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MODERN ITALY
AS SEEN BY AN ENGLISHWOMAN

By the same Author

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Il Duce

L.U.C.F.

MODERN ITALY
AS SEEN BY AN ENGLISHWOMAN

By
CICELY HAMILTON

WITH 16 PAGES OF
PHOTOGRAPHS

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FOREWORD

ITALY, as she lives and moves to-day, is Italy as Fascism has made her; which means that you cannot keep out politics when you write of the country and its people. However superficially you touch on what you see, you are bound—Fascism being what it is—to touch on matters of State. For the aim and purpose of those who now hold rule in Italy is “the creation of a State of truly sovereign authority which dominates all the forces of the country.” All the forces: not merely the conduct of the country’s administration, the collection of its taxes, and the execution of its laws. The “liberal” State is rejected by the Fascist because its essential function is only “to prevent the liberty of one from encroaching on that of another”; hence it is a purely negative institution, incapable of real control and growth. The State, as the rulers of New Italy see it, is an institution active and positive. And to its activities no bounds are to be set; “in every field of collective life it has its own mission to fulfil and a will of its own.”

The phrase “every field of collective life,” is no mere figure of speech. “Always and everywhere the Fascist State steps in with effective action, whether it be to protect infant life, to defend the family, to increase population, or to extend its jealous care to maintaining the moral and physical integrity of our race.” No other force, of whatever nature, can remain outside its sphere of influence. Mussolini, in one of his *pronunciamentos*, has summed up the aims and methods of the new order

in a sentence as pregnant as it is brief: "Nothing outside the State; nothing against the State!" What he and his followers are striving to create is a nation without organized division; a people of one mind and one heart; a people that has swept from its collective life the element of friction—social, industrial, political—so that its governing class may fulfil the duties to which it has been called, unharried by the antics of an opposition; an organized body which, in liberal States, exists for the purpose of creating friction and putting obstacles in the way of authority. The aim of Fascism is well-being through strength and efficiency; an aim which it holds to be incompatible with the ideals of individualism and political democracy alike. . . . It would be foolish, therefore, as well as unfair, to attempt to judge it according to the measure of individualism or democracy; it can be judged—and that only after due lapse of time—by its measure of success in the working out of its own plans; not by its failure to turn out good democrats or enthusiasts for individualism—whom itself would class as nuisances. Since it has openly avowed its belief that liberty is a much overrated blessing, we must not expect from it that devotion to liberty which has inspired other nations and epochs; on the contrary, we must admit its right to reject what it has ceased to admire. We are told that we needs must love the highest when we see it; and if Fascism's highest takes the form, not of liberty but of disciplined unity, all that can be asked of it is that it serves its cause of unity and discipline as other men serve their cause of freedom.

As to whether it be possible for a nation of millions to eradicate permanently the tendency to opposition and attain to the unity dreamed of by the rulers of Italy—a unity of heart and mind and method—who, at

the present stage, shall venture to prophesy with confidence? The record of human experience, which is history, would seem to indicate that some degree of friction is as necessary to the welfare of the body politic as it is to that of the individual: without the rebel and without the heretic the health of a community may languish. On the other hand, the same record of history bears witness that the aspiration towards unity is constant in the human race. Utopia has had its builders and planners in many generations, and all of those builders with whose works I have acquaintance have seen its inhabitants as a people dwelling together in unity. Few, if any, of the builders and planners of Utopia have faced the unfortunate, irrefutable fact that human beings only stand shoulder to shoulder—only move to one impulse and are stirred by sense of brotherhood—in the face of a common enemy. Union, in short, is most swiftly and thoroughly attainable in military formation; hence Fascism, striving to make a people one, lays stress on the military element in the training of its younger generation—the boys of the junior Black Shirt corps, the *Avanguardisti* and *Balilla*.

There is a price to be paid for everything worth having, including political efficiency and unity. A State that prides itself on a will of its own and permits of no opposition to that will; a State that claims "it has its own life and its own superior ends, to which the ends of the individual must be subordinated"; and that dominates all the forces of the country; such a State, of necessity, must inflict a certain amount of hardship on those whose old individual rights it sweeps away. To which accusation Fascism replies when it calls its achievement a revolution. It is seldom possible to bring about a national revolution by the use of kid-glove methods

alone; and it is practically impossible to impose a new form of discipline, political and industrial, upon an entire people without the infliction of hardship and annoyance. You cannot hope to produce an omelet if you shrink from the breaking of your eggs.

All the world over, political institutions that once seemed stable are in a state of flux and insecurity. Most of the nations are still undecided with regard to new developments needed, and are tinkering and plumbing at the institutions they have inherited; others, two others—Italy and Russia—have ventured into bold experiment. We are too near, as yet, to those colossal experiments to say what their ultimate effects will be on the world at large as well as on the people by whom they were inaugurated; but whether they end in success or in overthrow, these two communities cannot fail to teach much to the less adventurous peoples who have watched them try their experiment. Their blunders are a warning, their successes an encouragement. Even if our own convictions or prejudices are against the new developments, this we have to remember: their authors have blazed a trail on a path as yet untried, and—whether it lead them to progress or reaction—for that we owe them thanks.

.

What I have written in the following pages must inevitably be coloured here and there by prejudice, sometimes personal and sometimes traditional. Few of us are so made that we write of things alien without an occasional tinge of it; but, if we are honest with ourselves, we allow for its presence; make a mental note that, at this point or that, tradition will come in, or some personal liking, and we shall find it difficult to

keep to the impartial mean. My mental notes (which I hereby make public in my readers' interest) refer to Fascism in two of its phases: in its attitude to women and its attitude to opposition—the latter summed up in the phrase already quoted: "Nothing against the State!" When I deal with either of these subjects, I am at once conscious of the influence of my own tradition. In the one case, of the English tradition of freedom of speech, which allows the Hyde Park orator to spout his treason unmolested; and in the other case, of a more personal tradition of feminism that runs counter—very strongly counter—to the Fascist idea of womanhood and womanly destiny. I trust I am not bigoted on the subject of free speech, or of any other freedom. All forms of government—one may say all forms of reasonable life—are a compromise between the extremes of freedom and security. In the extreme of freedom, where a man, without let or hindrance, does that which is right in his own eyes and is hampered not at all by the right or convenience of others—in that extreme of freedom a man must perforce live dangerously. He must live, that is to say, without the protection of the law, and must either draw away from the life of the community or defy it in his every action, in the manner of Chicago gangsters. As for the extreme of security, the life without risk—where you are surrounded by precautions, by watchers, and by walls—the other word for that is gaol. If security were indeed the first desire of our souls, we should most of us aim at a comfortable term of penal servitude; where risks to life and limb are almost non-existent, where to-morrow has little uncertainty about it—and our daily bread is provided without fear of unemployment. While, if freedom were indeed the breath of our lives and the longing of our

souls, we should turn our backs on humanity. As a matter of actual and ordinary fact, we have no desire for security or freedom unadulterated; what we strive to attain, in our muddled fashion, is such an adjustment between our idea of security and our idea of freedom as will enable us to live in comfort. And our idea of a suitable adjustment inevitably alters with circumstance. When danger threatens (as in time of war) the value we place on our imperilled security may outweigh a thousand-fold the value we place upon our freedom. To a people that fears the assault of an enemy, its inherited liberty may seem so small a thing that it will let it slip without protest; it may permit its rulers to abrogate rights, such as that of free speech, which it once thought essential and which its fathers thought worth dying for. Those of us whose memory goes back to the beginning of the war will remember that that is much what happened in the first few days of August 1914; and happened with the full consent of the British Parliament.

Like the preferences of men and women, the preferences of nations vary; they have their individual temperaments and, further, their different experiences. To some—and especially to those who have come near to destruction in the past—security will seem the essential, the one thing needful, and for its attainment they will make any sacrifice. Others, who have lived less exposed to the peril of attack, may have been so long accustomed to the comfort of their liberties that they are willing, for their sake, to take risks. Those who rule Italy at the present juncture are not of the class that takes careless risks; they see fit and right to tip the balance in favour of security, which to them is their country's first need; it is in the interests of national security that they curtail the rights of opposition and the Press and

sacrifice certain of the comforts of individual freedom. We, with a different tradition behind us, may prefer our own method of adjusting the balance between freedom and security, between citizen and State; they prefer theirs—which sums up the case and the argument.

As for Fascist aims and ideals for women, here, too, I have had to make allowance—large allowance—for prejudice; my view of what should be the position of women in the body politic is not that of the rulers of Italy. (The fact is not likely to trouble the rulers of Italy!) On the subject of women and women's activities I have tried to write straightforwardly of what I have been told, what I have gathered from newspaper and pamphlet, and the use of my own eyes and ears; but (lest prejudice be observable) I here state frankly that I am feminist by conviction, that of old I was a suffragist, and that I am a whole-hearted advocate of birth control—which in Fascist eyes is anathema. The idea of my own sex as being created for the purpose of wifehood and motherhood does not commend itself to me. To which statement any right-minded disciple of Fascist doctrine would doubtless retort that my idea of a woman as a being whose success in life, and whose personal worth, has no necessary connection with her power of sex attraction or the bearing of children, does not commend itself to him. Being conscious of this utter divergence of ideals and points of view, I have as far as possible confined myself to facts, and refrained from comment in the pages dealing with Fascism as applied to women.

The above explanation, I hope, makes clear alike my honest intentions and my prejudices.

C. H.

CONTENTS

	Page
I. The Italian Child's War	1
II. The Child's Guide to Fascism	16
III. The Italian Youth Movement	31
IV. " Il Balilla "	43
V. Sidelights on the Fascist Party	52
VI. Advertisement: Free and Otherwise	62
VII. New Italy's Women. The Cult of the Cradle	76
VIII. An Italian Audience	98
IX. Games, New and Old	110
X. Alto Adige	126
XI. The Vatican State	138
XII. " Circuses "	156
XIII. The Open-air Theatre, Railways, Beggars, and Tips	167
XIV. Building and Excavation	178
XV. Laws and Regulations	191
XVI. Institutions and Votes	204
XVII. Organized Leisure. The End	219

ILLUSTRATIONS

Il Duce	<i>Frontispiece</i>
Children Saluting Mussolini	<i>facing page</i> 18
Piccole Italiane (Doll Drill)	" " 32
Piccole Italiane Saluting	" " 32
Avanguardisti and their Officer	" " 51
Avanguardisti at Review	" " 51
Italian Football Crowd	" " 62
Italian Football Team	" " 62
The Car of Thespis	" " 69
Gathering of Bersaglieri at Bologna	" " 69
Salute to Mussolini	" " 76
Football Match in Costume, Florence	" " 117
Women's International Sports, Florence	" " 124
Florentine Athletic Team	" " 124
Fascist Gathering in the Alps. Open-air Mass	" " 140
The Vatican City. Swiss Guard Barracks	" " 148
The Vatican City. Wireless Station	" " 148
The Open-air Cinema. A Performance in Rome	" " 157
"The First Hour"	" " 179
Recent Excavations. Ancient Temples in the heart of Modern Rome	" " 190
Recent Excavations. Trajan's Market	" " 190
Mussolini pinning on a Decoration	" " 209
Monument of Victory at Bolzano	" " 209
Clearance round the Capitol in progress	" " 224

Extracts from the following pages have appeared
in *Time and Tide*, to whose editor the author desires
to make acknowledgment.

I. THE ITALIAN CHILD'S WAR

I HAVE sometimes wondered why no enterprising publisher has thought it worth his while to compile a volume on the varying (and highly conflicting) war-teaching of those nations which once we knew as belligerent. Such a volume, which would consist very largely of extracts from children's school-books, would be valuably informative; it would also, at times, be amusing, though its humour would be largely unconscious and flavoured here and there with the grim. Because school-books are compiled without thought of their effect on the foreigner, it would enable us, far better than many leading articles, to estimate the differences in racial outlook and point of view of the various rising generations. If, for instance, we had been conversant, during the last few years, with German school-books treating of war-history, we should, I imagine, have been less surprised than we were in 1930 by the sudden increase in power and popularity of the National Socialist Party—the Nazis.

The Italian school-book, in this respect, is no less interesting than the German. Its teaching on the subject of the war is straightforward; the attitude of the rising generation towards the struggle in which its fathers took part is clearly and authoritatively defined, in accordance with the spirit of Fascism. As that is a spirit strongly patriotic, those who look upon nationality

as the prime cause of bloodshed, and imagine that the combative instinct has no existence apart from standing armies, will hardly approve of these Italian school-books—with their insistence on the soldierly virtues and on patriotism, and their praise for the achievements of the war.

We who are the ordinary British public know, save by rare exception, but little of the war as waged on the Italian front; its effect on our fortunes was indirect only, and comparatively few of our men were engaged there, so our interest centred, naturally enough, on the nearer strife of France and Flanders. A breach of the Italian line in Venetia was not like a breach of the line at Verdun or a thrust towards the Channel ports. We heard, from time to time, of advance or retreat and looked up names in our maps; we knew of the heavy defeat of Caporetto, we knew it was retrieved in the following year, at the Piave; and that, with the ordinary British public, was about as far as our knowledge went.

The Italian school-history, as a matter of course, gives you the interest reversed; in its pages the struggle that to us is subsidiary, the struggle with the empire of Austria-Hungary, is the pivot of the World War, the drama of supreme importance. The Battle of the Marne and the Battle of the Somme, the Salient, Verdun, and the saving of Paris—all these have dwindled to disappearing point, and, as seen through the eyes of the Italian chronicler, the decisive factor in final victory was the overthrow of the Austrian army—not the rolling back of the German army in France.

The passages following are taken from a book intended for use in the State-run schools by children of (I think) about eight; I have translated its simple language as literally as possible. One section of the volume is

devoted to *La Grande Guerra*; and the lesson thereon, in the first place, takes the form of a conversation between three small boys and a certain Signor Goffredo—who is not without points of resemblance to our own Mrs. Markham.

"It was called the Great War," explains Signor Goffredo to his three little friends, "because, of all the wars recorded by history, it was the most terrible. The nations who took arms and strove against each other were the most powerful in the world. On one side were England, France, and Belgium, and, in the beginning, Russia; also America, Japan, and various other countries. And over against them stood Germany and Austria, who also had their strong allies.

"The shock of these formidable nations, with their huge armaments and armies, was terrific, and the issue of the struggle remained for a long time in doubt."

"And what about Italy?" (So asks one of the boys.)

"What about Italy—you do right to ask. It was Italy's entry that decided the fate of the war. For, once for all, boys, you must get this into your heads—and all future generations must get it into theirs: *It was Italy that won the war at the Battle of Vittorio Veneto.*¹ Say that after me, all three of you—Sergio, Anselmuccio, Cherubino."

And the three boys said after him: "*It was Italy that won the war at the Battle of Vittorio Veneto.*"

"I am not going to give you the story in detail," went on Signor Goffredo, who was obviously stirred to emotion, "that your schoolmaster must do for you. I will tell you only that the army of Italy was one of the most heroic in the world; all the more heroic because, in the beginning, it was wanting both in necessary

¹Italics in the original.

armaments and food. I need give you no names; there were those who fought and died; there were those who still wear the glorious badges of their wounds, there were those who suffered alike in mind and heart. If you question the first, it is their graves that will give you answer; if you question the second, they will point to their scars; if you question the third, they will point to the lines on their foreheads.

"You will learn in your school the names of those who were foremost in Italian heroism; for my part, boys, I shall give you one name only, a name that stands for all—the Unknown Warrior. A soldier, that is to say, who, like thousands of others, fought and died, and whose very name is unknown. . . ."

.

Such is the introduction to the story of the Great War as presented, in their schools, to the boys and girls of Italy; the origins and progress of the struggle are sketched at some length in a later chapter of the same educational volume. It is there explained that the Risorgimento and its wars of the nineteenth century had not wholly attained the great object of unifying Italy; there were still regions outside the national borders, inhabited by men of Italian race and speech but subject to the rule of the Hapsburgs. "Veretia Tridentina, Venetia Giulia, Istria, and Dalmatia remained beneath the Austrian yoke," and Italy remembered "that the redemption of these territories was a sacred duty. . . ."

"Among these Italians oppressed by the foreigner there were not wanting gallant young men who offered up their lives, as their fathers had done in the heroic era of the Risorgimento; nevertheless, during many long years it was impossible to take arms to aid the

fratelli irredenti. At length, however, in the year 1914, the two powerful empires of Germany and Austria attacked the small country of Belgium, and also Serbia and France. To save the liberties of Europe, thus threatened by invasion, both England and Russia took the field, and the flames of war soon raged through the greater part of the European continent, as well as in Asia and Africa. During the four years of the conflict there were fought many terrific battles, which sometimes lasted for weeks. It was in 1915 that Italy took arms against the Austrian Empire, and two years later the United States of America also joined in the war. Finally, in the autumn of 1918, our army destroyed the Austrian army in Italy and so obliged Austria to sue for an armistice. Then the World War came to an end. As a result of the Italian victory Germany saw herself deprived, for good and all, of the support of her Austrian ally; she also saw herself menaced by an Italian invasion while her troops in France were being forced to retreat by the French, the English, the Italians, and Americans—so she also asked for peace.

“We will now go on to the heroic achievements of our soldiers in this great, victorious war.”

Here be it noted that, in all such books for the young as I have seen, stress is laid on the eagerness with which Italy entered the war. Which, no doubt, is correct; the school of pacifism which would have us believe that the combative instinct is confined to the higher ranks of diplomacy has little in the way of fact to go upon. In all those nations that took part in the war (whatever their weariness and repulsion later) the actual declaration of hostilities aroused enthusiasm and the ardent spirit of self-sacrifice.

“Our people understood that the hour had come to

free those regions of Italy which still suffered under foreign rule, and it was with the utmost enthusiasm that they demanded war against Austria. Once again the brave songs of the War of Independence resounded on every side, and they were echoed back by the newer songs which called for the ransom of Trent and Trieste.

On the heights, on the heights of the Trentino
We will plant, we will plant our flag!

“ Benito Mussolini, that great son of our people, he who to-day is the Duce of Fascist Italy, fired the souls of his countrymen with patriotism by his writings as well as by his burning words; while the eloquence of the famous poet, Gabriele d’Annunzio, likewise inspired the nation. Both these men, like the writers and poets of the Risorgimento, were gallant soldiers in the field.

“ Our king made himself interpreter of the public will, and on 24th May, 1915, he declared war against Austria. The House of Savoy set out again on the glorious path once taken by Carlo Alberto and Victor Emmanuel II.

“ The king, in a fine proclamation, thus addressed his soldiers:

“ ‘ Soldiers of the land and of the sea!

“ ‘ The solemn hour of our justification has sounded!

“ ‘ Following the example of my illustrious ancestor, I assume to-day the supreme command of the forces of land and sea, with an assured faith in the victory which will be achieved by your valour, your self-sacrifice, and discipline.

“ ‘ The enemy whom you are preparing to fight is trained in war and worthy of you. With the advantage of position and readiness, he will oppose to you a stubborn

resistance, but your enthusiasm will know how to overcome it.

“ ‘Soldiers, yours will be the glory of planting the tricolour of Italy on the sacred and natural boundaries of our Fatherland, and yours will be the glory of accomplishing the work which the heroism of your fathers began!’

“The Italian army, under the command of Luigi Cadorna, freed Ala, Gradisca, and Monfalcone in a swift advance, then reached and crossed the Isonzo. Then, between June and November 1915, our heroic soldiers, in four terrible battles, drove the enemy from trenches which appeared to be impregnable, cut as they were in the living rock, on dominating positions, and defended by barbed wire and thousands of cannon and machine-guns. Those vigorous sons of our mountains, the Alpini, wrested Monte Nero from its Austrian defenders, who had believed the position unassailable. In May 1916 the Austrians tried to take their revenge, and, with a large number of troops and many guns, they attacked our lines in the Trentino, having first destroyed our defences by a terrific bombardment. But after a month of furious fighting our soldiers reconquered nearly all the ground which they had been obliged to yield in the first moment of surprise.

“In August of the same year (1916) a magnificent victory adorned the Italian colours. In a ten-days’ struggle the formidable positions which barred the road to Gorizia were carried and passed, and Gorizia was added to Italy; while at the same time our troops were thrusting back the enemy on the Carso.

“Between May and September in 1917 the Italian army, in two other great battles, gained possession of the tableland of Bainsizza, of San Gabriele, and Monte

Santo. The Austrian forces, hard pressed by our heroes, were near to complete defeat and overthrow, when Germany sent to their aid an army consisting of some of her best troops. And by this time, unfortunately, Russia, convulsed by a ruinous revolution, had withdrawn from the war, and so it happened that the Austrians and Germans could send against Italy the guns and men they had formerly employed against Russia. On 24th October, 1917, the enemy advanced to the attack of our lines, succeeded in breaking them and seizing Caporetto, and marched into the plain of Venetia. Our army was forced to abandon the Isonzo and fall back, still fighting, on Monte Grappa and the Piave. But on the heights of Monte Grappa and the banks of the Piave our soldiers held fast; the most furious assaults of the enemy were of no avail to move them. The youthful recruits, boys of eighteen years, vied in courage with the veterans of the Carso and Isonzo. The enemy's invasion was stemmed and preparations were made to roll it back.

"Italy did not allow herself to be cast down by her misfortune.

"The nation was strong and united in its determination to maintain the courage of its soldiers and obtain for them the means of chasing the enemy out of Venetia, so that the Italian tricolour should float victorious over the redeemed provinces.

"June 1918 saw the Austrians engaged in another offensive in the mountains and on the Piave; and in hand-to-hand struggles the Italian soldiers defended the sacred soil of their country. 'Either the Piave or death for us all!' So wrote an infantryman on the ruined wall of a house destroyed by shell-fire. The Austrians were driven back beyond the river, and in

the first days of July the Battle of the Piave finished with a great Italian victory. . . ."

Here for a page or two the historian turns aside from the war on land to deal with the other wars waged at sea and in the air.

"While the army," he writes, "was fighting with so much gallantry on land, the navy was fighting with an equal gallantry at sea. The Austrian fleet had no wish to give it battle, preferring to take refuge in its heavily fortified harbours; but all the same our navy covered itself with glory. It defended the coasts of Italy against the attacks of enemy ships and itself made daring raids on the Austrian coasts; it laid minefields, in order to blow up hostile ships, and swept up the minefields of the Austrians; it protected against submarines the convoys of Italian and allied vessels engaged in the transport of food, munitions, and troops.

"Our sailors knew how to strike at the enemy, even in his harbours. Luigi Rizzo, in the port of Trieste, sank the ironclad *Vienna*; and another great armoured ship, the *Viribus Unitis*, was blown up in the port of Pola. There were many daring achievements by tiny motor boats, known as M.A.S., which were built for the chasing of submarines. One of those who distinguished himself in this form of warfare was Costanzo Ciano who is now a member of the Fascist ministry.

"The little M.A.S. did not hesitate to attack even large Austrian ships when they ventured forth from their cover. Two great ironclads once came out from Pola, escorted by many smaller vessels and making towards the open sea. It was hardly light when the smoke from their funnels was seen by two M.A.S., which, after having been on the watch all night, were about to return to harbour. Luigi Rizzo commanded

them. Quickly he turned upon the powerful Austrian squadron, unseen by the two monsters until he had launched his torpedoes. There were two deafening reports, two enormous columns of water, and one of the Austrian vessels foundered.

"The two M.A.S. escaped from the furious fire of the other enemy vessels, and returned triumphantly to Ancona, while the dismayed Austrian squadron with all speed took refuge in Pola. Nor was it only on land and sea that Italian heroism shone. Our tricolour was displayed to the skies in our aeroplanes, which were ceaselessly observant of the movements of the enemy, ever swift and eager to chase back his raiders, and ever ready, with bombs and machine-guns, to come to the aid of the infantry, alike in defence and attack.

"Brave amongst the many brave airmen of Italy was Francesco Baracco. With marvellous skill and magnificent courage he did not hesitate to attack enemy machines, even when he found himself in a position of sheer inferiority. He was victorious in sixty combats, in the course of which he brought down thirty-four enemy aeroplanes. During the Battle of the Piave he came to his glorious end. While the furious conflict was proceeding in Montello, Francesco Baracco flew low in order to use his machine-gun on the Austrians, and he was struck on the head by a bullet that had pierced his petrol tank. The machine fell in flames, and only when the battle was over did his countrymen find the body of the hero in its debris. It was reverently raised and buried with all honour.

"Famous, too, is the flight to Vienna. Eight aeroplanes under the command of Gabriele d'Annunzio appeared one day over the proud capital city of the Austrian Empire, and there was nothing to prevent

them from avenging the ferocious aerial bombardments from which our defenceless cities had suffered at the hands of the enemy. But the aim of the Italians, in flying to Vienna, was only to scatter manifestoes composed by the poet and advising Austria to put an end to a war in which she could never hope to be victorious. Then our aeroplanes returned after a flight of about a thousand kilometres, the greater part of the distance over enemy territory. The daring nature of the enterprise roused admiration throughout the world."

Then follows an account of the Battle of Vittorio Veneto, the ending of the war, and the peace signed with Austria at St. Germain.

"On the unhappy anniversary of the Battle of Caporetto our army engaged, from the mountains to the sea, in the decisive battle which we know as Vittorio Veneto. For eleven days the epic struggle continued; then, in the end, the resistance of the Austrians was broken, and their retreat, with the Italians pressing hard on their heels, soon transformed itself into a rout unparalleled in history.

"On 4th November, 1918, General Armando Diaz, who had succeeded Luigi Cadorna in supreme command of the army, could issue the following proclamation to exultant Italy:

"Under the supreme guidance of His Majesty the King, the war against Austria-Hungary which the Italian army, inferior both in numbers and armament, began on 24th May, 1915, and for forty-one months waged with unalterable faith and tenacious valour, has now been won.

"The gigantic battle engaged on 24th October, and in which took part fifty-one Italian divisions, three British, two French, one Czechoslovak, and one American

regiment against seventy-five Austrian divisions, is finished.

“ . . . The Austro-Hungarian army has been annihilated. . . . The remains of that which was one of the most powerful armies in the world is retiring in disorder and without further hope along the valleys which it once descended in pride and confidence.”

“ Our soldiers,” the lesson-book continues, “ then entered Trent and carried their colours triumphantly to the Brenner Pass: they disembarked at Pola and Trieste. The king’s command had been obeyed and the flag of Italy was planted on her sacred boundaries. Everywhere the liberated peoples, rejoicing in their freedom, fell on the necks of their gallant deliverers, embracing them and covering them with flowers. The Italian victory brought about in Austria the outbreak of a revolution: the empire was overthrown, and the various peoples who formerly composed it divided up into independent states.

“ Peace with Austria was concluded at St. Germain, near to Paris, on 10th September, 1919. Venetia Tridentina and Venetia Giulia, with Trentino, Trieste, Istria, were ceded to Italy; our glorious dead had not shed their blood in vain.

“ It was barely half a century after she had become a free and united kingdom that Italy issued triumphantly from the greatest war in her history. She alone among the powers taking part in the conflict had completely destroyed the enemy opposed to her; she had overthrown an empire that had existed through long centuries, and, by overthrowing it, had hastened the surrender of Germany. The number of her fallen, about six hundred thousand, bore witness to the terrific nature of the struggle.

"It is with a just pride, therefore, that we should look back on the war; thinking of it as a school of daring and discipline in which our people showed themselves worthy of their fathers, the Romans, who once were masters of the world. . . ."

Presumably it is with an eye on child-psychology—children demand heroes, and are interested in men, not in masses—that so much stress is laid, in this account of the war, on the exploits of daring individuals. In addition to those who are mentioned above, there is a subsidiary chapter devoted to "Italian Heroes and Martyrs of the Struggle"—and among the heroes is the name of Benito Mussolini. Of this military phase of the Duce's career we in England, as a rule, are ignorant, so it may be of interest to quote the passage in full.

"As soon as the World War broke out Benito Mussolini had urged that we should intervene against Austria. In urging this step he was prompted by his political genius as well as by his love for Italy; he was convinced that the war would be a means of strengthening our people. On 15th November, 1914, he founded his fighting paper, *Il Popolo d'Italia*, and began the campaign for intervention which was largely responsible for Italy's entry into the war.

"The outbreak of hostilities found Mussolini at the front, as a private in the Bersaglieri. He was a model soldier, gallant in danger, high-spirited, and a good comrade to even the humblest of his fellows. He was soon recommended for promotion to the rank of corporal, which he had merited by 'his exemplary activity, his *esprit de corps*, and cool courage.' And he was further described by his superiors as 'foremost in every kind of work and daring, careless of hardship, zealous and scrupulous in the fulfilment of his duties.'

" Benito Mussolini fought at Conca di Plezzo, at Carnia, and on the Carso. He was in a trench on the Carso on 23rd February, 1917, when a trench-mortar exploded, and by the hail of splinters caused by the explosion he was wounded all over the body. For long months he languished in a hospital, suffering acutely, but enduring his sufferings with fortitude. And during his slow convalescence, and then on till the end of the war, Benito Mussolini strove with his words and with his writings to sustain the fighting temper of the country and the army, and maintain in them the will to victory.

" It is with justice that Benito Mussolini is held to be one of the decisive factors in bringing about the war and its triumph. . . ."

Such is the story of the war as taught to the children of Italy; differing considerably, both in manner and content, from the story of the war as taught to the children of England. Throughout it is a record of success and patriotic achievement, a singing of arms and the man; and its moral, obviously, is the splendour of patriotism and the need of military virtue. The youth of to-day, should their country call to them, must emulate their elders, the victors of Vittorio Veneto; they also must show themselves worthy of the Romans—who once were rulers of the world!

It is with that reminder to the children of to-day that the chapter on the war concludes.

" Italy, a hundred years ago, was a country divided and enslaved; to-day that country is one of the great powers of the world, to which it presents an admirable example of discipline, of industry, and loyalty. The heroes and martyrs of the Risorgimento, of the Great

War, and the Fascist Revolution have united our Fatherland into one nation and made it free, prosperous, and strong. From you (of the younger generation) your country demands that you develop in health, both of body and mind, so that you may be enabled to continue the work that others have begun, and make of Italy, once again, a shining light of civilization. So that, if danger threatens, you may be ready like your fathers and your forefathers, to spring to arms, and be ready, as they were, to give your lives if the safety and welfare of Italy should require of you that last sacrifice! ”

II. THE CHILD'S GUIDE TO FASCISM

THE more I hear and the more I read of Fascism, as expounded by those who profess its doctrines, the more do I marvel at the acrid dislike of it which informs the average British Socialist. For Fascism is so plainly the result of Socialist thinking; it has grown and developed into what it is because the man who directed it was trained in Socialist thinking and had Socialist views on the scope and function of the State. Its discipline and outlook, in many respects, seem akin to those of a militant Trade Unionism, the difference between the two movements being rather in degree than in kind. Trade Unionism seeks to discipline, and thereby aggrandize, certain sections of the nation only—the wage-earning sections; the aim of Fascism, on the other hand, is to discipline, and thereby aggrandize, the Italian nation at large—in all its sections, all its ranks, all its interests.

“The forming of that unitary political conscience which is the true basis of the State”—so Fascism is defined by one of Mussolini's ministerial colleagues. “The leading problem of Fascism” (I quote from Villari) “is that of the *right* of the State and the *duty* of the individual. . . .” Of this, at least, we may be fairly certain; that when our State has come into its socialistic own, it will be obliged, however reluctantly, to take a leaf from the book of Mussolini, strive to form a unitary political conscience, and inculcate the strenuous

duty of citizenship—by penalty as well as by precept. When the State has gathered to itself all authority and its officials supervise all our manifold activities, industrial, commercial, scientific, agricultural; then, if it is to carry on without disaster, it will have to get service, good service, from those it employs and protects. And the likelihood is that it will find it necessary to insist on discipline and a measure of outward and ordered respect—very much in the manner of Fascism. Perhaps the real obstacle to "Socialism in Our Time" is no more than this: the refusal of those who profess the creed of Socialism to preach its inevitable duties. While the real strength of Fascism—that is to say, its hold on the honourable and the public-spirited—lies in the fact that it has not been afraid to establish a standard of duty. The individual, in Fascist theory, is a means to the end of the State. "Society must be considered as an imperishable organism where life extends beyond that of the individuals who are its transitory elements. These are born, grow up, die, and are substituted by others, while the social unit always retains its identity and its patrimony of ideas and sentiments, which each generation receives from the past and transmits to the future. According to the Fascist conception, therefore, the individual cannot be considered as the ultimate end of society. Society has its own purposes of preservation, expansion, and perfection, and these are distinct from the purposes of the individuals who at any one moment compose it. In the carrying out of its own proper ends, society must make use of individuals. . . . The State . . . is for Fascism an organism distinct from the citizens who at any given time form part of it; it has its own life and its own superior ends, to which the ends of the individual must be subordinated."

Fascism begins early with the training in citizen-virtue. As soon as it starts its education, the Italian child begins to learn of the duty and honour it owes to the State and its rulers; and the books that are put into its infant hands, far from avoiding discussion of public affairs, seek to make of it an infant politician. The making of infant politicians is by no means peculiar to Fascism; Italy is not the only country in which efforts are being made to mould the rising generation to a definite political pattern; but (saving no doubt the Soviet Republics) Italy seems the most thorough in her use of the schoolroom-propaganda system. Her little people start their schooling at the age of six; and, as soon as they can read (and it may be before), they are instructed in the merits of the Fascist Revolution and existing form of government—and incidentally in the black demerits of those who have opposed its authority. With us an attempt to form "unitary political conscience" through the Council schools would certainly lead to trouble; parents of an opposite way of thinking would object to the bias of the lessons. If such objections are made in Italy, the disgruntled parents are probably reminded that the State "has its own superior ends, to which the ends of the individual must be subordinated."

School literature is a method of recruitment for juvenile Fascist organizations. A class-book for children of very tender age shows among its excellent illustrations a boy and a girl, each with an arm uplifted in the orthodox Roman salute. He is clad in the black shirt, the shorts, and scarf of the *Balilla*; she in the white jumper and black skirt that denote membership of the *Piccole Italiane*, the corresponding corps of girls. And the small boys of seven who read the book in class are bidden to look forward to the happy day when they shall



Photo - Enit

Children Saluting Mussolini

have attained the age of eight. The age, that is to say, the enviable age at which they, also, can don black shirts and shorts and enrol in the ranks of the *Balilla*.

The school-book for children a year or so older from which I gave extracts in the chapter preceding, contains a section devoted to the Fascist Revolution, its causes, its achievements, and its leader. The war, it is explained, along with its success and its glory, had naturally brought suffering on the country; it had imposed many hardships and required many sacrifices, "and there were men so destitute of loyalty and patriotism that they took advantage of the general suffering and sought to destroy the fruits of victory. These were the *sovversivi*, men without a country, who tried to persuade the Italian people that the sacrifices it had made to win the war had all been made in vain. In this way they hoped to rouse discontent and hatred and stir the people to open revolt.

"As the then Government did not venture to oppose their treacherous propaganda, the *sovversivi* were soon the real masters of Italy. They fomented strikes, they urged workmen and peasants to wreck factories and lay waste farms, they abused and ill-treated ex-service men, priests, and officials, and they even hauled down and tore our Italian flag. Italy at that time was on the edge of a terrible abyss.

"But over her salvation there watched Benito Mussolini.

"There were many loyal and upright Italians who were convinced that these anti-patriots must be met and overthrown; at first, however, the necessary leader was lacking. But Italy, the country which had endured a long war with such splendid courage, and her people who had given such striking proofs of unity and bravery

were not abandoned by God; and the leader (il Duce) who saved them from disaster was Benito Mussolini.

"It was on 23rd March, 1919, that Benito Mussolini founded, in the city of Milan, the organization known as the *Fasci Italiani di Combattimento*; he chose the *fasces* as his symbol because they stood for strength and for law. If you take a single rod and try to break it, you will succeed without very much trouble; but if you place such a rod amongst several others, and then fasten them tightly together with cords, all your efforts at breaking the bundle will be vain. And it is the same thing with men; when they stand separate and divided, the first enemy will overcome their weakness, but when they are united and hold fast together, no one will be able to worst them. Also the *fascio*, the sheaf of rods and the axe, in the days of old Rome, was the symbol of justice and supreme authority, and as such it was carried by the lictors, who escorted the rulers of the Roman State—hence its name of *fascio littorio*. In this symbol, therefore, the genius of Benito Mussolini revived the memory of the power and the justice of Rome. . . .

"Inspired by Benito Mussolini, Fascism soon made its appearance in all the other cities of Italy. From one end of the country to the other the Blackshirts formed their determined and disciplined squadrons, which attacked and put to flight the *sovversivi*, whose outrages were disturbing the life both of town and country. Many of those who joined the Fascisti were veterans of the Great War, who now offered themselves for the second time to Italy, to save her from internal enemies. The struggle, indeed, was a cruel one, and no fewer than three thousand Fascists gave their lives in the sacred cause of their country; for the most part they were

victims of ambushade and treachery, which their enemies preferred to honest combat in the open field."

Then follows an account of the March on Rome, in the autumn of 1922. The march, it is explained, was rendered necessary by the fatal weakness of the Government; it was so weak, in fact, that "there was no longer any reason for its existence," while opposed to it was "a movement gigantic and disciplined. At a sign from Mussolini all the Fascists of Italy were mobilized; cities were occupied; and three columns of armed Blackshirts marched on Rome." The march was not accomplished without opposition—there was sanguinary fighting in places; but the king had realized what Fascism stood for—"the Italy that had been victorious on the Piave and at Vittorio Veneto." Eighty thousand Blackshirts who had joined in the march filed before him in disciplined columns, and Benito Mussolini was entrusted with "the titanic task of raising up a new Italy."

If it be true, as some psychologists assert, that you can make what you will of the plastic child-mind, it should not need more than a generation to produce that "unitary political conscience" which is the primary aim of Fascism. For the plastic child-mind is left in no doubt as to the success of the Duce and his henchmen in the titanic task of reconstruction. The next chapter is entitled "New Italy," and from first word to last it is a chapter of pride in the achievements of the Fascist regime.

"But a few years have gone by," it begins, "since the March on Rome, and already our Italy has undergone a complete transformation. Strikes, riots, and indiscipline, all these are things of the past; in their stead we have order and respect for authority, and industrial peace between the workers and those who give work. All

employees, whether they work with their hands or with their brains, have their organizations, and so do all employers of labour; while above these are the *Corporazioni*, which are the organs of the State. There is a Labour Charter (*Carta del Lavoro*), whose regulations have been drawn up in the common interest; and in all cases of serious dispute the decision is given, in the common interest, by a special court, the *Magistratura del Lavoro*. Then there is the *Opera Nazionale Dopolavoro* (National Institution for After Work—that is, for the use of leisure). By the means it places at their disposal, the workers, in their leisure hours, can improve their health by physical exercise, or carry on their education.

“The army, the navy, and the air force have been the objects of Benito Mussolini’s special interest, and the men who served their country in the Great War have been cared for and helped to find suitable trades and professions. Then the Duce has created the Fascist Militia (*Milizia Volontaria per la Sicurezza Nazionale*), which guards the conquests of the Fascist Revolution, watches over public order, and provides pre-military instruction for boys.

“In addition Benito Mussolini has constructed many new roads, including those which are especially designed for motor traffic, and he has greatly extended the area of land under cultivation. The production of corn in Italy has been much increased by the Duce’s institution of the *battaglia del grano* and the *festa del pane*.

“Elementary schools and kindergartens, to the number of thousands, have been founded by the Duce, who attaches a particular importance to the moral and physical training of the young. This form of education is under the charge of the *Opera Nazionale Balilla*. From the age of eight to the age of fourteen the boy, as a member of

the *Balilla*, is trained both physically and morally; on reaching fourteen he passes into the *Avanguardisti*; while as a youth of eighteen he can take his place with the 'Fascist Levy' in the ranks of the National Fascist Party. Then the little girls between six and twelve are classed as *Piccole Italiane*; after that they are *Giovane Italiane* until the age of eighteen; and at eighteen they also, through the Fascist Levy, can become members of the party. The religious training of these young people is carried on by the priesthood.

"Thus," concludes this little political chapter, "the rising generation is being brought up to honour both its God and its Country; and if Italy or Fascism should ever be menaced, it will be prepared, with all its strength, to defend them."

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I have quoted at some length from this "Child's Guide to Fascism" for more than one reason. In the first place because it is a straightforward example of political propaganda as applied to children; in the second because it summarizes, simply and clearly, the views which it is sought to impart to the child; and in the third because it touches on aspects of Fascist achievement and activity which we in England, as a general rule, ignore. Whether we dislike or whether we admire it, Fascism, to most of us, means little but strong government, arbitrary government, tinged with militarism, and its accompanying benefit of order. Barring the suppression of Bolshevik violence and the punctual running of trains, we know little or nothing of the other benefits it has conferred upon the nation—its encouragement of health through open-air exercise, its foundation of schools and sanatoria.

All over Europe—and perhaps beyond her borders—one of the results of reactions from the war was an access of interest in the welfare of the younger generation; to the era of bloodshed succeeded the era of the child! I leave it to the psychologist to explain (if he can) the precise connection between the workings of the combative spirit and enthusiasm for the training of youth; being myself content to note that such a connection does obviously exist, and that post-war Italy possesses her full share of the enthusiasm in which it is made manifest. The Fascist Government has set education in the forefront of its aims; and Italian education nowadays is no longer purely “intellectualist,” as it was but a few years ago. It includes the care of health, the training of the body, as well as a training in habits of good citizenship. Since good citizens must be sound in wind and limb, young Italians of to-day are bred to exercise, in drill and athletics, in fencing and gymnastics; and there has, further, been established a thoroughgoing system of seaside and country holiday. All over Italy, high in her mountains or breezy by her sea, there are children’s “summer colonies,” of Fascist origin; and in these colonies youngsters whose parents are too poor to afford them a hot-weather holiday are lodged, boarded, and looked after—free of charge. I was assured that no elementary schoolchild in Italy—no child, that is to say, from the age of six to the age of eleven—need go without its annual change. Each one can look forward to a stay by the sea or mountain of at least a fortnight’s duration. For the use of the children of Rome alone there are in existence no less than ten summer colonies, eight in the neighbouring mountain districts and the other two by the sea.

Yet another instance of care for the health and well-

being of childhood is a form of summer school now general in the larger cities. It is a day institution, and comes into being when other schools are closed—during the long summer holidays, which in Italy begin with the heat of July—and is situated at some convenient fresh-air spot that can easily be reached with bus or tram. These institutions, I was told, are not entirely free of charge; they are intended for the class wherein parents can afford a small fee. In return for it, the care of their boys and girls is taken entirely off their hands for the day; the children are collected in the early morning, and conveyed in batches, by bus or tram, to their seaside or country "colony." There, through the heat of the Italian summer day, they breathe clean air in healthful surroundings, and are kept from the mischief of the streets; collected again by those in charge of them, they are safely returned home at night. A blessed institution, the children's day-colony; and, in all probability, as great a boon to the mothers of young families as it is to the young families themselves!

It was an Italian who was anything but a blind admirer of the works of Fascism—who, in fact, had suffered heavily at Fascist hands—who told me that the one direction in which he was convinced that real progress had been made since his own younger days was in the care of the rising generation. For himself he would have preferred the times that are past; but not for the children. The small boys and girls that you see in school and street are cleaner, sturdier, a finer little race than they were but a few years ago.

Certain it is that the typical Italian child of to-day is a little creature very good to look at. When, during a recent visit to Rome, I was shown over one of the Montessori schools, I thought I had never seen assembled

in one room so many children who might be classed as beautiful. I might have thought that these children were exceptional—benefiting perhaps by their special training—if it had not been that, a day or two later, I went on to an elementary school for girls. Here again the little scholars were a delight to the eye; yet this particular school, I was assured by my guide, drew its children from one of the poorer quarters of the city. Dark or fair—and many Italians are fair—these little Italians were attractive individually as well as in the mass; and not the least attractive as regards appearance were the youthful Fascists, the *Piccole Italiane*, who, for the benefit of the foreign visitor, had kindly turned out in pride of uniform. White jumpers, white cotton stockings, black skirts, and little round caps of black stockinet, fitting, neat and tight, to their heads. Their white very speckless, their black very smart, they stood ranged in the hall, a line to either side, as I and my companion entered—the red, white, and green of the national flag lending the needed touch of colour to the scene. Very straight and well-drilled were the black-and-white lines; and as I and my companion set foot in the hall, up on the instant went all their white arms in the orthodox Roman salute—which my companion, as a Fascist, returned in like manner.

Until I made personal acquaintance with the rites and ceremonies of Fascist Italy, I was under the impression (entirely mistaken) that the Roman salute was a masculine gesture, used only by members of the National Militia when arrayed in their *camicie nere*; I had no idea that this form of greeting was practised by Fascists of all ages and both sexes, irrespective of the wearing of uniform. Having thought of it always as a military salute, I must confess to a shock of amused astonishment

when, on being escorted round one of the most feminine of institutions—a species of college for the teaching of domestic economy—a cook engaged with the institution's dinner raised her floury hand from a pudding of dough and stretched it aloft in correct salute *à la romaine*. The salute, I discovered further, is not confined to the Italian race and peninsula; it appears to follow the Italian flag overseas. I have seen a photograph (taken during a royal visit to the African colonies) of a group of native boys, clad in scanty native garb, with their brown arms lifted in the Fascist manner towards their distinguished visitor.

To return to the "Little Italian" maidens whose acquaintance I made in the Roman elementary school. Not all the scholars, be it noted, were clad in the black-and-white uniform—on the contrary; the greater number of children in every class wore the neat, white overall which is customary dress during school-hours. Both there and elsewhere I was assured by those in a position to know that membership of these juvenile Fascist organizations, though encouraged, is entirely voluntary, and that no discrimination is made in the schools between the children who join them and the children who remain unenrolled. Such pressure as is put upon small boys and girls is, I should imagine, a matter of suggestion merely; an effect of the books they are given, the example of others, and the atmosphere by which they are surrounded—an atmosphere which may be redolent with the incense offered to Fascism. If I were a small Italian boy or girl, I do not suppose I should need much persuasion to induce me to enrol as a juvenile follower of the Duce. Most children, perhaps all, are little partisans, and delight in the taking of sides; most children take pleasure in the

waving of a flag, be it national or red, the putting on of uniform, the importance of review, and the singing of loud and cheerful songs. And most children, also, need a hero to admire and honour—which Fascism provides magnificently in the person of Benito Mussolini. It did not surprise me that the "Little Italians" of the Roman school looked proud of themselves and their uniform. I was inclined to wonder rather that any of their fellows should remain outside the smart ranks. Parents, no doubt, are a factor in restricting the supply of recruits; there must be small expenses connected with these children's corps which needy fathers and mothers prefer not to add to their budget.

Whether or no they were enrolled as members of the *Piccole Italiane*, the small girls in that Roman elementary school were being trained in a spirit of sturdy patriotism, and a principal factor in their patriotic training was obviously the cult of the war. Fascist Italy, as I have elsewhere pointed out, has no shamefacedness with regard to the war. The "Oh-no-we-never-mention-it" attitude which is, I believe, considered the right thing by well-meaning sections of British educationists—that shocked turning of the head—has no equivalent in the Italian school system; on the contrary, the struggle is always a glorious experience, the uplifting of a nation, and those who took part in it were one and all heroes whom it is the duty of the young to remember with gratitude and honour.

I forgot to ask if the practice is general—I imagine it is—but at any rate in this particular school the memory of the war and its heroes is kept green by allotting to each classroom the name of some one fallen soldier; some soldier, that is, who either by his death or some action in life had been held worthy of especial honour.

His name is given to the classroom, and his portrait hangs on its wall; while his record of courage, and the exploits which distinguished him above his fellows, are known to each member of the form. He is, so to speak, the patriotic patron saint of the room and its occupants; and at stated intervals the head girl of the class is privileged to write, in the general name, to some one of the dead hero's kin—to his mother, his wife, his father, his child—whoever was his nearest and dearest. The object of her letter is to remind those who loved the dead soldier that it is not only by themselves that his name is held in honour—there are children who are taught to reverence his memory and his sacrifice. Every classroom, then, has its patron warrior; and the large room or hall in the centre of the building where the children assemble for singing, drill, and dancing is dedicated to the Unknown Soldier:

Ignoto il nome
Folgora il suo spirito.
Dovunque Italia
Con voce di pianto e d'orgoglio
Dicono
Innumere Madre
E mio figlio.

Unknown his name,
As the lightning his spirit.
Wherever is Italy
Mothers innumerable
Say with tears and with pride
He was my son.

So runs the inscription in the central hall in honour of the Unknown Soldier.

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To orthodox Fascism (as I explain elsewhere) woman is

always the wife and mother; naturally, therefore, the present regime stresses the housewifely qualities in women, and preparation for their housewifely duties plays a large part in the education of girls. Side by side with their very thorough grounding in patriotism, the little lasses of the elementary school were receiving a grounding that seemed equally thorough in the art and craft of cookery, in needlework, and hygiene; there was practical instruction on the rules for health in the home, on the need for ventilation and cleanliness. Then diet was explained on scientific principles, and there was likewise elementary instruction in the care of babies—advisable no doubt amongst a people which preaches the ever-full cradle and makes birth control a penal offence. In a family where babies arrive year by year much may depend on an elder sister's capacity for mothering the later arrivals.

I did not partake of the products that the kitchen class was turning out, but they looked sufficiently appetizing to do credit to cooks of greater age; while as for the embroidery produced by little girls of ages nine and ten, if I had seen it elsewhere than in Italy, where skill in needlework is a long tradition, I should have thought it near to amazing. All the embroiderers, if I remember aright, were copying or adapting old Italian patterns; in needlecraft as elsewhere there is a cult of the racial, the national. And in needlecraft, if anywhere, the cult is surely justified—so fine is the heritage left by designers of the past.

III. THE ITALIAN YOUTH MOVEMENT

"OUR entire scholastic system is pervaded by the spirit of victorious war and the Fascist Revolution. Side by side with the schools, the youth of to-day is trained in the *Balilla* and *Avanguardisti*, the hope and pride of our country." That is an extract from one of Mussolini's speeches; I quote it because it illustrates Italian pride in the memory of the war and the spirit wherewith it is sought to animate the Italian "Youth Movement" of to-day.

It was on a Sunday in Florence that I first made acquaintance with juvenile Fascism *en masse*—on the occasion of a review of its local legions by the Minister for Education. All sections of juvenile Fascism were there; the boys of the *Balilla* and *Avanguardisti*, the girls of the *Piccole* and *Giovane Italiane*; and they converged in their sections on the appointed parade-ground, a park on the outskirts of the city. One of the mustering-places of the *Balilla*, before they set out on their march to the park, was in front of the Florentine house where I was staying; and there, in the piazza, they gathered, troop by troop, till they numbered between two and three hundred. Until the word was given to move off, I sat at my window watching their youthful manœuvres. Watching them march up in sturdy little companies—the average size of a company seemed to be about thirty; watching them wheel, take their places in the column,

and halt. And the general effect of their movements and bearing was of smartness remarkable in children. There was one little company which, I verily believe, would have won approval from a sergeant-major of the Guards—so instant was its response to command, so regular its line and step. Three or four times, for the passing of traffic, it had to move its position; and always the movement was accomplished with a click, the thirty-odd boys stepped as one! I may add that, though many of these *Balilla* boys were small—and some of the detachments must have covered several miles before reaching their parade-ground—they all arrived there marching with an air, marching strongly.

These *Balilla* boys—the children from eight to fourteen—wear their own special, or embryo, variety of the uniform proper to the National Militia. The black shirt, of course—the *camicia nera*—but with the addition of a blue scarf worn round the neck, which they will discard later on, when they outgrow *Balilla* age and enter the *Avanguardisti*. As to the legs of the *Balilla* corps, they are bare between socks and field-grey shorts; as to their heads, they are capped in black, and the caps are adorned with a tassel; and the get-up is completed by white cotton gloves, which, on first acquaintance, struck me as somewhat incongruous.

The *Avanguardisti*—the fourteens to eighteens—sport a uniform more nearly resembling that of the full-blown Blackshirts. In place of the socks and shorts of their juniors they wear puttees and grey knickerbockers, inclining to a plus-four effect. In place of the blue tie they wear a looped white cord reminiscent of the French *foutragere*. And the white cotton gloves have gone with the tie. These elder lads go barehanded.

The title *Avanguardisti* does not call for any explana-



Piccole Italiane (Doll Drill)

Zaccaria



Piccole Italiane Saluting

Zaccaria

tion; the explanation of *Balilla*, on the contrary, does not leap to the foreigner's eye. *Balilla*, in fact, is a proper name, and the explanation of its use in this connection is a cutting from Italian history. It recalls the exploit of a lad of the artisan class, a young citizen of Genoa; who wrought the deed that has made his name remembered in the stormy days of the Risorgimento, when Austria still ruled in Italy.

This is the story of the dyer's boy, *Balilla*, as it is told to the children who call themselves after his name. (I quote from a version of the story designed for the use of the young—quote somewhat freely, and omitting certain details and simple explanations adapted to the youthful intelligence.)

"In the year 1846, and on the fifth day of December, some Austrian soldiers were dragging a mortar through the streets of Genoa when it sank in the mud of the road and there stuck fast. So deeply was its weight imbedded in the mire that, in spite of all their efforts, the soldiers could not make it budge; whereupon, with their customary arrogance of manner, they turned to the townsfolk who were standing by and ordered them to lend a hand with the mortar. That is to say, they ordered these Italians to help with a weapon that was intended for use against their countrymen.

"The bystanders understood what the order implied—that this mortar might be used to destroy their fellow-citizens, might even be turned on their own kith and kin. Instead of obeying the order, therefore, they murmured, hung back, and refused; whereupon the soldiers grew angry and began to ill-treat them. It was just at the moment that an Austrian officer was striking one of the Italian civilians with his stick that *Balilla*, the dyer's boy, came upon the scene. Roused to fury by the sight,

he snatched up a stone and hurled it at the officer, as David of old once hurled his stone at Goliath, the giant of the Philistines. As he flung it, he shouted in his Genoese dialect a phrase which means roughly: 'Let's have done with them!'

"The flinging of that stone at the Austrian officer was the signal for a general uprising in Genoa. The flame of revolt spread through street after street, the populace armed themselves with stones, with sticks, with any weapon they could lay their hands on; and within five days from the beginning of the struggle—within five days from the throwing of the stone—there was not a single Austrian soldier on the sacred soil of Genoa."

Such is the story of the boy Balilla, and the reason why his name has been given to the junior branch of the Fascist organization, that the memory of his exploit may be handed down and serve as an example of courage and patriotism to the Italian youngsters of to-day.

Being "pervaded by the spirit of victorious war and the Fascist Revolution," it is scarcely necessary to state that the training of the elder boys, the *Avanguardisti*, has its strongly military element; it is avowedly a preparation for the conscript life to come, and furnishes the army with recruits who already know something of the soldier's calling. Army rifles are served out to the lads for their shooting practice, and I have been told—though I have not seen the ceremony—that the day on which a member of the *Avanguardisti* first receives his rifle is looked on as a high occasion. At the Florentine review the actual arrival of the *Avanguardisti* was a form of military exercise; it represented the crossing, under fire, of the Arno—which, for the occasion, was spanned by a pontoon bridge. This crossing, I gathered, was

not only an exercise but a competition, for which marks were given, since each company performed the manoeuvre separately and was closely scrutinized by two or three officers who were stationed on the river bank. At the word of command each company charged down the farther bank and ran at full speed across the pontoon bridge; then, on reaching their first objective, the hither side, the boys halted, and crouched for a moment, taking cover beneath some overhanging scrub, before they sprang to their feet and ran up the bank to the road. There, still running, they disappeared in the direction of the parade-ground. What their judges thought of them I had no means of knowing, but they seemed to me a hefty set of lads who performed their manoeuvre with spirit.

What else they did in the way of military exercise I did not remain to see; I went off to another quarter of the park—past hundreds of *Balilla* drawn up by the roadside—to have a look at the girls' section, the *Giovane* and *Piccole Italiane*, who were encamped in a field apart. Very neat were the girls in their blacks and their whites—very neat and delightful to look at; but, save in the matter of outward appearance, its feminine element was, I thought, the least successful part of the review. Perhaps an outdoor display, to be in any way impressive, must be military, athletic, communal, or political in its nature—something that has a public purpose. Domesticity and the womanly ideal, as Fascism sees it, does not lend itself happily to processional symbolism and treatment by outdoor display; it is a private virtue, an ideal withdrawn, and its place is frankly the four walls of home and the family. (It was the suffragists, demanding their place in public life, who first taught Englishwomen the art of processional

display.) The gathering of the boys, both juniors and seniors, had a meaning—in each case it was embryo-military; the gathering of the girls, on the other hand, had no essential meaning, at any rate none that was apparent; it was just an outing, suggestive of a well-run school-treat. I make this remark in no spirit of depreciation; the promoters, I imagine, were aiming at a well-run school-treat where the girls were concerned.

While they waited for the long-delayed arrival of the minister, the girls had an easier time than their brothers, the *Balilla*, who were kept to their military lines at the roadside, and called to order at such times as their formation showed too ragged. The Little Italians, on the other hand, whiled away the morning with games of "Round the Mulberry Bush" order, and, played by pretty children on the summer grass, they were charming; there was also a maypole decked with long, coloured ribbons, and a small orchestra, violins and a piano, was ensconced on a platform in the centre of the field. By and by, as the morning drew on and the minister still lingered, the orchestra broke into tunefulness for the purposes of musical drill. This was performed by the elder girls, the *Giovane Italiane*, and, in keeping no doubt with Fascist ideals, there was nothing of the vigorous or unfeminine about their performance; it consisted merely of movements backwards and forwards, this way and that—graceful movements, of the gently-dancing type, in time to an unhurried music. With the arrival of the minister, this drill was repeated for his benefit, with the addition of another and more decorative item which involved the use of large wooden hoops; these were wreathed patriotically with the usual colours, the red, white, and green of Italy. (I note here, in connection with these colours, that they, and they alone, on

occasions of rejoicing, are used in street decoration; red, white, and green hangs from wall and from window, and flutters on flaglets from the trams. I do not know whether the use of other banners and standards is frowned on by authority; but certain it is that you do not see in Italy the mixed collection of flags of all nations wherewith we enliven our streets on occasions of rejoicing.)

I watched the Young Italians with interest as they moved to their music, this way and that, raised their coloured hoops and lowered them. The sight took me back in thought to my own young days, in a school which knew naught of athletics for girls, since the spirit of modernity had not yet invaded it, and the ideal, I am sure, was to equip us with the feminine graces—which some of us later rejected in favour of a vulgar independence. A school where we went out a-walking in our seemingly crocodiles, and drilled once or twice a week to seemingly music—in much the same fashion as these maidens of the newest Italy.

The cultivation of the womanly attributes—the domestic virtues—begins very early with Fascism; that I had already noted in the Roman elementary school. Here, at this children's review, was another example of the tendency; some of the small girls, the infants of the gathering, were passed in review holding dolls—and holding them not anyhow, as playthings, but in the correct manner of mothers dandling babies. (See, for this doll-drill, photograph facing page 32.) One of the bees in my own bonnet is an intense dislike of the "little mother" cult in children—which I hold to have its cruel side. The maternal instinct (so it seems to me) should be left to develop at its leisure and naturally; it should not be stimulated, prematurely forced, in creatures who

are only emerging from their own babyhood. We have no more right (so again it seems to me) to make little girls ape motherhood than to make little boys ape fatherhood; the habit has grown up, with regard to little girls, because even in their infancy they can be employed as nursemaids to the younger members of the family. Such is my personal sentiment—with which no right-minded Fascist will agree. But, in spite of my strong prejudice against the Little Mother and the cult that produces her—I had to admit at the Florentine review that these particular specimens of infant motherhood looked dear little souls when they drilled with their imitation babies.

When you see a group of Italian children you will not wonder that the Fascist faith has found its expression in a song that is a song of youth:

Giovinazza, giovinazza!
Primavera di bellezza!

(Which has taken its place as a second national anthem; you rise to your feet as it starts.)

Italian beauty is essentially the beauty of spring, of youth; once youth is left behind and maturity reached, I should say that the average of persons good to look at was higher in more northern peoples. And this is especially the case with men; you do not see so often as you do with us a man who is well on in years and still handsome—grey-haired, but upright and alert. I noticed this sharp difference between the young men and their seniors at a ceremony—a species of reception—attended by the officers of the local garrison; all the younger generation, the subalterns, struck me as good-looking, in figure and in face, and one or two among them were very much more than good-looking—in my own mind

I called them beautiful. Of a beauty that was classic but by no means effeminate; slim, virile young men, with clear-cut features and strong white teeth—all the whiter for the duskiness of complexions that were olive, not yellow. And the kind of profile that seemed made for the use of the sculptor; reminding you of other ancestral profiles, wrought long ago in marble or in bronze, and seen against the walls of museums. But when I turned from the subalterns, those decorative youths, to their seniors, I found myself searching for a type that was absent; the type of man I should certainly have seen in any British regimental gathering. The man who is none the worse-looking—perhaps all the better—because his boyhood is many years behind him and his hair is greying at the temples. I found myself wondering, as I looked round the room from one soldier to another, whether these obviously middle-aged colonels and majors had ever been as clear-cut in feature and as neat in build as the handsome young men who were their juniors?

To go back to my review of the juvenile Fascists in the park on the outskirts of Florence. . . .

What to me was a surprise, in so populous a neighbourhood, was the comparative smallness of the crowd that came to watch; the reviewees were more numerous than the onlookers. The place of the review was accessible enough; there is a fairly frequent tram-service from the centre of the town, and the ceremony, as a matter of course, was held on the Sunday holiday, after the customary hour for church-going—so that all would be free to attend it. I had expected to find the ground cumbered with sightseeing relations; but, taken all together, the number of parents, of brothers and sisters, of aunts and cousins who had come to see young Fascism put through its paces was never large enough to give a

crowded look to roads and pathways—which did not seem much more populous than the pathways of Kensington Gardens on any fine evening in the summer. I strolled where I would and stopped when I wanted to look. Nowhere was there anything approaching a struggle to see what was going on, and at no point in the proceedings did I have to survey them by dodging round someone else's head. I leaned on the palings, with plenty of elbow-room, to look over the field where the Little Italians danced round their maypole and played "Mulberry Bush," and the Young Italians went through their musical drill; and I stood a few yards from the bridge and the judges when the *Avanguardisti* made their dash under fire across the Arno. As to cars, they did not turn up in sufficient numbers to create difficulties in respect of parking; and those that were present I judged, for the most part, to be the property or prerequisite of officials connected with the ceremony. . . . The explanation being, I suppose, that Fascist ceremonies are of such frequent occurrence in Italian cities that, considered as entertainments, their stock has declined and, from the point of view of the ordinary spectator, they are no longer looked on as a draw.

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The Fascist system of education (like the system established in Bolshevik Russia) should be a matter of interest to more than the race that has created it. Whatever our speech and political outlook, we should do well to consider its ends and its workings, because it is an experiment in the mass-production of the citizen. The avowed aim of Fascism is "the maturing of the unitary spirit of the Italians, the forming of that unitary political conscience which is the true basis of the State"; and the

educational system of Italy is a factor in the process of maturing and forming. No other nation, save the Russian, has so far been in a position to try this particular experiment in mass-production in the same thorough-going manner; for it is only those two nations, the Italian and the Russian—or perhaps one should say the powers that control those two nations—that have definitely made up their minds as to the type of political conscience they are forming and the kind of citizen they need. Having made up their minds as to what they want, they have made no delay, but at once set to work to produce it. By words and books, by suggestion in school and out; by precept, by example, by physical training; by the inculcation of morals and ideals which will be of service to the State. In every other nation, save only those two, there is difference of opinion—effective difference—as to the dominant type to be desired; hence the system of training directly for citizenship, if it were attempted in any other nation, would probably end in swift failure. (No doubt there is difference of opinion on the subject, alike in Fascist Italy and in Bolshevik Russia, but it is not what I have called effective difference. Even if dislike be widespread, it has not the power to make itself felt by demanding alteration of the system.)

Two conditions would seem to be essential for the successful working of an educational machine intended to produce human beings of a definite type with a "unitary political conscience." In the first place full power—oligarchy, autocracy—on the part of the authority that controls the machine and its output; no interference by advocates of rival educational systems, or parliamentary oppositions bent on their duty of opposing. It is a case of a free hand for authority—and likewise a tight one! That is the first condition of success; and

the second is complete conviction on the part of those who create and work the machine. The guiding authority must have belief in itself and in its own high mission to rule. It must see before it a goal that is clear and accessible and have no doubt as to its splendour. It must believe in the rightness of the type of citizen its machine is producing and feel no regret for the elimination of types less useful to the State. (That is to say, the machine runs all the better for the driving power of fanaticism.)

In Italy, as in Russia, though in varying degrees, these essential conditions are fulfilled; in the one nation and the other, the machine for turning out good citizens is the product of faith and of power that stands without rival. Fascism, like Bolshevism, is sufficiently sure of itself and its creed to set to work without qualm or hesitation at the making of men in its own chosen image—the moulding of men to its own chosen pattern of citizenship. Where we ponder alternatives it goes straight ahead; where we hesitate and wonder—it knows!

IV. "IL BALILLA"

THE school-book is not the only form of printed matter whereby the mind of the rising generation is influenced towards Fascist orthodoxy; the teaching of the school-book is pleasantly supplemented by the teaching of a juvenile press. Of this, perhaps, the most striking example is the paper *Il Balilla*, a weekly publication containing stories, little poems, etc., profusely illustrated in black and white and colour, including a coloured front page. It is obtainable on every bookstall for the modest sum of thirty centesimi, and is issued under the ægis of a government department, the *Opera Nazionale Balilla*—that is to say, of the department which supervises the sports and amusements of Young Italy; while an announcement on its front page states that it was founded by *Il Popolo d'Italia*—that is to say, by the paper once edited by Mussolini. Being thus sponsored, it is hardly necessary to point out that its contents and conclusions would not always command the entire approval of earnest members of our British League of Nations Union. If any such there be who have taken up this book, they will probably be happier if they leave its next page or two unread.

The number of *Il Balilla* from which I give the following extracts was purchased at random at a Roman newspaper kiosk, and, to the best of my belief, it is representative—other numbers I have glanced at and thrown away seemed to me of much the same tenor.

A magazine-paper catering for the tastes of the young, its contents, naturally, are not all tinged with propaganda; still, the propaganda is scattered through its pages with a fairly liberal hand. The front page is straightforwardly devoted thereto; it "features" a poem patriotic and Fascistic—in eight brief verses of four lines each, with seven illustrations in colour. Canto and Illustration One introduce us to a small boy named Ironheart (*Cuor di ferro*), who is, needless to remark, a *Balilla*. *Cuor di ferro* is walking energetically homeward with what is described as his "sportsman's tread," his haste being due to a laudable desire to improve his mind by reading in his father's library. (Be it noted here that the ideal *Balilla* is a student as well as a soldier in embryo.) He is clad, of course, in full *Balilla* uniform: black shirt, blue tie, shorts, and socks. In Canto Two, *Cuor di ferro* has reached his destination, the library, and, perched on a stool in front of the reading-desk, he is turning the leaves of a tome as large as himself. This, we are informed, is the *Divina Commedia*, which seems meritorious reading for a youth of his very tender years. Then, in Canto Three, the young patriot is vouchsafed a wondrous vision. A red-robed vision, majestic, crowned with laurel, unmistakable, Dante himself, approving of his student and emerging from a pillar of cloud. Having emerged from it, "Father" Dante, the patriot of days gone by, tells the little *Cuor di ferro* how Dante, the poet, once "sang in the shadow of the sword!" tells him, further, how he also drew the sword and shed his blood on the field of Campaldino, where he fought for his well-beloved Florence, the city of his birth. And how, for love of his native Florence, he suffered when driven into exile! (Inset, at this point, is the field of Campaldino, with knights and men-at-arms hard at it.)

Then comes the moral for the boy *Balilla*, the young patriot of to-day; the star of New Italy, like the star of Dante's Florence, must shine in the shadow of the sword! And the last picture of the sevenfold series shows the ardent Cuor di ferro inspired by the vision and the words of the poet. With a book (which is, presumably, the works of Dante) held high in his left hand and a rifle held high in his right, swearing to Heaven (so the text informs us) that his breast shall be a shield for his country!

Little Ironheart's military patriotism does not stand alone; farther on in the same number of *Il Balilla*—which runs to sixteen pages—is another poem inspired by much the same sentiments, but this time they are uttered by one of the elder generation. He reminds the younger, "the little soldiers of to-morrow," that what they now possess is the fruit of their forerunners' sacrifice; reminds them that, in time to come, their country's flag will be handed into their keeping. They also, grown older, will hear the glad call of the bugle, and will follow where beckons the star of Italy and where points their great leader, Mussolini! There is likewise a contribution in prose which would certainly give cause for uneasiness to that prevalent school of pacifist which holds that the weapon created the fighting instinct, not the fighting instinct the weapon. It is headed by a drawing of a boy in *Avanguardisti* uniform, marching with rifle a-shoulder; a humorous drawing, but suggesting the pride of the boy. And the title of the sketch is "My Rifle; the Dream of the Balilla." I quote it below and in full, not so much on account of its advocacy of lethal weapons as because it is typical of the honour rendered to the Duce, the reverence for his name which is being instilled into the young.

It runs as follows:

"When evening falls on the cities of Italy and the sun lingers on their campanili, while the light, tinged with gold, seems a delicate veil, woven by the wheelings of the pigeons and the swallows; when the church bells, one after the other, sound their Ave Maria and ring in the hour of peace and rest; when the first lamps are lit and shining from the windows, and the women beside them bend over their sewing; when the day dies behind the dark outline of the roofs, though as yet there are no stars in the sky: then for the little *Balilla* there begins the hour of their daydreams.

"The enchantress Night, with the dusky hair, has not yet come down from her castle of cloud, to bring her gift of a sleep deep and dreamless, wherein all is forgotten and the hours of the dark fly on wings. The children have not yet begun to be drowsy, but they have ceased to shout and run to and fro in their play; they are sitting now at the side of their mother, who, from time to time, raises her head from her needlework to look at them silently and give them a smile full of love. They are close beside her, sitting on the ground, between a toy they have broken and a trumpet that has lost all its sound; and with their eyes wide open they gaze at the vision their childish minds have created.

"When daddy brought home a big photograph of the Duce he hung it there on the wall, so that his home and his children should be under the protection of the tutelary image. The image of a man who is so great and wonderful that, with a word or a sign, he can alter the destiny of his country and raise her to the heights of glory.

"The photograph is over there, hanging on the wall, like that of some warrior saint; the little *Ballilla* look

at it with their big, thoughtful eyes, and, as evening draws on and the room grows darker, it seems as if the face of the Duce stood out from the wall and was alive.

"Some among the boys of the little *Balilla* have seen more than just a photograph; they have actually looked on its original. Some of them have even been quite near to him; so near the Great Man that they have seen the smile which he bestows only upon children. The smile which many a man among his legionaries would give his life to win!

"And some there are who have even been taken in the arms of the Great Man and lifted up by those hands of steel, lifted as gently as if they were held in the hands of a loving father—and who have then felt his kiss upon their cheek. And not one of those boys, so long as he lives, will ever forget that kiss!

"Thanks to the thought of that kiss and that smile, a wonder is accomplished in the hour of the daydream, and the figure of the Duce comes down into the room from his frame on the wall, to caress the curly heads of the little lads of Italy, intent on their visions of greatness. Visions which he—who is maker of men and commander of legions—has known how to kindle even in the little souls of children.

"The dream, for the *Balilla*, has all the force of reality; under its influence they feel themselves protected by the love of this Man of legendary greatness, this Man who never promises in vain. It is he who has given them their black shirts and has given them their flag, and, some day soon, he will also give them rifles. Rifles, like those he has already given to their elder brothers; so that they, in their youthful legions, may march along the shining road to victory.

"A rifle! That is the dream of the little *Balilla* of

Italy in the quiet hour of the evening, when mother sits with her work beside the lamp; while, from the frame that hangs in its shadow on the wall, it seems to the children that the face of the Duce smiles down on them and that, by that kindly and fatherly smile, he promises the rifle they long for. They shall have it before long, they shall have it as soon as they are old enough; as soon as they are able to handle it rightly and take good aim at the target.

"All these children, these soldiers-to-be, who were born in the morning of our Fascist Revolution, they dream, one and all, of the day when they, too, shall carry arms in the legions of assault; they all feel in their souls the instinct of the race, the instinct of a fighting stock of conquerors.

"They feel, though as yet they have not reasoned it out, that they belong to the new generation of Italians; the generation destined to carry the standard of Italian rule into regions where still survive the traces of old Roman dominion.

"It is for this end that they desire to possess a rifle; and to-morrow, when Destiny turns a new and a glorious page in their country's history—to-morrow they shall have it, and their dream will become a reality!"

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At the risk of distressing earnest members of our League of Nations Union, I have quoted this "Dream of the Balilla" in full, because it is an example of that teaching with regard to Italy's descent from Rome, Italy's heritage of the glory of Rome, which occasionally causes spasms of uneasiness in Italy's "Latin Sister," France. For the Latin Sister, in the course of the last century or so, has possessed herself of the most fertile

and valuable tracts of Northern Africa—which is presumably one of the "regions where still survive the traces of old Roman dominion," since it once owned the sway of the Cæsars. In these circumstances, therefore, it is natural enough that she should look askance when New Italy, the product of Fascism and victorious war, maintains her inheritance from Rome.

And further, the "Dream of the Balilla" is a peculiarly interesting specimen of political propaganda as carried on amongst children. This is a form of propaganda which, so far, has been little practised in Great Britain, but which is being increasingly made use of abroad. Not only in Italy and in Soviet Russia, where the childhood of a nation is being bred, through its schools, to belief in one political doctrine and moulded to one pattern of citizenship; the same thing is happening in the German Reich, though by somewhat different methods. There the numerous political groups and parties have, all of them, their junior, and very junior groups, wherein they seek to train up future adherents to their party way of thinking and to guide the youthful Teuton on the electoral path he should tread.

It is a new development, this bringing of the child-mind into politics; one of the by-products of our system of education—and one of its very doubtful blessings. The older generation knew it not; the infant mind of yesterday was not encouraged to take active interest in politics. The development is so new that, as yet, it is impossible to gauge its effects with any approach to certainty. But this, at least, one may prophesy without much hesitation: it is not an influence that will make for tolerance in political life, not an influence that will make for peace. Youth is the combative, intolerant period of our lives; we all of us, when

the heart is young, pass through the stage when conflict is sought, rather than avoided, when compromise is despised as a weakness and we would rather hit out than find agreement. Dreams of the *Balilla* concern themselves with rifles, not with olive-branches. The legend, popular a few years ago, that wars were made by angry old men, who sent young men, peaceful and reluctant, to the slaughter—that once popular legend had not much foundation in fact. Achilles is readier than Nestor to lose his temper and buckle on his armour for the fray. Partisan feeling, as a general rule, is at its strongest in youth, and declines, through maturity, to age. The entry of youth into politics, therefore, is more likely to embitter internal difference and international quarrel than to soften them. Germany has already afforded an example of the tendency to embitterment; the dangerous enmity of Communist and Nazi, their frequent clashes in the public streets, and the readiness with which they resort to stones and shots are due to the fact that both the followers of Hitler and their enemies the Communists attract a youthful element and train it in partisan loyalty.

Political conditions in Italy differ considerably from those obtaining in Germany; in a sense they have far more resemblance to those obtaining in Russia, since there is only one form of political thought which is permitted, without hindrance, to proclaim its tenets, to organize its members, and train young adherents to its party. This being the case, partisan rivalries on the German model do not trouble the police of the Italian cities—as presumably they do not trouble the police of Leningrad and Moscow! The days have gone by when Fascism fought its way to mastery; to-day its opponents are individuals only, not organized groups, and there is



Zaccaria

Avanguardisti at Review



Zaccaria

Avanguardisti and their Officer

not even need of castor oil. . . . As to whether the spirit of loyalty and partisanship which is cultivated alike in Young Italy and Young Russia will evaporate harmlessly, for lack of internal antagonism, or whether, being concentrated in one narrow channel, it will seek its outlet beyond the nation's border, overleap the border in a flood of furious patriotism—who shall venture at this moment to prophesy?

That is one of the questions that can only be answered in the years to come, when we have had more experience of mass-education directed to political ends, of the one-minded nation and youth trained to partisan thinking.

V. SIDELIGHTS ON THE FASCIST PARTY

JUDGING by figures published from time to time, the numbers of the juvenile Fascist organizations are subject to fluctuation—large-scale fluctuation. According to an authoritative official volume¹ issued in the summer of 1930, boys enrolled in the corps of *Avanguardisti* numbered 365,044 on 1st February, 1930; while its junior contingent, the *Balilla*, was mounting up towards its million—903,324 is the actual figure given. Sixteen months later, on 1st June, 1931, a paragraph issued to the Press through the agency Stefani gives a figure considerably lower for the forces of young Fascism; the *Balilla*, at this latter date, being numbered at 780,280, and the *Avanguardisti* at 255,496. This, in both instances, is a considerable drop. And apparently the drop had been even greater in the recent past, as the paragraph goes on to state that there has of late been a notable increase (over 113,000) in the number of lads recruited by the two bodies. (The figures given on the same date, June 1931, for the girls' organizations were: *Piccole Italiane*, 608,476, and their elders, the *Giovane Italiane*, 74,182.)

Comradeship and a pride in citizenship are not the only benefits conferred by enrolment in the Young Fascist corps; there are definite material advantages in

¹ *Lo Stato Mussoliniano e le realizzazioni del Fascismo nella Nazione*—which has been published in England by Ernest Benn, under the title of *What is Fascism and Why?*

membership—advantages for the parents of members, as well as for the youngsters themselves. The O.N.B.—which, being interpreted, is *Opera Nazionale Balilla*—looks carefully after its charges in the matter of health. Medical care is provided in all cases of illness, and the “health programme” of the O.N.B. includes not only the encouragement of outdoor exercise and games but holiday colonies, in mountain and by sea, and, for delicate children, treatment in sunbath institutions. There is also a financial benefit attaching to membership, in the shape of a system of insurance against every form of accident; each boy and girl enrolled is entitled to a ticket which, in case of disablement through accident, guarantees the payment of ten lire a day for a period of ten weeks. In the event of an accident that cripples for life, a lump sum of thirty thousand lire will be paid as assistance; and in the event of death as the result of accident, ten thousand lire to the family.

There is another aspect of juvenile Fascism for boys which can hardly be ignored by parents who are ambitious for the future of their sons. The National Fascist Party is the driving force in Italian political life; it is a section of the nation, a trained class, whose function is leadership. “The mass of men tend to follow the will of some dominating element, some so-called ‘guiding spirits.’ The problem of government will never be solved by trusting in this illusive will of the masses, but must be solved by a careful selection of the ‘guiding spirits.’” That is the Fascist theory of government and the instrument whereby it transforms theory to practice is the National Fascist Party. “The fundamental institution of the regime is the party, an organization eminently political, which directs and stimulates every other activity. The party lives the life of the people,

interprets their sentiments, supports them in difficulties, forms their civil conscience. It continually intervenes to lend its disinterested aid; when some national problem presents itself, the Fascist Party is at its post, ready to guide and enlighten the Italian people."¹

The above is an official statement; an official estimate of the power of the party and its place in the national life. From that statement and estimate it will be deduced that it is no exaggeration to speak of it as the ruling caste of Italy. And it has been decreed that it is only by passing through the ranks of young Fascism—coming up to the party from the *Avanguardisti*—that a man can be received as a full-blown member of the caste. That is a fact, as I said above, which can hardly be ignored by parents ambitious for their sons.

It was a prominent official of the Fascist Party who gave me this piece of information, which is not, I think, generally known outside Italy. Yet to those interested in Italian politics it is important that it should be known; for it means that, whatever it may have been in the past, the Fascist Party is no longer a political party in our acceptance of the term, but a body trained to the exercise of political authority.

"But what do you do," I asked, "when an older man is converted to your faith? That must happen sometimes—and isn't he of any value to you? Because he has the misfortune to be fifty, or forty-five, or thirty-five—too old to train with the *Avanguardisti*—won't you have anything to do with him?"

"Not at all," was the answer, "not at all. Whatever the age of a recruit, he's of value, and we're glad to have him with us. We take off our hats to him." (He

¹ Quoted from the section on "The Transformation of the State," in *What is Fascism and Why?*

used that expression.) "But he can't be a member of the party."

"And that is a law of the Medes and Persians?"

No, my informant would not go so far as that. In the case of a distinguished recruit to Fascism—a man of real eminence or one who was known for his signal public services; in such a case, no doubt, exception would be made, but not otherwise. Admission to membership was a privilege, not the right of all and sundry. Training was required to fit you for your duties and render you worthy of your privilege. . . . Incidentally he told me that the party was being tightened up all round—as regards its existing members as well as its supply of recruits. Its numbers were not so large as they had been a year or two before; of late there had been something in the nature of a purification, a sifting-out of men who were not up to the standard. Certain types it had no use for—considered undesirable; for instance those who were known to have done well out of the war—lined their pockets. The party had made up its mind that it did not want profiteers in its ranks.

It was the same official who explained to me at length a theory whereby he accounted for the rise and growth of Fascism and the triumph of its leader, Mussolini. It was a theory that, to me, was novel and interesting, and to him, a Tuscan, entirely convincing; but a theory, I imagine, which would hardly find favour with men whose lineage was not that of central Italy—with Italians born in Milan, in Calabria or Piedmont, with citizens of Naples or Palermo. By Italian, as by foreigner, I had heard it said before that there were three Italies: of the north, of the centre, and the south; but the divisions, as explained by my Fascist friend, took on a new significance and importance. The Italian

nation, though welded into one, is not a people of one blood; on the contrary, the strains that compose it are many, and their separate characteristics still persist, and mark them out one from another. Not all of these races (he was firm on this point) are of equal value to the nation whereof they form part. Some of them, comparatively speaking, are dull or lacking in enterprise, others suffer from a weakly strain; and (as he saw it) the core and backbone of the nation are the races that dwell in the second of the three Italies, the centre. Here are the descendants of the tribes that created Rome, or those other virile races with whom Rome fought her earliest battles before they, too, became part of her growing majesty. Dwellers in the region that now is Umbria, the old mysterious stock of the Etruscans, with its civilization antedating that of Rome; the Sabellians, stretching from Apennines to Adriatic; and the Ligurians, whose strength lay along the western coast to as far north as where now is Genoa—a hardy race, these Ligurians, whom Rome took eighty years to conquer. These peoples of the central mountains and sea-coasts adjacent were representative of all that was strongest in Italian character and all that was best in Italian tradition. The Tuscan gave to Italy her keenest in intelligence and attained to her supreme in art; it was Tuscany, region of the centre, that brought forth Michelangelo, that brought forth Dante and Medici. While from Umbria, also of the centre, came the saints and the mystics, with Francis of Assisi at their head. The true spirit and true strength of Italy you find in this her central region. Go north into Lombardy, into Piedmont or Venetia, and you find another spirit and another mentality—not purely Italian because the race is not purely Italian. From the day of Brennus onward

wave after wave of barbarian invaders, coming from the west, from the east, and from the north, has flowed over the Alpine barrier to mingle with the old native strain. Here the Gauls settled and the Goths settled, and in the valleys of Piedmont are descendants of the Allobrogi; and these racial characteristics are still distinguishable in the populations of the north.

Then as to the south. Mussolini, in one of his speeches, once declared that many parts of southern Italy were fifty years behind the times, and I gathered that my Fascist acquaintance (being no southerner) was of much the same opinion. There also the original stock had been de-Italianized by influx of the foreign element. The Greek colonies in Sicily and on the southern mainland—these, in themselves, without other factors, would account for a difference in tradition and outlook. Was not the whole country from Naples southwards known as *Magna Græcia*? Further, the slave population of classic Rome had left more descendants in the south than in other parts of the peninsula. The Norman raiders for a time ruled Sicily; the Saracens, in the days of their pirate power, built their fortresses along the western seaboard. There was French invasion and Spanish dominion—and all must have left an inheritance of alien blood. . . . The men of the south and the men of the north resembled each other in this, that their mentality was not Italian throughout; and it was because they were not of true Italian mentality that efforts made by statesmen of the north and south to unify Italy and weld her races had been but partially successful. That was the secret of Crispi's failure to accomplish unity of the national heart and mind; Crispi was a son of the south, to whom something of the necessary Roman force, something of the necessary Roman

spirit was lacking. And that was why Cavour—the statesman of Piedmont, the son of the north—had left behind him a country that was not, indeed, what it thought and called itself: united, an Italian nation. Its unity was outward only; there was still division in its soul. Great as was the work of Cavour and of Crispi, much as their country owed them, they could not attain to the success achieved by the leader of the Fascist Revolution, who came from the true Italian stock. For Benito Mussolini, the leader of Italy, is native of a region where the old Italian blood is at its purest. He was born in the district between the eastern sea and the Apennines, near Forli, in the country of Romagna. . . .

Such is one explanation of the growth and power of the Fascist movement, as set forth by a Fascist of central Italy, a Tuscan. And who, being a Tuscan, was conscious that he, too, belonged to the superior race.

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The anthem of Fascism, as all the world knows, is a song in praise of youth—youth which is the springtime of beauty. Understandable enough, the choice of that gay and simple anthem, when one remembers not only the vehement post-war cult of youth—common, more or less, to all the belligerent nations—but the fact that the Fascist Revolution was accomplished chiefly by the young. Those who carried it through were men of the war-generation, which had often enough been called to the trenches before boyhood was spent; and their leader, Mussolini, was still in his thirties when he headed his Blackshirts in the March on Rome, ousted a Government that dare not say him nay, and rose to dominion over Italy. . . . A young man's achievement, then, in 1922; an expression of the Italian Youth Movement.

But the youth of every man passes, even the youth of an omnipotent Duce and his followers; the years have gone by since the march on Rome, and even the youngest of those who fought in the Great War has long left his springtime of boyhood behind him. Thus to-day the anthem, to elder ears at least, is not only praise of the springtime of humanity, the beauty of youth, and the young men who accomplished the Fascist Revolution; it has taken to itself a symbolic meaning (I use a phrase that was used to me) as praise of the eternal youth of Italy.

For a foreigner to analyse the spirit of Fascism is probably a hopeless as well as a presumptuous task; but—reading patiently and listening to talk—it has seemed to me that the secret of its strength lies as much in its historical as in its revolutionary elements; as much in its solid hold on the past as in its adventurous outlook on the future. (The views of the Tuscan Fascist given above are an example of this hold on the past.) The Fascist Revolution had its beginnings in immemorial conservatism, as well as in yesterday's socialism; it was influenced by a tradition so old and so ingrained in a race of long descent that we, who are northern, can only guess at it when we look out on Rome from the height of the Pincio or set our foot on the holy ground of the Capitol.

Two political experiments on a vast scale are at present being tried in Europe—that of the Bolshevist and that of the Fascist State. They have their points of likeness: their insistence on discipline, their endeavour to attain to "unitary political conscience"; but they have also a wide essential difference. Bolshevism has swept the whole Russian board clear of impedimenta, political and social; it has discarded as rubbish, as poisonous

rubbish, the heritage of past generations; it has razed the whole edifice of government and started to build from it anew. Institutions and traditions of the Tsarist regime have been scrapped with a thoroughness only possible to fanaticism, and which might not have been possible, even to fanaticism, if pre-war governmental institutions in Russia had not been largely of alien origin, imitations of those that an adventurous Tsar had seen working in more civilized nations. Peter in the eighteenth century, like Lenin in the twentieth, fitted the Russia wherever he had power to a political system introduced by himself, but devised by the Western brain; and he fitted it, like Lenin, with the straightforward ruthlessness that only faith inspires and permits. But for all the ruthlessness, and outward success, with which Peter imposed them on his subjects, his governmental imports always bore traces of their origin; they were essentially Western, not the product of Russian mind and need. Hence the swiftness with which they could be broken and scrapped—to make way for new imports from the West.

The making of New Italy, after the war, was a very different matter from the making of New Russia; the task of Mussolini and his Fascist following was infinitely more complicated than that of Lenin and his Communists. It is one thing to sweep the board clear among Slavs, another to sweep it among Latins. You can tear up a thin-rooted bureaucracy of Petersburg, the creation and tradition of yesterday; you could not, if you would, uproot the tradition that was born before history emerged from the forgotten, and ancient when Carthage fell to Scipio. Italy severed from her past is unthinkable; what she has been she is, and, while life is in her, she will be. The race-experience which is known to us as

history has with her been too long and too glorious to allow her to forget; it is part of her ego, her Italian self, and she responds to it even in the throes of revolution. With her hopes on the future she yet turns her eyes to take instinctive guidance from the past. And her past, her tradition, is not one: it is twofold. The tradition, secular and classic, of the State; Rome of the consuls and Cæsars, Rome that enclosed the known world. And against it the other, of a Church—that was likewise imperial!

Not easy to reconcile, those two supremacies, which to-day are embodied in the Vatican City and the Quirinal. Antagonistic, inheritors of Ghibelline and Guelf; antagonistic, yet alike in this, that each holds fast to tradition. And as long as the traditions they hold to are widespread, how imagine an Italy razed to the ground and beginning anew—anew and theoretically—in the fashion of Leninite Russia?

VI. ADVERTISEMENT: FREE AND OTHERWISE

TO begin with the Otherwise: that is to say, with the advertisement that pays its way by making contribution to the taxes.

We, for some reason best known to our legislators, exempt publicity from taxation; other nations, including Italy, see in it a source of revenue, and enact that advertisements shall not be displayed without the stamp that means toll to the State. But if Italy is not alone in the practice, she appears to be more thoroughgoing than some of her neighbours in her application of the principle and tax; her definition of the term "advertisement" is, to say the least, comprehensive. Elsewhere it is only the printed announcement, the placard or poster, that comes under the taxable heading; the Italian exchequer lets nothing escape—it has no intention of losing its perquisites because a tradesman, in the interest of his own economy, avoids payment of a printer's bill. No announcement, however modest, can be displayed unless the tax-gatherer has his dues. Whoever calls attention to goods for sale must pay down his pence and provide the accompanying stamps—even though he has not launched into print but contented himself with his own pen and ink and a couple of inches of pasteboard. When next you pass down an Italian street of the shopping order, come to a halt before a confectioner's window and survey its toothsome contents; if you survey them with sufficient attention, you will note that all the little prices of the



Italian Football Crowd

Foto Locchi



Italian Football Team

Foto Locchi

dainties there displayed—all the little tickets on the cakes and tarts and buns—are franked with the revenue stamp. Each little strip of card, marked with so many lire, contributes its mite of centesimi to the upkeep of the kingdom of Italy.

There is, however, a species of advertisement, and a very frequent species, which, in spite of its prominence, goes free of any stamp and pays no penny to the revenue—on the contrary, it must make considerable claims upon national or local finances. I refer to official advertisement, by poster and slip, which authority issues in profusion and scatters with a lavish hand. Nowhere else, surely, is there poured from the Press such a steady stream of official publicity—of laudatory official publicity—designed, like our own commercial placarding, to catch the eye of the public as it takes its daily walks abroad. A form of advertisement that, in London or Manchester, would indicate some special activity, such as an election, in Rome or Florence means everyday life and a feature of the ordinary street. Most of it takes the form which we should here call fly-posting: strips of paper, with a word or two, posted on a wall, on a pillar, on a gate, as we post a last-minute notice of an entertainment or political meeting; their legend is an expression of loyalty to the powers that be, and, as a rule, runs briefly: *W il Duce*. (The W, of course, is not really a W, but a combination of the letter V, representing a multiple *Viva*.)

Not all the expressions of loyalty to the Duce, and the Duce's regime, which one sees every day and on every side owe their existence to the Press; in addition to the printed slips there are the hand-made notices and scrawls, the *W il Duces* chalked up in village streets or painted in bold letters on the high yellow walls that enclose a

Tuscan garden or a vineyard. When the more usual means of advertisement are lacking, Fascist enthusiasm takes chalk and paint-pot; it is never at a loss to express the high honour in which it holds Benito Mussolini. . . . All the same it would be interesting to know how many examples of *W il Duce* and kindred loyal sentiments issued from the departmental presses in the course of a twelvemonth; though paper and print last much longer on the walls of Italian villages and cities than they would under rainier skies farther north, still the number must run to a good many hundreds of thousands and the cost to the exchequer be considerable. Fascism, in some respects intensely modern, is taking a leaf out of industry's book; it is using advertisement exactly as industry uses it, as an instrument for engendering a certain frame of mind in its public. (The certain frame of mind I should describe as a satisfied patriotism.) The process of continual reminder and suggestion which in London is employed by Harrod's, Selfridge's, Barker's, and their like, in the cities of Italy is employed by the State—the Fascist Government; and since the resources of the State exceed those of most forms of private enterprise, it is employed on a more generous scale.

It is an interesting experiment, this process of political education by advertisement, of patriotic suggestion by means of the fly-poster—one of the many experiments that Italy of to-day is trying out. And if repetition and appeal to the eye are as effective as the advertising expert would have us believe, then the Fascist regime can have little to fear from adverse opinion—it is firm for many generations. Day after day, as he takes his walks abroad, the citizen is reminded of his reasons for patriotic pride; reminded that he lives in a triumphant Italy, an Italy that is vigorous and young and expanding;

and that the foremost figure of triumphant Italy is one he should delight to honour.

How far is it successful, this unceasing process of political suggestion and appeal to national pride? Does it keep alight the fire of enthusiasm? or is it overdone because unceasing—and so likely to fail of its effect? . . . Who shall say? I who put the question am the last person qualified to answer it, since I belong not only to another people but to that cantankerous section of the human race which is irritated rather than attracted by the art of the publicity-merchant. As a member of the said cantankerous section, I weary of that whereof I hear too often and avoid the widely-advertised emporium just because it is widely advertised. Because its name has stared at me while I travelled by bus and likewise glared at me while I travelled by tube, I never wish to hear of it again! (I sometimes wonder how large that cantankerous section of the public may be—and shall probably continue to wonder, since it is a question no newspaper, regardless of revenue, would allow to be discussed in its pages!)

But, putting my personal idiosyncrasies aside, I doubt whether the system of laudatory political advertisement, as practised in Italy, could be made entirely acceptable to the British public; even though the average Englishman or Scot may be just as susceptible as the average Italian to suggestion by the medium of publicity. For one thing, the system cuts dead against one of our strongest traditions: our mistrust and dislike of anything that looks like self-praise—the blowing of a personal trumpet. For that reason alone we should enter an objection if the powers that be of our national expenditure were to authorize large issues of advertising matter, bearing the inscription (as the case might be) of "MacDonald for

Ever," "Hurrah for Henderson," or "Three Cheers for good old Baldwin"!—and if they further authorized the posting of the same in our streets. There would be comments in our Press on the new departure and questions asked in Parliament with regard to the use of public funds. . . . Italian tradition in this matter is not ours—by which I mean no slight on Italian tradition. I mean only that the difference between our two national outlooks makes it difficult to gauge, with any hope of accuracy, the effect on the average Italian mind of the lavish Fascist system of advertisement. Does it keep the average citizen at a pitch of high enthusiasm for his country and its Government? does he feel, as a result of continuous suggestion, that, every day and in every way, they are getting finer and finer? or has publicity, with the familiarity born of much repetition, lost some of its power to stimulate?

It must not be imagined that *il Capo del Governo* is the only person or institution honoured by official advertisement. Though he and his *W*'s figure pre-eminently on Italian walls, they do not figure alone—there are others for whose benefit the fly-poster goes on his rounds. It was in Verona (that lovely lady among cities) that I was witness of a striking method of publicity whose aim and purport was praise of the National Fascist Militia, as well as of the Head of the Government. The advertisement strips were arranged on the walls of Verona in sets of three, in the national colours—one strip being red, the next white, the next green. On the topmost of the three the inscription was the usual *W il Duce*; on the second it ran *W la Guardia Armata della Rivoluzione*—the armed guard of the Fascist Revolution being, of course, the black-shirted corps; and the third motto again concerned the Blackshirts—it was *W la*

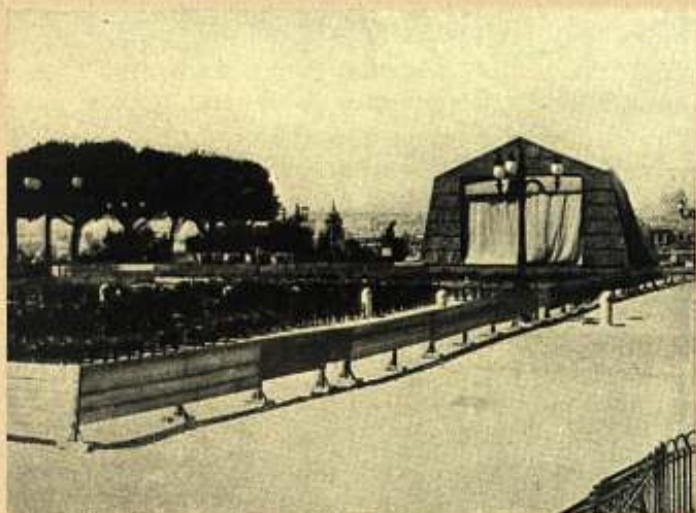
Milizia. I do not know whether the city of Verona has cause to feel affection for the Blackshirts above that felt by the other cities of Italy? or whether it is merely that she is a generous city, as well as a lovely, and likes to express her thankful sentiments towards the Guardians of the Revolution? Whatever the reason, express them she did; in patriotic stripes of red, white, and green, displayed at frequent intervals on the walls of her ancient streets.

A few days earlier I had been in Bologna when Bologna, too, broke out into flamboyant publicity, and the long colonnades that are her special glory were suddenly spattered—one cannot say adorned—with placards in a strong shade of pink. This time the gay-hued publicity was in honour of the *Bersaglieri*—the corps that runs when it marches and wears the cock-feathered hats. The occasion was a festival gathering in Bologna of *Bersaglieri*, of the present and the past; the present being represented by a regiment stationed in the town or its neighbourhood, the past by "Old Comrades" from every district of Italy who arrived in their local contingents. They came in numbers that must have run into thousands, some of the nearer contingents by road, the majority by train, and all obviously out to enjoy themselves. They strolled in their batches down the colonnaded streets, singing old songs of the war-time epoch and renewing old war-time acquaintance. Proclamations issued by the chief magistrate—the *Podestà*—gave them heartiest of welcome to the ancient city of Bologna; and in the welcome the official advertiser played his part, and played it with no lack of vigour. Wherever the *Bersaglieri* turned, they saw their own praises displayed; wherever they turned, in street or piazza—on house-wall or pillar of colonnade—there were strips of

bright pink paper setting forth the merits of the corps of *fratelli piumati*. More often than not these praises took the form of quotations, which were sometimes quotations from the poets; on one of the posters was a four-lined stanza from a work of Gabriele d'Annunzio. Another was the tribute of an Italian general to the valour of the *Bersaglieri*; when he commanded them, he said, he did not trouble to know what were the numbers of the enemy—he only wished to know where to find them. "The glad poetry of life and the thunderbolt of battle"—so ran yet another quotation; while, last but not least, was a pronouncement of the Duce, who himself was once a "plumed brother"—his war-service was performed in the corps. "Between the *Bersagliere* Mussolini and the *Bersaglieri* of all the rest of Italy is a link unbreakable of brotherhood." That was his greeting, blazoned through the streets of Bologna.

It was by chance and not of set purpose that my stay in Bologna of the Colonnades coincided with the merry-making of the *Bersaglieri*—for which I was grateful to chance. Soldiers and ex-soldiers, all the world over, have their many points of similarity; on the other hand, each national type has its own peculiarities, unshared by the rest, and those appertaining to the national type of Italy were here displayed for my interest.

One peculiarity, to an English eye, was the treatment of uniform — the very free-and-easy treatment. With us, you either wear uniform or you don't; in Italy, apparently, there is no such hard-and-fast rule, and a compromise between the two styles of dressing is allowed. If you haven't got all the components of uniform, you do your best with half-measures and nobody thinks any the worse of you. Judging by what I saw at Bologna, it is evidently the thing, on ex-service



The Car of Thespis

L.U.C.E.



Foto Gambini, Bologna
Gathering of Bersaglieri at Bologna

occasions, to turn up as near as you can in uniform—at any rate, in something that suggests it; and the suggestion, at the gathering of *Bersaglieri*, was usually supplied by the distinctive headgear of the corps. This is either the brimmed hat, with its glossy cocks' feathers dancing to the wind, or (as undress headgear, I conclude) a red fez—resembling that worn by French Zouave regiments, but, I think, more conical in shape. It differs further from the Zouave fez in that it is adorned, in odd and distinctive fashion, by a bright blue tassel, which is not fastened to the cap itself, but dangles detachedly down the wearer's back at the end of a foot or two of cord. Of the veteran *Bersaglieri* assembled at Bologna, it was only the minority—I should say the small minority—that had failed to equip itself with one or other of these regimental head-coverings. Fez and fluttering cocks' feathers alike were worn indifferently with the garb of the Fascist militiaman—black shirt and grey breeches—or with ordinary civilian reach-me-downs. So seldom was military headgear lacking, that I found myself wondering how it was obtained? It may be that the Italian soldier, when he leaves the service, is allowed to carry off his regimental hat as a souvenir, or it may be that the military authorities, on festive occasions, obligingly loan out headgear to ex-service men. Save on one of these hypotheses I found it difficult to account for the prevalence of the fez and the cock-feathered hat on the heads of the ex-*Bersaglieri*.

The ceremonial assembly of "plumed brothers," past and present, took place in the magnificent Piazza Vittorio Emmanuele; and if for nothing else I should remember that assembly for its absolute tornado of sound. It is perhaps a proof of native vigour in the race, this Italian capacity for making the welkin ring

with noise and being undisturbed by its effects. That idea first came to me on a hot summer night in the city of Turin, when I rose from my bed and looked out of the window, in order to see why a crowd had gathered in the street beneath and what was the cause of the disturbance? And, lo and behold, the crowd was not a crowd—it consisted of no more than a horse-drawn cab and its contents. Three people inside and the coachman sitting on his box. For some reason or other they had come to a halt in the street on which my window looked, and the four of them were talking—merely talking, holding converse. I found no reason to believe that anything but a friendly chat was in progress; though they all spoke at once, and spoke very loud, that was mere exuberance of speech! They were exchanging their views on some matter of interest with the vehemence natural to dwellers in a southern land—so natural to them that, shrilling through the night, it had startled no one but myself. No one came hurrying along the street to discover the cause of the uproar; no window but mine had an occupant . . . as no one but myself seemed startled, or in any other way disturbed, by the brazen tumult of the *Bersaglieri* in the great piazza of Bologna.

Brazen is the word, for the *Bersaglieri* march to brazen instruments—bugles. March, perhaps, should be translated into trot; for, like the *chasseurs-à-pied* of the French army, they are trained to swifter movement than the ordinary marching step. One or two companies of the local regiment were drawn up in the Piazza Vittorio Emanuele; and I noticed that even the slight movements necessitated by the increase of the crowd and the arrival of dignitaries at the Palazzo Communale were performed at a species of trot. Whether because a large

proportion of each regiment had served its time in the band, or whether because the bugle is a favourite instrument with Italian amateurs I know not; but this I do know: that each contingent of ex-service *Bersaglieri*, however few in numbers, arrived in style at the piazza, with buglers in full cry at its head. The peculiar marching step of the *Bersaglieri* requires, naturally, its peculiar marching music—a tum-tum tune, a jolly tum-tum tune, that goes well with the dancing cocks' feathers. And that tum-tum tune, that jolly tum-tum tune, each bugle-band played it, with might and with main, as it marched into the piazza and swung to its appointed place. Where already the buglers of other contingents were playing the same tune with all their might and main—but playing it at different stages. Some were just beginning it and some were near the end (having reached it they would start again). Some were half-way through, some three-quarters, and some seven-eighths. It was discord, discord—glorious, unceasing, and triumphant!

Down in the piazza, no doubt, the full magnificence of the discord was lacking; one fellowship of buglers, so you stood in their neighbourhood, would certainly outblare the more distant efforts of the others. But above, at the windows of the Palazzo Communale, you got all the stages of the tune at once, entwined in a blaring combination. The brazen clamour was bewildering, stupefying, and I felt my head going round with a sort of noise-drunkenness. The general effect of the embattled discord was wildly and insanely joyous, and I found myself wondering if it were with some such formless pæan of mirth that the devils exulted when a soul came hurtling into hell. Something magnificent there was about that concourse of sound—magnificent,

yes, but not music! As an indication of some special power of noise-resistance enjoyed by the ears of the Italian race, it fell into line with the ceaseless hooting of motor cars in Rome and the achievement of a Florentine tram-driver, who, for over a mile, to my certain knowledge—and to the seeming indifference of his Florentine passengers—never once ceased clanging his bell. . . ! “The noisiest city in the world!”—so Rome was once described to me; and he who so described it was a Frenchman, domiciled in Paris, which is not remarkable for calm.

One thing I took note of during this Bologna fête of the *Bersaglieri* was the frequency of the embrace between Italian military men. French soldiers also kiss, but not, I think, on parade, unless it is the case of an embrace enjoined by ceremony, such as the awarding of a decoration, when the recipient is embraced by the officer who pins the decoration on his breast. From my window above the piazza at Bologna I looked down on a contingent of present “plumed brothers,” drawn up in honour of its ex-service fellows; it was commanded by an officer I took for a captain, a tall, youngish man, who was evidently known to several of the military bigwigs who came to grace the proceedings from the windows of the Palazzo Comunale. And every time one of his military acquaintance appeared in the square, on his way to the Palazzo, he and the captain of *Bersaglieri* exchanged hearty kisses, one on each cheek, in salutation.

As shown by some of the examples I have quoted, the Italian official advertiser is addicted to the flowery appeal; there is a gay, poetic touch about many of his efforts—political posters and municipal announcements alike—which makes their British equivalents seem prosaic and earthbound productions. I was in Florence

when a visit was paid to the city by the Prince and Princess of Piedmont; and well do I remember the loyal proclamations and exhortations that appeared in profusion in the streets. Extracts from one of them I copied into my note-book, because they were so charmingly and floridly unlike the type of official pronouncement I was used to in my native English. It was an exhortation to all good Fascists to assemble in their thousands in the streets of Florence, in welcome of the prince and princess. "Blackshirts," it began, "*Camicie nere!* Our banners flutter beneath the sun of May; hasten, then, with a song upon your lips and a rose in the barrel of your rifle!" . . . Can we imagine the municipality of Birmingham or Bristol announcing, after this poetic fashion, a visit of the Prince of Wales, bidding us hasten with a song upon our lips and a flower in our hats to greet him? What, beside this gay exuberance of language, are the most picturesque of our English advertisements? What, beside this, are the purplest patches wherewith they decorate our hoardings? Italian, however, on placards or off it, is a tongue that lends itself to purple patches and exuberance; to those in whose veins runs the blood of the Latin there is permitted a happy flamboyance of expression which is forbidden to those of us who hail from regions farther north. Did not Corporal Mussolini, wounded in the war, send to his countrymen a message from his bed, to the effect that he was "proud, in the fulfilment of a hazardous duty, to have watered with his blood the road that leads to Trieste"? . . . That sort of thing, impossible in English, in Italian can be said—and sound inspiring!

I was told by an Italian acquaintance that the system of propaganda by means of the placard was general

throughout the peninsula—"from one end of Italy to the other" were the words he used. No doubt my informant was correct in a general sense, but he was in error as regards one region in the north; that newest of Italies which once was called South Tyrol and is now known as Alto Adige. In that region, however, I was not greatly surprised to remark the absence of the usually prolific W's; even if it be granted that a conquered people is treated with due consideration by those who have annexed it, you do not expect such a people to take immediate pleasure in acclaiming its conquerors, and acclaiming them, moreover, in an alien tongue. The authority responsible for the system of political placarding acts wisely, no doubt, in slackening its activities in the German-speaking district that a few years ago was Austria.

It may have been merely because I was unlucky in my quest, but the fact remains that, large as is the crop of political bill-posting, I was never able to catch one of the bill-posters at his work; nor did I ever see a Fascist, armed with his chalk, or his brush and paint-pot, tracing his legend of *W il Duce* on the walls. Rightly or wrongly, I came to the conclusion that this work of political publicity must be carried on at dead of night—as, when one comes to think of it, it should be. It is dramatic to come down of a morning and discover from your window that the street has burst into anonymous praises of your country's hero and your country's Government; while there is nothing dramatic in watching a hired workman at so much an hour pasting up slips with the legend *W il Duce*.

What seems curious to the Anglo-Saxon mind is the fact that this system of official advertisement provokes no retort or disagreement, not even the spirit of mischief.

It is perhaps not surprising that there are no retaliatory placards; did any such make their appearance on the walls, their stay would in all probability be brief, and the police, I imagine, would have something to say in the matter. But, considering the profusion of pro-Government posters, one might expect to see them, now and again, molested by the vulgar of a contrary way of thinking. I am not saying such defacements never happen; my experience is not sufficient to generalize. All I do assert is that, though I kept a sharp eye on pro-Government posters, I saw none adorned by remarks of a humorous or unflattering nature, by fancy portraits of the Duce, or the like. I was in Florence and in Rome when the tension between the Italian Government and the Vatican was at its sharpest, and the Papal press was returning in kind the anything-but-compliments paid by the newspapers of Fascism. Unless Italian human nature is remarkably unlike any other form of human nature, there must have been many politically-minded Catholics whose sentiments, for the time being at any rate, were not in accord with those of the official placards. Members, for instance, of the *Azione Cattolica*, the immediate cause of the trouble, who were feeling, at the moment, like anything but *W il Duce!* But though I looked out for it on my every walk abroad, I saw no sign of their resentment on the walls of Florence, on the walls of Rome, or of any less important locality. No placard scribbled with facetious disagreement, no inscription struck through by the contemptuous—as, in event of like political cleavage, would certainly have been the case at home!

VII. NEW ITALY'S WOMEN: THE CULT OF THE CRADLE

THE attitude of the Fascist Party with regard to the public activities of women has its inconsistencies—though these inconsistencies, I hasten to add, are probably more apparent than real. However revolutionary in other respects, the aims of Fascism, where woman is concerned, are conservative: the life domestic, a husband and a home; and children, future citizens of Italy, the more the better! Give her these and she has all the interests she needs, and likewise does her duty by the State. The authorized biographer of Mussolini (Margherita Sarfatti) says plainly that the Duce, "in his masculine egoism," looks upon woman as a creature whose mission it is to be beautiful and pleasing. "If she does not know that she pleases, she is nervous and unhappy, and with good reason." So he is said to have argued with an English suffragist. While views such as these are held in high quarters, it should not surprise us that Italian women have so far taken no active part in politics. . . . It is true that the Duce, a few years ago, extended the municipal vote to women—"with much generosity," his biographer comments. Apparently he repented this act of generosity, for, shortly afterwards, the municipal vote was abolished, both for women and men. The chief magistrate of an Italian city is no



L. J. C. E.

Salute to Mussolini

longer an elected mayor; he is a *Podestà*, appointed by the central Government.

Yet in spite of the generally conservative attitude towards women, and the desire to concentrate their interests on the life of home and of society; and in spite of the fact that they have no vote, parliamentary or otherwise—yet the word has gone forth that women are to be urged, more strongly than of yore, to enrol in the ranks of Fascism. In May 1931 the *foglio d'ordini* of the National Fascist Party laid stress upon the importance of the women's side of the movement, and called for more energy in the founding of *fasci femminili*. In all localities where a men's group, numbering ten members, is already in existence, a women's group is to be brought into being and the two organizations are to work in co-operation, side by side; those eligible for membership are "Italian women of irreproachable character and Fascist principles who have attained the age of twenty-two years"—those who have not yet attained that age belong to the junior group.

The working side by side of the two sections, masculine and feminine, does not, of course, imply any equality of status—on the contrary; the *fascio femminile* is strictly limited as regards its activities, and is subject to its colleague's authority—the woman secretary takes her orders from the officials of the masculine unit. So, at least, the position was explained to me by a well-known professional woman who, though thoroughly loyal to the Fascist regime, had refused to join a woman's group. She herself professed feminist principles; that is to say, her ideas of women's functions, sphere, and destiny were not wholly in accordance with those of orthodox members of the party. Hence, when approached by the organizers of a *fascio femminile* she had

explained that—holding the decided views she did—it was impossible for her to join a women's organization where the members, the women, had no real voice in the management of their own association, but were given their instructions by an outside official belonging to the men's association.

A comparatively slight acquaintance with the aims and methods of the women's side of Fascism will probably convince the inquirer that those who established and seek to extend it are not guilty of much inconsistency. The woman who joins a *fascio femminile* runs small risk of becoming unsexed; its activities do not threaten the peace of the home—in fact they can hardly be considered public. Public affairs as we in England understand them are right outside its scope; its *métier* is relief of distress. In an interview given by one of the leading lights of the movement—a woman occupying an official position—she lays stress on the essentially philanthropic character of the *fascio femminile*: it is an organization that has no concern with politics. No concern, that is to say, with politics as the term is generally understood, but the work done by the members—work of public assistance—is in so far political that it is of importance to the life of the nation. "Women," she goes on to say, "worked hard and ceaselessly during the war for the soldier at the front, finding a thousand ways of rendering him help and service; now they are finding such ways of rendering service in peace and remembering how many there are who still need their help. How many children to whom clothing is lacking and to whom the gift of a garment would be a real blessing! Those who cannot give active assistance outside their homes can help in their homes with sewing; and by these means we ought to ensure that no neces-

sitous mother is turned away empty when she applies for aid to the *fascio femminile*." Provision of garments for the needy is not the only duty enjoined upon the woman Fascist; there is child welfare in general and the care of the sick—the Red Cross side of the movement. One of the good works especially enjoined is care for the dependants of soldiers who fell in the war, and likewise for the dependants of those Fascists who lost their lives in the struggle with internal enemies.

(Here one may note that the memory of these fallen Blackshirts—"the soldiers and martyrs of the Fascist Revolution"—is held in equal honour with the memory of the men who died in the war against Austria. I have heard their numbers variously estimated—the official figure, I believe, is about three thousand, and official account represents them as victims, to a great extent, of treachery and ambuscade. A monument to the *Caduti Fascisti* is being erected in the place of highest honour, on the Capitol; and a recent measure laid before the Chamber of Deputies—where it was received with acclamation—placed the dependants of the fallen of Fascism on an equal footing, as regards benefits, with those of the fallen in the war.)

Although politics, in the common understanding of the term, are eschewed by the *fascio femminile*, its good works have admittedly a secondary purpose which is not wholly divorced from politics, the purpose of Fascist propaganda. "To the women's groups," so runs the official instruction issued by the party, "to the women's groups is committed the carrying out of the charitable work organized by the party. *This is a most effective means of propaganda and of penetration*" (italics mine). "The duty of the groups will be to relieve the persons in need who apply daily at the Fascist offices, and also to pay

visits to the sick and necessitous in their homes. This giving of moral and material help is a duty essentially and beautifully feminine, a duty which could not well be entrusted to any other organization."

The *fascio femminile*, then, is an organization for the purpose of good works; such good works as, in times past, were carried out chiefly under the direction of the Church. Is it, I wonder, no more than a coincidence that the order for increased activity with regard to the enrolling of women in the ranks of Fascism—the order from which I have quoted above—was issued in the summer of 1931? at a time, that is to say, when the tension between the Vatican State and its neighbour, the Kingdom of Italy, had culminated in open and angry disagreement. Was it a coincidence? or was the new order an outcome of the quarrel and a definite attempt to counteract the influence of the Catholic Church upon the women of Italy? Some share, at least, of the influence of the Church on the life of the people can be ascribed to its many organizations for charitable work. Through them it reaches those who dispense charitable benefits as well as those who receive; through them, until lately, it has attracted all women inclined to an active benevolence. And it is just that type of woman that the *fascio femminile* will attract. It is at least possible that the quickened activities of the *fascio femminile* may be intended as a counterblast to recent developments on the part of *Azione Cattolica*. The invasion by the Catholic organization of a sphere of influence that had hitherto been wholly Fascist—the sphere of athletics—was one of the causes of friction; the cult of games and open air, fostered by Fascism, was increasing its hold on the youth of the country, and, in the hope of like results, *Azione Cattolica* followed suit. It is possible, I repeat,

that a reply to this move was Fascism's increased activity in the woman's sphere of benevolence and charity, a sphere in which the authority of the Church had hitherto ruled supreme. If so it be, the thrust at the Church is a shrewd one, and indicates the determination of the Government to allow no encroachment on its rights. Certain it is that the Church would suffer loss, in prestige and in funds, if any considerable section of the women of Italy turned the stream of their benevolence into non-ecclesiastical channels.

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More than once, when I put a question as to the position and activities of Italian women, I was reminded of the fact that there is more than one Italy. Between the north and the south there is a wide gulf fixed, and the social usages that govern the one are not those that govern the other. Many timeworn traditions have been abolished in Lombardy that still are strictly followed in Calabria. Higher education for women is now quite usual in the north, and where higher education is usual the shackles of old etiquette are broken. As regards daily habits and customs, it is no longer considered necessary, as it was in times past, for a woman to find a companion before she can take her walks abroad. Nowadays she can be seen in the street, she can shop, or she can travel without hunting up an escort—more or less willing—to shield her from unfriendly remark; she can even go alone to a place of public entertainment, sit unprotected in a cinema palace, a concert-hall, or a theatre. This liberty, by the by, is of recent growth; its use would have shocked the mothers of the present generation. I was told that in Rome, in pre-war days, it would have been impossible for any well-bred and

well-conducted woman to show herself at the opera unattended. Eccentricity would have been the mildest explanation of such a breach of the social code.

In the north, then, the old restrictions on women's freedom of movement have slackened or ceased to exist—but it is not so throughout the peninsula. There are regions in the south where restrictions still endure and the code of behaviour and etiquette for women seems hardly to have altered for centuries. A well-known professional woman, herself an Italian of the north, gave me an example of this persistence of old etiquette for women: when she was staying in Palermo last year, she suggested to the friend in whose house she was stopping that they should spend the evening at the theatre. The friend, a married woman, would not hear of the outing; it was impossible, she said, because her husband was away from home. In Sicilian society it is not the proper thing for a married woman to be seen at a theatre unescorted by her husband—not even in the company of a woman friend against whom no word can be spoken. . . . It is just as well, therefore, that Sicilian men have a reputation for being considerate to their womenfolk, and ready to give up their time to them; perhaps it is their obliging readiness to give up time and act as escort when required that has prolonged the restrictions on their womenfolk, by making them bearable.

My friend, the visitor to Sicily, assured me further that in Palermo even elderly women are hedged about with nice rules of behaviour; whatever their age, they still belong to the sex that must be guarded from insult and careful of their reputation; thus they are only permitted, by public opinion, to take their airings without escort so long as the sun is in the sky. Once

night has fallen in the city of Palermo, they must not walk the streets unchaperoned; they must find them an escort or return to the shelter of their domiciles. As for the Sicilian girls and younger women, when they leave their houses to make their purchases or to take the air, the chaperon is still a necessity of life—to walk abroad without her would be to set tongues a-wagging. . . . Medieval as this sounds, it is not peculiar to Sicily; as far as unmarried girls are concerned, it was a custom prevalent, but a few years ago, among the respectable of France. Amongst my acquaintance of the war-time period was a snuffy old couple who kept a fusty little shop in a by-street of the town of Abbeville; and in the course of a discussion on the manners and customs of our respective nations, I was one day informed by snuffy old Madame that her daughter had been married at the age of twenty-two—and that from the day she was born to the day she crossed the threshold on her husband's arm, the girl had never left that fusty little shop unchaperoned. And, for all I know, the custom may persist in conservative circles of provincial France—just as it persists in Sicily.

Considering the difference in outlook and custom, it is not surprising to learn that the education of the Sicilian girl is often less thorough than that of the Florentine or Roman. Sicilian parents of the well-to-do classes do not aim, as a rule, at the higher education of their daughters; they are apt to think that they have done all that is necessary to prepare a girl for life when they have seen to it that she is instructed in the use of a musical instrument and has attained to a certain proficiency in some one foreign language.

There is, however, one other accomplishment that she is practically certain to possess and exercise with skill,

the accomplishment of decorative needlework. All over Italy, from north to farthest south, the craft of the needle is practised—and frequently the craft of the loom. Whatever she knows, or does not know, the Italian woman is a past mistress in the art of embroidery; while, often enough, she is weaver as well, turning out fine household linen or, it may be, curtains and carpets. Like many other household accomplishments, it is a talent that often stands her in good stead when times are hard and the family income needs stretching. I was told that many countrywomen of the working classes earn their living entirely by means of decorative crafts—embroidery, hand-weaving, lace, or the making of tooled leather bags; there are agencies in Rome—some of them at least benevolent agencies run by women—which collect and sell the decorative work produced in the country regions.

The idea of skilled needlework, beautiful needlework, as one of the essentials of a woman's education, is deeply rooted in the Italian mind. And the use of the needle is not merely an accomplishment; it is an art which, more easily than any other art, makes its way into everyday life. I was told that even the busy professional woman—the university don, the lawyer, or the doctor of medicine—seldom fails to keep up the fine sewing or embroidery wherein she was instructed in her youth. Round the craft of the needle there cluster old beliefs and superstitions; in some parts of the country a bride should on no account fail to embroider her own wedding nightdress—her work will ensure her good luck. The more stitches in the garment, so legend runs, the fewer the troubles of her marriage.

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It is in the south, I was told, that there lingers most

tenaciously the idea that the right and proper destiny of the right and proper woman is to be kept on the earnings or the income of a man. Preferably, of course, she marries, and the man is her husband; but if Fate is unkind and grants her no husband, then relatives by blood provide the keep. A woman of more independent turn of mind, who prefers to work for money and make her own way, would still, in certain regions, lose caste. This tradition of feminine dependence implies the right to masculine aid; thus it is not only a cramping tradition for middle-class women, it often falls heavily and hardly on middle-class men. If the women of a family do not find the necessary husbands, their father and brothers will have to support them in a manner befitting the family dignity, that is to say, in an existence of unpaid gentility. In such a family "Brothers do not marry, or only very late, because they must support their sisters, and elderly fathers work far beyond their strength, in order that their wives and daughters may lead an idle life." So an Italian woman whose own life was run on very different lines. Her explanation of the prejudice against the woman who earns money is that it is a heritage from feudal warrior days; the feudal warrior drew his income and sustenance from land, and would have accounted it a come-down to earn money as a trader. With the passing of feudalism there passed, also, the gentleman's prejudice against trading and other forms of business; but there are regions and classes where it still lingers as an influence on the lives of women.

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In our own country, as in many others, the right of women to university training was a right that had to be

asserted; it is scarcely a lifetime ago since the very idea of a girl undergraduate was a joke. In Italy, on the other hand, there was no such opposition to be faced and fought; women's right to higher education and the taking of degrees has been admitted for centuries. In view of what has been written above with regard to their lack of independence in some parts of the country, this statement may sound strange; but, strange though it sound, it is true. Italian universities have never erected a sex barrier. Nor was the right of entry merely nominal, not objected to because not exercised; even in early medieval times there were women who attained to high academic distinction. They held professorships, became doctors of medicine; some among them—such as Trotala de Roggero and Costanza Calandra—were so famous in their time that their names are not even yet forgotten. They were exceptions, of course; the few women graduates amongst the great majority of men; but the fact remains that no objection was raised to their presence in the schools, and no law forbade them to share the work and attain to the honours of the masculine majority of students. Nor did later generations withdraw the privilege which medieval schools had granted; when (in 1870) the kingdom of Italy was a fact accomplished, it carried on the tradition of equal education for the sexes—school and university were open to girls as to boys. . . . I was told, however, and by high authority, that, though higher education has never been barred to them, it is only within the last two or three decades that Italian girls (and their parents) have taken real advantage of the opportunities offered. The professions, be it noted, are open to women without let or hindrance, and the figures given me for the year 1930 include medical women to the number of about

three hundred and fifty, and a hundred and fifty, or thereabouts, for women lawyers.

There is one marked and important difference between the attitude of Italian and of British authority towards women who work for a wage or a salary. With us the assumption is that a married woman should be discouraged from work that brings her in an income, since it takes her away from her home; acting on the principle that her place is at home, with her husband and family, some public authorities will not engage a woman they know to be married, while others make marriage a reason for discharging a woman employee, however efficient her record. Though she may be highly satisfactory in all other respects (and her service and experience a loss to her employers), if she has the misfortune to fall in love and be asked in marriage, she is thereupon condemned to lose her job and part with her personal earnings. That is what frequently happens in England on the marriage of a State or municipal employee, and that is exactly what does not happen in Italy. There marriage, to the woman employee, does not entail loss of her job and personal wage; far from being ejected when she takes her a husband, she gets an advantage, an actual advantage, over those of her colleagues who remain in a state of single blessedness. By the law of 6th June, 1929, bachelors and spinsters may no longer be given preference for employment by the State, provinces, communes, or other public institutions. Where other conditions are equal, preference must be given to the married of both sexes over the single; and to the fathers and mothers of families over those married people who have not increased the population.

There is, of course, a reason, and an obvious reason,

for this favouring of the woman who is wife and mother as against the woman unmarried; it is part of that Cult of the Cradle which Fascism seeks to encourage. Loss of employment on marriage would mean—as it does mean in England—hesitation and delay on the part of young people before entering the married state; and (argue the advocates of the teeming family) the longer the delay before entering on marriage, the less likelihood that the union will be blessed by many children. Like the tax on bachelors, and revenue discrimination against one-child parentage, the present system of preference to the married is a direct encouragement to that abounding family which the Head of the Government desires to see in every household—to that abounding population which is to make of Italy, in the near future, a first-class colonizing power. It is in the interest of a spreading population, an ever-growing Italy, that no obstacle is placed in the way of man and maid desirous of setting up house; since the woman's salary helps to speedy marriage, certainly she must not be deprived of it.

In their views on the population question, Church and State in Italy are, for once, in cordial agreement and largely for the same reason. The Church always welcomes an increase in the number of its flock, and, anywhere and everywhere, finds cause for satisfaction when little Catholics arrive in greater numbers than little anti-clericals or heretics; while one of the aims of the Fascist State is an Italy that spreads beyond its borders and peoples a colonial empire. To Church, as to State, therefore, the doctrine of birth control is anathema; by the one it is visited with the penalties due to the sinner, by the other with the rigours of the law. Even the advocacy of methods of family limitation is a penal offence. Paragraph 553 of the new Penal

Code (which was issued in the summer of 1931) lays it down that any person who publicly incites to practices against procreation, or makes propaganda in favour of such practices, will be punished with imprisonment up to one year or with a fine up to ten thousand lire. If the offence has been committed with a view to gain, the offender is liable to suffer both penalties—the imprisonment as well as the fine—while if he should be a doctor there is further augmentation of penalty. Repetition of the offence on the part of the doctor deprives him of the right to practise.

Preference in the employment of married persons, tax discrimination as against the unmarried, and the putting down of birth-control propaganda, are not the only measures employed by the Government to encourage the production of babies. There is a widespread system of bonus and reward for large families; many communes, in accordance with the Duce's instructions, have instituted prizes for the fertile among their inhabitants. As a rule these prizes are paid by the commune for each child born after a given number, the sixth, or the seventh, or the eighth. Sometimes they take the form of an allowance, paid till the child reaches a certain age; and sometimes they run to a really considerable amount. One local authority, which must surely be opulent, gives five yearly prizes of a hundred thousand lire each to those of its local families which have had the largest number of children in the course of the preceding six years. Other, less generous, benefits to the prolific include free tram-fares, reduced rates for gas and electricity, reimbursement of the expenses incurred in childbirth, and the provision of school-books for the numerous children free of charge. The production of twins seems to be looked on as an act of special merit;

at any rate I read in an official document that the Duce has personally conferred rewards on women who have had more than one child at a time.

In view of Italy's reluctance to lose her nationals by emigration, it is hardly surprising to learn that there is an official department which keeps careful track of such emigrating nationals; in particular it carries on active propaganda amongst the many who are working and producing families on the neighbouring soil of France. There is special cause for watchfulness over these French-Italian families, owing to the fact that, under French law, a child born in France, whatever the nationality of its parents, is held to be French—and so liable, if male, to service in the French army on reaching military age. Such a child, therefore, may well be a citizen lost to Italy—a citizen, and also a soldier! In consequence, every effort is made by agents of the department to induce women of Italian nationality who are resident in France and expecting a baby to return to Italy before the date of confinement, so that the child may be born in the land of its fathers and free from any alien claim. The appeal, in the case of these expectant mothers, is not only to patriotic sentiment—there are solid financial inducements to undertake the journey. In return for the gift of an Italian citizen, expenses of confinement are assisted by subsidies and travelling expenses refunded.

It goes without saying that the teeming family is the family favoured when it comes to the allotment of rooms in workmen's dwellings, or houses in any way controlled by public authority. It is favoured also by a thoroughgoing system of tax discrimination. The tax on bachelors, already alluded to, does not only take the form of a higher income-tax; in addition there is an

actual, personal levy on the unmarried man, starting at twenty-five and continuing for the next forty years. (Has any state, however hard up, yet proposed a levy on the spinster? I imagine not; and imagine also that the motive of this special consideration is humanitarian rather than economic. It would be considered rather brutal to add the misfortune of extra taxation to the poor thing's primary misfortune, the failure to get herself a husband.) Then parents whose families reach a desirable size are allowed all sorts and conditions of exemption when it comes to the payment of their dues. If you are an employee of the State, or other public body, and have seven or more children, of Italian nationality, to provide for; or if you are just an ordinary citizen, without official status, and have ten or more children, likewise of Italian nationality, to provide for: in that case the exchequer will let you off payment of various rates and taxes—including a special tax on goats! . . . By the way, it is interesting to note that in these claims for large-family benefit, it is not only legitimate children that count; illegitimate children, recognized by one parent, are allowed to be reckoned in the total.

Because she is chiefly an agricultural country, with a large peasant population, living thriftily and hard, Italy does not carry our permanent weight of unemployment. It is not denied, however, that unemployment does exist, but official opinion declines to connect it with any superabundance in the number of workers. An official pronouncement on the subject (whereof the author is the President of the Central Institute of Statistics, Corrado Gini) explains that unemployment, "in the time we are passing through, is not to be found in an excessive number of workers. It is, instead, essentially caused by the inertia of wages in following the changes

in commodity prices." The phrase "inertia of wages in following the changes in commodity prices" being, apparently, a somewhat unwieldy method of expressing what we know more commodiously as "time-lag." Time-lag, therefore, and not pressure of population on the labour market is the real factor in producing unemployment, of which a certain amount (Signor Gini considers) is unavoidable in a modern nation, "especially as its industries become more highly developed and specialized."

Holding the views it does on the value of numbers, it is only to be expected that the present regime should rule out emigration to foreign countries as a means of relieving the pressure on the labour market. The refusal to permit emigration may sometimes mean hardship to the individual citizen, desirous of improving his position in life or finding a difficulty in making both ends meet at home; but that hardship the State has a right to inflict in its own paramount interest. The emigrant who decides that he will leave his native country is moved only by personal considerations—the prospect of his own advancement; the State, "besides considering the welfare of individuals, must take account of the collective economic power, in which average individual income is only one of the component factors." It is pointed out, further, that, in this matter of emigration to foreign countries, the economic factor is not the only one to be considered. The State "must take account of others, among which military considerations are not of least importance. The relation between the size of population and the economic and military power of the nation is obvious." . . . There we have the crux of the matter: the need for big battalions in war.

There are times when one wonders if that military need is not passing; if the war of the future will be waged by its millions of conscripts. . . . Big battalions, of course, have been a deciding factor in the past; but when it comes to thoroughgoing war in the air—whereof we, as yet, have known only the beginnings—and its accompaniment, thoroughgoing chemical warfare: then the big battalions, in so far as they consist of men, may not have their former importance. While, as to a large civilian population, there will certainly be conditions, in the wars of the future, under which it will be anything but an advantage to a belligerent nation; when a countryside swarms with terrified nomads, harried crowds, driven out of their homes in the towns by aerial attack or the threat of it. That belligerent nation which has a small and scattered population will be less at the mercy of bomb and torpedo, loosed from the air, and therefore may prove itself the stronger. . . . The machine that deals death has the same quality as every other species of machine: in the end it reduces the demand for human labour. Mass production in the killing industry, like mass production in the textile, will mean a decrease in the number of hands required to guide its mechanism. The fact that mechanism is ousting the artisan and labourer from work that once brought them in a livelihood—that fact has already penetrated the consciousness of those who think industrially; but it does not seem to have penetrated very far into the consciousness of those who think politically—pacifist or otherwise. They, to all appearances, are still apt to reckon the military strength of a nation in terms of its men under arms. Yet a submarine, manned by a score or two, may be a deadlier enemy than a battleship manned by her crew of a thousand; an

aeroplane, carrying a pilot and observer, may inflict more damage than a regiment. . . . And of such are the wars of the future!

Because the New Italy is seldom unmindful of her descent from old Rome, history in Italy sometimes repeats itself deliberately; it is likely, therefore, that the Duce's Cult of the Cradle was inspired, at least to a certain extent, by the campaign that Augustus once waged in his Rome against sterility and the decay of the family.

Be pleased, too, Goddess, babes through youth to rear.
 So shalt thou bless the Senate's high decree
 And marriage laws, that wives each coming year
 May fruitful be.

So Horace (who himself, I believe, was a bachelor), addressing Diana, the goddess of childbirth, at a time when the ruler of imperial Rome was endeavouring, by precept as well as by law, to revive the patriarchal family life that had long been out of fashion in patrician circles. Augustan methods of encouraging the family bear a close resemblance to those now practised by Fascism, and one may safely assume that the *Lex Papia Poppæa* and kindred decrees of the same period have served as models for some of the measures of family-encouragement described in the preceding paragraphs. Augustan legislation also laid special taxes on bachelors and the childless married; it also, like the modern decrees of Mussolini, granted various exemptions and privileges to those parents who did their duty to the State by bringing up numerous families. . . . Judging by the size of the families so rewarded, the Augustan parent must indeed have been reluctant; in Rome itself the possession of

three children entitled to bonus or exemption. In outside Italy the number was four, in the more prolific provinces five. But even the more prolific provinces compare badly with the families of modern Italy, where three, four, and five are thought nothing of! The *Lex Papia Poppæa* is believed to have failed of the effect intended by its sponsors; to which their imitators of the twentieth century would probably make answer that it was a remedy applied too late.

As to whether legislation of the Fascist era will be more successful than that of the Augustan, who can say? All the world over the family grows smaller; but Fascism, in alliance with the Catholic Church, may be able to arrest the tendency, at least for a time. The birth-rate of Italy as a whole is high compared to that of other European nations; but in some of the larger cities—Turin, Genoa, Milan—it has fallen to a lower level than the birth-rate of London; and this tendency of an urban birth-rate to fall is one of the reasons why migration from rural districts to towns is discouraged by the Fascist regime. Powers of expulsion from towns have been given to local authorities. "All those who arrive in cities without means of support, and those who, having received promise of jobs, remain unemployed and have not the prospect of securing employment within a short time, all these must be sent back to their homes and warned not to return to the city whence they have been expelled!"

In a recent official document, dealing with the subject of population, it is stated that the campaign against decrease of births has been too short a time in progress to permit of a reliable estimate of results. It adds, however, that "it can safely be stated that this policy has been beneficial, inasmuch as it serves as a sort of

dyke for Italy, protecting her from those neo-Malthusian tendencies which are undermining the future of other nations." Perhaps because he bears in mind the failure of the bygone *Lex Papia Poppæa* the Duce himself has not too much faith in the law as a weapon against neo-Malthusianism. It was necessary, he once said, to try these laws, just as all sorts of medicines are tried, in the case of disease; but "in these matters, more than formal laws, the moral custom, and, above all, the religious conscience of the individual prevail. If a man does not feel the joy and pride of being continued as an individual, as a family, and as a people; if a man does not feel, on the other hand, the sadness and the shame of dying as an individual, as a family, and as a people, then laws—and I would say especially Draconian laws—avail nothing. Laws must be employed as a stimulus to custom."

There is a story of the Duce in the days of his soldiering as *Bersagliere* which suggests that the phrase I have quoted above—"the sadness and the shame of dying as an individual, as a family, and as a people"—is not mere rhetoric for public consumption but an expression of emotion deeply felt. It is said that one of his comrades in the trenches once remonstrated with Corporal Mussolini because he had exposed himself to unnecessary danger, and backed his remonstrance with the reminder that Mussolini was the father of a family. Came the retort that it was on that account he should fear death less than others—he had children to carry on his name.

Even the most determined advocate of the teeming family will probably admit that unchecked increase is sometimes accompanied by difficulties. One such

difficulty has made itself manifest of late in Italy; the infant population has become too large for its schools. It is in the secondary schools, which receive the children at the age of eleven, that the problem is waxing acute; the authorities thereof are finding it impossible to fit in the superabundance of new scholars who have completed their years of primary instruction. In the years immediately succeeding the war the birth-rate went up with a bound; the new generation arrived in large numbers, thick and fast. From the Fascist point of view, and the Church point of view, this rapid rate of increase was highly satisfactory; it may, however, be considered less satisfactory by those parents who are informed that there are no vacancies in the State-run schools, and who are therefore advised to continue their offspring's education in the more expensive private establishments. So great is the pressure of children on accommodation that in Milan alone a thousand would-be pupils are said to have been excluded from State schools. New Italy is mindful of what she owes to her soldiers, and, as a matter of course, preference as to entry is given to war orphans and children of disabled men; but there has also been rumour of preference to boys over girls, on the ground, of course, that the need of the boy for education is greater than that of the girl; who, though school may have equipped her to take up a career, often leaves it with no such aim in view. So it is argued; and if the pressure on school accommodation continues, it may be that Italy will reverse her educational policy—her inherited policy of equality between the sexes. The Cult of the Cradle in the twentieth century may destroy the long tradition that dates from her medieval schools.

VIII. AN ITALIAN AUDIENCE

OFFICIALLY and outwardly, at any rate, the Italian nation, when it looks back on the great catastrophe of our time, seems to look with less regret and more satisfaction than the other parties to the war. Officially and outwardly, at any rate, there is none of that English reluctance to dwell on it which we are only by slow degrees overcoming, and, so far as I could see, but little sign of disillusionment. Nor (though I looked for it) was I able to find in any newspaper or magazine article dealing with the war the assumption, which is general enough with us, that under modern conditions of warfare real victory is impossible, since the victor, like the vanquished, is involved in the common catastrophe. On the contrary, the triumph of Italy is held to be complete and glorious; the nation has been unified by its struggles and its sacrifices. The goal of long centuries has been attained by the Peace of St. Germain; *Italia irredenta* is *Italia irredenta* no more. Austria, the hereditary enemy, has been crushed to the earth and dismembered; and Fascism, creator of the new and glorious order, was itself created by the heroes of the Piave and Vittorio Veneto—the product of a nation in arms!

That being the attitude of the nation towards the Great War (a happier attitude than exists in other lands), it is interesting to note—both interesting and curious—that Italy, so far, seems to have produced little of

moment dealing with the struggle, either in art, in fiction, or the theatre. In spite of a generous portion of discouragement, our English stage and literature would seem to have achieved rather more in this direction; and so, without a doubt, have the stage and literature of Germany—Germany whose lot was defeat. . . . When I was last in Berlin I saw at least one war film that seemed to me, in parts, of a terrible beauty; while Italy, the inheritor of a long tradition of theatrical and pictorial art, has as yet given us nothing particularly impressive—nothing, at least, that has stirred the world beyond her borders. Is the explanation this: that suffering is favourable to inspiration, the sense of triumph inimical?

But, if I did not see anything outstanding in the way of a war film, I saw an entertainment essentially Italian—a Marinetti play, or rather show! Marinetti, I am aware, though he was once very modern, is not very modern to-day. The years have dealt with him as they deal with all of us; from a novelty he has become an established institution. But, as an institution he is peculiar to his native land, and requires, for his full comprehension and enjoyment, a packed audience of his fellow-countrymen. That packed audience—which I am told he usually obtains—is more than a concourse of spectators; it is Marinetti's instrument, part of his performance; it provides him with background, with effects and atmosphere. Marinetti would probably be a dank failure in a London theatre, where he would be played to rows of our nice, well-mannered suburbanites, who merely cough or sigh when a play fails to interest, and who never in their lives so far forgot themselves as to throw a potato at an actor.

Whether Marinetti is a dramatist is probably open to question; but whether or no he can really write a play,

he is possessed of one invaluable theatrical quality. He is through and through a showman, a first-class specimen of the calling; and by virtue of his showmanship, his trick of advertisement, he keeps himself in the public eye—with satisfactory results to the box-office. In spite of this excellent recommendation there was a time—so I was told by those who remember it—when managers fought shy of Marinetti and his futurist productions. This reluctance on the part of managers to encourage the profitable futuristic play was not so unreasonable as it appears at first sight; it was not that they doubted Marinetti's drawing powers—on the contrary, they knew him as a popular attraction, a magnet. What deterred them from offering hospitality to his talents was the probability, amounting to a certainty, that by the time the entertainment came to an end, considerable damage would be done to the managerial property. A Marinetti audience was an audience that came armed for the fray; it started out for its evening's amusement primed with suitable missiles, usually of a vegetable nature. One who, in his student days, had been a Marinetti fan, told me how he and his like-minded fellows would bargain at a fruit importer's for plentiful supplies of such oranges as had been rejected on account of overripeness; these luscious bombs, when evening came, they conveyed to their positions of vantage in the gallery, and, as occasion offered, hurled them at the stage and its occupants. Where such genial activities were likely to be widespread, it is hardly to be wondered at that directors of theatres should think several times before they billed the appearance of the Marinetti company; even if the box-office were kept pleasantly busy as a result of the engagement, its gains might be discounted in other directions; the chances were that the unusual

expenses and damages incurred would make heavy inroads on the managerial cashbox. A bombardment of vegetables, a rain of bursting oranges, may be more than an interruption to the play, and an unpleasant experience for the actors; it may have its disastrous consequences on stage furniture and scenery—not to mention the garments worn by members of the cast. It might well be, therefore, that the Marinetti bill for dilapidations would be sufficiently heavy to transform what should have been a comfortable profit into actual and formidable loss.

The student generation still takes its pleasure in ragging the apostle of futurism, but the stage of vehement and violent disagreement with his doctrine is past; as I said above, he is now an institution. His audience still disagrees with him, of course; that is what it comes for, it is part of the show—he is there to be heckled in the manner of a parliamentary candidate. But the disagreement nowadays is not usually accompanied by so many vegetable missiles as it was in the earlier days of futurism. When I saw the latest Marinetti masterpiece, *Simultanina*, in one of the Florentine theatres, I should say that it was only a small section of the audience that had taken its tickets purely with intent to see the play; of the larger section, some had come to rag and others to be witness of their liveliness. Liveliness there was and in plenty, but, take it all in all, the rag, though noisy, was good-natured; only once or twice did it get beyond the stage of spoken comment and come to the hurling of garden produce from on high; and when that happened, it seemed to me that it happened quite amiably—as a matter of custom and tradition. Personally I was relieved at the comparative absence of vegetable bombardment, as activity on the part of the

gallery was not without its dangers to myself. I and my companion occupied seats close up to the stage, in the front row of stalls; that meant that we were nearly in the line of fire, and a badly aimed potato, falling short of the proscenium, might very well have come our way. It says much for the drawing powers of Signor Marinetti that, when we arrived at the theatre on the night of the performance, only these badly placed seats, in the front of the stalls, were available—so near to the stage that you had to sit with chin uplifted. All the rest of the house, from ceiling to floor, was booked up. The audience, by the way, consisted chiefly of men; even in the more fashionable and less demonstrative parts of the house women were in the minority, while above—where the noise came from—they were visible only here and there. This predominance of men in an Italian audience, I may add, is by no means exceptional.

The play was described on its posters and programmes as a *divertimento futurista* in sixteen syntheses—which was merely another word for scenes; the use of syntheses, instead of scenes, has probably some subtle meaning, which, I regret to say, has escaped me. The title of the piece, *Simultanina*, is symbolic; and the nature and beauty of the Marinetti symbolism was explained to us, and explained to us at length, in a prologue delivered by one of the actors, a fair-haired young man with a condescending manner, who was understood to represent a futurist poet. If the futurist poet was typical of his class, it has little in common with the careless, wild-eyed poets of tradition. This one, at any rate, was a fashionable youth, clad in the neatest and most modern of lounge suits and with his hair brushed slick to his head. He opened the proceedings by appearing before the curtain and delivering a discourse in which words like *velocità*,

simultaneità, and *ubiquità* made frequent appearance. For my own part, I could make very little of futuristic theatrical theory when expounded in a foreign tongue, and I should have found the discourse not a little dull if it had not been enlivened, at frequent intervals, by the comments of my fellow-spectators—enlivened, now and then, to the point of long interruption. As time went on and the poet was still with us, I gathered I was not the only one present who was wishful for an end to the discourse on *ubiquità*, etc. The interruptions from the most high gods grew more frequent and sounded more scathing. Those in the cast of a Marinetti play must be hardened to jeer and unflattering rebuke, and the futurist poet was no exception to the rule—he probably took them as compliments. When ironical laughter smothered his remarks, he strolled to and fro with his hands in his pockets and an air of indifferent boredom; and when the tumult had died down and allowed him to be heard, he once more took up the thread of his discourse on *velocità*, *ubiquità*, etc. Even the arrival on the stage of a good-sized potato failed to disturb his well-bred composure; he may, however, have taken it as a hint that we had had enough prologue, for shortly afterwards he vanished from our ken, to unflattering rounds of applause.

The prologue over (to the general relief), the curtain rose on the first of the sixteen syntheses, and revealed to our gaze the heroine of the piece, *Simultanina*. She owed her name, apparently, to the fact that she could inspire love simultaneously in a number of gentlemen—could inspire and also return it. Further, she was a painter as well as an inspirer of love; at any rate she was discovered at an easel, with a brush and a palette, and dabbed at a canvas in the extraordinary manner in which people do paint on the stage. To her entered a

gentleman, who proceeded to make love to her for the space of some minutes; then, at the end of the synthesis (which was not very long), the lover appeared by himself before the curtain and proceeded to make such remarks as the audience would listen to. What I could hear and understand of his monologue (it was not very much) struck me at first as rather pointless, but its purport was made plainer when he came to an end and the curtain rose on Synthesis Two. There was *Simultanina*, in her same surroundings; same easel, same paintbrush, same palette, still impossibly dabbing at her canvas; but having, with the aid of the pointless monologue, been enabled to change her dress. Otherwise Synthesis Two contained no surprises; it was on the lines of Synthesis One; it was also on the lines of Syntheses Three, Four, Five, Six, etc. In each a male character—a different male character—entered and made love to the lady at the easel; who, if I mistake not, justified her name by giving them, one and all, encouragement. The procedure at the end of each little scene was the same; at the fall of the curtain each male character had to appear before it and speak his little piece, while *Simultanina* hastened to her dressing-room and changed into yet another gown. Once, indeed, there was an unfortunate incident which deprived us of the interlude and left us with nothing but a curtain to gaze at till the next new gown should have been donned. The lover who should have kept us entertained in that particular interval was, if I remember rightly, described as an engineer—the trades and professions of the admiring sequence were all different; at any rate, when he appeared before the curtain for his monologue, it was clear that he intended to treat us to some appropriate wireless business. He was accompanied by earphones attached to a flex, and his entrance

was also enlivened by loud buzzing noises off stage. The syntheses and interludes by this time were becoming somewhat tedious in their repetition, and the audience accordingly was becoming more restive and warming to its work of interruption; while the engineer-lover, a bit of a stick, had failed to hold its attention in the previous scene, much less to arouse its enthusiasm. As, headphones in hand, he emerged from the wings, there was silence, cold silence, for the space of a moment; then, as he prepared to adjust his wireless apparatus, a voice from on high broke in upon his uninspiring patter, with one word only: a loud and imperious "Basta!"

The effect of the command was dramatic — tragically so. The luckless comedian's sentence was sliced through as by a knife. He glanced up at the gallery whence the order had come, and realized apparently that here was something different from the ordinary jeer, a form of interruption that had to be taken seriously. The man in the gallery had called out "Basta!" — "Get out! we've done with you! . . ." And, what was more, he had the house behind him; though, for once, it was silent, its silence was hostile to the actor. Every one was bored with him; no one wanted that scene with the headphones. It did not take the unfortunate player much more than a glance to realize defeat and accept it; whereupon, without a word or sign of protest, he turned to the curtain and disappeared from our sight. His untimely, if welcome, disappearance meant, of course, hiatus; the front of the house had to possess its souls in patience until such time as *Simultanina* and her dresser had effected the necessary change.

All along, the real sensations of the evening were provided not by the stage and its occupants but by those in the front of the house. In one of the syntheses, when

the wooer, a professor, was a timorous soul, and the love-making frankly on the side of the lady, the audience, at the fall of the curtain, provided a musical accompaniment; a song which was presumably ribald, and certainly popular, since, when one voice broke into it, dozens followed suit with a will. And when, half-way through the piece, we were permitted an interval, it was obvious from the talk and smiling faces in the foyer that, whatever they thought of the piece and the company, most of those present were enjoying their rag very heartily. An added source of amusement while we walked in the foyer were the futuristic sketches of Signor Marinetti; these, presumably, had arrived with the scenery and baggage, and were displayed on the walls for the length of the engagement—an excellent form of advertisement, since their incomprehensibility was the theme of much interest and laughter. The author of *Simultanina* is a man of varied attainments who fights the battle of Futurism in more than one field. His interests are not confined to the arts; in addition to the plays he writes and the pictures he paints, he has recently turned his attention to gastronomy and started a restaurant in Turin. The futurist restaurant takes an unpatriotic line in foodstuffs; its *raison d'être* apparently is Signor Marinetti's scorn for the national cuisine and especially for the national macaroni.

I should imagine that the performance of a work by Marinetti is the most striking form of the "rag" as practised by Italian audiences; but it is by no means an isolated phenomenon. The Latin playgoer will often allow himself a freedom of comment on singer and actor which, to our ideas, verges on the brutal; when they fail to please he does not always allow them to infer their failure by his silence; as likely as not he

expresses his contempt and disappointment. Such freedom of comment was once permitted to the English playgoer, who, in the days of the Garricks, the Keans, and the Kembles, would fling his oranges and shout his interruptions with the best; but it is long years now since the O.P. riots, and noisy interruption is out of fashion in the decorous English theatre. So much so that, even when provoked by the worst of entertainments, it usually earns a shocked rebuke from the Press.

My experience of the Italian, considered as audience, is not sufficiently extensive to permit of any real generalization as to his attitude and manners; but it has struck me once or twice, when I myself was a member of an audience, that the other members were slower to applaud than my countrymen would have been in their place. When he is stirred to a real emotion or enjoyment the Italian playgoer will clap his approval and clap it without stint; but, so far as my limited experience goes, he does not applaud when he is merely satisfied or out of good nature to the artist. In Rome, of an evening, I sometimes used to wander out after dinner to a restaurant in the Borghese Gardens, where there is an open-air stage all the summer, and a nightly show of the *café chantant* order. Each time I saw that variety show it was quite a good entertainment of its kind. There were patter artists, on whose actual patter I pass no opinion, since it was mostly incomprehensible to me, but whose manner was slick and amusing; there were singers who could sing, and some quite effective dancing—one night by half a dozen acrobatic ballet girls, who did their turn to effects of coloured light, and the next by a highly energetic troupe in the costumes of Russian peasants. An open-air audience (any actor will tell you) is seldom a really enthusiastic audience; to rouse real enthusiasm

you must get your crowd between walls instead of trees. In the case of a summer *café chantant*, moreover, the open-air audience, sitting round tables, had half an eye on its waiters and refreshments and half an ear for conversation with its neighbours. But even after making the fullest of allowance for the combined distractions of ices, coffee, and conversation, I was surprised by the very moderate interest shown in one or two items of the programme that seemed to me above the average.

It may be that the explanation of this comparative coldness is simply that the Italian standard, in these matters of the stage, is a good deal higher than our own; certain it is that, when the spirit so moves him, the Italian playgoer is both vehement and untiring in the expression of his pleasure. One night—it was in Florence—I went to a display of dancing; it was an international affair—*Riunione Internazionale di Danze* was the official title—where the schools of dancing of various nationalities were represented; Italians and Austrians, Germans, Russians, and English gave demonstration of their several methods and attainments. As a matter of course the programme, all through, was of a high level, as the audience was not slow to recognize; but what swept the board were the new-style German dances, presented by schools from Munich, Dresden, and Vienna. The odd, imperative novelties which had discarded the technique of sinuous grace, and where the “musical” accompaniment, often enough, was rhythmical only: the thrumming of a tom-tom or nothing but the clack of wood on wood. Once they had been seen, the dancing of a more familiar type fell a little flat with the audience; the schools whose teaching was all of grace and charm were received with an applause that was distinctly less vehement than that meted out to

exponents of the newer method. Whether by reason merely of their novelty or because something in their technique was akin to the modern spirit, certain it is that these German dancers seized on the fancy of their audience. What brought down the house was a strange, barbaric suite—of angular attitudes on the part of the dancers and clackety rhythms on the part of its accompanying orchestra. In spite of the lateness of the hour—after midnight—call followed call at the end of the number, and, for several minutes, it was impossible to proceed with the programme. Last trams were departing for the suburbs—but what matter? A Florentine audience had seen what it admired, and nothing could stay its delight.

IX. GAMES, NEW AND OLD

MUCH as it has done for games and sports, the Fascist regime does not claim to have originated the cult thereof in Italy; even so far back as the pre-war period the cult was in existence and adding to the number of its votaries. The first years of the twentieth century saw a considerable advance on the athletic usage of the nineteenth, when school gymnastics (and not much of that) was the only form of physical education imparted to Italian youth. But if Fascism was not responsible for the introduction of modern athleticism into Italy, it was largely responsible for its popularization; the physical fitness of the nation was one of its ideals; hence, with its advent to power, games and sports were speeded up. Football and kindred exercises were no longer an affair of scattered clubs and individual enthusiasts; they were a factor in the training of the younger generation, a recognized, essential factor. It is since the Year One of the Fascist Revolution (which, reckoned by ordinary calendar, is the year 1922) that the stadium has become a national institution and that a college has been founded in Rome for the instruction of young men as teachers of physical training. This Fascist academy was inaugurated in 1928, and is housed in the Palazzo Farnesina—temporarily housed, until the buildings designed for it shall be ready for its occupation. Its students are a hundred and fifty in number, and they qualify for appointments as instructors by a residential course of two years.

The effect upon the nation of this intensive culture of athletics has been marked. The race that only a few decades ago knew no exercise more thrilling than its school gymnastics for an hour or two a week now plays outdoor games with gusto, crowds to watch football matches, and runs its newspapers devoted to nothing but sport. As in other languages, the term "sport" remains untranslated—in spite of the tendency to oust foreign terms from Italian speech, no substitute has yet been found for it. The Frenchified *hotel* nowadays must give place to the native *albergo*; but if you are interested in cycling, or interested in football, you still buy a *Gazetta dello Sport*. Judging by the space allotted to it in the ordinary as well as the sporting press, the ups and downs of the Italian football championship are followed by a large section of the public with a keenness equal to that displayed by our own enthusiasts for the game. A newspaper intended for general consumption thinks nothing of devoting a full page of its space to reports and forecasts of various matches, and it will give a couple of its news columns to a description of some special encounter. And, in spite of the fact that the popularity of the game is of recent growth, the level of accomplishment would seem to be high; at any rate, last summer (1931) a visiting football team, hailing from Scotland, was on several occasions laid low, and with ease, by the Italian teams opposed to it. With so much ease and on so many occasions that the British colony in Italy, I was given to understand, was feeling ruffled, not to say resentful, at the poor show put up by its countrymen, whose visit had been treated as an athletic event, and whose humbling in the Roman stadium had been witnessed by the Duce himself. It should be said, in excuse for the outplayed Scots, that

the Italian summer of 1931 was more than commonly warm—even the Italians found its temperature too high to be pleasant. Conditions, therefore, must have been more than commonly trying to men who, even in our temperate climate, look on football as a game for the cooler months of the year. At the same time, why send a team that is liable to collapse in unfamiliar weather conditions?

Perhaps one of the reasons for the rapid improvement of Italian football is the fact that Italy has an inherited tradition of the game—so, perhaps, an inherited aptitude. "Soccer" and "Rugger" may have come to her by way of the Anglo-Saxon; but "Soccer" and "Rugger" are not the only varieties of football—there are other and older forms of the game which once were familiar to the youth of the Italian peninsula. One enthusiast for sport and his country's past once sketched for me the history of Italian football. Originally the game was an import from Hellas; like much else, the Romans acquired it from the Greeks, and the game, though at times it had languished, had never, since classic days, died out. The zest for football shown to-day was shown in equal measure by earlier generations.

A witness to its hold upon young Italy of the past is the festive ceremony of the *Giuoco di Calcio*, recently revived in Florence. The *Giucoco di Calcio* is a spectacle as well as a game and its revival, after a lapse of many years, is due, no doubt, to a laudable desire to provide entertainment for the tourist. The incident it commemorates is four hundred years past: a football match played under fire. A gay gesture of defiance to those who encircled her in siege; one of the last brave gestures of the city of Florence before she fell from her old glory as a city-state and was merged in the grand-dukedom of

Tuscany! Three years before she had risen against her Medici and driven them forth; not for the first time—and, not for the first time, they returned. The Pope was a Medici, bent on her undoing. To bring the rebellious city to her knees he allied himself with the emperor, and the troops of Charles V, under Philibert of Orange, marched against Florence and camped upon the hills around her. The Renaissance artist was a man of many talents, and it was Michelangelo, as engineer-in-chief, who strengthened the Florentine fortifications against Philibert; but, spite of his bastions, the city was doomed—and in the end the imperialist won through. The end, however, did not come swiftly; the siege dragged on—and while it dragged, the youths of the city, to relieve its tedium, played a football match in the wide Piazza Santa Croce. The Piazza Santa Croce was overlooked by the heights whereon enemy troops were encamped; the imperialists, seeing the game in progress, saw the opportunity of getting in a blow, trained their guns on the piazza, and fired. The football team, however, declined to be daunted by this rude interference with its pastime; guns or no guns, it continued as before, and played out the game to the end. The city was proud of its young men's bravado, and did not willingly forget it; it was the custom, for many years after, to give it annual commemoration by the playing of a match in the piazza. As time went on the practice fell into desuetude, until modern local patriotism, in combination with the need of tourist traffic, revived it, and revived it with splendour.

The game nowadays is no longer played in the place of its origin, the Piazza Santa Croce; it has been moved to the Piazza della Signoria—as being more central, the heart of the town, more convenient for display and the

erection of stands for spectators. It is played between teams which are known (and clad) as the Greens and the Whites, and which represent two sections of the town—the Arno being the barrier which divides the sections. It is an imposing game in the matter of numbers, as each side runs to twenty-seven players. Fifty-four in all, clad in green and white fancy dress!

Any game of football is a mystery to me, and this was no exception to the rule; I can only bear record that this game, to the eyes of an inexpert witness, had more resemblance to Rugby than to Association. That is to say the players were allowed to carry the ball and run with it, and they struggled in groups in a manner reminiscent of the scrum. Beyond that I grasped little of its method and technique; I gathered, however, it was far from comprehensible to the players of other kinds of football. I had a young Englishman as my neighbour on the stand, and to him, from time to time, I addressed my ignorant inquiries. One of them related to the manner of scoring, and he told me, somewhat doubtfully, that, as far as he could make out, the scoring went largely by penalty; as many points were made by the failures of opponents as by the achievements of your own side. As far as he could make out. . . . We knew at any rate when a goal had been scored because somebody fired a gun and the teams changed ends, the change-over being led ceremoniously by the White and Green standard-bearers, waving their white and green standards. I may add that the game was by no means of the kid-glove order; there were two or three casualties before it came to an end. One man was badly kicked in the face, and the injuries of another were sufficiently serious to call for removal on a stretcher. There was also a disagreement which involved a couple of the players and an official,

who, I suppose, was a referee; but the difference of opinion, though acute, was but temporary. Among the spectators of Florentine origin, local partisanship found plenty of expression; green flags and white flags waved from the stands and the rival teams were cheered to the fray by their admirers.

To those who are neither local supporters of the rival teams nor earnest students of the footballers' craft, the real interest of this *Giuoco di Calcio* lies in the beauty of its spectacle. For Florence has revived her old spectacle in its period dress; here is football as the Medici saw it. The fifty-four players appear on the ground, not in shorts and green or white jerseys but in green or white costumes of the year 1530, when the legendary football match was played. Slashed doublets—discarded when the game began; and slashed trunks—not discarded, and which, though extremely picturesque, were distinctly less serviceable than the ordinary unromantic shorts. Nor was the pageant of the *Giucoco di Calcio* confined to the actual players of the game and the slashed greens and whites of their costume; the football game was not the whole of the ceremony—there was the flamboyant march, the procession through the principal streets. It was a procession of more than the fifty-four footballers; there were pikemen, there were drummers, there were standard-bearers, horsemen—the number must have run into hundreds—and all of them were splendid in the garb of the Florentine Renaissance. A stream of fine colour winding through the city; winding through the streets, all beflagged and all crowded, and into the sanded Piazza della Signoria; and then, for the game, the non-football-playing part of it flowing into the loggia at the end. Round the other three sides of the piazza were stands, but the loggia was kept clear of

other spectators than those who formed part of the pageant; so that, looking towards that end of the piazza, you saw none of your contemporaries, in drabs, blacks, and greys, you saw an audience that was purely old Florentine. Clad as in the days when men were not afraid of gay colour: in plumed hats and breastplates and bright velvets—purples, reds, oranges, and blues. Then the horsemen who ranged themselves, in all their glad finery, in front of the loggia were a link with the past as well as an item in the pageant; they were members (so my programme informed me) of old Florentine families. Some of the names on that programme were familiar all the world over; one or two double-barrelled Medici—the direct line being extinct, one concluded Medici on the distaff side! And Pazzi, which is also writ large in the annals of the city-state—linked in enmity with Medici; recalling the Pazzi conspiracy against the ruling house, Lorenzo the Magnificent and his brother. The sacrilegious plan for murder in a church, during celebration of the Mass; when an archbishop, Salviati of Pisa, gave signal for the drawing of daggers by the elevation of the Host. (Of a truth there was need of a Savonarola in a city where such things could be!) Had things gone as planned by the prelate and his fellow-conspirators, neither of the brothers of the house of Medici would have left the church alive. As it was, the essential of the plot miscarried; Lorenzo, the elder, was but slightly wounded, and lived to wreak his vengeance. It was the younger Medici only who fell to the daggers of two of the conspirators, Bandini and Francesco Pazzi. Both of them swung for it—Francesco Pazzi from the same window as the sacrilegious prelate of Pisa. . . . Then Peruzzi, whom England, a King of England, once cost dear; it was the Peruzzi as



Zaccaria

Football Match in Costume, Florence

well as the Bardi of Florence who loosened the strings of their money-bags for our Edward III, making him loans for his endless wars in France. The Florentine money-bags thus emptied were not refilled; Edward borrowed, spent, and could not be brought to repayment; and his Florentine creditors, the Bardi and Peruzzi, suffered. . . . Names dating from the era of the city-state, a form of political grouping which has ceased to exist; but which, of all forms of grouping known to mankind, was the most favourable to intellect and art. Size—immensity—has an intoxicating effect on the human imagination; we straighten with pride at the thought of an empire on which the sun never sets, we thrill at the prospect of a world-state, an all-embracing world-state. Imperialism, internationalism—for most of us, I imagine, their attraction is their quality of immensity. Yet the glory that was Greece was the glory of cities whose entire population could be lost in London or New York; if size be the standard, cities second-rate, third-rate, fourth-rate. Dante and his genius were born to a town that to-day would be small for a county capital; and, for love of it, the bread that he ate in his exile was salt. It was for the citizens of no mean city (though a small one) that Brunelleschi planned and built his dome and Giotto reared his lily of a tower. These were men who did not think in immensities; their labours and their interests, their loves, hates, and prides were confined. We run to millions where they ran to thousands; it is necessary, therefore, for the modern world to think in immensities. But when we think imperially or internationally do we think as keenly, do we think as splendidly as those whose interests were confined within more manageable limits? Do we think as keenly or as splendidly as the citizens of Athens or of Florence? The answer would seem to be

in the negative. . . . If precedent and history go for anything, the growth of a man's wits is best encouraged (other conditions being equal) when he is born into a community of moderate size; when he is born into a society of teeming millions, his intellect, likely enough, will be swamped and stifled. Brains, like bodies, need their elbow-room and air.

Whatever the cause, this at least is certain: that no huge agglomeration of human beings has outstripped the little states of Greece and Italy in quality and quantity of intellect. Those who dwelt there, in their prime, knew themselves citizens of no mean city; and that is a stimulus, an urge to endeavour, which is passing away from the world. Pride in a place and love for it has meant inspiration to the art of building; it was as much in pride of city as in love of God that the Middle Ages piled their great churches towards heaven. The sense of being citizens of no mean city—we can see what it has done for those who went before us, but we may not keep it living in ourselves. Pride and love of place, as our ancestors knew them, are the characteristics of a people that throws out roots; of a people of stationary habits that expects, as a rule, to die where it is born; not of men who remove themselves hither and thither, as impulse leads them or the need for money drives. . . . Because we remove ourselves hither and thither and do not strike root in the manner of our fathers, it does not follow that our sense of the beautiful will shrivel and die down or that we shall have less need of beauty in our lives; but it will be beauty conceived in a different spirit, for the use of the tenant and the migrant. When you build for the use of those who pass by, your ideals and your methods must needs be different from those of the men who raised their dwellings in the pride of

long family possession; building for the heritage of their grandsons' grandsons, who, even as they, should serve the city-state and aspire to her honours and her dignities. Fine and lovely achievements they have left us, these rooted generations, in their one spot beloved over all; fine and lovely things whose like we may never see again, if the love of the one spot dies out of us. If, indeed, it is a world-state that lies ahead of us—in all its vastness and flat amiability—then something must happen to the soul of man before its amiable vastness becomes his inspiration and the motive of his art—in the fashion of his own small place!

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It was in Florence, or rather on the outskirts of Florence, in its stadium on the hill, that I attended another athletic festivity; not of footballers this time, but of teams of women athletes. An international affair, attended by representatives of a dozen different countries, and widely advertised as an Olympiad of Grace (*Olympiade della Grazia*). Unlike the *Giuoco di Calcio*, however, this women's sports meeting, despite its title, was not popular with the Florentine public; not even curiosity to see young women disporting themselves in a garb and fashion unusual in Italy could bring it to the stadium in sufficient numbers to fill even a quarter of the seats. The two or three Florentine women to whom I spoke of the *Olympiade della Grazia* all smiled, with a tinge of amused contempt, and said no, they had seen nothing of it—it was not the kind of thing they cared for. One of them, when I asked her why she was not interested, said that public contests of this kind for girls were not approved of by the ordinary Italian woman. Exercise, yes; gymnastics and so on, for purposes of

physical training and improvement in health; but not running and jumping and throwing heavy weights before an audience, in the fashion of men. Of such exhibitions, she must say she disapproved; and I should find that most Italian women felt as she did. I wished I had known beforehand how general was this Florentine prejudice against public athletics for women; the knowledge, gained in time, would have saved me from the wastage of several good lire on my seat for the Olympiad of Grace. As it was, being determined to be well placed and see all there was to see, I paid for a ticket admitting to the high-priced stand, when I could have seen quite as well and sat quite as comfortably in the uncrowded region of the cheap. So lonely was I in my exalted expensiveness that I hastily removed myself to a less distinguished quarter of the stadium, where friends and adherents of the competitors were sitting more thickly. I should add that the audience, though small, was remarkably keen, and I was interested to note that it included a strong contingent of young men whom I guessed to be members of local athletic organizations. Whatever their status, they followed the events with expert attention and gave unstinted applause to the victors.

In all probability the prejudice against athletic sports for women will be a thing of the past before many years are over; but at the present moment I imagine that the Italian girl athlete must be a young person of courage—the kind of courage that stands up to public opinion. Even those who, at the present moment, encourage her, encourage with a note of apology. As witness the following comment on the *Olympiade della Grazia*, culled from a Florentine paper. (The chronicler, while anxious to justify the meeting, is plainly aware that not all his readers will see eye to eye with its promoters.)

"If," so he writes, "if a woman has a beautiful face, then sport will not deprive her of it; if her face, on the other hand, is unattractive, sport will not provide it with beauty. But when from the face we turn to the figure, then we can affirm, without fear of contradiction, that athletic sport does improve the appearance by an added strength and plasticity. There are exceptions, of course, but they are exceptions that only prove the rule!

"Those who were present at the recent Florentine sports meeting saw, when they looked on the team of German women, not, perhaps, faces of the Venus type, but perfectly developed bodies, healthy and finely proportioned. Germany and England were the two nations whose representatives carried off the palm, and the English team also (with the one exception of —) consisted of well-made women."

Here I note that the writer evidently does not share the current admiration for the lean. The British representative whom he excepted was a slim, very slim, young woman—whose pace as a sprinter was no doubt due in part to her lack of *avoirdupois*.

The journalist continues:

"Those spectators who looked on at the high jump—which was perhaps the best worth seeing of all the events—must have been convinced that young women are not coarsened by the cult of athletics; that, on the contrary, they acquire through it harmony of movement and grace in their strength. The girl who is skilled in physical exercises is thereby fitting herself for her future as a good wife and mother, and is ensuring the good health of the children she will bring into the world."

I have quoted the above passage at some length, because it seems to me representative of a customary attitude towards women and their interests—their

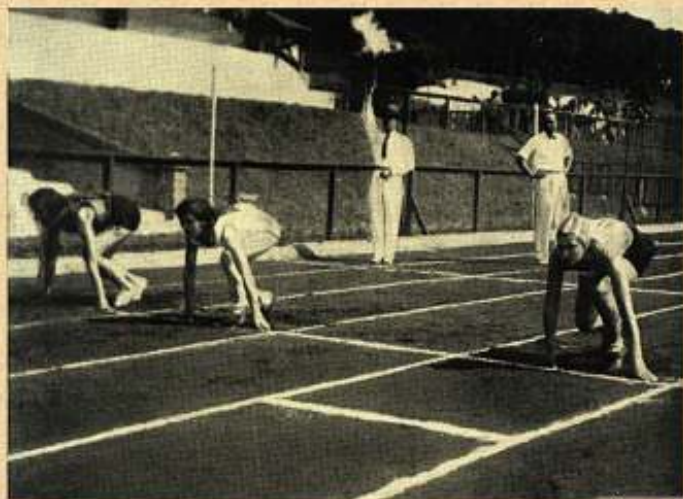
interests in general, not only their games and their sports. (The attitude, I hasten to add, is not confined to Italy, though more marked there than, nowadays, in England.) Read the passage with attention, and you will realize that the writer advocates athletics for women not because of any advantage that may accrue to themselves — any added enjoyment of personal skill, any bodily zest or personal sense of good health — but because he has convinced himself that their leaping and running and putting of weights will not lessen their attraction for the opposite sex or be in any way detrimental to their function of motherhood. In any community where the masculine element is uppermost the conception of woman is practically bound to be synonymous with that of wife and mother; and in Italy of to-day the masculine element is undoubtedly uppermost. As a matter of course, therefore, the girl is considered only as wife and mother-to-be; and the real and only problem with regard to her indulgence in athletics, or any other form of physical exercise, is that which the Florentine journalist has stated: Does her prowess on the sports ground lessen her sex appeal, and thereby lessen her chances of entering the marriage state? And, granted that athletics do not take from her charm, how does their practice affect her in her function of motherhood? If these two questions are answered satisfactorily, the existing prejudice against women's athletics should die down. Possibly with swiftness, since Fascism has set itself to the production of a healthy race; and it is likely enough that the marked improvement in the physique of the German girl since she discarded her former sedentary habits and took to open air and the sports ground has not passed unnoticed by those in Fascist authority.

Whether or no it was approved by the general public, the Florentine Olympiad of Grace was a well-managed function, where everything went off smartly and in friendly fashion. The contingents of the various nationalities appeared to be enjoying themselves; the winning team was that representing Great Britain, with the German hard upon its heels. There was an orchestra in attendance, and, when the finals were contested, it was kept busy with the playing of national anthems. When one of my countrywomen carried off a race, the victor was led forward by a master of the ceremonies, who lifted his arm in the Roman salute while the band played *God Save the King* and the audience rose to its feet. The next item in the programme—the hurling of the javelin—resulted in a German victory; whereupon the little ceremony was repeated as before, but, this time, with *Deutschland über Alles* as accompaniment, in lieu of *God Save the King*.

It seems strange that, with all the new enthusiasm for athletics and the health cult, the swimming-bath is not yet an Italian institution. Stranger still when one thinks of the torrid summer climate; and strangest of all when one thinks of the Roman tradition, of which Fascism proclaims itself heir—the Roman tradition which included luxurious bathing. Rome itself, where you get the impression in summer that a sausage would fry on the pavement; Rome where there is a stadium for other forms of exercise—and thermæ, ruins of extensive thermæ; Rome has not yet achieved a swimming-bath. It is true that in the plans for the Foro Mussolini—where the Academy for Physical Training will be housed and provision made for every sort of exercise—two

swimming-baths are included; but the Foro Mussolini is not yet. Meanwhile, if you want to get into your swimming-kit, it is a case of rail or road to the seaside; you must journey to Ostia, which is fourteen miles away. There is, I believe, an alternative of some sulphur baths inland; but they also mean a journey, and a journey of about the same length. Closer at hand there is nothing, and nothing in the city itself. The Tiber does not run to riverside baths; now and then you see boys splashing into its current from the banks, as they splash into the Thames when tide is low in London—but that's all. Florence also has nothing to bathe in but her Arno—her Arno just as it is. Bologna, by exception, has facilities for swimming at her stadium—facilities which I regret I was not able to sample, my time in the city of the colonnades being fully taken up with other matters. Perhaps it is the nearness of most parts of the Italian peninsula to the sea, and the facilities for reaching it, on one side or the other, that make the inland swimming-bath comparatively unnecessary. Still, when one thinks of the heat of the Italian summer—and thinks of the Roman tradition . . .

One does not expect the Italian to feel his native heat as the foreigner feels it; but, all the same, I have sometimes been astonished at his indifference to the mounting mercury. It is not only that he does not need the solace of the swimming-bath against his blazing noon; it is not only that he plays his football at mid-summer; it is his habit of wearing, in the hottest of weather, garments that are heavy and dark. It was curious, following on a couple of summers spent in Germany, where the coming of warm weather puts the men straightway into shirt-sleeves and where the cult of gay colour expresses itself in the joyous cretonnes



Zaccaria

Women's International Sports, Florence
(Note the empty benches)



Locchi, Florence

Florentine Athletic Team

of the women: it was curious, after that, to spend a summer in Italy, which runs to the sombre in regard to its clothing, and the conventional men's uniform of tweed and serge seems to be far more strictly adhered to than it is in our own country. I used to wonder in July at the thickness of the men's coats and waistcoats; wonder, and likewise admire their endurance. As for the absence of colour in dress—it may be that something in the soul of New Italy demands the sombre; else why the choice of the black shirt? . . . Women's hot-weather clothes, too, however light in texture, are quieter by far than they would be in Germany, quieter also than in England. You do not so often see, as with us, a flash of blue, red, or yellow enlivening the background of the street.

X. ALTO ADIGE

NEW Italy is not only a matter of the Fascist Revolution, its works and ways, and a younger generation trained to health, discipline, and patriotism. There is also a new geographical Italy, consisting of territory which, in pre-war days, lay outside her national borders; territory, for the most part, relinquished by a broken Austria when she signed the Treaty of St. Germain. Much of it is flesh of her Italian flesh and bone of her Italian bone—*Italia* which once was *irredenta*; but part of it is alien, by blood and by tradition, a province cut away from the Tyrol.

We, whose frontier, for so long as history remembers, has been the unchangeable frontier of the sea, find it difficult to realize, without turning to old maps, the frequent impermanence of the land-frontier—to realize how fluid are the borders of those nations that are not surrounded by water. Nearly always, when the nations have taken up arms, they have reshaped the map of continental Europe; cutting slices of territory from the countries that have suffered defeat, and adding them to those that have come out victorious from the struggle. The position and outline of Germany in the Middle Ages was very different from her position and outline to-day; compare her two maps, and she seems to have had a push eastward. Nor is France what she was a few centuries ago; on the west her sea-frontier, like our own, is immovable, but she has expanded to the east

and the north. As for Poland, once a kingdom of first-class importance but possessing no advantage of natural frontier, she, at the end of the eighteenth century, vanished altogether from the map of Europe, her territory torn in three pieces; and only after the lapse of a century and a quarter did she make her reappearance as one of the comity of nations. . . . Remembering the fate of Poland and the frequent impermanence of other land-borders, there is nothing to wonder at in the constant craving of the land-bordered state for a "natural" frontier—a line of defence by natural barrier, by water or by mountain range. The natural frontiers that ensure defence, and advantage defiance, do not always, unfortunately, coincide with racial limits; and that has been the trouble in the Alpine regions of Tyrol and Trentino alike. It was because the Eastern Alps were a natural frontier that commanded the approaches to the Lombard plain that the empire of the Hapsburgs, for so long as it might, held fast to *Italia irredenta*—the southern slopes of the Alpine range which were peopled by men of Italian blood and speech. And, for the same reason—because the barrier of the Alps is a natural frontier—Italy, in her turn, has extended her borders and pushed far beyond her racial limits; claiming possession, for the sake of her security, of that which was once South Tyrol. So that she, in her turn, from her height of the Brenner, commands the approaches into the territory of a possible enemy—the roads that lead north and the roads that lead east into Austria. What once was South Tyrol, a province of Austria, to-day is Alto Adige, a province of Italy; those that were humbled to-day are exalted, and those that were mighty brought low.

Italy has not only annexed her new territory as spoils

of war and military advantage; it is her fixed determination to make of it an integral part of herself. She is working to Italianize, in speech and in thought, her new countrymen of German origin. That means, of course, an organized discouragement of the use of German and an organized attempt to substitute the use of Italian. The substitution, naturally, begins in the schools, where instruction is given to the children in the official language of the State; an hour a week only (I was told in Bolzano) being allowed for the German tongue. But though italianization begins in the schools, the process is not confined to them; what is learned in the classroom must not be counteracted by things seen and heard in the street. One of the edicts issued soon after the advent of Fascism to power ordains that all "proclamations, announcements, statements, directions, inscriptions, tables, headings, catalogues, railway guides, and, in general, all writings and descriptions which are addressed to the public or designed for it, or, though relating to private interests, accessible to the public, must be composed exclusively in the official language of the State." And the same decree of translation into the official language applies to picture cards, maps, travellers' guides, and, in general, all references to places.

So the street-names of Alto Adige have been well and truly naturalized. The *platzen* of old-time are now one and all transformed into *piazzas*, the *Munster* is now known as a *Duomo*. And, since the use of Italian for all public announcements is compulsory, it is not only the original names of the streets that have taken on Italian guise; the same thing has happened to those German Christian names that are displayed, for business purposes, on shop-fronts, etc. Was a man christened *Josef* under the old dispensation, he must nowadays

paint up his name as Italian Giuseppe; was he Rudolf, he must set on his shop-front Rodolfo; was he Alois (the local form of Lewis), it behoves him to change to Luigi. I have traced on a signboard how Rudolf, with a paintbrush, performed the needful alteration to his name; the newer touch of paint, of a slightly different colour, that closed up the *u* and made it into *o*, and that added another, and a somewhat squeezed-in *o*, at the end of the original word. For Josef and Alois translation was a longer job; they had to paint their German names right out and start over again with the official Giuseppe and Luigi.

Place-names, from Alto Adige downwards, have one and all suffered their Italian change. Some are merely adaptations from their German originals, like Bolzano for Bozen, Bressanone for Brixen, or Isarco for the River Eisak; some are translations, such as Fortezza for Franzensfeste—"Franzens" being naturally left out; while here and there is a place which is completely unrecognizable under its post-war name. Vipiteno, for instance, which once on a time was Sterzing, and whose rechristening is a sign and reminder that New Italy does not forget the link between imperial Rome and herself. Here, on the road to the barbarian north that the legions drove over the Brenner, the lowest of the Alpine passes—here stood the Roman Vipitenum that has now been called back to life! The only German place-name that does not seem to have suffered change is Gries, the twin town of Bolzano; which perhaps has not an alien ring to the ears of its Italian rulers. . . . In this matter of names, places, and language in general, one notes that the new Italian rulers of Alto Adige must be far more insistent than the bygone Austrian rulers of *Italia irredenta*, who left names like San Michele and Cortina

d'Ampezzo unmolested on their maps and their timetables. The bygone rulers of Austria, however, were not working for the goal at which Fascism aims, of a unitary political conscience—which, indeed, with their hotchpotch of imperial populations they would have found it hard to achieve.

I never put a direct question about the official language to any ex-Tyrolese with whom I came in contact—indeed I was careful not to do so; but one cannot imagine that the various changes I have mentioned above are popular with those who are called on to make them. Most English-speaking fathers and mothers would resent it if their children were trained to forgetfulness of English speech and lore; if the fortune of war had gone to the Kaiser, and Germany, in consequence, had annexed a slice of Great Britain, we should certainly have felt it as an added unpleasantness if our Johns and our Jameses had been changed into *Johanns* and *Jakobs*. And we should, I imagine, have been conscious of annoyance for a good many years when we booked at a railway station for *Baden* instead of for *Bath*, for *Ochsenfurt* instead of for *Oxford*, or for *Kambrücke* instead of for *Cambridge*. But while recognizing the hardship inflicted on the ex-Tyrolese, one recognizes its inevitability, given the Fascist point of view. There is need, from the Fascist point of view, to break Tyrolese eggs for the making of Italian omelets. If the new territory of *Alto Adige* is to become Italian in more than in name, and acquire, with the rest of the country to which it now belongs, that unity of outlook, thought, and action which it is the aim of Fascism to foster and develop, then the new territory of *Alto Adige* must be trained out of all that cuts it off from the life of the race, including its separate language and even the memory of its past. Those who

have been bred to German speech and thought are likely to cling to it, whatever name you give to their dwelling-place, and whatever name you give to themselves; but the younger generation can be caught in the schools and there trained to the speech of their Italian compatriots till it supersedes the German speech of their ancestors and becomes a new mother-tongue. And lest school influence be countered elsewhere, by the daily sights and sounds of life, the younger generation must be accustomed to think of its surroundings—its towns and its villages, its rivers and its hills, the names of its streets and the names of its neighbours—in daily terms of Italian.

Apparently the edict from which I have quoted above admits, at any rate in certain circumstances, of the posting of announcements in the German language, but not in the German language alone—an Italian translation must be added. Once, a few miles from Bressanone (which was Brixen), when I was tramping a path beside a headlong stream, I came across a rude notice-board with a brief appeal for prayer for the soul of a man who had there met his death by accident. The man had been a farmer belonging to the neighbouring village, and the request to the passer-by for prayer had doubtless been penned, in the first place, by someone to whom the Tyrolese dialect was native. Thereafter, in accordance with the law's provisions, it had been duly translated into the language of the State; and the language of the State, as in duty bound, took pride of place on the notice-board:

L'improvvisa morte accade passando per quivi al contadino

Antonio Ploner

di Scaleres il giorno 23 Settembre 1927 di anni 68.

○ Lettore sei pregato d'un divoto Pater et Ave.

which in the rustic German spoken in his lifetime by Antonio Ploner—whom his neighbours knew as Anton—ran as follows:

Hier verunglückte am 23 Sept.

Anton Ploner

Wöhrer Pauer in Schalders im alter von 68 Jahren.

Man bittet um eün Vaterunser u Ave Maria.

The kindly petition was nailed to a tree by the side of a stream that ran swiftly and tumbled over boulders; which, it may be, was in spate on the September day when the *wöhrrer Pauer* of the commune of Schalders—otherwise the *contadino* of Scaleres—came to his untimely end.

It was the buying of a picture-postcard in some shop in Bolzano that first showed me how strict is the regulation against the use of advertisement, etc., in German. The card—I have it still—was an issue of the pre-Italian period, one of a series giving accurate illustration of the various peasant costumes of the district. Being of the pre-Italian period, it had been printed, no doubt, by a firm which gave its address in the German form then customary. Particulars of the costume depicted would also, as a matter of course, be given in the German tongue—and, as likely as not, it would have been described by the forbidden adjective, "Tyrolese," while certainly the pre-war name would be given of the district in which it was worn. Both the address of the publisher and the description of the costume had been well and carefully blacked out and the inscription "Alto Adige (Italia)" had been rubber-stamped on to the card in substitution. Some of the old lettering was so solidly blacked that it was quite impossible to make it out, but there were others of the words which could be deciphered

through their fainter coating of ink. Among these latter I made out the place-name of Gröden; the costume being one that was worn of old in the Romantsh (or Ladin) region which the Germans call the Grödnertal, but which, under the present dispensation, is always known as Val Gardena. . . . Val Gardena, incidentally, is the legendary birthplace of Walther von der Vogelweide, whose statue stands in the rechristened Piazza Vittorio Emmanuele at Bolzano, and who, I noticed, was sometimes described on picture-postcards, etc., as Walther only, with his von der Vogelweide left out. Perhaps the omission indicates that the *minnesinger* comes under the embargo of place-names? or perhaps it is merely due to civic pride and belief, on the part of the inhabitants of Bolzano, that there is only one Walther—who needs to be no further specified.

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It is unlikely that even the most sanguine advocate of italianization can imagine that the process of changing the German heart and speech of Alto Adige will be brief or easy of accomplishment; a unitary political conscience will hardly be acquired in the course of one generation. Languages have a knack of surviving, in spite of temptation and in spite of discouragement from on high. Prussian Poland was Prussian for a century and a quarter—part of it for longer—and the aim alike of Bismarck and Bismarck's successors was to Germanize the Slav population that partition had acquired for the Reich—and especially to substitute the speaking of German for the speaking of Polish. The tactics of Bismarck and Bismarck's successors were very much those of modern Fascism. As the schools in Alto Adige lend their aid to the dominant Italian, so

they lent their aid to the dominant German in Posen, Silesia, and West Prussia. After the Kulturkampf of the eighteen-seventies it was decreed that, throughout the educational system, German should be the sole medium of instruction. Even the private teaching of Polish, except in the case of the teacher's own family, was a serious offence in the eyes of the law, and, as such, it was visited with penalty. As for public institutions, such as theatres and libraries, German was their only use. Yet, after forty-odd years of strictly German education, forty-odd years of German theatres and libraries, the Poles of Prussia were not Prussian in heart or in mind; on the contrary, so soon as opportunity offered, they discarded their artificial German culture and lapsed into a native Polishness.

Italy may be luckier or more skilful than Prussia in her handling of a subject population. Fascism, to a certain extent at least, seems to be moulding itself on Roman traditions; and one of those traditions is the faculty of Rome for absorbing the races who passed beneath her yoke and turning the sons of her conquered into citizens. For her own sake, as well as for that of her subject Tyrolese, it is to be hoped that New Italy has inherited that useful faculty. If so be that she has, then Italy, in the course of a generation or two, may train her new nationals into a Roman pride in their citizenship. To attain that desirable end, however, she may need a double portion of the Roman faculty, since she has to deal, in her German Alps, not with the rude tribes that peopled them when the legionaries marched along the Brenner road, but with a civilized race, with a culture of its own and long sense of collective unity. And the Italian task will be rendered none the easier by the tradition of independence proper to a mountain

folk, or the legendary memory of Andreas Hofer, the patriot: who, when the greater part of Europe had been cowed to subjection, dared to embattle the peasants of the Tyrol against the military pride of Napoleon. Hofer, the innkeeper, son of the Passeiertal—which now is Passeiertal no more; a legend to more than the land for whose freedom he died. Where the German tongue is spoken he stands as a type of the courage that dares all against foreign oppression. A man of simple honesty, simple faith, and love of country; who showed in his death the same courage he had shown in his lifetime; and whose execution for the crime of his patriotism is one of the stains upon the memory of Napoleon. His story has all the elements that make for patriotic legend: faith in just quarrel, fearlessness in face of superior strength, and, in the end, martyrdom—the firing-party at Mantua. What Wallace is to Scotland, what Tell is to Switzerland, that is Hofer to his Tyrol; that and more, since he is nearer, by far more authentic, and more lovable. The legend of Andreas Hofer is not only told, it is sung in the *Hoferlied*—but not, I think, in Alto Adige, though the valley where he dwelt and the house where he was born are now on Italian soil.

For the cult of Andreas Hofer, the patriot of the Tyrol, Italy is substituting the cult of her own local hero—Cesare Battisti, martyr of *Italia irredenta*. Cesare Battisti was a son of the Trentino when it was still held in thrall by Austria; by sympathy, as well as by blood, he was Italian, but, in law, he was a subject of Franz Josef. When the war broke out, rather than fight in the Austrian ranks, he escaped across the border into Italy that was not *irredenta*; and when Italy herself joined the struggle he entered the army as a private soldier, rising later to the rank of lieutenant. In the summer of

1916, in the course of an attack on an Austrian position, he and his company were surrounded, and fell into the hands of the enemy. Being recognized by his captors, Cesare Battisti's fate was sealed. He had been taken red-handed, fighting against those who were legally his countrymen; he was an Austrian subject, and therefore a traitor and deserter. Such was the law, and those who administered it showed no mercy to the prisoner whose ill-luck had placed him in their power; two days after his capture he was hanged at Trent, in the Castello del Buon Consiglio. It is told that the last words he uttered when he came to die were a cry of "Viva l'Italia!" His place is now among the soldier-heroes of his country; every child who attends an Italian school learns of Cesare Battisti, his patriotic courage and his martyrdom.

He has other memorials of his life and death beside those that are written in school-books. There is a triumphal arch that has been built at Bolzano to commemorate the war and its Italian victory, and on its inner wall it contains a monument to Cesare Battisti. If truth be told, a somewhat gruesome monument, more commendable from the point of view of gratitude than of art: Battisti at the moment of his execution, a more than life-size relief of a head with the death-rope shown round the neck. Nor is this his only memorial in the region of Alto Adige; there is another on the summit of the Brenner Pass, in the shape of a barracks standing close to the frontier and close to the station of Brennero. It seems to be an Italian military custom to christen barracks after patriots or soldiers—at any rate, in the course of my wanderings, I noticed more than one so named. And the *caserma* that stands by the railway line, a few hundred yards from the Austrian frontier, bears

the name of the hero whom the Austrians hanged in Trent.

Andreas Hofer and Cesare Battisti, men of different races but alike in this: each died by the hand of the executioner, and died because he loved his country!

Facing page 209 is a photograph of the triumphal arch at Bolzano. It is well placed in the town; stands beside and above a bridge that spans the Isarco; and is interesting, further, as an example of the Fascist symbol used structurally. The pillars represent the *fasces*—the bundle of rods with the axe and the blade protruding. Whether officially and intentionally or not, the triumph the building commemorates is of Fascism as well as of the war; not only by the symbol of its pillared rod and axe, but by the dual inscription shown on two sides of its cornice. On the one side is recorded in the Latin tongue the fact that the arch was erected in the year 1928, in the reign of King Victor Emmanuel III; on the other that it was erected in the Year Six of the Fascist Revolution, when Benito Mussolini was Dux. The two systems of reckoning standing side by side—like the two systems of authority.

XI, THE VATICAN STATE

I WAS in Florence at the time when the disagreement between the Vatican State and the Italian Government was at its angriest; the immediate cause being the influence and activities of *Azione Cattolica*—Catholic Action—the institution accused of mingling political propaganda with its care for the religious welfare of the Catholic laity. In connection with the quarrel there was a regrettable outbreak of violence on the part of the hotheads of Fascism; it took the form of assaults on the priesthood, assaults which the Press and partisans of the Vatican declared to be both numerous and cruel. Fascism and its organs, on the other hand, declared that their number and their violence had alike been exaggerated; I was assured by an official of the party that in all Italy, with its thousands of priests, there had been but a hundred and seventy-three such attacks, and most of them were not at all serious—just cases of common assault. Church authorities, however, took them seriously enough to issue an edict forbidding the processions in the open, customary on the Feast of Corpus Christi—*Corpus Domini* they call it in Italy—for fear, it was explained, that violence would be offered to the ecclesiastics taking part in them. As to whether that fear was well-grounded I offer no opinion—official Fascism poohpoohed it, and declared the prohibition a needless precaution. But whether or no the precaution was

justified it meant that the ceremony I had hoped to see in Florence was maimed of its full processional glory; it confined itself to a progress through the aisles of the Duomo, instead of making a round of the principal streets of the city.

To the Duomo, accordingly, both worshippers and sightseers took their way; and, on entering it, saw (to my personal astonishment) a body of Blackshirts beside the main entrance, some dozen in number lined up, parade fashion, and in charge of a smart-looking officer. The purport of their coming I understood later when the procession had begun to wend its slow way round the building; for—spite of the tension between Vatican and Quirinal, spite of the angry columns in the newspapers, spite of the serious (or not serious) assaults on the priesthood—there were the Blackshirts, solemn and soldierly, taking their part in a feast of the Church and well to the fore of its ceremony. Representing a force in the life of the nation and the city and marching in company with other representatives of secular Florence; its ruler and chief magistrate, the *podestà*, and other frock-coated gentlemen who were presumably municipal worthies; and the *podestà's* gaily-dressed, fancy-dressed attendants, the *fanti* and *valetti*, splendid to behold, in the garb of a medieval Florence. And in the incongruous company of priests by the dozen and monks by the score, and of a mitred prelate bringing up the rear and murmuring his prayers beneath a canopy—in the very ranks of offended clericalism walked Fascism, reverent and soldierly.

When I had seen a little more of Fascism in action, and read a little more of its theory and principle, the incident no longer seemed incongruous; on the contrary, I saw it as significant—significant, that is to say, of the

strength of Mussolini's position as against the Vatican. For Fascism, as I have already pointed out, is not an atheistic, irreligious body; to a certain extent it is anti-clerical, but its anti-clericalism cannot be denounced as anti-Deism or even as anti-Catholicism. It has restored to the schools both the crucifix and the practice of prayer; while the religious teaching given in schools under State control is given on orthodox Catholic lines, and the teaching is by no means scamped. A reading book for younger classes which I have in my possession allots fifty-odd pages (out of four hundred odd) to direct religious instruction, including a portrait of His Holiness Pope Pius XI, as successor to the saint who was called to be Head of the Church. Then the Sunday reviews and ceremonies of Fascism are all of them timed so as not to interfere with the attendance of good Catholics at Mass; while its more important functions are often accompanied by religious ceremony. The photograph facing this page shows a Mass in progress in the open air during a Blackshirt gathering in the Alps. A clause in the new penal code enacts that "Whoever publicly reviles the religion of the State shall be punished with penal servitude up to one year"; and in a manual issued under Fascist auspices I read that it was the duty of all good Fascists to show reverence for the Catholic Church; even those who were not believers in its doctrine and mission to mankind were told it was their duty to treat it with outward respect. Obviously, Fascism of the more strenuous persuasion does not always live up to these exemplary recommendations; an epidemic of assaults on priests is hardly compatible with outward respect or a strong sense of reverence for the Church. The epidemic has to be admitted, even if authorities of opposing parties vary



Foto Centrale Pireti

Fascist Gathering in the Alps. Open-air Mass

with regard to its extent and seriousness; but it must also be admitted that the attitude of Fascism, taken all round, is not anti-clerical in the usual sense of the word. I suspect that it is an attitude far more difficult to meet with dignity and counter with success; the attitude not of an enemy seeking your downfall, but of the candid friend who, in your own best interest, calls attention to your slips and failings. The failing, in this instance, being a tendency to mingle political propaganda with instruction to the laity and care for the youthful soul, and thereby to usurp a function which the State has reserved to itself.

In 1929, with the signing of the Lateran Treaty and the Concordat, the long feud between Quirinal and Vatican was believed to have been brought to an end. It was hailed as a great historic event and an agreement which both sides could accept with honour and view with satisfaction. "All Catholics rejoiced and saw in this accord one of Mussolini's most significant gestures"—such is an official comment penned shortly after the signing of the treaty. The feud which seemed to have ended had endured for close upon sixty years. By the Franco - German War and the consequent fall of Napoleon III, the Temporal Power was deprived of its strongest support against the House of Savoy; and in September 1870, when France was in the dust, Victor Emmanuel II made formal demand to Pope Pius IX for the cession of Rome and its incorporation in the kingdom of Italy. The demand was refused, as perhaps it was bound to be; whereupon the army of Victor Emmanuel was ordered to march against Rome. It was on the twentieth of September of the year 1870 that General Raffaele Cadorna made a breach in the wall of the Eternal City—the spot is marked beside the

Porta Pia. Through that breach he marched in and took possession—and flew from the Capitol the tricolour of Italy United. The Temporal Power of the Papacy was a thing of the past, and Pope Pius IX, bereft of his lordship, shut himself into the Vatican and described himself, henceforth, as its prisoner. The kingdom of Italy had attained to its desired, its destined capital, but attained it at the price of Catholic enmity. The Rome of the Church declined to make one with the Rome of secular government.

To one who is not of the Roman Catholic faith it has often seemed strange that a Church holding worldwide spiritual dominion should hanker after the small dignity of material lordship over a few square miles of the Papal State. Yet so it was and so it is, and the essential of the Lateran Treaty of 1929 is the clause whereby "Italy recognizes the Holy See's full ownership and exclusive and absolute power over the Vatican, as at present constituted, thereby creating the Vatican City"; and declares further that "the sovereignty and exclusive jurisdiction of the Holy See over the Vatican City means that there can be no intervention in the said city on the part of the Italian Government, and that no other authority shall be recognized there but that of the Holy See." . . . So there it stands, a true sovereign state of the material order; an independent state of the smallest, that can be walked round of a morning and traversed on foot, from gate to gate, in some fifteen or twenty minutes; an independent state with its own nationals—nationality being limited to such persons as reside permanently within the bounds of the Vatican City and ample facilities being offered to those who so desire to resume their Italian nationality when they cease to inhabit papal territory. With its own State

governor appointed by the pontiff and responsible for the maintenance of public order and the protection of the Vatican citizens; with its own royal privileges recognized beyond its borders (all cardinals, the treaty stipulates, shall enjoy in Italy the honours of princes of the blood); with its own wireless station and its own post and telegraph services, its own police and detective force, and its own railway station a-building. Further I am told that you can buy tobacco in the Vatican City more cheaply than you can in the surrounding kingdom of Italy—all of which rights and appurtenances no doubt add, in some mysterious fashion, to the dignity of the pontiff who is God's vicegerent on earth!

One right and appurtenance of this independent state—a national prison system—the Vatican City is apparently willing to dispense with. So it would appear, at least, from Article Twenty-two of the Lateran Treaty, whereby Italy undertakes, should she be so requested by the Holy See, to provide on Italian territory for the punishment of offences committed on Vatican territory; while should the offender have eluded the papal police and taken refuge in Italian territory, no request by the Holy See is needed—the fugitive will be treated as an offender against Italian law. In return for this use of Italian prison accommodation, the Holy See undertakes to extradite any persons accused of offences against Italian law who may have taken refuge in the dominions of the Papal State.

The treaty whereby the Roman question was declared to be "definitely and irrevocably solved and so eliminated" has not fulfilled the happy expectations of its high contracting parties; within little more than two years of its signing, the Roman Church and the Italian State were once more in open hostility. Inevitably so,

one supposes, for here are two institutions which, in their ways, are curiously alike, both intolerant of heresy, both striving to form a "unitary conscience" and to obtain direction of the same, each striving to engender a mass obedience through devotion to its own ideals and striving to engender it by much the same means—the influence and control of the young. There can be little doubt that Fascism, at any rate among its more idealistic adherents, has many of the characteristics of a religion. The hope in its power, the faith in its future, the readiness to give service even at the price of rigid discipline and self-sacrifice—these are the qualities that go to the making of churches. And the intolerance that stamps out opposition and resents all other forms of thought is a habit of mind that easily allies itself with religious fervour.

It is something—an entity—akin to itself that the Roman Church finds arrayed against it and competing with it for control of the conscience of a nation, something that inspires like aims, like virtues, something that arouses like passions in its true believers. Perhaps Pius XI was not far wrong when he denounced the creed of Fascism as worship of a pagan state. Certainly it has in it the element of worship—of a state idealized into something more than a man-made institution, and a hero in whom the State is typified.

Be that as it may, here in actual contact are two proselytizing bodies, each careful of the souls and eager for the allegiance of the young, each filled with a faith in its own mission and therefore inevitably drifting towards clash and conflict; all the more easily because each has behind it the Roman tradition of authority, dominion, imperialism, and because neither has so far acquired the tradition of tolerance. Each believes in its own high duty to make the world better, and will

give way only under pressure of force and necessity. We may be sure that it was only under pressure of necessity that the Vatican ended the conflict for the time being, by signing an agreement which yielded so much to the pagan state it had denounced.

A few years ago, there was a general—and likewise a comforting—belief that in education was the panacea for most of the ills of the world, a belief that was at its strongest immediately after the war. Given education sufficiently widespread, and humanity would refuse to be duped into conflict by its rulers. (The fact that the rulers were in general better educated than the masses they were able to dupe had no power to shake our happy confidence.) We held that the catastrophe through which we had lived would have been an impossibility, that the sacrifice of millions of lives would have been spared, if the generation that tore each other's throats had been trained, in youth, to think rightly. That belief, it is probable, had a good deal to do with the urge for education which was one of the most striking phenomena of the post-war years. Education—a training in right thinking—was a means of salvation for the race.

Fundamentally, no doubt, the proposition is correct: a training in right thinking would save us from many a political catastrophe, and in time it might even produce the desired race of supermen. Unfortunately we have not yet arrived at a common definition of the term "right thinking." It is as true on the moral plane as it is on the material that one man's meat is another man's poison, and the training that is abhorrent to one set of educationists may be highly desirable to another. The difference of opinion with regard to education in itself has often caused political conflict; and such conflict, as

education spreads, is likely to become more acute. For education is not only the preparation of the young human being for manhood, the improvement of his body, mind, and morals; it is also a means of obtaining over him the influence which is power, of directing his thoughts and his faculties. Power, its attainment and retention, has at all times been the aim of the ambitious, and the holders of power have at all times found it needful to dominate the minds of their fellows. All rulers, except they were double-dyed fools, have realized the importance of the educational machine as an instrument of power; but in past ages, when only the minority received school training and the great majority went through life illiterate, the educational machine was a puny instrument compared to the mighty engine of to-day. Thanks to the modern system of compulsory education for all and sundry, authority to-day, if it so wills intelligently, can control young minds by the million; by the agency of teachers it can direct the young mind into channels convenient for its purpose. The science of psychology would seem to encourage the idea that it is possible to mould us like clay or molten metal and turn us out in "right-thinking" masses according to the pattern desired. For my own part I hope, and likewise pray, that the science of psychology is mistaken; but if so be that it does not err, if the mind of the child is malleable as clay—what a power, what a terrible power, is that of the pedagogue! And, given that any authority believes in its mission, and is sure it thinks aright, is it conceivable that it will allow the power it can attain through education to slip into the hands of those who disagree with it—those, in other words, who think wrongly? The answer is, surely, in the negative—the emphatic negative.

That is the cause of the rift that has shown itself, spite of solemn treaty, in the relations between Church and State in Italy: grasp at the power attained through education and a different estimate of what constitutes "right thinking." As I have already pointed out, the training of children in Fascist schools cannot be called, irreligious; the teaching of orthodox Catholic doctrine is part of the ordinary curriculum. To a certain extent, therefore, the two systems of training are in agreement and work in co-operation, but to a certain extent only—there comes in eventually the vital question of supremacy. "According to Fascism's all-embracing ideal, the State must preside over and direct national activity in every field. No organization, whether political, moral, or economic, can remain outside the State." So says Rocco, the Minister of Justice—whose phrase "Fascism's all-embracing ideal" sums up the cause of quarrel with the Vatican. In pursuance of its ideal, the State must preside over the national activity of the Catholic Church; and the Catholic Church, through its centuries of history, has refused again and again to submit to such a claim. What the twentieth century is witnessing is yet another more sophisticated phase of the struggle whose partisans once called themselves Ghibelline and Guelf, and whereof one of the episodes was the humbling of an emperor in the courtyard of Canossa and another the murder of Becket.

At the risk of wearying the reader by too frequent reference to school-books, I suggest that the origin and germ of the conflict may be found in a lesson on the Vatican City intended for children of the second class—that is to say, for children who are aged about seven. Like the lesson quoted in an earlier chapter, it runs on the conversational lines of Mrs. Markham, the place of

Mrs. Markham being taken, in this instance, by a grandfather. The grandchild, the other party to the dialogue, is a small boy, Bruno, who is introduced turning the pages of an illustrated book. At one of the illustrations, a heraldic design, little Bruno pauses in puzzlement. He points to it and asks what it means, and the grandfather, of course, replies with the necessary instruction.

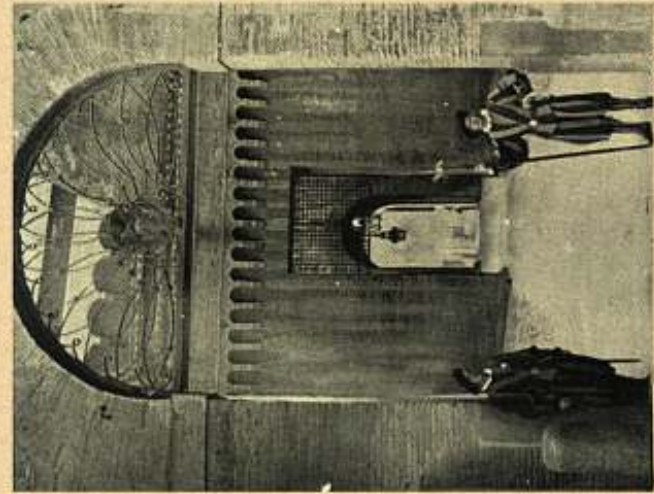
"That," he says, "is the cognizance of the Pope. The kind of globe surmounted by three crowns and a cross is the tiara; and the keys you see here are the symbols of St. Peter, who, by commission from Jesus Christ, became founder of the Catholic Church. The Supreme Pontiff is the head of the Catholic Church, which counts many millions of believers in all parts of the world. Do you know where the Pope lives?"

"At Rome," nods Bruno. "He lives in the City of the Vatican."

"That's right," approves grandfather; "and in the City of the Vatican the Pope is a sovereign. He reigns there with his own laws and regulations and has his own military force. And it was the Fascist Government which gave him this sovereignty in his little Vatican City. Though it is a little city, it is a wonderful one, because it encloses within its walls so many objects of art by the greatest Italian masters.

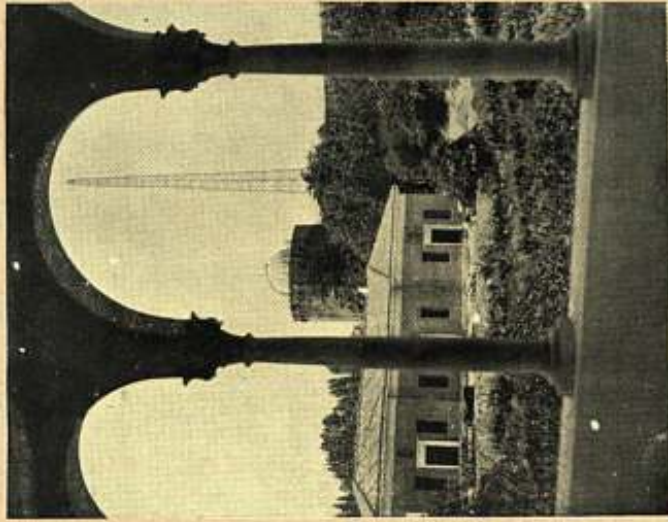
"Pilgrims and worshippers come to the city from every quarter of the world; they come to kneel before the statue of St. Peter and to receive the papal benediction, and they are protected and respected on their pilgrimage by the Government of Italy. The name of the present Pope——"

"I know," breaks in Bruno. "He is called Pius the Eleventh."



Topical

The Vatican City. Swiss Guard Barracks



Topical

The Vatican City. Wireless Station

"Bravo," says his grandfather. "But you must know, also, that Pius the Eleventh is a man of great learning and intelligence; a wise man, in fact, who has an understanding of the age in which he lives and the aspirations of the modern spirit."

Innocuous, even amiable as to content, this little conversation between Bruno and his elderly relative. Innocuous, even amiable; no word against the Church or her Head. Yet one would not be surprised to learn that the Church and her Head took inward exception to the touch of something that is almost patronage. One might say that the phrasing suggests condescension from State to Church; benevolence on the part of the Fascist Government when it bestowed on the pontiff the sovereignty of his little domain, the benevolence of a superior who also, in kindness, protects the Catholic pilgrims. There is no suggestion of atonement on the part of the Italian Government for wrong done to the Holy See by incorporation of the former Papal State in the kingdom of United Italy. The State is the benefactor of the Church, of whose Head, considered as an individual, it is good enough to express approval. . . . If the conversation between Bruno and his *nonno* had been issued from the Vatican press in a manual for the use of Catholic infancy, it can hardly be doubted that the account of the genesis of the new Papal State would have been differently phrased and placed in a somewhat different light.

And when the infant Bruno, grown a year or two older, enters the *Balilla*, and dons its black shirt and blue tie, the religious aid he will there receive may not be altogether in accordance with the papal point of view, since it "is not restricted to teaching Christian dogma and the rites of the Church but aims at promoting good

faith and honesty in general, thus contributing to raise the youthful conscience, associating faith in the Deity with that in the Mother Country and its destinies." Here, and in plenty, is material for disagreement with the views and claims of the Church. When one of the high contracting parties to the Lateran Treaty is a state which associates faith in the Mother Country with faith in the Deity, and strives for the forming of a "unitary political conscience," and when the other is a Church that has never been content with a kingdom that is not of this world, it would appear that the seeds of educational quarrel were latent in the treaty from the very hour of its signature.

As for the actual progress of the quarrel, the civil power seems to have had the better of the ecclesiastical. Mussolini, to use Bismarck's expression, has refused to go to Canossa, nor is there any reason why he should; that flaunting triumph of Church over State is a good many generations gone, and not likely to be paralleled in the twentieth century. Fascism, confronted with papal displeasure, did not budge, and it is doubtful if the Pope improved his position, as against the Fascist Government, by his appeals to Catholics abroad. One of the characteristics of the present governing class of Italy is its vehement consciousness of nationality, likely to become still more vehement in the face of appeals to the foreigner. An official reply in the Press to the Pope's encyclical put the case for the State with straightforward vigour. The Church thinks of the world at large, the State thinks of the nation. The interest of the Italian State lies in the making of good Italians. In the composition of the good Italian the Catholic spirit has an essential share, but a share only. Fascism counts the Catholic spirit as among the high values of

the nation; whatever happens, it will defend and develop that spirit in the people. But the Fascist State which, from the moment it came into being, suffered from hostility abroad and weakening at home—the Fascist State is bound to inform the minds of its citizens with all the elements necessary to good citizenship, and these elements are: Catholicism, culture, a passionate love of country and a passionate pride in it, discipline, physical fitness, and a soul in readiness for any undertaking. It is by this means that the permanence of its work is ensured. The oath that the Fascist takes when he is admitted to membership of the party is also an oath to the Catholic Faith which Fascism has linked with the regime. The phrase “which Fascism has linked with the regime” (*che Fascismo ha annesso al regime*) in itself reveals a cause of quarrel.

As regards the immediate bone of contention, Catholic Action, and its alleged political activities, the organs of Fascism have always insisted that Catholic Action was not the Church but an organized body of laymen whose incursions into the realm of politics were entirely without religious value. Catholic Action is not the Church nor is it a necessity of the Church's spiritual life. The Church has her ministers, her clergy, whose word and example should suffice to preserve the faith and carry it on; she has therefore no need of an organized activity of laymen. The Fascist State, in fact, appears in the conflict in the role of defender of the Catholic Church against those who would debase the pure gold of her religion with admixture of the world alloy of politics. As to whether the accusation of political activity was well founded, an outsider can speak with no certain knowledge, though on the balance of probabilities one would be inclined to give an affirmative

answer to the question, since the Roman Catholic Church in every age and place has always been politically minded. Certainly and openly it is working in Germany against the Fascist equivalent of Hitlerism. And even if the intention of its higher authority was that Catholic Action should refrain from political activity, it may well have been that subordinate officials may have let their zeal for the Church outrun their discretion.

Be that as it may, when the conflict between all-embracing Church and all-embracing State had been proceeding for a week or two, it was conducted in some quarters of the Press in a sufficiently angry temper. As regards facilities for Press propaganda, the State, as a matter of course, had advantages over the Church; the *Osservatore Romano* had to cope single-handed with the journals inspired by the Government, a numerous body. Outside Rome, moreover, while the quarrel was proceeding, it was not always easy to obtain the *Osservatore Romano*. There was probably some truth in complaints on the part of the Vatican's supporters that the circulation of the Vatican organ was being hindered of set official purpose—another point of resemblance between Fascist State and Church is that both consider censorship a legitimate weapon and neither professes adherence to the doctrine of free thought and speech. . . . Sometimes the hitting in the contest was fairly savage; I remember reading an anti-papal article in one of the principal Italian newspapers which contained a list of the clerical offenders who, in the course of the preceding two or three months, had made their appearance in the civil courts on proven charges of indecency or offences against public morals. And great was the exultation of the writer of the article when he could point out that one of the ecclesiastics thus listed and pilloried had

been a personage of importance in his local Catholic Action.

The peace (or truce) between the high contending parties which was agreed on after two or three months of conflict was presumably something of a compromise, in the manner of most peace treaties; apparently, however, the balance of advantage was distinctly on the side of the State. Catholic Action has lost one of its holds on the younger generation; it has undertaken, from this time forth, to renounce the pursuit of games and athletics for its members. The intention, obviously, is to make physical training a monopoly, or near to a monopoly, of the Fascist system of education, a field upon which religious bodies may not trespass. Here is a blow to the Church through loss of a means of influence over boys and young men, but in justification of Fascist high-handedness it should be remembered that it was Fascism, not the Church, that pioneered in physical training: the Church did but follow on a path already beaten. This embargo on Catholic Action's athletics is an example, striking and undisguised, of the tendency to use education in the interests of political power.

It is permissible to wonder, however, whether a far more serious blow to the influence of the Church was not dealt by the papal encyclical on Catholic Action—the famous encyclical that contrary to all precedent was first published outside Italy, having been secretly conveyed beyond her borders by Vatican courier. One of its clauses, I imagine, was as astonishing to many good Catholics as it was to many non-members of the Roman Church, the clause, I mean, in which Pius XI advises mental reservation in the taking of the Fascist oath. The vital passages run as follows:

"You ask Us, Venerable Brethren, in view of what has taken place, what is to be thought about the formula of the oath which even little boys and girls are obliged to take, that they will execute orders without discussion from an authority which, as we have seen and experienced, can give orders against all truth and justice and in disregard of the rights of the Church and its souls which are already by their very nature sacred and inviolable. Takers of this oath must swear to serve with all their strength, even to the shedding of blood, the cause of a revolution which snatches the young from the Church and from Jesus Christ and which inculcates in its own young people hatred, violence, and irreverence without respecting (as recent events have abundantly proved) even the person of the Pope.

"When the question is posed in such terms, the answer from the Catholic point of view, as well as from a simply human point of view, is inevitably one and We, Venerable Brethren, do not wish to do otherwise than confirm the answer already given. Such an oath, as it stands, is unlawful.

"Faced as We are by grave anxieties which We know are also yours, Venerable Brethren, especially those of you who are bishops in Italy, We are preoccupied first of all by the fact that so many of our children, young boys and young girls, are inscribed and have taken membership with that oath. We deeply pity so many consciences tortured by doubts (torments and doubts concerning which We have incontrovertible evidence) precisely because of that oath as it has been interpreted, especially after the recent occurrences.

"Realizing the many difficulties of the present hour, and knowing that membership of the party and the oath are for countless persons a necessary condition of their

career, of their daily bread, and even of their life itself, We have sought to find a way which would restore tranquillity to those consciences, reducing to a minimum the external difficulties of the situation. It seems to Us that such a means for those who have already received the membership card would be to make for themselves before God, in their own consciences, a reservation such as 'Saving the laws of God and of the Church,' or 'In accordance with the duties of a good Christian,' with the firm proposal to declare also externally such a reservation if the need of it arose."

I remember a Catholic, jealous for the honour of his Faith and Church, assuring me that the idea that "mental reservation" was permitted to the Jesuit was based on a misconception, a misreading of a rule of the Society of Jesus. I wonder what he thought when he read the encyclical dealing with Catholic Action? For my own part, it reads to me as a confession of weakness, an evasion of the challenge which Fascism flings down. Fearing to counsel an open defiance, the Vatican falls back on "mental reservation"—which discourtesy might call by another and a harsher name. And falls back, one imagines, to the hurt of its own prestige; the publication of the encyclical on Catholic Action must surely be counted as a gain for the other side!

XII. "CIRCUSES"

WE in England, in the course of the last few years, have heard a good deal of the Russian Government's use of the film for its own official purposes—as a means of education, in the political, as well as the ordinary, sense of the word. So far, however, we have heard comparatively little of the similar Italian system and the propaganda which Fascism achieves by the medium of the moving picture; yet Fascist authority, like Soviet authority, was swift to recognize the pictorial power that lay to its hand in the cinema. In accordance with its precept that no organization can remain outside the State, which "in every field of collective life has its own mission to fulfil," it has entered the field of photographic entertainment and taken firm control of the collective pleasure of "the pictures."

And by "control" I do not mean merely the negative activity of a censorship, such as that which is exercised in London by a committee of the London County Council. The functions of such a censorship are critical only and its action takes the form of veto; it has no concern with the productive side of the cinema. Official control of the cinema in Italy means a great deal more than that; it means positive guidance and actual provision of output. The art and trade of the moving picture is one of the means—and not the least important—whereby the Fascist Government pursues its policy



L. U. A. D. E.

The Open-air Cinema. A Performance in Rome

of keeping in contact with democracy, the mass of the people; and one of the means whereby it continues that process of education in orthodox political thinking which it begins in the primary schools and the ranks of the *Balilla*.

The organization, operating from Rome, which provides and distributes the official output of photography, claims to be the first institution of its kind in the world. It is commonly, conveniently, and aptly known as L.U.C.E.—a condensation into one brief word of its earlier and more imposing title, *L'Unione Cinematografica Educativa*. This association did not start as a Government enterprise; on the contrary, it began life as a limited liability company, with a capital of a million lire behind it and a directorate convinced of the high educational value of the film. As a limited liability company the undertaking made good, and its possibilities of service to the State were soon perceived by the omnipotent Head of the Government. His patronage and encouragement took the form of an official status, and the private enterprise was raised to the dignity of a national institute for propaganda and culture by means of the cinema. This step in rank meant that a market was henceforth assured for its productions; the material that issues from its studios is material that must be exhibited. It is by law established that the lessees and proprietors of Italian cinema theatres are obliged to include in their programmes such educational and propagandist items as the competent authority of L.U.C.E. may ordain. Should any proprietor evade the order, and omit the specified quota of official film, he exposes himself to penalty, in the shape of a temporary closing of his premises. While if he should venture to repeat the offence, he may find himself minus his licence.

The whole network of pictorial propaganda and

education is centred at Rome in the National Institute of L.U.C.E., whereof one of the aims and objects is to let the public know what its Government has done and is doing. All the growth and energy, all the industry and splendour of New Italy, all the activities of the Fascist regime, and the benefits those activities confer on the nation are chronicled by L.U.C.E., and sent through the length and breadth of the country to exert their influence on the citizen. "The labour of fields and of factories, public works, and great public assemblies, the assistance given to the needy and unfortunate, the upbringing of the younger generation, the reorganization of the armed forces of the State, drainage works, the making of new roads, the growth and reorganization of the railway system and the mercantile marine, the activity of the *Dopolavoro* [organization for the employment of leisure]. All the miracle, in short, of material reconstruction combined with a spiritual and moral awakening which our people, united round the Duce and guided by his hand, perform from day to day; all that miracle is faithfully rendered in photographic art. And the value of that record exceeds the value of any other chronicle not only because of its power of diffusing fact and knowledge, but also because it bears historical witness to the extraordinary character of the epoch through which our nation is passing. The documented film is history seen through the eye and a link between the present and the past; it shows the process of national betterment in action." . . . Such is L.U.C.E.'s own estimate of its work for the Government and the value of that work to Government and nation at large.

In addition to ordinary and everyday news propaganda there are issued, from time to time, films relating to special activities of the Fascist regime. Some of these

have been of real political importance; the so-called "Battle of the Grain"—the Duce's campaign for the growth of sufficient wheat to render Italy independent of import from abroad—is said to have been greatly aided by pictures distributed throughout the rural districts of the country. It was never my good luck to come across any of the more important political productions, though some of them I should much have liked to see. There is, for instance, a film devoted to the Fascist militia and its work—"the life, the manners, the spirit of sacrifice, the discipline, and the power of the magnificent arm of the Fascist Revolution." And, according to L.U.C.E.'s own catalogue of its achievements there have been many other pictorial descriptions of Fascist departments and activities. Some show the work of the *fasci femminili*; in child welfare, in schools, and in the organization of the *Piccole Italiane*. Then the work of the *Dopolavoro* and the *Opera Nazionale Balilla* has also made cinema history; and it appears to be a custom with the National Institute of L.U.C.E. to issue yearly a species of chronicle, or annual register, dealing with the achievements of Italy and her Government in the course of the preceding twelvemonth. These annual records are entitled Year Six—Seven—Eight, as the case may be; the year, that is to say, as dated from the Fascist Revolution of 1922. It may be noted here that, as far as common use and practice is concerned, this new, revolutionary calendar has not superseded the old, and I do not imagine there is any intention that it shall supersede it; the reckoning according to the age of Fascism seems to be chiefly for ceremonial use, on public occasions and monuments.

It was the propagandist, educational idea that brought

into being the travelling cinema theatres—*i cinema ambulanti*—which are now an institution of Italian national life. When the matter of supplying the communes with educational pictures was gone into, it was discovered that round about five thousand of the smaller communes of Italy were lacking in any sort of picture theatre; and if no picture theatre were available for L.U.C.E. films, how was it possible to give L.U.C.E. education to the inhabitants of villages and rural districts? The difficulty, once it had been realized, was coped with, and the year 1927 saw the launching of a fleet of twenty-five cars—twenty-five perambulating cinemas. Their field of operations was varied and extensive; it stretched from the extreme north of the Italian peninsula—the Alpine border—to the extreme south and beyond it. The perambulating cinema migrated overseas, to the colonies in Africa—thereby adding many millions to its audience.

The travelling cinema gives its performance in the open air; that is to say, it is a form of entertainment better adapted to the Italian climate than to ours. In our variegated weather, with its squalls and showers, there is always a risk attached to any entertainment in the open air; but in the south, where summer means continuous fine weather, and one hot night succeeds another, dry and cloudless, it is only by rarest exception that the shelter of a roof is required. The auto-cinema run by L.U.C.E. gives its performances in the open; a wall takes the place of the indoor screen and its theatre is the piazza or some other open space where a crowd can gather and stand. Needless to say these free entertainments are not entirely composed of educational, propagandist matter; the desired moral is only an item in the usual evening's admixture of thrill and amusement.

Is it by coincidence merely, or is it by intention, that Roman government of the twentieth century is repeating the old Roman policy of "circuses"—free entertainment for the million? For these nightly cinema shows, with the street for auditorium and the sky for canopy, are now a feature of the city life of the capital as well as of the rural life of the village; every night throughout the summer months two of the wandering cinemas give their performances—in two of the Roman piazzas, in different quarters of the city. The piazzas selected for each evening being specified in the daily Press. In the capital, as in the rural districts, the cinema car moves on every day; the same piazza—and audience—does not see it for two nights running.

As for the popularity of the institution, of that there can be no doubt; the Roman populace takes kindly to its *cinema ambulante*, and flocks out to welcome its arrival. The night I saw one of the cars on its rounds it was working one of the poorer quarters of the city; and the whole of the square where the show was given was thronged, from side to side, with an audience drawn from the surrounding streets, an audience content to stand in a solid crowd to watch the changing traffic of the screen. The children present—and, spite of the lateness of the hour, their name was legion—were happily catered for by the final film, something in the nature of a Mickey Mouse story, that filled the night with treble laughter. At least once a week every district in Rome must be provided with an evening's entertainment, free. The photograph which faces page 157 represents one of these open-air performances, given in the Piazza Colonna on a special occasion—an ex-service gathering in Rome of the men of the Alpine regiments.

From the politicians' every point of view these

perambulating cinemas must be well worth the money that is spent on them. They are a means of keeping in touch with the democracy, the multitude, of keeping it in good temper and gauging its mentality and taste. They are a means also of skilful reminder and suggestion; the mass of the people is continually reminded of the achievements and progress of its country and the greatness of its country's Government. It gives such pictured news as authority considers it advisable to impart to the public; and when needful it can make straightforward appeals to good sense and good citizenship—as during the Battle of the Grain.

If a similar system of free entertainment for all and sundry were carried on in the London suburbs—and carried on at the nation's expense—there would very shortly be protest of the angriest from persons unfavourably affected, who had either invested their money in the entertainment industry or were drawing wages as employees in cinema theatres. Presumably the lessees, proprietors, and employees of Roman picture-palaces are also, to a certain extent, affected by official competition, and it can hardly be supposed that they are always and everywhere enthusiastic about this giving away of photographic wares for nothing; but the likelihood is that they and their interests have not been specially consulted. If they were specially consulted, and if they proceeded to grumble at undercutting by a department that had behind it all the resources of the State, they were doubtless reminded of the Fascist principle of government, and told that the interest of the nation, considered as a whole, must outweigh the interest of a class. As for the expense of these Roman performances, I was told (and by one who should know, since his business is the cinema) that, in spite of the fact that

they took no money from their audience, they were a self-supporting institution. This seemingly impossible result is attained by the agency of what may be termed a by-product industry, the sale to the smaller class of picture-house of films issued by L.U.C.E. for the use of the cinema cars.

The gratuitous circuses which a benevolent Government provides for the citizens of Fascist Italy do not only take the form of moving pictures; there is also the circus that appeals to the ear, the car equipped with wireless apparatus and loud speaker. I made its acquaintance one night in Rome when a specimen thereof took up its quarters for the evening in the neighbourhood of the Porta Pinciana; starting its programme — which lasted for some hours — at the entrance to the Villa Borghese and afterwards moving to the other side of the Porta Pinciana, so that it could make itself audible to the evening crowds that sit outside the cafés of the Via Vittorio Veneto. I have no doubt that this clamorous institution is greatly appreciated by those for whose benefit and use it is intended; on the night I heard it there were plenty of listeners grouped around it; but so far as I myself was concerned, it struck me as a more than dubious benefit. Its orchestral reproduction was tuneful enough, as reproductions go, but when it started singing I removed myself in haste. I have heard many raucous reproductions of the human voice, but none, I think, that came near to its supreme of raucousness; whether in singing or whether in speech, the effect was of a human bray. (I trust, for the sake of the Italian populace, that this bray-effect was exceptional and due to faulty apparatus; but having no experience of similar loud speakers, operating in the open air, I am unable to venture an opinion.) And the voices which the radio

mocked with its raucousness I knew to be of superfine quality, the occasion being a special attraction, a concert at the Augusteo, where stars of first magnitude were billed. . . . Before the advent of the wireless miracle we should, I imagine, have laughed to scorn the idea that human beings whose ear was in any way attuned to music could be found to listen, and with seeming pleasure, to the harshness that issued from that migratory dispenser of noise; to the tuneless roars and the grating screeches that made caricature of the tenor and soprano who were discoursing their art in the Augusteo to an audience enraptured by its melody. Curious how tolerant we are of mechanical discord and uproar; we accept from a wireless apparatus what we should not for a moment endure from a performer who faced us in the flesh. If a tenor and soprano, visible on the platform, had attempted to inflict those roars and screeches on a concert-hall, the audience—and especially if that audience were Italian—would have drowned the horrid din with jeers and hoots. Yet here was a crowd belonging to one of the most cultured nations of the earth, a nation with a long record of musical excellence, which stood around the car with its braying loud speaker and listened without sign of repulsion! We are told that the spread of the listening-in habit is improving the average of musical taste, but there are moments, frequent moments, when it is difficult to accept so optimistic a statement. It is true that, by means of the wireless station, a large and ever larger section of the public is becoming familiarized with classical music and clean tunes; but it is likewise true that the wireless stations—or, more accurately, the sets that receive their communications—are accustoming their public to a standard of performance which, for the most part, is musically unsatisfactory

and, in certain instances, can only be described as atrocious. Nearly all listeners-in—the exceptions being the possessors of exceptional sets—must be dulling their ears to the sweeter, finer shades of music, alike in voice, instrument, and rendering; inevitably they accustom themselves not only to defective tone but to Beethoven interspersed by the cracklings that are known as atmospherics and to Chopin or Debussy accompanied by friendly conversation. Mass-production in music, as in everything else, means a standard some way below the highest. . . . I set down these reflections because they occurred to me, and occurred to me strongly, as I hastened down the Via Vittorio Veneto, away from that Roman loud speaker.

It would be a mistake to imagine that all the educational propaganda that emanates from the National Institute of L.U.C.E. is entirely political in its aim; on the contrary the activities of L.U.C.E. are as various as manifold. Many of its productions are educational in the ordinary sense of the word; such are its natural history films, dealing with the life of insects, birds, and beasts; or the geographical series which pictures the varying regions of Italy and the Italian colonies. Somewhat similar to the above are the films issued by the department for tourist propaganda; these include a series which is specially designed for the instruction of the innkeeping fraternity. Another educational series is that which concerns itself with the detail of industrial and technical processes; these are films which, it is hoped, will "aid in the creation of a will to work in the mind and heart of youth." In this category are those which illustrate the working of marble, the printing of music, and the making of paper; diamond-cutting, glass-making, brewing, and the various processes

of textile fabrics; the rubber industry, the construction of turbines, the construction of locomotives—these are a few of the many on L.U.C.E.'s list. And last, but by no means least in importance, are the propaganda films it issues in its campaign for national health. The Hygiene of the School, the Hygiene of the Infant; the Campaign against Tuberculosis, against Malaria, against Syphilis; the Peril of the Fly; the Open-air School and the Sun Bath. Such are the titles of some of the films that the National Institute has produced of late years, has distributed to health authorities throughout the country, and sent on their travels into rural districts by means of the perambulating cinema.

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Since it is the business of L.U.C.E. to make photographic record of all public events of sufficient importance, newspaper illustration, as a matter of course, comes within its scope and sphere of influence; it is, in fact, the leading agency for supplying photographic material to the Press, both Italian and foreign—several illustrations to the present volume were supplied from the archives of L.U.C.E. "The State in every field of collective life has its own mission to fulfil. . . . The State must dominate all the existing forces in the country, solidify them, and direct them towards the higher ends of national life." . . . And among the forces of the modern world is the art and business of photography.

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XIII. THE OPEN-AIR THEATRE, RAILWAYS, BEGGARS, AND TIPS

IN Italy, as in other parts of the world, one of the results of summer heat is a disinclination for indoor amusement and a consequent closing of theatres; but in Italy there are hot-weather facilities for drama denied to more uncertain climates. There, thanks to the rarity of summer rain, and also to the windlessness of summer nights, the actor can carry on his trade in the open; not merely, as in England, in occasional pastorals, with his eye on the weather, but regularly, evening after evening and month after month. The perambulating cinema has its equivalent in the perambulating theatre, which is known as *il Carro di Tespi*; an institution which tours the country dispensing drama in the open air—drama and likewise opera. And as the perambulating cinema is sent out on its travels by one institution of the Fascist State—L.U.C.E.—so the Car of Thespis is sent out on its travels by another. *Dopolavoro*—which literally is After-Work—the State institution that takes charge of Italy's leisure.

The opera car was a new departure in the summer of 1931. I never had the luck to strike its beat myself, but, by those who had, I was told it was a first-class draw, and wherever it set up its open-air stage the neighbourhood flocked to the performance. The other, the dramatic Car of Thespis, has been for some years on the

road; it is, of course, a development of that old-time species of theatre which travelled by caravan from place to place and which in England we knew as a booth. A glorified development, proceeding on its travels by motor-car and baggage-lorry, instead of by horse and caravan. And with none of the shabbiness of the booth about it, none of its tawdriness and tinsel; the play I saw was well dressed, well staged, well acted, and enclosed in a well-set-up, decorative proscenium. This particular performance was given in the Pincio Gardens; the company was prefacing its summer tour of the Italian provinces by two or three nights before a Roman audience. Evidently the *Carro di Tespi* was an institution well known and popular, for the Roman audience arrived in goodly numbers; row after row stretched back from the stage, away into the darkness of the gardens. Behind the chairs was standing-room, which also was well occupied, though the dialogue, at that distance, must have been in great part inaudible. Unlike the performance of the auto-cinema, the Car of Thespis is not a free show; in the Pincio Gardens the approach to the auditorium was strictly railed off, and accessible only to those who had purchased their tickets at a box-office pitched by the roadside. Prices ranged, if I remember rightly, from ten lire a seat in the foremost rows to two lire, or two-fifty, for the standing contingent at the back. The play was a costume comedy, scene Florence and period Renaissance; it was advertised to begin at the usual hour of nine—eight is the dinner-hour in Italy, and the theatre, there as everywhere, is subservient to the need for dinner. It was advertised, I say, to begin at the hour of nine but, in accordance with national custom, it began considerably later. All continental people with whose habits of amusement I have

any acquaintance appear to be amiably indifferent as regards punctuality; they will sit in a blank theatre while the minutes roll by, and take it for granted that the actors shall keep the curtain down. And, so far as my limited experience goes, the Italian people are the most amiably indifferent of the lot. . . . Once, in the simplicity of my English heart, I attended punctually an open-air ceremony which, according to official announcement on a placard, and according to statement in the local Press, was timed for 9 a.m.; as a matter of fact I attended more than punctually, and arrived in the piazza, the scene of the ceremony, at a prompt eight-thirty, in order to secure a good place. That good place I obtained, and without the slightest difficulty; there wasn't a soul to dispute its possession—the local populace knew well what those announcements meant. It was after nine, ten minutes after nine, before there was even a sign of Italian interest; if it had not been for a municipal official, who assured me to the contrary, I should have thought I had made a mistake in the date of the ceremony. It was nine-thirty-five by the Town Hall clock when some local functionaries put in an appearance, accompanied by a hosepipe; and, without any symptom of indecent haste, they made preparation for the coming parade by laying the dust in the piazza. After their departure the crowd grew thicker, and somewhere about ten the *podestà*, the city's chief magistrate, took his place of honour on the Town Hall balcony, you caught the strain of an advancing band—and after that things began to move. . . . Unpunctual, of course, amazingly unpunctual; but, if everybody likes it that way, why not? If every one in the neighbourhood understands that the time announced on a programme or a placard is a pure formality, and that an hour or two's margin must be

allowed for delay, what real inconvenience results? The occasional foreigner may be somewhat inconvenienced (as I was), but I do not see that he has the right to be greatly annoyed; it is surely the occasional foreigner's business to acquaint himself with the manners and customs of the country whereof he is a guest, not expect them to be altered for his benefit. . . . Of old, I remember, I used to wonder why so many admirers of Fascist Italy were wont to lay stress, as on a great achievement, on the punctual running of its trains; other countries, I reflected, can keep their trains to a time-table without calling in dictatorship to their aid. Now, however, that I understand something of the characteristic with which Fascist authority has had to contend—the national talent for unpunctuality—the achievement of the Punctual Italian Train does seem to verge on the miraculous.

It is, I suppose, because Fascist authority fears that the national talent for unpunctuality might again assert itself, if it were left unwatched, that railway carriages occupied by passengers who, to all appearances, are calm and inoffensive, are still patrolled by Fascist militiamen, clad in black shirts, and with revolvers at their belts. Their behaviour, so far as my experience goes, is quite unaggressive, but they are understood to deal drastically with passengers who put their feet on the cushions—which I, myself, was most careful not to do while travelling within their jurisdiction. It seems unlikely, however, that they are conveyed long distances, by main line trains, in order to deal with small breaches of good manners—which in other European countries would be dealt with by the guard of the train.

I once asked a Fascist official of importance what might be the cost to the national exchequer of these

wardens of the railway passenger. His answer surprised me, because I had imagined them as primarily militiamen, Blackshirts who were put on to railway duty and paid a special wage for the job. On the contrary, my acquaintance, the official, informed me that these railway wardens were railwaymen by calling; but railwaymen of Fascist conviction who had joined the National Militia, and had therefore been selected for this particular duty. I asked him whether they often had occasion to make use of their lethal weapons? were the trains ever raided by brigands, or were passengers in the habit of engaging in murderous assaults? Whereupon he laughed, and said I must allow for the Italian flourish, the Italian sense of the dramatic.

The Italian railway system nowadays is, to all appearances, a well-run system and an orderly; to the full as orderly as the railway in England or in France. Its employees perform their duties with efficiency and smartness, and its passengers behave much like passengers in any other civilized region. Why then, one asks, the presence of the military, or semi-military, with the tools of their military trade? There was a time, no doubt, when the onslaughts they seem to be expecting really did materialize; they and their revolvers were a present help in trouble in the stormy period when the *sovversivi* were a power in the land. But at present, in view of the general good behaviour of passenger and porter, one imagines they could be dispensed with, without violent upheaval ensuing.

Perhaps the continued presence of the militiamen in railway carriages means no more than this: the memory of the stormy post-war period, and its effects on the traffic of goods and passengers, are not yet forgotten in Italy. The years immediately succeeding the Armistice

were a time of constant interference with the railway system; interference which often produced more than inconvenience — sheer chaos. Trains ran uncertainly, local strikes were frequent, and orders from superiors ceased to be orders; they were sometimes obeyed, sometimes not. Then the service was overstaffed, burdened with unnecessary idlers; and, greatest nuisance of all, employees whose leanings were communistic would claim the right to exclude from the railway any would-be passenger whose opinions or profession they disliked. Soldiers, policemen, and *carabinieri*, of course, were especially obnoxious to *sovversivi*, and to march a detachment of them into a train might well mean that the train would remain in the station until they were marched out again. And there are stories of trains being held up in the course of a journey because some general, or other official of rank, had taken his ticket and was seated therein, and the consciences of "Red" railway servants would not permit them to forward the comings and goings of a man of his rank or calling. This sort of thing made railway travelling impossible in more senses than one; the mildest civilian was liable, at any moment, to be involved in a punishment intended for the military, the humblest member of the proletariat might be smitten with a blow aimed at capitalism. Small wonder that any alternative to this system of arbitrary outrage and annoyance was welcomed by the ordinary passenger; and small wonder that, so long as the memory of that period of outrage endures, the Italian travelling public feels little resentment at the presence on its trains of Blackshirts armed with revolvers. Also, it may be that to the constant presence of Blackshirt and revolver is due the much improved Italian record in the matter of railway honesty; the wholesale pilfering of days gone

by was one of the abuses tackled by Fascism when it took control of traffic.

A contributory cause of the swift improvement of railway working under the present Government was doubtless the reduction it effected in the number of officials and employees. In the year 1921 sixty thousand men too many were living by the State railways; and sixty thousand too many meant roughly that every fourth man was superfluous. Sixty thousand wage-earners making no return are a heavy addition to running expenses; and, apart from the loss on an unproductive wage-bill, there is no more certain method of producing muddle, and the waste that results from it, than the employment of an over-large staff. With sixty thousand unnecessary persons either idling or trying to make work for themselves, is it any wonder that the Italian railway system plumbed an almost incredible depth of inefficiency? Till Fascism arrived to sack the lot!

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The time-honoured profession of the beggar is now illegal in Italy. According to a clause in the new penal code, any person who asks alms in a public place is liable to a term of imprisonment not exceeding three months in duration; the penalty to be increased in the case of annoyance being caused by the beggar, or if he simulates any deformity or sickness, in the hope of thus arousing charity. Thanks to the discouragement of the last few years, the volume of Italian mendicancy is less, far less, than it was in days of yore; but a time-honoured profession, being time-honoured, is not easy to abolish root and branch by a clause in a penal code. Lack of work and the hard times consequent thereon will anywhere bring out the beggar, and it is not to be expected

that Italy, with a long tradition of alms-giving and -taking, should be an exception to the rule; and she, also, of late, like the rest of the world, has had her unemployment problem, which, code or no code, means the mendicant. I was present, one day, during a conversation between a prominent Fascist and a friend of my own; the latter was inclined to throw doubt on the Fascist's statement that, owing to the measures taken by the Government, there was little unemployment in the country. What statistics she did not know; she judged, she said, by her own experience and the number of beggars who (in blank defiance of the new penal code) called at her door to ask for a small contribution. That, her Fascist friend answered, did not necessarily imply any great distress on the part of the mendicant callers; it did not even imply that they were wholly without work and wage. There was, he admitted, a good deal of partial unemployment in the neighbourhood; in one or two industries short time was being worked, and short-time work would certainly produce its crop of beggars. A man with a day off from work, and his time on his hands, might well decide to tidy himself up and set out on an afternoon's begging tour. "You must not forget," he explained to me, "that begging with us, for many generations, has been looked on as a trade, a normal trade, that a man is entitled to live by." . . . There is a remark of Mussolini on the family and its increase which I have quoted in an earlier chapter, and which is as applicable to the problem of mendicancy as to that of parental responsibility: "In these matters, more than formal laws, the moral custom and, above all, the religious conscience of the individual prevail."

Of that branch of the begging industry which may be

termed the matchbox department, and which consists in the kerbstone-selling, or offering for sale, of small articles: of that branch of mendicancy we have plenty in England, and there is likewise plenty in Italy. There, however, the articles offered for the charitable sale, which is another word for alms, are frequently of a religious nature. Small, cheaply-printed pictures of St. Anthony of Padua, with a prayer on the back, were the stock-in-trade of the begging fraternity in the summer of 1931, when the seven-hundredth anniversary of the saint's death was occasion for pilgrimage to Padua and solemnity all over Italy. In the course of the summer I accumulated quite a large collection of these counterfeit presentments of St. Anthony—one and all of them acquired from beggars.

It is not my intention to suggest by the above paragraph that begging is rife in the streets of Italy, and therefore a nuisance to the tourist—not at all. I mean merely that necessity, and likewise tradition, will often get the upper hand of law and regulation; and that in the matter of mendicancy "the religious conscience of the individual" is apt to be more lenient than the principles of Fascism or the provisions of the penal code. As is the case in many other parts of the world; Italy is not the only country where legal enactments against the art of the beggar are in daily conflict with the charitable impulse of the average individual.

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In Italy, as elsewhere on the continent of Europe, the tip to waiters and hotel servants has been stabilized at ten per cent. Ten per cent for service is added to the sum of your bill, and you will see notices posted, in hotel lifts and corridors, requesting you to make no

addition to the legal charge, since employees who accept gratuities beyond it render themselves liable to penalty. There are those who tell you that, everywhere and always, this means exactly what it says; and certainly it is possible to stay in Italian hotels and leave them without the slightest hint from waiter or chambermaid, liftman or boots that their service is inadequately rewarded by the legal ten per cent on your bill. Possible, that is to say, in the generality of hotels; that there are exceptions I judge, not from my own experience but from an article I read in an Italian periodical wherein the writer suggested to the innkeepers and employees of a certain holiday district that they really could not have it both ways—they must not expect their charge on the bill, as by law established, and also stretch their hands for a tip.

As to the penalty (I think of dismissal) to which members of a hotel staff render themselves liable by accepting the departing guest's offer of gratuities, I do not imagine that it is often applied, since, if due discretion is exercised, the risk of discovery is not great; at any rate, on the occasions on which I myself have offered a little addition to the ten per cent, it has always been accepted without hesitation, and with smiles—not the slightest suggestion on the part of the recipient that he was doing what should not be done. Let me say here, in my own excuse, that I do not approve of the foreign tourist, from an impulse of good nature, breaking a rule which a country in which he is a visitor has made for its own convenience; but in Italy, as elsewhere, it has sometimes happened that, as a seeker after information which does not interest the average passer-by, I have asked for more help, from waiters and others, than the average passer-by requires. Having taken up their time with my questions and demands for direction, I have

thought it permissible to acknowledge an extra service in the customary manner; and whether or no the acknowledgment was expected, it was pocketed with no sign of surprise. As in the case of the beggar and his alms, moral custom occasionally prevails against formal law.

There is the other regulation against bargaining, a practice which also has a long tradition behind it. As to whether the rule is ever broken, who shall say? But in the ordinary, well-regulated shop where you buy something to wear or something to eat, the prices of most commodities are nowadays marked in plain figures. And, that being the case, opportunities for the chafferer must be limited. Judging by a notice I once saw displayed on a photographer's wall, it is, or was, the custom to haggle over prices when you went to have your photograph taken. The said notice announced, in the first place, that the proprietor of the studio was a member of the Fascist syndicate that included photographers; and went on to remind his clients that, as a member of the syndicate, he was bound to adhere to fixed charges. The clients were therefore requested not to make useless efforts to obtain special terms for themselves. As regards certain articles of common use—chiefly edible use—the possibility of bargaining would seem to be eliminated by the fact that lists of the prices that may legally be charged are placed in the windows of the shops where the commodities are sold. By decree of such and such a date, flour, beans, rice, etc., are priced at so much and will remain so priced, until notice of change is given by the competent authority.

XIV. BUILDING AND EXCAVATION

ONE evening in a Roman studio—one of the multitude of studios piled wonderfully against the steep of the hill, in the neighbourhood of the Piazza di Spagna—I discussed with several painters, in several different languages, the influence of Fascism on art. One of them—my host—was Professor Orazio Amato, painter of the picture entitled "The First Hour," and representing the death of a young Fascist, which, by his kindness, is reproduced in this volume. I asked his permission to reproduce it, not only on account of its merit as a composition, but because it seemed to me to illustrate much that I had heard in his studio on tendencies of Italian painting. And it has this added value which I should call historical, in more than the superficial sense: the painter, because he himself is moved by it, has caught and expressed that spirit of reverence for the Fallen of Fascism which is one of the traditions of the party. The dead youth, borne in the arms of his comrades, is more than a young man killed in civil strife. The figures that mourn him, mourn him as a martyr; and the light that illuminates his broken body is more than the headlight shining from a car—it is a symbol of the glory of martyrdom. . . . Here, in paint on canvas, was the complement to an account I had read, in a story of the movement, of the funeral of a young Fascist—like the lad in the picture, one of the Fallen of the Cause. To the funeral in Milan



"The First Hour"

Reproduced by kind permission of Professor Orazio Amato

his black-shirted comrades came marching, the Duce at their head, and, arrived at the cemetery, "they knelt at command, in religious silence, and so remained until the bugle brought them to their feet. They raised their arms towards the coffin, still in silence; till they broke it with one voice in reply to the summons of the Duce.

"'Comrade Aldo Sette!' He called the dead man's name. And—

"'Present!' came the answer of the crowd."

In art, as in every other sphere of activity, the Fascist outlook is nationalist; it aims at being Italian, through and through Italian. Those to whom nationality is a bugbear—the cause of all warfare and the source of most of our collective wickedness—will see cause for regret in the tendency; but even they will probably admit that the international outlook has not so far been of great benefit to art. Whatever developments may take place in the future, when we have adapted ourselves to an international atmosphere, art that is creative still thrives best on a local inspiration. . . . And that, I was told in Amato's studio, was what, for generations, had been the weakness of Italian painting—its failure to rely on its own inspiration and tradition. It had fallen under the influence of the foreigner; Italian painters had worked in his studios, acquired his mannerisms, and learned to look on art and the material of art through eyes that were not their own. Italy, with a grandeur of heritage no other living nation could approach, had declined from her high estate in art because her painters had neglected the racial tradition and refused to trust themselves to the guidance of her mighty masters of the past. Through the nineteenth century the goal and place of pilgrimage of the young Italian painter was Paris, where he lived in an atmosphere to which his art was not native and

trained his eyes to see as the Frenchman saw. It was true that the Italian masters of the past were also a study, and a source of inspiration, to painters of the French school; but inspiration, as it worked in painters of the French school, was not inspiration as it worked in those who were of the same race as Raphael, Leonardo, Giotto. . . . We who were Italian must come back to our own tradition, come face to face with it; we must learn from our own art directly and allow no foreign school to interpret and guide us astray. Hybrid training and execution resulted in unclearness of vision and idea; that was what was happening in French art to-day, and happening as a direct result of its nineteenth-century pre-eminence. The painters of all nations who had flocked to Paris studios through decade after decade had left their hybrid mark, their mingled influence; under which modern French painting was declining, for the same reason as the Italian painting of yesterday declined. . . . So they expounded to me their creed of national art, and, having heard the exposition, I looked with new interest at Amato's "The First Hour," realizing how strongly the painter had been influenced by the old Italian masters and their tradition of religious art. And understanding more clearly than before I had seen it the element in Fascism which gives it kinship to a faith.

A distinctively national school of Italian art will take its time to evolve; meanwhile, judging by an extensive exhibition I saw in Rome, modern painting in Italy is closely akin, in some of its vagaries, to modern painting in other parts of the world. Its extremists are inclined to despise the art of drawing and run to the eccentrically unrealistic; they are savagely simple as to landscape, lumpy as to nude, and unrecognizable as to portraiture. What struck me at that exhibition was the encouragement

given by public galleries to the extreme and eccentric modern; if one is to draw conclusions from their purchases, the municipalities of the larger Italian cities have acquired a taste for that form of picture on which the cautious uninitiated express no opinion until they have looked up its number in the catalogue and ascertained whether it represents Eve in the Garden of Eden or a baby having its bath.

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In Italy, as elsewhere, the art that has had its chance to flourish and develop is architecture; all the nations of Europe have had urgent need of building in the course of the last few years. There were the war arrears of housing to make up; and the legacy of the war was not only arrears of house accommodation but the new conditions created by movement of population. New industries had come into being, new centres of industry had arisen, and the pull of the towns on the rural districts had grown stronger. In the eight years from 1921 to 1929 the population of Rome had increased by thirty-three per cent—and Rome was not alone in this respect. In spite of the Duce's constant endeavour to keep the countryman from migrating to the street, the street remains a constant lure, and the urban population increases by more than its birth-rate. Everywhere the need was to widen the boundaries of cities, to build new suburbs, and plan for them.

It is in the northern half of Europe that post-war architecture has felt the stirrings of a new spirit, guessed at new possibilities, and handled its material adventurously; in Sweden, in Holland, in Germany (not as yet in England) there has arisen a generation of builders which looks forward to a City to Come. That new,

adventurous spirit in the building art has not yet greatly stirred the south, where there has been no noticeable departure from tradition; nothing that can, so far, be compared for novelty with the stark blocks of dwelling-houses, the cliff-like factories, and the strange, spare churches that German experiment has created. This Italian lack of experiment, as applied to art, is probably what we should expect, given present circumstance. Like the energy of individuals, the energy of peoples is but finite; and here is a people that has produced—created—a new form of government, and is breaking itself to the discipline of a new social system. No light achievement that; no small strain on its powers. Is it any wonder that—given such circumstance—it has not much overplus of energy to spare for the work of creation that is art? That work of creation, if it comes under Fascism, must come later, when the yoke of the regime, being more accustomed, is easier. I write "if it comes" with intention; for it may be that the discipline on which Fascism insists—the orthodoxy of political thought, the subordination of the individual to the needs of the State—it may be that the atmosphere thus engendered will not favour the development of the artist. There are precedents; art did not flourish, or literature, in the disciplined patriotism of Sparta. . . . In the make-up of every man whose art is more than skill and tradition is a quality of thought that is closely allied to heresy; and Fascism discourages the heretic.

If there is nothing strikingly new in the style of the blocks of flats that have arisen in Rome and its suburbs, they are often imposing and sometimes even palatial in appearance. They are likewise numerous; as indeed they had need to be. With its thirty-three per cent of post-war increase, Rome, in 1929, was nearing the

million mark, the figure it is said to have reached in the days of the Cæsars. And its authorities, in planning their housing schemes, have had to plan for the needs of migrants, as well as for actual increase in numbers. The last few years have seen a considerable displacement of population in the capital itself; the ambitious scheme of improvement and excavation which has brought to light regions of old Rome, long built over and hidden, has necessitated the clearing away of many dwelling-houses. During the centuries in which they were hidden from sight, Forum and market-place and buried temple had served as foundation for the dwellings of a later Rome; dwellings thickly placed and inhabited, whose occupants were perforce evicted when the clearing of the ground began. As an official statement of the Roman housing policy puts it:

"Rome's cultural duty to the world at large has imposed on her the necessity of demolitions which, while they reveal to us the power and undying beauty of the ancient world, have not lessened the housing difficulty." Nor was the difficulty imposed by cultural duty rendered less acute by the fact that Rome, compared with other capitals, is curiously isolated. She has no ring of adjacent dormitory towns; no Croydons and Maidenheads, no Surbitons and Welwyns, to which her business population can pour out at the end of the day.

As with us, the private enterprise of the building contractor was not capable of supplying the demand for new housing unaided, and the public purse has been drawn on, in the form of subsidy; but the system by which subsidy is granted is not the same as our own. The builders of the huge blocks of flats which have formed new streets and created new suburbs were guaranteed by the government of Rome the sum of a thousand lire for

each room that they built—the payment was by room, not by house. The advantage of the system for the ratepayer being that, with the payment of the thousand lire per room, the call on the public purse ceased; there was no permanent addition to the rates. Conditions, of course, were attached to the municipal payment; buildings were to be completed within a given time, and the flats they contained were to be let at a rate low enough to bring them within reach of the ordinary wage-earner—from sixty to sixty-five lire per month per room. These flats were to consist, for the most part, of one, two, or three rooms, with a kitchen attached; a smaller number running to four and five rooms, as provision for the numerous families which the Government delights to honour. Further, it was stipulated that tenants were to be secure for five years without alteration of rent, and they were to be selected from persons who had been domiciled in Rome for the preceding five years. Exception to this latter condition was made in the case of officials in the public service who had been transferred to Rome in the course of their duties. As yet another condition of their subsidy, the municipal authorities claimed the right to a voice in the selection of tenants for the new buildings; a clause which, at one time, occasioned some trouble with the contractors, who were probably afraid of finding themselves saddled with unremunerative tenants whom it had been convenient for the city fathers to move from their previous quarters. These alarms, however, seem to have been composed, and a commission was appointed by the governor of Rome to sift and classify the applicants who were to receive special consideration when it came to the allotment of tenancies. Although individual hard cases were considered on their merits, the “privileged” applicants,

roughly speaking, were divided into five classes. Disabled men, as a matter of course, came first on the privileged list, the disabled of the Fascist Revolution being placed in the same category as the disabled of the war. The second place—also as a matter of course—was allotted to those good citizens who were parents of large families; they took precedence of the ex-service man unblessed by many olive-branches, who was placed third on the list. After the ex-service man came the municipal employee, whether still on the active list or retired on a pension; and the last type of citizen to be specially favoured was the tenant evicted from his former dwelling by order of the municipality, provided, of course, that such eviction was due to municipal necessity and not to his own malpractices. Priority of application in itself did not count with the commission; it had to be backed by some recommendation held more valid. The proviso that applicants must have been domiciled in Rome for at least five years was strictly adhered to, and proof of such domicile had to be furnished if the application was to have any chance of success. But for some such proviso, the report of Rome's attractive housing scheme might have brought her an influx of flat-seeking immigrants to swell her over-swollen population.

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Rome, since the advent of Fascism to power, has grown in more ways than one. Outwards, in the customary manner of cities, by the growth of the new streets and suburbs that accommodate her rising population; and inwards, downwards, by excavation of an older Rome and clearance of the buildings that concealed, or half-concealed, its monuments. Since the advent of

Fascism to power with the March on Rome, there has been created a city that is modern, there has been discovered an old.

When the former municipal authority was swept away, in favour of the new and high-sounding *Governatorato*, Mussolini, to mark the occasion, made a speech, which was a speech to the nation at large as well as to the city of Rome. Rome, he declared, must again be what she was in the days of Cæsar Augustus; must again be the admired of the world, vast, orderly, and powerful. It was likewise her duty to clear away the lumber from her priceless treasures of antiquity. "You must free the trunk of the ancient oak of all this overgrowth; clear the ground around the Augusteo, the Theatre of Marcellus, the Capitol, the Pantheon; all that has grown up around them during ages of decadence must go; the majestic temples of Christian Rome must be freed from all profane parasitic growth and the millenary monuments of our history stand out gigantic in their solitude; you must give houses, schools, baths, gardens to the working Fascist people; remove from the streets of Rome the senseless contamination of the tramways, and provide the new city that is growing up beside the ancient one with the most modern means of communication. And the third Rome shall stretch out towards other hills and towards the unconsecrated sea."

That speech gives an idea of the twofold and gigantic work that the Head of the Government has set for himself and the administration of Rome; a work that has already been for some years in progress and that, for its completion, will need another decade and more. The modernization of Rome of to-day, not only by building but by the addition of all the amenities needful to fine and healthful living for her citizens—that is one

side of the work; and the other, the restoration to honour of "the millenary monuments of history." One can but wonder at the energy which shoulders two such stupendous tasks simultaneously—the energy in ruler and in nation; most statesmen and most political parties would esteem it sufficient for their day and their strength if they undertook to adapt an ancient capital city to the needs of its modern population—to extend its borders, plan its streets, give it means of recreation and of transport. But Mussolini and his Fascists, while they create a modern Rome with one hand, are transforming ancient Rome with the other. Mussolini is often compared to Napoleon and whether or no the comparison is justified in other respects, it is justified in this: he has all the energy which was characteristic of the Corsican.

One gathers that the task has not been altogether straightforward; there have been and are differing views among the Romans themselves as to the best method of reconciling the needs and improvements of to-day with the preservation of the past. There were the advocates of a modern Rome whereof the life, so far as possible, should be directed outside the bounds of the older city; a new Rome that should grow up without displacement of the old, and attract to its streets of to-day and to-morrow the industry and commerce of the twentieth century and the social life that gathers round their traffic. So that the existing Rome, with its heritage of centuries, should be spared adaptation to the needs of a progressive age. That was one view; that the elder city should be left, so far as possible, untouched by modernity and revered as a monument sacred to the life of the past. And there was another, as vehemently put forward, which insisted that Rome of the Romans should continue to

live and develop with the centuries, and should therefore be transformed, where needful, in accordance with the needs of progress. If progress demanded the driving of new roads through ancient quarters and the disappearance of something of her heritage of ancient building—well, so it had to be, since Rome is the City Eternal, with a future as well as a past.

What, as a matter of fact, has happened, is a compromise between these two extremes of opinion. The outlying quarters that are the product of modernity continue to grow and to house their added thousands; but there is no sign of ebbing life in the older, central thoroughfares. It is true that old buildings, and picturesque old buildings, have fallen to the housebreaker in the course of the last few years, and I have met with those who spoke of their passing with regret; but the destruction has been in the interest of monuments more ancient by far than themselves. Here and there the medieval may have crumbled and been carted as rubble, but on the site that it covered the classic stands revealed. . . . It is a mighty work, this excavation of the wonders that time and indifference have hidden; for the labour of those who have planned the work is by no means completed when the actual excavation is accomplished. There remains the further and the careful task of harmonizing surroundings of recent date with the excavated city of the Cæsars—which is year by year extending its domain. This problem of reconciling the new with the old, the industrial with the classical, is to all intents and purposes a problem of to-day; so long as most of the monuments of antiquity were grouped in one district and neighboured each other it did not arise. The Palatine, the Colosseum, the Forum, the Great Arches—these stood undisturbed by the hurrying of traffic and unshouldered

by shops and hotels. He who entered their precincts turned his back on modernity; here was Rome of the Cæsars standing apart in her silence!

The photograph of the Largo Argentina, which faces page 190, is an illustration of the manner in which Rome of the dead is thrusting forward into Rome of the busily living. The temples shown in the photograph are among the oldest monuments so far discovered; they are relics of an age before that of the Cæsars, an age when Rome was still republican. Their discovery was due to the pulling down of a large block of houses between the Corso Vittorio Emmanuele and the Piazza S. Elena, on a site which it was intended to clear and use for the erection of a new public building; but, following on the discovery of the temples, came an order from the Head of the Government that the area, instead of being built over, should be preserved, and its temples restored. So to-day it stands planted round with cypress in the centre of the city; and the life and traffic of the twentieth century flows past it. As it does past that other recent feat of excavation, Trajan's Market. The second photograph facing page 190 will give some idea of the labour entailed and the buildings removed before the Market was cleared and restored.

The work on the relics of ancient Rome is not only one of excavation. There is another side to it; the stripping of excrescences, the overgrowth of ages, from monuments standing above ground. "The millenary monuments of our history must stand out gigantic in their solitude"—so Mussolini, in the speech I have quoted above; and the policy he therein outlined is, year by year, in process of achievement. Steadily the encroachments of centuries are being cleared away, till site after site stands clear. Yet another illustration,

facing page 209, shows the work of isolation proceeding in the neighbourhood of the Capitol—the “millenary monument” that is symbol of the greatness of Rome! The work that was proceeding when the photograph was taken has now been completed and the Capitol is isolated, freed from the buildings that once huddled and pressed on its dignity. The Tarpeian Rock stands clear, as for centuries it had not stood, and there has likewise been a clearance of the shabby old houses that once crowded round the Theatre of Marcellus. Another clean sweep has been made on the Tiber bank, in the Piazza Bocca della Verità, where the temples of Vesta and of Fortuna Virile stand in the midst of an open space that once was covered with buildings. The relics of the ancients, in the last few years, have assumed a new beauty and new grandeur.

Truly Rome of to-day is fulfilling, and with thoroughness, her “cultural duty to the world at large”; and whatever failures and shortcomings his enemies may cast against the Head of the Government, they cannot accuse him of careless guardianship where the heritage of the past is concerned. The fact is not surprising when one remembers how conscious the Duce has shown himself of the Roman descent of his race, and how often he has moulded his policy on Roman pattern. To the men of old Rome, his biographer says, he feels himself near and akin; he could have lived their life because its interests and activities seem to him not unlike his own. . . . If the rule of Fascism were swept away to-morrow, it would leave at least one enduring monument: the older Rome that its founder has ordered and revealed.



Anderson

Recent excavations. Ancient temples in the heart of modern Rome



Anderson

Recent excavations. Ancient temples in the heart of modern Rome

VI. LAWS AND REGULATIONS

ON 1st July, 1931, there came into force the new Italian Penal Code, which had been six years in the making; and I remember being surprised when, a day or two later, I saw a cheap edition thereof being peddled by hawkers in the streets. I don't know why I was astonished at the sight; it was natural enough that the Italian man in the street should want to know what new laws had been sprung on him. But the fact remains that I was conscious of astonishment; to my English habit there was something incongruous in the buying of legal enactment from a gutter merchant, as if it were *Old Moore's Almanack*.

With the code that has been superseded I have no acquaintance, but, presumably, in its main principles it much resembled the new; still, looking through the latter, one picks out here and there certain clauses and penalties that are obviously the product of Fascism. For instance, the article which visits with the extreme penalty of the law an attempt against the Head of the Government, even an attempt that comes to naught. "Whoever makes an attempt against the life, security, or personal liberty of the Head of the Government shall be punished with death." The person of the Head of the Government is now held by the law of the Italian land to be as sacred as the person of the sovereign; the article of the code dealing with attempts against the

king has exactly the same wording: "Whoever makes an attempt against the life, security, or personal liberty of the King or the Regent shall be punished with death." Death is also the penalty for attempts against the queen and the heir to the throne; but in the case of other members of the royal family, the would-be assassin runs less risk than when he raises his hand against the Duce. The death penalty is only inflicted if his attempt against the life of a prince of the blood has been successful: otherwise he gets off with penal servitude.

There is another article in this section of the code which reads oddly, if vaguely, to our English ears: "Whoever commits an offence against the honour or the prestige of the Head of the Government shall be punished with penal servitude from one to five years"—a clause which would probably sound less alarming if one knew precisely what was considered an offence against the honour and prestige of a statesman. Does unfavourable criticism come under that heading? the sort of uncomplimentary remark that our prime ministers, as a matter of course, expect from Opposition newspapers? Or the forcible comments of the orange-box type of politician—would they mean one to five years? . . . Perhaps it is rumour of the existence of this clause in the Italian code, and uncertainty as to its precise meaning, that is the origin of the belief, held by many British tourists, that it is dangerous to mention the name of Mussolini in public. The belief, whatever its origin, is widespread enough to have attracted the attention of an institution desirous of directing the flow of foreign travel towards Italy; for I have seen a pamphlet, intended for consumption by the British tourist, in which he is assured that the precaution is entirely needless.

(As regards the personal safety of the Duce, there can be no doubt that very stringent precautions are taken by the police; and there can be no doubt that such precautions are required, since more than one attempt has been made on his life. The experience of an acquaintance of my own suggests that it is advisable to give no ground for suspicion in the neighbourhood not only of the Duce but of other persons of importance. She—a lady of entirely unpolitical mentality—was passing the door of a Government office when there issued from it a gentleman of whose identity she was ignorant, but whom she afterwards discovered to be a member of the Fascist Ministry. It so happened she was wearing a string of artificial pearls—which chose that moment to snap; whereupon, instinctively, she made a swift movement to grab them, and instantly found herself grabbed by a couple of policemen. Fortunately, though English by nationality, she had lived a great part of her life in Italy, and her Italian was voluble and without foreign tang. She explained, and her explanation being corroborated by the Woolworth pearls that were rolling in the gutter, she was not removed to the police-station to be searched for a lethal weapon.)

For an Italian to abuse his country in public is more than bad taste; it is a criminal offence which may lead to a sojourn in gaol. "Whoever publicly vilifies the Italian nation shall be punished with penal servitude from one to three years." And the same drastic penalty applies to the citizen who vilifies the national flag or other emblem of the State. Nor is it only in the case of flag and nation that the citizen must refrain his tongue from evil; there are other institutions whereof he will do well to speak politely. "Whoever publicly vilifies the Crown, the Government of the King, the

Grand Council of Fascism, the Parliament, or only one of the Chambers, shall be punished with penal servitude from one to six years."

Italy, as at present constituted, has no inspiration towards internationalism. She intends, if one may so put it, to keep herself to herself, and her dislike and suspicion of the manifestations of internationalism are reflected in several of the clauses of her penal code. To start a branch of an international society—however beneficent or harmless its objects—without receiving the express permission of the Government, is to bring upon oneself the displeasure and rigour of the law. "Whoever, without the authorization of the Government, promotes, constitutes, organizes, or directs in the territory of the State, associations, bodies, or institutions having an international character, or sections thereof, shall be punished with imprisonment up to six months or with a fine of from 5,000 to 20,000 lire." While any one who does no more than become a member of an institution for which the authorization of the Government has not been granted "shall be punished with a fine of from 1,000 to 10,000 lire." It is forbidden also, without due authorization, to belong to any form of foreign international society. (Another expression of the same spirit is aloofness from the Boy Scout movement; the *Balilla* is a purely national body which does not link up with similar institutions abroad.)

The death penalty in Italy is carried out by shooting, the execution being in private unless the Minister of Justice directs otherwise. As regards length of sentence, in some cases at least the Italian code and practice is sterner than ours; thirty years was the penalty awarded last summer to a couple of young men of the professional class who had ventured too far in their opposition to

Fascism. And there is a proviso concerning the death penalty which is strange to law as we know it: a man may be sentenced to death if he has committed two crimes which are both of them so serious that their punishment is imprisonment for life. Then offenders whose crimes are sufficiently serious are deprived not only of their rights of citizenship but of their right to make a will—even the wills they have already made are held to be invalid.

With us, adultery is a social offence, of which the law takes cognizance only as a reason for divorce. By Italian law divorce is not permitted; on the other hand, Italian law does take cognizance of adultery as a penal offence in itself. An unfaithful wife is liable to a year's imprisonment, and the same penalty is earned by her "co-respondent"; but the penalty is inflicted only if an action is brought by the injured husband; the law stands aside until he institutes proceedings. In this matter of unfaithfulness Italian law does not favour the idea of equality between the sexes; a husband, as long as his amours are not so open as to be insulting to his wife, may carry them on with impunity. What he should not do is to bring his mistress to live in the house with his wife or to keep her "notoriously" elsewhere; if he carries his unfaithfulness to this discourteous pitch, he is liable to pay for it with two years' imprisonment. Here, again, the penalty will only be inflicted at the suit of the aggrieved partner, the wife. . . . It would be interesting to know what proportion of Italian husbands and wives avenge the slight of marital unfaithfulness by sending the unfaithful one to gaol? Probably a small one; in any country there is a wholesome prejudice against washing the family linen in public; and, apart from the social custom that condones male

lapses, there is usually, on the side of the woman, the economic factor to give pause. An unfaithful husband may well deserve the penalty, and his wife may be longing to inflict it; but if you put a man in prison for the space of two years, what becomes of the wage or the salary which supported his babies and his wife? Unless she is possessed of independent means, the injured spouse may well give pause before punishing herself with her husband.

Also affecting women are the laws against birth control, a doctrine which (as mentioned in a previous chapter) is held accursed by the State as well as by the Church; in the penal code it comes under the heading of "Crimes against the Integrity and Health of the Race." If the lecturer on birth control ever existed in Italy, we may take it for granted that he is now as extinct as the dodo; his reward, if he did venture to advocate the pernicious doctrine on a public platform, would be a heavy fine or imprisonment. "Whoever publicly incites to practices contrary to procreation, or carries on propaganda in favour thereof, shall be punished with penal servitude up to one year or with a fine of 10,000 lire." And if the offence is committed for purposes of gain, the penalty is fine *and* imprisonment. Abortion, as elsewhere, is an offence heavily punishable. Article 547 of the code enacts that a woman who procures her abortion shall be punished with penal servitude from one to four years; while an accomplice who performs the operation incurs the heavier sentence of from two to five years. In the event of an injury resulting to the woman, the accomplice may receive as much as fifteen years, in the event of death, as much as twenty. . . . Strange, when one thinks of it, that in every country (save only in Russia) the law of the civilized twentieth century should still

bear the impress of its primitive past; strange that it should still be motivated by conditions under which a prolific birth-rate was necessary to balance the frequent wastage of pestilence and famine and the daily lack of hygiene. Strange that it still should be counted as a sin for a man to limit his poverty and a woman to limit her pain! . . . In industrial nations hard times and the pressure of unemployment are bringing about the change in public opinion which, in its turn, before many years are over, will bring about change in the law; but in Italy, which is still mainly an agricultural country, and where Church and State are (for once) in agreement, the change may be longer in coming.

One could guess, without reference to the penal code, that law, under Fascism, would not be over-indulgent to the striker. A State that claims supreme authority in every department of the national life is hardly likely to tolerate the practice of sectional warfare. "The force of the State must exceed every other force; that is to say, the State must be absolutely sovereign"—as it will not be if it merely keeps the ring while Capital and Labour fight it out. "This (absolutely sovereign) conception of the State has been completely realized in every act of Fascist legislation"; including the legislation dealing with the strike and lock-out. Both lock-out and strike are illegal in Italy; under the Labour Charter (*Carta del Lavoro*) special courts have been constituted for the trial of industrial disputes, and to these courts the disputants are bound, by law, to apply. If they try to fight out the matter for themselves, the code will deal with them faithfully. An employer who, by reason of any form of wages dispute, "wholly or in part suspends

work in his establishments, shall be punished with a fine of not less than 10,000 lire." (Note the "not less," no maximum fine being specified. One supposes it left to the judgment of the court, and that a millionaire will receive a millionaire's treatment.) As for the employees who "to the number of three or more collectively abandon their work, or perform it in such a way as to disturb the continuity or regularity thereof, for the sole purpose of imposing upon employers of labour terms other than those agreed upon"—they also are condemned to punishment by fine, though in their case the maximum limit is stated and its amount is 1,000 lire. A lock-out or a strike for political purposes is visited with heavier penalties; it means gaol as well as fine—up to a year for the master and up to six months for the men. And when a strike or lock-out is aimed directly at the Government, "for the purpose of compelling the authorities to take, or refrain from taking, a measure, or of influencing their decisions, the penalty of penal servitude up to two years shall apply." Yet another clause warns the sympathetic striker that he is exposing himself to the same pains and penalties as the original causers of quarrel; and, the strike in all its aspects being wholly illegal, it goes without saying, there is no provision made for the form of persuasion which is misnamed "peaceful picketing."

The law of the land as it affects the casual foreigner is chiefly a matter of passport regulation; and when I was in Italy, in the summer of 1931, I was given to understand that there had recently been a stiffening in the matter of passport regulation. Certainly one noted more careful precaution than in neighbouring countries; it

was not deemed sufficient for the tourist to fill in a docket on arrival at his hostelry; the passport itself must be produced and handed over to the hotel proprietor or his representative, the porter. This, I imagine, is so that the proprietor can furnish the police, of his own knowledge, with the particulars contained in the document; of his own knowledge and, apparently, in his own handwriting. I judge the own handwriting to be needful because I once made the mistake of offering to assist the proprietress of a small hotel on the Mont Cenis road who was struggling with the difficulties of our unfamiliar English names. Italian passport authorities share the usual curiosity of the foreign official as to the Christian names of your father and mother—which do not appear on a British passport but apparently are looked on, on the Continent, as a guarantee of good faith! When I informed the good lady, in response to her inquiry, that my father was Denzil and my mother was Maude, a look of sheer bewilderment overspread her simple countenance—here was spelling far beyond her ken. It was then I suggested that I should take pen and fill in the paper, and was repulsed with something like alarm and a murmur about the police. It was clear that a stringent procedure was enjoined with regard to the passports of foreigners. . . . I was told, when I inquired, that there was an added stringency; and the reason given me for this access of caution was the would-be assassin of the Head of the Government, Schirru. Schirru, a bitter anti-Fascist, who had been living in France, had slipped over the border and returned to Italy, with the purpose (so it was asserted at his trial) of making an end of Mussolini. Though the police were on his track he was able to evade them by the simple process of registering at his various inns and lodgings under a name that was

not his own. For some days no suspicion was aroused, and the trick worked smoothly enough; the fugitive from justice filled in his paper and the innkeeper accepted it, without thought of asking to compare it with his guest's passport. Then for some reason, some unlucky chance, the passport was asked for—and Schirru's days were numbered. He was arrested, tried, and found guilty of an attempt against the life of the Head of the Government; and, in due course, condemned to death and shot.

As a consequence of Schirru's arrest—or rather of the difficulty of making his arrest—the passport regulations were overhauled and instructions issued to all Italian innkeepers to possess themselves, for purposes of scrutiny, of the actual documents vouching for their guests' identity. Such, at least, was the explanation given to me. I may add, for the comfort of intending travellers, that the increase of stringency does not really mean increase of trouble; after a day or two in the country the necessity for furnishing the Christian names of your parents no longer arises, since you receive from the police a document supplementing the inadequacies of your British passport, on which the particulars you have hitherto been called on to furnish are filled in once for all. This *permesso* you hand in with your passport, on arrival at each new hostelry, and both documents, having been scrutinized and noted, are later returned to your possession by the porter—and that is all there is to it! One of the notices on the supplementary paper instructs you to hand it to the police before leaving the country, but adds the reassuring information that this confiscation on the part of the police is only for statistical purposes. As a matter of fact, the paper is removed by the passport officials on the Italian side of the frontier—and that, again, is all there is to it!

Personally, when I arrived in the country I had my passport examined not once but many times—so many times did I have to display it that I lost count of the number. But that, I take it, was because I entered Italy as I hold it should be entered, with a knapsack to my back and on my own two feet. As the legions came to Italy and as the pilgrims came; not through a hole in the ground, like a rat emerging from a sewer; or hurried in a car, in the space of an hour, from the region of the snows and the first stunted pines to the region of the orchards and the chestnuts. Then the route I had chosen, the Mont Cenis, because it is the road between two Latin countries, is not, I should imagine, at any time of year so frequented by walkers as other Alpine roads—those which lead into Italy from the countries where men walk for the joy of it, the countries of the Swiss and the German. Certain it is that, for a couple of days at the end of May, I had the old bridle-path entirely to myself, and even where the bridle-path had been improved out of existence and been merged into stretches of splendid (but most unwelcome) road: even there a car of any sort or kind was a rarity. In these circumstances custom-house officers and others whose duties confine them to uneventful solitude are no doubt grateful for any small distraction in their loneliness; and the arrival of a lunatic female who had scrambled up the bridle-path in a heat wave, with a pack on her back, when she might perfectly well have taken a comfortable train, was the occasion for much interested converse with the guardians of the French frontier. They were kind enough to suggest that my counterfeit presentment as revealed by my passport was not *réussi*; but agreed with me that a flattering likeness could hardly be expected when you were snapped by a "passport"

photographer at the price of three for eighteenpence. After some friendly converse on the subject of my journey from London and my strange preference for the road, we parted with expressions of mutual goodwill. As a matter of fact we did not part entirely, for when I had nearly reached the Italian frontier post—which must be a kilometre or so along the road—I was overtaken by one of the *douaniers*, who kindly introduced me to his colleagues, the *doganieri*. Thanks in part to this influential introduction, and in part, no doubt, to the fact that they too were bored, and looked upon me as a slight relief from surrounding monotony, the *doganieri* also received me with much friendliness. Owing to linguistic shortcomings, conversation was more limited on the Italian side of the frontier than on the French, but what there was of it was cordial. I was told that the custom-house was some hours farther on and given the distance to my inn.

When I parted from the amiable *doganieri*, and turned my face along the road to Italy, I imagined that—save for the custom-house *en route*—I had done with the showing of my passport. Wherein I was mistaken; time after time between the height of the frontier and Susa in the valley I had to open my knapsack at the roadside and produce the document for inspection. Some of the inspection was performed by gentlemen whose uniform suggested the military gamekeeper, and who hunted in couples, with guns and a dog. They seem to be a species of frontier guard; and I imagine that one of their duties is to keep watch for the offenders who try to leave the country without due authorization—which is often more than difficult to get. Obviously they also keep watch and ward on the entrants, for whenever I met them on my downward road they asked for a look at my passport. This periodical examination of cre-

dentials, however, was never unpleasant; on the contrary, the acquaintance thus officially begun was improved by a little friendly conversation. Its purport on the side of the officials was always the same. If I would go to such and such a village, or wait in the road at such and such a spot, there would arrive a *macchina*—which is otherwise a motor-bus—into which I could mount and be conveyed along the road to Susa. To this proposition my answer was always the same: "Mi piace andare a piede." An idea of taking pleasure which, judging by their comments, facial and verbal, made little appeal to the guardians of the Mont Cenis road.

Something to remember, that walk from Lanslebourg to Susa, over the Mont Cenis Pass; when one pitied, one pitied the unfortunates who travel through holes in the ground. The unfortunates who dine in a wagon-restaurant, instead of regaling on the Food of the Gods—which is only served at a wayside inn, at the end of a day's hard tramp. . . . One drawback only I remember on that wondrous walk: the difficulty of obtaining long drinks on the road, the long, long drinks, in mugs and tall glasses, that you begin to dream of when your pack is heavy to your shoulder and the sun is hot on the hill. It was not only that the vermouth and seltz which I was proffered when I reached a house of call is a drink which I feel I must approach with caution, but the glasses themselves, whatever you put into them, are emptied almost in a mouthful. They are wine-glasses, not tumblers, made for sips, not for draughts. Beer, which is, *par excellence*, the walker's drink, was not to the fore on the road between Lanslebourg and Susa. In other regions it was to the fore, and, judging by the frequency of *birra* advertisements, must be vying in popularity with the products of Italian vineyards.

XVI. INSTITUTIONS AND VOTES

IN an earlier chapter, wherein I dealt with the position of women in the New Italy, I mentioned the fact that, at one period of the Fascist regime, women had been possessed of the municipal vote—a privilege surprisingly conceded by the Duce. Surprisingly indeed, when his views on women and their place in the world are considered. There is a passage in a book I have quoted once or twice, Margherita Sarfatti's biography of the Great Man, which gives some of his comments on the life of classic Rome; comments wherein he expresses his approval of the exclusion of the Roman women from the public activities and interests of their husbands. "When the matron issued from the shelter of her home, the life of Rome began to decay."

Such being the sentiments of their ruler, it is hardly astonishing that the privilege of the vote was not long enjoyed by the women citizens of Italy; it was taken from them almost as soon as bestowed. It is only fair to the Duce, however, to point out that the deprivation was not theirs alone; they lost their municipal vote because it was abolished, abolished altogether, alike for women and for men. This change in the constitution of civic authority took place in the year 1926, when, by decree of the Government, the office of mayor was swept into limbo and with it the municipal council; and the power of rule they had formerly exercised was vested, in all Italian towns (save Rome), in an official appointed

by the central Government, for whose benefit was revived the medieval title *podestà*. The decision to abolish the system of election for mayor and council was probably influenced, to a certain extent, by the "Red" record of many civic bodies; for several years after the war—from 1918 to 1922—municipal councils were the happy hunting ground of the extremists whom the Italians call *sovversivi*, and it is said that, at one time, the red flag had been hoisted over something like two thousand of the communes of Italy. With, among other consequences, the usual results of ultra-progressive finance; many of the municipalities of the Italian peninsula were still struggling with the difficulties resulting from full-speed spending on a generous scale when the Fascist Government pronounced the doom of their system of local democracy, and the elected authority of the *sindaco*, or mayor, gave place to that of the *podestà*, appointed without reference to the ballot-box. The new—or rather the new-old—experiment was first tried in the smaller communes, those whose inhabitants were fewer in number than five thousand; and presumably the results were immediate and satisfactory, for, shortly afterwards, the larger towns were given the same treatment as the smaller and received a *podestà* as chief magistrate. With, as noted above, the one exception of Rome, whose chief magistrate is distinguished from his fellows by the title of governor—Rome is a *governatorato*.

It would not, I think, be inaccurate to say that local government in Italy is now run on the "crown colony" system, since the *podestà* is called to his duties by appointment and not by election. The appointment is nominally made by the king, and the *podestà's* tenure of office is, at the least, for five years. As a rule he combines in

his own single person the functions once exercised by mayor and corporation, but in the larger cities he may have the assistance of officials known as municipal advisers, to the number of not less than six. Like himself, however, these advisers are not elected by the burgesses; one-third of their number are nominated by the prefect of the province and the other two-thirds by the local Fascist syndicates—a procedure which is calculated to ensure a right-minded choice! The law instituting the new civic authority laid it down that the office of *podestà* should be honorary, and I was told that the majority receive no payment for their services; in a minority of cases, however—presumably when the right man is too poor to take office unremunerated—a salary is paid to the holder of the dignity, its amount being regulated by the capacity to pay of the commune. A feature of the system, and an important feature, is this: Unlike his predecessor, the abolished mayor, the *podestà* is frequently a stranger to the city over which he holds authority. In this lack of close acquaintance there is likewise a purpose; the aim of the system is, avowedly, to keep control over local independence, to centralize authority, and enable the Government to dominate “as it should the life of the provinces and of the communes, where in the past only local ambitions held sway.” Under the new regime “the authority of the executive power, by means of its own agents, is forcefully radiated from the centre to the circumference”—from Rome to all the provinces and communes.

This reversion to the office and title of *podestà* is yet another proof of New Italy's memory of her bygone centuries and desire to link herself with the institutions of the past. It was in the Middle Ages that the *podestàs*

came into being; they were rulers, chief magistrates, of the city states in the days of their proud independence and turbulent feuds. It was the feuds that were the cause of their special and peculiar office; its function being to hold the balance with impartial severity between the Montagues and Capulets, the Blacks and Whites, whose furious rivalries and bloody faction-fights were the curse of medieval Italy. Given the customary atmosphere of hereditary rivalry, and it was practically impossible for a man born and bred in an Italian city to be free of the taint of its faction; he must always have a leaning one way or the other—to Black or White, Capulet or Montague. Impartiality could not be expected of him; yet impartiality in dealing with turbulence was the quality needed above all others in a ruler of turbulent men. Hence arose a practice which soon became general in Italy; the city, unable to deal with its own violence, called in an outsider for the job. A man, that is to say, without local connections or interests, who was placed in supreme authority; since only a man without connections or interests could be trusted to deal faithfully with rival factions and inflict equal justice on bravos who made streets unsafe for the peaceful. . . . Such was the origin of the *podestà's* office; a voluntary resignation of powers of local government, a voluntary submission to the rule of the outsider, as a cure for the evil of the faction-fight. Fascism has revived it, after lapse of centuries, as a means of ensuring peace in local government; and, in reviving it, has adhered to the original tradition, that it is an office best filled by a man without local connections. Always and everywhere Fascism abhors the party spirit which inevitably produces opposition; abhors it on the stage of local politics, as well as on the wider stage of the nation. And to that

fact is due the revival of the office of *podestà* and the scrapping of municipal suffrage. The aim, always and everywhere, is the smooth running of the administrative machine, the removal of all checks on its efficiency; and that is an aim impossible of achievement when parties wrestle ceaselessly for the upper hand, and the existence of government, as a matter of course, entails the existence of opposition, seeking to entangle its feet. . . . So argues Fascism, not without some show of reason; and substitutes a *podestà*, appointed by the Crown, for mayor and council, elected by the voter—and therefore liable to faction-fight.

As it has freed civic authority from dependence on the good will of the burgess, so the central Government has freed itself from dependence on the good will of Parliament. "Freed" is the expression used by Rocco, the Minister of Justice, in his explanation of the principles of Fascism and the constitution of its executive. Our Cabinet theory of joint responsibility has been discarded, as making not for strength but for weakness. "At the head of the Government, to direct the general policy of the State, there must be a single person, not the Council of Ministers, which of course remains a consulting organ of the highest importance, but which from its collegiate nature cannot be the effective director of the political life of the country." It is explained, further, that "the old idea of (Cabinet) solidarity is abandoned, because it assumes diversity in action, and therefore has no longer any reason to exist when there is only one policy, that is to say, when action is unified. Technical matters alone remain outside the unity, for in this sphere individual work may be carried on by the various ministers." . . . Which sounds as if the "various ministers," whose responsibility is confined to technical



Institute Nazionale Luce, Rome
Mussolini pinning on a Decoration



Photo Centrale Pritzi
The Monument of Victory at Bolzano

matters, must have the standing rather of our permanent officials than of ministers in a British Government.

Then, as to the reasons for rejecting parliamentary government:

“Parliamentary government” (I still quote Rocco) “arose when the suffrage was restricted and the forces of the State were practically in the hands of some minorities of the intellectual *bourgeoisie*. These minorities, which held the vote and governed, constituted the only efficient force in the country, because social life was very simple, the conflicting interests between class and class were few, and the masses, not being politically minded, held aloof. Things changed when the masses entered into political life for the guardianship of their economic interests. The Lower Chamber, elected by universal suffrage, became simply a numerical representation of the electors, and could no longer be the exact expression of the political forces existing in the country, nor could it be an accurate reflection of the true state of the nation. There are, in fact, other living and active forces not represented, or represented inadequately in Parliament, because their qualitative value does not correspond to the number of votes at their command. The estimate and the interpretation of all real forces in the country is a very complex task, and is so far from being indicated by an enumeration of votes, that it can only be made by one who is above all conflicting forces, and is therefore more than any one else in a position to give each its true value. . . . The Government being freed from its dependence on Parliament, a return has been made to the principle of the constitution that government emanates from the royal power and not from Parliament, and ministers must enjoy the confidence of the king, the faithful interpreter of the needs

of the nation. In a period when the life of a great people has become highly complex, it is no longer possible to give to the elected representatives the chief power in the government of the country. Political representation is the representation of individuals and of groups. If the organ of such interests acquires pre-eminence in the exercise of sovereign power and dominates the executive power, the traditional and permanent interests of society are lost sight of in the interests of individuals, groups, and classes: thus the sovereignty of the State is reduced to a shadow." . . . And the first, the immutable principle of the Fascist creed, is that the State is not a shadow but a sovereign reality; that the nation is more than an aggregate of men and women, an entity of separate and supreme existence to whose rights are subordinate all rights of groups and classes, as well as all rights of individuals. "Everything," said Mussolini, in one of his orations, "is dependent upon the destiny of the nation. If the nation is powerful, then every one, from the highest to the lowest, can hold his head high. If the nation is impotent and disorganized, every person feels the consequences." And on that principle he and his party have acted.

(Its obverse—which also has much truth in it—is a sentiment of the Chinese sage Su Tung P'o: "If all men are happy in their work, what need has the empire of government?")

The Fascist Party and militia is run on a regional system, the local headquarters being known as a *Casa del Fascio*. This *Casa* is more than an ordinary office and information bureau; it is a centre for the many activities and amenities of Fascism. Such, at any rate, is the

Casa at Florence, where local Fascism has taken up its quarters in a vast *palazzo*, built in the customary fashion round a courtyard and running to rooms by the score. (In pre-war days this impossibly enormous building was, I believe, the dwelling of a Russian prince.) You know it without label, as you pass along the street, by the Blackshirts going in and out or chatting in groups in its hallway. Here are not only offices, offices innumerable, on floor after floor, but all the conveniences of a club; including a restaurant where the Blackshirt may fergather and dine at small cost, and a barber's shop where he can obtain his shave and his haircut. (Why is it that nearly all Englishmen seem to shave themselves and nearly all foreigners have to call in outside help?) Medical advice is also obtainable on the premises of the *Casa del Fascio*; a list displayed on the notice-board gives the names of the various doctors and specialists who are available for consultation by local Fascism, and the days and hours of their attendance at the *Casa*.

In Florence, judging by the frequency of the Blackshirt, the party is in a flourishing condition; but it would be expecting too much of a system but recently established to conclude that the machinery which is everywhere set up by Fascist authority is everywhere made full use of. I have seen in a provincial town of good size a *Casa del Fascio*, also of good size, which seemed to be leading a very quiet life; no smart young Blackshirts hurrying in and out or grouped in talk around the door. But the policy of those who direct the movement is (so I imagine) to have the machinery ready for use when required; to create a local demand for Fascism, not wait till it creates itself.

* The Blackshirt uniform being a common object of the streets, and the Blackshirt review a common incident of

public life, the question inevitably presents itself: What is the cost of all this soldiering? When I put my inquiry about the upkeep of the National Militia, I was told that its pay-roll is small, exceedingly small; for the reason that its members receive no regular wage, and are compensated only when required for duty that calls them away from their work. Still a certain proportion of the militiamen must always be on duty that requires pay or allowances; and there must also be a somewhat heavy expense incurred by the running of the many houses of Fascism—with their various departments and the permanent officials attached to them. While the numerous Blackshirt ceremonies and reviews must also be occasion for outlay.

Unlike service in the army, service in the militia is a matter purely voluntary. I once asked for an exact definition of its duties and status, whereupon I was referred to a little book written, I believe, by an Anglo-Italian, which contained the necessary information. The book I have mislaid but the passage concerning the militia I copied out at the time:

"The militia is an organization with a military character, in which any citizen may be enrolled who wishes; with the object of giving voluntary aid in defence of the State against either internal or external enemies; and also of giving voluntary assistance in the case of any national calamity, for example, in the case of earthquakes, floods, epidemics, etc., where aid is needed."

I have sometimes wondered what is the position, with regard to disarmament, of the volunteer, semi-military forces that have come into being since the war? These Blackshirts of Italy seem numerous and well-drilled, and so, to all appearances, are the Nazis and Stahlhelm of Germany. Do the politicians and pacifists

who sit round the table at disarmament conferences count them in as soldiers, when they reckon up the strength and the warlike resources of a nation? Or do they look on them as negligible in a military sense, and write them down as mere civilians? In whatever light the experts regard them, to the uninitiated their existence suggests complications. . . . Their existence and likewise their enthusiasm.¹

For there is a sense, and a very real sense, in which these semi-military, irregular forces are more dangerous to the peace of Europe and the world than regular armies, whether they be conscript or "mercenary." Regular soldiers, enlisted or conscript, are persons engaged for a term of years to carry out military duties; which may include war but, more often, is merely preparation for war, interspersed with the drudgery of fatigues. Once in uniform, they are trained to strict obedience, and, once in uniform, they must stay there for the time appointed. If they weary of their job, they must weary, but go on with it; if they loathe it, they must go on loathing. In order to keep regular soldiers together it is not necessary—as it is in the case of the Nazi and the Blackshirt—to make constant appeal to their fighting instinct and remind them of enmity and peril. When it comes to a crisis in the affairs of nations—when the peace of nations depends on the keeping of tempers—it will be easy enough to hold back the regular soldier; but the semi-military, in that ugly moment, may be straining and tearing at the leash. . . .

¹ Since the above was written the question has been raised—and advisedly. It is a question Europe will have to ponder, in connection with disarmament. War has many resemblances to love; one of them being that "it will find out a way," in spite of artificial barriers.

And—also in connection with the National Militia—I have sometimes wondered whether it may not be difficult for those in authority to draw a line of demarcation between the various military, semi-military, and police forces of Italy? whether the functions of these various forces do not, at times, overlap? For there are so many of them, all taking part in the guardianship of Italy—more than we, or other nations, seem to require for protection. The army proper, the regular, conscripted army; in which the young man, reaching twenty, does his term of service. The Fascist Militia, which does a lot of soldier-drilling and manœuvre; and which also—as when it keeps order on the trains—behaves as if it were police. Then, in the third place, the *Carabinieri*; understood to be a species of police but behaving somewhat as if they were soldiers; living in barracks and wearing an unpolice-like uniform. And last—less imposing in appearance—the useful, ordinary police of the streets; who direct the traffic, and, when you are in Rome, pull you up when you walk on the wrong side of the Corso and insist on your crossing the road. Presumably all these somewhat similar bodies are required for the safety and well-being of the nation; but one is tempted to wonder whether they do not occasionally get in each other's way? Anywhere else one imagines that they would, but Italy appears to have a special talent for the running side by side of institutions that might be expected to clash. For instance, the old institution of kingship and the new institution of Head of the Government, which seem to be working in together.

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Though the municipal vote has been abolished of late years, the parliamentary vote is still in existence.

Perhaps one should phrase it a parliamentary vote, since Italian suffrage is not the replica of British, nor is the Italian Chamber of Deputies like Parliament as we understand it. Openly and avowedly the new regime has rejected "the conception of a parliamentary government"; but though it allows no interference with the administrative machine, it permits of an assembly which "collaborates with the executive power." "Fascism," says Rocco, "has never failed to recognize the usefulness of parliamentary collaboration"; but, on the other hand, "the Fascist doctrine denies the dogma of popular sovereignty which on one hand made the Chamber the only seat of sovereign power, and therefore the chief organ of the State, and on the other surrendered the election of the deputies to the caprice of the masses." Elected deputies are the servants of the State, not its rulers, and as Fascism has no faith in popular wisdom, and does not hear the Voice of God in the Voice of the People, it holds that the election of members of Parliament must be regulated, not left to unguided ignorance and prejudice. "By a fundamental law of social life the mass of men tend to follow the will of some dominating element, some so-called 'guiding spirits.' The problem of Government will never be solved by trusting in this illusive will of the masses, but must be solved by a careful selection of the 'guiding spirits.'"

These being the principles that underlie the Italian election, it is easy to understand why candidates are not nominated locally and singly as they are with us. The deputy exists to further the good of the supreme entity, the State, not to represent the views of constituents; "the deputies are among the fundamental agents of the State"; so "their selection must be regulated in the best way." As for the actual procedure; the majority

of candidates are nominated, in the first instance, by the federated syndicates—the legally recognized trade unions and associations of professional workers and employers. The names of these chosen of the syndicates are then submitted for the approval of the Fascist Grand Council, which winnows the list to its own satisfaction; a process which “assures the choice of those most fit to exercise in Parliament their function of legislative collaboration and guardianship of the general interests of the nation.” And the roll of candidates thus decided on is finally submitted to the electorate. . . . Not our way of doing things; but then, why should it be? Fascism does not want to do things in our way—on the contrary, it has rather a contempt for it. The Duce has told us so plainly in the course of more than one of his speeches. “We say,” he once declared, “we say to the responsible governors of other nations: You will pass the same way that we have passed; you also, if you wish to survive, must put an end to talkative parliamentary systems.” . . . A few years ago, if any responsible ruler had voiced such a sentiment, democracy would have answered with a roar of contradiction. To-day the contradiction is somewhat more hesitating: democracy, having had more experience of government, is less blown with the sense of its own high talents and virtues.

The membership of the Italian Lower House—the Chamber of Deputies—is four hundred in number; and, having been duly approved and elected, it discharges its function of collaboration for the space of five years. The Second Chamber is the Senate, whose members are not elected but appointed by the king: the qualification

for appointment being attainment of the age of forty, coupled with distinction in some walk of life or payment of a certain sum in taxation. In addition to the Senate and the Chamber of Deputies there is also the Fascist Grand Council—presumably more important than either. With this body the electorate has no direct concern; as its name betokens it is a product of the National Fascist Party. Its membership consists, in the first place, of the *Quadrumviri*—the Head of the Government and three other leaders of the March on Rome; these four are permanent members. Then ministers and others who belong to the council *ex officio*; and finally a certain number of members whose appointment is only for three years.

The functions of the Chamber of Deputies having dwindled in importance, so, inevitably, have the functions of those who elect it. The procedure of an Italian general election would appear to resemble the procedure of a plebiscite rather than a general election as we are accustomed to practise it. There are no complications in the way of local interests, no particular measures on which candidates must make their position clear, giving pledges for or against. The last election took place in March 1929—otherwise Year VII of the Fascist Revolution—and the Italian citizen, possessed of a vote, was required to register a straightforward approval or disapproval of the list of national candidates put forward; which meant that he registered approval or disapproval of the works and ways of the Government. Do you agree with our Fascist policy? that, roughly speaking, was the question asked of the elector. And the manner in which the elector answered it is inscribed in proud letters on one of the municipal buildings of Florence—and, for aught I know, on municipal buildings all over the Italian peninsula. It is indeed a noteworthy

answer, which no Government, whatever the success of its record, could hope to obtain from a British electorate. Between eight and nine million Italian citizens—nearly ninety per cent of the electorate—recorded their votes at the poll; and of these 8,517,838 answered the question with a satisfied *Si*; and a meagre company of 135,773 cast in their disapproving *No!* . . . One hundred and thirty-five thousand seven hundred and seventy-three—out of an electorate numbering between nine and ten million. . . . I stared at the figures, stood and stared at them for minutes. Even remembering that this was the election affected by the Lateran Treaty, signed in the preceding month; and that, as one of the results of the Lateran Treaty, good Catholics, instead of abstaining, as aforesaid, were urged by their priests to the poll!—even so, the figures were sufficiently astounding. . . . Truly, if elections can be taken at their face value, Fascism appears to be attaining its goal of the unitary political conscience—people who think all alike!

Is it possible to make a people think all alike?

And if, and when, it does think all alike—what becomes of it? How does it develop?

These are questions to which there is at present no answer; but Italy and Russia may give us an answer in the future.

XVII. ORGANIZED LEISURE. THE END

THERE are special difficulties in the way of acquiring understanding of the institutions of states of the new order; that is to say, of Italy and Russia, where the political and administrative system is, to all intents and purposes, an artificial product—designed and fabricated in a few short years, not grown by slow process of centuries. To begin with, the institutions have been working for so brief a time that it is impossible as yet to gauge their real effect, which will show itself, at earliest, when a generation has grown to maturity beneath their influence. That is one difficulty, and another, as serious, is that the new order of government is strongly intolerant of criticism; hence in Italy (and by common report it is the same in Russia) there is little or no literature of critical comment on State institutions, undertakings, and achievements. Among other nations and languages such critical comment exists and is an aid to enlightenment; in its absence there is only the official admiring estimate.

As an instance of this lack of other than Blue Book information: both in Rome and in Florence I tried bookseller after bookseller for some volume wherein I could obtain details of the work of an institution to which I have more than once alluded in these pages, the *Opera Nazionale Dopolavoro*—the National Institution for the Use of Leisure. A certain amount of information

concerning it I had picked up casually; I knew that one of its activities was the open-air theatre—the Car of Thespis; and I knew (because I had seen placards to that effect) that, by the agency of the *Dopolavoro*, you could obtain reduced fares for excursions on the railways, and on certain days buy half-price tickets for theatres and cinema houses. One of my informants told me (not, I think, altogether seriously) that the reason so many well-patronized cinema houses went bankrupt was because such a large proportion of their audience came in on the unremunerative *Dopolavoro* prices. Although I do not think it was entirely serious, there was probably some truth in the suggestion; “circuses” for the multitude must be paid for by someone, and if they are not paid for by the audience, the management must meet the expense. The ordinary citizen, it was explained to me, obtained these reduced fee benefits of *Dopolavoro* through membership of his syndicate—his Fascist trade union or professional association; the subscription for working-class members is only a few of our pence—two lire fifty centesimi, to be exact—which, if a member is a film fan or ardent theatre-goer, must soon be recouped on his admissions. It is not to be wondered at that the number of members in 1929 was nearly a million and a half.

The organization of *Dopolavoro* is a natural development of the Fascist State; it is unthinkable that a form of government which desires to influence the whole life of a nation should leave the non-working hours out of its sphere of control. Some of the means whereby such control is exercised—the activities of L.U.C.E. and the *Balilla*—have already been indicated, but these, apparently, did not cover the whole field of leisure and amusement, and five or six years ago the *Opera Nazionale*

Dopolavoro was called into being, not only in order to furnish the citizen with cheap amusement but to aid him in the task of self-improvement.

According to the official account of the institution, the only account available, *Dopolavoro* "has much in common with the welfare work in Anglo-Saxon countries, which embraces all the efforts of the great firms for the assistance and future provision of their employees; and has also several points of analogy with other great organizations, such as the Y.M.C.A., the Playground and Recreation Association of America, the Carnegie United Kingdom Trust . . . and other foreign organizations and associations that promote libraries, culture, and artistic education for adults, sport, popular tours, and so on. In addition to these characteristics, however, the Italian movement has intrinsic features of its own which differentiate it from all organizations of the kind.

"The *Dopolavoro* is a public institution which . . . is able to deal directly with the problems of welfare, education, and recreation of the working classes. Whereas in other countries . . . the solution of the various problems of instruction, physical education, and the various forms of social aid for the working classes is left to private initiative, in Italy alone, thanks to the enterprising spirit of Fascism, these tasks have become an integral part of the State's activities, and in this field also, the State asserts its position as the controlling force of the nation."

There are statements in the above paragraph relating to other nations which might be challenged; I pass them by, however, and go on to the activities of the *Dopolavoro*, which are classed under four principal headings: "Instruction (culture for the people and the teaching of trades); Artistic Education (dramatic societies,

music and chorus singing, cinematography, wireless, folklore); Physical Education (Italian Excursion Federation and Central Sporting Commission); Social Welfare and Hygiene (dwellings, hygiene, provision for the future, leisure-time occupation for the various classes of workmen)."

As for the details of this vast programme, they include "libraries, reading-rooms, evening instruction courses . . . people's universities . . . the educational cinema"; these under the heading of Instruction. In the realm of sport, "a truly imposing number of young men and women . . . are being trained in all the soundest forms of sporting exercise, from gymnastics to fencing, swimming, rowing, cycling, running, and so on." On the recreative side the Institution has promoted "very extensive patriotic pilgrimages to the battle-fields and cemeteries of the war, tours of pleasure and instruction, and Sunday cruises and excursions" for the workers. (As one not uninterested in the theatre myself, I note, not altogether with approval, that one of *Dopolavoro's* methods of stimulating popular interest in the drama is by means of "reduced author's rights.") This list of activities is still further lengthened by "practical courses to encourage the cultivation of allotments and kitchen gardens"; by hygienic propaganda of publication and lecture; and by such miscellaneous undertakings as factory restaurants, depots for the sale of foodstuffs, small loan banks, etc.

Such is a much condensed list of the achievements of *Dopolavoro*; and, scanning them, one asks oneself whether it is possible that an official institution has obtained full control over all these activities of the human mind and body? Personally—and basing my judgment chiefly on probabilities—I should say that the answer was, No,

not yet; that in the few short years since it came into being, it could not reasonably expect to attain full control—it is a case of the inevitability of gradualness. What Fascism has done is to create its machine for the control of the nation's leisure and amusement; which, year by year, should become more efficient, as the younger generation is bred to its use and guidance. . . . In the machine-run state, as in the factory, you must make your machine before it will turn out its products.

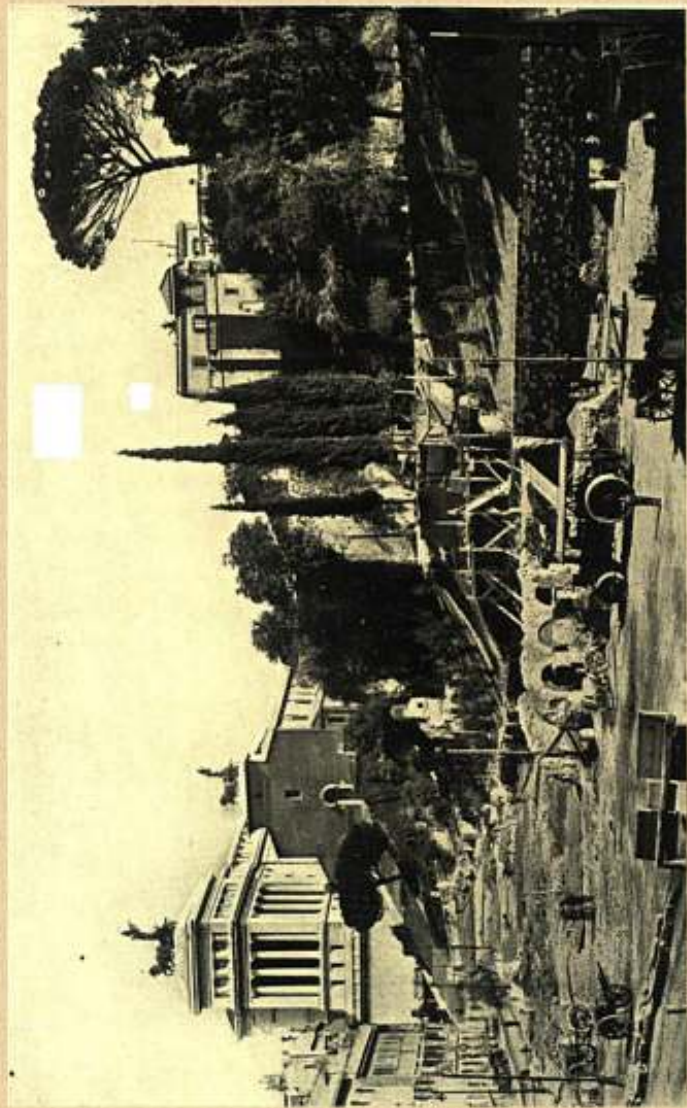
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I do not sleep easily on a railway journey, and on the long, hot night between Innsbruck and Boulogne I lay awake for the most part, thinking of the weeks behind me, and, now and again, making scribbled notes in my pocket-book. Some of which scribbings, elaborated, I here reproduce.

If Fascism endures, it will be because it has succeeded in its aim of training up profitable servants. That is the strength of its position as against liberal and socialist democracy with its neglect of duty to the State. The two new political and social systems that have arisen from the ruins of post-war Europe are, one and the other, based fundamentally on the idea of the citizen's duty to the commonwealth, the citizen's duty and service. Whatever the drawbacks of the two new systems, it cannot be laid to the charge of either that it is neglectful of education and the social services; from its very beginnings, in horror and starvation, the Soviet authority set itself to the foundation of schools, and from its very beginnings the Fascist authority did the same. Neither form of government, however, would admit that education and the social services are an unconditional right of the individual, for which he need make no

payment; it is demanded of all men that they shall make return to the common stock of that they have received from it, and make return with interest; and the first and strongest aim of education is to create a new sense of duty in the younger generation of citizens—so that when their time comes to make return, the return shall be made ungrudgingly. . . . Personally, having been bred in another and a freer tradition, I do not welcome the idea of an artificial state on one of the new foreign models—a “sovereign authority which dominates all the forces of the country” and sweeps away many of our old individual rights in favour of a stricter code of duty. But it may be that only by some such drastic method shall we be able to train ourselves out of the belief—a belief at present very widely held—that our mere arrival in this vale of tears confers on us rights of upkeep that the State is bound to discharge. Our system, based on the right of the citizen and the duty of the State, is kindlier, no doubt, than its Fascist obverse; but when millions of citizens act on that principle, and take more than they give, the system begins to sag beneath the strain.

The essentials of the new, artificial form of state would seem to be three: a man, a plan, and a faith. Lenin and Mussolini—these were the men; who each could evolve a scheme of things entire, to which his community must fit itself. And who either possessed some mystic power of arousing faith, or had the luck to arrive at a moment when a people, having broken its old idols and rejected its old creed, was striving to formulate a confession of faith and seeking for a new god to worship. . . . The instinct of worship is with us always, as strong and persistent as hunger, but not so easily satisfied. When it is satisfied, man or nation bends the knee; Mussolini's



Anderson

Clearance round the Capitol in progress

portrait looks down from the wall on the little *Balilla*, like the face of a warrior-saint; and the sons of those who once bowed before the icon now do reverence at the red tomb of Lenin.

It is likely that there is more of the religious element in the creed of Bolshevism than in the creed of Fascism, if only for the reason that Bolshevism has abolished God. That is not the same thing as abolishing the religious instinct in man which, in default of an Almighty who made heaven and earth and all that in them is, may attach itself to Lenin who created a Soviet Republic. Fascism has never aspired to abolish God—on the contrary; and because it exists side by side with a Church, it is unlikely to rival Bolshevism in the element of religious fervour. . . . Which, it may be, is as well; the element of religious fervour in politics has never yet made for tolerance and has never yet made for peace.

We may dislike dictatorship and trust that ourselves may escape it; but our dislike should not prevent us from realizing that it is a sane instinct which leads nations in difficulties to turn their backs on democracy and all its works. For democracy is a fair-weather system only, impossible in times of storm and stress. The essence of good government, of the kind that stands a strain, is responsibility; which means that a man who holds authority must answer for his sins and have his blunders brought home to him. Under our system of political democracy ultimate authority is vested in the entirely irresponsible, the elector; for what emperor, what dictator, however despotic, can err as the elector errs, with complete immunity from consequence? Who will take him to task if he votes corruptly, in selfishness, if he votes in folly or in ignorance? Who will even know when he has voted like a fool? The secrecy of the

ballot-box protects him from the modicum, the tiny modicum of blame that might fall to his share, as adherent of a party which had brought disaster on the country. And other method of bringing home error there is none. The dictator, grown intolerable, can be knifed or shot; but you cannot assassinate the anonymous, million-headed voter. The dictator, too, however autocratic, will probably have some thought for his reputation, while alive and at the bar of history; a consideration which need not trouble the anonymous, million-headed voter. . . . Because no community in difficulties dare risk irresponsible government for long, it is likely enough that Mussolini's prophecy anent the passing of parliamentary institutions in other nations may be fulfilled ere many years are out. But dictatorships in other nations, even if they mould themselves intentionally on the Fascist model, are unlikely to mould themselves exactly. In Fascism is an element which is part of the racial consciousness of those who hold themselves inheritors of Rome, but would have little meaning for nations whose tradition is not Roman.

I have refrained in these pages, and refrained of set purpose, from stories of ruthless treatment of the political opponents of Fascism. Not only because such stories are obtainable elsewhere and on better authority than I could quote; but because it seems to me that, given the Fascist aim of a one-minded nation, a certain amount of harshness in the treatment of opponents must be accepted as inevitable. No form of community which makes orthodoxy its highest good has been able to dispense with a measure of harshness to the heretic. Churches, insistent on the unitary religious conscience,

have instituted their Inquisitions and persecuted even to the death. Trade unions, bent on their solidarity—which is another word for Fascism's "unitary political conscience"—have not scrupled to deprive the heretic of his means of livelihood, with intent to starve him into orthodoxy. And even the warmest enthusiasts for the heaven on earth that is revealed in Soviet Russia may find it advisable not to concern themselves too closely with the place of the heretic in the system. Once a community—a church, class, or people—has decided that its members are to be of one mind, it must bring its heretics to heel. And heretics, because they are heretics, seldom come to heel unless they are driven with the lash. . . . "Right-minded" education of the younger generation and the silencing—the quelling—of heretics in the elder: so only can Italy, or any other nation, hope to attain to full orthodoxy.

Because I am by nature inclined to heresy, I cannot help hoping that this new order of community—the orthodox State with a dictatorship at its head—is not destined to world-wide development. Yet, whatever my personal hopes may be, I cannot shut my eyes to the indications that point to its advent, and that also point to its necessity. Political democracy as at present existing is too unreliable in its workings to be permitted in a World-State system, a really effective League of Nations, or even a United States of Europe; yet in the end, if our present civilization survives, we shall probably adopt some such form of federation. When that time comes we shall have to realize that, if federation is not to be a failure, it will be necessary for each national unit to provide itself with a system of government that is reliable and permanent, so that it can treat with federal authority on a permanent, reliable basis. Only a system

that partook of the nature of despotism or oligarchy could so treat; since only such a system could pledge itself to a given course of conduct with a definite yea or nay. The temper of an electorate at the next election is not a permanent reliable basis for negotiation or agreement; and it would probably be impossible to institute a workable federation containing members like the United States of America or the pre-partition kingdom of Poland, where legislative assemblies exercise the power of vetoing engagements made by their presidents and kings. A federated Europe or a federated world may well mean the limiting of local freedom and the passing of power from democracy. . . . Perhaps there was some such thought in the mind of the Duce when he advised "the responsible governors of other nations" that they also would have to pass where the governors of Italy had passed; that they also must follow the example of Fascism and dispense with parliamentary government.

In Italy, as in England, I have heard it wondered whether Fascist rule could outlast the life of its founder. To that wonder who shall give answer with certainty? There is discontent, of course, as there must be after any revolution; and, arguing merely from probabilities, one supposes it must be fairly serious, otherwise it would not be necessary to make such stringent laws and regulations against its expression. Obviously Fascism is rule by a minority, but so have been all lasting forms of government; it is only rule by the majority that collapses as soon as it starts. Mussolini is said to have declared at the outset that, if he were given five years of authority, his system would be made to endure. The March on Rome was in 1922, so double his five

years have been granted him; double five years for the adapting of his machine to the life of the nation, double five years for "right-minded" education—the instilling into the young Italian mind of belief in the splendour of the Fascist Revolution and a sense of duty to the State. . . .

In the beginning, to create the new artificial order, the man and the plan and the faith are all necessary; but if the plan is skilled enough and the faith is strong enough—if, but only if—then the man can drop out and another carry on his work. So, at least, it was in Russia, where Lenin, the man, was gathered to his fathers and Stalin reigns in his stead; and if in Russia, why not in Italy?

Meanwhile, Mussolini is still a young man; as politicians go, a mere youth!

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