# THE FOREIGN POLICY OF ITALY.

AFTER the remarkable and important articles on Italian affairs recently published by both the CONTEMPORARY REVIEW and the *Revue des Deux Mondes*, it seems almost superfluous for me to approach the subject. My excuse for so doing is that mine is a neutral country, quite apart from the rivalries and ambitions of great Powers, and whose sole interest in foreign politics is the maintenance of peace, the further development of economic relations between nation and nation, and the general progress of humanity. It follows, therefore, that what I say, failing any other merit, will, at all events, possess that of impartiality.

In the two articles which Signor Crispi wrote in the CONTEMPORARY REVIEW,* his object was to prove that the recent policy of Italy and her adhesion to the Triple Alliance had been compelled by the fact that France was, and ever had been, hostile to a united Italy, and had never really recognised Rome as its capital. Signor Crispi is here both right and wrong; in other words, it is essential very carefully to distinguish between different periods and currents of ideas.

It is, of course, obvious that an event so important as the establishment, on the confines of France, of a united realm of the first magnitude, involving the suppression of the temporal power of the great head of the Catholic Church, could not be similarly appreciated by all Frenchmen, or more particularly by all parties. The unity of Italy, with Rome as capital, has always found, and still finds, enemies in all devout Catholics and Ultramontanes. This, of course, can excite no surprise. It was opposed also by what I will call the *political* party—that is to say, by those who place themselves, as Signor Crispi does on behalf of his own country, at the point of

* June and August, 1891.

view of the possible rivalries of nations and of the balance of power. It is quite clear that France—then in the enjoyment of complete unity, and the first military nation in Europe—was comparatively far stronger when her neighbour Germany was split up into twenty little separate States, not unfrequently rivals, and at all events incapable of united action, and when Italy was also divided into principalities. Thiers constantly referred to this state of things in his speeches. Not only Liberal-Conservatives like Thiers, but Republicans such as Eugène Pelletan, and Socialists such as Proudhon, also expressed the same opinion. All, while anxious to see Italy delivered from a foreign yoke, were desirous that in her own interest, as well as in that of France, she should form a federation and not a united State. And, at the present day, in view of the existing situation, and from a French standpoint, might they not well maintain that they discerned the future clearly? It cannot, therefore, be denied that two powerful and influential groups in France were opposed to the unity of Italy.

But, on the other hand, the great majority of the French people were in favour of it; and this in consequence of two orders of ideas which are very prevalent in the country. Without going so far as to adopt Gambetta's famous motto, "Clericalism is our great enemy," the *bourgeoisie*, the workmen, and even the peasantry, are, as a rule, anti-clerical. This general sentiment is a legacy of the Revolution, easily explained by the horror which any recollection of the former state of things inspires. The great mass of the French nation, therefore, applauded the fall of the temporal power, and the mere notion of France taking up arms to defend it would have appeared monstrous and absurd.

In the second place, at that period, France considered herself the patroness of all oppressed nationalities. She was fired by a noble enthusiasm for the independence of Greece, of Italy, and later on of Hungary. She would have delivered Poland from Muscovite rule, at any cost, in spite of German opposition and the risk of a war with united Europe. There were popular movements and insurrections, with cries of "Vive la Pologne," not only under Louis Philippe, but as late as the Second Republic. What Frenchman was not moved by the perusal of Silvio Pellico's "Le mie Prigioni," by George Sand's "Orco," and by the verses of the poets who depicted the sufferings of Italy? Who did not long to see the hard and cruel Austrian domination in the land of Dante and Petrarch come to an end? Such feelings as these, which were favourable to Italy, and we may even say to Italian unity, were still very general in France even after 1870, although the people had in vain hoped for some assistance in their troubles from the other side of the Alps. It was known that Victor Emmanuel had shed tears, and even gone so far as to insult

his trusted Minister, Sella, when it was proved to him that the Italian army was wholly incapable of taking the field in time. The generous, though wholly futile, effort of Garibaldi, who attempted to come to the rescue of Bourbaki's army when it was already completely disorganised, was not forgotten.

How has it happened that the natural friendship between two sister nations has been replaced by such very different feelings?

The reason is certainly not, as Signor Crispi and many other Italians of note with him maintain, the fear lest France should support the Pope, and even reconquer his States for him by force of arms; it is, in part, the occupation of Tunis by French troops, for the purpose of chastising the Kroumirs. This is a very important point, which I will endeavour to prove later on.

But the true and serious cause of the existing ill-feeling between France and Italy lies still deeper. We may seek it in the position which Italy took in Europe, after she became a united kingdom. Definitely liberated and unified, after 1870, she was admitted to a place beside England, France, Germany, Russia, and Austro-Hungary. She became the sixth Great Power, and had a voice, with the others, in regulating the politics of our continent.

It would have been wiser to refuse this onerous and perilous honour. Happy the small States which have no such weighty responsibility! But it was too much to expect such exceeding wisdom from either the king or the country. Although taking her seat amongst the *Dii Majores*, Italy might still have kept somewhat in the background, and only interfered in the deliberations of the Powers in order to defend the rights of the people, or in humanitarian questions, abstaining for herself from any recourse to arms, and letting it be clearly understood that all her resources and all her activity were to be devoted to home affairs. This attitude, which is very similar to that adopted by the United States when they take part in any congress or conference of the Powers, would have placed Italy in the same sort of position as, for instance, Spain. I have spoken to this effect very frequently, and many years ago, to eminent Italian statesmen of different parties; and all, without exception, including that great Parliamentarian—so prudent, so moderate, so far-seeing—Minghetti, repudiated any such notion with the utmost indignation, as wholly unworthy of regenerated Italy. They argued that she was now a Great Power, and as such, must accept the burdens with the honours. To be nothing but a Belgium or a Switzerland, with a population of 30,000,000,—never! It was a duty to herself, her dignity, and her past history, to have the right of interference in international affairs, to contribute to the maintenance of the equilibrium of Europe, and, more particularly, in the Mediterranean, and to prevent the preponderance of one or other

of her neighbours from threatening her own security. It was, therefore, essential that she should be possessed of a large army and a powerful fleet, and also of colonies.

Italy was eager to give her opinion, even on the most delicate questions. For example, before the English were obliged to occupy Egypt, in order to save it from anarchy, on the refusal of France to have anything further to do with the matter, it was proposed to form a sort of protectorate of the three Powers—France, England, and Italy. The failure of this scheme, which was at the time amply justified by the very considerable interests possessed by all three States on the banks of the Nile, was a cruel disappointment for Italy, for which those who recollect the incident have never consoled themselves. It would have been a satisfaction to Italy to be completely entangled in the Egyptian wasp's-nest, from which even France preferred to withdraw.* Every one beyond the Alps, at that period, seemed to be attacked by that mania for greatness, designated so appropriately by the much regretted Jacini as *mégalomanie*, which led every Italian to be anxious that his country should play an important part in the affairs of the world.

Besides, the one special object, common to all Italian statesmen, of maintaining the equilibrium in the Mediterranean, sufficed alone to create, sooner or later, antagonism and difficulties in their relations with France. France, powerfully established on the two shores of this inland sea, with her thirty-eight million inhabitants, her almost exhaustless finances, her innumerable army and excellent fleet, must inevitably occupy a preponderating position. It is clear, therefore, that if Italy wishes to maintain a chimerical equilibrium, she can only do so by seeking alliances, and more particularly that of England, who also considers that she must have her share of influence and power in the Mediterranean.

We may, then, repeat that the idea of equilibrium in the Mediterranean, which Italy, so far, has ever laid stress upon as a matter of vital interest, implied a latent antagonism with regard to France. An unlooked-for incident rendered this antagonism open.

I have been informed, on good authority, that in the conferences

* It may be recollected that M. de Freycinet appealed to the Chamber for a vote of credit for the purpose of sending a small body of four thousand troops to Egypt, to act in concert with the English in maintaining order there. The offer of co-operation came from the Cabinet of St. James's. The great interest of France in Egypt, particularly in the Suez Canal, was an ample justification for such interference. Nevertheless, after a brilliant and cutting speech by M. Clémenceau, the Chamber of Deputies rejected the Bill by an overwhelming majority—416 votes to 75—and M. de Freycinet resigned. Frenchmen now bitterly regret this vote of July 29, 1882, and yet who can say that M. Clémenceau was not right? There is nothing more dangerous than a *condominium*. This was well proved by the occupation of Schleswig-Holstein by Prussia and Austria conjointly. What special advantage would it be to France if, at the present moment, her red trousers were mounting guard at Cairo in company with English red coats? The point of interest for the world in general, and also for French trade and finance, is whether order and security are established in Egypt. If England be willing to take upon herself the *rôle* of police officer, why envy her so ungrateful a task?

which preceded the Berlin Treaty the representatives of Italy felt themselves very much shut out, their colleagues displaying great coldness towards them, and even at times a lack of goodwill. This treaty, and especially its immediate results, provoked in Italy feelings of violent resentment. The general irritation was deep and lasting. Austro-Hungary received Bosnia and Herzegovina; England, Cyprus; Russia, the liberation of Bulgaria and access to the mouth of the Danube; and France, (this was the very nadir of bitterness and humiliation) Tunis; whereas the young realm came away empty-handed.

It may be asked, "What did the Italians expect? Did they suppose that Austria would give up the Italian district of the Tyrol; or that Albania or Tripoli would be taken from Turkey for her benefit?" Such ideas could not be entertained for an instant. They hoped, perhaps, for Tunis, but France would never have permitted that. It is certainly somewhat hard for Italy to see the Regency henceforth annexed to Algeria, but is it not very natural that it should be so under existing conditions? It is argued that it is a permanent menace to Sicily; but is not Toulon still more threatening to Genoa, and in far closer proximity?

Besides, in the event of war it is certain that France would never make her basis of operations in Africa, where she has little or no resources, whereas on her own coasts she is abundantly provided with men, arms, munitions, and provisions of all kinds. The Italians, however, could not and would not listen to any argument. They were so deeply irritated that their exasperation bordered on fury. It was beyond description, and quite general; it was shared by the most devoted friends of France, and by men renowned for their moderation.*

The most cruel trial of all for Italy, however, was that she could count on no support in her resistance to France. Russia was inconsolable at being obliged by the other Powers, including Italy, to give up the treaty of San Stefano. Austria could not pardon the Irredentist claims. And as for the two natural allies, Germany and England, it was—oh mockery!—Lord Salisbury and Prince Bismarck who offered Tunis to France, the former with the view of giving to that Power a compensation calculated somewhat to deaden the notions

* I found this to be the case, not only from letters received from Italy, but from a visit to the country which I made just at that time. I give one little example out of several which struck me. At the banquet which the city of Turin offered to the Institute of International Law, in September 1882, I was seated next to one of the chief authorities. Glancing at the *ménu*, I observed that there were only Italian wines. I remarked casually to my neighbour that I was very pleased to have an opportunity of making the acquaintance of the wines of the country. "We shall drink no more French wines," he replied; "she has refused to recognise our rights, and has humiliated us. Her desire is to see us wholly crushed, but we will show that we can defend ourselves. Even our women will take up arms." I had called forth, most involuntarily, an explosion of indignation and anger which absolutely amazed me.

of revenge, and the latter in order to create a cause of dissension and hostility between Italy and France, of which it would not be difficult for him to reap the advantage.

Italy, not accepting the *rôle* of a disinterested nation which would see the power of its neighbours increase without either fear or jealousy, naturally felt a most ardent desire to get out of her isolated and exceptional position. About this time strange and disquieting negotiations, which were going on between Rome and Berlin, induced the Italian Government to throw itself into the arms of Bismarck. We must here recall an incident of 1881–1882 which Signor Crispi wholly ignores in his two remarkable articles. Prince Bismarck, who shortly before had urged a revision of the Law of Guarantees *against* the Pope, now asked for its revision *in favour* of His Holiness. M. de Schloezer was despatched on an official mission to the Vatican, bringing to the Pope a most amiable and reassuring message. A telegram from the Italian Foreign Minister to the Italian Ambassador in Berlin betrays the uneasiness felt at the Quirinal. The Pope and his surroundings were quite elated. They even went so far as to hope that Germany might restore some States to the Papal See.*

Prince Bismarck, in thus siding with the Papacy, or in seeming to do so, secured three great advantages. He obtained the votes of the extreme Catholics in the German Parliament in support of his economic reforms. By putting an end to the *Kulturkampf* he lessened the hostility of the clergy in Alsace-Lorraine, and, lastly, he obliged Italy, standing alone and threatened as to Rome, to have recourse to himself. It was the trick of the forced card.

Could the Italian Government possibly do otherwise than seize such an opportunity as was then offered of abandoning her isolated position, which she recognised as fraught with peril, and securing the alliance of Germany, instead of the threatening hostility exhibited by Prince Bismarck in the ecclesiastical question?

Her position was transformed by this alliance as by magic. It had been most painful and dangerous, and it was now excellent. She felt herself thenceforth strong, and well supported as against France; and all uneasiness as to foreign interference in the Roman question vanished. One might well ask the French statesmen—who were themselves so eager to seize the first occasion of escape from their

* The situation was so strained, and there was, at this moment, such a general belief in the active interference of Germany in favour of the Pope, that I endeavoured to show the obstacles which stood in the way of any such step. I depicted the hopes indulged in by the Vatican in the following terms: "Those who are admitted to see the Pope describe him as looking quite joyful. Those who are immediately about him look mysterious in order to conceal their too great joy and their secret hopes. 'No,' they whisper, 'it will not be to-morrow; but great things are plotting. Rome is doomed; Sella admits it: the Pope will again be king. He will be delivered by the hand of barbarians, who will drive out the usurper.'"—(Article in the *Revue de Belgique*, February 15, 1882).

isolation, who have recently displayed so much enthusiasm for the understanding with Russia, in spite of their former infatuation for Poland—whether, taking into consideration the critical condition of Italy, they would not have acted as she did? Every one recollects King Humbert's visit in 1882 to Vienna, where the Triple Alliance was discussed and approached through Signor Mancini, the Foreign Minister of Italy, and Count di Robilant, the Italian Ambassador at Vienna. I knew Signor Mancini personally, and I have not the smallest hesitation in affirming that he was a sincere friend of France. He was a staunch supporter of the peace and arbitration principle, and would have refused to sign any treaty with an aggressive object. If he adhered to the Triple Alliance, he did so, in the first place, because he was convinced that its result would be the maintenance of peace; and, secondly, because it appeared to be the only safe course for Italy to adopt at the time.

The mere recital of these well-known facts proves that the conduct of Italy throughout this matter is to be explained not at all by any fear of French interference in favour of the Pope—a thing no one even thought of at that period—but, on the contrary, by the advances made to the Vatican by Germany through M. de Schloezer's mission, and by the threatening attitude which Prince Bismarck assumed in 1881–82 towards the Quirinal. The action of Italy is far more easily justified and explained in this way than by reference to the chimerical fears and apprehensions to which Signor Crispi attributes it. Frenchmen themselves, if they will but reflect, will be the first to recognise this fact.

The Italians complain bitterly that the French, who are so hard on their own clergy at home, have never by any public act recognised the occupation of Rome by Italy, as the Emperor William did, for instance, when he accepted King Humbert's hospitality at the Quirinal. We must however be just, and admit that the object of the Triple Alliance is to maintain the *status quo*, and that this *status quo* means that France shall leave Alsace-Lorraine in the hands of Germany. Some Powers may, of course, congratulate themselves on a treaty the effect of which is to lessen the chances of war; but one cannot expect Frenchmen to do so. As Italy forms part of the barrier against the presumed designs of France, the latter very naturally endeavours to seek means to weaken Italy. The Roman question and the claims of the Pope attain, in a measure, this result, and, under certain circumstances, might become a formidable weapon in her hands. It would certainly be too much to hope that she should part with this. It is quite as natural now that France should not be willing to abandon the means at her disposal for holding her own against the Allied Powers, as it was in 1881–82 that Italy should join the Triple Alliance.

In the treaty which handed over Schleswig-Holstein to Prussia, there was a stipulation that the wishes of the inhabitants of the exclusively Danish portion of Schleswig should be duly respected, a clause which has never hitherto been observed. Can Germany reasonably ask France to give her adhesion to a state of things directly contravening a formal article of the Treaty of Nikolsburg, which, moreover, she is not called upon to see fulfilled, as she did not interfere in it?

Although France did not choose to abandon a means of pressure which even Germany retained in her own hands until after the Triple Alliance was concluded, there was not the slightest real danger of the French Government defending the interests of the Temporal Power. Such a course could only have presented itself if the monarchy had been restored, and with a view to giving satisfaction to the clerical party, to whom the return to power would have been due. Napoleon III. acted in this way in spite of his sympathy for Italy. But, even in such a case, the restored monarchy would almost certainly have hesitated to adopt such a policy on account of the resistance it would have met with both at home and from Germany, which would have been interested in supporting Italy. Hence we see that, previously to 1882, there was nothing to fear on this score; and it is, certainly, not any such purely imaginary danger which could have induced the Italian Government to ally itself to Germany and Austria.

Nevertheless, it cannot be denied that since 1882 the situation has been completely altered. The French Republic is not likely to commit the egregious blunder of attacking Italy, as Italians, by some singular aberration, seem sometimes to imagine it will do;* but the question of the Temporal Power is a thorn in the side of Italy, and, as Italy forms part of the barrier opposed to the claims and aspirations of France, the latter is not likely to give any assistance towards the extraction of the thorn, or the smoothing away of a difficulty which she might some day manage to turn to her own advantage.

Having explained the manner in which Italy, aspiring to become a Great Power, was drawn on in spite of herself, and, one might even say, constrained and forced to enter upon the Triple Alliance, one is led to inquire why she did not withdraw from it after the

* During the summer of 1889, at the period of the Paris Exhibition, the Italian Government seriously believed, at a given moment, that the French fleet was about to surprise La Spezzia, and destroy the arsenals there. It was thought right to inform the English fleet in the Mediterranean, which sailed at once to Genoa, to follow the course of events, and be on the spot ready for any emergency. It appears that the explanation of this singular adventure is as follows: The fleet at Toulon had been given, as a subject for tactical study, "an attack on La Spezzia." Some non-official person informed of this had taken the matter seriously, and told the Italian Minister of Marine, who, in his turn, did not think it impossible, there being at that time a deep conviction in Italy of the evil designs of France. This incredible story is, nevertheless, perfectly true.

circumstances had entirely changed, and particularly last summer (1891) when her relations with France were on a much more satisfactory footing, in consequence of the friendly attitude of the newly formed Cabinet of Di Rudini?

Here, again, I think we might safely leave the conduct of the Italian Government to the judgment of any impartial Frenchman. In the first place, there is the consideration of the point of honour, which at the present moment will be better understood in Paris than anywhere else. With the Franco-Russian agreement on the point of settlement, Italy cannot, without being accused of cowardice and exposing herself to just attack, abandon her allies in view of the serious danger which henceforth threatens them.* In addition to this, the question of Rome, which was pressed by Germany in 1881–82 and which determined Italy to enter upon the Triple Alliance, still remains, and it is far more to be feared that this cause may be espoused by Germany and Austro-Hungary than by Republican France.

It must not be forgotten that Austro-Hungary is at heart clerical, as are the Emperor and his Court; and that Francis Joseph could not make up his mind to return the visit King Humbert paid him at Vienna for fear of wounding the Pope. If he were openly to support the Papacy, the majority of his subjects would fully approve—at all events he would meet with no serious resistance.†

* True, the renewal of the Triple Alliance was signed last summer (1891) before the French fleet went to Kronstadt; but, according to information received from what I believe to be a perfectly reliable source, the Italian Government was informed of the pending negotiations and of the Franco-Russian understanding. In addition to this, the Marquis di Rudini was anxious that public opinion should be fixed as to an accomplished and inevitable fact, in order to avoid the excitement and agitation which any uncertainty as to the situation might have provoked. M. Giacometti, in the *Revue des Deux Mondes*, says that the Marquis di Rudini yielded to pressure from England when he signed the renewal of the Triple Alliance; but any such intervention would be in direct opposition to the policy of the English Cabinet during the last few years, and it is highly improbable that Lord Salisbury would take any such course.

† In order to prove how threatening and uncertain the situation is in this quarter, we have but to recall the agitation and uneasiness provoked in the Italian Parliament by Count Kalnoky's reply respecting the Roman question, when the following telegram was handed in:—

"VIENNA, *Nov.* 20.

"Giving an explanation as to the Roman question to the Austrian delegation, Count Kalnoky so treated it as not to wound the Catholic party. At the same time he was exceedingly careful in no way to offend Italy.

"Taking into consideration the very legitimate susceptibilities of Catholics who form the great majority of the Empire, the Minister would wish the head of the Catholic Church to enjoy that complete independence which is necessary for him.

"But, on the other hand, the Government also desires that there should be peace between the Papal See and the Kingdom of Italy. The Austrian nation also wishes to be at peace with the Italian nation.

"We have concluded a political alliance with Italy, which forms the basis of our policy.'

"This is why Count Kalnoky refuses to reply to certain questions addressed to him, which he could not answer without hurting the feelings of the Italian nation. No one has at present solved the problem.

"The Foreign Minister was much applauded, and his budget adopted."

The uneasiness at Rome was certainly of very short duration, for Count Kalnoky very quickly reassured the Quirinal, which probably already knew very well what to think of the state of affairs. But the serious point remains that public opinion in Austria should compel the Chancellor of the Empire to make such declarations as these.

The situation is not the same in Germany, where the great majority of the population is Protestant: but, in point of fact, the Emperor William does as he chooses as regards foreign policy, and any interference in favour of the Pope would ensure him the gratitude of all the clergy of Alsace-Lorraine and of the Catholic party in Parliament, which would be well worth consideration. All this constitutes a formidable arm against Italy, binding her almost irrevocably to the Triple Alliance. Had she not alienated the friendship of France with respect to Tunis, had she not assumed as a mission the maintenance of the equilibrium of the Mediterranean, she might certainly have refused to join the Alliance; but, having once signed it, it is very difficult indeed for her to disengage herself without dishonour, or indeed without serious peril.

Whatever French and German Ministers may choose to say on the subject, it is certain that the visit of the ironclads to Kronstadt, and Admiral Gervais' reception there by the Czar, did not contribute to render the maintenance of peace more assured. Nothing, of course, is altered in the general situation of Europe. It was already clear that Russia would not allow France to be crushed by the Triple Alliance, and that, on the other hand, France would come forward to assist Russia. As Bismarck remarked once, when some one was speaking to him of the Franco-Russian Alliance, "*There is no question of any such thing, but it is an accomplished fact.*" Only the change is this: that France, henceforth sure of support, will be more exacting and less conciliatory towards Germany and Italy than before. The condition of affairs is therefore more strained and uncertain. As the best Foreign Minister Italy has ever possessed, the Marquis Visconti Venosta, remarked to me last autumn, in a conversation on the chances of war, at Santena, where we were visiting the tomb and souvenirs of Cavour: "One must always count on the unforeseen. Incidents—here lies the danger in certain situations."

Neither Signor Crispi, in the CONTEMPORARY REVIEW, nor M. Giacometti in the *Revue des Deux Mondes*, nor, in fact, the majority of Italians, appear to realise that the Roman question must necessarily be weighed in the balance and influence the decisions of the Italian Government.

M. Renan, in his interesting volume on Marcus Aurelius, predicts that Catholicism, like paganism, will die out in remote country villages and wastes, deprived of all culture and light, and Liberals everywhere consider the Papacy as of no account. It may be that, contrary to Macaulay's views on the subject, such is the destiny reserved for the Catholic faith in the twentieth century. But it is an undeniable fact, nevertheless, that the Pope and the clergy, of whom he is the absolute master, are a great power, and are not by any means to be ignored. Mr. Stead demonstrates this in his recently published

"Letters from the Vatican," with an enthusiasm hardly justifiable in so good a Protestant, but with a very clear perception of the real state of things. By means of his bishops and priests the Pope controls the votes of more than one-half of the population in Belgium and in Spain, of perhaps a quarter or a third in France, and of three-quarters in Ireland, Lower Canada, and the Tyrol. He has in his hands whole provinces of certain Protestant or schismatic empires, as, for instance, the Rhenish provinces and Alsace and Lorraine in Germany, and Poland in Russia. There may, therefore, at any moment come a time when either a Sovereign or a Minister may find it to his interest to purchase the support of the Pope by doing him a service, and supporting his claims. Did not the Ministers of Protestant England negotiate with Leo XIII. in order that he might exert his influence and moderate the violence of the agrarian movement in Ireland? In Germany the Catholic party have more than one hundred votes. Would it not be a temptation to a Minister depending on a Parliamentary majority to secure these votes for his party? A Pope interfered in favour of the Government in the "Septennate" question, and his assistance gained the day. When one reflects that the seamless coat of Christ exhibited at Treves has attracted a million and a half of pilgrims, it is impossible to deny that there is still a very considerable latent force in fanaticism.

Such facts as these are not satisfactory to the supporters of liberty and liberal ideas; but it is far better, as they are undeniable, to look them well in the face than to ignore or forget them. As the Pope lays claim to Rome, and exercises all over Europe great influence in political complications, this is certainly a very possible danger, and must necessarily be a source of constant pre-occupation for the Italian Government. If one reflects well on this, then the line of conduct followed by Italy becomes much more comprehensible.

Unfortunately it is not in her power to modify this situation. It is true that, by always acting with great prudence, maintaining firmly the Law of Guarantees, and assuring complete liberty to pilgrimages, as the Marquis di Rudini has recently done in his excellent speech at Milan, it is possible to put the danger on one side; but it is not in the least likely to disappear for many years to come. Projects of conciliation have been proposed in different quarters, and particularly by the eminent Stefano Jacini, and by Senator Lombroso, only too early lost to his country. All these schemes are alike vitiated by one defect, which is independent of the will of men. They involve two irreconcilable principles. On the one hand, the Pope cannot formally give up all claim to the temporal power which his predecessors and the faithful in general hold indispensable to the exercise of his ministry; and, on the other hand, the King cannot possibly restore Rome to the Holy See without risking his crown.

The present situation must therefore be prolonged until, in course of time, the suppression of the temporal power be accepted as naturally and definitively as that of the ecclesiastical principalities of Germany at the commencement of the present century.

Besides, it is worthy of remark that the Italian clergy are not in the least likely to create difficulties by violent opposition or open hostility. Not a single Italian prelate has dreamed of sending to his Government abusive communications such as the Archbishop of Aix, M. Gouthe-Soulard, published in the French papers against the Minister of Justice. True, the Italian priests deplore the antagonism between the Vatican and the Quirinal; but they are generally good patriots; they love their country, and would bewail an invasion by a foreign foe, even if it were made under the pretext of restoring to the Pope his lost provinces.

Wherever the King, "the usurper," arrives, the dignitaries of the Church make no difficulty about receiving him. I am told that the majority of the Bishops share the opinions of His Grace of Cremona, a learned prelate much interested in the social question, who demonstrated recently in very sensible language that it was the duty of the clergy to abstain from political struggles. He said :—

"The priest in such cases has nothing to win and everything to lose. If he conquer in the electoral battle, his vanquished opponents, with their friends and connections, will unite together against him, eager for revenge, and, in order to combat this opposition, the minister of a 'God of peace' is forced at times to seek allies among those who do himself and his cause but little credit. If the priests be vanquished, the conquerors boast that they have gained the upper hand over the Church, which comes in for her share of insult, and they spare no means to avoid a future defeat. Hence, either victorious or vanquished, the priest is placed in a most painful position. And this is not all. Oh! you vicars and incumbents of our parishes, after these electoral struggles, in which you have taken an active part, can you expect or hope that either the victors or the vanquished will come to church, to the celebration of mass or to listen to your sermons? Can you believe that they will present themselves at your tribunal to confess their sins and receive your counsels, that they will send for you on their death-beds as their spiritual advisers and respected fathers in God? To imagine this you must be profoundly ignorant of human nature; and what I myself have witnessed, with my own eyes, prevents my entertaining a doubt on the subject. Our parishioners will accept remonstrances from a priest who keeps strictly within the bounds of his spiritual ministry, but not from one who has opposed them in the political field, because they consider that in such a case he has usurped a position not justly his due.

"If we combat the laity in the forum and in the municipal elections, the latter consider it but their right to attack us in our temples and on religious matters. The priest ought to be the friend and father of all his parishioners, of the good in order to make them better, and of the bad to bring them back into the straight path. He should bring to all alike messages of peace and the consolations of religion. How is he to do this if, in electoral warfare, he has openly contended with those who to-morrow perhaps may stand in need of his spiritual assistance?"—("Il Clero e la Società Moderna" di Monsignor Jeremia Bonomelli, Cremona, 1889, pp. 46-48).

We must admit that the Italian clergy understand far better than those of Ireland, Canada, Belgium, or the Rhine provinces, and even than those of France (although the latter are far more reserved than the others in political matters) that their sacerdotal functions should render their mission wholly pacific and exclusively spiritual. True, there are in Italy, here and there, and more particularly about the Vatican, some few fanatics who would unhesitatingly condemn their country to fire and sword for the purpose of restoring the Papal States,* but if the demon of war, like the devil when he tempted our Saviour in the desert, were to present himself to Pope Leo XIII., saying, "You have but to lift your finger and a foreign army, either from France or Germany, will cross the Alps, disperse the Italian troops and, after disastrous but decisive victories, restore your power and drive the usurper from Rome," I cannot bring myself to believe that he who claims to be, on earth, the representative of the "Prince of Peace," would not refuse to reconquer his crown at such a cost. The danger then, if such there be, does not come from the Italian clergy, but from without. It behoves, therefore, the Government of the Quirinal to be very guarded and more prudent than ever.

The speech recently delivered on this subject at Milan by the Marquis di Rudini is worthy of all praise. He said:—

"Our ecclesiastical policy, the honour and the strength of Italy, henceforth traditional, will be most scrupulously maintained: the unfortunate incidents which have recently occurred, for which a few excited and misguided persons may be held responsible, will in nowise cause us to deviate therefrom. An event of such trifling importance could not possibly lead to a discussion of the fundamental statutes of the realm, or to any attempt at a modification of the Law of Guarantees of which long experience has proved both the wisdom and the necessity. Italy will not lessen by an iota the respect she owes to liberty of conscience and religious toleration so gloriously professed by our land. Pilgrims from all portions of the globe, safe in the security granted them by our laws, may continue to visit Rome to pay their respectful homage to the Sovereign Pontiff, to whom we, who feel safe as to the present and absolutely assured as to the future, can fearlessly guarantee complete freedom, while we, at the same time, tender him sovereign honour."

When once Italy, threatened as she ever is more or less by the Roman question, decided to play the part of a Great Power and to constitute herself the guardian of the Mediterranean equilibrium, a considerable army and navy became essential to her, even at the risk

* When Mr. Stead went to Rome for the purpose of ascertaining if there were any hope of the Vatican taking the lead in the social movement and accepting the idea of enthroning an Anglo-Saxon as the head of the Catholic Church, he travelled with a prelate who was also going to the Eternal City. The latter made no secret of his expectation that a foreign army would ere long invade Italy, chase away the "usurper," and re-establish the Temporal Power. Mr. Stead was surprised and indignant at this call for war and onslaught coming from a minister of Christ. This was not the only delusion dispelled by his journey. (See "Letters from the Vatican.")

of overtaxing her population, creating a deficit in her Budget, and necessitating constant loans; but even admitting such a policy, which is open to so many objections, still the Italian Government might certainly have spent far less than it has done—more particularly on its war vessels. Here again *megalomania*—the desire to "do the great"—had the upper hand. It was deemed necessary to have the largest ironclads in the world, costing from five-and-twenty to thirty million francs apiece, without any consideration of the immense and probably useless expense of constructing these enormous vessels,* just at a period when the progress made in such matters is so incessant that a vessel built to-day and thought perfect will in a very few years be considered out of date and set aside as of no good whatever.

Millions of money have also been expended in fortifying certain positions, including Rome; and it is now proposed to build forts in Sicily, because France has erected some works at Biserta. Is all this likely to be of much avail? To begin with, such a coast-line as that of Italy cannot be defended at every point, and an enemy would of course choose to land just at a spot where no forts were constructed. Secondly, recent wars have very clearly proved that separate points of attack are an error, that the important matter is to concentrate the entire force on one given spot. Everything now is decided very rapidly; we saw this in 1866 and 1870. It is perfectly certain therefore that France, whose attack is the event always dreaded, could never spare two or three of her army corps to occupy Sicily, Naples, or even Rome. Let us imagine for a moment one of these places, or even all three, occupied by France—what advantage would she have gained? For, conqueror or conquered, when peace was concluded she would retain none of them. It is perfectly certain, on the contrary, that she would assemble all her forces at the passes of the Alps and the Vosges—more particularly the Vosges, because, at a pinch, she might allow her southern provinces to be invaded. Her one aim would be to defeat the Germans; all the rest would be of comparatively small importance. Italy may be reassured, and need have no dread of a landing, which would have not the slightest influence on the decisive encounters of the campaign.

* Being myself quite incompetent in this matter, I merely repeat what I have been told by distinguished English naval officers. They say that these huge vessels with their hundred-ton guns, such as the *Italia*, the *Duilio*, the *Lepanto*, &c., are so exceedingly complicated in construction that on every cruise, however short it may be, some part of their machinery gets out of order. Their iron plating and their speed not being in proportion to their mass, two or three bold and rapid enemies would take the risk of sinking them, and the more so that they are armed with only a very small number of immense guns, so that their assailants would have every chance of suffering little from their fire. The only way in which the Italian navy could play any important part in a campaign would be in conjunction with a Great Power, Germany or England for instance. It would have been wiser, therefore, to have left to these iron and steel countries the work of building the ponderous war vessels, and Italy could have supplied the lighter and more rapid cruisers which may, in all probability, prove of chief utility in future naval combats, and of which at all events the Italian merchant navy would have supplied her with excellent elements.

Deficits in the Budget and an overwhelming taxation were not the only deplorable results of the general arming; it led also to Protectionism. It was a mistake to suppose that Signor Crispi commenced the tariff war for the purpose of holding his own against France. Italy was led to adopt protective duties by the following argument, which I have heard used very frequently and long ago by Italian statesmen and economists. "In order to maintain our political position in Europe we need very considerable resources. Experience has shown that if the country continue to be chiefly an agricultural one, it cannot supply this need. It is therefore necessary for Italy to develop industrially, so as to be on a par with other great nations. Heavy protective duties are indispensable for the attainment of this result. Italy must not be dependent on other countries for her rails, her machinery, her arms, or her cloth and woollen goods. She will never raise sufficient to defray her unavoidable expenses by the sale of oranges and macaroni."

The colonial enterprise in the Red Sea may also be attributed to this commercial policy combined with a sort of *megalomaniacal* aberration. A country that by Protection creates for itself a fictitious industry must also find for that industry favourable outlets. Besides, the Great Powers were dividing Africa among themselves. Even little Belgium was taking possession of a vast empire there. Italy must have her share too. Massowah would compensate in a measure for the cruel disappointment at Tunis.

To my great surprise, I discovered that so wise and far-seeing a politician as Minghetti, without being enthusiastic on the subject, was nevertheless by no means opposed to the new colony, and for very special reasons. He argued thus:—"A great country cannot concentrate all its activity upon itself. The desire to expand and spread, inherent in a population of vivid imagination, will, if no wide prospects be opened to them, become embittered and engender discontent and corruption. The malice of opposing political parties, finding no outlet, will endanger free institutions. The Far West in America, and the colonies in England, act as safeguards against the dangers of democracy." My reply to this argument was, "Doubtless; but your Erithrea is not yet equivalent to India, *plus* Australia, Canada, and South Africa!" The real fact is that Massowah is not a colony, but a parched up coast, where the only water to be had is distilled sea-water. By exaggerated taxation to force every year hundreds of Italians to quit their homes, depopulating the rural districts, and reducing small landowners to starvation by the exactions of the Treasury—and all this, for the purpose of occupying a point on the Red Sea, where there is ceaseless fear of attack only to be revenged by an impossible war, where causes of litigation, like that of Livraghi, arise, in which the health of soldiers and the morality

of officers are equally compromised—this is surely one of the most prodigious anti-economic follies of our day.*

The example of Atjeh really ought to have been a warning to the Italian Government. In the Treaty of November 2, 1871, England gave up to Holland all right of protection over Atjeh and Sumatra, but, at the same time, the Dutch Government undertook to put down any acts of piracy the inhabitants of Atjeh might commit. Hence a war, which commenced in March 1873 and which still continues. At the cost of very severe conflicts the Dutch have been successful in possessing themselves of one single point on the sea coast, Atjeh, and of the surrounding territory within gun-shot. But they could take possession of nothing further inland without a prolonged war, which would simply ruin the Exchequer. In order to retain this point, a mere fort, they have spent about £20,000,000, which has led to a deficit in the Budget, not only of their wealthy and admirable Indian colonies, but also of the mother country. For them, however, there is an excuse to be made. They had assumed the moral obligation of guaranteeing safety in the Straits. In the case of Italy there is nothing of the sort. She has thrown herself into this wasps'-nest entirely of her own free will.

Here, again, the Marquis di Rudini, while exceedingly careful not to ruffle the *amour propre* of his fellow-citizens, gave a very sensible view of the condition of affairs:—

"Spontaneously and freely [he said, speaking at Milan] we have limited our occupation to the triangle, Massowah, Asmara, Cheren, and have thus been enabled to reduce our military expenses, and lessen the burdens of the Italian ratepayers by about ten million francs a year. A state of ensured peace is absolutely essential for the establishment of a colonial system properly corresponding to the economic object we should have in view. The Government cannot open to the public gaze new and grand attractions in far-off climes. We shall make no war like that against King John, and shall establish no protectorate over Ethiopia. We will be satisfied with a state of honourable peace, which is all we need and all we desire."

The Marquis di Rudini also demonstrated very clearly and strikingly what an extraordinary contradiction it would be for Italy on the one hand to ruin herself in defence works in Europe, and to create, on the other, vulnerable posts in Africa.

"Our views are modest [he said], and such as they should be when there is no desire for a great initiative in politics, and no wish to saddle Italy,

* In 1880, there were 14,508 prosecutions, and 11,737 judgments for executions. The numbers of sales per 100,000 inhabitants in the different districts were as follows: In Northern Italy, 6·21; Central Italy, 11·27; Southern Italy, 36·84; Sicily, 55·91; Sardinia, 855·17, and for the entire realm, 40·54. Out of 11,715 properties thus sold, 9875, i.e., 84·29 per cent., were adjudged to the public domain. We see then that the Treasury itself is the most active agent in the disorganisation of property, and is the great enemy of family well-being. It is suggested to help Sardinia: the first thing to do is to reduce the taxes, which are making first beggars, and then brigands, of the inhabitants.

for the defence of her African possessions, with heavy sums which would be far better employed in defending Italian territory."

The conclusion these very just remarks naturally point to is of course the evacuation of Massowah, unhesitatingly and without delay; but hitherto no country except England has had the courage to display such wisdom and foresight as she gave proof of in giving up the Ionian Isles to Greece and the Transvaal to the Dutch in Africa.

In concluding this short study of Italian foreign affairs I should like quite briefly to sketch the Utopia of an economist who is also an old friend of Italy, that is to say, to show what might have been her line of conduct and her present position, if she had been able to steer clear of *megalomania*. Her unity once secured and confirmed, after 1870, she would have restricted herself to an attitude of complete reserve. Imitating Switzerland, or—if such a comparison be humiliating—the United States, she would have interested herself solely in her own affairs. She would have refused all active intervention in the regulation of European matters, save always to raise a perfectly disinterested voice in support of freedom, justice, and the rights of oppressed populations. She would on no account have committed herself to the perilous chimera of a balance of power in the Mediterranean, which could only lead her to antagonism with France, and consequently to the need of allies in the event of such antagonism culminating in conflict. She might then have accepted, without satisfaction probably, but also without bitterness, the occupation of Tunis by France and of Cyprus by England, considering that those countries when better governed would open new markets to her trade, and that, under any circumstances, these were great steps in the path of progress at which all true friends of humanity could but rejoice.

Situated, as she is, beneath the sheltering rampart of the Alps, and entirely removed from the arena of future wars, she had nothing whatever to fear for her own safety, even less than Spain beyond the Pyrenees, for she has no Cuba—and Cuba may one day lead Spain into difficulty with the great Transatlantic Republic. Every cultivated man in Europe would have been most friendly disposed towards Italy, the cradle of civilisation, poetry, and art in Europe, the beautiful land, the Eden of our continent, which no one who has visited it can ever forget. None of her neighbours would have thought of invading her for the purpose of conquering one of her provinces; neither Austria to reconquer Lombardy, nor France for Piedmont: it is unnecessary to demonstrate this.

Certainly the Roman question would not have been solved;—its very nature renders a solution impossible; nothing but time can smooth difficulties there;—but it would have been much less

menacing than it is now when an occasional word or sentence pronounced in Berlin or Vienna is sufficient to rouse excitement and uneasiness, and even now and then a crisis, in Monte Citorio. It is perfectly clear that, with the state of tension now existing among the European Powers—Germany and Austria on the one hand, and France and Russia on the other—neither one side nor the other would have chosen, for the sake of restoring the Temporal Power, to place Italy in the ranks of a future opponent. Even a restored monarchy in France would not have dared to take such a step, however violently urged on to it by the clergy. It would have been to the interest of every country to keep in the good books of a nation whose assistance, at a given moment, might turn the scales in favour of the nation she chose to support.

Italy might perhaps have felt herself isolated, as at the Berlin Congress; but what of that? She would have needed no ally, as she would have asked for nothing, and interested herself solely in her home affairs. In such a position as this, Italy would have required neither fortifications nor a powerful fleet, nor a great army ever on the defensive, nor colonies. All that would have been necessary would have been the nation armed—in other words, a military organisation similar to that of Switzerland, with perhaps a rather more numerous artillery and more extensive staff. Such an army would have been ample to protect the peninsula, as the shape of the territory, being elongated and covered with mountains, favours resistance to invasion. We may remember how the Spaniards, who were entirely destitute of military organisation, finally succeeded in repulsing beyond the Pyrenees the famous troops of Napoleon under the command of his best generals.

Instead of constantly increasing her debt and raising her taxes, Italy could have considerably reduced both. Her funds, giving an interest of from 4 to 5½ per cent., thanks to repeated conversions, would now have been above par. The forced currency could have been abolished without difficulty, and a sound metallic circulation easily maintained. She would not have been drawn into the adoption of protective duties, nor committed that sin against humanity of tearing Italian workmen away from the enjoyment of their beautiful climate to pack them in the unhealthy atmosphere of workshops and factories. She would not have been compelled to create fictitious industries, which are always in greater or less danger, and which only exist by the help of an unjust tax levied on the consumers. The peasantry would not have been obliged to flee from a soil taxed at from 25 to 35 per cent., where they cannot possibly, with the hardest labour, make enough to subsist on, after paying the claims of an insatiable treasury.

Millions of money would not have been thrown away in the Red Sea. If there had been a superabundance of riches they might have

been utilised in colonising the deserted regions of Sardinia, Sicily, and Calabria. Agriculture has certainly progressed; but its progress would have been still more considerable; for the population, instead of being reduced by emigration, would have increased much more rapidly, improving the country districts, and bringing into towns a healthy and normal development instead of the sort of enforced swelling attributable to ill-advised and ruinous speculations. We should then have seen realised in its true sense and vigour that well-known proverb: "Faites moi de bonne politique et je vous ferai de bonnes finances."

What is done, however, is an accomplished fact. We cannot expect Italy at once to reverse her policy and follow the counsel of economists, which would certainly have been in a measure the course taken by Cavour; but it would not be impossible to steer gradually nearer and nearer to this ideal, and resolutely to abandon the pathway of "megalomania." This appears to be the endeavour of the present Ministry, if we may judge by the Marquis di Rudini's famous speech at Milan, and by the financial statement of that eloquent economist and eminent financial authority, Signor Luzzatti, the Minister of the Treasury, who holds in his hands the keys of the resources of the State, and upon whom, therefore, the decisions and movements of the other Ministers must, perforce, in a very great measure depend.

We have shown that it is impossible for Italy suddenly to withdraw from the Triple Alliance without cowardice and dishonour, and this point will be perfectly understood in France; but she might, perhaps, be able to obtain from her allies the permission to communicate to the Cabinets of England and the Elysée the conditions of the secret Treaty, so as to prove clearly to them that its sole object is the maintenance of peace; and, at all events, in her relations with France she might show a friendly, and, I may add, a sisterly spirit, such as becomes two sister nations, alike in blood, civilisation, and origin.

When the unity of Italy was first recognised, English statesmen said that it would be an element and guarantee of peace for Europe. It depends upon herself to justify this prediction.

EMILE DE LAVELEYE.

[Since this article was written, its celebrated author has closed his career. As an old and constant contributor to this REVIEW, his loss is and will be deeply felt. His calm and impartial views, his luminous judgment, and his wide range of information, marked him out as a writer to be read and relied on in the great international questions which the present upheaval of society is more and more pressing to the front.—Ed. CON. REV.]