

ITALY DOOMED.

THE DANGER OF WAR.

The Triple Alliance Simply a Guarantee to Germany—Italians as Diplomats—Italy's Floating Debt Now Amounts to \$200,000,000.

There are signs that the Italians and the Austrians are beginning to realize what fools they have been in joining the German Empire in an alliance against France, in order to secure to Germany the possession of the French provinces that she seized in 1871. Germany had concluded a previous alliance of the same nature with Austria and Russia. The Russian Emperor, soon, however, discovered that what Germany meant by the union of the three emperors was, that the armies of Russia and Austria were to be at her disposal, whilst in all questions between her and her allies, they were to yield to her. The Russian Emperor, therefore, withdrew. On this Prince Bismarck replaced Russia by Italy in the Alliance. This fully on the part of Italy would soon have come to an end had not Bismarck induced Crispi, who had previously opposed the German alliance, but who had become Prime Minister, to confirm and extend its scope.

The annexation of a portion of France by Germany, after the war of 1870, was one of the most stupendous faults that were ever made by statesman. Either France ought to have been so weakened that it would have been impossible for her ever to recover from the blow, or her territory should have been left intact. To leave her in a position to renew the struggle, and yet for Germany to hold by arms a portion of her territory, was to create a situation in Europe that rendered permanent peace impossible, and made vast armaments an eternal necessity. Had Germany been satisfied with a heavy war indemnity, France would not long have remained in antagonism to Germany; for the French would have thrown the responsibility of their disaster on the Empire, and would hardly have consented to bear a crushing taxation in the mere hope of a barren revenge. Germany, on the other hand, would have been safe from all assaults, owing to the unification of her force, and she would have become the great ballasting European power, attacking no one, and attacked by no one. Of what material advantage are Alsace and a portion of Lorraine to her in comparison to the wealth that would have been hers, owing to her people being engaged in industry instead of in drilling. Her military men, it is said, insisted upon the annexation, because it would give her a more defensible frontier. Very probably they did, for military men are poor guides to a nation. But Bismarck and her statesmen ought to have realized that the permanent and persistent hostility of France was a more serious danger to Germany—placed as she is between three great military powers—than the best of frontiers. As it is, Germany is obliged to keep her population under arms, to expend each year far more than she can afford on her army, and all this with the knowledge that, if ever she quarrels with Italy, Austria, or Russia, either of these States will find an ally in France prepared to risk a contest in order to reacquire her lost provinces. How sane and sensible men, alive as one would suppose to these facts, can have made such a blunder, surpasses my understanding.

France naturally desires to acquire her lost provinces. But she dreams neither of attacking Austria nor Italy. Practically, therefore, the triple alliance amounts to a guarantee to Germany from Austria and Italy of these provinces; and that the statesmen of these two countries should have fallen into the net spread for them by the astute Bismarck does not say much for their wisdom. Russia, they seemed to have imagined, would hold aloof from European politics and submit to a European boycott. She did nothing of the kind, but entered into a counter alliance with France. The result, therefore, of this so-called League of Peace—or, as it ought really to be called, league to secure to Germany her conquests—has been, that Europe is split up into two hostile camps, armed to the teeth, and so evenly balanced that it is doubtful which would be the victor in the event of war.

It is possible that, had Prince Bismarck remained at the head of German

affairs, he would have kept Russia apart from France, by timely concessions on minor matters, for friendly relations between Prussia and Russia had always been the keystone of his policy. But when the German Emperor dismissed him, and took the reins in his own hands, all chance of this disappeared. Charles II., it is said, never said a foolish thing and never did a wise one. The Emperor William is foolish alike in words and in acts. He soon succeeded in irritating the Emperor of Russia, and in making his friendship a heavy burthen to the Emperor of Austria and to the King of Italy. The young man is not wanting in a certain sort of ability, but he lacks common sense. There has been a good deal of madness in his family, and this he has inherited. Were he a private individual, and were he to commit a murder, a jury would probably find him guilty, but recommend him to mercy on the ground that he is not entirely responsible for his actions, on which a war of doctors would break out, some holding to this view, others opining that he ought to be hanged. On such natures the possession of power exercises a most harmful influence. Young William had not been many months on the Prussian throne before he was fully convinced that he was there by right divine; a little later he included the whole of Germany in his divine kingdom; and he is at present under the illusion that Providence has raised him up as the arbiter of Europe; a craze which obviously renders him somewhat a troublesome ally, unless his allies are ready to agree with him.

The Emperor of Austria is far and away the most sensible monarch in Europe. I should fancy that he allied himself with William partly to make certain that he would not enter into an alliance with Russia against Austria, and partly to play the part of the tame elephant towards him. Austria has never piqued herself upon her fidelity to any alliance, when it has been her interest to evade its stipulations. Were William to precipitate a war with France, or were France and Russia to drift into war with Germany, Austria would in all probability manage to slip out of the obligations of the Triple Alliance, and to remain neutral. And of this German statesmen are fully aware. Austria, with her varied nationalities, aspires alone to peace. Now that she has withdrawn from Italy, and from the German Confederation, she has no enemies. By the annexation of Bosnia she has acquired the Dalmatian hinterland that she coveted, and if ever the Turkish Empire in Europe breaks up, she knows that she would inherit without effort territory which would bring her down to Salonica. As for Alsace and Lorraine, she is indifferent whether they belong to Germany or to France. The last move of Austria is proposing an electoral law, which, by giving the voting power to the non-German element, will probably lead to her withdrawal from the alliance.

The Italians are credited with being able diplomats, and in a small, tricky way they are. But Italy has at present no one that even flattery could dub a statesman. The Italians joined the Triple Alliance in a pet because France had taken (by the advice of Bismarck) Tunis, after which they vaguely lust. When Crispi went to visit Bismarck at Berlin, that able but unscrupulous statesman flattered and fooled him. Crispi had the sense to see that a war with France would expose the Italian coasts to the ravages of the French marine. Bismarck, therefore, induced Lord Salisbury to give some general assurance that England would regard with disfavor anything that might tend to disturb the status quo in the Mediterranean. These assurances Crispi translated into a pledge that the British navy would hinder French ships from attacking Italian ports, or landing a French army in Italy; and his sanguine countrymen are now under the illusion that if an Italian army were to join the German forces on the Rhine in an invasion of France, we should inform that Republic that, whilst Italy might attack France, we could not allow France to attack Italy. The Italians have been confirmed in this notion since Russia allied herself with France, for they are under the impression that the main object of our policy is to crush Russia, and that if that power is on one side in a European conflict, we should necessarily be on the other.

As I pointed out a fortnight ago, these silly Italians are rushing blindly forward

on the path that ends in bankruptcy. Their floating debt amounts to above forty million sterling. Each year shows an increasing deficit, their taxation is already crushing all industry and cannot be augmented, and no ministry can stop the reckless expenditure, because it has to buy support with public money. On their navy they lavish money, but their sailors are of such questionable quality that their ships seldom leave port. Their army is far too numerous, and it is of such doubtful material that they have of late been laboriously bringing into existence a few good regiments by taking the best soldiers from all other regiments. Civil employees, helping each other to do nothing, are as plentiful as fleas. They are miserably paid, and the recent trials at Rome have shown that they supplement their salaries by illicit gains. The King has lost his former popularity. He is entirely in the hands of a certain Rattazzi (a nephew of the former Prime Minister of that name), a fussy, meddling man, with all the belongings of an adventurer, and ready to drag his country into any wild scheme that may serve his personal ends. Were a European war to break out in a year or two, it is possible that Italy would fall into line with Germany; if the war be deferred, she will have withdrawn from the Alliance, for unless she reduces alike her civil and military expenditure she will very shortly have to go into liquidation.

In the present day statesmen are too apt to make the tenure of office their sole aim. In countries where this is dependent upon the vote of the people their tendency is rather to profess agreement with the opinion of the moment than to be themselves the exponents of the principles in which they themselves believe. Now, I hold to the right of a nation to shape its own destinies, whether for good or for evil. A statesman must accept the popular verdict. He ought not, however, to be ready to carry it into effect in order to retain office, if he believes it to be injurious to his country. His duty, in this case, is to point out in what he considers it injurious, and to be prepared to accept the cold shape of opposition, and there to await patiently the moment when what he considers to be right becomes the opinion of the majority. Those who say that the people are always right are as contemptible as were the courtiers of Louis XIV., who bowed and grvelled before him in the expectation of some crumbs from his table falling to their lot. In no country are statesmen more weak-kneed opportunists than in Italy, and the consequence of their yielding to every popular cry, instead of combating it when they know its error, is that their country has been brought to the verge of ruin. Italy is an object lesson to all those would-be leaders of men who prefer the name of leading to the reality, and who make office rather an end than a means. It is pretty clear that, as a League of Peace, the Triple Alliance has proved to be a failure. It never, indeed, was more than an alliance to secure to Germany the French Provinces that she has acquired. With Continental Europe divided into two armed camps, the danger of war is serious. If war does break out, it is, as I have shown, very doubtful whether Italy and Austria will stand to their contract with Germany.—London Truth.

Irish Catholic Benefit Society.

The last meeting of the Irish Catholic Benefit Society, held in St. Patrick's Hall, was a very enthusiastic one. The president, Mr. John Power, occupied the chair. After general business the election of officers for the year took place, and resulted as follows: President, Mr. John Power; 1st vice-president, Mr. D. O'Neill; 2nd vice-president, Mr. Wm. Grace; treasurer, Wm. James McVey; secretary, Mr. Joseph McCann, 58 Chenneville street; collecting-treasurer, Mr. John Davis; assistant collecting-treasurer, Mr. Wm. Inskip; grand marshal, Mr. John Dwyer; trustees, Messrs. John Currie, A. Jones and Jas. Toland.

Mr. John Power, president of the society, was born in July, 1833, in Killurin House, County Wexford, Ireland. He has been an active and energetic worker for twenty-three years in the Irish Catholic Benefit Society. He has been elected president of the Society for thirteen years, and vice-president for six years. During his membership he has been in office nineteen years in succession. Mr. Power entered the employ of the Gas Company thirty-three years ago.

During this period he was foreman for nine years and through his abilities and perseverance to further the work of the Company he was placed in the position of Superintendent at the Ottawa street works. This position he has held for the past seventeen years. The society, of which he is still president has for its chief objects looking after the widows and orphans. The members are looked after and cared for in times of sickness and distress, and none are allowed to want while there is a dollar in the funds. The Society is a strong one and continues to grow in strength.

WISE SAYINGS.

Love is a severe critic. Hate can pardon more than love.

To remember—to forget; alas! this is what makes us young and old.

He who can suppress a moment's anger may suppress a day of sorrow.

Those who trample on the helpless are liable to cringe to the powerful.

An idle reason lessens the weight of the good ones you gave before.

Piety is a good thing to have, but Christian charity is very much better.

Never excuse a wrong action by saying that some else does the same thing.

Home is sometimes thought flat and dull, and too often made so, just for want of understanding what it stands for.

No man has one bad habit and no more. The old proverb runs: "When the wolf gets one lamb he looks for another."

Different ways of putting it.—This is a scientific way: "If a man falls asleep in the sitting posture with his mouth open, his jaw drops; the tongue not being in contact with the hard palate, the suctorial space is obliterated; the soft palate no longer adheres to the roof of the tongue; and if respiration be carried on through the mouth, the muscular curtain begins to vibrate." And this is the popular form: "If a man doesn't keep his mouth shut when asleep, he will snore."

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