

montane party in Europe still hoped to re-establish the Temporal Power; the military strength of Germany was the sole hope for Italy to keep what she had or to ensure future progress. With France estranged and Russia uninterested, Italy might hope to get at least as much from Austria by the good offices of Germany as by maintaining an impotent hostility towards her. It must, again, never be forgotten that while Bismarck held office (that is, till 1890), participation in the Triple Alliance did not involve for Italy the strained relations with Russia and with Great Britain which its more recent developments have implied. Bismarck made it one of his maxims not to alienate Russia, and more than once a league of the three emperors entered into his plans. It is equally plain that, so long as Lord Salisbury presided over the Foreign Office, the relations of France and Great Britain were so hostile that Italy lost nothing, so far as British goodwill went, by being a member of the Triple Alliance.

The outstanding figure in Italian politics from 1878 to 1896 was undoubtedly Crispi. He belonged to the Revolutionary generation; he had helped Garibaldi in his attempt to raid Rome; he had a candid dislike of France, and scented the Vatican in every breeze from the Riviera. His letters seem to show a susceptibility to flattery of which Bismarck took the fullest advantage, and while Crispi was in power the Triple Alliance had no more eloquent and unhesitating friend.

And there is no doubt that in choosing to adhere firmly to this Alliance the Italians held on to the only constant and solid fact that existed in European politics between 1882 and 1896. Germany and Austria formed a coalition whose interests were perfectly consistent, whose objects were entirely concerted. Meanwhile,