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IV

MUSSOLINI & ITALY;

When one is travelling in a country not his own trying to understand what is going on there, it is well to sit down by the roadside occasionally and recall what he has seen.

For four months I have been wandering up and down Italy, and when I ask myself what I remember, the first thing that springs to my mind is a long procession of men, women and children bent in labor. They harvest fields of rice, wheat, alfalfa, laying the grain in perfect swathes; they sit on the ground, stripping and sorting tobacco leaves; they crowd narrow rooms, tiny girls, old women, embroidering with sure fingers lovely designs on linen, fine and coarse; they cook their meals before all the world in the narrow streets of - mou s; they carry home at sunset from the terraces or slopes of ntains great baskets of grapes, olives, lemons - young women straight and firm their burdens poised surely on their heads - old women bent under the weight on their backs; they drive donkeys so lademed that only a nodding head, a switching tail is visible; they fill the roads with their gay two-wheeled carts, tend sheep, run machines, sit in markets, spin, weave, mould, build - a world of work.

Mingled with these pictures of labour are equally vagrant ones of these same men and women at play, holiday and Sunday crowds filling the streets, the ~~works~~ squares, the cinema, dancing in pavilions, the squares of little towns tracing their history back clearly more than 2000 years, gay with flags and streamers and light and booths, where in the evenings throngs hold their breath as to the notes of softly swaying music the

lithe figures of the rope-walkers, harness high over the head, with slow and rhythmic steps.

There are memories of these same people at rest at little tables, under arbors or on the shadowy side of the house, asleep in fields, the streets deserted, the little shops closed, the roads and fields alone. All Italy sleeps through the midday heat - all Italy save the factory workers - the machine takes no siesta. Contadini?

Mingled with labour, play, rest, is prayer. Nowhere in the world are people more at home in their churches, more accustomed to "drop in." Again and again, you see outside of some country church a huge bundle of fagots, a great basket of vegetables or fruit; the bearer has stopped to kneel a moment to say a prayer.

When I assemble these recollections of things, seen and heard in Italy, I have a picture of a people going about their business with steadiness and reliability - a people getting what we call an "all round life" - that is one in which the needs <u>they</u> feel are satisfied.

It is hard to realize when you look on them that six years ago these same people were as badly out of step as they are perfectly in step at the present moment, that instead of rhythmic labour, there was a clash of disorder and revolt. Men and women not only refused to work themselves

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but to letother people work. Grain died in the fields, threshing machines were destroyed, factories were seized, shops were looted , railways ran as suited the crew. Sunday was a day not of rest, amusement, prayer but of war; fêtes were dangerous, liable to be broken up by raids. Instead of the steady balance, order, action, so conspicuous to-day was the disorganization, anger, violence of a people unprotected in the normal life; a people become the prey of a dozen clashing political parties and not knowing where to look for a Moses to lead them out of their Egypt. How can it be, one asks, that in so brief a time a people should drop its clubs and pick up its tools? There is only one answer. They found their Moses! They knew him when he came ~~before~~ them. He came from among them, was their kind of a man. He knew their life - that which they needed. He knew that if they could be protected in their labor, play, rest, prayers, they would go on like faithful clocks generation after generation. He has persuaded them he will give them that protection. As long as he does it they will follow him - and no longer! Let Mussolini - for their Moses is Benito Mussolini - disappoint their faith - and there will be revolt again in Italy. One has only to look at them at their machines in the factories, at their little tables on the side-walks - in the markets - in the fields - to know that they are as capable of revolt as ever. They have

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had two thousand years experience in upsetting governments of every conceivable variety in their efforts to find one that will give them the protection they sought. Mussolini is having his chance. He will have a fair chance for they believe in him and want him to succeed - but if he tries them over-much he too will go. They are not instep because of force - though there is force ready to act all around them and they know it, and it is their judgment that is needed - they are in step because they are getting what they want - a leader who protects their lives.

But Mussolini has done something more than give them protection in their normal way of living - he has succeeded in giving them normal simple life which they never before have felt. He has told them that they are real soldiers of Italy - the ones in whom her future in the world chiefly depends.

I have already set down in these articles that my first impression on coming to Italy was of war - economic war - and that my first idea that Mussolini was a man of unusual power and understanding was when I discovered how he had dramatized for all sorts of people the need of this war, had put into their mouths the reasons for it and showed them the campaigns that must be carried on, and assigning to each his part. Everything that I have seen since has strengthened this feeling.

When I talk to my chauffeur, my hairdresser, my chambermaid - the workman I meet in the street, the farmer who

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When I talk to my opulent, my patronesses, my shopkeeper - the workmen I meet in the street, the farmer who

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who is harvesting his wheat or gathering his grapes or bringing his wine to town, I get from each his version of the economic war and what he must do to help win it. I have heard over and over again in Italy from all sorts of working people the same statement of Italy's condition - her problems - as I have from the educated and the official. It is like a litany to-day in the nation's mouth:

"We have no coal, no iron, no oil; we owe America and England billions upon billions of lire; we have a big debt at home; we have a population of 42 million, increasing at the rate of half a million a year, and we cannot raise enough to feed and clothe them but must buy from abroad, so the balance of trade is always against us. There is no escape but work. If we work hard enough and long enough we may win the war, at least we are trying it."

Here you have a people with an objective they are interested in reaching and who see what they must do to reach it. It is with peoples as it is with men and women - let them see how to get what they consider worth while and they will - if ~~their~~ right-minded - and the mass is right-minded - willingly labor and sacrifice. These Italian men and women who are carrying on so steadily to-day are enduring many burdens beside hard labor. They are taxed to the limit of capacity to pay; the cost of living has outstripped their wages, bread was never as dear in Italy save perhaps in times

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of war - as it has been in 1926. In addition to this, they have been compelled by the government to give up for the moment at least the local elections which brought them excitement if not always honest or efficient officials, to give up all controversial of critical newspapers. We Americans understand taxes and the high cost of living and know how men can endure them, but we do not understand how men can live without elections and a free press.

I have asked many serious Italians how they felt about these suppressions, and with variations they have told me about the same thing:- "Of course it is a sacrifice and possibly a danger, but we are persuaded that it is a necessary sacrifice. You must remember that we have just gone through a revolution. We must do everything to secure that revolution or the country will fall back into civil war again. Mussolini believes it is possible for us to work out a new kind of a state - the Corporate State - it is worth trying, but we must have quiet if we are to succeed; the elections and the "free press" disturb us in our undertakings, therefore they are suspended until we find that they are needed."

" In a rich country like yours, Madam," a distinguished Fascist told me, "you can afford the parliamentary vices. You can allow your congress to chatter and delay and interfere with needed legislation. It excites and flatters the people; they think their representatives are struggling with great problems when they are merely trying to outwit and out-talk one another. We are too poor in Italy to pay for such amusement. It was sending us to the poorhouse, Fascism has determined to end it."

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"You have a government de luxe and a press de luxe in the United States ," another Fascist told me, " you can afford it, we cannot;"

These are points of view which we Americans cannot accept because we have not yet had enough experience with the evils which caused the Italian Revolution to accept them. That is not saying, however, that we are not familiar in our congress and in our press with the nature of the evils which exasperated the Italian s with suppressing these institutions. It is not saying either that unless these evils are kept in checked they may not finally drive us to drastic suppressions.

One must understand the Italian people better than most of us do before we can understand how they can accept the present situation. We must begin by admitting that they are not like us, in temperament or traditions, that they treasure things which we hold lightly, and hold lightly things which we treasure; moreover that as a nation they are in a situation vastly different from ours. We are immensely rich in raw materials and they have none. We are equally rich in land and they are crowded almost to the sea. They are one race, we are mixed with all s orts of bloods! Their characteristics are sharply defined, ours have had their edge taken off by the intermingling of many bloods.

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Many of those who know ~~him~~ them best explain their practically unanimous consent to the sacrifices Mussolini asks from them by saying they are "realists" - that is to say they are people of practical common sense who recognise facts and are governed by them rather than by theories. They recognise what Mussolini tells them about themselves, about the state of affairs in Italy, about the necessity for what he calls "silent and conscientious" labor, as the truth.

They follow him the more proudly and faithfully because as they tell you sometimes "he thinks as we do!" What he has done is to strip off the political and social theories they had picked up and pinned on and laid bare their real inner convictions, their solid common sense. All this makes him their kind of man. They are particularly proud of the daring of his crusades. He is not afraid to tell the truth, and if there is anything that this Italian people love it is the man who is not afraid.

There is no doubt of Benito Mussolini's courage, physical, intellectual and spiritual. His physical bravery runs often into foolhardiness. It always did. As a boy, as a youth, as a soldier, he courted danger, he does it now. He lives dangerously, as he says, accordingly he must never fear danger, ~~must court it~~, must familiarise himself with it, above all never let it disturb his labors. His life is unsafe enough, one would think, to satisfy anyone's

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craving for danger. He, of course, knows better than anyone else, except possibly those close to him the risks that he constantly runs, yet he refuses to change his routine of life. During the summer of 1926, he lived on a big estate on the confines of Rome. The place of course was fully guarded, but every morning he drove out at an hour which varied little, and though his route might be changed slightly, there are not over many roads to the Palace Chighi where he works, and there is only one entrance. He is impatient of the safeguards the police advise, refuses large escorts, submits with irritation to the service of secret detectives. He wants the people to know that he trusts them as he wants them to trust him, but it is not from the normal people of Italy that the danger comes. To-day, socialists, liberals, opponents of all sorts except the extremists, would deplore his taking off. "God has spared us a civil war," I heard an outspoken socialist in the North say when the news came of Mussolini's escape last September from the bomb of a would-be murderer.

It is not the normal that seek his life, it is the abnormal, the embittered, and what police, what detective service can tell who they are?

Who could look into the disordered brain of the Irish woman who wounded him in the spring of 1926 as he came

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out of a building where he had been speaking? How is it possible for a country to maintain a detective system far-reaching enough to prevent such an attack as that made last September when a young anarchist who had been residing out of Italy, living a quiet and laborious life in a corner of Southern France, stole over the mountains without a passport, hung around Rome for a few days, watched until Mussolini's car came as usual from the villa where he lives and threw him a bomb? There is no human foresight ~~that can prevent~~ against other attacks that probably will be made.

Mussolini's aplomb at these tragic moments has deeply moved the Italian people, and also greatly inflated their pride. Again he has proved he is their kind of man. He has refused to have capital made of these attempts on his life. He has refused to allow them to interfere in any way with his regular schedule. After the Lucetti bomb in September he came directly to his office. An English official had an appointment with him there. He knew nothing of what had happened, Mussolini did not inform him but went straight to the matter in hand, and when after alittle time the cheers and calls from the outside became so insistent as to arouse the visitor's curiosity, he explained ~~what had happened~~ ending it. "They will not get me," ~~he said,~~ "there is a prophecy that I shall die quietly." All this endears him to the people. They

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believe him protected. Again and again after the attack of last September I heard people say: "the good God is with him."

They hold particularly high the courage he shows in dealing with his own party. This is no new thing for him. They know well enough what it cost him in 1914 to leave the Socialist ~~party~~. He was driven from a party to which he had given himself utterly for years because he had decided after weeks of wrestling that Italy ought to go into the war. The wrath of his colleagues was terrible - they decided to chase him from the ranks. The break was the very top-notch of political tragedy. A young journalist of Milan, Giulio Barella, now the commanding director of Il Popolo d'Italia, went to Mussolini when he learned that he meant to attend a large socialist gathering which had been called to consider his boldness in pronouncing for a course contrary to party principles. "Do not go to the meeting," I begged him," Barilla says in a published account of the episode, "the crowd is violent, there are hostile murmurs, do not go!' 'I shall go,' he said, and he did go. It was a crowd which for years had adored him, ~~held his words as infallible~~, hung on his word more ~~brain~~, his gesture, his smile. Here was the same people turned on him; the same voices that had cheered him threatening him, the same hands that applauded menacing him, and he pallid, agitated, his hat jammed down on his head, his them. speaking eyes on fire, talked to them , silenced

I'll go, but I foresee centuries of Italian history as I go, not two hours.

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may chase me from the party,' he ended, 'but you can never chase me from your blood, I am part of you and of socialism.'"

"There were many moist eyes but the sentence was passed, he went out forever."

His courage with the Fascists has been shown again and again. No man could have had a more serious task than to hold, purge and dominate the groups of violent and largely self-directing men who made up the party and army in 1922. As has always happened in revolutionary movements, many adventurers, many self-seekers, some of them at least semi-criminal, had joined the movement. There was a great mass of the violently loyal, suspicious of criticism quick to break into violence if they smelt opposition. The last violent outbreak occurred in September of 1925 in Florence. Serious as the affair was it has been perhaps with calculation exaggerated, The newspapers outside of Italy have called it a St. Batholomew's Day. Florence could hardly be expected to go through a modern revolution such as Italy has been seeing in a quiet and orderly fashion. Her past is in her blood. Her working people like those of so many other cities, were many of them openly Communists. A citizen of Florence, as hard working as there was in the community but a professional man who had been a soldier, told me that for many months after the war he never drove to his country home in the hills that he was not threatened by workmen: "wait, your children will be the first to go, when the revolution comes

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we will drive in that car."

This same Florentine, coming out one day from a business transaction near the Arno, saw a crowd attacking a company of soldiers with banners flying, who were on their way to the station. As a soldier he and many others flew to their aid. It took a bitter fight to get the company with its torn banners and itsmore or less battered members on to the train.

In the square of Santa Maria Novella of Florence you will see to-day two groups of cypresses, 18 or 20 in all, planted in memory of individual fascists killed in the early days of the struggle.

After the Fascist Government was installed, the group in Florence which came in power was more or less violent and more or less venal. It was the kind of group that could be depended upon to go off in riot at the scratch of a match, and the match was scratched in September of 1925 when one of their leaders called upon a prominent anti-Fascist citizen, and probably tried to force from him confessions of intrigue with French masons. High words were passed and the visitor finally struck his host. The insult was revenged by a relative who shot the Fascist dead. In no time the news had reached the street and a mob had collected. A socialist on the scene was killed, his body riddled with bullets. One still sees the marks of the bullets on the face of the house before Wheels where the tragedy occurred.

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The crowd wild with anger, hauled from his bed and killed a former socialist deputy, a friend of Mussolini, ~~loved by him~~, a man now entirely out of politics, devoting himself to inventions. Nobody knows why they should have gone out of their way to have murdered as politically harmless a citizen as there was in Florence. There were four victims in the two hours the riot lasted. There were many shops looted, some of them shops of Fascists, showing how much there was of pure ruffianism in the outbreak.

Mussolini was furious when the news of the affair reached him. He immediately sent to Florence one of his most competent and relentless leaders, Italo Balbo, a member of the first big four of the party. The entire Fascist Government ~~of Florence~~ was removed. A prefet was selected from outside the provinces, other officers of admitted honesty and ability were appointed. Over one hundred identified as having been in the mob were arrested and their trials have been going on ever since. An interesting factor in the house-cleaning was putting an end to the graft in which many of the party had been indulging; cars for instance seems to have been one of the perquisites which any Fascist official, little or big, felt authorized to accept for personal use. This pernicious habit which was not peculiar to Florence, has been ordered stopped everywhere.

The vigor with which Mussolini followed up the Florentine tragedy has chastened the party and reassured the public.

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He is not afraid, the people say, to punish his own supporters, and that, they tell you sagely, is rare among public men.

They like him because he is not afraid of outside nations, makes threatening gestures when Italy's interests are trampled upon, even so slightly. No one must be allowed to think for an instant that the Italian people ~~will allow anyone~~, fears to resent any injury big or little, ~~to think that they will endure a~~ wrong or ~~resent an injury because of fear~~.

Mussolini has been much critized ~~by foreigners~~ for his harsh criticism made after the last attack on his life of the protection France gives to Italian exiles, among whom are supposed to be several anarchists like the man Lucretti. It may be that Mussolini knew the need of diverting the attention of the outraged masses. They would not riot at home if they could ~~strike~~ shake their fists at France! Unwise as his words may seem to an Anglo-Saxon, it should not be forgotten that assassination has rarely been attempted by an anarchist that the suffering nation has not called on all its neighbours to get rid of the revolutionary groups that they harboured and which spend their time in agitating which cannot but stir the occasional unbalanced mind to "direct action." Certainly the Italian Government in the case of the recent attempt to assassinate Mussolini has not shown anything like the anger that the French Government showed in 1858, when Orsini attempted the

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assassination of Napolon III. At that time, the French Prime Minister sent violent notes of complaint to England, Belgium, Switzerland, as well as to Piedmont, berating them for harbouring assassins and allowing the publication of newspapers which exalted or glorified them. Their notes to Piedmont were particularly severe, demanding that Piedmont immediately expel all refugees there, restrict her press, forbid the publication of all that her own exiles wrote. Compared with these demands the recent criticisms of the Italians have been mild.

It would not have been Italian not to have made a fierce gesture under the circumstances. When the Italians analyze themselves for you they invariably emphasize their exuberance. It is to exuberance that they attribute these sudden bursts of picturesque wrath, which so surprise and alarm the Anglo-Saxon obeserver new to the country.

Riding one day in an open carriage in the streets of an Italian city, my driver, deliberately it seemed to me, ran down a man on a bycicle. The man sent sprawling, sprang up, and leaving his machine in the middle of the road, ran at top speed after us. The driver evidently expecting the onslaught, bounded out, leaving me stranded and ran to meet his antagonist. With fists close to each other's faces but never touching them, they filled the air with a wild outbreak of amazing epithets! A crowd collected, and then suddenly a little Fascist guard appeared. It was like a mother saying: "hush, hush children, you must'nt quarrel," and they minded,

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the rider ran to his wheel, the driver back to me. Without a word of explanation he sprang to his seat and snapping his whip, gaily, drove off! It had been a beautiful relief to a dull day!

It is not to be supposed that these menacing gestures of the Italians are never followed by blows; they are occasionally, quick and heavy blows given out in heat, without reflection though not without conviction. When this happens in an international dispute it is serious.

Ten months after Mussolini became the head of the Italian Government he horrified the civilized world by such a blow. It may be said to be his real introduction into European affairs, the first act that made Europe and the League of Nations particularly, realize that they had a bold and rather contemptuous force to deal with. This was in what is called the "Corfu Affair."

Those who have followed the reconstruction of Europe since the war will remember that in 1921 the Conference of Ambassadors formed a commission to settle the boundaries between Albania and her neighbours, one of which is Greece. The president of this Commission was an Italian and he and his Italian colleagues had occupied themselves particularly with the Greco-Albanian line. The Greeks, dissatisfied with their decision, began a violent anti-Italian campaign in their press. On August 27th 1923, Europe was deeply stirred by the shocking

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news that the Italian head of the Boundary Commission with several associates, had been murdered on Greek territory. There was an immediate tremendous uproar in Italy. Greek flags were torn down, consulates attacked, seals broken; Mussolini did not wait to consult the Conference of Ambassadors but immediately issued a set of stern demands including a rigid inquiry to be completed in five days, capital punishment for all guilty, 50 million Italian lire to be paid within five days, military honours to the dead .

Greece acknowledged her guilt by acceeding partially to the demands; capital punishment for the guilty and indemnity she denied. Mussolini refused to accept her changes, and Europe was still further shocked by a proclamation that the Italian Government had sent a torpedo boat to demand the surrender of the Greek garrison at Corfu, and that the Italian fleet was within sight of the island. The island was occupied though not without some tragic bloodshed.

All of this had happened within four days! The independence of the action, its warlike aspect aroused the wrath particularly of England who insisted that the League of Nations to which the Greeks had appealed should handle the affair. Mussolini was incensed by this insistence.

"If there had been an Englishman in my place," he told an interviewer, "he would have acted as I have done, and would have acted properly. When Palmerston seventy years ago threatened

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similar action against Greece in the case of a British subject killed - who, as a matter of fact was a Portuguese Jew, his adversaries congratulated him in Parliament for his decision. When in 1916, several French seamen were killed in Athens, the French imposed conditions such as I have imposed and took hostages for fulfillment. I have ordered the Italian fleet to occupy Corfu because I know the Greeks. If I had not taken security for the payment of their reparations, I should not have been able to collect anything from them. If they fulfil my demands and pay up I shall withdraw from Corfu but they had better pay quickly for every week the price will go up; naval operations are costly. If Greece for any reason does not pay, we shall remain indefinitely in Corfu."

As for the claim of the League of Nations that the affair should be turned to it for settlement: "I ignore completely its competence," he said, "in mixing with Italy's honor." "The present affair is not comprised in the League pact because there is no question of war."

In all the hubbub, the point of which was that he meant war, he protested that this was not true. "There will not be war," he said, "but it is high time that these little nations learn that Italy is not an insignificant but an important power. My policy is an absolutely peaceful one. I know that the world is in need of peace for a long time to come but in order to ensure peace one must be strong."

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The Corfu affair dragged on for a month. The Conference of Ambassadors took it up and to them Mussolini was properly deferential. They accepted with some little modifications the demands that he had made and he accepted their revisions. In MUssolini's opinion his policy had triumphed in the only international bpdy that he recognized as having any control in the matter.

Europe, and particularly the European press, has watched Mussolini as a cat watches a mouse since the Corfu Affair. Every move that he has made has been interpreted as a menace to Europe's peace. It seems sometimes almost as if they were determined to exasperate him into violence. On the whole, he has taken it cooly and gone hisway. They were sure he had designs on the Balkan States, but so far asone can judge by events, they were only peaceful designs , for he has concluded in the last three years treaties of commerce or amity or both with Czecho-Slovakia, Serbia, Roumania and Russia, and negotiations are going on with Bulgaria. It looks as if in spite of the "Corfu Affair" he would soon conclude a new commercial treaty with Greece. In the case of each of these treaties the watch dogs have seen an alliance directed at some neighbor, but before they were through prophesying evil there was a friendly treaty with the neighbor!

"There is no need," he goes on to say, "to desire war - that atrocious business - and all who have had a hand in it

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know how atrocious it is - and above all things there is no need to wage war, but one cannot afford to be oblivious of it. The nation which rules war out as the ultima ratio is lost," aandhe adds something important to consider:

> 'There will never be a period of peace until the peoples shall have abandoned themselves to a Christian dream of universal brotherhood and shall be able to extend their hands to each other across the oceans and the mountains.'

One reason of uneasiness Mussolini has given those looking on from the outside is what may be called his "Roman" attitude, particularly his talk of restoring the glory of Rome. The modern democratic and socialistic ~~work~~ world has for many years treated the glory of old Rome with contempt, but in this only the rare Italian shares. It was the past of Rome, the hope of reviving it that stirred Rienzi to action. No one has been more eloquent in talking of the restoration of Rome than that unadulterated republican Mazzini, who refused to join Cavour, even Garibaldi, in their movement for a reunited Italy. Italy was to be united, but as a republic with Rome as her capital. "Rome is ours," said Mazzini, "God and man declares it. It is from Rome that we have inherited the language that makes us brothers. A thousand years of splendid memories has made her sacred as the mother of Italy and the center of national unity. Twice from Rome have we ruled the universe, twice out of her came the powerful breath which imposed a common life on the world. After the Rome of the

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Caesars, after the Rome of the Popes will come the Rome of the people."

Mussolini has had this dream from boyhood. He has it now. He sees Rome to-day in all her old glory as Mazzini saw her, the Rome of the PEOPLE, not a great industrial city, not a city of commerce, but a city of art, of music, of statesmanship, of history, a great and glorious head of a great and glorious nation!

But many of his heroes, listening to his talk of Rome and of Empire, jump to the conclusion that he is ambitious to do what Rome did, that is, carry outside of Italy's borders the struggle for empire. He denies this. "Empire," he told one who asked him what he meant when he used the word in his speeches, "empire as the will to life and power is the basis of all living organisms. Every nation which possesses exuberant capacity for progress is forced by its own nature as ~~its productive powers to grow stronger~~ to widen the limits of its own pacific penetration in the world, to extend its power and its intellectual and moral prestige beyond its frontiers. Does not the history of the United States of America afford us a typical example of this movement of pacific expansion? Is not American imperialism spoken of in the same way as Italian imperialism?

"When I speak of an Imperial Italy I am not thinking of definite territorial conquest but rather of an attitude

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of mind, a red virile conduct combative if need be, which Italy must observe in great international problems. Italy's place among the nations of the world, her great sacrifices during the World War, and her exuberant population all give her the right to wider expansion. He who sees aggression in this policy is a fool."

This "exuberant" population of which Mussolini talks is really the crux of Italy' problem. Rightly viewed, it is also the crux of intelligent international pacifism. Unless the nations of the world - particularly those who claim they want peace - are willing to face the fact that Italy as well as Japan must have more room on the globe, and if they cannot get it by being allowed a free peaceful penetration will be forced to get it by intrigue and force, they are ignoring one if not the chief danger of war which exist to-day in the world. There is a group of reformers who thinks that the problem ~~situation~~ should be solved by birth control. Advocates of this doctrine of economic regeneration turn up frequently in Italy but they receive scant sympathy. The Italians are too good Catholics and he great lovers of big families, to give it a second thought. As for Mussolini, he declares that in his judgment birth control is scientifically unsound. Italy does more to take care of the extra population than to try to settle them in alien lands.

She is doing her best to increase colonization in every spot of territory that she controls. The movement to redeem and colonise desert places in Italy, I have already talked

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This "exuberant" population of which Mussolini

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of. It is what they called "internal colonization" which corresponds to the colonization of unsettled or abandoned land that goes on constantly in the United States. The colonies which she does control - Libya, Somaliland, Eritrea, are being given serious attention. There are skeptics who scoff at the idea that there is anything to be hoped of these places, but Mussolini is determined their real worth be found out. There may be minerals in them, and commissions are at work now trying to find out. It may be possible to raise products in them that Italy now takes from other countries. There is a waging for the conquest of the colonies as there is for the increase of wheat. an arrangement was made with Peru by which many thousands of acres were conceded to the Italians for development and colonists are now going into this country. Timber they know can be obtained there, and of timber they are very short. It is believed that they can raise cotton. They propose to find out by experiment.

Great a strain on Italy as is an addition of four or five hundred thousand a year there is no doubt this abundant race of men and women is her greatest economic asset for they are men and women who are as frugal as they are industrious, a large proportion of them with trained hands, masters and lovers of their crafts, whether it is masonry, embroidery,

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fruit raising. To consider these people as simply an economic burden is gross unintelligence.

Another thing that should be taken into consideration is the economic value of the character of the young Italian. ~~It is the only~~ No country which went through the war ~~which~~ is raising a more serious youth. These young Fascists may be more or less fanatical, I think they are, but it is the fanaticism of labor, discipline, self-sacrifice. Now, these ideas planted in youth instead of the pessimistic, unbelieving egoistic ideas which seem to have won so much of the youth of England, France and the United States, make a ~~the~~ balance in Italy's favor economically.

They seem to me to be growing up with a notion that Mussolini emphasizes constantly, and that is to make the most of what you've got. I have never seen youth so interested as in Italy in institutions with which they are connected. Looking in Florence one day in a heedless way for the cell in which Savonarola agonized, I went into a church on the square that bears his name. No, a handsome little fellow at the sacristy door told me, Savonarola had nothing to do with that church, but I must not go until I had seen the body of Saint Marie something or other; but I did not care to see ~~that~~. ~~But I must see it~~ he said and promptly gave an order; ~~just a moment and the grill would be let down.~~ In spite of my efforts to get away the lad edged me politely

I said, "you must

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but firmly to the high altar, and when I persisted in calling for Savonarola, ~~said:~~ replied "hush, just a moment, hush."

Suddenly from under that sacred structure there came a horrible grating sound that made my scalp creep, and there under the high altar on a gorgeous catafalque, lay a lady dead I don't know how many years, black and parched, but such a splendid Roman nose and such long slender hands and feet that you knew she was patrician to the bottom of her soul whatever her origin. And such clothes! So many of the Virgins and saints have had such poor dressmakers togging them up, but not this great lady. There was marvelous artistry in her costume. A black veil fell on each side of her head to just below her shoulders; she wore a white tunic, gold embroidered over a petticoat that came to the arches of her slender feet — ~~and an equally~~ splendid black petticoat embroidered ~~with gold~~. And her jewels! Rings blazed from her fingers, there was a magnificent brooch and jeweled chain; also a be-jeweled crown and a jewel-incrusted bag which probably held more jewels. I have never seen a person so splendidly laid out. And what a person she must have been. I don't know her name. I never looked her up for ~~the church in which I found her is not in the guide book, and of course~~ I had no mission ~~was not~~ to find her. I was looking for Savonarola's cell to see if there I might get a hint in trying to understand Mussolini and his Italy. What I got was an exhibit of the enthusiasm of

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Italian boyhood for ~~his~~ church and its possessions - something which must not be left out of our reckonings.

This overflowing population of Italy means much to other nations. Ithas meant much to France since the war, for Italians by the thousands, have gone in to help do work which the French were unequal to ~~in numbers~~. In the ten years between 1905 and 1914 when the war broke out, we received nearly two millions and a quarter Italians, chiefly men and women who put their hands to our labor. Now count the value to us in dollars and cents of these people that Italy went into the expense of raising for us. It makes a debt. We talk much of Italy4s debt to us but little of ours to her. In the dreary days just after the Armistice, when the American doughboy was obliged to stay in France, his job in his opinion done, and his only desire to get home, there appeared one day in the streets of Paris, an American camion on which some profane youth had hung a huge banner on which was printed in big letters:

We have paid our debt to Lafayette
Now who in ——— do we owe?

Someone might have suggested Christopher Columbus. He took the trouble to discover us. He was an Italian though I believe it was not Italian money that backed him in his venture; nevertheless he was an Italian and I do not know that we have ever paid our debt to him. ~~That is,~~

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it might be put in the balance when ~~in this matter of Italy's debt to us~~ we discuss cancellation. Italy's war debt was funded in November of 1925, two billion forty two million, or about 1/12 of the entire wealth of the country. It is to be paid in gold in annual installments running over 62 years. The amounts are graded from five million dollars in 1926 to between 19 and 20 millions in 1946; 38 millions in 1966, 79,400.000 in the last year which is 1987. Where are they to get the money? When the interest payment on the American debt came due in the spring of 1926, there was an appeal made to the public for 25 million lire. The response was immediate and it outran the request nearly four times. Must Italy go on year after year taking up a collection for us. Can America endure the spectacle perpetually for 62 years, of people as hard-working and frugal as they were, straining themselves to pay us who certainly cannot be said to need the money? Can we do this when we think of Christopher Columbus?

Mussolini has had Italy solidly with him in the various international disputes that have come up. "He is Italy," one keen observer watching the Corfu affair declared. One is inclined to repeat the remark when he looks over this nation as it is to-day, accepting his counsels so unquestionably, following him so rhythmically. "A Corporate State? We do not know what it is but if Mussolini thinks it best we must try it." And they do. "Black bread? Certainly, it is right.

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it is right. We will be forced to buy less from the foreigner" and the nation goes to eating black bread - and very good bread it is too.

And is then there no opposition, the observer asks himself constantly? There is but you must look for it with a lantern. Here and there, an anti-Fascist will talk to you, when you have given him reason to believe that he can depend upon your pledge not to identify him if you quote him. Often they talk freely, but it is interesting how they qualify their confidences. That is;, there is no doubt that practically all those who still call themselves anti-Fascists have had their views substantially modified by what has happened to Italy in Mussolini's four years of leadership.

To the unregenerated socialist the man is of course an out-and-out renegade. But they get little consolation from many of their own. "He is the greatest man you ever had" is reported to have said Trotsky to a visiting body of Italians who went to him for consolation, "and you made a primary mistake when you refused to take him back after the war." To them his success in winning over great bodies of their late followers is also gall and wormwood. It is amazing to see how some of the former most violently socialistic centers have changed. Take Bologna. "From being the most socialistic state in the country," a Bolognese told me, "it has become the most fascist"

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Itis difficult to believe that such a complete change of attitude could happen in so short a period. It can only be explained by the utter disgust that the former disorders had caused. The Fascists came as saviours to the body of citizens and to-day they are so regarded."

Go to Bologna on a market day and look at the crowd that by eight in the morning fills the corridors, streets, surround her public piazza; look into their intelligent bronzed faces, at their virile frame, and you will see the manner of men that had been converted to Fascism. You could hardly have a stronger following anywhere. The way the doctrine has penetrated all the Romagna once violently revolutionary, is unbelievable. Even the little republic of San Marino which rises out of these eastern plains is almost violently Fascist. I have had no greater surprise in Italy than when on entering the public square of the capital ~~of this little republic~~ I saw on every hand the Fascists salute even. It is possible that San Marino went Fascist partly in self-defense. It was surrounded by radical socialist agricultural organizations and its own farmers were almost forced to join them. ~~movement~~. What a feather in the cap of Communism it would have been to have turned this little republic into a Soviet state! It was not an impossible outcome if Fascism had not come along and the wise of San Marino tell you so.

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This apparently explains their enthusiasm when in August of 1926 Mussolini made it the first visit of his life to the little Republic, a curious fact since he was born not over 30 miles away.

It is Mussolini's habit to make sudden dashes out of Rome to Forli to visit his family. It was on one of these quick visits that he was seized with the desire to see San Marino, so with Donna Rachele as the Italians call Mme. Mussolini and his three children, they dropped unannounced into the square of the little republic possibly with the hope of not being recognised. A vain hope for the first guide who came running to offer his services stopped short and saluted - "Mussolini!"

"Say nothing about it, we have come as visitors, we do not want to be recognized." But that of course, was out of the question. In ten minutes the whole capital knew that the head of the Italian Government was on their territory. There was wild telephoning to officials, the few great in San Marino began to prepare refreshments; women made up bunches of flowers, children came bearing them. They surrounded him, followed him as he went from place to place and there was nothing in the town or on the crags that he did not see. Never had the little town had they had such an exciting day!

They still tell you about it;-"Mussolini was there, he said so and so; here he said so"; and they are still selling

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the illustrated four-page paper that they got out immediately in honor of his visit. One of the interesting comments that is sure to be repeated is that of an old woman, who ~~looking from her window~~ exclaimed "they told me he looked like the devil and behold, he looks like the Redeemer!"

The most important opposition I have found in Italy is that of intelligent liberals. I have already noted in a former article that the liberals after the march on Rome made an apparently sincere effort to unite with the Fascists. They found it difficult for many reasons and after the Matteoti affair in the spring of 1924, not a few who had faithfully co-operated, withdrew.

"I have withdrawn entirely," one man told me, "although I made an honest effort to work with the Fascists. No reasonable man will deny that Mussolini has done extraordinary things for Italy. I know sections in which five years ago no man's life was safe and to-day no man's life is in danger. But I cannot endure their manners and their preposterous claims. You would suppose that before the Fascists no one had ever done anything for Italy. My grandfather was a follower of Garibaldi, I grew up in the liberal tradition, I have seen what the liberals have done ~~for Italy~~ and I cannot endure this boasting. ~~Everything~~ Even in a scientific conference they claim everything. It is as if they thought they had invented surgery and medicine. Moreover their

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way of conducting government is not orderly, it has no dignity, I cannot consent. It is dangerous too. Mussolini is a man of extraordinary energy and magnetism but no one can be sure what will happen when he goes."

There are at least a few philosophical observers in Italy to whom the whole Fascist movement is a deplorable retrogression because it idealizes ancient Rome and is tolerant of Catholicism. They look on Rome as a savage seizing what others had done, using it for herself, licentious, devoid of spirituality. They look on the Catholic Church as a great political machine, greedy only for power on earth, not at all interested in a religion of the spirit. They believe that Italy before the war was moving on an anti-classical, anti-Catholic path and here comes Mussolini with his revival of Rome and of her ways, with his compromise with the Church, allowing religious instruction in the schools, putting back the crucifix. "It is a step backward," one distinguished scholar told me, "Italy is a country without philosophy and without character, a country that accepts what is offered it in politics and religion, one thing to-day and another to-morrow. It has always been so, in mediaval times you were a Guelph one day and a Ghibelline the next." My friends come in here to me and say 'I am a Fascist', 'yesterday you were a socialist, why have you changed?' And all they can answer is "I am a Fascist." It is not reasonable, it

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is foolishness. It is letting others think for you, and as a matter of fact the Italians want nothing but prepared ideas. Mussolini is trying to drive Italy into a world that is dead. Rome is dead. The new world is a democratic, Christian; the Roman Catholic world is passing. It is all stupid, foolish."

This is a philosopher's analysis of the situation. Here is one from an able professional man of long experience with men and things, and a man who has known Mussolini well, personally. He told me, " I have been with him under the most trying circumstances, he is a remarkable man, a very great human being, perfectly simple, natural, sincere, never a humbug, but I am not a Fascist and for what I believe to be sound reasons! First the idolatry that the Italians have for him is dangerous. Italians love a great man and when they have one they expect him to do everything for them, they no longer attempt to do anything for themselves, they leave it all to him and they will support him to the death. I have young sons who are fanatics in their devotion to Mussolini, they would die for him to-morrow. Now, they expect too much from him and when he falls as he may at any time, there is great danger of reaction. People who love so fanatically are bitter in their revolts. Then we can no longer discuss publicly matters; it is not because the government forbids, it is because the fanaticism of his followers is such that they

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will not listen. My boys brook no criticism, no question.

"There is grave danger from his alliance with the Catholics. The Church is always watching for opportunities to increase its temporal power. Since the war it has been diligently strengthening itself in every country in Europe. Mussolini is in danger from the Church, the church is subtle, he is not; he is frank, natural, direct and able, make no mistake about that; a great and remarkable man, but he is not an intrigue as the church is."

But how could any man hope to govern Italy and disregard the Catholic Church? Even Garibaldi who was a fierce anti-Catholic until his conquest of Sicily, began his rule by appearing in his red shirt at a high mass in the cathedral at Palermo. He had a revolution to save!

So far as I have been able to discover, there is no serious attention given by the Fascist Government to the criticisms of this class. Their chief anxiety is lest their chief be murdered. There is a feeling at least among a few that the whole structure might go to pieces, that the old forms of government had been weakened, that the new are not yet complete or at least not functioning with surety and smoothness. They do not now see the ~~Free State~~ Corporate sufficiently wielded to stand the strains of Mussolini's removal as directing head ~~would cause~~.

The anxiety of the people after the attempt last spring

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on Mussolini's life led him to tell them that they need have no fear and that everything had been provided for in case of his death. Now, just what did he mean? Probably that the King would declare what is called in Italy "A" state of siege" that is put the country under martial law. This would continue until he was convinced that there was no danger of serious disaster. He would then appoint a successor who undoubtedly would be a Fascist - one of a half dozen strong men who have been in the movement from the beginning and whose ability has been proved. The present counsel would continue so would the ministries at least ~~with or without their present heads~~ for a time; the Parliament, which as we have already seen, is three-fourths Fascists, would continue its work, so would the new senate half of which has been made by recent decree syndicalist; that is the government Mussolini has evolved would go on. to back this government. There would be the same powerful machinery that is backing him: - the national militia which is the old Fascist army created in the revolution between 1919 and 1922; the municipal elections, the prefets of the various departments entirely Fascist. That is, the whole structure, built to withstand assault, would undoubtedly ~~live~~ hold together for a time. Whether it would endure permanently, continue its development of the Corporate State, ~~live~~ hold fast to ~~Mussolini's~~ Henri Gregoire's the gospel of "discipline" "order" and "~~rules~~" labor would depend partly on the strength of the leaders who succeed him, and partly on the ability of the leaders who undertake to put work

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together an opposition.

Probably the greatest danger would be from the Fascist themselves if Mussolini were assassinated. It would mean a revival at points at least, of the old suspicion and violence which would be hard for a new leader to quell unless indeed it turned out that he was of the same type. But as we have already seen, Mussolini does not think that he will be taken off, and as long as he remains the man he now is, Italy is safe. Indeed, she is growing stronger day by day, both within and without.

When I came to Italy four months ago, I received a little over 30 lire for a dollar of American money, To-day I am receiving 26. Now that, allthings considered , is a substantial improvement; it encourages the country, it increases confidence outside. To be sure it works woe to the speculator. The stronger the lire the more inflated stocks will topple. The quicker they go the better for those who labor.

But will he remain the man he is? The seeds of a man's downfall are in himself. Power such as Mussolini exercises is fruitful soil for human weakness. So far as we can judge, there is no present danger of his falling into either of t two pitfalls which have entrapped the larger number of strong rulers in the past. There is no sign that power is going to his head. He remains as he has been from the start, personally the simplest of man - also the most correct. He is and always

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has been—except in certain radical flurries, when, according to some of his old associates, he left off his collar and put on a fur cap,—most immaculate in dress, he is always correctly clad now and entirely unconscious of his clothes. He seems not to have been from the beginning of his power troubled in the least by the presence of the great-kings and queens. "What would this barbarian do at a queen's table," people asked, when at the beginning of his government in Rome it was necessary for him to be invited. The reports of those who have seen him are that he shows in royal presence the deference of good taste without any impairment of personal dignity. The late Queen Marguerita who entertained him is said to have remarked in ~~community~~ entry's on his surprising ease and dignity of manner, "He is not only great but handsome," and this is the comment of many women who meet ~~Mussolini~~ him socially.

When the strain of affairs is off and he is with friends or visitors, he is genial and smiling. The people who work with him if awed by his amazing power are fascinated by his personality full of surprises and his vitality which apparently never weakens. They say he is never malicious though he may fly into a rage. Those who go to him with notions formed in his public exhibits are sure to have them upset if he talks to them quietly. ~~Like~~ a hostile Italian editor who after the first interview with Mussolini said of him that at his desk he is "calm, correct, almost naive"—a different man from the one one

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Barella who met him first sometime before his break with the socialist party found him "good, honest, a fighter with no more care for his life than for his pocket book - his one passion the laboring masses - of surprising simplicity - as weak before the pain of others as he is strong in his will to conquer."

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sees on the platform - powerful, rude, fluttering.

A fine trait of Mussolini's is his interest in the affairs of the moment, ~~no matter how trivial it may be. He can interest himself in everything.~~ "He is like a child," one ofhis associates told me." "He is curious , wants to know about everything." Those who have been called into conference with him on some matter of which he knew nothing but on which he felt it necessary to inform himself, say he will sit for an hour, asking all sorts of questions, insisting on precise explanations, delighting in every new point, quick as a flash to seize the essential. This intentness of interest is shown in public gatherings, whatever he is doing. He gives his whole mind to it. If he is pinning on a badge he forgets everything in his effort to fix it firmly and at the proper point; when he is reviewing troops you get an idea he sees all the faces; when he is reviewing the bands of children who pass before him his face is a study in gentleness. At exhibits, particularly at the annual wheat exhibits, his knowledge and enthusiasm are a tremendous pride and stimulus to the growers. Last August there was a grain exhibit in Rome by the farmers of the surrounding country. There was a splendid showing, the struggle to increase the yield of grain in the last three years having produced remarkable results. Grower after grower displayed heads of wheat from the harvests of 1923/1924/5/6 and the increase in the size of the head, the weight of the grain was always

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unbelievable. Mussolini understood well what this meant, he exulted over it, shook hands with the growers, congratulated them, and when the chairman made his speech, ~~he~~ listened ~~from the chair where he sat~~ exactly as Theodore Roosevelt did when ~~would have done if listening to~~ somebody ~~who~~ was recounting that which interested him, on the edge of his chair, bursting with enthusiasm. There was no doubt about the effect on a body of hard-working agriculturists this honest joy of Mussolini's over their achievement. The entire lack of pomposity, of superiority over them stimulates their pride. He makes them feel he is one with them in the wheat Battle.

Another pitfall into which he shows no signs so far of falling, is that of greed. Mussolini has no fortune and there is no evidence that he has any idea of making one out of his position. His salary as Prime Minister is something like Dol 15000.00 a year. The State pays for functions which Mussolini insists must be handsome, worthy of a great State. But as for himself, he has in Rome only a little apartment with one maid to take care of him. His family he keeps at Forli a town mixed with his fortunes from boyhood, the place where he married Donna Rachele. Here she with her three handsome children keep up a simple home into which Mussolini now and then dashes. When people talk to him of the advantages of Rome for his family, he is contemptious. The social life, the association, the flattery, the danger of distorted views

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of life would be dangerous for the children. He does not want them "spoiled". His indifference to money disturbs some of his colleagues. They tell him that he should provide for the future of his family. It does not interest him. His boys must make their own way, he says, and he did.

One who knows him well tells me that Mussolini does not even carry a pocket book, that he apparently never knows what he has or has not, lacks the money-sense. It is rather that he never forgets where money comes from. "Labour produces money," he says, "it is sweat of the people's brow." So he takes only his salary as Prime Minister, although at the present moment he is filling five different secretaryships each of which carries a salary. He is glad he says to donate the salaries of these officers to the nation.

A serious element of uncertainty in the Italian situation comes from the strain he gives his physical and mental powers. The newspapers use regularly one descriptive phrase for Mussolini's day - "the most laborious day of the Head of the Government." He is a man who does nothing but work. Eighteen hours of every twenty four are usually spent in public labors; he usually sleeps but three hours; his exercise at present is horseback-riding in the morning, though he sometimes fences and is, I am told, a rather brilliant fencer. He also frequently drives his own motorcar madly, recklessly. His chief relaxations are reading and music. He is a rapid omnivorous reader of

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books, pamphlets, newspapers - not only Italian but French, English, German. If the bulk of these are political, social, economic, he enjoys both fiction and poetry. He is all Italian in his passion for music and plays the violin fairly. He has played it since he was 18 years old. When things are trying, problems knotty, he can be heard at night playing quietly to himself. Through all the "Corfu affair" his chief consolation was his violin.

Of one thing we may be sure; if Mussolini discovers that this strenuous life is telling on his faculties, enervating his energy and will, he will quickly enough apply to himself the discipline he preaches in all matters. Indeed, already he has done that in the matter of diet. Before his illness in the opening months of 1925, he is said to have been a hearty careless eater. He is abstemious now everywhere excepting possibly at public functions. He calls himself "dry" though he will tell you if the subject comes up that he would not have Italy dry, that he thinks working people need a little wine or beer at the end of the day. His reason is that it renews their social sense.

Wherever you probe into the man's life, you find him strong or capable of being strong in any possible change. Let him go on for ten years more in Italy as he is going now, and he will have created here a new attitude towards national life and possibly a new kind of state - the Corporate State - ~~as explained i~~ a

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as explained in a preceding article.

Profound as is his faith in this creation, deeper and more important than all in his mind is the return to "discipline, order and labour." He never loses an opportunity to emphasize the necessity of these qualities. One of his most impressive recent ~~proclamation~~ preachment on this text was a historical paper on the long and costly struggle of ancient Rome to make a place for herself in the Mediterranean, transforming herself from a land to a sea-power. The story was told to give him a clinching illustration of the qualities he believes essential in Italy to-day, an opportunity to drive in the two sentences with which he concluded his address: "the greatness of Rome as a seapower was the result of long sacrifices, incredible tenacity, indomitable will. These qualities conquer to-day as they will to-morrow and always."

These preachings of his not only touch the common sense of matured Italians, but they stir idealistic youth, stir it to training in self-control, in sacrifice, in co-operation. I hear a certain class of liberals say that this is training in slavery but they reflect that form of opinion which seeks a way to achieve without discipline, self-control, steady labor. There is none. This youth which is being trained to these hard virtues is organized. Half the boys in Italy are in a kind of boy-scout organization called the Balilla. Their very name in an invitation to revolt against slavery.

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Balilla was a Genevese boy who in 1746 when the Austrians controlled the city and were exasperating the people by their brutality, picked up a stone one day when the crowd was particularly incenced at some unjust action of their tormentors, and cried "shall I start it?" hurling the missile as he said it at the head of the Austrian commander. This was the beginning of a revolt which chased the foreigners from ~~Genoa~~ the city. To-day Balilla's statue in Genoa is a favourite point of pilgrimage for groups of Fascists boys. You meet them coming into the great stations ~~at Genoa~~, hundreds of them in black shirts always, however heterogeneous the rest of their garments may be, filling the air with their cries of "Eja, Eja, Alala" or with the strains of their marching songs, Giovanneza. If it were submission that Mussolini had in mind when he organized the boys, he would hardly allow young Balilla to become their hero! It is something else, it is the profoundest kind of belief based on his own hard experience with men, his own efforts to establish some form of social democracy in Italy, that has led him to the conclusion which he is giving his life to enforce ~~on Italy~~, that no society can progress except in proportion to the order, discipline, labor, of the masses of the people.

If Mussolini should pass now from the scene, he still has left not only to Italy, but to the world, a call which

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Will be remembered. In coming years, the world over, when politicians and congressmen sit impotent, unwilling to act lest some selfish party interest be endangered, when the press is a mere chorus of mischievous half truthe, of venomous accusations, of irresponsible counsels, there will be those who will not fail to cry: remember Mussolini.

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