II.

MUSSOLINI AND ITALY.

Those of us who have had experience with farms are familiar with the problem of the "run-out meadow". Local tradition tells of its once splendid fertility. Local judgments are severe in the exploitation and neglect which worked it until it dropped back to weeds - worn out - exhausted. Your problem if you are ambitions to make your land "pay" is its redemption - a serious problem calling for money and time and faith.

When Benito Mussolini took charge of the Kingdom of Italy in October 1922 and declared that the chief business of the Government and people was to put the country again on what we call a paying basis he found on his hands a number of vast run out meadows, lands making up practically the whole south of the country and including the Province or States as we would call them, of Sicily - Southern Campaina - Calabria - Apulia.

One has but to study the ruins of this South to know how prosperous and busy it once was. We think of Pompeii as a place of luxury and vice but Pompeii was a great manufacturing town, famous particularly for her dyes, and her port was filled the year round with traders from all over the earth. Paestem to the South where we go to see the remains of what is by scholars declared to be the most perfect remnant of a Doric temple left on earth was once a city of 600,000 people alive with trade and industry. And so it goes all over the heel and toe of Southern Italy "run-out meadows" everywhere.

Digital Image, 2011, The Idaho Tarbell Collection, 1890-1944, Allegheny College Pelletier Library.

As for Sicily, was there ever a geography written that did not tell of her being at one time the "granary of Europe"? From Sicily, old Rome took the bulk of the vast supplies of wheat she needed for herself and her colonies - took them through her port Ostia at the mouth of the River Tiber and if you go there today you can see more clearly than it can be written where full laden ships tied up at the wharfs, the road over which white slaves carried the grain on their heads to the row upon row of store houses - not towering elevators like those we have today in the United States, but solidly built capacious, brick and stone rooms properly aired and compactly and conveniently placed around the grain market where merchants met the buyer and actually sold - not speculated - in the grain. And the buyer, the trade made, carried off his purchase in his ship which lay near by in the River. It gives you a realization of what Sicily meant to Rome and her subjects to look over that grain market now laid bare down to the very names and signs of the merchants, to the near by hotel where the traders put up and to the convenient baths and theatre where they were entertained when the business was going on. It somehow seems an improvement to us in its directness, its limitation of middlemen on the Chicago Wheat Exchange, through which the descendants of these same Romans now yearly buy more or less wheat.

But why cannot Sicily do now all and more than she was doing 2,000 and less years ago? She has not been like Pompeii, Paestium, and many another once thriving city - wiped out by

Digital Image, 2011, The Ida M. Tarbell Collection, 1890-1944, Allegheny College Pelletier Library.

earthquake or tidal wave or torrents of ashes and earth or a combination of them all, though locally she has suffered from these disturbances. No, Sicily is an example of Man's, not Nature's cruelties Greece brought her to a high degree of cultivation and Rome, the plunderer of other men's works - conquered and raped her, then came the Vandals, the Byzantines, the Saracens, the Normans, a succession of European rulers, Germans and French, but all weak and unable to undo the evil done & making a strong and healthy government until finally Garibaldi only 66 years ago ousted the last of the miserable succession and Sicily became a member of the present Kingdom of Italy and shared in the hopes and the promises of that regime, but the promises have gone unfulfilled. Of course the Sicilian "had the vote" and they sent deputies to Rome, one of them able men, Orlando the man who made so good an impression at the Versailles Peace Conference, one of the Big Four who ruled that body was from Sicily. The deputies saw to it that Sicily received her share of appropriations for roads and water but somehow the Sicilians who took the matter up where the Deuptied laid it down were never able to make headway in the bureauz at Rome. They were unable to unravel the intricate red tape which had to be unravelled at Rome by their local politicians if they were really ready to see the money voted to build reservoirs and roads, and they grew sick and discouraged and went home. Go down to Washington D.C. and try to put through a claim, to get a farm for a veteran of the Great War - make a readjustment of your income tax - and you'll think you understand why the Sicilians went home! But you will have not 1/10th of one per cent of what they encountered in the Italian bureaucracy!

Digital Image, 2011, The Idaho Farrell Collection, 1890-1944, Allegheny College Pelletier Library.

earthquake or tidal wave or torrents of ashes and earth or a combination of them all, though locally she has suffered from these disturbances. No, Sicily is an example of Man's, not Nature's cruelties Greece brought her to a high degree of cultivation and Rome the plunderer of other men's works - conquered and raped her, then came the Vandals, the Byzantines, the Saracens, the Normans, a succession of European rulers, Germans and French, but all weak and unable to undo the evil done, making a strong and healthy government, until finally Garibaldi only 66 years ago ousted the last of the miserable succession and Sicily became a member of the present Kingdom of Italy and shared in the hopes and the promises of that regime, but the promises have gone unfulfilled. Of course the Sicilian "had the vote" and they sent deputies to Rome, some of them able men, Orlando the man who made so good an impression at the Versailles Peace Conference, one of the Big Four who ruled that body was from Sicily. The deputies saw to it that Sicily received her share of appropriations for roads and water but somehow the Sicilians who took the matter up where the Deupties laid it down were never able to make headway in the bureauz at Rome. They were unable to unravel the intricate red tape which had to be unravelled at Rome by their local politicians if they were ready to see the money voted to build reservoirs and roads, and they grew sick and discouraged and went home. Go down to Washington D.C. and try to put through a claim to receive a farm for a veteran of the Great War - make a readjustment of your income tax - and you'll think you understand why the Sicilian went home! But you have not 1/10th of one per cent of what the other encountered in the Italian bureaucracy!

Digital Image, 2011, The Ida M. Tarbell Collection, 1890-1944, Allegheny College Pelletier Library.

They didn't get roads and water out of the new institutions and they didn't get any decent policing or administry of law. It had been a long time since the wicked got their just deserts in Sicilian courts of law. The inevitable had resulted, the people had taken the matter into their own hands as had happened in our own country. The White Caps of the Middle West, the Vigilants of early Californian days were self constituted groups intent on seeing that evil doers were punished for their crimes, which the local government were not doing. Just such groups grew up in Sicily. They were called the Mafia. I have heard more than one Sicilian argue that the Mafia saved Sicily. If there had been a self respecting and resolute government in the state it would, as in our own country, have taken over the work the Mafia was doing, but there was none and it grew and grew and took on other functions - until finally it was the most powerful instrument in the State, ordering the lives of men and women in a secret mysterious despotic fashion. Five years ago life in a good part of Northern Sicily was dangerous and uncertain business if you were not allied with the Mafia. If you were a new comer you received limits where to trade, and if you did not heed the order your milk was always sour, your meat infected, and soon your cattle sickened or your horse died - finally you received a secret warning to go - and if you did not go of your own will - you might find yourself dead some morning on your doorstep. Grain was harvested, cattle sold, elections carried according to the will of the Mafia - and "good" people respectable, orderly, educated, deputies even! were the allies of the Mafia. Sometimes through fear, sometimes because

Digital Image, 2011, The Ida M. Tarbell Collection, 1890-1944, Allegheny College Pelletier Library,

they needed their support at the polls at the harvest, in trade. They accepted the support and if one of the order was caught by the none too vigilant officers of the law in a crime that even they could not wink at, the signal was given you to come to the criminal's aid and many a "good" man in Sicily has gone to a judge and said "Be easy on him. He's a good fellow after all. He's done me many a good turn."

We have in the United States today a young and vigorous institution which operates in the same way. We might call it the anti-prohibition Mafia - our strong and efficient League of Bootleggers They live on defiance of the law, and do not flinch at any crime if it is necessary to the success of their plans. The local police is their ally as the Sicilian police has long been of the Mafia and thousands of "good" men in the United States are giving their support to this American Mafia. They are under obligations for liquor obtained in defiance of law. Their bootlegger is arrested. the courts want to make an example - the culprit makes the sign and the "good" man sees the judge. "He's a good fellow after all- Be easy with him." It is Sicilian history repeating itself in the United States. - "the greatest country on earth!! "

Now one disastrous effect of this Mafia was the paralysis of the cultivation of the large landed estates with which the country and Southern Italy as well, had become divided in hundreds of years of changing rule. The prince or duke or count or merchant or politic who owned the title to the land found it unsafe to live long enough on it in a year to visit it frequently enough to manage ir properly.

Digital Image, 2011, The Ida M. Tarbell Collection, 1890-1944, Allegheny College Pelletier Library.

If he for any reason displeased the Mafia, tried methods of which they disapproved his cattle died and his wheat went unharvested. He might farm out his lands to agents who did stand in with the Mafia but little of the returns ever reached him. The result was the abandonment until a few years ago of practically all of the great estates. Then they began to break up, but the effect on the national wheat crop had not been perceptable, and then came Mussolini ~~in 1922~~.

A friend of his much with him in the days after the March on Rome has told me of his immediate insistence on giving attention to the South." The Italian Government has always neglected the South" he said, "everything has been done for the North. We must build up the South." Mussolini's chief reason for insisting on this was the hope that these once fertile and rich provinces might be restored so as to help him in his great undertaking, which as I tried to show in a former chapter is simply to restore the sick Italian Lira to health. If Sicily and Calabria and Apulia can be made to produce what they once produced Italy will come the nearer to raising wheat that she needs to eat and will ~~have more to sell~~ be obliged to buy less abroad. But "how to go about it, in Sicily for example"? Mussolini can be trusted to put his finger instantly on the weak spot of a practical problem. "You can't raise more wheat in Sicily" he said "until life is safe and men can grow wheat and raise cattle with work the fields no other risks than those of the weather and their own ignorance or neglect, and that day will not come until you've done away with the Mafia. They must be destroyed." and he ordered them destroyed at once!

Digital Image, 2011, The Ida M. Tarbell Collection, 1899-1944, Allegheny College Pelletier Library.

Fortunately for Mussolini, the Prefect of Palermo, the capital of Sicily, was a man of resolution. His county and two or three neighbouring ones were the chief strongholds of Mafia. He took charge of the campaign in them all. It was swift, relentless, quiet and terrifying. The methods were mediaeval and have been told. Probably by none other could 2000 of the leaders, most of them believed to be criminals of long standing, have been lodged in prison. Towns were surrounded in the night and those wanted carried away almost before awake. Wives and children and mothers were chained into jail and held until the outlaw gave himself up. In an incredibly short time the infected territory was stripped of its leaders and life became as safe and as orderly as in an American countryside. Everyone to whom I talked in Sicily whether Fascist in sympathy or not, testified to this change. "Four years ago you could not cross Sicily without an armed guard." Mrs. Raiola, the archaeologist and head of the American Travel Club of Southern Italy told me "In February I went with a little party for 18 days through all the wildest central parts and met only open friendliness. You are as safe as in Connecticut."

Four years agothe children stoned you in the streets of the towns and hamlets. Today they greet you laughingly with uplifted hand. Indeed the Fascist salute is a game with them. Salutes instead of stones, smiles instead of scowls, is not a bad exchange. The children do not know the meaning but they are looking on life with new eyes, new emotions, friendliness instead of hate.

But will putting 2000 men in prison, trying them, for them all have a trial it is claimed, hanging, deporting, them selves end

Digital Image, 2011, The Ida M. Tarbell Collection, 1890-1944, Allegheny College Pelletier Library.

the Mafia. Not unless they can keep the there for a generation, until a new generation that prefers smiles to stones and living by work rather than violence and beggary has come in.

But for the moment what has been is contributing enormously to Mussolini's objective. Life is safe, the great landowners are going back to raise wheat. They understand the economic war to which he has called them, understand that they must do their part as patriots. Its a new kind of battlefield, production instead of slaughter. Scores of estates are shown you where titled gentlemen are struggling with modern agricultural methods, pour in capital, give personal attention to help win the wheat battle.

But this safety has made another essential thing possible- roads and water. The roads have been and still are in many parts of the South execrable but everywhere you bump your way you find roads, reservoirs, aqueducts building.

All Italy has been divided into seven departments for material reconstruction - a skilled engineer at the head of each. Sicily makes one, and here is how it works there. The Head has divided the island into districts and organized in each a small body of the best local men. To these men he says, your first job is to find out what existing laws and existing but unused appropriations will do for you. Find out - go to Rome and demand immediate attention, and they do. The lethargy of the Roman bureaucrats is disturbed for the first time in generations it seems, red tape is out for them, and if it isn't they "go tell Mussolini":

All Italy runs to him with its troubles, he sees daily

Digital Image, 2011. The Ida M. Tarbell Collection, 1890-1944, Allegheny College Pelletier Library.

All Italy runs to him with its troubles, he eases daily
tasm is out for them, and if it isn't they"go tell Mussolini"!
is disturbed for the first time in generations it seems, red
attention, and they do. The infantry of the Roman bureaucratic
tions will do for you. Find out - go to Rome and demand immediate
is to find out what existing laws and existing but unused appropria-
body of the best local men. To these men he says, your first job
divided the island into districts and organized in each a small
storly makes one, and here is how it works there. The head has
material reconstruction - a skilled engineer at the head of each.
All Italy has been divided into seven departments for
roads, reservoirs, aqueducts, building.
of the South accessible but everywhere you bump your way you find
roads and water. The roads have been and still are in many parts
But Italy has made another essential thing possible
give personal attention to help win the wheat battle.
men are struggling with modern agricultural methods, poor [illegible],
of slaughter. Scores of estates are shown you where [illegible]
as patriots. Its a new kind of battlefield, production instead
going back to raise wheat. They understand the economic war to
which he has called them, understand that they must do their part
to Mussolini's objective. Life is safe, the great landowners are
but for the moment what has been is contributing enormously
by work rather than violence and beggary has come in.
until a new generation that prefers smiles to stones and living
the Mafia. Not unless they can keep them there for a generation,

Digital Image, 2011, The Ida M. Tarbell Collection, 1890-1944, Allegheny College Pelletier Library

from 9 a.m. to 1 - 2 p.m. the persons who have asked a hearing. Their wants have of course been made known to the proper secretary, and only the foolish, of whom no doubt there are many, are refused. Mussolini prefers to see as many as he can - only in this way he says truly can he know what are the needs of people, the complaints, the success or failure of his orders. For an hour and a half one day I watched this procession file in and out of his office at the Chigi Palace while myself waiting in the anteroom to be received. It was an extraordinary study in governmental machinery. Here were ardent confident youngsters, self-conscious countrymen, solemn delegations from north and south, come to present him with gifts - be received that day at least an antiques of value - to ask him to open a school or unveil a statue, to build a bridge, to push a road, to complain of anti-fascist activities, to plead for the pardon of a fascist sinner, public and private matters flowed before him, and he handled them all promptly, decisively, with sympathy or severity as they seemed to him to deserve. The out coming procession often bore the marks of their encounter, they were crushed or elated, - blinking or smiling. To watch them go in so brave and come out so often so shrunk and bewildered was not encouraging to one who only wanted to pay respect, make a personal request, and get an impression. You naturally feared that one who came on so personal and unimportant a mission would be met with the stern Roman gaze and the terse rapid questioning which, as one often confounds and defeats his interviewers. Although there is no doubt of Mussolini's power to rebuke, silence, even frighten visitors when he wills, there is also so I learned that day, no

Digital Image, 2011, The Ida M. Tarbell Collection, 1890-1944, Allegheny College Pelletier Library.

doubt of his power to disarm and captivate. Instead of the cold and formal stare I had anticipated, a smiling gentleman came from behind the big desk where standing he receives usually the invading hosts, and shaking hands cordially apologized for my long wait. He gave me a seat in a stately chair opposite his own and for twenty minutes or so chatted as naturally, simply and cordially as a friend you had come across at a tea party. Mussolini has one of the loveliest smiles I ever saw - it is not only on his lips but in his eyes and to finish the conquest of one who sees him in this mood for the first time, he has a dimple: The smile, the utter simplicity of manner, the naturalness and friendliness of his talk account no little for his amazing hold on men, their sudden and unexpected going over to him, They are factors in a powerful personality the more effective because unlooked for, and in all attempts to analyse his sway they must be counted.

But to go back to my Sicilians. They were almost sure to go to Mussolini if their requests were held up, and he always understood and acted. The result is that Sicily today is getting water and roads such as she never saw even in her greatest days. She is already well on the way to doubling the forces which she can throw into the wheat battle. Indeed she almost did it, last year, 1925. The average wheat yield in the decade of 1915-1924 was close to 19 million bushels, in 1925 it was close to 33 million bushels. But Italy had a bumper wheat crop in 1925, an increase of nearly 28% over the average of the preceding decade. Nevertheless it was Sicily and the other Southern Italian province Apulia that pie e of land which, if you think of Italy as a boot (and who

Digital Image, 2011, The Ida M. Tarbell Collection, 1890-1944, Allegheny College Pelletier Library.

Digital Image, 2011, The Ida M. Tarbell Collection, 1890-1944, Allegheny College Pelletier Library.

of us was not taught so?) runs from the spur to the heel, and Calabria the toe, that ~~should~~ did all the rest of the country in proportion of increase, even the famed wheat state - Emilia. This result is the direct result of the organizing energizing teaching that Mussolini has insisted for four years must be thrown in if the wheat battle is won. Naturally it seemes most where the neglect has been greatest.

Everywhere you go in the South you find proofs that he has not forgotten his original idea - "we must help the South". Take the great marshes south of Naples - the land of Pompeii and Paestium - once famous for their productiveity, their beauty, but ruined utterly by tidal waves, earthquakes, the outpuring of Vesuvius. For hundreds of years they have been little better than waste places, their chief return coming from water buffaloes imported from Egypt. They thrived there. But men and women died of malaria and brigands made life unsafe for the would-be restorer of the great abandoned estates. The draining of these marshes has long been a project and a promise of the Italian government but it was not begun effectively until some ten years ago. The war stopped the work and after the war the proletarian railroad rule and the brigands between them made steady work impossible. Of the two the proletarian was the greater interference. It was impossible to get supplies - for men to get back and forth. An inspector of ruins - remember ruins are an organized state industry in Italy with a big bureau and many officials to administer it - with whom I

Digital Image, 2011, The Ida M. Tarbell Collection, 1890-1944, Allegheny College Pelletier Library.

travelled over these marshes told me that he had taken from 6 to 12 hours to ger to Paestum from the junction of the little railroad spur with the main line ~~railroad~~. 25 minutes should be enough. The train crew being the over-lords, stopped for a smoke - a siesta - a game of cards - that is they acted like the Corsair Carsayir and Norman and Bourbon who had pr ceded them, operating according to their own pleasure and profit, - in cpmplete indifference to the needs and desires of those they ruled.

Well, our new dictator at least runs the trains on time, a fact which gives him enormous prestige - for it is Mussolini alone who does it, in the minds of the simple: The day the trains begin again to start and arrive at the convenience of their crews that day the people will nod their heads sagely and say Mussolini is passing. Who next?

Not only does the little road into the marshes run on time but the draining of tens of thousands of acres are complete and crops of a great variety are growing where recently only the water buffalo wallowed. Capital is coming in planting orchards, great wheat fields, starting market gardens. Tobacco is already a success, three big drying and packing plants having gone up this year. Best of all perhaps and a good index to the new methods Mussolini's reorganization of the relations of labor and capital has inspired in the beginning of decent houses for the workers on the marshes. You see them going up in all directions - tidy - white - green shuttered, the firwt decent living places which many of the tenants ever entered. Indeed all through the Southern country rural houses are improving. It is particularly noticeable in the terraced slopes from Sorrento South where grapes and lemons

Digital Image, 2011, The Ida M. Tarbell Collection, 1890-1944, Allegheny College Pelletier Library.

ripen to such luscious flavor under the full heat of the sun's rays. ~~miles~~ miles of new walled terraces have been made in the last few years, they tell you that it is American money that is doing it. Men and women whom the war brought to Italy took their American savings bought a piece of rocky cliff, blasted out a narrow ledge - they are still at it - carted soil, planted vines and trees - built a house, two stories and a "poarch as in America" - and are giving nights and days to the culture of their vineyards and groves. These buildings are a curious contrast to the square one story Saracen houses with their black and white roofs not alone in form - Their tidiness brings out the complete indifference to order and cleanliness which so characterizes the saracen community. And it has its effect. There is much rebuilding, remodelling going on. Voluntary efforts to do as they do in America! One of the most interesting and touching comunity undertakings I have ever come across has felt the touch of their influence. It is a tiny fishing village in a cleft of the mountain on the Campanian coast. Here lived apart from their fellows 50 or so people, happy, busy in a world of their own. Two years ago a great flood swept down the cleft usually dry and washed away their houses and what they felt more deeply, their church. Poor as they must be like all Italians they had their savings and they at once began rebuilding - but not separate houses. They are building an apartment house for a dozen families, "That is the way they live in America". You look down on it from the high bridge which crosses the gorge - white, gay, comfortable. It is not finished but before is a completed terrace with green sward, gay flowers, and while they build their comunity house, they rebuild with their own hands after the days

Digital Image, 2011, The Ida M. Tarbell Collection, 1890-1944, Allegheny College Pelletier Library.

work, after prayers are said on Sunday, their Church - and sing as they do it.

It seems sometimes to an American meeting the valiant struggle of these people to bring back their land to solvency that we have been cruel to them - unwittingly - all in the way of wealth getting - that impersonal tyrant. We have shut our doors to all but a few emigrants - put high tariffs on their lemons and oranges run their sulphur industry almost out of business - ev n gone to making our own maccaroni! But if they sigh, they do not hate us. It is the only country in Europe which is not cursing us for harsh debt settlements. "The Americans were generous" they say at leadt to Americans. "They gave us all they advanced for carrying on war and asked only what they lent us for reconstruction!" That is partly Mussolini's practical sense. "As long as we are fussing about better terms and uncertain about what our debts really are we cannot get down to our economic war. L t us know the worst - accept it and get to our fighting." That was his policy from the first on Italy's foreign debt settlemtnt.

But we have done various things which please them, convince them we are kind. After the war the United States offered to send to their families in Italy the bodies of all Italian soldiers killed in the army in battle - some two hundred requests came and the dead were sent in bronze caskets, with a military escort and every mark of honor, to the door of the home from which the soldier had come. Many of these were far away in the mountains but whatever the distance and difficulty there was no neglect of ceremony, and when the covering was taken from the casket and casket was revealed, something

Digital Image, 2011, The Ida M. Tarbell Collection, 1890-1944, Allegheny College Pelletier Library.

so much handsomer than had ever been seen. America was recognizing one of their sacred traditions - do your best for the dead. That ceremony, those caskets proved us their friend, sympathetic, understanding.

Then came the pensions. Some $2,000,000 are coming each year to Italy, pensions to families for those killed or incapacitated in our army. It is an annual surprise - a healer for the wounds we may have made in the process of looking out for ourselves without much regard for the other fellow.

Our last friendly act - a just one - has been stretching the emigration laws to allow those Italians to enter who, before we went into the Great war, left the United States temporarily to serve in their own army, ~~xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx~~ The war over we refused to allow them to re-enter ~~xxxxxx~~ They often had left families, positions - established businesses with us. There were no openings for them in their own overcrowded country. It was a wicked ruling, but finally this summer Congress has made it possible for them to return, and thousands are now all over Italy preparing "to go home". It is to be feared also that there is a considerable business doing in forged documents which it is hoped will pass muster with the authorities, by those who never saw America but would like to!

But to return to the housing problem - It is in the city of Naples that it is most acute - even appalling. But Naples itself from every point of view is appalling. It begins with the people themselves - gay friendly, charming - they are genial and changeful. And how can they be otherwise - neither man nor nature has ever kept faith with the Neapolitans.

Digital Image, 2011, The Ida M. Tarbell Collection, 1890-1944, Allegheny College Pelletier Library.

They have 3000 years of shifting governments behind them - bloodshed, tyranny, unkept promises. If they look deep enough they find the foundation stones of the houses in which they live were laid by Greeks who were not by any means the first in the field. They will find where Romans laid stones on top of those early ones and proof that after them a succession of different people built and built. There is no stability in their history or their environment. When they sail out on their lovely bay, they can look down and see ruined cities below them in the water. When they look on their hills they can see where great slices have been cut off by tidal waves of monster height and force, and carried away with them temples and dwellings. And always before their eyes is Vesuvius - lovely terrible, No man can tell when she may belch forth destroying their neighbours if not themselves. How can you expect stability and faith in a people of such an inheritance in such surroundings?

It has made cynics of them, made them indifferent to crime. "The Neapolitans" so one of their clever friends declares "were born before the seven deadly sins were invented." But when you have 80,000 and more people in a city of 800,000 living in cellars can you expect virtue? My own impression is that the degree of decency and cleanliness and order in the narrow and tortuous allies on which these basement and cellar homes open is really greater than an observer unfamiliar with such living condition would believe possible. Rarely have these apartments more than two rooms, the back one being usually entirely dark. No light, no air, except from the front room which has only a big opening door. In these two rooms and the street fronting them the family live and

Digital Image, 2011, The Ida M. Tarbell Collection, 1890-1944, Allegheny College Pelletier Library.

carry on its trade. You see and hear it all - the mother crying out in child birth - the man anxiously conseling her - the shoe maker at his last - the woman at her sewing machine - the sick child, the drunken man. Nowhere else in the world that I have been is the human panorama spread so openly before you. There are no secrets in these allies - no corner for secrets to hide and The street hangs together - absorbed in its own intense human tragedy and comedy.

Life will be dull for many of them when these streets are all finally destroyed and they find themselves in the air and in seclusion. And that day is coming if Mussolini has his way. Two years ago in a truly remarkable address on Italy's problems made in Milan he included the housing of Naples. It was - it should be - he said "a profound national humiliation". Mussolini is tender toward youth, the child. It is the idea of children growing up in these dark holes that stirs him particularly, and it ought to. I talked in Naples with a public school teacher who had been trying to apply the Montessori methods to the little ones of the cellars She found herself faced with perplexing problems growing out of the peculiar environment in which they had been reared. All of them had to become accustomed to brightly lighted rooms. They covered their eyes, hid behind doors at the start, the sun hurt their eyes. She must arrange to bring them gradually into the light.

None of them had ever had a bath. After much persuasion and the unravelling of reels of red tape she secured a bath tub,

Digital Image, 2011, The Ida M. Tarbell Collection, 1890-1944, Allegheny College Pelletier Library.

only to find her schoolroom empty. When she went after the children she was met by outraged mothers who declared the little ones were not old enough to be bathed - a bath would wash off the holy water the only thing that stood between them in their feebleness and the dangers of their world!

The cellars of Naples must go Mussolini has said, and he has ordered that as fast as new houses are built and people move into them the old cellars be destroyed or closed. It is going to be a long time before there will be enough cheap houses ready for these wretchedly poor people. The well-to-do and the comfortable poor are getting new homes in and around Naples. The building goes on at a pace like that in and around New York City - in the years since the war - but little of it is for the very poor. Moreover much of it looks dangerously shoddy - as if the first tremor of the earth would send it crumbling. One serious accident, which had a close connection with Mussolini's fortunes has already come from the hasty construction and slack inspection. In June, a popular local fascist leader, who because Mussolini had divided his responsibility with another local politicial had formed a Neapolitan fascist party of his own, was given a "demonstration". He came out on the balcony of the fourth story of one of the new houses to speak to the crowd filling the street below, a group of friends with him. As they leaned on the balustrade it gave way throwing them headlong onto the pavement and instantly killing the hero of the hour.

Digital Image, 2011, The Ida M. Tarbell Collection, 1890-1944, Allegheny College Pelletier Library.

It was found that the reinforcement of the concrete railing had never been attached to that of the balcony. There were those who saw in the tragic removal of a Fascist leader who disputed order with Mussolini a proof that fate was with him - another evidence that he is a man of destiny but Mussolini's real power in the world today lies in his success in getting useful things properly and promptly done in Italy. The balcony was a proof that there was something weak in Naples - enough such incidents and the "man of destiny" becomes no more o nipotent than the man in the streets.

In spite of all the difficulties and weakness however the present condition of Naples is a tremendous tribute to the efficiency and the energy of the fascist regime. The fact that there is so much deep-rooted and subtile to contend against there makes the progress the more remarkable.

Take the beggars, a historic institution of the city. "50,000 men and women arise in Naples every morning, hungry, penniless and workless and at night go to bed on full stomachs." That is the way they used to describe the situation. Four years ago the order was given to put an end to it and almost miraculously it seemed to old observers the fraternity disappeared, as a fraternity. What became of them? I asked a Naples social worker.

"To begin with" she told me, "every one fit for labor was given a job on some form of public work. Those not fit to work are living in palaces." And when I asked who furnished the palaces she replied "Rich aristocrats, many of whom have more palaces than income and were willing to do their part towards

Digital Image, 2011, The Ida M. Tarbell Collection, 1890-1944, Allegheny College Pelletier Library.

cleaning up the scandal by donating a house and a garden often, too. It is sometimes very beautiful. Here the Government feeds and clothes them. So the beggars of Naples were disposed of as a fraternity. But there are still more than enough relics at large the favored few who cling to their profession and practice it more or less on the sly.

The important change is in the children of the poor where begging was an almost universal habit - not only in Naples but all over the country. It has practically disappeared from Rome and has been reduced to a surprising minimum all things considered in Naples.

There are other substantial gains from the four years campaign - gains pathetically impressive to the thousands who use the port of Naples for shipping goods in and out. Four years ago it was probably the worst managed important port in the world. Every department of service had its own tight monopoly - headed by a boss who was arbitrary and dishonest. Towing charges were excessive and service uncertain - Customs House porters worked when and as they pleased - frequently striking when the docks were piled up with goods and more in the offing. Their rates, too, were considered exorbitant. If a shipper went outside for help he was obliged to pay double - to the privileged who wouldn't work and to those he had brought in who would. Those who now use the port for shipping tell me that disorder and graft have been swept out and that service is prompt, courteous and reasonable. It certainly is so for passengers who use the steamers in and out of the Bay of Naples - even the porters handling luggage on the

Digital Image, 2011, The Ida M. Tarbell Collection, 1890-1944, Allegheny College Pelletier Library.

moving water, once a packof howling wolves, are now forced into a military line and walked up the gang plank to the decks where they speak, to be sure and snatch, yet compared to former conditions it is a miraculous transformation.

On the whole the judgment of a recent English observer familiar with the city and the state which it heads is undoubtedly true:- "They" the fascists "are making an honest, strong thoughtful and wholehearted effort to raise the old Kingdom of Naples." "They - fascisti" the intelligent observer says, but Mussolini says the people. Every change, every improvement, every order is his - a personal act. "We do not beg" Mussolini says, we merit. A woman at the door of her cellar said.

"We do not give to beggars. Mussolini says we ought not to". I heard more than one person in Sicily and Naples explain when a hand was stretched out, and they put nothing in it.

"Mussolini says we must work and save - for Italy". Mussolini says we must keep the streets clean." He is the teacher, the accepted leaderm the head of the Italian family!

"Do you know who I am" he said once in the early days of his power but before the march on Rome, when thousands were already seeking him for help and protection. I am the founder and inventor of the order of the Great Umbrella". He is still that, only the umbrella has stretched, so that he is the universal protector.

There are dangers in such a protectorate. Suppose that some one does not get under the umbrella and suffers from storm outside. It is Mussolini's fault.

Digital Image, 2011, The Ida M. Tarbell Collection, 1890-1944, Allegheny College Pelletier Library.

But do not imagine this power has come without struggle. We have been talking of things done - of an immense energy infused into helpful undertakings. Mussolini's critics frequently call attention to the fact that most of these changes which bring him credit were long ago advocated and generally begun by liberals or socialists or nationalists. It never disturbs him. "Some say" he remarked a year ago in a speech in Milan "that I have accomplished only that which had been studied by my predecessors. That may be. They were studied for fifty years but the necessary five minutes of civil courage to make a decision in order that they should be put into effect was never found."

But even if Mussolini had the "five minutes of civil courage" how did he manage to exercise it in a state organized as Italy is - that is a state with a king, a constitution, a parliament, a Senate, none of which institutions he has destroyed even if he has shut them down more or less. How is a man to be a despot in a Constitutional Monarchy. It has not been an easy matter. The four years since the March on Rome have been filled with uncertainties, with terrible tragedies, with constant menaces to his life, with heart breaking experiences for his opponents, many of them men of the finest character and ability. Most difficult and perilous of all has been that the chief obstacle to Mussolini's working his will with a degree of peace has come from his own following, that tremendous, determined, almost fanatical host of Black Shirts - that at his bidding rose in the Fall of 1922, all over Italy, and marched on Rome. When Mussolini, summoned by the

Digital Image, 2011, The Ida M. Tarbell Collection, 1890-1944, Allegheny College Pelletier Library.

King to form a Government reached Rome on the morning of October 29th 1922 there were 115,000 of them camped on the edge of the town, and more within easy call. Rome expected a slaughter. It would have been the conventional revolutionary act for the Fascists to have at least destroyed the quarters of those who in the years since the close of the war had been their chief enemies - the communists and the socialists. That they did not was due solely to the fact that these enemies were stunned or cowed into discretion and that Mussolini himself the night before had given the order:-

"We have won a great victory. We must not spoil it. I insist upon the strictest discipline, the most complete order and absolute sobriety."

And then he sent them home. Victorious but with no idea that there was nothing left for them to do. Almost to a man the Fascists after his triumph felt that it was their business to see that the victory was made secure in their particular towns communes and their idea of making it secure was watchfulness - violence if necessary. Nothing else could have been expected from a host which had been formed as they had been, had had their experience. They were a body of revolutionary White Caps, vigilants, Their reason for being was like that of the original Mafia.

That which bred the fascists were the conditions in Italy after the war. The armies which had won the victory - which had played so essential a part in the final end of the conflict -

Digital Image, 2011, The Ida M. Tarbell Collection, 1890-1944, Allegheny College Pelletier Library.

that of Veneto = Vittorio Veneto : = came back exultant, expecting a welcome and a triumph. Instead they met in public and in the Government by neglect and sometimes hostility. A large socialist element in Italy had been opposed to the country going into the war. Their opposition had been kept alive and indeed stirred in some quarters to a revolutionary pitch by Russian Bolshevists, who rightly thought Italy the most hopeful field for their propoganda . The soldiers came back to neglect There are numberless stories told of attacks upon them and their families. They were spit upon , refused work, the funeral procession of one of their most honoured heroes was even fired upon in the streets of Rome.

The radical sodalists as they grew stronger stirred up increasing trouble in the factories = strikes were incessant . The Government was shifty, undecided, fearful and parties big and little multiplied, usually they were built about a man and the platform was whatever the man promised ; one of the small ones is said to have been rested on a man who promised them five cent chicken!

In this turmoil and clamor the voice of one Benito Mussolini editing a little Paper the People of Italy in Milan, began to make itself heard.bIt was a passionate, strident, often vituperative , not infrequently incoherent voice but its theme was Italy = the country; horror that those that defended it should be forgotten = their sacrifices dispised; anger that the Government did not force order ; alarm lest the disorder should utterly destroy all that Italy had gained in the war, and should prevent her facing bravely

Digital Image, 2011, The Ida M. Tarbell Collection, 1890-1944, Allegheny College Pelletier Library

that of Veneto = Vittorio Veneto : = came back exultant, expecting a welcome and a triumph. Instead they met in public and in the Government by neglect and sometimes hostility. A large socialist element in Italy had been opposed to the country going into the war. Their opposition had been kept alive and indeed stirred in some quarters to a revolutionary pitch by Russian Bolshevists, who rightly thought Italy the most hopeful field for their propoganda . The soldiers came back to neglect There are numberless stories told of attacks upon them and their families. They were spit upon , refused work, the funeral procession of one of their most honoured heroes was even fired upon in the streets of Rome.

The radical socialists as they grew stronger stirred up increasing trouble in the factories = strikes were incessant . The Government was shifty, undecided, fearful and parties big and little multiplied, usually they were built about a man and the platform was whatever the man promised ; one of the small ones is said to have been rested on a man who promised them five cent chicken!

In this turmoil and clamor the voice of one Benito Mussolini editing a little Paper the People of Italy in Milan, began to make itself heard. It was a passionate, strident, often vitupsrative , not infrequently incoherent voice but its theme was Italy = the country; horror that those that defended it should be forgotten = their sacrifices dispised; anger that the Government did not force order ; alarm lest the disorder should utterly destroy all that Italy had gained in the war, and should prevent her facing bravely

Digital Image, 2011. The Ida M. Tarbell Collection, 1890-1944, Allegheny College Pelletier Library.

and promptly the economic situation the seriousness of which he realized. Finally for lack of any better way to get a following Mussolini founded a political party, as so many others were doing. This was in Milan in March of 1919, seven years ago. His main idea at that moment was to fight Bolschevism, engaged in an effort to destroy the state as it then existed, and substitute a soviet state in its place. To his newspaper which at the start was his only medium for presenting his party he gave a new sub-title - The Journal of the Fighters and the Producers. Its a good sub-title for his work today. The party he called Fascists, from the old Roman emblem of a bundle of sticks bound together - an executioner's axe strapped to the bundle.

Milan laughed, the communists jered, but almost before Mussolini himself realized it groups of Fascists began to appear particularly Northern and Central Italy. Into these groups flocked the returned soldiers and their friends, thousands of farmers badgered by the socialists but unwilling to deny the Church and the King and skeptical too about the economics the socialists taught. Youth everywhere joined the new party. Patriotism is a national instinct in normal youth and patriotism was outraged daily under their eyes. They fought to preserve Italy - the king - the Constitution, the Church.

Italy must stop agitation and go to work was the first of Mussolini's teaching made it their business the Fascist/ to see that the teaching caused was to put an end to communist activities, seizing factories, destroying property, beating and killing capitalists and their supporters, and see that people worked. The Fascists started out

Digital Image, 2011, The Ida M. Tarbell Collection, 1890-1944, Allegheny College Pelletier Library.

committee
then as a kind of vigilance./ Each local group was more or less a law to itself, decided what ought to be destroyed, who ought to be beaten, who killed - in the same way that the communists who had preceded them had been doing. It was not long before scores of Italian towns had reverted practically to Mediaeval conditions so far as public order and safety were concerned. "In our town" so I have been told by more than one Italian, "we lived as in the old days when Guelphs and Chibbelines (followers of the Pope and of the Emperors) fought daily in the streets and life was unsafe for every man. We never went out after dark and rarely at that period /on Sunday for from midnight of Saturday to midnight of Sunday we devoted to battle by the Communists and the Fascisti.

An American woman who with her husband were visiting an in the summer of 1921
Italian Hill town/ and went out in the evening of her arrival to sit on the balcony of her hotel room. Below she saw every window ~~was~~ shuttered, ~~xxxxxxxxx~~ no one in the street. Then there began to appear here and there out of dark corners armed men - skulking carefully in the shadow - then came a shot - a man fell - Her husband hurried to her, dragged her in, sealed the windows. "Life is unsafe after dark in this town" he told her. Destruction of property, particularly of radical newspaper offices and of the head quarters of radical groups were common and often when daylight came, dead men lay in the streets, - now Fascist, now communist, and there was no local authority that dared deal vigorously with the warring bands.

Digital Image, 2011, The Ida M. Tarbell Collection, 1890-1944, Allegheny College Pelletier Library.

As the fascists increased they began to organise in military fashion, adopted their famous black shirt, their cry of Eja Alala - their marching song of Giovanezza - but it was only a little while before the March on Rome that the public realized that the fascist party were really a fascist army. In 3½ years it had become that - an army without barracks or pay or written manual, but an army ready to act at a word of the man whose hot, fierce passion of nationalism and whose economic common sense - queer mixture - had brought it into being.

It was their devotion to him that made it possible to scatter them over Italy in something like 48 hours after the March on Rome. They scattered - to resume their grim business of watchfulness. Mussolini knew well enough the danger of excesses in the many towns and communes where the communists and socialists were strong. At that moment the militant communists were on top having just expelled all moderates from the party, and their leader having announced "I do not believe socialism to be anything else than communism, bolschevism. The foot of our political thought is the dictatorship of the proletariat." It was not to be expected that they would give up the fight even if the Fascists had won the favor of the King and Mussolini been invited to form a government. Nor that they would give up the Russian revolutionary practices. But Mussolini wanted quiet, - for work. He sent at once precise orders to the prefect of all the provinces to enforce orders, to arrest and punish all fascists that were leaders in disorders.

Digital Image, 2011, The Ida M. Tarbell Collection, 1890-1944, Allegheny College Pelletier Library.

At certain points where there was particular danger he sent personal messengers. It was not enough; the returned squadrons now set about to see to it that everybody joined their party. Their methods were frequently brutal - though frequently too the provocation was great. There is no balancing the right and wrong of their tangled history after the March on Rome. It was still war. But it became more and more war on crime - shiftlessness - carelessness. They rounded up beggars & sifted out the able bodied, set them to work - found homes for the hopeless. They rounded up criminals - in one town some 300 - were run into a midnight meeting and told to choose between honest work which the fascists would find for them - and their own removal from an earth they disgraced! They promptly took the work, though how ever they kept it I don't know. They became arbiters of the habits of the public. If you threw paper in the street they asked you politely to pick it up - and it wasn't wise to refuse. If you put your feet on the seat opposite you in a railway coach, a street taxi, somebody was sure to protest - and if you resented the interference you were fined! There is more than one American man and woman who has had this experience in travelling in Italy.

~~The victory was to be insured, for the opposition must be crushed & the ends which were order, discipline, production must be enforced.~~

But while Mussolini's army was ensuring the victory in the provinces in its own way, he in Rome was doing the same thing. He had the Ministry - which the King had asked him to form, but he also had to work with a Parliament which he despised, composed as it was of representatives of at least a dozen parties

Digital Image, 2011, The Ida M. Tarbell Collection, 1890-1944, Allegheny College Pelletier Library.

Digital Image, 2011, The Ida M. Tarbell Collection, 1890-1944, Allegheny College Pelletier Library.

which for year had been proving they could not hang together to get these things done which they practically all agreed were necessary if Italy was to be restored. They did nothing but "tell their beads" said Mussolini one day after he had listened with ill-concealed irritation to the communists, the Catholics, the Republicans Nationalists repeating their old, old arguments. They "told their beads" while the South suffered for water and roads - the taxes for reformation, the people for work and while the lira grew weaker and weaker:

He began at once by informing Parliament that he should not permit it to make the Fascist victory sterile. He should defend the Black Shirt revolution - and do it in as orderly and peaceful a fashion as it would allow. He recalled to them his refusal to retaliate at the moment of victory. "With 300,000 armed youths at my orders, I might have punished all who have defamed and tried to break Fasciamo. I might have made of this dead grey hall a bivouac of armed bands. I might have done so but at all events in the first place I refused to do so." He had formed a Coalition Government. He had a program and he outlined it; It brought applause from all but a few. He wanted power to carry it out at once without political interference, and he asked and received by a vote of 275 to 90 - full power, to run the country for a year, to make laws by decrees, to order done whenever he thought it necessary to remove officials, to reform the taxes and to vote moneys! He was now a "legal" dictator as well as a "legal" premier, though in both cases it should b remembered there had been in the background an army of 300,000 men ready to strike if what he asked was not granted - and neither king nor parliament

Digital Image, 2011, The Ida M. Tarbell Collection, 1890-1944, Allegheny College Pelletier Library.

had anything comparable with which to oppose it.

He was a dictator and one of his first acts as dictator was an attempt to put his fascist army into a form which he could better control, prevent the local excesses and disorders of which it was guilty in spite of his orders and exortations - put it under control but keep it handy! Mussolini had no illusions about his enemies. They would destroy him and his party if he gave them an opening. "We shall rule by peace if you allow it" he told Parliament, "by force if you do not". And so he made his army a legal part of the Nation's defense force. It is called in the decree establishing it and signed by the King, "the Volunteer Militia for National Safety" but no volunteers who are not fascists are accepted.

The decree states the object is to "safeguard the inevitable and inexorable development of the October Revolution" and it exhorts the volunteers to "discipline, direst renunciation and the most ascetic abnegation" but the volunteers at the start at least included a considerable number of hot-heads "rough necks" we should call them - and embittered patriots set on still further punishing their enemies. 2000 fascist youths had lost their lives in the guerilla warfare which for three and a half years had preceded the march on Rome, and there were not a few of the new Militia that thought the score could only be settled by more blood shed - at all events no matter what Mussolini said they were not going to allow communists and Republican Socialists to go on with an agitation which had for its object the destruction of the state. They were not going to allow public abd private criticism of their

Digital Image, 2011, The Ida M. Tarbell Collection, 1890-1944, Allegheny College Pelletier Library

leader. In this militant attitude they were upheld then, and they continued to be upheld for many months by rabid loval bosses. "Mussolini may rule at Rome, but rule at Cremona" said one of these violent gentlemen.

This legalizing of the Fascist forces in the interest of his revolution disturbed the liberals of the country and particularly did it shock people in Anglo-Saxon Democratic countries. Many of us remember the dismay with which we heard of it. We translated it by our own situation - "Would we allow the Republicans or the Democrats to raise an army out of their ranks and incorporate it with the National Defense for the express purpose of fighting their battles? Hardly. But in making this comparison we were judging of that which happens in normal times. Times were not and for a long time had not been normal in Italy. Mussolini had headed a Revolution, was securing it just as we did in and after 1776. Mussolini legalized the volunteers who rose from the country side and out of the villages to make the revolution.

Moreover we are thinking of Fascism as a party. It is difficult to think of it as anything lse - Many contend it i nothing else - cannot be - but Mussilini had something more in mind so he claimed. He wanted to make of Fascism a new attitude towards the state - something everybody would acceptm-he wanted to create a new way of carrying on the State - more direct - practical, energetic - to establish a habit of getting things done. He talked himself almost blue in the face in those early days trying to

Digital Image, 2011, The Ida M. Tarbell Collection, 1890-1944, Allegheny College Pelletier Library.

put into simple and acceptable words a creed which would persuade Italians that he had something in mind which they could all accept - ought to accept regardless of party. Perhaps the simplest and best statement of what he was struggling ~~to say~~ and which he no better because the ideas where still or less uncertain in his own mind - Mussolini has developed his philosophy as h had gone along - is in the following creed which if not written was certainly inspired by him:-

I. Fascism is the victorious nation which will not allow itself to be reduced to the condition of a vanquished nation.

II. Fashism is all thinking Italy, substituting the old myth of class warfare for the cooperation of all classes in the effort to restore the country's prosperity.

III. Fascism is thinking Italy emancipated forever from the foreign ideaswhich have controlled us since the second half of the 19th Century - ending in the murderous notions of Moscow.

IV. Fascism is the genius of a race reborn, the Latin tradition always at work in our long history the return to the Roman idea of the State and to the faith of Christ; It is the of a great past to a luminous future.

V. Fascism is the cult of spiritual values as opposed to the cult of the belly - the only god - socialists- anarchists - and Communists recognise.

VI. Fascism is the liberty of the Italian people, replacing the frightful license of individuals, groups, parties; it is the triumph of work, order, discipline.

VII, Fascism is sacrifice humbly accepted ofpersonal welfare for the sake of national welfare.

Digital Image, 2011, The Ida M. Tarbell Collection, 1890-1944, Allegheny College Pelletier Library.

VIII. Fascism is the defense of Italy against enemies within and without.

As a creed that is certain to be a little bewildering not entirely convincing to an American disturbed by Mussolini's "private army" - disturbed by the threat of a new law muzzling the press which almost at once began to be talked by the Fascists; disturbed by the outbreak which were reported pretty regularly from various corners of Italy but it stirred the Italians and coupled with the tremendous changes which every day produced in the conditions of daily li e it brought thousands into the fascist ranks. Fear, policy, the desire to be on the winning side no doubt had something to do with the very landslide towards Mussolini in his first year of dictatorship but the fact that as my little Roman hairdressed told me one day "We could live in peace" did more among simple people.

Whatever his enemies in Italy might say, whatever we might think in America, Benito Mussolini ended his first year of plenary power far stronger in Italy than he began. Just before the celebration of the first anniversay of the March on Rome he made a trip in the North. It was a popular triumphal march - everybody agreed - and he celebrated his triumph by merciful acts as becomes a potentate! - He asked the King to sign decrees liberating a large number of political prisoners among them several communists and socialists.

When Parliament convened in November 1922 although it was ready and expected to extend his year of dictatorship he surprised the body by dissolving it. It did not represent the

Digital Image, 2011, The Ida M. Tarbell Collection, 1890-1944, Allegheny College Pelletier Library.

opinion of the country, he said, which was true. Italy was overwhelmingly Fascist and there were only 35 fascist deputies in Parliament. Suppose we had a Republican president and Cabinet and 35 Republicans in Congress! What mischief the Opposition would work. How utterly they would paralyze the administration. If Mussolini had not had his permit to exercise a dictatorship that is certainly what would have happened to him after the March on Rome.

He dissolved the chamber. The elections were to come in April and in the meanti,e new election laws long promised in Italy were put through. They were not however exactly the kind of laws the reformers before him had dreamed. The important arrangement in these laws for us is that the country as a whole became a single c mstituency and everybody voted - not for individuals but for a party. The party mustering the biggest vote had two thirds of the deputies. That insured what Mussolini was after that the ruling party out of which the executive would be chosen would always have a Parliament to b ck it. The ballot was a device the most ignorant could read - for it bore simply the symbol of the party; a cross with a sword for the Catholics, a hammer scythe and book for the socialists, a hammer and scythe without a book! - for the communists. When the election came in April of 1924 Mussolini's majority was overwhelming. 4,264,454 against combined vote for the eleven other parties in the field of about two and a half million. This gave him in the new Parliament 356 out of 536 seats.

There is no doubt that Mussolini hoped that his opponents

Digital Image, 2011, The Ida M. Tarbell Collection, 1890-1944, Allegheny College Pelletier Library.

would now join in a strong and sti ulating opposition accepting his definition of Fascism as a kind of religious devotion to the State and furnishing a criticism which would help not paralyse. There are evidences that such an opposition was possible for many of the wis st lib rals in the countrydeclared their intention of supporting not hindering the government. And then, at the highest moment he had yet reached his own followers dealt him a blow which sent him staggering in his tracks.

Among the deputies was an able and much respected socialist Matteotti who could not see his way to joining the kind of opposition which Mussolini sought. He began his work in the new session by a bitter attack on fascism and its leader and a re-statement of other arguments for the dictatorship of the proletariat - a kind of speech which always irritated Mussolini into nasty retorts "telling his beads again" he sneered.

Two days after this episode Matteotti's party startled the country by walking out of the Chamber saying that their leader had disappeared, kidnapped by Fascists they believed, and they would not come back until he was produced. As a matter of fact, Matteotti had disappeared.

There was no lack of energy on the part of the Fascist authorities, in solving the mystery. Within a week they had established that a group of men had picked up the lost deputy near his home and carried him away in a car which had been furnished by the Editor of a Fascist paper, that this Editor, when he found they were on his track, had attempted to escape into France but had been arrested. They also had identified various other persons connected with the kidnapping. They soon established too that

Digital Image, 2011, The Ida M. Tarbell Collection, 1890-1944, Allegheny College Pelletier Library.

Matteotti h d been killed.

Why, why should men prominent in Fascist activities have been concerned in the murder of such a man - critic and opponent though he was? It was not long before the reason was clear. Matteotti had in his possession documents which said to be very damagint to the editor and more important a member of the Government, the Under Secretary of the Interior Department, one Finzi, He intending to follow the speech which had so irritated Mussolini with one revealing the corruption.

Finzi was a type not uncommon in revolutions - a professional bicycle rider before the war he had made a record for dash and bravery in the army and later joined Mussolini's group in Milan. He became an active and intrepid factor in the fascist movement and was rewarded when the Government was formed by the office he held at the time of Matteotti's death. He had become a well known figure in Rome, dashing about in a rakish yellow car and spending money freely. It was rumoured that large sums had been paid him by Monte Carlo to suppress a law he was threatening to put through - a law licensing gambling in other parts of Italy, then destroying the Monte Carlo monopoly. He was said, too, to have made money out of Oil Concessions, one in particular then being negotiated with a well known American, Harry Sinclair. However this was uninformed gossip. Finzi never had anything to do with the Sinclair concession though the failure of that contract an admirable and honest arrangement, protecting both sides properly -I am told by those who know, was no doubt largely due to the charges of corruption now

Digital Image, 2011, The Ida M. Tarbell Collection, 1890-1944, Allegheny College Pelletier Library.

brought against the Fascists combined with the revelation about this time of Sinclairs connection with our oil scandal.

The Matteotti murder caused an awful revulsion of feeling all over Italy. The Fascists had been guilty before and during the recent elections of not a little violence, though by no means were they guilty of them all and they had been taken as more or less inevitable. But this was so dasterdly a crime that there was revolt even in the party. More than one friend of Mussolini who was with him at that moment hasetold me that he never saw him so near a colapse as when he learned the truth about the disappearance of Matteotti. He was literally stricken by it.

"Only an enemy who had sought through long nights for the most diabolical blow he could deal me would have committed this crime which horrifies me, ~~fills me with indignation~~. he said in the Chamber. "I could have said earlier in the week that I had arrived almost at the realization of my hopes and now comes this terrible affair to halt the process of moral reconstruction."

"It is an abominable crime" he told the Senate, "one of which we may say as Tallyrand did of the murder of the Duke d'Enghein "Its worse than a crime - its a blunder."

He had never been unconscious of the terrible possibilities of destruction in his fascist army but he never had reflected upon them in public so sadly or profoundly as now:-

"This government" he said one day, "came from a revolution made by a party which was hardly three years old. It was an improvised formed in turmoil. We had no time to establish the necessary delicate controls. What has happened is what we may call the

Digital Image, 2011, The Ida M. Tarbell Collection, 1890-1944, Allegheny College Pelletier Library.

tragedy of fearlessness. Insurrections bring together good and bad. Out problem has been to bring back into its bed the vast river which broke its banks in those days."

Encouraged by the revulsion against the fascisti within and without Italy, Socialists, Republicans, Communists - sprang into new life. There was talk of a new march on Rome, of overthrowing the King. Fascisti were again waylaid and murdered. The newspapers which had been more or less repressed broke out into virulent and frequently nonsensical attacks. The charges of corruption were multiplied. For the first time too, an effort was made to prove that Mussolini had known and encouraged - even suggested crimes of violence in th past. The campaign was carried on almost as violently in other countries as in Italy - it soon affected the lira - at least bankers and economists familiar with the actual financial situation give that explanation.

Hard hit as Mussolini was, his courage and his energy seem not to have failed him. To the opposition which at moments was a howling mob demanding his resignation he said one day:

"I am the servant, not the master of the nation. If the nation tires of me one day I shall go with a quiet conscience and with the feeling that a great many questions have been solved I am determinednot to give the hundred gentlemen of the opposition the satisfaction of having my head and there is no personal ambition or vanity in this declaration. The opposition are waitigg for grapes which will not ripen this summer."

At every point he tightened the rule he had begun to relax - forcing through to the dismay of his opponents - a press law which gagged it completely. It forbad the circulation of

Digital Image, 2011, The Ida M. Tarbell Collection, 1890-1944, Allegheny College Pelletier Library.

false news, of news that would alarm the public, provoke disturbance, stir up class hatred, incite to disobedience of the law. It forbad villifying the King and His Family, the Pope, religion, the Head of the Government. Of course under the law any criticism which was distasteful could be included. It was no dead law. It was enforced drastically from the start. Editions were confiscated; papers suspended for two days to two weeks - Editors fined, imprisoned. If offence was repeated the journal was suspended entirely. The law and its enforcement has never been relaxed. Today there is in Italy no free press as we understand it.

Mussolini defends the suppression. "They did nothing but stir up trouble kept people from work - kept them chattering - telling their beads." Talk to him of "liberty" "rights" a d he explodes in contempthous retorts.

"Rights" he cried one day when it was repeated to him that the Sicilians were being told that he had taken theirs. "The first rights of Sicily are to water, roads, order, safety. and I propose she shall have them." "If you mean by freedom" he said again "the right to ruin 40,000,000 Italians I energetically deny such freedom. If by "liberty" be meant stopping every day the tranquil ordered rythm of the work of the nation, if by liberty be meant the right to spit upon the symbols of religion and of the State, [illegible] I as Head of the State and chief of the Fastists declare that this liberty shall never come into existence."

"What you want is liberty to ruin me, ruin fascism. You shall not have it."

While he fought the Opposition he fought the violent

Digital Image, 2011. The Ida M. Tarbell Collection, 1890-1944, Allegheny College Pelletier Library.

element in his own party. The turmoil after Matteotti's death against Mussolini - the renewal of political hope among the radicals had brought the Fascists into open guerilla war again and Mussolini disciplined, punished, removed turbulent leaders, clapped the unruly into jail, and incessantly exhorted ... "What do I ask of you" he said in an address at Rimini in this period. "Not applause- something more profound, something living. Give me discipline devotion to work". He would allow no capital to be made out of the counter attack of his enemies. A Fascist deputy was murdered one night just outside the Walls of Rome in retaliation for Matteotti's death. He suppressed the Fascist uprising that threatened. "We must not speculate on our dead as our enemies do on theirs.

He resolutely forbade as he had from th start any "speculating" in the attempts made on his own life. He passes them off indifferently. A year ago a poor half crazed Irish lady shot at him. It was a narrow escape, the bullet wounding his nose. He had it plastered up and promptly appeared on the balcony of the Palace Chigi where he works - to prove to the thousands that refused to go away that he was all right - and the nex t morning he left for Tripoli. No newspaper exploitation of the attempt was allowed in Italy. It would disturb work! But the Irish lady's mental condition was quietly established, and it is now reported that she has been sent to her family.

There is no question that the Opposition had a wonderful chance after Matteotti's death but they lost it by a move intended to be dramatic but actually stupid. They withdrew from Parliament. They would not sit by the side of criminals - but outside they could do nothing, not even hang together. They were as soon as

Digital Image, 2011, The Ida M. Tarbell Collection, 1890-1944, Allegheny College Pelletier Library.

a good demonstration of Mussolini's repeated declaration that the sound reason for fascism was the break down of Parliament in the hands of many divided parties, as he could have asked "It is not the corruption of Fascism which Matteotti's death has chiefly demonstrated. It is the deplorable weakness of the Opposition." said an experienced commentator in a great English Daily. But if by the end of the year (1924) it was becoming certain that Mussolini was winning - slowly regaining what he had lost - the price he had paid personally was clear enough to all who saw him. He was white and wan and sleepless, and his intimates knew the devices he was employing to distract his mind from his problem & rest it. One was to write a play. It was an old form of relaxation with him. His friend and biographer Margherita Sarfatti met him one day going to his office and looking more cheerful. He had a pocketful of manuscript - a play of his childhood life in the country! he was writing And he played his violin - it is in

Seek what relief he would however the situation finally broke him physically and in February of 1925 he was obliged to give up - influenza - an ulcer of the stomach the authorities say "poison" said the people sagely. They still tell you that. For 37 days Mussolini was away from Parliament and when he re-appeared everybody rose in clamorous welcome except five communists who shouted "eviva il communismo" and promptly had their heads knocked by indignant fascists.

"Spring had come" he said. "It brings good times again to us all. There will now be a complete recumption of fascist activities. There was - activities which in the months since following

Digital Image, 2011, The Ida M. Tarbell Collection, 1890-1944, Allegheny College Pelletier Library.

a good demonstration of Mussolini's repeated declaration [illegible]
sound reason for fascism was the break down of Parliament in the
hands of many divided parties, as he could have asked "It is not
the corruption of fascism which Matteotti's death has only fly
demonstrated. It is the deplorable weakness of the Opposition."
said an experienced commentator in a great English Daily . But
if by the end of the year (1924) it was becoming certain that
Mussolini was winning - slowly regaining what he had lost - the
price he had paid personally was clear enough to all who saw him.
He was white and wan and sleepless, and his intimates knew the
he was employing to distract his mind from his problem
rest it . One was to write a play. It was an old form of relaxation
with him. His friend and biographer Margherita Sarfatti met him
one day going to his office and looking more cheerful. He had a
pocketful of manuscript - a play of blood and [illegible]
country! And he played me [illegible]
he was writing
Seek what relief he would however the situation finally
broke him physically and in February of 1925 he was obliged to
give up - influenza - an ulcer of the stomach the authorities say-
"poison" said the people sagely. They still tell you that. For
27 days Mussolini was away from Parliament and when he re-appeared
everybody rose in clamorous welcome except five communists who
shouted "eviva il communismo" and promptly had their heads knocked
by indignant fascists.

"Spring had come" he said. "It brings good times again
to us all. There will now be a complete resumption of fascist
activities. There was - activities which in the months since

have put an end to all resistance from the Opposition, practically scattering it - indeed the Fascists today will hardly allow any opposing group a meeting place - have completely shut the mouth of disagreeing newspapers and sent some of Italy's ablest Editors to join liberals and radicals politicians who have found it unsafe or intolerable to remain in the country. Activities which at the same time have made life sage again for 40,000,000 people - furnished them water and bridges and roads - restored the crucifix to their schools, given them work and a new ideal of self controlled livigg.

But these months which at once so shock and so rekoice there has been slowly emerging like a ship out of a mist - a shape. It is the new state Mussolini has dreamed since before the March on Rome. It is not clear yet but it is there on the horizon much of Italy has already gone out to meet it - has climbed on board. There are those who will draw you a plan of it - every rivet in place - not Mussolini. He will tell you he believes it is coming - into port - this ship - but he wants no forcing of engines. No dragging in by tugs. It must come of its own power.

Is Mussolini's state really a new thing in the Nation?O Has he found something which when it is finally finished will work - at least in Italy. Something fitted to meet her particular temperament and problems? Something that may help a jangling, battered nation towards a peaceful productive life?

It is too early to say with positiveness but this thing is certain Benito Mussolini has s t on foot in what he calls the

Digital Image, 2011, The Ida M. Tarbell Collection, 1890-1944, Allegheny College Pelletier Library.

Corpo di Stato the most interesting and promising experiment in consolidating the varied interests of a nation, and bringing them into harmonious action that is going on in the world today. What is Mussolini's corporate state? We Americans should know. It may be of use to us in our effort to live peacefully at home. Let us take a look at it, see how that people who have already gone over to it, men women and children, are getting along there.

Digital Image, 2011. The Ida M. Tarbell Collection, 1890-1944, Allegheny College Pelletier Library.