

Italy, of every Italy, stands an old proud tradition. You will find it in unexpected places, behind the plough, behind the counter, in the slum, in the stucco palace of the *nouveau riche*. It gives to this democratic race a haughty air, and explains why, with all her wiliness, Italy is rarely hypocritical. Through recent months she has borne the accusation, expressed or implied, of gross self-interest, without stooping to declare that the bargaining was not the whole truth, but merely what she deigned to show to the world. She wanted no advice—*Italia farà da se*—and she has only scorn for those who will not trust her to act in great moments as the daughter of an ancient house with responsible memories of noble enterprise.

Underneath the commercialism the Garibaldian tradition is still strong, a tradition nearer to old-fashioned English Liberalism than to any other political faith; a conviction of the sacredness of individual and national freedom, and a respect for the liberties of other peoples. It has made the Triple Alliance a hard yoke. Italians have borne it without murmuring, believing that their nation needed the support of the Central Powers; but in their hearts they have always felt they were in the wrong house and serving strange gods. The commercial spirit modified this, of course; and lately you might hear some prudent Milan man of business say, "Yes, we'll fight, but six months is enough. We'll make sacrifices, but we are not going to ruin our country quixotically." Yet the spirit was there; and in the less sophisticated it was there without alloy.

The newspapers did not tell us all in those trying weeks before the break with Austria. It is no exaggeration to say that in the few days which

followed the resignation of the Salandra Cabinet, when Giolitti like an evil genius hovered about Rome, Italy, all that was best of it—and the best was not in little sects and coteries—underwent a veritable agony. Up in the unemotional north men wept for rage and grief at the possibility of Sonnino's anti-Austrian lead being permanently defeated. And this not merely because they saw their own freedom and interests at stake. They knew themselves joined in soul with other nations in a common struggle and a common test. Poor unlearned peasants, who knew little of politics and cared less, followed the main issues of the war with the perspicacity of the simple for the large things of life; and when the Lusitania was sunk, rough mountaineers of Piedmont cried, "It is not England's enemy alone that has done this, but ours."

Thus in the fulness of time d'Annunzio, who had seemed for long to stand apart from common life by his superman nonsense, has come to express the national spirit. The old Roman pride and the Garibaldian love of liberty, the Venetian cult for the sea, the insight of a people which in its thinking is rarely crude, and has an intellectual disdain for inhumanity, all these have come to grips with the spirit of gain and bargain, and have conquered. D'Annunzio, who has sulked with his country of late years, is reconciled. The subtle currents in the people and in himself have met. At the Genoa commemoration of The Thousand he had his chance; and as much led as leader, he has found himself fulfilling the vow made at the grave of Carducci. And so the Dresden bookseller burns the poet's books.

ANNE MACDONELL.

COMMUNICATIONS

Letters from Missouri The Goose and the Golden Eggs

SIR: We have been greatly stirred these last months by announcements that because of the European war the United States would shortly capture the trade of the world. Our Chamber of Commerce has created a Foreign Trade section, and we have adopted resolutions urging the rehabilitation of our merchant marine. We are now much disturbed to hear that the LaFollette bill is going to put American shipping entirely out of business. In explanation we are told that both the House and the Senate are supposed to have indulged in the national sport of passing the buck, hoping that the bill would receive Mr. Wilson's veto. But it didn't, and everybody seems to be getting very excited about it all.

Somehow it appears to us, with our perspective—perhaps it is our ignorance instead—that a great many of our

most popular writers have failed to read either the bill itself or the ingenious memorandum presented to Congress by Senator LaFollette on behalf of Mr. Furuseth and his fellow representative of the Seaman's Union. Of the two the latter document is the more illuminating. It is not so technical, and almost smells of the sea.

Mr. Furuseth pleads for the adoption of the bill which he is supposed to have written and which Senator LaFollette introduced. He aims to accomplish two things: to improve the standards of living for American sailormen, and to assure the safety of life at sea. He claims that the cost of running a ship depends not upon the flag she flies, but upon the port where she engages her crew. He recognizes that his bill may make it impossible for American ship-owners profitably to operate their vessels in competition with foreigners. He therefore proposes in effect to facilitate desertion from visiting vessels, on the theory that foreign owners, by being forced to ship crews in American ports,

will be obliged to offer the equivalent of American wages. Thus the cost of operating foreign-owned craft will be increased, and, Q. E. D., vessels flying the American flag and subject to our navigation laws will be able to drive them from the ocean. To bring this about it may be necessary to abrogate some twenty treaties or so, but that is a matter of comparative unimportance.

Mr. Furuseth's contentions about upbuilding our merchant marine have already been answered. From all sides we hear that steamers which, despite the handicap of our navigation laws, are still flying the American flag, will, because of the LaFollette bill, shortly be transferred to British registry. But here again Mr. Furuseth hopes to catch them. He knows that foreign vessels and American-owned ships under foreign flags will continue to enter and clear from American ports. Perhaps it didn't occur to him that thanks to the provisions of the Seaman's act those who do come and go will certainly charge higher freight rates for carrying goods from our seaboard, and that all will be inclined, as far as possible, to seek their cargoes elsewhere. This will mean that as far as the cost of transportation is concerned, American industry will be handicapped in competing for the markets of the world. American labor must necessarily be affected. This may not have entered into the calculations of those who supported this measure.

Safety at sea, however, is to be assured because seventy-five per cent of all crews must understand the orders of their officers, and because it is stipulated that a certain percentage of the deck force shall be qualified able seamen. In addition the memorandum urges, and the bill provides for, a stated number of lifeboats, life rafts and other appliances.

Aside from an interest in battleships and cruisers christened after neighboring states and cities, our naval experience has been limited to trips on the River and an occasional journey on the water-wagon. Yet somehow we can't help feeling that this bill is not going to do the trick. It is all very well to insist that there shall be a certain number of lifeboats and able seamen. But if desertion is made easy, won't there be danger from the lack of discipline and team play? Even a hand-picked crew is not altogether satisfactory if the picking be done every time a steamer crosses the ocean. The purposes of the bill may be admirable. This we do not doubt. And we believe that something should be done to accomplish the very ends it has in view. But Mr. Furuseth, to our rural minds, has not found the answer.

We confess a little diffidence in offering our solution. It rather seems to us that we'd better not try to tell the whole world just where it gets off. Frankly we are for an experiment in government-owned American ships, with trained and disciplined crews, officered by graduates of the Naval Academy or some maritime school to be created. By enlisting the men in a regular merchant service, the lack of crew drills which caused such loss of life on the Titanic and the Lusitania might be avoided. Such a fleet would cost a good deal to operate, but it would be effective, and some people we know would rather pay a little more and travel on ships manned in this way than take chances with miscellaneous crews under a foreign flag. Such a plan would at least keep us from interfering with other peoples' shipping business, while giving better

living conditions and assuring the safety at sea which Mr. Furuseth desires. We confess, however, that while this looks after the passenger trade, we haven't quite thought out the freight problem.

But we don't believe that Mr. Furuseth has paid much attention to our foreign trade either. Perhaps American labor as well as American capital will do a little thinking along this line. It ought to, and so should Mr. Furuseth and Senator LaFollette. It is just as well that they should count the cost of measures like their Seaman's bill. Their humanitarian purpose should be applauded, but somehow we think that the whole problem needs a little more serious study from all its angles. Up to the present time the vital issues have not been made clear, to us at any rate. We like to listen to the Big Idea. But in doing so, Senator LaFollette and Mr. Furuseth and all the rest of us are now and then apt to be more intent on investigating the goose than in safeguarding the egg crop.

A. B. P.

Missouri.

The Basis for a New Protocol

SIR: Before the termination of the protocol in the New York garment trades, the commendation bestowed upon the manufacturers by impartial observers was generous and unstinted. The record of five years of good faith and sacrifice is now open for critical and fair examination.

What were the business reasons that led to the termination of the protocol—quite apart from the justifiable occasion for its termination? Are these reasons latent in the other protocols?

The report of the Industrial Council of Great Britain shows that it is the unanimous opinion of leading employers and trade unionists, as the result of wide and varied practical experience in collective bargaining, that if a considerable number of employers or workers are outside the "protocol" the thing is bound to break down. The cloak industry is not a "capitalistic" industry in the usually accepted meaning of this term; only a few hundred dollars are required to organize a shop. A worker or foreman, having saved the necessary amount, engages in business, and makes up his staff of workers from relatives or friends, immigrants who work under any and all conditions, only too ready to accept employment below union standards. This so-called "social" shop the union is unable to control. The union allegiance in such a shop is naturally weak, and the union officials naturally prefer the easier work of enforcing conditions in the larger shop units. In the "social" shop everything is easy. The boss gets along with his people and there are no "grievances." The small shops increase in number; new employers spring up over night. And the cost of manufacturing tells the tale to the Association employer. The difference in cost of labor cannot be accounted for by the difference in piece prices. It is made up by the opportunity in the "social" shop to work people longer hours, Saturday afternoons, holidays, to cut by piece instead of upon a week-work basis, to press by piece, and to do many other things forbidden by the protocol, and impossible in the Association shop. If the enforcement of sanitary standards were dependent upon "paper agreements" instead of upon regular, impartial investigation, how far would sanitary standards have been improved?