

LETTERS OF AN ITALIAN OFFICER TO HIS
SISTER IN AMERICA.¹

BY RICCARDO CIPRIANI.

NAPLES, April, 1915.

... With a good knowledge of languages and some "pull" to give access to the official documents published by the warring and neutral nations, it ought to be possible to write something worth while concerning the war, its causes, as well as the evil and good effects it is likely to have. . . .

At the proper time it will be necessary to point out the ineptitude of the men who were governing when the war broke out. It will be necessary to emphasize that the vital interests of nations, the world economy, as well as the life and welfare of hundreds of thousands of men, cannot be safely entrusted to small minds that treat war and what may and may not be done according to the rights of nations as they would a boy's quarrel in school.

The bankruptcy of international law is not a thing of to-day. The war in Manchuria between the Russians and Japanese with China's declaration of neutrality; the cruise of the fleet of Admiral Rojesvenski abetted by Germany, England and France; the sale by Italy to Japan of two warships; the contraband of arms carried on in Abyssinia from French Tobruk (?), in Lybia from Egypt and Tunis, have been too frequent and important instances to leave any hope that in the present war international law may inhibit any act that any of the belligerent nations may consider to their advantage. . . .

Let us leave aside the legality of the communications of the English government when it declared the North Sea a military zone, and forced the shipping of neutral nations (Holland, Denmark, Sweden and Norway) to follow established routes. Still one cannot help feeling some surprise that after such communications the declaration of blockade by Germany should be declared an act of piracy. Thus the great conflict between nations sinks to the level of a squabble between schoolchildren. And this seems so much more the case when one considers the littleness of the

¹ Translated from the Italian by Carlotta G. Cipriani. For some account of the author of these letters see page 439.

arguments used to saddle the responsibility of the war on one country rather than on the other. When the war is over . . . a long and painstaking investigation will be needed to prove that the people who are responsible for it are exactly those who did not want it. "Arm yourself in time of peace if you wish to avoid war," has once more proved true . . .

No one in Italy would be able to say at the present moment with any degree of certainty if, when, and against whom we are to go to war. England seems to have lost a great part of her popularity, even in America. Unfortunately the position of England and France in the Mediterranean is more of an obstacle to the development of Italy than the position of Austria on the Alps and the Adriatic.

In order to attain to a world-position, Italy needs the control of the Mediterranean, and this she cannot have without the possession of Tunis and Biserta, and perhaps Malta. We are now paying the penalty for former errors, and evidently the position of Italy in this war is not what it should have been according to her traditions and sympathies. Long years of a mistaken policy have produced a hybrid war with alliances that are nothing less than monstrous, to wit the alliance of France and England with Russian czarism.

The men who have governed Italy in the past are greatly to blame for this. Even more to blame, especially with regard to the consequences, are the English statesmen who have allowed a decadence of the national production and commerce that have made possible the gigantic commercial development of Germany. Thus they rendered inevitable the present war, which is primarily due to Anglo-German rivalry. England's responsibility for the war becomes every day more apparent, and the consequences for her will be exceedingly grave when it is proven that she has attempted to stifle a peaceful development by violence and bloodshed, and that to competition she has preferred the clash of arms.

On the other hand, war had become a necessity for her principally on account of the high cost of production that prevails in England. This high cost of production is due to the agitation of the labor unions that have handicapped in every conceivable way the rational development of England's industries.

Here in Italy we feel with especial keenness that the apparent struggle of races and national interests is in reality a struggle of internal policy. The splendid proof of German solidarity and the failure of international socialism prove once again how much more

honorable and stable is a government based on the efficiency of men than a government based on the sympathy of the masses captured by vain promises. The United States should take this lesson to heart, and I hope Italy will do so too.

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TURIN, May 28, 1915.

I have not written to you for some time, but it was not my fault. I have passed through a period of distressing uncertainty, because I had to find a solution in accord with my tastes and my just pride; one that would moreover honor the name I bear, which has never been sullied by any one, at least on the firing-line.

I have found a solution of which, I believe, almost all our relatives and friends approve. I could not return to the navy because any satisfactory command given to me would entail an injustice to my companions. I have always had an aversion for sedentary posts on shore, so I have decided to volunteer as military observer in the aviation corps. I have been successful, and I enrolled yesterday. They have been very courteous, and have enrolled me with my former rank. I think I shall soon start for the front....

* * *

June 10, 1915.

Good luck to you, dear sister, and let us hope that everything will go well with me.

I did not want war with Austria, but the Green Book and the publication of some of the articles of the treaty of the Triple Alliance reveal in what little esteem we were held by our allies. War is therefore a question of national dignity. I do not understand the Austrian diplomacy, nor do I understand why the Germans in their press and by the speech of Bethmann-Hollweg should attempt to arouse a hostility against Germany that did not previously exist. They feel conscious of their strength, and they are very strong. They are worthy of admiration, but I believe they are mistaken when they despise the Italian soldier. The country is united and enthusiastic, and if it proves to possess the endurance and cohesion needed for a long and difficult war, the qualities of our soldiers are such that they will surprise Europe.

And I am glad that we shall face a powerful adversary. Our race will be tempered anew by a struggle worthy of our wars of

independence. Have you seen the proclamation of the king? It is concise, moderate and strong.

Viva l'Italia, dear sister, . . .

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[From the Front, June 11, 1915.]

. . . I am pretty well satisfied, and would be even more so if I could manage to weigh some twenty kilos less than my actual weight. Lightness is a great advantage in aviation. Yet I am considerably underweight for my age and height. I have already made two flights over the enemy's lines, and I am more and more convinced that if aviation is intelligently used it will render the greatest possible service. You cannot imagine how like a game of hide-and-seek modern warfare is—and how well the enemy succeeds in hiding. There is no more effective means of finding him than flying over his lines. The amusing part of it is that you play the hero more for others than for yourself. The noise of the motor covers the bursting of the shells aimed at you, and your attention is generally so engrossed that you do not even see them.

We are making slow but steady progress. The slowness is due to the nature of the country, since war in a mountainous district is necessarily slow. A rapid advance would necessitate great sacrifices of men, which in many cases would moreover prove useless. Our little soldiers still keep all the good old qualities that they have always been known to possess. They are full of dash and good humor. The Alpine troops and *bersaglieri* (sharpshooters) have thus far distinguished themselves most of all, but as soon as they are given a chance I doubt not that our infantry, cavalry and artillery will do equally well. I fear the navy will have to resign itself patiently for the present to play a waiting game, but wherever they have had the opportunity, they have shown dash and valor.

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[From the Front] June 14, 1915.

. . . I am well, and on the whole, I am satisfied with the way things are going. . . I cannot predict the conditions of peace for this war, because, as is always the case when conflicts are very vast, definite and clear claims are lacking. This war has evidently been brought about by the industrial and economical development of Germany. But one of the principal underlying causes is also the

economic discomfort caused even to the richest and oldest nations by their permanent armaments. Whatever be the outcome of this war, the problem will remain unsolved. I am firmly convinced that Italy will gain on the East at least enough to constitute what we call "a military frontier," but I do not know whether the Adriatic, and even less the Mediterranean, problem can be solved.

What I feel sure of is that the war will not serve to strengthen that poor international law that should have been the forerunner of universal peace and arbitration. Never before have all available means been resorted to as is being done to-day. Even in the Boer war England refrained from using colored troops, while to-day, irrespective of the minor colonial wars, all the races of the world are to be found on the French battlefields.

And while Europe is exhausting herself and tearing herself to pieces, Japan is gaining the upper hand in China, and imposing whatever conditions she chooses. Contrary to my expectations, the United States shows no concern in the matter. I foresee that at the close of the war, whenever that may be, the victors, whoever they are, will find it hard to agree.

It appears that with the exception of Russia every one is very careful not to make too great sacrifices of men and of material on any of the European fronts. Yet thus far Germany gives no sign of weakening. England is making enormous efforts, and should perhaps make the supreme effort of "conscription." But I have little faith in improvised armies, especially because it is impossible to improvise officers and non-commissioned officers, and I do not know whether the country would be willing to submit to a sacrifice that appears to be repugnant to its habits of thought. Although our newspapers copy only the accounts of the optimistic press, I cannot forget the English papers I used to read at Naples.

It is true that the resources of Germany cannot be inexhaustible, especially hemmed in as she now is. But to carry the war into a country that has fought and is fighting with the strength and cohesion Germany has shown, and the preparation she has revealed, would prove no easy task. I believe that if the Germans were driven from all the conquered territory they now occupy, the Entente Allies would make peace. But it is hard to foresee the basis for this peace. Can England demand the mastery of the sea? She has neither sufficient strength nor sufficient men to maintain it, and in due time it would be claimed by all the nations that are allied to-day, and by all those that have remained benevolently neutral. Can England impose on Germany an industrial and economical servi-

tude? Such a course would offend too many interests that would ill brook such a monopoly.

On the other hand the imposing spectacle of strength that Germany is actually displaying, the value a long and patient preparation has in modern warfare, are so striking at the present moment that I scarcely believe peace will bring either the abolition or even a reduction of armaments. I hold that the conditions and factors of peace have to be sought rather in the social and economical conditions of the world than in the immediate results of the war. Should these factors prove to be rational and righteous, peace will be enduring; otherwise we shall have what we call "a lull in the storm," and the tempest will break out with greater violence after a short interval.

The present political alignment is not sound. England fighting side by side with France and Russia gives little promise of good, even for the near future.

On the other hand, I do not know to what extent Germany is disposed to back Austria, who is revealing once more all her natural and acquired weaknesses. I believe that Austria and Turkey will be the ones to pay the price of the war, but the situation in the Balkans is too complicated to foreshadow any possible settlement. Still this settlement is indispensable for the future tranquillity of Europe.

I hope that the strength of the race and the military qualities of the Italian people will enable us to acquire the place in the world that is our due. At any rate, for our country this war has had the great merit of revealing the harmfulness of a government that endures only by dint of temporary makeshifts, as was the case with Giolitti's. . . .

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[From the Front], June 20, 1915.

. . . . Yes—let us hope that Massimo d'Azeglio's² wish may be fulfilled. May this war make the Italians. Unfortunately long

² Note of Miss Cipriani: "While my father knew and admired Cavour, he did not like him; on the other hand he was devoted to Massimo d'Azeglio. Soon after the birth of my second brother, Alexander, Massimo d'Azeglio came to call on my mother, who sent for us, my two brothers and myself. It was then that, holding the baby, he said to my mother: 'Your husband and I have helped to make Italy, but the greatest task remains for you to perform: *make the Italians.*' This is a sentence that d'Azeglio often repeated in his writings, and that has become classic in Italy, but which undoubtedly had a greater significance for us than it had for many others—as, I think, the whole trend of my brother's letters shows."

years of a mean foreign policy and a dishonest internal one had created an unendurable condition of things.

For the time being, war has united all parties, the country is strong and stands shoulder to shoulder, our soldiers still possess their ancient good qualities, and faith in ourselves will grow as necessity calls for it.

Many of those who in the long years past have kept Italy from preparing as she should have done, must at last have changed their minds. They are now at the front, and if death spares them, they will go home with the knowledge that a modern war must be patiently and secretly prepared a long time ahead, if disasters and useless sacrifices are to be avoided....

The hugeness of the masses and the extension of the battle-front preclude the possibility of a decisive battle. But the effectiveness of the artillery and of infantry attacks remains, and I think that the latter will become more and more effective. The unforeseen development of the war, the lack of preparation of the strongest nations, have now given us a year of preparation. But if things continue to go as they are going now, there will be no solution, unless there is some truth in the report that the internal resources of Germany are beginning to show signs of exhaustion. It is evident that Germany cannot attack all of her enemies at once, and is obliged to defend the new boundaries which she has conquered and fortified. If within these boundaries Germany can be considered a besieged stronghold that must eventually surrender on account of famine, then victory may be obtained by a passive resistance.

But the losses and economical discomfort of the war must weigh on the Entente Allies in the same way and with the same pressure they do on Germany, in which case a violent and decisive action will at some time become imperative.

When we come to that pass, you may rest assured that our good little soldiers will prove themselves second to none.

I consider even the country better than it is generally supposed to be. The countries that were least prepared were England first and France next. Russia is the military delusion she always has been. Austria is doing her level best, but the only country that had a serious, far-reaching, orderly preparation was Germany.

We have done miracles; we are at war, and have had to improvise almost our entire armament. If Austria had believed that we were able to do this she would probably have avoided a break with us. But she considered us weak and inefficient. We actually were weak, and we appeared inefficient. A pervading, quickening

breath has enabled the country to place in the field forces that Austria did not realize were at our disposal, while England, that promised to place in the field two million men, only got meagre results from volunteer recruiting.

The very war makes us conscious of the necessity of the war. We are slowly conquering the military frontier which we asked for. We cannot compare our gains with those first made and then lost by the Russians in Galicia, nor with the astounding German successes of the first days of the war. From the very first our war has been a difficult mountain war, rendered more difficult by the thorough preparation of Austria along her Italian boundary. But each slow step we take is a sure step; each advantage we gain will entail on our adversaries an equal if not a greater effort than ours, if they ever attempt to regain what they have lost. Our frontier was entirely open to invasion; now we have already conquered positions that constitute a strong defense.

The press does wrong in making the country believe that our enemies are weak and do not fight well. To-day for the first time I have read in the *Corriere della Sera* something that approaches the truth. The prisoners we have taken are all young, strong, well armed and well nourished. The passage of the King's proclamation that pleased me immensely was the one that said: "You will find an adversary worthy of you." And the strength of our adversary "will make the Italians." An easy, quick, sure victory would have been our undoing. It is imperative to eradicate completely from our minds our former faith in being always able to provide at the last moment, the faith in *colpi di mano* (sudden expedients), as we call them in the navy.

The whole of Europe rebelled at the masterly, industrious, persevering manner in which Germany had carried on her military, industrial, economic and civil preparation. But when calm is restored, it will be necessary not only to admire this preparation, but to imitate it. I am pleased that there exists in Italy a profound respect and great admiration for the Germans. This respect and admiration inspire me with confidence in our own power of resistance. I have never felt any doubt concerning the enthusiasm and the spirit of the Italians, but I did not have complete confidence in Italy's power of resistance. In my opinion it was civil more than military preparation that was lacking. Well—Italy has taken the war with a seriousness, a calm, a determination that are really admirable. I saw the first outbursts of enthusiasm, not at Naples, Rome or Turin, but on the military trains that were carrying the reserves

to the front. The first places where I saw any celebrations were on the frontier. The rest of the country was quiet, severe, but completely calm and serene. All this inspires me with a great hope. After the declaration of war all discussions ceased, every one felt the necessity of winning. No one is better able to perform miracles than the Italian who is thoroughly convinced that it is up to him to do something. Yes, dear sister, I hope with you that this war will make the Italians. If when they are made, they are conscious of it, if they use all the uncommon gifts of their race for the purpose of organizing and remaining united, then Italy may look forward to a future of power and respect. . . .

THE PHYSICAL BASIS OF PLEASURE AND PAIN.

BY R. E. BOYNS.

HERBERT SPENCER says that "pleasures are the correlatives of actions that lead to welfare." That is doubtless true as a general statement, for it is the pursuit of pleasure that has made us what we are. Every organism, in its struggle to survive, has naturally been guided by its inclination toward the most pleasant feeling. Hence survival has been held to imply the building up of structure, or anabolism, and so anabolism and pleasure have been associated in the orthodox view of organic action. Many observers however refuse to see any connection between the two, for it is not difficult to point out instances where the association is not apparent. The graceful curve of a flourishing *embonpoint* doubtless recalls the pleasures of the table, but it can scarcely be said that growth in general, which inevitably implies excess of anabolism over catabolism, is accompanied by any conscious pleasure. On the contrary, do we not hear of "growing-pains"? There is however a third view which no one has as yet maintained, but which we believe to be the correct one: anabolism is pain, and it is catabolism which is the real pleasure—not merely that which accompanies pleasure, but that which is actually felt in the brain as such.

This seems paradoxical, but a slight consideration of the proofs will demonstrate its truth.

In the first place, no injury is painful. It is the repair which is so. It is not at all painful to cut your finger, as you may have proved by unexpectedly doing so when wiping a razor; but if you have an opportunity to anticipate what is coming, as in the case of