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Foreign Statesmen

CAVOUR



C A V O U R

BY

THE COUNTESS
EVELYN MARTINENGO CESARESCO

Italia ab exteris liberanda.

Motto of Pope JULIUS II.

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PREFACE

“Je suis italien avant tout, et c'est pour faire jouir à mon pays du *self government* à l'intérieur, comme à l'extérieur, que j'ai entrepris la rude tâche de chasser l'Autriche de l'Italie sans y substituer la domination d'aucune autre Puissance.”—*Cavour to the Marquis Emmanuel d'Azeglio* (May 8, 1860).

THE day is passed when the warmest admirer of the eminent man whose character is sketched in the following pages would think it needful to affirm that he alone regenerated his country. Many forces were at work: the energising impulse of moral enthusiasm, the spell of heroism, the ancient and still unextinguished potency of kingly headship. But Cavour's hand controlled the working of these forces, and compelled them to coalesce.

The first point in his plan was to make Piedmont a lever by which Italy could be raised. An Englishman, Lord William Bentinck, conceived an identical plan in which Sicily stood for Piedmont. He failed; Cavour succeeded. The second point was to cause the Austrian power in Italy to receive such a shock that, whether it succumbed at once or not, it would never recover. In this too, with the help of Napoleon III., he succeeded. The third point was to prevent the Continental Powers from forcibly impeding Italian Unity when it became plain that the population desired to be united. This Cavour succeeded in doing with the help of England.

Time, which beautifies unlovely things, begins to cast its glamour over the old Italian *régimes*. It is forgotten how low the Italian race had fallen under puny autocrats whose influence was soporific when not vicious. The vigorous if turbulent life of the Middle Ages was extinct; proof abounded that the *rôle* of small states was played out. Goldsmith's description, severe as it is, was not unmerited—

Here may be seen, in bloodless pomp array'd,
The pasteboard triumph and the cavalcade;
Processions formed for piety and love,
A mistress or a saint in every grove.
By sports like these are all their cares beguil'd,
The sports of children satisfy the child;
Each nobler aim, repress'd by long control,
Now sinks at last, or feebly mans the soul.

Only those who do not know the past can turn away from the present with scorn or despair. In this century a nation has arisen which, in spite of all its troubles, is alive with ambition, industry, movement; which has ten thousand miles of railway, which has conquered the malaria at Rome, which has doubled its population and halved its death-rate, which sends out great battle-ships from Venice and Spezia, Castellamare and Taranto. This nation is Cavour's memorial: *si monumentum requiris circumspice*.

SALÒ, LAGO DI GARDA.

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