PREFACE

THE lapse of two decades has not detracted from the importance of the drama that had its inception at Sarajevo in June, 1914. Rather it tends to confirm the view that the war itself and the peace settlement which followed it will rank among the crucial events of modern history, while at the same time it enables us to obtain a more comprehensive view of those events. A vast literature has grown and is still growing around the subject, in which the element of controversy may be expected steadily to yield to that of historical analysis. The time has come to gather together the elements of the history of that period, to which the present work is intended as a modest contribution.

Not unnaturally, attention has been focused to a large extent on the various phases of the German settlement, but the importance of developments east of the Rhine and south of the Danube should not be underestimated. In that region the position of Italy is of prime importance. In 1919 as well as in 1914—albeit in a different way—Italy was in a unique position. That fact lies at the root of the well-nigh universal dissatisfaction with which the peace settlement was received in Italy, and it is well worth examining the manner in which the peace negotiations helped to produce this result, which has been one of the important elements in subsequent developments in that country.

The unexpected duration of the war and the unprecedented havoc which it wrought created a widespread desire to prevent the recurrence of a like catastrophe. Circumstances caused the United States, particularly its chief representative in the person of President Wilson, to become the spokesman for the hope that a new order of things, especially in international relations, might come into being. That hope—widespread though it was in Europe—could not help clash with the forces of tradition that were pushing the nations into an attitude of exclusive, and often short-sighted, concern with their own interests.

Italy, like the other European Powers, had a well-defined national policy, which she hoped to further as the result of victory. The ambitions of the Powers had found expression in a number of secret

treaties, the provisions of which were in flagrant contradiction with the principles proclaimed by the American President. The collapse of Russia provided a convenient way of jettisoning these treaties, but, in actual practice, once the question was reopened, the substance of the same ambitions was pursued by the Powers, though no longer on the strength of treaty obligations. In the scramble that ensued Italy found herself in a particularly difficult position, for her territorial desires appeared to be in conflict, not with the claims of the former enemy, but with those of a country which—although consisting in large part of territory of the disrupted Austro-Hungarian Empire—appeared at the Peace Conference in the guise of an ally. In the end Italy fell back on the written pledge of her allies. Thus it was that, just as circumstances undreamt of in the earlier stages of the war made the United States the champion of the New Order, in large measure owing to circumstances, it fell to Italy to be cast in the rôle of defender of the Old. The result of this situation and of its handling by the Italian statesmen was the dramatic clash of April, 1919, when President Wilson issued his appeal to public opinion and the Italians temporarily withdrew from the Conference; and the unforeseen (before 1919) development that the negotiations with Italy resolved themselves, to a large extent, into a controversy between that country and the United States.

It has been our purpose to trace the development of these negotiations, as far as can be done at present; not to judge the merits of the case—an attempt that our proximity to the events would almost inevitably vitiate—but merely to fit their course into an intelligible pattern. In doing this, the Italian sources have been found regrettably meager; save, however, on one important point, for the minutes of the crucial meetings in April have been published in the form of a diary by Count Luigi Aldrovandi, then secretary to the Italian delegation. It is to be hoped that the English or French accounts of these same meetings and other meetings which the Italians did not attend at the time may soon be brought to light. On the other hand, the fact that the dispute was largely one between America and Italy, Great Britain and France remaining conveniently in the background, is responsible for our having a considerable amount of material of American origin, both documentary and in the form of personal recollections, while it is also possible to obtain

word-of-mouth accounts of the events from some of the participants.

The emphasis of the present work is definitely on the negotiations between Italy and the other Powers. For that reason, certain phases of the Italian settlement, though important, have not been dealt with in great detail. This is particularly the case with the Treaty of St. Germain, for there was no appreciable controversy that involved Italy in any special way in the framing of that Treaty. Once President Wilson had agreed that the Italian frontier in the north should be at the Brenner, the matter was essentially settled, for the Austrians, like the other defeated Powers, were not consulted in the drawing of their frontiers. On the other hand, it has been necessary to go back to the origins of the conflict and the making of the Treaty of London in order to provide an intelligible account of Italian policy; the events of 1919 were only a momentary phase, which should always be considered in the larger framework of the policy over a longer period of time. However, the author wishes it to be clearly understood that this introductory survey is given merely to explain and to clarify subsequent events. It is not intended in any sense to be an exhaustive account of Italian pre-war diplomacy affecting the relations of Italy with Austria-Hungary and the outbreak of the World War. It is an outline of the diplomatic history based upon documentary material, but it is definitely limited to those elements of the problem which serve to throw light on the question of the Italian negotiations at the Peace Conference, which question is the subject of the present work. For the same reason, the story has been followed beyond the adjournment of the Peace Conference proper to the settlements of Rapallo and Sèvres, which are but the conclusion of the same episode.

The author wishes to express his indebtedness to Professor James T. Shotwell, who is primarily responsible for the inclusion of this work in the present series. Professor Shotwell was a member of The Inquiry and subsequently of the American Peace Delegation; his consequent acquaintance with events and personalities has proved invaluable and has been freely drawn upon. Professor Robert C. Binkley, through his wide knowledge of the history of the Peace Conference, has made important suggestions, both on questions of major policy and on matters of detail; through him and thanks to the courtesy of Dr. Charles Seymour, it has been possible to make

use of the correspondence between Ambassador T. N. Page and Colonel House. Dr. Bowman, Chief Territorial Specialist of the American Delegation, has been kind enough to read the original manuscript and has offered valuable suggestions.

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The present work, it is hoped, may serve the twofold purpose of presenting a fair factual account of events, and, through this account, to assist understanding to take the place of what has been unfortunately too often, misunderstanding born of misinformation.

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