

"AFTERNOON LADIES."

When toward the west the sun descends
Till tinge of gold with shadow blends,
And calm are mellowed hours of day,
In oriental colors gay
The four-o'clocks are opened wide
To give fresh bloom to eventide.

In plain, old-fashioned yards they grow,
And yet, in softened sunlight's glow,
The mingled green of spreading leaves,
With petaled red and yellow, weaves
A web, fantastic with their bloom,
Like fabrics from weird Indies' loom.

From hedgelike rows their flowers gleam
Till nightfall comes with shade and dream.
Belated children of the day,
Whose birthplace is so far away,
You look like dames with sprightly air,
Whose robes a foreign tinting wear.

Sweet "ladies of the afternoon"
Your buds, awakened, are the boon
That brings to closing day a grace.
What mystic charm calls up each face
To brightly smile while shadows creep
To veil the summer hours with sleep?

—MARY FRENCH MORTON.

MILITARISM IN ITALY.

There is no doubt that this military element lends much life and color to the streets. Although there are more brilliant uniforms than in Italy—in Austro-Hungary, for example—the Italian uniforms are very handsome. The variety is striking. You see infantry officers in dark-blue tunics with silver facings, blue-gray trousers with scarlet stripes, and long blue-gray cloaks. You see *bersaglieri*, an elite rifle corps, in dark-blue and crimson uniforms, wearing round hats with cock's plumes hanging in a large bunch from one side. You see cavalry officers in blue and gray uniforms, some wearing fur caps, and the Savoy regiments wearing gold-crested steel helmets. You see artillery officers in blue and yellow, engineer officers in blue and crimson, the royal body-guard in blue and silver, and finally you see the royal horse-guards, imposing creatures in helmets with black horse-hair plumes, steel cuirasses, white leather breeches, and high boots. Then there are the *carabinieri*, or *gendarmes*, who wear a simple, old-fashioned uniform—long-skirted coat, cocked hat, and pipe clayed belt and scabbard. It is quaint and effective.

What we would call the police officers wear different uniforms in different cities. In Rome their uniform is much like that of the infantry of the line, which adds to the apparent number of military in the streets. In other Italian cities they wear various costumes, probably dating from the days before United Italy. In Genoa their garb is indeed extraordinary. They wear long, black surtout coats, cut like what our tailors call a Newmarket or paddock coat. The costume is crowned with a "stove-pipe hat." This seems incredible, but it is strictly true. When it rains they substitute a cap for the stove-pipe.

In addition to the military, the rural gendarmery and the municipal police officers, practically all government employees wear semi-military uniforms. Firemen, customs-house officers, post-office clerks, postal-wagon drivers, railway employees (the railways belong to the government), telegraph employees (the telegraph belongs to the government also), *octroi* employees—all of these men are in uniform. And people who are fond of advocating government ownership of railroads and telegraph ought to try it over here. These petty officials in brass buttons are so swollen up with bureaucratic importance that they are not even civil. The railways do not advertise their time-tables, or anything else for that matter. If you want to find out anything concerning trains, rates of fare, rates on luggage by passenger train, rates on luggage by fast freight, rates on luggage by slow freight, rates for transporting luggage from station to domicile in railway vans—well, you may succeed if you are persistent, but you will get little help and much insolence from the railway officials. If you purchase a sleeping-car coupon with a first-class ticket you are entitled, under the law, to demand that a sleeping-car be placed on the train even if you are the only passenger. But the railway officials will never tell you of your rights. I found this out from a tourist agency and took great pleasure in compelling the railway officials to put on a sleeping-car for our special use and behoof.

As for the telegraph, the government plainly says on its blanks that it is not responsible for anything—errors in transmission, failure to transmit, battle, murder, sudden death, pestilence, famine, or act of God. If you send high-priced cablegrams by the Italian government's telegraph service you had better demand a receipt for the money. A receipt, by the way, will cost you twenty-five centesimi extra. An American here recently complained of having sent six cablegrams to the United States in one month, five of which were never received. Probably the employees pocketed the money and threw the cablegram in the waste-basket. The postoffice so distrusts its employees that they have a contrivance for emptying letter-boxes by which the letters are slid from the locked letter-box into a bag with a locked top, so that the employee can not handle them. Newspaper-boxes are emptied into a bag, as in our country. The government railways have so poor an opinion of their brass-buttoned employees that they will accept no luggage unless it has strong locks upon it. Even with that precaution there are so many thefts from trunks on Italian railways that prudent people insure their luggage.

Italy Groans Under Militarism.

Why is Italy so poor? Why is official

honesty at so low an ebb that she can not trust even her own government employees? Why is it unsafe to hand a letter to a postal-carrier to post, lest he should steal the stamps? The answer is simple. It is because of the brilliant uniforms which give color to the streets; of the vast number of soldiers who live upon the tax-payers. For every idle officer loafing at a *cafe* three or four men are working hard to earn his living and their own. The unfortunate country is ground down with taxation. There is nothing that is untaxed. Even the food you eat pays a double tax—once to the state and again to the city. The very sunlight is taxed, for there is a heavy tax on windows.

California and Italy are about the same size. Roughly speaking, California contains about 150,000 square miles, Italy about 120,000 square miles. They are not dissimilar in physical characteristics. They extend over a long distance from north to south, and each has an extensive coast line. Each is destitute of coal mines. Each produces large quantities of wheat. Each produces citrus and other fruits, olives, wine, and raisins. The climate is about the same, although California's is superior. They are in about the same zone. Rome lies in about the same latitude as San Francisco. Our state is one of the richest and most fertile of all the United States. Yet suppose that California were as populous as Italy—as some day it will be—suppose it had a population of millions. Could California, even with its vast resources, support an army of a quarter of a million men as Italy does? She could do it only as Italy does, by grinding the people into the dust with oppressive taxation.

It is a fact that this country—about the size of California—has over 200,000 men under arms, with a reserve of 2,000,000 more. She also has a large and costly navy.

The Italian government is much concerned at the enormous emigration. They try to stop it, but it can not be stopped. The young men flee to avoid conscription. From the north last week there came news of the arrest of some chemists who were selling drugs which enabled young men to feign chronic maladies so skillfully as to avoid conscription. This is another symptom of the army ulcer which is eating into Italy.

Of course every one in America knows these things. We know them on paper. But there is nothing like seeing them. They had grown dim in my memory since I was last in Europe. But a glimpse of militarism revives my old impressions. Here it is hated and dreaded. The ambitious and energetic flee from it and go to other lands. Take the Germans in America as a type of this class. It is no wonder that the menace of militarism in our own coun-