



The ruling abyssinian classes recruit many slaves among the tribes subjected by them.

INDUSTRIAL RESOURCES

"Unfortunately, Italy is even poorer in the essential materials needed by modern industry than in its agricultural resources. Italy possesses in abundance not one of the minerals of prime importance in industry, while it is almost destitute of those of greatest usefulness. The entire coal reserves in Italy are less than the coal mined in a single year in this country. Since there is practically no petroleum produced in Italy, it is, for all practical purposes, dependent upon imported fuel, not only for much of its industrial power, but also for household uses.

"Italy does, however, possess considerable water-power in the northern provinces and in the Apennines. It is estimated that about five and five-tenths millions of horse-power can be developed by its streams at ordinary river flow, and about half this amount at extreme low water. At present between one and five-tenths and two millions of horse-power are developed—perhaps about one-third of what can ultimately be made available. This is of great use to Italy, and the manufacturing cities of the north (Turin and Milan) owe an appreciable part of their prosperity to the use of this water-power. But five to five and five-tenths millions of horse-power are, after all, a comparatively small amount and are insufficient for any large industrial development. It is quite clear, then, that the lack of cheap power which is a necessary consequence of the lack of cheap fuel, is a great handicap to the development of industry in Italy. It will also be decisive in determining the type of industries that can thrive best in the country.

"When in addition to the lack of fuel, we find that Italy's resources in iron are both small and expensive to mine, we can be quite positive that Italy has little chance of developing an iron and steel industry of any consequence. Certainly this industry cannot employ many workers and cannot, therefore, do much to provide places for any appreciable part of its yearly increase in numbers. This also means that Italy can do but little in the development of those derivative fabricating industries in which iron and steel are the materials principally used. It is not surprising, then, to find that even in Switzerland American automobiles are far more numerous than those from Italy. In all such industries Italy labours under an initial handicap in the cost of basic materials which cannot be overcome by the cheapness of labour.

"In developing an electrical industry the situation is practically the same as for iron and steel. Only three hundred and fifty men were employed in the mining of copper in 1926. Italy must import its copper either from this country or from South America and is at a disadvantage in fabricating it as compared with the United States and Germany.

"Italy's poverty in all the basic minerals can best be realized if we compare the number of persons engaged in mining in Italy and in some of the other European countries. In 1926 there were only 49,630 persons employed in the mines of Italy, while there were about 780,000 in Germany and 1,140,000 in Great Britain. Nothing could show more clearly that Italy labours under a great handicap in developing its industries. It is difficult for it to supply home markets with metal goods even with tariffs aids; and of course there is little chance to compete successfully with more favoured lands for world markets in such goods.

"In textiles Italy's position is more favourable than in metals for several reasons: (1) Italy exports considerable quantities of silk, because the production of silk is an industry in which a large amount of hand labour is used and Italy has an abundance of cheap hand labour; (2) the manufacture of textiles does not require a very great amount of power, and consequently expensive power can be partly compensated for by cheap labour; and (3) other European countries must also import most of the cotton and wool they use; hence they have less advantage over Italy in this field than in many others. But even in this field Italy cannot hope for a greatly increased foreign trade. There are too many competitors in the market. Several of the European nations are already better established in the textile trade and if cheap labour is relied upon, Japan, India, and China have even greater abundance of this than Italy.

"In all lines of manufacture the situation is much the same. Italy has an abundance of cheap unskilled labour, but the differential in the cost of power and materials is too heavily against her to enable her to manufacture most types of machine-made goods as cheaply as those lands that are blessed with a greater abundance of resources. Under these conditions the process of acquiring markets abroad in the face of competition from other peoples already established must be very slow and will be costly, if, indeed, they can be acquired at all. Besides, even when markets are secured, they are often of doubtful permanence. There is, then, very little reason to believe that Italy can much expand its production of machine-made goods for export, and that its large increase in population can be employed in these new industries...."

"Indeed, from whatever angle one studies the possibilities of Italy's industrial development, it does not seem probable that there can be any growth at all adequate to care for its present increase of population. Italian industry can grow only slowly and can provide only a few new jobs each year; and year by year the provision of even these few will become more difficult.

"If it were worth while to follow this whole matter further, one could show that both capital and technical skill are lacking in Italy; and these are almost as important as the basic minerals for the rapid development of machine industry. But we need not pursue this line of thought further; there is no need of piling up evidence of Italy's industrial handicaps. They are too generally known to need more than this brief statement.

"It appears, then, that Italy has neither the agricultural nor the industrial resources to care for the present growth of population for more than a few years. If they must remain at home, the pressure of population will shortly become intolerable and we may look for some kind of an explosion. It is certainly not to be expected that a people of spirit will not choose war when there is hunger at home and when there is at least a chance that war will lead to the expansion of their resources.

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AGRICULTURAL POSSIBILITIES

"By no stretch of the imagination can Italy be regarded as a rich agricultural country. If one were to list the factors limiting Italy's agricultural production, it would take many pages, a good many more pages than to list the favouring factors. It will be necessary to mention a few of the most decisive elements controlling Italy's agriculture. In the first place, the rainfall over the greater part of Italy comes chiefly during the autumn and winter. Such a rainfall limits, very materially, the kind of crops that can be grown and the yields of produce. This is one of the chief reasons, for example, why almost one-half of the land devoted to food crops is sown to wheat each year. The winter rains can be taken advantage of better by wheat than by crops which need more summer warmth and rain for their growth.

"Italy is also a very rough country, and much of the agriculture is carried on under conditions which we should consider impossible. Indeed, they are quite impossible from the standpoint of making a decent living, as anyone can testify who has visited hill communities in various parts of Italy. Not only must much of the working of soil in the rough lands be done by hand, but often the soil itself is poor and stony. It certainly appears less fertile than much of the soil in our own north-eastern states, which has been abandoned to pasture or is used only for meadow."

"If to these drawbacks of a general nature affecting the yield of the land we add the fact that all Italy has just one acre of tillable land for each person in its population today, we shall see that Italy is in no position to support an increase of numbers through extension of its agriculture. Indeed, agriculture in Italy fails to support even the people who apparently live by it, because it is of such a seasonal nature. Unlike the general farmer in this country, great numbers of Italian peasants can work at home for only a few months each year; and as a consequence for a century or more the migratory Italian labourer has been a well-known figure all over central and western Europe. There is comparatively little room for more workers in Italian agriculture. Any addition to their numbers necessarily means that an already very low standard of living must be still further reduced, and it cannot be reasonably expected that this increased hardship will be endured passively if it appears at all probable that any alleviation is to be secured by the use of force.

"It is also of importance to note in this connection that even now Italy is not self-sufficient agriculturally. It imports large quantities of cereals and cotton (the cheaper foods and fabrics), and exports in part payment for them the more expensive foods and fabrics (cheese, butter, fruit, and silk). Besides, the importation of cereals is on the increase, being about fifty per cent greater now than before the war." (Since the 'Battle for Wheat' the importation of cereals has decreased considerably and Italy is now self-supporting in this respect due to the exploitation of her marshes and every available corner of the country). "These facts still further reinforce the conclusion that Italian agriculture cannot provide a living for many more people than it now does without materially reducing their standards of living, which are already very close to subsistence level. If Italy is to support more people at home, it must be through the development of its industry rather than its agriculture. We shall next examine the possibilities of Italy's development in this direction.