

MR. GRASSI REPLIES.

To the Editor of The Daily Star:

I have read with interest and amazement your report in Saturday's paper of the proceedings of the Rotary Club. This collection of distinguished gentlemen seem to conduct their proceedings under the assumption that all the knowledge and education of the world, to say nothing of kultur, is in the possession of the English speaking race and particularly that portion of it over which Mr. Hollinrake has the honor to preside. This point of view does not accord with the fact that the Italians were a civilized nation when the English roamed the woods partially clad in the skins of animals and when the Scotch lived in mud huts where they were "half blinded with smoke and half dead with the itch"; and yet local engineers in public employ do not wish to accept as citizens people of the same race as William Marconi, whose knowledge of engineering would probably compare rather favorably with that of his accomplished critic. If these gentlemen are so learned as to have lost their common sense, some of them may possibly remember that the first foreigner who landed in America was Christopher Columbus, a native of Italy.

I presume that in the eyes of these people, the House of Savola is a degenerate family although it dates from antiquity. King Victor Emmanuel now fighting personally to make the world safe for democracy would probably not qualify for membership in this charmed circle.

Julius Caesar was a successful general centuries before the English language was spoken. Dante Alighieri wrote poetry many generations before Shakespear. Mazzini and Cavour achieved distinction before Miss McCrea's school was opened. (This remark is not intended as a reflection

on Miss McCrea).—Verdi was a celebrated musician although he never heard of canned music and Mr. Crume's theatre. Cialdini and Garibaldi were benefactors of their race and of civilization without having had the advantages of membership in the Rotary Club.

The history of the United States and South American Republics has shown that if left alone, Italians adapt themselves to the ways of the country of their adoption and become prosperous and useful members of society. They have been useful even here and some of them are moderately successful, in spite of the efforts of reformers whose sole idea in life apparently consists in making things miserable for somebody else.

The Italians have been the allies of Great Britain in the present war and they are treated with respect and consideration in the British Isles and in the United States. If Italy had not entered the war on the side of the allies the present situation of the entente would be desperate, not to say hopeless. For these and other reasons I am sure the country I represent would feel grateful if well-wishing but meddling people would kindly leave us alone. This perhaps is too much to hope particularly in view of the fact that much of the feeling of antipathy towards us is based on religious rather than racial grounds.

One of the speakers at the meeting in question advocated shipping foreigners back to Europe at the conclusion of the war. I would respectfully remind this gentleman that Europe was crowded with Canadian Emigration agents urging people to come to this country and frequently holding out inducements which were not substantiated on the arrival of the settler. My fellow-countrymen came here by invitation and have assisted materially in the building up of Canada. For the past twenty years railroad construction has been carried on very extensively here and the greater part of the labor has been performed by Italians. Without their assistance the new Transcontinental railways would not have been possible and even the Algoma Central could not have been built. The City of Sault Ste. Marie owes its present phenomenal prosperity to the work of Italians and other foreign laborers engaged in the manufacture of munitions of war for the allies. I am afraid if it were not for "foreigners" some of their prosperous critics might be obliged to seek other localities for the purpose of earning a living.

As illustrating the difference in treatment accorded to us by the United States and Canada, I might mention that since the entry of the United States into the present war, no celebration in any city of importance has been held without a prominent position being given to the flag of Italy. This flag, as perhaps you are aware, is a tricolor of green, white and red, the colors of hope, peace and love, three sentiments worthy of cultivation even by Rotarians. The flag of my Consular Agency flies over my office on the occasion of every Canadian holiday; but I seldom see the Italian colors shown at popular demonstrations, although

this courtesy is never neglected on the occasion of any patriotic demonstration at Sault Ste. Marie Michigan.

The attitude of sympathy adopted by some of the speakers would be more beneficial than criticism. Yours

truly,

W. GRASSI,

Royal Italian Consular Agent.