

NOTES FROM A CANADIAN IN ITALY

Venice, at this time of the year, is the mecca of tourists. The trains that come into Santa Lucia station from all parts of Europe, the motor cars and busses that drive up to Piazzale Roma after crossing the large, two-mile long cement Littoria bridge which connects the island city with the mainland, the ships from all parts of the globe which anchor in Bacino San Marco, in front of the Ducal Palace or near the Dogana, are now pouring their streams of happy travellers into this city of sunshine and color, marble and sea,

cover the vaults and domes of the richest of Christianity's temples. St. Mary's Basilica alone would be sufficient to make Venice a city of fame. But there is the Ducal Palace, where is summed up all the magnificent art and glorious history which gave to the Venetian Republic the glowing epithet of Serenissima. There is the Piazza San Marco itself, a square unrivalled for beauty in all the world. There is the Accademia, containing the masterpieces of Tintin, Tintoretto, Veronese and all the other painters of the Venetian school. There are the churches, the palaces, the bridges, the canals, the islands, the lagoon. Then, of course, there is the Lido di Venezia, the summer resort and bathing beach of aristocratic Europe. Seven miles of fine, white sand, washed by the clear green waters of the Adriatic. The Lido island, which once was but a barren stretch of earth where Byron years ago galloped madly during the Venice days of his adventurous life, is now a glamorous rendezvous of aristocracy and celebrities, with ultra-modern hotels, villas and gardens, large new streets, bordered by acacias and poplars.

Neat little steamboats constantly ply the waters between Venice and the Lido, laden with holidayers bound for sunshine and a dip in the Adriatic. Little motor launches churn up the placid waters of the lagoon as they race out around the island of San Michele towards Nuranò where glass-working is an art which only the glass-workers of Nuranò possess, and at nights now, the Canal Grande is the magic, soul inspiring, street of water where gondolas pass by ever so quietly. And here we must inveigh against those poor, demented, prosaic persons who go so far as to say that motor-boats were not being used in Venice because of the cost of gasoline. The fact is motor-boats have been constantly used for public services, while gondolas are the only logical, possible means of communication in Venice, but then, no motor-boat of the finest construction, could give the thrill and pleasure of a gondola ride.

Despite all the adverse publicity given Italy by the Archbishop of Canterbury, Lord Cecil, in England, the C. C. F. and others of the same clique in Canada, it seems that the power of attraction of il Duce's land remains undiminished and its beauty untarnished. This fact is merely established for the use of those who like to imagine that the country of Dante has blighted its character by the events of this last year, and that people will now refuse to come to Italy. Italy has always been the land of art and sunshine but Mussolini's government has enhanced this reputation and made of Italy a land worth while visiting for even the most fastidious traveller whether in search of art or comfort. It may be said of Italy that it is the best organized country in the world from a tourist point of view. As a matter of fact, there is always some attraction, some important exhibition, some magnificent fair, in progress. Here in Venice this year, three major exhibitions which are drawing thousands of visitors are the 20th Modern Art Exhibition, the 17th Century Exhibit at Ca' Rezzonico and the Cinematographic Exhibition. These were all organized during the sanctions and are proving very successful. The Cinematographic Exhibition, which takes place at the Lido with open-air presentations of the films presented by the leading motion-picture companies of the world, is an event of international fame. It is understood that the Hollywood film colony will be well represented as there are rumors that Elissa Landi, Clark Gable and many others will be in Venice for the exhibition.

Speaking of sanctions, I remember reading in a Canadian paper some months ago that the Italians would soon tire of meatless days and revolt against Mussolini. Here in Italy such talk is so ridiculous as not to be taken seriously. Sanctions were not felt by the ordinary man in the street at all. As a matter of fact, it was impossible to find someone who complained about them. Of course, they may have caused some inconveniences but they were not at all evident. And now that sanctions have been buried after having failed so miserably, now that the Abyssinian campaign has been brought to a conclusion not altogether as prophesied by the none too reliable exponents of the evils and weaknesses of Fascism, now that the Italian nation has giv-

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Avra' Luogo Domenica 26 LUGLIO 1936 nella Victoria Industrial School MIMICO

en to the world an irrefutable proof of its devotion and faith in the Regime under which it has been living happily for fourteen years, it would be advisable for the Canadian detractors of Fascist Italy to clear their befogged, biased mind and if they wish to continue to discuss and comment on Fascist policies and doctrines, to show a little less ill-faith and blatant dishonesty. This policy would, moreover, save them from appearing as ridiculous as they have shown themselves to be in their conduct during the colonial war. The press comments and editorials of Haile's sympathisers which appeared during the military operations in Africa, provided a good deal of mirth for the Italians and the humor papers and magazines had a boom season while the war lasted by merely publishing the drivel Addis Ababa correspondents wrote for their gullible anti-fascist readers. It is, of course, the privilege of the free press partisans to be as nonsensical as they wish, but such freedom of the press which endangers the peace of the world, is to be deprecated. In any case, the fact remains that certain Canadian newspapers who claim to be exponents of the truth, carried write-ups concerning Italy and the East African war which proved that the authors were better qualified to write comic strips or fairy tales.

But all that is over and Canada also has abolished sanctions. As for Italy, it can be truly said that the Italian people are as ready to bury the hatchet and forgive her ex-alies as she was, and is, ready to take up arms against anyone who tries to menace her vital interests. The whole world should thank Mussolini for having built such a united nation and such a powerful war-machine which enabled him to get justice for Italy in Africa while maintaining peace in Europe, for had Italy been militarily weak, Geneva would have wrought her injustice and Europe would have had her war.

ROOSEVELT E L'ITALIA

Il prossimo numero de LA SETTIMANA - rivista fondata a New York dall'On. Edward Corsi - contiene un importantissimo articolo di William R. Castle, Sottosegretario di Stato nel Gabinetto di Hoover, sull'atteggiamento di Roosevelt durante il conflitto etiopico: atteggiamento che l'illustre diplomatico e scrittore considera come "un inutile ed ingiustificato attacco contro l'Italia."

Scritto espressamente per LA SETTIMANA, questo articolo che certo avra' vaste ripercussioni politiche, è di particolare interesse per tutti i lettori e le comunita' italo-americane sparse negli Stati Uniti. La rivista conterra' pure un articolo dell'On. Corsi sulle attivita' agricole dei nostri connazionali che han saputo creare nella campagna del New Jersey - fuggendo dalla arida e dannata vita delle citta' - un lembo pittoresco della Patria lontana.

Articoli di varieta', una copertina a colori, fotografie di uomini e di eventi, un esteso notiziario internazionale, una bellissima novella, una pagina umoristica, critiche letterarie, teatrali e politiche, formano questo nuovo numero de LA SETTIMANA che è nel suo secondo anno di vita e che ha trovato un posto affettuoso e gradito nella immensa famiglia italiana d'America.

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