"Darwinism and Anti-Italian Sentiment"

Excerpt One

In a 1912 article in the *North American Review,* Prescott F. Hall of the Immigration Restriction League wrote that immigrants brought with them “. . . political and social institutions very different from ours [Americans]. The Southern Italian, which constitutes the largest element in our present immigration, is one of the most mixed races in Europe and is partly African, owing to the negroid migration from Carthage [who were really Semitic Phoenicians] to Italy. . . . The negro strain in the South Italians has already been mentioned . . . What would happen if a large Mediterranean [Italian] population should be colonized in our Southern States and should inbreed with the negro population it finds there? This is not an imaginary possibility, for the dark-skinned races are more likely to settle in the southern part of the country. . . . Let us suppose that some inbreeding with the negro takes place. Will the descendents of the emotional, fiery Italians submit to the social judgment that a man with a sixteenth or a thirty-second part of negro blood is a colored man who must occupy a position socially, if not politically inferior?

Excerpt Two

In 1916 Madison Grant, author of *The Passing of a Great Race* told his readers the highly evolved American people would become a diluted race, once new immigrants came into the United States and started to intermarry with Americans. He claimed that European leaders had taken the “. . . opportunity to unload upon careless, wealthy, and hospitable America the sweepings of their jails and asylums. The result was that the new immigration . . . contained a large and increasing number of the weak, the broken and the mentally crippled of all races drawn from the lowest stratum of the Mediterranean [southern Italy and Sicily] basin. . . . These immigrants adopt the language of the native [born] American, they wear his clothes, they steal his name and they are beginning to take his woman, but they seldom adopt his religion [Protestant Christianity] or understand his ideals.”

Excerpt Three

In a 1920 book, “*The Rising Tide of Color Against White World Supremacy*, Lothrop Stoodard warned against allowing immigrants into the country. He divided the White Race into three branches, the Nordic (blonde, blue-eyed English and Northern Germanics) the Alpines (stocky, brown- haired Austrian Germans, Swiss, etc,) and the Mediterranean (Southern Italians and Sicilians). He ranked the Mediterraneans as the most inferior branch of the White Race and warned against allowing them and immigrants of color into the United States. He worried that Mediterraneans would mix with Americans and, “Hence, when a highly specialized stock (superior white branches) interbreeds with a different stock (lower white branches or with people of color), the newer less stable, specialized characters are bred out, the variation, no matter how great its potential value to human evolution, being *irretrievably lost* [author‘s emphasis]*.*