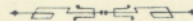


RESTRICTION OF IMMIGRATION.

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There is a disposition among men to form a general conclusion from a knowledge of only a few facts, and such facts usually as pertain only to one side of the question. In all that has been said or written on this subject this tendency has held full sway.

The question of Immigration into the United States, has from the founding of the Colonies to the present time attracted considerable attention among all classes of people living in the United States. It is a question which cannot be settled once for all time, but must be acted upon and adjusted to suit the various phases of the growth and development of

our country.

In the early history of the Republic when there were boundless natural resources not utilized there was no thought of restriction to immigration of any class. Later as the country became more thickly settled, and the division of labor more marked the laboring classes began to feel the injurious effects of having their wages lowered by the importation of foreigners under contract of labor. In consequence of this Congress, in 1862, passed a law prohibiting foreigners from entering the United States under these conditions. This was the first restriction placed upon immigration.

Nothing further was done until 1882 when the law restricting Chinese immigration was passed. Here was a condition where it seemed that absolute restriction was the only remedy. The Chinese are averse to becoming Americanized. And where there are large numbers of them as in some of the cities on the Pacific Coast, they manage almost entirely, all cases in law in which one of their number is concerned, and place the country in a hazardous condition. Perjury is a common practice with them. Seldom can one of them be brought to justice for the man who testifies against them places his life in peril.

Since that time however there have been some radicalists who believe that all immigration should be restricted; that foreign population is becoming so great as greatly to endanger the Republic. The Haymarket riot in Chicago they tell us represents the spirit of the foreigner. Let me ask is this a fair judgment? It is not a rare occurrence that a mob of American born citizens violate the laws of our country, commit murder and destroy property. Do we conclude from this that the Americans are a lawless set? Because the American does so, by no means justifies the foreigner for his action, but we should

have no respect of persons in judgment. All men are governed by the same general laws. The same feelings, impulses, and desires which move one civilized man move all.

It is an easy matter for the Police force to control such outbreaks as this. Only the one has occurred and the lesson it taught is long to be remembered.

Furthermore it has been often said of late years that the United States is the dumping ground for the shams and refuse of all the nations of Europe. It is doubtless true that some paupers and criminals have

crept into this country but the part which these make of the total number of foreigners is infinitesimal, and these can be kept out by stricter vigilance. It is not very probable that the slums of Europe would arouse enough energy to bring them across the Atlantic. It cannot be denied that the foreigners who come to this country are, with very few exceptions, a hard working class. We have only to look into our ~~manufactories~~, on the farms, and every place where hard, manual labor is required to see that the foreigner performs this work. The drudgery of American labor is done by foreigners, yet they often receive the

name of a shiftless, lawless class.

That they are to a large extent of a low order of intelligence must be admitted by all. Many come to this country merely to accumulate a small amount of money and then return to their former home. They work cheaper and thus throws many Americans out of employment. Our large cities are overcrowded and many thousand are out of employment today. These are the principal reasons held why the foreigner is undesirable.

A laborer of more intelligence will not do the work that is done by these men. He will rise by reason of his intelligence to what is called, though

with no honor to the American people, a higher plane of life. That the cities are overcrowded is not due entirely to foreign population. There is a steady flow of population from the rural districts to the large cities. They pass by work in anticipation of the imaginary opportunities afforded by the city. There are still in this country large undeveloped resources and to have them developed will only make the country richer.

The claim that the foreigner comes here, amasses a fortune and returns home thus carrying out of the United States wealth which should be retained is hardly well founded. The part which he carries away is very small in comparison with what

he creates while gaining it. He produces something by his labor which remains here and cannot be taken away. Even though he returns he leaves the country richer than when he arrived.

The intellectual and moral condition of the foreigner is shown by the consular reports, the following is the report given in 1890. The consul for Austria says; "the young men who want to escape military service, the ultra-socialist the anarchist, the men who have lost all social and business footing here, the bankrupt, embezzler, and swindler stop not to obtain permission of the governments, and naturally the authorities have no sort of record here, either as to the number or place of

destination of this class of emigrants... the government would, as a matter of course, prohibit if it could do so, the emigration of all young men subject to military duty, but it is quite natural that it feels no regret to get rid of the ultra-socialists and anarchists, and that it is quite willing the bankrupt and swindler should depart for foreign countries, and that the paupers should find support away from home."

The consul for Bohemia says; "The labor and agricultural classes of Bohemia probably supply the greatest number of emigrants to the United States, and among the Bohemian industrial laborers some of the most violent ultra-socialists are to be found. The great

majority of these Bohemian laborers, both of the industrial and agricultural class are illiterate and ignorant in the extreme. They stand in great awe of the police authorities at home."

The Consul for Hungary says: "I am of the opinion that with the present condition of the labor market in the United States there is no room at present for this class of people. I even believe that under more favorable conditions in the United States these Slavicks are not a desirable addition for us to make since they appear to have so many items in common with the Chinese. Like them they are extremely frugal, the love of whiskey of the former being

balanced by the opium habit of the latter. Their ambition lacks both in quality and quantity. Thus they will work similarly cheap with the Chinese, and will interfere with a civilized laborers earning a "white" laborers wages."

The consul for Italy says: "As to the habits and morals of the emigrants to the United States from the northern and central portions of Italy, both men and women are sober and industrious and as a rule trustworthy and moral. They are generally strong, powerful workers, and capable of enduring great fatigue. A less favorable view may be taken of the emigrants from the Southern districts and Sicily. These are the most illit-

erate parts of Italy, and in these districts brigandage was a few years ago extremely prevalent."

The Consul for Russia says; "The government of Russia does not encourage emigration. On the contrary it prohibits all Russian subjects from leaving the empire of Russia except Poles and Jews. The Mennonites have emigrated perhaps more extremely than any other class of Russian subjects. The lowest classes generally form the greatest part of emigration.

The report of the committee of the 50th Congress, appointed by Speaker Carlisle on foreign emigration stated that the effect of emigration upon the country was very bad, and cited as an

illustration the mining regions of Pennsylvania. Here it seems that the very lowest class of foreigners had come in and crowded out the American laborer. They lived in sheds like brats and their food was such that an American could not possibly eat.

With this state of affairs and this class of foreigners it might seem at first consideration that the United States is in great danger of being severely injured. But so long as able bodied men, and men who are willing to work, as nearly all foreigners are the injurious effect cannot be great and only of short duration.

It would doubtless be a great help

if some means could be provided to prevent the massing together of such large numbers in some cities and districts in the East. With the geographical situation of the country as it is this is unavoidable. There will be an overcrowding of some of the cities.

That they crowd Americans out of employment is true in many instances. But it is more often the case that the American is crowded a step higher and is glad of the change.

Americans may yet learn a lesson from these frugal, industrious foreigners. By this is not meant that they will sink to the low grade of life of the foreigner, but could some of their

traits of saving be acquired the country would become far richer and intellectual standing higher. There is prevalent today among Americans a strong tendency to outlive their income. We see as proof of this mortgaged property and a large number of people in every community who, if not in debt are living right up to the limit of their income. This is a condition rarely seen among foreigners. We generally see them, especially those of the rural districts, come here with nothing and in a few years they have made for themselves comfortable homes. Sixty per cent of all immigrants have their passage prepaid by relatives or friends.

Surely all of these belong to a progressive class.

Numerous methods have been proposed for restricting immigration but before any methods are employed, the question, shall immigration be restricted, must be decided. What restriction if any more than we now have do we need? The following twelve questions have been formulated and a discussion of these is the most obvious method of answering the above.

- (1) "Shall the list of excluded persons be enlarged; and if so by what new exclusions?"
- (2) "Shall anarchists and socialists be excluded; and if so how shall they be defined?"
- (3) "Shall an educational qualification for

admission be required; and if so how shall it be applied to families?"

(4) "Shall a property qualification be prescribed?"

(5) "Shall immigration from any particular countries (besides China) be excluded?"

(6) "Shall stricter methods of inspection be used; if so in what special directions?"

(7) "Shall more cuft of space for each passenger be required on the steamship and the cost of coming be increased?"

(8) "Shall the head tax be increased above 50 cents up to \$3.00, \$5.00, or \$10.00?"

(9) "Shall a consular certificate of his right to come be procured by the immigrant before starting, either at his pleasure or compulsorily?"

(10) "Shall passengers by land over the

Canadian or Mexican borders be examined with the same strictness as passengers by sea from Europe?"

(11) "Concerning naturalization; Shall aliens give three months notice of their intention to apply for final papers, and shall there be any other restrictions on naturalization?"

(12) "Can any improvement be made in the contract labor laws?" The laws as they now stand exclude paupers, criminals, insane, and persons having contagious diseases.

It is held that in many countries of Europe benevolent societies continually help the poor and helpless to procure passage for America. Just how far

this is carried is not known but if to any great extent the consuls for the different countries would doubtless put a stop to it.

Let us look now at the condition of the laborer in Europe as given by the consular report of 1884, and in some instances the statements appear to be quite contradictory to those given in 1890.

"In Denmark, the consul says; the laboring classes are characterized by lack of energy and slowness. These workmen on emigrating to our country will, however, soon learn that they must either make an alteration in these habits or go to the wall. And

I have reason to believe that with the change in their surroundings, and with greater ambition called into life by higher scales of wages and brighter prospects for the future they soon drop into the ways of our own classes, and that a visible improvement in this respect is not long in showing itself."

The consul for Russia said; "The lower classes are idle, unreliable, and wasteful, but intelligent and obedient."

In Belgium; "The laboring classes are sober, industrious, and economical."

In Austria-Hungary; "The laborer here is steady and trustworthy, industrious and sober. His constant occupation

keeps him from bad habits and immorality engendered by idleness and the spirit of anarchy. Their intellectual and moral capacity is not very high."

In Germany; "The habits of the working classes are generally good. They are usually found at work whenever they can find employment, whether wages be great or small."

In England; "The working classes are thrifty."

In Holland; "The working classes are tolerably steady, very trustworthy, apparently inclined to be saving."

That the laboring classes should decline in so short a time from

their condition given in this report to that given above seems almost an impossibility. These are the classes from which most of our immigrants come and it is not very likely that such a class would demoralize our country.

To require higher educational standing would keep out many desirable emigrants and admit many who are undesirable. And the same may be said of property standing.

With so large an influx as sometimes comes into certain districts of the United States it is impossible not to overcrowd the labor market, but if properly distributed throughout

the country no man need go without employment.

To restrict immigration among honest, industrious and thrifty people is contrary to a law of nature. Man from the beginning has been a migratory animal.

For the United States to think that she is the dumping ground for all the other nations of the earth is a great mistake. The same thing that is taking place here is occurring in almost every country of the globe.

The room for immigrants in the United States is incalculable. There are thousands of acres of wheat growing land in the western States which the plow has never

yet touched. Nothing but selfishness, could
cause an American to think of restricting
starving immigrants from occupying these
lands and making the country richer. Let
the existing laws be enforced and America
will support in comparative comfort and
intelligence all such foreigners as will
be permitted to land on our shores.