

In the United States itself the plantation form of agriculture, as distinguished from the domestic form, has always been based on a supply of labor from backward or un-Americanized races. This fact has a bearing on the alleged tendency of agriculture toward large farms. Ten years ago it seemed that the great bonanza farms were destined to displace the small farms, just as the trust displaces the small manufacturer. But it is now recognized that the reverse movement is in progress, and that the small farmer can compete successfully with the great farmers. It has not, however, been pointed out that the question is not a merely economic one and that it depends upon the industrial character of the races engaged in agriculture. The thrifty, hard working and intelligent American or Teutonic farmer is able to economize and purchase his own small farm and compete successfully with the large undertaking. But the backward, thriftless and unintelligent races succeed best when employed in gangs on large estates. The cotton and sugar fields of the south, with their negro workers, have their counterpart in the plantations of Hawaii with their Chinese and Japanese, and in the newly developed beet sugar fields of Nebraska, Colorado and California, with their Russians, Bohemians, Japanese and Mexicans. In the domestic or small form of agriculture the bulk of immigrants from southern and eastern Europe are not greatly desired as wage earners, and they do not succeed as proprietors and tenants because they lack oversight and business ability. It is the immigrants from northwestern Europe, the Germans and Scandinavians, whose thrift, self reliance and intensive agriculture have made them the model farmers of America.

These are a few of the many illustrative facts which might be set forth to show that the changing character of immigration is made possible by the changing character of industry, and that races wholly incompetent as pioneers and independent proprietors are able to find a place when once manufactures, mines and railroads, with their captains of industry, have sprung into being to guide and supervise their semi-intelligent work.

We have seen that the character of the immigrants for whom a place can be found depends upon the character of the industry. It also depends upon the laws governing property in labor. Here the industrial problem widens out into the social problem.

There are four variations in the treatment of labor as property in the United States, each of which has had its peculiar effect on the character of immigration or has grown out of the relations between races. They are slavery, peonage, contract labor, and free labor. Under slavery the laborer and his children are compelled by law throughout their lifetime to work for an owner on terms dictated and enforced by him. Under peonage the laborer is compelled by law to pay off a debt by means of his labor, and under contract labor he is compelled by law to carry out a contract to labor. To enforce peonage and contract labor the offence of running away is made punishable by imprisonment at forced labor or by extension of the period of service. Under freedom the law refuses to enforce a contract to work, making this an exception to the sacredness of contracts, and refuses to enforce the payment of a debt by specific service. This leaves to the contractor or creditor the usually empty relief of suing for damages. The significance of these varying degrees of servile, semi-servile and free labor will be seen in the following discussion of the social relations of the superior and inferior races.

In the entire circuit of the globe those races which have developed under a tropical sun are found to be indolent and fickle. From the standpoint of survival of the fittest such vices are really virtues, for severe and continuous exertion under tropical conditions bring prostration and predisposition to disease. Therefore, if such races are to adopt that industrious life which is a second nature to races of the temperate zones, it is only through some form of compulsion. The negro could not possibly have found a place in American industry had he come as a free man, and at the present time contract labor and peonage with the crime of running away are recognized in varying degrees by the laws of southern states. These statutes have been held unconstitutional by



a federal court in Alabama, but the condition of peonage which they contemplate is considered by many planters as essential to the continuance of the cotton industry. One of them, in southwestern Georgia, a graduate of Columbia college, with five years of business training in the northern states, is quoted in an interview as follows:

"We have two ways of handling our plantations. We rent small sections of forty acres each, and with these go a plow and the mule. In addition, I have about 450 hands who work on wages. These men are paid nine dollars a month, in addition to a fixed rate of food, which amounts to four pounds of meat a week, a certain percentage of vegetables, tobacco, sugar, flour and some other commodities.

"These negroes live on the plantation, are given a roof over their heads, have garden patches and several other more or less valuable privileges. They invariably come to me for small advances of money.

"These advances of money and rations and clothing, although there is not much of the latter, are frequently sufficient to put the negro in debt to us. The minute he finds he is in debt he naturally conceives it to be easier to go to work somewhere else and begin all over again, instead of paying his debts.

"Now, when a negro runs away and violates his contract, leaving us in the lurch, not only short of his labor, but short of the advances we have made to him in money and goods, what would happen if we depended simply and solely on our right to sue? In the first place, with 450 hands we would have 450 suits before the season is out, and if we won them all we would not be able to collect forty five cents.

"The result is, that in Georgia and Alabama, and, I believe in other states, the law recognizes the right of the planter to reclaim the laborer who has left in violation of his contract, whether he be actually in debt or not.

"Whether Judge Jones has declared this law unconstitutional or not, the planters in the black belt will have to maintain their right to claim their contract labor, or else they will have to go out of the business. Under any other system you would find it impossible to get in your cotton,

because the negroes at the critical time would simply sit down and refuse to work. When they are well, we compel laborers to go to the field by force. This is the truth, and there is no use lying about it."

The Malay races, to which the Filipinos belong, are, like the negroes, careless, thriftless, and disinclined to continuous exertion. In order to induce the Javanese to work the Dutch government of Java sets aside a certain tract of government land for coffee planting, and compels each head of a household to set out and keep in order a certain number of coffee trees. On private estates in Java and in other Malay and Indian colonies, such as Burma, Ceylon and the Philippines, where the government does not compel the native to take a contract to work, it nevertheless enforces contracts voluntarily made. In certain provinces of the Philippines the tenants are usually in debt, and the old law which permits the creditor to imprison the debtor for nonpayment of debt is still in force. Landowners of a district frequently come together shortly before the crops are sold and agree among themselves how much interest to charge the tenants on their debts. This is for the purpose of charging the highest possible rate and at the same time retain tenants, who then could not leave, finding the same conditions prevailing throughout the district. In the densely populated countries like Java and southern India, where the native cannot set up for himself, he has no alternative except to work under these contracts, and this is also true in the more thickly populated districts of the Philippine islands. But the case is different in sparsely settled countries, like Burma, East Sumatra and the greater part of the Philippines, where wages are so high that natives are not compelled by necessity to work continuously. "Speaking generally," says Professor Jenks, "the unskilled Filipino laborer, while intelligent enough, is careless and thriftless. He in most cases wishes to take two or three days a week on the average to celebrate as feast days. In individual cases, where his wages have been increased, he has been known to lessen correspondingly the number of days per month which he would work. His income being sufficient to satisfy his modest needs, he could



see no reason why he should toil longer than was necessary to earn his income."

Hence in these sparsely settled countries the Dutch and English governments have adopted, and Professor Jenks, in his report to the war department, has recommended, a limited use of the system of contract labor, not, however, for the native, but for imported Chinese. This system has existed in another of our newly acquired possessions, Hawaii, since 1852, where it applied to Chinese, Japanese, Portuguese and German immigrants, and whence it was abolished by the act of annexation in 1898.

Contract labor of this kind is quite different from the peonage and contract labor of the nonindustrial races. It is similar to the indentured service of colonial times, in that the term of each contract is limited to a few years, and the contract is made by way of compensation for advanced expenses of immigration. The object is not, as in the case of slavery and peonage, to compel a shiftless race to work, but it is to develop the country by the introduction of an industrious race. The Chinese, after the expiration of their contracts, often become skilled laborers and merchants, and in the latter position their frugality and wiliness make them dangerous neighbors for the native Malay and Filipino races. For this reason Professor Jenks recommends that employers be placed under bonds to return each contract Chinese coolie to China at the expiration of the period of the contract, not to exceed three years, unless the government gives special permission for renewal of the contract. Governor Taft, in his report for the year 1902, while advocating a limited employment of Chinese contract coolies, said, "The truth is that, from a political standpoint, the unlimited introduction of the Chinese into these islands would be a great mistake. I believe the objection on the part of the Filipinos to such a course to be entirely logical and justified. The development of the islands by Chinamen would be at the expense of the Filipino people, and they may very well resent such a suggestion."

Governor Taft's opinion is strongly supported by the special commissioner of the American federation of labor, who

after inquiries in the district surrounding Manila, reports as follows:

"Their reluctance to work, continually harped upon by many employers, is simply the natural reluctance of a progressive people to work for low wages under bad treatment. When wages rise above the level of the barest and poorest necessities of life, and where treatment is fair, there Filipinos are at work in any numbers required."

There is a statistical fallacy in the foregoing statement. It is true that when high wages are paid Filipinos can be found to work, but in order to secure 200 steady workers at these high wages it is necessary to hire and fire a thousand or more.

"Of course," continues Mr. Rosenberg in his report, "the Filipino worker cannot successfully compete—cheap as he can live—with the Chinese standard of living, hence the unceasing vilification of the Filipino workers by those employers and their following, who, seeing near by the unlimited supply of cheap Chinese labor, wish these islands to be thrown open to such labor, not only for the purpose of reducing the small wages of the Filipinos, but also to reduce that of the Chinese laborers now here. As one employer stated to me, "We want more Chinese to keep them here for one or two years, then ship them back and get another lot, for the Chinese I have here now are becoming too independent and want more pay."

The free laborer is not compelled by law to work. Then, why should he work? Why does he work? The answer is found within himself. He wants something that he cannot get without working. Though this may seem a trifling question and a self evident answer, the question and answer are the foundation of all questions of free institutions. For the nonworking races and classes or the spasmodic and unreliable workers are the savages, paupers, criminals, idiots, lunatics, drunkards and the great tribe of exploiters, grafters, despots and leisure classes, who live on the work of others. Nearly every question of social pathology may be resolved to this, Why does he not work? And nearly every social ill would be cured if the non workers could be brought to work.

There are just two grand motives which induce the free-man to work—necessity and ambition. Necessity is the desire



for quantity, quality and variety of things to be used up. The term is elastic. It is psychological, not material. It includes, of course, the wants of mere animal existence—food, clothing, shelter. But this is a small part. The cost of the mere quantity needed to support life is less than the added cost needed to secure the quality and variety that satisfy the taste and habits. A pig enjoys raw corn, but a man requires corn cake at five times the cost. Tastes and habits depend on one's childhood, one's training, one's associations and kind of work. The necessities of a Chinese coolie, Italian immigrant, or negro plantation hand, are less, and cost less than those of a skilled mechanic or a college graduate, because his associations have been different, and his present work is different. But necessity goes farther. It includes the wants of the family considered as a unit and not merely the wants of the single man or woman, else the race would not continue to increase. Furthermore, social obligations impose added necessity. Compulsory education of children compels parents to support their children instead of living on their wages. Laws regulating sanitation and tenements compel the tenant to pay more rent. The necessities of a farm hand on the estates of Italy are less than those of the same hand in the cities of America.

Ambition is the desire for an improved position for one's self and family—for better quality and greater variety of material things. It demands a style of clothing and living suitable to the improved position aspired to. It demands an education for one's children superior to the minimum set by compulsory schooling. It demands thrift and economy for the sake of independence or the ability to hold out until one's demands are conceded. Ambition looks to the future—necessity is based on the past. The negro or the Malay works three days and loafs three because three days' wages procure his necessities. The Chinaman or Italian or Jewish immigrant works six days and saves the wages of three, because the future is vivid to his imagination. With similar necessities one is ambitious, the other is content.

But ambition has its penalty. It is equivalent to an increase in the supply of labor. Rather than lie idle the ambi-

tious workman accepts a lower rate of pay. His fellows see the reduction and go still lower. The seesaw continues until wages reach the level of necessities and there is nothing left for ambition. The Jewish sweatshop is the tragic penalty paid by that ambitious race. In the Illinois coal mines the wages were reduced one third during twelve years of Italian and Slavic immigration. The ambitious races are the industrial races. But their ambition and their industry bring the momentous problem of destructive competition. There is but one immediate and practical remedy—the organization of labor to regulate competition. The method of organization is to do in concert through self sacrifice what the non industrial races do individually for self indulgence, namely, refuse to work. Where the one loafs the other strikes. While the necessities of the workers set the minimum below which wages cannot fall, the labor union, by means of the strike or the threat to strike, sets a higher minimum which leaves room for ambition. Eventually the higher minimum becomes habitual and becomes a higher level of necessities. Gifted individuals may, indeed, rise above the wage earning class by their own efforts, but labor organization alone can raise the class as a whole.

The organization of workmen in labor unions has been more difficult in this than in other countries, owing to the competition of races. Heretofore it has been the easiest possible matter for a manager, apprehensive of agitators in forming a union, to introduce a new race and a new language into his works. Indeed, almost the only device and symptom of originality displayed by great American corporations in disciplining their labor force has been that of playing one race against another. They have, as a rule, been weak in methods of conciliation and feelings of consideration for their employees, as well as in the means of safeguarding life and health, but they have been strong with the weapon of autocrats, divide and conquer. The number of races they have drawn upon is often amazing. The anthracite mine workers comprise nineteen languages and dialects. The employees of the Colorado Fuel and Iron company belong to thirty two nationalities and speak twenty seven languages. Such a medley of races



offers indeed a disheartening prospect to the union organizer. And, therefore, when these races finally organize the change in their moral character must be looked upon as the most significant of the social and industrial revolutions of our time. The United Mine Workers of America, with 300,000 members, is very largely composed of recent immigrants from southern and eastern Europe. So with the Longshoremen and the United Garment Workers. These are among the strongest and best disciplined of American labor unions. The newest races of the past twenty years have been coming long enough to have leaders who speak the English language and act as interpreters and leaders, and this is essential where the speeches at a union meeting must be translated often into four or five languages before the subject can be voted upon. Furthermore, the recruiting area for the new races has been nearly exhausted, and the races now coming find their fellow countrymen already in unions. In the anthracite coal field I saw a dozen Slovaks just arrived from Hungary, but persuaded by their unionized precursors not to take the place of strikers. Such a sight would have been unlikely a dozen years ago.

The competition of races is the competition of standards of living. The reason the Chinaman or the Italian can save three days' wages is because wages have been previously fixed by the greater necessities of more advanced races. But competition has no respect for superior races. The race with lowest necessities displaces others. The cotton textile industry of New England was originally operated by the educated sons and daughters of American stock. The Irish displaced many of them, then the French-Canadians completed the displacement; then, when the children of the French had begun to acquire a higher standard, contingents of Portuguese, Greeks, Syrians, Poles, and Italians entered to prevent a rise, and lastly the Scotch-Irish from the Appalachian mountains came down to the valleys of the south, and with their low wages, long hours, and child labor, set another brake on the standard of living. Branches of the clothing industry in New York began with English and Scotch tailors, were then captured by Irish and Germans, then by Russian Jews, and

lastly by Italians, while in Boston the Portuguese took a share, and in Chicago the Poles, Bohemians, and Scandinavians. Almost every great manufacturing and mining industry has experienced a similar substitution of races. As rapidly as a race rises in the scale of living and, through organization, begins to demand higher wages and resist the pressure of long hours and overexertion, the employers substitute another race, and the process is repeated. Each race comes from a country lower in the scale than that of the preceding, until finally the ends of the earth have been ransacked in the search for low standards of living combined with patient industriousness. Europe has been exhausted, Asia has been drawn upon, and there remain but three regions of the temperate zones from which a still lower standard can be expected. These are China, Japan, and India. The Chinese have been excluded by law, the Japanese are coming in increasing numbers, and the Indian coolies remain to be experimented upon. That employers will make strenuous efforts to bring in these last remaining races in the progressive decline of standards, to repeal the Chinese prohibitive laws and to prevent additions to these laws, naturally follows from the progress toward higher standards and labor organization already made by the Italian and the Slav.

The trade union is often represented as an imported and un-American institution. It is true that in some unions the main strength is in the English workmen, but the English are little inclined to become American citizens. The majority of unionists are immigrants and children of immigrants from countries that know little of unionism. Ireland and Italy have nothing to compare with the trade union movement of England, but the Irish are the most effective organizers of the American unions, and the Italians are becoming the most ardent unionists. Most remarkable of all, the individualistic Jew from Russia, contrary to his race instinct, is joining the unions. The American unions, in fact, grow out of American conditions, and are an American product. Although wages are two or three times as high as in his European home, the immigrant is driven by competition and the pressure of employers into a physical exertion which com-



pels him to raise his standard of living in order to have strength to keep at work. He finds also that the law forbids his children to work, and compels him to send them to school. To maintain a higher standard and to support his children he must earn more wages. This he can do in no other way than by organizing a union. The movement is, of course, aided by English speaking outsiders or agitators, especially by the Irish, but it finds a prompt response in the necessities of the recruits. Labor organization is essentially the outcome of American freedom, both as a corrective to the evils of free competition and as an exercise of the privilege of free association.

When once moved by the spirit of unionism the immigrants from low standard countries are the most dangerous of unionists, for they have no obligations, little property, and but meager necessities that compel them to yield. The bituminous coal miners were on strike four months in 1897, and the anthracite mine workers five months in 1902. Unionism comes to them as a discovery and a revelation. Suddenly to find that men of other races whom they have hated are really brothers, and that their enmity has been encouraged for the profit of a common oppressor, is the most profound awakening of which they are capable. Their resentment toward employers who have kept them apart, their devotion to their new found brothers, is terrible and pathetic. With their emotional temperament, unionism becomes not merely a fight for wages but for a religious crusade. It is in the nature of retribution that, after bringing to this country all the industrial races of Europe and Asia in the effort to break down labor organizations, these races should so soon have wiped out race antagonism and, joining together in the most powerful of labor unions, have wrenched from their employers the greatest advances in wages.

There is but one thing that stands in the way of complete unionization in many of the industries, namely, a flood of immigration too great for assimilation by the unions. With nearly a million immigrants a year, the pressure upon unions seems almost resistless. A few of the unions which control the trade, like the mine workers and longshoremen, with high

initiation fees and severe terms of admission, are able to protect themselves by virtue of strength already gained. But in the coast states and on miscellaneous labor this strategic advantage does not exist, and the standards are set by the newest immigrants.

We have now stated at some length the two standpoints from which the immigration of industrial races is viewed. One standpoint is that of the production of wealth, the other, the distribution of wealth. One is the development of our natural resources, the other is the elevation of our working population. If we inquire somewhat more critically and take into account all of the circumstances, we shall find that the motive of this difference in policy is not really the above distinction between production and distribution, but the distinction between two opposing interests in distribution, namely, profits and wages. Unfortunately, it is too readily assumed that whatever increases profits does so by increasing production. As a matter of fact it is only secondarily the production of wealth and development of resources that is sought by one of the interests concerned—it is primarily increase of profits at the expense of wages. Cheap labor, it is asserted, is needed to develop the less productive resources of the country—what the economists call the margin of production. It is needed to develop the less productive industries, like beet sugar, and the less productive branches of other industries, like the construction of railways in undeveloped regions or the reconstruction of railways in older regions, or the extension of a coal mine into the narrow veins, and so on. Without cheap labor these marginal resources, it is asserted, could not profitably be exploited, and would, therefore, not be developed.

This argument, within limits, is undoubtedly true, but it overlooks the part played by machinery and inventions where wages are high. The cigar making machine cannot profitably be introduced on the Pacific coast because Chinese cheap labor makes the same cigars at less cost than the machines. High wages stimulate the invention and use of machinery and scientific processes, and it is machinery and science, more than mere hand labor, on which reliance must be placed to develop the natural resources of a country.



But machinery and science cannot be as quickly introduced as cheap immigrant labor. Machinery requires accumulation of capital in advance of production, but labor requires only the payment of daily wages in the course of production. Consequently, in the haste to get profits the immigrant is more desired than machinery. But excessive profits secured in this way bring reaction and a period of business depression which check the production of wealth even more than the period of prosperity has stimulated production. Consider, for a moment, the extreme vacillations of prosperity and depression which characterize American industry. In a period of prosperity the prices of commodities rise rapidly, but the wages of labor, especially unorganized labor, follow slowly, and do not rise proportionately as high as prices. This means an enormous increase in profits and production of commodities. But commodities are produced to be sold, and if the market falls off, then production comes to a standstill with what is known as overproduction. Now, wage earners are the mass of consumers. If their wages do not rise in proportion to prices and profits, they cannot purchase as large a proportion of the country's products as they did before the period of prosperity began. Overproduction is mainly the underconsumption of wage earners. Immigration intensifies this fatal cycle of booms and depressions. A natural increase in population by excess of births over deaths continues at practically the same rate year after year, in good times and bad times, but an artificial increase through immigration falls off in hard times and becomes excessive in good times.

The swell of immigration in periods of prosperity increases the supply of labor, but the protective tariff prevents a similar increase in the supply of products. Thus immigration and the tariff together prevent wages from rising with the rise in prices of commodities and cost of living. This permits profits to increase more than wages, to be followed by overproduction and stoppage of business.

Furthermore, when once the flow of immigrants is stimulated it continues for some time after the pinnacle of prosperity has been reached. In 1903 the boom met a check at the beginning of the year, but the number of immigrants con-

tinued to increase during the summer and fall at the rate of 20,000 per month in excess of the number during the high period of prosperity in 1902. This has made it possible for great corporations to continue their investments by means of cheap labor beyond the probable demands of the country, with the result of overproduction, loss of profits, inability to pay fixed charges and consequent panics. Thus it is that immigration, instead of increasing the production of wealth by a steady, healthful growth, joins with other causes to stimulate a feverish overproduction followed by a collapse. It helps to create fortunes during a short period of speculation and intensifies the reaction during a period of stagnation.