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THE LITERACY TEST AGAIN

In writing about the President's veto of the immigration bill last week the Sentinel alluded to Germany, Ireland and Sweden as the countries from which the best immigrants came to this country in its earlier history. The list, however, is too short and ought to be enlarged. To it may be added all the Scandinavian countries, Denmark and Norway; Holland, England, Scotland, Switzerland and perhaps France and Austria. Outside of the Irish the laboring classes of the other countries were not very much in evidence among the early settlers of this country from abroad. The immigrants then usually came as home seekers, not as laborers. As laborers, before 1860, they were about as well off in their native countries as they would have been in America, the wages of labor not having been much above starvation. Immigrants who stopped in the States along the Atlantic seaboard found little to attract them. There was little demand for skilled labor, and such trades as carpentering, brick laying and the like commanded less wages than are now paid to unskilled labor of the lowest order. Forty cents a day, or at most 50 cents, and months of idleness during the year, were not attractive conditions to those foreigners who desired to seek better things.

And so, during the first century of its history as an independent nation the United States did not increase rapidly in population, and found no difficulty in assimilating immigrants, generally, to the principles of Republican government. The census of 1860 showed a population of about 38,000,000. That number was not much increased during the Civil War, so that in 80 years the natural increase, supplemented by immigration, did not add half a million annually to the population. But, as stated last week, the immigration brought the bone and sinew of foreign countries to these shores to become equally the builders of a strong, free nation of people on this North American Continent.

What a contrast the immigrants of those 80 years, in character and purpose, were to the people who have been pouring in upon us during the last twenty-five or thirty years, and what a vast body of these latter have swelled the population to all most double its number at the beginning of that period. What a difference between the hardy, brave Swiss, Germans, Scandinavians, Scotch, Irish, English and the few French who came earlier and the Poles, Hungarians and Southern Italians coming here since then.

Of these three races represented in this vast irruption of alien people upon this land, the Southern Italians are probably the least desirable, but the main bodies of all of them come as laborers in mines, on corporation works and the like. They come as competitors with American labor for the better rewards of such service here, than they can obtain in their own countries.

It is due to the people of Central and Northern Italy to state that they are a different people from the inhabitants of the Southern part of their country. They may be of the same race, but the influence of climatic conditions may have developed them into a higher degree of civilization. They are not coming here in large numbers. It is probable, however, that the people of Southern Italy are not real Italians, but the descendants of interlopers from other lands. The writer has heard that stated by a high authority in such matters.

At any rate, to class them with the immigrants who came to this country during the first 75 or 80 years of American Independence and even later, is a libel upon the character of those immigrants. Among these were not found such organizations as the Mafia, the Black Hand and the like. The knife and the stiletto were not such weapons as were found in their hands. If they had feuds, as was perhaps sometimes the case, they relied upon nature's weapons to maintain what they supposed to be their rights. But feuds were few and far between, and the courts and justices' dockets were not filled with names such as now figure largely thereon.

Now, this is the effective and just answer to one of the arguments of President Wilson and of others who approve his veto of the Immigration bill. The ante-Civil War immigrants who did so much to maintain law and order in this country were a desirable addition to the population. They did not come into competition with the native inhabitants of the country, because there was room enough for all and no crowding. The vast reaches of unoccupied land needed to be settled and they became settlers. They were needed and they came. Does the country need the people who are now coming in increasing numbers. There was no injustice to the American farmers in opening the public lands to settlement by immigrants from Germany, Scandinavia, Switzerland, and elsewhere. Is it just to the American wage earner to refuse him protection from competition with illiterate and undesirable citizens from other countries?' Especially, is there no injustice to him in permitting the whole country to be overpopulated by these people?

President Wilson says, in substance, that there is no general public demand for the proposed legislation providing a literacy test for future immigrants. He knows, in his own opinion, better than Representatives and Senators, what their constituents want. He knows better than the Federation of labor, the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and other labor organizations what they desire. These organizations urged him to approve the immigration bill, but he made light of their appeals for that action. They know that during the past year probably two millions of skilled and unskilled laborers have been walking about this country, vainly seeking for work. These are the people most directly affected by the influx of a vast body of European laborers. But the President turned a deaf ear to their entreaties. But righteous as is their objection to being crowded out of work by foreign laborers, their cause is secondary to the malign effect exerted upon the general welfare and future safety of the country by the multiplication of the population with a vast horde of either illiterate or otherwise very undesirable inhabitants.

WHAT THE FIGURES SHOW

Taking the figures of the New York Times, tabulated from the election returns of 1914, the Democratic Advocate, which, as a rule, is conservative and fair to the opponents of its party, argued in its last week's issue that the Republican party is even more of a minority party than the Democratic party. The accuracy of the figures quoted is not doubted, but they are, after all, misleading, as a careful analysis will demonstrate. They show that at the November election of 1914 the Democrats polled 6,324,362 votes and the Republicans 6,013,347. The Progressives cast 1,906,417, making the combined Republican and Progressive strength 7,919,791, a clear majority of all the votes polled at the election referred to. But these are the votes of two parties. In a sense that is true, but with this difference: These two parties have much in common and are, in fact, wings or factions of but one. Going back two years a marked difference between the figures of the election of 1912 and those of the election of 1914 appears. The Democratic vote at that election was 6,282,342, the Progressive 4,114,585, the Republican 3,480,479. The Democratic plurality then over the Progressives was 2,167,957, and over the Republicans, 2,801,863.

Thus the apparent Republican gain in two years was 2,490,884. Apparent gain be it understood, because it only indicates the transfer of the number of votes named from one wing of the party to the other. While Progressives in name it is well known that there is common ground upon which the members of the two wings, under the name Republican, stand together and, there is good reason to believe, will be found fighting together against the common enemy in 1916. Together they will embrace a clear majority of all the votes of the country.

There is another feature of the present condition of parties that should not be overlooked in summing up the event of 1912. The Democrats then elected a majority of 197 to the House of Representatives. Of this majority 125 of the 149 from the Southern States, in many of which there is practically no Republican party, was elected. Not much change from these figures occurred at the election of 1914. And so it appears that in the the number of Representatives from States in which the Republicans have an active organization, they are not only much stronger than the Democrats numerically, but have elected a large majority of the members of the next Congress. Take from the Democratic party its more than 100 majority of Southern Congressmen and it would be left in a hopeless minority. Its majortiy of 197 in the 63rd Congress has dwindled to 23 for the 64th Congress to begin March 4, 1915. With a union of the opponents of the present Administration and Congress, it stands to meet that fate anyhow in 1916.

THROWING OFF THE SHACKLES

Signs are multiplying that the autocratic character of the present Administration at Washington is meeting with decided opposition among its heretofore subservient supporters. The Administration received a heavy jolt, from an unexpected quarter—the Senate—on Monday. The Ship Purchase bill, as it is called, in which the Government proposed tot go into partnership with private corporations in the ownership of sea-going craft, was under consideration and was being bitterly opposed by the Republican Senators, who had for days been filibustering against it, when they received assistance from nine Democratic Senators, who refused to longer wear the administration collar.

The action of these nine Senators came as a surprise to both sides of the Senate. The only hope the Republicans had of being able to prevent the passage of the bill, lay in a filibuster that interrupted other pressing business. This was being exercised when suddenly the recalcitrant Democratic Senators showed their hands and made it clear that they are opposed to the measure. For a time it looked as if the bill would have suffered defeat then and there, if a vote had been taken upon it. But its opponents did not press for such action and the Senate finally adjourned, with a motion pending to recommit it to the committee. The Senators, who thus blocked the administration program, are Bankhead, of Alabama; Bryan, of Florida; Camden, of Kentucky; Clark, of Arkansas; Hardwick and Smith, of Georgia; Hitchcock, of Nebraska; O'Gorman, of New York, and Vardaman, of Mississippi. Seven of them, therefore, are from Southern States, a quarter from which opposition to the autocrat of the White House might have been least expected. O'Gorman, of New York, has shown his opposition to the bill is signification on previous occasions, and his opposition to the bill is significant, comng as he does from the principal maratime State of the Union. His colleague, Senator Root, being a Republican, is of course opposed to the measure, so that every State on the seacoast, north of New Jersey, has repudiated the scheme.

This manifestation of independence on the part of so many prominent Democratic Senators, however, is one of the most cheering signs of a possible return to legitimate authority and action over executive usurpation. It is the President's duty to advise, not coerce Congress to accept his views. The present Executive has traveled far from this highway of right and duty into the byways of autocracy, and a sycophantic Congress has followed him in his wandering from the plain limits of his constitutional authority. All honor to the men who have gotten back to the solid ground of the Constitution and have thrown off the shackles of Executive domination.

ALAS FOR POLAND!

The hearts of the American people were stirred to their depths for the suffering people of Belgium, and many ship loads of food, clothing &c., have been, and are still being, sent across the sea to relieve their destitution. Nothing of consequence has been done in this country for the Poles, who are said to be in a much worse plight than the Belgians. From Petrograd comes the information that millions of the people are in acute misery, caused by the German invasion. Whether Russia has been able to afford them relief is doubtful. Commissioners are said to be investigating the devastation the country has suffered, but the destruction has been so complete and universal "that it hardly seems possible it was the work of human agents."

"Normally," says the report from Petrograd, "Poland is a pleasantly rolling country, not unlike the American Middle West; fertile, agriculturaly developed, productive and prosperous, with its landscapes checkered with well-groomed farms and patches of wood. It is now bleak and scarred; almost every house is in ruins and the mutilated roads are full of half-starved, half-frozen people who have no homes and no possibility of escaping from the charred remains of what once were their habitations.

"The line of fugitive peasants is like a long black cord, knotted in places where they have assembled in groups to consider the best way to escape. But at one end escape is cut off by the heavily massed Russian troops, and the other end of the line recoils from the advancing German army.

"The picture is drawn by Prince Dominique Radziwill, a member of Poland's oldest and noblest aristocracy, who has come to Petrograd from his home in Minsk to devise some practical method of assisting his unfortunate countrymen."

Prince Radziwill has visited Petrograd for the purpose of arousing the Russian government to a knowledge of the conditions described, and to make them known to the other nations of the world. The American people should not be slow to respond to an appeal for such relief as they can extend. They were prompt in sending aid to the Belgians, who had no greater claim upon their sympathies than the Poles. There are, without doubt, many more natives of Poland than of Belgium in this country, and to these a special appeal for aid should be made. It is hard to read about the sufferings of their fellow-countrymen without a thrill of horror.

Carroll county people who have been called upon for contributions to the Belgium sucerers have, 7perhaps, reached the limit of what they felt inclined to give, but may be induced to go a little deeper into their resources for these destitute Poles. If they need information on the subject it can probably be furnished them by Ex-Governor Warfield, whose daughter is the wife of a Polish nobleman. No doubt an inquiry addressed to him at the Fidelity Trust and Deposit Building, Charles and Lexington streets, Baltimore, will elicit the information needed.

REFORM OF PARTY REPRESENTATION

The plan of the Republican National Committee to re-arrange the basis of representation in National Conventions has been approved by States representing 290 electoral votes, and will be put into effect when the committee meets to call the next convention to nominate candidates for President and Vice President. The number of electoral votes required to give effect to the plan, under the party constitution, was 265, so that 25 more than necessary are represented in deciding the question. Secretary James B. Reynolds, of the Committee explains the plan as follows

Under the new plan each State will be entitled in the national convention to four delegates-at-large; two additional delegates-at-large for each Representative-at-Large in Congress elected from any State entitled to one or more additional Representatives in Congress under the apportionment made in accordance with the last census, but in which State no new Congressional district has been provided by law; one delegate from each Congressional district; an additional delegate for each Congressional district in which the vote for any Republican elector in 1908, or for the Republican nominee for Congress in 1914, was not less than 7,500.

This may be better understood by the simple statement that no Congesssional District that failed to poll 7,500 votes for any Republican elector in 1908, or for the Republican nominee for Congress in 1914, will have more than one delegate, while all districts that polled that number and over will have two delegates in the national convention of 1916. Many districts in the Southern States will therefore lose one delegate. Probably there is no district in a Northern State that will be thus affected, and everyone of them will have two delegates, as usual. The districts affected lie in Virginia, North and South Carolina, Georgia, Florida, Tennessee, Alabama, Mississippi, Arkansas, Louisiana and Texas, most of them being south of North Carolina and Tennessee. Possibly a district or two in Kentucky may come under the plan. Just how many delegates will be eliminated in the aggregate cannot here be stated, as the figures are not at hand to show it, but the number will not fall below 60 and may be 70 or even 80.

The plan, it can be said, is a necessary reform. It has been utterly inequitable to give as much ELEVEN power in a national convention to a Congressional district in which there is scarcely a skeleton of a Republican organization, as to one in which the party polls a third to two-thirds of the votes cast. This glaring inequality never became so patent as it did in 1912, when votes of the Southern States exercised a potent influence in the action of the national convention and, it is probable, were the cause of the unfortunate division of the party that led to the election of a Democratic President and brought the ills upon the country under which it is now laboring.

There is no injustice, therefore, in predicating representation, to some extent, upon votes. In fact the plan adopted is really generous to those districts in which there is hardly the semblance of a Republican party, and it puts aside a cause heretofore calculated to excite dissension and unjust action. The plan should be received without a dissenting voice in any quarter.

NOT WAR VESSELS SAYS BRYAN

Secretary Bryan, replying to Germany's note contending that hydro-aeroplanes are ships of war, has notified that country that its contention cannot be sustained. The logic of the Secretary's reply seems pretty sound. He says:

"The fact that a hydro-aeroplane is fitted with apparatus to rise from, and alight upon, the sea does not, in my opinion, give it the character of a vessel any more than the wheels attached to an aeroplane fitting it to rise from, and alight upon, land give the latter the character of a land vehicle. Both the hydro-aeroplane and the aeroplane are essentially air craft; as an aid in military operations they can only be used in the air; the fact that one starts its flight from the surface of the sea and the other from the land is a mere incident which in no way affects their aerial character."

Of course sympathizers with Germany will contend that this decision is made in the interest of Great Britain, which has orders with the Curtiss Company at Hammondsport, New York, for many machines. Human judgment in such matters is apt to be warped by prejudice, and attribute action at variance with it to improper motives. To do so in this case would be exceedingly unjust to Secretary Bryan and also to President Wilson, who, without doubt, approves the stand taken on the subject. Whatever may be said of some features of this Administration it is beyond controversy that it is honestly bent on maintaining strict neutrality towards the nations engaged in the great European war.

The Sentinel had reached no conclusion regarding the justice of Germany's contention in this case. It seemed a matter wholly for consideration by the government and not for individual citizens. It raised a new question for which there was no precedent and had to be left absolutely to the judgment of those whose duty it was to determine it.

But, now that it is determined it is not out of place for the people to look carefully into the question, and, it is believed that, laying prejudice aside, their views will generally coincide wth those of the government. And the more carefully the arguments employed by Mr. Bryan are considered, the more logical they appear. The mere fact that a hydro-aeroplane can rise from the water as readily as from the land does not give it much, if any, offensive power at sea. As Secretary Bryan puts it in substance, it is essentially an air craft and is only designed to navigate the air. Its dual quality does not constitute it a ship or vessel of war.

THE SUBMARINE

About the third of a century ago Jules Verne, a popular novelist, published a fascinating book under the title, "Eighty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea." The name of the hero of the alleged adventure was Capt. Nemo, whose craft, traveling ten thousand miles beneath the surface of the sea, entered a cove in an uninhabited island, about the same time that a balloon, carrying a party of aeronauts, was wrecked on the island. These aeronauts at once explored the island, but found no trace of the presence of another human being. Later on, however, they came upon mysterious signs of such a presence, and at length found the explanation in the cove where Capt. Nemo lay in his submarine. The description of that craft was marvellously like the submarine of today, except that it was fitted up in the most luxurious style. But it had electric appliances for rising and sinking, lighting, propelling &c., all of which were to the mind of the novelist the sheerest fancy and utterly beyond practical realization. But today, only the third of a century after the story was written, the kind of craft, he described almost literally, is in constant evidence as a powerful vessel of war, and is being successfully used by some of the belligerents in the great conflict in Europe. Germany, particularly, is employing the submarine as the destroyer of British ships of war and merchantmen. Two or three big British war ships have been sent to the bottom, and within the last week five or more merchantmen have shared the same fate. It is said that these submarines from Germany have passed entirely through the North sea and around the British Isles, England, Ireland and Scotland. It would not be safe to predict how much damage they may do to British shipping, but they are a menace and a danger which are not viewed with equanimity by the British government and people. How litte Jules Verne supposed he was describing a practical under-the-sea craft when he gave rein to his imagination in telling the story of Capt. Nemo and his "Eighty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea."

It is now stated that Great Britain has declared food stuffs designed for Germany to be contraband of war. That action is based upon the seizure, by the German government, of the corn, wheat and flour now found in the empire. This action by the British was predicted by the Sentinel last week, and it must be acknowledged is fully jusified. Germany cannot legitimately abandon the support of her own non-combatant people and turn them over to neutrals for supplies. Just as it is Germany's misfortune that she is, in a great measure unable, for lack of a sufficient navy, to prevent Great Britain from procuring military supplies from neutrals, which she cannot do, so will it be in regard to contraband corn, wheat and flour, and possibly other food stuffs. If the German government's seizure of these articles, from its own people, shall leave them to suffer hunger and famine, the responsibility will rest with that government. It is a worse than military weakness that confronts the empire. The armies must be fed, but with what heart can German soldiers fight if they know that their families are starving at home. It will not be surprising if the order of seizure shall be amended and a division of supplies between soldiers and citizens shall be decided upon. Better short rations for the soldier than starvation for his wife and children.

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