

TOPICS OF THE DAY

CROSSING THE BORDER: A HAPPY PROLETARIAT: UNEMPLOYMENT AND IMMIGRATION: AN AGE OF GOLD.

THOSE golden phrases about three thousand miles of frontier without a fortress must surely have been coined and circulated by orators happily oblivious of the barriers erected at ports of entry by the United States Department of Labour. The pleasures to be derived from the advantages, public and private, of a visit to the great republic to the south of us are too often sadly diminished by first impressions at the doorway. Granted that a host is master in his own house, and has a right to impose the conditions of admittance, it would appear wise to discriminate so that as far as possible the rebuffs may be received chiefly by those to whom entry will eventually be denied.

A certain type of officer is fond of pointing out that there is no law compelling entry to the United States, and "if you don't like it, you can stay out." The intention of his interminable parade of formalities may be to produce respect, but the effect is far otherwise. There are others who explain that the regulations were never intended to molest reputable travellers and desirable immigrants, and who exercise commendable ingenuity in rescuing distressed voyagers from the results of their own folly. However, a very short period of detention in an immigration depôt, awaiting leave to spend a week's vacation, requires more than the company of the most genial and companionable of officials to remove the unpleasant reflections called forth by watching a transatlantic liner rapidly disgorging by way of the steerage gang plank a fresh consignment of future "citizens". The comparison is depressing to self-respect, but the encouragement to become a citizen and enjoy the same privileges of liberty, fraternity and equality must depend to some extent on the measure of freedom that one has enjoyed at home, and on the penalties imposed by the breaking of established ties.

Recently a British subject resident in Canada, whom business and pleasure occasionally calls across the border, was moved to enquire how he might reduce the tedium and annoyance to which, by obeying the regulations, he seemed inevitably to be subjected. He was advised to apply for a place on the quota, but enquiry revealed that for this particular applicant the accident of birth would postpone admission for a period of about seven years. As a large

portion of that time seemed to have elapsed pending the arrival of a certificate of birth and other equally necessary documents, the traveller was disposed to stay the course; but he was further informed that he must remain absent from the States until his permanent acceptance should be approved, and that immediately thereafter he should proceed to establish himself in the land of his adoption. The examining officer was himself an enthusiastic convert, and probably unique in being a Scotsman who admitted that there are better places than Scotland; but even his ingenuity was unable to adjust the rules to a natural desire to break the seven years of servitude with occasional glimpses of familiar scenes and faces in the promised land; nor could he deny that it is less simple to abandon a responsible salaried position than to give up a job with pick and shovel.

In the eyes of the immigration department, the right to become a citizen is measured by the strength of the desire; but it is possible to argue that when a new and free country offers so good a bargain to the illiterate, the impoverished, and even to the more reprehensible elements of its neighbours, it may possibly make a bad bargain for itself. Certainly there would seem to be some grounds for making allowance for the inability of a scholar of repute to grasp the implications of the oath of allegiance with the same facility and to accept them with the same enthusiasm as a Ruthenian peasant who has had the cultural and civic advantages of six weeks attendance at a night school. This readiness to accept the proletariat *en masse* may not be so impolitic as it at first appears. Every skilled artisan or competent professional man who immigrates to a given country provides the possibility that a native citizen may lose a position to which by virtue of his nationality he has a prior claim. Every illiterate, unskilled labourer imported means a corresponding chance for the ambitious native artisan to rise. Furthermore, while improving his financial position, he can derive additional comfort by looking down on his successor as an inferior member of an inferior race.

EVEN in a democracy, social and political advancement tends to the establishment of a helotage. In the United States, equality of opportunity and of intercourse does not prohibit the establishment of opportunity for a little condescension. The nigger of the old South has been succeeded by the subservient Dago and the comic Swede. Reports from Chicago and other strategic points on the middle-western front suggest that what is vaguely known as the foreign element is sometimes quick to seize opportunities more remunerative than those offered by the coal-bin and the banana

stand, and to establish a rapid and spectacular prominence by means of bombs and bootlegging. But the general effect of immigration is to swell the populace by accretions that will obtain the goodwill and protection of the genuine aristocracy without offending the more raucous susceptibilities of the hundred-per-cent Americans and the Klu Klux Klan. Such a proletariat, impressed by the comforts and opportunities denied at home, naturally provides a ballast of simple faith in the essential rightness of a body politic in which freedom, at least to those fresh from the conditions of the peasant and the serf, is a very real thing. Who would not do as he is told for a country that displaces the bondage of feudalism by the pleasant delusion of self-government, and by the more tangible privileges of the radio, the movie, and the subway, of the gas-stove and the bath-tub, of the coin-machine and the coins to feed it? A populace that has received its first real opportunity to live is not so likely as others to raise awkward questions about the conditions under which it may be asked to die.

If for no other reasons than honest gratitude and unquestioning loyalty, the new-found pride and responsibility of citizenship will ensure the belief that it is unnecessary to search the individual conscience in order to reconcile the voice of the United States Minister of War with the voice of God. Under democracy, of course, the voice of the minister echoes the voice of the people, and the voice of the people also determines the voice of God. Therefore, if the country goes to war, any question as to necessity or justice implies a criticism not only of a benevolent land of adoption, but of one's own privilege of governing its decisions. Not that the potential conscript thus argues it: he is content to retain a blind faith in his country, in return for the unbounded confidence it has engendered in himself. Recently, when the State of Massachusetts was engaged in celebrating the anniversary of the fight at Concord, the janitor of a certain Boston office, some six months emigrated from central Europe, accosted an executive officer of ten years' residence, but labouring under the disadvantages of English birth and British nationality, and offered the encouraging patronage of a hearty slap on the shoulder. "Too bad for you, hey? This was the day us fellas beat yous fellas". This sort of thing usually causes less apprehension to the individual victim than to responsible American citizens who view it as a symptom. Such naive patriotism produces a good servant but a bad master; and the man who drives an ice-waggon to-day may to-morrow ride in a limousine and control the vote of a precinct.

In spite of heavy and indiscriminating additions to the melting-

pot, there is still a tradition to which such blatancy, whatever civic rights be granted it, must remain for ever foreign. But traditions are of small account to a multitude whose happiness is based on the absence of distinctions and neglect of the past. The recent troubles of expatriate Canadians have affected chiefly those whose incomes are derived from the skilled trades and from business. This is probably due, however, to economic rather than to social causes. In times of depression, skilled labour from abroad meets with active opposition from trade-unions at home. Casual labour goes unchecked. Those unemployed American citizens who can make themselves heard are more likely to object to unnaturalized workers in factory and in office than to comparatively innocuous hewers of wood and drawers of water. In one profession, the desire to safeguard home industry threatened for a time to defeat its own object, and it has been found necessary for a wholesale expatriation order to be rescinded. When Nova Scotian fishermen received orders from Boston to abandon the New England schooners, it was found that there were not enough skilled sailormen to put the fleet to sea. Similar hasty measures threatened professional hockey, another industry depending on Canadian talent; but it is hardly necessary to add that the danger was speedily averted. In many other fields, however, the Department of Labour is efficiently going about its business of providing employment for its own countrymen, and many Canadians are beginning to fear that the ancient formality of "the first papers" is no longer sufficient to ensure a profitable union of American liberty and British freedom.

It has been reported that thousands of Canadians in the States are afraid to take their annual summer vacation at home lest they should be unable to return. Individual reports of arbitrary and irrational treatment at the border take on a new significance when considered as examples deterrent to the industrial invasion, which may be welcome enough in prosperity, but which in a period of slack production merely serves to aggravate local unemployment. By the Maritime Provinces in particular, the States have too often been regarded as the natural outlet for training or ambition. Ordinary observation in reading the newspapers and travelling around the countryside will show that it is an exceptional family which does not have a son there engaged according to his talents and opportunities in selling bonds or driving a street car, or a daughter employed as a domestic servant or a private secretary. Political parties have charged each other with the responsibility for the exodus, but neither has achieved any conspicuous success in "bringing the boys back home."

If this end is achieved through America's desire to protect her native-born or duly naturalised sons, Canada's resentment at the methods may be subdued to gratitude for the result. For various reasons, not the least of which is the simple desire to make a change, ambitious and energetic Canadians have always been attracted to the States. Those especially with a gift for reaching the top have naturally tended towards a field where the top is assumed to be higher because the base is broader. Many others, however, not remarkably successful at home, have achieved surprising distinction abroad; but whether from the inspiration of brighter surroundings or from the absence of adequate competition, it would be difficult to determine and impolitic to guess. At all events, the period of the great inflation was marked by the increasing number of Canadians to whom the land of promise offered apparently certain means to get rich quick, whether by transferring their energies and experience to American industry, or by less arduous commitments to the stock market. Many of them have turned their thoughts homewards with the discovery that, as to distance, coming down bears a close relation to going up, and that as to speed, it is usually much more rapid.

Perhaps there is not much difference in basis between the assurances on both sides of the border that "things" are fundamentally sound. They may all represent that kind of "optimism" which depends on cheers for oneself in the hour of victory and on shouting to keep one's courage up during a reverse. But the loudness of one's shouting may indicate the depth of the hole one is in, and the present screaming of the eagle seems to carry a note of apprehension. We are assured that business would be better than ever if people could only be brought to have faith in it; but we remember that the assurance is based on a method of doing business in which production is often regarded as subordinate to advertising. Nor is it genuinely reassuring to observe that the usual exhortation is not one to work, or to save, but to spend—surely a curious remedy for an evil produced by reckless expenditures and unregulated credit. On the whole, there seems less reason for comfort in the reiterated and somewhat humorless assertions that prospects never were better, than in the more sober northern estimate, which may be accepted without too precisely pointing the comparison, that they might be worse.

THE real danger that confronts the United States is that the ensuing winter will bring a critical extension of unemployment. This problem, already present, not only justifies the restrictions of immigration and the check upon resident "aliens", but explains

the constant exhortation to spend. It is better to buy what you don't want, and so keep a man at work, than to have your savings levied for a dole that keeps him in idleness. With Canada's more stable ratio of raw to manufactured products, and her relatively unimpaired buying power, the threatened return of the prodigal sons might prove an unmixed blessing if there were enough of the fatted calf to go round. The elder brethren who stayed on the farm may have something to say about the right to the first cut; and the second cut may go to adopted brethren from lands across the sea. Even now, however, it may be possible to repatriate vigorous and ambitious ex-Canadians, with mutual advantage, if there is restricted and highly selective immigration of aliens. It is difficult to see why the general importation of unskilled labour should have been so much encouraged in countries recurrently troubled with unemployment. Even in times of prosperity, increase in the number of labourers should be adjusted to the minimum needs of the present rather than to maximum prospects for the future: idle men are more expensive rebukes to over-confidence than idle machinery. One must suppose that Governments, having installed the necessary bureaucratic machinery and found it useful for certain needs, have wished, like the man who acquired a fire-extinguisher, to keep it always running.

Immigration is usually justified too much by statistics, questions of quality and effectiveness being referred to another Department. The figures are not usually presented on a balance sheet showing an equally accurate account of emigration. Even if we disregard problems of nationality, character or training, the practically subsidized stream of new citizens from the East appears less valuable when matched against the merely numerical loss of native citizens to the South. Even for immigrants, Canada has too often been merely a resting place. Those to whom the limitations of the quota, if not more personal objections, have prohibited entry through the stricter supervision of the seaports, find it convenient to make use of the greater freedom by road and rail that has grown up to facilitate free intercourse across the border. This method of getting round the barriers is probably one of the principal reasons for the present difficulties of resident or visiting Canadians. When the present census is complete, it will be instructive to compare the growth of population, as indicated by vital statistics and immigration returns, with the increase revealed by actual count. Whatever the numerical difference to indicate loss by emigration, it seems safe to assume that much of it will represent a loss of quality. Canadian emigrants are usually of high quality; much

of the immigration bears too close a resemblance to the American plan to suit entirely different conditions. Canada has nothing to gain and much to lose from large foreign additions to the numbers of small shopkeepers and casual workers in her cities, and comparatively small need for an imported peasantry to till her soil. Admitted that her natural resources are vast and undeveloped, there is little genuine aid to the production of wheat and silver by establishing a breadline and a dole.

Canada still requires pioneers; but many American immigrants to-day are not of this type at all: they are led not by the desire for activity and high adventure, but by the lure of the soft job or the easy mark. Canada's best pioneers are to be found at home, and if possible they should be encouraged to stay at home. In this respect, French Canada, with her solidarity and strong racial consciousness, sets her fellow-countrymen a good example. A policy of restricted movement abroad to encourage the development of opportunities at home is one that can hardly be imposed by legislation for the good of the country; but there are times when it appeals to private consciousness from within, for the good of the individual. In a world that has failed to look before it leaped, Canada has still managed to retain at least a foothold, and to remind vaulting ambition that gambling for high stakes is none the less gambling, with the inevitable proportions between the possibility of gain and the probabilities of loss. It may no longer require the exhortations of expatriate Canadians, heroically sacrificing themselves on the altar of Mammon, to persuade ambitious youth to shun their example and flee the land where dollars are easy to acquire though sometimes difficult to retain. The tide may turn away from the roar of the elevated and the crash of falling markets; and when the direction of pressure has been reversed, the barriers may again be opened.

IT is not news that science, religion and the liberal arts are indebted to the generosity of patrons distinguished in the fields of business, public service and the learned professions. On the contrary, we take such munificence so completely for granted that most of us are unaware of its real extent, or of the dependence of our cultural life upon it. Some servants of education and religion, and they should be able to speak at least for the circle they are supposed to influence, have been known to complain that spiritual and cultural values are neglected in this era of commerce and manufacture, and to yearn for an age when all men will be won to their own ideal of academic leisure and the contemplation of beauty. The present writer has argued, and hopes to argue again, that

commercial and material values have been overemphasized both in the vanishing seclusion of academies and in the growing turbulence of the outside world. But he is at least sensible that it is only by the generosity of the outside world that most champions of academic ideals are able to retain a comfortable basis for argument. It is interesting to speculate what proportion of the wealth of a Carnegie or a Rockefeller has been devoted to the sustenance of teachers and students who have been chiefly concerned to condemn the iniquities of an economic system which makes it possible to accumulate a vast private fortune.

However much we may deplore the source of certain incomes or the use to which they are put even when destined ostensibly for purposes of enlightenment, it is occasionally wise to remind ourselves that the situation at large provides adequate reason for gratitude. If industrial and commercial enterprise are regarded as foes to light and learning, they must be admitted to display a somewhat inexplicable chivalry in supplying their opponents with the sinews of war.

Particular criticism is at present being directed at American education. It is hardly necessary to argue, from information available to everyone, that too many people are going to college, that much money is being spent unwisely, and that among the principal products are dilettantism and pedantry, if not an absolute contempt for learning. But it is worth noting that the best products of American education are well able to castigate the defects of their own country, and are inclined to err chiefly in a modest belief that older ideals and institutions can and should be adapted bodily to the needs of a new and very different country. The schools of other countries are sometimes ready to accept American scholarship—or a share of the wealth that made it possible—while regarding only the inferior and more reprehensible forms of American education as a basis for estimating their own merits. Travellers attract attention to their origin chiefly when the comparison is obnoxious. The least obnoxious and most cosmopolitan education in the States is largely dependent upon private endowment. If the men and the enterprises that made such education possible seem somehow lacking in romance by comparison with those responsible for more ancient foundations, allowance should be made for the softening finger of time. When the impartial historian of the future sees the present century ranked equally with its predecessors, the name of Edward Harkness may sort not incongruously with that of Thomas Bodley, and the Lady Margaret's with that of Mrs. Widener. Especially in these gentler days a name honoured by

posterity is more likely to be acquired through the arts of peace than through those of commerce or war. Even in the tempestuous sunrise of the English renaissance, the good name that is better than riches descended upon a patron of letters not otherwise to be preferred above his fellows. Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester, appears to have been distinguished for few good qualities except the acquisition of books and the company of scholars. But his service to letters, in his own day and ever since, has buried his social and political transgressions under the happy epitaph of "the Good Duke". Nor should one, when recalling historic and distant cases, forget that generosity and public spirit are still shown at one's own door. The above reflections were indeed suggested by the recent legacy of Chief Justice Harris, which will do so much for the fortunes of his beloved King's College.

References to a twentieth-century renaissance in the New World are beginning to lose the air of paradox, and to assume the aspects of well-founded historical comparison. Even schoolboys view with suspicion the facile suggestion of their textbooks that the Revival of Learning spread over Europe like the plague, and was carried and caught with as little effort. Such changes do not simply happen: the most original and spontaneous art is the most derivative; poems and paintings are not produced merely by deciding to think beautiful thoughts, and the decision itself must come from somewhere. Before each successive western addition to creative art, there was a period of preparation not without its parallels to-day—of hospitality to foreign teachers and scholars, of the acquisition and patient study of manuscript and other "original" material, of meticulous and often pedantic exegesis, and above all of the unquestioning and often indiscriminating generosity of wealthy patrons. Amusement at naively enthusiastic collecting of dubious antiques should not obscure the concentration and adequate preservation of old world treasures in American galleries and museums. Nor is the transporting and restoring of architecture invariably inept; the great works of the past are often set off by harmonious echoes of their native surroundings, and there is more than mere satire in Mr. Shaw's conception of a future New England boyhood subjected to chastening traditions under the shadow of Ely Cathedral. If much so-called research is merely patient Teutonic futility, there is much also that is not. Even the worst of it may serve to establish the text of an old poem or to clear the way for a new one; American scholarship is faithful to its tradition of subservient allegiance to creative art. From the rasping hordes of collegians and co-eds, some few,

immune to scholarship, may still catch a slight infection of beauty, and if sufficiently fortunate achieve the opportunity as well as the desire to trace it to its source. Each summer sees the libraries and historic monuments of Europe subjected to a visitation, not merely of conducted tours, but of earnest young men and women with travelling scholarships. A boat-load of potential New England school-marms is awesome in the aggregate; but when they are returned to their points of departure, they may carry many blessings.

The pilgrimages, moreover, are no longer in one direction only. Some of the most noted European scholars have crossed the Atlantic to find receptive students, congenial colleagues, and adequate and sometimes even unique materials and facilities for their work. The great libraries must be included in any itinerary of exhaustive enquiry, and their treasures are amazingly accessible and complete. Of the three extant sets of *The Spectator*, two are in the Widener Library. To provide the same institution with rare and forgotten novels necessary to complete a single line of enquiry, a group of Harvard alumni, conversing at a dinner, casually guaranteed a fund sufficient to establish adequate library equipment for a small undergraduate college. Indeed, one of the chief real dangers from the wealth of the larger institutions is that smaller foundations may suffer by comparative neglect, and descend to the level of seminaries. The concentration of rarer books in a few localities is inevitable, but a properly endowed small institution may still avail itself of many of the materials of scholarship, and upon occasion even add to their number. There were critics who feared that the lavish inheritance of Duke University would be too much for an undeveloped small college, and that the endowment would betray its origin by going up in smoke. A very brief period, however, has shown that the gift was well bestowed. Scholars of repute have been appointed to positions where they have the leisure and the material for productive work without the burden of administering classes too unwieldy for effective teaching; and the University Press has undertaken to publish material from other libraries that could otherwise be made available only by direct inspection. Such gathering of tools and materials is a necessary, if not in itself a sufficient, preliminary to creative art. Whether a future generation will inherit the other requisite gifts is matter for the future to discover and posterity to judge. The present can at least claim to have made some efforts, as a material age, to provide material assistance. The possibilities have already been indicated; the most nationally and artistically significant of recent American poems was made possible by a fellowship for research.

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