

## CHAPTER III

### THE MATERIALS OF THE NEW RACE

**E**ACH of us has an ideal of what the American of the future should be. We have been told times without number that out of the mixture of stocks the intermingling of ideas and aspirations there is to come a race greater than any which has contributed to the population of the United States. What is the basis for this hope that is so generally indulged in? If the hope is founded upon realities, how may it be realized? To understand the difficulties and the obstacles to be overcome before the dream of a greater race in America can be attained is to understand something of the task before the women who shall give birth to that race.

What material is there for a greater American race? What elements make up our present millions? Where do they live? How do they live? In what direction does our national civilization bend their ideals? What

is the effect of the melting pot upon the foreigner, once he begins to melt? Are we now producing a freer, juster, more intelligent, more idealistic creative people out of the varied ingredients here?

Before we can answer these questions we must consider briefly the races which have contributed to American population

Among our more than 100 000 000 population are Negroes Indians, Chinese and other colored people to the number of 11 000 000 There are also 14 500 000 persons of foreign birth Besides these there are 14 000 000 children of foreign born parents and 6 500 000 persons whose fathers or mothers were born on foreign soil making a total of 46,000 000 people of foreign stock Fifty per cent of our population is of the native white strain

Of the foreign stock in the United States, the last general census compiled in 1910, shows that 25.7 per cent was German, 14 per cent was Irish 8.5 per cent was Russian or Finnish, 7.2 was English 6.5 per cent Italian and 6.2 per cent Austrian The Abstract of the same census points out several significant facts The Western European strains in this

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country are represented by a majority of native born children of foreign born or mixed parentage. This is because the immigration from those sources has been checked. On the other hand immigration from Southern and Eastern Europe including Russia and Finland increased 175 4 per cent from 1900 to 1910. During that period the slums of Europe dumped their submerged inhabitants into America at a rate almost double that of the preceding decade and the flow was still increasing at the time the census was taken. So it is more than likely that when the next census is taken it will be found that following 1910 there was an even greater flow from Spain, Italy, Hungary, Austria, Russia, Finland, and other countries where the iron hand of economic and political tyrannies had crushed great populations into ignorance and want. These peoples have not been in the United States long enough to produce great families. The census of 1920 will in all probability tell a story of a greater and more serious problem than did the last.

Over one fourth of all the immigrants over fourteen years of age admitted during the two

decades preceding 1910 were illiterate Of the 8,398 000 who arrived in the 1900 1910 period 2,238 000 could not read or write There were 1 600 000 illiterate foreigners in the United States when the 1910 census was taken Do these elements give promise of a better race? Are we doing anything genuinely constructive to overcome this situation?

Two-thirds of the white foreign stock in the United States live in cities Four fifths of the populations of Chicago and New York are of this stock More than two thirds of the populations of Boston, Cleveland, Detroit Buffalo Pittsburgh Milwaukee, Newark Jersey City Providence Worcester Scranton Paterson Fall River, Lowell, Cambridge, Bridgeport St Paul, Minneapolis and San Francisco are of other than native white ancestry Of the fifty principal cities of the United States there are only fourteen in which fifty per cent of the population is of unmixed native white parentage

Only one state in the Union — North Carolina — has less than one per cent of the white foreign stock New York New Jersey, Delaware Massachusetts Connecticut, Rhode

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Island Michigan Illinois Wisconsin Minnesota the Dakotas Montana and Utah have more than fifty per cent foreign stock Eleven states, including those on the Pacific Coast have from 35 to 50 per cent Maine Ohio and Kansas have from 25 to 35 per cent Maryland Indiana, Missouri and Texas have from 15 to 25 per cent These proportions are increasing rather than decreasing owing to the extraordinarily high birth rate of the foreign strains

A special analysis of 1915 vital statistics for certain states in the World Almanac for 1918, shows that foreign born mothers gave birth to nearly 62 per cent of the children born in Connecticut nearly 58 per cent in Massachusetts, nearly 33 per cent in Michigan nearly 58 per cent in Rhode Island more than 43 per cent in New Hampshire, more than 54 per cent in New York and more than 38 per cent in Pennsylvania

All these figures be it remembered fail to include foreign stock of the second generation after landing If the statistics for children who have native parents but foreign born grandparents or who have one foreign born

parent, were given they would doubtless leave but a small percentage of births from stocks native to the soil for several generations

Immigrants or their children constitute the majority of workers employed in many of our industries. Seven out of ten of those who work in our iron and steel industries are drawn from this class. Says the National Geographic Magazine (February 1917) seven out of ten of our bituminous coal miners belong to it. Three out of four who work in packing towns were born abroad or are children of those who were born abroad. Four out of five of those who make our silk goods seven out of eight of those employed in woolen mills nine out of ten of those who refine our petroleum, and nineteen out of twenty of those who manufacture our sugar are immigrants or the children of immigrants. And it might have shown a similarly high percentage of those in the ready made clothing industries railway and public works construction of the less skilled sort, and a number of others.

That these foreigners who have come in hordes have brought with them their ignorance of hygiene and modern ways of living and that

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they are handicapped by religious superstitions is only too true. But they also bring in their hearts a desire for freedom from all the tyrannies that afflict the earth. They would not be here if they did not bear within them the hardihood of pioneers, a courage of no mean order. They have the simple faith that in America they will find equality, liberty, and an opportunity for a decent livelihood. And they have something else. The cell-plasms of these peoples are freighted with the potentialities of the best in Old World civilization. They come from lands rich in the traditions of courage, of art, music, letters, science, and philosophy. Americans no longer consider themselves cultured unless they have journeyed to these lands to find access to the treasures created by men and women of this same blood. The immigrant brings the possibilities of all these things to our shores, but where is the opportunity to reproduce in the New World the cultures of the old?

What opportunities have we given to these peoples to enrich our civilization? We have greeted them as a lot of ignorant foreigners; we have shouted at, hustled and kicked them

Our industries have taken advantage of their ignorance of the country's ways to take their toil in mills and mines and factories at starvation wages. We have herded them into slums to become diseased, to become social burdens or to die. We have huddled them together like rabbits to multiply their numbers and their misery. Instead of saying that we Americanize them we should confess that we animalize them. The only freedom we seem to have given them is the freedom to make heavier and more secure their chains. What hope is there for racial progress in this human material, treated more carelessly and brutally than the cheapest factory product?

Nor are all our social handicaps bound up in the immigrant.

There were in the United States when the Federal Industrial Relations Committee finished its work in 1915 several million migratory workers, most of them white, many of them married but separated from their families who were compelled, like themselves, to struggle with dire want.

There were in 1910 more than 2,353,000 tenant farmers, two thirds of whom lived and



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worked under the terrible conditions which the Industrial Relations Commission's report showed to prevail in the South and Southwest. These tenant farmers, as the report showed, were always in want and were compelled by the very terms of the prevailing tenant contracts to produce children who must go to the fields and do the work of adults. The census proved that this tenancy was on the increase, the number of tenants in all but the New England and Middle Atlantic States having increased approximately 30 per cent from 1900 to 1910.

Moreover, there were in the United States in 1910, 5,516,163 illiterates. Of these 1,378,884 were of pure native white stock. In some states in the South as much as 29 per cent of the population is illiterate, many of these of course being Negroes.

There is still another factor to be considered — a factor which because of its great scope is more ominous than any yet mentioned. This is the underpaid mass of workers in the United States — workers whose low wages are forcing them deeper into want each day. Let Senator Borah, not a radical nor even a reformer, but

a leader of the Republican party, tell the story

Fifty seven per cent of the families in the United States have incomes of \$800 or less said he in a speech before the Senate August 24, 1917, Seventy per cent of the families of our country have incomes of \$1 000 or less Tell me how a man so situated can have shelter for his family how he can provide food and clothing He is an industrial peon His home is scant and pinched beyond the power of language to tell He sees his wife and children on the ragged edge of hunger from week to week and month to month If sickness comes he faces suicide or crime He cannot educate his children he cannot fit them for citizenship he cannot even fit them as soldiers to die for their country

It is the tragedy of our whole national life — how these people live in such times as these We have not yet gathered the fruits of such an industrial condition in this country We have been saved thus far by reason of the newness of our national life, our vast public lands now almost exhausted our great natural resources now fast being seized and held, but the hour of reckoning will come

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Senator Borah was thinking doubtless of open revolution of bloodshed and the destruction of property. In a far more terrible sense the reckoning which he has referred to is already upon us. The ills we suffer as the result of the conditions now prevailing in the United States are appalling in their sum.

It is these conditions that produce the 3 000 000 child laborers of the United States child slaves who undergo hardships that blight them physically and mentally, leaving them fit only to produce human beings whose deficiencies and misfortunes will exceed their own.

From these same elements living under these same conditions come the feebleminded and other defectives. Just how many feebleminded there are in the United States no one knows because no attempt has ever been made to give public care to all of them and families are more inclined to conceal than to reveal the mental defects of their members. Estimates vary from 350 000 at the present time to nearly 400 000 as early as 1890, Henry H. Goddard, Ph. D., of the Vineland, N. J., Training School, being authority for the latter statement. Only 34 137 of these unfortunates were

under institutional care in the United States in 1916 the rest being free to propagate their kind — piling up public burdens for future generations. The feebleminded are notoriously prolific in reproduction. The close relationship between poverty and ignorance and the production of feebleminded is shown by Anne Moore Ph D, in a report to the Public Education Association of New York in 1911. She found that an overwhelming proportion of the classified feebleminded children in New York schools came from large families living in overcrowded slum conditions, and that only a small percentage were born of native parents.

Sixty thousand prostitutes go and come anew each year in the United States. This army of unfortunates, as social workers and scientists testify, come from families living under like conditions of want.

In the New York City schools alone in December 1916, 61 per cent of the children were suffering from undernourishment and 21 per cent in immediate danger of it. These facts, also the result of the conditions outlined, were discovered by the city Bureau of Child Hygiene.

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Another item in the sordid list is that of venereal disease. In his pamphlet entitled *The Venereal Diseases*, issued in 1918, Dr Hermann M. Biggs, head of the New York State Department of Health, quoted authorities who gave estimates of the amount of syphilis and gonorrhoea in the United States. One says that 60 per cent of the men contract one disease or the other at some time. Another said that 40 per cent of the population of New York City had syphilis, one of the most terrible of all maladies. Poverty, delayed marriage, prostitution — a brief and terrible chain accounts for this scourge.

Finally, there is tuberculosis, bred by bad housing conditions and contributed to in frightful measure by poor food and unhealthy surroundings during the hours of employment. Dr Frederick L. Hoffman, director of the National Association for the Study and Prevention of Tuberculosis and foremost statistical authority upon tuberculosis in the United States, says: "We know of 2,000,000 tubercular persons in the United States."

Does this picture horrify the reader? This is not the whole truth. A few scattered statis-

tics lack the power to reflect the broken lives of overworked fathers, the ceaseless, increasing pain of overburdened mothers and the agony of childhood fighting its way against the handicaps of ill health, insufficient food, inadequate training and stifling toil

Can we expect to remedy this situation by dismissing the problem of the submerged native elements with legislative palliatives or treating it with careless scorn? Do we better it by driving out of the immigrant's heart the dream of liberty that brought him to our shores? Do we solve the problem by giving him, instead of an opportunity to develop his own culture, low wages, a home in the slums and those pseudo patriotic preachments which constitute our machine made "Americanization"?

Every detail of this sordid situation means a problem that must be solved before we can even clear the way for a greater race in America. Nor is there any hope of solving any of these problems if we continue to attack them in the usual way.

Men have sentimentalized about them and legislated upon them. They have denounced

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them and they have applied reforms. But it has all been ridiculously, cruelly futile.

This is the condition of things for which those stand who demand more and more children. Each child born under such conditions but makes them worse — each child in its own person suffers the consequence of the intensified evils.

If we are to develop in America a new race with a racial soul, we must keep the birth rate within the scope of our ability to understand as well as to educate. We must not encourage reproduction beyond our capacity to assimilate our numbers so as to make the coming generation into such physically fit, mentally capable, socially alert individuals as are the ideal of a democracy.

The intelligence of a people is of slow evolutionary development — it lags far behind the reproductive ability. It is far too slow to cope with conditions created by an increasing population, unless that increase is carefully regulated.

We must, therefore, not permit an increase in population that we are not prepared to care for to the best advantage — that we are not

prepared to do justice to, educationally and economically We must popularize birth control thinking We must not leave it hap hazardly to be the privilege of the already privileged We must put this means of freedom and growth into the hands of the masses

We must set motherhood free We must give the foreign and submerged mother knowledge that will enable her to prevent bringing to birth children she does not want We know that in each of these submerged and semisubmerged elements of the population there are rich factors of racial culture Motherhood is the channel through which these cultures flow Motherhood, when free to choose the father, free to choose the time and the number of children who shall result from the union, automatically works in wondrous ways It refuses to bring forth weaklings, refuses to bring forth slaves refuses to bear children who must live under the conditions described It withholds the unfit, brings forth the fit, brings few children into homes where there is not sufficient to provide for them Instinctively it avoids all those things which multiply racial handicaps Under such circumstances we can hope



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that the "melting pot" will refine We shall see that it will save the precious metals of racial culture, fused into an amalgam of physical perfection, mental strength and spiritual progress Such an American race, containing the best of all racial elements, could give to the world a vision and a leadership beyond our present imagination