

IS AMERICA TOO HOSPITABLE?

By CHARLOTTE PERKINS GILMAN

WITH hordes of potentially bad citizens knocking at our doors, Mrs. Gilman is for sending out word: "Not at Home." By recklessly including all nationals in the simmering pot of American citizenship, she believes the resulting concoction will be neither soup nor pudding. Is it possible to define an American as the only person who invites the world to crowd him out of his home?

THERE is a question, sneeringly asked by the stranger within our gates: "What is an American?" The American, who knows he is one but has never thought of defining himself, is rather perplexed by the question. A simple answer is here suggested: "Americans are the kind of people who make a nation which every other nationality wants to get into."

The sneering stranger then replies: "By no means. It is not your nation we admire,—far from it! It is your great rich country we want to get into."

But Africa is a great rich country, too; why not go there? They do not wish to go there; the country is "undeveloped;" there are savages in it. True, but this country was undeveloped, when we came here, and there were savages in it.

Our swarming immigrants do not wish for a wilderness, nor for enemies. They like an established nation, with free education, free hospitals, free nursing, and more remunerative employment than they can find at home.

The amazing thing is the cheerful willingness with which the American people are giving up their country to other people, so rapidly that they are already reduced to a scant half of the population. No one is to blame but ourselves. The noble spirit of our founders, and their complete ignorance of sociology began the trouble. They honestly imagined that one kind of man was as good as another if he had the same opportunity,—unless his

color was different. Consequently they announced, with more than royal magnificence, that this country was "an asylum for the poor and oppressed of all nations."

"F. P. A.'s" remark on this point is worth remembering,—
"Some of us, who are not particularly poor nor oppressed, but who have to live in the asylum, suggest that the more violent inmates be confined in separate wards."

Those high-minded old forefathers of ours were strangely lacking in even the political knowledge of their time, to imagine that "the poor and oppressed" were good stock to build up the country. The more competent, skillful, and daring were able to get on at home. The poor and oppressed were the under dogs, necessarily. A nation largely composed of under dogs is not likely to remain on top.

Never was a nation founded at so high a level of political idealism. However, there were three things our generous founders could not foresee: the development of steam manufacture, of steam transportation, and of colossal selfishness ready to sacrifice the good of the country to private profit.

Any man who knows enough to recognize that the advantages of another country are better than his own; who is strong enough to break home ties, brave enough to face the unknown, and who has saved enough to pay his passage, is likely to make a good citizen in the land of his choice.

But when we scour Europe for "cheap labor," deliberately seeking poor citizens instead of good ones, baiting them with glowing advertisements, and arranging to be paid from the proceeds of their labor, the resultant flood of low-grade humanity is not immigration at all, but sheer importation, which should be dutiable!

We used fondly to take for granted that the incoming millions loved the country as we did, and felt eager to join it. Some of them do. Enormous numbers do not. It is quite true that we ourselves are a mixed race,—as are all races today,—and that we were once immigrants. All Americans have come from somewhere else. But all persons who come from somewhere

else are not therefore Americans. The American blend is from a few closely connected races.

The idealism of our forefathers with its unavoidable ignorance, is more than matched today by our own idealism,—though we have knowledge enough to modify it. With glowing enthusiasm we have seized upon one misplaced metaphor, and call our country now a “melting pot” instead of an asylum. Our country is our home. Any man who wants to turn his home either into an asylum of a melting pot is,—well, he is a person of peculiar tastes.

Why did we ever so stupidly accept that metaphor? A melting pot is a crucible. It has to be carefully made of special material and carefully filled with weighed and measured proportions of such ores as will combine to produce known results. If you put into a melting pot promiscuous shovelfuls of anything that comes handy you do not get out of it anything of value, and you may break the pot.

The blending of races is not a new process. It has been going on ever since the different racial stocks were established and began to fight with one another, killing the men and marrying the women, mixing continually. We have all history to tell us about it, and all political geography to show us the results.

Since *genus homo* is one species, it is physically possible for all races to interbreed, but not therefore desirable. Some combine well, making a good blend, some do not. We are perfectly familiar in this country with the various blends of black and white, and the wisest of both races prefer the pure stock.

The Eurasian mixture is generally considered unfortunate by most observers. Of European races some seem to mate with better results than others. On the Levant, where there is as complete and longstanding a mongrelization as could be offered for study, the result is not an improved stock.

It is an entire mistake to suppose that the well-ordered World Federation to which we look forward requires the wiping out of national entity, or the physical compounding of racial stocks.

It is also a mistake to suppose that social evolution requires

the even march of all races to the same goal. Again we have the open pages behind us to study. The sea-weeds and mosses have not all become oaks and roses, the monads and rotifers have not all become quadrupeds, nor have all the quadrupeds become bipeds and mammals. Evolution selects, and social evolution follows the same law. If you are trying to improve corn you do not wait to bring all the weeds in the garden to the corn level before going on.

Genus canis, like genus homo, can interbreed practically without limit. But if you want a watch-dog you do not mate an Italian greyhound with a hairless pup from Mexico.

If dogs are left to themselves, in some canine "asylum" or "melting-pot," they are cheerfully promiscuous, but do not produce a super-dog. On the contrary they tend to revert to the "yaller dog," the jackal type so far behind them.

The present-day idealists have two main grounds of appeal in their defense of unlimited immigration. One is the advantage to us of the special gifts of the imported stock; the other is the advantage to them of the benefits of democracy. This last may be promptly disposed of. Any people on earth who want a democracy and are able to carry it on, can have one at home. There is no power above them which can prevent it. But if they do not want a democracy, or are unable to carry it on, they are a heavy drawback to us.

We are young in our great effort, we have by no means succeeded yet in developing this high form of government in full efficiency, in unimpeachable honesty and wise economy. Democracy moves on by the spread of ideas; majorities must be convinced, converted; a community of intellect is needed. The more kinds of races we have to reach, with all their differing cultures, ideas, tastes, and prejudices, the slower and harder is the task of developing democracy.

It would be far more helpful to the world if we could make such clear advance alone as to set all nations to imitating us, rather than to mix our physical stock and clog the half grown "body politic" with all manner of undemocratic peoples.

Now as to those "gifts" they are to bring us. In an article in *The Survey* some years since, Mr. John Collier, writing "For a New Drama," tells of a "Polish National University" with 1500 students, at Cambridge Springs, Pa., which is "consecrated to the preservation, in this new and deadening world, of those group achievements and group hopes,—one among a hundred streams of group endeavor,—which are our most precious heritage in all this land."

It is not quite clear whether it is the Polish group which contributes our most precious heritage, or all the hundred. We ourselves, apparently, are only responsible for "this new and deadening world," our "melting pot" a sort of contribution box, enriched from without.

Mr. Collier thinks that "before long the Poles will become self-conscious with reference to drama," and further hopes, "the interdiction against the hyphen notwithstanding, that America may prove to be indeed a free land, and may learn to solicit as well as tolerate this impulse of group creativeness which is inarticulately manifest in the half-formed drama of the Poles."

This is a very good expression of a common and serious error. It is true of course that each separate nation has its own "gifts." A nation is a self-supporting group of people long enough associated in one country to form a certain type and to develop a certain culture of its own. It then produces after its kind such contributions to social progress as it may, some nations more, some less. A wandering people, as the Gypsies, is not a nation.

The development of humanity is measured by these national gifts, these steps in commerce and industry, in science, in religion, in literature and music and all the arts, in discoveries and inventions. But this distinctive product is evolved in the privacy of each nation, so to speak, and may then be shared.

The painting and music of Italy appeared in Italy, the art and science of France in France, the inventions and literature of England in England. Separate colonies of different nations in another country are not noted for their "gifts," much less a mixture of heterogeneous peoples of the most contrary genius and

tendency. If "the half-formed drama of the Poles" is to become a living thing it will be in Poland, not in Pennsylvania.

The American people, as a racial stock, are mainly of English descent, mingled with the closely allied Teutonic and Scandinavian strains, of which indeed the English are compounded, together with some admixture of the Celt and Gæl. The Latin races are represented more in South and Central America, with the French largely segregated in one province in Canada. It may be added, as to such a settlement, that when it came to the world war, this colony of transplanted Frenchmen would fight neither for the country they came from nor the country they came to. It is the French in France who command the honor and admiration of the world.

The American people, as representing a group culture, brought with them from England and Holland and Scandinavia the demand for freedom and the capacity to get it. Owing to their vast and sudden advantages in soil and climate, in mineral wealth and geographic isolation, they made rapid growth and were able to add to their inherited tendencies a flexible progressiveness, an inventive ingenuity, a patience and broad kindness of disposition which form a distinct national character.

It is precisely this American character which is taken advantage of by the "poor and oppressed." The poorer and more oppressed they are the more they need it. Some great and good citizens have come to us, from various stocks, but this is a question of race mixture. There is no claim here made as to racial superiority. Almost any race is superior to others in some particular. Each has not only a right but a duty to develop its own special powers. The intellect of India or China is far more highly developed than ours in some lines, but if these races possessed this country they would only make another India or China. Indeed if our land were reinforced with a vast population of angels from heaven it would not be America!

One of the sharpest irritants arising from the various alien elements in our national body comes from an intensely self-satisfied group of young foreigners who come here to criticise and

improve us. These, being more vocal than the poor and oppressed, are loud in disapproval. They are not content with founding universities for themselves, but enter ours and seek to dominate them.

They openly scorn our national culture, proclaiming the high superiority of their own. They are particularly sarcastic about our recent feeble efforts to digest the indigestible and assimilate the unassimilable, looking over this great country, in which already there are a full half of varied Unamericans. We have whole colonies of them with their own languages, schools, and newspapers, their children growing to maturity without even learning English, merely using this country as a convenience for temporary profit or permanent colonizing. Observe them in the war, taking flight in great numbers to fight for their respective home-lands, or staying here to work us in their interests. Even so long established residents as the Irish remain Irish,—they are not Americans. They would willingly sacrifice the interests of this country, or of the world as a whole, for the sake of Ireland.

Nationals of such pure intensity should bestow their talents on the lands they love. Internationalists, of the sort who wish to belong to none, but mix all racial ingredients into a smooth paste, should select an uninhabited island for their experiment.

These social mixers should study the art of cooking. You may take sugar, butter, eggs, milk, and flour, with dried fruit and flavoring extracts, and by rightly combining these ingredients make cake. You may take meat, bones, onions, tomatoes, with salt, pepper, and fine herbs, and by rightly combining these ingredients make soup. But if you mix sugar and meat, butter and bones, eggs and onions, milk and tomatoes, fine herbs and flavoring extracts, salt, pepper, and dried fruit,—you make neither soup nor cake but something we pay to have removed.

What is an American? The only kind of person on earth who invites all creation to crowd him out of house and home. And even he is beginning dimly to wonder if it is not time to withdraw the invitation.

The Presidency in 1924?

REPUBLICAN No. 10

GEORGE WHARTON PEPPER

By HORACE GREEN

With a Linoleum Cut By Harry Townsend

A ROMAN SENATOR among the Babbitts of Washington, a statesman who quotes Pericles from memory, an athlete with the highest university degrees, a mountain-climber who can settle coal strikes, a champion of individual liberties, as he showed in his battle on behalf of the Leavenworth prisoners, a lawyer, professor and pulpit orator,—these are a few of the rôles in which the Senator from Pennsylvania has won nation-wide renown.

A FRIEND who insinuates presidential possibilities to the senior Senator from Pennsylvania, finds the atmosphere disturbed, although it is not exactly a case of Cæsar refusing the crown. When the present titular head of the Republican Party is riding tight-kneed (and tight-mouthed) in the saddle, a quiet gait is not only expected of his followers in the 1924 procession, but honestly preferred by them. It is always in order, however, to discuss the personality and exploits of statesmen who have the supreme virtue of being interesting, and since the heyday of Theodore Roosevelt, no more all-round figure has appeared in the public forum than George Wharton Pepper.

In the University of Pennsylvania, from which he graduated at the age of twenty with Phi Beta Kappa and the presidency of his class, he was considered an athlete,—if catching on the class baseball team, playing varsity cricket, running the half mile and throwing the hammer on the varsity track team, rowing on the class crew, and playing fullback on the varsity football team, come under the head of athletics.

He gobbled his law degree and the Sharswood prize two years later, and, after years of semi-public service at the bar, received LL.D.'s from the University of Pennsylvania, the Uni-

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