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EDITORIAL

A WORD FOR THE IMMIGRANT.

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ONCE before, when considering the unfavorable opinion that, no doubt having his eyes on the *New Yorker Volkszeitung* personnel, the Social Democratic member of the Reichstag Legien expressed upon the emigrants of Europe to America, the *Daily People* took occasion to point out the injustice done to our immigrants by such sweeping condemnation. The case of the United States Senator Lorimer furnishes the latest opportunity to come back upon the subject.

There are two sets of pasteboard speeches that our Republican and Democratic politicians make on immigration. One set contradicts the other. Each is used according as the maggot may happen to bite the speech-maker. On this subject it happens as on the subject of taxes. When Labor organizes itself to elect its own representatives, the politicians look sneeringly down and ask: "How dare you aspire to rule; you don't pay the taxes." When the politician wishes to ingratiate himself with the "Labor vote" in favor of some scheme whereby to ease his class of the taxes it pays, then he smirks up to the workers with the words: "Upon Labor lies the burden of taxation; vote for me that I may lighten your burden." Similarly in the matter of immigration. When the object is to conceal some native depravity, the politician raves against immigration as a thing that "is dragging down" the country; when the immigrant's vote is wanted, then the cue is to laud immigration to the skies. Which of the two lines of oratory is false, and which true?

Upon the usefulness of immigration, in the present as in the past, it should be superfluous to enlarge. Without the immigrant the country would have halted in its progress. That sociologic fact is too well established, and has been too often dealt with in these columns to need repetition. What has not yet been sufficiently dwelt upon is the seemingly incredible fact that, to a very perceptible extent, not the

immigrant drags down the country, but the country (through leading representatives) drags down the immigrant.

It may not be to the immigrant's credit to say that at his "native heath" he thinks of America as the sublimation of all that is lofty. Whether it be to his credit or not, the fact remains that such is the average immigrant's conception of things. It is in pursuit of such high ideals, and animated by them, that the average immigrant "pulls up stakes" at home, crosses the ocean, and lands upon our shores. It does not take long before his ideal is shattered. The shatterer is the native of distinction.

Not quite seven years ago, the contest in the House of Representatives, over the seat of an incumbent from a mining district of Pennsylvania, brought forth a mass of documentary evidence convicting the incumbent of having bought the votes of Italian laborers by the droves. The affiants swore to the length of their residence in the country. Hundreds of them had been here less than one year, some only a couple of months, none the requisite five. They swore they received the money and voted, because the candidate whom they took to be a representative American, a man of wealth and position, told them "it was all right." Other instances of this sort, and innumerable ones of kindred nature will recur to any one at all informed upon events. Needless to say that in all such instances the immigrant is disillusioned. Obvious are the consequences.

Such is the foulness of our untrammelled capitalism, as so conspicuously illustrated in Senator Lorimer's case, that the corruption filters down to the immigrant. A possible element of "new blood," the immigrant is decomposed speedily upon his arrival. Brought face to face with native depravity, in high places, he, not infrequently, Ah Sin-like outstrips his corrupter.

Before the immigrant can be fairly charged with "dragging down" the country, the native in high places must be convicted of dragging down the immigrant.

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