

test law. It was probably at that time the most expedient thing to do so long as American public opinion was not concerned in the Americanization and education of the healthy and unspoiled adult immigrant, but the operation of the literacy test law has given us something more serious than illiteracy to deal with in the human stream that has been passing in through our gates since the literacy test law went into effect.

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The redeeming feature, perhaps, in the literacy test law, many sincere and honest Americans claim to be the check it places on the immigration of Mexicans into the United States. The Mexicans, from every angle, are an undesirable element on the north side of the Rio Grande borderline. They can not be Americanized or assimilated among the people of the United States and their lower standard of living makes them indeed undesirable among our people. Yet, while the literacy test law has technically placed a bar against the illiterate Mexicans, and most Mexicans are totally illiterate, it is a remarkable fact that the big employers of our country seem to have no trouble in circumventing the spirit of the law when they desire Mexican crews of cheap labor. Mexicans are indeed cheap laborers, so cheap, in fact, that most employers, after a while, find them too expensive to keep on the job, no matter how they "trim" their wages. If the literacy of these hordes of Mexican laborers that have been admitted into America, ostensibly to fill the cheap labor quota in our greater industries from the Atlantic to the Pacific, were to be tested as rigidly as the European immigrants are being "literacy tested" at Ellis Island, most of the Mexicans now here and coming across the Rio Grande every day, would be turned back into the land of cactus, or perhaps better known as the land of "chili con frijoles" (pepper and beans), from whence they came.

This condition leads us to the conclusion that if the literacy test law's supposed check on the Mexican immigration were to be looked into, there is a mighty reason for believing that so far as keeping the Mexicans out is concerned, the law has not been enforced for the same reason the enforcement of other laws we have enacted have fallen down, because we Americans are what many of our best citizens term, "notoriously indifferent and therefore inefficient in the enforcement of our own laws."

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The literacy test law was enacted first during Taft's administration. Taft vetoed it. It was again introduced under Wilson's administration. Wilson vetoed it twice for the same reason Taft did, contending that it was an abridgement of the old established principle of "right to asylum." The law was finally passed over Wilson's veto and became effective in 1917 when we had practically stopped all immigration as a war emergency measure. When we raised the war emergency act against immigration we applied the three per cent quota law, consequently the literacy test law, so far as the Europeans are concerned, never had much of a chance to function before the quota law took effect. Under the quota law the need of the literacy test law diminishes and the stu-

dent of quality in immigration can not help but look upon the law as being to a great extent a bar against the healthiest blood strains of all nationalities.

The reason for the presidential vetoes is not vindicated thereby, because the day has long since passed and gone when the "American asylum" was full to overflowing and the inmates began to show an alarming desire to run "the whole works" of the asylum. One "ward" after another became a little independency and the inmates as "colonists" took a defiant stand against the government of the asylum. The realization of this menacing condition caused some of us who through citizenship obligations felt the responsibility of the asylum upon our shoulders, to call for restrictions in the admission of "patients."

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The lowest moral pervert from a European city can qualify for entry under our present literacy test law and, if he is not now actually diseased, he can not be legally barred, because in nearly every city in Europe there is some form of public education whereby even the undesirable may acquire an education sufficient to meet the requirements of this law.

The healthy, ambitious and hard-working young men and women from the rural districts of most of the European countries are less fortunate. Public education among the peasantry is very limited in most European countries. The consequences are most disastrous to those, who like many of their earlier kinfolk of the district, decide to cast their lot in America. At the gate they find that they can not pass because they have had either insufficient or no schooling. Ruddy cheeked, strong, vigorous and healthy, anxious to find a piece of American ground to till (even if it were nothing else than a discarded piece of prairie, sagebrush or stumpland), these peasant folk must stand aside while their ashen colored, hallow chested nationals, from the CITY of the native country, who are looking for a tenement room in the city and an opening for their "wits," pass through with flying colors stamped with the literacy test laws approval and carrying with it a supposedly unimpeachable American acceptability.

Europe's children of the slums who have had a measure of schooling, have gradually exchanged their native habitat for a preferable residence in the great American cities. These elements are almost beyond the pale of redemption and they certainly cannot be Americanized to any degree making them or their progeny acceptable integral parts of the American people. The admission of these tainted foreign strains, made possible through the literacy test law, is a doubtful vindication of that congressional enactment.

If we have not received any greater number of the literacy test proof undesirables of Europe, since this law went into effect, we have at least, by accentuating literacy as an admission qualification, weeded out a redeeming proportion of the purer strain which formerly found its way into our country.

Meanwhile the healthy, hard-working agriculturally-trained peasants from the uncontaminated inland valleys and mountain uplands of Europe, who have had no educational opportunity, who would like almost any kind of a chance on the American prairie