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A DARK PICTURE OF THE UNITED STATES.

The subjoined article is from a recent number of the *Weekly Scotsman*, a contemporary from the "other side," and will be perused with some interest as showing the views of one who evidently takes a pessimistic view of the world in which he lives:

All members of the English-speaking race are directly interested in the future of the United States of America. The letter written by Lord Macaulay to the Hon. H. S. Randall in 1857 is well known. His forebodings were ominous. The state of affairs predicted by Lord Macaulay has come to pass, and the government of the United States has to grapple with difficulties she has hitherto been free from.

Free homesteads are a thing of the past. Land is held at prices far beyond what farmers and stockraisers can afford to pay, and the prospects for the future are discouraging. The farmer has to compete with the foreign element, and must be content with a life of sordid toil and poverty, or quit. The new generation growing up has neither land nor the means to procure it. The cities are overcrowded, full of the worst elements, and labor is arrayed against capital in a war that can never cease until definitely settled.

The past summer has exhibited the singular spectacle of labor and capital, not first appealing to the law, but simply ignoring its power, and raising bands of armed, and even disciplined men, to settle their own differences; and blood has been shed in what may properly be called open conflicts or battles in, at least, three different states—Pennsylvania, Idaho and Wyoming—the combatants each claiming to represent the party of law and order. The central government shirks responsibility when practicable, and in one case (that of the lynchings in New Orleans) pleaded inability and lack of authority in its own territory—"the Baby Act," in short.

The statement that anarchy would find no ground for existence in the United States has proved to be a myth. It justifies its presence in the ineffectiveness of the government, and flourishes in its weakness. The powers in authority retort by spasms of injudicious severity, followed by lapses into neglect of ordinary prudence. The state governments are jealous of the authority of the central government,

resent all interference, and at the same time are either unable or unwilling to do what is necessary themselves.

The foreign population is rapidly increasing by immigration, the quality meantime deteriorating. It does not assimilate with the Anglo-Saxon element but endeavors to replace American institutions by its own habits and customs, and has already abolished the American Sabbath as formerly understood, and is now engaged in attacking the public school system. The control of the country districts, as well as the larger towns and cities, is either already in the hands of the worst American elements or of foreigners to a very great extent, or is drifting in that direction. The Anglo-Saxon seems to be losing his grip, and will have to make a stand in the near future, or step down and out.

Turn where you will, the laws are not enforced properly. Lynchings and burnings at the stake are the best proof of this. Lynching seems to be a settled institution to take the place of the law, assumed to be useless. The state governments initiate the policy of masterly inactivity set them by the supreme government; when called on for aid, their first proceeding is to shuffle out excuses. An important part of the duty of the state legal officials seems to be to supply precedents for inaction. The county officials have no authority beyond a few ill-paid or unpaid deputies, or a posse who propose to take no risks, to back them; and, like their superiors, are hampered by the fear of losing votes or office.

In case of any general disturbance (and the signs point to such at no very distant date), it looks as if the contestants will make a claim of each being the representatives of law and order, this being the line hitherto adopted of late. The government power, if not absolutely divided in opinion, will have to act as a partisan of one side or the other; and this with little force to back it, as the regular army is weak and scattered, and the militia, or local corps, composed of citizens, will naturally adopt the side most to their advantage.

The situation is a very curious one, and interesting development may be expected sooner or later.

American citizens of the better class, as is well known, generally take no interest, active at least, in public affairs. The baser elements or foreign

population have practically full control, and a glance at the large cities, at all events, will demonstrate this; the country districts are following suit. The country is honeycombed with secret societies, and this in so conglomerate a society is in itself an element of great danger, amid so many conflicting interests. There are religious elements also at work, whose interests are not conducive to the welfare of a republic. The anarchists are especially dangerous, as it needs a concentrated and powerful government to deal with them, and here such does not exist.

An election is becoming more and more to be a signal for arranging the different nationalities under their respective flags, to vote for their own peculiar interests. Formerly it was mainly the Irish or German vote; now it is beginning to be the Italian, Scandinavian, Polish, Mexican, or others as well; and self interest assures every effort being made to keep each nationality segregated, a procedure entirely opposed to American institutions.

The public school system broadly speaking, is a failure, due mainly to a want of proper supervision, and the assumption that the people will look after their own interests. But what is everybody's business is nobody's. These schools do not educate generally, at least in the country. Most of the children acquire a feeble knowledge of reading and writing, which, in the hard struggle for existence, commencing early is forgotten or turned to no practical account. The mass of the people get both their religion and politics second-hand, and usually from incompetent and interested sources.

A large proportion of the young people have grown up practically with no religion and no education. Statistics assert this, and observation confirms the truth. A return shows that out of seven million young men in the United States, 75 per cent. never attend church at all, 95 per cent. belong to no church, and 97 per cent. do nothing to further the spread of Christianity. 67 per cent. of every hundred criminals are young men, and they are the chief patrons of the saloon, the gambling house, and worse places.

The death rate steadily increases from fourteen to twenty-five years of age.

Robert Ingersoll is the prophet of the