

A GRAVE QUESTION.

The responsibilities of American citizenship present a serious problem in connection with the class of immigrants constituting the larger number of recent comers from foreign shores. The sentiment that our country should be an asylum for the oppressed of all nations is one that should be maintained, restricted only by a qualification that shall protect our institutions from danger of destruction. A recent writer has defined the danger line to be that which can be drawn between those who come as those came who founded the government and advanced it to its present proud position as the greatest and best on earth, and those who have no social or political longing to satisfy because their inheritances and traditions supply them with none.

A democratic community is at the mercy of those who come to it for the enjoyment of the benefits which have been founded by its pioneers. Its strong needs are for the presence of those who have ambitions to be satisfied beyond the mere gratification of appetite. The matter of race should not be made a bar to the growth of numbers, but social con-

ditions which have presented most serious problems in the industrial affairs of America within the past few years demand consideration. The intelligent use of the ballot and of the laws which have to do with the protection of the laborer, whether or not he has acquired the right of citizenship, are absolutely necessary to the safety of the rights of those who bear the burdens of good society and good government. This is the principle that is behind the regulation made by congress for the exclusion of contract labor, and should not be violated by a lax administration of that law.

It is not so much the sentiment of offering open arms to all who may come as the timidity of those engaged in partisan politics that stands in the way of needed action on these lines. It is not so much that those who are now flocking to our shores to take the places of Americans are not needed in this country as that among the number so many are disqualified from sharing the responsibility of American citizenship. The problem presented must sooner or later be met, and the outcome rests with the people who now have the ballot.