

This transplantation has most far-reaching effects. Politically, it transfers a preponderance of power to the great cities, changing the results of important elections, and increasing the urgency of municipal problems. Socially, it swells the number of the classes most exposed to agitation and discontent, intensifies the dangers to be apprehended from social upheavals, and widens the growing chasm between the classes. It concentrates the wealth of the nation into fewer hands, and reacts profoundly upon the material, social, and political life of the entire nation. The more rapid the process of centralization, the more frequent and intense must be the periods of depression needed to correct it.

The student of social science, observing so stupendous a movement, asks whether society is to be the gainer or the loser by it. On the one side, he trembles—especially if he be an American—at the prospect of adding enormously to the burden of the municipal governments in the large cities, already almost breaking down through corruption and inefficiency. He realizes that in times of social disturbances the great cities are an ever-growing menace to the public authority and even to the existing social order. He knows that crime is increasing, like the cities, out of all proportion to everything else; and that the massing of dense populations means impaired public health and morals. The constant depletion of the smaller towns and of the country, steadily draining away the best, lowers the tone of village and farm life, prevents the rapid diffusion throughout the country of improvements in education, and tends to exclude the inhabitants of the rural districts from participation in the great ameliorations of modern life which ought to be common to all.

*Per contra*, it is the testimony of

Sir Charles Dilke that in Australia "the working people of the capitals have excellent houses and gardens in the suburbs, and are better off than the dwellers in the country from most points of view. On the other hand, the population of the colony, generally speaking, gains, from the concentration in the capitals, in education, in power of recreation, and in many of the matters which make life most pleasant. The effect must be a quickening of the national pulse, and is already, in fact, visible in the brightness and high intelligence of the Australian people."

In America, even the poorest of the working people refuse to go into the country to live. Labor is benefited in many ways by association; school advantages are better, wages higher, capital receives better returns, ambition has a wider field where the rivers of people have their confluence. Yet, on the whole, the conclusion seems unavoidable that the evils and dangers, present and prospective, of the excessive massing of the people in the cities far outweigh the benefits. Doubtless the chief cause of this remarkable concentration is the natural superiority under existing conditions, of large centres for all the processes of production and exchange.

For some of the conditions that are operating so unfavorably against the country there is no remedy. So far as the concentration is the result of the natural superiority of the city as a place for business or residence, so long as human nature continues to crave the stimulus of social contact, there can be no remedy until the accumulated miseries of overgrown cities drive the people back to the land. Some sanguine observers, seeing the temporary check caused by the present depression, think that that time has now arrived. Others look to the recent extraordinary extension of the system of electric