

Wash you, make you clean, let me see the evil
of your doings no more.
 } Seek out justice, chastise the violent.
 } Right the orphan, plead for the widow.
 Come now, and let us argue together, says
Jahveh;
 If your sins be scarlet, they may become white
as snow;
 Be they red as crimson, they may become as
wool.
 If ye be willing and obedient, the good of the
land shall ye eat,
 But if ye refuse and resist, by the sword be
ye eaten!
 The mouth of Jahveh has spoken it!¹

Many of Isaiah's prophecies are almost incomprehensible without a knowledge of the events out of which they sprang, and with which they are connected; many of them are fragments, apparently incom-

¹Isaiah i, 10-20.

plete; much of the diction of Isaiah has yet to be interpreted; and I look for some one, yet to come, who will gather up the fruits of Hebrew scholarship and tell the story of his life, so far as it can be learned, weaving in with it his songs and speeches and making them luminous. In our English Bibles, most of us can do little more than pick out isolated passages, read them, and be strengthened. Little known, a dim and distant figure, still this voice of his, this voice of denunciation and of hope, this summons to repentance and counsel to trust, remains through the years; and rightly is he counted the most spiritual writer of the Hebrew nation, excepting only the Great Unknown who has in history, though nameless, borne the name of The Second Isaiah.

An Educational Colony

By Katharine Pearson Woods

ON the banks of a certain little stream in Texas—one of the branches of the many-branched Concho—there is an improved tract of land, or irrigated farm, containing about four hundred and fifty acres. Some fifteen or twenty dwellings near by are inhabited by the tenants—all Mexicans—of this *Labor Nuevo*, or New Farm, as it is called. I have termed it an educational colony, and venture to offer this account of it and its workings, with a purpose which it will, perhaps, be best to state straightforwardly in the beginning.

There exists a fairly strong analogy between the Mexican peons, or the proletariat, as we should call them in English, and the corresponding class of Cubans; though, in comparing race with race, the Mexicans are said to be the superior people. Their language, at all events, is the same, allowing for a few dialectical variations; their religion is the same; their houses, manners, and customs are closely similar; they may justly be considered as having reached the same point in the scale of development, and as needing about the same treatment to assist their further evolution. It may possibly, therefore, be of service to those who are considering the new duties and responsibilities which have been laid upon the

Nation by our guardianship of Cuba, to learn what has been the experience of one person in Texas with the Mexicans of that region; an experience which covers, I believe, some eighteen or twenty years. Possibly the results achieved may be disappointing to sanguine enthusiasts; but it is always to be remembered that the evolution of a people is never a very rapid process; and it is certainly best that we should not expect, in undertaking the guardianship of Cuba, to turn the island into a sort of tropical Boston within the lifetime of any one who assisted to conquer it.

The founder of the colony of which I have spoken is Mr. Charles B. Metcalfe, of the X Q Z Ranch, about fifteen miles from the little town of San Angelo. By putting to him a few leading questions, I succeeded in obtaining an account of the matter from his own hand, written with admirable modesty, from which I shall quote largely; adding certain matters which came under my own notice during a visit to the ranch about two years ago. And personality is so large a factor in any attempts of the kind to be described, that I feel constrained to say a few words about my friend himself. Kindness of heart, generosity, readiness to assist one's neighbors, especially the shiftless ones, to

get along in the world—these things are characteristic of frontier life; but, amid a population distinguished for these qualities, Mr. Metcalfe is markedly pre-eminent. And yet the "Labor Nuevo" was hardly established as a philanthropic institution; it is, first and chiefly, a business enterprise; benefiting the entire countryside by its productions, and Mr. Metcalfe, as a large landholder, in several ways which scarcely need to be pointed out. The one point which needs to be emphasized is that the only road to success in such undertakings is through the exercise of a wise paternalism; and that greed and extortion are and must be as fatal to the landlord as to the tenant. And now we will let Mr. Metcalfe speak for himself:

"The maximum number of acres per family is fifteen; the Mexicans call such tracts 'liñas.' The tenants had all the product of the land for three years, for which they cleared it and constructed the irrigation canals, side ditches, etc. I controlled and supervised the labor and construction, and assisted by advancing implements, seeds, some teams, and other necessary means of subsistence, as they were penniless. They were able, at the expiration of each year, to meet their indebtedness to me, with trifling exceptions; but never kept anything to run next year. And that is a national characteristic.

"At the expiration of their three years' lease, I allowed all who helped improve the land to retain possession of their fifteen-acre tract, or 'liña,' at a rental of fifty dollars per annum, and each man did about ten days' work each year as a contribution to the maintenance of the water system. I had offers from outsiders of five dollars per acre (seventy-five dollars per liña), but allowed the original renters to remain at the fifty dollars rental. This is the sixth year (1898), and some of the original settlers still remain; but, strange to say, those who prospered most were the first to leave. This goes to show that by long usage the habit is bred in them of living on credit, and not of accumulation. The average Mexican in Texas is perfectly happy with one meal ahead, and the hope of credit to get another one; if they cannot get credit, they will cheerfully work spasmodically. They will also work to pay their debts, but prefer—I am now speaking of the farmers—to work by task-

work, and do not care to labor hard by the month or day. They make docile tenants if one speaks their language and does not let them go into debt more than they can pay each year. On irrigated land they generally manage to live and pay each year's expenses; but if one of them dies, the landlord must advance the coffin, grave-clothes, etc., which, however, they take pride in repaying. If they marry, the landlord must also make an advance to the man for his gift of clothes to his intended. In sickness they will suffer and even die unless a doctor is employed for them. All these things they expect and generally are grateful for; and they are willing to pay such debts, provided the landlord manages so that they can make it out of the crop, or finds other labor for them.

"They live frugally, and their food is largely frijoles (beans), chile (red pepper), tortillas (flat cakes made from corn ground by the women on a rock made for that purpose, and called metate), lard which they put in their frijoles, very little bacon, beef, or mutton when they can get them, coffee and sugar. They use some wheat-flour bread, which they cook in flat cakes without yeast, and call gordas, or fat cakes. I have families on my farm who have plenty to eat of this kind of food, at a cost of about five dollars a month. Their clothing is mostly cotton of bright colors and cheap, light quality; they do not need warm clothing, as they stay in the house when northers blow."

These houses, by the way, have just enough wooden framework to hold them in place; the interstices are then filled in with cornstalks, and the whole is plastered over with mud, laid on, as I saw it in one case, with the bare hand, by a boy of some ten or twelve years, who was able to reach all but the extreme point of the roof. They have no flooring, and no furniture except a box or so, a few cups and cooking utensils, perhaps a table, and plenty of shawls and blankets, wrapped in which they sleep on the bare earth. This is not the hardship which it would be further north; the soil of Texas is remarkably dry; and even during a norther the insides of such dwellings are perfectly warm.

But to continue our quotations from Mr. Metcalfe:

"On account of the low price of cotton,

I cannot say that there is much profit to be made through them; but as tenants of irrigated land, I consider them the most profitable that we have here; for, as I say, if it is so managed that they have food and clothes (not many), advances of about \$30 to marry on, about \$20 to bury them, give them quinine and cathartic pills, and a *baile* (or dance)—which costs \$25—three times a year, they are content for the landlord to take the rest; and I do not find that they advance beyond this. However, they are rarely charges on the public, and live to a good old age.

Politically, they are not more venal than other ignorant classes, in fact much less so; but they are willing the Patron shall decide for them what is for their interest and his, and they vote as he solicits."

It should be remarked, however, that there are two ways of soliciting; and that the gentleman in question takes the trouble to provide lectures for his tenants on political matters. He has also built a school-house for them, which at the time of my visit was in charge of a Mexican of some education, whose salary was paid out of the public funds. It is thus evident that we are not offering any impossible ideal for the emulation of such Americans as may settle in Cuba; "the Patron's" attitude towards his Mexican neighbors is simply that of a clear-headed man, who is ready to help them from his own pocket when such assistance is really necessary, but considers that the general welfare is best promoted by establishing their affairs as well as his own, so far as possible, on a self-supporting basis.

So far he has spoken of them entirely as farmers; but his remarks upon other sides of their life are so interesting that I venture to quote further. He considers that they are generally honest, kind to their children, and virtuous; that while some of them live together without legal marriage, they do not consider this to be morally wrong, and are usually true to their agreement. In religion they are mostly Roman Catholics, but not very devout as a rule, though they like to have

the priests christen their children and marry them; and some of them attach importance to religious burial. "They are fond of feasting and dancing, which they do in a most orderly and graceful manner. They will pay two musicians eight dollars a night to play for a *baile*, when they haven't three meals left. In addition to the Mexican farmers, we have them as cow-hands, horsemen, sheep-herders, sheep-shearers, and male house-servants." (The women never work in the fields or go out to service, considering the latter, in especial, as a disgrace.) "In all these avocations they give satisfaction, as they work at a reasonable wage, and are faithful. It is a usual thing to trust a shepherd, whose wage is \$12 a month and about \$5 in rations, with a flock worth anywhere from \$2,000 to \$10,000 in value, and the rule is that he proves entirely trustworthy. I once employed one who was in sole charge of flocks ranging in numbers from 1,000 to 2,500 head, and in value as above; he worked for me nine years, and I do not think lost for me during that time as many as twenty-five sheep, and was not off duty more than ten days in that time. To realize what that means you must know that during all those years, night and day, winter and summer, through storm and sunshine, he was always with his sheep; his only house a little tent, and his food cooked at night by himself, while his flock lay around him. Once a web of lightning killed 150 sheep within five steps of his tent; at another time a solid sleet and snow covered the trees and earth for nine days, and he kept his flock alive by tramping from live-oak to live-oak, and cutting down branches from which they ate the leaves."

Such courage and fidelity as this would seem to be good material for the making of a nation; and while agricultural and sheep-raising conditions differ widely in Texas and in Cuba, the two peoples are, as had been said, sufficiently alike for the picture of the Texan Mexicans drawn by Mr. Metcalfe to prove both instructive and suggestive to the intending settler in the island now under our guardianship.

