

CHAPTER XIV

THE PROMISE OF AMERICA—WILL IT BE FULFILLED?

It is pertinent at this point to inquire, What is the purpose of America? Or rather, as Mr. Herbert Croly puts it, What is the Promise of American Life? The answer to this question must necessarily be preceded by a discussion of the fundamental reason for establishing the American Republic.

This has never been more clearly perceived or expressed than in the "Letters of an American Farmer," written by a French immigrant, Hector St. John de Crèvecoeur, and published before the Revolution. In a sense it may be regarded as a projected view of what the founders of the New Republic pictured to themselves as the goal they had conscientiously set for themselves. To this immigrant from France it was but natural that he would first be impressed by the apparent and conscious differences which he saw between conditions affecting the great majority of the people in the Old and in the New World.

Referring to the American, this immigrant-author says: "Here the rewards of his industry follow with equal steps the progress of his labour; this labour is founded on the basis of