

PART III.

IMMIGRANTS IN THE LEADING INDUSTRIES

[The Immigration Commission has devoted several volumes of its report to a description of labor conditions in special industries which are generally believed to typify the evils of recent immigration. Of these, five will be considered in this part.]

CHAPTER XVII

THE GARMENT WORKERS

THE manufacture of clothing in the United States is an immigrant industry. Immigrants have furnished the labor and in most instances the capital.¹ The labor conditions in this industry have attracted wide public attention by frequent strikes, ever since the Russian Jews have become the predominant element among the operatives. The clothing industry has become associated in the public mind with the sweating system, and since the employees are, with few exceptions, immigrants from Southern and Eastern Europe, the conclusion is readily reached that the root of the sweating system is in the character of the new immigration. This view draws support from the attitude of the United Garment Workers of America, an organization of Jewish garment workers, which, at its annual convention in 1905, adopted a resolution demanding restriction of further immigration for the protection of the foreign-born workers already here.² And yet a dispassionate study of

¹ *Reports of the Immigration Committee*, vol. 11, p. 417.

² John R. Commons, *Races and Immigrants in America*, p. 115.