

IMMIGRATION AND THE NATIONAL CHARACTER.

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Outline.

Introduction:

Some statistics showing number of immigration.

Discussion:

1. The immigration of yesterday side by side with that of today.
2. Causes of immigration of today contrasted with those of yesterday.
3. Character and social standing of immigrants.
4. Different kinds of immigrants.
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5. Settlement in little towns.
6. Evils connected with immigration.

Conclusion:

Remedies suggested for correction of evils connected with immigration.

- b. More thorough inspection and larger inspection force.
- c. Present solicitation by steamship agents forbidden, and laws governing such agents strictly enforced.
- a. Distribution.

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Immigration, and the National Character.

Immigration is the life history of the countries of the new world. It is through this process that European civilization has spread until now it covers the globe. It is only recently that the immigration problem has assumed a serious aspect. All through the middle ages there was very little ~~immigration~~.

The history of the migratory movement to the United States begins with the first settlement at Plymouth. In one sense all the inhabitants of the United States are immigrants, the only exception being the Indians. But this is a very misleading conception. There is a great difference between those who took part in building a political commonwealth by their toil and sacrifice and those who simply migrate to a country where laws and customs are already fixed, and a national existence certain. The former are called the colonists and the latter the immigrants. The number of people here at the beginning of the Revolutionary War is not accurately known. The population of New England was produced from an immigration of 20,000 persons, who arrived before 1640. These people spread to other colonies without receiving an additional increase from them. Franklin stated in 1751 that the population then amounting to about one million had been produced from an immigration of less than 80,000. The first census of the United States in 1790, gave the total population as 3,924,214, but this number did not include Vermont and the territory northwest of the Ohio River, which, one authoritative claims, would make the total over 4,000,000. The first records of immigration begin with the year 1820. The number of persons migrating to this country after the Revolutionary War to 1820, although not known, is estimated by good

authorities at 250,000.

The original settlers of this country were, in the main, of Teutonic and Keltic races. The pioneers in the thirteen colonies were practically all British, Irish, Dutch and German, with a few Portuguese, French and Swedes. The Germans were Protestants from the Palatinate, and were quite generally distributed, having colonized in New York, western Pennsylvania, Maryland, and Virginia. The Swedes settled upon the Delaware river. The French, although not numerous, were an addition of value to the community. The Irish, from the north of Ireland, were <sup>largely</sup> from Cromwell's army. All these people were from nations of a high degree of civilization, and were also the leading colonial and commercial nations of the world. Later, with the annexation of Louisiana and Florida, some of the so-called Mediterranean races, not so desirable, were brought in, but for obvious reasons the British civilization and customs enveloped these.

Immigration to the United States is divided into three periods. That before 1820, of which little is known; from 1820 to 1869; and from 1870 to the present time.

With the year 1820 the official history of immigration began, for it was at this time that the collectors of customs at our ports were first obliged to record the arrival of passengers by sea from foreign countries. This record included numbers, ages, sexes, and occupations. Before 1856 no difference was made between immigrants intending to return and those intending to remain.

Still very small, the immigration increased from 8,385 in 1820 to 22,633 in 1831. The first marked rise took place in 1827 and 1828, following a commercial depression in Europe. From 1831, with the exception of the period 1843 to 1844, numbers steadily advanced until they reached totals of 104,565 in 1842, and in 1850 310,004. The

largest annual increases were from 114,371 in 1845 to 154,416 in 1846 and 234,968 in 1847. These sudden movements of the population were due to hard times in Europe, especially in Ireland. These causes continued until the total immigration was bulged to 427,853 in 1854. With the year 1854 the tide began to recede and decreased steadily until the first two years of the Civil War, when it was below 100,000. However, in 1863 a gradual increase set in again and in 1869, 352,768 persons landed. During all of this period the only immigration of importance came from Europe and other parts of America. Immigration from Asia, which began in 1853, consisted in the largest year, 1854, of 13,100 persons.

In 1869 the ethnic composition of the races immigrating underwent a marked change, and considerations applying to the earlier immigrants do not necessarily hold for those from 1870 to the present time. For this reason the period is made to end with 1869.

Immigration from 1870 to date. In this period the immigration increased <sup>three</sup>fold. In 1870 the total immigration was 387,203; in 1903 the enormous number of 857,046; and in 1905 a still greater figure, 1,026,499. Directly after 1870 there was a period of industrial and commercial stagnation, which had a direct bearing on the number emigrating. The number increased until 1873 and then rapidly decreased. After 1878 suddenly increasing again until in 1882 it reached 788,992, the largest immigration for a single year except recent ones. A part of this sudden increase is ascribed to special laws, which were enacted in Russia, persecuting the Hebrews and causing large numbers of them to emigrate. Thus immigration from Russia exclusive of Poland and Finland was nearly four times as great in 1882 as in 1881, and by 1890 more than seven times as great.

The total immigration of 1905 was an increase of 26% over that of 1902 and 349% over that of 1898. The record for a single day was

reached when 11,343 aliens entered our ports at Ellis Island.

Our immigration consists of a succession of waves. The high tide was reached in 1903, but instead of declining again as has always been the custom, it has continued to increase enormously.

From the reports it appears that the total immigration from the close of the Revolutionary War to 1905 was not far from twenty-three millions, a movement of population unheard and undreamed of in history. If the average holds for the years 1901 to 1910, the immigration will be nearly eight millions of souls. But how does this number affect us? Probably it will be more significant to us if we say that at present one in every eighty persons in the entire United States has arrived from foreign shores in twelve months.

For 1905 there was a total of 1,026,499 entered through the different ports, 724,914 males and 301,585 females. In 1906 a total of 1,100,735--764,463 males, and 336,272 females. Of the number coming over in 1906, there were 4,755 who can read but cannot write, 256,068 who can neither read nor write; 112,679 aliens bringing \$50 or over; 698,401 brought less than fifty dollars. There was 25,109,413 dollars of money shown, and 133,624 who have been in the United States before. During this year ninety-two idiots were debarred; 139 insane persons; paupers or likely to become public charges, 7,069; loathsome or dangerous diseases, 2,273; convicts 205; polygamists 5; anarchists 1; prostitutes 30; those who attempt to bring in prostitutes 2; contract laborers 2,314; under Chinese exclusion act 122; thus the total number of debarred 12,432. There were 9,300 relieved in the hospital.

As we study the different periods of immigration we must notice a difference of reason for those coming in the earlier years of immigration and those coming in the recent years. Religious freedom and political equality were prime reasons for emigrating in the early

days. The Jews who are still persecuted in Russia because of their race and religion are caused to come over in great numbers. Military service is enforced in Italy; taxes rise, over population crowds, and poverty pinches. As a result the stream flows toward America, where there is no military tax, and where steady work and high wages seem assured. Commissioner Robert Watchorn, of the port of New York, puts the explanation into an epigram, "American high wages are the honey pot that brings the American flies."

Dr. A. F. Schauffler also says, "The great cause of immigration is, after all, that the immigrants propose to better themselves in this country. They come here not because they love us or we love them. They come here because they can do themselves good not because they can do us good." To make their good ours and our good theirs is both Christian and safe.

In general, migration is due to the tendency to follow a path either of increasing attractiveness or of diminished resistance.

The cause of fluctuation in the tide of immigration will now be examined.

Prosperity of this country -- that this is important is shown in the fact that there is a marked relationship between industrial and commercial activity in the United States and the volume of immigration. In 1837 for example, the total immigration was 79,000; after the panic it fell off in 1838 to 38,000. In 1842 the total was 104,000; in 1844 after a depression 78,000; and so on. Commercial activity also enables immigrants since it is estimated that 40% to 55% of those who come over have their passage paid by relatives or friends here.

Another aspect of the relation between prosperity and immigration may be noted. In times of depression it is in skilled immigrants that the decrease occurs. Foreign skilled workmen know that if they



come to this country in a time of industrial depression they run a great risk of being forced into the ranks of the unskilled, so they prefer to remain in their own country.

Religious and political persecution in the early settlement of the country had no mean part in promoting immigration. The flight of the Pilgrims from England, of the Quakers to Pennsylvania, and of the Huguenots to America and elsewhere are familiar. At the present time very few persecutions of this sort take place. The chief exceptions are the Armenians fleeing from Turkey and the Jews coming from Russia. Of the 8,581,000 Jews still in Europe, most are in Russia, Austria, the Balkan States and Germany, and are subject to unfavorable discrimination. They may therefore increase the number here at any time. The fear that if the Jewish immigration keeps up to its present level, an anti-semitic feeling may arise in the United States, is leading some of the Hebrew leaders to try to check the inflow and divert the immigration to other countries.

Facility of transit. The cost and degree of hardship in making the trip from across the waters to this country must always be an important factor in determining the volume of immigration. The great change which has come in conditions of immigrations in this respect is well described by Gen. Francis A. Walker as follows;

"Fifty, even thirty, years ago there was a rightful presumption regarding the average immigrant that he was among the most enterprising, alert, adventuresome and courageous of the community from which he came. It required no small energy, prudence, forethought, and pains to conduct the inquiries relating to his migration, to accumulate the necessary means and to find his way across the Atlantic. Today the presumption is completely reversed. So thoroughly has the continent of Europe been crossed by railways, so effectively has the

business of emigration been explained there, so much have the rates of railroad fares and ocean passage been reduced, that it is now among the least thrifty and prosperous members of any European community that the emigration agent finds his best recruiting grounds."

In 1900 over \$118,000,000 was invested in trans-atlantic steamship lines and these today are largely owned by foreigners. The multiplication of lines, especially new ones to the Mediterranean, increase in the sailings, and size of ships, have all made it easier and cheaper for the immigrant to come to this country. The sea formerly acted as a sieve, now the meshes let through every species of voyager.

Low rates alone do not seem to have a very powerful effect in stimulating immigration. Steamship lines are being extended to ports which had little or no communication a few years ago. All this means more immigrants. The competition between the lines is so great that one line went so far as to get the Hungarian government to guarantee that 30,000 immigrants a year would ship from its territories.

The methods used by steamship agents to obtain passengers. Solicitation by steamship agents. The present law forbids transportation companies or the owners of vessels to "directly or through agents, either by writing, printing or oral solicitations, solicit, invite or encourage the immigration of any aliens into the United States except by ordinary commercial letters, circulars, advertisements or oral representations, stating the sailing of their vessels and terms and facilities of transportation therein!" Never-the-less, there is no doubt that a large part of the present emigration is neither spontaneous nor normal.

The number of ship agents in Europe. One line alone has 1500. There are also thousands of other persons in the smaller towns acting as agents by making a commission on the sale of tickets. The steam-

ship companies claim that these men are entirely unknown to them, and that they have no control over their actions. In many cases this is true, but the companies are partly to blame for allowing any other than their regular agents to sell tickets. The wish of friends and relatives to send for their people across the waters is probably made effective and concrete by some drummer up of business in the neighborhood.

Assisted Immigration. At one time many of the governments had laws forbidding emigration, but later as population increased they saw that it was desirable to have some emigration.

The people generally emigrate to escape from hard economic conditions and military service, but the object of the government has been a different one altogether, they desiring to keep the able bodied and young citizens at home, and to limit those emigrating to the undesirable at home. Although not prohibiting it, the governments have put much red tape in the way of intending emigrants. For example, the Italian government makes it necessary for the Italian to have served in the Italian army before he can emigrate; the result is that more Italians emigrate from France than Frenchmen.

During the nineteenth century some of the governments, especially municipal local governments, adopted the plan of shipping their paupers, insane and diseased persons to the United States. As the average cost of supporting dependents and delinquents in the United States is not far from one-hundred and fifty dollars, and as the cost of transportation does not exceed fifty dollars, the home country would be adopting a good policy for themselves. The Swiss governments were especial offenders in this, as also were Great Britain and Ireland. The British Local Government Board has a right to take the taxes raised to support the poor and assist them to emigrate. Their

report for 1886 shows that in the preceding thirty-five years 40,000 persons had been sent out of the country and 750,000 dollars expended in that way. In 1884 and 1885 16,000 persons were sent from Ireland. The United States Government protested from time to time, but when these protests were ignored it resorted to legislation. The Act of 1875 "forbade the landing of persons who were undergoing a sentence for conviction in their own country for felonious crimes other than political or whose sentence had been remitted on condition of emigration." The Act of 1882 excluded persons unable to take care of themselves without becoming public charges, and since 1891 assisted immigrants have been especially mentioned. Thus in addition to idiots, insane persons, epileptics, persons likely to become public charges, professional beggars and convicts, the present law excludes any person whose ticket or passage is paid for with money of another or is assisted by others unless it is satisfactorily shown that such person does not belong to one of the foregoing excluded classes; but this does not prevent any relative in the United States from sending for friends or relatives not belonging to any of the above named classes.

However in spite of these provisions large numbers of delinquents and dependents do find their way here. The local governments are active in passing them out of their jurisdiction so they can finally emigrate to the United States. But the number assisted to emigrate by societies and associations is doubtless far greater than those assisted by general or local governments. Such associations as the Baron Hirsch Fund, the Jewish Board of Guardians, the Self Help Emigration Society, the Prisoner's Aid Society, The Munich Society for Assisting Discharged Convicts are only examples of numerous agencies which have been at work for longer or shorter periods in this direction. But a great number are helped by friends in this country.

There are many other factors in the fluctuations of immigration, such as war, epidemics with the resulting quarantine, and the development or extension of particular industry requiring a special kind of labor. The development of the fruit industry in California has led to the immigration of many Italians to that state, as they seem to have a natural aptitude for that work.

One of the most important factors and one little noticed is the protective tariff. Tariff creates a demand for certain kinds of labor and at the same time it destroys the demand for certain sorts of foreign goods. The moment the protective tariff is raised, especially if the protective industry is well organized and the rate of wages high, the goods will be shut out but the producer of the goods will come in.

Also the influence of new machinery on immigration is worthy of mention. Today a few can accomplish more than thousands could do fifty years ago. Machinery has chiefly diminished the need for skilled labor.

Another element which has undoubtedly had a potent effect in promoting immigration in recent years, especially from Italy and the south-western countries of Europe, has been the fear of restrictive legislation and the desire to get in before its enactment. The agitation for a reading test in the year 1895 probably accounts for the large increase in 1896.

The agencies of less importance are the advertisements in Europe of American Railroad Companies and Boards of Agriculture of American States and the missionary efforts of the Mormon Church.

A million a year or more is the rate at which the immigrants are now coming to the United States. Think of Lawrence, Kansas, which has a population of about 10,000 souls. Settle one hundred towns of

this size with immigrants mostly of the peasant class, with their un-American language, customs, religion, dress and ideas, and only those coming from Europe and Asia in the year ending June 30th. 1905 would be located. Those who came from the other parts of the world would make two and one-half more cities.

Group them by nationality:-- and it would make twenty-two Italian cities of 10,000 people each, or taken together a city as large as Minneapolis with its 220,000 people. In Pennsylvania there are enough miners, if they would rise up, to over-throw the entire police force. The various peoples of Austria and Hungary--- Bohemians, Magyars, Jews, and Slavs---would fill twenty-seven and one-half towns or a city as large as Detroit. The Jews, Poles and other races fleeing from Russia, would people eighteen and one-half towns or a city the size of Providence. For the remainder there be four German cities of 10,000 people, six of Scandinavians, one of French, one of Greeks, one of Japanese, six and a half of English, five of Irish and nearly two of Scotch and Welsh. Then there would be six towns of between 4500 and 5000 each, peopled respectively by Belgians, Dutch, Portuguese, Roumanians, Swiss and European Turks; while Asian Turks would fill another town of 6000. We would have a Servian, Bulgarian, and Montenegrin village of 2000; a Spanish village of 2100, and the other Asiatics would fill up a town of 5000 with as motley an assortment as could be found under the sky. Then the West Indian immigrants would make a city of 16,600, the South Americans and Mexicans a place of 5000, the Canadians a 2000 village and the Australians another; leaving a colony of stragglers and strays, the ends of the creation, to the number of 2000 more. Just let us put ourselves in any one of these hundred odd cities or villages thus, without a single American inhabitant, with every thing foreign, including religion; then realize

that just such a foreign population as is represented by all these places has been put in the United States somewhere and within a twelve-month. Then think that 230,882 of these people are illiterates, with no use of book, paper, pen, ink, a printing press---and we can realise how easy it is for the different agents and sharpers to take advantage of this ignorance to get all they can from them. This regiment of non-readers-and-writers come almost exclusively from the south and east of Europe. Then if we think that immigration from these countries is on the increase we may know that the problem of education in the future will become increasingly complex.

To emphasize as much as possible the vast number coming and the illiteracy, let us consider that the immigration of a single year exceeded by 26,000 the population of Conneticut, which has been settled and growing since colonial days. It exceeded by 37,000 the combined population of Alaska, Arizona, Nevada, Idaho, Wyoming and Utah. These immigrants would populate whole commonwealths, but they could hardly be called commonwealths in this case. If the distribution could be made, how quickly the Americanization of aliens would be realized. The Italians who came in one year would exceed the combined population of Alaska and Wyoming. The Hungarians and Slavs would replace the present population of New Hampshire or of North Dakota, and equal that of Vermont and Wyoming together. The Russian Jews and Finlanders would replace the people of Arizona. The army of illiterates would re-people Delaware and Nevada. And the much larger army of the unskilled would exceed by 50,000 the population of Maine, that of Colorado by about 80,000, and twice that of the District of Columbia.

Character of the Immigrants. English immigrants come from two very different classes. The better is well educated, brings considerable money and makes a valuable addition to our population. Many of

this class are skilled workmen or professional and commercial men. On the other hand there is much immigration of the lowest classes, including numerous defectives and delinquents. One authority says that the English are the least assimilable of the English speaking nationalities, because though they mix readily with the native population they hold tenaciously to their national characteristics.

Finns. The principle destination of these people were Michigan, New York and Massachusetts. They were practically all unskilled. Most of the Finns go to country districts and especially the northwest, a desirable location. The farm laborers are intelligent and well trained, and find employment easily, especially as they seldom leave home without having friends here to help them find work.

French. Among the French immigrants are a considerable number of clergymen, artists, engineers, and teachers; also of dressmakers, miners, and servants. The French immigrants are noted for their intelligence, education and thrift, and are in every way desirable additions to the population.

Germans. The immigrants of this race are thrifty and industrious. They have congregated largely in certain sections, 60% of the population of Milwaukee is German. What is of greater importance is the fact that the Germans come with the intention of settling here permanently. Delinquent classes among them are exceedingly small. They assimilate rapidly and give their children good mental and physical training.

Greeks. Many of them emigrate under contract. Owing to this fact they congregate in large cities and live in very unhealthy places. The percentage of trachoma and other contagious diseases is very high among them. They are patriotic, but in most cases come to this country with the intention of returning, therefore they do not



bring their families with them.

Hebrews. More than one half of the 1,100,000 Jews live in Greater New York. Musicians and teachers are the most numerous of the professional classes. Tailors, bakers, carpenters, clerks, locksmiths and painters also come. The longevity of the race and its freedom from acute disease, apart from tuberculosis in the crowded districts, has often been noted. So also is the freedom of the race from drunkenness and crimes of violence.

Italians. The newer Italians, that is from southern Italy and Sicily, are let out by contract to work on railroads, sewers, and the like. Many go back and forth according to the state of the labor market. Many Italians of the better sort are expert fruit growers and have settled on the interior of the Pacific coast. Italians are a tractable and imitative people, with great capacities for good or evil.

Evils connected with immigration. If immigration were left to the natural causes there would be little reason for apprehension. It is in the solicited and assisted immigration that the worst element is found. Commercial greed lies at the foot of all this. The great steamship lines have made it cheaper to emigrate than to stay at home in many cases, and every kind of illegal inducement and deceit and allurements has been employed to secure a full steerage. The ramifications of the steamship line is wonderful. It has a direct bearing upon the quality of immigrants. As have been mentioned, in the days when a journey across the Atlantic was a matter of weeks or months and of considerable outlay, only the most enterprising, thrifty and venturesome were ready to try an uncertain future in an unknown land. The immigrant was thus likely to be of the sturdiest and most enterprising class, and his increased the general prosperity without lower-

ing moral standards. Now that the ocean has become little more than a ferry, and the rates of railway and steamship have been so reduced, it is the least thrifty and prosperous members of their community that fall readiest prey to the emigration agents. Since these agents practise all kinds of frauds upon the ignorant aliens, and teach them to evade and even break laws, how can we expect them when they get here to think very highly of the laws. Also by "paying a little money to some one" they are enabled to have more at their command. They are thus given their first lesson in bribing. The agents treat them with much brutality but they patiently bear it, and would almost cut off their right hand if they thought that what they had to do to get to America. What is the best method of stopping this evil is difficult to say. Of the various legislative acts none have proven very successful. The end to be desired is plain. It is that immigration shall be controlled in such a way that elements incompatible with our civilization shall be excluded; that the defective and delinquent classes who are only a burden and a danger to us shall be excluded; and that the immigration shall not be on such a scale as to threaten the integrity of our political institutions or to cause economic disturbances. The general method would be to establish some process of selection by which the immigration of undesirable persons shall be discouraged.

Absolute prohibition is not necessary nor would it be satisfactory. Possibly the only exception might be the Chinese and such tribes who cling to the customs of their own land instead of adopting those of the country to which they migrate. The demands of life would make the absolute prohibition burdensome and oppressive. It would be impossible to keep friends or relatives from joining those who are already here. Absolute prohibition directed against immigrants of any particular nationality is invidious and would be apt to provoke retal-

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iation. The legislative measures should be such as are practicable to enforce, and such as shall have the effect of gradually discouraging immigration until it shall be of good quality and of reasonable numbers. The first step should be the rigid enforcement of the present laws against the landing of paupers, criminals and persons unable to support themselves. That these laws are not enforced is a scandal to the community. There is no question as to the undesirability of immigrating both for them and for us. When a foreigner wishes to immigrate, it ought to be so that he would have to send in his name. Then an officer should go around and examine him as to health, moral and material condition. Then if satisfactory he should be given a certificate giving him the right to travel. Diseased persons now can be treated so that they can pass the inspection all right, but they may probably be even worse than before they took treatment. Additional inspectors should be added to the al-ready overworked force. Still further, the steamship companies should be held rigidly responsible for bringing over persons who are prohibited by law from landing. Assisted immigration, no difference where the assistance comes from, should be prohibited, and made a subject of diplomatic negotiation.

Our cry should be not "America for Americans", but "Americans for America."