

"History and Effects of

Immigration

To The United States."

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"Immigration", says R. Mayo Smith, "is the life history of the countries." We can trace the different characteristics of a new nation such as the United States to the several sources from which the several parts of that nation come and yet they may be so changed by a different environment that the individuality of the several races is entirely lost. We might say and truly that all inhabitants of the United States are immigrants or descendants of immigrants, with the exception of the red men who first occupied this country.

The history of Immigration to the United States began, when our country ceased to be a temporary resting place for those who were fleeing from the firm laws of compulsory religion, when a new central government was formed to which this handful of sturdy men swore allegiance to love, honor, and protect the flag which had cost so much, and for which these citizens would and did so willingly give their lives.

The date generally used to show the difference between the period of colonization and that of immigration is the year 1783, or the conclusion of the war of Independence against Great Britain. During the year between 1783 and 1820 there was but little immigration. This was called the period of National Increase. From 1820 to the present day we may call the period of Immigration. Our statistics begin with the year 1820. Since that time the records have been kept of all passengers who have arrived from foreign countries, also the age and occupation and the country from which they come. Prior to 1820 the total number of alien arrivals is estimated at 250,000. In 1820 there were 8385 new comers. They came for the most part from Great Britain, Germany and Sweden. This stream gradually increased, but

with many fluctuations and was governed largely by the economic conditions.

The first impulse which brought men to America from other lands was the spirit of adventure and exploration. The Spanish came for the acquisition of wealth. The Portuguese, for the winning of souls to the church. The French have never been very much inclined to emigrate. The English made our most important settlement and to-day England is one of the three most important sources of immigration. Because of the report sent to Holland of the rich river valley, the fur bearing animals and other wealth producing interests, the Dutch traders and merchants flocked to America. This was about 1613. In 1638 the first Swedish colony came. During the period between 1688 and 1700 various elements were added to the population, such as French Huguenots, Hollanders and Scotch Irish. Statistics show that conditions of the country, both industrial and commercial, have had a marked influence upon the rate and volume of immigration. The extent of immigration from 1820 to 1837 was continuous and rapid. The panic of 1837 decreased the number from 79,000 to 38,000. In 1840 it increased only to fall again in 1842 because of a depression, from 104,000 to 78,000. After the great uprising in Europe in 1848 for the purpose of obtaining more political freedom, thousands came to America either to escape punishment or to seek a home in a land where freedom and justice ruled. By 1854 the immigration had increased to 427,000 but six years later at the beginning of the civil war it fell to 90,000. At the close of the war it increased again until in 1872 it was 438,000. But with the panic of 1873 the number again decreased to 261,000. By 1882 it had increased to a maximum of 730,000. Because of the passage of the first restrictive law and the numerous

labor troubles it fell again to about 400,000 in 1885. The slight increase which followed was somewhat checked by the panic of 1893 and the quarantine regulation, caused by the cholera epidemic. This period of depression lasted several years and in 1898 immigration reached the low mark of 229,000. From this point there was a rapid rise until in 1903 the number was 857,000. In 1905 it was 1,026,499 the highest point hitherto known.

It is very evident that the years of great immigration to our country were times of depression and poverty or other unfavorable conditions existing in the home country, for this, like all other movements follows the law of cause and effect. ?

By voluntary immigration, such as the early immigration has been, for the most part, our country gained the best of the foreign citizens, men who were intelligent, energetic and ambitious. Those who came seeking liberty and opportunities for development of a new and lofty type of civil and religious common-wealth, have produced civilization, which, although inevitably faulty, has excited the admiration of the world. In former days the journey was difficult and expensive and as a matter of fact this had a decided restrictive influence as only that class of persons who were willing to sacrifice themselves and all that they held dear, would start on such a perilous undertaking. We may therefore conclude that this period of immigration has brought us no harm, and these people and their descendants have formed a firm and well proportioned government of which we are justly proud.

The late immigration is not however, of this desirable type. In the first place the motives which bring them are purely selfish. It is not that they wish to help build up a new world or to lift the standards of this country to a higher plane than that at which they

now stand. It is not that they wish to do us good, but that they may themselves be benefited in a material way.

The new immigration, and by this term we mean the aliens from southeastern Europe, is at present the prevailing type. These people are the Italians, Hungarians, Slavs, Hebrews, Greeks and Syrians. Those who composed the principal part of the mass of former years were the northwestern Europeans, the English, Scotch, Welch, Irish, French, German and Scandinavians. The following racial division is taken from the official reports. "Ninety-five per cent of the immigration to this country comes from Europe. Most of these different races of peoples have been grouped into four grand divisions, as follows. Teutonic division from northern Europe. Iberic division from southern Europe. Celtic division from western Europe. Slavic division from eastern Europe."

With this new immigration come new problems. These people do not possess the characteristics of the colonists. They lack the sturdiness, the stability of purpose, the determination and above all education, which is almost nothing in comparison to those of the country to which they come. The point of importance to be considered is that as the immigration from southeastern Europe has increased, that from northwestern Europe has decreased, and because of this fact the later immigrants are more of a detriment than were those of the first period.

The direct causes of this immigration are very evident. The first and most important one is Attraction. To the immigrant, America is a beautiful, wonderful, attractive world. To him it means wealth and freedom. Both of these things he lacks at home. It is no more than may be expected that when necessity pushes and opportunity pulls, he should follow the path of least resistance and leaving the

old country, trying his fortune in the new. Commissioner Robert Watchorn says, "American wages are the honeypots that bring the alien flies". America is a magic word with which every foreign village is thoroughly familiar.

The second cause is Expulsion. This is not so very important in this late immigration although to-day there is considerable trouble against the Jews. Many of the young men of Germany wish to avoid the compulsory military service. In other countries the taxes are so high that the people are almost forced to leave or starve. It is only natural then that this stream should flow toward America where there is no compulsory drill and no unreasonable tax, where everyone is free and happy.

The third cause is Solicitation, and many are the ^{mt}ages at work in all parts of the world who come under the head of solicitors. The United States Post Office is a mighty factor in this direction. Those who come here send back letters, papers and money which excite the home folk to desires, and actions which result in their coming to find out for themselves the truths that have been written. Railroad and steamship companies make it a part of their business, to advertise the beautiful world on this side of the ocean, and the cheap rates to that world. "Not only American money and letters, but American ideas are at work abroad", says Rev. F. M. Goodchild in a recent address. The praises of America are told abroad by every person who comes here and prospers. The real reason why southern Europe is in a turmoil to-day, is that American ideas of liberty are working there like leaven. We get our notions of liberty from the Bible and from men who forced the Magna Charta from King John at Runnymede, but all other peoples in the world seem to be getting their ideas of liberty from us. The

cost of coming from any other country to America is so much less in this day than it was in the time of colonization that it inevitably brings a different class of people. They need not have much money nor much intelligence to make the journey, and taking them as a class in general they are not burdened very heavily with either one or the other.

During the last few years a marked change has occurred, the proportion of Irish immigration having fallen off and that of the German having increased. In recent years the Scandinavian immigration has steadily grown as has also the Italian. During the last century it was a very common thing for foreign countries to relieve themselves of part of their burden of paupers, insane, dependents and delinquents by shipping them to the United States. It was considerably cheaper to pay their fare here than to care for them for the remaining years of their lives. However in 1882 our government passed laws for self-protection and in 1891 another law made assisted immigrants a special class not to be admitted.

Let us consider the rank, distribution and effect, of this late immigration. In the first place we must know that, coming at the rate they are, more than one million during last year, they cannot be assimilated in the proper manner by the American people. In the words of H. H. Botesen it is thus expressed, "Just as a body cannot without safety accept nourishment any faster than it is capable of assimilating it, so a state cannot accept an excessive influx of people without serious injury." They are then in truth forced to live in settlements of their own kind which are as nearly like their foreign home as it is possible to make them.

The problem of note which comes with the new immigration is that

of over crowding. The city is the center of attraction and our large eastern cities contain the largest settlements as they are nearest the great ports. We find the large American cities contain several smaller cities made up entirely of foreigners. For instance in New York, in the little Italy there are 400,000 people. The Jews of Manhattan are 760,000 in number. In thirty-three of our largest cities there are more foreigners than natives. These people crowded as they are in unsanitary surroundings and in the most undesirable environment imaginable, knowing nothing of real America, following the customs of their native land, speaking their native tongue and in fact living their foreign life in America, cannot be expected to make good citizens. Each new installment tends to stop in the same place as that which came before.

As to the effect of this later immigration it is readily seen that what ever it is, it is brought about by the action of a great mass of people upon our government, or civilization in general. Intellectually the immigrant is far below the average native. But this is not the most important note. In some states the foreign vote outnumbers the native. Now if important school questions arise cannot the larger vote carry the day-whether foreign or native? For example in Illinois compulsory education was voted down because of this very fact. In some schools English is not taught and the children are growing up as thoroughly foreign as though they were on the other side of the ocean.

"The supine bowing of the native element in our political parties to this foreign, domineering, un-American, and denationalizing opposition to the state control of the education of the child for citizenship is in itself a menace."

American schools are pathways to Americanism for the immigrant

child, therefore we must keep their standards high that the pathway may be the best.

When we stop to think what it means to add thousands of ignorant men to the voting list we cannot but fear for the future. Proffessor Mayo Smith says, "We are thus conferring the privalege of citizenship, including the right to vote without any test of the man's fitness." The German vote in many localities controls the action of political leaders on the liquor question, often times in opposition to the sentiment of the native community. "The bad influence of a purely ignorant vote is seen in the degradation of the municipal administration in America." There is danger in one vote but in a million votes there is destiny.

We must remember in all of our conclusions that we are contrasting the lower class of foreigners with the average American. We do this because we see the most of this class, as they compose, to a great extent, the immigrant body.

Socially the immigrant appears very unfavorably. In regard to crime it is an undisputed fact that a large proportion of our criminals and convicts are of foreign birth. When we consider their environment their manner of living, their standards, if any there be, it is not surprising that many of their number are found in our jails and prisons.

Religiously the immigrant is a problem. There are very many Catholics. In 1900 when the last official inquiry concerning religious tendencies was made, fifty-two per cent of the immigration for that year was Roman Catholic. The Jews who usually come in poverty, soon gain plenty of worldly riches, but lose their religion. They are very clever, bright and exceedingly ambitious, and in proper environ-

ment, become excellent citizens. There are very many, who when they find themselves free, throw off all religious restraint. There is great opportunity here for the Protestant for at this time the people are more favorably impressed with new ideas than at any other time. Some one has said, "Christianize America and you Christianize the world," and without doubt this would be a clear solution of the problem for we know that nothing can more quickly remould one's character, and elevate one's ways of living than the gospel of Christ.

From the following statistics we can probably gain some idea of the enormous numbers with which we are dealing.

Number of immigrants arrived in the United States from 1890 to 1906.

1890.	.455,302
1891.	.560,319
1892.	.579,663
1893.	.439,730
1894.	.285,631
1895.	.258,536
1896.	.343,267
1897.	.230,832
1898.	.229,229
1899.	.311,715
1900.	.448,572
1901.	.487,918
1902.	.648,743
1903.	.857,046
1904.	.812,870
1905.	.1,026,499
1906.	.1,100,735

As Howard B. Grose says, "The solution of this problem demands the combined forces of our educational, social, and political life." And with the destiny of a nation in their hands the people of America are beginning to work realizing that we must protect ourselves from the undesirable and care for the desirable, that our nation may not lose the individuality which it has gained through years of struggle or prosperity and that we may do for the world the best we can, always lifting the standards higher.

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