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Immigration.

Immigration:

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Immigration.

The subject of immigration is one that has but lately assumed gigantic importance in America; but as we shall see, has long been a stubborn and knotty problem for the older nations.

Owing to certain natural and political conditions, it is only when these natural conditions are vanishing and these political ones becoming modified that we find this vast question thrust upon us and a demand is felt for a solution of the problem before it goes beyond the controlling line.

In treating this question, I desire to take up first, a bit of history closely connected with the United States, and to consider the political, economical, moral, and social effects, and try if possible to offer a partial solution to this great question.

Immigration and Emigration are said to be the phenomena of modern life. As early as we have a record, it is an

undisputed fact that men will change their location with the attending good or bad results.

But starting with the movement which began just following the discovery of America, we find that one of the first incentives for migration was that of booty. People became aware of the prizes stored up in this unexplored land, and adventure resulted. Perhaps a consequence or a product of this was the second incentive; namely that of colonization. But one characteristic which we find prominent in this first change of destination was that they still retained the customs and manners of their mother country, and the most friendly feelings were indulged in for many years after their separation.

The third type of movement is one which grew out of the second, and is peculiar to the 19th century. This is known as Emigration. It has come to be an important factor in determining the future destiny of the nation or nations concerned. This last

movement, emigration, properly dates from about 1825, and during the period between that time and the present, several nations have had their turn in being prominent as affecting the United States most.

From 1846 to 1852, Smith states that the Irish were most prominent, the number of emigrants from that country being 368,764. Famine being a main cause.

English and German peoples are also known to emigrate in large numbers, but French people do not as a rule. It is estimated that in one year over 700,000 people from European countries sought homes elsewhere. Such a fact as this cannot but impress us as having vast importance on the country to which these people come.

It is natural to ask what is the cause of this constant fluctuation. It may be misery, vice, religion, politics or some one of the many causes that persuades one to give up his native land. Milder reasons would be social or economic gains.

Evils connected with society were once thought to be corrected by emigration, but

this has proven to be untrue. Neither does it temper overpopulation, nor can we hope that it will remedy evils when carried on without leader or plan.

It is claimed by many that the best element generally migrates, claiming that those who do migrate possess, intelligence, energy, ambition, nerve and stability. It is estimated that 68% are males, and that the above are essential constituents.

The means of transportation have had a marked effect on the number of immigrants, and the unsettled lands of the West seemed to invite the foreigners. "In 1882 there were 790,000 immigrants into the United States and at present time the number is one-half million." At present, Germany contributes most largely to our immigrant population. One thing that has greatly increased the tide is the constant correspondence with those left behind. They paint glowing pictures, and one such letter may sow seed and bring forth fruit an hundred fold. It is said that millions of dollars are sent back

every year to aid persons in coming over.

From a political standpoint, such a constant influx cannot continue long without exerting a marked effect upon the country concerned; and in this connection we note that the evil effect is the predominant.

Many instances are known where Germans have settled in large numbers and have absolutely controlled the ballot in that particular community, being generally in favor of the liquor traffic, which is antagonistic to the highest ideal of American politics. In other cases the voter is ignorant and "green," and votes the ticket prepared by the leading foreigner of that community of which he was kindred. This, we are pleased to say, has largely been done away with by the "Australian Ballot System."

But still another evil which is not remedied by the above system, nor for which we have yet found a proper solution, is the fact that many are uninterested, and when election day comes

they stay at home. Here, then, is a choice, an ignorant vote or no vote at all. This is also the case in school elections as well as the general election.

Another effect might be cited here, and that is the notions and customs that they carry with them and seem unable to abandon. For instance, Germans have been accustomed, when in Germany to indulge in drinks of various kinds, and seem unable to discontinue the practice, while the better class of Americans are coming more and more to believe that such practices are not becoming to the highest idealism of civilized life.

In the economic as in the political world, immigration has a marked effect, and we can but mention a few of the more important factors here.

From the time the young man assumes responsibility until he finishes his journey of life and dies, he is constantly confronted by the question, "How can I successfully make both ends meet?" This of course applies to the average man, and

not to the boy whose father is worth a million dollars. One can easily see that such a vast army coming into a country, and of a much lower scale generally, exerts a powerful influence; and those who work at daily labor cannot help but know that this vast body will make competition keener, and reduce the standard of living.

Perhaps along this line worse than any other, reform is needed — some restriction of immigration.

The element that is being diffused thruout our country for the sake of finding employment, is of a lower order than are our people, and it has a tendency downward rather than upward in society.

Statistics show that Chinese and Irish immigrants can live on much less than the average American workman, and will work for correspondingly less wages. Work that does not require skill, and this is the kind of work the

vast masses are employed in, can be done as well by them as by our own citizens. But the ignorant immigrant receives a check when skill is required, for he seems unable to acquire the degree of skill or proficiency that our American workmen possess.

I am speaking now from the present state of affairs. There is no doubt that the immigrants were of great value in the 'early days' of settlement. They supplied the demand for labor and brought property or money with them when they came, so that there was a constant increasing of wealth from the other countries. But the state of affairs has changed, and our laborers are more numerous than is the work for them to do plentiful. Hence, we have to look at the subject from a different standpoint. True it is that the laborers came to us after they were developed, and this ought justly to be considered an economic

gain; but there can be but little doubt that the question of over-supply of the labor market more than counteracts the points in favor of immigration.

In speaking of social relations immigration is not without its weight, as is the case with previous problems of immigration.

Perhaps not the most prominent, but certainly among the foremost we find the subject of Education. Do the foreign people try to educate? Are they illiterate? Is education bettered or made worse by their presence as an element in society? Making our answer conservative we would say that they try to educate to some extent; But that this education which they endeavour to inculcate into the minds of their children is of a foreign nature. The sentiment expressed by the curriculum in the typical school under foreign jurisdiction, situated on American soil is not in harmony with the sentiment expressed by modern American insti-

tutions. This is particularly the case with schools of a lower grade. Granting that there are exceptions to the rule, we would say then that on the whole, the tendency of foreigners as related to education is not as beneficial as it might be.

It has been asked do the foreigners try to educate? To this we would reply that they do try to educate up to a certain point, but beyond that the mass is not urged to advance, and the point is merely to be able to perform the ordinary business that devolves upon the ordinary man.

Speaking of illiteracy, we would say, and it is a conceded fact that the immigrants are illiterate, and as the rule, granting again the exception, they are incapable of much development along educational lines. The reason for this is that they are, many of them fast middle age, and their habits, desires, and aspirations having been formed at an earlier age, they accept their present stage of development without interrogating the possibility of bettering

themselves.

Summing up, then, from the above facts, we might justly and truthfully say that education is not bettered by the immigrant, and that from this point of view, and because of this we are justified in discouraging more immigration. As to the manner in which this discouragement might be made a material thing, we will say a word.

Writers and students of the question have suggested that there be appointed certain stations to be designated by officials; and that at these stations a rigid examination be given every applicant for admittance to this country. The examinations shall in its requirements consist of morality, character, education, and belongings, each in a moderate degree to be determined by a board appointed for that purpose.

It may readily be seen that such a plan as this, might, and perhaps would separate many who other

vist would come to join their friends. But we have not advocated a radical change, neither do we want a change made before the people are ready for it and without time for preparation; but we do advocate a moderate change, or at least a better adjustment of the regulation of immigration.

In summing up, we note that immigration only became serious during late years; that its effect on the political, social and economic world is very marked, and in each case the argument against seems predominant at present. We also note that while all this is true, the good we have derived has been enormous, and that in treating this problem we should be openminded and tolerant toward those possessed of opposite views.