

## IMMIGRATION AND THE EDUCATIONAL TEST.

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A RECENT writer upon the immigration question \* truly says that much as this question has been discussed pro and con, there has been "a noticeable lack of the one element which can give certainty to the argument and force to the conclusions." Of such facts, he adds, "as bear directly and strongly upon the problems involved there has been little use made." There are many facts of the greatest importance to the solution of this question which have not appeared prominently in previous discussion, but which cannot safely be dismissed with generalities. A few of them it is my purpose to present in this article.

In the first place the real question confronting us to-day is not whether immigration in general is desirable, or has benefited this country in the past, whether it shall be entirely suspended, or whether there are more or fewer inhabitants per square mile in the United States than in some foreign country. The practical question is: Are the laws at present upon the statute books accomplishing what they were intended to effect, and do they let in all desirable additions to our population, and exclude all undesirable elements?

If immigrants be undesirable the fact that there is land enough for many times the population which we now have in the United States would be generally conceded to be an inadequate reason for admitting them. All admit that this is so in the case of persons unable to support themselves, and therefore present or future paupers are in theory excluded by the present law. As to whether they are in fact excluded I shall have something to say in a moment.

\* Mr. S. G. Crosswell, NORTH AMERICAN REVIEW, May, 1897.

But if we assume the paupers to be eliminated, is it true that we want in this country every man who can earn enough to keep body and soul together, or a little more? There seem to be two good reasons for thinking that we do not. First, admitting that wealth produced by manual labor gives a generous opportunity for mental and moral progress, still the greatness of a nation is not measured by the mileage of its sewers, the size of its tenement houses, or the abundance of its food supply. The essence of national greatness is in the intelligence and ideals of the people, and therefore the moral, social and political qualities of immigrants are of more importance in considering whether they shall be admitted or excluded than their ability to perform manual labor. Second, if there is a necessity for more laborers in this country, we can secure all we need without being obliged to take any who are undesirable because unfitted to our social and political life.

Postponing, for the moment, the precise definition of "undesirable," it is obvious that a considerable part of the immigration of the past has been desirable without question. If we exclude any elements, their place can be filled in two ways. It is well known that many industrious and thrifty foreigners no longer turn their attention to this country as a place to which to emigrate, because of the large influx in recent years of immigrants of a low grade of intelligence and standard of living. If we decide that these qualities are undesirable and exclude those possessing them, we thereby bid for a higher class of foreign labor; but even if this bid should not prove a sufficient attraction we can supply the needed additions from our own population. One of the most valuable contributions to the discussion of the immigration question was made by the late and much mourned Francis A. Walker. He showed that, contrary to some popular assertions, foreign workingmen did not come here in the past because Americans despised manual labor, but that the latter abandoned manual labor because of dislike of intimacy with the less intelligent and less progressive foreigners. The immigrants of '46 and '47, being for the most part peasants, turned their hands to the relatively unskilled work. The Americans, or the higher class of previous immigrants, already in those occupations, forthwith began to withdraw from them. In a growing country some of those thus displaced found other pursuits, but as this

process has been going on ever since there have been times when the adults displaced have had difficulty in finding congenial employment. The result has been that these men have not married, or, if they have married, they have refused to increase the size of their families until they had the means to give their children the education and opportunities which could take them out of the lowest social class they saw about them. Herein is one secret of the halving of the American birth-rate. In proportion as still lower and more degraded immigrants come, the process applies to a larger portion of the people already here. In proportion as this process is checked by the exclusion of the least desirable, the birth-rate of the natives and of the foreign-born already here will tend to increase. If this be true, we have found a most important consideration to take into account in dealing with the immigration laws, for we must consider not merely the immigrants but their children and our children. Do we want this country to be peopled by British, German, and Scandinavian stock, historically free, energetic, progressive, or by Slav, Latin, and Asiatic races, historically down-trodden, atavistic, and stagnant? The facts are that over four-fifths of our recent immigrants are utterly unskilled in any employment, while of some races which have been increasing in immigration of late, such as Italians, nearly nine-tenths are laborers.

Mr. Crosswell seems to think that the Middle and Western States are handicapped by the lack of manual laborers; but if that be true, why have these very States, and still more the Northwestern States, been crying out most loudly for several years for some further restriction of immigration? Among the States which in 1895 replied to an investigating committee of the Treasury Department that they wanted no further immigration of any kind were Illinois, Iowa, Mississippi, Minnesota, Nebraska, and California.

But, as is said above, the moral, social, and political aspects of the question are far more important than its material side. Let us, therefore, turn our attention to these matters. To find out what sort of citizens we are getting it is convenient to consider them by nationalities, bearing in mind, however, that each individual must be judged on his own merits without race proscription or prejudice. The facts suggest at once the dangers and the remedy.

Immigration during the ten years from 1880 to 1890 amounted to 5,246,613 souls, or over 35 per cent. of the total immigration from 1820 to 1890. At its highest it added over one per cent. to the population of the United States in a single year, while the average during the period from 1886 to 1895 was 435,000 per year. There is nothing especially significant in the fact that the number of arrivals for 1896 was below the average, or that the number is even smaller this year. There has always been in the past a close correspondence between the number of arrivals in this country and the general state of business activity here. The depression of the last four years is undoubtedly the cause of this falling off at the present time, and the immigration act of 1893, which was merely an administrative measure, has probably had but a slight effect, if any, in producing this result. After each panic in our history, immigration has rapidly increased with renewed industrial activity, and great numbers have come only to be thrown out of work when the next depression set in. One unfortunate feature of this fluctuation, which I have pointed out elsewhere,\* is that in times of business stagnation the falling off in immigration is largely of the skilled, enterprising and industrious races and individuals, while the coming of unskilled laborers and of those with no occupation is the last to be affected.

Previous to 1870, three-quarters of all immigrants came from kindred races, from the United Kingdom, France, Germany and Scandinavia. In 1880 these countries sent us only three-fifths, and in 1896 only two-fifths, of the total immigration. On the other hand, southern and eastern Europe, that is to say, Austria-Hungary, Italy, Poland and Russia, which in 1869 sent less than one one-hundredth of the total immigration, in 1880 sent one-tenth, and in 1896 over one-half. In other words, a most profound change has taken place in the nationality of our immigration almost while we have been discussing it, and the problems are by no means the same as they were a dozen years ago. Without going into the reasons for this change, it may be observed that they are likely to be even more potent in the future, and that a very different type of character was demanded of those who came here by sailing vessel forty years ago, enduring a long, rough voyage and paying a high rate of passage, from that required in taking a six days' trip in a huge modern steamer, and

\* NORTH AMERICAN REVIEW, August, 1896.

paying a steerage rate frequently as low as \$15, and sometimes as low as \$9.

That along with much good material we have gotten much which is worthless and a burden, is shown by the fact that in 1890 there were 80,000 persons of foreign birth or parentage supported by the public in the prisons, insane asylums and almshouses of the United States. Roughly speaking, if we take an equal number of the foreign and of the native elements of the population, we find the foreign element furnishes one and one-half times as many criminals, two and one-third times as many insane persons, and three times as many paupers as the native element. In Massachusetts, which does not get the worst elements of recent immigration to any great extent, those of foreign birth furnished in 1895 ten times as many criminals as an equal number of native birth and parentage. And, contrary to much that has been predicted, the second generation who were born in this country furnished five-sixths as many criminals as the foreign born. If we consider drunkenness alone, the foreign born furnished three times as many criminals as the native born. This shows that in the past, at any rate, we have been receiving some elements that tend to lower social morality.

Now, let us inquire from what nations we get these elements, and let us ask at the same time whether there is any test which can be applied which will separate the wheat from the chaff.

If we take the prison reports of Massachusetts (which are the only ones to my knowledge giving full statistics on this matter), and leave out of account the matter of drunkenness, as being likely to obscure the comparison as to intrinsically criminal tendencies, we find a certain progression in the number of criminals per thousand furnished by the foreign born of the various nationalities. Thus Germany gives 3.6 per thousand, Scandinavia 5.1, Scotland 5.8, France 6.1, Ireland 7.1, England 7.2, Russia 7.9, Austria 10.4, Hungary 15.4, Poland 16.0, and Italy 18.2. The native born give 2.7, and the foreign born 5.4, or just twice as many.

Now if we turn to the figures as to the illiteracy of immigrants, which do not vary much from year to year, we shall be startled to find a progression almost exactly parallel to the above progression as to criminality. In 1896 the percentage of illiter-

acy among Scandinavians was less than 2, among Germans less than 3, English 5, Scotch 6, Irish 7, Greeks 26, Russians 41, Austro-Hungarians 45, Italians 55, Portuguese 78. If we consider the converse of the question, namely the proportion of prisoners from the various races who are illiterate, the same result is reached.

We should expect that immigrants relatively ignorant of their language would also be ignorant of other things, *e. g.*, a trade, and such is the case. The progression in this respect is parallel to those already noted,—from Scotland sending us 25.7 per cent. of all her emigrants as professional and skilled persons, to Hungary sending 3.7 per cent. of such persons.

The same holds true as to the amount of money brought by immigrants—those from France, Germany, England, and Sweden bringing the most (\$37 to \$18), while those from Austria, Hungary, Italy, Poland, and Russia bring the least (\$7 to \$13) *per capita*. These figures do not give the numerical average money brought *per capita*, which would be extremely misleading, but are made up by taking into account the number bringing \$1 to \$5, \$5 to \$10, and so on.

It is generally admitted that the races which have largely increased their immigration since 1880 tend to settle in our seaboard cities, and do not, as did their predecessors, go out to settle the new regions of the West. We find in this respect also a progression parallel to those already noted. Thus of Norwegians only 20 per cent. are found in our large cities; of English, 40 per cent., and so on till we come to Poles and Russians, 57 per cent., and Italians nearly 60 per cent.

We find that the great size of this country is a poor argument for unlimited immigration, in the face of the fact that over seven-tenths of the total immigration last year was bound for the four States of Illinois, Massachusetts, New York and Pennsylvania. If these people could be spread abroad throughout the country, doubtless the evil effects of their crowding into particular centres might be diminished, but no one has as yet suggested any practicable scheme for doing this, even with enormous expense; and in the few cases where it has been tried it has proved a dismal failure. If the wishes of the various States as to the nationalities of immigrants desired by them have any bearing on the matter, those races of which we have received the greater

proportion since 1880 will not obtain any great inducement to settle in other parts of the United States. Among the replies of the States to the Investigating Commission, above alluded to, there were only two which expressed any willingness to receive Slav, Latin or Asiatic settlers, and these two were for Italian farmers with money intending permanent settlement.

It will readily be seen that those immigrants bringing the least money are not in a position, for some time at least, to go far from the seaboard, and when they have earned enough to carry them to other sections, if ties have not been formed which keep them on the Atlantic coast, they turn their faces eastward to spend their earnings in their native country, where a few hundred dollars seems a princely fortune. The commissioner at the port of New York states that during the fiscal year 1896 about 20 per cent. of all immigrants arriving had been in the United States before, and I have myself seen manifests of Italian immigrants at the same port which showed that in some cases they had already been in this country four, five and six times.

Too often, however, they drift at once and for all, or for a long time, into our city slums, and there become a heavy tax upon our schools, prisons, police, courts of justice, and public and private charities, and often a menace to the public health. A recent report of the United States Commissioner of Labor shows that those of foreign birth or parentage form 77 per cent. of the total population of the slum districts in Baltimore, 90 per cent. in Chicago, 95 per cent. in New York, and 91 per cent. in Philadelphia. And it appears that of these percentages Southeastern Europe has furnished three times as many as Northwestern Europe in Baltimore, nineteen times as many in New York, twenty times as many in Chicago, and seventy-one times as many in Philadelphia. In other words, the slums of our largest cities are largely a foreign product, and a product of the countries which have greatly increased their immigration in recent years. To return for a moment to a consideration mentioned earlier in this article, the average illiteracy of the inhabitants of the slum districts of the four cities mentioned was for those from Northwestern Europe, twenty-five in a hundred; for those from Southeastern Europe, fifty-four in a hundred, or more than double; while the illiteracy of the native Americans was seven in a hundred.

It appears, therefore, that restriction of naturalization, while a most desirable thing in itself, will not be any bar to the social and political dangers and burdens involved in the presence of the elements just referred to. There are other dangers quite as real as those of the ballot, and burdens quite as heavy as those of foolish expenditure.

Now, if we consider the effect of the laws at present in force, we find that their chief value is in deterring those from coming to this country who might otherwise come; for the actual number debarred and returned under these laws is but a paltry fraction of one per cent. of the total immigration. Under the present law an immigration inspector who wishes to exclude a man whom he thinks undesirable, but who does not come under any other excluded class, is obliged to decide that the man will certainly become a public charge within a year. This he can obviously seldom do, and the man has the benefit of the doubt. If he can keep from applying to the State or local authorities for assistance for a year, or if he can conceal his identity in doing so, he is safe from deportation. The latter method is worked so successfully that in Massachusetts only about one-third of the cases of immigrants receiving public relief can be identified so as to be deported under the laws.

If these statements are true, and the proof is clear beyond dispute, is there any remedy which shall allow us the benefit of desirable immigration, and curtail our hospitality to those from foreign lands as little as possible, but which shall yet bar out the elements which are a source of danger to our state? I believe the most effective remedy yet devised is suggested in the striking parallel we have found in the relation between illiteracy and other undesirable qualities, such as criminality, destitution, aversion to country life, ignorance of occupation and slum tendencies. It should be clearly understood that it is not claimed that the ability to read and write is an evidence of good moral character. But the facts above set forth, and others of like nature which could be adduced if space permitted, go to show that in general the illiterate are undesirable, and that the undesirable are illiterate. It is not to be expected that a test of reading and writing would exclude educated criminals and anarchists. We know how to deal with these gentlemen, as was shown at Chicago and Detroit. But the danger to the state comes not so much from

the few educated cranks as from the mass of ignorant material upon which they can work. If we must admit that some of that material is of American descent, so much the more reason is there for not adding to it from abroad.

The main object is to get some test which can be easily applied without danger of evasion. Undoubtedly, a few desirable immigrants might be excluded under such a law, but that is true of any test, and the educational test seems likely to shut out fewer desirable immigrants than any other, while it does shut the door against those unqualified to ask admission. It should be said, also, that on the one hand such a law would apply only to the less desirable part of our immigration, and would not be a wholesale measure of exclusion—if in force in 1896 it would have excluded about twenty-nine per cent. of the total immigration; and on the other hand, it is a test with which, by the exercise of a reasonable amount of diligence, the immigrant can comply. The ability to read and write his own language does not seem an unreasonable requirement to make in the case of a man who seeks to enter a democracy like ours. At the entrance to our principal port at which immigrants arrive we have placed a statue of Liberty Enlightening the World. The statue carries in one hand a torch and in the other a book; and this properly interpreted means not merely that immigrants shall be educated to a higher degree after they get here, but that they should be able to read the fundamental law of the land by the light of liberty's torch in order to entitle them to enjoy the advantages which liberty has produced.

To sum up the results at which we have arrived we may say:

1. If any immigrant be undesirable for social and political reasons, the mere economic gain from additional unskilled laborers is not of paramount importance.
2. Even if it were, we can supply such laborers by the multiplication of our native and adopted population.
3. Immigration of a lower mental development and standard of living tends to check the natural increase of those already in this country.
4. Undesirable immigration may be defined as that which is destitute of resources, either in money or, still more, in ability and knowledge of a means to support itself; which is generally ignorant; which has criminal tendencies; is averse to country

life, and congregates in our city slums ; which has a low standard of living and little ambition to seek a better, and which has no permanent interests in this country.

5. Considering immigration by nationalities, there is a closely parallel increase of illiteracy and other undesirable qualities.

6. A reading and writing test will, therefore, exclude the dangerous and unassimilable elements by a certain and uniform method ; it requires evidence of a rudimentary education indispensable in a democracy, and it will exclude fewer desirable immigrants than any other test.

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## COLLEGE DISCIPLINE.

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It is reported that Bismarck said something like this: "One-third of the students in the German universities destroy themselves by dissipation, one-third wear themselves out by overwork, and the rest govern Europe."

Without insisting on the numerical equality of these three classes, we recognize that something of this sort is true of the college students of America. One part go "to the dogs," one part to the grave, and the rest are the strength of the Republic. It is the art of college discipline to merge the first two classes into the third; to eliminate or reform the idle or dissipated, to transform weakness into strength, and to promote that culture which is power. The men the college should send out are those who have learned the secret of effectiveness. It is the safeguard of republics that in the long run the man outweighs the majority. Enlightened common sense must rule, whatever may be the form of government. It is the function of the university to enlarge the fund of common sense. To this end, primarily, all its powers should be directed.

The American university is changing year by year in its attitude towards matters of discipline. The tendency is to throw on the student, more and more, the responsibility for his work and his conduct. The growth of the elective system in studies carries with it freedom in personal development. The college student is becoming more and more of a man, and that he is treated more as a man is both cause and effect.

In the German system of education we see the opposite extremes in matters of discipline. In the gymnasium the student is under the strictest rule both as to his studies and as to his