RACES AND IMMIGRANTS IN AMERICA

BY

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CHAPTER IX

AMALGAMATION AND ASSIMILATION

A German statistician,\[122\] after studying population statistics of the United States and observing the “race suicide” of the native American stock, concludes: “The question of restriction on immigration is not a matter of higher or lower wages, nor a matter of more or less criminals and idiots, but the exclusion of a large part of the immigrants might cost the United States their place among the world powers.”

Exactly the opposite opinion was expressed in 1891 by Francis A. Walker,\[123\] the leading American statistician of his time, and superintendent of the censuses of 1870 and 1880. He said: “Foreign immigration into this country has, from the time it first assumed large proportions, amounted not to a reinforcement of our population, but a replacement of native by foreign stock.... The American shrank from the industrial competition thus thrust upon him. He was unwilling himself to engage in the lowest kind of day labor with these new elements of population; he was even more unwilling to bring sons and daughters into the world to enter into that competition.... The more rapidly foreigners came into the United States, the smaller was the rate of increase, not merely among the native population separately, but throughout the population of the country as a whole,” including the descendants of the earlier foreign immigrants.

Walker’s statements of fact, whatever we may say of his explanations, are easily substantiated. From earliest colonial times until the census of 1840 the people of the United States multiplied more rapidly than the people of any other modern nation, not excepting the prolific French Canadians. The first six censuses, beginning in 1790, show that, without appreciable immigration, the population doubled every twenty years, and had this rate of increase continued until the present time, the descendants of the colonial white and negro stock in the year 1900 would have numbered 100,000,000 instead of the combined colonial, immigrant, and negro total of 76,000,000. Indeed, if we take the total immigration from 1820 to 1900, exceeding 19,000,000 people, and apply a slightly higher than the average rate of increase from births, we shall find that in the year 1900 one-half of the white population is derived from immigrant stock, leaving the other half, or but 33,000,000 whites, derived from the colonial stock.\[124\] This is scarcely more than one-third of the number that should have been expected had the colonial element continued to multiply from 1840 to 1900 as it had multiplied from 1790 to 1840.

An interesting corroboration of these speculations is the prediction made in the year 1815, thirty years before the great migration of the nineteenth century, by the mathematician and publicist, Elkanah Watson.\[125\] On the basis of the increase shown in the first three censuses he made computations of the probable population for each census year to 1900, and I have drawn up the following table, showing the actual population compared with his estimates. Superintendent Walker, in the essay above quoted, uses Watson’s figures, and points out the remarkable fact that those predictions were within less than one per cent of the actual population until the year 1860, although, meanwhile, there had come nearly 5,000,000 immigrants whom Watson could not have foreseen. Thus the population of 1860,
notwithstanding access of the millions of immigrants, was only 310,000, or one per cent less than Watson had predicted. And the falling off since 1860 has been even greater, for, notwithstanding the immigration of 20,000,000 persons since 1820, the population in 1900 was 75,000,000, or 25 per cent less than Watson’s computations.

### POPULATION AND IMMIGRATION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Population (Census)</th>
<th>Watson’s Estimate</th>
<th>Watson’s Error</th>
<th>Foreign Immigration for Decade</th>
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<tr>
<td>1790</td>
<td>3,929,214</td>
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<tr>
<td>1800</td>
<td>5,308,483</td>
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<td>50,000</td>
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<td>1810</td>
<td>7,239,881</td>
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<td>1820</td>
<td>9,633,822</td>
<td>9,625,734</td>
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<td>12,866,020</td>
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<td>100,235,985</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total immigration 1820-1900</td>
<td>19,229,224</td>
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</table>
generally kept on a lower station in life. The real problem, therefore, with this class of people, is the opportunities for earning a living. In the earlier days, when the young couple could take up vacant land, and farming was the goal of all, a large family and the cooperation of wife and children were a help rather than a hindrance. To-day the couple, unless the husband has a superior position, must go together to the factory or mill, and the children are a burden until they reach the wage-earning age. Furthermore, wage-earning is uncertain, factories shut down, and the man with a large family is thrown upon his friends or charity. To admonish people living under these conditions to go forth and multiply is to advise the cure of race suicide by race deterioration.

![Faculty of Tuskegee Institute](Image)

Facility of Tuskegee Institute
(From World’s Work)

Curiously enough, these observations apply with even greater force to the second generation of immigrants than to the native stock, for among the daughters of the foreign-born only 19 per cent of those aged 15 to 24 years are married, while among daughters of native parents 30 per cent are married; and for the men of 20 to 29 only 26.8 per cent of the native sons of foreigners are married and 38.5 per cent of the sons of natives.[127] These figures sustain what can be observed in many large cities, that the races of immigrants who came to this country twenty-five or more years ago are shrinking from competition with the new races from Southern Europe.

Boston, for example, with its large Irish immigration beginning two generations ago, shows a similar disproportion. Of the American daughters of foreign parents 15 to 24 years of age, only 12 per cent are married, but of the daughters of native parents 17 per cent are married; of the sons of foreign parents 20 to 29 years of age, only 20 per cent are married, but of the sons of native parents 26 per cent are married. The contrast with the immigrants themselves is striking. In Boston, 24 per cent of the foreign-born women aged 15 to 24 are married, and 35 per cent of the foreign-born men aged 20 to 29.[128] In other words, the early marriages of immigrant men and women are nearly twice as many as those of the American-born sons and daughters of immigrants, and only one-third more than those of
the sons and daughters of native stock. With such a showing as this it would seem that our “place among the world powers” depends indeed on immigration, for the immigrants’ children are more constrained to race suicide than the older American stock.[129]

The competition is not so severe in country districts where the native stock prevails; but in the cities and industrial centres the skilled and ambitious workman and workwoman discover that in order to keep themselves above the low standards of the immigrants they must postpone marriage. The effect is noticeable and disastrous in the case of the Irish-Americans. Displaced by Italians and Slavs, many of the young men have fallen into the hoodlum and criminal element. Here moral causes produce physical causes of race destruction, for the vicious elements of the population disappear through the diseases bequeathed to their progeny, and are recruited only from the classes forced down from above. On the other hand, many more Irish have risen to positions of foremanship, or have lived on their wits in politics, or have entered the priesthood. The Irish-American girls, showing independence and ambition, have refused to marry until they could be assured of a husband of steady habits, and they have entered clerical positions, factories, and mills. Thus this versatile race, with distinct native ability, is meeting in our cities the same displacement and is resorting to the same race suicide which itself inflicted a generation or two earlier on the native colonial stock. But the effect is more severe, for the native stock was able to leave the scenes of competition, to go West and take up farms or build cities, but the Irish-American has less opportunity to make such an escape.

Great numbers of Irishmen, together with others of English, Scotch, German, and American descent, remaining in these industrial centres, have sought to protect themselves and maintain high standards through labor-unions and the so-called “closed shop,” by limiting the number of apprentices, excluding immigrants, and giving their sons a preference of admission. But even with the unions they find it necessary also to limit the size of their families, and I am convinced from personal observation, that, were the statistics on this point compiled from the unions of skilled workmen, there would be found even stronger evidences of race suicide than among other classes in the nation.

To the well-to-do classes freedom from the care of children is not a necessity, but an opportunity for luxury and indulgence. These include the very wealthy, whose round of social functions would be interrupted by home obligations. To them, of course, immigration brings no need of prudence—it rather helps to bring the enormous fortunes which distract their attention from the home. But their numbers are insignificant compared with the millions who determine the fate of the nation. More significant are the well-to-do farmers and their wives who have inherited the soil redeemed by their fathers, and whose desire to be free for enjoying the fruits of civilization lead them to the position so strongly condemned by President Roosevelt. This class of farmers, as shown in the census map of the size of private families,[130] may be traced across the Eastern and Northern states, running through New England, rural New York, Northern Pennsylvania, Ohio, and Michigan, parts of Indiana, Illinois, Wisconsin, and Iowa. In the rich counties of southern Michigan, settled and occupied mainly by native stock from New York, the average size of families is less than four persons, as it is in a large area of Central New York, whereas for the country at large it is 4.7, and for counties in the mining sections of Michigan occupied by immigrants it rises as high as 5.8 persons.

The census figures showing the size of families do not, however, reveal the number of children born to a family, since they show only those living together and not those who have moved away or died. This especially affects the large-sized families, and does not reveal, for example, a fact shown by
Kuczynski from the state census of Massachusetts that the average number of children of the foreign-born women in that state is 4.5, while for native women it is only 2.7. This also affects the showing for a state like West Virginia, composed almost entirely of native Americans of colonial stock, with only 2 per cent foreign-born and 5 per cent colored, where the average size of families is 5.1 persons, the highest in the United States, but where in the Blue Ridge Mountains I have come upon two couples of native white Americans who claimed respectively eighteen and twenty-two children. Throughout the South the reduction in size of families and the postponement of marriage have not occurred to any great extent either among the white or colored races, and these are states to which immigration has contributed less than 3 per cent of their population. Yet, if Superintendent Walker’s view is sound in all respects, the Southern whites should shrink from competition with the negro in the same way that the Northern white shrinks from competition with the immigrant. He does not do so, and the reasons are probably found in the fact that the South has been remote from the struggle of modern competition, and that ignorance and proud contentment fail to spur the masses to that ambitious striving which rises by means of what Malthus called the prudential restraints on population. It is quite probable that in the South, with the spread of the factory system and universal education, the growth in numbers through excess of births over deaths will be retarded.

On the whole it seems that immigration and the competition of inferior races tends to dry up the older and superior races wherever the latter have learned to aspire to an improved standard of living, and that among well-to-do classes not competing with immigrants, but made wealthier by their low wages, a similar effect is caused by the desire for luxury and easy living.

**Americanization.**—A line on the chart opposite page 63 shows the proportions between the number of immigrants and the existing population. From this it appears that the enormous immigration of 1906 is relatively not as large as the smaller immigration of the years 1849 to 1854, or the year 1882. Three hundred thousand immigrants in 1850 was as large an addition to a population of 23,000,000 as 1,000,000 in 1906 to a population of 85,000,000. Judged by mere numbers, the present immigration is not greater than that witnessed by two former periods. Judged by saturation it may be greater, for the former immigrants were absorbed by colonial Americans, but the present immigrants enter a solution half colonial and half immigrant. The problem of Americanization increases more than the number to be Americanized. What is the nature of this problem, and what are the forces available for its solution?

The term amalgamation may be used for that mixture of blood which unites races in a common stock, while assimilation is that union of their minds and wills which enables them to think and act together. Amalgamation is a process of centuries, but assimilation is a process of individual training. Amalgamation is a blending of races, assimilation a blending of civilizations. Amalgamation is beyond the organized efforts of government, but assimilation can be promoted by social institutions and laws. Amalgamation therefore cannot attract our practical interest, except as its presence or absence sets limits to our efforts toward assimilation.

Our principal interest in amalgamation is its effect on the negro race. The census statisticians discontinued after 1890 the inquiry into the number of mulattoes, but the census of 1890 showed that mulattoes were 15 per cent of the total negro population. This was a slightly larger proportion than that of preceding years. The mulatto element of the negro race is almost a race of itself. Its members on the average differ but little if at all from those of the white race in their capacity for advancement,
and it is the tragedy of race antagonism that they with their longings should suffer the fate of the more contented and thoughtless blacks.[133] In their veins runs the blood of white aristocracy, and it is a curious psychology of the Anglo-Saxon that assigns to the inferior race those equally entitled to a place among the superior. But sociology offers compensation for the injustice to physiology. The mulatto is the natural leader, instructor, and spokesman of the black. Prevented from withdrawing himself above the fortunes of his fellows, he devotes himself to their elevation. This fact becomes clear in proportion as the need of practical education becomes clear. The effective work of the whites through missionary schools and colleges has not been the elevation of the black, but the elevation of mulattoes to teach the blacks. A new era for the blacks is beginning when the mulatto sees his own future in theirs.

Apart from the negro we have very little knowledge of the amalgamation of races in America. We only know that for the most part they have blended into a united people with harmonious ideals, and the English, the German, the Scotch-Irish, the Dutch, and the Huguenot have become the American.

We speak of superior and inferior races, and this is well enough, but care should be taken to distinguish between inferiority and backwardness—between that superiority which is the original endowment of race and that which results from the education and training which we call civilization. While there are superior and inferior races, there are primitive, mediaeval, and modern civilizations, and there are certain mental qualities required for and produced by these different grades of civilization. A superior race may have a primitive or mediaeval civilization, and therefore its individuals may never have exhibited the superior mental qualities with which they are actually endowed, and which a modern civilization would have called into action. The adults coming from such a civilization seem to be inferior in their mental qualities, but their children, placed in the new environments of the advanced civilization, exhibit at once the qualities of the latter. The Chinaman comes from a mediaeval civilization—he shows little of those qualities which are the product of Western civilization, and with his imitativeness, routine, and traditions, he has earned the reputation of being entirely non-assimilable. But the children of Chinamen, born and reared in this country, entirely disprove this charge, for they are as apt in absorbing the spirit and method of American institutions as any Caucasian.[134] The race is superior but backward.

The Teutonic races until five hundred years after Christ were primitive in their civilization, yet they had the mental capacities which made them, like Arminius, able to comprehend and absorb the highest Roman civilization. They passed through the mediaeval period and then came out into the modern period of advanced civilization, yet during these two thousand years their mental capacities, the original endowment of race, have scarcely improved. It is civilization, not race evolution, that has transformed the primitive warrior into the philosopher, scientist, artisan, and business man. Could their babies have been taken from the woods two thousand years ago and transported to the homes and schools of modern America, they could have covered in one generation the progress of twenty centuries. Other races, like the Scotch and the Irish, made the transition from primitive institutions to modern industrial habits within a single century, and Professor Brinton, our most profound student of the American Indian, has said,[135] “I have been in close relations to several full-blood American Indians who had been removed from an aboriginal environment and instructed in this manner [in American schools and communities], and I could not perceive that they were either in intellect or sympathies inferior to the usual type of the American gentleman. One of them notably had a refined sense of humor as well as uncommon acuteness of observation.”
The line between superior and inferior, as distinguished from advanced and backward, races appears to be the line between the temperate and tropical zones. The two belts of earth between the tropics of Capricorn and Cancer and the arctic and antarctic circles have been the areas where man in his struggle for existence developed the qualities of mind and will—the ingenuity, self-reliance, self-control, strenuous exertion, and will power—which befit the modern industrial civilization. But in the tropics these qualities are less essential, for where nature lavishes food, and winks at the neglect of clothing and shelter, there ignorance, superstition, physical prowess, and sexual passion have an equal chance with intelligence, foresight, thrift, and self-control. The children of all the races of the temperate zones are eligible to the highest American civilization, and it only needs that they be “caught” young enough. There is perhaps no class of people more backward than the 3,000,000 poor whites of the Appalachian Mountains, but there is no class whose children are better equipped by heredity to attain distinction in any field of American endeavor. This much cannot be said for the children of the tropical zones. Amalgamation is their door to assimilation.

Before we can intelligently inquire into the agencies of Americanization we must first agree on what we mean by the term. I can think of no comprehensive and concise description equal to that of Abraham Lincoln: “Government of the people, by the people, for the people.” This description should be applied not only to the state but to other institutions. In the home it means equality of husband and wife; in the church it means the voice of the laity; in industry the participation of the workmen.

Unhappily it cannot be said that Lincoln’s description has ever been attained. It is the goal which he and others whom we recognize as true Americans have pointed out. Greater than any other obstacle in the road toward that goal have been our race divisions. Government for the people depends on government by the people, and this is difficult where the people cannot think and act together. Such is the problem of Americanization.

In the earlier days the most powerful agency of assimilation was frontier life. The pioneers “were left almost entirely to their own resources in this great struggle. They developed a spirit of self-reliance, a capacity for self-government, which are the most prominent characteristics of the American people.”[136] Frontier life includes pioneer mining camps as well as pioneer farming.

Next to the frontier the farms of America are the richest field of assimilation. Here the process is sometimes thought to be slower than it is in the cities, but any one who has seen it under both conditions cannot doubt that if it is slower it is more real. In the cities the children are more regularly brought under the influence of the public schools, but more profound and lasting than the education of the schools is the education of the street and the community. The work of the schools in a great city like New York cannot be too highly praised, and without such work the future of the immigrant’s child would be dark. In fact the children of the immigrant are better provided with school facilities than the children of the Americans. Less than 1 per cent of their children 10 to 14 years of age are illiterate, but the proportion of illiterates among children of native parents is over 4 per cent. This is not because the foreigner is more eager to educate his child than is the native, but because nearly three-fourths of the foreigners’ children and only one-sixth of the natives’ children live in the larger cities, where schools and compulsory attendance prevail. Were it not for compulsory education, the child of the peasant immigrant would be, like the child of the Slav in the anthracite coal fields, “the helpless victim of the ignorance, frugality, and industrial instincts of his parents.”[137] As it is, they drop out of the schools at the earliest age allowed by law, and the hostility of foreigners to factory legislation and
its corollary compulsory school legislation is more difficult to overcome than the hostility of American employers, both of whom might profit by the work of their children. The thoroughness with which the great cities of the North enforce the requirements of primary education leaves but little distinction between the children of natives and the children of foreigners, but what difference remains is to the advantage of the natives. In Boston in 1900 only 5 children of native parents were illiterate, and 22 native children of foreign parents, a ratio of one-twentieth of 1 per cent for the natives and one-tenth of 1 per cent for the foreigners. In New York 68 of the 83,000 children of native parents were illiterate, and 311 of the 166,000 native children of foreign parents, a ratio insignificant in both cases, but more than twice as great for the foreigners as for the natives.[138] Taking all of the cities of at least 50,000 population, more than one-fourth of the foreign-born children 10 to 15 years of age are bread-winners, and only one-tenth of the children of native parents. The influence of residence in America is shown by the fact that of the children of foreigners born in this country the proportion of bread-winners is reduced to one-seventh.[139]

But it is the community more than the school that gives the child his actual working ideals and his habits and methods of life. And in a great city, with its separation of classes, this community is the slums, with its mingling of all races and the worst of the Americans. He sees and knows surprisingly little of the America that his school-books describe. The American churches, his American employers, are in other parts of the city, and his Americanization is left to the school-teacher, the policeman, and the politician, who generally are but one generation before him from Europe. But on the farm he sees and knows all classes, the best and the worst, and even where his parents strive to isolate their community and to preserve the language and the methods of the old country, only a generation or two are required for the surrounding Americanism to permeate. Meanwhile healthful work, steady, industrious, and thrifty habits, have made him capable of rising to the best that his surroundings exemplify.
Since the year 1900 the Immigration Bureau has not inquired as to the religious faith of the immigrants. In that year, when the number admitted was 361,000, one-fifth were Protestants, mainly from Great Britain, the Scandinavian countries, Germany, and Finland. One-tenth were Jews, 4 per cent were Greek Catholics, and 52 per cent were Roman Catholics. With the shifting of the sources toward the east and south of Europe the proportion of Catholic and Jewish faith has increased. During this transition the Protestant churches of America have begun to awaken to a serious problem confronting them. The three New England states which have given their religion and political character to Northern and Western states are themselves now predominantly Catholic. In all of the Northern manufacturing and industrial states and in their great cities the marvellous organization and discipline of the Roman Catholic Church has carefully provided every precinct, ward, or district with chapels, cathedrals, and priests even in advance of the inflow of population, while the scattered forces of Protestantism overlap in some places and overlook other places. Two consequences have followed. The Protestant churches in much the larger part of their activities have drawn themselves apart in an intellectual and social round of polite entertainment for the families of the mercantile, clerical, professional, and employing classes, while the Catholic churches minister to the laboring and wage-earning classes. In a minor and relatively insignificant part of their activities the Protestant churches have supported missionaries, colporters, and chapels among the immigrants, the wage-earners, and their children. Their home missionary societies, which in the earlier days followed up their own believers on the frontier and enabled them to establish churches in their new homes, have in the past decade or two become foreign missionary societies working at home. Nothing is more significant or important in the history of American Protestantism than the zeal and patriotism with which a few missionaries in this unaccustomed field have begun to lead the way. By means of addresses, periodicals, books, study classes, they are gradually awakening the churches to the needs of the foreigner at home.[140] Among certain nationalities, especially the Italians and Slavs, they find
an open field, for thousands of those nationalities, though nominally Catholic, are indifferent to the
close relationship that they associate with oppression at home. Among these nationalities already several
converts have become missionaries in turn to their own people, and with the barrier of language and
suspicion thus bridged over, the influence of the Protestant religion is increasing. Perhaps more than
anything else is needed a federation of the Protestant denominations similar to that recently arranged
in Porto Rico. That island has been laid out in districts through mutual agreement of the home
missionary societies, and each district is assigned exclusively to a single denomination.

While the Protestant churches have been withdrawing from the districts invaded by the foreigners, the
field has been entered by the “social settlement.” This remarkable movement, eliminating religious
propaganda, is essentially religious in its zeal for social betterment. Its principal service has been to
raise up Americans who know and understand the life and needs of the immigrants and can interpret
them to others. In the “institutional church” is also to be found a similar adaptation of the more strictly
religious organization to the social and educational needs of the immigrants and their children.

More than any other class in the community, it is the employers who determine the progress of the
foreigner and his children towards Americanization. They control his waking hours, his conditions of
living, and his chances of advancement. In recent years a few employers have begun to realize their
responsible relations, and a great corporation like the Colorado Fuel and Iron Company establishes its
“sociological” department with its schools, kindergartens, hospitals, recreation centres, and model
housing, on an equal footing with its engineering and sales departments. Other employers are
interested themselves in various degrees and ways in “welfare work,” or “industrial betterment,” and
those who profit most by this awakening interest are the foreign-born and their families. This interest
has not yet shown itself in a willingness to shorten the hours of labor, and this phase of welfare work
must probably be brought about by other agencies.

The influence of schools, churches, settlements, and farming communities applies more to the children
of immigrants than to their parents. The immigrants themselves are too old for Americanization, especially when they speak a non-English language. To them the labor-union is at present the strongest
Americanizing force. The effort of organized labor to organize the unskilled and the immigrant is the
largest and most significant fact of the labor movement. Apart from the labor question itself, it means
the enlistment of a powerful self-interest in the Americanization of the foreign-born. For it is not too
much to say that the only effective Americanizing force for the Southeastern European is the labor
union. The church to which he gives allegiance is the Roman Catholic, and, however much the
Catholic Church may do for the ignorant peasant in his European home, such instruction as the priest
gives is likely to tend toward an acceptance of their subservient position on the part of the
workingmen. It is a frequently observed fact that when immigrants join a labor-union they almost
insolently warn the priest to keep his advice to himself.

Universal suffrage admits the immigrant to American politics within one to five years after landing. But
the suffrage is not looked upon to-day as the sufficient Americanizing force that a preceding
generation imagined. The suffrage appeals very differently to the immigrant voter and to the voter
who has come up through the American schools and American life. The American has learned not
only that this is a free government, but that its freedom is based on constitutional principles of an
abstract nature. Freedom of the press, trial by jury, separation of powers, independence of the
judiciary, equality of opportunity, and several other governmental and legal principles have
percolated through his subconscious self, and when he contemplates public questions these abstract principles have more or less influence as a guide to his ballot. But the immigrant has none of these. He comes here solely to earn a better living. The suffrage is nothing to him but a means of livelihood. Not that he readily sells his vote for money—rather does he simply “vote for his job.” He votes as instructed by his employer or his political “boss,” because it will help his employer’s business or because his boss will get him a job, or will, in some way, favor him and others of his nationality. There is a noticeable difference between the immigrant and the children of the immigrant in this regard. The young men, when they begin to vote, can be appealed to on the ground of public spirit; their fathers can be reached only on the ground of private interest.

Now it cannot be expected that the labor-union or any other influence will greatly change the immigrant in this respect. But the union does this much: it requires every member to be a citizen, or to have declared his intention of taking out naturalization papers. The reasons for doing this are not political; they are sentimental and patriotic. The union usually takes pride in showing that its members are Americans, and have foregone allegiance to other countries. In a union like the musicians’ the reasons for requiring citizenship are also protective, since they serve to exclude transient musical immigrants from American audiences. Again, the union frees its members from the dictation of employers, bosses, and priests. Politicians, of course, strive to control the vote of organized labor, but so disappointing has been the experience of the unions that they have quite generally come to distrust the leader who combines labor and politics. The immigrant who votes as a unionist has taken the first step, in casting his ballot, towards considering the interests of others, and this is also the first step towards giving public spirit and abstract principles a place alongside private interest and his own job.

But there is another way, even more impressive, in which the union asserts the preëminence of principles over immediate self-interest. When the foreigner from Southern Europe is inducted into the union, then for the first time does he get the idea that his job belongs to him by virtue of a right to work, and not as the personal favor or whim of a boss. These people are utterly obsequious before their foremen or bosses, and it is notorious that nearly always they pay for the privilege of getting and keeping a job. This bribery of bosses, as well as the padrone system, proceed from the deep-seated conviction that despotism is the natural social relation, and that therefore they must make terms with the influential superior who is so fortunate as to have favor with the powers that be.

The anthracite coal operators represented such men, prior to joining the union, as disciplined and docile workmen, but in doing so they disregarded the fact that outside the field where they were obsequious they were most violent, treacherous, and factional. Before the organization of the union in the coal fields these foreigners were given over to the most bitter and often murderous feuds among the ten or fifteen nationalities and the two or three factions within each nationality. The Polish worshippers of a given saint would organize a night attack on the Polish worshippers of another saint; the Italians from one province would have a knife for the Italians of another province, and so on. When the union was organized the antagonisms of race, religion, and faction were eliminated. The immigrants came down to an economic basis and turned their forces against their bosses. “We fellows killed this country,” said a Polish striker to Father Curran, “and now we are going to make it.” The sense of a common cause, and, more than all else, the sense of individual rights as men, have come to these people through the organization of their labor unions, and it could come in no other way, for the union appeals to their necessities, while other forces appeal to their prejudices. They are even yet far
from ideal Americans, but those who have hitherto imported them and profited by their immigration should be the last to cry out against the chief influence that has started them on the way to true Americanism.[141]

**Agricultural Distribution of Immigrants.**—The congestion and colonizing of immigrants in the cities and their consequent poverty and the deterioration of the second generation have brought forth various proposals for inducing them to settle upon the farms. The commissioners of immigration[142] at various times have advocated an industrial museum at Ellis Island, wherein the resources and opportunities of the several states could be displayed before the eyes of the incoming thousands. They and others have gone further and advocated the creation of a bureau of immigrant distribution to help the immigrants out of the crowded cities into the country districts. Still others have urged the establishment of steamship lines to Southern ports and the Gulf of Mexico, so that immigrants may be carried directly to the regions that “need them.” Very little can be expected from projects of this kind,[143] for the present contingent of immigrants from Southeastern Europe is too poor in worldly goods and too ignorant of American business to warrant an experiment in the isolation and self-dependence of farming. The farmers of the South and West welcome the settler who has means of purchase, but they distrust the newly arrived immigrant. Scandinavians and Germans in large numbers find their way to their countrymen on the farms, but the newer nationalities would require the fostering care of government or of wealthy private societies. The Jews have, indeed, taken up the matter, and the Jewish Agricultural and Industrial Aid Society of New York, by means of subventions from the Baron de Hirsch fund, has distributed many families throughout the country, partly in agriculture, but more generally in trade. The Society for the Protection of Italian Immigrants is doing similar work. Great railway systems and land companies in the South and West have their agricultural and industrial agents on the lookout for eligible settlers. All of the Southern states have established bureaus of immigration, and they are advertising the North and Europe for desirable immigrants. But these agencies seek mainly those immigrants who have resided in the country for a time, and have learned the language and American practices, and, in the case of the railroad and land companies, those who have accumulated some property.

The immigration bureaus of the Southern states and railways, the most urgent applicants at the present time for immigrants, are strongly opposed to the plan of federal distribution. They want farmers who will do their own work. From the standpoint of the immigrant himself this position is correct. To find a place as an agriculturist he must find a place as a farmer and not a harvest hand.[144] Speaking for the Southern bureaus, Professor Fleming says,[145] “The South decidedly objects to being made the government dumping-ground for undesirable immigrants. It does not want the lower class foreigners who have swarmed into the Northern cities. It wants the same sort of people who settled so much of the West.” The state board of South Carolina officially invites immigration of “white citizens of the United States, citizens of Ireland, Scotland, Switzerland, and France, and all other foreigners of Saxon origin.”

As for those without money who must depend on their daily labor for wages, they must go where employment is most regular and the best wages are paid. This is not on the farms, with a few months’ work in summer and no homes in winter. It is unmistakably in the great cities and industrial centres. The commissioner of immigration at Ellis Island, speaking of the cordon established by his bureau along the Canadian frontier from Halifax to Winnipeg in order to catch those who tried to escape inspection at New York, said, “All those immigrants who had New York, Philadelphia, Chicago,
Cleveland, or Cincinnati in mind as a destination when they left Europe and came to Quebec, went all the way around that wall to its western end at Winnipeg, and then took trains and came back to the very places they had in mind when they left Europe; and if you were to land all the ships that now come to New York at Galveston, New Orleans, or Charleston, every one of the immigrants would come to the place he had in mind when he decided to emigrate.”[146]

Professor Wilcox contends that the immigrants already distribute themselves according to their economic advantage as completely as do the natives. They seem to congest in the cities because the cities are necessarily their places of first arrival. “Our foreign-born arrive, in at least nine-tenths of the cases, at some city. Our native citizens arrive by birth, in at least three-fourths of the cases, in the country. The foreign-born arrive mainly at seaport cities, and disperse gradually from those cities to and through other interior cities, ultimately reaching in many cases the small towns or open country. It is in no sense surprising, or an evidence of imperfect distribution, that the foreign-born should be massed in the cities when nine-tenths of them arrive there, and the native population massed in the country districts when three-fourths of them arrive there.”[147] Artificial distribution would not relieve the pressure as long as the character and amount of immigration continue—it can only be relieved by creating greater economic inducements in the country. Natives and foreigners both crowd to the cities because wages and profits are higher than they are in the country.

Even supposing the congestion in the cities could be relieved by making the inducements in the country greater, the relief could not continue, for it would only invite more immigration. Emigration has not relieved the pressure of population in Europe. In no period of their history, with the exception of Ireland, have the populations of Europe increased at a greater rate than during the last half century of migration to America. It is not emigration but improved standards of living that lessens the pressure of numbers, and France with the widest diffusion of property has little emigration and no increase in population. With the redundant millions of Europe, increasing thousands would migrate if they got word from their friends that the American government is finding jobs for them. Just as we have already seen that the tide of immigration rises with a period of prosperity in America, so would it rise with agricultural distribution of immigrants. Both are simply more openings for employment, and the knowledge of such opportunities is promptly carried to the waiting multitudes abroad.

Consider also the political jeopardy of an administration at Washington conducting a bureau for the distribution of immigrants. If it refused to direct immigrants to one section of the country because it found that the wages were low, it would arouse the hostility of employers. If it directed them to another section, where the wages offered were high because the employers were preparing for a lockout, or the unions were on strike, it would lose the votes of workingmen. The administration would soon learn that safely to conduct such a bureau it must not conduct it at all.

Far better is it that the federal government should leave the distribution of immigrants to private employment agencies. It might then license all such agencies that conduct an interstate business. With the power to take away the license on proof of fraud and misrepresentation, and with the prosecution of agencies and employers that deceive and enslave the immigrant, the government would accomplish all that it could directly do for better distribution. Unquestionably the employment agencies, with their padroni, their bankers, and their false promises, are the source of miserable abuse to thousands of immigrants.[148] They require interstate as well as state regulation. By weeding out the dishonest agencies the field would be occupied by the honest ones, and the immigrant could trust himself to
their assistance. But such regulation would not be merely for the sake of the immigrant. It would, as it should, aid the American as well.

This suggests to us the true nature of the problem of city congestion and the nature of its solution. It is not to be found in special efforts on behalf of the immigrant, but in efforts to better the condition of both Americans and immigrants. The congestion of cities is owing to discriminations in favor of cities. If the government gives aid to agriculture as it does to manufactures, if it provides better communication, equalizes taxes, reduces freight rates to the level enjoyed by cities, then agriculture and the small towns will be more attractive. Americans will not crowd to the cities, and the more provident of the immigrants will find their way to the country. The proposition of federal distribution of immigrants is merely a clever illusion kept up to lead Congress astray from the restriction of immigration.

**Higher Standards of Immigration.**—As for the inferior, defective, and undesirable classes of immigrants, there is no protection except stringent selection. The Commissioner of Immigration at New York estimates that 200,000 of the million immigrants in 1903 were an injury instead of a benefit to the industries of the country,[149] and he advocates a physical examination and the exclusion of those who fall below a certain physical standard. During the past ten years the educational, or rather, illiteracy test, has come to the front, and the advantages of this test are its simplicity and its specific application to those races whose standards are lowest.

![Aliens awaiting Admission at Ellis Island](image)

Much discussion has been carried on respecting this test, and there has been considerable misunderstanding and misrepresentation as to its probable effects. The principal mistake has been the assumption that it is designed to take the place of other tests of admission, and that therefore it would permit, for example, the most dangerous criminals—those who are intelligent—to enter this country.
If we examine existing laws, and seek to understand the real nature of immigration restriction, we can see the character of this mistake. All of our legislation governing immigration should be described as improvement of immigration rather than restriction of immigration. The object has always been to raise the average character of those admitted by excluding those who fall below certain standards. And higher standards have been added from time to time as rapidly as the lawmakers perceived the need of bettering the quality of our future citizenship. Although in 1862 Congress had enacted a law prohibiting the shipment of Chinese coolies in American vessels, it was not until 1875 that the lawmakers first awoke to the evil of unrestricted immigration. In that year a law was enacted to exclude convicts and prostitutes. This law made an exception in favor of those who had been convicted of political offences. Next, in 1882, Congress added lunatics, idiots, paupers, and Chinese. In 1885 laborers under contract were for the first time to be excluded, but an exception was made in order to admit actors, artists, lecturers, singers, domestics, and skilled workmen for new industries. In 1891 the list of ineligibles was again extended so as to shut out not only convicts but persons convicted of crime, also “assisted” immigrants, polygamists, and persons with loathsome or dangerous contagious diseases. In 1903 the law added epileptics, persons who have had two or more attacks of insanity, professional beggars, and anarchists. Notwithstanding these successive additions of excluded classes, the number of immigrants has continually increased until it is greater to-day than in any preceding period, and while the standards have been raised in one direction, the average quality has been lowered in other directions. The educational and physical tests, while not needed for the races from Northwestern Europe, are now advocated as additions to the existing tests on account of the flood of races from Southeastern Europe.

The question of “poor physique” has come seriously to the front in recent reports of immigration officials. The decline in the average of physical make-up to which they call attention accompanies the increase in numbers of Southern and Eastern Europeans. While the commissioner at Ellis Island estimates that 200,000 immigrants are below the physical standards that should be required to entitle them to admission, the number certified by the surgeons is much less than this. Yet nine-tenths of even that smaller number are admitted, since the law excludes them only if other grounds of exclusion appear. That the physical test is practicable is shown by the following description of the qualities taken into account by the medical examiners at the immigrant stations; qualities which would be made even more definite if they were authorized to be acted upon:

“A certificate of this nature implies that the alien concerned is afflicted with a body not only but illy adapted to the work necessary to earn his bread, but also but poorly able to withstand the onslaught of disease. It means that he is undersized, poorly developed, with feeble heart action, arteries below the standard size; that he is physically degenerate, and as such not only unlikely to become a desirable citizen, but also very likely to transmit his undesirable qualities to his offspring should he, unfortunately for the country in which he is domiciled, have any.

“Of all causes for rejection, outside of those for dangerous, contagious, or loathsome diseases, or for mental disease, that of ‘poor physique’ should receive the most weight, for in admitting such aliens not only do we increase the number of public charges by their inability to gain their bread through their physical inaptitude and their low resistance to disease, but we admit likewise progenitors to this country whose offspring will reproduce, often in an exaggerated degree, the physical degeneracy of their parents.”
The history of the illiteracy test in Congress is a curious comment on lobbying. First introduced in 1895, it passed the House by a vote of 195 to 26, and the Senate in another form by a vote of 52 to 10. Referred to a conference committee, an identical bill again passed both Houses by reduced majorities. But irrelevant amendments had been tacked on and the President vetoed it. The House passed it over his veto by 193 to 37, but it was too late in the session to reach a vote in the Senate. Introduced again in 1898, it passed the Senate by 45 to 28, but pressure of the Spanish War prevented a vote in the House. The bill came up in subsequent Congresses but did not reach a vote.[152] The lobby is directed by the steamship companies, supported by railway companies, the Hawaiian Sugar Planters’ Association, and other great employers of labor. By misrepresentation, these interested agencies have been able at times to arouse the fears of the older races of immigrants not affected by the measure. Their fears were groundless, for the illiteracy test is not a test of the English language, but a test of any language, and it applies only to those who are 15 years of age and over, but does not apply to wife, children, parents, or grandparents of those who are admitted. With these reasonable limitations it would exclude only 1 in 200 of the Scandinavians, 1 in 100 of the English, Scotch, and Finns, 2 or 3 in 100 of the Germans, Irish, Welsh, and French; but it would exclude one-half of the South Italians, one-seventh of the North Italians, one-third to two-fifths of the several Slav races, one-seventh of the Russian Jews, altogether one-fifth or one-fourth of the total immigration.[153] But these proportions would not long continue. Elementary education is making progress in Eastern and Southern Europe, and a test of this kind would stimulate it still more among the peasants. Restrictive at first, it is only selective; it would not permanently reduce the number of immigrants, but would raise their level of intelligence and their ability to take care of themselves.

The foregoing principles do not apply to Chinese immigration. There the law is strictly one of exclusion and not selection. This distinction is often overlooked in the discussion of the subject. Respecting European, Japanese, and Korean immigration, the law admits all except certain classes definitely described, such as paupers, criminals, and so on. Respecting Chinese immigration the law excludes all except certain classes described, such as teachers, merchants, travellers, and students. In the case of European immigration the burden of proof is upon the immigration authorities to show that the immigrant should be excluded. In the case of the Chinese, the burden of proof is on the immigrant to show that he should be admitted. In the administration of the law the difference is fundamental. If the Chinese law is liberalized so as to admit doctors, lawyers, and other professional classes, against whom there is no objection, it can be done in one of two ways. It can name and specify the additional classes to be admitted. To this there is little objection, for it retains the existing spirit of the law. Or it can be reversed, and can admit all classes of Chinese except coolies, laborers, and the classes now excluded by other laws. If this were done, the enforcement of the law would break down, for the burden of proof would be lifted from the immigrant and placed on the examining board. The law is with great difficulty enforced as it is, but the evasions bear no comparison in number with those practised under the other law. European immigration is encouraged, provided it passes a minimum standard. Chinese immigration is prohibited unless it exceeds a maximum standard. One is selection, the other is exclusion. One should be amended by describing new classes not to be admitted, the other by describing classes which may be admitted.

This difference between the two laws may be seen in the effects of the restrictions which have from time to time been added to the immigration laws. Each additional ground of restriction or selection has not decreased the total amount of immigration, nor has it increased the proportion of those debarred from admission. In 1898, 3200 aliens were sent back, and this was 1.4 per cent of those
who arrived. In 1901, 3900 were sent back, but this was only three-fourths of 1 per cent of those arriving. In 1906, 13,000 sent back were 1.2 per cent of the arrivals. Intending immigrants as well as steamship companies learn the standards of exclusion and the methods of evasion, so that the proportion who take their chances and fail in the attempt is very small. Nevertheless, this deportation of immigrants, though averaging less than 1 per cent, is a hardship that should be avoided. It has often been proposed that this should be done through examination abroad by American consuls or by agents of the Immigration Bureau. Attractive and humane as this proposal appears, the foreign examination could not be made final. It would remove the examiners from effective control, and would require a large additional force as well as the existing establishment to deport those who might evade the foreign inspection. It does not strike at the root of the evil, which is the business energy of the steamship companies in soliciting immigration, and their business caution in requiring doubtful immigrants to give bonds in advance to cover the cost of carrying them back.[154] It is not the exclusion law that causes hardship, but the steamship companies that connive at evasions of the law. The law of 1903 for the first time adopted the correct principle to meet this evasion, but with a limited application. Since 1898, the Bureau had debarred increasing numbers on account of loathsome and contagious diseases. But these had already done the injury which their deportation was designed to prevent. In the crowded steerage the entire shipload was exposed to this contagion. Congress then enacted the law of 1903, not only requiring the steamship companies to carry them back, as before, but requiring the companies to pay a fine of $100 for every alien debarred on that account. In 1906, the companies paid fines of $24,300 on 243 such dejections. The principle should be extended to all classes excluded by law, and the fine should be raised to $500. Then every agent of the steamship companies in the remotest hamlets of Europe would be an immigration inspector. Their surgeons and officials already know the law and its standards of administration as thoroughly as the immigration officials. It only needs an adequate motive to make them cooperators with the Bureau instead of evaders of the law. Already the law of 1903 has partly had that effect. One steamship company has arranged with the Bureau to locate medical officers at its foreign ports of embarkation. However, the penalty is not yet heavy enough, and the Commissioner-General recommends its increase to $500. By extending the law to all grounds of deportation in addition to contagious diseases, the true source of hardship to debarred aliens will be dried up.[155]


[124] Professor Smith, for the year 1888, estimated the colonial element at 29,000,000 and the immigrant element at 26,000,000, applying to the immigrants the average rate of increase from births. “Emigration and Immigration,” pp. 60-61.


[129] Kuczynski concludes from his study of Massachusetts statistics that “the native population cannot hold its own. It seems to be dying out.” Could he have separated the two elements of the native
population, he would have found that the immigrant element is dying out faster than the older native element. “The Fecundity of the Native and Foreign Born Population in Massachusetts,” p. 186.

[140] Grose, “Aliens or Americans?”
[141] See also Stewart and Huebner.
[142] Report, 1903, p. 60; 1904, p. 44; 1905, p. 58; 1906, p. 64.
[147] Ibid., p. 119.
[149] Commissioner-General, 1903, p. 70.
[152] For details of the several measures, see Hall, “Immigration.”
[154] Commissioner-General, 1904, p. 41.
The National Immigration Conference, December 8, 1905, adopted the following resolution: “That the penalty of $100, now imposed on the steamship companies for bringing diseased persons to the United States, be also imposed for bringing in any person excluded by law.” National Civic Federation Review, January, 1906, p. 19.