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THE AMERICAN'S DISTRUST OF THE IMMIGRANT.

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OPPOSITION to immigrants is not new. Even in the convention that framed the Constitution a minority looked with distrust at the alien. A little later came the Alien Act of John Adams's administration. Again, in 1812, the Hartford Convention proclaimed 'The stock population of these states is amply sufficient to render this nation in due time sufficiently great and powerful.' During the discussion of the bill to establish the territorial governments of Kansas and Nebraska, Senator John M. Clayton, of Delaware, introduced in the Senate an amendment confining the elective franchise to native Americans; but, although some prominent statesmen warmly favored the measure, sense of justice and a prudent regard for the national welfare triumphed over narrow race prejudice, and the amendment was lost. In the debate on the bill dealing with preemption rights of settlers on public lands, approved May 29, 1830, Senator Merrick, of Maryland, offered an amendment barring aliens from such rights; but again there were enough clear heads and broad minds to prevent the measure from becoming a law. Finally, in the early fifties, opposition to the alien culminated in the Know-Nothing movement, when misguided fanatics, actuated by insane jealousy of foreigners, not only discriminated against all aliens, but attempted actual persecution.

By 1855, however, the immigrant had proved his usefulness and opposition lessened. He had convinced the intelligent American that he was not a menace, but an indispensable upbuilding force. From this time, therefore, up to a few years ago, he was subject to little or no restriction on entering our ports. It is fortunate for our growth that the immigrant of those early years was of a caliber vastly superior to that of the immigrant of to-day. To-day the immigrants are mostly of other stock than were those who gave us their brawn and muscle and indomitable courage to conquer a wilderness. It was national economy to avail ourselves of their services. They cut down the forests, dug the canals, and built the railroads, thus making our national life possible long before it could have existed without their assistance. These were the days when the immigrants were the German, the Irishman and the Scandinavian.

Of late there has been a rebirth of distrust of the immigrant. That this feeling exists and is even stronger than ever is attested by

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the numerous magazine and newspaper articles on immigration. Time and again we read protests against the 'horde of illiterates,' or the 'scum of Europe,' or the 'pauper invasion' which is 'swarming into our country.' The articles are usually the feverish output of some enthusiastic patriot who has not come in close contact with the immigrant for any extended length of time, and whose remarks are misleading, though eloquent and readable.

That the writers are as inaccurate as they are intemperate may be seen from a consideration of one of the most frequent errors into which they fall, confusion of race with nativity. For example, observe how they use the term 'Russian.' We receive a great many immigrants, good and bad, from Russia, but very few Russians. So-called Russian immigration is composed (exclusive of real Russians, who form so small a part that they can scarcely be considered a factor) of five distinct races: Hebrews, Poles, Germans, Lithuanians and Finns. The same is true in almost as great a degree of 'Huns.' The immigrants from Austria-Hungary are commonly called Huns; but, while the race line can not be so unerringly drawn as in the case of Russia, the term does not apply racially to the majority of the immigrants. The bulk of the immigration from Austria-Hungary is made up of Hebrews, Slovaks, Poles, Croats, Magyars (the real Huns) and Germans. This confusion of race and nativity is due to the fact that the statisticians of the past, took no cognizance of race, but recorded simply the nativity of the immigrant. Writers in using these statistics jumped at the conclusion that all immigrants born in Russia were Russians, and all born in Hungary were Huns. For the past few years, however, immigrants passing through the Barge Office, or Ellis Island, have been classified according to race as well as nativity. The statistics thus compiled have a scientific value.

If we examine the cause of an American citizen's distrust of the immigrant we find that it varies according to the citizen's point of view. The mechanic fears cheap competition, resulting in low wages; the stirpiculturist, noting the poor physique and low mental caliber of some of the immigrants, fears race degeneration; the reformer, or political purist, increase of crime or pauperism and the influence of a mass of ignorant voters controlled by unscrupulous political bosses; and the law-abiding citizen fears from the immigrant, not only the germ of bodily disease, but the germ of anarchy and also favorable media for its growth.

The great majority of male immigrants are not mechanics, but unskilled laborers. If they possess the qualifications that the early immigrants established as the prime requisites of a desirable immigrant—rugged physique and willingness to work—and if there is a demand

for unskilled labor and this demand is not met by Americans, then their admittance or non-admittance resolves itself, to-day as in the past, into a question of national economy. The native American does not engage in the digging of excavations, carrying the hod, or mining. No native American resents that the immigrant has turned him out of the great Pennsylvania mines. The American mechanic's objection is, however, well founded. There is quite a large class of immigrants, composed of men of poor physique, with their families, admitted every year, because they are skilled in tailoring, shoemaking, baking or other trades which do not require much physical strength. These people are undesirable immigrants. They enter into direct competition with the American tradesman or mechanic, accepting lower wages and working more hours.

The American mechanic, artisan or tradesman can have no grievance against the poor unskilled laborer, who does not compete with Americans, but with other foreigners who have preceded him and who is able and willing to do work that the American will not do—work that is necessary for our industrial progress. He has, however, cause to complain of the admittance through our ports every year of the thousands of skilled laborers, tailors, shoemakers and all kinds of factory hands who fill the sweat shops and factories and tend to greatly lower the American scale of wages.

The following table gives the relative value of the different races as shown by the percentages of skilled and unskilled laborers. It also shows the percentage of each race coming here between the ages of fifteen and forty-five. It is between the ages of fifteen and forty-five that the economic value of the immigrant to the country is greatest.

Unskilled laborers are absolutely essential for our industrial progress. The demand for the necessary unskilled laborers is not satisfied by native Americans.

Skilled laborers, coming as immigrants, may or may not be advantageous to the country, but they are not necessary for our advancement. The demand for skilled laborers can, with very rare exceptions, be supplied by native American applicants. Therefore, the races having the highest percentages of unskilled laborers and of immigrants between the ages of fifteen and forty-five are the most necessary and the most desirable.

Race.	Percentage Unskilled.	Percentage Between 15 and 45 Years of Age.
Lithuanian	86.5	90.5
Slav	86.9	88.2
Magyar	83.9	87.2
Finn	82.5	85.5
Italian	75.5	79.4
Syrian	48.1 ✓	75.7 ✓
Hebrew	13.6	68.5

✓ The reformer's reason for distrust is a grave one. It is a fact that thousands of immigrants receive qualification as voters when under the law they are clearly not entitled to it. There is no doubt that such a mass of ignorant voters constitutes a great power for evil. But the blame can hardly be charged to the immigrant; rather is it due to the unscrupulous ward politicians who thus increase their following and to the judge who grants citizenship papers without proper investigation of the applicant.

✓ So far as the fear of loathsome and contagious disease is concerned the danger is comparatively slight. The immigrants are subjected to a rigid physical examination at Ellis Island by the officers of the United States Public Health and Marine-Hospital Service. The double system of inspection practiced there makes it practically impossible for any immigrant suffering from a loathsome or dangerous contagious disease to pass without detection. The ratio in each race of the number so affected, to the total number of that race landed, during the fiscal year ending June 30, 1901, is here given:

Slav (Pole, Slovak, Croatian)	1	in every	7,000
Magyar	1	"	6,500
Italian	1	"	3,450
Lithuanian	1	"	1,250
Hebrew	1	"	1,100
Finn	1	"	1,000
✓ Syrian	1	"	135

As far as the fear of increase of crime and pauperism is concerned, it is true that prison statistics usually show a majority of those convicted of crime to be foreign born. But the industrious statistician loses sight of the fact that the 'other half' of the population of a great city, the poor and the needy, the underpaid and the underfed, are almost all foreign born, and it is from this class of course that we expect to fill our jails. It was not, however, his birth, but his poverty, that caused the immigrant to commit crime. We do not expect to find criminals so frequently on Fifth Avenue as on the Bowery.

Hunger may prompt a poor starving wretch to steal, and his act is a criminal offense duly recorded, but when greed of money or position or fondness for good living makes the comparatively rich man commit a 'breach of trust,' his error does not appear in prison statistics. Pauperism is the result of the absence of one or both of the prime requisites of a desirable immigrant. The pauper is either unwilling to work or lacks the physique to stand hard labor. The amount of money brought does not affect greatly an immigrant's chances of becoming a pauper. One immigrant may have little money, but with a rugged physique and willingness to work he will not become a public charge; another immigrant, too lazy for laboring work, or

not physically strong, but who is admitted because he claims to be skilled in a trade requiring no great physical strength, may have considerable money and yet be almost certain to become sooner or later dependent upon some one.

There remains the question of race degeneration. On this score the coming of the German, the Irishman, or the Scandinavian no longer causes apprehension. He has demonstrated his capability of making a useful and permanent citizen. His children have attended American schools, and they enter upon life with American ideals in their heads and American patriotism in their hearts. But, as was said before, these races no longer constitute the majority of the immigrants. It is a question whether the Italian, the Jew, or the Slav is willing to merge his identity in that of the nation, and whether such a fusion would not degenerate our race. In order not to deteriorate a race the new elements blended with it should be at least as physically strong as the native race itself.

Some idea of the relative physical condition of the different races from southern and central Europe can be gleaned from the following tables:

TABLE 1.

Ratio of Immigrants by Race requiring Hospital Treatment on Arrival to the Number of that Race Landed during the Fiscal Year ended June 30, 1901:

Race.	Ratio.	Total number of Arrivals.
Slav (Pole, Slovak, Croatian).....	1 in every 300	90,888
Magyar	1 " 250	13,311
Finn	1 " 200	9,999
Italian	1 " 185	137,807
Lithuanian	1 " 140	8,815
Hebrew	1 " 100	58,098
Syrian	1 " 35	4,064

TABLE 2.

Ratio of Immigrants Certified as having some Disability grave enough to make them Public Charges, or Dependent upon some one, by Race to the Total Number Landed during the Month of May, 1901:

Lithuanian	1 in every 1,906
Slav (Pole, Slovak, Croat).....	1 " 664
Italian	1 " 172
Finn	1 " 163
Magyar	1 " 148
Hebrew	1 " 42
Syrian	1 " 29

The average immigrants are of course not only far below the average American in intellect, but are physically inferior. Sensible expectation does not look for race improvement, but rather that before the new element is assimilated the improved surroundings, better food and cleaner habitations will build up physically the immigrant parent

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TABLE 3.

Ratio of Minor Defects in each Race to Number Landed. These were Defects or Conditions not grave enough for Actual Rejection, yet likely to Affect the Immigrant's Chances in making a Living or Usefulness as an Immigrant, such as Poor Physique, Anæmia, Loss of an Eye or Finger, etc. Month of June, 1900:

Finn	1	in every	81
Slav (Croat, Pole, Slovak)	1	"	65
Lithuanian	1	"	64
Magyar	1	"	40
Italian	1	"	26
✓ Syrian	1	"	24
Hebrew	1	"	16

stock whose children, brought up in American schools and in American environment can be assimilated without detriment to the native race.

It is not the assimilation of the immigrant but of his children we have to consider.

The American's distrust of the immigrant at present is rational and natural. It is the logical sequence of the sweat shop, the increase of crime and pauperism in New York and other great cities, and of the assassin's act at Buffalo. The percentage of undesirable immigrants is no doubt higher to-day than it was twenty, thirty or forty years ago. It may even be admitted that it has been growing higher year by year during the past two decades. But we are no longer unprotected against undesirable immigrants. Restrictions on admittance have been growing more stringent year by year and a great system has been perfected on Ellis Island for sifting the grain from the chaff, that is doing splendid work, not as a dam to keep out good and bad alike, but as a sieve fine enough in the mesh to keep out the diseased, the pauper and the criminal while admitting the immigrant with two strong arms, a sound body and a stout heart.

Amendment of the present immigration laws has been suggested in some important particulars. It has been urged by a great many people that an educational requirement should be added to the law, barring all immigrants who are illiterate. A glance at the following table will show that this restriction would debar many thousands of our most desirable immigrants—would, in fact, be felt most by the races furnishing us with nearly all of the unskilled labor necessary for our industrial progress. It would not, on the other hand, act as a barrier to some of the least desirable immigrants we receive. The passing of this educational amendment would have one good result: It would lessen the total number of immigrants landed and thus permit of an even more rigid examination of the immigrants upon arrival.

Other remedies suggested for the improvement of the immigration laws are raising the head tax and increasing the time of the Govern-

In the following Table by Illiterates is Meant those who are unable to Read and Write in some Language:

Race.	Total number landed year * ended June 30, 1901.	Percentage of illiterates.
Italians	137,807	51.20
Lithuanians	8,815	44.85
Slavs	90,888	34.07
Hebrews	58,098	23.31
Magyars	13,311	7.04
Finn	9,999	1.84

ment's jurisdiction over all landed immigrants and increasing the period of liability of the steamship company for return of undesirable immigrants from one year (the present period) to five years. Increasing the head tax from one dollar, the amount imposed at present upon each arriving alien, to five or ten dollars would probably lessen the number of immigrant arrivals. This reduction in number would be due to the fact that many large families, with children and aged dependents, would be obliged to stay in Europe; the extra five or ten dollars per head in a large family would be sufficient in many cases to make the cost of passage prohibitive. Young single men would pay \$40 for passage to America almost as readily as \$30; consequently the additional head tax would not greatly affect the number of single unskilled laborers. The young laborer would not go back and forth quite so often perhaps if he had to pay the additional five or ten dollars upon landing here each time.

The period of Government jurisdiction over the landed alien and the period of the liability of the steamship companies for return of undesirable aliens for cause should be extended from one year to five years, or better, until the immigrant becomes a citizen. This would enable the immigration authorities to deport within five years after landing many diseased, insane and pauper immigrants, anarchists and other criminals whose undesirability was not manifest upon landing or within one year thereafter. Relatives and interested persons would not be so ready to offer to the boards of special inquiry a guarantee that detained aliens would not become public charges if such guarantee were binding for five years instead of one year, as at present.

The enactment of these amendments into law and the enactment of stringent legislation bearing upon anarchists, together with a rigid enforcement of our naturalization laws, would go far toward dissipating the present popular distrust of the immigrant, and would still further minimize the dangers due to immigration.