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“The Immigrant,” undated.

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THE IMMIGRANT.

The first great stream of immigrants came from northern Europe. The Anglo Saxons, the Teutons, the Celts and the Scandinavians. Now the stream is flowing from southern and eastern Europe, mainly from Italy and Hungary, Poland and Russia. More than twenty millions have come since 1820 and they are still coming at the rate of about a million a year.

Do we understand the feelings of the immigrant? Some of us have traveled abroad. We have been interested in the scenes, impressed by the life and inspired by the historic associations of Europe; yet returning, we have been impatient to set foot on American shores. Home again, to be greeted and welcomed by friends and relatives. Who of us understands the heart of the immigrant; who comes to join son or daughter or relative in a strange land. Who has power to express the joy of the family reunited after years of separation - reunited - who knows at what cost in sacrifice and suffering and self-denial, sometimes of the very necessities of life itself? No wonder the immigrant is impatient to touch the soil of freedom. He comes from land of oppression and justice. No wonder his heart rejoices at the glad sight of the statue of Liberty enlightening the World. I rejoice that the statue is to be cared for and that our government plans to keep the light burning. Let the light shine as the beacon of Liberty to the thousands who seek freedom in this western world. Bartholdi, the great French sculptor, is dead; let his work live, - inspiring with new hope the eager thousands who seek new opportunity and a new life in a new land. They come to America for a better chance in life, for themselves and especially for their children - to escape from tyranny and cruelty, to establish a home under the rule of Justice and to become a part of a great and free nation.

The first law to ^{regulate} restrict immigration was put into effect under President Harrison. It was planned to exclude the diseased, the criminal, the paupers; then followed the contract labor law designed to prohibit cheap labor. Then an educational test was urged and passed but was vetoed by President Cleveland. Today there exists a League for the restriction of immigration.

All are agreed that ^{regulated} unrestricted immigration brings evils and dangers. America should not be the dumping ground for the scum and refuse, the criminals and

the paupers of Europe. None desire to increase the burdens put upon the state and the tax-payers by the degenerates and the dependents who crowd our prisons and insane asylums and alms-houses. The best sentiment of all is against the importation of cheap labor, except for such labor as was and is necessary for the hard and heavy work of this land. We desire no lowering of the standards of living. Every effort should be made to raise the standard. Is there political corruption and political danger because of the foreign element and the foreign vote. I am afraid our "good" patriots are the real danger and the chief source of political corruption. It is not the fault of the immigrant, - put the blame where it belongs - upon the leaders in the higher places.

The chief evil is the congestion in the great cities. Solve this as ex-commissioner Zenner advised, - exclude the undesirable and properly distribute the desirable immigrants.

Prof. Mayo Smith said - "Immigration has been of immense value in developing the natural resources of the united States. The unskilled labor was necessary to dig the canals and build the railroads, open the mines, cut down the forests and to do the pioneer work. Commissioner Frank Sargent says - "It is an undisputed fact that without this immigration of the peoples of other countries the United States could not have become the nation it is today."

The immigrant has also made contribution to the spirit and character of our democracy. He brings a new element to our civilization. It is foolish for us to believe that all foreigners must be like us Americans. Even the nations and the races we are inclined to despise may have qualities of heart and of spirit we should honor. There is something more in American civilization than work and wages and wealth.

Many thousands of Jewish immigrants are coming to America. Thousands of them are gathered in the great seaport centers, especially in the city of New York. It is a tremendous problem but ours is the responsibility to care for our brethren, crippled in the race of life by inhuman cruelty. However heavy the burden, no true-hearted Jew dare say other than welcome to his unfortunate brothers. And true Americans will

honor the Jew for his willingness to sacrifice and will help in the work of Americanization. The problem belongs not to New York but to every Jew in every city and village, - not only to Jews but to non-Jews as well, to all Americans.

Our duty it is to welcome the immigrant to freedom and peace and life, give him a chance to work and help him to find his place as a part of the nation, prepare him as quickly as possible for American life and American citizenship. Jews should be assimilated in speech and dress, language and custom. They should not surrender their religious convictions. They need not sacrifice their principles, but in all things else they should be thorough Americans. Let the immigrants Americanize, learn to speak the language of the land, to understand the character of our government and to love and honor the Republic - to understand liberty, and to preserve the institutions of freedom. The parents may seem foreign in speech and custom; the second generation will be as American as are we.

What can America and Americans do? Surely not to close the portals that lead to freedom. If any gates are to be shut, compel Russia and Roumania and Galicia to shut their gates and to establish justice and peace within. Russia is a vast empire with rich undeveloped resources. She has room industrially for all her millions of Jews. In 1492, memorable year, never to be forgotten by Americans or by Jews, Ferdinand and Isabella signed the decree expelling 300,000 Jews from Spain. Their goods were confiscated, they were pillaged and plundered, murdered and sold as slaves. Never again, in the history of the world, will an empire expel a people. No government has the right to expatriate its own. The time is coming when civilized nations will not permit the inhumanity, - the command to leave one's birthplace and one country is a command to enter another country, whether it be by the decree of the Czar of all the Russias or by the pressure of cruel legislation and its still more cruel enforcement. These peoples belong to the land of their birth.

If Jews are given peace - a chance to work and to live in Russia, they will remain in Russia. Driven forth by the oppressor's lash, they seek refuge in lands of justice and liberty. American cannot and will not give added force to Russia's inhu-

manity. America - if it cannot, with other just and freedom-loving nations, compel Russia to be humane and human, will not turn back the persecuted and the hunted to a life of want and suffering and want and unjust cruelty. True Americans, believing in justice and humanity will help us bear the burden of our suffering and unfortunate people. As James Russell Lowell sang -

"Thou, taught by fate to know Jehovah's plan
That only manhood ever makes a man,
And where free latch-string never was drawn in
Against the poorest child of Adam's kin."



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• • • • • Some are affrighted by the volume of immigration. Others are emphasizing the change in the character of the immigrants - their geographical origin in the countries of Southern and Eastern Europe.

All are agreed that America should shut out the diseased and the defective, the paupers and the criminals. We favor the sifting of immigration,

but are opposed to any restrictions that would hinder the poor and the able-bodied. The head tax, and especially an increase of the head tax, is an injustice to the honest immigrant. The dollar is not the real test of the man. America needs the brain and the brawn of the immigrant. Not all the degenerates and the undesirables come in the steerage. The door of hope should stand ever open. It is the established American principle. It is the best sentiment of the millions who themselves were immigrants, or are the children of immigrants. The gates of the land of refuge should never be shut in the face of the victims of persecution. * * * * *

Mr. Sargent, the Ex-Commissioner of Immigration, has urged repeatedly that the greatest peril of immigration is the congestion in the large cities. He has also pointed out the remedy, viz: an intelligent distribution of immigrants to the states and sections which need them most.

* * * * * Mr. Sargent says, safety lies in Americanisation. The public school and the press are the great educating, assimilating and Americanizing forces.

* * * * * The recent conference on immigration, held under the auspices of the National Civic Federation, expressed the best opinion of the country concerning this country. Andrew Carnegie had but one test - "Has the man the ambition to enjoy the rights of an American citizen?" "What would this country have been without the immigrant?", he exclaims, "and who is there here who is not either an immigrant himself or has immigrants' blood in his veins?" Valuing the immigrant at the price of a slave - \$1000 - Carnegie believes every immigrant increases the riches of the nation one thousand dollars. President Eliot of Harvard said emphatically, "We need all the brain and sinew we can import to develop our resources." The resolution of the Conference made clear that no restrictions could now possibly be placed upon the coming here of any immigrant who could not be qualified as undesirable. * * * * *

