

IMMIGRATION AND ILLITERACY.

Prescot F. Hall Points Out Where There Is a Certain Progression.

Americans Enter No Protest as Long as the Great Bulk of the Population Came From England, Germany, France and Scandinavia.

Under the foregoing title the North American Review for October contains a noteworthy article by Prescott F. Hall, secretary of the Immigration Restriction League. Mr. Hall's main contention is for an educational test to bar out all immigrants who cannot read and write their own language, and he fortifies his arguments with some interesting and significant facts. That the immigration laws at present in force are not particularly efficacious must be admitted from the simple fact that the persons debarred and returned under these laws are but a paltry fraction of 1 per cent of the total immigration. It is practically impossible to say whether or not a man will become a burden on the state within a year by looking at him or at his purse, and the result is that the slums of our great cities are daily growing at an alarming rate from this source. The importance of the matter lies not only in the fact that our slums are almost wholly of foreign growth, but also in the less widely realized fact that the slum elements come from the countries which have most markedly increased their immigration in the last ten years. In other words, immigration as at present allowed is feeding the slums faster than it is filling vacant positions or lands.

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. Previous to 1870 three-quarters of all immigrants came from the races of northwestern Europe—the United Kingdom, France, Germany, and Scandinavia. By 1880 these countries were sending us only three-fifths, and in 1890 only two-fifths, of the total immigration. On the other hand, southern and eastern Europe—Austria-Hungary, Italy, Poland and Russia—which in 1869 sent less than one-hundredth of the total immigration, in 1890 sent us over one-half. A most profound change has taken place in the character of the foreign elements admitted to our society, and the immigration question is much graver than it was a dozen years ago.

On an average it is found that 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 in 1895 the criminals of foreign birth outnumbered those of native birth ten to one—and Massachusetts does not get the worst class of immigrants by any means. From the prison reports of that state Mr. Hall deduces a certain progression in the number of criminals furnished by each of the nationalities. Germany gives 3.6 per thousand, Scandinavia 5.1, Russia, 7.9, Austria, 10.4, Hungary 15.4, Poland 16.0 and Italy 18.2. The native born give 2.7 criminals to the thousand and the foreign born 5.4 or just twice as many.

Turning now to the figures on illiteracy, one is startled to find a progression almost exactly parallel to the foregoing progression in criminality. In 1896 the percentage of illiteracy among the 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. In other words, the nations that have so largely increased their immigration since 1880 are at once the most illiterate and the most undesirable. Moreover, they form the element that has neither the ability nor the ambition to till the ground or to do any skilled work—the element that makes the slums.

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, 91 per cent in Philadelphia. What is worse, these foreign colonies are drawn from the illiterate nations. 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 a foreign product and the present immigration laws are powerless to prevent their rapid increase.

"Do you want this country to be peopled by British, German, and Scandinavian stock, historically free, energetic, progressive," asks Mr. Hall, "or by Slav, Latin and Asiatic races, historically downtrodden, 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."

Just here another important point is worthy of note. In proportion as this influx of unskilled foreign labor has increased the American have withdrawn from the manual pursuits thus invaded, producing at times a large contingent of Americans who could not find 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 raise their children above the lowest social class into which they were thrown. This is one cause of the halving of the American birth rate. On the other hand, the birth rate of illiterate immigrants is not only unchecked, but their children remain almost as illiterate as themselves.

On the whole Mr. Hall makes a strong case to the effect that the illiterate are undesirable and that the undesirable are illiterate. It is not to be expected that a test of reading and writing would keep out educated criminals and anarchists. But, as the writer remarks, "we know how to deal with these gentlemen, as was shown at Chicago and Detroit." 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.

"A reading and writing test will 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."

Such is the summing up of Mr. Hall's argument. He holds with reason that the ability to read and write their own language is no exorbitant thing to demand of men who ask to join our democracy. The statute of Liberty in New York harbor holds in one hand a torch and in the other a book, which may be interpreted as meaning not merely that immigrants shall be educated to a higher degree after they get here, but that they must be able to read the fundamental law of the land by the light of Liberty's torch before they have a right to land.—Chicago Tribune.

Who the Agitators Are.

One strike just settled, involving the coal mining industry, and up rises another proposition for a strike in Chicago involving the street car system!

When that is disposed of, another eruption at some other point will follow, and, to quote Robert M. La Follette in his Fair speeches, "every thinking man must have been impressed with the unsettled, restless condition of the public mind so marked for the last few years. The cry of discontent has sounded in the land again and again—now almost dying away, now swelling in volume—until men who consider beyond self and the hour of asking: 'Is there not some serious cause for it all?'"

Of course there is "some serious cause for it all." To the close, candid and truthful observer, that "serious cause" is not far away, or so hidden that we may not discover it, if we only will.

Who is it that is about to lead the Chicago eruption but our old acquaintance Mahone, the chief walking delegate, distinguished in the Milwaukee strike of a year ago?

Who was it that practically led the strike just disposed of but the renowned Debs, the grand steerer of the Micks, the Huns, the Slavs and the Dagos in their mission of misrule, anarchy and revolution?

Who are the men that are the trusted co-workers of Debs, Mahone, Powderly and the like, but the Fitzgeralds, the O'Keefe's, the O'Rourke's, the Archbalds, the O'Hickey's and the O'Malleys?

Who is it that is at work inciting and creating this unrest, creating disturbances and collecting the mobs and rioters to march as armies in the land, but the same class of agitators?

Who is responsible for the vast influx of the scum of Europe into the mining and industrial centers of this nation, to the detriment and, in many cases, the driving out of American labor?

Who is it that controls these hordes of the most ignorant, superstitious and vicious?

Who is it that is inciting, fermenting and stirring up strife and rebellion in our country?

Who is it that has its trained bands and cohorts of armed, drilled and equipped "auxiliaries," counting up to hundreds of thousands, scattered through our cities, towns and villages and ready at a moment's notice to march out under the banner of the hierarchy?

It is easy enough to see who it is, but why is it that so many of our Protestant orators, leaders and teachers ignore the "serious cause of it all" and seek to account for it all upon another and different basis?

No one doubts but that combinations and trusts are an evil in the body pol-

itic! that corporations, by their agents and lobbyists, corrupt legislators, national, state and municipal in many instances; that the concentration of the wealth of the country in the hands and control of the bankers and money lenders, and that the possession of all political power in the hands of a few men, is contrary to the spirit of our institutions, but to say that these evils are solely responsible for the conditions existing at this time, and have caused the swinging of states first one way and then another, is clearly untrue.

If the American people were let alone to pursue the even tenor of their way, all these questions would be met and solved without strikes, riots, mobs, lynchings or rebellion.

Again, who is the most responsible for the corruption and boodles in our legislatures, national, state and municipal, if it is not this same crowd and class? Look where you will and you will find them at the bottom of all such mischief, whether it is in New York, Boston, Chicago, St. Louis or Milwaukee.

Why should we not come out and talk plain and locate in the public mind this "serious cause" for all the rottenness and corruption in our body politic?

Why should we not lay bare this cancer that is responsible for this dangerous, festering and disturbing condition in our land?

Are our public men afraid to call a spade a spade?—Wisconsin Patriot

Washington's Idea.

WASHINGTON, Nov. 16.—The oft-agitated question of establishing in the city of Washington a great national university on the lines suggested by President Washington has taken more definite form than in the past, and a number of representative American women have taken hold of the project with a determination to push it to a successful conclusion if possible. They have started out in a practical manner by seeking to raise the first of the \$25,000 necessary for the erection of an administration building to form the nucleus for the university, and hope to be able to lay the cornerstone on February 22, 1899. Their purpose in the interim is to urge the matter continuously on the attention of women all over the world. They will assemble in convention in Washington on December 14 to devise ways and means for arousing public sentiment. Among those who have initiated the movement to fulfill Washington's wish are: Mrs. H. H. Hearst of this city, Mrs. Ellen A. Richardson of Boston, Mrs. Clara R. Anthony, Miss Rachel Howland, Miss Louise Tinker, and Mrs. Edmund Anthony, Jr., of Massachusetts, Mrs. I. S. Boyd of Georgia, Mrs. W. A. Roebing of New Jersey, Mrs. John K. Goodloe of Kentucky, Mrs. H. H. Adams of Connecticut, Mrs. S. B. Brice of

Ohio, Miss Eugene Hale, Mrs. David Starr Jordan, Miss Charlotte Blake Brown, Mrs. F. S. Hubbard and Miss Caroline Jackson of California.

Mrs. Ella A. Richardson of Boston, chief organizer of the movement, writing to George H. Harris of this city, of the plans thus formed, says:

"The patriotic women of America are to build the administration building, and they propose to make the 22d of February, 1898, the nation's first offering day. For this purpose they are asking no large contributions, begging nothing. America's 70,000,000 people must build this great monument. If the 13,000,000 children in the public schools in America would give an offering of a penny each on Washington's birthday they would raise a sum sufficient to erect the building and endow it. Let us, then, join hands and have an American university, American sciences and American ideas for American citizens."

Mrs. Richardson further stated that she had arranged with the proper authorities that the Bureau of Engraving and Printing shall produce certificates which will be given to those who contribute to the movement.

Simply a Highway Robber.

At a place not a thousand miles from Portage city, a young girl employed in a Protestant family was sent a few weeks ago to the grocery and was entrusted with the money to make a purchase. On her return she reported that a reversed father had compelled her to give the money for the church. Her employer not being a coward and not having the usual cowardly fear of a boycott, took the girl and hunted up the "fatherly" dead-beat and hired-girl bulldozer and compelled him to return the money which he knew was not the girl's when he took it. Their goal is wonderful. In this city the ghostly fathers do not hesitate to take the last fifty cents from poor washerwomen.—Wisconsin Patriot.

Whom the Gods Would Destroy.

"They whom the gods would destroy they first make mad!" How else can we explain the abominable doctrine proclaimed from the altar of the Cathedral of Notre Dame, Paris, by the Holy Father Ollivier?

We have been and are, constantly told that the Catholic Church has changed. That the Spirit of the Age has stirred her clotted blood, and she no longer is the same that she was centuries ago. We are told that it is unjust to bring up the horrors of the inquisition and anathemas thundered against the reformers of the past, because the present church has so far thrown off the old beliefs that it is no longer the same. The American has cried aloud like a faithful sentinel from the watch-tower that this was misleading, for its strength was in its iniquity and false, for the holy church never changed and admitted of no

fallibility and unchangeableness. The words of this priest, standing before a vast audience, refer to the fire at the charity fair, which left hundreds of the most self-sacrificing and benevolent persons, who were giving their labor to the suffering, white ashes or charred cinders, ghostly in the sight of a horrified world. His discourse was most blasphemous, yet it proves that the doctrines of the "Holy" church remain without shadow of turning. A single passage will be enough to satisfy the reader's curiosity, and the whole would be unbearable. "The holocaust of all those innocents has been willed, imposed by God, to ransom the incredulity and the failings of the age. In 1870 the divine God imposed upon France, that is to say, the oldest daughter of the church, an invasion of the Prussian Armies. That chastisement not having arrested unbelief, God in his fury, turned toward these women, who were the providence of the poor, and decided that they should die in the most atrocious sufferings."

Here is the old dogma of God's dreadful cruelty and vindictiveness. It is he who incites to war and the burning to death of hundreds of devoted women awakens no reproach in the lethargized mind of the priest.

Leon Denis in a masterly lecture reported in La Puisse Universelle, criticized this horrible sermon, and was met with tremendous applause. One of his most condensed paragraphs is as follows: "If God be a punitive deity, and if it is He who sends scourges upon the earth, then Jesus, who enjoins us to forgive even our enemies, must be better than God himself."

Leon Denis represents the advance of the age. The priests, the church's unchangeable doctrines, identically the same that they were five centuries ago. And can it be for a moment doubted that they who believe in a God who would harm hundreds of the noblest women, engaged in the most elevated labor, would hesitate to follow His example, and mercilessly crush those their bigotry held as His enemies?

What folly, then, to think that because the Mother Church does not agitate the school question, that she has relinquished her claims. She has only retired to cover, and is pushing forward in another direction. Her stealthy hand is clutching the throat of the Republic. She demands freedom and liberty, that she may destroy every vestige of these and substitute her accustomed despotism, which is as merciless as her God.

HUDSON TUTTLE.

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