

Likely to Break All Immigration Records This Year



A FINNISH BLOSSOM.



FROM THE NORTH OF EUROPE.



FROM THE SOUTH OF EUROPE.

UNLESS there should be an unexpected and highly improbable slump all immigration records are bound to be broken this year. Both the daily and monthly records have been broken already, as a matter of fact, so that only the yearly record stands.

The monthly record was broken in April, when 73,667 foreigners (steerage passengers, not citizens) passed through the nation's gate on the bit of land termed Ellis island in the harbor of New York. The daily record was broken on Saturday, May 3, when 6,213 men, women and children from almost every country in Europe, as well as a few from Asia and Africa, stepped foot on American soil for the first time. The burning of the records a few years ago with the flimsy wooden buildings in which the United States first received immigrants on Ellis island precludes accurate comparison with earlier figures, but it is distinctly remembered by the inspectors that never before was there such a hustling there and never were so many passed in one day as on the first Saturday in May, 1902. The heaviest month previous to April of this year since the government has had charge of the New York immigration station was exactly ten years earlier, in April, 1892, when the number coming in was 69,000. On the first nine days of this month 24,096 were landed, or at the rate of more than 80,000 for the month.

Our Prosperity Attracts.

Some notion of the great increase this year thus far over recent years may be gained from the following figures: In 1897 the total for the year was 142,400; in 1898,

206,902; in 1899, 278,846; in 1900, 367,440; in 1901, 498,226.

After 1892, when times in America were reported hard in Europe, immigration fell off signally, to increase from 1897 to the present, slowly at first, but steadily, and more recently by leaps and bounds. The poor and discouraged in Europe, those for whom there is no place and no comfort at home, have heard of Uncle Sam's prosperity and are now hastening to these shores as fast as they can raise the money to come and steam can bring them hither.

The present high tide of immigration is sure to keep up, too, as long as the country's prosperity is the wonder of the whole earth. There is a common belief that immigration figures reach the maximum in ten-year periods, but this is not so—the tide is governed almost wholly by the rise and fall of our material prosperity. The prosperity of Europe may be supposed to have something to do with it, and, perhaps, in a measure it has, but less than you would imagine, for though Germany is anything but prosperous, now, industrially, the immigration of Germans to the United States at this time is small, whereas it used to be enormous.

Immigration Changes.

In fact there has been a great change in the character of the foreigners who come here in search of fortune. In place of the hearty Irishman who develops better under the Stars and Stripes than anywhere else on earth, the sturdy German, who has made himself an important factor in American life, and the fair-haired Scandinavian, hard-working, frugal and a genuine acquisition, we have now an excess of Poles and Slovaks from Austria and Russia, and Italians.

The first two of these may be placed in one class as against the Italians—last year there were 60,000 of the former and 56,000 of the latter. The total immigration this year to date has been about 202,000, more than half the grand total of last year. It is hardly necessary to say that there is no comparison between the German and Irish immigrants of other years and the Polish, Slovak and Italian immigrants of the present. In physical appearance and vigor the men and women from northern Europe outmatch the others almost two to one. As material from which American citizens are made the disparity is still greater. Nearly all the German and Irish came here to stay; nearly all the Poles, Slovaks and Italians come here to remain only till they can get enough money together to go back and live on the proceeds of their savings or the produce of the little farms these savings will buy. Of late years, indeed, immigrants of these classes—the Italians more particularly—go back home winters and spend the earnings of the summers, thus draining the country annually of dollars by the millions, instead of adding to the national wealth, as did the earlier newcomers from Germany and the Emerald Isle.

Thousands of Small Fortunes.

It is not too much to say that thousands of what those who amass them term fortunes are got together in this country every year by European laborers to be spent in the old world.

The average Pole, Slovak or Italian will save from \$200 to \$250 in a year, and in five years will have got together, say, two thousand good American dollars. Everything considered—purchasing power, etc.—this money is worth two and one-half

times as much at home to the Pole or Slovak and five times as much to the Italian as it would be here, so that there is small wonder that both Poles, Slovaks and Italians, besides those of many other nationalities, prefer to spend their savings on their native soil, where they can make the most of them.

That Ireland is more prosperous than in former years is given as the reason for the decreased Irish immigration—anyway the good old days when a shipload of deep-chested, rosy lassies from the green island was no novelty at the immigration station have passed, and, apparently, forever. Irish women are going home to stay, by the thousands nowadays, as the public prints announce every once in a while; possibly more are leaving America than are coming, but there is no way of determining this. No records are kept of outgoing steerage passengers—besides, not all the Irish women who came here by way of the steerage go home as they came.

With the Germans it is different. The drop in immigration from the kaiser's domains is largely due to the kaiser's government. It has devised many restrictive laws which make it difficult to leave the Fatherland for America. Besides, weighty inducements to settle in German colonies are put forward to those who think they must seek their fortune abroad. They are exempt from military service, for one thing, yet may retain their German citizenship, and this is only one of the inducements which seem worth while to the Teuton who believes he can better himself by leaving home.

Non-Productive Immigrants.

However undesirable from the standpoint of citizenship the Italian, the Slav

or the Pole may be, because he doesn't intend to remain in this country, there are two other classes of immigrants now coming here who are undesirable because they are non-producers almost to a man.

These are the Assyrians and the Greeks. Men of both these nationalities prefer commercial life to productive toil. They come here with enough money to insure landing, almost invariably, but few of them have trades and they go to peddling or become petty merchants of some sort. The Greeks are almost all fruit dealers, while the Assyrians sell Oriental fabrics, such as rugs and other wares. The Assyrian colony in New York is one of the institutions of the metropolis now, the southern end of Greenwich street, which was formerly of almost Hibernian, being now almost all Assyrians.

It is the Turk who has sent both Greeks and Assyrians here. The Assyrians, who are Turkish subjects, come because the sultan's government is treating them with more and more severity every year, while the Greeks have had an ever-increasing fondness for America ever since the Graeco-Turkish war. Curiously enough, the Armenians, another non-producing class, have almost ceased to come to America. Greeks, Armenians and Assyrians alike are singularly non-progressive, yet they are among the most nervous and hysterical people in the whole world. They are seldom detained because of violating the contract labor law, but often because of contagious and dangerous disease. This is most often true of the Assyrians, who are frequently afflicted with trachoma, or, as they term it at the immigration bureau, "the Egyptian eye." It is caused, so rumor states, by the fine sand of the semi-arid lands from

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DELEGATES TO THE NATIONAL CONVENTION OF THE Z. C. B. J., THE BOHEMIAN BENEVOLENT SOCIETY, WHICH MET RECENTLY AT WILBER—Photo by W. M. Carr.