

Cosmopolitan Omaha---A Modern City of Many Mingled Nationalities



THEIR ANCESTORS SERVED UNDER CAESAR.

WHO is the Omaha—who are these people you see on the streets every day, trudging to work in the morning and home again at night, the thousands struggling side by side in the battle for a livelihood? Where did they all come from—for but a small percentage of the population was born in the city?

The reply to the questions develop a great many interesting facts. So far as the study of languages and peoples is concerned, it is almost as good as a trip around the world. For, place your finger on almost any portion of the inhabited globe, and you can find some person now a resident of Omaha and numbered among its growing thousands, who was born on that spot or not far from it. He will be able, if you question him, to tell you every detail about that spot, what its people do, how they dress, or anything you would like to know. And he could tell it in the language spoken there better, perhaps, than in English, and while he is telling it, there is apt to be a look of fond recollection, mingled with a deal of sadness, in his eye. His skin may be swarthy or it may be fair, his eyes black as night or blue as the sky in day—that depends upon where you place your finger—but he is here in Omaha. If your finger is on the other side of the world from our land, he had a long way to come, and when he came it is likely he had much trouble in making those he found here understand the jumble of sounds he uttered as speech. He came at the same time as another and as many others on opposite sides of the earth, wholly without his knowledge, were starting out for the same destination. He and they broke away from the thousands of years of companionship, habits and similarity of tongue, and, guided by the directions on their tickets, struck out for the new world to eventually join each other here as though by prearrangement, and, hand in hand, amid new surroundings and new modes of life, take part in the maintenance of a new government partly of their own making.

National Peculiarities Not Lost.
But they brought with them the peculiarities that characterized them from each other before they met. They still retain in a large measure the habits, thoughts, religion and tongue of their fathers, their fathers' fathers and all before them.

Over the water these foreigners have come for years, and many thousands of them have come to Omaha. Some arrived with large families of wondering children, while others, mere boys, came alone, leaving a sweetheart behind to be sent for when fortune should begin to smile. They found a few of their own people ahead of them, but many whom they had never seen

or known of except in books. From the far north, where ice and snow always exist, they have come to greet the man from sunny climes, where snow and ice is never seen, to call him fellow citizen and brother. Their children meet in the same school room and talk to each other in the new tongue they are learning, never thinking to wonder at the strange chance that has brought them thus together when they might be so far apart, learning to read and write other languages.

Many Settle in Colonies.
These are a large share of Omaha's population and give the city that part which is called polyglot. Attracted by promise of employment at wages unattainable at home, they have braved the many hardships and disadvantages and are now objects of much interest. Those who came at the instance of friends or relatives gone before have set up homes near their kind, while those who came unguided have not been long in locating their own people and becoming neighbors to them. The result has been the formation of colonies—little settlements taking on many of the features and oddities of old country villages, where the mother tongue is heard as prominently as is English in other parts of the city.

A visit to one of these settlements is like a striking picture of foreign land scenes, with the language and atmosphere thrown in. They have not all huddled together, each nation by itself, for in some parts of the city one may be able to hear a jumble of languages even in the same house, where families of widely differing extraction live neighbors or occupy the same building.

Street of All Nations.
The street giving the greatest diversity of nationalities among its inhabitants is South Thirtieth street. Here Poles, Germans, Jews, Scandinavians, Syrians, Italians and a few from almost every other land on the map, live side by side, children mingling promiscuously and perpetually, all striving to get along as well as possible under the circumstances. Clashes are, of course, not infrequent, but because of the mutual interest, little jealousies and "international complications" are reduced so as not to interfere greatly with the general welfare. The "mutual interests" are the making of homes under adverse conditions, the educating of children as they may grow up with the advantages of the Americans, not obliged to work and slave as the parents have to do, and fighting the handicap of strange surroundings and unwieldy language.

Down in "Little Italy."
But in other sections certain nations of Europe are represented by solid settle-



YOUNG AMERICA GATHERED FROM UNDER EVERY CLIME OF EARTH.



A MADONNA OF LITTLE ITALY.



FROM FAR OFF SYRIA.

ments, and villages of the old world are reproduced even so far as architecture sometimes. Huddled along the railroad tracks toward South Omaha and along South Twentieth street in the vicinity of Pierce street, can be seen the transplanted Italians, Syrians and Sicilians with their black, piercing eyes and dark hair. The houses in which they live are unpicturesque, being for the most part little more than shacks, but the foreign atmosphere is there the minute you set foot in the district. The women are a hard-working class, doing much of the out door work while the men folk—usually fruit peddlers and petty merchants, railroad and street laborers, earn what they can to support their usually large families. These people are perhaps the most interesting of all foreigners to the average American. In the old country it means dig and scratch for every member of the family to get food and clothing and the old folks here cannot let go this necessary habit of generations. It is by no means an unusual thing to see a short, old-looking and wrinkled woman "toting" a huge load of something on her head, at times steadying it with one hand, but more often, so expert is she at this

manner of carrying heavy loads, balancing it perfectly as she walks along, head rigid and shoulders moving, Indian fashion. The load on her head may be clothes to wash, or sticks of wood which she has picked up somewhere and tied together into a large bundle almost too heavy for an ordinary man to carry in the usual manner. This is one way in which the women help save a few cents each day to make a total of dollars in a year. While they appear to be old they may not be much over 20 years, for they are of the people whose women age rapidly. But very frequently they are really old, for the grandmothers, expert through years of experience, are able to bring home enough cast-away articles in this manner to more than pay for their "keep" and their age almost unites them for other work. As they pass with their burdens, their dark faces showing from beneath, they are always objects of curiosity. Every movement of their bodies, every flash from their jet-black eyes, breathe of foreign lands and strange customs.

Not all of them, however, are of the dark-complexioned type. There is a blond class of Italians, and some of these have also come to Omaha. In some ways they have different customs, but on the whole they can be distinguished by their manners of living and by the similarity of talk.

Making of a Great Omaha.
This is Omaha made. A little of this, a little of that, all of the ingredients being concentrated extracts of ambition, self-

Others Cluster Along Tracks.
The section along the railroad tracks is also shared with other Europeans. The Bohemian and Polish emigrants have, many of them, taken possession of this district in order to be nearer their work. And Poles also abound in Sweeney. Mingled with these two nationalities are a great many Germans, and the three get along very well together. Day laborers they are, few having ever learned trades before coming across the water. They adopt American ways easily and after a single generation the outward signs of extraction are almost lost.

Some Showings of the Countries.
With the Swedes of the northwestern and northeastern parts of the city and of Walnut Hill, and the Danes of the Cuning street district, the Germans, Bohemians, Russians, Jews, Poles, Italians and Syrians form the largest portion of Omaha's foreign population, but by no means the most interesting. Here and there throughout the city is found a resident who hailed from some land less prominent and who is more of a curiosity than the ordinary immigrant. Some almost unheard-of countries have but single representatives here—lonesome wanderers far from what they can really call home—and each with a story of heart-interest within his breast, which would explain why he broke the ties and came here, and what it cost him to make the change. We have in Omaha more than one man who was born in Iceland; we have Montenegrins, turban-topped Arabians, Chinamen, Japanese, Laplanders, South Africans, Finlanders, Slavs, Greeks, Austrians, Roumanians, and many more from remote corners of the earth. How they happened to come to Omaha some of them cannot tell themselves, but most of them were attracted by the opportunities for immediate employment held out by this city's great industries.

No Official Record Kept.
A strange and wonderful mixture they make. It would be of interest to know just how many there are of each race, but, strange as it may seem, no provision appears to have been made for tabulating our inhabitants according to nationalities from the regular census, as is done in most



DESCENDANTS OF GRECIAN HEROES WHO ARE BOOTBLACKS IN OMAHA.

help and daring. It is a good mixture, but it will not show in the general population for several generations yet. Some races associate with others quite freely, while others keep shyly to themselves, even resenting undue familiarity on the part of others, and so long as the distinct settlements are kept up these races will be preserved in the original blood, the outlandish customs and habits outlasting the oldest immigrant. But these exclusive territories

are continually being encroached upon, clans are disrupted, the corroding influences of assimilation always working toward the creation of a new race made up of all others combined. But meanwhile, and until immigration has long ceased, Omaha will be a city of many languages; and while a people of one tongue may be preferable, it will lose one of its most interesting features when it loses its cosmopolitan population.

How a Young Milwaukee Alderman Won the Mayorship

SHERBURN M. BECKER, the boy alderman of Milwaukee, who defeated David S. Rose, democrat, made a strenuous and in many respects a unique campaign. A son of a rich man and a politician for the fun of it, he has devoted a good share of his time to denouncing graft. He believed, and the results indicate that he is correct, that this is a popular issue just now. At the outset of the campaign he supplemented his party's platform by publicly stating: "Put me down as a supporter of any movement against graft. That's where I have always stood."

Mayor Rose made the fight of his life for reelection, but underestimated the republican candidate's strength. Some days ago he declared Becker was out of it. But while Rose was flanking him in the Polish wards, Becker was flanking him in the Polish wards. The primaries showed that Rose had lost strength in the Polish districts. Becker went campaigning there day and night. He saw the boys at their Saturday night dances, waltzed with the girls until they shouted for him, and "jollied" the old-timers until they were convinced that young blood was needed in the mayor's chair.

"You need more parks and breathing spots down here," he said. "Elect me and you shall have them."
"What you ought to have is more public bathing places," he told another meeting. "You'll have them if I get there."
"You are shy on school houses in this part of the city. Your children should have the same opportunity that ours have up on Prospect avenue," he said the next night. "Wait until I am mayor; I'll see that you get what you need."

But he still had a trump card up his sleeve.
"I am not one of those politicians who want the office because I need the money," he said one night in the Polish wards. "I am lucky and happen to have a supply on hand. Tell you what I'll do. If I get elected I will give the salary that goes with the office to charity."

But Becker stood for bigger things than parks and bath houses. He issued a platform, in which he demanded a big line of improvements to accomplish what the people want—a Greater Milwaukee. His platform, like everything else he says, was unique for its brevity. It was printed for distribution on a slip of paper six by three inches under the line "Becker's Platform," and addressed "to the voters of Milwaukee."

When Becker entered the field he was laughed at and called the boy who wanted the moon.

Becker's first step was to announce that a daily newspaper, Becker's Bulletin, would be published in his advocacy. Before the newspaper's first number was published he and his auto had covered the city thoroughly. Speaking at noon gatherings of workmen, Becker went back to his headquarters dinnerless, but happy in promises of general support.

From the factories he went to the "Bad Lands" where the negro vote is centralized. Encouraged by promises there, he would take a run to Little Italy, then great friends at headquarters, and dash home to dress for dinner and appear at some social function in the evening, to lead a coalition in public and to talk politics on the side.

During his career Becker has been globe trotter, gold miner, cowboy, lecturer to school children on his various experiences, county supervisor and has recently embarked in a war with the Tobacco trust, as the head of a local company which is putting out an anti-trust smoking tobacco. As supervisor he saved the county \$25,000 a year by exposing graft in printing contracts. As alderman he took such an interest in the fire department that he rigged up a quick-hitch apparatus in his stable, a wash boiler arrangement on the back of an ex-horse show prize winning cart, and provides hot coffee for firemen when big fires are in progress.—Milwaukee papers.

One of the Popular Musical Societies of the Omaha High School

IN THE late fall of 1906 a small group of young men, under varied difficulties, succeeded in organizing what has since become popularly known as the High School Octet. The present organization is the outgrowth of last year's octet and of the High School Glee club. Walter Hoffman has been the moving factor in creating this typically high school organization. Jo Barton has rendered all assistance possible to this group of young men

in his professional capacity, and under his excellent direction the octet has made rapid strides in the direction of unobscured success. At numerous and varied functions of high school life and otherwise the octet has continually been in demand and has more than frequently met the exacting requirements of their critical audience in a most creditable manner. On April 20 a musical will be given by this organization at which, aside from the octet, distinguished musicians of the city will take

part. A most elaborate program has been arranged, widely diversified and fully calculated to meet the demands of everyone. The Creighton University auditorium has been secured for the evening. Admission will be by tickets at 25 cents each. The members of the octet from right to left are Messrs. W. L. Hoffman, G. Barnes, H. Roe, F. Hoffman, R. Anderson, B. McCullough, W. Wickman and J. Dorward. H. Thom, accompanist, is seated in the center.



OMAHA HIGH SCHOOL OCTET.

Omaha Women Who Have Given Their Time to Y. W. C. A. Campaign

UST how much the young womanhood of Omaha is indebted to the faithful band of women who have spent the last four weeks soliciting subscriptions to the Young Women's Christian association building fund will never be known outside of the few who have directed the campaign. The building and finance committee, which is composed of members of the board of directors of the association, and a few others have given their entire time to the

casuaries at the expense of much personal fatigue and inconvenience. It has been this unselfish, voluntary service of the women, especially of these mothers, in every department of the association, ever since its founding, that has made the Omaha organization, although seventh in point of size, the most nearly self-supporting Young Women's Christian association in this country.

state secretaries of the association that have spent all or part of the time in the city, lending their experience gained in other campaigns to the local effort. And besides these there have been the young women who have carried the clerical work and kept up the routine of the headquarters, given their professional services, which, if paid for, would have offset some of the most generous subscriptions. The campaign is being most vigorously pushed.



GROUP OF WORKERS IN Y. W. C. A. BUILDING FUND CAMPAIGN.