

New World Calling

Our Foreigners : A Chronicle of Americans in The Making

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Opening The Door

It is an inspiring drama of colonization that has been enacted on this continent in a relatively short period. Its like was never witnessed before and can never be witnessed again. Thirty-three nationalities were represented in the significant group of American pilgrims that gathered at Mount Vernon on July 4, 1918, to place garlands of native flowers upon the tomb of Washington and to pledge their honor and loyalty to the nation of their adoption. This event is symbolic of the great fact that the United States is, after all, a nation of immigrants, among whom the word foreigner is descriptive of an attitude of mind rather than of a place of birth.

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Long before men awoke to the vision of America, the Old World was the scene of many stupendous migrations. One after another, the Goths, the Huns, the Saracens, the Turks, and the Tatars, by the sheer tidal force of their numbers threatened to engulf the ancient and medieval civilization of Europe. But neither in the motives prompting them nor in the effect they produced, nor yet in the magnitude of their numbers, will such migrations bear comparison with the great exodus of European peoples which in the course of three centuries has made the United States of America. That movement of races—first across the sea and then across the land to yet another sea, which set in with the English occupation of Virginia in 1607 and which has continued from that day to this an almost ceaseless stream of millions of human beings seeking in the New World what was denied them in the Old—has no parallel in history.

It was not until the seventeenth century that the door of the wilderness of North America was opened by Englishmen ; but, if we are interested in the circumstances and ideas which turned Englishmen thither, we must look back into the wonderful sixteenth century—and even into the fifteenth, for it was only five or six years after the great Christopher's discovery, that the Cabots, John and Sebastian, raised the Cross of St. George on the North American coast. Two generations later, when the New World was pouring its treasure into the lap of Spain and when all England was pulsating with the new and noble life of the Elizabethan Age, the sea captains of the Great Queen challenged the Spanish monarch, defeated his Great Armada, and unfurled the English flag, symbol of a changing era, in every sea.

The political and economic thought of the sixteenth century was conducive to imperial expansion. The feudal fragments of kingdoms were being fused into a true nationalism. It was the day of the mercantilists, when gold and silver were given a grotesquely exaggerated place in the national economy and self-sufficiency was deemed to be the goal of every great nation. Freed from the restraint of rivals, the nation sought to produce its own raw material, control its own trade, and carry its own goods in its own ships to its own markets. This economic doctrine appealed with peculiar force to the people of England. England was very far from being self-sustaining. She was obliged to import salt, sugar, dried fruits, wines, silks, cotton, potash, naval stores, and many other necessary commodities. Even of the fish which formed

a staple food on the English workman's table, two-thirds of the supply was purchased from the Dutch. Moreover, wherever English traders sought to take the products of English industry, mostly woolen goods, they were met by handicaps—tariffs, Sound dues, monopolies, exclusions, retaliations, and even persecutions.

So England was eager to expand under her own flag. With the fresh courage and buoyancy of youth she fitted out ships and sent forth expeditions. And while she shared with the rest of the Europeans the vision of India and the Orient, her "gentlemen adventurers" were not long in seeing the possibilities that lay concealed beyond the inviting harbors, the navigable rivers, and the forest-covered valleys of North America. With a willing heart they believed their quaint chronicler, Richard Hakluyt, when he declared that America could bring "*as great a profit to the Realme of England as the Indes to the King of Spain,*" that "*golde, silver, copper, leade and per ales in aboundaunce*" had been found there : also "*precious stones, as turquoises and emauraldes ; spices and drugges ; silke worms fairer than ours in Europe ; white and red cotton ; infinite multitude of all hind of fowles ; excellent vines in many places for wines ; the soyle apte to heare olyvesfor oyle ; all kinds of fruites ; all kindes of odoriferous trees and date trees, cypresses, and cedars ; and in Newfoundland aboundaunce of pines and firr trees to make mastes and deale hoards, pitch, tar, rosen ; hempe for cables and cordage ; and upp within the Graunde Baye excedinge quantitie of all kinde of precious fures.*" Such a catalogue of resources led him to conclude that "*all the commodities of our olde decayed and daungerous trades in all Europe, Africa and Asia haunted by us, may in short space and for little or nothings, in a manner be had in that part of America which lieth between 30 and 60 degrees of northerly latitude.*"

Even after repeated expeditions had discounted the exuberant optimism of this description, the Englishmen's faith did not wane. While for many years there lurked in the mind of the Londoner, the hope that some of the products of the Levant might be raised in the fertile valleys of Virginia, the practical English temperament none the less began promptly to appease itself with the products of the vast forests, the masts, the tar and pitch, the furs ; with the fish from the coast waters, the abundant cod, herring, and mackerel ; nor was it many years before tobacco, indigo, sugar, cotton, maize, and other commodities brought to the merchants of England a great American commerce.

The first attempts to found colonies in the country by Sir Humphrey Gilbert and Sir Walter Raleigh were pitiable failures. But the settlement on the James in 1607 marked the beginning of a nation. What sort of nation ? What race of people ? Sir Walter Raleigh, with true English tenacity, had said after learning of the collapse of his own colony, "I shall yet live to see it an English nation." The new nation certainly was English in its foundation, whatever may be said of its superstructure. Virginia, New England, Maryland, the Carolinas. New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and Georgia were begun by Englishmen ; and New England, Virginia, and Maryland remained almost entirely English throughout the seventeenth century and well into the eighteenth. These colonies reproduced, in so far as their strange and wild surroundings permitted, the towns, the estates, and the homes of Englishmen of that day. They were organized and governed by Englishmen under English customs and laws ; and the Englishman's constitutional liberties were their boast until the colonists wrote these rights and privileges into a constitution of their own. "Foreigners" began early to straggle into the colonies. But not until the eighteenth century was well under way did they come in appreciable numbers, and even then the great bulk of these non-English newcomers were from the British Isles—of Welsh, Scotch, Irish, and Scotch-Irish extraction.

These colonies took root at a time when profound social and religious changes were occurring in England. Churchmen and dissenters were at war with each other ; autocracy was

struggling to survive the representative system ; and agrarianism was contending with a newly created capitalism for economic supremacy. The old order was changing. In vain were attempts made to stay progress by labor laws and poor laws and corn laws. The laws rather served to fill the high-ways with vagrants, vagabonds, mendicants, beggars, and worse. There was a general belief that the country was over-populated. For the restive, the discontented, the ambitious, as well as for the undesirable surplus, the new colonies across the Atlantic provided a welcome outlet.

To the southern plantations were lured those to whom land-owning offered not only a means of livelihood but social distinction. As word was brought back of the prosperity of the great estates and of the limitless areas awaiting cultivation, it tempted in substantial numbers those who were dissatisfied with their lot : the yeoman who saw no escape from the limitations of his class, either for himself or for his children ; the younger son who disdained trade but was too poor to keep up family pretensions ; professional men, lawyers, and doctors, even clergymen, who were ambitious to become landed gentlemen ; all these felt the irresistible call of the New World.

The northern colonies were, on the other hand, settled by townfolk, by that sturdy middle class which had wedged its way socially between the aristocracy and the peasantry, which asserted itself politically in the Cromwellian Commonwealth and later became the industrial master of trade and manufacture. These hard-headed dissenters founded New England. They built towns and almost immediately developed a profitable trade and manufacture. With a goodly sprinkling of university men among them, they soon had a college of their own. Indeed, Harvard graduated its first class as early as 1642.

Supplementing these pioneers, came mechanics and artisans eager to better their condition. Of the serving class, only a few came willingly. These were the “ free-willers” or “ redemptioners,” who sold their services usually for a term of five years to pay for their passage money. But the great mass of unskilled labor necessary to clear the forests and do the other hard work so plentiful in a pioneer land came to America under duress. Kidnaping or “ spiriting” achieved the perfection of a fine art under the second Charles. Boys and girls of the poorer classes, those wretched waifs who thronged the streets of London and other towns, were hustled on board ships and virtually sold into slavery for a term of years. It is said that in 1670 alone ten thousand persons were thus kidnaped ; and one kidnaper testified in 1671 that he had sent five hundred persons a year to the colonies for twelve years and another that he had send 804 in one year.

Transportation of the idle poor was another common source for providing servants. In 1663 an act was passed by Parliament empowering Justices of the Peace to send rogues, vagrants, and “ sturdy beggars” to the colonies. These men belonged to the class of the unfortunate rather than the vicious and were the product of a passing state of society, though criminals also were deported. Virginia and other colonies vigorously protested against this practice, but their protests were ignored by the Crown. When, however, it is recalled that in those years the list of capital offenses was appalling in length, that the larceny of a few shillings was punishable by death, that many of the victims were deported because of religious differences and political offenses, then the stigma of crime is erased. And one does not wonder that some of these transported persons rose to places of distinction and honor in the colonies and that many of them became respected citizens. Maryland, indeed, recruited her schoolmasters from among their ranks.

Indentured service was an institution of that time, as was slavery. The lot of the indentured servant was not ordinarily a hard one. Here and there masters were cruel and inhuman. But in

a new country where hands were so few and work so abundant, it was wisdom to be tolerant and humane. Servants who had worked out their time usually became tenants or freeholders, often moving to other colonies and later to the interior beyond the “fall line,” where they became pioneers in their turn.

The most important and influential influx of non-English stock into the colonies was the copious stream of Scotch-Irish. Frontier life was not a new experience to these hardy and remarkable people. Ulster, when they migrated thither from Scotland in the early part of the seventeenth century, was a wild moorland, and the Irish were more than unfriendly neighbors. Yet these transplanted Scotch changed the fens and mires into fields and gardens ; in three generations they had built flourishing towns and were doing a thriving manufacture in linens and woollens. Then England, in her mercantilist blindness, began to pass legislation that aimed to cut off these fabrics from English competition. Soon thousands of Ulster artisans were out of work. Nor was their religion immune from English attack, for these Ulstermen were Presbyterians. These civil, religious, and economic persecutions thereupon drove to America an ethnic strain that has had an influence upon the character of the nation far out of proportion to its relative numbers. In the long list of leaders in American politics and enterprise and in every branch of learning, Scotch-Irish names are common.

There had been some trade between Ulster and the colonies, and a few Ulstermen had settled on the eastern shore of Maryland and in Virginia before the close of the seventeenth century. Between 1714 and 1720, fifty-four ships arrived in Boston with immigrants from Ireland. They were carefully scrutinized by the Puritan exclusionists. Cotton Mather wrote in his diary on August 7, 1718 : “ But what shall be done for the great number of people that are transporting themselves thither from ye North of Ireland.” And John Winthrop, speaking of twenty ministers and their congregations that were expected the same year, said, “ I wish their coming so over do not prove fatal in the End.” They were not welcome, and had, evidently, no intention of burdening the towns. Most of them promptly moved on beyond the New England settlements.

The great mass of Scotch-Irish, however, came to Pennsylvania, and in such large numbers that James Logan, the Secretary of the Province, wrote to the Proprietors in 1729 : “ It looks as if Ireland is to send all its inhabitants hither, for last week not less than six ships arrived, and every day two or three arrive also.” [1] These colonists did not remain in the towns but, true to their traditions, pushed on to the frontier. They found their way over the mountain trails into the western part of the colony ; they pushed southward along the fertile plateaus that terrace the Blue Ridge Mountains and offer a natural highway to the South ; into Virginia, where they possessed themselves of the beautiful Shenandoah Valley ; into Maryland and the Carolinas ; until the whole western frontier, from Georgia to New York and from Massachusetts to Maine, was the skirmish line of the Scotch-Irish taking possession of the wilderness.

The rebellions of the Pretenders in Scotland in 1715 and 1745 and the subsequent break-up of the clan system produced a considerable migration to the colonies from both the Highlands and the Lowlands. These new colonists settled largely in the Carolinas and in Maryland. The political prisoners, of whom there were many in consequence of the rebellions, were sold into service, usually for a term of fourteen years. In Pennsylvania the Welsh founded a number of settlements in the neighborhood of Philadelphia. There were Irish servants in all the colonies and in Maryland many Irish Catholics joined their fellow Catholics from England.

In 1683 a group of religious refugees from the Rhineland founded Germantown, near Philadelphia. Soon other German communities were started in the neighboring counties. Chief among these German sectarians were the Mennonites, frequently called the German Quakers, so nearly did their religious peculiarities match those of the followers of Penn ; the Dunkers, a Baptist sect, who seem to have come from Germany boot and baggage, leaving not one of their number behind ; and the Moravians, whose missionary zeal and gentle demeanor have made them beloved in many lands. The peculiar religious devotions of the sectarians still left them time to cultivate their inclination for literature and music. There were a few distinguished scholars among them and some of the finest examples of early American books bear the imprint of their presses.

This modest beginning of the German invasion was soon followed by more imposing additions. The repeated strategic devastations of the Rhenish Palatinate during the French and Spanish wars reduced the peasantry to beggary, and the medieval social stratification of Germany reduced them to virtual serfdom, from which America offered emancipation. Queen Anne invited the harassed peasants of this region to come to England, whence they could be transferred to America. Over thirty thousand took advantage of the opportunity in the years 1708 and 1709. [2] Some of them found occupation in England and others in Ireland, but the majority migrated, some to New York, where they settled in the Mohawk Valley, others to the Carolinas, but far more to Pennsylvania, where, with an instinct born of generations of contact with the soil, they sought out the most promising areas in the limestone valleys of the eastern part of that colony, cleared the land, built their solid homes and ample barns, and clung to their language, customs, and religion so tenaciously that to this day their descendants are called “ Pennsylvania Dutch.”

After 1717 multitudes of German peasants were lured to America by unscrupulous agents called “ new-landers” or “ soul-stealers,” who, for a commission paid by the shipmaster, lured the peasant to sell his belongings, scrape together or borrow what he could, and migrate. The agents and captains then saw to it that few arrived in Philadelphia out of debt. As a result the immigrants were sold to “ soul-drivers,” who took them to the interior and indentured them to farmers, usually of their own race. These redemptioners, as they were called, served from three to five years and generally received fifty acres of land at the expiration of their service.

On the revocation of the Edict of Nantes by Louis XIV in 1685 French Protestants fled in vast numbers to England and to Holland. Thence many of them found their way to America, but very few came hither directly from France. South Carolina, Virginia, New York, Rhode Island, and Massachusetts were favored by those noble refugees, who included in their numbers not only skilled artisans and successful merchants but distinguished scholars and professional men in whose veins flowed some of the best blood of France. They readily identified themselves with the industries and aspirations of the colonies and at once became leaders in the professional and business life in their communities. In Boston, in Charleston, in New York, and in other commercial centers, the names of streets, squares, and public buildings attest their prominence in trade and politics. Few names are more illustrious than those of Paul Revere, Peter Faneuil, and James Bowdoin of Massachusetts ; John Jay, Nicholas Bayard, Stephen DeLancey of New York ; Elias Boudinot of New Jersey ; Henry Laurens and Francis Marion of South Carolina. Like the Scotch-Irish, these French Protestants and their descendants have distinguished themselves for their capacity for leadership.

The Jews came early to New York, and as far back as 1691 they had a synagogue in Manhattan. The civil disabilities then so common in Europe were not enforced against them in America, except that they could not vote for members of the legislature. As that body itself declared in 1737, the Jews did not possess the parliamentary franchise in England, and no

special act had endowed them with this right in the colonies. The earliest representatives of this race in America came to New Amsterdam with the Dutch and were nearly all Spanish and Portuguese Jews, who had found refuge in Holland after their wholesale expulsion from the Iberian peninsula in 1492. Rhode Island, too, and Pennsylvania had a substantial Jewish population. The Jews settled characteristically in the towns and soon became a factor in commercial enterprise. It is to be noted that they contributed liberally to the patriot cause in the Revolution.

While the ships bearing these many different stocks were sailing westward, England did not gain possession of the whole Atlantic seaboard without contest. The Dutch came to Manhattan in 1623 and for fifty years held sway over the imperial valley of the Hudson. It was a brief interval, as history goes, but it was long enough to stamp upon the town of Manhattan the cosmopolitan character it has ever since maintained. Into its liberal and congenial atmosphere were drawn Jews, Moravians, and Anabaptists ; Scotch Presbyterians and English Nonconformists ; Waldenses from Piedmont and Huguenots from France. The same spirit that made Holland the lenient host to political and religious refugees from every land in that restive age characterized her colony and laid the foundations of the great city of today. England had to wrest from the Dutch their ascendancy in New Netherland, where they split in twain the great English colonies of New England and of the South and controlled the magnificent harbor at the mouth of the Hudson, which has since become the water gate of the nation.

While the English were thus engaged in establishing themselves on the coast, the French girt them in by a strategic circle of forts and trading posts reaching from Acadia, up the St. Lawrence, around the Great Lakes, and down the valley of the Mississippi, with outposts on the Ohio and other important confluent. When, after the final struggle between France and Britain for world empire, France retired from the North American continent, she left to England all her possessions east of the Mississippi, with the exception of a few insignificant islands in the Gulf of St. Lawrence and the West Indies ; and to Spain she ceded New Orleans and her vast claims beyond the great river.

Thus from the first, the lure of the New World beckoned to many races, and to every condition of men. By the time that England's dominion spread over half the northern continent, her colonies were no longer merely English. They were the most cosmopolitan areas in the world. A few European cities had at times been cities of refuge, but New York and Philadelphia were more than mere temporary shelters to every creed. Nowhere else could so many tongues be heard as in a stroll down Broadway to the Battery. No European commonwealths embraced in their citizenry one-half the ethnic diversity of the Carolinas or of Pennsylvania. And within the wide range of his American domains, the English King could point to one spot or another and say : " Here the Spaniards have built a chaste and beautiful mission ; here the French have founded a noble city ; here my stubborn Roundheads have planted a whole nest of commonwealths ; here my Dutch neighbors thought they stole a march on me, but I forestalled them ; this valley is filled with Germans, and that plateau is covered with Scotch-Irish, while the Swedes have taken possession of all this region." And with a proud gesture he could add, " But everywhere they read their laws in the King's English and acknowledge my sovereignty."

Against the shifting background of history these many races of diverse origin played their individual parts, each contributing its essential characteristics to the growing complex of a new order of society in America. So on this stage, broad as the western world, we see these men of different strains subduing a wilderness and welding its diverse parts into a great nation, stretching out the eager hand of exploration for yet more land, bringing with arduous

toil the ample gifts of sea and forest to the townsfolk, hewing out homesteads in the savage wilderness, laboring faithfully at forge and shipyard and loom, bartering in the market place, putting the fear of God into their children and the fear of their own strong right arm into him whosoever sought to oppress them, be he Red Man with his tomahawk or English King with his Stamp Act.

The Irish Invasion

After the Revolution, immigrants began to filter into America from Great Britain and continental Europe. No record was kept of their arrival, and their numbers have been estimated at from 4000 to 10,000 a year, on the average. These people came nearly all from Great Britain and were driven to migrate by financial and political conditions.

In 1819 Congress passed a law requiring Collectors of Customs to keep a record of passengers arriving in their districts, together with their age, sex, occupation, and the country whence they came, and to report this information to the Secretary of State. This was the Federal Government's first effort to collect facts concerning immigration. The law was defective, yet it might have yielded valuable results had it been intelligently enforced. [3]

From all available collateral sources it appears that the official figures greatly understated the actual number of arrivals. Great Britain kept an official record of those who emigrated from her ports to the United States and the numbers so listed are nearly as large as the total immigration from all sources reported by the United States officials during a time when a heavy influx is known to have been coming from Germany and Switzerland.

Inaccurate as these figures are, they nevertheless are a barometer indicating the rising pressure of immigration. The first official figures show that in 1820 there arrived 8385 aliens of whom 7691 were Europeans. Of these 3614, or nearly one-half, came from Ireland. Until 1850 this proportion was maintained. Here was evidence of the first ground swell of immigration to the United States whose subsequent waves in sixty years swept to America one-half of the entire population of the Little Green Isle. Since 1820 over four and a quarter million Irish immigrants have found their way hither. In 1900 there were nearly five million persons in the United States descended from Irish parentage. They comprise today ten per cent of our foreign born population.

The discontent and grievances of the Irish had a vivid historical background in their own country. There were four principal causes which induced the transplanting of the race : rebellion, famine, restrictive legislation, and absentee landlordism. Every uprising of this bellicose people from the time of Cromwell onward had been followed by voluntary and involuntary exile. It is said that Cromwell's Government transported many thousand Irish to the West Indies. Many of these exiles subsequently found their way to the Carolinas, Virginia, and other colonies. After the great Irish rebellion of 1798 and again after Robert Emmet's melancholy failure in the rising of 1803 many fled across the sea. The Act of Union in 1801 brought " no submissive love for England," and constant political agitations for which the Celtic Irish need but little stimulus have kept the pathway to America populous.

The harsh penal laws of two centuries ago prescribing transportation and long terms of penal servitude were a compelling agency in driving the Irish to America. Illiberal laws against religious nonconformists, especially against the Catholics, closed the doors of political advancement in their faces, submitted them to humiliating discriminations, and drove many from the island. Finally, the selfish Navigation Laws forbade both exportation of

cattle to England and the sending of foodstuffs to the colonies, dealing thereby a heavy blow to Irish agriculture. These restrictions were followed by other inhibitions until almost every industry or business in which the Irish engaged was unduly limited and controlled. It should, however, not be forgotten that these restrictions bore with equal weight upon the Ulster settlers from Scotland and England, who managed somehow to endure them successfully.

Absentee landlordism was oppressive both to the cottier's body and to his soul, for it not only bound him to perpetual poverty but kindled within him a deep sense of injustice. The historian, Justin McCarthy, says that the Irishman "regarded the right to have a bit of land, his share, exactly as other people regard the right to live." So political and economic conditions combined to feed the discontent of a people peculiarly sensitive to wrongs and swift in their resentments.

But the most potent cause of the great Irish influx into America was famine in Ireland. The economist may well ascribe Irish failure to the potato. Here was a crop so easy of culture and of such nourishing qualities that it led to over-population and all its attendant ills. The failure of this crop was indeed an "overwhelming disaster," for, according to Justin McCarthy, the Irish peasant with his wife and his family lived on the potato, and whole generations grew up, lived, married, and passed away without ever having tasted meat. When the cold and damp summer of 1845 brought the potato rot, the little, overpopulated island was facing dire want. But when the next two years brought a plant disease that destroyed the entire crop, then famine and fever claimed one quarter of the eight million inhabitants. The pitiful details of this national disaster touched American hearts. Fleets of relief ships were sent across from America, and many a shipload of Irish peasants was brought back. In 1845 over 44,821 came ; 1847 saw this number rise to 105,536 and in the next year to 112,934. Rebellion following the famine swelled the number of immigrants until Ireland was left a land of old people with a fast shrinking population.

There is a prevailing notion that this influx after the great famine was the commencement of Irish migration. In reality it was only the climax. Long before this, Irishmen were found in the colonies, chiefly as indentured servants ; they were in the Continental Army as valiant soldiers ; they were in the western flux that filled the Mississippi Valley as useful pioneers. How many there were we do not know. As early as 1737, however, there were enough in Boston to celebrate St. Patrick's Day, and in 1762 they poured libations to their favorite saint in New York City, for the *Mercury* in announcing the meeting said, "Gentlemen that please to attend will meet with the best Usage." On March 17, 1776, the English troops evacuated Boston and General Washington issued the following order on that date :

Parole Boston

Countersign St. Patrick

The regiments under marching orders to march tomorrow morning. By His Excellency's command.

Brigadier of the Day
Gen. JOHN SULLIVAN.

Thus did the Patriot Army gracefully acknowledge the day and the people.

In 1784, on the first St. Patrick's Day after the evacuation of New York City by the British, there was a glorious celebration "spent in festivity and mirth." As the newspaper

reporter put it, “ the greatest unanimity and conviviality pervaded” a “ numerous and jovial company.”

Branches of the Society of United Irishmen were formed in American cities soon after the founding of the order in Ireland. Many veterans of '98 found their way to America, and between 1800 and 1820 many thousand followed the course of the setting sun. Their number cannot be ascertained ; but there were not a few. In 1818 Irish immigrant associations were organized by the Irish in New York, Philadelphia, and Baltimore to aid the newcomers in finding work. Many filtered into the United States from Canada, Newfoundland, and the West Indies. These earlier arrivals were not composed of the abjectly poor who comprised the majority of the great exodus, and especially among the political exiles there were to be found men of some means and education.

America became extremely popular in Ireland after the Revolution of 1776, partly because the English were defeated, partly because of Irish democratic aspirations, but particularly because it was a land of generous economic and political possibilities. The Irish at once claimed a kinship with the new republic, and the ocean became less of a barrier than St. George's Channel.

“ The States,” as they were called, became a synonym of abundance. The most lavish reports of plenty were sent back by the newcomers—of meat daily, of white bread, of comfortable clothing. “ There is a great many ill conveniences here,” writes one, “ but no empty bellies.” In England and Ireland and Scotland the number of poor who longed for this abundance exceeded the capacity of the boats. Many who would have willingly gone to America lacked the passage money. The Irish peasant, born and reared in extreme poverty, was peculiarly unable to scrape together enough to pay his way. The assistance which he needed, however, was forthcoming from various sources. Friends and relatives in America sent him money ; in later years this practice was very common. Societies were organized to help those who could not help themselves. Railroad and canal companies, in great need of labor, imported workmen by the thousands and advanced their passage money. And finally, the local authorities found shipping their paupers to another country a convenient way of getting rid of them. England early resorted to the same method. In 1849 the Irish poor law guardians were given authority to borrow money for such “ assistance,” as it was called. In 1881 the Land Commission and in 1882 the Commissioner of Public Works were authorized to advance money for this purpose. In 1884 and 1885 over sixteen thousand persons were thus assisted from Galway and Mayo counties.

Long before the great Irish famine of 1846-47 America appeared like a mirage, and wondering peasants in their dire distress exaggerated its opulence and opportunities. They braved the perils of the sea and trusted to luck in the great new world. The journey in itself was no small adventure. There were some sailings directly from Ireland ; but most of the Irish immigrants were collected at Liverpool by agents not always scrupulous in their dealings. A hurried inspection at Liverpool gained them the required medical certificates, and they were packed into the ships. Of the voyage one passenger who made the journey from Belfast in 1795 said : “ The slaves who are carried from the coast of Africa have much more room allowed them than the immigrants who pass from Ireland to America, for the avarice of captains in that trade is such that they think they can never load their vessels sufficiently, and they trouble their heads in general no more about the accommodation and storage of their passengers than of any other lumber aboard.” When the great immigrant invasion of America began, there were not half enough ships for the passengers, all were cruelly overcrowded, and many were so filthy that even American port officials refused a landing before cleansing.

Under such conditions sickness was a matter of course, and of the hordes who started for the promised land thousands perished on the way. [4]

Hope sustained the voyagers. But what must have been the disappointment of thousands when they landed ! No ardent welcome awaited them, nor even jobs for the majority. Alas for the rosy dreams of opulence ! Here was a prosaic place where toil and sweat were the condition of mere existence. As the poor creatures had no means of moving on, they huddled in the ports of arrival. Almshouses were filled, beggars wandered in every street, and these peasants accustomed to the soil and the open country were congested in the cities, unhappy misfits in an entirely new economic environment. Unskilled in the handicrafts, they were forced to accept the lot of the common laborer. Fortunately, the great influx came at the time of rapid turnpike, canal, and railroad expansion. Thousands found their way westward with contractors' gangs. The free lands, however, did not lure them. They preferred to remain in the cities. New York in 1850 sheltered 133,000 Irish. Philadelphia, Boston, New Orleans, Cincinnati, Albany, Baltimore, and St. Louis, followed, in the order given, as favorite lodging places, and there was not one rapidly growing western city, such as Buffalo, Cleveland, Detroit, and Chicago, that did not have its "Irish town" or "Shanty town" where the immigrants clung together.

Their brogue and dress provoked ridicule ; their poverty often threw them upon the community ; the large percentage of illiteracy among them evoked little sympathy ; their inclinations towards intemperance and improvidence were not neutralized by their great good nature and open-handedness ; their religion reawoke historical bitterness ; their genius for politics aroused jealousy ; their proclivity to unite in clubs, associations, and semi-military companies made them the objects of official suspicion ; and above all, their willingness to assume the offensive, to resent instantly insult or intimidation, brought them into frequent and violent contact with their new neighbors. "America for Americans" became the battle cry of reactionaries, who organized the American or "Know-Nothing" party and sought safety at the polls. While all foreign elements were grouped together, indiscriminately, in the mind of the nativist, the Irishman unfortunately was the special object of his spleen, because he was concentrated in the cities and therefore offered a visual and concrete example of the danger of foreign mass movements, because he was a Roman Catholic and thus awakened ancient religious prejudices that had long been slumbering, and because he fought back instantly, valiantly, and vehemently.

Popular suspicion against the foreigner in America began almost as soon as immigration assumed large proportions. In 1816 conservative newspapers called attention to the new problems that the Old World was thrusting upon the New : the poverty of the foreigner, his low standard of living, his illiteracy and slovenliness, his ignorance of American ways and his unwillingness to submit to them, his clannishness, the danger of his organizing and capturing the political offices and ultimately the Government. In addition to the alarmist and the prejudiced, careful and thoughtful citizens were aroused to the danger. Unfortunately, however, religious antagonisms were aroused and, as is always the case, these differences awakened the profoundest prejudices and passions of the human heart. There were many towns in New England and in the West where Roman Catholicism was unknown except as a traditional enemy of free institutions. It is difficult to realize in these days of tolerance the feelings aroused in such communities when Catholic churches, parochial schools, and convents began to appear among them ; and when the devotees of this faith displayed a genius for practical politics, instinctive distrust developed into lively suspicion.

The specter of ecclesiastical authority reared itself, and the question of sharing public school moneys with parochial schools and of reading the Bible in the public schools became

a burning issue. Here and there occurred clashes that were more than barroom brawls. Organized gangs infested the cities. Both sides were sustained and encouraged by partisan papers, and on several occasions the antagonism spent themselves in riots and destruction. In 1834 the Ursuline convent at Charlestown, near Boston, was sacked and burned. Ten years later occurred the great anti-Irish riots in Philadelphia, in which two Catholic churches and a schoolhouse were burned by a mob inflamed to hysteria by one of the leaders who held up a torn American flag and shouted, "This is the flag that was trampled on by Irish papists." Prejudice accompanied fear into every city and "patented citizens" were often subject to abuse and even persecution. Tammany Hall in New York City became the political fortress of the Irish. Election riots of the first magnitude were part of the routine of elections, and the "Bloody Sixth Ward Boys" were notorious for their hooliganism on election day.

The suggestions of the nativists that paupers and criminals be excluded from immigration were not embodied into law. The movement soon was lost in the greater questions which slavery was thrusting into the foreground. When the fight with nativism was over, the Irish were in possession of the cities. They displayed an amazing aptitude for political plotting and organization and for that prime essential to political success popularly known as "mixing." Policemen and aldermen, ward heelers, bosses, and mayors, were known by their brogue. The Irish demonstrated their loyalty to the Union in the Civil War and merged readily into American life after the lurid prejudices against them faded.

Unfortunately, a great deal of this prejudice was revived when the secret workings of an Irish organization in Pennsylvania were unearthed. Among the anthracite coal miners a society was formed, probably about 1854, called the Molly Maguires, a name long known in Ireland. The members were all Irish, professed the Roman Catholic faith, and were active in the Ancient Order of Hibernians. The Church, the better class of Irishmen, and the Hibernians, however, were shocked by the doings of the Molly Maguires and utterly disowned them. They began their career of blackmail and bullying by sending threats and death notices embellished with crude drawings of coffins and pistols to those against whom they fancied they had a grievance, usually the mine boss or an unpopular foreman.

If the recipient did not heed the threat, he was waylaid and beaten and his family was abused. By the time of the Civil War these bullies had terrorized the entire anthracite region. Through their political influence they elected sheriffs and constables, chiefs of police and county commissioners. As they became bolder, they substituted arson and murder for threats and bullying, and they made life intolerable by their reckless brutality. It was impossible to convict them, for the hatred against an informer, inbred in every Irishman through generations of experience in Ireland, united with fear in keeping competent witnesses from the courts. Finally the president of one of the large coal companies employed James McParlan, a remarkably clever Irish detective. He joined the Mollies, somehow eluded their suspicions, and slowly worked his way into their confidence. An unusually brutal and cowardly murder in 1875 proved his opportunity. When the courts finished with the Mollies, nineteen of their members had been hanged, a large number imprisoned, and the organization was completely wiped out.

Meantime the Fenian movement served to keep the Irish in the public eye. This was no less than an attempt to free Ireland and disrupt the British Empire, using the United States as a fulcrum, the Irish in America as the power, and Canada as the lever. James Stephens, who organized the Irish Republican Brotherhood, came to America in 1858 to start a similar movement. After the Civil War, which supplied a training school for whole regiments of Irish soldiers, a convention of Fenians was held at Philadelphia in 1865 at which an "Irish

Republic” was organized, with a full complement of officers, a Congress, a President, a Secretary of the Treasury, a Secretary of War, in fact, a replica of the American Federal Government. It assumed the highly absurd and dangerous position that it actually possessed sovereignty. The luxurious mansion of a pill manufacturer in Union Square, New York, was transformed into its government house, and bonds, embellished with shamrocks and harps and a fine portrait of Wolfe Tone, were issued, payable “ ninety days after the establishment of the Irish Republic.” Differences soon arose, and Stephens, who had made his escape from Richmond, near Dublin, where he had been in prison, hastened to America to compose the quarrel which had now assumed true Hibernian proportions. An attempt to land an armed gang on the Island of Campo Bello on the coast of New Brunswick was frustrated ; invaders from Vermont spent a night over the Canadian border before they were driven back ; and for several days Fort Erie on Niagara River was held by about 1500 Fenians. [5] General Meade was thereupon sent by the Federal authorities to put an end to these ridiculous breaches of neutrality.

Neither Meade nor any other authority, however, could stop the flow of Fenian adjectives that now issued from a hundred indignation meetings all over the land when Canada, after due trial, proceeded to sentence the guilty culprits captured in the “ Battle of Limestone Ridge,” as the tussle with Canadian regulars near Fort Erie was called. Newspapers abounded with tales of the most startling designs upon Canada and Britain. There then occurred a strong reaction to the Fenian movement, and the American people were led to wonder how much of truth there was in a statement made by Thomas D’Arcy McGee. [6] “ This very Fenian organization in the United States,” he said, “ what does it really prove but that the Irish are still an alien population, camped but not settled in America, with foreign hopes and aspirations, unshared by the people among whom they live ?”

The Irishman today is an integral part of every large American community. Although the restrictive legislation of two centuries ago has long been repealed and a new land system has brought great prosperity to his island home, the Irishman has not abated one whit in his temperamental attitude towards England and as a consequence some 40,000 or 50,000 of his fellow countrymen come to the United States every year. Here he has been dispossessed of his monopoly of shovel and pick by the French Canadian in New England and Italian, Syrian, and Armenian in other parts of the country. He finds work in factories, for he still shuns the soil, much as he professes to love the “ old sod.” A great change has come over the economic condition of the second and third generation of Irish immigrants. Their remarkable buoyancy of temperament is everywhere displayed. Bridget’s daughter has left the kitchen and is a school teacher, a stenographer, a saleswoman, a milliner, or a dressmaker ; her son is a clerk, a bookkeeper, a traveling salesman, or a foreman. Wherever the human touch is the essential of success, there you find the Irish. That is why in some cities one-half the teachers are Irish ; why salesmanship lures them ; why they are the most successful walking delegates, solicitors, agents, foremen, and contractors. In the higher walks of life you find them where dash, brilliance, cleverness, and emotion are demanded. The law and the priesthood utilize their eloquence, journalism their keen insight into the human side of news, and literature their imagination and humor. They possess a positive genius for organization and management. The labor unions are led by them ; and what would municipal politics be without them ? The list of eminent names which they have contributed to these callings will increase as their generations multiply in the favorable American environment. But remote indeed is the day and complex must be the experience that will erase the memory of the ancient Erse proverb, which their racial temperament evoked : “ Contention is better than loneliness.”

[1] In 1773 and 1774 over thirty thousand came. In the latter year Benjamin Franklin estimated the population of Pennsylvania at 350,000, of which number one-third was

thought to be Scotch-Irish. John Fiske states that half a million, all told, arrived in the colonies before 1776, “ making not less than one-sixth part of our population at the time of the Revolution.”

[2] John Fiske : *The Dutch and Quaker Colonies in America*, vol. II, p. 851.

[3] The immigration reports were perfunctory and lacking in accuracy. Passengers were frequently listed as belonging to the country whence they sailed. An Irishman taking passage from Liverpool was quite as likely to be reported English as Irish. Large numbers of immigrants were counted who merely landed in New York and proceeded immediately to Canada, while many thousands who landed in Canada and moved at once across the border into northern New York and the West did not appear in the reports.

[4] According to the *Edinburgh Review* of July, 1854, “ Liverpool was crowded with emigrants, and ships could not be found to do the work. The poor creatures were packed in dense masses, in ill-ventilated and unseaworthy vessels, under charge of improper masters, and the natural results followed. Pestilence chased the fugitive to complete the work of famine. Fifteen thousand out of ninety thousand emigrants in British bottoms, in 1847, died on the passage or soon after arrival. The American vessels, owing to a stringent passenger law, were better managed, but the hospitals of New York and Boston were nevertheless crowded with patients from Irish estates.”

[5] Oberholtzer, *History of the United States since the Civil War*, vol. I, p. 526 ff.

[6] Thomas D'Arcy McGee (1825-1868), one of the leaders of the “ Young Ireland” party, fled for political reasons to the United States in 1848, where he established the *New York Nation* and the *American Celt*. When he changed his former attitude of opposition to British rule in Ireland he was attacked by the extreme by the Irish patriots in the United States and in consequence moved to Canada, where he founded the *New Era* and began to practice law. Subsequently, with the support of the Irish Canadians, he represented Montreal in the Parliament of United Canada (1858) and was President of the Council (1862) in the John Sandfield Macdonald Administration. When the Irish were left unrepresented in the reorganized Cabinet in the following year, McGee became an adherent of Sir John A. Macdonald, and in 1864 he was made Minister of Agriculture in the Taché-Macdonald Administration. An ardent supporter of the progressive policies of his adopted country, he was one of the Fathers of Confederation and was a member of the first Dominion Parliament in 1867. His denunciations, both in Ireland (1865) and in Canada, of the policies and activities of the Fenians led to his assassination at Ottawa on April 7, 1868.

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