OPEN LETTERS

The American in America.

NOT since the days of the Pharaohs, when the chosen people swarmed into Egypt like locusts from the desert, has a country been inundated by such a huge, varied, and continuous stream of immigration as that which has poured into the United States in the last century and a half. When the Goths migrated to Italy, the Saracens to Spain, and the Angles and Saxons to England, the life and character of the country were in every instance strongly colored by the new element. With immigrant settlers coming to America from the four quarters of the globe, what manner of nation is the result? The foreign observer, with one eye on the statistics of American immigration and the other eye on the history of Old-World civilizations, replies that America is a vast potpourri of foreign elements—a nation great perhaps in a material sense, but yet without national character, spirit, or unity. M. Ferdinand Brunetière, the distinguished French critic, in an article giving his impressions of the United States, says of New York that it is "a medley in which one would be troubled to find anything very American," and of Baltimore, that he was "puzzled to meet an American, born in America, of American parents." On these observations he bases generalizations as to the population of the whole country.

Statistics of the census would alone correct such erroneous deductions; and if observers would study more deeply and understandingly the history of America, they would find that what the American nation was in spirit, institutions, and laws at its foundation, it is to-day. In discovering this they would find indisputable proof of the existence of the true, native-born American, and of the tremendous strength and influence of that class. To mold into a homogeneous citizenship the cosmopolitan hodge-podge that immigration has brought to America requires that there be some powerful center of influence—an influence that has continued from the foundation of the country down to the present day. This center of influence is the native-born American. It is he who has shaped the country's policy, has preserved the integrity of its institutions, and has furnished its leaders in thought and action.

Away back in the early days of this country, the immigrant colonists were the toilers—the farmers, the mechanics, and the small tradesmen. Few of them succeeded in reaching positions of authority. Those who directed and governed the affairs of the colonies were officials belonging to the nobility, who came from the mother-country to hold office, and who returned home when their term of service expired. But the children of these immigrants were born in far different surroundings from those in which their fathers had been reared and trained. There was no liege lord to whom they owed vassalage. The land was there, free to whomsoever would reclaim it, to whomsoever could protect it against the red man. The isolated settler was all things unto himself; he was his own farmer, miller, weaver, smith, cobbler, road-maker, and militia company. It was a rough, free, vigorous life—a life that bred independence and a capacity for taking care of one's self, the fortitude to meet obstacles, and the inventive genius to overcome them; in short, the characteristics that stamp the American of to-day. When the little settlements of the new country grew into colonies that were rich enough to be overtaxed by the mother-country, it was but natural that these sturdy freemen should rebel against her burdensome rule; and that great charter of freedom and equality which they drew up—the Constitution of the United States—was the natural product of the lives they had lived.

To get at the truth as to the relative merits of the native-born and the foreign-born citizens, I made a census, using one of the most recent biographical cyclopedias,[1] which includes certainly all the men and women of the first and second order of distinction in various activities of American life, and a representative selection of others, beginning with the first settlement of the country and coming down to the present day. The result is surprising. Out of 2605 who are named as having gained distinction in this country's affairs, only 283 were foreign-born—a ratio of one to nine. Here is food for thought for those persons who are forever extolling the immigrant at the cost of the native-born citizen. Out of the vast horde of people who have come to this country since it was first opened for settlement, only about 283 have contributed enough to its advancement to make their adopted countrymen remember them. And of this small number 57 were early colonists, many of whom have no greater claim to distinction than the fact that they were the first to settle or to preach the gospel in such and such a place, as John Alden, for instance, who is remembered because he was the first of the Pilgrims to step ashore on Plymouth Rock, and perhaps more particularly because he was afterward told by a pretty fellow-colonist to "speak for himself."

The table on the following page shows from what countries these 283 immigrants came, and in what direction they achieved their success.

Now let us take a glance at the most prominent of these 283 foreign-born citizens, and see to what extent they have aided in the upbuilding of their

[1] The Century Cyclopedia of Names.

	England.	Ireland.	Germany.	Scotland.	France.	Switzerland.	Netherlands.	Italy.	Sweden.	Hungary.	Denmark.	Poland.	Spain.	Norway.	Russia.	Greece.	Servia.	Austrian Tyrol.	Total.
Colonials	47	3	1	1	..	..	5	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	57
Statesmen	6	2	1	4	2	1	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	16
Jurists	1	1	..	2	1	..	..	1	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	6
Inventors	...	..	..	2	..	..	..	..	1	..	..	1	..	..	..	..	1	..	5
Engineers	2	..	2	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	4
Capitalists and Man'f'rs.	...	1	2	2	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	1	6
Scientists	6	1	4	2	2	6	..	1	1	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	23
Scholars	...	2	5	2	1	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	1	..	..	11
Army	3	8	4	4	2	..	..	..	..	2	..	1	..	..	..	..	..	..	24
Navy	...	3	..	1	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	4
Physicians	1	..	3	1	1	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	6
Theologians	4	4	2	3	2	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	15
Reformers	3	..	..	1	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	4
Philanthropists	1	..	..	..	3	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	4
Writers	8	10	2	4	..	..	..	..	..	..	2	..	1	1	..	..	..	..	8
Actors	14	6	1	..	1	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	2
Artists	10	4	5	3	1	..	..	1	..	..	..	..	..	..	1	..	..	..	5
Musicians	3	1	5	..	1	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	20
Publishers	3	2	..	1	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	16
Explorers	...	..	..	1	1	1	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	23
Socialists	...	..	3	..	1	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	24
Totals	112	48	40	34	19	8	5	3	2	2	2	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	283

adopted country. We will take them by nationalities.

From England came Thomas Paine, the free-thinker and political pamphleteer, whose tract "Common Sense" roused and consolidated public opinion in the colonies in favor of independence of Britain; Robert Morris, the financier and statesman, a signer of the Declaration of Independence, and founder of the Bank of North America; Charles F. Crisp, the Democratic politician and ex-Confederate soldier, Speaker in the Fifty-second and Fifty-third Congresses; Charles Lee and Horatio Gates, generals in the Revolution; Matthew Vassar, the philanthropist, founder of Vassar College; John B. Gough, the orator; Timothy Cole, the wood-engraver, leader of the new school of wood-engraving; Calvert Vaux, the landscape-architect, designer of Central Park, Prospect Park, and the Niagara Reservation; Junius Brutus Booth, the actor; Fanny Kemble, the actress; and Amelia E. Barr and Frances H. [Burnett] Townesend, contemporary novelists.

From Ireland came General Richard Montgomery, killed in the Revolution while leading an attack on Quebec; General Thomas F. Meagher, organizer and commander of the Irish Brigade in the Civil War; John Barry, commodore, in command of the *Lexington* in the War of 1812; Stephen C. Rowan, naval officer, who served through the Seminole, Mexican, and Civil wars, and was retired in 1889 with the rank of vice-admiral; John E. McCullough, the tragedian, and companion of Forrest; Dion Boucicault, the dramatist, manager, and actor; Ada Rehan, the actress; Robert Bonner, founder of the "New York Ledger," and owner of fast trotting-horses; John B. O'Reilly, poet, and editor of the "Boston Pilot"; A. T. Stewart, the merchant prince, whose fortune at his death was estimated at forty million dollars; Augustus Saint-Gaudens, the sculptor; and Patrick S. Gilmore, band-master, and composer of military and dance music.

Germany has made a many-sided contribution, including John Jacob Astor, millionaire and progenitor of a family of millionaires; August Belmont, banker; Philip Schaff, theologian, president of the American committee for the revision of the Authorized Version of the Bible; Friedrich von Steuben, major-general in the Revolution; John A. Roebling, civil engineer, designer of the suspension bridges over the Niagara, over the Ohio at Cincinnati, and between Brooklyn and New York; Francis Lieber, the publicist; Adolph H. J. Sutro, mining engineer, planner of the famous Sutro Tunnel, running underground over twenty thousand feet to the mines of the Comstock Lode at Virginia City; Hermann E. von Holst, the historian; Abraham Jacobi, physician, and author of several standard medical works; Richard Mansfield, tragedian and comedian; Thomas Nast, caricaturist, famous for his cartoons exposing the "Tweed Ring"; Emanuel Leutze, artist, painter of "Washington Crossing the Delaware"; Carl Schurz, general in the Civil War, and United States senator and Secretary of the Interior; and Theodore Thomas and the two Damroschs, musical directors.

In Alexander Hamilton, Scotland has given America by all odds the greatest of its foreign-born citizens. This statesman, the ablest in the constitutional era of the United States, was born in the West Indies, of a Scotch father and of a mother of Huguenot extraction. Other leading Scottish-born Americans are James Gordon Ben-

nett, the elder, founder of the "New York Herald" and organizer of the Stanley expedition to Africa; Andrew Carnegie, capitalist and philanthropist; Hugh Mercer, Revolutionary general, mortally wounded in the battle of Princeton; Paul Jones, the famous naval officer; Alexander G. Bell, physicist, inventor of the telephone as it is used to-day; Alexander Wilson, ornithologist, author of "Birds of America"; and James McCosh, the philosopher and educator.

France makes rather a meager showing alongside the other great Continental nations. Her contribution includes Stephen Girard, merchant and banker, founder of Girard College in Philadelphia; Paul B. Du Chaillu, African explorer, discoverer of the gorilla and the Obongo dwarfs; and Captain Benjamin L. E. Bonneville, who fought in the Mexican and Civil wars, and who explored the Rocky Mountains, his diary being amplified by Washington Irving in the "Adventures of Captain Bonneville, U. S. A."

From Switzerland, America got Jean L. R. Agassiz, the naturalist and traveler, and Albert Gallatin, the financier and statesman, Secretary of the Treasury, and originator of the Ways and Means Committee. Sweden sent us John Ericsson, the inventor and engineer, who applied the screw to steam-navigation, planned the torpedo-boat *Destroyer*, and designed the turreted ironclad *Monitor*. From Italy came John Bouvier, the jurist, and author of several standard law books; from Hungary, Alexander S. Asboth, who served in the Civil War, attaining the rank of major-general; from Denmark, Jacob A. Riis, reporter, and writer on social topics, author of "How the Other Half Lives" and "Children of the Poor"; from Norway, Hjalmar Hjorth Boyesen, novelist, poet, and litterateur; from the Austrian Tyrol, Francis M. Drexel, the banker, founder of the banking house of Drexel & Co.; from Poland, Casimir Pulaski, officer in the Revolution, mortally wounded at Savannah, and Edmund L. G. Zalinski, soldier in the Civil War, and afterward commissioned in the regular army, especially noted for the development of the dynamite gun; and from Servia, Nikola Tesla, electrical inventor.

On the New York University Heights there is now being built an edifice wherein shall be gathered the memories of the greatest of America's great. The names of these elect are to be immortalized by inscription on stone tablets sunken in the walls. To make this Hall of Fame thoroughly national, it has been determined that none but native-born Americans shall be eligible candidates for tablets. The rule seems unnecessary, for History herself has already enacted this law of limitation. Those in authority, however, have decided to erect what might be known as a Supplementary Hall of Fame for the accommodation of those whose foreign birth excluded them from the main hall. But if they measure the greatness of the foreign-born by the same standards that were used to judge the native-born, whom shall they find? Beyond question Hamilton and Ericsson are each worthy of a tablet among the immortals; but how many more of those who are dead? And this hall that is intended by its builders to be a monument to the achievements of America's foreign-born will by the very meagerness of the inscribed tablets be transformed into only another monument to the glory of the native American stock.

George MacAdam.