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# The Assembly Herald

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## At the Gateway\*

*Charles L. Thompson, D.D.—in address at Des Moines, May, 1906.*

Come with me to the shadow of Liberty's Statue in New York harbor and see one of the mightiest missionary chances our country offers. Stand with me in the great immigrants' hall at Ellis Island. See them come over the gangway and into the hall! Weary thousands from many foreign lands—all drawn by the magnet of Liberty. The voyage has been hard, but every hour brightened by the hope of a home in Liberty's land! They are almost there. They file up the aisles. Doctors and other examiners await them.

Will they pass the ordeals? Ah, the strained and anxious faces! Fathers with their earthly goods on their backs; mothers with babes in their arms or tugging at their skirts. When the doctor passes them how their faces lighten! But ever and again he draws a chalk-mark on the breast. That means—"Suspected. Pass to a room yonder for closer examination, probably for deportation." Then how the face falls! The hopes of years are dashed! Oh, the tragedies of these coming Americans! And it must be; immigration laws are right and must be enforced.

But you and I believe in immigration. We remember it made us. We are all immigrants unless we are Indians! In our fathers and grandfathers we were foreigners and some of us, I suppose, a pretty poor lot! But see how fine we are now, how well educated and good-looking and essential to the Republic! And what Christian forces of the country have done for us they will do for those who are coming now. I know they are far from the spirit of the Pilgrims and the Dutch. They file in from Russia and Austria and Italy.

They know little of and care little for our free institutions.

A few months ago I said to Commissioner Watchorn at Ellis Island,

"Are they coming as fast as ever?"

He replied, "Yes, and I am not afraid of their coming. They will make good Americans."

And when I remembered that he—that splendid American—himself came as a steerage immigrant, I saw the basis of his cheerful hope. I join him therefore in saying, "Let them come." I would put up no bars east or west, save such as must protect our health and morals. Our history is too full of honored names which from foreign shores have helped to build our greatness to justify any but the largest views. They who oppose immigration fly in the face of all our history and in the face of sound philosophy as well.

Brunetiere has said, "There are no Americans—only an amalgam." It is amalgam that has made the American and as Spencer said, "This amalgam will produce the finest type of man." Therefore let us give welcome to immigrants, not be altogether appalled when they come a million a year. Let us have a dignified confidence in the power of American Christianity. It has not lost its moulding force. Only let us apply it.

There is no more sacred or patriotic duty to-day than that of meeting the incoming millions with the welcome, the sympathy, the counsel, and the instruction of the Christian missionary. We are doing a little—seven pages of statistics in the Annual Report of the Home Board attest that the Presbyterian Church is not wholly recreant to her duty. But how the magnitude of the work towers above our faith and our enterprise!

\* The Home Mission Topic for August is Present-day Immigration a Challenge to Christianity.

## *Experiences with Foreigners*

*By the Rev. Charles E. Edwards, Peoria, Ill.*

A Slavic woman one day was sitting in the railway station at Allentown, Pa. Her journey from Europe had been interrupted by unexpected delays, and when she reached America she was hastened toward her destination as she thought, but by a train that did not stop at that particular village. It did stop at Allentown; and there she waited for hours with her little child, famished, destitute, not know-

A railway attendant remarked that such mishaps were frequent; and it would be a boon to humanity if some mission could be established that would have interpreters at hand for such people. The Slavic colporteurs partly fulfil that same purpose. After making the linguistic discovery that Slavic tongues are alike in sound, though not in alphabets or literature, and that a colporteur



A CLASS OF YOUNG SLAVIC MISSIONARIES OF OUR TRAINING SCHOOL UNDER THE CARE OF PITTSBURGH PRESBYTERY.

ing where she was, or where to go. Suddenly she heard a Slavic tongue resembling her own. Rev. J. A. Kohout, who has since become the missionary of Lehigh Presbytery among Slavs was then visiting Allentown. That day, he sauntered through the station as his custom was, and soon found this woman. The Presbyterian pastor, the Rev. J. F. Pollock, D.D., arrived about the same time, and quickly supplied a lunch for the hungry travelers. Arrangements were made to have her escorted on the next train to the village where her husband was waiting; and great was their gratitude when they met these ministers on a later occasion.

who is a Bohemian or a Slovak or a Ruthenian can be understood by all other Slavs, including the Russians, Servians, Croatians, and Slovenes, it is easy to see the need of more colporteurs and more missionaries to train them. This fact simplifies the problem of immigration, which is twofold, Slavic and Italian.

In June this year, the writer visited a mission in lower Peoria, where the children were largely of German Catholic antecedents. Afterwards their workers took him a short distance to meet a woman who knew of "Hungarians." The term "Hungarian," so hated by the Slovaks of Hungary, as the designation of their Magyar rulers, should be handled as

carefully as a giant firecracker. Incidentally this woman remarked that some of these people were next door. Here was where a little Bohemian could go a great way. In that small house were a dozen Servian men, readily understanding Bohemian. They gave facts as to other Slavic nationalities in Peoria, utterly unknown to the best Christian workers in their neighborhood.

At the first news, the Rev. T. D. Logan, D.D., of Springfield, chairman of the committee on home missions for the Synod of Illinois, sent to the Board of Publication and to the Rev. Vaclav Losa, of Pittsburgh, who recommended a Lithuanian colporteur. His Slavic colporteurs under Pittsburgh Presbytery, the first organization of our Church to undertake such work, from 1902 till the present have obtained five thousand dollars from sales of Scriptures and Christian literature, surpassing the record of other American agencies, denominational or undenominational, national or sectional.

The late Rev. Samuel A. Mutchmore, D.D., told of a Jew who taught his son: "My son, if you sell a coat to a man who wants to buy a coat, that is nothing. If you sell a coat to a man who does not want to buy a coat, that is business." So these men succeed in selling Bibles among ignorant or prejudiced immigrants, and that is colportage.

The Lithuanian language is not understood by Slavs, although all their nationalities understand each other. Yet our wise encyclopedias mislead Americans by classifying Lithuanians as Slavs. No nationality from Europe is more destitute of the Scriptures than the Lithuanians, for whom no suitable Bible translation exists. A Lithuanian lady described the dedication of a Calvinistic Lithuanian church that she witnessed in Russia. "We do not hear much of the Calvinists in our country" said she to a Presbyterian friend, "But one thing must be said for them—they always keep their houses neat and clean."

John Szlupas, M.D., of Philadelphia, a leader among Lithuanians, was active in the Lithuanian Congress that met in Philadelphia on Washington's Birthday. The writer made the only English speech at their mass meeting; and he will not soon forget their welcome and their applause at a reference to President Roosevelt. They appealed to the Czar for

freedom of conscience for Lithuania. It was pathetic to see an assemblage whose kindred beyond the sea might soon be in the dangers of revolution. The faculty of Princeton Theological Seminary invited Dr. Szlupas to deliver an address last April on "Lithuania and its Ancient Calvinistic Churches." He pleaded for American contributions to give Lithuanians the literature they need in their present opportunities.

In an early stage of the French Presbyterian mission at Charleroi, Pa., a prominent lady of the Cumberland Church prophesied that this mission would come to naught—and this was a prevalent belief. Yet recently the Presbytery of Pittsburgh, to the joy of the missionary, the Rev. J. E. Charles, Ph.D., has bought that Cumberland church for the French, as the Cumberland people sought a better location.

For some years, the Italians outnumbered any other nationality of our immigrants, until last year, when the Slavs were first. The most conspicuous progress has been in Philadelphia, where some colporteurs are already in training. Dr. Arrighi's presence at the General Assembly called attention to his mission in New York which has sent several men into the Presbyterian ministry. It is interesting to meet Italians whose one theme is the Bible, to observe their amiable manners, and hear them sing. One longs to see more of such Presbyterians. "They of Italy salute you."

Progress has been made in the effort to evangelize the foreign-born population of our country, a population which increased one million last year. A number of worthy workers have been discovered and sent into fields where they are already beginning to exercise a potent influence. The whole Church will feel indebted to the Board for having ascertained and exhibited in its Annual Report, that already our Church is maintaining five hundred and fourteen churches and mission stations among our people who are foreign-born and the Board stands ready not only to undertake other work of this character, but to join with other organizations operating in this field, if by so doing the end sought—the evangelization of the strangers—may be reached more successfully.