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THE AMERICAN AS A COLONIST

“I will make them conform or I will herry them out of the land.”—JAMES I. in the Conference about Puritans at Hampton Court.

The Message of 1901.—“*The Queen commands me to express through you, to the people of Australia, her Majesty’s heartfelt interest in the inauguration of the Commonwealth, and her earnest wish that, under Divine Providence, it may ensure the increased prosperity and well-being of her loyal and beloved subjects in Australia.*”

Spread of New Englanders over all North America—Capacity for
Local Self-government

UP to the year 1898, when the United States suddenly and violently rose to the rank of a colonial power, Americans were habitually regarded as far outside of European combinations on this subject. Old world writers on colonization, while they honored Russia and even Denmark with a chapter, gave no thought to America after her separation from England in 1783.

And yet the United States of 1783 has been the mother of a colonizing family worthy of the best Anglo-Saxon traditions which they brought from the mother country. American colonization is the very antithesis of that which Russia has cultivated and to which so many writers point with ill-grounded ad-

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miration. The Czar, with an administrative machinery adapted to his monotonous millions of illiterate serfs, has sown Siberia with a crop whose quantity excites amazement, but whose quality calls forth sorrow. The history of American colonization is reflected in the family chronicles of hundreds who, under the spur of political or religious intolerance, came of their own free will and at their own expense to a land where the liberty they sought was rendered the more sweet by the dangers with which it was associated. As children were born and the little communities expanded, the rising generation showed the same eagerness for new adventure as had characterized the original settlers, and thus we find an English family, which in 1620 landed in Massachusetts Bay, thirty years afterward sending representatives westward toward the Connecticut River, in another generation settling about Hartford or New Haven; next the name appears for the first time on the banks of the Hudson, and another generation finds it contesting with Frenchmen on the frontiers of the present State of New York.

So on, from generation to generation, the hardy New England stock has propagated itself, from the Scotch-like stony soil of Massachusetts, westward toward the Great Lakes, the Valley of the Mississippi, and beyond; conquering the wilderness; asking no favors of government; taxing themselves for school-houses and churches; fighting the Indians; establishing homesteads, villages, towns, and ultimately States, which in due course of time were, at their own request, admitted into the American Union.

New England has furnished the best type of the

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American colonist, although, had there been no New England, Virginia and her neighbors would have still furnished the world with colonial leaders in plenty.

The introduction of negro slavery into the United States was a political and economic error, and retarded in many ways the fullest development of the States which tolerated it. Without discussing that question here, we note only the fact that in a small section of New England are concentrated, and have been for more than two centuries, the intellectual training-schools from which have gone forth generation after generation of shrewd, ambitious, well-disciplined and well-informed young men, who, as school-teachers, clergymen, doctors, lawyers, have uniformly marched with the pioneers toward the western frontier. We have only to glance at the dull mass of French Canadians and compare them with an equal body of New Englanders a hundred years ago, to illustrate our meaning.

The notable feature of American colonization, particularly from the beginning of this century to the settlement of California after the discovery of gold, is the universal practice of voluntarily clubbing together for offensive and defensive purposes; total absence of any administrative interference on the part of the central government, and an equally creditable absence of demand for government interference on the part of the colonists. There are one or two apparent exceptions, but they are trifling compared to the whole movement, which in this century alone has eliminated French and Spanish influence from the whole of the North American Continent, has spread the Eng-

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lish language throughout its boundaries without administrative coercion, and has reared a monument to self-government exceeding the most fantastic political dreams of our forefathers.

The Anglo-Saxons who trekked across the Allegheny Mountains at the close of the 18th century and reared their log cabins in the forests of Tennessee and Kentucky, cut themselves off from civilization quite as much as did the Boers who invaded the Kaffir strongholds of inner Africa. The Republic of Texas is a colonial romance. The latter-day Yankee, with the hatred of Spain in his blood, fell foul of Spanish settlements in the great southwestern territories, where Spanish Priests and Mexican Alcaldes represented the same civilization which had invited the freebooting expeditions of Drake and Raleigh three centuries ago. The individual American, whatever his Government might order, could not tolerate the bastard Spanish institutions which flourished over California, Arizona, New Mexico, and Texas at the time when the frontiers of the United States were being pushed further and further toward the setting sun. The conflict was inevitable, and the result equally certain. Spanish institutions under Mexican government were hopelessly swamped under the tide of advancing colonists, and to-day the three centuries of Spanish or Mexican rule are recalled only by a few ruins of priestly missions—a few picturesque Spanish names, which have enriched the vocabulary of miners and cowboys.

During all this colonizing period, notably the first fifty years of this century, Englishmen were colonizing Australia, New Zealand, and the Cape of Good Hope,

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and, in addition, pouring a steady stream into Canada and the United States. The Anglo-Saxon was doing his share in every part of the world—with or without government guidance.

Germany, too, through the pressure of bad government at home, was sending forth a large annual volume of discontented emigrants; but unfortunately, according to Professor Woker, no satisfactory estimate has yet been made of their number. Official statements on this subject are necessarily imperfect, because the several German governments placed administrative obstructions in the way of emigration, and therefore a large proportion of those who left their country did so secretly under false names, or under the pretence of belonging to other nations.

The political persecution which followed the revolution of 1848, brought from Germany the first considerable consignment of men eminent as leaders of thought. America is studded to-day with German social organizations which keep up intimate relations with the literary and political life of the Fatherland. Scarcely an American town that has not a German *Turn Verein* or *Liedertafel*. New York, Chicago, and similar centres have German clubs testifying to a wealthy and large membership. The best German actors find ample encouragement for a trip across the Atlantic, even though they limit their performances to exclusively German audiences. The German papers of America are in many instances not only better edited than some metropolitan dailies of my acquaintance, but I know of no daily of Berlin that does not suffer by comparison with the *Staats Zeitung* of New

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York. These and many other signs speak well for the high average of general intelligence and culture that characterizes the millions of Germans who form a precious portion of American citizenship. They have come to America in order to become American, and they have, from the very beginning, shared all the rights of Americans.

But it is strange that in all these years, particularly when America was a wilderness from the Alleghenies to the Pacific, not a single German community should have endeavored to perpetuate its own language and institutions, after the fashion of the Boers in the Transvaal or the Mormons in Utah. There was no administrative machinery to hinder them; on the contrary, the land was open to all comers and no embarrassing questions were asked.

But as nations are credited by some philosopher with producing the particular kind of Jew that suits them best, so in the long run the monarchs of a country bear a certain resemblance to the people over whom they rule—and it is no mere accident that Germany has developed a long line of rulers whose attitude toward the people has been that of a military commander rather than of a constitutional executive.

That may in a degree explain the striking inaptitude of the German for colonial self-government, many as are his virtues in other respects.

But the American has by no means limited his colonial enterprise to his own country, vast as it is. He has sought his interests in every part of the world where adventure or fortune favored, whether in the gold-fields of Australia or South Africa; a filibustering trip

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to South America; a commission in the Egyptian army, or as a trader to China. There are few corners of the world where the traveller will not run across prosperous Yankees who are perfectly at home in the land of their adoption, see as little of their consul as possible, avail themselves of every advantage afforded by such political rights as they can secure, and in short, get on well with their neighbors and the world at large.

In the British colonies and the treaty ports of barbarous countries, Americans and English naturally drift together in any schemes for improvement or revolution. They understand one another instinctively; they both have the same political ideals of law, liberty, and justice, and they are both trained in the same political school for securing these objects. Thus, whether in Johannesburg or Shanghai, Barbados or Cairo—in the Club of Manila or the Casino of Buenos Ayres, wherever there are representatives of different nationalities, there the two wings of the Anglo-Saxon family fold together in mutual support. America has no need to encourage emigration, for she has yet land enough and to spare, but when density of population shall afflict this continent as it does the countries of the Old World, then will be developed a monster colonizing force. For if, with plenty of room at home, the Yankee has, nevertheless, overspread North America, and even dripped over into other colonies, what may we not expect when the incentive of hunger is added to that of mere adventure or national ambition!