

the lash lustily over the Jew's head and shoulders,—flogged him unmercifully. The Jew coward made no attempt at defence. He simply writhed and squirmed and screamed, like the whipped cur that he was. Finally, lest his humiliation should not already be sufficiently complete, he fell down on his knees before his assailant, grovelling before him, kissing his feet, and imploring him to desist the castigation. Then, still abjectly kneeling, he confessed his attempted crime in terms of sickening servility, and implored the wife's forgiveness. What a disgusting spectacle! But let all Jew lechers be treated likewise. . . .

In the same city, a big scandal was occasioned some years ago by the misconduct of a daughter of the wealthiest shirt-manufacturer on the Pacific Coast,—an Israelite,—with a Chinaman who was a servant in her father's household. What became of the offspring of this scandalous intrigue cannot be definitely ascertained, but the father offered a hundred thousand dollars to any young man of decent antecedents who would make the girl his wife. His offer was confined to Gentile young men, he having a longing for a Gentile son-in-law, but he found no takers. Had he been less discriminating in his choice, and been satisfied with a Jew son-in-law, he could doubtless have married the girl off in twenty-four hours. What slip in maidenly virtue, what dishonor, would not the Jew gladly hug to his breast for the sake of a hundred thousand dollars? A hundred thousand dollars! Joost t'ink of it, Moses!

In many of the factories operated by the Jews throughout the country, the life of an honest girl therein employed is made simply a hell, by reason of the Jews' predominant lechery. Instances in support of this assertion have turned up by scores within the past ten years. In Newark, N.J., some time ago, a number of factory-girls demanded the discharge of a certain Jew foreman, upon the ground that he was in the habit of systematically insulting them by indecent proposals and actions. The Jew employers refused to discharge the Jew employee, whereupon the girls struck. As they were preparing to leave, this Jew foreman came into a room, one flight up, where a number of the girls were putting together their effects. The sight of him evoked quite a storm of indignation and rage; and, seizing upon him, the girls forced him to the window, and, disregarding his shrieks, threw him out headlong.

In Paterson, N.J., similar charges were preferred against another Jew foreman; and not long ago, in New York, the officers of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children neatly trapped a Jew employer who was in the habit of inducing little girls under fourteen to remain after work-hours, and debauching them. Similar instances of the workings of Jew lechery might be quoted from all over the country, at tedious length.

The Jew drummer is one of the most assiduous patrons of houses of prostitution throughout the country. Without the Jew clientele, it is safe to say that fully sixty-six per cent of the houses of ill-fame in the various cities of the United States, excepting, for certain obvious reasons, New York and Chicago, would be compelled to go out of existence. Not only is the Jew a liberal patron of these

houses of prostitution; but such is the insatiability of his carnal appetites, and to such an extent does he give rein to his lasciviousness, that his debauches only too frequently exceed the ordinary limits of lust. Those certain hideous and abhorrent forms of vice, which have their origin in countries of the East, and which have in recent years sprung into existence in this country, have been taught to the abandoned creatures who practise them, and fostered, elaborated, and encouraged, by the lecherous Jew!

The melting pot

Despite the violence and venom of nativist attitudes, many of the new immigrants persisted in idealizing life in their new homeland. Those who had fled their native countries because of religious or political oppression passionately sought to adapt themselves. This anonymous selection is from an essay submitted for competition in a contest entitled "What America Means." It was written by a young Russian Jewish woman who allegedly had studied English for only a year, and it reflects her desperate desire for Americanization. It is interesting, too, how she belittled the political radicals among the new immigrants whom she believed—quite correctly—had stigmatized their fellow refugees. The essay is reprinted with the original grammatical and spelling errors.

What did I myself look forward to when I left my home, my mother and my little sisters? My way was hard, harder then many of those emigrants, because I was all alone, no help from any one could I expect, and I was not very big, never worked before. I had just graduate from high school when decided to go away. What made me take the hardships of the long way? Not the looking forward made me go, but the looking backward made me search a new life and struggle a hard battle.

Yes it was hard it is hard still now to bear the homesickness, loneliness, among strange people not knowing the language doing hard worke without a minute of joy. But when I look back into my childhood without a single spot of gladness in it, always under a terrible fear—fear of "goim" (gentiles). I think that there is not anything harder than hardships of childhood.

I remember myself in my fear-mood—frightened by stories of massacres, unable to go to sleep for fear that gentiles may come and kill my mother and

father, as they killed my aunt and her husband. I could see in my imagination their mishaped bodies, swimming in blood, and I almost screamed of horror, when I saw myself left all alone in the big world and no one to care for me and stand for me before the gentiles. What can be worse a sight than a child with a frightened and hating soul? And that what I was.

Now when I meet italians, russians, jews here in America I see the great meaning of that country for us. We who in Castle Garden were still the same poor, desolate emigrants of Europe after a struggle with life, became winners of the battle, we have new ideas of freedom, we think with pride that in seven years we will be "Americans" and citizens and we are proud of our new country (that) because it is so much better than our old country and that it wellcomed us, and we try to be worth it and go to schools to study civics and all do hard work which makes our country just a little better. America means something to an American it means more to us immigrants for this meaning is new and holly and wonderfully dear to us.

When I meet the American children in white dresses and pink ribbons going to school to teachers whom they love and who love them and try to make their studies as interesting as possible, I see myself and my chums going to school as to a trial, in gray uniforms, black aprons, coming there to repeat words of a strange catechism which was forced into our heads. While young American learn in school how to love and respect your people and your government, 'so wise, so free,' so practical, we were forced to devine our kings who are so cruel so dull and so unsensible. But trying to force into us seeds of patriotism, they raised hatred in them, for teachers who offend us, calling "zudovka" (dirty jew) such teachers are unfit to stand as tutors of growing minds and certainly mislead more than one of the young generation.

In about five month after I came to America, I entered a hospital to take up training for a nurse. I could not speak English at all for some time, but when in a month I aske questions America opened to me through my patients. There were immigrants unable to speak, even to each other because of the mixture of all different nationalities and languages, Americans of all ranks who were sometimes cross and impatient to the little foreign nurse. America opened to me through the Irishmen and Italians hurt in a saloon fight and others their countrymen who were sick because they worked a whole day at hard labor in factories and outside and then went to school to study civics in night school, for their ambition told them, that they ought know their civil duties to a country in which they worke with a shovel diging sewers and laying tracks.

That what I learned during my short life in America: America means for an Immigrant a fairy promised land that came out true, a land that gives all they need for their work, a land which gives them human rights, a land that gives morality through her churches and education through her free schools and libraries. The longer I live in America the more I think of the question of Americanising the immigrants. At first I thought that there is not such a question as that, for the children of immigrants naturally are Americans and good

Americans. America is a land made up of foreigners and the virtues of American life is the best Americaniser. The first generation of American immigrants can't be Americanized much for they were raised in different ways the mod of living is different. And yett how much it is when they love America and are such patriots. I remember I took care of an old russian women, I was the only one who could speak to her in the hospital and we always had great conversations while I was fixing her up. Once she was telling me about her husband. On her face was a half sarcastic, half glad smile when she was criticising the way her husband acts. He was getting childish, she said, why only the other day the school teacher gave the boys a book about Washington and the grandfather heard them reading it. He pinned a paper flag on his hat and playing on a 5-cent horn lead the march of boys who were singing "Washington o, Washington, the father of our country." "Something wrong with him" said my patient, but it seemed to me that it was a righted wrong, for a man that never knew the patriotic feeling before became a purest, patriot now. No one tried to teach him be a patriot he came to it by himself.

How often the children of Americans call the immigrants "pollack" and "Diego" and only torment their Americanising, because they loose their confidence in Americans. Here is a way for Americans to help foreigners become Americans: teach their own children to respect those people that struggle such a hard battle.

There is only one kind of immigrants who need for their Americanising something besides sympathy. Those are anarchists and other political parties who do not realise the greatness and wisdom of American government, because they have no idea of morrailty. They come from Europe in a state of unbelieve and immorality because the church, administration and schools of Europe by forcing them to have certain false ideas of false virtues killed their best feelings in them. They need to be restorted a fallen building and the first thing they need is to build under themselves a foundation of moral ideas, believe in God and their country.

"In America it is no better...."

The United States, of course, was not paradise for all new immigrants. However necessary their migration, many never adjusted and accepted their new life. Indeed, through the first four decades of the twentieth century, a significant number returned to their native land, disillusioned or made bitter by their experiences. The following excerpts from letters of Polish immigrants particularly illustrate the difficulties and cynicism of people who had led a marginal existence in the Old World and did not find life noticeably easier or different in America.

February 15 [1904]

DEAR BROTHER ADAM, AND ALSO DEAR SISTER AND BROTHER-IN-LAW AND YOUR CHILDREN:

We are in good health, thanks to our Lord God, and we wish to you the same.

Now, dear brother, I think well [intentions are good] about you. If work were good you would already be in America. I have had no work for four months now, and I wait for better conditions. If the conditions don't improve by Easter, we will go back to our country, and if they improve and I get work, I will immediately send you a ship-ticket, and you will come. There will probably be hard times in America this year because in the autumn they will elect the president. If the same remains who is now, then all will be well, but if they elect a democrat, then there will be hard times in America, and those who have money enough will go back to their country. You will learn [all] in another letter. Hold out a little, until I bring you to me or until I come myself to you, and then we shall suffer together. Inform me about your health and success, and what kind of winter you have, because we have great cold and snows. I have nothing more to write, I send my good wishes and low bows to brother and to the Wolskis. With respect,

Your brother,
RACZKOWSKI [FRANCISZEK]

January 10 [1909, 1910, or 1911]

DEAR SISTER:

... I received the letter with the wafer and I thank you for thinking of me, dear sister. Now, dear sister and brother-in-law, don't be angry if I don't write to you very often, but I don't know how to write myself and before I ask somebody to write time passes away, but I try to answer you sometimes at least. You ask me how much my boys and my man earn. My man works in an iron-foundry, he earns 9, 10, 12 roubles [dollars] sometimes, and the boys earn 4 or 5 roubles. My dear, in America it is no better than in our country: whoever does well, he does, and whoever does poorly, suffers misery everywhere. I do not suffer misery, thanks to God, but I do not have much pleasure either. Many people

From F. Zaniecki and W. I. Thomas, *The Polish Peasant in Europe and America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1918). 2: 188-189, 220. Used by permission.

in our country think that in America everybody has much pleasure. No, it is just as in our country, and the churches are like ours, and in general everything is alike. I wish to know with which son grandmother is. Write me. And who is farming on that land after Rykaczewski? Perhaps we shall yet meet some day or other, dear sister. I should like to see you, and my native country. I have nothing more to write, I kiss you both and your children. I wish you a happy and merry and good New Year. May this New Year bring you the greatest happiness possible. We wish it to you from our heart. The children kiss auntie and uncle and their cousins.

We remain, well-wishing,
H. J. DABROWSKIS

Assimilation: two views

Assimilation for the new immigrants was difficult in the face of native hostility and the handicaps of alien languages and cultures. Among the first generation of immigrants who adapted fairly well there were many who still saw their loyalty and character split between their old and new countries. Stoyan Christowe, a Bulgarian immigrant, eloquently discussed the process of adaptation as he experienced it—an experience that left him “half an American.” His subsequent visit to Bulgaria only reinforced that feeling, for his native land still had enormous appeal to him; yet, he quickly grasped the truth of the old proverb, “You cannot go home again.” The second selection portrays the problems of immigrant or second-generation children who became alienated from their parents because of the latter's persistently “foreign” ways.

Half an American

As I try to recall my earliest impressions of America, first come to mind the rotten tomatoes which native urchins hurled against us poor frightened immigrants as we trudged morning and evening from our quarters to the foundries and back. My impulse then was hatred for all Americans, whom I considered as omniscient giants before whose energy and ingenuity nature herself bowed. My first desire was to accumulate as much as possible of the proverbial American gold and beat it back to the old country.

From Stoyan Christowe, “Half an American,” *Outlook and Independent* 153 (4 December 1929): 530-531, 555-557.