

## THE SCANDINAVIAN FACTOR IN THE AMERICAN POPULATION

According to the census of 1900, there are in the United States, 1,064,309 Scandinavians of foreign birth. The children of these number 1,950,000, making a total Scandinavian population of 3,014,309, which is about ten per cent of the total foreign contribution to our population. And yet immigration from the Northern countries cannot be said to have properly begun before 1843; not until that year did it exceed 1,000 a year. In 1866 it exceeded 10,000 for the first time. In 1869 it was 43,941. But dropping again in the seventies, it was only 11,274 in 1877. The period of heaviest immigration was between the years 1880 and 1893,<sup>1</sup> reaching its climax in 1882 with 105,326.

During the years 1820-1830 not more than 283 emigrated from the Scandinavian countries to the United States. In the following decade the number only slightly exceeded two thousand. Since 1850 our statistics regarding the foreign born population are more complete. In that year we find there were a little over eighteen thousand persons in the country of Scandinavian birth. In 1880 this number had reached 440,262; while the unprecedented exodus of 1882 and the following years had by 1890 brought the number up to 933,249. Thus the immigrant population from these

<sup>1</sup> With 1894 there is a sudden decrease in the Scandinavian immigration. In 1898 the number is only 19,282. After 1900 there is again a rapid increase, reaching 77,647 in 1903.



countries, which in 1850 was less than one per cent had in 1890 reached ten per cent of the whole foreign element. The following table will show the proportion contributed by the countries designated for each decade since 1850:—

	TABLE I					
	1850	1860	1870	1880	1890	1900
	PER CENT					
Ireland . . . .	42.8	38.9	33.3	27.8	20.2	15.6
Germany . . . .	26	30.8	30.4	29.4	30.1	25.8
England . . . .	12.4	10.5	10	9.9	9.8	8.1
Canada . . . .	6.6	6	8.9	10.7	10.6	11.4
Scotland and Wales	4.4	3.7	3.8	3.8	3.7	3.2
Scandinavia . . .	.9	1.7	4.3	6.6	10.1	10.3

Thus it will be seen that among European countries Scandinavia, considered as one, stands third in the number of persons contributed to the American foreign born population, exceeding that of Scotland and Wales in 1870 and that of England in 1890. Both the Irish and the German immigration reached considerable numbers at least fifteen years before that from the North, the two making up sixty-nine per cent of the total in 1850 and nearly seventy per cent in 1860, in which latter year the Scandinavian immigrant element had not yet reached two per cent. In 1900 it was two-thirds that of Ireland and two-fifths as large as the German. It may also be noted that since 1890 these are fast decreasing while the Scandinavian shows an increase for the decade.

As compared with other countries Scandinavia had in 1850 sent only a third as many as France and less by four thousand than Holland and Switzerland combined. In 1870 it was twice that from France and equalled the total



number from Holland, Switzerland, Italy, Austria, Bohemia, Hungary, Poland, and Russia.]

The Norwegians are the pioneers in the emigration movement from the North in the nineteenth century; the Danes were the last to come in considerable numbers. Statistics, however, show that 189 Danes had emigrated to this country before 1830, while there were only 94 from Norway and Sweden.<sup>1</sup> The Norwegian foreign born population had in 1850 reached 12,678; while that from Sweden was 3,559; and Denmark had furnished a little over eighteen hundred. The Danish immigration was not over 5,000 a year until 1880 and has never reached 12,000. The Swedish immigration receives a new impulse in 1852 and reaches five thousand in 1868; it reached its climax of 64,607 in 1882. The Norwegian exodus began to assume larger proportions in 1843 and reached five thousand in 1866 (according to our census, but in 1853 according to Norwegian statistics, the number for that year being 6,050, and this is probably much more nearly correct), the highest being 29,101 in 1882.]

The total immigration from the Scandinavian countries to America from 1820 to 1900 is 1,446,202.<sup>2</sup> This remarkable figure becomes doubly remarkable when we stop to consider that the population of Norway, Sweden, and Denmark is only two and one-half per cent of the total population of

<sup>1</sup> It should, however, be remembered that the principal Scandinavian sailing ports were Gothenborg and Copenhagen, and we know that many Norwegians had before embarked from Copenhagen. It is not unlikely that a few Norwegians coming thus each year from a Danish port would, in American ports, be put down as Danes. The number from Denmark would then be correspondingly too high.

<sup>2</sup> The total down to and including 1903 is 1,617,111.



Europe, yet they have contributed nearly ten per cent of our immigrant population. Counting those of foreign parentage also, there are in this country nearly one-third as many Scandinavians as in the Scandinavian countries, while for the German element the ratio is one to thirteen. In proportion to population Norway and Sweden have with one exception furnished more emigrants to America than any other of the European countries; and there are in this country half as many Norwegians and Swedes, including those born here of foreign parents, as in the Scandinavian peninsula.

#### CAUSES OF EMIGRATION FROM SCANDINAVIA

It will be natural to ask at this juncture, what are the causes that have brought about such an exodus from the Scandinavian countries in the 19th century? It is not a simple question to answer; for the causes have been many and varied, and it would be impossible in the following pages to discuss all the circumstances and influences that have operated to promote the Northern emigration and directed it to America. Perhaps there is something in the highly developed migratory instinct of Indo-European peoples. Especially has this instinct characterized the Germanic branch, whether it be Goth or Vandal, Anglo-Saxon, Viking or Norman,<sup>1</sup> or their descendants the Teutonic peoples of modern times, by whom chiefly the United States has been peopled and developed.

Of tangible motives one that has everywhere been a fundamental factor in promoting emigration from European countries in modern times has been the prospect of material betterment. Where no barriers have been put against the

<sup>1</sup> That is, "Northman."



emigration of the poor or the ambitious, unless special causes have arisen to create discontent with one's condition, the extent to which European countries have contributed to our immigrant population may be measured fairly closely by the economic conditions at home. As far as the Northern countries are concerned I would class all these causes under two heads: the first will comprise all those conditions, natural or artificial, that can be summarized under the term economic; the second will include a number of special circumstances or motives which may vary somewhat for the three countries, indeed often for the locality and the individual.

First then we may consider the causes which arise from economic conditions. These are well illustrated by the Scandinavian countries, slightly modified in each case by the operation of the special causes. Norway is a land of mountains, these making up in fact fifty-nine per cent of its total area, while forty-four per cent of the soil of Sweden is unproductive. The winters are long and severe, the cold weather frequently sets in too early for the crops to ripen, and with crop failure comes lack of work for the laboring classes and, burdened by heavy taxation, debt and impoverishment for the holders of the numerous encumbered smaller estates. In Norway especially the rewards of labor are meagre and the opportunities for material betterment small. "Hard times" and the inability of the country to support the rapidly increasing population has, then, been a most potent factor.<sup>1</sup> The same will hold true of Sweden, though

<sup>1</sup> Thus the failure of crops and the famine in Northern Sweden, Finland, and Norway in 1902 was followed by a vastly increased immigration from these sections. See above page 57, note. Compare Table II below.



in a somewhat less degree. Denmark is much better able to support a population of forty-one to the square mile than Sweden one of thirty, or Norway one of eighteen.<sup>1</sup>

In this connection compare above the statistics of immigration from the three countries, which are much lower for Denmark than for Norway and Sweden. The Danes at home are a contented people, and it is noticeable also that it is they who are most conservative here, who foster the closest relation with the old home, and who consequently become Americanized last. The Norwegians are the most discontented, are readiest for a change, are quickest to try the new; and it is they, who most readily break the bonds that bind them to their native country, who most quickly adapt themselves to the conditions here, and who most rapidly become Americanized.

Professor R. B. Anderson, in his book on the early Norwegian immigration<sup>2</sup> puts religious persecution as the primary cause of emigration from Norway. I cannot possibly believe that even in the immigration of the first half of the nineteenth century religious persecution was, except in a few cases, the primary or even a very important cause in the Scandinavian countries. In conversation with and in numerous letters from pioneers and their descendants, especially in Iowa and Wisconsin, I have found that the hope of larger returns for one's labor is everywhere given as the main motive, sometimes as the only one. Whether it be the Norwegian pioneers in La Salle County, Illinois, or

<sup>1</sup> The area and population of the three countries are:—Sweden, area 172,876 sq. m., population in 1901, 5,175,228; Norway, area 124,129, population in 1900, 2,239,880; Denmark, area 15,360, population in 1901, 2,447,441.

<sup>2</sup> *First Chapter of Norwegian Immigration*, Madison, Wis., 1896.



Rock County, Wisconsin, or the Swedes in Jefferson or Boone counties, Iowa, or the Danes in Racine County, Wisconsin, the causes are everywhere principally economic. But letters written by pioneers and by those about to emigrate testify amply to the fact that it was the hard times that was the chief cause.

A Norwegian Journal, *Billed-Magazin*, published in Chicago in 1869 and edited by Professor Svein Nilsen, offers much that throws light on this question. It contains detailed accounts of the early Norwegian immigration and the earliest settlements, a regular column of news from the Scandinavian countries, interviews with pioneers, etc. In one interview Ole Nattestad, who sailed in 1837 from Vægli, Numedal, and became the founder of the fourth Norwegian settlement in America, that of Jefferson Prairie in Rock County, Wisconsin, and the neighboring Boone County in Illinois, describes his experience as a farmer in Numedal and how the difficulty of making any headway finally drove him to emigrate to America.<sup>1</sup> The statement of another pioneer I quote in its entirety.<sup>2</sup> It is that of John Nelson Luraas who came from Tin in Telemarken to Muskego, Wisconsin, in 1839, and in 1843 moved to Dane County, Wisconsin. He says:—

I was my father's oldest son, and consequently heir to the Luraas farm. It was regarded as one of the best in that neighborhood, but there was a \$1,400 mortgage on it. I had worked for my father until I was twenty-five years old, and had had no opportunity of getting money. It was plain to me that I would have a hard time

<sup>1</sup> *Billed-Magazin*, 1869, pp. 82-83.

<sup>2</sup> *Billed-Magazin*, 1869, pp. 6-7, printed in *First Chapter*, p. 269.



of it, if I should take the farm with the debt resting on it, pay a reasonable amount to my brothers and sisters, and assume the care of my aged father. I saw to my horror how one farm after the other fell into the hands of the lendsman and other money-lenders, and this increased my dread of attempting farming. But I got married and had to do something. Then it occurred to me that the best thing might be to emigrate to America. I was encouraged in this purpose by letters written by Norwegian settlers in Illinois who had lived two years in America. Such were the causes that led me to emigrate and I presume the rest of our company were actuated by similar motives.<sup>1</sup>

In a letter written by Andreas Sandsberg at Hellen, Norway, September 12, 1831, to Gudmund Sandsberg in Kendall, New York, the former complains of the hard times in Norway.<sup>2</sup> In the spring of 1836 there emigrated from Stavanger county the second party of emigrants to America. On the 14th of May of that year Andreas Sandsberg wrote his brother Gudmund in America as follows:—

A considerable number of people are now getting ready to go to America from this Amt. Two brigs are to depart from Stavanger in about eight days from now, and will carry these people to America, and if good reports come from them, the number of emigrants will doubtless be still larger next year. A pressing and general lack of money entering into every branch of industry, stops or at least hampers business and makes it difficult for many people to earn the necessaries of life. While this is the case on this side of the Atlantic there is hope for abundance on the other, and this I take it, is the chief cause of this growing disposition to emigrate.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> In 1868, Mr. Luraas moved to Webster County, Iowa, returning to Dane County, Wisconsin, in 1873. I knew him in the early nineties as a well-to-do retired farmer living in Stoughton, Wisconsin. He died in 1894.

<sup>2</sup> *First Chapter*, p. 137.

<sup>3</sup> Letter copied from the original by R. B. Anderson in 1896 and printed in *First Chapter*, pp. 135-136.



A highly developed spirit of independence has always been a dominant element in the Scandinavian character—I have reference here particularly to his desire for personal independence, that is, independence in his condition in life. Nothing is so repugnant to him as indebtedness to others and dependence on others. An able-bodied Scandinavian who was a burden to his fellows was well-nigh unheard of. By the right of primogeniture the paternal estate would go to the oldest son. The families being frequently large, the owning of a home was to a great many practically an impossibility under wage conditions as they were in the North in the first half and more of the preceding century.

Thus the Scandinavian farmer's son, with his love of personal independence and his strong inherent desire to own a home, finding himself so circumstanced in his native country that there was little hope of his being able to realize this ambition except in the distant uncertain future, listens with a willing ear to descriptions of America, with its quick returns and its great opportunities. And so he decides to emigrate. And this he is free to do for the government puts no barrier upon his emigrating. This trait has impelled many a Scandinavian to come and settle in America; and it is a trait that is the surest guarantee of the character of his citizenship. Here too a social factor merits mention.

While the Nobility was abolished in Norway in 1814 the lines between the upper and the lower classes, the wealthy and the poor, were tightly drawn and social classes were well defined. And while Norway is to-day the most Democratic country in Europe, and Sweden and Denmark are also thor-



oughly liberal (not least through the influence of America and American-Scandinavians), a titled aristocracy still exists in these countries. The extreme deference to those in superior station or position that custom and existing conditions enforced upon those in humbler condition was repugnant to them. Not infrequently have pioneers given this as one cause for emigrating in connection with that of economic advantage.

In the class of special causes which have influenced the Scandinavian emigration political oppression has operated only in the case of the Danes in Southern Jutland. As a result of the Dano-Prussian war of 1864 Jutland below Skodborghus became a province of Prussia. The greatly increased taxes that immediately followed and the restrictions imposed by the Prussian government upon the use of the Danish language, as well as other oppressive measures that formed a part of the general plan of the Prussianizing of Sleswick-Holstein, drove large numbers of Danes away from their homes, and most of these came to the United States. In notes and correspondence from Denmark in Scandinavian-American papers during these years complaints regarding such regulations constantly appear, and figures of emigration of Danes "who did not wish to be Prussians" are unusually large for this period.<sup>1</sup> The United States statistics also show a sudden increase in the Danish immigration during the sixties and the early seventies. From 1850-1861 not more than 3,983 had emigrated from Denmark; while in the thirteen years from 1862 to 1874 the number reached 30,978.

<sup>1</sup> See for example in the foreign column of the *Billed-Magazin*.



Military service which elsewhere has often played such an important part in promoting emigration has in the Scandinavian countries been only a minor factor, the period of service required being very short. Nevertheless it has in not a few cases been a secondary cause for emigrating. Those with whom I have spoken who have given this as their motive have, however, been mostly Norwegians and Swedes.

Religious persecution has played a part in some cases, especially in Norway and Sweden. The state church is the Lutheran, but every sect has been tolerated since the middle of the century, in Norway since 1845. While few countries have been freer from the evil of active persecution because of religious belief, intolerance and religious narrowness have not been wanting. In the beginning of the 19th century the followers of the lay preacher, Hans Nielsen Hauge, in Norway were everywhere persecuted. Hauge himself was imprisoned for eight years. And the Jansenists in Helsingland, Sweden, were in the forties subjected to similar persecution. Eric Jansen himself was arrested several times for conducting religious meetings between 1842-1846—though it must in fairness be admitted that his first arrest was undoubtedly provoked by the extreme procedure of the dissenters themselves. After having been put in prison repeatedly Jansen embarked for America in 1846 and became the founder of the communistic colony of followers at Bishopshill,<sup>1</sup> Henry County, Illinois. No such organized emigration

<sup>1</sup> So named from *Biskopskulla*, Jansen's native place in Sweden. See article by Major John Swainson on "The Swedish Colony at Bishopshill, Illinois," in Nelson's *Scandinavians*, I, p. 142. This article gives an excellent account of the founding of the Bishopshill settlement and Jansen's connection with it. See also *American Communities* by Wm. Alfred Hinds, 1902, pp. 300-320.



took place among the Haugians, but we have no means of knowing to what extent individual emigration of the followers of Hauge took place during the three decades immediately after his death. The well-known Elling Eielson, a lay preacher and an ardent Haugian, emigrated in 1839 to Fox River, La Salle County, Illinois, and many of those who believed in the methods of Hauge and Eielson came to America in the following year.

It was persecution also that drove many Scandinavian Moravians to America in 1740 and 1747. Moravian societies had been formed in Christiania in 1737, in Copenhagen in 1739, in Stockholm in 1740, and in Bergen in 1740.<sup>1</sup> In 1735 German Moravians from Herrnhut, Saxony, established a colony at Savannah, Georgia.<sup>1</sup> In this colony there seem to have been some Danes and Norwegians. In 1740 a permanent colony was located at Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, and in 1747 one at Bethabara, North Carolina. Persecuted Norwegian, Swedish, and Danish Moravians took part in the founding of both these colonies.

In 1825 the first Norwegian settlement in America was established in Kendall, Orleans County, New York. This settlement was known as the Rochester settlement. The colony was formed by Quakers from Stavanger—the so-called “sloop party.” It has been claimed that the “sloopers” were driven to emigrate by persecution at home.<sup>2</sup> Another writer has shown that the only one of the Stavanger Quakers who suffered for his belief prior to 1826

<sup>1</sup> *Decorah-Posten* for September 9, 1904, p. 5.

<sup>2</sup> R. B. Anderson is emphatic in this view. Pages 45-131 of his *First Chapter of Norwegian Immigration* are devoted to a discussion of the sloop “*Restorationen*” and the Quaker Colony in Orleans County.



was Elias Tastad, and he it seems did not emigrate.<sup>1</sup> The leader of the emigrants in *Restorationen*, Lars Larsen i Jeilane, had spent one year in London in the employ of the noted English Quaker, William Allen. In 1818, Stephen Grellet, a French nobleman who had become a Quaker in America, and William Allen preached in Stavanger.<sup>1</sup> The Quakers of Stavanger were of the poorest of the people. It is highly probable, as another writer states,<sup>2</sup> that Grellet, while there, suggested to them that they emigrate to America where they could better their condition in material things and at the same time practice their religion without violating the laws of the country. The main motive was therefore probably economic.

It is perfectly clear to me that not very many of the Orleans County colonists were devout Quakers; for we soon find them wandering apart into various other churches. Some returned to Lutheranism; those who went west became mostly Methodists or Mormons; others did not join any church; while the descendants of those who remained are to-day Methodists. The Orleans County Quakers do not seem to have even erected a meeting-house; and in Scandinavian settlements a church, however humble, is, next to a home, the first thought. Nevertheless the Quakers of Stavanger did suffer annoyances, and it must be remembered that the leader of the expedition and the owner of the sloop was a devout Quaker,<sup>3</sup> as were also at least two other leading

<sup>1</sup> Nelson's *History of Scandinavians*, 1901, p. 133.

<sup>2</sup> B. L. Wick, in *The Friends*, Philadelphia, 1894, according to Nelson, p. 134 A. I have not been able to secure a copy of the above article, therefore cannot here state the arguments, or cite it more fully.

<sup>3</sup> Lars Larson settled in Rochester where he could attend a Quaker church. The same is true of Ole Johnson, another of the "sloopers" who later settled in Kendall but finally returned to Rochester.



members of the party. Had it not been for these very men the party would probably not have emigrated, at least not at that time. In 1840-1850 there was much persecution of the first Baptists in Denmark; and not a few of this sect emigrated. In 1848 F. O. Nilson, one of the early leaders of the Baptist church in Sweden, was imprisoned and later banished from the country. He fled to Denmark, and in 1851 embarked for America. In the fifties Swedish Baptists in considerable numbers came to the United States because of persecution.

Proselyting of some non-Lutheran churches in Scandinavia has been the means of bringing many Swedes, Norwegians, and Danes to this country. In the fifties Mormon missionaries were especially active in Denmark and Norway. Their efforts did not seem to be attended by much success in Norway, though not a few converts were made among the Norwegians in the early settlements in Illinois and Iowa. In Denmark, however, their work was more successful. All those who accepted Mormonism emigrated to America of course, and most of them to Utah. In the years 1851, 1852, and 1853 there emigrated fourteen, three, and thirty-two Danes, respectively, to this country. But in 1854 the number rose to 691, and in the following three years to 1736. In 1850 there were in Utah two Danes; in 1870 there were 4,957.

In 1849 a Norwegian-American, O. P. Peterson, first introduced Methodism in Norway.<sup>1</sup> After 1855 a regular Methodist mission was established in Scandinavia under the

<sup>1</sup> See a brief account by Rev. N. M. Liljegren in Nelson's *History of Scandinavians*, I, pp. 205-209.



supervision of a Danish-American, C. B. Willerup.<sup>1</sup> While the Methodist church has not prospered in the Scandinavian countries, especially in Denmark and Norway, there are large numbers of Methodists among the Scandinavian immigrants in this country, and the early congregations were recruited for a large part from Norway, Sweden, and Denmark.

The efforts of steamship companies and emigration agents have been a powerful factor in promoting Scandinavian emigration. Through them literature advertising in glowing terms the advantages of the New World was scattered far and wide in Scandinavia. Such literature often dealt with the prosperity of Scandinavians who had previously settled in America. Letters from successful settlers were often printed and distributed broadcast. The early immigrants from the North settled largely in Illinois, Wisconsin, and, a little later, in Iowa. As clearers of the forest and tillers of the soil they contributed their large share to the development of the country. None could better endure the hardships of pioneer life on the Western frontier. Knowing this, many Western States began to advertise their respective advantages in the Scandinavian countries.

Far more influential, however, than these were the efforts put forth by successful immigrants to induce their relatives and friends to follow them. Numerous letters were written home praising American laws and institutions, and setting forth the opportunities here offered. These letters were read and passed around to friends. Many who had rela-

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<sup>1</sup> Methodism had been introduced into Sweden from England early in the century.



tives in America would travel long distances to hear what the last "America-letter" had to report. Among the early immigrants who did much in this way to promote emigration from their native districts was Gjert Hovland. He emigrated to America in 1831 and settled in Orleans County, New York. In 1835 he removed to La Salle County, Illinois. He wrote many letters home. These "were transcribed and the copies passed around far and wide in the province of Bergen; and a large number were thus led to emigrate."<sup>1</sup> One of the most prominent of Swedish pioneers was Peter Cassel.<sup>2</sup> He is the founder of the first Scandinavian settlement in Iowa at New Sweden, Jefferson County, and the first large Swedish settlement in America in the 19th century. Through letters sent home to friends Cassel induced many of his countrymen to come to Iowa. These two instances are typical of many others.

Some immigrants wrote books regarding the Scandinavian colonies in America, and these exerted not a little influence. Especial mention should be made of Ole Rynning's<sup>3</sup> *True Account of America for the Information and Help of Peasant and Commoner, written by a Norwegian who came there in the Month of June, 1837.*<sup>4</sup> This little book of 39 pages had not a little to do with the emigration that followed to La Salle County, Illinois.

<sup>1</sup> See *Billed-Magazin*, p. 74.

<sup>2</sup> Born in Åsby, 1791, and emigrated to America in 1846.

<sup>3</sup> Ole Rynning was born in Ringsaker, Norway, 1809. He settled in La Salle County, Illinois, in 1837.

<sup>4</sup> *Sandfærdig Beretning om Amerika til Veiledning og Hjælp for Bonde og Menigmand, skrevet af en Norsk som kom der i Juni Maaned, 1837.*

Ole Rynning's book was an intelligent discussion of thirteen questions regarding America which he set himself to answer. Among them were: What is the



The visits of successful Scandinavians back home was in the early days an important factor; and as a rule only those who had been prosperous would return home. In 1835 Kund Anderson Slogvig, who had emigrated in the sloop in 1825, returned to Norway and became the chief promoter of the exodus of 1836 which resulted in the settlement at Fox River, La Salle County, Illinois.

In letters from immigrants to their relatives at home prepaid tickets or the price of the ticket were often enclosed. This custom was so common as to become a special factor in emigration. According to *Norsk Folkeblad* (cited in *Billed-Magazin*, p. 134), 4,000 Norwegian emigrants, via Kristiania in 1868, took with them \$40,335 (Speciedaler) in cash money of which \$21,768 (Spd.) had been sent by relatives in America to cover the expense of the journey. It has been estimated that about fifty per cent of Scandinavian immigrants arrive by prepaid passage tickets secured by relatives in this country.<sup>1</sup>

Finally, curiosity and the spirit of adventure have doubtless prompted some to cross the ocean.

To sum up, the chief influences that have promoted Scandinavian emigration to the United States in the nineteenth century have been in the order of their importance: *first*, the prospect of material betterment and the love of a freer and more independent life; *second*, letters of relatives

nature of the country? What is the reason that so many people go there? Is it not to be feared that the land will soon be overpopulated? In what part are the Norwegian settlements? Which is the most convenient and the cheapest route to them? What is the price of land? What provision is there for the education of children? What language is spoken and is it difficult to learn? Is there danger of disease in America? What kind of people should emigrate?

<sup>1</sup> Nelson's *History of Scandinavians*, 56.



and friends who had emigrated to the United States and visits of these again to their native country; *third*, the advertising of agents of emigration; *fourth*, religious persecution at home; *fifth*, church proselytism; *sixth*, political oppression; *seventh*, military service; and *eighth*, the desire for adventure. Fugitives from justice have been few, and paupers and criminals in the Scandinavian countries are not sent out of the country; they are taken care of by the government.

THE GROWTH AND DISTRIBUTION OF THE SCANDINAVIAN  
POPULATION IN THE UNITED STATES

It has already been noted that the Norwegians are the pioneers in the Scandinavian immigration to America, and that the Danes were the last to come. The first Norwegian colony was founded near Rochester, New York, in 1825, and not until sixteen years later was the first Swedish colony planted at Pine Lake, Wisconsin. Neither of these settlements prospered, but both had some influence on the formation of the first permanent colonies elsewhere—the Norwegian at Fox River, La Salle County, Illinois, in 1836, and the Swedish at New Sweden, Jefferson County, Iowa, in 1845. It was about fifteen years later that a Danish settlement was formed in Racine County, Wisconsin. The chief rural colony of Danes in the country, that of Audubon and Shelby counties in Iowa, did not really take its beginning before 1868.<sup>1</sup>

Between the founding of the Fox River settlement in

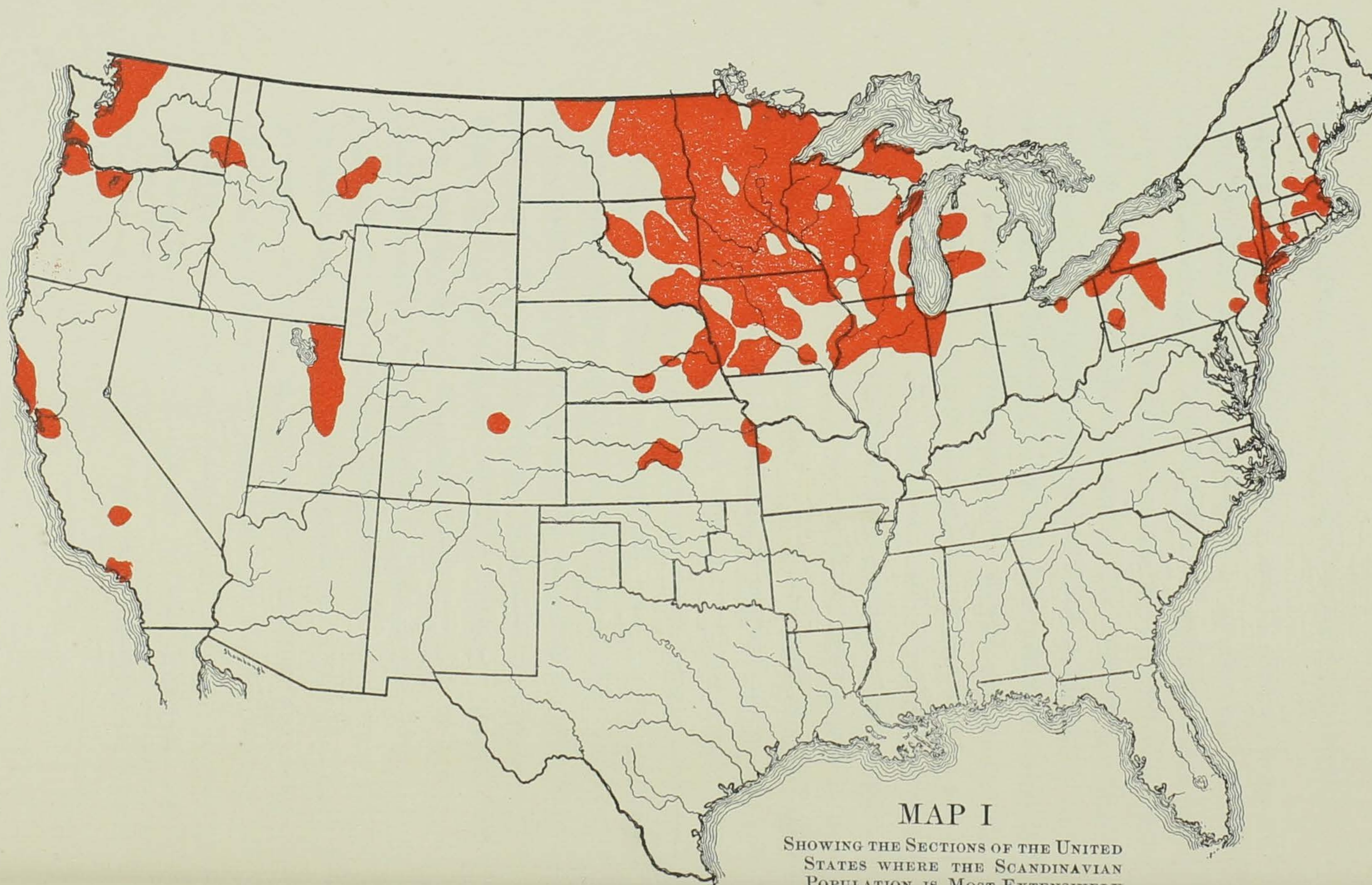
<sup>1</sup> There were some Danes there, however, as early as 1857—see *Shelby County*, by J. J. Louis, p. 6. (Reprint from *The Iowa Journal of History and Politics*.)



Illinois and that of the Swedes at New Sweden, Iowa, there had grown up a considerable number of Norwegian settlements principally in Wisconsin. The reason for the priority of the Norwegians and the lateness of the Danes is largely an economic one as has been shown above. Of the three nationalities, furthermore, the Danes are undoubtedly the most patriotic, and the most reluctant to leave their native country. It was economic causes that have furnished us the largest number of Danish immigrants, especially in the seventies, the eighties, and the early nineties; but it was a religious cause that gave the first impulse to the emigration of Danes, and it was a political cause that first drove them away in large numbers. But for these causes Danish emigration to America would have been exceedingly small before the seventies. It may be largely an accident that the Norwegian exodus came so many years before the Swedish. When once the movement had been started it was bound soon to assume considerable proportions under the economic conditions of the times. Furthermore, the movement in Sweden was started not among those who were earning a meagre living by the hardest sort of work as it was in Norway, but among the middle classes and men in professional life.<sup>1</sup> The father of Swedish emigration to this country in the nineteenth century was a graduate of Upsala. Under these circumstances it would take a longer time for such knowledge of America to reach the masses of the common people as would lead to extensive emigration. Finally, it may be recalled that while down to the middle of the nineteenth century one who desired to emigrate had

<sup>1</sup> And in part by mere adventurers.





MAP I

SHOWING THE SECTIONS OF THE UNITED STATES WHERE THE SCANDINAVIAN POPULATION IS MOST EXTENSIVELY REPRESENTED



to secure royal permission both in Sweden and Norway, a Swede before he could emigrate was required to pay 300 Kronor or about \$81, which undoubtedly at the time acted as a powerful barrier against any considerable emigration on the part of that class which later contributed chiefly to emigration.

Before 1868 immigrants from Sweden and Norway are classed together in the United States census. According to Scandinavian statistics, however, there emigrated from Norway to America between 1851-1860, 36,070, and from Sweden 14,857. Before 1850 the emigration from Sweden was very small. With 1868 the figures became much larger than before, and since 1875 have always exceeded those for Norway.

TABLE II

Showing the Norwegian, Swedish and Danish immigration by decades since 1820, and by the year since 1891.

	NORWAY	SWEDEN	DENMARK	TOTAL
(a) 1820-30		94	189	283
1831-40	1,201		1,063	2,264
1841-50	13,903		539	14,442
1851-60	20,931		3,749	24,680 <sup>1</sup>
1861-70	109,308		17,094	126,402
1871-80	94,823	115,922	31,760	242,505
1881-90	176,586	391,733	88,132	656,451
1891-1900	97,264	230,677	52,670	378,657
(b) 1891	12,568	36,880	10,659	60,107
1892	14,462	43,247	10,593	68,302
1893	16,079	38,077	8,779	62,935
1894	8,868	18,607	5,581	33,056

<sup>1</sup> In 1860 the Norwegian population was 43,995; the Swedish, 18,625.



	NORWAY	SWEDEN	DENMARK	TOTAL
1895	7,373	15,683	4,244	27,300
1896	8,855	21,177	3,167	33,199
1897	5,842	13,162	2,085	21,089
1898	4,983	12,398	1,946	19,327
1899	6,705	12,796	2,690	22,191
1900	9,575	18,650	2,926	31,151
1901	12,288	23,331	3,655	39,074
1902	17,484	30,894	5,660	54,038
1903	24,461	46,028	7,158	77,647

The Scandinavian population is very unevenly distributed in the different sections of the country. They have from the first avoided the South, they are not numerous in the East, while nearly seventy per cent of them reside in the northwestern States. A table will illustrate well this remarkable fact of distribution. The States are arranged in five groups showing the population in each for each decade since 1850.

TABLE III

Showing the number of Scandinavians of foreign birth in the five sections indicated from 1850 to 1900.

	1850	1860	1870	1880	1890	1900
The South <sup>1</sup>	1,084	1,531	3,709	3,834	5,846	7,450
New England	749	1,507	3,113	11,243	43,596	70,632
New York	1,897	4,506	12,291	28,532	75,331	105,641
New Jersey						
Pennsylvania						
The Northwest <sup>2</sup>	13,278	56,275	193,578	336,511	670,148	715,121
All other States	1,067	8,763	29,497	70,382	138,328	165,465

<sup>1</sup> Including Maryland, but excluding Missouri and Texas.

<sup>2</sup> Including Michigan, Wisconsin, Illinois, Iowa, Minnesota, Nebraska, and North and South Dakota.



TABLE IV

Showing the growth of the Scandinavian population in the Northwestern States by decades since 1850, and the total increase outside the Northwest.

	1850	1860	1870	1880	1890	1900
Michigan . . .	139	898	5,276	16,445	41,496	40,928
Wisconsin . .	8,885	23,265	48,057	66,284	99,738	103,942
Illinois . . .	3,631	12,073	44,570	65,414	128,897	144,812
Iowa . . . . .	611	7,814	31,177	46,046	72,873	72,611
Minnesota . .	12	11,773	58,837	107,768	215,215	236,670
Nebraska . . .		323	3,987	16,685	46,341	40,107
North Dakota .		{ 129	{ 1,674	{ 17,869	34,216	42,578
South Dakota .					31,372	33,473
All other States	4,777	16,307	48,610	113,751	263,101	349,188

There are in the whole of the South at the present time only one-tenth as many Scandinavian immigrants as in the State of Iowa alone. While they are found in the Southern States in small colonies, but principally as scattered settlers, as early as 1850, and while settlements have been formed at various times since then, they have never thrived and to-day there is outside of Texas no important Scandinavian settlement in the whole of the South. Danes had settled in Louisiana to the number 288 in 1850, and to-day they number only 216. Foreign born Swedes in Louisiana in 1850 numbered 249; to-day the number is only 359. There was one Norwegian family<sup>1</sup> in Texas as early as 1840, in 1850 they numbered 105; while the total in 1900 was 1,356. By 1860 the Danes had formed minor colonies in Missouri; their number being 464, which number has increased in 1900 to 1,510. There were in 1860 also 239

<sup>1</sup> John Norboe who bought a large tract of land in Dallas County in 1838.



Swedes of foreign birth in Missouri; the number to-day is 5,692. Thus Texas and Missouri are the only Southern States where Scandinavians are found in appreciable numbers—Norwegians and Swedes in the former, and Danes and Swedes in the latter. Elsewhere in the South the Swedes have settled to some little extent, that is to say, in Arkansas, Florida, Tennessee, Mississippi, and Alabama. Recent Norwegian settlements in Tennessee, Alabama, and Virginia have not prospered.

The reasons why Scandinavians have so generally avoided the South are not hard to find; they have already been indicated above under *causes of emigration*. The main reason was slavery, an institution upon which the Scandinavian immigrant looked with horror. Add to this the climate, so different from that of Northern Europe, and the general depression that followed the war in all lines in the South, and we have the causes that diverted the great body of Scandinavian immigrants from the South in the fifties, the sixties, and the early seventies. Finally, the Southern social conditions have also had their influence. Table III shows that before 1890 comparatively very few settled in New England and the East in general. It is, however, a noteworthy fact that in 1850 there were over thirteen thousand Scandinavian immigrants in the Northwest (nearly all in Wisconsin and Illinois or about five times as many in these two States as in the whole of the East.) In 1890 it was nearly six times as large.

What were the influences that directed the Scandinavian immigrants so largely to the Northwest in the early period and down to 1890? This question, too, is answered above



under causes of emigration. The great majority came for the sake of bettering their material condition. They came here to found a home and to make a living. It is a fact, moreover, that immigrants in their new home generally enter the same pursuits and engage in the same occupations they were engaged in in their native country. Seventy-five per cent of the Swedes at home engage in agriculture, and nearly that proportion of the Danes. Though a far smaller number in Norway are actually engaged in farming, three-fourths of the population live in the rural districts.<sup>1</sup> Thus seventy-two per cent of the Scandinavians in this country are found in the rural districts and in towns with less than 25,000 population. The fact that the influx of the immigrants from the North coincided with the opening up of the middle western States resulted in the settlement of those States by Scandinavian immigrants. Land could be had for almost nothing in the West. Land-seekers from New England, New York, and Pennsylvania were in those days flocking to the West.<sup>2</sup> About eighty-eight per cent of the Scandinavian immigrants at that time were land-seekers. As a rule long before he emigrated the Scandinavian had made up his mind to settle in Wisconsin, Illinois, Iowa, or Minnesota.

<sup>1</sup> This includes also fishermen and foresters.

<sup>2</sup> Outside of Chicago, Illinois had in 1840 a population of 142,210; Wisconsin was organized as a Territory in 1836, its population in 1840 was 30,945; Iowa had a population of only 192,212 in 1850; and Minnesota, organized as a Territory in 1849, had in 1850, 1,056 inhabitants. To the square mile the population of each was in 1850: Illinois, 15.37; Wisconsin, 5.66; Iowa, 3.77; Minnesota, .04.



THE GEOGRAPHICAL DISTRIBUTION OF THE THREE SCANDINAVIAN NATIONALITIES;<sup>1</sup> CITY AND COUNTRY POPULATION; CAUSES OF THE DISTRIBUTION<sup>2</sup>

Table III shows that after 1880 a much larger proportion of the immigrants remained in New England, New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania than before; in fact the increase of those States is four hundred per cent in the decade as compared with a little over two hundred per cent in the Northwest. The eastern increase is very largely in the cities—Boston, Worcester, Brockton (Mass.); Hartford, New Haven, Bridgeport (Conn.); Providence, R. I.; Manchester, N. H.; New York, and Philadelphia. This fact, however, shows that not so large a proportion of the new arrivals came from the agricultural districts as before; but that a larger number were skilled laborers of various kinds, while many came from the cities or with city inclinations and entered mercantile pursuits. This class of immigrants from the North were very largely Swedes, and so we find that in the Eastern cities to-day everywhere Swedes predominate among the Scandinavian population, as they do generally in cities elsewhere. They serve especially as machinists, electricians, iron and steel workers, painters, and carpenters. Skilled laborers had also come in considerable numbers in the seventies from the three Scandinavian countries as Tables II and III indicate, and as the census reports regarding the occupation of immigrants show. But with the rapid industrial growth which characterized the seventies and the eighties came an increased demand for skilled workmen; and so

<sup>1</sup> See also above p. 79.

<sup>2</sup> See also above p. 80.



there resulted a larger immigration of that class from the North as well as from other countries<sup>1</sup> elsewhere, and Sweden furnished the larger share of those that came from the Northern countries. Thus the Scandinavian population of Massachusetts is 38,097, of which eighty-six per cent are Swedes; that of Connecticut is 19,562, of which thirty-three per cent are Swedes; and in New York it is 64,055, the Swedes making up seventy per cent. And the bulk of these reside in the cities. The Swedes make up seventy-five per cent of the Scandinavians in Boston, ninety-seven per cent in Brockton, Massachusetts; eighty per cent in Cambridge; eighty-nine per cent in Providence; ninety-four per cent in Worcester; eighty-two per cent in Hartford; and seventy-seven per cent in Bridgeport. In New York City they number sixty-two per cent. New York is the only State in the East that has received any considerable Norwegian population. Here there are in all 12,601, nearly all of whom live in New York City.

TABLE V

The increase in the Scandinavian population from 1880 to 1900 in the cities designated will be shown by the following table:—

	1880	1900
New York	9,719	45,328
Boston	1,882	7,361
Worcester	946	7,964
Providence	254	3,112
Hartford	118	2,257

<sup>1</sup>The Swedish immigration was everywhere heavier in the eighties. The above will, however, explain the Swedish and the general Scandinavian increase in the East at this time.



Throughout the country everywhere the Swedes are found in larger numbers in the cities than the Danes or the Norwegians. Thus 207,109 or thirty-six per cent of the total Swedish contingent lives in cities having a population of 25,000 or more; whereas 43,456 or twenty-eight per cent of the Danes and only 65,447 or nineteen per cent of the Norwegians live in larger cities. This indicates a growing preference for city life and mercantile pursuits on the part of the Danes. The Norwegian while found extensively in the smaller towns, does not readily take to the larger cities. The chief Danish city colonies are found in Chicago, New York, Racine (Wis.), Omaha, San Francisco, Minneapolis, St. Paul, and Council Bluffs. The Norwegians are most numerous in Chicago, Minneapolis, New York, St. Paul, Duluth, San Francisco, La Crosse (Wis.), and Superior. The Swedes have located principally in Chicago, New York, Minneapolis, St. Paul, Worcester (Mass.), Rockford (Ill.), Boston, San Francisco, and Duluth, though they are found in several other cities in considerable numbers.

In rural settlements Scandinavians are extensively represented in all parts of the Northwest. It would be possible to travel hundreds of miles in Wisconsin, Minnesota, northern Iowa, and eastern North and South Dakota without leaving soil owned and tilled by Scandinavians. In Minnesota there are numerous counties where the population is almost wholly Scandinavian.<sup>1</sup>

We have seen above that a majority of the Scandinavians, in fact nearly seventy per cent, have chosen to settle in the

<sup>1</sup>The foreign born Scandinavians in Ottertail County, Minnesota, number 9,144; in Polk County, 8,998.



great agricultural Northwest. In the first half century of the Northern immigration approximately seventy-eight per cent located in that region. At the same time we have found that since about 1880 a very much larger proportion remained in the East, and that the majority of these came from Sweden. And we recall that Mormon proselyting directed a great many Danes to Utah in the middle of the century. We are then prepared to find a very unequal distribution of the three nationalities in the various sections of the country. The Swedes make up 53.8 per cent of the total Scandinavian population, the Norwegian 31.7 per cent, and the Danes 14.5 per cent. The total immigrant Norwegian population is 338,426, of which eighty-one per cent are in the Northwest, while only 93,169 or sixty per cent of the Danes reside here, along with 339,409 or fifty-nine per cent of the Swedes. In the East, Norwegians and Danes are few in numbers, while there are 42,708 Swedes in New York State, 32,192 in Massachusetts and 24,130 in Pennsylvania. In the Southern States the Scandinavians are a wholly unimportant factor; some Swedes have settled there but the Norwegians are practically absent from the population. In the extreme West the Swedes and the Danes predominate over the Norwegians—the former in California, Washington, Utah, and Colorado, the latter in Utah, California, and Colorado. The Norwegians almost equal the Swedes, however, in Washington, and they have settled somewhat in Oregon, California, Idaho, and Montana. In Kansas, which is not included in our eight States, the Swedes have formed considerable settlements.

The Norwegians are then bulked together on a much nar-



rower area, East and West, than either of the other two. About eighty-three per cent of the Norwegians reside between  $87^{\circ}$  longitude as the Eastern limit and  $100^{\circ}$  on the West, while only about sixty-two per cent of the Danes are here and sixty-five per cent of the Swedes. It does not follow from this that the Norwegians are more clannish, though I think it would be safe to say that the Danes are the most cosmopolitan. The reasons for the larger number of Swedes in the cities, especially in the East, lie, we have seen, in the somewhat different nature of the occupations that a large number of them pursue. The reason why the Norwegians are found largely in the Northwest is that a much greater proportion of them engage in agriculture and, as we have seen, their first coming in large numbers coincided with the opening up of the great Northwest. They are there by the right of priority; and they are there because they found that the great Northwest offered them the richest opportunities in the occupations which by preference they follow and which they have rarely been tempted to leave.

But the Scandinavian nationalities are also unevenly distributed North and South, though less so than East and West. This, indeed, we would naturally expect. But before discussing this point I will offer a table showing the distribution of the three nationalities in the seventeen States, given in order, that have the largest Scandinavian population.



TABLE VI

Foreign born Swedes, Norwegians, and Danes in the seventeen States where they are most extensively represented, according to the census of 1900.

	SWEDES	NORWEGIANS	DANES	TOTAL
1 Minnesota	115,476	104,895	16,299	236,670
2 Illinois	99,147	29,979	15,685	144,811
3 Wisconsin	26,196	61,575	16,171	103,942
4 Iowa	29,875	25,634	17,102	72,611
5 New York	42,708	12,601	8,746	64,055
6 North Dakota	8,419	30,206	3,953	42,578
7 Michigan	26,956	7,582	6,390	40,930
8 Nebraska	24,693	2,883	12,531	40,107
9 Massachusetts	32,192	3,335	2,470	37,997
10 South Dakota	8,647	19,788	5,038	33,473
11 California	14,549	5,060	9,040	28,649
12 Pennsylvania	24,130	1,393	2,531	28,054
13 Washington	12,737	9,891	3,626	26,254
14 Kansas	15,144	1,477	2,914	19,535
15 Connecticut	16,164	709	2,249	19,122
16 Utah	7,025	2,128	9,132	18,285
17 Colorado	10,765	1,149	2,050	13,964

The table shows that the Scandinavians who are found in Kansas and Colorado are mostly Swedes; that those in California and Utah are chiefly Danes and Swedes. Note particularly that the number of Norwegians in these States is exceedingly small. The table also shows that the Norwegians are found in largest numbers in Minnesota and Wisconsin, the Swedes in Minnesota and Illinois, the Danes in Iowa and Illinois (and southern Wisconsin). That is, the Danes are generally found south of the Swedes and the Norwegians. Except in Minnesota and Washington the



Swedes are most numerous south of the Norwegians. In North Dakota the Norwegians make up seventy-three per cent of the Scandinavian population; in Wisconsin and South Dakota nearly sixty per cent. Outside of the cities of Minneapolis, St. Paul, and Duluth (and the region of Duluth), the Norwegians exceed the Swedes by about 40,000 in Minnesota. And finally, in Iowa the Norwegians are nearly all in the northern or the central part of the State, very few being found in the southern and southwestern part where the Danes and the Swedes have formed extensive settlements. Furthermore the Scandinavian settlements in Nebraska and Illinois are chiefly Swedish and Danish; they are south of the Norwegian line of settlement. It is not uninteresting to find in this connection that it is chiefly the Norwegians who have gone North into Canada and to Alaska.<sup>1</sup> The Danes are few in number north of 44° latitude, while the Norwegians have rarely gone South of 42°. In general the Danes have settled chiefly between 38° and 44°; the Swedes between 40° and 48°; the Norwegians between 42° and 49°, to the Canadian border line. The three nationalities occupy then in America relatively the same position as in their old home. The reason for their location North and South is of course climatic, as the causes for their distribution East and West are largely economic. It is a climatic reason in considerable part has kept them from settling in the South.<sup>2</sup>

It would be interesting to discuss such questions as the

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<sup>1</sup> The Icelanders are located almost exclusively in Manitoba and in North Dakota.

<sup>2</sup> See above, p. 79.



increase in population of each nationality in city and country in the northern and southern settlements, intermarriage with native or other foreign nationalities, etc., etc., but space will not permit. Briefly, however, it may be stated that the Norwegians increase most rapidly. The increase is greater in the cities than in the country; in the West than in the East. With the table above of foreign born Scandinavians may be compared the following figures for the same States of those whose parents are born in the Scandinavian countries.

TABLE VII

Showing the Scandinavian foreign parentage population in the seventeen States listed in Table VI.

	SWEDES	NORWEGIANS	DANES	TOTAL
1 Minnesota	211,769	224,892	29,704	466,365
2 Illinois	187,538	45,761	24,427	265,726
3 Wisconsin	45,406	134,293	30,000	209,699
4 Iowa	57,189	58,994	32,489	148,672
5 New York	62,559	17,775	11,714	92,048
6 North Dakota	13,474	63,900	6,700	83,074
7 Nebraska	49,292	5,837	23,898	79,027
8 Michigan	47,316	12,813	11,482	71,611
9 South Dakota	15,725	44,119	9,506	69,350
10 Massachusetts	47,505	4,611	3,358	55,474
11 Pennsylvania	41,760	1,877	3,522	47,159
12 California	21,090	7,232	14,049	42,371
13 Washington	19,359	16,959	5,717	42,035
14 Kansas	30,000	2,818	5,328	38,246
15 Utah	12,047	3,466	18,963	34,476
16 Connecticut	25,000	977	3,457	29,434
17 Colorado	17,000	1,744	3,295	22,039



The Swedes have nowhere increased two hundred per cent, though they have very nearly reached that figure in Kansas, Nebraska, and Iowa. The Danes have increased two hundred per cent in Utah and almost as much in Kansas, Nebraska, and South Dakota. The Norwegians number in the second generation two hundred and fourteen per cent more in Minnesota, and over two hundred in Wisconsin, Iowa, North Dakota, South Dakota, and Nebraska, and nearly the same in several other States.

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Much has been written about the Scandinavian as a highly desirable immigrant, and the readiness with which he adapts himself to American conditions has often been commended. He has been a desirable immigrant because he comes from countries where there is less illiteracy than in any other part of the world; and so we find that in the States where the Scandinavian element is the strongest illiteracy is lowest. The Scandinavian has been a desirable immigrant because he always came with the intention of becoming an American citizen, learning the language of the country, obeying its laws, and making the most of his opportunities. And it is not without interest to note in this connection that of the foreign born citizens who cannot speak English, only six-tenths per cent are Danes, three and two-tenths per cent Norwegians, and three and five-tenths per cent Swedes; while for the Canadian-French it is seven per cent, the Poles eleven per cent, the Italians fifteen and three-tenths per cent, and the Germans eighteen and



eight-tenths per cent. It is also interesting to note the large proportion of Scandinavians in gainful occupations.

By more than one writer they have been pronounced our most law-abiding citizens. The Scandinavian readily enters into the spirit of American institutions because he comes from countries whose laws and institutions are so very much like our own. He has been reared in countries that are in fact as free as our own, therefore he comes with the very best qualifications for intelligent American citizenship. But good citizenship in America does not imply that he must immediately forget his language and with it all that that means. It does not imply that he must forget the religion of his fathers, and the ethical principles which the practice of that religion has inculcated. It does not mean that he shall forget the ideals of the race. If the Scandinavian has become a good citizen it is because, while he tries to assimilate that which is good in his new life, he brings with him a paternal heritage that is rich and noble, and because he cherishes that heritage. This is the prime condition of a high order of citizenship in America.

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