

GETTING ABOARD AT BUFFALO

THE SMOKY CITY WAY OF MAKING
STRANGERS ACQUAINTED WITH
YOUR UNCLE SAMUEL.

LET THE BUSINESS PUBLIC TAKE
A CONSIDERATE INTEREST AND IT
WILL MEEET WITH RESPONSE.

BUFFALO, in the state of New York, the city of smoke and steel, is doing a good work in making the thousands of people from other lands who have come there to labor and live, acquainted with Uncle Sam. The annual meeting of the organization engaged in the work was held some time ago, and the following account of the meeting by Charles Aubrey Eaton, published in Leslie's, will show that real Americanization work is something different from "running in radicals" by wholesale and sending them to jail, as many over-zealous and short-sighted seem to think. Everybody should try and get the right idea in this very important matter, for which reason this article is published:

"The program consisted of music by an excellent Polish orchestra, by an equally good Italian choral club, with solos by an accomplished Lithuanian couple and a talented Slovak singer. In addition there were three-minute addresses by an eminent Pittsburgh clergyman of Scottish origin, Dr. MacGowan; by a professor in the University, who was born in Russia; by a physician who spoke with extraordinary ability, and whose native country was Bohemia; by a Serbian clergyman, and by a young Greek-American, who is the official interpreter in one of the Pittsburgh courts, by name, Theos E. Manos.

At the close of the meeting, Dr. Davidson, the Superintendent of Public Schools, after delivering an address of unusual power to the graduates, presented certificates of citizenship to 176 new citizens of the United States, representing no less than 22 nationalities. Of the entire 176, only 14 bore names originating in English-speaking countries. The others ranged from Abraham Aaron, by way of Frank Miklaxzewicz and John Wojciehowski, to Joseph Zambrzycki.

That meeting I consider to be one of the great encouraging social symptoms of the present hour in America. To begin with it represented an awakened sense of obligation towards the millions of unassimilated foreigners and uninstructed native-born citizens. And this new sense of obligation is asserting itself in the great agencies through which it must work if it is to function at all. There was the Chamber of Commerce, in the person of the Americanization Committee, representing the industrial, commercial and financial resources of that great typical American city. Working in full and enthusiastic co-operation with the Chamber was the Board of Public Education and the great staff of public school teachers under the devoted leadership of the Superintendent of Public Schools. There also, in the person of various pastors, the Church found representation. In the various musical organizations we were brought into contact with the artistic life of the community. The press gave generous space in preparation for the meeting and followed it by full and sympathetic

reports.

But the play would have been like Hamlet with Hamlet left out, except for that remarkable group of 176 new citizens. I would like to be able to present to the readers of "Leslie's" a photograph of the group. I did not see a single face that was not illuminated by an eager interest and intelligence. Every one of the 176 had completed a course of free education in English and in American citizenship, either in some one of the 24 evening school centers or in the Grant School for adult immigrants, the School of Citizenship in the Ralston School, which aims to prepare 90-day petitioners for final naturalization; or in various factory or vestibule classes, which are conducted in industrial centers throughout the city.

As the Superintendent of Education and his helpers distributed the certificates to the 176 new citizens, the Judges of the Federal Courts, under whose jurisdiction these men were admitted to the status of citizens, looked on with keen interest and appreciation.

There was only one thing lacking, and that one lack represents the fundamental failure of the American people in the past generation. Americanization has been defined as "the educational process of unifying both the native-born and foreign-born Americans in perfect support of the principles of liberty, union, democracy and brotherhood." The most conspicuous feature of this meeting, as it is of all similar meetings, was the absence of native-born citizens, whom one would expect to be present in larger numbers to encourage their new fellow citizens. The rank and file of our American citizens are still wrapped in the grave-clothes of indifference towards the most vital problem in our nation. Unless these men of vision in our Chambers of Commerce, our School Boards, our pulpits, our press, and in other positions of public trust are able to awaken the average American citizen from his stupid selfishness and moral laziness, there is every reason to expect that this element in our population will have a very unpleasant awakening from altogether different sources in the not distant future.

Americanization of America is the paramount issue, if one may be permitted to adopt the language of statesmanship. I do not mean simply a mechanical Americanization of aliens, but I mean a complete awakening of the entire citizenship of the country to a new understanding and appreciation of our fundamental political and social ideals; of the worth of our public institutions; of the obligations and rights of our citizenship; of the dangers and difficulties which press upon us, and of those agencies which must be employed by all if all are to be free.

Native-born Americans must give to their citizens of alien birth all that they have inherited from our national past; and we must expect to receive in turn a great gift from those who are born in other lands. While we are moulding them it must never be forgotten that they will mould us. If we give to them only the dark side of our life, its selfishness, ignorance, indifference to duty, its greed and materialism, they will give back to us their inherited prejudice, their class

consciousness, their instinctive rebellion against government under the impression that all government is tyranny, and the result will be that our last state will become tenfold worse than our first. If, on the other hand, we give to these millions of foreign-born, friendship, leadership, a square deal; if we show them by education and co-operation the meaning of our nation; if we teach them by example and precept that we believe in the moral law and practice it; and if we unlock before them the golden door of opportunity for themselves and their children, then we shall evoke from them a gift of idealism, of artistic impulse, of industry and thrift, of the homely virtues that make a nation great, and thus they and we shall become enriched.

The home-born American does not even know his own country, as a rule. The foreign-born does know a considerable amount about his own native land and is eager to learn about the land of his adoption. As a fine illustration of this I wish to quote a remarkable little address given at the Pittsburgh meeting by Mr. Manos, the young Greek referred to at the beginning of this article. It would be hard to find a young native-born American with so firm and fundamental a grasp upon the essential ideals and principles underlying our life and the life of the old lands across the sea. The address follows:

"WHY I CAME TO AMERICA."

I have been requested, as a foreign-born and naturalized citizen, to say in very few words "Why I Came to America." It was my choice. There was no alternative. Europe and America. Compare them. The one old and crafty, the other young and virile. Europe, burthened with her past; heavy with the crimes of two thousand years; America, active with her future, clean of conscience. The one relies upon subtle diplomacy, lies and trickeries; the other, upon hearts and hands. Upon one side the privileged classes; upon the other the reward of merit. Europe seething, raging with political strifes; America calm, dispassionate; with a government as strong as Gibraltar. The one frantic for war; the other imperturbable, admirable in both peace and war. Upon one side, despair; upon the other, hope. How unlike the two: Europe persecutes; America tolerates. The one in want and misery; sunken in affliction; the other in plenty, overflowing with wealth and prosperity. Could there be any other choice? The alternative of misery is happiness; the alternative of Europe is America.

In this comparison I mean no offense, no disrespect to the countries in Europe. They are the victims of environment, of hereditary jealousies. But, my friends, there is only one life to live. To live it with honor and respect should be the object and purpose of all. America, beyond other countries, offers that opportunity. That is the reason why I came to America.

To you who are now to receive your final papers and about to assume the duties of American citizens, I say, do not forget, but remember why you came to America. Be grateful. Be good Americans.

It is an unerring instinct as well as the part of common sense to make education and leadership the foundation of all our Americanization programs. Until the foreign-born can speak, read and write our language, they must remain in an intellectual and spiritual vacuum so far as American life is concerned. The language is the very incarnation of a people's national genius and personal equation. And therefore we give to these millions our language and, having placed in their hands this instrument, let them use it first in a study of our Constitution, laws and ideals. Thus we have begun at the very beginning.

It must be remembered, however, that an enormous mass, such as now consti-