

THE CELTIC TIDE

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FROM the outbreak of the Revolution until the fourth decade of the nineteenth century there was a lull in immigration. In a lifetime fewer aliens came than now debark in a single summer. During these sixty years powerful forces of assimilation were rapidly molding a unified people out of the motley colonial population. In the fermenting West, the meeting-place of men from everywhere, elements of the greatest diversity were blending into a common American type which soon began to tinge the streams of life that ran distinct from one another in the seaboard States. Then came another epoch of vast immigration, which has largely neutralized the effect of the nationalizing forces, and has brought us into a state of heterogeneity like to that of the later colonial era.

THE HIBERNIAN TIDE

AFTER the great lull, the Celtic Irish were the first to come in great numbers. From 1820 to 1850 they were more than two fifths of all immigrants, and during the fifties more than one third. More than a sixth of our 25,000,000 immigrants have brought in their aching hearts memories of the fresh green of the moist island in the Northern sea. The registered number is about 4,250,000, but the actual number is larger, for many of the earlier Irish, embarking in English ports, were counted as coming from England. No doubt the Irish who have suffered the wrench of expatriation to America outnumber the present population of the Green Isle, which is only a little more than one half of what it was before the crisis of famine, rebellion, and misery that came about the middle of the nineteenth century. It is, indeed, a question whether there is not more Irish blood now on this side of the Atlantic than on the other. It is possible that during Victoria's reign more of her subjects left Ireland in order to live under the Stars

and Stripes than left England in order to build a Greater Britain under the Union Jack.

In his "Coronation Ode," William Watson sees Ireland as

. . . the lonely and the lovely Bride
Whom we have wedded, but have never won.

The truth of this shows in the way the wandering Irish still shun the lands under the British crown. Most of the inviting frontier left on our continent lies in western Canada. Already the opportunities there have induced land-hungry Americans to renounce their flag at the rate of a hundred thousand in a single year. Yet the resentful Irish turn to the narrower opportunities of what they regard as their land of emancipation. During a recent nine-year period, while the English and Scottish emigrants preferred Canada to "the States," eleven times as many Irish sought admission in our ports as were admitted to Canada, although Canada's systematic campaign for immigrants is carried on alike in England, Scotland, and Ireland.

Very likely the Irish exodus is a closed chapter of history. Ireland's population has been shrinking for sixty years, and she has now fewer inhabitants than the State of Ohio. People are leaving the land of heather twice as fast as they are abandoning the land of the shamrock. The early marriage and blind prolificacy that had overpopulated the land until half the people lived on potatoes, and two out of five dwelt in one-room mud cabins, are gone forever, and Ireland has now one of the lowest birth-rates in Europe. Gradually the people are again coming to own the ground under their feet; native industries and native arts are reviving, and a wonderful rural coöperative movement is in full swing. The long night of misgovernment, ignorance, and superfecundity seems over, the star of home rule is high, and

the day may soon come when this home-loving people will not need to seek their bread under strange skies.

During its earlier period, Irish immigration brought in a desirable class, which assimilated readily. Later, the enormous assisted immigration that followed the famine of 1846-48 brought in many of an inferior type, who huddled helplessly in the poorer quarters of our cities and became men of the spade and the hod. After the crisis was past, then again came a type that was superior to those who remained behind. Of course the acquiscent property-owning class never migrated, and those rising in trade or in the professions rarely came unless they had fallen into trouble through their patriotism. But of the common people there is evidence that the more capable part leaked away to America. The Earl of Dunraven testifies:

Those who have remained have, for the most part, been the least physically fit, the most mentally deficient, and those who correspond to the lowest industrial standard. . . . For half a century and more the best equipped, mentally and physically, of the population have been leaving Ireland. The survival of the unfittest has been the law, and the inevitable result, deterioration of the race, statistics abundantly prove.

Owing to this exodus of the young and energetic, Ireland has become the country of old men and old women. An eighth of her people are more than sixty-five years old as against an eleventh in England. In half a century the proportion of lunatics and idiots in the population of Ireland rose from one in 657 to one in 178. In 1906 the inspector of lunatics reported:

The emigration of the strong and healthy members of the community not alone increases the ratio of the insane who are left behind to the general population, but also lowers the general standard of mental and bodily health by eliminating many of the members of the community who are best fitted to survive and propagate the race.

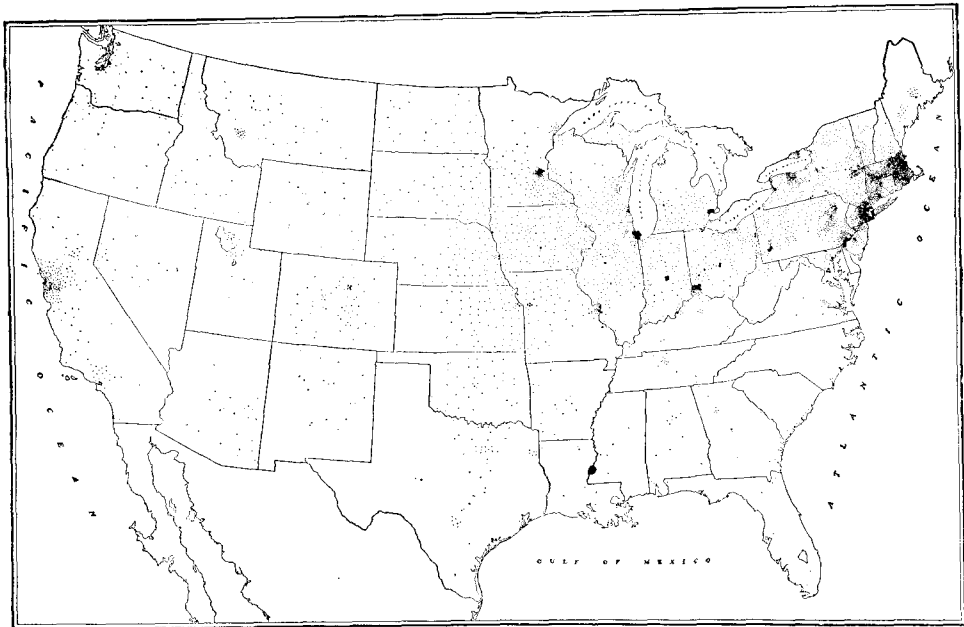
He may not have known that, compared with the rest of our immigrants, the Irish have thrice their share of insanity. The commissioners of national education, after pointing with pride to half a century's great reduction of illiteracy, add:

The change for the better is remarkable when it is remembered that it was the younger and better educated who emigrated . . . during this period, while the majority of the illiterate were persons who were too old to leave their homes.

THE IRISH IN THE STRUGGLE FOR EXISTENCE

A CLOSE study of two hundred workingmen's families in New York City shows that the typical German family is thirty dollars ahead at the end of the year, while the average Irish family of about the same income has spent ten dollars more than it has earned. Charity visitors know that the Irish are often as open-handed and improvident as the Bedouins. A Catholic educator accounts for the scarcity of Irish millionaires by declaring that his people are too generous to accumulate great fortunes. They are free givers, and no people are more ready to take into the family the orphans of their relatives. In a county of mixed nationalities there will be more mortgages and stale debts against Irish farmers than against any others. In a well-paid class of workers there will be more renters and fewer home-owners among the Irish than among any other nationality of equal pay. Less habitually than others do the Irish make systematic provision for old age. They depend on the earnings of their children, who, indeed, are many and loyal enough. But if the children die early or scatter, the day-laborer must often eat the bread of charity. A decade ago the Irish were found to be relatively thrice as numerous in our almshouses as in the country at large. In the Northeast, where they formed a quarter of the population, they furnished three fifths of the paupers. In Massachusetts, and in Boston as well, they were four times as common in the almshouses as out of them. Nor do their children provide much better for the future. In Boston, those of Irish parentage produce two and one half times their quota of paupers. In both the first generation and the second, the frugal and fore-looking Germans have less than a tenth of the pauperism of the Irish. Dr. Bushee, who has investigated the conditions in Boston, says:

It cannot be said that the ordinary Irishman is of a provident disposition; he lives



MAP SHOWING DISTRIBUTION OF 3,493,732 PERSONS OF IRISH
PARENTAGE IN THE UNITED STATES

• dot this size represents 200 people • dot this size represents 2000 people • dot this size represents 20,000 people

in the present and worries comparatively little about the future. He is not extravagant in any particular way, but is wasteful in every way; it is his nature to drift when he ought to plan and economize. This disposition, combined with an ever-present tendency to drink too much, is liable to result in insecure employment and a small income. And, to make matters worse, in families of this kind children are born with reckless regularity.

In extenuation, let it not be forgotten that at home the earlier Irish immigrants had lived under perhaps a more demoralizing social condition than that from which any other of our immigrants have come. Fleeing from plague and starvation, great numbers were dumped at our ports with no means of getting out upon the land. What was there for them to do but to rush their labor into the nearest market and huddle sociably together in wretched slums, where, despite their sturdy physique, they fell an easy prey to sickness and died off twice as fast as they should? They lived as poorly as do the Russian Jews when first they come; but, being a green country-folk, they understood less than do the town-bred Jews

how to withstand the noxious influences of cities and slums.

Certainly, along with their courage and loyalty, the Irish did not bring the economic virtues. Straight from the hoe they came, without even the thrift of the farmer who owns his own land. Many of them were no better fitted to succeed in the modern competitive order than their ancestors of the sept in the days of Strongbow. In value-sense and foresight, how far they stand behind Scot, Fleming, or Yankee! In the acquisitive mêlée most of them are as children compared with the Greek or the Semite. An observant settlement worker has said:

The Irish are apt to make their occupation a secondary matter. They remain idle if no man hires them; but not so the Jew. If he can get no regular employment, it is possible to gather rags and junk and sell them. . . . If employed under a hard master, he still works on under conditions that would drive the Irishman to drink and the American to suicide until finally he sees an opportunity to improve his condition.

We must not forget that Irish development had been forcibly arrested by the

selfish policy of their conquerors. In the latter part of the seventeenth century the English Parliament, at the behest of English graziers and farmers, put an end to Ireland's cattle-trade to England, then to her exportation of provisions to the colonies. Afterward came export duties on Irish woollens, and, later, complete prohibition of the exportation of woollens to foreign countries. "Cotton, glass, hats, iron manufactures, sugar refining—whatever business Ireland turned her hand to, and always with success—was in turn restricted." The result was that the natural capacity of the people was repressed, the growth of industrial habits was checked, and the country was held down to simple agriculture under a blighting system of absentee landlordism. Still, we cannot overlook the success of the Scottish Lowlanders in Ulster under the same strangling discriminations, nor forget that the 3500 German Protestant refugees who were settled in Munster in 1709 prospered as did their brother refugees in Pennsylvania, and became in time much wealthier than their Celtic neighbors.

A thousand years ago an Irish scholar, teaching at Liège, acknowledged his love for the cup in his invocation to the Muses, and addressed a poem to a friend who, being the possessor of a great vineyard, understood "how to awaken genius through the inspiration of the heavenly dew."

ALCOHOLISM THE FREQUENT CAUSE OF POVERTY

It is this same "heavenly dew"—whose Erse name, *usquebaugh*, we have pronounced "whisky"—that, more than anything else, has held back the Irish in America. The Irishman is no more a craver of alcohol than other men, but his sociability betrays him to that beverage which is the seal of good fellowship. He does not sit down alone with a bottle, as the Scandinavian will do, nor get his friends round a table and quaff lager, as the German does. No "Dutch treat" for him. He drinks spirits in public, and, after a dram or two, his convivial nature requires that every stranger in the room shall seal friendship in a glass with him. His temperament, too, makes liquor a snare to him. Where another drinker becomes mellow or silent or sodden, the Celt becomes quarrelsome and foolish.

Twenty years ago, an analysis of more than seven thousand cases of destitution in our cities showed that drink was twice as frequent a cause of poverty among the Irish cases as among the Germans, and occurred half again as often among them as among the native American cases. Among many thousands of recent applications for charity, "intemperance of the bread-winner" crops out as a cause of destitution in one case out of twelve among old-strain Americans; but it taints one case out of seven among the Irish and one case out of six among the Irish of the second generation. In the charity hospitals of New York alcoholism is responsible for more than a fifth of all the cases. Drink is the root of the trouble in a quarter of the native Americans treated, in a third of the Irish patients, and in two fifths of the cases among the native-born of Irish fathers. Contrast this painful showing with the fact that one Italian patient out of sixty, one Magyar patient out of seventy, one Polish patient out of eighty, and one Hebrew patient out of one hundred is in the hospital on account of drink!

IRISH NEAR THE FOOT OF THE LIST IN CRIME

IN the quality of their crimes our immigrants differ more from one another than they do in complexion or in the color of their eyes. The Irishman's love of fighting has made Donnybrook Fair a byword; yet it is a fact that personal violence is six or seven times as often the cause of confinement for Italian, Magyar, or Finnish prisoners in our penitentiaries as for the Irish. Patrick may be quarrelsome, but he fights with his hands, and in his cups he is not homicidal, like the southern Italian, or ferocious, like the Finn. Three fifths of the Hebrew convicts are confined for gainful offenses, but only one fifth of the Irish. Among a score or more of nationalities, the Irish stand nearly at the foot of the list in the commission of larceny, burglary, forgery, fraud, or homicide. Rape, pandering, and the white-slave traffic are almost unknown among them. What could be more striking than the fact that more than half of the Irish convicts have been sent up for "offenses against public order," such as intoxication and vagrancy! One cannot help feeling

that the Celtic offender is a feckless fellow, enemy of himself more than of any one else. It is usually not cupidity or brutality or lust that lodges him in prison, but conviviality and weak control of impulses.

It is certain that no immigrant is more loyal to wife and child than the Irishman. Out of nearly ten thousand charity cases in which a wife was the head of the family, the greatest frequency of widowhood and the least frequency of desertion or separation is among the Irish. In only eighteen per cent. of the Irish cases is the husband missing; whereas among the Hebrews, Slovaks, Lithuanians, and Magyars he is missing in from forty to fifty per cent. of the cases. But the sons of Irish, with that ready adaptation to surroundings characteristic of the Celt, desert their wives with just about the same frequency as men of pure American stock; namely, thirty-six per cent., or twice that of their fathers.

GREAT CHANGES IN OCCUPATION AMONG THE IRISH

THIRTY years ago, when the Irish and the Germans in America were nearly equal in number, there were striking contrasts in the place they took in industry. As domestic servants, laborers, mill-hands, miners, quarrymen, stone-cutters, laundry workers, restaurant keepers, railway and street-car employees, officials and employees of government, the Irish were two or three times as numerous as the Germans. On the other hand, as farmers, saloon-keepers, bookkeepers, designers, musicians, inventors, merchants, manufacturers, and physicians, the Germans far outnumbered the Irish. Where artistic skill is required, as in confectionery, cabinet-making, wood-carving, engraving, photography, and jewelry-making; where scientific knowledge is called for, as in brewing, distilling, sugar-refining, and iron manufacture, the Irish were hopelessly beaten by the trained and plodding Germans.

For a while, the bulk of the Irish formed a pick-and-shovel caste, claiming exclusive possession of the poorest and least honorable occupations, and mobbing the Chinaman or the negro who intruded into their field. But the record of their children proves that there is nothing in the stock

that dooms it forever to serve at the tail-end of a wheelbarrow. Take, for instance, those workers known to the statistician as "Female bread-winners." Of the first generation of Irish, fifty-four per cent. are servants and waitresses; of the second generation, only sixteen per cent. Whither have these daughters gone? Out of the kitchen into the factory, the store, the office, and the school. In the needle trades they are twice as frequent as Bridget or Mary who came over in the steerage. Five times as often they serve behind the counter, seven times as often they work at the desk as stenographer or bookkeeper, five times as frequently they teach. One native girl out of twelve whose fathers were Irish is a teacher, as against one girl out of nine with American fathers. The Maggies of the second generation are twice as well represented as the native-born Gretas and Hildas. Evidently it will not be long before they have their full share of school positions. In thirty leading cities eighteen per cent. of the teachers are second-generation Irish; and there are cities where these swift climbers constitute from two fifths to a half of the teaching force.

Tonio or Josef now wields the shovel, while Michael's boy escapes competition with him by running nimbly up the ladder of occupations. As compared with their immigrant fathers, the proportion of laborers among the sons of Irishmen is halved, while that of professional men and salesmen is doubled, and that of clerks, copyists, and bookkeepers is trebled. The quota of saloon-keepers remains the same. There is no drift into agriculture or into mercantile pursuits. In the cities the Irish suffer little from the competition of the later immigrants because, thanks to their political control, they divide among themselves much of the work carried on by the municipality as well as the jobs under the great franchise-holding corporations. So far, the strength of the Irish has been in personal relations. They shine in the forum, in executive work, in public guardianship, and in public transportation, but not in the more monotonous branches of manufacture. In the colleges it has been noted that the students of Irish blood are strong for theology and law, but show little taste for medicine, engineering, or technology.

Among the first thousand men of science in America the Irish are only a fourth as well represented as the Germans, a fifteenth as well as the English and Canadians, and a twentieth as well as the Scotch. This backwardness is in part due to the overhang of bad conditions; and the compilers of the table very properly suggest that "the native-born sons of Irish-born parents may not be inferior in scientific productivity to other classes of the community." The same comment may be made on the fact that of the persons listed in "Who's Who in America," two per cent. were German-born, another two per cent. were English-born, but only one per cent. came from the land of Erin.

IRISH INTELLECT AND MENTAL ABILITY

No doubt the peaks of Celtic superiority are poetry and eloquence. Their gifts of emotion and imagination give the Irish the key to human hearts. They are eloquent for the same reason that they are poor technicians and investigators, for the typical Celt sees things not as they really are, but as they are to him.

The Irishman still follows authority and shows little tendency to think for himself. In philosophy and science he is far behind. Even when well-educated, he leans on conventional ideas. Unlike the educated German or Jew, he rarely ventures to dissect the ideas of parental authority, the position of woman, property, success, competition, individual liberty, etc., that lie at the base of commonplace thought. Here, again, this limitation by sentiment and authority derives doubtless from the social history of the Irish rather than from their blood. They have been engrossed with an old-fashioned problem—that of freeing their country. Meanwhile, the luckier peoples have swept on to ripen their thinking about class relations, industrial organization, and social institutions.

TRAITS OF THE CELT

WITH his Celtic imagination as a magic glass, the Irishman sees into the human heart and learns how to touch its strings. No one can wheedle like an Irish beggar or "blarney" like an Irish ward boss. Not only do the Irish furnish stirring orators, persuasive stump-speakers, moving plead-

ers, and delightful after-dinner speech-makers, but they give us good salesmen and successful traveling-men. Then, too, they know how to manage people. The Irish contractor is a great figure in construction work. The Irish mine "boss" or section foreman has the knack of handling men. The Irish politician is an adept in "lining-up" voters of other nationalities. More Germans than Irish enlisted in the Union armies, but more of the Irish rose to be officers. In the great corporations, Americans control policy and finance, Germans are used in technical work, and Irishmen are found in executive positions. The Irish are well to the fore in organizing labor and in leading athletics. "Of two applicants," says a city school superintendent, "I take the teacher with an Irish name, because she will have less trouble in discipline, and hits it off better with the parents and the neighborhood."

Whatever is in the Irish mind is available on the instant, so that the Irish rarely fail to do themselves justice. They keep their best foot forward, and if they fall, they light on their feet. They succeed as lawyers not only because they can play upon the jury, but because they are quick in thrust and parry. They abound in newspaper offices because their imagination enables them to keep "in touch" with the public mind. The Irishman rarely attains the thorough knowledge of the German physician; but he makes his mark as surgeon, because he is quick to perceive and to decide when the knife discloses a grave, unsuspected condition.

The Irishman accepts the Erse proverb, "Contention is better than loneliness." "His nature goes out to the other fellow all the time," declares a wise priest. The lodge meeting of a Hibernian benevolent association is a revelation of kindness and delicacy of feeling in rough, toil-worn men. A great criminal lawyer tells me that if he has a desperate case to defend, he keeps the cold-blooded Swede off the jury and gets an Irishman on, especially one who has been "in trouble." "If you want money to advance a principle," says an observer, "go among the Scandinavians; if you want money to relieve suffering, go among the Irish." Bridget becomes attached to the family she serves, and, after she is married, calls again and

again "to see how the childher are coming on." Freda, after years of service, will leave you offhand and never evince the remotest interest in your family. The Irish detest the merit system, for they make politics a matter of friendship and favor. They warm to a reform movement only when it becomes a fight on law-breakers. Then the Hibernian district attorney goes after the "higher-ups" like a St. George. When the Irish do renounce machine politics, they become broad democrats rather than "good government" men.

Imaginative, and sensitive to what others think of him, the Celt is greatly affected by praise and criticism. Unlike the Teuton, he cannot plod patiently toward a distant goal without an appreciative word or glance. He does his best when he is paced, for emulation is his sharpest stimulus. The grand stand has something to do with the Irish bent for athletic contests. Irish school-children love the limelight, and distinguish themselves better on the platform than in the classroom. Irish teachers with good records in the training-school are less likely than other teachers to improve themselves by private study.

"The Irish are wilder than the rest in their expression of grief," observes the visiting nurse, "but they don't 'take on' for long." The Irishman is less persistent than others in keeping up the premiums on his insurance policy, the payments on his building-and-loan-association stock. He is quick to throw up his job or change his place in order to avoid sameness. "My will is strong," I heard a bright-eyed Kathleen say, "but it keeps changing its object; Gunda [her Norwegian friend] is *so* determined and fixed in purpose!" There is a proverb, "The Irishman is no good till he is kicked," meaning that he is unstable till his blood is up. Once his fighting spirit is roused, he proves to be a "last ditcher." As a soldier, he is better in charge than in defense, and if held back, he frets himself to exhaustion.

A professor compares his Celtic students to the game trout, which makes one splendid dash for the fly, but sulks if he misses it. A bishop told me how his prizeman, an Irish youth sent to Paris to study Hebrew, was amazed at the prodigious industry of his German and Polish chums. "I never knew before," he wrote, "what study is." A settlement worker comments on the avidity with which night-school pupils in Irish neighborhoods select classes with interesting subjects of instruction, and the rapidity with which they drop off when the "dead grind" begins. Their temperament rebels at close, continuous application. The craftsman of Irish blood is likely to be a little slapdash in method, and he rarely stands near the top of his trade in skill. The Irishman succeeds best in staple farming—all wheat, all cotton, or all beets. With the advent of diversified farming, he is supplanted by the painstaking German, Scandinavian, or Pole. Work requiring close attention to details—like that of the nurseryman, the florist, or the breeder—falls into the hands of a more patient type. In banking and finance, men of a colder blood control.

FUTURE OF THE IRISH-AMERICAN

THE word "brilliant" is oftener used for the Irish than for any other aliens among us save the Hebrews. Yet those of Irish blood are far from manning their share of the responsible posts in American society. Their contribution by no means matches that of an equal number of the old American breed. But, in sooth, it is too soon yet to expect the Irish strain to show what it can do. Despite their schooling, the children of the immigrant from Ireland often become infected with the parental slackness, unthrift, and irresponsibility. They in turn communicate some of the heritage to their children; so that we shall have to wait until the fourth generation before we shall learn how the Hibernian stock compares in value with stocks that have had a happier social history.

GIDEON

BY WELLS HASTINGS

"A' de nex' frawg dat houn' pup seen, he pass him by wide."

The house, which had hung upon every word, roared with laughter, and shook with a storming volley of applause. Gideon bowed to right and to left, low, grinning, assured comedy obeisances; but as the laughter and applause grew, he shook his head, and signaled quietly for the drop. He had answered many encores, and he was an instinctive artist. It was part of the fuel of his vanity that his audience had never yet had enough of him. Dramatic judgment, as well as dramatic sense of delivery, was native to him, qualities which the shrewd Felix Stuhk, his manager and exultant discoverer, recognized and wisely trusted in. Off stage Gideon was watched over like a child and a delicate investment, but once behind the footlights, he was allowed to go his own triumphant gait.

It was small wonder that Stuhk deemed himself one of the cleverest managers in the business; that his narrow, blue-shaven face was continually chiseled in smiles of complacent self-congratulation. He was rapidly becoming rich, and there were bright prospects of even greater triumphs, with proportionately greater reward. He had made Gideon a national character, a head-liner, a star of the first magnitude in the firmament of the vaudeville theater, and all in six short months. Or, at any rate, he had helped to make him all this; he had booked him well and given him his opportunity. To be sure, Gideon had done the rest; Stuhk was as ready as any one to do credit to Gideon's ability. Still, after all, he, Stuhk, was the discoverer, the theatrical Columbus who had had the courage and the vision.

A now-hallowed attack of tonsillitis had driven him to Florida, where presently Gideon had been employed to beguile his convalescence, and guide him over the intricate shallows of that long lagoon known as the Indian River in search of various fish. On days when fish had been reluctant, Gideon had been lured into conver-

sation, and gradually into narrative and the relation of what had appeared to Gideon as humorous and entertaining; and finally Felix, the vague idea growing big within him, had one day persuaded his boatman to dance upon the boards of a long pier where they had made fast for lunch. There, with all the sudden glory of crystallization, the vague idea took definite form and became the great inspiration of Stuhk's career.

Gideon had grown to be to vaudeville much what *Uncle Remus* is to literature: there was virtue in his very simplicity. His artistry itself was native and natural. He loved a good story, and he told it from his own sense of the gleeful morsel upon his tongue as no training could have made him. He always enjoyed his story and himself in the telling. Tales never lost their savor, no matter how often repeated; age was powerless to dim the humor of the thing, and as he had shouted and gurgled and laughed over the fun of things when all alone, or holding forth among the men and women and little children of his color, so he shouted and gurgled and broke from sonorous chuckles to musical, falsetto mirth when he fronted the sweeping tiers of faces across the intoxicating glare of the footlights. He had that rare power of transmitting something of his own enjoyments. When Gideon was on the stage, Stuhk used to enjoy peeping out at the intent, smiling faces of the audience, where men and women and children, hardened theater-goers and folk fresh from the country, sat with moving lips and faces lit with an eager interest and sympathy for the black man strutting in loose-footed vivacity before them.

"He 's simply unique," he boasted to wondering local managers—"unique, and it took me to find him. There he was, a little black gold-mine, and all of 'em passed him by until I came. Some eye? What? I guess you 'll admit you have to hand it some to your Uncle Felix. If that coon's health holds out, we 'll have all the money there is in the mint."