

The superfluous mind of other countries, the greater force of character which is produced by the breaking up of home associations, and by the excitement of a new world, as well as the influence of its example on the minds and character of the native-born, will all be lost. The great breadth of unsettled land would then, like the forests and plains of Russia and Poland, rather indicate what the country *might* become, than what, within any assignable time, it is likely to be.

Another set of facts is properly dwelt upon by the same writer. Of all quarters of the Union, the New England States, it is well known, receive the greatest influx of British settlers, and in character and habits approach most closely to the old country; and it is precisely by these restless New Englanders that the political, religious, and educational institutions of the great northern and western States are mainly influenced.

‘The emigrants who go out from Europe—the raw bricks for the new State buildings—are generally poor, and for the most part indifferently educated. Being strangers to the institutions of the country, and to their mode of working, and, above all, being occupied in establishing themselves, the rural settlers have little leisure or inclination to meddle with the direct regulation of public affairs for some years after they have first begun to hew their farms out of the solitary wilderness. The New Englanders come in to do this. The west is an outlet for their superfluous lawyers, their doctors, their ministers of various persuasions, their newspaper editors, their bankers, their merchants, and their pedlars. All the professions and influential positions are filled up by them. They are the movers in all the public measures that are taken in the organization of State governments, and the establishment of county institutions; and they occupy most of the legislative, executive, and other official situations, by means of which the State affairs are at first carried on. Thus the west presents an inviting field to the ambitious spirits of the east; and through their means the genius and institutions of the New England States are transplanted and diffused, and determine, in a great measure, those of the more westerly portions of the union.’

This paragraph helps to explain the phenomenon which of all others most astonishes the stranger—viz. the ‘power of absorption’ of the American character. Suppose a skilful chemist throwing five or six different ingredients into his crucible, and mingling and crushing them until he extracts one homogeneous essence, and we have an apt image of the moral and intellectual chemistry which is continually acting upon the population of the States. Its founders came from England, but ever since it has been receiving recruits from almost every country of Europe. Scotland, Ireland, Wales, France, Germany, the mountains of Switzerland, and the shores of the Baltic, nay, even distant and isolated Russia herself