

The Scandinavian countries belong to a group of five or six European states which are set down, in ordinary statistical works, as practically without illiteracy; that is, with less than one per cent. of persons unable to read and write. Austro-Hungary shows 30 per cent of illiteracy, Italy 41, Russia nearly 80. In the matter of religion, all Scandinavians are most uncompromising Protestants. The distrust of the Irish, which sometimes takes active form, is at bottom religious, and not racial. Few of them come here without some political knowledge and experience. Freedom, republican institutions, constitutional government, and elections are no novelties. There have been none of the excesses characteristic of the use of a new-found liberty.

Down to about 1878 the great majority came from the country parishes, where the dearest ambition was to own land, the more the better. No other class of immigrants, and few Americans, have been so ready to undergo the hardship, privation, and isolation of the frontier for the sake of a far-distant competence. It is simply because the Scandinavian puts a higher value upon land-owning than any other immigrant, and has generally preferred to settle upon cheap wild land instead of purchasing at a higher price land already cultivated, or settling down in town, that millions of dollars have been so rapidly added to the valuation of the Northwestern States, like Minnesota and Iowa. Organized emigration has been quite unknown among them. They have come as individuals, as families, or as voluntary companies, and they have settled in the same fashion. The proletariat is not largely recruited from them. Secret societies and intrigues are not their specialties. The anarchist does not look to them for allies or supplies.

The political influence of the

Scandinavians has been second to the economic. The Norwegian in particular seems to have a *penchant* for politics. An ingrained antipathy to slavery was undoubtedly the most powerful impulse which before the war carried the Scandinavians into the Republican party. The example of the earlier immigrants, the anti-slavery tradition, and the prestige of the party after the war predisposed the new-comers in favor of the Republicans. It was a perfectly natural choice, and indicates nothing more than a conservative mind. They have filled various state offices in Wisconsin and Minnesota since 1869, when a Swede was first elected secretary of state for Minnesota. In 1892, and again in 1894, a Norwegian was elected governor of Minnesota, and that State is at present represented in the United States Senate by a Norwegian. In general, the allegiance to party has been stronger than any race feeling. Toward the close of the decade 1880-90 the allegiance of the Scandinavians to the Republican party was gradually shaken. The original anti-slavery impulse had completely died out; the agrarian discontent affected those who were farmers, as it did Americans of that class, causing them to look to political forces to relieve them; the increased percentage of immigrants who went to the towns furnished material for labor agitators. Finally, the tariff reform sentiment had gained a great hold upon them. Altogether, the division of the Scandinavians, politically, is going on more and more along the same lines as among the Americans. The Populist party has gained the most in the readjustment of party affiliations. A fair index of the loosening of party ties among them is found in the changed politics of their press. All told, they have about 130 newspapers. In 1885, probably three-fourths of those