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# Association Men

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## CONTENTS

The Young Men's Christian Association in 1905: Annual review by the Editor.....	135	Soldiers .....	148
Leavening the Nation, by Rev. Cleland B. MacAfee	137	Sailors and Marines.....	149
Old World Men in North America, by Walter Laidlaw, Ph.D.....	138	Militiamen .....	150
At the Springs of Life, by Pres. Woodrow Wilson.	139	Boys .....	151
A Message from Gov. Folk.....	140	Students .....	152
Inaction a Prolific Cause of Evil, by Gov. Cutler..	140	Men of Mission Lands.....	153
Progress and Opportunity, by the General Secretary	141	Evening Study.....	154
A Program for Expansion on the Foreign Field, by John R. Mott.....	141	Physical Training.....	155
A Survey of the Association Field:		In Bible Study.....	156
Railroad Men.....	142	Men's Meetings.....	157
Industrial Men.....	143	Employment .....	158
Foreign-Born Men.....	144	Building Progress of the Year.....	159
Indians .....	146	The Year Reviewed by States.....	166
Colored Men.....	147	The Bible Study Department.....	175
		The County Department.....	176
		The Boys' Department.....	177
		Current Comment.....	178

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# ASSOCIATION MEN

VOLUME XXXI

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## THE YOUNG MEN'S CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATION IN 1905

Sixty cents a week measured the financial output and twelve men the numerical strength of the Young Men's Christian Association sixty-two years ago. At the close of 1905, in North America alone, the records show an expenditure of more than \$110,000 weekly, or \$7,000,000 yearly, contributed by the 400,000 members and those who stand back of their organizations; many of these and of the 300,000 more members in thirty-nine countries, in the spirit of the humble London clerk who was laid away in St. Paul's Cathedral a few weeks ago, have been "willing to make a sacrifice" and carry the load of other men. . . . The grip of the movement in North America to-day is shown by the three-score buildings erected last year as centers for manhood-making at a cost of more than \$3,000,000; and the payment of membership fees and contributions for extending the Association at home and abroad of \$4,000,000 and more. The courage to attempt still larger things is shown conspicuously in the one hundred and sixty and more enterprises on foot and success certain, to secure and to expend \$10,000,000 for new buildings. . . . But thousands of members added or millions of dollars spent in erecting buildings are not the terms of real advance by the Associations in the past year. More than members or millions, the most significant advance has been its extension and adaptation to the men of differing countries, conditions and religions and of what may be called the rediscovery of the place of the Bible and of the universal welcome given to men who present its message and represent its Author. . . . In a larger spirit than to serve itself or to gain members, there has been an increasing sympathetic outreach to all men, from the Italian section hand to the bank president. Thousands of groups of men have been found who have united under the Association's plan and idea of service—Mr. Wanamaker says, "The Association has the patent on opportunity"—for their fellowmen, among industrial workers, railroad men, street railway employees, high school and working boys, the foreign born young men in America, among the Chinese, Japanese and Orientals, soldiers, sailors and militia, to the boy and man in the country as he comes to the city, the Indian and the negro. It aims to stimulate to purpose and character and serve these men in every demand of their natures. . . . An idea of the men who constitute the Association, and whom it serves, and the stories of those who have felt its quickening touch and responded to Christ's call to service, may be gained by a glance through the succeeding pages. . . . While more has been done for social betterment, the Association has been none the less spiritual. Rapidly developing departments for the welfare of men have not diverted the Association from its spiritual service to them, but increased their service to others. Although there are more men now in the Associations seeking to strengthen their bodies, for recreation and to engage in com-

# THE ASSOCIATION AS A LEAVENING POWER

BY CLELAND B. McAFEE, D.D., SUCCESSOR TO DR. CUYLER.

The Gospel of Christ is amazingly adaptable. Institutions come nearest to the heart of it when they bring it to men at the points where they most need it and are most open to it. It is always amazingly equalizing too. There is not much said about classes of men in Scripture, but wherever the Gospel of Christ has a fair chance, you presently come to feel that class lines are incongruous. They blur before you, as lines do after you have looked at the sun. By the time your eyes are clear you cannot find the lines.

Now, the unity of a nation is not geographical or racial. It is a matter of spirit. Whatever makes men brothers is the thing for national unity. It will need to fit men who differ and bring them to terms of fellowship and understanding in service. It is because the Association takes the Gospel and gets that result among men that it is a tremendous agency of the church to-day for leavening the nation. I do not forget that its main purpose is not the amalgamating of a nation, but the advancing of the Kingdom of God. The most rapidly developing department of the work is the spiritual—Bible study, evangelistic efforts, personal work, bringing men to Jesus Christ. That is first and best. But in doing that the nation is leavened, unified and amalgamated.

## **The Remembrance of a City's Great Loneliness**

Think how the Association is helping young fellows to contact with the best life of a new location. Just now a gray-haired man was describing to me his boyhood in New York City. His clearest remembrance is of its loneliness, its isolation from life that he knew was best, and its almost forced contact with bad currents that flow strong in every city. Something was needed to bring him into reach of healthy life, so it could help him, but so he could help it as well. His voice almost broke in telling of the young fellows who came from the country with him. Only two of the group who did not go to the bad, and not one who was natively inclined from good. I was prepared for the saying that in his manhood he had maintained a dozen young fellows most of the time in the Association until they could stand on their own feet. Life is fluid in this land. A man is here to-day, and in five years is in three other cities with expectation of permanence. The Association meets him wherever he goes, gives him contact with the best life in his new location, saves him from the tug of downward currents.

## **Keeping Alive the Best of the Best Days**

Recent years have seen the sagacious extending of the reach of the Association into smaller

towns, the country, colleges, where the young men are in their younger days, where many of them will stay. There they learn the ways of Christian service and fellowship. When the change comes, if it does, they are ready to be part of the force rather than part of the field for Christian work. That is a great ambition which at least one secretary has, to have in our greatest city a splendid college clubhouse, which can be a rallying center for graduates for all colleges, in which they can keep alive the best traditions of their best days, from which they can set out to leaven the city into which they have come. It is not what the Association gives to a man that counts most; it is what it manages to make him give to his fellows that settles him in the finer way of living.

## **A Truer Democracy than Most Men Know**

Then think how the Association is equalizing what we may call the classes of men. We confuse ourselves by talking about higher and lower classes, unless we mean moral and immoral classes. Rather the classes of to-day are wings of society, running sometimes far apart, but all capable of harmony and cooperation. One of my friends has said a good deal lately about the neglected rich. No man is more pathetically in need of help to-day than the average son of wealth. At the other extreme of society there is the young fellow who has never had a chance, works early and late, and is wide-eyed at any chance for relaxation. Between these two are men in the shops, and factories, and car barns, and offices, and school. That man in shirt sleeves to-day will be the owner in ten years, and that man who struts in his walk will be under him. But all the while the Association is reminding them that they are brothers, is drawing them into the fellowship of profit and of service. That is the secondary philosophy of the noonday meetings in the factories in Cleveland and Brooklyn and elsewhere. The night classes, the summer outings, the gymnasium, the thousand and one methods of equalizing men, are teaching a truer democracy than most men know. A young minister told me that he went to a certain gymnasium class because there he met men of another sort than himself, who helped him to understand all men better. It chanced that the day before a man had said that his own attendance on that class had given him a new idea of ministers and a new sympathy with them. I spoke to a Bible class in another city, and the teacher, a gymnasium leader, told me the story of the young men as they sat together. They were of all sorts, with only

those essential human points of contact which the Association had discovered and magnified. There are the departments—army, navy, railroad, industrial—making men of all sorts feel the unity of the race at the point of their need. It is time we quit being interested in a man because he does this thing or lives in that way. It is time we grew an interest in him because he is a man and a fellow of ours.

#### **Association or Saloon-Treated Immigration**

Think also of the way the Association is dealing with men of all races. There was an old New York lady who rebelled against changing the name of her church by eliminating the "Dutch" from it, on the ground that there were plenty of other churches for other people, and hers ought to be saved just for the Dutch. The Association began in England and it has always spoken the vernacular. There is something about the Gospel of Christ, though, that makes race lines seem less than they were. Notably that is true where races are so thrown together as here. Go to Ellis Island for one day and you will thank God for the Association—among miners and factory men and in cities. Here are men mightily in danger of the ruin of American life, needing some strong, assimilating influence. They are foreigners; they must become familiars. In

one Association are twenty nationalities, and sixty-two occupations and professions. Another has twenty-two nationalities represented. They are being welded together into one national body, under the flux of the Gospel of salvation and service. Hardly a great Association which is not concerned with some foreign work, reminding itself that He hath made of one blood all nations of the earth. It is not immigration, good or bad, that threatens the country. It is the treatment the newcomers receive that determines the danger. Saloon-treated immigration, neglected immigration, that is perilous. But immigration which is introduced at once to the good influences of American life, which is blended at once with life already strong and safe, which is surrounded at once with Gospel light and life, that is the hope of the future. The unity of the nation is always one of spirit—a spirit to be caught by Poles and Slavs and Italians, quite as surely, if not quite as swiftly, as by the races which we count more favored. Here is the enlarging opportunity of the Christian church. Here is its agency—the Association. Classes, special efforts buildings for particular lines of work, all these help. Thereby the races are amalgamated into one new race—Christian, American.

*Brooklyn, N. Y.*

## **OLD WORLD MEN IN AMERICA**

BY WALTER LAIDLAW, PH.D., SECRETARY FEDERATION OF CHURCHES, NEW YORK CITY

Of the immigrants admitted at the port of New York in the five years, June 30, 1900, June 30, 1905, 2,032,804 were men, and 878,435 were women—69.9 per cent. men, 30.1 per cent. women.

Of the total immigration in these five years at the port of New York, namely, 2,911,239, 82.6 per cent., or 2,406,995 immigrants were between 14 and 44 years of age, less than 6 per cent. above that age, and the balance under 14 years.

Four out of every five immigrants, therefore, belong to the age class with which the work of the Young Men's Christian Association especially deals; 600,000 Southern Italians, 257,000 Poles, 242,000 Hebrews, 192,000 Germans, 161,000 Scandinavians, 135,000 Northern Italians, 131,000 Slovaks, 115,000 Irish, 103,000 Magyars, besides 56,000 English and hundreds of thousands of Armenians, Bohemians, Bulgarians, Croatians, Dalmatians, Dutch, Finns, French, Greek, Portuguese, and almost a score of other peoples, in the very heyday of their life, namely, between 14 and 44 years of age, entered America through the harbor of New York in these five years. Their brain and brawn are needed in the material development

of the country, for if immigration is a problem it is also a power. A problem it is when the incoming foreigner associates only with his congeners of creed or speech, and in our cities there is too much of a tendency of segregation among these foreign folk. In New York, for instance, the incoming Russian walks up the Bowery (the old post road to Boston), and, turning to the right, settles in the 4th Assembly District, or in the 8th, and when these overflow, he simply pushes up into the 12th, with the result that these three contiguous Assembly Districts now have more Russians than any other people. The Italian, who is reaching our country even more rapidly, does not even travel as far as the Bowery in his journey to settlement in New York, but, going straight up Broadway, he has taken possession of the 2d Assembly District, the 6th, which lies immediately north of it, and, turned westward by Union Square, has possessed the 3d Assembly District, making, as in the case of the Russians, three contiguous Assembly Districts more Italian than anything else.

This segregation of the foreigners is undoubtedly serious; it tends to the perpetuation of Old World customs, costumes, creeds and