

and Labor to admit borderline cases; it established in the Bureau of Immigration a division of information, designed by anti-restrictionists to promote the distribution of immigrants by finding jobs for them outside the big cities; and it set up a commission charged with making an exhaustive investigation of the impact of immigration on the nation. The last idea crept into the law as a substitute for the literacy test. It had the merit of sounding constructive, and above all it would afford a breathing spell, postponing another nativist assault until the opposition to restriction was better organized.⁷⁰

The anti-restrictionists had had a narrow squeeze, and they knew that the issue was far from settled. Perhaps they sensed that the ruthless power of the Speaker might not again avail them, though they could not foresee that it would be broken before the immigration question came to a head again. Yet they could count on building more durable barriers to legislative action. Big business was just beginning to take an active part in resisting restriction. The masses of naturalized Americans from southern and eastern Europe had shown only a fraction of their potential voting strength, and every ship was bringing more recruits. The victors of 1907 resorted to the delaying action of a lengthy investigation in the belief that time was on their side.

In a limited sense it was. Every year the new immigrants and their allies put up a more energetic defense. From a larger point of view, however, they had made too little and too sluggish use of a crucial interlude. The complacent optimism of the early twentieth century could not, in the nature of things, last for very long; the social and economic problems of the industrial age were certainly far from solved. Henceforth, confidence in the future of American society would have to rest increasingly on the use of organized intelligence to preserve and fulfill what fortune initially provided. With the extension of centralized direction over the national life, immigration would surely come under purposeful control. Yet the friends of the immigrant had simply adopted on the issue of restriction a frozen posture of defending the status quo. The progressive spirit reacted to ethnic problems too ambiguously to be of much help. So the opportunity to think out an immigration policy that might be both realistic and democratic was lost.

Chapter Six

Toward Racism: The History of an Idea

It need not puzzle us that Malay and Papuan, Celt and Roman, Saxon and Tartar should mix. . . . The best nations are those most widely related. . . .

—Ralph Waldo Emerson, 1856

"You cannot dodge the Mendelian law, my boy. Like begets like, but in a union of opposites we get throwbacks. . . . You're not going to run the risk of mongrelizing the species, are you?"

—Peter B. Kyne, 1923

Hardly any aspect of American xenophobia over its course from the eighteenth to the twentieth century is more striking than the monotony of its ideological refrain. Year after year, decade after decade, the same charges and complaints have sounded in endless reiteration. Various combined, formulated, and documented, adapted to different and changing adversaries, rising and falling in intensity and acceptance, nearly all of the key ideas persisted without basic modification.

But in one major respect the pattern of nativist thought changed fundamentally. Gradually and progressively it veered toward racism. Absent from the strictures of the eighteenth century nationalist, notions of racial superiority and exclusiveness appeared in the mid-nineteenth, but they were to undergo a long process of revision and expansion before emerging in the early twentieth century as the most important nativist ideology. Several genera-

tions of intellectuals took part in transforming the vague and somewhat benign racial concepts of romantic nationalism into doctrines that were precise, malicious, and plausibly applicable to European immigration. The task was far from simple; at every point the race-thinkers confronted the liberal and cosmopolitan barriers of Christianity and American democracy. Ironically and significantly, it was not until the beginning of the present century, when public opinion recovered much of its accustomed confidence, that racial nativism reached intellectual maturity.

Of course racial nativism forms only a segment, though a critical and illuminating segment, of the larger evolution of race consciousness in modern times. The greater part of the complex phenomenon which is now fashionably called "race prejudice" lies beyond the scope of this book; its history is tangled and still largely unwritten. What concerns us is the intersection of racial attitudes with nationalistic ones—in other words, the extension to European nationalities of that sense of absolute difference which already divided white Americans from people of other colors. When sentiments analogous to those already discharged against Negroes, Indians, and Orientals spilled over into anti-European channels, a force of tremendous intensity entered the stream of American nativism.

The whole story of modern racial ferment, nativist and otherwise, has two levels, one involving popular emotions, the other concerning more or less systematic ideas. Most of the emotions flow from a reservoir of habitual suspicion and distrust accumulated over the span of American history toward human groups stamped by obvious differences of color. The ideas, on the other hand, depend on the speculations of intellectuals on the nature of races. The distinction is partly artificial, for the spirit of white supremacy—or what may be labeled race-feeling—has interlocked with race-thinking at many points. Indeed, their convergence has given the problem of race its modern significance. But at least the distinction has the merit of reminding us that race-feelings and explicit concepts about races have not always accompanied one another. The Anglo-Saxon idea in its early form did not entail the biological taboos of race-feeling. Nor did the pattern of white supremacy, in all likelihood, depend at the outset on formal race-thinking. Traditional religious beliefs, often hardly articulated

at all, served the pragmatic purposes of the English colonists who enslaved Negroes and who scourged Indians as Satanic agents "having little of Humanitie but shape."¹ However, the evolution of white supremacy into a comprehensive philosophy of life, grounding human values in the innate constitution of nature, required a major theoretical effort. It was the task of the race-thinkers to organize specific antipathies toward dark-hued peoples into a generalized, ideological structure.

To the development of racial nativism, the thinkers have made a special contribution. Sharp physical differences between native Americans and European immigrants were not readily apparent; to a large extent they had to be manufactured. A rather elaborate, well-entrenched set of racial ideas was essential before the newcomers from Europe could seem a fundamentally different order of men. Accordingly, a number of race-conscious intellectuals blazed the way for ordinary nativists, and it will be useful to tell their story before turning in later chapters to the popular emotions their ideas helped to orient.

From Romanticism to Naturalism

Two general types of race-thinking, derived from very different origins, circulated throughout the nineteenth century. One came from political and literary sources and assumed, under the impact of the romantic movement, a nationalistic form. Its characteristic manifestation in England and America was the Anglo-Saxon tradition. Largely exempt through most of the century from the passions of either the nativist or the white supremacist, this politico-literary concept of race lacked a clearly defined physiological basis. Its vague identification of culture with ancestry served mainly to emphasize the antiquity, the uniqueness, and the permanence of a nationality. It suggested the inner vitality of one's own culture, rather than the menace of another race. Whereas some of the early racial nationalists attributed America's greatness (and above all its capacity for self-government) to its Anglo-Saxon derivation, others thought America was creating a new mixed race; and, such was the temper of the age, many accepted both ideas at the same time. But whether exclusive or cosmopolitan in tendency, these romantics almost always discussed race as an ill-

defined blessing; hardly ever as a sharply etched problem. During the age of confidence, as Anglo-Saxonism spread among an eastern social elite well removed from the fierce race conflicts of other regions, it retained a complacent, self-congratulatory air.

Meanwhile a second kind of race-thinking was developing from the inquiries of naturalists. Stimulated by the discovery of new worlds overseas, men with a scientific bent began in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries to study human types systematically in order to catalogue and explain them. While Anglo-Saxonists consulted history and literature to identify national races, the naturalists concentrated on the great "primary" groupings of *Homo sapiens* and used physiological characteristics such as skin color, stature, head shape, and so on, to distinguish them one from the other. Quite commonly this school associated physical with cultural differences and displayed, in doing so, a feeling of white superiority over the colored races. On the whole, however, the leading scientific thinkers did not regard race differences as permanent, pure, and unalterable. A minority insisted that races were immutable, separately created species; but the influence of this polygenist argument suffered from its obvious violation of the Christian doctrine of the unity of mankind. For the most part, early anthropologists stressed the molding force of environmental conditions in differentiating the human family.²

In the course of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the separation between the two streams of race-thinking gradually and partially broke down. Racial science increasingly intermingled with racial nationalism. Under the pressure of a growing national consciousness, a number of European naturalists began to subdivide the European white man into biological types, often using linguistic similarity as evidence of hereditary connection. For their part, the nationalists slowly absorbed biological assumptions about the nature of race, until every national trait seemed wholly dependent on hereditary transmission. This interchange forms the intellectual background for the conversion of the vague Anglo-Saxon tradition into a sharp-cutting nativist weapon and, ultimately, into a completely racist philosophy.

Behind the fusion—and confusion—of natural history with national history, of "scientific" with social ideas, lay a massive trend in the intellectual history of the late nineteenth and twentieth

centuries. Hopes and fears alike received scientific credentials; and men looked on the human universe in increasingly naturalistic terms. In religion, literature, philosophy, and social theory ancient dualisms dissolved. Human affairs and values were seen more and more as products of vast, impersonal processes operating throughout nature. The Darwinian theory represented a decisive step in this direction; in the eyes of many, it subsumed mankind wholly under the grim physical laws of the animal kingdom.

While the whole naturalistic trend encouraged race-thinking and lent a sharper flesh-and-blood significance to it, Darwinism added a special edge. By picturing all species as both the products and the victims of a desperate, competitive struggle for survival, Darwinism suggested a warning: the daily peril of destruction confronts every species. Thus the evolutionary theory, when fully adopted by race-thinkers, not only impelled them to anchor their national claims to a biological basis; it also provoked anxiety by denying assurance that the basis would endure. Although most Anglo-Saxonists still identified their race with an indwelling spiritual principle, now they had also to envision the bearers of that principle as combatants in the great biological battle raging throughout nature.

On the other hand, it is not true that Darwinian (and Spencerian) ideas led directly to an outburst of racial nativism or to an overriding hereditarian determinism. The whole scientific revolution of the nineteenth century merely prepared the way and opened the possibility for those developments. Actually, the evolutionary hypothesis left major obstacles to a rigidly racial creed.

First of all, the general climate of opinion in the early Darwinian era inhibited the pessimistic implications of the new naturalism. What stood out in the first instance, as the great social lesson of the theory of natural selection, was not the ravages of the struggle for survival but rather the idea of "the survival of the fittest." To a generation of intellectuals steeped in confidence, the laws of evolution seemed to guarantee that the "fittest" races would most certainly triumph over inferior competitors. And in their eagerness to convert social values into biological facts, Darwinian optimists unblinkingly read "the fittest" to mean "the best." They felt confirmed in their supremacy over the immigrants, who in turn seemed the winnowed best of Europe. Darwinism, therefore, easily

ministered to Anglo-Saxon pride, but in the age of confidence it could hardly arouse Anglo-Saxon anxiety.

Secondly, Darwinism gave the race-thinkers little concrete help in an essential prerequisite of racism—belief in the preponderance of heredity over environment. Certainly the biological vogue of the late nineteenth century stimulated speculation along these lines, but the evolutionary theory by no means disqualified a fundamentally environmentalist outlook. Darwin's species struggled and evolved within particular natural settings; they survived through adaptation to those settings. This aspect of the theory ultimately impressed itself so forcefully on American social scientists that toward the end of the century one of them acclaimed the doctrine of evolution for actually discouraging racial as opposed to environmental interpretations.³ And while liberal environmentalists drew comfort from the new scientific gospel, it left the race-thinkers with no definite knowledge of how hereditary forces function or persist. Darwinism explained only the survival, not the appearance, of biological variations from pre-existing types. The origins of and relationships among races remained obscure.

Obviously both of these difficulties would have to be overcome if the Anglo-Saxon nationalism of the 1870's was to evolve into a fully effective instrument for race-feelings. Even to begin the transition the race-thinkers would have to cast loose from Darwinian optimism, discarding the happy thought that the fittest, in the sense of the best, always win out. That done, they would still lack a strict racial determinism. To divorce race entirely from environment and to put biological purity at the center of social policy, American nationalists would need further cues from the developing natural sciences.

Patricians on the Defensive

Americans were slow to take that second and more drastic step. Although sweeping theories and pretentious sciences or pseudo-sciences of race developed in continental Europe in the late nineteenth century, American intellectuals of that period knew practically nothing of them. Nor did American scientists make any contributions to race-thinking similar to those of Broca, Ammon, or Lapouge. In the United States psychologists dealt with individuals

rather than groups, sociologists with institutions rather than peoples. Anthropologists immersed themselves in narrowly empirical studies of primitive folk, chiefly the Indians.⁴ The movement toward racism was an up-hill fight in democratic America.

But a number of Anglo-Saxon nationalists in the eighties and nineties did begin to break away from evolutionary optimism. At first, instead of trying to qualify or rebut the principle of the survival of the fittest, the race-thinkers simply turned from complacent contemplation of America's Anglo-Saxon past to an anxious look at its future. This swing to a defensive outlook marks the initial phase of racial nativism. It required no fresh intellectual stimulus; it was precipitated by the general crisis in American society.

The same internal crisis that reactivated the older nativist traditions crystallized the new one. Until unrest and class cleavage upset the reign of confidence in the 1880's, the assimilationist concept of a mixed nationality had tempered and offset pride in Anglo-Saxon superiority. But when the Anglo-Saxon enthusiasts felt their society and their own status deeply threatened, they put aside their boasts about the assimilative powers of their race. They read the signs of the times as symptoms of its peril. Contrary to an impression widespread among historians, the new racial xenophobia did not originate as a way of discriminating between old and new immigrations. It arose from disturbances, within American society, which preceded awareness of a general ethnic change in the incoming stream. At the outset, Anglo-Saxon nativism vaguely indicted the whole foreign influx. Only later did the attack narrow specifically to the new immigration.

The current social scene presented a troubling contrast to the image of America that Anglo-Saxon intellectuals cherished. The tradition of racial nationalism had always proclaimed orderly self-government as the chief glory of the Anglo-Saxons—an inherited capacity so unique that the future of human freedom surely rested in their hands. But now the disorders of the mid-eighties cast doubt on the survival of a free society. The more anxious of the Anglo-Saxon apostles knew that the fault must lie with all the other races swarming to America. Did they not, one and all, lack the Anglo-Saxon's self-control, almost by definition? So, behind the popular image of unruly foreigners, a few caught sight of un-

ruly races; and Anglo-Saxon nativism emerged as a corollary to anti-radical nativism—as a way of explaining why incendiary immigrants threatened the stability of the republic.

The explanation came out clear-cut in the convulsion that followed the Haymarket Affair. A writer in a business magazine stated the racial lesson of the riot in the baldest terms: anarchy is “a blood disease” from which the English have never suffered. “I am no race worshipper,” he insisted, “but . . . if the master race of this continent is subordinated to or overrun with the communistic and revolutionary races, it will be in grave danger of social disaster.”⁵ During the same fateful summer a leading Congregational theologian equated race and unrest in words so sharp that he withheld them from publication for a year and a half. The Reverend Theodore T. Munger, an exponent of evolutionary theology, had long admired the Anglo-Saxons, the most highly developed, the most individualistic, and indeed the most Christian of races. As he surveyed the strife of 1886, he saw “anarchism, lawlessness . . . labor strikes, and a general violation of personal rights such as the Anglo-Saxon race has not witnessed since Magna Charta. . . . This horrible tyranny is wholly of foreign origin.” Fundamentally, however, the problem was not just foreign. It was “physiological”: how to restrict immigration “so that the physical stock shall not degenerate, and how to keep the strong, fine strain ascendant.”⁶

Compared to the common and simple attack on radical *foreigners*, the attack on radical *races* was at first a minor theme. Indeed, it did not immediately displace the older kind of race-thinking. During the eighties many Anglo-Saxonists still clung to the traditional pride and confidence in America's powers of assimilation. Josiah Strong, for example, was still celebrating the absorptive capacities of the Anglo-Saxons after he had begun to attack the immigrants as socially disruptive. And in 1890 James K. Hosmer's glowing constitutional history of the Anglo-Saxon race still conceded that racial mingling invigorated it, although Hosmer was equally certain that immigration was diluting the Anglo-Saxons' blood and subverting their social order.⁷

During the 1890's, as the social crisis deepened, racial nativism became more defined and widespread. If one may judge, however, from Congressional debates, newspapers, and the more popular

periodicals, Anglo-Saxonism still played a relatively small part in public opinion. The rising flood of popular xenophobia drew much more upon conventional anti-foreign ideas.

On the whole, the Anglo-Saxon tradition in its new nativistic form still found its support within the patrician circles where it had persisted throughout the age of confidence. Now, as then, the race-thinkers were men who rejoiced in their colonial ancestry, who looked to England for standards of deportment and taste, who held the great academic posts or belonged to the best clubs or adorned the higher Protestant clergy. Some, like Frank Parsons or Albert Shaw, were active reformers, especially in the municipal field. But, in general, racial nativists worshipped tradition in a deeply conservative spirit, and in the tumult of the nineties it seemed to them that everything fixed and sacred was threatened with dissolution. Among them were Episcopalian Bishop A. Cleveland Coxe, who added the final “e” to his family name in order to re-establish its antique spelling;⁸ Woodrow Wilson, then a historian with aristocratic sympathies, a disciple of Burke and Bagehot who believed heartily in evolution because it moved so slowly; John W. Burgess, who brought from German seminars a love for “the race-proud Teutons” rather than the Anglo-Saxons and whose political science proved that racial amalgamation endangered private enterprise; and of course Henry Cabot Lodge, who mourned for the days when society venerated the old families, their traditions, and their ancestors. No one expressed the state of mind in this group better than the Presbyterian clergyman in New York who thought nature's great principle of inequality endangered by a “specious humanity,” liberty-loving Anglo-Saxons beset by socialistic foreigners, and the intelligent people in the clutches of the unintelligent.⁹

A substantial number of these patrician nativists belonged to the cultivated intelligentsia of New England, the region where the Anglo-Saxon idea was most firmly entrenched. There the proportion of foreign-born in the total population was rising more sharply than in any other part of the country. There too the declining vitality of the native culture contributed to a defensive attitude. Brahmin intellectuals such as Lodge, Henry Adams, and Barrett Wendell knew that the historic culture of New England had entered its “Indian Summer,” and the knowledge gave them added

cause to see their race and region beleaguered by the alien.¹⁰ In other places also a pessimistic spirit was creeping into intellectual life as the century waned. What the German writer Max Nordau was calling "vague qualms of a Dusk of the Nations" darkened various minds receptive to social anxieties or to the grimmer implications of Darwinian naturalism. But New Englanders particularly succumbed to the melancholy, *fin de siècle* mood and gave it a racial form. Thus at Harvard, Barrett Wendell, whose English accent matched his Anglophile interpretation of American literature, was settling into the conviction that his own kind had had its day, that other races had wrenched the country from its grasp for once and all.¹¹

Many if not most of these men in the early nineties remained oblivious of the new immigration, assuming that the immigrants as a whole lacked the Anglo-Saxon's ancestral qualities. However, the avant-garde of racial nationalists was discovering during those years the shift in the immigrant stream. The discovery was important, because it lent a new sharpness and relevance to race-thinking. By making the simple (and in fact traditional) assumption that northern European nationalities shared much of the Anglo-Saxon's inherited traits, a racial nativist could now understand why immigration had just now become a problem. Also, the cultural remoteness of southern and eastern European "races" suggested to him that the foreign danger involved much more than an inherited incapacity for self-government: the new immigration was racially impervious to the whole of American civilization! Thus Anglo-Saxon nativism, in coming to focus on specific ethnic types, passed beyond its first, subordinate role as a corollary to anti-radical nativism. It found its own *raison d'être*, and in doing so served to divide the new immigrants from their predecessors in an absolute and fundamental way. Racial nativism became at once more plausible, a more significant factor in the history of immigration restriction, and a more precisely formulated ideology.

Three prominent intellectuals of the day illustrate this evolution in the Anglo-Saxon idea. Each of them embarked on anti-foreign agitation in the loose terms provoked by the internal events of the eighties, and each of them ended by fixing on the new immigration as constitutionally incapable of assimilation.

Nathaniel S. Shaler, the Kentucky-born geologist who presided

over the Lawrence Scientific School at Harvard, was in some ways a reluctant and unlikely nativist. One of the most benign of individuals, Shaler felt a real sympathy for disadvantaged groups; and his professional training impressed upon him the large influence of the physical environment in creating human differences. But his early southern background had given Shaler an indelible race consciousness. He easily shared the belief of his Brahmin colleagues that American democracy rested on an English racial heritage. At first he stated the racial argument against immigration in class terms, contending that the immigrants threatened social stability because, as peasants, they lacked the Americans' inborn instinct for freedom. In 1894, however, he shifted to a more specific and sweeping attack on the new immigration. Instead of indicting the immigrants as a whole, he now drew a sharp racial contrast between northwestern and southeastern Europeans, maintaining that the new "non-Aryan" peoples were wholly different from earlier immigrants and innately impossible to Americanize.¹²

Henry Cabot Lodge arrived by a similar route at the same conclusion but carried it much further. What was perhaps his earliest public attack on immigration reflected simply a nationalist reaction to the crisis within American society. At that time, in 1888, he actually repudiated the injection of racial considerations into political issues. His own Anglo-Saxonism still conformed to the traditional eulogistic pattern.¹³ Events, however, soon turned his attention to invidious racial comparisons.* In 1891 Lodge published a statistical analysis, which cost him much time and effort, concerning "the distribution of ability" in the American population. By classifying the entries in a biographical encyclopedia, he tried to show "the enormous predominance" of an English racial strain over every other in contributing to the development of the United States. Although the figures in this study suggested the inferiority of every non-English group in America, thereafter Lodge concentrated his fire on the new immigration, arguing that

* In 1890, for largely partisan reasons, Lodge brought to a head a Republican drive to enact a Force Bill designed to insure Negro suffrage in the South. The attempt failed; in fact, it brought down upon Lodge the condemnation of "the best people" of Massachusetts. The next year, instead of opposing racial barriers, Lodge proceeded to champion them by opening his campaign in Congress against the new immigration. See James A. Barnes, *John G. Carlisle, Financial Statesman* (New York, 1931), 188.

it presented a supreme danger transcending political or economic considerations: it threatened "a great and perilous change in the very fabric of our race."¹⁴

To support this view, Lodge went far beyond his American contemporaries in the direction of a racial philosophy of history. During a summer in France in 1895, he happened upon a new book by Gustave Le Bon, *The Psychology of Peoples*. Le Bon was a poetic social psychologist, an enemy of democracy, and a man who lived in dread of an imminent socialist revolution. His book treated nationalities as races and races as the substrata of history. Only through crossbreeding, according to Le Bon, could a race die or miss its destiny. He saw little hope for continental Europe but thought that the English, alone among European races, had kept their purity and stability. Lodge took these ideas back to the United States and repeated them practically verbatim on the floor of the Senate in 1896 in leading the fight for the literacy test. Without restriction of the new immigration, he warned, America's fixed, inherited national character would be lost in the only way possible—by being "bred out."¹⁵

Lodge was exceptional both in his direct contact with European race-thinking and in the degree to which he embraced an ideal of racial purity. It was not so easy for others to ignore the influence of environment or to understand how a supposedly backward, inferior type could overwhelm the puissant Anglo-Saxons.

A third member of the Yankee upper crust moved more cautiously into racial nativism but exerted in the long run a more telling intellectual influence. Francis A. Walker, president of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and one of the outstanding economists of his day, was virtually the only American who made an original contribution to nativist thought in the late nineteenth century. Unlike Lodge, Shaler or the rest, Walker faced up to the key Darwinian issue of the survival of the fittest.

When he awoke to the menace of the foreign-born during the great labor upheaval of the mid-eighties, it was not race but rather the European's characteristic "insolence and savagery" that gave Walker visions of "great cities threatened with darkness, riot, and pillage." He continued to think of labor unrest as the most important aspect of the foreign peril and, in fact, never indulged in comprehensive racial theorizing. But as early as 1890 he trembled at a

new influx of totally unassimilable races, representing "the very lowest stage of degradation." That these were laggards in the struggle for existence Walker had no doubt. Lest anyone should still defend the old Darwinian notion of migration as a selective process bringing America the most energetic and enterprising of Europeans, Walker neatly turned the tables, declaring that natural selection was now working in reverse. Due to the cheapness and ease of steamship transportation, the fittest now stay at home; the unfit migrate. The new immigrants, he declared in phrases that rang down through the restriction debates of the next three decades, "are beaten men from beaten races; representing the worst failures in the struggle for existence. . . . They have none of the ideas and aptitudes which . . . belong to those who are descended from the tribes that met under the oak trees of old Germany to make laws and choose chieftains."¹⁶

But still there was the hard question: How and why can such unfit groups endanger the survival of America's strong native stock? Walker held the clue long before it occurred to him to ask the question. As superintendent of the United States census of 1870, he had noticed that the rate of population growth in America was declining. At the time and for many years afterward he interpreted the decline very sensibly as a result of urbanization and industrialization. Then, when the events of the eighties and early nineties turned his attention to the racial significance of immigration, the old problem of population growth appeared in a new light. Might not the dwindling birth rate be a prudential response by the old American stock to a Darwinian struggle with immigrants capable of underbidding and outbreeding them? With an ingenious show of statistics, Walker argued in 1891 that the reproductive decline was occurring largely among the native population and that immigration rather than domestic conditions was responsible for it. In order to compete with cheap foreign labor, he said, Americans preferred to reduce the size of their families rather than lower their standard of living. Thus the foreign-born were actually replacing the native stock, not reinforcing it; in the very act of maintaining social and economic superiority, native Americans were undergoing biological defeat. In view of the new influx from southern and eastern Europe, Walker was sure that this long

process of replacement would now enter an increasingly ominous stage.¹⁷

From a racial point of view, the argument had the disadvantage of resting on social and economic determinants and therefore failing to make any real distinction between immigrant types. Nevertheless, it did effectively counter Darwinian optimism while defining the foreign danger in plainly biological terms. Like Lodge's bluster about crossbreeding, Walker's birth-rate hypothesis suggested that unobstructed natural selection might insure the survival of the worst people rather than the best. The recasting of the Anglo-Saxon tradition into the mold of a gloomy, scientific naturalism was under way.

Optimistic Crosscurrents

Before this naturalistic trend made further headway, in fact before nativists paid much attention to Walker's theory, events temporarily twisted race-thinking in a very different direction. The fears and forebodings that were pushing Anglo-Saxonism toward sharper, more dogmatic formulations suddenly lifted at the end of the century; a new era bright with hope and flushed with well-being relieved the need to define enemies and explain failures. At a time when every xenophobia subsided, racial nationalism softened, relaxed, and resumed once more its historic air of triumphant confidence. Yet, oddly, it flourished as never before.

Actually, two currents of racial nationalism had developed among American intellectuals during the 1890's. One was defensive, pointed at the foreigner within; the other was aggressive, calling for expansion overseas. Both issued, in large measure, from the same internal frustrations; both reflected the same groundswell of national feeling. But one warned the Anglo-Saxon of a danger of submergence, while the other assured him of a conquering destiny. By 1898 the danger and doom were all but forgotten, and the conquest was made. An easy and successful adventure in imperialism gave racial nationalism both an unprecedented vogue and a cheerful tone. In a torrent of popular jubilation over the Anglo-Saxon's invincibility, the need to understand his predicament scientifically dissolved in a romantic glow.¹⁸

Imperialists happily intent on absorbing Filipinos and Puerto

Ricans felt little doubt of the Anglo-Saxons' powers of assimilation. Instead of Lodge's dread of racial mixture and his insistence on the fixity of the Anglo-Saxon folk, the country now heard once more the earlier theory of John Fiske: that Anglo-Saxons possess a unique capacity to merge with other peoples while retaining their own dominant traits. Franklin H. Giddings, the first professor of sociology at Columbia University, dressed up in scientific language the old notion that immigration was recapitulating in the United States the same blend of European strains from which the English had originally emerged. His proof that the United States was still English moved the editor of the *Ladies' Home Journal* to congratulate the home of the oppressed for its success in assimilation.¹⁹ Others admitted that America's racial composition was changing but insisted that its Anglo-Saxon (or Teutonic) ideals were imposed on all comers. Albert Shaw, once one of the leading racial nativists, explained his shift away from a restrictionist position by asserting that America's power to assimilate had increased. Another imperialist felt so strong a sense of national homogeneity that he gave a new definition to the term Anglo-Saxon. All who stand together under the stars and stripes and fight for what it represents, he declared, have a right to that proud designation.²⁰

Of course, there was another, less uplifting side to this frame of mind. The prime object of the imperialist ideology, after all, was to justify imposing colonial status on backward peoples. Every Anglo-Saxonist knew that the United States was taking up "the white man's burden" in extending American control over the dark-skinned natives of the Philippines, Hawaii, and Puerto Rico. Under these circumstances the Anglo-Saxon idea easily associated itself with emotions of white supremacy. In other words, while welcoming the immigrant population into the Anglo-Saxon fold, imperialists were also linking their ideal of nationality to a consciousness of color. Although a romantic idealism temporarily blurred the ideological sharpness of racial nationalism, at a deeper and more permanent level the Anglo-Saxon would henceforth symbolize the white man par excellence.

The imperialist excitement itself lasted only a short while, leaving the Anglo-Saxon tradition freighted with race-feelings and exposed again to a defensive, nativistic reaction. Overseas adventures lost their savor as soon as they engendered difficult moral prob-

lems and serious international entanglements. As early as 1901 the bloodshed necessary to impose United States rule on the "new-caught, sullen peoples" of the Philippines was deflating enthusiasm for expansion. And by 1905, when Japan emerged as a new world power menacing American interests in the Far East, American opinion was nervously repudiating the conquering, global destiny of a few years before.²¹ Confronted by the "Yellow Peril," the Anglo-Saxon abandoned his rampant stance and resumed a somewhat defensive posture.

There were various indications in the early years of the twentieth century that race-thinking was entering a fretful, post-imperialist phase. One very direct reflection of the change of mood came in a book published in 1905 by a United States Army surgeon on his return from a tour of duty in the Philippines. In *The Effects of Tropical Light on White Men*, Major Charles E. Woodruff passed a depressing verdict on the racial results of imperialism. The blond, blue-eyed race, he argued, is born to command and to conquer; but in expanding southward from its foggy, overcast homelands in northern Europe it always succumbs to intense sunlight, which only the brunette races can withstand. And as Woodruff glanced apprehensively at the complexion of the immigrants pouring into the United States at the time, he added a significant afterthought. Perhaps the blond Teutons cannot expect to survive even under the climatic conditions prevailing throughout most of the United States.²² Woodruff displayed all of the color feelings aroused by imperialism and none of its buoyant idealism. Much the same can be said of the gloomy tracts that California's leading race-thinker, Homer Lea, wrote in the next few years on the decline of American militancy and the spread of the Yellow Peril.²³

Among other racial nationalists the reaction from imperial euphoria brought back the vague fears of the nineties about the Anglo-Saxons' stamina. They spoke of the old stock becoming decadent and being elbowed aside, of the Anglo-Saxon race as doomed, of the native Americans suffering from all manner of moral, physical, and psychic deterioration, due in large measure to immigration. Since nativism was at a low ebb in the early years of the century, the complaints usually sounded a mournful note rather than a belligerent or defiant one. Professor George E. Woodberry, one of the old-guard literary critics, even tried to find some

comfort in the dismal spectacle. Lecturing on "race power" in literature in 1903, he suggested that the dissolution of the English race would fulfill a historic, sacrificial principle by which each great race succumbs in order to bequeath its heritage to a broader humanity.²⁴

A less spiritually satisfying but more scientific explanation of the Anglo-Saxon's flagging energies could be found in Francis A. Walker's theory that immigration discouraged reproduction among the older stock. The theory was more and more widely discussed, with hardly anyone equipped statistically to challenge it.²⁵ Instead of critical scrutiny, Walker's sober argument now got a popular currency as it was inflated into the more grandiose concept of "race suicide." This happened in a curiously roundabout fashion. In 1901 Edward A. Ross used Walker's ideas in an address before the American Academy of Political and Social Science to explain how unchecked Asiatic immigration might lead to the extinction of the American people. When a higher race quietly eliminates itself rather than endure the competition of a lower one, said Ross, it is committing suicide. At the time, Ross was too confident of America's powers of assimilation to write about European immigration in these terms.²⁶ Before "race suicide" did become directly pertinent to the problem which Walker himself had had in mind, Theodore Roosevelt simplified it into an argument against birth control. For all of his booming optimism, Roosevelt could not entirely repress lurking doubts over the future. His nativist tendencies being in check, he discharged his anxieties through vague, thundering appeals to mothers to arrest the suicide of "the race" by having more children.²⁷

The President's campaign for fecundity popularized the notion of race suicide. During the period from 1905 through 1909 the general magazines published over thirty-five articles dealing directly with the topic. Once it became a minor national phobia, the original, nativistic implications of the idea speedily reasserted themselves. In reply to a Rooseveltian tirade, *Harper's Weekly* remarked caustically in 1905 that exhortation would have little effect on the native birth rate as long as unlimited European immigration continued to reduce it. Soon books were being written to warn that race suicide would "toll the passing of this great Anglo-Teuton people" and the surrender of the nation "to the Latin and

the Hun."²⁸ In the end, the whole discussion probably caused more race-thinking than reproduction. At least it brought to a wider audience the racial pessimism previously confined to a limited group of upper-class intellectuals.

It would be wrong to suppose, however, that any despairing note sounded very loudly or struck very deeply during the first decade of the twentieth century. Pessimistic anxieties crept about the fringes of American thought; at the heart of it was a supreme confidence. As the ebullience of imperialism ebbed away, much of the slack in American spirits was taken up by another enthusiasm. Progressivism inherited and sustained a good deal of the verve and exuberance which imperialism had generated. Many of the empire-builders of 1900 became apostles of social reform in the following years,²⁹ their crusading élan shifting from expansion abroad to improvement at home. As long as progressivism kept that psychological tone, as long as it radiated a sense of promise and victory, it limited the impact of imperialism's other heritage of race-thinking.

Furthermore, the premises of progressive thought, as well as its optimistic spirit, blunted the force of Anglo-Saxon nativism. By renewing faith in democracy, progressivism tended to challenge belief in racial inequalities. By concentrating on environmental reconstruction, it implicitly disputed all racial determinisms. At a time when politicians, public, and intelligentsia, alike, quickened with a vision of intelligence recasting environment, the Anglo-Saxon tradition faced powerful opposing currents. If nativistic intellectuals were to capitalize on the race consciousness left in the wake of imperialism, they would have to breast the mainstream of progressive thought.

Thus the race-thinkers of the early twentieth century belonged in considerable degree to the same social minority that had sustained the Anglo-Saxon tradition during the late nineteenth. Conservative patricians were less likely than most Americans to share the prevailing optimism and environmentalism. To men like Lodge and the founders of the Immigration Restriction League, like Major Woodruff and Professor Woodberry, the crusading spirit of progressivism brought little solace. Surely reform was not restoring the more stable social order of the past, and those who above all valued family and tradition often relapsed into a gloomy view of their racial future once the appeal of imperialism faded.

A number of patrician intellectuals, it is true, were caught up in the wave of social reform and surrendered some of their ethnic worries in the process. Theodore Roosevelt, for example, who had applauded Lodge's racial tirade in 1896 and rushed off to France an order for Le Bon's books, by 1904 was calling into question the whole tendency to use racial criteria in judging nationalities.³⁰ But others of Roosevelt's background felt increasingly their own social displacement in a democratic age and hugged ever more tightly—in Henry James' words—"the honor that sits astride of the consecrated English tradition."³¹

In short, when imperialism subsided, the Anglo-Saxon tradition moved again in the nativist direction it had taken during the early and mid-nineties. Yet the subsequent compulsions of empire-building and progressive reform decisively affected its course—one in a positive, the other in a negative, way. Imperialism left a heritage of race-feelings that enriched the emotional appeal of Anglo-Saxon nativism; progressivism challenged its intellectual basis. The democratic, environmentalist outlook adopted by most of the leading social scientists and historians of the Progressive era weakened the intellectual respectability of the confused, ill-defined concepts of race prevalent in the nineteenth century. To vindicate its intellectual pretensions and rationalize its emotional tone, the Anglo-Saxon tradition more than ever needed restatement in the form of a scientific law. And this was exactly what happened.

Enter the Natural Scientists

In the 1890's nativist intellectuals had barely begun to think of European races as a biological threat or to associate national survival with racial purity. Even Walker's birth-rate theory offered no logical reason to suppose that the country would suffer from the replacement of old stock by new. Perhaps the most serious intellectual handicap of American race-thinkers before the twentieth century was the lack of a general scientific principle from which to argue the prepotency of heredity in human affairs. But at the turn of the century, when social science and history came increasingly under the sway of environmental assumptions, biologists advanced dramatic claims for heredity and even helped to translate them into a political and social creed.³²

The new science of heredity came out of Europe about 1900 and formed the first substantial contribution of European thought to American nativism after the time of Darwin. The study of inheritance suddenly leaped into prominence and assumed a meaningful pattern from the discovery of the long-unnoticed work of Gregor Mendel and its convergence with August Weismann's theory of germinal continuity. Together, these hypotheses demonstrated the transmission from generation to generation of characteristics that obeyed their own fixed laws without regard to the external life of the organism.

Amid the excitement caused in English scientific circles by these continental discoveries, Sir Francis Galton launched the eugenics movement. Galton, who was England's leading Darwinian scientist, had long been producing statistical studies on the inheritance of all sorts of human abilities and deficiencies. But it was only in the favorable climate of the early twentieth century that he started active propaganda for uplifting humanity by breeding from the best and restricting the offspring of the worst. To Galton, eugenics was both a science and a kind of secular religion. It certified that the betterment of society depends largely on improvement of the "inborn qualities" of "the human breed," and Galton preached this message with evangelical fervor.³⁴ Thus he provided biologists and physicians, excited over the new genetic theories, with a way of converting their scientific interests into a program of social salvation—a program based wholly on manipulation of the supposedly omnipotent forces of heredity.

In the latter part of the 1900's the eugenics movement got under way in the United States, where it struck several responsive chords. Its emphasis on unalterable human inequalities confirmed the patricians' sense of superiority; its warnings over the multiplication of the unfit and the sterility of the best people synchronized with the discussion of race suicide. Yet the eugenicists' dedication to a positive program of "race improvement" through education and state action gave the movement an air of reform, enabling it to flourish in the ambience of progressivism while still ministering to conservative sensibilities. By 1910, therefore, eugenicists were catching the public ear. From then through 1914, according to one tabulation, the general magazines carried more articles on eugenics than

on the three questions of slums, tenements, and living standards, combined.³⁴

The leading eugenicist in America was Charles B. Davenport, a zoologist of tremendous ambition and drive who established the country's first research center in genetics at Cold Spring Harbor, Long Island. Davenport's father, a descendant of one of the Puritan founders of New England, was a genealogist who traced his ancestry back to 1086, and Davenport himself often mourned "that the best of that grand old New England stock is dying out through failure to reproduce." His early experiments at Cold Spring Harbor were devoted to testing the Mendelian principles in animal breeding; by 1907 he was beginning to apply them to the study of human heredity. In 1910 he persuaded Mrs. E. H. Harriman to finance a Eugenics Record Office adjacent to his laboratory with the aim of compiling an index of the American population and advising individuals and local societies on eugenical problems. Over a course of years she poured more than half a million dollars into the agency, while Davenport—already one of America's leading biologists—gave the rest of his life to studying the inheritance of human traits and spreading the gospel of eugenics.³⁵ An indefatigable organizer, Davenport was also one of the leaders of the American Breeders' Association, where the eugenics agitation first centered. Established in 1903 by practical plant and animal breeders who wanted to keep in touch with the new theoretical advances, the association enlarged its field in 1907 to embrace eugenics.³⁶

The racial and nativistic implications of eugenics soon became apparent. From the eugenicists' point of view, the immigration question was at heart a biological one, and to them admitting "degenerate breeding stock" seemed one of the worst sins the nation could commit against itself. It was axiomatic to these naïve Mendelians that environment could never modify an immigrant's germ plasm and that only a rigid selection of the best immigrant stock could improve rather than pollute endless generations to come. Since their hereditarian convictions made virtually every symptom of social disorganization look like an inherited trait, the recent immigration could not fail to alarm them.³⁷ Under the influence of eugenic thinking, the burgeoning mental hygiene movement picked up the cry. Disturbed at the number of hereditary mental defectives supposedly pouring into the country, the psychiatrists

who organized the National Committee for Mental Hygiene succeeded in adding to the immigration bill of 1914 an odd provision excluding cases of "constitutional psychopathic inferiority."³⁸ By that time many critics of immigration were echoing the pleas in scientific periodicals for a "rational" policy "based upon a noble culture of racial purity."³⁹

None were quicker or more influential in relating eugenics to racial nativism than the haughty Bostonians who ran the Immigration Restriction League. Prescott F. Hall had always had a hypochondriac's fascination with medicine and biology, and his associate, Robert DeCourcy Ward, was a professional scientist. They had shied away from racial arguments in the nineties, but in the less favorable atmosphere of the new century their propaganda very much needed a fresh impulse. As early as 1906 the league leaders pointed to the new genetic principles in emphasizing the opportunity that immigration regulation offered to control America's future racial development.⁴⁰ Two years later they learned of the eugenics sentiment developing in the American Breeders' Association. They descended upon it, and soon they were dominating its immigration activities. The association organized a permanent committee on immigration, of which Hall became chairman and Ward secretary. Ward proceeded to read papers on immigration legislation before meetings of eugenicists, and for a time the two considered changing the name of their own organization to the "Eugenic Immigration League."⁴¹ Meanwhile they seized every occasion to publicize the dogma that science decrees restrictions on the new immigration for the conservation of the "American race."⁴²

Obviously the eugenics movement had crucial importance for race-thinking at a time when racial presuppositions were seriously threatened in the intellectual world. But basically the importance of eugenics was transitional and preparatory. It vindicated the hereditarian assumptions of the Anglo-Saxon tradition; it protected and indeed encouraged loose talk about race in reputable circles; and in putting race-thinking on scientific rather than romantic premises it went well beyond the vague Darwinian analogies of the nineteenth century. On the other hand, eugenics failed utterly to supply a racial typology. In their scientific capacity, the eugenicists—like their master Galton—studied individual traits and reached

conclusions on individual differences. When they generalized the defects of individual immigrants into those of whole ethnic groups, their science deserted them and their phrases became darkly equivocal. Indeed, the more logical and consistent eugenicists maintained that America could improve its "race" by selecting immigrants on the ground of their individual family histories regardless of their national origins.⁴³

In the end the race-thinkers had to look to anthropology to round out a naturalistic nativism. Anthropology alone could classify the peoples of Europe into hereditary types that would distinguish the new immigration from older Americans; it alone might arrange these races in a hierarchy of merit and thereby prove the irremediable inferiority of the newcomers; and anthropology would have to collaborate with genetics to show wherein a mixture of races physically weakens the stronger.

American anthropology remained cautiously circumspect on these points. The influence of the foreign-born progressive, Franz Boas, was already great; in 1911 he published the classic indictment of race-thinking, *The Mind of Primitive Man*. In the absence of interest on the part of American anthropologists, a perfected racism depended on amateur handling of imported ideas. In a climate of opinion conditioned by the vogues of race suicide and eugenics, however, it is not surprising that scientifically minded nativists found the categories and concepts they needed without assistance from American anthropologists.

Again the inspiration came from Europe. There, chiefly in France and Germany, during the latter half of the nineteenth century anthropologists furnished the scientific credentials and speculative thinkers the general ideas out of which a philosophy of race took shape. The first of the thoroughgoing racists, Count J. A. de Gobineau, reached a limited audience of proslavery thinkers in America on the eve of the Civil War and then was forgotten. His successors were even less effective. Once in a while an immigrant writer tried to translate some of this literature into terms that might appeal to an American public, but the stuff simply was not read.⁴⁴ Not until the beginning of the twentieth century did the invidious anthropological theories which had been accumulating in Europe for over thirty years reach a significant American audi-

ence. And when they did, they were delivered in a characteristically American package.

William Z. Ripley was a brilliant young economist who had the kind of mind that refuses to stay put. In the mid-nineties, before he was thirty years old, Ripley was teaching economics at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, while simultaneously developing a unique course of lectures at Columbia University on the role of geography in human affairs. In its conception this course reflected Ripley's conviction of the basic importance of environmental conditions in molding the life of man; but he quickly came up against the problem of race. The question led him to the controversies among continental scholars on the anthropological traits of European peoples, and he chose the locale of Europe as a crucial test of the interplay of race and environment. In *The Races of Europe*, a big, scholarly volume appearing in 1899, he anatomized the populations of the continent, pointing temperately but persistently to ways in which physiological traits seemed to reflect geographical and social conditions.

This was cold comfort to nativists, but the book had another significance apart from the author's well-hedged thesis. Ripley organized into an impressive synthesis a tripartite classification of white men which European ethnologists had recently developed. For the first time, American readers learned that Europe was not a land of "Aryans" or Goths subdivided into vaguely national races such as the Anglo-Saxon, but rather the seat of three races discernible by physical measurements: a northern race of tall, blond longheads which Ripley called Teutonic; a central race of stocky roundheads which he called Alpine; and a southern race of slender, dark longheads which he called Mediterranean.⁴⁵ Here was a powerful weapon for nativists bent on distinguishing absolutely between old and new immigrations, but to make it serviceable Ripley's data would have to be untangled from his environmentalist assumptions.

It is ironical that Ripley himself did some of the untangling. For all of his scholarly caution he could not entirely suppress an attachment to the Teutonic race that reflected very mildly the rampant Teutonism of many of the authorities on which he relied. In the early twentieth century the new genetic hypotheses and a growing alarm over the new immigration turned his attention from

environmental to inherited influences. He began to talk about race suicide and to wonder about the hereditary consequences of the mixture of European races occurring in America.

Before abandoning anthropology completely to concentrate in economics, Ripley delivered in 1908 a widely publicized address in which he suggested an answer to the old problem of how the crossing of superior and inferior races can drag down the former. His roving eye had come upon the experiments that some of the Mendelian geneticists were making on plant and animal hybrids. Hugo De Vries and others were demonstrating how hybridization sometimes caused a reassertion of latent characters inherited from a remote ancestor. The concept of reversion was an old one, discussed by Darwin himself, but the rise of genetics brought it into new prominence. Ripley fastened on the idea and raised the question whether the racial intermixture under way in America might produce a reversion to a primitive type.⁴⁶ In contrast to the theory of race suicide, this doctrine—torn from the context of genetics and applied to the typology of European races—provided a thoroughly biological explanation of the foreign peril. Presumably race suicide might be arrested by legislation and by education raising the immigrant's standard of living; but reversion seemed remorseless. All of the pieces from which a sweeping statement of racial nativism might be constructed were now on hand.

The man who put the pieces together was Madison Grant, intellectually the most important nativist in recent American history. All of the trends in race-thinking converged upon him. A Park Avenue bachelor, he was the most lordly of patricians. His family had adorned the social life of Manhattan since colonial times, and he was both an expert genealogist and a charter member of the Society of Colonial Wars. Always he resisted doggedly any intrusion of the hoi polloi. On his deathbed he was still battling to keep the public from bringing cameras into the zoo over which he had long presided.⁴⁷

In addition to a razor-sharp set of patrician values, Grant also had an extensive acquaintance with the natural sciences and a thoroughly naturalistic temper of mind. Beginning as a wealthy sportsman and hunter, he was the founder and later the chairman of the New York Zoological Society, where he associated intimately with leading biologists and eugenicists. In the early years of the twen-

tieth century he published a series of monographs on North American animals—the moose, the caribou, the Rocky Mountain goat. He picked up a smattering of Mendelian concepts and, unlike his eugenicist friends, read a good deal of physical anthropology too. Ripley's work furnished his main facts about European man, but he also went behind Ripley to many of the more extreme European ethnologists. Thus Grant was well supplied with scientific information yet free from a scientist's scruple in interpreting it.

By 1910 Grant's racial concepts were clearly formed and thoroughly articulated with a passionate hatred of the new immigration.⁴⁸ He showed little concern over relations between whites and Negroes or Orientals. His deadliest animus focused on the Jews, whom he saw all about him in New York. More broadly, what upset him was the general mixture of European races under way in America; for this process was irretrievably destroying racial purity, the foundation of every national and cultural value.

Grant's philippic appeared finally in 1916. It bore the somber title, *The Passing of the Great Race*, summing up the aristocratic pessimism that had troubled nativist intellectuals since the 1890's. Everywhere Grant saw the ruling race of the western world on the wane yet heedless of its fate because of a "fatuous belief" in the power of environment to alter heredity. In the United States he observed the deterioration going on along two parallel lines: race suicide and reversion. As a result of Mendelian laws, Grant pontificated, we know that different races do not really blend. The mixing of two races "gives us a race reverting to the more ancient, generalized and lower type." Thus "the cross between any of the three European races and a Jew is a Jew."⁴⁹ In short, a crude interpretation of Mendelian genetics provided the rationale for championing racial purity.

After arguing the issue of race versus physical environment, Grant assumed a racial determination of culture. Much of the book rested on this assumption, for the volume consisted essentially of a loose-knit sketch of the racial history of Europe. The Alpines have always been a race of peasants. The Mediterraneans have at least shown artistic and intellectual proclivities. But the blond conquerors of the North constitute "the white man par excellence." Following the French scientist Joseph Deniker, Grant designated this great race Nordic. To it belongs the political and military

genius of the world, the daring and pride that make explorers, fighters, rulers, organizers, and aristocrats. In the early days, the American population was purely Nordic, but now the swarms of Alpine, Mediterranean, and Jewish hybrids threaten to extinguish the old stock unless it reasserts its class and racial pride by shutting them out.

So the book turned ultimately into a defense of both class and racial consciousness, the former being dependent on the latter. The argument broadened from nativism to an appeal for aristocracy as a necessary correlative in maintaining racial purity. Democracy, Grant maintained, violates the scientific facts of heredity; and he was obviously proud to attribute feudalism to the Nordics. Furthermore, Grant assaulted Christianity for its humanitarian bias in favor of the weak and its consequent tendency to break down racial pride. Even national consciousness ranked second to race consciousness in Grant's scale of values.

This boldness and sweep gave *The Passing of the Great Race* particular significance. Its reception and its impact on public opinion belong to a later stage in the history of American nativism, but its appearance before America's entry into the First World War indicates that the old Anglo-Saxon tradition had finally emerged in at least one mind as a systematic, comprehensive world view. Race-thinking was basically at odds with the values of democracy and Christianity, but earlier nativists had always tried either to ignore the conflict or to mediate between racial pride and the humanistic assumptions of America's major traditions. Grant, relying on what he thought was scientific truth, made race the supreme value and repudiated all others inconsistent with it.

This, at last, was racism.⁵⁰

Chapter Ten

The Tribal Twenties

The old Americans are getting a little panicky, and no wonder. . . . America, Americans and Americanism are being crowded out of America. It is inevitable that there should be silly forms of protest and rebellion. But the Ku Klux Klan and the hundred percenters are fundamentally right from the standpoint of an American unity and destiny.
—Ltr. to ed., *New Republic*, 1924

. . . not nostrums but normalcy . . . not experiment but equipoise, not submergence in internationality but sustinment in triumphant nationality.
—Warren G. Harding, 1920

During the night of August 5, 1920, and all through the following day hundreds of people laden with clothing and household goods filled the roads leading out of West Frankfort, a mining town in southern Illinois. Back in town their homes were burning. Mobs bent on driving every foreigner from the area surged through the streets. Foreigners of all descriptions were beaten on sight, although the Italian population was the chief objective. Time and again the crowds burst into the Italian district, dragged cowering residents from their homes, clubbed and stoned them, and set fire to their dwellings. The havoc went on for three days, although five hundred state troops were rushed to the scene.

The immediate background of the affair was trivial enough. Thousands of workers were idle and restless owing to a strike in the coal mines where the Italians and a large part of the native population were employed. A series of bank robberies, popularly attributed to a Black Hand Society, had lately occurred; this was

followed by the kidnapping of two boys. The discovery of their bodies touched off the civic explosion.¹ The region, to be sure, had a bloody history. Violent anti-foreign incidents had occurred there during and before the war. But never on this scale.²

About the same time, an exuberance not wholly unrelated to the miners' frenzy sprang up elsewhere on the national scene in sundry ways. In California anti-Japanese hysteria, quiescent during the war, broke out again in the latter part of 1919 and rose to unprecedented heights during the election of 1920. A new law forbidding Japanese ownership of land passed by popular initiative; a fearful clamor against Japanese "picture brides" went up; and for the first time the agitation was beginning to have a real effect on eastern opinion.³ In Georgia the 1920 primaries brought the old warrior, Tom Watson, back to the hustings to end his career with a successful campaign for a seat in the United States Senate. The issue was popery. Silenced by the federal government during the war because of his anti-war attitudes, Watson now heaped ridicule on the authors of the discredited Red Scare while crying up the peril of Catholic domination. Not to be outdone, the adjoining state of Alabama had recently set up a convent-inspecting commission to ensure that no Protestant maidens were held under duress vile.⁴ Out of the Midwest in May 1920 came the opening blast of a propaganda campaign against Jews launched by Henry Ford, America's leading industrialist and a man idolized by millions. Almost simultaneously the most widely read magazine in the United States, the *Saturday Evening Post*, began to quote and urgently commend the doctrines of Madison Grant. At another intellectual level one of the country's foremost literary arbiters instigated a general critical assault on writers of alien blood and spirit for corrupting American literature.⁵ And during that same summer, quite outside the public eye, an insignificant little society named the Ku Klux Klan was feeling a sudden flutter of life. The upheaval in West Frankfort was only the gaudiest of the portents signaling another great nativist wave that was boiling up in the wake of the Red Scare.

Blighted New World

In its basic patterns, the new ferment of 1920-1924 was far from new. The nativisms that came to the fore in 1920 essentially con-

tinued prewar trends. They consisted largely of hatreds—toward Catholics, Jews, and southeastern Europeans—that had gathered strength in the late Progressive era, reaching a minor crescendo in 1914. The war had simply suspended these animosities while American nationalism vented itself in other directions. Once the war and immediate postwar period passed, the two leading nativist traditions of the early twentieth century, Anglo-Saxonism and anti-Catholicism, reoccupied the field. Anti-radicalism, their historic partner, had grown hugely under the conditions which temporarily blocked the other two, but its collapse cleared the way for their revival.

As they passed into the 1920's, the Anglo-Saxon and anti-Catholic traditions retained the distinctive character that the prewar decade had stamped upon them. Racial nativism remained fixed on the new immigration (together with the Japanese), rooted in primitive race-feelings, and rationalized by a scientific determinism. It owed to the early twentieth century its prophet, Madison Grant, its southern and western political leadership, and its nation-wide appeal. Anti-Catholic nativism similarly exhibited the characteristics it had developed just before the war. Whereas racism knew no limits of section or class and preserved an air of respectability, anti-Romanism thrived outside of the big cities and the cultivated classes. Reborn after 1910 in the small towns of the South and West, religious nativism resumed its prewar pattern of growth, feeding on the continuing surge of rural fundamentalism and the deepening frustration of progressive hopes. Despite the incongruities between religious and racial xenophobias, they had begun to intersect before the World War in the demagoguery of Tom Watson and, less melodramatically, in the program of the Junior Order United American Mechanics. After the war, the two traditions flowed together in the comprehensive nativism of the Ku Klux Klan, an organization which itself dated from 1915.

Yet the tempestuous climate of the early twenties is not to be accounted for simply as a resumption of storms after a temporary lull. The very fact that the lull did prove temporary, that old hatreds came to life after the war instead of being consumed by it, needs explanation. In some degree the causes lay in the objective circumstances of 1920. That year, as part of a general adjustment to peacetime conditions, two factors which time and again

in American history had encouraged anti-foreign outbreaks vividly reappeared. One was economic depression, the other a fresh wave of immigration. During the latter months of the year the war and postwar boom collapsed. For a year and a half businessmen, farmers, and workers felt the pinch of hard times, with all the consequences of unemployment, credit stringencies, and tobogganing prices. Unfortunately for the immigrants, the economic downswing synchronized with a sudden revival of immigration. Virtually halted by the war, immigration had remained at low ebb through 1919 and into the early months of 1920. In the second half of 1919 so many aliens, flushed with wartime savings and embittered toward America, had returned home to Europe that immigration figures showed a net loss. But the tide turned decisively around the end of May 1920. By early September an average five thousand arrivals per day were pouring into Ellis Island. Before the year was out newspapers teemed with hostile comment on the relation between this torrential influx and the worsening unemployment problem. Some thought that immigration was undermining the whole economic system.⁶

A third well-known irritant to ethnic relations intruded into the postwar era, assuming somewhat more importance than it had hitherto displayed. Whereas the scale of immigration and the state of the economy had often contributed significantly to nativist movements, the association of foreigners with crime had not affected their reception to a comparable degree. Crime had helped to make anti-foreign stereotypes rather than anti-foreign hatreds. Prohibition, however, created a much more highly charged situation, for it precipitated a head-on collision between mounting lawlessness and a new drive for social conformity.

On the one hand, the Eighteenth Amendment attempted an unprecedented regimentation of morality by law. Although a tradition of reform originally sired the prohibition movement, its national triumph awaited the strenuous spirit of conformity which the war unleashed. Riding the wave of 100 per cent Americanism, the Drys identified their crusade to regulate behavior with preservation of the American way of life. On the other hand, constraint bred revolt. Prohibition aggravated the normal lawlessness of a postwar era by opening a vast illicit traffic in alcohol. The immigrants, whose own cultures imposed no alcoholic taboos, were

Wets by habit and conviction. The dazzling opportunities that prohibition created for organized gangsterism thrust immigrant children into a special notoriety, for city gangs had long recruited a high proportion of their members in the disorganizing environment of foreign slum quarters. Thus the ban on alcohol hit the immigrants two ways: it increased their conspicuousness as law-breakers and brought down upon their heads the wrath of a 100 per cent American morality.

By the end of 1919 the press was commenting on a rising "crime wave" and speculating on its alien origins,⁷ but it remained for the eruption at West Frankfort to demonstrate the intensity of the hatred of foreign lawlessness. In the years ahead similar feelings would find a powerful outlet through the hooded legions of the Ku Klux Klan; in the Midwest the Klan delivered more real assaults on the bootleggers than on any other target. At the same time, one state after another tackled the specter of the foreign criminal with legislation to disarm all aliens. Wyoming took particular care to forbid the possession by aliens of "any dirk, pistol, shot gun, rifle, or other fire arm, bowie knife, dagger, or any other dangerous or deadly weapon."⁸

The resumption of immigration, the onset of depression, a wave of crime—each of these formed part of a social pattern shaped by a return to peace, and all three had precedents in the circumstances of earlier peacetime eras in which nativism flourished. But if these events help to account for the regeneration of historic xenophobias in 1920, in themselves they can hardly explain the peculiar force and magnitude that the reawakened hatreds now displayed. Indeed, the alien lawbreaker owed his new significance as an anti-foreign symbol more largely to a state of mind that had crystallized during the war than to the objective circumstances of the postwar period. In many respects the level of hysteria in the early twenties was a heritage of mind and spirit from the World War. Pre-1914 traditions supplied the massive roots of that hysteria; post-1919 conditions provided fertile soil for a new season of growth; but 100 per cent Americanism was the vital force that gave it abundant life.

On first thought one may wonder how the new nationalism survived so vigorously the transition from war to peace, when many other wartime ideals were shipwrecked. It is important to realize

that during the years from 1915 to 1919, 100 per cent Americanism shared in the heady optimism that flourished during the war and collapsed soon after. If the guardians of an exclusive loyalty had nothing else in common with the cosmopolitan, democratic nationalists, at least they felt a common exaltation. Despite the obsessive fears that tortured the 100 per centers, they too looked forward to a brave new world once the nation had passed through its ordeal. To be sure, their assurance was a grimmer and narrower thing than that of their liberal opponents; real victory would require iron resolution and heroic measures. But a crusading idealism formed a fundamental part of the 100 per cent American outlook. The millennial expectations dominant in public opinion since 1898 had reached a culmination during the war period, deeply affecting almost the whole spectrum of American thought, and 100 per centers acquired much of their evangelical zeal from the general hope that the war's turmoil would usher in a purified, regenerate society. So Americanizers set about with a will to transform the immigrants; patriotic clergymen testified to the spiritually ennobling results of warfare; prohibitionists carried the point that outlawing alcohol would accomplish a general moral improvement and call for little enforcement at that; few seriously challenged President Wilson's vision of a new reign of peace founded on a league of nations.

Perhaps this utopian spirit could not long have survived unsullied under any circumstances. Certainly the harsh facts of the post-war world produced, during 1919 and 1920, a general disillusion. The quarreling at Versailles and the class strife that broke out at home and abroad began the process of deflation and embitterment. It went forward under the influence of partisan wrangling in Congress, economic depression, the manifest failure of Americanization, and the scandalous consequences of prohibition. The letdown seriously undermined democratic, cosmopolitan values, for many who held them abandoned a crusading stance, repudiating their ideals as delusive, nationalism as nasty, and society as unsalvageable. One hundred per cent Americanism, on the other hand, had a built-in shock-absorber which not only saved it from disintegrating but converted every disappointment into rebounding aggressiveness. Believing implicitly that the great source of evil lay outside of their own society, super-nationalists could not hold their own

principles at fault when failure mocked them. The trouble must come instead from the tenacity and secret cunning of alien influences, together with a lack of sufficient solidarity on the part of true Americans in resisting them. The nation must gird anew against protean forces working in ever grander and more mysterious ways. Thus, instead of crippling the force of 100 per cent Americanism, the discouragements of 1919-1920 broadened the fears which it expressed and turned it against enemies vaguer and more elusive than either the German or the Bolshevik.

The persistence, then, of the fundamental premises of wartime nationalism was crucial to the nativist climate of the early twenties, but equally important was the loss of the spirit of confidence characteristic of the war years. In their own fashion, 100 per centers reflected the general psychological letdown. They ceased on the whole to look forward to a total defeat of the forces of darkness. The evil was too great, the world too deeply infected. Americans must concentrate their efforts on holding their present ground. In short, 100 per cent Americanism passed entirely to the defensive. Its aggressions took the form not of conquest but of a holding operation to save "the last best hope of earth." The result was an intense isolationism that worked hand in hand with nativism. By mid-1920 a general revulsion against European entanglements was crystallizing. In the debate over the Versailles Treaty an afterglow of Wilsonian ideals had lingered through 1919, and the League of Nations commanded immense support in public opinion (though with increasing qualifications) until the early months of 1920. By autumn not 10 per cent of the daily press, and hardly a single national magazine, still backed the league.⁹ America now seemed vulnerable to European influences of every kind. Policies of diplomatic withdrawal, higher tariffs, and more stringent immigration restriction were all in order.

Flowering of Racism

Logically, a nationalism so committed to isolation, so distrustful of entanglements with Europe, should find expression in a general revulsion against all foreigners. Indeed, an indiscriminate anti-foreignism did extend far and wide in the early twenties. It echoed through the debate on the League of Nations; it swayed the poli-

cies of the American Legion and rumbled in the "konklaves" of the Ku Klux Klan; it unloosed a new torrent of state legislation excluding aliens from a great many occupations.¹⁰ Nevertheless the most intense and significant anti-foreign feelings still focused on symbols of hatred more specific than the whole foreign population. One hundred per cent Americanism had greatest impact through interaction with older cultural traditions.

As the Red Scare subsided, the Anglo-Saxon tradition displayed more than ever the special magnetism it acquired in the prewar period. No other nativism spoke with equal authority or affected so much of American society. This was the flowering time of the semi-scientific racism that had burgeoned in the decade before the war. Although this ideology had the limitation (from a 100 per cent point of view) of not rejecting all Europeans, it was peculiarly well suited as a channel for the defensive nationalism of an age undergoing disillusion. In the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries racial nativism had developed in minds of a gloomy cast; it registered a failure of nerve on the part of an exhausted elite. Explicitly, racism denied the regnant optimism of the Progressive era; a pessimistic determinism imprisoned ideals within iron laws of heredity. Thus, when the utopian hopes of the war years dissolved, the harsh racial doctrines fitted a prevailing mood. Those doctrines not only explained the apparent imperviousness of the immigrant to Americanization. They also accounted for the failure of all efforts at universal uplift. And they showed that the United States could trust in no ideals save those that rested upon and served to protect the nation's racial foundations.

Intellectually the resurgent racism of the early twenties drew its central inspiration from Madison Grant's *The Passing of the Great Race*. The book had caused no considerable comment when first published in 1916, but now it enjoyed a substantial vogue. New editions appeared in 1921 and 1923, bringing total sales to about sixteen thousand copies.¹¹ Grant himself never became widely known in spite of sympathetic comments in the editorials of such influential publications as the *New York Times* and the *Saturday Evening Post*.¹² However, his emotionally charged formulation of a thoroughgoing racial philosophy stirred the imagination of many literate people. He inspired a bevy of popular writers and influenced a number of scholarly ones. More than anyone else he

taught the American people to recognize within the white race a three-tiered hierarchy of Mediterraneans, Alpines, and Nordics, to identify themselves as Nordic, and to regard any mixture with the other two as a destructive process of "mongrelization."

Of all of the nativist ideologies, racism most directly contradicted the central democratic postulate of equal rights, and it is significant that Grant's ideas flourished at a time when the whole postwar reaction put democratic values at a discount. The Young Intellectuals were cheering H. L. Mencken's raucous denial of the possibility of a civilized life in a democracy; a chorus of lawyers and business spokesmen was proclaiming the United States a representative republic rather than a democracy;¹³ the Harding administration was providing an uninspiring example of democracy in action. In this context race-thinkers tended generally to reflect the contemptuously anti-equalitarian outlook that had been one of the unusual qualities of Grant's book when it first appeared. For example, Prescott F. Hall, whose earlier racial diatribes had shown a certain caution and restraint, now characterized the "fatuous belief in universal suffrage" and "the lust for equality" as forms of paranoia.¹⁴ Other nativist writers argued that science proves the "basic fact" of inequality or that democracy perpetuates mediocrity. Lothrop Stoddard, a lawyer in Brookline, Massachusetts, with a Ph.D. in history, wrote a whole book on the menace of the Under Man—the racially impoverished opponent of all elites.¹⁵

Stoddard was Grant's leading disciple. Unlike most of the new racist intellectuals, however, his main preoccupation concerned the rapid multiplication of the yellow and brown races and the danger—spectacularly stated in 1920 in *The Rising Tide of Color*—that they would soon overwhelm the whole white world. His disillusion with the outcome of the World War took the form of a belief that it was actually a civil war which had vitally impaired white solidarity. Consequently Stoddard was hardly a nationalist at all in any explicit sense. Nevertheless he agreed with Grant that the white man's salvation rested with the Nordics and that the immigration of inferior white races would mongrelize the Nordic into "a walking chaos, so consumed by his jarring heredities that he is quite worthless."¹⁶ Grant, in fact, advised Stoddard during the writing of the book and contributed an introduction to it.

Other writers of the same school hewed to a Nordic nationalism.

Charles W. Gould's *America, A Family Matter* differed from *The Passing of the Great Race* only in adding some further data on the rise and fall of civilizations, culminating in the now threatened Nordic occupation of America. Clinton Stoddard Burr, in *America's Race Heritage*, rehearsed Gould and Grant. His own contribution consisted of a statistical estimate of the numerical size of the various white races in the American population. His thesis, summarily stated, came down to this: "Americanism is actually the racial thought of the Nordic race, evolved after a thousand years of experience." Undoubtedly the most widely read of these effusions were the articles which Kenneth Roberts wrote for the *Saturday Evening Post* and which appeared in book form in 1922 under the title *Why Europe Leaves Home*. Two years before, the *Post's* editor, George Horace Lorimer, had sent Roberts to Europe to work up a series of articles on immigration. Roberts cast his findings into the framework of the Nordic theory, concluding that a continuing deluge of Alpine, Mediterranean, and Semitic immigrants would inevitably produce "a hybrid race of people as worthless and futile as the good-for-nothing mongrels of Central America and Southeastern Europe."¹⁷

Natural scientists eschewed such intemperate generalizations, but a number of them lent their authority to the racial philosophy in a polite and qualified way. Scientific race-thinking centered, of course, in the eugenics movement, which continued to agitate genteel and academic circles during the 1920's. With a few exceptions such as Edward A. Ross, Henry Pratt Fairchild, and Ernest F. Hooton, both social scientists and anthropologists remained hostile or indifferent to eugenics, but to a good many speculative biologists, physicians, and amateur scientists it still seemed the salvation of a world imperiled by the multiplication of the unfit.

From a nativistic point of view, postwar eugenics showed a significant advance over the early phase of the movement. American eugenicists were increasingly prone to interpret their data in terms of clear-cut racial differences as well as individually inherited differences. In other words, many of them were coming to accept the new racist categories as a framework for analyzing the inheritance of valuable and vicious traits. This trend was evident as early as 1918 in *Applied Eugenics*, the standard textbook on the subject. The authors relied on Madison Grant's interpretation of the biolog-

ical danger which Nordic America faced from Mediterraneans and Alpines. And, to bring the racial cleavage to life, they appended to the narrative a flattering drawing of the "Old American" head—a high, well-developed head, the book gravely averred, denoting a very specialized type and an advanced evolution.¹⁸

Similar ideas reached a larger audience through the well-publicized sessions of the Second International Congress of Eugenics, which Henry Fairfield Osborn, prominent biologist and president of the American Museum of Natural History, brought to New York in 1921. Osborn was closely associated with Grant (who served as one of the Museum's trustees) and had supplied an introduction to *The Passing of the Great Race*. Osborn's welcoming address to the congress was the first of several warnings it heard on the subject of race-crossings.¹⁹ In the next few years the Nordic theory and its implications for immigration restriction showed up in books by such well-known scholars as the Harvard geneticist Edward M. East and the Yale geographer Ellsworth Huntington. With breadth and sweep, Huntington's *The Character of Races* summarized the whole eugenic argument for a racial interpretation of history and for the control of man's biological development now that the conquest of the physical environment seemed nearly complete.²⁰

Fundamentally, of course, the fusion of racism with eugenics meant that scientists who were not anthropologists were acquiescing in a disreputable anthropological theory. European anthropologists in the late nineteenth century had offered much evidence that the population of Europe might be classified into three general physical types; that these types carried with them hereditary cultural traits the scientists had never proved. Yet it was the cultural rather than the physical qualities of races that gave eugenicists and other nativists most concern. However much they might gloat over the external proportions of the "Old American" head, their main interest centered on what lay inside that head and how its contents differed from the moral, political, and intellectual characteristics of differently shaped crania. Grant's *The Passing of the Great Race* had simply assumed, on the basis of some scraps of historical data, a correlation between racial physique and racial culture. But loose historical assertions seemed hardly convincing to earnest eugenicists disciplined to the virtues of statistical analysis.

Their willingness to accept the Nordic theory depended to no small degree on a timely stimulus and a fresh group of allies which eugenics received in the postwar era from the field of psychology.

Although eugenicists had exercised their hereditarian bias before the war in counting the number of great men produced by various racial and national groups, they had had no way of comparing the supposedly inborn mental endowments of those groups as a whole. On the eve of the war, however, psychologists forged a wonderful new instrument for measuring some of the psychic differences between races. This was the intelligence test. Allegedly IQ scores did not reflect education. Were they not, therefore, independent of all environmental influences? So leading American psychologists contended. Just then, the war, by calling forth a mass army, fortuitously provided an opportunity for applying group tests on a large scale. Robert M. Yerkes, president of the American Psychological Association, and the corps of distinguished psychologists who aided him in the United States Army's new psychological testing program, gathered a mass of data on the intellectual ability of Negro, native white, and foreign-born soldiers. Published after the war, their studies showed what other investigators were simultaneously learning in testing school children: that northern Europeans scored almost as well as native whites, whereas soldiers born in Latin and Slavic countries averaged significantly lower.²¹ Eugenicists seized avidly on these findings as a clinching proof of the racial philosophy and of the inferiority of the new immigration.

Although Yerkes and other psychologists deplored the extravagant statements in which nativistic popularizers of their work indulged, they themselves fell increasingly under the Nordic spell. In 1921 William McDougall, perhaps the most eminent social psychologist of his generation, advanced a racial interpretation of history based on the data of the intelligence tests. McDougall had long been an ardent eugenicist in England, but only after coming to the United States in 1920 did he emerge as a champion of Nordic superiority. Meanwhile, Yerkes and one of his Army colleagues, Professor Carl C. Brigham, were recasting into racial categories the evidence which they had assembled during the war on the intelligence of immigrant nationalities. Inspired by reading the books of Madison Grant and Charles W. Gould, the psychologists realized how neatly their own studies might serve to substantiate the

conception of a hierarchy of European races in America. Thus Brigham's book, *A Study of American Intelligence*, triumphantly concluded: "The intellectual superiority of our Nordic group over the Alpine, Mediterranean and negro groups has been demonstrated."²² With such authority to sustain them, it is little wonder that not only many eugenicists but also a broad segment of literate opinion in America accepted the tenets of racial nativism as proved truths of science.

For those who consulted the oracle of art as well as for those who bowed down to science, the same Nordic myths and prophecies were told. Literary critics paid little attention to eugenics itself, but a group of them had reasons of their own to preach a racial nativism. A whole school of literary traditionalists in the early twenties looked on American literature as a battleground where old-stock writers were defending the nation's spiritual heritage against onslaught from the spokesmen of alien races. Stuart Pratt Sherman first raised the standard of the nativist critics. Around it rallied Brander Matthews, Gertrude Atherton, and John Farrar, supported by the professors of English in many an American college. At the head and front of the enemy hosts stood H. L. Mencken, a belligerent champion of unorthodox and corrosive writers like Theodore Dreiser and James Branch Cabell, ridiculing with mischievous joy the pieties, the patriotisms, and virtually the whole culture of the United States. Proud of his own German background, Mencken gleefully accepted the definition of cultural values in racial terms. The Anglo-Saxons, he proclaimed, have lost the little capacity they may once have had for producing ideas; the country's intellectual life comes largely from men of foreign stock.²³ The enraged traditionalists felt that their own kind was indeed losing cultural leadership, and they struck back bluntly at the unassimilated aliens whose racial hatred for Anglo-Saxon ideals was mongrelizing language, literature, and society. Gertrude Atherton, a leading popular novelist, argued that in the process of "breeding out" the Nordic aristocracy, the Alpine race was spreading the poison of democracy throughout American culture.²⁴

Public opinion echoed the perturbations of the nativist intelligentsia as never before. The general magazines teemed with race-thinking, phrased nearly always in terms of an attack on the new immigration. By no means all of the discussion displayed the sharp

outlines of the Nordic theory. The more old-fashioned Anglo-Saxon concept sometimes served as well, while other writers spoke in behalf of "the American type" or "the old stock."²⁵ As scientific racism spread downward from patrician circles, it blended with the cruder Anglo-Saxon nativism that was pushing upward from the grass roots of the South and West. The two streams of racial nationalism reinforced one another: the national news magazine *Current Opinion* wrote about keeping America white with as much gusto as the Imperial Wizard of the Ku Klux Klan discussed the lessons of eugenics.²⁶ No one any longer, except possibly some immigrant spokesmen, claimed that America's genius derived from racial mixture. In the former muckraking weekly, *Collier's*, George Creel, who had shown much sympathy toward the immigrants during the war, now denounced them as "so much slag in the melting pot. Opposed at every point to the American or Nordic stock. . . ."²⁷

At some point a fever in the public imagination becomes self-parodying, and criticism slips easily into ridicule. In the racial controversies of the early 1920s as reported by irreverent journalists, it is often hard to know what to take seriously. When Henry Fairfield Osborn argued learnedly that Christopher Columbus was actually a Nordic, did the proposition attract attention because it gave readers a good feeling about their country's origins or because it gave them a good laugh?²⁸ Was the *New York World* in 1924 making fun of racism by revealing that Dr. Alzamon Ira Lucas, a former Negro preacher, snake-oil salesman, and fortune-teller, was about to convene a Congress of Superior Caucasians at the Hotel Pennsylvania in the hope of awakening all Americans of Caucasian blood to the importance of their racial preservation?²⁹ Or was the *World* making fun of Negroes? A trivialization of argument was perhaps not the least of the fruits of postwar nativism.

The International Jew

Of all the European groups that lay outside of the charmed Nordic circle none was subjected to quite so much hatred as the Jews. They had always played a special role in the American imagination, but until the postwar period anti-Jewish sentiment, though

unique in kind, probably did not exceed in degree the general level of feeling against other European nationalities. The fear of a Jewish money-power during the 1890's and Georgia's emotional debauch at the height of the Frank Case in 1914 were merely preludes to the much more widespread and tenacious anti-Semitism that developed after the World War. No pogrom has ever stained American soil, nor did any single anti-Jewish incident in the 1920's match the violence of the anti-Italian riot in southern Illinois. Nevertheless the Jews faced a sustained agitation that singled them out from the other new immigrant groups blanketed by racial nativism—an agitation that reckoned them the most dangerous force undermining the nation.

During a period of a general weakening in democratic values social discrimination against Jews would undoubtedly have spread even if no new ideological attack on them had occurred. After the war a flood of Jewish students into private eastern colleges resulted in restrictions on admission similar to those earlier adopted by preparatory schools and college fraternities. Beginning in 1919, New York University instituted stringent restrictions. Columbia soon cut the number of Jews in her incoming classes from 40 to 22 per cent. At Harvard, where Brahmin students feared that the university was becoming a new Jerusalem, President Lowell in 1922 moved, with unseemly frankness, to raise the bars.³⁰ At the same time job opportunities were continuing to shrink. By the end of the twenties one informed estimate indicated that Jews were excluded from 90 per cent of the jobs available in New York City in general office work.³¹

What was startling, however, was not so much the steady growth of discrimination as the rise of a new anti-Semitic nationalism. On the whole the wartime spirit of fraternity had repressed and inhibited anti-Semitic ideas. Nevertheless, the seeds of a new movement against Jews were to be found in the 100 per cent Americanism of the war years. The more wealthy and prominent Jews in the United States were of German background. Certain 100 per centers, therefore, applied to the Jews the suspicion of all things German. Among some of the bitter, overwrought men who believed that the Wilson administration was dealing laxly, perhaps treasonably, with traitors within and enemies without, dark rumors circulated concerning German-Jewish influence in high places.

Henry Cabot Lodge and others whispered about secret ties between Wilson and Germany through Paul Warburg, a recent Jewish immigrant who sat on the Federal Reserve Board. "The government," a Texas businessman exploded, "seems to be permeated with the atmosphere of different kinds of Jews."³²

The growth of anti-radical nativism during the war opened another channel for anti-Semitic feelings—one that broadened enormously after the armistice. Morris Hillquit's remarkably strong showing as the Socialist, anti-war candidate for mayor of New York City in 1917 gave a good many people a glimpse of the radical ferment at work in Lower East Side tenements. Leon Trotsky's departure for Russia in 1917, after a brief stay in New York, and the sympathy with which other Russian Jews in the United States greeted the Bolshevik revolution sharpened an emerging image of the Jew as a subversive radical. In September 1918, Brooklyn witnessed the debut of a periodical "Devoted to the Defense of American Institutions Against the Jewish Bolshevik Doctrines of Morris Hillquit and Leon Trotsky."³³

The Big Red Scare turned these surreptitious by-products of the war into a thriving anti-Jewish agitation. Most commonly, of course, the nativists of 1919 identified radicalism with foreigners generally, so that anti-Semitism remained a subordinate aspect of an attack upon the larger immigrant community. Nevertheless, the Jew offered the most concrete symbol of foreign radicalism, and his significance as such increased very greatly when 100 per cent Americanism burst through the confining dikes of wartime unity. Stories circulated about the streets of New York to the effect that every Jewish immigrant would become a soldier in the revolutionary army assembling in America. A Methodist clergyman testified before a Senate committee that Bolshevism in Russia was drawing much of its inspiration and support from the Yiddish sections of New York. The same doctrine that Bolshevism was a Jewish movement echoed from public meetings and from the pulpits of many churches. A powerful propaganda organization of conservative businessmen in the Midwest, the Greater Iowa Association, spread word throughout the state that Russian Jewish peddlers were disseminating Bolshevik literature.³⁴

This was the atmosphere in which the most important anti-Semitic document of the early twentieth century came to Amer-

ica, and gained a certain credence. After Lenin seized power in Russia, Czarist sympathizers introduced into western Europe and the United States a spurious concoction, usually known as "The Protocols of the Elders of Zion," produced by the Russian secret police at the beginning of the century. The "Protocols" revealed a conspiratorial plan for establishing a Jewish world dictatorship. Purportedly drawn up by the leaders of world Jewry, the plan involved financial monopoly, chaos, war, and revolution.⁸⁵ Everywhere the intrigues of the Elders were advanced as an explanation for the downfall of Russia and the spread of Bolshevism. The "Protocols" reached America in 1918 through Czarist army officers who had come to this country on a military mission, notably through Lieutenant Boris Brasol. Brasol foisted upon the Military Intelligence Division of the United States Army an English translation of the "Protocols" and started typewritten copies circulating in other influential circles in Washington, D. C. A renegade associate, one Casimir Pilenas, tried to extort \$50,000 for the manuscript from the American Jewish Committee.⁸⁶

Although Brasol failed to influence governmental policy, he did get the "Protocols" before a larger public through the aid of two organizations engaged in 100 per cent American propaganda. One of these, the National Civic Federation, had adopted a nationalist line (in place of its original program of collaboration between capital and labor) too recently to give Brasol more than a little, covert support; the director, Ralph Easley, was forced to edit all anti-Semitism from Brasol's contributions to N.C.F. propaganda.⁸⁷ But the American Defense Society, the very quintessence of 100 per cent Americanism, took the White Russian and the "Protocols" under its wing. (Brasol had been in close contact with the chairman of the society even before the war ended.) Apparently under its subsidy, a small publishing house issued an American edition of the "Protocols" in August 1920. The American Defense Society then distributed copies among its members. Other copies of the book, which included much supplementary data on the responsibility of the Jews for Bolshevism, were sent to many Congressmen.⁸⁸ Shortly thereafter one of the society's most active members, the well-known publisher, George Haven Putnam, put out an American edition of *The Cause of World Unrest*, a British polemic based upon the "Protocols."⁸⁹

Up to this point the anti-Semitic movement had fed largely on the Red Scare, reflecting the conditions of 1917-1919 rather than the newer anxieties emerging in 1920. At the very time, however, when anti-Semitism was coming into the open and the "Protocols" were beginning to play a small part in molding public opinion, anti-radical nativism was subsiding. Instead of collapsing with it, the anti-Jewish strain in 100 per cent Americanism outlived that early phase and passed on from a time of war and revolution to one of depression and disillusion. The importance of anti-Semitism actually increased in the course of this transition, because in 1920 it came out from under the shadow of the Red Scare; it became in its own right one of the major nativisms of the early twenties.

Far from interfering with this shift, the "Protocols" presented revolution merely as one instrument by which the Jew sought mastery of the world; they could be read in other lights aside from the glare of Bolshevism. Although fear of Jewish radicalism remained an important element in the anti-Semitic complex, the character of the assault broadened significantly. The Bolshevik theme fused with an onslaught on Jewish capitalism and a supplementary attack on Jewish morality; and over all of these clashing charges hovered an image of the Jew as a peculiarly and supremely international force.

Though the "Protocols" served to substantiate the menace of the "International Jew," his entry into the stream of American nativism was largely independent of such exotic documents. Twice before 1920 this world-wide power, conspiring against all nations, had invaded American imaginations: once during the "battle of the standards" in the 1890's, again (on a more limited scale) during the Frank Case on the eve of the World War. At both times factors that reappeared in 1920 had contributed to the concept. Both the nineties and 1914 were periods of depression, in which the countryside suffered at least as much as the city from impersonal economic forces of international proportions. When hard times struck again in 1920, they bore down especially heavily on the agricultural areas. Townsfolk and rural people who had followed Bryan and Watson in the nineties now saw their wartime gains wiped out and the subjugation of their agrarian society confirmed. Also, the twenties repeated a second characteristic of the 1890's, namely, a strong, diffuse nationalism not confined to a single foreign ad-

versary but rather distrustful of a whole outside world. The isolationist reaction evident in 1920 pressed home the danger of world entanglements in a more conscious and articulate way than ever before. Whereas imperialism had swallowed up the free-floating jingoism of the nineties, and hyphenism had absorbed the assorted anti-foreign movements of 1914, the disillusion that followed the war left nationalists with no alternative to a thoroughgoing revulsion from all global crusades or encounters. Thus, while economic distress aroused old resentments at an alien money-power, isolation seemed a last defense against a threatening world.

It may be significant too that the very disillusion responsible for the recoil from international engagements closed in upon democratic reform as well. Though convinced that things had gone terribly wrong at home and abroad, men lacked the confidence to renew the progressive spirit of the prewar years. Their sense of social malaise, unallayed by substantial institutional reconstruction, found more shadowy and less rational objects. All of the xenophobias rampant in postwar America benefited from this failure of democratic morale, for it meant that the chief ideological check on the nativist traditions in the Progressive era was now relaxed. As far as anti-Semitism is concerned, the decline of progressivism helps to explain why the kind of sentiment that Tom Watson had incited during the Frank Case became much more widespread in the early twenties. Watson had appealed to rural or small-town progressives whose faith in concrete reform was already foundering and whose hatred of the trusts could be partially deflected to world conspiracies, Catholic and Jewish. Under the impact of the far greater disillusion of the postwar period, many more of the same kind of people found a substitute for reform in tilting at an international enemy, half banker and half Bolshevik.

The new anti-Semitism secured its standard-bearer and its prophet in one of the commanding figures of the day, Henry Ford. In the *Dearborn Independent*, a general magazine which he published and distributed through his thousands of dealerships, Ford, in May 1920, launched an offensive against the International Jew which continued off and on for several years. Then and after, the "Flivver King" was enormously popular (and not a little feared) as America's greatest industrialist, as a folk philosopher, and as a

potential politician. In 1923 he was one of the most popular and widely discussed candidates for the next Presidential nomination. That he was a food faddist, a suspicious factory-master, a man of mercurial mood swings and dogmatic opinions, and a quixotic crusader who once sent a boatload of pacifists to Europe to stop the World War, counted for little in the public eye. To millions he embodied the old pioneer virtues: a farm-bred simplicity contemptuous of elegance or intellect, a rugged individualism, a genius for practical achievement.

Ford carried over into the industrial field not only the personal traits but also the social ideas typical of his rustic background. The son of Michigan tenant farmers, he looked upon big cities as cesspools of iniquity, soulless and artificial. He hated monopoly and special privilege. He jealously guarded his enterprises from banker influence and was regarded, in the words of the *Detroit News*, as "the recognized crusader against the money changers of Wall Street."⁴⁰ In short, Ford, for all of his wealth, typified some of the key attitudes for which Watson had stood. It is hardly surprising that in Ford and in many others with an agrarian background, nativism took a violently anti-Semitic turn at a time of depression, isolation, and disillusion.

Each of the factors that apparently impelled the extension of anti-Semitism after the Red Scare affected Henry Ford in an acute and special way. The economic slump of 1920 hit him hard and early. Swallowing his scruples, he had borrowed \$75,000,000 in 1919 from eastern bankers in order to buy out his partners. The decline of sales in 1920 left him loaded with debts and unsold cars. His anti-Jewish campaign began in the midst of this crisis, and at first his propaganda presented the International Jew solely in the role of financier. Jewish bankers, according to the *Dearborn Independent*, operating through a vast international network, dominate the American economy. The great struggle of the hour lies between the contending forces of "international Finance" and "creative Industry," and apparently the latter cannot triumph until control of the world is wrested from the Jewish money-kings.⁴¹

Ford's plunge into anti-Semitism resulted at least as much from political disillusion as it did from economic difficulties. He registered in a remarkably dramatic manner the general collapse of Wilsonian idealism. His assault on a Jewish world-conspiracy co-

incided with an abrupt reaction on his part from an idealistic international outlook to a suspicious, somewhat cynical isolationism. After the failure of his "peace ship" in the winter of 1915-16, Ford had swung over to a Wilsonian position and had run for the Senate in 1918 as an avowed supporter of the League of Nations. Although his Americanization policies revealed a 100 per cent American streak, his outlook on the whole was liberal. To the horror of many business interests, the *Dearborn Independent* persisted throughout 1919 in championing the league, a world made safe for democracy, and "internationalism." At the same time the journal criticized the Red-hunters for intolerance and for serving selfish material interests, looked forward to a new era of partnership between labor and capital, and proposed such reforms as currency inflation and government ownership of the railroads.⁴² But in the early months of 1920 a sour note crept in. The war has not brought forth a better world, the Ford editorials confessed, first sadly, then in a dark and bitter spirit. "The world is sick. The world is showing foretokens of delirium. And the worst of all is that there are no doctors skilled in this kind of disease. . . . We shall have to save ourselves before we can hope to save any one else. Americanism still has a mission to the world."⁴³ Thereafter no more was said about the league, Ford lost interest in reform, and "internationalism" became an anti-Semitic epithet.

Ford himself repeatedly attributed his Jew-hatred to something he learned on his ill-fated peace expedition. As early as December 1919, he was muttering privately, "I know who makes wars. The International Jewish bankers arrange them so they can make money out of them. I know it's true because a Jew on the peace ship told me."⁴⁴ Whoever did plant the seed in Ford's mind, the fact that he afterward connected the failure of his peace efforts with the Jewish question (when in fact a Jewish pacifist had inspired the peace ship idea!) indicates how deeply the acid of postwar disillusion affected him.

Soon the "Protocols" came to the attention of the *Independent's* editors, who proceeded to draw heavily upon them. Brasol and other reactionaries flocked to offer their services, and in time the paper exposed Jewish control of everything from the Versailles Treaty to Tammany Hall, from baseball to Bolshevism. The subject gripped Ford so obsessively that he would burst into sudden

harangues upon it among Detroit business associates, who wondered at times if he was becoming mentally unbalanced.⁴⁵

Hardly any other reputable magazine or newspaper openly backed the agitation. It lacked the respectability which the broader Anglo-Saxon tradition had secured in the course of a long, indigenuous development; it rested on too insubstantial an intellectual foundation. Whereas native-born liberals directed only a scattering fire at the Nordic doctrine, they retorted massively to the new anti-Semitic ideology. The Federal Council of the Churches of Christ, a meeting of four hundred Protestant ministers in Chicago, the Wisconsin state legislature, and a group of 119 distinguished Americans headed by Woodrow Wilson and William Howard Taft issued slashing denunciations.⁴⁶ This opposition may have had some effect on Ford. The *Independent's* crusade slackened toward the end of 1921, perhaps because Ford was persuaded that it was endangering his Presidential prospects.⁴⁷

Nonetheless, the anti-Jewish campaign excited nation-wide attention and met much *sotto voce* approval. A popular writer reported that scarcely a day passed without bringing him letters claiming that the Jews were plotting to control the world, and in a luridly advertised series of articles the general magazine, *World's Work*, elaborately explained that the real menace was not the International Jew but rather the Polish Jew.⁴⁸ Although social discrimination was bitterest in the urban centers, which felt the pressure of a large and growing Jewish population, apparently the ideological attack emanated more from the hinterlands of the West and South. There the agricultural depression revived an old, thwarted hostility toward international finance, and a cultural isolation intensified political isolationism. The *Dearborn Independent* itself appealed chiefly to a countrified audience. Hardly an issue came out without one or more articles of specifically rural interest, from the aspirations of the Farm Bloc to the profits that might be made growing pecans.⁴⁹ And constantly the *Independent* sang the values of that way of life.

Another index of the locus and relative importance of the anti-Semitic theme may be found in the chief organization that fostered it, the Ku Klux Klan. Since all of the xenophobias of the 1920's flowed into this central apotheosis of a tribal spirit, the Klan

furnishes a kind of litmus-paper test of rural nativism. Significantly, the Klan's home was not in the great cities. Its strength came chiefly from the towns, from the villages, and from the ordinarily tranquil countryside. Through the theory and practice of a "noble Klannishness," anti-Semitism achieved, for the first time in American history, substantial organizational expression.

Klan propaganda echoed the Ford attack on the Jewish banker-Bolshevik, adding a special emphasis on vice that reflected the powerful strain of evangelical morality in the organization. To the Klan the Jew stood for an international plot to control America and also for the whole spectrum of urban sin—for pollution of the Sabbath, bootlegging, gambling, and carnal indulgence. Thus Klan publications described the Jew as a subversive radical, a Shylock seeking power through money, and a "Christ-killing" monster of moral corruption. All of these destructive forces radiated from the centers of population, and Klansmen had the assurance—in the words of one Oregon spellbinder—that in some cities "the Kikes are so thick that a white man can hardly find room to walk on the sidewalk."⁵⁰

Still, later generations of Americans, remembering the Hitlerite groups of the 1930's, can easily exaggerate the part that anti-Semitism played in the organized nativism of the postwar decade. The Jew occupied, on the whole, a distinctly secondary rank in the Klan's demonology. On the level of ideas, other passions outweighed, other hatreds outreached the attack on the Jew. As for direct action, he suffered largely from sporadic economic proscriptions. In southern as well as western towns boycotts harassed long-established Jewish merchants; sometimes enterprising Klansmen launched their own proudly labeled "100 per cent American" clothing stores.⁵¹ But personal violence was quite rare. Klan energies found larger outlet in the older, more massive traditions of American nativism. It is time to turn to the whole range of the Klan's operations, and to its central meaning.

The Klan Rides

In Atlanta on October 16, 1915, exactly two months after the Leo Frank lynching and at a time when excitement over the case still ran high in Georgia, William J. Simmons conjured into being

the Invisible Empire of the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan and anointed himself its Imperial Wizard. For a number of years Simmons had made a living in the rural South as a salesman and organizer of national fraternal orders. He had promoted, or at least belonged to, more than a dozen of them, including Masonry, the Knights Templar, and the Woodmen of the World; in the latter he held the rank of colonel. As befitted a southern "colonel," he had cultivated a majestic presence and a grand manner that belied his village origin. Now Colonel Simmons was launching a secret order of his own.

The idea was not wholly spontaneous. The Frank lynchers had called themselves the "Knights of Mary Phagan," and Tom Watson was currently writing about the need for a new Ku Klux Klan.⁵² In the same year a tremendously successful historical film (*The Birth of a Nation*) glorified the long-defunct Klan which ex-Confederates had organized in the Reconstruction era to intimidate Carpetbaggers and Negroes. Simmons was just the man to revive a vanished sectional institution as an instrument of modern American nationalism. His cloudy wits spun with the myths and history of the South; his heart exuded southern sentiment as a plum does juice. From his father, a small-town doctor and an ex-officer in the original Klan, Simmons heard bewitching tales of how it saved white civilization. Undoubtedly he knew also about the subsequent tradition of night-riding, by which rural bands often masked in white caps meted out informal justice upon their neighbors. He liked to trace his original inspiration to a vision that came upon him at the turn of the century not long after he returned from serving in the Spanish-American War—a vision that turned the clouds one day into white-robed horsemen galloping across the sky.

Simmons supplemented these romantic traits with an evangelical piety, a fine dramatic sense and, above all, the gift of the word. Converted by "the old-time religion" at a camp meeting, he had tried his hand at preaching before turning to the more lucrative field of fraternal work, and he remained a mellifluous orator. His first acts as Imperial Wizard were to draw up the high-sounding ritual of the Kloran, create a galaxy of Kleagles, Kligrapps, Cyclops, Geniis, and Goblins, and summon his little band of followers to Stone Mountain, where they dedicated themselves before a flaming cross and a flag-draped altar to uphold Americanism,

advance Protestant Christianity, and eternally maintain white supremacy.

In modeling his little society fairly closely on the Klan of yore, Simmons had in mind the same social objective of controlling the Negroes, who were (he believed) getting "uppity" again. Even at the outset, however, there were important differences between the two organizations, and they grew more sharp as the new Klan evolved. The latter, unlike its predecessor, was formed partly as a money-making scheme; Simmons, who was half visionary and half promoter, designed his own Klan as a fraternal order in the hope of enriching himself by selling insurance benefits to the membership.⁵⁸ Although the Klan failed to develop along such lines, it always remained something of a racket.

More importantly, it differed from the first Klan in being an avowedly *patriotic* fraternal order. Apparently the Colonel did not begin with an overtly nativist program, but his venture reflected a strong nationalist impulse. It embodied the twentieth century fusion of primitive race-feelings with Anglo-Saxon nationalism. The nineteenth century Klan, a product of sectional strife, had championed white supremacy (and white supremacy only) at a time when southern race-feelings clashed directly with nationalism. The new Klan reflected the coalescence of racial and national loyalties. Simmons' organization dramatized what the more diffuse movements of the early twentieth century had already revealed: the South was pushing into the forefront of American nativism. Thus in contrast to the first Klan, which admitted white men of every type and background, the second Klan accepted only native-born Protestant whites and combined an anti-Negro with an increasingly anti-foreign outlook. Always Anglo-Saxon nationalism remained one of the main pillars of its strength.

For five years after its founding, the Invisible Empire was far more invisible than imperial. It recruited during that time a maximum of five thousand members and attracted practically no public attention. Part of its weakness came from Simmons' impracticality. He wasted money, kept careless accounts, and generally showed no business sense. A greater impediment, however, was the temporary subsidence of racial nationalism just at the time when the Klan was forming. The war period offered very little occasion for and indeed inhibited the Klan's *raison d'être*. Significantly, the

order seems to have made what little progress it did by adapting itself to the typical pattern of wartime 100 per cent Americanism. Simmons joined an auxiliary of the American Protective League, turned his followers to spy-hunting, and began to envisage the Klan not as a benevolent order but as a vast secret service agency. One of the early, if not the first, public appearances of the Klan occurred late in the war in Montgomery, Alabama, when a hundred hooded Klansmen paraded through the main streets warning slackers and spies to get out of town and demanding that all others aid the Red Cross and buy their share of Liberty bonds.⁵⁴ Thereafter, wherever the Klan went and whatever it did, it persistently worked to enforce the 100 per cent American ethic of coercive conformity. The success of the Klan awaited, however, the return of a climate of opinion congenial to its own distinctive background.

The period of expansion began in the summer of 1920. Simmons joined forces with a pair of hard-boiled publicity agents, dour-faced Edward Y. Clarke and his plump partner, Mrs. Elizabeth Tyler. Both had long experience in fund-raising drives. They took over the actual management of the Klan, entering a contract with Simmons that guaranteed them \$8 out of every \$10 initiation fee collected by their organizers. Clarke and Tyler then launched an impressive membership campaign, operating partly through newspaper publicity, more largely through agents who usually started in a community by soliciting at the Masonic lodges.⁵⁵ In the next sixteen months they brought in about ninety thousand members. For this accomplishment Clarke and Tyler have generally received the whole credit. The secret of their success, however, lay essentially in the mood and circumstances of 1920. The whole complex of factors—depression, prohibition, and immigration; disillusion, isolationism, and reaction—that shunted 100 per cent Americanism into the older nativistic channels contributed to the Klan's growth. Never before had a single society gathered up so many hatreds or given vent to an inwardness so thoroughgoing.

Among the special circumstances stimulating the Klan's initial surge, not least was the agricultural depression that began in 1920. As cotton prices plunged catastrophically, desperate farmers in half a dozen states resorted to the old practice of night-riding in order to check the sale of cotton. All through the fall and winter of

1920-21 masked bands roamed the countryside warning ginneries and warehouses to close until prices advanced. Sometimes they set fire to establishments that defied their edict. Occasionally there was shooting.⁵⁶ Klan officials disavowed and apparently disapproved of this wave of economic terrorism, which indeed was soon suppressed by law enforcement officials. Like previous nativist organizations, the Klan had no economic program and rarely functioned in economic terms except to enforce a pattern of discrimination. Nevertheless the gin-burners frequently wore Ku Klux garb,⁵⁷ and their nocturnal exploits drew attention to the potentialities of the hooded order. Night-riding of a different kind flourished within the Klan, and it seems hardly doubtful that the organization diverted farmers' economic frustrations into more socially acceptable types of aggression.

The first acknowledged public appearances of the Klan in the postwar period reflected its underlying racial spirit. On the eve of the election of 1920, Klansmen paraded in many southern towns as a silent warning against Negro voting.⁵⁸ A large number of anti-Negro outrages were committed in the next few months under Klan auspices, provoked partly by fear that a "New Negro" had emerged from the war. (In point of fact, Negro veterans returning from France in 1919 and 1920 were often determined to stand militant and upright.) The men in white bludgeoned employers into downgrading or discharging Negro employees, intimidated Negro cotton-pickers into working for wages they would not otherwise accept, forced Negro residents out of a part of South Jacksonville coveted by whites, and branded the letters "KKK" on the forehead of a Negro bellboy.⁵⁹ In these early months of expansion the organization presented itself very largely as a means for keeping "the nigger in his place."

White supremacy remained an important theme even when the Klan spread into the North, but it would be a mistake to regard the Negro issue as the mainspring of its career. Fear of the "New Negro" rapidly declined as he either accepted his old place or moved to northern cities. By mid-1921 the Klan was specializing in attacking white people, and thereafter the great bulk of its disciplinary activities in all parts of the country had to do with whites.⁶⁰ This shift of emphasis by no means indicated a slackening of the racial imperative. To a considerable degree, however, it

suggested that race-thinking was more and more taking a nativistic and nationalistic direction. The Klan's snowballing advance in the early twenties paralleled the upthrust of racial nativism in public opinion generally. And within the order an insistence on preserving the superiority of the old Anglo-Saxon stock over foreigners of every description became pronounced. Edward Y. Clarke exemplified this trend in 1922 by defining the Klan's mission as one of creating national solidarity by protecting "the interest of those whose forefathers established the nation."⁶¹ Other Klan leaders, in particularizing on the old stock's interest, called immigration restriction the most momentous legislative issue of the day, asserted that only Anglo-Saxons or Nordics had an inherent capacity for American citizenship, damned "the cross-breeding hordes" of the new immigration, and trembled lest the "real whites" fail to keep the nation "free from all mongrelizing taints."⁶² This emphatic Anglo-Saxonism did not, of course, prevent the same men from ranting loudly at foreigners as such, on the plea that America must be made safe for Americans.

If the Ku Klux Klan had mobilized only this much of the emotional ferment of the period, if it had functioned only through an Anglo-Saxon version of 100 per cent Americanism and through related fears of Jews and of foreigners generally, it would have incarnated a very large part of the current tribal spirit. Yet the Klan had another big side. By embracing the anti-Catholic tradition along with the racial tradition and the new anti-Semitism, it comprehended the whole range of post-1919 nativism. Anti-Catholicism did not prevail as widely in American public opinion as did the Anglo-Saxon ideas reflected in the organization; an urban, materialistic culture had stifled in too many Americans the religious feelings on which Protestant xenophobia fed. Due, however, to the semirural base of the Klan, within its ranks anti-Catholicism actually grew to surpass every other nativistic attitude. In fact, a religious impulse, perverted but not devoid of idealistic implications, accounts for much of the Klan's distinctive energy, both as a nativist organization and as an agent of other kinds of repressions too.

Although the Klan was Protestant from the day its first cross burned on Stone Mountain, an anti-Catholic emphasis came into the order only in the course of its expansion in 1920 and 1921.

Simmons, Clarke, and Tyler had not at first expected to sell the organization as a bulwark against Rome. The Klan's stress on religious nativism, even more than the parallel expansion of its Anglo-Saxon agitation, reflected the passions of the people who joined it.⁶³ By 1920 the anti-Catholic crusade that had appeared in the South and West after 1910 was reasserting itself more powerfully than ever. Under a prohibitionist governor, Alabama pointed the way as early as 1919. While laying plans for inspecting convents, the state also challenged Catholic (and secular) sentiment by requiring daily Bible reading in the public schools, thus reviving a trend begun in Pennsylvania in 1913.⁶⁴ The following year the tide came in strongly. Tom Watson's Senatorial campaign spread about Georgia an impression that President Wilson had become a tool of the Pope; Governor Sidney J. Catts stomped up and down Florida warning that the Pope planned to invade the state and transfer the Vatican there; an able journalist reported that anti-Catholicism had become "second only to the hatred of the Negro as the moving passion of entire Southern communities"; Michigan and Nebraska debated constitutional amendments banning parochial schools; and in Missouri the once-mighty anti-Catholic weekly, *The Menace*, revived under a new name, *The Torch*.

Sentiment of this kind amounted to a standing invitation to secret societies. The first to respond prominently was not the Klan but rather the True Americans, a local southern organization. The T.A.'s acquired such influence in Birmingham in 1920 that they dominated the city administration and secured a purge of Catholic municipal employees.⁶⁵ Before long Ku Kluxers eclipsed and very likely absorbed the True Americans. Klan propaganda, reviving all of the old stories about arms stored in Catholic church basements, began to lay special stress on the menace of Rome to the nation. Instead of relying entirely on professional organizers, the Klan engaged itinerant preachers as heralds of its message. Increasingly its arrival in a new area was signaled by public lectures on popish conspiracies to destroy "the only truly Christian nation . . . where prophecy is being fulfilled."⁶⁶ As if to demonstrate that the hatred transcended rhetoric, in the summer of 1921 a Methodist minister who belonged to the Klan shot to death a Catholic priest on his own doorstep, and incendiaries destroyed a

Catholic church in Illinois two hours after a monster Klan initiation.⁶⁷

The storm of anti-Catholic feeling, for which the Klan proved a wonderfully sensitive barometer, was closely related to the growth of fundamentalism. This militant repudiation of a liberalized gospel and a secularized culture was making itself felt in the closing years of the Progressive era, but only after the World War did it become a major force in American Protestantism. In truth, fundamentalism owed so much to the emotional aftermath of the war that one may almost define it as the characteristic response of rural Protestantism to the disillusion following America's international crusade. The wartime hope for a new and beautiful world had produced nothing but crime, moral chaos, and organized selfishness on a grander scale than before. Surely here was proof that the nation had misplaced its faith, that the only true salvation for a sinful society lay in blotting out the whole spirit of innovation and returning to the theological and moral absolutism of an earlier day. Insistence on a Biblical Christianity naturally sharpened the historic lines of Protestant-Catholic cleavage, but the vigor of anti-Catholicism in the twenties could only result from the affiliations between fundamentalism and 100 per cent Americanism. The fundamentalist determination to fix and purify a Protestant orthodoxy followed the same channels and obeyed the same laws that governed the course of 100 per cent Americanism. Both epitomized a kind of crusading conformity, reacted to a common disillusion, and represented an urge for isolation from an evil world. Who can wonder that the two movements intermingled in rural areas, or that fundamentalism energized a religious version of postwar nationalism?⁶⁸

Simmons' religiously tinged imagination had given the Klan an appropriate structure for the anti-Catholic spirit that it absorbed and magnified. The flaming crosses burning on hillsides, the altars erected at meetings, and the kneeling posture of suppliants at initiation ceremonies were central in the Klan's symbolism. Every klavern, or local unit, had a kludd, its chaplain, who opened each meeting with a prayer; the closing ritual consisted of a "kloxology." As the Klan grew, it emphasized increasingly its militant Protestantism. Well-known hymns were modified and adopted as Klan songs. It became common practice for Klansmen to march

in a silent body into a Protestant church in the middle of a Sunday service and hand the minister a donation.⁶⁹ The organization took a close interest in compulsory Bible reading in the public schools, and in several states it lent strong support to Bible-reading bills.⁷⁰ "Patriotism and Christianity," said one Exalted Cyclops, "are pre-eminently the moving principles of the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan." Another boasted: "The Klan stood for the same things as the Church, but we did the things the Church wouldn't do."⁷¹

The things that the church would not do included general boycotts of Catholic businessmen, bringing pressure against Catholic public officials, and intimidation of many Catholic individuals. It would be futile, however, to try to estimate how much of this strong-arm activity applied to Catholics as opposed to foreigners, Jews, Negroes, and plain old-stock Americans. Contemporary accounts seldom identified the background of the Klan's victims, a circumstance which in itself suggests how manifold the proscriptions were. The significant fact was that the crusading, evangelical spirit behind the Klan turned it into a general instrument for moral regulation. Quite possibly (since it centered in areas where its foreign and Catholic enemies constituted only a small minority), most of the Klan's coercions affected other native white Protestants. Certainly it differed from prewar nativist societies not only in embracing a variety of xenophobias but also in ranging far beyond nativistic limits. Somewhat like the wartime American Protective League, the Klan watched everybody.

In its function as censor and policeman of local morality, the Klan brought to a head the 100 per cent American heritage as it survived into the twenties. Impatient of legally constituted authority yet dedicated to the maintenance of law and order, local Klans saw themselves as agents for accomplishing what government was failing to do: they would work a moral regeneration by compelling all deviants or backsliders to adhere to the ancient standards of the community. Hardly any infraction of the village code seemed too petty for intervention. An undertaker refused the use of his hearse to a bereaved family unable to pay cash in advance; Klansmen drove him out of town. A businessman failed to pay a debt or practiced petty extortions; Klansmen tarred and feathered him. A husband deserted his family, or failed to support it, or maintained illicit relations with women, or gambled too much; Klans-

men paid him a minatory call. A widow of doubtful virtue scandalized the neighbors; Klansmen flogged her and cut off her hair.⁷² Prohibition especially drew the order's vigilance. Its most spectacular clean-up campaign occurred in Herrin, Illinois, where lax law enforcement permitted wide-open saloons and flagrant vice, and where the large Italian Catholic population was held chiefly at fault. There the Klan carried out mass raids on homes and road-houses, engaged in pitched battles with the bootlegging faction, and temporarily seized the city government by force. The chaos extended over a two-year period, brought twenty deaths, and subsided finally in a great religious revival.⁷³

Throughout this regulatory activity runs the war-born urge for conformity that had passed from anti-hyphenism, Americanization, and Palmer raids into fundamentalism and prohibition. No less important here is the other side of the 100 per cent American spirit, its crusading idealism. Ku Kluxers repeatedly justified their programs of action in terms of reform, though the reform consisted essentially of stabilizing the old order of things; and when first organized in a community, the Klan usually had the support of some of the "best people," intent partly on improving the local situation.⁷⁴ In the generation before the war this evangelical zeal for reform had poured into progressivism. The war directed it partly toward an international crusade, partly toward the maintenance of homogeneity. When the disillusion that followed the war choked off any large international or progressive outlet for moral idealism, about all that remained of it in small-town America turned inward, in a final effort to preserve the values of the community against change and against every external influence. Professor Frank Tannenbaum has summed up a good part of the Klan spirit as "an attempt to destroy the 'evil' that stands in the way of the millennial hope—a hope made vivid to many souls who actually believed that the war would usher in a 'world fit for heroes to live in.'"⁷⁵ Perhaps, in the pageant of American history, the white-robed Klansman should stand in the place of Santayana's genteel New Englander as the Last Puritan.

It was ironical but inevitable that the Klan crusade to purify and stabilize spread contamination and strife everywhere it went. The secrecy with which the order operated served to cloak many an act of private vengeance. With poetic justice it was held re-

sponsible for crimes and cruelties that others committed in its name. Still worse, the Klan rent families, communities, and states, turning husband against wife, neighbor against neighbor, and man against man, until it compacted an opposition as lawless as itself. And while hatred bred hatred outside its ranks, the poison of corruption worked within.

In 1921 the Klan crossed the Mason and Dixon Line and began to attract nation-wide attention. By the end of the year it claimed to be operating in forty-five states and enrolling a thousand members a day.⁷⁶ Nineteen twenty-two saw a tremendous expansion, demonstrated by great public ceremonies at which a thousand or more initiates would be sworn in at once.⁷⁷ At the same time, like its nineteenth century predecessors, the organization entered politics, not with any positive program but simply to show its strength by winning elections. In Georgia the Klan was instrumental in putting a very friendly governor in the state capitol. In Texas it spent lavishly in money and effort to send Earl Mayfield to the United States Senate. In Oregon Klan sentiment wrought a virtual political revolution, defeating a governor who had tried to suppress its activities and installing a legislature that proceeded to enact several anti-Catholic measures.⁷⁸ Hundreds of candidates for local offices in many states were indebted to the Klan vote.

Political power greatly increased the divisive effects of the organization, partly because the Klan itself became an issue in elections, partly because law enforcement officials often dared not curb its terrorism. Thus in the latter part of 1922 local authorities in Morehouse Parish, Louisiana, proved helpless in the face of a near-civil war between the Klan-infested parish seat of Bastrop and the more leisurely and aristocratic town of Mer Rouge. Bastrop was Dry and Baptist; Mer Rouge held the Klan and all its ways in contempt. A series of whippings culminated in the abduction and murder of a well-known Mer Rouge planter's son and his companion. For months thereafter troops sent by the governor kept order while the pro-Klan sheriff and district attorney stood idle. Twice the Morehouse grand jury refused to admit that a crime had been committed.⁷⁹

Meanwhile internecine strife rocked the Invisible Empire. While its national officials exercised very little control over the local klaverns, an authoritarian constitution gave the members prac-

tically no control over their national leaders. For many of the latter the organization had an attraction quite different from that which drew its followers. It was immensely lucrative, and the profits to be extracted from membership fees and political corruption incited constant turmoil at the top. Clarke levied upon the Klan royally; Simmons, who was drunk or sick much of the time, was putty in his hands. When news got around in the fall of 1921 that Clarke was living with his confederate, Mrs. Tyler, this affront to Klan morality strengthened a group endeavoring to unseat him, but Simmons clung to Clarke and banished his principal enemies. Clarke held on against mounting opposition until November 1922, when a coalition of state leaders got rid of him by intimidating Simmons into retiring to an honorary position. Simmons retained a following and later tried to regain control, but the national headquarters had passed definitely into the hands of a moon-faced Texas dentist, Hiram Wesley Evans. Ultimately Simmons sold out his interest in the Klan to the Evans group for a sum which they announced as \$90,000 but which he said should have been \$146,000.⁸⁰ Evans regularized financial practices somewhat, but still the money flowed richly into many pockets.⁸¹

The Klan torrent rolled onward through 1923, reaching a high point late in the year. By that time the organization had enrolled an aggregate membership probably close to three million. Arkansas and Oklahoma fell vassal to it, and a spectacular expansion in the Midwest made Indiana and Ohio the leading Klan states in the nation. Except for Colorado, the order touched the Rocky Mountain states only negligibly; it left no considerable impression on the Atlantic seaboard outside of Pennsylvania and upstate New York.⁸² In Indiana and Texas, however, it could organize vast public gatherings attended by seventy-five thousand people.

The tremendous midwestern expansion in 1923 threw a new demagogue into the limelight and opened another chapter in the struggle within the Klan. D. C. Stephenson emerged as the dominant figure in the northern Klans. He could corrupt a legislator as effectively as he could organize a membership drive, and with equal ease he could convince the rural masses that the President of the United States was leaning on him for advice. He lived in bacchanalian style on an estate in Indianapolis; his political ambitions were boundless. As his power grew, he strove to wrest the na-

tional headquarters from Evans. All through 1923 the fight for control went on behind the scenes, with Stephenson perhaps partly in alliance with the disinherited Simmons faction. In November an Evans henchman murdered Simmons' attorney, supposedly to prevent an impending exposé. Somehow, that may have turned the tables against Stephenson. He surrendered his position in the national hierarchy of the Klan, but he rather than Evans retained paramount influence in Indiana.⁸³

While this internal struggle raged, opposition was mounting on all sides. All along, the urban press and urban liberals had denounced the Klan with singular unanimity. Now it was also rousing a more formidable popular resistance. Old-stock conservatives, horrified at the chaos that the Klan bred, rallied against it. So did the miscellaneous corruptionists and enraged minorities it attacked. In the winter of 1922-23 the conservative governor of Kansas opened a drive against the organization by bringing suit to restrain it from all public appearances or activities. New York, under its Catholic governor, Al Smith, took a series of legal steps that inhibited Klan operations there. Minnesota, Iowa, and Michigan passed laws forbidding the wearing of masks in public.⁸⁴

Oklahoma's flamboyant governor, John Walton, cast legality to the winds in trying to crush the hooded order. Although elected by a farmer-labor coalition in 1922, he soon showed greater friendliness toward grafters and big oil interests. The Klan supposedly controlled the state legislature and the Tulsa local government. Walton, in August 1923, took advantage of a series of floggings to put Tulsa County under martial law (later extended to the whole state). He imposed censorship on the leading Tulsa newspaper, forbade Klan meetings, established military courts to try Klan vigilantes, and used the National Guard to prevent the legislature from convening. When the legislature did succeed in assembling in November, it promptly impeached the governor.⁸⁵

At the same time, anti-Klan mobs were beginning to lash back at the organization in areas where the immigrants were strongly entrenched. A bomb wrecked the offices of the Klan newspaper in Chicago. In a suburb of Pittsburgh an angry throng pelted a white-robed parade with stones and bottles, killing one Klansman and injuring many others. In the small industrial city of Steubenville, Ohio, a mob of three thousand attacked a meeting of one hundred

Klansmen. In Perth Amboy, New Jersey, a mob six-thousand-strong, led by Jews and Catholics, closed in on a Klan meeting place, overwhelmed the entire police and fire departments, and fell upon some five hundred Ku Kluxers, kicking, stoning, and beating them as they fled.⁸⁶

Such, from the West Frankfort riots of 1920 to the collapse of civil government in Oklahoma three years later, from the triumphant demonstrations of racist scholarship to the nightmares of Henry Ford, were some of the fruits of nativism in a postwar world neither brave nor new.