

U. S. HARD TIMES EL DORADO FOR IMMIGRANTS

Miss Forbes Tells Why They Sail.

In this, the second of the series, Miss Genevieve Forbes of The Chicago Tribune staff tells why men and women leave their own countries to come to America. They want to "better themselves." The gateway to "The Land of the Free" is Ellis Island, which suggests almost everything but freedom. Charges concerning terrifying hardships suffered by immigrants there are sustained by Miss Forbes' experiences when she arrived as a supposed Irish immigrant.

BY GENEVIEVE FORBES.

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New York, Oct. 13.—"And the longer you stay away from Ireland the better Irishman you are," is the somewhat ambiguous motto of the wizened old man who sits next me in the third class railway carriage on the way to Wexford, county Wexford, Ireland.

He follows up this Irish bon mot with the explanation that he is returning to his home after an absence of thirty-five years in the coal mines of Wales, that Ireland is a "grand country," and — — but, of course, the conversation turns to politics.

Phrased a bit differently, but equally definitely, is the typical remark of the Irish girls leaving for America, "We're going to the United States to make some money but, please God, we want to die in Ireland."

Love Green and "Lei: Green."

In Wexford, on the coast, up in Galway, over in Kerry and Clare counties, throughout the south of Ireland, I find the same desire to emigrate to America. The young men and women sing of the shamrock, but they talk of the American pay envelope.

And the younger members of the communities are leaving in increasing numbers, in spite of the protests of the Irish republican army, in spite of the reported unemployment crisis in the United States, in spite of statistics, in spite even of Ellis Island, the one powerful deterrent.

Protests of the Irish republican army often translate themselves into definite prohibitions, and denials of traveling permits, without which the loyal Sinn Fein enthusiast hates and fears to leave the country.

Their "War Wages" Low.

"Of course," explained the Wexford girls, "we don't blame the Irish republican army for trying to keep us here, the boys to fight again if they have to, the girls to do cooking and nursing for them. But there's no chance for us to make a living here now, until real peace comes."

Then follows an argument based on the need of emigrating for a short time, making enough money to help the folks at home, and returning later, when conditions are stabilized, to invest capital in Irish business.

Useless also to tell these prospective immigrants of unemployment in the states. For they counter with stories of unemployment in their own country, in the county, in the village. Wexford, a town of 11,000 inhabitants, has 1,400 unemployed.

Hard Times in Wexford.

Formerly a prosperous town, supported in the main by several farm implement factories selling extensively to the numerous well to do farmers in the county, Wexford now is filled with men and boys loitering about the inns wondering when the foundries will open.

Warfare between the I. R. A. and the Black and Tans has resulted in a sequence of attacks, reprisals and counter attacks, until much of the farm machinery has been destroyed. The farmers are unwilling to purchase new equipment until there is a definite guarantee of permanent peace. So factories, their sales reduced to almost nothing, have shut down.

It is equally futile to discourage the girls with discussions of low wages in America, when these girls have been doing a man's work on the farms and receiving a maximum salary of the equivalent of \$5.80 a month.

Faith That Moves Mountains.

There is no deterring force to stop the majority of girls, whose interest in the United States is as serious as lovable Nellie Sullivan, the belle of every village dance, who has two ambitions which she hopes to realize in the promised land of America, the purchase of a gold tooth, and the ability to wear a hair net the way "the Yank girls do."

Economics, religion, political affila-

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IMMIGRANTS

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tions, tradition—the eager boys and girls overcome them all in their zeal to get to America. But there is one obstacle before which even the bravest shudder, the ordeal of Ellis island. All their superstitious fear of ghosts and witches, and all their practical fear of the "Gombeen" man are insignificant in comparison with the fright they have of "The Island" as they call the opening portal to the new land of freedom.

But the lads are brave and the girls courageous. So, even the terrors of "The Island," described to them in appalling letters from across the water, do not prevent them from taking the preliminary steps and they are many, in the long journey from Wexford, Ireland, to New York City.

Tomorrow's article will tell in detail just what the Irish girl must do before she gets her passport for the United States.