

CHAPTER III

THE INVASION OF SLAVS AND ITALIANS

IF we had taken a place by the side of "The Man at the Gate" in the port of New York early in the decade between 1880 and 1890 we would have witnessed the beginning of a change in the racial composition of our immigration that to-day has become of far-reaching significance. We would have seen it transforming from northwestern European nationalities of Teutonic and Celtic stock to those from eastern and southern Europe of Slavonic, Lettic, Italic, Finnic, and Chaldean descent—from the peoples of Germany, Ireland, England, Scotland, Wales, and the Scandinavian countries to those from Russia, Austria, Hungary, and Italy.

While as observers we would likely have recognised the change because of the widely varying racial characteristics of the two distinct groups, we could not have even conjectured its growth to its huge volume of to-day or foretold its present significance. If we could combine the imaginative faculty and descriptive ability of Conan Doyle with the clarifying perception of H. G. Wells, we might be able to word-picture its characteristics and graphically to outline the full meaning of it all. Lacking these, we can