

CHAPTER IV

DISTRIBUTION — THE OLDER IMMIGRATION

A CHANGE in the racial make-up of immigration to the United States is marked, as we have seen, by the decade from 1880. During that period and ever since, there has increased among us in startling numbers a group of European races which heretofore had been almost unrepresented in our foreign-born population. Their coming was accompanied by marked decreases among most of the nationalities which up to that time had formed the bulk of our immigration. This change in racial composition was almost simultaneously accompanied by an equally significant change in the geographical distribution within the country of the foreign-born population. Let us first see how the immigrants prior to 1880 were distributed.

When the foreign born enumerated in the census of 1850 began coming to this country, the South Atlantic as well as the North Atlantic states were already comparatively well settled. The then population, mostly agricultural, was distributed largely along the eastern seaboard, extending from Maine nearly to Florida, and in the region known as the Atlantic plain; few inhabitants were to be found west of the