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EDITORIAL

LOOKING FORWARD.

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MODERN business literature makes thrilling reading, more powerful and impressive, because more real and profound, than any volume of fiction. It tells a tale of titanic struggle that is prophetic of revolution and will be co-extensive with the boundaries of modern society. A greater share of the world's commerce is proclaimed a necessity for the industrial nations of the world. And measures are proposed by which it can be secured—measures whose final results will be far-reaching, and provocative of vast social changes.

The cause of this necessity is the ever-increasing growth of production over consumption. The tendency of the former is to surpass the latter in ever greater proportions. T.J. Zimmerman, a commercial expert, in a recent article, expresses the case, as far as the United States is concerned, in these brief but eloquent words:

“In 1850 our factories turned out one billion of dollars worth of goods. Fifty years later this country manufactured a product to the value of thirteen times that. Yet in that half century our population has only quadrupled. In 1850 we consumed what we produced. Now we produce half a billion more than we consume.

“Follow this up for the next half century. If our production and consumption continue in the same ratio, our factories will each year be turning out a surplus of \$24,000,000,000 worth of manufactured goods.”

Zimmerman further says:

“The market for this surplus must be found outside our own borders.”

And so impressed is he with the dangers presented by a failure to find this market, that he is impatient of delay. “Now is the time,” shouts he, “for American manufacturers to prepare themselves for the fierce struggle for foreign markets which is surely coming. . . . For this is a peculiarly critical time of transition in the

world's industrial development.”

Zimmerman is not alone in this hue and cry, this consciousness of danger and impatience with measures that promise slow relief. Bankers, presidents and managers of manufacturing corporations, capitalists in general, all more renowned and less penetrating and vivid than Zimmerman, are with him. They join with him in demanding a market for “our” surplus “outside our own borders.” And as a means to this end, they propose governmental aid, reciprocity treaties, international banking, foreign branches and advertising booms abroad, closer co-operation among all the domestic manufacturers and departments of industry, finance and transportation, together with cheaper raw material and labor. “We must,” say they, “if we are to flourish, further American trade abroad.”

And abroad they too shout “We must, if we are to flourish, further our trade in foreign markets.” And they too propose to do it by the same means as do the capitalists of this country!

Truly, this diagnosis and prognosis is thrilling reading; but how inadequate to the situation! In fifty years, as Zimmerman has shown, this country will produce an excess of \$24,000,000,000 yearly, when based on the present ratio of production and consumption. But that ratio is going to change with the intensity of the competition which it creates. The invention of machinery will not stop; neither will the concentration of capital; nor the sub-division of labor. All will proceed with greater acceleration. The discoveries of science will continue to increase man's ability to augment industrial production. And this condition of affairs will not only go on in this country, but in the United Kingdom, Germany and France, “our” greatest competitors and most dangerous rivals. Further than this, we shall see the so-called “new countries” which now offer great fields for commercial and industrial exploitation, like Russia and China, for instance, become “old” countries in those fifty years, as did Japan. Aye, the possibilities are that, so great will be the need of development in these “new countries” on the part of the “old” ones, their transformation will be accomplished with greater speed than was that of the “hermit nation.” They will receive the impetus of the ages in their progress toward modernity.

It stands to reason that this increase in the ratio of production and

consumption will not be one of orderly progression and peaceful social change. This country has produced its half-billion of excess amid a succession of panics, industrial troubles, class conflicts and foreign wars. So too have the United Kingdom, Germany and France—and the “new countries,” Russia and Japan. These phenomena are not likely to cease. On the contrary, as the excess of production over consumption mounts higher, as it climbs nearer those \$24,000,000,000 in this country, for instance, these phenomena will increase with the increase in the ratio of production of which they are born. That is, provided a new social order does not take the place of the present one; an order in which this necessity for a larger share of the world’s commerce will be obviated by giving to the working class, the great majority of modern society, all that they produce, thus enabling them to consume it all—Socialism. Already is such an order foreshadowed in the growth of the trusts. Like the chick in the egg it is yet enveloped in the shell of capitalism. And like the chick when it leaves the egg, a new creature differing greatly from its source{,} so will the new order step forth the result of Capitalism, yet differing from it in its greater beauty and grandeur, physical as well as moral. It is bound to come. The necessities of modern industry are making it inevitable.

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