

a general reduction of values is impossible. Therefore deflation means a reduction in the values of certain groups of commodities. Groups of non-agricultural commodities have been reduced in price, but only agricultural products have suffered a substantial loss in values, in buying power. It is therefore proper to say that deflation has been almost entirely at the expense of agriculture. Some day the farmers will want to know where and why the power to deflate commodities resides. Like the European collapse, deflation, as an explanation of the farmer's difficulties, seems to be so obvious as to arouse suspicion that a still more fundamental cause must be sought.

To what extent is the emergency tariff responsible for present conditions? To quote from the London correspondence in the August 5th issue of the *Modern Miller*, a Chicago trade publication: "Trading in Australian flour is pleasing to the nation as a whole, as this prosperous dominion takes in return for its shipments of wheat and flour and other raw materials an equivalent, if not a surplus, proportion of goods manufactured in this country. Naturally this all works out in favor of the Australian mills as against the American mills. America has a tariff wall against products of this country to such an extent that there is practically no market for them in the United States, whereas her products of not only raw materials but manufactured articles are allowed free entry on these markets." Is there need to say more? Is the tariff at last the Unseen Thing? Probably not. The tariff is probably only one of the claws or one of the tentacles of the Unseen Thing.

The speculator in farm products looms large as one of the dragons to be slain. The long hunger of the speculator during the war when his vocation was unpopular found ample appeasement when government controls were removed. Every opportunity and power of superior organization, knowledge of markets, control of capital were used to smash farm prices. This was not limited merely to American speculators, or to speculators on the boards of trade. Our speculative system is too ramified to be delineated. The sources of power are hard to trace. The subtle, automatic interrelations of industry involve the entire structure in all major price movements. The farmer is convinced that the speculative marketing of farm products with its chaos, trickery and swindle must be destroyed. Cooperative marketing of wheat throughout the west is being energetically driven to success against tremendous obstacles by Mr. George C. Jewett, on the basis of the binding pool as developed by Mr. Aaron Sapiro. The pool idea is spreading rapidly to other commodities, and to

practically every section of the country. The farmers, as never before, or rather for the first time, are crossing swords with the speculators of farm products. It is only a matter of time now before this field will be cleared of the obstructive accretions of rampant individualism.

But will the battle then be won? Can cooperative marketing force a satisfactory European settlement? Can it enforce rational policies of international trade? Can it compel all factors of industry to exert themselves to the same full measure in the production of commodities as does the farmer? Can it dethrone the wielders of autocratic economic power and enforce a wider distribution of economic successes and failures? Perhaps it can do these things and more. Time alone will tell. In the meantime the masses of agricultural producers are reeling under the succession of blows. A few are grasping vigorously at the Unseen Thing in an endeavor to shake it off. The many are dazed and uncertain of their defence because they cannot see from whence the blows are falling.

A. RICKLES.

David

Did you go this way? The alders trembled.
All of a sudden the katydids kept still.
Did you take the short cut through the dead tansy,
And no moon to help you down the steep hill?

Hours together the panther on the mountain
Has cried like a woman, sounding very near.
I went down the lane once to touch the warm oxen.
Did he go this way? No, not here.

The barn cat walked the wall along the cornfield,
Hunting like a shadow. The owl peered low.
I'm looking for the dark boy—Did he go this way?
The corn shocks rustled. The field breathed No.

The bats had gone. The horses never heard me
Coming through the pasture; they stamped in their sleep.
Did you leave a footprint here in the lowground?
No one could find it; the hardhack's deep.

Hardhack and boneset, brown-tipped snakeroot,
Paths that my feet know, help my sight!
Didn't you feel him? Did he go this way?
Who else would stir you in the middle of the night?

A black frost is harvesting; clips off the shagbarks;
Crumples up flowers with a crazy hand.

He went past me with a face like silver
And a word I could not understand.

MARIAN STORM.

Reason and the "Fight Image"

I

THERE is a type of mental exercise much approved in the schools and colleges and on the public platform which might be called an exercise in bilateral opposition. It is the exercise in which one side is pitted against the other. The oppositional bilaterality may be represented in some such manner as this:

Yes	No
True	False
Wise	Foolish
Our side	Your side
We win	You lose

It is a rattling good exercise for the development of competitive enthusiasm. It is thrilling to the participants and to the hearers. In each side—whether among participants or hearers—it awakens a vigorous sense of the will to win. It exhibits the same exciting duality as a boxing match, where the purpose is to knock out one's opponent so effectively that there is no breath in him.

This has been the highly approved form of intellectual combat in the schools and colleges for many years. It has been supposed to be wonderfully stimulating to the wits, and to develop in boys and girls, who tend to be dogmatically one-sided, the power to see two sides to every question. There are a number of considerations, however, that give us pause. I suspect it needs no argument, really, to support the contention that these intellectual boxing matches do *not* develop in boys and girls (nor in adults) the power to look upon both sides of every question. That is a bit of pleasant rationalization with which we have long deceived ourselves. When we are really frank with ourselves, we know that the tendency is rather the other way. The side that has chosen the affirmative eagerly and stubbornly refuses to give full credit to the arguments that may be made for the other side. To be sure, it will find out ahead of time what those arguments are likely to be; but it will not meet them with a freely considering, openly weighing mind. It will meet them, rather, as one meets foes. The arguments are there—yes—but just wait until, by hook or crook, we can get a good whack at them! The type of thinking, in other words, is forensic. There is a case to defend *at all costs*. And the outcome is never an adjustment, never an incorporation of the truth that is on both sides; never a reciprocal elimination of error; never the *evolving* of a conclusion that is neither the one side nor the other. It is *either* this side *or* that. Hence there is, in this exercise, nothing of that quality most precious in all social thinking—the "will to rapprochement."

The second consideration that makes us pause is the suspicion that this forensic, bilateral view of truth is in reality a highly artificial, conventionalized view. It is a view which harks back to the days of feudal kings and war lords, and which still shows vigorous traces of itself in party government. It is a view which can have no kinship whatever with the later-developed scientific spirit. For, by the scientist, nature is not envisaged as an antagonist; nor are the questions with which he deals clearly divisible

into two opposed sides. Nature, for him, is a problem; and the intellectual activity in which he rejoices is the power to seek out all the diverse aspects of this problem, to see the problem grow, to find certain guesses turn into proven errors, to find others develop into verifiable fact.

For the scientist, in short, all true thinking is an attendance upon and a working with a complex, *evolving* situation. It is a type of thinking in which the problem is never fully set at the beginning but grows as observation and experiment grow. The scientist, unlike the debater, never goes out by the selfsame door that in he went. He goes in exploring; and he comes out laden with the fruits of unexpected adventure. This means that the debate is an unreal or conventionalized leftover from an older, prescientific, militaristic civilization. Apparently, it has no proper place in a civilization dedicated to the careful, ramifying search for truth. It is a question, therefore, whether the debate ought not to be discontinued in our schools and colleges and on our public platforms; for apparently it tends to breed precisely that bilateral type of mind which is of least use and of most detriment to a social order based upon intelligent discussion and wise judgment.

Fundamental to the social training of the mind should be the development of a vivid sense that there is nothing cut and dried about the problem of life, nothing to be settled once and forever by a decision pro or con. Life is a process, a growing process; and clear thinking is nothing more nor less than effective activation in and through that process. For the static, mechanical, bilateral view, therefore, with its hard exclusions of affirmative and negative, and its pitiless knock-down blows; with its one-sided loyalties and its inevitably closed minds, we must, somehow, substitute the organismic view and the organismic method. For almost every problem we tackle in life—whether in the sciences or in industry, politics, domestic or business life—is widely complex. It ramifies in all sorts of directions. It has many parts that interplay. The adjustment of one part changes the orientation of other parts. It is affected by factors that lie outside it; and it, in turn, affects these. Moreover, no real problem of life is ever the same at any two moments. It changes, grows, becomes more amenable or less. What we need is not debate, but discussion. Debate is narrowing; discussion is liberating. Debate is stationary; discussion is evolving. Debate is purely antagonistic; discussion is cooperative.

Modern education is moving very rapidly in the co-operative direction. The older individualistic relation between teacher and pupil, where the teacher asked the question and the pupil answered—or failed to answer and was marked zero—is rapidly being discarded. The more advanced schools are realizing the value of having students do things in groups. This is the wider significance of the "project" method. In an elementary grade, let us say, the project is of "food supply." The class of youngsters are taken to a truck farm; the children watch the vegetables being gathered from the fields, loaded on to wagons, and carried to the station. They are then taken to the docks,