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FINANCIAI, DEPARTMENT

## (Continued)

vestors, but assumed that the granting of long-term credits by American sellers to foreign buyers would solve the problem. This is open to serious doubt. On such transactions the seller will remain contingently liable. To the extent to which he remains contingently liable he will have placed his working capital at the risk of foreign collections over a period of several years. We cannot expect that our industries will accept such risks, particularly because they are double risks, including not only the solvency of the customer in his own country, but the international solvency of his country. The attempt to facilitate grain exports by granting Government credits to farmers and exporters is open to the same criticism: the farmers want a cash export market, not credits against longterm foreign collections.

Moreover, it is not particular exports which require financing unless we intend to assume commercial banking functions for the world, but the excess of exports over imports. It is exceedingly important that in furnishing these tremendous sums of investment capital we should obtain the best risks and opportunities available. It is always probable that better investments for Ameri-
can capital can be found in the debtor countries than the obligations of importers of particular shipments which would issue under a system of granting long-term credits.
The plain fact is that such increase in our National wealth as has taken place since 1914 is very largely in two categories: we have redeemed foreign debits and created foreign credits. If our National gain is in foreign credits, so should the gains of individuals who have saved during this period be in foreign credits. But that is not the case, due to the fact that first the Government and later the banks and exporters stood between the public and the opportunity or burden, as you will, of absorbing foreign credits for investment. Efforts to advance foreign trade by granting longterm credits, unless exporters are entirely relieved of contingent liability for ultimate collections, go only a step further in the same direction by fastening upon our efficient exporting industries alone a burden which should have National distribution.

On the other hand, what amounts to a great burden to our banks and exporting industries is an equally great opportunity for American investors. We are offered on very attractive terms the ownership of European properties, the resources and business opportunities of

South America. The values are there, in far greater amounts than our present credits call for. We have delayed too long now in acquiring them. The reward will be rehabilitation of the exchanges, normal trade conditions, an ever-growing income for American capital from the four corners of the earth.
The greatest desideratum is a comprehensive programme for our business dealings with other nations which will be permanent and will guide our decisions in all subsidiary questions which arise. The important matters which come up for governmental action cannot be settled singly. Such a programme would have as a starting-point an intention to encourage American investment capital to encompass the earth. The encouragement of export trade would be the first step. The development and use of the merchant marine would be another logical step. So would ultimate collection of the debts of our allies. High tariff, on the other hand, would have to yield, not only because it would operate against the building of export markets and a merchant marine, but because we should soon be excluding, as in the case of Mexican oil, all manner of products produced abroad at the instance of American capital. Such a programme would include as an early step a complete survey of world markets to determine the potential and probable demands of each for our products, not only what they may want, but what they can pay for in goods and sound securities.

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## BY THE WAY

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"Wishing to see something good at the movies," a correspondent writes, "I asked a young man who sat opposite us at our hotel table what was the best thing in our vicinity. 'Oh,' he said, 'you want to go down to the - and see Douglas Fairbanks in "A Human Mosquiter."' I had seen posters announcing 'A Modern Musketeer,' but after seeing the picture we decided that the young man's title was the more appropriate of the two."

The worst days of the Circumlocution Office and of the Chancery Courts of England are brought to mind by the statement in the "Railway Age" that damages amounting to $\$ 180,000$ were recently paid to the Pennsylvania Railroad by the city of Chicago, the payment closing a legal contest which had started in 1894-twenty-seven years ago. The railway had obtained in 1905 a verdict of $\$ 105,000$ against the city for damages caused by the trainmen's strike of 1894 and the accompanying riots. The case was appealed and lost again by the city, and the interest on the original judgment continued to mount until $\$ 180,000$ was required to settle the case.

Vicar (as reported by "Punch")"Your pigs are doing very well, Johnvery well, indeed." John-"Ay, they be. If me and you wos as fit t' die as they be, we 'ud do, sir."

An epitaph on a tombstone in the cemetery at Middlebury, Vermont, reads, as copied by one of our subscribers:
Faithful husband, thou art at restuntil we meet again.

Another subscriber quotes this:
Dear husband do not weep: I am not dead, but in an everlasting sleep.

In slumber sweet beneath this peaceful shrine
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