

way. The object of this cry for conquest, this demand for imperialism, is to afford corporation promoters and land grabbers new and virgin fields of operation. But shall we for their enrichment moisten foreign soil with American blood? Shall their fortunes be fertilized by the bodies of American youth? For the extension of human liberty, no price is too high to pay, not even American blood; but American blood should be too precious to pour out for an extension of American monopoly.

There is a striking difference between the newspaper reports of general prosperity and the evidences on every hand of general depression. The papers say that good times have come again, yet merchants find it difficult to unload their goods; manufacturers, except in certain lines which are affected by the war demands of government, are desperately short of orders; capital rushes eagerly to invest in three per cent. bonds instead of business enterprises; and, although enlistments have made large drafts upon the army of the unemployed, it is well-nigh impossible for workingmen to get jobs. An advertisement for work brings few if any responses, except from book agencies and "fake" factories; while an advertisement for help overwhelms the advertiser with applications. Yet the papers, and the financial papers at that, multiply their assurances that we are on the flood tide of prosperity. There are only two ways of accounting for this. Either the reiterations of prosperity are made in bad faith, or those who make them proceed upon the theory that what ought to be, according to their philosophy, actually is. The latter is probably the explanation. It is supposed that we ought to be prosperous and therefore that we are, because our exports exceed our imports.

It is an old superstition that the prosperity of a country is due to its excess of exports. This superstition,

like most other superstitions, prevails in the face of the most patent facts. Were one asked to name the typically prosperous nation of the world, he would say Great Britain. This would not imply that everyone in Great Britain is rich; but that as a nation that country is notably prosperous. And if one were asked to name the typically unprosperous nation, he would be apt to say Egypt. Not that everyone is poor in Egypt. Quite the contrary. But Egypt is notably poor as a nation. Yet Great Britain, the rich nation, is an importing nation, and has been for half a century, whereas Egypt, the poor nation, has for long been an exporting nation. That is to say, in Great Britain imports steadily exceed exports, while in Egypt the reverse is the case—exports exceed imports. It is curious that with these two object lessons before their eyes all these years, American business men should be so deluded with the notion that an excess of imports means hard times, and an excess of exports good times.

Nor should these object lessons be at all necessary. The mere statement of the excessive export theory should condemn it. Briefly expressed it is that the country which sends out more property than it takes back is on the way to prosperity, whereas the one which takes in more property than it sends out is on the way to hard times. If an individual were advised to get rich according to the excessive export theory, he would laugh at the advice. How could an individual get rich by selling more property than he buys? Do you say he could do it by piling up the money he receives for what he sells? But if he did that, his trading would soon come to an end. Money is only a medium of trading. What men really trade is goods, and in order to do that they must buy as well as sell. Indeed, they must buy—or produce, and legitimate buying is but a form of production—so that they can sell. And un-

less they buy on the whole more in value than they sell, they will grow poor, not rich. It is the same with nations, even if we think of nations as traders.

The reason, perhaps, why it has come to be so strangely supposed that exporting enriches and importing impoverishes a country, is that it is assumed that exports will be offset with money; in other words, that exporting implies the accumulation of a debt in favor of the exporting country, which will ultimately be discharged with shipments of money. But this expectation is unfounded. As a matter of fact, exports could not in any great degree be paid for in money; and if they were, the money would have to go out again to pay for imports, which would change the nation from an exporting to an importing one. Is any debt accumulating in favor of Egypt in consequence of her excessive exports? Is any accumulating against Great Britain in consequence of her excessive imports? Certainly not. Egypt's excessive exports are due to the tribute which in one way and another she pays to absentees; and England's excessive imports are due to tribute which in one way and another she receives from other countries. This is the great fact which makes excessive exports an indication that a country, so far from being thereby enriched, is being drained of its wealth. It is a fact which suggests to thoughtful minds that our own continuous excess of exports means that we are being drained of our wealth by foreigners.

Propos of the collapse of the Leiter wheat corner, the Chicago Economist publishes a list of the elder Leiter's real estate holdings in the "windy city" alone. They are in number 28 pieces, most of them in the heart of the retail district. According to the report of the tax commission the value of this property is \$3,300,310 for the improvements,