

limited only by the confines of the world. Every country, every people, and every seaport was now a direct or indirect competitor. The conditions and methods of that competition were changing and the change was not in our favor. For a generation America led the world in invention, high wages, labor-saving machinery and quick fortunes.

Almost every element of competition had been favorable. In the older countries a single ox, or a horse and a cow yoked together, feebly tilled the soil, while in America the husbandman rode upon a wheeled plow driven by steam or drawn by a phalanx of horses and turning several broad furrows at once; there, women and children wrought from sun to sun to gather the wheat, here whole counties of golden grain were swept together like magic by the self-binder and the six-horse header; there the crop was laboriously pounded out by flail, here the steam thrasher and elevator rushed it through in a few hours; there the grain was cleaned by the slow process of the winnowing-board, here by powerful machinery at the rate of thousands of bushels per hour; there the crop was borne to rafts and boats in aprons, or baskets and sacks on the backs of men or horses and cattle, here it was whisked across the country in long trains of grain cars running 25 miles per hour, gathering the product of a year and an empire into immense elevators as though it were the pastime of a holiday. But it is unnecessary to further particularize. It was the aggressive stride of American progress and success outstripping like the wind the slow and primitive methods of other days.

RIVALS ADOPT AMERICAN TOOLS AND METHODS—But now everything is changing. The high-class, labor-saving machinery which was not only invented and used, but manufactured in America, is being sold and used liberally in the countries which are now pressing us with their competition. As before they did not meet us, so now we cannot meet them upon an equal footing. Their labor is patient and accustomed to long hours and moderate compensation; capital is represented by the accumulations of generations; interest is low, and the avenues to political and social position are not open to the ordinary people, so that the entire family, from the toddling infant to tottering age, grasping the instruments which hitherto made us omnipotent, join patiently together in the work of production and competition.

AMERICAN AND FOREIGN CONDITIONS CONTRASTED—Nearly every country that competes with the principal products of America lies close upon a seaboard open all the year or is pierced by ocean-connecting channels. The floods of the Volga, the La Platte, the Ganges, the Nile, the Danube and the Obi carry grains direct from the fields to tide-water.

Nor does this end the contrast. The total wheat product of all countries is now about 2,500,000,000 bushels. The available