

THE WAYSIDE PHILOSOPHER

ABRACADABRA

OUR BANKERS AND OUR HARD TIMES

At present our local body politic seems permeated with gloomy forebodings of hard times to come. Prophets of evil accept unemployment, the Irish question, the political situation, as texts from which to croak out dark word-pictures of worse times yet to befall us. The housewife brooding o'er her domestic problems finds life an unvarying promise of more dreadful future. Everywhere there is doubt, uncertainty and a dread anticipation akin to despair.

The worst feature of it all is that it is unnecessary. We suffer from an attack of "nerves." We have become hypochondriac on the subject of "a hard winter before us."

One naturally turns to financial interests to feel pulses there. Standing at the door are the local bankers. "Watchman, what of the night" we call. Listen to the reply.

One of our local bankers, Mr. Harrison, addresses the Rotary Club. Sanely he paints conditions as they are and may be. The ultra-blue shades are absent. It is a reasonable picture with the strong elements of financial stability and progress rather toned down than emphasized—a conservative estimate from a man but a few stages removed from a doubting Thomas.

We hear of this same banker in his office. We marvel at the change. Is it due to the change in environment contact with doubters? The clear vision has vanished, Dr. Jekyll has become a Mr. Hyde.

Nor is he alone. Another banker is reported to have advised an intending investor that next spring one would be able to obtain property in Vancouver forty per cent. lower than he could today. Most absurd, but the man took the advice and did not buy.

Had the banker said that here and there properties were obtainable today at less than cost, in some cases quite below cost, the statement would have been roughly correct.

The proposition as stated overlooks all the improvements that have taken place in the world situation during the last twelve to eighteen months. It overlooks the crop values of this year in Canada. It overlooks all the especial advantages with which we stand surrounded today. If sincere, it is absurd; if insincere, a crime.

Let our bankers consider their part in stabilizing conditions. We do not ask them to be blatant boosters, having no grounds for "hot air" visions of future development.

Such a position would be as distasteful as a too great pessimism such as now holds them.

With Mexico quiescent, with the German trouble at rest, with Germany in the world's market for minerals (especially copper for electrical machinery, etc.) with the English strike situation at an end, with Englishmen ready now (freed as they are from the necessity of living on their capital—a new and unwelcome necessity to them) to invest with some freedom, with the Russian danger minimized if not eliminated, with a rejuvenated Belgium and a reorganizing France, with settlement and settling conditions evident on all sides, how is our condition to become worse? Let us open our eyes and see what is around us instead of hiding our heads in bags filled with discounted and discountable imaginings of evil, and let us ask our bankers to lead the way, following Mr. Harrison in his Rotary Club address and not Mr. Harrison the banker, "cribbed, cabined and confined" by doubts, fears and misgivings.

THE AWAKENING

Sitting at Eve 'mid nightshades softly falling
Watching an owl sail by on silent wing,
Each vesper sound of Nature's songs recalling
Our dream of Spring, our loveborn dream of Spring.

Thy voice I hear in murmuring winds around me!
Thy form I see in flitting shadows flung.
Here! It was here! that you my Dream Queen found me,
Thy praise by sweet-voiced warblers softly sung.

Unseen they presence fills my heart with rapture
Our souls unite across the distant sea,
What visions of delight my fancies capture,
Dreaming, I still have converse sweet with thee.

I feel thy kiss on hungry lips impressed.
I hear thy voice in accents sweet and low,
I hug thee to my love-enkindled breast

* * * * *

The vision dieth! I am weary, I must go.

M. M. L.

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