

forest and mineral resources. Only because the earth is more long-suffering, only because its exhaustion is difficult and occupies a long period, have we escaped the peril that looms so large in other quarters. The reckless distribution of the land; its division among all the greedy who chose to ask for it; the appropriation of large areas for grazing purposes, have absorbed much of the national heritage. Only one-half of the land in private ownership is now tilled. That tillage does not produce one-half of what the land might be made to yield, without losing an atom of its fertility. Yet the waste of our treasure has proceeded so far that the actual value of the soil for productive purposes has already deteriorated more than it should have done in five centuries of use. There is, except in isolated and individual cases, little approaching intensive agriculture in the United States. There is only the annual skimming of the rich cream; the exhaustion of virgin fertility; the extraction from the earth, by the most rapid process, of its productive powers; the deterioration of life's sole maintenance. And all this with that army of another hundred million people marching in plain sight toward us, and expecting and demanding that they shall be fed.

From 1860 to 1900 is a far cry. In that time our population leaped from 31,000,000 to 76,000,000. In that time a vast area of wilderness was put beneath the plough. Yet in those same years the area of improved land in the North Atlantic States remained stationary. It is now steadily on the decrease. In