

disturbed. In the United States this is the condition that exists, and it is important to bear in mind how far-reaching and, to a certain degree, how permanent this state of affairs may be.

Perhaps the best proof of the distinctive tendency of over-production in the manufactures of the United States, which to many appears the direct cause of the present misfortunes of the country, is found in the great number of combinations that have been effected in industrial pursuits. It is no exaggeration to estimate that in fully one-third of the distinctive interests of the cities and towns, consolidation of competitive establishments has taken place. Competition, that in early days was supposed to be "the life of trade" became, by its excess, the death of profit when limitations of demand were reached and there seemed no limit to production. Hence in almost every line of life the new economic principle of combination, as a substitute for that of competition, has come into vogue, and with a result that tens of thousands, formerly employed in competitive establishments, are, owing to consolidation of interests, the elimination of competition, the regulation of production and the fixing of prices, out of employment, or seeking it in other avenues already over-crowded. It is significant that in the very great number of establishments closed, or put on "short time," throughout the United States, in the last ninety days (estimated, perhaps, at one-fifth or one-fourth of the entire manufacturing forces of the United States), there is hardly one interest seriously affected in which consolidation or combination has been consummated. True, certain departments of these industries have suffered in common with others, and in pursuance of the policy of restriction of out-put, many factories have been shut down. But it is a fact that failures and serious disasters have been avoided almost universally by interests in which

the principle of combination has been at work. The necessity, as well as the wisdom of this policy, thus illustrated, proves the assertion that in the growth of cities and their output, a vast disparity exists in comparison with the growth of the country and its power to absorb.

The inference is, that so long as the cities continue to grow at the present pace, and the country, having reached its limitations as to area and other conditions, grows no faster than hitherto, there must either be a universal adoption of the principle of consolidation or an outlet found in the world outside. Either one of these two results is inevitable, or the disastrous conditions, as to internal commerce, prevalent in the last few months, it would appear will permanently prevail.

To confirm the statement that the existing unfavorable conditions of internal trade in the United States are contributed to by the rapid growth of cities, as compared with the slow growth of the population of the country, and equally to show how forceful that influence already is, it may be well to follow out to its logical consequences, the growth of this disproportion, even within the life-time of those now living. Fifty years is not an exaggerated expectation of the average American youth of to-day. Within that period, a census for each of five decades will be taken, and if the same proportion of population in city and country prevails, the result will be very startling. New York and Brooklyn to-day have a population of 2,500,000. In fifty years, even at the rate of forty per cent. increase every ten years, the population of New York and Brooklyn will reach 7,000,000, or 2,000,000 greater than that of London to-day. At the same rate of progress, the population of Chicago will have attained 5,000,000, which is not at all unlikely. Philadelphia, Buffalo, Cincinnati, St. Louis, Milwaukee, Kansas City, and numerous other cities,