

of natural resources must force everywhere. He who doubts may easily convince himself by an honest investigation of the facts, that this is no sensational prediction, but something as established and inevitable as an eclipse or the return of the seasons. The most amazing feature of our situation, indeed, is its vast and compelling simplicity.

Every people is thus reduced, in the final appraisal of its estate, to reliance upon the soil. This is the sole asset that does not perish, because it contains within itself, if not abused, the possibility of infinite renewal. All the life that exists upon this planet, all the development of man from his lowest to his highest qualities, rest as firmly and as unreservedly upon the capacities of the soil as do his feet upon the ground beneath him. The soil alone is capable of self-renewal, through the wasting of the rocks, through the agency of plant life, through its chemical reactions with the liquids and gases within and about it. A self-perpetuating race must rely upon some self-perpetuating means of support. Our one resource, therefore, looking at humanity as something more than the creature of a day, is the productivity of the soil. And since that, too, may be raised to a high power or lowered to the point of disappearing value, it is of first consequence to consider how the people of the United States have dealt with this, their greatest safeguard and their choicest dowry.

This is pre-eminently and primarily an agricultural country. Its soil has been treated as have been its