

can not understand the thing and cannot get advice from the inside, then we will have to do it with the flat hand and not with the touch of skill and discrimination. Isn't that true? Men on the inside of business know how business is conducted and they can not complain if men on the outside make mistakes about business if they do not come from the inside and give the kind of advice which is necessary.

The trouble has been that when they came in the past—for I think the thing is changing very rapidly—they came with all their bristles out; they came on the defensive; they came to see, not what they could accomplish, but what they could prevent. They did not come to guide; they came to block. That is of no use whatever to the general body politic. What has got to pervade us like a great motive power is that we can not, and must not, separate our interests from one another, but must pool our interests. A man who is trying to fight for his single hand is fighting against the community and not fighting with it. There are a great many dreadful things about war, as nobody needs to be told in this day of distress and of terror, but there is one thing about war which has a very splendid side, and that is the consciousness that a whole nation gets that they must all act as a unit for a common end. And when peace is as handsome as war there will be no war. When men, I mean, engage in the pursuits of peace in the same spirit of self-sacrifice and of conscious service of the community with which, at any rate, the common soldier engages in war, then shall there be wars no more. You have moved the vanguard for the United States in the purposes of this association just a little nearer that ideal. That is the reason I am here, because I believe it.

#### COMPETITION IN FOREIGN MARKETS

There is a specific matter about which I, for one, want your advice. Let me say, if I may say it without disrespect, that I do not think you are prepared to give it right away. You will have to make some rather extended inquiries before you are ready to give it. What I am thinking of is competition in foreign markets as between the merchants of different nations.

I speak of the subject with a certain degree of hesitation, because the thing farthest from my thought is taking advantage of nations now disabled from playing their full part in that competition, and seeking a sudden selfish advantage because they are for the time being disabled. Pray believe me that we ought to eliminate all that thought from our minds and consider this matter as if we and the other nations now at war were in the normal circumstances of commerce.

There is a normal circumstance of commerce in which we are apparently at a disadvantage. Our anti-trust laws are thought by some to make it illegal for merchants in the United States to form combinations for the purpose of strengthening themselves in taking advantage of the opportunities of foreign trade. That is a very serious matter for this reason: There are some corporations, and some firms for all I know, whose business is great enough and whose resources are abundant enough to enable them to establish selling agencies in foreign countries; to enable them to extend the long credits which in some cases are necessary in order to keep the trade they desire; to enable them, in other words to organize their business in foreign territory in a way which the smaller man can not afford to do. His business has not grown big enough to permit him to establish selling agencies. The export commission merchant, perhaps, taxes him a little too highly to make that an available competitive means of conducting and extending his business.

The question arises, therefore, how are the smaller merchants, how are the younger and weaker corporations going to get a foothold as against the combinations which are permitted and even encouraged by foreign governments in this field of competition? There are governments which, as you know, distinctly encourage the formation of great combinations in each particular field of commerce in order to maintain selling agencies and to extend long credits, and to use and maintain the machinery which is necessary for the extension of business; and American merchants feel that they are at a very considerable disadvantage in contending against that. The matter has been many times brought to my attention, and I have each time suspended judgment. I want to be shown this: I want to be shown how such a combination can be made and conducted in a way which will not close it against the use of everybody who wants to use it. A

combination has a tendency to exclude new members. When a group of men get control of a good thing, they do not see any particular point in letting other people into the good thing. What I would like very much to be shown, therefore, is a method of co-operation which is not a method of combination. Not that the two words are mutually exclusive, but we have come to have a special meaning attached to the word "combination." Most of our combinations have a safety lock, and you have to know the combination to get in. I want to know how these co-operative methods can be adopted for the benefit of everybody who wants to use them, and I say frankly if I can be shown that, I am for them. If I can not be shown that, I am against them. I hasten to add that I hopefully expect I can be shown that.

#### IMPORTANCE OF SMALL BUSINESS

You, as I have just now intimated, probably can not show it to me off-hand, but by the methods which you have the means of using you certainly ought to be able to throw a vast deal of light on the subject. Because the minute you ask the small merchant, the small banker, the country man, how he looks upon these things and how he thinks they ought to be arranged in order that he can use them, if he is like some of the men in country districts whom I know, he will turn out to have had a good deal of thought upon that subject and to be able to make some very interesting suggestions whose intelligence and comprehensiveness will surprise some city gentlemen who think that only the cities understand the business of the country. As a matter of fact, you do not have time to think in a city. It takes time to think. You can get what you call opinions by contagion in a city and get them very quickly, but you do not always know where the germ came from. And you have no scientific laboratory method by which to determine whether it is a good germ or a bad germ.

There are thinking spaces in this country, and some of the thinking done is very solid thinking indeed, the thinking of the sort of men that we all love best, who think for themselves, who do not see things as they are told to see them, but look at them and see them independently; who, if they are told they are white when they are black, plainly say that they are black—men with eyes and with a courage back of those eyes to tell what they see. The country is full of those men. They have been singularly reticent sometimes, singularly silent, but the country is full of them. And what I rejoice in is that you have called them into the ranks. For your methods are bound to be democratic in spite of you. I do not mean democratic with a big "D," though I have a private conviction that you can not be democratic with a small "d" long without becoming democratic with a big "D." Still that is just between ourselves. The point is that when we have a consensus of opinion, when we have this common counsel, then the legislative processes of this government will be infinitely illuminated.

I used to wonder when I was governor of one of the states of this great country where all the bills came from. Some of them had a very private complexion. I found upon inquiry—it was easy to find—that practically nine-tenths of the bills that were introduced had been handed to the members who introduced them by some constituent of theirs, had been drawn up by some lawyer whom they might or might not know, and were intended to do something that would be beneficial to a particular set of persons. I do not mean, necessarily, beneficial in a way that would be hurtful to the rest; they may have been perfectly honest, but they came out of cubby-holes all over the state. They did not come out of public places where men had got together and compared views. They were not the products of common counsel, but the products of private counsel, a very necessary process if there is no other, but a process which it would be a very happy thing to dispense with if we could get another. And the only other process is the process of common counsel.

#### VALUE OF COMMON COUNSEL

Some of the happiest experiences of my life have been like this. We had once when I was president of a university to revise the whole course of study. Courses of study are chronically in need of revision. A committee of, I believe, 14 men was directed by the faculty of the university to report a revised curriculum. Naturally, the men who had the most ideas on the subject were picked out and, naturally, each man came with a very definite notion of the kind of

revision he wanted, and one of the first discoveries we made was that no two of us wanted exactly the same revision. I went in there with all my war paint on to get the revision I wanted, and I dare say, though it was perhaps more skillfully concealed, the other men had their war paint on, too. We discussed the matter for six months. The result was a report which no one of us had conceived or foreseen, but with which we were all absolutely satisfied. There was not a man who had not learned in that committee more than he had ever known before about the subject, and who had not willingly revised his pre-possessions; who was not proud to be a participant in a genuine piece of common counsel. I have had several experiences of that sort, and it has led me, whenever I confer, to hold my particular opinion provisionally, as my contribution to go into the final result but not to dominate the final result.

This is the ideal of a government like ours, and an interesting thing is that if you only talk about an idea that will not work long enough, everybody will see perfectly plainly that it will not work; whereas, if you do not talk about it, and do not have a great many people talk about it, you are in danger of having the people who handle it think that it will work. Many minds are necessary to compound a workable method of life in a various and populous country; and as I think about the whole thing and picture the purposes, the infinitely difficult and complex purposes which we must conceive and carry out, not only does it minister to my own modesty, I hope, of opinion, but it also fills me with a very great enthusiasm. It is a splendid thing to be part of a great wide-awake nation. It is a splendid thing to know that your own strength is infinitely multiplied by the strength of other men who love the country as you do. It is a splendid thing to feel that the wholesome blood of a great country can be united in common purposes, and that by frankly looking one another in the face and taking counsel with one another, prejudices will drop away, handsome understandings will arise, a universal spirit of service will be engendered, and that with this increased sense of community of purpose will come a vastly enhanced individual power of achievement; for we will be lifted by the whole mass of which we constitute a part.

Have you never heard a great chorus of trained voices lift the voice of the prima donna as if it soared with easy grace above the whole melodious sound? It does not seem to come from the single throat that produces it. It seems as if it were the perfect accent and crown of the great chorus. So it ought to be with the statesman. So it ought to be with every man who tries to guide the counsels of a great nation. He should feel that his voice is lifted upon the chorus and that it is only the crown of the common theme.

#### A LITTLE WHILE

A little while the tears and laughter,  
The myrtle and the rose—  
A little while, and what comes after  
No man knows.

An hour to sing, to love and linger \* \* \*  
Then lutanist and lute  
Shall fall on silence, song and singer  
Both be mute.

Our gods from our desires we fashion \* \* \*  
Exalt our baffled lives  
And dream their vital bloom and passion  
Still survives.

But when we're done with mirth and weeping,  
With willow and with rose,  
Shall Death take Life into his keeping? \* \* \*  
No man knows.

What heart hath not through twilight places,  
Sought for its dead again,  
To gild with love their pallid faces \* \* \*  
Sought in vain.

Still mounts the dream on shining pinion \* \* \*  
Still broods the dull distrust \* \* \*  
Which shall have ultimate dominion,  
Dream, or dust?

A little while with grief and laughter,  
And then the day shall close;  
The shadows gather \* \* \* What comes after  
No man knows!

—Don Marquis, in New York Evening Sun.