IN the changing world of today agriculture seems to have lost its tactical advantage in competition with other groups. During the past century industry has doubled and redoubled many times its production of goods. Not only has production per worker been enormously increased, but there has come a vast increase in the number and variety of its products. These, modern man has learned first to want, then to demand. No longer has agriculture a corner on the wants of the human race.

While industry has been pyramiding its contribution to the wants of man, agriculture has failed to interest him in eating and wearing more than he ate and wore a century ago, if quite as much. True, agriculture too has increased its output per worker. It has borrowed the machine from industry and put science to work on the farm. True also, agriculture has profited by rapid increase in the number of people in industry and commerce, an increase resulting in no small degree from the migration of its own youth to the city. Increased output per worker on the farm and a rapidly expanding ratio of urban to farm population both have been powerful buffers against the growing advantage of industry. Largely to them do those in agriculture owe such opportunity as they have had to share with other groups the material blessings of an industrial age. In the years just past we have been privileged to see just how vital to agriculture has been this expansion in industry.

American agriculture first felt the impact of industrialism in the decades following the civil war when rapid expansion on to virgin land, made possible by the building of the railroads, and the multiplication of the output of the individual farmer through the introduction of farm machinery (both the products of industry), caused the production of agriculture to outrun the demand for its goods. Prices fell to low levels and farmers suffered, but, fortunately, their wants were simple and inexpensive compared with those of their children of today.

1Presidential address delivered before the twenty-ninth annual meeting of the Society held in Washington, D. C., November 19, 1936.
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