

one-tenth of the arable soil has been destroyed, and that a considerable portion of this cannot be restored by any application of industry and care.

More serious and even more universal and speedy is the process of deliberate soil exhaustion. New England once supported a population of farmers whose shot was heard around the world. Professor Carver, of Harvard, after a tour of five hundred and fifty miles on horseback in 1905, records his conclusion that "agriculture as an independent industry, able in itself to maintain a community, does not exist in the hilly parts of New England." It is not many years since the favoured wheat-producing areas of the American Northwest gave a yield of from twenty-five bushels per acre upwards. Now an average of twelve to fifteen is accepted as satisfactory. Under the stress of need, by intelligent cultivation, many of the lands of Great Britain, cropped for a thousand years, are made to bear thirty bushels to the acre. The rich, deep soil of our own country, drawn upon for a few decades, produces about twelve. The same ratio holds good of other cereals and of every product of the field. The sea islands that once grew the most famous cotton staple in the world are virtually abandoned.

The people have neglected the preservation of the soil. They take away all and give nothing back. Thorough fertilization of the land has no place in the general work on the American farm. Average American agriculture means the extraction from nature of the greatest immediate return at the lowest possible