

You who are the fortunate owners of a bluff or two growing on a bit of unused prairie don't make the mistake that is commonly made in the West of fencing it and making a pasture out of it. Rather fence it and keep the stock out. The poplar, a very shallow-rooted tree, is much injured by the tramping of stock. The bark also is easily scratched and torn by stock. These wounds are always subject to fungus attacks which kill the tree in a very short



A corner in the garden of a prairie home rendered possible by the planting of a rapid-growing shelter belt.

time. If your bluff already shows dead tops and bears other evidence of old age this is a good time to under-plant with white spruce or balsam fir. If you think it too much trouble to plant the whole area and are not in a hurry for results plant eight or ten good trees to the acre and watch Nature do the rest of the planting, after these trees have reached the cone-bearing stage. In a few years, if you look closely in the leaf mold you will find the young seedlings. These will have no trouble in growing up through the light crowns of the aspen and ultimately displacing it.

There are few prettier sights in the West than a bluff of aspens bursting into leaf in early Spring. The fresh green of their trembling leaves set in motion by the slightest breeze, famed alike in song and story, down through the ages represent a type of beauty peculiarly their own. Think twice before you sharpen your axe and grubhoe and attack that bluff of aspens Nature has so kindly planted.

If you cannot see anything to admire in its sylvan beauty, perhaps your neighbor can and would greatly miss its familiar outline upon the prairie landscape if destroyed. A fool with a few matches or an axe can destroy more real beauty in an hour than Nature can replace in a century. Most of us can remember some tree or a superb piece of woodland destroyed by a thoughtless owner. How our eyes unconsciously looked for the familiar picture that had, alas! gone for ever.

The Act of a Vandal

Within half a mile of my early boyhood home in Ontario, growing on a little speck of an Island thirty feet across near the centre of the Ottawa river, was a magnificent white pine. This tree, about five feet in diameter at the base, by reason of its location was already a very conspicuous object upon the landscape in 1842 when my grandfather first settled in this wilderness famed for its pine forests.

Having always grown in the open and being well supplied with moisture from the river it was a beautiful pyramid of blue green foliage from the ground up. One day at school we missed its familiar form. It had been felled by a man who could see nothing in it but a few dollars worth of lumber. And what did the vandal get? After felling, he found it hollow for nearly half its length and otherwise defective for lumber and after a deal of chopping and sawing he got one knotty log for the sawmill. The rest of the tree was left to rot where it fell. Its glorious crown that towered over a hundred feet into space nurtured for centuries by the Infinite, the first living thing to greet the rising sun of a new day, the last to receive its goodnight kiss at eventide, lay a shattered and mangled wreck. Its mission of beauty forever ended. How does three or four hundred feet of low grade lumber or a ten dollar bill look in comparison? Look once again at that old veteran upon the hillside before you lay it low. Some trees have a scenic value vastly greater than their cash value in cordwood or lumber.

Just now people are greatly interested in National Highways: the main idea no doubt being to attract tourists. But to attract tourists we must have something in the way of scenery for them to look at. And at the rate our forests and mountain sides are being denuded by the fire scourge it will not be long till we have nothing left.

Some time ago I saw a picture entitled, "The Great Divide." This photograph showed a spring on the crest of the Rockies, the waters of which divided, part flowing down the West slope and eventually into the Pacific, and part by way of the East slope into Hudson Bay. The region around this spring had been heavily forested by Engellmann spruce and Fir but had already been visited by the fire fiend; not a green tree in sight. Its scenic beauty entirely gone.

A picture that might have made

history, gone forever by someone's carelessness.

That superb hanging garden on the mountain side with its purple folds of Fir and Spruce must be saved. We cannot afford to have the fire fiend change it into a charcoal drawing of desolation. These mountain fires are particularly destructive. In some cases it has taken Nature hundreds of years to get enough soil together to grow a forest and one fire will often burn completely both soil and



This picture shows what can be done in the way of tree-planting the shore of a prairie lake in eighteen years.

forest, leaving nothing but the bare rocks. A few beauty spots are a valuable asset to any community; so let us take care of what we have before it is too late. There are trees that money could not buy. I have seen single specimens of the American white elm and Eastern white pine with enough beauty to woo a man half way across a continent.

Here in the West there is a vague longing and restlessness amongst the people. What is the trouble? It's the Soul hunger for the beautiful. That tired, overworked housewife must have something more beautiful to look at than a barb-wire fence or that string of disabled machinery lying on the prairie. There are few more desolate or dreary places on earth to live than a bare windswept prairie home. And none more easily or quickly changed by the planting of trees and shrubs. So make a start to beautify the farm home if you have not done so before. To put some beauty where none was before. What a glorious privilege to be a co-worker with the great landscape gardener of the Universe! As with the wonders of radio we must have our receiving instrument in tune with the broadcasting station if we are to hear the music and singing given out by that station, so we must be in tune with the Infinite if we are to enjoy to the fullest the beauties in Nature all around us. Let us make an effort to plant more trees, shrubs and flowers this coming Spring. For beauty is wealth. Raise a lot of it and be rich.