

# THE CANADIAN MERCHANTS' MAGAZINE

## AND PATENT OFFICE RECORD

Vol. 6.

MAY, 1878.

No. 5.

### TREE WASTE AND TREE CULTURE.



**I**N an article that appeared some months past in this MAGAZINE, we drew attention to the rapid destruction, from fire and waste, going on in the forests of Canada, and the immense pecuniary loss to the country that must ensue, if some stringent steps are not soon taken to save our pine forests from annihilation. If not, then we need no prophetic gift to say that half a century hence merchantable lumber will be as hard to find up the tributaries of our great rivers, as it is now in the denuded woods around us, in which, not more than thirty years ago, there was abundance of

pine of the finest description, from which the wooden ships of the English Navy were fitted with their large masts and spars. The subject is one of so much importance to the Dominion, that this wholesale destruction of what has hitherto been one of the largest sources of wealth to our merchants, and has, in its various ramifications, given so much employment to our people, must end in a total cessation of the export of lumber to the markets of Great Britain.

We might readily suppose that, if stringent laws were passed by the Government of the country to save from destruction and waste its forests, caused by lightning fires in the bush during the heated term, or from burning up cleared land — except at certain seasons — that these laws should be sufficient to check the evil. But such laws are far more easily made than enforced; and if we look for example to the United States to observe how far their State laws have been effective in putting down many evils of this nature, we will find that they have been of little use, and that it has been to the formation of societies and the energy of their people, that law-breaking and destructive habits, horse stealing, orchard robbing, and similar offences, have been almost entirely put down where such societies exist. The most effective way, therefore, to save the forests of Canada from early destruction, would be by the formation of an organized

society, supported by law, whose members should be spread over the whole country, giving information of infractions of the law, and bound to take the necessary steps to bring infringers of it to punishment. But irrespective of the necessity of such a society for the protection of our forests, it would have another object in view, of equal importance, and of equal benefit to the community; and that would be to stimulate the agriculturist to the planting of trees on every spot of their farms which are too rocky, or too unproductive, to produce grain crops. Hard-wood timber will grow to a great size on rocky land, because the soil is generally strong, and the roots will find nourishment where nought else can be cultivated. Pine trees will attain a great height on sandy soil, where little else will grow; and on swampy lands, tamarack, which is a very valuable timber, particularly for railway ties, can be grown with little trouble.

There are two most important points to be considered in relation to the subject.

First: How to save our forests from destruction.

Second: How to renew the waste land of the country with a new growth.

If any one is disposed to think that the pine districts of our forests are inexhaustible, let him look at the map of Canada, and he will see how much of its surface has already been cleared of its trees in a single century; and then he can judge that, if the cultivation of the soil and destruction by fire proceed in the same ratio with the increase of the population, how much will be left of pine lumber at the close of another century. Let him not suppose, because he sees on the map an area of wild land, equal to a large portion of Europe, that that immense tract is all covered with forest-land bearing merchantable timber—or, that the banks of the rivers and their tributaries are studded with pine. Why, more than nine-tenths of that immense space is composed of mountains, lakes, swamps, grass plains and barren land, and the greater portion of it is in a northern latitude where the pine tree does not flourish. The greater portion of the water-sheds slope towards the Labrador coast, Hudson's Bay, and the Arctic ocean, and enter the sea where no lumbering could be carried on with profit, even if merchantable timber did exist in those cold regions.

Ask the lumberer, and the settlers on the great tributaries of the St. Lawrence and Ottawa, what they know