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THE PARKS

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among the trees it is the only necessary for which they enter a great competitive struggle, upon which their very lives depend. When once started a tree cannot help getting a certain quantity of food and moisture, but unless it receives light also, it dies.

In the forest, trees grow as closely together as they can live, and there is a constant struggle to reach the top; those that succeed in doing so will spread out, and by shading the lower ones, kill them just as surely as though one cut them off with an axe. This method of growth shades the ground closely, keeping it damp and cool, and each year's crop of leaves buries beneath it as it falls the dead limbs and bark chips which fell during the summer and preceding winter, and these, kept always damp by this mulch of leaves, soon decay, and with the leaves themselves form what we know as leaf-mould, the whole process being nature's method of making fertile soil. This is the normal forest condition, and the product of its development is timber, straight-grained, strong and nearly knot-free wood, the joy of the carpenter's heart and one of the best gifts of the Creator to man.

But once in a while, in natural conditions, and more often when the agency of man is involved, a tree gets a chance to grow in a place where there is an abundance of light on all sides, and what result do we find? This tree, instead of growing tall as rapidly as possible, for fear that some competitor will cut off its supply of light, grows broad nearly as fast as it grows tall, and sometimes faster; all sides are covered with leaves, and all the branches beneath are draped with leaves in nature's own unequaled manner. Between these two styles of trees there is little resemblance; the shape is different, the leaves are all over, instead of merely at the top, while the wood, though equally good for burning, is so full of knots from the well developed limbs that it is nearly useless for lumber, but for beauty there is no comparison. The one shows nature in a creative mood making soil and timber for the use of generations yet unborn; and the other shows her in an artistic mood, and the product is something whose beauty is rarely, if ever, equaled by the artifice of man.

Scarcely can the dullest-minded person pass a beautiful tree without rendering his meed of admiration, and many of these growths are of such surpassing beauty that one is tempted to wonder if the Creator could possibly make anything finer, and yet so inscrutable are the ways of some men that they cut, maul, disfigure and distort these gifts of God, and they appear to think that He does not know how a tree should grow and that it is their duty to teach Him.

In our parks and city streets trees are grown mainly for purposes of shade and beauty, and as the coolest and most dense shade is given by the most beautiful trees, namely, those that are covered with leaves above, below and on all sides, it naturally follows that our city trees should be grown in this form. And there is but one way to grow them after this manner, and that is by giving them plenty of light, and keeping the trimming fiend at a distance.

In Victoria Park, young as it is, many trees are at this moment ugly and deformed by a want of observance of these conditions, light and trimming, and, in fact, one can see there some of the most striking examples of how not to grow a tree that can be found in a long journey. But it seems invidious to single out Victoria Park, when one can see in any part of the city glaring examples of distrust in the Creator's good taste and ability to grow a tree properly.

To many people who do their own pruning and do a good deal of it, the idea may not have occurred that nature really intended certain trees to grow in certain forms, and that no matter how they may be pruned, that form will always be the ultimate aim of the tree. They fail also to realize that the hand of God is omnipotent, and that their best endeavours will only mar the perfection of beauty into which a tree would come if permitted to follow its natural bent.

The love of trees is implanted deep in the nature of nearly every person. Many people do not realize this until they come into possession of a plot of ground, where a few trees are growing, when their natural affection comes quickly to the surface. But few, however, have this feeling so chastened with wisdom as to enable them to treat their trees well; nearly all want to grow two, three or even a dozen trees in the space that should be given to one, not realizing how much better it would be to have one fine, large, well-shaped, handsome tree, than to have half a dozen stunted, mis-shapen, lopsided ones, whose only real utility is for consumption as fuel. No better proof of this deeply im-