

THE WEEK.

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A CUTICULAR PROSPECT.

THOSE who have thought about the matter at all know that in no part of the world are shade trees and forests more needful to insure the health and comfort of the people and the good condition of the land than in the Dominion of Canada. Our best friends are the forests, modifying as they do the evil effects of our sudden climatic changes and the great dryness of our summer heat; yet against these good old friends we wage a mad and senseless warfare, so that there are left but few parts of our native scenery not already desecrated by the defacing and deforming hand of man. We go on cutting down, cutting down, cutting down; and sometimes we cannot cut fast enough, but must needs kindle fires to help on the slaughter, till we make the once beautiful earth hideous with black and rotten stumps, and withered, parched-up grass. And Nature revenges herself in devastating floods, and by drying up the very skin of our faces. As the aborigines of the continent were popularly known as Redskins, so in days to come, unless we take speedy and active steps to stay the hand of the forest-destroyer and to counteract his fell work, we Canadians shall be popularly known as Dryskins—a sobriquet which none of us would especially relish. I see before me the day when the Dryskins shall be recognised in foreign fiction, when they shall be lionised in the London drawing-room, and their countenances curiously described in the London journals of polite society. And it shall be said of them in simple yet touching words, that the Dryskins are a people who depended upon their numerous governments rather than upon themselves to do things that they themselves should have done; and that they trusted in these numerous governments to protect the forests—once the glory and safety of the land,—but somehow the forests were not protected. The last were swept away before the charge of the Booble Brigade. And the land is parched and dry and the grass is withered ere it be sprung up. As is the face of the country so is the face of the man.

But these direful days are not fallen upon us yet, and it may be that our interest in these weighty matters will be aroused before it is too late. The Americans have become fully alive to the incalculable damage their country has sustained through the reckless and indiscriminate destruction of the forests, and every effort is being made to promote and excite an interest in the study of forestry, and to preserve the remnant which remains. We are told that the forest area of the United States consists to-day of less than two hundred and fifty million acres. Of these it is said that "more than ten million acres yearly are destroyed by fire; while to supply the needs of fuel, railway ties, lumber, etc., it is estimated that not less than ten million acres more are denuded—altogether an area of more than sixty thousand acres every day—the product representing a value of more than seven hundred million dollars per annum." The American Commissioner of Agriculture "deems it of great importance that those to whom the shaping of the intelligence of the coming generation is entrusted should be specially invited to take a calm consideration of this long neglected subject.

Schools of every grade, without departing at all from their proper work, can supply some practical lessons in regard to the object and use of forests, the nature and growth of trees, and the significance of their existence or absence, awakening thereby the interest of pupils in a kind of knowledge too little fostered in the schools of the agricultural classes. In schools of the higher grade it can be united with instruction in botany and natural history in general. In colleges forestry should be presented in lectures on its various relations to arboriculture, agriculture, and political economy."

Very wise are the remarks of the Commissioner, and it were well if Canadian educationalists would also "take a calm consideration of this long neglected subject." Immediate and decisive action is every whit as necessary on this side of the line as on the other—and for some reasons which will readily suggest themselves to the mind of the reader it is even more necessary. Floods and droughts and lessening streams are serious things—very serious. Some of our smaller lakes and many of our brooks have completely dried up after their shores were laid bare by the relentless axe and flame. To the forest alone can we look to retard the hasty melting of snow and ice in the spring, and so to save us from the worst consequences of the rapid transition of our seasons. For a full measure of rain, and an adequate retention of moisture, we are alike dependent upon the forest; and in a climate so dry and hot as that of Canada, these considerations are especially weighty.

Eminently practical reasons are these for husbanding what yet remains of our once mighty forests, and for taking steps to further their renewal. The beauty of our countenance is not, perhaps, so practical; but it is nevertheless an aspect of the matter deserving a share of attention. For us to be known by and by as Dryskins would not be pleasant—especially to the ladies. If Canadian gentlemen allow this thing to come to pass, it will have to be admitted indeed that the days of chivalry and tender honour are past and gone. And, besides all this, there is the question of scenery. Surely we cannot, as a people, be deficient in the love of the beautiful and sublime. Yet it would seem that we do not appreciate our affluent forest grandeur, nor realise that in stripping the country of its trees, we are ruining the beauty of our noble rivers and magnificent lakes. The lakes I speak of are not our great inland seas, but those which are dotted here and there throughout the length and breadth of the land in such wonderful profusion, and in the midst of such glorious scenery. Take from these lakes the dense setting of woods, rob them of the indescribable grace and charm imparted to them by the rich and fleecy outlines of the forest, the overhanging branches of the great dark hemlocks and melancholy pines,—strip them of all those, and their glory is gone, their loveliness is become but a memory.

CARTER TROOP.

THE NEW ANGLICAN CATHEDRAL.

ON last Thursday week a ceremony of a very interesting character took place at the north-western extremity of the city, near the crossing of Bloor Street and Bathurst Street. It was the laying of the cornerstone of the new Anglican Cathedral of Toronto by the respected Bishop of the Diocese. It is a matter of congratulation, not only to the communion for which the new Church of St. Alban is to be raised, but to the inhabitants of the city generally. It is well that every religious body should be equipped with all the machinery necessary for carrying out its own system, and an Episcopal Church without its Mother Cathedral is shorn of one great source of its strength.

It appears to us that the point just indicated may explain the comparative lack of interest shown by English Church people in the new Cathedral. They do not understand their own system, and they do not see that it is in a measure failing in its work, just because its own adherents have not sufficient faith in it.

It is entirely beside the question to say that Presbyterians and Methodists get on quite well without any Cathedral or Dean or Chapter. The answer is—first, that even the Methodists, under the guidance of Mr. Morley Punshon, saw the value of a large central Church, and at great cost raised their beautiful structure to the north of Queen Street. Moreover, the Presbyterians and Methodists have a system of their own which they work vigorously and thoroughly; and further, if they get on without a Cathedral they also manage to do very well without a Bishop. Do the