

# ASIA MINOR--AND THE PENALTIES OF DEFORESTATION

## DANGERS OF DEFORESTATION

When by reckless tree-cutting the forest cover is removed from hills and mountains, nothing is left to hold the rain—no layer of living roots, mosses or other vegetable growths mixed with decaying leaves, to act as a sponge and retain the moisture. Thereafter, in consequence, the rainfall runs off in torrents, and the streams to which it should afford a regulated supply throughout the year are flooded in winter and dried up in summer. Incidentally, the soil is washed away and the hillsides, once beautiful with fresh growing verdure, become so much barren desert. In this way the supply of certain areas has been practically destroyed. The forests of the hills and mountains are natural storage reservoirs. Destruction of these reservoirs means ruin to the farmers in the valleys and on the prairies.—*Editor.*

**R**ECENT warlike events have focused attention upon Asia Minor. The complexities of the struggle between Briton and Turk have been sufficient to prevent the hurried reader from inquiring as to the physical character of the country which only a few weeks ago threatened to be the stage of a terrific conflict. Probably no land on earth offers a more graphic subject to those in search of illustrations of the penalties paid by nations and people for neglect of their forests. Canada has made so many major mistakes in her forest management, the Canadian people have paid so highly for lost forests and will pay a sterner account during the next century, that the 'pointing finger' of older countries may give us a new sense of our dangerous direction.

Asia Minor is a deforested land, and the consequences are pitifully displayed in a struggling agricultural industry, dried up rivers, and generally stagnant civilization. One of the most authoritative writers upon the state of the natural resources, Mr. George P. Marsh, has the following indictment not alone of Asia Minor but of a large part of the other states constituting the old Roman Empire: "If we compare the present physical condition of the countries of which I am speaking, with the descriptions that ancient

historians and geographers have given of their fertility and general capability of ministering to human uses, we shall find that more than one-half their whole extent—not excluding the provinces most celebrated for the profusion and variety of their spontaneous and their cultivated products, and for the wealth and social advancement of

washed away; meadows, once fertilized by irrigation, are waste and unproductive, because the cisterns and reservoirs that supplied the ancient canals are broken, or the springs that fed them dried up; rivers famous in history and song have shrunk to humble brooklets; the willows that ornamented and protected the banks of the lesser water-courses are gone, and the rivulets have ceased to exist as perennial currents, because the little water that finds its way into their old channels is evaporated by the droughts of summer, or absorbed by the parched earth before it reaches the lowlands; the beds of the brooks have widened into broad expanses of pebbles and gravel, over which, though in the hot season passed dryshod, in winter sea-like torrents thunder; the entrances of navigable streams are obstructed by sandbars; and harbors, once marts of an extensive



CHANAK, ASIA MINOR.

A view of Chanak (Dardanelles), and the town of Kilid-Bahr (the Lock of the Sea), on the European side of the straits. On a clear day anyone in Chanak can easily see people walking on the opposite side. The city of Chanak, in the neutral zone, is the scene of much activity.

their inhabitants—is either deserted by civilized man and surrendered to hopeless desolation, or at least greatly reduced in both productiveness and population. Vast forests have disappeared from mountain spurs and ridges; the vegetable earth accumulated beneath the trees by the decay of leaves and of fallen trunks, the soil of the alpine pastures which skirted and indented the woods, and mould of the upland fields, are

commerce, are shoaled by the deposits of the rivers at whose mouths they lie; the elevation of the beds of estuaries, and the consequently diminished velocity and increased lateral spread of the streams which flow into them, have converted thousands of leagues of shallow sea and fertile lowland into unproductive and miasmatic morasses"