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### DESTROYING THE FORESTS.

The St. Paul Pioneer Press says:—In the issue of Saturday last there appeared an article from the pen of James S. Brisbrin, showing the effect of the destruction or cultivation of timber on the rainfall of the country. The article has elicited from Mr. Schatzka, a civil engineer and landscape gardener now employed at Lakewood cemetery, Minneapolis, some further interesting information. Mr. Schatzka is a graduate of the forest academy of Tharand, Saxony, and has written much and lectured on forestry. He says:—"I want to take this issue at the outset with Gen. Brisbrin, when he says: "Let every man remember when he falls a big tree that he is doing something which in his life time he cannot replace; and let him cut down just as few trees as possible." I say cut down every tree that comes to maturity, for after that the tree will deteriorate and become valueless altogether. But the man who has the benefit of a matured product, the cultivation of which has cost him nothing, is morally bound to replace the same, and thereby keep up the capital. He has had the compound interest; why not replace the capital? Trees come to maturity like other organized bodies, and it is poor economy to let your products go to waste. But to gain growth and time, a little nursery should be kept, out of which to replace such trees as become ripe for the woodman's axe. A small area of ground will suffice for this purpose. As there is coal enough in this country for fuel, it is important that trees be used for timber purposes. It is desirable, therefore, to have the trunks without branches as high up as possible. Trees for timber purposes should, therefore, be planted thickly together to make them grow straight and high without spreading. The lower branches will thus be too much shaded to live, and will die and fall off without leaving a mark on the trunk. After the necessary height is realized, or in the course of time, when they commence to show signs of crowded condition, a gradual thinning out should take place, but not too much at a time. We are aware that the national agricultural department in Washington has made several efforts to have the Government take the preservation and restoration of the forests in hand, and that the secretary of the interior, as authorized by Congress, has adopted some means to prevent the cutting down of forests in the territories. But all this is not sufficient for the preservation of that extent of forests which is needed for agricultural as well as manufacturing purposes. The forests should cover from one-quarter to one-third of the area of a country, if it is to be healthy and fitted to fulfill the conditions under which agriculture may be carried on with success. And not only is the extent of the forest to be considered. We must also take into account their proper distribution over the face of the country if we would secure the utmost possible benefit to its

inhabitants. The shelter and the healthful atmosphere of the forests in the far western territories have no effect upon the inhabitants of Wisconsin and New York. When we consider that some soils are in reality not fit for agriculture, and have to be termed on the assessor's list and on the maps as "uncultured land," would it not be a welcome sight to see young forests springing up in such places, and, though growing slowly benefitting the surrounding agricultural districts with a humid atmosphere, shelter against high winds, and against changes of temperature, frequently so sudden and disastrous?

In Europe the various governments have found it necessary to make the care of the forests a particular subject of consideration and legislation, and have created special official bureaus under the management of competent men who had to serve a long apprenticeship, graduate in the science and arts of forest culture, and who made the forests a source of revenue to the governments, amounting to millions of dollars from the poorest soil of that country. While the direct net income of the forests is counted by millions, their influence upon health and agriculture cannot be estimated. And when we consider the rapid increase of population in our own country, the demands already made upon the forests, and the present comparative scarcity of lumber, it is easy to see that here also similar methods will have to be adopted.

It will perhaps be objected, that in the vast areas of these states the millions of acres of woodland still remaining will be sufficient for all the wants of the country for years to come; but it must be remembered—

1st—That this abundance of wood is found just in those parts of the country where it is least needed, and that in consequence of the expense of bringing so bulky an article as lumber to the centres of demand, it is comparatively valueless where produced, and it is for the most part left to fall before the axe of the settler.

2nd—That two-thirds of the timber left to us is of such a quality as to be only fit for fuel.

3rd—That in the census and tax statements a large area is classed as woods, without deserving this classification.

4th—That Chicago alone employs a capital of \$30,000,000 in the lumber trade, and hundreds of thousands of acres of timber are annually sacrificed.

5th—That Michigan and Wisconsin, the main timber states, which had 10,000,000 acres of the finest timber before settlement began, have only about 2,000,000 acres left, and this, at the present rate, will be cut down in about five years.

6th—That according to the census of 1860, the value of the lumber improvements in the United States was \$3,322,522,000. All this had

been cut from the soil, and most of it within 30 years previous, and nothing has been done to replace it.

7th—That there are five hundred thousand artisans in wood in this country, and we estimate the value of their labor at \$1,000 each per annum, we have an aggregate of \$500,000,000 of wood per annum consumed as raw material for their use.

8th—That it takes one and one-third acres, on the average, to produce one cord of wood annually.

9th—That it takes three hundred acres for the production of wood sufficient to build and keep up one mile of railroad year by year.

10th—That the United States sends \$11,000,000 per annum to Canada for lumber, while millions of acres of land capable of producing the finest timber, are lying waste in our own country.

11th—That the farmer from year to year cuts down vast forests to enlarge his fields, and only saves what will suffice for his domestic uses, and seldom that.

12th—That the population of the country is daily increasing, the wood consuming industries are developing year by year to large dimensions, as hundreds of miles of new railroad are added annually to those already in operation, and in general, that while the wood-producing area has been greatly reduced, the demands upon the wood have been multiplied; and since the larger area has been so greatly reduced in supplying the smaller demands, how will the smaller area supply the larger consumption? From the above facts it is evident that unless measures are speedily taken to replace by planting the supplies consumed in the destruction of our old forests, there will be an actual famine for wood in this country within the next 30 years.

Can this matter of forest culture be safely left to private enterprise? A period of from 80 to 200 years is required for the growth and maturity of valuable forest trees. Now, if so many neglect to plant fruit trees and grape vines, the product of which they can enjoy in a few years, will they plant forest trees, whose completed growth they will never see? To carry on the culture of forest trees successfully, it is also necessary that extensive regions should be devoted to it, for the trees from year to year as are ready for the woodman's axe are necessarily a considerable distance apart. In small, isolated areas there could not be an economical adaptation of the means to the end. Forest culture can only be carried on upon a large scale. But there is still another reason why the supply of timber cannot be left to private parties. There is needed for the profitable growth of forest trees a scientific and technical knowledge which few farmers have it in their power to acquire. This knowledge, so far as it

is not purely scientific, must necessarily be, to a great degree, traditional. It cannot be acquired by personal experience. The mistakes of one year cannot be discovered, as in the case of ordinary farm crops, by the immediate results, for the forest tree's life outmeasures man's; the cultivator sees his error, if at all, when it is too late to remedy it. In Germany, therefore, where these facts are fully appreciated, the forester has to undergo a special scientific and technical education. He has to serve a long apprenticeship. The culture of trees and the management of the forests become the business and study of his life. From all this and numerous other reasons, it is evident that upon the government rests the necessity and duty of providing against the anticipated deficiency in the supply of timber, by initiating and controlling the planting of new forests, as well as the preservation of the old. It is not necessary to cite the disastrous consequences which have occurred in those parts of the globe, where the destruction of forests has taken, and which have been described by travellers in a most alarming manner. They are doubtless familiar to others as well as myself. In 1869 I sent a memorial to Congress in respect to the destruction of our old forests. I have not changed my opinion on this subject since, and believe that it cannot be refuted. I hope that all far sighted men will share the apprehension with me, and assist me in my patriotic recommendation.

### American Forestry Congress.

The annual meeting of the American Forestry Congress will commence on the 9th of May next at Washington, the sessions being held in the rooms of the Department of Agriculture. The object of holding the meeting at this early date is with the view of influencing the members of Congress, which will be then in session. Amongst other subjects to be discussed is that of the laws and regulations regarding the tenure and management of the timber lands in Canada.

### Wind Falls.

The late tornadoes, rather than gales, which have passed over these islands cannot fail to have some effect on the foreign timber trade, for when we read of trees being blown down by the two hundred thousand within a circumference of twenty miles diameter, and one hundred thousand on a single nobleman's estate in Scotland, &c., we can only conclude that all this timber being brought into the country markets—not a tithe of which would probably have been cut down for use this year—will bar so much of foreign wood, that under other circumstances might have found a remunerative market. Many of these fallen trees will fetch a small price, for which when standing an offer of fifty pounds would have been laughed at.—*Timber Trades Journal.*