

Truth's Contributors.

FORESTRY IN EARLY JUNE.

BY R. W. PHIPPS.

As the present is the season for taking action in the matter, I should like to suggest to the landowning readers of TRUTH the great necessity which exists in this country, that we should pay some attention to tree-planting, and, where practicable, to forest preservation. There is also one means of proceeding to be mentioned which, perhaps, of all others, promises greater returns for the labour invested.

First, as to the importance of the movement. This Province of Ontario needs, more, probably, than any other part of North America, to retain a considerable interspersion of forest for climatic purposes, or, in other words, agriculture will not, here, in the opinion of those who have studied the subject, continue to prosper if we do not contrive to so retain a fair proportion of woods among our farming lands. The urgency of this necessity has not yet forced itself on popular attention, because everywhere, as yet, we retain portions of the original forest, which portions have served and as yet serve an excellent purpose. But no one can travel over the country without observing that these remaining portions are every year becoming less and less, and that what with the destruction by the axe, by grazing or rather browsing cattle, and by wind, it is full time to prepare for the condition which shall occur when these scattered woodlands are much less in number and smaller in individual area than at present.

It is unfortunately our fate to retain what forest we preserve in large masses to our north. But this is not the position—it is the very opposite of the position required to assist and distribute our rainfall. What is needed for that purpose is masses of forest at some distance to the south, which condense and precipitate the moisture moving northward from the equatorial regions. There is no doubt that the central States of the Union, between us and the Gulf of Mexico, owe much in this respect to the immense forests yet existing in the Southern States. Those woods which formerly covered the Northern States in their day performed the same service for Ontario. But these are gone; our climate is feeling the ill effects of their loss, and as our small reserves vanish will feel it still more injuriously.

I received a letter lately from a farmer of long residence on the shores of Lake Erie, in which he remarks that years ago, when the farms near the lake had yet plenty of woodland, the residents could often in summer, see, as he expressed it, the clouds rise from the lake, come towards the shore, and fall in refreshing showers on their farms. But of late years, since all has been cleared, the rain-clouds pass over them, and descend, some distance inland, in torrents so heavy as to do more harm than good. The forest is, in our country especially, the distributor of rain, and this farmer's experience is that of many others. What seemed to be the rain-clouds rising from the lake were rather clouds becoming visible there, the principal material to form which had been borne thither from the south.

I was informed last week by a farmer who I know to be a person of sound judgment, and to have followed agriculture in the locality in which he speaks, for over thirty years, that—"In this part of Ontario,

in my opinion, a marked effect on the crops can be seen in consequence of the wholesale destruction of timber. Fifteen to twenty years ago, when there were large patches of timber, in cropping new land, or land first plowed after the removal of stumps, we were sure of large results in grain, often twenty-five up to thirty-five bushels of wheat per acre. Now, on the same quality of land, that is, new or almost so, we have very poor crops, seldom more than fifteen bushels per acre. If this difference is not caused by the comparative scarcity of timber, I do not know where to look for the cause."

Let us look to those portions of North America which, cleared and settled hundreds of years before our own, render their residents better able than we to judge of the evils of deforesting. Here is what the Commissioner of Agriculture of Kentucky, J. F. Davis, Esq., this year says: "The continued destruction of our forests, history proves, will result ultimately in making even this boasted Eden of the New World, a desert. First, the springs and smaller streams will dry up; increasing and more protracted droughts will follow and destroy the farmer's crops; next, great and sudden freshets will come to wash away the soil, sweep away mills, factories, bridges, cattle and dwellings—and so on and on in an ever-widening course of blight and desolation, until finally car once favoured land, of every land the pride, is brought to the same pitiable condition that Palestine finds herself in to-day, and to which she was reduced by this self-same madness of forest destruction. And, it was this, not total but only partial destruction of the forests, that turned, not alone Palestine into a comparative desert, but also large portions of Italy, the Spanish Peninsula, Sicily, Asia Minor, Media and Persia. A large portion of the fertile and sunny land of France was found to be rapidly going the same easily descended road, when her sagacious landowners, fully recognizing the danger, called a halt, and by the enactment of judicious Forestry laws, and the adoption of energetic measures of reforestation, gradually but surely remedied the gigantic evils which had begun to envelop and destroy the prosperity of one of the fairest and most fruitful countries on the globe. The same danger begins to threaten—the same evils begin to afflict many portions of our own highly favored country; and it behoves each State, in its own proper sphere, to adopt the requisite measures of prevention and protection."

I wish to lay one point in connection with forestry prominently before my farming readers, and that is, a particular species of injury inflicted on crops by the absence of shelter. It is a point not very generally understood, but when considered its importance will at once appear to be very great.

We have all noticed, of course, the great value of timely showers to the growing crops, and have observed that a day or so after such rain has fallen, the advance of vegetation was very rapid, and the farmer is apt to say, "If it would only keep growing like this for a week or two, what crops I should have." We shall find, on reflection, that this rapid growth occurs while the surface of the earth is yet partially saturated with the lately fallen rain, and that, while heat and moisture continue to work together, growth is rapid, (I mean on ordinarily drained land;) on low-lying lands there is a stagnation of moisture, which gives a different state of affairs.

But on ordinary land this state of healthy warmth and moisture can be continued for a much longer period than it is usually en-

joyed, by the simple expedient of giving shelter from the wind. Soft, gentle summer breezes do no harm, but great good. On the contrary, a strong wind dries out the land far too rapidly, and will often reduce the period of rapid growth following a shower to a couple of days or less, when it might have lasted a week. The mechanical operation of this drying process is plain. As a stratum of dryer air passes over the ground rapidly it withdraws a certain portion of moisture. It is immediately followed by another, equally dry, which absorbs more, and these succeed each other it may be all day long, and carry away a vast amount of moisture, which had far better been allowed to remain until it rose in the crops or sank slowly into the ground. In properly sheltered land this is not so; the local climate, so to speak, is more favourable to agricultural operations. This was an advantage once given us by our interspersing forests—an advantage, which, as I said, much of Ontario has lost—much is losing. But there is a cheap expedient by the use of which we might again enjoy this vanished or vanishing benefit—an expedient it is the principal object of this letter to suggest to my readers.

This is simply the planting of lines of evergreens along the north and west sides of farms. This can be done with the native pine, cedar or spruce, with the Norway spruce, and many other evergreens. Evergreens are better for this purpose than deciduous trees, because they serve a valuable purpose in winter as well as in summer, preventing snow-drifts, greatly mitigating the severity of the cold winds, and benefiting the crops of winter wheat and clover to a very important extent. I have no doubt that were this measure generally carried out, larger crops would be obtained with less labour; in other words, all farms would yield a much better return for the investment. It is a benefit which could be procured at very slight expense of time and trouble,—putting in and caring for a line of trees is a small matter compared with starting a broad plantation. From the middle of May to the tenth of June will be found a good time to plant them. As for the young trees they can be had, when small, cheaply of nurserymen, or they can be had sometimes for nothing in our woods and fields. Those who own them often set too little store by them. I saw last week in one field, which was being cleaned up, thousands of beautiful young pines, many of them just the size for planting piled up in heaps to burn. The owner seemed to think of planting them along the borders of his farm, on which he seemed scarcely to have left a tree. It may be well to mention that anyone who plants evergreens should keep the roots moist and covered from digging till planting. A few minutes' exposure to the sun might dry the roots in the roots and kill the tree. This proposal demands no great labour, but it would, if adopted, change for the better the whole of Ontario. It is hardly to be expected at once that vast forests should be planted here. But surely every farmer could easily grow a line of evergreens along too exposed sides of his farm. Nothing will pay him half so well.

TORONTO, ONT.

Peter Kavanaugh, now of Detroit, last heard of his sister Mary Ann over twenty years ago. The other day he learned, on what seemed to be good authority, that as Mrs. Goodolph who had lately died in Sydney, New South Wales, leaving him an estate worth something like a million dollars. Until the receipt of this information Peter was a very poor man.

SPRING IN CANADA.

BY JOHN WADDELL.

Each month in the calendar can boast of its own especial friends and patrons that give it a pre-eminence over its sisters. Some love one month for its flowers; some prefer another for its fruits; others welcome a third for its warm days; others again praise a fourth for its customary festivals; and another is greeted for the sake of its sports. To the general observer, the face of Nature does, in truth, seem without a smile, and her brow without a wreath, and they who love Nature's floral gifts must often have borne privations. The rich may indeed replenish their vases with hot-house plants; but they who are less favoured by fortune can look only for the productions of the simple garden, the field and the dell; and how desolate an expanse lies before them!

According to the sub-division of the year, the month of March should mark the departure of winter and the opening of spring. In our Canadian climate, however, this month can only be viewed as a season of promise. The most superficial observer of the signs that are abroad in earth and sky must find evidences to convict the poets, who indulge in graphic descriptions of the beauties of this month. The glowing pictures of mildness and beauty which the poets have expended on February and March will be found, when applied to our climate, almost an exaggeration if applied to the month of May. The poets contrast very unfavourably with the stern realities of a month which borrows keen frosts, with equally sudden floods, from the outskirts of winter. These poets must have drawn their inspiration when tasting the delights of an Italian spring.

The citizens of Toronto fancied that the severity of winter had withered its charms, which rendered it one vast field of uniform sterility. That would soon be succeeded by the returning spring, but were doomed to disappointment; for the vast expanse of the heavens displayed nothing but gloom on the 6th of April; the face of nature was obscured by a tremendous snow storm, in which slate, tiles, and timber were driven through the streets like chaff before the wind. Here were yawning gulfs in the vicinity of Lake Ontario; there, precipices were threatening; yonder, the high hills were dancing in the reflecting waves of the raging lake; whilst afar off was heard the rush of the torrent, and the impetuous roar of the mighty cataract.

How violently the air was agitated during the storm! How the wind whistled above, and swelled into a louder blast! How the dark clouds gathered, and then whirled along with fearful swiftness! The uplittered trees strewed the ground, and shook the earth as they fell; the summer residences built on the shifting sands of the Island, were swept away by the waves, and borne aloft by the blast; their shattered fragments were tossed in giddy eddies. Huge masses of confusion were heaped up, and stones, earth and timber confounded together, where formerly objects of grandeur stood in array. The *Globe* reports a schooner Speedwell, bound for the west, supposed to have been the only vessel riding in the storm at the height of the wind; above, the fog, and all around was darkness; met the clouds, then rolled back, leaving a gulf threatening instant destruction. The