

A POET ON FOREST FIRES.

If Mr. Joaquin Miller's poetry did not entitle him to the fame of an original genius, a scheme that he has for preserving the forests of America would. In the *New York Independent* he proposes to run fire through the woods every autumn by way of keeping them safe from fire in the summer. This, it appears, has been the practice from time immemorial of the Western Indians, from whom in his youth Mr. Miller obtained much of the knowledge by which he shines before white men. As the Indians in question lived on great treeless plains when the poet knew them, and long before we may believe that their ancestors did run fires through primeval forests in those regions, perhaps with the intention of preserving them, but not exactly with that result.

In Mr. Miller's day the Indians of his acquaintance had, it appears, but small patches of deciduous trees, bordering on the prairie, to preserve, and it is quite likely that their practice of running fire through and around them every fall was a good one. The accumulation of easily ignited grass, leaves, etc., was thus prevented and the light annual fire would not injure leafless hardwood trees.

But the poet proposes to deal with all the forests of the continent on the Indian plan. He says:—

"An annual fire is as natural, and necessary too, as is a rain fall at seed-time for the health and long life of any forest. When the leaves have fallen and all the nuts and fruit are ripened; when the bark of the tree is hard and sapless, and the new bushes and new branches are denuded and are made sound and hard, then the dry and indolent Indian summer possesses the land. The winds are still then, and there is no peril at all in turning the fire loose. This is the time the Indian takes to clear of his fields for the grasses of the coming spring, and to purify them of the malaria, burning leaves, and mosses that otherwise would lie rotting on the ground, harbouring insects, reptiles, fevers, death, and smothering out the new grasses, flowers, roots, and ground fruits for the coming year. The borer, the caterpillar, Colorado beetle, grasshopper, and bull cricket—these are some of the beautiful fruits borne from the white man's management, of our plains and forests."

After appealing to the history of Palestine, Assyria, Babylon, and ancient Germany, old Gaul, Italy, and Tyre, to support his argument, he says:—

"But to return to our own forests. I know it might at first be dangerous and difficult to burn out our forests now, and get them back to a state of nature, as it were. Yet it must be done. The old briar bound and moss-grown worm fence that winds about the hill to mark the limit of some settler's domain must go. Better the old fence should be burned now than the barn, house, cattle, and perhaps babies and all, in the end. However, these are details that must adjust and fit in themselves."

"The one special idea is to have the forests all burned over and burned out every autumn. These natural annual fires are so light that even the smallest and frailest little bush will not perish. See how nature has ordered this."

"Of course, all this will have to be regulated, by law; but here again I come to detail, which I shall not touch now. I should say, however, that every State ought to have its Forest Commissioners, and every part of each State be made to keep its forests clean, as certainly and exactly as any division of a city is made to keep its streets clean or in repair."

Mr. Miller hit the blot on his plan in the second sentence of the last quoted extract. It would at first be difficult and dangerous to run fire through pine forests in Indian summer, but never difficult or dangerous or necessary again, because there would probably be no forests left.

Though the poet's plan would not work, the idea that underlies it is good one. It would be well to keep the forests free from accumulated rubbish. Every year vast quantities of inflammable material pine needles, branches, chips, etc.—are left in the woods by lumbermen to assist in the spread of the fire. There is no reason why all this stuff should not be burned as soon as made in the winter, when the fire

would not run. The Government could commission bushrangers to see this done, and thus the great necessity which Mr. Miller perceives for burning the forests in order to keep them from being burned would be somewhat lessened.—*Globe*.

STOPPING THE WATER SUPPLY.

In a paper of reminiscences by the Rev. W. Wyo Smith, published in the *Canadian Monthly*, we find the following paragraph, which deserves attention as a striking illustration of the mischief that is being done by overclearing:—

"It will seem odd to the younger inhabitants of Brantford to state that near where the two railways cross, on the north edge of the city, was a mill-pond, supplying power to a mill some distance below. I once, when a boy, wandered out there, and had an exciting engagement with a snapping turtle that was sunning himself on the bank. And in 1852 I remember getting on board a queer flat-bottomed steamer—a regular old tea pot—to go to Buffalo. I was very glad to find that we changed boats at Dunnville, for I did not think much of the seaworthiness of 'The Queen,' which I believe was the name of the old scow I made the passage in. Probably the navigation of the Grand River (Lord Dorchester, the 'Sir Guy Carleton' of history, called it, in 1798, the 'Ouse'; but the name did not appear to stick), will never be revived. For one thing, the volume of water is immensely less than it was. I spent three months on its banks in 1837; and when a three days rain storm came, the river became swollen and dark coloured, and remained so for a month. Now, with the upper forests cleared away, it has hardly more water than will turn a mill on a dry summer. I was much interested in seeing, in the summer of 1837, some men who were running a pail factory in Galt pass down the rapids above Glenora, on a raft, with several hundred gaily painted pails, bound for Brantford. This could not be done now, except on the dangerous odds of a great freshet. The same may be said of other streams; old mills are found with not a drop of water running past them in a dry summer."

THE SCIENTIFIC AMERICAN OFFICES.

We are glad to announce that the *Scientific American* came out of the late fire in New York like the fabled Phoenix, with renewed life. The subscription lists, account books, patent records, patent drawings, and correspondence were preserved in massive fire-proof safes. The printing of the *Scientific American* and *Supplement* was done in another building; consequently the types, plates, presses, paper, etc., were unharmed, and no interruption of business was occasioned.

The new *Scientific American* offices are located at 216 Broadway, corner of Warren Street, a very central and excellent situation. Here, in addition to the issuing of their interesting publications, Messrs. Munn & Co., aided by trained examiners and draughtsmen, prepare specifications and drawings for American and Foreign patents. If any of our readers should happen to make a new discovery (we hope every one of them may do so, and gain a fortune), they have only to drop a line to Munn & Co., 261 Broadway, New York, who will reply at once, without charge, stating whether the invention is probably novel and patentable. A handbook of instruction, with full particulars, will also be sent, free. Messrs. Munn & Co., have had over thirty-five years' experience in the business.

DESTRUCTION OF TIMBER.

The *Chicago Tribune* says that while the need of legal restrictions to prevent the total destruction of our forests is so apparent, it is not often that they are imposed by State authority. The National Government is powerless to interfere, except for the protection of the public lands, and the laws enacted for this purpose are liberally interpreted and feebly enforced, if at all. Settlers on timber lands have not always been informed that the regulations imposed upon them were different from those established for prairie settlers. The law forbids persons who have acquired timber lands under the Homestead or Pre-emption acts to remove more of the timber than may be necessary for purposes of cultivation. This provision has been

flagrantly violated by persons who have acquired the title to Government timber merely for the purpose of selling it to speculators. The new commissioner of the Land Office has undertaken to stop this abuse. He has caused the provisions of the law in this respect to be stamped in red ink upon the blank receipts issued to timberland settlers; and has enjoined upon local agents the duty of watching and reporting cases of depredation and violation of the laws. Those orders may be a partial remedy. But it is evident the waste of timber cannot be stopped or repaired until the State Governments take an active interest in the subject. They may not be able to prevent the destruction of forests which have actually passed into private ownership; but they may protect such as still belong to the State, and, by offering bonuses, encourage new growth of timber to take the place of those destroyed.

HENRY STEVENS & Co., of St. Helen, Roscommon county, Mich., write that they have banked some logs this season that deserve to be rolled on the skidway of fame for the lumber world to gaze at. On January 31, at their camp No. 5, Leonard Coulter, foreman, were banked ten pine logs that scaled 6,316 feet. On February 2, at camp No. 3, David Murdock, foreman, fifteen pine logs were banked that scaled 8,197 feet. These logs were banked at two hauls, partially up hill.

Land and Water says:—"It is stated that from the forests belonging to M. Bismark are cut the greater portion of the blocks used for the wood pavement in London, and that an English company is going to use it in Paris for the Boulevard Montmartre. Query, if it will be paved with good intentions!"

"WOMEN NEVER THINK."—If the crabbed old bachelor who uttered this sentiment could but witness the intense thought, deep study and thorough investigation of women in determining the best medicines to keep their families well, and would note their sagacity and wisdom in selecting Hop Bitters as the best, and demonstrating it by keeping their families in perpetual health, and at a mere nominal expense, he would be first to acknowledge that such sentiments are baseless and false.—*Picayune*.

IS IT A HUMBUG? Some people think all proprietary medicines humbugs. In this they must be mistaken. A cough medicine like N. H. Down's Elixir that has stood the racket of 52 years must have some virtue, and must cure the diseases for which it is recommended, or people would not continue to buy and use it as they do. It seems to us that even if we knew nothing of its merits, the fact of its large and continually increasing sale justifies us in recommending Down's Elixir to all who may need a reliable cough medicine.

A healthy man never thinks of his stomach. The dyspeptic thinks of nothing else. Indigestion is a constant reminder. The wise man who finds himself suffering will spend a few cents for a bottle of Zojeca, from Brazil, the new and remarkable compound for cleansing and toning the system, for assisting the digestive apparatus and the liver to properly perform their duties in assimilating the food. Get a ten cent sample of Zojeca, the new remedy, of your druggist. A few doses will surprise you.

A GOOD FILTER.—To have pure water is the house every family should have a filter, the health and comfort depends largely upon the use of properly filtered water. The liver is the true filter for the blood, and Burdock Blood Bitters keeps the liver and all the secretory organs in a healthy condition. It is the grand blood purifying, liver regulating tonic.

THE SECRET OF BEAUTY.—No Cosmetic in the world can impart beauty to a face that is disfigured by unsightly blotches arising from impure blood. Burdock Blood Bitters is the grand purifying medicine for all humors of the blood. It makes good blood and imparts the bloom of health to the most sallow complexion.

"AND fools who came to scoff remained to pray."—We receive many letters from those having tried while doubting, yet were entirely cured of dyspepsia and liver troubles with Zojeca. Clergymen write us earnestly to it wonderful effects.

BURNS AND SCALDS are promptly cured as all flesh wounds, sprains, bruises, callous lumps, soreness, pain, inflammation and all painful diseases; by the great Rheumatic Remedy, Ragsdale's Yellow Oil. For external and internal use. Price 25c.

THE lost arts did not include steel pen making, an invention of the nineteenth century, Esterbrook's being superior, standard and reliable.

TEABERRY whitens the teeth like chastened pearls. A five cent sample settles it.

Chips.

THE Northern Pacific Railway Company, in order to encourage tree planting, will during the season of 1882 transport, free of charge, fruit and ornamental young trees for the actual use of settlers along its line.

ALLEGED pinkeye has become so prevalent in the Upper Ottawa district that lumbermen say they will be unable to get out so much timber as they expected on account of the scarcity of teams. Some veterinary surgeons say that the disease is not pinkeye at all, but only an acute influenza.

THE *Northwestern Lumberman* says the export of lumber from the States to Mexico, though not yet an immense factor of their commerce, is increasing under the late stimulus given to their relations with that country by railroad building, mining schemes, etc. In 1880 they exported to Mexico lumber to the value of \$130,000, and in 1881 the value increased to \$183,430.

THE steamship *Maas*, which arrived on Feb. 6 at New York, from Rotterdam, reports, Jan. 22, lat. 50 13, long. 13 40, passed a large ship on fire, water-logged, probably loaded with lumber. The ship was almost totally burned out. Steamers twice around the vessel, but could not perceive any name on her. Held a sharp look out for boats during the whole day, but saw none.

J. & G. K. WENTWORTH are now lumbermen in Mecosta county, Mich., but come prominently to the front on account of having purchased the Eldred railroad, which they removed to their present location. Their present job is estimated at 15,000,000 feet, which goes into the Chippewa River over their railroad, which is about five miles long, and is in course of construction, and nearly completed.

CAMPS have been established at Little Quinnesec Falls, Wis., and the work of making a cut around the falls on the Michigan side of the river has commenced. The cut will be 488 feet long, 40 feet deep in the deepest place, from 30 to 40 feet wide at the bottom, and 6,000 cubic yards of rock will be taken out of it. The work will cost in the neighbourhood of \$15,000, and is expected to be completed before the logs come down in the spring. Logs are so badly damaged in coming over the falls that it will take but a few years for the cut to pay for itself.

THE *Northwestern Lumberman* says that Senator Flint has introduced a bill into the Wisconsin legislature to provide for levying a tax of fifteen cents a thousand on all logs shipped out of the State. The object is to protect home manufactures on Wisconsin streams, and possibly to check the wholesale running of logs down the Mississippi to the Iowa, Illinois and Missouri mills. It would also affect the interests of Michigan lumbermen who operate in Wisconsin. The bill, however, will have to fight an enormous capital before it becomes a law.

THE *Calais Times* says that an unusually large stock of logs was held over on the St. Croix this winter. With the exception of F. H. Todd & Sons, and Chas. F. Todd, all of the manufacturers will have an abundant supply of logs with which to start in the spring. Murchie & Sons have the largest stock on hand, followed in the order named by H. F. Eaton, Eaton Bros., and Gates & Wentworth. Most of these logs are separated in side booms, and in the main and Baring logs enough are left for a month's rafting. Alexander Milligan says he has not seen for thirty years so many logs left over in the side booms.

A SIXTH of France (including Corsica) is under wood, but, notwithstanding this, an immense amount of timber is annually imported into the country from the United States and the north of Europe. In 1824 the Nancy School of Forestry was instituted, and a new code of forest laws was adopted in 1827. The fact has of late years been recognized that the floods which have proved so terribly disastrous to France have been largely due to the absence of trees on mountain sides. A forest acts both mechanically and hydrographically; in the former case by preventing any large body of water from collecting, and as a sort of permanent floodgate; in the latter by the trees themselves absorbing a vast deal of moisture.