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OBSERVATIONS OF MR. PHIPPS

CHICAGO, Oct. 20.—Here on the wide, flat prairie, over which the winds blow with an intensity unknown in many parts of Canada, the value of the protection given by trees is acutely realized. "It is hard," says a wealthy proprietor, "to have taken all the trouble to plant an orchard and, take care of it for some years, and then have it all killed by the frost." "Is it," I asked, "the intensity of the frost or the additional keenness of the wind?" "Oh, undoubtedly the wind. Those who have planted wind-breaks of other trees, or allowed the Osage orange hedge to grow up to trees along the exposed sides of their orchards, have not lost their apple trees. But of those who did not take this precaution, many, last winter being very cold, lost valuable trees. I lost nearly the whole of my young orchard. But the fact is that, though a good many forest trees are planted here, we do not plant one in every hundred we should." The same may be said in Ontario.

The prairie is, however, gradually becoming dotted with interesting groves, though it is plain that much remains to be done. Valuable as such protection is to field and orchard in Canada, it is still more so here, for the Canadian diversified heights and valleys—their succession of hill and dale—allow no such uninterrupted sweep as does the level prairie land. One of these groves is remarkable, and I travelled some distance to see it. It is in Douglas county, not 200 miles from Chicago, and consists between two and three thousand large walnut trees, planted in the nut thirty years ago, and now eighty feet in height, and some of them eighteen inches through. This grove, tall, extensive, its high pillar-like stems, evenly rising in regular rows of columns; its level, broad, table-like summit of autumn foliage is a picturesque object seen far across the prairies, and affords one of the best instances in America by which to judge of the possibilities of walnut culture.

The method pursued in planting has been to set the nuts ten feet apart, and gradually thin till the trees are about twenty feet distant from each other, trimming off some of the lower limbs of those left standing, so as to procure tall, straight timber. Some of these are forty-five feet from the ground to the first branch. These trees were for the first four or five years cultivated with crops of corn, but after eight years they cast such shade that nothing else would grow. After about twenty years the ground was, and is now, covered with short, wild grass.

But, though this grove will apparently in another twenty years yield timber worth many thousands of dollars and yet leave much standing which will in another twenty be worth hundreds of thousands of dollars more, yet there are points to be regretted in the method of its management, and some from which we may learn a useful lesson in Ontario. The grove needs a care now it has not lately had, or its ex-

tence is in danger. The owner is a man busy with many objects. His herd of thoroughbred and halfbred cattle here are large and very valuable. Cattle, splendid of coat and massive of form, were shown me, for which eight and ten thousand dollars each had been refused. He is a busy man on the Chicago Exchange. He has other great farms—acres by the thousands—in Minnesota. Amid these and many other occupations this walnut grove—a plan and hope of his earlier life—has somewhat faded out of view, and the cattle on this home farm have been allowed to use it for shade and shelter. The result is what happens to all assemblages of trees, grove or forest, when cattle are allowed free scope therein.

What we should aim to preserve is perpetuating and increasing a piece of woods is a similar forest bed to that which nature prepares beneath the branches. It is a covering of rich, soft, porous soil below, which perpetually feeds the small rootlets that underlie the ground as far as the tree top spreads, and above this soil, and feeding it in turn, a decomposing covering of last year's leaves. But when cattle in numbers are allowed entrance this is impossible of attainment. Their trampling beats the ground hard, a dense, short, and not very nutritious grass overspreads it and takes to its own purposes the benefit of the decomposing leaves, which falling on the ground should nourish the trees. In this valuable grove in question, the ground is hardened by trampling throughout the whole extent of many acres, and not only has this injury been inflicted, but every tree has been used by cattle as a rubbing post, so that the bark has been polished and thinned to their standing height. Above that, a glance at their bark shows a rougher and much more healthy covering. The process of injury to the grove has not yet resulted in the death of any of the trees therein; but coming into a path across the farm, which is bordered by over 150 large walnuts, we arrive at a place where the tramping and rubbing had entirely killed twenty-five of these trees, and it needs no forethought that the same process continued in the grove will be in time eventually effective in injury. The farmer in charge, a relative of the owner, stated that they were aware that the trees were injured by the cattle, and were about planning means to give them shelter elsewhere. In the meantime, it appears to me that had they always been excluded, the trees would have now been ten years' growth the better. The best thing now would be, in addition to keeping cattle out, to lightly cultivate the whole soil, so as to destroy the grass, soften the soil, and give the roots their chance of obtaining nourishment.

Here are trees which, with fair treatment, should in some years' time yield at least \$50 per tree, or the vast sum of \$75,000. Yet the desire to improve his cattle has led the owner to allow their injury and even risk their loss. The same

unfortunate mistake is made in many parts of Canada. Fine pieces of woods which might have continued to supply timber in good quantity yearly for ever, have been allowed, in order to make pasture for a few cattle, to become utterly destroyed in forest value, their saplings killed, their soil hardened and grass covered, and the whole woodland brought into such a state that the owner in a few years cuts down what is left and ploughs the land. The greatest forest authority in the United States has lately written that all that fire has done, all that the axe has done, has not equalled the injury inflicted by our own browsing animals. This, at first sight, would appear over strained, but to those who have considered what the forest value really was and is, how important it is that certain portions of it should be preserved, and that it is those very portions which are being, thus destroyed, it bears a different aspect.

There is a way now being practised here of obtaining a much more immediate return in planting groves, which I will describe in my next letter.

R. W. PHIPPS.

LOGS FOR THE SAGINAW MILLS.

Notices of projects of bringing pine from the Georgian Bay lumber region to the Michigan mills have from time to time been given in these columns, one last week referred to the operations of Alpena lumbermen in that direction. They were in fact the first to turn their attention to that locality as a source of supply. One of the first of the Michigan lumbermen to make a practical entry into the Georgian Bay pine were Folsom & Arnold of Bay City, who have built a saw mill on Spanish river, on which river they own large limits. Other men have from time to time secured interests in the same direction, and the suggestion that the logs might be brought to the Saginaw river to be cut has finally ripened into projects for bringing them here. Among those who have acquired limits in the Georgian Bay district are Emory Bros of East Tawas and the Saginaw Salt and Lumber Company, and the past week they have made a contract with reliable parties in this city for the transportation of 200,000,000 feet to this district to be cut by the mills at Tawas and on the Saginaw river. There is to be built steam barges capable of carrying 600,000 feet and making a trip a week, bringing over 15,000,000 next season. Other owners of mills on the Saginaw river are said to be dipping into the Canadian pine and attend the sales at Toronto for the purpose of purchasing limits. Their idea is to secure pine to supply the Saginaw river mills when the near-by timber shall have been so much reduced so as to be no longer adequate. It is an important matter to attend to and if the cost of towing the logs across does not prove too great the scheme will be of great

benefit to the river cities. The lumber industry is their main reliance and to take it away would give them a drop in importance. There are some seventy saw mills of the larger class here and they are well equipped. If they can be kept supplied with logs for 15 or 20 years longer they can earn a good deal of money for their owners and the Saginaw river cities will reach a development that will know no cessation in the future. This is a lumber mart and the advantage of bringing logs here to cut over removing the mills to scattered localities to cut the logs is obvious. There is hardly a doubt that the logs can be profitably brought here, since they can be brought in rafts surrounded by duplex boom sticks, if the eager plan should not prove profitable, although the risk would be greater. There seems no reason why bringing them over in barges may not be as successful and profitable as carrying lumber to Buffalo and Tonawanda, since the same plan can be followed of one steam barge towing a half a dozen rafts.

Logs are not to come along from the Georgian Bay region, however, but the upper peninsula is to be placed under tribute. Hill Bros. are putting in 25,000,000 feet in the upper peninsula which are to come to Saginaw to be cut and sold. W. J. & F. McGaw is mentioned as another who has secured pine in that region to be cut here. There is here every convenience and appliance for cutting and handling lumber, and the concentration of the manufacture is an advantage, as purchasers are drawn to this point by the certainty that they can find what they want. Then the transportation facilities from the river cities are excellent, and everything conspires to make the Saginaw valley a better point than any other at which to conduct large manufacturing and distributing operations. The plan of bringing logs here promises to very materially extend the period of the supremacy of the Saginaw valley as a lumber producing district.—*Lumberman's Gazette.*

The Alpena and Saginaw valley mill owners are about demonstrating the feasibility of bringing logs to their mills from distant forests in the Lake Superior region and that section of Canada lying north of Georgian bay. They will transport logs in great barges, towed by powerful steam tugs. This method of floating the piners to the mills, as it were, over wide reaches of water, often too tumultuous to admit of rafting, is nothing new, for it has been practiced for years by the Oconto and Sturgeon Bay manufacturers who have thus conveyed logs on Green bay. The method is perfectly safe and reliable, and is bound to come into extensive practice on the great lakes as the forests recede from the mills.—*Northwestern Lumberman.*

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