

Written for this Paper.

FORESTRY.

The forestry question is a new one to Utah. The first organization in this Territory having for its object the promotion of all forestry interests in Utah, was initiated the 24th of last February and named the "Utah Forestry Association." The present meeting represents that organization and is its first public demonstration.

WHAT IS A FOREST?

In Great Britain the term forest, and the corresponding word also in the language of France and of Germany, did not originally, as it now does in all these countries as well as in our own, refer solely to extensive areas covered with trees. Though trees may have been a prominent feature of such grounds, the feature was only an incidental one. The essential idea conveyed by the word was that of a resort, or extensive park where deer and other wild animals were kept to furnish amusement for kings, princes and noblemen, in hunting and slaughtering such innocent prey. Now when the term is used we think only of extensive and dense timber lands.

WHAT IS FORESTRY?

In more recent times, a derivative of this original word has come into general use. The necessity of creating new forests and of giving greater care to the preservation of existing ones, as well as the importance of studying tree culture in general, has given origin and prominence to the term forestry, which means the art and science of cultivating forests, and the rightful management of growing timber for all purposes.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF FORESTS.

The origin of our noble forests when they began with, or soon followed the disintegration of the primitive rocks of early geologic times, and their subsequent development and evolution through successive stages of germ, lichens, mosses, and other cryptogamic forms, on to herbs and the lower ligneous plants, until they reached the acme, the crowning effort of vegetable puissance in the stately oaks, walnuts, sequoias, and other monarchs of our "forests primeval," would, indeed, be a most interesting study, but too remotely relevant, perhaps, to our present purpose. We may be satisfied now to know that forests exist, and we are practically more concerned about their present safety and continuous reproduction than about their historic evolution.

FOREST AREA.

In the early settlement of this continent, a great part of its area was covered with continuous woods. In our country, they were found all along the Atlantic seaboard and extended beyond the Alleghany Mountains westward into the interior as far as the Mississippi River. They occupied much of the higher elevations of the Rocky Mountains and of the Pacific coast region, and trees, usually abundant, flourished on the bottom lands of nearly all our rivers. These forests had grown for unknown centuries, undisturbed by the savage tribes who wandered in their fastnesses, finding a shelter under their almost impenetrable foliage and a livelihood from their spontaneous growths and the wild animals they nurtured, thus preparing the

while the elements for a great civilization.

FOREST DESTRUCTION.

That civilization came and hewed its way into the mighty wilderness. Its progress, slow at first, as it felled the trees and consigned the most valuable timbers to the log-heap and the flames and cleared away the mat of tangled underbrush from the surface to expose the rich humus of the forest bed to the sunlight and to the plough, advanced with accelerated speed, as the population of the country increased, allured by the favorable prospect of an independent home in a free country. The severe labor at first necessary to remove the impending forests from the land they wished to convert into fruitful farms, induced in the settlers habits of reckless waste in the removal and use of timber; and its surrounding abundance also induced a feeling that the supply was exhaustless and its presence an obstacle in the way of their success, which further increased the wasteful consumption. Thus, with an utter lack of prudence and reasonable economy in the domestic and other necessary uses of timber; with the wanton havoc that attends its preparation for commercial purposes which has been going on for years in the Northwest, in the Rockies, and on the Pacific slope; with the shameless exploitation for other purposes; and with the prevalence of extensive and most disastrous forest fires; our native woods are fast disappearing. This thoughtless and wholesale spoliation of our forests has been, and is still going on at such a rate, far and near, that it may soon be true of them what is now said of the buffalo, there is but a remnant left; and unless their wanton destruction be not in some way checked, the prospect seems imminent that in the not distant future, we shall be obliged to import lumber for our current needs. The possibility of such an ultimatum has awakened a feeling of serious concern in the country, and schemes are being agitated and some measures taken to prevent, if possible, such a calamity.

THE VALUE OF FORESTS.

It is not necessary to say to an audience in this western land at this time that forests are a great blessing. It might have been difficult, however, at one time, for those who first settled the far eastern states to realize fully this fact when the indispensable condition on which a farm could be wrested from the wilderness, was the herculean task of clearing these forests from the soil. But "blessings brighten as they take their flight," and now that our timber lands are fast disappearing through lavish use and the want of precautionary measures for their preservation, we are beginning to appreciate their value. This realization of their importance and worth has been greatly enhanced since the arid and treeless regions of the great plains west of the Missouri, and the valleys of the Rocky Mountains, have been settled. Not only the great inconvenience and loss that their want entails has stood out more conspicuously before the nation, but their commercial value has been shown to an extent never before realized.

MONEY VALUE.

The annual consumption of wood in the United States for various purposes is estimated to be over 20,000,000 cubic feet with a commercial value of more

than three times the gold and silver output of the country, and three times the value of its wheat crop. We refer to this as one of many facts to show how necessary it is to take steps at once to preserve from demolition the comparative remnant of our ancient woods that we have left.

CLIMATE.

But the direct money value of these forests is but an item of insignificance when compared with their beneficent use in other directions, if our records regarding their influences be true. The history of Europe on every hand shows the blighting effects of forest devastation on agriculture, and in consequence on all dependent industries of civilization. Western Asia, once the seat of powerful empires teeming with a population that supplied their conquering armies with millions of soldiers and that boasted the wisdom, the refinement, the civilization of the world, is to-day a desert over which nomadic tribes of Arabs wander, and pitch their tents on the site of ruined cities, magnificent even in their desolation. The prestige and glory of these mighty nations vanished with the disappearance of the forests that once crowned the mountains and hills of their flourishing dominions. Palestine, once "a land flowing with milk and honey" and now a dry and barren heath, began its decadence with the compact of King Solomon with his friend Hiram to destroy the Cedars of Lebanon. The same story is told in every land, and could we read the past history of our own continent, there would be, no doubt, the same recital. From the multitude of facts obtained by modern investigations, there seems to be no question as to the decided influence forests have upon the climate of a country. But, whatever may be the conclusion regarding the influence of dense and continuous forests on climate in general, it is certainly true that trees do greatly modify the conditions of the atmosphere in their immediate presence. This fact is too conspicuous in examples all over our Territory not to realize the difference we experience in the health and comfort about a house and farm well stocked with shade trees, affording shelter from blazing sun and fierce and parching winds, as against others with no protection of this kind.

WATER SUPPLY.

Forests are valuable in regulating the water supply of rivers and other streams. The great Mississippi and Ohio rivers whose limpid waters once formed the highways of the nation, are to-day turbid streams, their depth gradually lessening, and their beds filling with shoals and sandbars that render navigation difficult and precarious. Floods also have become more sudden and disastrous along their courses. We are told these adverse conditions are the sequence of denuding the country about the head waters of these streams, of their native forests. Swamps, lakelets, and springs, once the natural reservoirs about their head waters and tributaries, holding in reserve the surplus rainfall for gentle distribution, have disappeared with the removal of their forest protection, and surface drainage over the hardened soil has now full and unimpeded sway. Have we not already had a somewhat similar experience in our own Territory, the result of stripping the mountain sides in our upper canyons about the origin of our irrigating streams,