MONEY IN NEW FORESTS.

[Telegraph poles grown in less than twenty years. The significance of an experiment made by the Memphis railway—the startling danger of an impending lumber famine in the United States.]

Some twenty years ago the Kansas City, Fort Scott & Memphis railroad began experimenting in the propagation and growing of forest trees, looking forward to a probable future timber supply for the railroad. Under the direction and instruction of Professor Sargent of Harvard university the company planted about 100 acres near Farlington, Kansas, of the following varieties of timber trees: White ash, black walnut, wild cherry, Osage orange, atlanthis, catalpa, bignarroid and catalpa speciosa. The annual growth and general appearance of these varieties were carefully noted for three or four years, and a perceptible difference was observed in favor of the catalpa speciosa, and the following is quoted from a report made by J. M. Buckley, roadmaster:

"The catalpa speciosa has certainly proved to be the strongest grower, most tenacious, standing the dry weather better than any other variety and at the present rate will come to maturity years before any other variety is of sufficient size to be of any utility."

The result was that a contract was made with the late Robert Douglas to plant two sections of land, 1,280 acres, in Crawford county, Kas., entirely of this valuable tree. The railroad company owned one section and Mr. Honewell, a director of the company, the other. The two plantations, when completed, contained about three million trees. The last of these trees were set about fifteen years ago.

A reporter for The Star visited these plantations recently and made a careful examination and an approximate calculation of growth with some idea of the present value. The most important fact disclosed by this visit was that the experiment had resulted in a most unquestionable financial success. Had better judgment been displayed in the selection of land on which the trees were planted an even richer harvest would be in store. A casual observer can easily see that there are many acres of "hard pan" within these two sections of land and as "hard pan" produces inferior corn, it will also produce inferior trees.

As it was unnecessary to plant the trees in this unproductive soil, The Star's reporter took note only of trees growing on rich loamy land. On this soil he found the trees had made notable growths, many of them measuring twelve to fifteen inches in diameter and forty to fifty feet high. Counting about 1,500 of the best trees to the acre, the average would be about eight inches in diameter and thirty-five to forty feet high. From this observation it was calculated that seventy-five to 100 valuable telegraph poles can be cut now from every acre of the good land, besides thousands of fence posts.

The Profit in Money.

It is a difficult matter to place a present valuation upon such timber lands, for the trees are just reaching a size whereat practical value begins. Every additional year will add greater wealth in a greater ratio. However, the indications are that with judicious cutting, a thousand telegraph poles could be taken off of each acre within the next ten years, besides a large quantity of fence posts and cord wood. As telegraph poles of timber as valuable as catalpa are worth in our markets $3 to $3.50 each, and fence posts 10 to 15 cents apiece, an approximate idea can be made of the value of a cultivated tree plantation. The whole cost of the land, the trees, the planting, the cultivation, the interest on the capital and the general attention for fifteen years has amounted to less than $100 an acre.

The reasons for planting catalpa speciosa in preference to other varieties of timber trees were not alone because of its rapidity of growth and freedom from worms, insects and borers, but because of its endurance when in or on the ground, and its superior value for furniture and inside finishing for cars or houses. The late Dr. Warder, of Cincinnati, a widely known horticulturist and botanist, and Suel Foster of Muscatine, Ia., speak of its rapidity of growth and its lasting qualities.

John C. Teas of Missouri says:

"In its native forests (which are in Missouri, Illinois, Indiana, Ohio, Kentucky, Tennessee and Arkansas), it often grows to a fine size, like the grand old yellow poplars of Ohio and Indiana, many of them making trunks three or four feet in diameter. The largest reported to me grew in Mississippi county, Mo. It was six feet across the stump and nearly fifty feet clear trunk."

The late E. E. Barney of Dayton, O., car builder, gathered information and wrote a book entitled "Information Relative to the Catalpa Tree," in which he said:

"General William Henry Harrison urged the extensive planting of the catalpa for timber in an able address at an agricultural fair near Cincinnati more than sixty years ago. In that address he told of a catalpa foot log over a small stream in the Wabash country which had been in use over 100 years. He chopped into it and found it sound. Catalpa posts set by General Harrison about the governor's mansion at Vincennes, Ind., in 1808, were taken up a few years ago and, being sound, were reset in other places."

Posts Nearly a Century Old.

In confirmation of this last statement, Mr. D. C. Burson of 1417 Broadway, Kansas City, visited Vincennes in 1883 and called upon Mr. Pidgeon, who had been living in the old Harrison home for over twenty-five years. Mr. Pidgeon showed him some of the old catalpa posts and gave him permission to take one out of the fence, which was found to be in a good state of preservation.

Prof. F. P. Hynds of Tennessee, speaking of the catalpa tree, says:

"If one wants a shade tree, there is none more beautiful; if a post that will last forever and then turn to a stone, the catalpa will come nearer filling the bill than anything else."

Mr. Burson has a writing desk made from a catalpa tree ten years old from the seed. It is a beautiful light wood and is susceptible of as fine a finish as San Domingo mahogany. "If," said Mr. Burson to a reporter for The Star, "all the shade trees of Kansas City were catalpa, our superintendent of trees and our police judge might live a little more harmoniously by simply having the hitching ordinance changed to read 'Hitch to the trees,' for neither horse nor mule will gnaw a catalpa."

Mr. Burson, who has always been deeply interested in the subject of forestry, furnishes some interesting, not to say, startling, information regarding the necessity of renewing the forests.

A Lumber Famine Nigh.

Official reports sent out by the forestry division of the agricultural department of the national government show that a timber famine is rapidly approaching. A carefully compiled report of the Wisconsin forests show that within the past twenty-five years sixty-six billion feet of white and red pine were cut in that state, and that only seventeen billion feet now remain standing in the entire state. At the past rate of cutting this will last only about five years longer. At the lumbermen's convention in Georgia it was reported that at the present rate of cutting the yellow pine of that state will be cut off within the next ten years. Ohio, Pennsylvania and other Eastern states report that their lumber supply is practically exhausted.

The entire standing lumber supply of the United States, as shown in these reports, is placed in round numbers at 2,300 billion feet, and the annual cut at forty billion feet, which shows that the entire lumber supply of the United States will be extinct in less than fifty years. And, as 1,000 billion feet of the standing timber is on the Pacific slope, which is far from commercial centers, it is evident that all the available timber—the timber east of the Rocky mountains—will be cut off in less than thirty years. That being the case, it is natural to suppose that within the next ten or fifteen years there will be a great advance in the price of all kinds of lumber.

Climatic Amelioration.

"The true value of forests or the planting and cultivation of timber