

CULTIVATION OF TREES AS A FARM BUSINESS.

The legislature of Indiana enacted the forestry law, which practically exempts forest plantations from taxation. With this encouragement, farmers should seriously consider the question of forest-growing as a profitable investment, as compared with grain farming.

For so many years the pioneers have labored to dispossess the land of its timber, which from its abundance had slight value, it is difficult for them to appreciate the wonderful change within one generation, and the necessity for additional forests. Timber has been rapidly advancing in price for two decades, and is still going higher as the area of forest lands in the United States decreases, and this will continue for years to come, since the demand for timber and lumber is increasing with the growth of population, requirements of builders' trades, commerce and wood manufacture.

In natural woods the great majority of trees are valueless; only a small per cent are of high commercial value. In artificial plantation every tree possesses an equal value, for all are alike, and every foot of land is occupied.

An acre of grain will produce for the owner about \$7 per annum, and in twenty years \$140. Each year the land must be plowed, planted and harvested, requiring continuous care and hard labor. Planted in suitable forest timber, the income in twenty years will be \$1,000, while the value of the surplus trees cut out will far exceed all expenses of the plantation.

The Prairie States fully understand this subject, and for years have been planting forest groves. Several of these plantations cover a square mile each, and those which were planted two decades ago are very remunerative. Telegraph poles, at \$2.50 each, are now being cut. Each land-owner is entitled under our law to a forest reservation one-eighth the area of his farm, and if every land-owner should take advantage of the law, planting one-eighth of the state systematically with commercial woods, the benefit to the remaining lands would be so great that a much larger aggregate crop would result in the state, benefiting every farmer and increasing the state's resources. Walnut, in twenty years, under favorable conditions, will make sawing timber sixteen inches in diameter. Russian mulberry, in that time, will make crossties, worth, at present prices, \$4.50, but, at advancing values, double that. A catalpa grove well cultivated for a few years will give still better results, from the extreme durability of the wood—fifty to 100 years—and the rapidity of its growth.

Many railways are planting the catalpa on their vacant lands, anticipating a timber famine about a quarter of a century hence. I have a catalpa crosstie taken from the Big Four tracks that was

in use twenty years—three times the life of white oak—and a post which I sent to the New Orleans Exposition was for seventy-five years standing in an Indiana farm fence. All spreading trees, as the walnut, oak and catalpa, will become straight-bodied, having long trunks, when planted thickly; 4x4 feet is a suitable distance, three-fourths to be removed in eight to ten years, giving additional space to the remaining permanent trees.

Not only is the catalpa durable and of rapid growth, but as furniture lumber it has few superiors. It has a firm grain, takes a fine polish and compares well with our finer woods for inside house finishing.

Grown in a forest, catalpa is tall, straight, symmetrical, while the neglected specimens on our lawns and streets are crooked and irregular, possessing no value as timber. Being a native of Indiana, it succeeds in every part of our state.

The following is from the Kansas City Star:

"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 Prof. 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, alanthis 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, road-master: '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 Douglass to plant two sections of land, 1,280 acres in Crawford county, Kansas, entirely of this valuable tree. The railroad company owned one section and Mr. Honewell, a director of the road, the other. The two plantations, when completed, contained about 3,000,000 trees. The last of these trees were set out about fifteen years ago.

"A reporter for the Star visited these plantations recently and made a careful examination 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. 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 one hundred valuable telegraph poles can be cut now from every acre of the good land, besides thousands of fence posts."

If the farmers of Indiana will give their boys a plot of ground to plant in forest, it will be a better investment than \$1,000 placed at interest, besides encouraging them to remain on the farm.

JOHN P. BROWN.

Connersville, Ind., Feb 15, 1900.

THE CRISIS OF THE REPUBLIC.

THE CONSERVATIVE has received from its generous and patriotic publishers this intensely interesting volume from the pen of the Hon. George S. Boutwell of Massachusetts.

Dana Estes & Company, of Boston, are the publishers. Letters addressed that firm will secure immediate attention, and all the details as to the cost, wholesale and retail, of this invaluable appeal to the patriotism and conscience of the American people will be set out.

To Mr. Dana Estes THE CONSERVATIVE is under renewed and constantly appreciated obligations.

FRENCH WOMEN'S VIEWS.

In reply to the question asked by the Girl's Own Paper of France: "Shall Women's Dress Be Reformed?" thousands of young women have written to the editor declaring that the skirt is at once graceful and womanly, while its substitute proposed by reformers has nothing to redeem its ugliness. That women should want to look as ugly as men is simply astonishing in the opinion of these feminine young women; and, really, when considered from this point of view, a divided skirt is the last dress in the world to be desired. The garb of man is not beautiful.

"The cry that free trade between Puerto Rico and the continental part of the United States would injure any protected industry or tend to cheapen labor in this country, is preposterous," declares the Chicago Inter Ocean (rep.). "The republican majority in both houses should stand by the recommendations of the president. The republican party has never won in the past by dodging a troublesome question.

The Philadelphia Ledger (rep.) trusts that when the settlement as to the position of Puerto Rico comes through a decision of the supreme court "the fundamental rights of the Puerto Ricans will be found to rest on something more substantial than the whim of congress or of the executive, acting upon their interpretations of the 'general spirit of the constitution.' That would be a rather hazy and precarious foundation."