

PLANT TREES—LESSEN CROP LOSSES.

The drouth this summer has been a national calamity, notwithstanding it may be found out later that present estimates of damage are too high. The losses to the growers of crops and the raisers of cattle will certainly in the aggregate prove enormous. Whatever offset there may be through higher prices will come from the purses of consumers, forced to pay more for the necessaries of life. Butter, meat, potatoes and fruits, as they increase in value, will have to disappear in corresponding measure from the poor man's table. The railroads will be losers financially in direct proportion, as there are less products to haul. Many industries, dependent on crops for raw material, will have to advance prices so that consumption will be curtailed, which will mean less profits for shareholders and less wages for labor.

We are too apt in this country to look on drouth, floods, etc., as unavoidable and therefore beyond our prevention. As a matter of fact, however, through such disasters we simply pay the bills for our own destructive acts.

On another page we print an interesting letter from J. Sterling Morton, of Nebraska, who states that the destruction of forests and woodlands—the cutting down of trees without making provision for future trees—is the principal cause for destructive drouths and floods. The Commercial West hopes that this year's crop losses by reason of drouth will stir up popular interest in the subject of forestry, as only general financial loss can stir it. There has been ample scientific demonstration in this country and abroad of the fact that the wholesale destruction of trees results in rendering climate dryer, more changeable and trying, while wholesale planting of trees, on the other hand, promotes the fall of rain at more regular intervals, and wards off sudden meteorological changes which may result in unusual falls of rain and disastrous floods. In 1875, a commission composed of the representative learned societies of Europe, like the Royal Academy of Sciences of Vienna, and the Imperial Academy of Sciences at St. Petersburg, after a thorough investigation of this subject, said in its report—"Forests exercise a beneficial influence, which can hardly be estimated too highly, in an increased humidity of the air, a reduction of the extremes of temperature, a diminution of evaporation, and a more regular distribution of the rainfall, while the injurious effects of their destruction is seen in alternation of periods of drouth at one time with wasting floods at another."

Many of the once rich and fertile regions of the world, like Persia, the Mediterranean coast of Africa, and the interior of Spain, have become arid wastes through being denuded of trees. On

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