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FIRST ARBOR DAY IN 1872

(Continued from page 3)

There never was a habitable region, however, that needed tree planting more than Nebraska at the time of its settlement a generation ago. It may be added that the need still exists and always will, for our plains do not of their own accord produce forests. Although Europe has long presented notable examples of arboriculture, it was an eminent Nebraskan, J. Sterling Morton, who, as president of the State Board of Agriculture, touching a popular chord, induced the citizens of this state in 1872 to put in operation the first publicly observed Arbor Day in the United States. It is said that during this first Arbor Day not less than 1,000,000 trees were planted in Nebraska. The plan met with such spontaneous enthusiasm that two years later Governor Furnas gave the day official sanction, and in 1885 its observance was more fully established by the enactment of a law in this state declaring Arbor Day a legal holiday.

The idea rapidly became popular throughout the United States, until today nearly every state observes the day either as a school holiday or a legal holiday. The date for its observance differs in the various states according to climatic conditions. In the South the winter months are best for tree planting; while in the North a day in April or May is generally designated. Arbor Day is Nebraska's contribution to our national calendar of holidays. It is fit, then, that we Nebraskans should be especially zealous in the observance of the 22nd day of April each year.

The older generation in Nebraska were tree planters; so much so that the legislature once passed a joint resolution to designate Nebraska in a popular sense "The Tree Planters' State," as follows:

"Whereas, The State of Nebraska has heretofore in a popular sense been designated by names not in harmony with its history, industry or ambition; and,

"Whereas, The State of Nebraska is pre-eminently a tree planting state; and,

"Whereas, Numerous worthy and honorable state organizations have by resolution designated Nebraska as the 'Tree Planters' State,' therefore, be it Resolved, That Nebraska shall hereafter in a popular sense be known and referred to as the 'Tree Planters' State.'" (2800 Cobbe's Annotated Statutes, 1909, Ed. 1.)

As the younger generation became men of affairs they found extensive groves and thousands of miles of windbreaks already established. Accustomed to fewer trees than were their fathers, who came from well-forested states in the East or from northern Europe, the young people came to feel that trees were not so very essential to prosperity and to contentment. Land became more valuable; droughty years, culminating in 1894, killed many groves, and altogether the interest in tree planting suffered. The older groves are declining; they need restocking, and many windbreaks, once effective, need repairing and underplanting. We are not now living up to our sobriquet of "Tree Planters."

We need to disseminate the results of scientific investigations as to the value of windbreaks in conserving moisture in the fields devoted to field crops. The value of these obstructions to the blighting hot winds of summer are great and real, but too little appreciated. Intelligently handled woodlots located on land less suited to agriculture can be made to produce a fair annual rental in posts and fuel, besides contributing very largely to the embellishment of the landscape and in providing nesting places and abodes for insectivorous birds, the allies of the prosperous farmer. We need another tree planting revival, such as that of forty years ago. As the gospel of more trees, more windbreaks and more groves is preached, backed by

tangible evidence as to their value, we shall experience the needed reform; it is an economic necessity. Fewer mistakes in choice of species and in tending them will be made, for we shall profit from the experiences of the past.

Not only on the farms of Nebraska is the need of more tree knowledge felt, but in the cities, as well, much tree reform would not be amiss. Lincoln, among other cities, suffers from lack of control and supervision of its street trees. Too much individualism is shown in the choice of tree species, in their spacing, and in their arrangement. Street trees will come to be considered adjuncts of the street and not of the abutting property; they will sometime be considered as belonging to the street, in the same sense as does the curbing and the paving. The property owners do not now exercise individual choice of the style of curbing or the kind of paving; they will elect, in the course of time, to entrust the city with full jurisdiction over the street trees, reserving only the privilege of handling their lawn trees according to their individual tastes. Imagine, if you please, the appearance of a classic Greek temple ornamented with columns of various orders, Ionian, Doric and Egyptian; continue still further the absurdity by spacing these columns irregularly and often out of alignment. Only a little less antagonistic to good taste and art is the ornamentation of our streets with trees of different species, irregularly and usually too closely spaced, and, in places, out of alignment. The only feasible procedure to accomplish the ideal street is to place street trees directly under the supervision of a qualified city forester, backed with sufficient city ordinances, and amply protected from interference. Such measures are being adopted by cities throughout the country. Arbor Day serves to call attention to these reforms.

The holiday has been used to direct attention also to our National Forests. An area one-third greater than that of Germany has been set aside, chiefly in the West, in order that the natural resources may be put to their highest continuous uses. These forests are believed to contain one-fifth of all our standing timber; those in the Rocky mountains alone are estimated to include 60 per cent of all our water power, and the watersheds of the National Forests receive precipitation that is used in irrigating the greater part of irrigated Western lands; while the pasture lands are being handled in a manner to insure no deterioration and to provide an opportunity to the small stockman competing with the wealthy stockman. The scenic treasures of the mountains are being guarded against private exploitation and against the blight of fire and erosion, in order that we and posterity may more fully enjoy these blessings of nature. Subtle enemies of conservation are always busy undermining the policy of conserving our public natural resources; unrestrained private exploitation appeals to their instincts for greed. Eternal public vigilance is the price we must pay to retain our public inheritance; and Arbor Day may well be devoted to the consideration of these matters.

"What does he who plants a tree?
He plants cool shade and tender rain,
And seed and buds of days to be,
And years that fade and flush again;
He plants the glory of the plain;
He plants the forests heritage;
The harvest of a coming age;
The joy that unborn eyes shall see—
These things he plants who plants a tree."
—Brunner.

W. J. MORRILL.

If at any time the University authorities desire rain, simply schedule a field trip for Foresters and—it doesn't rain—it just pours. Formals, although not quite so successful, also bring good results.

Why Foresters Never Marry.

It fills us with regret several inches deep to note that the attitude of the people in the different rural communities toward members of the Forest Service remains practically unchanged. The average son of the soil has not today and never has had any use for "Rangers" in a social way. Indeed, he seems to shun them from his home as our maltese kitten does a bob-cat, and not a single instance of a farmer taking one of these corduroy and leather sons of Satan into the bosom of his family has ever been recorded in modern history.

A few cases have come under our observation during our years of rambling, where some young forester, fresh from the incubator of knowledge would have the temerity to call upon the daughter of some doctor of agriculture and be allowed to stay for awhile, meanwhile being shown that he was about as welcome as a rattlesnake. The closing chapter would generally come about 9 o'clock p. m., by papa going out on the front porch, and after taking a weather observation, watering the flowers and blowing taps would put out the cat and the dog and the ranger and the lamp, and the family would retire. When the young forester would generally adjust his collimation, take an observation on Polaris, and if his standards were not too badly bent, would probably tie into camp about midnight, having learned a lesson in modern engineering that was not in the text books; while the rosy-cheeked country lass would go to bed and weep bitter tears of anger.

And still people are continually harping on the same old question of why girls leave home, and why so many rangers never marry.

There's a reason.—Weekly Kalmim.

A forester's life is one big collection of E's—Eat and sleep, but don't mErry.

"When well appared April on the heel of limping Winter treads" ---

—Romeo and Juliet

In that metaphor Shakespeare expresses man's deeply rooted instinct to don new apparel at the coming of spring.

Doubtless you feel it now—hence we urge you to gratify it at least to the extent of seeing the spring clothes which we are eager to show you.

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