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calculation. He showed that there are 530,202 miles of ordinary steam railroad tracks in the United States, using an average of 3000 ties to the mile; so that 855,786,000 ties have gone into their construction. The average life of an oak tie is ten years; natural pine ties live from four to six years, and when treated with chemicals are preserved for about ten years. Ten per cent. of the ties now in use must be renewed annually, making a yearly demand for replacement of 90,000,000 ties, without considering new construction, which amounts to about 6000 miles of track a year and requires at least 18,000,000 addition ties, and increases the total consumption to about 110,000,000 ties per annum.

Oak ties cost about 55 cents each, natural pine ties 35 cents each, and when treated with preservatives 48 cents. Hence, the average cost of the 110,000,000 ties which are now consumed annually in railway construction and repair is about 50 cents each, and the total cost not less than \$55,000,000.

Senator Manderson might have added the enormous amount of timber used for telegraph poles, which are set at an average of forty to the mile along the railways of the United States and cost from \$6 to \$10 each, or an average of \$7.50, taking the country together. This is about \$300 per mile. An easy calculation shows that not less than \$85,000,000 is invested in telegraph poles by railroads alone, which, like the ties, have to be renewed at stated periods.

Nor is this all of the timber required for railway construction: bridges, station houses, platforms, road crossings, rolling stock, snow sheds, doors and trestles, and other parts of the physical plant require an enormous amount of timber, which is always deteriorating and has to be replaced frequently. It is therefore fair and reasonable to estimate the expenditures of the steam railway companies of the United States for timber alone at \$100,000,000 a year.

The rapid cutting away of the timber supply makes this a very important proposition, and as the timber culture advocates assert, there is no more profitable investment for the American people than to plant trees—particularly oak trees.

**METAL TIES UNSATISFACTORY.** The European railways have metal ties but railway builders in the United States will not use them. They prefer wood ties because they give elasticity to the roadbed, most important for the preservation and maintenance of the rolling stock. Wood ties maintain the alignment of the rails, so essential to safety, better than any metallic substitute, and are much more easily handled and replaced.

Metal ties will do in Europe, where the locomotives and the rolling stock are light, but in this country locomotives have increased in weight in recent years from twenty-five tons to 110 tons, and freight cars from twenty-eight feet to forty feet in length and from 20,000 to 100,000 pounds capacity. Modern scientific railway construction requires an elastic roadbed to carry safely such heavy weights.

With metal ties or a solid stone base the rails would wear very rapidly, the heavy metal engines would pound themselves to pieces very soon and the running gear of

the cars would have to be renewed much more frequently than at present.

This far no safe or economical substitute has ever been found for wooden ties, and the railways of the country will continue to require annually ties and telegraph poles of a value equal to the output of all the gold mines in the world.

**TRIBUTE TO TREE PLANTER.**

In his address before the forestry congress General Manderson paid an eloquent tribute to the late J. Sterling Morton, the pioneer tree planter of the West, who was the first to suggest and introduce Arbor Day. It was his idea that once a year every school child in the State of Nebraska should plant a tree, and the suggestion has been faithfully carried out for nearly a quarter of a century.

The same practice has been adopted in every State and Territory except Delaware and Indian Territory, and one day in each year is set apart by legislative enactment or executive proclamation throughout the entire country as a legal holiday on which every citizen is expected to plant a tree. Countless millions of trees have thus been planted, and every one of them is a monument to the memory of J. Sterling Morton.

**The Year in America.**

The year 1904 has been one of unchecked material progress in the United States. We have gained two million inhabitants—equivalent to annexing a third of Canada—and our total population has increased to nearly 85,000,000. We have added about three billion dollars to our national wealth, which is now estimated at over \$111,000,000. The expenses of the General Government have risen to nearly two million dollars a day. The value of the year's crops has been the greatest ever known. Our foreign commerce has surpassed all American records, and our domestic commerce has exceeded the total volume of the foreign trade of all the nations of the world combined. Our shipping tonnage has reached a new high-water mark. We have begun at last to develop the remnant of our public domain on scientific lines. We have maintained peace at home and extended our influence abroad. We have made some progress, too, toward the solution of our moral, political, and social problems. We are recovering a public conscience. We are extending the benefits of higher education to a greater proportion of the population than ever enjoyed such advantages in any other country in the world. On the whole, America can look back upon the year with cheerfulness.

**Corrected.**

Nell—Why, you're limping! Your shoes are too small, aren't they?  
Belle—O, no, indeed!  
Nell—No? O, I see; it's merely your feet that are too large.—Philadelphia Ledger.

—The children had written compositions on the giraffe. They were reading them aloud to the class. At length the time came for little Willie to read his. It was as follows: "The giraffe is a dumb animal and cannot express itself by any sound, because its neck is so long that its voice gets tired on its way to its mouth."

**Hobbies are Good.**

How often does one hear the expression "Oh, that is So-and-So's hobby," spoken rather disparagingly. It is the tendency of the average mind to regard a person who has pronounced enthusiasm as a species of harmless lunatic, rather than to be pitied. The truth of the matter is that any one who has any special fad is greatly to be envied, and it probably provides more interest and amusement for its possessor than anything else. Any decided interest in life, whether it is dignified by the name of an occupation or is simply an enthusiasm or even mentioned slightly as a fad, is eminently desirable.

"I have never seen a genuine collector that is not happy when he is allowed by circumstances to gratify his tastes," remarked a student of human nature, "and a bent in that direction should always be encouraged. It is a curious phase of our humanity that we will work diligently to make provision for our material needs when we are old and quite neglect to store up mental resources that will interest and amuse us until we are called hence." Hobbies help us to forget sorrow and give us pleasure in the present. They are among the best things in life, promoters of health, peace and happiness.

**Lincoln Tragedy Recalled.**

John Mathews, an actor, who for a time was held as a suspect in connection with the assassination of President Lincoln, died at his boarding house in New York, Wednesday. Mathews was Wilkes Booth's room-mate and one of his closest friends, and was on the stage in the Washington theatre when the fatal shot was fired. After the assassination his room was searched, and because of papers left in the grate by Booth he was arrested on suspicion of knowing something of the plot. His innocence was later established, but his friends say he never recovered from the effects of the accusation.

Mathews was in the original cast of the famous drama, "The Two Orphans." He was 69 years old.

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