

Farm, Garden & Household.

From the New York Tribune. WHAT I KNOW OF FARMING.

By HORACE GREELY.

VIII.—Growing Timber—Tree Planting.

In my judgment, the proportion of a small farm that should be permanently devoted to trees (other than fruit) is not less than one-third, and may often be not less than one-half. I am thinking of such as are in good part superficially rugged and rocky, or sandy and sterile, such as New England, eastern New York, northern New Jersey, with both slopes of the Alleghenies, as well as the western slope of our own mountains, at least in that it is desirable to be content with a smaller proportion of timber in the Prairie States and the broad, fertile intervals which embrace most of our great rivers for at least a part of their course; but I doubt it. And there is scarcely a farm in the whole country, outside of the great primitive forest in which openings have recently been made, which some tree-planting is not urgently required.

"Too much land," you will hear asserted on every side as a reason for poor farming and meager crops. Ask an average farmer in New England, in Virginia, in Kentucky, or in Alabama, why the crops of his section are in the average no better, and the answer three times in four, will be, "Our farmers have too much land"—that is, not too much absolutely, but too much relatively to their capital, stock, and general ability to till effectively.

The habitual growth of poor crops will preferential attention, while as a rule, frequently, by a more thrifty neighbor. And what every one asserts must have a basis of truth. Now, I do not mean to quarrel with the instinct which prompts my countrymen to buy and hold too much land. They feel, as I do, that land is still cheap almost anywhere in this country—cheap, if not in view of the income now derived from it, certainly in contemplation of the price it must soon command and the income it will, under better management, be made to yield.

What I do object to is simply this—that those who have more land than they have capital to work profitably, will persist in half-tilling many acres, instead of thoroughly farming one-half or one-third so many, and getting the rest into wood so fast as may be. I am confident that ten-thirds of all our farmers would improve their circumstances and increase their incomes by concentrating their efforts, their means, their fertilizers, up on half or two-thirds of the area they now skin and skin, and giving the residue back to lumber-growing.

In my own hilly, rocky, often boggy, Westchester—probably within six of being the oldest Agricultural County in the Union—I am confident that ten thousand acres might be thrown back to forest and left to the owners and advantage to all its inhabitants. It is a fruit-growing, milk-producing, truck-farming county, closely adjoining the greatest city of the New World; hence, one wherein land can be cultivated as profitably as almost anywhere else—yet I am satisfied that half its surface may be more advantageously devoted to timber than to grass or tillage. Nay, I think that nearly a hundred of our rocky lands—that is, land rich in iron, with rocks that bar the bar or rock hook can not lift from their beds, and which will not as yet pay to blast—is now tilled to profit, or ever will be until it shall be found advisable to clear them utterly of stone breaking through or rising within two feet of the surface. The time will doubtless arrive in which many fields will pay for clearing of stone that would not do so to-day, these, I urge, should be given up to wood now, and kept under the bush and have struck for ridding them of over-ripened to the steady progress of both the surface and the soil below.

Where all the rocky crests and rugged activities of this County boundlessly wooded come more, and kept so for a generation, our floods would be less injurious, our springs unfulfilling, and our streams more constant and equable; our blasts would be less bitter and our gales less destructive to fruit; we should have better crops, and our fields would be more and aid us in our not very successful war with devouring insects; we should grow peaches, cherries, and other delicate fruits, which the violent caprices of our seasons, the remorseless devastations of our visible and invisible insect enemies, have all but annihilated; and we should keep more cows and make more milk than two-thirds of the land now devoted to grass than we actually do from the whole of it, and with a more successful and less laborious effort.

What I have said I believe in cutting trees as well as in growing them. I have not said, and do not mean to say, that I believe in cutting everything clean as you go. That was once proper in Westchester; it is still advisable in forest-covered regions, where the sun must be let in before crops can be grown; but, in nine cases out of ten, timber should be thinned or culled out rather than cut off; and, for every tree taken away, at least two should be planted or set out.

We have pretty well outgrown the folly of letting every apple tree bear such fruit as it will; though in the orchard of my father's little farm in Amherst, N. H., whereon I was born, no tree had ever been grafted when I had been to it in 1829; and I presume none had been to it in 1859. An old settler, a very farm realist that he was, once told me that he had never had a tree of his own that was not a native of the soil, and that he had never had a tree of his own that was not a native of the soil, and that he had never had a tree of his own that was not a native of the soil.

A WARRING TO THE FASHIONABLE.—The passion for dress about which we hear so much just now, is nothing new. An old satirist thus lampoons the ladies of his day: "What is the reason—can you guess—Why men are poor, and women thinner? So much do they for dinner dress, That nothing's left to dress for dinner." A SCANDALOUS priest once, exhorting the soldiers to fight like lions, added, in the midst of his enthusiasm, "Reflect, my children, that whoever falls to-day says to-night in Paradise."

Thunders of applause followed the sentiment. The fight began, the ranks wavered, and the priest took to his heels; when a soldier, stopping him, respectfully referred to the priest's profane utterance in Paradise. "I see, my son, that you are a priest," said the soldier, "but I never take snip." A LITTLE five-year-old boy was being instructed in morals by his mother. The old lady told him that all such terms as "by getting," "by jingo!" "by thunder!" etc., were only unclean words, and that little better than any other profanity. In fact, she said, he could tell a profane oath by the prefix "by"—"all such were oaths."

Miscellaneous.

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