

Fifty years ago the vast forests of the Mississippi, Missouri, Oregon, and other timber States in America were of such enormous dimensions that the word "inexhaustible" commonly used to describe even less extensive areas, seemed in proportion ridiculously inadequate as applied to them. Yet what has been the experience of fifty years with regard to these sources of supply, that used to be graphically described as "sufficient to last a thousand years," and in other terms expressing the comfortable conviction that no possible strain could practically affect them? In this year of grace, 1897, after but fifty years of unrestrained vandalism—destruction recklessly with axe and fire—thousands of miles of country once covered by magnificent forests of splendid timber-trees, now lie a pitiable and desolate waste. This condition of affairs has at last been recognised, and the customary awakening has, so the newspapers inform us, caused the Government to take alarm, and commissions have been appointed with instructions to promptly suggest a scheme of drastic reform. Naturally, however, the usual shilly-shallying is likely to take place, and probably years elapse before anything really practical is done.

SERIOUS SHORTAGE IMMINENT.

Meantime it will possibly astonish the outside world to learn that within a very few years the apparently limitless timber resources of America will be so materially reduced by the heavy drain upon them, combined with waste and terrible destruction by fire, as to occasion a very serious shortage of supplies. Destruction by fire alone contributes in a large measure to the rapid disappearance of these forests, as may be seen from the cablegrams which so frequently report "Another terrible forest fire"; "Thousands of people homeless"; "Air so thick with smoke for leagues around as to create a darkness as of night," &c. Once, too, the shortage above referred to makes itself felt in the timber markets an immediate and heavy rise in values must result, for, even though America possesses other valuable forests than those now being drawn upon, the former lie "way back" hundreds of miles from water-carriage, and even from railways, so that the cost of haulage, &c., would be so great as to prohibit the use of their timbers to make good the deficiency. Then, too, this coming shortage in American supplies must affect the forests of the Old World, which, in spite of jealous care and the best scientific treatment, as yet in most instances are barely equal to meeting the requirements of home markets, and in others—notably France—cannot nearly do even this. These statements of established facts may easily be verified. The lesson taught is plain: Prepare for a scarcity of timber in the immediate future.

SUCCESS OF FORESTRY IN EUROPE.

Actual results of operations in Europe are shown by the reports of the various countries, and these prove conclusively: First, that forestry, carried out on a scientific basis, is a certain method—and the only one—of keeping up the timber-supply of any country; secondly, that though such treatment involves great expense, it fully repays the outlay by giving work to a large number of employés, whose salaries are distributed among the public, and in more direct manner by returning a very high percentage of cash profit to the State. They prove, indeed, the contention of forest scientists that the more liberal the expenditure in dealing with forests on recognised principles the greater is the profit to the State—an experience which is invariable.

FORESTRY IN EUROPE.

The following statistics of European forestry are culled from official sources, and may be relied upon. Though the reports in which they appear are ten years old they are authoritative, and even now of great practical value:—

				<i>Prussia.</i>			
				M.	£	s.	d.
Revenue	...	...	...	56,070,000	=	2,336,500	0 0
Ordinary expenses	...	...	...	31,062,200	=	1,294,258	6 8
Surplus	...	...	...	25,007,800	=	1,041,991	13 4
Extra expenses	...	...	...	2,450,000	=	102,083	6 8
Net income	...	...	...	22,557,800	=	939,908	6 8

The area of Government forests is 2,374,039 hectares, equal to about 5,757,047 acres.

Saxony.

Revenue from 429,600 acres of area, and 799,000 forest yards of hardwood, including revenue of \$5,000 from the chase	...	...	...	...	...	\$	2,740,000
Expenses—						\$	
Maintenance	...	...	...	...	...	551,000	
Management	...	...	...	...	...	372,000	
							923,000
						£378,541	13s. 4d. = \$1,817,000

Mannheim (Grand Duchy of Baden.)

The area of the Grand Duchy is 1,508,173 hectares = about 3,648,620 acres. Under official control are—

		Hectares.		Acres.	
State forests	...	95,025.24	=	about	237,562½
Town "	...	249,021.58		"	622,557½
Corporation	...	18,289.76		"	45,728
		362,336.58			905,848