

FORESTRY IN SOUTH AFRICA.

In South Africa we see the forest cared for as in Europe. All the native forest under the Union Government is being carefully preserved, and most of it worked at a profit. There is a Forest Department, and a complete system of forestry which, while protecting the forests against fires and cattle, works off the old timber at a handsome profit, and ensures the gradual propagation of a better supply of timber in the future. This has been going on for the last thirty-three years. Valuable exotic timbers are introduced and left to spread naturally, as, in fact, does gorse, blackberry, and manuka now in the wasted forest areas of New Zealand.

The dense evergreen forest of South Africa closely resembles that of New Zealand. Some of the chief trees of each country are podocarps. Thus the two big timber-trees of South Africa are *Podocarpus elongata* and *Podocarpus Thunbergii*. They are called yellow-wood, and the largest of them grow up to diameters of 22 ft. These giant trees have the long, straight, cylindrical bole and the huge spreading crown of the kauri-trees of New Zealand. In New Zealand there is *Podocarpus spicatus* (black-pine), *Podocarpus ferruginea* (miro), *Podocarpus dacrydioides* (white-pine), and *Podocarpus totara*—in fact, all the chief timbers are podocarps except kauri, rimu, and puriri. Geologically, possibly, it was one forest at one time, and that geological time just the period required to differentiate the species.

The indigenous *Podocarpus* forest of South Africa is a small area in the South African Union, but the same forest, little modified, stretches up the eastern highlands of Africa to the Equator in British East Africa—altitude compensating latitude—and terminates, I understand, in Abyssinia. Thus the forest at sea-level in lat. 34° south is nearly the same as the forest at 8,000 ft. under the Equator. I can speak positively about this forest, because I spent twenty-six years as a forest officer in South Africa and four years as Chief Conservator of Forests in British East Africa. My surprise and delight may be imagined when I walked near Auckland into what looked like the same forest, and my horror at seeing this forest being recklessly destroyed because it was not fully realized that it could be worked and preserved (indeed, gradually improved) as in South Africa.

After nine months spent in New Zealand and an official tour to the various types of forest in each Island, this first impression has ripened into the certainty that nothing more than ordinary forest organization is required to work, and at the same time perpetuate and improve, the forests of New Zealand. On the whole, the forest of South Africa is less valuable than that of New Zealand, and