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FIRST ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

Commissioners of State Parks

OF THE

STATE OF NEW YORK.

TRANSMITTED TO THE LEGISLATURE MAY 15, 1873.

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THE ARGUS COMPANY, PRINTERS.
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STATE OF NEW YORK.

No. 102.

IN SENATE,

May 15, 1873.

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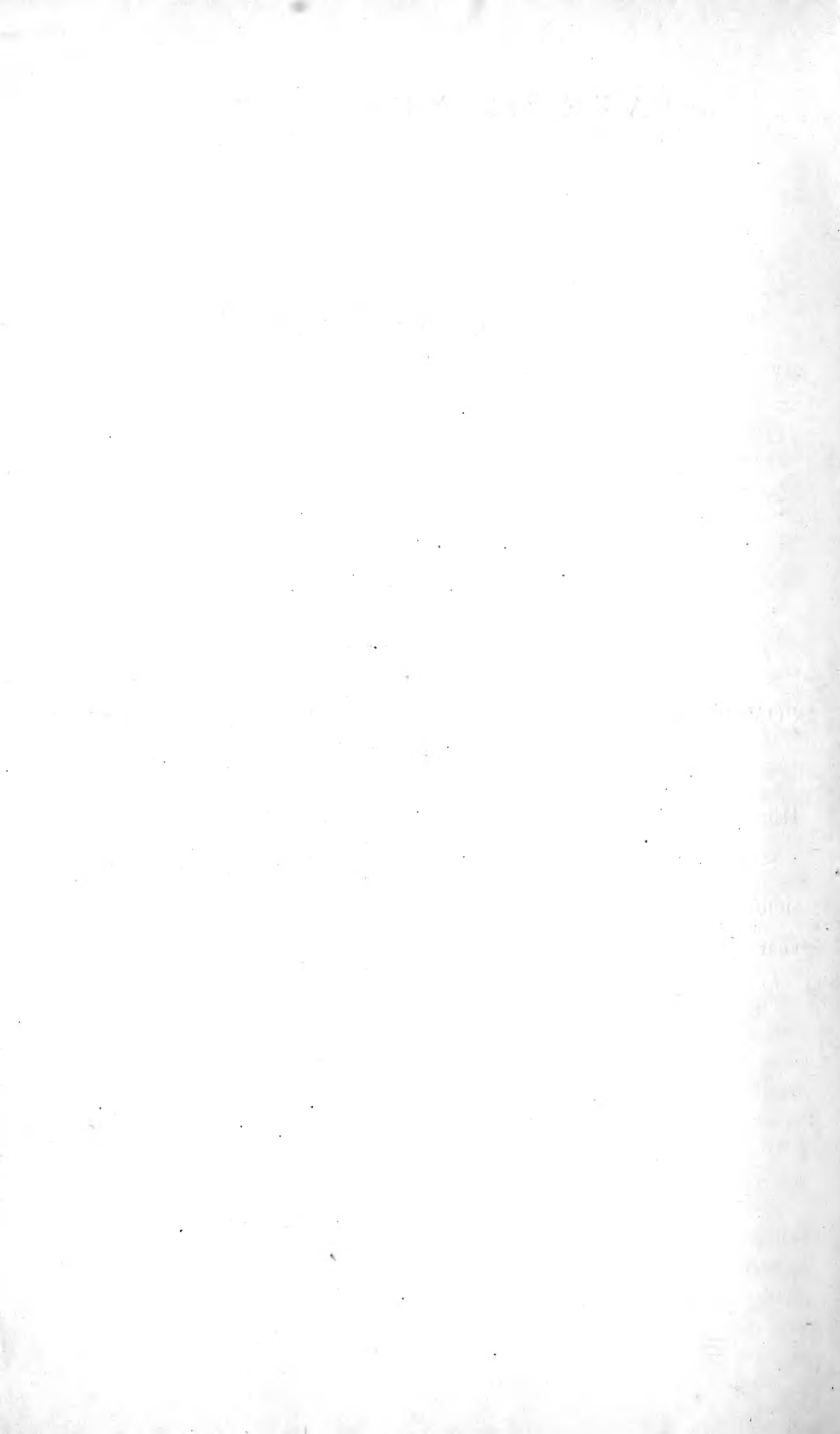
COMMISSIONERS OF STATE PARKS OF THE STATE OF
NEW YORK.

Hon. JOHN C. ROBINSON, *Lieutenant-Governor*:

SIR.—I herewith transmit the annual report of the Commissioners of State Parks of the State of New York, for the year 1872.

VERPLANCK COLVIN,

Secretary.



REPORT.

To the Honorable the Legislature of the State of New York :

The Commissioners of State Parks of the State of New York, having been directed "to inquire into the expediency of providing for vesting in the State the title to the timbered regions lying within the counties of Lewis, Essex, Clinton, Franklin, St. Lawrence, Herkimer and Hamilton, and converting the same into a public park," respectfully present the following

REPORT.

After a careful consideration of the projected forest park, with its practical bearing upon the interests of the people of the whole State, we are of opinion that the protection of a great portion of that forest from wanton destruction is absolutely and immediately required.

We do not favor the creation of an expensive and exclusive park for mere purposes of recreation, but condemning such suggestions, recommend the simple preservation of the timber as a measure of political economy.

The conclusion that the permanent preservation of a large portion of this forest is necessary, is based upon numerous considerations intimately connected with the great business interests of the State. Before proceeding to the discussion of the reasons which have brought us to this conclusion, a statement of facts in regard to the region is desirable.

The ancient *Cough-sa-gra-ge*—the beaver hunting country of the Indian Six Nations—now known as the Adirondack wilderness, is essentially a great and almost primeval forest, covering the mountainous and semi-mountainous elevated region of Northern New

York. The northern portion of the county of Hamilton is the approximate center of the wilderness, while the western portion of Essex county contains the most elevated lands and the highest mountains of the State. From Lake Champlain on the east, the Mohawk river on the south, the Black river on the west, and the St. Lawrence on the north, the land slopes upward towards the wilderness, whose marked peculiarity is the multitude of its lakes, of greater or less degree, and the vein-like ramification of its crystal brooks and rivers. The surfaces of the principal lakes throughout this upland are generally elevated from fifteen to sixteen hundred feet above the sea, whence some writers have been erroneously led to term the whole region a plateau or table land; viewed from some lofty peak it is seen as a silent expanse of mountains, shrouded in unbroken woods, vast and quiet, and stretching to the apparent limits of the sky.

Throughout this forest, game is still abundant; the deer, bear and panther, with smaller animals, find shelter and support, and their presence gives to the magnificent scenery a strange, wild and romantic element, which has contributed to make its more accessible portions a choice summer pleasure ground for those of our people who travel, and who admire the natural splendors of their native land.

A few settlements only have as yet been formed in this wild territory, although during the two hundred years past, numerous attempts have been made to recover and cultivate it, all of which have signally failed and recoiled with disaster upon the projectors. The cause of the failure of these enterprises is to be attributed to the deplorable ignorance that has existed in regard to the climate, soil and general capabilities of the region, which rendered unwarrantable the expenditures made. Amid the mountains, granitic rocks, sparsely covered with vegetable mould, soon become bare and almost arid when deprived of the dense growth of trees and the network of roots and fibres which hold the soil together. Ages will have passed before the slow growth and death of minor plants upon the naked rocks will again afford sufficient soil to enable the second growth of timber to attain the size and value of that destroyed.

It must not, however, be supposed that all this region is a mass of rock. There are extensive tracts of gravelly and sandy soil, inter-

vales, and, near some of the lakes and rivers, alluvial lands, which are sometimes covered with a dense growth of wild grasses, often cut and cured by the lumbermen for the use of their oxen and horses in winter. Nevertheless, owing to the elevation and the coldness of the climate, there is no profitable farming carried on anywhere upon this upland; for, seldom is there a year in which the temperature does not fall so low as to prevent the ripening of corn, while frost is not unfrequent even in summer. The potato, that hardy vegetable which may be grown even far toward the Arctic zone, in Labrador and British America, is here produced of fine quality, in some locations. Oats, also, grow thriftily, especially upon new lands or soils that contain even a small percentage of lime, which mineral—so important to the agriculturist—is, unfortunately, not abundant. In fact, the agricultural products are absolutely nothing when compared with the products of the forests; which are indeed the only surface wealth of the region; and but for the need which the lumbermen and the summer tourist have for even the scanty amount of hay, oats and potatoes produced, and provisions brought in and kept for sale at these slender settlements, those settlements would soon cease to exist. As it is, many of the inhabitants are forced to eke out their subsistence by hunting and trapping; and, latterly, since the value of the region as a summer resort has begun to be understood by our citizens and the citizens of other States, the class of guides—hardy and intelligent men—has increased, and thousands of dollars, which have hitherto been expended in travel in foreign lands, remain in or are brought into our State.

The mineral wealth of the region is not inferior to that of its forests. It is practically limited to iron; which exists in remarkable purity and enormous quantities; but careful geological exploration has proved that the available deposits of ore are confined to the northern portion of this region, and that the ore-beds generally exist in the settled, cleared or accessible portions of the country. Great activity in iron manufacture is now exhibited near Lake Champlain, at Port Henry, Mineville, Elizabethtown, Black Brook and Danemora. The beds which here supply the furnaces are of magnetic or octohedral ore. Passing westward, along the northern boundary of the region, the character of the rock changes, and the specular, *hematite* ores of iron are encountered, and the ore-beds, as at the

Iron mountain in the town of Oakham, St. Lawrence county, are often unworked, and far in the depths of the woods.

In addition to these masses of iron, there are beds of serpentine (so-called verde antique marble) steatite, or soapstone, and deposits of graphite. There are also superior grades of granite, or more properly gneiss, valuable for building purposes. Besides these products there are no mines or minerals of great commercial importance.

In the early days of iron manufacture in this region, all the iron was made with the aid of wood charcoal. When a pure ore was used, free from sulphurets and phosphides, the "charcoal iron" produced was unsurpassed in quality, and commanded a high price. The result was that large sections in Essex county were entirely stripped of forest in order to supply the requisite charcoal. The mountains thus debosqued are to-day almost treeless, showing desolate flanks of naked rock; and some of the streams which once were trout brooks are now torrent beds, through which the water of each storm on the smooth sides of the mountains rushes swiftly off to leave them almost dry, instead of slowly percolating through a sponge of moss and tree roots, as a slow-running, cold and constant spring.

To the introduction of coal from Pennsylvania by railroad may be partially attributed the present activity in the mining of iron near Port Henry, as in that immediate neighborhood the supply of wood was long since exhausted. It is not alone to coal, however, that this activity is owing; it is more directly attributable to the improved means of transportation. Instead of dragging the fuel far from the coal fields, up steep grades to the mines, and then dragging the iron produced out again to market, a great portion of the ore is now transported directly to the cities, to the furnaces, to points where labor is cheap, and where repairs to machinery can be readily made. Instead of being overloaded with coal, the empty cars go easily up hill to the mines, to roll speedily down again laden with the heavy ore.

From this it becomes evident that, for the development of the iron mines of the region, railroads only are needed. Without railroads, neither the ores nor the products of the ore-beds of the interior can be brought to market. With railroads, and the easy access they afford

to the coal fields, wood, which must be cut and drawn by team over a rugged country, and would at length give out, becomes a fuel far too expensive to compete with coal.

The advancement of iron manufacture, therefore, is simply a matter of railroads; and the development of the mineral wealth of the region does not in any way conflict with the projected preservation of the forest.

Vast portions of the wilderness are owned and controlled by the lumber interest, which, with that of the tanneries, is likely to be most immediately and radically affected by the creation of a State forest park or timber preserve. These lands are generally purchased, held, and valued solely for the timber growing on them. As soon as the pine, spruce and hemlock trees have been taken off, the lands are often abandoned and revert to the State for unpaid taxes. The common and wasteful method among lumbermen, therefore, is to cut all the available timber from a given section at once. This enables them to escape further taxes on that piece by abandoning and throwing the same back upon the State. The small trees, even under ten inches in diameter, are cut, and thus the natural process of replacement by a second growth of the valuable varieties of timber, becomes very slow, if not impossible.

The mass of brushwood, the boughs and tops lopped from the trees in such quantities, dry and wither, and become in summer beds of tinder. The first spark from a hunter's fire kindles them, and now—spreading rapidly through the forest—commences one of those terrible conflagrations which have covered whole townships with a sea of flame, and, invading the settlements, have destroyed mills, dwellings and human lives. These fires reveal the slenderness of the soil, which—though sometimes several feet in depth—is often totally consumed, even down amid the crevices of the great boulders, which after the fire stand out red and burnt, like the uncovered bones of the world. The soil, apparently so rich and strong, is here without base, substance or solidity; being only the rich peat-like earth, derived from the semi-decay of the fallen timber and sphagnum (peat) mosses. In agriculture such a soil is fairly eaten up by the plants cultivated in it, and the boulders gradually appear above the surface, as when the soil is burnt. Great tracts in Franklin

county have been swept by these fires, and the people of that section best know what a terrible infliction they are. It is interesting to notice that some of the people assert that they have detected a remarkable diminution in the usual flow of water in the streams of the burnt regions, and that sudden floods are more frequent now than heretofore.

The tanneries, which are scattered along the margins of the wilderness, require great supplies of bark, and, therefore, aid in the rapid destruction of the forest; though the hemlock is almost the only tree which is cut. So thorough in some sections has the work been made, that it is frightful to see the numberless crossed trunks of trees, lying one upon another, stripped of their bark and white as skeletons, left there to decay.

From an early day there have been numerous projects for building railroads through this region, most of which have been abandoned, and none of which have been completed.

At different times charters have been granted for such railroads, and, to some, special immunities and privileges have been given. Among these that now passing under the name of the "Adirondack Companies Railroad" is prominent. This company appears to have succeeded to the rights, privileges and real estate of the old Saratoga and Sackett's Harbor railroad, organized April 10th, 1848 (afterwards known as the Lake Ontario and Hudson railroad, organized April 6th, 1857), which became insolvent and passed into the hands of a receiver. Finally the present railroad, by certain amendatory articles of association, under the general railroad act, and by other means, has come to assume the character of a great landed corporation. A large portion of the land which they possess was originally obtained from the State at the price of five cents an acre; more than 250,000 acres being obtained by the Saratoga and Sackett's Harbor railroad in this way. The manner of their acquisition will, perhaps, be better understood by an examination of the following transcript from the report of the State Engineer and Surveyor (Assembly Document No. 60, Jan. 15th, 1857, page 202):

"Since the spirit of land speculation has subsided, to dispose of our public lands by wholesale was not to be expected, until by act

chapter 207, Laws of 1848, and subsequent acts chapter 72 of 1851, and chapter 122, Laws of 1855, the Commissioners of the Land Office are authorized and required to sell and convey to the Sackett's Harbor and Saratoga Railroad Company 250,000 acres, belonging to the State in the counties of Hamilton and Herkimer, at the rate of five cents an acre, on the company complying with the conditions named in said acts. This claim has been satisfied in full, by lands granted in August, September and October, 1855, viz. :

	Number of acres.	Per acre.	Amount.
Hamilton and Essex counties.....	205,202	5 cents	\$10,260 11
And on July 23, 1856 :			
Hamilton county.....	20,000	5 cents	1,000 00
Hamilton and Warren counties	6,984	30 cents	2,095 20
Warren county.....	15,974	30 cents	4,792 20
Warren and Essex counties.....	7,042	30 cents	2,112 60
Total.....	255,202		\$20,260 11

“As will appear from the following extracts from the minutes of the Land Office, on the 9th July, 1856, the Sackett's Harbor and Saratoga Railroad Company by their president, Mr. Waddell, made the following proposition :

“*To the Commissioners of the Land Office :*

“GENTLEMEN.—I propose, for the Sackett's Harbor and Saratoga railroad, to take lands now owned by the State in Hamilton and Herkimer counties, in accordance with our chartered rights, 20,000 acres; the road having already received 205,000 acres, and claiming 25,000 acres adversely claimed by Dart, Kirby, Loomis and others; also propose to purchase 30,000 acres of lands belonging to the State, lying in other counties, and to pay for the same thirty cents per acre, under a stipulation from the road, to be filed, that in case our suit for the disputed lands is decided against the road, the number of acres now purchased shall go toward the amount due from the State, in which case the excess over five cents per acre to be refunded.”

“Therefore,

“*Resolved,* That the proposition herewith submitted by the Sackett's Harbor and Saratoga Railroad Company be accepted, and that patents be issued, upon the payment of five cents per acre into the

State treasury, for 20,000 acres of land lying in Hamilton and Herkimer counties, and not claimed adversely by other parties; and that the proposition to purchase from the State 30,000 acres lying in Warren and Essex counties, additional, to pay therefor the sum of thirty cents per acre, be accepted, and that patents therefor issue upon the payment of thirty cents per acre, and the filing of a stipulation, on the part of said company, that in case the suit for lands on the part of the company, and defended by the State, shall be decided against said company, the amount of their said purchase at thirty cents per acre shall go toward the amount found due from the State, acre for acre in which case the excess over five cents per acre shall be refunded said company."

The suit of the railroad company was decided against them, and they obtained these last—thirty-cent—lands in *Warren* and *Essex* counties also at five cents an acre.

These transactions show that the wild lands of this region are, intrinsically, of very little value; for a single acre of farming land, valued at the moderate price of \$100, is equal to 2,000 acres at five cents an acre. The working of the iron ores would in no way interfere with the preservation of the forest, for the mining companies would only require those lands in which the iron lies, and the right of way for their railroads.

The area of the wilderness may be estimated approximately at one million seven hundred and thirty thousand (1,730,000) acres, or about two thousand seven hundred and three (2,703) square miles.

These wild lands are distributed among the several counties in about the following proportion:

County.	Acres.
Hamilton.....	750,000
Herkimer.....	350,000
Lewis.....	60,000
St. Lawrence.....	40,000
Franklin.....	300,000
Essex.....	200,000
Warren.....	30,000
Total.....	<u>1,730,000</u>

The county of Clinton, though containing much wild land, lies in a measure separated from the main portion of this great forest, and has not, therefore, been included in these estimates.

About eight hundred and thirty-four thousand four hundred and eighty (834,480) acres, or one thousand three hundred and three (1,303) square miles, are upon the Hudson river side of the mountain divide which separates the head waters of that river from the streams flowing to the St. Lawrence. This would be the approximate area of the region which would be required for the purposes of the forest park, in case it should be determined that the preservation of the forests covering and protecting the sources of the Hudson is all that is necessary for that purpose.

The following is a statement of all the lands now owned by the State and remaining unsold :

County	General Fund. Acres.	School Fund. Acres.
Clinton	8,315	3,027
Essex	2,824	9,954
Franklin	1	180
Hamilton	7,397	3,558
Herkimer ..	780	26
St. Lawrence.....		66
Warren	645	3,081
Totals.....	<u>19,962</u>	<u>19,892</u>

In all 39,854, or nearly 40,000 acres.

Having now given an outline of the more important facts and statistics in regard to this region, we will proceed to a review of the considerations which have brought us to the conclusion that these great forests should be permanently preserved.

Foremost among these considerations is the question of water supply—of the maintenance of that quantity of water in the navigable rivers, in the streams that supply the canals and afford power to mills and manufactories, which from time immemorial has flowed in undiminished volume in their channels, and which only in these later days begins to slowly fail and disappear. This is, of course, a question of rain-fall, for it is to the precipitated moisture of the air that all streams or rivers owe their origin. There is nothing of greater importance to the agriculturist than rain at the proper season and in the proper quantity ; and science has demonstrated that the forests of a country are potent in the regulation of storms, the formation of

clouds and the descent of rain. Anything which vitally affects the interests of the farmer and producer affects the whole State, and demands the earliest attention of the people's representatives.

The State of New York is, perhaps, the most remarkable watershed of the eastern half of North America. Northwardly its waters descending the St. Lawrence wash the coast of Labrador, while, far at the south, waters, which reached the earth from the self-same shower amid the Adirondack highlands, pour through the Hudson valley to the sea; and, in the western portion of the State, the sources of the Alleghany river rush, foaming, from their mountain springs to the Ohio, flowing thence through the Mississippi to the Gulf of Mexico. It is noteworthy that nearly every stream in this State, if traced to its source, will be found to originate in some lake or pond—of greater or less degree—from which, if in a forest region, it pours in an unfailing stream. South of New York there is no lake region till the brackish, dead-water bayous of Florida are reached; and it is to this system of lakes, of natural reservoirs, bosomed in the cool primeval forests, that our State is indebted for that water supply which has *created* our canals, and that steady water power which is the wealth of so many manufactories.

Without a *steady, constant* supply of water from these streams of the wilderness, our canals would be dry, and a great portion of the grain and other produce of the western part of the State would be unable to find cheap transportation to the markets of the Hudson river valley. In Erie, and the neighboring western counties, grain would decrease in value, and the farmers would be in the power of the great railroad monopolies. The merchants at Albany would also suffer, their summer trade would be ruined, and the hundred propellers which now make the Hudson foam before the fleets they tow, might be idly tied to the wharves and left there to decay.

We believe that the great Adirondack forest has a powerful influence upon the general climatology of the State; upon the rainfall, winds and temperature, moderating storms and equalizing throughout the year the amount of moisture carried by the atmosphere; controlling, and in a measure subduing, the powerful northerly winds, modifying their coldness and equalizing the temperature of the whole State.

It is now generally conceded that forests do not increase the amount of *annual* rain-fall. Their influence is to cause a distribution of the rain in frequent showers at short intervals throughout the year, while their absence induces droughts, followed by sudden and tremendous storms which are the origin of disastrous floods.

The record of the rain-gauge, year by year, shows only the amount of annual rain-fall. Let the total rain-fall of any year be supposed to be forty inches. If about every ninth day during the year there occur a shower—or forty annually—depositing only one inch of rain, the aggregate rain-fall of the year will be forty inches.

If, on the other hand, but eight storms occur, each precipitating rain to the amount of *five inches*, the amount of annual rain-fall is as before, viz., forty inches.

It thus becomes evident that the amount of annual rain-fall is not the question to be discussed, but “how, and in what manner does it fall?”

In the first instance, the rain coming in gentle showers refreshes and revives the earth, forwards agriculture and is a blessing.

In the second instance, there are long periods during which rain does not fall; the land is parched by the sun's fervent heat; evaporation proceeds rapidly; the air, though clear, is saturated with invisible moisture, heavily charged with electricity, which finds the moist upper air a better conductor than the heated, dry, repellent surface of the earth. The drought continues; nature is silently becoming exasperated, for there are now (in this case) no broad, cool forests, nor cold, wooded mountain sides to condense the vapor into cloud. The only chance for the relief of the atmosphere from its burden of moisture is the advent of some cold north wind. It comes at length, and the region of the air is convulsed. Black, gloomy clouds rapidly gather, and the suspended vaporous ocean overhead drops suddenly in one grand deluge, while the released electricity flies back to earth, cleaving the air with dreadful detonations. Down hill sides the furious turbid waters rush to the streams and rivers, cutting and carving ravines through grain fields or gar-

dens, and then, with united swollen volume, sweeping before them and destroying bridges, dwellings, cattle and human beings.

We have only to turn to France to see realized, as the actual result of forest slaughter, the very disasters which we have here described. There, though the government has been called upon to contribute large sums, and great contributions have been collected to aid the peasant farmers suddenly made destitute by such floods, the means seem to have been inadequate to relieve the suffering originated by the reckless wasting of the woods.

All floods, however, are not to be attributed to the destruction of the forests; for in this, as in other things, there are exceptions to the rule. Nevertheless, upon the Hudson river, the destruction of the Adirondack forest would have a calamitous effect. The deep winter's snows, accumulating upon the disafforested uplands, would remain unmelted till the thousand and three hundred square miles of the present wilderness watershed might have a compact covering of snow equivalent to twelve inches of water. Spring, with its sunshine and showers, would suddenly release this latent ocean; thirty-six billions, two hundred and forty-one millions, nine hundred and twenty thousand (36,241,920,000) heavy, cubic feet of water might rush at once down through the valleys to the sea. More than a quarter of a massive cubic mile of water hurled furiously into the narrow valley of the Hudson, it would sweep before it fields of ice, to crush and sink the strongest vessels, and ruin the warehouses on our wharves. While the Adirondack forests remain, these deep snows will be protected from the direct rays of the sun in spring, and will slowly and gradually melt away. The general temperature of the region will, consequently, be low; the air will not be overcharged with moisture, and sudden heavy rains will be improbable. Such vapor as exists will form light drifting clouds, which, influenced by the forest, will act the part of one vast shielding canopy above the snow-bound earth.

While, in our opinion, the chief and very important influence which forests exercise upon the rain-fall is their power to moderate storms and distribute the annual quantity of rain more equally throughout the year, there are not wanting, among the greatest of scientific men, those who strenuously advocate the theory that the presence of great forests increases, and their absence diminishes, the

amount of annual rain-fall. Among those who have given the weight of their names and influence to this theory may be mentioned Humboldt, Bonpland, De Sausure, Bousingault and others, who, in support of their opinions, have recorded facts so remarkable that they cannot be passed without notice.

De Sausure early came to the conclusion that the great diminution of water in some of the lakes of Switzerland was directly owing to the destruction of the forests covering the slopes of the Alps.

The Spanish historiographer Oviedo, in his account of Venezuela, states that the city of Neuva Valencia was founded A. D. 1555, about one and a half miles from the Lake of Tacarigua. The lake is peculiar as having no outlet, though numerous streams empty into it. The climate of the surrounding country is favorable, and the soil productive. In A. D. 1800, Humboldt visited it, and learned that for thirty years its waters had been gradually decreasing, being then distant three and one-third miles, the difference being proved by absolute measurement. The great philosopher recorded his conviction that the disappearance of the water was owing to the destruction of the vast forests in the neighborhood of the lake. After the period of Humboldt's visit, wars and dissensions paralyzed the industries of the country, and the tropical forests quickly grew again. In 1822, Tacarigua was visited by Bousingault, who found that the waters were rising, the people showing places which had been farms, but which were now covered by the lake.

The astronomer Herschel, while in Africa, at the Cape of Good Hope, made careful meteorological experiments, and is said to have remarked with surprise that rain fell plenteously upon the forest, while the neighboring plains received no showers.

More recently an unpretentious botanical publication of New York has made public new and important information; the famous West Indian island of Santa Cruz is at the present moment, it seems, suffering from the former vandalism of its inhabitants; its eastern portion, which twenty-seven years since was rich, populous and of tropical luxuriance, now deprived of its forest, has become dry, arid and worthless. It is now found to be too late to retrieve the previous error, for of a thousand trees, recently planted upon an estate

on this island, not one survived. The statements in regard to the Island of Curaçoa are still more interesting: "In the year 1845, it was found to be an almost perfect desert, where, according to the testimony of the inhabitants, had once been a garden of fertility, abandoned plantations, the recent ruins of beautiful villas and terraced gardens, and broad arid wastes without a blade of grass, showed how sudden and complete a destruction had fallen upon this unfortunate little island. The cause was the cutting down of the trees for export of their valuable timber; the effect followed even more rapidly than at Santa Cruz, as the island lies five leagues further to the south, and the heat is more intense. The rains have almost entirely ceased, and fresh water is among the luxuries. Almost within sight of Curaçoa is the coast of Spanish main, covered with the rankest vegetation, over which the burdened clouds shower down abundant blessings."

In a recent paper of the British Association for the Advancement of Science, an author states his belief that forests have little or no effect upon the rain-fall; but, at the same time, he records the fact that wherever forests have been cleared from the slopes of the Alps, destructive torrents have arisen, which disappeared when the trees were replanted. The author further relates the result of an experiment touching the influence of forests upon evaporation. Two open-mouthed jars of water were sunk so as to be nearly level with the surface of the soil, the one in an open field, the other amidst bushes. An equal quantity of water was placed in each jar, and after five days it was found that the jar in the field had lost by evaporation twice as much as that partially sheltered by the bushes.

But it is not necessary to enter more fully upon this subject. One thing seems to be beyond the possibility of doubt, viz.: that the destruction of a forest covering the sources of a stream or river, by exposing the moist earth, the springs, rills and brooks to evaporation, diminishes the supply of water in those streams. It is a principle of natural law and equity that no man has a right to take from others, without compensation, any property or privilege. Again and again streams have been diverted from their natural beds by selfish, ignorant men, who, as often, have been compelled by the stern mandate of law to restore and turn back the stolen water. The Indian savage, dependent for food upon the forest game, knew nothing of

such questions ; they were intangible and far beyond his comprehension. We, in the semi-barbarism of the present, are putting aside or passing by as incomprehensible the self-same question in another form. The mass of mankind do not see or fully comprehend that the rivers flowing down hill past them are forever, in the clouds, flowing up hill overhead. Like a long, endless wire rope moving over pulleys in some deep mine, the water descends the stream only to return. Destroy a pulley, and the slack rope stops, catches, and, perhaps, is broken ; destroy the forests, and the rain first stops, then falls suddenly in flood torrents, which are succeeded by hot, blasting droughts. It is a continuous process, this evaporation, cloud, rain and river, yet it is only one of the many perpetual motions which the Creator retains as his prerogative, and which man can merely apply and modify.

It has been shown that the forests preserve and protect the springs and streams among them. No man has, therefore, more right to cut away those forests absolutely, and thus divert, by evaporation, the water they protect, than he has to conduct it away, for his own selfish purposes, by canal or tube. Those below him upon the stream, the mill owner and operator, and the farmer and his cattle, are as much entitled to the water as the lumberman is to the timber. When we find individuals managing their property in a reckless and selfish manner, without regard to the vested rights of others, it becomes the duty of the State to interfere and provide a remedy. Here, by ruthless destruction of the forest, thoughtless men are depriving the country of a water supply which has belonged to it from time immemorial, and the public interest demands legislative protection. The canal interests of the State are very great, and are already suffering from this wrong. The water supply of the Champlain canal is entirely obtained from the streams of this wilderness, and the Erie canal, from Rome to Albany, is almost entirely supplied from the same watershed. In the Hudson, near Albany and Troy, navigation, at midsummer, has become very difficult. The mill owners at Glen's Falls and at other points find that their water fails them ; and the farming lands throughout the State suffer from the storms and droughts already noticed. It is of no consequence that, through ignorance of the natural laws governing rain and rivers, men have hitherto permitted, without protest,

the injustice which they felt, but the cause of which they did not understand. The State must apply the remedy, and, to protect their interests, preserve the forest.

The supply of timber which a State possesses within its own limits is one of the measures of its wealth. The lumber trade of New York was among its earliest sources of income, and our people will have cause ever to regret the hour when that trade shall cease to exist. At first sight it may appear that the absorption of all this vast forest (practically the only lumber region now remaining in the State) into a State park would amount to the immediate annihilation of that trade. The idea of such an unproductive and useless park we utterly and entirely repudiate. The park should be eminently a timber preserve and reserve. The carefully protected forests of Europe afford their States large annual incomes; the timber is cut under the direction of officers charged with the care of the forests, who mark the old and mature trees for cutting, and see that as little injury as possible is done to the growing timber. In England, and more especially in Ireland, forest *culture* has received much attention; for as early as the 17th century the cultivation of forest trees for industrial purposes was commenced. In Ireland, barren hillsides and hitherto desolate regions have, by arboriculture, become rich with forests, and the native trees are now in some sections less abundant than the foreign varieties, the very scenery being changed. In France and Germany there are natural forests which are preserved and properly cared for, affording supplies of valuable timber for house and ship building. Should an Adirondack park be created, careful consideration should be given to the utilization of the forest.

If the present wasteful use of lumber be continued, even the forests of Canada and the West will fail; and even now our supply from those quarters may be any year destroyed by another series of those forest conflagrations which have, in Wisconsin and Michigan, already been so extensive and disastrous. Unless we desire to be reduced to the use of inferior timber—of balsam-fir and other trees which we now regard as worthless—we must preserve our forests.

In addition to these weighty considerations of political economy, there are social and moral reasons which render the preservation of

the forest advisable. Its effect upon the general healthfulness of the State is great. The philosopher, Boyle, long since remarked that in the Dutch East Indian island of Ternate, long celebrated for its beauty and healthfulness, the clove trees grew in such plenty as to render their product almost valueless. To raise the price of the commodity, most of the spice forest was destroyed. Immediately the island—previously cool, healthy and pleasant—became hot, dry and sickly, and unfit for human residence. It is well known that the general clearing away of the forests in this country has had a tendency to raise the temperature, which in summer reaches such a height as to be barely endurable. In our cities, these great heats—acting upon garbage in those miserable quarters which are but cess-pools and sinks—give rise to the probable source of cholera and other epidemics, the foul miasmatic effluvia which could not exist in the presence of living vegetation. Anxious to escape, our citizens hasten either to the country, the sea-shore or the mountains, while those whose avocations will not permit their absence, find a purer air in the semi-rural suburbs, or in those elegant parks which modern culture and civilization have come to consider indispensable in any city.

The accessible portions of the Adirondack wilderness have already become favorite resorts for those seeking health or pleasure. The field sports of the wilderness are remarkably exhilarating, and strengthen and revive the human frame. The boating, tramping, hunting and fishing expeditions afford that physical training which modern Americans—of the Eastern States—stand sadly in need of, and which we must hope will, with the fashionable young men of the period, yet replace the vicious, enervating, debasing pleasures of the cities. It is to their eager pursuit of field sports that metropolitan Englishmen owe their superiority in physical power, with that skillful use of fire-arms, independence, fearlessness, cool presence of mind, and ability which they possess to bear the fatigues of war and exigencies of military service.

To foster and promote these natural and healthful exercises among the young men of the State, it is necessary in some measure to preserve the game, and the forest which affords it shelter.

In seasons of cholera the wilderness has been thronged with people, who have thus been preserved from that disease, and this is but one of the many additional considerations which might be urged as reasons for the preservation of the forest.

The area of the proposed park will not appear so immense when we compare it with that of the United States park at the head waters of the Yellowstone river, in the Rocky Mountains. When we remember, also, that that great reservation was made by the Government, not from motives of political economy or public necessity, but simply in order to preserve it as a pleasure ground for the people, then the claims of the Adirondack Park to consideration become apparent.

The little settlements already existing in the region are not incompatible with the project, but are, on the contrary, indispensable to the completeness of the park. They would keep provisions, as now, for tourists and lumbermen; and the people of these settlements, many of whom now earn a livelihood as guides, having a direct interest in the welfare of the park, would voluntarily protect the game and timber from unlawful destruction.

A summer residence in this wilderness has been found so favorable to health, and has become so popular, that people come even from St. Louis and Chicago, and more distant points south and west, and remain throughout the season. The mass of travel, however, comes from Philadelphia, Boston and New York city. Should these wild lands become the property of the State, it is thought that leases of woodland points in lakes, and of islands near certain favorite localities, to citizens desirous of erecting rustic summer villas or hunting lodges, would form a very considerable source of income, and more than repay any expenditures which would be necessary.

There is no need, however, for any expenditures, save, possibly, in the improvement of a few of the principal roads leading to the settlements. The forest is in itself a natural park, and it would be improper to think of inclosing and fencing it, for it should be a common unto the people of the State.

The question before your commission is one of great importance to the State, and requires their further consideration. For the present we deem it advisable, and recommend, that the wild lands now owned and held by the State be retained until this question is decided.

ALBANY, *May* 14, 1873.

HORATIO SEYMOUR,
PATRICK H. AGAN,
WILLIAM B. TAYLOR,
GEORGE RAYNOR,
WILLIAM A. WHEELER,
VERPLANCK COLVIN,
FRANKLIN B. HOUGH,
Commissioners.

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