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PROPORTION IN PLANTING.

BY H. W. S. CLEVELAND.

There is hardly any one thing connected with the work of laying out grounds, in which inexperienced persons are so liable to err, as in the preservation of a proportion between the different features which are introduced, either for use or ornament, and which, together, make up the character of the place. It is obvious that the skill necessary for the purpose can only be attained by practice, based upon innate taste, and cannot be acquired by study alone, because of the infinite variety of circumstances demanding its application. In the arrangement of large areas, the proportion to be allotted to wood, lawn, water, orchard, garden and domestic use, the proper width of avenues and paths, and, to come to minor details, the size and disposition of trees and shrubs about the house and the arrangement of flower beds or artificial ornaments of whatever kind, demand the exercise of much judgment in order to secure a harmonious effect for the whole and prevent an undue prominence of either of the parts. The want of such skill is continually seen in the planting of trees and shrubbery on places of small extent, and as there are some characteristics which are common to all such cases, a few hints on the subject may not be unacceptable.

It is almost invariably the case that trees, and especially evergreens, are planted too close together, and too near the house or avenue which they are intended to adorn. This is owing to ignorance or want of consideration of the size the tree will attain at maturity. Evergreens of all kinds should be suffered to grow, as nature intends they should, with branches touching the ground on every side so that the whole tree is a living cone-shaped mass of foliage. The pine or spruce at maturity will cover a circle of fifty feet in diameter, and nothing is more magnificent than a fine specimen of such a tree standing upon a lawn, with sufficient breadth of ground around it to admit a fair display of its majestic beauty.

yet nothing is more common than to see a dozen white or Scotch pines or Norway spruces crowded into a space which a single one would cover at maturity, or planted close beside a path, or so near to the house that in a very few years they will be crowding it so closely that they must either be removed or shortened in so much that their beauty is destroyed. It is safe to say that more places are permanently injured by too thick planting than by any other cause whatever; for one of the worst features of the evil is that by the time it makes itself manifest to the mind of the proprietor, the trees have become so distorted or have grown into such ill proportions, owing to their crowding each other, that it is no longer possible to remedy the evil by thinning out.

The object sought is to get rid of the bare or naked look of a new place or an open lot, by closing it with foliage, and the trees are planted for immediate effect, without a thought of ultimate results. By the exercise of a little forethought, both objects may be secured in a far more satisfactory manner.—Let the trees be planted at such distances from each other and from any objects with which they might interfere, as they will require to be when at maturity, and then plant around them groups of ornamental shrubs, over as large a space of ground as the tree will eventually cover, and keep the ground loose and clean over the whole area thus planted. The result will be that the tree will grow all the more vigorously for the shading of the ground afforded by the shrubs, and they, in turn, will afford an effect of a mass of foliage much sooner than trees would do, and as the trees rise and expand from year to year, the shrubs can be cleared from their vicinity without trouble and without having inflicted any injury on the tree.

There is a very great variety of shrubs which may be used for this purpose, and may be had at almost any nursery, but for ordinary ornamental use where the proprietor has no knowledge which would enable him to find enjoyment in flora peculiarities nothing better can be recommended than the following well-known, perfect-

ly hardy old varieties, viz., lilacs, bush honey-suckles, syringas, snow-balls, weigelas and deutzias.

In multitudes of instances, especially on the limited areas of suburban or village residences, an exceedingly pleasant and attractive effect might be secured by the use of such shrubs alone, or in connection with a single fine tree, all hope of which is destroyed by the crowding together of a number of trees which, before many years will be absurdly out of proportion to the premises they occupy.

Trees of the largest size, such as the elm, maple, ash pine, spruce or fir will cover at maturity a circle of from 50 to 80 feet. Before planting a tree or a group of trees, the question of ultimate effect should be carefully considered, for very few men have moral courage enough to remove the fine tree for a benefit of its neighbors till the injury is past remedy.

A California poet has bought a mule, and a brother poet chronicles it as a remarkable instance of self-possession.

Let us all strive to live so that the local paper may say of us as of Philip Burns, of Delaware: "His hat wasn't always cocked over the left ear, but he didn't owe a butcher in town."

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