WANTED, A TRACT ON FORESTRY.

To the Editor of Garden and Forest:

Sir.—The necessity of forestry reform is admitted by all intelligent people who take time to examine the question, but no reform can make much headway until the people at large become convinced of its necessity. The prime need, then, in every such cause is to instruct them as quickly as possible in that which so greatly concerns their welfare.

The two great avenues to the human mind are through the eye and the ear, and of these the first is, no doubt, the most important. That which we see makes, on the whole, the greatest impression. Such object-lessons, therefore, as that contemplated by the Adirondack League Club, referred to in your issue of February 18th, will, of course, be a vast help in forming a healthy public opinion concerning the management of our national forests. The fine example of the city of Lynn [Massachusetts], which is now engaged in acquiring a vast and varied tract of adjacent woodland, embracing some 1,400 acres, to be held as a public forest and park for the use of the people forever, is another splendid object-lesson; the enterprise of the little village of Freedonia, New York, which has had the wit to seize the park idea by the right handle and forestall the future by boldly laying out two parks in the very heart of the town. These and other similar examples help along the causes with which they may severally be classified far more rapidly than can the very best of preaching. May such tangible teaching increase.

Yet there is a large and important work to be accomplished through the “foolishness of preaching.” The press has done and is doing much. Still it occurs to me that there is need of, or at least room for, special work through such tracts as that one which assisted the great reboisement of certain districts of France. There, the forests having disappeared through heedless cutting, and the turf been gradually destroyed by the sharp hoofs and the hungry gnawing of the flocks, great and increasing damage from floods began to overwhelm the valleys. To reclothe the heights and restore the equilibrium was found to be impossible until the people—the peasantry who had votes—had been won over. A prize was offered for the best short work adapted to teaching them these lessons, the little book “Studies of Master Peter” being the successful competitor. Some similar work, all the better if shorter, which could be widely disseminated among our rural populations would, I am confident, accomplish much toward producing a right popular view of the vast forest-interests of our land. Who will write one?

Dorchester, Mass.

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[Mr. B. E. Fernow, Chief of the Forestry Department at Washington, has already written some leaflets for general distribution, but we cannot have too many of them nor have them prepared from too many points of view.—Ed.]

[Garden and Forest 4 (1891): 106]