

**O LOVE, RETURN.**  
 O Love, return! bring to me  
 The happy dreamy days  
 When thou and I on summer sea  
 Sailed on the morning breeze  
 O Love, draw near! my life is drear,  
 To thee my prayer I raise.  
 O Love, return! and bring again  
 The home so sweet and fair,  
 With one whose eyes were smiling then  
 Beneath her sunlit hair.  
 O come, and bring the olden ring  
 Of laughter in the air!  
 O Love, return! for I am lost  
 In the wilds of alien lands!  
 Tho' pride and fame may be the cost,  
 I yield to thy commands.  
 Return, return! O Love, I yearn  
 For touch of thy two hands!  
 —Richard Lee Denson, in the Current.

**INDUSTRIAL TOPICS.**  
**It is Generally Cheaper to Buy an Improved Farm Than to Make One, Etc.**

**Buying Improved Farms.**  
 Persons who have very small means and who have made up their minds to engage in the occupation of farming are almost certain to commence on a place that is not improved, says *The Chicago Times*. The temptation held out by the homestead, preemption, and timber-claim laws has induced very many poor people to take up land and occupy it for a term of years so that they can secure a title to it without the payment of purchase money. The agents of land-grant railway companies have attempted to show prospective settlers how easy it is to buy a tract of land for a farm and to make the payments for it out of money received for crops. Their showings always "look well on paper." In their calculations no allowances are made for bad seasons, the depredations of insects, the losses by fire and flood, or for sickness. A presentation is made of the average yield of the various field crops raised in the vicinity, which, quite likely, is truthful. The prospective purchaser, however, is not informed that these yields have been obtained only on farms that have been under cultivation for several years, and that they can not be expected on "new breaking."

The enthusiastic young farmer, especially if he has had no experience on a new place, does not take into consideration all the difficulties he will have to contend with. He overestimates his crops and underestimates the money and labor required to produce them. He will not be convinced till he learns by experience that but little food for his family can be produced from land whose soil has not been subdued so that it can be pulverized by the harrow. Neither can he be convinced that the crops that he can raise on such land will bring but a small price in the market, for the reason that they will be small in quantity and poor in quality. With a favorable season, corn can be raised on sod turned the year breaking is done, but the chances are that none of it will be fit to use for human food, and that none of it can be sold in the general market. If cut up and fed with the stalks, cattle will derive benefit from it, but the average new settler has not stock enough to eat the hay he can obtain for the trouble of cutting and curing. The crop of flaxseed raised on "new breaking" will ordinarily pay the cost of plowing, seeding, harvesting and thrashing, but it will rarely ever do more than that even if the season is favorable and prices are good.

Ordinarily five years will be required to make a new farm a paying institution, if the owner or occupier has no outside funds to draw upon. It may support a man and small family, but the support will be very poor. The life led on such a place will necessarily be hard. There can be very few pleasures or conveniences. The pressing want of money to pay taxes, to purchase tools, to buy stock, and to procure fuel and clothing will be constantly felt. The hope of better times in the future may tend to make the occupants contented with their lot, but it will not supply them with present pleasures. As a rule none but persons of fortitude, energy, and a large stock of patience and perseverance can endure the strain—the lack of comfort and the deprivations incident to getting a new place under cultivation. Of those who attempt it the proportion that fail is very large. A protracted sickness of a member of the family, a disastrous drought, a visitation of destructive insects, or a fire is quite certain to result in absolute ruin. With no serious misfortune making money to pay for land or to discharge obligations with farm products at their present prices is ordinarily out of the question.

The chances for success on an improved farm are better than on a place which at the start is nothing but a wild forest or prairie. It is true, that the improved farm costs much more money, but it is in a condition to make immediate returns. There are fences, buildings, and wells, and these constitute the great item of expense in improving a new place. It is also likely that there are some trees for producing fruit, supplying shade and affording protection against the wind and snow. These, by promoting comfort, will enable the occupants of the place to do more work with less fatigue. The soil on a large proportion of the land will be subdued and in a condition to produce large crops of good quality. The family can be supplied with nearly all the food it needs and the store bills can be made very small. Commercial farming can be engaged in at once. All the money realized from the sale of crops and stocks, aside from what is required to support the family, can be devoted to paying for the place. The interest paid on a debt secured by a mortgage on an improved farm is generally much lower than that which one has to pay on money borrowed and secured by a chattel mortgage on stock and tools. The former generally represents the lowest and the latter the highest rate for the most money.

Observation in large towns ordinarily shows that a house or store can be bought for much less than it can be built. Necessity is constantly compelling

people to part with buildings for less than it cost to build them. The like is true in regard to farm property. Many persons fail for want of skill or judgment, become sick or die just as they get farms very well improved and in a good condition to become paying property. These farms can often be bought for what the improvements or them cost, or for a trifle more. This is not the case in wealthy farming districts, in the states that have been settled for some time, as there one is likely to pay for his share in costly public buildings, roads and bridges, as well as for educational, religious and social advantages. In some portions of Illinois, Michigan and other states land is held for more than it is worth for legitimate farming purposes. But this is not the case in most of the states and territories. In many of them farms in a condition to pay handsome returns on the investment can be bought for what the improvements on them cost. The owners obtain the land for nothing and are willing to sell it for the same price, providing they can obtain compensation for the money and labor they have expended on it.

**Thinning Forest Trees.**  
 There is, perhaps, no other branch of more importance in the successful rearing of timber trees for profit, says a writer in *The Garden*, than a thorough knowledge of the art of thinning, and, perhaps, there is no other branch of tree culture so little understood, or, at all events, that practical men are more divided in their opinions as to the proper mode of carrying it out. Some say: "Do not thin at all; leave that to nature, and she will do the work infinitely better than we can do." These advisers generally commence their argument by asking: "Who thinned the natural forests—the source from which we derive the finest and best quality of timber?" Now, at first sight these arguments appear to be conclusive, and there can be no doubt that by studying nature we can learn much; at the same time, when we once become familiar with her ways we can sometimes find a favorable opportunity of assisting her in her operations, and by acquiring a knowledge of her economy, and where and when to apply that assistance, rests the pivot of the whole argument. As, for example, in thinning out a natural plantation of Scotch fir, some years ago, I found a patch of trees in one portion of the plantation about thirty inches high and growing at a distance of some ten or twelve inches apart. These trees were straight and free from branches, with the exception of some small bushy tufts at their summits. Now, had these trees been thinned in early life, there can be no doubt that they would have attained the size of useful timber, whereas by leaving them to nature they were only fit for piling rails or other similar purposes. These trees, being all about one size, grew up like a crop of corn or wheat, but had they been of different sizes the result would have been widely different, as the larger trees would then have killed their weaker ones, which is nature's system of thinning under ordinary circumstances. This may be taken as a fair illustration of the difference between natural forests and such as have been planted. The trees in the latter are generally one size as regards height, except in some isolated patches such as I have referred to. Now, when the larger sizes of the trees in the natural forest kill their weaker ones in their immediate vicinity the latter are never removed, at least as far as nature is concerned, so that they crumble away and fall to the ground by degrees; consequently no sudden climatic change takes place in the forest, as the work of pruning and thinning goes on at such a slow pace that the trees left never feel the want of such as have been killed, and the result is that we never find any bark-bound trees in the natural forest—that is, trees whose bark contracts and prevents the free circulation of sap, such as is caused by sudden exposure.

The foregoing is a brief description of nature's system of thinning. I shall now hastily glance at the system pursued by the forester, and in doing so I think I should not be far wrong in stating that in too many cases plantations suffer considerably before thinning is commenced, the trees become too crowded. Care is necessary at all times, but more especially in cases where thinning has been neglected too long, not to admit to great a current of fresh air at once into the plantation, which would have a very injurious effect upon the health of the trees and lay the foundation for a series of diseases from the commencement. On exposed situations and under such conditions I have found it a good plan to stem-prune such trees as were to be removed by cutting off two or three tiers of the lower branches, by which means the permanent trees are allowed room for development, and the others can then be removed in due course as required. This system is more in accordance with that pursued by nature, as the temperature of the plantation undergoes less change than would be the case were the trees cut and removed at once. I have practiced this system on exposed situations for many years, and cannot recommend it with confidence under such circumstances; nor do I remember seeing any of the permanent trees so dealt with become bark-bound, or fall in a state of premature decline.

Under such conditions it will be seen that thinning should be carried on gradually and conducted on rational principles, special care being taken never to open up the plantations too much at one time to admit the sudden rush of air through the trees, otherwise the latter are sure to suffer damage to a serious extent. Trees growing on different soils and situations show considerable diversity of size and strength in a given period of time, so that it is necessary to take all such circumstances under consideration when commencing to thin. Those, again, on high exposed situations should be treated cautiously as regards thinning, whereas such as are growing in sheltered situations in the interior of the plantation may be allowed more space than the former without risk of injury. Another point of much importance in rearing timber for utility, and one which should never be lost sight of, is

to remove the crooked, weakly, inferior trees, and leave such as are strong and healthy for the permanent crop. Sometimes this system may interfere to a certain extent with the regularity of the trees left upon the ground as regards their distance apart, yet, although it may sometimes happen that the best tree is not in the exact spot where it could be wished, yet for the welfare and prospective value of the plantation the best should be retained. No doubt if the trees in a plantation were all equally robust and healthy, then such should be thinned to a regular distance apart, but it is seldom that such is found to be the case, and although trees may appear to be nearly uniform, yet the practical eye of the forester can often detect a difference, when he will select accordingly.

**How to Begin the Year.**  
 Stop writing it 1886.  
 Stop whistling airs from the *Mikado*, unless by special request.  
 Stop wearing giraffe bonnets in audiences.  
 Stop telling ultra-venerable stories.  
 Stop telling fresh stories whose point can only be apprehended by the aid of a double convex lens.  
 Stop neglecting to return borrowed books.  
 Stop indulging in more than 100 pounds of self-conceit to the square inch.  
 Stop tarrying at the flowing bowl or other flowing receptacle for alcoholic stimulants.  
 Stop supposing that the world could not get along fair to middling without you.  
 Stop fighting the inevitable.  
 Stop looking at the dark side of life.  
 Stop giving away to fault-finding.  
 Stop furnishing your friends with the minute particulars of your bodily ailments.  
 Stop taking pessimistic views of men, things and the theory of the universe.  
 Stop working too hard.  
 Stop working not hard enough.  
 Stop going out between the acts for the aromatic clove.  
 Stop writing to famous people for their autographs.  
 Stop procrastinating.  
 Stop sending to newspapers "something I've just dashed off and haven't stopped to correct."  
 Stop informing your conscience that white lies or any lies that shades off from blonde don't count.  
 Stop using language unfit for publication to your telephone when you are unable to catch the other fellow.  
 Stop telling a busy man "I know you're busy, so I'll only keep you a minute," as a prelude to an hour and a half's attempt to talk his arm off.  
 Stop being so engrossed in moneymaking as to have no time to be public-spirited.  
 Stop investing your hard-earned savings in another man's game.  
 Stop trying to earn your living by the sweat of race horses, lottery tickets or stock gambling.  
 Stop laying the unction to your soul that you can brush your hair so the 'old spot' won't show.  
 Stop discussing Hamlet's madness, the personality of the XVIII Louis, the difference between the old and new school Presbyterian Church, the probable date of the arrival of the millennium, and the best way to dress a lettuce salad.  
 Stop casually reminding your wife of your mother's method of making mince pies.  
 Stop entertaining the impression that apples haven't the flavor they used to have.  
 Stop over-eating and under-exercising.  
 Stop entertaining the impression that any year of the past was a better year than this year.  
 Stop envy, hatred, malice and all uncharitableness.

**Politeness Pays.**  
 In an ancient and very wealthy town near Philadelphia, live two brothers who began life penniless, and are both unbelievably illiterate for their age, their locality and their time. One is a master mason, and one a master carpenter, and they are between 40 and 50 years old. Of the two, the mason has a decided advantage in person and solid sense, and he has had little trade competition to impede him. But poor and struggling he is, and poor and struggling, unless by miracle, he will remain to the end of the chapter, while the carpenter is the owner of several houses that rent for a high price, and might, if he pleased, live henceforth at his ease in his own luxuriously equipped house. The whole secret is in the carpenter's scrupulously polite manner. No patron was too insignificant for him to try to please. When summoned to a consultation his shoes were carefully scrubbed at the door, his hat came off his head the instant he was inside the house, and remained off, and especially if his employer were feminine it was a treat to watch him receive her instructions, listen deferentially to her suggestions, enter into her views with respectful appreciation, follow her about, measuring-rule in hand, and wait upon her indecisive as if time were a valuable detail, then set himself ardently to reduce her somewhat impractical ideal to possibility. When his hieroglyphic bills came in they were guessed at with shrieks of laughter. They proved that if he treated madam like a duchess, and that every moment of his apparently spendthrift time had been counted, but the thriftiest of lady patronesses neither rebelled, nor called in a rival workman. Such a carpenter was luxury worth the price.—*Providence Journal*.

**Was All Right.**  
 Two friends discussing a recent occurrence: "The fellow ought to be sent to the penitentiary for slipping up behind Thompson and knocking him down in that beastly manner. What do you suppose caused him to do it?" "I think he was hired for money." "Oh, well, it's all right if he got pay for it. I didn't know but that he knocked Thompson down because he was mad at him."—*Arkansas Traveler*.

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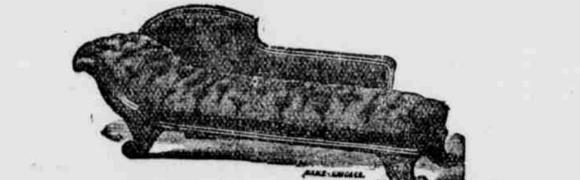
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