it might have realized, from the beginning, to the government, if it had been cared for as it might have been, who can compute? Not that we are to be too severe in charging the blame of this upon any one. Perhaps attention had not been called to the interests involved, and no one was aware of the important consequent responsibility. However we may dispense the blame, the loss has been great.

Waste of the National Forests.

It may be said that a large portion of this great area had to be sacrificed to make way for the homes that now constitute thriving farms, villages and cities. This is certainly true, but only of a comparatively small portion of the pine area. It may be said that something has accrued to the general government from the sales of these lands. Confessedly it is only a small pittance as compared with what might have accrued. But it is still replied, that, if it has failed to render its value into the public treasury, it has gone into the homes, the public edifices, the great transportation structures, the school houses, the sanctuaries, of the nation, and so is accounted for in the whole volume of aggregated national wealth. But if we could say nothing more, the manner in which the disposal of this harvest has been allowed to be made is such as no farmer would allow in husbanding the annual growths of his cornfield. It certainly is not too much to say that from five to ten per cent. of the original growth of pine in Wisconsin has been
destroyed by fires which might, with proper care, have been prevented. Twice as much has been destroyed in the manner of removal, representing all together, a waste of one-seventh—it is no doubt nearer one-fourth—of the invaluable treasure. This would mean to the farmer from one-seventh to one-fourth of his whole annual farm produce, only this is the one only harvest ever to be gathered. Nor has the remainder gone by equitable distribution to relieve the needs of the people and establish a general comfort, for this would mean at least a noble charity, however unwise, but into the hands of a few, to minister more especially to their luxury. And if the loss of this valuable and useful gift of nature means the houses of the people, the public edifices, the railways, the sanctuaries, it means all these plus the inequitable profits and surplus personal wealth of those who have been the favored middle-men in furnishing directly the material of these structures—the injudicious favoring of a few at the expense of the common interest. The substance of the truth is, that, in parting with the splendid inheritance of its pine forests, within the area of Wisconsin, in the various legitimate uses required in the building up of a new country, the administration of the trust of doing this has been allowed to go on with enormous waste and profligacy. The pine forests of the state have been squandered, so as to be immensely less available for real use than they might have been, and have brought besides but a small portion of their real value to the public treasury.