

WONDERFUL WORK OF THE PROFESSIONAL TREE MOVER

Changes Entire Appearance of Country Estates to Suit Ideas of Owners—Particular Trees Carefully Sought in Order to Produce Effects in Detail—Care in Handling.

ON THE Long Island shore of Long Island Sound, a few miles to the west of Theodore Roosevelt's residence and the Scawanhaka-Corinthian Yacht Clubhouse of Oyster Bay, there lay several years ago a rolling strip of country unimproved, just as it had been for generations, with a few old-fashioned homesteads scattered here and there, and a mosquito ridden, pestiferous marsh at one side. A wealthy New Yorker came along, and at small sums per acre picked up these farms, the owners selling gladly and with a slight feeling of contempt for the buyer.

To-day he who drives, rides, or walks over this corner of Long Island finds a tall iron fence, a mile back from the Sound coast line, shutting these acres off. As he looks between its bars the strip of countryside is no longer recognizable. Three short years have changed it beyond all precedent. Where woods and forests stood there are now cleared ground, smooth, beautiful squares, and panels of lawn. More remarkable still, where there was bare hillside and uninteresting level there are landscape pictures and vistas of mighty trees arranged so as to give the most satisfactory effect.

This is the country seat of William D. Guthrie of New York, at Lattingtown, and the transformation in the character of its hills, dales, and woodland has been brought about through the modern, little understood science of tree moving.

Given carte blanche as to expenses, made to feel that their bills will be honored without question, professional tree movers can accomplish wonders. In the "nurseries" of a Long Island gardener, on the great central plain close to the Wheatley Hills, there are, being trained, with their branches in circular iron "cages," (to produce boxlike effects, solid, thick balls of green,) two great bay trees, each twenty-two feet high and of fifteen feet spread.

Some time ago, by special order, these trees were picked up somewhere along the countryside and transplanted with much care and precision, so that not a tendril of the smallest root should be injured, in these "nurseries." Two years or so from now perfect, full grown trees, trained in this effective fashion, they will be dug up again, carted on special trucks "cross country" some twenty miles, and set out on the magnificent terrace of Castlegould, Mr. and Mrs. Howard Gould's place at Port Washington.

This terrace is being built on a narrow bluff, and is almost entirely artificial, on pile construction. The long mansion will cover nearly all of this terrace, and the transplanted bay trees will stand one at either end. The entire pictorial effect has been so marked out by the landscape architect and gardener that these trees, flanking the mansion and raised very high, will be seen from up or down the Sound for miles.

COST OF THE WORK.

Just what sum these two doubly transplanted trees will cost before they finally get into their appointed, designed place cannot be estimated, for it has not yet been figured. But an instance of the scale of some of these feats of tree moving of the present may be found in four great trees that have been selected for Clarence Mackay, and are to be set out on his country seat at Roslyn, Harbor Hill. The acquisition of these four trees will cost Mr. Mackay \$2,000, or \$500 apiece.

But to return to the Guthrie country place at Lattingtown, which is regarded by experts as one of the most notable examples of tree moving in America.

It is no simple thing to move a tree safely, so that it will live and flourish. It takes special tackle, specially trained men, and much time. The actual moving of the trees is but one part of the science and art, in a measure the least part. The main problem is to decide just what trees are needed for a given piece of ground, then to search over the countryside, perhaps many miles, until precisely the trees are found.

In the case of Mr. Guthrie's place the entire face of nature was changed. Actually when these adjoining farms were purchased there was nothing but a view. But in the eye of the landscape architect this bit of rolling country had great possibilities. The swamp at one side could be "subdued"—and this has since been done. It only remained to pay no attention whatever to nature and make a new countryside of it all.

The house, a long mansion, was built over and in a little valley, its ends resting on two small hills. Toward the water all the woodland was cleared in a curving line, and from the mansion's back, overlooking the Sound, the ground, instead of sloping, was terraced in an Italian garden. It was in the front of the house, however, that the great and daring feat of tree moving on a great scale was performed.

A GREAT ACCOMPLISHMENT.

A small forest originally stood here on uneven ground. Getting in their minds to a nicety, making up a definite picture precisely what was wanted, Mr. Guthrie and his landscape architect demolished the little forest with one blow as it were. Not a tree was left upon its acres. Then, tree by tree, choosing each with care, the landscape gardener, leveling, turfing, built up a splendid lawn. Practically he painted a new landscape in front of the house, making use of not a vestige of the old material, only using real trees instead of paint and canvas.

It takes time to build up a fine, velvety turf on bare ground, so that the great Guthrie lawn is not as yet nearing completion, or will it be for several years. But the new landscape picture is there, the trees set in place. By nature it would take a hundred years and generations of gardeners to make such a lawn.

Some of the trees that have been moved here to gain this effect are a Colorado blue spruce, another spruce thirty feet tall, a blue Douglas fir, a Colorado pine, elms, sugar and scarlet maples. None of these have been selected haphazard. Each was chosen to fit into a certain place in the picture. And in addition to the trees boxwood at least a century old was moved.

Thus the tree mover to-day has to be a man of parts, of artistic eye, far sightedness, and expedients. He must be a mechanical expert as well, and a practical architect and gardener. It is simple enough to move trees as trees, but these are special trees that if they do not survive transplanting, or for that matter do not continue at their best, cannot be replaced and in the landscape carefully planned.

These are great trees, too; no small additions, but old timers of enormous, wide-spreading roots. Frequently trees fifty and sixty feet high and of great spread have to be moved. It is no uncommon

thing on a great country place made beautiful and "old" almost in a day by modern science to transplant and move a single tree at a cost to the owner of the estate of as much as \$200. Bought from the farmer or the old country place owner originally this probably did not cost more than \$20, or at the most \$40. The difference occurs in the long process of scientific moving.

WHAT A "MOVER" MUST KNOW.

A landscape architect and gardener who also is entitled to the name of "tree mover"—and these are very few in number—has first of all to know individually every tree not only for miles around, but for a distance. He must carry in his mind's eye all of them, to be able to fit any one, or a half dozen of them, into the landscape picture he is composing. Then he must be able to make the picture which his patron wants out of bare ground, to create it from nothing. Or as in the case of the Guthrie place, he may have to tear away and level before he can commence.

All this is almost a new art and science, and it is commencing to bear fruit. There is a large and increasing demand for country places whose building up shall not be the work of years. The "tree mover" has found he can move any huge old tree in any length of box with absolute precision and surety. He may need fifty men to get down, move across country, and re-raise some old giant that has been standing at a homestead's doors, but no tree is impossible.

On paper or cardboard he sketches out his design, or perhaps he carries it in his mind alone. Then he picks up the trees he wants here and there, fitting his new landscape together as a child does a dissected map. This is interesting, artistic work, the work of the architect and gardener. Not less interesting is that of the scientist, the actual moving of the tree.

THEORY AND PRACTICE.

This is perfection in its simplicity, theoretically. Practically it is a never ending series of problems of mechanics, niceties of handling, and care. The "tree mover" has half a dozen different varieties of trucks and derricks. It is the first and the most important of all questions which of these shall be used for the particular tree to be moved.

The first thing the men do is to get to work laying bare the roots by sloping excavations on either side of the tree. This has to be done with the greatest precision. With big, old trees the roots generally spread out in a huge circle. The shovel must reach under the roots, but not too far under, and must never strike them. As the roots are uncovered the earth is loosened from between them, picked out carefully and tenderly by men with picks, working from both above and below. All this takes many hours, and when the roots are by themselves, the earth all picked away, the work of doing them up in bundles commences.

Then comes the question of judgment as to whether these scores of bundles of roots, laid bare at the tearing up of each big tree, shall be protected, whether they can safely be left as they are in transit, (care being taken, of course, that they are not rubbed against,) or whether they should be covered. This is a question that only the tree moving expert can answer, but it is one of high importance. If it is decided wrongly the tree may die after being transplanted, or at least never thrive properly. The decision depends upon the weather and upon the variety of tree that is being moved. Some trees have far more sensitive roots than others.

While this excavating is going on the cart and tackle are drawn up alongside, and the trunk is firmly fastened to the cart's long pole, then raised upright, but swinging on a screw. When the roots are all laid bare and the dirt packed away, done up in bundles, these bundles covered, if that has seemed advisable, with clay and burlaps, then the tree is loose from the ground, and its only support is the derrick.

CARE IN TRANSPORTATION.

Carefully it is then swung into a horizontal position, the roots at the front of the truck, the length of the tree stretching out behind. The branches are slowly manipulated until they can be tied down and together as much as possible, and these can be safely bent to a greater degree than one would expect. The roots (in front) are tied to a root holder and, wherever possible, bent under the axle and the steering bar. If the journey is long the roots are sprinkled on the way.

When the tree's new site is reached these operations are reversed. It is known just how far the roots will spread, of course. Men are sent ahead to turn up the ground, to cut it away in a huge circle, that the tree may have a new bed. Its old conditions are reproduced as closely as possible.

The precise inches of ground its trunk shall stand on have been plotted out. The truck brings it up to that point, and by means of the screw the tree is raised vertically and set down gently. The pole still holds it and carries its weight, however, and does this until the last inch of root and tendril is unrolled.

Now the workmen commence to unwrap the bundles of roots and to stretch them out. As each is laid down in its place it is covered over with earth lightly. Later on additional coatings of earth are shoveled atop. If there are near by trees guy ropes are run to them from the new tree to insure steadiness. Gradually the grip of the truck's derrick relaxes, and at last it can be dispensed with altogether. Mean-time streams of water have been played on the dirt over the roots, and these begin to take hold. Other men through all these proceedings have been unblinding the branches.

Without disturbing or harming a single twig, branch, or root a huge tree weighing tons, a century old, perhaps, a veritable monarch of the forest, has been transported to a new site. It is being done scores of times every year.

"No New Year's Presents."

IN MANY bakeries and confectionery establishments signs reading "No New Year's Presents" were hung recently. One Broadway proprietor explained that for years it has been a custom with the trade to make New Year's presents to permanent customers, and particularly to small retailers. But because of the great cost of coal and flour and the gradual increase in the price of other manufacturing necessities, while there was no corresponding increase in the selling prices of their goods, it was decided this year to omit the usual New Year's gifts, and it was added that, the custom once abandoned, there was very little likelihood of its ever being renewed.