

This lesson was funded by Minnesota Project Learning Tree and the Sustainable Forestry Initiative State Implementation Committee, and provided by the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources.

The Forest Provides

Overview

Students compare stories about taking care of forests, and how forests take care of us. Students examine the importance of conserving natural resources by hearing or reading an oral Anishinaabe (Ojibwe) story from long ago, and either The Great Kapok Tree (Lynn Cherry), The Lorax (Dr. Theodore Seuss), or The Man Who Planted Trees by French author Jean Giono.

Objectives

Students will discuss and analyze fictional stories related to natural resources.

Students will determine whether the main ideas of the stories build a case for the conservation and wise use of natural resources.

Grades

4-8

Subjects

Language Arts, Social Studies

Objectives

1. Students will discuss and analyze stories related to natural resources, including an oral Anishinaabe story.
2. Students will determine whether the main ideas of the stories build a case for the conservation and wise use of natural resources.

Assessment Opportunities

1. Students' answers to the questions at the end of each story can be used to assess students' understanding of the environmental messages contained in the stories.
2. Ask students to create a graphic organizer showing the main ideas presented in the story.

Background

A quick look around the home or school reveals how many items are made from wood and other forest resources. Trees are important to us whether they are used for products or left in their natural environment where they provide oxygen, soil protection, beauty, and a habitat for plants and animals.

Humans have always depended on trees for firewood, shelters, tools, paper, and many other needs. In many parts of the world, trees are removed from forested areas without being adequately replanted. This process of deforestation can have severe environmental consequences on a regional and global scale.

Doing the Activity (grades 4-8)

Note—this activity may be best taught over the course of a week. You may want to have the students listen to or read the stories twice. This will give them time to compare and contrast the concepts in the stories.

1. For students in grades 4-5, read aloud the story, [How the Anishinaabe Overcame Difficulties Long Ago](#), to your students. You may also want to ask the questions in #4 as you read.
2. For students in grades 6-8, show them the questions in #4 before you start reading so they can follow along. Older students could also read it themselves from the student page.
3. Ask students to list what they think the major ideas of the story are.
4. Have them think about and answer the following questions:
 - a. Why did Amik (the narrator) think he was not poor?
 - b. What patterns of change did the Anishinaabe observe in their environment?
 - c. How did the Anishinaabe depend on the forest?
 - d. What would happen to the Anishinaabe if the forest was gone?
 - e. How can people both use and protect the forest at the same time?
5. Now have students do a close read on their own, while filling out a graphic organizer for and against conserving natural resources.

Example: Conserving Natural Resources Table

Pros	Cons

6. Work toward a group decision based on text evidence, creating a class for/against poster that students could fill with post-it notes on which they've written text evidence.

COMPARE WITH A SECOND STORY

7. For students in grades 4-5, read *The Great Kapok Tree* by Lynn Cherry or *The Lorax* by Dr. Theodore Seuss. As you read, have them answer questions about arguments for and against conserving natural resources such as trees, like in #5. Record responses on the board.

OR

For students in grades 6-8, read the story, [The Man Who Planted Trees](#), aloud to your class. Or let them read it themselves from the student page.

8. Ask students to list what they think the major ideas of the story are.

Have them think about and answer the following questions:

- a. Why do you think the main character (the Lorax or Elzeard) did what he did?
- b. What changes did the narrator notice between his visits?
- c. What were the environmental conditions like before? What were they like after? (*In The Lorax, the "before" conditions were healthy and beautiful, and the "after" conditions*

were desolate. In The Man Who Planted Trees, the “before” conditions were desolate, and the “after” conditions were healthy and beautiful.)

- d. What was the author’s message about the difference one person can make?
9. Divide the class into groups of two to four students. Give each group an index card with one of the following statements on it. Each group should decide if students agree or disagree with the statement.
If they agree, they should give three reasons why and an example from real life of how this statement is true. If they disagree, they should state why and modify it into a statement with which they agree.
 - 1) The balance of nature is important to all life on Earth and can easily be destroyed.
 - 2) Humans cannot place themselves apart from nature in making decisions about natural resources.
 - 3) Actions taken without thought or planning can have disastrous consequences.
 - 4) Natural resources are not limitless and can be used up if they are not managed carefully for the long run.
 - 5) Each person has a responsibility to help conserve resources and protect the environment.
 - 6) Consumers should demand that manufacturers produce products in an environmentally sound manner.
 10. After students have had time for discussion, have each group read its statement and then present the results of its discussion. The group leading the discussion should encourage classmates to say whether they agree, disagree, or have ideas to add.

Variation (grades 4-6)

1. Ask students to name things from nature (natural resources) that they use to live. Examples include trees, water, air, minerals, and so on.
2. Read aloud the story, [How the Anishinaabe Overcame Difficulties Long Ago](#), to your students. Tell students to take notes as you read by writing down all the work that the Anishinaabe did over the course of a year and other parts they find interesting. Pause as you read to give students time to write notes.
11. Divide the class into groups of two to four students. Give each group a card with one of the questions (below) written on it. Each group should discuss the question, write down the answers, and be prepared to read them to the entire group.
 - a. How can the Anishinaabe take care of their natural resources so they don’t run out of them?
 - b. How did the Anishinaabe’s work change in winter, spring, summer, and fall?
 - c. How did the Anishinaabe distribute their products (wild rice, animal pelts, berries, maple sugar, fish, etc.) among their family and community? How did the Anishinaabe make money?
 - d. How do the Anishinaabe show respect to the world around them?
 - e. What was Amik’s (the narrator’s) purpose in telling this story?

Enrichment

After studying Amik's story, students can make a poster showing the four seasons of the year, along with the activities the Anishinaabe do each season. For example, students can write about or draw images of making maple sugar in the spring, collecting berries in the summer, netting in Mille Lacs Lake in the fall, trapping in the winter, and so on.

Assessment Opportunities

Students' answers to the questions and graphic organizers at the end of each story can be used to assess students' understanding of the environmental messages contained in the stories.

Connections to Minnesota Standards (science)

2P.4.2.2.1: Obtain information and communicate how Minnesota American Indian tribes and communities and other cultures apply knowledge of the natural world in determining which materials have the properties that are best suited for an intended purpose.

4E.4.2.2.1: Obtain and combine multiple sources of information about ways individual communities, including Minnesota American Indian tribes and communities and other cultures use evidence and scientific principles to make decisions about the uses of Earth's resources.

7L.4.2.2.1: Gather multiple sources of information and communicate how Minnesota American Indian tribes and communities and other cultures use knowledge to predict or interpret patterns of interactions among organisms across multiple ecosystems.

Connections to Minnesota Standards (Social Studies)

The benchmark Code Number is standard.grade.benchmark. For example 4.1.2 = standard 4, grade 1, benchmark 2.

17.9.1 Examine resources that are indigenous to the land and determine who has control and access to them.

19.7.1 Describe Native American history before and during European colonialism by using oral narratives, written accounts, and other historical sources in order to understand how indigenous people, including the Dakota and Anishinaabe, as well as other tribal nations today understand their history.

20.6.2 Describe Dakota and Anishinaabe interactions with each other and other indigenous peoples; and understand how their people understand their own history today.

Student Page: How the Anishinaabe Overcame Difficulties Long Ago

Shared orally by Amik (Larry Smallwood) and originally published in *Dibaajimowinaa*¹, by the Great Lakes Indian Fish and Wildlife Council

Explain: Anishinaabe means “original people.” It is a collective name for groups of people who live in the U.S. and Canada. The group of Anishinaabe who live in Minnesota are the Ojibwe people. Anishinaabe still live in Minnesota today and carry on both old and new traditions. The Ojibwe told stories in the oral tradition, and did not write them down. Amik, the narrator, tells the story in his own voice.

Long ago there wasn't any work, not like there is today for the Anishinaabe, to make his living. Those ones that raised me were always busing doing something. You see, they say we were poor. But I didn't know that we were poor; we always ate. We were never in need of food to eat or clothes to wear.

Oh, that old man that raised me used to do all kinds of things. I would go with him in the woods; I must of been five years old, maybe four, or six. When fall came around he would be out trapping. He did all sorts of stuff. Also he would find work cutting timber once in a while. That is one thing the Anishinaabe was good at; long ago they always cut timber. They were paid real cheap for cutting timber, .06 cents for each 8-foot log that was given, that were stacked up when they cut timber. Even the women all worked too, going around making money, supporting their children well. That's what they did all winter long, cut timber. They went all over to various places to do it. You see, some of those Anishinaabeg from Lake Lena even went to Montana to go around logging. At that time, indeed it was very far; it is very far to that place called Montana. That is what some of them did that over here, some of them went up north to the place called Ely to cut timber over there. They made their little villages around there like that all winter.

And then again when spring came around, that's the time they started boiling sap. Those

Anishinaabeg also used to trap. I can barely remember that old man that raised me, Biidaanimid. When he was trapping, it was beavers he trapped. All around my house (outside) is where those beaver hides would lay as he dried them there. I don't know how much he was given for each beaver hide. But it was a lot; he was given a lot of money, also mink hides, chipmunk hides, everything. That's how he made money. And also when spring approaches, that is when the people go in the woods making sugar. Some would move into the woods and camp there while they made maple sugar. They always used to have a lot of maple syrup and maple sugar. See, some they gave to some of their relatives, and they saved some for themselves as much as they would use in a year. What was left over, they would sell to the white man who would pay them for it. That is also how they made money. See it was hard long ago when there was no work. That's why those Anishinaabeg sold syrup and what they trapped. That is how they were able to support their children.

Some had a lot of children. Indeed, some had to work a lot to support them. But the Anishinaabe was never in need of something to eat you see; he was always out hunting. The Anishinaabe always had deer meat, partridge, and rice sugar, maple sugar and maple sugar candies. Also, they always had fish. They only had to buy lard and salt, and maybe tea. We didn't know that

¹ [Ojibwe People's Dictionary](https://ojibwe.lib.umn.edu/main-entry/dibaajimowin-ni): Dibaajimowinan (plural of dibaajimowin) <https://ojibwe.lib.umn.edu/main-entry/dibaajimowin-ni>

we were poor. And we were never hungry either.

And then in the summertime, before the summer, when the ice would leave, that's when they would go out spearing again on the lake, and they set nets also. They got a lot of fish from netting. Over in Mille Lacs Lake, over there that is an especially big lake where they set nets. They made their nets carefully. See, the Mille Lacs Anishinaabe always say, "You don't let your net touch the bare ground; treat your net with respect." That's why they always hung up their nets carefully and checked their nets right away, put their nets in a box and also their fish so that they wouldn't drag them on the bare ground. As for today, you see Anishinaabe from different places dragging their nets around on the road and the bare ground, going around disrespecting their nets. It is from there that we get our food from setting nets.

And when summertime came around again, they would again go around logging, and they were given a little more when they peeled it those little poplars when they were gathering poplars. Maybe a dime, no maybe not, twelve cents they were given for eight-footers that they had stacked up. Indeed they worked hard and many of those Anishinaabeg didn't have chain saws, they only had cross-cut saws to use. Indeed they worked hard every day. And they women helped out as well. Even the children around 8 years old so that they were able to drag those logs, that is when they started working, those Anishinaabeg. There were a lot of mosquitoes as well and flies, horseflies, too many of them.

And then when things began to ripen you see, that's when they would help the farmers gather hay. And they would gather beans also. I hardly remember that. When I was 13 years old, I can remember them going around camping, those farmers. When they grew beans, a lot of

Anishinaabeg went there to pick beans. Maybe for one bag only, maybe only 50 cents they were given per bag. I don't remember what they were paid, but I know it was cheap.

And when it was finally ricing time, again they would harvest wild rice and move around again to wherever they wanted to rice; they moved all over to various places camping around there when they riced. After all, at that time the Anishinaabe knew when the lake would be opened for ricing. The Anishinaabe estimated when the rice would be ready. But not these days; it is a warden, a white man, that opens up the lake before the rice is ready. And some go around knocking rice without waiting for it to ripen. I can barely remember those wardens long ago used to ask those old Anishinaabe men, "Is it time to open up the lakes?" the Anishinaabeg were asked long ago. Then when those old men had finished looking at the lakes, "Not yet, maybe three or four more days until the rice will be ripe enough." They used to listen to those Anishinaabeg, but not these days. They riced there and made a little money from it. You see at that time, there was a lot of rice. Many finished enough rice to eat for the whole year, many did. And some saved some to give to their relatives, maybe some went to the cities. They save some for them, to feed them as well. And they would sell what was left over and get paid well then. And this was also when they would buy what they would use again all winter long. Their tools, their clothes, everything they would buy even stuff for their cars to last all through the winter. First of all they would save enough to eat and to give away to their relatives, then from there (what was left after that) is where the money would come from.

In the summer again they would go around picking berries; they made all kinds of things, going around picking all different kinds of berries, which they would use all winter. They would sell what berries that were left over. And

after ricing, when they were done ricing, then again they would go around helping the farmers gathering potatoes and rutabagas; long ago a lot of Anishinaabeg were hired to do those things. That is how he made his living, where the money came from for the Anishinaabe to use. We didn't know we were poor. The elders were always working, always doing something,

having ceremonies, and dances, always using their tobacco. They didn't forget to pray to the spirits properly when they were in certain places, in order to live a good life and to be shown compassion by the spirits. That is how the Anishinaabe overcame the obstacles long ago.



Amik (Larry Smallwood), passed away in 2017

Student Page: The Man Who Planted Trees

About the author: Jean Giono, the only son of a cobbler and a laundress, was one of France's greatest writers. His prodigious literary output included stories, essays, poetry, plays, filmscripts, translations and over thirty novels, many of which have been translated into English. Giono was a pacifist, and was twice imprisoned in France at the outset and conclusion of World War II. He remained tied to Provence and Manosque, the little city where he was born in 1895. Giono died in 1970.

Giono was awarded the Prix Bretano, the Prix de Monaco (for the most outstanding collected work by a French writer), the Légion d'Honneur, and he was a member of the Académie Goncourt.

For a human character to reveal truly exceptional qualities, one must have the good fortune to be able to observe its performance over many years. If this performance is devoid of all egoism, if its guiding motive is unparalleled generosity, if it is absolutely certain that there is no thought of recompense and that, in addition, it has left its visible mark upon the earth, then there can be no mistake.

About forty years ago, I was taking a long trip on foot over mountain heights quite unknown to tourists, in that ancient region where the Alps thrust down into Provence. All this, at the time I embarked upon my long walk through these deserted regions, was barren and colorless land. Nothing grew there but wild lavender.

I was crossing the area at its widest point, and after three days' walking, found myself in the midst of unparalleled desolation. I camped near the vestiges of an abandoned village. I had run out of water the day before, and had to find some. These clustered houses, although in ruins, like an old wasps' nest, suggested that there must once have been a spring or well here. There was indeed a spring, but it was dry. The five or six houses, roofless, gnawed by wind and rain, the tiny chapel with its crumbling steeple, stood about like the houses and chapels in living villages, but all life had vanished.

It was a fine June day, brilliant with sunlight, but over this unsheltered land, high in the sky, the

wind blew with unendurable ferocity. It growled over carcasses of the houses like a lion disturbed at its meal. I had to move my camp.

After five hours' walking I had still not found water and there was nothing to give me any hope of finding any. All about me was the same dryness, the same coarse grasses. I thought I glimpsed in the distance a small black silhouette, upright, and took it for the trunk of a solitary tree. In any case, I started toward it. It was a shepherd. Thirty sheep were lying about him on the baking earth.

He gave me a drink from his water-gourd and, a little later, took me to his cottage in a fold of the plain. He drew his water—excellent water—from a very deep natural well above which he had constructed a primitive winch.

The man spoke little. This is the way of those who live alone, but one felt that he has sure of himself, and confident in his assurance. That was unexpected in this barren country. He lived, not in a cabin, but in a real house built of stone that bore plain evidence of how his own efforts had reclaimed the ruin he had found there on his arrival. His roof was strong and sound. The wind on its tiles made the sound of the sea upon its shore.

The place was in order, the dishes washed, the floor swept, his rifle oiled; his soup boiling over the fire. I noticed then that he was cleanly shaved, that all his buttons were firmly sewed on, that his clothing had been mended with the meticulous care that makes the mending

invisible. He shared his soup with me and afterwards, when I offered my tobacco pouch, he told me that he did not smoke. His dog, as silent as himself, was friendly without being servile.

It was understood from the first that I should spend the night there; the nearest village was still more than a day and a half away. And besides I was perfectly familiar with the nature of the rare villages in that region. There were four or five of them scattered well apart from each other on these mountain slopes, among white oak thickets, at the extreme end of the wagon roads. They were inhabited by charcoal burners, and the living was bad. Families, crowded together in a climate that is excessively harsh both in winter and in summer, found no escape from the unceasing conflict of personalities.

Irrational ambition reached inordinate proportions in the continual desire for escape. The men took their wagonloads of charcoal to the town, then returned. The soundest characters broke under the perpetual grind. The women nursed their grievances. There was rivalry in everything, over the price of charcoal as over a pew in the church, over warring virtues as over warring vices as well as over the ceaseless combat between virtue and vice. And over all there was the wind, also ceaseless, to rasp upon the nerves. There were epidemics of suicide and frequent cases of insanity, usually homicidal.

The shepherd went to fetch a small sack and poured out a heap of acorns on the table. He began to inspect them, one by one, with great concentration, separating the good from the bad. I smoked my pipe. I did offer to help him. He told me that it was his job. And in fact, seeing the care he devoted to the task, I did not insist. That was the whole of our conversation. When he had set aside a large enough pile of

good acorns he counted them out by tens, meanwhile eliminating the small ones or those which were slightly cracked, for now he examined them more closely. When he had thus selected one hundred perfect acorns he stopped and we went to bed.

There was peace in being with this man. The next day I asked if I might rest here for a day. He found it quite natural—or, to be more exact, he gave me the impression that nothing could startle him. The rest was not absolutely necessary, but I was interested and wished to know more about him. He opened the pen and led his flock to pasture. Before leaving, he plunged his sack of carefully selected and counted acorns into a pail of water.

I noticed that he carried for a stick an iron rod as thick as my thumb and about a yard and a half long. Resting myself by walking, I followed a path parallel to his. His pasture was in a valley. He left the dog in charge of the little flock and climbed toward where I stood. I was afraid that he was about to rebuke me for my indiscretion, but it was not that at all: this was the way he was going, and he invited me to go along if I had nothing better to do. He climbed to the top of the ridge, about a hundred yards away.

There he began thrusting his iron rod into the earth, making a hole in which he planted an acorn; then he refilled the hole. He was planting oak trees. I asked him if the land belonged to him. He answered no. Did he know whose it was? He did not. He supposed it was community property, or perhaps belonged to people who cared nothing about it. He was not interested in finding out whose it was. He planted his hundred acorns with the greatest care.

After the midday meal he resumed his planting. I suppose I must have been fairly insistent in my questioning, for he answered me. For three

years he had been planting trees in this wilderness. He had planted one hundred thousand. Of the hundred thousand, twenty thousand had expected to lose half, to rodents or to the unpredictable designs of Providence. There remained ten thousand oak trees to grow where nothing had grown before.

That was when I began to wonder about the age of this man. He was obviously over 50. Fifty-five, he told me. His name was Elezeard Bouffier. He had once had a farm in the lowlands. There he had his life. He had lost his only son, then this wife. He had withdrawn into this solitude where his pleasure was to live leisurely with his lambs and his dog. It was his opinion that this land was dying for want of trees. He added that, having no very pressing business of his own, he had resolved to remedy this state of affairs.

Since I was at that time, in spite of my youth, leading a solitary life, I understood how to deal gently with solitary spirits. But my very youth forced me to consider the future in relation to myself and to a certain quest for happiness. I told him that in 30 years his ten thousand oaks would be magnificent. He answered quite simply that if God granted him life, in 30 years he would have planted so many more that these ten thousand would be like a drop of water in the ocean.

Besides, he was now studying the reproduction of beech trees and had a nursery of seedlings grown from beechnuts near his cottage. The seedlings, which he had protected from his sheep with a wire fence, were very beautiful. He was also considering birches for the valleys where, he told me, there was a certain amount of moisture a few yards below the surface of the soil.

The next day, we parted.

The following year came the War of 1914, in which I was involved for the next five years. An infantryman hardly had time for reflecting upon trees. To tell the truth, the thing itself had made no impression upon me; I had considered as a hobby, a stamp collection, and forgotten it.

The war was over, I found myself possessed of a tiny demobilization bonus and a huge desire to breathe fresh air for a while. It was with no other objective that I again took the road to the barren lands.

The countryside had not changed. However, beyond the deserted village I glimpsed in the distance a sort of grayish mist that covered the mountaintops like a carpet. Since the day before, I had begun to think again of the shepherd tree-planter. "Ten thousand oaks," I reflected, "really take up quite a bit of space."

I had seen too many men die during those five years not to imagine easily that Elzeard Bouffier was dead, especially since, at 20, one regards men of 50 as old men with nothing left to do but die.

He was not dead. As a matter of fact, he was extremely spry. He had changed jobs. Now he had only four sheep but, instead, a 100 beehives. He had got rid of the sheep because they threatened his young trees. For, he told me (and I saw for myself), the war had disturbed him not at all. He had imperturbably continued to plant.

The oaks of 1910 were then ten years old and taller than either of us. It was an impressive spectacle. I was literally speechless and, as he did not talk, we spent, the whole day walking in silence through his forest. In three sections, it measured 11 kilometers in length and three kilometers at its greatest width. When you remembered that all this had sprung from the hands and the soul of this one man, without technical resources, you understand that men

could be as effectual as God in other realms than that of destruction.

He had pursued his plan, and beech trees as high as my shoulder, spreading out as far as the eye could reach, confirmed it. He showed me handsome clumps of birch planted five years before—that is, in 1915, when I had been fighting at Verdun. He had set them out in all the valleys where he had guessed—and rightly—that there was moisture almost at the surface of the ground. They were as delicate as young girls, and very well established.

Creation seemed to come about in a sort of chain reaction. He did not worry about it; he was determinedly pursuing his task in all its simplicity; but as we went back toward the village I saw water flowing in brooks that had been dry since the memory of man.

This was the most impressive result of chain reaction that I had seen. These dry streams had once, long ago, run with water. Some of the dreary villages I mentioned before had been built on the sites of ancient Roman settlements, traces of which still remained; and archaeologists, exploring there, had found fishhooks where, in the twentieth century, cisterns were needed to assure a small supply of water.

The wind, too, scattered seeds. As the water reappeared, so there reappeared willows, rushes meadows, gardens, flowers, and a certain purpose in being alive. But the transformation took place so gradually that it became part of the pattern without causing any astonishment. Hunters, climbing into the wilderness in pursuit of hares or wild boar, had of course noticed the sudden growth of little trees, but had attributed it to some natural caprice of the earth. That is why no one meddled with Elzeard Bouffier's work. If he had been detected he would have had opposition. He was undetectable. Who in the villages or in

the administration could have dreamed of such perseverance in a magnificent generosity?

To have anything like a precise idea of this exceptional character one must not forget that he worked in total solitude: so total that, toward the end of his life, he lost the habit of speech. Or perhaps it was that he saw no need for it.

In 1993 he received a visit from a forest ranger who notified him of an order against lighting fires out of doors for fear of endangering the growth of this natural forest. It was the first time, that man told him naively, that he had ever heard of a forest growing out of its own accord. At that time, Bouffier was about to plant beeches at a spot some twelve kilometers from his cottage. In order to avoid travelling back and forth—for he was then 75—he planned to build a stone cabin right at the plantation. The next year he did so.

In 1935 a whole delegation came from the Government to examine the “natural forest.” There was a high official from the Forest Service, a deputy, technicians. There was a great deal of ineffectual talk. It was decided that something must be done and, fortunately, nothing was done except the only helpful thing: the whole forest was placed under the protection of the State, and charcoal burning prohibited. For it was impossible not to be captivated by the beauty of those young trees in fullness of health, and they cast their spell over the deputy himself.

A friend of mine was among the forestry officers of the delegation. To him I explained the mystery. One day the following week we went together to see Elezeard Bouffier. We found him hard at work, some ten kilometers from the spot where the inspection had taken place.

This forester was not my friend for nothing. He was aware of values. He knew how to keep silent. I delivered the eggs I had brought as a present. We shared our lunch among the three of us and spent several hours in wordless contemplation of the countryside.

In the direction from which we had come the slopes were covered with trees 20 to 25 feet tall. I remembered how the land had looked in 1913: a desert ... Peaceful, regular toil, the vigorous mountain air, frugality and, above all, serenity of spirit had endowed this old man with awe-inspiring health. He was one of God's athletes. I wondered how many more acres he was going to cover with trees.

Before leaving, my friend simply made a brief suggestion about certain species of trees that the soil here seemed particularly suited for. He did not force the point. "For the very good reason," he told me later, "that Bouffier knows more about it than I do." At the end of an hour's walking—having turned it over his mind—he added, "He knows a lot more about it than anybody. He's discovered a wonderful way to be happy!"

It was thanks to this officer that not only the forest but also the happiness of the man was protected. He delegated three rangers to the task, and so terrorized them that they remained proof against all the bottles of wine the charcoal burners could offer.

The only serious danger to the work occurred during the war of 1939. As cars were being run on *gazogenes* (wood-burning generators), there was never enough wood. Cutting was started among the oaks of 1910, but the area was so far from any railroads that the enterprise turned out to be financially unsound. It was abandoned. The shepherd had seen nothing of it. He was 30 kilometers away, peacefully continuing his work, ignoring the war of '39 as he had ignored that of '14.

I saw Elzeard Bouffier for the last time in June of 1945. He was then 87. I had started back along the route through the wastelands; by now, in spite of the disorder in which the war had left the country, there was a bus running between the Durance Valley and the mountain. I attributed the fact that I no longer recognized the scenes of my earlier journeys to this relatively speedy transportation. It seemed to me, too, that the route took me through new territory. It took the name of a village to convince me that I was actually in that region that had been all ruins and desolation.

The bus put me down at Vergons. In 1913 this hamlet of ten or twelve houses had three inhabitants. They had been savage creatures, hating one another, living by trapping game, little removed, both physically and morally, from the conditions of prehistoric man. All about them nettles were feeding upon the remains of abandoned houses. Their condition had been beyond hope. For them, nothing but to await death—a situation which rarely predisposes to virtue.

Everything was changed. Even the air. Instead of the harsh dry winds that used to attack me, a gentle breeze was blowing, laden with scents. A sound like water came from the mountains: it was the wind in the forest. Most amazing of all, I heard the actual sound of water falling into a pool. I saw that a fountain had been built, that it flowed freely and—what touched me most—that someone had planted a linden beside it, a linden that must have been four years old, already in full leaf, the incontestable symbol of resurrection.

Besides, Vergons bore evidence of labor at the sort of undertaking for which hope is required. Hope, then, had returned. Ruins had been cleared away, dilapidated walls torn down and five houses restored. Now there were 28 inhabitants, four of them young married

couples. The new houses, freshly plastered, were surrounded by gardens where vegetables and flowers grew in orderly confusion, cabbages and roses, leeks and snapdragons, celery and anemones. It was now a village where one would like to live.

From that point on I went on foot. The war just finished had not yet allowed the full blooming of life, but Lazarus was out of the tomb. On the lower slopes of the mountain I saw little fields of barely and of rye; deep in the narrow valleys the meadows were turning green.

It has taken only the eight years since then for the whole countryside to glow with health and prosperity. On the site of ruins I had seen in 1913 now stand neat farms, cleanly plastered, testifying to a happy and comfortable life. The old streams, fed by the rains and snows that the forest conserves, are flowing again. Their waters have been channeled. On each farm, in groves of maples, fountain, pools overflow on to carpets of fresh mint. Little by little the villages have been rebuilt. People from the

plains, where land is costly, have settled here, bringing youth, motion, the spirit of adventure. Along the roads you meet hearty men and women, boys and girls who understand laughter and have recovered a taste for picnics. Counting the former population, unrecognizable now that they live in comfort, more than ten thousand people owe their happiness to Elezeard Bouffier.

When I reflect that one man, armed only with his own physical and moral resources, was able to cause this land of Canaan to spring from the wasteland, I am convinced that in spite of everything, humanity is admirable. But when I compute the unfailing greatness of spirit and the tenacity of benevolence that it must have taken to achieve this result, I am taken with an immense respect for that old and unlearned peasant who was able to complete a work worthy of God.

Elezeard Bouffier died peacefully in 1947 at the hospice in Banon, France.

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