

Germany's Black Forests

SEVEN HUNDRED years ago the area of the Black Forest of Germany formed part of the large estates of one of the Counts of Eberstein, concerning which gentleman nothing more descriptive can be said than that he was a typical and inveterate crusader. Time after time, he rallied his retainers about the ancestral banner to set out for Palestine, and as often returned home with only a ragged remnant of his band.

Each expedition left him poorer, and finally, to meet the cost of a last effort, he mortgaged to a group of thrifty woodsmen the best portion of his forest domain. History relates that the poor count was finally killed by the Turks, and as he left no heir his property fell to the state. The ruler of Baden subsequently tried his best to break the mortgage lien title of the woodsmen, but his efforts were of no avail, and the forest remains to this day in their successors' hands.

These men who supplied the money for the count to spend were known as rafters, because they put together great rafts of the largest fir timbers and floated them down the Murg, the Neckar, and the Rhine to sell in Holland, where the requirements of ship-building brought good prices. This was centuries before the first idea of forest conservation had occurred to anybody, but as there was no market for anything but the largest trees, which were also accessible to the streams, the forest was not ruined.

So grew up one of the world's earliest corporations and without doubt the first commercially productive private forest which has had an uninterrupted producing record up to the present day. The ownership has remained in the hands of the descendants of those rafters, most of whom have become wealthy families and now control not only that identical forest, but as individuals and members of other companies own and operate some of the finest saw mills, paper mills, and other wood using concerns of Germany.

The forest comprises about 12,000 acres of land similar to the Adirondack mountain region, said to be worth in the neighborhood of \$300 an acre, and there is probably almost as much timber growing on the land to-day as there was 700 years ago.

An inventory is taken of the forest every two years and the consumption

of timber regulated. The amount of timber in the Black Forest is a fixed quantity and does not increase or diminish. In 50 years there will be no more or less timber in south Germany than today. Quite a lesson for business men over here who are paying thousands of dollars in freight bills on lumber because there are millions of acres of idle land fit for nothing but growing trees.


Manufacturing "Antiques"

The "antique" furniture trade flourishes in the town of Dinan, France. Wonderful "ancient" Jacobean sideboards, chairs and spinning wheels may be purchased in profusion. The dealer makes and carves

his furniture, copying the originals of many periods. Rain and sun impart the necessary semblance of antiquity to the pieces which stand outside the shop in all kinds of weather.

To Aid Posterity

There are few farms that have not some corners, hills or ravines, or other untillable ground, where trees might be the only crop. It is a selfish argument with some, that the planter of a tree does not live long enough to benefit by it. This is not strictly true, but, if it were, every man should be glad to do something for the next generation and perhaps he could not do better than to plant a tree.



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