

CLASS JOURNALISM.

We find the following valuable suggestions in the *Northwestern Lumberman*—

The readers of the *Lumberman* are always demanding facts, and to meet this requirement is often a matter of serious and trying difficulty to the editor of their paper. Few of the uninitiated readers of trade journals can form any idea of the magnitude of the undertaking that requires a given amount of interesting and useful information every week or month, as the case may be, no matter in what condition of dullness the trade may languishing at the time of its issue. Like that celebrated character of Dickens' creation, Gradgrind, the demand is still and always for facts, and they must be supplied whether they apparently exist or not.

Were this better understood and appreciated, by the patrons of trade papers in general, less grumbling and faultfinding among them would be heard—and let us say that the *Lumberman* has no cause to complain on this point. Instead, they would, perhaps, aid their fellow craftsmen, as well as themselves, by sending items of interest, although they might not seem of such to themselves, to their paper, and among its readers many would be found who would appreciate them as news. Such items also often prove food for thoughts that would that would not otherwise have occurred to the mind of the editor, who, crowded, as he necessarily always is, with the worry and taxation of mind incident to newspaper publishing, cannot sit calmly down for an hour or two to cudgel his brain for the new and original ideas that require only the slightest hint from a correspondent to start to his mind of their own accord, and be brought forth in a column or so of thoughts and facts.

These, again, may reproduce themselves in the minds of others, each time receiving new additions and being improved upon, until, finally, some needed improvement or reform is produced that may prove the means of a saving and a benefit to the one who originally started the idea by sending an item that to him was of no import. Enterprising newspapers have many resources and spend large amounts of money annually searching for information, and although this enterprise and expenditure is bountifully rewarded by the gathering from far and near of all sorts of items, new and old, which the editor carefully sorts and prepares, there still remains plenty of room for more. And right here is where its patrons can aid it most, for a great number of exchanges have to be thoroughly gone over before sufficient matter of interest to its readers for a five-line item can be found. If you see anything in your paper that you think not worth reading, remember that you might have been able to supply the facts for something more interesting, thus making the paper much more readable for someone else, too.

A general newspaper and a trade journal are in widely different fields—although many so-called newspapers are padded and stuffed with superfluous words and sentences, breathing tautology on every page, for the sole purpose of being known as the largest paper published in their neighborhood, thus wasting money, paper, and not only their own time, but also that of their readers, in their vanity. But they have a large scope to work in, embracing politics, news, science, theology and a hundred and one topics of general interest to the whole world, while the strictly class journal is confined to the few subjects directly connected with the trade it represents, and is compelled to harp on the same cord week in and week out and year in and out, with no variety and little change further than the advance of improvements furnishes, as it is not expected to be read by anyone not connected, directly or indirectly, with its particular field. This being the case, the *Lumberman* would urge its readers not to be backward with any items, no matter how small they may be, that could possibly be made of interest to any one. They can rest satisfied that they will receive all the attention they merit, and their senders will be kindly remembered by its editor.

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THE TIMBER LINE OF MOUNTAINS.

Some very interesting facts were brought out at a meeting of the Academy of Natural Science of Philadelphia, concerning the timber line of mountains. The highest Alpine vegetation consists for the most part of short stemmed perennials. Lower down are found dwarfed trees of species, which, still further down the mountain sides, form forests of considerable height, and which, as trees suited to merchantable purposes, make what is known to mountain travelers as the timber lines. In the mountains of Colorado the forests commence at about 7,000 feet above sea level, and continue up to about 11,000 feet, when they suddenly cease. At this point the coniferous trees are from thirty to forty feet high, and above the same species exist as stunted shrubs, seldom exceeding three or four feet in height, and often but a foot, though trailing widely over the ground. In this dwarfed condition they are often found some 1,500 feet higher up, or half way from the recognized timber line to the top of the mountain. On Mount Washington, in New Hampshire, which is a little over 6,000 feet high, the timber runs up to about 4,000 feet, while Mount Webster, a mountain forming the southern peak of the same chain, and about 4,000 feet high, has little timber above 3,000 feet. Roan Mountain, in North Carolina, is about 6,300 feet above the level of the sea, and on some parts of it timber extends to its summit. At a height of 6,000 feet a black oak was measured that was five feet in circumference at three feet from the ground, and forty feet high.

The question as to the peculiar course of the timber line is a mooted one. Until recently it has been referred wholly to climatic conditions, of which temperature and moisture have been regarded as the chief elements in producing the result. The objection urged to this theory is that the dwarfed and gnarled cone-bearing species, extending so many hundred feet up the mountain sides, never produce seed, which leads to the alternative of believing that the seeds have been carried up the mountain sides in enormous quantities and to great distances from the fruiting trees below by winds, or else that there were seed-bearing progenitors of these scrubby trees, beneath the tall protecting branches of which they had their earliest stages of growth. The result of an examination of different parts of Mount Washington favors the latter supposition. As is generally known, there is a railway running straight up the mountain side from the base to the summit. Near the timber line a cut about ten feet deep had to be made through an area covered by mature balsam fir. Under the trees moss and dead roots and old fir leaves had made an earthy strata of a foot in depth. The moss was still green from the rains, melting snows, and fogs of this elevated region, and sustaining the various kinds of low vegetation common to such heights. Young firs were springing up in great abundance, but all the larger trees were dead, though here and there might be seen a branch with a few lingering green leaves. This mass of dead, standing timber occupied several acres, and the reason of the death of the trees was evident. The cut showed that the forest stood on a mass of large but loose rock, through which the water from the mountain above rushed, carrying with it all the earthy matter on which the larger trees had subsisted, but leaving the tough, turfy matter at the surface, on which the smaller trees of the same sort may live for many years. With the death of the larger trees there is an increase of light, and then the grasses and sedges speedily take possession, holding together the loose soil and permitting, in many cases, an increase of the earthy layer by holding much of the disintegrated rock which washes down from above.

A careful examination of the patches of scrubby spruces above the timber line not infrequently shows dark patches of vegetable mould, evidently the remains of larger trees that have been growing, where now only the masses of small scrubby plants exist. In some places a sharp stick may be pushed down among the dwarf firs and spruces, and the mass of roots intermixed with earth found to be but a foot or so deep over the loose rock from which the earth has been wholly washed away. Again, there are some places, often nearly an acre in

extent, where the scrubby first are still standing, dead, from the earth having been washed away, not leaving enough for even the moderate do mands of these small bushes.

It is evident that many of the dwarfed specimens are of a great age. Some that were examined were certainly fifty years old, though the stems at the ground were no thicker than a man's wrist, and, trailing on the ground, occupied but sixteen or twenty square feet of space. *Northwestern Lumberman.*

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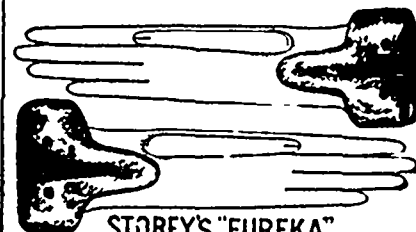
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