

THE ENGLISH TIMBER TRADE.

A fortnight ago we felt almost inclined to congratulate the trade on the dawn of a good time coming. The rate of importation had subsided very perceptibly in the month of August, and the Government being in the market for steam transports to Egypt, and a great bustle going on in loading them at the dockyards, it was expected that some rise of freight would keep speculators, whether here or abroad, from tampering with our markets, while there was no prospect of doing themselves any good by their ventures.

But the tide of importation seems to have flowed again unexpectedly in September, and from all parts we not only get accounts of large arrivals, but also that these are likely to be supplemented by a pretty long list of vessels, known to be chartered which have not yet put in an appearance; and there is, besides the stragglers intermediately, the whole of the regular Transatlantic fall fleet yet to be accounted for. So that we must not depend on any cessation of the rate of supply to the appearance of winter renders the chance of making a paying voyage in the timber trade, whether by steam or sail, very remote. We have been given to understand that both in Europe and America fewer timber ships than usual have accepted charters for autumn employment, and we heard weeks ago that already some of them were going into winter quarters. But have there not been rumours all through the season of deficient supplies to be expected from almost every shipping district? And figures are even now exhibited to us to prove the smallness of the stocks abroad in comparison of former years, and to convince us that the generality of shippers are hardly in a condition to complete their orders, much less to send forward market cargoes, and therefore that prices must rise before the season comes to a close.

On the other side there is an array of facts which will not be reasoned away, and they are totally opposed to the theory of there being any deficiency of timber in any quarter whatever. The list of arrivals in London last week was a curiosity. There were 35 cargoes of what is, by a figure of speech, termed "firewood," and a portion of it is no doubt used for kindling, but not for firing in the sense that firewood is used in France. On the contrary the largest part of these cargoes is good merchandise, that is convertible to a variety of useful purposes, notably for box and casemaking, where short length (1½ to 5½ ft.) come in as usefully as long deals, and at a very much smaller price; and when upwards of 30,000 loads of this sort of odds and ends are seen coming into London in a single week, enough to cover six acres of ground 6 ft. high, some idea may be formed of the stocks on hand abroad, of which these snips and cuttings are only the refuse.

We speak of these cargoes as if they had no influence on the general timber market, but they, no doubt, assist to keep prices down, for of this large quantity not perhaps a third or a quarter of it will be used for its nominal purpose. The rest will be mostly sent to the saw mills for conversion, some of it into matches, but more into boards of various thicknesses, for every variety of box or packing case that commerce can find a use for within the compass of the lengths proscribed. Ends of 6 to 8 ft. long are in Sweden shipped as stowage at two-third price of the longer deals, according to quality, 9 ft. and upwards being considered what is called merchantable sizes, but a limit is assigned to the quantity of short lengths in a cargo by a condition that the shipment must average a certain length, usually 16 to 17 ft. Everything under six feet from Northern Europe is accounted firewood, and all the lengths are cut to a multiple of 6 inches, 18, 24, 30, 36 in., and so on, to justify their title of firewood, as the bundles sold at the grocery stores and oil shops are found to suit the public best in lengths of 6 inches.

It is worthy of remark that from Canada short ends 3 ft. and upwards are not accounted firewood, but are sold as deal ends, and generally fetch fully two-thirds the price of long deals of the same quality. Perhaps because they are wider, and better in quality, being selected for the purpose, as the large freight from that quarter would render inferior stuff of that size

unmarketable. In some of the Russian ports anything below 12 ft. in length is treated as a deal end, and shipped at two-thirds price, but only as required for stowage. Custom has established the same rule in charter-parties as to deal ends. According to the usage at the port of shipment, they are charged two-thirds the freight of longer lengths, though it is usual to allow the abatement only on 6 to 8 ft. lengths.

Among the numerous inventions daily appealing to us for encouragement, is there not an opening here that has been overlooked? For instance, we are not aware that any one has yet applied for a patent to convert short deal and batten ends by a cheap and easy process into joists and rafters, of any length, and warranted stronger than those that are used, without a joint, size for size. With six acres of fathoms at market, the time suits well to try the experiment.

From this and other causes the prospects of the trade can hardly be said to be improving. Last week we suggested apologetically that war might not be altogether an unmitigated evil, though it is the fashion to speak of it as abominable, and to hold as monsters in human form, those who talk indifferently about, or who confess themselves ready to use the sword, politically or patriotically, whenever the occasion seems to require it. It is forgotten that our religion teaches us that in ancient times war to extermination was sometime waged under Divine authority. "Blessed are the peace-makers," is a precept of our creed, it is true; but were there no wars the occupation of the peace-makers like Othello's, would be gone.

A continuous heavy importation, accompanied by a check to the distribution of Government money, and a fading away of the demand for shipping, which was just beginning to brighten up, are not very favorable auspices for the autumn trade. On the other hand, the cheapness of money, a plentiful harvest, and a general belief that we are on the eve of better times, keep trade from languishing, and the timber branch of it maintains its ground wonderfully well through all. — *Timber Trades Journal.*

LIST OF PATENTS.

The following list of patents upon improvements in wood-working machinery, granted by the United States Patent office, Sept. 30, 1884, is specially reported to the CANADA LUMBERMAN by Franklyn H. Hough, solicitor of American and foreign patents, No. 617 Seventh St., Washington, D. C. —

- 305,868.—Hoop pointing and lapping machine—A. F. Ward, Detroit, Mich.
- 305,733.—Machine for making kindling wood—J. Bowman, Princeton, Ill.
- 305,010.—Latho, wood-turning—E. H. Hudson, Potterville, Mich.
- 305,744.—Lubricator—W. H. Craig, Lawrence, Mass.
- 305,883.—Saw lifter, circular—W. G. Baumrille, Fiber City, Mich.
- 306,038.—Saw mill dog—F. M. Underwood, Columbus, Ohio.
- 305,960.—Sawing machine—C. M. Pierce, Brugton, N. J.
- 305,760.—Sawing machine, circular—J. W. Robbins, St. Johnsbury, Vt.
- 305,922.—Shaping machine, adjustable table for—H. J. Hendey, Torrington, Conn.

PATENTS ISSUED OCT. 7.

- 306,173.—Barrel trussing machine—T. Murphy, San Francisco, Cal.
- 306,257.—Latho tools, cutting blade for—M. O. Johnson, Hartford, Conn.
- 306,325.—Planer pressure roll—W. H. Young, Cincinnati, Ohio.
- 306,216.—Saw jointer and set—J. K. Bridge, Woodstock, Ill.
- 306,312.—Saw mill set works—W. H. Appleman, Danville, Pa.
- 306,221.—Sawing machine table, band—H. J. Cordesman, Cincinnati, Ohio.
- 306,186.—Sawing machine, circular—E. O. Smith, Brooklyn, N. Y.
- 306,237.—Screw driver—W. B. Gilmore, Minneapolis, Minn.
- 306,096.—Screw driver—O. H. Olson, Decatur, Ill.
- 306,210.—Willow stripping machine—W. Barry, Syracuse, N. Y.

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I am, your respectfully,

H. J. HILL, Manager and Secretary.