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### IMPROVEMENT ALL ALONG THE LINE.

Three years ago there was an oversupply of white pine lumber. The mill of the Northwest had been run to their greatest capacity, curtailing of the logs or lumber supply had not been seriously considered, and the result was loaded markets, both at primary and distributing points. Such a condition, in any line of trade, has but one result—unremunerative prices. Every dealer and manufacturer was anxious to dispose of his stock. There was competition as to who should get rid of the greatest amount of lumber in the shortest possible time. Drummers were accorded the liberty to sell as their judgment might dictate, and that invariably means a meeting of as low prices as other drummers make, and often cutting a little under them. There was complaint everywhere that the business of manufacturing lumber, on the whole, was not sufficiently profitable, and stock for the yards of the jobbers was sent out at low figures because it could be replaced at lower prices. The situation was one that, while it pleased the jobber and retail dealer, was discouraging to the men who owned stumpage and saw mills.

In the South little mills had gone in, which were operated by men of small means. These men, in many cases, did not regard their business as permanent, that is, they put their mills in for the time being to cut off small tracts of timber that was accessible to a railroad, and when that was accomplished intended to trust to luck and get possession of another small tract if possible. In such a business the incentive was to sell their lumber, about as fast as sawed, for what it would bring. They were unable to hold their lumber until it was fit for shipment. Necessity compelled them to get rid of the product of their mills as fast as possible, and while it is said that a nimble sixpence is better than a slow shilling, the sixpence in this case did not go to profit account. Many of these small mill operators had neither the means nor disposition to visit the leading markets, and consequently knew little of the market requirements. This was another fact that compelled them to sell cheaper than they would have been obliged to had their stock been properly manufactured. Such a state of affairs was a constant menace to manufacturers who understood their business, and who had the means to take advantage of the situation.

Such were the conditions three years ago, but now we find them materially different. The white pine men called a halt and changed their tactics. They rightly concluded that it was foolish, from a business standpoint, to crowd the market; that trade would be much healthier and profitable if lumber buyers were forced to seek the manufacturers instead of the manufacturers the buyers. As it is impossible to turn out a big stock of lumber from a small

stock of logs, and as a large stock of logs had in the history of the lumber business almost invariably meant a large stock of lumber, they concluded that the proper way to begin curtailment was at the stump. It was believed by many that all talk about reduction was so much buncombe. Certain operators, however, meant what they said. There was such a lessening of the log cut in the seasons of 1883-84 and 1884-85, that at the end of the sawing season of 1885 nearly all the logs in some of the streams were made into lumber, with the further favorable exhibit that the output of lumber in 1885 showed a decrease of 11 per cent. as compared with that of the previous sawing season. This has been brought about by the stiffening of the backbone of the manufacturer. He has finally decided that his pine timber is good property; that at the most he has altogether too little, and that it will be better for him, and for his children who will inherit his possessions, if he does not rush business as he has been in the habit of doing for the past ten years.

During these three years a steady change has been going on in the South. The cutting away of the timber immediately on the railroads, or within an ox-haul of them, has inevitably placed the business in stronger hands financially. A man with little money can buy and operate a portable, but when it comes to erecting a first-class mill, securing enough timber to last for years and building a logging road from three to twenty miles long, it takes money, and considerable of it. And when the amount of money necessary to the establishment of a first-class plant is invested, the man who makes the investment is liable to go about his business intelligently in order that the returns may make the right kind of showing. The little mills in the South run by irresponsible wood butchers have been constantly going,—sold by the sheriff to the highest bidder in many cases,—and better mills have been put in. The indications of to-day are that the mill facilities of the South will continue to improve. Many of the choicest tracts of timber lands have passed into the hands of northern capitalists, nearly all of whom are also lumbermen, and if these men, after their white pine timber is exhausted turn their attention to the manufacture of lumber in the South, it will be on the same grand and thorough scale that marks their operations now.

Most of the southern lumbermen have come to realize what they must do to be saved from disappointment. They have learned that the northern and eastern markets want well-manufactured lumber; they know that if yellow pine lumber gains headway outside of the South proper it must take the place of white pine; and they know that it will take business push to give it this headway. Looking to this end the manufacturers have formed organizations, so that the members may be of mutual benefit

to one another. Thus by advising and discussing,—in short, by informing themselves, they will be able to conduct their business in a more satisfactory, and we trust profitable, manner.

We find, also, that there has been an improvement in the redwood business of the Pacific coast. It is not until a recent date that red wood could be laid down in the east at prices which would tempt the buyer. There was but a limited field for its use at home. A market was sought in England, but, we believe, with but little success. Sample cargoes were forwarded, a good price for the lumber was at first obtained, but it was not long before it began to depreciate in value, and we were lately informed by a gentleman who had visited the English markets that now it does not sell at a much higher price than poplar. The cost of manufacture has been considerably reduced of late, owing to improved machinery and facilities for logging, and the redwood lumber manufacturers may feel a hope that borders closely on assurance, that their stock will be wanted in the middle and eastern states if it can be laid down in those states at prices at which it has been sold during the past month, and from this on it probably will be at nearly such prices.—*Northwestern Lumberman.*

### THE MAGNOLIA AS LUMBER TREE.

The magnolia is one of the most universally and deservedly admired trees in all the southern forests. There are seven distinct species of this tree but the name, magnolia, is rarely applied to any of them except the magnolia grandiflora though the other six as justly entitled to it. In some sections of the south it is called big laurel and big bay tree. Its fragrant white flowers, six to eight inches broad, contrasting strongly with the dark green of its thick, leathery evergreen leaves, six to ten inches long, make it a universal favorite as a yard of lawn ornament. In addition to its beauty and grace it possesses other qualities that make it valuable as a lumber tree. It grows to a good size, often attains a height of ninety feet, and exists in sufficient quantities to constitute an important factor in the lumber trade whenever the scarcity of other woods or the evolution in public taste creates a demand for it. The sample of this lumber in this office—a four inch strip dressed on both sides to 7/8 inch in thickness—weighs 31 ounces to the square foot, and appears to be well adapted to almost any purpose for which poplar, basswood or any light, soft wood is used. It is of a light cream color, easily worked and not liable to split, though very straight grained.

Although the tree known as the magnolia proper is confined to a limited area along the southern coasts, the family of which it is the head is quite widely distributed. One of the largest species, the magnolia acuminata, is un-

iversally known throughout the south as the cucumber tree, from the resemblance of the green fruit to that vegetable in its green state, and is found from the northern lakes to central Georgia, but more plentifully in the fertile and moist coves and declivities of the Cumberland and Allegheny mountains. The lumber of this tree is considerably used in some localities and is especially suitable for wooden pump material.

The most widely diffused, and also the smallest of the magnolias in the M. Glanca, Lin., and is, we believe, most generally known as sweet bay tree. It is common along the coast from Louisiana to New Jersey, and is found in at least one locality north of Boston, Mass. It rarely exceeds thirty-five in height and as it blooms at a height of five or six feet, it is a favorite ornament. Its flowers are pure white two inches broad and of a powerful but grateful odor.

The other species of magnolia are variously known as cucumber tree, umbrella tree, and Indian physic. Only one of them, the Magnolia Cordata, of Michaux, called heart leaved cucumber, attains a diameter exceeding fifteen inches, and none of them are found in sufficient quantity to make them of importance to the lumberman, as yet.—*Southern Lumberman.*

### WOOD PRODUCTS OF CHEMISTRY

It appears from the experiment of M. Senff, that the yield of crude pyroligneous acid, tar, charcoal, and gas is almost the same with the most different woods. But the richness of the acid waters in acetic acid, and consequently the yield of dehydrated acid, vary greatly. In this respect the wood of coniferous trees is the least valuable. The wood of the trunk furnishes more acid than that of the branches. The wood yields more acid than the bark, and sound wood more than dead wood. Rapid calcination yields more gas at the expense of the condensed products and of the charcoal; it yields also the weakest acid waters, and the charcoal is more hygroscopic than that furnished by a gradual action.—*Timber.*

MR. JOHN KILBURN, with about 160 men, has been at work since September last cutting logs in the Province of Quebec for Mr. W. H. Murray. The cut this year is about eight million feet. Mr. Kilburn went north last night with about 30 men from Fredericton to commence stream driving, which operations will last until about the first of June. He will have about 100 men at work with him.—*St. John, N. B., Globe.*

THE new Chicago, St. Paul, Minneapolis & Omaha dock, now under contract, with Winston Brothers, at Duluth, will be 1,100 feet long, and will require 1,250,000 feet of lumber and timber and will cost \$100,000.