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NOTES FROM THE WORLD OF WOOD

A process has been discovered by which wood may be compressed into various designs, having all the appearance of carving, and with a finer finish. The process consists in paring hardwood shavings as thin as wafers, which are then placed in a chemical solution. When in a properly pliable condition, the mass is introduced into molds made from steel plates, and pressure is applied, which forces the wood pulp in every line of the mold. When it becomes dry, it is removed from the mold and has exactly the appearance of a wood carving, with the grain of the wood as perfect as though it had never been reduced to a plant condition. The process is a German invention, and large numbers of different designs are now being manufactured in the city of Berlin.

The tradition is, if the oak gets into leaf before the ash, we may expect a fine and productive year. If the reverse is the case, a cold summer and unproductive autumn are anticipated. Statistics have been collected on this point extending over 30 years. The oak displayed its foliage several months before the ash in 1818 to 1820, 1882, 1821 to 1827, 1833 to 1837, 1842, 1846, 1854, 1868 and 1869, all inclusive, and the summers of those years were dry and warm, and the harvest abundant. The ash displayed its foliage full a month before the oak in 1816, 1817, 1821, 1823, 1828 to 1830, 1838, 1840, 1845, 1850 and 1859, and the autumns were unfavorable.

The forest trees east of the Rocky Mountains have been divided into four groups, as regards their geographical distribution within the Dominion. (1.) A northern group, including the white and black spruces, larch, Banksian pine, balsam fir, aspen, balsam, poplar, canoe birch, willows and alder. (2.) A central group of about forty species, occupying the belt of country from the white pine line to that of the buttonwood. (3.) A southern group embracing the buttonwood, black walnut, the hickories, chestnut tulip tree, prickly ash, sour gum, sassafras and flowering dogwood. (4.) A western group, consisting of the ash-leaved maple, burr-oak, cottonwood and green ash.

Of a monster oak felled in England in 1810 the main trunk, 10 feet long, produced 150 cubic feet; one limb 472 cubic feet, and other limbs respectively 335, 233, 156, 113 and 106 cubic feet; six other limbs of inferior size averaged 93 feet each, making a total of 2,415 cubic feet of sound timber. The bark was estimated at six tons. It took five men twenty days to strip and cut down this tree, and two sawyers were five months without losing a day (Sunday excepted) in converting it into timber. The main trunk of this tree was 9 1/2 feet in diameter. The whole produce of the tree in the market brought about \$3,000.

A distillery has lately been put in operation at Chatham, S. C. manufacturing oil from

pine wood. The material is subjected to intense heat in sealed retorts, and one cord of it is said to yield fifteen gallons of turpentine, eighty gallons of pine-wood oil, fifty bushels of charcoal, 150 gallons of wood vinegar, and a quantity of inflammable gas and vegetable asphaltum. The oil alone is worth about 25 cents a gallon and is used by painters and shipbuilders.

There is a small tree growing in a gulch near Tuscarora, Nevada, the foliage of which at certain seasons is said to be so luminous that it can be distinguished a mile away in darkest night. In its immediate region it emits sufficient light to enable a person to read the finest print. Its luminosity is said to be due to parasites.

It is said that one of the properties specially conducive to durability in timber is odoriferousness. It is also said that the increase in strength due to seasoning in different woods is as follows: Elm, 12.3 per cent.; oak, 26.6 per cent.; ash, 11.7 per cent.; beech, 61.9 per cent. The comparative value of different woods in respect to crushing strength and stiffness is thus shown: Oak 40,74, ash 3,571, elm 3,468, beech 3,079. Regarding relative degree of hardness, shell hickory stands the highest, and, calling that 100 white oak is 84, white ash 77.

Lieutenant Zimmer Gossende, of the German navy and Dr. Kummel have explored North-east Guinea. They report that they reached a spot twelve days' march from the coast and discovered that their compass was useless, owing to the presence of a tree which possesses the properties of a highly charged electrical battery. Dr. Kummel was knocked down when he touched it. Analysis showed it to consist of almost pure amorphous carbon. It has been named *Elhasia electrica*.

The *American Architect* says that the Southern pine seems to be the natural habitation in this country of the cinnellectularius, or bed bug, which is found in immense numbers under the bark of old trees of that species. If the wood contains natural clefts, the insects and their eggs remain in these after sawing and are often carried in that way in the seams of large timber into buildings. It is worth noticing that living trees of yellow pine sometimes keep houses near them infested with the vermin, which stray in all directions from their home.

The inventive genius of the Yankee is constantly widening the use for lumber. Last year a concern in Maine cut up, in the aggregate 1,200 cords of white birch logs into shanks and counters for boots and shoes. Special machinery is used for the purpose, and the white birch is displacing leather board to a considerable extent. The more extended use of the hard woods in shoe making is among the possibilities of the near future.

Among the latest inventions is that of a match which may be used over again an indefinite number of times. The wood is soaked with a peculiar chemical solution which renders such reusing practicable.

The following trees were in ancient times dedicated to heathen gods. The cornel, cherry, tree and laurel to Apollo, cypress to Pluto, myrtle to Venus, oak to Jupiter, olive to Minerva and Pallas Athene. It is curious to note that the laurel, cypress, myrtle, oak and olive are all funeral plants. The olive with the Greeks was an emblem of chastity. — *Exchange*.

SAW MILL AT OAMBELLFORD.

On Tuesday last we spent a few minutes looking at the operations of Rathbun & Co.'s saw mills in this village, and while there learned from Mr. Joseph Clairmont, the trustworthy manager, that the average daily product of this manufactory is 800 railway ties and between 10,000 and 11,000 lath, besides a quantity of lumber.

There are 25 men now working steadily every minute of the day, as busy as the machinery beside them, handling the logs which come down the river, and cutting them up into ties, lath and lumber.

Ten saws are in constant motion. Two large saws are rapidly revolving on the first floor, at the north end of the building, butting and edging the logs which come up from the water where they are boomed, on what, in the absence of the proper name we will call a carrier. The large logs are handled with ease by the dexterous workmen, who first saw off the ends and then slide them on a truck which moves backwards and forwards on a track to and from the edger. This large saw does rapid execution, and the railway ties are cut as quick as thought and removed by men at the other end of the track, who slide them through an opening in the building and deposit them on waggons which are drawn to the cars. The slabs from the logs are then put through a planing machine and converted into lumber, while the small pieces are placed on a carrier and deposited on the second floor, where men quickly cut them up into lath. They are as busy as bees, too, turning out 10,000 per day.

In front department of the building is a machine for planing and edging lumber, which is fed by Mr. J. D. Arney. Near it is the invention of one of the Rathbun company, a gum-tan, for sharpening saws, which is worked by Mr. Ducheman. By the aid of this machine which carries an emery wheel making 1,600 revolutions per minute, a large saw is sharpened ready for work in twenty minutes.

The shingle machine is not yet in operation but will be shortly. The engine which drives the machinery, with improvement and the care of a tidy engineer, looks like a new one. Near it is a pump and hose ready for use to quench a fire.

The railway track has been laid along Ranney street to the mill, and will be ballasted and completed in about ten days. A switch is to be laid in front of the mill, and another at the

rear, on which cars will be run and loaded as the ties come from the saws. Fifteen car loads of ties were taken away on Monday. — *Herald*.

THE BUSINESS OUTLOOK

The New York *Star* Mill *Gazette* says. The semi-annual report lately issued by the mercantile agency of R. G. Dun & Co., shows a material improvement in the business outlook throughout the United States. Notwithstanding the strain resulting from labor troubles the record of business failures during the first six months of the present year shows a marked decrease as compared with the failures of the same period in the preceding year. The liabilities of insolvents for the period referred to in 1886 were considerably smaller in amount than they were in the corresponding period of 1885.

The report calls attention to other encouraging features of the times among which are the virtual decision of the conflict of labor against capital, and the fact that values of all kinds have apparently reached their lowest point. The power of the labor organizations to resist the ordinary laws of trade is not so seriously estimated as it was a few months ago. Confidence has been restored and there is a manifest disposition to extend business operations and engage in new enterprise. Good crops are now assured, generally speaking, and the fall season is looked forward to as likely to yield satisfactory returns in trade circles. The abundance of money, the result of the growth of the country in wealth, is one of the characteristics features of the times and is also a most influential factor in the business situation. In confirmation of the views expressed in this report Messrs. Dun & Co. present statements by their agents with reference to the condition of trade at all the leading business points in the country.

As regards the lumber trade, the outlook is in most respects encouraging. The temporary check to building operations caused by the labor troubles, has been succeeded by a marked activity in this trade throughout the east and west. The present consumption of lumber in the building trade is almost equal in amount to that called for at the same period last year, and it is possible that the demand for lumber for railway construction will soon exceed the mills. In hardwoods the transactions are moderate but the market is firm. Walnut is in special demand, and holders of good lots are not inclined to make concessions in price. In ash, doors and blinds the business being done is not large, but much activity is not to be expected at this season, and it is evident that prices are being fairly sustained.

REPORTS from Temiscamingue state the timber drives on the Kippawa and Upper Ottawa are successful this season, notwithstanding that fears were entertained at an earlier date concerning the insufficiency of the spring floods.