

tree growing in Delaware. Doubtless the same thing can be repeated on much of the worn out land of the Atlantic states of the South, and the question arises, would it not be profitable to rehabilitate a portion of the land in Delaware and Virginia, at least, in the way indicated. Certainly there is no need of going without wood and lumber in any of the older states when such timber as that on this Delaware plantation can be raised in ten years.

HOW THE INVENTOR PLAGUES HIS POOR WIFE.

A facetious chap connected with one of our daily newspapers gives the following amusing burlesque on the trials of an inventor's wife:—

"It is all very well to talk about working for the heathen," said one, as the ladies put up their sewing, "but I'd like to have some one tell me what I am to do with my husband." "What is the matter with him?" asked a sympathetic old lady. "William is a good man," continued the first, waving her glasses in an argumentative way, "but William will invent. He goes inventing round from morning till night, and I have no peace or comfort. I didn't object when he invented the fire escape, but I did remonstrate when he wanted me to crawl out of the window one night last winter to see how it worked. Then he originated a lock for the door that wouldn't open from midnight until morning, so as to keep burglars out. The first time he tried it he caught his coat-tail in it, and I had to walk around him with a pan of hot coals all night to keep him from freezing." "Why didn't he take his coat off?" "I wanted him to, but he stood around till the thing opened itself, trying to invent some way of unfasting it. That's William's trouble. He will invent. A little while ago he got up a cabinet bedstead that would shut and open without handling. It went by clockwork. William got into it, and up it went. Bless your heart, he staid in there from Saturday afternoon till Sunday night, when it flew open and displayed William with the plans and specifications of a patent wash-bowl that would tip over just when it got so full. The result was that I lost all my rings and a breastpin down the waste pipe. Then he got up a crutch for a man that could also be used as an opera glass. When ever the man leaned on it, up it went, and when he put it to his eye to find William, it flew out into a crutch and almost broke the top of his head off. Once he invented a rope ladder to be worn as a guard chain and lengthened out with a spring. He put it around his neck, but the spring got loose and turned it into a ladder and almost choked him to death. Then he invented a patent boot heel to crack nuts with, but he mashed his thumb with it and gave it up. Why, he has a washtub full of inventions. One of them is a prayer-book that always opens at the right place. We tried it one morning at church, but the wheels and springs made such a noise that the sexton took William by the collar and told him to leave his fire engines at home when he came to worship. The other day I saw him going up the street with the model of a grain elevator sticking out of his hip pocket, and he is fixing up an improved shot-tower in our bedroom."

RAILROAD TIES IN A HOT CLIMATE.

At a meeting of the Institute of Civil Engineers for Ireland some short time back a paper was read on "Railroad Ties in Mexico," from which we extract the following:—The sleepers used are 9 ft. long, 10 inches wide, and 5 in. thick. The selection of suitable wood for sleepers has occupied much attention. Good, well-crooked Baltic sleepers have been tried on a large scale, and found to become decayed and useless at the end of about four years. Hard, strong oak sleepers, obtained in the country, have also been tried in large quantities, and found not to last more than three or four years. The timber of both the Baltic and oak sleepers seemed to undergo a rapid change and become quickly converted into a dry spongy consistency. There was no appearance of insect ravages, the timber had evidently not been able to withstand the great heat or dryness of the atmosphere. The best wood yet discovered for sleepers is zapote. It is essentially a tropical timber, and is exceedingly durable for outdoor

or indoor work above or below ground. Samples of this wood taken out of buildings said to have been erected more than two centuries ago did not show the slightest signs of decay. The wood was as sound as the day it was put into the building. This wood, however, is very scarce and very expensive. In color it is nearly as dark as logwood. It is very heavy and sinks in water, and is so hard that the boring of the holes for the spikes and forming the grooves for the rails is very laborious work. It appears to be almost impervious to decay, but it has a tendency to split if exposed to the heat of a tropical sun for a few months. For this reason the zapote sleepers must be kept equally covered with ballast. The next best quality of timber yet found in the country, and of which by far the greater number of the sleepers on the line are made, is sabino, a species of cedar. The general colour of the wood is either a light yellowish brown or a light pink, and in appearance is very similar to the cedar used for ordinary lead pencils. It is a resinous wood, with a peculiarly fragrant odour, and its straight-grained, readily-worked, and does not appear to be attacked by any insects. In many of the very old buildings on the upper plains, beams and posts of this timber are still standing, and show very little signs of decay. For sleepers it is very durable, and those that have been down for several years indicate that they are more likely to give way from the actual wearing or cutting in of the rail flange than from natural decay.

The Lost Forests of France.

A writer in *L'Union Medicale* laments the destruction of the French forests, and the lesson for us cannot be learned too soon. The writer says:—

"How many regions formerly prosperous have become sterile deserts by the incense destruction of forests? When the forests disappear the soil dries up, the water is replaced by sand, the water-courses are alternately arid paths and devastating torrents. Our attention is naturally drawn to the great forests of Gaul and of ancient France; we follow with pleasure the description of the first clearings made by the monks, which, kept within certain limits, prepared the fertile France of to-day. But it is with sadness that we observe the increasing impoverishment of our forests and the pernicious effects resulting from it, whether it be in our water courses and our cities or for our bodily health. The author in giving our present status as to woodlands, tells us that in the extent of our forests as compared with our whole territory we rank but eighth among European nations."

The Hudson Bay Route.

There is a difference of opinion as to which side of Lake Winnipeg a Hudson's Bay railway ought to take. Alderman Clement Smith, of Brandon, favors the west side. The east side, where he wandered four years, he describes as a country of innumerable rocks. "In many cases the rocks rose to a height of 20 feet. Muskogs intervened. The timber was stunted and worthless. On the west side of Lake Winnipeg there was considerable improvement, but the country was flat, free from rocks and the land was good, but the best country was west of Lake Manitoba." Mr. Adam Nelson, of Selkirk, from personal knowledge, makes a similar statement.—*Monetary Times*.

A Remarkable Oleander.

The largest oleander tree to be found anywhere, perhaps, is on G. H. Packwood's place, at Spanish Town, Fla. It covers a piece of ground 39 feet in diameter; from the ground to the top of the topmost limb is a distance of 23 feet; at the surface of the ground the trunk is divided into 20 or 25 separate stems, the group being at least five feet through, and one single stem is 14 inches thick. The tree is a very old one.

Rosewood.

There are several specimens of rosewood, and the botanists have not entirely conquered this branch of their study. Not everyone knows why the name "rosewood" was applied to the dark wood so highly prized for various purposes.

When first cut the fresh wood of the tree gives out a fragrance that is strong and agreeable, much resembling the odor of roses.

TORONTO NEWS.

TORONTO, Feb. 23.—A terrific explosion occurred in the Bank of Commerce this morning. Shortly after nine o'clock when the clerks had just commenced work, George Shaw, the messenger, proceeded to open the vault, and struck a match to enable him to see more clearly, when a sheet of flame shot up and there was a loud explosion. Shaw was lifted from his feet and thrown a distance of twenty feet, being severely injured about the head and face. Twelve clerks seated at their desks were knocked down like nine-pins, and Fuller, the paying teller, who was standing looking out of the window on to Yonge street, was blown through the sash into the road and picked up insensible and bleeding. Heavy plaster rained down in showers, the railings and guards were twisted off the counters and flying pieces of glass inflicted innumerable cuts, on the bewildered clerks. Every window in the lower part of the building was blown out. The iron doors of the vault were almost twisted off the hinges. Everything was confusion, and the wildest rumours got afloat of burglary, &c. The bank was soon besieged with customers and others to ascertain the real state of affairs. It appears that plumbers were at work on Saturday, and either through their neglect or that of the clerks a jet in the vault had been left open, and the gas had been escaping since closing work on Saturday. The shock was felt for a considerable distance. The contents of the vault sustained no injury. The damage is variously estimated at from \$1,000 to \$5,000. Those injured are Mr. Bolster, sub-manager; Mr. Fuller, teller (severely); Mr. Beauregard, clerk, and Shaw, the messenger. Several others are slightly cut.

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