

IMPROVEMENTS IN MEN AND MACHINES.

It would be a curious study to ascertain how far the improvement in machines and in tools had kept pace with that in the skilled mechanic. One thing is certain, at the beginning of the inquiry, that a skilled mechanic is of just as much value to-day as ever. How much he has improved is a question for scientific examination rather than one for absolute statement. It would be a queer assertion that the men of fifty years ago were inferior to those of the present. All the facts of the past, as well as those of the present, show that our present mechanics are no more mechanics than those of half a century ago. All the great improvements in hand tools and machine tools for the last fifty years have come from the individual efforts of men who had done their work before the advent of machine and automatic tools. These men—these workmen and inventors—made possibilities out of suggestions, and realities out of imaginings. To them belong the realities of the present machine shop.

It would seem from this that it is not the tools and the appliances that make the workmen, but the workmen who make the tools. There are just as good mechanics to-day, with all our mechanical appliances for good work, as there were when every job required a new arrangement of tools for work. In fact, the improvement in machines presupposes the capacity of the machine makers.

And yet these improvements have their influence on the workman; the better the tool the more active the workman. There are grey headed, almost superannuated, workmen in our shops who have voluntarily discarded all their old time notions to take up with some "new fangled trick" that has been proved to be an advance toward perfection. Every improvement in tools—induced and perfected by mechanics—tends to an advance in the true mechanical improvement of the workman.—*Scientific American.*

Russian Ash.

Amongst the recent arrivals in Hull was a cargo of Russian ash, consisting of 1,311 pieces, shipped from Libau by the Wanderer. This has been imported by an inland firm largely engaged in the bobbin turning business, and is intended to be used in its own trade. It consists of ash butts, very straight, sound, and clean; and if its import grows into a trade, as we anticipate, it will seriously effect the import of Baltic birch. The advantage it possesses over birch is that it will not taint and decay in passage or in stock in this country. Beyond this, the larger logs, if white, have a market amongst cabinet makers and coach-builders. Like the English ash, it is subject to growing brown or black-hearted, but, unlike that of home growth, it is kind, soft, and tender—so much so that it is used for drawer making and other parts of furniture. In Russia itself this ash is used for door-making, office-fitting, etc.—a fact that in itself marks a wide distinction between Russian and English ash.

Demand for Birch.

The birch lumber demand has taken a new start on account of its use in the floors of skating rinks—as every smart town or village now-a-days has to have a skating rink as well as an opera house. The Whitehall, N. Y., lumber company, which deals largely in birch, has lately received orders from every direction for birch plank to be used in rinks. Thus it is that the ever varying wants and freaks of our modern civilized society develop new uses for the woods of the forests. There is no timber so mean despised to-day that may not be in urgent demand to-morrow.

A Rare Event.

It is seldom that the shipment of a cargo of lumber from Bay City to Canada can be chronicled, and it seems strange that such a shipment should be made, notwithstanding that Canada lumber often finds a market over the line. The Canadian schooner Ontonabee cleared on the 3rd inst. for Sarnia with a cargo of lumber to stock a yard at that place.—*Lumberman's Gazette.*

Friends of the Forests.

WASHINGTON, May 7.—The American Forestry Congress met this morning in the Agricultural Building. The Congress passed resolutions to the effect that it had witnessed with great satisfaction the attempt of the State of New York to preserve, protect, and regulate the sale of lumber in forests at the headwaters of the Hudson and Mohawk Rivers, and declaring legislation in this direction should be encouraged in all the States of the Union, and recommending the establishment of experimental stations and forestry commissioners by the States, and the aid of the Federal Government by appropriate legislation for the care and development of forests.

DRILLING square holes, says the *Mechanical Engineer*, used to be considered one of the impossibilities of the workshop, but some one with more ingenuity than sense contrived to do it. Turning square posts, however, is an accomplished fact, and machines for doing such work are in daily use. Square baluster posts, table legs, etc., are now produced moulded or planed in large quantities.

IT IS NATURAL.—It is natural for some people to be bilious, being often a result of peculiar bilious temperament, which with high living, too greasy food, indigestion from inactivity, is the frequent cause. The remedy above all others, is Burdock Blood Purifiers. It is highly curative for all bilious complaints, and far better than physic for inactive conditions of the bowels.

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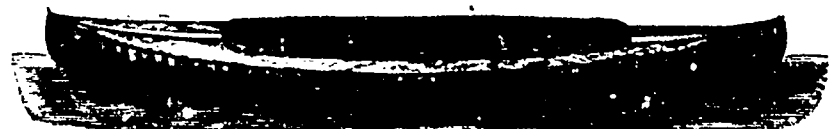
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