

## THE DAWN OF A BETTER DAY.

There are few industries, we might say scarcely any, which in their retail transactions are so steady as the timber trade. A builder's price-book, for instance, of ten years ago will give you a valuation of the timber you have occasion for in the construction of a house which will be pretty nearly as good a guide now as if it were published yesterday; and when we speak of the fluctuation in prices we must be chiefly understood as referring to the import department of the business, and the relative value of the goods at the landing wharves in this country, in comparison of those current at the shipping ports abroad, with the freight and charges added to them; and this is the question with which the magnates of the trade are chiefly concerned at the present time.

Turning to the timber trade, its proceedings are quite assimilated to the tone of business generally—it rather prods than presses forward along the even tenor of its way, but it may be said of it, as our aforesaid contemporary speaks of the iron trade, that "a better feeling is shortly expected." It is not impossible that this may come soon, for it has been "shortly expected" for a long time back, and we must in the natural course be much nearer now to the good time coming than we were then.

In dull times like these, London and Liverpool look at each other across the midland counties for something to indicate a trade revival that may serve to hang new hopes upon, and the better prospect seems at the present to be found here. Liverpool, rejoicing also in fine weather, moderate stocks of most kinds of wood, and a fair amount of building going on in the suburbs, complains that there are no large works in hand "likely to influence the future of the timber trade"; and, therefore, that "business on the spot is not very extensive, and prices do not improve." It seems to have established a small advance on pitch pine, but not sufficient to cover the advance of freight, "so that the shipper is really in a worse position now than before." Neither has the importation of Liverpool yet come up to its last year's figures at a similar date, which remark applies to almost all the ports except those which require large quantities of pitwood, such as Cardiff, Swansea, and Newport, Sunderland, and Shields, all of which have exceeded (some of them considerably so) their import of last year up to date, while on the other hand, Liverpool, Hull, Newcastle, Hartlepool, and Grimsby are much behind, which augurs well for the summer trade. Even London does not come up to its last year's figures yet, though it is but a fraction in arrears. Trade, however, has continued comparatively stagnant here as elsewhere, as we have had painfully to notice, when remarking hitherto on our dock deliveries. But all at once, and commencing a fortnight ago, a larger demand has sprung up, apparently in good earnest, for in two weeks the deliveries have exceeded those at the same time in 1881 by more than 2,600 Petersburg standards, a rather remarkable spring forward after a long period of retrogression; and at this rapid rate room will soon be made at the docks for the new arrivals without any crowding. The total deliveries for the two weeks including square timber amounting to nearly 11,000 standards, a rate of progress which we cannot expect to see maintained for any length of time, but none the less satisfactory as long as it lasts. Nor must it be forgotten that these are only the public deliveries, while those from the many large private timber yards and wharves of the Thames are unchronicled, though they would swell the returns to something considerable; and it must be evident that the quantity of imported wood gone into consumption during the past fortnight from the various depots in London cannot have been less than 60 to 70 cargoes, averaging 200 standards each. We need not expatiate on the immense amount of profitable labour which would be set at work by the distribution of this vast amount of wood in so short a time among consumers, for it will readily be conceived that there can be no want of employment in the building trade in and around the metropolis while so much business is done in delivering timber for use there.

We are quite aware that it may be argued that there is no evidence that the timber sold

and delivered in London, according to the figures produced, is not still lying unused on the premises of the dealer who bought it; but we do not see that the assumption of returning activity in trade is in any manner impaired by that possibility. The timber yards of the dealers have been remarkably well supplied all the winter, and if in a fortnight they have suddenly found room for 12,000 to 15,000 standards more, it shows that they have been doing a trade to that extent with the public as certainly as if the Dock deliveries aforesaid went directly to the consumers instead of to those that are in the habit of supplying them. The gap made among the Surrey Dock piles went to replenish the ground of the private timber yards, but not till the public demand had cleared the needful open spaces to store them. Whichever way we look at it, the fact remains that nothing but an active revival of business can account for the removal of so large a quantity, we may say of so unusual a quantity, of timber from the docks in so short a time, for it is quite apart from the normal condition of things during the foregoing portion of the present year, and we may fairly regard it as the precursor of a good healthy re-animation of the trade throughout the land.

What we have of late been suffering from may be traced to our indefatigable national industry. We appear to have been producing too much from abroad, till at last the supply overtook the demand at both ends. Then came a pause, and a cry of dull trade arose. There was still an immense business doing, but it was not enough for everybody, and productive works gradually reduced their establishments, because at their full strength they ceased to be profitable. So in the timber trade people continued to import freely while they saw a great trade in prospect. But by-and-by the demand fell off; failures among builders and other buyers, and the consequent decay of trade, threw a gloom over the latter part of last year, and almost every timber merchant fancied he had laid in too much stock. The idea grew more confirmed when a sloppy winter supervened, and it is only now, after the spring has returned in all its glory, that the trade is showing symptoms of a decided rally, which is not unlikely before long to pervade every branch of it. London has, at any rate, set the example of shaking off the apathy which has ruled everywhere latterly. Let us hope that the same spirited revival will, in like manner, soon show itself in the provinces. —*London Timber Trades Journal.*

## ARBOR DAY A SUCCESS.

QUEBEC, May 16.—The first celebration of Arbor Day here to-day was a most gratifying success, far surpassing, as admitted by Montreal visitors, the celebration in that city. Everything combined, including the weather, to render it a most enjoyable gathering of the promoters of the movement, their friends, and the citizens generally. The Lieutenant-Governor and his Cabinet, the heads of the public departments, mayor, aldermen, and councillors, the ecclesiastical dignitaries, foreign consuls, the citizens' committee, the convents, seminaries, orphans', and other charitable and educational institutions all joined together to make Arbor Day one to be remembered in local and provincial annals. The day was also pretty much observed as a general holiday, and an immense crowd, including many strangers, assembled to witness the ceremonies, which were duly opened by the Lieutenant Governor planting a tree in the grounds of the new departmental buildings, followed by the Hon. Mr. Joly, the soul and leader of the movement; Crown Lands Commissioner Lynch, who has ably helped it on from the start; Archbishop Taschereau, the Anglican Bishop, the Quebec Premier and his Cabinet; the Rev. Dr. Cook, of St. Andrew's; Rev. Dr. Clark, of Chalmers'; the Speakers of both Houses, the commandant of garrison, the Mayor and a large number of notable personages, ecclesiastical, civil, and military, not omitting the press. In this way some sixty fine oaks were planted when, headed by the band and a detachment of "A" battery, and the fire brigade in uniform, a procession moved off to the esplanade, where a hundred beautiful maples, elms, and silver birches were put in. Three of them were specially named after Lord Dufferin, and the present Ministers of Militia and Public

Works. A double row of trees was next planted on the road leading to the citadel, after which the Corporation plantation took place on Dufferin terrace. The magnificent elms presented by the Hon. Mr. Joly being put down, besides many others in the names of the Queen, the Governor General and Princess Louise, amid enthusiastic cheers of the members and officers of the City Council. A silver pick with ebony handle, was presented to the Mayor, and a silver spade similarly mounted to Madame Langelier, as souvenirs of the occasion. The official ceremony closed with addresses from the Lieutenant Governor, Commissioner Lynch, Mr. Joly, Ald. Rheame and the Mayor, congratulating the citizens upon the enthusiastic manner in which the day was celebrated. A considerable plantation was also made during the day by the different schools, hospitals, and other public institutions, as well as by many private citizens.

## THE ENGLISH WOOD MARKET.

James, Smith & Co.'s Liverpool Wood Circular dated May 2nd says:—The arrivals since our last have been 41 vessels, 20,755 tons, against 50 vessels, 25,197 tons, in the corresponding period last year, and 27 vessels, 14,365 tons, in 1881.

FROM 20TH JANUARY TO 30TH APRIL, 1883.			
Quebec.....	nil vessels.	nil tons.	
St. John, N. B., &c.....	4 "	3,843 "	
United States.....	23 "	16,345 "	
Baltic.....	04 "	20,941 "	
Total .....	31 "	47,129 "	

FROM 20TH JANUARY TO 30TH APRIL, 1882.			
Quebec.....	nil vessels.	nil tons.	
St. John, N. B., &c.....	8 "	0,027 "	
United States.....	33 "	27,714 "	
Baltic.....	65 "	25,610 "	
Total .....	106 "	53,351 "	

FROM 20TH JANUARY TO 30TH APRIL, 1881.			
Quebec.....	1 vessel.	921 tons	
St. John, N. B., &c.....	4 "	3,734 "	
United States.....	39 "	20,445 "	
Baltic.....	22 "	9,371 "	
Total .....	66 "	40,471 "	

Since our last issue there has been no change in our market. The import has been moderate and the consumption unusually dull and languid; fortunately the stocks are not heavy, and there can be little chance of any improvement until the general trade of the country shows more activity. The money market remains quiet. Freight rates are slightly easier, with more tonnage offering, with the exception of pitch pine, rates for which from Pensacola are still high.

COLONIAL WOODS.—Yellow pine timber: The stock is light and sales have been by retail from the yard only. A parcel of fair average square pine is reported sold at from 2s. 1d. to 2s. 2d. per foot. Red pine is without change and the demand is fair. Of ash the sales have been by private only, with the exception of a few logs sold at auction, which realized 2s. 3d. Elm is light in stock, and prices are fully maintained. Birch has been sold by auction at an average of 19d. for 712 logs ex Director, from St. John, N. B., all fresh, new wood. The consumption has been very good, and the stock is small. Oak—The stock is 171,000 against 243,000 feet, and the consumption has fallen off as compared with the same period last year; a parcel of mixed quality is reported at 2s. 7d. per foot. The demand for oak scantling continues good, and two cargoes are reported sold at 2s. 6d. to 2s. 7d. per foot, ex quay, and small parcels of prime quality at about 3s. per foot, also a small lot of ordinary quality at 2s. 5d. per foot, ex quay; the stock is nearly double that of last year. N. B. and N. S. spruce deals: The stock is now reduced to a moderate quantity, although somewhat larger than that of last year; there have been no fresh arrivals, and the consumption has reached 3,076 standards against 3,012 last year. There have been several sales at auction and the cargo ex Minnie Swift, from St. John averaged 27 6s. 6d., but a large proportion of the 11 in. and 7 in. was unsold; the cargo ex John Brice, from St. John, was sold at from 27 to 28 per standard, and ex Victoria, from St. John, at from 27 to 28 15s., but a considerable portion of both cargoes was withdrawn unsold. Several other yarded cargoes were offered for sale and partly sold at

similar prices. By private, a cargo of Miramichi has been sold to arrive at 27 2s. 6d. c. i. f., and a large cargo of St. John, good specification, at about the same figure. Quebec pine deals: The stock is now 5,316 standards against 4,709 standards, and the consumption has been equal to the same period last year, viz., 1,071 against 1,079 standards. There have been no fresh arrivals and sales have been by private. Quebec staves: No sales are reported. Palings and laths are in fair request.

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