

BACKWOODS DEPRAVITY.

While equally beyond reach and control of the influence of civilization, there is a strong contrast between the moral status of the Ottawa lumbering camps and those of Michigan and Northern Wisconsin. In the latter facilities are easy for the exercise of the grossest immorality, and a species of depravity appears to prevail which is wholly foreign to shanty life in the lumbering regions of Ontario. An industrious Detroit, who has spent several winters travelling in the various camps of the Menominee district, in Northern Michigan, gives the *News* of that city a faithful report of the state of affairs in that section. "Last winter," he says, "there was about 6,000 men distributed through this section getting out the logs for the many companies which carry on winter operations there. They are of every nationality and all ages from young fellows of 18 to old men of 50. In the fall they go into the woods with a spree and in the spring they come out with a spree, which they keep up until the winter's earnings are gone.

"I shall never forget a night I spent in camp about 10 miles from Crystal Falls. There were about 300 men quartered there. It was a bitter cold night in January, and after supper some of the boys being off for a dance, they said, and as the shanty promised little except to tumble into a bunk and battle with vermin, I went with the rest. After a run of about twenty minutes we came in sight of a small clearing. In the centre stood a rudely constructed shanty, tightly enclosed by a high board fence. One of the men pulled a string. Soon after the gate was opened by a big, villainous looking fellow, and the men followed each other through the narrow yard and into the shanty. The lower floor was one large room. At one end was a platform raised off, where an old fellow rasped a wheezy fiddle while half a dozen girls danced with their partners. A rough bar was at the other end where the old woman of the house served out whisky and cigars of the vilest kind. This woman looked well worn out for 40, but I afterwards learned she was only 26. The fiddler ceased his scraping and the dancers made a rush for the bar. All drank whisky and afterwards the women drank and smoked with the men as often as the treats went around. I observed soon that the custom was that after each dance the man had to treat his partner. The woodmen from other camps continued to drop in for several hours and the drinking and dancing went on. At one time I counted 35 big, brawny, red-shirted fellows in the room, all taking turns in the dance.

"Of the six girls in the place only one had any marks of youth left in her face. I singled her out and asked her how long she had lived in the woods. In a careless way she related that she had followed her lover from Canada only a few months previous. That is how most of the girls got there, she said. He had brought her out to the place and then had gone away to another camp, and she was left behind because she could not pay her debt to the landlady. She had no hope of getting away before the place broke up in the spring. Even if she could get away she would not know where to go or what to do; besides, the old woman would keep all her clothes. That's what the high fence and the men on watch were for. I soon found that the women were in a living hell, from which their chances of escape were poor indeed. The girl told me that the old woman managed to keep them constantly in debt to her. She charged them for their board, rent for the bawdy short dresses in which they danced, took a percentage of their earnings, and if anything was left over she would charge up fictitious bar bills against them. The victim once caught, away from all civilization and law, is hopelessly in the toils from which she cannot escape until she has laid all her youth and vigor on the altar of sensuality. Many of the girls do not last more than one winter, so hard is their usage. Girls who go there in the fall, fresh and in the bloom of youth, are turned out old hags in the spring. There is nothing left for them but to die. Those who survive are not acceptable anywhere except in a lumbering shanty, and then one year's service has detracted so much from their charms that they are pushed to the wall

by the later and fresher victims. I have been around the woods enough to know that there are fully one thousand of these dance houses in Michigan and Northern Wisconsin in which there are yearly not less than seven thousand women worn out, and most of them start their mad career under protest. The men who supply the girls are the favored ones, and are all free to them.

"The lumber companies are endeavoring to abate the horrible practice by refusing to accept orders from the men for their pay. This cuts off the supply of cash, and in a few seasons the dance house of the lumbering camps will probably become only a tradition."—*Ottawa Free Press*.

CONTINUED INACTIVITY OF TRADE

The *Timber Trades Journal* of January 23rd says:—The dock deliveries, we observe, for 1886, as far as it has gone, compare unfavorably with 1885. Only a short time since we were lamenting 1885 being so short of its predecessor; is this declining tendency still to go on? Let us hear the novelty of the Queen in person opening Parliament will give a spurt to trade in the metropolis that will extend itself as far east as the Surrey Commercial Docks. What is wanted just now is confidence in the uprising of trade, and if those who have money could see a reasonable prospect of things taking a turn for the better, they would launch out, and hasten the very event they are desiring. But in what direction is the improvement to come from if things remain in their present normal state? Are shippers going to curtail their productions to help the timber market, is money to get any cheaper, or is some new gold field to be discovered ore the lagging trade of the country receives the impetus necessary to bring locked up capital into circulation? As far as the timber trade is concerned there can be little question but that we import much more than we actually require. It is no use looking back a dozen years or so, because then there was a good export trade in the way of transshipments; while very little is now done in that way, the shipments being made direct from the producers to our colonial markets. If the imports to London, and to the outports as well, were limited to two-thirds of what they are for a season or two, the market might recover itself, but the chance of such a thing is not within the bounds of possibility. The forest exhaustion, too, which was made such a mountain of ten years ago, we have heard nothing more about. Judging from what happens at our own doors, we take it for granted that instead of exhausting the forests now ones are being cut into, and practically an inexhaustible and ever-increasing supply is to be the prospect of the future. While this surplusage goes on, with business running in a regular groove, the value of the wood cannot increase, and the efforts required to sustain it at its present level are palpable evidence of its artificial character. Till the laws of supply and demand have been left to their own regulation we shall experience the same state of uncertainty hanging over the market. Of course any new channels of distribution that may be developed will bring about a better state of things, and we are anxious that some extended area of consumption may be discovered, to lessen the strain on prices derived from a chronic over supply, but we must not be too sanguine about such a result happening.

Freights seem to be going anyhow, and the decline first noticeable on the other side of the Atlantic appears to have extended itself to the Baltic. Firewood at 32s. 6d. a fathom, sailing ships, is a contrast to the 45s. of two or three seasons ago. In America there may be some revival, but the lumber papers speak of it rather as hoped for than confirmed.

It reported that the Canadian Pacific Railway Company has contracted for 25,000 cords of wood and 500,000 ties to be delivered along its lines

A CEDAR tree, standing in Middle Branch township, Osceola county, Mich., measures 13 feet 10 inches in circumference 3 feet from the root, and is sound as a nut.

A STUMPAGE AGITATION.

The agitation in lumbering circles in New Brunswick against the excessive stumpage imposed by the Government is widening, and will scarcely end until a change for the better has been brought about. The large lumbermen, who are also sawmill owners in many cases have a real grievance, and the Government and Legislature will be obliged to recognize the fact and govern themselves accordingly.

It is clearly proven that the stumpage of \$1.25 per M feet, board measure, on spruce logs, is out of all proportion to the value. These logs are worth at the mill only about \$5 per M feet; they are, of course, worth much less standing in the trees; so that the Government actually exacts more than 25 per cent of the value. Such a tax on an important industry is out of all proportion. Even if the Government were of any assistance to the lumbermen or gave back any portion of this excessive tax in any way, it would still be impossible to continue lumbering at a profit in many parts of that Province, but the Government does nothing of the kind. In fact, its policy is handicapping the lumbermen of the Province in competition with those of other Provinces and countries. The competition with Norway is never ending and the odds are against New Brunswick, but against such competitors as Quebec with its 40 cents stumpage on spruce and Nova Scotia where the Government exacts only 60 cents, how is the New Brunswick lumberman to bear up with his \$1.25 per M feet imposition? Moreover, in recent years, when the English timber and deal markets have been growing more and more uncertain, and the legitimate expenses of lumbering have been steadily augmenting, the New Brunswick Government have gone on increasing stumpage from 60 cents per M feet in 1875 to \$1.25 in 1885. The business will only stand so much squeezing; beyond that the power of taxation avails nothing. It is easy to say that the lumbermen and the lumber manufacturers must go on, but they can't go on; their resources are not equal to the steady losses which in many cases must be sustained. At the very best their operations must be curtailed, only the choicest territory will be operated upon, and a serious reduction of lumber exports must result. This has been the case in New Brunswick for several years past, and it now remains with the Provincial Government to say how long this drying up process is to last, for the end must come before many years unless the Government and Legislature change their tactics.

We notice that in a recent address in the Northumberland County Council a councillor from Chatham, Mr. D. G. Smith, took occasion to deal with this subject at length and satisfactorily. The circumstances show that the subject comes home to the people, and we should not be surprised to find it becoming a topic of discussion at most of the municipal gatherings in that Province, where the lumbering business is so universally connected and interwoven with all other industries and business operations. In fact, there more than in most parts of the world the lumberman's industry is the real basis of the country's prosperity or want of prosperity. It sets all other wheels in motion; and now that the shipbuilding business is under a cloud it has become a more important factor in the industrial situation than ever. Hence the interest that is taken in the stumpage question and the importance it is likely to assume at the next sitting of the New Brunswick Legislature. It is one of those questions around which all commercial interests and all local industrial interests will rally.—*Montreal Herald*.

WORK IN THE WOODS.

Mr. Thomas Hale, a well-known Upper Ottawa lumberman, was in the city yesterday, and in answer to a query by a *Press* reporter said:—"The prospects for the coming season in the lumber business are good, in fact I may say bright. In the woods everything is going on as well as any reasonable person could expect. On the north side of Lake Nipissing, where I am working, things are quite brisk. I intend to get out about 70,000 logs which will be drawn to the lake, then towed to Mr. J. R. Booth's railway and by that trans-

ported to Noabonsing lake, and then by the Mattawa to the Ottawa river. With regard to square timber, Messrs. Barnett & Mackay are getting out some fine timber on Sturgeon river, as is also Mr. Hugh Coburn. Barnett & Mackay's timber will be brought to the Quebec market by the C. P. R. Further up the railroad line Messrs. Timmins & Gorman are getting out two rafts of square timber which will also be shipped by the C. P. R. Shipping by rail has this advantage over the water route, that it is got very early into the market, and another thing it is not subject to the drawbacks which often follow from a lack of water in driving.

"Is that portion of Nipissing well wooded?" questioned the reporter.

"About the Whanapitae country the pine is of a very good quality, and I may say of almost unlimited extent. In fact, the country may be said to be as yet unexplored, but what has been travelled over is very rich in timber resources."

"You think a large timber trade will be developed up there?"

"It must. The timber is there and the facilities for getting it out are very good, and you may be sure that the country will not be long left unoccupied. Many American lumber companies are casting greedy eyes on the territory, and it would not be surprising if some of these companies would be found operating them next winter. The pine is of good quality and abundant."

"Have you much snow up north?" asked the reporter.

"About two feet, I should judge, and the roads could not be better."—*Ottawa Free Press*.

THE LONGFORD LUMBER COMPANY.

To the Editor of the Canada Lumberman.

Sir, Having received an invitation from the secretary of the Longford Lumber Company to visit the operations of that company I availed myself of the opportunity. Accordingly I took the Midland railway on Monday morning and arrived at the Longford mills and partook of dinner, and in about half an hour set off with the company's splendid span of brown horses in company with the secretary—who, by the way, is one of our own town boys—who did everything to make my trip comfortable and pleasant. After we set out from the mills we crossed a beautiful little lake called St. John, and then proceeded on our way up the Muck road, to what is known as the company's

"DIGBY FARM,"

24 miles distant. Arriving before dark I proceeded to make an inspection of that fine property. The farm is situated in the township of Digby, county of Victoria: it is composed of some 360 acres, beautifully situated, cornering on the two townships. The buildings on it are a commodious farm house, a fine store and storehouse, capable of storing sufficient grain, meat and other supplies to supply their eight camps; large barns, and immense cattle byres, where they have 90 head of cattle, all good grades, and stables for eight span of horses, an immense piggery large enough to hold 25 to 30 hogs, and also a large henry filled with fowl. The woods manager, Mr. Jas. Porter, lives here and John McRae is in charge of the store and is paymaster for the camps.

AN IMMENSE VOLUME

of business is done, upwards of 14,000 bushels of oats, 250 ton of hay and 35 to 40 ton of pork and beef are annually purchased and paid for in cash, and all kinds of farm produce is readily disposed off by the farmers of the surrounding country, who seem to be exceedingly well satisfied with all their dealing with the company. In addition to the above supplies about 15 car loads of other supplies are brought over the G. T. R. to Victoria Road and thence teamed in to this point some 11 miles.

On Tuesday morning we started north for the TOWNSHIP OF LONGFORD.

At 10 o'clock we arrived at the first camp and a right royal welcome we received. Mr. N. Whalen has charge here, and after many years of practical experience he seems to have his part in first-class shape, and his drawing well in hand, expecting to be through about the middle of February. The next camp was then visited, Mr. P. Dwyer is foreman, he is well along