

USE OF NATURAL WOOD v. PAINTING.

As Sir Roger de Coverley would say when he wished to dodge a question, "much might be said on both sides," but Mr. Gardener states the whole subject so felicitously, says the American Furniture Gazette, that we will let him present his views somewhat at length:—

To answer according to the spirit of your inquiry, I should say by all means (if you do not mind the cost) use wood instead of putty. With all respect for white paint and striped paint and all other kinds of paint, there is nothing more enduringly satisfying than the natural tint and grain of the different kinds of wood suitable for building, of which we have such great variety in style and color, from the over-estimated black walnut to the rarely-used white pine, rarely used without having its natural beauty extinguished by three coats of paint. What I wish to say is, that finishing your woodwork without paint does not necessarily require the said wood to be of the kinds commonly called hard. Any wood that is not specially disposed to warp, and that can be smoothly wrought, may be used. There are several important points to be religiously observed if you leave the wood, whatever the variety, in its unadorned beauty. It must be the best of its kind; it must be seasoned to its inmost fibre; it must be wrought skillfully, tenderly cared for, and, finally, filled and rubbed till it wears a surface that is not liable to soil, is easily cleaned, resists the action of moisture, and will grow richer with age.

Hence, I say, by all means finish with unpainted wood, if you are not afraid of the expense; and yet paint and varnish are good, and putty, like charity, covereth a multitude of sins. Nothing protects wood better than oil and lead, and by means of them you have unlimited choice of colors, in the selection and arrangement of which there is room and need for genuine artistic taste. Yes, good honest paint is worthy the utmost respect. When it tries to improve upon Nature's divine methods and calls itself "graining," it becomes unmitigated nonsense,—yes, and worse. It is one of the sure evidences of man's innate perversity that he persists in trying to copy certain beautiful lines and shading in wood, not as an art study, but for actual use, when he may just as well have the perfect original as his own faulty imitation. What conceit, what blindness, what impudence this reveals! What downright falsehood! Not in the painter—oh no! skill is commendable even when unworthily employed,—but in him who orders it. You may buy a pine door, which is very well; pine doors are good; you tell every man that comes into your house it's black walnut, or oak, or mahogany. If this is not greeting him with lying lips and a deceitful heart, the moral law is not as clear as it ought to be. You may think it is of no consequence—certainly not worth making a fuss about—but I tell you this spirit of sham that pervades our whole social structure, that more and more obtrudes itself in every department of life, comes from the bottomless pit, and will carry us all thither, unless we resist it, even in these milder manifestations, as we would resist the Father of Lies himself. Truth and falsehood are getting so hopelessly confused that we can scarcely distinguish one from the other.

One other suggestion in this connection. Without either painting or graining you may get a most satisfactory effect, both in looks and utility, by staining the less costly kinds of woods, using a transparent stain that will not conceal, but strengthen the natural shading, and at the same time change its tint according to your fancy. This is an honest and economical expedient. It only requires that your lumber shall be sound, tolerably clear—a good hard knot isn't alarming—seasoned, and put up with care. The coat is less than common painting, and the effect as much better than graining as nature's work is more perfect than ours.

From the consideration of painting, per se, we naturally glide to the question of graining or deceptive painting, which Ruskin has just declared inadmissible. And here we may say that however much they may be at variance on other points, there is substantial accord among art writers in condemning graining. Mr. Gardener has had his tilt at it in the extract already given, and Ruskin pounces upon it with all his pugna- cious virulence:

"There is no meaner occupation for the human mind than the imitation of the stains and stripes of wood and marble. The grainer must think of what he is doing, and veritable attention and care, and occasionally considerable skill, are consumed in the doing of a mere absolute nothing than I can name in any other department of painful idleness. I know not anything so humiliating as to see a human being with arms and limbs complete, and apparently a head, and assuredly a soul, yet into the hands of which when you have put a brush and a palette, it cannot do anything with them but imitate a piece of wood. It cannot color; it has no idea of color. It cannot draw; it has no idea of form. It cannot caricature; it has no idea of humor."

Eastlake says his say about it as follows:—"It is an objectionable and pretentious 'deceit,' which cannot be excused even on the grounds of economy. In the last century, an English oak and Spanish mahogany could be procured at a reasonable price, the grainer's work was, of course, unneeded. In modern days the usual substitute for those now expensive woods is deal; but deal is so soft and absorbent in its fibre that it quickly becomes soiled, and in most situations, especially when exposed to the air, it soon requires painting. But why should we paint it in imitation of oak? Everybody can see at a glance that it is not oak, and, as far as appearance is concerned, there are many modes of treatment which would be far more effective."

The White Water of the Arabian Sea.

With reference to the phenomenon of what is known as the "white water" of the Arabian Sea, a correspondent writes as follows:—"If the call of duty or pleasure should at any time induce any of your readers to undertake the overland journey to India, they must not fail to give instructions to be called from bed should the nocturnal phenomenon of the 'white water' occur. It is more frequently seen in the months of July and August, and is principally confined to a narrow belt to the eastward of the Island of Socotra, known in the charts of that sea as the Line of the Strongest Monsoon, and wherein the rain clouds on quitting Central Africa on their passage eastward are apparently confined. Should the moon be above the horizon, an uneasy night's rest may be anticipated, as the writer has never known the phenomenon to occur in the presence of that orb.

"To give the reader some idea of this remarkable and striking appearance, we will suppose ourselves in a steamer, about two hundred and fifty miles to the eastward of Socotra, in the position named, and in the latter end of July; time, 1 a.m. The monsoon is blowing strongly and steadily—the night, starlight and clear—a light fleecy scud occasionally passing rapidly to the eastward, and the good vessel bowing along at the rate of fourteen or fifteen knots an hour. Suddenly we discover a light hue in the water, which in a short while assumes a snow white aspect, and in the course of a quarter of an hour extends to the horizon in all directions. The transformation of the water is perfect, the usually green color of the sea having been replaced by an appearance of whiteness like that of milk. And yet if you draw a bucket of water for inspection or analysis, you will find that it is beautifully clear, and not a vestige of anything white being visible; nor can the microscope discover anything over and above the ordinary quantity of minute life always present in sea water within the tropics.

"The deception seems to me to admit of easy explanation, it being the result simply of reflection of color. The vessel in passing through a light, misty atmosphere, inappreciable to the eye while within its influence; and the white watery vesicles held in suspension are in some favorable condition of air and water, reflected on the surface of the latter."—Chambers' Journal.

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KEEWATIN MILLS.

These mills are situated on the line of the Canadian Pacific Railway, at the outlet of the Lake of the Woods into the Winnipeg river. Their water power is equal to anything on this continent. There is always a fall of eighteen feet, and sometimes more, if the water is high. A channel was formed for the passage of the water from the main lake into a depression which forms a small lake, at the outlet of which the mills were erected, and after driving the turbines the water falls into Darlington Bay of the Winnipeg river. A gate at the outlet into the small lake or reservoir keeps the amount of water perfectly under control, and may be closed entirely if necessary for repairs, leaving the mill quite dry, and keeping them in the winter free from ice.

The buildings were erected in the fall of 1879, and everything completed for the season's cutting at 1880. The main building is 120 feet long by 36 in width, and is three stories high. The lower storey contains five turbine water wheels and shafting required to drive the machinery above. The second storey contains three shingle machines, a bolter and lath machine, slab cutter and planing machine. The upper storey or saw floor contains one large circular for dimension stuff, two slash saws, one double stock gang, one double edger, one trimmer and two log ways, all fitted with the latest improvements and conveniences. There is also within the walls an iron lathe and other machinery and tools required for making repairs, so that when breakdowns occur no time will be lost in waiting for the necessary repairs. On a level with the upper floor is a very large platform for temporary storing, hauling away, etc. The other buildings are an office, two storehouses, blacksmith shop, boarding house, to hold fifty, residence, five tenement houses, stables, etc.

The present capacity of the mills is 800,000 feet of lumber, 90,000 shingles, and 35,000 lath per day, which will be increased as required. The piling ground is situated between the mills and the track of the Canadian Pacific Railway, and is very convenient, there being room for about 6,000,000 feet of lumber with railway switch running through it. The platform of the mill extends out to the switch connection with the main track of the railway, placing them in excellent position for shipping. From 8 to 10 carloads of lumber per week have been sent to Winnipeg since the commencement of this season's cut. About 6,000,000 feet of lumber will be manufactured this season, for which there is a ready market at good prices. About seventy-five to one hundred men are steadily employed in the mills during the summer and getting out logs during the winter. Wages range from \$40 to \$60 per month, without board. These mills are owned by the Keewatin Lumber Company, and are conducted under the efficient management of Mr. John Mather, the largest stockholder. The timber limits of the company are all the islands of the Lake of the Woods, as well as a number on the shores of the lake, and are easily accessible by their powerful tug, which is used for towing the logs to the mills. This is one of the many institutions which will eventually occupy the narrow neck of land which

forms at this point one of the finest water power on the continent, and which will build up a large manufacturing centre, supplying the provinces of the west with various kinds of manufactured articles.—The Progress, Rat Portage, Keewatin.

Monster Locomotives.

The Rhode Island locomotive works are now at work on ten monster freight locomotives for the Atlantic and Pacific Railroad Company, and have furnished two which will be shipped to Albuquerque, New Mexico. The locomotives, when in running order, will weigh sixty tons each, and the tanks have a capacity of 3,500 gallons of water. The tenders weigh 8 tons each. The length of the locomotive engine all is 60 feet. The cylinders are 20 inches in diameter, with 26 inch stroke. There are two pairs of couple drivers 50 inches in diameter, and one four wheel truck. The fire box is 16 feet long and 43½ inches wide. The boiler is 58 inches in diameter, wagon top, and contains 200 2½-inch tubes. There are a set of steam gauges for the fireman located at the back head of the boiler, and another set for the engineer, inside the cab. The tops of the cabs of these locomotives are higher than the smokestacks of the engines used on the railroads hereabouts. The height of the smokestacks from the top railing is sixteen feet six inches. Either hard or soft coal can be burned. These locomotives, compared with the largest eight-wheeled engines built at the Locomotive Works, look like giants. The smokestacks and wheels had to be removed, in order to allow the engine to pass under the bridges, and there is some doubt as to whether they will pass under all the bridges with the cabs in position. The company are also building fifty of their largest eight-wheeled engines for the Milwaukee and St. Paul Railroad.

Fire in a Saw-Mill.

MOUNT FOREST, July 30.—Between four and five o'clock this morning a fire broke out in the large saw-mill owned by Messrs. Martin & Sons, of this town, and in a few minutes the entire building, including the stove, heading and kiln mills, were in flames. The mill was situated about a mile from the town, rendering assistance impossible until the building, with all the machinery, was entirely consumed. Efforts were directed to saving the large quantity of lumber and shingles in the yard, but the flames spread with such rapidity that this was difficult. Quite a lot of lumber was burned, with five hundred bundles of shingles. The building and machinery was insured for about \$4,500 in the Waterloo Mutual, Saugeen Mutual, and Union Insurance Companies. Estimated loss, \$12,000.

SOME four or five millions of logs taken out of the Red Lake county in the United States tributary to the Red River, are being floated down the latter stream to Winnipeg, where they have been sold to Canadian manufacturers of lumber.

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COMPARATIVE TABLE

SHOWING STOCK OF TIMBER AND DEALS IN LIVERPOOL ON JUNE 30TH, 1880 AND 1881, AND ALSO THE CONSUMPTION FOR THE MONTH OF JUNE, 1880 AND 1881.

Table with 5 columns: Item, Stock, June 30th, 1880, Stock, June 30th, 1881, Consumption for the month of June, 1880, Consumption for the month of June, 1881. Rows include various timber types like Quebec Square Pine, Waney Board, St. John Pine, etc.