

CHARCOAL AND BY-PRODUCTS.

Readers of the *Lumberman* will remember that several times mention has been made in its columns of the Mathieu retort for making charcoal. Mr. J. A. Mathieu called at this office recently on his way to Detroit from the South. He has been putting in four retorts for the Shelby Iron Company, at Shelby, Ala., and will put in 76 more for the same concern. The 80 retorts will turn out 10,000 bushels of charcoal per day. The gentleman has now 56 retorts in Michigan, 24 in New York, and 82 elsewhere. As everybody knows, wood in the South is very cheap, and there are many who may be interested in knowing the financial result of making it into charcoal. Mr. Mathieu gives it as follows, per cord of yellow pine, the prices representing the values of the different products on the ground at Shelby.

68 bushels of charcoal,	7 cts.....	\$4 76
12 gallons of turpentine,	30 cts.....	3 00
2 gallons of wood alcohol,	90 cts.....	1 80
Tar.....		1 50

Total\$11 06

The entire cost of treating a cord of wood, including labor, interest on the investment, wear and tear, etc., does not exceed \$2.50. To place the price of the products considerably lower, the profit would be regarded large considering the outlay. Mr. Mathieu, as will be seen elsewhere, has been giving his attention to a new style of refuse burner. Aside from being safe, it is profitable. A safe and profitable "hell" is certainly a new idea. A safe burner has been desired by many a mill owner after an unsafe one has been the cause of the burning of a stock of lumber. A large mill firm recently wrote to this office regarding refuse burners, saying that sparks from its old one set on fire 6,000,000 feet of lumber which was consumed. Smaller fires from the same cause have been frequent. The burner in question is said to be absolutely safe, and, besides, to pay a profit of about \$5 for every cord of refuse wood thrown into it. The slabs, edgings, etc., are put in at the base of the burner, and the charcoal is taken from the top. The fire can be kept continually burning. The charcoal is suitable for locomotives, blast furnaces, etc., and the cost of the burner is about the same as that of an ordinary burner. From the acetic vapors are made turpentine, alcohol, and other marketable liquids. The *Lumberman* thoroughly believes in Mr. Mathieu's retorts for making charcoal, inasmuch that it turns wood, that would otherwise be of no use, into dollars and cents, and being pretty well acquainted with the ability of the gentleman as a chemist and inventor, it has no reason to doubt that his refuse burners will be as great a success as his retorts are.—*Northwestern Lumberman*.

MINNESOTA PINE.

The alleged pine land frauds in Minnesota have again been brought into prominence by the indictment in the United States Court of four men, charged with fraudulent practices in obtaining lands and timber belonging to the public domain. The individuals indicted are John McGuire, S. R. Wentworth and J. H. Caldwell, of Duluth, and C. B. Sleeper, of Crainard. The latter is county clerk of Crow Wing county, and it is charged that he was in collusion with the other parties mentioned, by which Sleeper gave them bogus certificates, which were issued to fictitious names, and on the strength of those, entries in the land office were duly filed, and the timber on the lands entered afterwards cut off and sold. Almost simultaneously with these arrests and indictments W. W. Spalding was removed from the government land office at Duluth. Since his removal he has spoken out loud, and declares that while the arrests were just enough, they were not brought about by the vigilance and enterprise of the federal officials, but through the connivance of a ring of much larger and more powerful fellows who picked up only a quarter section at a time. The *Lumberman* has before described the alleged method pursued by the great pine land owners, who promote public sales, like the late one at St. Cloud, at which it is said they freeze out outsiders and small would-be buyers by high bidding, and afterwards letting the bids lapse, until the outsiders are discouraged and give up in

disgust; whereupon the alleged ring steps in and gobbles the land at a minimum price.

The capitalist always enjoys the advantage of being able to do that legally, by the overbearing power of money, that the man of but little or no means is forced to do, if he does it at all, by fraud or crooked means. For instance, numerous individuals in the Duluth district, and other parts of Minnesota, have wanted to get possession of the pine on government lands in that state. The land was subject to entry as homesteads, under the pre-emption law, but not otherwise, except when the government should order special auction sales in districts that had been set apart and surveyed for the purpose. It was the most natural thing in the world for operators in logs to use the pre-emption dodge in getting possession of timber, inasmuch as they wanted nothing at all of the land after it was stripped of pine. It is well known that the pre-emption scheme has been worked for years with great success, so far as securing the pine was concerned; but the chickens of illegal procedure are apt to come home to roost sooner or later, and the men recently arrested have an example of the truth couched in this homely saying.

The capitalists who, it is said form a Minneapolis ring, and have promoted the prosecution of the fraudulent pre-emptors, have evinced much righteous indignation against the men who were picking up quarter section lots, but it is presumed that their virtue was pricked as much by their own moneyed interests as by the loss that the government was sustaining. They wanted that pine, and they did not want it slashed into here and there by so-called pre-emptors. They wanted it all, in untouched, virgin blocks, and at government price. So it has been all along the scheme of the capitalists to dog the small operators out of the pine woods by shouting fraud, and setting on the federal officials when that was possible. The bill that was pending in the last congress, introduced by the Hon. R. D. Washburn, and said to be backed by Senator Sawyer, of Wisconsin, and favored by the new Senator Sabin, of Minnesota, to repeal the pre-emption law, has its motive in the desire to wrest the pine lands from the pre-emptors, and give the capitalists at Minneapolis and Stillwater an opportunity to buy it up in blocks.

The difference between the scheme of the large operators and the small operators is this: that of the first is legitimate; that of the other is illegitimate. One is the method of the monopolist; the other that of the swindler and thief. Poplar prejudice puts both on a par, but there is a wide difference in favor of the monopolist. The Minnesota pine capitalist, of course, want all the pine land they can legally get their feet on. There is nothing essentially wrong about that, in a business sense. They want to secure the land as cheaply as possible. There is nothing surprising about that, since they are human. They want it before the small operators have "hogged" over it and spoiled the best tracts. They don't want to see men from down East at the sales, and do not mean to let anybody but Minnesota men buy up blocks of the lands they covet. They have for years had men in the woods, going over the government lands prospecting, and know where the best pine is to be found. They have the inside track and intend to keep it, and make the most that is to be made out of Minnesota pine. It is likely that there is a combination among the wealthy pine owners of Minnesota to secure the results indicated in the foregoing; there may be, or there may not be. There can be no doubt, however, about their intention to own the most of the government pine in northern Minnesota.

But when it is alleged that there is anything particularly reprehensible about the designs of the alleged ring, it seems like straining the question. If there is anything wrong in the Minneapolis scheme, it is in the alleged freezing out of would-be buyers by high bidding, and then refusing to take the lands as bid in. If there is collusion between the bidders and the government officials in this scheme, it amounts to a swindle, and should be ferreted out and punished. But if the government agents, who conduct the sales, know nothing about the motives of the straw bidders, all that can be

said is that the alleged ringsters perpetrate a clever trick on the outsiders. It may not be strictly honorable and business-like, but it could not be called illegal, or even preventible.

So far as the public are concerned, the general good would be better subserved by allowing the pine lands of Minnesota to pass into the hands of the great operators, who have capital enough to cut and manufacture the pine and distribute it for use. The growth of Western Minnesota, Dakota, Wyoming, Montana and Idaho depend on the ability of their expanding community to obtain lumber for building purposes. A dog-in-the-manger policy of restricting the sale of these lands to pre-emptors, and by auction sales at long intervals, will not contribute to the progress of the New Northwest. It is not sufficient to say that a few capitalists should not be allowed to monopolize Minnesota pine. Capital will control it in the end, despite all that can be done to prevent it. It will be manufactured and distributed more economically by a few capitalists than by hundreds of owners of limited means.—*Northwestern Lumberman*.

A BOTANIC GARDEN.

The current number of the *Farmer's Advocate* has the following suggestive paragraph:—In a paper by Mr. Charles Gibb on "Trees and Shrubs of Northern Europe and Asia," in which he records his observations on forestry and horticulture in the fruit-growing areas of the Russian Empire, the author alludes to the lack of botanic gardens in Canada. These institutions are to be found throughout Europe, even in Russia and most of the tropical and other colonies of England, for the interchange of botanical products growing in similar climates. "That this great Dominion of Canada," he says, "which stretches from the Atlantic to the Pacific should be without a botanic garden or a series of such gardens, is a fact without parallel in British colonial history." We cannot think of a city or town in Canada which has a more suitable and beautiful spot for a botanical garden than Salter's Grove, near London, Ont. And in what other city in our Dominion can such assistance for the successful organization and management of such a most elevating school be found as with us? We need only mention the names of Wm. Saunders, Esq., F. R. S. C. &c.; Dr. Burgess, A. R. Murdock, and so many others. By all means have a botanical garden at once, and let London have the honor of having such a worthy addition to our fine schools and colleges.—*London Free Press*.

THE Behn Manufacturing Company, of Winona, Minn., has taken a \$25,000 contract to supply all the woodwork for the new building of the Northern Pacific road at St. Paul. The entire inside finish will be in Wisconsin red oak. The same company has the contract for trimming what is expected will be the finest bank building in Dakota, to be erected at Pierre.

A DISPATCH of July 9 from Portland, Oregon, says:—Tremendous forest fires are raging south of Ralama. Six miles of railroad and two locomotives have been destroyed at Oak Point logging camp. The loss reported up to this morning is \$200,000. The flames extend for miles and are so fierce that it is unsafe to attempt to investigate the losses. It is believed the fire will continue until it rains.

A correspondent of the *Northwestern Lumberman* says:—New England in those good old days was a well-wooded section; as to that matter, it is far from being lumberless to-day. In certain sections there are large tracts of woodland which, if properly protected, will within another decade prove a valuable source of profit to its owners. Investigation goes to prove that New England is well adapted to the growth of timber, especially white pine, and who knows but in a few years those of us who may live may witness the shipping of New England pine, the same as to-day pine is shipped to us. In parts of Maine, at this time, pine is being cut, from which large quantities of good width and strictly clear in grade are sorted out. Large quantities of clear strips are cut, which are used by moulding manufacturers, who in former times used western strips.

THE Grand Haven Courier says:—G. W. A. Smith, this week closed a bargain with Chicago parties for the firm of Smith & Field for 1,100 acres of choice pine lumber on White river, estimated to cut 30,000,000 feet. Average haul, one mile to the river. The most of said pine is within a mile of their old camps. Consideration \$120,000.

THE *Timber Trades Journal* says:—The fact of the present low prices is causing a curtailment of the production at several of the shipping ports; and we hear that some of the largest concerns in Sweden have ceased night sawing, confining all their operations to day work, and as the night cutting has been carried on somewhat extensively hitherto, this action on their part is likely to make a considerable difference in the supplies.

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