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READY-MADE HOUSES.

The ready-made house business has been mentioned in these columns several times, for the reason that it is a growing industry, and one that will eventually consume a large amount of lumber. The inquiries regarding them are numerous. A gentleman visited the *Lumberman* recently who wanted from twenty-five to fifty houses for a colony that is about starting to Dakota. Such houses for the people settling in that territory, and often in other sections, are just what is needed. In many parts of Dakota it is impossible to buy lumber, and often when lumber can be obtained the services of a carpenter are hard to secure. A ready-made house can be shipped to its destination and erected by any man of ordinary ingenuity. It saves all bother of running around the country after building material and men to put it together. A gentleman called at the office of this paper a few days ago who wanted a house to set up on a lot in the city limits. He could rent the lot during the summer for a small sum, and thus avoid paying big rent, and at the same time have a house of his own to live in that could be handily moved whenever it was desirable to do so. A late inquiry from Philadelphia was made regarding ready-made houses for export, and the same day there came letters of inquiry relating to the same subject from West Virginia and New York. These letters, and hundreds of others, show that the ready-made house business is not carried on extensively enough to meet the demand. There is no good reason why a manufacturer of knock-down houses should not use 100,000,000 feet of lumber yearly in this city alone.—*Northwestern Lumberman.*

BEECH CHARCOAL.

The *Northwestern Lumberman* says:—The value of beech continues to come to the surface. While never esteemed of great importance among the numerous American hardwoods, it has held a high place in foreign countries. It is reckoned in Germany as next to oak in value, and about on a par with Scotch pine. It is preferred there for wagon stock, woodenware, etc. It makes thoroughly odorless butter-tubs. Beech is also an excellent charcoal wood. Thousands of tons of beech charcoal are consumed in European distilleries annually, and distiller's charcoal needs to be a very superior article. Charcoal from beech is also a superior fuel for iron smelting. Some retorts in use for 10 years in Germany, for making wood vinegar are thus described:

The retorts are simply boiler-like iron cylinders three feet in diameter and nine feet long, horizontally placed in ovens like common flue boilers. In front is the door for charging, at the back the opening for the gases to escape into the condenser. Each cylinder contains a basket made of iron bars, for the purpose

of quickly withdrawing the charcoal into an iron box, which, to effect gradual cooling, is made air-tight by the use of clay. There are 24 retorts in use, which produce yearly at least 1,200 tons of beech charcoal. The wood used is made three feet long, and all dimensions, oven stocks and roots are used—the latter give the same quantity of distillates, but require longer time for charring than the ordinary cord-wood. Each retort is charged with about one-half cord of split wood. Duration of process, 18 to 20 hours, (formerly 12 to 14 hours with less favorable results); temperature about 482 degrees Fahrenheit. The cooling requires five hours. Each two retorts have one fire-place; coal, saw-dust saturated with tar, and all the gases resulting from the process, which cannot be condensed, are used for firing. One cord of beech wood weighed 4,092 pounds, and yielded in the average, 966 pounds of good charcoal, or 23.6 per cent. in weight, the small braize not included. And since one bushel of 2,748 cubic inches of coal weighed 20.38 pounds, one cord yielded 47.39 bushels. In the coalings in millers the average result obtained in the same district, and with the same wood, was 41.3 bushels per cord, or 1,094 pounds, which brings the weight of the bushel to 26.5 pounds, braize included. These comparative results, extending over a number of years, prove that the specific weight of charcoal made in retorts is very much below that made in millers, whilst the yield in volume is in favor of the retort.

NEW ENGLAND FORESTS AND WEATHER.

The accounts of the Maine logging are accompanied with lamentations over the drought which the State has suffered for nearly a year, lowering the wells and lakes, and in some cases robbing manufacturers of their water-power. The connection between the destruction of the forests and decrease of rain seems not to occur to the thrifty and usually far-seeing Down-Easter, and if there is any fear that thousands of men in our northern woods are living off their children's children, it is certainly not expressed. The season's cut is over, and there is now being floated down the Penobscot some 150,000,000 feet of logs, while the Kennebec adds 120,000,000, the Aroostook 70,000,000, the Machias basin 30,000,000, the other sources of log crop supply of the state swelling the amount to about 580,000,000 feet, to say nothing of the ship-timber harvest. Some 10,000 men and 2,800 horses and oxen are required to do the cutting and transporting. If those logs averaged two feet in diameter, and could be placed end to end, they would reach over 36,000 miles, or about once and a half round the earth. One of the beneficial effects of the ancient "forest courts" of England and the governmental supervision of forest lands in some of the continental countries is that the destruction of trees was made a grievous offence against the

laws, and this was of inestimable service to agriculture. In many portions of New England (for nowhere have the forest trees been properly protected), it is no uncommon thing to hear old inhabitants refer to dry gullies where in their youth a goodly stream of water used to flow, and unless this matter is better regulated by the authorities and not left to the feeble efforts of village improvement societies and sentimental people of the woodman-spare-that-tree variety, many of our towns and manufacturing will suffer more and more for lack of abundant water, the danger from spring floods will be increased, while the farmers will be visited more frequently than they are now with long succession of rainless days and damaged crops. It has been frequently demonstrated in New England that waste lands appropriately set with trees will yield a profit of from \$6 to \$10 per year; but, owing to a want of system in tree-planting, such as prevails in portions of the West, our hills are being rapidly disrobed and our resources wasted.—*Springfield Republican.*

A BRIDGE TWENTY-ONE MILES LONG.

On Sunday a party, composed mainly of railroad officials and contractors interested in the building of the New Orleans and North-eastern railroad, took a trip across Lake Pontchartrain for the purpose of examining the great trestle work now in course of construction. The entire length of the trestlework work when completed will be twenty-one and a half miles. This distance comprises thirteen and a half miles from People's avenue canal to the point, five and three-quarter miles across the lake and two and four-tenth miles from the north shore. All the piling along the southern shore, with the exception of about one mile, has been driven and this division will be completed by July 1. Of the piling in the lake two and a quarter miles and one mile of the work is completed.

The trestle on the north shore has been finished some time and the rails are laid nine miles, or to Pearl river. The trestlework is all constructed after the same plan, except that the cross-ties are further apart in the approaches than in the bridge proper, and that the timber used on the latter is all cross-sited, the description of the bridge will answer for the other work.

This structure, which probably will be the longest of the kind in the United States, will also be one of the most substantial. Experts in railroad building pronounce the sections already finished the most perfect specimens of trestle construction they have seen. The piles average 60 feet in length and are driven about 40 feet. In each bent there are four piles and the bents are 15 feet apart. The caps of the piles are 12x14 inches, and the stringers are 6x16 inches, and three of them on each side laid on edge.

The cross ties are only four inches apart, and on them are bolted stringers, which act as guard rails. The ties form a secure decking to the trestlework, upon which the wheels of a car could run without danger of leaving the bridge on account of the guard rails.

The trestlework, from beginning to end, is one of the grandest undertakings connected with railroad building in the south. Some idea of its magnitude may be formed from the statement that the quantity of lumber required, outside of the piles, is over 15,000,000 feet. There will be 8,161 bents, of four piles each, or 32,644 piles.—*New Orleans Picayune.*

SAVE THE HARDWOOD.

A local correspondent at Long Lake, Grand Traverse region, Mich., states that farmers in his section, though they are clearing land rapidly, do not slash the timber down in windrows and burn it up to get it out of the way. They are pursuing a much wiser course. They are making saw logs of all that is available for that purpose, and fence rails and wood of the residue. The correspondent alluded to, wisely pleads with his neighbors to continue on in the good way of economy, "for the time is coming in the near future," he says, "when these majestic maples will be as it were gold mines to the owner." This advice is encouraging as showing that the farmers of that part of Michigan are awakening to the value of their timber, and that the slaughtering and destructive method sometimes pursued in clearing land is to be changed to a better one. A wanton waste of timber in that section of Michigan, so near to Lake Michigan, and the great markets of the treeless prairie states, would be simply the most inexcusable folly.—*Northwestern Lumberman.*

Squatter Sovereignty.

The American *Lumberman* of New Orleans says:—"Squatter sovereignty" is a persistent enemy to our magnificent pine forests, and its rule is everywhere found in the shape of thousands of trees girdled and left to decay around thriftless and abandoned homes, hundred of which are found throughout the pine lands of the South. The vandals generally remain long enough to destroy what they can of what is valuable, and then move to some other section to repeat their work of devastation, an evil as far reaching and as pernicious in its effect as the forest fire. Both are evils which should as far as possible be cured by prompt and proper legislation.

The *Ottawa Citizen* says:—The brisk trade done in shingles just now is not confined to Ottawa. The Galletta shingle mill on the Mississippi, owned by Mr. James Sheen, has been running to its fullest capacity since early in April, and is receiving custom orders faster than it can fill them.