DURABILITY OF TIMBER AND WOODWORK.

The proper seasoning of timber is one of the very best means of securing it against decay, from whatever cause decay may originate. The seasoning, however, to be effectual, must be thorough and complete. In late years the modes of seasoning timber have changed. In olden times it was allowed to dry in the air for a long period of time. The carpenter or builder of the present day who would feel any delight in the progress of his art, cannot feel insensible to the advantage of giving durability to his materials; nor yet be uninterested in any inquiry into the probable extent of their duration. Not that his fame as an artist rests solely on the extent of their duration; for while his productions are worthy of imitation, the remembrance of them will be preserved by the engraver's art as long as there shall be men capable of paying a just tribute to the memory of departed merit. The French army, in 1799, under the great Napoleon, destroyed the celebrated bridge across the Rhine, at Schaffhausen, but the fame of Grundenmann the carpenter, will long continue; and the form of that excellent structure of art will only cease to be remembered when carpentry itself no longer exists. We have introduced our subject in this way for the purpose of citing some of the most remarkable incidents on record in all history. We have taken the pains to condense a number of the most remarkable of these, as showing our readers how long timber has been preserved in an almost perfect state. Examples are not wanting in the history of Mexico, where timber has been found in a perfect state after being cut over three hundred years ago. But our examples are obtained mostly from ancient history, and exist in the old world. The piles of the bridge built by the Emperor Trajan, across the Danube, is a striking instance of the durability of timber in a wet state. One of these piles were taken out and found to be petrified to the depth of three-fourth of an inch; but the rest of the wood was little different from its ordinary state, though it had been driven more than sixteen centuries.

The piles under the piers of the London Bridge have been driven about six hundred years, and from observations made from Dancis, in 1746, it did not appear that they were materially decayed; and they are to-day sufficiently sound to support the massive superstructure. These piles are chiefly of elm.

In digging away the foundation of the old Savoy Palace, London, some sixty years ago, which was built nearly seven hundred years before, the whole of the piles consisting of oak, elm, beech and chestnut, were found in a perfect state of soundness; as also was the planking which covered the pileheads. Some of the beech, however, after being exposed to the air a few weeks, though under cover, had a coating of fungus spread over its surface.

On opening one of the tombs of Thebes, some sixty years ago, there was discovered two statues of wood, a little larger than life, and in good preservation; the only decayed parts being the sockets to receive the eyes. The wood of these statues is most probably the oldest in existence that bear traces of human labor. We believe they are in the British Museum to-day.

A continued range or curb of timber was discovered in pulling down a part of Trowbridge Castle, in Kent, which was built over seven hundred years ago. This curb was built into the middle of the thickness of the wall, and was, no doubt, to prevent the settlement likely to happen in such heavy piles of buildings, and therefore is an interesting fact in the history of constructive architecture, as well as an instance of the durability of timber.

In digging for the foundation of the present house at Ditton Park, near Windsor, the timbers of a drawbridge were discovered about ten feet below the surface of the ground; these timbers were sound, but had become black. Hakenwell says that Sir John de Molines obtained liberty to fortify the Manor House of Ditton, in 1396, and it is most probable the drawbridge was erected soon after that time; accordingly the timber had been there about 400 years.

The durability of the framed timbers of buildings is also very considerable. The trusses of the old part of the roof of the Basilica of St. Paul, of Rome, was framed in 816, and they were sound, and in good condition in 1814, a space of nearly 1,000 years. These trusses are of fir.

The timberwork of the external domes of the church of St. Mark, at Venice, is more than eight hundred years old, and is still in a good state.

The timber roof of Crosby Hall, in London, was erected over 300 years ago, and the roof of Westminister Hall, which is supposed to be of chestnut, is now over three hundred and fifty years old.

The rich carvings in oak, which ornamented the ceilings of the King's room, in Sterling Castle, are many of them still in good preservation. It is nearly three hundred and fifty years since they were executed, and they remained in their original situation till a part of the roof gave way, in 1777, when the whole was removed, and afterwards were dispersed among the collectors of curious relics of the old times.

In some of the old mansions which yet remain, and in ancient cathedrals and churches, there is nothing like dry rot found.

In regard to the durability of the different woods, the most odoriferous kinds are generally esteemed the most durable; also the woods of a close and compact texture are generally more durable than those that are open and porous; but there are exceptions, as the wood of the evergreen oak is more compact than that of the common oak, but not near so durable. If we were asked if any of the woodwork of the Chicago of the present day would be found in existence one thousand years hence, we should promptly answer "No," and in a future issue may give our reasons. With us, our woodwork, exposed to the rigors and uncertainties of climate, soon goes into decay.—*Lumber Trade Journal.*

EXHIBITION OF WORKS IN WOOD.

An exhibition of works in wood was opened lately at the hall of the Carpenters' Company, London-wall, London, England. The ceremony was performed by the Lord Mayor, who was accompanied by the Lady Mayoress (Miss Fowler). The exhibition is divided into two parts. The first is devoted to constructive and ornamental carpentry and joinery, and the second part to wood carving. The exhibits in first part are located in the great hall, and comprise models of buildings, bridges, roofs, staircases, the interior fittings of buildings, such as doors and windows, house furniture, church furniture, including ornamental alter railings and reading desks, and various architectural designs. The second and smaller portion of the exhibition, though in point of fact the most interesting is located in an ante-room. It comprises specimens of all kinds of wood-carving, ancient and modern, as well as models of ornamental furniture. There are 140 exhibitors, and the exhibits number over 500, which for the purpose of competition have been arranged in 5 divisions. The first division comprises constructive carpentry, in which skill in obtaining the greatest amount of strength at the smallest expense of material and labor is the chief object of the constructor. The second division consists of constructive and ornamental carpentry, the articles exhibited being such as are used in obtaining architectural effect. The third division consists of joinery, all the articles exhibited being of wood and handmade. The fourth division is devoted entirely to wood-carving, while the fifth consists of models or drawings or any of the articles comprised in the former divisions. There are 37 prizes offered for the successful competitors in each of the classes into which the five divisions are divided. In every case the first prize is £5 and a medal, and the second prize £3. The exhibition will remain open until June 14.—*Times.*