

VIEWS AND INTERVIEWS.

Spools and
Shoe Pegs.

Large quantities of birch timber are consumed annually in the manufacture of spools and shoe pegs. Both articles rank among the smallest of our small wares, but, like the common pin, they find a large consumption everywhere. The larger quantities of these articles are manufactured in Maine and to some extent in the province of New Brunswick, for it is in these parts that birch is principally found. The white birch logs are sawn into strips four feet long, and from one to two inches long and of the same thickness. These strips are sent to the spool factories where they are quickly worked into spools by most ingenious labor-saving machinery. The strips of white birch are fed into one machine, and they are not touched, in fact they are hardly seen again, until the spools, all finished for market except polishing, drop out by the bushel from another machine several rods away from where the strips started in. The spools get their gloss by being rapidly revolved in barrels by machinery, the polishing resulting from the contact of the spools in the barrel. Maple is used largely in the manufacture of shoe-pegs, although white birch is used at some factories. Shoe-pegs are sold by the bushel, and are worth all the way from three shillings to one dollar a bushel, according to quality. More than \$150,000 was received by Maine shoe-peg factories last year for goods.

Present-Day
Progress.

With the progress that is made in mechanical arts, and none the less so in every department of life, it is not surprising to find improvements in methods of transportation equally far forward. In fact, when we cast our memories back to the days of the stage coach in our own country, or travel in imagination to suffering Russia, where only the most primitive methods of locomotion are known— one actual cause of the present terrible distress and then study the railway and canal systems of this continent to-day, we are inclined to think that nowhere else has progress been more advanced than in the one line of transportation. Coming to an item of detail affecting the lumbering industries, we are just now witnessing an important change of methods in this respect. Only a few years ago, within the memory of most lumbermen, the man who would suggest railroading logs from the pineries to the mills would have been looked upon as verging on insanity. To-day the business in Michigan is so enormous that the capacity of the Michigan Central railroad has been overtaxed to such an extent that the company has been obliged to hire locomotives from other roads to meet the demands made on it on the Mackinac division, and consequently an order for twenty locomotives given a short time since, has been changed to thirty. The man who haunts the corner grocery and out of the volubility of his own emptiness talks as if he knew everything, is apt to find himself sadly left as he gets out into the light. Verily, it doth not yet appear what we shall know.

Machines
Well Placed.

A machine may not be able to speak, but a writer in *The Tradesman* is of the opinion, evidently, that it has a choice of company, and knows the good from the bad. "Almost any machine," he says, "will behave better in a good place than if hidden in a slush-hole under piles of dirt and rubbish. The feed cones of a certain wood-working machine were located in a little 'dog-hole' underneath the engine-room floor, and a man to get at them had to 'walk in on his back, and crawl out on his belly.' The cones gave all manner of trouble. When it seemed as if nothing else could possibly happen then the belt would let go or turn inside out against the guide forks, or the lacing would give out, or a cone get loose, just for variety. It kept the mechanic busy about all the time looking after these cones. Finally, new arrangements were made, and a little room built expressly for these cones. The room had a nice skylight and a bricked-up pit wherein the cones were in full view. A railing was built around the pit, a nice staircase led thereto, and these same old cones and same old belt ran six whole months without breaking or giving the least trouble. I might get up a moral that clutches and speed

cones work the best when they are placed in good wholesome locations, but the 'live' millwright has found that out long ago, and he doesn't build low, cramped-up wheel rooms and mills any more—if he can prevail on the owner to let the millwright have his own way, the better way. He tries to make plenty of room for twice as much machinery as he ever expects to put into the mill, and thus he keeps all the friction clutches 'good natured' and the workmen ditto."

More
Strange Finds.

We talk of the nine lives of a cat, and some wonderful stories are told of feline endurance. A few days ago the *Toronto press* told of a cat that had been discovered in the drain box of a sewer, where it had been embedded beneath several feet of earth for not less than three weeks without food or air. When set free, however, it did not take pussy long to recover her usual vivacity and playfulness. The following stories from London *Tid-Bits* tell of two specimens of the toad and frog species whose ability to exist on less than Dr. Tanner's diet leaves the family cat a long way behind in the race. What is printed by our English contemporary supplements nicely the stories printed in the *LUMBERMAN* at different times telling of the curiosities found inside of trees: "In some strangely shaped fossil trees accidentally dug out of a stone quarry were found treasured up the petrified-looking bodies of reptiles, birds, bats and such small deer—which had thus been honored by preservation in massive mausoleums. When cutting open the trunk of an elm a live toad was found lying concealed about three feet from the root. It skipped away very alertly, yet, we are told, no tree was more sound, nor could any aperture be discovered through which the little captive could have penetrated. It is supposed that the spawn from which it originated must have accidentally been treasured up in the tree from the first moment of its vegetation. In like manner, while some men were squaring the trunk of an oak they had just felled, they suddenly started back in astonishment on seeing a hideous frog, about the size of a large pullet's egg, encrusted in the tree four inches in from the bark and fifteen feet from the root. Though mangled by the axe, the creature still moved, but it appeared old, thin and decrepit. As in other cases, a careful examination revealed no entrance to its prison house."

The
Lumber Scalper.

Scalping and scamping are not unknown in different trades. We do not know but that it is a trick of all trades to scamp in work so that the loss in profits, that is often a result of present-day competition, may in a measure be leveled up. Perhaps the term "scamping" is more properly applicable to these methods than "scalping," though both transactions are none the less dishonest. They lack even the extenuating element that led to the suggestion in early English days to remove a penny's worth of silver from the current English shilling and still call it a shilling. The suggestion then was made in ignorance of the true principles of political economy, which requires that value be represented by value, and a more thorough knowledge of the science made the blunder clear. It will hardly be claimed, however, that the contractor who makes his profits out of spurious material and incompetent workmanship, when the opposite is called for in his specifications, does so out of the simplicity of his heart, believing all the time that logically and morally he is doing the correct thing. A lumber contemporary has taken the term "scalping" and applied it specifically to certain transactions in lumber. Appeal is made to the Century dictionary for an official interpretation of "scalping," and is given thus:—"Scalper, n.—One who scalps, or takes a scalp; one who sells at less than official or recognized rates; specifically, a dealer in railway and other tickets who shares his profits with his customer, or who purchases unused tickets and coupons at cheap rates, and sells them at a slight advance, but for less than the official price." The *Timberman*, the journal referred to, then goes on to say:—"There are some things in the Century definitions that are suggestive of the lumber scalper—he not infrequently takes the scalp of his consignor, and he has to sell at less than the recognized rate—but it is assumed that the scalper first buys, and

then sells at a slight advance. That is not the way with the lumber member of the genus. He never buys. If he would the objection to him would be largely removed, for the little dealer who has happened to buy cheap and is content to sell at a slight advance, even if under the market, is merely a nuisance to be endured with as much equanimity as possible. The lumber scalper first sells something he hasn't got and often doesn't know where to get—and then tries to buy at a low enough price so there will be margin enough to pay his postage, boarding house and laundry bills—assuming that he ever pays them. He has no investment, no office, no money (and needs none, takes no risk (the seller does that), and is merely a demoralizing element in a reputable business without any decent prompt to himself or to any one else, for the man he sells to usually is cheated on grades and measure, and the man he buys from can whistle for his pay if anything goes wrong—or the scalper goes wrong, which he does in numerous instances. Poverty is no crime, but it should not seek credit under the pretence of wealth. The lumber scalper is the clerk or inspector who tires of earning an honest living and turns confidence man. He may think he has honest intentions, but he is on the wrong basis. If the *Timberman* were to make a dictionary it would define "scalper" in the lumber sense, about as follows: Scalper, n.—One who sells to a sucker lumber he doesn't own, and then finds another sucker to trust him with the goods."

BITS OF EXPERIENCE.

HAVING occasion to grind a saw to-day, says a writer in the *Sawmill Gazette*, the thought came: "What a difference from the way I filed the first saw I ever tried to sharpen." I nearly wrote "put in order," but that would not fit, for it was in anything but order when I presented it for inspection. When the writer was fifteen years old he was employed by a carpenter to assist in rebuilding an old house, with the understanding that if he proved "docile," or in other words, showed any hopes of becoming a good workman, he should have steady work and be advanced as his ability would warrant. But for quite a while he evidently had a much greater capacity for finding iron in the old material being worked over than anything else, and it was a very poor day when the saw did not require filing at least twice, while the time put in over the grindstone crank, to have the hand-axe and chisels ground, makes his back ache to even think of.

The old gentleman, Mr. S., had not forgotten that he was once a boy himself, and was very patient. But one day he concluded that possibly it would lessen the number of nails found by the saw if the one using it had to keep it in order, more especially as it was but a few minutes after filing when the saw was brought up with the points all gone, having had a full stroke, and very likely with a "rider," across a ten-penny nail. So, going to his chest, he procured the saw-set, a flat file and a three-cornered file; but instead of proceeding to file the saw he gave them to me and said: "You are pretty good at dulling, now let's see how you are at sharpening." "I don't know how to file a saw." "Well, I guess you do not; but you will never be able to tell until you try, and you can't learn any younger than you are now," and turned to his own work, leaving me with the tools, which I concluded to use.

I set the saw first, and if the blade had been as hard in temper as many I have seen since, possibly I would have had to re-tooth it; as it was the teeth were reduced in thickness as well as turned pretty well out on the sides of the saw. After setting, the thought came that the flat file was to be used to joint, so it was used vigorously, though with no thought as to whether a saw would work best with a full or hollow front; my recollection is that one was rather on the hollow, if not "holler," which it certainly did when I got at it with the other file, which was pressed well down and pushed and pulled (when the handle did not come off) several times across each notch in the saw, the side filed first getting the most, so when the saw was turned but little was required to bring the teeth to a point.

Thomas Gibson, Wroter, Ont.:—We think a great deal of CANADA LUMBERMAN, and from a sawmill's standpoint see nothing to excel it.