

MAKING LUMBER IN JAPAN.

A writer from Japan says: Lumber is worth about twice as much in Japan as it is in the United States and Canada. Common lumber, which is sold for \$10 and \$12 a 1,000 feet, will bring 40 yen—that is, \$20 gold—in Japan. This is due to the scarcity of timber and the great labor required to work it up by their primitive processes. They have been cutting timber off their mountains in Japan for 2,500 years, and although the forests have been reproduced again and again during that period, it is difficult and expensive to get logs down from the mountain sides in the absence of the necessary facilities. The Japs usually go into the woods and cut one log at a time, which they haul out

by hand or by oxen for many miles. When streams are convenient they use them; but they have no saw mills in the mountains, although there is an abundance of water power everywhere. I understand, continues the writer, they have tried them, but have not been successful. They cut all their lumber by hand with a wide and thin saw during a time of the year when they have nothing else to do, and each man that is engaged in business that requires lumber usually buys his own logs and cuts them up himself at odd times. Women and men both work at it. One man or woman will work on the top of the log while another works underneath, but usually not with the same saw. I have seen four or five men working on the same log, each sawing off his own board. They raise

the log at an incline of 45°, with one end on the ground and a rest about the middle, and when the work is down to the rest they tie it up and begin at the other end again. All the lumber is dressed by hand. I have found but one planing mill in the country; that is in Yokohama. It employs about 150 hands and, curiously enough, its entire product is made into boxes and shipped to India. It does no business in the local market. The machinery is all from Boston. The manager tells me that the company is thinking of enlarging the plant by adding a sash factory and machinery for making blinds and doors, also for the India market. I do not know why they do not sell their goods in the local market, but I presume there is a good reason for it; perhaps they get better prices for it in India.

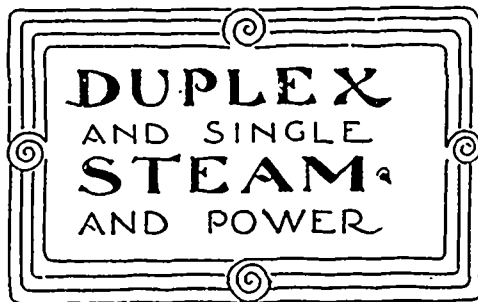
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