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WOOD FINISH.

The patented preparations known as wood fillers are prepared in different colors for the purpose of preparing the surface of wood previous to the varnishing. They fill up the pores of the wood, rendering the surface hard and smooth. For polishing mahogany, walnut, etc., the following is recommended: Dissolve bees-wax by heat in spirits of turpentine until the mixture becomes viscid; then apply by a clean cloth, and rub thoroughly with a flannel or cloth. A common mode of polishing mahogany is by rubbing it first with linseed oil, and then holding trimmings or shavings of the same material against the work in the lath. Glass paper followed by rubbing also gives a good lustre. There are various means of toning or darkening woods for decorative effect. Log-wood, line, brown soft soap, dyed oil, sulphate of iron, nitrate of silver exposed to the sun rays, carbonate of soda, bichromate and permanganate of potash, and other alkaline preparations are used for darkening the wood; the last three are specially recommended. The solution is applied by dissolving one ounce of the alkali in two gills of boiling water, diluted to the required tone. The surface is saturated with a sponge or flannel, and immediately dried with soft rags. The carbonate is used for dark woods. Oil tinged with rose madder may be applied to hard woods like birch and a red oil is prepared from soaked alkanet root in linseed oil. The grain of yellow pine can be brought out by two or three coats of Japan much diluted with turpentine, and afterward oiled and rubbed. To give mahogany the appearance of age, lime water used before oiling is a good plan. In staining wood, the best and most transparent effect obtained by repeated light coats of the same. For oak stain a strong solution of oxalic acid is employed; for mahogany, dilute nitrous acid. A primary coat or a coat of wood fillers is advantageous. For mahogany stains the following are given: 2 oz. of dragons blood dissolved in one quart of rectified spirits of wine, well shaken; or raw sienna in beer, with burnt sienna to give the required tone; for darker stains boil half a pound of madder and 2 oz. of logwood chips in one gallon of water, and brush the decoction while hot over the wood. When dry, paint with a solution of 2 oz. of potash in one quart of water. A solution of permanganate of potash forms a rapid and excellent brown stain.—*Amateur Mechanic (London)*.

THE DULUTH SQUABBLE.

Mr. R. C. Mitchell, the newly appointed receiver of the government land office at Duluth, was arrested by United States Deputy Marshal Brackett, at Duluth, on July 14, charged with fraudulent pre-emption of pine lands in Vermillion lake district of Northern Minnesota. Mr. Mitchell is editor and proprietor of the

Duluth Tribune, and supported the Hon. Knute Nelson, member of Congress elect, in his famous fight with Kindred in the late congressional campaign. A warrant was issued for the arrest of H. L. Gordon, who enjoys the title of "Thundering" Gordon in the upper country, and is alleged to have been a partner with Mitchell in the pre-emption grab. The charges were brought by ex-Gov. Marshall, of Minnesota, special agent of the United States land department, and in the main are to the following purport: It is alleged that H. L. Gordon and R. C. Mitchell did conspire, combine, confederate, and agree together, with A. K. Lovejoy, Frank C. Gordon, G. Blades, W. Peak, W. F. Harley, Walter Gordon, Amos Malder, J. Malder, L. B. Draw, Proctor Morgan, Gus Marden, and nineteen others, to defraud the government of lands in township 68, range 16 west; that arrangements were made by Gordon and Mitchell with the others mentioned, whereby they were to proceed, and did proceed to the township indicated, and to took up lands under form of the pre-emption law. These lands were afterwards turned over to Mitchell and Gordon for a sum of money that had been agreed upon before the pre-emptions were made.

Mr. Mitchell says that he will be able to refute these charges, and prove what he has done in acquiring lands is at least technically legal. He waived examination, and gave bonds in the sum of \$5,000 to appear in the United States district court at Winona, Minn., in October. Gordon could not be found at time Mitchell was arrested.

This legal action against the land grabbers at Duluth caused much excitement in pine land, newspaper and political circles in northern Minnesota. It is the culmination of a fight that has been going on over the receivership of the Duluth land office, and involved the politics of the 5th congressional district. When Knute Nelson was elected to congress, Receiver Spalding had to submit to the decapitating process, while R. C. Mitchell, who had worked hard for Nelson by means of the Duluth Tribune, was appointed in Spalding's place. But Mitchell has not yet received his government commission, and his arrest is said to be a movement to prevent his ever getting it and being confirmed in office. It is alleged by the anti-Mitchell partisans that Gordon and Mitchell failed to pay the men whom they hired as pre-emptors for the service rendered, and that they have openly charged their employers with bad faith.

The Duluth Times has an old score to settle with Mitchell of the Tribune, and the Times takes this opportunity to get even with its adversary. It says that it is known that Mitchell has for years been engaged in fraudulent pre-emptions. He was receiver in the land office when the pine boom first struck the Duluth district, and he had the opportunity to become

familiar with the workings of the office. M. C. Russell succeeded Mitchell, though the latter tried hard to retain the place. He became interested with H. L. Gordon in land-grabbing schemes, and they employed Scandinavians and Finlanders in large numbers to pre-empt lands for them. The Times declares that at one time a representative of that paper counted twenty-seven Finlanders in Gordon's and Mitchell's office all waiting for their pay for pre-emption service. There are charges enough, if they can be proved, to convict Mitchell and Gordon of fraudulently obtaining pine lands, but without a doubt the defendants will appear in court with a formidable array of counter-testimony. Mitchell has a powerful political influence to back him, and great moneyed interests are involved on both sides. It is doubtful if either party in the contest can really afford to have the courts tear off the mask that covers the means whereby pine lands have been acquired in northern Minnesota.—*Northwestern Lumberman*.

ABOUT THE BIG CALIFORNIA TREES.

A correspondent of the Philadelphia Bulletin thus descants upon the size and antiquity of some of the California big trees: "We have seen so many illusions. What we take for little hills a half mile away, we find on walking toward them are mountains twenty miles off—and so we go till the dazed traveller is almost ready to take off his clothes and swim, when really the ditch may be jumped across. So with the big trees. "Not so large after all," several of the party said, but when the tape line showed a fair 100 feet round, there was no use in disputing any longer. Imagine a tree standing in one of your 30 feet streets and going right straight up, so that you could only see down the sidewalks on each side, and it will give a fair idea of the enormous size of these trees. There was no room to doubt the size. Then I took to questioning the height, and here I think there is room to question whether they can claim to be the monarchs of the forests by any great degree. I find no measurements in print of the sugar, yellow or balsam fir of these regions. Prof. Whitney had taken a few of the larger trees by triangulation with an instrument. There are about 600 of these monsters, besides innumerable younger ones coming on, and most of them have been singled out for special names. I took one that had been named after our celebrated college, "Harvard," and, by the same process which gave me the figures already noted for the sugar and yellow pine, I had 249 feet as the height of this tree. I have been on the other side, but am now converted. The age has been computed from the annual rings of wood. But some trees make more than one circle of wood a year. We would not compute the age of a cottonwood by its annual rings—and so we said of

these trees that probably they made more than one circle of wood a year—and so said I. Now all our known conifers make but one circle. Why should this be an exception? Well, we wanted the exception to account for its enormous size, as against its supposed age. Well, I found a comparatively young one which had fallen across the wagon road and had to be sawed across. A fire had just scorched the surface cut across and made the rings easy to count. I first estimated the age by the annual tiers of branches, which, however, are not so easy to count in the giant trees as in the true pines. I was sure by this examination, however, that the tree ought to be less than 200 years old. It had 189 rings and a diameter of four feet. This would give about 1,300 years for the largest trees. Thus, though I am not yet persuaded that these trees were growing when the Saviour was on earth, as some have asserted, an age approaching this must be conceded.

ONTARIO FORESTS.

There are, according to Mr. Phipps, in his lately published report on the preserving and replanting of forests, four elevated plateaux or ridges in Ontario. The first of these is that which is known as the Oak Ridges, about thirty miles north of Toronto, and which passes round to the west, coming at Hamilton close to the lake, then going around the head of it and oying away in the Niagara peninsula. If this height of land had been retained in timber, he thinks the benefit to the Province would have been incalculable. The second watershed is that which extends, with a slight curve to the north, from Kingston to Nippissing. To the east of it all streams flow into the Ottawa; to the west into Lake Ontario. Much of the land is still in the hands of the Government, and it would be well he suggests that large masses of forest were preserved along the whole line. Hundreds of thousands and even millions of acres of it might, indeed, well be left in forest, which would be a reservoir of moisture and ensure fertility to the whole of Eastern Ontario. The third watershed is the height of land of Western Ontario, the locality of the great Canadian swamp. Much of it might be reserved for timber. Its central point is one thousand feet above Lake Ontario, and from its sides rivers run into Georgian Bay and lakes Huron, Erie, and Ontario. The Blue Mountains, at the extreme north of the Ontario peninsula, extending from near Collingwood, past Owen Sound, to the north of promontory between Lake Huron and Georgian Bay, is the fourth Plateau, and, as much of it is still in the Government's hands it could be easily preserved in timber. The forest left standing on these ridges would be much more efficacious as storehouses of moisture than a larger amount scattered through the country.—*Montreal Gazette*.