

MAPLE FLOORING.

The secretary of the Maple Flooring Manufacturers' Association of Michigan furnishes interesting facts and figures about that comparatively youthful industry. Architects well remember what a time they used to have in getting a good hardwood floor down. In the first place, it was a long hunt to find the kind and grade of lumber wanted; then, even if machined with unusual care on the best machine to be found, it was far from uniform, owing, it is said, to the fact that the harder woods in passing through caused the machinery to give in some way, so that if one cut off an end of a given piece that appeared all right, it was a chance if it matched well in the other end of the same piece. But after all this, when a workman undertook to complete the dressing process begun by the machine, it seemed as if the troubles had just begun—the cost of laying and dressing smooth by hand would perhaps nearly double the cost of flooring delivered at the building. So, therefore, when the maple flooring, thoroughly dry and well finished by special machinery, was placed on the market it made its way very rapidly. It was true, squared at the ends and so well dressed that no plane need be used after laying, a touch with the cabinet scraper here and there being all that was required. This improved way of placing the goods on the market originated in the west.

Well-made hardwood flooring was at first to be found in maple only, but now several kinds of hardwood are in use. Oak, which is very

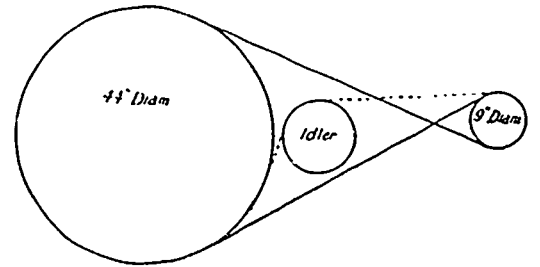
desirable for house floors, was some time in finding its way into the market in this form, if we remember, but now oak is to be had with the rest, and much birch is used, while beech is finding its way into stocks to some extent. Statistics as to output of "maple flooring" probably cover all these varieties, and all thicknesses. Originally most of the output was "¾" stuff, but now quite a bit of "¾" is sold for laying over old house floors, and although this is tongued and grooved, those who lay it recommend it as not weakened thereby so as to give them trouble in putting it down. However, "½" flooring is making its way into the market, and it will be readily seen that if skillfully tongued and grooved this thickness should prove very desirable for house work, for while it would have little durability in soft or loose-grained woods, one would chance it to wear many years in maple. Some 90 per cent. of all flooring sold in the Northwest is "2¼" face, while Eastern states, Ohio, and the export trade, use most of the "3¼" face. One large concern makes "1½" face from strips that will not make "2¼," and sells it at about the same as the "2¼," but a demand for the narrower in large quantities would raise the cost to something like \$5.00 per M. above the cost of "2¼."

Maple appears to stand at the lead of the list for real wearing qualities. It is averse to dampness, and there are places where white oak would stand much longer. Opinions differ as to relative durability of the maple and birch in damp places and beech is too little known to say how it would behave in damp

situations. Oak stains easily, but the experienced housewife has most likely learned that she can have the stains removed from oak more easily than from the others. Owing also to its more open grain, marks and scratches show less in its surface than in the smoother and closer grained woods, while its color is a great advantage to its appearance in house floors. We would guess that beech trees would furnish flooring of more uniform color when laid and finished than either maple or birch.

A BELT PROBLEM.

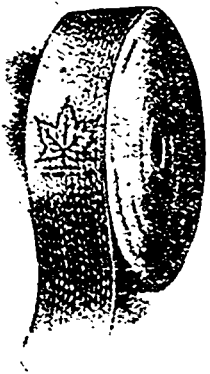
Sketch shows how I overcame the trouble we had with a short cross belt. The drive pulley is 44 inches and the driven pulley 9 inches. The distance between centers is 5 feet 8 inches. I believe every experienced man will admit this would be a hard belt to run. The loose pulley is 1 inch smaller in diameter than the tight one. By placing the



shaft out enough to make the belt run well on the tight pulley, it was simply impossible to keep it on the loose pulley. The full lines show how the belt did cross; the dotted lines show how it crosses now after putting a 12-inch idler on the slack side of belt. We haven't a belt in the shop that runs better, nor is it possible to get one that does.—"C. H. B., in the Wood-Worker."

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