

AMERICAN LUMBER RAFTS.

The first recorded arrival of a raft of white pine lumber at St. Louis was in the spring of 1840, says the *Lumber World*. The raft was run by twenty men and contained 800,000 feet of lumber. The fleet came from near the mouth of the Wisconsin river and was thirty-five days in making the trip. The history of rafting on the Mississippi, however, antedates this period. It goes back to 1831-32. In those days all the rafting was done within 300 miles of the city. E. O. Shephardson, possibly one of the oldest Mississippi river raft pilots, gives it as his opinion that the first lumber raft arrival at St. Louis was in the spring of 1835. He describes the raft as having been 100 feet in length, 30 feet wide, and carrying 150,000 feet. The lumber was yellow pine, cut and rafted in the Gasconade river, about 125 miles from the mouth. The distance from there to St. Louis was 250 miles, and the time required in making the run was seven days. Up to 1840 the principal lumber arriving here in rafts was yellow pine and hardwoods. From 1835 to 1840 the receipts ranged anywhere between 1,500,000 and 3,000,000 feet per week.

In 1840 the receipts of white pine lumber aggregated 3,000,000 feet. The rafting business from that time on had a most remarkable growth, and the following two years numerous saw mill men of the North followed the example of the pioneer raftmen, and the result was that hundreds of men were furnished with work in new field, and the upper river was continually filled, in season, with moving rafts. In 1842, two years after arrival of the first fleet of white pine lumber, the receipts aggregated 75,000,000 feet, which gives a well defined idea of the rapid increase in the interest. The growth continued with each season until 1860, when the rafts landed 200,000,000 feet of white pine lumber at the North St. Louis landings. During the four years following there was a slight interruption, the result of the civil war. The urgent demand for lumber, however, during that bloody period, brought many new capitalists into the business, and some of them retired, after the war, with large fortunes. From 1865 to 1872-3 the raftsmen saw their best days. In 1866 the Schulenburg & Boeckeler Lumber Company invented a patent steam windlass, which enabled a steamboat to handle a raft of from 1,000,000 to 3,000,000 feet. This invention brought with it a great reduction in the cost of running a raft, reduced the danger of wrecking it, and also reduced the number of men required to handle it. The Mollie Whetmore was the first steamer to attempt to run a raft in this way, and she proved a success. Other steamers followed in the business, and last summer there were 160 boats employed in the trade, the aggregate value of which is put down at \$1,000,000.

The average raft boat carries a crew of 18, which includes the mate and captain. A good stout raft boat is able to push a fleet containing as much as 3,500,000 feet of lumber. To move this vast quantity of lumber by rail would require seven trains of fifty cars each. The time necessary to tow such a raft from La Crosse, Wis., 700 miles north, to St. Louis, is generally fourteen days, although runs have been frequently made in less time. Nearly all the white pine lumber received in St. Louis comes from the Wisconsin, Black, and Chippewa rivers. The rafting season opens in the spring as soon as the ice runs out. The first raft of the season, from the Upper Mississippi, usually arrives here at the beginning of May, and the season winds up about November 15th. The local season, however, has been known to extend into December. With the advent of raft boats, the days of floating rafts reached their end, and the business to day, compared with its former greatness, is but a shadow, there being very few floating rafts now seen. Where it formerly required two months' time and 35 men to run a raft from Wisconsin to St. Louis, a steamboat now does the work in fourteen days, with the aid of 18 men, thereby reducing the cost more than one half. In the best days of floating rafts the cost of running one from Reed's Landing or Stillwater to St. Louis would reach as high as \$4,000.

From 1865 to 1870 lumber rafts were frequent-

ly taken as far south as Memphis and Vicksburg. Now not more than two rafts in a year go south of St. Louis, and these only as far as St. Mary's and Chester. The longest distance ever run by a raft on the Mississippi was from La Crosse, Wis., to New Orleans. The trip was made in 1870, and this lumber raft was the only one that ever went to New Orleans from the Upper Mississippi. The fleet was made up of ten strings, or about 1,100,000 feet. It was owned by the Gruner Brothers' Lumber Company, and was valued at \$30,000. Mr. E. O. Shephardson, at present raft superintendent of the Ganahl Lumber Company, piloted the fleet as far out as Vicksburg, where a Lower Mississippi pilot took charge. The run from La Crosse to New Orleans was made in ten weeks. There are eight regular raft boats coming to this port which bring in each season about 150,000,000 feet. This does not include what outside steamers tow in here, which swells the figures to 200,000,000 feet. The principal lumber landings are located in North St. Louis, and take in the principal part of the wharf from North Market Street to Bissell's Point. The landings are controlled by the Knapp, Stout & Co. Company, Eau Claire Lumber Company, Gruner Brothers' Lumber Company, Henry Lange, the Schulenburg & Boeckeler Lumber Company, and I. G. Buckley. The landing in the southern part of the city is in charge of the Ganahl Lumber Company.

These are dry details that do not by any means suggest the departed greatness of the days of floating rafts. The captain of a fleet was, as it were, monarch of all he surveyed. He was the political, religious and civic boss of the men in his employ, and he lorded it over them in a majestic, but, at the same time, quite a humane way. Usually a man of magnificent build, the shagginess of his exterior gives no idea of the bigness of his heart. Heavy-bearded, top booted, and filled with the bracing health of the riveries, his presence inspired awe for the moment. As soon as his mouth opened and the pleasantness of his coarse voice fell upon the ear, the feeling of sublimity gave way to one of admiration, and soon he held your heart in his hand. There were, of course, some rough captains in the old days, but they have quite perished out of memory, and only the agreeable characters remain behind.

There were many exciting times in the lives of the old rafters. When they made the shoot of the rapids there was danger in their positions, but, just like the men who court death in the log booms, these old chaps braved any danger, and their days and nights were often full of the enthusiasm and excitement that are born of the proximity of trouble. There were not, as a matter of fact, many such thrilling experiences as that related by the literary liar who wrote the "Pike County Folks," but there were some almost equally interesting. Shooting the rapids was frequently the least dangerous of their exploits. Pulling the channel or steering shy of a bridge called for as much care and coolness of nerve as any other effort put forward by the raftsmen. The forward sweeps had to be worked with great skill, as the slightest error of judgment or misapplication of strength might prove fatal to the raft and injurious to the fleet. The cook was the canonized saint of the party. The sound of his dinner gong was sweet and welcome to the raftsmen's ear, and it always got a kind greeting from an overwhelming appetite. The cook's hut, with its V shape, its smoking stove-pipe and bough-trimmed apex—the temple in which about the only worship the rafters knew took place. Here they worshipped three times a day regularly. The culinary high priest took pleasure in tickling the palates of his devotees, and when at work, whether peeling potatoes on the shady side of his hut, or stirring the huge pots of boiling meat, kept their individual and collective tastes in view, and tried to make the meals and meal hours pleasurable to all. The time past so agreeably that it was really felt to be a moment of sadness when the "breaking-up" came and the rafts were picked to pieces, to be piled away in the lumber yards. Then their came the partings for awhile, often for ever, for in the early days raftmen were as human as men are now and had their frailties. Whisky often

brought on fights, and then the knife and pistol came into play. Many a rafter died a violent death, and the story of his taking off furnished half-hours of gossip on future trips for those who had known and associated with the unfortunate fellow.

VALUE OF BAND SAW BLADES.

That a good blade is cheap at any price and an inferior one is dear, are propositions which no one with experience will dispute. To this we may add that a good blade operated on a properly constructed machine has a capacity for wear, and will do more work than the "same value" represented in a circular saw. The purchaser cannot, from the appearance of a band saw blade, tell much of its quality or temper, nor can he do so by experiment without injuring the blade, and he must therefore depend mainly upon the good faith, reputation and experience of those from whom he purchases.

In order to have good work done, it is absolutely necessary that the saw should be kept perfectly true in every respect.

To keep saws true, the points of the teeth, just before filing, should be jointed with a stone or emery brick.

Then comes setting. This should be produced by blows and not by bending. Setting by a blow, with the proper kind of a machine, is done very quickly and the teeth are set perfectly uniform.

Then, after setting, if the saw is touched up with a file, it will be in good order.

Now, as to the use. Do not attempt to use a small circle with a wide blade. Keep your saw sharp, with a good set in it, and you will get good wear out of it.—*The Wood-Worker*.

INDIFFERENT LENGTHS.

"Speaking of tricks in inspection," said Mr. Western Millman, "I was in Boston once, and dropped into the office of a hardwood dealer that I had some acquaintance with in a business way. While I was sitting in the office word came that there was five cars of walnut on the track from Mr. John Jones, of Jonesville, in a western state. Mr. So-and-so called up the surveyor general's office on the telephone and asked the party at the other end of the line to send 'Dick' over to inspect the walnut.

"The next day I went up into Vermont to visit some friends, but in a little over a week struck Boston on my way home, and stepped into Mr. So-and-so's office again to see if I couldn't sell him some lumber. While I was there who should bounce in but Mr. Jones, of Jonesville. It seems that he had received the report of Dick's inspection of that walnut, and it was so unsatisfactory that he determined to go to Boston and investigate the matter for himself. He waited not on the order of his going but went.

"And he was mad. As I said, he bounced into Mr. So-and-so's office, and opened up on him at once, without the ceremony of an introduction. He would be dashed if he would stand such dashed robbery. He wouldn't take any such money for his good lumber, and wanted his lumber back and was bound to have it re-inspected. Mr. So-and-so talked very suavely to him, told him that the lumber was inspected by a sworn surveyor who was under bond to make a true report, and that there could be no material difference between the report sent and a new survey.

"That didn't have any effect on Mr. Jones. He demanded the return of his lumber, and adhered to his purpose to have it re-surveyed.

"Mr. So-and-so made various ineffectual offers of compromise, and finally took back his check and transferred the lumber to Mr. Jones. Jones then went out, but he had no sooner got the door shut than Mr. So-and-so turned to his partner and said, 'I have got to be away this afternoon. Won't you step over to the surveyor general's office and tell him to put Dick on that job when Jones gets around there?'

"I suppose they did not think I heard the remark; but they did not make any great effort at secrecy and besides they would not

remember that I had any previous knowledge of the transaction.

"I am not given to interfering with another man's business, but the more I thought of this the more I wished I could find Mr. Jones and tell him what I know. I got back to my hotel just in time for supper and went into the dining room and sat down at a table. I was thinking how I could find out where he was stopping when who should take a seat right opposite me but Mr. Jones himself. I introduced myself to him by saying I was so unfortunate as to be a western hardwood manufacturer as well as himself, and that though he did not remember me, I was in So-and-so's office when called that afternoon. Then I told him all I knew and advised him to go around to the surveyor general's office in the morning and demand that another man be put on that job in place of Dick, who had already been assigned to it.

"He asked me to go around with him to see how it came out. I agreed, with the understanding that he was not to disclose his real reason for wishing the change. Well, to make a long story short, when he made his request for a change of inspectors, the surveyor general was much surprised; said there could be no material difference; all the surveyors were under oath, etc. Mr. Jones said that it was a personal matter with him; he had had a personal difficulty with Mr. Richard—, and that if all the surveyors would give the same inspection it could make no difference with the result or with the office. The general said that certainly that if it were merely a personal difficulty he could have another man; and then assigned a surveyor waiting in the room to the job in place of 'Dick.' The new inspection was very satisfactory to Mr. Jones. It gave him about \$250 more for his lumber than the original inspection."

This is a true tale by one who was there.—*Northwestern Lumberman*.

THE CENTIPEDE IS QUICK.

Several Mexicans were in camp at the mouth of the Medina river in Texas, and were lying about the fire, when one of them, Selester Cruca, saw a large centipede, fully nine inches long, travelling slowly over his leg. Knowing that the least motion would make it sink its claws into his skin, without moving his leg, he got out his revolver and waited until the insect had almost reached his knee, slowly putting the mouth of his pistol to its head, he pulled the trigger, and the centipede was gone. But the centipede's claws are quicker than gunpowder, and Cruca began to cramp in a few minutes. The trace of the insect along his leg turned a brownish yellow, and the place where it was killed swelled up frightfully. Cruca rapidly grew worse, and in a little over four hours afterwards he died in great agony. But the most singular part of the story is that the bullet from Cruca's revolver cut a small nick in the foreleg of a mule that was tethered near by, and at daylight the next morning the mule was also dead, with the leg so swollen that the skin had burst in several places.—*Laramie Boomcrang*.

A Singular Discovery.

While making improvements on land in Carver, Mass., a singular discovery was recently made. The workmen disturbed a small spring and some days afterward it was found to be throwing out a light substance, which on being examined, proved to be very fine silica. It was tested for polishing purposes and found to be excellent for cleaning silver, leaving not a scratch and giving a beautiful surface. The spring makes considerable deposit in a day. Examination proves that there is a large quantity of the silica, and other small springs have been struck, which can be made to discharge if given vent.

It Is Really Consumption?

Many a case supposed to be radical lung disease is really one of liver complaint and indigestion, but, unless that diseased liver can be restored to healthy action, it will so clog the lungs with corrupting matter as to bring on their speedy decay, and then indeed we have consumption, which is scrofula of the lungs in its worst form. Nothing can be more happily calculated to nip this danger in the bud than Dr. Pierce's "Golden Medical Discovery." By druggists.