



"THERE is one characteristic of birch timber which, I believe, few have observed," remarked the manager of a planing mill not far from Toronto. "If you notice," he continued, "you will observe that birch checks both ways, while all other woods check only in one direction. This is one of the simplest ways of distinguishing birch timber when piled with other woods and only the ends of the logs are visible. Just watch in future and see if I am not correct."

* * *

A LUMBER paper tells a rather good story about the Hon. Philetus Sawyer, of Oshkosh, Wis., who has not only made a fortune out of white pine lumber, but is one of the best-known men in the northwestern lumber states. He recently attended the country fair at Omro, Wis., took in the fair and drank country fair lemonade. At one of the lemonade stands there was a boy about twelve years of age tending the lemonade barrel and he was not acquainted with the senator. The lemonade was good and Mr. Sawyer wanted a second glass, but the boy refused to give it to him until he had paid for the first glass. He paid for it and took the second. Some time afterwards the boy found out who it was to whom he had refused credit, and wrote Mr. Sawyer a letter of apology, in reply to which Mr. Sawyer said that he had done just right. The sequel of the affair is that Mr. Sawyer has sent for the boy and will educate him.

* * *

THERE is located on one of the islands near Great Manitoulin a saw mill which has an interesting history. The Mississippi Valley Lumberman tells us that the plant was originally located in Detour, Mich., and was the property of a firm of Frenchmen whose capital was limited, but who had been offered inducements to locate there. Everything went well for a time, but the other parties of the contract at length failed to carry out their part of the bargain and the firm saw ruin staring them in the face. They employed a desperate and very novel expedient, but it proved entirely successful. They selected a new site across the border on a large island having a bay so completely landlocked as to be entirely hidden from ordinary observation. Then, selecting their time, they cut the telegraph lines out of the town and began loading the mill on a large scow. Before they got away telegraph communication was restored and a tug hastened to the rescue and gave chase to the runaway tug and scow. As the island chain was being approached the pursuer almost overhauled the heavily loaded scow, when it was found that the Canadian line had been passed and the chase had to be abandoned. When the parties who claimed the mill returned to the search they had great difficulty in locating it. The only thing which could be done then was to seize the plant as contraband, which was done by the Canadian government. It was sold for duty at Ottawa and the runaway owners bid it in at a

low figure and it has been busily at work in its new location for five or six years.

* * *

Mr. W. B. Tindall, of the Parry Sound Lumber Company, is not altogether in favor of an export duty on logs; in fact, he conscientiously believes that the whole question of export duties is wrong. He says: "The Government sell their timber and get a good price for it, what more do they want? With regard to the claim that the manufacturing of our logs should be done in Canada, that is a matter which will eventually right itself, as shown by the fact that the Michigan people are now erecting mills on this side, where they can secure cheaper and better labor. Too many people apparently forget or are ignorant of the fact that as soon as an export duty is imposed upon saw-logs by the Canadian government, the same duty on lumber as existed under the McKinley bill comes in force. Apart from those who are directly interested in securing the imposition of an export duty on saw-logs, the persons who are advocating the measure are not conversant with the facts. We should remember that Canada is a long narrow country, and that the interests of other provinces besides Ontario must be considered. Then, again, the Americans are making unnecessary noise about the flooding of the United States market with Canadian lumber. Why, the importations from Canada are much less than the receipts at the city of Chicago alone." I observe that for the fiscal year ending June 30, 1896, according to the figures of the United States Treasury Department, 756,102,000 feet of lumber were exported from Canada to the United States, while the yearly receipts at Chicago are nearly double that amount.

* * *

Mr. L. O. Armstrong, colonization agent of the Canadian Pacific Railway, returned early in November from a visit to the west. He was in the State of Michigan on election day. "Although the business men of Michigan rejoiced at Major McKinley's election," said Mr. Armstrong, "they appreciate the services rendered the Republican candidate by the sound money Democrats, and for this reason it is not thought probable that an extreme protective policy will be resorted to when the tariff comes to be framed."

"How is business in Michigan?" Mr. Armstrong was asked.

"Before the election," he replied, "business was in a terribly depressed state. In fact, it could hardly have been worse. The Chicago Lumber Company, one of the largest milling concerns in the State, had not paid a cent of money to their men for over a year, they being obliged to accept coupons, which were changed for goods at the company's stores. This was the deplorable state of affairs in Michigan, and, in fact, all over the country previous to the Presidential election."

"And are things any better now?"

"The feeling improved at once. The company I have just alluded to raised the price of lumber fifty cents per thousand feet all round, and merchants reported that orders began at once to come in."

Mr. Armstrong states that there is a strong feeling in Michigan in favor of putting a duty on Canadian lumber, but he thinks this influence will be counteracted by the New England States, where Canadian lumber is in such demand, and

also by the knowledge that an export duty would be imposed on Canadian logs. Be this as it may, Mr. Armstrong added that Canadians should begin to look to Europe for a lumber market.

* * *

A LUMBER dealer who formerly resided in Toronto, but is now located in Georgia, recently paid a visit to his native city to renew acquaintances, and incidentally ran across a representative of one of the daily papers, when the following conversation ensued:

"Will you have something?" said he. The scribe never said a word, but over a pipe and a glass—or maybe two—a pleasant hour of the evening passed quickly away.

"How do you like Georgia?" asked the scribe.

"All right, except for the pigs," returned the lumberman.

"They have only one kind of pig down there, you know—the 'three-row' pig. They call him that because he can reach through a rail fence and dig up the third row of sweet potatoes." And the scribe laughed while the lumberman quietly pulled at his pipe.

"I went out one day to see about buying a timber limit," he continued. "Down there, you know, we cut logs all the year round, and the greatest bother we have is from water overflowing the ground so we can't cut during the rains. Well, I reached the place and went out to look over the ground."

"The owner of it solemnly assured me the water never came up near the timber at all. I could see water-marks about ten feet up from the ground on all the trees in one bottom, and I asked him what caused those funny marks up there."

"Oh, just the hogs scratching their backs, was the answer."

"I never said a word until we went to his house and had dinner. In the evening we were smoking on the big verandah."

"Waal, ah you goin' teh buy my timbah?"

"I thought a minute, and then I just said: 'No, but I'll take all the hogs you've got.'"

THE MOISTURE IN WOOD.

MICROSCOPICAL investigation is said to prove that the pores of wood invite the passage of moisture in the direction of the timber's growth, but repel it in the opposite direction, and this is supposed to account for the phenomenon which has been so often noticed and which is so commonly a mystery, namely, the fact of two pieces of timber sawn from the same section of a tree sometimes appearing to possess very variable degrees of durability. It is found that if the wood, say, of a gate post, is placed right end up the moisture in the soil will affect it, but the rain falling on the top will do little harm; if, on the other hand, the butt end of a tree is placed uppermost the top of the post will decay, because the moisture of the atmosphere will penetrate the pores of the wood more rapidly in such a position. The fact, so familiar, that the staves of a wooden tub appear to absorb moisture irregularly some getting quite sodden while others are comparatively dry and seemingly almost impervious to moisture is because the dry staves are in position as the tree grew, but the saturated ones are reversed.