

SCARCITY OF OAK TIMBER IN EUROPE.

From the New York Post. Oak timber is disappearing in Europe with great rapidity. France with an annual production of 1,320,000,000 of gallons of wine, is especially injured by the change. In 1857 she imported 26,000,000 of staves, in 1866 she imported 63,000,000 at a cost of \$9,000,000. Most of the timber came from Austria. France requires every year 1,500,000 cubic feet of oak timber for wine casks, 600,000 for her fleet, 150,000 for railway cars, and 750,000 for building purposes. In 1826 oak staves were worth six cents each of our money; in 1866 they were worth fourteen cents each. In 1826 the total value of imported staves was \$4,000,000; to-day the total value was \$30,000,000. A similar increase in the importation of oak for the next thirty years would probably double the present price.

When Caesar marched into Gaul he found two thirds of its surface covered with forests; now the forests cover but one-seventh of its surface. France, after losing Alsace and Lorraine, 135,000,000 of acres, of which 20,000,000 are covered with forests. Of these timber lands, the state, the commune and public institutions own 7,500,000 acres, the remainder belonging to private persons. M. Thiers, in a speech made in the Corps Legislatif last year, said there was danger that timber for building purposes would disappear, and urged that no state forests should be sold.

In Norway the Central Administration of Forests declares that it is necessary to stop the cutting down of timber. Norway, Sweden and England not only furnish pine wood to England and the European countries on the Atlantic, but to Rio and Australia. Their exports of timber have doubled during the last ten years, while the local consumption is five times that of France.

In France, since the time of Colbert in 1669, no oak has been felled until full-grown, that is, until within thirty years of its probable decay. This rule was confirmed by the law of August, 1827. Near the end of the last century the Forest laws were changed, excepting this protection for oaks. Up to that time the production exceeded the consumption; but since then speculation has arisen, and the tall trees have been cut down. In the Commune forests the destruction has been slower, although the valuable trees are disappearing. Oaks of nine feet in circumference abounded in the state forests at the beginning of the present century. Now they are rarely found. The consumption of oak timber in France has doubled during the last fifty years. In 1866 \$50,000,000 worth were consumed, of which \$3,000,000 worth were imported, against \$25,000,000 worth consumed in 1820, of which \$2,000,000 worth were imported.

The same enormous consumption is going on all over Europe. France, with 40,000,000 of inhabitants, still possesses 20,000,000 acres of woodland, while Italy, with 25,000,000 inhabitants, has 1,250,000 acres. England has no heavy timber but her traditional oaks, and her imports are twice as large as those of France. Her distant colonies furnish very little timber, a special restrictive law having been enacted in India, March 1, 1866, to preserve the forests from destruction.

North Germany is rich in forests, but within half a century she has begun to cut down young trees, and is now importing from France. Austria has sold her forests at auction since the introduction of railways. Foreign

speculators have thus cut down to the stumps forests in the Cracow and Slavonian districts formerly inaccessible. This timber is sent by the way of the Sava and Julian Alps to Trieste, to be shipped thence to Western Europe. These woodlands contain but 250,000 acres. The timber is now nearly swept off from them. Five years ago one of these forests of magnificent growth was sold at about \$18 an acre. Spain and Greece are almost absolutely woodless.

In Sicily, Mount Aetna was called "neni-rosa," wooded, by the Romans, because of a belt of two hundred and fifty thousand acres of forest which surrounded it midway to the top. Now there is nothing to be seen but the bare rock.

The condition of the forests of Europe shows the importance of this subject, and the need that exists of giving it careful attention in this country.

The German Government has just issued a decree creating sixty-three forest "administrations" in Alsace and Lorraine, each to superintend fourteen thousand acres of land thus following up with vigor Napoleon's measures for preserving the forests.

ARTILLERY INSPECTION

The first brigade Halifax Garrison Artillery, as fine a body of young men as one can well imagine, under command of Colonel Mitchell, assembled at the Drill Shed last evening, according to notice. The brigade was formed into open column in rear of No. 1 Battery, when the Colonel, accompanied by Capt. Wainwright, Major. Albro, and Adj. Bland, passed along the front and rear of every man, as also those of the Band. After the inspection the Brigade was formed into close column on No. 3 battery, when Colonel Mitchell took the opportunity to address the men. He warmly congratulated them on their neat and soldierlike appearance, thanked them most sincerely for the zeal and attention they had displayed during the past three years, and trusted that every man present would sign the roll for three years more. The gallant Colonel alluded to the subject of camp duty, and said the matter would be brought before the Brigade previous to re-signing. He referred to the interest evinced by the Dominion Government in our militia, and said they only required to be reminded of our wants when they would be promptly attended to. Colonel Mitchell concluded his well-timed remarks by stating that the pay was now in the hands of the respective Commanding officers, but that no man whose drill was incomplete, would receive his money until he had complied with the statute, and an opportunity would be afforded them of doing so during this and next week.

The Colonel's remarks were to the point, and attentively listened to throughout by all present. At the conclusion, the Band of the Brigade under Prof. E. R. James, struck up a lively quickstep, and at intervals during the inspection, played some appropriate airs. The Brigade was then dismissed, and the Dartmouth battery marched to the steamboat wharf, headed by the band, while Capt. Coleman's battery returned to the inner drill room to receive their pay. The remainder of the Brigade will be paid off during the present week. Colonel Mitchell has every reason to be proud of the fine body of men over whom he is placed, and we believe that no more efficient or popular Commanding Officer stands in the Dominion to-day.—Halifax Citizen.

ACQUISITIONS OF ENGLAND IN THE EAST.

The rumoured purchase of the numerous islands on the confines of our Indian possessions in the East by the Imperial Government, from the Dutch, affords another instance of the sagacity of English statesmen. The Islands of Singapore, Malacca and Penang, with a few others of lesser importance, have been in the possession of the East India Company for more than 50 years, and long before the charter of the East India Company was withdrawn, and the Imperial Government assumed direct management of the affairs of the East Indies, these islands were directly under the control of the Imperial authorities. The great island of Java with its capital and chief sea port, Batavia, distant from Singapore about 48 hours by steambot, owned by the Dutch, has for years yielded immense quantities of the staple commodities of trade in that part of the East, such as rice, coffee, sugar, gutta percha, gambier, caoutchouc, and a great quantity of drugs and spices for the European markets; the policy of the Dutch being exclusive, the carrying trade has been conducted solely in Dutch vessels. The Islands now in question are situated between the coast of Java and the Bay of Bengal, the Indian Ocean, reaching nearly as far to the south of the Equator as Torres Strait, which separates the coast of Guinea from Australia. Most of these islands produces large quantities of spice and other articles of merchandise, similar to the island of Java, the larger one being inhabited by a mixed Malay and Indo Malay race. Ships bound inwards to China and Singapore from the Indian Ocean always stop at Sunda Strait, but steamers and sailing vessels often bear up to the Bay of Bengal, leaving this group of Islands to the eastward, to reach the Islands of Penang and Singapore, thus obviating the necessity of casting anchor at the Head of Java or Sunda Straights.

The great island of Sumatra, the principal one of this group of islands, appears to be the great object of the English authorities, heretofore like Guinea, it has been a terra incognita to the commercial world; but about 18 years ago a thorough exploration was made of those islands, and the coast's lines thoroughly surveyed by Commander Richards and a staff of competent officers in the surveying schooner Saracen. Geological explorations revealed the fact that gold existed in Sumatra, and what was of more special importance large coal deposits of a superior quality were discovered. Guinea is separated from the coast of Australia by a narrow strait called Torres Strait. A number of islands scattered here and there in this last-named strait have recently received the attention of the Australian authorities, and the Prince of Wales' Island, one of the largest, has been found to possess a soil and climate well adapted for agricultural purposes. At the point of departure from Torres Strait, is Booby Island in the Indian Ocean. This island has for a long time served the double purpose of being selected as a station for shipwrecked sailors, as well as a rendezvous for obtaining supplies, and ships passing through these straits are required to pay attention to any signal that may be visible, and if short of provisions may take any reasonable quantity sufficient to carry them to the nearest port, and should there be any shipwrecked sailors they are supposed to bring them off. From this island the high land of Sumatra is visible on a clear day, and sailing vessels, especially steamers, sail close to its shores. The view from the deck of a vessel is grand beyond