## THE FOREST SKY-SCRAPERS OF AUSTRALIA.

The tallest of California's "big trees" is 325 feet in height, but among the great gum trees of Australia many specimens are more than 400 feet in height, and one, which was felled in southeast Australia, measured 471 feet—the talest tree on record. Gum trees grow very rapidly. — Popular Science Monthly.

## MUST HAVE TIMBER.

Great Britain has heretofore relied on Norway, Sweden and Russia for her timber. With Russia under German control she is turning her attention to America. Canada sold her some $14,000,000 a year before the war, but with a shortage of ships this trade has ceased. During the past two years she has cut her own forests remorselessly and imported two-thirds of her supplies from Baltic ports. The rate across the Atlantic will be double the Baltic rate, but she must have the timber.

## WE ARE NOW GROWING OUR OWN CAMPHOR IN FLORIDA.

The first and only bearing camphor plantation of any size in this coutnry is located at Satsuma, Fla. It contains over 2,000 acres of camphor trees, which last year yielded over 10,000 pounds of crude camphor. This year it is expected that the yield will be many times this amount. Florida has several other other plantations, which will soon come into bearing. Many more trees are being planted, and camphor may soon become profitable. — Popular Science Monthly.

## ECONOMIC VALUE OF SUNFLOWER.

The discovery of the economic value of the sunflower, a native of this country, is chiefly due to a foreign people. In Russia to-day the sunflower has become one of the chief products of agricultural sources. Until recent years the sunflower has been grown in this country chiefly as an ornament, and for its seeds, which were used for poultry and bird food. The cultivation of this plant on a commercial scale now forms the latest industry that has engaged the attention of the department of agriculture. Already it has been proved that the sunflower can be grown not only successfully, but also with great profit for fuel, fertilizer and fodder over very extensive areas in the United States.

## WOOD OIL IN COMMERCE.

Wood oil has many uses. It is used as an illuminant, an ingredient in concrete, an adulterant in the manufacture of lacquer varnish, and when mixed with lime and bamboo shavings it is used by the Chinese in calking their boats. Chinese or Indian ink is made from the soot resulting from the burning of the oil or the fruit husks. The product is also used as a dressing for leather, in the manufacture of soap, and as a varnish for fine furniture. In foreign countries wood oil is chiefly used for the manufacture of varnish and cheap gums. Other oils require a higher and more expensive quality of gum in order that the resulting varnish be of equal grade. This feature, together with the rapidity with which wood oil varnish dries, has caused the demand for the product to increase steadily.

## PULPWOOD STATISTICS.

H. D. Bean, of the Abitibi Power & Paper Company, in a recent address here on "The Pulp and Newsprint Paper Industry in Canada," spoke of the fixing of the price on newsprint as having stopped the expansion of the pulp and paper industry in Canada for the time being; stopped the export in increasing quantities to the United States, and stopped extensions projected in various mills. Two thousand tons of paper daily was the demand from the United States for Canadian paper, he said, and 250 tons of newsprint every 24 hours were required to furnish Canadian newspapers. Mr. Bean said nearly $160,000,000 was the investment in the 100 mills in Canada. It took the pulpwood from approximately 60,000 acres to supply the demands of Canada alone for a year, he said, but he believed Canada had 350,000 square miles of pulpwood limits, and 60,000 acres taken out would not make a noticeable inroad.

## WAR AND THE COCOANUT.

We've had no end of surprises in relation to this war. The submarine has revolutionized naval warfare. The aeroplane has become the eyes of the army. A gun that shoots 75 miles has popped up suddenly and we have promise of seeing one that will send a messenger of death and destruction 100 miles. Armies now fight each other with flame and gas and there are rumors of a device that manufactures lightning and will send bolts of death more deadly and devastating than those with which Jove bombards the earth at times. But who in his wildest imaginings ever supposed the humble cocoanut would vault to eminence in the field of Mars?

And yet it is so. Henceforth the cocoanut must be included in the list of munitions.

The cocoanut is the answer to the poisonous gas attack. With a sufficient supply of cocoanuts the Allies can tell Emperor Wilhelm to shoot all the poisonous gas he wishes over the trenches at them. The cocoanut makes laughing gas of poisonous gas.

In the gas masks which the soldiers wear as protection against gas attacks there is a certain quantity of charcoal, the ordinary charcoal of various woods. Charcoal has a remarkable absorptive action on gases. The charcoal now used is sufficiently powerful to absorb gas for 30 minutes and protect the mask wearer, but after that time it loses its virtue and unless more charcoal is put in at once it becomes a menace to the man with the mask.

Someone has discovered that charcoal made of the hull of the cocoanut has nearly 18 times the absorptive power of ordinary charcoal and that a man with a mask loaded with cocoanut charcoal can be safe against the most poisonous of gas for nearly 10 hours.

As a result of this discovery thousands of tons of cocoanut charcoal will be shipped to France to be used in the masks of the men facing the German horde.

It is going to cost a fortune to get this brand of charcoal for, to save cargo space, it is likely that the cocoanut hulls will be cooked in the tropics and the meat and the milk of the nuts cast away until such time as conditions make it possible to recover the full values.—Commerce and Finance.

## BLOTTERS.

Even to-day there are a few old-fashioned people who use sand instead of blotting paper. Stationers once in a while have a call for a "sand box."

The sand box is a very ancient contrivance. It somewhat resembles a pepper box, but has a concave top. When the sand has been sprinkled over a freshly written page to dry the ink, the overplus is turned back into the receptacle.

The method is primitive, but it must be said that sand does the work a whole lot better than much of the blotting paper one buys. The latter ought to be made of cotton rags, but too often the material is wood pulp, which lacks absorbent quality.

The sand box went out of use at about the same time as the quill pen. In old times, for the purpose, there was a special demand for a fine black sand of uniform grain that came from Lake George, in New York State.

Excellent blotters are made of a porous kind of stone formed of sediment deposited in hot springs of Missouri. Very light in weight, it soaks up ink more readily than any bibulous paper. In fact, such mineral blotters do the work so well that it is surprising they have not come into more common use. —Philadelphia Public Ledger.

## STRONG TIMBER.

The Journal of the Royal Institute of British Architects reports that tests made by the United States Ferest Products' Laboratory and by the Canadian Forest Service indicate that timber from the United States is far superior in strength to that of Canada, Norway, Russia or any of the Baltic countries.

## THE BOOKS OF 1917.

The necessary chart has been arranged by Fred E. Woodward, of Washington, D. C., to show at a glance the proportional number of books published in each class by the size and position of blocks. Thus, fiction is the largest, 922, but it is hard prestby sociology and economics with 902, and general works and miscellaneous are the smallest, with 77 tities, all of the intermediate ones occupying their respective places. There are interesting stories connected with many of these classes, notably in sociology and economics, poetry and drama, science,both applied and mathematical, philosophy, law, and education, all of which illuminate the progress of the American people.

The total number of books published in the United States during the year 1917 was 10,060, a decrease of 385 from the total of 1916, which was 10,445. Changes have taken place in our literary output during our first year in the war. Various classes of books have been affected, favorably or otherwise. The loss of 385 is scattered through fourteen of twenty-four classes or divisions, while ten classes record gains.

In 1908 there were published in the United States 9,254 books; in 1917 the number published was 10,060. In the first of the war years, 1915, the number dropped to 9,734. In 1916 it rose to 10,445. This was only a few titles more than the number of books published last year. The publication figures of 1917 thus compare favorably with three of the years contained in this decade, and actually show an increase under war conditions.