IN THE LIMELIGHT

VAN VALKENBURG IS JUDGE

Judge Arba S. Van Valkenburgh, recently appointed United States district judge, western division of Missouri, is one of the youngest jurists on the federal bench. He is only 48 years of age, but his friends say this will not prevent him from making an enviable record.

Mr. Van Valkenburgh succeeded Senator Warner as United States district attorney for the western district of Missouri in 1905 and was reappointed by President Taft in December, 1909. He had previously served seven years as assistant to Major Warner in that office. He was born in Syracuse, N. Y., in 1862. When he was seven years old his parents removed to Illinois and later to Michigan. He was graduated from the University of Michigan in 1884, attaining high rank as a scholar.

Mr. Van Valkenburgh went to Kansas City in 1885 and entered the law offices of Dobson, Douglas and Trimble, being admitted to the Jackson county bar in 1888. The same year he formed a law partnership with D. J. Haff. He was married in 1889 to Miss Grace Ingold of Kansas City.

Mr. Van Valkenburgh was appointed assistant district attorney by Major Warner in 1898, succeeding William Draffen. Upon Major Warner's election to the senate in 1905 President Roosevelt appointed him to the place he since has held.

Law came naturally to Mr. Van Valkenburgh. His father, Lawrence Van Valkenburgh, was a justice of the peace back in New York in the early 60's.

Friends of the newly appointed judge say that at the department of justice in Washington Mr. Van Valkenburgh was considered as ranking among the ablest United States district attorneys in the country.

As United States district attorney, Mr. Van Valkenburgh first attracted national attention in the prosecution of all the packing companies to compel them to comply with the interstate commerce laws regarding the shipment of meats for export. He brought the suit in this jurisdiction and won it before Judge McPherson, sitting for Judge Philips.

POINDEXTER IN LIMELIGHT

Representative Miles Poindexter of Washington, candidate for the United States senate, whose cause has been espoused by Theodore Roosevelt, was born in Memphis, Tenn., fifty-two years ago and has lived in Washington nineteen years. He has served only one term in congress and has been identified with the insurgents, which makes the action of Colonel Roosevelt all the more important to national politics.

Mr. Poindexter has been a political foe of Richard A. Ballinger, secretary of the interior in the Taft cabinet, with whom Gifford Pinchot, former chief forester and friend of Roosevelt, has had a feud for some time.

The Washington congressman visited Colonel Roosevelt at Sagamore Hill a few days ago and came away in jubilant spirits. Roosevelt had promised to aid him in his fight for the senate and he had a right to feel happy, for help from Roosevelt means help of the right kind and Poindexter needed it.

Mr. Poindexter was educated at Fancy Hill academy, Rockbridge county, Va., and at Washington and Lee university, Lexington, Va., in both the academic and law courses. He located at Wallawalla, Wash., in 1891 and began the practise of law. He was elected prosecuting attorney of Wallawalla county in 1892 and in 1897 moved to Spokane. He was assistant prosecuting attorney for Spokane six years and in 1904 was elected judge of the superior court and remained on the bench until nominated for congress in the newly created third district of Washington. He was elected by a majority of 15,000.

When Secretary Ballinger learned that Colonel Roosevelt had promised to lend his influence to the Poindexter cause he expressed the belief that the former president had been misled as to the situation in Washington. The seat in the senate to which Representative Poindexter aspires is now held by Samuel Henry Piles, who is not in the race for re-election.

GIVES MILLIONS FOR BOYS

David J. Ranken, Jr., one of the wealthiest men of St. Louis, has acted literally upon that much-advertised saying of Andrew Carnegie, that "he who dies rich dies disgraced," and has turned over his entire fortune, estimated at a little more than $3,000,000, to the David J. Ranken, Jr., School of Mechanical Trades, which he founded, reserving only $3,000 a year for his own modest uses.

The school was established a year ago with an endowment of $500,000, its purpose being to give boys over fifteen years old a trade education for a nominal sum. The school has prospered and to amplify its usefulness the additional endowment by Mr. Ranken has been made.

Mr. Ranken, who was born in Londonderry, Ireland, in 1835, and who has been a resident of St. Louis since 1862, made his money in real estate and stock transactions. The students at the Ranken school are charged only $30 a year, payable in three installments, and are given a two years' course. All their education is of a practical kind.

Ranken occupies three small rooms over a grocery. When he enters the door and climbs to his rooms he shuts out the world and declines to be seen. Here he has lived for years and worked out the plans and ambition of his life—the founding of the trades school where poor boys can receive a trade education for a nominal fee.

Mr. Ranken visits his school every day and watches the boys at work. He wastes no time in teaching theory in the lecture rooms unless it has some practical application in the shop work. Geometry is taught, but instead of having the boys compute the columns of a cone, they are taught the holding capacity of a funnel of like dimensions. Classroom work in all branches of drawing, carpentry, bricklaying, painting and steam engineering is along similar practical lines.

ASTOUNDS CHOATE'S FRIENDS

Not only the judges and lawyers of the country but all citizens who follow the affairs of the nation were astonished when charges of unprofessional conduct were made against Joseph H. Choate, former ambassador from the United States to Great Britain.

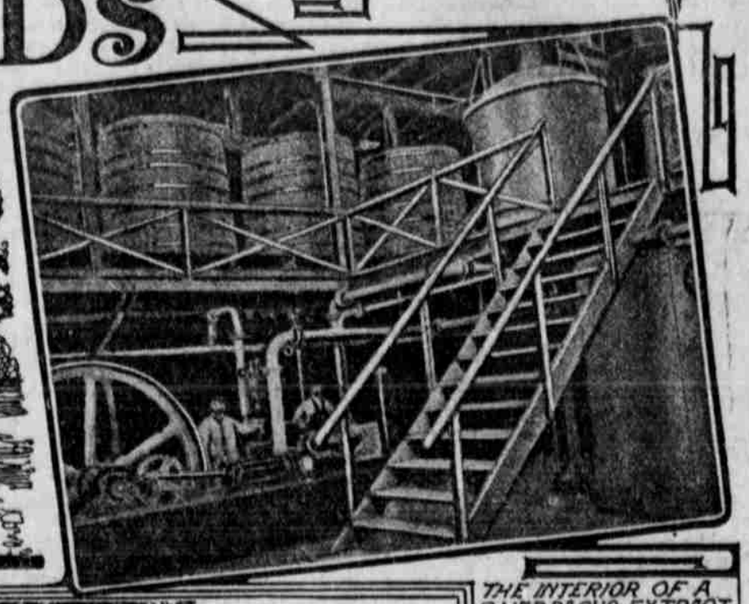
The American Bar association, of which Mr. Choate is a former president, will thoroughly probe the charges at its convention in Chattanooga, Tenn., next month and Mr. Choate's friends say there is no doubt that the verdict will completely exonerate him from all blame.

James R. Watts of Staten Island is Mr. Choate's accuser. He alleges that Mr. Choate caused him to lose hundreds of thousands of dollars through "omissions and wrongful acts" while acting as his attorney. Mr. Choate lost no time in demanding a thorough probe of the charges, the first ever made against him in his long and honored career.

Mr. Choate is 78 years old and internationally famous as a lawyer, diplomat, orator and after-dinner speaker. He was ambassador to the court of St. James from 1899 to 1905. His legal career began in 1855, when he was graduated as master of arts at Harvard and admitted to the bar of Massachusetts. He went to New York in 1856 and with the exception of the time he served as ambassador has been practising his profession there. He has been connected with many famous cases and was elected a bencher of the Inner Temple, England, in 1905, an honor conferred only on persons of distinction.

Mr. Choate's many friends say the charges against him are due to some mistake and is confident that the American Bar association will so determine.

HARDEST OF ALL WOODS



THE INTERIOR OF A QUEBRACHO EXTRACT FACTORY

TWO of the greatest industries in the world are railway building and the preparation of hides and skins into leather. For the former the sleepers on which the rails are laid are essential and costly factors; for the latter nothing can take the place of some vegetable extract which is the tanning substance of the trade. Sleepers can be made of glass and metal, but these do not give the satisfaction of those made of wood. The oak and the hemlock have for ages supplied tannin by which leather is cured; in fact, the very word tann implies by its derivation its relation to the oak, by which name the tree was called in old Breton language. Railway sleepers have been made from the oak, but the expense grows higher year by year. No wonder, therefore, that the earth is scoured for trees to furnish either the one or the other or both of the substances, and no wonder also that manufacturers and builders hailed with delight the announcement a few years ago of the availability for both purposes of the South American tree called "Quebracho."

Quebracho is a contraction of the colloquial Spanish and Portuguese term quiebra-hacha, originally applied to many trees in Latin America. It means 'ax breaker," and the character is implied in this meaning. The wood is hard, fine grained, and tough and had been used by the natives for ages in their primitive construction work. Of recent years, however, quebracho is restricted in the arts and industries to a particular tree found only in South America, and even here only within broad limts of the drainage basin of the River Parana. In Cuba there is a "quebracho," so-called locally, which is a member of the Copaiba family. In Chile a quebracho is rather of the Cassia family, and probably in other parts of Latin America the name is indiscriminately given to any hard wood that has tested the metal of the native's ax. No such indefinite use of the word, however, can be permitted today, because the tree of

A SAWMILL BETWEEN "THE CHACO" AND CIVILIZATION

A QUEBRACHO TREE IN "THE CHACO"

THE BARK OF THE QUEBRACHO TREE

the South American Chaco has become so commercially important that it must be understood to signify only that one tree and nothing else.

The genuine quebracho tree is found in Brazil, Paraguay, and the Argentine Republic. There are two important varieties and a third has been distinguished, although it has no great significance botanically or value commercially. Locally and in the trade the names given are Quebracho colorado (red), and Quebracho blanco (white). Quebracho colorado has the scientific designation of Loxopterygium lorentzii, and belongs to the order of Anacardiaciae. This is the particular tree from which both the sleepers and the better quality of tanning extract are derived. The other, Quebracho blanco, is neither so straight nor so serviceable as the red variety, but is nevertheless of definite commercial value, as it furnishes some tanning extract and the logs can be used for fence posts and axles. From it is taken also a drug extensively used for bronchial diseases; in fact, as a plant it was studied for this purpose long before its other advantages were exploited. The scientific name is Aspidosperma quebracho.

Railways must have sleepers on which to lay their rails. In some instances wooden ones are imported at great expense, or substitutes therefor are used if climatic conditions are favorable. As a rule, however, it is preferred to take supplies from native timber whenever procurable. This was the case in the Argentine Republic when railway building away from the coast had begun, and no more fitting wood could be discovered than that recommended by the natives, both by the name and by the experience of those who had used it. The quebracho wood proved by far the most serviceable for sleepers on South American railways, and its reputation grew so steadily that today many miles of European rails are supported by sleepers brought from the River Plate.

In one respect quebracho resembles rather mahogany than oak or pine. The trees do not grow in clumps or groves, but are dispersed through the forests and the less dense woods, singly or in groups seldom more than four or five to the acre. The tree itself is tall, about two or three feet in diameter, and is crowned by a rather thin, oval, or V-shaped, mass of branches and leaves. The white quebracho is somewhat smaller than the red, and begins to branch lower to the ground, so that it is not hard to distinguish them from each other. The leaves are oval, or lance shaped, smooth, somewhat shining and leathery; they do not fall completely in the winter, but cling to the branches in company with the fruit. The tree seems to thrive best on a sandy soil, where the atmospheric moisture is not very great, but where abundant water is provided for the roots, either by dews or sufficient rain. It is neither a mountain nor a river growth, but lives best in the subtropical stretches between water courses. Although the age of the tree has been given as measured by hundreds of years, it is well enough established that at ten years from planting the first small shrubs are big enough to use for posts. The future promises, therefore, an opportunity for the actual cultivation of quebracho, because, although savage inroads have been made into the supposedly inexhaustible forests of the Chaco, it is not too late to restrict the cutting of the tree, or even to adopt modern forestry methods of planting and conservation for the supply of coming generations. In fact, the Argentine Republic has already passed suitable laws in this direction, and it is more than probable that under the wise administration of that government there will be developed an arboricultural industry to proceed hand in hand with the preparation of quebracho posts for fences and construction work, sleepers for railways, and of tanning extract, the three industries for which this unique tree is at present utilized.

"Rollizos" is the Spanish word commonly employed in the trade for the rough and untrimmed logs (which the word means), from which only the bark has been removed. They are still supplied by smaller camps from dwarfed undergrowth not great enough for other purposes than posts, beams, cabin pillars, or cart axles. When the forest was first invaded these logs were the only product brought out of it, and the stories told of the primitive methods adopted by the natives for transport carry one back before the days of steam and machinery. A popular way of loading the logs was to lay them on the ground on ropes; then the animals were unharnessed and the cart was tilted bodily upside down over the logs; these were then made fast to the body of the cart, after which maneuver it was brought back to its normal position. Of course only two-wheeled carts were used. As soon as modern methods were introduced, and better carts or wagons became known, these primitive and cumbersome habits disappeared, although in the far interior even today rollizos are still brought to market in this manner. "Durmientes," according to the Spanish, or sleepers, in the English idiom, are probably the most important product of the quebracho of the Argentine Republic.

The industry of making sleepers has assumed huge proportions. The difficulties of former days have been largely overcome by the introduction of modern machinery, especially saws, and some of the mills many miles distant from any main railway are equipped and organized in a manner which would reflect credit on any similar plant in the United States. Special saws are needed to penetrate the wood, but they are furnished from the factories of England, France, and America. This mill business is carried on by many companies, although the tendency is to concentrate the management into fewer but larger organizations. One company owns a tract of land of about 4,000,000 acres, and is prepared to cut timber, fashion it into logs and sleepers, prepare tanning extract, and utilize every other resource which the land provides. Another company can turn out 20,000 to 30,000 sleepers a week. This number, however, can by no means meet the steady demand for railway building which is characteristic of this portion of South America. Sleepers are laid at about an interval of two feet from center to center. Assuming, therefore, only 2,000 sleepers for every mile, it will be seen that 30,000 are enough for only 15 miles. A year's supply at fullest capacity will consequently build only 750 miles of railway. But the Argentine Republic, Uruguay, Chile and Bolivia, all contiguous to the Chaco, are constructing more than this mileage, so that it is easy to see that every sleeper turned out from modern mills can at once find a local market. These sleepers are now finished at the mill, and the mill is situated at the spot in the forest itself most convenient for carrying on the process.

Quebracho extract prepared for tanning skins and hides into leather is, however, the most serviceable product of the tree. All the timber companies are adjusting their plants so as to utilize the wood, either in its entire output, or in that portion not reserved for posts and sleepers, for this extract. In Paraguay and areas in the Chaco remote from good roads, so that the cost of supplying timber is excessive, every particle of the wood is turned into extract, because the demand is usually in advance of the supply, and it is therefore more profitable to manufacture the more concentrated article, which can be easier and more economically carried to market.

One feature of quebracho, in which it is superior to other sources of supply, is that the bark, the sapwood, and the whole of the central part of the tree produce the extract in considerable quantities. The bark contains 6 to 8 per cent. of tannin, the sap 3 to 5 per cent., and the heart 20 to 25 per cent. As the heart represents two-thirds and often three-fourths of the total quantity of wood, the amount of tannin in the Quebracho colorado is seen to be considerable. It is merely a chemical question whether this tanning material is equal or inferior to that from the oak, but later methods of preparation point to a full justification of the claim that the leather from quebracho extract grades up to that resulting from any other tanning substance. So serviceable is it, however, that since its discovery, the tanning industry of the Argentine Republic has made noticeable advance, because, with both hides and extract as great natural products of the country, the government is making every effort to foster the leather industry within its own border.

"Quebracho extract," as it is called in the trade is easily manufactured when the machinery is once installed. All the wood is passed through a machine that cuts it into shavings or the smallest possible chips. It is then collected into immense kettles, in which it is treated by chemical processes until all the tannin is removed; after this the fluid preparation is reduced by evaporation to a thick, jelly-like mass, which is poured into sacks, where it is finally dried into the substance sold in commerce.

The difficulty of gathering the raw material far outweighs the preparation of the finished article, especially as the extract is no longer to be considered a by-product, but is coming to have more importance and value than posts and sleepers. In Paraguay particularly, where all the wood is utilized for extract, the hardest part of the business lies in gathering wood for the factory. The trees are cut in the heart of the virgin forest and hauled by ox teams to the nearest clearing. Only native Indians have proven themselves suitable for the work, as they are thoroughly acclimated, understand the wilderness, and can withstand the plague of insects which make life at night miserable for the foreigner; and exposure for nights as well as days is unavoidable, because the cutting stations are usually remote from any settlement.

In 1895 the first real exportation of quebracho extract from the River Plate was recorded. The increase has been rapid—from 400 tons in the first year to 9,000 tons in 1902, 120,594 tons in the next five years, and 28,195 tons in 1907. Of this quantity the United States received 17,733 tons, or almost 65 per cent.