

wooded regions of America; 30,000 square miles of forests was our inheritance. They have disappeared. Thirty years ago Indianapolis was the center of the hardwood trade. We now import almost our entire consumption of timber.

We see from the car window a skirting of trees which would indicate a body of woodland, but if we go to any of these apparent groves we find but a few worthless beach left, because of the labor in working them up; but just beyond would appear another grove, the same character as the first. Here and there has been left a tree, occasionally a bit of wood, but, except in a few localities, there are no forests. "The Last of the Mohicans" are being gathered up for the city saw-mills.

Flatboating Times.

Less than fifty years ago the banks of the Ohio river and all its tributaries were lined with flat boats, each Autumn loading with hay, pork and farm produce from the rich river farms, to bear it away to southern plantations—Lawrenceburg, Aurora, Rising Sun, Vevay, Madison, and on down to Evansville and Mount Vernon. Every town was a boom city when the flat boats were receiving produce. The lands were rich and productive. Farms often paid for themselves in a few seasons. But a change came gradually. Now there are no flat boats, while much of the hill land is unprofitable to the tiller of the soil and the labor far more oppressive than formerly.

Removal of the forests from the steep hillsides caused a rapid erosion of the soil. Those rich farms may be found in the Mississippi's delta, remaining as monument to the forest clearing mania of our people.

Summary of Forest Areas.

	SQUARE MILES
Total for United States . . .	570,320
New England, all required at home	18,150
Eastern Atlantic group, all required at home	35,900
Group of Southern States, export and shipment to Eastern cities	130,000
The prairie group, insufficient for local use	48,900
Pacific states, west of 103° west longitude of the latter, all for export	212,400
Lake states group	44,970
Central Manufacturing states, good, bad and indifferent	80,000

While the census of 1890 gave as the annual consumption of timber 28,488,997,000 feet, board measure, the annual consumption of wood as fuel reckoned to board measure for comparison being 180,000,000,000 feet.

The great commercial zones and larger manufactories will be limited to the last two groups or 125,000 square miles. If it were possible to "average" the yield

over so large and varying territory we might find 125,000,000,000 feet of available lumber, while another decade of energetic lumbering will startle this entire nation.

The authorities dwell upon the vastness and density of Puget Sound timber, which they greatly overestimate, but no matter how large a yield it will afford, what most concerns the lumbermen of the Middle States is the available supply. Mountain ranges, with great distance for transportation, will confine the dealer and user to the limited region mentioned.

The year and the day when this supply will cease is known to no man, but if we are assured of what we possess and know what we annually consume, together with the increasing requirements of a rapidly growing population, we can guess as well as the eminent authorities, but assuredly it will not last fifty years, unless greater economy be practiced.

Too Great Competition.

In the stress of great competition the lumbering concerns of this country are extravagantly wasteful of their forest property. Ambitious to accumulate largely in a short period they lose sight of the more important consideration, viz., permanency.

The critical period of a tree is after it has reached a diameter of eight inches. It then increases in lumber rapidly. To destroy young growing trees is to prevent ones successors from reaping another crop of timber a few years hence.

Thirty years hence we will have a population of 150,000,000, and whether or not they find a country as good as we have, and timber resources of sufficient amplitude, will depend upon the wisdom, patriotism and justice of Americans of this generation. Our forest area is ample, if fully protected, to furnish the lumber required for all future time.

The states should enact wise laws and afford this protection to the forests. Otherwise we are not performing a duty to our children now in the public schools.

THE TORRENS LAW.

THE CONSERVATIVE has frequently called attention to what is known as the Torrens System of Land Titles, and recommended to the consideration of its readers whether this would not be a desirable improvement for adoption in Nebraska. The Torrens system is a plan devised half a century ago in Australia, and since adopted in one or two of the provinces of Canada and several states of the Union, by which greater security in the ownership of land and greater facility in making transfers and mortgages are obtained. The present system, as practiced, with a few exceptions, throughout this country, came down to us from England, where it had

grown up through many centuries, being little changed from the days when real estate transfers were few and simple. It gives no state supervision to the ownership of so important a class of property as land, but requires a purchaser to find out as best he can whether the party to whom he pays his money is really the owner of the land, and provides him no greater safeguard than the promise of the seller that, if any one turns up and claims to be the rightful owner, he, the seller, will protect the purchaser's title. The Torrens System, on the other hand, does away with these individual guarantees, and offers in their stead a certificate of ownership from the state, which is issued anew at each transfer, after suitable investigation of title in the first instance, and the authority of which cannot be questioned. One who once gets this certificate can be absolutely certain of the peaceful possession of his land. No flaws in the title nor claim of ancient fraud can ever be brought up to disturb his occupancy.

The system is now lawful in Illinois and Massachusetts. There is nothing compulsory about it, simply anyone who wishes to avail himself of its privileges may do so. A recent report from Massachusetts shows that after several years of rather slow growth it has made a sudden leap into favor in that commonwealth. The fees received by the board of registration in the quarter ending January 1899, were \$192; in that ending October 1900, \$1154. The owners of the city property it seems also are quicker to take advantage of its benefits than are holders of farm property; no doubt for the reason that city lots are traded in much more frequently than country tracts, and for the further reason that the workings of the new plan are better understood in the towns.

The recorder quotes an instance to show the advantages of the system in the saving of time in making loans. The owner of some property in North Boston worth some \$10,000, wished to borrow a considerable sum on the security of this land. According to the usual practice, the bank to which he applied for the loan would have first demanded an abstract of his title, which, if he had not one ready, would have taken two or three weeks to prepare; the abstract would then have been placed in the hands of the bank's attorney or abstractor for examination, which would have taken two or three weeks more; and if the attorney's report were favorable, the officers of the bank would then have been in a position to pass upon the advisability of the loan. This man however, presenting himself at the bank in the morning, had with him the above-mentioned certificate from the state that he was the owner of the land and that it was unincumbered; the bank therefore had merely to consider the value of the property relative to the size of the proposed loan, and the man had his money by one o'clock of the same day.