

THE TIMBER TRADE AND SAWMILLING INDUSTRY,

Whilst still of importance to the district, is comparatively small with what it was in bygone years. Though it was some time after arrival of the first settlers before systematic cutting of timber was done by modern appliances, the vast treasure in timber was well known, but it was not till Messrs. Gladwell & Greathead, Pettigrew & Sim, and other enterprising firms joined the industry that it received marked impetus.

Perhaps the best known, though not the first of these gigantic enterprises, was the DUNDATHU SAW MILLS (1875), on the left bank of the Mary River, ten miles below Maryborough, is the property of the enterprising firm of Pettigrew & Sim. Dundathu is only one out of five of a similar kind. 120,000 feet of pine pass through the mill every week, whilst the average amount stacked on hand is 700,000 feet. It is seldom that a brig or schooner is absent from the wharf, loading with timber for all parts of Australasia. Forty laborers are employed who represent a population of 200, for whose accommodation cottages have been erected in addition to a school-cum-chapel, where the Rev. J. I. Knipe occasionally improves the Sabbath hours; whilst, other days, Mr. Johnson teaches between fifty and sixty children.

The machinery, most of it manufactured in England and Scotland, consists of three boilers, one of them fitted with galloway tubes, the other two being the ordinary flue boilers; four condensing engines of 15-horse power each; two vertical saws, one of them a four-bladed and fearful looking instrument, used for reducing the larger logs, from which the wood thus becomes manageable, is shifted by a travelling crane running on transverse beams overhead; from this a chain is suspended, to which are two iron claws, and the timber being grasped is carried to travelling benches, according to size of the planks to be sawn; the other, vertical, is chiefly used for squaring or sawing larger logs into boards. From the travelling benches the planks or boards pass to the two planing machines, whence they emerge smoothly planed and, if required, beaded, tongued, and grooved; besides the foregoing are two shingling and two hand-saw benches, two turning lathes—one for wood and one for iron; two sharpening machines; a punching and a drilling machine, used both for wood and iron. At the wharf is a crane for lifting logs to the bank, whence by means of chain and dogs they are hauled by steam power to undergo the processes we have attempted to sketch. Notwithstanding an increase in the quantity of beech and ash annually sawn, the supply of pine is still plentiful, though it is receding further afield, and the "Hercules," a powerful tug steamer, the property of the firm, is constantly engaged in towing up rafts from their lumbering stations on Fraser's Island and at Tin Can Bay, at which latter place Messrs. Pettigrew & Co. have a tramway at work of nearly seven miles in length for carrying logs from the interior, the motive power being a locomotive engine. The Mary scrubs fail to supply the demand for cedar; but, if we may judge by the quality of the "Daintree" cedar, that river is scarcely likely to be the source of our future supply.

THE MARYBOROUGH SAW AND PLANING MILLS,

Owned by Messrs. Wilson, Hart & Company, Limited, are widely known as the largest and best equipped mills of their kind in Queensland, if not in Australia. Standing on the river bank, in an elevated position, just below the Botanic Gardens and the Government Railway Wharves, they form one of the most prominent features of the town, and visitors approaching the town by the river

cannot help having their attention directed to the large pile of buildings and outworks comprising this busy hive of industry. Thirty one years ago, in the early days of the timber trade of Maryborough, this firm commenced operations at a site chosen on the opposite bank of the river, in what is now called Granville, and met with well-earned and increasing prosperity until towards the close of the year 1881, when in a single hour the visible results of years of persevering toil and energy were swept away by an all-destroying conflagration. Nothing daunted, the firm showed the same enterprise in the erection of the present works as had characterised their previous exertions. The present commanding position, the pick of the town, was selected for the new mills, and the many conveniences it affords proves the wisdom of the choice. A branch railway siding running along the front of the works connects them with all the timber country tapped by the district railways, by which the greater portion of log timber supplies are now received, while at the same time rafted or punted lumber is hoisted from the river into the works by means of powerful steam cranes and winches. Railway wagons are relieved of their heavy burdens by a steam "traveller," which also raises the logs a considerable height and places them on the mill staging ready for further, handling by the sawyers.

The business-like and ever restless action of this aerial traveller is in itself an interesting spectacle. Passing up an incline and taking a turn to the right we obtain a full view of the interior workings, including the large number of machines and appliances, and the many interesting operations conducted by which the giants of the forest are speedily reduced to the requisite sizes and shapes for the construction of dwellings and their furnishings, or for shaft linings for our goldfields.

To follow the material along as it passes through breaking-down or boarding frames, over rack benches, self-feed or hand benches, through planing or moulding machines or turners' lathes, bandsaw machines cutting it into circular or irregular shapes, or automatic benches for box timber, or through machines for grooving or tenoning shafting, is an interesting experience. Many appliances are also noticed for grinding and sharpening saws and tools, also engineers' appliances for effecting repairs, and a blacksmith's forge. At the back and sides of the mills are extensive yards for stacking and drying timber, the yards being intersected in all directions by tramlines to facilitate the handling and removing of the timber. Beyond are patent American hot-air drying kilns of the latest improved designs, and a shed adjoining in which to store the output. By means of these kilns a supply of seasoned timber can be at all times depended upon, even through the wettest seasons.

Wilson, Hart & Co., Limited, were the first to introduce these drying kilns into Queensland, and their action has been greatly appreciated by the trade. The Company have also complete shipping facilities. Their steamers and sailing craft on the coast and their numerous branches and agencies throughout the colony speak sufficiently of their wide business connection. The high quality and excellence of their products ensures a preference in all markets, the demand being sufficient to keep the works constantly and fully employed. The Company also undertake extensive coal contracts, having been for a number of years the largest shippers of coal from this port. The Company have been identified with the progress of the town, and its members may feel satisfied that by their technical knowledge, practical ability and business enterprise they have built up an industry in which the town justly takes pride.

SASH AND DOOR FACTORY AND MOULDING MILLS.

The founder of this extensive business, Mr. James Fairlie, arrived in the colony in 1862 in the "Helenslee " and laid the foundations of the present establishment in a small way in 1868. By degrees, as the colony progressed and population increased, various machines were put in, and the male members of the family, each in his turn, bore a hand in developing the business. From small beginnings the establishment has now grown into one of the largest of the kind in the colonies, giving employment to a considerable number of hands, and distributing its products far and wide. A stroll through the factory shows all the operations of breaking down logs, sawing planks, manufacturing joinery, mouldings and turnery of every description in full swing. Heavy trucks for cane factories grow up side by side with the latest ideas in doors, fretwork, or office fittings. In fact, well nigh everything that can be wrought from timber is well within the compass of the firm's facilities, aided by the latest and most improved woodworking machines.

Another important branch of Messrs. Fairlie's operations consists of glass, from the modest window pane to the most elaborate ornamentation in fancy glasses, and various devices in cut glass. Putty is manufactured and corn cracked on the premises. Cedar in high stacks of many years' seasoning forms a feature of the yard; mouldings by the mile and glass by the acre lie ready at the call of the purchaser; and altogether a visit to these extensive premises reveals a thoroughly up-to-date establishment, ready to lead as well as to respond to the call of the building industries. The ice works connected with this establishment are a boon to Maryborough, and most of our butchers avail themselves of its cool storage.

THE NATIONAL SAW MILLS,

Messrs. R. M. Hyne & Son, occupy a large extent of ground. The works are on a direct line from Kent street, and adjacent to the Maryborough Sugar Milling Company and other leading industries. The firm is always busy, and has many contracts for local and country works. Mr. Hyne was a heavy loser in the floods of 1890, not the least being nine houses opposite his mills, whilst timber valued at £3,500 was also destroyed. At present the works are fully employed, and persevering energy is meeting reward. Mr. R. M. Hyne, who is one of the pioneers of the timber industry, was a few years ago elected to Parliament as junior member for Maryborough, and in that sphere did much to advance the interests of the community. Like most local sawmill owners, Mr. Hyne was a sufferer by the large importations of Oregon timber, and the tariff on such bringing about a big local competition. Mr. Hyne is a gentleman of liberal views, but strongly in favour of a land tax, a tax on absentees, and a definitely protectionist Government. When the tariff on imported timber is doubled it will mean an increased railway revenue and a doubled wage sheet at every mill in this district.

TAYLOR BROTHERS' SAW MILLS

are situated on the banks of the Mary Eiver, adjacent to the town ; they occupy about six acres, the buildings alone covering an area of 20,000 square feet. Henry Taylor, the head of the firm, was born .at Stirling, Scotland, in 1840, and served an apprenticeship to Currie and Taylor, builders, of that city. He arrived in Maryborough in 1868, and after working four years as a journeyman, commenced business for himself. Among other buildings he erected St. Paul's Church of England, Boys' Grammar School, Bank of New South Wales, Booker's Buildings, and other extensive contracts. The present

works were established in 1881, and comprise large steam saw and planing mills and joinery works, giving employment to about 130 hands. A large stock of seasoned timber is always on hand, and full supplies can be obtained at short notice. Strangers who visit these' works gain more insight into the state of the timber trade than by reading many books. For years past this firm, like others, has laboured under great disadvantages, the chief deterrent to progress being the introduction of Oregon timber, a worthless article, unfitted for a hot climate, highly inflammable, and exuding a noisome smell. Against this trash local sawmilling firms have had to compete and lower the price of good timber to meet market rates to their own disadvantage and that of their employees. Happily the tariff on the imported kauri, as it is called, has been increased, and so far relieved the unjust pressure on a leading local industry. Better times for the timber trades are predicted, but as many have been ruined by the imports referred to, it will probably take years of prosperity to recover their original status and success. Among other causes which militated greatly against the timber trade were floods, scarcity of cedar, and obtained for pine, which, as Mr. Taylor says, "went down to three shillings per hundred, with a stationary or lessening consumption, whilst wages were actually higher." At present Taylor Bros' Mills are busy and have contracts in hand likely to occupy them for some time to come.

RAMSAY, AKMITAGE & Co.'s SAW MILL,

Established in 1876 by Ramsay Bros., of Imdah Sugar Mill and Plantation, is on the left bank of the Mary, near

Irrawarra. For some time these works were in great repute, with good prospects of success. Mr. Armitage, the resident partner and manager, employed about 40 workmen who, with wives and families made up a settlement of 120 population. Though not so extensive in operations as other mills, and with less machinery, it furnished employment to quite an army of lumberers, sawyers, and others. Unfortunately through bad times its "glory has departed;" and silence marks the spot where once all was busy life.

SCOTT BKOS.' SAW MILL,

At the S.E. end of Ann street, was established in 1874, and the plant of home manufacture comprised two engines of 50 and 26-horse power, a Cornish flue boiler, vertical frame saw (six blades), turning lathes, drilling, punching, planing, and other machinery. The bank of the river being steep was cut through to admit log timber, which was hauled to the mill by steam power. On the wharf, level with the top of the bank, 30ft. above high-water mark, was a travelling crane for lifting the hardwood from the punts or pine from the river. At this point the Mary is sufficiently deep to admit of vessels, drawing 10ft. of water, to lie at the wharf.