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TURPENTINE FARM.

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 OR the past two weeks I have been traveling through the turpentine farms of the south. I have visited turpentine estates containing hundreds of acres, and have seen thousands of barrels of rosin gathered for the market. It seems funny to think of raising turpentine on farms, but turpentine farms are, in fact, pine forests, in which it takes about a generation to grow the crop and a season or so to gather it. Until within a few years the most of our turpentine and rosin—or naval stores, as they are called—came from North and South Carolina. Now the forests of those states have been gutted and the turpentine farmers have come further south. They are to be found at work throughout the forest regions of Georgia. I saw their distilleries during some recent travels in Mississippi and Louisiana, and in this region the smell of burning rosin is everywhere wafted into my nostrils, making me think that the whole state must be engaged in fruit canning, and that the rosin running around the cans is burning. Brunswick, where I am writing, is one of the great turpentine and rosin markets of the world. The United States produces, you know, the most of the rosin and turpentine used in the world, and we ship naval stores by the thousands of barrels to the different countries of Europe and Asia. I walked out on the wharves here this afternoon and watched ocean steamers being loaded with barrels of this material to be carried to Germany. Rosin is largely used for making soap. It goes into many different manufactures, and it greases the fiddle bows of millions. In the neighborhood of 200,000 barrels of rosin and about 40,000 barrels of turpentine will be shipped from here this year, and about five times these amounts will probably be marketed at Savannah.

But let us visit a turpentine farm. There are hundreds of them within a few hours' ride of Brunswick. Each farm consists of thousands of pine trees, and as you look at it you notice that the trees have chopped and scarred places, running from the roots to about the height of your waist. As you come closer you see that at the foot of each scarred place a hole or box has been cut in the tree, and that the gum or sap is oozing out of the scarred places and running down into this box. The scars or places where the bark and wood are cut off are about a foot wide and from eighteen to thirty-six inches long. Some trees have several scarred places

upon them, with a box at the foot of each. The size of a turpentine farm is known by the number of the boxes. Ten thousand five hundred boxes make what is known as a crop, but there are farms here which have millions of boxes and upon which hundreds of employes are kept busy cutting the trees and scraping and gathering the gum. The employes are negroes, many of whom have been imported from North and South Carolina. They are worked under overseers. They labor in gangs, going rapidly through the forests and chopping out the boxes. Their axes are not so wide and about twice as long as the ordinary ax used for wood chopping. Two men always work together, and one must be a right-handed man and the other a left-handed. When the box is finished it is deep enough to hold the sap which it is thought the tree will supply. If the tree is small, only a pint box is made; if large, a box big enough to hold a quart is cut. This work is done in October and November, or even later in the winter. In the spring, when the sap begins to move in the trees, the negroes go about with scrapers and gouge out ridges or scars in the wood above the boxes. The sap begins at once to flow out, and crystal drops form upon the wood and drip down into the box. Every few days the box gets full, and a man comes along with a scoop and scoops out the liquid, which is almost as thick as molasses. He carries a box or keg with him, and pours the sap into this as he goes from tree to tree. When his keg is full he empties it into a barrel, and the barrel later on is carted off to the distillery. The trees must be gashed again and again during the summer, and from time to time the negroes go through the farm and scrape down such of the sap as has crystalized above the boxes. At the close of the season, or a little later, another set of gashes are made above the old ones to furnish the crop for the next year. The sap for the second year is not so white or transparent as that of the first. It grows darker from year to year, and after six years it is so dark that it is not valuable, and the tree is then about ready to die. The lumber men tell me that the trees are good for lumber after the turpentine has been taken from them, but I find that there is a diversity of opinion on this subject.

In some cases the trees are rented to the turpentine farmer, who pays about \$200 per crop, and in others the land is bought outright and the lumber sold after the yield of rosin and turpentine is exhausted.

But let us follow the juice of the pine tree and see how it is turned into rosin and turpentine. As it comes from the tree it is of a waxy crystalline nature.

The question is to get the turpentine out of it. It will take eight barrels of this mixture to furnish about two barrels of the spirit of turpentine, and what remains will be rosin. The turpentine is gotten out in much the same way that whiskey is made. The distillery consists of rude sheds knocked up in the forest at a distance not far from the railroad. The sap is first emptied into a great kettle for boiling which is set into a brick furnace. From this pipes run out at the top and on into a coil or worm. These pipes are to carry out the turpentine vapor. The sap is mixed with water. As the fire heats it a vapor rises and goes off into the pipes. The pipes are so arranged that water flows over them, and as the vapor strikes their cold sides it condenses and is turned back into liquid again. The boiling is continued until what remains in the kettle has grown as thick as molasses and quite as brown as the cheapest of the New Orleans variety. This is taken out and put into barrels. It is rosin, and as it leaves the distillery it is ready for shipment to the markets. There are different qualities of rosin, according to the character of the sap from which it is made and to the time of the year at which the sap is gathered.

The Georgia pine forests are fast being cut away. There are big saw mills here and at different points throughout the lumber regions. I visited yesterday a cypress mill, which ships vast quantities of shingles all over the north, and in which the great cypress logs are carried in by machinery at one end and come out at the other in the shape of finished boards and shingles. The saws used are what is known as band saws, which work like a band of leather and cut their way straight through the logs with hardly a second's cessation. They cut faster than the gang saws which are so largely used in the northern lumber regions, and are the latest improvement in the saw line. This I find to be the case with all the machinery of the south. The big establishments have the newest designs and the best of labor saving tools. The fact that labor is cheap does not lead them to use the old methods and the man who expects to sell old machinery to the south will fail.

A great quantity of Georgia cypress is now being gotten out. Much of that of the future will come from the Okefinokee swamp, which is now being redeemed. This swamp is, with the probable exception of the Dismal swamp, the largest in the United States. It has vast quantities of good timber, and when the present improvements are completed it will be one of the most valuable agricultural parts of the state. Today it is to a large extent a terra incognita.