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GREAT BARREL PLANT LOCATED AT MARCUS HOOK – Interesting Description of the Big Industry of Knabb & Co. and Its Extensive Facilities

The National Coopers' Journal in its December issue publishes an illustrated article of interest entitled, "The Great Tight Barrel Plant of A. Knabb & Co." This concern has extensive buildings at Marcus Hook. Besides a view of the buildings, there is a good picture of Henry Krug, the vice-president and general manager. The article is as follows:

The plant, of which the buildings are principally brick, couples about three and one-half acres and is not only devoted to the manufacture of oil and other barrels of like character and kegs, but is also equipped for the finishing of staves and the circling of heading from the rough.

The plant lies between spurs of the Pennsylvania and Philadelphia and Reading Railroads, and is most admirably situated for receiving the raw material and shipping the finished product. The oak staves and headings used come principally from the South, but there is also quite a substantial amount comes from the mills of A. Knabb & Co., situated in West Virginia, while some elm stock for tight barrels comes from Canada and pine heading, to go with it, from Maine. This is furnished by our old friend, the Sutherland-Innes Company. These barrels are used for silicate of soda, but barrels of a similar construction are frequently used for syrups.

As we were shown through the plant by Vice-President Henry Krug, it needed only a glance here and there to show that the machinery was strictly up-to-date and the best money could buy.

Out in the heading room few noticed the old and very reliable Ralya heading rounder as furnished by John S. Oram. The planer is an Oram type and so are the jointers. In the stave finishing room we found the double Crossley jointer and stave planer, also of the Oram make.

THE BARREL DEPARTMENT – About one thousand barrels per day in the capacity in this department. After the barrels are set up they are carried through an automatic steam box by means of an endless conveyor. From here they go to the Holmes double windless machines, after which the heaters claim them. These heaters are unique from the fact that compressed air and oil fuel are used by means of a Parsons patent oil burner. Mr. Krug says it is a very economical and satisfactory way of heating.

The next process through which the barrel passes is the trussing. This is accomplished by an Oram trusser and then the barrel is leveled, chamfered and crozed by means of an Oram machine for that purpose.

The barrel now goes to the heading up machine, which is an adaptation of the Glenkier device to machines of the Holmes and Aram construction. The next process takes the barrel to one of Oram's barrel lathes, where the exterior of the barrel is thoroughly smoothed by a planning device. Then comes the thin hoopers, of which there are two of the Oram make. These machines are so perfect in action and so satisfying in results as to absolutely reflect on human ingenuity, as no man could ever hope to drive hoops so perfectly, evenly, expeditiously and with such little breakage as is done with these machines.

From the hoopers the barrels are then passed to the glue kettle for testing. They are then carefully inspected and passed directly on to the cars for delivery, so that while the

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Journal man was watching he saw staves, heads and hoops transformed into the finished product and sent on their way to the user without a single interruption.

It must not be concluded that the processes we have mentioned and the devices we have referred to are all that enter into the construction of barrels at this plant.

On looking about we saw the Glader hoop expander in successful operation. Also an ingenious machine, also made by our friend, William Glader, of Chicago, called the Glader double punch. These machines with an Oram flaring machine and riveting machine perform a very important function.

The power for this plant comes from a 150 horsepower in addition to which the engine room contains a dynamo of 110 voltage and also an air compressor used to operate the oil burners in the barrel-heating room.

The kiln is of brick and was erected by the standard Dry Kiln Company of Indianapolis. Mr. Krug says it works to his entire satisfaction.

RAW MATERIAL – About one million staves are kept on hand and about 25,000 sets of heading to keep the barrel department in motion.

This rather imperfect story but partially describes a plant which, when completely equipped will have a very large capacity, and can turn out any kind of a tight package from 5 to 70 gallons in size. New machinery is being added, as we saw a Holmes "Yankee Cooper," made by the E. & B. Holmes Machinery Co., of Buffalo, and an Oram Trusser still unboxed, and which had only recently been loaded.

The parent plant is located at Warren, Pa., and is of similar capacity of this one. The firm of A. Knabb & Co. was recently incorporated and officered as follows: A. Knabb, president; Henry Krug, vice-president and treasurer, and C.S. Knabb, secretary.

Both plants are running to their full capacity and have all the orders they can comfortably fill for some time, unless the very pronounced scarcity of stock interferes.

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