

FROM THE INDIAN FORESTER - ONE HUNDRED YEARS AGO

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EXTRACTS

PROPELLING POWDER FROM WOOD-PULP

Mr. Walter F. Reid, F.I.C., F.C.S., in a letter to the *Daily Chronicle*, writes:- There is not the least difficulty in making as good propelling powder from wood-pulp as from cotton, and as a matter of fact, excellent powder has been made from wood for more than thirty years in this country, and this powder easily passes the stringent tests insisted on by the Home Office, and is perfectly safe. Statements that cotton is necessary for the production of explosives have been made by several persons, who apparently derive their knowledge from the very limited information that has been published in text-books. I am not aware of any competent authority who has actually been engaged in the manufacture of explosives who would endorse such a statement. I have the authority of Count de Chardonnet, the inventor of artificial silk, a member of the French Committee on Explosives, and one of the highest authorities on nitro-cellulose, for the statement that the cellulose derived from wood-pulp yields a nitro-cellulose which is even better and purer than anything that can be produced from cotton. This entirely agrees with my own experience. More than thirty years ago, when working out the process by which all nitro-cellulose powders now in use are made, I tried wood-pulp as a raw material, and obtained a product which was in every respect equal to the best gun-cotton made from cotton. The process of purification of wood-pulp for explosive purposes is not difficult, and is well known in Germany. Cotton waste has hitherto been used for making gun-cotton, not only because it is cheap, but also because it has already been partially purified in textile factories. The best woods for this manufacture are those free from resin; but resinous woods can be purified without difficulty and the Germans have an ample supply of both varieties. - [*The Indian Trade Journal*.]
