

TIMBERS
OF THE
NEW WORLD

BY

SAMUEL J. RECORD

DEAN OF THE SCHOOL OF FORESTRY,
YALE UNIVERSITY

AND

ROBERT W. HESS

ASSISTANT PROFESSOR OF FOREST PRODUCTS,
YALE UNIVERSITY

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PREFACE

TIMBERS OF THE NEW WORLD is the successor to *Timbers of Tropical America* which was published by the Yale University Press in 1924 and has been out of print since 1934. The new work contains more than twice the amount of material in the old. It not only covers the same ground more fully but its field is extended north and south of the tropics so as to include the trees and larger shrubs of the entire Western Hemisphere, exclusive of the islands of the Pacific. The bulk of the treatise directly concerns Latin America, however, since about 90 per cent of the species occur there, but the timbers of the United States and Canada are brought in to complete the picture. This is the first attempt by anyone to deal with all the larger woody plants of the Americas and it represents the cumulative results of more than twenty-five years of continuous investigation.

The book is intended not only for scientists but also for everyone interested in the utilization of American forests. It contains descriptions of the trees, tells where they grow and the sizes they attain, and attempts to evaluate their present and potential economic importance. It supplies the basis for the identification of the trees and their woods, correlates the vernacular, trade, and scientific names, and gives technological data on various subjects. It indicates the present and possible sources of rubber, resins, oils, tannins, dyestuffs, drugs, and fibers, and classifies the timbers with respect to their properties and uses. Persons looking for substitutes for well-known timbers or in search of a wood for a special purpose will find suggestions in the classified lists. The survey of the field is fairly complete since more than a thousand genera, or about 85 per cent of those containing trees native to the New World, have been described. Most of those omitted do not, as one might suppose, inhabit the vast Amazon basin but occur in the subtropical regions of Mexico and Brazil. From what is known about the botanical relationship of the missing genera it can be confidently stated that very few, if any, of them have economic possibilities.

The trees considered are in two principal divisions; namely, the Gymnosperms or conifers, the source of the softwood timbers, and the Angiosperms or broad-leaved trees, which produce the so-called hardwood lumber. Within each group the families and genera are arranged alphabetically to facilitate reference to them. The treatment is fairly consistent throughout. Each family is introduced with respect to its size, geographical distribution, and economic value, first throughout the world and then in the Americas. This is followed by a family description of the American woods. The genera are treated in a similar manner, though the emphasis on individual species and specific groups is limited to those in which the differences are considered important.

Each generic description concludes with a list of the trade and vernacular