STANDING TIMBER.

Rule by Which to Figure Out Its Contents in Board Feet.

The contents of trees in board feet is usually figured by Doyle's rule. This rule is to deduct four inches from the small diameter of the log for slab, squaring one quarter of the remainder and multiplying the results by the length of the log in feet. For example, to find the contents of a twelve foot log twenty-four inches in diameter (inside the bark) at the small end—24 inches minus 4 inches equal 20 inches; 20 inches by ¼ equal 5 inches; 5 by 5 by 12 equal 300 board feet.

Perhaps an easier way to get at the same result is to state the rule as follows: From a sixteen foot log deduct four inches for slab and square the remainder. For longer or shorter logs the contents would be proportioned to the length. In the above case it would be worked out thus: 24 minus 4 equals 20, 20 by 20 equals 400, for a sixteen foot log. But a twelve foot log is twelve-sixteenths or three-quarters as long as a sixteen foot log; therefore this log contains three-quarters of 400 board feet, or 300 board feet. If the log were twenty feet long it would contain one and one-quarter times 400 feet, or 500 feet.

A common way of estimating standing timber is to estimate the length and the top and bottom diameters and apply Doyle's rule, using the average of both diameters and the whole length of the tree.—Rural New Yorker.

BED OF THE THAMES.

It Often Yields to Dredgers Relics of the Ancient Romans.

"Yes, sir," said the skipper of a Thames dredger as he wiped his grimy hands on the legs of his trousers, "there are many worse jobs than dredging. It is interesting and exciting work, too, for one never knows what the bucket scoops are going to pick up.

"Do we make any rich 'captures?' Occasionally we do, but of course we bring up more mud than anything else. But, personally, I believe that the bottom of the Thames is a small gold mine in disguise, but one that it is impossible to 'work.' A 'nugget' is brought up now and again, and a 'nugget' may mean a gold watch or coins.

"Some time back a bucket scoop brought to the surface a small sack, and this sack contained a number of watches, mostly minus the cases. Evidently they had been thrown into the river by thieves, who had no use for them.

"Human bones are brought to light at infrequent intervals, and so are old metal implements. Roman coins are fairly plentiful close by Billingsgate and London bridge, and some of the copper ones which have been recovered are as clean as new coins from the mint. Julius Cæsar coins and weapons have been found in the upper river and some stone age implements down by Hampton court."—London Answers.

Room For Improvement.

A certain estimable old gentleman is at all times worth listening to, though occasionally his grammar is scarcely perfect. He was dining on one occasion with the local squire, when, much to the disgust of his worthy host, a trifling error on the old gentleman's part was pounced upon and loudly repeated by the son and heir of the house. There was a painful silence, broken at length by the host.

"My son," he remarked quietly to the young fellow, "there are times, I admit, when our old friend's speech is a little peculiar. At such times you might be of mutual assistance to each other."

"In what way, sir?" asked the son.

"Well," was the severe rejoinder, "you might give Mr. X. a lesson or two in grammar, in return for which I have no doubt he would assist you to patch up the holes in your manners."—London Tit-Bits.

The Plantagenets.

A flowering English shrub, the broom plant, is called in French "plantagenesta." From it the kingly family of Plantagenet took its name. It is said to have been first used as a badge by them because the Count of Anjou had himself scourged with its branches. The name was taken by Henry II., king of England, in 1154, he being the son of Geoffrey of Anjou, who wore in his helm a spray of the broom when he started for the Holy Land. The best known of the Plantagenets was Richard I., king of England, called "the Lion Heart."

Very Queer.

"My husband has been out late every evening this week, attending important club meetings."

"Yes, so has mine. They belong to the same club, you know."

"Why, how queer! My husband says he hasn't seen your husband in six months!"—Cleveland Leader.

Phantom Bubble in Sapphire.

In the National museum at Washington is a sapphire weighing nine carats that incloses a bubble which changes of temperature cause to appear and disappear.

Dangerous.

"Sssh—this is a gossipy place."

"Sssh—why?"

"Sssh—even the rooms communicate with one another!"—Harvard Lampoon.

A Lac and a Lack.

"In India a lac of rupees is a fortune."

"And in America a lack of dollars is a misfortune."—Boston Transcript.

Trust not too much in an enchanting face.—Vergil.

The First to Go.

Father Dolan was surprised, amused, and a little curious, as well, when he received a profoundly mysterious note from Mr. Lee, begging him to come to see him as soon as possible, but not on any account to allow Mrs. Lee to suspect that his visit was other than a chance one. Mr. Lee was not wont to be mysterious; neither was he inclined to hide anything, however trifling, from his wife. What he wanted Father Dolan could not imagine.

The Lees had lived in St. Joseph parish for many years, long before Father Dolan was sent there. People of comfortable means, they were not fashionable, or cultivated, or worldly-wise. They were old, now, and frail and feeble; very gentle, very loving toward each other, and not greatly concerned about the rest of the world. Their interest in many things had died with their only son, cut off in the flower of early manhood.

In his first spare hour Father Dolan answered Mr. Lee's summons. Unannounced he entered the library on the heels of the little housemaid who had opened the door for him. The old people were sitting side by side, Mrs. Lee knitting and her husband reading David Copperfield aloud—for the third time, as he explained later. When Mrs. Lee looked up and knew who the caller was, Father Dolan was astonished to see her quiet, patient face light up with intense joy. She said nothing beyond a few conventional words of welcome, but had he been her own child, returned after a long absence, she could not have seemed more happy.

But Father Dolan forgot her when he turned to speak to Mr. Lee. It was two months since he had seen him except for an occasional distant glimpse in the church, and he was startled by the change those few weeks had made in him. He had grown thinner and less florid, and in some indescribable way had aged terribly. His seventy-six years, once carried lightly, now bore down upon him with crushing force.

After the first greetings had been exchanged, Mrs. Lee was almost silent while the two men talked of one commonplace and another; the weather, the crops, and some repairs being made in the church, and bravely voiced very definite predictions as to the result of a coming city election. All the time, however, it was but too evident that Mr. Lee was eager to see Father Dolan alone. So numerous were the covert signs he made, and so palpable his restlessness and lack of interest in the topics under discussion, that the priest feared Mrs. Lee would suspect that something was afoot between them. He, too, was beginning to wonder how she was to be got out of the way after she had gently said she was not tired when, with a tactlessness born of desperation, Mr. Lee bluntly suggested that she ought to rest. A moment later, in all innocence, Father Dolan asked Mr. Lee if he had ever bought a set of engravings, which he had spoken of getting from a certain English firm, and beaming with satisfaction the old man rose instantly saying that he had them in his room and would be delighted to show them.

On the stairs he talked volubly and loudly about them; after the top was reached they were forgotten. He led the way to his room and closed the door, and, when he spoke again, it was hardly above a whisper.

"I am glad you came. It was very kind. I knew I could count on you. We must not let my wife suspect anything, but—I'm sick, Father. The doctor says I have organic heart trouble and may drop off at any moment. He says that I must not go to church any more—the exertion is too great. I'd like to make my confession now, Father, if you will hear me, and will you bring me Holy Communion sometimes? You could manage so that Mary would suspect nothing, couldn't you? I've tried to think of a plan, and can't. Ever since I began to feel so badly, we've had a great deal of abominable weather—I've made it my excuse for not going to church. Why, it hasn't been fit even for her to go, well as she is!"

"Yes, yes, I shall manage somehow, so that she will not be alarmed. Winter is coming, it will furnish a good excuse for your staying in the house, and I'll bring you the Blessed Sacrament two or three times a week; but, Mr. Lee, wouldn't it be better to tell her? She is brave, and——"

"No, no, Father, please don't! I know best about this. Believe me, I do. She would be uneasy every moment of the day if she knew. And the worst may never happen, for though I may die at any time, I may live for several years. The good Lord may take her first. That's what I am hoping and praying. She'll be very lonely if I leave her—I have taken care of her so long. She's little and helpless—not fit to be alone. But, Father, it may never happen. What would be the use of telling her and having the fear always hanging over her?"

"But doesn't she notice that you are not yourself?" the priest asked.

"No, to begin with she is nearsighted; then, when I feel the pain coming I slip away, and I eat—" he laughed softly, "I eat, or she thinks I do, like a boy. I take everything she gives me and drop into my pockets everything that won't make a mess—fruit and rolls and radishes and cake—an awful assortment! Afterward I throw the things out of this window to the boys next door. They are always hungry!"

After a few moments' further conversation Father Dolan heard Mr. Lee's confession and said good-by, promising to see Mrs. Lee before he left the house and tell her tactfully that, commencing the following morning, he would bring Mr. Lee Holy Communion frequently during the autumn and winter.

Mr. Lee called him back after he had left the room. "And, Father, won't you say a little prayer that she will go first? She'll be terribly lonely if I leave her, Father. It's fifty-five years, Father."

With tears in his eyes Father Dolan promised.

As he descended the stairs he wondered if he would find her where they had left her, and at the foot almost ran into her in the semi-darkness. She had been waiting in the hall for him, determined that he should not escape her.

"Father," she whispered, "will you come with me into the parlor? I shall not detain you long." She gave him the biggest chair and, slipping into a little one near it, faced him, her hands tight-clasped her eyes bright and eager.

"I can't tell you how glad I am that you came today! For weeks I have wanted to see you and didn't know how to manage without arousing Mr. Lee's suspicions. I—I am going to die, Father. The doctor says the end may come any time. You can't imagine how weak I am. I can hardly get about the house. But Tom must not suspect anything. Nothing matters compared to that. You see, Father, he is old, too, and I hope will go first and never need to know about me."

Then her face became troubled. "But he does seem wonderfully strong. You should see how much he eats! More and more all the time, it seems to me."

"He depends on you and needs you, does he?" Father Dolan asked very, very gently.

"O, so much, Father! He imagines that he is independent and self-reliant, and I humor him in the notion; I always have; but he is like a child in a hundred ways. You know how helpless men are! And, Father, we've walked hand in hand, up hill and down, for more than fifty years—I couldn't bear to have him worried about me now. Besides he may go first." And she went on to ask him to hear her confession and, when he had done so, he promised often to bring her Holy Communion.

"You and Mr. Lee are both too old to go to Mass in bad weather. I told him a few minutes ago that he must not attempt it all winter. I'll bring you both Holy Communion tomorrow. It won't make Mr. Lee expect that you are ill for he'll be doing the same himself."

Mrs. Lee was silent for a little before she said, with a faint smile: "Sometimes I've had a hard time to keep my secret. The day before yesterday was bright and sunshiny, and for years, whenever the weather was fit, we have taken a walk in the afternoon. I felt miserable and wondered how I could possibly go, if he proposed it. Several times I lay down for a little while, trying to make myself feel stronger, and it did no good; but, Father, the good God was on my side! Mr. Lee began to read a book that has lain here for months without being opened. He read hour after hour, never stopping except once or twice to say he found it so interesting that he could not bear to put it down. But he got tired of it before he reached the end, for he never finished it."

The clock in the hall struck five and Father Dolan rose instantly, saying that he must hurry home. Mrs. Lee went with him as far as the door and resting her hand on the knob looked up at him with tears in her dimold eyes. "You'll say a prayer, won't you Father, that he'll go first? He would be so lonely without me."

"God will take care of you both!" he answered so fervently that her heart was comforted.

It was hardly eight o'clock the next morning when he reached the house. Mrs. Lee awaited him in the parlor where all was in readiness for the coming of the Lord. Mr. Lee she explained apologetically, had overslept and was still in bed, but another table had been prepared in his room. Father Dolan gave her Holy Communion and went directly to Mr. Lee's room, wondering a little that he had not arisen.

Mr. Lee's door stood ajar and a faint voice bade the priest enter. The old man lay gasping on his pillows, his face distorted with pain. "I'm afraid it has come—the end, I mean—but don't call her. I can at least spare her the sight—of this—and it's awful."

Father Dolan gave him absolution; he became a little easier and was able to receive Holy Communion, and then, seeing that the end was at hand, the priest began to recite the prayers for the dying. For five minutes the agony lasted; it passed, and Mr. Lee looking up with a little sigh, said faintly, "I had hoped she would go first and be spared all this. She'll be lonely—God's will be done."

The pain came again, sharper than ever before, but only for a minute; all was over then, and eternity began.

Sick at heart Father Dolan crept down the stairs. Mrs. Lee must be told; how, he could not imagine. Praying with all his strength he slipped into the parlor. She was kneeling where he had left her, but was bowed lower, he thought, over the chair against which she leaned. He touched her on the shoulder. She did not stir, and in an instant he realized with deep thankfulness that she, too, was dead.

"For fifty years—and now forever!" he whispered. "Thy ways are sweet, O Lord!"—Florence Gilmore in the Magnificat.

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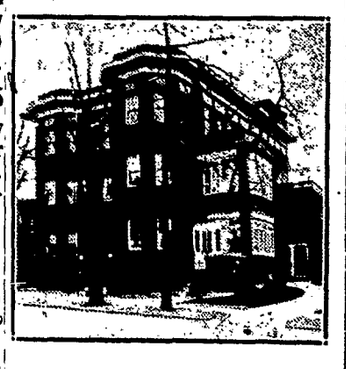
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