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### LAND SURVEYING—LAW-SUITS.

There is so much litigation concerning division lines of property that it would be for the advantage of all proprietors to have a slight knowledge of the art of surveying land, for we frequently see cases brought into the courts which would have been settled without trouble by the parties had they had sufficient knowledge of surveying to have understood the subject in dispute.

All lots of land have at least three sides, and in laying out new land lots are generally planned with four sides, and square corners, like those of a sheet of paper, or pane of glass, whenever it can conveniently be done. These corners are called angles in Surveyors and Navigators language, and square corners are called right angles. Now if we lay two ten feet poles on the floor, parallel to each other, and three feet apart, and then with a single nail at each corner, fasten two yard sticks across from the two ends of one pole to those of the other, and then make the corners square by a carpenters square, it will be a right-angled frame covering thirty feet of the floor, but if it is then racked so much that the corners are not square, it will be an oblique-angled frame, and will cover less than thirty feet, and the more out of square, or oblique these angles are made, the smaller number of feet the frame will cover. It is therefore necessary for the Surveyor to learn to measure the quantity of Angles, to enable him to calculate the quantity of land which the lines enclose. For this purpose a circle is divided into 360 equal parts called degrees, and lines are then supposed to be drawn from a point in the centre of the circle to each of these divisions; and the space between two of these lines is called an angle of one degree; the centre of the circle being the corner, or angular point. Upon the Surveyors compass two opposite points of the circle are marked N and S. (North and South). From N. the degrees are numbered 1, 2, 3, &c. up to 90, to the right, to the letter E. (East); they are also numbered in the same manner from N. to the left to 90 to the letter W. (West). From S. also the degrees are numbered right and left up to 90, to W. and E. The sights of the Compass are in the direction of the line from N. to S. and in noting the quantity of angles this line is always supposed to be one of the two which form the angle at the centre of the compass. Thus a line which runs five degrees to the right, or East, of North, is marked North five degrees East, and a line which runs one degree to the North of East is marked, North 89 degrees East, and not East-one degree North.

The word "degree" is often used for a measure of length, for all

circles, large or small, being divided into 360 degrees, a degree is often used to express the 360th part of the circumference of the earth measured on a circle of Latitude, that is to say, a line running North and South and passing through the poles of the earth. The length of a degree on this line is nearly 69½ English miles. A degree of Longitude measured on a circle of Longitude, (or line running East and West) at the Equator, is nearly the same length, but the circles of Longitude are parallel to each other, and consequently grow less as the latitude increases. It has frequently occurred that in advertisements of lots of land in our newspapers the meaning of the word "degree" has been strangely changed by improper punctuation. Thus a lot beginning on a road and running Southwest 1¼ miles, then Northwest ¼ mile, and then Northeast 1¼ miles to the road; would be expressed thus in the Surveyors language, "running South 45 degrees West 100 chains; then North 45 degrees West 20 chains; then North 45 degrees East 100 chains, &c." In this description the number of degrees gives the quantity of the angles, but has no connection with the length of the lines; but when, as was the custom some years ago, a point is placed after the word "degree," it alters its meaning to the measure of length, thus, "running South 45 degrees; [about 3000 miles] West 100 chains; then North 45 degrees; West 20 chains; &c." This appears ridiculous to those to whom the surveyors language is familiar, but a much more serious evil has sprung from the same source. We have seen so many errors of much greater importance than false punctuation, in those documents which record the titles to landed property, that we are convinced that no person ought to be employed as a Lawyer's Clerk who has not acquired so much knowledge of surveying as to enable him to understand the descriptions given by Surveyors. We see that in many newspapers and pamphlets where a short sentence is cited in a foreign language, there will hardly be a line without some gross error, the copyist not understanding what he is writing, cannot be guided by the sense as he would be in writing his own language. If the person who is drawing deeds understands what he is writing he will not be more liable to make mistakes in the description of lines of land than in any other part of his work.

The courses of lines noted by Surveyors are those indicated by the Compass, the needle of which does not point exactly North and South on the greater part of the Earth; nor does it any place keep the same direction for a long time. At Halifax the North end of the Needle now points about 18 degrees to the West of North, and since the first settlement of Halifax the North end of the Needle has moved Westward at about the rate of one degree in 16 years. At Windsor it is nearly the same; ditches on the Marshes made upon lines run in the year 1763 will be found to run about 5 degrees to the right of the recorded course. In the Eastern part of the Province the variation, and rate of increase, are greater; in the Western part considerably less. This variation of the Compass has been one source of litigation. A great part of the land in the Province was laid out by persons more than commonly ignorant of their business. At the close of the American Revolution in the year 1783 a great body of new inhabitants came at once into the Province, and lands were assigned to them in almost every part of it; to lay out these lands it became necessary for the Surveyor General to appoint immediately a great number of deputies, who were mostly