

THE FRENCH MARKET FOR AMERICAN OAK.

It is well known that in consequence of the almost universal use of oak parquet flooring in France, the consumption of oak for this purpose is exceedingly large, and the trade shows continued signs of progression. Up till a few years back the forests of Austria-Hungary and Sclavonia were the principal sources of supply of the oak used for this purpose, the shipments being made principally through the ports of Trieste and Fiume. The wood, both in quality and color, being of that yellow tint dear to the French contractor, is admirably suited to the purpose, and the home-grown French oak, although always used to a large extent, being of a harder nature, could not compete with it, bearing in mind that in this country it is the custom for the builder or carpenter who lays the floor to guarantee it for ten years.

To this day much of the wood shipped from these forests is of the very finest quality, notably that which comes into France under the auspices of La Societe d'Importation de Chene and two or three other leading importers who from long experience know exactly what is wanted for this market, and take care to send nothing else. But the price is high, and in the nature of things competition was to be expected sooner or later, and it is therefore not to be wondered at that during the last few years a determined effort has been made by the London dealers to capture a portion of this large market for the magnificent oak production of the United States. Much of the wood grown in is character very suitable for the French parquet floor trade, and although perhaps in color it is rather too red for the liking of the connoisseur, this is in practice not proved to be an insurmountable object, and for the last few years the competition offered by the American to the Austrian wood has been gradually increasing, until to-day it is recognized by the shippers of the latter as a very serious rival.

The Timber Trades Journal, of London, than which there is no more competent authority, is of the opinion that there is room for a very considerable increase in this trade, and that it rests entirely with the shippers in the United States to bring this about by getting into closer touch with buyers at the British metropolis, and very properly urges the point that it is worse than useless to send anything but wood which in every respect suited to the market.

This journal says: "In the first place, the wood must be of first quality and free from sap. Let it be understood once and for all that sap-wood will not be used here for this purpose, and besides that, the greatest care must be used to send only wood which is free from knots and which has been properly dried and seasoned. The other point to which we would direct shippers' attention is the sawing, which must be carefully done, as any departure from the standard thickness entails extra and unnecessary work on this side, which is greatly resented. The standard sizes for thickness are 27, 35, 41 and 54 millimeters on boards 6 inches and upwards wide, lengths 6 feet to 9 feet and upwards. At the present moment the size 27 millimeters has been a little overdone, and the others are in better request. As to prices, good stuff is now fetching about 130 francs, c. i. f. Havre, per cubic meter—35 English cubic feet. The duty, charges and transport to Paris cost about 30 francs, making the price 160 francs, landed in the capital; but

the business is generally done c. i. f. to the seaport, buyers paying freight and deducting from invoice.

"The Austrain wood is at the present time time fetching about ten per cent. better prices, and it enjoys a distinct advantage in being shipped by the direct regular line of steamers, Fiume Rouen, which is in many respects a cheaper port than Havre; in fact, these oak planks could be delivered in Paris something like ten francs per cubic meter cheaper through the latter port. We think this is worth the attention of some enterprising firm of shipowners."

The article quoted touches on but one of the uses for oak in France. A great deal of it is employed for furniture, interior decoration, cabinet work, etc., while the trade in oak stairs is in itself a very large business capable of great development.

With commendable enterprise the Journal puts its Paris office entirely at the disposition of American shippers who are anxious to share in this large trade, and states that it will be pleased to give any further information which they may require, or even to put them in communication with responsible agents and sellers in that country.—The Tradesman.

QUARTER-SAWING OAK WITH A CIRCULAR SAW MILL.

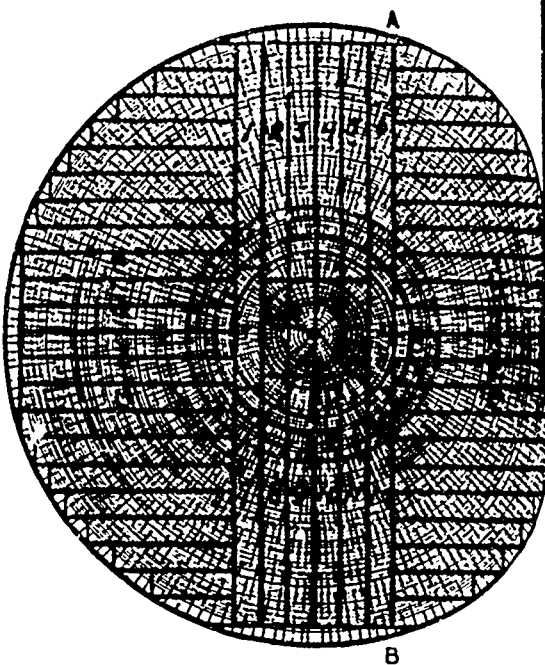
THE high prices that are now being paid all over the country for quarter-sawed oak make it particularly desirable that some plan be devised by which the saw mill man who is not specially fitted up for this class of work should be enabled to get some of the benefit of these gilt-edged prices.

The idea that oak timber cannot be quarter-sawed profitably with a circular saw mill, and without the use of special dogs to hold the quarters, seems to have got generally fixed in the minds of circular saw mill men. While there can be no doubt that the band mill is the best mill for this kind of work, and the duplex dogs are necessary when it is desired to make all the quarter-sawed lumber there is in the log, we have proven from our own experience that we can get 50 to 60 per cent. of the cut of the log, in a fine grade of quarter-sawed lumber, with no loss of timber, and with very little loss of time, with a double circular mill. Moreover, that portion of the lumber which will not pass as quarter-sawed lumber will cure better in this trying southern climate, and be more satisfactory, than if plain-sawed the usual way. Our plan may not be original, but we do not remember to have seen it published, and on that account we send you a drawing showing it, thinking it might benefit some one.

At the outset, no logs should be quarter-sawed, by any plan, out of a stock of large and small logs, that are less than twenty-six inches, or at the least twenty-four inches in diameter. While a fair average width of quarter-sawed can be got by this plan by using logs a little smaller, it would make the average widths of the plain-sawed firsts and seconds run too narrow. The primary object in quarter-sawed oak is not to bring the edge of the grain to the surface of the board, as it is in what is called rift-sawing in pine, but is to bring into view the peculiar glistening figure which comes from cutting the medullary ray or grain that runs from the center to

the circumference of the log. Cutting this ray nearly or quite parallel with its line of direction will show the figure large, and as the angle of the saw cut becomes more obtuse the smaller the figure will show until it disappears entirely. And herein lies one feature of this great beauty of quartered oak. The variations of figure are almost endless. It would be almost impossible to pick out two boards figured just alike, and to find one board figured alike from end to end is not an easy thing to do. Any method of sawing oak that will get lumber which shows this figure is quarter sawing, no matter whether it is done by the orthodox way of opening and quartering the log and edging a bevel piece off each board or not. The drawing shows about the proportions of a twenty-six-inch log cut as we are now doing.

We first slab the log lightly on three sides, working the log down small enough one way so the lower saw will reach through from A to B. We then split the log at A and B, and let the portion at the right in the drawing back on the



CROSS SECTION OF LOG IN DANIELS' SYSTEM OF QUARTER-SAWING.

log deck. This piece is not slabbled in the beginning, although it can be done if preferred. We do not, as it saves the time of one turning. We then cut off wide boards as long as the figure shows wide enough on the top and bottom edges; we take out the heart, or any portion that does not show the desired figure, with the edger; we turn what is left down on the flat side and saw it up, after which the piece lying on the deck is turned on the flat side and sawed up in the same way. We have no market for oak scantling or we would make a piece from each edge of these flat pieces, and not narrow strips as shown.

The numbered pieces in the drawing will usually show the figure, but the amount will vary in different logs. If a piece should not show the figure it is not lost, but makes desirable plain-sawed lumber, inasmuch as it does not check in seasoning and keeps its place better when put into work. Of course, a top saw is absolutely necessary in quarter-sawing with a circular mill, but no special dogs or devices are necessary by this method. We have tried all the various plans, and we doubt very much if we should work on any other plan than this, even if we had a band mill.—Howard Daniels, in Dixie.