

WOODSMEN IN WINTER.

LUMBERMEN OF THE SUSQUEHANNA AT WORK IN THE FOREST.

HOW THE RED-SHIRTED GIANTS WILL PASS THE SHORT DAYS AND LONG NIGHTS OF THEIR HARVEST SEASON—TALKS TRAGEDY FROM THEIR LIVES.

The approaching winter brings satisfaction to hundreds of men in the mountains along both branches of the Susquehanna who follow that most ancient of calling—woodcraft. A cold white winter brings happiness to the rugged woodsmen, to whom it means steady work in the forest with good pay and plenty to eat until April and then another or so of rafting down the timber thus out. The great operations where are up in acres of pine trees are felled and hewn are not as numerous as formerly, for each clearing demands so much of the forest gone for all time or at least for decades, for nature cannot replace in a year what man destroys in as many days. Still, although the output of the West Branch timber lands is steadily decreasing there yet remains sufficient of the old time industry to clearly portray the simple modes and customs of the work and its followers.

The red-shirted giants with great grizzly woolen countenances, knit by their sweaters, wound around their necks and with their feet encased in heavy woolen stockings reaching to the knee, without shoes which would only pinch and frostbite their feet, or at most shod only with rubber overshoes and wearing heavy trousers supported by another long-colored sash around their waists or thrice around the waist and tied with long dangling ends, are familiar sights along the Susquehanna. Whether hard at work felling trees in the clearing or seated on a log sled like some modern mountaineers dragging a Hoe of the forest to the winter woodsman is ever full of life and animal spirits. Eating prodigious quantities of food in the most primitive way and consuming all the liquor he can obtain without regard to its quality, the lumberman enjoys life to the utmost. To pass the long winter evenings when other recreations fail he has always two courses open to him—either to play "penny poker" or to go to the nearest revival, the protracted meetings held by devout Methodists, usually in the mountain hotels and continuing weeks, frequently months, without cessation. And to the credit of the men it is stated that, although generally holding crude ideas of religion, the lumbermen are most quiet and orderly during the services and, sometimes moved by the appeals of preachers and friends, a great rough mountaineer may arise and approach the mountaineer's bench.

These, with an occasional change in the way of a spelling bee (at which force of circumstance compels him to be not a spectator) or a visit to town are his sole diversions all through the long winter, until spring thaws the rivers and melts the icy roads. Then he replaces his woolen stockings with heavy boots, in the heels of which are set steel nails projecting half an inch and sharpened to a point. "Corks" is their common but inexpressive name. The nails are to enable the wearer to secure a firm footing on a rolling log, but they sadly mar a carpet and the wooden pavements of the interior towns are riddled with holes.

Armed with a "cant hook" the mountaineer now becomes a raftman and bends his energies toward getting the timber to market at Williamsport or elsewhere. The round saw logs are slowly rolled into the stream on one of these huge platforms observing magnificent mountain scenery which cannot otherwise be seen, for the streams are not navigable for any other class of boats. Very often a whole family will make the trip, wife doing the cooking for the crew.

As may be found everywhere a trace of the tragic crowd often and frequently to the locality and occupation abound. One may be recalled. A handsome young mountaineer had wood and a young country maid and the happy pair took their tour on a raft, the young man eager to see the great outside world, of which she had heard so much. The raft had two cabins built upon it, one for the man and the other for the newly married pair. The second night was clear and moonlight, and the pilot determined to run on instead of tying up, as customary. About midnight they drew near one of the largest dams, along the river, and although every effort was made to get the raft close in by the shore so that it might pass through the long inclined chute provided for the purpose the state of water was so great that it was soon seen the raft must go over the crest of the dam. The man, with thrilling, is not necessarily a dangerous adventure, as very frequently a raft will pass over with no serious damage to the straining of the joints but again every timber may be torn loose and the men thrown into the surging waters. On this occasion the raftman stationed his bride as near him as safety would permit, and with anxiety all awaited the plunge.

Slowly the long mass of timbers approached the booming catwalk and the front section began to curve downward and suddenly disappeared, the second followed and then the third, while the men on the fourth and last could plainly see the timbers just ahead stand all most perpendicular and then right themselves. Finally the last section, upon which were the bride and her husband, pitched over and almost instantly righted itself safe below, but in that instant the long handle of the oar had swung around, despite the efforts of the men and swept the girl into the boiling rapids at the foot of the dam. With a wild yell her husband sprang after her. The raft swept on and both were drowned, but for years raftsmen have refused to pass that dam after nightfall, and local gossip say that in time of flood the shriek of the drowning girl can be heard above the roar of the falling waters.

Another tale in more cheerful strain, is told of the great flood of June, 1889, which devastated the Susquehanna Valley about the same time the Johns-

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town calamity occurred. A well-to-do resident, whose house stood close to the river, had a beautiful daughter to whom a handsome young lumberman had been paying suit.

A Doctor's Confession.

"Humbog" Of course it is. The so-called science of medicine is a humbug and has been from the time of Hippocrates to the present.

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The Last of the Farneses.

AN ILLUSTRIOUS ROMAN FAMILY NOW EXTINCT.

Prince Farnese Arif Bey, who died the other day as Consul in Rome, was the last survivor of the illustrious Italian family of Farnese, which has now become extinct.

A Sioux Raid Feared.

MANDAN, N. D., Nov. 16.—Settlers living on the border of the Sioux reservation bring stories of the arming of the Farnese, which is borne out by Joseph Buckley, who speaks their language.

A Chorch in Wales.

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