

WITH CHARCOAL BURNERS

PECULIAR COMMUNITIES SCATTERED OVER NEW JERSEY.

Cutting Wood and Burning it Em-ploves Hundreds of Men Who Live in Primitive Simplicity.

LITTLE colonies of men, peculiar communities, are scattered up and down New Jersey like bumps on a log. They live remote from the centres of civilization; they have little or no interest in the affairs of the outside world, while their wants are very few and of the simplest kind. These are the charcoal burners of the Jersey pines.

All told, there are not more than fifty of them in the State. Their earnings are scanty, averaging the year round about a dollar a day, a fact in itself which precludes the enjoyment of much that others enjoy, even the poorer classes in great cities.

Day in and day out, in winter's cold and summer's heat, the ring of the charcoal burner's axe may be heard in the pine forests of the State beyond the Delaware. On days when the mercury in the thermometer hugs the zero mark these fellows begin their labor in the woods at daybreak. Their first act is to light a fire with such dry branches as they can scrape together, over which they hold their keen-edged axes to draw the frost out of their glittering blades.

"El we didn't, why, the fust lick 'ud break 'em right in two," said one of the fraternity who took enough of his time to tell something about their way of life.

Atsion is the nearest settlement to the charcoal pits, and Atsion is a medieval dream. It is the wreck of a once considerable village. If its unpainted and decaying houses were of stone instead of old-fashioned clayboards, it would be a fac-simile reproduction of a Yorkshire hamlet gone to seed.

"This part of the country has been pretty well chawed up by charcoal burners," said the driver, as the decrepit buggy rolled noiselessly along. "They clear out patches here and there, and then move off to another piece to begin work. The man who owns this track wont let them cut it up the way the other owner did. He keeps them pretty much in one place."

In the expressive Jersey vernacular, the soil in spots did present a "chewed-up" appearance. There were side clearings covered with a thick growth of shrubbery and long grass, through which peeped the black stumps of trees which had been felled years before. After an hour's ride there came, off to the right, the sound of axes at regular intervals, and the forms of men were seen moving to and fro. In a clearing near by were a lot of smoking tumuli—heaps of earth ten or a dozen feet in height, around whose summits light vapor were curling in fantastic wreaths and shapes.

By a strange perversion of English these heaps of earth were called "pits." In them were burned the charcoal of commerce and manufacture.

There was a light snow on the ground, but the workers did not seem to mind it. Most of them were in their shirt sleeves—heavy woolen shirts—and the exertion of swinging their axes kept them in a perspiration, despite the cutting wind which whistled to itself as it played hide and seek with the clumps of decayed leaves. Out in the clearing a dejected looking horse was hauling a load of cord wood on a sled, while near one of the pits a sturdy man was wheeling a barrowful of logs that would have made a city hod carrier groan. There were old men and young; some were boys at work in the wood land. Trees of all sizes, from the sapling four inches in diameter to the giant five feet in circumference, were crashing here and there, and the steady stroke of axes was never silent.

The burning of charcoal is done in the same primitive condition here that it has been carried on for centuries in Eastern lands. The wood is heaped up, covered with earth and fired. But a peculiar nomenclature expresses the various processes of the work. Thus after the wood is cut and "ranked" it is wheeled or sledged to the spot where the pit is to be "set"—that is, where the wood is set up on end—"two banks," or eighty feet in height, with a space in the centre for the fire, or, as it is called, the "chimney." The average to each pit is about seven cords of wood.

After the pit has been set then comes the "blacking" and "floating." For a space of three feet around the pile of wood the earth, or turf, or "blackin," is dug up and thrown on the pile of wood. Upon this is thrown more sand, and the whole is covered compactly with sod and soil. The fire is then kindled from the top, and the wood is left to be charred. It has to be tended night and day, however, and this process is called "dressing" it.

There were ten or twelve pits in the field where the Atsion workers were cutting fuel. Some of them had about burned out, had sunken to half their original size, while others were just beginning to smoke like mimic volcanoes.

The average product of a pit is about 200 bushels of charcoal. In tending a pit the watchman has to climb to the top of the mound by a rude ladder made out of a log of wood, with niches or steps cut in it and set up on end against the smoking pile.

Sometimes the pits begin to "mull," that is, it burns too fast and the fire eats to the foot of the pit and threatens to consume the entire mass. Tending charcoal pits is a dangerous business, although it looks as simple as throwing coals on a grate. A couple of years ago a son of the superintendent of the pits described went up on a pit to attend the fires, when the whole mass caved in under his feet and he was roasted to death. It was during the night and no help was near.

The best paid men about charcoal pits are those who haul the wood and "set" them. They are compelled to work very hard to earn \$8 a week. The men

who do this work at Atsion are brothers, and have labored at charcoal burning in Illinois and other Western States. Upon the manner of "setting" a charcoal pit depends, very largely, the success in burning. Sometimes the pits are built of three tiers of wood, and then with the "float" or earthy covering they measure about thirteen feet in height. The average thickness of this float is a trifle less than six inches.

Until recently only pine wood charcoal was burned in this vicinity. Now oak and maple are used also. Where "big" wood—that is, thick sections of trees—is used, from ten to twelve days are required to burn a pit; small wood requires only about 150 hours on the average. The pine wood charcoal is used for rectifying purposes almost exclusively; the oak and maple for furnaces.—Philadelphia Press.

WISE WORD.

Plain living is long living.
Matrimony comes in sealed packages.
Pleasure is narrow; happiness is wide.
A woman is never afraid of a brave man.

Avarice is green persimmons to the soul.
The wise man holds his tongue in his hand.

There is no telling what the world would have been like if woman had been created first instead of last.

Great men are they who see that spiritual is stronger than any material force; that thoughts rule the world. Men say, Ah! if a man could impart his talent, instead of his performance, what mountains of guineas would be paid! Yes, but in the measure of his absolute veracity he does impart it.

The unity in this web of contradictions is its great wonder. How if this unity prove to be the law of which the oppositions are but one clause? How if the perfect unity were only attainable through the freedom of the natural diversity? And what is the substance and sum of this fundamental agreement?

The desire of good, the progressive conception of which marks, more than anything else, the progress of the race. Life is a succession of lessons which must be lived to be understood. All is riddle, and the key to riddle is another riddle. There are as many pillars of illusion as flakes in a snowstorm. We wake from one dream into another dream. The toys, to be sure, are various, and are graduated in refinement to the quality of the dupe. The intellectual man requires a fine bait; the sots are easily amused. But everybody is dragged with his own frenzy, and the pageant marches at all hours, with music and banner and badge.

Heavy Cars the Safest.

Every commercial traveler has an opinion of his own as to that position which makes a car the safest one in a train. Some of them hold that it is the one next the baggage car; the majority maintain that the centre of the train is the least dangerous, while there are still individuals, in the minority, to be sure, who favor the rear car.

These opinions have been gained in many instances from practical experience in railroad wrecks, which are, of course, by no means infrequent in certain sections of the country. As such they are entitled to consideration, but the dissimilar views really go to show that the position of a car in a train as regards its greater or less safety is a matter of speculation alone.

Upon one matter, however, all the traveling men agree, and that is that no matter what the position of the car is, the safest ones of all are the heavy sleeping, parlor, buffet cars and the like. They are commonly referred to by the drummers "as better than an accident policy." There is every reason for the holding of this favorable opinion of these cars. Their heavier frames and trucks render their telescoping a difficult matter, and they are less likely to leave the rails in a time of collision than other cars in consequence of their greater weight.—New York Herald.

Presence of Mind.

Last summer a boy of whom we know—and he is only eleven years old—sprang into the water when the boat in which he had been rowing upset—and rescued from drowning both his mother and sister.

A few weeks ago two children were playing on a railroad track. A train came upon them unperceived and they would have been killed had not an Italian sprung forward and snatched them from the peril, receiving in the act injuries that were probably fatal.

The truest heroism was displayed in both these cases, and, in addition, there was another quality—referred to only three weeks ago in these columns—presence of mind. Of priceless worth in the moment of emergency is this capacity to think quickly and act effectively.—Argosy.

The Silk of Spiders.

In a French publication there is a paper by Rev. P. Cambone on the silk of spiders. After giving a history of the attempts to obtain and use the silk of spiders, he gives some interesting experiments of his own, made on a large orb-weaving spider of Madagascar. He finds that the spider furnishes the most silk after she has laid her eggs. From one spider there was obtained in twenty-seven days nearly four thousand meters of silk—over three miles. The silk was of a golden yellow color. He gives the plan of an apparatus for winding the silk, which, however, as he says, is imperfect. Nothing, however, was done as to the raising and keeping of the spiders in large numbers, undoubtedly the most serious question.

The students' volunteer missionary movement now numbers 7300 volunteers for missionary work in the foreign field, among the college students.



Stockings are fantastic.
Paris reports gowns of paper.
Lace frills for the neck are quite in favor.

Queen Victoria, during her youth, was fond of archery.

Stylish gloves will be embroidered on the backs to match suits.

A good sewing machine is supposed to do the work of twelve women.

The study of astronomy is the newest fad adopted by English women.

Among the choicest fabrics are the fine repped, light weight velours.

Mrs. Henry M. Stanley, although an artist, has absolutely no taste in dress.

Women not only buy comfortable boots for their children, but wear them themselves.

Queen Anne detested the smell of roses, and became sick when they were in the room.

A laundry in England, owned by women and employing only females, earned \$25,000 last year.

Mrs. Reginald de Koven, wife of the musical composer, is her husband's chief adviser and critic.

Mrs. Amelia Barr is said to make from \$10,000 to \$15,000 a year from her literary work.

Mary, Queen of Scots, had a lap dog that followed her to the scaffold and soon after died of grief.

Italian women and Oriental women bring with them to this country the arts of knitting and embroidery.

Miss Wanamaker is heiress to at least \$2,000,000. She is so pretty that she would be a catch if she hadn't a cent.

"Chopped Chat" is the name given to a series of evening talks to be given by a Philadelphia society lady during Lent.

At a recent luncheon the ices were served in china cups of rose-leaf design, each cup encircled with a wreath of roses.

Walter Besant's sister, Mabel, is an enthusiastic tricyclist and regards a "spin" of thirty or forty miles as a mere bagatelle.

There are believed to be a score of women in New York City whose collections of lace vary in value from \$20,000 to \$50,000.

George Eliot wrote for eight years with the same pen, and when she lost it bewailed her misfortune as almost too hard to bear.

The Empress of Austria has made so much progress in the study of modern Greek that she is about to translate two of Shakespeare's plays into that language.

One of the oldest war pensioners of the United States is Mrs. Semons, of Sodaville, Oregon, who draws a pension from the war fund of 1812. She is over 100 years old.

Lady Haberton in her zeal for dress reform is organizing a league, every member of which will be pledged to wear skirts clearing the ground by at least five inches.

Ohio's capital rejoices in the possession of the only fourfold string quartet in the world played by women. Four first violins, four second violins, four violas and four cellos complete the ensemble.

M. Felix, the well known Parisian man-milliner, has always condemned crinolines in any shape. He takes some credit to himself for having brought into vogue the infinitely more graceful style that has reigned of late.

Miss Eleanor Hewitt, daughter of New York's ex-Mayor, can play the piano, violin and banjo, drive a four-in-hand or tandem, ride a thoroughbred and row and sail a boat, and speaks French, German and Italian like a native.

Black stockings are, like black kid gloves, very expensive. Cheap goods are so abominable, as the dye soils the underweave and the shoe lining; a fast black stocking warranted is a luxury that the rich woman alone can afford.

The newest Paris gowns are being made with the new full skirt, and the silk under petticoat is quite separate from the outer skirt. This is a return to the style of three or four years ago, and is much less clumsy and more comfortable.

A fashionable wedding gift just now is a "loving cup" of silver or gold, beautifully engraved, and with its four handles in graceful attachment. On one side is the united monogram of the letters of the family names of the bride and groom.

The New Bread.

Attention is called to the new method of making bread of superior lightness, fineness and wholesomeness without yeast, a receipt for which is given elsewhere in this paper. Even the best bread makers will be interested in this. To every reader who will try this, and write the result to the Royal Baking Powder Co., 106 Wall street, New York, that company will send in return, free, a copy of the most practical and useful cook book, containing one thousand receipts for all kinds of cooking, yet published. Mention this paper.

There are in foreign lands, American missionaries, their wives and assistants to the following number: Presbyterians, 1817; Baptists, 1860; Congregationalists, 2980; Methodists, 3783.

In several instances lately recorded missionaries have adopted the bicycle as an agent of transportation.

Sixty Years a Lake Sailor.

Bart Logan, the oldest skipper in Buffalo, N. Y., with the exception of one colored man, began as cabin boy under the late Levi Allen sixty years ago, on the steamboat Ohio, and has sailed the unsalted seas ever since. He is hale and hearty at seventy-four, and recalls the good old times in Buffalo half a century and more ago as though they were things of yesterday. He knew Ben Rathbun, and like most of

the survivors of that period insists that that enterprising man was deeply wronged when he was sent to prison. He was a victim of circumstances and jealous rivals in business. Bart Logan sailed regularly under Captain Allen in 1834, on the Superior, a steamer made from the wreck of the Walk-in-the-Water.—Buffalo Courier.

Mince pies were known as far back as 1596 as "mutton" pies.

The New Bread.

ROYAL unfermented bread, made without yeast, avoiding the decomposition produced in the flour by yeast or other baking powder; peptic, palatable and most healthful; may be eaten warm and fresh without discomfort, which is not true of bread made in any other way.

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Receipt for Making One Loaf.

ONE quart flour, 1 teaspoonful salt, half a teaspoonful sugar, 2 heaping teaspoonfuls Royal Baking Powder, half medium-sized cold boiled potato, and water. Sift together thoroughly flour, salt, sugar, and baking powder; rub in the potato; add sufficient water to mix smoothly and rapidly into a stiff batter, about as soft as for pound-cake; about a pint of water to a quart of flour will be required—

more or less according to the brand and quality of the flour used. Do not make a stiff dough, like yeast bread. Pour the batter into a greased pan, 4½x8 inches, and 4 inches deep, filling about half full. The loaf will rise to fill the pan when baked. Bake in very hot oven 45 minutes, placing paper over first 15 minutes baking, to prevent crusting too soon on top. Bake at once. Don't mix with milk.

"A SUCCESS."

F. J. Cheney & Co., Toledo, O., Gentlemen:— I have suffered from catarrh for about five years and have tried several remedies without relief until I commenced to use Hall's Catarrh Cure last February. I must say that it is a **A SUCCESS**, the dropping in my throat disappeared entirely after the first bottle. It increased my appetite, so that I now weigh eight pounds more than my customary weight. I have recommended it to others and all who used it have been greatly relieved and speak highly of it. One of them was in my store yesterday and expressed his wish to peddle it this winter. Will you please let me know the lowest terms you could furnish it for, as I would like to keep it in stock. Hoping to hear from you soon, I remain, Yours respectfully,

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