



A SKETCH ON THE WORK.

rendered to sickness, a purse of about forty dollars had been raised for him among the men, and he was to be "packed" to Sproat's Landing on a mule at the company's expense whenever the doctor decreed it wise to move him. Of course invalidism of a more serious nature is not infrequent where men work in the paths of sliding rocks, beneath caving earth, amid falling forest trees, around giant blasts, and with heavy tools.

Another one of the tents was that of the "boss packer." He superintended the transportation of supplies on the pack-trail. This "job of 200 men," as Dunn styled his camp, employed thirty pack horses and mules. The pack trains consisted of a "bell-horse" and boy, and six horses following. Each animal was rated to carry a burden of 400 pounds of dead weight, and to require three quarts of meal three times a day.

Another official habitation was the "store-man's" tent. As a rule, there is a store-man to every ten miles of construction work; often every camp has one. The store-man keeps account of the distribution of the supplies of food. He issues requisitions upon the head storehouse of the company, and makes out orders for each day's rations from the camp store. The cooks are therefore under him, and this fact suggests a mention of the principal building in the camp—the mess hall, or "grub tent."

This structure was of a size to accommodate two hundred men at once. Two tables ran the length of the unbroken interior—tables made roughly of the slabs or outside boards from a saw-mill. The benches were huge tree trunks spiked fast upon stumps. There was a bench on either side of each table, and the places for the men were each set with a tin cup and a tin pie plate. The bread was heaped high on wooden platters, and all the condiments—catsup, vinegar, mustard, pepper, and salt—were in cans that had once held condensed milk. The cooks worked in an open-ended extension at the rear of the great room. The rule is to have one cook and two "cookees" to each sixty men.

While I was a new arrival just undergoing introduction, the men, who had come in from work, and who had "washed up" in the little creeks and at the river bank, began to assemble in the "grub tent" for supper. They were especially interesting to me because there was every reason to believe that they formed an assembly as typical of the human flotsam of the border as ever was gathered on the continent. Very few were what might be called born laborers; on the contrary, they were mainly men of higher origin who had failed in older civilizations; outlaws from the States; men who had hoped for a gold mine until hope was all but dead; men in the first flush of the