

inch of room they can ever expect to occupy.

The eye follows the narrow highway, first with its single row of buildings facing the river, and then built up on both sides to the foot of Mount Pisgah, an almost perpendicular elevation rising to the height of fifteen hundred feet above the tide-water, and about the base of which cluster, in what seems at first a hopeless confusion, the dwellings, stores, and churches of this active little town. It is over Mount Pisgah that we shall enjoy a ride on the famous gravity railroad known as the "Switch-back." Though Mauch Chunk was first settled in the year 1815, it was in this immediate vicinity that, about a quarter of a century earlier (1791), anthracite coal was accidentally discovered by one Philip Ginter, a hunter.

The first problem presented for solution to the Lehigh Coal and Navigation Company, when organized, was the transportation of coal from the mines to the river. Science and enterprise joined hands to solve it. First, a tedious system of mule teams was adopted, but in 1827 this was replaced by the gravity railroad, running on a descending grade from Summit Hill to the river. Cars coming down on this road by their own gravity carried with them the mules which were to drag them back. In 1844 the mule system was abandoned entirely, by the erection of inclined planes and stationary engines. Since that time a ride over these planes has annually become more popular, until now it is an inseparable feature of a visit to Mauch Chunk.

Let us step into this car, which is waiting here at the base of the plane, and we shall shortly see how it is for ourselves. Here we go! Up—up—up. Now we begin to look down on the tree-tops, and the landscape below seems to be

slowly but steadily receding. We speedily traverse two thousand three hundred and twenty-two feet of track, and, reaching the summit, are eight hundred and sixty-four feet higher than our starting-point.

We now whiz along, with gravity for our motive power, for a distance of six miles, a descent of three hundred and two feet, to the base of another inclined plane, Mount Jefferson, two thousand and seventy feet long and four hundred and sixty-two feet in elevation. Drawn by invisible chargers, we hurry along, down a mile's steep incline, to the quaint mining village of Summit Hill, with a population of two thousand, and an elevation of nine hundred and seventy-five feet above the Lehigh. A curious place it is, with rambling streets, old buildings, and a stone arsenal with turrets and loop-holes, and in which are stored arms for a company of militiamen, to be called out should disorder arise among the miners. Here, too, is the "burning mine," within the subterranean depth of which a fiery heat has been raging for nearly fifty years, searing and blighting whole acres on the surface above it.

The supreme pleasure of our ride is the return over the nine miles of continuous descending grade to our starting-point at Mount Pisgah's base. A single turn of the brakes and off we start, faster and faster, down through long stretches of shaded roadway, around wondrous curves, along giddy cliffs, under shadows of great ivy-grown crags, and still down—down—down, at a dizzy speed, and as if borne on the wings of the wind. There, like a toy village in the distance before, and far below us, we once more descry Mauch Chunk, with its familiar church spire so indelibly impressed upon all who