TO SUNDAY-SCHOOL WORKERS.

The attention of Sunday-school teachers and superintendents is especially directed to our offer of prizes for Bible study, on another page. There is no more valuable aid to successful teaching than the judicious use of prizes. Our day schools recognize this, and every year spend large sums of money for rewards for learning, and the Sunday-schools which do the same, have the best success.

The editor of the 'Northern Messenger' feels this very strongly, and we propose to do all that such a paper can to further this end. We hope to see every school into which the 'Messenger' goes, taking part in this competition.

RIDING THE HUMP-DURGIN.

'Of course you'll take a ride on the hump-durgin,' said the vice-president of the company, as he handed me a note of introduction to the foreman of the logging camp.

'What is this hump-durgin?' I asked. 'I have heard the name several times before, but can't learn to what it applies. Is it an animal or a machine?'

'You'll find out fast enough,' laughed the vice-president.

I was about to visit a logging camp in the foot-hills of the Cascade Mountains, amid the vast forests of fir and cedar with which the North-West coast is so densely covered.

The Northern Pacific train from Tacoma, after devious windings up the mountains, brought me to the coal-mining camp of Wilkeson, where I was to spend the night.

This Wilkeson mine is one of the oldest and most important in Washington, and the discipline of the works is as perfect as the order maintained in this model mining camp, and both are due to the far-sighted wisdom and unbending firmness of manager J. H. Scott, a man who is famed throughout the far West for his skill in handling men.

The following morning we boarded a train of empty flat cars, that were pushed a few miles up a branch track leading into the very heart of the forest. The bit of level beside which we halted, was known as the 'landing,' and was paved with logs solidly embedded in the ground, laid a few feet apart, and at right angles to the track. The upper surface of these was worn white and smooth by the constant friction of other logs, for whose passage they afforded a solid roadway. At one side, and a couple of hundred feet apart, stood two stationary engines of about thirty horse-power each. One of them was used to 'yank' the great logs up a set of skids on to the flats, while the other rolled in over a drum a slender wire cable that trailed its apparently endless length from somewhere far up the gulch.

'Yes,' replied Mr. Scott, in answer to my inquiry, 'it is a cable system. By means of it we are enabled to beat the world in getting out lumber.'

The bottom of the gulch up which the cable disappeared was laid with log cross-ties until it resembled a railway minus its rails. This was the central 'skid road,' which extended from the landing two miles into the forest, and connected with an arterial system of other skid roads that branched from it through every lateral ravine. Down these skid roads the huge logs are drawn by half-mile relays of wire cable, in tandem teams, or 'turns,' of from three to seven at a time.

As we watched the movement of the snake-like cable, there came from up the gulch a sound of bumping and sliding that rapidly increased in volume until finally the butt end of a log appeared swinging around a corner. The first monster was followed by a second, closely chained to it. Then came a third, fourth and fifth, until the swaying, groaning procession was at length completed by a nondescript affair looking like a cross between a horse-trough and a dugout canoe. It was about twenty feet long, was pointed at both ends, was made fast to the last log of the 'turn,' and in it sat a man, who, as soon as the landing was reached, sprang out, cast loose his novel craft, and left it standing at the foot of the skid road. 'That,' said my companion, pointing to the canoe-like affair, 'is the famous hump-durgin, and if you care to, you can take passage in it on its return trip, which will be made in a few minutes.'

'All right,' I answered. 'It appears a sea-worthy craft. But why hump-durgin?'

'It is a hump-durgin,' replied the manager, 'because the captain of the first one ever launched called it so, and the word is derived from toboggan, which was the name originally applied to it. It's captain was not familiar with toboggans, however, and the word proved such a puzzler to him, that the first time he was asked what he called his craft, he answered: "The boss was calling it by the name of one of them Canuck sliding machines, hump-durgin, I think he said it was." This word was of course too good to lose, and hump-durgin it has ever been since.'

A few minutes later I was seated in the after-end of the dugout. It was laden with the iron dogs and chains with which the logs just arrived had been fastened together, and the captain was stationed well forward to look out for snags. We had been made fast to the return cable, a telephonic signal had been transmitted to the first relay engine, half-a-mile away, and the voyage was begun. My instructions were to hold on tight, watch out for 'slews,' and take care that my fingers didn't get jammed against the sheer skids. These were logs so placed at the sharp turns in the gulch as to divert passing logs or hump-durgins from the bank and sheer them into the main channel. At such points the proper position of the cable was maintained by both vertical and horizontal steel rollers. It was here, too, that the 'slews' occurred, the hump-durgin being jerked around the corners and made to slide or 'slew' across the road-bed with such sudden violence that an unwary passenger must inevitably have been flung out. On tangents the motion of the craft was generally smooth and bearable, though there came times when it pitched and pounded as though encountering a head-sea.

As our rate of speed was about four miles per hour, in less than ten minutes we reached the first relay station, where the hump-durgin was run into a snug berth, protected from descending logs by a heavy side skid. Here, housed in a rude shed, an upright engine of thirty-five horse-power was winding in two wire cables at once—the one that had drawn us up from the landing, and a second that was hauling a 'turn' of logs down from further up the line. The length of these cables was so regulated that the logs arrived about half-a-minute after our craft had been safely docked, and on their appearance, followed by a second hump-durgin, I discovered that this was a transfer as well as a relay station, the original durgin being about to return from this point to the landing.

Hump-durgin No. 2, being intended for easier grades and less violent 'slews' than the other, was a much lighter affair and differently constructed. It was formed of two small logs, squared, pointed at both ends, set a couple of feet apart, and joined by a solid platform with slightly raised sides. As the other durgin suggested a canoe, so this one resembled a catamaran.

No. 3 relay engine we found placed a hundred or more feet higher than the one we had just left. Here occurred a second transfer and a repetition of the scene witnessed at the preceding station. Hump-durgin No. 3 was also a catamaran, and its route was the most interesting yet traversed. In places the hills were so precipitous that the outer edge of the road was protected by heavy log guards, while all the skids sloped toward the inner side. It sometimes though rarely happens, when the road is wet and slippery, that logs will begin sliding on their own account, become unmanageable, gather speed like an avalanche as they rush down the glade, leap or sweep away the barrier at some curve, and plunge with a crushing roar into the valley below. At such a time it is policy for the captain of a hump-durgin to desert his craft as quickly as possible, for he might as well be attached to the tail of a comet as to be hurled through space in the wake of a runaway 'turn' of these mammoth logs.

As the luxuries of all travel gradually disappear in a wilderness, so on the last half-mile of this skid road there was no hump-durgin; passengers were forced to walk, and the final length of cable was drawn by a team of horses back to the scene of active logging operations. Here was the virgin forest of lofty firs and giant cedars, whose mighty trunks shot upward, smooth, unblemished, and straight as the columns of a temple, from two hundred to three hundred feet in height. It was a place of silence and deep cool shadows, flecked by scattered points of golden sunlight. But it was a songless forest, and save for the presence of inquisitive squirrels, and softly flitting jays clad in complete suits of dark navy blue, it seemed devoid of animal life.

In sharp contrast to the profound silence reigning elsewhere throughout the mighty forest, the scene at the terminus of the skid road was one of noisy animation. The wooded aisles rang with incessant axe strokes, the raucous swish of long, fierce-toothed saws, the jangle of chains, and the shouting of teamsters. There was the laughter and singing of light-hearted men, and above all came the occasional thunderous crash of stately woodland kings deposed and hurled from their lofty thrones.

Of this magnificent timber, while much is taken, a far greater quantity is left, for the loggers of this generation are but skimming the cream of the vast North-Western forests, selecting for present use only the largest and finest trees, and leaving those of inferior growth for their as yet unborn successors. Still, the present waste of timber is prodigious and inexcusable. A pernicious custom of the coast is to cut all trees at a height of from eight to ten feet above the ground, leaving stumps containing millions of feet of the finest lumber to useless decay. Not only is the waste of fir timber at both top and bottom of the tree most prodigal, but as there is little present demand for cedar lumber, cedar shingles having sold on Puget Sound last year as low as sixty-five cents per thousand, the finest cedar trees, superb great fellows from three to five feet in diameter, are being used in the construction of skid roads, because they are easy to split, and with them large surfaces may be quickly covered.

In these Western forests there is no waiting for snow nor for high water, no sledding, rafting, nor river driving, and by the aid of engines, cables, and railways, the fir-tree of to-day may easily become the lumber of to-morrow, and be voyaging in Pacific waters to ports of far-away China or Japan the day after.

Under these conditions, the work of a North-West logging camp never ceases, and it quickly assumes a permanent and village-like aspect, unknown to similar communities in the East. In a camp that originally contained only the familiar dining-shed, stable, blacksmith's shop, and big log dormitory in which all hands may bunk at night, numerous other buildings soon begin to appear. The foreman, certain of an all-the-year-round job, decides to bring his wife to camp, and must build a house for her accommodation. Some of the men follow suit. Others, desiring a privacy that is not afforded by the public dormitory, or something in the nature of a home, devote their leisure to the building of little 'shacks' or cabins, of which sides, roofs, floor, doors and furniture are all made of split cedar. Their further leisure is spent in the furnishing and embellishing of these tiny houses. They run out porch roofs, construct comfortable lounging seats, and by-and-by they experiment warily with garden seeds. Flowers and vines put in a timid appearance and decide to remain, the winding paths among the stumps take on the aspect of rude streets, a store becomes a necessity, and the patient hump-durgin comes up from the landing laden with many a package of goods besides logging tools. All at once it becomes apparent that the camp is no longer a camp, but has become a village, that in the near future, when its surrounding forests shall be supplanted by fields and orchards, may be the centre of an agricultural district yielding even greater wealth than the sombre woodlands to which it owes its existence.—From Kirk Munroe in 'Harper.'

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