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MULE SHOE ROUTE

Gravity Scheme Invented by Miners of Tennessee.

Devise Mountain T-Rail Toboggan Which Takes Them to Shaft Openings in a Hurry.

A queer gravity railroad scheme is in use among the miners in the Inman district of Tennessee, not far from the town of South Pittsburg. The region has, by the way, more different kinds of means of transportation than any other in the world. The range is from the steeply inclined cable road that runs up Lookout mountain, not so many miles away, to the idea that the miners evolved for themselves after watching section bosses use gravity cars for coasting down the mountains.

The mines nestle in a valley at the foot of a series of hills, and the railroad track winds its tortuous way from the mine openings up to the heights that lead to the outside world.

Many of the miners live in the settlements on the hills, and it is a long way to the shaft openings. One day some bright genius discovered that a mule shoe would fit over the top of the T-rail that marked the course of the railroad.

It was but an inventive step to attach the shoe to a short board and then slip the mountain rail sled over the track, says an exchange. Then all Mr. Miner had to do was to balance himself, pick up his feet and transport miner, pick and dinner bucket down the mountain to work. Of course, it was one way traffic for which the road got no money, but there was no conductor, no strap hanging and no stopping to buy tickets on the mule shoe route.

Early any morning the stranger may see the miners come along with their mule shoe toboggans, calmly take a seat and begin the descent.

A pick handle, stick or the foot serves as a brake to regulate the speed of the incline railway. As the shoes wear smooth from contact with the rail they pick up speed, and at times a couple of daring coal diggers will race on opposite rails from the top to the bottom. But as a rule they take the trip carefully and earnestly so as not to interfere with the rights of the road that may belong to a neighbor before or after them.

The scheme, of course, will not work up hill, and the road has to bring the men back on crowded cars that are not so comfortable or exhilarating as the individual coasters that come scooting down the mountain in the morning.

The number of missing mule shoes when the idea first got vogue was perplexing, and it was some time before the company storekeepers found out why the stocks were being depleted by such odd lots that no amount of shoeing extravagance could account for it.

But the miner in those parts is a law unto himself; since he rose up twenty years ago and put a forcible end to the convict system of working the mines, and the owners mindful of the fact that the state of Tennessee had to keep a standing army for two years to keep the peace at that time, do not intend to let a little thing like a mule shoe create any disturbance.

England's Hungry Birds.

In gardens where no bird-table attracts its feathered pensioners the silent absence of bird-life is almost oppressive; but the birds did not depart before necessity compelled, observes the London Times. Sometimes grim fate stalked in the thin shrubbery whence now and again the household cat has emerged; but more often your garden birds have migrated afield because they had exhausted the possibilities of their home. See down the length of the garden wall a footwide space had been absolutely cleared of dead leaves by blackbird and thrush, who had tossed them to one side in their search for wintering insect life. Look closer and you will see that probing bills have worked a little crevice all the way between the earth and the wall. See, every square inch of uncovered frozen ground is dusty from the innumerable pecks of hungry little beaks.

India's Famines.

Famines in India are growing in number and in intensity. After a careful study of the problem, Sir William Digby says in his "Prosperous British India" that there were in India two famines in the eleventh century, one famine in the thirteenth, three in the fourteenth, three in the sixteenth, three in the seventeenth, four in the eighteenth up to 1745. And under British rule seven famines from 1769 to 1800. And in the nineteenth century thirty-two famines. In the first quarter of the nineteenth century there were five famines, with 1,000,000 deaths; in the second quarter, three famines, with 500,000 deaths; in the third quarter, six famines, with 5,000,000 deaths; and in the fourth quarter, eighteen famines, with 26,000,000 deaths.

The Penalized Civilian.

"Don't you think the modern fashions for men are absurd?"

"Yes. There seems to be an idea that anybody who doesn't wear soldier clothes deserves to look funny."

A Plea.

"I ain't kicking at these meatless days, ma'am, you understand."

"Well, then?"

"Only let's have a pruneless day, too, once in a while."

Children Cry
FOR FLETCHER'S
CASTORIA

TO THE PUBLIC

The undersigned, intending to retire permanently from business, will close his Photograph Gallery in Chestertown January 1st, 1918. All persons desiring photographs for the holidays, or photographic work of any nature are urged to place their orders and arrange sittings without delay. All work taken now will be completed and delivered when desired.

Very respectfully,
JOHN M. SOUTH,
n24-tf Gallery Cross St., near Depot

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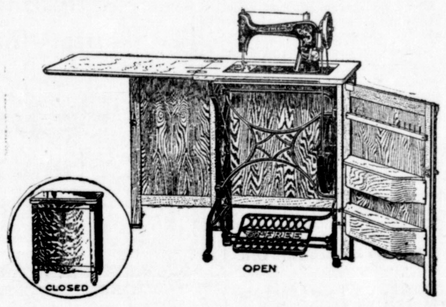

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