

MEN WORK AND FIGHT

PERCHED UPON HIGH STILTS IN SOUTHERN FRANCE.

All Traffic Here is "Elevated" because of the Swampy and Sandy Condition of the Soil—They Cover Long Distances With Little Fatigue.

Stilts are almost as common in use to-day in the famous Landes of France as they were forty years ago, when the hand of man undertook the work of improving the nature of the land there by changing swamp to meadow and making pastures of what had been deep morass. The extensive strip of land embraced in the territory known as the Landes lies between the Mediterranean Sea and the valleys of the Adour and the Garonne, covering an area of over 800,000 acres.

It was impossible to reach the Landes during the winter months in the old days because the intervening regions were flooded and shut off all communication between the Landes and the mainland. Many sections of the Landes are still in the old condition of sand wastes and marsh bottoms, like deserts in their seeming use-



The Shepherd and His Herd and Hound

lessness. On the other hand, vast tracts of the region have been redeemed in the last half-century. They have been covered with rich, productive soil and occupied by human beings. Vineyards are plentiful where once the rushes swayed in the breeze, and the wine that comes from there has a pleasing flavor that recommends it to the critical French connoisseur. Towns flourish now on land that was sunken meadow forty years ago, and agriculture has the upper hand. The furze-dotted stretches of land are brushed here and there with straw-thatched huts in which both shepherds and herds take refuge when bad weather threatens. These shepherds constitute a class entirely their own. They are called "lanusquets" in France. Mounted on stilts, they guide their herds over miles of pasture land, for which they have to pay no tax or rent, thanks to a special dispensation granted in the sixteenth century by the sovereign of the country, and which has never been revoked.

The Shepherd.

The shepherd is never idle. When his charges are feeding peacefully in some choice bed of fodder he uses his balancing pole as a brace, and thus is able to make an aerial perch for himself, where he sits and knits steadily with long needles as long as the herd is quiet. His winter costume consists of a sort of dolman made of sheepskin, with the hide side outside and the wool side inside. His legs and feet are wrapped in lamb skins. Thus equipped, he can withstand all the rigors of the Mediterranean winter. His summer outfit is as little as possible. The lanusquets can cover long distances faster and with less fatigue than any other class of athletes, with the exception of bicyclists. They can chase their straying sheep over shallow waterways, swamps and bogs with little or no trouble. They handle their long balancing poles, that add greatly to the picturesqueness of their appearance, with great effect, using it not only for its original purpose as a balance while in motion, but as a brace while resting and a crook in the chase, at having a hook at its end.

Swamps Ignored.

Throughout the sections of the Landes that still remain unredeemed the majority of the male population uses stilts to-day in going from place to place, ignoring swampy spots, which would otherwise be impassable, practically. The stilt-walkers have tapped many of the little streams that run through the swamps and led them to the lakes and ponds that are now used in the irrigation of the soil on which the pitch pine, cork tree, chestnut and similar trees flourish. The sandy soil of the Landes is well adapted to the culture of such growths, favored as it is by the most delightful climate of France. Spring opens there early in March, and from then until late in May rainfalls are frequent and steady. The young forest progresses rapidly under such conditions, and is of benefit to the herders as well. Cattle and sheep find much better fodder on such tracts than on their usual pasture grounds on water-soaked fields. (This fact is evidenced particularly in the winter, when the herds find their way to the forest lands and dig into the snow to nibble the green shoots that spring up around the roots of the trees.)

Their Manufactures.

The principal industry in the Landes is the manufacturing of such commercial staples as can be produced from the pitch drawn from the pines as maple syrup is won from the trees of America. In that industry the pitch gatherers do not receive regular wages. They are known as "metayers" in France—laborers who share in the business profits of the employer for the work involved. The employer

makes resin, turpentine and other similar products from the raw material in his factory, and it is in the profits of the manufactured articles that the workmen get their dividend. The pitch gatherers live in the pine forest in rough, wooden cabins, large enough to accommodate their families. They are a superior lot of workmen and live in clean surroundings. Their income is not great, but sufficient to enable them to live in comparative comfort and lay aside a little money each year. They are good in every sense, energetic and industrious and, above all, decent.

Catching the Pitch.

The first step in the attempt to draw the pitch from the tree is to cut away sections of the bark. That is done usually early in February. Then little earthen receptacles are hung under the exposed places to catch the pitch when the trunk of the tree is cut. The cuts are made once a week after that with a peculiar kind of ax, named "hopchott" with a razor edge. The first year the cutting begins at a point just above the roots and is repeated in a straight line upward to a height of about two feet. Each succeeding year the cutters work thirty inches higher, until finally the limit is reached at twelve feet. The cuts in the trunk are never more than three and a half inches wide, or one-third of an inch deep. To accomplish his work at the upper cuts in the pines the laborer uses a pair of stilts, made especially for that service. With the use of these a man can tap an average of 300 pines a day. The pines yield their flow of pitch throughout their life of sixty to seventy years, provided they are tapped in the manner described. The cuts are used for five years, and then are allowed to heal up, new ones being made in different parts of the bark.

Games on Stilts.

On feast days in the Landes most of the games indulged in are contested on stilts, and it is not uncommon on such occasions to see both the boys and girls in lively round dances and quadrilles, perched high up on the spindly supports. Stilts have been put to many other uses in that region from time to time. Not the least important of these was the elevation of the letter carriers from the difficult surface of the swampy ground to an aerial perch on lofty stilts, with which they performed and still perform their postal duties in comfort and with remarkable speed. The authorities of France agree that the development of the Gascogne section of that country in the last forty years is due in a large measure to the stilted letter carriers. What the bicycle is to rapid postal delivery in the rural sections of upper France over perfect roads, so are the stilts to the service in the Landes, where the routes lead over sunken meadows.

Stilts in the Army.

Experiments have been made with stilts by the Eighteenth army corps of France in reconnoitering in the Landes. They proved to be successful, and a certain number of soldiers are kept in training for work on stilts at a moment's notice. Most of them are natives of the Landes, young men to the manner born. Miles and miles of military telegraph lines have been erected by the milliamen on stilts in Southern France, and it happens frequently that fords are found by men on stilts in rivers that have to be crossed by troops in going through sparsely settled country.

The pine forests of the Landes are alive with game of the wildest kind and of many varieties. In the long list of wild birds and beasts no more popular than the boars—the fierce and vicious members of the pig family that are often guilty of malicious devastation of poultry yards in the small settlements. The best stilt runners available are chosen for the boar hunts. They use their long poles as weapons and club their prey to death when



Stilts As Used in the Army.

they chase them to cover. Their speed on the stilts is remarkable, as is evidenced by the fact that they never fail to outrun the wild pigs, once they strike the trail. The boars sink into the soft mud of the swamps and find it hard work to move on out of harm's way, while the men on stilts have no such hindrance to bother them. The stilts are safe from the bites and attacks of enraged beasts when it gets to fighting at close range, because the best the boars can do is to chew away at the hard wood of the stilts, which is proof against their fangs.

In Arcachon, a town renowned in Europe as a health resort in winter for persons with weak lungs, races on stilts are regular features of the season. They are conducted by a man named Dornen, the acknowledged champion with the stilts in the Landes. He is the man who made the journey from Paris to Moscow on stilts in March, 1891. He had many obstacles to overcome, particularly in Germany, where the peasants and children all but prevented him from carrying out his programme. The races are run in other Landes towns as well as in Arcachon, but the final championship contests always take place in Arcachon.

Stilts are by no means uncommon in this country. They are used, not for utilitarian purposes here, but as toys for the boys in our larger cities. After the kite season, the top season and the marble season are over in the spring the boys take to the stilts and parade the streets gleefully on their elongated motors. It is so easy to acquire the balance and knack of using stilts that any boy can learn how in a few minutes.

A LIVE COAL TRICK.

The Experiment Teaches an Important Natural Law.

One would suppose that it is possible to hold a glowing coal on a piece of linen or cotton without burning the cloth, but that such can be done is easy for anyone to prove, and at the same time the experiment teaches an important natural law. Every child knows that the telephone and telegraph wires are made of copper because that metal conducts sound well. It is also a good conductor of heat and electricity which is only another form of heat. If a poker is heated in the fire you pick up a cloth to hold the outer end, although it has not been in the fire, because experience has taught you that the heat is conducted through the metal from the fire to the outer end. This experiment with the flaming coal is based upon the linen is in no way injured by



the Glowing Coal.

this principle, and the additional one that linen and cotton are poor conductors of heat. Take a globe of copper and draw a piece of cloth tightly over it, so that there is not a wrinkle at the top. If the linen or cotton is closely woven the trick is all the more certain. Then, holding the cloth tightly in place, you can safely put a glowing coal on top of the cloth, and while it burns fiercely, the cloth will not even be scorched. The reason is that the great conductivity of the copper draws the heat of the coal before it can burn the cloth. Do not try this experiment with a good handkerchief at first, for if the cloth is not tightly drawn it may burn; but take some worthless piece of linen or muslin, and after you are certain of your experiment you can astonish your friends who do not know the secret.

The Song of the Top.

Spining! Spining! Spining! Round and round I go, Twirling, tripping, dipping, Gliding to and fro; Cutting graceful right and left go bounding— Well I know my art! Life to me is motion! Britches as bird on wing. With each revolution hark the song I sing! Humming, humming, humming, round and round I go! Oh, I lead a gay life, gliding to and fro!

Maggie Wheeler Ross in Little Folks.

These Funny Children. "Say, mamma," said four-year-old Tommy, "let's play I'm an awful-looking old tramp. I'll come around to the back door and ask for a piece of pie and you get scared and give it to me."

Mary and Martha, the three-year-old twins, were busy with their paint boxes. "Why, you've painted your doll's face blue all over!" exclaimed Mary. "Yes," rejoined Martha, "I'm pretending she's got the blues."

"Teacher says that rubber trees grow wild in Florida," said a seven-year-old school girl. "Well, s'pose they do," rejoined her brother, aged five. "Nobody ever has any use for rubbers till it rains and then it's too wet to go out in the woods and gather them."

Mabel, aged five, while visiting her aunt in a low, marshy part of the country, contracted malaria, and was quite ill on reaching home. Not long afterward her mother had a chill. "I can't understand why you should have symptoms of malaria, living on such high ground," said the doctor. "Oh," spoke up Mabel, "I guess mamma must have inherited it from me!"

Marks of the True Lady.

No lady should turn and look behind her in the street; the girl who does so directly courts unpleasant attentions from men who are passing. Unless she is a hostess or a member of the family a lady need not rise when a gentleman is introduced to her.

When visiting conform to the rules of the house in which you are staying. A visitor should always bear this in mind. When shopping do not order assistants about; a lady never forgets to be thoughtful for those who serve her. "A man is known by the company he keeps." This applies equally to a woman.—Woman's Life.

No Wonder She Wondered

"How long does the train stop here?" the little girl asked the brakeman. "Stop here?" asked the functionary; "four minutes. From two-two to two-two." "I wonder," mused the little girl, "if that man thinks he is the whistle!" —Boston Herald.

Some people are so busy criticizing the faults of their neighbors that they have no time to correct their own.

THE WEELITTLES AT KRONSTADT.



They visit the floating dock at Kronstadt and with their Weelittle gives an illustration of Russian punishment. It is successful.

FIND THE SHIPBUILDER.

THE WEELITTLES VISIT A SIBERIAN MINE.



Back to the Mines! The adventurous little tourists investigate these horrors while en tour.

FIND ONE OF THE CONVICTS.

THE WEELITTLES IN CHINA.



A Jung-Chan Mandarin, celebrating the birth of children in his family is insulted when the little voyagers laugh at his paper dragon.

FIND THE CHINESE MOTHER.

THE WEELITTLES INSPECT A CHINESE IDOL.



At the shrine of the Chinese God of War.

NEW YORK CENTRAL

THE FOUR-TRACK THROUGH

114th Street to 125th Street, Avenue Station, Rochester, Albany, West Point, Poughkeepsie, and Newburgh.

EAST BY MAIN LINE.
A. M.—8:00, 8:30, 9:00, 9:30, 10:00, 10:30, 11:00 P. M.—11:30, 12:00, 12:30, 1:00, 1:30, 2:00, 2:30, 3:00, 3:30, 4:00, 4:30, 5:00, 5:30, 6:00, 6:30, 7:00, 7:30, 8:00, 8:30, 9:00, 9:30, 10:00, 10:30, 11:00.

EAST BY AUBURN ROAD.
A. M.—8:15, 8:45, 9:15, 9:45, 10:15, 10:45, 11:15 P. M.—11:45, 12:15, 12:45, 1:15, 1:45, 2:15, 2:45, 3:15, 3:45, 4:15, 4:45, 5:15, 5:45, 6:15, 6:45, 7:15, 7:45, 8:15, 8:45, 9:15, 9:45, 10:15, 10:45, 11:15.

WEST BY MAIN LINE.
A. M.—8:10, 8:40, 9:10, 9:40, 10:10, 10:40, 11:10 P. M.—11:40, 12:10, 12:40, 1:10, 1:40, 2:10, 2:40, 3:10, 3:40, 4:10, 4:40, 5:10, 5:40, 6:10, 6:40, 7:10, 7:40, 8:10, 8:40, 9:10, 9:40, 10:10, 10:40, 11:10.

WEST BY FALLS ROAD.
A. M.—8:05, 8:35, 9:05, 9:35, 10:05, 10:35, 11:05 P. M.—11:35, 12:05, 12:35, 1:05, 1:35, 2:05, 2:35, 3:05, 3:35, 4:05, 4:35, 5:05, 5:35, 6:05, 6:35, 7:05, 7:35, 8:05, 8:35, 9:05, 9:35, 10:05, 10:35, 11:05.

Trains Arrive from the West.
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