

DEAN BESSEY

WRITES ON CRUISING  
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and then would be found a very old, very large White Pine. These trees attained enormous dimensions. I have seen some fully six feet in diameter, and unbranched till sixty or eighty feet from the ground. They were looked upon as the most valuable of all the Pines within these forests.

"One spring I was asked to join a small party to go into the hitherto untrodden forest of the southern peninsula, in order to do a certain piece of work. The party consisted of the Boss, the Cook, the Expert, and an Indian who helped us to carry our belongings. We set out on foot and traveled until we were tired, when we camped. The next day we continued our journey until we reached the part of the state where we wished to do our work.

"We had been employed by a large land company owning tracts of Pine land in several of the central counties of the southern peninsula of Michigan. We were asked to determine the amount and kind of pines to be found on these areas, and to determine their value, standing and also after being cut and taken to the mills. We were also required to report in like manner on the Hardwood forests that we found, being sure to include valuations as before. We were to report upon the logging possibilities of the various forest areas, so that it was necessary for us to investigate the streams, and to report upon the general surface conditions of the areas covered with Pines. We were then to report also upon the value of the land for agricultural or other purposes after the removal of the forests.

from one quarter post to another across a section of dense timber and found that I varied from the surveyor's measurements by not more than a very few feet. For guiding us in direction we used good pocket compasses, and found that by a little practice we could maintain a line with a fair degree of accuracy. Each man was supplied with a notebook, small enough to slip into his pocket, and in these notebooks the records were made immediately after each observation. At the close of the day when we gathered in camp each man made footings and summaries of his day's work, no matter to be included in the final report being left to mere memory.

"It may be well to indicate exactly how the work was done in the forest. Suppose that the little tract of forest to be surveyed was an eighty acre tract. The cruiser would pace off twenty rods from one corner of the eighty, and would then proceed to survey the whole eighty by traveling parallel with one of the long sides, keeping twenty rods away from the line. This was readily done by means of the compass and by pacing. We were instructed by the Boss to stop at the end of each twenty rods and make notes in our notebooks as to the amount and quality of the timber on both sides of the track covered since the last notes were made. I found that after a little practice I could do three things at once. I could keep account of my pacing with one portion of my mind; with another I could count up the large trees on my left hand and keep a running account of the number of feet that these trees represented, while a third portion of my mind kept a similar account of the trees on my right hand. In nearly all places it was comparatively easy to

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"In carrying out these instructions we determined to carry our own camp outfit, and not to depend upon the extremely isolated Indian or white men's cabins here and there. This meant that as we moved from camp to camp we were heavily loaded with our outfit. It meant also that we did not take more than what three or four men could carry, and as a matter of fact there were not four of us all of the time but only three, the Indian giving out early, and concluding to go home, leaving us to do all the work

"Our day's work was about as follows for each day: Each man was supplied with the surveyor's notes, i.e., copies from the original notes made by the government surveyors as they surveyed out the land. And I may remark that we found that many of these original notes were very crude and unreliable, and yet we had to make use of them to locate the tracts of land that we were to survey. In surveying the land ourselves we divided every area into forty acre, and eighty acre tracts. This we did before we separated in the morning. For measuring distances we practiced "pacing," and each man had been practiced enough so that he could pace a mile with a fair degree of accuracy, and could keep this up even through the dense forest and over rough land. I remember that many a time I paced

see from the track passed over by the observer twenty rods to the right and twenty rods to the left, so that when the eighty had been gone over in that way the kind of timber and its amount were reported upon with a great deal of accuracy. Sometimes it happened that two of us through accident or otherwise covered the same tract of timber, and it was very interesting to notice that our measurements were practically identical.

"After the work had all been done on the many areas which we investigated we returned to our starting point and in the office of the Boss made our final report. In this I may say that the Cook did not join us, and it was left to the Boss and the Expert to make this final report, and it turned out that the Boss concluded that the Expert could do the work well enough and it was turned over to him for final preparation. This report included statistical summaries and many quite detailed maps to show the various distributions of the different kinds of trees, including the Hardwoods.

"A few points are of sufficient interest to be entered further. We learned how to pack our belongings in such way that we could carry what we had on our backs and in our hands very comfortably. As I said before, our Indian carrier concluded after a short experience with us that we worked him quite too hard and he deserted

us, leaving us to divide our belongings amongst ourselves.

"Mosquitoes were our greatest trouble. Each man surrounded his head and neck and as much of his face as he could with the best of mosquito netting, and yet the tormentors managed to work their way in, so that our faces were considerably swollen by the time we finished our cruising. Our hands were covered with mittens, and at night we slept under mosquito netting, and yet this did not prevent the mosquitoes from finding us.

"Excepting when we found water in the vicinity of the Arborvitae trees we suffered most from lack of good water. Occasionally we had to camp beside a pool of water which was as brown as coffee from the decayed leaves and twigs which had fallen into it, and yet by boiling this before making it into coffee we killed all the germs and none of us suffered from this source.

"Wild animals were fairly abundant, but they kept out of sight very largely. We saw many signs of bears, deer, wolves, and other animals, but they

did not bother us, and we saw little of them.

"Indians were abundant at one point, but most of our cruising was done outside of the Indian reservation, and so far away from it that they gave us no trouble, and as I have said before, the one Indian that we hired did not stay with us.

"This account of cruising is here recorded in order that foresters may be able to compare and contrast such work as done half a century ago with similar work as it is done now."

# HARRY PORTER

THE

# STATIONERY

AND UNIVERSITY SUPPLY MAN

1123 O Street

# YELLOW FRONT