

VOCATION OF THE PIPE-MAKER

Evolution of the Locomotive Pump—Recent Additions to Locomotives Which Give the Piper His Vocation—Ingenuity of the Mechanics—Advance in Mechanical Appliances—Systems of Hydraulics—Railroad Shops Fire Brigade—Non-Conductors of Heat—Economy in the Use of Steam—Complex Character of the Piper's Work—Compressed Air a Competitor With Water and Steam.

An interesting feature confronting a visitor to the Sacramento railroad shops is the endless variety of appliances and machinery.

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But is not in the pipe shop where the result of the labor of this class of workmen is to be seen.

Racks loaded with a perplexing variety of pipes in every form and size are situated on the outside of the shop.

The ancients were adepts at working lead. The Roman plumbers made their lead pipe from sheets of lead, four or some specimens, still preserved.

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In the early 70's the locomotive from its primitive simplicity, with its old-fashioned plunger pumps, working from the piston crosshead, its single blow-off pipe, and occasionally a heater pipe to prevent the pumps freezing in cold climates, gradually underwent a change, and was adorned with many modern ingenious devices that competition and advancing science have placed at the command of the manager of the motive power, and which have been adopted, seemingly regardless of expense, for the safety and luxurious comfort of the traveling public.

The water injector—that mysterious and remarkable invention by which water is lifted from the tank and forced into the boiler against its own steam pressure—has supplanted the water pump, with its air reservoirs, cylinders and other attachments, superseding the former simple hand brake, and now claims its relative position on the engine and commands constant care and attention.

The air signal whistle relieves the old bell rope; steam heaters for vestibule cars avert danger from fire by the car stove; rotary engines to run electric headlights; fire pumps with their attachments; storage reservoirs for fire trucks for lighting cars; water sprinklers for wheel fires; water journal coolers connected to every axle box to prevent heating and delay on fast runs; devices for blowing sand by air pressure under the engine driver wheels to prevent slippage; air bell ringers, and an endless number of skillfully planned inventions which have been adopted to promote efficiency and regularity of service, now compose the complement of auxiliaries of the modern locomotive.

These additions to the engine give the piper his vocation and responsibility. Where formerly a few feet of pipe completed the entire outfit of the old style engine; to-day, a fully equipped passenger engine requires nearly 900 feet of pipe to place it in running order.

As the designer leaves to the workman a choice of minor details in making connections with the several parts, the ingenuity of the piper is constantly called into service and displayed in the neatness and completeness of the various parts to carry out the general design.

The steady advance in mechanical appliances; the changes which time and experience demonstrate desirable, resulting from the use of steam, water, air or gas, and other powers, or agents employed, call for the skill of

most common appliances, for instance—this class of mechanics. A simple illustration is applicable as showing the changes and improvements in even the most common appliances, for instance—that of the hoist or derrick for loading engines with buckets of coal, originally in the form of a windlass worked by hand power, was first transformed by the addition of a steam boiler and water power pump, which was worked by water force with the aid of a lift cylinder and cable.

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