

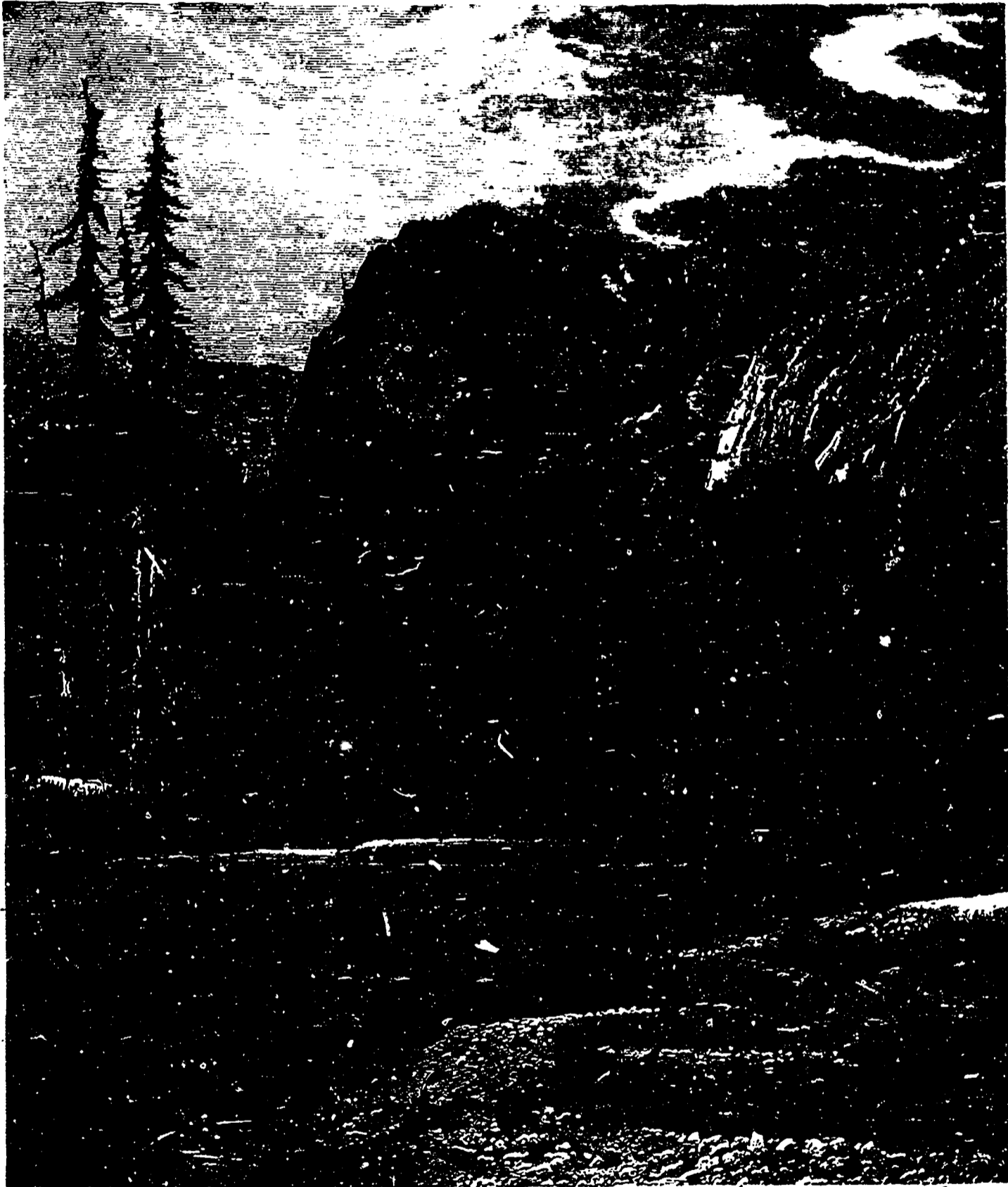
PLEASANT HOURS

A PAPER FOR OUR YOUNG FOLK.

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IN THE HEART OF THE ROCKIES.

A WESTERN EXPERIENCE.

BY W. J. WITHEROW.

One bright morning toward the end of April, the writer of this sketch left Toronto for the far West.

The scenery throughout northern Ontario is of a picturesque character, lit up here and there by a romantic lake or rapid stream. Once a glimpse was caught of the Ottawa, and later on Lake Nipissing was in view. A short glimpse of Lake Superior, as the train, on the down grade, shot across the head of a narrow inlet, was soon followed by a full view of the great inland sea from the overhanging precipice along its rocky shore. Leaving the enterprising town of Fort Arthur, and its neighbouring rival, Fort William, with its solitary table mountain, one passes through a long stretch of scrubby low land to Win-

nipeg. The size and wealth of the Prairie City are a complete surprise to one from the East visiting Manitoba for the first time. Little is left of Fort Garry; but on the site of that old Hudson Bay trading post now stands the enterprising company's store, the superior of which even Toronto cannot boast.

But we must hurry away from these haunts of the pale-face intruders to those of the dusky aborigines. As the train glided out from Winnipeg we had the first good view of the prairies, not boundless, but beautiful, for long belts of timber skirted the horizon.

At length the signs of wild western life began to appear. Highly painted Indians, wrapped in their gaudy blankets, and a few red-coated mounted police mingled with the crowd at every station. Occasionally the picturesque scout, in his buckskin shirt and leather

trousers, was seen astride a bucking broncho, or leaning lazily against the station with his broad sombrero thrown back on his head, revealing generally a handsome, sun-browned face.

Here is the prairie and these are its denizens.

"These are the gardens of the desert, these unshorn fields, boundless and beautiful, for which the speech of England has no name, The Prairies."

And well may one feel with Bryant when he says,

"I behold them for the first, And my heart swells, while the dilated sight Takes in the encircling vastness. Lo! they lie

In airy undulations far away, As if the ocean, in his gentlest swell, Stood still, with all his billows fixed And motionless forever Motionless! No! They are all unchained again.

The clouds Sweep over with their shadows, and beneath The surface rolls, and fluctuates to the eye;

Dark hollows seem to glide along and chase the sunny ridges"

At Calgary the clouds on the far horizon took strange fantastic forms, soon developing sharp and clear into the mighty mountain range, seeming scarcely eighteen miles away instead of eighty.

The Red Deer was reached on the fifth day. There ran the beautiful river over

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