

The City of Numbered Days

in a zest for cleverly turning the hidden facets of the human polygon up to the light; and if the facets chose to turn themselves of their own accord, as in Brouillard's case, why, so much the better.

"As you were saying?" he prompted, stretching himself luxuriously upon the fragrant banking of freshly clipped spruce tips, with his feet to the blaze and his hands locked under his head. He felt that Brouillard was merely responding to the subtle influences of time, place, and encompassments and took no shame for being an analytical rather than a sympathetic listener. The hundred-odd men of the pioneer party, relaxing after the day-long march over the mountains, were smoking, yarning, or playing cards around the dozen or more camp-fires. The evening, with a half-grown moon silvering the inverted bowl of a firmament which seemed to shut down, lid-like, upon the mountain rim of the high-walled valley, was witchingly enchanting; and, to add the final touch, there was comradesly isolation, Anson, Griffith, and Leshington, the three other members of the engineering staff, having gone to burn candles in the headquarters tent over blue-prints and field-notes.

"I was saying that the present-day world slant is sanely skeptical—as it should be," Brouillard