

was away off in the East, either 500 or 5,000 miles from India, & that while regular steamers sailed for the latter the former was reached by a ship when she went there. A line of fast steamships of the Atlantic greyhound order from Vancouver to Yokohama (which is now known to be the chief trading port of Japan) gave form to the nebulous ideas that had existed on the geographical position of Japan, & this route continued to Shanghai & Hong Kong, established a commercial highway that, figuratively speaking, bends beneath its weight of business. It has been a refutation of the axiom *ex nihilo nihil fit*, & has driven the pessimist into other fields for mournful incredulity. Japan with its strange incongruities is now familiar in our mouths as household words, & we have realized by observation that China is more Chinese than ever; & by its example the great highway has awakened the ambition of Australia. Enterprise & energy are contagious virtues. If Japan, said Mr. Huddart, why not Australasia, & the regular line from Vancouver to Honolulu & Sydney was the answer, a line which has added to the nautical disturbance of a Canadian harbor which, until the coming of Van Horne, was ploughed only by the keel of the Indian canoe; a figure of speech which must be taken as meant, by reason of the absence of keels on Indian canoes. Thus the back street has been brought into a more business-like condition, but still is short of that condition of a perfect thoroughfare which the untiring ambition of the President of the C.P.R. is working to secure. It is not yet the Regent Street of Eastern traffic, still less the Strand or Oxford Street, but it now actively competes for the best class of business. To further increase its attractiveness & usefulness Van Horne—for the name, thus used now signifies something more than an individual—has urged the establishment of a fast line of steamers across the Atlantic. The St. Lawrence route, he holds to be vastly superior to that by New York; more beautiful, more expeditious, & with a large proportion of smooth-water navigation. Gilbert, in one of his charming operettas, says that "to lay aloft in a howling breeze may tickle a landsman's taste," but ladies are not partial to howling breezes, very seldom lay aloft except in an upper berth, & even the accustomed traveller usually prefers to promenade the deck of a vessel on an even keel. Therefore, says the exploiter of new paths, establish a fast route which will attract American as well as European voyagers. On the pros & cons of this question it is not our purpose to argue; it is mentioned merely as a branch of the main idea which it has been Sir Wm. Van Horne's desire to impress upon Canada.

This is Van Horne as the world of strangers, seeking a concrete personality of a great enterprise, knows the President of the C.P.R. But there yet remains Sir William as known by his friends & business associates. In the purview of their experience there is Sir William in his office, at his home in Montreal, at his summer house at St. Andrews, N.B., & in the "Saskatchewan"—that is the name of the private car from the rear window of which he has made himself familiar with each section of the many that are comprised in the road from St. John, N.B., to Vancouver, & in which many distinguished persons have travelled "from ocean to ocean;" & concerning his idiosyncrasies when found at headquarters, we may borrow what has already been said elsewhere with reasonable accuracy.

On the second floor of that great, grey, Norman castle-like building, at the corner of Windsor Street, Montreal—a stone's throw, if you can throw a stone that far, below the Windsor Hotel—are the offices of the C.P.R.'s executive. Time was when one door only stood between the visitor & the man whom so many wanted to reach, & when the bolder pushed it open & got ahead of the

more diffident. Now it is another matter. The man who desires to sell a patent corkscrew for opening ginger ale in the dining-car, or has a scheme for crossing to Vancouver Island under the straits, must pass more than one official Cerberus. But assuming him to be one whose business requires the here & now personal consideration of the C.P.R.'s President, he is shown into Sir Wm. Van Horne's room. His first view of that gentleman is a back view. Seated—no, not seated, but astride a peculiar chair, such as no man ever before sat in—before a cylindrical desk, he will see a man of middle height, stout, dark-haired, slightly bald, smoking a cigar & dictating to a secretary at an adjoining table. The sentence finished, this gentleman, using his foot on the ground as a lever, spins his chair round and faces his visitor. If his eye rests on a friend, the usually calm, unreadable countenance lightens up with a smile of welcome, & a cheerful word of recognition having been uttered, an acrobatic movement empties the chair, & Van Horne, settling the cigar more comfortably in his mouth by a rapid movement of his lips, extends his hand to greet his acquaintance. Having seated his friend he seats himself—no, he re-straddles. How he manages that chair no one knows. The unwary who attempt to sit in it are thrown, as surely as if they tried to sit on one of Buffalo Bill's bronchos, but it is as gentle as a lamb beneath Van Horne. Now the visitor is either a friend of the C.P.R. or he is not. Van Horne recognizes no intermediary sentiment. If he be one unsound in faith, then he has to deal with a polite but inscrutable being, who will pleasantly guide the inquirer into mazes of irreconcilable conclusions, from which he can find no outlet. He will obtain the facts, possibly, of which he is in search, but at such angles, so to speak, that he will never be able to put them into shape, & the last stage of that man's understanding will be worse than the first. If he is a friend he will find a mentor to whom all things appertaining to railways, & many other subjects, are familiar, & that which he desires to know will be made clear & easy of comprehension.

Van Horne is thorough. He goes to the root of the matter, & by word & diagram he explains it up to the flower. He is great at the use of the diagram. He is an artist & likes to illustrate. Settling the cigar which has gone out, in his mouth, taking a pencil in his hand & balancing that most peculiar chair, he illustrates his information as he proceeds, occasionally making a dash into figures on a supplementary sheet of paper, until his story & his picture is complete, & the information sought is so plain that he who runs may read. He never thinks it too much trouble to explain. He does not wonder why the question is asked, or why he is asked to answer it. He may decline to give information for reasons which are sufficient to himself, but the "I can't be bothered" plea is never urged; & the lucidity of his explanations is equalled by the extent of his knowledge. Tackle him on what you will & you will find that from personal investigation or from the resources of his library he knows it, probably more about it than his questioner. To nonplus him you must ask him about something that has gone wrong, some false report about the railway; some stupidity of the employes having serious consequences, or some scheme which is intended to "get ahead" of the C.P.R. Then the chair spins round, the acrobatic movement takes place & Van Horne, rubbing the top of his head, drawing heavily at his cigar, paces his room, troubled in his mind & uncertain whether to let fly in western vernacular or to comment on the circumstance with deceptive moderation. Sometimes moderation carries the day; sometimes his opinion is given in language of startling originality. Except when thus put out he is good temper personified. The clerks in the next room hear sud-

den bursts of laughter or continued chuckling as the business is transacted in the President's room. Van Horne is keenly alive to humor, & likes to tell or hear of a good joke. In the once celebrated correspondence regarding a timber limit in the Cypress Hills, a certain member of Parliament informed his correspondent that he could carry out a plan that he had in view were it not that "that old brute Van Horne would not agree to it." Some time after the same member wrote to the C.P.R. office for a pass or some other favor, & Van Horne dictated the reply. The member was informed that the secretary would be happy to comply with his request, but "that that old brute Van Horne would not agree to it."

In his home on Sherbrook Street, Montreal, Sir William is one of the most genial & hospitable of hosts. He is a lover of comforts & of art. In his business he is anxious for the comfort of his passengers, in his house for that of his friends. He is not a bookworm, or a collector of many volumes, but a lover of books, & fanciful as to their make-up. Their contents are the first consideration with him, but their ease of handling & neatness of appearance follow hard upon it. In the low & convenient cases that surround his cosy working room are copies of every procurable work on the Northwest from the time of Charles II. to the present day. He is a connoisseur of Japanese art, of which he has an almost priceless collection, including personal presents from the Emperor, & his pictures hanging here, there & all over the house, are not only to the uninitiated beautiful examples of well-known painters, but also, I understand, meet the approbation of the judges. Several rooms now supply the accommodation that in his former house on Dorchester Street was found ex-necessitate in the one he called his "den." The library already alluded to has solid modern British comfort somewhat etherealized by suggestions of Japan, & here & there of mediæval Europe. A casual glance round shows a pair of rare old Italian daggers, something from Tokio, the latest art publications from London or Paris, a bundle of type-written letters to be signed, or an architect's tracing waiting the experimental corrections of that inevitable blue pencil which so many connect with the President of the C.P.R. regard as the gift of Satan for their persecution. There is enough of each to make the room pleasing to the eye & artistic intelligence, while grateful to the ease of the Philistine. Recent years have added largely to Sir William's stock of paintings, in which are included some of Monticelli, Rembrandt, Labrador & not a few from the newest school of impressionists. Sir William is himself a painter; a self-taught one, & produces not only clever caricatures of his friends, but charming little landscapes of fancy or familiar spots. Some of these you may first meet in the raw, so to say, in the painting room, looking like mad escapades of unruly paint, & afterwards find framed & in their right mind in some corner down stairs, looking as pretty as a picture. There is one landscape which hangs in a corner of his drawing-room easy of access, & which is one of his most successful works. He is fond of showing these paintings of master hands which he possesses, & ready in answering questions about them. When he has taken a visitor around the walls he generally manages to halt him opposite his own landscape & then leave him for a minute, & on his return he usually hears, "This is a very pretty picture." or as one picture collector put it, "This is one of the best pictures in the room; who is it by?" "That," says Van Horne, "is a landscape by a Dutch painter. It is not signed, but it is by a well-known man in some circles, some Dutch name." Sometimes he does & sometimes he does not inform his visitor that the Dutch name is W. C. Van Horne. Failing to find Sir William in his study you