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A VISION OF DESPAIR.

A strip of white sand where the sea with shore merges,
A cliff that climbs clear past vision and ken,
Sheer up from the shoal where the surf ever surges
To the heights of the heaven that hangs over men,
And look you to east, or look you to westward,
There fronts you forever the face of the foam,
Behind you the steep, where the billows rush restward,
As they race to their respite from rolling and roam.

And the sea-bird soars high with a shrill, sad sighing,
And circles away to windward and lee,
Till it falls with its feathers in light foam lying,
And vanishes in the unvintaged sea ;
And sinks to the depths, where none may behold it,
And is limp and lifeless on lone ocean's floor,
Where the strange phantom fishes in grey gloom enfolded
Cling to their close on the shadowy shore.

Coast-line accursed of mysterious region,
Where gaunt gape the ribs and the spars and the sail
Of drowned vessels manned with a listless legion
Of spirits unburied that speechlessly wail,
Leaden the lilt of the winds that wander
To fan the face of the Thing on the strand ;
They whisper a brief while and waft away yonder
Fearsome, and fain to forsake the fey land.

His arms are en fettered in rock adamantine,
He glassily gazes afar o'er the sea ;
And breasting forever the break elephantine,
Is doomed to desire what never can be.
Tired is his visage as plow-land with furrows,
Snow-white the strands of his straggling hair ;
He feeds on false fancies and sups on his sorrows,
And drinks to the dregs the deep draught of despair.

And time never was when the weird thing was not,
It sat there of old, and it sits there to-day,
And a thousand years hence in yon dolorous spot
It will cherish chill grief in the splash of the spray.
The skies may be folded and faded earth's landscape,
But change shall come never where change never came,
And the strand and the steep, and the surge and the
strange shape
Shall remain still forever and ever *the same* !

WILLIAM HARDY ALEXANDER.

IN THE MOUNTAINS.

Of the life of those pioneers of civilization, the engineers, but little is known, therefore the following sketch of life on a survey party will, I hope, be of some interest to others besides the "School" men. The *coureur du bois*, the missionary, the trapper, all have their historians. The traveller reclining in his upholstered seat and admiring the scenery, marvels at the twists and turns of the ribbon of steel. Little does he think of the hardships endured without a complaint, of the perils met in the

performance of duty, or of the disappointments which are the every day lot of an engineer. But the life is not all thorns. The vigorous, healthy outdoor work gives one an appetite unequalled by a coyote, and a desire for sleep profound as that of the polar bear. And what a charm it is, after the day's work is over, to lie around singing the old camp songs and watching the sparks soar upwards, as though they sought to rival the stark tamaracs that seem to touch the stars !

I will endeavor to explain the personnel and duties of a survey party. The chief has absolute authority over the party, directs its movements and decides on the location of the line. The transitman, who takes charge in the absence of the chief, runs the transit and makes the plans. The leveller, aided by the rodman, takes the profile of the country. The topographer makes a map of the district, noting the distance from the line to the various geographical features in the vicinity, and also takes the slope of the ground on each side of the line. The two chainmen, rear and fore, put in stakes every hundred feet or oftener, while the picketman gives "line" for the axemen and puts in the "hubs." The number of axemen varies. In our party there were four, as well as a cook and two "packers."

An accurate idea of the country having been obtained, the transit is "set up" where the line is to start. A line is then run to some desirable spot ahead where a stake is driven in flush with the surface of the ground. A tack is driven in this so that, when the picket is held on the tack, the hair line of the transit cuts the centre of the picket. The instrument is then brought forward and "set up" above this stake or hub, as it is called. This operation is repeated, the transitman noting the angle turned at each hub, while the chainmen put in their stakes at every station (100 feet) and measure the distance between the hubs. The leveller and topographer come along behind them and use the stations as a guide to their work. This is called the preliminary or trial line. From it the chief decides where the final line is to be run, the object being to get the straightest possible line with the easiest possible grades. The work on the final location line is done in much the same manner, with the exception that curves are substituted for the angles of the preliminary line. This of course makes progress slower on location.

The telegram had come at last. After a month's waiting we were to start for the Crow's Nest Pass, and that on twenty-four hours' notice. The next evening I left Toronto accompanied by Wilmott Matthews, a cadet from the Royal Military College. Arriving at Montreal the morning of Dominion Day, we found that the party could not start till the following Saturday morning. The intervening days passed, as days have a habit of doing, and Saturday found us bright and early at the station.

When the bustle incident upon getting under way had subsided, we had time to examine those whom fate, or the C.P.R., had determined should be our companions for the next few months. Mr. Earle, the chief of the party, was a big, broad-shouldered man, a thorough, painstaking engineer, and above all, a gentleman. Mr. Grant, the leveller, clever, full of fun, up-to-date, and, as I afterwards found, for I was his rodman, very considerate and easy to get on with. "Col." White, than whom no one can tell a better story or sing a better song, was topographer