An determining from the first of the second contraction of the first o The Gamblers of Gravel Mountain

the great boss of the railroad as he through the windows of his frame-built office. A snowy king of peaks was in the centur of west end done before the picture, heavy blue sky was balanced by sight. At the east er aladows in glaciers for below, the snow ran highest, six feet above the level, and there down the rock, then scant pines fringed the the work was slow.

But you own up fair and square that this they rarely spoke. ts taking a risk?" said Holdredge, the contractor from Utah. "It's no common kind of Job out work in and take dollars out."
"We lay the cards on the table, Mr. Holdedge."

"We lay the cards on the table, Mr. Holdedge."

"The Mormon boys look glum." said the fereman to himself. And he felt it, too.

"If we came out as we went in we're lucky." said Keeley.

But I'll loped yet.

"The timbering bolds so far," he cried.

May.
"There's nothing underhand here," said "There's nothing underhand here," said
Ross. "What our engineers say you know.
One's word is, 'Why, certainly,' and enother's, 'It can't be done,' and the third is
a Scotchman, and has what he calls 'his
doots.' But if you and your brother risk it,
and make it, we pay heavy. If you muck
it, our share goes and you'll lose your labor.
It's a gamble."

He stirred up the stove with a burnt pine
stick, which he withdrew, blazing.

"Tomorrow we should see daylight through
it,' he said.

"The moon was full. At a distance the
lower valley was haze but in the lofter allitodes the peaks pierced the sky with silver
spears. The heavens were deep and splendid. Here and there a brilliant star or
spier planet showed like the lighted summit of some tremendous mountain. The air
was calm, no wind moved in the forest. The
pulse of the river was the one sound in a
stick, which he withdrew, blazing.

"Tomorrow we should see daylight through
it,' he said.

"I think so," said Keeley, almost sullenty.

But Gordon put the scantling's two-inch
side against the huge balk and it only
touched it closely on one place—just in the
spears. The heavens were deep and splendid. Here and there a brilliant star or
spier planet showed like the lighted summit of some tremendous mountain. The air
was calm, no wind moved in the forest. The
pulse of the river was the one sound in a
stick, which he withdrew, blazing.

"But to be sure we'll try some mair."
With three out of five the result was the
same.

"Nature always holds four aces," said the sleeping world, younger Holdredge.

they felt that on that plain bit of pine lay turned round, and outside air was like the they felt that on that plain bit of pine lay turned round, and outside air was like the and there we knew the strains. Who know the treiting with mighty interest or swept off by Ross and those behind him.

In a wooden any means a shorteness the and there we knew the strains. Who know the present of the property of the proper

cant back in his chair and locked our sworld Recley, "and it soaks the time and There was a quarter

shoulder of a mountain, dipping into dark stood half a day at one end of the work or the with the rearing river at its foot.

The lord of railroads throw a packet down Yet that night at 11 o'clock, when the before him, and, rising, went to the stove, world was quiet save for the song of the Except about noon the air was chill at the mountain river, he left his tent and his allitude of the summit when the month was sleeping brother and went out to the tun-

"Nature always holds four aces," said the younger Holdredge.
"No," said Ross; "but she keeps her gun ready for all of us when we win. Even a plan piece of rock wo k at \$1 a yard, or \$2 may spell extastrophe and sudden death."
The Holdredges looked at each other for a long minute and then at the table. This was a strangely quiet gambling house, far among the hills.

And the dealer waited.
"Fill straidle the blind," said Holdredge.
And his brother nodded.
But as they tut their names on paper they felt that on that plain bit of pine lay



AS HE SAT THERE HE HEARD A THOUSAND VOICES INAUDIBLE IN THE DAY

on," said the dealer. "I'd have given con-siderable when I was 30 to have such a head to listen.

"It can be done," said Keeley Holdredge, alive. 'I reckon," assented Bill.

'We've got hold of the biggest thing here," they said, "but it's the riskiest. It's make a spoon or spoil a horn. But we'll make a spoon, never fear.'

They deamed as they slept in their tent by the foaming waters of the Kicking-Horse river that they were rich, that they were poor, that the world was theirs and that it was lost. And overhead was the great Gravel mountain through which they had undertaken

The big men of the east were in a hurry to meet the big men of the west.

By the end of May the valley was a hive of men, and every hour came the sound of great rocks cast down. On temporary rails flat cars ran. Explosions shattered the air and best the white river whiter yet with the wreck of mountains. In the forests strong men from Michigan and Wisconsin hewest piles of ties, and many working on contract for the Holdredges squared huge balks with broad axes. The crash of falling pines re-echoed; mountain sheep and goats and shambling bears wondered and went north and south. A world of men divided their ancient domain. Amid the sounds of cataract and snowslide was the elfin shrick of the far locomotive, now dominant on the conquered summit, and in the great gravel hill the Holdredges' ants were working, preparing a natural slope among the disintegrated wash of a thousand years. For in

its natural slope.

In June the tunnel began, and with the And to those who knew little this means tunnel the difficulties were unburied, for in victory. Yet the struggle was even now be the gravel was a bed of blue clay that cut ginning. It began a week later when the becautifully with a spade or a shovel. It was rimbering was complete from end to end, for as strongly pure in color as it was home-only then did the tunnel/begin to be audible

When they came to it the men called to the foreman and sent for Keeley. The sight and feel of it gladdened his heart.

Among these who worked with the lumber were many rudely learned in the s rength 'If it runs through this will save half the of materials and some of them were very labor," he said. For to timber up the gravel seemed more and more terrible to him. His foreman looked doubtful, but kept his doubts to himself. He said nothing when the contractor made some men put down slabs of the clay for a track, but he shook his head when Holdredge went away.

In the morning when Keeley came out of he should be tended and the standard of the hill.

and saw none; but the men's long boots were daubed with blue. 'Have you struck a spring?" he asked.

They told him "No." asked the labor "H's hard when it comes out," said the sledge and maul. foreman gloomily, "but every hour out softens it. Look!" He lifted a lump and squeezed it. It came

through his strong fingers like putty. Water 'How will it stand timbering?" asked

"It stands it so far," said the fore-And day by day as they cut their easy tunnel the blue clay outside softened, de-liquesced And melted; a high pile flattiened;

into it soaked the moisture of the mountain In their tent at night the brothers talked

"We'll put it through. It'll be only a matter of timbering," they said. But as they lay in their beds they knew it might

be more than that.

Then they struck concrete and cement, a rising bed of it, under the clay. A pick would not touch it; they had to send for drills. Now a quarter of the time was lost by the use of dynamite. It was difficult to keep up the ventilation.

Gordon was the Scotch engineer who had "doets."

"For I think you'd better double timber it," said Ross. He knew what that meant and was a bit sorry for those who had betted their pile against that pile of gravel. "Send Gordon," said Kelley, and a tough old Scotch tyke came from Laggan next day. cult to keep up the ventilation.

"It's an ill wind that brings no luck,"

botted their pile against that pile of gravel.

"Send Gordon," said Kelley, and a tough old Scotch tyke came from Laggan next day.

old Scotch tyke came from Laggan next day.

level chance offered If you put it through you make three times as much in half the time as the man who has the fattest job between the Summit and the Cascades."

The hill spoke in a language intelligible to an engliseer, who, standing there, might have interpreted what it said as the pathologist insterprets obscure phenomena to the

He laughed jovially.

"And if we don't, Mr. Ross," said the younger Holdredge, "we'll establish a claim on you for a long station in the Calumbia.

"Have you cubed my contents?" asked the hill. "Have you weighed me in your scales and balances? For I am not rock, but gravel.

But when they were outside they shook hair moved. This narrow world seemed

As he sat there with open ears, which gradually grew acute in the stillness of midnight, he heard a thousand voices insud-Yet without telling each other they wrote midnight, he heard a thousand voices insudithat night to their wives in their native ble in the busy day. Every balk laid flat state to go easy with the money and save for the great upper the roof timbers comupright whispered, the roof timbers com sound, or like no known sound in the world If it was like aught it resembled most a breath of wind in a tuft of grass, in a tree t was like the sound of fine wheat growing n calm after rain. A mouse's cry would have seemed a shriek. As the man wn listened held his breath he heard his hear beat like a pulsometer working. But he understood what the minute chorus of the ight meant. The wood in the tunnel was

ginning to take the strain. "Beginning!" he said, "beginning!" And when he slept again he dreamed that he and his brother were back in Utah with out a red cest. He spoke to Keeley as they breakfasted, just when the men were turn

'I couldn't sleep last night."

"So I go up and went into the twonet." What time?" 'About 1.'

'I was there at 3," said Keeley.
"Then you heard it?" asked Bill.
"She begins to feel it," said Keeley; "but

that's of course He caught his brother's eye, "O, don't croak," he cried,

"O, don't croak," he cried, wngrlly, and the food was dry in his mouth. But that day the men were joyful, for day light ran through the tunnel. And the work ers of the east slook hands with the work solid rock the engineer may cut to what steep angle he will; in hardened earth or ers of the east slook hands with the work ers of the east slook hands with the work for all loose material only the natural slope work which seemed so nearly done. For will hold. The angle at which gravel runs there is this quality in human workers-joy is the angle at which it will stay. That is in toll under fair conditions, joy in strife, as strongly pure in color as it was none-geneous. Not a grain of sand gritted on a knife passed through it; a man could stand on a frish cut slab and hardly leave a million insects and 10,000 men strung from

the summit to the Columbia.

"How does it go?" asked Keeley 'All right for the present, Mr. Holdredge,

Pine and fir will never hold; we want his tent and set his foot upon a blue slab "Pine and fir will neve he sank in it deeply. He looked for water hardwoods, oak and teak."

"Steel," said another.
"And steel won't," said a third.

Keeley went up to see Ross, and the big

"Talks a good deal," he said. Keeley nodded and tried to look cheer-

She's settled down, I reckon." "I recken not," said Ress, "but she's set-ng. Shall I send you down, Gerdon?"

"Meester Holdredge?" he said, as he tumbled off his pony.
"That's so," said Keeley, "and you are Mr. Gordon. Will you walk through now or after dinner?"

or after dinner?"

"I'm bungry and in a wicked bad temper the noo," said Gordon, "so I'll go through right away and give you a hungry man's openion. And then I'll tak my food and a drink and have a smoke, and giv you a full man's best judgment, for with both I don't often go wrong, Mr. Holdredge, And till ye know a man's digrestion and his temper ye can't trust his word."

He sat down on a heavy balk, which was

the dinner hour, and the men were slowing rough beef and rougher pie in a big tent. The sound of their laughter and talk came For five minutes Gordon said nothing The air was full of strange sounds-cracking, weeping, whimpering went on for

He laid his ear against one upright and listened. "Give me the lamp," he said, presently And he looked at the fir he had been sitting on. Where one upright stood on it the tolk was compressed two inches. On each able splintery fibers stood up. A little damp cozed from the green wood. He stood back and looked at the upright.

"Gle's a straight edge if ye hae one," said . And Keeley found him a two-by-four scantling lying among the balks not ye

'Is she straight?" asked Gordon, point

in a wooden ship means a shortening life and there we knew the strains. Who knows

soid Keeley when they were at the table. The Scotchman had his mouth full an could not speak, but he held up his finger and struggled with a half-chewed chunk o beef. When he had gorged it he spoke.

"That was my hungry openion, boys and maybe my afternoon one winna diffe much. But though they say a Scotchina fights best with his belly empty, it was neve my way, and I've mair doots in the earl morn' than any other time. Courage come out of feeding and a moderate use o' specifi and above all, not too much tobacco. At I've mair faith full than hougry, wheth t's in mate lals or in providence. And bat's a strong good argument against as eticlem and a silly scorn o' God's good cra

He showed no scorn of them till it wa byjous he could eat no more.
"Barrieg the pipe, I'm done till suppe-me," he said presently, "And after on time, he said presently. And after one smoke I'll play the wise physiccian again and put my finger on the pulse of the biblil, and tell you what's what in two shakes of a lamb's tall. And I don't mind sayin out straight that my experience is as big as that of a carload of the common run of

He went through the tunnel again, and he brothers followed. Once or twice he topped and spoke to a laborer as well as "Ye wonder," he said to Bill Holdredge that I'd speak to these men and hear wha hey have to say, for I see all they see an nair. But I've learnt to trust to feelings out, as well as cold knowledge, and til e do yo may be a school engineer, but the ooks are across your eyes and heavy o

When they reached the far end he invited iem to sit on a fallen tree. now ye want my second oughts?"

said Keeley And Gorden filled his pive. "If ye can drop it, and if ye hae enough

in't know how you and Ross fixed it up But to go on is to gamble."
"Against a certainty?" esked Bill.
Gorden screwed up his mouth and shook

is head slowly. "I'll no say that, but it's long odds."

"And if we go on, what?" asked Keeley. "Double timber her throughout, and g me hard wood if you can. But my advice s to cut your losses and your labor. There naethin' in the world so pectiful as hones abor wasted. Good-by, boys, and good luci

He rode back to Laggan whistling.
"They'll try it, they'll try it," he said.
And I've nae doot they'll bear the catasophe like men-nae doot at all."

And that very night the second set of tim r was ordered. What they could buy the



SUPPERTIME.

bought. But suitable hardwood there was none within 2,000 miles, and to set that hill on oak pillers was to buy \$10 with a golden cagle. As a makeshift, new pine and fir fell on flat and mountain slope, and the trees of daylight were daily buried in the pit. They found the western end, which was Among themselves, in their rude shacks clay bottomed, hardest to deal with, and and tenus, they estimated the weight of the and drove some hardwood wedges in, and under each they blocked the luward, thrusting mud with heavy green planks, measuring 4x10 that came from a saw mill hum ming near the summit. But that here the "If she comes, will she come sudden?" asked the laborers, as they worked with was the deadliest sign of all. For where cement bottom was it was necessary to But they were paid to risk it. Some left, put in square blocks betwixt each huge for their nerves gave way when they took standard. And even then the groaning was to thinking of a quick run out of the pit. more horrid, new strains were established. Even those who stayed frowned to hear the timber talk. It spoke so loudly of the heavy and piped perpetually. Day by day the formatting the content of the properties of world above them—the sinking world in the ests sent tribute to the devouring dragon bright air. big possible to see the clay save upon the bottom. He Yet here and there it squeezed out between walked through from end to end, and when he was once more in daylight he used the same expression that came to every one's down like solid pouring water And hour by hour, day or night, Keeley

or his brother patroled the tunnel, which was now like a leaking ship. They doubled their redoubled care, and watched the massy framework perpetually. The roof was treble timbers, each twelve inches square; they un-derpinned it again, and set angled struts in complex latticework against the doubled

walls. And the flat door of the tunnel became convex. They saw it, and for a day assured each

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all," he sald.

ing both ends to the side frame, they left it, swered Holdredge. "I've had a letter from By the early dawn the middle of the Andy Onderdonk. It was a gumble, and the side standards bent like bows. I walked on a curve of floor timbers driven upward by the rising clay. Here and there in mud. The foreman said this was the end. They shook hands and parted. in mid. The foreman said this was the end
of it. But Keeley sent for more stuff, and, leveling the floor again, he set in a solid it shricked and cried and set a man's teeth bottom fourteen inches thick, and beat it is edge with hortible grating noises. The steps on which the uprights stood were timbers lengthways, and on them three more crushed through; each standard's heavy heal.

A

struts against the roof. And he saw the was set in mere wood-fiber, as a floor was level. seemed, as a bank of coir yarns. But the roof was convex, bulging down-where the side thrusts were greatest, the short blocks splintered. The ceiling was "We've done all we can," said the conractors. "If it holds now we shall have
nade nothing. And if it doesn't held—"
For in the contract the finished tunnel
was to stand a month before acceptance.

They went to their tests and played poker

The ceiling was
town a downward hanging arch—the bulging
was very obvious. And by no trick of foreing the imagination could the eye behold a
level first. Little shakes and splinters rose
on it, as when a man bends a lath to breaking. And every hour or so came a sound to pass the time. But, though they were like a gunshot, when some drier, overwrought now idle and their men discharged, the hill beam gave way utterly. Though its sound

The next day cards were a weatiness. They paced the groaming hole from dawn to over the cries of the strained wood were greater and more terrible.

The next day cards were a weatiness. They the cries of the strained wood were greater and more terrible.

The next day cards were a weatiness. They the cries of the strained wood were greater and more terrible.

The next day cards were a weatiness. They the cries of the strained wood were greater and more terrible.

The work for another contractor (wo miles up the pass, and one hot Sanday in August, when my males were lying in their tenis, next above them came to view it. The fend of the irack was now but five miles away, and some of the track layers came too. They offered bets against its standing. Ross done it, but it was the last.

There was semething uncarny in the brought seeming attence, in a moment mor-

They offered bets against its standing. Ross came down and shook his head as he rode back.

"I give it a week," he said.

But in less than a week Keeley Holdinger Line of the ground of the wood, something aweredge came up to him.

"You'll have to make a cut of it, after all." He said.

"Can you take on the job?" asked Ross.
"We're going over to the lakes, sir," and the said more and more perpendicute.

"There was something any and it was the last.

There was something any and it to make a cut of the deeper tunnel were agony under a most intolerable weight. But the sounds of the deaper tunnel were muffled. We knew the clay was bursting in agony under a most intolerable weight. But the sounds of the deoper tunnel were muffled. We knew the clay was bursting in agony under a most intolerable weight. But the sounds of the deoper tunnel were muffled. We knew the clay was bursting in at a thousand places; perhaps even now the long work of gravity was done there. One ground the daylight at the west end I saw the hanging roof. It seemed to move; long the sounds of the deoper tunnel were muffled. We knew the clay was bursting in at a thousand places; perhaps even now the long work of gravity was done there. One ground the sounds of the doubt at the sounds of the doubt the sounds of the doubt the sounds of the doubt the sounds of the deoper tunnel were muffled. We knew the clay was bursting in at a thousand places; perhaps even now the long work of gravity was done there. One ground the sounds of the doubt the sounds of the dou

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Twenty-eight Street. hill, and when the dust was dissipated the tunnel was seen no more.

'Did ye see the Holdredges, man?" he anked. "And what did they say?"
"O. just 'D-n!" said I. "And they ve

gone away whistling. They were good me to work for " "Ye ought to know," cried Gordon, grin-ing, "for ye know they fired ye." But if I did get the sack at the mud tun-

Chicago Post: "Papa!"

"Yes, my boy." "I want to ask you a question."

Proceed, my son.

'Was he a man who had soured on pros-

But with at all, and when he did he didn't say anys

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LUMBER

WHOLESALE AND RETAIL

ragged with tough fiber. In the hands of the mountain the mightiest trees were matchwood. And outside by their test I saw the Holdedges loading up a pack pony, while two other little cayuses stood ready saidled. I gave them good day, and they nodded—not uncheffully, as I thought. And when the pony's load was fixed up I followed them at little distance as they took their last valk to the tunnel's mouth, which was now shapeless end distorted. Two great rafters had freed their ends, and pointed northwest and southwest; the sill was burst, and the

loud cry of breaking harp strings. "It's settling now," said Keeley Hold-And visibly, though with a peculiar glow-

underclay rose in a strange mud flower. From the tunnel's depth came sounds which

were half musical, half discordant, like the

riven roofing fringed its jagged mouth like yellow fames, stained blue in places, until seemed some living monster writhing to

It might have been my imagination, but as the brothers turned away it seemed to were jagged points; brams split and opened. me that a great weight was off their minds.

I met old Gordon a mile up the road and) stopped him.
"The mud tunnel's down," Mr. Gordon," said. And he whistled.

nel it was only for having too much to say, And I bore the Holdredges no malice. One of These Childish Questions.

He spoke with all the confidence of a man who realized that he was dealing with so nexperienced lad.

erity?"

The man no longer spoke with confidence.