

THE HARD ROCK MAN

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649599165

The Hard Rock Man by Frederick R. Bechdolt

Except for use in any review, the reproduction or utilisation of this work in whole or in part in any form by any electronic, mechanical or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including xerography, photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, is forbidden without the permission of the publisher, Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd, PO Box 1576 Collingwood, Victoria 3066 Australia.

All rights reserved.

Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.
Cover @ 2017

This book is sold subject to the condition that it shall not, by way of trade or otherwise, be lent, re-sold, hired out, or otherwise circulated without the publisher's prior consent in any form or binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition including this condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser.

www.triestepublishing.com

FREDERICK R. BECHDOLT

**THE HARD
ROCK MAN**

THE HARD ROCK MAN

BY

FREDERICK R. BECHDOLT

UNIV. OF
CALIFORNIA



NEW YORK
MOFFAT, YARD AND COMPANY

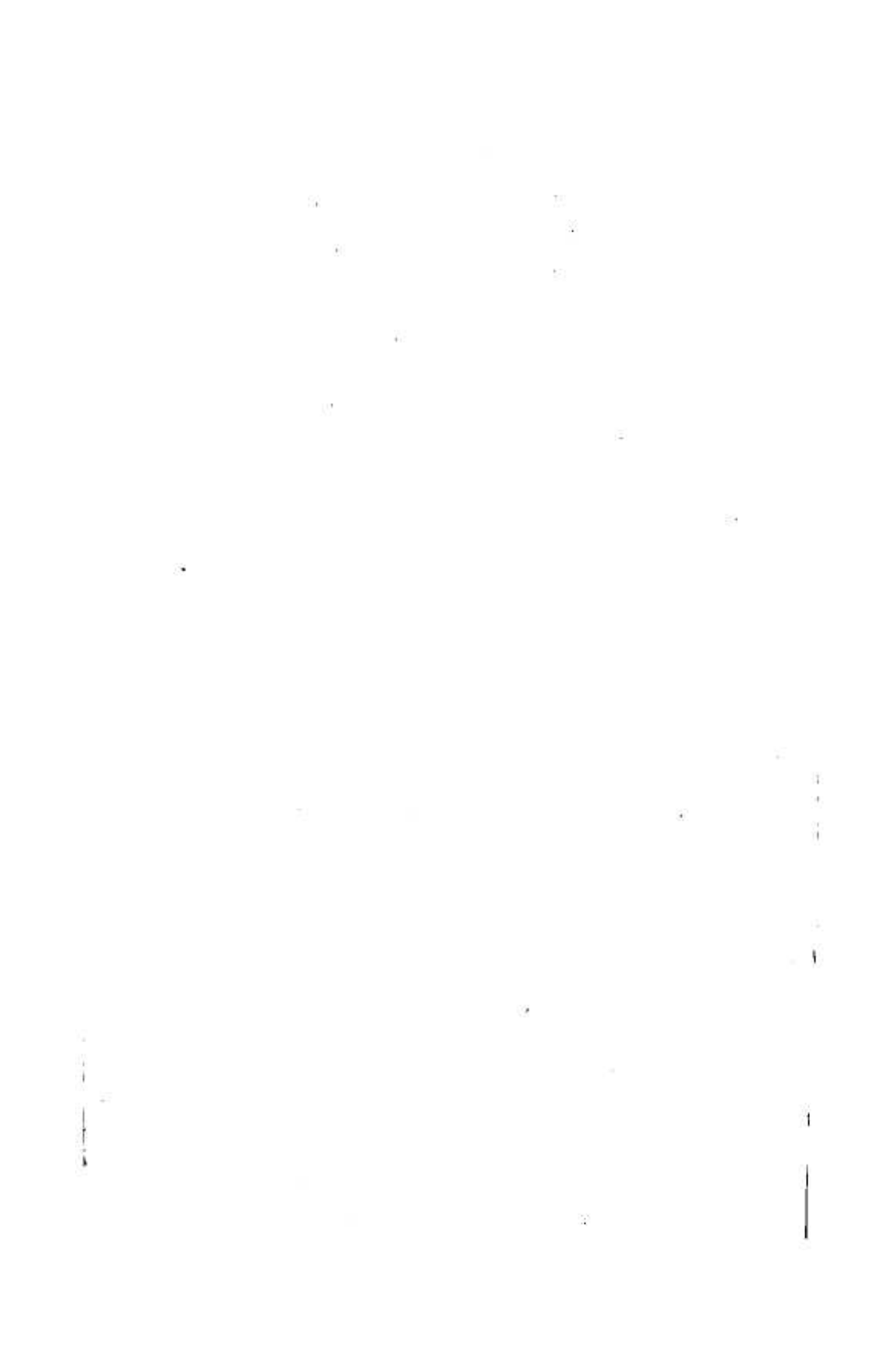
1910

Copyright, 1910, by
MOFFAT, YARD AND COMPANY
NEW YORK

TO MIND
APPROXIA

TO
MY WIFE, ADELE
WHO HELPED ME WRITE THE STORY

M60322



THE HARD ROCK MAN

CHAPTER I.

UNIV. OF
CALIFORNIA

THE construction camp of Snowslide lay in the depths of the canyon bed, a gray and yellow scar. The gray dump stretched along the side of the brawling stream; at its head clustered the buildings of unpainted yellow pine. Here in the middle the portal of the tunnel yawned, a black spot on the mountainside.

They had been boring Snowslide tunnel eight months; they would be at it three years more, making a short-cut for the railroad through a three-mile barrier of the living rock. In the eight months they had littered the place with man-made desecrations; on the hill the bunk-houses and dining hall; by the stream-bed the timber-sheds, the blacksmith shop, the power-house smearing the tree-tops with black smoke, and the lean gray dump where the muck trains clattered to and fro. Beside

their track the outside gang labored, shoveling away the loads which the cars brought to them.

There were six of them bending their backs to the heavy toil. Five worked near together; the sixth, at a little distance from them. All the morning they had been working this way, the five in close company their backs toward the one, a little interval between the group and the solitary figure. The five were Slavs; they were short, thick-chested men with long muscle-bound arms; their eyes slanted slightly toward the corners. Their fingers were crooked, warped to the shovel handles. They shoveled deliberately, with precision, working like slow-moving machines. Occasionally one of them glanced obliquely at the sixth man; then said a low word to the others, and they laughed. It was a low laugh with no ring.

Toiling thus by himself Tom Morton, the sixth man, shoveled the broken rock awkwardly. He was an Irishman. It was his first day on his first job since he had left a little rented acreage across the sea. And he was young. He worked with eagerness; he made strength do where skill was lacking. He crushed his shovel blade into the heap of

rock before him; he threw each load far from him over the edge of the dump down into the stream-bed. He sweated with excess of effort, striving to do more than any of the five whose backs were always toward him. At intervals between the muck trains—after he had scraped together the last fragments of his pile and tossed them away—he straightened his back and rested. Then he looked upward at the mountains, along their steep sides black-green with mantling hemlocks toward their sheer rock summits cutting the sky's blue with ragged silhouette of brown. They were the first mountains he had ever seen so closely. Green Irish hills lay a little more than a month back, fresh in his memory, low rolling hills rising away from a broad river. Standing on the edge of the dump leaning on his shovel handle, he turned his sweating face upward toward the rugged peaks. They were very dark; they seemed to touch the sky like lofty walls.

He leaned upon the shovel; his big hands gripped the handle, hiding it; his long arms extended rigidly from his wide shoulders bent now to the reaching—for he was very tall, tall