

Reading Article G2

Article #1: Excerpt from THE WHITE MOUNTAINS

A long, difficult, and dangerous journey, Ozymandias told me. So it proved. And with a hard life at the journey's end. He was right in that, too. We have nothing in the way of luxury, and would not want it if we could: minds and bodies must be kept taut and trim for the tasks that lie ahead.

But there are wonders, of which our new home itself is the greatest. We live not only among the White Mountains but inside one of them. For the ancients built a Shmand-Fair¹ here, too—six miles long, rising a mile high through a tunnel hewn out of solid rock. Why they did it, for what great purpose, we cannot tell; but now, with new tunnels carried still farther into the mountain's heart, it provides us with a stronghold. Even when we came to it, in summer, there was snow and ice around the opening to the main tunnel, and it emerges to a place that looks over a river of ice, inching its way down between frozen peaks to be lost in the distance. But inside the mountain, the air is no more than cool, protected as we are by the thick layers of rock.

There are viewing points where one can look out from the side of the mountain. Sometimes I go to one of these and stare down into the green sunlit valley far below. I can see villages, tiny fields, roads, the pinhead specks of cattle. Life looks warm there, and easy, compared with the harshness of rock and ice by which we are surrounded. But I do not envy the valley people their ease.

For it is not quite true to say that we have no luxuries. We have two: freedom, and hope. We live among men whose minds are their own, who do not accept the dominion of the Tripods and who, having endured in patience for long enough, are even now preparing to carry the war to the enemy.

Our leaders keep their counsel, and we are only newcomers and boys—we could not expect to know what the projects are, or what our part in them may be. But we shall have a part, that is certain. And another thing is certain, too: in the end we shall destroy the Tripods, and free men will enjoy the goodness of the earth.