VL post mounts on a sledge also *as well for the management of it as to feed the dogs,* and has himself taken by the dogs, and he takes them by the straightest way and by the
LT best.[1] And when they are come to the next post *which is at the end of that journey,*
LT they find there also the dogs and the sledges[*and*]*another guide* ready to carry them
LT LT forward *for the second journey*; and *this is done because the dogs could not bear such labour*
LT *as that for all the thirteen days journeys, and so* those which have brought them, *the*
V *first driver or first guide of the sledge with his sledge and with his dogs,* turn back *to their*
Z LT *own post*. And so it goes *through* all those journeys, *changing dogs, sledge, and guide at*
VB *every stage,* for the dogs always take them, *till the messengers of the lord are carried*
LT [*over*]*on the sledges drawn by the dogs·to the mountains, and buy the skins, and return to their own land through the plain in the manner which has been said*. Moreover I tell you quite truly that the men who dwell in those valleys and in those mountains of
VB those thirteen days journeys are great hunters, for they take *very* many precious little animals of great value, from which they have great [105*c*] profit and great benefit; these are sables[2] and ermines and squirrels and ercolins and black foxes and many other precious animals from which are made the dear skins and those
LT of great value, *about which we have spoken above, and they are there almost without number.*
LT TA[3] They *know how to catch them very cleverly and* have their traps *and set them* so that no[animal]escapes before them. But I tell you also that they have all their houses under ground because of the great cold that is there, and they always live under
L ground; *otherwise they would hardly be able to live. And they are not beautiful people.*[3] There is nothing else which does to mention and so we will depart from it and
Z *going forward* will tell you of a place where is always darkness.

·217· V HERE HE TELLS OF *THE* PROVINCE OF DARKNESS. It is true that far forward from this kingdom still to tramontaine is a province which is called
TA TA the *Valley of* Darkness; *and truly it has the name very rightly* because at all
TA times there is darkness, for the sun is not *ever* seen there nor moon nor star, but it
LT is always *for the greater part of the time of the year*[4] as dark as we have in the early
V LT R evening *in our parts,·like the twilight, almost like the dawn,·when one sees and sees not.·*
Z *And this is caused by the dense mist which always reigns there and is never destroyed nor goes*

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[1] LT: "Then they put bears skins on the sledge, upon which skins sit two men, namely the trader or merchant who is going for the skins and the driver or conductor who controls and guides the dogs and knows the way very well."—and so P. It will be noticed that LT and P speak of traders throughout this passage, where F,VB, etc. speak of official messengers.

[2] LT: *rondes* copying P.

[3] *& non sunt pulcri homines.* These words are in L but not in L[1].

[4] R: " For the greater part of the months of the winter."