THE SONG OF THE WORLD.

Action, unceasing endeavor — whether
with brain or with brawn;
Singing of hammer on anvil, thrust of
the plow through the soil,
Thought born of thought in the night-
time, axe-stroke in silence of dawn,
Solving the secrets of science—secrets
that guerdon our toil.
Action, strong effort forever—this is the
life of our time;
This is the heart-throb of manhood, the
pulsing of purpose sublime.

Flickered the glaive long in battles, carv-
ing the future of kings,
Cutting the fetters of bondmen, doing
God's will in His way—
Now in its scabbard 't is sleeping, here on
the wall where it swings,
Dust on its hilt and time's sharp teeth
eating its edge, day by day.
Hauberk nor casque brought it harming,
yet all of its temper is gone—
Vanished its puissant prowess—to-day la-
bor rolls the world on.

Tides of the amorous ocean strive for the
kiss of the moon,
Rivers, full-bosomed and brimming, bring
their broad blessings to men;
Health from their restlessness rises; but,
in the stagnant lagoon,
Born is the pestilent vapor—born in the
death-breeding fen.
Water, life's limitless solvent, its blessings
will freely disburse;
When it is stagnant and pulseless, lo, it is
turned to a curse.
Action, untiring and constant—this is
the law of our breath;
Live, then! O brothers who labor; la-
bor that ceases is—death.

—Robert Mackay, in Success.

NEVEN'S TEMPTATION.

"YES, there are great opportunities in an 'oil town' like this." James Neven, the young lawyer, spoke quietly, as his habit was, but his face flushed and his keen eyes glittered. "A few hundred dollars will buy an interest in a company formed to drill a well, and if the well proves a 'gusher' a man's share may yield him fifty thousand or more a year. If you want to be rich, Jerris, better let me invest the money you've made on that Dakota ranch of yours."

The sturdy Westerner, Neven's classmate at college, laughed and shook his head. "Guess not, thank you, Jim," he answered. "'Slow and sure' is my motto. I never expect to get rich at a stroke."

"As you please," said Neven, dryly. "Your cousins, the Larrabees, have more faith in my judgment. Mrs. Larrabee gave me a thousand dollars to invest for her—as an agent, of course. She paid me twenty dollars for placing it."

"I should think if success is so certain you would prefer to be paid by a percentage on the profits."

"N-no—well," said Neven, uncomfortably, "Mrs. Larrabee would not consent to that. 'If the well proves a dry one,' she said, 'it won't be your fault; you'll do your best for me, I know.' So she gave me twenty dollars down."

Hugh Jerris had risen and was pacing restlessly about the dingy little office. "Bother investments, anyway, Jim!" he cried. "The only reason why I came to Pennsylvania was to try to get Jennie Larrabee to go back to South Dakota as my wife. That's the only subject that interests me just now."

Neven rubbed his chin thoughtfully. "You know the Larrabees haven't any money," he suggested. "That thousand dollars represented all their savings. You ought to look for a girl who could put some capital into that ranch of yours."

"Jennie Larrabee without a cent will be a fortune to me—if I can win her! She and her mother are well, you say? I think I'll go out to the farm and see them this morning. Good-by, Jim!"

"What a fool!" muttered the young lawyer, as he watched the burly fellow stride impetuously down the street. He meant to make money—and marry money. Then he turned to his work again, which at this time consisted mainly in figuring his possible income from the Karns well.

Neven had invested his own savings, six hundred dollars, in the Karns well, which was now being drilled about two miles from town. He had put Mrs. Larrabee's thousand dollars into the Warren well, not so promising a property, he thought, which was only a few hundred yards from the other.

The drill in each well had already passed through layers of solid rock and of slate, and a current of salt water, and now was near the stratum of glass-like rock beneath which oil might be found. In an hour or two he might be a millionaire or—no, he would not be a pauper, in any event. Jabez Wright, one of the drilling crew, had agreed to warn him by a cipher telegram of the chances of success or failure. If the well seemed likely to be "dry," Neven planned to rush out on the street and sell his interest before the public heard the news.

A tap at the door startled him. A boy appeared with a yellow envelope. Neven took it and tore it open.

"Sand reached," the ciper, translated, told him. "Dry. Better sell."

Dry! All his savings gone in a moment!

James Neven was not a demonstrative man. He paid the boy, and when he was gone, stood staring at the floor. His skin looked yellow and as if it were tightly drawn over his sharp features, but only his clenched hands told his emotion.

Suddenly he seized his hat. He must sell at once, shift his loss upon somebody else! He opened the door. It seemed that Bushby, the town gossip, had been just about to enter.

"Heard the news, Neven?" Bushby asked. "The Karns is a dry well!"

"Yes, so I've heard," said Neven, quietly. Useless now to try to sell! He turned back into his office. Bushby sat down on the steps outside and lighted a cigar.

"Neven," he called, presently, "telegraph boy after you!" He lounged into the office as Neven opened a second cipher dispatch.

"Warren well struck oil," it told him. "Promises to be a gusher."

The strip of paper shook in Neven's hand. This luck had come to the Larrabees! He was ruined! Oh, if he had only put his money into the Warren well and theirs into the Karns! But Neven was outwardly calm as he drew a blank message toward him and told the boy to wait.

Bushby, leaning on the table, glanced familiarly over his shoulder at the direction of the message.

"'Mrs. Sarah Larrabee,'" he repeated. "Why, sure enough! It was in the Karns well you invested her money? And she's lost it? What a pity!"

Neven started. Why should it not be so? The well drillers had not incorporated yet. No stock certificates had been issued. The receipts for the two sums of money mentioned his name alone, "James Neven, Attorney." No human being but himself knew positively whether it was the Larrabees' money or his own that he had put into that dry hole.

He held the pen suspended for a moment, facing the temptation of his life. Then he dipped the pen in the ink. Bushby still looked on.

"Invested six hundred in Karns well," he wrote. "Dry. Heartily sorry. Hope to do better with remaining four hundred."

"So it was the Larrabees' money that you put into the Karns?" asked Bushby, eyeing him keenly.

"Yes."

"You bought a quarter share in the Warren well, too?"

"Yes. Cost me a thousand. That was a little venture of my own. The well promises to be a gusher."

"You don't say so!" Bushby seized his hat and rushed to tell the news. In the very same moment Neven began to prepare for a trip to New York. He did not care for the congratulations of his townsmen. He did not want to hear them express their sympathy for Mrs. Larrabee. Besides, he wished to look up safe investments for the large sums of money he would soon begin to receive.

It was late one rainy evening when Neven arrived again at home and entered the little parlor of the hotel in which he boarded. He had heard nothing from the place since he left—Jabez Wright had unaccountably failed to reply to a request for information—but Neven felt that "no news is good news," and he could easily put on a bold front, for he had now begun to think of his theft as merely a bit of "sharp practice."

He looked around with disgust at the tawdry finery of the room. Well, it would not be his home long. He was going to New York to live. With his income——

"Hello, old fellow!" cried a hearty voice behind him.

"Why, Jerris, is this you?" Neven said, as he turned to meet the rancher. "How did you prosper in your errand?" There was a lofty condescension in his tone, but the other did not perceive it.

"With Jennie? She's up stairs. She's Mrs. Hugh Jerris. Haven't wasted any time, have I?"

Neven gave his hand with a feeble effort at cordiality. "I am sure I wish you well, Jerris," he said. "You are able to support a wife, and needn't care whether she has anything of her own or not."

"Anything of her own! Why, my dear boy, what more could she want? Her mother has given her half of her interest in the Karns well, and——"

"Karns!" gasped Neven. "It was a dry hole."

"In the upper sand, yes. But they bored deeper since you left and struck oil. The well is yielding fifteen hundred barrels a day. Why, Jennie is an heiress."

Fifteen hundred barrels a day! Neven stood staring at the ruddy, good humored face, which suddenly took on a look of pity. "What a brute I am," the rancher cried. "I forgot that while investing their money so wisely you made such a terrible mistake about your own."

"A mistake? My own? What do you mean?" shouted Neven fiercely.

"The Warren well — surely you've heard? It was only a pocket. It ran out in a week."

Neven tried to speak, but he could only mumble unintelligible words. Then he clapped his hat on his head and rushed from the house. The first man he met confirmed the story.

"Folks thought it queer you were so sharp for the widow and so stupid for yourself, Neven," his townsman said. "But Jabez Wright says you bought the Karns for yourself and the Warren for the widow, and then shifted things for your own advantage when the first news came, and as long as that's so, everybody's glad that you fooled yourself. Well, if things had come out just as you thought they would, I don't know as you'd have had much comfort out of your ill-gotten gains. 'Fraid you won't ever get many more clients in this town."

Neven left town that night. So, as it chanced, did Mr. and Mrs. Hugh Jerris. But Mr. and Mrs. Jerris were respected and happy.—Youth's Companion.

Ominous.

Prairie dogs seeking deep cover, corn with thick husks and acorns that the squirrels can't open confirm the weather prophet's pronouncements for a cold winter. If prophecies were fuel there would be enough for all to burn. —New York World.

A Good Enough Argument.

Plenty of noise makes a good enough argument for most people.—New York Press.

THE NEED OF EDUCATION.

Russian Peasants Benefited by Spread of Knowledge.

The economic decay of the Russian peasantry is not primarily due to ignorance, for in the first few years after emancipation, when the peasants were totally illiterate, they were comparatively prosperous. Nevertheless, education invariably has good economic results, for the need for intensive farming grows, and ignorance and intensive farming are incompatible. The Moscow Zemstvo in twenty years reduced the illiteracy figures from 70 per cent to less than 30 per cent in certain districts, and it was found that in the educated districts the peasants were much better off than in the districts where illiteracy was more common. Peasant education, however, is hampered by climatic conditions, by the distance between the villages and by the poverty of the Zemstvos. A Russian Zemstvo village teacher is paid from ten to fifteen dollars a month; the teachers in the parish schools sometimes receive as little as $2.50 a month; and their social position is extremely bad; so bad, indeed, that when the introduction of the State Drink Monopoly created a new class of government officials, many schoolmasters left the villages and obtained positions as assistants in the government public houses.—R. E. C. Long, in The Pilgrim.

An Unfortunate Giant.

At Warrnanbool, Victoria, Australia, an application for an "old-age pension" has recently been made on behalf of a young man, named M'Lean, whose height is 7 feet 4 inches and his age twenty-four years. It was stated that owing to a heart weakness this youthful Goliath would never be able to work, and that he had no one to rely on for support. For some time he had been an inmate of the local hospital, where two beds had to be placed together in order to accommodate his recumbent form.

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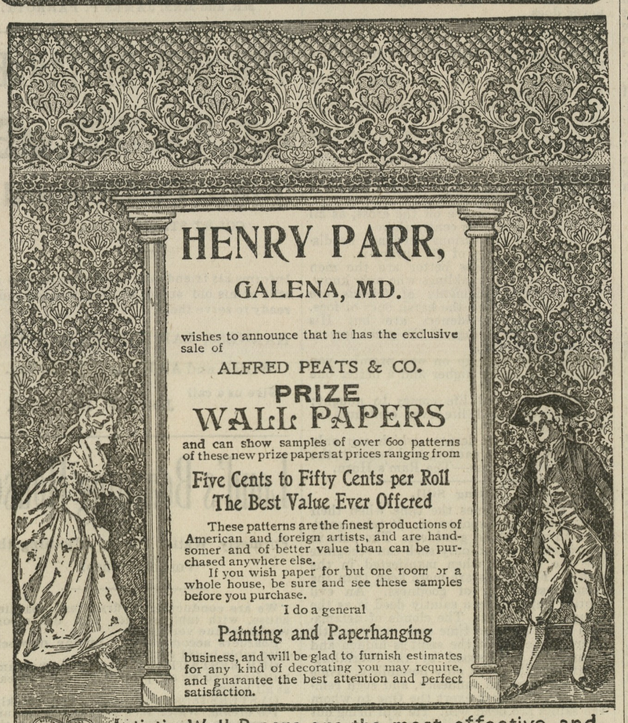
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