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#### THE PASSING OF NICKEL.

We remember the horrid joy that was ours in reading long ago a novel writ by a talented female. The hero was a mining engineer. He was a strange compound of self-abnegation, silent sentiment, and improbable genius. He led the maiden that he loved through parlous stopes, winzes, and sumps with no regard at all for the law of gravitation. Unless our memory fails, the progress of the two was equally easy in all the workings of the mine. They walked down a ladderless winze as readily as they sauntered up an almost vertical stope. This is mining from the viewpoint of fiction.

Not less entrancing is fiction from the viewpoint of mining. And our exhibit was warm from the press but a few weeks ago. It is a short, all too short, phantasy in the American Review of Reviews, January, 1911. The artist is Dr. David T. Day, of the U. S. Geological Survey. The title is prosaic enough. It suggests nothing of the tingling inwardness of this tabloid romance. Who would or could imagine that under the caption "The Platinum and Nickel Industries" a staid geologist would have cavorted through the iridescent realm of dreamland! But Dr. Day has thus cavorted. Let us gambol after him for a space.

Dr. Day's word etching is elegiac; it is the funeral-song of the nickel industry. Platinum also provides a presumptive corpse, but platinum's untimely demise brings no tears to our eyes.

The first picture upon Dr. Day's small canvas is almost pastoral in effect. "For thirty years one strong personality, Joseph Wharton, a Quaker merchant of Philadelphia, ruled the nickel market in peace and prosperity. . . Wharton ruled partly by being a great metallurgist, . . . but chiefly by his untiring vigilance as a merchant. He ruled until foreign ores of New Caledonia and of Canada pressed their demands."

Despite Wharton's "vigorous protest," the obstreperous foreign ores knocked a hole in the tariff. United States citizens proceeded to operate the Canadian nickel mines, on the plea that their country called for armour plate. Wharton, with Christian resignation, "closed the only considerable nickel mine in the United States and submissively [mark the word!] changed his activity from mining and smelting nickel ores to making government nickel steel at his Bethlehem Iron Works. His reign passed to the International Nickel Company, which controls the nickel supply of the world, and, lacking Wharton's shrewd knowledge of trade principles, has tried to force a great supply upon a market that does not exist." Briefly, the nickel trade is moribund, the trust is an aggregation of visionaries, and there is no balm in Gilead.