

JOHN AND ROBERT LIVINGSTON STEVENS

A BIRD builds its nest from an impulse which fills its heart. A like instinct, every whit as compelling, urges a Mergerthaler to create a composing machine. He conceives its plan, and, while his wheels and levers unite under his touch, he sees how he can remodel every part from base to crest. This rebuilding is no sooner accomplished than the machine is cast into the melting-pot, to emerge with a new pace and precision. If, incidentally, this man of experiment can earn his bread, well and good, but there may be no gold in the horizon which allures him. It is enough that his new devices glide together with the harmony and economy of his dreams.

But among inventors we meet men of a wholly different stamp. First and last, they are pioneers who descry new worlds for industrial conquest. To plant, till, and water these empires they need new tools, machines, and engines. These they build, not for the joy of building, as might your instinctive inventor, but simply as means to the mastery of a continent, with fibers of gainful service reaching every home in the land. Preëminent in this company of industrial chieftains in America stand John Stevens and his son, Robert Livingston Stevens, who seized a supreme opportunity as they yoked steam as a burden-bearer on land and sea. They were themselves engineers of original talent, and this gave them a fellow-feeling with the engineering fraternity not always found in the councils of great firms and corporations. Of course, such men, however ingenious and skilful, never rise to such a triumph as the steam condenser of James Watt. In their schemes invention is always the servant