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observer overlooks nothing, neglects nothing. The smallest detail may speak volumes to his trained senses. Even a scratch, even a pimple, on the face of Nature has its significance.

"What did I do? Filled a bottle with that oily scum, and here it is. It goes forward to the Patent Office by express train to-day."

"The Patent Office?"

"Yes. They don't know anything about oil there, but they know me. That's what counts. Suppose I send this oil to the Department of Oleology, where it properly belongs. It means endless delay and confusion. Fourth Assistant Clerk says to his assistant:

"Who sent this oil?"

"Assistant doesn't know; asks his assistant. He doesn't know, but passes it on down the line. Finally the Fourteenth Sub-Assistant Office Boy takes that oil and cleans his boots with it; and all the time I'm writing letters and tracers, and wiring and phoning, and hiring detectives to follow that oil through the Department of Oleology."

"But I send it to the Patent Office, where they know me —"

"And well they might, with all the correspondence they get from you."

"—where they know me, and what is the result? Minister of Patents says to the Chief Clerk:

"Where's this oil from?"

"Which? Oh 'that. Potter sent that."

"Well, why don't you hunt up the information he wants, and wire it to him? You ought to know enough to do that, without being told. That is one man which must not be kept waiting."

"The result is, I get my information inside of a week, instead of having to wait goodness knows how long for it."

Mr. Potter's next step was to consult his banker; a young man who affected gaudy flowing ties, button boots, and loud shouting perfumes; the kind of young man who falls an easy prey to the practice of using the first initial and signing the second name in full. E. Leonidas Smith was the signature of this king of finance. He warmed up to Mr. Potter's proposition at once.

"What we want," he said, "is a merger."

Mr. Potter agreed that a merger was the very thing. He had been trying to think of that word all along.

"What capital would we need?" Mr. Smith asked.

"I don't know. What do you think?"

"Why, I'm not particular. What do you think?"

"Say, fifteen or sixteen million."

"Well, which? Fifteen or sixteen?"

"Make it sixteen."

"Very well. I'll make a note of it—capital, sixteen million. Paid up capital."

"Omit that for the present."

"Assets?"

"Whatever you like. You can't make it too high."

"Say a billion?"

"Make it two."

"Assets, two billions. I tell you this is going to be a big thing. We'll make that Standard Oil bunch hump themselves."

"Hump; well I should say. In time we'll absorb them."

The whole merger was constructed along the same generous lines. It took all afternoon, but it was worth it.

The next morning found Mr. Potter busy "setting the stakes" for the oil wells. He had plenty of stakes, so he set them out freely and promiscuously. The lower end of the pasture fairly bristled with stakes.

Then he imported a gang of surveyors from Winnipeg to lay out the rest of the pasture according to a diagram he had prepared; a diagram labelled "Petroleum Heights: A Subdivision of the City of Dutton, Man.," a fearful and wonderful diagram, showing acres and acres of forty-foot lots, fronting on wide paved streets—streets that were boulevarded, treed and cement sidewalked on top, and sewerded, conduited and gas mained underneath—with provision for church, school, theatre, fire-hall, burying ground, parks, slums—everything that the heart of the most ardent subdivisionist could desire.

By this time Dutton was waking up. The news had spread, and real estate

was climbing steadily. Every vacant lot in town was grabbed up by speculators—local speculators—of course—and every tract of vacant land for miles around was laid off in town lots and put on the market at fabulous figures.

Those surveyors made a good thing out of it. They elected to camp in Dutton for the summer.

The printing office staff was working overtime, turning out stock certificates, prospectuses, circulars, listing blanks, by the ream. The columns of the Courier were flooded with advertisements to the exclusion of all reading matter, unless you call editorials reading matter. Jim Haines wouldn't sacrifice his editorials for all the advertisements between here and Jericho. To do that would give him the feeling that he had betrayed a trust. He would sacrifice the advertisements first.

I don't know but what he did sacrifice a few, for a while there, while the boom was at its height. It hurt him

to do it, but he couldn't see any other way. They were paid for, I don't mean that; it was the principle of the thing that bothered him. A newspaper man just naturally hates to pass up good fill-up.

Another man that reaped a harvest was old Bill Henderson. Old Bill had a well-boring outfit, and was consequently in constant demand for sinking test-pits.

The pits never revealed any traces of oil, but that is not the purpose of a test-pit. The aim of the people who sank these pits was merely to get some kind of backing for the statement appearing on their "literature," that "Such and such a well—the fancier the name, the better—is not a wildcat proposition, but a bona fide oil well; drilling operations having already commenced." They spoke of old Bill's humble efforts as "drilling operations."

Mr. Potter contracted for the largest auger old Bill had in stock, a three-

foot weapon, for the use of the old original company, of which he was now president and managing director, Mr. Smith being secretary and treasurer. He said he figured it was up to them, as the oldest and largest company, to put in the largest plant.

When the report on that scum came from Ottawa, it set the town by the ears. The Patent Office had handed Mr. Potter's sample to the Government Analyst, and he had discovered—by proxy, of course—that the main ingredient of that oily scum was just ordinary kerosene, with slight traces of turpentine and tar.

Not crude petroleum, mind you! but the refined article—kerosene—common coal oil, the kind you burn in lamps. No expensive refining machinery necessary; just pump it out like water, and barrel it up. I tell you that was a lucky find. It's probably the only case of its kind on record.

The night the report came there was



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