

The petroleum engineer will find his career filled with novelty as the experience of Mercer Hardie Parks, '28 pet. eng., who is now the petroleum engineer for the Humble Oil and Refining Company. Mr Parks did his civil engineering work at the University of Texas and his petroleum engineering at the University of Oklahoma. He has obtained a wide reputation in returning gas to fields where high pressure is needed to flow the wells

The thrill of the oil game

BY MERCER H. PARKS, '28

THE experiences of the graduate who goes to work in his home state are not so exciting as those of the one who takes to the wilds of South America to earn his living, and they make pretty poor reading for the most part. However, the oil field generally offers something new, even for the most seasoned hired hand, and it must be for that reason that oil field work has such an appeal for those who ever engage in it. Working and living conditions which are considered ideal for an oil field would be intolerable to workers of the most civilized industries. Until recently the only set rule in the industry has been that the work must go on, three hundred and sixty five days in the year, regardless of the cost, regardless of weather, regardless of any personal inconvenience, discomfort, or exposure. However, during the years more recently passed, some of the heated and vigorous competition has abated, and it has been realized that a considerable portion of the general hurry had merely been taken for granted.

It was into the industry scantily sketched above, that I was projected upon graduation, and while I was not a rank "boll weevil," there was very much to be learned, and the only way to learn was to work. One of the major companies became my employer, and sent me to an old field of North Texas where profits were low and economies correspondingly great. There was enough hard work for everyone. My first assignment was that of blacksmith's helper, and the particular duty was to swing a fourteen-pound hammer and strike at hot metal until it cooled. This was considerable exertion in comparison to the exercise of several years' college work, and for several days, it was a fight to last as long as the work did. After the blacksmith work, I was used in connection with general production and main-

tenance work, and in all of these, considerable surprise and wonder was aroused by the fact that a college man would work. The connection work led me into the work of returning gas to the depleted sands of various producing properties which in turn gave me a little more employment for the head as well as for the hands.

Sometime later, I was sent to another depleted field, this time in East Texas, and here again, the work consisted of the study of the return of gas to the producing formation. Still later, I spent several months on the road, completing some special assignments. Soon after this work was finished, I made my entrance into the Gulf coast of Texas as district engineer in a field controlled and being developed by the company employing me. My duties were as numerous as they were indefinite, but in main they consisted of metering and accounting for gas, analyzing different phases of well drilling, and the writing of reports on oil field material tested. The actual volume of work was quite considerable, due to the fact that twenty one drilling rigs were completing wells, with all possible speed. It was about that time that some of the other boys from Oklahoma joined the organization and arrived in this Gulf coast district just soon enough to be of great assistance in taming a wild well. They mixed mud along with about a hundred other men for twenty four hours straight.

Late in 1929, I was transferred to another controlled field in the Gulf coast which was located near Sugarland southwest of Houston. The work done there has been pretty thoroughly covered in the trade journals, and it is sufficient to say that it consisted of returning gas to high-pressure producing zones in order to maintain pressures sufficient to flow the wells. To do this, compressors



and equipment capable of handling gas at 2000 pounds were installed and at present nearly all the produced gas is being returned to the sand from which it came, at a pressure of 1400 pounds. This work was the most interesting, as well as the most responsible, in which I had been involved, and the experience obtained has been valuable as well as enjoyable.

At present, my work is in the general office, from which I get a view of the more general working of a great and complicated machine, and my present assignment of special investigations and reports allows the opportunity to segregate and understand particular parts of a large organization.

As you have noted, there is little out of the ordinary in the experiences I have had since graduation. They have been more interesting to me than their novelty can make them to a reader, but they are about what an average college graduate in petroleum engineering may expect, if he is employed by one of the larger organizations in this country.

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Cotton stockings versus Japan

Following the lead of Kappa Alpha Theta alumni chapter of Washington, D. C., many Oklahoma sororities, led by Kappa Alpha Theta, plan to help stop the Sino-Japanese war by a proposed boycott against Japanese goods. Girls have pledged themselves to ban Japanese silks and other goods until the Nippon armies are withdrawn from China.

Mary Sue Simpson, local chapter president of Kappa Alpha Theta, announced that the local chapter would observe the boycott and would urge every other sorority to join them at the next meeting of the Panhellenic council March 8, at which time plans for carrying out the boycott will be made.