

**A PARABLE.***(For the Review.)*

In a certain desert there is a well. Around it a number of date-palms grow, so that the place is shady and refreshing. From the beginning of time travellers have stopped there to fill their water bottles.

Long ago a poor man pitched his tent beside the well and began to draw water for those who pass that way. Many a grateful traveller rewarded him with fruit or cakes for his humble service. For many years he labored thus and gained the blessings of his fellows.

When he died his son drew water in his stead. But the young man was selfish and grasping. He threatened the weak and flattered the strong, exacting as high a payment as he was able.

One day the king, whose caravan had been overwhelmed by a sand-storm, arrived at the oasis, faint almost to death. And as he lay exhausted on the sand, he offered to grant to the well-keeper any wish in exchange for food and water.

"Sire," said the young man, "My well is in danger from the savage hordes of the desert. Send me stone and iron, that I may build a strong wall around it."

This request the king conceded; and when he had returned to his capital, he sent a train of camels laden with stone and metal, with servants to build the wall. And he charged the servants to remain and guard the wall.

The wall is built and the servants stand on guard.

When travellers and merchants seek for water, there is one at the gate who demands a toll. And the well-keeper exacts the uttermost payment; so that honest men are plundered and the poor are turned away to die.

But those who cross the desert are murmuring. They cry for justice; and their cry will reach the king. Then shall the king send messengers to his servants and the walls shall be broken down. And they who cross the desert shall regain their ancient heritage.

Whereat the people rejoice.

DOUGLAS P. BOATMAN.

**A SOUND PRINCIPLE OF TAXATION.**

As a matter of sound principle of taxation, instead of taxing improvements, the city officials should tax heavily the unoccupied, ugly and unkept premises, thus forcing the owners of vacant lots and useless or near useless buildings to improve their places and make it pay, instead of holding them for a "rise in values," while all the time their property is an eyesore to the community and a fine place to breed disease in. The man who keeps his property in miserable condition, waiting for a time when it may bring more, not by anything that he may do to increase its value but by the efforts of the hustling portion of the community, is the man who should be taxed, for his land values come to him, not as the fruit of his work, but simply because he can afford to wait and because the assessors do not tax his property as they should. If he were to pay stiff taxes, he would very quickly see to it that it brought him some returns for his money, and in order to do that he must improve it.—*Elmira (N. Y.) Advertiser.*