CHAPTER X.

MASTERS AND MEN.

'The sweat of industry would dry, and die,
But for the end it works to."—SHAKSPEARE.

"Man is a shop of rules, a well-truss'd pack,
Whose every parcel underwrites a law."—GEORGE HERBERT.

"Care preserves what Industry gains. He who attends to his business diligently, but *not* carefully, throws away with one hand what he gathers with the other."—COLTON.

"The acquisition of property, the accumulation of capital, is already in the power of the better-paid working-class; and legislation has but few further facilities to give, or obstacles to remove. Their savings are now so large that only soberer habits and sounder sense are needed to make them independent capitalists in less than half a life-time."—W. R. GREG.

EMPLOYERS can do a great deal toward promoting habits of thrift, prudence, and sobriety among their work-people. Though the working-man does not like to be patronized, he has no objections to be helped. We have already seen that individuals can do much; they can cultivate habits of economy, and lay by a certain portion of their earnings for help in time of need But they want encouragement and assistance. They want sympathy; they want help.

If masters fully understood the immense amount of influence which they possess, they would extend their sympathy and confidence to their workmen, which would cost them so very little, and profit them so very much. We know of no instance where an employer has displayed a concern for the social well-being and improvement of his workmen, in which he has not

been repaid by their increased respect and zeal on his behalf. He may, for instance, arrange that wages shall not be paid so as to drive them into the market late on Saturday nights, when they are often under the necessity of making their weekly purchases at a great disadvantage. Of course, workmen who possess a little store of savings might make their purchases at greater advantage at any other time. The employer might also avoid paying wages in public-houses, and thus keep his workmen out of the way of incurring an expenditure upon drink, that might prove so hurtful.

But masters can do more than this. They can actively aid their workmen in the formation of prudent habits by establishing savings-banks for men and women, and penny banks, for boys and girls; by encouraging the formation of provident clubs and building societies, of provision and clothing clubs, and in many other ways. They might also distribute among them, without any officious interference, good counsel as to the manner in which they might make the best use of their wages. Many large employers have already accomplished much practical good by encouraging the formation of provident institutions—in which they have never failed to secure the respect, and generally the co-operation, of their workmen."

At the same time there is much want of sympathy between masters and men. In fact, want of sympathy pervades all classes—the poorer, the working, the middle, and the upper classes. There are many social gaps between them, which can not yet be crossed, which can not yet be united. "If I were to be asked," said Judge Talfourd, on whom Death was at the moment laying his hand, "what is the great want of English society—to mingle class with class—I would say, in one word, the want is *the want of sympathy*." A great truth

but not yet appreciated. It is the old truth, on which Christianity is based, "Love one another"—a simple saying, but containing within it a Gospel sufficient to renovate the world. But where men are so split and divided into classes, and are so far removed that they can scarcely be said to know one another, they can not have a due social regard and consideration, much less a genuine sympathy and affection, for each other.

Charity can not remedy the evil. Giving money, blankets, coals, and such-like to the poor—where the spirit of sympathy is wanting—does not amount to much. The charity of most of the Lord and Lady Bountifuls begins with money, and ends there. The fellow-feeling is absent. The poor are not dealt with as if they belonged to the same common family of man, or as if the same human heart beat in their breasts.

Masters and servants live in the same unsympathetic state. "Each for himself" is their motto. "I don't care who sinks, so that I swim." A man at an inn was roused from his slumber: "There is a fire at the bottom of the street," said the waiter. "Don't disturb *me*," said the traveler, "until the next house is burning." An employer said to his "hands," "You try to get all you can out of me, and I try to get all I can out of you." But this will never do. The man who has any sympathy in him can not allow such considerations to overrule his better nature. He must see the brighter side of humanity ever turned toward him. "Always to think the worst," said Lord Bolingbroke, "I have ever found the mark of a mean spirit and a base soul."

On the other hand, the operative class consider their interests to be quite distinct from those of the master class. They want to get as much for their labor as

possible. They want labor to be dear that they may secure high wages. Thus, there being no mutual sympathy nor friendly feeling between the two classes—but only money considerations—collisions are frequent, and strikes occur. Both classes, backed by their fellows, determine to "fight it out," and hence we have such destructive strikes as those of Preston, Newcastle, London, and South Wales.

The great end of both is gain, worldly gain, which sometimes involves a terrible final loss. A general suspicion of each other spreads, and society becomes cankered to the core. The remedy is only to be found in the cherishment of a larger Christian sympathy and more genuine benevolence. Thus only can the breath of society be sweetened and purified. Money gifts avail nothing, as between rich and poor. Unless there is a soul of goodness, and a real human fellowship between them the mischief and the curse which the excellent Judge Talfourd lamented with his dying breath will never be overcome.

Some allege that this want of sympathy arises, for the most part, from the evils of competition. It is "heartless," "selfish," "mischievous," "ruinous," and so on. It is said to produce misery and poverty to the million. It is charged with lowering prices, or almost in the same breath with raising them. Competition has a broad back, and can bear any amount of burdens.

And yet there is something to be said for competition, as well as against it. It is a struggle—that must be admitted. All life is a struggle. Among workmen, competition is a struggle to advance toward higher wages. Among masters, to make the highest profits. Among writers, preachers, and politicians, it is a struggle to succeed—to gain glory, reputation, or income. Like every thing human, it has a mixture of

evil in it. If one man prospers more than others, or if some classes of men prosper more than others, they leave other classes of men behind them. Not that they leave those others worse, but that they themselves advance.

Put a stop to competition, and you merely check the progress of individuals and of classes. You preserve a dead uniform level. You stereotype society, and its several orders and conditions. The motive for emulation is taken away, and caste, with all its mischiefs, is perpetuated. Stop competition, and you stop the struggle of individualism. You also stop the advancement of individualism, and, through that, of society at large.

Under competition, the lazy man is put under the necessity of exerting himself; and if he will not exert himself, he must fall behind. If he do not work, neither shall he eat. My lazy friend, you must not look to me to do my share of the world's work and yours too! You must do your own fair share of work, save your own money, and not look to me and to others to keep you out of the poor-house. There is enough for all; but do your own share of work you must.

Success grows out of struggles to overcome difficulties. If there were no difficulties, there would be no success. If there were nothing to struggle or compete for, there would be nothing achieved. It is well, therefore, that men should be under the necessity of exerting themselves. In this necessity for exertion we find the chief source of human advancement—the advancement of individuals as of nations. It has led to most of the splendid mechanical inventions and improvements of the age. It has stimulated the ship-builder, the merchant, the manufacturer, the machinist, the tradesmen, the skilled workman. In all departments of productive industry, it has been the moving power.

It has developed the resources of this and of other countries—the resources of the soil, and the character and qualities of the men who dwell upon it. It seems to be absolutely necessary for the purpose of stimulating the growth and culture of every individual. It is deeply rooted in man, leading him ever to seek after, and endeavor to realize, something better and higher than he has yet attained.

Of course, man is much more than a competing being. That is only one of his characteristics, and not the highest or noblest. He has sensibilities, sympathies, and aspirations, which should induce him to unite and co-operate with others in works for the common good. With unfettered individualism, there may and there ought to be beneficent co-operation for the general happiness. Men may unite to labor, to produce, and to share with each other the fruits of their corporate industry. But under any circumstances there will be the instinct of competition, the opportunities for competition, and, though mixed with necessary evil, there will be the ultimate advantages of competition.

One of the results of industry and thrift is the accumulation of capital. Capital represents the self-denial, the providence, and the enterprise of the past. The most successful accumulators of capital have in all times risen from the ranks of labor itself; they are working-men who have shot ahead of their fellows, and who now give employment instead of receiving it. These persons—who are not the less working-men because they have ceased to be manual laborers—by creating and extending the sphere of productive industry, must be regarded as among the most effective benefactors of the people, as they unquestionably are among the principal sources of the power and wealth of any nation. Without the capital accumulated by their

thrift during many generations, the lot of the artisan would be most precarious.

There is not a mechanic but has the use of the money of the master who employs him. When the unskilled laborer lays down his spade, he leaves idle a capital worth eighteen-pence; but when a skilled artisan or mechanic leaves his mill or his workshop, he leaves idle a capital of from a hundred to two hundred pounds per man. Nor does the skilled workman run any risk whatever as regards the sums invested, though he virtually shares the profits in the shape of the wages paid for his labor. The profit which remains is the master's return for his management and his risks. It is well known, however, that the risks are not always covered, as the *Gazette* in bad times abundantly demonstrates.

The workman in good employment is not liable to losses by bad debts; he has no obsolete machinery, from time to time, left useless on his hands; and he has no anxiety about finding a market for his goods, nor fears respecting fluctuations in the price of the raw material. These are important advantages in his favor, which he does not usually take into account. It is true, he suffers if trade is bad, but he earns high wages if it is good: he can then save money, if he chooses to do so. He may be said to participate in the adversity or prosperity of his firm, but without incurring any of the liabilities of partnership.

Mr. Carlyle has given a curious account of the great English manufacturer: "Plugson, of St. Dolly Undershot, buccaneer-like, says to his men, 'Noble spinners, this is the hundred thousand we have gained, wherein I mean to dwell and plant my vineyards. The hundred thousand is mine, the three-and-sixpence daily was yours. Adieu, noble spinners! drink my health with this groat each, which I give you over and above!'"

This account of the manufacturing buccaneer is a picture drawn by a man of genius from his imagination. There are probably many readers who believe the picture to be drawn from fact. There may, of course, be masters who are buccaneers; but there are also masters who are not buccaneers. There are dishonest manufacturers, as there are dishonest literary men, dishonest publicans, dishonest tradesmen. But we must believe that in all occupations honesty is the rule, and dishonesty the exception. At all events, it is better that we should know what the manufacturers really are from fact rather than from fiction.

Let us first take a large manufacturing firm, or, rather, series of firms, well known in South Lancashire. We mean the cotton-spinning mills of the Messrs. Ashworth at Egerton and New Eagley. They have been in existence for more than seventy years. They have been repeatedly enlarged, and increasing numbers of work-people have been employed at the uniform wages paid throughout the district. Workmen earn from seventeen shillings to two pounds a week. Women weavers can earn as much as twenty-one shillings a week. Where the parents have children, the united earnings of families amount to as much as from one hundred and fifty to two hundred pounds a year.

Then, as to what the Ashworths have done for the benefit of their work-people. Schooling, by means of mutual-instruction classes, was in operation from the first; but about the year 1825, when the works were greatly enlarged, and the population was considerably increased, a day school was opened for children, which was used as an evening school for young men, as well as for a Sunday-school. The continued extension of the works led to an enlargement of the school accommodation; and while this was being provided, arrange-

ments were made for a news-room, library, and for the performance of Divine worship on Sundays. A cricket-ground was also provided for the use of young people.

Misgivings were not unfrequently expressed that the zeal and expenditure incurred by the Messrs. Ashworth might one day be turned against them, to their annoyance and pecuniary loss. The prediction was realized in only a single instance. A young man of considerable talent, who, when a child, had been removed to the factory from a neighboring work-house, made very rapid progress at school, especially in arithmetic; and when a strike of the work-people occurred in 1830, one of the great strike years, he became very officious as a leader. The strike was defeated by the employment of new hands, and it was attributed to the influence of this young man that the employed were brutally assailed by an infuriated mob, and that the windows of the school-room were smashed, and other works of destruction committed.

The employers, nevertheless, pursued their original design. They repaired the school-house, and endeavored to increase the efficacy of the teaching. They believed that nothing was better calculated to remove ignorant infatuation than increased schooling. In a great many instances, the heads of the families had previously been engaged as hand-loom weavers, or in some pastoral pursuit; and it became evident that in course of time the exercise of their minds in the details of a new pursuit awakened their intelligence, and their general demeanor indicated marks of a higher cultivation.

The New Eagley Mills being situated in a narrow valley, several miles from Bolton, and the property being in the possession of the owners, they forbade the opening of any tavern or beer-house on the estate; so

that the district became distinguished for the order and sobriety of the inhabitants. A man of intemperate habits has little chance of remaining in the Ashworth villages. He is expelled, not by the employers, but by the men themselves. He must conform to the sober habits of the place, or decamp to some larger town where his vices may be hidden in the crowd. Many of the parents have expressed how much gratification they have felt, that, by reason of the isolated situation they enjoyed as a community, they had become so completely separated from the corrupt influences of music-saloons and drink-shops.

The masters have added to their other obligations to the work-people, the erection of comfortable cottages for their accommodation. They are built of stone, and are two-storied; some have two upper bed-rooms, and others have three. On the ground-floor there is a sitting-room, a living-room, and a scullery, with a walled court-yard inclosing the whole premises. The proprietor pays the poor-rates and other local charges, and the rentals of the houses vary from two shillings and fourpence to four shillings and threepence a week.

The regularity of their employment, accompanied with the payment of wages on Friday night, doubtless promoted their local attachment to the place. Many of the descendants of the first-comers remain on the spot; their social relations have been promoted; intermarriages have been frequent; and during the whole period there has not been a single prosecution for theft. The working-people have also thriven as well as their masters. Great numbers of them are known to possess reserved funds in savings-banks and other depositories for savings; and there are others of them who have invested their money in cottage buildings, and in various other ways.

But have not the men risen above their lot of laboring spinners? They have. Such of them as possessed skill, ability, and the faculty of organization, have been promoted from the ranks of laborers, and become mill managers. "About *thirty* of these," says Mr. Henry Ashworth, "have been reckoned on the spur of the moment, and *ten* of them have become business partners or proprietors of mills .... Many manufacturers," adds Mr. Ashworth, "are to be found who have done a great deal to ameliorate the condition of those they have employed; and no one will doubt that they have been prompted, not by hopes of gain, but by emotions of good-will."

Manufacturers such as these do not, like Plugson of St. Dolly Undershot, gather up their fortunes and run away, leaving a groat each to their work-people to drink their healths. They remain with them from generation to generation. The best and the noblest among them—the Ashworths of Turton, the Strutts of Derby, the Marshalls of Leeds, the Akroyds of Halifax, the Brookses of Huddersfield, and many others—have continued to superintend their works for several generations. The Strutts were the partners of Arkwright, who was almost the beginner of English manufacture. In fact, it is only since Arkwright took out his patent for the spinning-machine, and Watt took out his patent for the steam-engine, that England has become a manufacturing country.

Where would England have been now, but for the energy, enterprise, and public spirit of our manufacturers? Could agriculture have supported the continuous increase of population? Is it not more probable that this country would have become overrun by beggars, or that property would have been assailed and the constitution upset, as was the case in France,

but for the extensive and remunerative employment afforded to the laboring classes in the manufacturing districts? The steam-engine has indeed proved the safety valve of England. It enabled the kingdom to hold its ground firmly during the Continental wars; and but for it, and the industries which it has established, England would probably by this time have sunk to the condition of a third or fourth rate power.

It is true, the great manufactures have become wealthy. But it would certainly have been singular if, with their industry, energy, and powers of organization, they had become poor! Men of the stamp of the Strutts, Ashworths, Marshalls, and others, do not work for wealth merely, though wealth comes to them. They have not become great because they were rich, but they have become rich because they were great. Accumulations of wealth are the result of exceptional industry, organization, and thrift, rather than of exceptional gain. Adam Smith has said: "It seldom happens that great fortunes are made by any one regularly established and well-known branch of business, but in consequence of a long life of industry, frugality, and attention."

But it is not always so. For instance, Mr. Lister, of Bradford, after inventing the combing-machine—or at least combining the invention of others into a complete combing-machine of his own—proceeded to invent a machine for using up silk waste (then cast away as useless), spinning it into silk of the finest kind, and by means of the power-loom to weave it into velvet of the best quality. The attempt had never before been made by any inventor; and it seemed to be of insuperable difficulty. Mr. Lister had already made a fortune by the success of his combing-machine, such as to enable him to retire from business, and live in comfort

for the rest of his life. But, urged by the irrepressible spirit of the inventor, he went onward with his silk machine. As he himself said, at a recent meeting at Bradford, "They might judge how hard he had worked to conquer the difficulties which beset him, when he told them that for twenty years he had never been in bed at half-past five in the morning; in fact, he did not think there was a man in England who had worked harder than he had." The most remarkable thing was, that he threw away an immense fortune before there was any probability of his succeeding. "He had almost brought himself to ruin, for he was £360,000 out of pocket before he even made a shilling by his machine; indeed, he wrote off a quarter of a million as entirely lost, before he began to make up his books again. Since then, his patent for the manufacture of silk had turned out one of the most successful of the day."

In the park presented by Mr. Lister to the people of Bradford, a statue was recently erected by public subscription. It was unveiled by the Right Hon. W. E. Forster, who, in closing his speech, observed, "I doubt, after all, whether we are come here to do honor to Mr. Lister so much as to do honor to ourselves. We wish to do honor to those working faculties which have made our country of England a practical, and therefore a great and prosperous, and a powerful country. It is this untiring, unresting industry which Mr. Lister possesses, this practical understanding, this determination to carry out any object which he is convinced ought to be carried out, and his determination to fear no opposition and to care for no obstacle—it is these practical faculties that have made England what she is. What is it especially that we are honoring? It is the pluck which this man has shown; it is the feeling

that, having to do with the worsted trade, he said to himself, 'Here is something which ought to be done; I will not rest until I have found out how it can be done; and having found out how it can be done, where is the man who shall stop my doing it? Now, it was upon that principle that he fought his long struggle; and so when we read the story of his struggles, ever since 1842, in those two great inventions, we raise this statue to the man who has successfully fought the battle, and hope that our sons and the sons of all, rich and poor together, will come in after-days to admire it, not merely because it gives them the form and features of a rich and successful man, but because it gives them the form and features of a man who was endowed with industry, with intellect, with energy, with courage, with perseverance, who spared himself no pains in first ascertaining the conditions of the problems he had to solve, and then whose heart never fainted, whose will never relaxed, in determining to carry out those conditions."

Great men are wise savers, and wise spenders. Montesquieu has said of Alexander: "He found the first means of his prosperity and power in the greatness of his genius; the second, in his frugality and private economy; and the third, in his immense liberality to accomplish great objects. He spent but little on himself; but, for public purposes, his hand was always open." It was also said of the First Napoleon that he was economical like Charlemagne, because he was great like Charlemagne. Napoleon was by no means a spendthrift, except in war; but he spent largely in accomplishing great public undertakings. In cases such as these, economy and generosity are well combined. And so it is in the cases of all men possessed of energy, industry, and great powers of organization,