

who had been employed by him from the first, and who knew him well, was wont to say, "If he'd been a parson he'd have been a bishop; if a prize-fighter he'd have had the belt." It is surprising to learn that his fortune was not made by lucky speculations, or excessive gains on any one or two transactions. Taken as a whole, the per centage of profit which accrued to him on all his enterprises was but the moderate amount of three per cent. He laid out about seventy-eight millions of other people's money; and upon that outlay retained about two millions and a half. The rest of his gigantic fortune arose from accumulations. His operations were chiefly but by no means wholly limited to the construction of railways. He interested himself and took prominent part in various other vast projects, such as steamships, mines, engineering, marine telegraphs; and, in many cases, he became the main support and the largest proprietor of these costly undertakings. Mr. Brassey therefore may be said to have been a man of almost universal utility, in the civilized world; and the results of his long industrious career have not been merely the accumulation of a colossal fortune, but great services rendered to mankind. His habitual liberality may be judged of by the fact that during his lifetime he gave away the immense sum of £200,000.

The life of our Captain of Industry was by no means an eventful one, and furnishes very few remarkable incidents; but it does suggest many important lessons. An outline of it may be given in a few words. Thomas Brassey was born November 7th, 1805, at Buerton, in the parish of Oldford, in Cheshire. His family was an ancient one, his ancestors having come over with William the Conqueror. For nearly six centuries they resided on a small landed property of three or four hundred acres, at Bulkely, in Cheshire. Thus he came of a good sound stock, of the middle class of English people, having a certain amount of culture and knowledge, but which had not been enervated by luxury, nor yet, as Sir Arthur Helps puts it, "had thought itself out." It is remarkable how few descendants of eminent men of former days are now to be found among the living. Like a slowly developing plant, a family seems sometimes, after long ages, to produce its best flower, and then dies off. The infusion of fresh blood, of minds unwearied by mental labour, and bodies not exhausted by luxury, is necessary, if a family is to go on producing remarkable men.