

WERE I A STAR.

WERE I a bright and glittering star,
Set in the firmament above,
I'd pierce the densest clouds there aro,
And watching o'er thee from afar,
I'd prove thy beacon-light of love.
A Star of Hope so dazzling bright
To lead thee through life's troublous sea;
Onwards I'd point thee to thy flight,
Upwards I'd lure thee by my light—
I'd prove a guiding-star to thee.

WERE I a bird, on fluttering wing,
For thee I'd tune my matin lay;
For thee my sweetest notes I'd sing;
For thee I'd make the echoes ring
Through all the gladsome summer day;
And in the dowy eventide,
When other birds had sought their nest,
Still nearer thee would I abide,
And warbling softly by thy side,
I'd gently lull thee to thy rest.

WERE I yon lovely fragile flower,
So delicate and fair to see,
Contented in my woody bowyer,
I'd linger out my little hour,
So thou didst cast one glance on me;
Or gathered from my lowly bed,
For thee I'd put fresh beauty on,
For thee I'd raise my drooping head,
For thee my richest fragrance shed,
Then fade and die when thou wert gone.

But golden stars, however bright,
Will pale and vanish in the day;
The skylark's song will cease at night;
And lilies wither in the light,
Whilst I would ever near thee stay.
So truer than the flickering star,
More lasting than the fragile flower,
More constant than the warblers are,
I'd ever watch thee, near or far,
And love and serve thee hour by hour.

ROMANCE OF THE ENGLISH
IRON TRADE.

IN the earlier days of the English iron-trade, the earth still retained its natural tint of green, trees flourished and flowers bloomed where are now mountains of slag and refuse; the coal-basin of South Wales, now a teeming hive of industry, was then an untrodden district of mountain bogs and morass, unvisited by any save the bold wanderers after grouse, or black cock. Lancashire, Yorkshire, and Ayrshire were free from iron-foundries, furnaces, pits, or any other appliances with which those countries now abound. The pleasant woodlands and wealds of Sussex, which now may be traversed without seeing the smoke of scarce one manufactory, in the days of Camden were the centre of the English iron-trade. The reason why is contained in the fact that Sussex was an eminently wooded county. And chance having commenced the trade of iron smelting there, it soon took root and threw apace.

It is not known how many iron works and foundries existed in the Sussex wealds, but the destruction of woods to provide charcoal for their use must have been on a large scale; so much so, as to cause great alarm lest England should be denuded of her forests, and there should be no timber left for her navy. To guard against this, an Act was passed in Elizabeth's time, that no timber should be felled for iron-making, growing within fourteen miles of the sea or the Thames, Severn, or, in fact, any river which was navigable. Sussex, however, the weald of Kent, and part of Surrey, were exempt from the operation of the Act; doubtless from the feeling that it was better to confine the rapacity of the iron-smelter to a locality which had already suffered so much from it, and partly, too, from an unwillingness to check too abruptly a trade which might become useful and important. But Sussex and Kent were not the only places in which the smelting of iron was carried on at this time, for Yorkshire, Staffordshire, and part of Worcestershire had also made a reputation for themselves for carrying on the manufacture; and when the Act passed for prohibiting the cutting down of wood, these latter counties made an effort, which proved unsuccessful, to smelt iron with pit-coal; so that, as a whole

the iron works throughout the country were stopped, and did not revive until the reign of Charles II., when the experiments by the celebrated Dud Dudley on smelting with coal proved to be the turning point in the trade.

Dud Dudley was the natural son of one of the Lord Dudleys, who had iron works at a place called Pensnett, near the present town of Dudley. Iron making seems to have been the particular occupation of this family, for ever since the sixteenth century to the present day it has always been remarkable for being represented by one of the largest iron-masters of its time; and it may be safely said that no family in England has been so long or so largely associated with the iron-trade as the noble house of Dudley.

Being sent for by his father from college to superintend the ironworks, Dud Dudley at once proceeded to experiment on his pit coal, in which he succeeded so far as to make three tons of iron a week. A patent was granted to him for thirty-one years by Charles I., which greatly excited the ire of the charcoal iron-masters: who, naturally indignant at his being able to sell iron cheaper than they could, left no stone unturned to throw difficulties in his way. In the end they triumphed, and poor Dudley first of all had his menopoli taken away from him, then suffered severely from a flood, and finally had his furnace destroyed by a riotous mob, who cut the bellows in pieces. Having by this time lost all his money, he was imprisoned for debt; however, he managed to get released, and to obtain a fresh patent, and armed with this he started again in partnership with two other persons in Bristol. But it was to no purpose, for he got taken in by them, and a long and disastrous Chancery suit was the end of Dud Dudley's troubles.

The next successful name in the iron-trade was that of Darby, whose descendants, like those of Dudley, are of renown in all things pertaining to iron. They were sturdy yeomen of Worcestershire in the seventeenth century, one of whom, Abraham Darby, left the pursuit of agriculture and went over to Holland, from whence he returned with Dutch workmen to set up some brass mills at Bristol. There the fortunes of the family began, and from this establishment rose the celebrated Coalbrook Dale Works, which have kept their reputation for now nearly two hundred years. During the first Abraham Darby's life charcoal was the fuel used at Coalbrook, and it was reserved for the second Abraham, his son, to smelt his iron with coal, or what came to the same thing, with coke. It is narrated of him that for six days he anxiously watched the result of his trial, without once leaving the furnace; and that as soon as it answered its purpose, he fell asleep on the top of the furnace so soundly, that his workmen took him up and carried him home without waking. The Coalbrook Dale experiments were the first really remunerative ones, and from that day the use of charcoal steadily died out, and the number of coal furnaces to increase. This is conclusively shown by the fact that the quantity of tons of charcoal iron made in England and Wales in 1740 was 17,000, which by 1788 had decreased to 13,000, while the same year saw a yield of 48,000 tons of coal, or coke, iron. It is true that this great increase in coke iron must not be put down exclusively to the use of that material, but in some degree to the invention of powerful steam engines, such as Watt and Boulton's, for the purpose of supplying a much greater and more continuous blast.

As regarding this latter desideratum, which, both chemically and physically, was one of the highest importance for the proper smelting of the ore, a very great improvement was made in 1822 by a Mr. Neilson, who substituted for the cold air hitherto used a blast of hot air, which was an immense saving to the iron master. He took out a patent for it, and granted a license to the Bairds the great iron-kings of Scotland, for a consideration or royalty of one shilling a ton upon all iron made by them by this process. But their notions of what was fair and honest were not what a king's should be (even though it be only an iron-king, for although they acknowledged that they made in one year 51,000/ net profit on their hot-blast iron, they actually refused to pay the license on some cock-and-a-bull story that the patent was old and wanted novelty. It will scarcely be believed that wealthy men in a land of honest trading could descend to such meanness, but so it was. They did not, however, get off scot free, for the patentee was not to be humbugged or bullied, but brought an action against them for 20,000/., out of which he got about 12,000/.

But by far a worse case than Neilson's is that of Cort; which is a standing reproach to English fair-

play; and it would really seem, in perusing his case, that the fascination of trickery, shabbiness, and mendacity had enveloped everybody concerned in it, from the highest to the lowest.

Henry Cort, who was a man of moderate means, patented an invention known as "puddle rolls," in which the iron was drawn out into bars, instead of under the hammer. Rolled iron was found so immeasurably superior to hammered iron that Cort's invention was at once seen to be of enormous importance, and some of the leading iron-masters consented to buy a license at the price of ten shillings per ton. Cort himself embarked his whole capital in starting machinery for supplying rolled iron to the Navy, in conjunction with the son of a Mr. Jellicoe, the deputy paymaster of that department. Cort and Jellicoe made some nice jellings, as no iron was allowed to be contracted for save that made by their patent. And so all went as merry as a marriage bell, until old Jellicoe died suddenly, and it was found that the capital which he had given his son, together with a few other large sums, had been taken from moneys of the Government lying in his hands as paymaster. The Government was not likely to be a lenient creditor, so that proceedings were at once taken, by which Cort and Jellicoe's works were seized, together with Cort's private patent; which, in defiance of the sums asked and paid for its use by iron-masters, was only estimated as an asset of 100/.

Cort was ruined, and in consideration of his services he was allowed a pension of 200/ a year until his death which happened about six years afterwards; perhaps, fortunately for him, for he was thereby spared a good deal. As soon as he was dead, Lord Melville, the Treasurer of the Navy, presented a petition to the House of Commons, showing the enormous good Cort had done to the trade of Great Britain, and praying on that account a release of all debts with which he (Lord Melville) was hampered, as being responsible for Jellicoe's defaulting, amounting to about 25,000/. This was immediately granted him, although he at the same time was indebted on his own account to the Government to the tune of 150,000/.

Yet, in the face of this monstrous piece of injustice, the same House of Commons could with difficulty be persuaded to allow 100/ a year to Cort's widow. Of course, when the rulers of the land set such an example, the iron-masters were not slow to take advantage of it, and accordingly they petitioned against the patent, alleging that they would have been ruined if they had followed it, although a correspondence was brought forward acknowledging the obligations under which they were lying for the use of it, and it was universally known that these iron-masters had made an enormous fortune out of it. And so it happened that the Cort died in starvation, while others flourished like a green bay tree,—an ugly story, which needs no comment. The story of the founding of the Crawshaw family is a feather in their cap.

In the last century, the original Crawshaw, then a farmer's son, rode to London on his pony (his sole property) to seek his fortune. He began by sweeping out the warehouse of an ironmonger, who was of a discriminating mind, and saw that young Crawshaw had good stuff in him. The ironmonger had been speculating successfully in sending out iron pots to America, and his astute apprentice observed that if the Americans used so many pots, they must want hooks to hang them on. Whereupon his master not only took the hint, but kindly determined that Crawshaw should send them out, and that he would lend him the money for the purpose. Upon this venture £100 was realised, and from that time the farmer's son moved rapidly upwards, being first taken into partnership by his master, and ultimately becoming an iron-king in South Wales. It is curious that from this stock have arisen (in so short a time) two baronetages and one peerage—that of Ilanover.

A very pretty story is that of Foley, the fiddler, and founder of the Foley family, who introduced into Staffordshire the machinery for making split rods, which, previous to this, had been of the rudest description. The observant fiddler, having heard that Sweden contained appliances suited to this branch of the trade played his way to Hull and across to Sweden, where he speedily became a favourite with the workmen in the iron districts. As soon as he had primed himself with the information he wanted, he suddenly disappeared, and turned up again in Staffordshire, where he persuaded a capitalist to put up the requisite machinery for split rods according to the Swedish pattern. But when the mill was put up it would not