

as they were a genuine expansion of our industrial life, they are a permanent honour of the age, so far as they are the prizes of ambitious adventure, they were the reversal of the system of Walpole. It was Chatham, says his bombastic monument in Guildhall, who made commerce to flourish by war. It is an ignoble epitaph, though Burke himself composed it. But for good or for evil, it was the policy and the age of the two Pitts which gave England her gigantic colonial and maritime empire. And whether it be her strength and glory as many think it, or her weakness and burden as I hold it, it was assuredly one of the most momentous crises in the whole of our history. A change, at least as momentous, was effected at home from within. The latter half of the eighteenth century converted our people from a rural to a town population, made this essentially a manufacturing, not an agricultural country, and established the factory system. No industrial revolution so sudden and so thorough can be found in the history of our island. If we put this transformation of active life beside the formation of the empire beyond the seas, we shall find England swung round into a new world, as, in so short a time, has hardly ever befallen a nation. The change which in three generations has trebled our population, and made the old kingdom the mere heart of a huge empire, led to portentous consequences both moral and material which were hardly understood till our own day. It is the singular boast of the nineteenth century to have covered this island with vast tracts of continuous cities and works, factories and pits; but it was the eighteenth century which made this possible. Appalling as are many of the forms which the fabulous expansion of industry has taken to-day, it is too late now to deplore or resist it. The best hours of the twentieth cen-

tury, we all trust, will be given to reform the industrial extravagances of the nineteenth century; but it will be possible only on condition of accepting the industrial revolution which the eighteenth century brought about.

Whatever be the issue of this great change in English life, there can be no question about the sterling qualities of the men to whose genius and energy it was due. The whole history of the English race has no richer page than that which records those hardy mariners, who with Cook and Anson girdled the globe; the inventors and workers who made the roads and the canals, the docks and the lighthouses, the furnaces and the mines, the machines and the engines; the art-potters like Wedgwood, inspired spinners like Crompton, roadmakers like the blind Metcalfe, engineers like Smeaton, discoverers like Watt, canal makers like Bridgewater and Brindley, engravers like Bewick, opticians like Dollond, inventors like Arkwright. Let us follow these men into their homes and their workshops, watch their lives of indefatigable toil, of quenchless vision into things beyond, let us consider their patience, self-denial, and faith before we call their age of all others that of quackery, bankruptcy, and fraud. We may believe it rather the age of science, industry, and invention.

A striking feature of those times was the dispersion of intellectual activity in many local centres, though the entire population of the island was hardly twice that of London to-day. Birmingham, Manchester, Derby, Bristol, Norwich, Leeds, Newcastle, and other towns were potent sources of science, art and culture, and all the more vigorous that they depended little on the capital. A hundred years ago the population and extent of Birmingham was hardly one hundredth part of what it is now. But what a wealth of industry, courage,