

through the mud and snow in the dark winter mornings to get within the gates before the factory bell ended. Then they were comrades; now they were master and servant. Then they were friends who quarrelled, fought, and made it up again; now they were chief and secretary. But all along the weaker nature looked up to and revered the stronger. It was Jacob who always conquered in their fights; it was Jacob who rose first to be a foreman, then had the courage, followed always by Reuben, to give up the factory and begin as a small contractor; it was Jacob who, when the small jobs multiplied and became large jobs, took pity on the less successful Reuben, and admitted him as clerk, foreman, superintendent of works, accountant—everything. A million men at least, at one time or other, now worked for the great contractor; not one of them ever worked for him so long, revered him so much, or worked for him so well, as his old friend Reuben Gower. No stickler for large salary was Reuben; no strict measurer of hours given to the firm; no undue estimator of his own labour. All he had, all he thought, all he knew, he threw into the affairs of the house. The three hundred a year, which Sir Jacob considered an equivalent for his experience and zeal, seemed a noble honorarium to him, the old factory boy, who had never got over his respect for hundreds. And while he was content to occupy the simple position of jackal, it never occurred to him that it was mainly by the adaptation of his own ideas, by the conveyance to his own purposes of his own surprising mastery of detail, that the great Sir Jacob prospered and grew fat. A simple, hard-working dependent, but one who had faith in his master, one who felt that there could be no higher lot than in working for a good, a noble, and a strong man; and indeed, if such be the lot of any, dear brethren, write me down that man happy.

Outside the private room they were to each other as to the rest of the world, Mr. Gower and Sir Jacob. Within the sacred apartment, whither no one could penetrate without permission, the old Lancashire habit was kept up, and one was Jacob, and the other Reuben.

Reuben looked the older, probably by reason of the careful and laborious life he led. He was thin, grown quite grey, and he stooped. His face was remarkable for a

certain beauty which sprang from the possession of some of his ancient simplicity. Men who remain in their old beliefs do retain this look, and it becomes all faces, though it is unfortunately rare.

He was married, and had one son, John, who was, naturally, in the great Escomb ironworks, a mechanical engineer by trade, and a clever fellow. The father and son were excellent friends on all subjects except one: John could not share his enthusiasm for the great man who employed him.

"He is successful, father, because he has had you in the first place, and half a hundred like me in the second, to work for him."

John did not know, being a young man, that the mere fact of being able to see quite early in life that the way to success is to make other people work for you is of itself so highly creditable a perception as to amount to greatness.

"Who," continued the rebellious John, "would not be successful under such circumstances?"

His father shook his head.

"He is a strong man, John—a strong man."

"How has he shown it? Has he invented anything? Has he written well, or struck out any new idea?"

"He is a man of the highest reputation, John—not here in Lancashire only" (they were then at the works), "but in the City of London."

"Every man has the highest reputation who can command so much capital."

"And he is such a good man, John."

"Humph! Then why does not his goodness begin where it ought, at home? We should have been saved this strike if his goodness had been shown to the hands. Are his men better paid, more considered, more contented, than the men in other works? No—worse. You know that, father. His goodness wants to be proclaimed to all the world; he does good in the sight of men."

"John, Sir Jacob is a political economist. It is hard, he says, to set up private benevolence against the laws of science—as well sweep back the tide with a hearth-brush. Supply and demand, John: the men are the supply, and capitalists the demand."

But John was not to be argued into enthusiasm for Sir Jacob, and returned to the works, where the pits were banked up and the engines were silent, and men who ought