

"So you say, miss, so you say. But there's a good proverb mayhap you've heard—'A bird in th' hand's worth two in the bush ;' an' Job's got a bird in his hand worth five shillin's a week, and he shan't let it go."

"You won't even lend him the money?"

"Naw, naw," said the farmer, slapping his pocket. "An' look ye here, miss, I'm just about tired of a' this argufyin' and interferin' in my affairs, and I'll not stan' it any longer."

When Farmer Christie began to stamp his foot, it was high time a lady should quit his presence ; besides, it was no sort of use expostulating any further. So without more ado I wished him good morning, and took my departure. I must have carried away with me on my face the signs of my chagrin and disappointment, for presently when I met Mr. Harding in the lane he inquired at once what was the matter. Thus invited, I poured out to him my troubles on Job's behalf. Mr. Harding listened in silence till I finished, then said quietly—

"Why didn't you appeal to me at once? If funds are all that are needed, I shall be very happy to advance them."

He spoke as if his willingness to do so ought to have

been taken as a matter of course, and waived the thanks that sprang to my lips.

"Such a phenomenon as a Shallerton genius doesn't make its appearance every day," he declared, "and ought to be made the most of."

His liberality very quickly altered the whole aspect of affairs. Farmer Christie's objections, which were solely of a pecuniary nature, were satisfactorily disposed of, and he gave his gracious consent to Job's accepting Mr. Harding's generous offer.

To follow out in detail the career of our Genius at the College in London, and subsequently, would far overstep the limits of this paper. I will only say that his success in every way answered our expectations, that on leaving the College he at once obtained an excellent appointment as organist at a large London church, and that in the course of time he became well known as a composer of church music.

The consciousness of having produced a genius had a most beneficial effect on Shallerton, and a sort of rage for music set in, which lasted long enough to make a radical change in the musical attitude of the whole place. When Mr. Gilman started a boys' choir at Ashdale Church, we straightway set up one in rivalry—but of that some other time. H. L.



A MILLIONAIRE PHILANTHROPIST.

NEARLY eighty years ago a poor boy, about eight years of age, began his business life by vending cakes in the streets of Kidderminster. On Thursday, June 16th, 1881, that whilom cake-merchant died at Erdington, near Birmingham, full of years and honours, a millionaire in fortune, but leaving behind him what is more priceless than untold gold, the reputation of a blameless life, and vast educational establishments built under his own personal inspection, and endowed at his sole cost. The career of Sir Josiah Mason was full of varied interest, and deserves to be ranked with that of the Crossleys, Titus Salt, or any other of those "merchant princes" whose lives have furnished fitting material for appreciative biographers.

Born on the 23rd, of February, 1795, in Mill Street, Kidderminster, Josiah Mason was the second son of a poor carpet-weaver, so poor that he could only afford to send his child for a few months to a dame-school in the cottage next his own ; and, as we have said, at eight years old the boy was compelled to face the world on his own account, selling cakes from door to door. After a time he ventured on a higher flight, and having procured a donkey, with panniers, he pursued the calling of a dealer in fruits and vegetables, till he had reached his fifteenth year. Tired of street-life, and largely influenced by a desire to tarry at home with a

sick brother, Josiah taught himself shoe-making ; but, as he often said in after-life, although he used the best leather and put into it his best work, he could not make it pay, and so gave it up. Meanwhile he had been trying hard at self-improvement, being helped to a knowledge of the art of writing by attendance at various Sunday-schools.

From fifteen to twenty, he tried his hand successively at various occupations, including shopkeeping, baking, carpentering, blacksmith's work, house painting, and finally his father's old trade of carpet-weaving. Resolved to try a wider field for enterprise, he removed to Birmingham, where he fell in love with, and married (on the 18th of August, 1817) his cousin, Anne Griffiths, a union prolonged in mutual confidence and happiness for fifty-three years. In Birmingham he worked at a small gilt toy business, in which, however, although he was making the business a success, he was deceived by a partner, and at twenty-seven years of age was thrown upon the world without work and without money. At this time he was, under circumstances of some interest, introduced to the business to which his after-life was devoted. Some one who knew his character and circumstances took him to Mr. Harrison, split-ring manufacturer, of Lancaster Street, Birmingham, saying, "This is the very man you want." Mr. Harrison, disappointed probably by many previous applicants, rather coldly remarked, "I have had a good many young men come here, but

they were afraid of dirtying their fingers." Young Mason, who had been standing quietly in the background, raised his hands and, looking at his extended fingers, said, with a quaint humour that characterised him throughout life, "Are you ashamed of dirtying yourselves to get your own living?" This unstudied touch of nature so impressed Mr. Harrison, that he at once closed with his visitor, to whom he sold his business twelve months later for £500, Mr. Mason being able to pay for it out of his first year's profits.

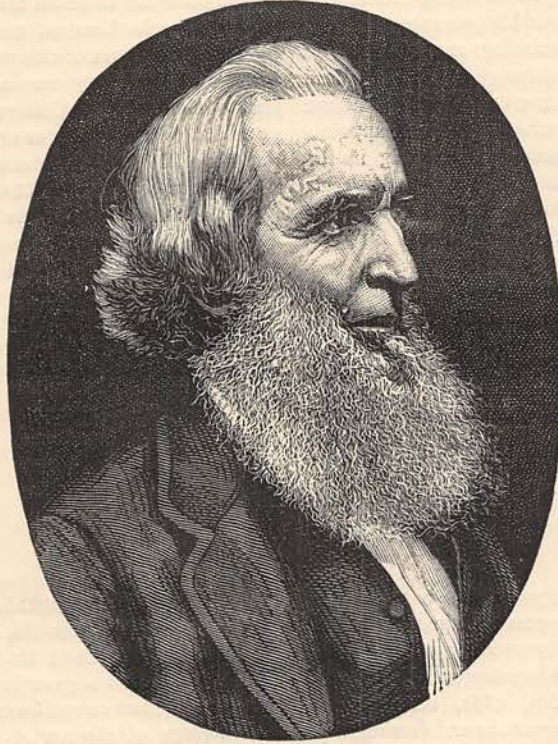
The story of Josiah Mason's business life thenceforward reads like a chapter from a fairy tale. Inventing a machine for bevelling hoop rings, he so reduced the cost and increased the speed of manufacturing them, that a clear gain of £1,000 resulted from its first year's use. The first machine so constructed was made in 1825, and was until very recently still in use in the large works at Lancaster Street. To the split-ring trade Mr. Mason quickly added that of making steel pens. Mr. James Perry, of Manchester and London, had been the first maker of these, preceding by a short time the earliest Birmingham makers. The two latter had begun to make the slit in their pens by machinery, while in Mr. Perry's the slit was made by means of a hammer. At that time nine pens were sold upon a card for three and sixpence; and one of these falling into Josiah Mason's hands, he set about devising improvements, and the same evening made three pens, which he sent in a letter—for which he had to pay ninepence postage—to Mr. Perry. That gentleman at once saw the value of the improvement, hastened to Birmingham, and had an interview with Mr. Mason, who from that time onwards became the sole maker of the pens sold under Perry's name. The trade at first was of very modest proportions, the old account books showing that in 1829 and 1830 orders were executed by twenty or thirty gross at a time, from which the concern grew until Mr. Mason became the largest pen-maker in the world. In 1830 twelve workpeople were employed in

Lancaster Street, and 112 lbs. of steel was thought a large quantity to roll for a week's consumption. In 1874, towards the close of Mr. Mason's connection with the works, nearly a thousand persons were employed, the quantity of steel rolled every week for pen-making exceeded three tons, and about sixty tons of pens were constantly in movement throughout the building, in one or other of the many stages of manufacture. The significance of these figures will be better understood when we add that there are probably a million and a half of pens to a ton.

Throughout his long business career Mr. Mason was connected with other branches of trade besides those more immediately associated with his name. Thus he was largely interested in the development of electro-plating, and the great show-rooms and workshops of the firm in Newhall Street, one of the sights of Birmingham, were planned by him and erected under his direction. In the same connection, too, he established extensive copper-smelting works at Pembrey, in South Wales, and indirectly was associated with the manufacture of india-rubber rings. Mr. Mason retired from the business of electro-plating in 1856. From the original business in Lancaster Street he retired in 1875, when the concern was transferred to a limited company. He had, however, previously established a large busi-

ness as a nickel refiner, with which he was connected till his death.

From these various businesses Josiah Mason accumulated a large fortune, of which in many ways unknown to the public at large he made good use. Two great works of benevolence will always be associated with his name, the Orphanage at Erdington and the Science College opened rather more than a year ago in Birmingham. The former is the development of an Almshouse for thirty women, and an Orphanage for fifty girls, which he established in 1858. Though having no children of his own, Josiah Mason had a tender regard for little ones, and laboured in various ways to promote their welfare. The first stone of the



Faithfully yours
Josiah Mason

larger Orphanage was laid in 1860, and for eight years the founder personally superintended its erection, expending £60,000 upon the immense building. By a deed executed in August, 1868, he transferred the building, together with an endowment in land, &c., valued at £200,000, to seven trustees, to whom seven others will now have to be added by the Town Council of Birmingham. The Orphanage, which has been enlarged since its opening, is now capable of receiving 300 girls, 150 boys, and 50 infants; and admission is limited by no restriction of locality, class, or creed. The College, which occupies a prominent site near the Birmingham Town Hall, was founded by deed executed in 1870, property valued at £100,000 being vested in the trustees. The actual work of erection was not commenced till 1875, when Sir Josiah Mason (for he had received the honour of knighthood several years previously) laid the first stone on his eightieth birthday (February 23rd). On the founder's eighty-

fifth birthday, February 23rd, 1880, the building was opened by an address by Professor Huxley. The cost of the building, in addition to the endowment of £100,000, was £60,000; and to obviate the necessity of trenching upon the foundation, the founder furnished the College throughout before handing it over to the trustees. Like the Orphanage, the College is without restriction of class or creed. The first intention had been to limit the instruction to scientific subjects—mathematics, chemistry, physics, and biology; but to these have since been added physiology, geology, engineering, classics, English language and literature, German and French, with discretionary powers to the trustees in regard to other subjects.

A long life of honourable industry has thus been crowned by permanent endowments, that will carry down to posterity a name that for full half a century has been "familiar as a household word" throughout the Midlands.

THE WAR OFFICE.



VERY high authority has declared that "the Horse Guards is, without flattery, the ugliest building in the metropolis." Ugly as it is, it is probably the best-known building in the metropolis. If there were nothing else to draw attention to it, the mounted Dragoons

in the boxes at the gateway would do so. All day long, in all weathers, groups of people stand gazing at these colossal sentinels, and watching the tall figures of the Guards marching up and down within the courtyard. The sight is familiar to every youthful Londoner; and it is one of which country visitors, both young and old, retain most vivid and delighted recollections.

Time was when those mighty men-in-armour were really "guards" of one of the chief Departments of State. They kept watch and ward over the persons and records of the War Minister, the Commander-in-Chief, and all the great officials charged with the control of the British Army. But they discharge no such important functions now; the building, though still called the Horse Guards, is really little more than a Guards' barracks, all the great military officials having long since migrated to the War Office in Pall Mall and premises elsewhere, selected for the different branches of Administration. Down to the year 1854 there were a Secretary *for* War, and a Secretary *at* War, these two officials dividing between them the political, financial, and administrative concerns of the country in reference to the army. Then there was a Commander-in-Chief, who was entrusted with the control of the Cavalry and the Infantry only; for the management of the Artillery and Engineers there was another authority, called the Board of Ordnance.

Another "Board" regulated the clothing of the army, another Department was responsible for the Commissariat, still another for the medical requirements of the forces; and, finally, there was a Department specially charged with the duty of supplying the army with chaplains. All these various Departments were independent of each other: communication between them was conducted through the office of the Secretary of State; and it was only through his office that any one Department could possibly obtain from another Department what was required for carrying out any great military measure. The War Department at that time was rightly named the "Circumlocution Office." The disasters of the Crimean campaign put an end to this state of things. The office of Secretary *at* War was abolished; the Secretary *for* War ceased to be also Secretary for the Colonies (as he had hitherto been), and was charged with the administration of the army as a whole. Numerous other alterations in names of offices and the duties connected with them followed very shortly; and in the year 1870, by Act of Parliament, and by Orders in Council, the work of unification was completed—the direct and immediate control of the army in all its branches being thereby vested in the Secretary of State for War.

It was a curious coincidence that two of the chief military offices were held just before these changes were made by noblemen who had each suffered the loss of a limb in battle. Lord Raglan, who was Secretary at War, and Lord Hardinge, who was Commander-in-Chief, were both one-armed men.

The Secretary of State for War stands, in relation to the army, next the Sovereign; and, by delegation from the Crown, holds the supreme authority and command of all the military forces of the realm. The building in which he exercises these august functions