

all our new lights about Oswald?" was John's greeting.

"Dazzling me, rather. I make my humble obeisance to such highly-illuminated parents. By the way, you are deputed to instruct me, Mr. Jervis, as to why Oswald wears nothing but woollens."

"Oh, that's easily told; a child's skin is punctured all over with little ducts for the purpose of letting out moisture and other waste of the body; woollens, being porous, allow free passage to all this *débris* of the body, which would clog the ducts if allowed to remain on the skin; also, woollens are absorbent, take up perspiration like a sponge, and so relieve the skin. Again, woollens are bad conductors of heat, do not

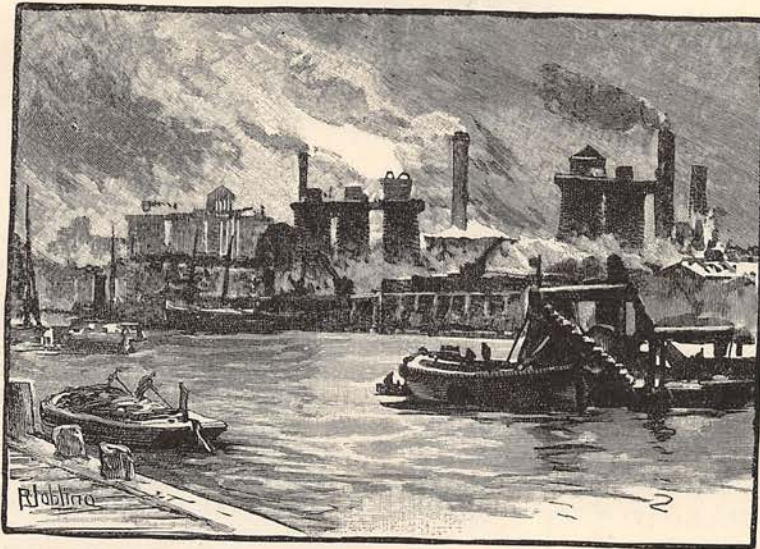
allow the heat of the body to pass off suddenly and be succeeded by a sudden chill. You mothers are behind the times. Whoever saw men playing cricket or tennis in cotton or linen? and, worse than all, in *starched* cottons, where whatever there was of a porous nature in the material is stopped up? No, take my word for it, starch should be eschewed in the nursery, and 'Oo! a' oo!' as the Scotchman said, should be the only wear."

"Nice woman, Mrs. Brown," said John, as he was locking up.

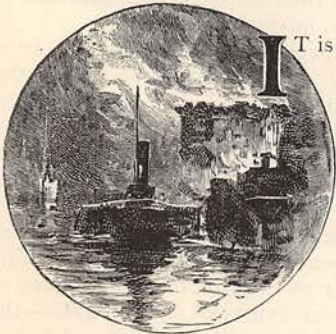
"Yes; but I hate to feel as if I had done nothing but boast the whole time."

"Don't be fanciful, my dear."

IRONOPOLIS AND ITS PEOPLE.



BLAST-FURNACES FROM THE RIVER.



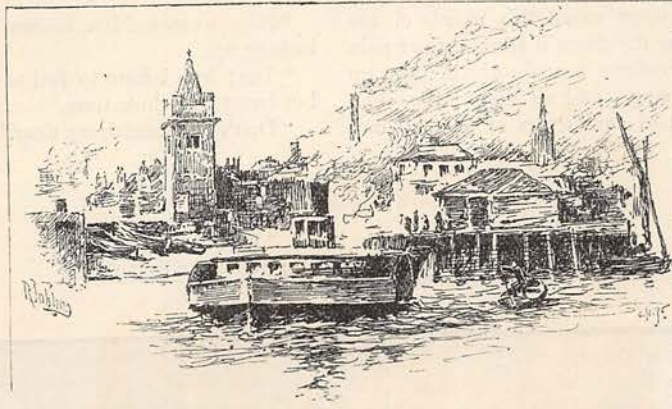
BLAST-FURNACES AT NIGHT.

IT is less than sixty years since a farmer received at his hospitable table, almost within a stone's-throw of the river Tees, a dweller in a town some miles above. The guest told his host that he had heard that the Quakers at Darlington were about buying the farm to build a town. The farmer was incredulous, and added that it was as likely that it should be turned into a public-house. It was a

solitary farmstead near the river; "the silence and solitude were only broken by grey-headed seals" in the river, or women with shrimping-nets on the banks. But on the spot was begun a town which has spread itself for miles; whose productions are in all parts of the world; whose market largely rules the price of iron; and whose people—gathered from many corners of the world—have abundant energy, pluck, perseverance, and belief in the future of the town in which they dwell. In the year 1830 a body subsequently known as the "Middlesbrough Owners" bought some 480 acres of land—farming land and salt marshes on the side of the Tees; and out of the purchase by Joseph Pease, Thomas Richardson, Henry Birkbeck, Simon Martin, Edward Pease, and Francis Gibson, sprang the town of Middlesbrough. The first house built—a modest

cottage—records the fact on a tablet in its walls ; the primal railway was extended to the place, coal staiths were erected, and on the basis of its trade as a little coal-shipping port the “new town” began its life fifty-seven years ago. It was for years a struggling little town, shipping its coals, building its oldest streets,

it has built in its own bounds about two-score huge smelting furnaces, and all around it studded others ; whilst rolling-mills, steel works, plate-mills, engineering establishments, have arisen to use up some of the raw iron made in magnificent masses yearly. From the river the “new town” has spread out its streets,



FERRY-BOAT LANDING, MIDDLESBROUGH.

and dreaming of the potteries and other works which were its earliest employers of labour. It acquired little “steam-packets,” ran them to the greater ports, erected small engineering works, built its little town hall, began a foundry of some moment ; acquired a trade in coal, in fuel, in pottery, and in engines ; rolled its iron, and having drawn to it two iron-masters of the olden type, one of the latter, after long search, discovered “a solid rock of ironstone, lying bare, upwards of sixteen feet thick.” From the 8th day of June, 1850, the progress of Middlesbrough has been marvellous. It has quarried out of the hills and from the dales of Cleveland millions of tons of ore yearly ;

south, east, and west. Three years after the “commercial discovery of the Cleveland ironstone” the town was incorporated ; in the following year the water-supply was commenced from a source which has since claimed one million sterling to expand it to the needs of the Tees-side towns ; and step by step, as the demand for iron increased, so increased the iron-works of this Yorkshire town, so increased its wealth, its extent, its population, and all the indications of corporate life, energy, and pluck. A quarter of a century ago the Chancellor of the Exchequer of the day, Mr. Gladstone, visited it, and remarked that the town was so little known in the south that a prominent London journalist did not know where it was, and wondered that the Chancellor should visit so obscure a place. “But,” said Mr. Gladstone, “this remarkable place is the youngest child of England’s enterprise. . . . It is an infant, but an infant Hercules.”

The eloquent Chancellor’s prediction has been verified. The slight growth that distinguished the little railway-made port half a century ago is small to that which Ironopolis has known. Its population is such that for every year of its life a thousand persons have come into it ; and what were the decaying little villages near have become, since iron blood entered into their veins, large towns. On its great Iron Exchange £28,000 were spent ; on the park which its first mayor and first member of Parliament gave to it nearly £30,000 were expended by the donor—the late Mr. Henry Bolckow. About forty churches and chapels give a local habitation and a name to the religious aspirations of Churchman and Nonconformist of many views and of more than one nationality. A palace has been erected for the home of the municipality ; and the claims of philanthropy, of charity, and



MIDDLESBROUGH MARKET.

of the sick and afflicted are duly recognised ; so that for two dozen years Middlesbrough has been building itself (for business, pleasure, religion, or duty) out into what was the open country near it at a rate that is surprising in this country.

The river steamers that ply on the Tees form possibly the best point from which to watch Ironopolis. In the day-time the course is through clouds of smoke that issue from tall chimneys, flaming forges, and huge furnaces that line the banks of a stream whose waters are impinged on by the slag-refuse from these vast smelting machines. From the banks of the river to the north are the salt works of South Durham, where weekly there are 3,000 tons of salt drawn up in brine from 1,000 feet below the surface to the boiling-pans on it. On the south the river is flanked by the furnaces, converters, foundries, and all the accessories of the iron trade ; the lines of railway are never weary of the rum-

ble of the waggons of coal and coke, ore and limestone, iron and steel ; beyond these the town stretches its miles of streets, with turrets and spires rising from the long roofs of bluish-grey. And further off still, the land rises into the hills of Cleveland, which merit the Biblical praise, "a good land, whose stones are iron." But it is at night-time that the scene on the river Tees becomes spectacular. The river runs its course of dark water along banks where the huge slag-ball is falling in masses that are barely solidified, and retain a little of the colour of the heat yet ; by tall stacks of dark masonry, whose crest now and then sends forth a tongue of flame that irradiates the land all round them ; by iron-works, whence pencils of fierce light strike out, and down on the dark waters ; by huge "sows" of sand, where the livid white metal runs along to the furrows that give it the name of "pig ;" and by works where the Bessemer converter sends up into the startled air a sheet of flame that falls again into little particles, and dazzles the eyes with its brilliancy.

The men who have made Middlesbrough have been

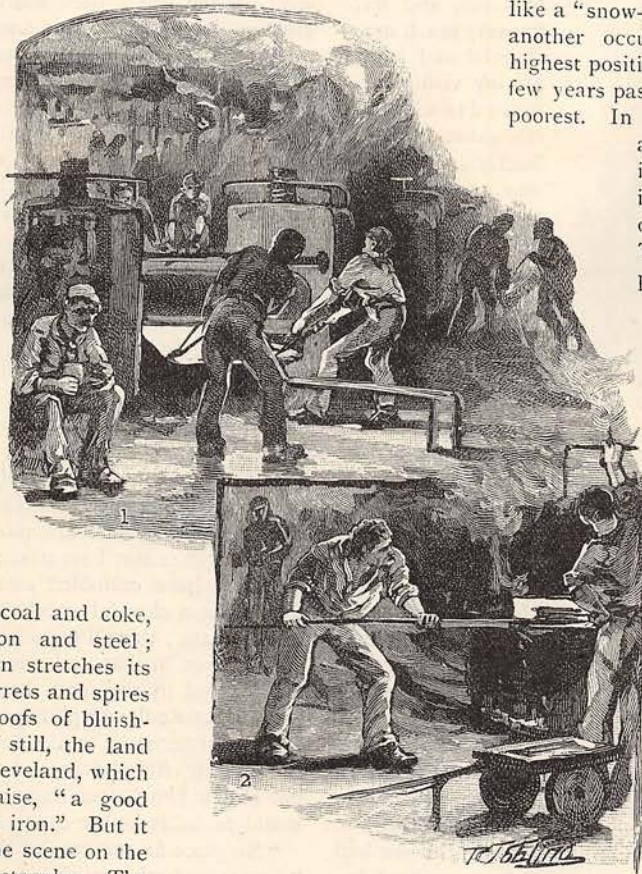
drawn from many quarters—there are puddlers from the ancestral iron-works of Wales and Staffordshire, there are ship-builders from the Clyde, there are engineers from the far south, there are prosperous men from the ancient iron-working country of Sweden. Whoever, from near or far, had push, energy, and courage to speculate, seemed to make for Middlesbrough, and their fortunes were made—and lost. One of the pioneers of the trade entered the town a poor man, and in twenty-five years became actually

a millionaire ; but his riches, after his death, in other hands passed away like a "snow-fall in the river : " whilst another occupied in one year the highest position in the town, and in a few years passed away in one of the poorest. In Ironopolis life proceeds

at a fast pace ; business is a rapid stream, bearing speedily on to fortune, or as speedily stranding. To see it at its best two periods are needed—the

market-day, when pigs and ingots, plates and coke, coal and ore, are the articles bargained over on 'Change, and when the well-to-do merchants for thirty miles round meet ; and again on the Saturday night, when mining villages near pour in their crowds, and the streets become in parts masses of humanity jostling with rough good-humour to and from market or station. Into these mining villages gather many of the labourers,

who find that class of mining comparatively easily learnt, and more remunerative than agricultural work ; and thus a stolid population drawn from many counties is attracted. Many dialects then mingle with that of the iron-workers of Middlesbrough, and the streets glaring with gas, and with a little of the halo that never ceases at night from the furnaces glowing in the air, with an abundant show of varied humanity in most of its phases, combine to make Saturday night in Middlesbrough one of the sights of the north which might give room for a longer sketch.



IRON-WORKERS.

(1) Rolling Plates. (2) Putting in the Heat.