HOW FORTUNES ARE MADE.

"HOW can I make a fortune?"

This is an inquiry that is more often made mentally than spoken, but it is heard at times, and it is one many have an interest in. If those who have made fortunes—using the word with a rather elastic definition—if these could reply, it would be very often found that the means of attainment differed, but the persevering skill behind them was generally found to have been needful. With this, and with health and activity, bodily and mental, fortunes are often made; but these fortunes are as often lost. I knew a man who in fifteen years made a fortune of three-quarters of a million—which his son inherited and spent in ten years! Changes in business life, in centres of commerce, in methods of production, are now very frequent, and nearly every one of these gives opportunity for the acquisition of much wealth to those who can "seize the moment by the foremost top." But it needs skill to discern the changes and their effect, and faith to follow out a projected course that will lead to fortune in the opinion of its planner. It is curious and instructive to trace the methods in which fortunes are made, but it is a process which does not confirm the popular opinion that "lucky accidents" are most frequently the means. It is true that some men are born rich, some inherit riches, and a very few have riches thrust upon them. But more generally a fortune is the outcome of a life's work; and, not seldom, it is the result of the efforts of father and son. Nor is fortune confined to those who follow one calling or trade.

An illustration will show this. Fifty years ago, three men lived on one northern river who each became literally millionaires. One was a Welshman, a worker in iron-works, a second was a corn merchant, the third was also in the grain trade. The two first became partners, had ten years of struggling in the iron trade, sought for and found fresh supplies of iron-stone, and in a score of years each became a millionaire, and one of the two died a Member of Parliament. The third left the grain trade, embarked largely in the chemical manufacture, and died recently, owning an estate, won by hard work, worth a million and a quarter. These men were not very highly educated, not very learned, nor personally gifted in great degree—they had simply dogged decision and untireable industry. Another illustration; a small manufacturer in a northern town dreamt of better communication than that by the road, guided popular desire for it to the consummation of a railway, invested largely, for his means, in it; then in the mineral districts it opened out, his sons followed in his steps, two of his grandsons and one of his great grandsons are to-day Members of Parliament, whilst a great granddaughter is a countess. It is not by blind chance, but by persistent search and continuous effort, that fortunes are won.

It is singular how often the gainers of fortunes have changed their trades and occupations. Lord Armstrong was a lawyer before he turned his thoughts to hydraulics and those constructive works which have given him wealth and fame. Sir Henry Bessemer's early work had more to do with the devising of stamps for the Government than with the production of ingot iron. Minton was apprenticed to an engraver before he began to manufacture earthenware. The Peases of Darlington were wool-spinners before they became coalowners, iron-masters, and bankers; and one of the leading ship-builders in the kingdom commenced his business career and laid the foundation of his fortune in the drapery business.

Fortunes are seen to be made in many branches of commerce. James Gordon Bennett is one proof that the newspaper press enriches in America, just as the names of Walter, Levy, and Baines show similar successes in this country; Crossley and carpets are familiar in association, and led to golden results; the manufacture of starch has enriched the Reckitts of Hull; the production of biscuits has given fortunes to the Palmers of Reading; the Bairds, now of Ury, found gold in iron; and at least one instance is known of a fortune being made from the production of "artificial alizarine."

Nor is it entirely to new ideas being brought into play that fortunes are traceable. Many inventors had tried locomotive building before George Stephenson, but he had the sagacity to follow up what he considered practical, to invest his earnings in a locomotive factory, in a coal-mine, and in stone quarries, and the wealth resulting was the reward of his own labour and of the shrewd investments of what he did not need. His mode of living was at all times moderate; his earnings increased with his fame and with the increase of the railway system; and thus the enlargement of his fortune was a mere question of time.

Another example is afforded of methods of making a fortune by the well-known instance of one of the leading financiers who heard in France of the result of a great battle, who posted express to the coast, thence sailed across to England, arriving before the news did in those pre-telegraph days. He bought stocks largely, and realised vast profits when stocks and funds rose on the arrival of the news of the British victory. Contrast this with the method of a gentleman still living, who began life as a mason, who took small sub-contracts on public works, then larger contracts; who rented first a quarry for the stone he needed, and then a cement works for that material; and so gradually and surely, by safe invest-

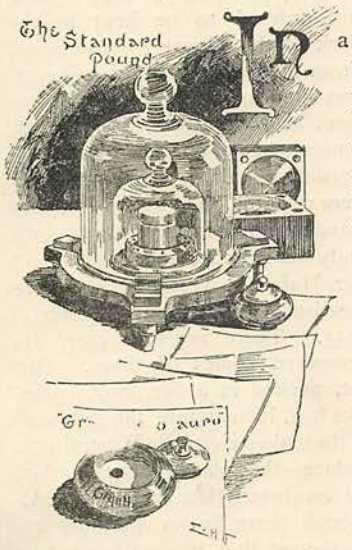
ment, enlarged the area of his work, until he is now one of the greatest railway contractors of to-day.

There is another method of fortune-making—that of the utilization of products that were wasted : a method which has in it the elements of many a romance. The story of Mr. Lister—now Lord Masham—and the silk waste that was sold for rubbish, that led to the investment of a quarter of a million sterling in machinery for converting it into fabrics costly and beautiful, has been well told ; the allied story of Sir Titus Salt and the alpaca is even better known. Out of hydrochloric acid—once wasted in the production of soda—the fortunes of the Tennants of Glasgow grew ; and, very recently, the "Chance-process" for the utilisation of alkali-waste in the production of a very pure sulphur appears to be yielding golden results. Mining and shipping are branches of commerce and adventure that have often led to fortune, but that cannot be even briefly touched upon here, though the stories of success and failure are almost as romantic as the tales in the Arabian Nights.

A very natural and a very fitting question is this—Does the result justify the effort ? The reply is—That depends on the use made of the fortune. One millionaire who died recently lived "only to make money," the words quoted being those of a near kinsman, who is his executor. Another merchant who partly made and partly inherited a fortune very differently uses his wealth. His income is now assured : it is about £4,000 yearly, one-half of which is given to religious, philanthropic, and charitable objects, and the other half is devoted to personal and family use. Does the result justify the effort ? In the training of mind to judge of results, in the endeavour to win success in a race that is open, there are developed powers that otherwise might lie dormant ; so that the exercise needed in fortune-seeking, and the full use of powers and faculties, are in themselves desirable, but the acquirement is really tested in its usefulness by the way in which the fortune is used.

Fortunes are probably more rapidly made now than formerly, and so there is the more opportunity for the wise use of the acquired gold. As commerce is enlarged, the uses of wealth are greater and more potent, the interest larger. The early bankers (Childs and others) carried on business under their old-fashioned signs on a comparatively small scale ; but now the "turn-over" of the modern banks is millions where that of their predecessors was thousands. The first public railway had a total subscribed capital, at its inception, of £120,900 ; but its successor has now a paid-up capital of £60,300,000. The great carrying companies by land and sea have enlarged the area of investments. So the making of fortunes is expedited, the telegraph and the steamship, quickening communication, aid in the more rapid use of capital, and stimulate its growth. It is probable that more rapid accretion and quicker dispersal of fortunes will lessen the danger of acquiring that "love of money" which Scriptural authority and many a modern proof show to be the root of evil. Those who, in Burns's phrase, "assiduous wait" upon Dame Fortune are now more rapidly repaid, and with health of body and brain, and with the desire to seize opportunities as well as to wait patiently and search diligently for them, fortunes are more easily made in most occupations than they used to be in the past.

CONCERNING THE STANDARDS.



In a quiet corner of Old Palace Yard, right under the shadow of Westminster Abbey, there modestly hides one of the most interesting of the Government offices. The Standards Department of the Board of Trade, which has long been there located, is in singular contrast to most other branches of the State, for it is of antiquarian and scientific, as well as of practical, value. One of its distinctive features is the museum, which contains many curious relics, ancient and modern, illustrative of our system of weights and measures The most ancient standard here preserved is a small bronze weight, contained in a conical box, which is inscribed "*grana pro auro*." This is believed to belong to the time of Edward I. It was used as the standard pennyweight in the fourteenth century. The standards here which rank next in age date from the reign of Henry VII. These include an octagon yard-measure, marked "H," and having lines roughly cut in it, denoting $\frac{1}{16}$th yard, and also inches. This standard is probably the same length as the old standard yard, and is only $\frac{1}{100}$th of an inch shorter than the present Imperial standard. Close at hand are also the standard corn bushel and corn gallon referred to in Act xii. Henry VII. cap 5, viz., "It pleaseth the King's Highness to make a standard of a bushel and a gallon to remain in his said Treasury for ever." These are manufactured of gun-metal, and are elegant examples of founders' work of the period. There are no standard weights at Westminster of the time of Henry VII., but in the Albert Museum at Exeter there is preserved an old Exchequer 14 lb. avoirdupois weight of that monarch's