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A COTTON PLANTATION

*Photograph by Ewing Galloway, N.Y.*

THE ROMANCE  
OF THE  
COTTON INDUSTRY  
IN ENGLAND

BY

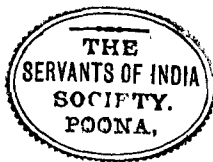
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## P R E F A C E.

EACH of the great industries has its own literature ; but this, being for the most part expert or technical, is not designed for the ordinary reader. The present book, avoiding such technical detail, seeks to give to the general reader, as well as to those interested in England's industrial development and in the Cotton Industry itself, some idea of the part played by cotton in English history. It seeks to show how the Cotton Industry has thriven from the days when, like the Red Rose under whose auspices it flourishes, it was first grafted, weak and insignificant, on to the sturdiest industrial stem in England, the stem of the ancient Woollen Industry, to the days when, spanning the world from the western hemisphere, whence it drew its raw material, to the eastern, where it sold its finished produce, and, having concentrated within itself all the features of the Industrial Revolution in their most intense form, it provided England with the riches wherewith to pay for the second Hundred Years' War with France and to defeat Napoleon, even as its parent, the famous Woollen Industry, had provided her with the moneys to pay for the first ; and then to show how, from about 1830 onwards, it displays, as it were in microcosm, the changes that have befallen industry in England under the stress of international competition, and how it has given England Free Trade. In short, the aim of the present book is to depict the Cotton Industry in its setting as part of the history of England, rather than to isolate it for minute and detailed study.

The story of a great industry is a romance, in which may be traced the hopes and fears, achievements and failures of successive generations. Could the history of the great businesses be written, we should find few that were not actuated by many motives beside the primary one of profit-making. This plainly appears when a stray breeze, set in motion by some cardinal occurrence, lifts for a moment a curtain, as in Lancashire during the American Civil War, and affords a glimpse behind. But for the most part these great businesses are shrouded in silence, because they were built up and are maintained by men whose tradition it is not to talk.

It is this self-imposed silence that has consigned many a stirring deed to oblivion, and caused Industrial History, intimate as it is, to seem somewhat invertebrate in comparison with Political History, a thing of tendencies and statistics, lacking in

striking personalities. Whether this charge be in general just or not, it is not true of the history of the Cotton Industry, which can boast figures like those of Chetham, Arkwright, Peel, and even Lincoln himself to fill the niches of its temple-front. In this book such personal histories as rightly belong to the story of the Cotton Industry, and are suggested by its setting in Lancashire, have been introduced. Similarly it is hoped that the reader's ears may now and then catch the echo of a debate in the House of Commons or of the reply of a witness before a Royal Commission, or listen to the comment of some observer or man of letters when he first heard the news of an event or development now famous. For History, even when clad in sober economic garb, is a thing of flesh and blood. Old Proteus, though he may have put off a gay uniform for a fatigue dress, is no whit less vivacious now in Liverpool or Manchester than once in Rome or Antioch,<sup>1</sup> and since it is by trade men live, that branch of history known as Industrial History should be second to none in inculcating the lesson of the essential brotherhood of man, and in giving men and women understanding of the ties that bind them in a common purpose. Whatever their industrial or political party, the study of it should help them to approach the vexed industrial and social questions of to-day in a frame of mind more humble, a temper more serene. For the study of History not only enlightens us about the past—it teaches inexorably that *seldom in human affairs may not as much be said on one side as on the other, and that never is all the right on one side and all the wrong on the other.* It is hardly too much to say that, in a democracy, widespread study of Industrial History is a matter of national importance. We shall not solve our industrial difficulties till we understand clearly how they have come to be what they are, until we realise that they are matters of complexity and not of catchwords.

In the history of industry there are so many cross-currents, especially during the century of the Industrial Revolution, that, in writing it, it is difficult always to observe rigid chronological sequence. In each chapter those points have been dealt with which seemed properly to belong to the subject of the chapter: the authors have preferred the occasional repetition of a detail to absence of clearness.

We take this opportunity of thanking Mr A. N. Wilmore for kindly undertaking the construction of the Index.

A. W.  
L. S. W.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Emerson's *Representative Men*.



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