

***SAMUEL
SMILES***



***SELF HELP; WITH
ILLUSTRATIONS
OF CONDUCT AND
PERSEVERANCE***

Samuel Smiles

Self Help; with Illustrations of Conduct and Perseverance

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PREFACE.

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THIS is a revised edition of a book which has already been received with considerable favour at home and abroad. It has been reprinted in various forms in America; translations have appeared in Dutch and French, and others are about to appear in German and Danish. The book has, doubtless, proved attractive to readers in different countries by reason of the variety of anecdotal illustrations of life and character which it contains, and the interest which all more or less feel in the labours, the trials, the struggles, and the achievements of others. No one can be better aware than the author, of its fragmentary character, arising from the manner in which it was for the most part originally composed,—having been put together principally from jottings made during many years,—intended as readings for young men, and without any view to publication. The appearance of this edition has furnished an opportunity for pruning the volume of some superfluous matter, and introducing various new illustrations, which will probably be found of general interest.

In one respect the title of the book, which it is now too late to alter, has proved unfortunate, as it has led some, who have judged it merely by the title, to suppose that it consists of a eulogy of selfishness: the very opposite of what it really is,—or at least of what the author intended it to be. Although its chief object unquestionably is to stimulate youths to apply themselves diligently to right pursuits,—sparing neither labour, pains, nor self-denial in prosecuting

them,—and to rely upon their own efforts in life, rather than depend upon the help or patronage of others, it will also be found, from the examples given of literary and scientific men, artists, inventors, educators, philanthropists, missionaries, and martyrs, that the duty of helping one's self in the highest sense involves the helping of one's neighbours.

It has also been objected to the book that too much notice is taken in it of men who have succeeded in life by helping themselves, and too little of the multitude of men who have failed. "Why should not Failure," it has been asked, "have its Plutarch as well as Success?" There is, indeed, no reason why Failure should not have its Plutarch, except that a record of mere failure would probably be found excessively depressing as well as uninstructional reading. It is, however, shown in the following pages that Failure is the best discipline of the true worker, by stimulating him to renewed efforts, evoking his best powers, and carrying him onward in self-culture, self-control, and growth in knowledge and wisdom. Viewed in this light, Failure, conquered by Perseverance, is always full of interest and instruction, and this we have endeavoured to illustrate by many examples.

As for Failure *per se*, although it may be well to find consolations for it at the close of life, there is reason to doubt whether it is an object that ought to be set before youth at the beginning of it. Indeed, "how *not* to do it" is of all things the easiest learnt: it needs neither teaching, effort, self-denial, industry, patience, perseverance, nor judgment. Besides, readers do not care to know about the

general who lost his battles, the engineer whose engines blew up, the architect who designed only deformities, the painter who never got beyond daubs, the schemer who did not invent his machine, the merchant who could not keep out of the Gazette. It is true, the best of men may fail, in the best of causes. But even these best of men did not try to fail, or regard their failure as meritorious; on the contrary, they tried to succeed, and looked upon failure as misfortune. Failure in any good cause is, however, honourable, whilst success in any bad cause is merely infamous. At the same time success in the good cause is unquestionably better than failure. But it is not the result in any case that is to be regarded so much as the aim and the effort, the patience, the courage, and the endeavour with which desirable and worthy objects are pursued;—

“’Tis not in mortals to command success;
We will do more—deserve it.”

The object of the book briefly is, to re-inculcate these old-fashioned but wholesome lessons—which perhaps cannot be too often urged,—that youth must work in order to enjoy,—that nothing creditable can be accomplished without application and diligence,—that the student must not be daunted by difficulties, but conquer them by patience and perseverance,—and that, above all, he must seek elevation of character, without which capacity is worthless and worldly success is naught. If the author has not succeeded in illustrating these lessons, he can only say that he has failed in his object.

Among the new passages introduced in the present edition, may be mentioned the following:—Illustrious Foreigners of humble origin (pp. 10–12), French Generals and Marshals risen from the ranks (14), De Tocqueville and Mutual Help (24), William Lee, M.A., and the Stocking-loom (42), John Heathcoat, M.P., and the Bobbin-net machine (47), Jacquard and his Loom (55), Vaucanson (58), Joshua Heilmann and the Combing-machine (62), Bernard Palissy and his struggles (69), Böttgcher, discoverer of Hard Porcelain (80), Count de Buffon as Student (104), Cuvier (128), Ambrose Paré (134), Claud Lorraine (160), Jacques Callot (162), Benvenuto Cellini (164), Nicholas Poussin (168), Ary Scheffer (171), the Strutts of Belper (214), Francis Xavier (238), Napoleon as a man of business (276), Intrepidity of Deal Boatmen (400), besides numerous other passages which it is unnecessary to specify.

London, May, 1866.

INTRODUCTION TO THE FIRST EDITION.

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THE origin of this book may be briefly told.

Some fifteen years since, the author was requested to deliver an address before the members of some evening classes, which had been formed in a northern town for mutual improvement, under the following circumstances:—

Two or three young men of the humblest rank resolved to meet in the winter evenings, for the purpose of improving themselves by exchanging knowledge with each other. Their first meetings were held in the room of a cottage in which

one of the members lived; and, as others shortly joined them, the place soon became inconveniently filled. When summer set in, they adjourned to the cottage garden outside; and the classes were then held in the open air, round a little boarded hut used as a garden-house, in which those who officiated as teachers set the sums, and gave forth the lessons of the evening. When the weather was fine, the youths might be seen, until a late hour, hanging round the door of the hut like a cluster of bees; but sometimes a sudden shower of rain would dash the sums from their slates, and disperse them for the evening unsatisfied.

Winter, with its cold nights, was drawing near, and what were they to do for shelter? Their numbers had by this time so increased, that no room of an ordinary cottage could accommodate them. Though they were for the most part young men earning comparatively small weekly wages, they resolved to incur the risk of hiring a room; and, on making inquiry, they found a large dingy apartment to let, which had been used as a temporary Cholera Hospital. No tenant could be found for the place, which was avoided as if the plague still clung to it. But the mutual improvement youths, nothing daunted, hired the cholera room at so much a week, lit it up, placed a few benches and a deal table in it, and began their winter classes. The place soon presented a busy and cheerful appearance in the evenings. The teaching may have been, as no doubt it was, of a very rude and imperfect sort; but it was done with a will. Those who knew a little taught those who knew less—improving themselves while they improved the others; and, at all events, setting before

them a good working example. Thus these youths—and there were also grown men amongst them—proceeded to teach themselves and each other, reading and writing, arithmetic and geography; and even mathematics, chemistry, and some of the modern languages.

About a hundred young men had thus come together, when, growing ambitious, they desired to have lectures delivered to them; and then it was that the author became acquainted with their proceedings. A party of them waited on him, for the purpose of inviting him to deliver an introductory address, or, as they expressed it, “to talk to them a bit;” prefacing the request by a modest statement of what they had done and what they were doing. He could not fail to be touched by the admirable self-helping spirit which they had displayed; and, though entertaining but slight faith in popular lecturing, he felt that a few words of encouragement, honestly and sincerely uttered, might not be without some good effect. And in this spirit he addressed them on more than one occasion, citing examples of what other men had done, as illustrations of what each might, in a greater or less degree, do for himself; and pointing out that their happiness and well-being as individuals in after life, must necessarily depend mainly upon themselves—upon their own diligent self-culture, self-discipline, and self-control—and, above all, on that honest and upright performance of individual duty, which is the glory of manly character.

There was nothing in the slightest degree new or original in this counsel, which was as old as the Proverbs of Solomon, and possibly quite as familiar. But old-fashioned

though the advice may have been, it was welcomed. The youths went forward in their course; worked on with energy and resolution; and, reaching manhood, they went forth in various directions into the world, where many of them now occupy positions of trust and usefulness. Several years after the incidents referred to, the subject was unexpectedly recalled to the author's recollection by an evening visit from a young man—apparently fresh from the work of a foundry—who explained that he was now an employer of labour and a thriving man; and he was pleased to remember with gratitude the words spoken in all honesty to him and to his fellow-pupils years before, and even to attribute some measure of his success in life to the endeavours which he had made to work up to their spirit.

The author's personal interest having in this way been attracted to the subject of Self-Help, he was accustomed to add to the memoranda from which he had addressed these young men; and to note down occasionally in his leisure evening moments, after the hours of business, the results of such reading, observation, and experience of life, as he conceived to bear upon it. One of the most prominent illustrations cited in his earlier addresses, was that of George Stephenson, the engineer; and the original interest of the subject, as well as the special facilities and opportunities which the author possessed for illustrating Mr. Stephenson's life and career, induced him to prosecute it at his leisure, and eventually to publish his biography. The present volume is written in a similar spirit, as it has been similar in its origin. The illustrative sketches of character introduced, are, however, necessarily less elaborately

treated—being busts rather than full-length portraits, and, in many of the cases, only some striking feature has been noted; the lives of individuals, as indeed of nations, often concentrating their lustre and interest in a few passages. Such as the book is, the author now leaves it in the hands of the reader; in the hope that the lessons of industry, perseverance, and self-culture, which it contains, will be found useful and instructive, as well as generally interesting.

London, September, 1859.

CHAPTER I.

SELF-HELP—NATIONAL AND INDIVIDUAL.

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“The worth of a State, in the long run, is the worth of the individuals composing it.”—*J. S. Mill*.

“We put too much faith in systems, and look too little to men.”—*B. Disraeli*.

“HEAVEN helps those who help themselves” is a well-tryed maxim, embodying in a small compass the results of vast human experience. The spirit of self-help is the root of all genuine growth in the individual; and, exhibited in the lives of many, it constitutes the true source of national vigour and strength. Help from without is often enfeebling in its effects, but help from within invariably invigorates. Whatever is done *for* men or classes, to a certain extent takes away the stimulus and necessity of doing for themselves; and where men are subjected to over-guidance and over-government, the inevitable tendency is to render them comparatively helpless.

Even the best institutions can give a man no active help. Perhaps the most they can do is, to leave him free to develop himself and improve his individual condition. But in all times men have been prone to believe that their happiness and well-being were to be secured by means of institutions rather than by their own conduct. Hence the value of legislation as an agent in human advancement has usually been much over-estimated. To constitute the millionth part of a Legislature, by voting for one or two men

once in three or five years, however conscientiously this duty may be performed, can exercise but little active influence upon any man's life and character. Moreover, it is every day becoming more clearly understood, that the function of Government is negative and restrictive, rather than positive and active; being resolvable principally into protection—protection of life, liberty, and property. Laws, wisely administered, will secure men in the enjoyment of the fruits of their labour, whether of mind or body, at a comparatively small personal sacrifice; but no laws, however stringent, can make the idle industrious, the thriftless provident, or the drunken sober. Such reforms can only be effected by means of individual action, economy, and self-denial; by better habits, rather than by greater rights.

The Government of a nation itself is usually found to be but the reflex of the individuals composing it. The Government that is ahead of the people will inevitably be dragged down to their level, as the Government that is behind them will in the long run be dragged up. In the order of nature, the collective character of a nation will as surely find its befitting results in its law and government, as water finds its own level. The noble people will be nobly ruled, and the ignorant and corrupt ignobly. Indeed all experience serves to prove that the worth and strength of a State depend far less upon the form of its institutions than upon the character of its men. For the nation is only an aggregate of individual conditions, and civilization itself is but a question of the personal improvement of the men, women, and children of whom society is composed.

National progress is the sum of individual industry, energy, and uprightness, as national decay is of individual idleness, selfishness, and vice. What we are accustomed to decry as great social evils, will, for the most part, be found to be but the outgrowth of man's own perverted life; and though we may endeavour to cut them down and extirpate them by means of Law, they will only spring up again with fresh luxuriance in some other form, unless the conditions of personal life and character are radically improved. If this view be correct, then it follows that the highest patriotism and philanthropy consist, not so much in altering laws and modifying institutions, as in helping and stimulating men to elevate and improve themselves by their own free and independent individual action.

It may be of comparatively little consequence how a man is governed from without, whilst everything depends upon how he governs himself from within. The greatest slave is not he who is ruled by a despot, great though that evil be, but he who is the thrall of his own moral ignorance, selfishness, and vice. Nations who are thus enslaved at heart cannot be freed by any mere changes of masters or of institutions; and so long as the fatal delusion prevails, that liberty solely depends upon and consists in government, so long will such changes, no matter at what cost they may be effected, have as little practical and lasting result as the shifting of the figures in a phantasmagoria. The solid foundations of liberty must rest upon individual character; which is also the only sure guarantee for social security and national progress. John Stuart Mill truly observes that "even despotism does not produce its worst effects so long as

individuality exists under it; and whatever crushes individuality *is* despotism, by whatever name it be called.”

Old fallacies as to human progress are constantly turning up. Some call for Cæsars, others for Nationalities, and others for Acts of Parliament. We are to wait for Cæsars, and when they are found, “happy the people who recognise and follow them.” [4] This doctrine shortly means, everything *for* the people, nothing *by* them,—a doctrine which, if taken as a guide, must, by destroying the free conscience of a community, speedily prepare the way for any form of despotism. Cæsarism is human idolatry in its worst form—a worship of mere power, as degrading in its effects as the worship of mere wealth would be. A far healthier doctrine to inculcate among the nations would be that of Self-Help; and so soon as it is thoroughly understood and carried into action, Cæsarism will be no more. The two principles are directly antagonistic; and what Victor Hugo said of the Pen and the Sword alike applies to them, “Ceci tuera cela.” [This will kill that.]

The power of Nationalities and Acts of Parliament is also a prevalent superstition. What William Dargan, one of Ireland’s truest patriots, said at the closing of the first Dublin Industrial Exhibition, may well be quoted now. “To tell the truth,” he said, “I never heard the word independence mentioned that my own country and my own fellow townsmen did not occur to my mind. I have heard a great deal about the independence that we were to get from this, that, and the other place, and of the great expectations we were to have from persons from other countries coming amongst us. Whilst I value as much as any man the great

advantages that must result to us from that intercourse, I have always been deeply impressed with the feeling that our industrial independence is dependent upon ourselves. I believe that with simple industry and careful exactness in the utilization of our energies, we never had a fairer chance nor a brighter prospect than the present. We have made a step, but perseverance is the great agent of success; and if we but go on zealously, I believe in my conscience that in a short period we shall arrive at a position of equal comfort, of equal happiness, and of equal independence, with that of any other people."

All nations have been made what they are by the thinking and the working of many generations of men. Patient and persevering labourers in all ranks and conditions of life, cultivators of the soil and explorers of the mine, inventors and discoverers, manufacturers, mechanics and artisans, poets, philosophers, and politicians, all have contributed towards the grand result, one generation building upon another's labours, and carrying them forward to still higher stages. This constant succession of noble workers—the artisans of civilisation—has served to create order out of chaos in industry, science, and art; and the living race has thus, in the course of nature, become the inheritor of the rich estate provided by the skill and industry of our forefathers, which is placed in our hands to cultivate, and to hand down, not only unimpaired but improved, to our successors.

The spirit of self-help, as exhibited in the energetic action of individuals, has in all times been a marked feature in the English character, and furnishes the true measure of our

power as a nation. Rising above the heads of the mass, there were always to be found a series of individuals distinguished beyond others, who commanded the public homage. But our progress has also been owing to multitudes of smaller and less known men. Though only the generals' names may be remembered in the history of any great campaign, it has been in a great measure through the individual valour and heroism of the privates that victories have been won. And life, too, is "a soldiers' battle,"—men in the ranks having in all times been amongst the greatest of workers. Many are the lives of men unwritten, which have nevertheless as powerfully influenced civilisation and progress as the more fortunate Great whose names are recorded in biography. Even the humblest person, who sets before his fellows an example of industry, sobriety, and upright honesty of purpose in life, has a present as well as a future influence upon the well-being of his country; for his life and character pass unconsciously into the lives of others, and propagate good example for all time to come.

Daily experience shows that it is energetic individualism which produces the most powerful effects upon the life and action of others, and really constitutes the best practical education. Schools, academies, and colleges, give but the merest beginnings of culture in comparison with it. Far more influential is the life-education daily given in our homes, in the streets, behind counters, in workshops, at the loom and the plough, in counting-houses and manufactories, and in the busy haunts of men. This is that finishing instruction as members of society, which Schiller designated "the education of the human race," consisting in action, conduct,

self-culture, self-control,—all that tends to discipline a man truly, and fit him for the proper performance of the duties and business of life,—a kind of education not to be learnt from books, or acquired by any amount of mere literary training. With his usual weight of words Bacon observes, that “Studies teach not their own use; but that is a wisdom without them, and above them, won by observation;” a remark that holds true of actual life, as well as of the cultivation of the intellect itself. For all experience serves to illustrate and enforce the lesson, that a man perfects himself by work more than by reading,—that it is life rather than literature, action rather than study, and character rather than biography, which tend perpetually to renovate mankind.

Biographies of great, but especially of good men, are nevertheless most instructive and useful, as helps, guides, and incentives to others. Some of the best are almost equivalent to gospels—teaching high living, high thinking, and energetic action for their own and the world’s good. The valuable examples which they furnish of the power of self-help, of patient purpose, resolute working, and steadfast integrity, issuing in the formation of truly noble and manly character, exhibit in language not to be misunderstood, what it is in the power of each to accomplish for himself; and eloquently illustrate the efficacy of self-respect and self-reliance in enabling men of even the humblest rank to work out for themselves an honourable competency and a solid reputation.

Great men of science, literature, and art—apostles of great thoughts and lords of the great heart—have belonged

to no exclusive class nor rank in life. They have come alike from colleges, workshops, and farmhouses,—from the huts of poor men and the mansions of the rich. Some of God's greatest apostles have come from "the ranks." The poorest have sometimes taken the highest places; nor have difficulties apparently the most insuperable proved obstacles in their way. Those very difficulties, in many instances, would ever seem to have been their best helpers, by evoking their powers of labour and endurance, and stimulating into life faculties which might otherwise have lain dormant. The instances of obstacles thus surmounted, and of triumphs thus achieved, are indeed so numerous, as almost to justify the proverb that "with Will one can do anything." Take, for instance, the remarkable fact, that from the barber's shop came Jeremy Taylor, the most poetical of divines; Sir Richard Arkwright, the inventor of the spinning-jenny and founder of the cotton manufacture; Lord Tenterden, one of the most distinguished of Lord Chief Justices; and Turner, the greatest among landscape painters.

No one knows to a certainty what Shakespeare was; but it is unquestionable that he sprang from a humble rank. His father was a butcher and grazier; and Shakespeare himself is supposed to have been in early life a woolcomber; whilst others aver that he was an usher in a school and afterwards a scrivener's clerk. He truly seems to have been "not one, but all mankind's epitome." For such is the accuracy of his sea phrases that a naval writer alleges that he must have been a sailor; whilst a clergyman infers, from internal evidence in his writings, that he was probably a parson's clerk; and a distinguished judge of horse-flesh insists that

he must have been a horse-dealer. Shakespeare was certainly an actor, and in the course of his life “played many parts,” gathering his wonderful stores of knowledge from a wide field of experience and observation. In any event, he must have been a close student and a hard worker; and to this day his writings continue to exercise a powerful influence on the formation of English character.

The common class of day labourers has given us Brindley the engineer, Cook the navigator, and Burns the poet. Masons and bricklayers can boast of Ben Jonson, who worked at the building of Lincoln’s Inn, with a trowel in his hand and a book in his pocket, Edwards and Telford the engineers, Hugh Miller the geologist, and Allan Cunningham the writer and sculptor; whilst among distinguished carpenters we find the names of Inigo Jones the architect, Harrison the chronometer-maker, John Hunter the physiologist, Romney and Opie the painters, Professor Lee the Orientalist, and John Gibson the sculptor.

From the weaver class have sprung Simson the mathematician, Bacon the sculptor, the two Milners, Adam Walker, John Foster, Wilson the ornithologist, Dr. Livingstone the missionary traveller, and Tannahill the poet. Shoemakers have given us Sir Cloudesley Shovel the great Admiral, Sturgeon the electrician, Samuel Drew the essayist, Gifford the editor of the ‘Quarterly Review,’ Bloomfield the poet, and William Carey the missionary; whilst Morrison, another laborious missionary, was a maker of shoe-lasts. Within the last few years, a profound naturalist has been discovered in the person of a shoemaker at Banff, named Thomas Edwards, who, while maintaining himself by his trade, has

devoted his leisure to the study of natural science in all its branches, his researches in connexion with the smaller crustaceæ having been rewarded by the discovery of a new species, to which the name of “*Praniza Edwardsii*” has been given by naturalists.

Nor have tailors been undistinguished. John Stow, the historian, worked at the trade during some part of his life. Jackson, the painter, made clothes until he reached manhood. The brave Sir John Hawkwood, who so greatly distinguished himself at Poitiers, and was knighted by Edward III. for his valour, was in early life apprenticed to a London tailor. Admiral Hobson, who broke the boom at Vigo in 1702, belonged to the same calling. He was working as a tailor’s apprentice near Bonchurch, in the Isle of Wight, when the news flew through the village that a squadron of men-of-war was sailing off the island. He sprang from the shopboard, and ran down with his comrades to the beach, to gaze upon the glorious sight. The boy was suddenly inflamed with the ambition to be a sailor; and springing into a boat, he rowed off to the squadron, gained the admiral’s ship, and was accepted as a volunteer. Years after, he returned to his native village full of honours, and dined off bacon and eggs in the cottage where he had worked as an apprentice. But the greatest tailor of all is unquestionably Andrew Johnson, the present President of the United States—a man of extraordinary force of character and vigour of intellect. In his great speech at Washington, when describing himself as having begun his political career as an alderman, and run through all the branches of the legislature, a voice in the crowd cried, “From a tailor up.” It

was characteristic of Johnson to take the intended sarcasm in good part, and even to turn it to account. "Some gentleman says I have been a tailor. That does not disconcert me in the least; for when I was a tailor I had the reputation of being a good one, and making close fits; I was always punctual with my customers, and always did good work."

Cardinal Wolsey, De Foe, Akenside, and Kirke White were the sons of butchers; Bunyan was a tinker, and Joseph Lancaster a basket-maker. Among the great names identified with the invention of the steam-engine are those of Newcomen, Watt, and Stephenson; the first a blacksmith, the second a maker of mathematical instruments, and the third an engine-fireman. Huntingdon the preacher was originally a coalheaver, and Bewick, the father of wood-engraving, a coalminer. Dodsley was a footman, and Holcroft a groom. Baffin the navigator began his seafaring career as a man before the mast, and Sir Cloudesley Shovel as a cabin-boy. Herschel played the oboe in a military band. Chantrey was a journeyman carver, Etty a journeyman printer, and Sir Thomas Lawrence the son of a tavern-keeper. Michael Faraday, the son of a blacksmith, was in early life apprenticed to a bookbinder, and worked at that trade until he reached his twenty-second year: he now occupies the very first rank as a philosopher, excelling even his master, Sir Humphry Davy, in the art of lucidly expounding the most difficult and abstruse points in natural science.

Among those who have given the greatest impulse to the sublime science of astronomy, we find Copernicus, the son

of a Polish baker; Kepler, the son of a German public-house keeper, and himself the “garçon de cabaret;” d’Alembert, a foundling picked up one winter’s night on the steps of the church of St. Jean le Rond at Paris, and brought up by the wife of a glazier; and Newton and Laplace, the one the son of a small freeholder near Grantham, the other the son of a poor peasant of Beaumont-en-Auge, near Honfleur. Notwithstanding their comparatively adverse circumstances in early life, these distinguished men achieved a solid and enduring reputation by the exercise of their genius, which all the wealth in the world could not have purchased. The very possession of wealth might indeed have proved an obstacle greater even than the humble means to which they were born. The father of Lagrange, the astronomer and mathematician, held the office of Treasurer of War at Turin; but having ruined himself by speculations, his family were reduced to comparative poverty. To this circumstance Lagrange was in after life accustomed partly to attribute his own fame and happiness. “Had I been rich,” said he, “I should probably not have become a mathematician.”

The sons of clergymen and ministers of religion generally, have particularly distinguished themselves in our country’s history. Amongst them we find the names of Drake and Nelson, celebrated in naval heroism; of Wollaston, Young, Playfair, and Bell, in science; of Wren, Reynolds, Wilson, and Wilkie, in art; of Thurlow and Campbell, in law; and of Addison, Thomson, Goldsmith, Coleridge, and Tennyson, in literature. Lord Hardinge, Colonel Edwardes, and Major Hodson, so honourably known in Indian warfare, were also the sons of clergymen. Indeed, the empire of

England in India was won and held chiefly by men of the middle class—such as Clive, Warren Hastings, and their successors—men for the most part bred in factories and trained to habits of business.

Among the sons of attorneys we find Edmund Burke, Smeaton the engineer, Scott and Wordsworth, and Lords Somers, Hardwick, and Dunning. Sir William Blackstone was the posthumous son of a silk-mercator. Lord Gifford's father was a grocer at Dover; Lord Denman's a physician; judge Talfourd's a country brewer; and Lord Chief Baron Pollock's a celebrated saddler at Charing Cross. Layard, the discoverer of the monuments of Nineveh, was an articled clerk in a London solicitor's office; and Sir William Armstrong, the inventor of hydraulic machinery and of the Armstrong ordnance, was also trained to the law and practised for some time as an attorney. Milton was the son of a London scrivener, and Pope and Southey were the sons of linendrapers. Professor Wilson was the son of a Paisley manufacturer, and Lord Macaulay of an African merchant. Keats was a druggist, and Sir Humphry Davy a country apothecary's apprentice. Speaking of himself, Davy once said, "What I am I have made myself: I say this without vanity, and in pure simplicity of heart." Richard Owen, the Newton of Natural History, began life as a midshipman, and did not enter upon the line of scientific research in which he has since become so distinguished, until comparatively late in life. He laid the foundations of his great knowledge while occupied in cataloguing the magnificent museum accumulated by the industry of John Hunter, a work which

occupied him at the College of Surgeons during a period of about ten years.

Foreign not less than English biography abounds in illustrations of men who have glorified the lot of poverty by their labours and their genius. In Art we find Claude, the son of a pastrycook; Geefs, of a baker; Leopold Robert, of a watchmaker; and Haydn, of a wheelwright; whilst Daguerre was a scene-painter at the Opera. The father of Gregory VII. was a carpenter; of Sextus V., a shepherd; and of Adrian VI., a poor bargeman. When a boy, Adrian, unable to pay for a light by which to study, was accustomed to prepare his lessons by the light of the lamps in the streets and the church porches, exhibiting a degree of patience and industry which were the certain forerunners of his future distinction. Of like humble origin were Hauy, the mineralogist, who was the son of a weaver of Saint-Just; Hautefeuille, the mechanician, of a baker at Orleans; Joseph Fourier, the mathematician, of a tailor at Auxerre; Durand, the architect, of a Paris shoemaker; and Gesner, the naturalist, of a skinner or worker in hides, at Zurich. This last began his career under all the disadvantages attendant on poverty, sickness, and domestic calamity; none of which, however, were sufficient to damp his courage or hinder his progress. His life was indeed an eminent illustration of the truth of the saying, that those who have most to do and are willing to work, will find the most time. Pierre Ramus was another man of like character. He was the son of poor parents in Picardy, and when a boy was employed to tend sheep. But not liking the occupation he ran away to Paris. After encountering much misery, he succeeded in entering

the College of Navarre as a servant. The situation, however, opened for him the road to learning, and he shortly became one of the most distinguished men of his time.

The chemist Vauquelin was the son of a peasant of Saint-André-d'Herbetot, in the Calvados. When a boy at school, though poorly clad, he was full of bright intelligence; and the master, who taught him to read and write, when praising him for his diligence, used to say, "Go on, my boy; work, study, Colin, and one day you will go as well dressed as the parish churchwarden!" A country apothecary who visited the school, admired the robust boy's arms, and offered to take him into his laboratory to pound his drugs, to which Vauquelin assented, in the hope of being able to continue his lessons. But the apothecary would not permit him to spend any part of his time in learning; and on ascertaining this, the youth immediately determined to quit his service. He therefore left Saint-André and took the road for Paris with his havresac on his back. Arrived there, he searched for a place as apothecary's boy, but could not find one. Worn out by fatigue and destitution, Vauquelin fell ill, and in that state was taken to the hospital, where he thought he should die. But better things were in store for the poor boy. He recovered, and again proceeded in his search of employment, which he at length found with an apothecary. Shortly after, he became known to Fourcroy the eminent chemist, who was so pleased with the youth that he made him his private secretary; and many years after, on the death of that great philosopher, Vauquelin succeeded him as Professor of Chemistry. Finally, in 1829, the electors of the district of Calvados appointed him their

representative in the Chamber of Deputies, and he re-entered in triumph the village which he had left so many years before, so poor and so obscure.

England has no parallel instances to show, of promotions from the ranks of the army to the highest military offices; which have been so common in France since the first Revolution. “*La carrière ouverte aux talents*” has there received many striking illustrations, which would doubtless be matched among ourselves were the road to promotion as open. Hoche, Humbert, and Pichegru, began their respective careers as private soldiers. Hoche, while in the King’s army, was accustomed to embroider waistcoats to enable him to earn money wherewith to purchase books on military science. Humbert was a scapegrace when a youth; at sixteen he ran away from home, and was by turns servant to a tradesman at Nancy, a workman at Lyons, and a hawker of rabbit skins. In 1792, he enlisted as a volunteer; and in a year he was general of brigade. Kleber, Lefèvre, Suchet, Victor, Lannes, Soult, Massena, St. Cyr, D’Erlon, Murat, Augereau, Bessières, and Ney, all rose from the ranks. In some cases promotion was rapid, in others it was slow. Saint Cyr, the son of a tanner of Toul, began life as an actor, after which he enlisted in the Chasseurs, and was promoted to a captaincy within a year. Victor, Duc de Belluno, enlisted in the Artillery in 1781: during the events preceding the Revolution he was discharged; but immediately on the outbreak of war he re-enlisted, and in the course of a few months his intrepidity and ability secured his promotion as Adjutant-Major and chief of battalion. Murat, “*le beau sabreur*,” was the son of a village innkeeper in Perigord,

where he looked after the horses. He first enlisted in a regiment of Chasseurs, from which he was dismissed for insubordination: but again enlisting, he shortly rose to the rank of Colonel. Ney enlisted at eighteen in a hussar regiment, and gradually advanced step by step: Kleber soon discovered his merits, surnaming him "The Indefatigable," and promoted him to be Adjutant-General when only twenty-five. On the other hand, Soult [15] was six years from the date of his enlistment before he reached the rank of sergeant. But Soult's advancement was rapid compared with that of Massena, who served for fourteen years before he was made sergeant; and though he afterwards rose successively, step by step, to the grades of Colonel, General of Division, and Marshal, he declared that the post of sergeant was the step which of all others had cost him the most labour to win. Similar promotions from the ranks, in the French army, have continued down to our own day. Changarnier entered the King's bodyguard as a private in 1815. Marshal Bugeaud served four years in the ranks, after which he was made an officer. Marshal Randon, the present French Minister of War, began his military career as a drummer boy; and in the portrait of him in the gallery at Versailles, his hand rests upon a drum-head, the picture being thus painted at his own request. Instances such as these inspire French soldiers with enthusiasm for their service, as each private feels that he may possibly carry the baton of a marshal in his knapsack.

The instances of men, in this and other countries, who, by dint of persevering application and energy, have raised themselves from the humblest ranks of industry to eminent

positions of usefulness and influence in society, are indeed so numerous that they have long ceased to be regarded as exceptional. Looking at some of the more remarkable, it might almost be said that early encounter with difficulty and adverse circumstances was the necessary and indispensable condition of success. The British House of Commons has always contained a considerable number of such self-raised men—fitting representatives of the industrial character of the people; and it is to the credit of our Legislature that they have been welcomed and honoured there. When the late Joseph Brotherton, member for Salford, in the course of the discussion on the Ten Hours Bill, detailed with true pathos the hardships and fatigues to which he had been subjected when working as a factory boy in a cotton mill, and described the resolution which he had then formed, that if ever it was in his power he would endeavour to ameliorate the condition of that class, Sir James Graham rose immediately after him, and declared, amidst the cheers of the House, that he did not before know that Mr. Brotherton's origin had been so humble, but that it rendered him more proud than he had ever before been of the House of Commons, to think that a person risen from that condition should be able to sit side by side, on equal terms, with the hereditary gentry of the land.

The late Mr. Fox, member for Oldham, was accustomed to introduce his recollections of past times with the words, "when I was working as a weaver boy at Norwich;" and there are other members of parliament, still living, whose origin has been equally humble. Mr. Lindsay, the well-known ship owner, until recently member for Sunderland, once told

the simple story of his life to the electors of Weymouth, in answer to an attack made upon him by his political opponents. He had been left an orphan at fourteen, and when he left Glasgow for Liverpool to push his way in the world, not being able to pay the usual fare, the captain of the steamer agreed to take his labour in exchange, and the boy worked his passage by trimming the coals in the coal hole. At Liverpool he remained for seven weeks before he could obtain employment, during which time he lived in sheds and fared hardly; until at last he found shelter on board a West Indiaman. He entered as a boy, and before he was nineteen, by steady good conduct he had risen to the command of a ship. At twenty-three he retired from the sea, and settled on shore, after which his progress was rapid "he had prospered," he said, "by steady industry, by constant work, and by ever keeping in view the great principle of doing to others as you would be done by."

The career of Mr. William Jackson, of Birkenhead, the present member for North Derbyshire, bears considerable resemblance to that of Mr. Lindsay. His father, a surgeon at Lancaster, died, leaving a family of eleven children, of whom William Jackson was the seventh son. The elder boys had been well educated while the father lived, but at his death the younger members had to shift for themselves. William, when under twelve years old, was taken from school, and put to hard work at a ship's side from six in the morning till nine at night. His master falling ill, the boy was taken into the counting-house, where he had more leisure. This gave him an opportunity of reading, and having obtained access to a set of the 'Encyclopædia Britannica,'