

our Christmas vacation. But again let us consider the situation of those few who have been induced to make an effort at a reformation, and yielded so far as to pledge themselves to abstain from the use of this liquid fire which has been the chief means of all their folly, misery and misfortunes; behold these few endeavoring to recover themselves after many years has been spent in a course that they have at last become ashamed of; here they are contending with a host of opposition, the sneers of some, and the jest of others; so far they have maintained their integrity, by avoiding those haunts of drunkenness to which they formerly resorted; and one would suppose they were doing all in their feeble power to redeem themselves from their sad condition; but notwithstanding all their precaution, the enemy, that scourge of mankind, that abomination which overcomes man's physical and mental powers, that which conquered an Alexander, with proper authority is brought, in the most alluring and tempting aspect, into the barrack-room, amongst those who are but partially healed of their malady. The disease is very infectious,—the contagion spreads, and alas, there are so many instances of our fondest hopes being prostrated into the depths of degrading drunkenness again, that we have great occasion to weep. So many instances of real rot, have resulted from these heinous festivities, that it is high time to raise up our voices and disclaim against them. In place of being able to greet that auspicious morning with thankfulness and holy joy, as being the anniversary of our great deliverer's birth, I could almost wish it was omitted from the calendar, or that there was no such day in existence; for in the judgement when the secrets of all hearts shall be made known, the account of that day and its proceedings, will, I have much reason to fear, be blacker than any other. I have feebly attempted to show the awful results attending a Christmas spent in the service, but I am wholly at a loss for language strong enough—this is but a shadow of what the reality is. Various kinds of public drunkenness have of late been abolished amongst us, viz.—reviews, promotions, gentlemen joining after purchasing commissions and being posted to their company, &c., &c., Queen's birth day, and so on, are almost unknown now, through the salutary influence of the *total abstinence pledge*; and I have reason to hope that the Christmas evil may soon be unknown amongst us too.

## EDUCATION.

### Self-taught Men.

In the different monarchies of Europe, where the means of early education are restricted, where the inhabitants are divided into grades, and power is exclusively vested in the hands of the wealthy or the noble—where, in a word, aristocracy rules, the mechanic is too often regarded as a machine, intended to increase the comforts of the favored few who inherit wealth and dignity. Honor and distinction, those stimulants to high-souled and enterprising deeds, are presumed to be beyond the reach of the man who gains his livelihood by honest industry; yet, even there, where vice and poverty are too often considered synonymous terms, the humble mechanic and the lowly serf, undaunted by the cheerless prospects before them, have in many instances struggled successfully for fame and distinction against the tremendous tide of prejudice, and by the force of energy and enterprise alone, have attained the summit of eminence and wealth, or gained immortality by administering to the comforts, or increasing the knowledge of their fellow-men.

RICHARD ANKNIGHT passed the earlier years of his life in pursuing the humble occupation of a barber; but he was fond of reading; and what proved of more value to him, he had early acquired habits of reflection. He conceived the idea of spinning cotton by means of machinery, and notwithstanding he was miserable poor and friendless, notwithstanding he was every where ridiculed as a visionary projector, who deserved a cell in Bedlam—by the force of energy and application, he succeeded in carrying

his design (which has since proved so beneficial,) into effect, and afterwards revelled in all the luxuries of wealth, and was knighted by his sovereign.

JOHN LESLIE was the son of a humble farmer of Largo, in the lowlands of Scotland; and when he had attained his 15th or 16th year, he had made considerable progress in all the branches taught at the village school. He was now employed as a herdsman; and as the pasture on which he tended his cattle was for the most part hedged in, his attendance was more a necessity of being in the field than an employment. This gave him leisure, and he sought to improve his mind. By some means he became possessed of a copy of Simpson's *Euclid*, upon which he commenced his career as a mathematician; he powdered the foot-path by the hedge with sand, delineated his figures thereon, and closing his book, went through his demonstrations. It so happened, that one day the minister of Largo was taking a walk which led him by the other side of the hedge, and he was startled by hearing muttered sounds, and listening, he could hear distinctly the words "angle," "triangle," "two sides of the one equal to two sides of the other," and A B C mingled with words and sentences—"that *must* be the mathematics," quoth the minister of Largo—and he was truly astonished to find Jack Leslie overcoming that in solitude and without instruction, which the minister himself had never been able to overcome amid all the sciences and stimuli of St. Andrew's University. Suffice it to say, that by his means young Leslie received a University education, became afterwards distinguished for his scholastic attainments and grasp of intellect, and succeeded the celebrated Playfair as Professor of Natural Philosophy in Edinburgh.

JAMES FERGUSON was the son of a man in the humblest conditions of life. He was employed during his earlier years in keeping sheep—and eagerly appropriated every leisure moment to study and reflection. While his flock was feeding around him, he used to busy himself in making the models of mills, spinning wheels, &c., during the day, and in studying the stars at night, like his predecessors of Chaldea. Without instruction he became an able astronomer and ascertained the cause of eclipses. He struggled hard with adversity for many years, but finally by the aid of enterprise and industry, he raised himself from poverty and obscurity to a distinguished place among the philosophers of the age.

WILLIAM GIFFORD was the son of a dissipated mariner, and at his father's death was left friendless and forlorn. He was put on board a coaster by his godfather as a cabin-boy where he remained till he was 14 years of age. He was afterwards apprenticed to a shoemaker, and continued at his trade till he was 19 years old. During his apprenticeship he devoted every leisure moment to study, and made himself completely master of algebra, without any instruction. Being destitute of paper, pen, and ink, he hammered out pieces of leather as smooth as possible and wrought his problems on them with a blunted awl. We cannot sufficiently admire the perseverance of such a youth. And his perseverance was rewarded—for the fame of his literary pursuits reached the ears of a gentleman who was the means of purchasing the remainder of his time—and placing him in a situation where he could acquire a classical education—and he afterwards proved to be one of the ablest writers and most distinguished critics of his day.

Many other illustrations of a similar character might be brought forward, but it is unnecessary. In this country it is computed that about nineteen-twentieths of the population are engaged in manufactures, trade, or agriculture. But according to the system of a republican government, *the people rule*, and a man is respected according to the qualities of his head and heart. The question is not asked whether he is a farmer, a mechanic, or a member of a learned profession—whether he is the child of poverty, or the inheritor of wealth. If he is a man of information, talent, and integrity, he may reasonably aspire to the first offices in the gift of his fellow citizens. Instances are innumerable in the history of our country, of men, who, by their *own industry*, acquired an education, and have afterwards become distinguished in our legislative halls, or have assisted in the councils of state. Such men have always been noted for wisdom, firmness of character, and inflexible patriotism. Here the celebrated line of Pope will truly apply:

"Act well your part—there all the honor lies."

—*Boston Mercantile Jour.*

### How to Treat the Poor.

Treating the poor by proxy. We sit at home at ease, in blessed unconsciousness of poverty and pain. Through the newspapers, or the parliamentary report, we hear of destitution