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THE BOY WHO BUILT THE CRYSTAL PALACE.

Joseph Paxton was born of poor parents in the village of Milton-Bryant, near Woburn, Bedfordshire, in 1803. He was what we should call one of the laboring classes. His career seemed to be cut and dried for him. He would go in due course to the parish school, to learn to read and write. He would stay there as short a time as possible, and then go out as a laboring lad to earn his bread by the sweat of his brow, and after a long life of labor mingle his dust in the village churchyard, and be forgotten!

Young Paxton went to the free school, and left it after a very few years to go out as a gardener's boy. The place offered, and it was thought a fortunate thing to get him out into the world so quickly. After some time he went to Chiswick as assistant in the grounds of the sixth Duke of Devonshire, his duties being of the humblest nature, as one might expect. It was said, I think, of Lord Brougham that if he had been a shoeblick instead of a great lawyer he would not have rested until he became the best shoeblick in England, and it is that ceaseless desire to excel which makes all the difference between success and failure in life. Young Joseph Paxton, although handling a broom, was not willing to sit down quietly and let the world take its course. He found out books—good books, books that taught him something—and with one of these in his pocket would sally forth to his weeding and sweeping. When the meal times came round he would sit down for a quiet read, enjoying the murmur of the summer air through the stately trees, and the cawing of the rooks and the perfume of the flowers. He read about trees and flowers, and began already to have his own ideas upon the subject of gardening. He observed things, and asked questions of men and books, sometimes getting them answered, and sometimes not. It was when he was at this kind of work that the old Duke of Devonshire—"My Duke," the young fellow used to call him afterward—came upon him unexpectedly during the dinner hour.

The duke had many people in his employment but he was always ready to take an interest in each one, and, being passionately fond of flowers himself, he could feel pleasure in talking to the humblest person on the subject he loved. Young Paxton rose to his feet and raised his cap, holding in his other hand the book on which he had been engaged when

the duke and his great mastiff came walking that way. There was something in the boy's bright face and respectful manner which pleased the duke, and he stopped to say a few words to him, but especially to see the sort of book he was reading. "Show me your company, and I'll tell you what you are," is a proverb that is as true of the books

fire without opening its leaves is true to himself; but after all, he does no more than the man who kills a viper lying in his path ready to sting him.

The duke discovered that young Paxton was trying to improve his mind, and the very fact of a lad studying without being driven to it made an impression on the nobleman.

to all three, as he did. After some time spent in the duke's gardens at Chiswick, young Paxton was sent to Chatsworth, and there being placed in a more responsible position he proved worthy of promotion.

Chatsworth well deserves the name of palace. It is one of the oldest and noblest private houses in England. The domain in which it stands, amid the wild scenery of Derbyshire, was thought worthy to be the gift of William the Conqueror to his son William Peveril.

In the old mansion Mary Queen of Scots was a prisoner for thirteen years, and her portrait hangs on the wall of the state drawing-room at this day.

The Dukes of Devonshire, from father to son, carried on the improvements in the house and grounds until they became known through Europe as the most magnificent in the world. When young Paxton went to Chatsworth he showed such remarkable skill and judgment that the duke raised him to the position of chief gardener. It was evident that the young man had a natural taste for flowers, and that he had improved and enlarged his natural powers by reading. If any one had told young Paxton when he was sweeping up the dead leaves at Chiswick that his name would be linked through many generations with one of the most splendid mansions in England, he would have thought it absurd, but it soon became plain that Paxton's master hand was making Chatsworth more beautiful than ever.

He was consulted on all the work that was done, and suggested most of the improvements that were made. The great conservatory was almost altogether his design. It is without a rival in Europe. It occupies nearly an acre of ground, and has a carriage-drive through it. It contains 70,000 or more feet of glass.

The fame of Paxton's work spread beyond the limits of our own country, and the splendor of the Duke of Devonshire's palace gained new lustre by the efforts of the poor gardener's boy.

He was soon to win a world-wide reputation as the architect of the building in which the world's fair was held in Hyde Park in 1851.

The Great Exhibition, as it will be always called, was not the first that had been held, but there was in the extent and grandeur of its conception something that raised it far above everything of its kind either before or since. It was to Prince Albert that the idea



YOUNG PAXTON AND THE DUKE OF DEVONSHIRE.

we read as it is of the boys and men with whom we associate. I have seen well-dressed boys, clean and fresh, who would have shrunk away in disgust from the touch of a man fouled by having fallen in the mire, who have yet enjoyed books that have soiled their minds for life. The boy who has courage enough to fling a bad book into the

He afterward took opportunities of asking him questions, and found him to be quick, cheerful, and eager to learn. The lad was a gardener, and he wished to be a good one. He had no vague ideas as to what he might do if he were differently placed. He could not alter his birth, or his name, or his station, but he could, by honest work, bring honor