

### THE BENEFITS OF EDUCATION DEPENDENT UPON GOOD EDUCATION.

The grand object of the mental improvement of the industrious classes is, as we observed in a recent Number, to unfold the higher faculties of reason and imagination which those classes possess in common with the high born and the best educated, in order to raise them above low tastes and mere animal indulgences, and thereby to elevate their character rather than their station. But it may be added, that in pointing out elevation of character rather than of station as that which should be the main object of mental improvement, we are also pointing out the only sure mode of attaining to such elevation in station as will prove at once creditable and lasting. For there can be little credit or security, and still less happiness, in any change of station, when the person raised does not possess proper self-control, or when his tastes and habits are unsuited to the change. And such will for the most part, be the case of those, if successful, who aim only at elevation of station instead of the proper qualifications for it. Whereas, if elevation of character be sought by cultivation of the higher faculties, and by the acquisition of self-control, a person will thereby become not only fitted for a higher station, but also furnished with the best means of attaining it. In a country like our own, where examples of men in the humblest station raising themselves to affluence and distinction are so common, instances of the truth of the truth of the above observations need hardly be adduced. There are however, not infrequently so many apparently accidental circumstances connected with success, that it is often difficult to decide in any particular case whether success is mainly to be attributed to good fortune, or to education and good conduct. Of itself, indeed, mere good fortune can do but little, as has been so well expressed in the following lines, which form the motto of a chapter in the "Fortunes of Nigel;"

"Chance will not do the work--Chance sends the breeze;  
But if the pilot slumber at the helm,  
The very wind that wafts us toward the port,  
May dash us on the shelves.—The steersman's part is vigilance,  
Blow it or rough or smooth."

But still the question arises, whether the chance, or, in other words, the favourable opportunity, be for the most part indispensable, or whether education can ever be regarded as the main cause of success.

In perusing a recent publication, by the Rev. Erskine Neale,\* it has occurred to us that perhaps no course of life affords a better opportunity of tracing the benefits of education, joined with good conduct, in causing elevation of station, than the military profession, as illustrated in the case of those who have risen from the ranks to offices of trust and posts of honour. Of those who enter the army as privates, all start upon the same footing, and, as far as entering the profession is concerned, are under similar circumstances. But no sooner have they gone through the first part of their training (if not while passing through it) than their relative position is regulated by their conduct.

The man who by regularity and obedience shows that he is possessed of self-control and worthy of trust, is soon fixed upon to be placed above his comrades. But then comes almost immediately the question, whether his previous education has been sufficient to render him capable of filling the post for which he appears to be morally fitted. And unless he has acquired, or can acquire, some knowledge in reading, writing, and accounts, his promotion cannot go on. The want of such knowledge is often a bar to the advancement of the well conducted private, but one which the regimental schools are now happily tending to remove. There is, however, still too much cause for lamenting the truth of a remark of the late Lord Hill, quoted by Mr. Neale, "that the soldier has much to combat in the way of constant temptation, and more in the want of early education; and that his deficiencies in this latter respect are deplorably and avowedly great."

The evils arising from the want of education is perhaps best shown by the benefits which have been derived from it by those who have been possessed of a certain amount of it before they entered the ranks. Of this there are several striking instances in the work before us.

The first is that of the late Brigadier-General Cureton. He was of an old family, long possessed of an hereditary estate in Shropshire, which his mother was obliged to obtain authority to sell after his father's death. At an early age he entered the militia of his native country as an ensign, and shortly after became a lieutenant. But he was speedily obliged, by pecuniary difficulties, to leave both this and another regiment of militia, when he enlisted, under the name of "Taylor," as a private in the 14th Light Dragoons. The officer of his troop, finding him a superior and educated young man, and steady, appointed him a "lance corporal," from which he gradually rose. He quitted England for the Peninsula in 1810, and in 1813, while holding

the rank of serjeant, was recognised by one of Lord Wellington's staff, who had been his brother officer in the Shropshire militia. His conduct was so meritorious that, when a steady non-commissioned officer was required to manage the post-office arrangements, he was recommended by the colonel of his regiment, and at once appointed serjeant of the post to the head-quarters of the army. In 1814 he took his leave of the ranks, and of the name which he had assumed, and was gazetted to an ensigncy in the 4th foot.

When he had suddenly disappeared from the militia, it was believed that he had been drowned while bathing, from the circumstances of his regimentals having been left on the beach; and the first intimation that his mother had of his being still alive was the Gazette recording his commission. Although he had received many severe wounds in the Peninsula he followed up his profession, and exchanged first into the 20th Light Dragoons, and then into the 16th Lancers, which he accompanied to India in 1822. He was present at the siege and capture of Bhurtpore, in 1825-26; and in the campaign of Afghanistan in 1839-40 he served as Assistant-Adjutant-General, and was present at the capture of Ghuznee. In 1845 he was in command of the cavalry corps at Aliwal and Soobraon.

In Sir Harry Smith's despatch of the battle of Aliwal it is stated, that Brigadier Cureton's knowledge of the outpost duty, and the able manner in which he handles his cavalry under the heaviest fire, rank him among the first cavalry officers of the age. At the battle of Soobraon similar praise was bestowed by the commander in chief. When he fell at Ramnuggur, in 1843, every honor was rendered to his memory. Although a strict disciplinarian, he is spoken of as one of the kindest and most thoughtful of commanding officers, and singularly considerate, in all points, of those under his command.

It is particularly mentioned, that, rapid as was his rise, no accusation was ever breathed of his indulging in unjust censure, or displaying overbearing demeanour. He fell in the presence of the same regiment, the 14th Light Dragoons, in which, thirty-eight years before, he had commenced his military career as a private. The interesting account in the volume before us, proves still more clearly than the foregoing imperfect sketch, that this distinguished officer owed his signal success in his profession, not to chance, but to education and uniform good conduct.

Another example of a similar nature is to be found in our author's account of Sir John Elley. He was the son of a paper manufacturer, and was early articled to a solicitor in London; but, disliking the law, he enlisted as a private in the Blues, in 1789. His steadiness, quickness, devotion to his duties, and general merits as a soldier, soon attracted attention. In 1790 he was gazetted quarter-master, thus becoming a commissioned officer, and in the following year obtained a cornetcy. He rose regularly through the different grades, until, in 1813, he became full colonel in the army.

During the long and arduous struggle in the Peninsula, his judgement, tact, prompt decision, and dashing bravery, were conspicuous. For the particulars of his gallant career, especially at Salamanca and Waterloo, as also for the history of his favourite charger, we must refer our readers to Mr. Neale's pages. He became a major-general in 1819, and lieutenant general in 1837. In 1835 he was returned as one of the members of Parliament for Windsor, and he died in the beginning of 1839. Shortly before his death he justly observed, that "rash and hasty words are one of the soldier's besetting sins; and yet, considering that in war-time he is one moment all 'life and daring,' the next, 'laid low,' blasphemy in his case seems flat rebellion against Heaven. These points," he added, "appear in their true colours when life begins to wane."

In compliance with a request strongly expressed in his will, he was interred in St. George's Chapel at Windsor. Soon after the accession of William IV., at the great camp dinner at Windsor Castle, one of the earliest toasts proposed by the king was "The Army and John Elley." In responding to it, Sir John referred to his early life, and to his having risen from the ranks, and alluded modestly to the obligation he was under to the army for the position he held, and for the circumstances in which he then found himself.

Here we have an instance of one who enlisted as a private in a celebrated regiment, raising himself, by the aid of a moderate education, and by sheer dint of merit, to the command of the same corps, becoming afterwards, a representative of a royal borough in Parliament, and a guest at the table of royalty, where his health was proposed by his sovereign as a chief in whose person the British army was worthily represented; and, finally, obtaining a last resting-place where so many of the royal and the noble are interred.

In time of war it was not uncommon for men well brought up (of whom some had previously served as officers in the militia,) to enter the regular army as volunteers, in the hope of being enabled by their education and good conduct to obtain commissions. Sir Hudson Lowe is related by our author to have thus commenced his military career. After having been previously an ensign in the East Devon militia, he served in the ranks for nearly three years as a volunteer, before he

\* "Risen from the Ranks; or, Conduct versus Caste." Pp. 841. London: Longmans, 1889.