

JOURNAL OF EDUCATION,

Upper Canada.



VOL. VII. TORONTO: NOVEMBER, 1854. No. 11.

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HUGH MILLER AS A SCHOOL BOY.

Men may learn much from each other's lives—especially from good men's lives. Men who live in our daily sight, as well as men who have lived before us, and handed down examples for us in the lives of others formed after their own model, are the most valuable practical teachers. For it is not mere literature that makes men—it is real, earnest, practical life, the life and example of the home, and the daily practical life of the people about us. This it is which mainly moulds our nature, which enables us to work out our own education, and build up our own character.

Hugh Miller has very strikingly worked out this idea in his admirable autobiography just published, entitled "My Schools and School-masters."* It is extremely interesting, even fascinating, as a book; but it is more than an ordinary book—it might almost be called an institution. It is the history of the formation of a truly noble and independent character in the humblest condition of life—the condition in which a large mass of the people of this country are born and

brought up; and it teaches to all, but especially to poor men, what it is in the power of each to accomplish for himself. The life of Hugh Miller is full of lessons of self-help and self-respect, and shows the efficacy of these in working out for a man an honorable competence and a solid reputation. It may not be that every man has the thew and sinew, the large brain and heart, of a Hugh Miller—for there is much in what we may call the *breed* of a man, the defect of which no mere educational advantages can supply; but every man can at least do much, by the help of such examples as his, to elevate himself and build up his moral and intellectual character on a solid foundation.

We have spoken of the *breed* of a man. In Hugh Miller we have an embodiment of that most vigorous and energetic element in our nation's life—the Norwegian and Danish. In the times of long, long ago, these daring and desperate northern pirates swarmed along our eastern coasts. In England they were resisted by force of arms—for the prize of England's Crown was a rich one; and by dint of numbers, valor, and bravery, they made good their footing in England, and even governed the eastern part of it by their own kings until the time of Alfred the Great. And to this day the Danish element amongst the population of the east and north-east of England is by far the prevailing one. But in Scotland it was different. They never reigned there; but they settled and planted all the eastern coasts. The land was poor and thinly peopled; and the Scottish kings and chiefs were too weak—generally too much occupied by intestine broils—to molest or dispossess them. Then these Danes and Norwegians led a seafaring life, were sailors and fishermen, which the native Scots were not. So they settled down in all the bays and bights along the coast of Scotland, and took entire possession of the Orkneys, Shetland, and Western Isles, the Shetlands having been held by the crown of Denmark down to a comparatively recent period. They never amalgamated with the Scotch Highlanders; and to this day they speak a different language, and follow different pursuits. The Highlander was a hunter, a herdsman, a warrior, and fished in the fresh waters only. The descendants of the Norwegians, or the Lawlanders, as they came to be called, followed the sea, fished in salt waters, cultivated the soil, and engaged in trade and commerce. Hence the marked difference between the population of the town of Cromarty, where Hugh Miller was born in 1802, and the population only a few miles inland; the townspeople speaking Lowland Scotch, and dependent for their subsistence mainly on the sea, the others speaking Gaelic, and living solely on the land.

These Norwegian colonists of Cromarty held in their blood the very same piratical propensities which characterized their forefathers who followed the Vikings. Hugh Miller first saw the light in a long low-built house, built by his great grand-father, John Fedders, "one of the last of the buccaneers;" this cottage having been built, as Hugh Miller himself says he has every reason to believe, with "Spanish gold." All his ancestors were sailors and seafaring men; when boys they had taken to the water as naturally as ducklings. Traditions of adventures by sea were rife in the family. Of his grand-uncles, one had sailed round the world with Anson, had assisted in burning Pesta, and in boarding the *Manilla* galleon; another, a handsome and powerful man, perished at sea in a storm; and his grand-father was dashed overboard by the jib-boom of his little vessel when entering the Cromarty Firth, and never rose again. The son of this last, Hugh Miller's father, was sent into the country by his mother to work upon a farm, thus to rescue him, if possible, from the hereditary fate of the

* No. 219 "Biography" in the Supplemental Catalogue of Books for Public Libraries in Upper Canada.