

author of *Robinson Crusoe*, was a brick maker. Ferguson F. R. S. to whose astronomical lectures George III. was a constant attendant, commenced his studies a poor shepherd. Benjamin Franklin, the American philosopher, is an example of humble station being but a slight obstacle to learning and honour, so well known that it were idle here to do more than allude to it. Shakespeare—in whose name is a host of magical thoughts—was an attendant on the promptor of a theatre. Robbie Burns was a ploughman. Gifford, first Editor of the *London Quarterly*, served part of an apprenticeship to a shoemaker, becoming noted for his rhyming talents, a few friends subscribed and purchased his indentures for six pounds, and sent him to school ; and Bloomfield, the author of “the Farmer’s Boy,” was of the same trade, but less fortunate in after life. These few instances, taken from a multitude, may suffice, to show that humble station is far from being an insuperable bar to the acquisition of knowledge and honourable fame. We mention no instance in which chance had much to do, or in which romantic incidents raised the man in the ranks of civilized life, all our examples, and a thousand others which might be given, are specimens of exaltation springing from persevering and enthusiastic efforts at improvement. In all this there is nothing to induce disgust at humble avocations, or to excite exertions to escape from those modes of getting a livelihood ; many eminent scholars have with primitive simplicity, worked at the most humble professions while they instructed and delighted persons in the highest ranks of life ; and many called by circumstances from humble stations to others more congenial to their aspirations, so far from being unduly proud of the exaltation, gloried in referring to their humble origin. While nothing appears in those examples to induce idleness or folly, there is much indeed to induce all to aim at a high degree of mental improvement, which not only bestows exalted pleasures, but mends the morals and the disposition ; there is much to make the man of humble life respect himself, and to consider that he is not secluded by rank from *any* intellectual attainment.

But there is an evil—not always attendant on humble station, and worse than it—as a difficulty in the way of the lover of knowledge, and this is poverty. Can any man get over this chilly