

CHAPTER XIV

A SUCCESSFUL AUTHOR AT LAST!

THE work at the office was by no means uninteresting. Though some of it was monotonous, it was pleasant and agreeable. I had always plenty to do, what with correspondence, minutes, and reports; and active work is always attended with happiness. So, at least, I have found in the course of my life.

I endeavoured, so far as I could, to clear off the work of every day, so as to begin every morning with a *carte blanche* as it were—free and unfettered. Sometimes this was difficult, especially when we were approaching the half-yearly meetings. But still I managed to get through the day's work; and when there were arrears to dispose of, I took a bag of correspondence home with me, to settle and arrange it there. In this way, I often sat up until a late hour, perhaps until two or three in the morning.

When an arrangement was made to have only one Board meeting in the fortnight, so as to suit the convenience of the Liverpool and Manchester directors, it became still more difficult to get through the work satisfactorily. All the correspondence had to be gone through and attended to in the course of the

day. Besides, there were the minutes of four committee meetings held on Wednesdays, to be written out and made ready for confirmation at the fortnightly board on the following day. Sometimes I found it difficult to accomplish this work; and sitting long at my desk, either at the office or at home, often gave me a splitting headache. Indeed, I began to think that there might be some difficulty in carrying on the work further.

Then it was that the idea of dictating the minutes, and the answers to the greater part of the correspondence, occurred to me. I had made the acquaintance of Mr (afterwards Sir Arthur) Helps, secretary of the Privy Council. He told me that he had found an immense advantage in dictating, not only his letters, but his books. It saved time, and enabled him to clear away his correspondence. He said that he used, while riding home by railway from London to Kew, to turn over in his mind the subject of his forthcoming works (such as his *Companions of my Solitude* and *Friends in Council*), that he would prepare the thoughts and sentences, and retain them complete in his mind; and that then, on reaching home, he would dictate them to his daughter, who had in this way written out nearly the whole of his books.

I acted upon the suggestion, and inserted an advertisement in the *Times* for a short-hand writer. I had many applications for the position, and at length selected a clever reporter. I found some difficulty at first, in communicating my ideas to another for the purpose of being set down in black and white. But practice soon made perfect; and at length I was enabled to get through all my work in the shortest possible time. By dictation, I dis-

burthened my mind at once. The matter was written out in long hand and submitted for my approval. The letters were sent off at once, and the minutes were copied out and ready for submission and approval on the following morning. By this means I was enabled to get through my work with pleasure and dispatch.

There was one thing, however, that I could never accomplish. I could never dictate anything that was to appear in print. I must see the sentences before me, coming out, as it were, at my fingers' ends; and shape, and prune, and modify them, for purposes of publication. Sir Arthur Helps was able to do this; but he must have had a better memory for words and consecutive sentences than I had. Composition was often very difficult in my case; and I made many erasures and alterations before I was fully satisfied with my productions. My brain was at work, as well as my fingers; and the excitement of the one had its correlation in the activity of the others.

At the same time, the dictation of minutes and of ordinary business letters proved of immense advantage. My health was restored; I could clear away my work for the day; and I went home with my mind clear and unfagged. I recovered my evening's leisure, and could spend it in amusement, recreation, or the pleasure of social converse. The question then occurred, what was I to do with the leisure time thus set at liberty? My object always was—for, indeed, it had become a habit—to turn my spare minutes to some useful account. There was that old *Life of George Stephenson* that had been hanging over my head for so many years. Could I not proceed with it now? And was it right to write out the contemplated book?

I know that there are many people who think that a man of business who devotes his leisure to writing a book is in a measure lost. He ought to devote his whole time either to business or literature; and literary men are not considered business men. Had I proposed to spend my evenings at the theatre, or at concerts, or at the club, no one would have complained; but to spend it in writing a book, with my name on the title-page, was a very different matter. What has a railway secretary, who is paid for his work as such, to do with writing books? And yet I thought that, provided I did the work of the railway company thoroughly—and I believe that I did—I was at liberty to do with the leisure of my evenings what I thought proper, provided the result was not at variance with my other duties. The reader will observe that I am arguing for my own liberty in the matter.

There was one thing in which I was very particular—the regularity of my attendance at the office. I was always there first—with one exception; and that was my good assistant, Robert Hudson—a most good, conscientious, and devoted man—the backbone of the Secretariat, during the many years that he remained with the company. But I was always before the bulk of the clerks, and the example had, no doubt, its influence. I was so regular in passing the window of my neighbour, Wilson of Blackheath, on my way to the station, that he declared that he could set his clock by my movements.

I made up my mind, then, to proceed with my *Life of Stephenson*. But before I proceed to describe the history of this book, I may mention that, on arriving in London towards the end of 1854, I sent the MS. of *Self-Help* to Messrs Routledge & Co.

Mr Walker, of Leeds, had offered to publish the book on half-profits, but I preferred to have a London publisher. The circumstances of the times were, however, opposed to the publication of new books. The Crimean War was raging, and people were satisfied with the perusal of their newspapers. The Messrs Routledge accordingly declined to publish the book. Their reply was as follows:—

“LONDON, FARRINGTON STREET,
“25th February 1855.

“SIR,—

“We regret having detained your MS. so long. We were in hopes that we should have been able to publish it; but trade still continues so dull that we find it will be quite impossible. We shall be happy to give you the MS. at any time; and are, Sir, your obedient servants,

“GEORGE ROUTLEDGE & Co.”

So far as I can recollect, I did not place my name on the title-page of the proposed work. Indeed, my name was not worth anything at all, for my two previous works—one in 1838 and the other in 1844—had been failures, and were forgotten. I went to Messrs Routledge for the MS., laid it to one side for future uses, and then proceeded with my proposed *Life of George Stephenson*.

I again communicated with Robert Stephenson. I learned from him that no one had yet proposed to write the *Life*; and that if I did not proceed with it, the probability was that it never would be done. I was still under the same impression as before, that there were materials in the subject for an original and striking memoir. I told him my ideas of the way in which the *Life* should be treated. First, there was the early history, on which I had already obtained a

large amount of information. Then there was the history of the locomotive, which, Robert Stephenson told me, he had written out in full detail. There was next the invention of railways, starting into full life under the eyes of the present generation, and producing the most extraordinary results upon the action and framework of society. Then there was the supersession of the old methods of travelling by means of the locomotive, the development of railway enterprise up to the period of speculation and gambling, the extension of railways to foreign countries, and some account of the principal persons connected with the advance of this great revolution in our commercial interests. The task was not very easy, but I thought that it might be satisfactorily accomplished. If it were not done now, the probability was, that, owing to the death of the principal persons connected with the development of railways, it never would be done. To all this Mr Stephenson agreed, and he promised me throughout his hearty co-operation.

I was still anxious for the information which Mr Nicholas Wood of Newcastle had promised me many years before. He had been present at the first trial of the "Geordy" Lamp in the Killingworth pit, and knew a great deal of the early history of the locomotive. Though he had been George Stephenson's master, I believed that jealousy would not prevent his helping me to a certain extent. I asked Robert Stephenson's assistance, and he wrote to me, saying, "Nicholas Wood has never replied to my letter: I shall fire another shot with a heavier charge." But no information came. Then I wrote to Mr Bourne, engineer of the North-Eastern Railway, asking for his assistance. Mr Bourne saw Mr Wood, on which

the latter said, "Well, if you will put in for me that bit siding at Penshaw, I will give you all the information that Mr Smiles wants." On inquiry, Mr Bourne found that to put in the "bit siding at Penshaw," would cost more than £3000. He asked me if the information was worth that money, on which I replied, that it was not worth 3000 farthings. I told Robert Stephenson of the result of my application.

"Ah," he said, "it is Nick all over. His motto is, 'Nothing for nothing for nobody'!"

The truth is that I could do very well without the information asked for. The report and evidence respecting the "Geordy" Safety Lamps had been published; and besides, Mr Wood had written out his account of the early history of the locomotive in his *Practical Treatise on Railroads*. Strange to say, long before any controversy arose about the blast-pipe, Nicholas Wood had (though not believing in its virtue) given all the credit to Stephenson; but after it had been found that the steam-blast was the life blood of the locomotive, and that Timothy Hackworth claimed its invention, Mr Wood withdrew that part of the treatise from his book, thereby seriously injuring the authenticity of his history. But Robert Stephenson handed me the first edition of the work, published in 1825, long before the steam-blast had become a matter of controversy.

I had already obtained all the requisite information from Edward Pease as to the projection and construction of the Stockton and Darlington Railway. And now I wished to get access to the best information relative to the Liverpool and Manchester Railway—the opening of which marks the era of a great change in all popular ideas respecting loco-

motion. Fortunately, the men were still alive—Mr Gooch, Mr Dixon, Mr Swanwick, and Mr Henry Booth—who had taken part in that undertaking; and they gave me all the information that I desired. Through the influence of Robert Stephenson, also, I obtained many valuable facts from Sir Joshua Walmsley, Mr T. Sopwith, Mr Charles Parker, Mr Vaughan of Snibston, Mr Binns of Claycross, and many more. Mr Stephenson himself, of course, supplied the principal information in the book, especially as to the history of the locomotive. Little or no information was derived from books or reports, but nearly all from personal inquiry and intercourse.

I proceeded at home quietly to work up the subject from my old notes. I wrote in the evenings, mostly after six; sometimes alternating my occupation with a walk on Blackheath, preparing a sentence or laying out a subject, and returning home to commit the results to paper. I had no library then, but used to write with my children playing about me; I had no difficulty in concentrating my attention upon the subject in hand. While I had been a newspaper editor, I used to write with the clang of the steam-engine and printing-press in my ears; and afterwards, at the railway office, I worked amidst constant interruptions and inquiries, which I was always ready to answer.

I did not attempt to write in any particular sort of "style." I first endeavoured thoroughly to understand the subject, and then the sentences flowed from my pen without conscious effort. If I wrote quickly and expressively, it was because I had been vigorously active during my walk. I think Southey was right when he said to Ebenezer Elliott, "My rule of writing is, to express myself, 1st, as perspicuously as

possible; 2nd, as concisely as possible; and 3rd, as impressively as possible." This is the way to be felt, and understood, and remembered. The writer who relies upon "style" dances in fetters. Sydney Smith said truthfully, "Every style is good that is not tiresome." Another thing—a man must himself understand before he begins to write: this is the most infallible mode of being understood by others.

After a long and protracted period—long, because of the numerous interviews with friends of Stephenson, and also because of the few intermittent hours I could give to writing out the results of the interviews in the leisure of my evenings—I at length got the manuscript into shape, and went up to Robert Stephenson's house in Gloucester Square, to read some portions of it over to him and his friend Mr Sopwith. I sought out some of the most interesting parts—his father's early life, and the history of the Safety Lamp. I read on and on; and when I looked up, Sopwith was drowsy, and Robert Stephenson was profoundly asleep! Gracious goodness! was this to be the result of my labours with the public? But it is true, my audience had dined; and dined well. When I stopped, Stephenson suddenly looked up, and said, "Oh! I hear you very well. Go on, if you please."

I went on a little further, and this time my audience kept wide awake.

"Well," said Stephenson finally, "who is to be your publisher?"

"I intend," I answered, "to try Mr Murray first, as I consider him to be at the top of the publishing business."

"If a few hundred pounds would be of use," he

rejoined, "for illustrations and such like, let me know."

"I don't think that will be at all necessary," I answered, "as I have no doubt I can get the book published, without expense to anybody."

Stephenson afterwards said to me that he was surprised at my answer, and that he saw I must have some confidence in the success of the book.

Having finished the MS. towards the end of 1856, I called upon Mr Murray, and found him willing to publish the book on half-profits. He suggested, however, that the MS. should be placed in the hands of an experienced author for revision and correction. I afterwards found that Mr (afterwards Sir John) Milton was my reviser.* His fee was £30. He cut out a good many anecdotes, which I took an early opportunity of restoring; as I think that personal anecdotes, when characteristic, greatly enliven the pages of a biography.

The book was ready for publication in June 1857. On the 26th of May, at the anniversary of the Civil Engineers Institution, I presented to the secretary the first bound copy of the volume, which was looked over by some of the members. A few days later, I received the following letter from Robert Stephenson:—

"34 GLOUCESTER SQUARE, 8th June 1857.

"MY DEAR SIR,—

"Now that your work is advertised, I believe you will get a good deal of correspondence of my father's. I enclose you a little batch from Thomas Gooch, who was associated with my father in the execution of the Manchester and Leeds Rail-

* Mr, afterwards Sir J. Milton, sometime clerk and chief-clerk in the War Office, occasionally acted as literary adviser to the late Mr John Murray.—ED.

way. I have no doubt more will come to hand; but you will perceive that much of the correspondence could scarcely with propriety be published at this time—the allusions to the men of the Great Western to wit!

“Those who have perused the volume you left at the Institution, not beyond two or three, like the tone and feeling of the Biography very much indeed. They like both the head and the heart that produced it.—Yours very faithfully,

“ROBERT STEPHENSON.”

Copies of the “Life” were as usual sent out to the press. How would the critics receive the volume? I remember a clever description, by the late W. S. Landor, in his *Imaginary Conversations*, of the manner in which the critics receive a new book. “Some slowly rise, like carp in a pond when food is thrown among them; some snatch suddenly at a morsel and swallow it; others touch it gently with their barbe, pass deliberately by, and leave it; others wriggle and rub against it more disdainfully; others, in sober truth, know not what to make of it, swim round and round it, eye it on the sunny side, eye it on the shady; approach it, question it, shoulder it, flap it with their tails, turn it over, look askance at it, take a peashell or a worm instead of it, and plunge again their contented heads into the comfortable mud: after some seasons the same food will suit their stomachs better.”

I must say that, on the whole, the critics received my new book very favourably. The *Spectator*, indeed, said, “little was left for Mr Smiles to do, but to fill in the details.” But what is a Biography without the details? The details are everything. To take a much more important case. Most people knew something of the lives of Johnson and Scott; but

merit was certainly due to Boswell and Lockhart for filling in the details. The *Athenæum* was cordial; the usually staid *Economist* was enthusiastic; the *Saturday Review* was full of praise. These and other reviews appeared in print shortly after the appearance of the book; and favourable notices were re-echoed from the provinces. In the course of the following month, Mr Murray informed me that the Life had been so well received, that he had very few copies remaining of the 1000 composing the first edition, and that he must send the book to press again as soon as possible. Another edition of 1500 copies was accordingly printed and sold; and in the following September, a further edition of 2000 copies, in which many amendments and additions were made, was disposed of.*

Then came the reviews in the Monthlies and the Quarterlies, as well as two long consecutive articles in the *Times* of 9th and 16th September: all of which had the effect of sending off the book. Indeed, on several occasions, the type of one edition had only been half distributed, when another edition was called for. It had also the honour of being reprinted in America—without my knowledge or consent. This is usually the case with all English books that succeed. Failures are, of course, never stolen. I was once complaining to an American lady of the unsatisfactory state of the copyright law between England and America. "Oh!" she exclaimed, "you ought to be satisfied with the fame you achieve by the in-

* Since the above passage was written, I have read the *Life of George Eliot*, and observe that she was an admirer of the book. "*The Life of George Stephenson*," she wrote to a friend, "has been a real profit and pleasure. . . . He is one of my great heroes: has he not a dear old face?"

creased circulation of your works." "Well, madam," I answered, "I do not know what it may be in America, but in England, fame is considered a very hungry diet."

The result of the publication was, that in the course of little more than a year, five editions of the 8vo *Life of George Stephenson*, amounting in all to 7500 copies, were printed. In 1859, a reduced and cheaper copy of the work was published; and afterwards a larger and handsomer edition, to range with the *Lives of the Engineers*. At the time at which I write these lines, some 60,000 copies of the book have been printed in England—the last being the Centenary Edition at 2s. 6d.

Behold me at last, at the advanced age of forty-five, a successful author! People wondered how a person so utterly unknown in the literary world should have been able to write a successful book, especially on the topic of a railway engineer. But they did not know the long training I had had for the work, and the difficulties I had overcome—the encounter with which, indeed, had educated me—nor the reading, thinking, observation, and perseverance, which are about the sole conditions for success in anything.

When I found that I could succeed in writing a respectable book, I took from the drawer, where it had lain so long, my rejected MS. on *Self-Help*, and thought of rewriting it and offering it to the public. I took some pains with it, and had it ready for the printer in July 1859. I intended at first to publish it without my name on the title-page; but Mr Murray warned me against doing so. "You ought to recollect," he said, "that success is a lottery in literature, and you abandon your vantage-ground by

publishing anonymously." I therefore eventually agreed to give my name on the title-page.

My object in writing out *Self-Help*, and delivering it at first in the form of lectures, and afterwards re-writing and publishing it in the form of a book, was principally to illustrate and enforce the power of George Stephenson's great word—PERSEVERANCE. I had been greatly attracted when a boy by Mr Craik's *Pursuit of Knowledge under Difficulties*. I had read it often, and knew its many striking passages almost by heart. It occurred to me, that a similar treatise, dealing not so much with literary achievements and the acquisition of knowledge, as with the ordinary business and pursuits of common life, illustrated by examples of conduct and character drawn from reading, observation, and experience, might be equally useful to the rising generation. It seemed to me that the most important results in daily life are to be obtained, not through the exercise of extraordinary powers, such as genius and intellect, but through the energetic use of simple means and ordinary qualities, with which nearly all human individuals have been more or less endowed. Such was my object, and I think that, on the whole, I hit my mark.

Mr Murray was willing to incur the risk of printing the book on the half-profit system. But, looking to the publication of *George Stephenson*, I thought I might myself incur the risk. Accordingly, the work was published on the usual commission. Then arose the question as to the number to be printed of the first edition. I thought the book might succeed, but I was not particularly sanguine. Mr Murray, however, said, "I think, *with* your name on the title-page, you may venture to commence

with the printing of 3000 copies." Even that was a large number of an untried book. It was offered at Mr Murray's annual sale in November, and the whole edition was sold off. "In fact," he said, "the work has followed the hint of its own title." Orders for 3000 more were given to the printer, though the specimen copies had not yet been sent out to the press for review. When the reviews appeared, they were favourable. The book went, as Mr Cooke said, "like hot rolls"; and yet, by the 2nd of March following, the copies had not yet been sent to the country papers. Indeed, the book was received with more applause than the *Life of Stephenson*. During the first year 20,000 copies were printed, and 15,000 the second. Since then, the book has continued in demand. Up to the present time, I think that about 160,000 have been printed.*

When the book was announced, Messrs Ticknor & Fields, the American publishers, were so well satisfied with the results of their publication of the *Life of George Stephenson*—which was undertaken without my knowledge or consent—that they offered £25 for a set of the advance sheets of *Self-Help*. Mr Murray said, "It is not much to give, but it is something saved out of the fire." Mr Cooke, his partner, also said, "We think you would do well to accept the £25 as *generally* they offer only £5 or £10 for such a work." The proposal was accordingly accepted. It appeared that shortly after the publication of the book in America, it was largely purchased for the School Libraries in Ohio and other States of the Union; so that Ticknor & Fields must have done well by their spirited and generous arrangement.

* At the beginning of 1905 the number printed was close on 258,000.—ED.

But they could not retain the monopoly in America. Other publishers reissued the book. I have seen three editions, but I am told there are many more.

The *Atlantic Monthly*, then published by Ticknor & Fields, contained an article on International Copyright in October 1867, from which it appeared that the practice then was, that if an American publisher issued a reprint of a foreign work, he by that fact acquired an exclusive right to the republication of all subsequent works by the same author (p. 441). This was the "courtesy of the trade" in America. It shortly meant this: "If I steal from an English author once, I have the right of stealing everything that he publishes in any future year." Not only so, but "all and several of these rights may be bought and sold, like any other kind of property." The same article contained a statement that Messrs Ticknor & Fields, "on principle, and as an essential part of their system, send to foreign authors a share of the proceeds of these works, and this they have habitually done for twenty-five years." I can only say that in my own case, they published the *Life of George Stephenson*, and afterwards *Industrial Biography*, without my knowledge or consent, and that they did not send me the value of a brass farthing for the privilege of publishing either of those works.

I was, however, sufficiently satisfied with the results of my publication at home. It would be considered absurdly eulogistic were I to detail the many marks of sympathy and gratitude which I have received from all classes of the community, at home and abroad. I hope I shall be excused for mentioning a few curious instances. One gentleman

at Dundee, who named his son after me, assures me that he is indebted to me for what he is to-day: he says my words have often cheered and spurred him on in the battle of life. Another, at Hastings, says, "*Self-Help* has been of extraordinary service to me. I have repeatedly gained hope and courage from its aphorisms and brave sentences; and with them I have tried to encourage others." A third, a lady at Birmingham, writes to thank me for my lessons, which have so cheered and encouraged her son, who is now far away, an emigrant at Waimato, New Zealand. "Smiles's *Self-Help*," he writes, "has been the cause of an entire alteration in my life, and I thank God I have read it. I am now devoted to study and hard work, and I mean to rise, both as regards my moral and intellectual life. I only wish I could see the man who wrote the book, and *thank* him from my heart." The lady who wrote the letter adds, "You may, perhaps, imagine with what feelings his mother read this passage; for when my son went out, he was thoughtless, and we were *anxious* about him. 'Out of the abundance of the heart' etc., is my only excuse. Thank God!"

A working man at Exeter was not less grateful. He thanks me for what I have done for the benefit of his class. He says my books "have instructed and helped him greatly," and he "wishes that every working man would read them through and through, and ponder them well." Another correspondent, resident in the same city, says that "since perusing the book, he had experienced an entire revolution in his habits, and is grateful to the author as the primary cause. Instead of regarding life as a weary course, which has to be got over as a task, I now view it in the light of a trust of which I must make the most;

and, acting accordingly, I am beginning to feel a satisfaction that I never felt before."

One night I met at a friend's house a gentleman who said he "desired to shake me by the hand, and to thank me for all I had done for him." "How is that?" I asked. "When a young man," he said, "I was on the slide downward. I was careless, thoughtless, and pleasure-seeking. Your *Self-Help* came in the nick of time. I read it, and pondered over it, until it seized entire hold of me. I endeavoured to put its lessons into practice. I became sober, punctual, attentive, and began to be trusted. I was promoted, and eventually rose to be a partner in my firm. I am now a prosperous man, and have to thank you for it all." This was certainly a most encouraging testimony to the results of my small literary efforts.

I knew a widow lady who was encouraged to persevere in art, from the instances of perseverance which she found related in *Self-Help* and two other young ladies who were encouraged to write for their living and the support of their relations—all of whom are now recognised and famous. A young surgeon at Blackheath tells me that my little book, first placed in his hands by his father, "gave fresh energy and hopeful enthusiasm to his career." He thanks me cordially "for being one of the chief causes in giving an inclination to my mind, which, I hope, will bear good fruit, as well as more ennobling views of life and its duties."

This is surely eulogy enough. But I cannot refrain from adding another instance. At first, I did not know what to make of it. Many years after the book had been published, I received a letter from Dublin from a person I had never heard of,

beginning "My dear Sir." He apologised for addressing me in so familiar a manner; but it all arose from "dear old *Self-Help*," which had become his most familiar friend and adviser. His story was as follows:—

Eleven years before the date of his letter, he had seen an announcement of the book. That, he thought, is the volume for me; besides, the *Free-man's Journal* had praised it. He saved a shilling, for he was then only a boy; but when he went to the bookseller, he found the price of the book was beyond his means. The bookseller showed it to him: "Little did I think," he says, "of the fruit that was concealed therein." Nevertheless, he was only put off for a little. He saved again, and in three weeks he was able to buy the book, "though pence were then of far greater importance to me than pounds now are."

"Now," he adds, "comes the strange part of my story. Such was the influence worked upon me by your description of what has been done and what could be done by continued industry and determined perseverance, that you made me believe it possible to do things that I and thousands more had regarded as impossible. Such, however, was its effect. I had already served seven years to the Wine and Spirit trade, which I every year regarded with greater dislike. I now wished to change my occupation, and embrace some less equivocal calling. After a time, I embarked all my earnings and savings in the druggist and chemist business; and as Smiles had been my guide, I determined to take you into my concern as a sleeping partner. Hence you will see your name, in conjunction with my own, at the top of my letters and shop-bills. My friends were very much opposed to my undertaking, and did everything to deter me from entering upon it, believing that I should have succeeded very well in the spirit trade, which was my own proper business. They did not

know who my partner was, but supposed he must be a man of capital and experience. I had, of course, many difficulties to encounter; but after years of struggle and labour I made my way. Not to trouble you with too many details, I may say that I became prosperous. Your name smiled upon me. Many of my customers addressed me by your name as well as by my own, and I answered to the one equally with the other. Indeed, I scarcely knew which was which. After three years I opened another branch in a different part of the city. That too succeeded. So that you will see I have many reasons to believe in dear old *Self-Help*; and I long much to shake by the hand so good a guide and friend as the writer of the book."

I had not yet seen my correspondent; but in the course of a short time I had the pleasure of making his acquaintance. He was all that I could have expected of him—active, enterprising, and intelligent. He was still young, and desirous of distinguishing himself in another walk of life. He had saved enough money to enable him to enter at Trinity College as a student. First he thought of embracing Law; eventually he determined upon devoting himself to the Church. After disposing of his business, he went to Stonyhurst College in Lancashire; then he went to Rome, where he remained for three years; now he is at Oxford, preparing himself for ordination in the Roman Catholic Church. Knowing well the vicious tendency of drinking habits, he intends to devote the rest of his life to promoting the cause of temperance. I still treasure as a gift from him, a present on which is inscribed, "To Samuel Smiles, Esq., as a small token of esteem."

Self-Help was translated into most foreign languages. The first I heard of it was from a Dutch clergyman, who was in England attending the marriage of a niece of my friend. Mr Eborall.

He said to me, "We know your name very well in Holland." "How is that?" I asked. "From your book *Help u Zelfen*: it is one of the most popular books in the country." He afterwards sent me a copy; and there it was, complete, in Dutch. The next translation, I think, was made at Hamburg, in Germany; but it was badly done, and another translation came out at Colberg a few years later. Denmark and Sweden followed; then France; then Buenos Ayres, in Portuguese. Translations were also made at Prague into the Czech language, and at Wagram into the Croatian. I was informed by Mr Ralston that Russia has several translations, though I have not seen them. There are two in Spain, and the last that I have heard of is in Turkish.

The translation made into Italian was a great success. The book, I was told, had been more successful than any published in that country. When I was in Italy (of which more hereafter), in 1879, more than 40,000 copies had been published. The late Dr Max Schlesinger told me that, while in Egypt some years ago, he had visited one of the Khedive's palaces, then being fitted up by an Italian architect. On looking at the inscriptions and mottoes written on the walls, and on the magnificent furniture of the house, Dr Schlesinger asked what they were. The Italian informed him that they were texts from the Koran. "But they are not all from the Koran," he added; "indeed, they are principally from Smeelis." "From whom?" "Oh! you are an Englishman: you ought to know Smeelis! They are from his *Self-Help*: they are much better than the texts from the Koran!" Dr Schlesinger told me this anecdote with much gusto on his return to London.

I cannot tell the number of Eastern languages

into which *Self-Help* has been translated. In 1874, Mr Murray wrote to me, "Two days ago, I gave leave for a translation of *Self-Help* into Arabic, for the use of the people of Mount Lebanon!" Translations were made into several of the languages of India, more especially into Tamil, Marati, Gujarati, Hindustani, and Canarese. When Professor K. Nakamura, the Japanese, was in England in 1868, he heard a good deal about *Self-Help*, and took a copy of the work home with him. He translated it while on shipboard, and published it on arriving at Shidz'oka shortly afterwards. He entitled it, *European Decision of Character Book*—there being no equivalent for *Self-Help* in the Japanese language. In a letter which I received from Professor Nakamura, through the hands of the Honourable G. Takeda, delegate to the International Exhibition in 1873, he said, "Will you allow me to thank you with a sincere mind for your literary work, which has had a good result in our little island of Japan." He then proceeded to give me an account of the manner in which he was induced to make the translation, and now, he adds, "I am glad to see the results, for almost all the high class of our fellow-countrymen know what *Self-Help* is."

The translated book, a copy of which was handed to me by the Honourable G. Takeda, was a remarkable document. It had become expanded into a book of about 2000 pages, and read from the end backwards. The characters reminded one of an entymological collection. They stood apart, like insects in a case at the British Museum; but, on closer scrutiny, they seemed to represent, not the lower creatures, but familiar objects, such as houses, windows, fireplaces, and various domestic

utensils, involved in fantastic flourishes capable of no European explanation. On looking at the book and its characters, it does not afford matter for surprise that the Japanese should be contemplating the abandonment of their own language, and a resort to straightforward, condensed, and sensible English!