

HEROES OF THE LABORATORY

AND

THE WORKSHOP.



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BY

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“Toiling, rejoicing, sorrowing,
Onward through life he goes ;
Each morning sees some task begun,
Each evening sees it close :
Something attempted, something done,
Has earned a night’s repose.”—LONGFELLOW.

A New Edition, Illustrated by John Absolon.

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ROUTLEDGE, WARNE, & ROUTLEDGE,
FARRINGDON STREET;
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1860.

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PREFACE.

SOME months ago, as I was walking in the suburbs of the city in which I live, I met an artisan returning from work, to whom, as he passed, I offered a little book. The man courteously thanked me, and extended his hand to receive the gift. As he did so, I was struck with the strange contrast between his broad, labour-stained palm and my own slight fingers, which nearly touched his, and I experienced a feeling of peculiar and deep interest as I looked upon the working-man, with whom I was thus, for a single instant only, brought in contact.

I would gladly have made him feel that I sympathized with him, for I realized, as I had not before done, how many were the hardships of his lot, while, at the same time, I half envied the feelings of honest independence which of right belong to the hard-working and industrious members of the community, who "earn their bread by the sweat of their brow," in obedience to the Divine command. "I wish I could give him something he would be glad to have, and could talk with him on some subject that would please and interest him," thought I, as I went on my way—

and this wish returned, again and again, to my mind, until at length it resulted in the production of the following pages.

Surely, the history of a working-man's life cannot be without interest for his fellows, especially if it be a true narrative of victorious struggle, and of laborious effort crowned with success. It is true, that but few of this class have given us the personal record of their experience; but there are some who have done so, while we possess trustworthy and instructive memorials respecting many others. They are not, however, readily to be met with, especially in a form suited for general reading. In this little volume the attempt is made to present a few of the more remarkable examples of the kind, in such a manner as to interest those who may here find the life-histories of men of their own class, many of whom acquired wealth and deserved the respect and gratitude of mankind.

In offering this book to working-men, I wish to say a few words with reference to it. There are here given a variety of short notices of men, most of whom laboured in the mechanical arts;—among them, indeed, are four or five names devoted to science, but they may truly be numbered among “working-men;” and they all rose to eminence solely by the force of their own talent and energy, while many of the fruits of their researches were turned to practical account in the service of the industrial arts. So closely indeed is science linked to the arts, that we cannot think of the steam-engine without recalling to