

'hunting the traffles' and crying down the follies from the start to the finish, our 'Johannes factotum' though the sweetest child of fancy was perhaps even innocent of the canon 'that a comedy is to do good to us through laughter.'

[(*To be continued*)]

SMILES AS AN ESSAYIST.

After the perusal of the master-pieces of Smiles, we are impressed with his vast knowledge of facts and details of all the common writers. Smiles's pen is pregnant with thoughtful details of events of the past as well as of the present age. He vividly and at the same time in a lucid and easy style gives us the lives of all great men in any department whatsoever. His "SELF-HELP" and "CHARACTER" bear testimony to the above statement. The general characteristics of his writing are simplicity and instructiveness and the examples of actual biographies of great men. He is always content with examples and not with precepts. "Example" he says "is one of the most potent of instructors, though it teaches without a tongue." His watchword is perseverance, diligence, duty to parents, family thrift and such-like everyday qualities which are of vital importance. His 'SELF-HELP' which begins with the universal proverb—"Heaven helps those who help themselves" is a great testimony to his belief in Providence and to his faith in diligence.

One of the special points which the present writer has been able to pick out from the book referred to after going through it not less than two dozen times is that the book is filled with examples of those great men who have succeeded not at the first chance but by repeated trials. He on one occasion quotes the observation of one of the greatest of the political geniuses—Mr. Fox. The passage runs as follows:—"It is all very well to tell me that a young man has distinguished himself by a brilliant first speech. He may go on or he may be satisfied with his first triumph but show me a young man

who has not succeeded at first but nevertheless has gone on, and I will back that young man to do better than most of those who have succeeded at the first trial.' He often says that perseverance is the key-note of success. Smiles infuses courage and inspiration into us by saying that, whatever be the circumstances, if one be true to himself, he must succeed. He speaks in glowing terms to those who get disappointed on account of severe penury. The well-known words of the poet Gray will show the self-same idea. "Chill penury repress'd their noble rage and froze the genial current of the soul." To the believer in this idea he says that poverty is not such a barricade that it can not be surmounted by patience and perseverance.

His essays, on the other hand, are not wanting in spiritual exhortation. By the influence of his writings we are speedily led to be God-fearing; and the examples of those who have sacrificed their worldly enjoyments by being preachers and missionaries are not few. He has not spared to mention even the very name of Mr. Carry, a benevolent man who has made his name almost immortal by doing many good works and by establishing a middle school at Barisal. He has not omitted a single name in whose life there is a soul of goodness. It is not less astonishing that he not only cites examples from his own country but also from other countries. He speaks of the life of Napoleon in as stirring words as the life of Wellington.

His essays often inspire us with moral and spiritual instructions. His great example referred to in the book on "Duty" under the title "Responsibility" teaches us to keep away from an earthly career of pomp by unfair means. It can be strongly asserted that if any body can read all his essays and can truly and faithfully follow the path laid down by him, he can be an ideal human being. I may remark in passing that it is not out of place to refer to a saying of the great orator whose voice still as it were rings in the ear of the present age. The following quotation has been given in such an attractive way that every careful student must understand the efficacy of difficulty and the use of vice which 'ease' brings on in its train. Burke says "Difficulty is a severe

instructor set over us by the supreme ordinance of a parental Guardian and Instructor, who knows us better than we know ourselves, as He loves us better too. He that wrestles with us strengthens our nerves and sharpens our skill : Our antagonist is thus our helper." We find a similar idea in Burns—

"Though losses and crosses
Be lessons right severe,
There's wit there, you 'll get there,
You 'll find no other where."

My readers should never entertain the idea that Smiles was in-experienced in family life or in other words, in household affairs. His book entitled "THRIFT" is a golden proof of it. He says that we should never be spend-thrifts and should put something, however small be the amount, in the savings bank. The style in which he paints the unrivalled career of Palissy, the potter, is simply admirable. His accuracy of thought and expression is also commendable and is one of the main qualities which place him in the first rank of essayists. His thoroughness is not less remarkable. Though an essayist, he, like many novelists, can attract the attention of the disappointed men and specially those who have gone astray on account of repeated failures. His comparison symmetrical with fact is really beautiful and worth reading. It is a general idea entertained by a mass of educated people even, that essays are uninteresting, but he by the extra-ordinary power of his pen has routed that idea altogether. His books are as interesting as any novel,

In writing his voluminous books he has not confused one subject with another. Even a child whose mother-tongue is English can easily understand and appreciate them. His choice of words is very nice indeed. His simplicity of style is the first and the foremost point of importance. He gives us a vivid picture of the life and character of Englishmen and on the other hand he points out their deterioration. On the one hand, he gives the description impartially of the sharpness and rapidity of Napoleon's management of war-affairs, and on the other hand, of the calm and sober temper of Wellington even when he was in urgent need of food

and materials. His advice to us can easily be summed up in the well-known words of Napoleon: "Impossible" says Napoleon "is a word found in the dictionary of fools!" We should by no means be disappointed in whatever circumstances we fall. He says that even the notorious dunces can cut a good figure in the market of the world. On this occasion he cites the example of one of his class-mates who was one of the greatest of dunces. In spite of the ardent and repeated attempt of the teachers the dunce remained as he was before. But this dunce had a dull energy in him and when he came in contact with the world to play his part, he rose to be the chief magistrate of his native town. On another occasion he says that if a man earnestly and with his whole heart aspires after anything, he must be that for which he hankers. Here he gives an example of a carpenter who was mending a magistrate's bench with unusual carefulness; when asked the reason, he frankly expressed the desire of his being the magistrate, and the carpenter lived to sit upon that very bench as a magistrate.

As an essayist, Smiles surpasses all ordinary writers of modern times. A style without ambiguity is not generally found in present-day writers. The essay under the title "Habits of Thrift" is so to speak a monosyllabic one. A boy whose boundary of knowledge is within the sphere of even a small number of books can easily appreciate and assimilate everything in it without straining his every nerve; and he not only understands it but can be guided and inspired with confidence in him. His attention must be arrested and he will in course of time be a man of importance to society and to the community he belongs to. This is not the only importance but specially worthy of notice are its good quality of expression, of thought, of style, of simplicity and last not least, the quality of moral and spiritual influence. These books are specially recommended to young men, and more particularly to those that are eager for a new phase of life. Every one who comes in contact with these books must be influenced and inspired by them and a new page of life will certainly open before him.

HIRENDRANATH GHOSH,
1st Year Class, Section C.