

**HELPS BY  
THE WAY**

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Helps by the way by S. W. W. & M. S. H.

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# HELPS BY THE WAY

COMPILED BY

S. W. W. AND M. S. H.

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY

REV. PHILLIPS BROOKS, D. D.

*EIGHTH THOUSAND*

BOSTON  
D LOTHROP COMPANY  
FRANKLIN AND HAWLEY STREETS

1886  
1887



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## INTRODUCTION.

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**T**HIS little Book speaks for itself and hardly needs an introduction, and yet it may not seem unsuitable that one who has been interested in its compilation should say a few words about its purpose and idea.

Some books are teachers, and come to us with systematic and well ordered truth ; other books are friends and bring to us suggestions. We recognize at once the difference between the teacher and the friend. The two characters may be united in one man and yet they are separate when in our thought. We value the teacher for his truth ; we value the friend for his personality.

The books which come to us as friends have something which is almost personality for us.

We almost know their faces — we have almost heard the sound of their voices and felt the pressure of their hands.

And the most notable quality of such books is their suggestiveness. They bring their thought and give it to us not as men bring their treasures to a warehouse, laying them down there upon the floor as on a foreign, unrelated substance, but as you bring the spark of fire to a pile of wood which has within itself the power of burning and turning into fire. It is not the fullness of their hands which makes them welcome. It is the delicacy and discrimination of the finger which they lay upon some spring in us and set some of our nature free.)

This book, I fancy, aspires to be the friend of men and women, and so it must be judged by its suggestiveness. If it does what it hopes to do, it will show that it has the qualities which belong to all suggestive men and things; it will illustrate anew the essential nature of suggestiveness which is always interesting.



Let me mention two or three truths which are involved in the very fact that there are suggestive books and men — books and men at whose touch human natures start into life and thought which often far outgoes the book or man that touched them.

1. First, it implies a human nature full of mysterious and rich resources. You think that you have made a full survey of your own life and have an inventory of your possible powers, when sometime the wise word of a sage or of a child falls on you and some spring flies back, some door flies open, and you are thinking in new directions, living another life which you have never thought that you could live. Whenever that has once happened to a man, he always must think of himself expectantly and reverently, not knowing what other yet unopened chambers there may be in his life.

2. Again, suggestiveness in books and men, with the corresponding power of receiving suggestions in the men whom they touch, involves

the thoughts of how our endlessly various lives have a unity with one another in virtue of their power of responding to the same great simple influences. Some suggestive word out of this book will fall upon a score of lives some morning and will touch the key of each. Each will be better for it, but how differently. One will do better trading; another will do better teaching; another's household life will be more pure and lofty. The fire falls upon a hundred substances and each burns with the same fire, but with its own color. What could more illustrate how we are one beneath our differences than the sight of a single text or verse inspiring many different lives to be their best.

3. And as it displays the unity between different lives, so it brings out also the fact that each life is a unity when it is touched by and responds to some suggestive power. The engine seems a thousand things until the living steam is poured in upon it, and then it moves all together and shows that it is one thing.

You let the power of some fiery word in upon your life, and the grosser portions of you respond, and show that they are parts of the same nature with your finest feeling. Your morning prayer, your early greeting of your best friend, the single sentence from a glowing page fills the whole day with life. The drudgery of the hot noontime and the weary afternoon is fresher for it. The most mechanical occupations feel its power. The first dream in the new house colors all the hard experience which is to follow. And the pervading inspiration makes the whole life one.

4. This book provides for every day a text from Holy Scripture, and a few words from some English prose writer and a short piece of poetry. It is a good arrangement, in which each part has its meaning. The Bible is the oracle of souls. It is to countless men and women in some true sense the word of God, not to be reasoned with and questioned, but to be accepted with docility and faith. But the wise words of other literature are the utterances of thoughtful friends which we