

**MEMOIR OF
A BROTHER**

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Memoir of a brother by Thomas Hughes

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THOMAS HUGHES

**MEMOIR OF
A BROTHER**



Every most affect
George. & Hufner

Engraved by G. J. Jones from a portrait by J. H. Hill

MEMOIR OF A BROTHER.

THE
YON BROTHERS
& COMPANY.

BY

THOMAS HUGHES,

AUTHOR OF "TOM BROWN'S SCHOOL DAYS."

London :

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1873.

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P R E F A C E.

THIS Memoir was written for, and at the request of, the near relatives, and intimate friends, of the home-loving country gentleman, whose unlooked-for death had made them all mourners indeed. Had it been meant originally for publication, it would have taken a very different form. In compiling it, my whole thoughts were fixed on my own sons and nephews, and not on the public. It tells of a life with which indeed the public has no concern in one sense; for my brother, with all his ability and power of different kinds, was one of the humblest and most retiring of men; who just did his own duty, and held his own tongue, without the slightest effort or wish for fame or notoriety of any kind. In another sense, however, I do see that it has a meaning and interest for Englishmen in general, and have therefore consented to its publication in the usual way, though not without a

sense of discomfort and annoyance at having the veil even partially lifted from the intimacies of a private family circle. For, in a noisy and confused time like ours, it does seem to me that most of us have need to be reminded of, and will be the better for bearing in mind, the reserve of strength and power which lies quietly at the nation's call, outside the whirl and din of public and fashionable life, and entirely ignored in the columns of the daily press. The subject of this memoir was only a good specimen of thousands of Englishmen of high culture, high courage, high principle, who are living their own quiet lives in every corner of the kingdom, from John o' Groat's to the Land's-End, bringing up their families in the love of God and their neighbour, and keeping the atmosphere around them clean, and pure and strong, by their example,—men who would come to the front, and might be relied on, in any serious national crisis.

One is too apt to fancy, from the photographs of the nation's life which one gets day by day, that the old ship has lost the ballast which has stood her in such good stead for a thousand years, and is rolling more and more helplessly, in a gale which shows no sign of abating, for

her or any other national vessel, until at last she must roll over and founder. But it is not so. England is in less stress, and in better trim, than she has been in in many a stiffer gale.

The real fact is, that nations, and the families of which nations are composed, make no parade or fuss over that part of their affairs which is going right. National life depends on home life, and foreign critics are inclined to take the chronicles of our Divorce Court as a test by which to judge the standard of our home life, like the old gentleman who always spelt through the police reports to see "what the people were about." An acquaintance, however, with any average English neighbourhood, or any dozen English families taken at random, ought to be sufficient to reassure the faint-hearted, and to satisfy them that (to use the good old formula) the Lord has much work yet for this nation to do, and the nation manliness and godliness enough left to do it all, notwithstanding superficial appearances.

A life without sensation or incident may therefore well form a more useful subject of study in such a time, than the most exciting narrative of adventure and success, the conditions being, that it shall have been truly lived, and

faithfully told. Readers will judge for themselves whether the former condition has been fulfilled in this case: I wish I could feel the same confidence as to the latter. I can only say I have done my best.

T. H.