

**ENGLISH MEN OF  
SCIENCE: THEIR  
NATURE AND NURTURE**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649574780

English Men of Science: Their Nature and Nurture by Francis Galton

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Cover @ 2017

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ENGLISH MEN OF SCIENCE.

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# ENGLISH MEN OF SCIENCE:

*THEIR NATURE AND NURTURE.*

BY

FRANCIS GALTON, F.R.S.,

AUTHOR OF "HEREDITARY GENIUS," ETC.

London :

MACMILLAN & CO.

1874.

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LONDON:  
R. CLAY, SONS, AND TAYLOR, PRINTERS,  
BREAD STREET HILL.



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## PREFACE.

I UNDERTOOK the inquiry of which this volume is the result, after reading the recent work of M. de Candolle,<sup>1</sup> in which he analyses the salient events in the history of 200 scientific men who have lived during the two past centuries, deducing therefrom many curious conclusions which well repay the attention of thoughtful readers. It so happened that I myself had been leisurely engaged on a parallel but more extended investigation—namely, as regards men of ability of all descriptions, with the view of supplementing at some future time my work on Hereditary Genius. The object of that book

<sup>1</sup> "Histoire des Sciences et des Savants depuis deux Siècles." Par Alphonse de Candolle. Corr. Inst. Acad. Sc. de Paris, &c. Genève, 1873.



was to assert the claims of one of what may be called the "pre-efficients"<sup>1</sup> of eminent men, the importance of which had been previously overlooked; and I had yet to work out more fully its relative efficacy, as compared with those of education, tradition, fortune, opportunity, and much else. It was therefore with no ordinary interest that I studied M. de Candolle's work, finding in it many new ideas and much confirmation of my own opinions; also not a little criticism (supported, as I conceive, by very imperfect biographical evidence,)<sup>2</sup> of my published views on heredity. I thought it best to test the value of this dissent at once, by limiting my first publication to the same field as that on which M. de Candolle had worked—namely, to the history of men of science, and to investigate their sociology from wholly new, ample, and trustworthy materials. This I have done in the present volume; and I am confident that

<sup>1</sup> Or, "all that has gone to the making of." The word was suggested to me.

<sup>2</sup> Reference may be made to a short review by me of M. de Candolle's work, in the *Fortnightly Review*, March 1873.

one effect of the evidence here collected will be to strengthen the utmost claims I ever made for the recognition of the importance of hereditary influence.

A few of my results, and some of the evidence on which they were based, were given by me at a Friday evening lecture, February, 1874, before the Royal Institution. I have incorporated parts of that lecture into this volume, with emendations and large additions.

It had been my wish to work up the materials I possess with much minuteness; but some months of careful labour made it clear to me that they were not sufficient to bear a more strict or elaborate treatment than I have now given to them.

The pleasant duty remains of acknowledging a debt to my friend, Mr. Herbert Spencer, for many helpful suggestions, and for his encouragement when I was planning this work; and to reiterate my deep sense of gratitude to numerous correspondents, which I have expressed elsewhere in the following pages.

I may add that four of the scientific men who replied to my questions have passed away since I began to write. Of these, two had sent me complete returns, namely, Professor Phillips, the geologist, and Sir William Fairbairn, the engineer. As regards the other two—Sir Henry Holland, the physician, had published his autobiography, but he gave me much help colloquially, and promised more; and Sir Edmund, better known as Count Strzelecki, the Australian traveller and meteorologist, furnished me with very suggestive information, but too incomplete for statistical use.

FRANCIS GALTON.

42 RUTLAND GATE, *November, 1874.*

*P.S.*—I have to apologise for some faults of style in the earlier pages, due to my not having had as full an opportunity as I had counted upon of correcting that portion of the press.

After I had sent the above to the printer, a friend happened to point out to me the fol-