

THE PEASANT AND THE PRINCE

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The Peasant and the Prince by Harriet Martineau

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HARRIET MARTINEAU

**THE PEASANT
AND THE PRINCE**



Front.

PEASANT AND PRINCE.—Chap. 8.

THE PEASANT

AND

THE PRINCE.

By HARRIET MARTINEAU,

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"THE EMPLEAS AT HOME," "FRASES ON THE FIELDS,"

AND, &c.

With an Illustration.



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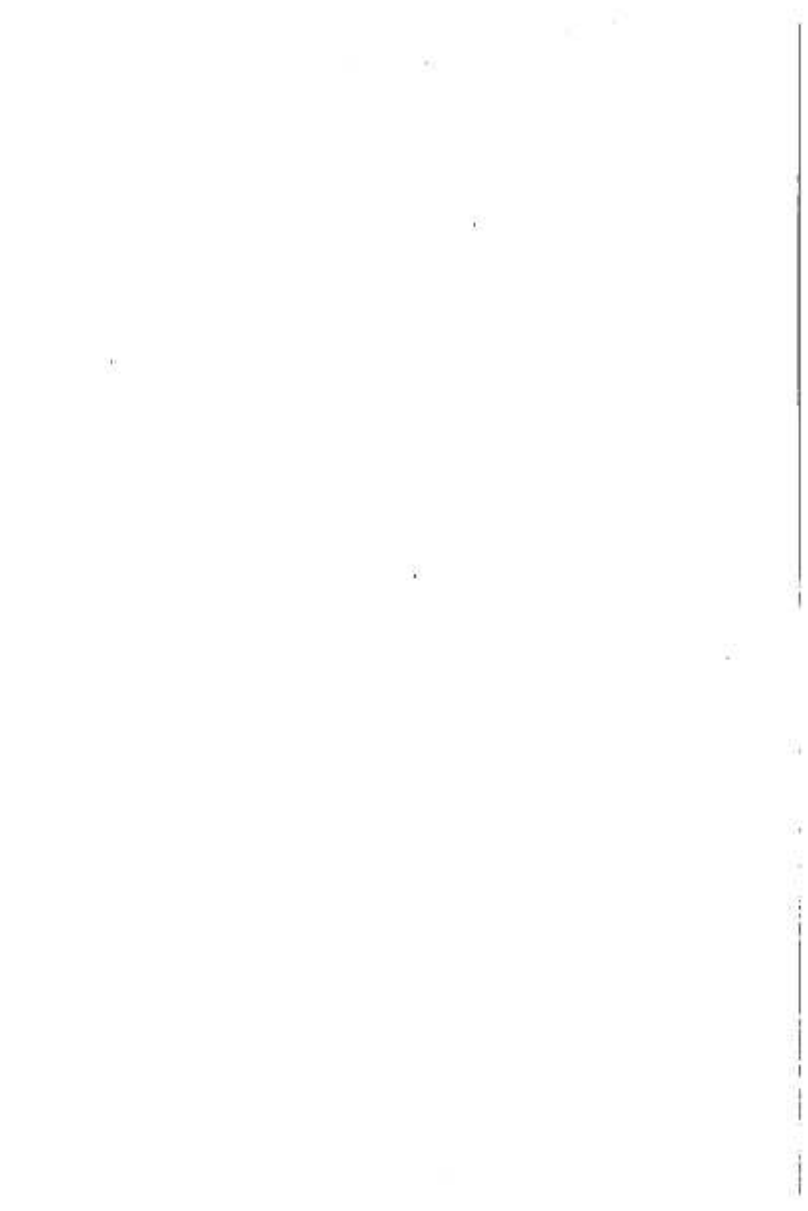


Figure 1: A line graph showing the relationship between the number of hours spent studying (x-axis) and the score on a test (y-axis). The x-axis ranges from 0 to 10 hours, and the y-axis ranges from 0 to 100. A solid line represents the data points, showing a positive correlation. A dashed line represents a linear regression fit to the data.

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| 41 | 42 | 43 | 44 | 45 | 46 | 47 | 48 | 49 | 50 |
| 51 | 52 | 53 | 54 | 55 | 56 | 57 | 58 | 59 | 60 |

1962

THE PEASANT.

CHAPTER I.

THE LOVER IN THE WOOD.

ONE fine afternoon in April, 1770, there was a good deal of bustle in the neighbourhood of the village of St. Menehould, in the province of Champagne, in France. The bride of the Dauphin of France,*—the lady who was to be queen when the present elderly king should die,—was on her journey from Germany, and was to pass through St. Menehould to Paris, with her splendid train of nobles and gentry; and the whole country was alive with preparations to greet her loyally as she passed. The houses of the village were cleaned and adorned; and gangs of labourers were at work repairing the roads of the district;—not hired labourers, but peasants, who were obliged by law to quit the work of their own fields or kilns, when called upon, to repair the roads, for a certain number of days. These road-menders were not likely to be among

* It is not certain how the heir of the throne of France came to be called Dauphin—(in the same manner as the heir of the English throne is called Prince of Wales)—but the reason is supposed to be this. Dauphin is French for Dolphin. An ancient noble family in France had a dolphin in their coat of arms, and called their family after it, and also their territory, known by the name of Dauphiné. The last of this race of independent nobles yielded up his territorial authority to the kings of France, whose heirs from that time (1349) to the last French Revolution, in 1830, have borne the title of Dauphin.

the most hearty welcomers of the Dauphiness; for they had been called off, some from their field-work, just at the time when the loss of a few days would probably cause great damage to the crops,—and others from the charcoal works, when their families could ill spare the small wages they gained at the kilns. These forced labourers would willingly have given up their sight of the Dauphiness, if she would have gone to Paris by another route, so that this road-mending might have been left to a more convenient season.

The peasants round St. Menehould were not all out upon the roads, however. In the midst of a wood, a little to the north of the village, the sound of a mallet might be heard by any traveller in the lane which led to the ponds, outside the estate of the Count de D—.

The workman who was so busy with his mallet was not a charcoal-burner; and the work he was doing was on his own account. It was Charles Bertrand, a young peasant well known in the village, who had long been the lover of Marie Randolphe, the pretty daughter of a tenant of the Count de D—. When they were first engaged, everybody who knew them was glad, and said they would be a happy couple. But their affairs did not look more cheerful as time went on. Charles toiled with all his might, and tried so earnestly to save money, that he did not allow himself sufficient food and rest, and was now almost as sallow and gaunt-looking as his older neighbours; and yet he could never get nearer to his object of obtaining a cottage and field to which he might take Marie home. Marie grew somewhat paler, and her face less pretty; for, besides her anxiety for her lover, she had hard living at home. Her father and mother had her two young brothers to maintain, as well as themselves; and no