

**HINTS ON SELF-
HELP; A BOOK FOR
YOUNG WOMEN**

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Hints on Self-Help; A Book for Young Women by Jessie Boucherett

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JESSIE BOUCHERETT

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A

BOOK FOR YOUNG WOMEN.

BY

JESSIE BOUCHERETT.

"I would wish to impress on young people who are beginning life, as I did, dependent on their own exertions, the absolute need of concentrated industry; a definite purpose, and, above all, conduct dictated by common sense."

LADY MORGAN.

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Dedicated

TO THE

PRESIDENT, VICE-PRESIDENTS, & COMMITTEE

OF THE

Society for Promoting the Employment of Women.

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Also to those who kindly afforded assistance to the Society in its early days, but who, from various causes, are no longer on the Committee.

INTRODUCTION.

THE object of this little work is to convey instruction to young women on the Conditions of Industrial Success, in an easy and popular manner, and to illustrate the subject by examples of successful industry in persons of their own sex.

It is a subject on which women generally have little knowledge, and the ill effects of this ignorance are shown in the large number of those who, when compelled to try to maintain themselves, fail in the attempt.

These failures are not confined to one class only, but extend to all, from the gentlewoman, who, by the misfortunes of her family, is unexpectedly thrown on her own exertions for support, to the labourer's daughter, who has been brought up in the knowledge that she would have to earn her bread by manual labour.

To begin with the failures of the highest class.

The Governesses' Benevolent Institution had, on the 31st of December, 1861, 102 annuitants on the chari-

table fund, 22 in the Asylum, and 142 applicants for annuities.

The Corporation of the Sons of the Clergy has a long list of aged single women, daughters of clergymen, dependent on it for support.

In London and elsewhere there are numerous charities to assist distressed gentlewomen—Homes for Poor Ladies, half self-supporting, half kept up by subscriptions; and Repositories, where fancy work, executed by the same class, may be purchased by the benevolent. Yet, numerous as are these charities, they are still insufficient for the task before them, as the report of every one which has come before me testifies; for each speaks, either of deserving cases left unaided from want of funds, or else complains that the assistance which can be afforded is inadequately small. In one case it is stated that a poor lady-worker for a repository actually died of want. Workhouse visitors tell us that in the wards it is not unusual to find women who have known "better days," and evidently belong to a higher rank than ordinary paupers.

In the lower ranks, too, sad failures occur. The oft-told tale of the shirt-maker,—

"Sewing at once, with a double thread,
A shroud as well as a shirt,"

has lost its force by repetition, yet is not less true or less terrible now, than when Hood wrote his famous song. In the workhouses of England there dwell, according to a late return, 2,267 able-bodied and intelligent young women of good character, unable to find work, and every night in London, when the over-

crowded casual wards are closed, women, sometimes a crowd of women, are shut out, and left to spend the night on the stones of the street outside, and this happens even when snow is on the ground!

That much of this misery arises in all classes from ignorance of the necessary conditions of industrial success is my belief, and the belief of others who have studied the subject.

One common cause of failure is the impression prevalent among both parents and daughters of every class, that unskilled female industry is of value; thus in no class are sufficient pains taken to prepare girls for their future avocations, and not until too late is it understood that a willing heart is of small avail in earning a livelihood, if united to unexercised brains and unskilful hands.

It is my object to combat this and other false notions; to set forth under what circumstances a woman may hope to succeed in supporting herself, and when she must necessarily fail; what will conduce to her success, and what bring on a failure.

In the Appendix are given the addresses of several institutions, where girls and young women may be taught various useful employments, suitable to different ranks and degrees of education. Also addresses are given from which well-taught and specially-trained young women may be obtained by those who require their services. I have given, too, the addresses of several emigration offices, and some hints as to the description of persons required in the Colonies. It has been my object to write a useful yet readable book. If I have