

# BRITISH WORKMAN



AND FRIEND OF THE  
SONS OF TOIL

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### CELEBRATED BLACKSMITHS.

**THOMAS CROMWELL**, the Prime Minister and favourite of Henry VIII., was the son of a blacksmith at Putney. What education he received was in a private school, where all the learning he attained was only reading, writing, and a little Latin. When he grew up, he travelled through the continent and visited Rome, and in his journey to and from that city he learned by heart Erasmus's translation of the New Testament. Upon his return from his travels, he was taken into the service of Cardinal Wolsey, and afterwards into that of the king, by whom he was advanced in wealth and honour until he became Earl of Essex, and Lord High Chamberlain of England. He was so hospitable and bountiful, that about two hundred persons were served at the gate of his house in Throgmorton Street, London, twice every day, with bread, meat, and drink. From the time he acquired authority in the cabinet, he employed it in promoting a knowledge of the Sacred Scriptures, one of his injunctions in the king's name being, that a large Bible, in English, should be placed in every church, that the parishioners might have an opportunity of reading it. We are indebted to him, also, for the establishment of parish registers of births, marriages, and burials. He was accused by his adversaries of treason, and beheaded in 1540.

**JOHN RAY**, one of the most learned naturalists of the 17th century, was the son of a blacksmith in Essex. He was first sent to the grammar school at Buntingford, and in 1644 was admitted into Catherine Hall, Cambridge, whence he afterwards removed to Trinity College. His health becoming injured by intense application to study, he was obliged during his leisure hours to take riding or walking exercise in the fields, which led him to the study of plants. With his friend Willoughby, he travelled through various parts of England, Scotland, and the continent, in search of plants and other natural curiosities. He died in 1704, having written several valuable works, one of the most important of which was "The Wisdom of God manifested in the Works of Creation."

**BARTHOLOMEW ASTORIO**, an Italian physician and poet, was born in 1628. His father was a poor blacksmith, with whom he worked until his eighteenth year. He then began to read such books as came in his way, or were lent to him, and with some difficulty was enabled to enter the university of Padua, where he studied medicine, and so was qualified to enter upon the lucrative practice to which he was introduced by an influential friend. He died in 1677.

**QUINTIN MATYS** was a blacksmith at Antwerp. When in his twentieth year, he became enamoured of the beautiful daughter of a painter, who cannot be named, returned his passion, but the father was inexorable.

"Wert thou a painter," said he, "who should be thine; but a blacksmith!—never!"

The young man mused and mused; the hammer dropped from his hand; a thousand glorious conceptions passed like shadows across his brain.

"I will be a painter," said he. He applied to his new art with so much liking and perseverance, that in a short time he produced pictures which gave a promise of the highest excellence. He gained for his reward the hand for which he sought, and rose to a high rank in his profession. He died in 1629, and a monument was erected to his memory in the cathedral of his native city.

Some of Quintin Matys's heads in a Descent from the Cross, at Antwerp, are declared by Sir Joshua Reynolds to be equal to any of Raphael's. His Two Misers, in the Windsor Gallery, is also much admired. The elegant steel work over the tomb of King Edward IV., in St. George's Chapel, Windsor, is attributed to the workmanship of this celebrated man.

A ROYAL BLACKSMITH.—It was the custom of Peter the Great to visit the different workshops and manufactories, not only to encourage his people, but also to judge what useful establishments might be formed in his dominions. Among the places he visited frequently, were the forges of an Miller, at Irtis, ninety versts from Moscow.

The czar once passed a whole month there; during which time, after giving due attention to the affairs of state, which he never neglected, he amused himself by seeing and examining everything in the most minute manner, and even employed himself in learning the business of a blacksmith. He succeeded so well, that one day, before he left the place, he forged eighteen hoes of iron, and put his own particular mark on each bar. The boyars and other noblemen of his suite, were employed in blowing the bellows, stirring the fire, carrying coals, and performing the other duties of a blacksmith's assistant. When Peter had finished, he went to the proprietor, praised his manufactory, and asked him how much he gave his workmen per poed.

"Three kopecks, or an altina," answered Miller.

"Very well," replied the czar; "I have then earned eighteen altinas."

Miller brought eighteen ducats, and offering them to Peter, told him that he could not give a workman like his majesty's rate per poed. Peter refused the sum, saying, "Keep your ducats, I have not so much better than any other man; give me what you would give to another: I want to buy a pair of shoes, of which I am in great need."

At the same time he showed him his shoes, which had been once mended, and were again full of holes. Peter accepted the eighteen altinas, and bought himself a pair of new shoes, which he used to show with much pleasure, saying, "These I earned with the sweat of my brow."

One of the great hoes forged by Peter the Great, and authenticated by his mark, is still to be seen at Irtis, in the forge of Miller. Another similar bar is preserved in the cabinet of curiosities at St. Petersburg.

**REV. SAMUEL MARSH** was born at Horsforth, near Leeds, towards the end of the last century; and, becoming an early student of the law, was taken by his grandfather, who was a blacksmith, to assist him in his employment. He was a thoughtful, lively, energetic youth, and adopted the habit of rising as early as 4 or 5 o'clock in the morning, in order to discharge his duties as the squire and gain leisure to attend school and study Latin. The school he attended was conducted by the Rev. Samuel Stone, of Rawden, who took great interest in his pupil, and was the means of procuring his admission to the university. While there, he gained such approval by the excellence of his conduct, that he was selected by government as chaplain to the colony of New South Wales, which was taken in the year 1770. He gave himself liberally to his work, and as a clergyman, magistrate, and philanthropist, by his indefatigable labours in the colony, and his earnest representations to the government at home, introduced moral and political changes of which the present generation are reaping the fruits. He was also the honored pioneer missionist to the savages of New Zealand, in the year 1814, and died in 1837, aged 70.

**THOMAS NEWCOMEN**, a blacksmith of Dartmouth, in Devonshire, lived at the latter end of the seventeenth century, and the beginning of the eighteenth. To this worthy Devonian, who was a blacksmith, the credit of having made the first great improvements in steam engines, by forming a vacuum under the piston, thus bringing into action the atmospheric pressure.



AARON ARNOLD AND THE TWO FATHERLESS CHILDREN. (See next page.)

**THE HON. H. W. PEPPER**, a circuit judge, of Tennessee, was once a blacksmith, and by way of joke made with his own hands an iron-shoe, which he presented to the governor, the Hon. Andrew Johnson. In return, Governor Johnson, who had been once a tailor, cut and made with his own hands a coat, and gave it to the judge.





