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# **PASSAGES FROM THE LIFE OF A PHILOSOPHER**

CHARLES BABBAGE

JVA EDITORA

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# Passages from the Life of a Philosopher

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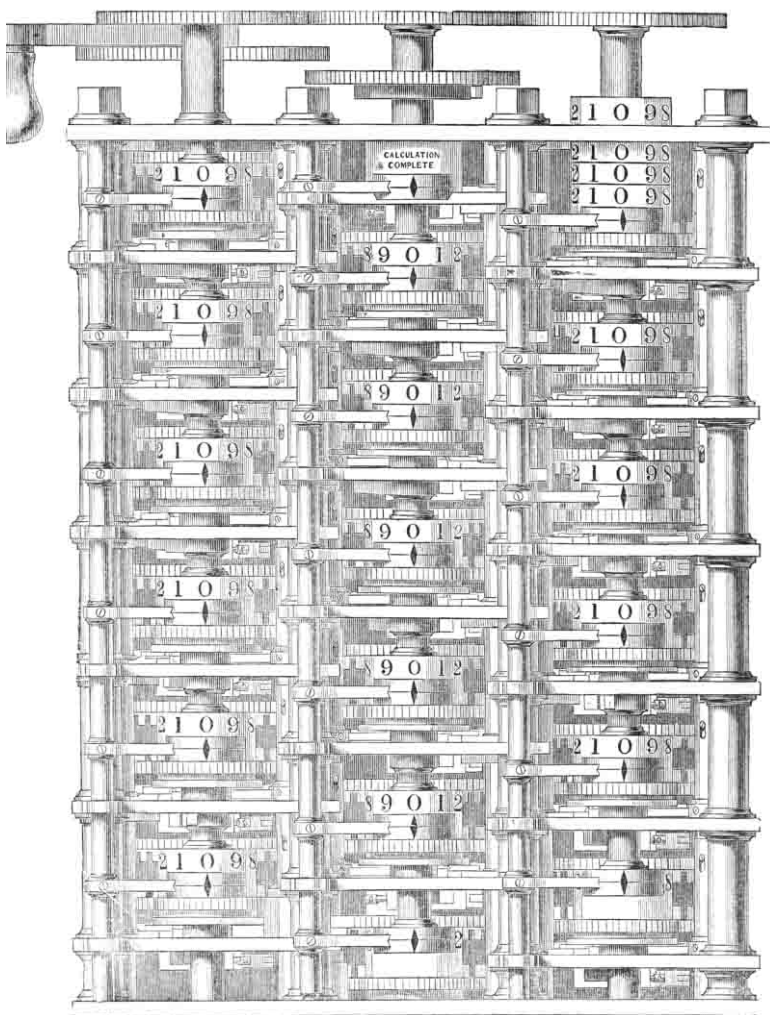
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PASSAGES FROM THE  
LIFE OF A  
PHILOSOPHER, by  
Charles Babbage



B. H. Babbage, del.

Impression from a woodcut of a small portion of Mr. Babbage's Difference Engine No. 1, the property of Government, at present deposited in the Museum at South Kensington.

It was commenced 1823.

This portion put together 1833.

The construction abandoned 1842.

This plate was printed June, 1853.

This portion was in the Exhibition 1862.

PASSAGES  
FROM  
THE LIFE OF A PHILOSOPHER.

BY  
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AND ST. LAZARUS, INST. IMP. (ACAD. MORAL.) PARIS CORR.,  
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SOCIUS. ACAD. IMP. ET REG. PETROP., NEAP., BRUX., PATAV., GEORG.  
FLOREN, LYNCEI ROM., MUT., PHILOMATH. PARIS, SOC. CORR., ETC.

“I’m a philosopher. Confound them all—

Birds, beasts, and men; but no, not womankind.”—*Don Juan*.

“I now gave my mind to philosophy: the great object of my ambition was to make out a complete system of the universe, including and comprehending the origin, causes, consequences, and termination of all things. Instead of countenance, encouragement, and applause, which I should have received from every one who has the true dignity of an oyster at heart, I was exposed to calumny and misrepresentation. While engaged in my great work on the universe, some even went so far as to accuse me of infidelity;—such is the malignity of oysters.”—*“Autobiography of an Oyster” deciphered by the aid of photography in the shell of a philosopher of that race,—recently scolloped.*

LONDON:  
LONGMAN, GREEN, LONGMAN, ROBERTS, & GREEN.  
1864.

[The right of Translation is reserved.]

## DEDICATION.

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TO VICTOR EMMANUEL II., KING OF ITALY.

SIRE,

IN dedicating this volume to your Majesty, I am also doing an act of justice to the memory of your illustrious father.

IN 1840, the King, Charles Albert, invited the learned of Italy to assemble in his capital. At the request of her most gifted Analyst, I brought with me the drawings and explanations of the Analytical Engine. These were thoroughly examined and their truth acknowledged by Italy's choicest sons.

To the King, your father, I am indebted for the first public and official acknowledgment of this invention.

I am happy in thus expressing my deep sense of that obligation to his son, the Sovereign of united Italy, the country of Archimedes and of Galileo.

I am, Sire,  
With the highest respect,  
Your Majesty's faithful Servant,

CHARLES BABBAGE.

## PREFACE.

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SOME men write their lives to save themselves from *ennui*, careless of the amount they inflict on their readers.

Others write their personal history, lest some kind friend should survive them, and, in showing off his own talent, unwittingly show them up.

Others, again, write their own life from a different motive—from fear that the vampires of literature might make it their prey.

I have frequently had applications to write my life, both from my countrymen and from foreigners. Some caterers for the public offered to pay me for it. Others required that I should pay them for its insertion; others offered to insert it without charge. One proposed to give me a quarter of a column gratis, and as many additional lines of eulogy as I chose to write and pay for at ten-pence per line. To many of these I sent a list of my works, with the remark that they formed the best life of an author; but nobody cared to insert them.

I have no desire to write my own biography, as long as I have strength and means to do better work.

The remarkable circumstances attending those Calculating Machines, on which I have spent so large a portion of my life, make me wish to place on record some account of their past history. As,

however, such a work would be utterly uninteresting to the greater part of my countrymen, I thought it might be rendered less unpalatable by relating some of my experience amongst various classes of society, widely differing from each other, in which I have occasionally mixed.

This volume does not aspire to the name of an autobiography. It relates a variety of isolated circumstances in which I have taken part—some of them arranged in the order of time, and others grouped together in separate chapters, from similarity of subject.

The selection has been made in some cases from the importance of the matter. In others, from the celebrity of the persons concerned; whilst several of them furnish interesting illustrations of human character.

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