

to begin the study of his profession. His education was of that kind that is usually acquired with little aid from the school-master. It was the same sort of training that the early lawyers, statesmen and divines of the West were compelled to pursue. A few terms' attendance at the common school, a year or two devoted to the study of a profession, and then a launch out into the world to further develop their powers in its rugged contests. There was no graduation in this course; education was a life-work. It was such training as this that developed men like Jackson and Clay and Douglas and Lincoln. It lacked the drill and discipline, the deep learning and culture of the college, but it supplied a knowledge of human nature, and a ready fund of practical information; it preserved the individuality of the man, and forced into active growth his strongest faculties. He who could by his own unaided efforts overcome the disadvantages of frontier settlement and rise to distinction in public and professional life, must have been endowed with great natural ability and force of character. A process of education, however, which fostered and promoted such intellectual development under circumstances so unfavorable, is worthy of respectful consideration. It did not stimulate a hot-bed growth; it had no tendency to fashion every mind in the same mould, to smother genius, and to root out that intense individuality which is the germ of true greatness in man.

Gen. Smith was self-educated; he had chosen his own studies and pursuits, and grown to the full maturity of his powers with little assistance or direction from others. He was perhaps, never a close student of books, he certainly was not during the later years of his life. He seemed to have more capacity to learn than inclination to study. He had evidently pursued the common and higher branches of learning only so far as he deemed them useful in his profession; and after his admission to the bar, he studied law only as it was necessary in the argument and trial of his causes. His knowledge was not, therefore, profound, it was not always accurate, but it was varied, extensive and practical. His personality was not lost in his attainments, but gave direction and character to all his learning. His acquirements could not over-shadow his native talents; and in an emergency he relied less on memory than upon mother-wit.