

## Samuel Fox, Adult School Pioneer

By kind permission of the National Adult School Union we are able to present a portrait of this Friend,<sup>1</sup> as reproduced in G. Currie Martin's *The Adult School Movement* (London: N.A.S.U., 7½ by 5, pp. xviii. + 435, with an Introduction by Sir Michael Sadler, and twenty illustrations, 3s. and 5s.). Samuel Fox (1781-1868) was a Friend, a grocer in the city of Nottingham, "a man looked up to by every one for his probity and conscientious character." He became at an early age, a helper, in the work of Adult Schools, of William Singleton, a member of a Methodist body and originator of Adult Schools in Nottingham. "The School leaders were mainly recruited from the women assistants in his shop, and we are told that he closed on Saturday evening earlier than his neighbours that everyone might be in the School at seven o'clock on Sunday morning."

It is said that on one occasion he overheard a butcher name a certain price to a woman for a piece of meat. Though a low figure, the man knew she could not afford it, S.F. asked him to weigh it, paid the price the man had named and handed the meat to the woman, saying to the butcher, "If thou hast any complaint to make I will go with thee to the magistrate." One day a woman entered his shop and asked for a piece of string. He told her to help herself. This she proceeded to do rather liberally, and looked up to see how he was taking it. "Help thyself," he said, but eventually he stopped her and began to measure the length she had taken. She then offered to pay for it. "No," was his reply. "I just wanted to know the length of a woman's conscience."

One of his sayings was, "If you mean to thrive, you must rise at five."

Samuel Fox was one of the secretaries of the Nottingham Anti-Slavery Association. In 1836 he signed an appeal for support of T. F. Buxton's motion in Parliament for a Select Committee to enquire into the working of the apprenticeship system in the Colonies. He was a son of William Fox, grocer and flax-dresser, and Mary, his wife. In 1810 he married Sarah Jowitt, of Nottingham.

<sup>1</sup> The portrait is a reproduction of a painting by George Hodgson from a pencil sketch by a relation of the family named Hackett.