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ARTICLE III.

GENIUS.

By William S. Tyler, Professor in Amherst College.

IDEAS, not men, govern the world. Or, if men rule, whether in the church or in the State, they rule only in and by the ideas which are entertained and cherished by those subject to their control. Men have been kings, but ideas are the throne and the sceptre, in and by which they reigned. Men have been priests and popes, but ideas have invested them with all their sacredness in the eyes of the people. An idea clothes a president, chosen by the popular voice, with a sovereignty more real and more absolute, than that of the legitimate monarch or the irresponsible despot. And an idea, deep-seated in the public mind, enthroned in the heart of the nation, however degraded or oppressed that nation may be, though it be Turkey or Muscovy itself, still a political or religious idea which they reverence as having come down to them from a patriarch or a prophet, even there, sets bounds to the power of the Autocrat, saying to the Czar or the Sultan: "thus far shalt thou come, and no farther, and here shall thy proud waves be stayed."

Men have been conquerors, but ideas have been the engines or forces by which they conquered. Alexander and Napoleon won and triumphed, because they knew how to seize upon these forces, and direct them to the accomplishment of their own chosen ends. An idea precipitated Asia upon Europe in the Mohammedan conquests, and Europe upon Asia again in the Crusades. Luther and Washington were each the embodiment of a grand idea, which was already working silently in multitudes of inferior minds; and the Protestant Reformation and the American Revolution were the magnificent results.

Ideas *make* men; form their character, control their conduct, determine their history. The age, the nation, the city, the community, the family and the individual, all have their several ideas, more or less cherished, and more or less controlling, which characterize them; which make them what they are; and which, so long as they are entertained, determine what they *shall* be.

The idea of *Jehovah*, the one living and true God, as *their* God and King, was the idea which distinguished and controlled the better part, at least, of the Jewish nation in its best ages; and it has given to that obscure, that despised and hated people, that "teterrima gens" et "despectissima pars servientium," as they were esteemed by those conquering nations who could not understand the idea, a history of more true grandeur, and a literature of more enduring power, than those of any other nation on the face of the earth. The ideal of Sparta, as it was set before her by Lycurgus, was that of a military aristocracy, isolated and conservative, without commerce and without money, without books and without culture or progress; and Sparta continued to the last a nation of soldiers, born only for the State (and that organized wholly for war), stationary even in the military art, rude in speech, uncultivated in manners, without versatility or flexibility, as cold, and stiff, and heavy, and barren of beauty or utility, as her own iron currency. The bean ideal of Athens, though a contemporary State and a kindred race, was widely different, nay, diametrically opposita. Her ruling idea, early adopted and never abandoned, to which her great lawgiver gave shape, and which all her subsequent statesmen could only guide and unfold, was democracy; her law was free development, unrestrained culture, unbounded progress; and the result was a literature so diversified, a civilization so untrammelled, a development so manifold and yet so beautiful, that we know not which is the more wonderful, its variety or its perfection. Loyalty and devotion, faith and obedience were more the prevailing ideas of the ancients, especially the oriental nations. Hence prophets, priests and kings were the great men and the ruling powers of Asia and the Old World. The modern idea, at least in Western Europe and America, is individual and political liberty, freedom in thinking and speaking, in writing and printing, in believing and acting. Accordingly, though kings and emperors may appear to *reign*, the people now *rule*, not only in America, but in Great Britain, and France even, and Western Europe generally; and they will rule more and more, despite of occasional reactions, despite of legitimacy and hierarchy, till the oppressor and the oppressed shall stand together on the level of a common humanity. And those who would be great men in this age, must be great, not over and above, but among and through, the people; great in patriotism, or, better still, in Christian charity and universal philanthropy.

The ruling *social* idea of the Middle Ages was honor; and chivalry, with its virtues and its vices, its beauty and its deformity, was the flower and fruit. Wealth is, to a great extent, the ruling idea of modern society; the governing power in modern civilization. Mammon is the god of the nineteenth century, capitalists its kings, and bankers its priests; and, as a natural consequence, every body is making haste to get rich.

The ruling ideas of all ages and nations have had in them more or less of the elements of truth and rectitude; else they never would have become the prevailing and ruling ideas. The minds of men are so constituted, and, with all their depravity and perverseness, they are still so adapted by nature to the true and the right, that no system, or idea, or influence, which is entirely devoid of these elements, can exercise a wide or lasting dominion, whether in the political or the moral world.

At the same time, it is equally obvious, that these ruling ideas must have been, to a great extent, false and wrong. Otherwise, the history of the world would not have been, in so large a measure, a history of vices and crimes, and mankind would not now be in so degraded and so unhappy a condition.

It is quite impossible to exaggerate the importance of truth and rectitude in these ruling ideas. They form the creed, they regulate the conduct, they direct the business and the politics, they fashion the ethics and the religion, they shape the character and destiny, of individuals, of communities, and of nations. They are the real kings and princes, prophets and priests, of mankind in all ages. Nay, they are the gods of this lower world; the *dei minores et majores* of ancient and modern, of Pagan and Christian, nations. Lord Bacon designates the notions and prejudices, which had perverted the philosophy of past ages into a barren wilderness, by the significant name of *idols*, and classifies them, as the idols of the tribe, the idols of the school, etc. No term is better fitted to express either the power or the monstrosity of some of the ideas, of which we speak. Sometimes an object or image, the most hideous that imagination can conceive, or ingenuity construct, is tricked out in gaudy attire, honored with the most precious offerings, worshipped as an idol, honored as a god. Thus war is a Moloch, a Juggernaut; indeed, all the idols of the heathen combined, form but a feeble approximation to its unspeakable deformity and atrocity. And yet it has been the idol and the god of the ages and nations almost to our own,

obeyed, worshipped and honored with the sacrifice of untold myriads of human victims.

At other times, the most intrinsically lovely and excellent of all the creatures which God has made; the most ethereal and divine of all the essences which exist in the universe of thought; are so misconceived and misrepresented, that they inspire no reverence, attract no love, but are passed by with neglect, or looked down upon with contempt. Such are the ideas, which men have too often conceived of meek-eyed peace, gentle charity and heavenly love; such the treatment they have too often received in our world. Such, too, are the misconceptions, and such the injuries, with which the very God of peace and love too often met, as he went about doing good in human form on earth.

Even such a ruling idea, to come at length to the immediate subject of this Article, is that of GENIUS in the empire of mind; thus often and thus fatally, as we think, has it been misapprehended; and thus important beyond calculation is it, that it should be truly and rightly conceived.

Genius may well be called the *idol of the school*. It is honored in the preparatory school; it is almost worshipped in the college. The young, in all the stages of their education, especially in our large public seminaries, look up to the reputed genius, as belonging to a higher order of beings. They envy his transcendent intellectual powers. They repeat his smart sayings. They imitate his manners, catch his spirit, and aspire to tread in his footsteps. They not unfrequently admire his very faults, and ape his eccentricities. Too often he has power to make his evil good, and bitter sweet, among a large circle of admirers, if not even throughout the literary institution.

This exaggerated estimate of genius is not, however, confined to the young, or shut up in academic halls. It extends, more or less, to all ages, and all classes. It prevails, especially, through the literary community. Genius is not only the idol of the school, but the god of the learned world; the Magnus Apollo of the literary Pantheon; the Jupiter Optimus Maximus, Deus Deorum of the Olympus of letters.

And, as ours is an age of philosophy rather than faith, of intellectual rather than moral culture, we are, perhaps, peculiarly liable to this idolatry. If hero-worship is the tendency of the earliest periods in the history, whether of particular nations or of

mankind; and the worship of beauty is the characteristic of the Middle Ages; in these latter days, perhaps, we incline to the worship of intellect and of genius. And, as the hero of the early times was not always of the highest order, nor the beauty of the Middle Ages always of the truest type; as the one was too often sadly perverted by a false code of morals, and the other monstrously distorted by a false standard of taste, so the intellect that we idolize, the genius that we worship, in our day, is too often, not after the true and original Divine archetype, but after some perverted and corrupted human pattern; not that sunlike effulgence which is the brightest image of its Maker, but some mephitic exhalation from the low grounds of earth, which "leads to bewilder and dazzles to blind."

The college genius is usually a one-eyed, one-eared, one-sided monster, like Virgil's Polyphemus, who never had but one eye, and that one he had lost in a fit of intoxication:

Monstrum horrendum, informe, ingens, cui lumen ademptum.

He is a man of one idea, one study, one pursuit. He has an eye for one thing, and he can see nothing else; nothing else is worth seeing. He has a genius for languages, for instance, and despises mathematics, as hostile to taste and imagination, fitted only to cramp and confine all the most ethereal faculties of the human soul. Alas, for poor Plato, that he should have been so devoid of taste and imagination, and of genius too, as to make mathematics the very password for admission to the Academy! Or, he has a genius for the natural sciences, and looks down with sovereign contempt upon classical studies, as the study of mere words and the works of men, while he exalts the natural sciences as the study of things and the works of God. As if words were not inseparably connected with things, speech the invariable accompaniment of reason, and reason and speech the noblest work of God.¹ As if the truest thoughts, and best words and divinest deeds of men in all past ages were less worthy of the attentive consideration of a rational and moral being, than snail-shells, or frog-tracks in the mud and mire of the pre-Adamite earth.

More likely he has a genius for light reading, and fine writing, and grandiloquent speaking; and to confine him to the plodding routine of mathematical or classical discipline, were to chain the

¹ So Shakspeare: "the lips is parcel of the mind;" and so the Greek language, in which reason and speech are denoted by the same word.

bird of Jove to the earth. As if the borrowed wings and plumage only of the eagle were sufficient to convert the jackdaw into the bird of Jove, and bear him upward to the sun! Most likely of all, he has a manifest genius for talking, and loafing, and lounging; and, to so ethereal a spirit, all study is decidedly a bore.

Besides, what need is there of study to him? He can get his lessons without studying them; at least, he can recite them without getting them. He has a genius for extemporizing; why should he not exercise and display it in the recitation room? He has invented a new method of study, which may be characterized as a species of incubation; and he has brought quite to perfection a new branch of mathematics, which, by a very summary process, can "count chickens before they are hatched." He can read the Orations of Demosthenes by instinct, and can see through the *Metaphysics* of Aristotle by intuition. "The College Laws" he comprehends and *masters* by a process equally summary, equally original, equally *transcendental*. Indeed, he is above *all* laws, human and divine. Laws, rules, precepts are for meaner mortals. He is a law unto himself.

Often he tramples under foot the laws of bodily health and life. To eat, and drink, and sleep, and exercise, like other men, were to reduce himself to a level with the common herd. He turns night into day, and day into night; eats and drinks and sleeps when others study, and studies when others sleep; for, if he were once *known to study* like his classmates and fellow-students, he would lose his reputation for original and creative genius. He violates all the laws of mind; those of reason and imagination not less than those of understanding and memory; and, while he despises what he deems the lower, saps the foundations of the higher, faculties. The moral law itself scarcely reaches up in its sanctions to the superhuman eminence on which he stands. At least his faults are comparatively venial. The splendid sins of the man of genius are to be viewed in a very different light from the low vices of ordinary men. And such vulgar virtues as honesty, chastity and sobriety, he cannot condescend to practise, or even think of them.

In the various walks of professional and literary life, there are not wanting men of this same type; men who aspire to the reputation of genius, and prove their title by their eccentricities and extravagances, perchance by the looseness of their principles

and the irregularity of their lives. No one thing so characterizes them, as the intensity of their desires and efforts to be unlike other bipeds. And they *are* about as distinct from the proper type of humanity, as the strutting and crowing "two-legged animal without wings," which Diogenes plucked and turned into the Academy, exclaiming: "see Plato's man." If they belong to the genus "*homo sapiens*," it must be among certain rare specimens in the species *sapientissimus*. If a new genus were formed and denominated *ipse*, they would fall inevitably, nay, they would rush eagerly, into the species *ipsissimus*.

In the pulpit, for instance, our would-be genius hunts up texts that most of his hearers would never suspect to be in the Bible, and, dividing his discourse, like the Scotchman, into three heads (of which the *last* is always the *longest*), he tells his hearers, first, things, which they do not know; secondly, things, which he does not know; and, thirdly, things, which are alike beyond the knowledge of the preacher and his hearers. He loves to startle his audience with paradoxes; to excite their laughter by those incongruities which are so easily got up in the pulpit, and which are so cheap a substitute for wit; and to appall them almost by his boldness in the use of certain words, which, lightly spoken by unappointed lips, constitute profaneness. He has a sovereign contempt for standards and formularies; long enough have they checked the free development of the human mind; they shall not cramp his soaring and expanding genius. He can swallow creeds, as fast as an anaconda can swallow mice; and, when he has devoured those of all churches and sects, he is ready, Saturn like, to devour his own offspring. A man of such prodigious capacity and such pulpit legerdemain, his hearers think, is unquestionably a genius. Another of the class will make a platform speech every evening in the week, and, Saturday afternoon or Sunday morning, get up two sermons for the Sabbath, and make *nothing of them*. Assuredly he must be a genius. Another sort (a notable example occurs to us, as we write) *are*, indeed, the very genius of license and laziness, though they often pass for considerably more. They have in all, perhaps, half a dozen written sermons — written on fly leaves, like the inspirations of the Sybil — and these they shuffle together, like a pack of cards in a practised hand, and turn over, as a child does a kaleidoscope, not more to their own satisfaction, however, than to the wonder and delight of their auditors. And thus they continue to supply

two or three of our "best (?) pulpits" for two or three years each, till at length loss of character, more than want of wit or ideas, drives them to the bar or to the stump, where they figure in much the same way as political declaimers, still making use of the same "purple patches," which served them so well in the pulpit. And still the multitude run after them wherever they go, crying: it is the voice of a genius, nay, of a god!

Whether there is more room for such geniuses in the law than in the ministry, it does not become us to say. Certainly the fondest admirer of the legal profession will not deny, that it affords scope enough for jugglers and sharpers; that smartness and singularity too often pass for genius; and that unscrupulous brilliancy and undeserved success not unfrequently baptize a very questionable character into a highly honorable name. The lawyer who has saved the greatest number of villains from the State prison or the halter, is the reputed genius, not to say the acknowledged head, of his profession; and, if he is sharp-witted enough to deceive, not only a jury of twelve men, but the sovereign people, he is an eminent genius, and may aspire to a seat in Congress, or even to the occupancy of the White House at Washington. If any deem this a caricature, they will, at least, acknowledge, that more or less of the lawless and the erratic belongs to the vulgar idea of the legal genius, while the true and the right have little or nothing to do with it; and that quick wits and loose morals, if they do not win him wealth, honor and power, are no barrier to his success, scarcely a drawback on his reputation. And too many of our great men, who have a genius for *politics* and *financiering*, seem to have adopted, with the apparent consent of the mass of the people, the maxim, that laws, whether human or divine, are, like cobwebs, made only to entangle the weak and to be broken through by the strong.

If we follow our would-be genius into the medical profession, we find him still lawless and eccentric, scorning study, despising book-practice and precedents, experimenting with reckless boldness on the life and health of his patients; never coming when he is called, and never ready to leave when he does come; choosing to be up all night, and never willing to rise in the morning; never collecting his own dues, and never ready to pay his debts to others. If he observes common usages, it is only to avoid them; and if he has any rule, it is to be irregular. And,

strange to tell, these singularities, annoying and even fatal as they not unfrequently are, pass with the multitude for so many proofs of genius. He is certainly an original; and that, with many, is another name for genius.

In literature, our genius, so called, belongs to the school of Byron, and Bulwer, and Bailey, rather than of Cowper, and Burns, and Wordsworth. It is the Satanic school, rather, to which he belongs, for he strives to outdo all earthly competitors in daring and recklessness, if not also in cursing and bitterness. He aspires to resemble, not the dew and the rain, but the tempest, the volcano, and the earthquake. True genius, like the song of the wind or the light of the sun, cannot but sing and shine, though unseen and unheard. But it is *his* ambition, like the comet or the meteor, to burst forth upon the world in sudden flashes and loud explosions; to glare portentously on the eyes of the awe-stricken multitude, and to be seen even by the learned to move in an orbit so eccentric as to defy calculation. If he writes for the newspaper press, he delights to run athwart established creeds and prevailing opinions, and to shock even the moral and religious sentiments of the better part of the community. Fain would he sweep the sky, like the great red dragon, drawing after him a third part of the stars of heaven and casting them to the earth. Does he enter the wide and thronged field of novel-writing, he seeks his heroes and heroines among the outcasts of society, and with them wages war against law and government, against civilization and religion, against man and God. If he aspire to tread the higher walks of poetry, he gives loose reins to his lawless passions; he lashes them, of set purpose, into a phrenzy of affectation and extravagance. Or a licentious and artificially stimulated imagination transports him beyond the bounds of reason and sobriety. Or his speculative reason (if reason it may be called), divorced from its heaven-sanctioned union with the practical understanding and the natural affections, disports itself in regions, it may be, of unearthly beauty and sublimity, but of an atmosphere so tenuous and so cold withal, as to chill all the tender sensibilities of the human soul. No matter how unreal and unnatural his productions are; no matter how often he violates the laws of taste or the laws of reason, the laws of man or the laws of God, provided he is only sufficiently original and transcendental, he is sure of a numerous class of readers, who will set him down for a genius.

Here is a man, who has spent his life in night vigils and day dreams of having squared the circle, or discovered perpetual motion. And there is another, who is always just on the point of finding the philosopher's stone, the universal solvent, the elixir of life, the key to immortality. And a third is sure he has hit upon a method of turning all the gross elements, not into gold, but into fuel, or light, or food for the use of man. A fourth aspires yet higher and nearer to the incommunicable prerogatives of God. He can create new substances, or infuse the breath of life into dead matter, and the dust of the earth shall become a living creature. A fifth has fathomed the counsels of eternity and explained the origin of evil. These all talk of being in advance of their age, when, in fact, they are at work on the problems of the dark ages. They flatter themselves, that they have risen above the rest of mankind, while they have only gone out of the sphere of human knowledge and power. But no matter for that. The more insoluble the problem, and the more daring the claim to creative power, the more ready multitudes are to cry: he is a genius.

Genius, it would seem, according to the claims of some and the consent of others, can make brick without straw or clay either; or, with equal ease, it can build pyramids without brick or stone. Genius can build houses without foundations, as easily as an imaginative youth can rear castles in the air. Genius can move the world without either the fulcrum or the standing place of Archimedes. Genius can put a cordon round the globe in less time than Shakspeare's fairies. Genius can go from one point to another without passing through the intervening space. Genius can work miracles, reconcile contradictions, and achieve impossibilities. In short, genius has creative power and is possessed of Divine attributes, so that "as god, he sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God." Indeed, our would-be genius not unfrequently "*opposeth* and exalteth himself *above* all that is called God and is worshipped." For the Creator himself does not claim to perform impossibilities, or to rise above the laws of his own natural and moral universe.

And, what is stranger than all the rest, there is a prevailing disposition to concede these preposterous claims. The reputed genius is indulged, flattered, admired, honored, worshipped, while industry, fidelity, virtue, and even piety, are all, comparatively, undervalued and despised. What is called genius is often

mere affectation, eccentricity, lawlessness and laziness, self-righteousness and self-conceit. And yet it is honored and exalted, as if it were the very essence of goodness, greatness and glory.

Against all this, we enter our solemn and earnest protest. This affected and reputed genius is *not* genius. If it were, it could not do what it professes. And if it could, even then it would not be worthy of the paramount honor which it claims and too generally receives.

The view very commonly entertained of genius is erroneous and unfortunate, especially in three respects.

In the first place, it involves a misapprehension of the nature of genius.

The word genius, from its etymology, denotes anything that is *native* or *inborn*. The Romans, from whose language we borrow the word, used it to express natural disposition as well as natural talents. We usually restrict it to the intellectual powers. And when we limit it by an article or an adjunct, we often mean by it a strong natural aptitude or capacity for some particular department, irrespective of every other. Thus we speak of a genius for mathematics, a genius for mechanics; or the genius of poetry, the genius of sculpture, and the like. But when we employ the word without these limitations, it implies no singularity, no particularity, nothing one-sided, narrow or partial. In its highest and largest sense, in its true idea and proper definition, genius comprehends or expresses *the fullest development of all the faculties, or the largest endowment of all the powers, proper to the intellectual nature of man*. A *man of genius*, in the full and proper sense of the phrase, is not a genius for mathematics, or mechanics, or poetry, or the fine arts, but he is a man of unusually great powers of mind, which have been given him by his Creator; and which he may or might apply with uncommon ability and success to almost any department of human activity. No definition less comprehensive or less elevated than this will come up to the actual standard of the men, who, in all ages, have passed for the *types* and *representatives* of genius.

All ages, and all nations, so far as they have been cultivated, have done homage to the genius of Homer. But Homer was no one-sided character, no man of one idea, no Cyclopean one-eyed monster. Still less was he blind from his birth. Whoever thinks so, as has been well said, must needs be blind him-

self in all his faculties. On the contrary, he was the most clear-sighted of men. He saw everything. He observed everything. He knew everything, that could be known in his day. He was interested in everything. He sympathized with men of all classes and conditions in all their various pleasures, pains and pursuits. So far from the narrowness and exclusiveness of a genius or would-be genius in some particular line, nothing is more characteristic of him, than his impartiality and universality. Instead of the irregularity and waywardness, that are inconsiderately imputed to genius, he possessed the very soul of harmony and method, of law and order, inasmuch that his poems have ever since been acknowledged as the rule and standard of the Epic for all time. And, as to that self-consciousness and self-conceit, which are so characteristic of affected genius, he says nothing of himself. He thought not of himself. He forgot himself in the absorbing interest of his subject. It is for this reason, that the world is left in such utter ignorance of his age and birth-place, of his personal history, and his very existence. He wrote not so much as his name on any the obscurest part of that pile of adamant, which he reared to defy the tooth of time. He wrote not from vanity or self-esteem. He sung not for fame. He spoke, because he could not be silent. The fire of his genius burned within him, and he could not repress its irresistible outgoings.

The genius of Shakspeare is unquestioned and unquestionable. He is the type of genius in English, and, indeed, all modern, literature. And he, too, answers to our definition. He, more than any other man, sat for the picture, when we were sketching the essential features of genius. His universality is the secret and the measure of his power. He was a man of universal sympathy and universal observation. His reading was extensive for his day. And he read nothing, which he did not remember and realize, that is, make real, actual, and, in some sense, personal to himself. He observed nothing, which he did not analyze by reflection, or understand, as it were, by intuition. He knew nothing in the past, which he could not reproduce in the present. He saw nothing in the present, which was not to his mind prophetic and comprehensive of the future. He lived in the past and future, just as, and just because, he truly lived in the present. He lived in other nations, as well as other times, than his own. In his historical plays, the old Romans reappear

on the stage; and Coriolanus and Julius Caesar, Volumnia and Porcia enjoy in him a renewed life, a second immortality. All classes, as well as all ages and nations, appear, in his dramas, invested with their several characters, engaged in their respective occupations, acting their proper parts, living over again, as it were, their own real and proper life; and their various thoughts, feelings, passions and motives stand out to view with such accuracy and distinctness as to make it manifest, that he understood, embraced, *possessed* them all. Observation, memory, reflection, judgment, imagination, wit, reason, conscience; philosophy, poetry, comedy, tragedy, songs, sermons; the great and good, the vile and vulgar; in short, men and things as they are in real life, all are there. For he is the myriad-minded, and a mirror of the world.

Lord Bacon was, by common consent, a man of genius. And he was a man of amazing versatility, of most diversified talents and attainments. His learning and taste were equal to his originality. The father of modern science, he was also master of ancient literature and philosophy. He traversed the whole field of ancient learning for materials wherewith to build, and ornaments wherewith to adorn, his *Instanration of the Sciences*; and his *Essays* on moral and religious subjects are quoted as no less just and beautiful, than his philosophical and scientific treatises are original and profound.

President Edwards was, confessedly, a man of genius. He was the *Instaurator* of the Science of Theology. His independence as a thinker and his power as a reasoner, the originality with which he struck out new principles and arguments, and the systematic order and demonstrative force with which he linked them together, have placed some of his theological works on the same high level with Euclid's *Elements of Geometry*. At the same time, his private journal and some of his practical treatises evince a liveliness of imagination, and a glow of emotion, which, if cultivated, might have won for him a high niche in the temple of sacred poetry. Furthermore, these high endowments of reason and imagination were combined with a personal experience, with a knowledge of the human heart, with a power of discriminating character, and impressing truth, and realizing invisible objects, which made him the most powerful of preachers. And, to crown all, his intellectual gifts were guided and adorned by such integrity and piety, such moral and Christian graces, as are

too seldom seen in union with genius, but, when thus united, produce a constellation of surpassing brilliancy, and, even alone, shine with a lustre superior to genius itself.

Genius is not confined to the sphere of poetry and philosophy. There have been men of genius in almost every department of public and private life; and these men, under other circumstances, might have been equally great in almost any other department. Alexander, Caesar, and Napoleon were men of genius. Their military greatness is known and read of all men. But their literary and political genius was no less eminent. They were eloquent men; eloquent with the tongue and eloquent with the pen. Caesar's Commentaries, in their matchless purity and simplicity, are well worthy of Caesar's wars; Napoleon's harangues and proclamations were as sublime and irresistible as his charges; and the theological conversations which he held at St. Helena, his demonstrations of the Divine existence and of the divinity of Christ, were as luminous, were as extraordinary, as the political projects, which he dictated from the same rocky isle. These men appreciated and cherished literature, science, and the arts. They governed States with the same superior wisdom with which they commanded armies; and they renovated laws, constitutions and the arts of peace as truly, as they revolutionized the methods and the arts of war. While the hearts of men owned their sovereign sway, the face of nature, the structure of society, the channels of commerce and the course of events recognized and followed their conquering march. They were first in war, and first in peace; first in the cabinet and first in the parlor; the first men of their day in everything they undertook, and capable of being the first in everything which they did not undertake.

It is not usual to speak of Washington as a man of genius. It is not, however, because he did not possess the thing, but because the word does not compass the variety and fathom the depth, still less measure the symmetry and rise to the sacredness, of his intellectual and moral nature. The perfect balance of his faculties obscures their brilliancy, as the colors of the spectrum cease to dazzle when harmoniously blended in the solar beam; and we forget the real greatness of his intellectual powers and his military achievements in the grandeur of his moral excellence, in the perfection of his whole character and life. In contemplating his character, we feel, as his contempo-

aries felt in his presence, and as all men instinctively feel at the most imperfect portrait of him that is ever printed on a postage-stamp, or daubed on a tavern-sign, that we stand before a superior being "with less of earth in him than heaven;" and we refuse to call him a man of genius, not because he did not give abundant proof of original and creative powers of the highest order, but because he possessed something higher and better, more ethereal and divine. The polytheistic Greeks never spoke of the genius of Jupiter or Apollo.

Kossuth is, unmistakably, a man of genius. And his intellect is as comprehensive as the law of nations, which he expounds; as universal as the rights and liberties of mankind, which he vindicates. An intuitive sagacity in the discernment of men and things; a power of metaphysical analysis and logical reasoning which reduces a subject at once to its simplest elements, and links arguments together in an indissoluble chain; a cool and deliberate adroitness in taking advantage of the minutest circumstances that may conduce to his purpose, combined with a largeness of view that comprehends the universe, and a fervor of desire that impels him ever onward as with burning wheels; a memory pregnant with the facts and principles of universal history, yet daguerreotyping, as it passes, every feature of the living and moving present; an imagination that reproduces the past and realizes the future, while it also creates new worlds of ideal beauty and excellence; a reflection truly philosophical rising into a forecast almost prophetic; a judgment that seldom errs even when it startles us with apparent impossibilities, and a taste that does not offend when it licenses the boldest flights of invention; an executive talent that would do honor to Western Europe, colored and sublimed by a poetic susceptibility which invests all that he says and does with the purple hue of the Orient; such is the rare assemblage of faculties, with which his Maker has endowed this remarkable man, and which he has cultivated with the most conscientious diligence and consecrated to the noblest ends. Great alike in speech and in action, his impassioned eloquence gathered a nation of heroes and martyrs around his standard, while his executive genius created for them finances and arms. His failure only rooted him deeper in the affectionate confidence of his countrymen, and spread his influence wider among the nations. His voice has been heard from the City of the Golden Horn to the prairies of the Mississippi.

It is the voice, not of an individual, but of oppressed and down-trodden nations. He pleads, not for Hungary only, but for Europe and mankind; and the heart of universal humanity responds, as the heart of one man, to his plea. That voice cannot always be stifled. That heart cannot always be crushed. Kossuth may not live to see the fruit of his labors and sufferings. He may even die by the hands of the executioner. But his blood will be the seed of liberty for the nations; and the crown of martyrdom will be the seal of his immortality.

Men of genius, it thus appears from a wide induction of facts drawn from the most diverse departments, have not been men of one faculty, or one idea. On the contrary, nothing is more characteristic of them, than the universality of their powers, and the comprehensiveness of their attainments. The men, whom the world has agreed to recognize as the very types of genius, have answered to our definition; they have been marked by the largest endowment of all the faculties proper to the intellectual nature of man.

Thus it is, that such men are able to see all things as they are; to comprehend all men of all times and places; and not only to comprehend them, but to sympathize with them, to live in them, to reproduce the past, to represent the present, and to anticipate the future. It is because they have it all within them, in their diversely gifted, myriad-minded souls. No man can understand what he does not possess and never experienced; and he who is able to comprehend all men of all times, which is a characteristic prerogative of genius, must combine in himself all the essential elements of their character.

So far from the narrow and exclusive thing, which too often usurps the name, true genius is broad and comprehensive, *all-comprehensive* in the twofold sense of embracing all and understanding all. So far from being lawless and irregular, it owes its power to the discovery and observance, *beyond others*, of the laws of nature and of mind. And so far from the artifice, and affectation, the intense self-consciousness and intolerable self-conceit of the would-be genius, true genius is simple, unassuming, natural, tranquil also, usually, as "the summer sea," and, when stirred from its repose, moved only in just proportion to the exciting cause; when swept by tempests, rolling in sublime harmony with the spirit of the storm. It abhors all disproportion and undue manifestation of feeling, all affectation and mere

seeming. *It has no occasion for artifice, none for exaggeration and extravagance. It comprehends a subject so fully and easily, as of course to speak of it in simple, familiar language, and achieves its ends with such perfect facility and naturalness, that every beholder fancies he could have said and done the same thing in the same way; though, should he make the attempt, it would be with great effort and small success:

Sudet multum, frustra que labores
Ausus idem.

In the second place, the notions of genius upon which we are animadverting, involve an exaggeration of its power.

Some idea of originality and invention universally attaches, and, no doubt, belongs to genius. But to go further and ascribe to it a strictly creative power, which can work without instruments or materials, which is independent of knowledge or culture, is to ascribe to it prerogatives which belong to nothing earthly. God only can create out of nothing. It belongs to mortals to combine and fashion what he has created, and that only with instruments which he has given, and according to laws which he has ordained. God only can speak, and it is done. Man can produce only by time and toil, reflection and study proportioned to the value of the production.

The nearest approach to pure creation on earth, perhaps, is in the ravings of the madman, whose morbid imaginings sometimes seem to conjure up phantoms altogether unearthly, though, in fact, the materials of his strange phantasies may be traced in his own observation and experience. Some poets, however, and some philosophers, and not a few who aspire to be poets and philosophers, it must be confessed, approximate amazingly near to the ravings of the maniac.

"Their speculations, soarings high,
Which leave all reason infinitely far
Behind — surprising feat of theory!
Are pure creations of their own, webs wove
Of gossamer in fancy's lightest loom,
And nowhere on the list of being, made
By God, recorded."

The imagination, though the most creative of our faculties, is just as incapable of creating its own materials, as the humblest

of our mental powers, or the meanest of our bodily organs. Imagination is the power of forming images. The elementary forms, colors, ideas must be gathered from the world which God has made, and the image, if it be an image, must bear some likeness to something that is in the heavens above, or in the earth beneath, or in the waters under the earth. Imagination is the power, not of creating, but of selecting and combining. It must, therefore, have objects to select, and materials to combine. And these must be in the mind. And they must be retained there by memory; they must be put there by observation and study, reflection and reason. The more extensive, therefore, the observation and study, the more profound the reflection and reason, and the more ready and retentive the memory, the more ample and rich will be the materials, which imagination may combine. And the more delicate the taste, and the more correct the judgment, the more felicitous will be the combination. In other words, the more *knowledge and culture, other things being equal*, the more abundant will be the resources, and the more happy the productions, of the imagination.

"Knowledge of every sort and in every degree," says Coleridge, "is in its nature a proper, and in a great degree a necessary condition of the operation of genius. But if memory, sense and judgment are necessary, as they surely are, to the full exercise of the powers of genius, then everything which strengthens and everything which impairs those faculties, must certainly, in like proportion, augment or diminish the force of invention."

"The three foundations of genius," according to the Welch triads, "are the gift of God, human exertion, and the events of life. The first three requisitions of genius, are an eye to see nature, a heart to feel it, and a resolution that dares follow it. The three things indispensable to genius are understanding, meditation and perseverance. The three tokens or proofs of genius are extraordinary understanding, extraordinary conduct, and extraordinary exertions. The three things that improve genius, are proper exertion, frequent exertion and successful exertion."

Shut up a man of the largest native intellect in utter ignorance, and he is like a giant immured in a dungeon. Preclude the most gifted genius from all knowledge, and he has nothing to work upon, and nothing to work with. Of course, he can accomplish nothing. He wants the *σὺν ὁρῶ*, without

which even Archimedes could not move an atom, much less a world.

Absolute ignorance, however, is not to be supposed. The only practical question is, what shall be the quantity and quality of discipline and acquirement. Genius is never without some degree of knowledge; never without some kind of culture. It may be quite concealed from the observation and remote from the experience of the rest of the world. It may be by observation and reflection rather than by recitations and lectures; by travel and intercourse with men and things in the world rather than by reading and study of books in the schools. Homer was a man of excellent education and boundless knowledge, though it is a question, whether he ever saw or heard of such a thing as a book. His powers of observation, reason, memory and imagination were all excited, exerted, disciplined to the utmost. He was himself the school-book and the Bible, the library and the gazette of his times, even as his verse is the living image of the heroic ages. Patrick Henry, though to appearance an indolent man, and in reality a less learned and disciplined, and therefore, far less capable and effective, man, than he might otherwise have been, was, in an important sense, a hard student, and by no means wanting in education or information. He studied men with the same intensity with which scholars study books. He watched the course of events and reflected upon it, till he understood it and threw himself into it, that he might be its master and guide.

The man of genius will do something. The only question is, what he shall do, and how he shall do it. The value and amount of his achievements will depend upon his knowledge and culture; upon his opportunities and his improvement of them; upon his circumstances and his use or abuse of them. Hence it is, that the direction which genius takes, and the results which it accomplishes, are so different in different ages and countries. The difference lies even more in the times, than in the men. The genius that in one age constructs the bow and arrow, in another, invents the catapult and the ballista; in another, gun-powder and the simplest form of the gun; and, in still another, the paixhan, the minie rifle and the revolver. The greatest prodigy of invention could not have sprung the modern improvements in agricultural and manufacturing machinery upon the Heroic or the Middle Ages. They wanted, not the genius, but the ideas

and the knowledge of the moderns; those ideas and that knowledge of the useful arts, which have been the growth of centuries, and with which our age is saturated. The steamboat could not have been launched upon the world, till long ages of experiment had developed and diffused the requisite knowledge of chemistry and mechanics. If Fulton had been an Athenian of the age of Pericles, he would have originated, perhaps, some great improvement in the propelling of the trireme; and if Columbus had lived in the early essays at navigation, he might have astonished his contemporaries by his boldness in launching out into the midst of the Aegean sea. Time was, when it required as much inventive power to start the rudest vehicle that ever run, or rather crept, on wheels, as is now required to drive a train of cars forty miles an hour. The contrivances of a common American carriage are now as far beyond the utmost conceptions of undeveloped Asiatic genius, as to Americans are the means of a voyage to the moon, or of keeping pace with the sun in his travels round the earth. Guttenberg's types would print, perhaps, a thousand impressions in a day. Hoe's press will throw off ten thousand copies of a newspaper in a single hour. Is Hoe, therefore, the greater genius? By no means. What, then, makes the vast difference in his favor? He knows more; that is all. Had they changed places, in other words, outward facilities and resources, in one word, knowledge, they would have changed results. Or rather they *might* have changed results. That *may* have been all the difference. And it may not. For we do not, by any means, suppose all men of genius to be alike, any more than we suppose all *men* to be alike, or all men to be men of genius. The doctrine which we inculcate is, that different men may be endowed with equal powers of intellect, and those of the very highest order; in other words, they may be men of equal and similar genius, as much so as God ever made; and yet they may accomplish widely dissimilar and very unequal results. And the point, to which we wish to call particular attention is, that, *other things being equal*, the more the man of genius *knows*, the more he will *do* for himself and for mankind; in short, that with men of genius, as with other men and more than with other men, knowledge is power, and right culture is true wisdom.

The man of genius is always in advance of his age; but he is never independent of it. He is in advance of it, because he is

master of it; and he is master of it, because he is the representative of its attainments and tendencies, the possessor of its knowledge and thus of its power. Had Newton lived in the age of Aristotle, he might not have been an Aristotle, but he could not have been Newton. He would have been in advance of his age, but he could not have discovered the law of gravitation, still less the polarization of light and the identity of carbon and the diamond. He lived in his age, though he lived above it; and he was superior to other men of his age, because he caught more fully its spirit, and looked out more widely, more sharply, more accurately from the high vantage-ground of its attainments.

Had Milton lived in the age of Homer, he would have been subject to all Homer's ignorance of the true God and a future state, and even of the history and condition of a large part of the world in which he lived; and would have committed all his sins against the common knowledge and the moral sense of a later age. Had he lived in the age of Aeschylus, he would have been an Aeschylus, and would have written tragedies not inferior in boldness and strength, in wild grandeur and towering sublimity to the *Paradise Lost*, but as unlike the *Paradise Lost* in breadth of understanding and depth of reflection, in compass of knowledge, richness of material and perfection of finish as the tower of Babel to the massive walls and splendid palaces and hanging gardens of the perfected Babylon. The *Paradise Lost* could not have been written in any previous age. As well might Solomon's temple have been built in the wilderness. It required all Milton's boundless reading and knowledge to furnish the materials, all his original genius and cultivated taste to construct the edifice, and then all his fervid love of liberty, humanity and God to consecrate it and kindle a holy fire on its altars. He had no more genius than Homer. He was as much like Aeschylus in the native elements of his soul, as the Archangel Ruined of the one resembles the Prometheus Bound of the other; so much like him, that a Pythagorean might have instanced it as a clear case of metempsychosis. But Milton knew all that Homer and Aeschylus did, and a thousand fold more in addition. He was master of all the wisdom of past ages. He drank deep at the fountain of Divine knowledge. The spirit of republican liberty was as a fire in his bones. And the *Paradise Lost* is a shrine, built, indeed, in Occidental form and style, but with more

than Oriental magnificence, wherein the treasures of the world and the wealth of ages are dedicated to a free and evangelical Protestant Christianity. It is a splendid illustration of the use which sanctified genius can make of a finished classical education.

It is the prerogative of genius, not to dispense with learning, but to turn all learning to the best account, and make the most of the largest or the smallest means and opportunities. So far from being superfluous to the man of genius, there is no other man to whom knowledge and culture are of so much value as to him, whose nature, like the diamond, is worth polishing at any expense, and whose mind, like some rich soil, causes every seed that falls into it to spring up into an abundant harvest. Say, if you please, that it is of no use to educate ordinary minds. But say not, that knowledge and culture are useless to him who alone can breathe into all knowledge and culture the breath of an etherial life. Believe, if you can (to borrow a Socratic illustration), that the most spirited horses need no training, and the noblest dogs require no instruction. But never flatter yourself that you have so much genius as to supersede the necessity of a good education. Let the farmer, who has a better farm than his neighbors, persuade himself, if he will, that it is not worth while to cultivate it. But never let the student, who has a better mind than his fellow-students, imagine that the universal law of labor is repealed in his behalf. Rather let him be assured, that it is for him, of all others, to secure its most abundant rewards.

In the third place, the current notions of genius involve an over-estimate of its rights and its relative value.

To claim exemption from the common lot of humanity and the established laws of the human mind, on the ground of superior intellect, is folly. To assert or imply superiority over the moral law of God, on the same ground, is still more absurd and unnatural. It is not only impious, it is preposterous. It is not only the subversion of all right principle, but the reversal of all right reasoning. It is to plead the greatness of his gifts, as an excuse for ingratitude to the giver, and build a non-performance of duty on the very ground of a most sacred and superior obligation. Obligations are proportionate to favors received. Talents and duties, like principal and interest, should bear a fixed ratio to one another. No truth in ethics can be better established than this. Indeed, it is an axiom in society, as well as in

morals. To whom men have loaned or given more, of them they expect to receive more. And God deals with men on the same principle. He has written the same law, not only in the Scriptures, but on the tablets of the human heart. The great man should, of all others, be the good man. The most gifted intellect should be the most devoted Christian. *A priori*, we should expect, it would be so. The parable of the talents is constructed on such an assumed or implied expectation. It is the servant who received but one talent, who buries the money, while those who had received the two and the five talents, improved them, and, at the day of reckoning, were ready to return them with interest. Our Lord would not imagine so violent an improbability; would not indite such a libel on human nature, as to reverse the representation. But if the receiver of the five talents *had* pleaded, not the rigor, but the goodness of his Lord, as an excuse for misimprovement or misappropriation of his gifts, with what severity would the Master have rebuked him *out of his own mouth!* Yet this strange perversion of superior talents, and this strange reversal of right reasoning have been repeated before our eyes, especially in public life, and justified, or at least palliated, in popular literature, till it ceases to shock, and it seems to be expected, almost as a matter of course, that great men will be great sinners, that men in high places, especially, will not condescend to the practice of ordinary and common-place virtues. The royal robbers and imperial murderers of the old world, have never set their destroying foot on our shores, and it is to be hoped that they will soon pass away from our age forever. But if the reign of defaulters and embezzlers, whether of material or of intellectual wealth, is to be inaugurated in their stead, it may be doubted, whether we shall have gained much in the exchange.

After the definition and illustrations, which we have given, we shall not be suspected of an intention to depreciate genius. It is a high endowment. It embraces all that is greatest and best in merely natural gifts and purely intellectual faculties. But there is something higher, greater, better than genius at its best estate; and that is moral excellence.

The superiority of the moral to the purely intellectual is attested by the very nature of man and the constitution of society. Where the moral has that ascendancy which it manifestly claims, there, and there, only can there be harmony, or hap-

ness, in the individual, the family, the neighborhood, or the nation. Conscience asserts its rightful supremacy over all the faculties; and the other faculties either give in their ready assent and adhesion to this supremacy, as they do in every healthy mind; or, if they rebel, as they do in too many diseased souls, they soon demonstrate their own utter unfitness to govern. In like manner, politics is but a branch of ethics; and power, whether physical or intellectual, is subordinate to right, in all well-governed States, in all well-regulated communities.

Genius is but a means to an end. That end is truth, virtue, moral excellence. And the end is better than the means, as surely as the sovereign is higher than the subject. Genius, like gold, shines only in the use that is made of it. Goodness, like the sun, shines by its own light. Goodness is bright and beautiful without genius, without rank, without regard to place or outward circumstances. Genius, without goodness, is sometimes dazzling, but never lovely; sometimes useful by accident, but often fatal both to others and to its possessor.

"Talents angel-bright,
If wanting worth, are shining instruments
In false ambition's hand, to finish faults
Illustrious and give infamy renown."

Genius is properly with reference to goodness, not goodness with reference to genius. Moral excellence is the consummate flower and fruit of man's nature, as man is the culminating point of this lower creation; and conscience is the proper sovereign of the human soul, as the soul is made to exercise dominion over the body and the irrational creatures. Such is the true light in which we should view these things; such their proper relations.

But if we choose to consider both the intellectual and the moral nature, as too many do, in the lower light of *means*; means to honor, glory, happiness or any other desired end, still the moral asserts and maintains its superiority over the purely intellectual. As a means of discernment, or instrument of knowledge, in affairs of moral and *practical* interest, an enlightened conscience and a pure heart are often found to surpass the most gifted intellect. The want of this moral discernment, well and truly called *moral sense*, was, perhaps, the ruin of Napoleon. Conscience was feeble in his own breast, and he always underrated its power in others. With all his sagacity and strength of intel-

lect, he could not see in others a supremacy which he did not feel in himself, and the outraged moral and religious sentiments of men ere long scattered his empire to the winds and chained him to a barren rock, like another Prometheus, not to writhe under the gnawings of conscience, for these he never seems to have felt in *this* life, but to burn with the consuming fires of a disappointed ambition more torturing than the cancer which corroded his vitals. Had he been truly and wholly what he professed to be and partially was, the representative of the rights and liberties of the oppressed masses; had he not loved glory more than liberty, France more than mankind, and himself more than France, he might have reconciled all these conflicting interests and secured at once liberty for mankind, lasting happiness for France, and for himself a grateful as well as perpetual remembrance. An enlightened conscience and a benevolent heart might have seen what even the eagle eye and the comprehensive genius of Napoleon failed to discover; and nothing else was needful to have enlisted permanently on his side moral forces, which his selfishness and moral obtuseness arrayed against him, and before which the mightiest armies and the ablest commanders must, sooner or later, be driven away like the chaff before the whirlwind.

Again, if you would learn how essential an unblemished character and a virtuous life is, as a ground of public confidence, and so a source of political power, see Mirabeau toiling with the strength of a Titan to repair the ruin he had wrought, and speaking with the eloquence of an angel to persuade the country and the court to entrust their destinies in his hands, but oppressed, all the while, and at length overwhelmed, by the crushing consciousness, that the stains on his character had blighted public confidence in the bud; that the sins of his youth had blasted forever the labors of his life.

Now compare with these prodigies of intellectual power the moral greatness of the Father of our country. Less eloquent than Mirabeau, he never wanted means, in peace or war, to persuade his countrymen. His farewell address still speaks in their ears, like a voice from heaven; and his silent example has passed into the acknowledged law of the land. Less rapid and brilliant than Napoleon, he conquered by delay and triumphed by not losing, rather than by gaining great battles. A man of exalted intellect, he was scarcely conscious of his intellectual strength;

and it is not for his genius or his courage, his military powers or his political sagacity; it is not for any mere personal qualities or intellectual powers, though he had these in rare perfection; it is not for these, but for his rare moral excellence, that he is remembered. Or rather it is for that singular combination and balance of all the physical, intellectual and moral powers, and that perfect subordination of the lower to the absolute dominion of the higher faculties, which made his noble person instinct with true greatness, and Washington, in his whole constitution and character, a model man, if not, indeed, as his countrymen and his fellow-men of all countries are tempted to consider him, something more than human, dwelling alone, unapproached and unapproachable in his glory. Who that remembers and reveres the name of Washington can ever forget, that spotless integrity, high moral excellence is the surest passport to confidence, honor, power, success, happiness; to all that is most coveted among men. This lesson is, above all else, his legacy to his youthful countrymen.

But if it were not so, moral excellence is so much higher and better in its own nature than all these objects of desire, that it should be cherished, though it led to sure failure and certain death. Look at the Moral Philosopher of ancient Athens, welcoming the hemlock rather than suppress the truth or cease from his philanthropic labors; hear him declare on his trial, that, were his life offered him on condition that he would no longer reprove the vices and follies of his countrymen, his reply would be: I respect you, my fellow-citizens, but I must obey God rather than men; listen to his calm discourse on the immortality of the soul, as he awaits in prison the execution of his unjust sentence; and then see him, with the language of thanksgiving to the God of *Health* on his lips and in his countenance, "languish into life." And think you any earthly success equal to that triumphant martyrdom; any honor or pleasure of life to be compared with the glory and the joy of that heroic death?

Or follow Paul through a life which was one perpetual martyrdom, and hear, as it were, from his dying lips the song of victory: I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I am going to my crown. And tell us, what sceptre of power, what wreath of victory, what hoards of wealth, what treasures of knowledge, or what discoveries of genius, can compare in true beauty and grandeur with such a character, such a life, and such

a death! Call it not death. Call it rather the dawn of immortal life. Life on earth. For when such persons are dead, if not before, men will appreciate their worth, and go on a pilgrimage to their tombs. They never die. They live in memory, in example, in influence, when every other memorial of their times has perished, and reign forever in the hearts of men.

“Live and take comfort. Thou hast left behind
Powers will work for thee — earth, air and skies;
There's not a breathing of the common wind,
That will forget thee. Thou hast great allies;
Thy friends are exultations, agonies,
And love, and man's unconquerable mind.”

Life with God. For whoever else may forget them, whatever else may fail them, and however long he may seem to delay his interposition in their behalf, God will hold their names in everlasting remembrance, reward their sacrifices with unswerving felicity, and honor their virtues with eternal glory, while he pours contempt on all the pride of intellect, if unaccompanied with moral excellence. He that loveth his life shall lose it; but he that loseth his life in the cause of truth and righteousness, shall find it. Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit.

With God, character is everything, and all else nothing in comparison. He awards praise or blame, not at all with reference to talents, but simply with reference to our improvement of them. Double your two talents (such is the spirit of the two parables of the talents), and you shall receive the same approving sentence with him who doubles his five talents. Make your one talent ten, and you shall rule over ten cities, while he who misimproves his talents, be they few or be they many, shall have them taken from him, and shall be cast into outer darkness. So God teaches in his word. And he teaches the same lesson in his providence and in the economy of his grace. “Not many wise men, not many mighty are chosen.” “He taketh the wise in their own craftiness.” “Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom; let not the mighty man glory in his might.” These warnings and doctrines of Holy Writ, which men are so slow to read in the word of God, his providence sometimes reveals to the world as with a flash of lightning, and preclaims them in the ears of individuals and of nations as with a voice of thunder.

Napoleon pronounced a blunder worse than a crime. But in the end, his crimes proved to be fatal blunders. How poor a thing does intellectual power or high place appear to be in comparison with moral principle, when we see Lord Bacon's deplorable fall, and read, as it were, on his tombstone, the inscription :

" Wisest, greatest, meanest of mankind ! "

It is often said of some one more remarkable for his virtues than his talents, said more in pity or ridicule, than in praise : he is a *good* young man. Life often, and death always, brings the scoffing, or, at least, thoughtless, persons who indulge in such remarks, into circumstances where they would gladly exchange their boasted talents for a moiety of his goodness. Many a man, perhaps most men, would rather be called knaves, than fools. They welcome a compliment to their understandings, though it be at the expense of their consciences and their hearts. But God, in his providence, often writes folly on all their valued shrewdness in this world ; and, if they will not learn the lesson in any other way, he will yet blazon their names with the epithet "*fool*," which they so much dread, in letters of fire in sight of the intelligent universe.

Away then, we would say in conclusion (and wish we could say it in the hearing, especially, of every *young* man), away with this idol of the schools. Worship not genius itself, much less its counterfeit. True genius is a choice and noble thing. But when it is highest, there is something higher ; when it is greatest, there is something greater ; when it is best, there is something better. Virtue and piety are better. Honest industry and conscientious fidelity are more praiseworthy and more *trustworthy*. They are more sure to minister to the public good ; far more certain to secure the happiness of the individual

If you have genius, though there is scarcely the slightest probability that you have, and if you have, *you* will be the last to be conscious of it ; but if you have it and cannot but be sensible of it, be thankful for it as a divine gift, prize it as a sacred trust, improve it as a talent for which you must give account. But be humble, that you are so little worthy of it. Be fearful, lest you neglect or pervert it. Rejoice, but rejoice with trembling, for it may be a "*shining instrument*" of evil to yourself, and a mighty engine of mischief to others.

If you have not genius, and probably you might as well make up your mind first as last, that you have not, it is not your fault.

It is not even your misfortune, and if it were, you could not help it. Genius is born, not made. It is the gift of God, and cannot be acquired by toil or bought with money. Still less can it be won by affecting it, or aspiring to it. The ordinary man (the reader will pardon our Socratic illustrations) who stoops when he enters the gates of the city, only renders himself ridiculous; and the pigmy who undertakes to walk in the footsteps of a giant, only strains his legs to incur the laughter of the spectators. Envy it not. Covet it not. Still less imitate it. Above all things, be not a pretended genius, nor his admiring follower. By so doing, you make yourself the mere shadow of a shade; the mere echo of a *vox, praeerea nihil*.

Be industrious. Be honest, faithful, wise and good. These are within your reach. And these are truly meritorious. These cannot fail of high honor, extensive usefulness, and substantial happiness. Make the most of the talents God has given you. Do the work he has given you to do; do it in earnest, do it well. The loftiest genius on earth, the highest angel in heaven can do no more, and can secure no richer reward.

If you are handsome (it was a maxim of one of the Seven Wise Men of Greece), if you are handsome, do handsome things; if deformed, supply the defects of nature by your virtues. So, if you are gifted with superior intellectual powers, do something worthy of such powers; if not, supply the defects of nature by your virtues and exertions.

Be yourself, your whole self and nothing but yourself. If your Maker had thought any body else would answer the ends of his wisdom and goodness better than you in your place, he would doubtless have created somebody else in your stead. You have no more right to destroy your identity, or, which is the same thing, sink your individuality, than you have to commit suicide.

Make the *most* of yourself, your talents and opportunities, wasting no idle breath or empty sighs on what you might have been under kinder auspices. If your Maker had thought any other talents or opportunities better for you, he would have conferred them on you.

Improve *all* your powers and all your privileges. Resolve to be a whole man, wanting nothing, *totus, teres et rotundus*. Cherish a pure heart, and a sound mind in a sound body. No part of man's complex nature can be perfectly healthy, while any

other part is diseased. Wholeness is health, soundness, integrity. Etymologically, if not theologically, *wholeness is business*.

Above all, make the most of the *best* there is in you. And that, be it remembered, is not the body nor the intellect, but the conscience and the heart; not genius or imagination or learning or taste, but truth and right and wisdom and goodness. Be true to your whole nature, but especially to your moral nature. Do right by men; by *all* men, but above all, be right in the sight of God. Dethrone every idol in your heart, and let not genius, but moral excellence, not self or the world, but humanity and God, be the ruling idea of your private and your public life. That idea has in it elements of more than earthly, of more than human power. It can refresh the weary body, as with ethereal sustenance, and revive the exhausted mind, or the sinking spirit, as with a new inspiration from the breath of the Almighty. It can give understanding to the simple. It can almost put a soul within the ribs of death. It can electrify learning, which were otherwise dead matter, and impart to genius itself a higher life, which is like the life of God.

ARTICLE IV.

GERMAN EDUCATION.

By Anthony Lamb, Jr., Providence, R. I.

THE question has frequently been asked of late, why the instructors of Germany succeed so much better, generally, than our teachers, in imbuing their pupils with a love for science, and an ardor in the pursuit of knowledge. The inquiry has been suggested by the remarks, upon that subject, of a popular writer of travels, who has lately presented, in a strong light, the contrast observable in this respect between the pupils of the German schools and universities, and those of our own. We allude to the work of Mr. Brace, entitled "Home-Life in Germany," in which is given a faithful picture of life, and particularly of