

What Is Genius?

18

In every age the whole world regards the rising of a genius with wonder, admiration and praise. His very presence brings to our minds this question. Why should this man rise above us, when we have had the same advantages. The best answer is incomplete. That genius is hereditary few people doubt, but there arises this question. Why is genius suddenly present in families who for generations before could neither read nor write. That genius is a divine gift, is a popular idea requiring no special effort on the part of its possessor to produce marvellous results in Art, Lit^{re} & Science is often proved to be a mistake. Does any one suppose that Newton's valuable discoveries were the result of but a moment's thought. Newton it is said worked thirteen years before publishing the barest outline of his discoveries. Do you suppose that the battle plans of Gen. Grant were impromptu? - The famous saying, "We will fight it out

on this line if it takes a summer"

19

indicates some hard shuiking. Old masters in painting have studied hard and continuously on the mysteries of light and shade and the details of anatomy and physics. Geo. Eliot took years to plan and elaborate the schemes of her novels. But I do not wish you to think that I mean that Genius does not depend on natural gifts for certainly it does; but the greatest quality of these gifts, is the gift of application. A genius is an untiring searcher after truth and perfection in his chosen work, caring little for the encouragement and applause of his friends. A genius studies profoundly in everything and has an unquenchable desire to perfect himself in his chosen work. Genius has a tendency to develop itself early in life. Statistics show that of noted musicians - nineteen-twentieths give promise before the age of twenty years. Of poets, five-sixths, of novelists and men of

science three-fourths, and of philosophy 20
ers two-thirds. Lord Byron, Gen. West-
ster, Gen. Grant, Duke of Wellington
and Napoleon Bonaparte did
nothing to distinguish themselves
in youth. To be a genius in this last
decade of the nineteenth century means
infinitely more than it did one hun-
dred years ago. The genius of the pre-
sent time must be able to add to
what the geniuses of the past have
done. The minds of the people on
this earth may be likened to an in-
tellectual firmament which is ever
increasing in brilliancy and
each star vying with the other
in shedding light. Where there
are so many strong intellectual lights
it is difficult to select those of
superior radiance until they have
far outshone their companions.

No mind is a genius after it
ceases to exert creative power, and
few minds have the insight of a
genius or his patience to follow him
to the end of his theories. True
genius has the power of striking out

in the by-paths of knowledge and
returning to the main path laden
with new and valuable truths.
The mind of genius is independ-
ent and self-reliant. A genius has
fine sensibilities, and great imag-
inative power and the greater
the amount of work he performs
the greater his liability to brain
disease.

A review of the names of noted
men who have permanently influ-
enced the world of thought, strongly
impresses the reader with the number
who have died from brain disease
or have gone insane! But let us
hasten past this record ever regret-
ting that such is the penalty of so
many human deceptions who have
dared press immortal fame.
It is interesting to note the number
of opinions which differ on this
subject - Buffon says that by
diet of indefatigable industry,
perseverance and labor nearly
everything can be accomplished
Another writer says "patience is

genius", another "It is an infinite capacity for doing work. Galton an Eng. writer says that genius is hereditary. Johnson inclines to the view that genius is an untiring effort in a certain direction. Newton seemed to think that he did nothing which any man might not do if he would have patience and concentration of mind ^{on} one thing for an unlimited length of time. Not all of us are possessed of genius, but everyone of us is capable of improving his present condition and, whether we will or not every individual must settle for himself. To escape from the dungeons of intellectual darkness is not so difficult as it first appeared: for our Creator made the Sun of Knowledge to give light and heat to every human being and by natural right we are entitled to accomplish as much in this life as we have ability for.

If we do not succeed in what we undertake, we must bear

The humiliation of seeing others
step into places which might
have been our and taking places
which we might have had. If we
succeed we must conquer our
difficulties and this we can do if we
have within our souls enough
patience, intellect and will.

Corinne Louise Daly.