

must have made a mistake; we must go back—turn back, and that aggravating Kate is so afraid of my turning a wagon that she always jumps out. I got the wagon round—what matter if it did crank pretty badly?—and in ten minutes we were once more on the broad road that we hoped led to a man that “druv a milk wagon.” Soon we came to another cross-road, turned to the right and went along.

Suddenly we remembered the bridges—had we passed any? Kate thought she remembered a little muddy place a ways back, and as everything but the deepest rivers had dried to mud that summer, we thought we might have crossed a bridge. Still, he had said, “quite some”—how many did that mean? I had known it to mean two fish when a party of Jersey folk had been fishing; but again I had known it to mean fifty—for instance, when our neighbors came to get “quite some” melons from our patch. We had any number then from two to fifty to choose from, and not a bridge in sight! Time, five o'clock in the afternoon; distance from home, “quite some” miles we felt sure.

Ah! there come the bridges! Sure enough, “quite some” just expressed it. Five, stringing one after another, the ground beneath them bare enough now, but no doubt in early spring they were very useful. We had kept a sharp lookout for cross-roads, and turning to the right, inquired for Komans of a woman who stood as if waiting to answer any stray questions.

“Komans? He drives a milk wagon. Goin' to sell milk to him? I want to know! Now Komans—”

“Can't you tell us where he lives?”

“Sure, sure; you needn't be so short; just drive along, his house is at the head of the road. If you're goin' to sell milk—”

But we heard no more; driving along and turning into Komans's barnyard, I had meekly proposed that Kate should do the bargaining this time, and was delighted at the arrangement when I saw the number of men and boys hanging around. It looked like election day. Kate asked for Komans, and he came. Did he want a horse?

“Wa'al, it wuz accordin' to what kind 'ev a hoss it wuz. It warn't that hoss she wanted to sell, wuz it?”

Kate deprecatingly remarked that it was. I wondered at her—I should have said, “Oh, certainly not,” but Kate stuck to her horse.

By this time the crowd of men and boys had gathered round, and questions came fast.

“What d'ye ask for him?”

“Reckin he don't run away often, hey?”

“Forty dollars! Jehu!”

We felt rather warm as to our faces, but Kate made a last effort:

“Will you make any offer for the horse?”

“No,” was the answer; “I want a strong, young horse. That air gets leg-weary.”

Poor Rory; I suppose he was leg-weary! He had traveled eighteen or twenty miles, and was still a long distance from home. We bade the crowd good-day and started off. I proposed ticketing the horse for sale, but as we

had no ticket that fell flat. It was growing rather dusky, we had to stop at every guide-post to see which way to turn—how deceitful guide-posts are! three successive posts said six and a half miles to Milton.

It grew so dark that we could not keep to our last rule about never worrying as to getting home. People smiled at two ladies asking how far it was to Milton at that time of day—or evening. At last we suddenly felt our wagon settle down; at first we thought a wheel was coming off, but it was not quite so bad. In the twilight we managed to find out the trouble. A nut had worked off one of the spring screws, and the box of the wagon had jumped off the spring. As we pulled and hoisted, a laborer came along. He kindly fixed the spring so that it would hold till we got home—if we drove slowly! We thanked him for his help and told him how far we had come.

“Why, ye *hev* been a ways—what did you go fur? To sell the horse? Don't say! Why, I'm a lookin' for a horse. What d'ye ask for him?”

My dear reader, I was very tired, and so was Rory! I was determined to sell the beast, for I knew the Pater would be jubilant over my failure. So I told the fellow he could have the horse for twenty dollars. He beat me down to fifteen, and at last I agreed to bring him the horse for fourteen dollars, on his solemn promise that he would never tell what he had paid for him.

Kate seemed too astonished or too weary to say a word till the bargain was completed and I had received full directions where to bring the horse the next day. Then she broke out: “Fourteen dollars! Hope, are you mad? What will your husband say?”

“Now, Kate, the Pater is to know nothing of this. I have a little money I've been saving up, which I'll add to the fourteen dollars, and he'll think I sold the beast for twenty-five dollars. I'd rather lose the money than let him know I failed.”

We reached home about eight o'clock. How good the blaze of the log fire felt after the chilly night air!

“Sell your horse? How much?” asked Pater.

“Oh, I came down to twenty-five dollars—I don't know the man's name.”

“But how can I take the horse to him if you don't know his name?”

“I'll take Rory myself to-morrow,” I answered, as unconcernedly as I could, with Kate tittering in the closet.

“You'll take the horse? Are you going to lead him yourself? Little woman, you're playing some trick, but you might as well own up, for I shall deliver the horse myself. Come, I don't believe you sold him at all.”

“Yes, I have.”

“Well?”

Well, the end of it was—as it always is with me—I had to own up what a fool I'd been. I'm afraid I'll never hear the last of my bargain. If any one speaks of selling, Pater says:

“Better ask Hope. She'll tell you how to sell a horse.”

Talks with Girls.

BY JENNIE JUNE.

UNFLEDGED GENIUS.



HERE is a vast amount of genius of a very peculiar kind in this country—genius believed in by its possessor and hosts of friends, but which is always seeking aid for its development, and only exists by continual boasting and pushing on the part of good-natured but mistaken friends.

Unfortunately, these friends are either so ignorant, or so hampered, that the truth cannot come from them.

They may believe what they say, because whatever is a little out of their way seems to them wonderful, and having had little experience, and even less real knowledge of special and particularly technical subjects, they are incompetent to even form an opinion upon the requirements for success in given directions, much less express one authoritatively. Moreover *success* in such a case is another name for genius, which is something quite different in its ordinary manifestations and permanent development from the dim, hazy, mythical fire, which many very good men and women consider it.

“George Eliot,” the highest representative of the genius of the women of this age, is often quoted as saying that genius is industry, and another well known writer has said that it is “seeing that a thing should be done, and being able to do it.” But unfledged genius differs materially from such genius as is described by these definitions. Its capacity is not for work, but for knowing and doing everything without work. It does not see anything until it has been done by some one else, and then it is quite sure it could do as well, or better, if it could only be put in the place, and furnished with the instrumentalities. Most unfortunately, through the good nature and ignorance before mentioned, it does get put in places where it does not belong, and is furnished with instrumentalities which it is unable in the very nature of things to properly use.

Genius needs a great deal more than taste, aptitude, desire, or ambition, for its growth and continued life. It needs a body to start with—a strong, vigorous, sound, well developed, and healthful body. It needs next a mind capable of taking the measure of its own capacity, and lastly, a will strengthened by the consciousness of worthy purpose to persistent endeavor.

All this, added to a sufficiently strong natural bent, and cultivated intellectual faculty, becomes genius in time, and it is ignorance alone that looks upon such genius as having sprung like Jove full-grown from its place of birth.

One of our great sources of pride in our country consists in its opportunities for advancement. But these opportunities involve reciprocal obligations. It is dishonesty to seek for them, or take advantage of them, unless we can put them to good use, for we stand in

somebody's way, who deserves what we have got, and could meet its requirements better.

In every department of active life, particularly of late years, we find the ground swarming with incompetency, and good undertakings paralyzed by the presence and pressure of unprepared, inadequate, unfledged, but aspiring, self-admiring, self-elected "genius."

Of course even genius must have a beginning, and must have a chance to have a beginning, but it is not genius if it wants to begin at the top, and in the wrong place. The beginning of genius is simply the divine instinct of *being*. Like the seed in the earth, it is bound to push its way out. Our unfledged genius wishes to show itself at once as a blooming flower, forgetting that if growth comes at all after that, it must be growth downward, that the flower unsustained by root soon finds its level in the obscurity it despised.

If the divine spark were latent, however, in the unfledged activity, there would not be so much to complain of, for it would still make itself felt, and furnish some sort of excuse for the vanity, which comes to the front; but, in the majority of instances, there is no divine spark there at all. There is a certain cleverness, or what is called "smartness," a readiness which passes for intelligence, but lacks comprehension, and a desire for the results of work, which is believed to be genuine love for the work itself.

The great disadvantage attending such mistakes, such want of judgment, such ignorance of requirements, is not only that aspiring young persons get put into the wrong places, but that they fail to fill the right ones.

Looking over the entire ground, it is easy to count on the fingers of one hand those women who have in any direction become so representative of great acquisition and natural faculty as to be entitled to distinctive recognition, or so original in the path they have carved out, as to claim the highest honor, that of genius.

Large numbers start on the way, but the majority fall by the wayside; some, because strength of body fails them, others, for lack of the industry, the perseverance, the absolute devotion which success in any art or occupation demands as its price.

It was remarked before, that success in this connection meant genius. It means, at least, growth and permanence. That is not success which consists of a flourish of trumpets over a future possibility, which is obtained through the good nature, the willingness to encourage, the mistaken kindness of friends, and which, like the little flicker of a candle, is blown out by the first adverse wind.

We hear so much of the triumphs of genius, but nothing of what those triumphs cost. We exaggerate so greatly the first puny little efforts, and the impression they make, that not only the subjects themselves are misled, but thousands who come after them. We are thus eternally rearing enormous crops of incompetents, and suffering from the absence and failure of these very persons to fill their proper places.

Out of the hundreds of thousands of young women who aspire to the stage, musical or dramatic, out of as many more who wish to

be painters or sculptors, what proportion are ever heard from as doing great original work, which the world could not spare, and which leaves it enriched by their contributions? It may be said that a rank and file are needed in the professions as well as elsewhere, and that there are those who can do good work, without being great workers. This is quite true, but it emphasizes the point I wish to make, that thorough preparation, and complete understanding of the technique of the business of a profession whatever it may be, is all that renders mediocrity respectable.

To start out, therefore, on the basis of genius which one does not possess, with not even the sure foundation which is needed to support the pretensions of mediocrity, is to make it certain that, having gone up a rocket, we shall come down a stick, and find our ammunition expended, and no permanent footing gained.

Women need to be much more careful of accuracy in measuring their intellectual strength than men; for they have not so much brute force to bring to its aid in impressing the multitude. The organization of the woman is also more vibrant, more responsive, more sensitive, more easily affected by malign influences than that of the man, and her mistakes not only cause more individual suffering, with less power of reaction, but exhibit what are considered peculiarly feminine weaknesses in a misleading, exaggerated, and ridiculous degree.

Women generally live more truly, more in harmony with natural law, than men, and are capable, under right and natural circumstances, of as much endurance, and as good work and service, conditions on both sides being equal. But the true and honest workers, whether in the kitchen or the office, in the laboratory or the workshop, are misrepresented by the army of pretenders, who do not know what work really is, who do not want to know, but would willingly usurp the crown which should be the reward of faithful achievement.

It is pitiable to see real genius struggling with hard circumstances, with a frail body like that of Elizabeth Barrett Browning, with a narrowed life like that of Charlotte Brontë; but in spite of the crushing circumstances, in spite of poverty, which like arid soil has weakened and warped some of the noblest representatives of genius in literature and historic art, their light has always been such as to show the divine origin of the spark which enkindled it, and make us regret that it could not burn longer, and with a larger and more steadfast flame.

One would never think of Maria Mitchell as having failed to be a good housekeeper, in order to become a bad astronomer. One would never wish that George Eliot had had a large family, that she might not have found time to write her novels, and we thank Heaven that Rosa Bonheur lives for art, only because she has proved herself worthy of her mistress.

But how many girls there are who are "dying" to be readers, and actresses and painters, and writers, and sculptors, and doctors, and lawyers, and who have even rushed in to the inner temple of their deity, who ought to be doing their homes and neighborhoods good service

as house decorators, as real-estate agents, as sellers of needles and thread and tapes and ribbons, as good milliners, and neat, tasteful dress-makers, as helpers of hard-worked mothers, or assistants to pressed and broken-down fathers, as performers, in short, of the duty which lay next their hands, the followers of an avocation to which their tastes and talents were suited, instead of the hangers-on and gleaners in fields, where they never can be respectable or recognized workers.

There is no direction in which strong, good work is not needed, but when the call is made for workers it is answered by swarms of weak, incompetent aspirants, whose only claim is their own desire for public applause, and the pecuniary reward which accompanies it, or the ill-judged praise of friends.

A good deed is said to be infinite in possibilities of wide-spread influence. It is started on its mission with little thought, but no mortal mind can tell where it will be likely to terminate its work. But if this is true of the good that is done, it is just as true of the evil, whether that evil is intentional or not. It is the burden of the mistakes that weighs down the world, and makes it a vast whispering gallery of sighs and moans, of groans and complaints, instead of a beautiful and cheerful home, where season succeeds season, and each period brings its own sources of sweetness and happiness.

Those who make mistakes are seldom the ones to patiently bear them. Their vanity either refuses to accept the mistake as their own or their indolence endeavors to shift the burden upon the shoulders of other people. Life is very short, and does not give us the opportunity of repairing important mistakes, and it is of the greatest importance that we should not start with one, as this not only controls to a great extent our own lives, but affects largely, whether we think it or no, the lives of others.

The test of a thing, and of its right to existence, is the completeness of its own individuality, and the perfection with which it fills its place.

To meet either of these conditions, it must have truth and honesty as its basis of operations. Vanity and selfish desire can never form the foundation of permanently good work, and are not only unreliable as evidences of genius, but so inconsistent with it, as to afford the best possible proof of its absence from the soil in which these qualities have been cultivated.

La Francaise.

BY M. A. LORILLARD.



ONE clear-skied day in June, long buried now beneath the rose-leaves of many later Junes, I found myself deeply ensnared in the face and fortunes of a young French girl of rank. She had been at the place a week, and was at that time seated upon the rear piazza of an American hotel.

Being a woman, and not young, I had made