

ORIGINALITY.

THE word which forms the title of this evening's lecture, expresses a quality which universally commands admiration, and even a certain mysterious reverence. There is something divine and heroic about the man who, untaught by living voice or printed page, spins the web of truth from his own mind — through the dense clouds of ignorance which veil the vision of ordinary mortals, sends his piercing gaze into the orbs of beauty that glitter in the vault of heaven — or like Prometheus, pitying poor mortals in their need, brings them aid from heaven, in the shape of inventions that will minister to their daily wants. Standing between the common herd of mankind and those higher intelligences who people the angelic world, he occupies a position which seems to elevate him above the sympathy of his fellow-men into a world of his own, where he feeds his mighty thoughts upon things too hard to be understood, — things which it is impossible for man to utter. As we look upon a NEWTON, a SHAKESPEARE, and a DANTE, we say "there were giants in those days;" — an immeasurable gulf seems to separate their transcendent genius from anything that we can ever hope to attain. We feel that it is for us to lie low before such imposing presence, rather than to attempt treading in their footsteps, or in any way availing ourselves of their example. Such things are too high for us; we may understand a little of their achievements — but we look upon