

revolts at the first indication of compulsion and of restraint." One of the best critics of antiquity, Horace, remarks of genius, that no one can claim that distinction who does not enjoy a superior imagination, and is not master of high flights of fancy.

"— *Cui mens divinior atque
Magna sonaturum des nominis hujus honorem.*"

"Genius," says Reynolds, "is supposed to be a power of producing excellencies, which are out of the reach of the rules of art; a power which no precepts can teach, and which no industry can acquire." "It is the invention," observes Pope, "that in different degrees distinguishes all great geniuses: the utmost stretch of human study, learning, and industry, which masters every thing besides, can never attain to this. It furnishes art with all her materials, and, without it, judgment itself can at best but steal wisely: for art is only like a prudent steward, that lives on managing the riches of nature. Whatever praises may be given to works of judgment, there is not even a single beauty in them to which the invention must not contribute: as in the most regular gardens, art can only reduce the beauties of nature to more regularity, and such a figure, which the common eye may better take in, and is therefore more entertained with. And perhaps the reason why common critics are inclined to prefer a judicious and methodical genius to a great and fruitful one, is, because they find it easier for themselves to pursue their observations through an uniform and bounded walk of art, than to comprehend the vast and various extent of nature." Fancy, which is nothing else than invention, Milton declares to be the eye of the soul; and

"— In her absence *mimic* fancy wakes
To imitate her; but misjoining shapes,
Wild work produces oft."

The heathen world exhibited several great natural geniuses, not disciplined by any rules of art. But of them all—Solomon excepted—Homer affords the most striking illustration. His was an imagination above all artificial aid; and his mind a Paradise of the richest soil. The "*vividi vis animi*," he possessed; and there is that divine fervour in his works that captivates the soul of every reader of any degree of poetical susceptibility. Demosthenes is another remarkable instance of genius. His indomitable spirit and wonderful perseverance enabled him to overcome constitutional defects; but it was the splendour of his imagination, the greatness of his invention, that produced the eloquence that astonished the Athenians, and may be said to have resembled

"The big thunder o'er the vast profound."

Socrates, of whom it was remarked, that he brought philosophy from heaven, to inhabit among men; and Archimedes and Euclid, were all powerful

geniuses. They had no models from whom to borrow their theories—they were the imitators of none. The Romans were not void of genius. They produced many great men, whose memories we reverence, and whose works we admire; but, for the most part, they formed themselves by rules, and submitted the greatness of their natural talents to the corrections and restraints of art. The genius in both these classes of authors may be equally great, but exhibits itself differently; and, for the purpose of distinction, is classed separately. The one may be compared to a most prolific soil, whose fruits spring up in abundance without any certain order: in the other, art supplies the skill of a cultivator. Under this second head of genius may be classed Plato and Aristotle among the Greeks, Cicero and Tully, Juvenal and Horace, Virgil and Ovid, among the Romans, and Milton, Bacon, Newton and some others among the moderns.

Without derogating from the fame of the ancients, it may be remarked, that antiquity afforded a golden era for the display of genius. That irregular manner of life, and those manly pursuits from which barbarity takes its name, were most favourable to the free and unrestrained exercise of the nobler passions of the mind. In advanced and civilized society the characters of men are more uniform and disguised; and the powers of the soul have not the same opportunity of exerting themselves. "In the infancy of societies," says Dr. Blair, "men live scattered and dispersed in the midst of solitary rural scenes, where the beauties of nature are their chief entertainment. They meet with many objects to them new and strange; their wonder and surprise are frequently excited; and by the sudden changes of fortune occurring in their unsettled state of life their passions are raised to the utmost. Their passions having nothing to restrain them, their imagination has nothing to check it."

A more noble exemplification of human genius the world has never witnessed than in the Bard of Avon—the immortal Shakspeare, who has been most aptly compared to the stone in Pyrrhus' ring, which is represented to have had the figure of Apollo and the nine muses in the veins of it, produced by the spontaneous hand of nature, without any help from art. Born of humble parents, Shakspeare's education was limited, but his genius was indeed gigantic; and it has cast a deathless celebrity on the history of his country. The genius of this mighty magician, which diffused such glory around it, may be admired, or rather adored, but can never be measured.

"A genius universal as his theme;
Astonishing as Chaos, as the bloom
Of blowing Eden fair, as heaven sublime."

In the whirlwind of his scene, Shakspeare bears the imagination of his audience along with him. He