

## The Portfolio.

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### Editorials.

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A GREAT many people are gifted with mediocre capacities, a lesser number have higher gifts, and but very few have the capability of becoming specialists in any department of knowledge, science, or art. Among the great gifts is originality. Of course every one possesses it in so far as he is different from every one else, and has an individuality of his own. We are often delighted with the remarks of children. It is because they are original, as they have not had time to become imbued with the ideas of their elders. They are imitators of the outward acts of those around them, but cannot be of the inward thought, and we would not wish them to be. Neither then, should they be imitators when they are grown up. If it is to be esteemed in youth, can it be any less admirable when all the faculties are developed? We are apt to become too much conventionalized by the fashions of the age. We think, speak, and act in a certain way because others do so. This is perfectly right in some things, but not in others. A man possessed of the franchise

should have a decided opinion of his own, and should know which candidate for any position is the best qualified to fill it. On some subjects it is essential that we have an opinion of our own. While about others it does not matter so much. So many external influences affect us, and often it is much better for us to do things in the same way that others do—to conform to the general rules and principles which are for the well-being of society and govern it. We should not be peculiar—peculiarity never was originality. If we have not fully made up our minds on a certain subject, and perhaps are not in a position to be capable of doing so, either through lack of knowledge or experience, suppose that we hear a speech about it, we may come away thinking as the speaker does, till we hear someone else who holds some very different views. If the second speaker has convinced us that the first was wrong, then we think as he does, or if he does not convince us he either confirms our first opinion or else leaves us in doubt which to believe. Or it may be two books or two teachers which exert the influence over us. We should be instructed, and to some extent guided by men of greater minds than our own.

All the great writers have possessed the faculty of presenting their own ideas in original dress, and it is this which has distinguished them. Some would not hold a place among first-class writers if it were not for this gift. The man whose writings and speeches catch and retain the attention of the public must be original. The first piece Josh Billings wrote for a paper was a failure, but he changed the spelling of it, and it was instantly copied into papers all over the continent. The changing of the spelling was not altogether original, but it answered his purpose, and called the attention of newspaper readers to his writings, who im-