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## TIDES OF INSPIRATION.

There is an element of inspir-  
ation, in all great work which is  
never wholly at command; with  
the greatest as with humbler men,  
it ebbs and flows. There are times  
when it comes in with the rush  
of the flood; when the mind is  
suddenly fertilised with ideas,  
when the heart is "a nest of sing-  
ing birds," when the whole visible  
world shines and glows. There  
are times, also, when its ebb  
leaves mind and heart as bare and  
vacant as the beach from which  
the tide has receded. These alter-  
nations of ebb and flow, of dark-  
ness and light, are not unknown  
to the greatest souls; they are the  
invariable accompaniments of  
that quality of soul which makes  
a man the interpreter of his fellow  
and of the world which is common  
ground between them. There is  
something above us whose instru-  
ments we are; there are currents  
of inspiration which touch us and  
our strength is "as the strength  
of ten"; which pass from us and,  
like Samson shorn, we are as  
pygmies with other pygmies.  
No man wholly commands these  
affluent moods, these creative im-  
pulses; but some men learn the  
secret of appropriating them, of  
keeping within their range. These  
are the men who hold themselves  
with immovable purpose to the  
conditions of their work; who  
refuse all solicitations, resist all  
temptations, to compromise with  
customary habits and pleasures;  
who keep themselves in their  
own world, and, working or wait-  
ing, achieve complete self-expres-  
sion. "I am always at work," said  
a great artist, "and when an in-  
spiration comes I am ready to  
make the most of it." Inspiration  
rarely leaves such a man long un-  
visited. One looks at Turner's  
pictures with wonder in his heart.  
In this rushing, roaring, sooty  
London, with its leaden skies, its  
returning clouds and obscuring  
fogs, how were such dreams  
wooded and won? The painter's  
life answers the question. London  
had small share of Turner; he  
lived in a world of his own mak-  
ing, and the flush of its sky, the  
glory of its golden atmosphere,  
never wholly faded from his  
vision.

## OF CAUSES.

I have often amused myself  
with remarking how many per-  
sons' good and ill fortunes have  
flowed from the most trifling  
events; and by what strange and  
intricate combinations things are  
brought about. Epictetus hath well

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