

long years everybody had told him he was a genius; and now, when the question was put to him, "What had he a genius for?" he could not answer it. This rebuff rendered him melancholy for several days, and he wandered from street to street, sometimes standing, unconscious of what he was doing, before the window of a bookseller, till, jostled by the crowd, he moved on, and again took his stand before the window of the print-seller, the jeweller, or the vender of caricatures. Still he believed that he was a genius, and he was a genius, and he was conscious that that genius might make him a fortune; only he knew not how to apply it; he was puzzled where to begin. Yet he did not despair.—He thought the day would come—but how it was to come, he knew not. He took out his uncle's letter, which his father had put into his hands when he left him, and he read it again, and said, it was all very good; but what was he the better of it?—it was all very true—too true, for he understood every word of it now; and he turned round his arm and examined his coat with a sigh, and beheld that the lining was beginning to shew its unwelcome face through the seams of the elbows. I should have told you that he was then sitting in a coffee-house, sipping his three halfpence worth of coffee, and *kitchening* his pennyworth of bread, which was but half a slice, slightly buttered—and a thin slice, too, compared with those of his mother's cutting. He was beginning to feel one of the first rewards of genius—*eating by measure*! To divert the melancholy of his feelings, and the gloom of his prospects, he took up a magazine which lay on the table before him. His eyes fell upon a review of a poem which had been lately published, and for which the author was said to have received a thousand guineas! "*A thousand guineas!*" exclaimed George, dropping the magazine—"A thousand guineas! I shall make a fortune yet!" He had read some of the extracts from the poem, he was sure he could write better lines, his eyes flashed with ecstasy, his very nostrils distended with delight, a thousand guineas seemed already in his pocket! Though, alas! out of the eight pounds which he had received as the price of his father's cow, with all his management and with all his economy, he had but eight shillings left. But his resolution was taken—he saw fortune hovering over him with her golden wings, he purchased a quire of paper and half a dozen quills, and hurried to his garret—for his lodging was a garret, in

which there was nothing but an old bed and an olden chair—not even an apology for a table—but sometimes the bed served the purpose of one, and at other times he sat upon the floor like a Turk, and wrote upon the chair. He was resolved to write an epic—for the idea of a thousand guineas had taken possession of all his faculties. He made a pen—he folded the paper—he rubbed his hands across his brow for a subject. He might have said with Byron, (had Byron then said it,)

"I want a hero!"

He thought of a hundred subjects, and with each the idea of his mother's beautiful but most unlucky first-foot was mingled!—At length he fixed upon one, and began to write. He wrote most industriously—in short, he wrote for a thousand guineas! He tasked himself to four hundred lines a day, and, in a fortnight, he finished a poem containing about five thousand. It was longer than that for which the thousand guineas had been given, but George thought, though he should get no more for his, that even a thousand guineas was very good payment for a fortnight's labor. Of the eight shillings which we mentioned his being in possession of when he began the epic, he had now but threepence, and he was in arrears for the week's rent of his garret. The landlady began to cast very suspicious glances at her lodger—she looked at him with the sides of her eyes. She did not know exactly what a genius meant, but she had proof-positive it did not mean a gentleman. At times, also, she would stand with his garret-door in her hand, as if she intended to say, "Mr. Rogers, I would thank you for last week's rent."

Scarce was the ink dry upon the last page of his poem, when George, folding up the manuscript, put it carefully into his coat pocket, and hurried to the bookseller of whom he had read that he had given a thousand guineas for a shorter work, and one too that, he was satisfied in his own mind, was every way inferior to his. We do not say that he exactly expected the publisher to fall down and worship him the moment he read the first page of his production, but he did believe that he would regard him as a prodigy, and at once offer terms for the copyright. He was informed by a shopman, however, that the publisher was engaged, and he left the manuscript, stating that he would call again. George did call again, and yet again trembling with hope and anxiety; and he began to discover that a great Lon-