

'Æneid' which he left unfinished at his death. Thucydide's great work cost him twenty-years. Diodorus was thirty years compiling his history. Lucretius' great poem occupied a life time. Pope would pass whole days over a couplet. Gibbon's "Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire" embraced almost a quarter of a century before it was completed. Eighteen years it took Locke to write his great essay on the human understanding. Balzac, it is said would average but a page a week. Charlotte Bronte would devote an hour to the selection of a word. A short ode would take Gray a month, and Foster would often devote a week to a sentence, while one poem of Waller's consisting of only ten lines represented his summer's work.

Of course this is but a one-sided view of genius, for others have been endowed with a degree of fluency surely marvellous. Lucilius made his boast that he could compose two hundred verses, "stans pede in uno." Cicero wrote as he spoke, and as eloquently. One week was all Dr. Johnson had in which to produce his 'Rasselas' that he might pay the expenses of his mother's funeral. Alexander's Feast, said to be the finest drinking song in the language was finished at one sitting, and four of Dryden's greatest works cost him but one year, while his wonderful translation of Virgil was produced in three. Sir Walter Scott dictated faster than his amanuensis could write, and his original manuscripts show scarcely a single blot or erasure. Milton at times poured forth his verse in a constant stream, but this seems to have been rather an effort of remembrance than immediate composition. Ben Johnson wrote his 'Alchemist' in six weeks, and Fenelon spent but three months on his *Telamaque*. Southey has left all modern writers far behind in the number of his works, there being extant 109 finished productions, besides articles in magazines and reviews without number. And he but compares with Lope De Vega, who as Hallam estimates was the author of at least 21,300,000 lines, and who could with ease write a complete play in a couple of days, or finish a farce inside of an hour.

It is one of the greatest tributes to genius that many of the most elaborate undertakings have been accomplished under the most adverse circumstances. The 'Iliad' and 'Paradise Lost' are the works of a blind Homer, and a blind Milton. The numerous historical works of Prescott were likewise compiled in darkness,

and the 'Amenities of Literature' was produced by Disraeli when overtaken by the same affliction. Dante, a needy pilgrim, brought forth his immortal poem. Cervantes, in a wretched prison composed his 'Don Quixote,' and it was in the jail of Bedford, that Bunyan's 'Pilgrim's Progress' was conceived and finished. Thucydides, Ovid, Zenophon, all during exile composed their different works and under the same circumstances did Locke write his letter on 'Toleration,' and Bolingbroke his 'Reflections on exile.' Petrarch was continually threatened by the priests who attributed his poetry to heresy and witch-craft. Camoens the only one that Portugal has produced of whom she can be proud perished from hunger in a Lisbon hospital. Vaugelas, of all French writers the most polished, and who devoted over 30 years to the translation of Quintus Curtius, was so poor, that at his death he sold his body to his creditors.

The many and various freaks and caprices of genius are at once strange and interesting. Among the Romans four of their most noted poets would before writing become completely intoxicated. Coleridge, De Quincey, Shadwell, were absolute slaves to opium. Schiller, drank coffee "to thaw the frost on his wits," and absinthe alone could excite the imagination of Musset. Dryden was accustomed to be bled, and raw meat, it is said, was the incentive of Fuseli. Milton, could compose only between the vernal and autumnal equinox. Phillips employed a servant to comb his hair whilst he was writing, and Montaigne could never have composed his essays, without his favourite cat beside him.

It was Florus, that first said, "Poets are born, not made." Now this refrain is echoed world-wide, and this seemingly accounts for the extreme reluctance, with which a criticising public greets the first appearance of a true genius. The Many believe there were mental giants in the past; they readily admit this since they are dead and buried, and but for fear of other men's opinions, they would perceive that the world is indeed suffering from a superabundance of great men at the present time, but this is the misfortune of real genius, not to be recognized until too late. Alas! they cry, Southey and Byron, Scott and Wordsworth, Coleridge and Lamb, Keats and Shelley, all are gone, and never for a moment consider that they have but given place to men like Tennyson and Browning, Arnold and Meredith. Landor and Morris, Swin-