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THE LOCALITIES OF AUTHORSHIP.

We suggested in these columns, a few weeks ago, a compilation from travellers' diaries; we would now urge on any one who has a taste for compiling, to make a volume bringing before us the scenes in which famous works have been written. As Mr. Morley has said: "It is always interesting to know the circumstances under which pieces that have moved the world were originally composed;" and often there is a striking dramatic contrast, sometimes a beautiful harmony, between the work itself and the circumstances of its composition, which one finds it worth while to become aware of.

Authors are fond of picturing to us their moments of inspiration, and the records of them are numerous. Those of Rousseau, naturally, are among the foremost, and it was they that occasioned the sentence we have quoted from his biographer. We know how he was walking along the road from Paris to Vincennes one hot summer afternoon, going to visit Diderot, then in prison for his Letter on the Blind, when, seeing in a newspaper the theme proposed by the Dijon Academy, his hitherto unembodied genius instantaneously asserted itself "with a force and confusion that threw me into unspeakable agitation." Diderot, when they met, perceiving his excitement, "I told him the cause of it; and I read him the *protopopœia* of Fabricius, written in pencil under an oak. He urged me to give wing to my ideas and to compete for the prize. I did so, and from that moment I was lost. All the rest of my life and my misfortunes were in the inevitable result of that hour of bewilderment." In other words, from that moment he was a leader of men.

Of Gibbon, whose great work made him not a leader of men, but a master of students, we have perhaps heard quite enough concerning "the moment of conception" and "the hour of my final deliverance;" quite enough about "the ruins of the Capitol," and "the barefooted friars," on the 15th October, 1764, and "the summer house in my garden," and "the *berceau*, or covered walk of acacias, . . . on the day, or rather night of the 27th June, 1787. . . . when all nature was silent." But we shall never hear enough of (what he himself does not tell us) the ruffles and powder in which he was wont in his solitude to array himself for the majestic presence

of his history—an admirable contrast to the Dominican robes and lamplit rooms in which Balzac wrote the *Comédie Humaine*—just as our interest is insatiable in hearing from M^{me}. de Genlis that Rousseau told her that "he wrote all the letters of Julie on pretty little note-paper with vignettes, which he afterward folded as letters and re-read on his walks with as much delight as if he had received them from an adored mistress." This power of acting his characters to himself reminds one of what was told the other day of Mr. Dickens by his daughter, in an article in the *Cornhill*. She describes being with him, when a child, in his working hours, and seeing him spring up from his writing table and go to a mirror to bring before himself more vividly, by dispositions of his own face and figure, the looks and ways of the personages he was creating.

But to return to localities. It is interesting to know that George Eliot wrote *Adam Bede*, full as it is of England, in a foreign land, at Munich; and it is perhaps even more interesting to know that George Sand wrote *Jacques*, which Lord Acton calls "the most ignominious" of her stories, André, one of the most plaintive of her idyls, and, as she herself described it, "the least complicated and most indolent of fictions," and Léone Léoni, the counterpart of *Manon Lescaut*, all in Venice, in rapid succession. She was there in solitude and desolation; the carnival was roaring and whistling together with the icy wind outside her great dreary apartment in the *Palazzo Nasi*. She sought by the help of imagination to escape from melancholy, and, she says, "I began at haphazard a romance which opened by a description of the place, of the gayety without and of my solemn apartment;" it was finished in a week, and the breath of her life still quickens it after fifty years.

Passing over the prison within whose walls Bunyan entered into the "large upper-chamber whose window opened towards the sun-rising: the name of the chamber was Peace," let us turn to the poets, and to Burns' exquisite account of the "bonnie, sweet sonesie lass"—his fellow-labourer in the harvest field in his fifteenth autumn—who, a year younger than himself, first inspired him with love and poetry "She sang sweetly, and it was her favourite reel to which I attempted" to vent in rhyme the emotion with which "I looked and fingered over her little hand,