

to London, stopping on his return, in Holland, afterward making a hasty trip through Italy to Paris, where he established himself in a fine studio, intending to make that city his home for a considerable time. But news of the death of his mother, in the year 1856, entirely changed his plans, and he determined at once to return to his home in the city of Washington. There he passed the following winter, and in the succeeding summer made a trip to Lake Superior, where he made many studies of Indians and frontier characters, returning to Washington in the winter, and going back to the North-west in the summer, stopping on his return at Cincinnati, where he secured a studio and painted a number of portraits. He reached Washington in the month of June, 1858, and during that summer at the Capital he painted one of his

largest pictures, and called it "The Old Kentucky Home." In the autumn of the same year he established himself in a studio in University Building, New York, and remained there fourteen years.

Mr. Johnson was born in 1824, was married to Elizabeth Buckley in 1869, and has one daughter. When I began this essay, I intended to group a number of artists about the subject of this sketch, and make him the central star; but, on looking over the list, I found such a large number of distinguished painters in all the departments of the art, which, like that of printing, is, though in a higher sense, preservative of art, that I determined to let him, like Wordsworth's star, stand and shine alone.

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### SUGGESTIONS.

ONE might apprehend that the beginning of centuries is favorable to genius. The great men of our Revolution were men of genius in one shape or other. Their ages ranged within a score of each other, the Nestors of the period coming in with 1700, as witness that wonderful man, Benjamin Franklin, scientist, moralist, patriot, philosopher, born 1706.

Every man has his counterpart, his double, his bane, his antidote. Alexander had his Aristotle; Cæsar his Brutus; Seneca his Nero; Hypatia her Cyril; Luther his Loyola; Mary Stuart her Elizabeth; Charles First his Cromwell; Buonaparte his Wellington.

Great men and women come in groups. Socrates and Plato, Pericles and Aspasia; Cæsar, Anthony, Cleopatra, Herod, and so on through the ages. There must be greatness to reflect greatness, and give back the key-note. Leo the Magnificent was intensified by Luther and Loyola; observe the alliteration of the three, in itself curious. The chords struck by these two, Luther and Loyola, are still vibrating—dividing the civilized world—and

each in its peculiar way tending to utter negation. The intelligent Catholic, spurning the dogmas of the Church that sets itself against human thought and progressive ideas, lands himself in materialism; while the Protestant, carrying *his* ideas to their ultimate issues, finds himself at length in the same category of utter unbelief.

What is truth? asked Pilot of Jesus, not in mockery, but in simple desire to learn, even from the despised Nazarene; and it is the question we are all forced to ask in many ways.

The groups of persons that have made their mark in the world are not always wholesome in character, but there they are, marking with pen of iron the age in which they lived. Charles V., the Duke of Alva, Catharine de Medici, Mary Stuart, Mary of England, Philip of Spain, contrasting with the royal Elizabeth and Bacon and Raleigh and Shakespear, followed by Hampden and Cromwell and Milton, great double stars, that make us exclaim—

"Look how the canopy of heaven  
Is thick inlaid with patins of fine gold."

Even in our day the group of writers coming early in the century have achieved more or less of celebrity—as witness, Willis, Longfellow, Holmes, Hoffman, Whipple; but the chances are growing less, year by year, for even high genius to win distinction, whether or not distinction be desirable. The passion for wealth, and the perpetual wear and tear of our elective system are unfavorable to the imaginative or æsthetic element. If either in politics or religion any stability existed, time for the creative thinker might be found; but as it now is, the writer has no time for elaboration, and hurries his progeny into public view, either from the stress of poverty or because he fears that somebody will “run away with his thunder,” so much do all think alike, and hence there is something crude and premature, not only in authorship, but everything else about us.

We do not take time enough to do what we attempt, well. Our scientists are an exception; but as a rule, we know too much in the same line, and either do not think at all, or all think alike, talk alike, and write alike, partly because we are too cowardly to face public opinion and public abuse.

We are in a chronic hurry and chronic tiredness. “What’s the use?” is growing to be the excuse for our shortcomings and imperfect achievements. Pre-

mateness prevails in courts of law and halls of legislation, no less than in the lucubrations of authorship and prophecies of the future. American babies have something premature about them, and do not suck the thumb like foreign babies. I have a suspicion that they have eschewed the creeping upon all-fours, and hitch along in unseemly wise fashion, while seated, like a young monkey.

Our young men, guilty of much youngness, are now going into politics, which promises to be a relief from party old-fogyism. Cromwell was ill content at the indifference of his son Richard to the interests of the Commonwealth of England, and wrote in this connection, “It went to my heart when Henry died.” What might have been the destiny of England had it been that he lived?

Henry died, and Richard, who did not inherit the century, but came somewhere in the middle of it, was passive, if not lazy. This must be the fact with myriads of us who are born midway in time, and hence the sound conservative common-sense of the majorities in civilized nations.

Perhaps the world is outgrowing the need of genius. Perhaps it is resting now, as it has rested often in the long ages, waiting for its revelators, its sibyls, its prophets.

ELIZABETH OAKES SMITH.

## ON A PICTURE

IN THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM, NEW YORK.

It is a childish face; but such a face  
As breathes alone from canvas of old time,  
Where loveliest poetry and life combine  
With strength to form an ideal boyish grace,  
And shadowed from the forehead’s flushing  
height,  
And shadowed from the mystic darkling eyes  
Is all the loveliness of Italian skies,  
And all the beauty of the Italian night.  
But in those orbs and on that forehead’s space  
More yet there lingers as of olden song,  
Or memories glorious, such as sweep along  
Undimmed by each succeeding age’s trace.

And the deep flush that rests upon the cheek,  
More darkly sensuous than the tropic rose,  
And all the mouth’s full-lipped and red repose,  
The dawn of future proudest passion speak.

But is naught known of him who thus inspired  
The artist’s pencil? save that feudal time  
Marked him as one lord of a lordly line—  
Say, were not those bright eyes by glory fired?  
Did no triumphal prime, no full heyday  
Complete the promise of this early glow?  
All vainly would we moderns seek to know,  
Few echoes come from out the past to say.

EILEEN COX.