

Goodrich Samuel Griswold

Curiosities of Human Nature



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ZERAH COLBURN

Among the intellectual prodigies which sometimes appear to excite the wonder and astonishment of mankind, Zerah Colburn was certainly one of the most remarkable. He was born at Cabot, Vermont, Sept. 1st, 1804. He was the sixth child of his parents, who were persons in low circumstances and of little education. He was regarded as the most backward of the children till he was about six years old, when he suddenly attracted attention by the display of his astonishing powers.

In August, 1810, when his father, Abia Colburn, was one day employed at a joiner's work-bench, Zerah was on the floor, playing among the chips; suddenly, he began to say to himself, – 5 times 7 are 35 – 6 times 8 are 48, &c. His father's attention was immediately arrested by hearing this, so unexpected in a child so young, and who had hitherto possessed no advantages, except perhaps six weeks' attendance at the district school, that summer. He therefore left his work, and turning to the child, began to examine him in the multiplication table. He thought it possible that Zerah had learnt this from the other boys; but finding him perfect in the table, his attention was more deeply fixed, and he

asked the product of 13×97 , to which 1261 was instantly given as the answer. He now concluded that something unusual had actually taken place; indeed, he has often said he should not have been more surprised if some one had risen up out of the earth and stood erect before him.

It was not long before a neighbor rode up, and stopping at the house, was informed of the singular occurrence. He desired to be a witness of the fact. Zerah was called, and the result of the examination astonished every one present. The strange phenomenon was now rapidly spread throughout the town. Though many were inclined to doubt the correctness of the reports they heard, a personal examination attested their truth. Thus the story originated, which within the short space of a year found its way not only through the United States, but also reached Europe, and extorted expressions of wonder from foreign journals of literature and science in England, France and other countries.

Very soon after the discovery of his remarkable powers, many gentlemen, at that time possessing influence and public confidence throughout the state, being made acquainted with the circumstances, were desirous of having such a course adopted as might most directly lead to a full development of Zerah's talents, and their application to purposes of general utility. Accordingly, it was proposed that Mr. Colburn should carry his son to Danville, to be present during the session of the court. This was done, and the boy was very generally seen and questioned by

the judges, members of the bar, and others.

The legislature of Vermont being about to convene at Montpelier, Mr. Colburn was advised to visit that place with his son, which they did in October. Here large numbers had an opportunity of witnessing his calculating powers, and the conclusion was general that such a thing had never been known before. Many questions, which were out of the common limits of arithmetic, were proposed, with a view to puzzle the child, but he answered them correctly; as, for instance, – which is the most, twice twenty-five, or twice five and twenty? Ans. Twice twenty-five. Which is the most, six dozen dozen, or half a dozen dozen? Ans. Six dozen dozen. Somebody asked him how many black beans would make five white ones. Ans. Five, if you skin them! Thus it appeared that the boy could not only compute and combine numbers readily, but that he also possessed a quickness of thought, somewhat uncommon among children, as to other things.

Soon after this, Mr. Colburn took his son to other large towns, and at last to Boston. Here the boy excited the most extraordinary sensation, and several gentlemen of the highest standing proposed to undertake his education. The terms, though very liberal, were not equal to the high-raised expectations of the father. The offer was therefore refused, and Mr. Colburn proceeded to the southern cities, exhibiting his son in public, his performances everywhere exciting the utmost wonder.

The author of these pages had an opportunity of seeing

Zerah Colburn, at this period. He was a lively, active boy, of light complexion, his head being rather larger than that of boys generally at his age. He was then six years old, and had the manners common to children of his age. He was playful, even while performing his calculations. The quickness and precision with which he gave answers to arithmetical questions was amazing. Among those proposed to him at Boston, in the autumn of the year 1810, were the following:

What is the number of seconds in 2000 years? The answer, 63,072,000,000, was readily and accurately given. Another question was this: Allowing that a clock strikes 156 times in a day, how many times will it strike in 2000 years? The child promptly replied, 113,800,000 times.

What is the product of 12,225, multiplied by 1,223? Ans. 14,951,175. What is the square of 1,449? Ans. 2,099,601. Suppose I have a corn-field, in which are seven acres, having seventeen rows to each acre, sixty-four hills to each row, eight ears on a hill, and one hundred and fifty kernels on an ear; how many kernels in the corn-field? Ans. 9,139,200.

It will be recollected that the child who answered these questions was but six years old; that he had then had no instruction whatever in arithmetic; that he could neither read nor write, and that he performed these immense calculations by mental processes, wholly his own. His answers were usually given, and the calculations performed, while engaged in his sports, and the longest process seemed hardly to divert his mind

from his amusements. His answers were often made almost as soon as the question was proposed, and in most cases before the process could be performed on paper.

His faculty for calculation seemed to increase, and as he became acquainted with arithmetical terms, his performances were still more remarkable. In June, 1811, he was asked the following question: If the distance between Concord and Boston be sixty-five miles, how many steps must I take in going this distance, supposing each step to be three feet? The answer, 114,400 steps, was given in ten seconds. He was asked how many days and hours had elapsed since the Christian era commenced. In twenty seconds he replied, 661,015 days, 15,864,360 hours.

Questions still more difficult were answered with similar promptitude. What sum multiplied by itself will produce 998,001? In less than four seconds he replied 999. How many hours in thirty-eight years, two months, and seven days? The answer, 334,488, was given in six seconds.

These extraordinary performances, witnessed by thousands of people, and among them persons of the highest standing, were soon reported in the papers, and attracted scarcely less attention in Europe than in this country. In England, particularly, great curiosity was expressed, and the plan of taking young Colburn thither was suggested. After some deliberation, this project was resolved upon; and in the spring of 1812, the father and son embarked at Boston for Liverpool, where they landed on the 11th of May. They proceeded to London, and taking rooms at Spring

Gardens, commenced their exhibition.

Great numbers came to witness the performances of the boy, among whom Zerah, in his Life, enumerates the dukes of Gloucester and Cumberland, Lord Ashburton, Sir James Mackintosh, Sir Humphrey Davy, and the Princess Charlotte. The latter, attended by her tutor, the bishop of Salisbury, remained a full hour, and asked a number of questions. Among the rest was this: What is the square of 4001? The answer, 16,008,001, was immediately given. The duke of Cambridge asked the number of seconds in the time elapsed since the commencement of the Christian era, 1813 years, 7 months, 27 days. The answer was correctly given, 57,234,384,000.

An extraordinary interest was excited in London in respect to this remarkable youth, and schemes for giving him an education suited to his turn of mind were suggested. At a meeting of several distinguished gentlemen, to mature some plan of this sort, various questions were proposed to the child. He multiplied the number eight by itself, and each product by itself, till he had raised it to the sixteenth power, giving, as the almost inconceivable result, 281,474,976,710,656. He was asked the square root of 106,929, and before the number could be written down, he answered 327. He was then requested to name the cube root of 268,336,125, and with equal facility and promptness he replied, 645.

A likeness of the young prodigy, drawn by Hull and engraved by Meyer, was now published, and sold at a guinea each. Many

were sold, and a considerable profit was realized. Another scheme was now started, – a memoir of the child, – and among the committee to superintend its publication, were Sir James Mackintosh, Sir Humphrey Davy and Basil Montague. Several hundred subscribers were obtained, but, though many paid in advance, for some reason or other the work was never published. Young Colburn and his father now made a tour to Ireland and Scotland. Among his visitors in Scotland, were Dugald Stewart, Professor Playfair, Doctor Brewster and Doctor Macknight. In March, 1814, they returned to London. By the advice of friends, they now proceeded to Paris, where they arrived in July, 1814.

Zerah was carefully examined before the French Institute. It is curious that on this occasion he was longer in giving his answers than ever before; probably owing to some embarrassment. His performances, however, excited here, as everywhere else, the greatest astonishment. La Place, the author of the *Mécanique Celeste*, was present. Guizot received the youth at his house, and expressed in his behalf the liveliest interest.

Such was the feeling excited, that a project was set on foot for giving Zerah an education at the Royal College of Henry IV. Nothing was wanting but the sanction of the king; but at the precise moment when measures were in progress to secure this object, Bonaparte came back from Elba, sweeping everything before him. The Bourbons fled, and the emperor was reinstated upon his throne. Application was now made to him in behalf of young Colburn; his assent was obtained, and on the 13th May,

1815, he entered the seminary, which was now restored to its original title, the Lyceum Napoleon.

Mr. Colburn had, in England, Scotland and Paris, obtained a large number of subscribers to the memoir. Having placed his son in the Lyceum, he went to London to attend to the publication of the work. Here he met with bitter disappointment. His agent, who had been authorized to collect the money, had received about one third of the whole subscriptions, and appropriated the money to his own use. As he was poor, the whole sum was irretrievably lost. At the same time, Mr. Colburn found that his former friends were greatly chagrined to find that the French government, more liberal than themselves, had made provision for his son. Under this influence, the project of the memoir was abandoned, and a new scheme was proposed, the object of which was to raise two hundred pounds a year for six years, to defray the expenses of the boy's education.

While Mr. Colburn was pursuing this scheme, Zerah was at the Lyceum at Paris, which now became the theatre of the most interesting events. The battle of Waterloo was fought, Napoleon fled, and the French army retreated toward the capital. To this point, the hostile armies were now directing their march, and the citizens of Paris were roused for its defence. Every effort was made to strengthen the walls and throw up entrenchments. The scholars at the Lyceum received permission to join in this work, and with enthusiastic ardor, heightened by their sympathy for Napoleon, they went to their tasks, crying, "*Vive*

l'Empereur." Our little mathematician was among the number, and if he could have multiplied forts as easily as he managed figures, Paris would, doubtless, have been saved. But the fortune of war decided otherwise. Paris was overwhelmed, Napoleon dethroned, and Louis XVIII. restored.

Zerah Colburn might have continued at the Lyceum, but his foolish father, having embraced the London scheme, proceeded to Paris, and carried him thence again to London, where they arrived February 7, 1816.

The scheme which had excited Mr. Colburn's hopes, was, however, a mere illusion. His friends were worn out with his importunities, and, doubtless, disgusted with his fickleness. They were dissatisfied by discovering that while he wished to obtain a provision for his son, he desired also that some emolument, sufficient for his own wants, should come to himself. The result was, that both the father and son were reduced to a state of poverty. While attempting, by means scarcely better than beggary, to obtain transient support, they chanced to call upon the Earl of Bristol, who received them kindly, and expressed great interest in the youthful calculator. He invited them to his country residence at Putney, whither they went, and spent several days. The result of this fortunate acquaintance was, that the Earl made a provision of six hundred and twenty dollars a year for young Colburn's education at Westminster school, where he was regularly entered on the 19th September. At this period, he was a few days over twelve years old.

It now seemed that better fortunes had dawned upon this gifted, but still unfortunate boy; but these were soon clouded by disappointment. The custom of fagging existed in this school, as in all the higher seminaries of England. By this system, the boys of the under classes were required to be waiters and servants of those in the upper classes. Zerah was subjected to this arrangement, and a youth in the upper school was pitched upon for his master. This was the son of a baronet, Sir John L. Kaye.

Soon after he had been initiated into these menial duties, one of the upper scholars called upon him to perform some servile task. This he accomplished, but not to the satisfaction of his employer. He therefore complained to young Kaye, his proper master, whose wrath being greatly excited, he fell upon poor Zerah, twisted his arm nearly out of joint, and, placing him in a helpless situation, beat his shoulder black and blue. Zerah went to his father, who immediately proceeded to Mr. Knox, the usher. The latter expressed regret for the abuse Zerah had received, but when the father claimed exemption for his son from the custom of fagging, the usher positively refused compliance. Mr. Colburn enjoined it upon his son by no means to submit to this system of drudgery again, and departed. In the evening, he was called upon to clean a pair of shoes. This he refused; whereupon, a number of the larger boys, who had gathered around him, first threatened, and then beat him without mercy, until at last he complied. All this occurred under the same roof where the usher then was. In the morning, the father came, and appealing to him, was treated

with contempt. As he was going across the yard to see Dr. Page, the head master, the boys yelled at him from their windows, calling him Yankee; doubtless, deeming it the most opprobrious of epithets. The final result of this matter was, that Zerah was exempted from the custom of fagging, though no relaxation of the custom, generally, was made in the school.

Zerah continued at Westminster, spending his vacations with the Reverend Mr. Bullen, Lord Bristol's chaplain, at the village of Danton. His father, in the mean time, picked up the means of subsistence, partly by boarding his son and a few other scholars, and partly by contributions. At length, the Earl, who was now in Germany, made an arrangement for the removal of Zerah from the Westminster school to the exclusive charge of Mr. Bullen. Mr. Colburn objected to this, and wrote accordingly to Lord Bristol. The latter persisted in his plan, and in order to reconcile the father to it, offered him fifty pounds a year for his own personal use. With stubbornness, amounting to infatuation, he rejected the generous offer, and withdrew his son from the Westminster school, and the patronage of his noble friend.

Young Colburn had spent two years and nine months at the Westminster seminary, where his progress in the acquisition of languages and other studies was extremely rapid. Euclid's Elements of Geometry were mastered with ease; but it is a curious fact that while the boy was fascinated with arithmetical calculations, as he advanced into the abstruser portions of mathematics, his taste revolted from a pursuit that was dry and

repulsive.

Again the father and son were afloat in the sea of London. What was to be done now? The education of his son was, doubtless, an object to Mr. Colburn; but, with blind selfishness, he seems to have thought more of turning him to account as a means of raising money. With this view he proposed that he should go upon the stage; no doubt supposing that the youth's notoriety would render him available in this capacity. He was put in training, under the care of Charles Kemble. After four months' tuition, he appeared at Margate in the character of Norval. His reception was tolerably flattering, but he obtained no compensation. Mr. Colburn now determined to exhibit his son in his new profession, in Scotland and Ireland; but being almost entirely destitute of money, they were obliged to take a steerage passage in a vessel, and subsist upon hard fare. They arrived at Edinburgh, but received no encouragement in the theatrical line. Mr. Colburn called upon his former friends, and they contributed to his immediate relief. They now proceeded by canal-boat to Greenock, and thence in a vessel to Belfast. Here they found a strolling company of players, with whom an arrangement was made for Zerah's appearance at Londonderry, whither the party were about to proceed; to that place father and son journeyed on foot. Here the latter performed in some inferior characters, and soon returned with the band to Belfast. At this place he played the part of Richard the Third – but alas! even this master-stroke of policy failed. The father and son pushed on to Dublin, but they

could get no engagement at the theatre.

The inventive resources of Abia Colburn were not yet exhausted. Zerah must now turn author – and the future Methodist preacher must write a play! The subject chosen was that of Tasso's Jerusalem Delivered. The drama was composed – and we believe it was actually performed. But, alas! says Zerah, in his honest, modest book – "it never had any merit or any success."

After an absence of two months, the wanderers returned to London. A long period of inaction follows, during which Zerah wrote plays, which were never printed or performed, and the father picked up a precarious living by levying contributions upon his former friends. These were at last worn out with his importunities, and finally, one of the best of them deliberately turned Zerah out of doors, when he came upon some errand from his father.

Deprived of all other means save that of begging, which was now a poor resource, the youth obtained employment in October, 1821, as an usher in a school, and soon after established one on his own account. This afforded so poor a support, that still another effort was made to raise funds, ostensibly to provide for his permanent relief. To obtain subscribers to this proposal, Zerah went to Edinburgh, Glasgow and Belfast. At the former place, Mr. Combe took a cast of his head, seeking thereby to throw light upon his phrenological theories. He returned to London, with little success, and resumed his school.

The health of his father now began to give way. Unhappily,

he had, from the first discovery of his son's extraordinary gifts, looked upon them with mercenary feelings – as a source of revenue. It is true he had a father's love for his child – and in this respect, Zerah, in the simple memoir of his own life, does his parent more than justice; but still, it was this short-sighted selfishness which made him convert his child's endowments into a curse to him, to his friends, and Zerah himself. His expectations had been lifted to such a pitch, that nothing could satisfy them. The most generous offers fell short of what he felt to be his due; liberality was turned, in his mind, to parsimony – and even friends were regarded as little short of enemies. His sanguine temper led him constantly to indulge high hopes, which were as constantly doomed to disappointment. Such a struggle could not always last. His mind was torn with thoughts of his home and family neglected for twelve years; of his life wasted; his prospects defeated; of fond dreams, ending at last in failure, shame and poverty. He failed gradually, and on the 14th February, 1824, he died. A few days after, the body was consigned to the tomb, and Zerah, in his life, notices the fact that John Dunn Hunter was among the mourners. We mention this, as coinciding with the account we have given in this volume of that extraordinary character.

Zerah continued in London for a few months, in the employment of Mr. Young, in making astronomical calculations. He had, however, a desire, enforced by his father's death-bed injunctions, to return to his country, and his mother, at Cabot.

Again aided by his friend, Lord Bristol, he was provided with necessary means, and in June, 1824, he arrived at New York. On the third of July he approached his mother's door. He found there an elderly woman, and being uncertain who it was, he asked if she could tell him where the widow Colburn lived. "I am she," was the reply.

The mother of Zerah Colburn was a remarkable woman. During the long absence of her husband, with a family of eight children, and almost entirely destitute of property, she had sustained the burthen with indomitable energy. She wrought with her own hands, in house and field; bargained away the little farm for a better; and, as her son says, "by a course of persevering industry, hard fare, and trials such as few women are accustomed to, she has hitherto succeeded in supporting herself, besides doing a good deal for her children."

Zerah Colburn was now unable to offer much aid to his mother or the family. He found employment for a time as a teacher; but his mind at last was impressed with religious views, and after some vicissitudes of life, and many fluctuations of feeling, he finally adopted the Methodist faith, and became a humble but sincere preacher of that sect. With pious, patient assiduity he continued in this career for a number of years. He published a modest memoir of his life and adventures, from which we have gathered the greater part of our account, – and at last became professor of the Greek, Latin, French and Spanish languages, as well as of classical literature, in the "Vermont University," at

Norwich. At this place he died, March 2d, 1840, in the thirty-eighth year of his age.

Whoever has carefully attended to the facts stated in the early part of this notice, will be prepared to admit that Zerah Colburn was one of the most astonishing intellectual prodigies that has ever appeared. Totally uninstructed in figures, at the age of six years, he was able to perform mental operations which no man living, by all the training of art, is able to accomplish. It had been stated by scientific men, that no rule existed for finding the factors of numbers; yet this child discovered a rule by which he ascertained results of this kind, accessible only to skilful arithmeticians. In the London prospectus, the following facts, in relation to this point, are stated, which cannot fail to excite astonishment.

At one of his exhibitions, among various questions, it was proposed that he should give the factors of 171,395 – and he named the following as the only ones: 5×34279 ; 7×22485 ; 59×2905 ; 83×2065 ; 35×4897 ; 295×581 ; 413×415 . He was then asked to give the factors of 36,083; but he immediately replied that it had none, which is the fact, it being a prime number. "It had been asserted and maintained by the French mathematicians that 4294967297, was a prime number; but the celebrated Euler detected the error by discovering that it was equal to $641 \times 6,700,417$. The same number was proposed to this child, who found out the factors by the mere operation of his mind."

Great pains were taken to discover the processes by which

this boy performed his operations. For a long time he was too ignorant of terms, and too little accustomed to watch the operations of his mind, to do this. He said to a lady, in Boston, who sought to make him disclose his mode of calculation, "I cannot tell you how I do these things. God gave me the power." At a subsequent time, however, while at the house of Mr. Francis Bailey, in London, upon some remark being made, the boy said suddenly, and without being asked – "I will tell you how I extract roots." He then proceeded to tell his operations. This is detailed in Zerah's book; but it in no degree abates our wonder. The rule does not greatly facilitate the operation; it still demands an effort of mind utterly beyond the capacity of most intellects; and after all, the very rule itself was the invention of a child.

As he did not at first know the meaning of the word factor, when desired to find the factors of a particular number, the question was put in this form – "What two numbers multiplied together will produce such a number?" His rule for solving such problems was sought for with much curiosity. At last this was discovered. While in Edinburgh, in 1813, he being then nine years old, he waked up one night, and said suddenly to his father – "I can tell you how I find the factors!" His father rose, obtained a light, and wrote down the rule, at Zerah's dictation.

It appears that when he came to maturity, these faculties did not improve; and after a time he was even less expert in arithmetical calculations than when he was ten years old. It is probable, his whole mind was weakened, rather than

strengthened, by the peculiar circumstances of his life. As a preacher, he was in no way distinguished. He says this in his book, with simple honesty; and seems at a loss to understand the design of Providence in bestowing upon him so stupendous a gift, which, so far as he was able to discover, had produced no adequate results.

He suggests, indeed, a single instance, in which an atheist in Vermont, who witnessed his performances in childhood, was induced to reflect upon the almost miraculous powers of the mind, and led to the conclusion that it must have an intelligent author. He saw that which was as hard to believe, as much beyond the routine of experience, as any miracle – and hence fairly concluded that miracles could be true. By this course of reflection he was induced to reject his infidelity, and afterwards became a sincere Christian.

This, we doubt not, was one of the designs of Providence, in the bestowment of Zerah Colburn's wonderful gifts. But their use should not be confined to an individual case. If there is argument for God in a flower, how much more in a child of Zerah Colburn's endowments? What infidelity can withstand such an instance, and still say, there is no God? And farther, let us reflect upon the noble powers of the mind, and rejoice, yet with fear and trembling, that we are possessors of an inheritance, which, at God's bidding, is capable of such mighty expansion.

The history of Zerah Colburn may teach us one thing more – that the gifts of genius are not always sources of happiness to the

possessor; that mental affluence, like worldly riches, often brings sorrow, rather than peace to the possessor; and that moderate natural gifts, well cultivated, are generally the most useful in society, and most conducive to the happiness of the possessor.

BARATIERE

John Philip Baratiere was a most extraordinary instance of the early and rapid exertion of mental faculties. He was the son of Francis Baratiere, minister of the French church at Schwoback, near Nuremberg, where he was born, January 10, 1721. The French was his mother tongue, and German was the language of the people around him. His father talked to him in Latin, and with this he became familiar; so that, without knowing the rules of grammar, he, at four years of age, talked French to his mother, Latin to his father, and High Dutch to the servants and neighboring children, without mixing or confounding the respective languages.

About the middle of his fifth year, he acquired a knowledge of the Greek: so that in fifteen months he perfectly understood all the Greek books in the Old and New Testament, which he translated into Latin. When five years and eight months old, he entered upon Hebrew; and in three years more, was so expert in the Hebrew text, that, from a Bible without points, he could give the sense of the original in Latin or French, or translate, extempore, the Latin or French versions into Hebrew. He composed a dictionary of rare and difficult Hebrew words; and about his tenth year, amused himself, for twelve months, with the rabbinical writers.

He now obtained a knowledge of the Chaldaic, Syriac and

Arabic; and acquired a taste for divinity and ecclesiastical antiquity, by studying the Greek fathers of the first four ages of the church. In the midst of these occupations, a pair of globes coming into his possession, he could, in eight or ten days, resolve all the problems upon them; and in January, 1735, at the age of fourteen, he devised his project for the discovery of the longitude, which he communicated to the Royal Society of London, and the Royal Academy of Sciences at Berlin!

In June, 1731, he was matriculated in the university of Altorf; and at the close of 1732, he was presented by his father at the meeting of the reformed churches of the circle, at Franconia; who, astonished at his wonderful talents, admitted him to assist in the deliberations of the synod; and, to preserve the memory of so singular an event, it was registered in their acts. In 1734, the Margrave of Brandenburg, Anspach, granted this young scholar a pension of fifty florins; and his father receiving a call to the French church at Stettin, in Pomerania, young Baratiere was, on the journey, admitted master of arts. At Berlin, he was honored with several conversations with the king of Prussia, and was received into the Royal Academy.

Towards the close of his life, he acquired a considerable taste for medals, inscriptions, and antiquities, metaphysical inquiries, and experimental philosophy. He wrote several essays and dissertations; made astronomical remarks and laborious calculations; took great pains towards a history of the heresies of the Anti-Trinitarians, and of the thirty years' war in Germany.

His last publication, which appeared in 1740, was on the succession of the bishops of Rome. The final work he engaged in, and for which he had gathered large materials, was *Inquiries concerning the Egyptian Antiquities*. But the substance of this blazing meteor was now almost exhausted; he was always weak and sickly, and died October 5th, 1740, aged nineteen years, eight months, and sixteen days. Baratiere published eleven different pieces, and left twenty-six manuscripts, on various subjects, the contents of which may be seen in his *Life*, written by Mr. Formey, professor of philosophy at Berlin.

GASSENDI

Pierre Gassendi, one of the most famous naturalists and philosophers of France, was born at Chantersier, January 22, 1592, of poor parents. They were, however, wise and virtuous people, and perceiving the extraordinary gifts of their son, did everything in their power to promote his education. At the age of four years, young Pierre used to declaim little sermons of his own composition, which were quite interesting. At the age of seven, he would steal away from his parents, and spend a great part of the night in observing the stars. This made his friends say he was born an astronomer. At this age, he had a dispute with some boys, whether it was the moon or the clouds that moved so rapidly; to convince them that it was the latter, he took them behind a tree, and made them take notice that the moon kept its situation between the same leaves, while the clouds passed on.

This early disposition to observation led his parents to place him under the care of the clergyman of the village, who gave him the first elements of learning.

His ardor for study then became extreme: the day was not long enough for him; and he often read a great part of the night by the light of the lamp that was burning in the church of the village, his family being too poor to allow him candles for his nocturnal studies. He often took only four hours sleep in the night. At the age of ten, he harangued his bishop in Latin, who was passing

through the village on his visitation; and he did this with such ease and spirit, that the prelate exclaimed – "That lad will, one day or other, be the wonder of his age." The modest and unassuming conduct of Gassendi gave an additional charm to his talents.

In his manners, this remarkable youth was in general silent, never ostentatiously obtruding upon others, either the acuteness of his understanding, or the eloquence of his conversation; he was never in a hurry to give his opinion before he knew that of the persons who were conversing with him. When men of learning introduced themselves to him, he was contented with behaving to them with great civility, and was not anxious to surprise them into admiration. The entire tendency of his studies was to make himself wiser and better; and to have his intention more constantly before his eyes, he had all his books inscribed with these words, *Sapere aude*; "Dare to be wise."

Such was Gassendi's reputation, that at sixteen he was called to teach rhetoric at the seminary of Digne; in 1614, he was made professor of theology in the same institution; and two years after, he was invited to fill the chair of divinity and philosophy at Aix. After passing through various promotions, and publishing several works of great merit on philosophical subjects, Gassendi went at last to Paris, where he gained the friendship of Cardinal Richelieu, and shared the admiration of the learned world with the famous philosopher, Descartes.

Being appointed a professor of mathematics in the College Royal of Paris, he gave his attention to astronomical subjects, and

greatly increased his reputation. After a life devoted to science, in which his achievements were wonderful, he died at Paris, October 14, 1655, aged sixty-three years. Distinguished by his vast learning, his admirable clearness of mind, the diversity of his acquirements, the calmness and dignity of his character, and the amiableness of his manners, Gassendi was alike one of the brightest ornaments of his age and of human nature.

PASCAL

Blaise Pascal "perhaps the most brilliant intellect that ever lighted on this lower world," was born at Clermont, in the province of Auvergne, on the 19th of June, 1623. He was descended from one of the best families in that province. As soon as he was able to speak, he discovered marks of extraordinary capacity. This he evinced, not only by the general pertinency and acuteness of his replies, but also by the questions which he asked concerning the nature of things, and his reasonings upon them, which were much superior to what is common at his age. His mother having died in 1626, his father, who was an excellent scholar and an able mathematician, and who lived in habits of intimacy with several persons of the greatest learning and science at that time in France, determined to take upon himself the whole charge of his son's education.

One of the instances in which young Pascal displayed his disposition to reason upon everything, is the following. He had been told that God rested from his labors on the seventh day, and hallowed it, and had commanded all mankind to suspend their labor and do no work on the Sabbath. When he was about seven years of age, he was seen, of a Sabbath morning, measuring some blades of grass. When asked what he was doing, he replied that he was going to see if the grass grew on Sunday, and if God ceased working on the Sabbath, as he had commanded mankind to do!

Before young Pascal had attained his twelfth year, two circumstances occurred, which deserve to be recorded, as they discovered the turn, and evinced the superiority, of his mind. Having remarked one day, at table, the sound produced by a person accidentally striking an earthenware plate with a knife, and that the vibrations were immediately stopped by putting his hand on the plate, he became anxious to investigate the cause of this phenomenon; he employed himself in making a number of experiments on sound, the results of which he committed to writing, so as to form a little treatise on the subject, which was found very correct and ingenious.

The other occurrence was his first acquisition, or, as it might not be improperly termed, his invention of geometry. His father, though very fond of mathematics, had studiously kept from his son all the means of becoming acquainted with this subject. This he did, partly in conformity to the maxim he had hitherto followed, of keeping his son superior to his task; and partly from an apprehension that a science so engaging, and at the same time so abstracted, and which, on that account, was peculiarly suited to the turn of his son's mind, would probably absorb too much of his attention, and stop the progress of his other studies, if he were at once initiated into it.

But the activity of an inquisitive and penetrating mind is not to be so easily restrained. As, from respect to his father's authority, however, the youth had so far regarded his prohibition as to pursue this study only in private, and at his hours of recreation,

he went on for some time undiscovered. But one day, while he was employed in this manner, his father accidentally came into the room, unobserved by Pascal, who was wholly intent on the subject of his investigation. His father stood for some time unperceived, and observed, with the greatest astonishment, that his son was surrounded with geometrical figures, and was then actually employed in finding out the proportion of the angles formed by a triangle, one side of which is produced; which is the subject of the thirty-second proposition in the First Book of Euclid.

The father at length asked his son what he was doing. The latter, surprised and confused to find his father was there, told him he wanted to find out this and that, mentioning the different parts contained in that theorem. His father then asked how he came to inquire about that. He replied, that he had found out such a thing, naming some of the more simple problems; and thus, in reply to different questions, he showed that he had gone on his own investigations, totally unassisted, from the most simple definition in geometry, to Euclid's thirty-second proposition. This, it must be remembered, was when Pascal was but twelve years of age.

His subsequent progress perfectly accorded with this extraordinary display of talent. His father now gave him Euclid's Elements to peruse at his hours of recreation. He read them, and understood them, without any assistance. His progress was so rapid that he was soon admitted to the meetings of a

society of which his father, Roberval, and some other celebrated mathematicians were members, and from which afterwards originated the Royal Academy of Sciences, at Paris.

During Pascal's residence with his father at Rouen, and while he was only in his nineteenth year, he invented his famous arithmetical machine, by which all numerical calculations, however complex, can be made by the mechanical operation of its different parts, without any arithmetical skill in the person who uses it. He had a patent for this invention in 1649. His studies, however, began to be interrupted when he reached his eighteenth year by some symptoms of ill health, which were thought to be the effect of intense application, and which never afterwards entirely quitted him; so that he was sometimes accustomed to say, that from the time he was eighteen, he had never passed a day without pain. But Pascal, though out of health, was still Pascal; ever active, ever inquiring, and satisfied only with that for which an adequate reason could be assigned. Having heard of the experiments instituted by Torricelli, to find out the cause of the rise of water in fountains and pumps, and of the mercury in the barometer, he was induced to repeat them, and to make others, to satisfy himself upon the subject.

In 1654, he invented his arithmetical triangle, for the solution of problems respecting the combinations of stakes, in unfinished games of hazard; and long after that, he wrote his Demonstrations of the Problems relating to the Cycloid; besides several pieces on other subjects in the higher branches of the

mathematics, for which his genius was probably most fitted. Pascal, though not rich, was independent in his circumstances; and as his peculiar talents, his former habits, and the state of his health, all called for retirement, he adopted a secluded mode of life. From 1655, he associated only with a few friends of the same religious opinions with himself, and lived for the most part in privacy in the society of Port Royal.

At this period, the Catholics being divided into Jesuits and Jansenists, Pascal, being of the latter, published his famous Provincial Letters. These are so distinguished for their admirable wit, their keen argument, and their exquisite beauty of style, as to have even extorted praise from Voltaire and D'Alembert. He also wrote other pieces against the Jesuits, marked with great talent.

Pascal's health, however, continued to decline; and it is probable that his mind suffered in consequence. Though his life had been singularly blameless, still he seemed to be pained with a sense of inward sin. He was accustomed to wear an iron belt around his waist, in which were sharp points, upon which he would strike his elbows, or his arms, when any unholy passion crossed his mind. He continued to practise charity toward all mankind, and severe austerities to himself, until at last he was attacked with sickness, and on the 19th of August, 1662, he died. His last words were, "May God never forsake me!"

The latter part of his life was wholly spent in religious meditations, though he committed to paper such pious thoughts as occurred to him. These were published after his death, under

the title of "Thoughts on Religion and other Subjects." They have been greatly admired for their depth, eloquence and Christian spirit.

GROTIUS

Hugo Grotius, celebrated for his early display of genius and learning, as well as for his adventures and writings in after life, was born at Delft, in Holland, April 10, 1583. He had the best masters to direct his education, and from childhood, was not only distinguished by the great brilliancy of his mind, but also by his application to study. Such was his progress, that, at eight years of age, he composed Latin elegiac verses of great cleverness, and at fourteen, he maintained public theses in mathematics, law, and philosophy with general applause. His reputation by this time was established, and he was mentioned by the principal scholars of the age, as a prodigy of learning, and as destined to make a conspicuous figure in the republic of letters.

In 1598, he accompanied Barnevelt, ambassador extraordinary of the Dutch Republic, in a journey to France, where he was introduced to Henry IV., who was so pleased with his learning, that he presented him with his picture and a gold chain. While in France, he took the degree of doctor of laws. The following year he commenced practice as an advocate, and pleaded his first cause at Delft. In the same year, though then only seventeen, he was chosen historiographer to the United Provinces, in preference to several learned men who were candidates for that office.

Grotius now rapidly rose in rank and reputation: he published

several works of great merit, and was appointed to various public offices of high trust. On one occasion he was sent by the government to England to attend to some negotiations, at which time he became acquainted with King James II. But serious religious difficulties now began to agitate Holland. In 1618, a synod met at Dort to take these into consideration. They proceeded to condemn the Arminian doctrines, and to banish all the preachers who upheld them. Barneveldt, who was a celebrated statesman, Grotius, and Hoogurbetz, advocated these sentiments; they were tried and condemned; the first was executed and the two others were sentenced to perpetual imprisonment.

In his prison of Louvestien, Grotius found consolation in literary pursuits. His wife, after much entreaty, was permitted to visit him, and she did everything which the most devoted affection could suggest, to alleviate his confinement. She was accustomed to send him books in the chest which was conveyed out and in, with his linen: this was carefully examined by the jailer, for a time, but finding nothing amiss, he became less suspicious and careful.

Taking notice of this, the wife of Grotius, after he had been confined about two years, devised a scheme for his escape. She pretended to have a large quantity of books to send away. Having a small chest of drawers, about three feet and a half long, she packed her husband into it, and it was carried out by two soldiers, who supposed they were transporting a quantity of books. The chest was now put on a horse, and carried to Gorcum, where the

illustrious prisoner was set at liberty.

Disguised in the dress of a mason, with a rule and a trowel in his hand, he fled to Antwerp, which was not under the government of the Stadtholder, Prince Maurice, who had caused his imprisonment. Here he wrote to the State's General of Holland, asserting his innocence of any wrong, in the course he had taken, and for which he had been deprived of liberty. He afterwards went to Paris, where he received a pension from the king.

After the death of Prince Maurice, his confiscated property and estates were restored, and he returned to Holland; but he still found such a spirit of rancor against him, among the principal persons, that he left the country forever, and took up his residence at Hamburgh. Here he received the most flattering proposals from the kings of Portugal, Spain, Denmark, and other countries, who admired his great abilities, and desired him to seek shelter and protection with them.

He finally adopted Sweden as his country, and becoming the queen's ambassador to France, he proceeded, in that character, to Paris, where, for eight years, he sustained the interests of his patron with firmness and dignity. At last, being weary of public life, he solicited his recall. In August, 1648, he embarked for Lubec, where he intended to reside; but, meeting with a dreadful storm, he was driven upon the coast of Pomerania, and obliged to take a land journey of sixty miles, in order to reach Rostock, during which he was exposed to the rain and inclement weather.

A fever soon set in, and at midnight, on the 28th of August, the illustrious stranger died.

Grotius has left behind him many works, some of them of great value. His treatise upon the "Truth of the Christian Religion," written in Latin, like his other productions, is one of the best defences of that system which has ever appeared. His work on the law of Peace and War, is still of high authority. We must look upon Grotius as a man of great acuteness, as well as vast expanse of mind. He was, indeed, in advance of his generation, and, like other patriots and philanthropists, who see farther than those around them, he was an object of hatred and disgust, for those very things which in an after age brought him the homage and gratitude of mankind. In an intolerant age, Grotius was in favor of toleration, and this alone was a crime which his generation could not forget or forgive.

NEWTON

Sir Isaac Newton, the greatest of natural philosophers, was born at Woolsthorpe, in Lincolnshire, December 25, 1642, old style. At his birth he was so small and weak that his life was despaired of. On the death of his father, which took place while he was yet an infant, the manor of Woolsthorpe became his heritage. His mother sent him, at an early age, to the village school, and in his twelfth year, to the seminary of Grantham.

While here he displayed a decided taste for mechanical and philosophical inventions; and avoiding the society of other children, provided himself with a collection of saws, hammers, and other instruments, with which he constructed models of many kinds of machinery. He also made hour-glasses, acting by the descent of water. A new windmill, of a peculiar construction, having been erected in the town, he studied it until he succeeded in imitating it, and placed a mouse inside, which he called the miller.

Some knowledge of drawing being necessary in these operations, he applied himself, without a master, to the study; and the walls of his room were covered with all sorts of designs. After a short period, however, his mother took him home, for the purpose of employing him on the farm and about the affairs of the house. She sent him several times to market, at Grantham, with the produce of the farm. A trusty servant was

sent with him, and the young philosopher left him to manage the business, while he himself employed his time in reading. A sundial, which he constructed on the wall of the house at Woolsthorpe, is still shown. His irresistible passion for study and science finally induced his mother to send him back to Grantham. Here he continued for a time, and was entered at Trinity College, Cambridge, 1660.

At the latter place he studied mathematics with the utmost assiduity. In 1667, he obtained a fellowship; in 1669, the mathematical professorship; and in 1671, he became a member of the Royal Society. It was during his abode at Cambridge that he made his three great discoveries, of fluxions, the nature of light and colors, and the laws of gravitation. To the latter of these his attention was first turned by his seeing an apple fall from a tree. The Principia, which unfolded to the world the theory of the universe, was not published till 1687. In that year also Newton was chosen one of the delegates to defend the privileges of the university against James II.; and in 1688 and 1701 he was elected one of the members of the university. He was appointed warden of the mint in 1696; he was made master of it in 1699; was chosen president of the Royal Society in 1703; and was knighted in 1705. He died March 20, 1727.

His "Observations on the Prophecies of Daniel and the Apocalypse" appeared in 1733, in quarto. "It is astonishing," says Dr. Hutton, "what care and industry Newton employed about the papers relating to chronology, church history, &c.; as, on

examining them, it appears that many are copies over and over again, often with little or no variation." All the works of this eminent philosopher were published by Dr. Samuel Horsley, in 1779, in five volumes, quarto; and an English translation of his "Philosophæ Naturalis Principia Mathematicæ," is extant.

The character of this great man has been thus drawn by Mr. Hume, in his history of England. "In Newton, Britain may boast of having produced the greatest and rarest genius that ever rose for the ornament and instruction of the human species. Cautious in admitting no principles but such as were founded on experiment, but resolute to adopt every such principle, however new or unusual; from modesty, ignorant of his superiority over the rest of mankind, and thence less careful to accommodate such reasonings to common apprehensions; more anxious to merit than acquire fame: – he was from these causes long unknown to the world; but his reputation at last broke out with a lustre, which scarcely any writer, during his own lifetime, had ever before attained. While Newton seemed to draw off the veil from some of the mysteries of nature, he showed at the same time some of the imperfections of the mechanical philosophy; and thereby restored her ultimate secrets to that obscurity in which they ever did and ever will remain."

The remains of Sir Isaac Newton were interred in Westminster Abbey, where a magnificent monument is erected to his memory, with a Latin inscription, concluding thus: – "Let mortals congratulate themselves that so great an ornament

of human nature has existed." His character is shown, by Dr. Brewster, to have been that of the humble and sincere Christian. Of nature, antiquity, and the Holy Scriptures, he was a diligent, sagacious, and faithful interpreter. He maintained by his philosophy the dignity of the Supreme Being, and in his manners he exhibited the simplicity of the Gospel. "I seem to myself," he said, "to be like a child, picking up a shell here and there on the shore of the great ocean of truth." He would hardly admit that he had a genius above other men, but attributed his discoveries to the intentness with which he applied to the study of philosophy. We cannot better close our notice of this great man, than in the words of Pope:

"Nature and nature's laws lay hid in night —
God said, 'let Newton be' – and all was light!"

MAGLIABECCHI

Antony Magliabecchi was born at Florence, on the 29th of October, in the year 1633. His parents were so poor as to be well satisfied when they got him into the service of a man who sold greens. He had not yet learned to read, but he was perpetually poring over the leaves of old books, that were used as waste paper in his master's shop. A bookseller who lived in the neighborhood, observed this, and knowing that the boy could not read, asked him one day what he meant by staring so much at pieces of printed paper? He said, that he did not know how it was, but that he loved it of all things; that he was very uneasy in the business he was in, and should be the happiest creature in the world if he could live with him, who had always so many books about him.

The bookseller was pleased with this answer; and at last told him, that if his master were willing to part with him, he would take him. Young Magliabecchi was highly delighted, and the more so, when his master, agreeably to the bookseller's desire, gave him leave to go. He went, therefore, directly to his new business. He had not long been there, before he could find out any book that was asked for, as readily as the bookseller himself. In a short period he had learned to read, and then he was always reading when he could find time.

He seems never to have applied himself to any particular study. A love of reading was his ruling passion, and a prodigious

memory his great talent. He read all kinds of books, almost indifferently, as they came into his hands, and that with a surprising quickness; yet he retained not only the sense, but often the words and the very manner of spelling.

His extraordinary application and talents soon recommended him to Ermina, librarian to the Cardinal de Medicis, and Marmi, the Grand Duke's librarian. He was by them introduced to the conversation of the learned, and made known at court. He now began to be looked upon everywhere as a prodigy, particularly for his unbounded memory.

In order to make an experiment in respect to this, a gentleman of Florence, who had written a piece, which was to be printed, lent the manuscript to Magliabecchi. Sometime after it had been returned, he came to the librarian with a melancholy face, and told him that by some accident he had lost his manuscript; and seemed almost inconsolable, entreating Magliabecchi, at the same time, to endeavor to recollect as much of it as he possibly could, and write it down. Magliabecchi assured him he would do so, and on setting about it, wrote down the whole, without missing a word.

By treasuring up everything he read, in this wonderful manner, or at least the subject, and all the principal parts of the books he ran over, his head became at last, as one of his acquaintance expressed it, "an universal index, both of titles and matter."

By this time, Magliabecchi was grown so famous for the vast extent of his reading, and his amazing retention of what he

had read, that it began to grow common amongst the learned to consult him when they were writing on any subject. Thus, for instance, if a priest was going to compose a panegyric upon any favorite saint, and came to communicate his design to Magliabecchi, he would immediately tell him who had said anything of that saint, and in what part of their works, and that, sometimes, to the number of above a hundred authors. He would tell them not only who had treated of their subject designedly, but of such, also, as had touched upon it incidentally, in writing on other subjects. All this he did with the greatest exactness, naming the author, the book, the words, and often the very number of the page in which the passage referred to was inserted. He did this so often, so readily, and so exactly, that he came at last to be looked upon almost as an oracle, for the ready and full answers that he gave to all questions proposed to him in respect to any subject or science whatever.

It was his great eminence in this way, and his almost inconceivable knowledge of books, that induced the Grand Duke, Cosmo the third, to make him his librarian. What a happiness must it have been to one like Magliabecchi, who delighted in nothing so much as reading, to have the command and use of such a collection of books as that in the Duke's palace! He was also very conversant with the books in the Lorenzo library; and had the keeping of those of Leopoldo, and Francisco Maria, the two cardinals of Tuscany.

Magliabecchi had a local memory, too, of the places where

every book stood, in the libraries which he frequented; he seems, indeed, to have carried this even farther. One day the Grand Duke sent for him to ask whether he could get him a book that was particularly scarce. "No, sir," answered Magliabecchi, "for there is but one in the world, and that is in the Grand Signior's library at Constantinople; it is the seventh book on the second shelf, on the right hand, as you go in."

Though Magliabecchi lived so sedentary a life, with such an intense and almost perpetual application to books, yet he arrived to a good old age. He died in his eighty-first year, on the 14th of July, 1714. By his will he left a very fine library, of his own collection, for the use of the public, with a fund to maintain it; and whatever should remain over, to the poor.

In his manner of living, Magliabecchi affected the character of Diogenes; three hard eggs, and a draught or two of water, were his usual repast. When his friends went to see him, they generally found him lolling in a sort of fixed wooden cradle, in the middle of his study, with a multitude of books, some thrown in heaps, and others scattered about the floor, around him. His cradle, or bed, was generally attached to the nearest pile of books by a number of cobwebs: at the entrance of any one, he used to call out, "Don't hurt my spiders!"

JAMES CRICHTON

James Crichton, commonly called 'The Admirable,' son of Robert Crichton, of Eliock, who was Lord Advocate to King James VI., was born in Scotland, in the year 1561. The precise place of his birth is not mentioned, but he received the best part of his education at St. Andrews, at that time the most celebrated seminary in Scotland, where the illustrious Buchanan was one of his masters. At the early age of fourteen, he took his degree of Master of Arts, and was considered a prodigy, not only in abilities, but in actual attainments.

It was the custom of the time for Scotchmen of birth to finish their education abroad, and serve in some foreign army, previously to entering that of their own country. When he was only sixteen or seventeen years old, Crichton's father sent him to the Continent. He had scarcely arrived in Paris, which was then a gay and splendid city, famous for jousting, fencing, and dancing, when he publicly challenged all scholars and philosophers to a disputation at the College of Navarre. He proposed that it should be carried on in any one of twelve specified languages, and have relation to any science or art, whether practical or theoretical. The challenge was accepted; and, as if to show in how little need he stood of preparation, or how lightly he held his adversaries, he spent the six weeks that elapsed between the challenge and the contest, in a continual round of tilting, hunting, and dancing.

On the appointed day, however, and in the contest, he is said to have encountered all the gravest philosophers and divines, and to have acquitted himself to the astonishment of all who heard him. He received the public praises of the president and four of the most eminent professors. The very next day he appeared at a tilting match in the Louvre, and carried off the ring from all his accomplished and experienced competitors.

Enthusiasm was now at its height, particularly among the ladies of the court, and from the versatility of his talents, his youth, the gracefulness of his manners, and the beauty of his person, he was named *L'Admirable*. After serving two years in the army of Henry III., who was engaged in a civil war with his Huguenot subjects, Crichton repaired to Italy, and repeated at Rome, in the presence of the Pope and cardinals, the literary challenge and triumph that had gained him so much honor at Paris.

From Rome he went to Venice, at which gay city he arrived in a depressed state of spirits. None of his Scottish biographers are very willing to acknowledge the fact, but it appears quite certain, that, spite of his noble birth and connexions, he was miserably poor, and became for some time dependent on the bounty of a Venetian printer – the celebrated Aldus Manutius. After a residence of four months at Venice, where his learning, engaging manners, and various accomplishments, excited universal wonder, as is made evident by several Italian writers who were living at the time, and whose lives were

published, Crichton went to the neighboring city of Padua, in the learned university of which he reaped fresh honors by Latin poetry, scholastic disputation, an exposition of the errors of Aristotle and his commentators, and as a playful wind-up of the day's labors, a declamation upon the happiness of ignorance.

Another day was fixed for a public disputation in the palace of the bishop of Padua; but this being prevented from taking place, gave some incredulous or envious men the opportunity of asserting that Crichton was a literary impostor, whose acquirements were totally superficial. His reply was a public challenge. The contest, which included the Aristotelian and platonic philosophies, and the mathematics of the time, was prolonged during three days, before an innumerable concourse of people. His friend, Aldus Manutius, who was present at what he calls "this miraculous encounter," says he proved completely victorious, and that he was honored by such a rapture of applause as was never before heard.

Crichton's journeying from university to university to stick up challenges on church doors, and college pillars, though it is said to have been in accordance with customs not then obsolete, certainly attracted some ridicule among the Italians; for Boccacini, after copying one of his placards, in which he announces his arrival, and his readiness to dispute extemporaneously on all subjects, says that a wit wrote under it, "and whosoever wishes to see him, let him go to the Falcon Inn, where he will be shown," – which is the formula used by

showmen for the exhibition of a wild beast, or any other monster.

We next hear of Crichton at Mantua, and as the hero of a combat more tragical than those carried on by the tongue or the pen. A certain Italian gentleman, "of a mighty, able, nimble, and vigorous body, but by nature fierce, cruel, warlike, and audacious, and superlatively expert and dexterous in the use of his weapon," was in the habit of going from one city to another, to challenge men to fight with cold steel, just as Crichton did to challenge them to scholastic combats. This itinerant gladiator, who had marked his way through Italy with blood, had just arrived in Mantua, and killed three young men, the best swordsmen of that city. By universal consent, the Italians were the ablest masters of fence in Europe; a reputation to which they seem still entitled. To encounter a victor among such masters, was a stretch of courage; but Crichton, who had studied the sword from his youth, and who had probably improved himself in the use of the rapier in Italy, did not hesitate to challenge the redoubtable bravo.

Though the duke was unwilling to expose so accomplished a gentleman to so great a hazard, yet, relying upon the report he had heard of his warlike qualifications, he agreed to the proposal; and the time and place being appointed, the whole court attended to behold the performance. At the beginning of the combat, Crichton stood only upon his defence, while the Italian made his attack with such eagerness and fury, that, having exhausted himself, he began to grow weary. The young Scotsman

now seized the opportunity of attacking his antagonist in return; which he did with so much dexterity and vigor, that he ran him through the body in three different places, of which wounds he immediately died.

The acclamations of the spectators were loud and long-continued upon this occasion; and it was acknowledged by all, that they had never seen nature second the precepts of art in so lively and graceful a manner as they had beheld it on that day. To crown the glory of the action, Crichton bestowed the rich prize awarded for his victory, upon the widows of the three persons who had lost their lives in fighting with the gladiator.

In consequence of this and his other wonderful performances, the duke of Mantua made choice of him for preceptor to his son, Vicentio de Gonzago, who is represented as being of a riotous temper, and dissolute life. The appointment was highly pleasing to the court. Crichton, to testify his gratitude to his friends and benefactors, and to contribute to their diversion, framed a comedy, wherein he exposed and ridiculed the weaknesses and failures of the several occupations and pursuits in which men are engaged. This composition was regarded as one of the most ingenious satires that ever was made upon mankind. But the most astonishing part of the story, is, that Crichton sustained fifteen characters in the representation of his own play. Among the rest, he acted the divine, the philosopher, the lawyer, the mathematician, the physician, and the soldier, with such inimitable skill, that every time he appeared upon the theatre, he

seemed to be a different person.

From being the principal actor in a comedy, Crichton soon became the subject of a dreadful tragedy. One night, during the time of Carnival, as he was walking along the streets of Mantua, and playing upon his guitar, he was attacked by half a dozen people in masks. The assailants found that they had no ordinary person to deal with, for they were not able to maintain their ground against him. At last the leader of the company, being disarmed, pulled off his mask, and begged his life, telling Crichton that he was the prince, his pupil. Crichton immediately fell upon his knees, and expressed his concern for his mistake; alleging that what he had done was only in his own defence, and that if Gonzago had any design upon his life, he might always be master of it. Then, taking his own sword by the point, he presented it to the prince, who immediately received it, and was so irritated by the affront which he thought he had sustained, in being foiled with all his attendants, that he instantly ran Crichton through the heart.

His tragical end excited very great and general lamentation. The whole court of Mantua went three-quarters of a year into mourning for him; and numerous epitaphs and elegies were composed upon his death.

To account in some manner for the extent of Crichton's attainments, it must be recollected that the first scholars of the age were his instructors: for, besides having Rutherford as a tutor, it is stated by Aldus Manutius, that he was also

taught by Buchanan, Hessburn, and Robertson; and hence his extraordinary proficiency in the languages, as well as in the sciences, as then taught in the schools of Europe. It must also be recollected that no expense would be spared in his education, as his father was Lord Advocate in Queen Mary's reign, from 1561 to 1573, and his mother, the daughter of Sir James Stuart, was allied to the royal family. It is evident, however, that these advantages were seconded by powers of body and mind rarely united in any human being.

BERONICIUS

The history of this man is involved in some obscurity, yet enough is known to show that he was a person of wonderful endowments, and great eccentricity of life and character.

In the year 1674, the celebrated Dutch poet, Antonides Vander Goes, being in Zealand, happened to be in company with a young gentleman, who spoke of the wonderful genius of his language master. Vander Goes expressed a desire to see him, and while they were talking upon the subject, the extraordinary man entered. He was a little, sallow dumpling of a fellow, with fiery eyes, and nimble, fidgety motions; he was withal a sight to see for the raggedness of his garments.

The strange man soon showed that he was drunk, and shortly after took his leave. But in a subsequent interview with the Dutch poet, he fully justified the character his pupil had given him. His great talent lay in being able with almost miraculous quickness, to turn any written theme into Latin or Greek verse. Upon being put to the trial, by Vander Goes, he succeeded, to the admiration of all present.

The poet had just shown him his verses, and asked his opinion of them. Beronicius read them twice, praised them, and said, "What should hinder me from turning them into Latin instantly?" The company viewed him with curiosity, and encouraged him by saying, "Well, pray let us see what you can do." In the meantime,

the man appeared to be startled. He trembled from head to foot, as if possessed. However, he selected an epigram from the poems, and asked the precise meaning of two or three Dutch words, of which he did not clearly understand the force, and requested that he might be allowed to Latinize the name of *Hare*, which occurred in the poem, in some manner so as not to lose the pun. They agreed; and he immediately said, "I have already found it, – I shall call him *Dasypus*," which signifies an animal with rough legs, and is likewise taken by the Greeks for a hare. "Now, read a couple of lines at a time to me, and I shall give them in Latin," said he; – upon which a poet named Buizero, began to read to him, and Beronicus burst out in the following verses: —

Egregia Dasypus referens virtute leonem
In bello, adversus Britonas super æquora gesto,
Impavidus pelago stetit, aggrediente molossum.
Agmine quem tandem glans ferrea misit ad astra,
Vindictæ cupidum violato jure profundi.
Advena, quisquis ades, Zelandæ encomia gentis
Ista refer, lepores demta quod pelle leonem,
Assumant, quotquot nostro versantur in orbe.
Epitaphium Herois Adriani de Haze, ex Belgico versum.

When the poet had finished, he laughed till his sides shook; at the same time he was jeering and pointing at the company, who appeared surprised at his having, contrary to their expectations, acquitted himself so well; everybody highly praised him, which

elated him so much that he scratched his head three or four times; and fixing his fiery eyes on the ground, repeated without hesitation, the same epigram in Greek verse, calling out, "There ye have it in Greek." Every one was astonished, which set him laughing and jeering for a quarter of an hour.

The Greek he repeated so rapidly, that no one could write from his recitation. John Frederick Gymnick, professor of the Greek language at Duisburgh, who was one of the auditors, said that he esteemed the Greek version as superior to the Latin. Beronicus was afterwards examined in various ways, and gave such proofs of his wonderful learning, as amazed all the audience.

This singular genius spoke several languages so perfectly, that each might have passed for his mother tongue; especially Italian, French, and English. But Greek was his favorite, and he used it as correctly and as fluently as if he had always spoken it. He knew by heart the whole of Horace and Virgil, the greatest part of Cicero, and both the Plinys; and would immediately, if a line were mentioned, repeat the whole passage, and tell the exact work, volume, chapter, and verse, of all these, and many more, especially poets. The works of Juvenal were so interwoven with his brain, that he retained every word.

Of the Greek poets, he had Homer strongly imprinted on his memory, together with some of the comedies of Aristophanes; he could directly turn to any line required, and repeat the whole contiguous passage. His Latin was full of words selected from

the most celebrated writers.

The reader will probably be desirous of knowing to what country Beronicus belonged; but this is a secret he never would disclose. When he was asked what was his native land, he always answered, "that the country of every one, was that in which he could live most comfortably." It was well known that he had wandered about many years in France, England, and the Netherlands, carrying his whole property with him. He was sometimes told that he deserved to be a professor in a college; — but his reply was, that he could have no pleasure in such a worm-like life.

Strange to say, this eccentric being gained his living chiefly by sweeping chimneys, grinding knives and scissors, and other mean occupations. But his chief delight was in pursuing the profession of a juggler, mountebank, or merry-andrew, among the lowest rabble. He never gave himself any concern about his food or raiment; for it was equal to him whether he was dressed like a nobleman or a beggar. His hours of relaxation from his studies were chiefly spent in paltry wine-houses, with the meanest company, where he would sometimes remain a whole week, or more, drinking without rest or intermission.

His miserable death afforded reason to believe that he perished whilst intoxicated, for he was found dead at Middleburgh, drowned and smothered in mud, which circumstance is alluded to in the epitaph which the before named poet, Buizero, wrote upon him, and which was as follows: —

Here lies a wonderful genius,
He lived and died like a beast;
He was a most uncommon satyr —
He lived in wine, and died in water.

This is all that is known of Beronicius. The poet, Vander Goes, often witnessed the display of his talents, and he says that he could at once render the newspapers into Greek and Latin verse. Professor John de Raay, who was living at the time of Beronicius's death, which occurred in 1676, saw and affirms the same wonderful fact.

MASTER CLENCH

Of this astonishing youth, we have no information except what is furnished by the following account, extracted from Mr. Evelyn's diary, of 1689, very shortly after the landing of William III. in England.

"I dined," says Mr. Evelyn, "at the Admiralty, where a child of twelve years old was brought in, the son of Dr. Clench, of the most prodigious maturity of knowledge, for I cannot call it altogether memory, but something more extraordinary. Mr. Pepys and myself examined him, not in any method, but with promiscuous questions, which required judgment and discernment, to answer so readily and pertinently.

"There was not anything in chronology, history, geography, the several systems of astronomy, courses of the stars, longitude, latitude, doctrine of the spheres, courses and sources of rivers, creeks, harbors, eminent cities, boundaries of countries, not only in Europe, but in every part of the earth, which he did not readily resolve, and demonstrate his knowledge of, readily drawing with a pen anything he would describe.

"He was able not only to repeat the most famous things which are left us in any of the Greek or Roman histories, monarchies, republics, wars, colonies, exploits by sea and land, but all the Sacred Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments; the succession of all the monarchies, Babylonian, Persian, Greek and Roman;

with all the lower emperors, popes, heresiarchs, and councils; what they were called about; what they determined; or in the controversy about Easter; the tenets of the Sabellians, Arians, Nestorians; and the difference between St. Cyprian and Stephen about re-baptization; the schisms.

"We leaped from that to other things totally different, – to Olympic years and synchronisms; we asked him questions which could not be answered without considerable meditation and judgment; nay, of some particulars of the civil wars; of the digest and code. He gave a stupendous account of both natural and moral philosophy, and even of metaphysics.

"Having thus exhausted ourselves, rather than this wonderful child, or angel rather, for he was as beautiful and lovely in countenance as in knowledge, we concluded with asking him, if, in all he had ever heard or read of, he had ever met with anything which was like the expedition of the Prince of Orange, with so small a force, as to obtain three kingdoms without any contest. After a little thought, he told us that he knew of nothing that resembled it, so much as the coming of Constantine the Great out of Great Britain, through France and Italy, so tedious a march, to meet Maxentius, whom he overthrew at Pons Melvius, with very little conflict, and at the very gates of Rome, which he entered, and was received with triumph, and obtained the empire not of three kingdoms only, but of the then known world.

"He was perfect in the Latin authors, spoke French naturally, and gave us a description of France, Italy, Savoy and Spain,

anciently and modernly divided; as also of ancient Greece, Scythia, and the northern countries and tracts.

"He answered our questions without any set or formal repetitions, as one who had learned things without book, but as if he minded other things, going about the room, and toying with a parrot, seeming to be full of play, of a lively, sprightly temper, always smiling, and exceedingly pleasant; without the least levity, rudeness, or childishness."

JEDEDIAH BUXTON

This extraordinary man was born in 1705, at Elmeton, in Derbyshire. His father was a schoolmaster; and yet, from some strange neglect, Jedediah was never taught either to read or write. So great, however, were his natural talents for calculation, that he became remarkable for his knowledge of the relative proportions of numbers, their powers and progressive denominations. To these objects he applied all the powers of his mind, and his attention was so constantly rivetted upon them, that he was often totally abstracted from external objects. Even when he did notice them, it was only with respect to their numbers. If any space of time happened to be mentioned before him, he would presently inform the company that it contained so many minutes; and if any distance, he would assign the number of hair-breadths in it, even though no question were asked him.

Being, on one occasion, required to multiply 456 by 378, he gave the product by mental arithmetic, as soon as a person in company had completed it in the common way. Being requested to work it audibly, that his method might be known, he first multiplied 456 by 5, which produced 2,280; this he again multiplied by 20, and found the product 45,600, which was the multiplicand, multiplied by 100. This product he again multiplied by 3, which gave 136,800, the product of the multiplicand by 300. It remained, therefore, to multiply this by

78, which he effected by multiplying 2,280, or the product of the multiplicand, multiplied by 5, by 15, as 5 times 15 is 75. This product being 34,200, he added to 136,800, which gave 171,000, being the amount of 375 times 456. To complete his operation, therefore, he multiplied 456 by 3, which produced 1,368, and this being added to 171,000, yielded 172,368, as the product of 456 multiplied by 378.

From these particulars, it appears that Jedediah's method of calculation was entirely his own, and that he was so little acquainted with the common rules of arithmetic, as to multiply first by 5, and the product by 20, to find the amount when multiplied by 100, which the addition of two ciphers to the multiplicand would have given at once.

A person who had heard of these efforts of memory, once meeting with him accidentally, proposed the following question, in order to try his calculating powers. If a field be 423 yards long, and 383 broad, what is the area? After the figures were read to him distinctly, he gave the true product, 162,009 yards, in the space of two minutes; for the proposer observed by the watch, how long it took him. The same person asked how many acres the said field measured; and in eleven minutes, he replied, 33 acres, 1 rood, 35 perches, 20 yards and a quarter. He was then asked how many barley-corns would reach eight miles. In a minute and a half, he answered 1,520,640. The next question was: supposing the distance between London and York to be 204 miles, how many times will a coach-wheel turn round in that

space, allowing the circumference of that wheel to be six yards. In thirteen minutes, he answered, 59,840 times.

On another occasion a person proposed to him this question: in a body, the three sides of which are 23,145,789 yards, 5,642,732 yards, and 54,965 yards, how many cubic eighths of an inch? In about five hours Jedediah had accurately solved this intricate problem, though in the midst of business, and surrounded by more than a hundred laborers.

Next to figures, the only objects of Jedediah's curiosity were the king and royal family. So strong was his desire to see them, that in the beginning of the spring of 1754, he walked up to London for that purpose, but returned disappointed, as his majesty had removed to Kensington just as he arrived in town. He was, however, introduced to the Royal Society, whom he called the *Folk of the Siety Court*. The gentlemen present asked him several questions in arithmetic to try his abilities, and dismissed him with a handsome present.

During his residence in the metropolis, he was taken to see the tragedy of King Richard the Third, performed at Drury Lane, Garrick being one of the actors. It was expected that the novelty of everything in that place, together with the splendor of the surrounding objects, would have filled him with astonishment; or that his passions would have been roused in some degree, by the action of the performers, even though he might not fully comprehend the dialogue. This, certainly, was a rational idea; but his thoughts were far otherwise employed. During the dances,

his attention was engaged in reckoning the number of steps; after a fine piece of music, he declared that the innumerable sounds produced by the instruments perplexed him beyond measure, but he counted the words uttered by Mr. Garrick, in the whole course of the entertainment; and declared that in this part of the business, he had perfectly succeeded.

Heir to no fortune, and educated to no particular profession, Jedediah Buxton supported himself by the labor of his hands. His talents, had they been properly cultivated, might have qualified him for acting a distinguished part on the theatre of life; he, nevertheless, pursued the "noiseless tenor of his way," content if he could satisfy the wants of nature, and procure a daily subsistence for himself and family. He was married and had several children. He died in the year 1775, aged seventy years. Though a man of wonderful powers of arithmetical calculation, and generally regarded as a prodigy in his way – it is still obvious that, after the practice of years, he was incapable of solving questions, which Zerah Colburn, at the age of six or seven years, answered in the space of a few seconds.

WILLIAM GIBSON

William Gibson was born in the year 1720, at the village of Bolton, in Westmoreland, England. On the death of his father, he put himself to a farmer to learn his business. When he was about eighteen or nineteen, he rented a small farm of his own, at a place called Hollins, where he applied himself assiduously to study.

A short time previous to this, he had admired the operation of figures, but labored under every disadvantage, for want of education. As he had not yet been taught to read, he got a few lessons in English, and was soon enabled to comprehend a plain author. He then purchased a treatise on arithmetic; and though he could not write, he soon became so expert a calculator, from mental operations only, that he could tell, without setting down a figure, the product of any two numbers multiplied together, although the multiplier and the multiplicand each of them consisted of nine figures. It was equally astonishing that he could answer, in the same manner, questions in division, in decimal fractions, or in the extraction of the square or cube roots, where such a multiplicity of figures is often required in the operation. Yet at this time he did not know that any merit was due to himself, conceiving that the capacity of other people was like his own.

Finding himself still laboring under farther difficulties for want of a knowledge of writing, he taught himself to write a

tolerable hand. As he had not heard of mathematics, he had no idea of anything, in regard to numbers, beyond what he had learned. He thought himself a master of figures, and challenged all his companions and the members of a society he attended, to a trial. Something, however, was proposed to him concerning Euclid. As he did not understand the meaning of the word, he was silent; but afterwards found it meant a book, containing the elements of geometry; this he purchased, and applied himself very diligently to the study of it, and against the next meeting he was prepared with an answer in this new science.

He now found himself launching out into a field, of which before he had no conception. He continued his geometrical studies; and as the demonstration of the different propositions in Euclid depend entirely upon a recollection of some of those preceding, his memory was of the utmost service to him. Besides, it was a study exactly adapted to his mind; and while he was attending to the business of his farm, and humming over some tune or other, his attention was often engaged with some of his geometrical propositions. A few figures with a piece of chalk, upon the knee of his breeches, or any other convenient spot, were all he needed to clear up the most difficult parts of the science.

He now began to be struck with the works of nature, and paid particular attention to the theory of the earth, the moon, and the rest of the planets belonging to this system, of which the sun is the centre; and considering the distance and magnitude of the different bodies belonging to it, and the distance of the

fixed stars, he soon conceived each of them to be the centre of a different system. He well considered the law of gravity, and that of the centripetal and centrifugal forces, and the cause of the ebbing and flowing of the tides; also the projection of the sphere – stereographic, orthographic, and gnomical; also trigonometry and astronomy. By this time he was possessed of a small library.

He next turned his thoughts to algebra, and took up Emerson's treatise on that subject, and went through it with great success. He also grounded himself in the art of navigation and the principles of mechanics; likewise the doctrine of motion, of falling bodies, and the elements of optics, &c., as a preliminary to fluxions, which had but lately been discovered by Sir Isaac Newton; as the boundary of the mathematics, he went through conic sections, &c. Though he experienced some difficulty at his first entrance, yet he did not rest till he made himself master of both a fluxion and a flowing quantity. As he had paid a similar attention to the intermediate parts, he soon became so conversant with every branch of the mathematics, that no question was ever proposed to him which he could not answer.

He used to take pleasure in solving the arithmetical questions then common in the magazines, but his answers were seldom inserted, except by or in the name of some other person, for he had no ambition to make his abilities known. He frequently had questions from his pupils and other gentlemen in London; from the universities of Oxford and Cambridge, and different parts of the country, as well as from the university of Gottingen in

Germany. These, however difficult, he never failed to answer; and from the minute inquiry he made into natural philosophy, there was scarcely a phenomenon in nature, that ever came to his knowledge or observation, but he could, in some measure at least, reasonably account for it.

He went by the name of Willy-o'-th'-Hollins, for many years after he left his residence in that place. The latter portion of his life was spent in the neighborhood of Cartmell, where he was best known by the name of Willy Gibson, still continuing his former occupation. For the last forty years he kept a school of about eight or ten gentlemen, who boarded and lodged at his own farm-house; and having a happy turn in explaining his ideas, he formed a great number of very able mathematicians, as well as expert accountants. This self-taught philosopher and wonderful man, died on the 4th of October, 1792, at Blaith, near Cartmell, in consequence of a fall, leaving behind him a widow and ten children.

EDMUND STONE

Of the life of this extraordinary man we have little information. He was probably born in Argyleshire, Scotland, at the close of the seventeenth century. His father was gardener to the Duke of Argyle, and the son assisted him. The duke was walking one day in his garden, when he observed a Latin copy of Newton's Principia, lying on the grass, and supposing it had been brought from his own library, called some one to carry it back to its place. Upon this, young Stone, who was in his eighteenth year, claimed the book as his own. "Yours!" replied the duke; "do you understand geometry, Latin, and Newton?" "I know a little of them," said the young man.

The duke was surprised, and having a taste for the sciences, he entered into conversation with the young mathematician. He proposed several inquiries, and was astonished at the force, the accuracy and the clearness of his answers. "But how," said the duke, "came you by the knowledge of all these things?" Stone replied, "A servant taught me to read ten years since. Does one need to know anything more than the twenty-six letters, in order to learn everything else that one wishes?"

The duke's curiosity was now greatly increased, and he sat down upon a bank and requested a detail of the whole process by which he had acquired such knowledge. "I first learned to read," said Stone; "afterwards, when the masons were at work at

your house, I approached them one day, and observed that the architect used a rule and compass, and that he made calculations. I inquired what might be the meaning and use of these things; and I was informed that there was a science called arithmetic. I purchased a book of arithmetic, and studied it. I was told that there was another science, called geometry. I bought the necessary books, and learned geometry.

"By reading, I found there were good books on these two sciences in Latin; I therefore bought a dictionary and learned Latin. I understood, also, that there were good books of the same kind in French; I bought a dictionary and learned French; and this, my lord, is what I have done. It seems to me that we may learn everything when we know the twenty-six letters of the alphabet."

Under the duke's patronage, Stone rose to be a very considerable mathematician, and was elected a member of the Royal Society of London, in 1725. He seems to have lost the favor of the Duke of Argyle, for, in the latter part of his life, he gave lessons in mathematics, and at last died in poverty.

RICHARD EVELYN

John Evelyn, a very learned English writer, was born in 1620, and died in 1706. He published several works, all of which are valuable. His treatises upon Natural History are greatly valued. He kept a diary, which has been published, and which contains much that is interesting. Of one of his children, who died early, he gives us the following account:

"After six fits of ague, died, in the year 1658, my son Richard, five years and three days old, but, at that tender age, a prodigy of wit and understanding; for beauty of body, a very angel; for endowment of mind, of incredible and rare hopes. To give only a little taste of some of them, and thereby glory to God:

"At two years and a half old, he could perfectly read any of the English, Latin, French, or Gothic letters, pronouncing the three first languages exactly. He had, before the fifth year, not only skill to read most written hands, but to decline all the nouns, conjugate the verbs regular and most of the irregular; learned Pericles through; got by heart almost the entire vocabulary of Latin and French primitives and words, could make congruous syntax, turn English into Latin, and *vice versa*, construe and prove what he read, and did the government and use of relative verbs, substantives, ellipses, and many figures and tropes, and made a considerable progress in Comenius's *Janua*; began himself to write legibly, and had a strong passion for

Greek.

"The number of verses he could recite was enormous; and when seeing a Plautus in one's hand, he asked what book it was, and being told it was comedy and too difficult for him, he wept for sorrow. Strange was his apt and ingenious application of fables and morals, for he had read Æsop. He had a wonderful disposition to mathematics, having by heart divers propositions of Euclid, that were read to him in play, and he would make lines and demonstrate them.

"As to his piety, astonishing were his applications of Scripture upon occasion, and his sense of God: he had learned all his catechism early, and understood the historical part of the Bible and Testament to a wonder – how Christ came to mankind; and how, comprehending these necessities himself, his godfathers were discharged of their promise. These and like illuminations, far exceeding his age and experience, considering the prettiness of his address and behavior cannot but leave impressions in me at the memory of him. When one told him how many days a Quaker had fasted, he replied, that was no wonder, for Christ had said 'man should not live by bread alone, but by the word of God.'

"He would, of himself, select the most pathetic Psalms, and chapters out of Job, to read to his maid during his sickness, telling her, when she pitied him, that all God's children must suffer affliction. He declaimed against the vanities of the world, before he had seen any. Often he would desire those who came to see him, to pray by him, and a year before he fell sick, to kneel and

pray with him, alone in some corner. How thankfully would he receive admonition! how soon be reconciled! how indifferent, yet continually cheerful! He would give grave advice to his brother John, bear with his impertinences, and say he was but a child.

"If he heard of, or saw any new thing, he was unquiet till he was told how it was made; he brought to us all such difficulties as he found in books, to be expounded. He had learned by heart divers sentences in Greek and Latin, which on occasions he would produce even to wonder. He was all life, all prettiness, far from morose, sullen, or childish in anything he said or did. The last time he had been at church, which was at Greenwich, I asked him, according to custom, what he remembered of the sermon. 'Two good things, father,' said he, '*bonum gratiæ*, and *bonum gloriæ*;' the excellence of grace, and the excellence of glory, – with a just account of what the preacher said.

"The day before he died, he called to me, and, in a more serious manner than usual, told me, that for all I loved him so dearly, I should give my house, land, and all my fine things to his brother Jack, – he should have none of them; and next morning, when he found himself ill, and I persuaded him to keep his hands in bed, he demanded whether he might pray to God with his hands unjoined; and a little after, whilst in great agony, whether he should not offend God by using his holy name so often by calling for ease.

"What shall I say of his frequent pathetic ejaculations uttered of himself: 'Sweet Jesus, save me, deliver me, pardon my sins,

let thine angels receive me!' So early knowledge, so much piety and perfection! But thus God, having dressed up a saint fit for himself, would no longer permit him with us, unworthy of the future fruits of this incomparable, hopeful blossom. Such a child I never saw! for such a child I bless God, in whose bosom he is! May I and mine become as this little child, which now follows the child Jesus, that lamb of God, in a white robe, whithersoever he goes! Even so, Lord Jesus, let thy will be done. Thou gavest him to us, thou hast taken him from us; blessed be the name of the Lord! That I had anything acceptable to thee was from thy grace alone, since from me he had nothing but sin; but that thou hast pardoned, blessed be my God forever! Amen."

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