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OUR CELTIC INHERITANCE.

ONE of the oldest specimens of Gaelic poetry tells how Oisín was once enticed by fairies into a cavern, where, by some of their magical arts, he was for a long time imprisoned. To amuse himself during his confinement, he was accustomed to whittle the handle of his spear, and cast the shavings into a stream which flowed at his feet. His father, Finn, after many vain attempts to find him, came one day to the stream, and, recognizing the shavings floating on its surface as portions of Oisín's spear, followed the stream to its source and discovered his son.

The legend may illustrate the fate of the people to whose literature it belongs. It has been a perplexing question, what became of that old Titan, who led the van in the migrations of races westward, and whom Aristotle describes "as dreading neither earthquakes nor inundations; as rushing armed into the waves; as plunging their new-born infants into cold water"—a custom still common among the Irish—"or clothing them in scanty garments."

Two thousand years ago, we know from Ephorus and other classic geographers, the Celts occupied more territory than Teuton, Greek, and Latin combined. They were wonderful explorers; brave, enterprising, delighting in

the unknown and marvellous, they pushed eagerly forward, over mountain and river, through forest and morass, until their dominion extended from the western coasts of Ireland, France, and Spain, to the marshes around St. Petersburg and the frontiers of Cappadocia: in fact, they were masters of all Europe, except the little promontories of Italy and Greece; and these were not safe from their incursions. Six centuries before Christ, we find them invading Northern Italy, founding Milan, Verona, Brixia, and inspiring them with a spirit of independence which Roman tyranny could never entirely subdue. Two centuries later, they descend from their northern homes as far as Rome, become masters of the city, kill the Senate, and would have taken the capitol, had not Camillus finally repulsed them. A century later, they pour into Greece in a similar way, and would surely have overrun that country, had not their profound reverence for the supernatural—a characteristic not yet lost—led them to turn back awed by the sacred rites of Delphos. Their last and most formidable appearance among the classics was in that famous campaign—a century before Cæsar—when the skill and bravery of Marius saved the Roman republic.

Entered, in the year 1870, by G. F. PUTNAM & SON, in the Clerk's Office of the District Court of the U. S. for the Southern District of N. Y.

Then the scales turn : the Romans become the invaders, and the Celts suffer ruinous defeats. In that great battle with Quintus Fabius Maximus, Cæsar tells the Gauls two hundred thousand of their countrymen were slain. Through nearly all the vast territory they once inhabited, the Roman empire became supreme; and where Rome failed to gain the supremacy, the persistent Teutons, pressing closely on their rear, generally completed the conquest. Everywhere, at the commencement of the Christian era,—except in the comparatively insignificant provinces of Ireland, Scotland, Wales, and Armorica,—this great Celtic people vanish so suddenly and so completely from history, that their former existence soon seems like one of the myths of a pre-historic age. In those regions where the Celts retained their identity, prolonged political and religious animosities have tended to throw into still greater oblivion all mementoes of their early greatness. Their English rulers have treated them as members of an inferior race. Glorifying in his popular misnomer, the Anglo-Saxon has generally ignored all kinship with those Britons whom his ancestors subdued.

"Little superior to the natives of the Sandwich Islands;"—says Lord Macaulay in his positive way, and dismisses the subject as unworthy farther notice. "When the Saxons arrived, the ancient Britons were all slain, or driven into the mountains of Wales;"—say our common school histories. "Aliens in speech, in religion, in blood;"—says Lord Lyndhurst, with traditional virulence, in that speech which Sheil so ably answered.

Still, scraps from Oisín's spear have been floating down the current of Anglo-Saxon life. In language, words have arisen; in politics, literature, and religion, ideas and sentiments have been expressed, bearing unmistakably the impress of the old Titan, and showing conclusively that his spirit, although so long concealed, was still influencing and inspiring even the descendants of Hengist and Horsa.

These evidences of a Celtic presence

in the Anglo-Saxon the wonderful discoveries of modern science have made so manifest, that men are beginning at last to recognize them; and, during the past century, some of our most noted scholars have been patiently endeavoring to trace them to their original source.

Philology, although one of the youngest of our sciences, has been of the greatest service in putting us on the right track in our search after this pioneer of nations. By its subtle art of drawing from words—those oldest palimpsestic monuments of men, their original inscriptions—it has cleared up many a mystery in which the old Celt seemed hopelessly enveloped. Those adventurous tribes who first forced their way through the western European wilderness, left memorials of their presence which no succeeding invaders have been able to efface, in the names they gave to prominent landmarks; so that "the mountains and rivers,"—to use a metaphor of Palgrave's,— "still murmur voices" of this denationalized people. The Alps, Apennines, Pyrenees, the Rhine, Oder, and Avon,—all bear witness to the extensive dominion of the race by whom these epithets were first bestowed. By means of these epithets, the Celts have been traced from their original home in Central Asia in two diverging lines of migrations. Certain tribes, forcing their way through northern Europe, seem to have passed from the Cimbric Chersonese—or Denmark—into the north of Ireland and Scotland; others, taking a southerly route, finally entered the south of Great Britain from the northern coasts of France and Spain. The British Isles became thus the terminus of two widely-diverging Celtic migrations.

Naturally, the different climatic influences to which they were subject during their separate wanderings, tended to produce a variety of dialects and popular characteristics. Those old Britons, however, whom Cæsar first introduces to history, all belonged substantially to one people. Zeuss, after a patient drudgery of thirteen years in

investigating the oldest Celtic manuscripts, has proved beyond question, in his *Grammatica Celtica*, not only that the Cymry, or modern Welsh, are of the same family with the Gael or modern Irish and Scotch, but that all the Celtic people are only another division of that great Indo-European family out of which the nations of Europe originally sprang. More extensive philological investigations have indicated a still nearer relationship between the Celt and the Anglo-Saxon. In Great Britain, Celtic names linger not only upon all the mountains and rivers, with scarcely an exception, but upon hundreds and hundreds of the towns and villages, valleys and brooks, and the more insignificant localities of the country.

How frequently Aber and Inver, Bod and Caer or Car, Strath and Ard, appear in combination as the eye glances over a map of England. Is not this fact most naturally explained by the supposition that Briton and Saxon grew up together in the same localities so intimately, that the latter found it most convenient to adopt the names of places which the former had already bestowed? The Celtic root with Saxon suffix or prefix, so often greeting us in any description of English topography, certainly hints at a closer amalgamation of the two races than school histories are wont to admit. So the language we daily speak, frequently as it has been denied, is found strongly impregnated with Celtic words, and many of these our most idiomatic and expressive. Balderdash, banner, barley, basket, bicker, bother, bully, carol, cudgel, dastard, fudge, grudge, grumble, harlot, hawker, hoyden, loafer, lubber, nudge, trudge,—may serve as specimens. The unwritten dialects which prevail in so many parts of England, give still more numerous examples of this Celtic element.

If we turn now to our family surnames, we shall also find indications of a similar race amalgamation. The Cymric Joneses are only equalled by the Saxon Smiths. Take any of our ordinary directories, and how many Cymric

names you find like Lewis, Morgan, Jenkins, Davis, Owen, Evans, Hughes, Bowen, Griffiths, Powel, and Williams. Scarcely less numerous are the Gaelic Camerons, Campbells, Craigs, Cunninghams, Dixons, Douglasses, Duffs, Duncans, Grahams, Grants, Gordons, Macdonalds, Macleans, Munros, Murrays, Reids, Robertsons, and Scotts.

Although the application of these surnames has been a custom only during the past four hundred years, still they show that, at some period, we must have received a large infusion of Celtic blood.

Physiology has also something to say on this subject. A careful comparison of the different physical types has shown that the Celtic is found almost as frequently among the English as the Saxon. The typical Saxon of olden times had the broad, short oval skull, with yellowish or tawny red hair. The old Celt had the long oval skull, with black hair. Climate undoubtedly modified to some extent these types, the northern tribes of the Celts possessing lighter hair than the southern; still, these were generally the distinguishing physical characteristics of the two races.

How, then, have these characteristics been perpetuated? Retzius, one of the best Swedish ethnologists, after making extensive observations and comparisons, gives it as his opinion that the prevailing form of the skull found throughout England is the long oval, or the same which is found still in Scotland, Ireland, and Wales. His statements are confirmed by many other ethnologists. Somehow, after crossing the German Ocean, the broad, roundish-headed Saxon became "long-headed." And his hair changed. Yellow, or tawny red, is by no means now the prevailing color among the Anglo-Saxons. Any English assembly will show a much greater proportion of dark-haired than light-haired people. Different habits and occupations have undoubtedly contributed somewhat to effect this change. Germans and English have alike grown darker during the past one thousand

years; still, the marked difference which to-day exists between the Anglo-Saxon and his brethren on the continent is too great to be accounted for,—except through some decided modification of the race relation. The Celts are the only race to whom such modifications can with any propriety be attributed.

Whence came, then, this popular opinion that the old Britons were either destroyed or expelled from the country by their Saxon conquerors? Are the statements of history and the conclusions of modern science so contradictory in this matter? Let us see. At the Roman invasion, 55 B. C., Great Britain seems to have been thickly settled. Cæsar says: "The population is infinite, and the houses very numerous." In one battle, 80,000 Britons were left dead on the field; and in one campaign the Romans lost 50,000 soldiers. It took the Roman legions nearly three hundred years to bring the southern portion of the island under subjection;—and then that great wall of Severus—seventy-four miles long, eight feet thick, twelve feet high, with eighty-one castles and three hundred and thirty turrets,—was erected to secure the conquest from the warlike tribes of the north—a stupendous undertaking, surely, to protect a province so worthless as Macaulay asserts!

Ptolemy enumerates no less than twenty British confederacies—with great resources—south of this wall, and eighteen upon the north. During the five centuries of Roman dominion, they steadily increased. There was not sufficient admixture of Latin blood to change essentially the Celtic character of the race. The Latins came to control, not to colonize. When Rome, for her own protection, was obliged to recall her legions, thus relinquishing the province which had cost so much time and treasure to secure, we are distinctly told most of the Latins returned, taking their treasures with them.

What, then, became of the numerous Britons who remained? Their condition was deplorable. Accustomed to rely upon Roman arms for defense and

Roman magistrates for the administration of law, they were suddenly deprived of both defenders and rulers. While Latin civilization had developed their resources enough to make them a more tempting prize to their warlike neighbors, it had rendered them almost incapable of guarding the treasures they had gained. They had grown unwarlike—had lost both weapons and their use.

Moreover, a crowd of rival aspirants at once began a contest for the vacant throne. It is not difficult to believe the statements of our earliest historians, that many, thus threatened by external foes and internal dissensions, were ready to welcome as allies the Saxon marauders, preferring to receive them as friends than to resist them as foes. The Saxons evidently were determined to come; and the Briton,—with characteristic craft,—concluded to array Pict and Saxon against each other, hoping, doubtless, both would thus become less formidable.

Those Saxons also came in detachments, and at different intervals. They were generally warriors, the picked men of their tribes. Finding a better country, and a people without rulers, they quietly determined to take possession of both. Their final ascendancy was gained, not by superiority of numbers, but by superiority of will and of arms. It seems utterly incredible to suppose, that, in their little open boats, they could have transported across the German Ocean a multitude great enough to outnumber the original British inhabitants. All accounts indicate that they were numerically inferior. Nearly one hundred and fifty years of hard fighting were necessary before Saxon authority could take the place of the Roman.

The Welsh historical Triads tells us that whole bodies of the Britons entered into "confederacy with their conquerors"—became Saxons. The Saxon Chronicle, which, meagre and dry as it is, still gives the truest account we have of those dark periods, states that whole counties, and numerous towns within the limits of the Heptarchy,—nearly five

hundred years after the first Saxon invasion,—were occupied almost entirely by Britons; and that there were many insurrections of semi-Saxonized subjects in the different kingdoms. Bede, speaking of Ethelfred as the most cruel of the Saxon chieftains, says he compelled the Britons to be “tributary,” or to leave the country. The great mass of the people seem to have chosen the former condition, and to have accepted their new rulers as they had done the old. There is not the slightest evidence of any wholesale extermination by the Saxons, or of any extensive Celtic emigration, except two passages found in Gildas, our earliest historian. In one of these, he speaks of the Britons as having been slain like wolves, or driven into mountains; and in the other, of a company of British monks guiding an entire tribe of men and women to Armorica, singing,—as they crossed the channel in their vessels of skin,—“Thou hast given us as sheep to the slaughter.”

Gildas' statements are so contradictory and erroneous, as every historical student knows, that they must be received with great allowance. He evidently hated the Saxons, and shows a disposition, in all his descriptions, to exaggerate the injuries his countrymen had received. Undoubtedly the Saxons often exhibited the savage ferocity common in those days, killing and enslaving their enemies without much compunction; undoubtedly many of the British, who had been Christianized, fled from the pagan violence of their conquerors to the more congenial countries of Armorica and Wales; but that most of them were obliged thus to choose between a violent death or exile, is sufficiently disproved, I think, by the evidence already given.

The adoption of the Saxon language is also sometimes cited as evidence of the destruction of the old Britons; but conquerors have very often given language to their subjects, even when the subjects were more numerous than themselves. Thus the Latin was adopted in Gaul; thus the Arabic followed the conquests of the Mussul-

mans. Yet there is nothing but this argument from language and the statements of Gildas—which later historians have so blindly copied—to give any foundation to the common opinion of an unmixed Saxon population. All other historical records and inferences indicate that the Anglo-Saxon—when that name was first applied, in the ninth century—represented as large a proportion of Celtic as of Teutonic blood.

Future invasions effected little change in this proportion. The Danes, indeed, increased somewhat the Teutonic element, although they made fearful havoc among the old Saxons; but the Normans brought with them fully as many Gauls as Norsemen; and since the Norman conquest, the Celtic element has rather increased than diminished.

It is fitting that the Lia Fail, or stone of destiny, which Edward I. brought from Scotland, and upon which the Celtic kings for many generations had been crowned, should still form the seat of the English throne, and thus become a symbol—although undesigned—of that Celtic basis which really underlies the whole structure of Anglo-Saxon dominion.

If it be admitted, then, that the Celt formed so large a proportion of those races out of which the English people were finally composed, it becomes an interesting question whether any of their spiritual characteristics became also the property of their conquerors. What were these old Celts? Did their blood enrich, or impoverish, the Saxon? Did they leave us any inheritance beyond certain modifications of speech and form? An answer to these questions may also serve to confirm the conclusions already stated.

We do not get much satisfaction to such inquiries from contemporary historians in other lands. The self-complacent classic troubled himself little about neighboring barbarians, provided they did not endanger his safety or tempt his cupidity. That they traded in tin with the seafaring Phœnicians, three hundred years before

Christ; that, in the time of Cæsar and Augustus, they had many barbarous customs, but had also their chariots, fleets, currency, commerce, poets, and an order of priests who were supreme in all matters pertaining to religion, education, and government;—these, in brief, are the principal facts gleaned from the meagre accounts of Greek and Roman writers concerning the inhabitants of the Ultima Thule of the ancient world. Saxon historians add little to this information. From the time of Gildas to Macaulay, they have generally viewed the Celt through the distorted medium of their popular prejudices.

The Celt, then, must be his own interpreter; yet the Celt of to-day, after suffering for so many centuries a treatment which has tended to blunt and destroy his best talent, and after long association with foreign thoughts and customs, is by no means the best representative of his pagan ancestors.

In some way—through their own productions, if possible—we must get at the old Celts themselves before we can determine with any certainty how many of our popular characteristics can be attributed with any propriety to such a source. Aside from their language, which we have already alluded to, their oldest works are those weird megalithic ruins—scattered all over western Europe, and most numerous in Brittany and Great Britain. That these were of Celtic origin, seems indicated both by their greater number and perfection in those countries where the Celt retained longest his identity, and by certain correspondences in form and masonry with the earliest known Celtic structures,—the cells of Irish monks, and the famous round towers of Ireland.

Those round towers,—after being variously explained as fire-towers, astronomical observatories, phallic emblems, stylic columns, &c.,—Dr. Petrie has very clearly proved were of ecclesiastical origin, built between the fifth and thirteenth centuries, and designed for bell-fries, strongholds, and watch-towers. Yet these cells and towers alike exhibit the same circular form and dome roof,

the same ignorance of the arch and cement, which are revealed in many of the older and more mysterious ruins.

If we suppose a mythical people of the stone age preceded the Indo-Europeans in their wanderings,—and there seems no need of such a supposition, since it has been so clearly shown by some of our best pre-historic archaeologists, that the transition from implements of stone to iron has frequently taken place among the same people,—it may still be said these ruins are entirely dissimilar to the productions of such a people in other lands: they mark a higher degree of civilization, and show clearly, in certain cases, the use of metallic instruments. Some of them reveal also great mechanical skill, forethought, and extraordinary command of labor. Most of these ruins are at least two thousand years old. They have been exposed constantly to the destructive influences of a northern climate;—and any one who has noticed the ravages which merely six centuries have wrought upon even the protected stonework of English cathedrals, can appreciate the power of these atmospheric vandals;—they have suffered even greater injury from successive invaders; and still few can gaze upon them to-day without being impressed with their massive grandeur.

Of the vast ruins of Carnac, in Brittany, four thousand great triliths still remain; some of these are twenty-two feet high, twelve feet broad, and six feet thick, and are estimated to weigh singly 256,800 pounds. Says M. Cambray: "These stones have a most extraordinary appearance. They are isolated in a great plain without trees or bushes; not a flint or fragment of stone is to be seen on the sand which supports them; they are poised without foundation, several of them being movable." In Abury and Stonehenge there are similar structures, not as extensive, indeed, but giving evidence of much greater architectural and mechanical skill. They are found also in different parts of Great Britain and the Orkney Islands and the Hebrides.

How were these immense stones transported—for there are no quarries within several miles—and by what machinery could the great lintels of Stonehenge, for instance, have been raised to their present position?

We may smile incredulously at the learned systems of Oriental mythology which enthusiastic antiquaries have discovered in these voiceless sentinels of forgotten builders, but can we question the evidence they give of scientific proficiency—superior to any ever attained by a “race of savages”?

Their cromlechs, or tombs, exhibit clearly the same massiveness. The Irish people still call them “giant beds,” but they give us no additional information concerning the people whose skeletons they contain;—unless there be a suggestion in the kneeling posture in which their dead were generally buried, of that religious reverence which characterized them when alive.

In the Barrows—or great mounds of earth—which they seem to have used at a later period as sepulchres, we do get a few more interesting hints concerning their early condition. In these, large numbers of necklaces, swords, and various ornaments and weapons in gold and bronze,—some of exquisite workmanship and original design,—have been found, showing at least that they had the art of working metals, and many of the customs of a comparatively civilized life. All these relics, however, although interesting in themselves, and confirming the few statements of classic historians, only serve to correct the popular notion concerning the savage condition of the old Britons. They leave us still in ignorance of those mental and spiritual characteristics which we are most anxious to discover.

By far the most extensive and valuable material for determining the character of the ancient Celt, although the most neglected, is presented in their literature. Few persons I imagine who have given the subject no special investigation, are aware how extensive this literature is, as found in the Gaelic and Cymric tongues. In the library of Trinity

College, Dublin, there are one hundred and forty manuscript volumes. A still more extensive collection is in the Royal Irish Academy. There are also large collections in the British Museum, and in the Bodleian Library and Imperial libraries of France and Belgium, and in the Vatican;—besides numerous private collections in the possession of the nobility of Ireland, Great Britain, and on the continent.

To give an idea of these old manuscripts, O’Curry has taken as a standard of comparison the *Annals of the Four Masters*, which was published in 1851, in seven large quarto volumes containing 4,215 closely-printed pages. There are, in the same library, sixteen other vellum volumes, which, if similarly published, would make 17,400 pages; and six hundred paper manuscripts, comprising 30,000 pages. Mac Firbis’ great book of genealogies would alone fill 1,300 similar pages; and the old Brehon laws, it is calculated, when published, will contain 8,000 pages.

The Cymric collection, although less extensive, still comprises more than one thousand volumes. Some of these, indeed, are only transcripts of the same productions, yet many of them are original works.

A private collection at Peniath numbers upward of four hundred manuscripts; and a large number are in the British Museum, in Jesus College, and in the libraries of various noblemen of England and Wales.

The Myvyrian manuscripts, collected by Owen Jones, and now deposited in the British Museum, alone amount to forty-seven volumes of poetry, in 16,000 pages, and fifty-three volumes of prose, in about 15,300 pages; and these comprise only a small portion of the manuscripts now existing. Extensive as are these collections, we know, from trustworthy accounts, the Danish invaders of Ireland, in the ninth and tenth centuries, made it a special business to tear, burn, and drown—to quote the exact word—all books and records which were found in any of the churches, dwellings, or monasteries of the island.

The great wars of the seventeenth century proved still more destructive to the Irish manuscripts. The jealous Protestant conquerors burnt all they could find among the Catholics. A great number of undiscovered manuscripts are referred to and quoted in those which now exist. From their titles, we judge more have been lost than preserved. So late as the sixteenth century, many were referred to as then in existence, of which no trace can now be found. Some of them may still be hidden in the old monasteries and castles. The finding of the book of Lismore is an illustration of what may have been the fate of many. In 1814, while the Duke of Devonshire was repairing his ancient castle of Lismore, the workmen had occasion to reopen a doorway which had been long closed, in the interior of the castle. They found concealed within it a box containing an old manuscript and a superb old crozier. The manuscript had been somewhat injured by the dampness, and portions of it had been gnawed by rats. Moreover, when it was discovered, the workmen carried off several leaves as mementoes. Some of these were afterward recovered, and enough now remains to give us valuable additions to our knowledge of Irish customs and traditions. It is by no means improbable that others, similarly secreted in monasteries and private dwellings, may still be discovered.

In O'Clery's preface to the "Succession of Kings"—one of the most valuable of the Irish annals—he says: "Strangers have taken the principal books of Erin into strange countries and among unknown people." And again, in the preface to the "Book of Invasions": "Sad evil! Short was the time until dispersion and decay overtook the churches of the saints, their relics, and their books; for there is not to be found of them now that has not been carried away into distant countries and foreign nations; carried away, so that their fate is not known from that time hither."

When we consider, thus, the number

of literary productions which have been either lost or destroyed, and the number still remaining, we must admit that there has been, at some period, great intellectual activity among the Celtic people. How far back these productions may be traced, is a question which cannot now be discussed properly, without transgressing the limits assigned to this article. We can do little more, at present, than call attention to the extent of these writings, and their importance. Many of them are unquestionably older than the Canterbury Tales; they give us the clearest insight into the character of a people once great and famous, but now almost lost in oblivion; and, although containing a large amount of literary rubbish, they still comprise numerous poems, voluminous codes of ancient laws, extensive annals—older than any existing European nation can exhibit in its own tongue, and a body of romance which no ancient literature has ever excelled, and from which modern fiction drew its first inspiration.

Had this literature no special relation to our own history, we might naturally suppose it would repay investigation for the curious information it contains of a bygone age, and the intellectual stimulus it might impart. The condition of Ireland, to-day, is also of such importance to England and America—the Irish Celt, in this nineteenth century, enters so prominently into our politics and questions of reform, that every thing is worth investigating which can reveal to us more clearly his character and capacity.

But these productions of his ancestors have for us a still deeper significance. They are peculiarly our inheritance. Celt or Teuton, or both, we must mainly be; our ancestry can naturally be assigned to no other races. Much in us is manifestly not Teutonic. The Anglo-Saxon is quite a different being from all other Saxons. Climate and occupation may explain, in a measure, the difference, but not entirely. Some of the prominent traits which Englishmen and Americans alike possess, belong so clearly to the German,

or Teutonic people, in every land, that we do not hesitate to ascribe them at once to our Saxon blood;—but what shall we do with others equally prominent, and naturally foreign to Teutons everywhere?

Were these found peculiarly characterizing the Celts from their earliest history, might we not—must we not—with equal propriety also ascribe them to our Celtic blood?

If, then, it can be shown—and we think it can—that, not only before the time of Gower and Chaucer, but also before Caedmon uttered the first note of English song, Celtic wits and poets were busy expressing in prose and verse

the sentiments of their people, then these old manuscripts become of incalculable value in explaining our indebtedness to those Britons, who, as history and science alike indicate, contributed so essentially to our popular formation.

On some future occasion, we may present such illustrations of their antiquity and general character, as will make it appear still more clearly that the Anglo-Saxon is—what we might expect the offspring of two such varied races to become—the union of the varied characteristics of Celt and Teuton, stronger, braver, more complete in every respect, for his diverse parentage.

THE TALE OF A COMET.

IN TWO PARTS: I.

“*Rerum natura sacra sua non simul tradit. Initiatos nos credimus; in vestibulo ejus heremus.*”
SENECA. Nat. Quæst. vii.

I.—THE PROFESSOR'S LETTER.

THE year in which the comet came I was living by myself, at the windmill. Early in May I received from my friend the Professor the following letter:

“COLLEGE OBSERVATORY, May 5.

“MY DEAR BERNARD,—I want to ask a favor, which, if you please to grant it, I honestly think will contribute sensibly to the advancement of science, without causing much disorder to your bachelor life. I want you, in fact, to take a pupil. There has come to us a very strange young man, who knows nothing but the mathematics; but knows them so thoroughly and with such remarkable and intuitive insight, that I am persuaded he is destined to become the wonder of this age. His name is Raimond Letoile; he is about twenty years old, and his nature, so far as I can determine upon slight acquaintance, is singularly amiable, pure, and unsophisticated. His recommendations are good, he has money sufficient for all his purposes, and I think you will find him a companion as well as a pupil, who, while giving you but little trouble, will reward you for your care by the contemplation of his unexampled progress. I want you to take charge of this

young man, my dear Bernard, because I have confidence in the evenness of your disposition, and the steady foothold you have obtained upon the middle way of life. He is an anomaly, and therefore must be treated with prudence, and a tender reserve such as we need not exercise toward the rough-and-tumble youth of the crowd. In fact, this young man Raimond Letoile is a unique and perfect specimen of that rare order of beings, which, not being able to anatomize and classify, owing to the infrequency of their occurrence, we men of Science carelessly label under the name of *Genius*, and put away upon our shelves for future examination. Letoile is certainly a genius, and when properly instructed, I believe he will develop a faculty for the operations of pure science such as has no parallel, unless we turn to the arts and compare him with Raphael and Mozart. He is a born mathematician. And when I say this, I do not mean that he simply has an extraordinary power of calculation, like Colburn and those other prodigies who have proved but pigmies after all—I mean that he possesses an intuitive faculty for the higher analysis, and possesses it to such a wonderful degree that all of us here stand before him in genuine amaze-