

1849

## Nationality

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# THE COLLEGIAN.

## NATIONALITY.

STANDING upon the threshold of observation, I looked upon the world. The vivacious Frenchman, the grasping Englishman, the spirited Irishman, the vengeful Spaniard, and the high-toned American passed before me. Each, impelled by the tide of his own thoughts, moved onward. Each, wrapt in the seclusion of his own destiny, heeded not the rest. Silent, intent, I gazed.

The individual is an epitome of the nation :—presenting in concentrated form the distinctive characteristics of the people. So intimate is the connection between the man and the mass, so sure an index the former to the latter, that the same considerations which determine our judgment of the one, determine also our opinion of the other.

Nationality is based upon physical, intellectual and moral condition. These collectively constitute that character which gives a nation respectability abroad, security and confidence at home. England, washed by the waters of full many a sea, receives to her bosom the gems which for centuries have lain treasured within their pearly vaults. Having long since subdued

Old Neptune to her gentle sway,  
By the power of her name,  
She rides upon his stormy way  
To glory, wealth, and fame.

We cannot fail to trace and feel the influence which the extensive and productive territory of France exerts upon her people. Pouring from her bowels nature's choicest gifts, and lavishing them upon her children, she receives in return only war's hard tread and floods of blood. No wonder that Italia's dark-eyed daughters are full of smiles, and wreathing for themselves loveliest garlands, surround them with the song and the dance ; since there, in the chaste language of Addison,

Blossoms and fruits and flowers together rise,  
And the whole year in gay confusion lies.

Nature, in her conception, never intended Switzerland to be the land of luxury. No, but bleak and free ; that her Tell, cradled in the whirlwind,

and rocked in the storm, might afterwards exclaim, in spirit akin to the elements which played in terrific grandeur about his own mountain home,

Hail! native land of great renown,  
 No more oppressed and trodden down!  
 Your crags and peaks at length I greet;  
 While all the hills the echo loud repeat,  
 Switzerland again is free,  
 Again the land of liberty!

To me the sound of an Atlantic and Pacific ocean, rolling and breaking upon the out-stretched shores of Columbia, speaks big with national superiority. To me her cataracts' deafening roar is significant of a sublimity that bewilders human thought, and compels its devotion.

True men, who have devoted themselves to science and to its diffusion, occupy a position at once prominent and commanding in the Temple of Nations' Fame. Beside them, the martyrs to the cause of right, standing in the flame, point upward as the climax of human greatness. The political and moral truths, for the maintenance and propagation of which they lived and died, infuse a nation's character with a living power and shed around it an original splendor.

What is it that has sustained humanity in her struggles?

In the long stream of life and action, what is it that has kept the bark of man afloat, despite the eddy and the storm? Distinctive Nationality, like a great Goddess, has presided. Humanity is preserved. To their national character the eyes of a people are turned. Around it their fond recollections cluster. Enshrined in it are the loved names they cherish. It is the focus of their greatest glory and highest hopes. It is their pride, and life, and light and power. Sully it, and they are enraged. Destroy it! and they fall lifeless and powerless. Dethrone it, and you strike from the firmament their ascendant star: you put out their only lamp, and launch them beaconless to burst like so many bubbles on the ocean of destiny.

A nation's character is stamped upon her every action. In peace it gives impulse to trade; and in war, courage to the soldier. It was the one great idea of *Rome*, standing in solitary grandeur—once the petty village, now the awe of a world—that penetrated the breast of every Roman, that honeyed the tongue of a Cicero, and created the genius of a Horace. It was the one idea of the *Union*, the *Federal Compact*, which absorbed the energies of a Washington, and when dying yet lingered upon his quivering lips. A nation's character is the common patrimony of all her sons. The ruddy little boy bounds over the green sward, and from his young full heart, bursts forth "hurrah!" for the hero his mother has taught him to love and admire. To body forth his countrymen's brilliant achievements, the poet invokes the inspiration of the muses, and wakes his slumbering notes to a song so noble.

The British fleet lay off Trafalgar, with the enemy full in view. Nelson,

the darling hero of England, on board his own swift *Victory*, moved out, followed and surrounded by the rest. They had approached. Just then, while every eye was fixed, every lip compressed, every countenance firm, and every heart quickened, dilated 'twixt hope and fear, there went looming up the immortal words, "*England expects every man to do his duty!*" In that word *England* was a charm that sent a thrill of enthusiasm, which resulted in the most glorious triumph that has ever graced the annals of British fame.

When disunion, that hideous monster, would snap asunder, Nationality reconciles clashing interests, and neutralizes jarring powers. When invasion, that blighting sirocco, that fiery deluge would sweep across the land, it arouses, animates, fires the hearts of the people. Clinging to it, our fathers and mothers, and brothers, are preserved amid the whirl of human passion. And now as I stand surrounded by the relics of ancient might, the awful sublimity of Roman greatness heaving in its last struggle, rushing upon my vision, would inspire me to the prophecy of Roman resurrection. And still impressed with the magic power of my theme, I would bid that vein of sympathy which has long flowed for Ireland, Flow on! For who knows but Ireland, quickened into life by the stirring memory of her Emmetts, her O'Connells and her Mitchells, and maddened by the sad spectacle of an O'Brien's gallows, may yet rise triumphant from the dust and tears of her thralldom!

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#### THE MACHINE FOR GRINDING POETRY.

"That some things can be done as well as others," is by no means improbable. And, in this enlightened and progressive age, when lightning is trained and taught to speak, it is not probable that speaking of machines for making poetry will be considered, by men of science at least, as attempting to impose upon the credulity of the people; and if, indeed, such were the case, we feel ourself prepared, by a practical illustration, to establish the theory.

Of the inventor we know nothing but what is to be learned from the invention; that is, he lived, and if not dead, is still living. Of the machine we know a great deal, but shall say nothing, it being able to speak for itself.

Johnny L. was what might be classed in the scale of talent as a poetical genius. We have arrived at this conclusion after having enjoyed the extreme pleasure of perusing his only production, "*The Lover's Soliloquy*," strictly speaking, a scintillation from an intellectual star of the first magnitude; but, alas! by some ill-fated mistake, he, together with his production, has found a peaceful slumber in the archives of oblivion.