

**GIFTS OF GENIUS: A
MISCELLANY OF
PROSE AND POETRY**

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Gifts of genius: a miscellany of prose and poetry by Various

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VARIOUS

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MISCELLANY OF
PROSE AND POETRY**

GIFTS OF GENIUS:

A Miscellany

OF

PROSE AND POETRY,

BY

AMERICAN AUTHORS.

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TO THE PUBLIC.

At the desire of Miss DAVENPORT, for whose benefit this collection of original Miscellanies by American authors has been made, I write this brief Preface, without having had time to read the contributions which it is designed to introduce. The names of the writers, however, many of which are among the most distinguished in our literature, and are honored wherever our language is spoken, will suffice to recommend the volume to the attention of the reading world.

If this were not enough, an inducement of another kind is to be found in the circumstances of the lady in whose behalf the contents of this volume have been so freely contributed. A few years since, she was a teacher in our schools, active, useful, and esteemed for her skillful communication of knowledge. At that time it was one of her favorite occupations to make sketches and drawings from nature, an art in which she instructed her pupils. A severe illness interrupted her duties, during which her sight became impaired, and finally lost. A kind of twilight came over it, which gradually darkened into utter night, shutting out the face of nature in which she had so much delighted, and leaving her, without

occupation, in ill health. In this condition she has already remained for five years.

To this statement of her misfortunes, which I trust will commend her to the sympathies of all who are made acquainted with them, as one who was useful to society while Providence permitted, I have only to add the expression of her warmest thanks to those who have generously furnished the contents of the volume she now lays before the public.

W. C. BRYANT.

NEW YORK, *June*, 1850.

INTRODUCTORY.



THIS volume speaks so well for itself that it does not need many words of preface to commend it to a wide circle of readers. Its rich and varied contents, however, become far more interesting when interpreted by the motive that won them from their authors; and when the kindly feeling that offered them so freely is known, these gifts, like the pearls of a rosary, will be prized not only severally but collectively, because strung together by a sacred thread.

The story of this undertaking is a very short and simple one. Miss Davenport, who had been for many years an active and successful teacher in our schools and families, especially in the beautiful arts of drawing and painting, was prostrated by a severe illness, which impaired her sight and finally terminated in blindness.

The late Benjamin F. Butler, in a letter dated October 13, 1858, which will have peculiar interest to the many readers who knew and honored that excellent man, writes thus:

"Miss Davenport has for several years been personally known to me. She is now blind and unable to follow the