

**THE DAUGHTER OF
A GENIUS: A TALE
FOR YOUTH**

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The Daughter of a Genius: A Tale for Youth by Mrs. Barbara Hofland

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MRS. BARBARA HOFLAND

**THE DAUGHTER OF
A GENIUS: A TALE
FOR YOUTH**

TO THE YOUNG LADIES
OF
MRS. HAUGH'S ESTABLISHMENT,
DONCASTER.

DEAR YOUNG LADIES,

Permitted by your excellent Governess to offer you this little work, I present it with the good wishes of a heart alive to the best interests and most endearing claims of your age and your sex: entreating each individual to consider my simple story as offering her a personal lesson and a practical example.

I flatter myself you will at least learn from these pages how much more happily you are situated than the pupils of Mrs. Albany could possibly be, notwithstanding the exertions of her meritorious daughter; since the comforts of your elegant and "pleasant home," the system of your expansive education, is conducted by a mind of extraordinary powers, under the control of that wisdom and experience which are alike necessary to the formation of character and the cultivation of intellect.

Without desiring to detract from that gaiety of heart, and sprightliness of manners, which properly belong to the spring-time of life (and which were unhappily denied to my little heroine), I must yet entreat you to reflect on the value of the time and privileges you are now enjoying, in order that your industry may be confirmed, and your grateful affections excited, towards all the friends to whom you are indebted for these blessings, whether daily administering, or distantly contributing to them. Many of you are called to consider these subjects in connexion with that the most sacred and important. You have taken your baptismal vows upon yourselves, and publicly announced yourselves Christians—remember this your “high calling,” your honourable distinction, demands especially a humble heart, a teachable spirit, and that daily progress in well-doing, which proves that your manners as gentlewomen, are built on the best foundation, the self-subduing, yet truly ennobling precepts of Christianity.

I am, my dear young ladies,

Your sincere friend,

B. HOWLAND.

THE
DAUGHTER OF A GENIUS;

A TALE.

CHAPTER I.

Mr. and Mrs. Henville were sitting one evening surrounded by their young family, which consisted of five children, when their attention was suddenly awakened by the loud laugh of the youngest, who was the only boy in the family, and a person that enjoyed uncommon privileges.

Arabella and Maria, who were considerably older than the two following sisters, had been employed some minutes before by their mamma in winding two skeins of silk for her, which were held for each by

a younger sister. Belle was still carefully pursuing her task, and following the entangled thread through all its labyrinths; but Maria, having found the employ too wearisome for her more volatile spirits, had suddenly cut it, and thereby occasioned the exulting laugh of little Charles.

“Why did you cut the silk, Maria?” said Mrs. Henville.

“Oh, mamma, it was so tiresome, I could not disentangle it.”

“I told you it would be so, yet you insisted on trying.”

“And I did try, dear mamma, in the most Griselda-like manner, but all at once my patience ‘oozed out,’ as the courage of Acres did, and then alas! ‘the gordian knot I did unloose’ in the Conqueror’s manner.”

Mr. Henville smiled, but his lady looked only the more grave, as she replied—

“I wanted the silk to be wound, Maria, and it makes me no amends for spoiling it, that you can quote a line of poetry, or refer to an historical fact—in the walk of

life, to our sex there are every day many petty cares, and active services called for, which have little to do with either knowledge or imagination ; and are yet of great importance to happiness, and virtue. I wish you had possessed more patience, or less confidence."

At this moment Belle laid her ball of silk in silence on the table.

" Thank you, my dear, *this* will be useful."

Maria hastily ran out of the room, her heart throbbing, and the tears perforce starting from her eyes. Belle, who tenderly loved her, saw her disorder, but not wishing that it should be further noticed, desired the little ones to say good night, and she would put them into the hands of the nurse-maid, and in a few minutes the worthy couple were left alone, on which the following conversation ensued.

" I think, my love, you were a little too hard on Maria, for her feelings are so acute, the poor girl is just heart-broken with a word from you."

“ Very true, my dear, and it is frequently heart-breaking to me to give it, but the more I am compelled to admire the wit, ability, good-humour, and sensibility, the dear child certainly displays, the more I feel it my duty to correct the exuberance of her fancy, and to guard her from eccentricity to which she is very prone ;—in my opinion there is as much necessity for restraining her faculties, and chaining down her mind to the common duties of life, as in general it is necessary to stimulate children to application, and compel them to exertion—with her talents, if she is not well directed, we have every thing to fear.”

“ And every thing to *hope*,” said the father exultingly.

The door was re-opened, and Maria entered with a number of little balls on her hand, on each of which she had wound a needle full of the silk, and she laid them before her mother with an air of tender submission, which proved that she was far from satisfied with her own conduct even yet.

“ Well, my dear, this is certainly the best way you could manage it,” said Mrs. Henville.

“ My sister told me how to do it—I don’t believe I should have had the sense to find it out.”

“ Yes you would, my love, if you had thought about it—Belle generally does right, because she never despises any thing as not worthy of attention, yet as seldom desponds”——

“ Desponds !” cried Maria, resuming her usually enthusiastic expression, “ Oh ! no, why should she ever despair of judging right ? with her sound understanding, and her calm gentleness, so full of reflection and real goodness—but there never was such a girl as Belle—*never !*”

“ But there may be one as good as Belle if she would try—one as useful to her invalid mother, and as good a companion to her solitary father.”

Maria flung her arms alternately round the neck of each dear parent, blushing,