

June 1, 1846

- 11 This is the 15th class. I have not found a genius among the whole number if you mean by genius the power of developing knowledge by spontaneity without study.¹³
- 12 What ever is worth possessing must be purchased at the expense of labour. The Gods have placed a price on that which is valuable.¹⁴

¹³ In another set of introductory remarks, Henry elaborated upon his conception of the term "genius":

I do not believe in particular genius—nothing can be acquired that is worth having without labour and with it any thing may be attained

If a person tell me he has no genius for mathe[ma]tics I would say to him you (*have not*) you are *no compus mentis*.

The true is that as a general rule to which there are few exceptions any ordinary man can learn any thing he chooses by simple give his mind to it and to it alone for the time being—never attempt to learn two things at the same moment.

If by genius is understood that power of

mind which enables its possessor to comprehend and secure to himself knowledge without labour I must be permitted to assert that there is none in this class who possess it.

Henry Papers, Box 18, Folder "Introductory Remarks and First Lecture."

¹⁴ Henry used much the same language in describing education as "a forced condition of mind or body" in his 1854 address to the American Association for the Advancement of Education, asserting that "God has placed a price on that which is valuable, and those who would possess a treasure must earn it at the expense of labor" ("Philosophy of Education," p. 73).

EXCERPT, DIARY OF JOHN R. BUHLER

General Manuscript Collection, Firestone Library, Princeton University

Monday. June. 1st 1846.

... HENRY lectures to the Juniors again this morning & I again attend. His manner grows more & more interesting, every time he lectures. He grows upon you. There's no popping up & then popping out about him. He isn't a kind of Water Pot that thro' a number of small holes allows his Instructions to filter through & drizzle out on the Understandings of his Pupils—but he is a Great Canal—laugh not at the Simile—like a Canal in its Constancy Uniformity, Depth & Majesty of Flow. Or like his own *Galvanism*—a Strong & Constant & Powerful Current—not possessing the momentary pungency & the Rapid Brilliancy of *Electricity* is true, but having that which *it* has not, a Continuity & a Deep Power in it that lasts & lasts with strong *Effect*. ...