MR. JAMES SULLY ON THE PRECOCITY OF GENIUS.

WHENEVER Mr. Sully turns his attention to a problem in psychology or anthropology, he is sure to give it a lively, interesting treatment, and to accompany it with a wealth of illustration. His paper on 'Genius and precocity' in the June number of the *Nineteenth century* is no exception to this: and it has the additional attraction of dealing with a question quite within the popular comprehension.

Mr. Sully says that the idea that genius reveals itself early in life is repugnant to common sense. It seems more fitting that genius should be the result of development and close application. To test the question, two methods may be pursued. First, it may be asked what proportion of those who have shown marked precocity have afterwards redeemed the promise of their youth? and, secondly, what number of those who have unquestionably obtained a place among the great were previously distinguished by precocity? The former line of inquiry is evidently of great complexity, and Mr. Sully therefore confines himself to the second question, and also examines only instances in modern times, where the evidence is reasonably full and accurate, and in the departments of art and literature. The field of practical affairs, including statesmen, soldiers, and ecclesiastics, is not entered upon. Mr. Sully's precise question therefore is, in what proportion of cases, in the realms of art and literature in modern times, has recognized intellectual eminence been preceded by youthful distinction and superiority to others. He distinguishes seven groups: 1°, musicians; 2°, painters; 3°, poets; 4°, novelists; 5°, scholars, including historians and critics; 6°, men of science; 7°, philosophers. Any manifestations in childhood or youth of an exceptional aptitude and bent, corresponding to the special direction of the later development of genius, are taken as indications of precocity. Childhood and youth end, in Mr. Sully's data, at the twentieth year of life.

In his first group, the musicians, Mr. Sully cites as precocious the well-known cases of Mozart, Beethoven, Mendelssohn, and Schubert; and the not so familiar cases of Meyerbeer, Hillier, Spohr, Méhul (who was an organist at ten), Schumann, Cherubini, Auber, Weber, David, Lotti, and Purcell. Rubinstein played finely at ten, Liszt at twelve. Of 40 musicians enumerated, 38 showed a decided bent before twenty. Of these 38, 29 are known to have had the gift as children, and there is reason to believe that others betrayed it by the age of twelve. In only two cases — the rather surprising ones of Rossini and Wagner — is there a lack of early manifestation of musical ability.

The second group includes painters and sculptors, and among the precocious are to be found Mantegna, Andrea del Sarto, Raffael, Tiziano, Michael Angelo, Murillo, Holbein, Ruysdael, Cornelius, Vernet, and Ary Scheffer. Of the great sculptors, Canova carved a lion at twelve, and Thorwaldsen began work at eleven. Of the 58 representatives of this group, 42 showed decided talent before fifteen, and 47 before twenty. In none of the instances was artistic fame acquired after the age of forty.

Among the poets, comprising the third group, Tasso wrote 'Rinaldo' at seventeen; Calderon composed very early; Goethe wrote dialogues at six; Alfred de Musset had written poems before fourteen. Beaumont, Cowley, Pope, Byron, and Coleridge were all precocious. Elizabeth Barrett Browning wrote poetry at eight, and Mrs. Hemans published her first volume at fourteen. Of 52 poets, 39 were distinctly precocious.

The fourth group, novelists, tells a similar story. Scott, Dickens, Lytton, Balzac, Hoffman, Charlotte Brontë, and Miss Burney are familiar instances of precocity. Of 28 novelists, 21 gave evidence of great imaginative power before twenty.

Of the fifth group, scholars, historians, and critics, Grotius, Porson, Niebuhr, Macaulay, and Thirlwall are well-known instances. Of 36 representative names, 30 showed preternatural ability in childhood or early youth.

The sixth group, men of science, has among the affirmative instances Galileo, Tycho Brahe, Newton, Thomas Young, Clerk-Maxwell, Sir William Rowan Hamilton, Cuvier, Haller, and Laplace. Of 36 cases examined, 27 gave evidence of a decided bent to science before twenty; of the remainder, 5 took to science after twenty, and 4 are doubtful.

The seventh and last group, philosophers, shows as precocious Berkeley, — who, as his commonplace-book shows, hit upon his new principle of idealism when a youth of eighteen at college, and who wrote his 'New theory of vision' at twenty-four, — Hume, Leibnitz, Schelling, and John Stuart Mill. Of 37 eminent representatives of this group, 25 showed marked philosophical inquisitiveness before twenty.

The summation of the seven groups is remarkable; for it shows that out of 287 names chosen, 231, or 80.48 per cent, were precocious. As a rule, the productive period also begins early. In a total of 263 cases, we find 105, or 40 per cent, produced works before the age of twenty; and 211, or 80 per cent, before the age of thirty. Moreover, a large majority of great men attain

success in early manhood. Out of 258 cases examined, 101, or nearly 40 per cent, attained success before the age of twenty-five; and 155, or 60 per cent, attained it before thirty-five.

In viewing the statistics as a whole, we find the following results: —

1°. The proportions of the various groups showing distinct promise before twenty are, musicians, $\frac{19}{20}$; artists, $\frac{8}{9}$; scholars, $\frac{5}{6}$; poets, novelists, and men of science, each, $\frac{3}{4}$; philosophers, $\frac{2}{3}$.

2°. Taking the age of thirty as the limit, we find the following proportions of the various groups showing early production: musicians, all; artists, $\frac{41}{42}$; poets, $\frac{11}{12}$; scientists, $\frac{4}{5}$; scholars, $\frac{5}{7}$; philosophers, $\frac{5}{9}$; novelists, $\frac{9}{16}$.

This order in respect to precocity answers roughly to the degree of abstractness of the faculty employed. The musicians and artists, representing the sensuous faculty, are found at one extreme; and the philosophers, representing the highest degree of abstraction, at the other. Between them are the poets and novelists, the men of imagination.

Genius, Mr. Sully concludes, is essentially natural. A truly great man is born such; that is, he is created with a strong and overmastering impulse to a definite form of origination: so he usually evidences it early. But actual production implies also opportunity, physical vigor, and leisure; hence circumstances become of importance as aiding or delaying achievement. Allowing for all this, there are some cases which are explicable only as illustrations of a process of slow development. Sometimes, as was the case with Dante, Milton, and Cervantes, the postponement was volitional and not compulsory.

Genius is precocious, then, in the sense that it manifests itself early. But does it attain the summit of its development quickly, or does it go on improving as long as, or longer than, ordinary intelligence? This is a separate question, and one to which Mr. Francis Galton ('Hereditary genius,' p. 44) gives an affirmative answer. We hope that Mr. Sully himself will before long throw some light on this question too.

EVERY-DAY LIFE OF THE WOMEN OF INDIA.

THE Society of arts lately listened to a paper by Capt. Richard Carnac Temple on the life and habits of the women of India. The author's qualifications for writing such a work would seem to be excellent, as he has lived long in the country, and has an extensive acquaintance with its popular literature. He does not treat of all classes of Indian women, but chiefly of the higher-caste Hindus, who, however, as he tells us, practically set the example for all the rest.

An Indian woman's life, he says, in its ordinary course, is divided into two clearly defined parts, which are quite distinct, though separated from each other only by the fateful day on which she first goes to take up her abode within her father-in-law's family. Note that it is not called in the Indian languages her husband's family, for that, under the Indian family system, it can seldom be in the case of a bride. Childhood, rather than girlhood, is the heyday of the Indian woman. Free to play as she pleases, with plenty of companions (for children can hardly ever be wanting in a family where all live together, from oldest to youngest); free to run in and out of the houses of friends; never bothered to learn any thing, except what she can pick up from the women about her; never worried with caste restrictions; never asked to do more in the way of labor than to help in the housework; petted by her parents; spoiled by her aunts and uncles, and beloved by her brothers, — an Indian girl-child is indeed happy, as children count happiness. And then suddenly the curtain falls. At about ten years of age — earlier in some parts, and later in others — our spoilt child is old enough to work in earnest, and so she is packed off, sorely against her will, to join her husband's family, entering it not as our brides enter their future homes, at the head of the female community, but at the bottom.

At this stage it is necessary to consider two matters, so far as they affect an Indian bride; viz., the practice of infant marriage, and what is known as the joint-family. It need hardly be stated that the so-called 'marriage' of infants is practised among all classes in every part of India, though of course there are many exceptions to the rule. The term 'marriage,' as applied to this ceremony by us, is, however, rather misleading. It is in reality an irrevocable betrothal, — a bargain, not between the infants who are 'married,' but between those who control them, being often nothing else than a purely commercial contract. It arises out of the theory that a woman is for life under tutelage, and her 'marriage' is therefore merely a transfer of the right over her to another party, — a transfer naturally very frequently made in return for a pecuniary consideration. After this marriage, or betrothal, the girl usually remains with her parents, in trust for those to whom she is to be transferred, until the home-coming, or going to her husband's house, which may be looked upon as the real marriage, as we use the word. Until the second ceremony takes place, the child-wife is still a child to all intents and purposes, and treated