

a literary one, it would have been a partial failure. For he was eminently a man of actions as well as of thoughts. His strong positive nature was bound to influence even a Roman life, while he was handing down immortal words to all posterity. In this his character was rare, for you seldom find the elements of a man of letters and of the statesman combined in one. True, there was the divine Julius, but Julius was rare. Generally speaking, these two elements of character are antagonistic. If you embody a Napoleon you must forget the Shakespeare. If you call to mind a Washington, you must leave off the Irving. But when you remember some of the closing words of the life of Agricola, *forma mentis aeterna*, you must bear in mind that in substance he also said, "My political dignity was founded by Vespasian, increased by Titus, and further advanced by Domitian." He was Quaestor in 74, Tribune in 81, Praetor in 88, and consul *suffectus* in 97, A. D.

A third element also contributed largely to his greatness. He was an orator. He was esteemed as such in a time when eloquence abounded, when oratory was especially aimed at, and in a time when the words of Cicero had hardly lost their echo in the Forum. So Pliny remarks that "it was the crowning glory of his predecessor to have had Tacitus to deliver his funeral oration." When you would call to mind Tacitus, then, you must remember him as an essayist and critic, as a finished orator, as a politician and as a historian. But it is worthy of remark, that, as a historian, he was not merely so, but he was preeminently such. What Bacon did for reasoning, what Shakespeare did for the drama, what Darwin and Tyndal and Huxley have done for science, Tacitus long since did for history. For, says his great follower, Gibbon, "He was the first historian who applied the science of philosophy to the study of facts." He has thus been considered the Father of Philosophical History. So he was one of

those great men, who, as Macaulay says, ever stand upon the mountain tops and catch the first rays of sunlight, while far below the valleys are dark and shaded. His sunlight, however, was that which was received through the early mist of early experience. So he now stands before us a noble, a thinking, a true-minded Roman. But we are not inclined to stop here. There are questions that still go beyond and ask, What were the leading characteristics of the inward man? What was his secret character? What was he to himself? These questions always come up when we see one, most especially when we look upon one so much a Roman as Tacitus. For these there is only one answer, "Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh," and never could this be said more truly of a man than of Tacitus. So it is by his words that we must know him; and in studying his words we pick up here and there many beautiful elements of his nature.

First of all, he was patriotic. In the short treatise on the Germans, in one place he says, "Who further, saying nothing of the danger of a rough and unknown sea, would seek Germany, uninviting in its lands, stormy in its climate, sad in its civilization and appearance, unless it were his native land?" This, we are assured came from the very depths of his soul. In this one sentence, because it so well expresses his own feelings, he teaches, that, for a man who cherishes his father-land, there is no sea too wide or stormy, no danger too great, no inconveniences too grievous, no perils too enormous. We are assured that it was this patriotism which prompted him to write. For his sentences burn with it all along. It was the love of his country, and the sense of its imminent peril that moved his spirit to raise his hand and his voice in its defense. For his philosophic mind told him if there should not intervene some radical change in the policy of the government, it must soon go down. With this great motive he wrote. And so great