

GENIUS AND MARRIAGE.

To the Editor.

Sir—I see by "George Warrington's" letter that Miss Mary Taylor, granddaughter of the wife of John Stuart Mill, has been vindicating the memory of her grandmother against the aspersions cast by the "Edinburgh Review" on her fitness to be the wife of such a genius. At the same time Miss Taylor has repudiated the reviewer's suggestion that cultivated women are hindrances rather than aids to clever men, who, according to the same authority, are better mated with fools. Is it not true, however, that, as "George Warrington" puts it, "the sensitiveness that goes with genius makes its possessors more exacting in their marital affairs?" Friedrich Nietzsche, the greatest man of the age, has said, "Before marriage the question should be put, 'Will you continue to be satisfied with this woman's conversation until old age?' Everything else in marriage is transitory. The future ideal marriage in which the wife will be a companion and friend in the highest sense will probably necessitate the simultaneous institution of concubinage." I could quote many pages of other authorities to show that men of genius, whether of letters, science, art, or men of action, are ill advised to marry without being absolutely positive that the women of their choice will be ideal wives. Kitchener, Amundsen (the South Pole discoverer), as men of action, H. D. Thoreau, F. Nietzsche, as philosophers (men as opposite as the poles, however, in thought), and many others, were, or are, bachelors. Yet men or poets "learn in suffering what they teach in song." But for their unhappy marriages would Shakespeare have given us his tragedies and written of the Dark Lady of the Sonnets; Shelley have composed his divine lines, "Written in dejection;" would Dickens have given the world his immortal works; or Byron or Lytton theirs? The conclusion a thinker comes to is that men of genius should preserve their ideals of women and not sully those ideals by the intimacy of a worldly marriage. Not yet is the world ripe for the union of the superman with anyone less than the superwoman. Zarathustra for generations yet must remain an anchorite with his serpent and eagle for companions. Meantime the science of eugenics languishes, and the foolish, the weak, the sick, the degenerate, propagate their species unchecked. To quote Nietzsche again, "As to whether the free spirits will have wives, I believe that generally, like the soothsaying birds of antiquity, they will prefer to fly singly.—I am, &c.

(Mrs.) J. MACDONALD,
South-terrace, April 2, 1912.