

# THE ACADIA ATHENÆUM.

VOL. 3.

WOLFVILLE, N. S., MAY, 1877.

No 7.

[Original Poetry.]

“Hush!”

ONLY a thought,  
Whisper it not,  
Full too sweet for the world to hear;  
Only a word  
My soul has stirred,  
Tenderly, quietly murmured there.

Only a breath,  
As still as death,  
Lovingly touching my soul apart;  
Speak of it slow,  
Whisper it low,  
Hint of it not to the careless heart.

Only for me,  
Only for thee,  
Full too pure for a stranger eye;  
Timid as love,  
Shy as a dove,  
Let it in tenderest silence lie.

## Harold — A Tragedy.

(CONTINUED.)

A strong dramatic element of character in this age, was the superstitious spirit of Religion. It had remained for Genius to portray a character, fitly representative of a powerful mind enslaved by this mysterious taskmaster, at once a figment of a gloomy and distorted Imagination, and an evil of a youthful soul, misled by its own enthusiasm and the false tendencies of christian doctrine. If there is any strength in a soul agonizing beneath the incubation of a perpetual nightmare fallen athwart it from eternity; if there is any grandeur in the conception that God yet speaks to man “in dreams, in deep visions of the night,” in awful appearances and supernatural phenomena; that he wields the thunderbolts of the sky in His battles and makes the very stars in their

courses fight against His enemies, then there should be both strength and grandeur in the execution of the drama of “Harold.” Doubtless the Author felt this and has given us the character of Edward the Confessor to meet the just expectation. But Edward’s is a puny soul with no passion but its superstition, too childish, too unquestioning, too stormless. The burst of enthusiastic piety, the rapt faith which sees “the flashing of the gates of pearl” is poetical, but nothing more, for it savors of the passionless cloister, and the shaven monk; besides it is too common and modern. His superstition and enthusiasm are tinged with the dyes of Mary’s morbid spirit, but withal less warlike than her’s, who saw her unborn hero establishing the old Faith on the wrecks of the new and riding triumphant over thrones and helms and helmed heads. The scene of his death is wrought up to something like a pitch of intensity. There is a genuine spark of superstitious passion in the darkly prophetic vision of Senlac, and yet even here we are dissatisfied, for there is something in the intense stormfulness of a great soul hovering before its flight into the shadows of death over the battlefield of doom, wrought upon by the awful vision until it swept through the portals of dissolution with the prophetic cry of fate which impresses us with a tragic awe that is susceptible of being more powerfully depicted. The acme of superstition, frenzy and despair is reached in the prophetic dying words of Edward—“Sanguelac! Sanguelac! the arrow! the arrow!” Instead of a climax it seems to us to be a descent from the sublimest imagery into the most commonplace.

It would have been far more dignified and accordant with the elevation of the scene to have anticipated the doom of Harold with a burst of the Hebrew spirit and a glow of imagery with which he described

“A great Angel passed along the highest,  
Crying the doom of England.”