

ACADIA ATHENÆUM.

TROS TYRIUSQUE MIHI NULLO DISCRIMINE AGETUR.

VOL. 1.

WOLFFVILLE, N. S., DECEMBER, 1874.

No. 2.

Original Poetry.

THE DEAD YEAR.

Sink quiet sunsets of the autumn time;
Fall, golden leaflets to your leafy bed;
Lament the glory of the summer prime,
Ye mournful breezes, for the year is dead.

The poplars, sisters seven, by the brook
Cast leaner shadows in the westering gleam,
And stoop with saddened murmur as they look
Upon their faded beauty in the stream.

The thrush, lost within the silent deep
Of thick brown woods, hath hid himself away,
The lark lulls himself into a sleep,
A dreaming of his blue skies in the May.

The quiet silence of the voiceless lanes,
The scurr dropping to its early bed,
The redder sunset on the cottage pane,
All sadly tell us that the year is dead.

The fields are tenantless—I hear no more
The gay green cricket chirping in the grass,
But just the wet winds sighing overmore
A requiem to the dead year as they pass.

Yet there is something beautiful withal,
When wearied Nature yields her last soft
breath,
And in the rich decay of autumn fall
Breathes fragrance, even in the dew of death.

RHETORICAL EXHIBITION.

On Thursday evening, the 17th inst., the Sophomore Class favored the public with their annual Rhetorical Exhibition. We are happy to report that it was in every respect a decided success, and reflected honor upon the speakers.

The students assembled, as is their custom, in the vestry of the church wearing their College costume, thence they marched in regular order to the body of the house which was well filled with an attentive audience. The evening was very favorable indeed, and the people tired of political excitement and party clamor, flocked in to enjoy the literary treat usual at this season of the year. We think we can safely say, that no person possessed of any intellectual capabilities could possibly be disappointed. The exercises of the evening were ably conducted and their order well arranged.

The music interspersed between the Essays was highly creditable. As it would be impossible to add any force to the several Essays by any remarks that might be made upon them we will say no more; but insert a copy of the Programme and also one of the Essays, as a sample which we think will speak for itself. At the close of the exercises the venerable Dr. Crawley addressed the audience by a thoroughly instructive but humorous speech, directing his remarks more particularly to the Sophomore Class, giving encouragement to, as well as praising those who were striving for excellence in the literary world.

PROGRAMME.

Voluntary; Prayer; Music.

Essays by Sophomore Class.—A Rift in the Cloud, G. A. Smith, Brookfield; Music, G. S. Freeman, Milton.

Music.

Laws and Caprices of Literature, C. A. Cook, Milton; The Equipose of Nature, S. A. Burnaby, Brookfield.

Music.

A Common Inheritance, B. P. Shafner, Williamston; Scylla and Charybdis, P. W. Campbell, St. George, N. B.; Thought Germs, J. Goodwin, St. John, N. B.

Music; Addresses; National Anthem.

ESSAY.—SCYLLA AND CHARYBDIS.

In the poems of Homer, especially the Odyssey, frequent mention is made of two natural objects situated in the Straits, between Italy and the Island of Sicily;—the one a boiling, foaming whirlpool, the other a reef of rocks directly opposite. The whirlpool was called Charybdis, the rock Scylla. In those early times when the idea of the Mariner's Compass yet lay enveloped in the folds of futurity; when the timid sailor hugged close to the shore, while the vast ocean stretched out beyond, unexplored and unknown, it would happen as a natural consequence that objects of danger would be greatly exaggerated. Hence it is that the poets of early times have related marvellous stories concerning them, so that it passed into a saying, "He that would avoid Charybdis is dashed upon

Scylla." With the lapse of nearly thirty centuries have passed away the ignorance and superstition of Homeric times, and that which possessed such terrors for the timid mariner of three thousand years ago, is passed by the sailor of the 19th century after Christ without a fear.

But the whirlpool, the rocky ledge, and the narrow strait between, like every striking object of nature, seem eminently suggestive. We speak of the tossing and rolling of the ocean as symbolising the revolutions and commotions among men. As the one by its continual heaving keeps its waters pure, so great movements among man-purify society.

We speak of life as the grass that withereth. The church is represented as going forth, "fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners." It is thus a natural tendency of the human mind to compare the moral and intellectual operations of men to the workings and processes of nature. We can only have a well defined idea of the immaterial by similitudes derived from the material. We find the cause where we only know the effect, by comparing that effect with some analogous result of which we know the cause. In other words, having three terms given of the intellectual proportion we may find the fourth.

The avoiding of Charybdis and the consequent destruction upon Scylla suggest the idea of extremes, which individuals and nations shunning on the one hand, are ever prone to run into on the other. There is a line, a course direct, dangers are on the right hand and on the left, but those who have the compass of undeviating truth, follow it safely and surely. Few possess it, however, or possessing know how to guide their way by it. Men rush from one extreme to the other, and why? They are in search of truth, but they are often allured by the shadow, and lose the substance. The tinsel often glitters more than the fine gold. From error in defect the transition is easy to error in excess. It is a matter bordering on the impossible to keep the golden mean. It is true that truth lies to some extent in the extremes, but like the sun's rays at the Poles, it is scarcely perceptible, and as the sun shines in his full