

The Acadia Athenæum.

VOL. XVIII.

WOLFVILLE, N. S., MAY, 1892.

No. 7.

THE Acadia Athenæum.

Chief Editors:

F. A. STARRATT, '92. A. V. PINEO, '92.
C. E. SEAMAN, '92.

Assistant Editors:

MISS A. MCLEAN, '92. A. F. BAKER, '93.
B. K. DANIELS, '94. H. S. DAVISON, '94.

Managing Committee:

H. H. SAUNDERS, '93, Sec'y.-Treas.
F. W. YOUNG, '94. J. L. MINER, '95.

TERMS:

One Copy per Year \$1.00. Postage prepaid.

Business letters should be addressed to H. H. SAUNDERS, Sec.,
Treas. Upon all other matters address the Editors of the
ACADIA ATHENÆUM.

The Sanctum.

SELF-RELIANCE.

Our characters and our faculties constitute the basis of our actions. To learn the extent of our powers and develop them in the best way should be our ambition. Trial alone reveals what stuff we are made of. And too often, did not chance supply the trial, we never would know, or know only when too late, what is really in us. We are apt to distrust our abilities. Rarely do we venture to test our faculties to the utmost. Chance alone gave Athens a knowledge of her power. Marathon meant more to the Athenians than the mere warding off of an enemy. Above everything it revealed to the citizens what was in them, and taught them a lesson of manly reliance on themselves—the chief element of their future success. Only by the utmost use of her powers did Athens gain supremacy. And only through self-reliance was such exertion possible.

So it is with us individually, success demands not only our continued action, but that we continually put forth our best action. Self likes to be trusted, to be treated with confidence; then is done the best work possible. Continued mistrust in abilities will

inevitably make a weak character. A health-giving trust in their power aids in developing our faculties. There has been no great work or enterprise successfully carried out, but was fostered by manly self-reliance. Distrust in self leads only to inaction. Difficulties have been overcome by reliance in manhood, not by shirking duty through mistrust in ability. Opportunities must unhesitatingly be taken advantage of. Duties must be bravely faced. "One gets the standing he claims," is a proverb containing much truth. To make an effectual claim to a high and honorable standing, one must not only possess the fitting qualities, but hold them in such appreciation as to make the best possible use of them.

Faith in one's self works miracles indeed. But true self-reliance must have a foundation. Self-knowledge is necessary to intelligent self-reliance; for if ignorant of ourselves, firm self-reliance is impossible. It is important that we know what we cannot do, as well as what we can. In judging of our characters perhaps we often over-rate our importance as individuals; but we also frequently undervalue our abilities, and thus hesitate to improve opportunities. Self-reliance must be distinguished from that self-conceit which regards ourselves as possessing faculties which we have not. True modesty and consistent force of character must ever rest on an accurate knowledge of ourselves.

This knowledge is gained only by experience. The man who will not test his powers, who assures us that he has "no genius," "no talent" or "no capacity," will never really know himself. The first step must be ventured and the second will become easier. Boldness will beget assurance. Every manly effort put forth, every obstacle overcome will engender self-reliance. As "I am a part of all I have seen," so also am I a part of all I have done. Failure harms us not, if we do not lose heart. The lessons of experience make a surer trial possible. We all know "how far high failure overleaps the bound of low success." "The secret of genius," says Emerson, "is to suffer no fiction to exist for us; to realize all that we know, and to honor every truth by use."

The world gains no inspiration from weak men. The leaders in all departments of life have been men who relied in themselves and treated their own opinions with confidence. And why does the world ascribe such merit to these? Is it not because they were not bound by other people's opinions but spoke and acted what they themselves thought? No man ever gained renown but by acting on his own convictions and original views. The judgments of other people are