

also a declaration that the piece has never been published; and all pieces sent in will become the property of the University. The poems will be submitted to the decision of a jury chosen by the same Faculty. The following are excluded from competition: Members and officers of the Laval University, pupils of colleges and schools, and any contributor who shall discover himself before the award of the jury shall have been rendered. The first subject chosen by the Faculty of Arts for competition is, *The discovery of Canada*.

— On Wednesday last series of "Penny Readings" was inaugurated in this village (Charenceville, C. E.) under the presidency of the Rev. C. H. Lancaster, assistant minister of the place. The idea was a new one to the people here, but judging from the success which has attended the first endeavour, the scheme is thoroughly appreciated.

The following were the readers and readings on the above occasion:—"The Town Pump," by Hawthorne, Rev. C. H. Lancaster; "The Last Man," Campbell, Mr. Jno. McFie; "The death of Absalom," N. P. Willis, Rev. C. H. Lancaster; Selections from Sam Slick the Clockmaker, J. B. Morrison, Esq., B. A.; "The Tinker and the Glazier," "The Doctor and his Pupil," Rev. C. H. Lancaster; Selections from Picwick, Mr. Jno. McFie; "The Bridge of Sighs," T. Hood, Rev. C. H. Lancaster.

On this occasion the Committee had to avail themselves solely of "native talent," but they trust on future occasions to obtain the assistance of kind friends from Montreal and elsewhere who feel disposed to encourage this effort to cultivate a literary taste, which is so sadly deficient in many of our country districts and villages.—*Exchange*.

— Last evening an interesting lecture was delivered by Professor Andrews at the Normal School, the subject being "The Reading of Poetry." The chair was occupied on the occasion by Principal Dawson, and the lecturer was listened to by a crowded and attentive audience. He commenced by giving an outline of the theory of elocution, and proceeded to dwell upon the importance of the reader understanding what he read, and said without this it is of course impossible that he can efficiently render the meaning of the author to his audience. But it does not follow that because he understands the text himself that he can therefore render it in an intelligible manner. When giving lessons sometime since to a gentleman of more than ordinary culture and intelligence, he was struck with the want of intelligibility in his reading of some passages from one of his favorite authors. The words were pronounced carefully enough, although with a monotonous sing-song accompaniment, but meaning there seemed to be none, and of course neither the rhythm of the poetry nor the measure could be distinguished. In thinking over the matter he came to the conclusion that his perception of the sense instead of preceding the reading of the passage, was reflective, and that until the words were uttered the reader made no attempt to arrive at the meaning. Now, in order to read a passage properly, the reader must know perfectly what he is going to express, or it will be impossible to give it the true expression. It is not enough, however, to read rightly—you must read pleasantly as well as correctly, so that your hearers may not only be enabled to understand, but induced to listen. Reading must be pleasant in order to be profitable to others. It will be necessary to consider a most important element in the reading of the English language—accent and rhythm. Every word of more than one syllable has what is called an accent (that is a superior degree of pronunciation, by stress or inflexion), on one of the syllables. Without accent speech would be drawing, monstrous, and unemphatic. Accent ties syllables into words, and enables the ear to comprehend at once the boundaries of each verbal utterance. The succession of the accents in sentences constitutes rhythm—Rhythm, good or bad, is an element of all speech. He now spoke of a most important element in correct and expressive reading, viz, the pause. We are all familiar with the old rule laid down about minding our stops. All that was necessary was to count one one at a comma, two at a semicolon, and so on and the matter was done. I need scarcely say that such rules are worse than worthless. In so far then as the pauses for reading are concerned, we must make our own punctuation. The lecturer then explained what is meant by the word emphasis, and concluded a very interesting lecture by urging upon the teachers the necessity for a perfect knowledge of elocution in order to be able to communicate a share of good reading to their pupils. Mr. Andrews illustrated the subject by reading some very fine poems and dialogues, in which he was assisted by three of his pupils, Masters Dawson, Baynes and Cochrane, whose correct and masterly reading, was highly creditable to both the teacher and themselves. Principal Dawson, in a few appropriate remarks, returned thanks to the lecturer. It was then announced that a paper by Professor Howe would be read at an early date, after which the meeting dispersed.—*Montreal Gazette, 9th Feb.*

#### SCIENTIFIC INTELLIGENCE.

— The following is an abstract of the third lecture of the Sommerville course, delivered by Dr. T. Sterry Hunt on Thursday evening, at the rooms of the Natural History Society—the subject being the "Origin of Continents":

The lecturer commenced by giving a few statements with respect to the general features of the earth. Its shape is that of an oblate spheroid, such as mathematicians have supposed would be the case with a sphere of fluid or semi-fluid matter acted upon by the opposing forces of the laws of gravity and of centrifugal force. Four-fifths, or, more correctly, eight-

elevenths of the surface of our planet are covered with water, the greater portion of which lies in the Southern hemisphere. There are two great series of Continents, N. and S. America forming one, and Europe, Africa and Asia constituting another. The Eastern hemisphere, however, properly speaking, includes two, joined together, but separated by a barrier of land. Thus Europe, with Africa, forms one, while Asia properly should rank as another. The various mountain chains were briefly enunciated, and after this the general outline of the submerged land. It was stated that the deepest water is near the S. Pole, and that the mean depth of the N. Pacific is about 13,000 feet. The average height of the land North of the Equator is 3 times as high as to the South of it. Portions of the interior of continents, such as the Caspian and Dead Seas, are lower than the general ocean level. According to Humboldt, the mean elevation of the land in the globe above the sea level is about 1,000 feet, while the mean depth of the submerged portions is 10,000. If a model of the earth were made, 80 feet in diameter, with the mountains and ocean abysses of a size to correspond, the inequalities of the surface would seem very trifling. A continent was defined as being a body of land so large as to have the true basin shape, that is, mountain borders about a low interior. In describing the mountain chains in N. America, it was stated that the N. American mountains have a greater antiquity on the whole than most of those in Europe. In N. and S. America the mountains run N. and S., but in Asia and Europe their direction is E. and W. On the whole, the bulk of the land above the level of the sea is about one-fortieth that of the ocean.

Attention was then called to the original condition of our planet, and this was described as being a liquid or molten mass undergoing a gradual cooling process. It was stated that under some conditions when bodies are intensely heated they absorb gases, which are again given off when the body cools. A ball of silver, upon being heated and afterwards allowed to cool, presents an appearance, caused by the escape of bubbles of gaseous matter, of little miniature volcanoes. Attention was called to the fact that the moon presents a not very dissimilar appearance, of course on a much larger scale, but possibly due to the same cause. It was stated that Phillips has estimated the height of some of the mountains of the moon at from 10 to 20 miles, and the lecturer remarked that this luminary had no atmosphere, and probably almost no water on her surface. The idea was thrown out that the moon is now undergoing a change, similar to what obtained in our earth in one of the earlier stages of her existence.

The great agents in the formation of sediment are water and air; first occurs chemical change and then waste. It is the transportation of sediment caused by erosion, that makes continents. There is a constant mutation in the existing order of things, our present continents, according to the lecturer, are formed from others which have long disappeared. The agents of denudation are frost, the waves, ocean currents, aerial currents, &c. forces which as Tennyson says, "Sow the dust of continents to be." The principal ocean currents were then described, and the course of the Gulf Stream minutely detailed. It was shown that the rotation of the earth on its axis causes a deflection of these currents, which must be taken into account. A number of instances was given to shew the way in which sediments are deposited along certain lines, and that the mass of accumulated sediment causes flexures of the comparatively plastic material upon which it rests. The mountains, however, are not wholly raised by these flexures, but often by subsequent erosion of these ridges and subsequent redeposition. After the formation of these mountains, denudation gives them their present form and contour. A diagram was shown exhibiting a section of the Adirondacks (which are of Laurentian age), of the Green Mountains (which are Silurian), and of Mount Washington, which respectively belong to different formations, and were formed at different periods of deposition. Many other illustrations of the way in which sediment goes to build up mountains were given, which our space forbids us to detail. Playfair has said that upon surveying the present order of things he could see no evidence of a beginning nor any sign of an end. This planet has undergone many changes, ranging over a time of enormous duration, but the end, the lecturer thought, might be speculated upon. Assuming that the exterior of the earth was cooling in a definite ratio, the thickness of the cooled portion would increase. This cooling might induce porosity in the earth's crust, sufficient, if carried on through ages and gradually increasing, to absorb all the water on the surface of the earth, without which element, life would be impossible. Still this view, if correct, would require a very much greater time to elapse before such a result, than it has taken to evolve the present order of things, and the lecturer stated his belief that we are

"Yet in the very morning of the times."

It was announced that the fourth lecture of the course would be delivered on Feb. 14th, by Principal Dawson, the title of the lecture being "On the Anatomy of the Common Sea Urchin," and that the fifth annual Conversation of the Society would be held on the 18th of February next.—*Montreal Gazette, 9th Feb.*

*An Active Volcano in the Moon.*—A volcano in the moon is said to be in an active state. The crater called Linne on the Mare Serenitatis, was noticed by an astronomer at Athens, a Mr. Schmidt, during the months of October and November, to be obscured. English photographs taken during the same time show the crater very faintly marked. The same darkness was observed on this spot by the eminent astronomer Schroeter in November, 1788. The London *Spectator* says: "The impression is that an