

Such a paper will be of great value if it presents a scheme by which the enormous water power lying at the feet of the city can be utilized. Such commercial projects are precisely those which the Science Faculty is intended to forward, and it is just by such considerations its value to the country will be made the more apparent.

Much has already been said in our columns of Medical Bills and Medical Legislation, but it is hard to resist congratulating the men in Medicine, especially in the third and fourth years, who have had a heavy load lifted from their minds by the repeal of the one especially obnoxious clause of the Medical Bill which dealt with retroactive effect. The representations of the Montreal delegation, headed by the Deans of our various faculties, evidently proved too much for the law-makers, and our representatives have the satisfaction of knowing that they deserve and will receive the heartfelt thanks of those whose little schemes for commencing practice in this Province, after the final examinations this year, seemed threatened by these provisions. Never before has there been such unanimity of opinion among the Universities on any one subject as on this occasion, and the solid front displayed in opposition to this clause of the Bill fortunately had its full effect.

### CONTRIBUTIONS.

#### THE FAIRIES OF THE MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM.

We are told that the publication of Spenser's "Faerie Queene" in 1590 made fairy literature more popular among English writers. Chaucer, however, long before had referred to the popular belief in fairies of whom Pluto and Proserpina were king and queen respectively. At the beginning of the Wife of Bath's Tale we read:—

"In olde dayes of the king Artoir,  
Of which that Bretons speken gret honour,  
All was this lond fulfilled of faerie;  
The elf-queene with her joly compaignie,  
Danced ful oft in many a grene mede."

In the Marchant's Tale he describes a well under a green laurel tree where

"Ful ofte time he Pluto and his quene  
Proserpina, and alle her faerie  
Disporten hem, and maken melodie  
About that well, and daunced, as men told."

But it is certain that in Elizabeth's time fairies were much in vogue, and no writer has made them so beautiful, so delicate and so ethereal as Shakespeare.

He seems to have blended the elves of the village, the diminutive creatures who can creep through key-holes and to whom the cowslips are tall, with the Fays or Fairies of Romance who are really men with more than human powers. His fairies like the elves are diminutive, they are fond of dancing, and love cleanliness. On the other hand, like the Fays of Romance, they form a community by themselves ruled over by King Oberon and Queen Titania. There is a court and chivalry, for we are told Oberon desires the queen's

sweet changeling to order that he may make him "Knight of his train to trace the forest wild." Then this fairy court has also its jester, in the person of Puck or Robin Good-fellow, a shrewd and knavish spirit, who is best pleased when things befall preposterously.

Oberon and Puck are important characters in Literature, and deserve special mention. Oberon or Auberon is by Grimm derived from the German Elberich or Albrich. In passing into French, the *l* becomes *n*, and for the German termination *ich* was substituted the diminutive *on*. Therefore it may be interesting to refer to the German legend from which we derive the character Oberon.

The two great collections of German legends are known as the Heldenbuch (hero-book) and the Nibelungen Lied.

In the Nibelungen Lied the dwarf Albrich is the guardian of the Hoard which Siegfried, the hero of the poem, captures from the Nibelungen.

In the story of Otnit in the Heldenbuch he appears as *Elberich*, the most celebrated of dwarfs. The story relates how Elberich the dwarf aided the Emperor Otnit who ruled in Lombardy to gain the daughter of the heathen Soldan of Syria. Otnit having heard of the beauty of the Soldan's daughter sets out for Syria, against the wishes of his mother the queen, who, however, finding him resolved to go, gives him a ring, and directed him to go towards Rome till he comes to a linden tree beside a brook, where he will meet with an adventure. Otnit rides forth till he comes to the brook. And when the Lombarder had looked on the Linden, He began to laugh loud: now list what he said then: "There never yet from tree came so sweet breathing a wind."

Then saw he how an infant was laid beneath the lind,  
Who had himself full firmly rolled in the grass;  
Then little the Lombarder knew who he was.  
He bore upon his body so rich and noble a dress,  
No king's child upon earth e'er did the like possess.

This child was Elberich whom the ring rendered visible. After a struggle he is overcome by Otnit, to whom he promises as a ransom a magnificent suit of armor which is elaborately described. Then Elberich persuades Otnit to lend him the ring, upon which the dwarf immediately becomes invisible, and rallies Otnit upon the whipping he will get from his mother for losing the ring. He, however, returns the ring, and promises to stand by his friend and to assist him in his enterprise.

Otnit with his army sets sail from Messina, and when they arrive at Sanders (probably Sidon), Elberich, who has been sitting unseen on the mast, appears and gives his advice together with a stone, which, put into the mouth, endows its possessor with the gift of speech in all languages. Being admitted to the city under the disguise of a merchant, Otnit proposes to murder the inhabitants during the night, which the dwarf indignantly forbids. Elberich sets out for Muntabur (Mount Tabor), the royal residence, but the Soldan, enraged at the insolence of the invisible envoy, orders him to be put to death. He returns in safety, however.