

# Acadia Athenæum.

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS.

	PAGE
Farewell.....	37
Thought — Action.....	37
Luther and Erasmus.....	38
After Prophecy.....	40
Languages.....	41
Editorial.....	42
Co Education.....	43
A Contrast.....	44
English Colleges.....	45
Miscellanæi.....	46
Things Around Home.....	46
Personals.....	48
Our Exchanges.....	48
Acknowledgments.....	48

Who so base as would not be a critic?  
If any, speak!

## FRIENDS,—

One and all, please read this chapter to the end. It is very interesting. At least the writer thinks so. He has put on his spectacles, slippers, etc., and invoked the spirit of criticism, who, obedient to his will, hovers over him and dictates the following:—

Criticism is one of the prerogatives of man as an intellectual being. Every body is a critic, from the "missing link" to Mrs. Grundy. The little boy with the dirty face criticizes, and the President receives sentence before the high court of the street gamin. The genus Partington criticizes, and the parson's wife stands convicted of high crimes and misdemeanors unknown to civil law, because her husband's linen was smooched, and it was darkly whispered about by a lady at whose house he slept, that there was actually and truly—may she never speak another

word, if she should die at the moment, etc., etc., etc.—actually a hole in the big toe of the poor dear man's sock, and it the dead of winter too! Therefore let no one indulge the hope that he has never been arraigned before some bar, for in this world all are judges and criminals at the same time. This is the first great revelation. Again the spirit came and said: Quite curious it would be to examine some of the opposing judgments of great men. Macaulay called Milton "The poet, the statesman, the philosopher, the glory of English literature;" while Goldsmith said of him, "There is no eloquence in his style, and no taste in his compositions." Addison said Milton stood first among English poets; Waller said the only merit *Paradise Lost* possessed was its length. Mr. Whately said of Pope, "That his rhymes too often supply the defect of his reason;" Mr. Dyce speaks of his closeness of argument and marvellous condensation of thought. Then of Wordsworth; who does not know how severely his great poem, *The Excursion*, has been condemned by Jeffreys and Macaulay, and how enthusiastically praised by Prof. Wilson. Apropos of Wordsworth, here is a little story of Charles Lamb's: "Wordsworth one day told me he considered Shakespeare greatly overrated. There is an immensity of trick in all Shakespeare wrote, and the people are taken by it. Now, if I had a mind I could write exactly like Shakespeare. So you see, said Lamb, it was only the *mind* that was wanting."

Johnson despised the taste and knowledge of the Athenians. He said Demosthenes spoke to a people of brutes. Macaulay says of Athens: "When the sceptre shall have passed away from England, her influence and her glory will still survive, fresh in eternal youth, exempt from mutability and decay, immortal as the intellectual principle from which they derived their origin, and over which they exercise their control." Samuel Johnson was the greatest of gentlemen to Carlyle, and to Macaulay, the prince of gawks. The one saw in his nature the tenderness and inborn dignity of the true man; the other, while he acknowledged his ability, ridiculed his clownish behaviour. Carlyle depreciates Tennyson, whom the world acknowledges great,