

THE ACADIA ATHENÆUM.

VOL. 3.

WOLFVILLE, N. S., JUNE, 1877.

No 8.

At Home To-night.

I.

The lessons are done and the prizes won,
And the counted weeks are past;
O! the holiday joys of the boys and girls
Who are "at home to-night" at last!
O! the ringing beat of the springing feet,
As into the hall they rush!
O! the tender bliss of the first home kiss,
With its moment of fervent hush!
So much to tell and to hear as well,
As they gather around the glow!
Who would not part, for the joy of heart.
That only the parted can know
At home to-night!

II.

But all have not met, there are travellers yet
Speeding along through the dark,
By tunnel and bridge, past rim and ridge,
To the distant, yet nearing mark.
But hearts are warm, for the winters storm
Has never a chill of love:
And faces are bright in the flickering light
Of the small dim lamp above.
And voices of gladness rise over the madness
Of the whirl and the rush and the roar,
For rapid and strong it bears them along
To a home and an open door—
Yes, home to-night!

III.

O! home to-night, yes, home to-night,
Through the pearly gate and the open door!
Some happy feet on the golden street
Are entering now "to go out no more."
For the work is done and the rest begun,
And the training time is for ever past,
And the home of rest in the mansions blest
Is safely, joyously reached at last.
O! the love and light in that home to-night!
O! the songs of bliss and the harps of gold!
O! the glory shed on the new-crowned head?
O! the telling of love that can ne'er be told.
O! the welcome that waits at the shining gates,
For those who are following far, yet near,
When all shall meet at His glorious feet
In the light and the love of his home so dear!
Yes, "home to-night."

The Moral Teachings of "Shakespeare's Tragedy of King Richard the Second."

THE character of every man is a beam of seven-colored light photographed in distinctive and imperishable features upon the plane of an universal life. According as the brighter or darker elements predominate in any character is the life of the individual made a success or a failure. The successes or failures of individuals cast the die of nations. The truth of these statements has, to some considerable extent, been demonstrated in real life; for, now and again, in the study of history, we meet with persons who have foreshadowed the grander prosperity or the overthrow of kingdoms and nations from a thorough and widespread knowledge of the elements which entered into the composition of those particular powers. From this source alone, and we say it reverently, if no other were at his command, could he who perfectly knows the hearts of all men read the eternal future as clearly as the eternal past.

He, therefore, who discovers to any nation, or class of individuals, evil in its primary and simplest forms, and who most clearly and acceptably points out the issues, thereby helping men in the most agreeable manner into the way of escape, confers the greatest good. Shakespeare, in his tragedy to King Richard II., appears to have had such an aim in view. Before the mind of this great and imaginative poet rested a dark scene in English history, and as he possessed both a loyal and benevolent disposition, he was led immediately to conceive and aim for the good of his country. The masses would not read, many of them could not, but they would listen and learn, too, when Shakespeare and the stage should become the medium of instruction. The step was taken, and as a result this, with the other historic dramas which quickly followed, "produced a very deep effect on the minds of the English people," and "were familiar even to the least informed of all ranks." "The spirit of patriotic reminiscence," says Coleridge, "is the all-permeating soul of this noble work." I have already shown that when we know the elements of any society or people, we may see, as from a mirror, the reflection of coming events. This is exemplified in the play before us. Look for a moment at the principal characters and scenes of this tragedy.

Norfolk, in his hidden purpose, who takes up the gauntlet of the brave, far-seeing, and insinuating