

Correspondence.

(For the Acadia Athenæum.)

DEAR EDITORS,—

I hope you will not conclude from my long silence that I have forgotten you. So far from this, not a day passes, on which in fancy I do not visit Acadia. Had the time at my disposal for writing been equal to my disposition and to the abundant subject-matter on hand, I should frequently have trespassed on your space. But without any contributions from my pen you have succeeded admirably in filling and enriching the columns of the *Athenæum*, and I beg to congratulate you on its improved character and appearance.

Ere you receive this the anniversary exercises will be over and the college halls again for a time deserted. Those who have worked hard—which is true I believe of Acadia students generally—will appreciate the rest which vacation brings. But rest comes not to all, at least at the same time. In the German university the present Semester lasts till the middle of August. The student may indeed enjoy the glories of the bursting spring; he may—in Leipzig—regale his eyes with the beauties of Rosenthal, and his ears with the songs of its nightingales, but none of these things must be allowed to allure him from his books. True, a breathing spell of five weeks or so is given him from the middle of April on. In my own case I added a week to each end of this, and availed myself of the opportunity it afforded of visiting Italy, going thither by way of Nuremberg, Munich, Innsbruck, and the Brenner Pass, and leaving it from Venice across the Adriatic to Trieste, and thence through Vienna and Prague to Leipzig. I spent 18 days in Rome. And such days! so full of delicious—I had almost said—delirious pleasure—well! in few life-times do they come more than once. I cannot of course speak particularly in a single letter of what could not be fully described in a hundred. To mention only the churches and palaces of Rome, of which of the former there are 365 and of the latter over 100, how many and peculiar are their attractions. Then there are the museums and galleries of painting and sculpture, the walls and gates and bridges, the forums and temples and amphitheatres, the arches and columns and obelisks, the baths and aqueducts and fountains, the piazzas and promenades and villas, the mausoleums and catacombs and historical houses, and last but not least the charming environs, such as *Tivoli* whose scenery inspired some of the most beautiful lyrics of Horace, and 10 miles more distant, *Horace's Sabine farm*, and *Tusculum* the birth-place of Cato and the scene of Cicero's Tusculan disputations, and *Alba Longa* made familiar by the poetry of Virgil, and *Ostia*, and the *Via Appia* &c., so that Rome and its surroundings are not only full of interest but almost inexhaustibly so. And the same is largely true of Venice, Florence, and Naples, all which with Verona, Milan, Turin, Genoa, and Pisa I had the pleasure of visiting.

The attendance at the University this Semester is possibly greater than it was last, and last Semester it was about 3100. The majority of these may be seen in a body in the University Court on any day during the 15-minute intervals between the different lecture hours. And swarming like a hive or standing in

groups distinguished from each other by the different colored caps worn, showing to what Verein or Gesellschaft each group belongs, the sight is quite an interesting one to look upon.

Taking them altogether these students are a gentlemanly lot of fellows. They follow some practices indeed which would hardly consist with the code of American Colleges; which at least I hope will never prevail at Acadia,—I refer to smoking, beer drinking, and duelling. The last is against the laws of the University, but the laws are evaded, and pretty often too, judging from the number who go about with gashed faces. But in the matter of order and propriety in the lecture room and respect for the lecturer, the conduct of the German student is unexceptionable. After the Professor has taken his stand before his class, the class take the question of the preservation of order into their own hands, and permit nothing in the shape of noise or interruption. The poor fellow who is behind time and ventures to enter the room after the lecture has commenced will probably, so to speak, be *scraped* out of his shoes. *Scraping* with the feet upon the floor is the way in which a class expresses its indignation, and the indignation of three or four hundred scraping all at once is about enough for one mortal to bear. The same thing is done also, only with respectful intent, when the lecturer speaks too fast or too indistinctly, and the class find themselves unable consequently to take down his words or catch his meaning. Then *scraping* is heard heard and there over the room; the Professor takes the hint and goes over the sentence again. Not a single lecture is given in which more or less of this does not occur. This morning, for instance, as Dr. Kahnis was lecturing on the connection of Religion and Philosophy, he gave a quotation from the Greek of Aristotle which was not understood. *Scraping* was the result. He went over it again, but still the class could not catch the words; hence more *scraping*. Then the Doctor took up the chalk and put the quotation on the black board, and turning to the class with his broad face full of humor said:—"nun verstehen?" The class replied with a tremendous cheer.

The Germans have the reputation of being good students and good scholars, but I am convinced it is not so much from superior intellectual sharpness and vigor as from dogged persistence in the particular line of inquiry that has been chosen. As original investigators they are probably behind the English and Americans. On equal terms the American student will be found every way a match for the German. But the entire educational system of this country, and even the social and political condition of the people seem to favor that singleness of aim—that concentration of endeavor, which characterize the German student and ensure his success. In this old and over-populous country where, in every department of labor, there seem to be two or three persons to do the work of one, where the condition of things appears to be settled and finished, there are far fewer diversions from single lines of study than the student meets with in America. Here, with all the paths to distinction thronged with aspirants, success is impossible to him who spreads his energies over too large a field. It is only by the severest application of the principle of division of labor and by the selection of a single line of pursuit, that ultimate distinction can