

infant on its mother's bosom, upon His words, for they are the words of God who cannot lie.

As I hear His voice the restless surging or my soul's doubt sinks to rest as did the waves on the sea of Galilee, at His peace be still. With His assuring word in my ear, my soul shall go forth without one tremor to face all that dying may reveal. As my closing wish—one than which I know no better—so may you all."

The lecture was well received by a large and appreciative audience, many of whom were greatly impressed by the closing remarks.

[CORRESPONDENCE.]

MARKING AND RANKING.

MESSRS. EDITORS.—As a student of Acadia and a lover of education, permit me to make a few observations on a subject that has long been agitating the college world—"the marking system." This apparently necessary evil has been thoroughly discussed in many of our college circles. Indeed, the cry against the "tyranny of marks" has sometimes been mingled with the wail of despair; and the question is still an open one—"who will devise a scheme by which the marking curse can be abolished, or, if it must continue as a necessary evil, evolve a system by which the evil will be reduced to a minimum?" In the name of resistless progress, this problem must be solved. Already there are marked indications of a much needed reform. The fondly cherished custom of conferring medals, honors, etc., on the student whose brain has been able to hold the largest collection of facts, is becoming obsolete in many of our larger colleges. "No longer is he regarded as the best scholar who has succeeded best in cramming for an examination, or who has answered most correctly the questions upon the text-books, without regard to the degree in which he has assimilated his intellectual pabulum, or turned his knowledge into faculty."

The awarding of prizes for excellence in college work, as contingent upon marks, is notably damaging in its effects. It exhibits student life as a great contest, where, amid vicious rivalry and strife, one becomes victor to the shame of the other's defeat. The love of excellence for its own sake is ignored, and a spirit of emulation is called forth, which too often degenerates into envy, malice and hate. Thus allured by the glittering medal, the unhappy victim becomes oblivious to the feelings and interests of others, and rushes precipitately to his fate,—a martyr to the marking system.

The custom of distributing prizes at Acadia has been abandoned. No longer does the coveted prize throw its baneful influence over these college halls. In this Acadia has taken a step in advance of many similar institutions. Yet, so long as "the laws of

the Medes and Persians" are supreme, and high marks are considered the *ne plus ultra* of all intellectual greatness, Acadia's students can boast but little of comparative freedom. On the contrary, it is confidently asserted that "the importance of a high relative position in class work at Acadia college is magnified to an extent unparalleled in any of our colleges or universities."

Acadia's attitude toward this much vexed question may be represented by a few brief statements, as follows:

1. The daily recitations are graded on a scale ranging from zero to ten, according to value.

2. The terminal examinations papers are subjected to the same test.

3. The general average of grades between the daily recitations and terminal examinations, is made up at the close of each session.

4. The relative standing of the students is thus determined at the end of the college year, and their names are posted accordingly on the college bulletin board and published in all the leading papers in Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, and Prince Edward Island.

5. The members of the graduating class are required to march on anniversary day according to relative class standing, and to accept their degrees at the hand of the President in that order.

In all colleges some system of marking seems necessary. Indeed the universal prevalence of grades, is *prima facie* evidence that a fixed standard of grading is considered essential to college discipline. Without it many might pass through college without mastering the prescribed course of studies. The student should not object, therefore, to "the fatal pencil and paper," or refuse to be measured, so long as the measurement is confined to the class room. Nor does the marking system proper involve anything more than a record of the studies which the student has completed during his college year. Confined within these limits, the tyranny of marks is greatly lessened, if not reduced to a minimum. But to record the value of a recitation on this plan is one thing; to publish the comparative intellectual failures of a student is another. The former humiliates; the latter disgraces. The former may sometimes be expedient; the latter is never justifiable.

The "Pass List," published in the newspapers is a cold injustice; but the ranking of graduates on anniversary day is a heartless imposition. To compel the members of the graduating class, against their will, to march under the "yoke of bondage," is a species of oppression akin to despotism in the dark ages.

Like Banquo's ghost, the marking tyrant will not down. Regardless of health, it whispers at midnight, "grades, grades!" It incites the over-ambitious to dishonesty in the recitation and examination. It mutters on lying lips, "no time" for religious meetings, debating society and general reading. Alas, the "enemy of all righteous-