

# ACADIA ATHENÆUM.

TROS TYRIUSQUE MIHI NULLO DISCRIMINE AGETUR.

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## Original Poetry.

### AUTUMNAL MUSINGS.

There is a breath of sadness in the air,  
A nameless sorrow which the days impart,  
A voiceless thought that trembles on the ear,  
The soul of nature speaking to the heart.

Each breeze that stirs the changing forest hues,  
And whirls the falling leaves in fitful play,  
Doth boding murmur through the soul infuse,  
And breathe a hidden shadow on the way.

The very birds that gladdened wood and lane,  
And joyed in melody the livelong day,  
To melancholy tune their plaintive strain,  
Or voiceless, grieve the weary hours away.

Sighs soft the stream the drooping reeds among,  
While o'er its flow the faded grasses wave,  
The moaning forest joins th' Autumnal song,  
And chants a requiem over Summer's grave.

"Gone!" sobs the wind the shaded dales along,  
"Gone!" whispers low the scentless wayside bloom,  
And melancholy are the thoughts that throng  
My heart's sad chambers 'mid the evening gloom,

See! from the cloud the buried years once more,  
Slow to my sight their varied wealth unfold,  
The quiet fields my feet have wandered o'er,  
The wooded hill where died the sunset gold;

The evening walk beside the moonlit stream,  
The rustic bridge where love's first vow was paid,  
The lingering fancies of a fading dream,  
The quiet grave beneath the willow's shade.

Ah! weary heart, 'tis sad the ways to tread,  
Which in the sunny past my feet have pressed,  
Where withered hopes as leaves the pathway spread,  
And mouldering joys in rayless niches rest.

### INDEPENDENT THOUGHT.

"WE have many readers but few thinkers." Few who with regular trained habits of thought are bringing up to the admiring gaze of the world gems of their own creation and polish. The mind too often seems not "rich with unborrowed wealth," but fraught down by the burden of remembered love.

Instead of becoming an active, energetic, creative power, strong for the accomplishment of mighty ends and world-wide enterprises, it has been made but a mere depository of information, a cycle of attained facts. Not the deep-channelled stream ever urging onward with irrepressible flow, and washing up along its sides golden sand for every admirer: but shallow water conforming its course to every intervening object.

The realm of thought is vast, attractive, unexplored. Through this extensive domain many seem to wend their erring flight with bat-like blindness, ever thinking yet never comprehending. Others traverse it only as they can borrow the wings of another, or grasp with clinching firmness the ascending spirit of a matured intellect, and thus reach nobler heights. Perhaps no more fruitful source of mental weakness and vacillation could be mentioned than this imitation and passive compliance with the views of others. In this way the mind becomes an artificial channel for the conveyance of foreign thought from man to man. But there is no increase of power and vigor: no steady growth, no drawing in of other streams to swell its own current, no deepening of the strength and tone in its onward progress. There may be evinced by such a mind a beauty and pointing in figure, a clearness and vivacity of illustration, a copious and imposing magnificence of language, all of which serve to win the temporary attention and please the imaginative, but manifest little force of intellect in their authors and awaken less in their dreamy applauders. Such literature at best only nourishes a habit of thinking for pleasure, a false, delusive enjoyment, without producing finished ideas, structures well designed and completed.

Power of mind must have persistent, independent, original thought for its development and growth. This is its sustenance, its exercise, its moving principle. Only by this can the intellect be expanded to its full and natural proportions. Any other course develops mental monstrosities or leaves undeveloped dwarfs. Constant effort, intense application, strong will may be necessary, but they will bring

forth from the mental soil flowers of peerless beauty and fruits of richest worth. In this sense it is most emphatically true that "there are no men but those who have made themselves." No more can the shrewdest, strongest instructor impart intellectual force to a student who refuses to think for himself, than an expert physician muscular power to a patient persistently recumbent. Each *must* work himself. The results follow the universal law of nature and so are inevitable.

The advantages derived therefrom are innumerable. Dignity and tone are added to character: self-respect increased without conceit, power without arrogance. The deep impress on style will be unmistakable: fierce without bombast, beauty and elegance without gaudiness. Thus elevated to its Alpine heights, the mind views with wonder the light and darkness alternating; the clearness and confusion; the dawns and clouds in other minds in the valleys below. Thus with keener vision sophisms which rise with overwhelming proportions before the multitude, melt at its gaze as winter snow before the summer sun. Real satisfaction awaits those who dare to be truly great in the realm of mind. The "pleasures of thought" well up in the soul like an overflowing crystal fountain. They are not sounding and noisy, but silent and deep. The world may not perceive nor sympathize with them; but higher than sensual gratification in their nature, they depend not on the world for origin, and need it not for continuance. But the years of independent thought requisite for attaining this measure of strength meet many obstacles. The light and frivolous literature deluging the land, the aversion to that which is real, substantial, and the result of diligent laborious thought constitute opposing influences of great force. Do these not seem just criticisms on the age: "Men ask for that which they can easily digest." "Those who would become intellectually great must seize their opportunities of reflection and of study where and when they can find them; and be contented with the respect and veneration of a few familiar friends, and the reward of thought in their own bosom. The driving world will not pause to admire nor help them."

## THE FORCE OF CIRCUMSTANCES.

(Concluded.)

IN the sky of every life twinkles a guiding star of destiny, that marks the spirit's path,—a path over which passes, but one traveler, and whose dim crooked outline none can trace. How often have joyous eyes looked out from the golden portals of twenty smiling years wreathed with grateful memories, and garlanded with flowers. A strange, soft, fascinating light draped with trailing folds the mistiness of the future. Through the awakened outward ear, there fell upon the delicate inward ear of the soul the distant rumbling of the wheels of mammon. They hear the steady ceaseless tramp of fire-shod passion, and the clang of iron handed purpose, and the life current sweeps and surges through the heart with a wild impetuosity stirring up from their inmost depths the latent capabilities of desire, and binding them to the service of executive will. Thus inspired and thus equipped, they burn to enter the busy haunts of men, dreaming not of "the storm of fate blowing wild," reckless of the threatening waves of strange unforeseen circumstances that dash about their feet. A mother's agonizing prayers, a father's priceless benediction have been given, amid the cruel rending of fondly cherished ties, and other young lives are on the open sea. Deep in the bosom of many a cloud now tempering the glare of the sun, lurks the death-dealing tempest. Beneath that unruffled calmness sleeps the force of ten thousand, hundred handed giants. Like swords from their scabbards these potent though hidden foes may leap to smite and slay. The morn of life marshals about human souls elements quick to catch and retain the hue and form of the most swiftly passing circumstance. Like a thorn-brake the mind touches only to adhere. Susceptibility to all within the realm of our consciousness is a principle firmly embedded in the innermost depths of our nature. Like the vine the tendrils from our hearts go out for something round which to twine. The feelings, sympathies and love of the great God encircle and overreach the vastness of His domain, and we have the rich endowment of a like though limited capacity. How often has a trivial word burnt like molten lead. How often has a look smote with crushing power upon the interior inmost vital chord of sensibility. As with a moulding hand circumstances develop or repress these wondrous powers. They come with the speed and lightness of a sunbeam, and with the terrific might of a destroying angel. Now gently as the summer wave they lap the shores of human life, anon like giant billows they hurl themselves against the threshold of the heart. Now they murmur hope, and

sparkle with bright expectancy, anon they swallow up our splendid dreams, and a dead sea rolls its dark salt bitter flood when once a beauteous prospect opened to the eye of ambition. Circumstances seem the warm friends of some, and the relentless foes of others. They have cherished and sheltered many an opening bud, but have nipped many more. They guarded with jealous eyes the Lake-side school, and breathed gently upon its fame. They snuffed the candle by which Dante Chatterton and DeMusset wrote and snuffed it out. They have placed a cooling hand upon the hot brow, and have sent warm glances through the dreariness of the dark clouds of discouragement. They have stagnated the deep strong flow of many an energetic nature. They have beset with deadly power the cherished purpose, and have cruelly thundered upon the weary steps of many who slowly and mournfully but manfully struggled on toward the lofty light crowned summits of intellectual superiority. Tremendous is the force of circumstances to draw out to strengthen and enlarge every latent capacity of our being, and terrible the same force to cramp, to cripple, and to kill. But an iron will has often proved mightier still. The stern power that lies behind a courageous heart has driven many a man against the swift tide of circumstances. Just as steam forces the ship through the very teeth of the tempest. So steady will power often drives men safely through the treacherous stormy sea of hostile circumstances.

## AUTUMN.

AUTUMN is again upon us. The withering leaves and blighted meadows show that Summer has passed and gone. Decay and death seem to be everywhere at work, and the rich luxuriance of Spring fostered by the gentle rays of the sun, just returning from his Southern tour, has faded away. Yet Autumn is a beautiful season. All vegetable nature though fading away is still grand in its ruins. As we gaze out from our window upon the North Mountain raising its sylvan crested brow from behind the Cornwallis Valley, the view that thus meets our eye is beautiful beyond description. The blending together of colors in the variegated foliage which clothes the mountain, from classic Bloomidon as far to the Westward as the eye can reach, greets us with the true sensation of beauty.

The leaf whilst fading away and dying seems to array itself in its most gorgeous habiliments—eve, it drops to the earth to be resolved again to its native elements. Thus we think it should teach man a twofold lesson—that he is mortal, and that when his time comes to fade and expire he should be found enrobed in the sacred garb of salvation.

Poets have sung and rhapsodists have dilated upon the praise of Spring, in its removing the pale fleecy mantle of Winter from off the fields, and covering them with a rich carpet of verdure; and the theme is not yet exhausted. But whilst this is so, much might be and has been said in the praise of Autumn. 'Tis true at this season of the year everything wears somewhat of a sombre aspect, but what of that. The thoughts which decaying nature impress on the mind are far different from those which rise up within us as we behold the wintry waste transformed into the charming verdancy of Spring; and yet who will say that they are less important? We think they are not, but that they perform an important part in the discipline of life. The blithe, charming, joyous appearance of Spring teaches us that there is a time to be joyous—the downcast demure appearance of Autumn, on the other hand, teaches us that there is a time to be pensive.

"Then is the time,  
For those whom Wisdom and whom Nature charm,  
To steal themselves from the degenerate crowd,  
And soar above this little scene of things:  
To tread low-thoughted Vice beneath their feet;  
To soothe the throbbing passions into peace;  
And woo lone Quiet in her silent walk.  
Thus solitary, and in pensive guise,  
Oft let me wander o'er the russet mead,  
And through the sudden'd grove where scarce is heard  
One dying strain to cheer the woodman's toil."

But whilst Autumn is the season of withering and decay, it is also the season of maturity and plenty. The agriculturist, who in the time of Spring toiled through the long days, oftimes

"Brushed with hasty steps the dews away,  
To meet the sun upon the upland lawn,"

And laboring until at eve the retiring orb closes the eye of day, is now rewarded for his laborious though pleasing toil, as he gathers into his garner the golden products of the fields, or stores his cellar with the mellow fruits of his orchard—the gifts of industry. To him Autumn is by no means all sombre. The busy season is now past, the short nights are over, and have given place to long evenings during which he may, in the enjoyment of domestic happiness, peruse the newspaper or his books, as he feels inclined, thus storing his mind with useful knowledge which will fit him to discharge the duties of a good citizen.

## THE VOICES.

THE world, both physical and mental, is full of voices calling upon man in many and varied tones. As he gazes into the blue heavens above, stretching far away into boundless space, filled with countless suns and their attendant systems, each pursuing its intricate course in silent grandeur there comes a convincing voice telling him of an all powerful God

Supreme in might and wisdom. And he hears nature, clothed in beauty and verdure, sending up an unceasing song of praise to a never failing Providence.

But there are other voices.

The young man just setting out in life, before whom is spread the boundless sea of an untried future—standing, as it were, on the outlook of that scene in which he will soon be an actor, hears many voices ringing through his soul all calling him to action. Life is spread before him in a beautiful and inviting panorama. This great gift with all its glorious possibilities is his. He feels that he has powers and faculties that can be developed to almost any extent. Thinking of the future there is stirred within him many emotions as he longs to go forth and cope with the forces around him. He sees before him innumerable paths of life, some trodden, others new and untried. And as he looks on this scene with a heart full of hope, and beating high with strong aims, there comes to him almost imperceptibly, voices, each in its own way, and with its own peculiar power appealing to his emotions, and inviting him to follow.

Some speak loud and commanding, others in soft winsome accents, full of persuasion, while the tones of others again are grave and serious, each presenting great inducements.

There comes the winning voice of pleasure, speaking of happiness, promising to satisfy every desire of his heart, and spreading before him in glowing colors a life full of enjoyment. The way she leads is very easy to tread, every barrier is taken down, and he has only to follow the promptings of his desires.

While this pleasing voice is heard in his heart telling him to give up all care, and to enjoy life, there comes another of a somewhat loftier nature pointing out to him the possibilities of attaining to an exalted position among men.

In tones urgent and strong rousing his ambition it invites him to high honors, and offers him the crown of fame. Through his excited mind there floats in dreamy thought a magnificent picture of his life, and a thousand fancies of future greatness flit before him in fascinating forms called into existence by the magic wand of imagination.

The voice of fame shows a path rugged indeed and narrow, but leading to renown.

The voice of wealth in silver tones points out the way to solid joy, and holds forth golden hopes for the gratification of every wish.

Among the other voices is heard one eloquent and impressive, speaking with words of power. This is the voice of duty. She shows that while all the joys promised by the other voices will disap-

point the seeker, or be swept away, the satisfaction found by listening to her words will remain forever, like the old gray crag whose head is lifted high among the storm clouds and around whose base the rushing tide of the restless sea ever chafes and foams.

She incites him by the noble examples of the past, and by the degradation of man to a life of disinterested labor. And mingled with this voice comes that of revealed religion, showing him for what great ends he was created, and pointing him through faith to a future home in a land of endless happiness.

Thus we are surrounded, thus we are influenced, and our characters moulded by the silent voices in the soul.

### PERSPICUITY.

LANGUAGE, as the incarnation of thought, becomes the most potent medium of influence within the broad realm of mind. Adorned with the grace of style and manner, or accompanied by the resistless logic of natural and impassioned action, it proves itself mighty to take by storm man's complex nature at the point assailed, and the idea, evolved from the inner depths of an individual consciousness, burns its way deep into the profoundest convictions of others. In connection with all those subjects of prime importance which must ever prove of interest, inasmuch as they are founded upon the essential principles of human nature, and stand in vital relation to man's highest welfare and happiness, in connection with all such, there have sprung from the fruitful soil of universal common-sense, a class of ideas long since become venerable as generally recognized truisms. The title of this article embodies such an idea in relation to the grandly important subject of the practical employment of human thought through the medium of speech. It must be evident to all that there is no essential which should be more carefully regarded by those ambitious to excel as writers or speakers, or one whose necessity is more frequently illustrated in the failure to realize it than this, that perspicuity is the crowning excellence in either method of employing language. All the graces of style and manner may abound, but if the composition be wanting in this particular, so far as any practical results will follow, it might as well be a gaudily decorated corpse. To the real worker, the man of set purpose and conscientious resolve, who has recognized the importance of employing to the utmost extent this grand channel of influence, this element will at once commend itself as the prime essential. He will perceive the necessity of having strong conviction and clear insight in relation to

any subject to which he would turn the attention of others, hence the kindred necessity of so moulding and fashioning language to his purpose as to most readily move and convince those to whose sympathy or reason he appeals. Ornament follows as an after consideration, and care is taken that this shall never be used in such a way as to conceal or impair the sense. A tendency to the converse is observable in many writers, especially youthful essayists. The meretricious glitter of a gaudy style, the harmony of neatly turned aggregates of words, the pompous tread of stately periods; these dazzle and charm and are eagerly sought for, and so it comes to pass, that from the scanty stock, crude unformed ideas are pushed forward like beggars in the cast off robes of royalty. The cultivated mind will ever turn from the author whose meaning lies hid beneath mountains of barren words, to slake the mental thirst at the calm stream of another's thought as it flows on in icy clearness. Much evil has no doubt arisen from the indolent neglect of perspicuity. The truth intended may, through imperfection in this respect, be so cognized in the mind of reader or hearer as to become one of those *half-truths*, which are the most fatal of *un-truths*. Thus a pernicious germ may be implanted in some mind and a hurtful bias given to a developing intellect—the twist in the tender shoot which displays itself a painful deformity in the full grown tree. Doubtless many of those prejudices so deeply rooted in some natures, dwarfing and distorting in their tendencies, and hindering to a great extent sound mental growth, may have arisen through this primal imperfection in the guides of youthful thought. In matters of greater or less importance these evils are being frequently illustrated. Considered in this light, how pre-eminently essential does this quality of good composition become. Here, then, is the first point to be aimed at, the lustre that adorns should be mainly that of the keen steel which has become polished in the process of sharpening, or the peerless glow of the diamond as it comes a finished gem from the patient hands of the lapidary.

He is a good artist who can draw a breath with his eyes shut.

THERE was an eclipse of the sun a short time ago. We knew there would be, or something similar, for only the morning before a certain somnolent senior was observed to be on hand when the hash-gong sounded.

The nights, for some time past, have been moonlight, much to the chagrin of our pomological class, who fear that all the fruit will be gathered ere the moon wanes again.

# Acadia Athenæum.

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## CONTENTS :

Autumnal Musings.....	9
Independant thought.....	9
The force of circumstances (continued).....	10
Autumn.....	10
The voices.....	10
Perspicuity.....	11
Queen Mary.....	12
Prof. Sumichrast's lecture.....	13
Our Reading Room.....	13
Greatness in Littleness.....	13
Conversation.....	14
Character.....	14
Personals.....	14
Locals—Acknowledgments.....	15

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## "QUEEN MARY."

TENNYSON the poet has won a new name. Tennyson is now a dramatist, *in embryo* indeed, but still a dramatist. How it will sound in future years:—"Tennyson the great poet and dramatist of the Nineteenth Century!"

This is all very fine, but in our opinion the glory of the "Idyll" is one, and the glory of the "Tragedy" another, and that must be a star of transcendent brightness in the literary sky, which unites the brightness of the twain. It is fair to infer that Shakespeare did not, that Milton did not, because neither attempted both departments of writing. Whether posterity will say that Tennyson did possess this rare combination of diverse genius, or no, half a century more or less, subsequent to this will decide. At present the English critics are ecstatic. Their verdict is, "The greatest drama since Shakespeare." Alas then for the merit of the drama since that time. It is our candid opinion that there is not more than two or three passages that would be encored by the theatrical auditors of the last four centuries. Such a production would afford small room for the expansion of the genius of a Garrick or Macready. But there are merits. We may say that the character of Queen Mary is most carefully and truly drawn. If we do not see in her portrait any of that intensity of passion; that depth of emotion; that wondrous eloquence of the inner life, it is

owing to the fact that truth to the original made it an utter impossibility. We see a woman possessed of three passions: love, hate and jealousy. A narrow minded bigot, her one idea is the establishment of the Papacy in its former vigour. To this end everything else is made subservient, even her violent passion for Philip as bigoted and narrow minded as herself. More for this than for maternal tenderness, she feverishly desires offspring, who shall carry forward her cherished designs and trample Protestantism under foot. Thinking, by some mistake, that this longing is about to be satisfied, she thus bursts forth in her stern enthusiasm something after the "Balfour of Burley" style:—

He hath awaked, he hath awaked,  
He stirs within the darkness!  
The second prince of peace,  
The great unborn defender of the faith,  
Who will avenge me of mine enemies.  
He comes and my star rises,  
The Ghosts of Luther and Zuinglius fade  
Into the deathless hell which is their doom,  
Before my star.  
His sceptre shall go forth from Ind to Ind,  
His sword shall hew the heretic peoples down,  
His faith shall clothe the world that shall be his,  
Like universal sunshine! Open  
Ye everlasting gates! The king is here,  
My star, my son!

In this we still see the hope of her life, the goal for which she aimed. Protestantism was the object of her hate; Philip of her love; religion of her superstition, and Elizabeth of her jealousy. The first she could not conquer, though she ruthlessly trampled humanity under her feet in the endeavor; the second she knew to be false; the last she dare not destroy. And so the poor Queen, sour minded, having drunk the cup of bitterness to the dregs, fell sick with shame, grief and despair. Her love for Philip, and her grief, so touching in its wild and utter abandonment is the highest, we had almost said the only mark of her womanhood. Philip gone, Calais gone, with a people's hate, she wails:—

"Clarence Clarence! what have I done?  
Beyond all grace, all pardon?  
Thou knowest never woman meant so well,  
And fared so ill in this disastrous world,  
My people hate me and desire my death."

And now the faded leaves of her life all sere and yellow, rustle in the autumn blast before her darkening vision. Her mind trembles on the verge of madness; she weeps upon her lute:—

Love will hover round the flowers when they first  
awaken;  
Love will fly the fallen leaf and not be overtaken;  
Low my lute, Oh, low my lute, we fade and are  
forsaken,  
Low dear lute low!

In her delirium we see the sincerity of that ruling passion. Poor deluded bigot, she really thinks her mission is divine. She had fiercely kindled the martyr fires in life, and now in death she raves:—

Oh God I have been too slack, too slack.

Let this tribute be paid to her memory. No doubt of God's approval seems to have entered her mind. If she piled hecatombs to the manes of the Papacy, she thought that the incense of heaven hallowed the sacrifice.

Although there are many beauties throughout this tragedy, for we suppose it comes most appropriately under that name, yet from what we were led to expect by the noise of transatlantic critics, and the reputation of the author, the result has not been quite satisfactory. If we are wrong, we claim Mary's virtue, sincerity. We love Tennyson. Not because he is an Englishman, nor because the laureate wreath has fallen on his brow; but because he has ennobled and reflected a lustre on both by his fine genius. It is not prejudice then, and if it is ignorance we willingly submit to rebuke.

One cause of this barrenness and frigidity is, that the characters he chose for "dramatis personæ," were cold, unfeeling, and calculating. It seems to us that he selected an unhappy subject. The passionless, relentless bigotry of the times was not congenial air for the flights of high dramatic genius. A pigeon-souled Bonner, or a shifting, time serving Cranmer do not strike the mind as effective characters in a drama if truth he sought. Tennyson has very well succeeded in the portraiture of the superficial life of that period, but he has not laid bare the palpitating arteries and the quivering heart. The province of the dramatist is that most difficult one of throwing on his canvass the emotions and passions of the soul. To embody those vague intangible existences found in the depths of the heart, and to place in the physical world the incarnated wonders of the unseen sphere of mind. A great dramatist takes a great theme, as a great painter will copy a great original. Landseer painted dogs, but Angelo and Raphael took Christ and the Deluge for their great originals. So the true dramatist does not stop at small things; nay, he even enters into an ideal realm, and traces the outlines of a vaster conception than is met in the common walks of life; a conception in whose grandeur and power we see all the forces of the soul in their infinite intensity. In this high success Tennyson has, it seems to us, failed. He aimed too low. But now we will close these remarks with a passage which is most like some of those old Shakespearean ones which used to thrill us so. It is one of the best in the whole work. Princess Elizabeth in confinement, with her life in danger exclaims:

Those damp, black, dead nights,  
Nights in the tower! dead—with the fear of  
death—  
Two dead, even for a death-watch! Toll of a bell,  
Stroke of a clock, the scurrying of a rat  
Affrighted me and then delighted me,  
For there was life and there was life in death,  
The little murdered princes in pale light,  
Rose hand in hand, and whispered "come away."

### PROF. SUMICHRAST'S LECTURE.

OUR readers will remember that, in our last issue, we intimated our intention of reviving the old idea of a monthly course of lectures, before the Athenæum, or Students Debating Society, which of late years had fallen somewhat into disuse. It affords us pleasure now to be able to state that the course for the current year was opened in a highly satisfactory manner by Prof. Sumichrast, on Friday evening, October 15th.

The Lecturer chose for his subject, "Hungarian life and character," a theme, which from his being a native of Germany, and having travelled in Hungary, hence, being an eye-witness of the scenes he described, he was adapted to treat in a masterly manner. Our readers who were in attendance at the institution three years ago, will remember having enjoyed a rich treat in hearing Prof. Sumachrast lecture before the Athenæum at that time. We might add, that had they been present on this occasion, their enjoyment and profit would have been commensurate with, if not superior, to their enjoyment of the former lecture.

The lecturer introduced his subject by giving us some account of the geography of the country; and then entering more particularly upon the topic of the evening, he dealt first with the general characteristics of the people, showing, that although they evinced great subtlety in evading the law, in their unfortunate propensity to appropriate the property of their neighbours, yet they were an industrious, frugal, and, in many respects, a highly moral people.

To proceed with the subject in a systematic manner, the lecturer took up in succession, the three different grades of society—the lower, middle and upper classes; commencing with the lower. In imagination he introduced us to the cottage of the peasant, and held out to our gaze the scanty, yet in many instances, strange contents of that humble abode. His very graphic description of the peasant's stress was entirely amusing, and called forth frequent outbursts of laughter. It was, however, when he came to describe the grotesque manner in which the Hungarian rustic wools and wins his fair one, that the greatest hilarity was displayed by the audience.

The delineations of character and costumes of the middle and upper classes, were equally interesting and amusing. The lecture was intermingled throughout with anecdotes and ludicrous descriptions of Continental dress and habits of life, which kept it from being wearisome, although an hour and forty-five minutes long. Prof. Sumichrast's powers of description are of no ordinary kind, as we think all present will freely admit, and

we also think it will be some time before the picture which he painted upon our minds, in describing Hungarian life and character, will have faded away.

### OUR READING ROOM.

No student can afford to neglect this important branch of his education, even if he were so disposed. The rare inducements presented by our Reading Room are such that every member of the institution will find the possibility of excuse from insufficient attractions forever precluded. A student, we know, has little time at his disposal; yet general reading on the news of the day, and the questions of the age constitutes an important element in every man's training. It is absolutely necessary that he be thoroughly informed of these, that he may be able to bend the new force he is daily developing towards its legitimate practical ends. Such knowledge should not be regarded as secondary, but as a requisite for the pursuit of the more classical and mathematical departments. Instances are too frequently found of learned ignorance, wherein a man seems to have been acquiring facts and theorizing without any definite idea of their future utility. Such could not be the unfortunate description of any one who avails himself of the choice opportunity supplied by the Reading Room. There may be found various papers and magazines from different sections of the Dominion and United States, in which will be met different views well presented on the leading topics of the age—literary, religious and political. We trust the measure of attention due this room will not be withheld to the detriment of the student and disappreciation of the Society which furnishes it.

### "GREATNESS IN LITTLENESS."

MAN holds a stand-point midway between infinite greatness and infinite littleness. He cannot ascend nor descend to any considerable degree without crossing the line of demarcation, which shows where man ends and God begins. And that kind of human power which descends deepest into infinite littleness, is by far greater than that which ascends into infinite greatness. Look at a massive ice-crowned imperial mountain; it is a magnificent work of nature. Yet what is it? It is only a collection of materials with which we are all familiar. It is only a larger mountain than the hillock which lies at its base. A few of these hills would make one of those huge mountains with its Alpine glaciers, its thunder-bolts of snow and its eternity of frost. Such vastness, although it makes deep impres-

sions upon us, is not beyond our comprehension. So the mighty ocean, with its mountain-like billows is only an expanse of water larger than the river which lazily meanders through the pleasant meadows. It is great, but it is only an aggregation of diamond drops which our eyes can measure, and our minds comprehend. These are considered great objects, and so they are, but only so because they are large. They are above us, and they lead us less toward creative infinity.

If we turn our eyes in the other direction we lose ourselves quite as readily. If we pick up a pebble and undertake the examination of its structure, the different elements which compose it, the relation of those elements to each other; the mode of combination—we are lost as quickly as though we undertook to track the footprints of the stars. We can dissect from each other the muscle, veins, arteries, and nerves of a human body; but the little gnat which taps a vein upon our hand does it with an instrument, and by the power of machinery, which are entirely beyond our scrutiny. They are the servants of an instinct of which we are entirely ignorant. We may look through a drop of water, and may at first be arrested by the sports and struggles of animalcular life, but at length we find ourselves gazing beyond into infinitude, using it as a lens through which the Godhead becomes visible to us.

If we look up into the firmament and send our imaginations into its deep abysses and think that, even further than dreams can go, those abysses are strewn with stars. If we think of comets coming and going with lightning rush, yet occupying centuries in their journey, or if we only sit down by the sea and think of the waves that kiss other shores thousands of miles away, we are pressed by a sense of our own littleness, and ask the question whether God who has such large things in His care can think of us—speaks on an infinite collection of surface—motes uneasily, shifting in the boundless space? We get no hope in this direction; but we look down and find that the shoulders of all inferior creation are under us lifting us up into the very presence of God. It is then we obtain comfort and happiness. We find that God has been at work below us in a mass of minute and munificent detail by the side of which our lives are great, simple, and satisfyingly significant.

Let us note one more phase of this subject. A large number—the greater part in truth—of the human race are engaged in doing small work, and it may be gratifying to them to know that the Almighty Maker has done a great deal of the same kind of work, and has not found it unprofitable employment. And that it is

just as hard to do a small thing well as a large one, the difficulty of the deed is the gauge of the power that is required for its doing. It was a very forcible remark, to which a visitor at Niagara Falls gave utterance, when he said that considering the relative power of its authors, he did not consider the cataract as remarkable a piece of work as the Suspension Bridge. And it may be truly said that there is no work within the power of man that God has not been below it in a work smaller, and possibly humbler still. A man may think it beneath his dignity to till the soil, yet his Maker breathes upon that soil and works in it, that it may produce food to keep human dignity from starving. Alas! human dignity! I do not know what to make of you.

### CONVERSATION.

It is a pleasant recreation for the student harassed with knotty Greek roots, abstruse mathematical problems, or subtle metaphysical distinctions, to engage in an animated, jovial chat. The topic may be general, local or reflective. Objective subjects, as a rule, are preferable for such exercise. It enlivens the spirits, awakens new trains of thought, develops the social element in his nature. If no suitable companion can be found at leisure, with whom to break the monotony of his life for an hour or so, to relax the strain on his intellectual nerves without lessening their power, an equally exhilarating effect will be realized in casting a glance backward to watch the social movements and idiosyncrasies of distinguished men. Perchance of the authors he studies. True the shady past veils our vision from surveying the exact expression of countenance, the merry twinkling of the eye, the peculiar demeanour of each. We hear not the harsh, grating voice of one, nor the dulcet, silvery tones of another. Yet we can perceive much of their real, inner life in their mingling with the world as private individuals. By looking at them in this way we remove their stilts. Men who wrote dry, hard text-books; who saw things clearly that we cannot understand, and sometimes wish they never had, are thereby revealed to be the merriest, most entertaining souls of the age. Not unfrequently the facts of biography destroy our fancied hero or clown. Virgil, the very embodiment of poetical spirit and expression, we are told was heavy in conversation. Dante we unexpectedly find satirical, and Milton irritable, displeased if urged to colloquial intercourse. Gray, like the rose that "was born to blush unseen," except on rare occasions was born to smile unseen and talk unheard. Swift with his sharp wit and keen withering sarcasm, was noted for his absentminded-

ness in company. "Goldsmith wrote like an angel, and talked like poor Poll."

Men of eloquence seem to have attained a higher place in the realm of colloquial discourse. Fox was inexhaustible in his variety and vivacity. Burke was ever found pleasant and enthusiastic. Curran is described as a convivial deity, soaring into every region, free and easy in all.

Experience evidently teaches that conversational ability rarely runs parallel with a man's depth and power of thought. It is a peculiar endowment of nature to talk well with a few or a single person, as much as to sway with fervid eloquence the immense multitude. An endowment pre-eminent in demanding, and very susceptible to growth and development by constant exercise. It opens a broad sphere of labour and influence; discovers a pathway to the real motives and life of a man when nothing else will. The orator overwhelms, excites, commands; the poet attracts, pleases, guides; the conversationalist appeals to the individuality of each, and by his adaptability yields more exclusive control where he enters. The former two address themselves more to the general, the common passions and reasons of mankind; the latter to the particular, the personal characteristics of each. Poetry and eloquence resemble the rolling river, rapid, deep, exhaustless; conversation is the winding mountain stream that penetrates with unnoticed progress where the other could never flow.

### CHARACTER.

CHARACTER has been defined as "that which lies in or pertains to the person and is the mark of what he is." We are frequently led to a decision with respect to the character of any individual by noting the character of his associates; in fact, so universal has this idea become that it has passed into a common saying that a man is known by the company he keeps.

'Tis said that "poets are born, not made," and we willingly admit this; but we believe characters are made rather than born. If that is true which we sometimes hear, that a man can make himself what he wishes, surely then we can form our characters as we will, for in this case we deal with passions rather than with the force of circumstances.

Character is not so much the outgrowth of that which dwells within as that which is formed by training and its fostering influences surrounding us. We might mention a few of the causes which affect the formation of character: society, natural inclinations, and passions, the professions and trades pursued, and the localities in which one resides; these are a few of the many causes which might be referred to.

The characters of different persons are differently affected by the same scenes and circumstances. That which in the mind of one would create sensations of joy and pleasure, would in the case of another be attended with pity, scorn and contempt; in the mind of one is raised a desire for a repetition of the scene, another is led to the determination not to uphold such acts.

To possess a character firmly and correctly founded and formed, it is very necessary that we should be subjected to a course of judicious training from infancy, for after having arrived at manhood we all know how very difficult it is to change old habits and customs, and trains of thought and modes of action. We may thus see how all important it is to have our characters rightly formed in youth, so that when we arrive at the stature of men, we may the better be able to cope successfully with the cares, and troubles, and temptations of life. Let us, then, strive to dig deep and lay a sure foundation, so that neither sneers nor smiles, nor any other thing, will turn us from the right.

Show me a man whose character is firm and well laid on a sure and sound basis; let me see him fully impressed with the idea that that character must be upheld no matter in what position of life or in what position of society he may stand, and I will guarantee that he will be a man of influence, and that wherever he is, under whatever circumstances he may be placed, he will exert an influence that must be felt; and if he uses that influence on the side of right, as he surely will if he is a good and true man, he will be classed as one of nature's noblemen, a child of God and a worthy beneficent friend of the race.

### Personals.

A. J. STEVENS, A. B., '75, since our last issue has been ordained over the Baptist Church at Kentville. It is our wish that the success which has attended him in the past may be increased one-hundred fold and more.

MR. SYDNEY WELTON, of last year's Freshman Class, has also been ordained. We are rejoiced to learn that his labors are highly appreciated and greatly beloved, and that he is reaping an abundant harvest.

THE Rev. Donald McDonald, a former student of Acadia, recently paid us a flying visit, and preached to us with great acceptance in the Academy Hall, on Sunday, the 10th inst. We understand that he purposes leaving his present field of labour to take a Theological course at Newton.

MR. W. J. STEWART, of the present Sophomore Class, we regret to be informed is not to be present with us this year.

WHILST writing the above we have received a letter from Mr. A. J. Davison, a former class-mate of two of our present Editors. He was compelled to relinquish his studies on account of ill-health, since then he has passed the greater part of his time in the U. S., where he consulted the most eminent physicians, but without avail, he is now at his own residence in Portauipique, Colchester Co. We deeply sympathise with our very highly esteemed friend in his affliction, and hope that the progress of disease may yet be checked.

**Locals.**

WE would just say to our readers that owing to a change made in the Postal affairs, of which our Post Master had not received adequate instructions, our last issue was delayed in the Post Office one week. We hope that this has been remedied forever, and that the deed will not occur again.

ONE of our Editors has been afflicted with a severe cold. We trust he is convalescent, and that he has no serious intention of "shinning up the golden pole."

THE new Academy Building is finished at last, and is now ready for occupation.

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CLASS ROOM.—Prof. Mr. Y., What relation has the first step in your argument to the third.

Soph. (After repeated attempts,) why—why—it gives us a foundation to stand on.

Prof. Well put your foot upon it then and tread along.

Common pleas—Please shut the door.

**ACKNOWLEDGMENTS.**

WE have received the amounts of subscriptions from the following:—A. J. Davison, Rev. J. Chase, Prof. J. F. Tufts, A. M., I. M. Longley, A. B., G. E. Good, A. B., M. S. Hall, Miss G. E. Wiley, F. E. Good, J. L. Archibald, Miss S. Bancroft, John Dickieson, G. J. Creed, Esq.

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