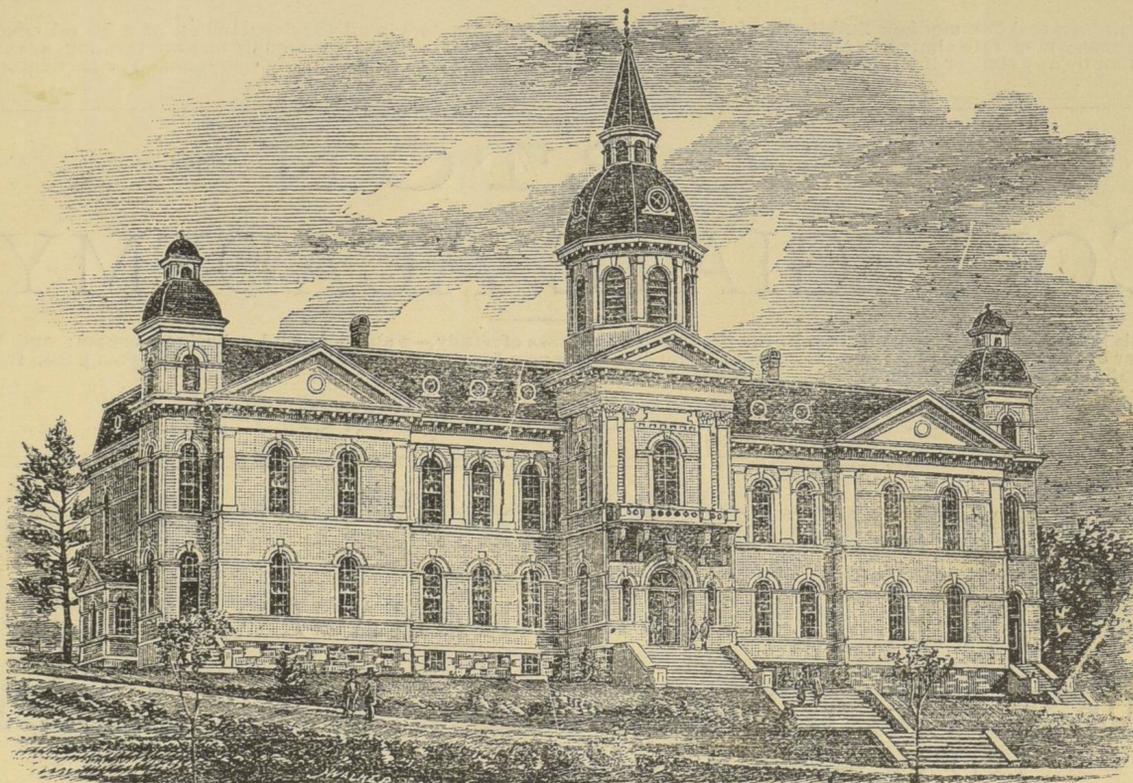


THE ACADIA ATHENÆUM.

VOL. X.

WOLFVILLE, N. S., MARCH, 1884.

No. 6.



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Students of Acadia University.

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THE *Dalhousie Gazette* hopes the attack upon the provincial treasury by the denominational colleges will be unsuccessful. Such expressions from a college which derives a part of its revenues from a legislative endowment, come with rather bad grace.

WHILE our literary society may be said to be fairly flourishing, it certainly comes far short of its possibilities. True, circumstances have been against us, but there should be a spirit among the students which, despite adverse conditions, would make greater success inevitable. The attendance is not so good as it should be, and the discussions fall below their possible merit. After a debate is fairly started there is plenty to speak, but in most cases there is evident lack of previous thought or preparation. Too frequently opens fail to appear or to provide substitutes, and hence

the debate loses for want of intelligent direction in the beginning. A little more effort on the part of each and all, would work a great improvement. We think that the society should reveal itself occasionally to the public, if for no other purpose, to justify its existence. Moreover, since we receive many kindnesses from friends on the hill and in the village, it would be fitting to reciprocate in some small way, by providing at times for their entertainment.

FOR several years Acadia has supported a missionary society. In general the monthly meetings are interesting, but we are of the opinion that they are not made as educative as they might be. They are of too general and miscellaneous a character—without definite aim or purpose. As we understand it, the missionary idea includes the desire and obligation to christianize all nations and peoples. It may be part of an abstract doctrine, but only as it takes hold of men in their heathen condition does it become a living power. There are but few who do not assent to the truths asserted. Then why deal so much with abstractions? But perhaps very few students have any clear insight into the great process of reclamation which is daily going on, or any due appreciation of the forces at work, or of the forms under which they act. Yet it is with and through these that they must work if they become factors in the great enterprise. We study missions as an idea rather than as an activity. The command is to all nations, yet we are seldom found seeking out the nations, to find where the gospel is needed, how it can be sent, and what transformations it will have to make. We often repeat that, the "proper study of mankind is man;"

yet the human voice which daily rises from broad acres and crowded cities of heathendom receives from us no response. Yet distance is no longer our excuse. Why not make our society, in part, a help to missionary study? Let it be known one month beforehand that some particular portion of the heathen world or the work of some missionary society, would be made the subject of study at the next meeting, and that this one topic was to be a matter of thought to all the members in the meantime. This would give point to the meetings and make them the means of valuable culture.

WEDNESDAY, the 27th ult., was observed as a day of special prayer for Acadia and affiliated institutions. Services were held in the afternoon and evening, in the Academy hall. All the members of the Faculty and a number of students and others were in attendance. As might be expected, the spiritual condition of the students came up for review, and the importance of their welfare in this regard argued and enforced. Rev. T. A. Higgins, who presided at the evening service, regretted that in late years there had been so much separation between the students and the village church, in work and worship, and expressed a desire for a return to former custom. Possibly this would be the proper thing, but we are not sure but that the tendency should be toward further separation rather than union. The time may come when the endowment of a chaplaincy would be as great a boon as a new professorship. Under the present conditions students are necessarily deprived of much of that pastoral care and direction which is invaluable.

THE *Gazette* in its last number suggests the institution of an inter-collegiate society, the object of which shall be to bring the students of the various colleges together for the discussion of matters concerning student life, and for the development of general good

will and interest in each other's welfare. We have not given the suggestion much thought but have no doubt that something of this nature might prove valuable. The society might partake, in part, of a literary or scientific character. The session might close with a public debate on some well chosen subject by picked men of the different colleges. This, we think, would have an excellent reflex influence upon our several literary societies.

The *Gazette* takes its cue from the teachers' associations which are now so generally established. These have often suggested to us something of a slightly different nature. We have wondered why the professors of our colleges never met in similar associations. The manner and matter of higher education are topics of tremendous importance and would afford abundance of subject matter for profitable discussion.

SOME changes in the New Brunswick school law have recently been made. After the present year the school terms will begin on the first of January and July, and the Normal School term will be divided into two terms, as formerly. The former change will have some advantages. It will be a more convenient division of the year from a fiscal point of view, and also to teachers moving to new districts. As each term's work will begin immediately after the holidays, there need be no loss of time.

The change in the Normal School, however, seems to us like retrograde legislation. Its effect will be to impair the teaching service by subtracting from the training of candidates for license, and by reducing the salaries of teachers through increased competition. Already the supply of teachers is equal to the demand; and yet, judging from the past, the increase in the manufacture, following this change, will be over 50 per cent. So far the government have left untouched that part of the law they were expected to modify. The inspector and grading systems, however fine

in theory, were, at the time of their adoption, strenuously opposed by many, as impracticable, and there is reason to believe that the conditions of their successful operation do not yet exist.

THE monthly lecture delivered by Doctor Sawyer, before the students of the three departments, on Sunday, March 2nd, was more than usually interesting. It was, besides, a slight departure from the ordinary course. Heretofore it has been customary to deliver addresses on various religious topics, chosen by the different speakers, sometimes with too little adaptation to the circumstances and the prevailing mental and spiritual needs of the students. But on this occasion the President selected the regular lesson from the International series, viz., Paul at Athens, and by his characteristic clearness of explanation, felicity of expression, and vividness of description, commanded the earnest attention of his listeners for more than an hour. He followed Paul on his missionary tour over the classic grounds trodden by the conquering hosts of Alexander, and by the expedition of Cyrus, immortalized by Xenophon. He described Athens as it was, with its magnificent temples and porticoes, its splendid statues, its Acropolis, the pride of Greece, on whose summit glittered the celebrated statue of Minerva—the guardian goddess of Athens, the Parthenon, dedicated to “all the gods” and the Propylæa constructed entirely of Pentelic marble. The scene, thus spread out before the apostle Paul, as he stood upon Mar’s Hill, was an imposing one, and yet, though not insensible to the beauty of art, and the unsurpassed splendor of the Grecian capital, he was not to be diverted from his purpose by the scenes around him. He came almost alone, a pioneer of Christianity, to plant the standard of the cross on one of the strongholds of heathenism in Europe. The undertaking seemed like a forlorn hope, but in the end it was crowned with success. He was about to address an audience, the most cultured and crit-

ical in the world, but he was equal to the occasion. His sermon is admitted to be a masterpiece in its adaptation to the religious characteristics and habits of thought of his hearers. He conciliates and then interests them. He delivers his message and goes his way, scoffed at by some, treated with deference by others, followed by a few.

IT might seem to some that public opinion in a small college community was a matter of little account. Such, however, is far from the fact. On the contrary, there is no way in which the positive influences, the whole genius of an institution, are more clearly revealed than in the prevailing conversation and sentiment of the students.

But while a pure healthy tone of life may be an effect, it becomes itself a great positive power. Hence the evil results of these disturbing, diverting causes which turn the mind from its normal course into dissipating channels. The tendency of these is to keep the student’s mind distracted, or in a state of ferment. It is needless to specialize as to what these causes are. They are peculiar to no one institution, but arise out of the general and particular circumstances of college life. In dealing with such irregularities it is, of course, wise to remove, if possible, the underlying cause; but, supposing some disorder to be inevitable, the aim should be to destroy the effect. This will be best secured by such action on the part of the students and faculty as will most quickly put the particular circumstance out of sight.

But public opinion in one place will be marked by a local coloring. Thus, in our own case, in which three institutions with separate residences are situated within a small town, we are apt to be shaken by every little local sensation, while we feel but faintly the throb of the great world pulse which quickens large centres. This, we say, is a tendency, but not a necessary or proper fact. The great world of thought and action is not far from us if

there is only a reaching out on our part and a conditioning of ourselves to receive its stimulus. From the great storehouse of thought accumulated and accumulating, from the inspiring fountains of modern life, we should draw our mental food and drink, and not dwarf ourselves with the husks of commonplace and the skim-milk of gossipy nonsense. Doubtless our college occupies one of the best possible positions, yet tendencies may arise out of the very nature of this situation, which it will be necessary to guard.

DEATH has been among us with a heavy hand. In the present Academic year three members of the Board of Governors and a member of Acadia's Senate have passed away. Of these, D. R. Eaton, Esq., was the first. He had been a Governor of the college sixteen years, and was highly esteemed as a man of integrity and ability. His enterprise and success in business were well known, and his counsel much valued by the denomination. Of Rev. Dr. DeBlois and his services for the college, we have recently spoken.

Now we have to record the death, at Digby on the 15th ult., of Rev. J. A. Durkee. Mr. Durkee graduated in 1873, and took his M. A. in 1877. He distinguished himself in college and at the time of his death was widely known as an able thinker and preacher. He had a mind of rare insight and power, and was successful in every field of labor to which he was called. His devotion to his work was great and, had he lived, no doubt his record would have been equal to the promise of his early years. He was a member of the Senate of Acadia, and his early death will cause sorrow to many whose esteem he had won.

On the 22nd ult., Avard Longley, Esq., died at his home in Paradise, N. S. His name is familiar in the provinces. As a member of the House of Assembly, and later of the House of Commons, he was known for many years as an able and consistent public man, who

gave earnest attention to every question and acted with decision and effect. He was twice called to preside over the Baptist Convention, and discharged the duties of his office with tact and ability. He was elected a Governor of Acadia in 1874, in place of the late Hon. Judge Johnstone, and held office till his death. But other journals will record at length the services of these gentlemen to various public interests. It is ours only to note with grateful remembrance their labors on behalf of education. Time, thought, money, they freely gave to the cause they loved. Other men will take their places, but these honored names will be kept in remembrance by the many who will enter into the fruit of their labor in years to come.

THE *University Monthly* in reply to an editorial in the last number of the ATHENÆUM, reiterates its opinions in respect to government appointments. It says:—

“Our interests must at all times be stronger in a natural born citizen than in one who has become such through naturalization, probably more for his personal interest than for the benefit of his adopted country. And that preference should be given the graduates of the University, we still maintain. The sooner such a conclusion is arrived at, the more quickly will students decide to patronize that institution which is in direct connection with those departments, over the government of which we think our men should be placed if they are capable of fulfilling the duties devolving upon them.”

The *must* in the above quotation may imply obligation or simply necessity, but in either case the inference seems to be that, in addition to fitness, personal interest, not right, not benefit of the country is to be taken as a basis of selection. Is this sound? We do not hold that men should be imported to fill positions, when there are capable men, not otherwise needed, at home; but when a man has been admitted to the privileges of citizenship, and has served his country as long and as well as his neighbor, we cannot see wherein his foreign birth can destroy the equal-

ity of political right. It would surely have been unjust to have made Mr. Crocket's Scottish birth a bar to his present position.

But "preference should be given graduates of the University, and the sooner that conclusion is reached the sooner will students learn to attend this institution." This means that the government should not only support the University, but by a particular use of its powers compel men to be educated there.

It lays down the law that a province man who educates himself outside of N. B. University is guilty of a political crime by which he forfeits a part of his right to recognition. In other words, no such man is a true citizen. Where, we ask, is the authority for such a law?

We have no quarrel with the *Monthly* because of the opinions which it so honestly holds, but we are compelled to regard them as the expressions of an extreme and false provincialism.

WE do not know what tariff changes are contemplated, but earnestly hope that books may be placed on the free list, at a very early date. In consideration of the present surplus, the continuance of the tax on knowledge, by a government supported by so large a representation of the people, is a standing reproach on the intelligence of the Dominion. Last year the matter was brought before the Finance Minister in a very cogent manner, by a deputation from the colleges, but the concessions granted were trifling compared with what the cause merited.

It would seem as if the monetary idea had got hold of the legislature with a relentless grasp but that the charm of glittering fetters had destroyed all sense of bondage.

Thus, while the cabinet knights, the champions of young and gentle Canada, are admiring and adjusting their *protective* chains, and fumbling their golden ducats, their fair mistress groans under a form of burden scarce found in the semi-civilized nations of the globe. We fear that the ghost of Iago is

hovering around the capital, and instructing the Finance Minister in practical wisdom.

Put money in the treasury. Intelligence may be crippled—but put money in the treasury. Mechanics may need books of instruction in their craft—but put money in the treasury. Let science, literature, art and religion suffer—but put money in the treasury—put money in the treasury. What matchless counsel!

NOTICE of Dr. Rand's lecture before the Lyceum, and other matter, crowded out.

PROFESSOR SOPHOCLES.

IT is said to be one of the unwritten laws of Harvard University that all members of her faculty must be Harvard graduates. Occasionally, as the case of that young metaphysician, Dr. Royce, of California University, an American celebrity of another college is admitted. Still rarer is it to find foreign scholars on her teaching staff; but to this the late Professor Sophocles was a notable exception.

Born in Eastern Thessaly when this century was but a year or two old, he spent his teens in a convent in Cairo, Egypt, engaged principally in the study of the Greek classics. Resuming in 1820 his studies in his native country he was interrupted by the war for Greek independence, and shortly afterward while travelling, fell in with an American missionary, Rev. Josiah Brewer, who advised him to come to America.

A knowledge of English was soon acquired, and several years were spent in teaching in various parts of New England. He became identified with Harvard College in 1842, and maintained his connection with a slight intermission until a month or two ago, first as tutor in Greek; advanced in 1859 to assistant Professor of the same subject; and University Professor of Ancient, Modern, and Byzantine Greek in 1860.

A writer in a late number of *The Nation* says: "Harvard College has lost one of her most remarkable men. Probably no one connected with her academic society has left so vivid a personal impression on the graduates of the past forty years as the venerable Greek who has just passed away." Speaking of his acquirements the same writer remarks:—"Professor Sophocles was a scholar of extraordinary attainments. His knowledge of the whole length and breadth of Greek literature could hardly be surpassed, and he had much rare and profound erudition on points on which most western scholars are ignorant."

He was very eccentric in his habits. His peculiar dress made him an object of remark. Ever since 1847 he had occupied the same room which served him for kitchen, sleeping-room and study. As regards his personal history he was peculiarly reticent, and when asked to correct the life of himself for a biographical dictionary he replied:—"I shall tell them nothing; and if they publish anything, I shall always say it is a lie." But beneath this seemingly harsh exterior, the warmest sympathies had a large place. The greater part of his income (for his wants were few) found its disbursement in the relief of the needy, and this not through public charities, but doubly sanctified by personal giving.

CHUNDER SEN.

CHUNDER SEN, the celebrated Hindu reformer, is dead, and his followers—the Brahma Somaj—are now without a recognized leader. The career of this remarkable man, whose life has so suddenly closed, is deserving of more than passing notice. He was born in 1838, and educated in the Hindu University Calcutta, where he early displayed an intense love for English literature and mental philosophy. At the age of twenty-two he became a member of the Brahma Somaj, (God Society), a religious body that has since become so closely identified with progressive thought in India. In 1870 he

visited England where he was received with the highest honors and introduced to the Queen—a mark of distinction peculiarly gratifying to an Oriental. He appeared before English audiences, on several occasions, and won their respect and admiration by his chaste eloquence, lofty moral sentiment, and skilful use of the English tongue.

Chunder Sen was not a profound philosopher—few Hindus are. "He was not," says Cook, a "Bacon, a Leibnitz, or a Kant. He was a man, like Mr. Emerson, powerful in the intuitive, rather than the analytical faculties." He was emotional rather than intellectual: not a mystic, but one who depended upon the voice of conscience and moral perception more than mere reason as a guide to religious truth. He was a sworn foe to child-marriages, caste, idol worship and the doctrine of the transmigration of souls, regarding them as deadly enemies to social and moral improvement. By his profound devotion, his enthusiasm and great personal magnetism, he gathered around him a band of followers of whom any leader might be proud. Among them were men of ripe scholarship, as well as earnest young disciples thirsting after truth, who, dissatisfied with the absurdities of Hindu philosophy, sought in the new theistic movement of Chunder Sen, a religion more consonant with the enlightenment of the age, and better calculated to meet the wants of man's moral nature. This new religion can hardly be said to be orthodox in its origin and aims, but yet in the order of intellectual and moral progress, it is far in advance of the false philosophy and unmeaning rites of Buddhism. It professes to be a "revealed theism," and freely borrows from the Bible whatever is in harmony with its own principles. It is at war with atheism and deism, but holds to the unity of God, and the existence of the Holy Spirit. Its followers regard the Christ with a devout and loving reverence, but deny his pre-existence and the efficacy of his atonement. At present the Brahma Somaj numbers only a few thousand, but it is rapidly

increasing in number and importance, and bids fair, in time, to become a successful rival of the older systems of Buddhism and Hinduism.

A PRAIRIE REVERIE.

IT is early June. The sun is slowly sinking toward the West. Three thousand miles from my Cape Breton home, I lie stretched out upon the green sward of the prairie, musing on things past and present. It is the glorious evening of what has been a glorious day. All day the sun has swung gladly on through a perfectly cloudless sky. Gazing up into the zenith the vast dome of heaven appears of a deep and wondrous blue, shading off gradually till it merges near the horizon into an opal tint.

But now the wondrous hues of sunset are beginning to kindle in the West. True there are no massive clouds to be tinged and brightened till the heavens are filled with gloriously tinted battlements and palaces and mountain ranges, but yet the sky begins to glow and brighten in a wondrously beautiful manner, till one is led to wonder how the "land beyond" can be fairer or brighter.

On every side stretches the prairie. Not a dead level, but stretching out in mighty undulations as far as the eye can see, and miles and miles beyond. And it is as green as the sky is blue, except that countless flowers deck its bosom, and add variety and brightness to the garment with which fair spring has robed our earth. To the North and East the ocean verdure stretches in emerald billows of mighty sweep far beyond our ken.

To the Southward several deep gullies may be seen as dark curving breaks in the green expanse, while beyond them rises a range of grassy hills, stretching for miles in a south-east and north-west direction, and, at their nearest point, only a few miles distant. These, with their sunlit slopes and shaded hollows, are especially grateful to the eye of one who has gazed on majestic Blomidon or the rugged

hills of Cape Breton. In the West the scene is lovely beyond description. If, in all its surpassing beauty, it could but be transferred to canvas! The sky is glowing with all the glories of the sunset. The earth is kindled into kindred beauty. In the immediate foreground sweeps in broad curves a deep and picturesque valley, through which winds a somewhat turbid stream. Did it but glance and flash and leap and gurgle like our peerless eastern brooks, what a touch of life and freshness would be added to the scene.

The valley is broad and deep, with alternative grassy flats and steep banks, as the creek curves gracefully on toward the north-west. Along the edges of the water are broad fringes of wild rose bushes and other shrubbery, from which the fragrance of opening blossoms steals gratefully. Up the creek nothing but grass and shrubbery appears, but just as it passes it enters a thick growth of soft maple, and this gradually extends and becomes larger, till, about a mile further up the maple largely gives place to ash, and the valley is almost filled with a dense forest of stalwart ash trees, their darker foliage contrasting well with the lighter green of the grass, and enabling the course of the creek to be traced till it winds out of sight.

Such the scene that spreads out broad and fair before and around me, as I muse on the days of the not very distant past, and of the present. Not many years have passed since these plains and valleys doubtless presented a somewhat different aspect. One lying where I am now would have seen vast multitudes of buffaloes, and heard the earth vibrate and reverberate beneath the galloping tread of their mighty hosts. Deer and antelope might doubtless have been seen quenching their thirst in this now silent and deserted stream, and if report be true, only a few years have passed since, on the banks of this very creek, only a mile or two lower down, a long and bloody battle was fought between two large bands of Indians. Now, naught but bones remains to tell the tale of these

wilder days. Many a sturdy buffalo, the very embodiment of life and strength, that once roamed over these grassy plains, has left his bones bleaching upon the prairie, sad mementoes of his once shaggy and sinewy frame.

But now as I see the gleam of these relics of those once mighty brutes, and muse upon such fallen greatness, there breaks upon my ear the panting of that great iron leviathan which man has pressed into his service. Though seven miles or more distant, the air vibrates and quivers, and the rush and roar of those mighty forces is plainly audible, as, coming from the peopled East, that moving avalanche of power rushes along its iron track into the untenanted West, while beneath it the prairie trembles. And on both sides of that iron road human habitations spring up as if by magic. Vast fields of grain wave and rustle in the breeze, as it sweeps freely over the prairie, and ere long, towns and cities add life and variety to the scene.

KAYOSHK.

OUR LECTURE COURSE.

THE first lecture of the term,—“Criteria of Sceptics and their Scepticism,” was delivered by the Rev. Calvin Goodspeed in the Academy Hall on Friday evening, February the 15th.

The lecturer said that the present age was one of doubt. The young, accustomed to progress in science, naturally distrusted old opinions. Sceptical works come upon us by surprise and we think our faith shaken. But we may rest assured that it will not be called upon to bear more severe shocks than it has withstood in the past. When sceptical thought has such free access to the people, it is yet a fact that most students cannot follow the course of philosophic doubt as it loses itself in the mysteries of being.

What can the ordinary christian do under such circumstances? Certainly he cannot refute all the arguments brought against Christianity. Must he, therefore, take his faith second-hand, and perhaps have a lurking

suspicion that his belief may be founded on his own ignorance? Such a state as this implies would be in conflict with all our ideas of God. Whence these hopes and longings? I cannot but believe there is some anchor hold of certainty upon which the illiterate toiler as well as the intellectual athlete may lay hold of and outride the fiercest gales of disbelief.

Are there any laws of judging and refuting sceptics which all can apply?

The Bible and christianity have to do with tremendous doctrines. They affirm that our deepest convictions point to the truth that there is a God; they affirm that our lives with their growing powers, their eager longings and upward yearnings, do not go out like a burned out light, but go on with increased and ever increasing force from the impetus of our life on earth. They concur with the most solemn assurance of our natures, which will not down, that the life in time gives the determining bias to its stretch across eternity. Such beliefs are too glorious and awful to be lightly given up; nor will a man do so unless compelled.

The fact that a certain class of doubters exist is an argument in favor of christianity. If the truths of our religion are the highest, it requires a man of unperverted moral nature to perceive them. For a young man, who from the nature of the case could not have given much study to these great facts, to hold that the doctrines which have in all ages afforded happiness to some of the most celebrated men are untrue, is absurd.

Yet there are honest doubters, who are modest and prefer having their doubts cleared up than to disseminate them into the minds of others. For they know in so far as there is the remotest possibility that their doubts are erroneous, that they are in that degree running the risk of wrecking their eternity.

The men who seek to unsettle our faith would take away our belief in the Bible, which they cannot prove to be untrue, and give us nothing in the place of it. Certainly we want the truth, and at any cost. But the publishing of crude questionings is the best way to play into the hands of error. The utterances of the most assured convictions alone advance truth.

Religious truth has to do with what God is, what man is, and what man ought to be, and how the change which will make him what

he ought to be can be secured. Insight and knowledge here do not depend so much upon the mind as upon a state of moral soul likeness to religious truth itself. In proportion to the likeness between the nature within and the nature of this religious truth without will be his power to discern it. As the moral nature grows we climb from terrace to terrace of tablelands of truth. At each stage of progress a new landscape stretches itself around us, each exceeding the preceding in beauty and grandeur. The views of the sceptic whose moral nature is not capable of perceiving religious truth may be passed by as would be the opinions of a deaf man regarding the qualities of some fine toned music.

The German critics who have sought to disprove the divine origin of the Bible have been specialists. From this fact they have not been in a position to come to sound conclusions. By keeping the mind exclusively on one point of truth specialists are apt to magnify the relative importance of that truth, and to give it undue prominence. And further, the specialist makes it his aim to be a discoverer, which he can properly be if limited to the discovery of facts. But from the nature of the case, it is not possible for him to theorize correctly, not having sufficient knowledge of kindred truth. Hence the conclusions of specialists in regard to the origin of the New Testament should be cautiously received.

To become good and true by acting as our inmost conscience prompts is the highest possible attainment. The highest truth to any man is what his soul is compelled by its own nature to accept as such. We only need to believe God to be true to accept the conclusion that truth and goodness go together; and in the last analysis merge into one. As the nature grows in goodness it grows in truth. Through goodness a man has an affinity for truth.

If there is any truth in the words, religious truth, we must expect that it has drawn to itself the good in all ages; while falsehood has drawn to itself the irreligious and the bad. Here, then, are our just rules for judging of truth and error. What compels the assent of our deepest hearts and conscience and attracts to itself the best of men, has a high claim to be true.

"If our deepest instinctive convictions are worth anything; if there is any certainty that the highest truth and the highest goodness have any affinity for each other; then christianity is the highest

truth which the world knows. But if these convictions are worthless and truth and goodness do not go hand in hand, then truth is the despair of men and is a demon instead of divine.

It is only when a religion appears which shall attract the best of men from christianity to itself because it makes a stronger appeal to that which is best in our souls, that my confidence in her as embodying the highest truth shall be shaken. As long as good men hold to her; as long as scepticisms are welcomed by the irreligious and the evil; so long do I desire to have my all-embracing hope, based upon her foundations as the sweetest and safest that can be found."

According to the law of the survival of the fittest, the christian religion has stood while much of that which has opposed her has fallen. Whenever she has been brought face to face with other beliefs she has triumphed, or is gradually winning the victory. The highest standard in the souls of the best men have been applied to her.

The Rationalism which has been sweeping in upon us from Germany was an attempt to judge religion by the mind alone. While religion is a matter of the heart, the heart was not allowed to speak. External evidence, such as appeals to the understanding, was alone thought worthy of attention; while the internal, which has to do with its essence, was almost entirely unheeded.

The fact that scepticisms have gone down, while christianity has stood and is winning her mightiest triumphs to-day, is strong evidence that she will still stand and triumph while they continue to fall, as the keen edge of her truth smites them. And what general conclusions have been reached?

"Can it be other than that the christian religion being most in harmony with the principles of the axiomatic truth in our souls, evolved from the purest and most transcendent nature which the world has ever seen, having a power to attract the best of men to herself from all other faiths and satisfy and reach to unseen heights above their highest moral growth, and possessing the ability to nurture in all classes the loftiest character and the best living—can our conclusion I repeat, be other than that she contains and is the highest form of truth known to men. That all systems that are opposed to her are erroneous.

* * * * *

The Bible is the book of God. The teeth of rationalistic and of all other criticism which seeks to eat away the foundations of its teaching will be broken on the rock of ages. Jesus of Nazareth is the world's Redeemer and my Saviour. I can let my soul with all its throbbing emotions, its glowing aspirations, its untold possibilities rest like an

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 of 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 re-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-

ness" enters into the study, and claims homage of the student on the Sabbath day.

The college is closing. Under the fatal "order of standing," the student rises or falls in the public estimation. Pure culture ignored, dishonesty rewarded, the ominous word "merit," fixes the reputation for life; and love for *Alma Mater*, otherwise deep and tender, on that fatal day is crushed out forever.

In review of the "Tyranny of Marks," in the December number of the ACADIA ATHENÆUM, the *Colby Echo* says: "We cannot agree with the writer in absolutely abolishing all means of keeping a student's standing, yet we cannot blame him for making a most violent attack upon the ranking system, for we learn that at Acadia they practice the hitherto unheard of custom of parading the graduating class on commencement day in order of standing. If a student is to go through college with no higher aim than to march the first in this procession, we can easily see how it will bring about disastrous consequences. It will injure him physically, corrupt his moral nature, and give his mind altogether the wrong discipline."

But a lover of marks has said, "it is one thing to admit an error and quite another thing to reform it." True, but does not the above criticism, coming from the Colby University, on "the hitherto unheard of custom," imply that there are other and less objectionable methods of grading. A late correspondent to one of our leading college journals recommends "a more excellent way"—free from insidious comparisons and wholesale injustice. He writes that, "there is a system practiced at Oberlin College, and a few other schools, which may be called a recognition of the natural condition of things. It is a system which seems to the writer to have all the advantages of the prize systems, and to be exposed in only a slight degree to their dangers. It is the confident opinion of the writer that it produces a much larger proportion of good scholars, encouraging instead of discouraging the weaker portion of the class. Each recitation and examination is marked and recorded, but the marks are shown only to the student and his immediate friends, and no comparison is drawn on strict 'ranking' permitted by the authorities. Nor are the marks in different studies added together to make up a 'general average.' Each student is constantly confronted with his 'record' and compared with an absolute standard, but the desire to make solid attainments, and the honor which inevitably belongs to merit, are alone invoked to stimulate his endeavors. The pressure is even upon every student, and the element of emulation is ruled out."

Other systems might be commended, but time admonishes to close this letter, already much too long. Thanking you, Messrs. Editors, for so much of your valuable space; and hoping that the Senate will abandon a custom which fosters dishonesty, outrages justice and drives students from college;

and that Acadia will seek at once some better way. I am,

Yours &c., &c.

UNDER GRADUATE.

Locals.

The Wolfville church is to have a new organist. This departure will no doubt seriously effect the "invisible choir."

The interest of the morning exercises in chapel has been enhanced by the addition of both vocal and instrumental music.

Senior (meditatively), "who was the father of history?" Class-mate, tapping him on the cheek, patronizingly, "Why Herodotus, sonny!"

Wolfville had its skating carnival on the 8th ult. A few of the students appeared in costume, but the larger part spent the evening in their rooms.

Prof. in Chemistry: "Mr. S., can you tell me why the loadstone is called a magnet?" Mr. S. (promptly) "Because it is derived from *magnus* and *eo*, meaning a great go."

"Shaw! my book has fallen," impatiently exclaimed a lady sophomore. The gentleman who sat near regarded the remark as personal, and looked confused accordingly.

A soph. being asked by a friend the meaning of the term "*emeritus*," which is found in connection with the name of a venerable D. D., promptly replied that it was a branch of theology!

An unsophisticated freshie enquired of a senior if a certain soph. was pious. The senior looked perplexed, but finally ventured to hint that the question was a conundrum, and so gave it up.

Scene on the stair at midnight. Soph. struggling with an appropriated packing case—noise agonizing. Voice from a disturbed sleeper: "Say, stop that diabolical din and put a *lock* on that box." Noise ceases, Soph. retreats.

A senior was trying, with a pained look, to identify an individual who was loudly repeating his name, when suddenly a relieved expression stole over his countenance, and he exclaimed, "O, I know you; you are the fellow who speaks so much about *eternity*."

A senior being accused of serious matrimonial intentions, became excited, and wildly exclaimed: "That accusation is a fabrication of a brain given to hallucination, and has not the slightest foundation in all creation. Darnation!" The listeners were convinced.

Soliloquy of a hungry senior :

To eat or not to eat, that's the question:—
Whether 'tis better in the stomach to suffer
The pangs and gnawings of outrageous hunger;
Or to feed upon *apples* in spite of troubles,
And by eating end them?

Class in Latin; Prof. explaining the difference in meaning between *amo* and *deligo*. Mr. M. seeking for more light, "Professor, you say *amo* is to love; now what *is* love?" Prof.: "Ask your heart, sir." Mr. M. covered with confusion, does not pursue the inquiry further.

Diminutive Soph coming into classics late. Prof.: "You had some difficulty in finding the class-room, I suppose." Dim. Soph.: "Oh, no sir." Prof.: "Your manner would indicate that you were lost, and had accidentally opened the right door." D. S. humbled, disappears behind a class-mate.

Enquiring soph. to professor in chemistry: "Professor, why is it that a man's health is impaired while working among acids, when a woman can do the same work with impunity?" Prof.: "I don't know, unless the inherent sweetness of woman neutralizes the acid." Visible agitation among the ladies.

A freshie went home during holidays filled with the doctrine of evolution. In a conversation with *paterfamilias*, he took occasion to air his pet theory, cautiously hinting that he believed all men sprang from apes. An evil light gleamed in the old man's eye, as he exclaimed, "That may have been the case with you, but not with me."

Scene on the upper flat. Scientific soph trying to generate hydrogen—several ministerial sophs in the distance. Experiment progresses. Sc. soph triumphantly applies the match, but suddenly the scene is changed, and the soph discovers himself standing on his ear in the corner of the room, with fragments of ministerial sophs seeking shelter in impossible places, from the confused storm of broken glass and escaped hydrogen. Sc. soph completed the performance by invoking certain heathen deities and retiring from the scene with a burnt expression on his countenance.

The recent "strike" in the boarding department of Chipman Hall was not without its ludicrous side. Many of the boys then took their first lessons as *caterers*, with doubtful results. It would require a Mark Twain to describe the many amusing scenes of that memorable week. The following, however may be noted. (a) A freshie in *dishabille* struggling in vain to keep his boiling porridge in subjection, and then diving into his garments to conceal his emotions; (b) a junior cheerfully eating crackers at one end of a table and a mouse disappearing with his only fragment of cheese, at the other; (c) a senior solemnly roasting apples over his stove, and at the same time

trying to grapple with the abstruse reasonings of Kant; (d) a ministerial conference on the roof of C. Hall at midnight, after the adjournment of which the steward's flue was found in a state of total depravity; (e) two juniors smoked out of their rooms and wandering about like unquiet spirits seeking whom they might *devour*; (f) certain students favored(?) with a private consultation with the President, &c., &c., *ad infinitum*.

The executive committee of Chipman Hall are to be congratulated on securing the services of so competent and popular a matron as Mrs. Balcom. She has already won the favor and esteem of the students, by her kind and obliging manners, and her readiness to attend to their comfort in sickness as well as in health. The students are not slow to observe and appreciate these acts of kindness, and consequently each one strives to deport himself with becoming propriety, not only in the dining hall, but in the building generally. On Monday afternoon all the students, boarding in Chipman Hall, met in the chapel and passed unanimous resolutions, in which they agreed to co-operate with the executive committee in all efforts that had in view any improvement in the management and comfort of the boarding house. When students and managers act in consort, and especially when those who have charge of the boarding department are wise enough not to overlook the "little acts of kindness," which win favor where indifference or thoughtlessness will fail, there will be little danger but matters will run smoothly. At the present time the corridors of the boarding house are comfortably heated and lighted up at night, springs are put on the outside doors, and the whole building has a more comfortable and homelike appearance than for many a day before. Verily the "strike" was not in vain.

PERSONALS.

C. O. Tupper, '83, recently paid a visit to his friends in Wolfville. Mr. Tupper had just returned from Philadelphia where he was pursuing his medical studies.

C. E. Whidden, who was a freshman with the present seniors, was in Wolfville a few days ago. He is a partner in the well known firm of Whidden & Sons, Antigonish.

C. D. Rand, '79, is a prosperous Real Estate Broker, Notary Public, etc., in New Westminster, B. C. His brother, E. E. Rand, who spent the matriculating year with the present seniors, is a partner in the same business.

J. B. Bogart, M. D., a graduate of the New York University, and at present practising in St. Peter's hospital, has been appointed house surgeon at the hospital in New Haven, Conn. Dr. Bogart is a native of Lower Granville. —*Halifax Herald*.

Dr. Bogart spent the matriculating year in the Academy, and freshman year in College with the class of '82.

Benjamin Rand, '75, has translated *The Centennial of the Critique of Pure Reason*, by Kum Fisher, for a late number of the *Journal of Speculative Philosophy*. Mr. Rand, who has been studying at Heidelberg, is at present prostrated with an attack of sickness, of such a severe nature that his father took passage by the last English steamer from Halifax, *en route* to see his son.

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