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A BREEZE FROM THE PAST;

OR,

THE ARISTOI.

A PROSE IDYL.

Four most intense young men ;
Four soulfull-eyed young men ;
Four ultra-poetical,
Super æsthetical
Out of the way young men.

—After "Patience."

THE readers of these lines who have adventured in the literary field will admit how hard it is to write sometimes. I might say it is so very often. If one does not know what he is writing about, it naturally follows that his efforts will be a failure. If the subject is one in which the writer's heart is not interested, which is uncongenial, and affords no scope for the exhibition of his natural taste and feeling, the pen may be forced unwillingly to the task, but the result though perhaps not total failure, is unsatisfactory both to the author and the ever-so-indulgent reader. These causes and effects are thoroughly natural. There is, however, another phase of authorship in which, while the theme of the hour may be one that is pre-eminently attractive, it is still almost as difficult to express one's ideas satisfactorily as in the cases I have mentioned above.

In such a fix am I now! My thoughts are roaming amid those scenes in the past in which I was once an actor. The contemplation is fraught with unalloyed pleasure to me. The mellowing and softening influences of time have thrown their kindly veil over those portions of my college life which were not wholly pleasing, and have left only those things which are cheer-

ing to the heart of one who is fighting his way through an unsympathetic world. Perhaps the greater evils of the "now" are in themselves no unimportant factors in toning down the harder and rougher portions of the tale of the past.

Some wretched old philosopher in the days of universal naughtiness,—concerning which we hear so much during our four years with the humanizing influences,—in a fit of temporary sanity ground off the now well known and intensely hackneyed aphorism, "*tempora mutantur et nos mutamur in illis.*" Old fellow I thank thee for this proof of our unanimity of feeling. The times have changed indeed, but toga and broadcloth were the garments of men of like spirit. I feel just the same about the matter in question as my shady old friend, P. Virgilius Maronis, or Marcus Antonius Twainus, or whoever it was who wound off those half-dozen axiomatic words. *Tempora mutantur!* Yea verily! I do really begin to believe it. The change makes itself visible even in the comparatively short time that has elapsed since I was one of the heterogeneous crew, that flaunted its lustre, and exhibited its cheek and animal spirits in the face of the old clock, that was wont to look admonition at the motley throng surging beneath it, in the halls of old Dalhousie.

Our *Alma Mater* has changed since then in many ways. When "Silenus" first sat at the feet of the doctors within her venerable fanes the scene in the hall was one calculated to engender uneasiness—I speak mildly—in one who was not able to take his own part in a rough and tumble between the classes. The boys as a rule were more noted for their physical power and animal spirits than for any super-

abundant amount of intellectual brilliancy. Mark you I speak generally, for there were those also who would yield the palm to none in the academic field, and who went out of Dalhousie to be lights in the world of science and the arts. But as a whole the *Dallusienses* of a few years back were men of great strength of limb, depth of chest, and sonorousness of voice; men who could and would make a foot-ball field lively, and raise the roof with a thundering chorus; men who loved the arts and loved themselves, and who were never willing to sacrifice to Mercury an ounce more of the midnight oil than was necessary to keep them afloat amidst the storms of the "horrid Ides." And as I compare the lungs of 1875 and 1882, I am forced to partially admit the truth of the often posited theory, that as the fields of science and learning widen and widen, the human physique becomes proportionately weaker and weaker.

Those were the days when the dread machinery of the Senate was continually in operation; for there were some of whom it has been said within my own recollection,—“they lived, aye, they went into the Senate.” Lived! rather there was a super-abundance of life in the old pile then, and the professors and governors were often exercised over some scapegrace or other, or, in the case of the scapegrace being *non inventus*, as I grieve to say was often the case, over his ill doings. The Janitor's curly, sunny locks were already beginning to show a tinge of gray, the result at once of accumulating years and wces, when something happened which was well nigh finishing him, and bringing down his gray hairs with sorrow to the grave.

The troublous spirits of those troublous times seethed, and churned, and boiled, until out of the mass a quartette of evil spirits arose, whose naughtiness and recklessness, while raising them above the heads of their fellows, was so evenly distributed in their four wicked selves, that there was none among them who would dare to stand forth and say, “ye call me chief.” Their natural parts were widely different, their intellectual qualities were as opposite as night from day, and in nothing were they one, save only in that communion of ill which bound them together

as one man. Nihilism can show nothing like their unanimity when engaged in some wild prank or silent mischief. Talk of communion of soul; it is a mere myth compared with their lawless indivisibility. Should the Janitor chance to see these lines, he would shudder in his boots at the horrible picture I have conjured up from amongst the myriad trials it fell to his lot to bear.

Such were the “ARISTOI;” “the first,” “the best,” truly, but in evil. Their souls refused to be satisfied with common fun, and they soared into a wild empyrean of mischief which was, as our beloved brother Oscar would say, “quite too unutterably utter.” They were, forsooth, Philistines of the first water.

What will the “gentle reader” think when he hears that the writer of “these presents” was a constituent member of this gruesome coterie. But so it was, alas, and I must e'en confess that my nature is so unchanged in its gracelessness that the avowal gives me anything but pain. It is so soothing to be above the average, be it in however doubtful a respect, that a feeling of shame at my past wildness is yet among the things to be experienced by me. “’Tis true, ’tis pity, and pity ’tis ’tis true,” as many of the “Theologs” of my days have said to me.

And now for a brief biographical sketch of this worthy four. At the time of its formation the “Aristoi” was composed of a Junior, two Sophs, and a Fresh; known first in the annals of the organization, and afterwards to posterity, by the suggestive titles of “The Sage,” “Silenus,” “Tim,” and “Freddie.”

“The Sage,” dear soul, was a Junior, and therefore the senior of us all. A college bard in a valedictory effusion to the year to which he belonged, afterwards hymned him thusly:—

“Next comes “The Sage,” and who will soon forget
Our light-haired boy, his face and form and fancies;
’Tis but an idle task to aid here memory.”

And we cannot do better than echo the song. An intellectual forehead bespoke the mental powers which were often of service in evading threatened retribution. His Grecian features were embellished with a pair of melting blue eyes and a wealth of golden hair. His stature,

while not great was imposing, and his stride was of the gods. Like the fabled war-horse he “scented the fray from afar.” In his class-work he was never behind-hand—happy soul—and in the fun he was always to the fore. Within him lurked a wealth of argument which was often advantageously employed in semi-theological controversial encounters with the Janitor. Often have I seen his blue eyes flash, and his curly hair bristle, in an attempt to convince Johannes Vilson of the benefit of a neutral policy. Often has it fallen to his lot to undergo examination by the Senate and by the Faculty, and never yet has his soul failed within him. Always happy, always careless, but always successful, “The Sage” was a proper “Aristoi.”

Then comes “Silenus,” one of the aforesaid Sophs, whose natural modesty forbids the remotest approach to self-elevation. He, too, hath been hymned by one of Dalhousie's lyric lights, who sung:—

“Methinks he was a lad of six feet one,
With ebon locks and budding whiskers mild.
Ah me! I'd have him not so wicked quite,
No'erless the muses have around his neck
Fastened their ticket, so we'll humor him.
His glory shines not on the horrid Ides,
But rather shines on every common day;
How merrily he tunes his smoky lyre,
Lifting in air the fair Kafoozle'um,
Kafoozle'um the daughter of the Turk,
That horrid Moslem beast out in the East.—
But here comes Homer, smiling from a cloud
In smokiest smoke, smoking a smokier smoke,
Waiting with dignified expectancy.”

And true to the letter is this description. Nature had been kind to me as regards stature and appearance. I was a youth who looked good, but those who knew me said I was awfully wicked, and I must confess that they were not far wrong. A dabbler in doggerel, I was elected poet laureate by my fellow disturbers of the general peace. I was generally successful in the examinations I have referred to above, but never distinguished myself as did “The Sage.” Somewhere between the thirties and forties I was always to be found. My vocal abilities were of a decided type, and ever and anon were devoted to disturbing the general peace in the halls during class hours. Note—I should have been in class myself but wasn't. As a devotee of the

weed I would yield to none. I gloried in my muscle and weight, and was never so happy as when engaged in a fierce struggle on the stairs. I loved the Professors and Janitor with a whole-souled and reverent love, but they did not hanker after me. But still I struggled along and was a conscientious “aristoi.” I always stuck to the boys and the boys, always stuck to me. Such were my salient points.

Next comes “Tim,” and if ever there was a good-natured, happy-go-lucky boy, he was one. The law and the testimony were naught to him. He lived for the present and threw care to the winds. While possessed of well-determined mental powers, he eschewed all kinds of mental labor as he would the plague. The class-room never saw him, and his name or mark never figured in the pass-list. It was his standing boast, that during his two years at college he spent only twenty minutes in study. He was the life of every circle in which he moved, and was an “aristoi” of the “Aristoi.” He delighted in bothering the Professors with profound questions, and they stood in unutterable terror of his handsome face. The Janitor would sooner meet his father's ghost, than come in contact with “Tim” on the rampage. Such was one of the jolliest dogs it ever fell to my lot to meet with. May his shadow never grow less!

Last comes “Freddie.” His good qualities were all negative, and how he ever became an “Aristoi” none can tell, were it not as an offset to the other three. He was a youth all legs and wings, and projected into the midst of a scrimmage, caused more havoc than the scythed wheels of an ancient Briton's war chariot. He never studied because it was no use; forsooth his mental gifts reflected muchly on nature's stinginess. He was the butt of all hands, and when the “Aristoi” had no one else upon whom to expend their malevolence, poor “Freddie” was sure to get it. Most decided, however, were his proclivities to harrass the powers that were by all available means, and when the “Aristoi” were on the same tack “Freddie” was no non-entity, “not by no manner of means.”

These were the four most troublous souls of the times of which I write. So they went on in

the somewhat uneven tenor of their way, until time and change broke their ranks and scattered the "Aristoi" to the four winds. Were the time or space at my disposal I might while away an hour in telling some of the marvellous exploits in which they participated. But it cannot be. In some future issue, perhaps, we will follow the fortunes of this worthy quartette in their adventures by flood and field while in college, and trace their footsteps so far as they have gone in life's way. And now for a fortnight, *adieu*.

SILENUS.

NOVELS.

THE preaching of sermons has been invented for the purpose of influencing the imagination so as to induce the hearers to live good lives. Earnest preachers have great weight and the opinions of the world are formed to a large extent by its spiritual teachers. But novels read at a time when the imagination is especially vivid, and being of a more entertaining nature, have an influence that reaches further than the precepts of any sermon. Just as medicine is distasteful to a child, but when hidden away in honey, goes on its curative mission without objection.

It is from these books that girls will be taught modesty, or to become brazen-faced, and throw themselves at men's heads; boys will learn honesty or dishonesty, manliness or cowardice. In this age of the world when honesty is so much pressed by ambition, a man's conduct will be influenced by that which is from day to day pictured as leading to good or bad results. Many a young man can tell how, after going through a certain number of Read's stories, he thought the free, wild life of the western hunter, with numerous battles with the Indians, the most happy existence a man could lead. Marryat's tales make even the hard life of a sailor seem so pleasant, that every boy reading them desires to be a midshipman. Not long ago a young friend of mine wanted me to read a story called "Bob Short," published in the Wide Awake Library. He said it was the finest, and altogether the best story he had ever read. To please him I read

part of it. Now, the hero of this story had some qualities that a boy could not help admiring. He was very witty, and clever at playing practical jokes; but he was just a clever scamp. He dined at saloons and made ignorant countrymen pay for him. He cheated his land-lady—but it is no use giving an abstract of his rogueries; sufficient to say he was painted in that attractive way by which boys would be taught to practice cleverness at the expense of honesty. If, when reading a novel, we are led to sympathize with a person who does wrong, if virtue is made ridiculous, the tendency of such a book is not good. The base must look base, and the noble be made to look noble. It must be supposed that if the person treated of be evil, the precept will be evil. The drawing of a bad character and showing the terrible condemnation that overtakes those who do not follow wisdom's ways, is often better teaching than drawing a spotless character. No story could show the horrors of evil doing more terribly than the fate of Effie Deans.

Novels are generally divided into sensational and anti-sensational. Of what we call sensational novels, the works of Ainsworth may be taken as the type, "by merit raised to that bad eminence." But since he has died during the past month, we must remember the Latin maxim "about the dead, nothing but what is good." The one class is supposed to be superior in the drawing of characters, in the other the gradual development of the plot holds the interest, but when a novel does not combine the two it is a failure as a work of art. Some readers make an over nice distinction and say they do not like sensational novels; but surely some of the best novelists have highly sensational scenes. As instances, I may quote, Rebecca in the Castle with Ivanhoe, Burley in the Cave with Morton, the Mad Lady tearing the veil of the Bride, in *Jane Eyre*, and Lady Castlewood's indignation as she explains to the Duke of Hamilton, Harry Esmond's right to be present at the marriage of his Grace with Beatrix. But we can only become interested in persons who are made to appear as flesh and blood, whom we for the time cannot but conceive, that they were living in the world and that they passed through these woes. But

when characters are wooden blocks, horror after horror soon ceases to horrify. You may read of a man that murdered two wives, and then, on the way to prison, wished he had murdered his wife's sister, but nothing is more dull. We cannot take an interest in such characters any more than if they were blocks or stones. Indeed it is hard to account for the immense sale of those newspapers, which publish stories of the blood and thunder type. Some part of their success is no doubt due to the clothing of some conventional thought in high-falutin' English. And as the reader ponders over it, "Well that's my idea, but I could not have expressed it so grandly."

The novels which have stood the test of criticism are legion; but Dickens, Thackeray and Scott are the favourites. Critics may say that the characters portrayed by Dickens are unreal, that there never were such good girls as Little Dorrit, Agnes, and Floy Dombey; but by reading his works no young man will learn dishonesty and no young woman will think it a fine thing to throw aside the rules, which the world has established for its guidance. There is not a passage in all his works which a mother would rather her daughter should not read. Low as seems the character of Nancy, woman's constancy has no better witness of its unswerving faith.

Thackeray is always crying out against the wrongs of this world, always preaching his sermon. He looks continually at the dark side of life, everybody with him was a *Snob*. But the lessons that he sought to teach were those of truth and manliness.

Scott is no doubt the grandest genius of them all. He never could paint a woman; in this (so critics say) he is the counter part of Goethe. Give a woman a pretty face and he bowed down before her, his chivalry would not allow him to look into the little weaknesses of their characters. In this we except Amy Robsart and perhaps too Jennie Deans. But he could paint a queen or a masculine woman to perfection. The scene in the *Abbot* where Mary Stuart asks one of her attendant Marys to tell her the last bridal at which she danced, and then her agony and raving

when Mary Fleming hesitatingly blurts out the name of Darnley, illustrates his skill in this respect. An equally fine scene is in *Kenilworth*, where Elizabeth endeavours to reconcile Sussex and Leicester. In portraying women no novelist can come up to Miss Austen, though perhaps her young ladies are a little too fond of getting married.

I would like to close this by an extract from Sterne. In his *Tristram Shandy* there is hardly a page but what there is an indecent allusion, but in no novel has a finer character been drawn than *My Uncle Toby*. In the following extract every reader will recognize wit, humour, and a kind nature speaking true sentiments. He is out walking and meets an ass heavily laden:—

"Come, Honesty," said I, seeing it was impracticable to pass betwixt him and the gate, "art thou for coming in or going out?"

The ass twisted his head round to look up the street.

"Well!" replied I, "we'll wait a moment for thy driver."

He turned his head thoughtfully about, and looked wistfully the opposite way.

"I understand thee perfectly," answered I, "if thou takest a wrong step in this affair, he will cudgel thee to death. Well! a minute is but a minute; and if it saves a fellow-creature a drubbing, it shall not be set down as ill-spent."

He was eating the stem of an artichoke as this discourse went on, and, in the little peevish contention between hunger and unsavouriness, had dropped it out of his mouth half a dozen times, and had picked it up again.

"God help thee Jack," said I, "thou hast a bitter breakfast on't—and many a bitter day's labour, and many a bitter blow I fear for its wages! 'Tis all bitterness to thee—whatever life is to others! And now thy mouth, if one knew the truth of it, is as bitter, I dare say, as soot (for he had cast aside the stem), and thou hast not a friend perhaps in all this world that will give thee a macaroon." In saying this, I pulled out a paper of 'em, which I had just bought, and gave him one;—and, at this moment that I am telling it, my heart smites me that there was more of pleasantry in the conceit of seeing *how* an ass would eat a macaroon, than of benevolence in giving him one, which presided in the act.

When the ass had eaten his macaroon, I pressed him to come in. The poor beast was heavily loaded—his legs seemed to tremble under him—he hung rather backward, and, as I pulled at his halter, it broke in my hand. He looked up pensive in my face: "Don't thrash me with it; but if you will you may." "If I do," said I "I'll be d—."

H. M. Emms SNODGRASS.

The Dalhousie Gazette.

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We again request Subscribers to pay up.

It is our sad duty to record in this issue the death of one of our old graduates,—C. W. Hiltz. The deceased was still a young man. His career though short was honorable. Previous to his studying medicine, he taught school in the western part of the province, and afterwards became Inspector of Schools for the County of Lunenburg. Relinquishing this position, he began the study of medicine at Dalhousie in 1868. Four years later he graduated M. D., C. M. At that time he won the prize in Obstetrics. In the fall of 1872 he went to Harvard and spent one session there. Returning to his native land he began the practice of his profession in Chester. From that time till his death he lived in that place, continually extending his sphere of labor. He was admired and loved by all who came in contact with him, whether in his professional capacity or otherwise. On the 31st ult., when the summons came, he passed away.

"Like one, who draws the drapery of his couch
About him, and lies down to pleasant dreams."

The deceased graduated in '72 along with four other young men,—Robert Sutherland of River John; George H. DeWolfe, Halifax; William McRae, Cape Breton; and Finlay McMillan, Pictou. Of these five all but one

have passed away to their eternal rest. Sutherland died of consumption at Liverpool some eight years ago. McRae was carried off by the same fatal malady in December, 1872. After leaving college, he had begun to practice at Baddeck, C. B., but it pleased the Almighty to carry him hence. McMillan, after graduating, settled at West River Station, Pictou Co. There he practised for some time; but God, in his inscrutable workings, saw fit to remove him. DeWolfe, the only survivor of this fated quintad, is now in England. To him the news of the death of his fellow graduates must be a grievous blow. To us all the demise of these men, in the prime of their life and usefulness, should be a warning to "be ready; for in such an hour as we know not the Son of Man cometh."

G. P.

WE regret very much to state that one of our students is dangerously ill. H. K. Fitzpatrick, who at the examination last fall won the second exhibition, has been seized with a very severe attack of congestion of the lungs, and has been unable to attend classes for the past two or three weeks. We hope to be able to report his recovery in our next. Meanwhile we can assure him, that while he is thus laid prostrate, he has the sympathy of the whole body of the students.

We are also sorry to have to state that one of our students has been compelled through illness to return home. We refer to Gavin Hamilton, whose departure from our midst all will, with us, regret.

THE IDYLLS OF THE KING.

THE term "idyll" does not correctly express the character of these poems. An idyll is a short poem descriptive of the quiet scenes of every day life. When Goldsmith wished to paint the simple joys and festive scenes of his once happy Irish home, the *Deserted Village* naturally grew into the idyllic form. The legends of Arthur and the Knights of his Round Table possess nothing of the homely character essential to idyllic poetry. They are animated by the heroic spirit which manifests itself in the

heroic epics of classical literature. Probably nothing in English poetry, so closely resembles the *Iliad* in subject matter and style of treatment as the *Idylls of the King*. If the legends of Troy had long been sung by Grecian bards before the poet worked them into his model heroic epic, so had the stories of Arthur been sung by many a travelling troubadour in the baronial castles of Western Europe, hundreds of years before the greatest poet of the present age twined them into his laurel wreath. If Homer sings of war and plunder, Tennyson's song is set to the same music. Wolf conceived the Homeric poems to have grown "chant by chant until the time came for the whole to be welded together in heroic form." So it has been with the *Idylls of the King*. The ten poems of which Tennyson's great epic is composed occupied nearly twenty years of the poet's life in their production. No doubt Tennyson was right when he foretold the character of the *Idylls* by designating them "faint Homeric echoes."

A distinguishing characteristic of the *Idylls* is the Anglo-Saxon purity of style. The most cursory examination will reveal to the student, that words of Latin origin are almost as rare as in our English Bible. When we compare the *Idylls of the King* with *Paradise Lost* we are irresistibly drawn to the conclusion that it was a fortunate thing for Arthur that the fallen angels had a greater charm for the blind poet than had the heroes of English romance. Milton's Latinized forms and scarcely naturalized construction may be excellent for such a subject as *Paradise Lost*, but for a heroic love-story, such a style must lamentably fail. An Englishman's tender emotions can find suitable expression only in language, that has grown up from the seed of the pure and noble Anglo-Saxon passion-flower. Even Gibbon, when he got his gouty limbs into a proper posture to offer his heart to Mademoiselle Churchod, is said to have descended from the stilted forms of his Latin style to language, of Anglo-Saxon brevity and expressiveness. Yes, we are glad that the Knights of the Table-Round were not compelled to give expression to their tender emotions in Miltonic phraseology.

A writer in a late issue of the *Edinburgh Review* in a criticism of Tennyson's poems repeats the old, old story about the lack of personality in the heroes of the Arthurian Idylls. To his penetrating eye all the Knights of the Round Table are simply various modifications of one character. Lancelot is King Arthur with a slight admixture of a baser element, and so of all the rest. This criticism is "too critical to be understood." The physical, the mental, and the moral characteristics differ in the various heroes—which the *Review* critic admits—and yet they form but one man. It would be interesting to know in what the identity consists. No doubt it would be the easiest thing in the world, for this scholastic critic to prove, that the Emperor Nero was the Apostle Paul with a slight admixture of a baser element.

Every one acknowledges that the same character at different periods of life, and influenced by different surroundings, may display antagonistic propensities. The exquisite beauty and manly deportment of that fascinating boy at the Roman court, gave no hint that he should develop into the monster Nero, the beast of the Apocalyptic vision, whose loathsome manhood has been so strikingly portrayed by the French artist. There is a certain dualism in human nature which every observer is forced to acknowledge. Walpole's sneer at the sentimental Sterne for stivelling over a dead donkey and neglecting a living mother, was called forth by the novelist's somewhat pronounced exhibition of this two-fold aspect of human nature. The courageous Peter was a coward. John XXIII. was a pope as well as a pirate. It must be confessed that the pure-souled, noble-hearted, strong-willed king of the early Britons *might* also have been the jealous-hearted Geraint, or the villainous Modred, but such a combination of antagonistic characteristics is highly improbable when we take into consideration the fact, that these knights do not display such features simply as momentary impulses or acts of temporary degeneracy, but as the firmly-rooted propensities of the soul. Many of the heroes are no more like to Arthur "than I to Hercules." The holy aspirations of the noble King are foreign to many of them. They know

no more of that heaven-born longing for a higher plane of moral existence, than "he who dwells beneath the tropics knows of icicles."

Some, whose occupation it is to taste the fruit of literary genius and pronounce as to its quality, have discovered that Tennyson is blame-worthy for investing the prosaic, hard-handed, steel-hearted heroes of the Round Table with the trappings of an age long posterior to the reign of Arthur. It was not till the tenth or eleventh century that chivalry arose, about five hundred years after the passing of Arthur from this "earth which is bound by golden chains about the feet of God." To find the tournament with all its associations fully developed in the sixth century, is like finding Adam enjoying a bicycle-ride through the cool glades of Eden, while Eve reclines in the refreshing shade of the tree of knowledge, enjoying Ouida's last novel. Tennyson is not to blame for this anachronism. He has taken the legends as he found them. If the love-born poet-minstrels of the Middle Ages breathed into their resurrected heroes the spirit of chivalry, it was not Tennyson's part to assume the *role* of exorcist.

AW Mahon

THE SUPERNATURAL.

MEN in all ages of the world have attempted to acquire by supernatural agency, whatever knowledge is beyond their reasoning powers. The many and diverse forms which their endeavours have assumed in this search are highly interesting and amusing. We have no reason, however, to be astonished at their attempts, for the same yearning to pry into the unseen will frequently come over us; indeed nothing is more common than a desire of knowing what is before us.

In early ages, such information was sought directly from the gods themselves, and the practice was less a stigma upon ancient than upon modern times, since it was perfectly consistent with religious beliefs then current. The most widely known and celebrated method of unravelling the future was by "oracles." From the highest to the lowest, all men sought from these sources a knowledge of coming events. No

undertaking of any importance was commenced before the sanction of the gods had been obtained through the "response" of an oracle. We can not believe that those mediums between gods and men, were otherwise than gigantic deceptions. But their long continuance with unimpaired fame show us plainly, with what eagerness mankind grasps at any means of penetrating the future.

Another method, scarcely less celebrated than the system of oracles, was the interpretation of the movements of heavenly bodies. These were all considered to bear the most intimate relation to the lives of men. "The avowed reason for assigning such proportion to the planetary bodies was, that the heavens are one great book in which God has written the history of the world, and in which every man may read his own fortune and the transactions of his time." Astrology seems to have held sway for a longer period than any other superstition. It appeared in full power at very early stages in man's history, yet its influence extended down to the middle of the seventeenth century. At that comparatively modern period, the belief in this superstition is shown by the reputation of one William Lilley. This man styled himself Professor of Astrology, published numerous treatises on the subject, and even went so far as to produce a yearly almanac in which were laid down the events of the next twelve months, as ascertained from the movements in the heavens. He claimed that the stars showed him the great events of a century in advance, and he published a set of rude engravings descriptive of these. Two of these engravings were rather remarkable—one representing the people of London going about in shrouds, another the same city wrapped in flames—referring plainly enough to the great plague succeeded by the great fire. In many instances, however, there was no attempt at deception in this search after fore-knowledge. Men firmly believed that the sky was covered with hieroglyphics, the meaning of which required much learning and study, and that a certain portion of the mysterious writing was allotted to every person upon earth. At birth, the "natale astrum" indicated the child's career in respect to general principles: the particular events of life were announced in the

skies previous to the occurrence of each. Eminent men have attempted to guide their actions by the stars. Wallenstein will occur to every person's mind as a devout believer in this superstition. There were some, however, who ventured to ridicule it, and among those our great dramatist, if we are to judge from his words:—

"This is the excellent foppery of the world that when we are sick in fortune, (often the surfeit of our own behaviour,) we make guilty of our disasters the sun, the moon, and the stars"

In some countries, the power of foretelling the future from visions, called second sight, obtained great credence. The phenomena is certainly very mysterious and in itself must not be classed with superstitions. It only ranks among the latter when men believe that persons can conjure up visions of anything and everything about which they are consulted. So many wonderful instances of second-sight have occurred, as to render it by no means strange that people should have sought a knowledge of coming events through its agency.

It is related that the murder of the Emperor Domitian by Stephanus, which took place at Rome, was seen by Appolonius Thyanius at Ephesus. He was attending the theatre at the time the vision appeared to him, and on behold-it he cried out,— "Well done Stephanus, strike the murderer—thou hast wounded him—he is killed!" A madman in Gascony shouted, "The Admiral is fallen!" at the moment Coligny fell in the great massacre at Paris in 1572. Now these, with other examples I might mention, are phenomena very difficult to explain. But the assumption of a power to call up visions of anything required, as was very common in Scotland two or three centuries ago, was a gross deception, and often brought those claiming it into laughable situations. A party of folks belonging to a village somewhere on the west coast of Scotland, started to visit some friends living on an island some distance from the mainland. Shortly after their departure bad weather set in. Day after day passed, and no sign of the missing people. At last some one visited a person professing to have the gift of second sight, (such persons in Scotland were called "taischers,") and

inquired if he had received a vision about the absent ones. With some reluctance the *taischer* acknowledged that a sinking boat had appeared to him, (the usual vision in cases of drowning). The whole village was accordingly plunged into woe and lamentation. The day following, however, the party returned safe and sound, and explained that they had exceeded the proposed length of their visit, at the earnest solicitation of their friends. It is rather peculiar that the prophecies of those *taischers* were always of a mournful character. For instance, a neighbour would appear wrapped in a shroud. Death was soon to seize him, and the time of its coming was in proportion to the part of his body covered by the shroud. A peculiarly direful vision was that of a spectre carrying a coffin. Whatever village he, (I am in doubt as to the sex of a spectre,) approached, was straightway to be visited with some pestilence.

From the desire of the many to know more of things hidden from mortal view, and the ingenuity of a few in taking advantage of that fact, sprang what we now know as, the black art. This is an old and wicked imposture, as we learn from a passage in the Mosaic law forbidding the Israelites to have any dealings with "a charmer, or a consulter with familiar spirits, or a wizard, or a necromancer." The black art appears to have been a judicious mixture of astrology and alchemy, with the introduction from the nether world, of an individual by no means amiably disposed toward mortals. We are all familiar with descriptions of a professor of this dubious science,—a man advanced in years, with a long beard, and wrapped in a cloak, intently studying the blackest of black-letter text, with numerous similar volumes piled around; on his shelves certain treatises signed with the sign-manual of the prince of darkness himself; divining rods, charms, scrolls with incantations written thereon, and mysterious herbs on every side, a tripod in one corner and a general air of mystery over the whole. I suppose one should be thankful that the past holds this deceiver; but I at least am not wholly sorry that his art ever existed, for without it, where would be so many delightful novels?

J. A. Bell TINTIN.

CORRESPONDENCE.

To the Editors Dalhousie Gazette:

MESSRS. EDITORS,—I was sorry to see that in your last issue instead of endorsing the grievance I had aired in your columns some time ago, you endeavored to show that there was no possibility of unfairness in the competition for the Dr. Avery Prize. However, you will excuse me if I dare to differ from some of the opinions you have expressed. In the first place, in the concluding sentence of your editorial you assert that "the very fact that the subjects in question are optional, precludes the possibility of there being any unfairness, every student having an opportunity of taking whichever subject he may think least difficult." But every student does not want to take the subject he thinks least difficult. For example, a student who intends to prepare himself for the ministry requires to know Greek. He has his choice of Greek and German. German he believes to be far less difficult than Greek, still he prefers studying the harder language, because it will be useful to him in his after-work. Still this student is to see himself beaten, it may be, by another who, just considering the way in which he can get through the easiest, takes German instead of Greek. Surely there is unfairness here.

As regards the respective difficulties of the three subjects there is not, I think, any chance of dispute. I must confess that I have never studied much German, and no Hebrew; but I have always heard and have always believed, that neither of these languages was nearly as difficult as Greek. To him who still thinks German harder than Greek, I would recommend a careful perusal of a paper read a few years ago by Prof. McDonald, at a meeting of the Teachers Association held in the College. It will convince him, I have no doubt. And as regards the "proficiency one is expected to attain," I am of opinion that one is expected, and has to be, *more* proficient in Greek than in German. You have only to look, I think, at the examination papers published in the Calendar to be convinced of this. As for Hebrew, you have not said it was more difficult than Greek, and wisely so. You would have found it hard, if not impos-

sible, to make any unprejudiced person believe, that the elements of a language, however difficult, can be as hard as advanced Greek. It will be noticed by every one who has read your reply, that you have steered clear of Astronomy altogether. Was it because you thought there might be some unfairness in putting it on the same footing with German and Hebrew?

I am afraid I have already occupied too much space in the discussion of a subject which can only be interesting to a small number of your readers. But I felt that some of your statements needed answering, and to these I have endeavored to reply.

I am, yours truly,

STUDENT. *G*

OUR EXCHANGES.

VERY few exchanges have as yet arrived. Most college papers, and nearly all Canadian ones, are published monthly, generally at the beginning of the month, and college journals are not the things which above all others are distinguished by the unvarying punctuality with which they make their appearance.

The first exchange that comes to hand is the ARGOSY, which does not in the issue for January fall *below*, at all events, the quite respectable line of its average excellence. We were especially pleased with an article written by "S." on "Ramblings through Foreign Art Galleries." We presume this is the first of a series, as it deals with only one Gallery, viz., the National Art Gallery of Scotland. The article is written in a knowing and interesting manner, evidently by one who appreciated the art and enjoyed the ramble. There are cleverness and skill displayed in the mock criticism on "The Latest Poem." If not the intrinsic merit of the ode, then it must have been the superior charm of the fair authoresses in other respects, that inspired the writer's ingenuity. We would advise the Exchange man not to hazard many expressions like the following: "Cool your heated brow, friend, and we think you will come to the conclusion that the ARGOSY editors are not the stamp of men you seem at present to think they are." This sounds too much like self-conceit,

DALHOUSIE IN COUNCIL.

A GENERAL meeting of the students was held on Wednesday, the 25th ult., to consider matters in reference to the Gymnasium. The committee brought in a report which was adopted. The committee had made all arrangements, and had got tenders from different instructors, the terms of which were made known to the students. The old committee was discharged, with thanks, and a new one appointed with power to draw up rules and regulations. The committee was further empowered to make all arrangements about the instructor, and various other matters in connection with the Gymnasium. This committee is to consist of Davidson, Campbell, Bell, Taylor and Crowe. After this the meeting adjourned.

A SECOND meeting was held on Friday, the 27th ult., to consider matters *in re* GAZETTE. So said the notice, but when the students assembled on that evening there was no person there who knew what the business was. Then there were curses, not loud but deep. At last, however, the secretary put in an appearance and the meeting proceeded to business. The resignation of Mr. Kempton as editor was read and on motion accepted; Mr. Crowe was appointed editor in his stead. After this the meeting adjourned.

PERSONALS.

A. J. MURRAY, a General of Session '78-'79, is teaching at Fisher's Grant, Pictou Co.

S. KEITH, who was a student here for some years, is now attending Medical College, Kingston.

J. F. DUSTAN, a General here a few years ago, and once an editor of the GAZETTE, is now at Princeton, N. J., studying theology.

W. IVES, a Freshman of '78-'79, is studying law in the office of J. D. McLeod, Esq., Pictou. We wish him every success in his legal studies.

J. T. WYLIE, winner of the Professor's Scholarship in '78-'79, is teaching the "young idea" at Nappan, Cumberland Co.

BROWNRIGG, a Senior of '77-'78, but who was compelled to leave early in that session on account of ill health, is Principal of the Academy at Bridgewater.

brag and bravado, which are not at all *comme il faut* in a college journal, and in the least becoming to the "modest ARGOSY." A very good account is given of the late burning of the Male Academy, which would have been better still, had not the writer strained so hard after the tragic in the opening paragraph. We may here express our sympathy with the Sackvilians in their recent loss. Fate seems determined to thwart the yearnings expressed by the editors of having the "hazy uncertainty and romantic quaintness of the past" gather around their institutions. We wonder if in the late conflagration there was not the finger of destiny pointing to Consolidation? If so it is a significant augury that the flames, if we understand the description aright, extended in the direction of Halifax. Some people *will* be superstitious, you know.

The BATES STUDENT from Lewiston, Me., enters with the New Year upon its tenth volume, and appears in new covers which present a very neat appearance. It also comes from a new editorial board, which indicates that the students of Bates appoint their editors in the middle of the session, not at its commencement as is most generally the case. There would be some inconveniences in this plan, we imagine, yet it would tend to a more equable division of labour in any one session. We welcome the new editors into the high and honorable field of journalism, and trust that they may always find that it is a very good place to be in.

The COLLEGIAN AND NEOTORIAN represents Lawrence University, Appleton, Wis., and would do so more respectably, had it a better style of cover. It has some readable articles, however, and a spirited remonstrance in "The Grumbler's Corner" against certain rules and restrictions imposed upon the students, in regard to their conduct towards the young ladies connected with the institution, and similar matters. We sympathize with them and wish them speedy redress. When students are commanded by the powers that be to "distribute their attentions on all ladies alike," why, resentment is a natural and proper sentiment.

W. F. FRASER, winner of Young Elocution Prize in '78-'79, is studying law in the office of H. W. C. Boak, Esq., Halifax.

WE have still to add to our list of Dalhousians in Pictou County. We thought we had completed the list in our last issue, but we find to make it complete we must add the names of J. R. COLLIE, M. D., River John, County Councillor for Polling Section No. 4, Pictou Co.; A. P. SMITH, M. D., Lower Barney's River; E. KENNEDY, M. D., Stellarton; M. LINTON, M. D., Westville. None of the above gentlemen completed their course at Dalhousie, but all attended this college for some years. Among the clergymen of Pictou County, we have also more representatives than we at first supposed. The congregation of Salt Springs has for its pastor one of Dalhousie's sons, J. FITZPATRICK, B.A., '75. Over St. Andrew's Church, New Glasgow, GEORGE MURRAY, for two or three years a student here, is the much respected pastor. This congre-

gation is an exceedingly large one, and it is but right that we should congratulate them on the choice they have made. A. W. McLEOD, B. A., '75, who graduated from Princeton in '78, and obtained his M. A. degree from Dalhousie in the same year, has been lately inducted pastor of the "United Congregation" of West River. Previous to his removal to West River he had been settled in Parrsboro', Cumberland Co. The congregation over which he now presides, is the very charge, once ministered to by the venerable Principal of our College.

It will be interesting to those students who regularly attend the debates in the House of Assembly to know, that the Hon. J. F. Stairs was educated in Dalhousie. Mr. Stairs was elected member for Halifax some time after the election of 1878, to fill the place of Mr. McDonald, who had resigned his position in order to become Post Office Inspector. His well known abilities at once secured him a place on the Executive Council.

DALHOUSIE COLLEGE & UNIVERSITY.

MUNRO Exhibitions & Bursaries.

Through the liberality of GEORGE MUNRO, Esq., of New York, the following Exhibitions and Bursaries will be offered for competition at the commencement of the Winter's Session of this College, 1882, 1883, and 1884.

In 1882 **Five Junior Exhibitions** of the annual value of \$200, tenable for two years, and **Ten Junior Bursaries** of the annual value of \$150, tenable for two years.

Seven Senior Bursaries of the annual value of \$200, tenable for two years.

In 1883 **Five Senior Exhibitions** of the annual value of \$200, tenable for two years.

Ten Senior Bursaries of the annual value of \$150, tenable for two years.

In 1884 **Five Senior Exhibitions** of the annual value of \$200, tenable for two years.

Ten Senior Bursaries of the annual value of \$150, tenable for two years.

The Exhibitions are open to all candidates; the Bursaries are open to candidates from the Maritime Provinces. The Junior Exhibitions and Bursaries are open to candidates for Matriculation in Arts; the Senior Exhibitions and Bursaries to undergraduates of any University who have completed two, and only two, years of their Arts course, and who intend to enter the third year of the Arts course in this University.

The subjects of examination for the Junior Exhibitions and Bursaries of 1882 will be the same as those for the Junior Exhibitions and Bursaries of 1881, with the following modifications:

The Classical books to be professed will be, in LATIN—*Cæsar*, Gallic War, Book VI., and *Ovid*, *Metamorphoses*, Book I.; and in GREEK, *Xenophon*, *Anabasis*, Books III. and IV. In MATHEMATICS, the Third Book of Euclid is added to the Geometry required, and the Theory of Indices to the Algebra required.

A statement of conditions, dates and subjects of examinations, &c., may be obtained on application to the Principal, Dalhousie College, Halifax, N. S.

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