Professor Dixley Naylor delivered his third Friday lecture at the People’s Hall, Falmouth, on the 1st February. He dealt with the theatre-going in classic times, choosing particularly the year 481 B.C., as both Sophocles and Euripides plays were produced in Athens in that year. The Athenians, he said, were very fond of their theatre and that “The Medes” is still procurable. The lecturer invited his audience “to put back the clock,” and come with me to the city of Athens. Let us drink the plays of Sophocles and Euripides; let us learn to appreciate the influence of Greek drama. The audience was invited to join in a toast “to the gods and the heroes of the past.”

It is March 25th, the first day of the Dionysia, and the festival is in full swing. The playwrights who celebrate the festival of Dionysus, small crowds watch the circus, where two daimons are turning the game of racing. The audience is invited to listen to fiddlers; and knots of noisy politicians. Tomorrow we hear that the poets are going to compete in the tragedy at the theatre on the stage of the city of Athens. The playwrights, joined by their actors, chorus, and choruses (the state-appointed officials who paid the expenses of each poet’s play), are about to put on their show. In this evening’s torchlight procession, the youths who have just come of age (16 years old) and women in their briefest dress will draw the statue of Dionysus from its place and convey it to the theatre where they act in it. The open space of about 25 feet, surrounded by the stage and the audience, will be lit with torches. The theatre is large enough for the expected number of spectators, and the gods who are present will be able to see every detail of the performance. Chisels of 50 strong complete, five boys and five men, and after a close contest Aesopicae carries the prize. The following day, there will be another procession; the playwrights will assemble at the theatre, where the frost is on the grass and the air is crisp and cold. The box seats will be occupied by the judges of the two competitions. At the top sit the judges, below them, the “ephebe,” next to the stage is the entrance, and the poor have a free pass. The aged priest of Dionysus opens the proceedings, and the first play, which is a religious ceremony performed by the priest of all the deities, is performed. They are as usual three, and a satyr play. The game, which lasts for seven hours, and in the afternoon the first comic poet will perform. The audience is in constant awe of the gods, and the silence is disturbed by no audible noise. The audience is seated, and the veil is lifted. At the end of the festival, the awards are given by the jurymen, and the verdict goes to Euphorion. Congratulations, commemorations, and wrestling, and the victor steps forward and is crowned with the olive garland by the Lord High Steward. Professor Dixley Naylor applauds the success of the event.