

One would think, if Latin can be learned at all, that four years at any School where it is taught should give a boy a fair insight into the language.

But what are the facts? These four years suffice only to give a boy, however bright he may be, a very vague and theoretical view of Latin. If we question him, we will find that he knows a smattering of grammar, that he has at least a small vocabulary of Latin words, and when a short simple Latin sentence is shown him, he can frequently make some attempt at translating it. We cannot stick him at declining nouns or adjectives; and as to conjugating verbs, he can do this sleeping or waking.

But how much real Latin does he know? Give him an extract from Cæsar or Cicero—I mean something he has not already learned by heart—and what can he make of it? Nothing more than he could of hieroglyphics. To take up a piece of Latin and translate it as he might a piece of French or German, is something which we need not expect of the youth who has just graduated from a High School. Four years at a High School may enable him to talk learnedly about declensions and conjugations, and to go through certain rigmaroles, which, to one unacquainted with Latin, may sound like wisdom, but four such years rarely suffice to give him any real knowledge of the Latin language.

Let us allow this boy, therefore, four more years—not at School this time, but at College—and see how much Latin he will know at the end of his course. Eight years' study of any language, we think, should be sufficient to make the dullest student quite familiar with it. But we are