

LETTERS TO YOUNG MEN AT COLLEGE.

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COLLEGE COURSE.

THE average college course is well known; it is to teach something of everything, which must, of necessity, mean not a very great deal of anything. But consider that no one finishes his education in a college, and no one wants to know everything about everything, he only wants to know everything about some one thing. What is this something of everything that a boy is to learn?

This must be answered in a paragraph, nor will the same answer apply in every case. You know there is a long-continued warfare to displace the classics—the Latin and Greek classics—out of our colleges and universities. The men of science want to have science in their stead, but Latin and Greek have all the advantages of tenants in possession. These arguments, however, would not apply to such classics as are taught in most of our colleges, and unless a college is equipped equal to a full university course the sciences cannot generally be considered as of much importance in them.

A boy who goes to college means, of course, to have his Latin and Greek grammars on the very top of his satchel. He must needs wait until the next generation for a reversal of the past in this direction.

With these two languages there will be added his own, and at least one other—French or German—as the most natural things in the world. These gifts of tongues are inseparable from a college education, and generally the new student manages them like a rider in the Hippodrome—sometimes he has all well in rein and

rides his own steed, and again he is dragged on or is rolled over in the dust. But if he is well mounted on his own horse he can get along pretty well with or without the others.

The study of English—assuming that to be the language of the house—is, or ought to be, the main feature and test of a college, and by a study of it one does not mean such an acquaintance with it as when one makes up to a foreigner such as Greek or German. By the study of English in a college, we mean composition, elocution and the study of the literature. Incidentally also we connect history and such matters as go to interpret it.

These, with some lessons in chemistry, philosophy, botany, and other special studies in the natural sciences, go to make up a college course, and are, every one knows, there already. We must explain why reference should here be made to it.

It often happens that a college grows around some one man who is distinguished in his own line, who attracts students to him, and then gets assistants, and develops into an academy and then into a college. If he be a good classic, as they speak of excellence in the dead languages of Greece and Rome, then you may be sure his college is distinguished in that direction, and the best prize is for such iambic trimeters as the head student can compose. In the same way if it be literary tastes in English, and he is known as an author, you may expect excellence in that direction, and so on in other departments. In Catholic colleges prominence is always given to the classics, especially Latin—it is as necessary as English.