

Editorial Department.

COLLEGE STUDIES FIRST.

THIS is not the order with some students. Occasionally we find that outside reading is made of primary importance and the class exercises brought into subordination. Is this advantageous to students? No one will deny that it is desirable to be well read not only in the current literature of the day, but also in the whole field of classical English. This end, however, should not be allowed to encroach on our college work. A brief reflection on the purpose of that work will suffice to confirm our conclusion. The primary aim of education is not to fill the mind with facts, however useful in themselves these may be. It seeks rather to increase the power of the mind by proper discipline. Now we hold that this end which obviously lies at the basis of all well-regulated college curricula is not attained by general reading. We may thus fill our minds with useful facts and become conversant with the best authors, but surely that is not to be compared with the impulse given to our mental powers in mastering subjects for the ordeal of an examination. It is true that students have a higher motive in their study than the passing of examinations, but it must be granted that these tests result in a healthful mental discipline. They are incentives to a closeness of application and an intensity of thought which is not often realized without them.

General reading certainly should not be neglected. It is not our intention by any means to belittle it. We desire simply to impress the fact that during the winter months it should not be allowed to impinge on our college exercises. This rule holds good also with respect to all our social arrangements.

The college curricula provide an abundant scope for the employment of all the powers of the most competent student. The different courses at our disposal from the Preparatory up to the honor courses of McGill University, and our own college make ample provision for the diversity of talent and physical capability to be found among those who seek a collegiate training. And every student should grapple with as much college work as his utmost capacity will allow; it is only by so doing that he will secure most effectively that benefit which such a training is intended to convey. The records of college life furnish us with too many instances of students who seriously impaired their training by allowing other interests to encroach on their studies. Certainly there are legitimate exceptions to the rules we have sought to lay down. Financial considerations frequently make it necessary to engage in other employments.