the benign protection of Diana, seclusion and retirement from the busy world around them; and at the same time better realize and cultivate the social element in their characters.

In truth, such is the sanctity which shrouds the place, that even the dauntless youth, who

"Everywhere as welcome guest
Steps in with easy mind,"

pauses at the threshold, then turns sorrowfully away.

X. Y.

Gold Mining in Colombia.

To one engaged in gold mining, at present or in prospect, the gold mines of Colombia must be a subject of interest. It has long been known that the gold and platinum deposits of the United States of Colombia were among the richest of the world. So abundant are these precious metals that the natives—Indians—scoop up the mud and sand from the river beds in their hands, wash it out in their rude pans in the ordinary manner, and obtain all the way from twenty-five cents to $5.00 worth per pan. Gold is obtained with equal facility from the basins of all the rivers of this country, but the Atrato River, which rises in the Cordilleras and flows into the Gulf of Darien, is especially rich in these alluvial deposits, and an American company has been recently formed to work them.

The method to be employed is vacuum dredging, the operation of which is very simple and effective. From a scow, anchored in the river, an air-tight tube is sunk to the bottom, the air in the tube is exhausted by steam, a vacuum is formed, and the pressure of the atmosphere forces up everything within the capacity of the tube, the size of which is of course variable, but in this case is about two feet in diameter. The mud, sand, and other material is discharged through a valve, opened by a cam-lever, upon the scow, where it is then washed in the ordinary manner for the grains of gold. The mouth of the pipe is made slightly smaller than anywhere else in its length, so as to secure the easy discharge of whatever enters it.

It is said that stones twenty inches in diameter have been lifted with this dredge. The machine has a lifting capacity of from three to six tons of material at each lift, and makes a lift in about three minutes. It is estimated that it will dredge 3,000 cubic yards per day. The machine is now in successful operation on the Chestatee River in Georgia, for gold dredging, and in Maine and Vermont for other work. With such a powerful machine as this, the profit of dredging the as yet unworked basins of the Colombian rivers can readily be seen.

R.

Communications.

[The Editors do not hold themselves responsible for opinions expressed by correspondents.]

Mr. Editor: — An editorial in a recent issue of The Tech upon the advisability of raising the standard, as well as the age of applicants for admission, and dwelling upon some of the disadvantages of the present system, has, no doubt, been read by the thinking members of the several classes with much interest; for it is generally felt among us that even with all the advantages the Institute affords for instruction in the sciences, it has, possibly, a tendency to turn out men who are not quite so well balanced as professional men ought to be. This is attributed in part to the low requirements of admission, and in part to the few years that must have passed over the head of a candidate ere he enters these walls.

That this is true in a large number of cases there can be no doubt, but the writer would beg to differ as to the remedies suggested, especially the second one, that the student "might, on leaving the preparatory school, spend two years in travel or business, as circumstances might dictate." The question of spending this time in business I will leave for the present, that I may protest at once against the advisability of a young man of sixteen years of age spending two years in travel before he resumes his stud-