

TO RALPH WALDO EMERSON.

*December 12, 1864.*

MY DEAR EMERSON, — If your lecture on universities, the first of your course, has been correctly reported to me, I am almost inclined to quarrel with you for having missed an excellent chance to help me, and advance the true interests of the college. You say that Natural History is getting too great an ascendancy among us, that it is out of proportion to other departments, and hint that a check-rein would not be amiss on the enthusiastic professor who is responsible for this.

Do you not see that the way to bring about a well-proportioned development of all the resources of the University is not to check the natural history department, but to stimulate all the others? not that the zoölogical school grows too fast, but that the others do not grow fast enough? This sounds invidious and perhaps somewhat boastful; but it is you and not I who have instituted the comparison. It strikes me you have not hit upon the best remedy for this want of balance. If symmetry is to be obtained by cutting down the most vigorous growth, it seems to me it would be better to have a little irregularity here and