



A UNIVERSITY BENEFACTOR.

Memorial Tribute to Mr. Lampson by a Classmate.

To the Editor of the Yale Alumni Weekly:

Sir:—William Lampson, whose recent death and gifts to Yale, have made him in some sort a public character, was my classmate. To not more, I suppose, than three or four of his class—one of these not now living—can he be said to have been intimately, or even well, known. One would find it difficult perhaps to name another man more completely unknown to our Yale world for the past 25 years. His great, almost unprecedented gift,—really unprecedented if regard be had to its proportion to the total of his estate,—has inevitably lifted him into fame. I gratify, therefore, a reasonable public interest, as well as my personal feeling, by here trying to tell what manner of man he essentially was, as I saw and knew him.

If any one imagines, as many seem to do, that men rise suddenly, or at the last supreme moment, to some great or noble act pitched quite above the ordinary plane of their lives, one does not well heed the laws of character or the workings of human nature. To those who knew Mr. Lampson well, there is nothing unusual or unexpected, least of all unnatural, in what he has done for Yale. By nature, as well as unbroken habit, he was unobtrusive, quiet, reserved, highly reticent, except to the few he cared for and trusted in. By nature and habit, he was, too, strong-willed, self-reliant, independent, even to the point of apparent, if not real, disregard for others' opinions or feelings. In one large aspect, Shakespeare's familiar words describe him;—

"Lofty and sour to those that loved him not;

"But, to those men who sought him, sweet as summer".

Rather unambitious himself in college, no man whom I there knew was more appreciative of the success or good work of others, whether in scholarship, or in other lines. He had naturally, if any man can be so described, an excellent taste in literary matters. He exercised himself with great diligence in college in reading and in composition. Whoever knew his choice of books or had looked over his writings as a Yale "Lit" editor has discovered the truth of this remark. He enjoyed intensely his college life, his few friends, and one of two of his instructors. Our classmate, S. B. Eaton, his most intimate friend to the last, has elsewhere spoken of the fascination which Professor Thacher had over him. It was touching and in every way beautiful to see and now to remember.

Special family circumstances turned him three years after he left college to the seclusion of a business life in the small village of LeRoy, which remained absolutely unbroken for his remaining 32 years of life. The death of his father 25 years ago left him in sole charge of a large and prosperous bank. The death of an only and greatly-loved sister saddened him beyond his power to resist. This was followed by the death of one of his two younger brothers; and he was left with but one survivor of his household, an invalid and crippled brother, whose death preceded his own by only two months. Faithful to a

scruple, to his financial, as well as personal, duties through all this, he stood at last at the age of 57, alone. Sorrow, seclusion, loneliness, desolation of heart, had done their work. "He must sink overwheeled, as at nightfall, when it was yet but the mid-season of day."

But the man of 1862 in college was not changed in spirit or habits of thought, at the last. One bright vision attended him on all his way,—the vision of his college life and his friendships there. When, therefore, he was left without living relatives to care for, it was in perfect keeping with his character and the sentiment of his life, to give to Yale the fortune which he had inherited and had so wisely and skilfully kept and greatly enlarged. If there be those who would say 'better to have given it while he lived,' I would reply he could never have done it; his aversion to notoriety or public personal notice of all kinds was too ingrained and profound. In truth, as I write these words my only misgiving is that I know well he would forbid me, if he is now the same spirit he was when here.

Mr. Lampson, as I have intimated, had remarkable tenacity of purpose, remarkable strength of will, amounting in the eyes of some, to obstinacy. No doubt, he had, like all of us, the effects of his qualities; but it is a complete mistake for any to think he could not change or was deaf to arguments which ran counter to his ways or even his prejudices. Let me illustrate this. In politics he was a life-long Democrat. I think most of our class will recall nothing of him more clearly than the apparent bitterness or bigotry of his political opinions. In the last national canvass he was, like so many others of us, brought face to face with the question whether we should forget all other issues and stand for financial honor and decency at the price,—the cruel and bitter price,—of voting for one who, on almost all other issues, embodied what we held to be gross and dangerous political heresies. I know no man to whom this brought greater sacrifice of feeling than to Mr. Lampson; but he met the issue as became him; and the last time, absolutely the last time, he left his house was when he was carried to the polls to cast his vote for McKinley.

One reflection which comes to me in recalling my classmate is the tremendous hold which Yale has upon her sons! Wherever the scenes of their lives may fall, how widely soever they may stray in place, or habit, or thought, the heart, untraveled, fondly turns at last to the old home of so many influences and friendships.

And another reflection,—and one it may be well to state,—is: What a responsibility rests on those now at Yale who thus enter into the reward of their predecessor! To really deserve all this devotion, to keep full high advanced the great standard of power and influence which have prevailed there in the older days, is a duty not to be met by numbers only, nor by outward appliances chiefly, as too often seems to be thought, nor by achievements in directions opposite to the old ones, but only by steadfast fidelity to those lofty ideals of scholarship and character which gave Yale all her power over William Lampson.

D. H. Chamberlain.

New York City,
February 20, 1897.

MR. LAMPSON'S BEQUEST.

Disposition of the Property—An Alumni Hall Mentioned.

The will of the late William Lampson, '62, who died in LeRoy, N. Y., on Sunday, February 14, has been made public since the last issue of The Weekly. Mr. Farnam, treasurer of the University, returned to New Haven last Friday after a trip to Rochester, where he attended the funeral as Yale's official representative. Property which at the latest estimation has been valued at between \$400,000 and \$500,000 has been left to Yale University. It is at present impossible to obtain the exact figures of the value of the property, as it has not yet been appraised, and it is hardly probable that the matter can be entirely cleared up within a year. It was thought at first that the amount would approximate \$1,000,000, but later reports show that this is not true. The will specifies that \$150,000 shall be devoted to a University building, to serve the purposes of a lecture and alumni hall, and that the remainder of the bequest be appropriated to chairs of instruction primarily in English, Latin and Greek. In case the funds are more than enough for this purpose, they can be devoted to other chairs of instruction. These provisions allow the Corporation considerable latitude in the appropriation of the bequest. The Corporation will not determine exactly what will be done with the bequest until it is formally delivered into their hands, which will not take place until at least a year has elapsed.

MR. EATON'S ACQUAINTANCE WITH HIM.

Mr. S. B. Eaton, '62, who was a classmate of Mr. Lampson at Yale, has given the following interview to the New York Tribune:

"William Lampson and I were classmates in the class of '62 at Yale, and the class friendship then begun continued through his life. Probably I knew Mr. Lampson better than any of his classmates or any of his other friends, and I certainly saw more of him. Mr. Lampson came from good New England stock. One of his ancestors was a Colonel in the Revolutionary Army. Sir Curtis Lampson, his uncle, was one of a well-known group of American financiers living in London, including George Peabody and J. S. Morgan. After graduating from college, Mr. Lampson went abroad for two years, studying at Heidelberg. Upon returning to this country, in 1864, he entered the Columbia Law School, and took the regular course, although he never practised law. He then accepted a position in his father's bank at LeRoy. A few years later his father died, and upon William was thrown the entire care of the family (a widow and four children), together with the property. One brother was married, but died without offspring. The mother and sister died, and William Lampson and a brother, known as 'the Colonel,' were left alone, living together in the large family mansion for the rest of their days.

"The two best known pieces of property belonging to the estate, and now apparently going to Yale, are the Bank of Le Roy and Ingham University of Le Roy. Ingham University consists of three or four large buildings, located in the center of Le Roy, and in old times was a prosperous seminary for young women. Mr. Lampson had loaned money on the institution of late years, and in the end took it on a mortgage foreclosure.

"Mr. Lampson was always interested in education, and cherished an especial fondness for Yale. His last visit there was made in company with myself, about six years ago. The next year after this he and I made a visit to Harvard, and he was interested in examining the new buildings, especially

Sanders Theater. He talked freely about erecting a similar one for Yale, but not long afterward decided that the best gift he could make to the University would be one yielding cash, which decision he followed out in the terms of his will. Prof. Thomas Thacher held complete sway over Lampson when in college, and the memory of him had much to do with influencing Mr. Lampson so favorably toward Yale.

"While Mr. Lampson was a member of the Metropolitan and University clubs, of this city, he seldom visited them. He was fond, when on a visit here, of roaming about the city, studying the improvements and exploring old quarters which he read of. His only brother died a short time ago, and this is supposed to have affected him seriously. In business, Mr. Lampson was sagacious and conservative. He never speculated in any sense of the word and never once sold or bought a share of stock in Wall Street. His business methods were what are now called old-fashioned. His investments were principally in securities, and I shall be surprised if when they are turned over to Yale they are not found to be an exceptionally sound and gilt-edged lot."

"Lit." Editors Elected.

The meeting for the election of the Ninety-eight board of the Yale Literary Magazine was held last Tuesday night, February 23. The following men were nominated: F. Wyckes, F. A. Lord, A. D. Baldwin, E. C. Streeter, D. D. Burrell, G. Morris, and H. D. Gallaudet. The final ballot resulted in the election of the following: Arthur Douglas Baldwin, of Maui, H. I.; David DeForest Burrell, of New York City; Gouverneur Morris, of New York City; Edward Clark Streeter, of Chicago, Ill.; and Franklin Atkins Lord, of Morehead, Minn.

The University Taxation Question.

It has been definitely settled that the Yale Co-operative store on the Campus shall be taxed. A hearing was held concerning the matter before the Board of Relief Friday morning, Feb. 19. Prof. Reynolds, president of the Co-operative corporation, and Mr. Vincent, appeared before the Board and said that they were willing to pay taxes on a fair valuation of their property, which was estimated at about \$3,000. Prof. Reynolds stated in addition that the store was operated for the benefit of the students, that there were about 650 members but that it owned no capital stock. It was then decided by the Board of Relief that the store and its contents should be taxed.

The valuation of \$1500 has been put upon it and the annual tax will amount to \$33.75.

At a session of the Town Board of Relief from Taxation, held Saturday, Feb. 20, the assessment of the property of Yale University, which amounted to \$439,782, and from which the University had filed a formal appeal to the Board came up for discussion. The only action which the Board saw fit to take was the passing of the following vote: "There has been no action on the Yale University property for the reason that no representative of said Corporation appeared before the Board, to enable this Board to obtain the facts necessary for a correct judgment of the case." The vote of the Board signifies that the assessment levied by the Assessors on the Yale property will stand. When the attempt is made to collect the tax the University will probably make an appeal by counsel to the court.

The Yale Freshman Union is making efforts to arrange a debate with the Columbia Freshmen.