

# YALE ALUMNI WEEKLY

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## BETTER USE IT IN RHETORIC.

### Professor Beers on the Lampson Bequest and the English Department.

At the invitation of the editor of the Yale Alumni Weekly, I have agreed to say something about the needs of the English Department, and the best use to be made of the new professorships. The opinions here expressed are my individual opinions. The English Department, as a whole, is in no way responsible for them.

The English staff in Yale College (Academic Department) for the coming year will be composed of two professors, an assistant professor and five instructors, even should the two new chairs remain unfilled. I believe that force is large enough, if properly distributed, to handle the work; and that the two professors already on the ground might be put upon the Emily Sanford and Lampson foundations, thereby releasing an equivalent income for the general uses of the College. But I ought to explain what I mean by "properly distributed." If I had my way, English literature would not be taught as a required study, nor would there be any entrance requirement in the subject. The instructors who are now engaged in teaching the required courses in Freshman and Sophomore years would thus be set free for elective work in the Senior and Junior classes and in the Graduate School.

But the College has committed itself—unwisely, as I think—to a system of required work in English literature in the lower classes and in the preparatory schools. Moreover, there is a general expectation, on the part of the public, that the new endowments will be used to strengthen the Department by adding new men to the present corps of instructors. Under the circumstances, therefore, we shall have to look about for such men, if we wish to satisfy the alumni and to enrich the elective program of English study in the upper classes.

#### WHAT "ENGLISH" INCLUDES.

Now, "English" includes three branches of instruction:

(1) Rhetoric, or the arts of spoken and written expression, comprising theme work, praxis, lectures on style, text-book instruction in rhetorical theory, the reading of authors for purposes of rhetorical analysis, etc.

(2) Philology or linguistics, i. e., the study of the English language, its structure and history, embracing usually, courses in Old and Middle English, etc.

(3) English literature, or the study of literary history, or of authors for their own sake and not as illustrations of rhetorical principles or linguistic laws. Of course these branches run into each other; no hard and fast line can be drawn between them. But they are easily separable and are, in fact, practically separated every day in the teaching given at Yale as at other colleges.

English philology is, perhaps, already well provided for here. Anyone wishing to study Anglo-Saxon, or Early English, or the history of the language, has an opportunity to do so under a teacher who is a recognized authority in his subject. The classes in this branch will naturally always be small. Few men specialize, as undergraduates, in linguistic science. Fifty men, or a hundred men are interested in Shakespeare, where one is interested in Caedmon.

#### RHETORICAL EQUIPMENT INADEQUATE.

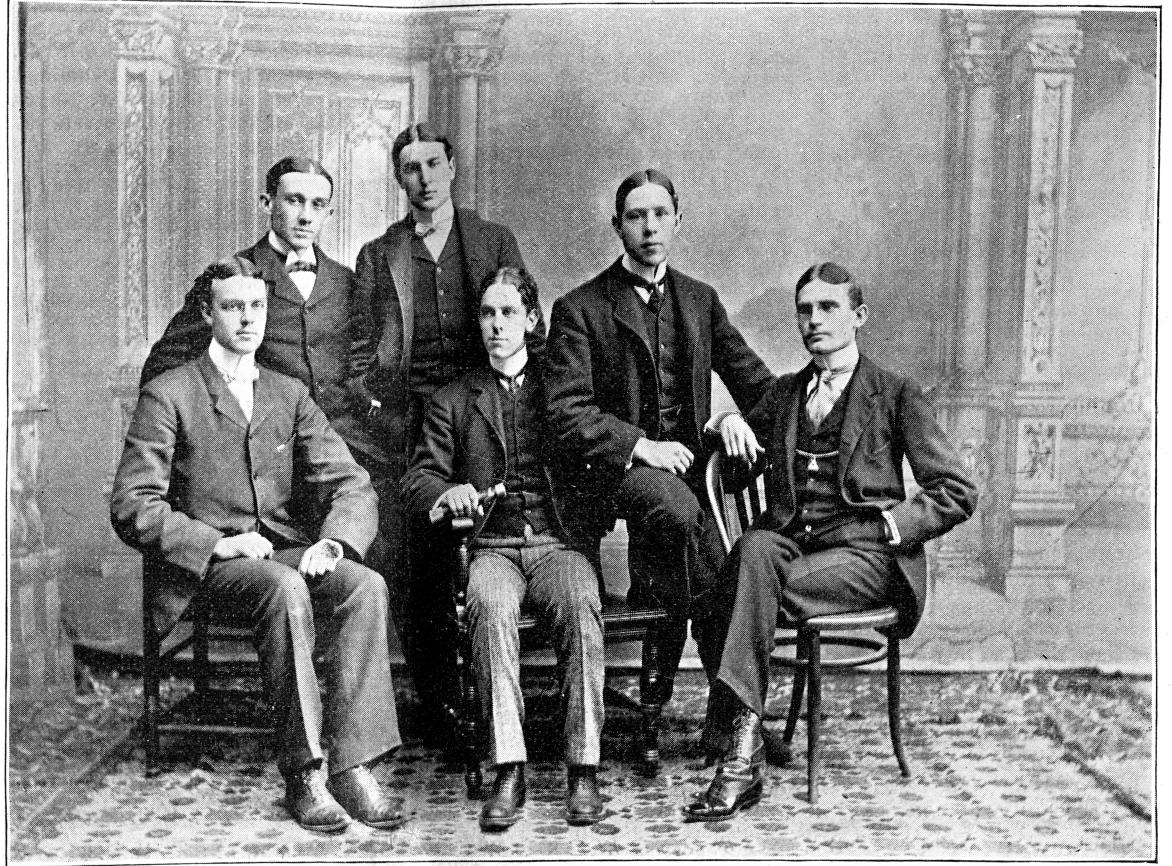
On the other hand, the rhetorical instruction in the College is, at present, quite inadequate, not in quality, but in amount. This is work which requires

a large force. To read and criticize the themes of twelve hundred undergraduates, to train twelve hundred men individually in writing and speaking is a prodigious task. And to be of much effect, the work must be individual. Every student ought to write, not four but ten—but twenty—themes a year; and every theme should be carefully criticized. There is perhaps no department of human labour in which the returns bear so small a proportion to the energy expended as in this. We are not going to provide adequate rhetorical instruction for our students by filling the Lampson chair with a silver-tongued orator. The drudgery of theme reading is something which no silver-tongue will long endure.

For rhetoric in the old sense, i. e., oratory, or public speaking, the College has long ceased to make provision. This is something which can best be managed by the students themselves, in debating clubs of their own, like the old Linonia and Brothers and the modern Yale Union; just as journalism is carried on by the undergraduate periodicals; though Mr. Hesing, I see, is calling loudly for a graduate school of journalism here, just as Mr. Chamberlin is calling for some one to train us in public speaking.

Well doubtless that "Richtung" ought to have recognition; and I, for one, would be glad to have the alumni gratified by the appointment, to one of the new chairs, of some accomplished speaker—I say, the nearest modern analogue attainable of Edward Everett. I shall hope to see the other chair filled by a man of letters; a scholar, of course, but also, if possible, one who has made contributions to literature; not necessarily to what is known as "creative" literature—fiction, poetry, drama, etc., but to literary history, biography, criticism or the like; who is something more than an annotator of texts or a compiler of other men's writings.

HENRY A. BEERS.



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See page five.

## STATUS OF THE CLASSICS.

### Professor Seymour Reports a Strong Department.—Another Latin Professor is Suggested.

The terms of Mr. Lampson's recent bequest to Yale call attention to the condition of classical studies in our University. To inquire in detail how this gift will affect the Classical Department, may be premature. Very probably one of the present professors of Greek will be put upon a Lampson foundation. That another professor of Latin should be added seems exceedingly desirable, and more probable than before in view of the increase in the funds available for this purpose.

The Latin Department has three permanent officers, but Professor H. P. Wright has had his thoughts and strength drawn away from philological teaching and research by the important and absorbing duties of the Deanship, for which he has shown very unusual fitness. Those regret most his partial withdrawal from work as a teacher, who know best the accuracy and depth of his scholarship and his powers of clear statement. His work as Dean leaves him less than half his time for Latin, although his influence in the Department is important. Professor Peck is devoted entirely to elective and graduate work. Thus for a large part of the year Professor Morris is the only permanent officer of the Latin Department who is engaged in the instruction of the Freshman and Sophomore classes. At least one additional professor should take part in this work.

But we would not imply that the classes are suffering from any lack of competence in their Latin teachers.

The time is distinctly in the past when tutors have been selected on the sole ground of general scholarship. For several college generations no one has been called to teach the classics at Yale who has not had special preparation for the work, and did not expect to devote his life to classical studies. Of the younger officers in Latin at present, four have received the degree of Ph. D., in classical philology, and the fifth has had a long residence in Italy. No one of them is without experience in teaching. One received his A. B. thirteen years ago, another nine years ago. Two have been teaching here for four years, after previous experience elsewhere; another has taught here for three years. Men of this age and training, when carefully selected, are efficient and stimulating teachers of Freshmen and Sophomores. Several of these men are at least fully as learned and competent instructors as the average college professor of our country. But the two lower classes should have also a larger amount than our Latin Department can now afford them of the ripeness and fullness of learning which comes to a teacher only with age.

Our Greek Department has a larger number of experienced instructors than the Latin,—having four professors, of whom the youngest has had fifteen years of experience in teaching. Three of its permanent officers are continually engaged in the instruction of the two lower classes,—two being with the Sophomores, and one with the Freshmen. In this Department, too, the instructors who are not on a permanent appointment have had adequate experience, and preparation. One of these instructors has had twelve years of experience in teaching here. Another has taught for seven years. Two have spent each two years in study at Athens, in connection with the American School of Classical Studies there. A certain amount of young, new blood is desirable in every department, and the present arrangement for the Greek force, four permanent officers, and three on