

# YALE ALUMNI WEEKLY

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## MR. CHAMBERLAIN PROTESTS.

**He Takes Issue with Professor Beers on English and Oratory.**

To the Editor of the Yale Alumni Weekly, Sir:

A gentle reference to me by Professor Beers in his article on the needs of the English Department at Yale in the Weekly of the 11th inst. has given a little natural zest to my reading of his article. Professor Beers' views are so striking—I will use no other adjective at this point—that I feel disposed to notice them briefly.

I confess to a serious and unfeigned hesitation in doing so on one account, namely: I am reluctant to call attention to Professor Beers' views on at least two points. I do not like to have it known any more widely than it must now be, that a full Professor of English Literature at Yale—indeed, the senior Professor and head of his Department—thinks and is bold enough to proclaim his opinion, that there ought to be no requirement whatever of English for entrance to Yale, and no required study whatever of English in college; and further, that he thinks—indeed, states it as a fact—that Yale no longer makes any provision for instruction in oratory, or public speaking.

The first of these opinions I shall not discuss; in truth, I cannot. There are a few things that are settled for me and, I think, for most sane or intelligent people. These few things are not properly open to argument, either for or against. One such thing, I should say, is that English should be taught and required, at school and college, as early and as continuously and as long as, and even earlier and longer than, any other study in the world. Whoever would question or flout this truth, as Professor Beers does, must find other audience than me.

### THE CONFESSION AS TO ORATORY.

More humiliating, if possible, is it to have it proclaimed by the most authoritative voice on the point, that Yale has "long ceased" to give any attention to "oratory, or public speaking." (I here use Professor Beers' exact words, and I am glad to see he identifies oratory with public speaking.) I had long suspected the practical fact to be as Professor Beers states it, but never before heard it confessed. I have had a rather active correspondence within the past year with sundry of the Faculty and Corporation of Yale in which I was by nearly all assured, and by some sharply called to order for doubting, that Yale is now doing more than she ever did, more than Harvard or Princeton is doing, more than Oxford or Cambridge is doing, (I am telling the literal truth, strange as it may seem!), in furnishing instruction, means, and incentives in the art of public speaking. Accepting Professor Beers' statement as correct as to the fact—though I shall be curious to see what my very excellent friends, President Dwight and Dr. Palmer, have to say to it—let us consider it a moment.

Professor Beers says that training for public speaking can be best "managed" by the students themselves in student debating societies. By "managed," he means, I suppose, cultivated, acquired, learned. Would it not be remarkable beyond example, if this were true? Is not public speaking pre-eminently an art, an acquirement, largely subject to the rules which if not wholly technical, are certainly not instinctive or native with anyone?

### EDWARD EVERETT'S ART.

Edward Everett, who seems to stand with Professor Beers for the grand exemplar, though I do not quite know what his "analogue" might be, was above all other men of his day an artist in

oratory. His oratory bore to the last the manifest marks of perfect knowledge and observance of the traditional and scholastic rules of the art—so much so as to point many a sneer and sarcasm. He had not quite art enough to conceal his art, as Phillips had; though for my part, I come near to agreeing with Professor Beers in his estimate of Everett's rank. Does any one but Professor Beers seriously think that Everett's oratory was "managed" by his experience or practice in debating societies, or could have been? It is perfectly well known that it was the result of the most laborious and assiduous study of rhetoric under teachers and in books, supplemented by unwearied drill in elocution under instructors, and finally by the self-imposed, protracted study of the great masters and models of the art.

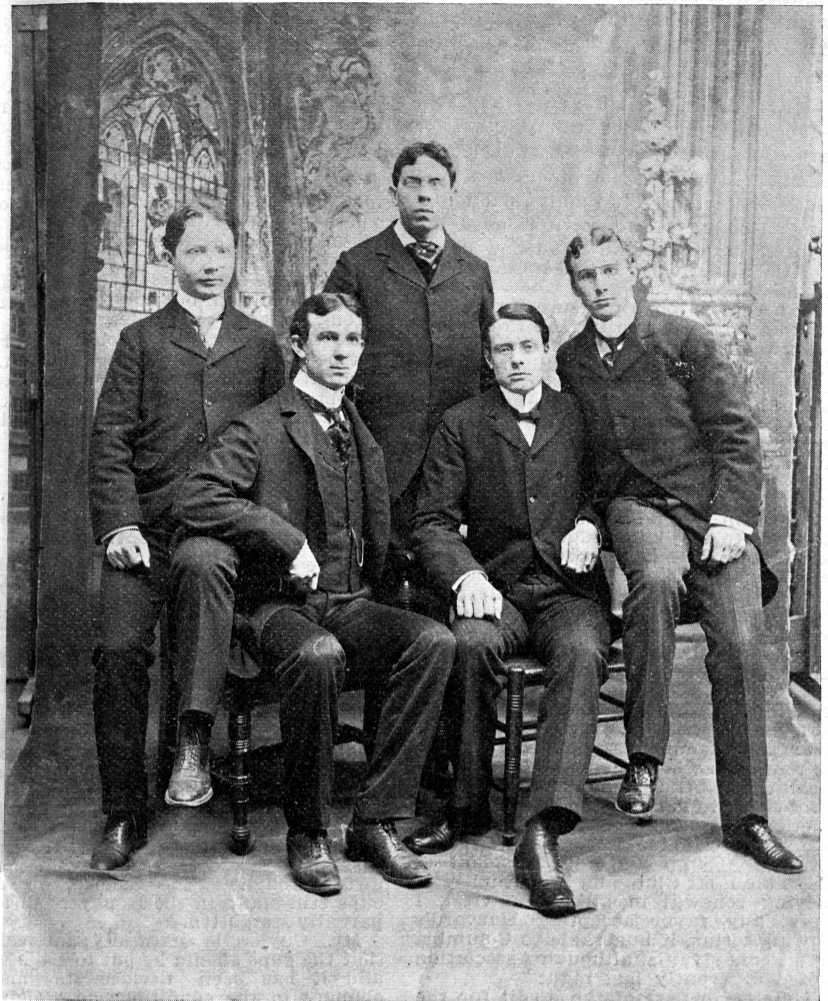
To imagine that Everetts or their "analogues" can be produced, or reproduced, by the practice alone of debating societies, I should call puerile, if Professor Beers had not so informed me. Self-cultivation must always follow the best instruction in public speaking in order to make an accomplished orator, but the foundation must be laid in the most careful instruction in the rules which are to a great extent as fixed and conceded as those of any other art. For such training, for such a foundation, debating societies alone may be said, with perfect truth, to be about the worst schools one can imagine. So "managed," the natural faults that art was invented to overcome and correct, will become inveterate, the insurmountable obstacles, in a short time, to any high success in cultivated oratory. I do not undervalue debating societies. My own record of their use in Linonia is unparalleled, so far as I know, "though I say it that should not say it;" for, I was absent from its meetings, regular or special, or from its debates, ordinary or prize, but once in my four college years. But student debating societies are properly only adjuncts of the formal, class-room instructions of instructors in rhetoric and elocution.

### NATURAL ORATORS.

There have been, there are, what are properly called natural orators, in distinction from cultivated orators,—orators who have been taught neither in class-rooms nor in debating societies. I suppose Patrick Henry and Abraham Lincoln are good examples. But such results in no wise disprove what I have said. In fact, they are a high confirmation of it, for it has been acutely observed that the rules of oratory taught in the schools are deducible always from the speeches or productions of any so-called natural orator. Genius is genius. These men—the Henrys and the Lincolns—came at the rules of public speaking, and highly exemplified them, by the superior insight or instinct of genius, and that is about all we can say of it. There have been, too, natural poets, even natural mathematicians; but I never heard that it was supposed that for this reason poetry or mathematics could be best "managed" for the general, by throwing aside books and study, instruction and instructors, and leaving our nascent or embryonic poets and mathematicians to cultivate each other!

By the way, when Professor Beers affirms as a fact that Yale has long ceased to pay any attention to public speaking will he tell us why, then, my old friend and much-valued instructor, Mr. Bailey, is still borne on the Yale catalogue as "Instructor in Elocution?" "Superfluous lags the veteran on the stage?" Or has he "long ceased" to give instruction? If so, it strikes me forcibly that here is another chance to "release an income" for some "general uses of the college," to borrow Professor Beers' phrases on another point.

Professor Beers' article calls for more remark on other points, but this must be done, if at all, in another issue of the Weekly. D. H. Chamberlain.  
New York, March 15, 1897.



YALE DEBATING TEAM.

E. H. Hume, (Alternate). C. S. Macfarland. F. P. Garvan (Alternate).  
Charles H. Studinski. C. U. Clark.

[From a photograph by Pach.]

## DEBATERS AT WORK.

**Less Faculty Assistance—The Men who Meet Harvard.**

The men chosen to represent Yale in the debate with Harvard on the 26th, have been working hard in preparation for the event. It is generally understood that their preparation will be obtained this year with less Faculty assistance than formerly, their training being obtained chiefly from trial debates against the alternates and other prominent members of the Union. Governor Roger Wolcott has been chosen to preside at the debate and the judges have been selected as follows: Prof. D. R. Dewey of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology; Prof. F. H. Giddings of Columbia, and Judge E. A. Aldrich of the United States Court.

Charles Stedman Macfarland, 97T. S., of Melrose, Mass., prepared for college at one of the public schools of Boston. In school he had taken part in the public debates and prize speaking, but received most of his training in the public institution known as the Boston Young Men's Congress, which has served to train a great many public speakers. After leaving there he went to the Young Men's Congress of Melrose, of which Institution he was on several occasions chosen speaker. Since coming to Yale he has taken an active part in debating. In his second year Mr. Macfarland carried off the William H. Fogg scholarship of \$50, which is offered to Juniors of the Divinity School. During the last term he has held the office of president of the Leonard Bacon Club, of which he was one of the organizers. Last year he was alternate in the Yale-Harvard debate.

Charles Upton Clark, '97, comes from Brooklyn, N. Y. His training in debate consists in what he has done in

the way of speaking since coming to College. In his Freshman year he took an active part in the Freshman Union but had done no speaking in public before the Princeton debate last year, which he was adjudged the best undergraduate speaker and was awarded the Thatcher prize of \$75. During the Fall term this year he has held the office of president of the Yale Union. He prepared for college at the Brooklyn Polytechnic.

Charles H. Studinski, '97, spent the first two years of his college course at the University of California and joined the class of Yale '97 in the Fall of 1895. He is class orator and president of the Yale Union. Last year he was alternate in the Yale-Harvard debate. At the recent final trials he was awarded the Thatcher prize, being the best of the debaters from the Academic Department.

Edward Hicks Hume, '97, of Bombay, India, and Frank Patrick Garvan, '97, of Hartford, Conn., were chosen alternates.

Of the three men who are to represent Yale in the coming debate with Harvard, C. H. Studinski, '97, is the best orator. He, however, works himself up to such a pitch, in his delivery, that he becomes at times too reiterative.

On the other hand, C. S. Macfarland, '97 T. S., is very forcible in making his points and says what he has to say in a telling manner; but is not apt to pick up quickly original points and is slow to see the weak points in the opponent's argument.

Great readiness in the latter direction is the particularly strong characteristic of C. U. Clark, '97, who is by far the best and most logical thinker on the team. He is extensively keen and notices at once the faults and weak points contained in the opposing statements. His delivery, though, is not as strong and effective as that of Studinski.