

YALE ALUMNI WEEKLY

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NEW HAVEN, CONN., JAN. 6, 1898.

FOR ASSOCIATION SECRETARIES.

This is the season of alumni association meetings, and it may not be necessary to remind the secretaries that we want to hear from them very promptly. In any case where the secretary arranges with some other member of the association to report the meeting we would like to have the fact made known to us. What we desire is the most readable and reliable and complete report, and we also desire it to be forwarded promptly. We trust this year's reports of the gatherings of alumni will be more satisfactory than any yet printed.

HOW MUCH DO WE PRIZE YALE DEMOCRACY?

It will ever be hard, as far as one can judge from the past and present, to pick out his College and University as a place where a man need have much, if any, capital, besides that under his own hat and in his own heart, in order to obtain an education which he has strongly resolved shall be a part of his equipment for life. The means of self-support have been elaborated very recently in the WEEKLY, and the articles in that line, from the pen of one who knew well whereof he wrote, have been, it may be hoped, reassuring to many and of practical aid to not a few. Although the means indicated were so numerous and various, it seems to us, on re-reading the list, as though it might yet be extended at great length. In the line of the chronicling of news for the press of the country, to take a single illustration, the opportunities for the man who combines the ability to put together facts in a clear and readable (not fanciful) form, with a modicum of common sense in observing the relations of things, are very great. This kind of work has in recent years, and does now, yield unusually good revenue to a number of men. And the more fair and faithful a man is in it, the better, in the long run, is his compensation and many opportunities he can find for serving his College in a very real way. Good illustrations of this could be given. And it goes without saying that the training of the work in clear expression is very nearly invaluable, whatever may be the line of the student's final choice. This is assuming, of course, that it is faithfully and conscientiously done. And so, in this department alone, the incentive to

the man who has to carry himself, is strong and the hope excellent that his work shall have a reward entirely apart from monthly settlements.

In a more purely, or more nearly literary work the opportunities are still greater, although, of course, such ability is rarer. When one sees, however, what return often comes from very mediocre efforts in such lines and considers the ability for very excellent productions on the part of others, who simply lack confidence, it is easily seen how much farther this kind of work could go in helping many men to secure their education.

But this is only elaborating a single line and, as has been said, it is not much to be feared that the opportunities of this place for those of little or no means shall fail to be recognized. In this fact itself, of course, there is a very important part of the foundation of a genuine democracy. Without such possibilities, it could not exist in its best form. And when to this it can also be truthfully added that the reputation in the student body of any man is, at the worst, not affected by the fact of his self-support, but that he is generally more thought of for it, then it would seem that Yale democracy is secure.

Perhaps it is. But we have seen it somewhat weakened at times in the last decade by influences for which the students themselves were in no way responsible, and perhaps not the Faculty. And we see now, though the spirit of the place has temporarily recovered from such influences, that this democracy does not accomplish its perfect work because of the physical fact of a certain amount of separation along the lines of means.

The Corporation says it must get the highest amount of revenue consistent with the general expenses of living in New Haven, from its dormitory equipment; and so the price of rooms is set by the commercial value of the particular building and the scale is adjusted as it would be by any private real estate office. The result of this is, of course, that the line is drawn in the matter of residence according to the means of the students. It is very much to be doubted if dormitories were ever given with this idea in mind. The most natural thought on the part of the giver is that he is simply allowing the College to house the greater part of its family itself, in a comfortable way, rather than forcing it to go outside the limits of the College grounds, at increase of expense, inconvenience and discomfort.

But the Corporation says that if it did not get as much revenue as it is possible out of dormitories, Yale would run behind.

The point is whether the student's environment and the effect upon his character, is to be considered a cardinal point in the government of Yale—that is, not any less important than the method of instruction in the principal studies and the character of the men who instruct and influence the students. The regulation of instruction at Yale and the choice of men is not altogether governed by commercial considerations. Yale instruction must be of the first order and the men who give it must be the best men available. It is a part of the immemorial tradition of the place. It is an ideal, set up by the founders and perpetuated by generation after generation, from which no Corporation would dare to deviate, but which each set of trustees feels called upon rather to develop and to raise still higher. Should the Corporation of Yale say that the depreciation of certain securities would make it necessary to cut the salaries of the principal

professors and to lop off certain branches of instruction, its members would undoubtedly be soon informed of how far short they fell, in the minds of their fellows, from the standard of what the governors of Yale should be. The men of Yale would ask them why they had not frankly come forward and said to the graduates and to the friends of Yale that the University was in need of money for carrying on its instruction.

We confess to much surprise that the frequent advance in the price of rooms at Yale, with a scale set in certain buildings which is practically prohibitory to certain classes of students, has not raised in a more general way a similar protest. It is a tradition of the place that there should be no barrier to the most perfect association between men on the score of the difference in their bank accounts; and this fact has counted greatly for the glory and benefit of Yale.

But for several years the government of Yale, in regard to the student's environment, has gone on the same principles as govern the environment of men in the outside world. Such a plan leaves the Campus far from the ideal place of which we grow eloquent at alumni meetings. It makes it simply a reproduction of the world outside. It allows no particularly favorable influences for the development of those traits, which must become very strongly implanted in youth, if they are not to be crushed out afterwards by the conventions of worldly wisdom.

Do we really want to teach men here to gauge men by what they are, rather than by what they have or what position their family holds in the world? When a millionaire's son comes within these gates, do we principally desire for him that he may be pushed up against a farmer's sturdy son and receive from him such benefit as can come from association with a man of simple force and strong principle and inherent love of that which is good and true—these things alone, without the pleasing accessories of finish which wealth can give? Do we especially desire, when the boy comes to New Haven with only his own hands and head and spirit to carry him and having had little opportunity to know men and the ways of the world, that he be sure, as soon as possible, to meet one who has had the advantage of all the refining processes which money and social situation can command? And do we wish these two, in as early and frequent association as possible, to altogether forget the dollars-and-cents difference in their condition and the distinction

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Prof. FRANCIS WAYLAND,
Dean.

of lineage? Do we wish them, above all else, to find out, each what is in the other, and rate him accordingly, so that after four years together, they may go out into the world, the one fearing nothing in the way of the advantage which others have from wealth or position, and the other rating nothing half as high as character?

Or do we think this thing will take care of itself, and we can do anything whatever, however unfavorable to ideal conditions, just because Yale students have generally been manly fellows and given a healthy tone to the life here, and because the traditions of Yale are all that way?

Or really don't we care? If we do, it is a good time to say so, when Yale has again shown the power of her better self after some years in which that better self was partially eclipsed. Or do we still wish to go on very blindly, and so invite a more complete eclipse? If not, why is it not well when we meet around the jovial alumni banquet board to take a few minutes from singing and from glorification to talk about these things?

Prof. Henry S. Williams was elected Vice-President of the Society of American Naturalists, which held its annual meeting at Ithaca, N. Y., last week.

The American Historical Society, which finished its annual session in Cleveland recently, elected Prof. Geo. P. Fisher of the Yale Divinity School to be its President for the ensuing year.

By the will of the late Mrs. Henrietta Rush Fales Baker of Philadelphia, the University of Pennsylvania gets in the neighborhood of \$700,000 for various departments and endowments.

President Timothy Dwight will speak at the celebration of the 50th anniversary of Girard College the first week of January.