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NEW HAVEN, CONN., MARCH 3, 1898.

Please sign with your full name all your communications. THE WEEKLY can pay no attention to articles which do not bear the author's full name and post office address.

THE W. C. T. U. PETITION.

The petition, with threatened boycott, of the Women's Christian Temperance Union to the President of Yale University and the Dean of Yale College, is printed elsewhere. An abstract, or indication, of the slander on which this action rests, is also given as forming a basis for judgment for those who care to estimate the value of the present agitation. The slander itself is, to an unusual degree, unworthy of notice and it is self-answering. Nothing quite so impossible and so unscrupulous has been put in print about Yale for some time.

The officers of Yale will not say anything about this agitation and the Yale family here are very glad that they will not. It is generally recognized that a number of good people are being misled, and it is as generally felt that they will sooner or later see their mistake, and that they will also realize what it means to try to advance good morals at a university by threatening a boycott unless certain means to that end, which they believe in, are adopted. Yale's friends are so far from being troubled, that they know that much good will in the end come to the University, through the more careful scrutiny which will be given by sincere and intelligent people of the actual conditions here. The more these conditions are understood, the better for the good name of the place.

No one has any authority for saying what the President or Faculty of Yale may or may not do; but those of us who are watching things here could not be more surprised than by learning that, under the influence of a threat from any source, the government of Yale would be swerved one hair's breadth from that course which is dictated by the experience of two hundred honorable years, and the conscience and the high purpose of as noble and single-minded a set of men as were ever gathered in the cause of education.

There has been a succession of lively and profitable alumni gatherings the past few weeks, and the Orange dinner, which is so fully reported elsewhere, was as usual not the least of them.

PROFESSOR BEERS'S DEFENSE.

Mr. Walter Allen Analyzes His Letter on Gov. Chamberlain.

To the Editor of YALE ALUMNI WEEKLY:

Sir: The letter of Prof. Henry A. Beers, in reply to ex-Gov. Chamberlain's recent criticism of the Department of English in the College, will hardly reassure those who have had doubts regarding the scheme of instruction in English, its sufficiency or its quality. In but one point does he raise a direct issue with the critic touching these matters. Quoting from the Worcester speech this sentence: "He further thinks, as do other Yale professors, that English cannot be taught as an ordinary study at all," Prof. Beers replies: "I have never said or thought anything of the kind. I have been teaching, or trying to teach, English 'as an ordinary study' for a quarter of a century." Even this issue may not be a substantial one; for Prof. Beers may misapprehend what ex-Gov. Chamberlain means in the quoted phrase. But this is not for me to decide.

Touching another matter, he corrects the critic fairly enough, as it seems to me. Mr. Lampson's will being in litigation, his endowment of a professorship is not yet available. However, judging from experience, the Faculty will do well to begin prospecting for an incumbent now, in order that the chair may not become a waiting one.

Let us regard some of the things which Prof. Beers thinks it becomes him to utter in response to ex-Gov. Chamberlain's sincere and loyal criticism, especially since he protests that "what I say I say in defense of the College, not of myself."

He thinks it is not becoming for him to reply at all to the substance of the criticism relating to the quality of the instruction in the Department of English, of which he is the head. This is strange. One would suppose that he, of all men, should be swift to vindicate the Department, when its efficiency is publicly questioned. But while he is essentially dumb on the real issue, he does not scorn to resent the wound to his *amour propre*. Or is it the *amour propre* of the College he defends by abandoning argument on the facts and resorting to personalities in his smartest style?

He tells us that ex-Gov. Chamberlain is now "worrying" the alumni of Massachusetts, as he has long "worried" the alumni of New York on this subject. In his speech, the orator told his auditors that he had "wearied" the alumni of New York with talk on this theme, but had not before had an opportunity to "weary" them. When he learns that there is worrying he will take heart. It is more hopeful than indifference. He has also "deluged people in New Haven with private letters on this subject"—not so private, however, that Professor Beers does not make public use of the contents of one of them in a manner that I verily suspect to be essential garbling.

Does the fact that ex-Gov. Chamberlain has long urged a reinforcement of the Department of English show that he is mistaken regarding the need? Should he have quit in submission when once and again rebuffed and have sued to join the choir of indiscriminating adulators of whatever is? Well, he is not an easy quitter. He has a proper portion of Yale spirit, the real stuff. This has been shown on occasions requiring a stouter heart and stiffer will, but perhaps not more patience, than does an attempt to induce Alma Mater to recognize her obligations.

Prof. Beers brands the statement that the whole Department counts but one man who is a good teacher "discourteous." Of course, this concludes the matter. The teaching must be adequate and superior if it is discourteous to say it is not. While the ex-Governor's statement may be too sweeping (and in my opinion it is), he is not apt to condemn without information and consideration. In any case, the issue is one of fact and judgment, and not one of courtesy.

"That the Emily Sanford chair is still vacant," says Prof. Beers, "is not the fault of the Faculty. It has been offered in turn to three gentlemen, any one of whom would have been an ornament to the College, and has been declined by all of them." In three years (or is it a longer time?) it has been offered to three persons, only three. Does this

indicate energetic concern or even due diligence? Two of the gentlemen—I do not know certainly who the other is—are persons about whose fitness it would seem to be possible for a Yale Faculty to reach a decision promptly.

Ah! but in extenuation of any slowness, this must be taken into account: ex-Gov. Chamberlain having been asked by one to whom he had written a private letter on this subject, to suggest a candidate, "he nominated his own brother, the Rev. Leander (T.) Chamberlain, and Col. Homer B. Sprague." In the absence of other information, accepting the Professor's report as made, is it any evidence of bad judgment or bad motive? I am not making reply for ex-Gov. Chamberlain; but knowing both Col. Sprague and the Rev. Dr. Chamberlain, the latter being valedictorian and DeForest medal man of my class, I am willing to say, in Prof. Beers's words, that either of them in that place "would have been an ornament to the College."

Now we come to Prof. Beers's crowning reason why ex-Gov. Chamberlain's criticism must be scouted. The reason is phrased in borrowed wit, and for substance of argument it is stale. Every criminal lawyer and every party hack knows its terrible effectiveness with the unreasonable and the scandalous elements. For aught I know, Prof. Beers may plume himself on first introducing it into discussion between scholars concerning the welfare of Alma Mater. With this example on record, we may yet have to tolerate the like, and hear it applauded, in intercollegiate debates.

"I have heard it hinted by the wicked," Prof. Beers deliberately writes, "that Mr. Chamberlain's real candidate was someone more nearly related to himself. But this I cannot believe. He must know that a College professorship is not a very highly salaried position; not nearly so profitable as some other positions which ex-Gov. Chamberlain has occupied."

Seriously, Mr. Editor and brethren, is this sort of *argumentum ad hominem*, this substitution of innuendo for candid statement, of imputation of low motives for brave reasoning upon allegations of fact and principle,—is this what is now inculcated at Yale? Is striking below the belt an exhibition of the proper Yale spirit now? Is defamation what loyal critics of Alma Mater, striving, however mistakenly, for her advancement and glory, have to expect in the Consulate of this Plancus?

But what is the significance of Prof. Beers's grand *coup*? Is it not that some discredit, some right suspicion of insincerity, attaches to what may be said about filling the vacant post by one who is willing to take it himself? But how can he intend this significance, seeing that less than one year ago he proposed his own appointment to one of the new chairs? In a communication to the YALE ALUMNI WEEKLY of March 11, 1897, he said:

"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 dis-

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tributed, to handle the work; and the 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."

If this opinion of the sufficiency of the teaching force is entertained by the Faculty generally, the reason for slowness in reinforcing the Department is plain. That his suggestion was not adopted is ground for hope.

WALTER ALLEN.

New Haven, Feb. 28.

A Queer Question at Cornell.

One of the questions submitted by Statistics Committee of the present Senior class at Cornell demanded a definition of Yale University. Various comments on the unusual question have appeared in the Cornell press. The explanation offered by the Committee, in response to an editorial in the *Cornell Sun* severely denouncing the question, is that the matter submitted in reply to these questions is confidential and that the Committee, in deciding what would eventually be made public, would use all necessary discretion. A Cornell Senior has written the following letter on the subject to the *Cornell Sun*:

"In the Senior statistics blanks, I have just made their appearance, a definition of Yale University is asked for. The propriety of this question is doubtful at least, and from a certain point of view it is absolutely improper. Any attempt to define Yale University would be faulty unless it included a statement that her dignity had never been impeached and that to her sons her good name was as a thing sacred and not to be impaired by any descent to the ignoble or even to the questionable. In the face of this blank, can the same thing be said of Cornell and of her sons? And yet we know that this is generous compared with some of the things which have gone forth from here. If we countenance such things and are at heart honest, we will feel a sense of shame in meeting a Yale man. The managers of our teams can build up no athletic relations with universities who love fair play, if the reputation which these things engender precedes their attempts. But more than all this, there is an admission of superiority in the persistent giving away to fretful spite.

"Youth is the time in which to form habits, and Cornell is in that youth. Let not the habits be those of a peevish, degenerate old man snarling at and reviling all who seem to cross him, but of a vigorous and spirited youth meeting all in manliness and candor and possessing a dignity, the quiet depth of which may awe all who come in contact with it.

"The definition we should give, as Seniors and Cornellians, is plain."

Sigma Xi Elections.

At a meeting of Sigma Xi, the Scientific high stand society of the University, held on February 19, the following men were elected to membership: Dr. Wesley R. Coe, '92 S.; Dr. Edson F. Gallaudet, '93; Dr. Edward W. Scripture; William H. Parker; George F. Eaton, '94; Herbert E. Hawkes, '96; Herbert E. Gregory, '96; Yandell Henderson, '95; James L. Hitchcock, '97 S.; Louis C. Jones, '96; Alfred N. Richards, '97; H. H. S. Aimes, '97 S.; Walter S. Cameron, '97 S., and Augustus Coit, '97 S.; from the Class of Ninety-Eight, S., Civil Engineering Course—Zenas H. Sikes and Cooper Wood; Electrical Engineering Course—George P. Wisdom; Mechanical Engineering Course—Fred C. Ferrey, Herbert Hastings, James L. Howard, Jr., George H. Humphreys, Jr., Richard Krementz, Edward J. Sherwood; Chemical Course—Walter M. Bradley and Treat B. Johnson; Biology Course—Justin F. Grant and Allen C. Eustis; from the Class of Ninety-Eight—Z. M. Briggs, George A. Hanford, Ernest Howe, John F. Norton, Jr., E. Reed Whittemore and Arthur B. Williams, Jr.