

tongue with decent accuracy," or, as the *New York Times* more tersely puts it, may be "an unlettered hind in English." On the other hand, it is due to Professor Beers that I should say I was mistaken in saying he thought English could not be taught at all as an ordinary study. I suppose I had in mind on this point the reported opinions of another Yale professor, whose name I need not now mention. At any rate, let the correction be made.

AS TO THE REGISTER'S CRITICISM.

Robert Toombs once gave the advice to a young Georgia politician,—“Before you go into a fight, kill all your fool friends.” I have been reminded of this advice in reading the editorial article of the *New Haven Register* on this matter, the burden of which is that I have come to grief at the hands of Professor Beers because of my neglect to “know at least something of the facts associated with the topic under consideration before attempting an opinion.” If the writer of this had known me, or especially if he had known the extent of my first-hand information on the subject of English at Yale during the last twenty years and particularly during the last five years, he would have been saved from this amusing performance. Probably I ought to bow in submission to this editor, who has seemed so ambitious—and to be ably seconded in his ambition by some of the Yale Faculty—to become a reduced copy of Mr. Depew; but as a plain tale shall put him down, as well as Professor Beers, I shall venture still to hold my opinions and to defend them.

On several occasions before my Worcester speech I had called attention by speech and pen to the low condition of English at Yale, but not a word can be pointed to that was extravagant, hap-hazard, or censorious, or in any sense personal. The sensitiveness of Professor Beers cannot find such a word. The evils I complained of continuing, I addressed a brief letter to each member of the Corporation as the governing body of the University. If I had then known what I know now, that they are not the governing body but only so called, I should have spared myself this trouble. As it was, learning that my first letter was not rightly understood,—indeed several of the Corporators expressed surprise that any complaint should be made and wished a full statement of the grounds of complaint—I addressed a second and longer letter to each member. This is the extent of my “deluding people in New Haven with letters on the subject,” as Professor Beers with fine courtesy calls it. All but one or two of the Corporators acknowledged receipt of my communications in most respectful terms, expressing high appreciation of my views as well as of my interest in the subject.

Having had occasion to write to President Dwight about this time on a matter connected with the Lampson bequest, I received a letter from him dated February 27, 1897, five pages in length, in which he undertook in a covert and veiled way to discredit my public criticisms—criticisms which up to this time had been wholly impersonal. After assuring me as usual that everything at Yale was as it should be, “only more so,” President Dwight, referring to the filling of the Sanford chair, said: “As you seem to have regarded the field as richer in men than I have been able to discover it to be, I should be glad to know of any available and thoroughly competent persons of whom you have thought.”

Responding to this invitation, as well as replying to his letter generally, I wrote him under date of March 3, 1897. From this letter I am now compelled by Professor Beers, and after notice to President Dwight, to make the following excerpt, which will show several things of probable interest to Professor Beers and perhaps to his special *New Haven* editorial champion; and will also show on what occasion and under what circumstances I “nominated” my brother and Col. Sprague. (And by the way, if it was an offense to nominate my brother, it would seem not to be so great a one as to nominate oneself, as Professor Beers did, in the *WEEKLY* in March last.)

THE LETTER TO PRESIDENT DWIGHT.

“Let me ask,” I wrote to President Dwight, “what I ought perhaps to assume,—whether you are familiar with the work of Beers and Cook in the

class-room, or out of it, in their professorial duties. I have attended two recitations in Beers’s class-room and I have induced three others—better judges than I—to do the same at different times. Our verdicts were the same; namely, that in all our experience we had never seen so great failure, so little hold on the attention of the students, so little attempt to hold their attention, so little said worth attention.

“We all know Beers to be a good scholar, a fine fellow, a conscientious man, a fairly good writer of some rather ephemeral matters; but all this does not hide his conspicuous ineptness for teaching either rhetoric, or English, or literature.

“With Mr. Cook, the general result is the same. I have had the same experience with him, and so have my friends. He fails lamentably, grievously, to arouse, or inspire, or even to drill his classes. Larned, even *he*, 35 to 40 years ago, did give us some very good drill, rather mechanical, but valuable. Cook again is a fine scholar, a learned critic—I have read his books—but he cannot and does not *teach*, and is an eminent Dryasdust.

“Now I do not say there is no place for Beers and Cook, but I do say there is no place for more Beerses or Cooks. What is needed is obvious enough. Men of power, of strong personality, men of light and leading, masters to some eminent degree of the art they essay to teach, are needed.

“Are there not such men who can be had? You think not. Here, while we might agree in qualifications, we might disagree on what men possess them. Therefore, I can only tell you whom I consider fit to fill the Sanford and Lampson chairs, and this I will do with all frankness.

“In my judgment the best man in the country for either of these chairs is Homer B. Sprague. What objections there can be to him on any ground, I cannot understand. His age is, I believe, about sixty-seven. If he were forty-seven or fifty-seven, it would be better; but you have before your eyes daily an example of high success in instructing, achieved, all of it, after sixty to sixty-five. I mean E. J. Phelps. Sprague has probably eight or ten years of as good work in him as at any earlier period. He could set the pace, if he did not live to make it familiar and permanent himself. Personally he is the most guileless, saintly layman I know.

“The next man I name is Moses Coit Tyler of Cornell—a fine scholar, full of communicable enthusiasm, a charming exemplar of the art he would teach, a noble man.

“I name next William L. Wilson, now Postmaster General, a scholar, man of affairs, skilful and experienced teacher, admirable writer and speaker, overflowing with moral and intellectual earnestness and enthusiasm. He is understood to have been offered the presidency of Washington and Lee, but I am not sure he could not still be had at Yale, if asked.

“I name now, with reluctance which I need not explain, my own brother, Leander. I do not know for my life that he would take it, if pressed upon him; but I do know how deeply he feels the need of better work in this Department at Yale, and the exalted estimate he places on the work which might be done there.

“Another such man is Professor Ernest W. Huffcut, now of the Law School at Cornell,—a man of most engaging personality, of great power of impressing himself and his teaching on his pupils, a fine writer and speaker, a fine scholar in present attainments, with a scholarly spirit which will carry him to far higher attainments and success. He is about thirty-five years of age, and specially well known to Andrew D. White.

“But I should hunt first for younger men for *one* of these chairs, on the principle on which Dr. Johnson said, ‘You can make a good deal even out of a Scotchman, if you catch him early.’ I mean the type of men so well illustrated by your Mr. W. L. Phelps,—the only really effective teacher you now have in that Department.

“I can give you some suggestions of such men a little later, if desired. You must bear in mind, however, how meagre are my opportunities to seek out such men, and how ample are yours.”

It is for Professor Beers, not me, to explain, if explanation be needed, how he came to any knowledge of the letter from which I have now quoted, as well as to explain, where explanation is certainly needed, how he came to state that I “nominated my own brother, Rev.

Leander Chamberlain, and Col. Homer B. Sprague.” He knows, I suppose, the sound rule both of reason and of law—*suppressio veri est suggestio falsi*.

WILL CONTINUE TO AGITATE.

In conclusion, I have to remark that this matter of English at Yale will be kept before the public till relief comes, be it sooner or later. Professor Beers or others may think, or affect to think, this is my “rhetoric,” not to be “taken seriously.” I think they will live to see their error.

To the President, the gentlemen of the Corporation, the members of the Faculty,—to them all,—let me say: Come out into the open; recollect for a moment you are servants, not masters; mere passing almoners, momentary trustees, of a bounty not your own; tell us in some proper and dignified way what are your difficulties in filling the Sanford chair, or if there are no difficulties, why you delay; give us surely some better reason than that you have in three years offered it to three persons who have declined it, for we know it can be filled, full to overflowing, in thirty days at any time. If the English Department is all it should be, prove it to our satisfaction, as you easily can; I am eager to put all I have said to the test. Appoint an able, fearless, impartial committee who shall examine and inquire and report, a committee necessarily not of your number or specially connected with those who are, not necessarily graduates of Yale, but fair-minded experts, like the Harvard Committee,—Adams, Godkin, Nutter. You can, if you are right and I and those I speak for are wrong, put us to silence and to shame almost as deep as is said to have been cast on you by Professor Beer’s letter which I have now noticed. We are not enemies or intruders; you cannot make us enemies of Yale. We are friends, and we would be co-workers with you in all fidelity to Yale. Meet us on these terms and there shall be peace.

D. H. CHAMBERLAIN.

Elm Knoll Farm,
West Brookfield, Mass.
March 5, 1898.

Athletic Calendar.

March 12.—Annual indoor games, Second Regiment Armory, New Haven.

April 23.—Annual Spring games, open to Yale men, at Yale Field.

April 23.—University of Pennsylvania relay races at Philadelphia.

April 30.—Invitation games, at Yale Field.

May 14.—Dual Yale-Harvard track games, at Cambridge.

May 27 and 28.—Intercollegiate games, New York.

June 4.—Yale-Princeton baseball at New Haven.

June 11.—Yale-Princeton baseball at Princeton.

June 18.—Yale-Princeton baseball at New York, if necessary in case of a tie.

June 23.—Yale-Harvard baseball at Cambridge.

June 28.—Yale-Harvard baseball at New Haven.

July 2.—Yale-Harvard baseball at New York, if necessary in case of a tie.

Charles Bill Memorial.

There has recently been placed in the Trophy Room at the Gymnasium a large silver cup presented to the Athletic Association by Mr. Ledyard Bill, as a memorial of his brother, the late Charles Bill, ’64 S. The cup is heavily chased and is mounted on an ebony base. On the front it bears the inscription, “Presented to the Athletic Association of Yale University for Interclass Competition. Given as a Memorial of the late Charles Bill, of the Class of 1864.”

The cup will be contested for annually by the four classes of the University in the three branches of athletics—football, baseball and rowing.

It will be kept in the Trophy Room and on the back of it will be engraved the name of the class winning it in at least two of the three branches.

A number of men from the University Glee and Banjo Clubs gave a concert at the Hotchkiss School, Lakeville, Friday, March 4. The annual concert given at Smith College will occur on Friday, March 11.

Among the signs of Spring carelessly overlooked by the poets in the March Magazines are seven hundred exquisite designs for shirts at the store of

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The hockey teams of Yale and Columbia played a tie game last Saturday evening at the Clermont Avenue Rink, Brooklyn. The tie will be played off on Saturday, March 12th, at the same place.

“Spring Styles Ready.”

That’s a very familiar sentence, and often a very unsatisfactory one. It leaves you wondering. There are styles and styles. But no further specification is necessary, when the reference is to

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