

## THE YALE PRESIDENCY.

### A Plea for a Business Man, and for Less Worship of the Golden Calf.

[From a letter from Yale '67 in the Springfield Republican.]

I find myself largely at one with the advocates of the Old as contrasted with the advocates of the New at Yale, in their insistence on the validity of the old idea of a college education,—one, namely, which shall give the mental faculties a discipline distinct in character from the attainment of knowledge as such. The case seems to me exactly analogous to the difference between muscular exercise in a gymnasium and such muscular exercise as the mechanic or farm laborer puts forth. In the one case, the quest is for agility and strength as such; in the other, for the results of the exercise of strength and agility. When, in the past, college instructors have been charged with graduating students who had small store of available knowledge at command, the entirely just and pertinent answer has been possible, that the student has been graduated with a mind adapted to the ready acquisition of all knowledge. In a sense, the distinction is a fine one, and yet really a vital, broad and very important one, and I should hope no man would be chosen to be president of Yale who was not alive to the value of this distinction, and who was not largely faithful to the idea of a classical education, as such.

I put in the saving adjective "largely," because, in common with a great many others, I have welcomed such inroads on the old method of giving a classical education as admitted of the substitution of a modern language for Greek. It has long seemed to the writer that in the preparatory school, as well as in the college and university, if a student's mind be well drilled in Latin and mathematics, a modern language could very advantageously be substituted for Greek. It was no small cause of mortification and inconvenience to the writer, whose student life at Yale did not cease till his 24th year, to find himself living in Europe with only the most primitive and inadequate knowledge of any modern language,—French, German, Italian, Spanish. It seems that as much as this should be conceded to the demand for "available knowledge," that one or more of these languages should be substituted in the college curriculum for Greek.

In the further demand so often urged in these days, that a college president should be a good business man, the writer, in a sense, most emphatically assents. To begin with, a good business man in these days must of all things be a man of accuracy. First and foremost he must know his facts; he must know them very definitely and almost always, as business is done to-day, in considerable detail. There is a scholarship of business as well as of literature and science. And again, that the highest executive officer of a university like Yale should have the executive force of a good business man would seem a matter of prime moment. Not only is this important in administering the business of the college, but the man of fine executive force has almost always a certain decision of character, a certain firmness and tone of nerve tissue, conducive in a high degree to strong personal influence. This quality also results often in a personal magnetism of radical value, in the art of teaching as such. A good illustration was the late Gen. Francis A. Walker, during the last years of his life, at the head of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. His teaching was forceful, because his character was forceful. He powerfully stimulated his students, by reason of the incisive, aggressive enthusiasm of his own manly nature.

And the presence of a man like this at the head of a university is an admirable object-lesson to the student of the qualities needed in the business world to-day. Very many of the students at Yale at the present time (as well as of many of our colleges) are going to become business men. Very many of them are the sons of business men, who have sent them to college somewhat reluctantly, because the college graduate, as such, has heretofore been regarded as not only not helped by his college course, but possibly hindered. I have

in mind the case of a very successful business man, not himself a college graduate, who is always glad to employ college graduates, providing they have worked hard in college, and have not studied books, either, wholly to the neglect of a study of men. Unfortunately this proviso has excluded any free or general employment of them. His complaint is that they are apt to be pedantic, to have lived too much in books, to underestimate the knowledge gained of life itself, through a hand-to-hand struggle with life, in comparison with the second-hand knowledge derived from text-books. How very, very common this objection is among business men, those who are best conversant with them most fully realize; and the very sight, at the head of an institution like Yale, of a man like Gen. Walker, embodying in his own person and character the qualities of force, practicality, and what I have called "business scholarship," would quickly draw the favorable notice of very many moneyed men, who at present hesitate to send their sons to Yale, or any other college. I am well aware that the combination of qualities named is not easily found. But if it is possible to find it, it would seem to the writer that every possible effort should be made rather than fail in the search. It would even be better, in the judgment of the writer, to have the University without a president, for a period of a year or two, rather than to make an unfortunate choice. The place is a large one, and we want a large man in it.

In so far as securing a business man, with a peculiar vocation for securing pecuniary gifts for the college is concerned, I must beg to sharply dissent from a good deal that I have heard talked and seen in print. I must confess that I look with some distrust on the extent to which munificent sums of money have already been lavished on our leading institutions of learning. Where riches so greatly abound as they do frequently now in the buildings and endowments of our institutions of learning, riches are very apt to be worshiped. It is exceedingly difficult to maintain among the students themselves that democracy which in the past has been the glory of Yale,—which in former years, at least, has made it possible for poor men to secure an education there. Nay, I believe scholarship itself suffers, where a scale of living becomes prevalent which debars the poorer class of students from attendance. In the trade, political life and, I may even add, church life, of to-day, the golden calf is worshiped as never before in our history. We have a right to look to our colleges at such a time for the maintenance of a life where higher ideals prevail. They should be the very sanctuaries of what, in character, is just, democratic, high-minded. To a surprising degree, I think they have so far maintained this standard. But they are in danger, even as the civil and political life of the nation is in danger, from this rampant materialism. And I for one am a little weary of hearing the defects of this and that college president condoned, on the plea that he is a good man for the place, because he has obtained access to the pockets of so many rich men.

## CURRENT YALE LITERATURE.

### Professor Beers's New Book.

It is no exaggeration to call the publication of Professor Beers's "History of English Romanticism in the Eighteenth Century" a literary event. The very title is stirring, and will be to many readers a distinct shock. They will rub their eyes, and look in wild surmise at the words "Eighteenth Century," which to most intelligent persons connote something in literature quite the opposite of Romantic. Histories and text-books constantly make the statement that the English Romantic movement began at the beginning of this century, or in the last decade of the eighteenth; so that it has become a commonplace in criticism to call the whole eighteenth century "classic," ignoring meanwhile two important facts; first, that English Literature is and always has been instinctively Romantic, and second, that Scott and Coleridge had their literary ancestry.

To the philosophical student of literature, nothing is more interesting than

studies in development, in literary evolution. Such a student will note the difference between the prevailing verse forms in 1616—the year of Shakspeare's death, and in 1700—the year of Dryden's death, and will ask himself the question, What caused this astounding change? And he knows that the only way in which he can answer the question for himself is by a minute study of the literary productions between those years. Even the most superficial reader sees a total change in thought, atmosphere, and expression between the literature of 1730 and the literature of 1800; and if he wishes to know the various causes that produced this change, he cannot do better than to read straight through this volume by Professor Beers.

The book before us is the fruit of many years' study and patient research. For a number of years past, Professor Beers has given a course of lectures to graduates and advanced students in English Romanticism; and these lectures, which many recent graduates will recall with pleasure, are now incorporated with many additions and references in this published work. The first chapter is called "The Subject Defined" and treats very fully of the various definitions of the words Romanticism and Romantic. These terms are heard constantly in discussions concerning literature and art; and yet no one has ever given a wholly satisfactory definition of them. Mr. Beers's discussion as to what the word Romantic means, is most helpful and suggestive; and the large number of definitions he gives, with the foot-notes referring to their authors in English, French, and German, make this opening chapter the most valuable treatment of this vexed question that has probably ever appeared in print. Lovers of art and literature will find it highly profitable. The definition that Mr. Beers accepts for his own purposes is the one suggested by Heine. "Romanticism, then, in the sense in which I shall commonly employ the word, means the reproduction in modern art or literature of the life and thought of the Middle Ages. Some other elements will have to be added to this definition, and some modifications of it will suggest themselves from time to time. It is provisional, tentative, elastic, but will serve our turn till we are ready to substitute a better." (p. 2.) This definition seems at first rather narrow and disappointing; and it is pleasant to note that Mr. Beers does not adhere strictly to it, as indeed would be impossible in a treatise so thorough as this. I suspect he will find this definition more useful in nineteenth century literature than in the early part of the eighteenth.

The chapters that follow treat of "The Augustans," the friends and contemporaries of Pope; the "Spenserians," in which Mr. Beers traces the revival of Spenser and the imitation of the stanza of the *Faery Queene*; the "Landscape Poets," where the growth of a wider appreciation of nature and the beginnings of the English school of landscape-gardening are considered; the "Miltonic Group," in which chapter Mr. Beers discusses the wide influence of Milton's *Il Penseroso*; and the remaining chapters are headed "The School of Warton" (where the critical side of Romanticism first appeared), "The Gothic Revival," "Percy and the Ballads," "Ossian," "Thomas Chatterton," and the work closes with a chapter on "The German Tributary."

The style of the book is just what readers will expect from Professor Beers; it is dignified, sincere, luminous, and bright with an occasional touch of delicate humor. This is a work that one can read as steadily as though it were a romance itself, instead of a disquisition on Romanticism; and to men and women of culture and wide reading, the constant literary *allusiveness* of the book will be one of its chief charms. In a word, this history has that literary flavor that comes from its author's personality.

But the great value, the distinguishing mark of this book is not that it is a brilliantly written literary essay; it is the fact that the whole volume represents original work, independent research, and that, therefore, it is a distinct contribution to our knowledge. Students of Eighteenth Century Literature cannot neglect the results attained here; and hence the book reflects the greatest credit not only on its author but on the University he represents. This is what is meant by calling this publication a literary event; it is such an event as the appearance, a

few years ago, of Professor Lounsbury's "Studies in Chaucer," which won so instant recognition here and abroad. This "History of Romanticism," Mr. Lounsbury's "Chaucer," and the extremely valuable publications by Professor Cook and by the large number of scholarly pupils who owe all their training to him, prove conclusively that whatever may be the shortcomings of Yale's English department, it has added to the world's stock of literary and linguistic knowledge much valuable and important material. Professor Cook's name is honored and well-known in every German university, for his work in linguistics; the students of Chaucer the world over are familiar with Professor Lounsbury's volumes; and this latest publication by Professor Beers is sure to meet with the same recognition. It is to be hoped that his next volume on "English Romanticism in the Nineteenth Century" may not be long delayed.

WM. LYON PHELPS.

### The "Lit." Prize Essay.

The Yale News has the following, editorially, on the winning of the *Lit.* medal: "We wish to take this opportunity to congratulate Mr. Carleton of the Senior class for his winning of the medal awarded annually by the *Yale Literary Magazine*. Mr. Carleton's essay was an unusually thoughtful effort, full of that quality so little found in college work—sincere and competent appreciation. The paper was fully up to the standard set in previous years; indeed, owing to the difficulty of the subject chosen, perhaps ahead of previous standards. The fact that the essay was won by a Senior is a very gratifying indication that there is a live literary culture in the University, one not fostered and urged on by any idea of material advancement. It disproves to a certain extent the often repeated cry that in Yale there is no real love of letters. Mr. Carleton's essay itself we commend highly, but we also wish to commend the literary interest and appreciation which prompted his effort."

### The Crosby Yale Sketches.

The book of Yale sketches, by R. M. Crosby, '98, published by H. H. Tompkins, '99, has already met with an excellent reception. It fully deserves this. Nothing of the kind, as far as the writer can recall, has ever been put out here which was its equal. Indeed, nothing has ever been attempted along this line before. Some of the drawings are of very unusual merit, and would stand very well in any collection. As illustrations of this kind of college art, they are, almost without exception, of an unusually high order, and they emphasize, as only sketches of this nature can, peculiar phases of college life and bring recollections of some of its happiest and choicest things. Many of the sketches, one would imagine, would bring back to the graduate whole chapters from his college life. As a piece of book-making, it is excellent. It is a pleasure to know that it has been so well received, and it is very safe to prophesy that the demand for it will be an increasing one for a long while.

### List of General Reading.

The third edition of Professor Wm. Lyon Phelps's "List of General Reading," has just been issued. It is a little circular of four pages, containing a list of the best books in English Literature from 1580 to 1898. The dates of the births and deaths of the authors are given, together with the year of publication for each book. The list is meant to be a busy man's guide to the best reading, to works that are standard and at the same time interesting. Essays, novels, and poems are given, but not histories and scientific works. Those who wish a copy may obtain one by sending six cents in stamps to 70 South Middle College.

### Very Graceful.

[Harvard Lampoon.]

"The Seats of the Mighty"—The Yale Fence.