

Second preparatory students will call at the chapel at four o'clock on Friday and receive corrected themes.

HERBERT BATES.

There was a suppressed giggle in the chapel that afternoon as Mr. Bates came in at the west door with a pile of themes under his arm. Few of us had ever seen him before. We were used to the bear, a man of authority. This was a boy with smooth red cheeks and we thought vacant blue eyes. He gave us our themes calling our names with some embarrassment. There were suppressed titters over the room at his queer pronunciation of our names. When he began to talk the titter was no longer suppressed. He told us in accents we could mock for days afterwards that the subject of our second theme was to be "The Personal Characteristics of Charles Dickens." We considered his accents affected. We turned up our noses. The new English instructor did not take with the second preps. We did not consider the other side—how the second preps impressed the new English instructor. Perhaps not any better than the other classes. It is said that a struggle with the bookkeeping of the junior themes class was what gave him the fever he had in the spring. It would have been like him to have a fever because he could not manage a few hundred dates for themes and criticisms.

He came out of the fever with even less of personal powers than before. Now there was added to his nervousness a slight stoop, a half slouch and a sensitiveness increased by physical weakness. He had been sensitive before. I can only half imagine the torture he underwent afterward. I have seen him shrink when some impetuous student came to him indignant at the rank criticism scrawled across the corner of a theme. I have seen him shrink but I have never seen him take back a criticism.

It was this sensitiveness of his that made him the real poet that he is. And it was what gave him later on a real liking for western people. He had seen in us at first a certain straightforwardness and he had put it down as roughness. A less sensitive man, prejudiced as he must have been against the roughness, might

never have learned that underneath the western outspokenness, there is something finer than culture. It was Prof. Bates I think who discovered first that there was a chance for real literary work in the University.

Allied to Prof. Bates' sensitiveness there was a directness as direct as our own but of a keener finer kind. Those who have no themes with his scribbling on them can not understand how sincerely and sharply he was accustomed to give his opinion. Yet his criticisms were hardly ever discouraging. I know of one theme that came back with a brief reference.

"See there was a little girl that had a little curl, etc."

I knew the "and so forth." It was the last he meant: "And when she was bad she was horrid." This cut deep till the owner of the theme remembered the part "When she was good." Then she was inspired to try again.

Perhaps it was the combined sensitiveness and utter lack of the power to be an actor that led to the nervousness so characteristic of Prof. Bates. This made for him the few enemies he had. Even these can hardly be called his enemies since they were merely repelled by what they considered his unattractiveness. I must admit that his nervousness sometimes set my teeth on edge too. In daily themes class it was trying to have to listen to a Professor lecture while his feet twirled around the legs of his chair, while his arms wandered over his desk and his head kept feeble time to his words. But one gets used to these things. These three characteristics showed on the surface, sensitiveness, directness and nervousness. Beneath these lay something that spoke only after long acquaintance. At every touch his inner self rang perfectly true. Not one bit of vanity, not one tinge of flattery only sincere devotion to the realities of thought and feeling. These he felt to be above the other realities. He could not rise above trivial things in practical life. In affairs of human feeling and sympathy there is no one I ever knew who was beyond him. If he was ever misunderstood it was because all men cannot appreciate all that is good.