

I think you are quite right in the main of your estimate of "Pop" Webster. I imagine that he was the right man at the right place and at the right time. I don't think the method would do today, but there was one thing you said, which I was rather surprised at, and I wondered upon what you based it. You say, "Webster, the President, was profoundly a religious man and he made his religion felt in his teaching." I can't say that. I realized that "Pop" Owens, for instance, was a religious man, and I really loved him. He was certainly very good to me, because he knew a good deal about the struggles that I had in working my way through College, but I would no more have thought of "Pop" Webster as being a religious man, anymore than I would of the jolly old Prof. Docharty of whom my strongest recollections, outside of his great kindness to "Introductories" and his jolly good humor generally, was the fact that whenever a boy was up at the board, if he had occasion to explain anything, he would have to go to the window and eject a large quantity of tobacco juice, being otherwise "too full for utterance". I got to think of old "Pop" Webster as a very kindly man at heart, although he seemed to be very severe on "Introductories" and "Freshies". Indeed, until a boy was in the Sophomore class, he didn't seem to have any standing whatever in the "Institution". In fact, "Pop" Webster once suspended me but I don't think I ought to complain of it, although as you will see, it grew out of an accident. Perhaps you don't remember the winter of '56-7 which was my first year in the Academy. We had some portentous snowstorms. I remember snow being piled six or seven feet high and some rather extraordinary results were produced on our "campus", which perhaps sounds better than "back-yard". You remember there was a long fence that went along the east and south side of the aforesaid "campus", and as a result of one peculiar snowstorm, while the snow was piled up very high, there was a space left between it and the board fence. One day I was tempted to investigate that, not thinking of what would naturally result. When I got way out there, the other boys could not forbear snowballing me. I had to stand a pretty severe bombardment, and one fellow whose name I remember, and perhaps will always remember, hit me in the face with either a chunk of ice or snow soaked in water. He gave me a stinging blow which compelled me to put my head down so that they would not strike me in the face. Without stopping to make any snowballs myself, I was able to gather up an armful out of the snowbanks, from those that were hurled at me. I charged forward with my head down, hurling the snowballs for all I was worth. Suddenly, all balls ceased coming my way, which seemed a surprise. When I looked up, I found that I had been pelting old "Pop". He simply said: "Character, character, go to the office." I went there and was suspended. I had a somewhat similar experience with Gibbs who made a complaint which caused me to be suspended, but he was absolutely mistaken in what he said, and I was very indignant and didn't hesitate to tell him that he didn't know what he was talking about. I think afterwards, he did look into the real merits of the case; anyway, my suspension was ended and we became very good friends.

I have very pleasant recollections of Doremus. Perhaps if "Pop" Webster had known what was going to happen on Commencement

Night, he would not have treated me as kindly and pleasantly as he did, for a long time. You know how impatient he was if the speeches exceeded by a quarter of a second, the time allotted to them, and I don't know whether you have ever been called down with his sudden "Time's up", but I think I have, and I certainly heard a lot of others called down. But my experience about the Commencement, was very different from yours. You know, I graduated in July of '61, which was just the beginning of the war. Of course, I had in my speech some patriotic allusions, which carried the audience away. They cheered and clapped and otherwise made violent demonstrations which I took advantage of. I haven't the slightest doubt that Barton had seen to it that my speech only consumed the amount of time allotted to us, and in his room, I could easily say it off in that time, but I had learned some points from Sam Jelliffe, and I knew that in order to be heard in a large hall like the Academy of Music, it was necessary to speak deliberately, and pronounce each word carefully. Accordingly, I did so, and I imagine that in that way, the time was at least doubled, but my voice wasn't nearly as strong then as it is now, and in order that I might be heard, I made a great effort, and by the time the applause came, I was exhausted. Instead of attempting to go on through the applause, as the other boys did, I deliberately waited, got my second wind, and was able to finish good and strong. I would not be at all surprised if the time that was consumed in this way, was just about three times what was allotted me. It is fifty-six years ago, and yet, I can feel behind my back at this minute, the sensation that I had at that time, of "Pop's" impatience, his moving about in his chair, and his uneasiness. I can't say that I entirely sympathized with him. Perhaps I thought I was getting even with him, for there, he could not do as he did in Chapel, abruptly end me with "Time's up".

All the places, in the City of New York, that you speak of, were very familiar to me. Speaking about Grove Street, my sister-in-law, my oldest brother's wife, went to the school at the head of Grove Street and Greenwich Avenue at the time of that awful accident, but fortunately, she was pulled out alive. While my parents were out of the city, I lived with her in their house on Christopher Street.

Speaking about the Thirteenth Street school, afterwards Grammar School #35, the old vice-principal of that, and I were great cronies when I was a teacher in New York.

But I guess I have taken up all the time that I ought. I certainly would be glad to see what else you have written, and if you come to Philadelphia and have a little time, I would like you to drop in so that we could talk about old times.

J. B. Lippincott and Company published one of my books of about one thousand octavo pages, based on some of the Latin work about which I was telling you. I would very gladly send you a copy, but I think it would be an outrage because it is on a subject that you would hardly be interested in.

Sincerely yours,

McGeorge, Wm. Jr.

'61

W/F

Wm. McGeorge