

## "OUR ALUMNI."

## TOAST AT ALUMNI BANQUET.

*Mr. Toast-master, Honored Guests, Fellow Alumni:*—But a day or two ago I received from my old friend and fellow-Alumnus now sitting immediately before me [Mr. Reber] a so-called hastily-written note—a note so hastily written that for the life of me I could decipher only so much of it as told me that I should be called upon to defend the Alumni here to-night.

The prospect first appalled me. The feeling grew upon me that the subject was too big for me to tackle. Never before did I so fully realize as now that—

"True ease in speaking comes from art, not chance,  
And those move easiest who have learned to dance."

Having for years had my attention demanded by material things that more frequently called for acts than for words, I feel that I am not sufficiently endowed with the power of facile speech and ready expression which the occasion warrants. For that reason I must beg of you to bear with me for not being a Depew and for calling to the assistance of a halting tongue an occasional note.

A deep-seated and overpowering sense of my duty to our Alma Mater is of immeasurable assistance to me in rising superior to that pronounced timidity and innate modesty which those who knew me in other days so marked me as a student, and which are universally recognized as the peculiar characteristics of a rail-roader under any and all circumstances.

The assignment which has been made to me kindles within me a feeling of sincere gratitude for and hearty appreciation of being given a subject in which I may freely indulge in man's most natural pastime—bragging—an opportunity which I cannot let go by.

I cannot refrain from here expressing my extreme satisfaction in being the chosen alternate or substitute of one whose absence is not to be attributed to any fault of my own, for aided by that thorough practical training which our Alma Mater ever imparts to her sons and daughters I was enabled to so keep up a part of that great transporting system which is said to own this State that he would have been able to come in perfect safety—"with none to molest him or make him afraid," except that creature whose sweet, familiar note is "Pepsiu chewing-gum, five cents!"