

THE ALUMNÆ NEWS

Published Monthly from October to June, inclusive, at 12-14 Lawton Street, New Rochelle, N. Y., by the Associate Alumnae of Hunter College of the City of New York.

Entered as second class matter, 1895, at the post-office at New Rochelle under the Act of March 3, 1879.

VOL. XLV

NEW ROCHELLE, N. Y., NOVEMBER, 1940

No. 8

PRESIDENT ROOSEVELT'S VISIT

On October 28 Hunter was honored by a visit from the President of the United States.

The President and his entourage arrived at about one, and were entertained at luncheon by members of the Board of Higher Education and representatives of the Faculty. At two the group mounted the platform of the Assembly Hall, before a mammoth audience of staff, students, and alumnae. Meanwhile an overflow of girls crowded into the Auditorium and the Lounge to listen to the exercises on loud-speakers. Classes were of course suspended to give all a chance to hear, and if possible see, their Chief Executive.

The general air of happy excitement was refreshing. At the President's arrival, throngs of girls filled every vantage-point in halls and on stairs, and even on the sidewalks outside—all well-behaved despite the great pressure and discomfort, all charming in their youthful enthusiasm.

President Roosevelt entered delightfully into the infectious spirit of the day. He must have sensed the eager expectancy that electrified the air during the brief introductory words of President Shuster and Dr. Tead, the latter of whom referred to the "hope deferred" at the time of our Dedication that had now become "hope realized"; and to his expression of pleasure at attending "the final Dedication of Hunter College", he added the assurance that this was not his final appearance there, since he had not seen enough of the students or of the building.

After a gay reference to the Mayor's skill in "wangling" millions for the City, he showed a sympathetic understanding of the overcrowding in the teaching profession in New York, but added encouragingly that in many parts of the country there is still need for more teachers and better-qualified teachers. As for our College, he declared that, as a neighbor, he knew Hunter well, and knew that "there is no question about its usefulness in the community".

Then he repeated his promise to come back and look over Hunter completely, "modern lighting" and all; for, though "an old man of 58", he was still "young enough to take an interest in this generation and advocate changes". He reiterated his belief, with a good-humored reference to the "razzing" occasioned by his original use of the phrase, that nation and state and city did not want to return to "the horse-and-buggy days"; and then, growing deeply and impressively serious, he declared that we do want to maintain one thing alive in the "horse-and-buggy days", patriotism. "For some things that are old *are* worth preserving—life, liberty, the pursuit of happiness; our form of government; and America!" E. ADELAIDE HAHN.

DEDICATION WEEK

By E. ADELAIDE HAHN

Not since its Golden Jubilee, over a score of years ago, has the Alma Mater known such a week of celebration as came to its share last month. Classes were suspended on October 8, 9, 10, and 11; and Hunter gave herself up to ceremonies and festivities. The Grand Marshal, Associate Professor James M. Hendel of the Chemistry Department, together with his diligent and devoted band of co-workers, had planned the program with zeal and care; and the result was a succession of events to be recorded in red letters in the Annals of our College.

The dignified and impressive invitation sent to "the Colleges, Universities, and learned Societies of the Western Hemisphere" over the signatures of Professor Hendel and Dr. Tead announced that it was being issued "in recognition of the vision of Thomas Hunter, his associates, and the City Fathers who in the year 1870 founded the first free college for women in order that those who did not share in this world's goods might claim their birthright to the riches of the mind, and that this institution, known as Hunter College, might fruitfully symbolize that basic article in the creed of the American nation, to wit, equality of opportunity for all, regardless of race, position, color, or creed; the great work accomplished throughout seven decades in preparing thousands upon thousands of students to give of their best efficiently to insure the progress of an increasingly complex civilization, and in maintaining, while so doing, standards of discipline and culture transmitted from the great colleges of the past; the devoted series of graduates who have taken their places in many fields of public and private endeavor—in teaching and law, in government and social welfare work, in medicine and philanthropy, in the arts and letters, in business and journalism—and who have manifested unstintingly their abiding affection for the College which trained them; the coöperation of City, State, and Federal Governments in the erection of a new setting for Hunter College endeavor—a modern structure in the heart of New York, sixteen stories in height, equipped with lecture halls and auditoriums, gymnasiums and laboratories, roof terraces and gardens, all beautiful and useful alike; the hope for a bright future under the leadership of President George N. Shuster". This invitation was accepted by 164 institutions of higher learning (including five South American universities), 25 learned societies and educational associations, and several civic and professional organizations of various types.

THE DEDICATION CEREMONY

The functions opened with the Dedication of the New Building, on Tuesday, October 8, at 2 P. M. Dr. Ordway Tead, Chairman of the Board of Higher Education, made an admirable presiding officer, handling the program with dignity, grace, and ready wit. The platform was occupied by public officials and representatives of civic and educational bodies.

In presenting the New Building, the Hon. Stanley Isaacs, President of the Borough of Manhattan (and, incidentally, a graduate of the Hunter Model School, and brother of a former Alumnae President), stressed the fact that this structure, while "a source of pride to all who love Hunter", is none the less not so important as the use to which it is put. In this connection he emphasized the complete freedom of thought and expression enjoyed at Hunter, and went on to stress the corollary of such freedom: government is not merely for the people but of and by the people; emphasis must be put upon the obligations of youth as well as its rights; liberty and democracy are worth dying for, since without them life is worth less than nothing.

Dr. Tead accepted the Building in a speech in which he discussed the three-fold aim of the College, the search for truth, beauty, and righteousness, and the essential unity of this triple quest.

The program then turned to the fine arts. Professor Robert P. Tristram Coffin of venerable Bowdoin read a noble ode specially written for the occasion, "The Palace of Park Avenue", in which he, like Mr. Isaacs and Dr. Tead before him, stressed the mission to be carried on within the new edifice.

"Here in a college for a sex set free
Sits the hope of our humanity."

Mrs. Theodore E. Simis, President of the Alumnae, presented the Graduate Gift, the Organ, as a symbol of the three-fold gratitude of the alumnae, to country, city, and college. And then, appropriately, there followed music, the singing by the choir, a charming group of white-gowned girlhood in the gallery, of Psalm CL, to the music of César Franck.

Thereafter came an address by Mayor Fiorello H. LaGuardia, in which he too proclaimed the relative unimportance of the building, in comparison with the greater importance of Dr. Shuster and a good faculty, in making Hunter the great institution that he declared it to be. He added to his own tribute that of his little daughter—"There can't be so many smart girls." He told of having voted for a new Hunter building twenty years earlier, and sounded a graver note by saying how different must his speech be to-day from the one that he might have delivered then. However, he grew more optimistic in reminding his hearers that this country is not over-populated, and in asserting that he had no doubt of its economic future. He looked forward confidently to the

coming of a shorter working-week, with a consequent increase of leisure which education must provide for, and concluded with the declaration that enlightened young men and women would soon take over the country and write a new chapter in history.

Dr. Tead aroused amusement, accompanied by gratitude in the mind of Hunter's over-burdened teaching staff, by applying to them the need for the shorter working-week that the Mayor had just envisaged, thus showing that he himself fully understood the faculty point of view which he said was so ably represented on the Board of Higher Education by one whom he now presented in the dual guise of scholar and friend, Professor Harry J. Carman of Columbia University. Professor Carman then gave a deeply thoughtful and scholarly address which, like Mr. Isaacs' speech earlier in the day, had as its theme the stirring one of liberty. He outlined the age-old struggle between democracy and totalitarianism with special reference to its course in our own country, and dwelt on all the implications of the democratic way of life, with the need for full development of personality, for the use of the mind and the exercise of the will through practice in the management of affairs, for education, for civic rights. While acknowledging the existence of troubling social and economic ills (such as exploitation of labor, unemployment, and undue stress on material acquisition) and occasional shortcomings on the part of democracy (such as extravagance and political corruption), he ended with a ringing call to protect and strengthen democracy, and to work with others to the end that justice and liberty may be guarded against totalitarianism with its spies and terror.

Professor Carman was followed by a colleague on the Board of Higher Education, Mrs. Walter S. Mack, Jr., Chairman of the Hunter College Administrative Committee, who expressed appreciation for the work of the two distinguished firms that had collaborated in the planning of the structure which means the realization of a dream for an educational center in mid-Manhattan. She described the building in detail, and pronounced it superior to any other edifice of the kind in the country and perhaps in the world. In conclusion she paid tribute to one who must have been often in the thoughts of many of that great audience, when, recalling the descriptions of our earlier home on the same historic spot, and declaring that our manner of speech was different, our building higher, and our ideals no lower, she expressed the hope that we would continue to carry on the tradition of Thomas Hunter.

The Benediction which closed the meeting, like the Invocation which had opened it, was pronounced by the Reverend William Adams Brown of Union Theological Seminary.

After the singing of the National Anthem, the procession marched out of the hall that was now truly Hunter's own, as part of the Building thus duly and fittingly dedicated.