

HUNTER SPECIAL

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No. 1

HUNTER COLLEGE—A VISION FULFILLED.

On Feb. 14th, 1920, Hunter College of the City of New York is to celebrate its fiftieth anniversary.—

Perhaps nothing could more perfectly typify the growth of that institution, than the changes that can be noted in the condition of the locality where the College stands.

Extracts from the diary of the father of one of the Professors in the College, whose home, in the sixties, was on the corner of 79th St. and Fifth Ave., state:—

"I could not go to Sam Geery's to-night because my lantern was broken."

"Sam and I attended Sunday School, and played tricks on the new farmer on the way home." The prayer book of the writer of the diary bears this inscription on the fly-leaf:—"St. James Church, 68th St. near 3rd Ave. Road."

"We intended to go down town to service, but missed the stage."

"I went down town with father. We were late because two people were not ready when the stage driver blew his horn, and we had to wait. One gentleman said he did not eat all his breakfast, because he did not want to make us all wait too long."

"I went down to shop with mother. Coming home it snowed, and all the gentlemen got out and pushed the stage up the hill at 65th St."

And now,—think of the Lenox Hill of the present, and you will appreciate the development of the old "Normal College" of 1810 into the "Hunter College" of to-day.

Away back in the early fifties, when Thomas Hunter was made Principal of No. 35, he began a search for superior women teachers. He soon discovered how very limited was the education they themselves had received, and began to question in his own mind why the girls of this great city should not have the advantage of a college education the same as the boys were receiving in the Free Academy, later the College of the City of New York.

From this questioning he could not rest, until he had persuaded others of its righteousness so successfully that "Mayor Hall's Twelve Apostles" took the necessary steps "to secure ways and means to found an institution for the education of

girls, worthy of this American metropolis."

Thus in 1869 the Normal and High School, which name a year later the Legislature changed to "Normal College of the City of New York," was definitely decided upon. By-laws for its government were passed, and Thomas Hunter was chosen as its President, while Lydia F. Wadleigh, who came from old Twelfth Street School with 300 supplementary students, was appointed Lady Superintendent.

A floor and a half on the south-east corner of Broadway and Fourth Street were hired for temporary quarters, and here—a carriage salesroom below, an armory above, a restaurant on the east, and a horrid din of omnibuses rolling incessantly over the Belgian pavement on the west—Normal College had its birth!

A by-law was passed by the Board of Education abolishing supplementary classes in the public schools, and transferring the pupils to this new institution.

New York is always a very conservative city, willing to bear many ills rather than make an effort to remove them, and our incipient College was regarded by some with feelings of intense dislike, by others with cold disapproval, and by the great majority with absolute indifference. It happened, fortunately, that at this time the Faculty and tutors consisted mainly of young men and women, or they could never have survived the difficulties they had to overcome.

The first selection for the site for the buildings of the College was a part of Bryant Square, but here fortune favored the young institution. The Mayor's residence on 42nd Street fronted the Square, and Mr. Hall feared a school near at hand would injure his property. The best part of Hamilton Park, 68th Street and Park Avenue, was then offered and thankfully accepted.

Months of vexatious delay in getting to work on the buildings ensued, for, although prizes were offered and money expended for architects' plans, none of them was practicable for school purposes. In this dilemma, President Hunter himself prepared a sketch of a building which was accepted by the Executive Committee, elaborated by the architect of the board, and became the working plan of the present

edifice. Even then there was danger that the Commissioners would not adopt the Committee's report. Mr. Wood, ardent and untiring friend of the College as he was, wanted a larger and handsomer building, while another warm friend of the College demanded as a condition for his vote the present unsightly stoop at the front entrance. At length the necessary seven votes were obtained, chiefly through the exertions of Isaac Bell; and in the summer of 1871, work on the foundations was begun, and on the opening day of the session, September, 1873, the girls took possession of their beautiful College Home.

In 1880, the course of study was extended to four years; in 1888, to five years, in 1903, to six; in 1905, to seven. In 1908 the degree was registered; and from then on the institution has been a College in reality as well as in name, second in rank to none in the land.

In May, 1914—on a day of days,—the old name "Normal" was changed to "Hunter," for what brave name should the College bear but his who brought "The Good Ship Alma Mater" safely into port?

A. D. S.

LETTER FROM AN APPRECIATIVE GRADUATE.

My dear——,

Alumnae Hall! What a happy thought! A "Home" where all we College children old and young alike will live again the old times and dream about the new. A "Home" where those who traveled the same road under the same wise guidance will feel the eternal kinship and where the lonely will find a friend. Time will close our own homes, but Alumnae Hall will stretch out its sheltering arms and gather us into its fellowship.

How beautiful the fulfillment of this dream of your Graduate Gift Committee will be and how fitting a memorial to Thomas Hunter, who fathered those of us who were so fortunate as to hear the teaching of his kindly heart. I have wondered sometimes through the passing years how I might pay my debt, how perhaps communicate to others the urge of that mental stimulus and the warmth of that illumined spirit which influenced to such a marked degree the lives of those who knew him. I am grateful to your Committee and I know others will be for pointing out the way: a way in which each and every one of us may proclaim our love for President Hunter and our loyalty to the College which his initiative and dogged persistence called into being.

The possibilities of such a building as

Alumnae Hall quicken one's imagination. What a vantage ground for usefulness to one another and to the community! Here the older graduate may place her steady hand upon the shoulder of her little sister and the younger enliven the spirit of her counselor with her fresh young vision. Back into the College fold will come those who have wandered far, and joining hands with their almost forgotten family strengthen the College spirit and make Hunter a tremendous force for good in the community.

Alumnae Hall, the embodiment, as it must be, of a precious sentiment of thousands of good women, will attract the highest type of young womanhood to the College and make its impress upon the youth of this great city. Oh, there will be many material advantages, but I shall forget them all when I step across the threshold and know that I BELONG! Just the mere thought of it takes me back to the old chapel with Professor Mangold at the piano. We are singing, "O, Merry Goes the Time when the Heart Is Young, There's Naught Too Hard to Climb when the Heart Is Young"—and I feel that Alumnae Hall will always keep us singing that happy hopeful strain.

Somehow I cannot get away from the thought that this memorial to Thomas Hunter will be one also to our parents, whose wise foresight sent us to him and whose sacrifice kept us with him through our tender years. Our feet will tread on sacred ground consecrated to the perpetuation of those principles which emanated from such sources.

I trust that the Hunter Golden Jubilee will assure the erection of this building, and that all who come after may feel the significance of a structure whose every stone proclaims—"I am—because he was."

Yours fraternally,

Lillian A. Lilly,
President, New York City
Federation of Women's Clubs.

LEARN TO GIVE BY GIVING.

To those friends who contributed to the G. G. Fund before this Drive began we extend grateful greetings. Your contributions form the nucleus of the Gift Fund. But for a Golden Jubilee much money is required.

It is only once in a lifetime that a great moment of common interest like this will arise for all graduates of Hunter. The gift for such an occasion *must* be great—therefore the individual subscriptions must be as large as possible. For that reason we are asking you to *Give Again!* B. B. D.