

THE ALUMNÆ NEWS

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COLLEGE NOTES

February 23 marked the fiftieth anniversary of Dr. Kieran's entrance upon his teaching career. Although, at his request, plans for paying suitable tribute to the occasion had been abandoned by the staff, a recalcitrant Department of Education, whose members feel that a particularly strong bond unites them with the President, arranged, under Professor Higgins's direction, a surprise party in Room One, where Dr. Kieran taught his first classes in Education.

Under pretense of showing him the Department's famous "clinic," Professor Higgins ushered the President in to an assembly of more than fifty of his enthusiastic friends. On the desk, in a handsome blue leather portfolio, tooled in gold, lay a set of resolutions, beautifully engraved and illuminated by Miss Margaretha Brohmer, and signed by the entire Department of Education. Near by stood a vase containing fifty golden yellow roses.

After a few informal words of explanation by Professor Higgins, and an appreciative reply by the President, refreshments were served.

In the course of the day, many other congratulatory messages and tokens arrived, among which was a "spiritual bouquet" presented on behalf of the Hunter College Newman Club.

During the years since Professor Helen Gray Cone's retirement in 1926, the English Department Tea in honor of her birthday has become a tradition, and annually offers more striking proof of the stronghold which she has built for herself in the affections of Hunter people.

This year, the tea celebrating her seventy-fourth birthday took place in the Faculty Room on Thursday, March 9. Great numbers of guests, including many members of the staff, crowded into the room all afternoon to offer their felicitations to the guest of honor, who modestly disclaimed her right to such an ovation, and, with characteristic whimsicality, expressed the fear that she might become a "legend."

Rarely, if ever, has the Faculty Room been so attractively decorated. The table, spread with exquisite linen, and bright with spring flowers and colorful delicacies, bore in its center a large birthday cake which carried on a telegram-form the message:

—1859-1933—

"Thy own wish
Wish we thee
In every place."

Dr. Williams, a gracious and charming hostess, greeted Professor Cone warmly and presented her with a corsage bouquet of old-fashioned flowers.

Among those who came to pay tribute were Dr. Isobel Camp, a former member of the Education Department, and Miss Julia R. S. Chellborg, formerly of the Mathematics Department.

The arrangements for the party were under the direction of Professor Renata Remy, assisted by Professor Emma K. Temple and Miss Cecelia M. Hotchner.

On March 16, the Senior Class entertained the Faculty at a Tea in the Council Room. The event took the form of a St. Patrick's Day celebration.

Professor Marguerite E. Jones of the Department of Speech and Dramatics was one of the speakers at the convention of Teachers of English which was held at Textile High School on February 22.

On March 9, Dr. Kieran sailed for California on the Santa Ana to be gone until the latter part of April. He is taking the trip on the advice of his physician in order to gain a much needed rest. During his absence, Dean Hill will be Acting-President.

MARY ROSE SHEEHAN.

WORK DONE IN FEBRUARY

After reading an article published in the *Times* in regard to the contemplated plans for free colleges, your Chairman on Unemployment was in communication with the authorities with reference to positions for our graduates in these colleges. Letters were sent to eighteen of our very needy cases, advising them to apply for the positions, and telling them whom to see and what to say. Up to the time of the writing of this article, we have heard that a position was given to one of our girls, and we hope to hear of better results in a few days.

A letter soliciting help was received from a graduate of 1901. She was immediately referred to the proper authorities, and her application for a position in the free college is being favorably considered. In the meantime, this graduate is without funds and writes that she is in debt for seven weeks' room rent and board.

Another applicant who was successful in obtaining employment writes, "I am so breathlessly thrilled to enter a new field (having been assigned to research work in

IN MEMORIAM

CLARA BYRNES

(Address by Helen Gray Cone at Lenox Hill Neighborhood House, January 26, 1933.)

As Clara Byrnes was a member of the Class of 1893, my knowledge of her covered a period of forty years. I first knew her as a brilliant and original student in the experimental and argumentative stage of youth. One of my most delightful early recollections of her is connected with her Christmas extravaganza, called *Yuletide*, which was acted by her fellow-students in December, 1892. She wrote and coached the little play, basing it upon Tennyson's *Gareth and Lynette*, inserting, as the custom was, humorous and allusive elements, and boldly introducing a novelty in the shape of an entirely original Dragon, ultimately slain by the hero. Miss Byrnes refrained from taking any part herself, notwithstanding the marked dramatic talent which we all recognize in her. I remember that when all was over, and the play had been enthusiastically applauded, the principal actors, with the author, gathered about the piano, and joined in a charmingly graceful Yuletide song which Clara had prepared. Memory summons that young group, so full of life and promise, from the far past, as we should now have to summon those who composed it from varied careers and remote distances—and Clara Byrnes, the very center of the group, from the greatest distance of all.

I knew her later as an ambitious young writer just beginning to make her way with the magazines, and vastly enjoying the discovery of her own power to evoke laughter; and still later as a fellow-teacher in different departments of the college; and lastly as a member of my own department of English, where our contact was naturally closer than before. Thus she became a comrade, and also, as it chanced somewhat later, a neighbor; and a pleasant half-jesting relation in which her characteristic humor was a strong thread, became gradually woven into an affectionate and unbreakable friendship. It was given to me in the years that followed to share with her many experiences, experiences of mirth and mourning, of gay excitement and grievous anxiety. This close connection does not make it easier, but on the contrary somewhat more difficult, to speak about my friend.

Hers was a complex nature, richly endowed. It is my belief that she would have been successful, perhaps brilliantly successful, in any one of several walks of life, other than that which she was led to follow by a combination of choice and chance. In particular, one is impressed by her intense feeling for drama, and her power of arousing a corresponding passion in others. Not to speak of many minor undertakings of a lighter nature, the task of directing a great play was accepted by her in a spirit which must be called religious. I cannot do better than

quote an expression of her own, a little poem called *The Coach's Prayer*.

"Give me, O Lord, the glowing heart,
The temper, sweet and fierce and gay,
The intricate and patient art
To recreate an older day.
To rugged strength, add suave finesse,
To classic skill, a modern way,—
And in return for such largesse,
Dear Lord, I offer you a play!"

As we seek for the key of her career and character, we recognize first her warmly sympathetic interest in youth. She loved young people and understood them, and that love and understanding were eagerly returned. She was always ready to be carried away by any enterprise in their behalf; she gave generously of herself, her time, her ingenuity, her energy, her many talents. On reflection we perceive that this interest in youth was one phase of her most individual quality—a warm *humanity*. This showed itself also in her ardent sympathy, quite without racial or creedal barriers, for all the people of the great city from which she sprang, and her relation to which she always keenly felt. She idealized that city, personifying it as a noble supernatural figure demanding her loyal service. This faith of hers, not blind, but transcendent and triumphant, this faith in the city which is hers and ours, is perhaps her greatest gift to us. The memory of it may help to increase in us a loftier spirit of service, service which is not slavery, but active redemption and retrieval. We may join her in crying,

"O City,

You shall be a City not of dishonor but
of honor!"

As we repeat these her words, we may still feel the reality of her dear continuing presence, and even seem to hear the deep tones of her well-remembered voice.

Comrade of many merry or weary days,
No more encountered in our casual ways,
Our crowding memories press to speak
your praise.

We will not wish you back again to tread
The twilight labyrinth that lies ahead.
On your new pathway luminous peace be
shed!

We who still walk the devious roads of
earth,
Clasping remembrance as a thing of worth,
Lift high the lights of Kindness, Faith,
and Mirth.

HELEN GRAY CONE.

Hunter College graduates who were members of Il Circolo Italiano held a tea at Alumnae Hall on February 19, organized an Italian Alumnae Club, and discussed plans for a memorial to the late Professor Clara Byrnes. The first regular meeting of this organization was held in the Auditorium of the College on Tuesday, March 21, at 8:30 P. M.

VIOLETTA NOCITO.