

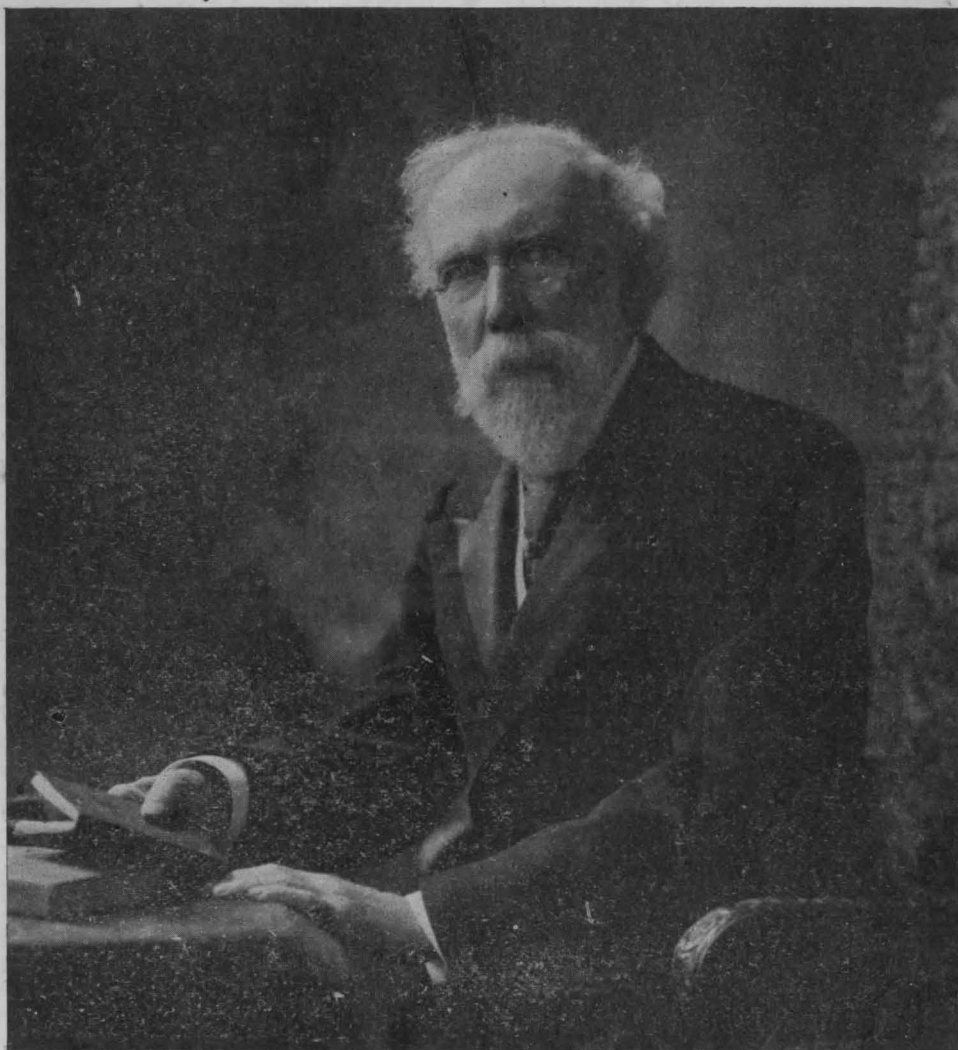
THE ALUMNÆ NEWS

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VOL XX

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In Memoriam Thomas Hunter, LL.D., President Emeritus of Hunter College

One of the lyrics in "Pippa Passes" is a song of an ancient king who, in his long and wise rule, had quite outgrown the infirmities of age, and the very necessity of death itself.

"The gods so loved him while he dreamed,
That, having lived so long, there seemed
No need the king should ever die."

Somewhat in this way have we of the Associate Alumnae regarded our dear President Emeritus. It hardly appeared in the nature of things that he should pass away from us; and his death, even at so advanced an age, has not only most deeply grieved but startled and shaken us all. In the confusion resulting from this shock, it

is hard to marshal our ideas. The writer does not presume to think that she can in this brief article touch upon all sides of President Hunter's character or career. Each of us will doubtless feel that she has an individual word to say. Here it will only be possible to indicate those few qualities and principles which have appeared to one of the Alumnae essential and central in his life and work.

First, Thomas Hunter was a true American. He was born, indeed, in Ireland; one was often reminded of that by his humor, elaborate courtesy, and charm; but when he came to this country in 1849, a youth of eighteen, he adopted American ideals and

traditions with a special devotion. Washington was his revered hero. Lincoln, whom he had seen, he was wont vividly and admiringly to describe. Among the ideas steadily impressed by his use of "the teacher's privilege of repetition", perhaps the most far-reaching in its effect upon his pupils was that of democratic equality, irrespective of race, class, or creed. It was fitting that in his honor the flag he loved should be placed at half-mast over the schools in which he believed, throughout the city to which he had given the faithful service of his working years.

The next thought that rises is that he was before all,—putting aside for a moment his success as the chief builder of a great institution,—a true teacher. It was the title which he preferred to all others, even the most imposing. Led to his high vocation more or less by chance, he showed himself in a short time to have been born for it; even as the legendary Arthur made good his claim to the kingdom of Britain by pulling the mystical sword out of the stone in which it was miraculously fixed. His master-touch upon the mind, his freeing of the powers of youth for the enterprises of manhood, is to this day attested by the reverent and affectionate gratitude of the men of the Thomas Hunter Association, the boys of "Old Thirty-Five."

As principal, achieving a perfect discipline without the use of the rod, he relied upon the influence of character, upon a union of sympathy and justice. These qualities he enjoined by example as well as precept upon those about to be teachers, during his presidency of the Normal College. He did not fail to use an occasional wholesome severity, nor did he neglect minor details. He exacted accuracy, punctuality, implicit obedience; and these virtues are the more present and effective to-day throughout the schools, because of his insistence upon them.

It has perhaps been too little emphasized, that in his administration of the college, from 1870 till his resignation in 1906, President Hunter was moved, through all variations of policy, by one dominant idea. It was advanced beyond his time; it was impossible to put fully into immediate practice; but it was sound and vital, and in it is firmly rooted the great and growing organism that bears his name. It was the idea that in an institution which was certain to supply the city with many of its teachers, a broad academic preparation was a necessity; that the teacher even in the elementary school needed not merely a technical training, but a liberal education.

The most valuable of ideas might fail without a personality behind it. We who feel that we must thank him for many gifts, thank him most for the gift of himself. The essential quality of his personal effect was a certain stimulating warmth. He radiated courage, enthusiasm, goodwill; he

was "of all sorts enchantingly beloved." To any real trouble his response was quick and hearty. We felt that we were individuals to him; he held us quite magically in his memory. Sometimes we got a glimpse of his romanticism; he bore as the secret lantern under his coat a fire of devotion to our Alma Mater; for her he was ever ready to fight gallantly or to plan adroitly, with a relish of the very difficulties. Certain rich words he delighted in; they were the words of chivalry; *loyalty* was the best of all.

Among his distinctions, he doubtless valued most the unique tribute of the bestowal of his name upon the college which was in a measure his own creation. It is a happy thought to us now, that the public gratitude had been expressed in this tribute in time for him to taste fully the pleasure of it. In his last sunny autumnal days, there was fulfilled for him the wish set forth by our American nature-poet, in his invocation to October:

"Wind of the sunny south! oh, still delay
In the gay woods and in the golden air,
Like to a good old age released from care,
Journeying, in long serenity, away.

In such a bright, late quiet, would that I
Might wear out life like thee, mid bowers
and brooks,

And dearer yet, the sunshine of kind looks,
And music of kind voices ever nigh;
And when my last sand twinkled in the
glass,

Pass silently from earth, as thou dost
pass." HELEN GRAY CONE.

(The following poem, read at the reunion of the Associate Alumnae, October 27, 1906, is here reprinted on account of the characterization of our President Emeritus which it contains.)

"DEAR CAPTAIN OF OUR
STAUNCH OLD SHIP"—BY
HELEN GRAY CONE.

DEDICATED TO THOMAS
HUNTER, LL. D., PRESIDENT
EMERITUS OF THE
NORMAL COLLEGE. READ
AT THE REUNION OF THE
ASSOCIATE ALUMNAE, OCTOBER
27, 1906.

I.

Whom are we met to praise?
Soldier of many battles, or singer of lovely
lays?
Or shaper of soaring spires, that lift our
souls to the sky?
Or builder of strong sea-towers, that flash
where the sea-birds fly?
Nay, but the Teacher, the Teacher! Is he
not all, and more?
Who wakes the song in the spirit, who lifts
a light from the shore,
Who heartens youth for the battle with a
bugle that echoes far,
Who sets in the midst of the city the spire
that points to a star!

II.

Him are we met to praise,
Remembering all our ardors of old days,
Our winged days, that still shine out among
The crowding memories; was he not our
friend?

He understood us, for he too was young,
And shall be to the end!
What man grows old, with warm romance
aglow,

A rosy fire, on his heart's hearthstone still,
Faith fresh as long ago
In vital good triumphant over ill,
Brave hopes and dreams? Ah no,
He grows not old, nor ever will!

So, being young,
He spake with us in our own tongue,
And set us with Godspeed upon our ways;
And now, in long procession, one great
guild,
With that rekindled ardor filled,
We come to speak his praise.

III.

How far, how far beyond
The limits of our well-loved hall
Would that procession stretch, might we see
all,

As at the waving of a magic wand!
From some young soldier of the Sixties,
spurred

To splendid charge and sacrificial fall
By the inspiring echo of his word,
To the last girl of Nineteen-six who goes
To face dark ignorance and want and sin,
More subtle and less noble foes,
In that dim daily battle hard to win—
All his, all his—whate'er their fields, their
fates,
Behold, his children praise him in the city
gates!

IV.

Here in this place—his place—
Shall not his praises leap upon the lip,
Dear Captain of our staunch old Ship
So bravely brought to port through every
storm?

Here shall his presence dwell—the well-
known form

Martial-erect, the kind familiar face,
The blue eyes' laughter, and the crowning
grace

Of curling silvered hair;
Here shall his presence dwell,
Held by affection's potent spell,
A gracious wraith, filling his vacant chair.
Here in this place—his place—
He breathed good-will to every creed and
race,

And pressed the simple virtues home, and
taught

The love of little children and the poor;
Here in this place, be sure,
The goodly unseen works his spirit
wrought,

Being of the spirit, shall evermore endure.

V.

Dear Captain of our staunch old Ship,
So proudly brought to port through every
storm!

Now let the prayer leap warm
On every loyal lip,
"God bless the staunch old Ship,
And bring her safe to port, whate'er the
coming storm,

Though her good Captain rest
In sunny harbor, as seems best!"
All golden be his days,
Mild suns slow-moving to the peaceful west,
Amber October hours, fragrant with all
men's praise!

College Notes.

On Thursday, October 14th, President Davis received the sad news of the death of our revered President Emeritus, Dr. Thomas Hunter. He immediately ordered the flag to be placed at half-mast as a symbol of the loss which Hunter College had suffered.

A special meeting of the Faculty was called to take appropriate action, but it was found impossible because of the lateness of the hour to summon a general assembly of the students. However, news of the sad event became sufficiently diffused throughout the College to result in the postponement of all social affairs.

On Friday at noon a special assembly was called at which President Davis made the formal announcement of Dr. Hunter's decease. He spoke in a sympathetic manner of the long and loving life work of Dr. Hunter in the interests of education, especially the higher education of women, dwelling particularly upon his labors for the college which to-day proudly bears his name.

By action of the Board of Trustees of Hunter College, sessions were suspended on Monday, October 18th, in token of respect for the memory of Dr. Hunter.

The Students' Association of Hunter College sent a large delegation to represent it at the funeral services of Dr. Hunter.

On June 29th, 1915, a few days after Commencement, the College suffered a great loss in the death of Marjorie Burr Sargent, A. M., Associate Professor of English, who had for the past several years devoted her attention to Dramaturgy, in which field she was markedly successful. It is with a deep sense of loss that we record her death.

The following recent graduates are now teaching in the College in the departments indicated:—Katherine E. Kümmerle, '14 (German); Isabel McLaughlin, '15, and Julia Simpson, '15, (Mathematics); E. Adelaide Hahn, '15, (Classics); Elizabeth Whitehurst, '15, (History).

M. K. G.

THE ALUMNAE NEWS

Published Monthly

by

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HUNTER COLLEGE

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No more shall we see at the head of our procession the gracious form, the silvery locks, the sunny blue eyes of our beloved chief.

"Out of the day and night
A joy has taken flight."

All around us in our Chapel are presentments of our honored benefactor. Just at first we older ones see them "through a glass darkly," for our vision is tear-dimmed, and we can discern only the "pictures on memory's wall." But we have many of these pictures, and they seem alive owing to the vivid personality, the inspiring instruction, the stimulating influence of his onward and upward leadership.

His memory will live in the hearts of numberless men and women, who are indebted to him for benefits of every kind. He has assisted many a poor person to success. His old "boys" owe him a debt for his teachings, which they glory in acknowledging;—but it is his old "girls" and his girls of later generations who proudly claim the greatest debt, the gift of the higher education for women. How shall we endeavor to repay this debt in smallest fashion? Not by grief and gloom and gravity, which will benefit no one, but by adherence to his teachings who has made history. He often said, "History is philosophy teaching by example". We can live to help others to live, and this was his philosophy.

Let us give thanks that he lived to see his pioneer work crowned with greatest success, that this great educator was made to realize not only the esteem but also the love in which he was held, and that he knew, thank God he *knew*, that the great institution of our land, which he founded, would bear his name forever, and that myriads of young voices would hail the name and myriads of young lives would be attuned now and evermore to the ideals of Hunter.

October 17, 1915.

"It is not a funeral: it is a triumph"—thus did the Rev. Henry Mottet characterize the last rites in honor of our beloved President Emeritus on Sunday, October 17, at the Cathedral of St. John the Divine. The immense place of worship could not contain the crowds who had come to honor the memory of our "dear Captain." In truth the "groves, God's first temples" all through the land would scarcely have held the throngs who owe him gratitude.

Among the delegations at the church were great numbers of the Associate Alumnae led by our President, Mrs. Kramer, followed by ex-Presidents and officers of the Association: a large representation of the "boys" of P. S. 35, the Jenny Hunter Kindergarten Association, and more than two hundred of the faculty, trustees, and officers of Hunter College, High and Model Schools. Many of the members of the Board of Education were present. Dr. George S. Davis was one of the honorary pall-bearers. In the auditorium were many great educators who were present in honor of our greatest educator.

"I am the resurrection and the life," rang out solemnly in the great edifice, where masses of wondrously beautiful flowers, sweetest music from the choir and the organ, intensely loving devotion of myriad hearts beating unitedly in submission to the divine will, and God's golden sunlight over all made the solemnization what it was, not a "funeral but a triumph."

In Memoriam: Isabella Sullivan.

The members of the Class of 1876 announce with sorrow the passing away of their dear friend and comrade, Isabella Sullivan, for forty years President of the class.

Miss Sullivan was President of the Associate Alumnae from 1904 to 1906, an office which she filled with efficiency and grace.

Most of the alumnae knew her as the principal of P. S. 170, a most important school in a very crowded district, where her enthusiasm and high ideals, during the fifteen years of her service, affected the lives of thousands of children and inspired a large corps of teachers.

Her teaching career began immediately upon graduation, in West Farms. Some years later she was appointed principal in Rivington Street School and then served in the same capacity in P. S. 68 in West 128th Street, before being transferred to P. S. 170.

We feel that our dear friend has
"Joined the Choir Invisible
Of those immortal dead who live again
In minds made better by their presence: live
In pulses stirred to generosity,
In deeds of daring rectitude, in scorn
For miserable aims that end with self."