

# 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 INAUGURATION CEREMONY

To those who believe, as so many of the speakers at our various Dedication Week ceremonies made it explicitly manifest that they believe, and as all with a true appreciation of what education really is must believe, that Mark Hopkins—or Thomas Hunter—or George Shuster—at one end of a log means more than any Gothic structure of red brick or any limestone skyscraper, the high point of the week was reached by the Inaugural Exercises on October 10th. This was summed up amusingly by the graphic—and practically stenographic—account given by Dr. Tead, who once again was the admirable presiding officer, of the telephone conversation which, contrary to his custom, the Mayor had had with him that morning.

Mayor LaGuardia: "This is the Inauguration this afternoon?"

Dr. Tead: "Yes, Mr. Mayor."

Mayor LaGuardia: "This occasion is more serious and dignified than Tuesday afternoon?"

Dr. Tead: "Yes, Mr. Mayor."

Mayor LaGuardia: "I get it." (Hangs up.)

And so did every one in the crowded Assembly Hall "get it"—the dignitaries and delegates on the platform; the staff, teaching and administrative, from College, High School, Elementary School, and the alumnae, on the floor; the white-frocked Choir, and other representatives of the student body, in the gallery. The key-note of seriousness and dignity was struck by the long academic procession in cap and gown that advanced down the stairs and up the aisles, headed by the Marshal for the Faculty, and behind him the Mayor and the Chairman of the Board of Higher Education, the Chairman of the Administrative Committee and Dr. Shuster; then the speakers in the Inauguration; officials of the State and City Governments; the Board of Higher Education; delegates from universities and colleges, and from learned societies and educational associations; former Trustees; Directors of the Associate Alumnae, with a few other prominent members especially invited; and the Faculty of Hunter College. One particular alumna had a special place of honor on the platform, and a faculty marshal of her own as an escort: this was Miss Jenny Hunter, daughter of our first President. (And perhaps there were some who recalled as a happy omen her words at a recent Alumnae Meeting, that President Shuster reminded her of President Hunter. Perhaps, too, to many that staunch, sturdy first leader of Hunter seemed to be with us in spirit still, though it was twenty-five years almost to the day since his gracious presence had left us.)

The ceremonies were opened by the pronouncement of the solemn Invocation by the Right Reverend Monsignor Patrick J. Barry, Rector of Immaculate Conception Seminary.

The opening address was by Dr. Tead, who reminded the audience that the hallowed

spot now occupied by the new skyscraper had been our own location for almost seventy years; recalled that in 1914 had come our new name adopted in recognition of the work of Dr. Hunter, whose name was greeted with hearty applause; and enumerated all our Presidents, Doctors Hunter, Davis, Kieran, and Colligan. He then proceeded to install Hunter's fifth President, George N. Shuster, whom he presented as one who had combined the careers of publicist and college teacher; who was characterized by that trinity of qualities whose importance in a college Dr. Tead had stressed two days before, truth-seeking, beauty-loving, and high-minded righteousness; who had the vision of a lovelier community, and the will to work for it, the courage and the loftiness of moral aim that are the very essence of to-day's needs. In conclusion he paraphrased the speech made at the induction of G. Stanley Hall as President of Clark University, emphasizing that this choice was free from influence of trustees or friends, from pet theories or sectarian test or guarantees, but was actuated by the single desire to produce men—or in this case women—trained in the highest duties of life.

After the new President had risen in response, the program continued, with an address by Dr. Van Wyck Brooks, who, speaking of "Our Literature To-Day", stressed as "the dominant need in the history of literature" that of health, will, courage, faith in human nature, which characterizes the great writers from Homer on, and whose displacement by disillusionment and cynicism, by rawness and hardness, by absurdity and immaturity, in the American Literature of to-day he deeply deploras. Only two modern American writers received his acclaim as revealing "a joyous confidence in human nature, an abounding faith in the will, a sense of the heroic in the human adventure"; these were Robert Frost and a special friend of Hunter's who had spoken at the Dedication Dinner two days earlier, Lewis Mumford.

The Choir then gave a noble rendering "In Modo Exhortationis", adapted from Bach by the Chairman of Hunter's Music Department, Professor Walter Helfer. The Choir was led, at the Inauguration as at the Dedication, by Mr. Anders Emile, and the Organist was Mr. Alexander Russell.

Next followed an address on "True Humanism" by one whom Dr. Tead introduced as "a true humanist", Dr. Jacques Maritain, Visiting Professor of Philosophy at Columbia University. Dr. Maritain paid tribute to Dr. Shuster for his knowledge of European affairs and for his possession of "the kind of mind that dictators dread most", and expressed the hope that he would some day give us a history of the Weimar Republic. He spoke of culture's need for defense, and of the indispensability of the moral element in all culture, of the importance of knowing not so much how to do as how to be. In devoting a special word to the part of woman, he

dwelt not on the differences between male and female, but on the need for complete development of all human beings; and from that passed to the importance of human dignity, which demands that truth, beauty, and wisdom shall not be at the command of the state but shall be served by the state, and that the slogans and regimentation of fascism shall not be allowed to enter into democratic education.

The Mayor, who had arrived during Dr. Maritain's speech, expressed regret for his unavoidable lateness, and added, "I am here because I want to be here." He declared that the ceremonies of the day were of far greater importance than those of the Dedication, for they gave the new building its soul. He tendered his personal best wishes, and the best wishes of the people of the City of New York, to Dr. Shuster in his assumption of "the second most responsible office in the City of New York" (the most responsible being that of the Superintendent of Schools). In entrusting to Dr. Shuster's care "New York City's most priceless gift", its young women, he said, "Nature has given them charm; education will give them force. Heredity has given them courage; training will give them competence." After a brief and graceful tribute to Dr. Maritain, in which he expressed happiness at having him in this country, and the hope that his stay here might be short, and that the time would soon come when all Frenchmen might return to their own country with heads held high, he turned back to the new President, asking him to keep in close contact with the Mayor that the latter might be accurately informed, and pledging complete coöperation for the best interests of Hunter.

As the spokesman for all the visiting delegates, Dr. Guy E. Snavelly, Executive Director of the Association of American Colleges, offered greetings and felicitations to the new President, and predicted that, with an enlightened President and the coöperation of the Faculty, Hunter would play an intelligent rôle in the future welfare of the community and the nation, well-befitting a college with the motto "mihi cura futuri".

Now came the culmination of the ceremony. Introduced by Dr. Tead with the words, "The President will do what we expect him to do because he has done it—surpass our fondest hopes", Dr. Shuster arose to deliver the Inaugural Address, his first speech as President of Hunter College.

Despite "the sobbing of a whole world in pain", Dr. Shuster declared, man's spirit is still to be free, to be kind, to go forward unafraid. As a part of this, we must consider what we purpose to do and why. We must provide free education, conservative but not conventional, having as its goal sound intellectual training not too far from active pursuits. Education must be alive, for the people without convictions is doomed.

The youth of this efficient machine age, expecting government, society, and educa-

tion to be conducted with comparable skill, is often taken advantage of by the propagandist and the totalitarian. But, despite such dangers, the quotation from Emerson chosen as an inscription upon the wall of the New Building still holds good—"We are of different opinions at different times, but we always may be said to be at heart on the side of truth." And this recognition of the right to differ is one solid guaranty of democracy's existence.

But democracy needs the positive discipline that was provided by Benedictine monasticism in the Middle Ages, and by Puritanism in the early days of our own country. Such discipline the college must create, that ours may be a land of free men and women, afraid of nothing but humble too. Thus we shall be protected against corruption and dictatorship.

Coming directly to the specific methods by which the college shall achieve such ends, the new President spoke of the need for personality-building teaching, guided both by scientific method and by a central liberalizing force that shall preserve our heritage, the best in all ages. Thus shall be inculcated an awareness of the permanent dignity of man.

The strength of the college lies in the rapport between teachers and students. Students need guidance, in Dr. Shuster's opinion, of two types not now available for them—the guidance of the physician and of the religious counsellor. It is regrettable that at present we cannot offer them medical supervision. As for religious guidance, the President declared that no one creed can be taught, but that the hunger and need for religion exists. He also spoke of vocational education, asking how we are going to find employment and prepare our young people for it, and voicing the need for a relatively scientific forecast of the vocational needs of city and nation. Finally, he expressed the hope that we might undertake something similar to Vassar's work in preparing its young women for the vocations of child-care and home-making.

He concluded with thanks to students, instructors, administrators, alumnae, and Board of Higher Education, and with the statement that, though he had looked forward to a different career, he was sincerely grateful for the invitation to become Hunter's President. And he sat down to thunderous, and obviously spontaneous, applause that came from students, instructors, administrators, alumnae, and Board of Higher Education, led by the Mayor of the City of New York, which seemed to bespeak sincere joy that he had accepted this invitation.

The Benediction, by Dr. Louis Finkelstein of the Jewish Theological Seminary of America—the dignified Recessional—and so ended the Inauguration of what it is hoped will be the long, happy, and successful career of George N. Shuster as fifth President of Hunter College of the City of New York.