

THE ALUMNÆ NEWS

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THE DIAMOND JUBILEE OF HUNTER COLLEGE

By E. ADELAIDE HAHN

Hunter's Diamond Jubilee opened on the birthday of the Great Liberator, an appropriate date for an institution that is free in every sense of the word—free in that the students equipped to avail themselves of its opportunities may do so without charge, which is of the very essence of democracy; free in its conduct of business and free in the pursuit of truth, which is of the very essence of scholarship; and dedicated to that type of training which has ever been deemed the suitable one for free men and women, a liberal education.

The opening was in the form of a radio address by President George N. Shuster over Station WNYC, "Seventy-five Years of Hunter College Students". The President described the type of girl that Hunter College trains, and the type of training that it gives her. Sympathetic understanding of the student body, and an unswerving determination to give them of the best, characterized his speech, which could not but make the Hunterites in his unseen audience proud to be so ably and so nobly represented.

This address, on the eve of the celebration proper, opened a week of festivities. The seventy-five-year-old College proper—faculty, students, alumnae—had its big two days on Tuesday, February 13th, and Wednesday, February 14th (the day itself); the Elementary School, founded soon after the College, celebrated on Thursday, and the High School, youngest of the three, on Friday; the Alumnae had a Jubilee Tea for their members on Saturday, and a Jubilee Canteen for the armed forces on Sunday. Meanwhile, the Hunter Chapter of Phi Beta Kappa had its own special Silver Anniversary Celebration on Thursday. All these events are chronicled below.

OPENING OF THE LIBRARY EXHIBIT

As at its Golden Jubilee, so at its Diamond Jubilee, the City's great public college for women was honored by an exhibit at the City's great public library. This exhibit, consisting of pictures, documents, books, and personal mementos of various kinds, mainly connected with Thomas Hunter, shared the honors with another of equal interest, which showed graphically the absurdity of discriminations based on the fallacious notion of "race". Could finer partner be found for our own institution which has always been happily free from any taint of discrimination?

The official opening of the exhibit, on Tuesday, February 13th, was in the form of a program that began promptly at 10:30 A. M.,

with President Shuster as chairman. In the absence, due to illness, of the Director, Franklin F. Hopper, the Library was officially represented by Mr. Paul North Rice, Chief of its Reference Department, who greeted the audience on behalf of his institution. The Board of Higher Education was represented by its Chairman, Dr. Ordway Tead, who urged that "new times demand new measures and new men"; and the Associate Alumnae by its President, Dr. Ruth Lewinson, who outlined the interests and vocations of our graduates, including various professions, motherhood, and war work. The students had a part in the program through the melodious singing of Ruth Kleinman, accompanied by Ruth Pressburg.

The City of New York had as its representative its Chief Magistrate, Mayor Fiorello H. LaGuardia, who delivered a dynamic speech. He urged that in our studies we must not forget the past; we must study it in order to keep what it had of good, to avoid its mistakes, and thus to use it as a guide in charting the future. Subjects should not be eliminated or discarded because difficult. "And now," he said solemnly, "I am going to shock some educators; I know of no better exercise for the mind than mathematics or one of the dead languages." To judge by its applause, the audience was not deeply shocked.

In conclusion, the Mayor declared that he was proud of Hunter and of his own part in the improvements of the last ten years. He explained that he was not referring to the new building, but to the fact that the College had been given a new soul, new life—and Dr. Shuster. And the audience showed by its prolonged applause that it shared this pride.

OPENING OF THE COLLEGE EXHIBIT

A goodly audience of which a large part had hastened up from the Forty-second Street Library for the purpose, filled the Hunter Playhouse—alias the Auditorium—for the official opening, at 12:30 on February 13th, of the Hunter College Exhibit, "As We Were and As We Are".

After the singing of the National Anthem, President Shuster, who presided, read from the Scriptures, and then presented the heroine of the occasion, Professor Edna Wells Luetz of the Art Department, who, as Chairman of the Brochure and Exhibit Committee, and with notable assistance from Mrs. Alva Critchley Cooper, Secretary of the same Department, had spent many weary hours on "the double shift" that the Exhibit might achieve the artistic beauty and fascinating interest which all have found in it. Professor Luetz, "covered", as she put it herself,

"with the dust and glamor of 75 years", gave a charming speech, free of the dust and full of the glamor of her investigations. First paying a special tribute to Thomas Hunter and Lydia Wadleigh, she then held her hearers spellbound with a host of memories—her own and those of others—of some of the College's memorable figures who had meant most to her, Professor Cone, Professor Williams, Professor Reid of the Art Department, Dean Hickenbottom.

Professor Luetz was followed by Ruth Kleinman, whose noble singing of a noble song, "The Good Ship Alma Mater", made at least one member of the audience mourn afresh the severance of the sweet tradition dating from 1876, the rendering of this first and finest of our college songs by the graduates at each Commencement, and wonder whether the venerable custom might not be renewed this June in honor of our Jubilee.

"Highlights of Our History" were now presented by representatives of the Elementary School, the High School, the College, and the Alumnae. A tiny tot, Ann Carol Heyman, bravely stood up to deliver a speech that was intelligible to those on the platform, and was rapturously taken on trust by the rest of the audience. Rose Friedman, President of the General Organization of the High School, spoke with poise and dignity, outlining the School's history under the supervision of a college committee and then under its three successive principals, Miss Beach, Miss Webster, and Dr. Brown, and telling of some of the honors won by its students, of their war work, and of their desire to uphold their institution's high standards of scholarship and personality. Vera Andruson, Chairman of the Traditions Committee of the College, gave a brief epitome of the College's history, and with charming sincerity and spontaneity paid a tribute to her Alma Mater, where "we may study everything from typewriting up to Greek", and where girls from all walks of life are received "simply because they have the brains to come". Finally, Louise F. Draddy, introduced as "the genial First Vice-President of the Alumnae", fully justified that characterization by a gay speech in which she assured the audience that "the older alumnae of Hunter College are much younger than any other alumnae".

The program concluded with the singing of "The Ivy Leaf" and "Fame" by the audience, which then adjourned to the lobby to view the Exhibit so auspiciously inaugurated.

THE ACADEMIC SYMPOSIUM

On Tuesday afternoon, February 13th, the faculty thronged into the Playhouse to attend an Academic Symposium on the subject of "Cultural Forces in America". Some members of the Alumnae were also present; and students who had attained the distinction of a place on the Dean's List were invited to attend in recognition of their academic achievements.

The graceful and gracious Chairman, Pro-

fessor Hoxie N. Fairchild of the English Department, opened the program with an amusing reference to the meaning of the word *symposium*, a soberer one than it had in the days when Socrates drank Alcibiades under the table. The word *toast*, too, he said, has come to connote something parched and dry! But there was nothing dry, though there was much occasion for sober thought, about our Symposium.

Dr. Waldo Leland, Director of the American Council of Learned Societies, treated Humanistic Scholarship, neglect of which he considers the chief among the ills in the colleges of to-day. He spoke especially of recent development in the field, notably in Oriental culture—Far Eastern, Indian, Arabic, and Islamic—and in methods of studying foreign languages; his reference to the Intensive Language Program sponsored by the Council was of special interest to Hunter, which had had experience of this in its fruitful semester of Hindustani. He looked forward to similar advance in synthesis or interpretation, and in the history of ideas.

Dr. Kirtley F. Mather, Professor of Geology at Harvard, discussed Scientific Scholarship. Like Dr. Leland, he urged a broader vision, warning of the danger of standardization, and urging that apparatus be not only used but understood; and after outlining the development of scientific bodies in our country, starting with the American Philosophical Society founded by Benjamin Franklin in 1743, he ended with the question: "What will we do with the enormous power science puts into our hands? Shall we use it for good or for evil, for life or for death?"

Dr. Marjorie Nicolson, Professor of English at Columbia University, was introduced as an expert on the relation of science and literature, and as an authority in both creative arts and scholarship. She restricted her theme, "The Creative Arts", mainly to the art in the study of which she herself is an eminent leader, namely literature. She spoke with pessimism, in the writer's opinion all too well justified. She began by condemning the cult of unintelligibility, and urged a League for Sanity in Poetry to combat the widespread notion about writing that the more esoteric the better. The present generation does not learn to write or speak its own language, or even to read it; and literature demands both a writer and a reader. But our young people cannot hope to read the great classics of English literature because they are ignorant of the sources of these, classical literature and the Bible, and consequently they must remain ignorant of such writers as Bunyan, who was no classicist but who knew the Bible from cover to cover; of Shakespeare, who, despite Jonson's strictures, "knew a lot more Latin than most of the people in this room"; of Milton, learned in both sources. Hitler believed that the great trouble with German education was that it tended to develop a generation that

liked books; from 1933 on, this was ended, and books were banned and burned. We too shall lose our traditional culture unless we train our youth to write intelligibly and to read intelligently.

The three speakers on these three great disciplines—the fourth, that of the Social Studies, was omitted, as the chairman explained, because it combines the method of Science with the symbols of the Humanities—were followed by Dr. Lillian H. Gilbreth, Consulting Engineer, to whom was assigned a general synthesis under the head “The Educated Woman”. She urged that the education of women take cognizance of five different aspects of the individual, physical, mental, emotional, social, and spiritual; and that it have as its aim the turning out of a final product “socially adjusted, physically fit, mentally alert, and emotionally serene to participate in life to-day”.

At the close of the formal addresses the Chairman gave an opportunity for questions directed to the different speakers. The audience had evidently been stimulated by the four thought-provoking addresses to which they had been listening, so that their questions, answered graciously by the speakers, were stimulating in their turn. Thus concluded a fruitful program well worthy of the grand old Platonic epithets of *Academic* and *Symposium*.

THE JUBILEE DINNER

Faculty, alumnae, and students eleven hundred strong filled the Grand Ballroom of the Waldorf-Astoria to overflowing for the Jubilee Dinner on Tuesday evening, February 13th, at seven o'clock.

As usual, Hunterites had occasion to be proud of their two Presidents. Dr. Shuster as usual presided with characteristic grace and charm, lightened by humor and deepened by sympathy. Dr. Lewinson, also as usual, gave an admirably clear and carefully-organized address; she stressed the close relations of the Alumnae with the College, and suggested the formation of an advisory group of alumnae representing various professions to counsel the undergraduates in their choice of their life-work.

The audience also had a chance to pay tribute to the Alumnae Past President, Helen L. Simis, gallant and diligent Chairman of the Jubilee Committee.

The two guest-speakers, President Henry Noble MacCracken of Vassar College and President Victor L. Butterfield of Wesleyan University, presented an interesting contrast in educational philosophy. President MacCracken, of the school known as progressive, conceives of all subject-matter as chosen with an eye to direct utilitarian results, namely, service to the community; he frankly envisages the college of the future as a “political” institution, and as frankly urges “indoctrination” of the students—with the ideas and ideals that in his opinion constitute Americanism. President Butterfield on

the other hand is of the older school which stresses liberal as opposed to practical education; he deplores the heavy emphasis laid to-day on vocational education, and believes the best (and most efficient) thing for the liberal arts college to do with this is to forget about it (for instance, a future business executive needs to attain a large vocabulary rather than to take courses in “business English”); the proper aim in his opinion is to understand and appreciate the world we live in without much attention to the question of “use”; and he hopes the liberal arts colleges will regain their basic position and integrity by revitalizing their function, and thus truly make life full of “social significance”.

A message from another great college president was brought by our special guest of honor Miss Jenny Hunter, who declared that “Father believed in women’s education” and gave several reminiscences of our loved and revered Founder. More reminiscences came from our oldest living graduate, Mrs. Harriet Eagleson of 1871, who recalled for us the happenings of that memorable day February 14, 1870, and delightfully shared other precious memories of our Alma Mater’s early youth. The Golden Class of 1895 in the absence of its president Mrs. Mulligan was ably represented by Miss Mary E. S. Davidson, who announced the forthcoming celebration of the class at the Spring Reunion. The Silver Class of 1920 celebrated then and there, with 57 present of its 150, and with an effective spokesman in its president Miss Margaret Meade, who announced the class gift of \$600. Finally to bring matters down to the present a youthful Ensign of the U. S. Naval Reserve, Miss Ruth McFarland, made a charming little speech in behalf of the Class of 1944.

Another recent graduate whose career has brought distinction to her Alma Mater, Regina Resnik, new soprano of the Metropolitan Opera Company, sang for us with the same superb voice and the same modest demeanor that characterized her when as an undergraduate she charmed her audiences at Alumnae Day and other college functions. Organ music was provided by Natalie Gutekunst, highly talented guest organist.

The Invocation was delivered by the Right Reverend Monsignor William H. Scully, Secretary of Education for the Archdiocese of New York; and the Benediction by Rabbi Henry M. Rosenthal, Director of B'nai B'rith Hillel Foundation of Hunter College.

Souvenirs at the dinner were copies of “Jubilee Facts and Figures”, a summary of the results of the questionnaires prepared by Professor Hobart Bushey and Mrs. Irene L. Feaster of the Mathematics Department; and of the handsome and artistic Brochure designed by Professor Edna Wells Luetz, containing an admirable history of the College by Dr. Margaret R. Grennan of the English Department, and many fine photographs, mainly the work of Mr. Alfred Luetz of the Evening Session Art Department.