ARCHIVES
HUNTER COLLEGE

I am happy to greet you today for the first time as Chairman of the Administrative Committee of Hunter College and of its Board of Trustees.

Before I go to more serious things I want to tell you a little story. I was in the railway station the other day and saw a man sitting there, rocking back and forth with laughter. I bought a magazine and wandered around. Every once in a while he would burst forth with fresh laughter. I became very curious and finally went up and asked him what he was laughing about. He said, "I missed my train and I have a long wait for the next one. As I sit here I tell myself one story after another, and after each one I laugh and laugh and I say, 'That's an old one. I've heard that one before.'"

I suppose everything I could say to you today has been said before. It is strange that we should use the word "Commencement" for the day on which we lay down for all time the school work which we have carried on for so many years. "Completion" might seem to be a more appropriate term. But that would not be life, for in this world everything that marks an end also marks a beginning.

You are about to be given a new life as educated citizens. My message to you today is that you should live this life with imagination and vision. And you will probably ask how can you do this. To do this successfully you must think for living. Think of today, tomorrow, and the morrow's morrow. In college we have equipped you to think. Now you must do the thinking. You have studied mathematics, which
is pure fact; science, which is deductive and inductive reasoning; languages for culture; philosophy for spiritual and abstract values; and history and economics for cause and event in the past, and many other subjects. Go out and use what Hunter has given you. Study your own life, your community life and your country's life. Integrate them one with the other. Use your imagination to see what is happening, might happen and should happen, and have the vision to pierce the apparent reality of today and strive for a more fruitful tomorrow.

Study your own lives and make a plan. This plan, of course, will change with time, but will be a means through which you can project yourselves into the future. In the study of your own lives consider how you can improve the usefulness of those tools which you have been given to work with, and why. Look your best. Walk and talk with distinction, and you will be favorably received. Cultivate your mind. Read the great books that you have not yet had a chance to read. And study all of the wealth of cultural material with which our great city is so richly endowed. Educate yourselves for your leisure time and you will have great happiness. Know your strength and your weakness. Be honest with yourself and you will be honest with others. Develop your character. Be truthful and reliable and your integrity will never be questioned. Have the imagination to create yourselves.

After you have studied your own lives as individuals, consider your community life. Be an integral part of your home and share its joys and burdens. Belong to your church of whatever creed. Give a helping hand wherever possible to those in need. You will be building faith in yourself and consequently in your fellows. You will be
developing strength for time of need. And if you have a job — and statistics show that a great, great many more of you will have jobs than last year — do not draw down a salary and feel that you have "gotten yours". If you do this you will "get yours", and it won't be much. Take pleasure in your work. There is satisfaction in a job well done. Build in your work. There still are frontiers in such fields as education, science, medicine and industry. With vision and imagination you might create employment for millions of your fellows. Our electricity, telephone, radio are all the results of creative work. Have the imagination and vision to see yourselves as part of a live community.

And having studied your lives individually and in your communities, take part in your country's development. Consider it objectively. You who have fought for academic freedom cherish the national freedom which is our great inheritance — that freedom which considers the individual as well as the state. Do not lightly help groups which endanger that freedom. Beware of isms. Look beyond their apparent realism, their pledges of quick relief, and consider their possible consequences. Study the country's government, its economic realities. Think up a way out of its problems. If you cannot do so yourself ally yourself with those who are optimistic, not pessimistic. Pessimism retards production and employment. It retards good will and breeds irritation and restlessness. Have the imagination to see the national life as a whole and not only its temporary phases.

And don't forget Hunter College when you go out into the changing world. With the imagination which I am urging you to cultivate I hope that you will help us in our dreams and plans for a new college
which must arise like a Phoenix from the flames. This must be beautiful, for education is for truth, and truth is beauty. It must be adequate; for we must have plenty of space for our activities. Dissatisfaction is nurtured in dark and dreary halls. Hope thrives in sunlight. It need not be expensive. Capitalization of the rent that we pay now would build it. You know how you have wandered all around the town for an education. You know how your teachers have had to spend hours travelling, at great waste of energy and the city's money. You must help me and my fellow trustees to achieve our purpose. You must help us to get fine buildings for the college, which you can do by urging it, and by building up a fine opinion of our college. You can do this latter by example: behave well, with dignity, have a high standard in your appearance, your achievement and your purpose.

And don't forget us when you are out in the world. Come back to the college. If you are successful, advise our young people how to achieve success. If you are happy, in a small home, or a job which you take pleasure in, come back and advise our young people that there is pleasure in things well done. You are successful if you are happy. If you are miserable, come back for consolation, fresh hope and help. But if you are discontented trouble-makers, stay away. We don't want you. We have had trouble but we want to forget it. We want to believe in ourselves. We have a fine body of young people, as fine as you will get anywhere, and what they need is faith. They need to conquer with faith. We want to help them build up that faith, the faith with which they in turn can conquer. They must believe in themselves and their community and in God. They must believe in their
college, in its administration, the faculty and staff. And I, as Chairman of the Administrative Committee, say to you that I and my fellow trustees and members of the Board of Higher Education are here to see that that belief is justified. We shall give freely of our time and thought to judge fairly of all difficulties - as of course such difficulties must arise in an institution as large as ours. You may not know it, but Hunter College is the largest women's college in the world.

We of Hunter College, your Alma Mater, ask your cooperation, your interest and your patience. We shall respect tradition and encourage change in the college. We must have place for new schools of thought, revitalize ourselves. We shall love and consider those who serve us faithfully, and we shall condemn those who have a selfish purpose. We shall be fair and loyal, and shall jealously guard and truly educate the young people whom the state has entrusted to our care.

We hope that you will come back and visit us. I would like to know you better, to have your advice and cooperation. I want to know the whole college better. I am going to have office hours at 2 Park Avenue next year. My hope is that the students, the faculty and staff, and you who, as our most recent graduates are closest to us, will come in to see me. I think the best is not too good for our college. I think good education given free to the intelligent young people in New York City is an economy because it is creating real wealth in developing latent possibilities in our bright young people. They will be leaders, teachers, dieticians, musicians, artists, and so on. They
will enrich our culture by a new demand for pictures, good books; and
will develop our industry and purchasing power.

In conclusion, as you go forth I want to urge again that
you think dynamically, that you plan your day, your year, your life,
to the best of your ability. Think not only of yourselves but of
your community and country. Don't be small - be big. Look into the
past, present, and future. And having done so, create for yourselves
full, productive and stable lives. To do so, you must think. You
must have imagination and vision. But if you will do so, you and your
150,000 fellow graduates throughout the land will begin a new life not
only for yourselves but for America - a true Commencement.
I greet you for the first time today as Chairman of the Administrative Committee of Hunter College and of its Board of Trustees.

Before I go to more serious things I want to tell you a little story. I was in the railway station the other day and saw a man sitting there, rocking back and forth with laughter. I bought a magazine and wandered around. Every once in a while he would burst forth with fresh laughter. I became very curious and finally went up and asked him what he was laughing about. He said, "I missed my train and I have a long wait for the next one. As I sit here I tell myself one story after another, and after each one I laugh and laugh and I say 'That's an old one. I've heard that one before.'"

I suppose everything I could say to you today has been said before. It is strange that we should use the word "Commencement" for the day on which we lay down for all time the school work which we have carried on for so many years. "Completion" might seem to be a more appropriate term. But that would not be life, for in this world everything that marks an end also marks a beginning.

You are about to be given a new life as educated citizens. My message to you today is that you should live this life with imagination and vision. And you will probably ask how can you do this. To do this successfully you must think for living. Think of today, tomorrow, and the morrow's morrow. In college we have equipped you to think. Now you must do the thinking. You have studied mathematics, which
is pure fact; science, which is deductive and inductive reasoning; languages for culture; philosophy for spiritual and abstract values; and history and economics for cause and event in the past, and many other subjects. Go out and use what Hunter has given you. Study your own life, your community life and your country's life. Integrate them one with the other. Use your imagination to see what is happening, might happen and should happen, and have the vision to pierce the apparent reality of today and strive for a more fruitful tomorrow.

Study your own lives and make a plan. This plan, of course, will change with time, but will be a means through which you can project yourselves into the future. In the study of your own lives consider how you can improve the usefulness of those tools which you have been given to work with, and why. Look your best. Walk and talk with distinction, and you will be favorably received. Cultivate your mind. Read the great books that you have not yet had a chance to read. And study all of the wealth of cultural material with which our great city is so richly endowed. Educate yourselves for your leisure time and you will have great happiness. Know your strength and your weakness. Be honest with yourself and you will be honest with others. Develop your character. Be truthful and reliable and your integrity will never be questioned. Have the imagination to create yourselves.

After you have studied your own lives as individuals, consider your community life. Be an integral part of your home and share its joys and burdens. Belong to your church of whatever creed. Give a helping hand wherever possible to those in need. You will be building faith in yourself and consequently in your fellows. You will be
developing strength for time of need. And if you have a job—and statistics show that a great, great many more of you will have jobs than last year—do not draw down a salary and feel that you have "gotten yours". If you do this you will "get yours", and it won't be much. Take pleasure in your work. There is satisfaction in a job well done. Build in your work. There still are frontiers in such fields as education, science, medicine and industry. With vision and imagination you might create employment for millions of your fellows. Our electricity, telephone, radio are all the results of creative work. Have the imagination and vision to see yourselves as part of a live community.

And having studied your lives individually and in your communities, take part in your country's development. Consider it objectively. You who have fought for academic freedom cherish the — that freedom which considers the individual as well as national freedom—which is our great inheritance. Do not lightly help the state groups which endanger that freedom. Beware of isms. Look beyond their apparent realism, their pledges of quick relief, and consider their possible consequences. Study the country's government, its economic realities. Think up a way out of its problems. If you cannot do so yourself ally yourself with those who are optimistic, not pessimistic. Pessimism retards production and employment. It retards good will and breeds irritation and restlessness. Have the imagination to see the national life as a whole and not only its temporary phases.

Hunter College

And don't forget when you go out into the changing world. With the imagination which I am urging you to cultivate I hope that you will help us in our dreams and plans for a new college which must arise like a Phoenix from the flames. This must be beautiful,
for education is for truth, and truth is beauty. It must be adequate; for we must have plenty of space for our activities. Dissatisfaction is nurtured in dark and dreary halls. Hope thrives in sunlight. It need not be expensive. Capitalization of the rent that we pay now would build it. You know how you have wandered all around the town for an education. You know how your teachers have had to spend hours travelling, at great waste of energy and the city's money. You must help me and my fellow trustees to achieve our purpose. You must help us to get fine buildings for the college, which you can do by urging it, and by building up a fine opinion of our college. You can do this latter by example: behave well, with dignity, have a high standard in your appearance, your achievement and your purpose.

And don't forget us when you are out in the world. Come back to the college. If you are successful, advise our young people how to achieve success. If you are happy, in a small home, or a job which you take pleasure in, come back and advise our young people that there is pleasure in things well done. You are successful if you are happy. If you are miserable, come back for consolation, fresh hope and help. But if you are discontented trouble-makers, stay away. We don't want you. We have had trouble but we want to forget it. We want to believe in ourselves. We have a fine body of young people, as fine as you will get anywhere, and what they need is faith. They need to conquer with faith. We want to help them build up that faith, the faith with which they in turn can conquer. They must believe in themselves and their community and in God.
They must believe in their college, in its administration, the faculty and staff. And I, as Chairman of the Administrative Committee, say to you that I and my fellow trustees and members of the Board of Higher Education are here to see that that belief is justified. We shall give freely of our time and thought to judge fairly of all difficulties — as of course such difficulties must arise in an institution as large as ours. You may not know it, but Hunter College is the largest women's college in the world.

We of Hunter College, your Alma Mater, ask your cooperation, your interest and your patience. We shall respect tradition and encourage change. We must have place for new schools of thought, revitalize ourselves. We shall love and consider those who serve us faithfully, and we shall condemn those who have a selfish purpose. We shall be fair and loyal, and shall jealously guard and truly educate the young people whom the state has entrusted to our care.

We hope that you will come back and visit us. I would like to know you better, to have your advice and cooperation. I want to know the whole college better. I am going to have office hours at 2 Park Avenue next year. My hope is that the students, the faculty and staff, and you who, as our most recent graduates are closest to us, will come in to see me. I think the best is not too good for our college. I think good education given free to the intelligent young people in New York City is an economy because it is creating real wealth in developing latent possibilities in our bright young people. They will be leaders, teachers, dieticians, musicians, artists, and so on. They will enrich our culture by a new demand for pictures, good books; and will develop our industry and purchasing power.
In conclusion, as you go forth I want to urge again that you think dynamically, that you plan your day, your year, your life, to the best of your ability. Think not only of yourselves but of your community and country. Don't be small – be big. Look into the past, present, and future. And having done so, create for yourselves and stable full and productive lives. To do so, you must think. You must have imagination and vision. But if you will do so, you and your 150,000 fellow graduates throughout the land will begin a new life not only for yourselves but for America – a true Commencement.
This week urged the students to develop courage and vision to identify themselves with the environment and the nation. She also asked the cooperation of the graduate in getting a new building for the student.

Mr. Fisher quoted Robert Frost:

"Don't you long for more. Join the army. Join the party.
Join the United States and fight for the family."

But not much in between unless a college.
BACCALAUREATE ADDRESS

TO THE GRADUATING CLASS OF HUNTER COLLEGE

AT CARNEGIE HALL, JUNE 24th, 1936.

CHANNING POLLOCK,
240 WEST 98th STREET,
NEW YORK.
In "The Simpleton of the Unexpected Isles", George Bernard Shaw reminds us that there is no longer security in the world,

"AND THE FUTURE IS TO THOS WHO PREFER SURPRISE AND WONDER."

That would mean that the future is to the young, since the preferrment of surprise and wonder is the attribute of youth---of young people and young civilizations.

SECURITY IS THE GOAL FOR WHICH OLDER PEOPLE AND CIVILIZATIONS STRIVE, and it is astonishing how little of it there has ever been in the world.

IT WOULD NOT BE OVER-STATEMENT, I THINK, TO SAY THAT OUR LONGEST STRETCH OF SECURITY WAS THAT WHICH BEGAN IN ENGLAND WITH THE CORONATION OF VICTORIA, spreading slowly over the globe, and ending with the Great War.

NOR DO I BELIEVE IT COINCIDENCE THAT THIS WAS A PERIOD OF AMAZING ACHIEVEMENT.
THE DESIRE FOR SURPRISE AND WONDER
SPRINGS FROM VITALITY, SELF-CONFIDENCE,
DARING, AND EBULLIENCE.

These are fine qualities, and especially for
pioneers, but something else is required
for harvest in the fields they
conquer.

That something is experience, knowledge,
and tranquility.

THE WORLD WASN'T MADE IN A MINUTE.

IT CAN'T BE RE-MADE IN A MINUTE, EITHER.

IT CAN'T BE RE-MADE BY PASSING A LAW, OR BY
KICKING FROM UNDER US ALL THAT WAS
BUILT BEFORE US, AND STARTING
AGAIN AT SCRATCH.

THOSE WHO CLIMB HIGHEST ARE THOSE WHO BEGIN
WHERE OTHERS LEFT OFF.

Civilization is a pyramid to which each of us
contributes a grain of sand—
a pyramid whose broad base was
laid on the Nile, AND TO WHICH ALMOST EVERY SUCCESSIVE GENERATION HAS ADDED SOMETHING.

-----

Into the structure of that magnificent ship, THE QUEEN MARY, went the discoveries of all the men who first hollowed logs, AND FLOATED THEM; who first built galleys, and rowed them; WHO FIRST TRIED SAIL AND STEAM.

-----

A little girl declared that she was drawing a picture of God.

-----

"A PICTURE OF GOD!" protested her mother.

"WHY, MY DARLING, NOBODY KNOWS HOW GOOD LOOKS."

-----

"No", answered daughter, "but when I get thru they will."

-----

THAT'S SELF-CONFIDENCE, AND STARTING AT SCRATCH, BUT IT DOESN'T BUILD SHIPS, OR WORLDS.

***************

Since the War, we have all been drawing pictures of God.
AND THAT'S WHY THERE IS NO LONGER ANY SECURITY.

In no other age, perhaps, has there been such general agreement that whatever is, or was, must be wrong.

WITH GOOD-HUMORED TOLERANCE, WE SPEAK OF "THE GAY 90s."

There is neither humor nor tolerance in our estimate of "THE VICTORIAN ERA."

EVEN OUR PRESIDENT WAGS AT "THE HORSE AND BUGGY DAYS", forgetting, perhaps, that, at least, we knew where the buggy was going, and had a check-rein on the horse.

WE ALL ASPIRE TO BEING "MODERNS"—almost the only state that is achieved merely by being born.

THIS MIGHT BE WELL IF WE WERE CONTINUING OR SURPASSING WHAT WE DISCARD.

It is a little funny when one reflects that...
this ridiculous Victorian era produced Disraeli, Gladstone, Bismarck and Lincoln....

Wagner, Turner, Whistler, Ruskin and Rossetti....

Pasteur, Samuel Morse, and Alexander Graham Bell......

Dickens, Thackeray, Kipling, Swinburne, Carlyle, Ibsen, Emerson, Mark Twain, Gilbert & Sullivan......

And, by slight extension, Shelley, Keats, and Goethe.

-----

The ages of Pericles, of Elizabeth, and Lorenzo, the Magnificent, bred one or two greater men, perhaps, but no other period has been as rich in greatness.

-----

These are giants beside whom the best we moderns can offer seem strangely hollow and pretentious pygmies.

-----

Our generation prefers cleverness to greatness, and the two things are inimical--

No great man was ever clever,
AND NO CLEVER MAN EVER WAS GREAT.

-----

OURS IS A RACE OF WISE-CrackERS, TICkLING
LIFE WITH STRAWS.

-----

With a need of leadership hitherto unknown in
the world, we have produced no great
leaders—ONLY LITTLE MEN WORKING
FOR THEIR OWN AGGRANDIZMENT, AND DRAWING
PICTURES OF GOD.

***********************

That is no alarming matter, perhaps.

-----

It is not every generation that creates.

-----

BUT IT IS AN IMPERILED GENERATION THAT,
FINDING NO NEW LEADER OR NEW GOD,
STILL DISCARDS THE OLD LEADERS
AND THE OLD GOD.

-----

It is an imperiled generation that never looks
back, or looks back only to laugh,
BUT PUSHES AHEAD IN THE CONVICTION
THAT ALL MOVEMENT IS PROGRESS; that is it is
better to destroy than to do nothing
at all.

-----
Doesn't it begin to seem sometimes that all this is what Olive Schreiner called "a striving, and a striving, and an ending in nothing"?

-----

WHAT SHAKESPEARE DESCRIBED AS "A TALE TOLD BY AN IDIOT, FULL OF SOUND AND FURY, SIGNIFYING NOTHING"?

-----

SURPRISE AND WONDER!!!

-----

BUT THERE ARE SO MANY DIFFERENT KINDS OF BOTH!

-----

There is the surprise Galileo must have felt at his telescope, or CORTEZ'S MEN, who "looked at each other with a wild surmise, silent upon a peak in Darien."

-----

AND THERE IS THE SURPRISE OF A CHILD WHEN JACK COMES OUT OF THE BOX.

-----

There is wonder born of "the might of design and the mystery of color."

-----

AND THE WONDER OF A YOKEL, GAPPING AT A CALLOPE --ALL SOUND AND FURY.

-----

----------------------
What have we accomplished with these wonders and excitements?

-----

Speed, clamor--FOR WHAT?

-----

We fly to Chicago in a few hours; WHAT DO WE DO WITH THE TIME WE GAIN THUS?

-----

To Europe in two days, and what do we see when we get there?

-----


-----

HOLLYWOOD SENDS US DRAMA IN TIN CANS; has it created a Kipling or a Bernhardt?

-----

WHERE SHAKESPEARE LABORED WITH HIS Quill, I take my ease with that marvelous modern contrivance, the Dictaphone, BUT IT HASN'T MADE ME A SHAKESPEARE.

-----

It hasn't made anyone a Shakespeare--only an Edgar Wallace or a Louis Bromfield.

-----

GREATNESS, my girl-friends, is a matter of soul, and mind, and heart.
THERE IS NO OTHER GREATNESS.

----

MAN...OR WOMAN...ONLY IS GREAT.

----

AND THE GREATNESS OF MAN, OR WOMAN, IS MORE LIKELY TO COME OF SIMPLICITY, AND HIGH IDEALS, AND RESPECT FOR TRADITION, AND VENERATION AND EMULATION OF NOBILITY THAN FROM STEEL TOYS AND BRONZE GODS.

***************

I am for change--heaven knows I am!

----

I'M NUTS ABOUT MODERN GADGETS.

**---

But there are things that cannot change if our race is to survive.

----

THE LORD FORBID THAT I SHOULD CONSIGN YOU TO HOMES WITHOUT TELEPHONES OR WASHING MACHINES.

----

But there was something in that kind of home that we seem in a fair way to miss.

----

THERE WAS SOMETHING IN THE OLD-FASHIONED HOME THAT WAS A REFUGE AND A HARBOR;
something that is lost in the 3½-room flat, with its dining alcove, its
dinner from the delicatessen—a mere
halting place between the office
and the movies.

AS HENRY LINK SAYS IN THE DEDICATION OF ONE
OF HIS BOOKS, "There are millions of
grandparents who, with less mon-
ey, gave their children more than we are
giving ours today."

"With all the benefits from the physical
sciences", he asks, "where is the
evidence that individuals are
happier, that families are more united, that
governments or political bodies are
wiser, or that nations are less
likely to go to war?"

MANY OF YOU GIRLS ARE PROBABLY THIRSTING FOR
A CAREER.

Shall you be better off, do you think, than
those old-fashioned girls whose
career was home and motherhood?
ALL RIGHT; HAVE IT YOUR OWN WAY!

Only, don't try to eat your cake and have it, too.

FOR HOME IS A CAREER.

You can no more make it a successful career in your spare time than you could make a success of medicine or architecture in moments when you'd nothing else to do.

DON'T CONSIGN ME TO THE RANKS OF THE HATED REACTIONARIES.

I give you a home with every gadget known to Schenectady; will you give me a home in which there is courtesy and kindness, and good food and good talk, and plain living and high thinking?

THIS ISN'T A PROPOSAL OF MARRIAGE; I am married, and I have such a home.

"MILLIONS OF GRANDPARENTS WHO, WITH LESS MONEY, gave their children more than we
Perhaps one of the things they gave them was "less money."

The best thing my father ever did for me was to leave nothing but a family to support.

Anyway, he lived in that neolithic age before a father's greatest wish was to spare his children all the struggles that made him the man he was.

There is truth in Joseph Hergesheimer's phrase, "The first generation that wears evening clothes is the last generation that amounts to anything."

Unless it earns them.

One of the troubles with the generation whose place you are taking is that its fathers had too much money.

There were young men in my village who wouldn't have known how to earn bread enough to feed ants, but they had...
each his own motor car.

THEY WENT THROUGH COLLEGE WITHOUT EFFORT,
AND GRADUATED WITHOUT EDUCATION.

One of them, applying for admission to the bar,
was asked, "WHAT WAS THE MAGNA CHARTA?",
and answered, "A naval expedition."

AND, absurdly old-fashioned as the phrase is,
Satan, in those days, as in these,
found much for idle hands to do.

AND IDLE LIPS.

I DON'T MEAN WHAT YOU MEAN.

I'm thinking of the post-war sneer at almost
every established virtue and decency.

A WIT ONCE WROTE OF A BOOK, "There are some
things in this book that are new, and
some that are true, but the true
things are not new, and the new things are not true."

LIFE, I'M AFRAID, IS A TRIFLE LIKE THAT.
LITTLE THINGS MAY BE CHANGED; GREAT THINGS ARE ETERNAL.

In this iconoclastic age, we are forever quoting Nietzsche's words about "the ever-changing code of morals."

Few of us seem to realize that Nietzsche was writing of morals in the Greek sense of manners and customs; not--to quote Nietzsche himself--of "that fundamental code that never changes."

WOMEN DIDN'T SMOKE CIGARETTES IN MY MOTHER'S DAY.

They do now--and WHAT OF IT?

But cheating and thievery and murder were taboo in my mother's day, and are now, and always will be.

IN SPITE OF OUR SOPHISTRIES AND SOPHISTICATIONS--as I heard Will Rogers say once--"WHAT WAS DIRT IN CAESAR'S TIME IS DIRT IN JIMMIE WALKER'S."
A FEW YEARS AGO, when I mentioned Tennyson in a talk at City College, a lad asked me if I didn't realize that Tennyson was "a purveyor of pious platitudes."

WELL, MAYBE—but, somehow, I still think that pious old platitude about kind hearts being more than coronets and simple faith than noble blood, has been read by more people, is being read by more people, and has influenced more lives than all the glittering apostacies of all the Bertrand Russells and James Branch Cabells in the universe.

SOME TIME BACK, I acted as toastmaster at a dinner to Daniel Frohman, and, on my left, sat my old friend, Billy Phelps.

WHEN DONALD OGDEN STUART rose to speak, he said, "There's the man who taught me about Charles Dickens...By the way, whatever became of that fellow Dickens?"
AFTER DINNER, LOWELL BRENTANO ASKED me to tell Stuart that what became of Dickens was that "last year, we sold more copies of Dickens than at any time since we have been in the book business."

ANOTHER MODERN YOUNG AUTHOR dined with me recently, and kept sneering at Dickens.

AND I STOOD IT AS FAR AS THE CELERY.

THEN I SAID, "Let me tell you something, my friend:

"WHEN 'THE OLD CURIOUSITY SHOP' was published, like most other Dickens novels, it was published in installments."

"Over here, the interest was so great that a fast clipper ship was hired to bring them to America."

"WHEN THE FINAL INSTALLMENT ARRIVED, a crowd of nearly 5000 people were waiting at the pier in the rain, and, unable to restrain their impatience until the boat docked, they cried across the
water, to the captain, 'IS LITTLE NELL DEAD? IS LITTLE NELL DEAD?"

AND I SAID, "I'll tell you something else, my friend: When you write a story that brings 5000 people to the Battery to learn whether or not your heroine still lives--then, and not till then--you can sneer at Charles Dickens!"

THAT'S WHAT I MEAN.

Read Proust if you will, and James Joyce if you must, but don't throw overboard the accumulated--if dated--treasures of thirty centuries of literature.

DON'T DECIDE THAT SEX WAS DISCOVERED BY ELINOR GLYNN, and that no humans are interesting unless they're psychopathic.

LONG BEFORE YOUR TIME, a sex-weary MAX BEERBOHM WROTE TO THE LADY WITH A PAST IN THE PINERO PLAYS:

"Lovely lady, we implore,
Go away, and sin no more;
Or, if that effort be too great,
Go away, at any rate."
When you're half my age, you will have discovered that reportorial writing is the easiest kind of writing; that authors abandon reticence only when they have not the skill to be reticent; and that there is enough dirt and ugliness in the world without paying to have it hauled into the theater or the library at $3 a load.

Also, that the new freedom in writing isn't so very new, after all.

2300 years ago, a genial gentleman named Plato was warning us, "We would not have our people grow up amid images of moral deformity. "The important thing to secure is the admiration of noble deeds, noble words, and noble character."

***************

Herein lies another reason for not spurning the past with the Achielian heel of the present.
COURAGE, COURTESY, CONTINENCE ARE NOT
ALTOGETHER INSTINCTIVE QUALITIES.

THEY COME OF ADMIRATION AND EMULATION.

I doubt that the cave men, starting at scratch,
felt any great urge to "noble deeds,
noble words, and noble character."

THROUGH CENTURIES OF HISTORY AND LITERATURE WE
HAVE BUILT UP A COMPELLING TRADITION.

There is comparatively little to take its
place in the modern world.

IN OUR POST-WAR FICTION, THE HERO CAME WAY TO
THE POOR FISH.

The cheap fiction of my youth was supplied by
Laura Jean Libbey and the Duchess.

Laugh as you will at their card-board heroes,
these were no more false, and a good deal
more wholesome, than the celluloid gentlemen with the pee-wee mustaches and the patent-leather hair
who represent the present aspirati
of every soda-water clerk, and the ambition of every salesgirl.

The economic break-down that has disturbed us so violently isn't one-tenth as serious as the moral break-down that helped produce it.

WE LIVE IN AN AGE OF REPUDIATION AND LITTLE TIN BOXES.

There probably was a good deal of surprise and wonder when the Vestris went down, and its crew pre-empted the life-boats.

BUT THERE WAS NO SECURITY.

NOR YET ON THE MORRO CASTLE, where many of one class were too drunk to save themselves, and most of the other class too cowardly and undisciplined to save anyone else.

Is this sort of thing occasion for surprise or wonder?

FOR 20 YEARS, WE'VE BEEN TELLING THE COCK-EYED WORLD THAT THE ANCIENT VIRTUES
WERE THE BUNK—that heroism was applesauce, and self-sacrifice a bowl of spinach—and then we're amazed that men don't stand aside on a sinking ship to give their places to women and children.

---

LET ME TELL YOU, when a man does that, or any of the thousand-and-one things that is its equivalent, it's because he's been told from the cradle, at his mother's knee, in school, and in everything he reads, and sees and hears afterward, and for generations before that, that there are things in life that are worse than death; things a gentleman cannot do—and when he believes that, and not until then, he behaves like a gentleman—and that's a demodded word, too!

***************

IF WE KNEW MORE OF THE OLD, I think, we should be less ready to believe in the new.

---

FOR SO LITTLE OF IT IS NEW.
found cubist art edging into every civilization that had reached decadence.

IT HAS BECOME PLATITUDINOUS to refer to the tendencies in contemporary America that are described in Gibbons’ "Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire."

EVEN OUR CURRENT "EXPERIMENTS" IN GOVERNMENT ARE NOT NEW.

Devaluation of currency was known to the robber barons, who gathered up all the coins, cut a piece out of each, retained the piece, and returned what was left to the helpless owners.

THE ROMAN EMPIRE DEPRESSED ITS MONEY TO 1/96TH OF ORIGINAL VALUE, and inflation was one of the major causes of the French Revolution.

"Not to believe that government must regulate all human affairs is currently regarded as stupidly reactionary by those who imagine themselves the pioneers of a new world", 
says Walter Lippmann.

-----

BUT IT IS REGIMENTATION, PLANNED ECONOMY,
THAT ARE REALLY REACTIONARY—a return
to the ancient autocracies
against which mankind has been struggling
for hundreds of years.

* * * *

I HADN'T MEANT TO GO INTO POLITICS.

-----

They aren't my forte.

-----

I'D RATHER BE RIGHT THAN BE PRESIDENT.

-----

In fact, I'd rather be wrong than be President.

-----

WHAT I'M TRYING TO SAY IS MERELY THAT MOST OF
THE MODERNNESS UPON WHICH WE PREEN OURSELVES
ISN'T REALLY SO DARNED MODERN.

-----

We should escape a good deal of trial and
error if our politicians knew history.

-----

AND IF WE OURSELVES were a little less contem-
pluous of what we think dead merely
because it has gone on before.

-----

THAT IS TRUE EVEN OF TRIFLES.
A FEW YEARS AGO, one of my best girls told me that she encarmined her nails because it was "the newest thing."

BUT THE BLOOD-REDDEST NAILS I ever saw are on the fingers of a Priestess of Iris who lies in the National Museum at Cairo.

WE WHO TRY OUR WINGS in the rarified atmosphere of luxury, and self-indulgence, and easy ethics are not trail-breakers.

WE ARE THREADING PATHS IN THE GROVES OF DAPHNE that were worn smooth ages before Nero gave his violin recital in burning Rome.

AND ALL THE ATHENS in which life has become effortless, and soft and undisciplined have fallen victim to some iron Sparta.

IT IS THIS ABANDONMENT OF OLD FAITHS that made us great, for so-called new faiths that never made anyone great, that
seems to me dangerous.

I DREAD AN AMERICA OF SURPRISE AND WONDER in which the greatest surprise shall be high idealism; the greatest wonder that any man or woman shall prefer tranquility to excitement.

I DEPLORE AN AMERICA more interested in follies than in freedom, and an education so common and so easily acquired that only the few value and profit by it.

AN EDUCATION that teaches making a living, but not how to make that living worth while.

A WORLD BOUND UP IN MATERIAL THINGS.

IN ONE OF LAST WEEK'S NEWSPAPERS, I read the Probation Officer's report on that wretched man who faces 50 years in prison for compulsory prostitution.

"HIS IDEALS OF LIFE", the Probation Officer says, "resolved themselves into money
to spend, beautiful women to associate with, silk underclothes, and places to go in style."

---

DOES THAT DESCRIBE AN AWFUL LOT OF US WHO ARE NOT CRIMINALS?

---

"His freedom of conscience", the report said, "springs from the philosophy, 'IF I HAVE TO BE A CRUMB, I'D RATHER BE DEAD.' He explains that a crumb is a person who works and saves, and indulges in no extravagances.

His social outlook is essentially childish, in that it is dominated by recklessness, and a craving for action."

---

THAT'S "LUCKY" LUCIANO.

---

ISN'T IT A LOT OF UNLUCKY YOUS AND MES?

****************

It's curious that "reactionary" should become a term of opprobrium in one of the unhappiest periods the world has ever known.

---

I CAN UNDERSTAND WHY MEN IN PARADISE DON'T WANT TO TURN BACK.
But I CAN'T understand why men who have left firm ground for quicksand and chaos should press ahead to more chaos and quicksand.

BELIEVE ME, I DON'T DEPLORE CHANGE.

WHEN SHE WAS 90, somebody asked the Baroness Burdett-Coutts at what age women cease being interested in love, and the Baroness replied, "GOODNESS, I'M NOT OLD ENOUGH TO KNOW THAT!"

I'M NOT OLD ENOUGH TO DEPLORE CHANGE.

I'M ONLY OLD ENOUGH TO DEPLORE CHANGE BORN OF RESTLESSNESS, RECKLESSNESS, IGNORANCE--to know that those eternal veritites of the Greeks--truth and beauty--are eternally the eternal verities.

I'M OLD ENOUGH to agree with Herbert Hoover, when he said, "THERE ARE SOME PRINCIPLES which came into the universe along with the shooting stars of which worlds are made, and they have always been and always will be true. SUCH ARE THE LAWS OF
AND THE CEASELESS STRUGGLE OF MANKIND TO BE FREE."

-----

SUCH, TOO, are honor, courage, kindness, loyalty, industry, thrift, and concern for the common good.

-----

I ENJOY MY CAR AND MY ICELESS ICE-BOX, but I don't believe that higher standards of living are exclusively bound up with automobiles and electric refrigerators.

-----

I BELIEVE HAPPINESS IS ROOTED IN SIMPLICITY; that a man is rich, not in proportion to what he has, but in proportion to what he doesn't want.

-----

I BELIEVE THAT "HIGH HOPES FAINT" ON TOO WARM A HEARTHSTONE; that it is less likely that singers have lived in attics because they were poets, than that they have been poets because they lived in attics.

-----

I BELIEVE IN THE GLAMOR THAT WAS AN ABRAHAM
I don't believe in the joy of a life made up of little things—little loves, little labors, little thoughts—of golf, bridge, department-store ads, stock market reports, and the night clubs.

These are symbols of the "security" Shaw had in mind—a security to which we should rightly prefer the excitement of the good fight, and the wonders of treasures of the mind and soul laid up for us during ages of real progress.

Finally, and from the bottom of my heart, I believe that no man who believes in these things can be a reactionary, because they are eternal things that never can have been left behind.

The education that teaches them is true education, the purpose of which is character even more than curriculum, and higher appreciations and aspirations.
even more than HIGHER ARITHMETIC.

I SHOULD LIKE TO THINK that you girls may help bring back some of these things of the spirit into a world too much concerned with things of the flesh.

For the SPIRIT of man is timeless, ageless, and deathless.

IT MAY BE OLD-FASHIONED, but I can leave you with no better advice than the words that the dying chemist, Pasteur, addressed to the students of Paris:

"DO NOT LET YOURSELVES BE TAINTED BY A DEPRECATING AND BARREN SKEPTICISM; do not let yourselves be discouraged. SAY TO YOURSELVES, 'WHAT HAVE I DONE FOR MY INSTRUCTION?...WHAT HAVE I DONE FOR MY COUNTRY?' UNTIL THE TIME COMES WHEN YOU MAY have the immense happiness of thinking that you have contributed in some way to the progress and good of humanity."

THE END.