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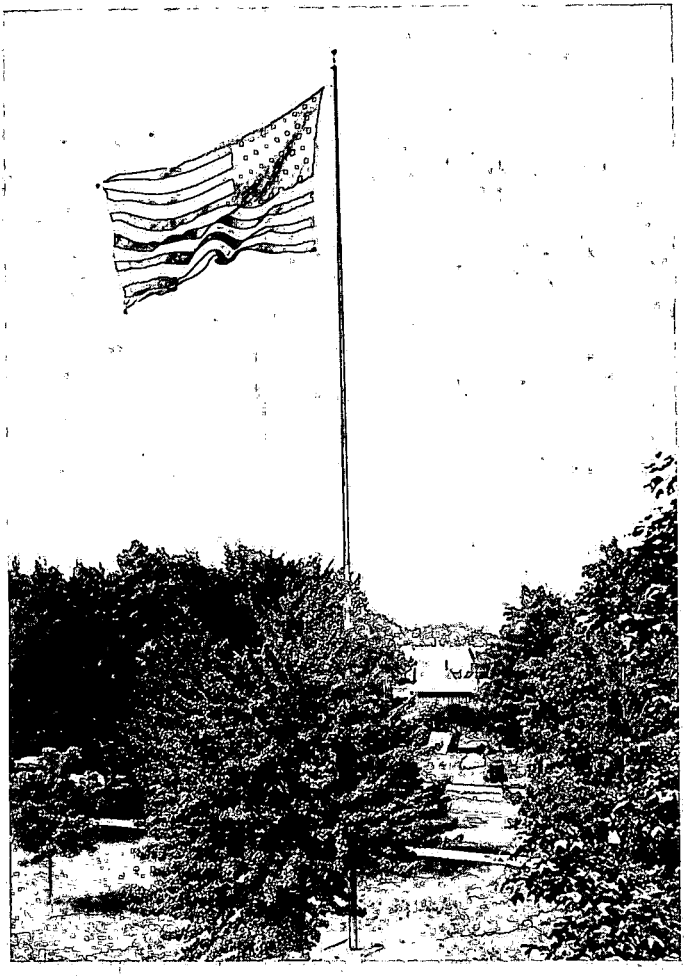
HOPE COLLEGE BULLETIN

Volume 61 May 1923 Number 1

ALUMNI NEWS LETTER

1923

HOPE COLLEGE
HOLLAND MICHIGAN



Alumni News Letter

This May Number of the College Bulletin has been given over by definite purpose for several years to a presentation of the particular items in the life of Hope College in which it is felt the Alumni as a body have a definite interest. It is a true conception of the College as it existed in its infancy that it is made up of those who have membership in it by way of full graduation rather than by way of undergraduate enrollment. It is becoming increasingly true, however, that these undergraduates are also a part of the College. Learning and the humanities in particular were the objects of the earlier College and these were pursued with a devotion that marked the membership as true "collegii," men who foregathered for no other purpose than the advancement of the subject dear to their hearts. This is gloriously true of the graduate schools of today and one who is privileged to have membership in one of them feels the inspiration of the fraternity of kindred minds. Schools of research more than any others are characterized today by this element. The findings of "pure science" bring neither wealth nor position to most of those who devote their time and energies to its advancement; yet nowhere is there to be found a group of men and women more consecrated to an idea—even an ideal—than amongst this society of rare souls. The undergraduate groups are united by other bonds, largely of a social nature, but their loyalty to their institution is hardly less marked. In this group there is now evident the growth of a spirit not unlike that which marks the graduate schools. This will grow more rapidly as colleges become less institutional and more general. The business college, the musical college, the technical school, in themselves at present largely professional but already taking on the nature of the purely academic

schools, will force the literary colleges to assume this attitude toward life, just as they, on their part, are becoming more fraternal in their constitution. As a result we shall again be directed in our national and social life by "schools of thought,"—a condition from which we have drifted away through the fact that so-called "college education" has become a common thing and not a special functioning of our social activity. The rapid rise of our "trade schools" and our technical colleges has been a factor in this departure but now that we are taking account of the movement and its meaning is becoming evident, we are realizing that a "college education" never can mean "the next step after high school" for every lad. The over-crowded condition of all of our colleges and universities, due not only to the increase of wealth and leisure in our country but more largely to this misconception of the meaning of a "college education," is forcing upon us a recognition of the same fact. Not all young people are fitted either by native ability or by personal tendencies to the pursuits of the college. The next few years will demonstrate our realization of this fact. The present attempts at "elimination" will be unsatisfactory in their outcome but the end they seek after will be brought about by the necessary return of the college to its original function,—"the furtherance of learning and the humane arts."

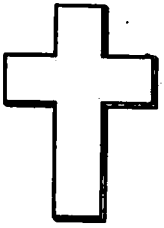
In this development college alumni will take their part. Alumni of technical schools are now furthering the cause of their particular professions or trades; academic alumni will inevitably do the same. Graduates of such colleges as HOPE will find their interests centered about the original purposes of its founders. "An educated ministry" was one of the thoughts uppermost in the minds of the sponsors of Hope. The idea of the learned school-master was almost as prominent for the "dominie" was still teacher as well as preacher,—in many places in

actual fact and not merely by way of reverent recognition of literary attainments. The trained jurist was also to be the product of the College. Behind all these professions was the literary pursuit,—a pursuit which included "pure mathematics" and "pure science" at the same time with letters. It is not prophecy to say that these interests will be the prominent element in the loyalty of the alumni body to the College. Administrative matters must become more and more a technic apart from the interest of the alumni body for they are too detailed and intricate to allow of much acquaintance on the part of any who are not in daily contact with their development and control. The high purpose of the Alumni Body as it truly constitutes the College will be the development of a "school of thought." And it is this type of development which America—perhaps the world—needs sorely today. In our attempt to be democratic we have imagined that we must assimilate everything and be a composite of everything if we are to be really American and democratic. Yet democracies, more truly than any other form of political organization, must have their principles well developed and carefully defined and protected if they are to continue in existence. The democracy of our day is not the democracy of Washington's day. We have mingled a vast amount of social thought with our political thought and the characteristics of our state and federal legislative bodies are determined more by social conditions than by political principles. Our ethical and religious attitudes are becoming more and more the product of compromises between conflicting ideas rather than the expression of stable convictions. In these things we are true demonstrants of the "relativity theory." There is a call for a "school of thought" such as HOPE COLLEGE, through its graduate and undergraduate membership, may develop. The call comes from a social body which is distracted by the endless procession

of new "ideas" and proposals. It emanates from a church which is lost in the maze of contentions voiced by fundamentalists and progressives in their none too friendly debates. It comes as well from a political situation which is so uncertain that each of the great parties of old has encroached upon the field of the other and new ones are born over night with each new aspirant to public attention. The ethical field more than all others combined needs the attention of such a group as the alumni of HOPE COLLEGE constitute. In this field the College has always worked. Here she has an established place. Here, without change of principle or personnel, she can continue to affect the destinies of church and state. If this be true, should she not at once begin to find herself in this activity?

These suggestions are along the line of the President's Annual Report to the Council of Hope College. They are made public here because it seems as though the denominational college must do one of two things in the near future,—cease to exist because she cannot offer the material advantages of the well-endowed and well-equipped state institutions and because she has no real place in American life if she cannot offer something different but just as valuable as they do; or, continuing to exist, must make a place for herself which will be approved by all men of stable thought and principles. If she is to do the latter, she must be willing to shape the future of her own denomination first of all, the tendencies of the evangelical world next, and finally the ethical trend of the nation as a whole and of foreign nations as well through her influence upon the varied activities of society, industry and commerce.

Toward this end the activities of the College have been directed in the past year. All the phases characteristic of Hope have been carried on and fostered. It is a great accomplishment in days like these to hold one's own as an institution but it is possible to

say that advances have been made. Buildings have been bettered; general improvements have been carried on and are projected for the future; student personnel has been maintained. And as a result the pathetic and chronic deficit has been incurred. The Permanent Funds have been increased to the total of $717,692.21, a surplus of over $20,000.00 in comparison with the last fiscal year. We have no word for the future except that which has been placed at the head of all of our publicity material during the last year.

A Purposeful Christian Education.
A Strong, Loyal Americanism.
A Vigorous Cultured Personality.