

Founders Day Exercises

March 23, 1940

14:00 o'clock

Albert Long Hall

Exercises held to commemorate

1. Istiklal March
2. College Chorus
3. Violin Solo
4. Address
5. College Chorus
6. College Song

FOUNDERS' DAY

1940

is used
Founders' Day is ~~to~~ commemorate the founding of the College and to explain what it stands for. No one can point to a definite day and hour when Robert College was born. It was born in the minds of certain men before ever it took shape in stone. This is the way of all great enterprises. First comes the creative thought, and then the realization of that thought. The idea of founding such a College took shape first in the minds of two brothers called Dwight. They were born in this country, had grown up here, and they knew how few were the schools of the country at that time. They had as the background of their thinking America with her insistence upon the necessity of education of all the people. This was a necessary principle for a republic. If the people are to choose their officials to govern them the people must have education to enable them to appreciate the questions of vital importance for their own interests. The American principle was not the aristocratic one, education for the classes and ignorance for the masses, but education for all.

The plan of the Dwight brothers did not succeed but the idea remained in the minds of the Americans living in this country, notably in the mind of Dr. Cyrus Hamlin. In 1855, towards the close of the Crimean War, an American tourist, Mr. Christopher Robert, visited this city, as tourists have done ever since. He came as others came, to see this city, beautiful in its superb situation and interesting because of its historical associations. Few cities contain so many monuments which commemorate events of great importance in the history of the world. On a day in 1855 there occurred another not unimportant event. We have in English a well known saying, a verse from the Old Testament: "Cast thy bread upon the waters and it shall be returned unto thee," meaning that a generous deed

will often bring its reward in time to the doer..

One day Mr. Robert saw a boat laden with what looked like American bread, ^{because in color} whiter than Turkish, crossing over to Uskúdar. Thinking it a strange thing, he made inquiries about it. He found that it was made by Dr. Hamlin of Bebek, who was supplying the British Hospital at Uskúdar, where the pioneer of women nurses in hospitals, Florence Nightingale, was working for the sick and wounded from the Crimea. A man who was a baker as well as a hundred other things struck the visitor as a curiosity not everywhere to be found and he sought out the curiosity. The baker proved also an enthusiastic educationalist. Mr. Robert was captivated and won over to the idea of establishing a college in the capital of the Ottoman Empire. The bread on the water of the Bosphorus had been returned a thousand fold to Dr. Hamlin.

Founders' Day is Mr. Robert's birthday, because he made the founding of Robert College possible.

Robert College is a product of men of wealth and men of knowledge; men who gave and men who taught.

Prominent among the givers are three: Christopher Robert; John Stewart Kennedy, also of New York, who left a large share of his fortune to the College, greatly increased its endowment funds, and made possible the establishment of the Engineering School; Cleveland H. Dodge of New York, President of the Board of Trustees for many years, a friend and generous supporter of the College throughout the last war and very generous donor, to whom we owe the construction of the Gymnasium and Henrietta Washburn Hall, and who gave so generously to the College in its time of great financial need that it is accurate to say that without his generosity the College would not be in existence today.

The men who taught and labored here are many of them also represented by their portraits on our walls.

First, another word about the men who gave. Why did they give their money to found a College in far-distant Turkey? Their purpose, as stated in the constitution and Charter of this College was in order to give to the youth of the Near East such opportunities for education as American Colleges give to the youth of America. They believed in education, they believed in the liberal arts college as an institution which prepares young men for life and citizenship. Then they believed intensely in the brotherhood of man, in the promotion of international understanding and sympathy, in the rule of peace in the hearts of men, and in the relations between nations.)

As evidence of this motive, I wish to bring to your attention the fact, of which few are aware, that there was another Robert College founded about the same time as this. In 1863, the date of the opening of our Robert College, a terrible war was raging in America. The armed conflict, largely brought about by the question of negro slavery, lasted four years. Naturally there was intense bitterness at the end of the Civil War, particularly on the part of the South, whose armies had finally been defeated. The high-minded Mr. Robert wished to do what he could to soften the bitterness and to restore to the people of the two parts of the country the old friendship and sense of kinship. The story of his attempt is told in an article from which I quote.

Our Robert College survived its birth throes. One very clear reason for its success was the selfsacrificing spirit of the men who organized and taught in the early days. This is vividly illustrated by the following extracts which I have taken from some of the old correspondence exchanged between the college authorities and Mr. Robert. It is obvious that Dr. Hamlin was ready to sacrifice everything personal for the success and welfare of the College.

I quote from a letter written by Mr. Ostrander, a tutor, to Mr. Robert on September 28, 1866: "I hope that you will not consider it presumption on my part if I mention a subject concerning which I have long desired to write to you. I refer to the small and, as it seems to me, inadequate salary of our President. His family is large and his personal expenses necessarily great. Mrs. Hamlin and the children are often under the doctor's care. I make bold to mention these things because I know that Dr. Hamlin is often obliged to deny himself and family not only the luxuries but even some of the necessaries of life."

The result of this plea from Mr. Ostrander was that the Trustees repeatedly offered Dr. Hamlin an increase in salary which he also repeatedly and categorically declined.

In his report to Mr. Robert on the work of the year 1867-1868 Dr. Hamlin comments as follows on a proposal of the Trustees that he should move out of the building in which the College was located in Bebek and move to a house near by. This was urged on Dr. Hamlin by the Trustees for the sake of the health and comfort of Dr. Hamlin and his family: *His remarks reflect the sparkle & vigor of his personality* ("Moving my family.") It would be pleasant as a family to occupy a separate house. Mr. and Mrs. Washburn advocate it very strongly. So would anybody and everybody who knows practically nothing about the matter. I shall probably never attempt it. I have no doubt the first

man that follows me will **and** possibly with good success. I should certainly fail in it, and bring disaster upon **the** College. (a) Parents would have no confidence in a body with its head cut off at sundown, and stuck on at sunrise. (b) There would be no one symbol of authority which students would obey as an ever present power. (c) I could not be watchful over their health, and have every invalid immediately where I can see him at any hour of the night. (d) It would diminish a great deal the paternal character of my relations to the students, and I should **consequently lose** a great deal of moral influence. (e) It would add immensely to my anxiety. I am now always on hand. I sleep in peace. But when I am away for a night, I always fear the establishment will be burnt up before morning. (f) As to the unpleasantness of being in the building, we accept it gladly for a higher good."

Boğaziçi Üniversitesi

Arşiv ve Dokümantasyon Merkezi

Kişisel Arşivlerle İstanbul'da Bilim, Kültür ve Eğitim Tanıtımı

Scott Ailesi Koleksiyonu



SCOTTS0502801