

Dean Scott

THEODORUS HALL CELEBRATES ITS FIFTIETH

When it was felt that Robert College needed to open a Preparatory Department, President George Washburn went to America in the summer of 1898 to get money for this purpose. He was particularly anxious to see if he could interest Miss Olivia Egleston Phelps Stokes in the project. The youngest of the ten children of the wealthy New York banker (Phelps, Stokes & Company), John Boulton Stokes, Miss Stokes had been brought up in an atmosphere of philanthropy. Her father was a liberal giver. After his death in 1881, she and her sister had visited the Middle East and in Constantinople had become interested in two Bulgarian students at Robert College. Because of this indirect connection with the College, Miss Stokes might conceivably be interested in giving money for a Preparatory Department, President Washburn reasoned.

To Dr. Washburn's great disappointment, however, he found, on reaching America, that Miss Stokes was not in the country. When he returned to Kennedy Lodge, however, he found a letter from Miss Stokes, offering -- as if by miracle -- to provide money for the project in question. The building, very appropriately, was called Theodorus Hall -- the gift of God. It was completed in 1902 and in September of that year the first classes in the new Preparatory Department were opened under the principalship of Dr. William Smith Murray.

On Friday, November 14, 1952, the fiftieth anniversary of the opening of Theodorus Hall was officially observed with a program that lasted from 2:30 P.M. until nearly 10:00 P.M. By the time the evening was over, more than four hundred people had participated in the birthday observance of the half-century-old Theodorus Hall.

At 2:30 o'clock members of the Faculty, Staff and Community joined the 365 students of Robert Academy to hear speeches devoted to recalling the history of the building. The exercises took place in Albert Long Hall. On the platform was probably the largest roster of individuals ever to occupy places of distinction in that hall. Included among them were four housemasters, past and present, and two principals, past and present. These were: Dr. Harold Lorain Scott (principal: 1927-47) and Prof. Willard M. Whitman (principal: 1950-); housemasters: W.M. Whitman (1941-43, 48-52), D. Garwood (1943-45), and A. Whitman (1952 -). Others on the platform were President Floyd H. Black, Professor Muzafer Yesim, Turkish Vice-President of the College, Bay V. D. Çerçyan '07, Bay Manol Angelides, '26, and Professor Louis Leresche, who came to Robert Academy to teach French in 1908.

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After a few brief comments, President Black, who had come to Robert College as a tutor in 1911, introduced Dr. Scott, who had climbed the hill with him for the first time forty-one years ago. Today, as American Vice-President of the College, Dr. Scott recounted the story of the founding of Robert Academy and its history from the housemastership of Dr. Murray through fourteen other housemasters:

1902-07 - William Smith Murray
1907-19 - George Herbert Huntington
1919-26 - Harold Lorain Scott
1926-27 - Benjamin F. Gronowald

- 1927-29 - George C. Miles
- 1929-32 - Caleb Gates, Jr.
- 1932-33 - George C. Miles
- 1933-38 - Theodorus Hall closed for lack of students.
- 1938-41 - Harvey P. Hall
- 1941-43 - Willard M. Whitman, Jr.
- 1943-45 - David A. Garwood
- 1945-48 - Robert L. Allen
- 1948-52 - Willard Whitman, Jr.
- 1952- - Arthur Whitman, Jr.

The fashions had changed radically since Dean Scott first stepped into Theodorus Hall forty-one years ago, a young, newly-arrived tutor. The students sported bushy mustaches in those days and pajamas, which have become so fashionable all over Turkey today, were unheard of in those days. The one English boy in the dormitory who wore pajamas did so under the heckling of his classmates. The banisters in those days were used by the students to slide down three floors to the dining room, until one day a boy fell and it became necessary for the authorities to provide barriers to prevent this mode of going to dinner.

Dean Scott pointed to Theodorus Hall as providing for fifty years a training ground for Robert College. Without Theodorus the standards of scholarship in the classroom and sports on the athletic field might not have been possible. In extra-curricular activities mention must be made of Theodorus, which has always been a center for out-of-class activities. At one time there were as many as ten hobby clubs operating at the same time. Attempts at student government are already being given a third try.

Theodorus Hall has reason always to be proud of the men it has graduated, whether they have gone on to the College or not. Bay Turgut Menemencioglu, RC '35, served some time as assistant to the Turkish Ambassador in Washington, D. C. Bay Solim Sarpör, RC ex '19, is permanent Turkish delegate to the United Nations. Dr. Michael Dorizas, RC '07, is professor of political and economic geography at the University of Pennsylvania.

Professor Muzaffer Yeşim, ex '17, Turkish Vice-President of Robert College, told how the boys used to coast down the hill in front of the college until one day a boy threw a snowball at him, and in the subsequent collision with a wall he broke his arm. That incident had ended coasting for that season. He also told of the enthusiasm of the boys in participating in athletics of all kinds, and indicated his shock to find so many boys today persuading their parents or guardians to secure medical reports to exempt them from all sports without any real cause, thus denying themselves the body development that is necessary along with mental development.

The exercises in Albert Long Hall were concluded by a speech given by Vahram Çerçyan, '07, who has been on the Academy staff ever since graduation. Bay Çerçyan appealed to the student body, in particular, with regard to their indebtedness to the people of America who have given so generously that the students of Turkey might have the education provided by Robert Academy and Robert College. "Our College has received millions of dollars from good people on the other side of the Atlantic, strangers to us and to this country. You and I owe our education, and, in part, our position in life, in business, and in society, to the College

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and we must lend a helping hand in some way to our Alma Mater. Those who have given millions for us have received nothing; we who have given nothing have received so much."

The exercises in Albert Long Hall were followed by a football game between present and former students of Theodorus Hall. Included in the line-up of the latter team was Rasim Cenani, RC '36, who is President of the Alumni Association of Istanbul. The game took place on a field strewn with puddles. The game was followed by tea in Theodorus Hall, a basketball game between the Theodorus Hall team and the Freshman team in the Dodge Gymnasium; a regular Theodorus Hall "guest night" and an evening of entertainment.

Considered as a whole, the program was a most ambitious one and might have drawn a great number of graduates from outside had it not been for the inclement weather. All morning rain had fallen and, even as President Black rose to introduce the speakers at the Commemoration Exercises, rain threatened to put off the football game. But even the rain might be said to have aided in launching Theodorus Hall on its second half-century of service.

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