YALE UNIVERSITY 250TH ANNIVERSARY

BY

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When John Davenport, an Oxford man, and the group which had come with him from England founded New Haven in 1638 it had been his hope that a college could be established for the education of the sons and daughters of the newly arrived colonists who had ventured so far from their native shores. But the fact that, as an early historian has explained, "the aid of the whole of New England was needed for the maintenance and advancement of Harvard College, prevented the plan of Mr. Davenport from being immediately executed."

It was in September of 1701, therefore, when ten ministers met at the house of one of their number in Branford, near by to New Haven, each bringing a gift of books and saying, in effect, as they laid them on the table: "I give these books for founding a college in Connecticut." On October 9 of that year the General Assembly of the colony granted a charter to the college, and in March of 1702 the first student was received.

Some ten years later these early gifts were greatly augmented by a man who was to do much for the struggling college—Jeremiah Dummer, a Harvard graduate of the Class of 1699, who, having failed to secure a place on the Harvard faculty or a pulpit, sailed for England and there spent the rest of his life, taking

an active part in political life in London and serving as agent for the Massachusetts Bay Colony and later for Connecticut. Some of his activities on behalf of the Collegiate School, as it was first called, are apparent from a letter (January 23, 1712/13) to the Reverend James Pierpont, one of the founders:

"'Tis with regret I must now acquaint you that all my labour and pains with Dr. Salmon are at an end, for when I had brought him to consent to give his Library to your collidge an Apoplexy took him off before he had time to make a new will. . . . I have endeavoured to retrieve this great loss by begging a Library for you among my friends. . . . I have got together a pretty parcell of books already for you to begin with, and I hope in a years time to send you a very valuable collection, with the names of the Benefactors."

This "pretty parcell of books," which arrived from England in 1714, included all eleven volumes "in Royal paper, neatly bound and gilt" of the *Tatlers* and *Spectators* (the gift of Sir Richard Steele), the poems of Sir Richard Blackmore, which the author delivered in his own chariot to Dummer, and a large number of theological folios. Science was represented by the collected works in nine volumes of the Honourable Robert Boyle, the "Cutlerian lectures" of Robert Hooke, the recent works on geology of Thomas Burnet and John Woodward, Dr. Cheselden's *Anatomy*, and, as a gift from the Royal Society, Grew's *Musaeum Regalis Societatis* and *Miscellanea Curiosa* . . . being the most Valuable Discourses read . . . to the Royal Society. Also included in this shipment of books were twenty-nine volumes from Elihu Yale, his first gift to the college. Dummer had early thought of Governor Yale as a possible benefactor, since his father was one of the founders of New Haven and he himself had been born in America, although his family had subsequently returned to England.

About four years later a second lot of books arrived. These included gifts from William Derham, Dr. Edmund Halley, Dr. Richard Mead, Sir Hans Sloane, Richard Bentley, and, from Isaac Newton, a copy of the second edition of the *Principia* and the first edition of the *Opticks*. A portrait of the King, a large box of books, and East India goods which fetched £562 12s. in the Boston market came from Governor Yale. In grateful appreciation of this gift—a veritable fortune for those times—the Trustees at commencement in 1718 named the Collegiate School Yale College.

To Dummer, the instrument of this and other benefactions which did much to establish the college as a true institution of

FIG. 1.—Yale College, 1793. (Courtesy of the Yale University Library.)

learning, tribute was paid in the following lines published in 1733 in Dr. John Hubbard's *The Benefactors of Yale College* :

By Dummer nurs'd as by a Patron's care,
Still *Science* grows and grows divinely fair:
His opening hand her num'rous wants supplies
And next to Heav'n on *that* her hope relies.
Yalensia's Sons in gen'rous Dummer find
Mecenas's bounty and great *Tully's* mind:
This, his judicious present sweetly prove,
And *that*, the constant tenders of his love.

There is considerable evidence that the books which came from England had a profound effect on the minds of the students of Yale College, who devoured their contents eagerly. Two examples might be of interest : one, that Jonathan Edwards, the eminent preacher and college president, acknowledged late in life the influence exerted on him by Locke's *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*. The other incident was of more far-reaching consequence, for after commencement in 1722 the Rector of the College, Timothy Cutler, a tutor, and a number of young pastors from neighbouring parishes (graduates of the college)—all of whom had been reading the theological books in the new library—made the startling public profession "that some of us doubt of the validity, and the rest are more fully persuaded of the invalidity, of Presbyterian ordination in opposition to Episcopal." The upshot of this was that Cutler and the tutor, after dismissal from their posts, sailed for England with another of the doubters, the Reverend Samuel Johnson, and all were subsequently ordained in the Church of England. Samuel Johnson was Episcopal missionary in Connecticut until 1754, when he became the first president of King's (now Columbia) College in New York.

Elihu Yale never visited the college which bears his name ; after occupying for some years a palatial mansion on Queen Square he eventually came to his resting place at Wrexham in July of 1721. The disposal of his effects was accomplished in nine sales, the first in December of 1721, the last in March, 1724. Several of these were six days in length, and paintings, books, furniture, and a collection of nudes were disposed of—a collection that must have been the envy of any eighteenth-century collector in the field of the fine arts. As far as I am able to determine, the college in Connecticut did not benefit from the nudes or his other pieces of art, but his other benefactions came at a crucial time and were an important impetus to its early progress.

Two years after the death of Yale, Jeremiah Dummer transmitted a gift of books

from one Daniel Turner, a Licentiate of the Royal College of Physicians. This was accompanied by a request from Turner that the college grant him an honorary degree of Doctor of Medicine. Thus was the first medical degree conferred in the American colonies, but unhappily it did not win for Turner, as he had hoped, Fellowship in the College. Nor did this somewhat unorthodox granting of a medical degree stir Yale into founding a medical school at that time. Ezra Stiles, in an unpublished memorandum of 1777 written just before he assumed the presidency of the college, proposed the transformation of Yale into a university through the creation of schools of law and medicine, but the financial strain caused by the American Revolution prevented this far-sighted plan from becoming an actuality during Stiles's term of office. Fortunately he was followed by a man of similar vision, and Timothy Dwight worked toward the founding of a medical school through, first, the appointment of Benjamin Silliman, a young barrister, to a newly created chair of chemistry. Silliman spent two years studying chemistry, one in Philadelphia and Princeton, the second in England and Scotland, where he met men such as John Dalton, Humphry Davy, Sir Joseph Banks, the Monros, and others in the forefront of British science in that period. Silliman later took a prominent part in establishing the medical school, and when it opened its doors to students in 1813 he was appointed Professor of Chemistry and Pharmacy. The Yale University School of Medicine, which has been in continuous, although sometimes precarious, existence since that time, has been directed during the past four years by an Englishman—a Mancunian—C. N. H. Long, who came to Yale in 1936 as successor to Professor Lafayette Mendel, who for many years had occupied the chair of physiological chemistry. Long has brought to the

FIG. 2.—Present-day Yale. The Sterling Memorial Library opened in 1931, showing the dominant book-stack tower. (Courtesy of the Yale University News Bureau.)

FIG. 3.—Title-page of the *Principia*, second edition, the gift of Isaac Newton. (Courtesy of the Yale University Library.)

school many of the traditions he had absorbed during his period of work with Professor A. V. Hill at Manchester and later at University College.

The university is now marking its two hundred and fifty years of growth from these humble beginnings by a series of observances. The new President of Yale, Dr. A. Whitney Griswold, conferred, on recommendation of the Yale Corporation, twenty-five honorary degrees on a group of distinguished American scholars on June 12, 1951. In choosing the candidates for these degrees there was deliberate emphasis on those whose contributions have been in the fields of teaching and research. High on the list was Sir Peter Buck, Director Emeritus of Yale's Bernice P. Bishop Museum in Honolulu, a native Maori prince and warrior, and a doctor of medicine of New Zealand, who has become the foremost authority on the anthropology, traditions, and poetry of the Polynesian peoples. Mr. Griswold conferred the degree upon Sir Peter "with veneration and affection." There were other doctors of science known to the readers of the *British Medical Journal*—Otto Loewi, of Austria, who since his displacement has become an American citizen, and Dr. Gerty Cori, who with her husband shared a Nobel prize and now a Yale honorary degree (he having received one previously). Finally came the American philosopher and educator, John Dewey, who mounted the academic platform completely unperturbed at the age of 92. The tumultuous applause which followed his citation rivalled that for Sir Peter Buck.

The formal celebration of Yale's anniversary took place in Woolsey Hall on October 19, 1951. In arranging the ceremonies, the President and Fellows of Yale invited the representatives of those universities whence Yale traces its descent—Oxford and Cambridge being the foremost among these—and it is pleasant to record that

Professor E. L. Woodward of Oxford University represented that ancient seat of learning, and that Mr. S. C. Roberts, lately Vice-Chancellor and Master of Pembroke, represented Cambridge. Mr. James B. Conant was the official delegate from Harvard. In addition, the heads of forty-odd American colleges and universities which were originally administered by graduates of Yale were either present or sent their representatives. Formal addresses were given by Mr. A. Whitney Griswold, as President, by Lord Halifax, Chancellor of Oxford University, who is the guest of the university, and Mr. Conant. The 250th Anniversary Ode was read by Mr. Leonard Bacon. The proceedings of the anniversary exercises will be published in due course.

In honour of the Anniversary, the Association of American Universities is holding a special meeting in New Haven on October 23–25, and the National Academy of Sciences on November 5–7. There will be a further celebration on Alumni Day, February 22, 1952, when President Griswold and the Chairman of the Yale Alumni Board will award Yale Medals to alumni for outstanding service to the university.

In addition to these public observances, a number of books are being published on the occasion of the Anniversary by the Yale University Press. Those already issued include: *The Yale Scene*, by Samuel Chamberlain and Robert D. French; *Yale Men Who Died in the Second World War*, by Eugene H. Kone; the *Diary (1843–1852) of James Hadley*, by Laura Hadley Moseley; *The Life of Willard Gibbs*, by Lynde Phelps Wheeler; *The Two Lives of James Jackson Jarves*, by Francis Steegmuller; and the *Yale University Portrait Index*. The portrait collection began with Elihu Yale's gift of the painting of George I, and to-day this painting is the earliest portrait in continuous ownership in an institution of higher learning in the United States. Other books to be published will be *A Survey of the Resources of the Yale Libraries*, by Herman W. Liebert; *A Catalogue of the Coe Collection*, by Mary Couch Withington; and *Yale College and University, 1871–1937*, by George W. Pierson. The first volume of this two-volume history, which will be off the press in a matter of months, is entitled *Yale College, An Educational History, 1871–1921*.

The anniversary year will draw to a close at the Commencement exercises on June 9, 1952.

The Ministry of Health has circulated the following extract from the Weekly Epidemiological Record, No. 245 (September 5, 1951), issued by the World Health Organization: "It has been reported that a number of misunderstandings have occurred concerning the date of issue, and hence the duration of the period of validity, of International Certificates of Inoculation and Vaccination, due to differences in national practice of recording the date. For example, 10th August, 1951, may be written in the following manner: 10 Aug. 1951; Aug. 10th 1951; 10.8.1951; 8.10.1951. In order to reduce to the minimum the number of such misunderstandings it is suggested that when completing the International Certificates of Inoculation or Vaccination in English or in French the following method of recording the date should be adopted. The day should be written in Arabic numerals and should appear first; the month should be written in Roman numerals, and should appear second; the year should be written in Arabic numerals and should appear last. In the example quoted above, the date would appear as 10.VIII.1951." The suggestion made in this extract would, of course, apply equally when the authentication of a certificate is dated.