

Reunion in Washington

By MARY McDOUGAL AXELSON

THE rain pours cats and dogs, but here they come—senators, stenographers, congressmen, lawyers, doctors, economists, big new dealers, sailors, professors, writers, soldiers, pretty girls and—let's see, if there were any gangsters there they did not make themselves known.

The rain pours on us and we pour into the New Colonial Hotel in Washington, D. C., where the Sooner Alumni are having a dinner in honor of President Joe Brandt, on this March twenty-first.

The indefatigable Paul Walker, master of ceremonies, is Santa Claus in a dinner jacket, twinkling with wit and kindness.

Around me I see a gay and impressive crowd. But who is that over there beyond the others? I can see them very plainly although the rest apparently do not know they are there, so real does the thought of these absent ones whose spirits are with us seem to me. There are Dr. and Mrs. Bizzell, cute little Sallye Brandt, Dean Gittinger, Dean Adams, Professor Dowd, Mr. Hadsell, Mr. Felgar, and a crowd of other half-seen figures. And who is that waving to us?—"Uncle Buck," of course! Wherever Sooners meet together, there the spirit of Uncle Buck is and always will be. Dr. Elgin Groseclose says a prayer, a few simple words for America at war. It is singularly moving.

Paul Walker is speaking of our Oklahoma boys who have already died in this war, and he asks all the men here in uniform to rise that we may honor them. They look a bit embarrassed, as the crowd, rising to do them honor, rattles the windows with applause. Then their faces change and one can read that this tribute of loyalty and appreciation is sweet in their dislocated and uncertain lives.

This kindly Santa Claus flanked by the smiling Mrs. Walker in a blue lace gown is introducing people—he wants to introduce everybody, but time will not have it, and the list of notables is enough to throw an ordinary tongue into stuttering exhaustion, but not Paul's! There is Senator Josh Lee, with a big grin handy, Senator and Mrs. Elmer Thomas, handsomely harmonizing in black, and a long line of Oklahoma congressmen. (Wouldn't this country have been in a fix if Hitler dropped a bomb on this dining room right now!) The Jed Johnsons, the Will Rogerses, Mike Monroney, the Ross Rizleys, the Wesley Disneys (Mrs. Disney, wearing a tricky little hat set with red geraniums!), the Jack Nicholoses, the Victor Wickershams, and they report that it has taken a dozen or two strong-armed doctors and nurses to keep Lyle Boren, the only missing congressman, from being here.

The list runs on, as our chest sticks out at the Who's Who crowd. Mrs. Walter Ferguson, who waves us on with a flashing quip, Adelaide Loomis Parker (perhaps if G. B.—that's "Deke" Parker—had known she was going to wear that becoming hair-do he would have been afraid to start to Florida this afternoon for a new supply of mental elbow grease). There is Hon. T. P. Gore, and Mrs. Gore, Elgin Groseclose, the economist and novelist, Major H. D. Rinsland, Hon. Richard Disney, Mrs. Lucille Hinshaw Powell, recent O. U. queen, Eldon Magaw, administrator of Temple University Law School, and Mrs. Magaw, and Senator and Mrs. E. W. McFarland (he is the U. S. Senator from Arizona who says that he is the only native Oklahoman in the Senate). Hughes B. Davis, president of the Oklahoma Alumni Association in New York, takes a bow as do Roy St. Lewis, former president of the Washington group, and Commissioner C. D. Mahaffie of the Interstate Commerce Commission and Mrs. Mahaffie.

HERE are Mr. and Mrs. R. R. Zimmerman, Dr. Paul Vogt, Dr. and Mrs. F. F. Blachly and Mr. and Mrs. Tom Stokes (he the noted columnist), friends of President Brandt and adopted Oklahomans for the evening. Then we have Louis Palmer in sailor's uniform, with eyes heavy from all-night duty. And there are Holmes Baldrige, from the Department of Justice, and Mr. and Mrs. Victor Waters. Edward A. Evans, son of A. Grant Evans, missed a plane in Hollywood and so is missing us, but his wife, son and sister are here. Bruce Carter, state administrator of the NYA in Oklahoma takes a bow as does Mrs. Bruce L. Melvin and her son, Paul Smith. Here are Mrs. Opal Lee and her pretty daughter and Bob McKinney. Here are Lt. and Mrs. Bryce Harlow (she was Betty Larimore), Ivar Axelson and Joe Rhoads, economists, and May Frank, Joe's writer wife, Lynden Mannen of the Census Bureau and Pat of Treasury, the business wizard Ray Homer Haun, Mr. and Mrs. William H. Miley, Paul Thurber (come all the way from Cincinnati to this dinner), Ed McKay and F. C. C.'s Portia, Elizabeth C. Smith. And this is only a beginning of the crowd that braved the rains and tire depletion to come tonight.

Walter B. Emery is here from Ohio University at Columbus and gives a word of greeting for Ted Beaird. And Mary Ivonne Axelson, '13, in an "Alice Blue Gown" with a white gardenia on her shoulder chants *Any Bonds Today* wear-

ing her grandfather McDougal's old high hat.

Jack Summers, music graduate from O. U., begins and ends the program with his own piano arrangement of *The Star Spangled Banner*.

Now we are "alerted." Paul Walker is screwing up the microphone to dizzy heights, and President Joe Brandt is unwinding his arms and legs and disengaging his famous pipe. Here we are at last! Well, how has it gone, Joe Brandt—this past year? You seem soberer than you did when we met here 13 months ago to honor you and Dr. Bizzell (Wouldn't anybody!). A long hand wave and the applause flutters down. He is speaking—listen!

The new Naval Air Training Base at Norman, to train 800 pilots every three months... If we should win the war and close all our schools, that would be great defeat... New policy of rotating chairmanships of departments at O. U., an academic application of democracy... The establishment of University College at O. U. for solid uniform basic work for all freshmen and sophomores... Trying to build mutual confidence between the business man, the farmer and the taxpayer, and the college professor... Dr. Bizzell, ten years younger, teaching his Honor Class in his beautiful library... Establishment of the Research Foundation hoping to make definite contributions to the welfare of Oklahoma... We must not let science lag during this war... the Germans have made it their handmaiden...

(Courage and sincerity are the things about this Joe Brandt that hit you between the eyes.)

Now to the speech again... We are not fighting men, but ideas. Democracy is a philosophy of hope, while Nazism is one of hate. War may be won by machines and yet lost in ideas... While Germany and Japan were preparing for war, we were admiring our new model autos. We have all been to blame, but now must keep our feet on the ground and not get hysterical.

Then this: "We will win this war. But if we should not, I would commit suicide. I see no reason to live in a world dominated by wrong."

And I, who am writing this, say to myself, "Oh no you wouldn't, Joe Brandt, oh no you wouldn't! Toussaint L' Ouverture didn't nor Garibaldi, nor Edith Cavell, nor Nathan Hale. And neither would you, Joe Brandt! If Hitler didn't kill you, I know what you would do—you and Paul Walker and a lot of these other people around me—I know what you would do..."