MONSIEUR LE PRESIDENT,
MES CHERS AMIS.

During the nine and a half years that I have had the honor and the pleasure to serve my Government in this center of world trade and commerce it has been my privilege on a number of occasions to be present at manifestations of this sort through which the people of this good city endeavor to show from time to time their appreciation of services rendered by their fellow citizens or by those who may have sojourned and labored in their midst. Up to this time it has always seemed to me an admirable custom in many respects but it never once occurred to me that when I should be under the necessity of leaving this city to proceed to a new post, that such a dinner would be organized in my honor. If such a thought had occurred to me I think I would not have announced my departure until the actual eve of my going away, for I can quite assure you that the thought of facing all my friends this evening and of hearing so many things said which I am sure I do not deserve entirely dismays me.

You have been good enough to credit me with virtues which I do not possess and with having performed services which are far beyond and above everything which
I may have even hoped to accomplish. I am deeply grateful to my friends who had the kind and generous thought to organize this banquet in our honor. To the debt which I already owe them for the generous friendship with which they have favored me in the past, I now owe this signal honor for which I can express to them no proper measure of appreciation.

I particularly appreciate the fact that His Eminence the Cardinal Van Roey has designated Monseigneur Zeel to represent him here this evening, and that Mr. Hymans, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, has been good enough to come all the way from Brussels to attend this dinner. That my friends Baron Holvoet, the Governor of the Province, Mr. Van Cauwelaert, the Burgomaster of Antwerp, and General Hellebaut, have come here tonight is only another indication of that official and personal courtesy that they have so unfailingly shown towards me during my stay in this city.

Mr. Franck, Governor of the National Bank, who has always so interested himself in such a lively fashion in all that can contribute to increase the prestige of Belgium and who has particularly studied the commercial relations between his country and the United States, has by his learning and by his vision acquired beyond the frontiers of Belgium a most flattering reputation, and it is a great honor which he does me this evening in having accepted the invitation of the organizing committee to preside at this banquet. I do not in the least merit the
the kind things which he has said to me, but coming from him I can only appreciate them the more.

I am particularly appreciative also of the very kind words which Mr. Whipple has addressed to me on the part of my American friends, and I am sure that you will excuse me if I do not attempt to thank you individually, particularly as I would not be able to do it. Your devotion, the courtesy which you have invariably shown me, and the honors which you have paid me this evening are things for which one cannot express one's gratitude in words. I assure you that I will carry away from the banquet of this evening and from Antwerp a remembrance which shall be with me as a treasured possession all my life.

I am conscious of only one thing and that is that I have endeavored to do my duty and for this I can claim no credit whatever. After all this is what all of us try to do every day of our life. The principal reward for duty done in any path of life lies in that satisfaction that comes to us from within. It is however characteristic of all of us that it is at times highly encouraging to have our friends tell us that we have at least not utterly failed in our endeavors and I know you will permit me to look upon this dinner which you are offering in my honor this evening not as an indication that I have rendered any signal services during my stay in this city but merely as a meeting of my friends and associates.
associates at Antwerp and in Belgium who are good enough to feel that I have at least not failed in some of the things which I endeavored to accomplish. The kind thought which lies behind this dinner and the generous sympathy and recognition which it implies are more than sufficient compensation for anything which I may have attempted to do.

It would be impossible for me to tell you with what satisfaction I have been able to work in this city and in Belgium and what pleasure the life here has brought to Mrs. Messersmith and myself. I doubt whether there is any city in the world where a consular officer could work under more favorable conditions and where he could find more full play for his activities. Your city has been for many centuries one of the world's great markets and it is one of the world's greatest ports. I venture to prophesy that within a few decades it will also be one of the world's greatest industrial centers. I had the privilege of beginning my work in your city in those momentous days immediately following the war. When I arrived in March 1919 your vast docks were still practically bare of merchandise, your factories were just beginning their recovery from the effects of four years devastating war and occupation. The commerce of this great commercial city was still paralyzed and your country as a whole was faced with a series of problems such as have faced few countries.

You
You had before you the problem of the reconstruction of your entire commercial and industrial fabric and the making of many social adjustments.

Little by little during those first days of my service in your city there dawned upon me many things; the tremendous energy of your people, their industry and stirring virtues, and the recognition of the wonderful advantages which exist at Antwerp not only as a great world port but also as a great world market. It has always seemed to me that the duties of a consular officer have a double nature. While he is a representative of his own government and of his own people, and while it is his duty in every way not only to protect but to advance the interests of his countrymen, it seems that he can only do this in the fullest and in the most complete measure by endeavoring to perform reciprocal services for the commerce of the people of the country in which he is stationed. Trade like many other things must be reciprocal if it is to be established on a firm basis. There must be mutual advantage as well as mutual understanding if the course of trade is to be free and unimpeded.

As one who has always been interested in problems of distribution, I applied myself particularly to informing my countrymen of the advantages which existed to such an extraordinary degree at your port for the development of trade with various other countries of Europe.
Europe. I sometimes wonder whether the Belgian people realize as a whole what a tremendous instrument they have in the port of Antwerp. When you measure your national resources, you have much upon which you can count. You have the sturdy nature of your population, you have an industrious people, you have a huge and industrial machine, and you have businessmen and bankers with an international outlook, and you have in addition that enormous and only partially developed empire in Africa. All of these things the Belgian people as a whole are more or less conscious of, but you have in addition the port of Antwerp which is located strategically such as few world ports are in relation to one of the richest, largest, and most productive and most densely populated hinterlands possessed by any port. Both by land and water the communication of the port with its hinterland is unexcelled and you have practically two hundred lines of steamers regularly calling at the port and going to the most out of the way parts of the world. This port is therefore an element in the national wealth which you have not failed to develop, but the value of which has only been too little realized in the country as a whole. It has been particularly significant, as well as interesting, to a stranger to note how within the last two years the people of Belgium outside of the city of Antwerp are beginning to realize and fully understand the value of this
this port in your national economy and in your commercial and political structure.

No other port in the world has witnessed in the last ten years the same development as Antwerp. The growth from 13 million tons of shipping in 1919 to 22 millions in 1927 is phenomenal and unparalleled in shipping history. This growth is not due to any sentimental reasons but to the fact that shipping and trade find here certain advantages as well as considerate treatment of which trade does not fail to avail itself. The administration of your port has been such as to make it attractive to ships and traders and it has played no little part in the development of this huge movement through the port. Your acquisition of the left bank of the Scheldt, the energetic and the large-minded manner in which you have envisaged and pushed forward the construction of the new port works show that those who are entrusted with the direction of the port and with its future have not only the large views but also the energy and the executive capacity to give them effect. I am personally confident from my studies of the economic structure not only of your country but of this part of Europe, that the port of Antwerp has before it a brilliant future and that before many years further additions will be necessary to the port works to the north now so happily approaching completion.

That I have been able to live and work in your city as a consular officer during this period of extraordinary develop-
development following the war has been a wonderful thing for me. It has been interesting to note that during these years the increase in American interests at this port has been so considerable. There is now a goodly number of American citizens enjoying the hospitality of your city and there is now a goodly number of American firms using the facilities of your port and of your country.

This is, I believe, in fact I am confident that it is only the beginnings of a peaceful invasion of your city not only by American firms but by firms of other industrial countries who will not fail to use these advantages so richly existing here. It is an invasion of which you need not entertain the slightest fear, and for my own countrymen I am sure that I am able to say that it is the intention of these American interests who may use the facilities of your port to conform themselves in every way to your laws and regulations and to become an integral part of your commercial and economic structure and to endeavor just as any Belgian firm to assist in all that means the strengthening of your financial and economic power. No other course could and would be followed by them. It is to the credit of those who direct your municipal affairs that they have recognised the important part which foreign firms can and must play in the building up of the economic strength of a great world port and commercial center such as Antwerp.
If I have in the smallest way been able to play any part in this extraordinary development I should indeed be proud. I do know, however, that I have not done even in the smallest measure the things for which you give me credit, and that little which I may have been able to accomplish has only been made possible through the cordial cooperation and the kindly sympathy which has been accorded me from the very beginning by all the business people in this city and by your officials from the highest to the lowest.

It is very natural that in a city like Antwerp which has trade relations of such an intimate character with every part of the world that your business men should be men of large vision. In a similar manner it is natural that your officials charged with the administration of a great world port depending upon the ships and goods of so many nations for its life should look upon a consular officer as one who may be able to be of assistance to them. But things are not always as they should be, but I can bear testimony and do so with the greatest pleasure this evening to the effect that I can remember not a single occasion during my long stay in this city when I did not receive from the business or official world the fullest cooperation. Such an attitude towards strangers and towards business is one of the most powerful arms which you possess for the strengthening of the commercial and economic situation of your port.
I wish I had it in my power this evening to pay a proper tribute to Baron Holvoet and to Mr. Van Cauwelaert. It is only too true that the progress of a city lies in a large measure not only in the quality of its citizens but in the energy and vision and honesty of purpose of those who direct its destinies. Circumstances have thrown me in close contact with these two leaders of your civil life and I have on more than one occasion been astonished and gratified to find in them such a clarity of vision and such an energy of purpose as are seldom to be found. Antwerp developed from the great trading city of the Middle Ages into the great trading city and world port of today. The age in which we are living is an industrial one and I am quite confident that the energetic and far-seeing business men of this city, under the leadership of your Governor and Burgomaster, will make of Antwerp as great an industrial center as it is now a market and world port.

I am particularly grateful that you have seen fit to associate Mrs. Messersmith and myself in this dinner this evening. If I have reached any measure of success or if I have ever been able to do any useful thing, it has been largely through the generous help and encouragement which she has always given to me.

We are particularly grateful to Mr. Vanderslyen, his associates on the committee which organized this dinner, and we desire to express to all our friends our deepest
deepest gratitude for the welcome which they gave us during the first days of our stay at Antwerp and for the kindness and sympathy and cooperation always given to us since in such a charming manner.

We are really overcome by this profusion of honors and by the kind things which have been said and to accept this magnificent souvenir just presented us. We are delighted to possess this superb work of Mr. Buschman, created like all that this celebrated artist has produced with such great talent and deep love of his art.

To you all, dear friends, I reiterate once more the expression of our very deep appreciation which I feel myself incapable of translating into words. We have the firm hope that your departure for Buenos Aires will only interrupt these agreeable relations which we have enjoyed and that we will in the future have many opportunities to meet one another.