

A BIT OF RICE INSTITUTE CONTEMPORARY HISTORY
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OF THE INSTITUTE

after World War I

Rice Records in War Service

The Rice Institute has recently received from the press a hundred-page Pamphlet containing the actual records of more than seven hundred of its members who were actively enlisted in the armed forces of the country during the Great War. It is a noble record, prefaced on the one hand by the altogether admirable commemoration sermon preached by the Reverend Doctor Peter Gray Sears at the first Rice reunion after the war, and, on the other, by a memorial tribute from a Rice address to the Rice men who went down in the war. The records are numerous, and in every branch of the service, beyond the best expectations of so young an institution as was the Rice Institute when the United States entered on the war. Moreover, between two and three hundred towns of Texas and some twenty states of the Union are represented in these lists. No pain was spared to make the record complete, but despite this care there are omissions, unavoidable because in several instances the repeated efforts seemingly failed to reach individuals or their families. The records fall naturally in three groups, containing, respectively, the names of those members of the faculty who were on non-resident duty, the great host of students who were actually enlisted in the Army and the Navy, and a smaller group of men and women engaged in auxiliary service. It is no defense of war to say that these records have added to the early prestige of Rice by reason of places of service earned in competition in all parts of the world with members of many other American institutions.

The Rush to College

A part at least of the credit for the extraordinary rush to college we have witnessed in the wake of the war is due to the conspicuous success of college men as such in the war. Furthermore, the inevitable hard times

in the wake of the war have contributed to this congestion because in such times parents and guardians strain every point to have their children and wards in school rather than unoccupied in the dearth of employment. The same causes have served to stabilize the resident student population, so that relatively more are staying in college in the absence of tempting business or professional openings. These reasons are to be reckoned along with the natural increase to have been expected consequent upon the nation-wide development of the public school system and its co-ordination with the higher institutions of learning on public or private foundation. And in this connection there should also be mentioned the very significant circumstance that the strongest argument for going to college is the appeal of the self-made man, every successful self-made man, to his own sons and daughters. I have the honour of knowing many such men, and while such men are finding the race with the college-trained men a race severer and severer, yet in this democratic land of opportunity careers will always be open to the self-made man. But the most interesting thing that I have discovered about these self-made men is that to a man they are seeing to it that their sons and daughters go through college. There must then be a good and practical reason for going through college. This wide-spread reason in the hands of practical men has been a vigorous contributing factor towards the rush to college.

In this rush to college the Rice Institute has participated without admitting any strain on its high standards in scholarship. And we have again shared this autumn in the experience of those institutions who are maintaining such standards, by receiving more applications for admission on the part of qualified students than could be accommodated. The Rice Institute has not only the largest Freshman Class in its history, but they are as a whole the best prepared class yet to be received by

this institution. Equally noteworthy is the circumstance that in this autumn's enrollment at Rice there is a far higher percentage of former students than usual. In this respect Rice has uniformly fared better than most institutions in this latitude, where it frequently occurs that as many as fifty per cent. of the previous year's enrollment failed to attend. And this is largely due to the fact, which is uttered as an observation and not in any spirit of criticism, that the tradition of going to college and staying four years in college is yet to be firmly established in this section. One of the consistent aims of the Rice Institute from its very beginning has been the establishment of just this sort of tradition, namely, the tradition of graduating from college, just for the sake of the thing, and independently of whether the future career of the student is to be in business or law or medicine or theology or engineering or architecture or in any one of the other callings or professions requiring trained intelligence for the highest success. And in this matter Rice has been steadily gaining ground. More and more of our students are planning for their professional training, after graduation, in those few professional schools of the first rank in the country in law and medicine and engineering and the other professions which require graduation from an approved college before granting admission to their professional courses. Rice's own work of this character in engineering and architecture has been deliberately planned with a view to placing it on a graduate basis as early as the circumstances of our immediate environment will admit.

Although Rice graduated its first class as recently as June 1916, representatives of the early student body are already entered on business or professional life, and in most of its branches, not only in Texas, but in widely separated parts of the nation. For example, three of them are representing as many business interests of Houston at Savannah,

Georgia, Boston, Massachusetts, and Liverpool, England. Its graduates in engineering and in architecture are engaged in practice in all the four quarters of Texas. Of the graduating class of a year ago, one entered the Johns Hopkins Medical School and received a scholarship, two others graduated from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in a year with Master's degrees, while a fourth received a diploma from the University of Paris last June. To cite an even more recent example, five Bachelors of Arts in the Class of 1921 have entered the Harvard Law School. Two other Rice Bachelors are entering the Graduate School of Princeton University this autumn on two of its best fellowships: one of these this last year's Graham Baker Student at the Institute, in mathematics; and the other an engineering graduate of a year ago, who is entering on a Princeton fellowship in economics. Another recent graduate received his degree of Doctor of Philosophy at Harvard University last June, after holding an assistantship there in biology. Other graduates have entered schools of theology, medicine, and law, for which no special provision has as yet been made at Rice, while one of the most interesting details of alumni intelligence is that a Rice student of four years' standing went on graduation a year ago as a Christian missionary to the home town of Saul of Tarsus, the pioneer missionary of christendom. Moreover, an increasing number of these graduates are engaged in teaching, not only in the local public and private schools of the city, but in increasing numbers in other towns of Texas; while several of them have by preference accepted college and university positions. Furthermore, a growing group of social workers on the scholarships provided under the Sharp Foundation in Civics and Philanthropy are entering on active work beyond our own immediate precincts.