

IV

ADDRESS TO THE RICE CORPS

THIS is a time for work and not for words; yet I welcome an opportunity of attempting to frame in words what you yourselves are feeling on this occasion. By solemn and formal renewal of a pledge to which you were born, you have consecrated to the cause of freedom all that you are and all that you hope to be. By this solemn act, we become crusaders in a common cause, knights of a new chivalry, champions of a cherished civilization; and to the high purposes of our avowal we are impelled by every instinct, every influence, every inspiration of our history. Three things have been in the background of every civilization,—the instinct of race, the influence of war, and the inspiration of religion. It was so with the Greeks: in the instincts of a peculiar people, in the influence of the Hellenic wars, in the inspiration of the Homeric poems. It was so with the Jews: in the instincts of a chosen people, in wars for national integrity, in songs of psalmists, and shoutings of prophets. It has been so with America: in our Anglo-Saxon instincts for freedom, in our wars of independence, in our reverence for Christian institutions.

In America you have come to college this autumn at your country's call, for the country is calling men to college. Even as it called them to the colors, the country is now calling men to college. Go to college! Return to college! are not the mere seasonable exhortations of college presidents: they are governmental slogans: they are emergency orders from the national government. If you are in college, remain there!

If you are ready for college, report there! A year ago these orders read, Enlist and report at camp! To-day, as issued to the properly prepared, they read, Enlist and return to college!

There's a reason for this. There are many reasons. For us in America, education had become a spiritual aspiration akin to religion. As a people, we were more in accord about education than we were in agreement either in politics or in religion. More lately our educational achievements have proved to be a national asset, indeed a material asset, of the first order. In the national extremity, the country called for men. The response of the college men was immediate. No class of our countrymen responded more promptly. The response was general. The record of results is equally gratifying, for out of all proportion to their numbers these college men have come into positions of great responsibility. The call continues. And clear, insistent, weariless, is the call. Their places must be filled. The columns from college to camp and from camp to coast must be kept continuous and complete, not only unbroken columns for Army and Navy, but also unbroken columns of engineers and architects, unbroken columns of physicians and surgeons, unbroken columns of chaplains and nurses, and a thousand other unbroken columns of skilled civilians. The government is coming to the rescue and assistance of the colleges, by providing a plan whereby college men can, with honor and in all good conscience, complete their civilian training and simultaneously prepare for efficient active service in the sky, active service on the land, active service on the sea, or, in virtue of the enemy's methods, active service under the waters of the seas.

And all this to the end that civilization may be saved alive, by saving the country alive, by saving the colleges alive, by

saving the church alive. Nor will the colleges fail the country. They are preparing for universal service now, "that the world may be made safe for democracy"; they are providing for universal education then, that democracy may be made safe for the world. However wracked and wrenched by the war, the world will be neither permanently wrecked nor ruined. Civilization will survive. In the meantime, we are all on trial. Daily caught up in great affairs, we are daily passing through momentous crises. Every man is on trial. Every institution is on trial. Every enterprise of the human spirit is put to the test. Patriotism, education and religion are put to the test. Love for country, the essence of patriotism, love of learning, the essence of education, love for all conditions of mankind, the essence of religion—all are being put to the test. We have stomachs for the trial. We have strength for the test. In the day of our visitation we shall not fail.

I have been writing under the stirring events of the last eighty days. At the moment two men stand out against the sky of every horizon—Woodrow Wilson, in Washington; Ferdinand Foch, at the front. Statesman and soldier—generalissimo of the allied forces of the west, spokesman of the free nations of the world. Marshal Foch, until lately professor of military science in Paris; President Wilson, formerly professor of jurisprudence and politics at Princeton. Each a professor called to practice. Each a student of affairs become a man of affairs. Each a man of thought called to action. Each trained to think, and therefore trusted in action. Each in a place earned by his deeds—deeds of thought and deeds of action—the one by service in the field and in the study, the other by service in the study and on the forum. Praise of these men were an unpardonable impertinence on my part, but their careers are among

the reasons why young Americans are heeding the country's call to college.

In this connection we may perhaps remind ourselves of a singularly significant fact in our more recent civil history, namely, the fact that the leading candidates in the last four national campaigns were all college graduates: Roosevelt, of Harvard, the oldest American college; Taft, of Yale, the next oldest college; Wilson, of Princeton, the third American college in age; and Hughes, of Brown, whose sesquicentennial was lately celebrated. Roosevelt, Taft, Wilson, and Hughes are some of the reasons why patriotic young Americans are heeding the country's call to college.

In conclusion, I turn from America's leaders of the present to America's potential leaders of the future. Gentlemen of Rice, I salute you, as you salute the flag. Four hundred strong, you are joining the ranks of the Rice men in service, ranks already nearly four hundred strong in volunteers from students and staff. I hail you as conquering crusaders, champions of the common weal of men and nations. The flag you salute has never been dipped in surrender. You will carry it to victory, nor will you rest until you have carried it to victory, for I confidently expect you, under the Homeric rubric of Rice, over here and over there,

"To win renown,
To stand the first in worth as in command;
To add new honours to your native land;
Before your eyes your mighty sires to place,
And emulate the glories of our race."