

## RICE BEFORE THE WAR—AND AFTER<sup>1</sup>

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#### THE FOUNDER

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**I**T is a common saying in drawing-room and market-place that we are living in a wonderful age. Perhaps no known period of the past towers up to it, unless it be the age of Pericles, or that in which the Roman Empire was consolidated, or that of the Reformation. No features of the age are more striking than the handsome foundations which have been provided by private donation for lengthening the days of man and enlarging the content of his spiritual life. Every child of ten years knows the names of Alfred Nobel and Cecil Rhodes, of Mr. Carnegie and Mr. Rockefeller, of Girard and Peabody, of Johns Hopkins, Leland Stanford, and Cornell: the names of these gentlemen are household words, and in thousands of American homes their bearers have become household gods.

In this charmed circle of immortal philanthropists the name of William Marsh Rice is permanently inscribed this day by the poet of Princeton, the jurist of Texas, and the bishop of Tennessee. Thanks to the inaugural lectures of those twelve prophets of the fundamental sciences, the liberal humanities, the progress of modern learning, Altamira of Madrid, Borel of Paris, Croce of Naples, De Vries of Amsterdam, Jones of Glasgow, Kikuchi of Tokyo, Mackail

<sup>1</sup> Paragraphs from an opening address, 12th October, 1912, on The Meaning of the New Institution, printed in full in the first number of The Rice Institute Pamphlet, pp. 45-132, under the headings:—The Foundation: I. Source, II. Site, III. History.—The University: IV. Studies and Standards, V. Saints and Seers, VI. Students and Staff, VII. Shades and Towers, VIII. Strength and Support, IX. Spirit and Summons.

of Oxford, Ostwald of Leipsic, the lamented Poincaré of Paris, Ramsay of London, Størmer of Christiania, and Volterra of Rome, the good-will of Mr. Rice to open new springs of inspiration and living fountains of knowledge in an institution of liberal and technical learning becomes known to the world of letters and science and art, to whose advancement he gave of his substance and of his life.

For this fair day we have worked and prayed and waited. In the faith of high adventure, in the joy of high endeavor, in the hope of high achievement, we have asked for strength, and with the strength a vision, and with the vision courage: the courage born of straight and clear thinking, the vision of enduring forms of human service, the strength in resolute and steadfast devotion to definite purpose. And to-day, by virtue of the Founder's splendid gift to the people, by virtue of the public spirit of his early advisers, by virtue of the public service of those who defended his last will and testament and thereby protected the people's rights, by virtue of the covenant which his trustees have kept in all good faith and conscience, by virtue of the constant creative work of supervising architects and the arduous labors of constructive engineers, by virtue of the cheer and the criticism and the counsel of friends in the community and throughout the commonwealth, the Rice Institute which was to be, in this its modest beginning, now has come to be—the new foundation has accomplished in its own being the miracle of all living things: it has come to life, and from this day forth takes a place, let us hope of increasing influence and usefulness, among those institutions which have made possible the civilized life of men in communities of culture and restraint—the State, the Church, and the University.

There are men and men and men. There are men of millions and men of millions. William Marsh Rice was a man

in a million, an inspired millionaire who caught the prospect of monumental service to Houston, to Texas, the South, and the Nation. With no resources other than soundness of body and strength of will, from a New England home of English and Welsh forebears, he came to Texas in his youth to make his fortune. By temperate habits of industry and thrift he made a fortune in Texas. He left his fortune in Texas. He gave his fortune—the whole of it—to Texas, for the benefit of the youth of the land in all the years to come; thus writing in the history of Texas the first conspicuous example in this commonwealth of the complete dedication of a large private fortune to the public good. Moreover, resolutely living a simple life, he denied himself even the “durable satisfaction” of seeing his philanthropy’s realization in order that he might give more abundantly of life to his fellows and their successors. Shrewd in foresight, strong in purpose, of stout courage and independent spirit, generation after generation will rise to call him blessed—“with honour, honour, honour, honour to him, eternal honour to his name.”