

THE BRITISH AMBASSADOR'S ADDRESS TO THE  
STUDENTS OF THE RICE INSTITUTE  
IN THE FACULTY CHAMBER,  
MAY 12, 1921, 1:00 P.M.

**M**R. PRESIDENT, Ladies, and Gentlemen: I would like first, if I might, to thank you, Mr. President, for what you have said, and you, Ladies and Gentlemen, for the reception which you have just given to Lady Geddes and to me.

It is a very great pleasure to us to be here in Houston, and it is an extraordinary pleasure to me to be here at the Rice Institute.

In the days before 1914, if any one had asked me what path my life was certain to follow, I should have said that it was obvious that I was going to be a university teacher for the rest of my life. Although I have been torn out of that old path and swept into a new one, the old interests remain, and there is no interest to me really greater than that of seeing the educational institutions of a country; and especially an educational institution at the stage of growth and development which yours is at, because so much in the future depends upon the line of growth and development of such homes of learning.

To any one like myself, born in Europe, brought up, educated in Europe,—and when I say educated in Europe I mean that in a literal sense, because my education was divided not only between Scotland and England, but also, though to a lesser degree, between Germany, Austria, France, and Switzerland,—to any one who has had experi-

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ence of the last few years in Europe, who has seen its old civilization crack and its old economic structure brought to the verge of ruin, to come to this continent, to this state, and to see a new life, a new culture, a new growth springing up before his eyes, is to enjoy one of the most fascinating and interesting experiences that it is possible for a human being to undergo. You do not realize, you who are here, how important all this is. Europe has worked to the end of one of its cycles. Nothing, so far as human eye can see, can bring back the old life into Europe. An age ended in the great clash of the European War which lasted from 1914 to 1918; and since then many of the damaged ruins of ancient institutions have been falling. Something new is starting in Europe, starting amid ruins. In this country, in this state, you have a new life, a new growth, a new development, with everything in its favor, because it has no ruins to hamper its start. In this country the growth is unimpeded; the chance is unlimited. You are just a few years ahead of the new growth in Europe. You think of this as a new country, and so in a sense it is; in another sense, of course, it is very old. In contrast, the new Europe that is growing up is very new. You are ahead. You are really pioneers in a movement that is going to be paralleled, not structurally paralleled, but intellectually paralleled, in other lands. You are leaders now in a movement which will become world-wide. At least you have it in your power to be the leaders. Whether you will actually seize leadership or not depends entirely upon yourselves. I do not mean national leadership, individual leadership. Thought leadership, cultural leadership, those are the things which lie ready to your hands if you are strong enough, determined enough to seize them.

And yet there are dangers which lie before you, as before

all men and women who are educated in any one of these great educational institutions. To avoid these dangers is one of the greatest difficulties that face a university such as this; and the great danger in my view is that there is a tendency on the part of many students to specialize too early, to limit their study, to allow their knowledge to narrow itself down, and to think too much of the education they are receiving as a means simply and exclusively to make a livelihood. We see that in every country. We have seen it for years in the European countries. I have seen it in Canada and in the United States, this tendency to specialize too early, this tendency to regard education as a means to make a living instead of what it is—a means to secure leadership among the thinking people, that is, among all the people, of the world. If I were asked what I think one of the greatest general difficulties of this period in which we live is, I would say that we are getting too many specialists, too many people who know exactly everything about a little subject and too little about everything else, about life as a whole.

You know the type of individual who is educated in part, who is instructed, well instructed, in a certain subject. Take as an example the man who is a specialist on the eye and forgets all the rest of the body. You have got people in life who are specialists purely on one subject, forgetting all the rest of life; and the difficulty that comes from that, in the life of a nation, is this: that these specialists pose and pass as being, even appear to be, educated people, whereas they are people of a limited instruction. Their opinion is taken upon subjects altogether outside their specialty, and their opinion outside their specialty is of no value. No one can go about, in any of the great countries of the world, without finding the specialist, the typical specialist, who has

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limited himself, who has allowed a shell of special knowledge to grow around his personality, acting as a local leader in subjects altogether outside that which he knows. From the point of view of the individual that is the danger which lies ahead of a great many people who are trained in universities. They will allow themselves to become specialists in one subject, and having got that specialty fully at their fingers' ends, forget that they may be just as ignorant upon the subjects outside their specialty as if they had no education at all.

I hope, I believe, that here in this great, new, growing institution you are alive to that difficulty and alive to the danger of lopsided education. It leads, I believe, to more social difficulties than no education at all. It leads to the blind leading the blind in the inevitable and invariable direction. And so, if I might wish a wish for this institution, it would be this: that throughout the long years that lie before it, throughout the years of usefulness which it will have, throughout the whole of its career, the men and the women who go out from it may be educated roundly, may know that they are in this world to live as men and women among men and women, and not to themselves and for themselves alone. I would wish, too, that this institution, keeping a broad view of life before you, its students, and your successors throughout the many years to come, will provide a leadership in service, the service which the educated have to give to the uneducated, the service which the higher races have to give to the lower, for there is no truer saying than that it is necessary for the white races to carry the burden of maintaining civilization, order, and conditions suitable for trade and commerce throughout the world. The white man's burden is a real burden; it is the burden of service to the lesser peoples, and the more highly educated

a man or woman is, the more heavy is his share of the burden of duty to the people of his community, to the nations of the world, and especially to the lesser peoples of the world.

And so I wish for you, for this institution, long-continued existence, a great prosperity, and the understanding that knowledge is requited by the burden of service,—a service to humanity, service to the people who have not the advantages of education.

AUCKLAND GEDDES.