

"IN REVERENCE AND IN AWE"

It is with a great sense of pride that we speak today of Princeton and of her sons who have gone on into the larger life. For all of us there is a magic in the name of Princeton. Generations of our families have spent happy years on this beloved campus. Some of us can never remember a time when graduates of "the best old place of all" have not been in our homes, and numbered among our dearest friends.

quote
This spirit of comradeship among the men of Old Nassau is difficult to duplicate anywhere upon the face of the earth. It never grows dim or cold. Time and distance tend only to enhance its brightness and its warmth. There are no words to define the Princeton spirit. For all of us, its value is far beyond the wealth of the ages. We sensed it at the first meeting of our Freshman class, and felt it deepen "thru the four long years of college, midst the scenes we know so well"; until we gathered on the steps for Senior singing. We of the older classes can testify to what this same spirit has meant to us as "the cares of life o'ertake us, mingling fast our locks with grey." This spirit is here today, a strange, wonderful nostalgia which binds us all together, quickens our pulses and creates in our hearts a deep love for one another. We are all one household, and the sons who have left us are all our sons. We may not have known them by name, but they are members of the Princeton family and today we share a common sense of loss. What a glorious company of men they are. We remember them as they lived with us on the campus and ate with us at the club. We see them again struggling over the little blue books in the exam rooms of McCosh, sweating at the oars on Carnegie Lake, giving their best "on the football field or track."

Some of us, whose memories go back almost a half century, remember many things today—the Freshman flour picture, the cane spree, the Old Nass, the Triangle Shows in the armory with its leaky roof, Jack Honoré and his Oleaqua, the SATC and the Russian rifles they gave us covered with grease, the fast line trolley to Trenton, Hank the proctor, the walks with our girls in the Taylor Pyne estate, Renwicks where no Freshmen were allowed before the St. Patrick's Day P-rade, the first days of the Balt, the famous jiggerman on Nassau Street with his bacon buns, and the wild night in which Dickinson Hall and the old Chapel both burned down. We all remember the honor system, bicker week, the house parties, skating on the lake, the first time that as Seniors we could sit and smoke at the sundial, the championship bonfires after we had beaten both Yale and Harvard, the beer suits and the day the Juniors took over the steps of Nassau Hall and we passed solemnly before them while they sang over and over, "Where, O Where are the grave old Seniors—safe now in the wide, wide world"; and somehow there was a lump in each throat, and tears in many eyes.

As all of these experiences pass in review before our minds, we see again the faces of our classmates who shared them with us, and have now gone to join the growing Princeton family in another world. They are our sons, they are Princeton.

What a name they made out in that "wide, wide world." Some of them became famous statesmen, soldiers, scholars and leaders in industry and the professions. Many more simply became good, solid citizens, doing a day's work as God gave it to them to do. Some were great, some not so great, but all made a real contribution to society and helped to build a better world for us and for our children.

As the years roll by, we are less concerned about what club they joined, or whether they earned a Phi Beta Kappa key or a Varsity P. Rather we remember their character and friendliness, their loyalty and honesty and love, and all the other glorious intangibles that make life worth living. They are not dead—they are immortal. This is our faith.

There is a certainty of immortality. It is not the certainty of personal experience, for none of us can enter experimentally into death. Nor is this certainty based upon the testimony of others. Our dear ones do not come back to tell us what they see over yonder.

Charlie's post