

IN MEMORIAM
JAMES EDWIN PEARCE

James Edwin Pearce was born in Roxboro, North Carolina, October 7, 1868, and died in Austin, Texas, October 22, 1938, thus fulfilling, with a few days to spare, his three score years and ten. Reared on a farm in Hunt County, Texas, he came to the University of Texas as a freshman in 1890, and was graduated therefrom with the Bachelor of Literature degree in 1894, third in his class in scholarship (Phi Beta Kappa and Fellow in History), and received the Master of Arts degree the following year. During the next ten years, alternating study with teaching and school administrative work, he spent a total of one year in graduate study in the University of Chicago, and one year abroad, for the most part in Paris, France. He was Principal of the Austin High School for nineteen years; and has been on the faculty of the University of Texas, first in Institutional History and then in anthropology, since 1917.

"During twenty-one years' service at the University of Texas, Professor Pearce, in addition to teaching duties, assembled an extensive collection of archaeological material, established a museum of anthropology, and especially during the later years of his life worked untiringly in behalf of a Texas State Museum. He was an exponent of the principle of supplementing the work of the classroom by exhibiting objects that teach lessons, and to this end he took the museum message to his students, to fellow members of the faculty, to educators throughout the State, and to the citizenship of Texas. In June, 1938, he was appointed Director of the then partially completed Texas Memorial Museum and served in this capacity until his death. It had been his hope to open the new Museum to the public on November 3, 1938, and the strenuous work of arranging the exhibits for the Museum undoubtedly told heavily on his strength and vitality."

For thirty years Mr. Pearce was active in exploration work in the field of Texas anthropology. He began with a pick and shovel in his own hands and ended with four large field expeditions under his supervision reclaiming for the University and for science the physical remains of the prehistoric peoples of Texas. Particularly rich in quantity and significance is the pottery he has recovered in the northeastern portion of the State. Many of his students in

anthropology have continued work in Texas anthropology either professionally or as a hobby in Texas communities. One of his former pupils, Victor Smith, of Alpine, has gained national recognition for anthropological work in the Big Bend country, and has begun a very creditable museum of archeological material in the Sul Ross State Teachers College. Indeed, Professor Pearce had this to recommend him as an instructor: he inspired his pupils with a deep and abiding interest in his subject. He constantly endeavored to relate his subject to life, and not only to impart information but to influence towards saner, healthier, and therefore happier living the individuals who composed his classes. It was his overwhelming conviction that it was only through the experience of the human race that the generations of men are to learn the right from the wrong ways of living, and he believed that the science of anthropology was constantly revealing this long buried human experience for the enrichment of present and future generations of men. It is for this reason that he gave himself so wholeheartedly to it.

The deceased was active in business affairs. He owned and operated farms at one time or another. He conducted various valuable experiments in pecan culture, and scattered buds and grafts from his improved stocks far and wide over the state. He was instrumental in securing a U.S. Pecan Experiment Station for this portion of the State.

Although his activities as research worker, teacher, and business man took up a great deal of his time, he was active also socially. He was a member of three discussion clubs here in the University, the Social Science Club, the Scholia Club and the Town and Gown Club, and was a regular attendant at their meetings for a long period of years. His place on Lake Austin, known as Mañana, for many years served as a rendezvous for picnic parties made up of students, faculty folks and townsfolk; and he was never happier than when arranging some outing for the pleasure of his friends and their friends and friends' friends.

Reared on the frontier, he had the natural democracy of the frontiersman in his everyday contacts with his fellowmen. He conceived of America as "the table equally set." With him there was no placing of the guests above or below the salt, no high and no low; but in his chosen science, anthropology, he was by no means an equalitarian. He conceived of society as having

natural leaders, naturally superior persons, who therefore had the obligation of leadership always with a "reached hand bringing up the laggards."

Mr. Pearce was fond of music and art. He was an omnivorous reader of the best literature. His lectures and his talk were filled with apt allusions drawn from wide reading and study in these fields and his value as a teacher lay largely in his ability to inspire interest in subjects other than his own. He wrote little, but what little he wrote, he wrote well. His "Tales that Dead Men Tell" is a little book with greater significance than many more pretentious volumes. It is written in a lucid style, and in fact is a sort of summary of his philosophy. While we may regret that he did not give more of his time to writing, we who enjoyed so much of his companionship would not have been willing to forego that to release him for literary labors.

In considering the character of this man, there is a natural interest in what he believed in, upon what assurances or authority he built his life. How did he meet the more extreme challenges of fate? What faith sustained him in cheerfulness in the dark hours, the cloudy periods that descend upon every thinking person? Whence did he derive the strength to bear his cross? He was, in our opinion, nearly a stoic. The phrase attributed to Socrates, "No evil can come to the good man" was often on his lips. He was, of course, far from accepting the extreme asceticism of the later Stoics, but he did clothe his courageous spirit with this armour, not invincible, but certainly effective in warding off many of the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune.

We feel that in the death of Professor James Edwin Pearce this Faculty has lost an efficient teacher, an intelligent and energetic research worker, a man whose social activities were of great value to the institution, and that many of us have lost a dear, personal friend; Further, that the community has lost a progressive citizen who identified himself unselfishly with its best interests; and that his family has lost a kind and devoted husband and affectionate father whose last thoughts were given to the care of and proper provision for his children.

Roy Bedichek, Chairman
J. Frank Dobie
G. C. M. Engerrand
C. W. Ramsdell