



**Obituary: Alexander Hamilton Rice, A. M., M. D.**

G. R. Crone

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and drive, he was a thoroughly sound mountaineer. He had a strong sense of responsibility and did not believe in taking unjustifiable risks or climbing beyond his capacity. This makes it the harder to account for the accident which caused his death, while engaged upon a relatively easy training climb.

He was a most delightful companion. The searching intimacy of expedition life discovered in him no trace of malice, arrogance or affectation. I remember him best for his warmth and sympathy, for his sincerity, for the imaginative intelligence which emerged from his shy, reticent manner, for his quick anger at injustice done to others, for his gentleness, emphasized by contrast with his great physical strength, for his humour and, above all, for his inflexible loyalty. These characteristics were combined in a personality of rare quality and charm.

ERIC SHIPTON

#### ALEXANDER HAMILTON RICE, A.M., M.D.

Dr. Hamilton Rice, who died on 23 July 1956, at the age of eighty, was a distinguished traveller, an authority on exploratory survey, and Gold Medallist and generous benefactor of the Royal Geographical Society. He and his first wife made the first and largest contribution to the fund raised at the centenary of the Society in 1930 for the new lecture hall and building. His last gift was a copy of the rare volume of charts, "The Mariners Mirror," 1588, which he presented to commemorate the coronation of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II. Dr. Rice joined the Society in 1901, and was a Vice-President from 1930 to 1933.

Hamilton Rice, born at Boston, Mass., in 1875, always maintained close relations with Britain. When receiving the Patron's Medal of the Society in 1914, he remarked: "I have also read in the Press of my being a foreigner, but I do not consider myself as such. A son of New England and a true son of England, I feel as much at home in London as in Boston." He was educated at Harvard and afterwards studied medicine, taking his M.D. in 1904. By that time he had already begun his long series of journeys in South America upon which his distinction as an explorer was based. To equip himself for this career, he received instruction in exploratory surveying from Mr. E. A. Reeves at Savile Row, taking the Society's diploma in survey in 1910. He was interested in obtaining rapid and accurate observations with compact instruments, a subject in which Reeves had established a reputation. Hamilton Rice had tables computed and published to facilitate the use of Reeves' prismatic astrolabe for observations for time and longitude, a method which he used successfully in his expedition of 1924-5. In the 1914-18 war he was first a surgeon attached to the American hospital at Neuilly, but was later commissioned in the Navy and eventually became director of the navigation school at Newport, Rhode Island.

Dr. Rice's area of exploration was the north-western Amazon basin, and from 1907 onwards he examined and mapped the hitherto little-known rivers; in the course of his work he investigated the Casiquiare Canal, the natural waterway linking the Orinoco and the Amazon, and carried out research into the natural history and medical geography of the region. His last expedition in 1924-5 was to the easterly tributaries of the Rio Negro—the Rio Branco, Uraricuera and Parima. On this he made use of the hydroplane for reconnaissance, and was the first to take a short-wave wireless into the field. The narratives and maps resulting from his journeys were published in the *Geographical Journal*, the papers on the last expedition being later translated into French and Spanish. He had also written on air photography in geographical exploration. Dr. Rice received not only the Patron's Medal of this Society, but numerous honours from geographical societies in America and in Europe. In 1934 he was made a Chevalier of the Legion of Honour.

G. R. CRONE

#### COMMANDER G. MURRAY LEVICK, R.N.

The death of Surgeon-Commander G. Murray Levick, founder of the British Schools Exploring Society, was reported in *The Times* of 1 June 1956, and a full