



COLEMAN HAWLEY WILLIAMS

1912-1917

COLEMAN HAWLEY WILLIAMS entered St. Paul's School in 1912 and was graduated in 1917. He went to Princeton in the following autumn. Early in 1918, having been rejected by other branches of the service on account of weak eyes, he enlisted in the Ground Aviation. He was ordered to San Antonio and five days after he arrived there died of meningitis, contracted at Fort Slocum. His body was sent home.

Service of such character and such tragic brevity must be estimated by its purpose, rather than by its accomplishment. Coleman Williams was of an age which was affected by the war in a peculiarly disorganizing manner. He and his contemporaries were too young by several years to be

received as candidates for commissions at any of the training camps. They saw boys only slightly older than themselves active in military organizations, and were no less eager for the privilege of service. In the early days of our participation in the war, the Aviation was open to boys of eighteen, but by the time that Williams had left school, the age limit had been raised to twenty-one. The handicap of weak eyes would have debarred him even from that opportunity. Like so many others, he went to college because there did not seem to be anything else for him to do; like so many others, he found waiting unendurable and in the course of the following year discovered a way to enlist. We who knew him have no doubt of the quality of service he would have given if he had lived.

It is difficult to set down on paper one's estimate of Coleman Williams. From the beginning to the end of his career at St. Paul's he was one of the quiet and unobtrusive citizens whom the School is proud of producing, and who never bring to the School anything but credit. His circle of friends was not very large, but those of us who counted ourselves members of it knew the value of his sincerity and simplicity—two qualities which do not always go with more striking achievement than his. He was not given time to prove his worth to a larger acquaintanceship or to the country. We remember him for what he was and not for what he did or tried to do.