

HARRIET ISABEL BALLINTINE

1864 - 1951

The Faculty of Vassar College wish to pay tribute to the memory of Harriet Isabel Ballintine, who died on February 9, 1951 at the age of eighty-six.

Her early experience of rigorous farm living in LeRoy,, near Rochester, taught Miss Ballintine habits of hard work and the necessity of cooperation; it also inspired in her the desire to explore openings where women could stand on their own feet and develop their abilities. After attending schools in LeRoy and a gymnasium for women in Rochester, she went at twenty-five to Harvard Summer School for further training, and two years later graduated one of a dozen students from Dr. Sargent's School for Physical Training. To finance herself, she taught at LaSall Seminary and Bennet Street Settlement House.

She came to Vassar in 1891 as Director of the Gymnasium, which had been built two years before, and supervised the individual exercises for several hundred students, teaching seven periods a day. In 1913 the college recognized the value of her work by setting up a department of Physical Training and according her the rank of Assistant Professor; six years later the department was renamed Physical Education and she was made Associate Professor. _

Miss Beldmng, who succeeded her as chairman of the department, wrote: "Her vision and leadership made possible the introduction of those sports and activities which are so universally accepted, but which in the early days were innovations, and even daring experiments, allowed only under definite restrictions." Four years after it was invented, Miss Ballintine introduced basketball played in the open air. Demand for further open air sports led to the organization of an Athletic Association, and in November 1895 was held the first Field Day. So successful was this that she was asked to teach athletic training at Harvard Summer School the next summer. At about the same time, golf was introduced as a third open air activity. And in 1901 she persuaded Miss Applebee, whom she had met at the Harvard Summer School, to teach the English game of field hockey to the Vassar students. Dancing was one of her chief interests; she enrolled in Mr. Gilbert's first Aesthetic Dancing class, and four years later started teaching it at Vassar. In short, when a new activity appeared, Miss Ballintine first learned it herself, then taught it to her students.

with the expansion of the work, the Gymnasium, which in 1889 had seemed "the best equipped Gymnasium for women

in the country" became crowded, and a section was added for offices. Impressions of these early days are very clearly given in Miss Ballintine's History of Physical Training at Vassar College published on the fiftieth Anniversary; except that Her characteristic modesty prevented any mention of her own part in the advance. In the 1920's when the department had outgrown the Gymnasium, she planned for the new building, and then in 1930 characteristically retired so that the building might be built under the direction of those who were to use it.

She enjoyed her retirement, living quietly in Williams Hall. She liked the contact with old friends who came to look her up, and with the young people who lived near her. From her early days at LeRoy her vision had gone out toward progress, and all her life she did what she could for women suffrage, for the education of the less privileged, and for opening up opportunities for women. She had the patience to watch quietly for the right moment and the tact to produce results. She could always be counted on to keep track of issues of public policy and to perform the duties of an alert citizen.

We the Faculty of Vassar College wish to express our appreciation of the pioneer qualities in Miss Ballintine, which for forty years she put at the service of the college.

Maud M. Makemson
Alfreda Mosscrop
Frances A. Foster
XIII - 197-198