

PHILIP HALDANE DAVIS

1901 - 1940

In the sudden death on February 20, 1940, of Philip Haldane Davis, Professor of Greek and Chairman of the Department, Vassar College suffered an irreparable loss. By heritage, training and taste Mr. Davis was a scholar. His education at Princeton University and as Fellow of the School of Classical Studies in Athens gave him a rich equipment for his chosen research on Greek Building Inscriptions; and in this field already at thirty-eight he had won an international reputation. Indeed both his scholarship and his personal distinction were so early recognized that he had been called to five other institutions before in 1930 Vassar secured his presence here by giving him the rank of professor. In the congenial atmosphere of Vassar College, his scholarship flowered into that humanism which embraced not only linguistics but literature, ancient and modern, enacted drama, art and music. And as a humanist, he taught with distinction in four departments, Greek, Latin, Comparative Literature and Art. His students mourn the loss of a great teacher, his colleagues the loss of a stimulating and sympathetic friend, the town of Poughkeepsie the loss of a young leader who sought to promote ideals of democracy, justice and peace with good-will. On the campus, the memory of his rich and ardent life has erected a monument more lasting than bronze, the devotion of his fellow-workers.

As a last tribute, we offer to him an epitaph which Plato wrote:

Thou wert the Morning Star among the living,  
Ere thy fair light had fled;-  
Now, having died, thou art as Hesperus, giving  
New splendor to the dead.

(Shelley's translation).

Elizabeth Hazelton Height

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