

JOHN H. RAYMOND

1814 - 1878

At the first meeting of the Faculty of Vassar College after the death of our late honored President, John H. Raymond, we record a brief statement of his work in this College, and an expression, altogether inadequate, of the love we have for his memory.

We appreciate, as others cannot, the unceasing toil, the perplexity, the solicitude, the many discouragements which attended his heroic and successful endeavor to secure for this College its present eminence among educational institutions.

We appreciate, as others cannot, the complications of the problem given to him for solution at the time of his election to his office. At the outset, there was a Board of Trustees having the heartiest interest in this work, but presenting many shades of opinion on educational questions. And the Faculty, organized under peculiar limitations needed time and trial to give it experience and strength. And the demand made by the public upon this College in its earlier years, insisting that students sent hither should be trained to the accomplishments of the fashionable world rather than to the earnestness of the scholar, was a demand that he resisted with an unfaltering, a religious constancy, and defeated utterly, so that under his leadership a victory, complete, enduring, has been gained for the higher education of women. Beset by the ill-advised and persistent appeal of the parents of our students, with no pioneers to guide him, President Raymond cautiously and safely led this College through the wilderness of its first years.

We know what his thoughtfulness has accomplished in the improvement of all the appointments and properties of the College, in securing for it the respect of educated people, in winning for it the loyalty of students, and in organizing a happy domestic regime. But these achievements made by devotion to the duties of his office, though they have commanded expressions of public
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admiration, still seem to us to fade in comparison with the result he attained in promoting the steady growth of our educational work. Comparing the "Scheme of Instruction" published in our first

catalogue, with the clear and well adjusted curriculum now followed by our students we see the traces of his most difficult work, and his brightest success.

While others point to his temperament, or to his scholarship, or to his literary and oratorical skill as the secret of his power in this College, we, recognizing all these qualities in him, point to his rare gift for organization as his prime endowment – a gift blending with comprehensiveness of plan a conscientious zeal for the performance of smallest details. This endowment made it possible for him to watch every interest related to his office, and insured the uninterrupted progress of Vassar College under his administration.

We remind ourselves that our late President himself grew to loftier ideas under the discipline of his work. Each new success inspired him with grander hopes, to more intense endeavor. He led the way to broader freedom in the discipline of the College; and in presiding over our legislative deliberations, he had come to be the most advanced among us in demanding an unfaltering respect for the womanliness of our students.

Always considerate of the weariness of his fellow-workers, he gave himself no rest. In recalling what he has done for Vassar College, we pay our reverent respect to his industry, to his fidelity, to his sacrifice of self, to his wisdom, which have laid our foundations so secure that no adversity, not even his death, can overturn them.

He was modest, he was honest, he was cautious, he was patient, he was just, he was devout, he was faithful in all things. He was eminent, and he was eminently good, He is dead, but his work survives,

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