

JAMES MONROE TAYLOR

1848 - 1916

The death of James Monroe Taylor, President of Vassar College for twenty-seven years, offers a fitting opportunity for an appreciation of the important services rendered by him to this college. The Faculty therefore desires to record on its minutes this expression of the high opinion which it holds of Dr. Taylor, as an administrator, as an educator, as a man.

As an administrator Dr. Taylor was preeminently prudent and sincere in his management of the material and educational interests of the college. Few at the present time are able to realize how desperate was the condition of the college when he became president and how difficult was the task of planning a safe and honorable policy of administration. The material growth of the college is definitely measured by the fact that when he came to Vassar there were but four buildings on the college campus and comparison with the present reveals a long line of material problems constantly faced and successfully solved. With splendid confidence in the future Dr. Taylor in his first year of office abolished the preparatory department, although the number of students was thereby reduced to less than three hundred; later in his administration when ever-increasing numbers were threatening the educational efficiency of the college, he resolved the opposing claims of caution and progress by limiting the number of students.

As an educator Dr. Taylor sympathized with a liberal culture rather than with specialization; he inclined to the humanities rather than to science. Nevertheless his administration witnessed a rapid development of science in the college - the dual department of Physics and Chemistry was divided, the departments of Biology and Psychology were established. With like breadth of purpose he organized on an academic basis the separately existing Schools of Art and Music and admitted courses in these subjects to the collegiate curriculum.

JAMES MONROE TAYLOR (continued)

Few men have been blessed with a personality so peculiarly suited to the position of a college president - a rare combination of wisdom and simplicity, prudence and honesty, strong convictions and modesty. His cordial, frank, sincere manner made a direct appeal to the goodwill and confidence of all who met him and the nobility of his ideals and principles

held fast the loyalty of his friends and colleagues.

J. Leverett Moore

Margaret Floy Washburn

Elizabeth B. Thelberg

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