

ALAN PORTER

1899 - 1942

During the ten years of Alan Porter's teaching at Vassar he became more truly a part of the college than many of us realized. He was devoted to the place, and deeply appreciative of the chance to work here in his own way.

He was born in the United States, but was taken back to England at an early age, and grew up in the north of England; when the spirit moved him, he could fall into the Lancashire dialect with most delightful results. The war interrupted his undergraduate career at Oxford, and at eighteen he was serving in the Royal Tank Corps. He returned to a brilliant career first at Oxford, where he took a degree with honors, and later in London, as editor and contributor to literary periodicals of the first rank. The years following his return to America were spent in lecturing and free-lance writing in New York, and in studying and teaching psychology as an associate of Dr. Adler.

From the very beginning of his work at Vassar, he was distinguished by a penetrating understanding of his students; his teaching of them, inside and outside the classroom, had perceptible and lasting effect, always managing to extend and enrich their social vision. No one can take his place in the department of which he was a member; as a poet-friend of his once wrote, he was "one human being" who was "well defined" and his expertness was always at the service of his colleagues.

His interest in all forward-looking activities of the faculty group, though quiet, and even unobtrusive, was informed and constructive. His deep concern for economic and social justice animated not only his teaching but also his associations in the larger community, - in Poughkeepsie and elsewhere, - with those whose aim is the full freedom of the common man.

Noting how few of his poems Alan Porter was willing to publish in book form - a single volume that came out in 1931 - the London Times Literary Supplement recently remarked on the writer's extreme fastidiousness concerning his own poetical attempts and spoke
ALAN PORTER (Continued)

of the excellence of his work in conception and style. "His early death (at 43)," the Times continued, "takes away one of the most learned, perceptive, and personally charming figures who came into public notice in the period of re-animation after 1914-1918." By the Vassar community he will

be remembered as scholar and poet, teacher and friend.

Anna T. Kitchel

Helen E. Sandison

X - 397