

AMY LOUISE REED

November 22, 1872 - January 24, 1949

Wisdom and humanity are the qualities that must always be associated with the name of Amy Reed by all who knew her. Throughout her long service as an active member of the faculty of Vassar College colleagues and students alike relied on her judgment, for it was always sound and given with the understanding of a large minded, large souled woman. Even in retirement she made friends among the younger and newer members of the community who, like her older friends, found themselves turning to her for advice and for friendship.

Her services to the faculty were incalculable. When discussions in faculty meeting were straying to non-essentials or into apparently insoluble oppositions she would rise and bring them back to commonsense and cohesion with words at once downright, simple and full of humor. The faculty committees on which she worked, always actively, are almost the total roster of our committees. She gave vital service to all the activities of the campus community and to many in town.

Her connection with Vassar goes back to 1888, when she entered as a freshman; and, except for two years of graduate study at Yale, it was continuous after 1904, when she became an instructor in the English Department. As a younger associate of Professor Laura Wylie, whose great leadership she followed with comprehension and sturdy independence, she herself became one of the formative elements in English teaching here. Her mark is on the thinking of the Vassar English department today; and her sane and liberal ideas have influenced many a teacher elsewhere through her constructive work in such organizations as the School and College Conference on English.

She left her characteristic impress on the Library also. Though without professional training for the post, she was appointed head librarian in 1910, because of her rich and humane knowledge of books. During her eleven years in this position her broad vision of long-range problems set a pattern that has remained valid. Her searching, critical concept of the place of the library in a liberal arts college insured vitality to the work in her time and has provided a stimulus to the library staff, even to the present day.

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She directed faculty plays in the old days, and she herself walked the stage, the very figure of her "great Dr. Johnson". Her chairmanship of the fiftieth anniversary celebration was a vast practical and educational achievement; this occasion marked the

inauguration of President MacCracken, who always recognized her as in a sense "the dean of us all". She composed the pageant of the Canterbury Pilgrims, one of the most memorable of Vassar's outdoor theatre productions. Sometimes in leisure hours she wrote memories of her girlhood in the New York of the 70's and 80's; to hear her read a chapter aloud, - to see the twinkle of her eyes and hear the irresistible quality of her laughter, - was the delight of her friends. She returned to the English department in 1920 and taught through 1944. In 1924 she received the Doctorate from Columbia University, publishing then her "Background of Gray's Elegy" and later her edition of "Letters from Brook Farm", evidences of a scholarship that permeated her daily thinking and teaching. It is primarily as a teacher that she will be remembered by many generations of Vassar students. In the last few weeks alumnae have written about her as a valued teacher, a wise, humorous, friendly person who always remembered and placed you", who "wore her learning so lightly that one was aware of it merely as an enrichment of herself". A foreign student writes "she is more to me than just the patient teacher who helped me, struggling with English, and tried to make me understand American Literature. She is the warmest of friends, and the most open minded spirit. I shall always remember her as a great personality and as a woman who could understand so well human nature". The whole community mourns the loss of a great woman, a great leader, and a great friend.

Ellinor Belding

Mary L. Sague

Helen E. Sandison

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