

WOODBIDGE RILEY

1869 - 1933

Professor Woodbridge Riley held over many years a unique and distinguished position in the professions of Philosophy and Education. Both as a scholar and as a professor of Philosophy his work was characterized by a lively and vigorous interest in intellectual freedom. In much of his writing, and always in his teaching, Professor Riley reflected the widespread tendency to embody the abstract truth in terms of concrete experience. Though his contributions to philosophical letters were many and varied, his work in the field of early American philosophical thought, as appeared in the volumes, "American Philosophy", 1907, and "American Thought - From Puritanism to Pragmatism", 1915, represents the first and most authoritative work in this field. In addition to his more strictly scientific writings, he devoted much time in his later years to the task of writing against what he considered harmful superstitions in the intellectual and moral world. As a teacher of Philosophy, Professor Riley offered courses which gave the historical approach to philosophical problems. His terse epigrammatic style, human sympathy, and lively wit served to make him always an effective teacher, and an able controversialist in the world of ideas.

Professor Riley received his university education at Yale University from which he received the A.B., A.M., and Ph.D. degrees. He was a research scholar at Johns Hopkins University, a teaching member of the faculty at New York University, and for two years was acting professor of Philosophy at the University of New Brunswick. From September 1907 to the day of his death, he was professor and chairman of the department of Philosophy at Vassar College. In his sudden death on September 2, 1933, the faculty of Vassar College has suffered a grievous loss, and will miss in him a vigorous active-minded colleague, loyal friend, and neighbor.

Henry S. White

Margaret B. Rawlings

C. Mildred Thompson

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