

## AARON LOUIS TREADWELL

1866 - 1947

In Professor Emeritus Aaron Louis Treadwell Vassar College honors an eminent zoologist and a beloved teacher and friend.

Mr. Treadwell was a member of the second generation of American zoologists that succeeded Agassiz. His brilliant research on the embryology of the worm Podarke started him on the way to becoming the world's authority on the polychaete annelids. Investigators sent him their specimens from many parts of the globe for study and identification. For more than two decades the American Museum of Natural History submitted for his description and classification material collected on its expeditions. For the Carnegie Institution he carried his studies to the Caribbean and the Gulf of Mexico, to Samoa and Fiji. He worked at the Marine Biological Laboratory and at the Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory. The honorary degree of doctor of science, which Wesleyan University conferred upon him in 1938, stood for a solid contribution to scientific knowledge.

For thirty-seven years, from 1900 until his retirement in 1937, Mr. Treadwell was Giraud Professor of Biology, later Zoology, at Vassar. For the same period he was curator of Vassar's Museum of Natural History. He belonged to the company of great teachers who built the traditions of our college. President MacCracken wrote: "To Professor Treadwell more than to any other person in the field of science is due the sound position taken by the departments of science at Vassar College." With the soundness went initiative. Mr. Treadwell introduced the study of evolution before college administrators liked to acknowledge its place in the curriculum. He and Miss Washburn taught their joint course in Animal Behavior before the faculty had deliberated on Related Studies. He sent his students out, with nets and bottles, to their field work on the campus. His department offered the first course in anthropology on the campus. His own teaching was witty and winning: it beguiled a long line of students into taking a scientific attitude toward annelids and other living creatures. He helped a good number of them to careers in his own profession. Because Vassar's zoologist was also a Connecticut farmer he could tell alumnae how to make butter and when to dig parsnips.

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## AARON LOUIS TREADWELL (continued)

For some years after his retirement Mr. Treadwell spent part of each winter near the campus. He was as sociable

as ever. He continued to gladden our eyes with his debonair elegance, to enliven our minds with his talk, to satisfy our hearts with the goodness beneath his urbanity.

He always enjoyed going back to the Connecticut farm, near the place of his birth and his boyhood, where he had first known his wife. There they had spent many summers with their children, and it was there that he died, on July 17, 1947, in the eighty-first year of his life.

Josephine M. Gleason

Barbara Swain

Rudolf T. Kempton

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