

EDITH WOODRUFF

1887 - 1950

The sudden death of Miss Edith Woodruff on Saturday, March 25, 1950 ended the career of one who had spent more than thirty years of her life in the service of Vassar College.

Miss Woodruff was born in Andover, Massachusetts on April 14, 1887. She received her early education at Brunswick, Maine where her father was Professor of Greek at Bowdoin College, and at Wheaton Seminary where she completed her preparation for college. She graduated from Vassar in 1909. Thenceforward, with the exception of two years which were spent in social work, the study and teaching of music were her chief concern. She received her A.M. at Vassar College in 1918 and the degree of Bachelor of Music at Northwestern University in 1924.

Her interest in music and in methods of teaching music led to frequent periods of study in this country and abroad. She studied piano, harpsichord, theory, composition and musicology in New York, London, Paris, Salzburg, at the American Conservatory in Fontainebleau and at the Harvard Summer School.

Of late years composing had come to be Miss Woodruff's greatest delight, and in the summer of 1948 she attended the Composer's Conference at Middlebury College, where some of her compositions were performed. A choral work, a setting of Sara Teasdale's Zierrot, has been sung several times and has been recorded by the Vassar Glee Club. Characteristically, she spent her last morning composing and playing the harpsichord.

While she was intensely interested in the life of the college in all its aspects, the affairs of the Music Department were a matter of deep and lasting concern to her. She had done more than anyone else to give continuity to the teaching of music theory at Vassar College. She made a constant study of her own teaching methods and earnestly endeavored to improve them; and she was always searching for ways in which the department might serve the students more effectively. Many of her ideas which had crystallized over the years took permanent shape in the volume, Harmonic Writing, published in 1948. While the book was designed primarily

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for the use of Vassar College students, it has attracted favorable attention elsewhere, and has already been adopted by one or two other institutions.

Edith Woodruff will be remembered for her spontaneous and genuine friendliness, her warm heart,

her freshness of outlook and her sense of fun. Students and faculty members who knew her will recall affectionately her eager interest in people, her loyalty to her friends, her concern for the welfare of her students, and the spirit and the corage which she showed when expressing or defending her views.

The faculty of Vassar College has lost a loyal and devoted colleague.

Jane T . Swenarton

Maud W. Makemson

E. Harold Geer

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