

In Memoriam

KEMP MALONE

1889–1971

Kemp Malone, professor emeritus of English at The Johns Hopkins University and president of the American Name Society in 1956, died on October 13, 1971, at Eastport, Maine, where for many years he and his wife had maintained a summer home.

Professor Malone was born on March 14, 1889, in Minter, Mississippi. He was brought up in bookish surroundings, and at the age of 18 was awarded the A. B. degree by Emory University. Before going on to receive his Ph. D. in 1919 at the University of Chicago (where John M. Manly was his master), he spent four years teaching high school in Atlanta, two years as a Carnegie Foundation exchange teacher in Germany, a year as a graduate student at the University of Copenhagen, a year as instructor in German at Cornell University, and two years in the U.S. Army. In 1919–1920 he was a postdoctoral student at the University of Iceland, and the following year at Princeton. In 1921 he accepted an assistant professorship of English at the University of Minnesota, and three years later he was called to Johns Hopkins as successor to James W. Bright. He became emeritus in 1956. Subsequently he served as visiting professor at Georgetown University, New York University, Southern Illinois University, and the Catholic University of America.

He was a prolific and wide-ranging scholar: his bibliography runs to more than 500 items. His editions of *Deor* and *Widsith* and his papers on *Beowulf* are invaluable contributions to our understanding of Old English heroic poetry; he had an abiding interest in phonology and especially in the sounds of English and of Icelandic; he was etymologist for the *American College Dictionary* and the *Random House Dictionary of the English Language*; his edition of Thorkelin's transcripts of *Beowulf* evidences his interest in textual criticism; and his brilliance as a literary critic is apparent in his *Chapters on Chaucer*. He was a tireless editor of learned journals: he was a founder of *American Speech* and its managing editor from 1925 to 1932, and he carried out extensive editorial duties on various other journals, notably *Modern Language Notes* and the *American Journal of Philology*. He was a stimulating lecturer, and it has been said that "no one who has ever listened to his magnificent readings from Old English poetry or from Chaucer can deny that his scholarship has helped us to know these works as poetry and not just as printed words for dissection." He was, indeed, a poet in his own right, as those who have read *The Dodo and the Camel* or who received his Christmas sonnets readily know.

His distinction as a scholar brought him honors at home and abroad. He was the recipient of honorary degrees from his college (Emory), his university (Chicago), and the university whose faculty he graced for so long (Johns Hopkins), as well as from Yale, the University of North Carolina, and Kenyon College. He served as president of the American Dialect Society, the Linguistic Society of America, the Modern Humanities Research Association, and the Modern Language Association of America. He was a member of the Danish Order of the Dannebrog and the Icelandic Order of the Falcon.

Those of us who studied under Kemp Malone knew him as an illuminating teacher, and as a wise counselor who continued to advise and encourage us long after we set out from Johns Hopkins to make our own way in the world. The years strengthened our friendship and deepened our respect, and his death leaves a void that cannot be filled. We will not see his like again.

H. B. Woolf