

## Brasenose Sacrifice

(The following memoirs are reprinted, by kind permission of the Editor, from the *Oxford Magazine*.)

LANCELOT ANDREWES VIDAL, Second Lieutenant in the Oxford and Bucks Light Infantry, was killed at Givenchy on September 25 last. He appeared in the casualty list as 'missing', and for many weeks hopes were entertained that he might prove to be alive and a prisoner. In December his death was definitely announced. Vidal came to Brasenose from Malvern in 1906, and took his degree in the History School in 1909. He was President of the Junior Common Room in his last year, the Quatercentenary of the College. He is the fourth Bible Clerk to give his life for the cause. Vidal was a keen athlete, and captained the College A.F.C., playing always a hard and fast game. Tenacious and master of himself, he did everything he had to do with all his might. Never finding his Schools easy, he conquered examinations by sheer pluck. After taking his degree he was appointed to a mastership at Radley.

He was greatly loved by the men of his year. One of these wrote of Vidal a few weeks since: 'He was, I think, the chief favourite of all in our eyes, and it is hard to think of his radiant personality, as clear and strong as the sunshine, being gone.'

ALFRIC EUAN ALLIES, Lieutenant in the Royal Welsh Fusiliers, who was reported missing in August, is now reported to have been killed in action on August 16. Destined for the Bar, the outbreak of war found him at Cox's Bank. He had been a member of King Edward's Horse, but increasing weight had compelled him to resign his membership of that body, and he was free to accept a commission. He went to Churn with most

of his Oxford friends. Here at Oxford he had been the life and soul of his friends. He was no athlete, but he could play golf well and hit a cricket ball hard; he was no scholar, but he had many intellectual interests, quick wits, and a lively understanding. By sheer force of personality he won for himself a unique position in College life.

He was endowed with a rich vein of natural humour, of the truest and best kind. It was Falstaffian. It flowed from the depths of his nature, and was as gentle and as gracious as it was unforced: it was universal in its character. By choice his favourite butt was himself, no matter what his theme—the peccadilloes of his friends, his own laboured ascent of Cader Idris, the difficulties of the law, the intricacies of high finance as seen from the point of view of a clerk at Cox's, the discomforts of camp life or the too great reality of sham trench-warfare—the same refreshing humour played over and illuminated the whole subject; for his was the humour which comes of vision. With the Principal no less than with the callowest Freshman he conversed in a tone of the most delightful persiflage. It showed itself in hundreds of ways. Like Sir Francis Drake, where five reasons could be invented, he was never content with one, however convincing and genuine that one might be. He did not wish to deceive, nor did he deceive: his excuses were born of the joy of creation. Humour of this type is elusive, but Allies had the unusual gift of imparting some of the flavour of his conversation to the written word. Those of our readers who read the 'Letters of a Subaltern in the Dardanelles', which were published last Term, will (notwithstanding the activities of the Censors) have some idea of what we mean. They will know, too, the manner in which he gave his life. Those letters are the way in which his promise to the Magazine to write an account in the manner of Caesar of the Crossing of the Rhine in 1915 has unfortunately been fulfilled.

Singularly high-minded, singularly pure, he was happy himself, and spread cheerfulness and good temper about

him. He bore the follies of his friends with tolerance; the discomforts and dangers of a soldier's life he bore with fortitude.

The best natures have the homing instinct strong within them. Allies loved dearly the shady lawn of his home at Bewell; he loved no less the University where he spent three happy years. For under all his humour there lay a depth of feeling which only seldom came to the surface. We saw him often after he had taken his degree; we listened in wonder while he unfolded the tale of his doings in London or in camp, and we shall long and sorely miss the sunny nature of one who brightened our lives so greatly whilst he was with us here on earth.

Previously reported missing, now reported to have been killed in action in Gallipoli in August, 1915, ARTHUR EDWARD MARTYR WARD, Captain and Adjutant in the Norfolk Regiment, Commoner and Organist of the College 1896-9. Aged 38.

Arthur Edward Martyr Ward came to Brasenose from Haileybury in 1896 and held the post of Organist during his three years of residence. Without being specially prominent in College life he was a very useful member of the College. He took his degree just as the Boer War was breaking out, and at once passed on to serve his country in the regiment of his native county, Norfolk. He remained throughout his life in service with his regiment. He was Captain and Adjutant in his Battalion and took part in the Gallipoli fighting. Since August he and other officers of his regiment have been missing, and just lately his friends have announced that they have certain news that a soldier's life has ended in a soldier's death.

JOHN COBLEY SLANEY, Lieutenant in the Royal Field Artillery, who was killed in action in France on Thursday, February 17, came to Brasenose from Rugby in Michaelmas Term, 1905. He rowed in the Second Torpid in the following Term. He resided, however, only for one year,

and since he left Oxford the College had lost sight of him. But in the last few days testimony has been borne to the affection with which he is remembered by contemporaries at Brasenose. He was gazetted to a commission in December, 1914.

CHARLES HERCULES FRANCIS AUGUSTUS NEWTON (only son of Francis James Newton, C.M.G., C.V.O., Treasurer of the British South Africa Company), who was killed when leading his platoon in a night attack on Monday, March 13, matriculated as a Rhodes Scholar from Eton in 1908. He left Oxford in December, 1909, to attend the School of Mining at Camborne, and went out to Rhodesia in January, 1912. He came back in October, 1914, in order to serve, and obtained a commission in the King's Royal Rifle Corps in the following month. In July, 1915, he went to France, and served with his Battalion there. One of his brother officers writes: 'He was wounded in the leg, and in endeavouring to get some of his own men who were also wounded under cover he received a second wound in the stomach, which proved fatal. He refused assistance, and told his men to look after the wounded; in other words, he sacrificed himself for his men—truly a soldier's death. We have lost one of our very best, one whom we could ill afford to lose.'

STEPHEN FREDERICK HAMMICK, Captain in the Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Light Infantry, who died on April 18 of wounds received in action on April 6, matriculated at Brasenose from Marlborough College in 1890. He obtained his commission in 1894, and was promoted to Lieutenant in 1897 and to Captain in 1900. He served in the South African War, and was wounded at Paardeberg. The following extract from a private letter may serve to express the feeling of those who knew him well:—

'He was always so straight and frank and sincere, and from all the accounts of him he was also a most gallant soldier. His men were all devoted to him: he was always

so kind and genial with them, and they would have followed him anywhere.'

Two of his commanding officers have borne testimony to his wonderful fearlessness and pluck.

AUBREY HERBERT BOWER WEBSTER was educated at King's School, Worcester, where he was King's Scholar, and came to Brasenose as Colquitt Exhibitioner in 1907. Here he did strenuous work on the river, rowing in the Torpids and in the Second Eight, of which he was stroke in 1909. After taking his degree with Honours in Modern History in 1910 he spent four years in teaching work. After the outbreak of war he obtained a commission in the Northampton Regiment and came to Oxford for his training, leaving for the front in March last, after a long period of waiting, his battalion having gone out in the previous September. We heard last week that he had been accidentally killed while on active service on April 26.

Keen on the river, steady at his work, Webster had also a quiet charm which awoke and responded to the affection of those who knew him. He was always unassuming, but quietly anxious to do his full part. Writing on the eve of his departure for France, he expressed regret that his battalion, already six months' veterans, would find him still an amateur. We are certain that he made full use of the few weeks which he had.



## The late Sir Arthur W. Rücker

IT has occurred to me that a short memoir of the late Sir Arthur Rücker by one of his oldest and most intimate B.N.C. friends, by way of supplement to the account of his distinguished scientific and educational career by 'W.N.S.' published in the *Oxford Magazine*, and reproduced in the last issue of the *Brazen Nose*, may be acceptable to the readers of the latter.

He was educated at Clapham Grammar School, of which he was a distinguished ornament, and he obtained a Mathematical Scholarship at B.N.C. I don't think he gave one the impression of being a very hard reader, though of course he was, or he would not have taken three firsts in a little over three years, and it is a remarkable thing that, during a good part of his undergraduate life, he suffered very much from his eyes, which were never strong. Notwithstanding this drawback, he did not appear to find it any trouble to get through his difficult examinations with conspicuous success.

A year or two after his election as Fellow of the College (I think it was in the Long Vacation of 1873) he and I had a delightful walking tour in Switzerland. We were fairly good walkers, but inexperienced in mountain climbing. I do not think he had ever been in the high Alps before. We managed a few easy ascents, and crossed the Col du Géant, and we were so pleased with our experiences that we promised each other that we would try something much more formidable the following year—I think we decided we would tackle the 'Wetterhorn', which in those days was, for novices, a pretty tough climb, but, whether we could have accomplished that feat was never proved, as meanwhile Rücker became engaged to be married, and our projected second tour was never carried out.

I only once heard him give a public lecture at the Royal Institution. I cannot remember what the subject was, but I was very much impressed by his extraordinary

fluency and his mastery of the subject, which was apparent even to an ignoramus like myself. The last time I had a long chat with him was when he was Principal of London University, and he told me about his work there, and said he was no longer a man of science, but a man of business, but I think he enjoyed the change of work. I spoke to him for a moment at the Quatercentenary dinner, and heard his excellent and amusing speech, but I never saw him again.

Sir Arthur Rücker was one of the most charming persons it has been my lot to meet. He was, as everybody knows, a brilliantly clever man, but was entirely devoid of 'side'. He had a keen sense of humour, and was one of the pleasantest of companions. Though he did not talk about it, I know he was a deeply religious man.

The University and the College have lost one of their most devoted members.

J. T. F.



### The late Sir Arthur Rücker and Dr. H. J. D. Webb<sup>1</sup>

A TRIBUTE of affection and respect is owed by us at this time not only to the younger members whose untimely loss we had in mind yesterday, but to senior members whose departure hence lies in the course of nature. Arthur Rücker, an Honorary Fellow, came up nearly fifty years ago, and had a fruitful career of untiring industry and well merited success. Of his attainments in the field of science there is no need to speak here. Genial, kind-hearted, and unfeignedly loyal to the College, he was a pioneer in the great movement towards a better acquaintance with the world we live in. He forms a transition between the older Oxford, with its

<sup>1</sup> From a Sermon preached in the College Chapel on December 5, 1915, by Dr. Bussell.

mediaeval studies and well-nigh complete seclusion, and the new cosmopolitan age of combined learning and world-wide research.

Of Llewellyn Montfort Bebb I can speak here from personal knowledge and with a keen sense of personal loss. He was Vice-Principal for several years—pains-taking, accurate, absolutely unsparing of himself and his comfort at the call of duty. He set a very high standard of self-sacrifice which it was hard, indeed impossible, for a successor to follow. Those who had the patience to penetrate the mask of diffidence and reserve, were rewarded by knowing a singularly upright, loyal, and affectionate nature. He passed from Oxford to fill a difficult post as Principal of Lampeter College. I met the Bishop of St. Asaph in Norfolk last summer, as Chaplain of the Denbighshire Regiment quartered there, and I recall with pleasure and pride the high praise he paid to Dr. Bebb's devoted labours in Wales. He was one of the most modest and unselfish of men. His natural taste for minute scholarship and theology was cheerfully surrendered to the exacting calls of administration, both here in Oxford and at Lampeter. I am certain that many of his pupils will look back with gratitude—some perhaps not without a pang of regret—upon his influence, his unfaltering sense of equity, his ascetic example,—even those who at times did not take the trouble to understand him and so failed to do him full justice.

