



Isaac Bayley Balfour

born October 19th 1889

killed in Action. June 28th 1915

whilst serving with the 1st K.O.S.B's.

Magdalen College.

ISAAC BAYLEY-BALFOUR, Lieutenant in the 14th Battalion of the Royal Scots, Lothian Regiment, who was killed in action at the Dardanelles, on June 28, calls for special note, both for his father's connexion with Oxford and still more on account of his own striking personality. He was the only son of Professor Isaac Bayley-Balfour, F.R.S., who has now held the Chair of Botany, once filled by his father, at Edinburgh since 1888, and who previously, in a brief period of four years, during which he was Sherardian Professor here, left an enduring mark both on the Botanical Garden and the science of Botany in Oxford. His son, called after him, was a boy at Winchester, and came to Magdalen in 1908. His health was delicate and he was obliged to leave in mid-career for a voyage round the world. Notwithstanding this serious interruption, on his return he took First Class Honours in the Final School of Literae Humaniores. This might have marked him for what his friends knew him to be, a young fellow of high intellectual ability, but he was more than that. He was brilliant and versatile, he had a lightness and quickness of perception and intuition, and at the same time a force of reasoning quite unusual and which must have carried him far in many lines had he been spared. He was also singularly winning and engaging, a delightful talker and companion, while his goodness of heart and absence of all self-seeking or self-consciousness endeared him to all who knew him. Truly his friends rejoiced in his light, and the shadow which his loss has brought is proportionately deep.

From "Oxford's Sacrifice"

Nov. 3rd 1915

Mrs. Van Raalte narrowly escaped drowning while endeavouring to rescue her sister. It was beyond a dem that she body was discovered by divers.

Poetry.

I. B. B.—1903-1915.

Twelve years ago, that hot July,
We walked together, you and I,
From Flint Court into School, to show
How much and little t'others know.

You smile at me. I seem to live
Through each long hour in every Div.;
You whisper, and I watch you rise
With mischief dancing in your eyes.

Your coat was gray as Magdalen Tower;
I see you, at each sounding hour,
Flit through the winding Oxford street
With tattered gown and eager feet.

A year ago last June, we walked
The Highland hills, and bathed, and talked
Of everything beneath the sun,
And all our races yet to run.

July is come again—but you
Have done all that a man can do.
You loved your friends, and will not want
Companions by the Hellespont.

For your brave spirit wanders free
To islands in that summer sea,
And your light feet will pass with joy
Across the windy plains of Troy:

And all the heroes Homer sung,
Hector, Patroclus ever young,
And Nireus with the flowing hair,
Will smile to give you welcome there,

And weave into another lay
Your golden deeds of yesterday,
For half the tale was left unsaid
Until you shone among the dead.*

Then, swift as thinking, you will come
To Flanders, where the bullets hum:
Your spirit will come to mine and tell
My loneliness that all is well;

Yes! to the friend who knows his friend
And knows himself, Death's not the end,
And every day until I die
We'll walk together, you and I.

In the Trenches,

A. D. G.

July, 1915.

* Ἀστὴρ πρὶν μὲν ἔλαμπες ἐν ζωῶσιν Ἔθνος
νῦν δὲ θανάτων λάμπεις Ἐσπερος ἐν φθιμένοις.

This poem to
J. B. Balfour was
written by his friend
A. D. Gillespie who
was killed in action
near La Bassée at
the end of September.