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FRANCIS BÉKÁSSY.

A young Hungarian who died for his country and whose name is included, for future generations to read, on the tablet of honour set up in commemoration of the sons of Cambridge who fell in battle.

*+1915 June
Eszaki harcter*

This young Hungarian was educated up to this thirteenth year in Hungary then he was sent to England where he was entered at Bedales school. After five year study here he entered King's College, Cambridge.

At Cambridge he won the respect and love of all who knew him. He took two parts of the History Tripos and would have come out even higher had he devoted himself to the subject and period proscribed. He thought, discussed and wrote much and was alike devoted to poetry, philosophy, history and political problems.

On the occasion of a political debate he was offered the position of political correspondent for Hungary and the Balkans to a leading London newspaper. He felt, however, unable to accept this position as he was preparing for a different career.

On the outbreak of the war he returned from Cambridge in order to serve his country; he served her until last year, — last year he died for her.

His professor, G. Lowes Dickinson of King's College said of him "To me... his death is a personal loss. I think, also, it is a loss to the whole world."

The following note was prepared for a Cambridge publication by his fellow-student, E. A. Felton, and shows what respect and love this brilliant young Hungarian won at Cambridge..... "In Ferenc Békássy the University of Cam-

126 bridge has lost one of the most promising and interesting of

that generation of her members which was there during the three years immediately before the outbreak of the war. He had been educated from his 13th year in England. The School which sent him to the University had fostered rather than suppressed his originality, the combination in him of enthusiasm and disciplined mental powers was all the more striking because it contrasted with the prevailing tone of academic life. He struck his contemporaries, apart from his varied gifts, above all by the unsophisticated enthusiasm with which he threw himself into anything that had fixed his attention. He would go for long country walks by himself; he would argue hotly for a whole evening on subjects which the rest of us would have discussed coldly. Yet he always succeeded in imparting some of his own fervour to others in the company. He would sit for hours absorbed in reading or writing and forget all his engagements — a proceeding to which no one took exception, for even at Cambridge there was something wayward and childlike in his nature.

Yet, as I have indicated, it would convey an untrue impression of him to say only this. The extent of his knowledge was exceptional. In languages he was both versatile and accomplished. He wrote poetry in his native tongue, in English, in French, even in old French. He was widely read, and his time had been devoted to natural science as much as to literature, a fact which few realized because at the University his predominant interests were for the time literary and philosophical.

Thus his early training had aided his natural ardour of temperament, powers of reasoning, and the desire for sound knowledge.

His powers of application were at times remarkable. For his college essay on Browning he read, I believe, every line by that poet before producing a most thorough piece of criticism.

His affectionate disposition together with a certain naivety gave him many friends. But above all it was his freshness and buoyancy which attracted us. I remember how one cold November night we walked out to Grantchester, about midnight we came to the lock above Byron's pool; he was seized with an irresistible desire to bathe, flung off his clothes and swam about for ten minutes.

I think he was at his best in the open air, filled with a curious wild love of nature, due perhaps to his nationality.

He often spoke of the future, but always with the determination of returning to Hungary to which he found himself bound by ties of blood and race stronger than the associations of his life in England and his love for them. This circumstance is typical of him: he was a man of strong natural instinct, full of vitality.

And so he died for his country, — one more in the general loss of humanity. Of the Cambridge men who have fallen in the war the Vice-Chancellor said in his speech on resigning office: „Many were the hopes and expectations we had formed for them, but every one of these had been surpassed by the event,.....the University bears them on her heart.“ Ferenc Békassy's name may be read by future generation of his college on the honourable roll of those who went to the wars, and his name standing there is a sign, if such were needed, that his English friends bear him affectionately in their memory and mourn his loss.“

(Signed) E. A. Felkin
a fellow-student at King's College, Cambridge.

The following verse is not his best but it seems suitable for the present occasion. Later on we hope to give a further selection from his works.

INTO THY HANDS, O LOVE.....

When I must die, a lonely man and grey,
And all my life lies open like a book
Year after year close-written, I shall say:

“How long is it since I one day forsook
(Not yesterday! long years and years ago.)
The dearest of dear costly loves and took

“The uncertain journey all men had to go?
It was the time when men went out to war,
My way went north, I fought among the snow

“For sixty days of winter, while our star
Our dreary little planet, rang again
With wails and cries and cannon. Now there are

"No friends of mine alive: for some died then
But some died afterwards, What matters it?
That was a bad war; but a time for *men*.

"Though I had loved then, I was young, thought fit
Never to think of her whose eyes were day
And starry night to me: she used to sit

"With her hands clasped sometimes in such a way,
For many nights I dreamt of what must lie
Asleep behind her eyelids: meadows, gay

"With purple crocuses, or daffodils
Where she would wander with the winds that fly
And drive the pearly rain across the hills;

"Or yet a road perhaps and such a sky
With fast grey clouds that skirt across the sun,
That she unhappy there perhaps would cry

"Beside the reeds where gurgling waters run.
— Now I am all alone, and since I know
That all my days and all my deeds are done.

"It little matters that it happened so,
That — empty words to an on-speeding world —
She too is dead now many years ago.

"I see the grains that long ago have pearled
Through Time's dim glass and know them, tear by tear,
For vanity, but bannerlike unfurled

"My love that was, is bright. My end is near
Now all the rest is dust and emptiness
I give myself to her — for, she is here.

1914 October

FRANCIS BÉKÁSSY B. A.

Hungary may well be proud of such sons, who by their
lives and by their deaths show the world of what stuff the
Hungarian is made.

"By their fruits shall ye know them."

