



BRONSON HAWLEY

1894-1898

BRONSON HAWLEY was born in Bridgeport, Conn., April 19th, 1880. His parents were Alexander Hawley and Susan Hubbell Waller. He came of pure Anglo-Saxon stock and lived on the old homestead in the town of Kent, which has been in the family for eight generations, since the original land grant. He was descended from three colonial governors, Treat and Wells of Connecticut and Nichols of New York.

In his early years he attended a private school and then continued his education in the public schools of Bridgeport until he went to St. Paul's School, in 1894. Always a good student he finished at St. Paul's with an excellent record and entered Yale. But at the end of his first semester he

decided not to continue and take his degree. Instead, he took up his favorite study, bird-life, and undertook to increase his ornithological collection, which he had begun as a boy. Many trips Bronson made to different parts of the country and he was in correspondence with many recognized ornithologists. At the same time he had the management of two farms and was greatly interested in agriculture. For two years he taught Greek in the Bridgeport High School and in a private school.

During the war he was very restless and was one of the first to go to the Officers' Training Camp at Plattsburg. When the United States declared war, Bronson applied for a commission, but was refused five times on account of the fact that he had to wear glasses and in spite of the fact that he was an expert shot, a fine horseman and in excellent physical condition, as a result of his out-of-door life. Not despairing, however, he was persuaded by friends to enlist as a private in the Seventh Regiment, New York. This he did and was accepted. Bronson went with his regiment into training at Spartansburg, going overseas with the 27th Division, which was assigned to fight with the British.

His company went into action in Belgium, at Ouderdom, near Mount Kemmel and, on August 18th, 1918, at the end of their first occupation of the front line, while his battalion was returning in the night for their first rest, he was killed when the Germans shelled the road on their march out. He was buried in a British cemetery at Ouderdom, with a few others of the 27th Division, the first casualties of the old Seventh Regiment of New York.

From the time Bronson enlisted he was confident that he would see action and had a strong premonition that he would be killed. In fact he made such a prediction in his letters and requested that, in such event, he be buried in the old family plot adjoining the old homestead. So, in 1920,

two of his brothers, after notification from the Graves Registration Bureau that Bronson's body was to be moved to one of the large American cemeteries in France, went to Belgium and identified his body, which now lies in the beautiful Berkshire Hills which he loved so much.

When Bronson died he possessed one of the best individual ornithological collections in this country. This his brothers have given to the Peabody Museum of Yale University, of which an ancestor, the Rev. Dr. Jeremiah Starr, was one of the earliest trustees.

Bronson never married and when he died left three brothers, Dr. George W. Hawley, of Bridgeport, Conn., S. P. S. '93; Alexander W. Hawley, of Fort Dodge, Iowa; and Samuel M. Hawley, S. P. S. '95, who died in January, 1924.