GEORGE WILLIAMSON
1898–1901

George Williamson was born in London, September 6th, 1883, the son of Charles J. and Laura Williamson. He was educated in English schools until he entered St. Paul’s in the autumn of 1897. He will be remembered by those who knew him at that time as a very straightforward, handsome boy, physically fit, a good cricketer and a fine rider, rather shy, with a very unusual ability in writing and a delightful sense of humor, which recalled that of Jerome K. Jerome.

He contributed freely to the *Harve*, almost from the time of his entrance, and was one of its head editors in 1901. His literary contributions were not only in prose, but both in English and Latin verse, and included two *Library
Poems." The signature of a Latin poem by him illustrates his sense of humor—"Georgius Guilielmii F." At Harvard, from which he graduated in 1905, he continued his literary work by writing for the college papers and by an occasional contribution to outside magazines. After leaving Harvard he took a law course at Oxford University.

In 1910 he married Hilda, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. James Alexander Gordon, of Montreal, Canada, and made his residence in that city.

At the outbreak of the World War he immediately volunteered for service. He reached the continent in August, 1914, and trained for some weeks with a reserve battalion, joining on September 8th the Second Battalion of the Duke of Wellington's West Riding Regiment, in which he held the rank of lieutenant.

The following vivid paragraphs from the letter of a friend tells some of the incidents in the final chapter of his life: "His Captain, who was wounded the day after George and is now invalided home, says the young fellow was in his usual fine form throughout, cracking jokes and putting heart into everyone. Arrived at Ypres, where the Battalion was in the thick of things, George distinguished himself by holding on one occasion a trench which was furiously attacked with the bayonet, rallying his men with boldness and, eventually, after desperate hand-to-hand fighting, driving the enemy out.

"On November 8th his company advanced in the morning to relieve the crowd who were holding a certain trench and George's section was on the left, advancing on the outside of a wood. The enemy had worked around further to the left and proceeded to enfilade George's men with machine-gun fire. He promptly ordered his men to do a bunk into cover, and might have saved himself had he followed suit, but he stepped out of the wood and took a good

look around to see that all his command had gone to ground safely, and in so doing lost his life, for he was hit five times all down the left side, beginning with one through the top of the lung.

"However, he kept going long enough to get his little lot safely into the trench and to hunt up his Captain and report himself wounded. All that blessed day he sat up in the trench, as the wound in his lung pains too much when he tried to lie down. After dark they moved him—seventeen miles in a motor ambulance—to a dressing hospital. Neither he nor the vets thought he was going to die and on the 20th he wrote his mother saying he had been somewhat chipped, but on the whole making rather light of it, and giving the approximate date of his proposed arrival in England. It was then they wired to his wife to come. On the 12th, in the evening, he took a sudden turn for the worse, whether it was a hemorrhage in the lung or a general break-up they don't know, and at three o'clock on the morning of the 12th he died. He was buried there, or thereabouts, and his grave is marked."

When he died his wife, summoned by cable, was on her way across the ocean to join him in London, where his mother already awaited him. He is believed to have been the first graduate of an American college, and the first Harvard man, to be killed in the war.

In boyhood and youth he was ever cheerful, clean, brave and fine, and those who knew him best loved him most. He is buried in the Reservoir Cemetery near Ypres.