



WM. J. BEATON, LIEUT. M.G.C., Assistant Librarian, R.S.E.
Killed near Ypres, Sept. 24, 1917.

**II.—Wm. J. Beaton, Second Lieutenant Machine Gun Company,
Assistant Librarian, R.S.E. By The General Secretary.**

MR WM. J. BEATON was born on October 7, 1893. He entered the service of the Society as Assistant Librarian on December 6, 1909, and continued to fulfil his duties with the greatest efficiency until September 1914, when he was allowed to enlist in the 15th Royal Scots. In July 1916 he was wounded, and after his convalescence he applied for a commission, and subsequently returned to France as Second Lieutenant in the Machine Gun Company. According to the detailed report by his brother officer, the manner in which he met his death was as follows:—It was about 8 a.m. on the morning of the 24th September, about 4 miles east of Ypres. He was at the time in a German concrete pill-box, the machine guns and teams being at the left and right. Mr Beaton set out in a thick fog to visit the gun on his right, and apparently lost his way. Suddenly the fog lifted, and from the pill-box Lieutenant Beaton was seen at a position well forward and just in front of the German trench. Almost immediately he was sniped at by the Germans. Lieutenant Dodd and a private, Dalby by name, went out with a stretcher, but found that he was past hope; he just managed to say good-bye. The body was brought in at night by a party of the Notts. and Derbyshire Regiment.

In another letter from Lieutenant Dodd it is stated that Mr Beaton was the most popular officer of the Company with the men, probably owing to his having been in the ranks himself, and also to his cheery disposition. He could never do enough for them. Just before going into the trenches about September 20th, he discovered that the men had not a cigarette among them, and rode ten miles on a heavy push bike to buy them some. On another occasion during a heavy bombardment he insisted on remaining with the men, for whom there was no shelter, rather than take advantage of a shelter for officers. He was always thinking of the men in one way or another, and his death was most deeply regretted.

The accompanying portrait is reproduced from a photograph taken by J. Campbell Harper, Leith, in the early part of the year, shortly after Mr Beaton received his commission.