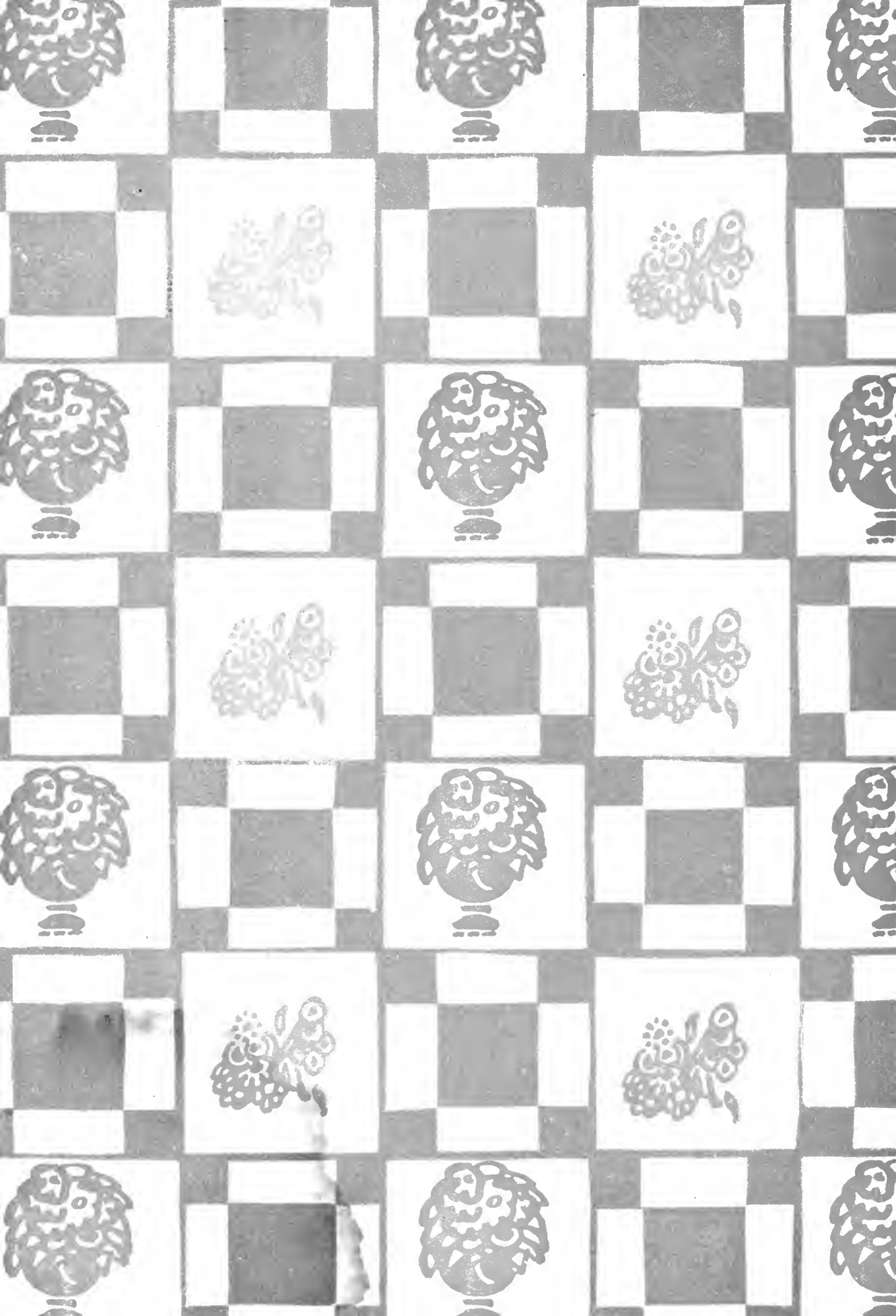
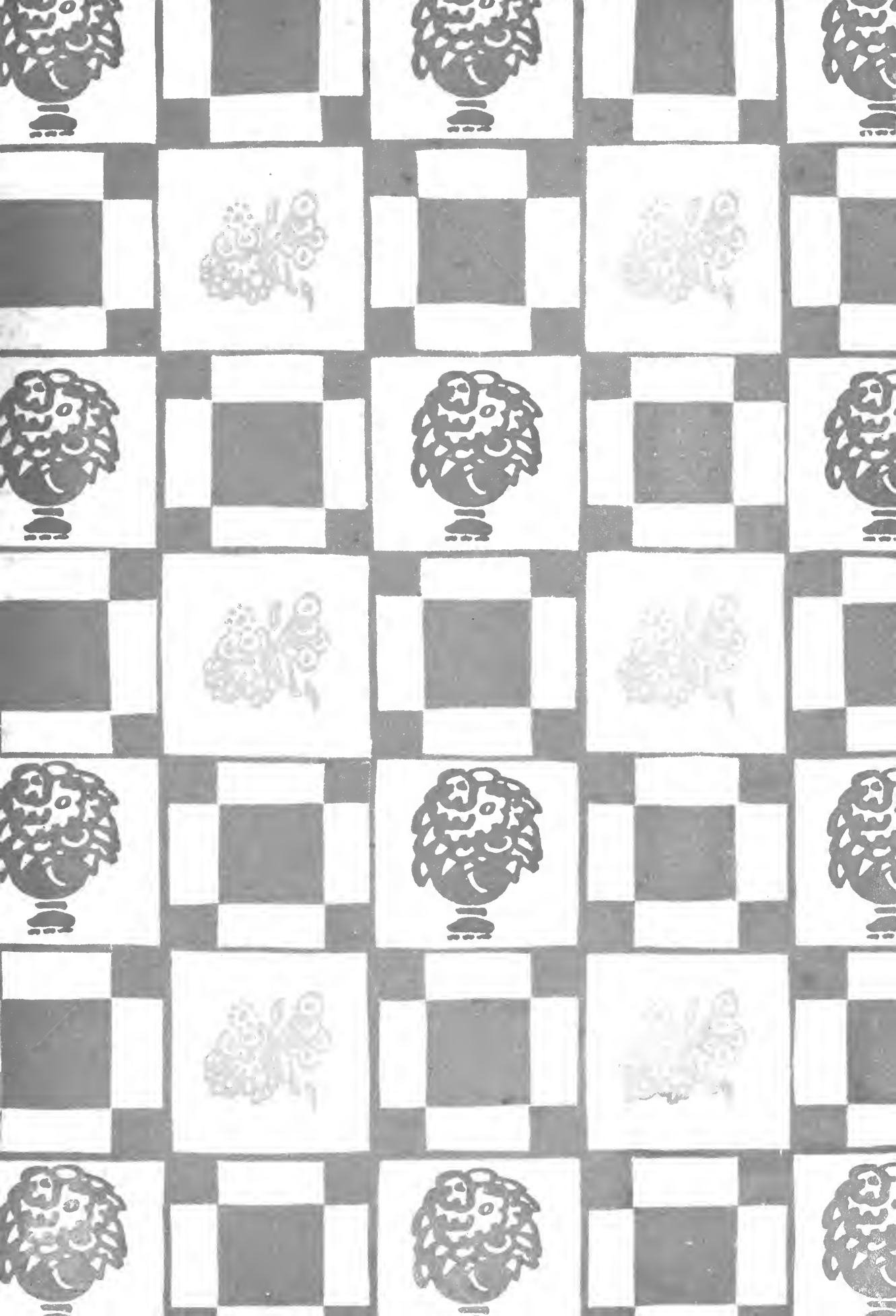
THE BOOK OF LOVAT





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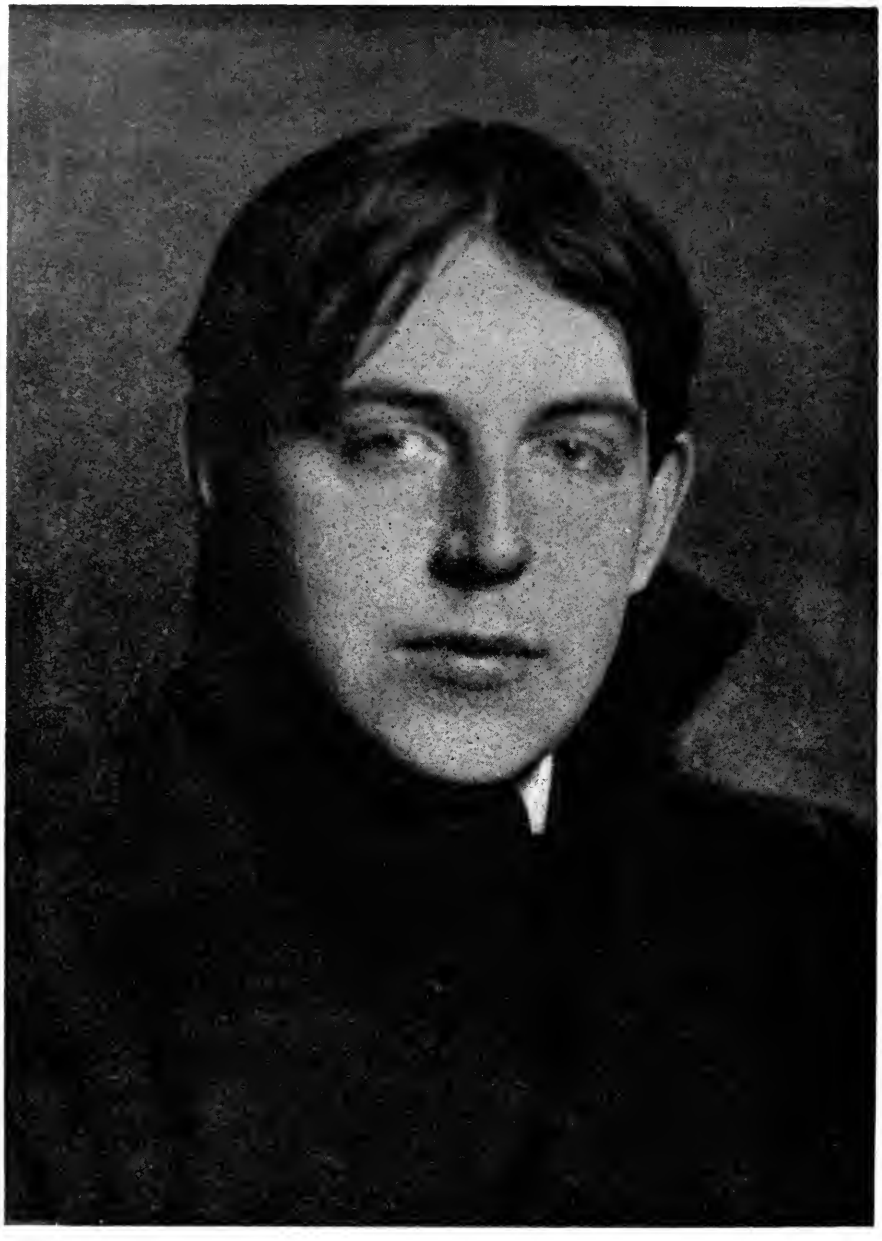

By Marion Neilson

Sr. Cecilia Dunn.

THE BOOK OF LOVAT

CLAUD FRASER

BY

HALDANE MACFALL

1923

J.M.DENT & SONS, LTD: LONDON

The Splendid Wayfaring

THE PERSONAL NOTE

THE authorised Life of Lovat is being written by other hands than mine; nor does this volume make any pretence to enter that more elaborate field. I was probably Lovat's most intimate friend; to me he was as a younger brother. These pages but give the impression of the man as I knew him and of him—the Man, his Art, his Career, and his Significance. Herein are gathered together various appreciations that I have written upon him from time to time, with some more considered estimates of his many activities, of which few could so fully write since no other wholly knew. That I championed him when there were none to give him praise is my sole excuse for adding to the literature that is arising about his dandified wayfaring.

Hail and Farewell!

H.M.

The Splendid Wayfaring

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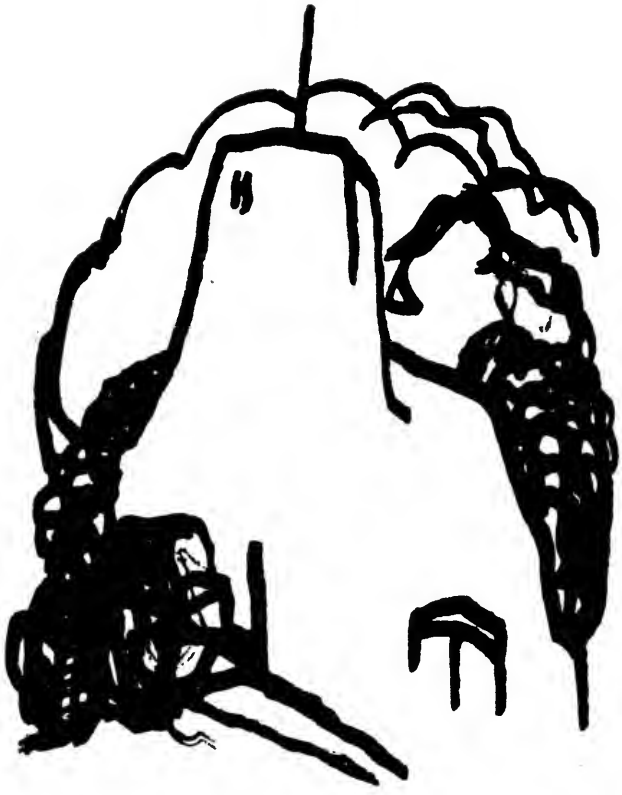

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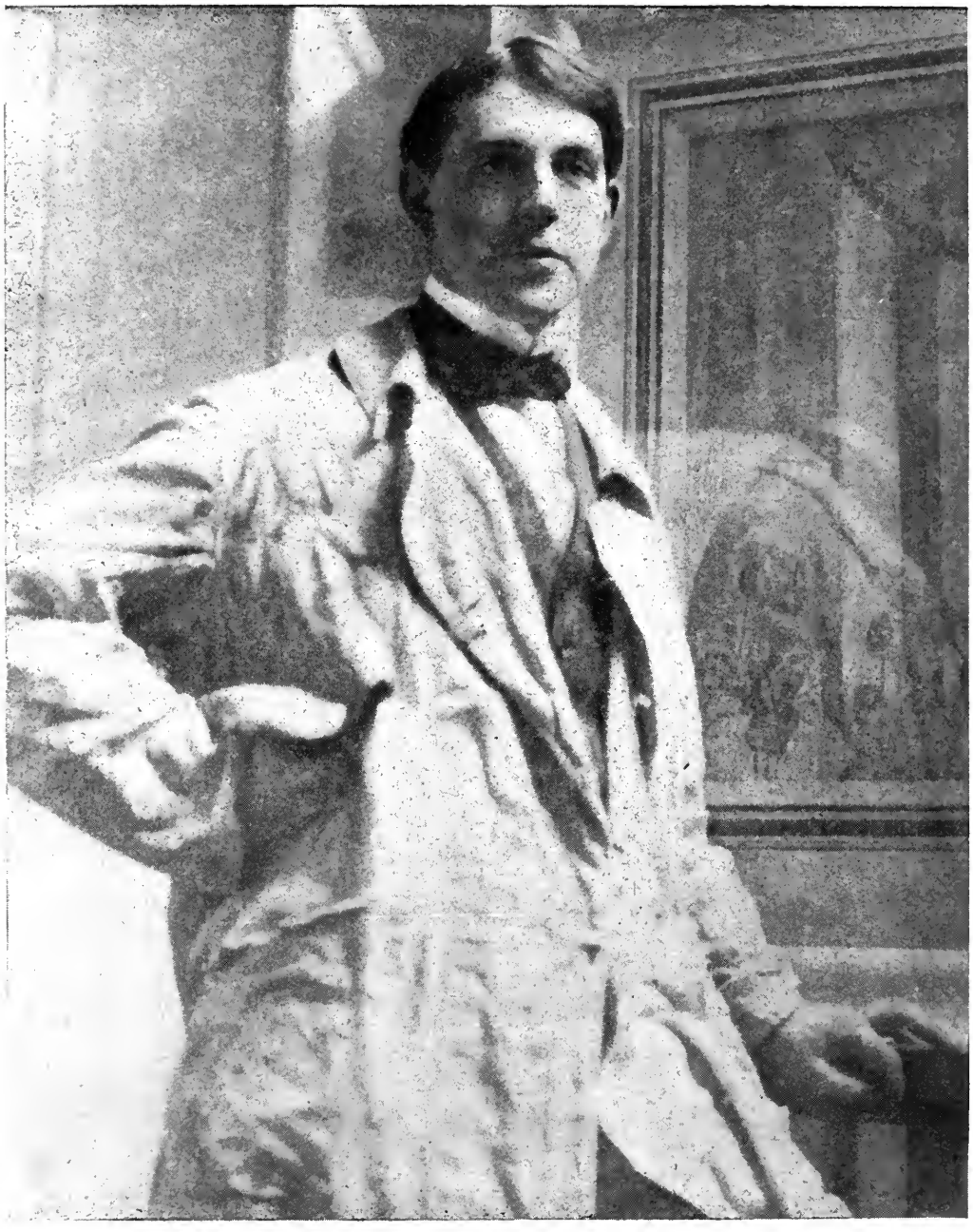


The Splendid Wayfaring

LOVAT: THE MAN

15 May 1890 18 June 1921

HE was christened LOVAT CLAUD FRASER; but to us all he was never anything but Lovat—and I think his name and fame will endure as Lovat. We all knew him as Lovat—indeed, amongst us it needed a mental effort to recognise him as "Mr. Fraser." He was bound to be Lovat; even servants announced him as "Mr. Lovat."

Lovat was born on the 15th of May 1890—his father Claud Fraser being a member of a well-known firm of solicitors in the City; his mother an artist of very considerable gifts in painting and decoration. The boy was sent to the famous public school of Charterhouse.

This big, laughing young fellow stepped straight out of his historic

school into London already an artist, a wit, and a man of letters; for it was the fine culture of Charterhouse, with its keen encouragement of the arts and of literature, that was the garden in which Lovat's genius had its roots, as with Thackeray and Leech before him.

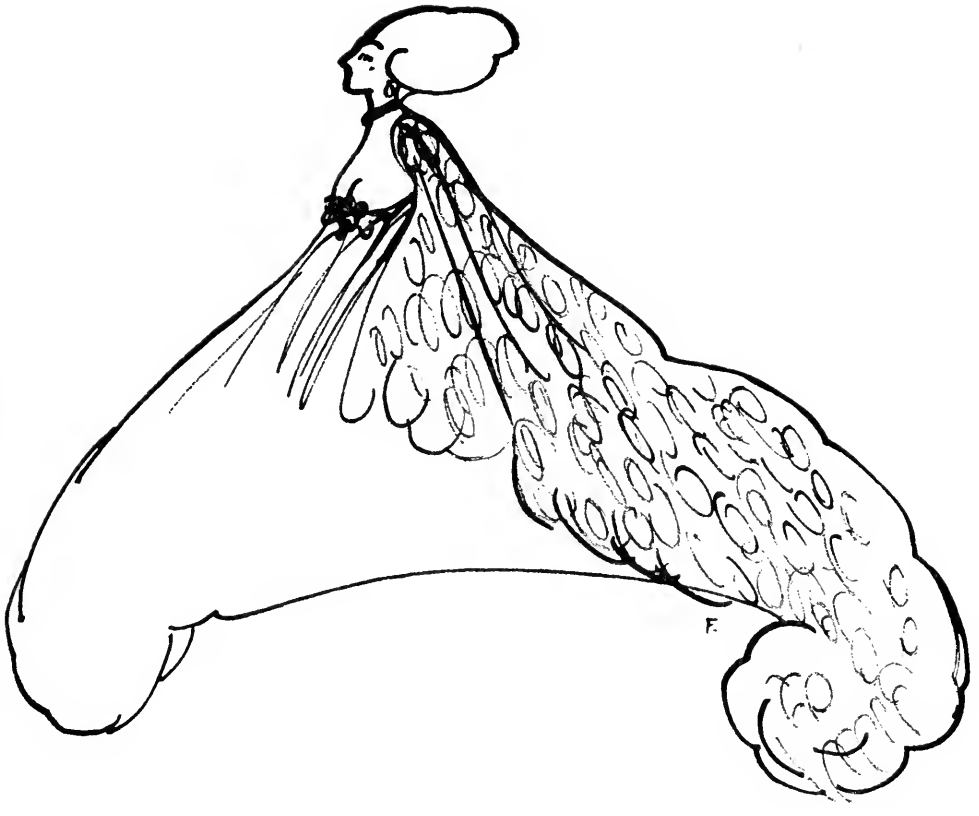
The handsome young giant came upon London Town a very dandy, shedding about him a genial atmosphere of witty kindliness, just happy to be alive, and full of affection for all living things. Never was artist born more innocent of the "cattishness" of the art-world; if he did not care for the art of another he would like the man, or his dog, or his fantastic shadow—he had to like something about everybody. The only thing indeed that ever puzzled him was that anybody should bear him a spite. His genial entity knew scarce a frown except of perplexity that any human being should have a grudge against him. And if there were anything in his life which did not make for happiness it was the act of anyone that seemed unfriendly—he would fret about it and wonder if he himself had been to blame. Such a man breeds friends; and everyone who knew him loved him—you could not help yourself. He was the most unjealous of mortals. By consequence he trampled straight into ones affection like a happy

child. And children, with their consummate instinct, went to the big burly dandy, won by his infectious chuckle, to find him a storehouse of pirates and desert islands and bucanneers and fairy fantasies—and, what was more, he must have known and seen them all, for he could draw them with a few deft rhythmic sweeps of a reed pen.

Poets and wits were soon his intimates; for, by the time the down was on his lip, he had as astounding a grip on literature as on art; and his speech, like his pen, uttered the well-shaped phrase, pointed with genial humour and illumined with quaint raillery.

Romantically modern, Lovat yet loved and was of the dandified years of the eighteenth century—in taste, in vision, even in speech. His keen sense of humour early warned him that his bulk, his stature and heavy form, would have fitted ill with the slender elegancies of powdered wig, brocaded coat, and knee-breeches; and with laughing philosophy he compromised before his frank mirror between art and God's design of him by leaning towards the years of the Regency—the tight sleeve, the high velvet collar, the pantaloons, and the silk hat on the back of the head of a belated D'Orsay. He was the last of the dandies—and it was his only grief.

Lovat loved to play at life. Life was just a great jolly game to him —and he romped through it in his spare time (ay, even in his work) as if it were a costume ball and he the clumsy fun of the fair. Yet, so true and pure was his unfailing playfulness that he never knew indignity and never stooped. He was incapable of a pomposity. But, for all his jollity and love of life, Lovat had no ounce of flippancy in him. He was of too romantic an essence to miss the drama of life—which for him held no hint of being a farce. A large-hearted kindly man, he hated to see man or woman suffer—even a slight. With a blithe quip and in jesting fashion he would leap quickly to help distress or embarrassment. His lavish hand was in his pocket at the hint of want. To heal another's pain he would scour the town for relief. He knew no fatigue in well-doing; knew no rebuff for charity. He was shame-faced about doing it, and hid it under ridiculous excuses—but



he did it, unfalteringly and without calculation, for high or for low. Lovat could never help being a gentleman.

Lovat was an artist born. His art was not a profession; it was the whole man, the essence and articulate expression of his life—the pencil or brush or pen never out of his industrious fingers—his imagination never slept.

As though warned that he was early doomed, Lovat addressed himself to the career of art and letters feverishly: with restless energy that never flagged in his copious output. He dashed off rhythmic decorations to "The Splendid Wayfaring" as he sat talking to us in my workroom. By twenty-one—he lies asleep at thirty-one—Lovat had a grip of English literature, especially of the old dramatists and poets, that few university dons could rival.

Revealing from very youth a remarkable sense of the rhythm of

line, of colour, and of pictorial massing, as of words, he was granted a greater sense, far more vital to art—he was dowered with that unerring and fitting power of expression to realise the dramatic emotions which he desired to evoke, that is the bedrock of all art whatsoever. He was not of those who could benefit by schooling; indeed, a short dose of a Student's School of Art had as only result that for awhile his whimsical fancy was drawn to great gas-tanks and the gaunt scaffoldings and gutter-folk of the East End in a "mix-up" with his own romantic vision—and even so, he brought romance to the gasometers and what Rebecca West wittily labels as "the larger ironmongery," if he got little from his masters. But the art-student was the thing to do—and he did it.

Lovat had the good fortune to come out of a cultured home—his mother being also an artist of rare skill in water colours. And Lovat was at least saved from the hideous desert of neglect and of struggle with poverty. From his father's love of the theatre, and his mother's artistry in water colours, he drew the first inspirations of his genius; and they poured forth with lavish hands every gift of encouragement that could further his fine promise and could make his wayfaring free

from that struggle for bread that has warped so much genius and might have slain the art and withered the soul of this loveable man. A sensitive man, the young fellow was to be spared the suffering of working in Grub Street at the hack-saw. His devoted father and mother lived a second youth in Lovat, quick to make any sacrifice that would bring aid to his advancement. He was happy in his home, in his brother Alan, in his friends, in his marriage, in his early success, and in his fascinating little daughter "Dorkles," made in his very image.

The two years that Lovat spent in his father's law office bore fruit to his advantage in his art career in that they taught him shrewd business habits, and not the least of these was to sign and date nearly everything he wrought; they developed in him a business acumen that, combined with the scrupulous honour of the man in all his dealings, served him to fine purpose in pursuing every advantage that led to his advance in his profession. Lovat never let slip the forelock of opportunity; he seized every chance that gave him a stepping-stone to advancement; and his charm of manner, his kindly courtesy to rich and poor alike, and his genial readiness to aid every lame duck to the brook or to do anyone a good turn, made all who knew him

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quick and responsive allies. His dandified ways and cultured tastes kept him from the vulgar tomfoolery of affecting slipshod and feckless untidiness and slovenliness in dress or habits or honour, that pass for "bohemianism" and "the artistic temperament" amongst the mediocrities. Tree claimed that he and Lovat were of the real bohemians, not the dirty travesty of bohemianism. In the studio, Lovat's big body stumbled about amongst the litter of his performance, his overall and fingers covered with paint and ink; but, his day's work done, he put on the apparel of the exquisite and sallied forth to theatre or dance or dinner or visit a very dandy, and might have been mistaken for a diplomat from the embassies.

The theatre was Lovat's appointed destiny—it held for him the largest field for his rare decorative gifts of line and mass and sumptuous colour; but everything he touched he made into a thing of delight, and every province of art and craft interested him. Whether it were toys for children, or chapbook decorations, or dainty covers for

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booklets of poems by his friends, or a match-box or what not, Lovat brought his inimitable grace and charm to the adorning of it all. He gave distinction to everything he worked upon. He designed and carried out a number of toys that would have helped to put the British toy-trade at the head of the European achievement. He was an exquisite decorator and maker of books. Everything about him was dainty and decorative—his postcards, his letter-paper and envelopes, the trade-tracts he wrought with such delightful charm—he was all for getting sordidness and vulgarity swept out of life.

But it was in the theatre that he was to "find himself," and on its vast canvas discover his genius. His unerring sense of colour harmonies in mass and line was bound to find full range in the theatre; and it was in coming early into the personal friendship of Gordon Craig and Tree that his art was guided to the utterance of its fullest song. Both men became devoted to him, and there was opened to him the way to his greater achievement. It was in his designs for the

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costumes and scenery of the Eastern play "The Three Students" which Tree was at that time eager to produce, that Lovat made his first essay in the field in which his genius was coming to fruition when the end came. It was to Gordon Craig, however, that Lovat was to owe his supreme artistic debt; as he was also to become Gordon Craig's most gifted and able disciple. Through dark days or fine, he never drew back from his appointed destiny, but poured out his art in scenic paintings, wrought reckless of the lack of a theatre and the indifference of the theatre folk, until at last he got his footing before the footlights; and he won to fame even as he stepped into his kingdom. He never doubted, never acknowledged defeat—he walked as to his destined right.

His first designs for "The Three Students" fired Lovat with the gorgeous colour of the East, and the coming of the Russian Ballet increased his enthusiasm. He saw at once that Gordon Craig alone had revealed the only way to the new theatre by the colour and lighting which rid the stage of the crude and slavish realism that slew the soul of the impression which the dramatist essayed to evoke. He had long been making designs for "The Beggar's Opera" and other earlier plays; and "The Beggar's Opera" was begun in his studio years before he met a sympathetic manager. Nigel Playfair brought him into his kingdom, and Karsavina extended the realm of which Gordon Craig had handed him the sceptre.

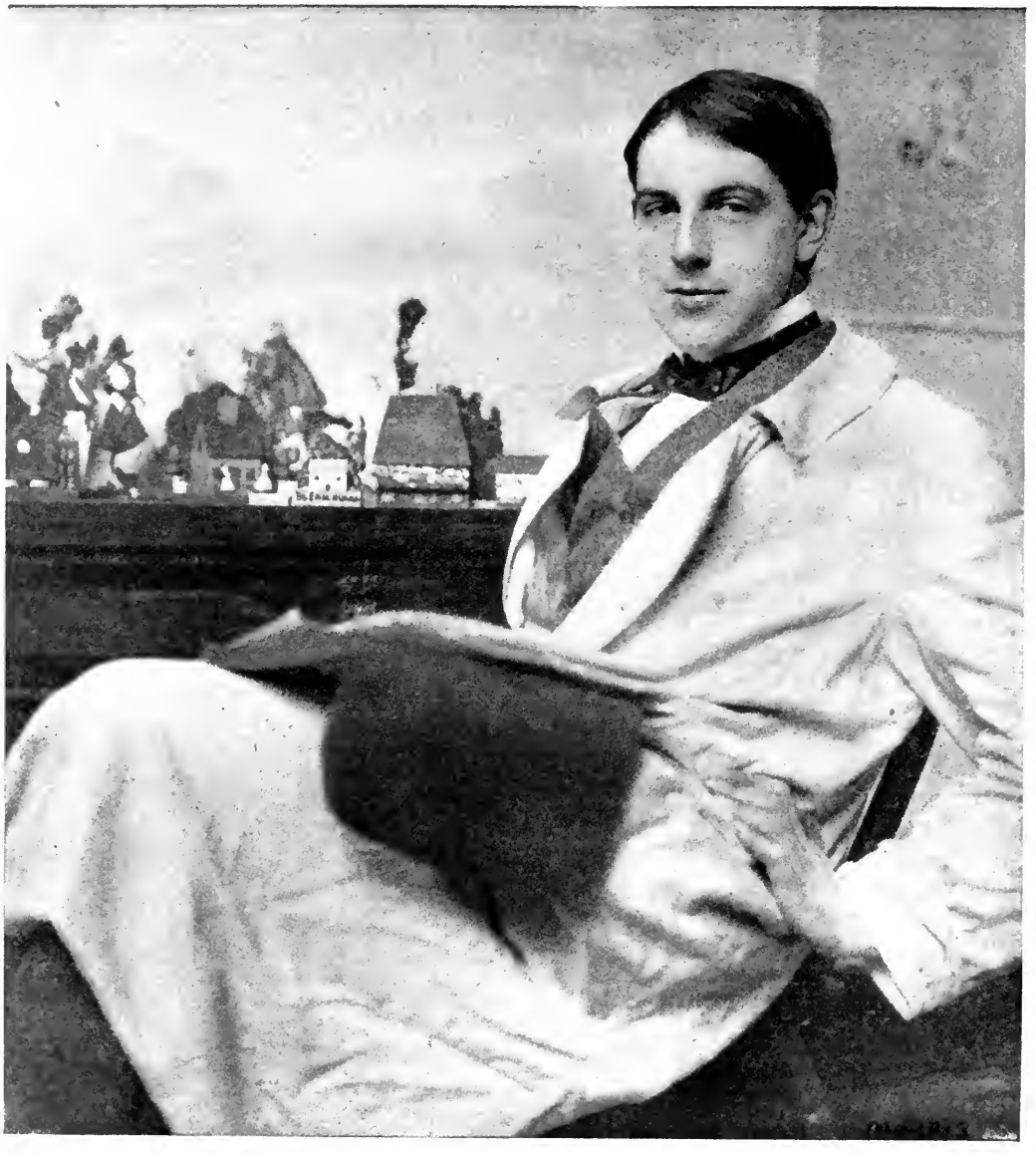
Lovat flung himself into the war with all the dandified rollicking gusto that had marked his artistic wayfaring; and his delight and eagerness at going into the hell of it all was as gorgeous as though he went to his wedding. But no sooner was he out in the trenches than he discovered that he had packed his pencils and pen and water-colours in his haversack with his iron ration; and to the thunder of the guns and the whistle of the snipers' rifles, by guttering candle-light in his dug-out he illustrated his letters as though he were at a carnival.

He lived to know public applause; but even as the applause greeted him as conqueror, Death, as though in envy of his youth, stilled his sensitive fingers and silenced his wide-ranging fancy. He faced his doom with a jest, flinging off a pencilled witticism to hearten his grieving brother, and departed unafraid.

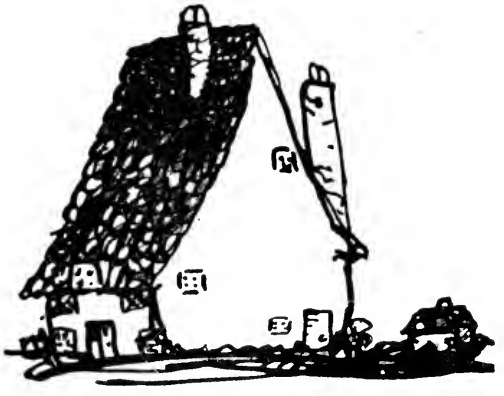
He sleeps on the hillside above his adored Buntingford amidst the country-folk he loved so well; and be sure he sleeps well content that the field-labourer, as he passes in the leafy lane hard by, whistles as he goes to his ploughing and sowing and reaping in Lovat's corner of that England for which, in the hour of her trial, he set aside his very art and went forth like knight errant in some old-time romance, offering his all that England might be free.

And to think that Lovat came laughing and debonair as a boy out of the hell of Ypres and Loos (and he was in the Durham Light In-

fantry at that!) only to die under operation a-holiday-making! For it was written in the book of fate that he should be but thirty-one when death stole in at the window and filched the long handsome fingers of their exquisite cunning and stilled his unconquerable blitheness of heart.



Lovat



LOVAT: AS ARTIST

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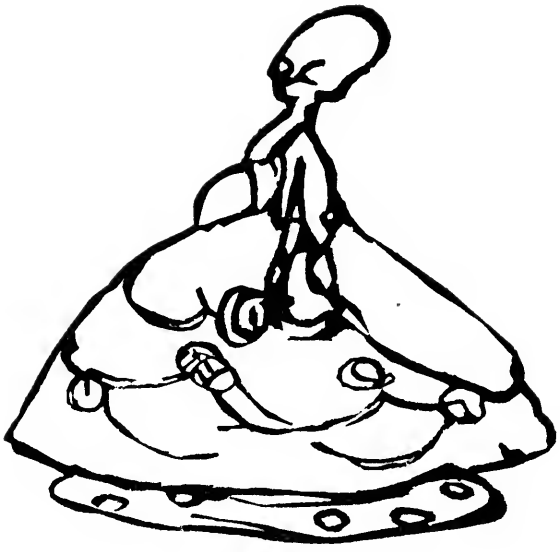
LOVAT: AS ARTIST

AS the first decade of the nineteen-hundreds ran out, certain young literary and artistic men were in the habit of strolling into a little second-hand bookshop in St. Martin's Court by St. Martin's Lane, where the lord of the house was one Dan Rider, a man of remarkable personality, of astounding flair for modern art and literature, and keenly interested in social movements—a man known to most of us literary folk, from George Bernard Shaw to the youngest poetaster flung up by the tide of the universities on the muddy Strand of London town. Dan Rider's Den has vanished, and he is now the moving spirit in more than one social movement for the bettering of the lives of his fellow men; but he remains, as then, chiefly concerned with championing the young strugglers after literary and artistic laurels—and his jolly laugh the severest test that can be put upon the foundations of jerry-built homes for heroes.

I had written several articles during 1909 in "T.P.'s Weekly" on "Pictures for Pence," which had not only surprised us all in Dan Rider's Den by the revelation of the widespread love of art throughout the country, but had resulted in making the little second-hand bookshop in St. Martin's Court blossom into an art gallery.

Now, in the window of the Court hung caricatures by Joseph



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Simpson, colour-prints by Steinlen, and other glorious pictures for pence in the "standardised frames" that I had invented and Dan Rider's workmen were making amid the chaos of old books in the cellars below. And it came about in the spring or early summer of 1911 that a big boyish figure of a youth of twenty would dawdle into the Court and hang about the window, fascinated by its treasures, but shy to enter, until Dan Rider, struck by the young fellow's haunting the place, sallied out and brought him in. It pretty soon appeared that the young dandy was interested in literature and illustration, and then emerged modestly the fact that he was himself both writing verse and making drawings. Thereafter, Dan Rider opened the glass-panelled door into his den and there stumbled into the little room the big fellow whom we were to know as Lovat Fraser.

Lovat could not have been much more than twenty the day he stepped into Dan Rider's little den in St. Martin's Court. There the young literary bloods, here and from America, were wont to forgather before the war—the "lions den," where the young lions roared and the asses brayed on their way to becoming editors and begetters of limited editions or the like wondrous emprise, the while Dan Rider's laugh, where he sat enthroned at the seat of custom (I never

saw him sell a book!), rattled the windows of St. Martin's Lane and the parts lying adjacent thereto. We found the tall young dandy a seat on another pile of books, the "Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire" and such masterpieces as the many buy and the few read; and he straightway became one of us.

Lovat was at that time on his way from his beloved school, Charterhouse, supposed to be studying the law in his father's office in a picturesque old city square, on his journey to Oxford—so tongues wagged—but he was in a hesitant state, not sitting very comfortably in the saddle of the law; not, in that, like Dogberry, he had discovered the jade to be an ass, but in that he was trying to do his duty by it without aim and without ambition. I think, as a matter of fact, he had been offered by his father who was devoted to him, the choice of Oxford or the law office in the city on leaving Charterhouse; but whether he had not been attracted to the Bar, or whether he thought he had better first have a year or two in a solicitor's experience even if he went to Oxford and the Bar, or that strangely enough he shrank from Oxford as being likely to keep him for several years longer from the pursuit of his real ambition in art and letters to which all his eager hopes urged him—for it is unthinkable that Oxford did not call to

him—it had clearly been early borne in upon him that the ermine and scarlet robes of a judge would never grace his handsome being—indeed it were difficult to imagine Lovat harassed by the solemn burden of passing judgment upon his fellow men.

However that may be, neither Oxford nor the Law were to be enriched by his gracious and winning personality, for art leaped within him; and his deft, sensitive fingers were already more busy upon sketching the picturesque square outside his father's office and the folk that hurried past the alley that led from the court-yard into the turgid stream of the city's streets, than in taking the edge off his logic upon the fine points of legal decisions. The loss was Oxford's and the Law's; his fine scholarship was not of the stuff that is made in the academies or has honour of the academies; it was to reveal itself in far other fields. Yet nearly all who met him accounted him to be of Oxford. He was of the fine type of the culture of his great literary and artistic school of Charterhouse—as he was one of its most fascinating ornaments. He would have been at home by consequence, at Oxford . . .

But to return to Dan Rider's Den.

It appeared that Lovat had a sheaf of legal papers in his pocket which he had probably been getting stamped, but which he waggishly vowed to be writs. He showed so marked a knowledge of art and letters that he was urged to "bring along some of his own stuff" with the "writs" the next time he came to the den; and he brought drawings which revealed qualities so remarkable and so free from the hesitancies of the amateur, that Joseph Simpson and I strongly urged him to pursue art—and we were little given to encouraging any man to enter the gamble of an art career and certainly would have shrunk from giving the slightest encouragement to mediocrity—for there are

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few more pitiful life-tragedies than mediocrity struggling to make a living by art or literature.

Lovat must have served his apprenticeship to art and letters under the encouragement of the masters at Charterhouse; for, the day that he tumbled over the books that cumbered the floor of Dan Rider's Den he was already done with the crudeness and the tentative searchings for the means of artistic utterance of the novice. His line was still a trifle hard and thin, but he never employed a useless or futile stroke—it held rhythm, even though his drawing were faulty.

He was at this time much concerned with caricature, and was taking Max Beerbohm and Ospovat as models; but he was almost as much concerned with writing verse as with painting; and of course he had not as yet set foot firmly on the definite path of an artistic career.

Both Joseph Simpson and I urged him to get a firmer grip on drawing as he had little else to master in the craftsmanship of art. Soon thereafter, Dan Rider was astutely taken by Lovat to see his drawings at his home in South Kensington; so it came about that, at Dan Rider's advice, backed by Joseph Simpson's and my belief in the young fellow's remarkable gifts, his father decided to fulfil his mother's wish and to allow Lovat to give up the lawyer's office and try a couple of years at art for his career. It was typical of the superb service that his father unhesitatingly rendered to Lovat's ambition. That day that Dan Rider helped to push open the gates into the garden of art for Lovat was a day of wild exaltation for him. He was a new man. He leaped into that garden with glee and enthusiasm—tossed his "writs" to the dogs—and thenceforth employed a ceaseless and untiring industry in giving utterance to the romantic song of life that was in him and thrilled his whole being.

It is true that a little while thereafter, when he threw up the law, or such dandified pretence of the law as he suffered, and boldly launched upon an art career, he went awhile to schooling under Walter Sickert almost straight from his father's office—I fancy at the Westminster School of Art and Rowlandson House at Hampstead—but, except for an excellent grounding in etching and aquatint, which he had the good fortune to learn from Miss Sylvia Gosse, Sickert or other master could give him little. Lovat was already set.

It was about his twenty-first birthday, in the summer of 1911, that Lovat asked me to meet his mother at Cresswell Gardens and to advise upon the work he was doing—he sent a sketch-map to guide me, and I went to luncheon. He lived in an atmosphere of radiant affection and was as proud of his adoring mother as though she had been his bride. The work he had already done revealed that in him a rare artist was about to come upon the town, and we revelled in it in his little workroom that "abuts the back of a pub." A few days thereafter he was dropping into the "Wednesday evenings" at our flat—was early an intimate therein, which he called his "second home"—and here

The Smoker

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he met congenial folk, artists and writers, and became a "younger brother" to me that he always claimed as his right.

The day that Lovat stole into Dan Rider's Den, with that delightful boyish shyness that never wholly left him and was so fascinating a part of his genial personality, the young fellow was feeling his way towards artistic utterance through caricature—chiefly through the caricatures of Max Beerbohm and Ospovat, whilst much intrigued by the masterly broad black line of Joseph Simpson, though the craftsmanship of this fat black line and its massing at that time baffled him.

From Ospovat the caricaturist he had learnt much—he must have been studying him almost in his schooldays, for his line was already showing a remarkable quality, it was flowing and free and answering rhythmically to his intention; and his use of wash with it was firm and bold and colourful. He was eliminating all useless touches.

But whilst he owed much of his self-schooling to Ospovat, Ospovat had the bitterness and venom in his plagued soul that gave him delight in seeking out weaknesses and defects—Lovat was devoid of bitterness or venom; he made caricatures in a jolly spirit of raillery and he was

early destined to fling it aside except for an occasional diversion or a tomfoolery that was empty of spite or hate. Ospovat was a born illustrator; Lovat as wretched an illustrator as he was a born decorator. Ospovat was a fine draughtsman, as he was bound to be, being a child of the men of the 'Sixties—an age of great illustrators and fine draughtsmanship. Lovat was not a good draughtsman, had scant gift of illustration, and had nothing in common with the men of the 'Sixties. He was of the gay, tuneful, careless breed of a far earlier time.

Lovat had a trend to imitate Max Beerbohm whose wit was always a joy to him; but he was mimicking "Max" and Ospovat far too closely. I strongly urged him to rid himself of this mimicry and to develope his own romantic strain in the craftsmanship of the line and water-colour wash that was all his own. I also led him towards the broad simple line and mass of the woodcut; and he would revel in my collection of woodcuts by old Joseph Crawhall; soon knew the *Impresses Quaint* by heart, and was himself early collecting Crawhall's larger volumes of chapbooks and broadsides. This led him to the use of the broad black line of the reed pen of which he rapidly became an astounding master—and he always had a bundle of these reed pens at my rooms.

My flat teemed with the woodcuts and drawings of Gordon Craig, of the Beggarstaff Brothers—Pryde and his disciple William Nicholson

—and colour-prints by Steinlen and Randolph Caldecott and others. Lovat steeped himself in a craftsmanship and a romantic spirit so akin to his own genius. And he rapidly developed a very personal style.

His most marked advance was with the fat black velvety line of the reed pen; it seemed to give him at once a large style, and developed the broad and simple statement which the reed pen compels.

And these were early days—the summer of 1911.

In the August of 1911 Lovat was on holiday in France, yet his quick deft pencil and water-colour sketch of "Evening Sun on Boulogne—from the Boat," with its grip of the luminosity of atmosphere, and painted with freedom and a remarkable sense of arrangement, proved that he had already found his means of artistic utterance in water-colour; and to water-colour, with its fluidity and glowing purity of pigment, he remained true to the end. He tried painting in oil later on, once or twice, but he never seemed to find himself at ease with it.

About mid-October 1911 there appeared the last volume of my History of Painting—"The Modern Genius"—and a few days thereafter I gave an address on "Art and Photography" to the Camera Club; this address was taken from "The Splendid Wayfaring," a short review of my researches into the basic foundations of the arts, which were to be published a year later, and were to have a strange influence in shaping Lovat's artistic destiny. "The Modern Genius" and this address from "The Splendid Wayfaring" seem to have

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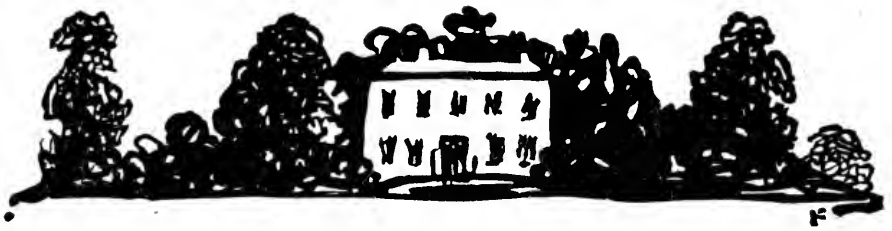
made a profound impression on Lovat—and in after years he often vowed that they were the only artistic education that he had really ever known. Whatever sincerity there may have been in this, Lovat at any rate received an impulse in painting which developed a craving for a larger handling and more ambitious motives; and he was particularly impelled towards "mass-impressionism" and "colour-orchestration." Several causes led to this new urge. It was rather amusing to read in a sketch of Lovat's career after he died a rather fatuous story about Lovat sneering at me behind my back in that I grouped him with the mass-impressionists! Now—quite apart from the fact that Lovat was little likely to make me a scoff to a critic—whilst a critic might quite honestly and sincerely be utterly incapable of understanding what an artist would mean by mass-impressionism, Lovat certainly would understand. At any rate it so happened that he did understand, and was very much affected by it. It was the inevitable trend of his whole genius—it was to shape his art to fulfilment in the theatre—and it was his grip, his understanding of it that was to give him that mastery of the theatre. A painter, the moment he essays to employ colour as colour to utter his impression, creates colour-orchestration as a musician creates the mass music of his orchestra.

Up to this time—as 1911 ran out—Lovat had not reached sufficient mastery of colour masses to handle colour-orchestration—he had been employing the pencil or the pen line and was beginning to use the broad line of the reed pen, with washes of water-colour. He felt that his ideas and his handling were somewhat trivial and that he was not lifting his art into the larger dramatic utterance, whether of comedy or tragedy, that he now ached to achieve. He told me that mass-impressionism and colour-orchestration gave him the key—that at the art schools they were only concerned with craftsmanship.



Before undertaking the hideous responsibility of advising Lovat to pursue the career of art, I had pointed out to him that the modern pose of the artist was an utterly false attitude towards art. The student went through his three or four years at an academy, as a doctor or lawyer went through the schools; and there the comparison ceased. But the art student did not realise the difference—he "set" up as a professional man in a studio, gave out that he was an artist and was prepared to paint pictures. No one cared a tinker's trough whether he did so or not—and nine out of ten, after years of this futile business of "being an artist" in which they became shabbier and shabbier and more and more embittered against the poor old British Public, took themselves off to window-cleaning or politics or the city to begin life again in middle age.

It is the artist's job to *create his art* to the people's need and hunger for a fuller life. He should bring the emotional experience aroused by art into everything that is a need of man's day—glorify everything and raise everthing—from man's delight in his habitation to his note-paper, from the commercial poster to the city office. And thereby the greater artist he. It lay with him, through the sense of sight, to make the home a lyric or a harmony wherein to dwell. Every activity of man's day lay within his reach whereby to utter his art—not only a canvas in a gold frame. Look at the hideous thing that most publishers call a book! Look at the demoralising and dingy doghole that most people call a home!

And Lovat learnt the lesson.

He set to work to make everything he touched into a means of arousing the human being to joy in the blithe and glorious miracle that is life.

In these early days at my flat we planned many artistic campaigns, several of which Lovat later carried through. The chapbooks and

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broadsheets I suggested to him from old Joseph Crawhall, and he entered into it with keen delight, and started collecting old broadsides on which to found the new. We planned the bringing of gay colours into the paintwork and decorations of the English home—and though I had only been able to begin in a small way, Lovat was later to be free to let himself go, and he did let himself go—a few years afterwards, on the first house that became his home after the war and his marriage—but we shall see him make a start before this, on his second studio in Roland Gardens where he was to put up the "Sign of Flying Fame." He entered with keen enthusiasm also into the work I was doing to improve the "make-up" of books, of book-covers, and of the decorated paper jacket for keeping books from soil—later on I got him his commission from my friend Edwin Jack of Edinburgh for his first book-covers, a field in which he was afterwards to range with such charm. Lovat's eager spirit revelled and joyed in it all. And to all he touched he brought a personal style and a distinction that the dullest eye could not have mistaken for anything but the promise of a rare artist.

However, to return to Lovat's searchings of soul as 1911 was running out and he stood within the gates of the garden which he was so exquisitely to cultivate. I had shown him that draughtsmanship was most important to the painter, but that a fine draughtsman does not thereby become a great, or even a fairly good, painter. Great painting depends on the massing of colours into harmonies so that the colours themselves, by their very music to the eye, and by their broad orchestration, in relation the one to the other, yield into our senses the mood or impression that the artist desires to evoke in us. This colour-orchestration is to the eye what musical orchestration is to the hearing —for instance, a blithe and merry mood is not aroused by solemn and

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stately or tragic orchestration, and the like. So also with colour. Yet you will find artists all their lives long using one scheme of colour to try to create every mood!

It was in a state of unrest about his work that Lovat, on the morrow of my address on "The Splendid Wayfaring," begged me to go to his little workroom in his father's house and pass judgment on what he had done so far. And what he had to show at once made it clear that Lovat's art should become known to a wider public, for his advance had been so rapid that it must inevitably become more rapid.

When, two or three days later, Lovat brought me his first aquatint, "The Evil House," which he had made under the able tuition of Miss Sylvia Gosse, it was abundant proof that he had little more to learn from masters—the consummate artistry of the thing, the rich quality of its handling, showed it a masterpiece, wrought in a most personal style and by an original genius. Lovat was beyond any benefit that schooling could give him.

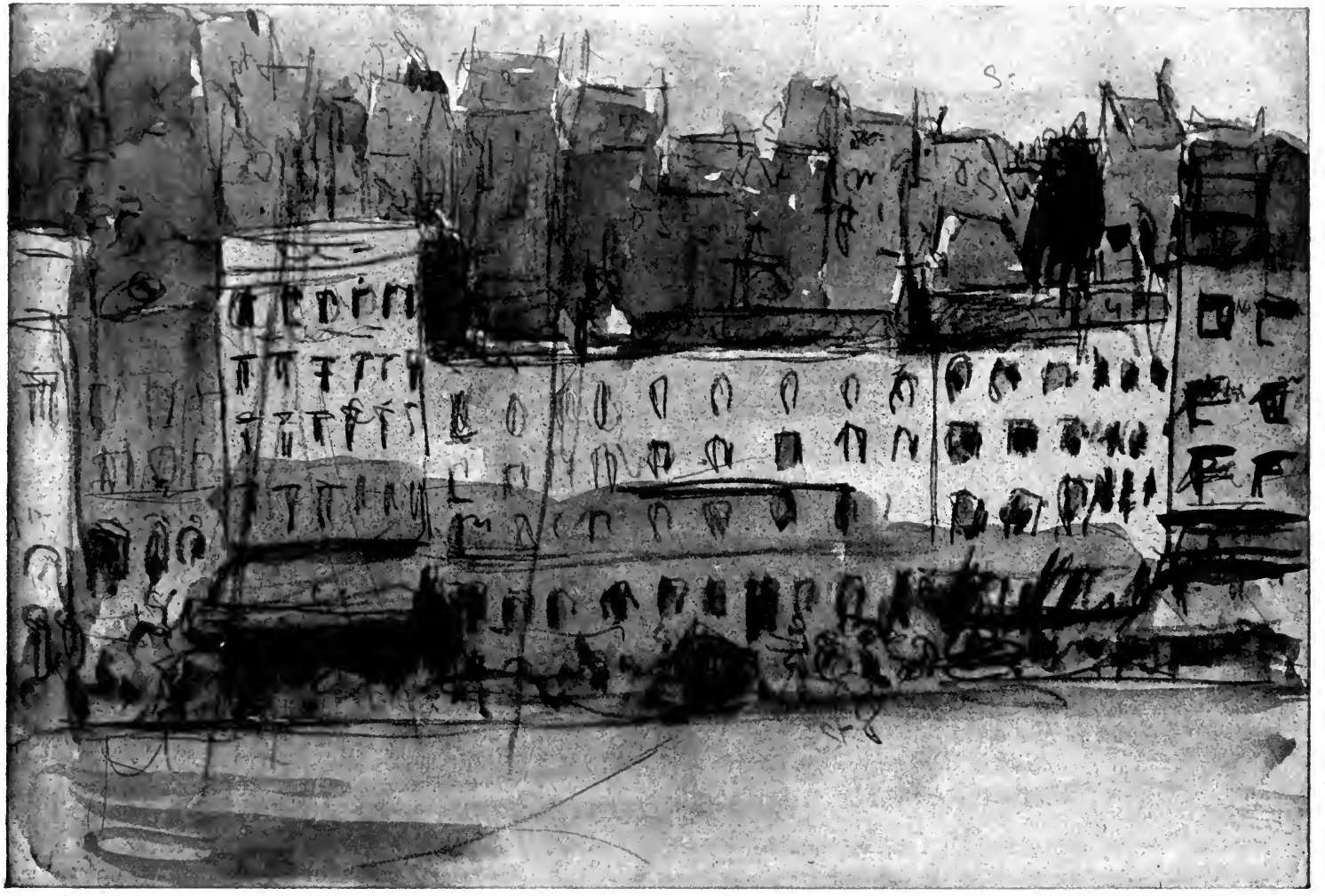
Webb was at this time struggling to keep alive "The Art Journal," an illustrated journal for art-students; and he was easily persuaded to let me write an appreciation of the young fellow's art, very fully illustrated. This article on Lovat was his first introduction to the public, and it has a particular value for the estimation of his development in that it contains a considerable number of picked examples of his best work at this time, for Lovat and I carefully selected the finest things that he had so far wrought. From it can be derived a very clear idea of Lovat's style and craftsmanship at this early stage of his career; these designs were in Lovat's own opinion considered the highest he could then reach in his art. He made a drawing of a charwoman for the cover of the number, which Webb cut on wood; and

thus it came about that on the 17th of November 1911, "The Art of Lovat Fraser" appeared in print in "The Art Chronicle" to Lovat's huge delight.

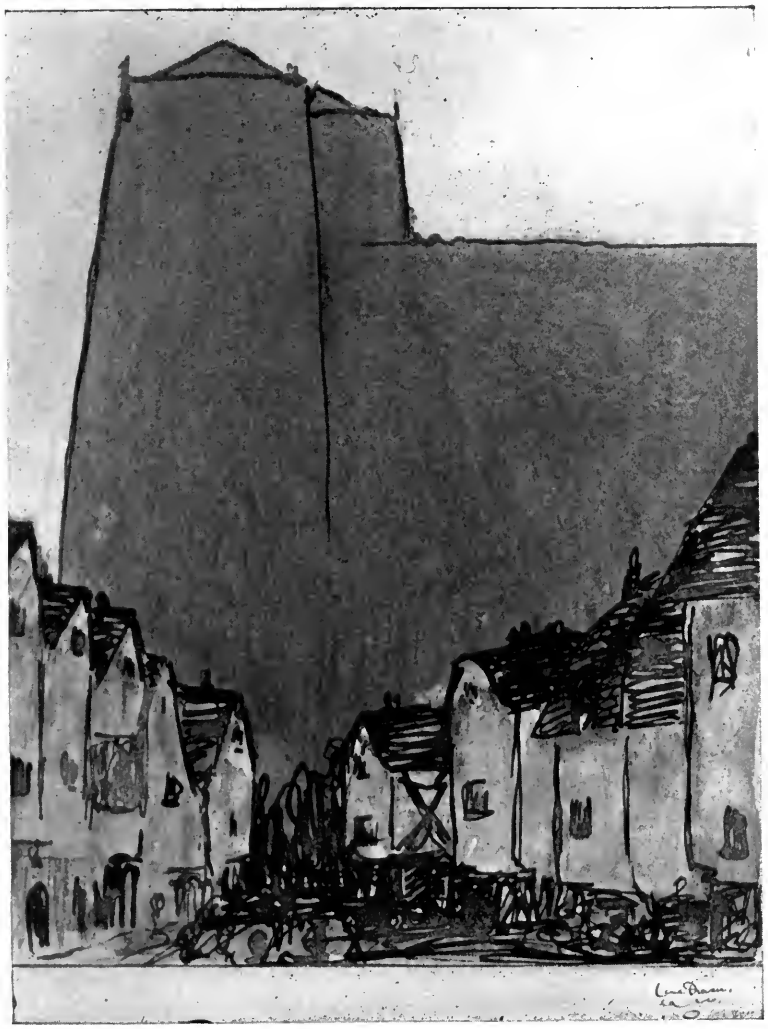
He painted "A Street Scene" and the "Mill Chimneys" at this time in the same craftsmanship.

LOVAT sketched out a "dummy" of his illustrations for the article, and to my great regret, Webb rejected the "Two Houses at Amiens," which for dramatic power probably excelled anything Lovat had done in painting as pure painting at this date. Three other important drawings with wash were also cut out, and the only records of two of them that I now know are the thumbnail sketches in Lovat's "dummy"—"The Actors," "Fleet Street," and "The End House," which I have. This "dummy" also contains thumbnail sketches for what Lovat calls "four little notes in pen and ink"—"Kent," "A Woman's Head," "A Lady in Green," and "In Time's Museum"—which last he made into the initial T for this article, now in the possession of Christopher Millard; whilst I fancy that the "Lady in Green" was "The Dutch Lady" now in the possession of Mrs. Wells, for there was much talk of the dark lady of Shakespeare's "Sonnets" at this season.

Two Houses at Amiens



Boulogne



Abbeville

The Evil House

The Splendid Wayfaring

THERE is one point here that is very interesting to note: nearly every drawing by Lovat for this eulogy is clearly marked by his intention to make it into an aquatint.

The five drawings, "Boulogne," "Abbeville," "Gastanks," "The Crane," and "Heaven's Fall," almost look as much like aquatints as "The Evil House," though only reproduced from wash drawings, and where ink is used, a markedly etched-like line. The "Man in the Red Coat," which he originally called "1810," shows him already employing the reed pen with skill.

A couple of weeks after this his first public notice appeared, there was published Lovat's charming cover-design in a blue scheme for a night piece—a figure with a lantern in the snow—together with four other illustrations in the Christmas Number of "The Onlooker," to a story—"The Cottage of Evil Purpose," "The Inn of Ill Intent," "The Window of the Silent Palace," and "The House of Many Windows," all revealing the influence of Craig and Pryde. These with his illustrations to my eulogy, give a

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very complete idea of his remarkable achievement in the first six months of his artistic career. "The Evil House" is of rare accomplishment for a novice; and the water-colour, "Two Houses at Amiens," reveals a dramatic power that promises wonderful things when his activities are directed, as they were rapidly being directed, towards colour-orchestration.

Lovat was now bent on "getting a proper studio" in which to work, as he felt that he must do some hard "slogging" at the foundations of his art. It was true that the "slogging" was to remain but a pious intention, as a man buys a diary on New Year's Eve and forgets all about keeping it in a week. However, the studio he must have.

But before the year ran out, there was to cross Lovat's destiny a man who was to disturb his serene way of life and his ease—was as suddenly to vanish out of his life, leaving disillusionment behind. There stepped into Dan Rider's Den the wilful man whom the journalistic world knows as Frank Harris. An excellent talker, an able man, and vain as able withal, Frank Harris's dapper little thickset figure strutted into the den, and usurped the throne of the genial Dan—for Frank Harris was pirate captain of the ship and brooked nothing but a chorus. The den was never to know Dan again as its lord and laughing spirit—the place lost all its old intimacy and a new realm arose in its stead, with Frank Harris as its God. Of somewhat indolent ways in many things, Lovat for awhile basked in the sunshine that radiated from overwhelming authority. But Frank Harris was a broken man—broken in health, broken in fortune. He hungered for editorship; but the one-time vigour was gone out of him. He was restless, aimless, his old concentration departed, except in flashes.

There remained to him alone the rare gift of being a great talker, and he talked wonderfully. Lovat was impressed. Frank Harris had the whim upon him to reform the world—he did not quite know how, but he was fired with the zeal of the reformer, even bawled in the disconcerted den of how he would have written the plays of Shakespeare had Shakespeare had the luck to be he. He craved to address vast audiences and to see them swept by his will—dreamed dreams of mighty literary, artistic, and oratorical triumphs. But, alas! the audiences hung back from the splendours of rebirth, refused to come to hear—even at the Ritz or Claridge's. Tickets for lectures brought no queues. The man was fighting with every nerve strung to achieve something of his once promise—but his vigour of body was gone. A naturally kindly man, he was rebuffed and became embittered. It was to break him. There was something tragic, pathetic, in it all, as in watching the struggle of a drowning man. He was trying to climb back to higher things, but—he was too late.

However, for a little more than a short hectic twelvemonth he swept Lovat and more than Lovat along in his train. But the whole atmosphere of Dan Rider's Den had suffered change. The old blithe comradeship and goodfellowship were departed with Dan out of the chair. A bumptious type of youngster, flung on the town raw from the universities, and of priggish literary habits—a superficial type that talks half-baked philosophy and has read up art, took the place of those who now began to pass by the call of Dan's doorway, dreading those dogmatic youths who came to worship Harris, who despised them even as he suffered their worship. And Lovat, as he worshipped awhile at the new shrine, was repulsed by the worshippers and the

fulsomeness of the worship; and by consequence he came to live more and more of an evening at our flat.

Lovat was revelling in my portfolios of works by Gordon Craig, and was beginning to search after mass in colour employed in a large fashion so as to give a dramatic idea as if seen as a scene in a theatre —he was groping towards it.

The year passed out amidst Yuletide frolic and gaiety, and Lovat was the heart and soul of it; but throughout it all his idea was fixed on a studio.

WALTER BRADLEY
his Book

1912

The Splendid Wayfaring

1912

THE year 1912 then opened with Lovat's dogged intention to get a studio, and a somewhat sad place it was when he got it—one of those bare rooms with a top-light in a long caravanserai of the like rooms. It was, in Lovat's idea, essential to "tackle the nude," and he tackled it with the blunt charcoal line! It stood to reason that a small drawing of the nude in a broad charcoal line was going to give no man a grip on the subtleties of draughtmanship, and the nude calls for the finest draughtsmanship. Even his models criticised him for it. However, the nude was the thing to do and he did it. But Lovat was no dullard; and long before his year's tenancy was run out he realised that the time for studentship had passed. As a matter of fact, from the day he took the studio, he came home at nightfall to his real studio, the little back-room in his father's house where his teeming imagination and tireless fingers were busy the while in creating gems of art.

Before the year was well a-foot, indeed, Lovat was busy with far other artistic ventures than "slogging at the nude." His urge for

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creative utterance would not be stayed. Toys, the decorations for "The Splendid Wayfaring," and his first essays in the theatre which he was to make his realm, were to be the fruits of the year.

Lovat's attack on the subtleties of the nude was to be airy enough and lacking in concentrated effort; but the New Year was to bring into his life an influence and an example of fine draughtsmanship of which he was quick to take advantage.

In the January number of "The English Review" had appeared an article by me entitled "The Puritan and the Theatre" in which, as in the address to the Camera Club, I had embodied the main ideas of the book I had been engaged upon for a long time which was to be called "The Splendid Wayfaring." Curiously enough it also led to the discovery of a young genius who, like Lovat, was to pass away at the gates of the realm of which he might have become a prodigious master. I got a letter from a young fellow, a Frenchman, or rather of French and Polish stock, who told me he had felt compelled to write as he had read the article, and it was the only thing he had ever read on art that seemed valid and interpreted the artist. I asked him to come and see me; but he replied that he was living with his sister in bare garrets in Chelsea, working as a clerk in a London shipping office by day in order to enable him to live so that he might get up

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at daylight and work at sculpture and at drawing before he went to the office. I begged him to come one Wednesday with his sister; and so it came about that there walked into our flat one evening the gifted, bright, and wonderful lad whom the world to-day knows as Gaudier-Brzeska, but whom we knew better as Henri Gaudier.

Lovat took kindly to the young fellow, and was greatly interested in his astounding skill of line in drawing figures and animals with intent to model them in clay. Gaudier's line showed that innate feeling for form that is the mark of the sculptor; and his simplicity of statement and his astounding skill in giving the outline of a form with his containing line did more to purify Lovat's draughtsmanship than any other schooling, whilst Lovat's sumptuous colour reacted on Gaudier.

Lovat's quick generosity and unjealous admiration needed but a hint to make him an ally in furthering Gaudier's career. We found that he, Gaudier, could not afford to buy clay and the like; so we clubbed together and bought it for him. Lovat at the same time gave him commissions for his large painted sculpture of a "Mask" and the beautiful little painted sculpture of a "Hunting Leopard or Cheetah," Gaudier's mordant cynical wit was in curious contrast with Lovat's genial raillery.

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Of all the brilliant little group of writers and artists and art-lovers who were wont to take possession of our flat of a Wednesday evening —the early-doomed Henri Gaudier; Enid Bagnold, since come to repute with her verse; Miss Bieber, an artistic and handsome girl, like the others who happened to be a particularly beautiful bevy; Leith Ross and his charming and accomplished young wife; Dolly Tylden who afterwards married the son of Sir William Crundall the mayor of Dover; Henry Hardinge who was writing plays and came to success with "Carnival"; my old comrade Major Raymond Smythies; and the others—Lovat was the life and soul. I can see them all sitting about the rooms, on chair or sofa or carpet, caricaturing one another. Enid Bagnold, a very beautiful girl, daughter of Colonel Bagnold of the Sappers, and now married to Sir Roderick Jones, made some witty caricatures of Lovat and of Gaudier; and I can hear the laughter

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that came when Lovat, who wore his dark hair somewhat long, arose after some tomfoolery, and standing up on his massive six foot and more, with his dark hair rumpled about his eyes, fired off some ridiculous sally, whereon Enid Bagnold withered him with "Lovat, do get some hairpins and be reasonable!" Indeed, Lovat's mass of dark locks and the three or reputed five ridiculous hairs on Gaudier's chin that Lovat libelously called Gaudier's beard, were the theme of many a caricature.

It was about this time also that Lovat met Desmond Coke at our flat.

This somewhat dreary first studio of Lovat's was a part of his pose as artist rather than his workshop by day; as we have seen, it was in the evenings when he returned to the delightful little room that "abuts the back of a pub"—that little bedroom in his father's house for which his big body was too ridiculously large—the little room that breathed

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Lovat's personality with its shelves of books, its water colours and drawings pinned on the door or shelves or walls as he made them, and its genial atmosphere—it was in this little room that Lovat the artist was really at home, and somehow he never again seemed to fit any other room quite so completely. There were his treasures—his ship in a bottle, his beloved books. There he would sit before the fire, amidst a wild confusion of paints and inks and kickshaws, working away with his unceasing spirit, opening the door or shutting the window almost from where he sat.

It was in the March of this year that Lovat wrote to me in wild enthusiasm about my eastern play "The Three Students" which Tree was at that time meditating producing at His Majesty's Theatre. Tree had had the play for a long time. The reading of this play seemed to arouse in Lovat the richest outburst of his sense of sumptuous colour which was his supreme gift from his fairy godmother. He

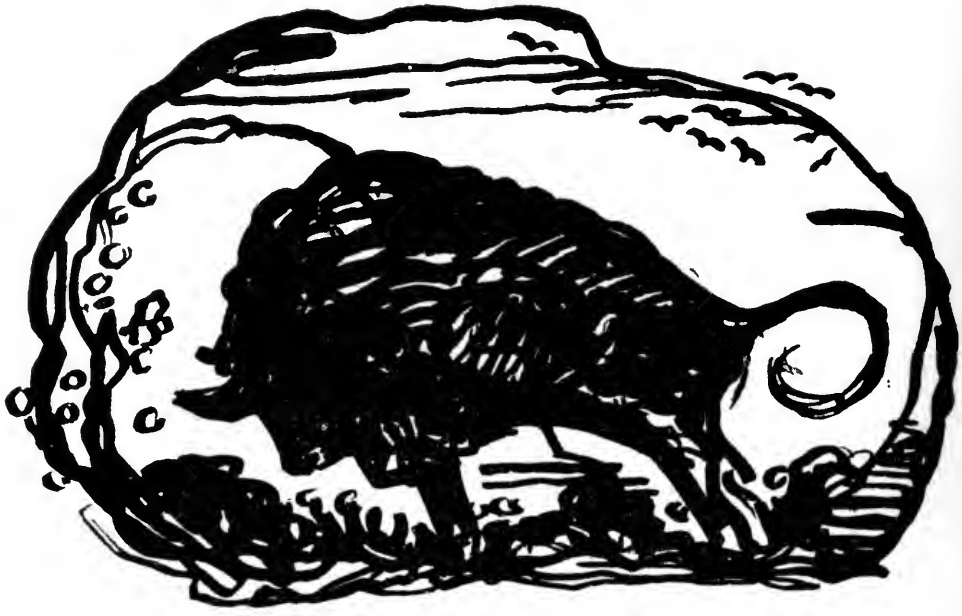
Aboo Ali

Act I.—The Three Students

paints a very "blaze of colour" which he entitles "Enter Sir Herbert Tree," but this tomfooling apart, he was now coming to grips with massed colour and colour-orchestration.

At Lovat's earnest solicitation I persuaded Ernest Brown of the Leicester Galleries to promise to go and see his work with a view to an exhibition—a business on which Lovat was keenly intent—but little came of it. Young artists had no better friend than Ernest Brown, and it was a pity that his galleries were taken for a long time to come.

Lovat was very ailing and restless this year, and I think that the studio depressed him if anything could depress him; he was also drifting overmuch, a little aimless all this summer. But before the year was out he was to find himself and to move towards his larger artistic destiny. He found himself in my eastern play "The Three Students," he found himself in the reed pen decorations for "The Splendid Wayfaring," and he found himself, not in his gloomy studio,



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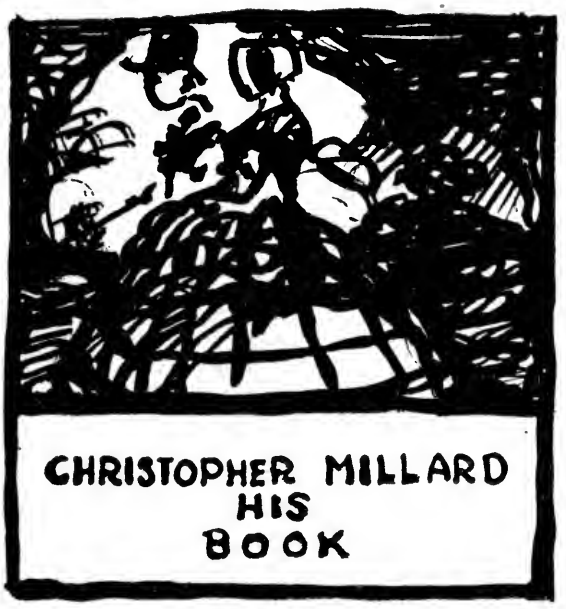
but in the evening hours in that "little back room that abuts the back of a pub."

But he was ailing and restless, and his flying about town in the social racket, especially his devotion to the cause of Frank Harris and Frank Harris's grandiose scheme of lectures, made him more restless. He did not feel that he was "getting anywhere." The lectures, that were to have made the summer brilliant, collapsed—for lack of worshippers. Frank Harris himself was a sick man, nervous, irritable, baffled, ill at ease, rudderless.

Lovat's drawing "In Hyde Park" was published in "The Cambridge Magazine" in this June, though it belonged to his work of 1911.

He now seriously meditated painting in oils. He begged me to give him a gamut of good and safe colours as I had done in water colour. He felt for awhile that he might reach a fuller colour-orchestration in oils, and he was now wholly bent upon getting what I had been urging upon him—mass-impressionism in more important and higher and larger moods and a deeper and wider statement of life. But water colour, with the aid of pastels, was to yield him what he desired



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to utter more fully; and he found that oils were a new trouble that fretted him. He painted one or two oils but he could get what he wanted more quickly and with more luminous glow in water colours which he had now thoroughly mastered and made subject to his hand and will, and he turned his back on oils forthwith. He was soon thereafter pouring out reed-pen drawings, and by the end of the year he was to reach to an astounding beauty of handling and was to be creating his very finest work in that medium, and to give forth to the public eye the first fruits of this master-work in decorations to a book of mine which came as by good fortune to offer him his first serious appeal to public favour.

However, it was only his ceaseless creative energy that kept him going, for he was suffering much all this mid-year and was ordered off to Harrogate to take the cure there. Needless to say, his fingers were busy the while, and his Harrogate drawings and water-colours are of this time, together with the colour sketches of Ripon and Knaresborough. It was not a very inspired phase of his art. But it was whilst at Harrogate that he begged me to get him the series of costume designs for the Russian Ballet by Bakst, appearing in "Comedia,"

By Haldane Macfall

designs that were to have a far-reaching influence upon his after-career; for he was now undertaking the designing of costumes and scenery for "The Three Students."

It was whilst Lovat was at Harrogate that our American friend Gaylord Wilshire sent us, on Waterloo Day, the 18th of June, the little feathered friend who became such a delight to Lovat and appointed himself the guardian spirit of our home. The "Hoyd" bird was a black oriole with gold points—variously called a "troopiall," a "tailor-bird," and a "coodoorie" (a corruption of cou doré perhaps); but his class or station in life mattered little to the "Hoyd" bird. He was a small edition of the magpie family in build and habits and devilry—and a more loveable rogue. He won into our hearts from the

Silhouette of Author as Finis for The Splendid Wayfaring

beginning. He was not in the flat for twenty-four hours before his cage became but his bedroom—the door of it was never shut except when the windows were open; and within a week the windows were wired and Hoyd took possession and became lord of the flat, and his

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master and mistress his footstool. He early gave a hint that he preferred to sleep on his mistress's lap under a handkerchief, and we made him up a bed with two little blankets in his cage to which he would go at dusk and dig himself in—a performance that tickled Lovat hugely. But no matter how soundly he slept, if he heard Lovat's voice coming into the flat of a night, he was out to greet him. He whistled us into the house on hearing the key in the latch; he burst into his beautiful song of remonstrance every time we went out. His glorious song filled our every day with music. He knew Lovat's step on the stairs outside, and he sang him into the place. He would swoop with his wonderful flight straight on to Lovat's head or shoulders—run round his neck—perch on his fingers and open them with his bill to look for his matchbox—would open the matchbox, pick out the matches and drop them on the floor, with head cocked and beady mis-

chievous eye watching to see where they fell. It was a quaint friendship—the big burly dandy sitting on the carpet with the "Hoyd" bird running about all over him. And by a strange destiny, Lovat was to die on Waterloo Day nine years thereafter, and "Hoyd" to pass away in the same year in his mistress's hand as a winter's day broke over London town . . . .

On Lovat's return to London from his cure at Harrogate, he asked me to get him into the Cabaret Club of The Golden Calf, of which Austin Harrison had asked me to be an original member—it was a glorified cellar affair, an elaborate supper-club with a theatre, its intention to bring the younger dramatic writers to the front and to discover struggling genius. Founded by the widow or grass-widow of Strindberg, I fancy it was modelled on the artistic night clubs of Vienna. In its beginnings it was interesting; but was soon a muddled

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thing. Austin Harrison and I have sat on some quaint committees in our time, but "The Golden Calf," as Plato might have put it, "took the crumpet." The noble lords and the like bloods must have been too devoted to affairs of State, for their appearances at committee were but sparse, if any. And the ship was soon in troubled waters beyond our steering. It became a somewhat vacuous affected affair, and soon palled upon Lovat as upon the rest of us. By some grim irony, the last I heard of it was "on the tented field" in the Great War, when, riding through camp as field-officer of the week, I came across a young officer whose face seemed familiar to me, and he laughed and discovered himself as Crispin the stage-manager! . . .

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But Lovat was now busy with many things besides "slogging at the nude." He flung himself with his wonted enthusiasm into designing and making toys—and very delightful they were. In the August of 1912 "Hearth and Home" passed into the directorship of some of Lovat's friends and Frank Harris was installed as editor, who carried over to its dingy editorial offices what remained of Dan Rider's Den—including the jolly laugh of Dan Rider. Lovat was to make a few charming drawings for "Hearth and Home," but the plans of mice and men will go astray, and by a strange irony it was in quite another journal that Lovat was to make his mark and publish to the world his first serious artistic work, the masterly decorations he wrought

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with the reed pen—the most complete and perfect of all his handling.

Webb was at this time struggling to keep alive "The Art Chronicle" as an illustrated journal for art students and such of the public as were interested in the arts and crafts. It was in a pretty sorry state, and needed all Webb's dogged pluck to keep it going—not the least part of the burden being to get payment for the contributors and working staff—a staff that had fallen to Webb as editor, advertiser, publicity man, sub-editor, and nearly everything else, with a courageous girl who did the typewriting. I don't think Webb will ever again serve as editor under a rich amateur. The war, when it broke out, must have saved his reason. However, Webb, in a ruthless moment, asked me to write something for him. I was anxious to reach art students and give them the fruits of my long researches into the basic foundations of art and to hold up to them a lamp for creative endeavour by publishing the now completed book of "The Splendid Wayfaring," and I offered to let Webb publish it serially in his pages with decorations by Lovat, Gaudier, and myself, for a nominal wage that would about pay for the postage—my ulterior motive and aim being to bring Lovat's remarkable reed-pen work and Gaudier's drawings of animals before the public eye. I shall never forget what poor Webb had to go through in order to get these articles into print. However, we have laughed together many a time since over what seemed tragic then. Webb has

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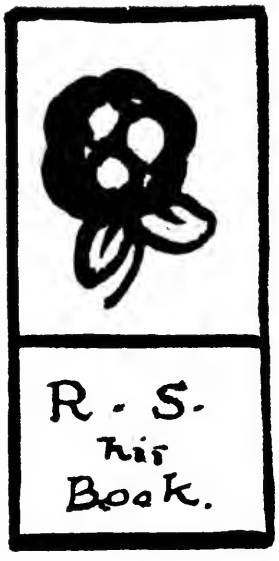
shot lions in the East African bush since those days. But it may give some key to his many tribulations if I tell one story out of school that is really too precious to be lost, especially as it came near to bringing Lovat to an apoplectic fit from sheer laughter that threatened to hold up the traffic of Fleet Street below. We found Webb in a fit of deep depression—it appeared that the august owner of the paper had not paid the typewriter girl for a fortnight, and had absolutely refused to pay me for weeks, because, he said he had met me at the office and I was "wearing a fur coat and was obviously a gentleman"! We had to hold Lovat down. . . .

OWEVER—Lovat had now reached an astounding perfection of handling with the reed pen; and with all his ready comradeship he went at the business of making decorations for "The Splendid Wayfaring" with a will, pouring them out with the deft ease that proved him a born master of the woodcut, had he ever taken up the woodcut. Many of these were never to appear, as "The Art Chronicle" foundered in the mid-career of the publication of "The Splendid Wayfaring"—as Lovat put it, "sinking under the unwonted weight of pure literature." So that many now go forth to the world for the first time in these pages. They show Lovat at the height of his achievement in this field; and he never reached



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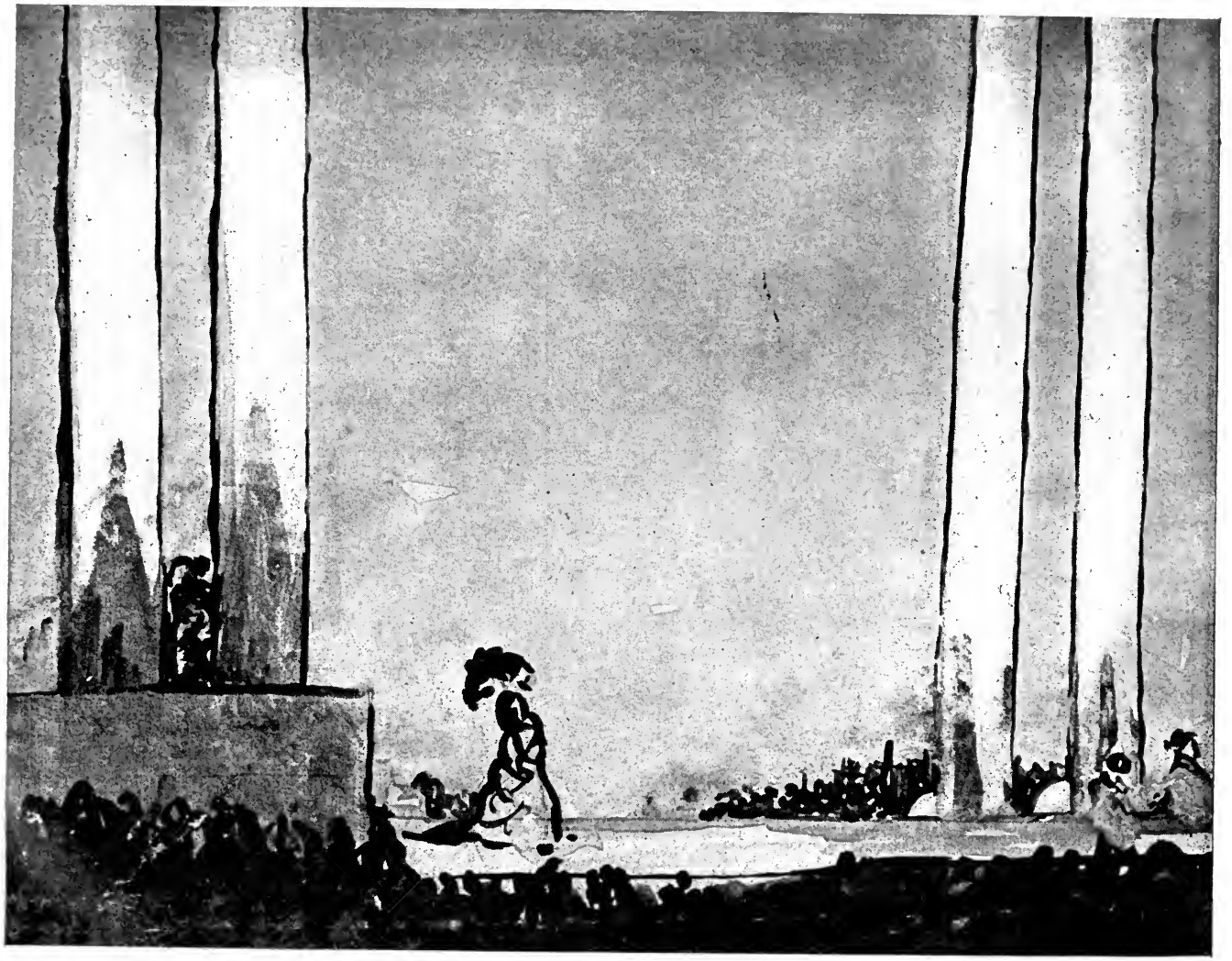
a higher perfection in any other. He was now complete master of his instrument. Yet, in his art career, he was barely a year old!

Gaudier's marvellous drawings of animals received a severe rebuff almost at the start; the owner of the journal refusing to allow "The Splendid Wayfaring" to appear further unless Gaudier's drawings were withdrawn! Gaudier insisted that "The Splendid Wayfaring" must go on at all costs—"My rotten drawings does not matter; Macfall's 'Splendid Wayfaring' matters much; only Macfall likes my rotten drawings," said Gaudier airily. He would not hear of my insisting on his drawings being produced. Within a year, a special article was being written on Gaudier's genius! Gaudier's cynical comments thereon are not fit for publication.

"The Splendid Wayfaring" was to make its start in "The Art Chronicle" of the 20th of September. One of the decorations—a charwoman, called 'A Note'—Webb cut on wood for the cover-design. Lovat feared being behindhand with decorations as the issues appeared, and begged for advance scrip of the book, fortunately, for he was thus able to pour out some three or four hundred of the finest things he ever wrought with the reed pen which would never have been done had he relied on fortnight to fortnight inspiration; and thus the collapse of the whole thing, which appeared for the last time a few

The Wreck

The Splendid Wayfaring



Enter the King

Act II.— The Three Students

The Splendid Wayfaring

months later in the May of 1913, did not rob the world of many of the beautiful works which I am here enabled to publish to the enrichment of the reputation of his exquisite genius.

IN the early days of September, whilst he was pouring forth these decorations between the gasps of "slogging at the nude" and the designing of toys for Dolly Tylden's enthusiastic enterprise for the betterment of the British toy trade, Lovat brought Ralph Hodgson to our flat. Ralph Hodgson and Lovat were beginning to foreshadow in vague fashion as yet the combination of poet and artist in broadsheets and chapbooks which were to become a reality in the coming year. But it was on the eve of the appearance of "The Splendid Wayfaring" that Lovat was to meet at our flat the man of genius who was to have the supreme influence on his artistic career, and to lead Lovat to his highest artistic utterance.

Now, it was very clear that the man who had come to such astonishing perfection in so difficult a medium as the broad black line of the reed pen in one short year was not going to be content to create even such fine decorations as he was now pouring forth for "The

The Splendid Wayfaring

Splendid Wayfaring" with facile ease, his teeming energy modelling and designing toys the while with like facility and skill. And the restless life he was living was not satisfying his creative ambition nor his brain. The advance in his endeavour to paint in mass with glowing colour to suggest the mood of the impression desired, whilst his energies were being considerably wasted on small things, was urging him to larger intention.

From the beginning, Lovat had revealed a gorgeous and ever increasing sense of the music of colour that was all his own; and I think the chief thing that drew him to rely on me was my insistence on the music that lay in colour as colour to the eye. I had shown him that the greater part of modern painting was vitiated by being wrought in the dingy atmosphere and sombre lighting of brown studios, and by consequence in the wretched untuneful and vibrationless light, whereas a white studio sent reflecting light glittering into the shadows and illuminated the colours of all objects. I had urged upon him a gay palette from which all the "greenery-yallery" ideals of the Aesthetic Movement were rigorously excluded. He took eagerly to that palette. Indeed, he was soon employing viridian green, the roses, ultramarine, and daffodil yellow, in such purity of hue that they were to become a significant part of his artistic expression. He was early rid of the fallacy whereby artists, instead of

employing the gaiety of colours as they see them, strain all their resources to mimic the colours of the dead masters as they have come down to us, muddied by the discolouration of ages.

Lovat had not been an intimate at our flat for more than a few months before I realised that in him the theatre was to find one of its leading decorators, and that it was in the theatre that he would "find himself" and achieve his supreme artistry.

Everything pointed to it. It was true that he had as yet been working on small lines and in small fields; but if he could be given a larger canvas he would soon shake off littlenesses—for his littlenesses were done with something of the grand manner and with a remarkable largeness of handling. It was true that he was tickled with the careful wit of poetasters and of the little masters in literature both of the past and of his own day; but his admiration for the large dramatic painting of Brangwyn and Craig proved his leanings. It was clear that Lovat's art lay in a far larger field—he needed a canvas such as only the theatre could give him. I decided that it was the time, now or never, to bring Lovat into touch with the leaders in the theatre.

On the 7th of September, 1912, on the eve of the appearance of "The Splendid Wayfaring" in "The Art Chronicle," Lovat and Gordon Craig met at our flat. The two men at once took to each other. Craig, with his characteristic generosity greatly encouraged

Lovat, and drew him on to the Committee that had been formed to further Gordon Craig's theatre.

A fortnight thereafter "The Splendid Wayfaring" started its troubled journey in "The Art Chronicle" and ran until the 16th of May of the next year, the year which was to shape Lovat's career to the end and to lead him to his fulfilment. Everything thereafter was but mere detail.

The next move was to get Lovat to Tree in order to induce Tree to employ him for the production of "The Three Students," but Tree had put off the production until the New Year, and events were looming that were to make the last months of 1912 a feverish affair for Lovat and us all.

Dolly Tylden must have arranged a show of the toys, for Lovat was begging me to help to send out invitations in the first week of October, and I was to write an article upon them. He was hard at work on the decorations for "The Splendid Wayfaring." He was at work on the painting of costumes and scenery for "The Three Students." And he was anxious to be rid of his "doghole at The Boltons" and to get into a good studio which he could decorate in a white scheme and where he could get to painting on a more important scale. And he was now closely in touch with Gordon Craig, and attending the meetings of Craig's Committees. It was at "Craig's

Meeting" on the night of the 28th of October when Lovat made the delicious "Caricature of Ezra Pound"; as it was at Frank Harris's lecture at Claridge's a month later that he drew the fine "Caricature of George Moore"; but he was now done with caricatures for publication. It was in this same October that I persuaded my friend Edwin Jack, of the well-known publishing firm of Edinburgh, and a great and early admirer and patron of Lovat's, to commission Lovat to design the covers for "The English Year," by Beach Thomas and Collett, which Jack had asked me to art-edit.

But book covers and the like had all suddenly to be swept aside for a few weeks. Lovat's friends were involved in the conduct of "Hearth and Home," and Frank Harris suddenly threw aside the Christmas Number and made for America, leaving the whole concern in a hopeless tangle. Dan Rider's Den, or what remained of it, had to come to the rescue. We all put our shoulders together and saved the situation as best we could. Lovat had drawn a fine illustration for Frank Harris's story "The Temple of the Forgotten Dead," amazingly like one of the two or three scenes he was painting for "The Three Students"; and as I glance back again it all seems to me that I must have written the greater part of the number, and at fever pitch. It was the most thankless task and the most ill-paid job of my life—to Lovat's bitter grief for letting me into it—but it was a wonderful save.

WE were scarce through with the Christmas Number when there appeared on the 5th of December of this 1912, in "Hearth and Home," an article by me on Lovat, which forms a fairly good second milestone in his career; for, not only in it have we a survey of Lovat's art as far as it had gone in a twelvemonth since my first estimate of him in "The Art Chronicle," but the too few illustrations at least reveal, as in "The Art Chronicle" a year gone by, the type of his work and the advance that he had made towards massing colour. Indeed, the splendour of his decorative feeling in colour, used in simple masses, could not have been better shown than by "The Keeper of the Black Leopard," or as it was then entitled, "The Blue Panther." This article dwells on Lovat's art moving towards the theatre. In "The Keeper of the Black Leopard" Lovat reveals a largeness of decorative power in form and colour and spacing that would have filled a large wall-space as sumptuously as the seven inches by ten of paper on which the water colour is wrought. This water colour was a revelation to me of the vast stride that Lovat had made in his art towards mass-impressionism; and we may take this, together

with "The Orange Seller" and one or two scenes for "The Three Students," as the height of his achievement at this stage of his career.

The "Keeper of the Black Leopard" was inspired by the "Keeper of the Great Ape" in "The Three Students."

Lovat had now reached an utterance with the reed pen that must always stand out as the height of his marvellous handling of the thick black line. And it was in "The Splendid Wayfaring" that appeared the examples carefully chosen by Lovat and myself wherewith to make his first serious bow to the public—for "the written word remains." It was a sad pity that the journal broke down under its best editorship and when it was giving to the public some of the very best black and white decorations of our generation. To take but one instance, Lovat's "Man in the Coat of Brocade." It is a marvel how he here suggests the intricate and delicate qualities of the brocaded material on this man's coat with so clumsy and blunt a point, and so heavy a line.

So, as 1912 drew to a close, Lovat was at the very height of his achievement with the reed pen—that achievement by which he is best known to a wide public, and perhaps by which he will be best known in the years to come—and he was moving towards colour-

orchestration in a larger dramatic aim, with the scenery of the theatre as its basic intention.

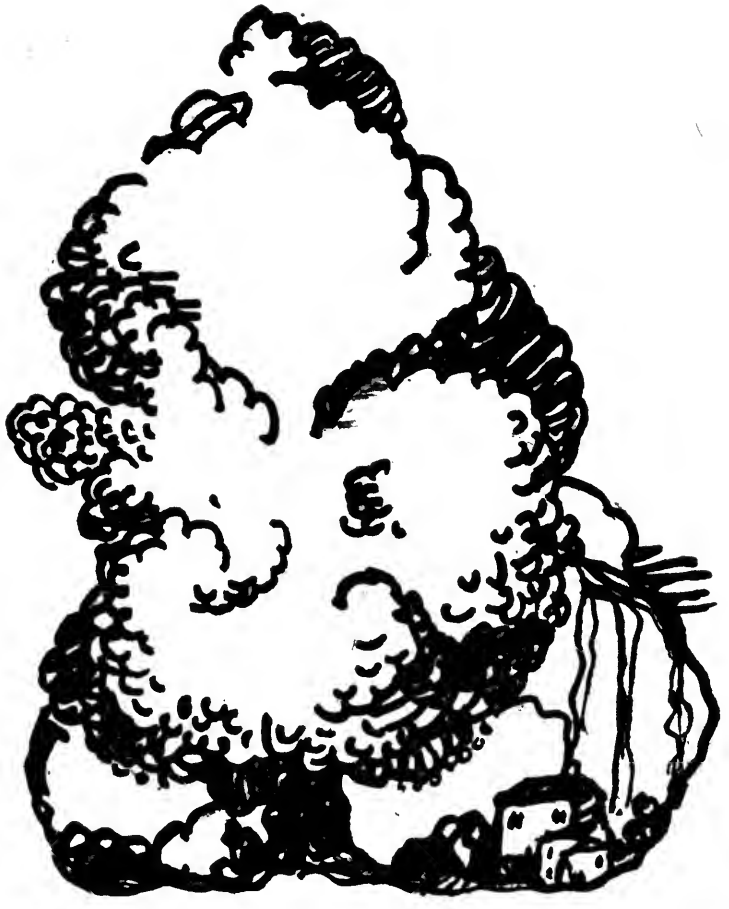
It is to me a matter of constant bewilderment that writers on art never seem to be able to get into the soul of us artists, and for ever repeat outworn fallacies and drum on the same old battered tin can. Even an intelligent man like Holbrook Jackson, in a charming little obituary survey of Lovat's career, utterly fails to grasp the significance of his art, yet he knew him personally and his aim is utterly sincere. "Art with him," says Holbrook Jackson, "was a bringing together of various materials for a pleasing and useful, but not necessarily utilitarian, purpose." Useful, but by all the thunders of art-criticism it must not be "utilitarian"! This everlasting misunderstanding of the whole basic significance of art, year in year out, generation after generation! Then he proceeds, "He had no 'views,' only tastes. He belonged to no 'movement,' only his own, which is inimitable and ends with him." What about Joseph Crawhall and James Pryde and Gordon Craig and Brangwyn? Has Holbrook Jackson never seen "Impresses Quaint"? Never seen a play produced by Gordon Craig?

Then on we go to this: "The 'impressionists' would doubtless have called him a 'literary' artist, and so, of course, he was." Holbrook Jackson may sneer at my employing words such as "mass-impressionism" and "colour-orchestration," and may even invent a treachery for Lovat to point the sneer; but Lovat did not sneer—he understood. However, let us see what Holbrook Jackson means by Lovat being "of course a literary artist." It seems that it was because "almost everything he did was connected with literature or inspired by literature, whether it was (or were) a chapbook or a stage-setting. He even wrote very excellent verse and a witty prose." It is almost unthinkable that any intelligent man should so mistake and befuddle what we artists mean by literary painting. It has nothing to do with being evoked by literature. Lovat's art did not require a literary explanation, it was complete in itself. I will put a hundred paintings by Lovat before Holbrook Jackson and he will not be able to tell me what literature evoked them. Now Aubrey Beardsley *was* a "literary" artist—if you do not know Wagner's operas or the like, a mass of Beardsley's work would mean nothing—they compel "a book o' the words." In

The Splendid Wayfaring

other words they are "literary." Literary art is not complete in itself, and requires explanation—for instance, a "Punch" drawing with its tag. Burne-Jones was a "literary" artist—you could not appreciate the cycle of the Briar Rose unless you had read the tale. So was Millais in his "Ophelia" or the like. Lovat was so lacking in the "literary" habit in art that he was as wretched an illustrator as he was an exquisite decorator . . . .

Here is a typical drawing by Lovat, a decoration to "The Splendid Wayfaring," which, incidentally, Holbrook Jackson forgets even to mention, though Lovat reached his supreme art in black and white in its decoration! Now what is the "literary" art in this? Does Holbrook Jackson hold that it is *Cincinnatus looking for Pignuts to make a Roman Holiday?*



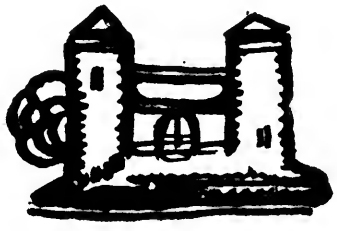
I had to give an address on "The Splendid Wayfaring" at Bristol on this 5th of December, on which the second eulogy of Lovat appeared; and Lovat, who had kin in the West Country, came with me, the hospitable Ernest Savory and his charming family being our hosts. We were made the guests of the "Savages," an artistic club, the night before I was to speak, and Lovat hugely enjoyed himself; the "Savages" were a glorious brotherhood, and Fuller Eberle and Savory and other "chiefs" made much of him.

The year went out on "Hearth and Home" in a tangle. The Christmas Number was the beginning of the end of Frank Harris. He had aforetime brought out one of the finest Christmas Numbers ever produced, the famous issue of "The Saturday Review." He had genuinely intended to make this venture the talk of the town. But the man was

broken in health, in will, in capacity. He was trying to climb back into a foremost place in journalism, but his old vigour was gone. Suddenly all his finer qualities crashed. Something in the man had snapped. Harassed by ill-health, broken hopes, and repulsed ambitions, he thundered of his own greatness, and the world turned deaf ears. He could not "deliver the goods." He took to the City instead, and at once the directors of his paper became seriously alarmed. Suspicions arose and Harris's aggressive ways did little to smoothe out the crumpled linen. Lovat found himself being used to ignoble ends. It was as though he had been stung. To Lovat any kind of trickery was a hideous nightmare.

So 1912 stole away full of the thrill for Lovat of entering the garden of the theatre, but not without disillusion. At least the New Year was to open with Lovat rid of the restlessness that Harris had put upon him; and he was to step into 1913 more himself again and better fitted to devote his energies to the new realm to which his art was leading him.

By Lady Day of the new year Frank Harris, estranged from Lovat, with dire threats flounced out of the editorial chair of "Hearth and Home," and his evil genius took him to the editorial chair of "Modern Society" in its stead; then came ugly whispers—and prison.



1913

1913

JANUARY opened for Lovat in happy wise. He had found a delightful studio which he decorated throughout in a white key; and by the 11th of January he was asking us to 45 Roland Gardens, to his huge glee—the paint scarce dry—to a housewarming tea to which he had also asked our friends, Judge Evans and his wife, whom he had met at our flat. The judge was making one of the best collections of modern painting in the country.

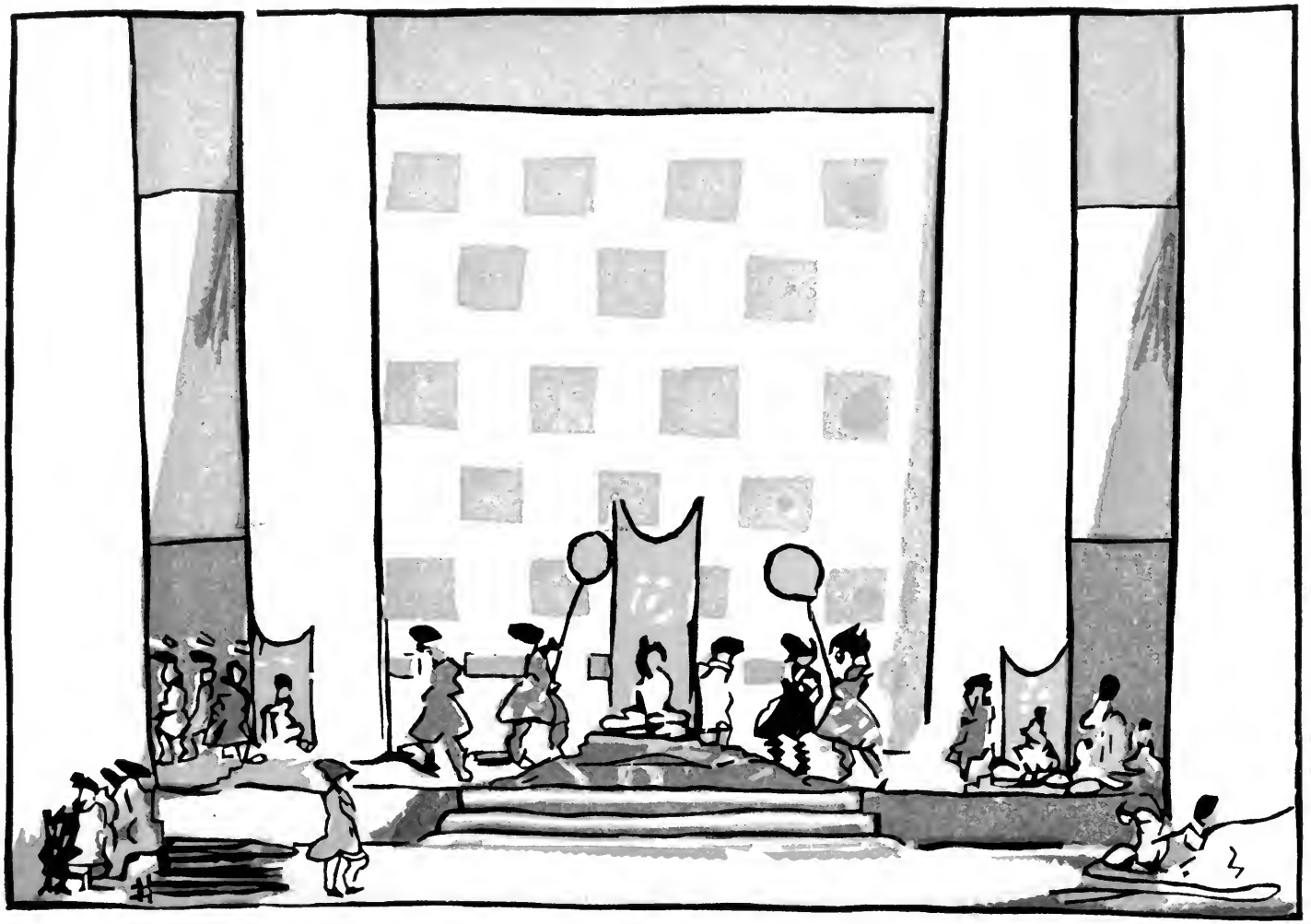
Lovat was like a child with a new toy. What happy days we were to spend in that delightful place with him! The old couple who lived on the premises were greatly attached to Lovat—and I have a delicious pencil portrait in a letter by him of "Old Robinson," who I fancy was a retired butler.

At once Lovat felt that he had elbow-room and light and air; and it spurred him to the larger designs which he craved. He was pouring out reed-pen decorations for "The Splendid Wayfaring" still; was hard at work upon scenery and costumes for "The Three Students"; and it

was about the New Year that I took him, with a sheaf of these designs, to see Tree, who, free from acting himself in "Drake," was keenly considering and working upon "The Three Students." So with Tree, as it so chanced, Lovat's first great opportunity was to come. The play was now so uppermost in Tree's mind that I persuaded him to consider Lovat as the designer for its costumes and scenery, and Benrimo as the producer. Lovat had thrown himself into the business with keenest enthusiasm, looked upon it as the chance of his life, and poured out designs. So Tree and Lovat met; and in the dome of His Majesty's Theatre that night began a fast friendship between the two men, so apart in years, so akin in many qualities—wits and dandies both and loveable personalities. Tree had a sincere admiration and affection for Lovat; but, unfortunately the more Tree grew to like and appreciate Lovat the man, the less he grew to like and appreciate his designs for costumes and scenery for the theatre—the which became a little more than embarrassing.

These theatre designs had the great value of turning Lovat towards that painting of colour harmonies as though for a scene in a play; and his rapid development in the large colour schemes may be traced to these beginnings.

Lovat was with us on the night that I persuaded Tree to collect his more serious essays on the theatre and to publish them in book form. I undertook to edit them at Tree's urging; and Lovat promptly offered



The Seat of Judgment

Act II.—The Three Students.

to decorate them. We spent many a delightful evening together in the dome of His Majesty's Theatre over this book and the play.

Lovat was scarcely settled into his Roland Gardens studio when he took himself off on a sudden to a holiday in Ireland, which he vastly enjoyed, greatly liking the people. As he had arranged to open his studio with a show of his works on the 10th of February, his holiday had to be a somewhat hurried affair. He wrote to me from Ireland to beg me to bring Tree to this show; and he mentions a big scene, the "Steps to the Sultan's Palace," that he has painted for "The Three Students," Act II—"I have worked you out a capital *Steps* scene with the colouring of my 'Masque of Roses'—great columns and tree-tops!"

Lovat had just completed, probably his first work at his beloved studio, the three cover-designs for "Spring" and "Summer" and the "Autumn and Winter" volumes of "The English Year," and had them sent to me, whilst he was in Ireland, for me to letter for him—he often got me to letter his designs at that time.

The first show of Lovat's paintings opened at his Roland Gardens studio on the 10th of February for ten days, it was continued for a week longer, until the 27th; and he designed for it a charming little yellow invitation slip and a blue decorated catalogue. But a more telling thing was the *Poster* for which he enlarged the "Saracen's Head" from a talepiece to "The Splendid Wayfaring," hand-colouring it with sumptuous effect—from this beautiful design he after-

wards issued a limited set of hand-coloured proofs on japanese vellum in gold and colours. As a matter of fact it was originally a study for the Sultan in "The Three Students.

Lovat had a family gathering at his show where he met his uncle Frank Fraser and his aunt Mrs. Patrick, to both of whom he was greatly attached, also Mrs. Patrick's daughter Joyce, for whom Lovat made a bookplate of a fish. Lovat whimsically accounted for the gathering by saying that, as the British Public seemed shy, there was nothing for it but to "try and stick his relations with masterpieces to decorate their back bedrooms." Lovat had the good fortune to come of a most united family, all of whom were devoted to him, as he to them.

The catalogue reminds us that several of the paintings were now for theatre scenes—and several not so labelled were obviously inspired by scenic ideals for the theatre. The "Captain Queernabs" drawing was the type of his costume designs at this time, and like the "Roman Soldier," give his handling and style with pen and water-colour; these of course might be straight out of one of Gordon Craig's woodcuts.

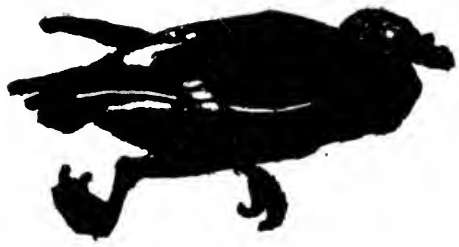
Immediately after his show at his studio, Lovat made a very charming cover-design for the spring number of "Hearth and Home," that appeared on the 13th of March, 1913—two Victorian ladies in crinolines.

It was in this spring of 1913, whilst he was in full career on the last decorations for "The Splendid Wayfaring," and was busy with the

Aboo Ali

Act II.—The Three Students

stage scenery and costumes for "The Three Students," and was decorating Tree's "Thoughts and Afterthoughts," that Lovat again took up the idea of the "Broadsheets and Chapbooks," and put them into practical form. He entered into the game with his wonted zest; and though he tired of it before the year was out, as he had done with caricatures and the toys, he wrought these whilst he was in the mood for it with keen enthusiasm and energy. They were by no means on a level with his finest achievement, and the decorations lacked something of the vigour of handling of his work with the reed pen which raise his superb decorations for "The Splendid Wayfaring" to so remarkable a height; but it was all charmingly done in its smaller way; and no better proof of Lovat's consummate artistry could be shown than the failure of others to carry on the scheme. Lovat avoided the stupid blunder of trying to revive dead things or producing antique *fakes*. He just drew modern decorations in an 18th century spirit.



THE BROADSIDES AND CHAPBOOKS

Although Lovat published his first broadsides and chapbooks in 1913 "At the Sign of Flying Fame" (his Roland Gardens or second studio), the idea arose much earlier.

When the young fellow first came to my flat he was greatly delighted with a little apostrophe I had written upon old Joseph Crawhall —the prince of woodcut artists—in the last most beautiful number of Gordon Craig's "Page." Crawhall was a revelation to Lovat; and it is extraordinary that this man of genius seems to remain an artist's artist. The writers on woodcuts and the critics on art and the museum authorities do not seem to realise the genius of the man nor the immense influence he has exerted on some of the supreme artists of our time. The eulogy of old Crawhall—his son became the exquisite painter of animals of our time—was written for my old friend Craig —we were youngsters then—for "The Page"; and some American publisher re-issued it with its illustrations from old Crawhall much reduced, in a charming little chapbook, one of the most artistic things of the kind ever done. It was called "The Cornhill Booklet" —I do not think it was a piracy, but if a piracy, such pirates deserve to live. Lovat was very fond of this little chapbook and I tried in vain to get him a copy for himself. But I give the little eulogy in full here chiefly for its illustrations.

I think that the dandiacal old world lilt of my essay appealed to Lovat as much as the woodcuts; at any rate it shaped his whole artistic career. Gordon Craig's charming spacing of the print in "The Page" finished its conquest:

SOME THOUGHTS SUGGESTED BY THE ART OF JOSEPH CRAWHALL

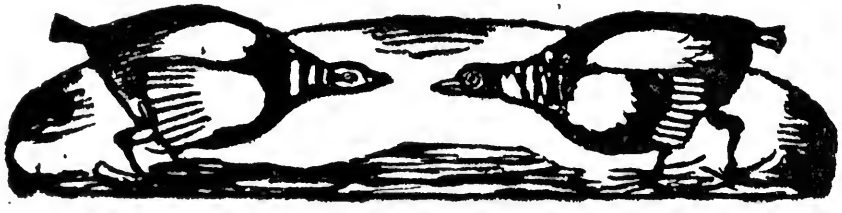
ILLUSTRATED WITH WOODCUTS, THE PRESENCE OF WHICH IS DUE TO THE COURTESY OF THE LEADENHALL PRESS

He dips his hands into the stilted magnificence of the eighteenth century, gets a grip upon the elaborate etiquette and paste-buckled manners that held the time, and brings out in his deft fingers the discovered secret of the whole art of the chapbooks, with the bluff hint of his own deeper secret of artistry added to it. And his modern eyes—seeing the form of things more subtly than these Georgian folk saw it, seeing form with that deliberate grace that is the characteristic of our later-nineteenth century art, seeing it also with a full sense of its surface and body, and most of all its texture—he gives us the art of the chapbooks considerably glorified. So that you shall find amongst the geniuses of the old chapbook days—now wholly unknown, and their names altogether blown into nothingness—no man of them all with gifts so complete and hands skill so adequate as this Crawhall. What squidgy soft body has that snail for all the limits of the wood-

block's technicalities! How we almost count the slow inches of his slobby career as he sets his "demmed moist, unpleasant body" towards the vague ambition where his protruding feelers blindly lead him—to end in the thrush's singing interior, or otherwise aid in the music of the spheres.

This black flagon of whiskey, too—how fully recorded we have the essential quality of the dark bottle-glass! It cries out that, uncorked, it will yield a rousing jorum—it is indeed the full-bellied body to the spirit of revelry within. Even here we find a whiff of the eighteenth century, when whiskey was but the despised source of courage with which certain wild fellows north of the Tweed filled their tough stomachs to rouse them to charge our bayonets and face the smell and loud report of gunpowder on more than one hated field of battle, when, indeed, our fellows with the bayonets had more often than once to make a run for it.

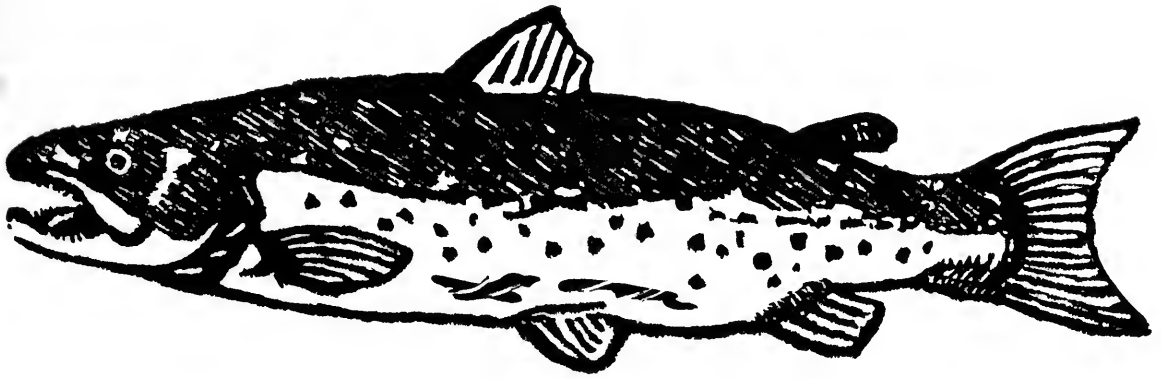
This breath and whisper of the olden days, is it not carried also into our good Raleigh's back here, as he struts it to the new accomplishment of inhaling the hot fumes of a loud-smelling weed into him,



blowing it out from him again in fragrant puffs of smoke—devilwise, astonishing the stay-at-home neighbours, and such as were of sedate and orderly mind, and had their religion rooted in precedent, and their slow-going wits shackled with the mental habit of their forefathers? Astonishing these open-mouthed gentry that he should not only have this devil's habit of digesting smoke, but even of looking complacent in the exercise of it.

In none of these plays of fancy has this, our whimsical Crawhall, more vigorously displayed his knowledge of the sleight of hand that was in the craftsmanship of this eighteenth century, with its broad decorative sense, than in the "Dandy with the Powder Puff." Yet here again we see something of that subtlety of tone and of draughtsmanship peeping out through the breadth and rude skill of the thing —a quality that is so foreign to the accent of the old chapbook men, and adds so much to the capacity of wood to suggest mood and colour and atmosphere.

Even this ship, with all its laughing affectation of primitiveness, how it turns one's eyes into one's boyhood, and sets one's memory



jigging back to the raucous din and strenuous irregularity of the brazen music that was the violent orchestration to the old country statute-fairs. With remembrance, too, of gingerbread of mighty thickness, fashioned into ships such as this! So, no doubt, had they made their gingerbread ships in pride of pastry-cook's art and tribute to England's great admiral right away back in the teens of the century, when Nelson, ineffectually begging the nation to be gentle to his Emma, lay a-dying, a fleet of whipped Frenchmen at his *Victory's* stern. Full of portholes is this old impossible battleship; yet the artist has but forced the drama a little so that he might give an inordinate threat of guns. So choke-full is it of impossible masts (thick as "quills upon the fretful porcupine") there is not deck's planking enough into which to step them all; wherefore one or two are of needs almost overboard; but this exaggeration gives the desire to sail at all costs, and we cannot quarrel with rigging that fouls under such virtuous ambition.

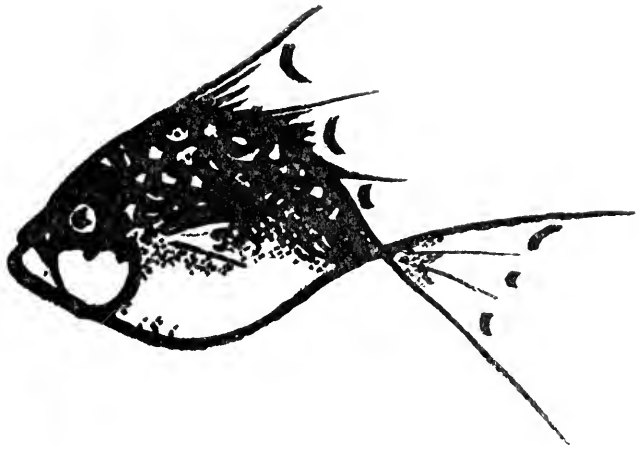
And this conventional sun, is it not lit with the flare of the old broadsheets? Flaming dimly out of the days when journalism was touched with classic aspirations; when journalism, not yet being devoid of some ambition to be accused of the smell of midnight oil that is the very perfume of scholarship, always spoke of him, half-playfully, as Old Sol!

IT will at once be seen how old Joseph Crawhall's woodcuts shaped Lovat's art, both the "Impresses Quaint" and the other handsome volumes of chapbooks and broadsheets decorated by Crawhall. Lovat delighted in them. I suggested to Lovat that as he had literary as well as artistic gifts—and it should be recalled that at this time he was writing a good deal of verse—he could give some of the younger poets their hearing by publishing *modern* broadsheets and chapbooks with decorations by Lovat with the reed pen which would give the rich blacks of the woodcut; and he became very enthusiastic over the idea. But there were difficulties to be overcome. The publishers would be difficult to persuade to so new a project that was so old. Then, how to get them put about and sold, for it was futile to make a private affair of them? I convinced Lovat that Crawhall's, and later

on Tuer's, efforts to revive the old broadsheets and chapbooks was an utter blunder and a waste of genius—that it became mere tedious academism and boredom except in so far that Crawhall's delightful woodcuts became known thereby; but in itself the decorating of dead and often trivial and tedious ballads with archaic woodcuts would never rouse a wide public interest, and quite properly so. But Crawhall had led the way with his fine woodcuts; and Gordon Craig, in "The Page," had revealed the living application, for he had glorified it and made it a thing of rare charm. If modern broadsheets and chapbooks were issued, giving modern poems and decorated by modern woodcuts or the like, then there was an artistic public to enjoy them. In fact, when you come to think of it, a poem is a complete work of art in itself; and collecting poems into a volume is but a clumsy expedient. It only needed Lovat's enthusiasm and literary and artistic flair and temperament, especially his quaint and delightful sense of decoration, to create such a modern broadsheet and chapbook, and to raise the whole thing to a higher level.

Lovat was quick to see it, eager to do it, and when the time was ripe, to act upon it. But as we have seen, the young fellow had felt that he must first get a studio and master the groundwork of his art in the year of 1912.

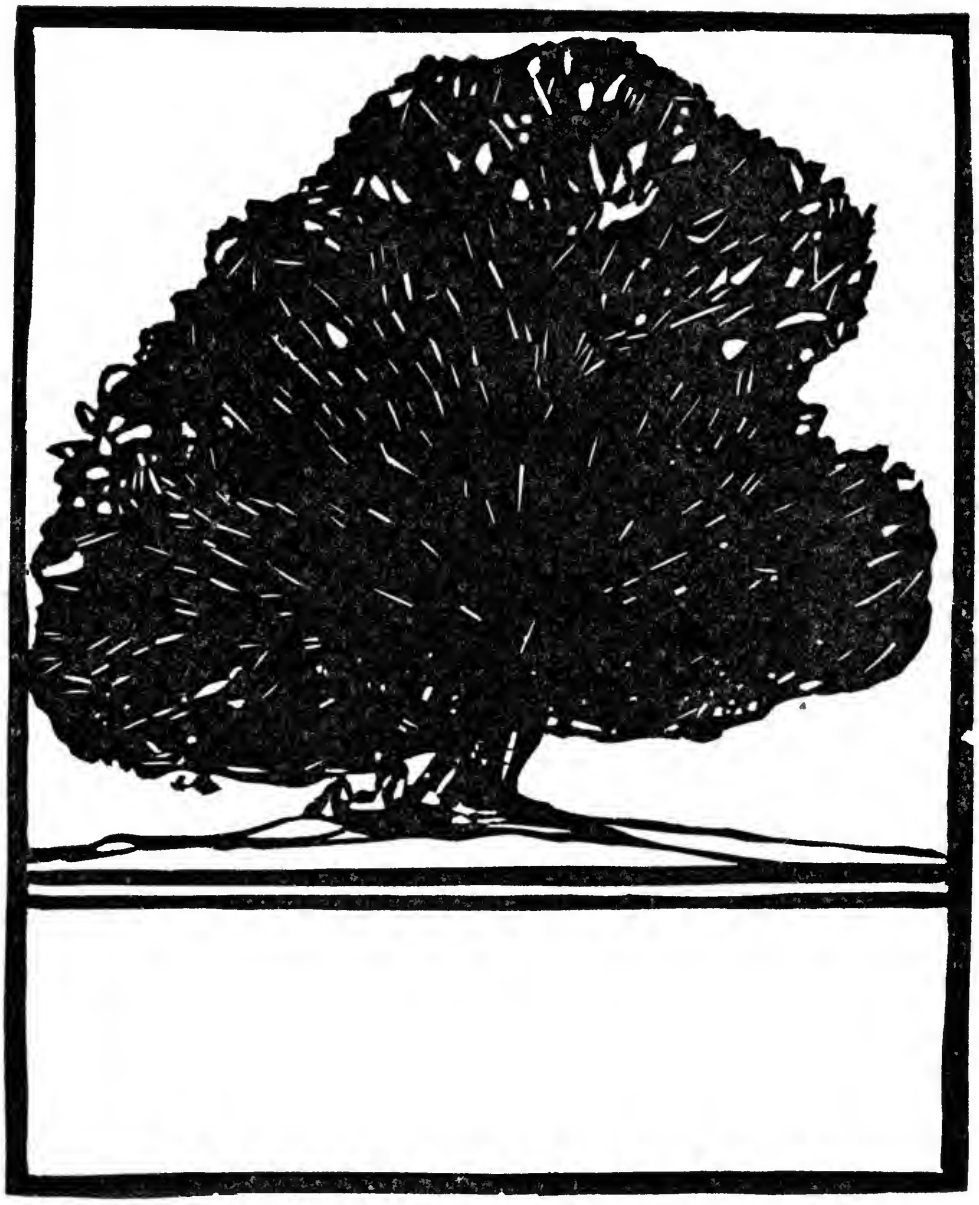
As the restless year of 1912 had reached towards its ending, Lovat had been much with Ralph Hodgson, an exquisite writer of lyrics; and had put the idea of the broadsheet and chapbook to him—Lovat told me he thought he had found just the very man for it as poet.



One day, in a coffee-house in the Strand, Lovat thrashed out the idea with Ralph Hodgson and Holbrook Jackson, and the three promptly went into partnership to make the idea into a reality, each putting some five pounds into the venture. Lovat had found the ideal printer in a friend of Dan Rider's called Stevens, who had already printed some blocks and woodcuts for Lovat and my wife (Mab Plumridge) and myself as Christmas cards. Lovat was to make the decorations, Ralph Hodgson to write the verse, and Holbrook Jackson a prose piece. Later on, Walter de la Mare and James Stephens of "Crock of Gold" fame also contributed.

With Frank Harris departed from "Hearth and Home" early in the new year, and his disturbing influence wholly gone out of Lovat's life, and eased of the need to create decorations for "The Splendid Wayfaring," which, after long punctuations of halting appearance in "The Art Chronicle," came to a sudden end in mid-career in the issue of the 16th May, 1913, Lovat was now more free to push on with the broadsheets and chapbooks. And as Gordon Craig had issued his "Page" from "The Sign of the Rose," so about the middle of May, Lovat set up "The Sign of Flying Fame" at 45 Roland Gardens on the heading of his studio writing paper, and sent me one of the first copies of Ralph Hodgson's "Eve" ever printed—as exquisite a little chapbook as was ever wrought to hold exquisite gems of verse. The "Eve" contained the beautiful verses "Time, you old Gipsy Man," one of the most musical and colourful things written by Ralph Hodgson.

The 20th of May saw "Eve" published; on the 24th came "The



Two Wizards" by Richard Honeywood; on the 3rd of June Holbrook Jackson's "Town," and Lovat's exquisite little "18th Century Essays" came to me in proof.

Tree's book of essays "Thoughts and Afterthoughts" was now complete, and Lovat's decorations for it in print; so he was free of it. Tree was as delighted as a schoolboy with the volume; but he was "pernikity" in one of his stupid moods about the design for the cover. The original drawing for one of the very reduced decorations in "The Splendid Wayfaring" made a superb design in gold for the cover, but Tree, who had little sense of design, chose instead an insignificant little drawing of a tree that grieved Lovat into groaning that he wished to goodness that Tree had never seen it. Tree, it now appeared, wanted an appalling design by some girl, but I absolutely refused even to consider it. However, Tree consented to the large design for the paper "jacket" to keep the cover from soil; and later was persuaded to use it for the cheap edition. When the larger design, that Lovat afterwards at my suggestion made into Tree's bookplate, was first shown to Tree for the cover of his book—and, remember, it was engraved and printed on the cover of the proof copy in gold on green!—to my surprise Tree, although he admired it, wanted to know if there were any sinister suggestion in the smallness of the figure reclining under the tree.

"That," said Lovat neatly, "is the old Adam."

"I'm afraid," said Tree with a shy glance at me, "the critics would say that there is too much Tree and too little of the Old Adam."

Lovat was ready:

"But if there were too little Tree and too much Old Adam you would play to empty houses," said he.

Tree chuckled:

"How well Lovat understands the conceit of the profession"! he laughed. . . .

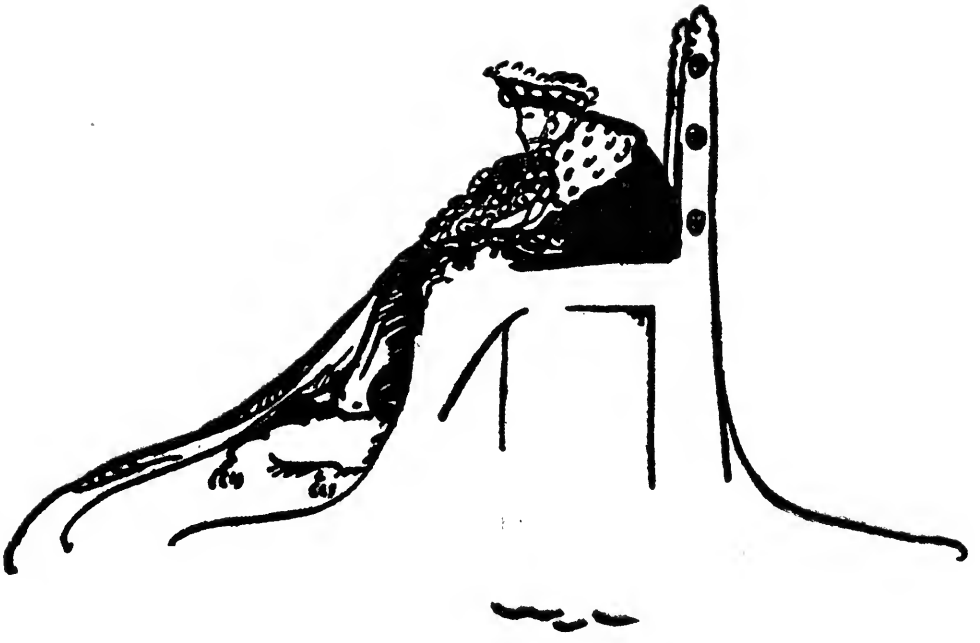
It was, by the way, when Tree was troubled as to a better title for "The Tempest" essay in his book, something that would suggest a squabble by the parish pump, that Lovat neatly suggested the title "The Tempest in a Teacup," which sounds so typically a *mot* by Tree!

"Thoughts and Afterthoughts" contained the two delightful drawings by Lovat of "Queen Elizabeth" and "Henry VIII," and "Our Betters," which Tree so greatly liked; but most of the designs are more on the level of the broadsheets than in the higher flights of the reed pen in "The Splendid Wayfaring."

Lovat returned to the nude but rarely after he left his first studio; but he was now pouring forth rich and glowing harmonies in colour, and in this May of 1913 he painted the sumptuous colour scheme in orange purple, sapphire and emerald green of a nude, "So She Passed," and about the same time another gorgeous colour harmony in which he employs the nude, "The White Slave." Both these paintings were wrought whilst he was steeped in the Eastern atmosphere of "The Three Students."

Lovat made some very good studies of costume and character whilst roaming the theatres as artist for "Hearth and Home"; and this congenial run of the theatres was training his eye and giving him increased leaning towards designing scenery and costume.

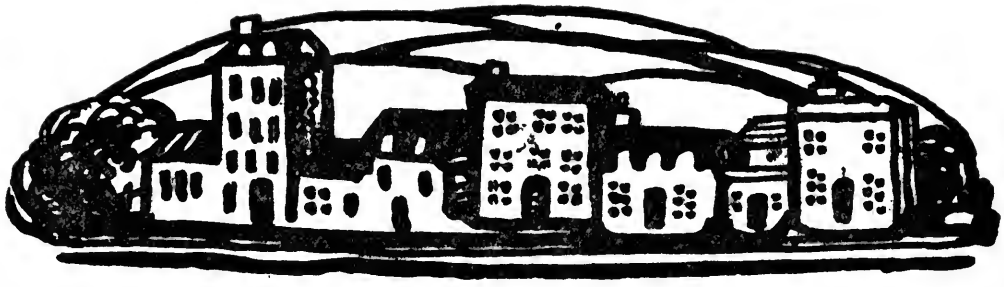
The appearance of the chapbooks and broadsheets led to my writing in "Hearth and Home" for its issue of the 19th of June, the article



"Broadsheets and Chapbooks," which forms a useful third milestone in Lovat's career, being as it is very fully illustrated with some of the best examples from his decorations as he was handling line at this time.

On the morrow of the appearance of my eulogy of his "Broadsheets and Chapbooks," this midsummer, Lovat issued the print entitled "The Edge of the City," or as he first intended to call it "Mandragora," for what reason I never could comprehend. At the same time came the caricature of "Chesterton," and Lovat was at work on a dainty little "Battledore" or "Alphabet" which he dedicated to "Lover," the little son of our American friend Gaylord Wilshire as "Lover Wilshire's Alphabet," though it was not published until the following year (1914). It was for this Alphabet that he made the pen drawing of a ship and wrote the lines thereunder. Holbrook Jackson in his eulogy of Lovat calls this ship "The Great Harry," by some mistake I feel sure; for Lovat wrote to me on the back of it:

"'The Ark Raleigh,' the largest ship in Elizabeth's navy, about 500 tons."



However, whether "The Great Harry" or "The Ark Raleigh," they are one and the same drawing, and that drawing is at the head of the turn-over to "Lovat Wilshire's Alphabet" or "Battledore."

URING the July of 1913, we moved from our flat, which had been Lovat's "second home," to our house in Perham Crescent, whither Lovat had been keenly set on our going; and the moving in was a great joy to him and he came and helped to hang pictures. Curiously enough, Lovat's own family at the same time bought the old Red House at Buntingford, which was an added joy to Lovat's summer and was to become the centre of his life forthwith on that countryside of Hertfordshire that he adored, and which was thenceforth to figure so often in his landscapes, and amidst the leafy lanes of which he now sleeps.

We had wired the windows of our new home, and "Hoyd" flew about the house, following us in all our doings; and he would swoop down the stairs on to Lovat's head and shoulders on hearing him enter, singing like a mad thing and generally hampering the picture-hanging, which had to give way to Lovat sitting on the drawing-room carpet and playing "hunt the slipper" with him.

It was an astounding thing how the bird knew that Lovat was at the door. Other's footsteps would come and go, and people would pass into the house, wholly unnoticed by "Hoyd"; but Lovat and one or two others he always seemed to know, whether by their step or

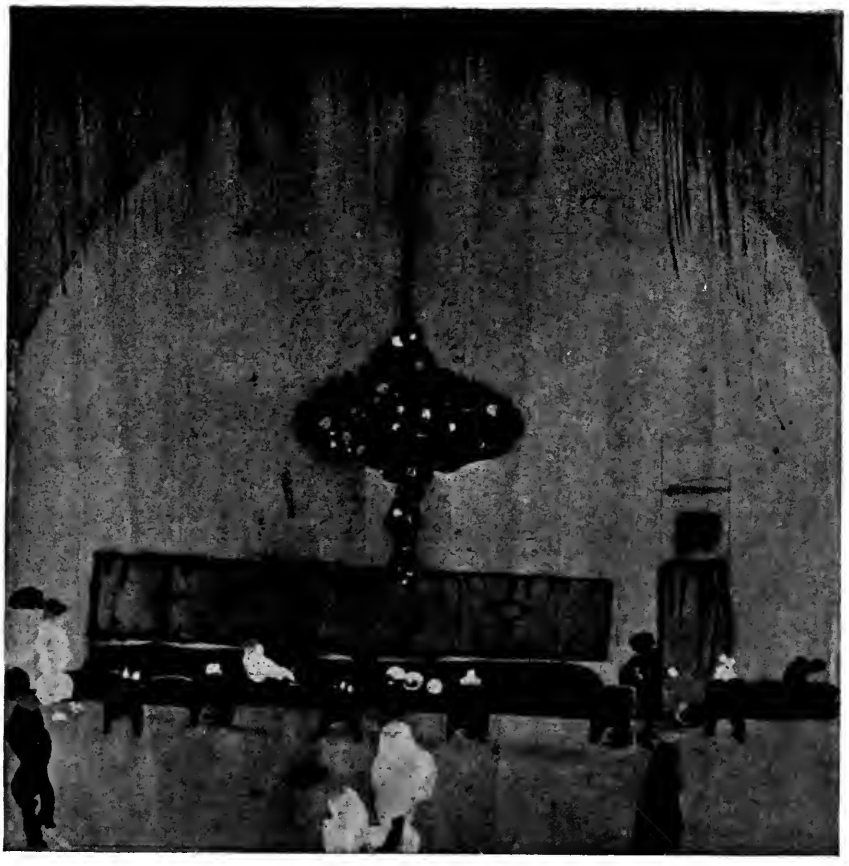
whatsoever gave him the clue; and he would burst into song or his welcoming "Coo-ie!" He was wonderfully human, was "Hoyd"—whether he had been a victim to the steam from a kettle in his early past, or whatever the cause, he would always call with a peculiar burst of song the moment a kettle began to boil. But the devilry with which he left everything, even his food, and swept down on an opened inkpot to dip his impudent beak therein and send the ink spurting, scattering it abroad round about, was a source of ecstacy to Lovat—the more so as we could not punish "Hoyd" except with harsh words, and for vituperation the "Hoyd" bird had an utter contempt—or, on the rare occasions on which he was moved to shame, he only flew on to one's finger and gazing into one's face, burst into his wheedling song. After all, you cannot smack a bird's face. And "Hoyd" knew it.

IT was in the autumn of this year that the Royal West of England Academy came into being under the fostering care of Ernest Savory of Bristol, to whom Art in the west country owes a debt it can never repay; indeed, it has always been a mystery to me that his modest personality has been overlooked by the powers that be, for if any man ever deserved honour for public service it is Ernest Savory. The bountiful civic spirit of the Wills family, inherited by Miss Stancomb Wills, poured money into the foundation of this West of England Academy. . . .

Savory now invited Lovat to exhibit at the show that was to be opened with banquets and rejoicings under the new royal charter just granted to it. Lovat had been very ailing all this early autumn, and asked me to choose a picture from his studio for the show.

Lovat sent me the vellum edition of Tree's "Thoughts and Afterthoughts," hand-coloured by himself most beautifully, and to the prodigious enhancement of the designs, about this time; and it was on a postcard dated 17th October, 1913, that he drew the delicious "Caricature of Gaudier" with his five-haired "beard" and in his shirt sleeves at the studio he had made out of some old stables, where he was working wonders, carving direct on the stone and on alabaster.

An artist friend of Lovat's and ours, Mrs. Marion Neilson, had opened a photographic studio in Bond Street; her artistic training had done much to make her the foremost portrait-photographer living amongst ns. She made the superb portrait of Lovat, seated, in his great coat and holding his hat, which will go down the years as the most beautiful and perfect picture of his poetic personality. Indeed, several masterpieces by her hand have immortalised Lovat in his young manhood. Lovat, with his wonted enthusiasm and genial comradeship, insisted that I must write Marion Neilson's eulogy in "Hearth and Home"; and after it appeared, on the 13th of November, Lovat had it made into a booklet with sugar-paper covers

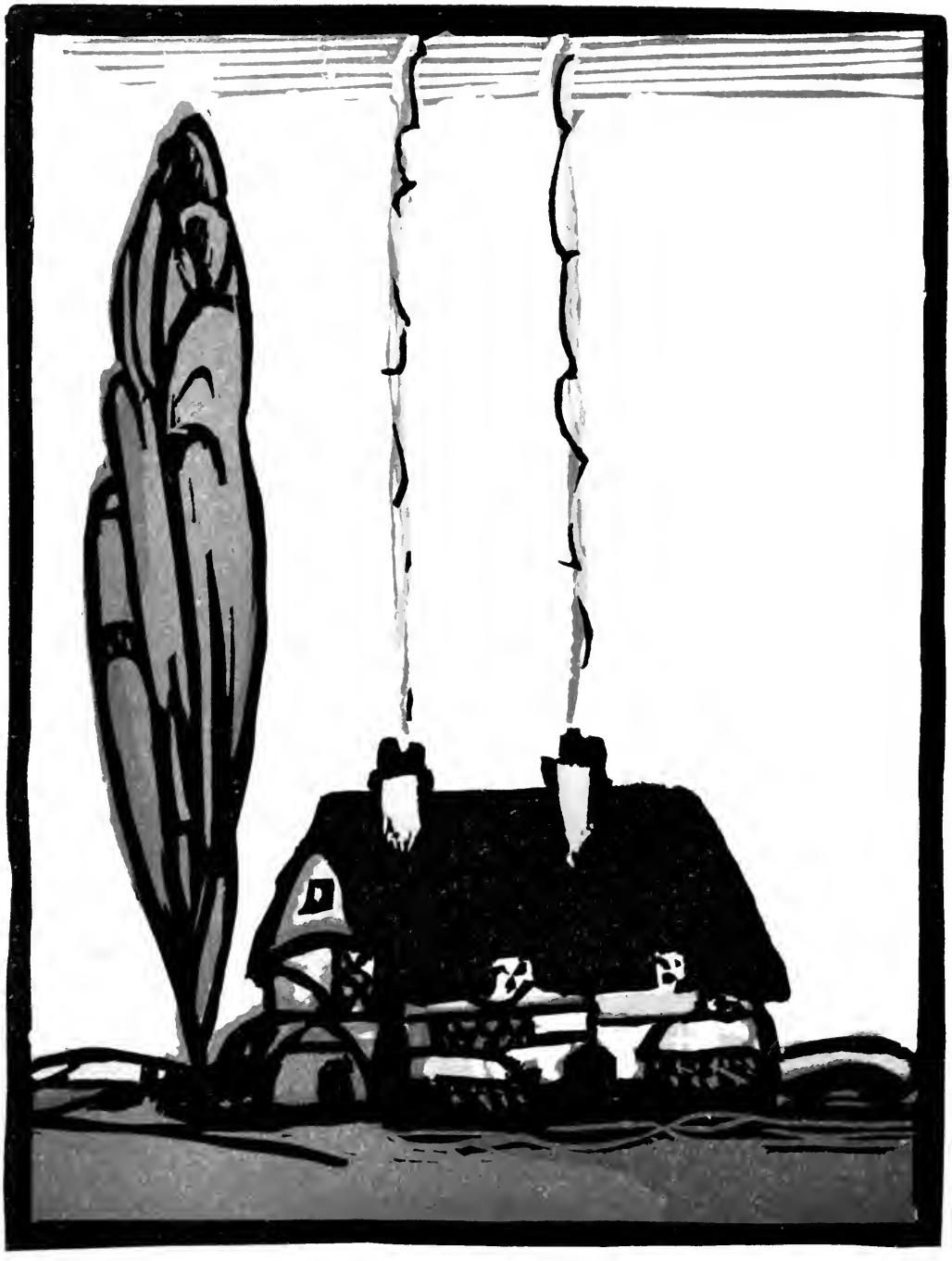


Tavern Scene

Prologue: The Three Students

Hassan Sabbah Bound

Act II.—The Three Students



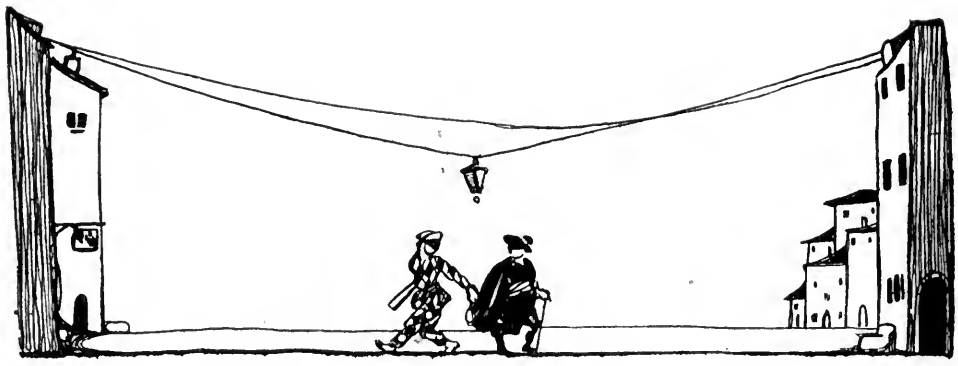
Autumn

The Splendid Wayfaring

for which he drew the charming cover-design that also became her bookplate, and a figure of an 18th century lady, holding a fan, for the back cover. The original drawing for the front cover is a considerable size and for sheer beauty of handling is a masterpiece.

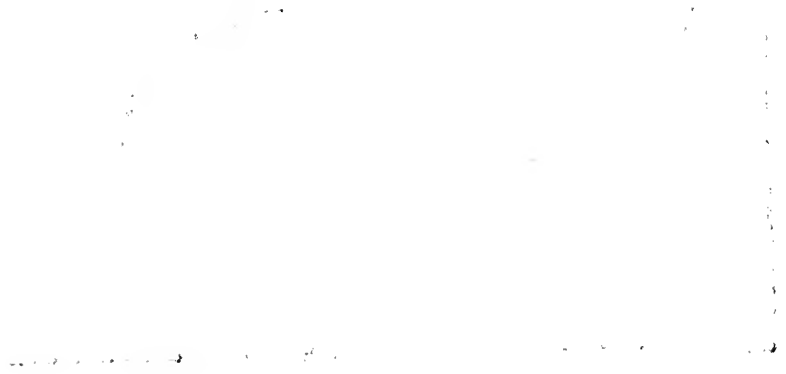
IN spite of ill-health, Lovat's eager indomitable spirit had to keep his fingers busy; and whilst he was trying to persuade Ernest Brown to let him have the Leicester Galleries for a show at the New Year, he was drawing the designs for a bazaar that was to be held at Lord Glenconnar's beautiful rooms. The bazaar became a *Bizarre*, of which the guiding spirit was our handsome and artistic young friend Miss Bieber, who carried it out with rare taste. Lovat made broadsheet advertisements of the *Bizarre* on four gaily coloured long slips of paper, which are now very rare and are much sought after.

The year 1913 went out on Lovat working not only on scenery and costumes for "The Three Students," but on other ambitious



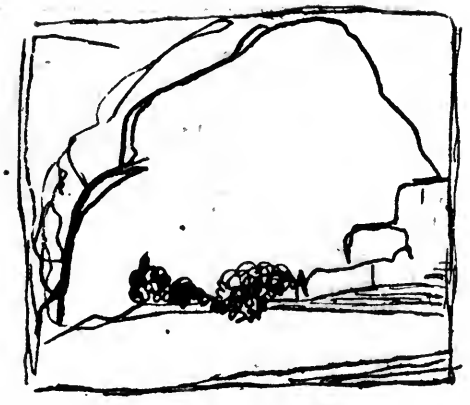
and important water-colours in which he was employing colour-orchestration and mass and decoration with sumptuous splendour. He asked me on the 7th of December to come and see a large painting that he had just completed. He was in great good spirits—felt that he was, of a sudden, making advance into a larger realm and that he was increasing in power.

An excellent article, very fully illustrated with Lovat's decorations, in "The Daily News" of the 18th of December, showed that his broadsheets and chapbooks from "The Sign of Flying Fame" were making him known to a widening public. "The Splendid Wayfaring" appeared in book form at Yuletide, revealing him in handsome form at the height of his achievement with the broad black line of the reed pen; and the serious attention given to the book by an enthusiastic press incidentally further spread his work. But it was really in his



Conspiracy

Act III.—The Three Students



Act I.—The Three Students

remarkable paintings for the theatre, both for scenery and costumes, that—though the public were unfortunately to be baulked of seeing them carried out in all their splendour at the first theatre in the country—raised Lovat into the realm of that far higher achievement of which the public at large had as yet seen nothing. Lovat had found himself. He knew that in the theatre his art could blossom to its fulness. It was on the knees of the gods that the wilful act of Tree and the criminal folly of the German Kaiser should baulk his art and baffle his ambition—for awhile—just as he was setting foot into his kingdom. But the year was ending in wonderful promise for Lovat; and he joined in our Christmas revels with the gaiety and high spirits of a boy on holiday.

We have but to look upon his wrecked first endeavour as it can here be seen for the first time—and to remember that it was his

earliest work for the theatre, designed for a play for which he had unbounded enthusiasm, in order to realise that the supreme flight of Lovat's genius would unquestionably lie in the theatre—though even here there are gaps, for a few of the finest colour-harmonies for scenery and costumes have vanished, having been in Tree's keeping when he died, and were probably sold with his effects.

Two or three of these paintings for "The Three Students" were made at the end of 1912, but the bulk of them were of 1913, and fairly early in 1913. The Eastern motive aroused by the play greatly influenced Lovat's designs in other fields during this year; we find Oriental heads and figures decorating "The Splendid Wayfaring" and his catalogue for his own show.

They prove how clearly Lovat had grasped the values of stage representation and how skilfully he had rid scenery of the overburdening details by which the cult of "realism" had confused the dramatic intention of the playwright and subordinated and overwhelmed and harassed the actors. They show how he achieved the largeness of the impression that the playwright desires to evoke by means of a majestic simplicity. He had learnt his lesson full well from his master, Gordon Craig. He compelled the mood of the scene upon the eye by sheer

Act I.—The Three Students

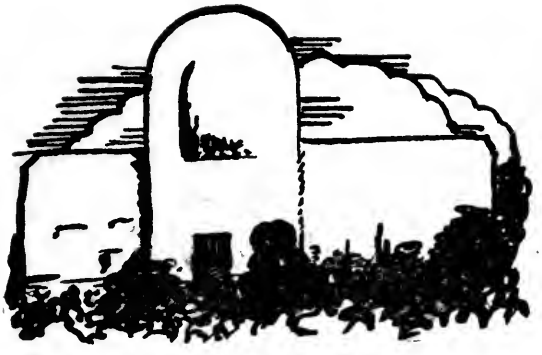
colour-music and design employed in broad simplicity of mass, sumptuous and splendid, and thereby left the players unhampered to utter the art that the dramatist had created for their skill of acting to arouse in the hearing of the audience whose eyes had prepared them for the mood through Lovat's colour-orchestration and the uplift of the dignity and dramatic power of his design.

How wonderfully—in spite of the fact that the play is as wholly unknown as though it had never been written—how wonderfully he conjures up the whole idea of the East in these designs, as we imagine the East. Take the masterly scene "The Seat of the Mighty: Power"; and at once he makes us feel the loneliness of Greatness, makes us realise the hushed intrigue that moves in stealth about the feet of the throne and dogs the authority of the leaders of mankind. He catches and fixes in this wondrous picture the whole basic significance of the Act as I wrote it and evokes the emotions I essayed to evolve by the art of words and of dramatic action. And Lovat achieves this tremendous impression by consummate employment of a great and simple mass of darkness out of which looms the troubled figure of the Vizier, the Right Hand of the King, where he sits upon the seat of the mighty, silhouetted against a gorgeous canopy of golden yellow, and

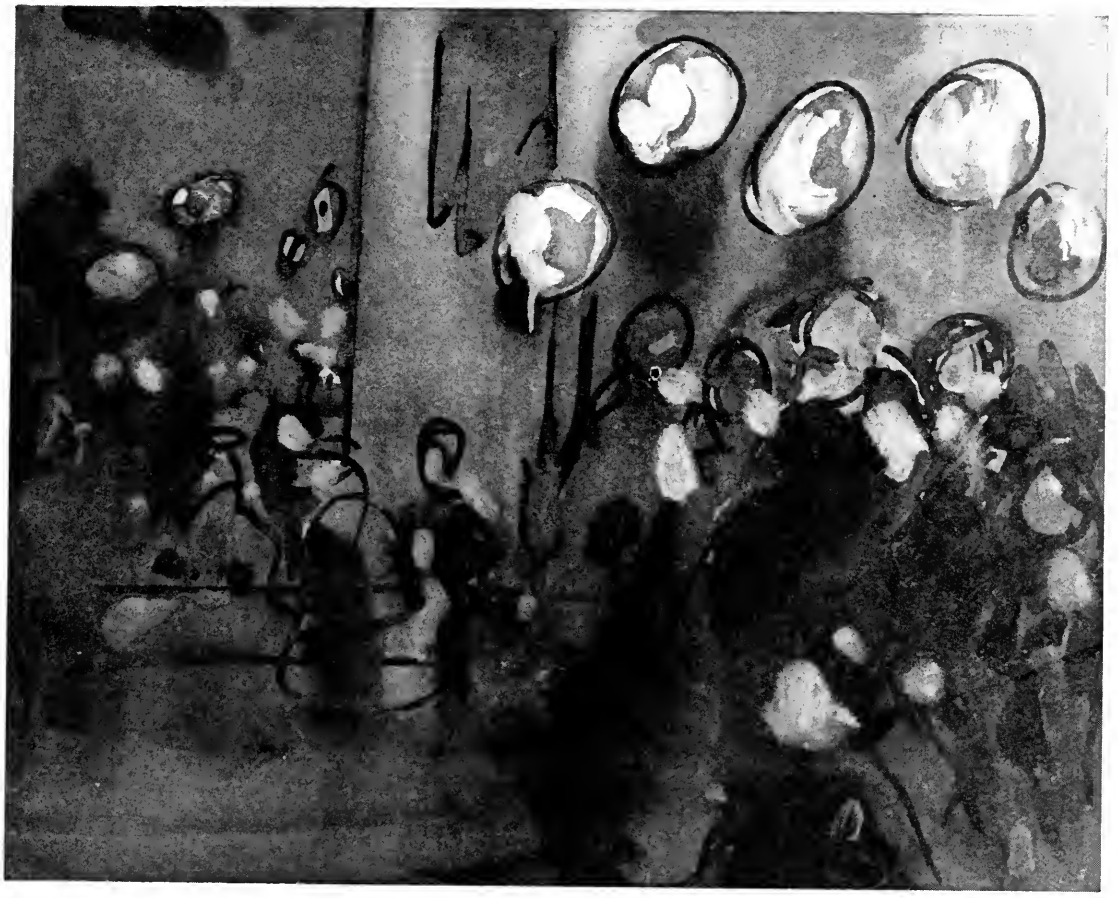
the darknesses and the great threatening shadows swallow him up again. The majesty of the whole thing is unforgettable. The uplift of it, and the utterance of it, are completely dramatic—this is the very spirit and essence of the theatre. Nor could orchestra with its vast gamut of music rouse in our senses an impression that could better it, nor the magic of words written by human hands and uttered by all the practiced skill of the actor's art more completely evoke it. Given a background of such magic to compel the impression upon our senses through our vision, it follows that the dramatic utterance of the players is enormously enhanced thereby in the wondrous illusion of the theatre to compel the imagination of mankind.

It was precisely this poetic power to raise the illusion in our senses whereby we become partakers in the experience of mankind that made Lovat an exquisite artist. What do little faults of craftsmanship matter in the hands of a man who can arouse the majestic impressions of life within us so that we share for awhile in that majesty; or who can, with as magic a touch, charm us with the lyrical sense of the joy of life by his blithe comedy? He is careless of the tools of the workshop. He has larger affairs forward than bothering with a camera.

Lovat had set foot in his kingdom; the gates thereto lay open to him. Thereafter he had but to walk to triumph after triumph. But this was not to be as yet. Before the New Year was a month old, he was to be thrust back out of his realm and the gates of the theatre slammed in his face.

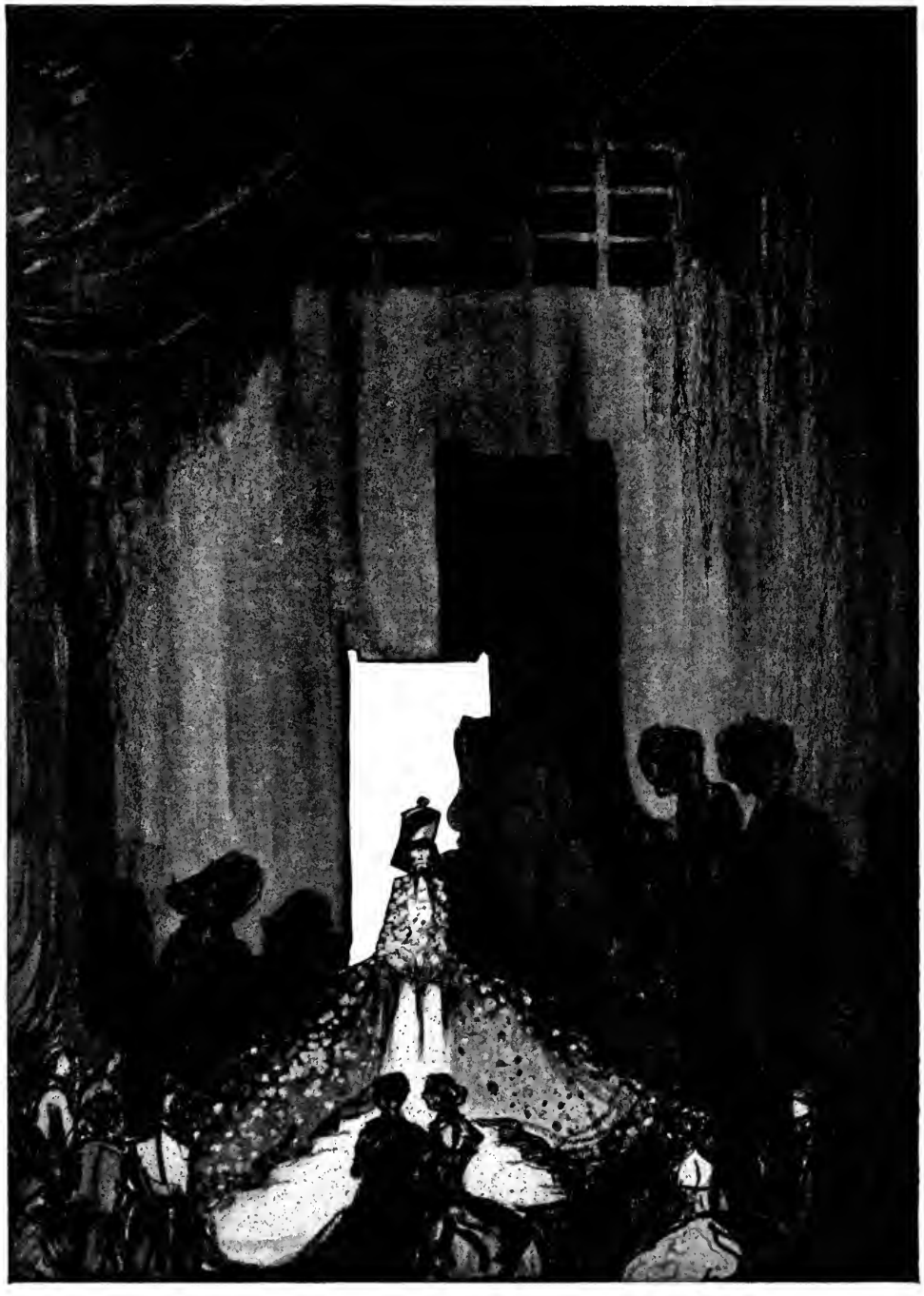


1914



Enter the Queen

Act II.—The Three Students



Power

Act III.—The Three Students

1914

Fortune, the fickle jade, had beckoned, dressed in all her finery and wreathed in smiles throughout 1913; she now flounced past after the new year, and took herself off elsewhere.

On the 19th of the January of 1914, Tree rejected my Eastern play "The Three Students." He had been hesitant about it for weeks, but had been embarrassed as to how to break the news to us who had given so heavily of our days and our toil to it. However, on the evening of this day, amidst quips and badinage in the dome after the theatre had closed for the night, Tree plucked up courage and plunged into the unpleasant business, and rejected the play.

It was as though he had struck Lovat across the face with a whip.

I forgot my own consternation in the presence of Lovat's wound.

Tree had uttered his decision haltingly and not without embarrassment; but I saw that Lovat, as he rose to his feet, was more concerned for me than for himself. He knew that several years of elaborate and unprofitable toil had gone to the making of this thing that he himself had been so confident about and estimated so highly, and that Tree had so enthusiastically himself wrought upon in minutest detail until some other dream had led him away from it. Lovat stared at Tree in stammering consternation, and at last broke the long silence with a simple "Why?"

Tree answered with one of his long silences; but as nothing but stilly silence came to his relief, after some hesitation, gave three reasons:

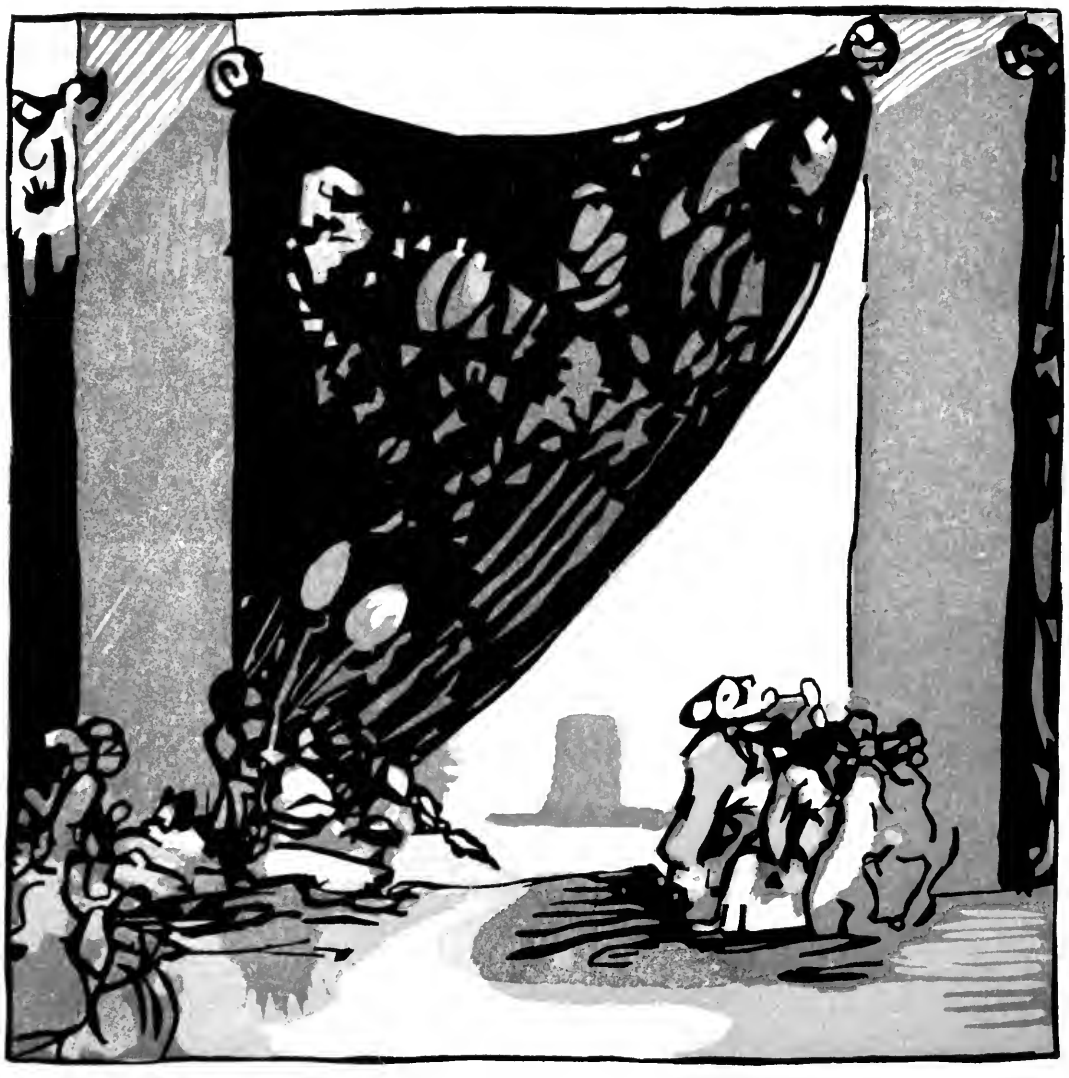
His business advisers demurred at the cost of its production. Tree himself must have felt the futility of this reason in face of the enormous cost of many of his ventures, and his oft-repeated tale that the more he had risked upon a play the greater had been his profit and reward. Besides, we had proved to him, as Lovat has since proved in practice, that a sumptuous production if artistically done need not be as costly as a realistic hotch-potch.

Lovat and I stood silent. Tree felt about vaguely for his second reason.

He and his business advisers were convinced that the theatre-going public would not be attracted by the Eastern atmosphere in a play. Tree was obviously digging for excuses. It was precisely the Eastern atmosphere that was now on the town and was attracting the theatre-going public. He had missed the superb chance of forestalling it; it had made the fortune of Knoblauch and Oscar Ashe in 1911 with "Kismet." The "Russian Ballet" and "Sumurun" had swept the town. He was to be proved still further wrong and short-sighted, leaving Oscar Ashe to reap the fortune he deservedly won, which Tree had flung into the gutter—a fortune that, ironically enough, Oscar Ashe was to reap in Tree's own theatre!

Lovat and I remained silent; and Tree then gave his third reason:

He said that *he no longer had the youthful figure to play the leading part.*



The Great Arras

Act III., Scene 2.—The Three Students

I saw at once that this was the vital reason—knew, as an American friend of mine would put it, that *there* was where the dog lay buried—knew that it was hopeless to say another word to persuade him otherwise. Lovat protested in his charming way. But I stopped him; he was only embarrassing Tree. "Tree," said I, "is grieving for the loss of his girlish figure—and will not be comforted. Come away, Lovat—we have lost and it can't be helped—we must not whimper."

Lovat stood obstinately awhile. At last, with some pleasantry between us and Tree, Lovat said good-night and came away. As we stepped out into the bitter cold of the night, Lovat looked at me. "By God," said he, "you are a born soldier! I nearly whimpered." Yes; Lovat had been "through it."

A fortnight later, Lovat wrote to me that Tree had begged him to see me and was reconsidering my play: On a postcard dated the 1st of Feburary 1914, Lovat writes: "I hear that great things are in the balance and that T— is reconsidering the work. Keep me posted in all developments." But I knew that Lovat was clutching at a forlorn hope. And Tree, almost immediately after he got the play again, decided on the fateful visit to America. Neither Lovat nor I was ever to see his genial face again. Tree was a loveable, exasperating, delightful man, and his death a severe loss to the stage.

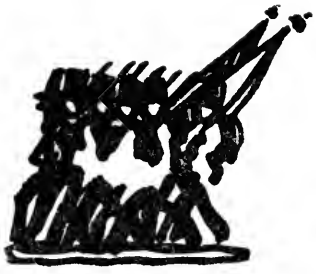
Lovat saw his "Lover Wilshire's Alphabet" in print; he made arrangements with the Doré Gallery for an exhibition in October; and went off on a holiday jaunt to France and Italy.

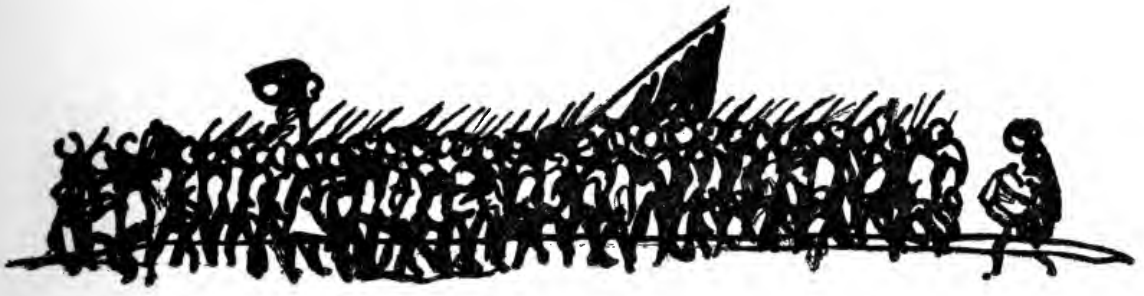
On his return he wrought the first of those trade-tracts which he

was to decorate with such marked distinction. "The Court of the Printers' Guild" appeared in June; in July he sent me some proofs for "Pirates," the cover of which Lovat had begged me to letter for him, and I was to design the title-page. The book was somewhat disappointing, though beautifully produced. Lovat was no illustrator; and, charming as were the decorations, he was not able to make a very readable volume of it even by editing the old lives of the pirates. They are dull stuff. Lovat would have done better to have rewritten the whole thing in his own delightful prose. The book reveals his limitations. However, he made a delightful looking volume, as he always did; and my friend Harold Shaylor produced it for Simpkin, Marshall & Co. with the consummate taste that he had brought to the making of the sumptuous volume of "The Splendid Wayfaring."

Tree had slammed the door of the theatre upon Lovat's most cherished ambition; but Lovat was not daunted; and during the early months of 1914, though at a loose end, the Roland Gardens studio saw him busy upon designs for costume and scenery for old English plays —one or two by Congreve, and particularly on "The Beggar's Opera," which he was working upon as early as these days. Lovat always had an uncanny confidence in this play.

WAR





WAR

"Pirates" was about to appear when, out of the blue of the summer's holiday, the War came crashing.

ERMANY had decided that the Day had come. Such was Lovat at twenty-four when the German launched his Great War into the glorious summer's ending of 1914, and the Hunnish hosts set forth with guttral song and ridiculous goose-step to reach to dominion over the world. The romantic essence in Lovat left his action in no doubt for five minutes. He flung down brush and pen, shut up his paint-box, and made all our lives a purgatory to get him a commission.

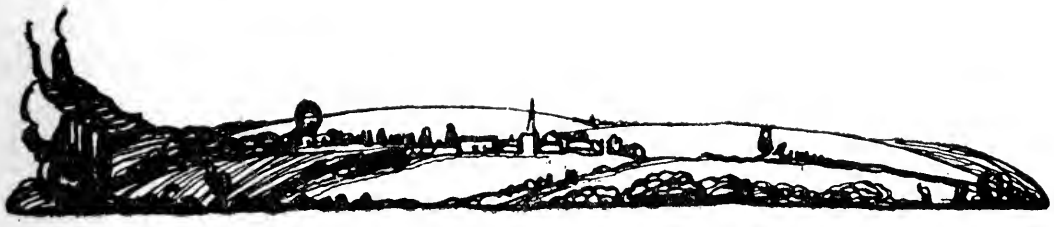
In early August he writes to me: "For the love of God, get me something. I am not a bad shot, and served some time in the O.T.C. at Charterhouse. I can 'Forrrm fours' and 'Re-forrrm two deep' with the best of 'em . . . . Haven't done a stroke since war was declared . . . . Moi, je peux parler la française assez bien et je connais bien la Belgique."

I urged him not to fret himself into a fever, he was bound to be called up; and, to prepare him for it, I got him to work on "Field Service" and Map Reading and gave him a rough idea in broad outline of Battle practice—a sketch which I published to help other lads like him. After the fiasco of the Foreign Legion, from which I had done my utmost to keep him, pointing out that if he went into the

war he should go bearing the King's commission, irked by a few week's delay he enlisted about October in a cadet corps, or as Lovat whimsically put it, "Catford and I have joined the O.T.C. (Inns of Court). . . . Mine is not (now) to reason why, mine is not (now) to make reply, mine is (now) to do or die, gallant 1½ hundredweight!" From the Officers' Training Corps of "The Devil's Own" he got a commission in November as a "one pip" lieutenant into the 14th Service Battalion of the historic old regiment, the Durham Light Infantry, then lying at High Wycombe, Bucks; and Kitchener's Army knew no more enthusiastic soldier. He applied himself to mastering his job for close on a twelvemonth with the energy and zeal that he displayed in all he did.

The Bearer of Fruit

1915



1915.

Lovat's agonisings that he might never get to the front were not to be of long duration. In the late autumn of 1915 he was given embarkation leave, and came home in high spirits. On the 10th of September, 1915, Lovat had his orders to rejoin his battalion at once. So, after some twelve months of training in home camps, it came about that one night Lovat and my wife and I walked the great London railway station, swarming with men in khaki, in the small hours, and we saw Lovat off to rejoin his regiment on embarkation for the front, my wife having given him a ring as mascot to keep him from harm, a ring that he greatly prized. By a stroke of good fortune I happened to be home on leave.

Lovat's next address was B.E.F.

On the 16th of September, Lovat wrote us his first letter from the front. He was on the blood-stained Ypres salient during this winter.

But once in Flanders, and secure of service at the front, in his billet and in his dug-out, to the thunder of the great guns before Ypres, Lovat found that he had packed his box of water-colours in his haversack; and with pen and brush and the War Office blue-and-red pencil, by guttering candle-light his industrious fingers were soon as busy as ever on sketches in his letters home. In November he drew the "Lone Tree Farm—Plug Street" in a letter to me, at which the censor must have winked the other eye and passed on to safe keeping. Lovat sketches himself in charge of a patrol.

It is curious to note—Lovat no longer being able to use a reed pen

—how the fine steel pen is employed by him in exquisite fashion, as exquisite in its almost etched quality as his broad swinging reed pen line had been big and rhythmical. He made a drawing of a Waterloo Cavalry officer in a letter to me which is an astonishingly fine thing, done under the strain of trench life; and it is interesting to see how Lovat finds relief from the hideous business of war and the mud and the misery by turning to the romantic vein within him and creating little works of art that have scant bearing on the war at his door.

Lovat's constant anguished hope, urged in almost every letter to me from the day war was declared, was to get under my command; but it was not to be.

He went into the hell of it all with the romantic spirit and happy quest for adventure of a big schoolboy on a holiday frolic. He loved the men; and they must have loved him. . . . He sent to me in camp a piece out of the tunic of the first Boche prisoner that he took in a raid that brought him considerable good report from his brigade-commander; and when I accused him in that, on getting his Boche, he emptied his cigarette-case into the fellow's lap, he wondered who had told me! Lovat could not abide to see any man humiliated. . .

1916

1916

Some of the fighting before Ypres punished Lovat very badly at the New Year—he lost so many men and his comrades were falling all about him. He had little time for letters evidently, for they were few and far between, and the censorship was severe. But he found time to sketch roughly in pencil a drawing of "The Old Cloth Hall" and of "G.H.Q." which tell their simple tale of desolation.

But by mid-January the battle line had settled down to suffering the bitter assaults of sleet and snow and biting frost, and Lovat's pencil gets going again with enhancement of blue-and-red pencil in a delightful drawing of "An old Dandy of Marlborough's Day," with a hand-mirror, which is far away from war's horror and as exquisite a thing as he ever drew in pencil. It was made in the trenches on the 19th of January. It was Lovat's last whimsy in Flanders—his last laugh.

The strain and exposure of Ypres and Loos were too much even for his blithe spirit; and he went down before it all. The young giant's strength was from without; he was a fragile vessel within. Sent home a sick man, suffering from the hideous thing called shell-shock, five months after he had gone out to the front, Lovat was back at his beloved Buntingford on the 24th of February, 1916, on "indefinite leave," his "bit" done.

He was no sooner in "Blighty" than he was fretting to be at his art again, and during all the weary months until the war was over he pined for the old studio that he had glorified and has made famous.

But Lovat's fingers could not be idle.

About the middle of May he writes to me in camp that he has met Lady Constance Stewart Richardson, and I think that this brilliant lady must have introduced him to the theatrical circle in which he thenceforth moved. Lovat neglected no step that led him to his appointed destiny in the theatre.

HOWEVER, the social flutter in which he now indulged, could not make his fingers idle; and with June came his dainty little chapbook of "Nursery Rhymes," from the "Poetry Bookshop," in its terra-cotta paper cover, to me in camp. "The Sign of Flying Fame" had been pulled down by the war. On the 20th of July he sent me a proof of his large pen-drawing of "Bristol City." His "indefinite leave" was now cut down to the 9th of August, when he was to rejoin his regiment at some home camp for clerical work; and the time was coming close at hand for the end of his leave and leisure; whilst Lovat dreaded the business of clerical work with a battalion of his regiment in the north as he had never dreaded war; he struggled might and main to get work in London. I was far away with my battalion, and could do little to save him from the melancholy threat of the dreary life in a home camp; and did not know at what moment I might go to the front.

The 9th of October came with his announcement of his engagement to the gifted American singer Grace Crawford, whom he was to marry at an early date; and he joyfully announces at the same time his high glee that he is to go to the War Office on trial for a month on the Intelligence Staff for propaganda work. The bleak north and the mud of dreary camp-life recede for awhile. A month later (Nov. 8th) Lovat was confirmed in his appointment to the Intelligence Staff and "put up" the "beastly green gorgets" and "the brass hat." He was able to do much of his work at home, and was overjoyed.

Lovat had evidently now definitely decided to devote himself to the theatre at all costs, for Gordon Craig wrote to him about "devoting his whole self to the theatre."

However, Lovat was busy on many things besides propaganda, for the first week of November brought "The Fairies' Farewell" and "Kenneth Hare's Poems" to me in camp—two charming little chapbooks decorated by Lovat—"just finished," he writes.

He seems to have satisfied the Intelligence Department at the War Office with his work as propaganda-artist; for the year ended with him at this congenial work, and he had considerable leisure for his own painting the while; at least he was able to make time, as indeed Lovat always made time to create his art, even in the trenches.

I had the bitter disappointment of being disabled this cruel winter from exposure, but it had its compensation in bringing us together. It seemed for awhile almost like old times again with Lovat at work in his delightful little back room at his father's house, or painting away at the Roland Gardens Studio; and the talk again of old plays and scenery and artistic ventures.

1917

Pickford Waller
his
Book.

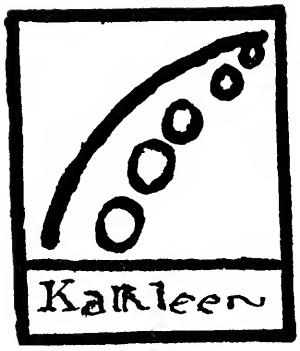
1917

IN mid-January the Poetry Book Shop published Lovat's "Portraits of Three Old Gentlemen." On the 6th of February, Lovat married his gifted young American wife, Grace Crawford, who was to be his eager and sympathetic partner in his artistic career forthwith. To Lovat's consternation, his honeymoon was scarce ended when the War Office flung a bomb into his studio by ordering him to rejoin his regiment in the month, and to get a medical certificate of fitness; the medical certificate, however, turned out to be a somewhat grim affair; the resulting medical board found him fit for the army but only for clerical work. It was a time when a man with a wooden leg could have got into the cavalry. However, the North was now wholly to recede as at the stroke of a magician's wand; for, to Lovat's great delight he was posted at the end of April to the Record's Office at Hounslow, getting home every evening at sunset; and it was astounding how much really quite fine work he now wrought in the evenings of those invalid days when he was on a staff job from early morning to candle-light.

Lovat busied himself with the designing of Posters for his own

amusement—"I've been doing Posters for myself, no one else would have them," he writes. But what was really absorbing his creative thinking was the making of very important paintings of scenery and costumes for old plays. He again made overtures to the Leicester Galleries for a show of his work, but could not secure the rooms. However, he was concentrating upon and increasing his hold upon the theatre the while, and on throughout all the summer; though, in October, he wrote to me, not without a note of discouragement: "I am full up with some things people want me to do for them, stage-scenes, etc. They take the very devil of a time to do and then it is generally for nothing at all." Lovat was getting his first taste of the living theatre! We sympathize with a friend when he is bitten by a dog; but we appreciate his suffering more keenly when the dog bites our own leg.

1918


Kathleen

1918

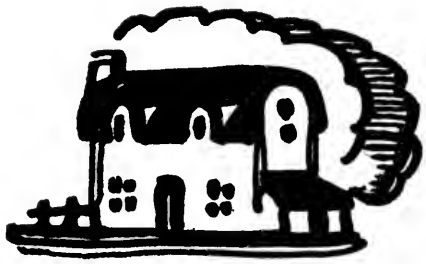
The New Year came in amidst an ominous lull at the Front, a lull that goes before a storm. The Hunnish hosts were being secretly gathered for the last desperate gamble, the last bid by the distracted Kaiser and his much-defeated generals to save his throne or downfall. For it was now no longer an affair of conquering the world; the throne rocked, and Germany must be kept subject by the "War God," and Germany was growing threatening.

NOWING, as every man of strategic intelligence must, that it was coming—as rat caught in trap—I knew it was inevitable, knew that it was the only thing that the German overlords could do. It was their sole hope against overthrow by their own sullen and defeated people. They had promised to Germany for a generation the whole wide world to play with; and had failed to deliver even the key to the backdoor. It were as though you offered a man a palace and gave him the dustbin. I had written "Germany at Bay" in the summer of the past year, aghast at the official ignorance as to what meant victory and what meant defeat, in the hope of stiffening public opinion to the forthright prosecution of the war. The book seems to have given gross offence in official quarters; but at least it warned the public of what was about to happen, and happen it did, with a vengeance. The disasters of the

spring of 1918 made Lovat uneasy about his duty to go back to the front, but it was clear that he would never again go through the hell of war—he was down and out.

AMILY responsibilities were now crowding in upon him. On the 29th of April, Lovat's little daughter was born to him. In mid-May he begged me to be godfather to the little one, the bonny, fascinating little girl who, later on, when she came to a voice in the business, swept aside the ways of mice and men, and self-christened herself "Lovat's Dorkles." I had appealed to Lovat, in reply to his request, to do what Enid Bagnold had told him to do in his extreme youth, "to put hairpins in his hair and be reasonable." I urged him for heaven's sake and the child's sake to give her a rich godfather and "prospects," instead of loading the child's fate with a "dud" like me who could give her nothing—and reminding him that if, as it was ridiculous to imagine, he should go west before me, I should in any case watch over her well-being in so far as in me lay. But Lovat would have none of it; and it seemed to be a distress to him. "I can think of no one I should like the child to have better than you—Catherine D'Erlanger and Jenée are to be godmothers and James Stephens, the Irishman, will play second fiddle to you, so you will suffer in good company. Don't refuse; there's a good fellow" . . . . So the little "Dorkles" had to be sacrificed; Lovat would not be "reasonable," and his hair was now too short cut for hairpins.

Lovat's "family events" always seemed to be chosen by the War

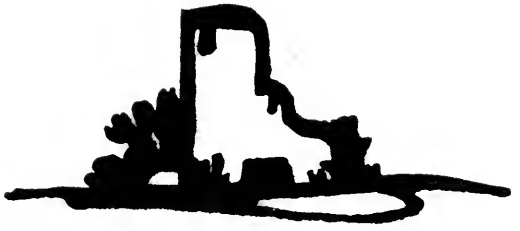


Office for flinging bombs into his genial wayfaring. He was suddenly ordered before a medical board again; but Lovat writes to me that he expects either to remain at the Record's Office at Hounslow or to get "the beatific boot." I think he must have got "the beatific boot;" for, not long thereafter, he was in treaty for the purchase of the house at 11 Tregunter Road in South Kensington, which was to become his first home after his marriage.

SETTLED in by October—the German was on the run everywhere and the end near,—the Armistice came within a month—11 Tregunter Road was the heading to a letter acknowledging a preface I had written at his urging for a show of his paintings about to be given at Birmingham. "My very best thanks," writes Lovat—"for the splendid preface. It is very high praise indeed, and my ears have turned a sort of beetroot hue. I am very grateful, old chap, and have forwarded it on to Drinkwater 'for his information and action, please.'" . . . This preface to Lovat's show at the Foyer picture exhibitions held in the Birmingham Repertory Theatre makes another milestone in the indication of Lovat's art career; for, though it is unfortunately without illustrations, it proves that Lovat was now almost wholly concerned with the theatre—that he was in touch with Drinkwater—and that he was pressing forward to stage-production.

It will be seen, then, that Lovat is wholly concerned with the theatre. He now, probably through Drinkwater, came in touch with Nigel Playfair and his Lyric Opera House venture at Hammersmith; for at Yuletide Lovat designed the now famous Poster for the Lyric at Hammersmith of the fantastic figure, in cocked hat and peg-top trousers, holding the two masks of tragedy and comedy, for the "Make Believe" Pantomime; and I think he designed the harlequin dice drop-curtain.

1919



1919

The New Year of 1919 was a thrilling one for Lovat. He was closely in touch with the Lyric Opera House at Hammersmith. On the 8th of January he writes of his fatigue in designing costumes and scenery for a "Tiny Pergolesi Opera" to be produced at the Lyric at Hammersmith, which his wife had translated into English and in which she was to play a part. This "La Serva Padrona" was produced on the 29th of January, 1919. Lovat begged us to bring our friend, the famous singer, Blanche Marchesi. It seemed to me rather a pity that Lovat should make his first step in the theatre with this tedious boredom with all the dreary inartistic Italian opera tradition writ all over it; for even his charming scene and costumes could not bring life to the boredom. It was a dangerous blunder at the threshold of his adventure into the realm of the theatre, and might have wrecked him. But, ill-judged as was the futility, Lovat's share in it was not lost upon Nigel Playfair; and by April he was in full swing upon the designing of costumes and scenery for "As You Like It," which was produced on the 21st of April. The July number of "The Studio" contained an illustrated article upon this production of "As You Like It" by Lovat, which proved that, attacked as he might be in certain sections of the Press, he was thrusting into the public eye and was become a quantity to be reckoned with.

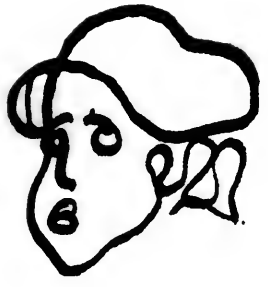
Lovat at once stepped into his appointed realm. The way was paved for the success that was to sweep the town and to bring Lovat into his own.

But even the theatre could not keep Lovat's industrious fingers from his many fancies; he was at work on a book he had long contemplated on "The History of Costume," for which I had been trying to collect

material for him—it is to be hoped that this book, even if unfinished, may one day be published as it stands. In July he sent me the proof of the cover-design for Harold Monro's chapbooks, which was issued in several changes of colouring. September gave us perhaps the most beautiful poster he ever wrought, the mask of a girl's head in emerald green, sky-blue, and scarlet, the Poster for the Mansard Gallery for his own show of pictures at Heal's.

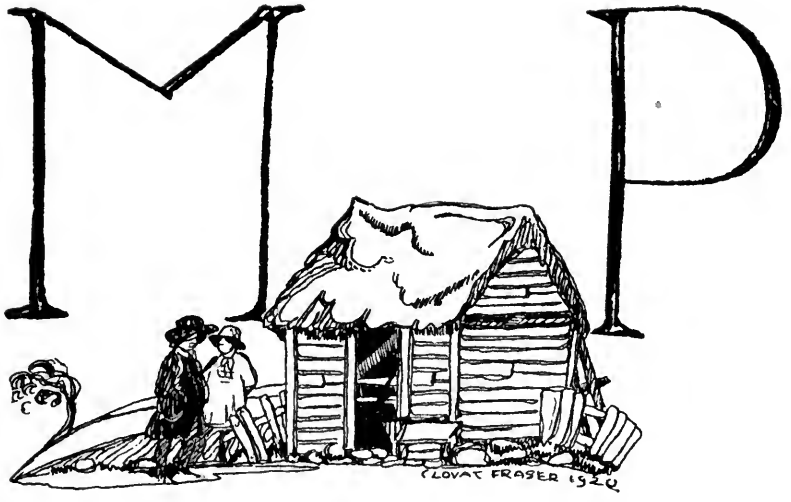
Yuletide brought the large "Nursery Rhymes," published by Jack of Edinburgh, in colours.

What new restlessness induced Lovat to seek change of home I don't know; but he decided to sell his beautifully decorated home in Tregunter Road and to move towards Chelsea.



1920

The Splendid Wayfaring



1920

Lovat took the lease of his new and second house at 23 Elm Park Gardens in Chelsea, and decorated it gorgeously throughout. It was all a delight and excitement to him; but he was already losing something of boyish fire and was become more staid in his enthusiasms. He had moved in by the end of February; and was soon busy upon the designs for the scenery and costumes of "The Beggar's Opera."

On the night of June 5th, the curtain rang up on the first performance of "The Beggar's Opera." It was to make Lovat famous. From end to end of it, from the scenery and costumes to the lighting and the book of the words, the atmosphere, its whole essence, the thing was Lovat's, woven through and through with his gay pattern and design. He made a new poster for "The Beggar's Opera," the red-coated heavily bewigged Macheath in irons, which has decorated the hoardings of London town for a couple of years and still takes the summer's sun and winter's rain. The play was still being played, and the poster on the city's hoardings, the day that Lovat lay silent in death, his ears deaf to the world's applause.

Lovat's teeming brain and his resourceful fancy still wrought designs for varied themes. He drew for Walter Bradley the charming printer's mark foi The Morland Press, so redolent of Morland's art; and this design of an old thatched cottage probably inspired a sketch on a postcard to me at this time: "Let us all take this house and go and live in the country for ever *always*."

For some reason or another, Lovat was beginning to feel lonely! It is a curious fact that Lovat's early poems on the edge of manhood dwell on this fear of loneliness. It seemed to haunt him, this big, affectionate fellow who joyed in his friends and made friends as the summer sun makes flowers.

OW, here was a young fellow at thirty leaping into an astounding success, feeling lonely, when most men of genius are but struggling for recognition. Happy in his home, in his family, in his child, in his life; successful beyond all calculation, working in the realm he had desired to conquer, he finds some bitter in the cup! As the years pass, and the grey besprinkles our temples, we begin to feel the pang of friends departed, we know the empty chair at the banquet of life—the chairs become more empty—beloved faces vanish into dreams. But youth knows little of these hauntings, cares less. Yet here was

Lovat, successful and loving success, haunted by the hint of loneliness! And not only troubled by it, but rapidly burying his blithe and buoyant youngness of spirit in it, becoming set and sobered. Of a truth, we humans are a puzzle of puzzles.

He constantly takes up this burden. Amidst all the glamour of his huge success with "The Beggar's Opera," he suddenly missed his old friends about him. It seemed to distress him. To the day he died he recurred to this again and again. I never could understand why. Something had gone out of life for him; something of its salt and savour. And his youth departed with it. . . . I fancy he was doing too much.

In September appeared "The Lute of Love," decorated by his hands, as a charming chapbook; and he made perhaps his finest drawing for the cover of a piece of music, the "Valse Intrigante," by Patience Mellor.

In October he was planning a production of "Macbeth" for Hackett, whose acting he held in very high esteem; but I do not think anything came of it.

November gave us Lovat's delightful Toy Poster of a gallant figure on a rocking horse for Heal's Christmas Show of Toys, and he designed the invitation for the same. Indeed, for his friend Ambrose Heal, Lovat always seemed to put forth his best effort.

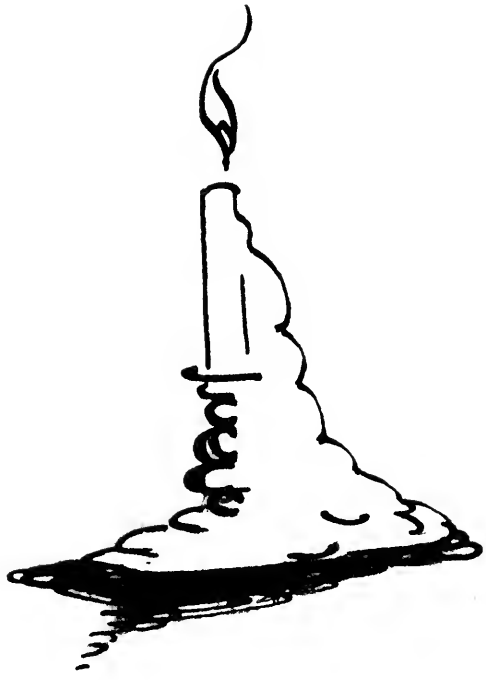
The Minden Day Poster for the Hampshire Regiment was of this year.

But 1920 was above all the year of Lovat's winning into his kingdom—the theatre.

My prophecy had been fulfilled.

But just as Tree had slammed the door of the theatre upon him on his first stepping across its threshold, so now as he stepped into his realm, Death was as wilfully about to strike him down hard by the portal.

1921



1921

When 1921 dawned, Lovat was fully established in the theatre. The New Year found him designing scenery and stage-dresses and colour-lighting for Karsavina in "The Two Blackbirds" for the "Nursery Rhymes Ballet" at the Coliseum, and the like.

RECKLESS of the heavy work for the theatres his teeming fancy still impelled his tireless fingers to work in the several fields that he had made his own. He published, as in the old "Flying Fame" days, on several gaily coloured papers a "Vase Decoration" to hang on the wall. He had found a sympathetic and enthusiastic publisher and printer in Curwen, of the Curwen Press, a source of very real pleasure to Lovat, who in the early days of February sent me sketches to show the method he employed, in conjunction with Curwen, in making the colour-prints for the Curwen Press. He was at this time designing the trade-tract of "Little Romances," and a week or two afterwards appeared one of the wittiest and best produced trade-tracts he ever wrought, the now eagerly sought after "A Great Step Forward," beautifully reproduced and published by the Curwen Press for the Comptometer, or counting machine, ingeniously invented by Dorr Felt, and used in banks and great counting houses. March brought the "Helicon Hill" chapbook, in its gay green cover with pale rose label; but Lovat begins to show haste and weariness more than once in these dainty designs—the man was being overworked, and was content to send out slight things rather than fail to carry out a bargain.

Here is little of that masterly stuff such as the reed pen "Splendid Rebel" for "The Splendid Wayfaring." 'Tis true that the things he had to decorate were but dainty fooling, as he himself writes in the copy he sent to me: "I thought the comic poems in 'Helicon Hill' rather good spoof, did you?" But "Meligo Popholoi" was something of far finer stuff and exquisite fabric than "good spoof" . . . . No; Lovat was tired—driven—beginning to work to a pattern. Nor is the cover-design for "By Olive and Fir," of which he sent me a proof in April, reassuring,for it is but a moderate essay from Lovat's pen in design. I think he must have begun to feel dissatisfied; for he did what he always now did when he felt that things were not going quite right—he came back to me. He was complaining pathetically of being overdriven, of having "taken on too much," and above all, of feeling that he had drifted away from his old friends. I never quite solved the problem whether this was an expression of tiredness and overstrain, as I knew little of his new acquaintances and could not judge—but why he should be feeling any sense of disheartenment when the ball was at his feet and success of an astounding kind coming to him so early in his career, was more than a little baffling.

My wife and I were strolling down the Strand on the afternoon of her birthday in February, which Lovat had in the old days "kept" with many rites; he had now forgotten it. It so happened that we found him in the Strand in a brooding mood, and he was frankly delighted to see us. He discovered, from some chance word, that it was my wife's birthday, and insisted on taking us to tea, bought her a little Indian clay figure, and clung to us all the afternoon. He poured out

to us the confession of his weariness and fatigue—he was keeping unconscionable hours—the theatre is merciless to its creators. I told him he was now in a position to make the theatre subject to him, not he to it, or it would kill him. He grieved over never seeing his old friends now, and he was doggedly set on seeing more of them in the future; he missed them keenly. He felt that he had drifted. He had not heard "Hoyd" sing for months. He seemed boyishly glad to be able to pour it all out; he was quite his old self again. And then and there I was to promise to go and see the work he had been engaged upon during the later part of the past year and was still working upon. He wanted a frank criticism before he showed it to the general public. But he wanted to get just a few more pieces done first, and would fix the day.

It was about May Day that Lovat decided his *magnum opus*, as he called it, to be sufficiently advanced for me to see it, and he pleaded hard that we would go and let him know whether he was on the right lines. He hoped that nothing would interfere with our going. He was clearly most anxious about his new development. We went.

Lovat's industry was again a revelation.

It was interesting to note that the compulsion of the fine steel pen in his drawings for his home letters from the trenches had developed in Lovat as remarkable a skill with the fine line as he had acquired with the broad black line of the reed pen; it also compelled greater accuracy of drawing—and Lovat realised it and was now striving to conquer it. He was not to live to conquer it as wholly as he had perfected the broad black line of the reed pen—the containing fine line of features and

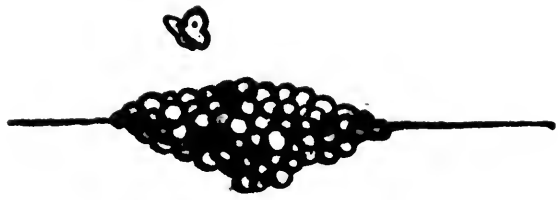
extremities of the human figure was faulty; but the whole craftsmanship was splendid in effect. From the autumn of 1920, with "The Beggar's Opera" off his hands, to this May Day of 1921, Lovat had been engaged upon a series of very beautiful water-colour drawings of costumes for the characters from the great dramas of the past; somewhat on the lines of William Nicholson's large portfolios. He wrought them on a considerable scale on silvery grey sugar-paper, a by no means sympathetic or easy ground on which to employ the fine pen; for, in these designs he used this very fine threadlike line with rich flat washes of colour—the fine line becoming but a containing line to hold together these sumptuous masses and groups of glowing patterns which he wrought in consummate fashion. I think he would have done better to have employed a broader line, of which he was master, in some tint, for the thin black line leaves a weak effect, whilst it also pronounces his faulty drawing, especially of the features and hands and feet. But the splendour of the massed colour and its pattern overwhelm the weakness of the line, and swamp it so that its faultiness becomes of little account in the resulting magnificence.

Lovat, like most of the designers of stage-dress to-day, had of course learnt much from Bakst, who had by sheer genius, beauty of handling, and the use of exquisite harmonies of colour, raised costume designs into lyrical works of art—leaving the makers of the costume to shape

them as best they could. Lovat had now made his designs on the same larger scale. The result was a collection of colour-harmonies that promised great things for the theatre, though they are of course of lesser pictorial value for the walls; and it seemed rather a pity that he did not give his greater gifts to creating a *magnum opus* of "scenes" from the famous masterpieces of the dramatists.

Lovat at the same time showed us the costume designs and scenery for a new play by Lord Dunsany, called "If"; and for Drinkwater's drama of "Mary Stuart." The Drinkwater designs lacked something of Lovat's splendour of colour; the play for some reason had evidently not aroused Lovat's full song. But in "If" he found the whimsy and that Eastern glamour that had first roused him to design for the theatre in "The Three Students," and he lavished upon Dunsany's play the full orchestration of his palette and his genius. It was the most sumptuous work he ever completed. It is possible that he might have achieved "The Beggar's Opera" by a fortunate hazard; here was proof that it was no thing of mere chance, for he bettered it in "If." It was destined that he should never see this, his masterpiece, performed.

Lovat had begged us to go to him without fail as he was about to take a much needed holiday. Before he started on that holiday he sent the black and white proof, before colouring, for his Christmas card of



the "Three Old Men." It was the last letter I was ever to receive from him.

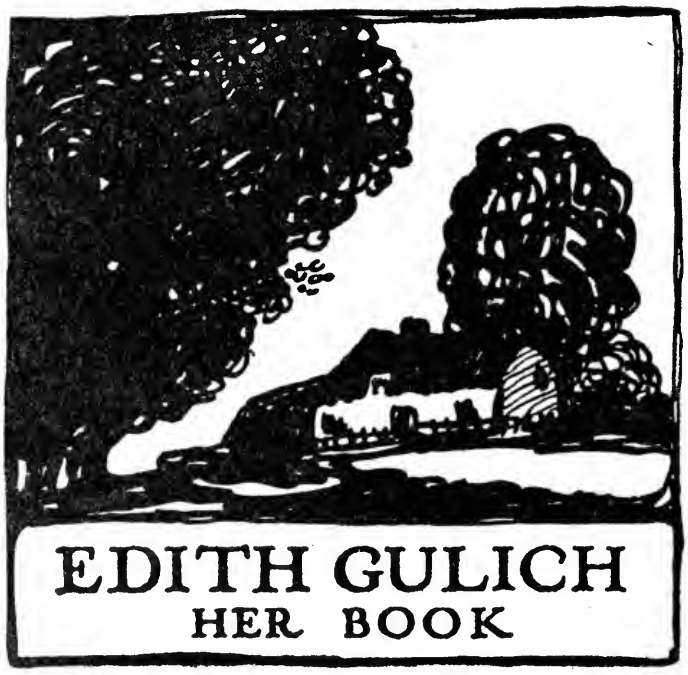
Thus Lovat was pouring out superb work for the theatre, when, a-holiday-making from his ceaseless and prolific workmanship, Death, out of the wilful decision of Fate, stepped across the gracious young fellow's wayfaring and cut the thread of his blithe career.

He was staying at Dymchurch, near Hythe, in Kent, and his father was happy to be with him. On Friday, the 10th of June, Lovat was taken seriously ill and had to be carried off to a nursing home in Hythe—he had sickened from the duodenal trouble that had afflicted him from childhood, and a well-known surgeon had to be called down from town. Lovat bore the operation well, but the trenches had done him no good—on the morrow his heart gave way, and on Waterloo Day, the 18th of June, 1921, death stepped through the lattice, released his handsome spirit, and closed his mortal eyes in the sleep from which there is no waking.

How far Lovat would have gone we shall never know; he was but at the beginning of the utterance of his genius so far as we can judge. We only know that in him was lost an exquisite influence in our great national achievement.

He sleeps in his adored Hertfordshire which colours nearly all his landscapes, in the God's-acre of that Buntingford that he had loved so well—sleeps alone, under the summer moons and the glittering stars of winter—one who lavished on his fellows so warm and generous an affection, and with his constant and stedfast chivalry won all hearts.

LOVAT: AS DECORATOR, MAKER OF BOOKS, TRADE TRACTS, POSTERS AND CARDS


EDITH GULICH
HER BOOK

MELODRAMA
The Splendid Wayfaring

SOME mischievous sprite at Lovat's cradle decided that his good fairy godmothers were granting him too great largesse of gifts, and so decided to withhold from him the gift of illustration. He had this curious limitation—particularly curious in his case considering his splendid sense of a stage picture and of colour and arrangement of mass and line to create scenically a dramatic situation and atmosphere, which would seem to be of the very essence of illustration—nevertheless he wholly lacked the power of illustration. This lack is perhaps most marked in his sequence of Christmas Cards, in not one of which, except the last he wrought and was not to live to see in print, did he seem capable of suggesting, even remotely, the atmosphere of Yuletide.

We have only to take Howard Pyle's immortal achievement as an illustrator—indeed, but to take his illustrations of pirates alone—and to set it beside Lovat's "Pirates," to realise the splendour of Howard Pyle's art. His "Marooned," and "On the Tortugas," and "Walking the Plank," and the like, are amongst the masterpieces of all time. Again, let us take Edwin Abbey; or in the realm of books for children, let us glance at the exquisite art of Randolph Caldecott in his famous

"Nursery Rhymes," or "Old Christmas," or "Bracebridge Hall," or the "Graphic," which are very masterpieces of illustration.

But Lovat was as exquisite a decorator of books as he was an indifferent illustrator. It may be that much of what he achieved in other fields may pass away, but as a decorator and maker of books he will live, as Crawhall will live. Here he was in his own way a very master; and his influence is and will remain widefelt.

It was in decoration that Lovat first came into his own. And in nothing did he reveal more precious gifts than in his consummate treatment of books and the printed page, from their covers to their headpieces and tailpieces. He created a type of bookmaking all his own, without pedantry, fresh and original and attractive.

But from the very beginning Lovat used gay colours for his paper covers—and what a job we had to get them! His title page for "Poems by Cotton," or The Morland Press Collection of his decorations, show Lovat at his best in a type of title page that he made peculiarly his own.

Every book or booklet produced by Lovat was a treasure-house of little decorations—headpieces and tailpieces—*never too important to dwarf the text or take the eye away from the reading of the letterpress*—that most demoralizing and unforgivable of blunders so often inflicted on decorated books, a blunder of which Lovat was never guilty.

The Poetry Bookshop was greatly responsible for bringing Lovat as a maker of books before the public; the poet Harold Monro brought out several book covers for the chapbook issued from the Poetry Bookshop, and more than a few of his poems were decorated by Lovat in dainty volumes. Harold Monro also kept the broadsides going for some considerable time.

DESIGNS BY CLAUD LOVAT FRASER

[1890-1921]

THE MORLAND PRESS
190 Ebury Street
London SW1

It was above all the service rendered to Lovat by Ambrose Heal, by Harold Curwen, and by the Poetry Bookshop under Harold Monro, that steadily won Lovat into public notice; and in the north Edwin Jack completed that great service.

Edwin Jack, of the publishing house of Jack of Edinburgh, was one of Lovat's earliest and most enthusiastic encouragers. He gave Lovat his first commission to decorate the covers of the three volumes of "The English Year," and later called upon Lovat to decorate the covers for his edition of "Charles Dickens."

For Felix Godwin, of the music publishers Godwin & Tabb, Lovat designed a handsome scheme in emerald green and magenta to Bliss's "Rout," with Pierrot and Harlequin and Co. dancing amidst paper lanterns and showers of confetti. Curwen also published sixteen or more pieces of music, action songs for children, embellished with rough sketch cover decorations by Lovat.

In the decoration of the book, in the "make-up," and in the design of its covers and title page, in the beautifying of its pages with head-piece and tailpiece, Lovat created a style that has already bettered the whole field of the making of books. His exquisite taste and his gaiety of heart raised the book, the booklet, and the pamphlet to a standard that will hereafter benefit letters and give literary art a worthy setting.

Lovat was fortunate in early catching the attention of business houses at the head of which were men of taste who realised the prodigious value of attractive and artistic advertisement of their wares.

MR. AMBROSE HEAL, of the famous furnishing house of Heal & Sons, encouraged and brought out some of Lovat's best decorative qualities in fabrics, posters, and invitation cards. To Ambrose Heal he owed a very great advance in his handling, for he was given a free hand and a fair canvas. The firm of W. Foxton were also supporters of Lovat's art in textiles. Lovat had an excellent ally in the early days in the printer Stevens for all his essays with "Flying Fame" and the like.

Later on, Lovat found his ideal colour-printer in Curwen, of the Curwen or Unicorn Press, who made colour-blocks for Lovat's work that are an example to any printer. Lovat was overjoyed to find him, and to work with him. With care and sympathetic skill, Curwen found and developed a technique to fit Lovat's charming fancy; and instead of dragging Lovat down to commercial standards, he brought "Commercial Tracts" up to Lovat, who adapted his picturesque and gay art to it all.

URWEN'S many successes were headed by the "Safety First Calendar"; the "Fripp's Olive Oil Soap," for which Lovat decorated in colour the fascinating booklet "A Diary of 1745," strongly reminiscent of "The Beggar's Opera." For the "MacFisheries" he designed several showcards; this firm has always shown artistic taste. For the firm of Eno of Fruit Salt fame, and for the as famous

firm of scent and soap makers, Atkinson, he designed delightful labels and cards redolent of lavender.

But then, everything that Lovat had about him was dainty and gay —his postcards, his letter-paper, his envelopes—the very labels for pasting on the back of his pictures.

Of Lovat's Posters: the first was the large "Saracen's Head" decoration for the tailpiece in "The Splendid Wayfaring," of which he borrowed the large original from me, and reproduced full size and decorated in gold and colours, laid on by hand, for his first Show of Paintings.

Ambrose Heal inspired three or four of Lovat's best posters; and for Miss Dolores Denison, of Harlequin & Co., he made the harlequin.

But probably, Lovat's two most famous posters were for the Lyric at Hammersmith—with poetic justice, for it was the Lyric that made him—the Lyric Poster of the fantastic figure in the black pantaloons, holding the masks of comedy and tragedy, designed for the Christmas of 1918; and the Poster for "The Beggar's Opera," with the much bewigged Macheath in red coat and in irons (1920).

Lovat's posters stand out for their personal charm, some spirit of romance that they breathe, not easy to define. One does not pass them by. As always, there is a lyrical note.

LOVAT AS THE POET HONEYWOOD

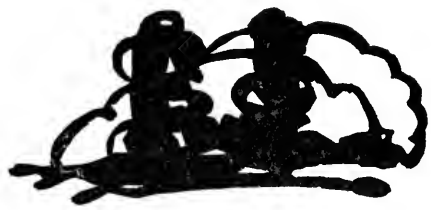
The Splendid Wayfaring

"This fellow
Honeywood
is an unmitigated
damned scribbler."

Lovat disguised his pen under the name of Honeywood; and—scourged him in his drawings as "an unmitigated, damned scribbler."

It was a part of a quaint shyness that held the man; he was ever a little coy of posing as a literary man, yet his conversation, his letters, and the few literary pieces that he published, proved him rarely gifted in literary expression.

Lovat's literary gifts, like his literary tastes, were within marked limitations. Although he had a rare appreciation of the great dead and knew his Shakespeare, his intimates amongst the illustrious dead, as amongst the living writers, were the great "little" masters—the little masters who were gifted with dandiacal style and quaint conceits. He was a voracious and cultured reader; but his reading ran always towards the dandies of the pen, living or dead. Above all, it was to the writer of the musical phrase, to the lyrical sense in the man, that he was most drawn—Herrick was ever his love—and they that wove their art of words akin to Herrick. The neat epigram, the condensed epitome of life, phrased with a musical lilt of words, tuneful, colourful—these ever drew Lovat's homage.



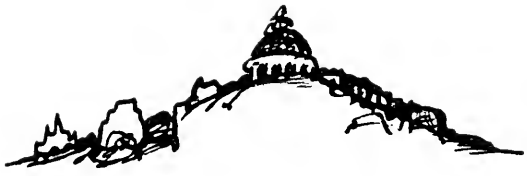
THE ROBIN'S SONG

God bless the field and bless the furrow,
Stream and branch and rabbit burrow,
Hill and stone and flower and tree,
From Bristol Town to Wetherby—
Bless the sun and bless the sleet,
Bless the lane, bless the street,
Bless the night and bless the day,
From Somerset and all the way
To the meadows of Cathay;
Bless the minnow, bless the whale,
Bless the rainbow and the hail,
Bless the nest and bless the leaf,
Bless the righteous and the thief,
Bless the wing and bless the fin,
Bless the air I travel in,
Bless the mill and bless the mouse,
Bless the miller's bricken house,
Bless the earth and bless the sea,
God bless you and God bless me!

Lovat chose as hymn for his marriage service an exquisite old-world song so redolent of him that it might have been written by him. As I lay down the pen wherewith I have haltingly endeavoured to evoke the portrait of him, the opening phrase of this old song makes me realise that in these few lyrical lines was written with far more consummate skill than mine the complete record of his wayfaring.

"King Jesus hath a garden, full of divers flowers,
Where I go culling posies gay, all times and hours,
There naught is heard
But Paradise bird,
Harp, dulcimer, lute,
With cymbal,
Trump and tymbal,
And the tender, soothing flute."

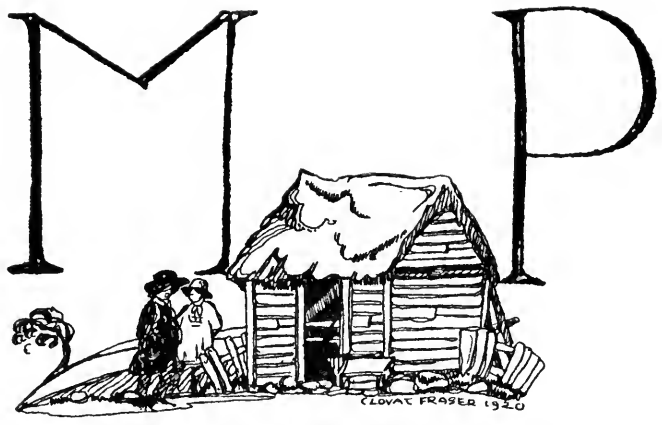
Yes; that was Lovat in God's wonderful world—he was ever culling posies gay, all times and hours.



POSTSCRIPT

IT would ill become me to let this book go forth to the world without acknowledging my indebtedness to that master printer Walter Bradley of The Morland Press, not only for the handsome way in which he has devoted his rare skill to do honour to Lovat's memory, but in that it was largely due to his enthusiasm and help in its making that the book was brought together at all. I have also to thank my friend the artist Marion Neilson for kindly letting me use her superb portrait of Lovat in the flower of his young manhood. To Dan Rider I am deeply indebted for the tedious business of going through my proofs to check a memory not above tripping. To perhaps the finest authority on Lovat's iconography, Christopher Millard, I acknowledge much most generous assistance. To Harold Monro I owe the privilege of quoting "The Robin's Song" from the Poetry Bookshop's Chapbooks. Indeed, to the many friends of Lovat and my own, I take this opportunity of acknowledging all their handsome support. I am happy to think that henceforth the world at large may have some share in enjoying part of Lovat's art that his spendthrift genius put into my keeping.

Haldane Macfall.



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