

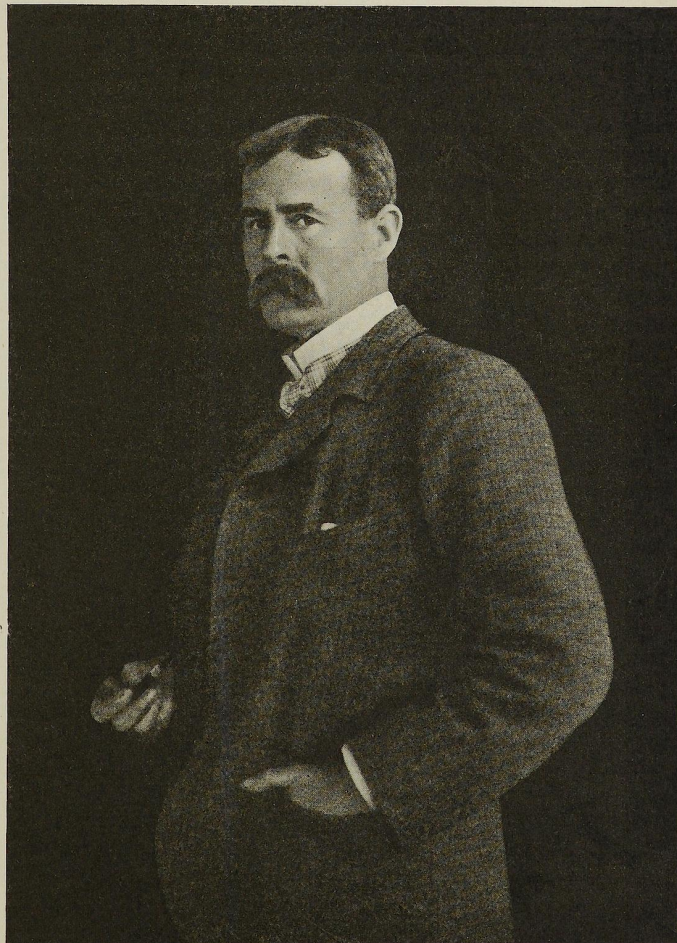
In Memoriam: Wilfrid Ball

IN MEMORIAM: WILFRID BALL,
WATER-COLOUR PAINTER. BY C.
LEWIS HIND

ICLOSE my eyes, dream back a quarter of a century, and out of the mist of memory comes Wilfrid Ball, quick of step, quick of smile, quick of comprehension, more vivid to me than many of the living. Those were the days of the old Hogarth Club, and regularly, when he was in London, he would descend from his spacious sky studio in Albemarle Street to lunch and dine at the Hogarth. His habits were methodical. Early training as an accountant had taught him method. His mind, too, was orderly. Revolutionary art, revolutionary opinions, did not interest him. His pleasure and duty was to produce Wilfrid Ball Water-Colours. On that he concentrated. He loved painting; he loved etching; he loved nature, and he was quite content to march modestly along the pleasant road of his pleasant choice. I do not think that he was in the least ambitious, and I am sure that he had no vanity, and no illusions about himself. He liked to etch and to paint, and he was delighted to find that art dealers and the public also liked his water-colours and etchings. For years Agnew's showed a panel of Wilfrid Balls at their annual water-colour display. He was successful. In a quiet way his work was in greater demand than the performances of men with a much greater reputation. The explanation is simple. His patrons were not professional buyers. They bought his water-

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colours because they liked them, liked to hang them in their drawing-rooms. A Beardsley would have been provocative; a Ball was sedative. His patrons were wide-cast and faithful. Last week when I asked a bank manager of my acquaintance, who spends his Sundays painting in water-colour, if he knew Wilfrid Ball's work, he smiled and invited me into his home. I counted over twenty Wilfrid Balls in various rooms. And Mr. Deighton, a lifelong friend and patron, tells me that for years he had only to put a Wilfrid Ball into his window to sell it immediately. They were not bought by *les jeunes*, or by those who scramble for fine Brabazons; they were bought by the solid, family English who never change. (How



PORTRAIT OF WILFRID BALL

FROM A PHOTOGRAPH

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