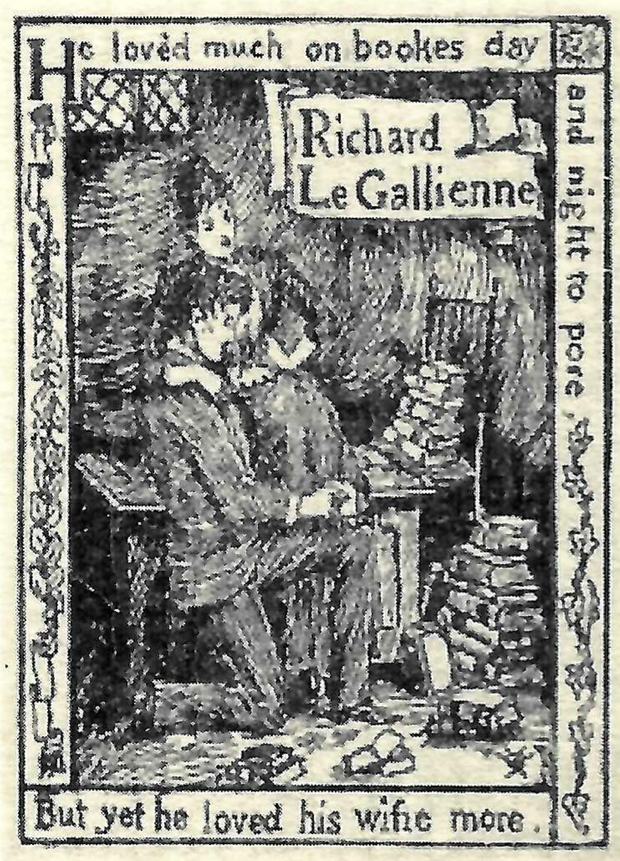
'THE LE GALLIENNE VERSUS HERON-ALLEN INCIDENT'

JOHN P. MAHONEY and BARBARA P. MAHONEY

TALKS DELIVERED AT THE NINTH AND TENTH HERON-ALLEN SYMPOSIUMS, NATURAL HISTORY MUSEUM, LONDON, JULY 2009, AND WEST SUSSEX RECORD OFFICE, CHICHESTER, JUNE 2010



VERSUS

Opusculum XVII
Heron-Allen Society

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by
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'The Le Gallienne versus Heron-Allen Incident' by
John P. Mahoney and Barbara P. Mahoney.
Talks delivered at the Ninth annual Heron-Allen Symposium,
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Cover: Bookplates of Richard Le Gallienne and Edward Heron-Allen.

THE LE GALLIENNE VS. HERON-ALLEN 'INCIDENT'

In our review of the life of Edward Heron-Allen, we were perplexed at two major events in his 80+ years of life: the events of the 1892-1893 'Incident' involving the Sette of Odd Volumes (1) and the 1932 breakup of his long scientific partnership with Arthur Earland involving the Discovery Reports on foraminifera. (2). We were inexplicably drawn to these two volcanic events hoping to understand his sudden abrupt severance of long term and productive synergistic relationships. Perhaps there was our subliminal desire to learn and hopefully avoid suffering a similar trauma of lost opportunities and friendships. We narrowed our review to the 'Incident' at the Sette because it reinforced how one's future can quickly and adversely change despite an exemplary life. This incident shows us a human side of Heron-Allen who made a very minor private, uncomplimentary comment, suffered the loss of fellowship through treachery, and endured months of public doubt and scorn. History records how he dealt with these issues and the incredible spectrum of long term human responses to short term adversity. "To become a deeper man is the privilege of those who have suffered", (Oscar Wilde). (3)

In what is now known as 'The Incident' of 1893, Edward Heron-Allen was accused of uttering an unspeakable slur against poet Richard Le Gallienne, a well respected candidate for membership in the Sette of Odd Volumes. Our research suggests that the provocateur of this destructive episode was neither the purported slandered nor slanderer, but a fellow brother in the Sette, a powerful, well connected publisher for aspiring literary artists in the 1890s. The authors were intrigued by a comment by a founding Sette member, W. Mort Thompson, in an 1894 year book publication of the Sette, "certain differences of opinion, long chronic, eventually became acute, thereby causing the retirement of several members". (4) The animosities and ruthless behaviors of some of the major players in the 1893 'Incident' finale could not be explained solely

by the alleged slur. This review explores the underlying source of the literary club's early discontent and the subsequent 1893 firestorm at the Sette of Odd Volumes.

Part I
The Clouds of Discontent at the Sette of Odd Volumes, 1889

In the early 1870s, Bernard Quaritch, W. Mort Thompson and Charles W.H. Wyman met by chance in a small Italian restaurant and formed a triangular social circle. (5) In the same period, Quaritch had purchased an extremely rare Gutenberg Bible and shared his find with his new found friends at his private home. This initial private and social gathering led to more frequent dinner-table meetings to just "talk books". The advantage to all was plain and simple: mutual sympathy, interests, comradeship and support. With time, the group slowly expanded to a wider circle of bibliophiles. Rather than endure the uncertainty of irregular meetings, W. Mort Thompson proposed the formation of a permanent club. Quaritch is credited with the concept of distinguished individual members, much like odd volumes in an otherwise magnificent library, coming together to form a perfect Sette. This founders' group also made the rules. Once constituted in 1878, fifteen members joined at once and founders were elected officers. Quaritch set forth the creed of the Sette:

Conviviality and concord giving each member strength and confidence

Charitable feeling towards each other

Our acts must have the imprint of honor and truth

Quaritch preached that if members adopted this creed, then belonging to the Sette would transform the club members into an "intellectual aristocracy". Whether by default or election by admiration, Quaritch was acknowledged to be the principal founder, first President, de facto "Godfather" of the Sette and the "genius" who produced the Society of Odd Volumes. The Sette's first "Boke" illustrated this social coronation of his grace, B. Quaritch. (6)

Bernard Quaritch, London's most renowned 19th century bookseller, had been described as having a "....strong character, shrewd, unyielding, irascible, energetic and industrious. Physically, he was a short, pudgy and awkward figure. He occasionally displayed rough manners, irrepressible egotism, and pithy expressions, delivered in a grating voice". (7) Edward Heron-Allen described Quaritch as follows: ".....a small but terrible figure of a man sat at the end of the table. He was - I will not say dressed - but clothed with striking, one might almost say tramp-like negligence."

Bernard Quaritch, 1819-1899, Original founder and President of the Sette of Odd Volumes

Heron-Allen sensed that Quaritch was "clearly a great man, a strong man, an eater of lions, with the grandfather of hats upon his head". (8)

In the early years of the Sette, the original founders had extensive influence over the club's administration, rules and most importantly membership selection. All members had equal rights, but different titles: Odd versus Supplemental Volumes. The Sette of Odd Volumes was the 21 "Elder" members with the most seniority (The perfect set was the 21 volumes of the 1821 variorum edition of *Plays and Poems of William Shakespeare*). The Supplemental Odd Volumes were the next 21 members most recently elected, "Juniors". With expansion and diversification of Odd Volume membership to include aspects of literature, art, science, business, medicine, pharmacy, and book collecting, the culture of the club and society itself began to wander from the founding Quaritch creed. The membership was far more than merely a bibliophile dining club of similar like minds exhibiting fraternity and conviviality. Obtaining membership in the Sette was evolving into a mark of professional distinction, affluence and, most importantly, a social and political network of influence in London's artistic and literary circles. The end of the 1880s and beginning of the 1890s would forever change the founders' intentions and creed. (9)

One of the best examples of these new members was John Lane. Lane was clearly one of the most important business contacts in the Sette for these rapidly developing networks. Lane was the proprietor of one of the defining journals of the 1890s, *The Yellow Book,* and was publisher of Bodley Head contracting with highly desirable literary talents from Oscar Wilde, Richard Le Gallienne to Alice Meynell. (10) The Sette had a wonderful built-in networking bonus for these budding entrepreneurs. Members could bring multiple guests to each of the monthly dinners and all could meet London's literary and social upper crust.

In 1889, there had been increasing generational tension between the "Elder" Odd Volumes (1878-1883) and the newer "Supplemental" Odd Volumes over issues relating to governance, rules and membership of the Sette. (11) There was also a growing

perception beginning as early as 1881 that a few members were altering the culture of the Sette by attempting to change into a narrow bibliophilic trade association perhaps to the financial benefit of a very few members, especially Bernard Quaritch. (12) Quaritch's early years in the Sette corresponded with his own business' highest peak in buying and selling some of the world's most fabulous collections. Quaritch had a propensity to show his trophies at his and other homes, parties and clubs. (13) On June 5, 1885, Quaritch published his Odd Volume Miscellanies No. 10, *Catalogue of Manuscripts and Early-Printed Books.* Invitations to the O.V. Sette's Soirée went out stating, ".....evening dress, music, singing...". Only somebody conveniently notified the press. The newspapers concentrated on Quaritch's thirty enviable treasures and their value. Author Colin Franklin traces the first public restive concern about this "trade association" culture directly to this O.V. publication by Quaritch. (14).

In May 1889, a well qualified candidate, William Manning, was nominated by founder Quaritch and seconded by founder Thompson. (15) According to the Sette's historiographer, unwritten gentlemen's tradition stated that if a proposed member was in danger of rejection, the proposer and seconder should always be first advised, so they would be able to consider withdrawal of a nomination to avoid undue embarrassment to all concerned. No Sette member told them that a black-ball vote was in the works (three negative votes). The Supplemental junior members sent a strong message to the Elders and black-balled Manning solely to poke a stick into the founders' eyes. Quaritch and Thompson both felt that this was an intentional premeditated slight against them, and, on general principles of upholding the standards of a civilized society, promptly resigned from the Sette. His Oddship, President Ross, called a special meeting in late May. The members present unanimously elected Manning and refused to accept the resignation of the founding elders. This was an unprecedented event: a candidate, properly blackballed at a general membership meeting, was suddenly elected at a later special called meeting just before the long summer recess. On June 17th 1889 at another O.V. Soirée, Quaritch again brings his celebrity collection manuscripts to the meeting proudly displaying his treasures - and their worth.

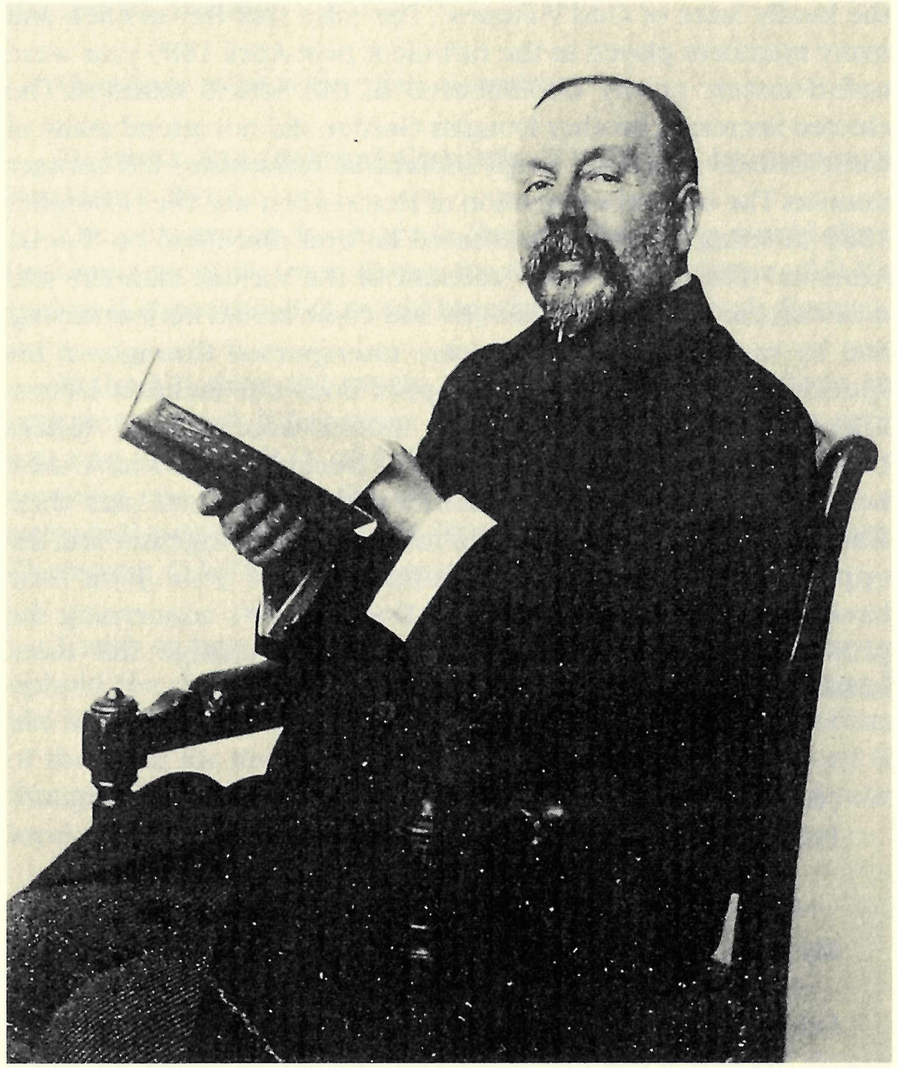
All seemed calm until the membership returned from summer travel. A private letter was sent to President Ross in early Oct. 1889 protesting Manning's subsequent admission via an unwritten appeals process from a direct verdict (black-ball) of the membership at the previous May meeting. There were only 17 members at that late May special meeting in which Manning was elected. This October meeting was described as very stormy - on both sides of the controversy. But, the election of Manning was not reversed. Unfortunately, the Elders did not leave the pot unstirred (perhaps those young blokes needed a good stick in their eye too). Edward Wyman, Treasurer (Elder, 1878) sent the following to the President: (16)

Document #1: a printed circular, presumably signed by E. Wyman, dated Dec. 7th, 1889, requesting a Special Meeting in order to form a Special Committee of 13 members for constitutional changes in governance & arrangements of the Sette. Twelve questions were proposed to be sent to this new committee. {We have not found a surviving copy of this document} We do know the three most controversial proposals:

No. 1: Quaritch to become the Perpetual President of the Sette
No. 2: Annually elect the Vice President and he would relieve the President of all active work; the V.P. would be the working President for that year
No. 3: Two or more meetings held each year would have no invited guests

President Ross (Elder, 1884) had known about this memo. Quaritch had known (Elder, original founder and President, 1878). Mort Thompson had known (Elder and Sette's Historiographer, 1878). It is not clear whether all members of the Sette's Band of Odd Councillors (Past-Presidents) were aware of the contents of the proposal. No Supplemental younger members were informed about the contents of the proposal or participated in its preparation until it was delivered to every member of the Sette.

It would be a mild understatement to say that the Supplemental members took great umbrage at the Elders. A core of rebellious O.V.s suspected a cozy arrangement in which Wyman and Quaritch would control the future affairs of the Sette with minimal interference from the young boys. This Document #1 was considered to be a deliberate attack on the rights and privileges of newer members. A response was needed! But, who would lead the party of opposition?



John Lane, 1854-1925, Publisher of the Bodley Head

At the new President's inauguration in April 1889, Edward Heron-Allen was present having just returned from many years of literary, financial and amorous escapades in America including the death of Selina Dolaro. The Sette's minutes record that he "gave a graphic entertaining account of his own journeying by sea, land, lake and river, the moving accidents by flood and field, the adventures and misadventures he had met with while dragging along his ever lengthening chain in distant travel, and the wild pleasure it gave him to find himself again at home in the midst of the kindly Sette of Odd Volumes". The roles that Heron-Allen and many members played in the turbulent post-April 1889 year were unfortunately poorly documented in the Sette's minutes. The elected Secretary, Brother Douglas Gordon did not attend many of these critical meetings. Inept secretarial substitutes left meager minutes. The only other mention of Heron-Allen was the November 1889 meeting when he presented an oral discourse on "Social America". This was a "lively account of the various manners and customs, the foibles and follies, he had come across his journeying, and by racy illustrative anecdotes interspersed throughout his speech". The Sette's Historiographer does not mention Heron-Allen again in 1889. Recently rediscovered private letters concerning the explosive meetings of December 1889 have shed new light on the warring parties within the Sette and their leadership. Edward Heron-Allen and John Lane together led the opposition party against the Founders of the Sette. John Lane having received Wyman's Dec. 7th Document #1 concerning the proposal to form a special committee to change the rules, immediately corresponds with Heron-Allen: (17)

"O.V. 37 Southwick St. W.
Private Dec. 12, 89

My Dear Bro. Heron Allen,

I view the proposals of E. F. Wyman (OV 78') as most opportune mainly because it gives us an opportunity of expressing our views at their invitation; suggestions more preposterous and offensive

could not be formulated. They are too numerous & too wild to be the outcome of any one man tho' I am aware that only one signature is appended.

I will deal briefly with the offensive proposals, suggestions of E. F. Wyman.

II. If a committee be elected, it should consist of P. {President}, V.P. & Sec: of course, but the remaining members to be elected at the special meeting.

Questions to be referred to committee

To invite B.Q. {Bernard Quaritch, O.V. 78'} to be perpetual President!! Why?

The only reason I can see is that our Banquets would then become a monthly trade dinner for B.Q. at the expense of O.V.'s (unless II. stated that B.Q. would bear the expense of such dinners).

If the V.P. does the work, we must look upon B.Q. as an ornamental head. It has never come to my knowledge that ever any one accused B.Q. of being an ornament to the Sette (or anything else) before. Should B.Q. be seriously proposed as a perpetual president, I should like to propose W.M.T. {W. Mort Thompson. O.V. 78} as the perpetual Vice-President!

I wish to be a fair O.V. by which I mean an intense desire to uphold the dignity of the Sette. Altho' only a younger member, I like and have identified myself with the best traditions & interests of the Sette for much has been the whole aim of my actions & thoughts. You may count upon me dear Bro' Allen as one of your loyal supporters in the present crisis.....

With my kind regards & best wishes.
Yours Sincerely,

John Lane"

Lane quickly follows up with a letter requesting an organizational meeting with Heron-Allen: (18)

"O.V. 37 Southwick Street
Private Hyde Park W.

13th Dec. 89

Dear Heron-Allen,

Can't we manage to get together 8 or 10 of the younger O.V.s on Monday or Tuesday evening with a view to getting their opinions on the situation & then to take combined action?

You could meet here, but it would be better still at your home. I too fear that the councilors will elect one of their own party for the next president. It would then be so much more difficult for us to act. But, if we can now meet at the suggestions of Wyman {E. F. Wyman, O.V. 78'}, I feel confident we are strong enough to cancel that absurd custom of vesting the election of the President in the Councillors. The right of electing a President should belong to the members. The skit I received last night appears to disapprove of the meeting, but we must have this meeting. This is a chance not to be lost. I shall write to Ross to that effect. Let me have an early letter please with your views. Are you in communication with his oddship on this subject?

Ever
John Lane"

John Lane and Edward Heron-Allen were fierce antagonists in the 1893 Le Gallienne versus Heron-Allen "Incident". (19) Yet these two future enemies were once mutual allies seeking to undermine the goals and financial ambitions of a few of the Sette's founders, especially Bernard Quaritch. Author Jonathan Betts claimed that Heron-Allen resigned from the Sette "in 1890 after an altercation with his founder". (20) His reference only states, "Bernard Quaritch had begun using meetings of the Sette for commercial purposes, which many members found unacceptable." (21) Although Heron-Allen did not resign in 1890, but in November 1893 and for other reasons to be discussed, Betts was absolutely correct that Heron-Allen and his comrade John Lane were fiercely opposed to Quaritch's vision of the Sette's future.

The Sette's opposition party struck back at the founders' faction: (22)

Document #2: On Dec. 12th, 1889, an anonymous printed two-page spirited scathing parody on Document #1 purportedly written by an O.V. and signed "AN APPENDIX VOLUME (with a tail to it)", was sent to all members berating the original sender(s) of the Document #1:

Opening: "The Sette has been in existence for many years chiefly as a trade advertising medium for some of our brethren..." It is later stated that the purpose is to call a special meeting "to appoint a committee to report generally as to what changes (if any) are possible, so as to enable me and my friends to have everything in the Sette our own way as of yore".

Parody of the twelve proposals including: giving pocket change to his grace, Bro. Q; Supplemental O.V.s doing all the work and Elders doing the advertisements; selling advertisements in all publications; cease invitations to all guests to insure the absence of success and enjoyment.

Ending: "If your oddship (B.Q. Gratia) is foolish enough to keep your promise, and call this special meeting, I trust the members will realize the absolute inanity of calling a Meeting at all, and will

discuss their private affairs without undue party language, always bearing in mind that the future welfare of everything sub-celestial depends upon the willingness of those of us not of the elect to B.Q.(be quiet). I am, my dear Oddship (B.Q. Gratia) yours of efflorescent countenance (Anglice Blooming cheek) in all calmness, An Appendix Volume (with a tail to it)"

Elder W. Mort Thompson was greatly incensed. He considered this parody rude and crude with offensive language, and for an O.V., most un-gentlemanly. But the Supplemental younger members were eager to insert a dagger deep into the heart of the Elders' ambitions. In the best traditions of spirited fellowship, they sent the following:

Document #3: On December 14th, 1889, an anonymous printed parody of the Athanasian Creed (the blessed holy trinity) was sent to all members equating Quaritch, Thompson and E. Wyman as the THREE in a holy trinity. The parody allegedly used fairly toxic adjectives and adverbs. {We have not found a surviving copy of this document}. However, Colin Franklin has published a shortened version of this "somewhat coarse document" headed: (23)

AT ODD VOLUME DINNERS

Upon these feasts, the Nativity of The Grand Quar, the Marriage of The Grand Quar, the Anniversaries of his Being whipped at School, Cutting his Wisdom Teeth and Early Friends, Entry into Business, Removal into P.....y, Passing through Lincoln's Inn Fields, shall be sung or said at Odd Volume Dinners instead of toast of the President , this Confession of our Odd Volume Faith, commonly called the Screed of St. B.Q. by the President and Brethren standing.

QUINCUNQUE VULT
{Whosoever will be saved}

Whoever will be an O.V.: before all things it is necessary that he holds the O.V. faith.

And the O.V. faith is this: That we worship one great Panjandrum in the Consolidated Q. and the Consolidated Q. in the great Panjandrum.

For there is one person of the Perpetual President, another of the Vice-President, and another of their Secretary.

But the cold-drawn gall of the President, of the Vice-President, and of the Secretary, is all one: the assurances co-equal, and the impudence co-eternal.

Such as the President, such is the Vice-President, and such is the Secretary.

The President indefensible and an eternal bore, the Vice-President indefensible and an eternal bore, and of the Secretary indefensible and an eternal bore.

As also there are not three indefensibles nor three eternal bores, but one governing Body - the Consolidated Q.

This is the Odd Volume Faith, which except an O.V. believes faithfully, he cannot advertise the Caucus.

Gloria Quarricio, et Thomsoni atque Wymannio: sicut erat in 1881 non et nunquam erit in futuro, saecula saeculorum. Amen. {Glory be to Quaritch, Thompson and Wyman: as it was in 1881 and never will be again, for all eternity, for all eternity}.

Thompson was apoplectic and extremely offended by such an outrageous attack on religious Christian sensibilities. President Ross felt that Document #3 displayed unconscionable partisanship. Alfred Davies (Past President, 1887) called these lampoons a 'tyranny'. A late December special meeting was extremely bitter and hostile on both sides. But who sent these Documents #2 and 3? A letter from Lane to Heron-Allen sheds further light on this episode: (24)

"Private 37 Southwick St. W.

Dec. 16, 89

My Dear Allen,

Brown {James Robert Brown, O.V. 79'} is dead against us. B.Q. {Bernard Quaritch} at any price for J.R.B. He accuses you of writing both the skits. I told him that a certain letter I had just received from you bore strong internal evidence against his theory.

He also says that B.Q. was never "whitewashed". Can you bring evidence to bear on that point? I tell you this so that you may be prepared. I have written the following note to East {Alfred East, O.V. 88'}, Holme {Charles Holme, O.V. 86'}, Liley {Henry George Liley, O.V. 83'}, Hamilton {Walter Hamilton, O.V. 88'} & Horner {Burnham W. Horner, O.V. 80' and current Vice President}:

'I hope you are free to smoke a pipe with us here on Friday Eve next, between 8:30 &. 12 and meet with O.V.s Heron Allen, Todhunter, {John Todhunter, O.V. 88'}, D. Gordon {Douglas Gordon, O.V. 88' and current Secretary}..... It seems to us important that we should meet and talk over the present O.V. crisis.

Yours Truly,

J.L. '

Do you think I might write to H. Moore {Henry Moore O.V. 87'} in the same guarded way or can you suggest a more guarded note? I should so much like to have Moore with us. If we could get him at our meeting, I think we should carry Ross {H.J. Gordon Ross, O.V. 85' and current Oddship} with us, but I don't care to lay myself open to a snub. At present, I think we are very good friends. Let me await a reply for return of post if you think I might venture to write as suggested. If we can get Moore on our side, the game is up.

Yours Ever,

John Lane"

On March 5th, 1890, select members of the Sette published an eight page pamphlet in which were printed seven letters dated between January 17th, 1890 and February 28th, 1890. These letters were exchanged between Brothers Quaritch and Charles Welch (O.V. 1884), a candidate for President. (25) Welsh stated:

"I have a strong feeling that there can be no better Vice-President in my year of office than Edward Heron-Allen" who will "restore the harmony, which alas! seems to have flown from us as a Sette."

Quaritch replied on Jan 17, 1890:

"I must adhere to my statement, that until the writer of the two Pasquils {lampoons or libels} has confessed and apologized, I

remain simply a passive member of the Sette. I consider Mr. Heron-Allen to be the author of these papers."

"Mr. Heron-Allen", he continues, "cannot become Vice-President of the Odd Volumes."

At the March 1890 meeting, 31 members were present at a business meeting. (26) There were two rival slates for leadership, Bro. Welsh and Bro. Holme. For the first time, a slate of O. V. candidates was elected by a non-unanimous vote (21 of 31 members present). For the first time, the Supplemental younger members occupied all 3 officer positions of the Sette:

President: Charles Holme, O.V.1886

Vice President: Alexander Hollingsworth, O.V.1888 (who later replaced Heron-Allen in the 1893 ballot for President)

Secretary: John Lane, O.V. 1888 (current ally and later arch nemesis of Heron Allen in the 1892-1893 'Incident' and the individual who nominated Richard Le Gallienne for Sette membership in 1892)

The Rules of the Sette were immediately amended to reflect the results of the election and the prevailing mindset of the Supplemental members.

Did Heron-Allen write those scurrilous parodies of Quaritch and his elder brothers? Remarkably, thirty-seven years later, Heron-Allen provided this answer in his inaugural address as President to the Sette: (27)

"There did indeed occur a serious lacuna in our relationship. As he {Bernard Quaritch} grew greater and loomed even more gigantically in the eyes of the Book-World, like other great men, indeed like all highly evolved and perfected organisms in nature, a time came when he suffered from parasites, and his outlook was too wide, and his soul was too great for him to realize that some of

his saprophytes - his 'symbionts' as we call them in Biological Science - sought to use his great personality as a club wherewith to crush the rising generation of O.V.s who were demanding a place in the sun. I am not going to 'Hark back' - infandum renovare dolorem { oh woe to dwell on those past pains} -but, it is part of the O.V. history that in the Revolt of the Juniors, I jumped in and did all my share of the splashing about. The storm blew over - a cloud of steam obscured the main issues, and drove them into well-deserved oblivion, and B.Q. forgave the youth who had played the part of Monster to his Frankenstein. The lesser men - the parasites -did not {forgive}. But I survived; B.Q. published my Omar Khayyam Parallels in 1899, and I made more money out of that book than I ever did under the aegis of any other publisher."

But did these elder members forgive and forget or get even? Did Heron-Allen apologize to Quaritch which Quaritch required for Heron-Allen to advance to Vice President? Heron-Allen and Lane worked very closely together to destroy the Quaritch vision of the Sette's future in late 1889 & early 1890. Lane was elected Secretary in 1890 and Master of Ceremonies in 1891 working with then President George Haité. In 1892, Lane disappears from any leadership role and Heron-Allen suddenly vaults into the Vice-Presidency of the Sette for 1892-1893. By July 1892, it was clear that a Heron-Allen and Lane 'petty quarrel' had begun a 'blooming cheek'. The exact nature of the quarrel(s) remains undiscovered, but by February 1893, it was in full bloom and Lane became Heron-Allen's fervent arch nemesis. Lane clearly chose a scorched earth approach to removing all remnants of Heron-Allen's influence from the Sette.

PART II
THE SETTE OF ODD VOLUMES 'INCIDENT' IN 1892-1893

Le Gallienne versus Heron-Allen

By the tender age of 26, poet Robert Le Gallienne was nearing the top of his game in the London cultural and literary scene. Recently married and employed with the Bodley Head publishing firm as one of their high profile "readers", he was in high demand as a poet and literary lecturer. (28) He was a founding member of *The Rhymers' Club* - a poetry society- in 1890. (29) He was a member of the inner circle of Oscar Wilde. Both his social web and his publisher, John Lane, had enticed him into the sphere of many of the desirable London private clubs and proposed him for membership in the Sette of Odd Volumes (translation: individual "matchless" members who, as a whole, form a perfect club). This Sette was a prestigious private London literary dining and bibliophiles' club. (30,31) Members of the Sette were clearly interested in him both as a lecturer, poet and potential member as early as 1890. (32)

Membership in the Sette followed a strict selection process. The names of potential members were submitted to the general membership for comment. There would be a formal vote with only the member with the highest vote tally being offered membership for that monthly meeting. Le Gallienne was originally proposed for membership on June 3rd, 1892 by Lane, but Heron-Allen's candidate won election. Heron-Allen invited another poet, Oscar Wilde, to be his guest during this same period. With the encouragement of Sette members, on October 7th, 1892, Le Gallienne again assented to placing his name on the ballot for membership. Heron-Allen was in open support of another candidate. A third candidate, Max Pemberton won election on January 13th, 1893. With a third nomination, both men's worlds changed and the Sette was in deep turmoil. (33)

Grounds for objection to Le Gallienne's membership selection began to percolate in the proverbial grapevine of the Sette. According to his printed letter to the Sette, Le Gallienne was aghast

at both the review process and a Sette member whom he considered to be the agent of a vicious whisper campaign against him. (34) In September 1892, Heron-Allen "heard" from Past-President James Brown that Le Gallienne was aware of an alleged "infamous slander" and that the statement was directly attributable to Heron-Allen. (35) In a hand-written letter dated February 10th, 1893, Heron-Allen wrote directly to Le Gallienne in an attempt to state his version of the truth and apologize for his separate unflattering private comments. (36) On Feb. 14th, Le Gallienne's attorneys responded that the letter contained an insufficient apology for "the grave injury that you have done him" and proposed an alternative letter. (37) John Lane and two other members of the Sette were participants at that meeting which outlined the language of an acceptable apology. (38) Heron Allen writes a hand-written letter to Le Gallienne (39):

"Dear Sir 15th February 1893

I have since writing to Messrs. Withalls yesterday had the opportunity of conferring further with my friends on the subject of their letter. I feel that my retraction has not been so full as it should have been. I again emphatically deny having made such a charge against you as is suggested. But, I did unfortunately make observations (privately as I believed) which have apparently reached your ears, & have been made to bear a construction never, as I repeat, intended by me. I now unhesitatingly withdraw my remarks & tender to you my sincere apologies, & desire to express my regret for any pain & annoyance which I may have caused you.

Yours obediently
Edward Heron-Allen"

What Heron-Allen exactly said in the privacy of his home and what was the public interpretation of his private comments are unknown. "Whenever a man does a thoroughly stupid thing, it is always from the noblest of motives". (Oscar Wilde) (40) Heron-Allen wrote to Le Gallienne's attorney (41):

"To Messrs Withalls & Belton 14 February 1893

Dear Sirs:

I am in receipt of your letter of yesterday's date which is evidently written under very grave misapprehension of the facts. My letter to Mr. Le Gallienne was drafted in September 1892 & was sent on the suggestion of Messrs Venables & Brown who stated that it was all that was necessary to terminate this very unpleasant incident. I am conscious of having made uncomplimentary remarks about your client's personal appearance and manner, but that I have ever in any way imputed to him the commission of unnatural offences, I most emphatically & utterly deny. I think you will agree with me that I have a right to know on whose authority such a statement is made. Your client has been (mislead) through the animosity borne towards me by one of his friends. I fully realize and I should be only too glad to do anything in my power to remove any impression which has been conveyed apparently on my authority. Under these circumstances I shall be happy to call & discuss the matter with you if you will write me with an appointment for tomorrow or Thursday morning.

Yours Faithfully
Edward Heron-Allen"

{Messrs T.C. Vernable and James R. Brown mentioned in the letter were Past-Presidents of the Sette}

Gallienne's attorneys wrote to Heron-Allen the following response (42):

"Dear Sir 17 Feb, 1893

Our client has forwarded us your letter of apology dated the 15th (of February) which with view to ending this unpleasant matter, he is willing to accept.

Yours faithfully
Withalls & Belton"

What were the specific "uncomplimentary remarks" about Le Gallienne? Heron-Allen was a man of considerable wit and literary skills demonstrable in many public and private venues. Clarence R, Decker, a contemporary author of Le Gallienne's centenary memoir and an admirer of this poet wrote (43):

"He acquired a scarlet-lined Inverness cape to drape his slight figure, and cultivated a mop of flowing dark locks to frame his 'delicate almost girl-like, profile.....dreamy eyes and pale brow' as he (Le Gallienne) portrayed himself." ! (our emphasis added)

If Heron-Allen used a similar composition of Le Gallienne's own words to describe Le Gallienne's "personal appearance and manner" at a private dinner party at his own home, this would be dubiously considered to be even an uncomplimentary comment. And what in the Le Gallienne's historical record might be relevant to this 'Incident'? Le Gallienne was a well recognized member of the circle of Oscar Wilde and other perceived "decadent" groups such as the Rhymers' Club. Some contemporary writers have suggested that the poet and the married Oscar Wilde had a casual homosexual liaison. Wilde presented him with a manuscript inscribed," to Richard Le Gallienne, poet and lover..." Le Gallienne responded with a poem entitled, "With Oscar Wilde, A Summer-Day in June '88", and he inscribed, "This copy of verse I have made for my friend Oscar Wilde, as a love-token, and in secret memory of a summer day in June '88." If true, did Le Gallienne subsequently regret his "secret memory"? (44) The mere threat of a homosexual scandal to a now married Le Gallienne and especially John Lane would have galvanized an aggressive rebuttal campaign. The 1885 Criminal Law Amendment Act concerning homosexual activity was well known. We are unaware of any alleged "secret memory" liaisons in his subsequent years. The speculation of this single "Wilde" liaison only became public in the 20th century with the discovery of these manuscripts. Richard Le Gallienne married three women and fathered two daughters and historically was considered to be a "womanizer"(45).

From the content of subsequent letters, it becomes obvious that John Lane and/or Le Gallienne had verbally provided Heron-

Richard Le Gallienne, 1866-1947, Poet, c.1890

Allen and friends the name of their star witness. The gauntlet had now been thrown down by Heron-Allen and the noose seemed to begin to tighten around the neck of a suspected treacherous Odd Volume. Heron-Allen wrote a hand-written letter to a "dear" colleague (46):

"Private Confidential 20, February 1893

My Dear Haité

I think you ought to stop Lane, friend (of) shortly to-be Brother Gallienne , {from} traducing you. He {Lane} states authoritatively that it was you that he obtained his evidence of what was said at my dinner-table, & further that you announced your intention of getting up & leaving the house if another word was said. Of course, I do not believe one syllable of this. You pledged your word of honour to the Council that it was not so & that is enough for me, but he has made the statement to Davies, & I think you should prevent his carrying it further. Of course, regard being had to Lane's power & dictation, we must elect Gallienne, but I confess, I tremble for the future if we are to be kept in a constant turmoil by bad blood being engendered between O.V.s in this way. Davies is of course surprised, but I assure I don't, & won't believe that it is true.

Yours ever
E.HA
(P.S.) I should like you to call me afternoon here & have a chat."

George Charles Haité (Sette name "Art Critic"), a very well known English watercolor artist by trade, was a Past President of the Sette, 1891-1892 when Heron-Allen was Vice President-Elect. (47) Haité joined the Sette in 1883, the same year as Heron-Allen. We have found no historical association of Haité with Le Gallienne, Lane or Heron-Allen. Haité responded to Heron-Allen's letter (48):

"Dear Bro.Allen 21 Feb 93

..... I have little inclination & less time to go into the matter you write about.As it is, I have arrived at the conclusion that Odd Volumes affairs make too serious a demand upon my time, pocket and temper.Anyway, I shall vixen what to do in my own interest. I have no doubt if Mr. Le Gallienne has stated what you say, his election would be simply impossibility. As you say he has mentioned this to Bro. Davies, will you show Davies this & ask him to write me.

Yours .....
Geo. C. Haité"

Heron-Allen obviously sensed that Haité was in denial concerning the gravity of the allegation and wanted to give Haité every opportunity to clear his name. He writes him again (49):

"Private 22.Feb.1893

My Dear Haité:

Will you come & see me, one afternoon? I showed your letter to Davies who conferred with Brown, Vernables & Holme & they all uphold their (suspicions) of course. It is a serious matter rather, as their contention is, constructively, that you have caused the whole of this sickening business. I should much like to confer with you on the whole position. I am sick of the whole damned Sette & all belonging to it.

Yours ever
Ed. HA"

{Charles Holme was a Past-President of the Sette, 1890-1891 just before Haité's Presidency}

Haité promptly responded (50):
18.

"My Dear Allen: 24 Feb 93

By all means, have the letters back. Here they are enclosed. There appears to be absolutely nothing in them in any way to injure yourself. I have already proved the truth of your statement, as far as Lane is concerned & it is now solely a matter between Lane and myself. From all I hear, the incident as far as it affects yourself is closed.

I really have not been near your place or even in London before last evening. Had it been in your interest to have asked me to call, I would no doubt have done so. But it is a matter affecting myself alone. And as I said before, apart from the want of time & really being very busy with my work....., I am really getting so tired of the whole thing. I can only assure you again that I did not impart to anyone what transpired at your house. I did not mention your name. It appears to me to be intentional deductive inference on Lane's part, and as to having had anything imparted to him, from what I can gather, he cannot form any actual charge now.

Of course I will come and see you if you still wish it or you can come down here on Sunday evening & I will get Bro. Davies here and we will discuss it, but only if you really think it necessary. I am seriously overdue with one very important work.

Best wishes, Yours
Geo. C. Haité"

Heron-Allen had now identified the treacherous Odd Volume. He wrote back to his dear friend (51):

"My Dear Haité 25th February 1893

Thanks for yours of yesterday date. To recapitulate my two private letters to you, the facts are simply these: Lane and our new brother, Gallienne, told Davies at their recent conference that you had informed him (Gallienne) & others that I had accused him of unnatural offenses at my own dinner table at a private dinner of O.V. friends, & that you had moreover said you would get up & leave the house if such a thing were repeated. In face of your

pledge to the Council & myself, the fact that the other men present witnessed no incident of the kind, I thought it only right to tell you of this. I assure you that I rely on your word, and would not believe either Lane or his friend on their version after your assurance that it was not so. It was, in fact, an electioneering lie and I am very sorry to see the rapid & forced growth of a party in the Sette that can resort to the methods recently adopted for settling personal differences & enforcing the election of new members. The Sette is very properly afraid of Mr. Lane, he has certainly shown a remarkable talent for engendering bad blood between O.V. friends.

Yours ever

Edward Heron-Allen"

Following Heron-Allen's urging, Haité confronted Le Gallienne with his suspicions (52):

"24 Feb. 1893

Ormsby Lodge
The Avenue
Bedford Park

Dear. Mr. Le Gallienne,

You may have heard, or you will hear, of the position affairs have taken between Mr. Lane & myself.

I was given to understand that both Mr. Lane & yourself had repeated a conversation which I had with you at the *Authors' Club* on Monday, 6th of this month.

I find this, as far as Mr. Lane is concerned, is correct; but he has embellished the same with deductive inferences, I can understand your recollection of what took place, being coloured by possibilities, for you were much worried & smarting under a sense

of injustice, & it was moreover, of direct personal importance to yourself. But this of course cannot apply to Mr. Lane, & I am afraid I must make this a question for the Sette, for the reason that if we are expected to be indignant at one of our body reflecting upon a gentleman outside the Sette, I think it is quite as necessary when one member misrepresents another.

I shall regret if the action I am compelled to take affects your interests, as I am writing now to ask if you will furnish me with as near as you can, the actual words I used on the occasion; may I add, (without offense to yourself) without discussion or council with Mr. Lane. I remember I informed you in Mr. Lane's presence that "your interests had been least consulted by Mr. Lane, & that any inconvenience that you experience was due to his petty quarrels."

Finally, I may say I'm in no way complain of use having been made of anything I said - although you will do me the justice that I did not desire to discuss the matter at all - but I can under no circumstances permit a personal construction on my remarks to be given as emanating from me.

Yours very truly

Geo. C. Haité"

Mr. Le Gallienne apparently wrote a response in a letter to Haité. George Haité rapidly responded to Le Gallienne's personal defense (53):

"27. Feb. 93

R. Le Gallienne Esq.

Dear Sir

Your answer to my letter of the 24th just in hand. I did not ask for your impression - I asked you to state the words you alleged I used in the short conversation I had with you at the *Authors' Club.*

I may here state that at the time I wrote you, I had not seen Mr. Davies & therefore knew nothing as to the gravity of your statement to him. Had I been cognizant of that, I should not have written you in the strain that I did – if at all! I deny the possibility of any such construction upon what I said!

The misstatements in your letter I will refute elsewhere. I did not mention any name, or the word, dinner, or any conversation which might have taken place; neither did I imply or suggest name, place or thing in anyway. I could not moreover, make such implication or suggestion, for as far as I know they exist only in your imagination. It has been left for you of all men, to put into shape & words the most horrible accusations. Your friend, Mr. Lane, I deal with on Friday. I may find it necessary to deal with the matter – as it affronts you – later.

In the mean time, I count it fortunate that the incident – unpleasant though it is, should have arisen, so that I am in a position to place the matter before the society you are desirous of joining.

Yours very truly

Geo. C. Haité"

A last letter dated from February 27th, 1898 from Haité secured the meeting date of Feb. 28 with Heron-Allen, Haité and the current President of the Sette, William Murrell, M.D (54).

Heron-Allen was in total agreement with Haité that Sette member John Lane was the provocateur who purposely embellished and promoted the 'Incident' for his own personal gain and drew in his own employee, Richard Le Gallienne, as a co-conspirator. Le Gallienne personalized, shaped and "put a public face" on the fabricated horrible charges against Heron-Allen. Haité was Lane's "unintentional source" of some of these disjointed facts and tidbits (perhaps with an added artistic embellishment). Heron-

Allen believed Haité's theory that Lane, a skilled publisher, had the deductive intuitive abilities to spin a creative confabulation, to make an 'Incident'. Le Gallienne was of prime importance to Lane. The poet was the principal reader/reviewer to Lane's publishing empire. Le Gallienne had an incredible talent for discovering new talent and middlemen for the new reading public which contributed to the publisher's growing power and financial success (55,56,57). But a recently rediscovered letter from Le Gallienne to Lane sheds new insights regarding Le Gallienne's active involvement in the 'Incident'. Le Gallienne writes to Lane: (58)

"25, Jan., '93'

My dear Johnny,

Don't be too unhappy about Heron-Allen. He is, I haven't the least doubt, all you say. But, I assure you, I care little for what he may say about me: except in so far as it may be disagreeable to you. Really, truly I am not over-anxious to join the O.V.s, though you must think that, in saying so, I am ungrateful for your goodness in this matter. But, I mean that I don't think that it matters much now for either of us. .....

Rich. LeG

In Le Gallienne's only known existing handwritten letter about the 'Incident', he seemed to imply that he was resigned to the fact that both he and Lane would lose this battle because of the power of the Sette's Council. A letter from Haité to Heron-Allen dated Feb. 28, 1893 confirmed that the Council's considered an aggressive response to both Lane and Gallienne. (59) We also sensed from his letter that Le Gallienne may not have been the sole source of the passionate outrage portrayed in his professionally printed epistle and his attorneys' letters.

After February 1893, many of the Sette's recent leadership simply vanished from the Sette with no written account. Edward Heron-Allen did not become President. The Sette did not record whether Heron-Allen unsuccessfully stood for election for President or withdrew from consideration. But a letter from Charles P. Johnson, an 1891 new member of the Sette , to Heron Allen documents the following: (60)

"27th Feb, 1893

My Dear Heron-Allen,

I have heard with great regret of the news which is pending especially that re: - Le Gallienne- ; and as a friend of yours, I now have to give unasked advice. Don't you think it would be right for you next Friday to state that your opposition to Le Gallienne's election was based upon erroneous information & that you consequently withdrew it? I hear that you will not be President this year & that Gervis is . Moreover, I am asked to be his V.P. and don't see how I can refuse.

Now, I can well refuse. How is it that I have heard nothing from you about these doings? Why I might have been Lane for all you have said true!

I hope things may go smoothly on Friday- that you will take my advice, and that we may (successfully) elect you to the chair next year.

Yours sincerely,

Chars. P. Johnson"

{Frederick H. Gervis had never served in a Sette leadership position}

There is no record of Heron-Allen attending any Sette meetings from March 1893 to November 1894. Interestingly, Haité did not resign, but stayed in the Sette and continued to write and paint landscape scenes for the Sette's monthly menus. Douglas H.

Gordon, the Remembrancer, resigned. The immediate Past-President, William Murrell resigned. The newly elected member, Max Pemberton resigned. The Historiographer, W. Mort Thomson, failed to explain in his yearly 1892-1893 summary report any reasons or justifications for such events. A member of the Sette, Past-Vice President-1890, Alexander Hollingsworth, was installed as his Oddship without explanation in April 1893. This was a stunning turn of events for the Sette.

Unfortunately, Heron-Allen's letter of regret did not resolve the "incident". Le Gallienne stated in a later printed letter, "I may add that the slander was not only circulated at the meeting aforesaid, but it has come to my attention that it has since been diligently repeated". He named the repeat offender as Edward Heron-Allen and suggested that future legal action may still "have for him a somewhat stringent moral".(61) La Gallienne continued to be invited to attend meetings of the Sette, and, in June 1893, publicly spoke of topics of mutual interest. (62) W. Mort Thompson was a supporter of Le Gallienne's membership. Thompson stated as an aside in 1894, "it is necessary merely to say that certain differences of opinion, long chronic, eventually became acute, thereby causing the retirement of several members." (63) Thompson was renowned for his own allegedly slanderous printed comments about other existing "younger" members in a published account of the Sette's yearly activities in 1889-1890. But, Thompson was in a legal quagmire over his published comments which necessitated the Sette attempting to "suppress" the original published yearly volume and issue a corrected edition in 1891. (64)

Le Gallienne's tempest finally erupted when he reported to the Sette membership in his printed letter that the Sette's Attorney-General, Alfred J. Davies called upon him in September 1893 "at the request of the Council, to express regret for the wrong that had been done to me, but to make the astonishing addendum in the form of a request that I should consent to have my candidature withdrawn!" To say that Le Gallienne was infuriated, staggered and stupefied by this "infamous request" would be a "Wilde" understatement. The poet responded, "Certainly it seemed incredible that a club of men should thus willfully choose to

repudiate the slandered and harbour the slanderer." The Sette's Council had seriously underestimated this poet's and his publisher's resolve. (65)

On October 6th, 1893, Le Gallienne decided to educate the members of the Sette by issuing his plea in a printed numbered limited edition, *A Letter to his Oddship the President, and Members of the Sette of Odd Volumes*. The letter stated, "... the Sette was ignorant of the fact that I had received the following letter from Mr. Allen". The Heron-Allen letter was then printed in its entirety. He told them that now they had all the facts and were now informed of the injustice of the council's request that he withdraw his candidacy. He entrusted his reputation to the honor and integrity of the Sette's membership. The poet ended his statement with a dagger aimed directly at Heron-Allen, "It is impossible to think they will impassively allow one of their own body to commit so base and cowardly a slander with impunity." (66) The formal printed letter was a brilliant, bold and cunning move by the poet and his supporters. On November 3rd, 1893, at a short and private meeting of members, "the resignations of two brethren, the Necromancer {Edward Heron-Allen} and the Vagabond {Herbert Ward} were regretfully accepted". Le Gallienne was then formally received and welcomed into the Sette having been elected at the October meeting and received the Sette name, "Rhymer". (67)

Richard Le Gallienne had an interesting and volatile career. In the 1890s, he rarely attended Sette meetings due to the burden of his business, the births of his two daughters and death of his first wife to Typhoid fever. By 1903, he was deep in debt, divorced from his second wife and desiring new literary prospects. He left for America and had already resigned from the Sette. His next 25 years in America were marked with modest financial and literary success and a third wife. His last years were spent in France, persecuted by the Nazis during the occupation. He died in 1947 leaving a wealth of eighty-one years of literary experience and the authorship of more than 50 books. He lived the life of the Golden Boy: famous men praised him, women loved the poet, and he them. (68) In all of his subsequent letters, publications and biographies, there was no mention of Edward Heron-Allen and this 1893 'Incident'.

We uncovered no other public or private independent documents directly accusing Edward Heron-Allen of participating in a public campaign of alleged slander against Le Gallienne. From the public record, it would appear that Heron-Allen voluntarily resigned from the Sette. One can only conclude that Heron-Allen resigned in disgust with the Sette and its members, and that a significant number of members chose to give the benefit of the doubt to Le Gallienne over Haité and Heron-Allen. His resignation must have still been personally painful. Heron-Allen was deeply indebted to his mentor and original Sette of Odd Volumes sponsor, Bernard Quaritch; "What I am.....in Literature and Bibliography to-day, I owe to Bernard Quaritch". (69) "Misfortunes one can endure—they come from outside, they are accidents. But to suffer for one's own faults—ah!—there is the sting of life", [Oscar Wilde] (70). History has proven that he never looked back and grew in stature with future literary and scientific recognitions. With John Lane still a member, Heron-Allen was elected to the Sette in late 1924. John Lane died the week following Heron-Allen's induction into the Sette. Heron-Allen became Sette's President in 1927-1928 and remained a most respected member of the Sette until his death in 1943.

There are questions that will remain unanswered unless additional documentation comes to light. What was the exact nature of the "petty" quarrel(s) between Heron-Allen and Lane? Did Heron-Allen also fear parasitic infestation by Lane? In February 1893, George C. Haité wrote to Richard Le Gallienne:

"I remember I informed you in Mr. Lane's presence that "your interests had been least consulted by Mr. Lane, & that any inconvenience that you experience was due to his petty quarrels." (71)

After World War I, Heron-Allen was approached to consider rejoining the Sette. By whom? Why? John Lane was still a highly respected and powerful member of the Sette including the period of Heron-Allen's nomination and installation in 1924-25. What was Lane's role in the re-emergence of Heron-Allen in the Sette? Ivor Jones, grandson of Heron-Allen and a founding member of the

Heron-Allen Society kindly allowed us access to six letters of correspondence from Heron-Allen to John Lane dated 1915, 1921 and 1923. (72) We are unaware of any surviving correspondence between them from 1893 to 1915.The tone of Heron-Allen's letters was very personal, friendly and collegial. All letters involved

Edward Heron-Allen, 1861-1943, c. 1889.

scheduling luncheon meetings usually to discuss business affairs relating to Heron-Allen's role as a book reviewer for Lane and also Heron-Allen's introductory statement for Lane's publishing company's pending publication:The *Rubaiyat of Umar Khaiyam - Translated From the French of J.B. Nicolas by Frederic Baron Corvo, Together With a Reprint of the French Text* (John Lane, The Bodley Head Ltd, 1924).

We can safely conclude that as early as 1915, the twenty-five year old animus between the two was completely dissipated. Heron-Allen obviously had resolved his conflict with Bernard Quaritch prior to his death in 1899. Quaritch published Heron-Allen's Omar Khayyam Parallels in 1899. (73) Heron-Allen never forgave the Elder odd volumes members, W. Mort Thompson and Charles W.H. Wyman. (74) Heron-Allen's only surviving post-1893 statement concerning Richard Le Gallienne was discovered in his personal papers reaffirming his dislike for the man he called, "Gallienne". (75) He obviously could neither forgive nor forget The Rhymer!

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