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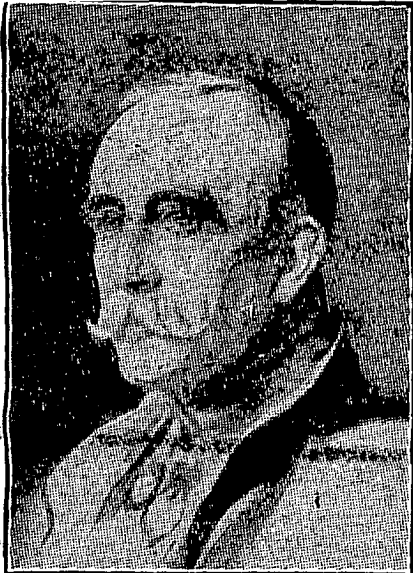
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RIDING
LORD MINTO. A Memoir. Illustrated. New
son and Sons. 21s. net.

The memorials of two soldiers fallen in arms meet the dawn that comes over Cheviot from the Eastern seas. One is that of the fifth Earl of Minto, a gay and gallant young soldier and idolised by his men, who fell in the Third Battle of Ypres. The other, a tall cross near at hand, is the monument of his father, who was himself a soldier, and, as Governor-General of Canada and as Viceroy of India, proved himself so brilliant an expert in the art of being a Governor, which is so much more difficult than that of merely governing. He, too, gave his life for King and Country, being utterly worn out in these high and burdensome offices, the occupants of which must live up to the ideal of service and self-sacrifice realised by the Sovereigns they represent, without having the glamour of the Crown about their brows. He will rank high among the men of the Border, of whom Sir Walter Scott was the most famous. For, as this Memoir shows, he combined the speed and fire of the Liddesdale Elliots and the practical sagacity and balance of the Whig Lords of Minto, and had also a genial tolerance and a genius for the mirthfulness and the graces of life, and a certain boyishness which never failed in dark and dour times.

Mr. John Buchan knows the countryside and its people; as with the "Shirra," much of his youth, but not all, lies buried there—*ubi cor, ibi thesaurus!* So it comes about that his Memoir is nothing like those huge cenotaphs of printed matter which the industrious compiler builds in honour of personages without personality. It is a living book about a living man, and there is an indefinable graciousness added to it, because the biographer has been able to quote from Lady Minto's delightful Indian diary (which ought some day to be given intact to the world), and to draw upon the reminiscences of the late Arthur Elliot, that wise and gracious character. The Fourth Earl was born in 1845, and Mr. Buchan gives us a charming picture of his childhood. He had the family love of horses, rode a Shetland pony named Mazeppa when rising four, and at five commenced his hunting career with the Duke of Buccleuch's hounds. His mother knew how to bring up boys, rightly believing that home was the best seminary, and declaring that: "Minds, like bodies, should have good solid meals, and leisure for digestion—and time to stretch! Beef makes bone, and *les etudes Fortes* nourish the mind; but it will not do to let it gnaw every merry thought, nor refine itself into spun sugar." There was a sturdy, happy group of boys at home there, and they did not care much about the visits of girl cousins, for one of them was once heard condoling with his dog after their departure: "Poor old man, poor old fellow, did those horrid little girls give you flees!" Eton came next, and in 1863 Lord Melgund, as he then was, was elected to "Pop," and made his maiden speech in favour of "instantaneously going to war with America." He was a good oar, and his watermanship was inherited by his son.



Gilbert John, 4th Earl of Minto,
K.G., P.C.

From a sketch by P. A. Laszlo. Reproduced
from "Lord Minto" (Nelson and Sons), by
permission of the publishers.

Yet hunting remained the serious family pursuit — "A' Elliots can ride," said the old Buccleuch huntsman at a time when the two families were in opposite political camps; and he was not prepared to allow them any other virtue! At Cambridge he proved himself a good all-round athlete, and would have done great things on the running track had he specialised: Afterwards, as "Mr. Rolly," he was a famous gentleman rider, and he thought, quite rightly, that racing gives a man much insight into human nature. Also, as he said in a speech to the Turf Club at Calcutta at the close of his term of office as Viceroy: "In the ups and downs of racing, I learned to keep my head, to sit still, to watch what other jockeys were doing, and to be a good judge of pace. The orders I liked best were 'Get off well,' and 'Wait in front.' . . . Seriously, the lessons of the turf need not be thrown away in after life. . . . Don't force the pace, lie up with your field, keep a winning place, watch your opportunity, and when the moment comes, go in and win."

But this beguiling pursuit did not keep him from preparing himself, by the work of a soldier in love with his vocation and by constant travelling and roughing it, for the high offices he was to hold in the coming years. He saw the Indian frontier, and learnt the object-lessons of that other and larger and more barbarous Border. India, he wrote in his Journal, "is our school for great administrators, and as such alone is worth millions to our country; but many of our home-staying, book-taught, theoretical politicians are incapable of realising this." A piece of wisdom for these latter days! He went to Canada with Wolseley on the occasion of the second Riel Rebellion, and Sir John Macdonald (the Disraeli of the Great Dominion in policy and appearance, and a