

OCT. 4, 1925.

POSTCARD

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WHAT WE OWE TO THE MASTER BUILDERS.

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THE ARTIST IN THE HOME. TRUNKS OF

SIR JOHN LAVERY IN A NEW LIGHT.

LORDS AND LADIES AS THEY REALLY ARE.

(BY A SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT.)

Just to see what the great folk look like in their ancestral and modern homes, scores of people will go to the Leicester Galleries for the exhibition of Sir John Lavery's "Portrait Interiors." Theirs will be the visit of the purely curious. Others will go to see art by an artist. Probably both parties will be satisfied. If this innovation of Sir John's serves one purpose more than another it is to illustrate the convenience of being painted in one's own room instead of going to a studio and holding a pet dog in the lap. We see, for example, Lady Oxford in her bedroom writing her famous memoirs. So real and vivid is this rendering of a magnetic personality in surroundings characteristic of her courage and her taste that it conveys a

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GRAVE IN FRONT OF HOUSE. Master Uren, pointing to the spot in his garden where the late owner of the house buried a lighted candle. —See

truer conception of her than any other portrait yet has done. Almost one feels the nervous headache which appears to be following her literary effort. Two of the paintings should be handed down to her descendants in Lady Juliet Trevor's case, as records of a beautiful ancestress. How clearly they recall and emphasise war-time contrasts! Some critics have hesitated as to which is the gem of the collection; "Coombe Court" or "A Hospital in Grosvenor Square." Few people realise that both concern Lady Juliet, for the hospital was hers. Which picture is more typical of her—the amber-tinted ease and elegance of the long drawing-room at "Coombe Court," or the grey, hard facts of life in that hospital ward during war? Of real historical value there is plenty in this exhibition, and of first political interest is Sir John's impression of the House of Commons being addressed by

ITS FIRST LABOUR PRIME MINISTER.

Mr. Ramsay MacDonald. In the painting of this picture Sir John Lavery established a precedent, for he was the first artist to be allowed to take palette and brush into the Chamber itself and paint there while the House was in session. Strangely enough, the artist in his House of Commons missed the opportunity to add one historic feature to this work. He failed to put upon the Treasury bench Miss Margaret Bondfield, the first woman entitled to sit there. Lovers of Sir John's work will enjoy the first portrait ever painted of the great writer, in what he himself has dubbed his "Garret in Adelphi." There he is in an attitude of whimsical observation curled up in a shadowy retreat in the corner of an oak settle by the fire. One leaves the exhibition feeling that Sir John has now found his happiest method of expression. It is curious that this poor Irish boy should best manifest his genius in painting the drawing-rooms of Mayfair. Portraits he has painted in plenty, and landscapes not a few. He has equals in both these fields; but in his new line of work—that of "Portrait Interiors"—he has few competitors. That he is the originator of a new departure cannot truly be claimed for him. Proof to the contrary hangs at Chequers, where Lord and Lady Lee were painted together in an oak-panelled room—she at her needlework, and he with his papers—by Philip de Laszlo in 1920. This painting, which now hangs in the hall there, shows them just before they renounced their home to the nation, and is a record of their sacrifice. Sir William Orpen has tried his master hand at landscapes and interiors; so, too, has Mr. Winston Churchill. It is to Sir John Lavery's instruction and inspiration that we owe Mr. Churchill's adventures on canvas. As for Sir John's own inspiration and critic, where is she in this latest exhibition? Lady Lavery is there—it would not be complete without her—but she is there only as a still, small figure in a lilac gown, talking to her friend, Mrs. MacLaren in a colourful "Drawing-room in South-street, Park-lane."

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