

**THE ETCHINGS OF SIR
FRANCIS SEYMOUR
HADEN, P.R.E.**

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The etchings of Sir Francis Seymour Haden, P.R.E. by Sir Francis Seymour Haden & Malcolm C. Salaman

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SIR FRANCIS SEYMOUR HADEN & MALCOLM C. SALAMAN

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Haden, (Sir) Francis Seymour

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SEYMOUR HADEN, P.R.E.

BY MALCOLM C. SALAMAN



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EIGHTY years ago Seymour Haden made his first essays in etching, that delightfully graphic art of pictorial suggestion of which he was to become one of the undisputed masters. In 1843, however, the bitten line as a medium of direct expression, was but rarely, but sporadically used, and when the brilliant young surgeon, making holiday in Italy after a severe course of medical study in Paris, took the etching-needle tentatively in hand, it was to translate to the copper half-a-dozen of his sketches in water colours or pencil. These etched records of that Italian visit, albeit preserved in but unique impressions—a fact in itself indicative of their simply experimental purpose—have a certain biographical interest, since they show that, although Haden, in sketching his subjects, was influenced probably by the example of his travel-companion, Duval le Camus, a French water-colourist, his instinctive feeling for pictorial line sought early expression on the copper-plate. It was no more than experimental, however, and was not pursued; for there could have been at that time no possible idea in the young surgeon's mind that in another fifteen years he would be playing a distinguished part as one of the foremost agents in the revival of the art of original etching. Indeed any collective effort important enough to constitute a revival of that art was still to seek, even in France. In Barbizon Daubigny and Charles Jacque had certainly begun to etch, but Millet and Corot not yet, while nine years had to pass before the genius of Meryon was first revealed in his wonderful Paris etchings. Of the original etching done earlier in the century in England and Scotland, of the various achievement that distinctively associates with the story of British etching the names of Wilkie and Geddes, of Crome and Cotman, Daniell, Stannard, and, although with differing aims, Turner and Girtin, Haden in 1843 probably knew nothing, though at a much later date he lauded Wilkie as the "only real painter-etcher of his time." But had there been sufficient contemporary appreciation of etching as an expressive art to encourage such brilliantly individual efforts as those of the two Scotch and the two Norwich masters, what promised to be a movement in line with the great seventeenth-century tradition might well have established, or at least inaugurated, in the early decades of the nineteenth, a sound British school of etching. There was, however, no responsive understanding, and so no stimulus to practice or publication. Yet, even had the achieve-