

John Crabtree's interest in design and architecture must have led to his undoubted skill as an artist. He produced many fine drawings mainly in charcoal of both rural and industrial scenes, he loved the Cotswolds and many of his drawings are from that region. For several years his drawings featured on the Crabtree family Christmas card.

His artistic skills were not restricted to paper. He was a keen wood carver producing many carvings for the family home. His most famous however were the light switches carved into the two newel posts of the oak staircase in Lincoln Works reception.



Lincoln Works staircase.



Lord Leycester's Hospital, Warwick entitled "The Road to Stratford".

Church and alms-houses at Chipping Campden, Gloucestershire.



John and Gwendolen Crabtree shared a common enthusiasm for art, since she also painted as a hobby. Here we see Gwendolen's painting of the silver birch trees on a frosty morning at the family's home Endwood.



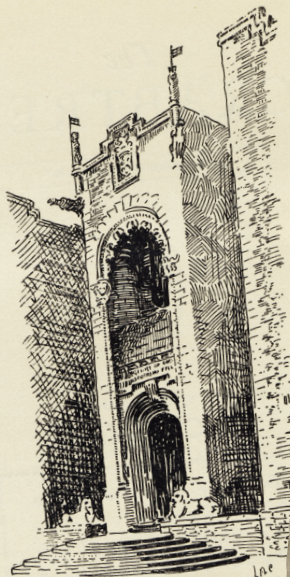


"And Men call this the Black Country"

John A. Crabtree

John Crabtree's artistic ability was matched by his ability to observe and translate these observations into literary skills. This is obvious from all he did connected with his work, travel or in his hobbies.

Here we see a sketch and personal memory of a visit to the Scots Memorial in Edinburgh. (Published in "The Crabtree" Number 1, Volume 2)



THE SCOTS MEMORIAL
EDINBURGH

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one looks at the names of men who rest far from home, and whose records are already being obliterated by the weather. One stone I remember is that of a New Zealander; underneath his name, regiment, and the date of his death (sometime in '18), there runs the line "the only son of his mother." Already the inscription is crumbling away.

¶ My third memory is of the Memorial at Edinburgh. Here the Scots people have given of their best in art and craft, and raised a little gem of loveliness "in remembrance." Without, it is plain. I had almost said ugly and brutal. Within, it is beautiful, as only sorrow, love and hope can make things beautiful. It is as though the Scots had brought the most precious of all the flowers in earth's garden and fashioned them in affection and reverence. Gold, and silver, and granite: glass, and marble, and bronze: each in its own way and in its own place records the story of those who made sacrifice.

No one is forgotten. The men who fought in the air, on land, and under the ground. Those who sailed on the waters, and under the sea. The men who worked in the mines, the factories, and the laboratories. The women, too, in their own sphere: in the C.C.S. and the Base Hospitals: the V.A.D.'s and the W.A.A.C.'s. And the animals are remembered. The horses and mules; the mice and canaries—each has its place in memory. ¶ And round the top of the building is a frieze, where, running side by side, are the names of fields that have become immortal—Festubert—the Somme—Passchendaele—Ypres, and the rest. For some reason which I cannot explain, the way in which the names are engraved seems to have given them life, and they stand out in such vividness that the very places themselves rise up before you in your mind.

Round the walls, under the windows, and in alcoves, there rest, amidst a glory of crimson and gold, the printed copies of the Scots Roll.

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The books are dog-eared and stained with the handling of innumerable fingers, and if you are of the generation that knew the war, you cannot pass by without turning over the pages and looking for the record of some man you knew. You need feel no shame for the tears that come to your eyes, for you are not alone. To each man there comes from out of the past a flood of memories, jealously guarded lest they become too vivid, memories that have grown very precious with the years, and are numbered amongst the sacred things we keep locked up in our hearts.

¶ Eleven years have passed since the war, and the fires of hatred sink low. Already we begin to glimpse, through the haze of fear and prejudice, the pure white flame of sacrifice. We are still too near, and our memory is as yet too painful, to recognise in full that the same flame burns on the altars of friend and foe alike, but we are learning that the glory of that sacrifice is greater than the spark that set it aflame, and that its unselfishness sanctifies the mourning of many peoples, and makes us one.

¶ The Edinburgh Memorial is forever crowded. Streams of men and women are continually passing through, but, in spite of its crowdedness, it has a strange sense of loneliness and silence. You feel that you are within an empty sepulchre: you cannot forget that the men for whom it mourns lie sleeping in a foreign field. You come forth quietly, realising something of the immensity of the price that was paid, and wondering whether we, who are left, are proving worthy of our heritage.

¶ The Memorial is still unfinished. I hope it may long remain so, with something yet to do, so long as this generation shall live. For, when our memorials are finished, it will be a sign to our children that we are forgetting, and it is not for the good of your soul, nor of mine, that we in our generation should forget.

John A. Crabtree