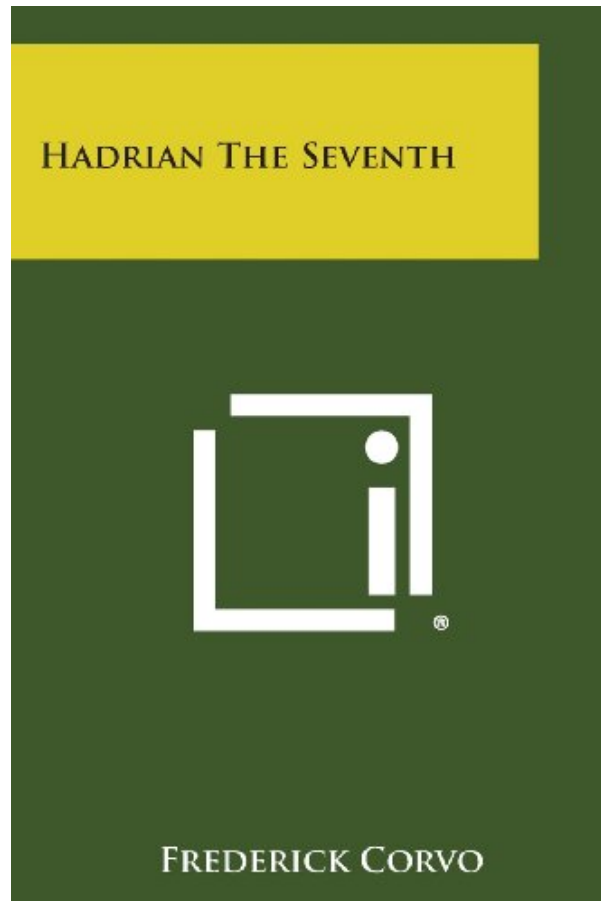


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This is a new release of the original 1925 edition.

- Published on: 2013-10-27
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 9.02" h x .74" w x 5.98" l, 1.05 pounds
- Binding: Paperback
- 358 pages

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18 of 20 people found the following review helpful.

Astonishingly modern themes

By Xenophanes

This really is an astonishingly modern book. He shows in part a Church capable of corruption and deceit, but also shows a Church which has what we now call a preferential option toward the poor, and a Pope also works diligently for peace.

Here we have the hero, a poor, scholarly eccentric, who has been ill-treated by Church officials. His bishop did not like him and did not support his vocation to the priesthood, and told lies to boot. However, finally, a couple of bishops, one an Archbishop, look into his case and decide he has been dreadfully wronged. Rolfe delineates a structure of secrecy, deceit, and cover up. He did not anticipate the scandals of the cover-up of child abuse, but the structures of deceit are there, and one can still see them at work today.

Well, the old Archbishop, after much careful and challenging questioning, determines that our hero really does have a true vocation to the priesthood, and that his studies were sufficient. He ordains him. It just turns out that the Archbishop has come back from a Papal Conclave which is in deadlock, unable to choose a new Pope. He returns to Rome with the new priest in his entourage, and lo and behold, it turns out that his ill-treatment and his case have been discussed. By the Holy Spirit, he is chosen Pope, much to his surprise. However, the Spirit no doubt gave him strength and he accepts the office, choosing the title of Hadrian VII.

Well, what kind of Pope is he? He first of all wants to be a Pope of the people, and so ensures after his election that his first appearance is to the waiting crowds outside in the world. He likes going among the crowds, even though there is some danger of assassination, though he was not the traveler that J. P. II is. He insists on having his quarters built and decorated in a utilitarian way, eschewing grandeur. Having experienced poverty, he is very solicitous towards the poor and devotes a lot of Church resources towards ameliorating poverty. So, he anticipated the preferential option towards the poor.

Some have pointed out that his Pope has a great deal more influence in the world than any modern Pope has had, Hadrian VII showed himself as vitally interested in peace. Truly, the Pope would not be able to engineer a division of the world into spheres of influence for various favored powerful nations.

There is good and bad in the Church, and Rolfe's Hadrian VII sets out much of both.

Rolfe himself was quite an eccentric, and so is his Pope. The style is full of archaisms and wierd bits of learning, but Rolfe was theologically astute, too. His Hadrian is a very complex and facinating character, somewhat depressive, hard working, kind, and strange. This novel is so interesting I can forgive it a few faults. Some of it is a hoot.

11 of 12 people found the following review helpful.

Had enough of E M Forster? Try Rolfe.

By A Customer

Baron Corvo, like Ouida, is one of those once popular novelists who have been expunged from the canon. There is an H G Wells image of Queen Victoria sitting on British society like a paperweight, once she was gone a great many things started blowing around. Well, Rolfe was one of those things. The word "disturbing" is used about a great many slickly written modern novels but Rolfe's mental instability is very obvious in this book (this is not always an easy book to read). High camp (lots of kissing of rings), a none-too-well-hidden homosexual subtext, the Catholic Church: it sounds terrible but this rogue text is surprisingly enjoyable and as a sort of postmodernism avant la lettre raises intriguing "what might have been" questons about the C20th English Novel.

13 of 15 people found the following review helpful.

A Match Made in Heaven

By Steven Moore

The most attractive feature of this new edition of Rolfe's bizarre classic is the introduction by Alexander Theroux, perhaps the only writer today with the fire, erudition, and vocabulary to carry on the tradition of Corvine invective. (If you like Corvo, you must read Theroux's novel "Darconville's Cat.")

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