



JOSEPH CONRAD

## New Portrait Busts by Jo Davidson

**I**N the course of his recent stay abroad, in France and England, Jo Davidson did busts of the following, among others: Joseph Conrad, T. M. Healy, the lawyer and M.P.; Israel Zangwill, the novelist; Georg Brandes, the Danish critic; Sir Rabindranath Tagore, the East Indian mystic and educator; Havelock Ellis, the writer on science; Lord Northcliffe, the owner of the *London Times*, Arnold Dolmetsch, and Frank Brangwyn.

Of all these recent portrait busts, that of Georg Brandes is the most interesting. The Great Dane, as he has so often been called, is an extraordinary mixture of kindness and cynicism, of enthusiasm and despair. In him the creative force of the artist is constantly battling with the demolishing disbelief of the critic, all of which facts have been admirably shown by Jo Davidson.

The Conrad head was part of a triple show at the Leicester Galleries in London. An English critic who had the advantage of knowing the novelist described it as "a *tour de force* of searching modeling, instinct with life and splendidly characteristic, broad and vigorous in effect notwithstanding its intimacy of detail." The head certainly suggests the force of the wonderful man who, taking English, a strange language to him, as his medium, lifted himself, as by his bootstraps, to a high position among the living makers of English prose. It is easy to see that Davidson got fun out of his job in this case and that he had come to understand the maker of romances before he got to work. That Conrad likes the bust is pretty well indicated by the fact that it is to be used as a frontispiece in the collected edition of his novels.

A few years ago Jo Davidson was regarded as "extreme." But so many things have happened in the meantime that, in spite of his youth, he is almost reconciled to regarding himself as a conservative. He went away a New Yorker and has come back one, having changed neither his citizenship nor his ways. In this respect he is quite unlike his old fellow-pupil, Jacob Epstein, who is now a British subject and one of the esteemed pillars of the "English school" of sculpture. It is easy to see that the terrible fate of knighthood—which Whistler would have submitted to so willingly—menaces this former native of Manhattan.

One of the great surprises of Jo Davidson's life was when he was elected, in his absence, and without any warning, to the vice-presidency of the Association of American Painters and Sculptors, the body which gave the famous Armory Show which upset New York in the spring of 1913.