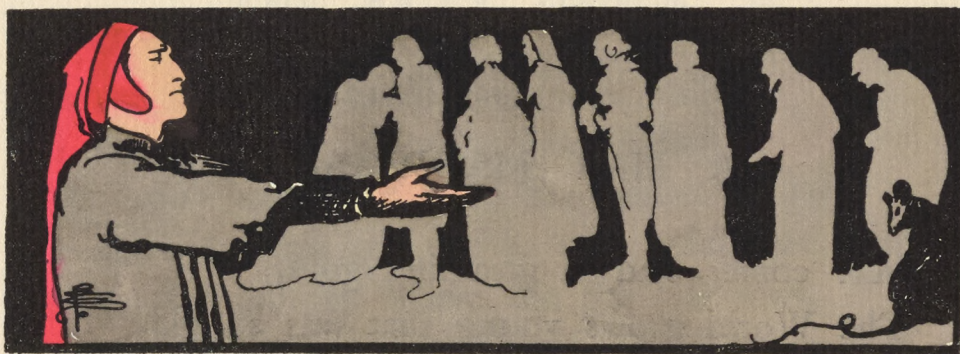


# The Green Sheaf



## THE LAMENT OF A LYCEUM RAT.

“YES,” said the last rat, “they say that rats leave the sinking ship; so they do—another trait in common with humanity. Why? Because both men and rodents must live! For though the necessity for our existence does not seem obvious to men, it is so to a far higher power, and therefore we live and seek the means withal.

“I am the last rat left here. I had hoped to find shelter in the Lyceum to the end, but,” he said abruptly, “I am starving.” He leapt to the edge of the dress circle where I sat gloomily gazing at the deserted stage.

“Ravenous, I roamed over the house just before dawn. All I could find to gnaw was a fragment of hare’s-foot and an old grease rag which some of you people had left on departing. I crept down again cold and weary, when suddenly the old familiar staircase seemed thronged with crowds of men and women and little children all hurrying away. I crouched in fear, but they did not touch me nor heed me in any way.

“Brave men in armour, priests, lovers, fair girls, witches, nuns, dancers—a whole rabble of beings from every page of history and romance—they rushed past me like the eddies of a strong tide, flowing rapidly away and out into the night. Then as they left me, scared and