



Before Leonard

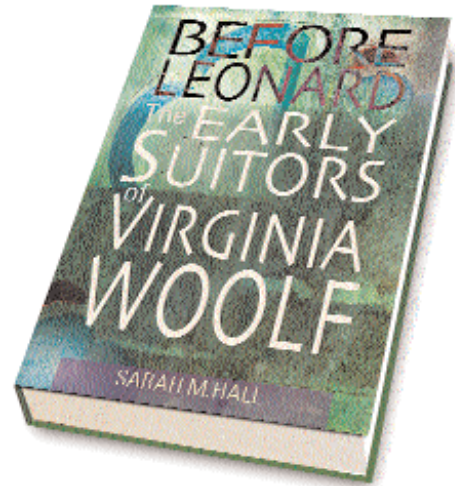
The Early Suitors
of Virginia Woolf

SARAH M. HALL

NON FICTION/BIOGRAPHY

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'A fascinating read for all Virginia Woolf fans: the story of her romantic life before her marriage, with full before-and-after accounts of eight admirers, some of whose names and careers have until now been consigned to footnotes in the annals of Bloomsbury.' – Victoria Glendinning

Virginia Woolf's life and work continue to fascinate. Following on the heels of the discovery of new unpublished material by Woolf, as well as Stephen Daldry's acclaimed film *The Hours*, this major new book takes an illuminating look at a previously unexplored element of her life.

From the controversial biographer Lytton Strachey (who made and then quickly retracted his proposal of marriage) to the war poet and neo-pagan Rupert Brooke (who held nudist parties in the river at Grantchester), Sarah M. Hall looks at Virginia Woolf's 'unsuitable' early suitors.

Woolf's work has frequently been seen against the backdrop of the Bloomsbury Group or her relationship with Vita Sackville-West. But the men considered in this book had an important impact on Woolf's life and work, too, as veiled portraits of most of them appear in her novels. *Before Leonard* unearths new material and adds a brand-new perspective to the fertile ground of Woolf studies.

'We may wonder why we have not already heard about the early romantic relationships of a woman whose sexuality has been a point of intrigue among Bloomsbury devotees . . . Virginia Stephen in her mid-20s was a catch in some ways and a challenge in others . . . Hall's prose is charming . . . this is an enjoyable, unusual read and Hall has researched much new information.' – *Scotland on Sunday*

'Each of the men emerge as of interest in their own right. It is instructive to learn just how suffocatingly small the circle was from which the Bloomsbury set was drawn. The family trees at the end of Hall's book show that almost everyone was related to everybody else: the connections between the characters coming and going in the Stephen house are positively dizzying.' – Lisa Jardine, *Financial Times*

'This is a fascinating look at the private correspondence, diaries, memoirs and novels of a great writer and at some of the many admirers who had an important impact on her life.'
– *The Lady*

Sarah M. Hall is a writer and editor. She is a current member of the Executive Council of the Virginia Woolf Society of Great Britain and has written numerous articles on the writer.