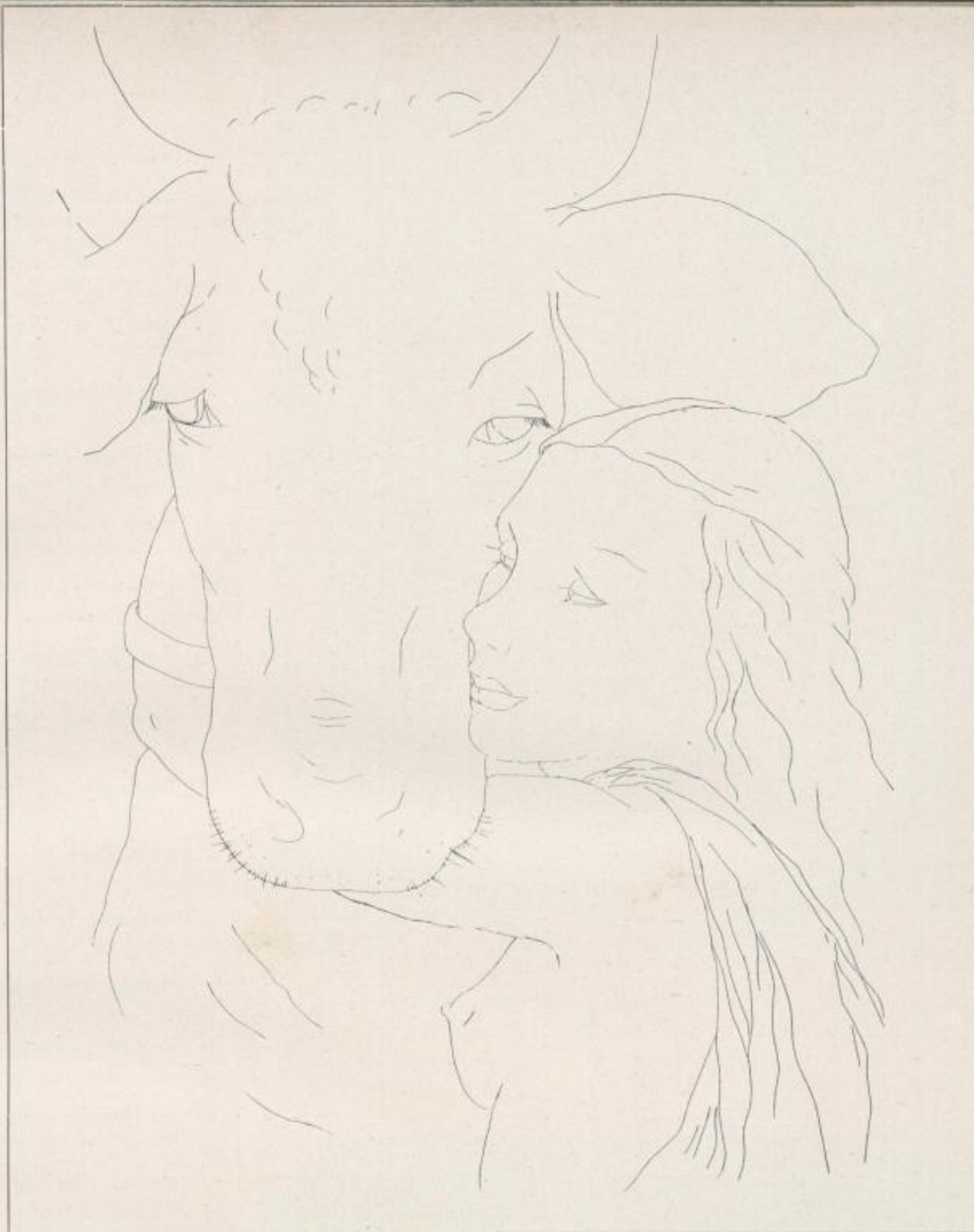


In France, the low price of popular books, never exceeding half a crown, compels the neglect of their outward form. On the other hand, even to-day, editions de luxe are not subject to any restrictions in get-up, as long as something really artistically valuable and perfect in craftsmanship is offered in the way of illustration. Such a book seldom has an edition of more than 100 copies and the true bibliophile can still spare several thousand francs for an unbound volume in which the etchings or lithographs were printed by the artist himself. Thus French book illustration, supported by the sacrificial enthusiasm of a small circle of bibliophiles and the ability of craftsmen-artists conscious of their traditions, flourishes at a height almost unknown in any other country.

LYDIS PARIS

Among the modern book-illustrators of France, Mariette Lydis, whose portrait, painted



Illustration

by herself (for she is not only an illustrator), heads this article, takes a first place. Her graphic beginnings are familiar to many from the "Persian Miniatures" (1924) and the "Oriental Dream-Book" (1925). These have found a continuation, at this late date, in her recently published strange and fairylike etchings to the travels of Marco Polo. Marco Polo, Venetian nobleman, stands like a clumsy bear in the midst of the elaborate grandeur of Chinese civilization in the 13th century, in the colourful chaos of the Asiatic migration of peoples.

In the meantime, Mariette Lydis has turned to such formidable tasks as the illustrating of Ovid's "Ars Amandi" and Lukian's "Courtesan Conversations". Her girls and women are quite conscious