

Lucas

18-19

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JOHN O' LONDON'S WEEKLY.

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LETTERS TO GOG AND MAGOG.

E. V. L.*

Gentlemen,—Dedicating his new book to three asterisks, Mr. Lucas says that his first *Punch* editor, F. C. Burnand, said that the books which men write about themselves fall into two categories, autobiography and ought-not-to-be-ography, and that he does not know to which his own belongs. It belongs to neither. It is a wayward and most prosperous trawl of memory. If any philosophy of life is here its parts cannot be assembled, though they can be vividly seen. Incidentally, Mr. Lucas explains that his book is due to a sudden and prolonged attack of lumbago. Laid up for five weeks, he found it impossible to invent among pillows, but amusing to remember: hence . . . Well, I, too, have suffered, though not so badly, from lumbago, but it never occurred to me that it could be used to disarm criticism. Actually, I think, lumbago and literature go well together; they do so in this finely-produced volume.

Teens and twenties.

I am not absolutely certain whether Lucas and I were at the great Quaker school of Ackworth together or not, whether he came to it just before or just after I left, but it was one or the other. As he was then (and presumably is still) four years my junior, I should never have seen much of him among 180 boys. Nor did he stay long. I knew that Lucas was educated like a shuttlecock, but it is only now I learn that he was at nine schools between the ages at which I was at three—six too many I should suggest. When I first really knew him he was about as far in his teens as I was out of mine. That was in 1892. We were already both in the writing way. He had put in about four years as a reporter and adventurous scribbler in Brighton, and I was concerned with Quaker publications in London. He had come to piece together his nine educations at University College. His tether, he tells us, was £200, a sum for which, I dimly remember, he found some ex-collegiate uses. This college set was a bright one; it included a budding doctor, a budding borough surveyor, and the present Statistician General of Tasmania, Mr. L. F. Giblin. Lucas drank culture at University College as a camel drinks after desert marches. He was deeply influenced and wisely advised there by that master critic, W. P. Ker, Professor of English Literature, on whose lectures he hung hungrily. Ker was the very man for him, because he added to vast literary attainments many other abilities and interests: he was a playgoer, a dancer, and a mighty country walker. As a conversational critic he talked from the shoulder. E. V. L. says:—

No one that I ever knew used so few words as W. P. or did more with them. His "Good" was worth pages of elaborate praise; his "Bad" was a death sentence. . . . of his hero, Sir Walter Scott, he loved every word, even the prefaces; of Wordsworth, too. In fact, there was no excellence

* "Reading, Writing, and Remembering: A Literary Record." By E. V. Lucas. With 31 Plates and 50 Illustrations in the Text. (Methuen, 18s. net.)

in all literature, from Greek to Scandinavian, that he did not relish and extol. But his condemnations were as emphatic as his praises. I shall always remember his comment when I told him that William Sharp had confided to a friend of mine that whenever he was preparing to write as Fiona Macleod he dressed himself entirely in woman's clothes. "Did he?" said W. P.—"the bitch!"

From such a teacher you might expect such a pupil. Mr. Lucas does not include an example of his master's wit, at its driest, of which he once told me. Ker was walking a country road with another scholar, much less versatile than himself, when a lithe little animal crossed their path. "Hallo, a stoat!" said Ker, to which his friend replied, sceptically, "That's not my idea of a stoat." "Maybe not," retorted Ker, "but it's God's idea of a stoat."

In the early 'nineties.

E. V. L. was now rapidly multiplying his own literary likes and dislikes. He met a good many living poets, but the man-of-letters whom he set up as a more useful model was that amazingly fecund writer, George Augustus Sala, of the *Daily Telegraph*, and writer of the famous *olla podrida*, "Echoes of the Week," in the *Illustrated London News*—a discipleship, however, which did not last. A really fresh story about Mr. Bernard Shaw is rare, but here is Mr. Lucas's encounter with him at this formative period.

I have more reason than most people to be grateful to Bernard Shaw, for in addition to giving me the pleasure of his books and plays, he taught me to swim. We were staying in the same cottage in Cornwall and bathing every day, and he, one of the best swimmers in the world, took me in hand and made what had been so difficult before simple and safe. I followed him less easily on land, for his talk was about things which I had never analysed but took for granted, with emphasis always laid on the folly and wrongheadedness of every one else. Counsels of perfection too often. He also bewildered me, unfamiliar then with the iron laws of individualism, by saying that a short story for children which I had just written, called "The Ameliorator," the teaching of which was that we should do things for others, was the "most immoral thing he had ever read."

Other authors to whom E. V. L. desired to play the more or less "sedulous ape" were Oliver Wendell Holmes (an excellent choice), John Burroughs, Goldsmith in "The Citizen of the World," Augustine Birrell, and Andrew Lang. But he was rapidly becoming himself.

The beginning of much.

I was Lucas's first publisher, not in name, it is true, or in any financial way, yet very much so in fact. His opportunity to write his first book, "Bernard Barton and his Friends," came to him through me; I am not sure that he met the real publisher, my employer, at all. He says:—

It was to Whitten that the manuscript had to be delivered. I forget the date on which I promised to deliver it, but I remember this, that I faithfully carried it just before midnight to Whitten's house, and, as I could get no response to knocks and rings,

deposited it (as though it were a baby at the Foundling Hospital) on the doorstep, where it was found the next morning with the milk.

Yes, I took both in myself—gasping to think what might have happened—but when I remonstrated with E. V. for risking the entire loss of his labour he would only reply, "I am a fatalist." He was that even more than he knew, for this book, published in a small edition in 1893, put Lucas's feet on the highway of his Elian studies and led him to produce by far the best Life and Edited Works of Lamb that we possess. Another and more intimate sequel was a visit I paid to his friend, Mrs. Edward Fitz-Gerald (formerly Lucy Barton), at her Croydon home. To meet an old lady who was by far the widow of the transfuser of Omar Khayyám, but had been, as Lucy Barton, the little girl to whom Charles Lamb wrote his album verses beginning "Little book surnamed of white" was a memorable treat.

"Globe" turnovers.

I am glad that Mr. Lucas gives a chapter to that good old (and to both of us most helpful) London evening newspaper, the *Globe*. He was for some years on the staff, and helped to produce its witty "By the Way" column of paragraphs, "each with a joke or a sting in it," bearing on the morning's news. At that time this was the only column of its kind. He inside, and I outside, the office were eager contributors of the famous *Globe* "Turnover," a light essay which began in the last column of the front page and ended near the top of the first column in the second. For these light essays the payment was one guinea, and we were keen on guineas—so much so that Lucas put it to me one day that a good turnover ought to appear more than once, in fact be given a run like a play. I quite concurred, but the editor, Algernon Locker, was not impressed by the proposal. Lucas was soon promoted to write short leaders on light topics, and then to produce the Saturday "Literary Gossip" column. In this job, after some years, I succeeded him, and I mention it because I want to tell him something which apparently he does not know. While I was "Gossiping," Lucas acted sometimes as reader to a certain publisher, and in this connection he confesses to one of his worst blunders in this branch of his career. "Having, in 1910, an early copy of Stephen Leacock's 'Literary Lapses' in the first Canadian edition, I wrote an enthusiastic article on it, but neglected to mention it to my employer. John Lane, having read the article, at once secured the English rights, and the author has remained with the Lane firm ever since." It happened that I, too, had written enthusiastically of Leacock's book, and in the very column I had taken over from Lucas. John Lane read my paragraphs and wrote to me; then he cabled to Stephen Leacock with the result that he secured a most valuable connection. I had ploughed for him with Lucas's heifer. The *Globe* enabled my old friend to open his first banking account, and it is he who now recalls that I was the first person for whom he drew a cheque. It was indeed the first in his virgin cheque-book and was for a million pounds. He correctly adds that I did not present it but had it framed. What he does not relate is that a few weeks later when we were walking on a dark evening up Highgate Hill I noticed the branch bank where his account lay was lit up, and remarked, "What is your bank doing at this time?" He looked and growled sadly, "I expect they're trying to find my balance."

In this letter I am afraid there is as much of what I remember as of what Lucas remembers, but that is as much his fault as mine. And many unused notes of both confront me still.

I am, gentlemen, yours faithfully,

JOHN O' LONDON.

78, BUCKINGHAM GATE,
ON THE EDGE OF PETTY FRANCE,
S.W.1.

Jan 3
1914

Dear John I. is a legend
that since you and I are
always just going some-
where, I go work or
out for you for pleasure
I shall like a good

talk with you but
what's the use? -
how can I go to
Madagascar?

Thank you for
thinking of me
Yours sincerely
E. Lucas

MR. E. V. LUCAS: The Connoisseur of the Exquisite and the Absurd.



Mr. E. V. Lucas.

"I NEVER come to a new village or country town," wrote Mr. Lucas a good many years ago, "without exploring the curiosity shop." We can see this passion for the curiosity shop running through all his books. To him the whole world is largely a curiosity shop, and, as an author, he is a guide to its oddities and treasures.

That is one of the secrets of the appeal he makes to us. He does not take us into a mine and point out one perfect thing after another, all perfectly arranged, till our heads ache. He prefers the jumble of precious things and rubbish that the curiosity shop provides, his eyes shining at sight of the one and twinkling all but as happily at sight of the other. A masterpiece of badness will delight him as well as a masterpiece of goodness. He is a connoisseur alike of the exquisite and of the absurd. He has shown the fineness of his taste as an anthologist, and yet no living author has collected more delicious examples of the worst work of the worst writers than he.

The Rev. Mr. Whurr.

It is this duplicity of taste that gives him so high a place among the essayists. Life must appeal to a man's humour as well as to his love of perfection before he can write a good essay. And in Mr. Lucas the mixture of moods is so happy that he can give us in "The Life of Charles Lamb" the richest biography of our generation and at the same time become the appreciative biographer of the Rev. Cornelius Whurr, the East Anglian clergyman who wrote the poem beginning—

In this imperfect gloomy scene

Of complicated ill,

How rarely is a day serene,

The throbbing bosom still!

Will not a beauteous landscape bright,

Or music's soothing sound,

Console the heart, afford delight,

And throw sweet peace around?

They may, but never comfort lend,

Like an accomplished female friend!

How deftly in a single sentence Mr. Lucas sums up the character of Mr. Whurr, whose Muse was never so much at home as in a graveyard, when he writes: "He is the kind of man who would build his country house in the valley of the shadow!"

Odd corners.

Mr. Lucas's essays are alive with such eccentric characters. He has explored many of the odd corners of life and has returned rapturously to tell us about the people and things he discovered in them. He is a prince of storytellers, and no essayist has been more anecdotal than he. How sweet a tragedy he puts before us in two pages when he tells the story of his Polish barber who was also an enthusiastic cook and who was looking forward ecstatically to buying oysters with which to stuff his Christmas turkey!

Before setting out on his shopping the barber borrowed a book called "How to Become a Millionaire," and found, on arriving at the fishmonger's, that he had left it behind at a greengrocer's shop which he had also visited. He hurried back to the greengrocer's, but the book was gone, so that he had to spend six shillings on buying a new copy of "How to Become a Millionaire" for his customer, and, after that, was unable to afford any oysters at all. What an incomparable plot for a short story! And Mr. Lucas is a millionaire in such plots.

A waiter's heroism.

There is another one, almost as good, in a little thumbnail sketch called "Middle Age" in the same volume. It runs—

"I have been to Drury Lane pantomime only once," the German waiter, who had become confidential, said to me. "It was before I was married, and I took my girl. My girl, who is short, could not see, and I let her stand on my feet all the evening. She kept saying that she was sure it hurt me, but I said it didn't. It did, though, and the next day I could hardly walk. . . . I would not do it now. Not that I do not love my wife, but I would not do it now."

I sometimes wonder whether readers sufficiently realize what fine dry wines Mr. Lucas keeps in his cellar.

The titles he has given some of his books are, perhaps, to blame for this. It is natural to expect only sweet wines from an author who calls his books by such titles as "Rose and Rose," "Loiterer's Harvest," and "London Lavender." They are the titles of a sentimentalist. Yet Mr. Lucas is comparatively little of a sentimentalist in the sense in which, say, Thackeray is one. He puts himself on no terms of false intimacy with his readers, and, though he talks about himself when the occasion calls for it, he keeps his feelings well under control. Criticism is among his pleasures, and he takes a predominantly comic view of life. He collaborated with Mr. C. L. Graves and Mr. George Morrow in some of the funniest books that have been published in recent years, and his writings in *Punch* are known to all the world.

Avoiding controversy.

Unlike many of the essayists, he avoids the serious passions of controversy. He has nothing of the fury of Hazlitt, on the one hand, or of the gentler reforming zeal of Addison, on the other. He has often been compared to Charles Lamb, and he writes more in the tradition of Charles Lamb than in any other. But he is not an echo of Lamb. His gifts are original and unique. He provides a particular kind of entertainment of his own which cannot be got outside his pages.

One feels that he has enjoyed life in a hundred of its aspects like a gourmet, and he infects us with his enjoyment as we read him. He is a gourmet of pictures, of cricket, of conversation, of books, of characters, of houses, of dogs, of roses, and what not. He writes as a gourmet even in his sentimental moods, as when he recalls the ancient glories of Ginnett's Circus. He seems to enjoy the delicious flavours of things beyond most people, and to find flavour in an old country house as well as in an English mushroom, in cricket as well as in a book about cricket. His essays are essays of relish even when he is telling us how he was cheated by an old furniture dealer. He has the humorist's gift of turning his misfortunes into fortunate sentences.

A half-crown watch.

And how well he plays the autobiographer whether he tells us how when a schoolboy he saw an advertisement offering a "jewelled and accurate time-piece" for half a crown, postage free, and how, on sending the money, he received in return a pocket sundial, or whether he relates how in later life he was inveigled into prosecuting a servant—a youth of eighteen—for theft and getting him two months' hard labour. In the second of these we see how cunning a professor of human nature Mr. Lucas is, and how keen is his sense of dramatic situation in ordinary life.

With perfect economy of description he brings three characters before us in this essay—the detective who "beamed" as though he were giving out a hymn, as he proposed to "lay a trap" for the boy, the embarrassed author who felt that laying traps was not in his line and who only wanted to give the boy a fright, and the boy himself so frank and manly in his denial of his guilt, and so furtive-eyed after proof of it had been brought home to him.

Easy conversation.

There are few things more enjoyable than the observation of human nature, and we observe it freely in Mr. Lucas's essays, whether he is writing about himself or about other people.

Like most essayists, he has been called "whimsical," and many people appear to regard "whimsicality"—a word that has become almost meaningless through over-use—as the beginning and the end of essay-writing. I am sure, however, that his sense of life and his half-lyrical, half-humorous delight in it are far more important elements in his genius than his whimsicality. And he communicates it to us in the flow of easy conversation. His very discursiveness is not an artifice like Sterne's, but is the natural discursiveness of a man reminded in the course of a conversation of something much too good not to tell. It seems to me that, in the best sense of the word, he is the most conversational essayist of our time. If anyone can rival him in his field, I should like to know his name.

E. V. LUCAS

By FRANK SWINNERTON

On the surface, E. V. Lucas was a wit, a gourmet, and one who relished good company. At bottom, he was a grimly unhappy man. In between these two extremes he was shrewd, superbly kind, and implacable. No man had finer taste in letters or painting; and no man, among friends, offered richer talk. He listened darkly but unfrowningly, with almost sack-like relaxation. He gave his mind wholly, and did not hesitate for an answer.

He spoke, hardly moving his lips, in a deep voice that astonishingly suited and softened the slightly bitter benignity of his matter; and a smile, both indulgent and ironic, hardly ever left his face. He had an extraordinary gift for affection, as well as an extraordinary need of it; and he sensitively understood and protected all the simplicities of his friends, who gratefully adored him. No man was richer in friendships than he.

This fact may explain to some of Lucas's readers a discrepancy between his reputation and his visible performance. He was first of all a great friend, punctilious in every detail of personal relationship, and gloriously kind. At a little distance from friendship, but below it, came his work as publishers' reader, as bookman, and as editor and biographer of Lamb. All this, in its variety, was of distinguished value. His knowledge of books was very wide; he had read in poetry and belles lettres, and zestfully remembered, more than the majority of bookworms crawl through in a lifetime.

He had also an extensive acquaintance with modern French literature, in which he sought a wit rarely found in current English. And although his lesser commentaries upon life and travel often wanted force, and his novels always failed in shape and importance, the work he did upon Lamb was excellent, and when it was allowed scope the harsh justice of his mind could produce an overwhelming effect. There was never a more scathing picture of life at the Pines than Lucas's. A single book in such a vein would have made him immortal.

He did not write that book. He played upon the surface, possibly through dread of his own pain. No reader, therefore, can appreciate his greatness; for his greatness lay in conversational criticism and in the intimacies of friendship. There he was supreme. He knew so much, was so unshockable, and in his grimly tender way was so responsive to the essential quality of his companions, that they rested upon his sagacity and spoke their hearts. His continued friendship was thus either an immeasurable compliment or a sign of unlimited mercy.

Well, his friends are poor men to-day. They know that the largest heart in literary London is still. They will never again receive letters of which each succeeding line was shorter by an inch than its predecessor. They will never be summoned by E. V. to eat saddle of mutton or drink champagne at one of other of his many clubs. E. V. himself will no more extol the grandeur of dogs or the great game of cricket.

He will be seen no longer at the Oval, at Hove, or at Tunbridge Wells, where he could judge a batsman at the end of half a dozen overs and say whether or not he would one day play for England. His unkind knowledge of life, books, and human beings ceases to be available. But memory will live long and with poignance among those who familiarly heard his thick voice ploughing through wit and wisdom, and who treasured his affection as a mark of uncommon esteem. His work was sometimes slack and trivial; but the man himself was a Man.

Robert Southey

In remembering the centenary, which falls to-morrow, of the death of ROBERT SOUTHEY, England salutes a man whose whole life was devoted with the utmost loyalty to the cause of literature, and, by taking due notice of the occasion, the city of Bristol shows gratitude for one of her most distinguished sons. SOUTHEY knew his Shakespeare and Spenser by the age of eight; at nine he had written an epic on "Egbert." Hopeful and courageous—did he not at his private school venture the opinion that *i.e.* stood for JOHN the EVANGELIST?—he was sent by a kind uncle to Westminster, faced the bullying of the time, and was expelled for undertaking in a school magazine "to prove from the ancients and the Fathers that flogging was an invention of the Devil" (a sentiment by no means in the Busby tradition). The uncle remained kind; at Balliol SOUTHEY met S. T. COLERIDGE and with him planned a happy, brotherly community on the banks of the Susquehanna. Though SOUTHEY and COLERIDGE took steps to forward the scheme by marrying the sisters FRICKER, hard finance soon demolished the vision of pantisocracy. There followed a holiday with his uncle in Portugal, hopeless attempts to read law ("thrashing straw," SOUTHEY called it), and a short period as private secretary in Ireland. But he would "rather leave off 'eating than poetizing,' whether in vast epics or at a guinea a week for the *Morning Post*. After he had settled at Greta Hall, Keswick, in 1807, his life was given up to cats and children, to the writing of histories and biographies, to his collection of 14,000 books. (Virtually no man though he was, some of them were smuggled from Portugal.) It was an admirably well-ordered and calm—perhaps dangerously calm—existence:

To me the past presents
No object for regret;
To me the present gives
All cause for full content . . .

SOUTHEY'S poems to-day find few readers. FOX used to read "Madoc" aloud until after midnight, but the complicated machinery of that poem and of "Thalaba" and "The Curse of Kehama" nowadays keeps no one out of bed. Even the tale of Old Kaspar and sportive Wilhelmine and Peterkin is rarely read in a modern nursery; the young are not much troubled by the Abbot of Abergbrothok, who used to twist the tongues of their grandmothers; and not many have looked farther than the page of "Alice" for "You are old, Father William." SOUTHEY owed the best jewel of the laureateship—in 1813—to the generosity of SCOTT. He was well enough fitted for the tasks of that office, and the fortune of war gave him a good subject for the first of his New Year Odes—

In happy hour doth he receive
The Laurel, meed of famous Bard's of yore,
Which Dryden and divine Spenser
Wrote
In happy hour, and well may he rejoice,
Whose earliest task must be
To raise the exultant hymn for victory . . .

The untimely death of PRINCESS CHARLOTTE inspired him to a higher strain, above mere hack work. Yet it seems certain, though paradoxical, that this poem is chiefly to be honoured for its prose. He wrote readable letters, he was a master of clear narrative, and his lives of NELSON, WESLEY, and COWPER set a new standard in biographical appreciation.

It may be that SOUTHEY by the man is more worthy of celebration; than either the biographer or the poet, though, for all his renunciation of the world, he did not escape a touch of naive conceit. A seat in Parliament he declined—from his point of view wisely, no doubt; he showed equal discretion in not inviting CRABE ROBINSON to enlarge upon his hint that JOHN WALTER, "needed a writer of the poet's ability, who was willing to contribute, with some regularity, leading articles to *The Times*;" he affected no great interest in his "ell-el-deeing" at Oxford; at the beginning of a well-known poem he tells us that his "days among the 'Dead are past,' but at the end of it we find him hopeful of leaving a name that will not perish in the dust." A disappointing artist? Yet none can follow the tale of his domestic affections without sympathy, or read of his help to young writers and unknown correspondents without discerning a steady flow of natural goodness. If he felt bound to refuse a lover's request to write an acrostic on the name of a young lady, he was careful to keep the retainer he had been offered and spend it on blankets for the poor of Keswick. SOUTHEY at his best was like his own best work, "The Doctor," for varied learning, wisdom of reflection, and saving his hour. It must have been a delightful surprise to many to come upon the story of "The Three Bears" in its original setting—without Goldilocks, it is true, but with the big, little, and middle-sized bears complaining in an appropriate type. To have been responsible for that story alone, and for all the joy it has given, would be enough to justify the final "Well done" that LANDOR prophesied for ROBERT SOUTHEY.

36, Essex Street,
Strand.

Yes, Mr. E. Lucas will,
should his hand
be less firm than
usual the reason
being his perplexity
as to how Mr
C. Bramley discovered
his bolt-hole

Nov 27

1928

Nov 26

1928

36, Essex Street,
Strand.

Dear Mr. Bramley, here
you are! Every line
I now realize, could
be improved. I

am yours sincerely

E. Lucas



Charles Bramley Esq

Bramcote

Pine Tree Avenue

Humberstone

Leicester

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Reginald L. Hine Esq.,
Riddy Shott,
Hitchin.

January 29th., 1929.

Dear Mr. Hine,

I have read your account of Sam Lucas with very great interest, and am sending for two or three more copies. I wish I had been able to participate in the book, and, had I had the opportunity of seeing a representative selection of his work, I should have done so. The examples that you give convince me that I could have let myself go with enthusiasm, whereas the only two pictures by him that I knew, are dark and amateurish.

I am,
Yours sincerely,

S Lucas

2/1-

36, Essex Street,
Strand.

Dear madam there is no
question of copyright. as
my name has been used in
your case. Will you kind
ly send me a description of what
is in the book. I shall be
glad to see it. Yours
J. V. Lucas

Dec 14

J. V. Lucas
36 Essex St
UC 2

We know not the length of our threads

^{Friend}

Or how long the web may last

But each thread must ^{shine} more

Brightly

As the moments of life fly past.

E. M. T.

20/7/08.

E. V. Lucas (1) Education at
Holborn

1. William Barry (2) Clamp net
2. My poor William (3) Godspeeds
3. His handwriting
4. His exasperation at mine :-

1. Letter returned with the Receipt for the
Displacement of funds handwriting

endorsed in red & independent ink :-

Take a quart of patience, 3 spoonfulls
of guesswork, 2 handfull of imagination,
3 pint of insight, & 1 magnifying
glass.

Now, when you have failed with
all these adventitious aids,
send the letter back to the writer,
& ask him, in God's name or
the Devil's, to have the damned
thing typed."

Howe Calendar

Dunro June 9. Sample
liquid

HAPPY ESSAYIST

GENTLEMEN.—E. V. Lucas, whose selected essays are just published, belonged to the generation of writers born around 1867, and was as remarkable as any of his contemporaries. His lazy father, a Quaker, on being thrown out of the family banking business became an insurance agent at Brighton; E. V., after attending nine different schools, was at sixteen apprenticed for five years to a Brighton bookseller. This offered valuable experience, as he had the run of his employer's stock and circulating library; but he hated bookselling, and as soon as he could do so he escaped from it to join *The Sussex Daily News*.

As a schoolboy at Ackworth, in Yorkshire, he made friends with another boy who, he said, recited *The Bells* with endearing thunder and sweetness; the two had maintained their association; and when both were halfway through their twenties they launched a magazine for Quaker readers called *The Essayist*. If I tell you that this friend, this fellow-schoolboy, was none other than Wilfred Whitten, the original "John o' London," you will see how early they set, and how long they kept, their common course in literature. Both loved books and oddities, and to both the essay was as natural a means of self-expression as singing in the bath. That is why they wrote such good essays.

I do not know how long their magazine lasted; but by the end of the nineteenth century Lucas and Whitten were together on a vivid, never profitable literary periodical called *The Academy*, edited by Lewis Hind. Among their fellow-contributors were Elizabeth Robins, long a novelist of quality and renown, Francis Thompson, the Meynells, Lionel Johnson, and Arnold Bennett, then editor of *Woman* and reaching out to a kind of critical work unsuited to his own paper.

To the end of their lives, Lucas, Whitten, and Bennett were on terms of friendship; their differences were the differences of temperament. When Whitten, for example, was acting editor of *T.P.'s Weekly* he engaged Bennett as a regular contributor; when Lucas was reader for Methuen and Co., that firm published Whitten's monumental edition of J. T. Smith's *Book for a Rainy Day*; and no doubt would have published his many original works, if he had written them.

LIKE Whitten, Lucas developed extraordinary affection for London. Lucas wrote *A Wanderer in London, London Revisited, and London Afresh*; Whitten contented himself, peremptorily, with *A Londoner's London*. But while Whitten, a natural Bohemian, was happiest in town, Lucas wandered also abroad, and had a sentiment for the country, especially for Sussex, where he lived, on and off, all his life. It was not his native county (he was born at Eltham, in Kent); but his favourite cricketers were Sussex men, and it was on the Hove ground that he forgot every trouble.

Cricket was one of his passions. He had been made a member of the Sussex County Club when a little boy, because, he said, his father enjoyed batting, and needed somebody to bowl to him at the nets; but the right of members to watch every game on the County Ground rendered even the hot slavery of bowling tolerable, and fired E. V. with unquenchable love of cricket. He long played the game; and when he could play no more he watched from pavilions, and travelled all over England in ardent pursuit of joy.

He had other passions, of course; some of which are pleasingly illustrated in this attractive anthology, *Selected Essays of E. V. Lucas*, arranged by H. N. Wethered 695 (Methuen, 10s. 6d.). One such passion, as you

will gather from the anthology, was Poetry; another was modern French literature, in which he found the wit he missed in English books; a third was Charles Lamb. It is upon his essays, his anthologies, and his biographical and editorial work on Lamb that his literary fame depends. That he was also a wit, a Publishers' Reader second only in prestige to Edward Garnett, a gourmet, and, for men, the perfect host, were matters less publicly known.

In his day he familiarly met everybody in the book world—authors, editors, publishers, reviewers, and literary touts. If not an exact scholar—in the classical sense he was not a scholar at all—he had a quick memory; he knew where to look for facts and poetic gems; and when he found the gems he knew them to be gems. That was the reason for his unsurpassed anthologies, of which the first to become celebrated was *The Open Road*;

FRANK SWINNERTON

WRITES

LETTERS TO GOG AND MAGOG

and it was the reason why the *Life of Lamb*, although sometimes, I understand, inaccurate, was crowded with numberless charms undiscovered by Talfourd, Ainger, etc. Taste was his greatest asset.

He came to Lamb by way of the Quakers and, incidentally, Whitten's interest on his behalf; for his first book, suggested by Whitten, was a biography of Lamb's Quaker friend, Bernard Barton. From Barton he turned to more friends of Lamb in *Charles Lamb and the Lloyds*; and so, naturally, to their hero. I think there may have been a feeling of identity with Lamb, who (like Lucas) was bookman, wit, essayist, anthologist, and a host at whose table men gathered for what Mr. Elliot, in *Persuasion*, called "the best society." This, you remember, was "the company of clever, well-informed people, who have a great deal of conversation."

Lucas loved conversation. He listened to it with complete physical relaxation, dark, sacklike, unsmiling, but mentally alert. When he spoke, which he did with the smallest possible movement of the lips, the voice one heard was as deep as the growl of a big dog. He was very brief. His judgments sounded like grumbles. One had to listen hard for their wit. Yet he was personally one of the kindest men in the world. He gave great affection; he needed affection from his friends more than any other regard.

BEING a lover of good food, who complained that young men preferred made dishes to saddle of mutton, he looked closely after the welfare of his guests. He gave large dinner parties (at which there was always saddle of mutton at its finest); and if host to one or two would so much desire their gastronomic delight that if he thought what he was eating was the best of all he would embarrassingly cut off a little piece of it and set this fragment on the guest's plate. The gesture was one of affection; as if he offered a scrap of his own heart.

Sentiment, affection, and the quickest readiness to suspect rebuff or criticism went in his case with an implacable mind. Writing of him in 1909, Arnold Bennett said:

Mr. Lucas is a highly mysterious man. On the surface he might be mistaken for a mere cricket enthusiast. Dig down, and you will come, with not too much difficulty, to the simple man of letters. Dig further, and, with somewhat more difficulty, you will come to an agreeably ironic critic of human foibles. Try to dig still further, and you will probably encounter rock.

These remarks, I must remind you, were written with the knowledge that they would be read by the object of them—always a restraint to any critic who does not specialize in telling the truth at all cost to the other man. Moreover, Bennett liked Lucas, as all did who knew him. Some went farther, and felt love: this, too, I am sure, was deserved. Yet I always thought his secret but confidentially declared verdicts upon other men harsh, from innate grimness, perhaps from envy of qualities he knew himself not to possess.

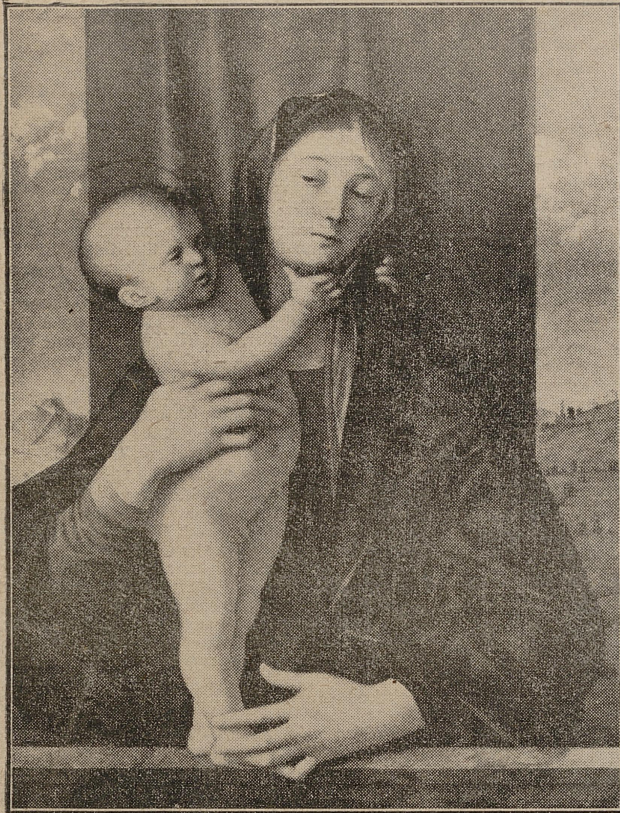
GRIMNESS rarely showed in his writings. It peeps into the essays from which Mr. Wethered has made his pleasant selection only in *Swinburne* and "*The Pines*," which is ferocious. I often wonder whether, if Lucas had written a whole scarifying picture of the literary world in the vein of this essay, he might not have stopped the earth for half an hour. As it was, he tended to do what was easy, to dip into old books, select the charms he found there, compile, decorate, and, taking some slight theme, such as that of "the oldest joke" or M. Pol, the sparrows' friend of the Tuileries, produce a brief essay (well-suited to the "middles" and "turnovers" of former days) as much for his own comfort as the amusement of others.

He tried several times to write a novel, without success: his novel crumbled. Also, he could not bring himself to deal with the cruel or the passionate. It was not that he ignored what was unpleasant. It was that he could not bear the pain—and the effort—involved in its vivid presentation. That, to my mind, was the defect of his character. He said his father was lazy; in spite of his many, many books he himself may have been fundamentally indolent. Being, moreover, uncreative, in the sense that he wrote about people without becoming them by imaginative power, and so giving them life, he had a certain superficiality of comprehension.

I say this, not in blame (I have said he was a wit), but in order to show why his published work fell short of the man whom his friends knew. To friends he was always "E. V.," a complete personality, unlike any other man, responsive to entertainment, contributory to entertainment, generous and warm-hearted. At a word or a glance which he thought adverse, he would suffer desperate wounds. He had suffered such wounds from boyhood; and when I knew him he was a grimly unhappy man. The unhappiness was not obtruded; it showed sometimes in bitter comments upon individuals, but more often in one's sense that he did not wish one to go, because he would then be alone. Fortunately, although there is sometimes a little sentimentality in these *Selected Essays*, there is never the smallest shadow of gloom; so you can, and should, read them with high expectation of pleasure.

I am, gentlemen,
Yours faithfully,

John o' London



"Madonna and Child," by Giovanni Bellini.

THE story of São Paulo and its museum is an astonishing piece of Brazilian city-mythology. The town of São Paulo can boast only a quarter-century of existence. During the last seven years it has built up a collection of old and modern masters, mainly through the efforts of a great collector, Senator Assis Chateaubriand, who has whipped up the enthusiasm of his countrymen through the Press, radio and television which he controls.

The São Paulo Museum has gathered some of the best works available on the European art market immediately after the second world war. Among its Old Masters are works by Bellini, Mantegna and Titian, Holbein and El Greco, Goya and Rubens, Frans Hals and Rembrandt, Chardin and Ingres. There are fine pictures of the English School and a galaxy of French masters from Manet to Matisse and from Renoir to Degas and Cézanne.

The four great Manets and the superb Goyas will be of special interest to Londoners who have recently enjoyed exhibitions of Manet and his Circle and of Goya's Drawings. The Old and the New are well balanced in a collection which spans five centuries of European painting, from the Florentine Madonna of Bernardo Daddi, a Byzantine icon of the Giotto following, yet with an element of genre in the playful Child who clasps the little finger of the Virgin's hand, to a group of Modigliani portraits and three fascinating Picassos. Among the latter the *Portrait of a Woman* in blue with

strong facial forms and sensual lips, the dark hair covering her forehead, is like a curious translation of Rossetti's Lizzie Siddal into the more sinister, almost sulky Picasso idiom.

ONE of the great prizes crowning São Paulo's art-collecting effort is the *Madonna and Child* by Giovanni Bellini of 1488. It is a work of Giovanni's maturity, after he had absorbed the oil technique, the substance, the firm pyramidal forms of Antonello da Messina, and endowed these with his own tender poetical spirit, the richness and translucency of his colour. The colours are those of the liturgical tradition: the glowing red and blue of the Virgin's robes, foiled by the green curtain, the azure sky, the radiant clouds.

But what lends to this Madonna her charm and her pathos is the saddened expression of the Virgin whom the caressing Child tries in vain to rouse from her thoughts and premonitions. As he stands erect upon the marble ledge, his taut little body firmly modelled in the light, touching his mother's neck and chin to draw her attention upon himself, an intimate, even a tragic note is introduced into the traditional grouping of the Madonna and Child. Outside, the blue mountain distance and rising greensward dream in the stillness of the Venetian summer.

One of the formative influences upon Bellini was that of his brother-in-law, Andrea Mantegna, in nearby Padua, and by him is the small *S. Jerome in the Wilderness*, a most significant work of this

stern old master. S. Jerome with his book has chosen a cave of neolithic rocks for his retreat, there to ponder and to translate the Bible. His pale blue habit and the red cardinal's hat at his feet are the only local colours in the graded monochrome of the primeval landscape of savage rocks, spiky and barren, of which the philosopher-saint forms an integral part. To the right a delicious stream winds its way to the shimmering distance.

NO greater contrast to the stillness, the gravity, the mood of withdrawal and contemplation in a landscape of stony facets and flint where the Christian anchorite has built his abode, than the pagan mythology of bathing nymphs by the French sixteenth-century painter François Clouet. Within a century the Paduan world of granite has been transformed into the luscious flower-starred glade, where classical nudes, the antique Graces, display their impeccable forms and proportions in varied postures and poses.

This *Bath of Diana*, with dreamy satyrs reclining or making music, is a Franco-Flemish translation of Titian's mythologies or poesie, a little academic perhaps, yet exquisite in the ivory smoothness of Diana's companions seen against the turquoise green of the grove, the Venetian reds and gold of the robes. The rider on his dark horse, silhouetted against the misty distance, coming unawares upon the bathing goddess, may be the hapless Actæon who was changed into a stag. For over there on the right the artist inscribed with silvery brush the tragic scene, where the writhing stag is felled by the savage hounds.

A small panel of the *Resurrection* with an azure distance of Umbrian hills and streams was probably painted in Perugino's workshop; but Raphael was there at the time (1498), an infant prodigy, and his hand may be discerned in the youthful grace of the guards, tumbling in front of the marble tomb. Only the colouring is a little gaudy, bright crimsons and blues in the soldiers' cuirasses and hose, relieved by the buff and green of the angels.

A MASTERPIECE of the Venetian School is Titian's whole-length portrait of *Cristoforo Madruzzo*, Bishop of Trent, painted in 1542. Like one of Holbein's Ambassadors, the bearded prelate in his black robe leans his right arm upon a table, where a clock of golden filigree draws our attention. The prince-bishop and future cardinal, a born ruler of men, firm, rocklike, earthen, has a sculptural presence which is the more evident if compared with one of Goya's prelates nearby, the consummate *Portrait of Don Juan Antonio Llorente*, painted in 1813.

Llorente was the reformer of the Inquisition and later a partisan of the French Revolution and of King Joseph Bonaparte, whom he hailed as his country's liberator. His ruddy face is full of eighteenth-century grace and elegance, and this is matched by the vibrancy of paint, the graded blacks of his robe, only

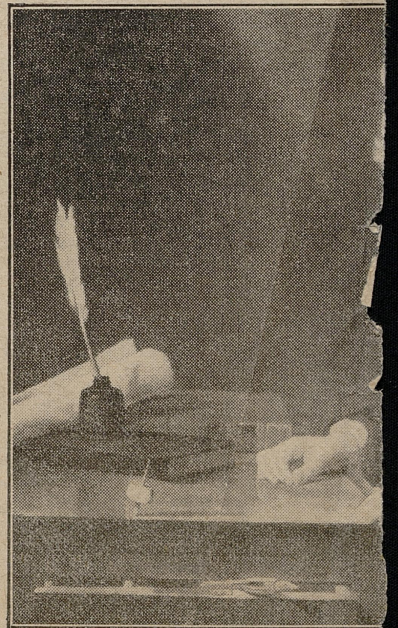
OLD MASTERS FROM THE FROM THE

At the Tate Gallery
is a magnificent exhibition
on loan from the town

By F. M. G.

relieved by the crimson band of the Order of Spain, the silvery kerchief in his hand. The humanity, the volubility of the great ecclesiastic are in significant contrast to the steely strength, the simple grandeur, of Titian's portraits.

Holbein, on the other hand, combined a seemingly impassive objectivity with deep insight and controlled passion. In his portrait of *Henry Howard, the Earl of Surrey*, he leaves the enigma of the poet-statesman unresolved, revealing only as much as we might interpret as a typical Tudor countenance of noble breeding and high vision. It is a study of type as much as of character, where alertness and earnestness, brilliance and sensuality mingle. These are conveyed in the lengthened face, the sealed lips, the scanty beard, the far-seeing eye. The Earl, who with Thomas Wyatt explored the wealth of Italian poetry, commanded at Boulogne and was beheaded on Tower Hill for high treason. Technically, Holbein employed his smooth, almost shadowless modelling,



SUCH CHARMING PEOPLE

A WRITER'S second book is always said to be the most critical in his career. It must show that his first was no mere flash in the pan and that experience has taught him something. Last year reviewers gave high praise to Angus Wilson's first collection of short stories, *The Wrong Set*, and readers, I am sure, enjoyed it thoroughly. Now he is safely over that tricky next hurdle with *Such Darling Dodds* (Secker and Warburg, 9s. 6d.).

The new stories echo the qualities of the earlier ones—tatt, economical writing; puckish humour; gimlet-like probing of human foibles; ruthless satirizing of the bumptious, the unpleasant, the patronizing. In addition, there is a firmer control in the telling of the tales, a surer hand that smacks down even harder.

Perhaps Mr. Wilson is too intolerant, too fond of lifting stones to look for human insects. But after chewing over one of his stories, you realize that there are people just of the type he describes; or very nearly.

I have mentioned his economy and, indeed, he can sum-up a character in a sentence:

Brenda's father, Mr. Nicholson, like the brave old sportsman he was, had risked on a horse what little cash he still had from Rex's last loan.

Can't you see the old ruffian? Or this frightful young woman, whose type most of us have suffered:

By WEBSTER EVANS

She had only two rôles with men—tomboy and good scout; even they were very alike, except that the good scout was full of deep, silent understanding and could hold her drink.

I may have overstressed the satirical side of Mr. Wilson's stories. "A Little Companion" is a much deeper psychological study and first-rate of its kind. But the majority are the sort to make you chuckle, perhaps because you glimpse your own failings or, better still, those of your family or friends!

SHIRLEY JACKSON, writing from the American side of the fence, shares many of Mr. Wilson's good points. She, too, has a wickedly satirical sense of humour and a sharp insight into human nature. In addition, she has pity, which is not Mr. Wilson's strong suit. Yet she has written one story that is much more cruel than anything of his. The story that gives its name to her collection, *The Lottery* (Gollancz, 10s. 6d.), is one of the grimmest I have ever read. Yet it is told so quietly that you have no idea what is going to happen until the last sentence, unless you get a hint from Christopher Morley's mention on the dust jacket of Nathaniel Hawthorne.

Miss Jackson uses such a soft pedal that, when you have finished a story, you have to sit back and ponder, in case you have missed something. I read

"Seven Types of Ambiguity," for instance, twice before grasping what a subtle study of thoughtlessness it was.

"The Demon Lover" again only reveals its full poignancy on reflection. "Charles," however, about the small boy who intrigues his parents by tales of the naughty boy in his class, is pure fun from beginning to end.

Miss Jackson is clearly a remarkable young woman. So is Kay Cicellis; even more so, perhaps. She is Greek, twenty-three, and has never been to England; yet she writes an English prose that is free-flowing and unstilted. The stories in *The East Way* (Harville Press, 8s. 6d.), set in Greece or France (she lived there as a child), are astonishingly mature.

Erskine Caldwell knows all the variations on the theme of boy meets girl; or, following the American way of life, boy grabs girl. I won't say that all seventy-five stories in *Jackpot* (Falcon Press, 16s.) are of equal merit, but at his best Mr. Caldwell is as good as any American writing to-day. "Rachel," to take one example, is only a boy meets girl story, but so skillfully evoked—and so cruel—that you won't forget it in a hurry. The cruelty is not the writer's, but the world's.

Mr. Caldwell writes from what must be rich knowledge of American country or small-town life. One gets the same feeling of love and understanding of the New Zealand scene from John A. Lee's *Shining With the Shiner* (Bernard Henry, 7s. 6d.) and of country life over here from Patrick O'Brian's *The Last Pool* (Secker and Warburg, 9s. 6d.). The Shiner, the central character, is what New Zealanders call a "swagger," one who carries his worldly goods on his back, never stays anywhere for long, and works only when he has to. He is the happy vagabond; and who shall say his philosophy of life is not the right one?

Mr. O'Brian is particularly felicitous when describing the mystic delights of fishing or that other delight, quite incomprehensible to those who have not tried it, of foxhunting on foot in the Welsh hills.

Finally, two books of long, short stories, one by an experienced hand, one by a tyro. Mark Aldanov introduces real people into the five stories in *The Tenth Symphony* (Cape, 9s. 6d.)—a queer mixed bag that includes Beethoven and Hitler, Michelangelo and Mussolini. The two dictators he shows us in their last days; and, truly, to misquote Shakespeare, nothing in their lives was more disreputable than the leaving of it.

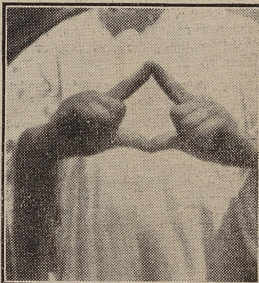
Of John Pettavel's four stories in *The Unblest* (Hand and Flower Press, 12s. 6d.) I am forced to say that, good though they are, I wish they had dealt with less miserable specimens of humanity. "The Experiment," the best story, is about a ferret-faced youth who marries a pathetic young woman whom he calls (aptly enough) Mouse. I am afraid, so baldly stated, this must sound awful. But the story has something that makes one remember it; and so have the others.

SILENCE IS GOLDEN

THOMAS MERTON, as a priest called Father Louis, has introduced many readers to that world where silence is golden, so strangely different from the world of noise in which most of us live.

He now follows his autobiography with *The Waters of Silence* (Hollis and Carter, 15s.), in which he answers the questions that his first book must have raised in many minds. This book is a treatise on the rule of silence and the history of the Trappist, or Cistercian, Order to which he now belongs.

The Cistercians take their name from their monastery in Cîteaux, founded in 1098. Thomas Merton says that 700 years later they had declined to "a



The Trappist monk communicates by signs. Here is his sign for God.

kind of ragged patchwork quilt flung over the chilly bones of monastic Europe." Even Roman Catholic institutions need reform, and a godson of Richelieu's came from the Court of the Medici (where he thought, no doubt, that talk had done enough harm) to become Abbot of La Trappe. From his reforms in that monastery derives the name "Trappist." He died in 1700, having prophesied the French Revolution to Louis XIV.

The first Trappists to reach America from France landed in Baltimore in 1805, made their way by boat down the Ohio, found an old convent building, and there started the Monastery of Gethsemani, now much extended.

Perhaps the most interesting part of the book, to non-Catholics at any rate, is the description and the photographs of the life lived to-day, which in summer begins at 2 a.m. and ends at 7 or 8 p.m. And what a lot of trouble some of us might avoid if we did likewise.

What strikes one about the life is a strong practicality alongside its spirituality, for even silent monks have bodies that must be fed and clothed. The photographs have a look of rough American usefulness, not to say ugliness, and among them are interesting and beautiful ones of the sign language by which the monks convey simple ideas.

MAT C. BYRNE

JOHN O' LONDON'S WEEKLY
August 18, 1950 Page 512

Abigail Hill

called by Queen Anne

THAT ENCHANTRESS

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HUTCHINSON

CRICKET AND E. V. LUCAS

GENTLEMEN,—I was never much of a cricketer ; but I knew a boy with a bat and a ball, and we both made fabulous scores in Parliament Hill Fields. And, by chances which I cannot now account for, I went as a boy three times to Lord's or the Oval. At Lord's I saw W. G. and Stoddart (a horrible old wretch in the crowd greeted them with a raucous singing: "I put my money on the big fat man, doo-dah-doo-dah-dey!") open the innings against Lockwood and Richardson; at the Oval Ranji made a century against Surrey; at Lord's again he made something over ninety against the Australians. So when other men boast of great cricket days I have my own quiet memories.

Other writers, I ought to say; because cricket has long been associated with the profession of letters. From Cowper and Byron to Meredith, Francis Thompson and Siegfried Sassoon; from J. M. Barrie to A. A. Milne and J. C. Snaith; from A. G. Gardiner and Arthur Clutton-Brock to J. C. Squire, A. G. Macdonell and Ralph Straus, authors have been steeped in the game and are, or were, passionate addicts to it.

A level Wicket, as the Ground allow,
A driving Bat, a lively Ball, and thou
Before me bowling on the Cricket-pitch—
O Cricket-pitch were Paradise enow!

That was Francis Thompson. Clutton-Brock once interrupted his own reverie on Mozart by ejaculating, as if he glimpsed even higher things: "I saw Ulyett catch Bonner!" "You did?" exclaimed A. G. Gardiner. "So did I!" They shook hands as Stanley and Livingstone must have done. When Gardiner remembered George Lohmann's bowling he passed from current politics into dreamland. Even J. A. Spender had lively stories of W. G. and Ranji, both of whom he had known. And E. V. Lucas, when in the right mood, would dwell in that rich and growling voice of his on the virtues of living cricketers until one could fancy oneself in the Pavilion at Hove, where Lucas loved to sit.

LUCAS was not one of the greatest of essayists; but he was full of miscellaneous information, and in his day he was both a character and a man of influence in the literary world. His biography of Charles Lamb, although it contains errors, is unlikely to be superseded; and as a host to other men he was one of the best and most generous our time has known. His kindness, indeed, was noteworthy. And he loved cricket. Therefore it was a splendid notion to collect into a single book nearly all that he said about the game and its heroes. This has been done in a most attractive volume by Mr. Rupert Hart-Davis, under the title *Cricket All His Life* (Hart-Davis, 7s. 6d.), which will give pleasure to cricket-lovers and literary men throughout the world.

In this book occurs the famous description of an over bowled by Lucas himself to an unknown "gentleman" who made sixty-eight in a village match. This "gentleman"

walked to the wicket without any particular confidence; but I was conscious of a tinge as I saw his swift glance round the field. He then hit my first ball clean out of it; from my second he made two; from the third another two; the fourth and fifth wanted playing; and the sixth he hit over my head among some distant haymakers.

It has been pointed out that "the fourth and fifth wanted playing"; and in the case of Lucas the point is well made. It did not do to take that genial richness for granted. He could be implacable, even bitter.

On the whole, I should say, he was—for all his love of cricket—a dissatisfied man; chiefly because, having none of the easy contentment of a dilettante, he never realized hopes formed early in life of becoming a writer

of original power. When I was a boy he was already known as editor of that almost perfect anthology, *The Open Road*, in which, wherever one turned, one found the result of exceptional reading and ingenuity. His two anthologies of letters, *The Gentlest Art* and *The Second Post*, show the same delightful gifts of appreciation and selection. He edited Lamb; he was *A Wanderer in London, Paris, Venice, Florence, Holland*, and elsewhere, and in such books he celebrated the history, manners, arts and oddities of mankind. But his style was meagre, and when he essayed the writing of novels he could give them charm but not vitality. The word "essay" is appropriate.

And yet his mind and interest and affections were not at all meagre. In conversation he was a wit, ruthless and wide-ranging. He had such an acquaintance with men that it was strange to find him so little given to verbal miniatures. Only in such a tiny work as his account of a visit to Swinburne and Watts-Dunton at the Pines (an account cruller than that of Max Beerbohm) do we see what he might have done in this vein if he had followed it. Why did he not follow it?

I think he did not follow it because he felt that if he expressed his true vision of life, which was a harsh one, he would be thought disagreeable. He could not bear to be thought disagreeable. Nor was he, of course, disagreeable. But he wanted, he needed, to be found very agreeable indeed. He needed friends, love, loyalty. He gave friendship and loyalty in return; but he did not give himself. The self lay far within; it did not enter his writings, which represent the superficial play of his mind.

AS a young man, Lucas worked for that odd, unequal and evidently unprofitable weekly literary paper, *The Academy*. At that time, the end of last century, the great literary paper was *The Athenaeum*, a serious and authoritative organ. But *The Academy*, under the editorship of Lewis Hind, sought brilliance without the savagery of the old *Saturday Review*, and although it was sometimes dazzling it could never tempt publishers into advertising. Thus the paper looked thin; it seemed to specialize in pills or ointment, or both, owned by its proprietor; and at length it passed into the hands of Lord Alfred Douglas and T. W. H. Crossland.

Lucas had left it long before. In his day the contributors included Lionel Johnson, Elizabeth Robins, Arnold Bennett and our own Wilfred Whitten, the founder of *JOHN O' LONDON'S WEEKLY* and the first man to write these letters to you. Such men and women soon became celebrated, as Lucas became celebrated. He very jovially knew everybody in Fleet Street, in the literary world, in general society. He had a period of triumph as a parodist, when he and C. L. Graves ridiculed in a series of delightful booklets the publicity for a new encyclopaedia, the halfpenny press, and other features of the age. And when it was announced that he was to edit the works of Charles Lamb he seemed sure of establishing himself, with the versatility of genius, as a scholar in the grand tradition.

Unluckily, J. M. Dent had already arranged to publish an edition of Lamb. He saw it as a charming set, with illustrations by the brothers Brock, who had already adorned *The Essays of Elia*; and as he needed an editor he engaged an intellectually inexhaustible but physically minute and crippled man, William Macdonald, to write introductions and notes to all the volumes. Macdonald undertook the task more seriously than Dent had expected. He mastered all that had been written about Lamb, all that Lamb and his sister had written, and as much as could then be ascertained about the life and times of Lamb. And he produced a memoir of Lamb which I think is superior to anything written in that line by anybody else. The two editions began publication simultaneously.

I should describe Macdonald as a fighting editor. He found that Canon Ainger, hitherto the sole authority on Lamb, had bowdlerized Lamb's letters; and he scourged Canon Ainger. Being rather given to verbosity, he spread himself at some length; and having a nose for life as well as literature he guessed (it was proved to be the fact) that Lamb had proposed marriage to Fanny Kelly and been rejected. What else he guessed, or established, I do not now remember; but I recall that for a time the literary air seemed to be full of catcalls. One reviewer advised purchasers of the Macdonald edition to cut out and destroy the editorial matter. Lucas said nothing. He went on editing Lamb. But he was not unaware of Macdonald, as I discovered much later. On any point connected with Lamb he was extremely sensitive. On any point connected with Lucas he was sensitive to excess. This, I am sure, was his real trouble.

But how gifted he was! How, for all his apparent idleness, he concentrated upon his work and the cricket of other men! And with what taste and enthusiasm he brought his love of literature to the service of those less widely read than himself. Many years of his life were spent as a publishers' reader, in which craft he can be placed second only to Edward Garnett, the discoverer of Conrad, D. H. Lawrence, and many more. But the devoted drudgery that he gave to unpublished manuscripts did not deter him from seeking everywhere, from *The Paston Letters* to modern French wit, whatever was amusing, accomplished, naïf and wise. He relished good food, good wine, good writing, good painting, good batting and good fellowship. In all such arts and comforts he was the perfect gourmet.

IN person, when I knew him, he had lost the slimmness of youth and had coarsened with years. He was broad, of the medium height, full-faced, and slow in movement. His smile, like his speech, was subdued; and his voice came from somewhere under his waistcoat. He spoke very much as a bumble bee does when it has had a stroke of luck with a flower, ruminatively, briefly, and as if to himself. He was obstinate, grim and humorous. At our first meeting he remarked that I was hard; at our second, with great irony, that I was not malicious; at our third he insisted upon passing me delectable food from his own plate; at our last, long afterwards, he did his best to annoy—always with great kindness and a charming familiarity very flattering to one many years his junior. And he never forgot that I had known William Macdonald, who had edited the works of Charles Lamb. I doubt if he ever forgot anything. That was what made him the ideal anthologist.

Now he has himself been anthologized; and it seems to me that *Cricket All His Life* is the best of all his many books. He loved the game. He watched it with absorption, silent, attentive only to what was happening in the field. He knew its history, its literature, its technique, its beauty, and its exquisite uncertainty. All these knowledges are illustrated in the book; and so is one of the most attractive of all the attractive facets of Lucas's character, his ability to appreciate the fun of other men. Francis Thompson's cricketing poems are here in full. So is the identity of the man who missed the "dangerous" (which he rhymed with kangaroos) at the Zoo. So is the story of the bowler who told what it was like to bowl to W. G. Read them for yourselves; they are a delight.

I am, gentlemen,

Yours faithfully,

John o' London

JOHN O' LONDON'S WEEKLY.
November 2, 1935.

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LETTERS TO GOG AND MAGOG.

Finis Coronat Opus.

Gentlemen,—Yes—the end crowns the work, but endings are as hard to identify as beginnings. Swift certainly exaggerated when he said that all things come to an end except Wimpole Street, and one must not assume that Mr. Lucas's long years of work on the career, genius, character, friendships, and public and private writings of Charles Lamb are ended with the greatly enlarged collection of the letters of Lamb and his sister just issued. Since 1912, when his original edition of the Letters appeared, Mr. Lucas's continued researches, and the help of many who were inspired to help, have resulted in this publication in one work of the whole of the known existing material.* The largest new tributary to the stream has come through Messrs. Dent and Sons' acquisition of residuary legate rights, but other publishers and many private collectors have been eager to share the triumph and partake the gale. The triumph is assured, but the gale may not even now have blown itself out.

1,021.

The total of the published letters of brother and sister now stands at a thousand and twenty-one. These, with a complete apparatus of notes, fill the fourteen hundred pages of the three volumes just issued. My task of dealing with them adequately is simplified by its impossibility. Even now Mr. Lucas is not superannuating himself from Elian exploration. That Lamb wrote many more letters than we possess is the obvious deduction from the fact that the earliest of these was written (to Coleridge) when he was turned twenty, and from the scarcity of letters written in his late thirties and early forties. Mr. Lucas hopes, indeed, that the publication of this exhaustive collection of known letters will bring to mind "that box of old papers in the attic which surely had something by a man named Lamb in it. And, if so, piqued as an editor must be by such tardy discoveries, all I shall say will be: Better late than never." Of the literary value and human delight of Lamb's letters Mr. Lucas has nothing fresh to say (how could he have?); but he points out that the letters themselves, as here arranged and annotated, constitute in themselves a new biography. Lamb wrote letters of all lengths down to short notes and shorter "notelets": Mr. Lucas prints them all on the principle of Lamb's first biographer, Talfourd, who insisted that nothing epistolary that he ever wrote was without "some tinge of that quaint sweetness, some hint of that peculiar union of kindness and whim, which distinguishes him from all other poets and humorists." Further, in editing the Letters Mr. Lucas has not sandpapered them; Lamb's vagaries in spelling—"sports" of his literacy—have been perpetuated even when he mis-spells Hazlitt's name, wobbles over Bonaparte's, or deprives "volume" of its last vowel; also when, as often, he leaves his punctuation to take care of itself. As Mr. Lucas

says, the reader will notice these little ways and accept them. For the rest, in the ever-recurring problems of arrangement by date and transcription, Mr. Lucas acknowledges the invaluable assistance of the late Mrs. G. A. Anderson, who to her love of Lamb added a flair for these particularities.

Posthumous travels.

Charles Lamb's untravelled Cockneyism makes the adventures of his Letters seem incongruous. Who would guess that nearly all the best of them are in America—where, until recent years, they were widely scattered and virtually inaccessible? All his letters to Thomas Manning—cream of the cream—were long in the hands of one American collector who declined to let them be so much as seen. However, that wealthy and wise book-lover, Henry E. Huntington, of Pasadena, successively penetrated these strongholds, with the result that at his death more than two hundred of Lamb's best letters became State property in perpetuity—so that to-day English Elians have only to nip over to California to be shown them with every courtesy. But for Lamb's precious letters to Wordsworth they must go to the University of Texas, and for other important Eliana—letters and manuscripts—they need to rail themselves between New York, Washington, Philadelphia, Harvard, Yale, the Maine Historical Society, the Library of the State of Iowa, and other institutions and persons whose possession of these treasures is one of the queerest phenomena of literary emigration. Even Lamb's plump, good-looking brother, John, whom he pictures getting drunk on claret with Tom Sheridan, and as the author of a pamphlet against the practice of skinning eels alive, with observations on the last hours of lobsters, is under American protection. Mr. Lucas states that only one copy of his praiseworthy but not very important work is known, and that its American owner will not allow it to be reprinted. He is able, however, to quote one sentence from it which, with the aid of ten colons and semi-colons, runs to no fewer than four hundred and fifty words and, in construction, seems to simulate the last writhings of a well-grown eel about to justify its existence. Here I may mention another freak of Elian topography though it comes to no more than a might-have-been. In December, 1823, Charles Lamb—Elia—thought it was within the bounds of possibility that he might at no distant date visit Manchester! So he told William Harrison Ainsworth (who lived there) in a letter dated December 29th. This hypothesis, vision, or mirage of CHARLES LAMB IN MANCHESTER will, I think, upset most good Elians. Me it paralyses. And Mr. Lucas gives little first aid when he annotates, "I cannot understand why Lamb should go to Manchester." I imagine not.

Solus.

Collectors aside, what is the secret of Lamb's persisting appeal to writers, to readers, to way-faring men? A great part of it lies in the fact that he is his own Boswell. He is self-recording, and there is only one of him. He is the most self-magnetized creature of his day and genera-

tion. Greater men were around him, but in sheer takingness none seems near him. In this regard, Coleridge, Wordsworth, Keats, Shelley, Hunt, Hazlitt, and the rest appear—is it extravagant to say so?—rather as spokes in a wheel of which Charles Lamb is the unwhirling, unweaving hub. In personal distinctiveness only Byron seems his equal, but they cannot otherwise be so much as named together: Lamb radiated, Byron was self-consumed. Lamb, with all his waywardness, is actually the most coherent of them all. He boswellizes himself as no one else could have done: biography can approach him only through himself. And he was Elia long before he bore the name.

The little clever man.

I am not sure whether Mr. Lucas now prints for the first time the story of John Bates Dibdin's detective feat at the India House. This young man, a grandson of the great sea song-writer, when about twenty-four years of age, was often there on business for the shipping office in which he was employed. His sister long afterwards gave the story to Canon Ainger as follows:—

My brother had constant occasion to conduct the giving or taking of cheques, as it might be, at the India House. There he always selected "the little, clever man" in preference to the other clerks. At that time the Elia Essays were appearing in print. No one had the slightest conception who "Elia" was. He was talked of everywhere, and everybody was trying to find him out, but without success. At last, from the style and manner of conveying his ideas and opinions on different subjects, my brother began to suspect that Lamb was the individual so widely sought for, and wrote some lines to him, anonymously, sending them by post to his residence, with the hope of sifting him on the subject.

Although Lamb could not know who sent him the lines, yet he looked very hard at the writer of them the next time they met, when he walked up, as usual, to Lamb's desk in the most unconcerned manner, to transact the necessary business. Shortly after, when they were again in conversation, something dropped from Lamb's lips which convinced his hearer, beyond a doubt, that his suspicions were correct. He therefore wrote some more lines (anonymously as before), beginning:—

"I've found thee out, O Elia!"

and sent them to Colebrook Row. The consequence was that at their next meeting, Lamb produced the lines, and after much laughing, confessed himself to be Elia.

This is as pretty a piece of external biography of Lamb as we possess: Lamb without fantasy. And, to say the truth, it is both illuminating and refreshing to envisage Elia as the "little clever man" of the India House.

One man, one pen.

Not a few of the Letters were the Essays unconsciously rehearsed. Not a few were the Essays continued. Lamb was of one piece. Here is a passage that might be from either. The scene is Enfield in 1830, and Lamb is writing to Wordsworth:—

O never let the lying poets be believed, who 'tice men from the cheerful haunts of streets—or think they mean it not of a country village. In the ruins of Palmyra I could gird myself to solitude, or muse to the snorings of the Seven Sleepers, but to have a little teasing image of a town about one, country folks that do not look like country folks, shops two yards square, half-a-dozen apples and two penn'orth of overlook'd gingerbread for the lofty fruiterers of Oxford Street. . . . O let no native Londoner imagine that health, and rest, and innocent occupation, interchange of converse sweet and recreative study, can make the country any better than altogether odious and detestable.

Mr. Lucas could not boswellize Lamb—a full generation separated their lives—but his "Lamb" is probably the greatest constructive biography in the language. And of these last splendidly organized volumes one may say, *Finis coronat Lucas.*

I am, gentlemen,
Yours faithfully,
JOHN O' LONDON.

* The Letters of Charles Lamb to which are Added those of his Sister Mary Lamb. Edited by E. V. Lucas. Three Volumes. (J. M. Dent and Sons, Ltd., and Methuen and Co., Ltd., 60s.)

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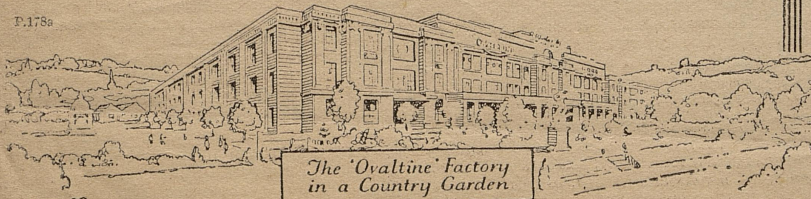
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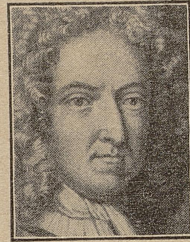


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A BOOKMAN'S DIARY.

THOSE who make it their business to discern cross-currents in the main stream of English fiction have observed lately that the picaresque novel—which was popular two hundred years ago—is again in favour with authors and readers. No one needs to be reminded of the success of *Anthony Adverse* this year, and now Mr. E. H. W. Meyerstein, a poet and scholar, has chosen the picaresque form of narration in his new novel, *Terence Duke* (reviewed on another page). His publishers rightly describe it as a latter-day revival of the old "romance of roguery." What is behind this reawakening of interest in the picaresque tradition? Can it be that our law-abiding society, having tired of reading about murderers and jewel thieves, is turning from detective fiction to the "life-histories" of



Daniel Defoe,
author of several novels in the
picaresque tradition.

THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK.

WAR marks a weakness and disease in human society, and its best triumphs are glorious evils—cruel and treacherous remedies, big with new germs of disease.—GEORGE SANTAYANA, in "The Life of Reason."

Sent by Mrs. Madeline Lambert, 24, Pembridge Road, Notting Hill Gate, London, W.11, who receives 5s.

NOTE: Quotations, the detailed source of which should be given, should be addressed to "Colophon," at the offices of this paper.

rogues? Or is it the style that attracts? It might be argued that the large-scale production of novels burdened with psychological disquisitions has produced a swing-over in favour of "plain, unvarnished tales." For the picaresque novel does not, of course, regard its hero as a pathological subject.

If you are lucky you may still pick up in second-hand bookshops a copy of *The English Rogue*, described in the *Life of Meriton Latroon*, a *Witty Extravagant, being a Compleat History of the most Eminent Cheats of Both Sexes*. This autobiography of a professional thief—reprinted in 1928—is sometimes regarded as the first picaresque novel in English, the precursor of Defoe's *Moll Flanders* and Smollett's *Roderick Random*. Actually, however, it is not. The picaresque tradition in our literature goes back to Elizabethan times, to those yarns about "cozeners" and "coney-catchers" which Greene, Nash, Dekker, and the rest tossed off as a by-product of their poetry and pamphleteering. Nash was more ambitious than his contemporaries. *Jack Wilton: The Unfortunate Traveller*, published in 1594, is one of the first English prose-works cast in the form of the modern novel. The exploits of its hero, a rascally page, sometimes recall the rogueries of Falstaff, and it is likely enough that Shakespeare found Nash's book amusing. But it had no great success in its day, and the experiment was not repeated.

JOHN O' LONDON'S WEEKLY
July 8, 1938

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LETTERS TO GOG AND MAGOG

Edward Verrall Lucas

Gentlemen,—It is an old experience that an author's personality and conversation can disappoint those who love his writings: the magician may not appear in the man. This balk can never, I think, have occurred in an encounter with E. V. Lucas, whose death at the age of seventy leaves a vacuum that can be felt. The man and the writer were one. Lucas, indeed, was the least professional writer of his day. You could not imagine him seeking a subject, for his pen followed his likings, and he liked so many things.



I knew E. V. L. for more years than I care to count. It is almost enough to say that I once walked with him on Brighton's Old Chain Pier, that sea-mark and hieroglyphic of the town in which he was born. But I knew him long before that, for we had been all but schoolfellows: he had come, as a small boy, to the great Quaker school, Ackworth, just when I was leaving it. I doubt whether I condescended to speak to him there. Long afterwards I heard one thing only about his Ackworth days—that this youngster had brought to the cricket pitch a *style* in batting never seen there before. His father, I believe, had put him under the tuition of a professional cricketer, and had actually procured his election to the Sussex County Cricket Club at the age of seven. He was to become the Laureate of the game. When Sir Herbert Baker designed the new entrance gates at Lord's as a memorial to W. G. Grace he took the idea of the sun and the cricket ball from Lucas's verses, "The Cricket Ball Sings," with the gallant prayer of the Ball:—

*Pour on us torrents of light, good Sun,
Shine in the hearts of my cricketers, shine;
Fill them with gladness and might, good Sun,
Touch them with glory, O Brother of mine,
Brother of mine,
Brother of mine!
We are the lords of them, Brother and Mate,
I but a little ball, thou but a great!*

It goes without saying that Lucas became a member of the M.C.C.: all through his career the holy places seemed to be open to him.



Our vague meeting at Ackworth was to become one of those "links" which he considered to be the determining factors in the journey of life. This first link between us might well not have counted as one, for at the age of sixteen he had, by his own statement, been educated in nine schools, and I do not see how he could have kept his school friendships, if he had time to make any, in repair. But when I came to London from Newcastle, and he, some years later, from Brighton, we met as guests of three old Ackworth brothers in Tufnell Park Road, N.W., an interminable avenue of villas which may have been either in Kentish Town or Upper Holloway. All five of us were bookish and we constituted ourselves as a Treasure Trove Club, the idea being that each of us between our weekly or fortnightly meetings should acquire an old book at the maximum

cost of sixpence, produce it at our next séance, and boast of its rarity or literary merit. The scheme began pleasantly enough, but its fate was that which overtook the "Society on the Stanislaus" and I regret to add that the disruptive element in our feasts of reason was the incorrigible levity of a young journalist from Brighton. I fancy that most of our "finds" failed to excite Lucas, who, when his nine-schools-wonder education ended, had been apprenticed to a Brighton second-hand bookseller whose stock was huge and curious.



From this establishment, where he learned a lot about books, young Lucas had gone to the office of the *Sussex Daily News*, where he learned a lot about life. Then a generous Quaker uncle thought that his mind would be all the better for a little synthetic training. He gave his nephew the sum of two hundred pounds so that he might go to London and attend lectures at University College for as long as the money lasted. Under Gower Street's dome young Lucas missed "the cynical atmosphere of a newspaper office" and "such varied life as police courts and inquests provide." Yet in this, his tenth, school and real Alma Mater, he began to find himself. Under its brilliant Professor of English Literature—W. P. Ker—he sat as much entranced as one of Plato's pupils in the grove of Academe. Of Ker he wrote: "His 'Good' was worth pages of elaborate praise; his 'Bad' was a death sentence. . . . In fact there was no excellence in all literature, from Greek to Scandinavian, that he did not relish or extol." I have suggested in this page more than once that all successful teaching of literature is by way of infection: this was Ker's way; this was Lucas's benison. While still at University College he prepared for its Literary Society an essay or address on poetry for children. I remember my astonishment and envy when he told me that Ker had got it accepted for the *Fortnightly Review*, then edited by W. L. Courtney. This led to the publication by Grant Richards, in 1897, of his first anthology, *A Book of Verses for Children*. I got even with him (for the nonce) when about a year later the same publisher issued in handsome form my own first anthology, *London in Song*. I mention this simply because in those days and for years afterwards Lucas and I played catch-as-catch-can—until his flings mocked my efforts to keep up the game.



We both lived at Highgate or close to it, and there I saw in him the strong sproutings of the critic, the essayist, the biographer, and the man of the world. Within his eager vision he was developing an edged appetite for the best of everything according to his own valuations. For example, he worshipped Henry Irving not so much as an actor but as a great gentleman of the Stage. Sometimes I breakfasted with him, and one morning there stood on his table a big jar of marmalade such as I could not think had been seen before in a London lodging-house by gods or wondering men. It appeared that he

had obtained it from one of his Gower Street friends who had passed on to Cambridge, and that it had come straight from the buttery of a famous college—in circumstances which he did not reveal. A small thing, but here was connoisseurship. It was at Highgate that he abashed me by opening his first bank account. He produced his cheque book on the day he received it and told me that he proposed to draw his first cheque in my favour. He did so there and then, and the amount he filled in was One Million Pounds. Relating this in his reminiscences, *Reading, Writing, and Remembering*, published six years ago, he added the true detail that "he [I] did not present the cheque but had it framed." He forgot another small sequel to his munificence. A few weeks later we were walking up West Hill on a dark evening when I noticed that the windows of his little branch bank were all lit up. "What on earth is your bank doing at this time of night?" I said. He glanced over the way, and just growled: "I expect they are trying to find my balance." All rather idiotic, no doubt, but the sap of life was rising fast in the future editor of *Elia*. Again, we had a project to exterminate every *lion comique* left on the musical-hall stage in full view of their audiences, being convinced that the charge against us would be reduced to one of manslaughter with extenuating circumstances. We reflected, in time, that the rate of mortality among *lions comiques* was hopefully high.



The £200 largesse that brought Lucas to London gave out after eighteen months. He had been scribbling little burlesques, satirical verse and what not, and some of these trifles had been accepted by the *Globe*, one of the six London evening newspapers then flourishing. On his second application for work its editor, Algernon Locker, a most genial man who might, incidentally, be described as the last of the Puntersters, asked him to call. He was appointed forthwith to assist W. L. Graves in writing its front page feature, "By the Way," a column of pungently humorous paragraphs based on the news in the morning papers. He made the most of a fine opportunity and a month or so after starting told me with proper pride that Michael Temple, the experienced writer who controlled another feature, "Men and Matters," had already said of him, "There are no flies on Lucas." Of his *Globe* days Lucas wrote long afterwards: "I can't believe it possible for any young man intending to live by his pen to have had a better chance than the *Globe* gave me." Many successful writers have confessed that they graduated on *Globe* "turnovers."



In those far-off beginnings we were sometimes in a position to help each other. I was the "intermediary" in getting Edward Hicks, the official publisher of the Society of Friends, to commission and publish E. V. L.'s first prose book (his own expression). This was *Bernard Barton and His Friends*, which, though long out of print and mostly forgotten, was the germ of all his work as the greatest editor and biographer of Charles and Mary Lamb. The book was very well printed by the Headley Brothers (Ackworth again), whose Ashford establishment Lucas, in allusion to the Bodley Head, then in its Yellow Book glory, would profanely refer to as the Headley Bottom. When the day on which he was to deliver the book arrived he was still hard at work on it, but rather than be the most shadowy defaulter he completed it by working late and brought his manuscript round to me at a little before midnight. Failing to rouse anyone by bell or knock, he left the result of all his toil on my street doorstep, where it was found with the milk in the morning. When I

reproached him with the risk he had taken, he replied, "I am a fatalist." He had good right to be one; the Fates seemed to be always his backers.



That which distinguished E. V. L. from all other writers of his time was his versatility. As I have said, he wrote about the things he liked, but who else had such wide, such tentacular, likings? He was a humanist to the core. Men and dogs, books and pictures, places and antiquities, games and gastronomy, town life, country life, and any good thing forgotten were his diet and delight. He was so attentive to life that his quitting of it is hard to realize; harder still is it to believe that now he

*neither hears nor sees,
Rolled round in earth's diurnal course
With rocks and stones and trees.*

Yet for him there was—I know not whether he cherished it—and for us there remains—I know not whether it deludes us—a larger hope.

I am, gentlemen,
Yours faithfully,
JOHN O' LONDON.

MR. E. V. LUCAS

FURTHER TRIBUTES

Lieutenant-Colonel C. P. Hawkes writes:—

Even now it is so difficult for those who were honoured to be his intimates to realize that life and letters in London have got to go on without E.V. Life he loved: and he was a man of letters. Literature, and the writing and the publishing of it, was the breath of his being. Endowed with an almost superhuman capacity for work, he was never in a hurry, never too busy to forgo the camaraderie of club and table with all its implications of intimate convivial contact with human personality, of close touch with those who, like himself, had something to contribute to the knowledge of good and evil in human life—with a bias on the side of the good which is so strong an element that it can emerge even from the evil. In this regard his endearing gusto was indomitable. It was Shakespearean, or Johnsonian; though it was never an escape from pessimistic melancholy. It was always genially human, an expression of his love for life as the whole material of letters.

One felt in his company that he would have been welcome (with oneself as his guest) at the Mermaid or with Johnson's Club, and, even more, in Charles Lamb's circle in the Temple. His lightning sense of fun and his subtle and immediate application of the allusion to the occasion, his quick sympathy with literary workers of every variety, his monosyllabic appreciation of the right idea and the just word made him the most inspiring influence in such diverse areas of his activity in life and letters as the Beefsteak and the Garrick, the supper table at the Cabdrivers' Association, the pavilions at Lord's and the Oval, the Punch table in Bouverie Street, and at Buck's Club in Mayfair. All that life could give him he took avidly; but in his varied contacts he gave back in full measure all that he had to give. His ripe and delicate style, sophisticated yet wholly sympathetic, was a true expression of his own mentality; and the countless kindnesses registered by his many characteristics and hieroglyphic letters can only be known and treasured by their recipients. The clichés of obituary notices assume, with regard to him, an unwonted veracity. A thousand persons, nonentities as well as eminencies, are mourning the loss of a man of letters who was their friend.

G. D. G. writes:—

One of E. V. Lucas's activities has not yet been mentioned. In 1915 many successful reviews (such as *Business as Usual*, *Shell Out*, and J. M. Barrie's *Rosy Rapture*) had delightful numbers—music by H. E. Darewski, lyrics by F. W. Mark. As a would-be rising composer of 18 I wrote and asked Mr. Mark whether he would send me some lyrics to set to music. I received most courteous, handwritten letter (of regret) signed "E. V. Lucas (F. W. Mark)."

Mrs. R. G. Hayward writes:—

May I mention a letter from Mr. E. V. Lucas, dated May 6, 1921, showing his great kindness to young people and his sympathy with their "literary" efforts? My two little daughters were members of a club at their high school, and "edited" a magazine, so-called, to which, greatly daring and unknown to the higher powers, they asked Mr. Lucas to contribute. His answer to "Dear President Hayward," was as follows: "I am sorry to have been so long in returning your magazines, but when they came I was in France. I am sorry to be unable to write anything for you, but as a matter of fact I think you ought to do it all yourselves. You are doing it very well, only it would be better if you never looked at any other periodical, daily or monthly, but were quite spontaneous."

E. V. L.

"E. V. Lucas." By Audrey Lucas. (Methuen. 6s. net.)

BY HUMBERT WOLFE

It is no use writing on E. V. L. in the third person singular. He was so eminently a first person singular that he necessarily infects any commentator upon him with the same pleasant malady. He has succeeded in appearing in his own character on his daughter's page almost, one would say, without interference by the biographer. Such, indeed was and is the force of the man that merely to know him was in a sense to become part of him, at any rate for the time that one was in his company. Miss Lucas has not attempted a large or portentous biography. She has been content with a slight sketch of the type that E. V. himself would have most earnestly desired. Above all he abominated dullness and pomp. He would have hated to have been given a niche in Westminster Abbey. What he liked and what he is given here is a quiet place where the wind can blow over him and where he can lie back remembering all the good dinners that he has eaten and all the good turns for which he has been responsible.

There is one particular point to urge in favour of Miss Lucas's portrait of her father. We have recently been presented in Miss Daphne du Maurier's similar adventure with what modern youth regards as filial piety. The success that the book had must have been surely one of surprise. Miss Lucas need neither fear nor expect such a fate. Her book is as light as a soufflé and as gently appreciative as any father could have wished.

Not that Miss Lucas is in any sense uncritical. She is aware that with all E. V.'s kindness and amused wisdom he was accused of undue care for his own comfort and pleasures. Miss Lucas indicates that this was in part an inheritance from his father, and in part a reply to the same original. E. V. was, she tells us, conscious of the comfort in which he lived, but through the mask of self-indulgence there were always to be observed two clear, keen eyes that weighed life as impartially as they weighed the soul behind them.

Miss Lucas indicates how many were her father's friends and relationships. She does not refer to a famous series of caricatures by Max Beerbohm in which E. V. L. is indicated in five completely different roles. Max could have continued them for another five and still not exhausted the infinite variety of the man. In the world of letters E. V. was a sportsman. In the world of sport he was a man of letters who could talk to its denizens on their own terms, and in both worlds he brought a fastidious sense of the niceties of life which added appreciably to the agreeable aroma of his personality.

Miss Lucas tells us nothing new, and above all she is careful neither to trouble his memory nor us with unnecessary intimacies. What she shows with great simplicity and beautiful ease is that those who knew E. V. best forgave him first and loved him most. There could be no gentler tribute and none perhaps better deserved.

36, Essex Street,
Strand.

Right; but re-
about the picture?

Lucas

May 19th 1932



C. Brankley Esq
Bramcote

Pine Tree Avenue

Humberstone

Lucas's

2, GORDON PLACE,
CAMPDEN HILL,
W.

May 7

Dear Sir I am very sorry that
I cannot manage the
you name. Sorry it is
best for me to be as hard
sorry just now. yours



John Wilson Esq
 12 Stoneysale House
 Leicester

Oct 29
 1830

36, Essex Street,
 Strand.

Dear Sir, thank you
 for your letter.
 Concerns of perfumery.

I fear.

Myself, as the
 flaccidities of the
 must be made
 certain first.

I am yours
 faithfully
 J. Wilson

John Wilson Esq

this exceeding. Believe
 me yours faithfully
 J. Wilson

- is at any rate part of it.
I think you had at his meeting
some two or three before he was
tried - true. Believe me
Yours sincerely

W. Lucas

2, GORDON PLACE,
CAMPDEN HILL,
W.

Jan 6 1906

Dear Mr Wright, I should think
it very unlikely that Lamb
was sent to the 051 minute meeting
then. I was a visit to
the Bell Meeting House in John
St. Church and will give
him his due for the money

E. V. LUCAS

Tributes to His Memory

The SUNDAY TIMES mourns the loss of Mr. E. V. Lucas, who died on Sunday last in a London nursing home at the age of seventy. For over fourteen years his articles on this page under the heading of "A Wanderer's Notebook" had been one of the most popular features in the English Press. The last appeared on the morning of his death. It was in type three weeks before, for "E. V.'s" writing was always done ahead of time; when he arranged early in June to be "out of the paper" during July he finished his SUNDAY TIMES work for the month, and—for such was his practice—we should, but for his illness, have received before the planned holiday began an article for the first Sunday in August. Alas! the Wanderer's Notebook will not be reopened.

Mr. Lucas was a model contributor. Though he wrote thousands of articles, we never saw one from his pen that showed signs of haste: there was nothing careless or slipshod; and, however good the copy, he was never satisfied till he had revised the last proof and knew that it exactly fitted the column. He found time also to read and consider countless letters from readers; and this established a relation between them that was unusually close and friendly.



From the painting by J. Kerr-Lawson
E. V. LUCAS

HIS LOVE OF LETTERS AND LIFE

By E. V. KNOX

I have been asked to write what follows, I think, because "Punch" loses as much as the SUNDAY TIMES, now that E. V. Lucas is dead. For a long time he contributed more to "Punch" than any other single writer: he kept up his articles to the end, and he was hardly ever absent from the gathering at the Round Table that forms part of our weekly routine.

It is not easy to exaggerate the charm of a writer who loves letters and loves life, and can express his appreciation of both with equal skill. This gift was "E. V.'s" most certainly, and if the objector says: "But surely there are plenty of writers who have that talent," I would answer: "The talent is not always so genuine as you suppose, and it was 'E. V.'s' at a date when it was (oh, very much) rarer than it is today."

It was here far more than in any real similarity of manner or mental equipment that he followed Hazlitt and Lamb. The common essayist is often now, was often then, in method extremely bookish in his outlook on life. How should it be otherwise? It was his wont to bully or to threaten with culture the recalcitrant mind. And for that reason in the early years of this century one can remember—it is not too much to say—the thrill of a new book or a new collection of Essays from the pen of E. V. Lucas.

* * * *

They were hailed with delight in quiet homes not yet surfeited with the easy presentation in cinema and newspaper of the lighter and more genial side of living, not yet surrounded (on earth and air) by persuasive arbiters of taste and connoisseurs of right thinking—right thinking about modes and manners, about travel and art and recreation. It was possible in those days to spend one's leisure happily with E. V. Lucas for a guide—and with almost no one else, because he so obviously enjoyed the good things he was showing, and not merely the act of showing or the feeling that his readers were "there to be improved."

We had our stern and upright teachers, our doctrinaires, and our elegant aesthetes: but quite other was this companion, never discourteous, making no parade of his learning, and desirous always, it seemed, of escorting us in idle hours to the woods and pastures where we were most willing to follow him. I do not think that obscurity or mysticism ever pleased him any more than scholarship or pedantry; nor that high passion moved him much: but here was a man as ready to talk about quaint books as about cricket, as ready to show us a Flemish picture as to point out that the sound of the crunching of good breakfast toast should be like "the thunder in July." If this was a schoolmaster he taught us to play truant every day.

* * * *

E. V. Lucas, by the compulsion of the celebrity which he gained, got to know men as well as he knew books and as well as he loved life. He was shy. And he was sensitive. I think that struck me most of all the first time that I met him—outside his printed works. It was natural for an author to be shy: not so natural for a man already famous, a member of I don't know how many clubs, versed in affairs, and appreciative of the art of good living.

The shyness came, I think, from the fact that he was always a kind of stranger among men who had the blessing—or curse—of a more formal academic education than his own. He did not like this little barrier, easy though it was to upset. And since he was sensitive he would not—as others who have felt this sort of shyness might have done—carry it off by treading roughly on other men's views. He could be satirical, cynical, but you felt his satire and his cynicism were a kind of armour protecting enthusiasms and sentiments which had been too often assailed.

* * * *

With some justice, I think "Over Bemerton's" has often been called his best book, as I believe it was also one of the most popular of that long succession of novels, "travelogues," essay-collections, books about books, and books about pictures that are credited to his name. In "Over Bemerton's" the method is as characteristic of the author as is the matter. Has not "Mr. Falconer" returned to England "after thirty years exile in such a bookless city as Buenos Aires?" Who then is to be more easily excused if he lives over a bookshop and talks to us so often about books? Of whom could it be more expected that he should laugh at and be sentimental about Londoners? And what more natural than that he should meet so strange a character as Mr. Dabney, the journalist who "interviews himself," and runs a sane, fearless and vitriolic newspaper containing no advertisements—the Savonarola of Fleet Street—a man with whose outspoken comments on the toils and abuses of the day "Mr. Falconer" (but ever so gently) disagrees?

E. V. Lucas had the seeing eye: he collected oddities: he was a great admirer of life. He would have preferred, I think, that it should consist of all the beautiful, all the homelier, all the simpler things. Since it did not he went on collecting; but his first enthusiasm made him loth to express on paper (except for a few topical skits) anything but the happier part of experience. Mr. Max Beerbohm has told us charmingly that every man is at heart a host or a guest, and that he himself is the latter. E. V. Lucas was a host. He was most at his ease in giving us pleasant things: and his hospitality was unbounded.

A MEMORABLE COMPANION

By MAX BEERBOHM

I am saddened by the thought that I shall not see my dear E. V. again. But this sounds egoistic. Whose dear E. V. was he not? He was loved by many thousands of people who had never met him, and by all the hundreds of people who had. Nor were these hundreds few, for though, when first I knew him, he was not very gregarious, he became immensely so in later years. In all kinds of company might one hope to encounter that forensic, that judicial head; those eyes which always rather reminded one of an elephant's, so solemnly and yet so wittily sagacious were they; that smile which might with a shade of difference have been a scowl—an amicable scowl. In any kind of company he "told," though never was a man less anxious to do so. He was there to observe and to listen, he was there for passive enjoyment. I wonder if anybody ever heard him "hold forth"? I should have liked to have

that treat, though it would have startled me. E. V. must, I think, have written in the course of his life a greater number of words than he spoke. Not that his oral gifts were less great than his scriptural. He merely didn't exercise them so much. Perhaps it was his Quaker blood that inspired this choice. He was essentially a quietist, as had been his forbears in a world less noisy than ours. I never heard him raise his voice in approval or disapproval, I never saw him lean forward to emphasise a point, I don't remember that he had any gestures. The vivacity was in what he said; and the tranquil, almost gloomy way in which he expressed his fun was a part of the good sweet. He was a wonderful, a memorable companion.

WRITING TO GIVE PLEASURE

By DESMOND MacCARTHY

We who are filling "E.V.'s" column this Sunday—it is sadly like filling his grave—are in danger of repeating the same things in different words; and he would never have approved of overlapping.

E. V. Lucas had in him the makings of a first-rate satirist; but he had a great reluctance to inflict pain. He could have easily been, had he chosen, the most cruel of gentle writers.

Something, too, about the ease of his accomplished prose I must say. He was one of those delightful writers who wrote inconspicuously well. I must draw on memory, but perhaps this example will serve. He is describing his hero (characteristically a tired British Museum official) on a voyage, now napping in a deck-chair, now, as he says, "watching the horizon rhythmically rising above the taffrail and sinking below it." Those words suggest perfectly the motion of a ship. Almost every page he wrote exhibited this quiet adroitness in the use of common words.

Once, it is now many years ago, he asked me to one of those good dinners he loved to give his friends, where the food and wine were always excellent and the company congenial. When at last the chairs began to empty, he beckoned me to bring my glass round and to sit beside him. Then, gazing in front of him with that glare in his eyes and in that husky, deliberative, humorous voice, which his friends will always remember, he said, after jiggling his knees a little under the table: "I admire your writing, but you don't admire mine." I was surprised, embarrassed, and delighted.

"No, no," I protested, "for instance, take that description of your visit to Swinburne you wrote in 'The New Statesman'—I thought it perfect!" But he only shook his head and turned his cigar between his lips. Then, to my relief and admonishment, he went on: "You Irish fellows have no sense of form. Your own essays stop; they don't end. They contain very good things, but they finish without leaving a feeling of completeness." I recognised the truth of that criticism at the time, and I have kept it in mind since—at least to the point of reprinting as little of my work as possible. But it also had the effect of drawing my attention to one of his own rare merits. However casual, short, scrappy, discursive one of his essays or articles might be, it had an air of being somehow complete.

And that brings me to the substance of his writings. It was quite true that at the time of that dinner his favourite themes and way of handling them were

not interesting to me. But as time went on, and as more books were written by people who wanted to give me pain, or do me good, or thrust their private troubles at me, while fewer and fewer seemed to be writing to give me pleasure, I began to appreciate E. V. Lucas more and more. He was a restful yet alert travelling-companion, whether down the by-paths of literature or history, or in England or on the Continent. His company was never insistent, he left us free to share—that was all, and not necessarily his impressions. The skill with which his humour or his intellect played round an object without reminding you of its painful implications pointed, I think, to an immense sensitivity in himself to pain.

Thus he was cheerful without being hearty; tender without being mawkish. His knowledge was wide, miscellaneous and accurate. He was, so I read him, so well acquainted with pain, disappointment, shame and disgust, that he sympathised with our need of rest and distraction; and very modestly and skillfully he used his wit, his frequent high spirits, his sound commonsense and his sensibility to provide us with that relief. He invariably wrote out of an amiable uncondemning part of himself; not to make a good impression, but because he was aware that the world was full enough of misery.

"E. V."

E. V. LUCAS was over seventy when he died last week, leaving a void for his nearer friends that is hard to describe. In a myriad ways of intercourse he had a telling and delightful touch of his own at every moment, and he kept it till the last. He was the best editor and biographer of CHARLES LAMB; he was the perfect anthologist of "The Open Road" and "Her Infinite Variety"; his output as an easy essayist was prodigious. Publisher, wit, contributor to "Punch"—acute connoisseur of dining, books, pictures, cricket, and people—he was an astonishing worker without showing it, just as his ironic zest made him at all times an enchanting and reposeful companion. Also in kindnesses towards others and fortitude within himself he was every bit a man and in his own way a strong one.

E. V. Lucas

If ever there was an irreplaceable it is E. V. Lucas, who with characteristic good manners has made a quiet and unassuming farewell to the age that he enriched. He would have wished no farewell trumpets and certainly no eloquent tears. He would have asked—and not in vain—that when two or three of his many friends met they would remember him with affection and with a lightening of the heart.

It is as difficult to convey E.V.L. to those who did not know him in person

as it would be to explain the scent of a flower to a man born without the fifth sense. He had a quality which can only be called a spiritual fragrance. He was like lavender in any place that he visited.

Some, though not all, of him was given to the world in his books. These conveyed the lover of verse, of good company, of the open air and of all the curiosities of the human heart. They showed, too, the ubiquity of his interest and his acquaintance with much that was memorable, and a great deal that was unknown in the Arts.

But neither in novels, nor articles, nor in anthologies was E.V.L. fully disclosed. If you wished to find him as he was, look round upon the faces of the friends that he has bereaved. Si monumentum requiris circumspice.

VALEDICTION

THE LAST ESSAYS OF E. V. LUCAS

"Adventures and Misgivings." By E. V. Lucas. (Methuen. 6s. net.)

BY HUMBERT WOLFE

For many years one of the compensations of autumn has been the annual book of essays that E. V. Lucas published. As the leaves fell from the trees, he gathered in his own—an enchanter from whom no leaves fled. It was harvest-time for one of the most amiable writers who ever used the English tongue, and each year his barns were stacked full to the beams.

There are various factors in his work which lend it its unique quality of worldly lavender. In the first place, E. V. had the true collector's mind. He loved people—plain and coloured, places, things and legends. In the next he added to this general interest an extraordinary erudition. Because he wrote with the quill of a swift, many suspected that he could but skim and dip over the surface. This was not true. In matters of Art he could match many a so-called expert, while in strange details of history's byways he wandered at ease with no need of guide. In the third place, he possessed an elegantly lucid style. What could be a greater tax upon any man's writing than that he should have to compose an essay every week of his life for many years? One would have expected staleness, looseness in construction, and, above all, weariness. Nothing could be less true of E. V. He was always as fresh as a basket of newly-laundered linen, he was neatly ironed, and he was ready to be worn for a dinner, for a ball, or for some field sport.

This brings us to his last sovereign and co-ordinating quality. E. V. had not only wide, almost ubiquitous, interests, but he had a general affection. He was, and he proved it in his work and in his life, a great sportsman. One might vary Landor and say of him,

"Cricket he loved and after cricket, Art."

In anthology after anthology he gave proofs of his love for the game, indeed of all games, but he had the happy knack of seeing them, if not sub specie æternitatis, at any rate in Test form. He was equally a lover of the good things of life—good wine, good food and good talk. He was a great host on paper and in fact. At one of his dinners at the Garrick he would say after a great champagne had circulated: "Here is the true, the blushing Hippocrene. Swallow this brandy after that cold stuff." He was always entertaining his readers to brandy after the cold stuff.

And, above all, he was (though few realised this), one of the most pertinent

and relentless critics of contemporary life. His "Inside Complete You Are," series fired cheerful (but damaging) salvoes against the first vicious invasion of Transatlantic methods of publicity. His "Quoth the Raven," ranks in satire by the side of Chesterton and Belloc at their best. It was there, for instance, that the phrase first appeared on the lips of Mr. Lloyd George, "This war, like the next war, is a war to end war." It was there too that pictures appeared of heroes such as the one "who was first at Victoria Station to see our brave lads off to the front," or of the young lady "who was first in the margarine-queue at Balham. Her aunt's belief in Lord Northcliffe as a war-winner is profound."

And now "Adventures and Misgivings" is what his publishers—indeed, his own old firm—mournfully say is the last collection. Perhaps we need not accept that too literally. For there must be hundreds of précis worthy of collection and not yet collected, waiting to be rescued. But, if this is really to be the last, then it is a charming and characteristic colophon.

There are half-a-dozen topics at least treated here as no one else could have done or will ever again. There is the scheme for the poem, which is to deplore that, as Adam and Eve were never children, they could obviously never have managed Abel and Cain. There is the charming and melancholy note on "Hotel Books." To all who write the hotel-libraries are a "memento mori." For there moulder the unburied forms of books, once best-sellers, which even the worst-buyer would not now buy in a two-penny box. There is a series of apothegms, reminiscent of "Quoth the Raven," as, for instance,

"Woman is an attractive and expensive creature who plays with the wrong ball at billiards."

He was always climbing up his family tree and insulting one from the branches. And finally there is a half-humorous, half-pitiful protest against his own memorial service.

Well! we will not tease him with another here. Hail and farewell, and if for ever, then for ever fare you well.