

Preface to the First Edition

"One of the deep secrets of Life," Charles Lutwidge Dodgson confided to his friend the actress Ellen Terry, is "that all, that is really *worth* the doing, is what we do for *others*." The letters assembled here, or a remarkably high percentage of them, spell out the way that Dodgson practised what he preached. Indeed, he spent much of his life in the service of others: writing for their instruction and amusement; paying for their schooling, for their lessons in French, music, and art; getting them jobs; guiding their careers; meeting their dentists' bills; buying them railway tickets; treating them to the theatre; giving them inscribed copies of his books and other presents; taking their photographs; inventing games and puzzles for them; tutoring them in mathematics and logic; giving them religious guidance; feeding and clothing them; and, of course, telling them stories.

Letter-writing itself was often for him another way of doing something for others, especially for the young girls whose friendship he so ardently cultivated. As he stood at his upright desk, he was often challenged to breathe life and laughter onto the dry leaves of letter paper ranged before him. The result is a stream of letters that Lewis Carroll's fancy alone could create -- new self-contained microcosms of Wonderland, vehicles of fun and pleasure that underscore his devotion to others and prove him, in both senses of the phrase, a man of letters.

Of course, not everything he wrote was inspired by the comic muse. He was actually a serious man, formal and scholarly, shy and awkward, hard-working, fastidious, deeply religious. From his father's death in 1868, he was, as the eldest son, head of his family, and he took to heart his responsibilities to his three brothers and seven sisters. From the age of eighteen, he was a member of the oldest university in the land, Oxford; from twenty-three a mathematics don at Christ Church; and from twenty-nine an ordained clergyman. He wrote treatises on mathematics and logic as well as children's books and concerned himself with

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THE SELECTED LETTERS OF LEWIS CARROLL

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the mechanics of designing and publishing them. His far-reaching interests and avocations involved him deeply in photography, the theatre, art, literature, and the minutiae of college affairs; his voluminous reading took him into the worlds of science, medicine, psychic phenomena, and technology. All these interests elicited from his pen a flow of serious, reflective letters that provide posterity with a record of his life, his mind, his soul, and go beyond to document the behaviour, manners, and psychological tenor of his age. His less serious letters are, on the other hand, marvellously fanciful creations, many of them little jewels fashioned for child friends. These reveal the workings of the imagination we already know from the *Alice* books; they take the art of letter-writing into new provinces.

Dodgson was, surely, one of the world's most prolific letter-writers. By his own confession, he wrote "wheelbarrows full, almost." "One-third of my life seems to go in receiving letters," he claimed, "and the other two-thirds in answering them." Writing to the poet Christina Rossetti on August 16, 1882, he told her that her letter was the thirteenth he had written that day. He confessed to his young friend Mary Brown that some of the letters he had yet to answer were five and a half years old; he got about two thousand letters off every year, he told her, but even that was not enough. "I'm generally 70 or 80 names in arrears, and sometimes one letter will take me an afternoon," he wrote elsewhere. On New Year's Day 1892 he resolved to catch up. "I began by making a list of the people who are waiting (some of them 5 to 10 years) for letters. There are more than 60 of them." "Life seems to go in letter-writing," he wrote to Ellen Terry's sister Marion when he was fifty-five, "and I'm beginning to think that the proper definition of 'Man' is 'an animal that writes letters.'"

He was a systematic record-keeper, and in fact devised a Register of Letters Received and Sent, with a *précis* of each alongside its date and entry number. He began this record on January 1, 1861, less than a month before his twenty-ninth birthday, and maintained it diligently for the remaining thirty-seven years of his life. That Letter Register has not survived, but we know that the last number recorded there was 98,721. We also know that he kept a separate register for letters he sent and received between 1882 and 1892 as Curator of Senior Common Room at Christ Church. That register has not survived either, but by adding a modest estimate of five thousand entries one arrives at a hypothetical sub-total of 103,721. To that figure one must yet add an estimate of the number of letters sent and received before either register was begun,

during the first twenty-nine years of his life, as a schoolboy at Richmond and Rugby and an undergraduate and young Oxford don. How many? If there were over 100,000 in his last thirty-seven years, what for the first twenty-nine? It is difficult to know. But, whatever the figure, the total is overpowering.

One hard reality emerges from these arithmetical speculations, and that is that letter-writing was no sham pastime for Dodgson. He took it seriously, and he spent long hours at it. "I find I [write] about 20 words a minute, and a page contains about 150 words, i.e., about 7½ minutes to a page," he observed. "So the copying of 12 pages took about 1½ hours: and the original writing 2½ or more. In fact," he sums up his report on how long it took him to write a draft of a letter and to make a fair copy, "I began soon after 2½, and ended about 7." But he comforted himself by recalling to the actress Mrs. Herbert Beerbohm Tree: "I have proved by actual trial that a letter, that takes an hour to write, takes only about 3 minutes to read!"

Sometimes he composed letters in bed at night (he invented a device called the Nyctograph to enable him to take notes under the covers, in the dark); and in the morning, fully dressed, standing before his writing-desk, he would choose the appropriate sheet of paper from the various sizes he kept in good supply, select his pen, and write, usually in purple ink, in a clear, easy hand that placed no strain upon the reader. One might conclude that letter-writing was a compulsion with him. But the saving grace is that he could laugh about it: "I hardly know which is me and which is the inkstand," he wrote. "The confusion in one's mind doesn't so much matter - but when it comes to putting bread-and-butter, and orange marmalade, into the inkstand; and then dipping pens into oneself, and filling oneself up with ink, you know, it's horrid!"

The light touch and the whimsy always come to his rescue; he rises above the ordinary, the basic, and whisks himself and his reader off to a world of nonsense. He creates puzzles, puns, pranks; he teases, he feigns, he fantasizes. He sends letters in verse, sometimes in verse set down as prose to see if his correspondent will detect the hidden metres and rhymes; letters written backwards so that one has to hold them up to a looking-glass to read them; letters with hoaxes and acrostics; rebus letters with other visual effects, with a beetle or a spider crawling across the page, with a sketch of what he himself looked like when he was lecturing. In the end he packs into tiny envelopes huge amounts of pleasure for his many friends. For them the postman's knock must surely have become one of the world's happiest sounds.

Yes, of course, he enjoyed composing these letters, and reaped a sense of fulfilment, psychic satisfaction – all of that – and he knew it. He admitted the possibility that doing good for others might be motivated by one's own pleasure. But, as he continued in his letter to Ellen Terry, "it is *not* selfishness, that my own pleasure should be a motive so long as it is not *the* motive that would outweigh the other, if the two came into collision."

Motive and manner of life meant everything to the man we have come to know as Lewis Carroll. He would have been abashed, even appalled, at the thought that his name (or even his pen name) would become a household word. For he was essentially a modest man, one who led a rather ordinary life for his time and station.

He was the son of an intelligent and sensitive clergyman in the north of England. He grew up in what appears to have been an agreeable family circle. The Dodgsons were a "good English family" on both sides, with a heavy sprinkling of clerics and an occasional bishop and military man here and there on the family tree. They could even make a claim to a distant relationship to Queen Victoria. It was an upper-crust family: conservative, steeped in tradition, self-conscious, reverential, pious, loyal, and devoted to social service. The father could be witty and whimsical at times, but, on the whole, he was occupied with his clerical duties and must have given the impression of a strong, solid, authoritarian, rather gloomy, high and dry churchman.

We know less about Lewis Carroll's mother. She died before Carroll's nineteenth birthday. She must have been a gentle creature, and, what with eleven children, a busy one. In his few allusions to her, Carroll shows genuine affection. But the evidence makes quite clear that Carroll's relationship with his father was more important. The two developed close sympathies, and in the course of being taught by his father while, as a boy, he was still at home, the young Carroll adopted the father as his ideal, a model to emulate. Dodgson *père* died in 1868, when Carroll was thirty-six, but even many years later, he characterized his father's death as "the greatest sorrow of my life."

Carroll the man had mostly pleasant memories of childhood. He grew up with a gaggle of sisters and brothers to play with, and he enjoyed walks and outings in the Yorkshire countryside. He was good at mechanical things and built a miniature railway in the garden and a puppet theatre for which he wrote original plays. He was also a great

reader, had a good memory, liked to sketch and paint and to write poetry and short stories. But most of all, he had learned in the Dodgson family circle to live a purposeful life, and he dedicated his entire being to making his life meaningful to others and to society in general. Carroll was educated first by his father, then at the Richmond School in Yorkshire, next at Rugby in Warwickshire, and, as an undergraduate, at Christ Church, Oxford.

It was not until 1862, when he was thirty, that he first told the story of *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* to the three daughters of his college dean as they rowed languidly on the River Isis. Even then, it took another three and a half years before the story could be read by all. It was this book and its sequel, *Through the Looking-Glass and What Alice Found There*, with their exceptional blend of humour and nonsense, that made Carroll world famous.

The *Alice* stories were by-products of a mind filled with many serious matters. By profession, Charles Dodgson was a mathematician and logician, and he wrote and published numerous works on these subjects. He was also deeply interested in art, and was one of the earliest art photographers. He liked to sketch as well, to stay abreast of the art movements of his day, and to visit art exhibitions. He was a tireless theatre-goer and fostered a love of the theatre in many of his child friends. He pursued friendship not only with literary lights but also with artists, actors, and playwrights of the time. It follows that many of his letters are to the famous people of the Victorian world of the arts.

For most of his life, Dodgson lived in college rooms. He allowed himself the pleasure of visits to London and outings with young friends, but no extravagant indulgences. He travelled abroad only once, always ate frugally when he ate at all, and he usually dressed simply, in black. For much of his life he helped support his six unmarried sisters and a good many other people—relatives, friends, even strangers. He was always willing to take on new students, and he was happy, albeit with genuine modesty, to give young and old alike religious and spiritual instruction. When he realized that his *Alice* books would bring in a modest income for the rest of his life, he actually asked the University of Oxford to reduce his salary.

Although he resigned his lectureship in 1881, before he turned fifty, he remained a Student of Christ Church until his death in 1898, a fortnight before his sixty-sixth birthday. In his Oxford setting, with occasional forays into the larger world, Charles Dodgson, the shy,

stammering, sheltered academic don, managed to encompass two disparate worlds, writing serious tomes on the one hand and creating nonsensical flights into Wonderland on the other.

This selection of Dodgson's letters comes from the two-volume edition of *The Letters of Lewis Carroll* that was published in London by Macmillan and in New York by Oxford University Press in 1979. Those two volumes contain 1,305 of Dodgson's letters, of which 320 appear here, a selection which I hope captures the essence as well as the multiple interests and subtleties of the whole man. Where the two-volume edition strove to identify the recipients of Dodgson's letters and to give a biographical sketch of each one, I have included in this edition biographical information only where I believe it to be especially interesting or illuminating. Full biographical details are available in the original edition, as are identifications of most of Dodgson's quotations and allusions. There, too, readers will find an explanation of the principles used in transcribing the letters, and they can determine the location and source of each letter.

Although the Reverend Charles Lutwidge Dodgson lived a life away from the limelight, disliked publicity, and cherished privacy, he was aware that we must all make concessions to history, that we cannot, should not, try to place a restraining hand upon the truth from beyond the grave. Surely he would have taken some satisfaction in knowing that his letters could, more than three-quarters of a century after his death, still afford pleasure to others.

New York and London, 1982

Morton N. Cohen

The Wonderland



Postage-Stamp Case

Figure 4.1 The Wonderland Postage-Stamp Case (1890) was invented by Lewis Carroll in 1888 as one of the many *Wonderland* products in his *Alice* industry.

Eight or Nine Wise Words about Letter-Writing

1. On Stamp-Cases

SOME American writer has said "the snakes in this district may be divided into one species - the venomous." The same principle applies here. Postage-Stamp-Cases may be divided into one species, the "Wonderland." The title is entered at Stationers' Hall: the two Pictorial Surprises, and the "Wise Words," are copyright.

You don't see why I call them "Surprises"? Well, take the Case in your left-hand, and regard it attentively. You see Alice nursing the Duchess's Baby? (An entirely new combination, by the way: it doesn't occur in the book.) Now, with your right thumb and forefinger, lay hold of the little book, and suddenly pull it out. *The Baby has turned into a Pig!* If that doesn't surprise you, why, I suppose you wouldn't be surprised if your own Mother-in-law suddenly turned into a Gyroscope!

This Case is *not* intended to carry about in your pocket. Far from it. People seldom want any other Stamps, on an emergency, than Penny-Stamps for Letters, Sixpenny-Stamps for Telegrams, and a bit of Stamp-edging for cut fingers (it makes capital sticking-plaster, and will stand three or four washings, cautiously conducted): and all these are easily carried in a purse or pocket-book. No, *this* is meant to haunt your envelope-case, or wherever you keep your writing-materials. What made me invent it was the constantly wanting Stamps of other values, for foreign Letters, Parcel Post, &c., and finding it very bothersome to get at the kind I wanted in a hurry. Since I have possessed a "Wonderland Stamp-Case," Life has been bright and peaceful, and I have used no other. I believe the Queen's Laundress uses no other.

Each of the pockets will hold 6 stamps, comfortably. I would recommend you to put them in, one by one, in the form of a *bouquet*, making them lean to the right and to the left alternately: thus there will always be a free *corrier*

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to get hold of, so as to take them out, quickly and easily, one by one: otherwise you will find them apt to come out two or three at a time.

According to my experience, the *5d.*, *9d.*, and *1s.* Stamps are hardly ever wanted, though I have constantly to replenish all the other pockets. If your experience agrees with mine, you may find it convenient to keep only a couple (say) of each of these 3 kinds, in the *1s.* pocket, and to fill the other 2 pockets with extra *1d.* Stamps.

2. How to Begin a Letter

If the Letter is to be in answer to another, begin by getting out that other letter and reading it through, in order to refresh your memory, as to what it is you have to answer, and as to your correspondent's *present address* (otherwise you will be sending your letter to his regular address in *London*, though he has been careful in writing to give you his *Torquay* address in full).

Next, *address and stamp the Envelope*. "What! Before writing the *Letter*?" Most certainly. And I'll tell you what will happen if you don't. You will go on writing till the last moment, and, just in the middle of the last sentence, you will become aware that "time's up!" Then comes the hurried wind-up - the wildly-scrawled signature - the hastily-fastened envelope, which comes open in the post - the address, a mere hieroglyphic - the horrible discovery that you've forgotten to replenish your Stamp-Case - the frantic appeal to every one in the house, to lend you a Stamp - the headlong rush to the Post Office, arriving, hot and gasping, just after the box has closed - and finally, a week afterwards, the return of the Letter, from the Dead-Letter-Office, marked "address illegible"!

Do not, however, in your anxiety to observe this rule, commit the error of *addressing two Envelopes at once!* The inevitable result of *that* would be that the Letters would get into wrong Envelopes, and if (as is most probable) one was a Letter of congratulation, and the other of condolence, the outcome of your morning's work would be to turn two of your best and oldest friends into *bitter enemies for life!* *Verb. sap. sat.*

Next, put your own address, *in full*, at the top of the note-sheet. It is an aggravating thing - I speak from sad experience - when a friend, staying at some new address, heads his letter "Dover," simply, assuming that you can get the rest of the address from his previous letter, which of course you have destroyed.

Next, put the date *in full*. It is another aggravating thing, when you wish, years afterwards, to arrange a series of letters, to find them dated "Feb. 17,"

"Aug. 2," without any year to guide you as to which comes first. And never, dear Madam (N.B. this remark is addressed to ladies only: no man would ever do such a thing), put "Wednesday," simply, as the date! "That way madness lies."

3. How to Go On with a Letter

Here is a golden Rule to begin with. *Write legibly.* The average temper of the human race would be perceptibly sweetened, if every body obeyed this Rule! A great deal of the bad writing in the world comes simply from writing *too quickly*. Of course you reply "I do it to save time." A very good object, no doubt; but what right have you to do it at your friend's expense? Isn't his time as valuable as yours? Years ago, I used to receive letters from a friend — and very interesting letters too — written in one of the most atrocious hands ever invented. It generally took me about a *week* to read one of his letters! I used to carry it about in my pocket, and take it out at leisure times, to puzzle over the riddles which composed it — holding it in different positions, and at different distances, till at last the meaning of some hopeless scrawl would flash upon me, when I at once wrote down the English under it: and, when several had been thus guessed, the context would help one with the others, till at last the whole series of hieroglyphics was deciphered. If *all* one's friends wrote like that, Life would be entirely spent in reading their letters!

This Rule applies, specially, to names of people or places — and *most* specially to *foreign names*. I got a letter once, containing some Russian names, written in the same hasty scramble in which people often write "yours sincerely." The *context*, of course, didn't help in the least: and one-spelling was just as likely as another, so far as I knew: it was necessary to write and tell my friend that I couldn't read any of them!

My second Rule is, don't fill *more* than a page and a half with apologies for not having written sooner!

The best subject, to *begin with*, is your friend's last letter. Write with the letter open before you. Answer his questions, and make any remarks his letter suggests. *Then* go on to what you want to say yourself. This arrangement is more courteous, and pleasanter for the Reader, than to fill the letter with your own invaluable remarks, and then hastily answer your friend's questions in a postscript. Your friend is much more likely to enjoy your wit, *after* his own anxiety for information has been satisfied.

In referring to anything your friend has said in his letter, it is best to *quote the exact words*, and not to give a summary of them in *your* words. You know, yourself, how aggravating it is to have "words put into your mouth" — so to speak — which you have neither said nor meant to say. This caution is specially necessary when some point has arisen as to which the two correspondents do not quite agree. There ought to be no opening for such writing as "You have quite misunderstood my letter. I never said so-and-so, &c. &c.," which tends to make a correspondence last for a life-time.

A few more Rules may fitly be given here, for correspondence that has unfortunately become *controversial*.

One is, *don't repeat yourself*. When once you have said your say, fully and clearly, on a certain point, and have failed to convince your friend, *drop that subject*: to repeat your arguments, all over again, will simply lead to his doing the same; and so you will go on, like a Circulating Decimal. *Did you ever know a Circulating Decimal come to an end?*

Another Rule is, when you have written a letter that you feel may possibly irritate your friend, however necessary you may have felt it to so express yourself, *put it aside till the next day*. Then read it over again, and fancy it addressed to yourself. This will often lead to your writing it all over again, taking out a lot of the vinegar and pepper, and putting in honey instead, and thus making a *much* more palatable dish of it! If, when you have done your best to write inoffensively, you still feel that it will probably lead to further controversy, *keep a copy of it*. There is very little use, months afterwards, in pleading "I am almost sure I never expressed myself as you say: to the best of my recollection I said so-and-so." *Far* better to be able to write "I did not express myself so: these are the words I used."

My fifth Rule is, if your friend makes a severe remark, either leave it unnoticed, or make your reply distinctly *less* severe: and, if he makes a friendly remark, tending towards "making up" the little difference that has arisen between you, let your reply be distinctly *more* friendly. If, in picking a quarrel, each party declined to go more than *three-eighths* of the way, and if, in making friends, each was ready to go *five-eighths* of the way — why, there would be more reconciliations than quarrels! Which is like the Irishman's remonstrance to his gad-about daughter — "Shure, you're *always* goin' out! You go out *three* times, for *wanst* that you come in!"

My sixth Rule (and my last remark about controversial correspondence) is, *don't try to have the last word!* How many a controversy would be nipped in the bud, if each was anxious to let the *other* have the last word! Never mind how telling a rejoinder you leave unuttered: never mind your friend's

supposing that you are silent from lack of anything to say: let the thing drop, as soon as it is possible without discourtesy: remember "speech is silvern, but silence is golden"! (N.B. If you are a gentleman, and your friend a lady, this Rule is superfluous: *you won't get the last word!*)

My seventh Rule is, if it should ever occur to you to write, jestingly, in *dispraise* of your friend, be sure you exaggerate enough to make the jesting *obvious*: a word, spoken in *jest*, but taken as *earnest*, may lead to very serious consequences. I have known it to lead to the breaking-off of a friendship. Suppose, for instance, you wish to remind your friend of a sovereign you have lent him, which he has forgotten to repay - you might quite *mean* the words "I mention it, as you seem to have a conveniently bad memory for debts" in jest: yet there would be nothing to wonder at if he took offence at that way of putting it. But, suppose you wrote "Long observation of your career as a pickpocket has convinced me that my only hope, for recovering that sovereign I lent you, is to say 'Pay up, or I'll summons yer!'", he would indeed be a matter-of-fact friend if he took *that* as seriously meant!

My eighth Rule. When you say, in your letter, "I enclose £5 bank-note", or "I enclose John's letter for you to see", get the document referred to - and *put it into the envelope*. Otherwise, you are pretty certain to find it lying about, *after the Post has gone!*

My ninth Rule. When you get to the end of a note-sheet, and find you have more to say, take another piece of paper - a whole sheet, or a scrap, as the case may demand: but, whatever you do, *don't cross!* Remember the old proverb "*Cross-writing makes cross reading.*" "The old proverb?" you say, enquiringly. "*How old?*" Well, not so *very* ancient, I must confess. In fact, I'm afraid I invented it while writing this paragraph. Still, you know, "old" is a *comparative* term. I think you would be *quite* justified in addressing a chicken, just out of the shell, as "Old boy!", *when compared* with another chicken, that was only half-out!

If doubtful whether to end with "yours faithfully," or "yours truly," or "yours most truly," &c. (there are at least a dozen varieties, before you reach "yours affectionately"), refer to your correspondent's last letter, and make your winding-up *at least as friendly as his*: in fact, even if a shade *more* friendly, it will do no harm!

A Postscript is a very useful invention: but it is *not* meant (as so many ladies suppose) to contain the real *gist* of the letter: it serves rather to throw into the shade any little matter we do *not* wish to make a fuss about. For example, your friend had promised to execute a commission for you in town, but forgot it, thereby putting you to great inconvenience: and he now writes

to apologize for his negligence. It would be cruel, and needlessly crushing, to make it the main subject of your reply. How much more gracefully it comes in thus! "P.S. Don't distress yourself any more about having omitted that little matter in town. I won't deny that it *did* put my plans out a little, at the time: but it's all right now. I often forget things, myself: and 'those, who live in glass-houses, mustn't throw stones,' you know!"

My tenth Rule. When your letter is finished, read it carefully through, and put in any "not" that you may chance to have omitted. (This precaution will sometimes save you from saying what you had not quite intended: e.g., suppose you had *meant* to write "Dear Sir, I am not prepared to accept the offer you make me of your hand and heart.") Then fold up the letter with all the enclosures in it, so that all must come out *together*. Otherwise your friend will simply draw out the letter, and put the envelope into the fire, and it will only be when he reaches the words "I enclose £5 bank-note" that he will turn to watch, with tearful gaze, a fragment of white paper-ash, as it flickers up the chimney!

My eleventh Rule. Do not fasten up the envelope till Post-time is close at hand. Otherwise, you will have to tear it open again, to insert something you had forgotten to say.

My last Rule. When you take your letters to the Post, *carry them in your hand*. If you put them into your pocket, you will take a long country-walk - I speak from experience - passing the Post-Office *twice*, going and returning, and, when you get home again, will find them *still* in your pocket!

4. On Registering Correspondence

Let me recommend you to keep a record of Letters Received and Sent. I have kept one for many years, and have found it of the greatest possible service, in many ways: it secures my *answering* Letters, however long they have to wait; it enables me to refer, for my own guidance, to the details of previous correspondence, though the actual Letters may have been destroyed long ago; and, most valuable feature of all, if any difficulty arises, years afterwards, in connection with a half-forgotten correspondence, it enables me to say, with confidence, "I did *not* tell you that he was 'an invaluable servant in every way,' and that you *couldn't* trust him too much." I have a *précis* of my letter. What I said was 'he is a *valuable* servant in *many* ways, but *don't* trust him too much.' So, if he's cheated you, you really must not hold *me* responsible for it!"

I will now give you a few simple Rules for making, and keeping, a Letter-Register.

Get a blank book, containing (say) 200 leaves, about 4 in. wide and 7 high. It should be well fastened into its cover, as it will have to be opened and shut hundreds of times. Have a line ruled, in red ink, down each margin of every page, an inch off the edge (the margin should be wide enough to contain a number of 5 digits, easily: I manage with a $\frac{1}{4}$ inch margin; but, unless you write very small, you will find an inch margin more comfortable).

Write a *précis* of each Letter, received or sent, in chronological order. Let the entry of a "received" Letter reach from the left-hand edge to the right-hand marginal line; and the entry of a "sent" Letter from the left-hand marginal line to the right-hand edge. Thus the two kinds will be quite distinct, and you can easily hunt through the "received" Letters by themselves, without being bothered with the "sent" Letters; and *vice versa*.

Use the *right-hand* pages only; and, when you come to the end of the book, turn it upside-down, and begin at the other end, still using right-hand pages. Write, at the top of every sheet of a "received" Letter, and of every copy you keep of a "sent" Letter, its Register-Number in full.

I will now give a few (ideal) specimen pages of my Letter-Register, and make a few remarks on them: after which I think you will find it easy enough to manage one for yourself.

| | | |
|-------|--|-------|
| 29217 | (217) Ap. 1 (Tu.) Jones, Mrs. am sendg. J., a white elephant. | 27518 |
| (218) | do. Wilkins & Co. bill, for grand piano, £175 10s. 6d. [pd] | 225 |
| (219) | do. Scareham, H. [writes from 'Grand Hotel, Monte Carlo'] asking to borrow £50 for a few weeks' (!) | 221.2 |
| ○ | (220) do. Scareham, H. would like to know object, for wh loan is asked, and what security is offered. | ○ |
| 218 | (221) Ap. 3. Wilkins & Co. in previous letter, now before me, undertook to supply one for £120: declining to pay more. | |
| 246 | (222) do. Cheetham & Sharp. have written 221 — enclosing previous letter — is law on my side? | |
| 23514 | (223) Ap. 4. Manager, Goods Station, G. N. White Elephant arrived, addressed to you — send for it at once — 'very savage'. | 226 |

| | | |
|-------|--|------|
| 29225 | (225) Ap. 4. (F) Jones, Mrs. thank, but no room for it at present: am sending it to Zoological Gardens. | 190. |
| 217 | (226) do. Manager, Goods Station, G. N. R. please deliver, to bearer of this note, case containing White Elephant addressed to me. | |
| 230 | (227) do. Director Zool. Gardens. (enclosing above note to R. W. Manager) call for valuable animal, presented to Gardens. | |
| 223 | (228) Ap. 8. Cheetham & Sharp, you misquote enclosed letter: limit named is £18 0. | 222 |
| 229 | (229) Ap. 9. Director, Zoo, Gardens. case delivered to us contained 1 doz. Port — consumed at Directors' Banquet — many thanks. | 237 |
| | (230) do. T. Jones, Mrs. why call a doz. of Port a 'White Elephant'? | 227 |
| | (231) do. T. Jones, Mrs. 'It was a joke'. | 230 |

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|--------|------|---|-----|
| 29233- | /90. | (233) Ap. 10. (Th) <i>Page and Co.</i> orderg Macaulay's Essays and "Jane Eyre" (cheap edn). | |
| 242 | | do. <i>Aunt Jemima</i> — invitg for 2 or 3 days after the 15th. [] | 236 |
| (234) | | do. <i>Lon. and West. Bk.</i> have recevd £250, pd to yr Acct fm Parkins & Co. Calcutta. [en] | |
| 234 | | (236) do. <i>Aunt Jemima</i> — can possibly come this month: will write when ablc. [] | |
| 228 | | (237) Ap. 11. <i>Cheetham and</i> Co. re- | [x] |
| 240 | | turn letter enclosed to you. (238) do. <i>Morton, Philip.</i> could you lend me Browning's 'Dramatis Personæ' for a day or 2? | |
| 245 | | Ap. 14. <i>Aunt Jemima</i> , leave-ing ho use at end of month: address '136, Royal Avenue, Bath.' | 236 |
| (239) | | Ap. 15. <i>Cheetham and Co.</i> , returng letter as reqd, bill 6/6/8. [] | 237 |
| | | | 244 |

EIGHT OR NINE WISE WORDS ABOUT LETTER-WRITING

| | | | |
|-------|------|--|-------|
| 29242 | /90. | Ap. 15. (Tu) <i>Page and Co.</i> bill for books, as ordered, 15/6 [] | 233 |
| (243) | | do. § do. books. [] | 247 |
| 240 | | (244) do. <i>Cheetham and Co.</i> can understand the 6/8 — what is 6/8 for? | |
| (245) | | Ap. 17. § <i>Morton, P.</i> 'Dramatis Personæ', as asked for. [retd] | 238 |
| 221 | | (246) do. <i>Wilkins and Co.</i> will bill, 175/10/6, and ch. for do. [en] | |
| 250 | | (247) do. <i>Page and Co.</i> bill, postal £ 107258 for 15/6, and 6 stps. | 15/6, |
| 243 | | Ap. 18. <i>Cheetham and Co.</i> it was a 'clerical error' (!) | 244 |
| (248) | | (249) Ap. 19. <i>Morton, P.</i> returng do. <i>Wilkins and Co.</i> receipt bill. | 246 |

I begin each page by putting, at the top left-hand corner, the next entry-number I am going to use, *in full* (the last 3 digits of each entry-number are enough afterwards); and I put the date of the year, at the top, in the centre. I begin each entry with the last 3 digits of the entry-number, enclosed in an oval (this is difficult to reproduce in print, so I have put round-parentheses here). Then, for the *first* entry in each page, I put the day of the month and the day of the week: afterwards, "do." is enough for the month-day, till it changes: I do not repeat the week-day.

Next, if the entry is *not* a letter, I put a symbol for "parcel" (see Nos. 243, 245) or "telegram" (see Nos. 230, 231) as the case may be.

Next, the name of the person, underlined (indicated here by italics).

If an entry needs special further attention, I put [] at the end: and, when it has been attended to, I fill in the appropriate symbol, e.g. in No. 218, it showed that the bill had to be *paid*; in No. 222, that an answer was really *needed* (the "x" means "attended to"); in No. 234, that I owed the old lady a visit; in No. 235, that the item had to be entered in my account book; in No. 236, that I must not forget to write; in No. 239, that the address had to be entered in my address-book; in No. 245, that the book had to be returned.

I give each entry the space of 2 lines, whether it fills them or not, in order to have room, in the margin, for a head-reference and a foot-reference. And, at the foot of each page I leave 2 or 3 lines *blank* (for entering omitted Letters) and I miss one or 2 numbers before I begin the next page.

At any odd moments of leisure, I "make up" the entry-book, in various ways, as follows:

(1) I draw a *second* line, at the right-hand end of the "received" entries, and at the left-hand end of the "sent" entries. This I usually do pretty well "up to date." In my Register the first line is *red*, the second *blue*: here I distinguish them by making the first thin, and the second *thick*.

(2) Beginning with the last entry, and going backwards, I read over the names till I recognise one as having occurred already: I then link the two entries together, by giving the one, that comes first in chronological order, a 'foot-reference', and the other a 'head-reference'. When the two entries belong to the same *thousand*, I use only the last 3 digits of their reference-numbers (see Nos. 221, 246): otherwise, I write the number in full (see head-reference of No. 217). I do not keep this "up to date," but leave it till there are 4 or 5 pages to be done. I work back till I come among entries that are all supplied with "foot-references," when I once more glance through the last few pages, to see if there are any entries not yet supplied with head-

references: their predecessors may need a special search. If an entry is connected, in subject, with another under a different name, I link them by cross-references, distinguished from the head- and foot-references by being written *further from the marginal line* (see No. 229). When 2 consecutive entries have the same name, and are both of the same kind (i.e. both "received" or both "sent") I bracket them (see Nos. 242, 243); if of different kinds, I link them with the symbol used for Nos. 219, 220.

(3) Beginning at the earliest entry not yet done with, and going forwards, I cross out every entry that has got a head- and foot-reference, and is done with, by continuing the extra line *through* it (see Nos. 221, 223, 225). I also cross out every entry that is done with, even if it have no head-reference, provided it is the *first of its kind*, so that no head-reference is possible: also every entry that is done with, even if it have no foot-reference, provided it is likely to be the *last of its kind*: but in this case it is convenient, in order to find it again if the correspondence should ever re-commence, to enter it in an alphabetical index of "Closed Correspondences." The result of this system of crossing-out is that, wherever a *break* occurs in this extra line, it shows there is some matter still needing attention. I do not keep this anything like "up to date," but leave it till there are 30 or 40 pages to look through at a time. When the first page in the volume is thus completely crossed out, I put a mark at the foot of the page to indicate this; and so with pages 2, 3, &c. Hence, whenever I do this part of the "making-up," I need not begin at the beginning of the volume, but only at the *earliest page that has not got this mark*.

All this looks very complicated, when stated at full length: but you will find it perfectly simple, when you have had a little practice, and will come to regard the "making-up" as a pleasant occupation for a rainy day, or at any time that you feel disinclined for more severe mental work. In the Game of Whist, Hoyle gives us one golden Rule, "when in doubt, win the trick." I find that Rule admirable for real life: when in doubt what to do, I "make up" my Letter-Register!

PREFACE

Among those interested in 'Lewis Carroll' and his works, his hitherto unpublished Diaries have become almost a legend. Since Charles Lutwidge Dodgson died, in 1898, these Diaries have been in the possession of his family, and have been seen by members of his family alone. Only one author who has written on Lewis Carroll had access to these Diaries—and that was his nephew, Stuart Dodgson Collingwood, whose *Life and Letters of Lewis Carroll* appeared within a year of his uncle's death. Only one other book contains extensive extracts from them: Mr. Helmut Gernsheim's *Lewis Carroll, Photographer* (1949)—and in this case the extracts were made by Dodgson's nieces.

The fact that the Diaries have been inaccessible to the general critic, biographer, and research student has led to the suggestion that they contain information about Lewis Carroll which his pious relatives wish to keep from the world. That rumour can now be set at rest once and for all: they contain nothing whatsoever about Lewis Carroll that the world at large could not read. I have been permitted to read every word of the Diaries, no embargo has been laid on any sentence in them, and this Book contains all that the Diaries have to tell. This does not apply to every reference to other members of the Dodgson family: Lewis Carroll, with rare kindness and family affection, interested himself in the fortunes of even his more distant relatives, bringing help and assistance where these were needed. Thus family troubles were, naturally, entered in the Diaries, and family feeling has as naturally wished to keep these personal matters private.

It is also, of course, obvious that if one student had been allowed access to the Diaries, others could not have been denied—and a private house would have been turned into a public library by eager researchers.

It is for the sake of all those interested in Lewis Carroll that Dodgson's nieces have decided to publish the Diaries, and have asked me to edit them—both for the sake of the student and of the general reader. That the Diaries require editing, and are not offered in their absolute entirety, needs a word of explanation.

Collingwood, p. 27, says that C. L. D. had a diary in 1844 (he dates a piece from it!) p. 30: no diary at Rugby.

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Firstly, with regard to the larger gaps. The Diaries themselves are written in quarto manuscript volumes, which were numbered by Dodgson from '1' to '13'. Four of these volumes have been lost, the set running as follows:

- No. 1. Lost. 1851-4? See p. 34. At least 14 ms.
- No. 2. (2) January 1855 to 26 September 1855. 9 ms. 3 months! R
- No. 3. Lost.
- No. 4. 1 January 1856 to 31 December 1856. 12 ms.
- No. 5. 1 January 1857 to 17 April 1858.
- No. 6. Lost. Apr. 58 to Feb. 59. 7 1/2 ms. 16 mo.
- No. 7. Lost. Feb. 59 to Mar. 1882. 32-126.
- No. 8. 9 May 1862 to 6 September 1864. 28 ms.
- No. 9. 13 September 1864 to 24 January 1868. 4/1 ms.
- No. 10. 2 April 1868 to 31 December 1876. 106 ms.
- No. 11. 1 January 1877 to 30 June 1883. 78 ms.
- No. 12. 1 July 1883 to 30 June 1892. 105 ms.
- No. 13. 1 July 1892 to 23 December 1897.

The disproportionate lengths of the volumes is explained partly by the shortness and infrequency of entries in later volumes, but chiefly by the fact that some of the volumes are very much fatter than others. Thus we need not assume that the missing volume '3', which covered only the months of October, November, and December 1855, contained unusually long entries (and so assume that they were of unusual interest).

The loss of these volumes appears to be due simply to neglect. Lewis Carroll's importance in the world of literature was not recognized for some time after his death. 'Lewis Carroll' had written some very popular books for children; C. L. Dodgson of Christ Church was a minor mathematician and logician—you would find that considerably less had been preserved to assist the biographer of, say, Mrs. Molesworth and T. Vere Bayne. When Dodgson died, his rooms at Christ Church were needed immediately for another donor: however carefully his family sorted the multitudinous papers in those rooms, still it was inevitable (however much we may regret it now) that many cartloads were taken out and burnt—and that his Letter Register was probably included in this holocaust. No manuscripts of published books have survived (the famous *Alice* manuscript being merely the early copy made for Alice Liddell); Dodgson may have destroyed them himself, or they too may have been among the

Collingwood, p. 64, quote, Dec. 31, 1855, in the edw. No. 3. We omit any ref to 1858, which could have been No. 6.

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cartloads. The family had no ancestral mansion in which to store several dozen chests of papers of doubtful value: naturally, nearly everything was destroyed or disposed of in the sale—which consisted mainly of books and effects.

The Diaries, however, were kept, and Stuart Collingwood had the use of them for his Biography, and quotes from all of the thirteen volumes. After he had used them there was, apparently, no need to keep them carefully—and they disappeared, with what else remained of the papers, for a number of years. In the course of time, Dodgson's possessions were scattered among members of the family, some of them were forgotten, and only during the last few decades, and particularly at the time of the Centenary celebrations in 1932, did the next generation begin to look for their uncle's miscellaneous literary remains.

The Diaries were found on a cellar floor, having fallen out of a cardboard box; and by then four of the thirteen volumes had disappeared—and no trace of them has since been discovered.

So much for the larger gaps. The smaller ones are largely due to Dodgson himself, who frequently neglected to 'write up' his Diary, supplying the missing months or weeks by a synopsis. Even when he was most thorough, he did not make an entry for every day, and as often as not he brought the Diary up to date only about once a week. Thus I must not be held responsible for missing days or weeks—though I have cut out a number, besides shortening many others.

My principle has been to keep every entry of literary interest, every reference to even the least important of his works, every personal touch, every mention of the books that he read, the plays that he witnessed, and the pictures that he saw. I have also included every meeting with a man or woman, in whatever branch of life, who was of the smallest importance in their own day, or has the tiniest claim to remembrance now. I have sometimes omitted passing acquaintances which are no more than lists of names: I offer my apologies to anyone with a treasured memory that their father or grandfather once met Lewis Carroll at dinner—and cannot find the name in the index.

With 'child-friends' I have tried to include every name: but I have sometimes cut lists, for example, of those attending a Logic lesson, and I have often omitted long accounts of how he saw children on the shore at Eastbourne, but failed to cultivate their friendship.

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Items of no interest whatsoever occur fairly frequently in the Diaries: times of trains, the weather, the temperature of his rooms, which sisters were at Guildford on each visit, and so on. These I have omitted whenever possible.

I have tried throughout, however, to show exactly where Dodgson was at a given date (hence the rather wearisome recurrence of 'Oxford to Guildford', 'Guildford to Eastbourne', and so on), only occasionally omitting reference to a week-end at Guildford when nothing is recorded of what he did there.

There is, naturally, a great deal of repetition in a Diary, and I have sought to avoid this wherever possible. Dodgson will give a course of lectures at a school: each lecture is recorded, often with the times and the numbers in the class. I have often let one stand for the whole, merely indicating how many he gave.

Otherwise my cuts have chiefly been of mathematical and logical formulæ and minor problems, of many unimportant references to his work as Mathematical Lecturer at Christ Church, and of the movements and doings of friends and relations in which he was not personally concerned: 'Edwin is now at Guildford', for example, I have omitted, but 'Edwin came over from Guildford' I have retained.

My *additions* to the Diary have been of three kinds. The first is of transcription: Dodgson used many abbreviations, omitted words, referred to his family by initials, and so on: I have expanded these for the sake of easy reading.

My second kind of addition has been to bridge the gaps left by the lost volumes, so that the whole book may form a consecutive Life: to do this I have, wherever possible, used letters, many of which are here published for the first time.

Finally, I have made notes wherever I felt that they would help the easy understanding of what Dodgson had written: not merely attempting to identify people, plays, and so on, but adding wherever possible the person's account of meeting Dodgson.

From the point of view of Dodgson's works, I have assumed that everyone who reads this book possesses the volume published by the Nonesuch Press and called *The Complete Works of Lewis Carroll*: it is in no sense 'complete', but it is the most easily accessible edition of his major works, and I have given references to it wherever possible.¹ Where pieces crop up which are not included, I have

¹ A new edition of this volume was published in 1949 and, most unfortunately,

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indicated where they are to be found, and in many instances I have quoted from them. Thus this book, besides the Diaries, contains many unpublished or uncollected works by Lewis Carroll, some of which were hitherto unknown. Some items I have been unable to find: in most cases these are unknown even to Madan and Williams in their Bibliography, and no copies may have survived.

To indicate by example in what manner I have dealt with the Diaries themselves, I quote here two months, one taken from an early volume and one from a later, exactly as Dodgson wrote them. Choosing at random, I begin with *October 1856*:

Oct: 1. (W). Spent most of the day photographing.

Oct: 2. (Th). Arranged for the Longleys to come & be photographed & see Mr. Witherby's pictures. Only Caroline & Rosamond came for the first, and we were joined by the rest of the party on the way to Mr. Witherby's. Dined in Hilda Terrace.]

Oct: 3. (F). Went over with the 4 Miss Longleys to Hilda Terrace and finished their pictures, in spite of the rain. The sky cleared about 5, & we went out in a boat—i.e. the Longley party, Miss Lee & myself. Met Trebeck of Ch: Ch:

Oct: 4. (Sat). Went over again to Hilda Terrace, & took a few pictures, & succeeded in getting all packed & off by the 12.40 train. Reached Croft 8.30.

Oct: 7. (Tu). Sent off 'The Three Voices' to Yates for the Train: I sent with it 3 sketches as suggestions for illustrations. I proposed writing 'My Uncle' as a continuation of 'Novelty & Romancement', & following that up with 'My Uncle's Papers', among which the long-intended essay on 'Nursery Songs' might be placed.

Oct: 8. (W). Left Croft for Alvaston, which I reached about 4 o'clock in the afternoon. I found a number of Pooles there, including Mr. Henry Poole & 2 of his children, Lucy & Ellen, 10 & 8 years old: they were born in Nova Scotia, & have very un-English looking faces—Aunt Skeffington Poole, from Weston-super-mare, is also staying there.]

Oct: 9. (Th). Spent the day in photography—took many pictures of the party, & some of 2 children of Mr. Sherwit, the clerk, Mary & Willie.] *Oct: 10. (F).* S. H. & W. L. arrived in time for breakfast, & we left for Oxford in the afternoon: the three-fold luggage, all marked with one name, put down at Tom-Gate, caused the wildest of confusion I ever witnessed here, & after all we found that no rooms had been allotted to my brothers, who accordingly had to spend the night at the Mitre.

the pagination differs from that of the original edition. All references in this book refer to this current edition (of 1949).

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Mich: Term, 1856

Oct: 11. (Sat). Two or three men called about lectures. Yates wrote the other day to ask leave to abridge 'the 3 voices', which I granted: he says it is too long for publication.]

Went in to see the chapel, which is enlarged & much improved: the Dean is staying down at Torquay for his health, & is not expected up for some time.

Oct: 19. (Sun). Dined at Magdalen College with Mr. Barmby. He strongly advises me to read 'Never too late to mend', a novel by one of their Fellows, Charles Reed.

Oct: 21. (Tu). Began writing parts of an article for the Train, 'My Uncle'. *Oct: 22. (W).* Fell in with Harry & Ina Liddell down in the meadow, & took them up to see my book of photographs: they tell me the Dean is expected back in a week.

Uncle & Aunt T. Raikes called on their way to London with Lizzie (now Mrs. Lowthrop) & Mr. Lowthrop, & Lady L. his aunt. Took Tyrwhitt's photograph unsuccessfully in the afternoon.

Oct: 29. (W). Went to the Star in the evening to see Miss P. Horton (now Mrs. German Reed) & her husband perform. I thought the whole thing very good: Miss Horton's acting was wonderful, & not the least charm in her performance was her exquisite singing: this especially struck me in St. John Quill's song 'The Fairest of the Fair', which she sings in a rich tenor, introducing high chest-notes, far sweeter than any mans voice could manage: the whole thing lasted 2 hours.

Oct: 30. (Th). Went again to the Star, principally to hear 'The Fairest of the Fair' sung again, & liked it even better on a second hearing: S. H. & W. L. went also.

Missed Heurtley's 2nd lecture by accidentally prolonging my own lectures till ½ past 1: the chances are now decidedly against my completing the course.

By way of contrast, here is a month forty years later:

October 1896

Oct: 3. (Sat). Went to Guildford. Party are F. J., C. H., L. F., M. A. A.

Oct: 5. (M). S. H. arrived at Chestnuts for a visit.

Oct: 7. (W). Back to Eastbourne.

Oct: 17. (Sat). Complained to Postmaster abt local box being cleared too soon.

May Barber, 19.
(see p. 515)

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- Oct: 20. (Thu). Miss Donaldson dined with me. [om]
- Oct: 21. (W). Packing nearly all day. In evening went [at May's request,] to Mrs. Barber's, where about 40 girls were waiting. I told 'Bruno's Bionic', and then taught them 'Mischmasch'. [om]
- Oct: 22. (Th). Eastbourne to Oxford, via London. [om]
- Oct: 24. (Sat). Went and had tea with Violet etc., at Mrs. Wilson's. [om]
- Oct: 25. (Sun). Had Violet and Beatrice to luncheon. Then we went to sermon (by Lang, late Vicar of St. Mary's) about Union with Establ. Ch. of Scotland. Took a walk with Dr. Sanday. [om]

It will be seen by this how little I have omitted, and also how I have corrected the spelling of names, elongated abbreviations, and occasionally restored words omitted for the sake of shortness. My omissions are not marked in the usual way by dots: the result would have subjected my pages to an attack of measles, unseemly to the eye and annoying to the mind of any but the most pedantic reader. I have added nothing, save omitted words (usually 'the', 'and', 'my', &c.), except by way of explanation: where I have done this, every addition is indicated clearly by square brackets []. The ordinary round brackets () are those used by Dodgson himself. In this matter I have also departed from common usage, incorporating my notes in the text instead of massing them at the bottom of each page. This I feel sure will prove pleasanter and easier for readers, without sacrificing the accuracy and distinctness desired by scholars.

This is no place for a Bibliography, but it is as well to mention a few books to which I refer frequently in the notes, &c. Chief of these is the 'Nonesuch Omnibus' (which I refuse to call by its pretentious name *The Complete Works of Lewis Carroll*) issued by the Nonesuch Press in 1937 and reprinted (the edition here quoted) in 1949. Many items not included in this will be found in the following, to which references are given:

The Lewis Carroll Picture Book, edited by S. Dodgson Collingwood, 1899.
A Handbook of the Literature of the Rev. C. L. Dodgson, by S. H. Williams and F. Madan, 1931.
The Rectory Umbrella and Mischmasch (Cassell), 1932.
A Selection from the Letters of Lewis Carroll to his Child-Friends (Macmillan), 1933.

Frequent reference is made also to the only reliable biography that has appeared so far, *The Life and Letters of Lewis Carroll*, by S.

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Dodgson Collingwood, 1898; and I have given references wherever possible to the photographs in this and in *Lewis Carroll—Photographer* by Helmut Gernsheim (Parrish), 1949: for the sake of brevity, I have usually referred to these as 'Collingwood' and 'Gernsheim'.

Most of the new material, besides the Diaries themselves, of which I have made use, has been supplied by Miss F. Menella Dodgson and her sister Violet—to whose constant assistance and encouragement this book owes more than can readily be described. But my thanks for assistance—verbal or material—are due to Mr. John Greenidge, the late Professor Clement Rogers; Wing Commander Caryl Harreaves; Miss Price; Miss Aubrey Moore; Miss Isa Bowman and her sisters Nellie and Empsie; Mr. Helmut Gernsheim, Mr. Archie Harradine, Dr. C. S. Lewis, Mr. J. N. Bryson, Mr. John Woodward, and Mr. F. J. H. Sanders.

My gratitude goes also to the Faculty of English in the University of Liverpool for awarding me the William Noble Fellowship in English Literature, and extending this for a second year—thus allowing me to give my full time to the long and exacting research needed for this book—and to Professor L. C. Martin and Professor Kenneth Muir, who have helped to make my tenure of the Fellowship so pleasant and productive.

Finally, I must thank the shade of that most retiring of men, Charles Lutwidge Dodgson, and apologize to his memory for making public in this way his private journal. I have found him during my pilgrimage to be full of learning and simplicity, kindness and high integrity, one of the purest of Christian gentlemen, and at the same time a thoroughly human and amusing companion, by no means devoid of little idiosyncrasies that are at once so aggravating and so endearing among those friends whom we meet in daily life—and though born twenty years after his death I now cannot but regard 'Lewis Carroll' as a friend.

Of the character of the man, I hope that these Diaries will bear worthy witness: of the greatness of the writer, there is no need to speak while *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* and *Through the Looking-Glass* are the best loved and most often quoted stories in the English language.

ROGER LANCELYN GREEN
 POULTON-LANCELYN
 4 May 1953

TRIPLED
OXFORD
1950
photocopy

INTRODUCTION

BY F. MENELLA DODGSON

Not long ago we read in a magazine or newspaper that the nieces of Lewis Carroll were to blame for not having revealed the contents of his Diary.

Interest in him and his writings waned after his death in 1898, but the idea of celebrating the centenary of his birth in 1932 by a 'Lewis Carroll' Exhibition in London and various other activities in places connected with him, aroused interest to such an extent that my brother received many letters of inquiries and reminiscences—so many indeed that he called on my help in answering and acknowledging them. Amongst those we got in touch with was dear old Mr. Falconer Madan, and he strongly advised us to publish the nine remaining volumes of the Diary (most unfortunately four volumes had mysteriously disappeared). We felt that it would have to be in abridged form, and we set to work to cut out unimportant details. But partly owing to the fact that we were ignorant of the principles of editing, partly because no publisher seemed to think the time was ripe for publication, we failed in our attempt.

The interest roused in 1932 has been sustained, and until his death in 1941 my brother and I were kept busy doing research work for various inquirers. My sister Violet has been helping me since his death, and together we have grappled as best we could with inquiries, always with the feeling in the background that it would be very much more satisfactory if those who were interested could have the Diary (the chief source of information) to delve in for themselves. Some six years ago we came across a book called *Tellers of Tales* by Roger Lancelyn Green and found it contained a chapter about Lewis Carroll and his stories. We liked it, and later read Mr. Green's *Story of Lewis Carroll*, which we thought gave a very true portrait of him. It occurred to us to make the author's acquaintance and ask his advice about the Diary. The result of our letters and talks was that we asked Mr. Green if he would edit the Diary for us in a second attempt to publish. We have found him most helpful and knowledgeable, and we owe him our sincere thanks for his unflinching considera-

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tion for us; I am sure we have been very trying in our demands and ideas. Mr. Green has himself described his method of editing in order that the Diary might be compressed into reasonable space, so there is no need for me to say any more except that we hope that Lewis Carroll students and the descendants of his many friends may find the book helpful and interesting.

Never, I suppose, has an author talked less about his writings in the family circle. In our eyes 'Lewis Carroll' was just 'Uncle Charles', one of the large family of uncles and aunts. We have only lately realized how much his relations owed to his generosity during his lifetime, and how greatly our financial path has been smoothed by royalties since his death. We have no idea when we were introduced to the 'Alices' nor when we first connected them with our uncle. Probably we grew up with copies of the books in the nursery. I don't remember ever reading either book straight through, which probably accounts for the fact that I am still quite often vague as to which book contains certain characters and incidents. *Sylvie and Bruno* (except for the abridged children's book made from it after Lewis Carroll's death by his brother Edwin) I confess I have never read, but thanks to *The Story of Lewis Carroll* I have now grasped the lot—more or less!

Our meetings with our uncle during childhood generally took place at 'The Chestnuts', Guildford, the family home after Archdeacon Dodgson died. 'The Chestnuts' was looked upon as a second home by all the nieces and nephews, so much so that we read again and again in his Diary that Lewis Carroll had to 'put up at the White Lion', his home being over full of the younger generation. One of my first recollections of a visit there (I must have been only a few years old) is of standing on a drawing-room sofa on arrival and being kissed by what seemed an endless succession of aunts all exactly alike. The thrill of going to stay there in our early days was immense. First the drive from the station in the 'White Lion' bus with its fat and rosy driver and equally stout pair of horses which always took the stony hill from Castle Arch to the 'Chestnuts' gate at a sort of plunging gallop, filling us with a sense of adventure. Then there was the 'best bedroom' with its large double bed adorned with chintz curtains; the transparent Pears soap (to be well sniffed at) and, after a wash and brush-up, tea in the drawing-room with *thin* bread and butter. We were a large family, and, coming as we did, from a rambling house in the country with nursery and schoolroom meals

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and a general atmosphere of 'look after yourself', the change to this orderly house with devoted aunts always ready to entertain and amuse was enchanting even if, when we were small, a little awesome. My sister Violet and I must have stayed there at the same time as my uncle when we were 9 and 10 years old, as, although we don't remember it, he seems to have made pencil drawings of us. They are mentioned in the Harvard College Library Catalogue, with a note to the effect that the one of Violet was used as the foundation for the 'Alice' on the cover of *The Nursery Alice*. But we do remember our uncle superintending a sketch of us together drawn in crayon by Lucy Walters, his Guildford artist friend. The picture has vanished, but I fancy we were perched on the two arms of a big chair and I remember it was an irksome task for us, and I expect for the artist too, as Lewis Carroll walked about the room during the sittings making suggestions.

During the years that followed we met him fairly often at 'The Chestnuts'. We were shy children and I cannot remember him taking much notice of us. One walk, when I was about eight, stands out clearly. He took me Newlands Corner way, and when we came to the 'fairy rings' among the may trees there, he asked me, 'Do you believe in fairies?' I answered that I didn't know, to which he replied: 'Ah, that is because you have never seen one.' The rest of the conversation is a blank in my memory.

Later on, when we were in our teens, we were introduced to 'Symbolic Logic' in the little room which was always looked upon as his, and in which he spent most of his time, working on one book or another. We enjoyed the lessons, but, personally, I have forgotten all I learnt. For one great thrill I shall always feel indebted to my uncle. He took me to my first real theatre—*Liberty Hall*. George Alexander, Marion Terry, Maude Millett, and Ben Webster were acting in it, and I came away dazed with the glamour of it all. Although I have tried to harden my heart and throw away the brochure my uncle gave me on leaving, I just cannot do it. Later he took me to other plays, but never again did I experience the same exhilaration.

Although Lewis Carroll's personality seems to have been somewhat unique, his family shared his characteristics. No one but my father seems to have had the gift of story-telling and, except for contributions to the home magazines of his youth, and to those we produced in our childhood, his stories were never written down.

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They were told to us when we were tiny and illustrated as he went along. Several members of the family stammered slightly; nearly all shared Lewis Carroll's love of detail, and one especially his passion for inventing small devices. One sister, Louisa, was as good a mathematician as he was, and he often consulted her when confronted with a difficult problem. They were doubtless an eccentric family, but their eccentricities were as bubbles on the surface of a deep sincerity and large-heartedness. During the last years of his life Lewis Carroll was much interested in his nieces' careers. He did his best to persuade our parents to let one of my sisters try her vocation on the stage, which she was longing to do—but without success. And he was quite determined that I should become a governess, a prospect which filled me with horror as I detested teaching. I was taken very unwillingly to see several of his friends with small children, but to my joy I never proved acceptable, either 'too young' or 'not strong enough'.

But I did not see so much of my uncle during those years as my sister Violet did (she was at Oxford then), so I have asked her to write a few words to complete these reminiscences.

Mrs. Shawyer, in those days his favourite child-friend, Enid Stevens, has also contributed some recollections of their friendship.

VIOLET DODGSON'S CONTRIBUTION TO THE INTRODUCTION

Sifting my childhood memories for glimpses of my uncle Charles, I recall a quiet, precise, and very kindly figure, an occasional and welcome addition to the comfortable household at 'The Chestnuts'. I remember him, with one or two of us small things on his knee, telling stories, propounding puzzles, teaching games; or again pacing the dining-room while the rest of the party lunched, sipping his sherry and helping himself to a dry biscuit from the biscuit-barrel on the sideboard; or setting out on one of his long solitary walks.

I came to know him better when, at the age of about thirteen, I was honoured but slightly alarmed by an invitation to spend ten days with him in his rooms at Eastbourne—ten days so crowded with good things that I had no time to feel lost or homesick (as one usually did when separated from one's family). We did 'lessons' in the morning—Bible-reading, a few sums, a little symbolic logic, some poetry-reading—all of an unexpectedly spicy quality which raised them above ordinary 'lessons'. They included an exciting

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attack on the first few propositions of Euclid, hitherto only a name to me. I shall never forget my bewilderment when paper, pencil, ruler, and compasses were laid before me with the smiling request that I should, unaided, draw an equilateral triangle on the line $A-B$ ruled for me. I had learned no geometry. It got done, but I need scarcely say *not* 'unaided'! He made it quite fascinating, as also the symbolic logic. The rest of the day went on a variety of amusements, expeditions to here, there, and everywhere, concerts, theatres (five plays in the ten days), talks on the beach, every day ending with games of 'backgammon, &c., which removed my bed-time almost into the small hours and sent me home finally a somewhat washed-out little person. I probably bored him: he liked children to talk and we were rather dumb. But he never let me see it and was the most thoughtful, courteous, and unwearied of hosts. Moreover, he made one feel that one was of interest to him as an individual—a novel experience to a child picked out of the middle of a large family. He invited opinions and discussed them with respect and understanding. His face lighted up with appreciation of my feeble little jokes or my admiration of something he was showing or explaining. He was always a cheerful, keen, and sympathetic companion, and I had not a dull moment.

A few years later, about a year and a half before his death, two of my younger sisters and I went to live in Oxford, at his suggestion, to attend the High School. He showed himself then to be the Perfect Uncle. From the moment when he met us at the station he took us under his wing and ran round after us like a hen fussing over her chicks. He showed us Oxford, introduced us to his friends, children and grown-ups, made us free of his rooms at Christ Church, saw to it that we had everything we needed, friends, amusements, books, and so on, and kept an eye on us generally. We used to find little notes awaiting us after school, with suggestions or invitations for the afternoon, some little plan which meant that he was thinking of us and wishing us to be happy. We spent hours in his rooms, exploring his cupboards, browsing among his books, and playing games. He was, I remember, very particular about neatness and care of books and toys. The sternest rebuke I ever received from him (well-deserved and never forgotten!) was for leaving an open book face downwards on a chair.

My uncle had undoubtedly his foibles. For instance, though invariably welcoming and courteous to guests both at 'The Chestnuts'

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and in his rooms, he had a disconcerting way (on becoming aware that the informal tea which he was settling down to enjoy was a real party, with people invited to meet him) of rising and departing with polite but abrupt excuses, leaving an embarrassed hostess and a niece murmuring scared apologies. It is undeniable also that there were many who found him difficult, exacting, and uncompromising in business matters and in college life. But I write of him as 'Uncle Charles'; and his care for us and the trouble he took for us made just *all* the difference to our life in Oxford. I fear we took it all very much for granted! but, though I cannot remember our making more than the usual little speeches of thanks after a tea-party or outing, I hope he realized somehow our deep gratitude for the kindness with which he encompassed us and the feeling of security he gave us.

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