LEWIS CARROLL

A TANGLED TALE

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The Lewis Carroll Timeline

Jan. 27, 1832: Lewis Carroll is born as Charles Lutwidge Dodgson in Daresbury, near Warrington. He is the eldest son of Charles Dodgson, incumbent of Daresbury, later archdeacon of Richmond and one of the canons of Ripon Cathedral. His mother is Frances Jane Lutwidge.

1844: Carroll starts school in Richmond, Yorkshire. Being only 12 years old he displays quaint precocity and is interested in biology and mathematics, especially logarithms. He also writes his early plays for marionettes.

1846: He enters Rugby. He starts writing and illustrating for 'The Rectory Umbrella.'

May 23, 1850: Carroll enters Christ Church in Oxford. In his second year he earns first-class honours in mathematical and second-class honours in Classical and moderations.

Jan 24, 1851: He starts to his residence in Oxford, more or less his home town until he dies.

Dec 18, 1854: After having places in the first class in the final mathematical school and in the third class in Uteres humaniores Carroll graduates B.A.

1855: Carroll starts working as a mathematical lecturer (until 1881).

1856: Carroll starts to write for 'The Train.' The editor is responsible for his pseudonym, deriving 'Lewis' from 'Lutwidge' and 'Carroll' from 'Charles.'

1857: He proceeds M.A.

Dec. 22, 1861: Carroll is ordained deacon and starts lecturing to children – not always on Bible subjects but also narrating from his books. Children also became his chosen intimates. His shyness always prevented him from carrying friendships other than by letters.

June 1865: ' Alice's Adventures in Wonderland,' is first published. The story was written for Dean Liddell's second daughter Alice. The book is removed from the shelves immediately after its release because of defectively printed illustrations by John Tenniel. It is re-published in November of the same year.

1867: Carroll accompanies Dr. Liddon on a journey to Russia. Though he almost took no more part in the daily college life, he always cared for Oxford matters and the discussions that took place in his home town. Besides his local interest he also wrote a lot of letters to London newspapers on various subjects.

1871: The sequel to 'Alice', named "Through the Looking Class' becomes a bestseller.

1876: ' The Hunting of the Snark,' hits the market. It is a technically brilliant but still bewildering story in verse and defying students until today.

1879: 'Euclid and his Modern Rivals' is Carroll's most valuable contribution to mathematics. Though in a dramatic form it provides valuable insights on Euclid's geometry. Most of his other works on mathematical subjects are of no real value.

1886: Mr. Savile Clarke dramatizes the two 'Alice' stories.

1889: 'Sylvie and Bruno', a book for children, is released.

1893: The sequel to 'Sylvie and Bruno', 'Sylvie and Bruno Concluded' appears on the shelves. The first time the wide acceptance was not as expected. The story with its perceived mixture of drolliness for children and theological dogmas fails to find its audience.

Jan 14, 1898: Carroll dies at Guildford, where his sister lives.

These books add to Carroll's complete bibliography:

- Syllabus of Plane Algebraical Geometry, Oxford, 1860.
- Formulae of Plane Trigonometry, Oxford, 1861.
- An Elementary Treatise on Determinants, London, 1867.
- Phantasmagoria and other Poems, London, 1876.
- Euclid, Books I and II, London, 1882.
- Rhyme? or Reason?, London, 1883.
- The Principles of Parliamentary Representation, London, 1884.
- A Tangled Tale, London, 1885.
- The Game of Logic, London, 1887.
- Curiosa Mathematica, 3 parts, London, 1888-93.
- The Nursery Alice, London, 1890.
- Symbolic Logic, London, 1896.

Living in Wonderland – An Essay

Reading " The Life and Letters of Lewis Carroll," by his nephew, Mr. S. Dodgson Collingwood, impresses me very much as did the performance of " Trelawny of the Wells" at the Lyceum Theatre. It was only a short time after the period illustrated in Trelawny that " Alice in Wonderland " appeared, so that the awful " hoop-skirts " and baggy trousers of the early sixties are associated in my mind with Wonderland and its people. When " Alice " was introduced into my home she was at once made a member of the family. Her strange animal friends became ours, and when she went from " Wonderland " to that other wonder country behind the Looking-Glass we youngsters went with her. As for " Jabberwocky," it became the language of the household. If anyone asked what anything was, we replied

that it was " brillig." If anyone pondered, he was " in uffish thought "; no one came running, it was always "whiffling"; we never merely came back, we "came galumphing back"; the day was not fine, it was " frabjous " ; we never laughed, we " chortled " in our joy. A person unacquainted with " Jabberwocky," hearing us talk, might have thought us as mad as the March hare, but we understood, and found those delightful words more full of meaning than any others.

As I turn the pages of this interesting biography I find portraits of well-known men and women from photographs taken by Lewis Carroll, all in the Trelawny period. There is Holman Hunt in enormously wide trousers with a wide stripe running down the outside seam, there are Christina Rossetti and her mother both in " crinolines," and Miss Ellen Terry with her hair in a net. Mr. Dodgson was very proud of his skill as a photographer, and his work must have been a revelation in those days of stiff, unnatural poses. He put his sitters in easy attitudes; his aim was to make pictures as well as to take likenesses, and he succeeded in both efforts. What could be more charming than his picture of Alice Liddell in the character of a beggar-child ? though just why a beggar-child should be quite so scantily clad I do not know. Tennyson described it as the most beautiful photograph he had ever seen.

The child in Lewis Carroll's case was father to the man. In his boyhood days, at his father's rectory, he invented the strangest diversions for himself, making pets of the most odd and unlikely creatures, snails and toads among them. He even had a friendship with earthworms. He invented games for the entertainment of his brothers and sisters, and constructed a railway out of very rude material. It had stations and a refreshment-room, and the passengers had to purchase tickets before they could ride, as is the case on

any well-conducted railway. The little Charles was quite a conjurer too. Arrayed in wig and long robe, he would by sleight of hand conjure up wonderful animals and other strange things as in later years he created a new world and peopled it from this same menagerie.

When young Dodgson was in his seventeenth or eighteenth year he started a home magazine called The Rectory Umbrella, which he not only wrote but illustrated. One of his contributions to this amusing publication was a parody on Macaulay's " Lays of Ancient Rome." From the selection here given it will be seen that his drawings were conspicuous for their action rather than for other qualities. To his very last days Dodgson loved to sketch, though he knew that he possessed no talent as an artist, for had not Mr. Ruskin told him so in plain words ? As a lad Dodgson showed remarkable aptitude for mathematics. When he left Rugby, Dr. Tait, afterwards Archbishop of Canterbury, wrote to Archdeacon Dodgson that his son's " mathematical knowledge is great for his age, and I doubt not he will do himself credit in classics"; and he adds: " His examination for the Divinity prize was one of the most creditable exhibitions I have ever seen." Writing of his school days, Dodgson says that none of his work was done con amore, and that he looked back to his three years at public school without any sensations of pleasure. From Rugby he went to Oxford, matriculating at Christ Church in 1850. In January of 1851 he " came into residence," and from that day to the hour of his death—a period of forty-seven years—he belonged to '' the House,'' never leaving it for any length of time, " becoming almost a part of it." Mr. Dodgson's specialty, as all the world knows, was mathematics; his passion,—children. He wasted no time on " grown-ups " that could be given to the little ones—girls, I should add, for he paid little attention to mere boys! "Alice in Wonderland," as all the world also knows, originated in a

series of stories told to his particular pet child, Alice Liddell (Mrs. Reginald Hargreaves), and her two younger sisters. On July 4, 1862, there is this entry in his diary:

" Made an expedition up the river to Godstow with the three Liddells; we had tea on the bank there and did not reach Christ Church till half-past eight." [Then later he adds:] " On which occasion I told them the fairy-tale of ' Alice's Adventures Underground,' which I undertook to write out for Alice." The name was finally changed to " Alice's Adventures in Wonderland." Of the inception of his new world Alice herself has written: " Most of Mr. Dodgson's stories were told to us on river expeditions to Nuneham or Godstow, near Oxford. My eldest sister, now Mrs. Skene, was ' Prima,' I was ' Secunda,' and ' Tertia ' was my sister Edith. I believe the beginning of 'Alice' was told one summer afternoon when the sun was so burning that we had landed in the meadows down the river, deserting the boat to take refuge in the only bit of shade to be found, which was under a new-made hayrick. Here from all three came the old petition of ' Tell us a story,' and so began the ever-delightful tale. Sometimes to tease us—and perhaps being really tired—Mr. Dodgson would stop suddenly and say, ' And that 's all till next time.' ' Ah, but it is next time,' would be the exclamation from all three; and after some persuasion the story would start afresh. Another day, perhaps, the story would begin in the boat, and Mr. Dodgson, in the middle of telling a thrilling adventure, would pretend to go fast asleep, to our great dismay."

We have Dr. George Macdonald to thank for the Lewis Carroll books. Their author had no idea of publishing them, but his friend, Dr. Macdonald, who had read them, persuaded him to submit them to a publisher, and Messrs. Macmillan were the lucky choice. " On July 4, 1865, exactly three years after the memorable row up the river " [writes

Mr. Collingwood], " Miss Alice Liddell received the first presentation copy of ' Alice's Adventures in Wonderland '; the second was sent to Princess Beatrice."

To the surprise of author and publisher, two thousand copies of the book were sold at once, and " Alice " increased the bank account of her creator for many years. Tenniel's illustrations add to the fascination and the success of "Alice." To my mind they are as much the result of inspiration as is the story. " It is a curious fact," wrote Tenniel some years later, when replying to a request of Lewis Carroll's that he would illustrate another of his books, " that with ' Through the Looking-Glass ' the faculty of making drawings for book illustration departed from me, and, notwithstanding all sorts of tempting inducements, I have done nothing in that direction since." Mr. Collingwood has done his task with credit. Whenever possible he has let the subject of his biography tell the story—a story that no one who loves " Alice "—and who is not her slave!—will care to miss. Well may the " mome raths outgrabe," for there will be no more Wonderland adventures — no more unexplored countries through the Looking-Glass!

A TANGLED TALE

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To My Pupil.

Beloved pupil! Tamed by thee, Addish-, Subtrac-, Multiplica-tion, Division, Fractions, Rule of Three, Attest thy deft manipulation!

Then onward! Let the voice of Fame From Age to Age
repeat thy story, Till thou hast won thyself a name
Exceeding even Euclid's glory!

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PREFACE.

This Tale originally appeared as a serial in *The Monthly Packet*, beginning in April, 1880. The writer's intention was to embody in each Knot (like the medicine so dexterously, but ineffectually, concealed in the jam of our early childhood) one or more mathematical questions—in Arithmetic, Algebra, or Geometry, as the case might be—for the amusement, and possible edification, of the fair readers of that Magazine.

L. C.

October, 1885.

KNOT I. EXCELSIOR.

"Goblin, lead them up and down."

The ruddy glow of sunset was already fading into the sombre shadows of night, when two travellers might have been observed swiftly—at a pace of six miles in the hour—descending the rugged side of a mountain; the younger bounding from crag to crag with the agility of a fawn, while his companion, whose aged limbs seemed ill at ease in the heavy chain armour habitually worn by tourists in that district, toiled on painfully at his side.

As is always the case under such circumstances, the younger knight was the first to break the silence.

"A goodly pace, I trow!" he exclaimed. "We sped not thus in the ascent!"

"Goodly, indeed!" the other echoed with a groan. "We clomb it but at three miles in the hour."

"And on the dead level our pace is——?" the younger suggested; for he was weak in statistics, and left all such details to his aged companion.

"Four miles in the hour," the other wearily replied. "Not an ounce more," he added, with that love of metaphor so common in old age, "and not a farthing less!"

"'Twas three hours past high noon when we left our hostelry," the young man said, musingly. "We shall scarce be back by supper-time. Perchance mine host will roundly deny us all food!"

"He will chide our tardy return," was the grave reply, "and such a rebuke will be meet."

"A brave conceit!" cried the other, with a merry laugh. "And should we bid him bring us yet another course, I trow his answer will be tart!"

"We shall but get our deserts," sighed the elder knight, who had never seen a joke in his life, and was somewhat displeased at his companion's untimely levity. "'Twill be nine of the clock," he added in an undertone, "by the time we regain our hostelry. Full many a mile shall we have plodded this day!"