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*Novelty*  
*and*  
*Romancement*

*Lewis Carroll*



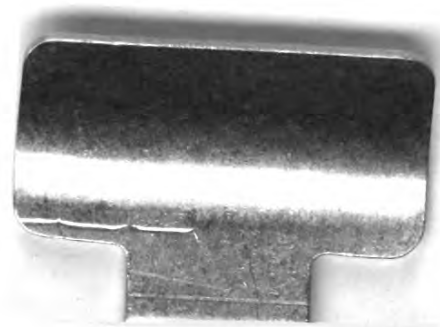
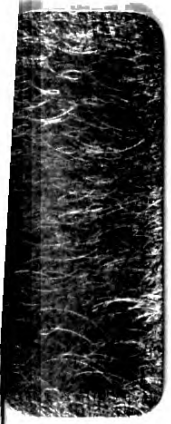
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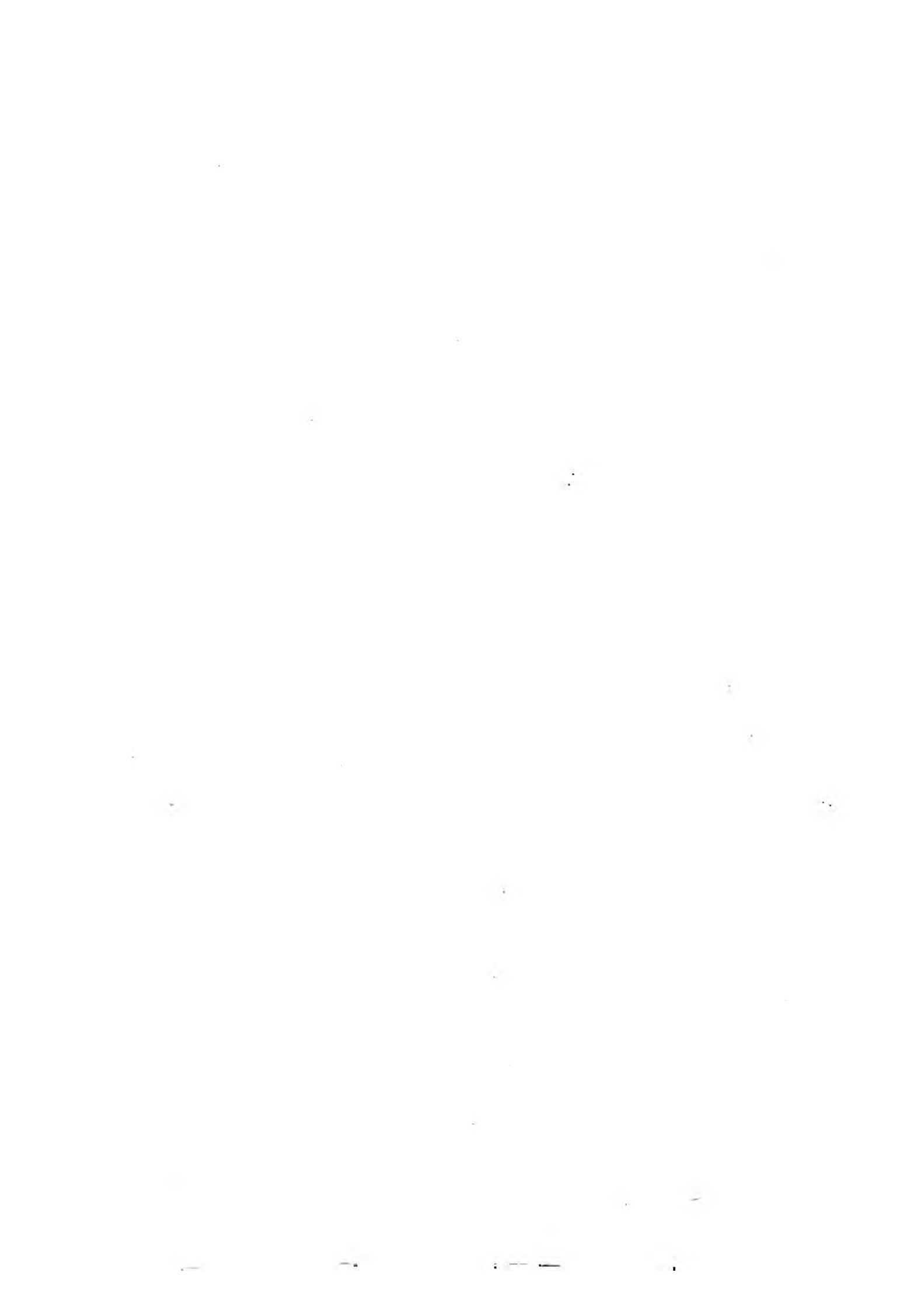
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# *Novelty and Romancement*

With Compliments  
and regards

MR. MORRIS L. PARISH.

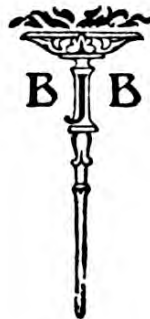
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# *Novelty and Romancement*

*A Story by Lewis Carroll*

*Author of "Alice's Adventures in Wonderland"*

*With an Introduction by  
Randolph Edgar*



*Boston*

**B. J. BRIMMER COMPANY**

*Nineteen twenty-five*

recd March 30, 1925 Zm



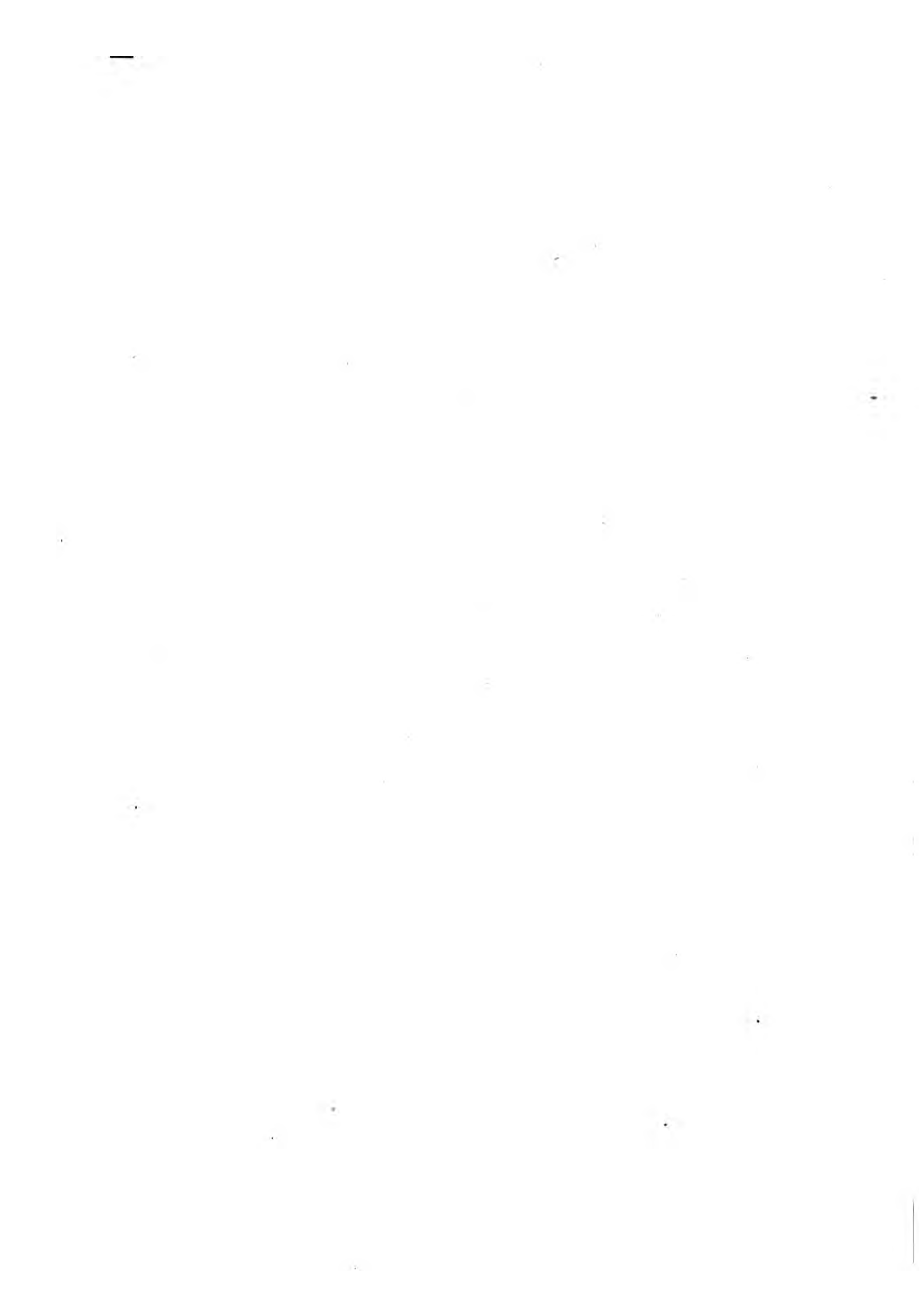


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**By B. J. BRIMMER COMPANY**  
*First Printing, February, 1925*



*Printed in the United States of America*







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# *Introduction*



*H*ERE and there the biographers have left an unturned stone in the literary path of Lewis Carroll, a path sometimes as devious as the ways of Wonderland itself. Early in the year of 1919 the present writer succeeded in securing copies of *The Train* to which Lewis Carroll had been a contributor with the result that an article regarding *The Train* appeared in the now defunct *Bellman* and was in part reprinted in *March* of the same year in *Current Opinion*. Apparently the subject was forgotten until a year ago—April, 1924, to be exact—when an essay covering the same ground by an English admirer of Lewis Carroll was published in *The Cornhill Magazine* and copied in America by *The Living Age*. All of which indicates that these stones in Lewis Carroll's path are now public property and are now to be thrown, or otherwise used as missiles by the Carroll coterie.

If the statement is true that a man is usually the best living authority on himself it is equally true that biographers are persistent little things who spend their time trying to prove that the state-



ment has no foundation. Biographers relate with much relish a little story of Queen Victoria's appreciation of Alice in Wonderland. She, we are told, wrote "Lewis Carroll" shortly after the appearance of the volume, and requested from the author other works from the same pen. Great was her surprise when she received in reply to her letter *The Enunciations of Euclid, Books I and II and Condensation of Determinants*, being a new and brief method for computing their arithmetical values; the author of both volumes being the Rev. Charles L. Dodgson (Lewis Carroll).

And then from the second edition of *Symbolic Logic*, the last book by Lewis Carroll to be published prior to his death, one reads: "I take this opportunity of giving what publicity I can to my contradiction of a silly story, which has been going the round of the papers, about my having presented certain books to Her Majesty the Queen. It is so constantly repeated, and is such absolute fiction, that I think it worth while to state, once for all, that it is utterly false in every particular; nothing even resembling it has ever occurred."

*Perhaps it is not amiss to here call attention to what is obviously an error in the recent Bibliography of Lewis Carroll by Sidney Williams. Shortly before the volume went to press — in December, 1923 — I had luncheon with Mr. Williams at the Junior Athenaeum in London and during our conversation called his attention to what appeared to be a “fake” issue of a pamphlet by Lewis Carroll called Some Popular Fallacies About Vivisection. There was no question regarding the authorship, it being reprinted from The Fortnightly Review where it had appeared over Lewis Carroll’s signature, but the imprint of the pamphlet bore all the ear-marks of being false. It was dated Oxford, June, 1875, but the type was from no font known at Oxford in 1875 and both stitching and paper seemed products of the present century.*

*I also related to Mr. Williams the experience of an acquaintance who had ordered on approval this so-called rare pamphlet from an English dealer, the latter claiming that it was from the library of Ellen Terry and one of the few copies in*

*existence. Through an unfortunate mistake on the part of the bookseller, my acquaintance received two copies of the pamphlet. Whereupon, guided by the dealer's conscience, he returned one of the copies accompanied by a note declining to make the purchase.*

*Mr. Williams, however, apparently still believes that Some Popular Fallacies About Vivisection is both authentic and scarce, having listed it together with a fac-simile of the title page in his bibliography.*

*Space need not be given to Lewis Carroll's life. It is generally known that he was born in Daresbury, Cheshire, in 1832, that in 1850 he moved to Christ Church, Oxford, and that he remained there off and on until shortly before his death in 1898 — thirty-three years after the publication of Alice in Wonderland. Yet in spite of the fact that the life of Lewis Carroll, or the Rev. Charles L. Dodgson, was spent in writing and that a huge bibliography of his work is the evidence, all the fiction and verse by Lewis Carroll may be found within the compass of six volumes. Such a collection,*

*were it assembled, would be as follows: Alice's Adventures in Wonderland and Through the Looking-Glass (in one volume), Phantasmagoria (issue of 1869), The Hunting of the Snark, Sylvie and Bruno, Sylvie and Bruno Concluded and the present volume, Alice's Adventures Underground is merely a facsimile of the original form of Alice in Wonderland, while A Tangled Tale is Euclid going about in disguise.*

*It is likewise astonishing that the author of "Alice" wrote but two short stories during his entire literary career. One of these short stories, Bruno's Revenge, which appeared in a juvenile periodical, was afterwards developed into Sylvie and Bruno, while the other, Novelty and Romancement was published in The Train in 1856 and for almost seventy years has remained in the obscurity of that magazine. Upon the suggestion of Edmund Yates, its editor, the youthful Mr. Dodgson (he was then twenty-four) took the pseudonym of Lewis Carroll which appeared for the first time in March 1856 beneath some verses called Solitude.*

*With the exception of Novelty and Romancement and Upon the Lonely Moor, all of the Carroll contributions to The Train were reprinted in the 1869 edition of Phantasmagoria, some of the verses being slightly altered for publication in book form, but Upon the Lonely Moor was completely re-written for Through the Looking-Glass (1872) where it appeared as The Aged, Aged Man.*

*Novelty and Romancement having slipped through the posthumous literary net only to be caught again is especially typical of Lewis Carroll in that it lays stress on the exact value of words and is pivotal upon a "portmanteau" word — a rather dreadful pun. Its sustained satire seems somehow to give the effect of a Victorian Anachronism. The venerable uncle who maintains that the poet's verses will be read "When Milton and such like are forgot" is a Twentieth Century "type". There is no retrospect. He is here.*

Randolph Edgar





*Novelty and Romancement*





*Novelty*  
*and*  
*Romancement*

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*A Broken Spell — By Lewis Carroll*

**I** HAD grave doubts at first whether to call this passage of my life “A Wail,” or “A Pæan,” so much does it contain that is great and glorious, so much that is sombre and stern. Seeking for something which should be a sort of medium between the two, I decided, at last, on the above heading —

wrongly, of course; I am always wrong: but let me be calm. It is a characteristic of the true orator never to yield to a burst of passion at the outset; the mildest of commonplaces are all he dare indulge in at first, and thence he mounts gradually; — “*vires acquirit eundo.*” Suffice it, then, to say, in the first place, that *I am Leopold Edgar Stubbs.* I state this fact distinctly in commencing, to prevent all chance of the reader’s confounding me either with the eminent shoemaker of that name, of Pottle-

street, Camberwell, or with my less reputable, but more widely known, namesake, Stubbs, the light comedian, of the Provinces; both which connexions I repel with horror and disdain: no offence, however, being intended to either of the individuals named—men whom I have never seen, whom I hope I never shall.

So much for commonplaces.

Tell me now, oh! man, wise in interpretation of dreams and omens, how it chanced that, on a Friday afternoon, turning sud-

denly out of Great Wattles-street, I should come into sudden and disagreeable collision with an humble individual of unprepossessing exterior, but with an eye that glowed with all the fire of genius? I had dreamed at night that the great idea of my life was to be fulfilled. What was the great idea of my life? I will tell you. With shame and sorrow I will tell you.

My thirst and passion from boyhood (predominating over the love of taws and running neck

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and neck with my appetite for toffy) has been for poetry — for poetry in its widest and wildest sense — for poetry untrammelled by the laws of sense, rhyme, or rhythm, soaring through the universe, and echoing the music of the spheres! From my youth, nay, from my very cradle, I have yearned for poetry, for beauty, for novelty, for romancement. When I say “yearned,” I employ a word mildly expressive of what may be considered as an outline of my feelings in my calmer moments: it is about as capable of

picturing the headlong impetuosity of my life-long enthusiasm as those unanatomical paintings which adorn the outside of the Adelphi, representing Flexmore in one of the many conceivable attitudes into which the human frame has never yet been reduced, are of conveying to the speculative pit-goer a true idea of the feats performed by that extraordinary compound of humanity and Indian-rubber.

I have wandered from the point: that is a peculiarity, if I

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may be permitted to say so, incidental to life; and, as I remarked on an occasion which time will not suffer me more fully to specify, "What, after all, *is* life?" nor did I find any one of the individuals present (we were a party of nine, including the waiter, and it was while the soup was being removed that the above-recorded observation was made) capable of furnishing me with a rational answer to the question.

The verses which I wrote at an early period of life were eminently



distinguished by a perfect freedom from conventionalism, and were thus unsuited to the present exactions of literature: in a future age they will be read and admired, “when Milton,” as my venerable uncle has frequently exclaimed, “when Milton and such like are forgot!” Had it not been for this sympathetic relative, I firmly believe that the poetry of my nature would never had come out; I can still recall the feelings which thrilled me when he offered me sixpence for a rhyme to “despotism.” I never succeeded, it is

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true, in finding the rhyme, but it was on this very next Wednesday that I penned my well known "Sonnet on a Dead Kitten," and in the course of a fortnight had commenced three epics, the titles of which I have unfortunately now forgotten.

Seven volumes of poetry have I given to an ungrateful world during my life; they have all shared the fate of true genius — obscurity and contempt. Not that any fault could be found with their contents; whatever

their deficiencies may have been, *no reviewer has yet dared to criticize them.* This is a great fact.

The only composition of mine, which has yet made any noise in the world, was a sonnet I addressed to one of the Corporation of Muggleton-cum-Swillside, on the occasion of his being selected Mayor of that town. It was largely circulated through private hands, and much talked of at the time; and though the subject of it, with characteristic vulgarity of mind, failed to appreciate the

delicate compliments it involved, and indeed spoke of it rather disrespectfully than otherwise, I am inclined to think that it possesses all the elements of greatness. The concluding couplet was added at the suggestion of a friend, who assured me it was necessary to complete the sense, and in this point I deferred to his maturer judgment: —

“ When Desolation snatched her tearful prey  
From the lorn empire of despairing day;  
When all the light, by gemless fancy thrown,  
Served but to animate the putrid stone;  
When monarchs, lessening on the wildered sight,  
Crumblingly vanished into utter night;

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When murder stalked with thirstier strides  
abroad,  
And redly flashed the never-sated sword;  
In such an hour thy greatness had been seen —  
That is, if such an hour had ever been —  
In such an hour thy praises shall be sung,  
If not by mine, by many a worthier tongue;  
And thou be gazed upon by wondering men,  
When such an hour arrives, but not till then!”

Alfred Tennyson is Poet Laureate, and it is not for me to dispute his claim to that eminent position; still I cannot help thinking, that if the Government had only come forward candidly at the time, and thrown the thing open to general competition, proposing some subject to test the powers

of the candidate (say “Framp-ton’s Pill of Health, an Acros-tic”), a very different result might have been arrived at.

But let us return to our mut-tons (as our noble allies do most unromantically express them-selves), and to the mechanic of Great Wattles-street. He was coming out of a small shop — rudely built it was, dilapidated exceedingly, and in its general ap-pearance seedy — what did I see in all this to inspire a belief that a great epoch in my existence had

arrived? Reader, I saw the sign-board!

Yes. Upon that rusty sign-board, creaking awkwardly on its one hinge against the mouldering wall, was an inscription which thrilled me from head to foot with unwonted excitement. "Simon Lubkin. Dealer in Romancement." Those were the very words.

It was Friday, the fourth of June, half-past four p.m.

Three times I read that inscription through, and then took out

my pocketbook, and copied it on the spot; the mechanic regarding me during the whole proceeding with a stare of serious and (as I thought at the time) respectful astonishment.

I stopped that mechanic, and entered into conversation with him; years of agony since then have gradually branded that scene upon my writhing heart, and I can repeat all that passed, word for word.

Did the mechanic (this was my first question) possess a kindred soul, or did he not?



Mechanic didn't know as he did.

Was he aware (this with thrilling emphasis) of the meaning of that glorious inscription upon his signboard?

Bless you, mechanic knew all about that 'ere.

Would mechanic (overlooking the suddenness of the invitation) object to adjourn to the neighbouring public-house, and there discuss the point more at leisure?

Mechanic would *not* object to a drain. On the contrary.

(Adjournment accordingly: brandy-and-water for two: conversation resumed.)

Did the article sell well, especially with the “*mobile vulgus*”?

Mechanic cast a look of good-natured pity on the questioner; the article sold well, he said, and the vulgars bought it most.

Why not add “Novelty” to the inscription? (This was a critical moment: I trembled as I asked the question.)

Not so bad an idea, mechanic thought: time was, it might have

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answered; but time flies, you see.

Was mechanic alone in his glory, or was there any one else who dealt as largely in the article?

Mechanic would pound it, there was none.

What was the article employed for? (I brought this question out with a gasp, excitement almost choking my utterance.)

It would piece a'most anything together, mechanic believed, and make it solider nor stone.

This was a sentence difficult of interpretation. I thought it over a little, and then said, doubtfully, “you mean, I presume, that it serves to connect the broken threads of human destiny? to invest with a — with a sort of vital reality the chimerical products of a fertile imagination?”

Mechanic’s answer was short, and anything but encouraging: “mought be —, I’s no scollard, bless you.”

At this point conversation certainly began to flag; I was seri-

ously debating in my own mind whether this could really be the fulfilment of my life-cherished dream; so ill did the scene harmonize with my ideas of romance, and so painfully did I feel my companion's lack of sympathy in the enthusiasm of my nature — an enthusiasm which has found vent, ere now, in actions which the thoughtless crowd have too often attributed to mere eccentricity.

I have risen with the lark —  
“day's sweet harbinger” —  
(once, certainly, if not oftener),

with the aid of a patent alarum, and have gone forth at that unseemly hour, much to the astonishment of the housemaid cleaning the door steps, to “brush with hasty steps the dewy lawn,” and have witnessed the golden dawn with eyes yet half-closed in sleep. (I have always stated to my friends, in any allusion to the subject, that my raptures at that moment were such that I have never since ventured to expose myself to the influence of excitement so dangerous. In confidence, however, I admit that the reality

did not come up to the idea I had formed of it over night, and by no means repaid the struggle of getting out of bed so early.)

I have wandered in the solemn woods at night, and bent me o'er the moss-grown fountain, to lave in its crystal stream my tangled locks and fevered brow. (What though I was laid up with a severe cold in consequence, and that my hair was out of curl for a week? Do paltry considerations such as these, I ask, affect the poetry of the incident?)

I have thrown open my small, but neatly furnished, cottage tenement, in the neighbourhood of St. John's Wood, and invited an aged beggar in to "sit by my fire, and talk the night away." (It was immediately after reading Goldsmith's "Deserted Village." True it is that he told me nothing interesting, and that he took the hall-clock with him when he departed in the morning; still my uncle has always said that he wishes he had been there, and that it displayed in me a freshness and greenness of fancy (or "disposi-



tion," I forget which) such as he had never expected to see.)

I feel that it is incumbent on me to enter more fully into this latter topic — the personal history of my uncle: the world will one day learn to revere the talents of that wonderful man, though a want of funds prevents, at present, the publication of the great system of philosophy of which he is the inventor. Meanwhile, out of the mass of priceless manuscripts which he has bequeathed to an ungrateful nation, I will

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venture to select one striking specimen. And when the day arrives that my poetry is appreciated by the world at large (distant though it now appear!) then, I feel assured, shall his genius also receive its meed of fame!

Among the papers of that respected relative, I find what appear to have been a leaf torn from some philosophical work of the day: the following passage is scored. “Is this your rose? It is mine. It is yours. Are these your houses? They are mine. Give

to me (of) the bread. She gave him a box on the ear.” Against this occurs a marginal note in my uncle’s handwriting; “some call this unconnected writing: I have my own opinion.” This last was a favourite expression of his, veiling a profundity of ethical acumen on which it would be vain to speculate; indeed, so uniformly simple was the language of this great man, that no one besides myself ever suspected his possessing more than the ordinary share of human intellect.

May I, however, venture to express what I believe would have been my uncle's interpretation of this remarkable passage? It appears that the writer intended to distinguish the provinces of Poetry, Real Property, and Personal Property. The inquirer touches first on flowers, and with what a gush of generous feeling does the answer break upon him! "It is mine. It is yours." That is the beautiful, the true, the good; these are not hampered by petty consideration of "meum" and "tuum;" these are the common

property of men. (It was with some such idea as this that I drew up the once celebrated bill, entitled "An Act for exempting Pheasants from the operation of the Game Laws, on the ground of Beauty"—a bill which would, doubtless, have passed both Houses in triumph, but that the member who had undertaken the care of it was unfortunately incarcerated in a Lunatic Asylum before it had reached the second reading.) Encouraged by the success of his first question, our inquirer passes on to "houses"

(“ Real Property,” you will observe); he is here met by the stern, chilling answer, “ They are mine ” — none of the liberal sentiment which dictated the former reply, but in its place a dignified assertion of the rights of property.

Had this been a genuine Socratic dialogue, and not merely a modern imitation, the inquirer would have probably here interrupted with “ To me indeed,” or, “ I, for my part,” or, “ but how otherwise? ” or some other of those singular expressions, with

which Plato makes his characters display at once their blind acquiescence in their instructor's opinions, and their utter inability to express themselves grammatically. But the writer takes another line of thought; the bold inquirer, undeterred by the coldness of the last reply, proceeds from questions to demands, "give me (of) the bread;" and here the conversation abruptly ceases, but the moral of the whole is pointed in the narrative: "she gave him a box on the ear." This is not the philosophy of one indi-

vidual or nation, the sentiment is, if I may so say, European; and I am borne out in this theory by the fact that the book has evidently been printed in three parallel columns, English, French, and German.

Such a man was my uncle; and with such a man did I resolve to confront the suspected mechanic. I appointed the following morning for an interview, when I would personally inspect “the article” (I could not bring myself to utter the beloved word itself). I passed



a restless and feverish night, crushed by a sense of the approaching crisis.

The hour came at last — the hour of misery and despair; it always does so, it cannot be put off forever; even on a visit to a dentist, as my childhood can attest with bitter experience, we are not forever getting there; the fatal door too surely dawns upon us, and our heart, which for the last half hour has been gradually sinking lower and lower, until we almost doubt its

existence, vanishes suddenly downwards into depths hitherto undreamed of. And so, I repeat it, the hour came at last.

Standing before that base mechanic's door, with a throbbing and expectant heart, my eye chanced to fall once more upon that signboard, once more I perused its strange inscription. Oh! fatal change! Oh! horror! What do I see? Have I been deluded by a heated imagination? A hideous gap yawns between the N and the C, making it not one word but two!

And the dream was over.

At the corner of the street I turned to take a sad fond look at the spectre of a phantom hope, I once had held so dear. "Adieu!" I whispered; this was all the last farewell I took, and I leant upon my walking stick and wiped away a tear. On the following day I entered into commercial relations with the firm of Dumpy and Spagg, wholesale dealers in the wine and spirit department.

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The signboard yet creaks upon  
the mouldering wall, but its  
sound shall make music in these  
ears nevermore—ah! nevermore.













