

# SOME RECENT ADVANCES IN MEDICINE

RALPH P. SMITH

IN writing an article of this type, one is always somewhat fearful of becoming over technical, and should I do so, I crave indulgence.

Medicine has progressed considerably since the days of the old family practitioner, who relied mainly on the use of his eyes, ears and hands for diagnosis, and was somewhat scornful of the newer methods. However, many of the newer laboratory and mechanical aids make diagnosis infinitely more sure, and enable the physician to gauge the course of the illness more accurately and thus to give a more reasoned opinion. The contrast in bacteriology, which is a comparatively recent science, between the vague speculations of the ancient philosophers, that there existed living organisms too small to be seen by the unaided human eye, and the present certainty of that science, is outstanding.

Prior to the work of the Dutch microscopist, Anton Van Leeuwenhoek, in the latter part of the 17th century, definite ocular evidence for such a belief did not exist. He was a skilled lens maker in Delft, who spent many years looking through his microscope at a great variety of natural objects (with industry, if without system), and chanced to come across the organisms now known as bacteria in stagnant water. In a letter in 1683 to the Royal Society, London, speaking of what he saw in some tartar from his teeth, he wrote: "I saw with wonder that my material contained many tiny animals which moved about in a most amusing fashion and were one thousand times smaller than the eye of a big louse" (thereby showing a familiarity with the latter animal which we do not have to the same extent at the present time!). But he had no inkling of their significance, and 200 years had to elapse before that was realised.

Even in the 16th century, from as far back as the time of Aristotle, the statement that mice could be created by placing some old linen and cheese in a cupboard was believed in all seriousness, and, in spite of the earlier work of Ehrenberg, Naegeli and Spallanzani, spontaneous generation and fermenta-

tion was not finally disproved until Pasteur's researches around the year 1860. It was almost entirely through the work of Pasteur that bacteria and their allies emerged from their relative obscurity and took a conspicuous position in natural science, as a group of organisms whose activities were full of significance for all mankind. He placed the germ theory of many diseases in man and animals on a sound basis. Lord Lister, whose own name is inseparably connected with the triumphs of antiseptic surgery, said in an address to Pasteur in 1892 at the latter's Jubilee celebration:

Truly there does not exist in the entire world any individual to whom medical sciences owe more than they do to you. Your researches have thrown a powerful beam, which has enlightened the baleful darkness of surgery and has transformed the treatment of wounds from a matter of uncertain and too often disastrous empiricism into a scientific art of sure beneficence. Thanks to you, surgery has undergone a complete revolution, which has deprived it of its terrors and has extended without limits its efficacious power.

But Lister's own work on the cause and prevention of wound putrefaction, by means of a spray of carbolic acid to kill off bacteria which might drop into a wound, led to the general adoption of the aseptic or germless technique to which the advance of modern surgery has been chiefly due. We are proud to possess a Lister Carbolic Spray in the small Historical Instrument Museum of the Nova Scotia Medical Society, brought back to Nova Scotia by our own beloved surgeon, the late John Stewart, who served under Lister in Edinburgh, even though to our modern eyes it looks so much out of date.

To give an example of the practical benefits of bacteriology:—my readers have no doubt noticed that there has been recently a scare concerning the use of shaving brushes of Japanese origin, which are believed to have been contaminated by anthrax bacilli. *Anthrax bacilli*, first discovered by Robert Koch in 1876, have the power of forming what are called spores when exposed to air. This is a stage of hibernation by which the bacterium as it were curls itself up into its shell, and is able to resist deleterious or harmful external influences. It can live in this state for years, and then germinate afresh and cause infection when introduced into a suitable environment. As anthrax is a disease of cattle and sheep, the bacilli contaminate the hairs and hides, and unless these are properly sterilized (and this is done only by steam heat under pressure) they may

induce the disease. Hence, shaving brushes made from such hairs, improperly sterilized, are a potential source of danger to everyone who uses a contaminated brush. The spores enter a nice cut and then grow, causing a local angry wound from where they spread to the blood stream and cause death. Unfortunately, no efficient antiserum has as yet been evolved, but early surgical excision yields many cures.

We are passing through the season of pneumonia, a disease which takes more lives than any other disease, except heart disease and cancer. It causes an inflammation with consolidation of the lung or lungs, and in over 95% of cases is due to a small lancet shaped bacterium occurring in pairs, the pneumococcus, which is surrounded by a gelatinous envelope or capsule. The latter makes it more dangerous or virulent. Until recently only four types of pneumococci had been identified, but now we recognize 23 types. Neufeld discovered that each of these 33 types could be identified by mixing a drop of sputum, containing pneumococci, from a case of pneumonia, with a drop of serum (which is the fluid part of the blood, separated from the blood cells) from a rabbit, previously injected with the same type. When mixed only with its own type serum, the capsule swells up to 2 or 3 times its normal size, and thus allows one to identify it under the microscope. Within the last few months antisera have been elaborated for treatment against all of the types causing pneumonia, but they are of value only against the individual type of pneumococcus causing the disease. Formerly we had antisera only for Types I and II, which were obtained from the horse by injecting it with pneumococci of these types. Now we use not only the horse serum for certain types, but also a similar serum made from rabbits. By use of these antisera the mortality of the disease has been reduced by more than 2 or 3 times. The serum acts by aiding the defences of the body, namely the white cells of the blood, which in turn destroy the pneumococci, if the outcome is favourable, and remove the inflammatory products which make the lung solid. The only drawback to the use of antisera is the necessity of great care in giving in case of a reaction; it requires to be given very slowly, and this is time consuming.

Within the past two years a new drug has been added to our armaments in the war against the pneumococcus. It is called sulphapyridine, M. & B. 693, and dagenan. The story of the drug really begins with that very famous German chemist and

bacteriologist, Paul Ehrlich, who had a theory that certain chemicals would kill bacteria inside man without injuring or killing man himself. He experimented with hundreds of arsenical compounds until he finally stumbled on the famous 606, salvarsan,—which has been of invaluable aid in the cure of syphilis. Since then, research chemists and bacteriologists everywhere have been looking for something to destroy other disease producing organisms. About 4 or 5 years ago in Germany, Gerhardt Domagk discovered certain chemical components in a new dye substance, called sulphanilamide, and tested it for checking streptococcus infection (round bacteria occurring in chains which cause tonsillitis, abscesses, erysipelas, scarlet fever, purperal or childbirth fever, etc.). Excellent results have been experienced by sulphanilamide treatment, and it has been tried on numerous other disease producing germs. In turn, pneumococci faced it. White mice, which are very susceptible to pneumococci, were injected with pneumococci and sulphanilamide, but died. Their deaths were slower than when pneumonia germs alone were injected, however, and in the Laboratories of May and Baker in Birmingham, England, research chemists strove to find a combination of the atoms in Domagk's drug which would protect. After many failures, Dr. Lionel Whitby, the pathologist who tested these drugs at Dudley Road Hospital, Birmingham, England, finally with preparation 693 was able to record success. The control mice, given pneumococci alone, all died, but those given "693" with enough pneumococci to kill 10,000 mice lived.

But before the drug could be used on human beings, he had to discover whether the new M. and B. 693 (sulphapyridine or dagenan) was poisonous, and what was the lethal dose. To find this out, Whitby gave tremendous quantities to his mice until it killed them. Can this drug kill human beings too? It can, just as salt, caffeine or alcohol, can kill when administered in staggering doses, but now a suitable dosage for human beings has been worked out. At Birmingham Hospital 100 people with pneumonia were given the regular treatment which usually saves 3 out of 4; the second 100 received the same treatment, but were given M. and B. 693 as well. Even although 27 out of the 1st group died, the doctors in charge, Evans and Gaisford, didn't rush M. & B. 693 to them, as there were deaths in the second group too, but only eight. Their work has been confirmed by physicians all over the world, and the drug is now in general use. Within a few hours it causes the temperature

to drop to normal in a most spectacular manner. Gaisford has now treated over 1,000 cases with no ill effects, though certain toxic manifestations have been recorded by others. The chief of these are the development of a deep blue colour, nausea, and a sharp drop in the number of the white cells of the blood, especially the polymorphonuclear leucocytes (the cells which act chiefly on the bacteria). This condition is called agranulocytosis, but can be avoided by repeated counts of the white cells during treatment.

Sulphapyridine or M. & B. 693 has also proved strikingly successful in the treatment of meningitis due to the pneumococcus and various other bacteria. Many lives which would be lost are daily being saved.

The drug does not actually kill the pneumococci, as was shown by Dr. Alexander Fleming of London University, but inhibits their growth or rate of reproduction, causing a condition of bacteriostasis, which literally means causing the bacteria to stand still. It seems to render them avirulent or harmless by destroying their capsules, as these disappear within a few hours after giving the drug by mouth. They cannot, then, be demonstrated by the Neufeld reaction in the sputum, which I have described for typing the pneumococci. The scavenger cells or leucocytes of the body do the rest. At the present time, we can safely state that this is one of the most outstanding advances in medicine, but is not a hundred per cent cure, as the stage of the disease at which it is given and the strength of the patient must be taken into consideration.

An almost routine practice now is a blood count or blood picture, and people ask what its value is. Included in this is a count of the white cells of the blood, which are normally 6,000 per cu. mm., but when there is any acute infection present, such as appendicitis, or pneumonia, the count rises to as high as 25,000. When this occurs, it reveals a good reaction or power of resistance on the part of the patient, as the increase is mainly of the polymorphonuclear leucocytes, which have peculiar lobed nuclei, and act as the phagocytes or scavengers against the offending bacteria. There is an apparently inexhaustible supply in healthy individuals in the bone-marrow, where they are manufactured. They pass from the bone-marrow to the bloodstream, and are transported to the site of the infection. Occasionally, when the infection is overwhelming or the patient exhausted or a chronic alcoholic, the reaction on the part of

the bone-marrow fails to take place; then the prognosis or outlook is bad.

Even when the total white cell count is not raised, by making thin films or smears of the blood on microscopical slides and staining with special dyes, one can count the number of lobes in the polymorphs or leucocytes. The newly formed cells or immature forms have only one lobe, and are called band forms. When the latter are increased beyond the normal 5, they indicate the severity of the infection in proportion to their increase. In cases where there is no acute infection, for example, arthritis and rheumatism, an increase of these immature forms, or shift to the left, as it is called, may indicate some latent or hidden focus of infection in the body, such as an infected tooth, tonsil or gall-bladder. As the white cells become older, the number of lobes increases up to five, and these are referred to as segmented forms.

A count of the red cells, which normally number five millions per cu. mm., an estimation of the colour of the blood (the haemoglobin) and an examination of the appearances of the red cells on stained films, enable one to decide whether an anaemia is present or not and also the exact type present, and thus guide the physician in giving appropriate treatment. For example, in some anaemias such as pernicious anaemia, the red cells are larger and contain an excess of haemoglobin per cell; others are smaller than normal and contain less colouring matter per cell, although the clinical picture in both of these types may be very similar. I saw a lady recently who was obviously very anaemic, with a smooth glossy tongue, but whose chief complaint was the condition of her finger nails. They were exceedingly soft and brittle, had longitudinal ridges and were depressed in the centre like little scoops or spoons. She belonged to the latter type, and on treatment with large doses of iron with copper made a rapid improvement. The former type, pernicious anaemia, which less than 20 years ago was invariably fatal (and now we rarely see a fatal case), reacts to liver extract given by mouth or into the muscles, or to an extract of pig's stomach, called ventriculin. It is remarkable to see how quickly such cases improve, and this is all due to the work of Minot, Murphy and Castle. As pernicious anaemia is a deficiency disease, a small dose after the blood has gone back to normal must be maintained for life.

Examination of the chemistry of the blood helps, too, to solve many cases. The blood sugar becomes raised above the

normal level in diabetes mellitus (called thus because the urine became sweet as honey). The work of Sir Frederick Banting and Professor Best of Toronto in the introduction of insulin, which is an extract of the pancreas (sweetbreads) of calves, has been of outstanding merit in reducing the mortality of cases which have gone into coma, and which in the old days would probably have died. It also makes life more bearable with a more liberal diet, and gives the pancreas a chance to get some physiological rest and to a certain extent to regenerate. Insulin, which is one of the internal secretions or hormones of the body, breaks up and utilizes the sugar in the body. Within the past few years a modified form of insulin, called protamine-zinc-insulin, has been introduced, which cuts down the number of hypodermic injections necessary, as it is more slowly absorbed than ordinary insulin and acts over a much longer period of time, giving greater comfort to the patient.

Within recent years the giving of blood from a healthy individual to a sick one has been used more and more. Such cases as those suffering from shock following a severe injury, especially when complicated by haemorrhage, receive a blood transfusion routinely now. It is also of great aid in many other conditions, but before the blood can be given, the donor must belong to the same group as the patient. People all belong to one of four groups variously called I(AB); II(A); III(B); and IV(O) to avoid confusion. A very simple test decides the blood group. A drop of blood, in a sodium citrate solution to prevent it clotting, is mixed with a drop of known type II and III sera on a microscopical slide. If no clumping or massing together of the cells occurs, the blood belongs to Group IV, and if both clump, to I; if with III and not with II, to Group II and the opposite for III. The danger of giving the wrong group is that the donor's cells on entering the patient's blood may dissolve or lyse and cause a very severe and even fatal reaction. As a double check we cross-match the donor's red cells with the patient's serum and *vice-versa*, and if no clumping or agglutination occurs, then we know that the bloods are compatible. The use of "blood-banks" obtained from various donors has been largely tried in the Spanish Civil War by the late Dr. Norman Bethune, and stored on ice for immediate use, the blood keeping in good condition for about a month.

Recently, some further modifications in the four main blood groups have been elucidated, namely three further sub-

groups M, N, MN, and while not used for blood transfusion, they are of value in the test for paternity from the blood. A blood test cannot prove a person the father of a child, but can disprove it. For example, where the father and mother both belong to Group IV(O), i.e., the largest group, all the children of that union must belong to that group. If any do not do so, then the alleged father could not be the parent. By the use of the new subgroups the value of the test has increased from 20% to 45%.

Perhaps one of the most interesting advances in medicine from the pathologist's point of view is the cultivation of tissues outside the body in a specially prepared medium. Tissue culture compares with the growth of bacteria, and although first employed eighty years ago by Roux, who kept a chicken embryo in a weak solution of sodium chloride and observed the further development of its intestine and spinal canal, it is only recently that its full value is being appreciated. Growth takes place without the influence of nerves and vessels, but a fresh food supply must be added every 4 or 5 days. Carrel has his original tissue cultures still growing after 24 years in blood serum, showing that the cell itself, when removed from the body, may be immortal. By means of tissue culture we need not rely upon fixed or stained material, but can watch the behaviour of living cells and tissues and even photograph them while dividing, as was done by Canty in the case of tumour cells. Not only can the normal tissues of the body be grown, but also tumour or cancer cells, and the action of radium and X-rays upon both normal and malignant tissues studied; similarly the influence of various drugs. It promises to be of great aid in the investigation of many new cures.

Viruses, which are regarded as bacteria too small to be identified by the microscope and able to pass through the finest filters, but which are the cause of many diseases such as small-pox, rabies, influenza, infantile paralysis, etc., can be cultivated only along with living tissues. As a result of this, the use of cultivated cowpox virus has been introduced by Rivers for vaccination against small-pox, instead of the virus obtained from calf lymph. Accordingly, tissue culture opens up a wide field for further research on tumours and other forms of growth.

As space is limited, I have only touched on a few of the more interesting advances in medicine; but equal advances have been made in the constant battle being waged against the ravages of disease in surgical technique, anaesthesia, radiology, and in cancer research.



# LYTTON STRACHEY

CYRIL CLEMENS

WHEN the first Great War broke out in 1914, Mr. J. Lytton Strachey became one of the most militant of the pacifists. Appearing before the magistrates in 1915, to show cause why he should not be drafted, he blew out an air cushion before taking his place on the hard bench, and comfortably seated on the cushion he continued to survey with delicate irony the follies and eccentricities of mankind as manifested for the nonce by the draft board.

"I understand that you disapprove of war, Mr. Strachey," said the officer in charge.

"Oh, no, only *this* war," was the imperturbable answer.

\* \* \* \* \*

Lytton Strachey was born, March First, 1880, at Stowey House, Clapham (then a suburb of London), the son of Sir Richard Strachey, a British general who had won renown in India. William Strachey, secretary of the Virginia Colony in 1610, and author of *Historie of Travaile into Virginia Britannia*, was a direct ancestor.

After attending first a small private school, then a semi-public one called Leamington College (which no longer exists), young Strachey spent two years at Liverpool University, and finally arrived at Trinity College, Cambridge, whose distinguished faculty numbered A. E. Housman as professor of Latin. At Cambridge, Strachey made a number of friends, including Leonard Woolf (the husband of Virginia Woolf), Maynard Keynes the economist, E. M. Forster the novelist, and Desmond MacCarthy the critic. Before leaving the university, Strachey determined to grow a long red beard, which thereafter became his most noticeable physical characteristic. But entirely aside from his red beard with a curious rufous tinge, he was an extraordinary figure; fairly tall, his excessive thinness, almost emaciation, caused him to appear endless. He had a rather bulbous nose, on which sat the spectacles of a British Museum bookworm. He drooped if he stood upright, and sagged if he sat down. Possessed of no voice at all, he seemed to lack all vitality, and most people would have mistaken him for a professor of languages who was trying to remember some grammatical rule which he had forgotten all about.

Strachey now gave himself up to reading, studying, and

observing his fellow mortals. In no hurry whatsoever to begin his writing career, he considered it a grave mistake for callow youths to rush into print merely for the sake of getting their names on the covers of books. Seldom has a born writer, maturing so early, had such a period of incubation. This long preparation was partly due to ill health, but probably even more to the warring of those two tendencies in his breast—the romantic and the rational. He simply could not decide what he wanted most to do, and what he could do best. His extraordinary interest in human nature, and his uncanny sense of form, made the idea of dramatic writing very attractive. The dramatic qualities of Elizabeth's and Essex's story had fascinated him even during his school days. His literary debut was made in the *Independent Review*, which in 1905 published the essay, "English Letter Writers". This was entered in, but did not win, the "Le Bas Prize Contest". Strachey's ill-success is a matter of some surprise, for his mature contribution was written with unusual skill and perspicuity.

On March 30th, 1909, St. Loe Strachey, editor of the *London Spectator*, wrote an unidentified correspondent, the following very interesting letter, marking it "Confidential":

Dear Sir,

I am much obliged for your kind letter. Unfortunately I am so busy just now that I could not undertake the writing of the Introduction which you kindly suggest to me. I say this with no little regret, as my love for and interest in the Elizabethan poets is quite as great as ever it was. I should like to suggest putting one of these introductions into the hands of my cousin, Mr. Lytton Strachey. This may sound at first like a piece of nepotism, but as a matter of fact it is nothing of the kind. I am convinced that Mr. Lytton Strachey, though quite a young man and though his name is as yet hardly known, is one of the very ablest of our younger critics. I at any rate have backed my belief by entrusting him every week with one of the principal reviews in the *Spectator*, and I find all competent judges who know his work loud in its praise. He has made a very special study of the Elizabethan dramatists, and indeed knows them far better than I do or ever did. There is not one volume on your list which I feel he is not fully competent to do, for he knows his Drdye and Congreve as well as he does his Shakespeare and the Elizabethans.

I send you two samples of his work, in case you would like to adopt my suggestion. In that case, please write to him direct to 67 Belsize Gardens, Hampstead.

Believe me,

Yours faithfully,

J. St. Loe Strachey.

Mr. H. A. L. Fisher, the historian and statesman, first met Strachey when, as an unknown Cambridge graduate, he had attracted attention by a review of Elizabeth Lee's translation of Vauvenargues which indicated a profound knowledge of the French tongue. Fisher invited Strachey to write his first book, one on French Literature, for the *Home University Library*. He accepted at once, and in a few months produced his manuscript, *Landmarks in French Literature*, 1912, in the opinion of some the most faultless of his works, and a truly remarkable achievement for one who had taken his degree at Cambridge only a few years before.

*Eminent Victorians*, the author's second book, appeared in the fall of 1918, and at once became a best seller. Mr. Frank Swinnerton read the manuscript for Chatto and Windus. He found the pages so enchanting that when night fell, he carried the work home. He had hardly taken the manuscript up again after dinner, when the Germans staged an air raid. The whirring of aeroplanes overhead, the rattle of machine-gun fire, and the thunder of the anti-aircraft guns, would all have distracted a man less happily engaged, but, with curtains drawn to prevent the escape of light, Swinnerton consorted that evening with Cardinal Manning, Thomas Arnold, Florence Nightingale, and General Gordon, and the nineteenth century became alive again.

*Queen Victoria*, the first full-length biography, came out in 1921. Although it was praised by most, some disagree with Strachey's interpretations. Mr. E. F. Benson, himself the author of a work on the Queen, writes:

Brilliantly written, it seems to me to miss the bigness of her altogether, and to stress unduly and to ridicule certain smallnesses which were no doubt there too. Taken as a whole, the work is almost a caricature.

"*Queen Victoria* proved Strachey a first-rate man of letters, with an ironical touch which many have tried in vain to imitate," declares Dean William R. Inge. "Whether this is the best way to write biography or history, may be doubted."

Apropos of trying to copy Strachey, Viola Sackville-West tells us there were few things which annoyed both her husband, Harold Nicolson, and Lytton Strachey more than to be told that they belonged to the same school of biography. There is far too great a tendency among modern critics, especially in America, and of course in Germany, and even in France, to

attribute influences too readily between one author and another. The resemblance is far more truly to be ascribed to some spirit of the age than to deliberate influence or imitation. In fact, Nicolson deliberately avoided reading anything by Lytton Strachey, in order not to be thus influenced. Certain resemblances in their approach to their subjects were due to some similarity in their general attitude to life; e.g., a desire for realism as a reaction against the hero-worship and whitewashing which had immediately preceded their generation.

It was to Clive Bell, one of Strachey's closest friends, that the latter read all his books bit by bit as he wrote them. Bell believes that Strachey's attitude to life was based on a critical appreciation of the past, an interest in the present, and a sense of human possibilities—the amalgam bound together and tempered by a fine pervasive scepticism. He writes out of knowledge and sympathy and doubt; and because he understands what human beings have achieved, he is not indifferent to their fate.

In addition to his numerous literary and artistic friends, Strachey had not a few "non-writing" ones like Mrs. Mary Behrend of Frome;

I knew him best before he was famous, and I think personal jokes and witticisms sound so flat when in print. One source of my high admiration for him was that, in spite of a most biting tongue and an almost frightening penetration into people's minds, his own great generosity of mind and extreme kindness to those less gifted than himself was so often manifested. His deliberate refusal to be lionized by turning his back on London was interesting. Later he had an entourage, not to say court, but of fine intellects—not head-hunters.

Mr. Ferris Greenslet once invited the biographer to lunch at his London hotel. Strachey stayed for two or three hours afterwards, discussing the suggestion that Greenslet made for a book about Julius Caesar:

I can see him yet, red-headed, red-bearded, long-legged, immaculately dressed, curled up into a double bow-knot, in a big armchair, presenting his views of Caesar as a man, lover (ambidextrous), general, and emperor. He had green eyes, a notably high-pitched voice, and he spoke with nervous gestures of the hands—altogether a man that leaves a vivid memory.

Vincent Sheean, the author of *Personal History*, writes us that he first met Strachey at Cambridge where the latter was visiting friends:

Strachey walked about, here and there, and I remember particularly the moment when an owl appeared in the very bosky depths of Christ's College. I knew him rather better afterwards, and although I was always a little afraid of his intelligence—it was all edged round with scorn, in spite of his kindness of nature—he seemed to me a mind and character of extra-special quality. I never knew anybody at all like him. Some of his best qualities, intellectually speaking, such as his fastidiousness, were the very ones which interfered with complete realization of his material, I think. In *Victoria* and in *Eminent Victorians*, his most impressive work, he had not enough vulgarity for them, just as he did not have enough vitality for his *Elizabeth and Essex*. In the latter book he was also, I imagine, handicapped by a lack of actual stuff, material to work with—had embarked upon the book through an emotional attraction to the subject, perhaps, and only found out halfway through that there wasn't enough to make a book out of. In that case some of his great deficiencies became glaring, because he did not have enough to the necessary robustness and vital imagination, or even opulence with words, to fill up the content of a design of that nature.

Anyhow, he was a strange and remarkable figure, with a mind like no other. He had a strange, gloomy look, you know, and his up-and-down voice, sometimes quite strong and deep and sometimes a mere falsetto squeak, added a lot to the oddity of the general impression. He could make great sweeping condemnations in fewer words than anybody, and without undue emphasis. I once said something to him about T. E. Lawrence. He merely enquired, "Are you interested in that tawdry character?" Of a very famous aristocratic country house of the Tudor period (it was the Sackvilles' house, Knole, near Sevenoaks) he said "It is a very large house".

He seldom had to say more than half a dozen words, in ordinary talk, to convey a sort of essay in criticism. I suppose you had to know him to read into such remarks all that he actually meant.

At one time or another, Strachey visited most of the countries of Western Europe. His tastes were catholic, for his brother, James Strachey, informs the author of this paper that he liked France, Italy, Germany, Austria, Belgium, Holland, Switzerland, Denmark, Sweden, Spain, and Portugal. Nor did he neglect such countries as Algiers, Tunisia, Egypt, and many parts of South Africa. More than once he thought of writing on the colorful Cecil Rhodes, a subject eminently suited to his genius.

Unmarried, Strachey lived with his mother and sister at Fifty-one Gordon Square, a neighborhood where resided a number of his Cambridge friends, including John M. Keynes,

Leonard and Virginia Woolf, and Clive Bell. In this highly mechanized age, Strachey eschewed the typewriter, and unlike Chesterton and Henry James he disliked dictation, writing all his manuscripts out in his neat, legible hand. He indulged in no sports, few recreations, and his favorite relaxation was reading.

Few men have been subject to more unkind remarks than Strachey. For some reason or other, the critics delighted in making fun of him on every possible occasion. Once a group of Mayfair Society folk got up an exhibition of worthless daubs made by the blind-folded, under the pretence that they were the work of a promising young artist. The London press made a great to-do over the story that Lytton Strachey—completely taken in—had actually purchased two pictures! Here, they tittered, was sophistication gone *reductio ad absurdum!* As a matter of fact, Strachey had never been taken in at all. His attention being called to these smears on canvas, he had remarked to his companion:

And does this poor young man really think he can paint? Oh, poor young man! Poor young man! If his pictures are cheap, one must buy one! Oh, poor young man, one must buy two! Oh, poor young man—

In mid-career, with everything to look forward to, Strachey was fatally stricken with paratyphoid, at his country place Hamspray, near Marlborough, early December, 1931. He lingered on in no little pain until January 21st, 1932. At the time of his death he was planning a series of essays on Shakespeare's plays—which if we may judge from his published essay on *The Tempest*, would have treated Shakespeare in a strikingly original fashion. Various possibilities for future full-length biographies were more or less vaguely in his mind, including one of George Washington.

A typically Stracheyesque will was found. With the exception of the following specific bequests, all his "property, books, and manuscripts" were left to his brother and literary executor, James Strachey. To Dora de Houghton Partridge he bequeathed fifty thousand dollars, all his pictures, and drawings; and to Reginald Sherriff Partridge five thousand dollars. To Roger Pocklington-Seahouse he left all the books in his library *published before 1841*.

Strachey stood in the enviable position of being a scholar without portfolio. Not obliged to find time for writing in the intervals of teaching, or doctoring, or practising law, he had

the gentleman's privilege, the scholar's authority, and the artist's delight in arranging, compressing, and illuminating. Beneath his capable hands biography developed the swift quality of portrait painting, with its immediate and single statement.

"I met Lytton Strachey," recalls Bernard Shaw, "and read his books on Queen Victoria, Gordon, and Essex. The last time we met I found him in the street forlornly contemplating a taximan whose cab he had taken only to find his pockets empty at the end of the drive. I arrived at the door of John Lavery the painter, with whom we were lunching, just in time to rescue him!"