

# LESLIE STEPHEN'S DAUGHTER

By HILDA RIDLEY

**I**N his recent book, "Leslie Stephen: His Thought and Character In Relation to His Time" (Harvard University Press, 1952), Noel Annan contends that his famous daughter, Virginia Woolf, inherited more from her mother than from her father, since her artistic, imaginative gifts were at variance with his rather prosaic and typically Victorian upper middle class reaction to life. He distrusted "artistic people," who, he confessed, "inhabit a world very unfamiliar to me," and he deplored the consistently "unwholesome atmosphere" he found in Balzac's novels. With the idea of Art for Art's sake, he had no sympathy.

Like other conscientious searchers for Truth of the Victorian era,—the Huxleys, the Arnolds, the Stracheys—he could not refrain from assuming the role of a moralist. Although he had taken holy orders and had felt compelled, through loss of faith, to resign from the Church, he was unable lightly to dispense with precepts imbibed in childhood and cherished by tradition. In his books, "The Science of Ethics" and "Essays in Free-Thinking and Plain-Speaking," he endeavoured to evolve a system of ethics, which, though independent of divine sanction, retained all the religious values that he believed could be approved by reason.

Since his daughter, Virginia, in her character and work, reveals an attitude to life almost antithetical to that shown by him, it is perhaps natural that a biographer should assume that her inheritance was maternal rather than paternal. In her physical beauty, temperament and imagination, she certainly resembled her mother, but such an endowment may be greatly modified by environment. Leslie Stephen, like other strong, opinionated Victorian men, was a formidable piece of environment. His first wife had been Thackeray's younger daughter, Minny, but it was his second wife, Julia Duckworth, a beautiful young widow, once the toast of pre-Raphaelite circles, who became the mother of Virginia and her sister Vanessa. That the sisters—one through her writing and the other through her painting—subsequently developed into the kind of "artistic people" he distrusted, is rather an ironical commentary on the effects of his teaching. It was his teaching and character, however, that influenced Virginia and stimulated her enquiry into

life. In this sense he may be accounted at least as strong a force in her unfolding as her mother.

She was impressed by his authoritative attitude, by his views on sex and by his respect for money. "Where money and sex entered his life," his biographer rather sardonically comments, "Leslie Stephen's reason departed through the window." Sir Leslie was indeed the beneficiary of an order of society favourable to the male. In his circumstances and in his mental attitudes, he was a true member of the powerful upper middle class from which, during the past 200 years, Great Britain has drawn not only distinguished names in her Army, Navy and Air Force, but many of her best writers, thinkers, heads of universities and influential civil servants. His grandfather had been closely associated with the great parliamentarian, William Wilberforce, and his father, Sir James, as a colonial administrator, had drafted the legislation that put an end to slavery in the British Empire. His relatives held important civil posts, and after he left the Church, his status as Man of Letters, philosopher and editor, was assured by his connections and by his association with leading minds in the political and administrative life of England.

The contrast between the character and roles of her father and mother impressed Virginia. She saw in her father's approach to life, through authority and rationalism, a typically masculine reaction. In her mother's passive acceptance of a secondary role, and in her reliance on intuition, faith, and imagination, and the making the most of her immediate environment, she saw what she believed to be a typically feminine approach. She loved the qualities of her mother. In many of her books she has faithfully limned those qualities, accepting them in the main as the distinctive ones of her sex. Her portrait of Mrs. Ramsay in "To the Lighthouse" is a case in point.

Mrs. Ramsay was an artist in life. "Her creations were happiness and security, her materials men and women and children, her frame the house on Skye." She knew how to make, through her imagination, "islands of meaning" in an incomprehensible world. Within the magic spell of her personality, her husband and children experienced a satisfying sense of unity. In her dispensations, she made the moment appear of infinite worth. "Life stands still here," she was fond of saying. She found pleasure in the objects of her immediate environment,—in willows dropping over streams, birds in flight, trees and flowers. So that just being alive was a joy

to her,—a joy which she imparted to her family. The rhythm of the seasons she related to the rhythm of man's life itself,—to the "childhood, maturity, old age and death" of the human beings around her. While her husband, immersed in some sterile abstraction, made the air about him "thin and dry," she enriched it with her divinations. The aloofness of the self-centred, rather querulous scholar, who was Mr. Ramsay, contrasted with the practicality of his wife, who was always ready to sink her own personality in her immediate task of making an abode of charm, happiness and security for her husband, her children and herself.

In Mrs. Ramsay's qualities, which were those of her own mother, Virginia found a satisfaction that Mr. Ramsey's qualities—those of her father—did not evoke. She called the one set of qualities "feminine," and the other "masculine." Why, she inquired, did the masculine qualities receive in society a sanction not accorded to the feminine ones? She found the answer in the entrenched "patriarchal system," which for centuries had set its imprimatur on the masculine way of life. In her father she saw an unmistakable product of this system. His aloofness, she discerned, had arisen from his education,—an education concerned with the vast structure of artificial life that man, through the centuries, had superimposed upon the natural order of existence. England, like other civilized countries, was essentially a patriarchy, and her schools and universities reflected this fact. In them students were prepared to take a place in a complicated society involved with the intricacies of government in an order of life that laid stress on power, place and property. Preoccupied with the complexities initiated by himself, man tended to become segregated in parliaments, conventions, offices, private studies and barracks and to lose touch with the simple and elemental facts that conditioned his existence.

Scholar and man of letters though he was, Virginia realized that he suffered from the maladies incidental to a system that made the works of man in his artificial society of paramount importance. She went further and declared that the great contemporary novelists of her day, Bennett, Wells and Galsworthy, were "all materialists, occupied with the surface of life," spending "immense skill and immense industry in making the trivial and the transitory appear the true and enduring."

How had the artificial society to which education catered developed? And why, after three thousand years of civilization,

did the evils of war, famine and torture exist? What was the canker at the heart of society? How was it that the education received by men in the great public schools and at Oxford and Cambridge had not resulted in any appreciable "respect for liberty nor a particular hatred of war?" In two of her books, "A Room of One's Own" and "Three Guineas," Virginia Woolf strove to find answers to these questions. She found them, to her satisfaction, in the very nature of the "patriarchal system," which all over the civilized world ministered to the importance of the male ego. This pandering to the male ego had resulted in its inflation, to which the subservience of women had contributed. "Women have served all these centuries," she observes, "as looking-glasses possessing the magic and delicious power of reflecting the figure of man at twice its natural size."

An inflated masculine ego betrays unwholesome trends. Behind and conditioning the peaceful pursuits of men of letters, professional men, writers and students, was the structure of a society of which such trends formed an integral part. Virginia Woolf named three that she believed were responsible for war and the suppression of liberty: (a) Male love of fighting, resulting in the justification of war as a "heroic exercise" and—in the language of Hitler and Mussolini—"an outlet for manly qualities;" (b) the craving of the enlarged ego for possessions expressed in "the rage for acquisition" which drives men "to desire other people's fields and goods perpetually;" (c) the cultivation of a form of patriotism which identifies the pride and prestige of the individual with the pomp and glory of the fatherland.

In the characters of the dictators—Mussolini and Hitler—she saw the culmination of undiluted masculinity. Here is a composite portrait of a dictator, presented in her book, "Three Guineas," published shortly before her untimely death:

"It is the figure of man; some say, others deny, that he is Man himself, the quintessence of virility, the perfect type of which all others are imperfect adumbrations. He is a man certainly. His eyes are glazed; his eyes glare. His body, which is braced in a unnatural position, is tightly cased in a uniform. Upon the breast of that uniform are sewn several medals and other mystic symbols. His hand is upon a sword. He is called in German and Italian Fuhrer or Duce; in our language Tyrant or Dictator. And behind him lie ruined homes and dead bodies—men, women and children."

How has such a figure arisen? She replies, "It has always been there—in the patriarchal system, in the very framework

of society." The force that animates it has taken different forms. In her book, "The Years," in which she depicts the tyrant in the home, she remarks, "There we have in embryo the creature, Director as well call him, when he is Italian or German, who believes that he has the right, whether given by God, Nature, sex or race is immaterial, to dictate to other human beings how they shall live, what they shall do."

To counteract, to modify, to check those trends which have resulted, and may result again, in the production of dictatorship, Virginia Woolf urged that women assert their influence, not through imitation of men, but in the ways they have learned through the disciplines of their own experience in the home as mothers, wives, daughters and sisters. She says—

"Women have sat indoors all these millions of years, so that by this time the very walls are permeated by their creative power. . . But this creative power differs greatly from the creative power of men. And one must conclude that it would be a thousand pities if it were hindered or wasted, for it was won by centuries of the most drastic discipline, and there is nothing to take its place."

In the realm of intimate relationships, carried on for the most part in the home, women have developed an attitude at variance with the cold impersonality of the artificial world created by men. "We find, between the lines of their husband's biographies," she says, "so many women practising the bringing of nine or ten children into the world, in running a house, nursing an invalid, visiting the poor and sick, tending here an old father, there an old mother, that we must lump them and their lives together, and deliver their message to those who have time to extract it."

Leslie Stephen's daughter took time to extract at least a portion of their message. She found through her study of biography that the teachers of women in the home had been poverty, chastity, derision and freedom from unreal loyalties, and she believed that the results of this "unpaid education" had values that should be perpetuated by women.

The teacher, poverty, her study informed her, had long exerted a restraining influence on the wives and daughters of educated men, under a system which frowned on their earning their own living, or receiving payment for any form of service. Concentrating on human activities in the home, they were conditioned by their immediate environment in which the human element dominated, and when they looked out on, or participated in, the activities of life they projected into them feminine conceptions of work and duty.

“If I were a man, I would not work for riches,” said Anne Clough, the first, though unpaid principal of Newnham College. . . . “No, I think I would work for my country and make its people my heirs.” “The Bridge is what we care for, and not our place on it,” declared Octavia Hill, who initiated the movement for securing better homes for the poor. And Josephine Butler, who led the campaign against the Contagious Diseases Act to victory, pronounced her conception of the dignity of work when she refused to have a life of herself written and testified of the women who helped her in her campaign that they lacked any desire for recognition and displayed not a vestige of egotism. In Florence Nightingale, Mary Kingsley, and Gertrude Bell, Virginia Woolf found further evidences of women’s allegiance to standards that differed from those of men.

Turning to Chastity, the second great teacher of women, she saw in it another important factor in their development. The age-long insistence on this virtue in women had preserved in them an integrity of purpose. “It should not be difficult to transmute the old ideal of bodily chastity into the new ordeal of mental chastity,” she suggests,—“to hold that if it was wrong to sell the body for money, it is much more wrong to sell the mind for money, since the mind, people say, is nobler than the body.”

In the third teacher, Derision, she saw a factor that tended to keep women sane. They had so often been the butts of masculine jokes and innuendoes that they had been taught not to take themselves too seriously, and so had not infrequently escaped the sins of “vanity, egotism and meglomania,”—the fecund causes of “masculine manias.” As for the fourth teacher, “freedom from unreal loyalties,” women had engaged in so few of the activities that brought men fortune and fame that they not unnaturally lacked their enthusiasm for the preservation of certain traditions.

But how to make the values acquired by women through experience effective?—this was the conundrum Virginia Woolf had to confront. That women’s points of view had never been impressed seriously upon society, was due in large measure, she felt, to their lack of sufficient economic independence. Dependents, either in the home or in subordinate positions in the mart, could not expect to secure the hearing necessary to mould events. Economic independence women must have, in order to win the intellectual freedom necessary to make their opinions effective. For this reason she supported the “equal pay for equal work” movement and the entry of women into the professions. But here she was brought face to face with a disconcerting dilemma. If women sought the same rewards

and did the same kind of work that men did, might they not acquire some of his unfavourable characteristics? She asks rather pathetically: "Are we not right in thinking that if we enter the same professions we shall acquire the same qualities? And do not such qualities lead to war? In another century or so if we practise the professions in the same way, shall we not be just as possessive, just as jealous, just as pugnacious, just as positive as to the verdict of God, Nature, Law and Property as these gentlemen are now?"

Such a thought was anathema to her, and served to strengthen her conviction that women should not try to imitate men but should endeavour to discover other means for registering their points of view. In her book, "Three Guineas," she devoted many pages to suggestions whereby women might benefit by the emoluments of professional and executive life and at the same time evade the penalties to character which it tended to induce. Among her proposals was the forming by women of a college of their own in which might be taught "not the arts of dominating other people, not the arts of ruling, of killing, of acquiring land and capital, but only the arts that can be taught cheaply and practised by poor people, such as music, painting and literature, the arts of human intercourse, of understanding other people's lives and minds, and the little arts of talk, of dress, of cookery that are allied with them." She envisaged, in effect, a college for women which would conserve the qualities they had acquired through experience, as well as those appertaining to their feminine natures. Then they might venture into business and the professions on their own terms, refusing to sell their brains for money, and being satisfied not to earn a penny more than was sufficient to render them independent, healthy, leisured and civilized.

Other suggestions related to the orientation of public opinion in favour of the feminine way of life, through the distribution of pamphlets (printed on private presses) containing criticisms of education and religion, and urging a living wage for women in the callings open to them, including marriage and motherhood.

The last point—that of making motherhood a profession—Virginia Woolf particularly stressed. "If dictatorship is to be fought, then it must be fought first at home," she insisted. "A woman who is looking after a house and family, who is bearing children, has a right to a private income. Her profession is a valuable one to the State." The making of marriage and motherhood a paid profession would be the means, she felt, of securing for women a form of economic independence in

keeping with their special gifts, native and acquired, and the most effective way in which to ensure "that the large and very honourable class of married women shall have a mind and will of their own." In what better place could they win economic independence than in the home, the sanctuary of their stored-up femininity?

Leslie Stephen's daughter, anxious to preserve authentic femininity and to make it a kinetic force in evolutive conduct, subscribed to the finding of the modern biologist (represented by Aldous Huxley) that "not only does sex account for the secondary sexual characters relating to voice, texture of skin and bodily conformation, but it produces profound psychical differences in the reactions of men and women to life." But she also subscribed to another biological finding expressed laconically by Maranon: "In every male lurks a female, and in every female a male." She defined it in this way, "In each of us two powers preside, one male, one female; and in the man's brain the man predominates over the woman, and in the woman's brain the woman predominates over the man." There were and always had been men who listened to the voice of the woman within them. In these a fusion between the two elements of their nature had been effected, so that in a sense their minds were androgynous, with sympathies that transcended the limits of their sex. A similar fusion had taken place in some women.

She herself came to reject the view she had at first held,—that the feminine approach, the way of intuition, faith and imagination, was always preferable to the masculine one. She liked the qualities of courage, of intellectual integrity, based on the exercise of reason and logic, in the young, thoughtful men she knew, and she felt that these qualities were needed to indemnify the feminine ones. In the proportionate blending of masculine and feminine qualities she saw a desirable consummation. Only when the mind becomes fully fertilized, she believed, is it able to use all its faculties. "If one is a man, still the woman part of the brain must have effect; and a woman also must have intercourse with the man in her."

In human society the combination of masculine and feminine qualities, in equal proportions, could be attained only when women took their rightful place in it on an equal plane with men. But to obtain this equality of opportunity to effect events, women must have the co-operation of men whose minds were sufficiently sympathetic to enable them to recognize the value of the feminine view point, and to welcome it as a beneficent force in counteracting the undiluted masculinity that had in the past dominated human affairs.



# A GREAT LIBRARIAN

By MADGE MACBETH

THE disastrous fire in Canada's Library of Parliament during the summer of 1952 brought Mr. Martin Joseph Griffin vividly to mind. A fire in 1916 while he was Librarian burned all the main building, but the Library escaped serious damage.

Mr. Griffin was not our first Librarian, but he was the first one that I knew. Preceding him was Mr. Alpheus Todd, said to have begun his library career at the age of fifteen. He made the earliest important collection of books; by wise and careful spending, he furnished the shelves with 83,000 volumes when the young library was opened in 1876, by the Governor General, Lord Dufferin, who gave a Fancy Dress Ball in the library to celebrate the occasion.

Fifteen hundred guests attended.

Mr. Griffin was appointed in 1891 and held office for thirty-five years. Further biographical details tell us that he was born in St. John's, Newfoundland, in 1847, moved to Halifax about six years later, earned a B.A. from St. Mary's College and subsequently was given an LL.D. by both Dalhousie and McGill Universities.

Admitted to the Nova Scotia bar in 1881, he practiced Law in Halifax, but was lured away by the call of journalism. He became an editorial writer on the *Chronicle*, *Express* and *Herald* probably representing the latter in Ottawa's Press Gallery.

Next, he went to Toronto as Editor-in-Chief of the *Mail*, giving that up to become Parliamentary Librarian.

I have always felt that the impact of Mr. Griffin's influence on our literary life is not widely enough appreciated. True, his work speaks for itself—assuming there is somebody to listen—and few men could ask a finer monument than that same work. But today, we hurry past monuments, taking little thought as to what they stand for. So, in Mr. Griffin's case, I want to recall something of his literary activities and something of the man, himself. But for him, I doubt that I should be writing this, at all. He took the sting of defeat out of my rejection slips and made me feel it was worth while to struggle on.

For months, I regarded him as a stern, forbidding man; one who did not suffer fools gladly, and I knew I was a fool. Sick with fright, I would approach him, stutter my questions, mumble my thanks and escape on trembling legs that would hardly

support me. Yet, somehow, I always felt refreshed and strengthened in excess of what I asked for, often gathered at considerable trouble. I did not then know that Mr. Giffin's ambition was to serve the *public*, not only M.P.'s, whatever their political creed or social or intellectual standing.

Certainly, that ambition was fulfilled.

He seems to have been a normal if scholarly young man, swimming in the Arm with his cronies John Thompson (afterwards Sir John) and Lawrence Power (afterwards Senator). Miss Power, the Senator's daughter, became Sister Moira, a frequent contributor to this *Review*.

One might call this the first period of Mr. Griffin's life. The second was spent in Toronto, where as a loyal and uncompromising Tory, he fought savage battles with men of the opposing party, notably the Hon. Edward Blake. But entering the third period as Parliamentary Librarian and coming to Ottawa, he banked the fierce fires, making friends of those who had been his editorial enemies.

Sir John Macdonald was one of his closest friends, and a bust of the great statesman always stood on the Griffin mantel piece.

Another valued friend was Earl Grey, who recommended the C.M.G. which Mr. Griffin was persuaded to accept, refusing a proffered knighthood, with the words;

"How incongruous it would be to see 'Sir Martin Griffin' shovelling his snowy sidewalk "

This pretty conceit is hard to explain, for he never shovelled an ounce of snow in his life!

Endowed with a scholar's mind, he was also blessed with immense powers of concentration and a phenomenal memory. If he did not know the answer to a question, he could put his hand almost instantly on the place where it could be found. There was a clergyman who, anxious to find an obscure author's name, applied to the British Museum, to the Cambridge University Library and to the Bodleian Library without success. Some one suggested that Mr. Griffin might know the answer.

He did.

A similar incident occurred during the Behring Sea Seal Commission held in 1893 in Paris. Sir Joseph Pope was a member of the Canadian party headed by Sir John Thompson. One day, a point arose relating to the ownership of the seal industry (comparable to the Queen's ownership of all English swans) and nobody could be sure of the position. Young Froude was present and said;

"Don't worry I'll cable my father, who being a historian, will have the information at his finger-tips."

Historian Froude cabled briefly; "Don't know."

Several other sources were unsuccessfully tapped. Then, Sir Joseph Pope suggested;

"Let me cable our Parliamentary Librarian. If anyone can help us, he's the man."

With no more delay than necessary for the sending and receiving of the cables, the desired information was in the Commission's hands.

As for concentration, Mr. Griffin could sit in his living room, surrounded by family and friends, and turn out a twenty-paged article with never a correction needed. These articles were rather widely circulated. He not only wrote for *Blackwood's Magazine* (articles mostly concerned with political and literary thought of the 18th century in England) but was on the Board of Directors. He was much pleased to be invited to contribute a chapter to Lord Acton's monumental enterprise, "The History of England." In Canada, he was best known for his reviews appearing in *The Montreal Gazette* under the title "At Dodsley's."

An Irishman by birth, Mr. Griffin's habit of mind was completely English. Mentally, he lived in the 18th century as most of his writing illustrates. None of his serious work was signed; this, conforming to the literary tradition of his favorite period. In announcing his reviews editorially, even *The Gazette* shrouded him with anonymity:

"We introduce . . . another new department of a literary character, under the heading, "At Dodsley's." It will treat of current literary topics, especially those publications in which Canadians have interest. The writer is a gentleman of erudition who has the faculty of both entertaining and instructing his readers."

What writer could ask more, and what current writer would allow his identity to be suppressed after such heartening words of praise?

Just why he was willing to acknowledge his verse, I do not know, but there are several poems in a Birthday Book compiled by "Seranus," (Mrs. Frances Harrison) which bear his full name.

One of them reads;

Comes a shadow out of time,  
With the key to all;  
'Tis not found in prose or rhyme  
Why God should give us or recall  
The meaner things or the sublime.

Comes a day our quest shall find  
 What we yearn to know;  
 We shall read with purged mind  
 Meanings of our life below  
 When our eyes were blurred'd or blind.

Mrs. Harrison wrote, herself, in addition to a daily column for a Toronto paper, many poems; and she was always compiling the works of other poets. Professor Rhodenizer says of her; "She compiled the first anthology of Canadian verse and she was a deeply sympathetic interpreter of French-Canadian life. Her own poems are marked by graceful imagination, apt diction and musical cadence."

I have by me another little verse, not written for publication but which is revealing. It shows the tenderer side of a stern disciplinarian; a man who not only terrified me but converted the entire Library Staff into quivering mutes when he started on a tour of inspection. One of his daughters confesses that her earliest recollection of him dates from the morning he gave her an unjust spanking all in the cause of discipline. It seems that there was quite a little before-breakfast ceremony each morning. The wee girl waited for her father to emerge from his room at the top of the stairs. Then, he carried her down and placed her at the table.

On this particular day, he allowed her foot to upset the porridge bowl, whereupon he bore her into an adjoining room and thoroughly walloped her!

Mr. Griffin, no sport, no lover of any form of Art save Literature, was passionately fond of his roses. He cultivated them with patient tenderness and spent much of his leisure in the garden. Occasionally, the little daughter whom he spanked—called Alden, and now Mrs. C. P. Meredith—was allowed to accompany him as he pruned and fondled the flowers. He nicknamed her Bressèd, or perhaps better said, this was her version of his 'Blessed'. One pictures her trotting in his wake, wearing a neatly starched gingham dress and a sunbonnet; carrying a small basket over her arm—very 18th century style. Of course, she was not permitted to touch the good roses. Only the withered ones and the snippings were given into her care.

The couplet referred to above was composed as the two walked through the garden;

How can things look very blue  
 Bressèd, when I look at you?

How can things be very black  
 Bressèd, when you're smiling back?

The Griffins lived at the corner of Chapel and Rideau Streets in a large house built by Colonel Eagleson, who had served on Colonel By's Staff. Later, Sir John Macdonald occupied the home and after Mr. Griffin's tenancy, it became the residence of the Sanford Flemings.

There are few more historically famous houses in the Dominion.

In addition to the main building, there was a tool shed, a potting shed, a coach house and numerous other structures considered indispensable from gentle living in those days. The tiny Aldie was particularly fascinated by the dark, mysterious coach house. It held, besides the family conveyances, frightening things that clanked and rattled, that swung from hooks when there was a high wind and whipped across an upturned face. Mounds of rolled rugs and blankets lay like headless people in the dim corners. Sometimes, the gardener looked like that after a holiday in the Hull taverns!

After a period of pleasing terror, the child would go outside to stand beneath a tree and watch the exciting doings on Rideau Street which she could just see beyond a paling fence and if she climbed on to a wooden seat that circled the tree.

This type of resting place was designed, I imagine, for formal conversations. Two people could hardly sit side-by-side. One half of each was turned away on the curve of the seat, reminding me of those picturesque monstrosities called Tete-a-tete chairs. Shaped like the figure eight, a lady and gentleman sat so far apart that she could not catch a whiff of the Sen-sen or Pachouli or what-have-you he had eaten to disguise the fact of having just downed a devilish glass of beer!

I never could figure out what was Tete-a-tete about the chair.

The funerals that passed along Rideau Street were especially worth while; coal black horses looking as though they had been cut from shiny marble and wearing waving plumes of great size and elegance; masses of flowers almost as beautiful as Father's roses, and the entire procession moving so slowly that it was possible to examine the inmates of each carriage.

Then, there were splendid parades; parades of many types including the circus and the Masons. Sometimes, the little girl could not distinguish one from the other, except that in one Sir Sanford Fleming marched spiritedly along, wearing a neat little blue apron.

In the house, itself, there were many of Colonel By's treasures. Mr. Griffin bought a good deal of his china and several

pieces of jewelry with other objects of considerable value. But he found nothing to interest him among the books. Probably, the Colonel read little, or only those volumes relating to his profession of engineering; and Mr. Griffin preferred history, biography, essays and poetry of the highest quality. The only fiction I discovered in his large collection of handsomely-bound books were the novels of Dickens, Thackeray and Sir Walter Scott with a sprinkling of Jane Austen and the Brontes.

Mr. Griffin admired Scott with an intensity that amounted to reverence. The historical accuracy of the novels made an appeal, the slow, assured progression towards a definite goal, none of the shilly-shallying that marks the psychiatric treatises of today; the dignified, romantic style. . . . He knew the books almost by heart!

He did not approve of juvenile stories as such; that is, he was averse to filling a child's head with nonsense because that was the only type of reading it could understand. I doubt that he would have allowed the so-called 'comics' to come into his house. Nor would he have approved the habit of great men—or any man—of reading Whodunits and mysteries for recreation. Henty was about as far as he would go along that line. But he read versions of masterpieces adapted for youthful minds to his children, thus cultivating in them a love of the world's best literature. He read as a bribe to make them study their Catechisms and to punish them, he would not read, at all. His usually well-controlled temper broke all bounds when he saw anyone abuse a book. No Arab could have felt greater anger at seeing an infidel tramp into a mosque with his boots on. The Griffin children were taught to revere books, to open them carefully, to turn the pages gently; never to break the backs by laying them face downward; never to bend the corners or scribble in the margins. Heaven knows what he would have said if he could have seen one of my novels—just off the press and which had been loaned to a friend—used to prop up the storm window in a heavy snowfall!

I have always thought that our present Parliamentary Librarian, Mr. F. A. Hardy, captured Mr. Griffin's interest and sympathy by one brief remark he made when applying for a post in the Library. The conversation went something like this:

"A job here?" Mr. Griffin echoed. "Oh, no, young man! Don't bury yourself in the Civil Service."

"Just the same, sir," protested Mr. Hardy, his teeth chattering with nervousness, "I'd like a place in the Library."

“But why?”

“Why-er-I suppose, sir—because I love books.”

“Well,” said Mr. Griffin, capitulating in characteristic manner, “you are very foolish, but I suppose it’s all right. *You look like a gentleman!*”

Mr. Hardy got the job.

Martin Griffin’s active mind was always working; he never seemed to need a mental rest. Reading, learning, inwardly digesting, he managed to keep abreast of current topics, even Science, and at the same time to prevent his knowledge of the classics from rusting. He considered himself something of an authority on the Battle of Waterloo and carried on a brisk correspondence with Earl Minto on the subject. I used to think it must be like playing Chess by mail.

The letters on both sides are now in the Dominion Archives.

Impeccably dressed himself in a rather conservative way, he was not acutely conscious of what others wore unless he thought the clothes showed bad taste. Then, he was offended almost as much as he would have been by a badly written or printed book. Books were the yard stick by which he measured most other things.

After his death, Mrs. Meredith presented a collection of his *Gazette* reviews, “At Dodsley’s” to the McGill University Library. Dr. Lomer’s letter of acknowledgment ran in part as follows: “Indexed for reference, these articles being largely literary reviews, cover an interesting and fertile period in . . . English history as surveyed by a forceful, powerful mind. Rich in anecdote and pithy epigram and written in a brilliant and trenchant style, they should interest many students.”

Mr. Griffin died on March 19th, 1921, at the age of seventy-four. His mind was clear and youthful up to the very end. With his passing Canada lost a splendid citizen and a fine Librarian.

I lost a kindly friend.