

“CLARK’S FATUOUS BOOK”:
COMMENTS ON RONALD W. CLARK’S
LIFE OF BERTRAND RUSSELL

EDITH RUSSELL

*Edith Russell had already written the lives of Carey Thomas and Wilfrid Scawen Blunt when she married Bertrand Russell in 1952. She preserved his files as no one before had, and took a great interest in his earlier years as she did in his current campaigns and family. When Clark’s Life appeared in 1975, she reacted strongly to it. She wrote three drafts of her comments, each draft more extensive, and including information only she would have, such as Russell’s views on personal matters, even his habits of dress (see the long entry on p. 46). She numbered the comments within the chapters and referred to them in her final (and often difficult) manuscript by page and comment number. On the verso of the dustjacket, having turned it inside out, she wrote: “Clark’s fatuous book”; then she replaced the jacket in its new state. Not all of her original comments are present in the final version, which she headed “Comments on Clark’s Biography of BR; Rather Rough Notes”. She also made a summary of her overall attitude and complaints. Altogether Countess Russell laboured hard in her effort to correct for researchers—especially future biographers—what she saw as imbalance, errors in fact, and appreciation of her esteemed husband. Along with similar but shorter critical notes on Dora Russell’s autobiography and a draft book by Michael Burn, the document was listed in the finding-aid to her papers (see S. Turcon, “The Edith Russell Papers”, *Russell 12* [1992]: 61–78). This unabridged excerpt goes to the end of Chapter 7 (about 1912). Where her comments needed context I have supplied footnotes.—K.B.*

“Acknowledgements”

9/1 C. guards himself: “Neither she [i.e. me, E.R.] nor any member of the BR Estate nor of the BRPF, has read the ms., and there are, indeed passages in it with which they will probably disagree. However, if a devoted widow and

equally devoted colleagues agreed at all points with an objective biographer something would be wrong.”

C. evidently considers himself an *objective* biographer. I do not. I hold, as B. did, that no one *can* be wholly objective. The point is that a biographer, like any historian, should be as objective as he can be. He must recognize and admit his own prejudices so that his reader may know from what standpoint the writer makes his observations. C. does not recognize and certainly does not admit his prejudices. From his judgments I should think that he is both insular and parochial, for instance, although he does not recognize this bias. Also, the balance of his book, overweighted as it is by details of and from what in anyone else would be called B's "private life", is destroyed by C's desire to amass as much possible "new material" as he can—evidently in order to sell his book. This stress of C's upon "objectivity" is the result of his inability to weigh the worth or the possibility of achieving this fetish of professional writers. The "objective biographer" is merely the claptrap of contemporary professional writers.

9/2 C. speaks of the "unrivalled knowledge" of B's "life and works" of K. Blackwell and J. Slater.

I question this. They know a great deal. But, up to date, they have missed a very great deal. (Also, they did not know B. and clearly often misunderstand a great deal—though probably much less than Clark. I question their capacity for this "knowledge".)

9/3 C. speaks of Colette's "undeviating devotion to Russell".

There is no mention or suggestion here or anywhere in the book of Colette's many and ardent affaires with others.

9/4 C. does not mention the help offered—and given—to him by Conrad and his wife Elizabeth Russell or by Christopher Farley and Kenneth Coates. Possibly the references to the BR estate and the BRPF are intended to pay these debts. If so, C. has failed to understand who is included in either. Had he paid more attention to what he might have learned from the BRPF, the latter part of his book would, perhaps, have been less overbalanced by his stress upon Ralph Schoenman.

[Moreover, he should somewhere mention what he has derived from BR's autobiography and how he has used it. He nowhere clears this point. Nor does he mention Alan Wood's biography of BR. The latter is important since the Woods were friends of BR who put all the material that he later sent to McMaster University at their disposal and discussed it with them. Also, there were friends—old friends of BR's still alive when Alan Wood gathered material for his book. He was able to talk with them. Almost all of them had died by the time that Clark set to work. But there is no evidence in his book that he had read Alan Wood's book, much less used it in any way.

He should have made this clear and given his reasons, if the omissions were intentional. This introduction, "Acknowledgements", would have been the place to do it.]

Part I “The Reason Why”
(Chap. I “The Lodge in the Park”)

19/1 Has “the logical heart of mathematics” been found? What is it?

24/2 This suggestion that he failed to give Alys a child was owing to some psychological or physiological flaw in B. is silly. As C. himself says somewhere later in his book, Alys was later found to be incapable of having children. C. too often goes off half-cocked—perhaps because he has not digested the “facts” that he has gobbled up.

24/3 That the atmosphere of Pembroke Lodge was of “almost Grand Guignol darkness” is nonsense. C. entirely misunderstands P.L. C’s view seems entirely superficial. He does not appear to have examined with any “objectivity” the evidence upon which he bases this sweeping remark.

27/4 The mound conveyed no “dark and looming memories” to B. His first remembrance of it was of a delightful place to play. He delighted in rolling down its steep sides. The connection with Henry VIII and Ann Boleyn was to him only a tale like Red Riding Hood but better, since it was more nearly his own. C. shows singularly little understanding of children if he thinks it seemed dark to the little B.

27/5 I don’t think that C. has the plan of the house quite right. Lady R’s sitting room was upstairs. Ditto Agatha’s and Rollo’s. C. omits the dining room.

27/6 I think that C. has this quite wrong. Frank, of the two, was the more vulnerable, partly because of his age and partly because of his temperament (more Stanley than Russell). Together, they made him chafe against the restraints of P.L.—which, combined with his Stanley characteristics made him disliked by P.L. This dislike was felt and reciprocated by Frank. B, on the contrary, was loved and cherished by P.L.

C. nowhere mentions B’s childhood friends or the games etc. etc. that they played.

This is the first of C’s scathing remarks about Frank. He has, apparently, made no attempt to understand Frank or his and B’s relationship.

27/8 On p. 30 *a little* sets this right.

28/7 This whole paragraph, in its attempt to be “readable” and “lively”, is superficial. C. says that “the physical regime” of P.L. was “a well-disguised blessing,” but that the benefits of “the intellectual course” were “more questionable”. Yet, as the paragraph develops, it seems to show that the benefits of the latter were quite as great and *not* questionable—and, in fact, they were probably greater.

29/8 C. speaks of “Lady R’s strong fears of contamination” which tended to “limit R’s contact with other children”. Nonsense. Lady R. did her best to import other children. She sent him to kindergarten, dancing school. She welcomed the Burdets, especially Maud Burdett, the Grant Duffs, especially “Terry”, Jimmie Baillie, and a raft of cousins: the Arthur Russells, the Stanleys, the

Portals, etc. etc. These, after all, were the only children available to her. But C. fails entirely to note them. Most of these remained warm friends of BR to the end of their lives.

29–30/9 Somewhere in the next pages C. should discuss the literary as well as the political and historical associations at PL. They had important bearing upon B's education. The fact that his people spoke, habitually, in finished sentences also is very important. All this affected B's writing. C. also fails to mention the period in adolescence when B. was not permitted to read as it was feared that he was going blind. During this period he learned vast amounts of poetry—by opening a book, reading the lines with concentration, shutting the book and repeating the lines. He never forgot what he then learned. He never ceased loving and reading poetry and getting it “by heart”.

33/10 “R's own later accounts of his development at PL are contradictory.” No. They are not. By C's own account B. speaks of his childhood and of his adolescence. These are differing periods. B. felt certain things in childhood and certain things in adolescence. This difference holds true for B's “verdicts on his grandmother” which C. discusses in the next-but-one paragraph as being contradictory. They are not.

Also the point (noted later) that things said in talk are often casual and suited to the interlocutor and the occasion, both of whom must be taken into account in weighing the accuracy and the intended accuracy of such remarks.

33/11 Till puberty “mere kindness sufficed”.

B received more than mere kindness at PL. He was given much thought and care and devotion. And, perhaps more important, he was very warmly loved—sentimentally, perhaps, but still cherished warmly.

34/12 Rollo was considerably more than merely “amiable and uncomplaining”. Amongst many other things, he was great fun with children. He was also extremely knowledgeable, even learned, in various fields.

35/13 Nice of C. to put the “intellectuals” of Portmeirion “on”, and not under, “almost every large stone.”

35/14 Tyndall's house was not finished when Rollo moved into Dunrozel.

36/15 This account seems to pass over very lightly the years of Alys's bitterness against B.

37/16 This is an excellent paragraph for showing up Santayana's own snobbery, but as a comment upon the Russells it is very wide of the mark. The Russells lacked the snobbery although they were acutely aware of differences in attitude etc. etc. in different social classes.

37/17 B. never looked back upon Friday's Hill as honest. It came to seem to him irretrievably *dishonest*.

37/18 “a luscious Alys”—ugh!

C. might well have mentioned B's shyness.

[Clark nowhere mentions in this chapter B's later feeling that it was probably fortunate for him that his parents died early. Their views were very definite and

very fixed and B. would inevitably have quarrelled with or succumbed to them. In either case his feelings would have been torn—torn far worse than were his feelings in differing from his grandmother because the tie between them would have been tighter. B’s parents were very dominating. B. would have suffered acutely and guiltily. B. often talked and speculated about this. I told Clark of it—but he quite ignores it. He prefers the commonly accepted view that loss by death of parents is the worst of losses.]

Chapter 2 “Cambridge Chrysalis”

38/1 Clark puts too much weight upon Santayana’s opinions regarding B. This paragraph like the quotation in the previous chapter are better as expositions of Santayana and his prejudices than of B. it seems to me.

I do not agree that “B’s microscopic intensity ... fanatic.” One of the chief reasons for B’s rare gift as a thinker was precisely his power of *combining* his “microscopic insight” with a wide view of the whole—for seeing both the trees and the wood.

43/2 “the natural but slightly bloody-minded reaction of being perverse for perversity’s sake”

I do not remember B. ever being perverse *for perversity’s sake* or, indeed, ever being perverse. Somewhere Clark also refers to B. as being “wayward”. He was not wayward. Nor was he “capricious”. I think that the reason why C. falls into this error is that his examination of B’s 98 years of multifarious mental, emotional and physical activity is superficial. He accepts too readily other people’s views—especially “the generally accepted view”—without sufficient consideration of their character and prejudices. This, I suppose, was inevitable since five years (which is what he spent on this book) is too short a time to amass the necessary information *and* to examine it with care. In any case, Clark was clearly not equipped to be other than superficial.

46/3 Frank’s “rackety ways”.

Clark never misses a chance to denigrate Frank, of whom he evidently knows little and dislikes what he does know. *Cf.* p. 52/5.

46/4 B’s coming of age and inheritance also brought him the knowledge that his upkeep and education had been paid for out of his inheritance. He had honoured his grandmother for her generosity in making both upkeep and education financially possible. It was a blow to learn that her generosity had not extended to this even though he could readily understand why it had not done so. Clark evidently didn’t know this.

52/5 Frank “awash with coarse stories”.

C’s phrasing, let alone his attitude towards Frank, is *not* felicitous.

53/6 I wonder if B’s early dislike of the French owing to their peculiar views of love, wives and mistresses affected his attitude towards Grey’s politics and Grey’s reliance upon France rather than Germany. It seems to me unlikely; and

Clark adduces no evidence. [In fact, I think it is *Tosh*.]

54/7 The name of the street should be not Boissy d'Anglais but Boissy d'Anglas. B. did not have a sexual affaire with Mary.¹

56/8 In this, Clark's context, B. charms birds off trees by saying precisely what he felt—a rare gift and rarely used.

57/9 B's genuine affection for Mary was never swamped by a searingly accurate judgment of her character.

This seems to me an accurate statement. It deserves expansion. Few people and none who were important to him escaped B's searingly accurate judgment of their character. But his feeling for them was as warm as his judgment. They did not necessarily march together. He longed and struggled to bring them together. Sometimes the person concerned recognised the dichotomy and sometimes resented it and reacted against it.

Chapter 3 "Marriage in Haste"

An unfortunate title. It was not a shotgun marriage.

58/1 Clark refers fairly often, in various terms, to this imagined safety-net of Pearsall Smith money. Far from being a "safety-net" B.—if he had ever thought of it as a possible help in time of need, which is doubtful—found that he was expected to "lend" money to Hannah. And he gave considerable money to various members of Alys's family. It was given through Alys and its source—B's account—was never acknowledged. B. paid, for instance, for the Worthington boys' education, though the gift was attributed to Alys by the Pearsall Smiths and Ray (Costelloe) Strachey and others. B. also tutored various members of the family, including the Worthington boys. B. rec'd. no acknowledgment and no thanks (unless, privately, from Alys). Note, on page 60, the 100 pounds to the Berensons. [The mulcting of B. had its parallel in the later mulcting of B. Berenson.]

Grace Worthington drew my attention to all this when in the 'thirties I used to see and talk with her about her family.

60/2 "Mary Costelloe had set up in a small villa next-door to BB's I Tatti."

Is this true? I do not think that BB owned I Tatti at this time. They rented and lived in for a time—but I am not sure what time—the lovely house made from a monastery on the hill above *David* opposite Settignano. Heavenly view. It belonged to the Rathbones [I think that was their name] and I remember how startled Mrs. R. said they'd been when they called upon BB and were greeted by two chairs, first one and then another, flung out a window into the first courtyard by BB in a violent temper.

61/3 This is an important passage and Clark is quite right in what he says.

¹ Costelloe (later Mrs. Bernard Berenson).

But his “feeling for art and architecture” might be enlarged to include all B’s “sensuous joys”.

62/4 B’s straightforward and honest admissions about the *Foundations of Geometry* occur in *My Philosophical Development* and are typical of B’s “objectivity” and honesty about his own work. He taught himself by a scrupulous examination of his own prejudices etc. to be as clear-sightedly critical of his own work as towards that of others.

63–4/5 This remark about Mary should be expanded. Interesting.

64/6 Why does C. call B. a “romantic *manqué*”? Why not just a romantic?

A possible explanation of the temptation that C. finds besetting B. may be that it was necessary to seem to regard people and movements as better than they were in order to achieve the needed reform. It might well be argued that only by seeming to expect people to be better than they were could they be persuaded to become better than they were. I suspect that this point of view played a part in B’s apparent public attitude. I agree, however, that B. was a romantic—and was aware of it and guarded against its possible extravagance [which guarding leads me to suspect that there was good reason behind his apparently rosy view—or, rather, the view apparent to Clark—of the human race].

64/7 I think that Clark should have suggested the reverse of this medal—that his and Alys’ fact finding expeditions and new friendships led to their ostracism by the Establishment at Berlin, including by the British Ambassador Malet (a goose, if ever there was one. *Cf.* W. S. Blunt) and his wife Ermyntrode, B’s cousin. This reverse of the medal had difficult repercussions.

Presumably Clark omits this because B. mentions it in his autobiography. *Important.* Nowhere in his book does Clark clarify his attitude towards the *Autobiography*. Sometimes he uses it; sometimes, even when its interpretation differs from his he uses it. But he never says precisely what use he makes of it or how far he uses it. This is a blemish, indeed.

65/8 “A pointer to the way in which R. was to co-opt his wives into his work.”

Fairer to say “in which R permits them to share and take part in his work if they wished.” He always acknowledged their part and genuinely felt that he owed them much. And he said so.

67/9 C. might have added that the only “lav.” (or “loo”) was an “earth closet” at the end of the garden and the only bath a tin “hip bath” that had to be brought into the bedroom and laboriously filled by hand by jugs of hot water.

67/10 The Smiths’ house was on Millbank. The sitting room stuck out like the apex of a triangle or the prow of a ship towards what is now the Tate Gallery and had a wonderful view of the river. The house was next to the Webbs’.

69/11 Is Bryan Magee *the* British philosopher? I did not know that he much counted philosophically. I should have thought that he was merely “*a* British philosopher”—one of a myriad.

69/12 What literary masterpiece has not been superseded in its scientific

context?

Why does Clark so often use people who are second rate or not very well informed on the subject in question to pass judgment on a subject? He should sum up himself if he cannot find someone who counts to hide behind.

73/13 Note this. It is a neat summary—if one can trust it.²

73/14 B. was 5'9" in his 81st year—not so remarkably short.

B's laugh was never an "almost falsetto laugh". It was loud, but not high. Does Clark know the meaning of the word "falsetto"? I have asked many of B's friends and acquaintances if he had a falsetto laugh. All have said no. I have never heard of it save from Clark.

Clark does not mention the fact that Frank's "bigamy" was bigamy only in the U.K. He was not bigamous in the U.S.A. where he had obtained his divorce and was told that it was legal anywhere. C. says somewhere that F. does not mention his wives in his autobiography. This is not true. He does not mention Elizabeth but he writes of the others. Even a glance at the Index of his book tells you this.

73/15 B. himself did not think that Alys accounted for his slowness off the mark. He thought that he was then and continued to be "a slow developer". I think that B. was right. We often discussed it. Both our developments were slow.

73/16 B. does not say that his "feelings [towards Alys] had evaporated in a moment". What he does say was that he suddenly *realized* that he had ceased to love her. The process of ceasing—of love growing less—had been happening for some time.

This is typical of Clark's slovenly thought and use of words. I suppose this misstatement regarding B's feelings and his realization of them was made because C. regards his version as more dramatic and more ridiculous and livelier than the true version.

This is a process familiar to anyone who has been in and out of love. B. himself was quite aware of the apparent ridiculousness of the Bicycle episode but did not omit it because it seemed to him (as it does to me) very accurately illustrative of the way such things happen.

74/17 Friday's Hill: "as a permanent habitation it lacked the necessary little something."

Cheap and far too easy.

75/18 Clark should have mentioned the fact that B. later profoundly regretted his behaviour towards Frank at this time.

75/19 Mrs. W.³ may have taught W. "that beauty, moral and aesthetic, is the aim of existence; and that kindness, and love, and artistic satisfaction are

² Re BR's general philosophical conclusions from studying Leibniz.

³ Evelyn Whitehead.

among its modes of attainment”, but she did not teach B. this.

I do not think that Clark is right in finding Mrs. W’s and O’s and C’s characteristics “curiously similar”, but I agree that Mrs. W’s characteristics were not at all like Alys’s.

Clark misuses words or drastically misunderstands B. in this reference to “R’s wayward devotion”.

76/20 I much doubt if Mrs. W. started any “unthinkable thoughts” in B’s mind.

78/21 B’s remarks on inequality are Important.

This is a point where Alan Wood went wrong. He could not believe that B. did not believe that “everyone is equal”.

81/22 B’s words about Frege apply to B. himself in his conception of what “superseded” *Principia Mathematica*.

Clark is right in saying that the quotation from B. “tells almost as much about R as about Frege”.

83/23 This final sentence is characteristic of C’s slovenliness. “Had things been different” the result would have been different. One may see what C. probably means, but the sentence as it stands is remarkably silly.

Chapter 4 “Repentance at Leisure”

This does not seem to me a good description of this chapter. The title seems to come from Clark’s determination to make B’s marriages and affairs the pivot of his life and its most important strand. I do not think they were.

84/1 I do not think that B. “concealed” these circumstances of his emotional life “for the rest of his life”. He did not publish them, but he sometimes talked of them—to me, for instance. And, even according to Clark, he wrote of falling in love “with someone else”.

84/2 I do not agree with Clark and Ottoline in their guess that “the love which died a gradual death for want of nourishment” was for Mrs. Whitehead, although Clark’s evidence is very strong. I suggest that it was for Margaret Llewelyn Davies. Certainly, B. came to feel the affection for Mrs. W. of which he writes to O., but that was something different. However, given his belief that Mrs. W. was the woman with whom he was in love, I think that Clark might well have noted B’s restraint in never pursuing his love of the wife of his colleague and what it meant about his character. [B. talked to me about this now unknown other woman and now I cannot remember with certainty who she was or all that he said about her. But the impression that remains with me is that she was Margaret Llewelyn Davies.]

88/3 He cut them because he *had evidence* that they were untrue.⁴

⁴ Russell’s original autobiographical lines about his physical fondness for any woman.

88–9/4 Not only were there no “second options for the wives of University Dons”, but there was also Mrs. W’s hatred of anything even remotely approaching adultery or promiscuity. This hatred arose as she told B. from her early experiences in France.

90/5 It is interesting to note that B’s attitude towards pain and pleasure changed later in his estimation of its necessity for artists and their experiences. He is nearer his later judgment in what he says here of writing.

91/6 He learned later that Alys had never been capable of having children. Clark, somewhere in the book, mentions this, but I should have thought it well if he mentioned it again here. (Its late discovery had resulted in so much futile suffering.) This is an example of the great weight that C. puts upon his readers’ memory. He rarely, if ever, recalls anything, apparently trusting to the reader’s memory entirely. The book would be more “readable” as well as richer had C. indulged in a little recall.

94/7 I can’t now remember why, but B. preferred the spelling Mephistopheljs to Mephistopheles. I believe that it is spelt with an *i* in the *Free Man’s Worship* first printing in the *Hibbert Journal*. He corrected it to *j* in his copy of Longman’s edition (5th impression, 1925). Whenever he came upon it by chance spelt with an *e* he inveighed against it and against publishers who thought that they knew more about spelling than he did and refused to pay attention to his preferences in spelling.

95/8 He might have written this, not merely a quarter of a century later, but at any time during his life after the publication of *A Free Man’s Worship*.

98/9 This should be expanded, for it shows an interesting point in B’s character. He was, unexpectedly to many people, extremely conservative in his own manners and customs.

“Expand”: Clothes—Young man—fop: lavender gloves and gold headed cane. Then coat, trousers, waistcoat—shoes. Watch, old. No knife edged creases. Dark in Town, tweed in country if money enough.

Bow “from the waist”. Courtesy

Address men friends by last name.

Pronunciation and clear writing—Russell. Also punctuality.

Houses and furnishings and everything in its place.

Food.

All in order not to have to think about them.

Familiar. Protective carapace.

And all recognized as his own absurdities. No censure of others.

Defence—“You wouldn’t love me half so much if it weren’t for my absurdities”.⁵

⁵ The following is on a separate sheet at this point in Edith Russell’s comments.

As a young man, he used to explain to me amid much laughter, he was quite a fop. In the height of fashion, he wore lavender gloves and carried a beautiful gold-headed cane. When I knew him his clothes were cut to the pattern fashionable in his middle age—with a few modifications daringly slipped in by his tailors. TOM BROWN had been his tailors since the 1880’s. He was extremely pleased when they told him, when he had just turned eighty, that he had a waist such as any young girl would be proud of. It took much persuasion to get him to abandon his waistcoat even on the hottest of days. “But what shall I do with my watch—my tobacco—my pipe etc. etc.” He loathed getting into evening dress, dinner jackets only less than full rig. The only concession made to changes in place or purpose was that in town he wore dark, sometimes striped, clothes and in the country (if he had enough money to get them) tweed suits of a cloudy green or blue. And in the country he wore heavy, brown thick rubber soled shoes in place of his town black calfskin. During the last quarter of his life and probably before he habitually wore his grandfather’s long gold chain, one end in his right waistcoat pocket with a small gold figure named Zahatopolk on the end. The chain was caught into his waistcoat button hole by the usual little crossbar and continued to the left pocket of the waistcoat with the watch on the end. Usually the watch was a cheap dollar watch that he had bought in America or later, a slightly more expensive Bravington watch, both of them very reliable. On high days and holy he wore his grandfather’s beautiful Dent watch. Not long before he died he gave these treasures—watch, chain, and Zahatopolk—to his younger son Conrad. Zahatopolk had been dug up in Central America and given to me and I gave it to B. in 1951 or 2.

In manners, too, he was “old fashioned”, being unfailingly courteous and, however friendly, never familiar. He hated the present habit of men of addressing each other by their first name and it shocked him when people whom he hardly knew addressed him by his. If introduced to anyone he bowed to them. Some of his friends twitted him: “Look, Bertie is bowing from the waist.” He remarked rather plaintively, “I don’t know where else I can bow from.” He believed firmly that one should speak clearly, giving the pronunciation of words their full value, not only for aesthetic reasons, but to make communication with other people easy. For the same reason, he believed that handwriting should be, however decorative, as easy to read as possible. He detested the present habit of signing letters with a sort of indecipherable cartouche developed from the writer’s name. It seemed to him not only quite silly, but to suggest that the writer supposed his sign-manual to be known to everyone—a blatant form of swelled-headedness.

He was extremely punctual, regarding impunctuality as a severe lapse in good manners (i.e. consideration for others) and courtesy. And by punctual he meant “on the dot”—neither early or late. To be either the one or the other was not only a lapse in manners, but it was a waste of time, a bumbling stupidity and usually the result of thoughtless misjudgment.

He disliked change in matters of furnishing. It, too, was a waste of time. If furniture, etc., was moved about one had to think about it. He liked things left where they were so that, without having to think about them, he knew where they were.

All these conservative foibles he used to laugh at, regarding them as absurd. And certainly he never demanded that anyone else should agree with his likes and dislikes in regard to them. He would sometimes say defensively when I laughed about them: "Well, you wouldn't love me half so much if it weren't for my absurdities."

Cf. p. 168/3 for partial explanation of this.

Perhaps because Frank was at Winchester, or, more likely, because the dictum was more readily understood and generally accepted than it is now, B. subscribed to the view that "manners makyth man" [manners being a gentle attitude of mind (or, in the absence of "mind", "spirit") not the action of table manners or taking off your hat to a Lady etc.].

100/10 Maud Burdett was his playmate throughout his childhood and youth. Should have been mentioned before. But, in his anxiety to paint PL as dark as possible, Clark has omitted discussion of any of B's youthful playmates—who remained his life-long friends. Or perhaps Clark omits them because they are spoken of in the *Autobiography*. Again, C. should somewhere say how and why he uses the *Autobiography*.

100/11 Here is a chance for Clark to speak of B's educating the Worthington young—not only by tutoring, but by financing—but C. does not take it.

101/12 Clark has one great virtue in this book—the only one I fear—the passages which he quotes are usually exceedingly interesting. But he does not use it to the full. He relies habitually upon the reader's working out the implications of the passages for himself. This paragraph from B's journal is remarkable for showing the honesty—unshirking and scrupulous—of B's self-analysis.

102-3/13 Ivy Pretious would not let B. speak to McKenna, but she begged him to protect her from McKenna. So he cooked up, with her, a variety of ploys to do so. B. told me this and we laughed about it. He said that he had told no one else, "not even Janet Trevelyan". He immensely liked I.P. and was fond of her but he never had an affaire with her. In any case, she was in love with her future husband. *Cf.* p. 153/27.

105-6/14 I question B's being "cocksure". The pressures upon him were terrific at this time and I don't suppose Moore had any knowledge whatever of them. His complaints and judgment of B. here sound to me as if B. had just about "had enough" and was keeping his head out of water with difficulty.

106/15 B. not only regarded Wm. James with respect but—and to a greater degree—liked him.

Chapter 5 “*Principia Mathematica*”

108/1 The coolness⁶ was owing almost entirely to their different but equally passionate attitudes towards the War. The “professional disagreement” was the outcome of their war prickliness.

109/2 I suppose that Clark thinks it unnecessary to underline B’s generosity and its characteristicness in making this admission.

Perhaps it is. Perhaps, if the reader has the sense to see it for himself, the impact is greater. But there is always that “if”.

110/3 Clark might well connect this with the passage that he quotes (p. 90) from “A Free Man’s Worship”.

110/4 Lucy Donnelly used to tell me about finding B. sitting before a blank page morning after morning when she was staying with the R’s during these years. But passion, for all it made him stick to it, did not always protect him from despair and deep gloom. According to Lucy—and it is borne out by B’s own tale of suicidal thoughts—he was often very desperate.

110/5 Again—hark back (or in the chronology of B’s life forward) to page 90.

111/6 I do not think that this points to ambivalence. It points to the recognition of the unhappy necessity in a long reasoned piece of dealing with what, taken alone, would be trivial.

115/7 Also, a printer’s delight. In his autobiography B. tells of the joy of the man at the Cambridge Press who worked out the type.

116/8 my impression is that Mrs. Webb usually did misunderstand—largely by accepting human situations at their face value.

117/9 Yet he kept up the show. Lucy Donnelly writes in her diary of his coming in from Bagley Wood to see her when she was living in a cottage at the P-Smith’s Iffley Court: “B came in in tearing spirits”.⁷

118/10 B. was aware, as usual, of how he appeared to others.

120/11 Clark’s reading of “Francophobia” into this seems to me very much overstressed. C. does not always allow for the exaggeration of friendly letters and forgets or does not know of the admiration that B. felt for many Frenchmen living and dead, and much French politics and government etc. etc.

120/12 And how right B. was in his reading of what the Co-efficients and Grey’s “francophilia” would bring! And certainly the treaty with France kept by Grey secret from Parliament, was “conspiracy”.

123/13 Lion Phillimore was still giving hats to Alys so long as the latter lived.

123/14 I am surprised that Clark thinks Alys was LPS’s “beloved sister”. No

⁶ On Whitehead’s part.

⁷ This diary’s whereabouts are unknown.

one else, including Alys herself and Logan himself, thought so. His “beloved sister” was Mary.

124/15 According to Ottoline’s own telling, this incident happened when she was visiting her aunt, Mrs. Scott, who lived not at Ham House but on Ham Common.

Part II “The New Romantic”

Why “new”?

Chapter 6 “Ottoline”

129/1 B’s “new teaching duties”. I can’t remember Clark’s discussing B’s teaching duties at all before this. B. as a teacher doesn’t seem to me to be examined as carefully or at length as the importance of teaching to him warranted.

132/2 Did she “adore” Julian? B. seemed to think that she often felt Julian to be merely a bother and to be “adored” only as a decoration. And by O’s own telling—*cf.* Gathorne-Hardy—she felt some resentment that she could not subdue that Julian had survived and her twin brother had died. This O. herself seemed to fear coloured her feeling for Julian. B. said that on one of Julian’s birthdays when she came in full of birthday importance and excitement she had been packed off with an insouciance and lack of warmth and interest that shocked B. He remonstrated with O. O. said that she did not much care for children.

132/3 I should have thought that B. was more important to O. than Clark allows. How much did he contribute to her self-confidence? Would her salon have been attended equally well by so many important intellectuals if B. had not been there? This may have been considered by Clark, however, to be on a “lower level” than its importance to B.—and perhaps it was.

132–3/4 I think the discrepancy that Clark here notes in the autobiography results from the fact that, for B., the evening did *not* start till the other two guests had departed—and also to the fact that they didn’t, in the circumstances, count for much to B. He recounted only the part that was important to himself.

133/5 I should have thought that “part fascination” should be added to the mixture.

134/6 He did accept less and felt degraded thereby and, I think, later felt some resentment for being forced to accept less.

135/7 I do not agree with O. (*cf.* p. 84) but O’s feeling gives some weight to Clark’s belief that B. had been in love with Mrs. W.

135/8 This seems to have been characteristic of O.

137/9 It was evidently O. who first expatiated upon “the bird in the hand”.

138/10 “Philip dearly in love with his wife”—Even Gathorne-Hardy does not put so charitable a complexion upon Philip’s reply. Clark can do so since he nowhere acknowledges the fact of Philip’s many affairs.

139/11 Clark quotes O’s dictum as to her feeling that B. entirely lacked

physical charm, gentleness and sympathy. But he does not remark upon the odd fact that, if she felt this as she says, she could not have carried on the affaire as she did physically.

139/12 Again, B’s scrupulously honest attempt to assess his own characteristics. In all this discussion of the Studland time there is no mention of O’s relations with Harry Lamb.

141/13 Philip “had behaved with the tolerant decency . . . Philip accepted the situation for O’s sake.”

Surely, he could hardly do otherwise. This would have been a good place to discuss or at least to suggest Philip’s affaires (including his pre-marital affaire with Logan).

141–2/14 Interesting and characteristic paragraph.

Hypocrisy is revolting but, if it has to be, B. will get what fun he can from it.

142/15 “dirty business” should be in quotations. It is B’s judgment of the business. But without quotations it becomes Clark’s and not B’s.

142/16 Frank is treated here with contempt by Clark—as usual.

142/17 Clark’s comment that B. must have “maintained a high level of oddness rating” shows a lack of understanding. In the climate of that day, in England, there would be no public and not much private speculation on the part of any hotel minions. Clark should know this. He keeps on referring to the perks that aristocracy brings. They might have been relentlessly observed but they and their doings would have been accepted.

146/18 Very interesting on music. Good for Clark in choosing to quote it!

147/19 Here the real reason for and way in which B. tried to associate his loves and his wives with his work is given—not Clark’s previous “co-opting”. This is a clear sighted paragraph as are most of those from B’s writings that Clark has chosen—1/2 point up for Clark!

147/20 B’s characteristic pleasure in praise if he finds that he can believe it sincere or well based. Also characteristic generosity in giving thanks.

148/21 Gilbert Murray’s estimate of B. as a philosopher. Good.

148/22 It seems to me that Clark does this knitting together clearly and well.

151/23 These dots may refer to Harry Lamb or Lytton Strachey, or, perhaps to Mark Gertler (though I think that he came later). My guess is to Lytton. The description fits him excellently.

152/24 An interesting paragraph showing B’s acute self-knowledge. It also throws some light upon his feeling for Mrs. W. Would he have spoken as he does of her had she been more than a *very* good friend?

152/25 Clark makes heavy weather of the Spinoza fun.

153/26 It seems to me that in view of Philip’s own infidelities Clark over-stresses his tolerance—though not his quick wit in self-protection.

153/27 Cf. p. 102–3/13.

154/28 It seems to me that Clark’s explanations for the layman of B’s phi-

losophy are very clear. But whether they are right or full enough, I am not qualified to say. They do not seem to me to be full enough. B's philosophy seems to Clark far less important than B's relations to women. It was not and did not seem so to B.

155/29 Interesting. About the need to break down the limitations of "the instinctive man" and escape into a larger sphere.

156/30 This seems to be a grand mixture of realism vs. idealism, religion and mysticism. Clark might well have discussed *Forstice* here but he doesn't. Cf. p. 172ff./9.

157/31 Shows the fine line which B. (and so few others!) draws in his analyses of his own feelings and character.

158-9-60-61-62/32 to end of chapter The temptations and the impossibility of accepted religions. Possibility of religion without God and immortality.

["Forstice"] → "Prisons" → "Essence of Religion".

Excellent analyses, on B's part, of his own point of view.

161-2/33 B's humour and irony.

B's humour shines through much of these analyses as well.

162/34 B. said that he did most of *Principia* sitting on a sort of pouffe with the papers in a circle about him on the floor. Certainly he wrote a good deal of it on a variety of tables.

164/35 Not only "a limit to his powers of adaptation" or of "external circumstance", but very largely a limit imposed by his reason.⁸

164-5/36 The importance of popular, as opposed to technical, philosophy.

Chapter 7 "Enter Wittgenstein"

166/1 His own explanation of his "failure to break from her" [Ottoline] at the intervals when he contemplated a break and announced that he could no longer continue as they were was that she always drew him back from the brink by at once holding out hope in spite of what she had just previously said.

167/2 I cannot detect any "strain of the facetious" in the paragraph that Clark quotes from B. about his lecture. Irony and a sense of fun, and, underlying serious comment *is* there. No wonder Clark does not succeed in showing what fun B. was! But Clark himself is "facetious"—"a luscious Alys" and Frank "awash with coarse stories" etc. etc. Frank's "champagne-for-breakfast programme". Cf. p. 169/5 and p. 170/6.

168/3 Here is the explanation, part of it at any rate, of B's conservatism in manners and customs. Cf. p. 98/9.

169/4 I do not think that B. was unaware of "the savage cut and thrust".

Clark is too soft about O. Why does he accept everything that is written or

⁸ Re Russell's writings on religion under Ottoline's influence.

printed, but little that he learns even on “good authority” that he hears? And in this sentence he does not look further than the surface, it seems to me.

169/5 Cf. p. 167/2. These two bits are almost the only references by Clark to B’s attitude towards his students.

170/6 Cf. p. 167/2.

172/7 Clark should have remarked here upon the fact that he later changed his mind and though never himself feeling any taste for it he lost entirely his feeling of disgust. Also, in 1952 (or 1953 or about then) he made a public speech advocating the withdrawal of the laws vs. homosexuality between consenting adults.⁹

172–3–5/8 B’s romantic depression and usual romantic cure of “batting with the elements” or simply “getting into action” if the elements were unavailable. Passionate love of tumultuous nature—rage vs. God, the permitter of pain. P. 175.

172–82/9 All this passion and nature and God and pain was imaginative writing (p. 177). Clark might well have pointed back from p. 178 to p. 156/30 [and from p. 156/30 forward to *here*].

174/10 B’s power of laughing at himself and the narrow line between sanity and madness.

177/11 Passion and remorse.

180/12 Written confirmation that the nun part of *Forstice* was by O. Lucky, or Clark would not have believed it.

Clark notes *only* what he reads—not what he either hears or observes at first hand. [Note his mention of approaching Plas Penrhyn by an avenue of Beeches in spite of the fact that he visited Plas Penrhyn a good many times while writing this book and could have seen that there was no avenue.]

180–2/13 B. always felt this about being “a student” till 40.

180–2/13 B’s own criticism of *Forstice*. Clark gives his own opinion in the form of little digs and innuendos such as his remark on p. 180 that Lowes Dickinson’s admiration of *Forstice* “suggests that even the originator of the phrase ‘League of Nations’ had his critical off-days”.

Was B. “out of his depth” in imaginative writing? I think that he was merely in an unaccustomed attitude.

Clark might have noted that, pleased as he was by Lowes Dickinson’s praise, he did not accept it. He examined and repudiated it.

186/14 This is a very unworthy suggestion of Clark’s and not borne out by B’s own description. The incident did not “rankle”, it “haunted” and therefore the pain recurred.

187/15 Is “comical” the right word? No.

188/16 I do not recognize B. in O’s description of him. Cf. for this and

⁹ Cf. *Papers* 28, App. XIV, “Morals in Legislation”, 13 January 1954.

most of the rest of the discussion of O. and B. my notes on Gathorne-Hardy's two vols.¹⁰

188/17 I do not think that B. felt anything but distaste for the "conspiratorial approach". But, since it had to be, he got as much fun as he could out of it.

188-9/18 This is an interesting quotation for B's scrupulous assessment of his own character and, also, for his humility in recognizing that he is one of many, isolated, fighting the same battle.

189/19 Characteristic of B's attitude towards adverse criticism: Accepted or rebutted, but not resented; and of his ability to keep and generate good nature.

190/20 Cf. Leopardi's "The Infinite". This attitude and Hogben's feeling about B.

[Hogben wrote me that when he thought of B. he thought of Leopardi's "The Infinite" and when he read or heard the latter he thought of B.]

190-1/21 What seems to me interesting was their similarities.

192 This protective feeling towards Wittgenstein seems to be overlooked by most of the writers on B's and W's relationship.

193-4/23 This whole account reads to me like typical Lytton "de-bunking". Lytton was malicious. B. disliked the prevalent homosexuality in *The Society*. Wittgenstein's entrance to and exit from *The Society* is a good example of B's usually very just estimate of character in this or that situation. Does Clark—like Lytton—try to find some other explanation in order to show his own cleverness and to denigrate B.? It seems to me that B. was justified in his fear of the result of W's election.

?Date? It was the War and the stress and strain of relations with O. and later with C. that aged B's appearance. Lytton, characteristically, overstresses it. What Clark terms B's later fudging reads to me as being the result of extreme doubt as to the mental acuteness of his interviewer and a feeling that it was not worth making the extreme effort needed to clarify the situation for him.

194/24 So B. proved to be right. But neither Lytton nor Clark underline this.

195/25 "Lack of passion" was not "explained away". It was only explained. This is Clark's slovenly use of words to achieve his end which, here, is the attempt to produce further evidence of the power of glossing over unpleasant facts which Clark attributes to B.

196/26 This seems to me an excellent paragraph—a clear knitting together. The cue is given to the reader; the inference is drawn for the reader. Why doesn't Clark do this more often. He puts too much weight upon the reader and too much trust in him, by almost always making him draw his own inferences.

¹⁰ Neither these notes nor her copies of the *Memoirs of Lady Ottoline Morrell* came with Edith Russell's papers.
