

# RUSSELL'S PORTRAITS

AT the age of 81 Bertrand Russell looks back on a life filled with intellectual adventure, for through the years he has known intimately some of the most remarkable British figures of the present Century. Four reminiscent talks by him about some of these people—*Portraits from Memory*—will be heard on BBC transcriptions from 3YC, starting on Tuesday, September 8, at 7.44 p.m., and from 2YC, starting on Friday, September 11, at 10.3 p.m. They will be broadcast later by other National stations.

Bertrand Russell's first portrait is of a philosopher and mathematician who profoundly influenced the intellectual life of his generation by his books and his teaching. One of these books was *Principia Mathematica*, of which Bertrand Russell was joint author. In this talk he recalls the early days of this century when he and Alfred North Whitehead were collaborating in their famous work. The friendship between the two men began when Russell, as an undergraduate, attended Whitehead's lectures at Cambridge, and it lasted until the latter's death in 1947, although by then they had reached a stage of disagreement on philosophy. Alfred North Whitehead came of a family which for many generations had sent its sons into the Church. He received many academic honours from universities in Britain and the United States. In Britain he was honoured mainly as a mathematician; in America mainly as a philosopher. In 1945 King George VI bestowed the Order of Merit upon him.

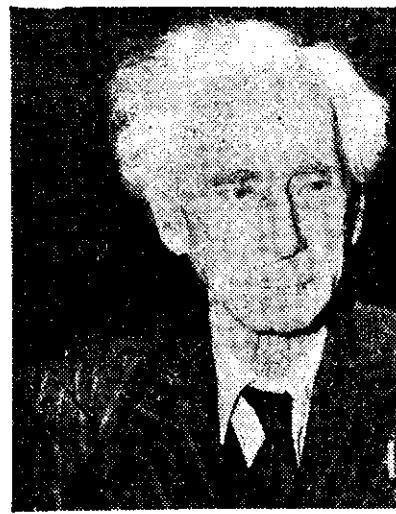
When Lord Keynes's posthumous volume, *Two Memoirs*, was published a few years ago, it contained, as a frontispiece, a photograph of three figures sitting at ease in the garden of a country home. They were Maynard Keynes himself, Lytton Strachey and Bertrand Russell. In his second talk Russell speaks of Keynes and Strachey who belong to a Cambridge generation about 10 years junior to his own. The average listener will remember Lord Keynes as the financial expert who led a British delegation to Washington to negotiate the American Loan in 1945. He may remember him, too, as the connoisseur of art who was a trustee of the National Gallery and married the ballerina Lydia Lopokova. In his memories of Lytton Strachey, Bertrand Russell draws an amusing picture of his first dinner with the Strachey family and the number of sons and daughters "almost beyond computation and all to my unpractised eyes exactly alike . . . who dropped in one by one at intervals of 20 minutes. I had to look round the room to make sure that it was a new one that had appeared and not merely one of the previous ones that had changed his or her place."

Russell's acquaintance with D. H. Lawrence was brief. He says: "We did not see eye to eye. When it appeared that I would not be his mouthpiece he quarrelled with me." When the two were introduced in 1915 each was in a state of rebellion against the world, and it looked at first as though there was a considerable measure of agreement be-

tween them. During an intensive and increasingly bitter correspondence it became evident that their outlooks were fundamentally opposed. In this third talk Bertrand Russell says that Lawrence had developed the whole philosophy of Fascism before the politicians had thought of it. He tells how his disagreements with Lawrence came about.

The last talk in *Portraits from Memory* is about Sidney and Beatrice Webb, whom Bertrand Russell knew well for many years. "Their methods of collaboration were interesting," he says. "Mrs. Webb had the ideas and Webb did the work. In spite of the fact that they and I were Socialists we disagreed profoundly." But though the Webbs went their different ways and though Sidney and Beatrice were people of very different background, Bertrand Russell's considered judgment is that theirs was the most successful marriage he has ever known.

In his reflections on his 80th birthday which he broadcast last year, Ber-



BBC photograph  
LORD RUSSELL



LORD KEYNES

trand Russell said: "If individuals are to retain that measure of initiative and flexibility which they ought to have, they must not all be forced into one rigid mould. . . Diversity is essential in spite

of the fact that it precludes universal acceptance of a single gospel." Such diversity is shown strongly in the people discussed in *Portraits from Memory*.

## CHAMPION ACTRESS

(By J. W. GOODWIN)

SHE was a Gaiety girl in an age when one of the occupational risks of a chorus girl was to become a countess, but she was not "just a Gaiety girl."

An actor who later became a leading stage producer called her the most beautiful girl in the world—and meant it—but she says: "I could just as easily have been a flier, or a tennis champion, or a racing motorist; I'd have loved any of these things."

A theatrical magazine said of her in 1910: "Bow down your heads, O Lovers of Musical Comedy, for beautiful, charming, fair-haired—has forsaken you. No more will she trip divinely down the stage and say with her adorable smile as she did in *Havana*: 'Hello, people—people, hello.'"

Now Cecil Beaton says of her: "Merely to have survived in the public eye successfully through so many decades proves her to be, at the lowest estimate, a considerable character." And Somerset Maugham writes: "She has turned herself from an indifferent actress into an extremely accomplished one. . . I owe much to her."

She was, she still is very much, Gladys Cooper. When her biography was published in London the other day and she was the guest at a theatrical luncheon, those of us who had enjoyed her in *Relative Values*, her joint triumph with Noel Coward, learnt a great deal more and yet still admired. There are few actresses of whom that can be said.

### Started as a Joke

Gladys Cooper herself says: "I was never stage-struck—I just happened to go on the stage, that's all. It started more or less as a joke, and it wasn't until I'd begun to have some sort of success that the joke became a serious reality. I suppose I'd never have been content just to run a house and bring up a family. I'd always have wanted another outlet for my energies as well."

As for her energies, her son-in-law, the actor Robert Morley, said at the



GLADYS COOPER  
"Hello, people—people, hello"

luncheon: "You would not believe how splendid Gladys is at the poker table. She always plays till five in the morning. 'I must play until five,' she once told me in New York, 'then I just have time for a bath before taking my daughter riding in the park.'"

With engaging candour, he added: "She is not a champion beauty or a champion clothes peg. She is not even a champion mother-in-law. But she is a champion actress. . . I think she must have read Kipling's *If* for she treats triumph and disaster as impostors."

### Handicap of Beauty

Of people connected with the theatre, few could differ more in experience and outlook than Somerset Maugham the playwright, Cecil Beaton the scenic designer, and James Agate the critic, yet each has praised her.

In a restrained and dignified introduction to the biography, *Without Veils*, by Sewell Stokes (publisher Peter Davies), Mr. Maugham says:

"I have a notion that her beauty has been at once her greatest asset and her

greatest handicap; an asset because without it she would never have gone on the stage, for she is not the born actress who, whatever she looks like, is impelled by her nature to act." Some irregularity of feature enables an actress to display emotion more effectively, he believes, whereas classical features limit the variety of her emotions: "Age, which has left her beauty almost unimpaired, has given her face an expressiveness which in youth it lacked."

Commenting on the statement that at Hollywood, Gladys Cooper did not trouble to read the entire script, but managed to receive awards for outstanding performances, Mr. Maugham says: "Her wide experience enables her to get into the heart of a character by intuition."

### Relish and Precision

She articulated every word with relish and precision, says Mr. Beaton, spat out her s's, produced a little explosion with every p, dotted and crossed every i and t.

"Miss Cooper glittered like the Matterhorn at daybreak," wrote James Agate in 1938. "I have never seen the Matterhorn and seldom the daybreak, but the conjunction is irresistible."

### "Pranking in Shakespeare"

Naturally, she has her limitations. Her biographer quotes her as saying that she had been "pranking in Shakespeare—I wasn't really at all bad as Desdemona: the critics said I gave her a sense of humour which is what she needs."

Other critics were less kind. She could not persuade Lady Macbeth to be Gladys Cooper, nor wheedle Rosalind into the part; she was always perfectly arch and word imperfect. However, her gifts in the right play are so remarkable that one wonders who will follow Maugham and Coward in writing the perfect parts for her to be perfect in. She seems to outlast them all.

"Once I'd chosen my job, I worked hard at it; slaved at it, sometimes," she is quoted as saying. And at the congratulatory luncheon the other day she denied the description of a "bustling little woman," but added: "I do not want to fade away yet—perhaps I will just bustle off." As in her Gaiety days, it will be with that adorable smile.