



Feast of Stephen

Stephen Leacock

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“Do you know the characteristic wine of Madeira?...I do not know whether Leacock ever drank Madeira himself – he was very much a Scotch-whisky man – but I enjoy Madeira greatly, and I never drink it without thinking of Leacock, who was sometimes dry, sometimes sweet, but who always leaves upon the tongue a hint of brimstone...”

In his witty and illuminating introduction, which takes up the first third of the book, Robertson Davies invites us to join him in a *Feast of Stephen*. Davies’ selection of fifteen pieces from Leacock’s less familiar works presents the humorist as a true, broad, and sympathetic interpreter of Canadian life, as a man who may have lacked self-knowledge and sensitive insight into the feelings of others, but “whose best work was the outpouring of genius.” All shades of Leacock’s writing are represented here, from the “brilliant nonsense which made some critics liken him to Lewis Carroll,” to his occasional attacks of “aggressive Lowbrowism.” Together in all their diversity, Davies’ selections pay tribute to the gifts of exuberance, originality, and slightly malicious truth with which Leacock so entertainingly extends our vision.

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