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Alice in Wonderland

&

Through the Looking-Glass

by Lewis Carroll

published by Davies Guttmann

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ALICE’S ADVENTURES IN WONDERLAND & THROUGH THE LOOKING GLASS

Charles Lutwidge Dodgson (alias Lewis Carroll, the author of the above) was an interesting and idiosyncratic character, to say the least. He was a mathematics lecturer at Cambridge University and a deacon in the Anglican Church. Obviously a very bright man he suffered from physical impairments such as partial deafness and a stammer which, perhaps, made him reserved and slightly aloof from the society of the day. He also had a predilection for young female companionship, which would seem highly contentious to us today but was, perhaps, more acceptable (and possibly entirely innocent) in the latter part of the 19th century.

The books can be read on a number of levels. They originally emerged from a boat trip that Dodgson took with a family he knew (the Liddells) including their three daughters and he told them a tale to while away the journey. The children were so taken with it that they asked him to write it down – and so the legend began.

It is quite possible that, initially, Dodgson has simply intended the tale to be a children’s story for their amusement; but when he set about writing it down,

expanding and structuring it he introduced some darker, perhaps even sinister elements to the tale. His penchant for logic, dry humour and nonsense pervades the stories but there is also a suggestion of themes running through the books.

Inevitably the states of childhood and maturity feature strongly given Dodgson's own situation and the nature of his relationships with both adults and children. The topsyturvy nature of Wonderland could be seen as a commentary on the outside world where the child, Alice, seems to be the only sane and sensible person around. Dodgson himself seemed to live more in a child's world than adults (the character of the Dodo is thought to be Dodgson himself, derived from his own stammered attempt to say his surname). The nature of his occupations – in academia, the church and finally writing – would all serve to contain him in an unreal existence, somewhat separate from the harsh truths of the world around him.

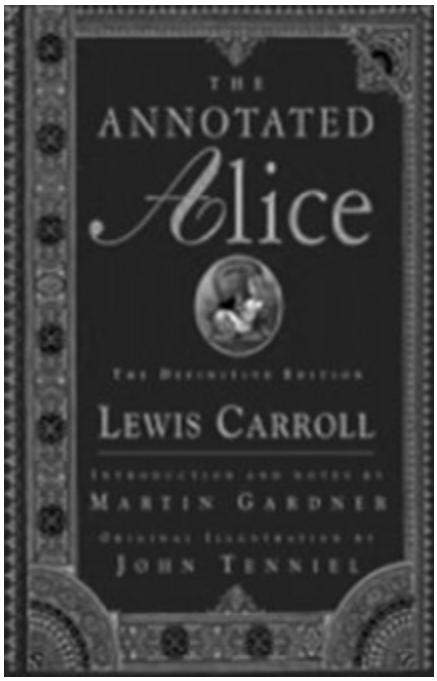
Perhaps it was all an acting out of his own fantasy – a world full of conundrums, logic puzzles and childlike interactions that he would much preferred to inhabit than the world he was personally faced with. Whatever the true motivations and meanings behind them, the stories have stood the test of time as children tales and literature in their own right and scholars today continue to pore over the interpretation of the musings of a lonely mathematics teacher from 150 years ago.

1

MEET THE REAL ALICE: HOW THE STORY OF ALICE IN WONDERLAND WAS BORN

Maria Popova

“What is the use of a book,” thought Alice, “without pictures or conversations!”



On July 4, 1862, a young mathematician by the name of Charles Dodgson, better-known asLewis Carroll, boarded a boat with a small group, setting out from Oxford to the nearby town of Godstow, where the group was to have tea on the river bank.

Alice Liddell, age 7, photographed by Charles Dodgson (Lewis Carroll) in 1860

The party consisted of Carroll, his friend Reverend Robinson Duckworth, and the three little sisters of Carroll’s good friend Harry Liddell — Edith (age 8), Alice (age 10), and Lorina (age 13). Entrusted with entertaining the young ladies, Dodgson fancied a story about a whimsical world full

of fantastical characters, and named his protagonist Alice. So taken was Alice Liddell with the story that she asked Dodgson to write it down for her, which he did when he soon sent her a manuscript under the title of Alice’s Adventures Under Ground.

Alice Liddell (right) with her sisters circa 1859, photographed by Lewis Carroll

Historian Martin Gardner writes in The Annotated Alice (public library), originally published in 1960 and revised in a definite edition in 1999:

A long procession of charming little girls (we know today that they were charming from their photographs) skipped through Carroll’s life, but none ever took the place of his first love, Alice Liddell. ‘I have had some scores of child-friends since your time,’ he wrote to her after her marriage, ‘but they have been quite a different thing.’

Liddell dressed up as a beggar-maid, photographed by Lewis Carroll (1858)

The manuscript also made its way to George MacDonald, an idol of Dodgson’s, who had the perfect litmus test for the story’s merit: He read it to his own children, who singlemindedly loved it. Encouraged, Dodgson revised the story for publication, retitling it to Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland and adding the now-famous scene of the Mad Hatter’s tea party and the character of the Cheshire Cat for a grand total nearly twice as long as the manuscript he’d originally sent to Alice Liddell.

John Tenniel’s original illustrations of Alice

In 1865, John Tenniel illustrated the story and it was published in its earliest version. Gardner recounts this curious anecdote of the collaboration:

Tenniel’s pictures of Alice are not pictures of Alice Liddell, who had dark hair cut short with straight bangs across her forehead. Carroll sent Tenniel a photograph of Mary Hilton Badcock, another child-friend, recommending that he use her for a model, but whether Tenniel accepted that advice is a matter of dispute. That he did not is strongly suggested by these lines from a letter Carroll wrote sometime after bothAlice books had been published…

‘Mr. Tenniel is the only artist, who has drawn for me, who has resolutely refused to use a model, and declared he no more need one than I should need a multiplication table to work a mathematical problem! I venture to think that he was mistaken and that for want of a model, he drew several pictures of ‘Alice’ entirely out of proportion — head decidedly too large and feet decidedly too small.’

http://www.brainpickings.org/index.php/2012/07/04/storyof-alice/

2

ALICE’S ADVENTURES IN WONDERLAND

Lewis Carroll

Lewis Carroll was the pseudonym of Reverend Charles Lutwidge Dodgson, a lecturer in mathematics at Christ Church, Oxford, who lived from 1832 to 1898. Carroll’s physical deformities, partial deafness, and irrepressible stammer made him an unlikely candidate for producing one of the most popular and enduring children’s fantasies in the English Language Carroll’s unusual appearance caused him

to behave awkwardly around other adults, and his students at Oxford saw him as a stuffy and boring teacher. He held strict religious beliefs, serving as a deacon in the Anglican Church for many years and briefly considering becoming a minister. Underneath Carroll's awkward exterior, however, lay a brilliant and imaginative artist. A gifted amateur photographer, he took numerous portraits of children throughout his adulthood. Carroll's keen grasp of mathematics and logic inspired the linguistic humor and witty wordplay in his stories. Additionally, his unique understanding of children's minds allowed him to compose imaginative fiction that appealed to young people.

Carroll felt shy and reserved around adults but became animated and lively around children. His crippling stammer melted away in the company of children as he told them his elaborately nonsensical stories. Carroll discovered his gift for storytelling in his own youth when he served as the unofficial family entertainer for his five younger sisters and three younger brothers. He staged performances and wrote the bulk of the fiction in the family magazine. As an adult, Carroll continued to prefer the companionship of children to adults and tended to favor little girls. Over the course of his lifetime he made numerous child friends whom he wrote to frequently and often mentioned in his diaries.

In 1856, Carroll became close with the Liddell children and met the girl who would become the inspiration for Alice, the protagonist of his two most famous books. It was in that year that classics scholar Henry George Liddell accepted an appointment as Dean of Christ Church, one of the colleges that comprise Oxford University, and brought his three daughters to live with him at Oxford. Lorina, Alice, and Edith Liddell quickly became Carroll's favorite companions and photographic subjects. During their frequent afternoon boat trips on the river, Carroll told the Liddells fanciful tales. Alice

quickly became Carroll’s favorite of the three girls, and he made her the subject of the stories that would later becomeAlice’s Adventures in Wonderland and Through the Looking-Glass. Almost ten years after first meeting the Liddells, Carroll compiled the stories and submitted the completed manuscript for publication.

Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland received mostly negative reviews when first published in 1865. Critics and readers alike found the book to be sheer nonsense, and one critic sneered that the book was “too extravagantly absurd to produce more diversion than disappointment and irritation.” Only John Tenniel’s detailed illustrations garnered praise, and his images continue to appear in most reprints of the Alice books. Despite the book’s negative reception, Carroll proposed a sequel to his publisher in 1866 and set to work writing Through the Looking-Glass. By the time the second book reached publication in 1871, Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland had found an appreciative readership. Over time, Carroll’s combination of sophisticated logic, social satire, and pure fantasy would make the book a classic for children and adults alike. Critics eventually recognized the literary merits of both texts, and celebrated authors and philosophers ranging from James Joyce to Ludwig Wittgenstein praised Carroll’s stories.

In 1881, Carroll resigned from his position as mathematics lecturer at Oxford to pursue writing full time. He composed numerous poems, several new works for children, and books of logic puzzles and games, but none of his later writings attained the success of the Alice books. Carroll continued to have close friendships with children. Several of his child friends served as inspiration for the Sylvie and Bruno books. Like the Alice stories, Sylvie and Bruno (1889) and Sylvie and Bruno Concluded (1898) relied heavily on children’s silly sayings and absurd fantasies. Carroll died in 1898 at the age

of sixty-six, soon after the publication of the Sylvie and Bruno books. He passed away in his family's home in Guildford, England.

Carroll's sudden break with the Liddell family in the early 1860s has led to a great deal of speculation over the nature of his relationship with Alice Liddell. Some books indicate that the split resulted from a disagreement between Carroll and Dean Liddell over Christ Church matters. Other evidence indicates that more insidious elements existed in Carroll's relationships with young children and with Alice Liddell in particular. This possibility seems to be supported by the fact that Mrs. Liddell burned all of Carroll's early letters to Alice and that Carroll himself tore pages out of his diary related to the break. However, no concrete evidence exists that Carroll behaved inappropriately in his numerous friendships with children. Records written by Carroll's associates and Alice Liddell herself do not indicate any untoward behavior on his part.

Carroll's feelings of intense nostalgia for the simple pleasures of childhood caused him to feel deep discomfort in the presence of adults. In the company of children, Carroll felt understood and could temporarily forget the loss of innocence that he associated with his own adulthood. Ironically, Carroll mourned this loss again and again as he watched each of his child friends grow away from him as they became older. As he wrote in a letter to the mother of one of his young muses, "It is very sweet to me, to be loved by her as children love: though the experience of many years have now taught me that there are few things in the world so evanescent [fleeting] as a child's love. Nine tenths of the children, whose love once seemed as warm as hers, are now merely on the terms of everyday acquaintance." The sentiment of fleeting happiness pervades Carroll's

seemingly lighthearted fantasies and infuses the Alice books with melancholy and loss.

http://www.sparknotes.com/lit/alice/context.html

3

POINTS TO PONDER

Life is But a Dream: Alice shares with many other works of fantasy its framework of a dream. Although it’s not clear at the beginning of the story that Alice is asleep, the adventure ends when she “wakes up” on the riverbank beside her sister, yanked out of Wonderland. Of course, we are free to believe what we like about the nature adventure.

The dream is a time-honored way of enclosing a fantastic narrative, as Lewis Carroll knew very well -- it goes back to ancient, religious English texts such as the fourteenth-century “Piers Plowman,” or the seventh-century rune poem “The Dream of the Rood.” In modern times, dreams are used more as convenient mechanisms for fantastic adventure (though, post-Freud, they’re also seen to be loaded with symbolism). In Alice’s sequel, Through the Looking-Glass, Carroll used the concept of dreams to explore our ideas of reality and imagination, though in Alice he leaves the topic mostly unexplored. What do you make of the idea that Alice’s adventure is really a dream? Does the “logic” of Wonderland resemble in any way the way things happen in your own dreams? And do you think we can read symbolism into the story if we think of it as a little girl’s dream? (How does that symbolism change, by the way, if we think of it

instead as being the fantasy of a middle-aged bachelor who loved to entertain little girls?)

Alice, Victorian Goth?: Among the many unusual facets of Alice is its morbidity -- its frequent references to death. In this respect, Alice is more like one of the classic Grimm or Perrault fairy tales, with all their violence and eventual fatality, than like most other children's books of the Victorian period -- or, in fact, of our own day. The references are nearly constant. Some of them are explicit, like the Red Queen's habit of shouting "Off with his head!" (Actually, in this way she condemns nearly all of the main characters to death at one point or another, including Alice.) There are also other, more subtle references; for instance, the songs which Alice tries to recite or which others sing to her nearly always end with someone about to get executed or eaten -- this is true of the crocodile poem, the Owl and the Panther, the Mouse's tail, and the Lobster Quadrille sung by the Mock-Turtle and Gryphon.

These references are easy to overlook in Alice's atmosphere of illogical humor, but it's worth noticing that the threat of danger or death is seldom far away. As Martin Gardner notes, Lewis Carroll was well aware of children's interest in story elements which can seem illogical or inappropriate to grown-ups -- for instance, their fascination with eating and being eaten, and their morbid interest in violence and death. What do you think of the morbid humor in Alice, and how does it affect the way you react to the characters in the book? Does it seem to you that Alice is aware of this feature of her adventure? And do you think that, in the course of the adventure, Alice is put in any real danger?

The Secret Life of Lewis Carroll: When we read the Alice books, it's hard not to think about their author, Lewis

Carroll, and try to read into the story his personal thoughts and emotions. No one is exactly sure what Carroll's relation was to the little girls he loved so much, but his apparently asexual personal life and the amount of artistic energy he poured into entertaining children have led to a flood of speculation.

What we can say, with certainty, is this: Carroll was passionately fond of little girls, and had a number of "child-friends" throughout his life. He wrote them long letters, spent as much time with them as he could, and often told stories to entertain them -- as was the case with the story he eventually wrote down at the request of young Alice Liddell, which eventually became Alice in Wonderland. Carroll also liked to sketch and photograph little girls, sometimes in the nude. He is acknowledged to have been a very good photographer, and some of his surviving pictures -- especially the ones of young Alice Liddell, dressed as a beggar and watching the camera with a heavy-lidded gaze -- are interesting and profoundly disturbing.

However, there's no evidence that Carroll ever had -- or consciously wanted to have -- sexual relations with any young girl. He seems to have considered his feelings toward them to be pure and spiritual, as was appropriate for a clergyman; moreover, he was thoroughly Victorian in his feelings about the spiritual purity of children, an attitude which avoided any sexual considerations. As for those infamous nude photos, he never took them without the child's parent present, and he requested that they all be destroyed after his death to avoid embarrassing the subjects. And his child-friends seem to have only fond memories of him, including Alice herself, who had nothing but praise for him after she grew up. As Martin Gardner puts it, we have no evidence that Carroll wanted to marry or have an erotic relationship with little Alice -- but,

nevertheless, “his attitude toward her was the attitude of a man in love.”

The final word is that we can’t really jump to any conclusions about Carroll. He seems to have lived a happy, academic, asexual life, taking pleasure in indulging his great passions -- logic games, wordplay, and spending lots of time with little girls. As Martin Gardner puts it, Carroll is perhaps unique in literary history in combining “complete sexual innocence with a passion that can only be described as thoroughly heterosexual.” The result is his legacy: the Alice books, among the most priceless works of intelligent nonsense ever written in English, his gift of love to Alice Liddell. How does all this affect your thinking about the story? Does it make you view Carroll’s treatment of Alice’s character differently?

http://www.jiffynotes.com/AlicesAdventuresinWonderland/PointstoPonder.html

4

AN ANALYSIS OF ALICE'S ADVENTURES IN WONDERLAND

Jerry Maatta

Interpretations and opinions

It is important to bear in mind that Alice's Adventures in Wonderland, however special it may seem and however many different interpretations one thinks one can find, is, after all, but a story written to entertain Charles Dodgson's favourite child-friends.

It is very obvious in the story that it was written for the three Liddell girls, of whom Alice was the closest to Dodgson. In the introductory poem to the tale, there are clear indications to the three, there named Prima, Secunda and Tertia — Latin for first, second and third respectively in feminized forms. The part considering rowing on happy summer days was derived directly from reality. It is said that he used to row out on picnics with the Liddell girls and tell them stories. On one of these excursions it started raining heavily and they all became soaked. This, it is said, was the inspiration to the second chapter of the book, The Pool of Tears. The ever-occurring number of three points out

Dodgson always having in mind the three girls he tells the story to. It could, of course, having in mind the fact that he was a cleric, be the Christian Trinity or something completely different.

Many people have seen Alice's Adventures in Wonderland as a prime example of the limit-breaking book from the old tradition illuminating the new one. They also consider it being a tale of the "variations on the debate of gender" and that it's "continually astonishing us with its modernity". From the looks of it, the story about Alice falling through a rabbit-hole and finding herself in a silly and nonsense world, is fairly guileless as a tale. The underlying story, the one about a girl maturing away from home in what seems to be a world ruled by chaos and nonsense, is quite a frightening one. All the time, Alice finds herself confronted in different situations involving various different and curious animals being all alone. She hasn't got any help at all from home or the world outside of Wonderland. Lewis Carroll describes the fall into the rabbit-hole as very long and he mentions bookshelves on the sides of the hole. Perhaps it is an escape into literature he hints at. Carroll is an expert at puns and irony. The part with the mad tea-party is one of the best examples of this. There's a lot of humour in the first Alice book, but in the second the mood gets a bit darker and more melancholic. The theme with Alice growing and shrinking into different sizes could reflect the ups and downs of adolescence with young people sometimes feeling adult and sometimes quite the opposite. The hesitation so typical of adolescent girls is reflected in Alice's thoughts: "She generally gave herself good advice (though she very seldom followed it)." Many short comments point to teenage recklessness, restlessness and anxiety in all its different forms.

One other example of maturing is Alice getting used to the new sizes she grows. She talks to her feet and learns some of the new ways her body works in. Her feelings are very shaken from her adventures and she cries quite often when it’s impossible to obey the rules of the Wonderland — or is it adulthood? “Everything is so out-of-the-way down here”, as Alice often repeats to herself. Alice doesn’t like the animals in Wonderland who treat her as a child, but sometimes she gets daunted by the responsibility she has to take. The quote “Everyone in Wonderland is mad, otherwise they wouldn’t be down here” told by the Cheshire Cat can be given an existential meaning. Is it that everyone alive is mad being alive, or everyone dreaming him- or herself away is mad due to the escape from reality? Time is a very central theme in the story. The Hatter’s watch shows days because “it’s always six o’ clock and tea-time”. Time matters in growing up, I guess, but further interpretations are left unsaid. The poem in chapter 12 hints at forbidden love, and it is entirely possible that it is about his platonic love for children, or Mrs. Liddell, for that matter. Considering the fact, that the first manuscript was called Alice’s Adventures Underground, and that some — atleast the Swedish — translation of the title is a bit ambiguous, it becomes more apparent, that the world Alice enters isn’t just any childrens’ playground, but a somewhat frightening and dangerous place for maturing. The “underground” part of the old title undeniably suggests drawing parallells to the direction of Dante or the Holy Bible.

Continuing in this direction, the wonderful garden, into which Alice wants to get, can be a symbol of the Garden of Eden. It can be assumed that Dodgson, being a cleric and a strictly religious man, had read and was very familiar with the biblical myths aswell as Milton’s Paradise Lost. It becomes more interesting when Alice finally gets into the garden and finds a pack of cards ruling it, with a very evil

queen at its head. It appears to be a way of saying that even The Garden of Eden can be in chaos, or that the garden isn't really what it appears to be. Or, having in mind his Victorian irony in the tale, a way of saying that our lives on Earth are, in fact, the closest we can get to a paradise, and that it is ruled my a malignous queen with little respect for human lives. These theories are, of course, merely speculations and it would be quite rude to suggest even madder parallells, which isn't at all difficult with a childrens' story of this kind.

Some people have gone very far in their claims that Lewis Carroll wrote the stories while influenced by opium. They say the fifth chapter with the smoking Blue Caterpillar is about drugs. These claims have no real evidence or facts to point at, and it seems that they're just mad rumours made up by people who want to see more than there is in a fairy tale. It is fairly obvious that the visions of the stories derive from the genious of a man, and not from drug influence. If the worlds in the books are somewhat surreal it surely comes from Dodgson having a vivid imagination and an ability to make nonsense worlds alive. He definitely had his share of problems, but drugs don't seem to have been one of them. At a closer look, there seems to be a whole lot of anguish in the story. This becomes even more apparent in the sequel, Through the Looking Glass, and its introductory poem, where the following can be found: "I have not seen thy sunny face, / Nor heard thy silver laughter; / No thought of me shall find a place / In thy young life's hereafter—". The part surely expresses Dodgson's feelings for missing the young girl Alice used to be before growing up.

Perhaps the first story is more like a description of a young friend growing up and disappearing out of one's life by becoming an adult, and as such, out of Dodgson's reach. Dodgson lost contact with Alice Liddell in 1868, a few years

before the publishing of the sequel. It seems that the first book is a tribute to a friend who, in time, will be lost to Dodgson, and that the sequel is, considering its tone, an epitaph. This is clearly seen in the last lines (actually, it's just one long sentence) of the first story when Alice's sister thinks of Alice:

"Lastly, she pictured to herself how this same little sister of hers would, in the after-time, be herself a grown woman ; and how she would keep, through all her riper years, the simple and loving heart of her childhood: and how she would gather about her other little children, and make their eyes bright and eager with many a strange tale, perhaps even with the dream of Wonderland of long-ago: and how she would feel with all their simple sorrows, and find a pleasure in all their simple joys, remembering her own child-life, and the happy summer days."

It appears to be Dodgson's own thoughts about the girl growing up expressed through one of Alice's sisters. Another quote that expresses Dodgson's feelings for getting old found in the same introduction mentioned above: "We are but older children, dear, / Who fret to find our bedtime near." This melancholy tone of Dodgson's can be found in various parts of the sequel, which expresses his grief of losing the close friend he once had before she grew up and vanished. The very last poem in the sequel begins its lines with letters that make up "Alice Pleasance Liddell" — her complete name. Charles Dodgson's academic education shows in his books. The exotic fantasy creatures who inhabit the worlds of his imagination all have very peculiar names made up from real words in English, French and Latin. For example, the Dormouse is a sleeping mouse. Dormire in Latin means to sleep, while there's no need to explain the rest of the word.

Conclusion

It is very difficult to decide on or write a conclusion to a project concerning so intricate subjects as this. I've tried to show some different interpretations and keep the whole project as objective as possible. The subject is vast and there could probably be years spent on it without reaching a definitive answer, and therefore I suggest people use their own imagination, common sense and logic when discussing the book Alice's Adventures in Wonderland. One of the few certain things are that Charles Lutwidge Dodgson really loved children and dedicated his works for them. Whether this love of his was sexual or platonic is almost impossible to decide with the few indications he left after him.

http://www.alice-in-wonderland.net/explain/alice841.html

5

LEWIS CARROLL BIOGRAPHY

- NAME: Lewis Carroll
- OCCUPATION: Author
- BIRTH DATE: January 27, 1832
- DEATH DATE: January 14, 1898
- EDUCATION: Richmond School, Yorkshire, Rugby School, Christ Church (Oxford)
- PLACE OF BIRTH: Daresbury, England
- PLACE OF DEATH: Guildford, England
- ORIGINALLY: Charles Lutwidge Dodgson

Lewis Carroll was the pen name of Charles L. Dodgson, author of the children's classics "Alice's Adventures in Wonderland" and "Through the Looking-Glass."

Synopsis

Born on January 27, 1832 in Daresbury, Cheshire, England, Charles Dodgson wrote and created games as a child. At age 20 he received a studentship at Christ Church and was

appointed a lecturer in mathematics. Dodgson was shy but enjoyed creating stories for children. His books including “Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland” were published under the pen name Lewis Carroll. Dodgson died in 1898.

Why, sometimes I’ve believed as many as six impossible things before breakfast.

Early Life

Charles Lutwidge Dodgson, best known by his pseudonym, Lewis Carroll, was born in the village of Daresbury, England, on January 27, 1832. The eldest boy in a family of 11 children, Carroll was rather adept at entertaining himself and his siblings. His father, a clergyman, raised them in the rectory. As a boy, Carroll excelled in mathematics and won many academic prizes. At age 20, he was awarded a studentship (called a scholarship in other colleges) to Christ College. Apart from serving as a lecturer in mathematics, he was an avid photographer and wrote essays, political pamphlets and poetry. “The Hunting of the Snark” displays his wonderful ability in the genre of literary nonsense.

Alice and Literary Success

Carroll suffered from a bad stammer, but he found himself vocally fluent when speaking with children. The relationships he had with young people in his adult years are of great interest, as they undoubtedly inspired his best-known writings and have been a point of disturbed speculation over the years. Carroll loved to entertain children, and it was Alice, the daughter of Henry George Liddell, who can be credited with his pinnacle inspiration. Alice Liddell remembers spending many hours with Carroll, sitting on his couch while he told fantastic tales of dream worlds. During an afternoon picnic with Alice and her two