THE ENCHANTED HOUSES

Leacock's Irony

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CRITICAL DISCUSSIONS of Stephen Leacock's *Sunshine Sketches of a Little Town* revolve about two central questions, upon each of which the critics are sharply divided. The first of these deals with the book's distinctive flavour: is it sharply satiric, or is it composed of kind and fundamentally affectionate comedy? The second question is concerned more with characterization and structure, and with the mind and motives of Leacock himself, the issue being whether or not the book is a tentative, exploratory step in the direction of the fully articulated novel, and therefore whether Leacock achieved his full potentialities as a writer.

Obviously, the two questions are logically related. The first turns on Leacock's relation to his material, on the way in which he saw the material and the way in which he intended his reader to see it. So, essentially, does the second: the novelist's concern is with plot and character treated in terms of certain conventions for which Professor Ian Watt has suggested the term "formal realism".[1] Those who feel that Leacock could never have been a novelist commonly maintain that Leacock did not see his characters, or their actions, in terms of formal realism — which is another way of saying that Leacock's approach to his material is incompatible with the novel form. A detailed discussion of Leacock's work in relation to the novel is hardly possible here, but the view of human character and action which we shall see in Leacock's best book does not seem substantially different from that of such a comic novelist as Fielding.

Our concern, then, is with the terms in which Leacock sees both the people who inhabit his book and their actions. We may call this his vision. What is the characteristic quality of this vision?

For Desmond Pacey, the vision of *Sunshine Sketches* is fundamentally kindly; in *The Unsolved Riddle of Social Justice* (1920), modern industrial civilization is criticized from the viewpoint of a benevolent eighteenth-century country squire; and

> In his greatest book of humour, *Sunshine Sketches of a Little Town* (1912), Leacock uses gentle irony to suggest the same general outlook. Here he creates an idyll of a small community. . . .[2]

A little later in the same essay, Professor Pacey refers to the book's "genial satire", and he concludes, "The satire in *Sunshine Sketches* is . . . very mild and gentle."

Robertson Davies, on the other hand, sees the book as "ferocious and mordant". He goes on:

> What it says, if we boil it down, is that the people of Mariposa were a self-important, gullible, only moderately honest collection of provincial folk; they cooked their election, they burned down a church to get the insurance, they exaggerated the most trivial incidents into magnificent feats of bravery; the sunshine in which the little town is bathed seems very often to be the glare of the clinician's lamp, and the author's pen is as sharp as the clinician's scalpel.[3]

A third position is outlined by Malcolm Ross. After reviewing the disagreement between Davies and Pacey, Ross makes the point that their two positions may not be such uneasy bedfellows as it might at first appear. Leacock, he suggests, is not a satirist:

> Because *he loves what he hates.* And he is not *bribed* into loving what he hates . . . He just can't help it. To attack and defend, to love and hate in one breath, is not the genius of satire but the genius of irony, the subtler art, the deeper wisdom.[4]

For all this difference of opinion about Leacock's vision, no one has so far offered a close examination of specific passages in the book as a useful means of approaching the question. That is the approach I want to take now. What we will find may be clearer if we bear in mind that the satirist must distinguish sharply between himself and his characters, while the writer of pathos, in contrast, asks not that we observe and judge his characters but that we understand them and identify with them. And the ironist feels both things at once. Seeing the

character both from within and without, the ironist simultaneously observes and forgives his weaknesses; he combines the viewpoints of satire and pathos.

Moreover, the ironist's view of character implies an awareness of a leading fact about the human condition: man is at once both social and individual. As a social being, he has a relationship with his fellows, and the relationship carries responsibilities. When he fails to live up to those responsibilities, he is a legitimate object of satire. On the other hand, he is an individual; seen in terms of his own makeup and the forces acting upon it, his failings in the social sphere are understandable, and he may even take on a kind of nobility. The ironic view of character provides a means of reflecting in literature the full complexity of this dual condition.

I want to suggest that although Leacock's vision in *Sunshine Sketches* appears at first to be satiric, and although a large element of the book is in fact satiric, its overall vision is ironic, and in its best passages we are aware, however imperfectly, that we are in the presence of basic questions about the nature of truth and the nature of man. Leacock usually begins with an external view of his characters and comes gradually to suggest their inner lives as well; we begin in satire, but we end in irony.

To see how this change takes place, we may examine several passages in some detail. In the following passage, Leacock is satirizing the romantic illusions of Zena Pepperleigh:

> With hands clasped she would sit there dreaming all the beautiful day-dreams of girlhood. When you saw that far-away look in her eyes, it meant that she was dreaming that a plumed and armoured knight was rescuing her from the embattled keep of a castle beside the Danube. At other times she was being borne away by an Algerian corsair over the blue waters of the Mediterranean and was reaching out her arms towards France to say farewell to it.[5]

During several more paragraphs of roughly the same kind, Leacock broadens his satire to include the girls of Mariposa in general: ". . . all the girls in Mariposa were just like that." The edge of the satire is sharpened by contrasting the girls' dreams with their actual situation — gently at first (we see them against "a background of maple trees and the green grass of a tennis court") and then more incisively:

> And if you remember, too, that these are cultivated girls who have all been to the Mariposa high school and can do decimal fractions, you will understand that an Algerian corsair would sharpen his scimitar at the very sight of them. (p. 169)

We are seeing these girls from the outside, and we continue to do so until the last sentence of the next paragraph. Here is the paragraph:

> Don't think either that they are all dying to get married; because they are not. I don't say they wouldn't take an errant knight, or a buccaneer or a Hungarian refugee, but for the ordinary marriages of ordinary people they feel nothing but a pitying disdain. So it is that each one of them in due time marries an enchanted prince and goes to live in one of the little enchanted houses in the lower part of the town.

Something has changed; the illusion has become the reality. Leacock has gone over to the girls' point of view and is looking at the world through their eyes; the world as they find it really is the romantic place they thought it to be, and they are not disappointed in their hopes. When we were laughing at illusion, moreover, we were actually laughing at truth; the laughter now must be at our own expense, since we ourselves seem to have mistaken truth for illusion. To make it even more clear, Leacock continues:

> I don't know whether you know it, but you can rent an enchanted house in Mariposa for eight dollars a month, and some of the most completely enchanted are the cheapest. As for the enchanted princes, they find them in the strangest places, where you never expected to see them, working — under a spell, you understand — in drug-stores and printing offices, and even selling things in shops. But to be able to find them you have first to read ever so many novels about Sir Galahad and the Errant Quest and that sort of thing. (pp. 169-70)

Clearly, Leacock is giving us an inside view of the girls' world; from their viewpoint, what we have considered to be appearance has become reality. But there is a further twist of the irony here. So far, Leacock has been saying, essentially, that there is no way to say that one view of the girls' dreams is truer than the other; it is a purely subjective question. But we may recall that the passage began by discussing Zena Pepperleigh in particular, and as the story unfolds we discover that her dream of marrying an enchanted prince is *literally* true, if on a limited scale; Pupkin, the man she does eventually marry, is working as a bank clerk more or less *incognito*. His father, one of the wealthiest men in the Maritimes and a former Attorney General, is a financier who "blew companies like bubbles" and who owns Tidal Transportation Company, Fundy Fisheries Corporation and the Paspebiac Pulp and Paper Unlimited. Pupkin, the only son and heir apparent, who has been sent into the world to make his own name and fortune, is in actual fact a merchant prince.[6]

The motif of the enchanted houses reappears as we leave that part of the book which centres around Pupkin and Zena:

> So Pupkin and Zena in due course of time were married, and went to live in one of the enchanted houses on the hillside in the newer part of the town, where you may find them to this day.
>
> You may see Pupkin there at any time cutting enchanted grass on a little lawn in as gaudy a blazer as ever.
>
> But if you step up to speak to him or walk with him into the enchanted house, pray modulate your voice a little — musical though it is — for there is said to be an enchanted baby on the premises whose sleep must not lightly be disturbed. (p. 211)

It is still funny: Pupkin is still essentially a comic character, and once again the reader himself is partially the object of the fun. But the passage is irradiated with Leacock's feeling for both the outside of the house, which is comic, and the inside, the wonder and joy of marriage and family. The humour is based on a paradox: the lover as seen by other men is absurdly foolish and richly comic, but at the same time he inhabits a world which for him is utterly transformed into something fresh, golden and magnificent. That Leacock did see his lovers this way, is confirmed by a passage in his own voice:

> For you see, it is the illusion that is the real reality. I think that there are only two people who see clearly (at least as to one another), and these are two young lovers, newly fallen in love. They see one another just as they really are, namely, a Knight Errant and a Fairy. But who realizes that that old feller shuffling along in spats is a Knight Errant, too, and that other is a Fairy, that bent old woman knitting in the corner.
>
> This illusion, greater than reality, we grasp easily in the form of what we call art — our books, our plays.[7]

If we were to examine the whole book in detail, we would find that Leacock's development of character often follows the pattern we have seen in Pupkin. Pepperleigh, for instance, seems at first to be a simple caricature of the country judge: he is rabidly Conservative, ill-tempered and pompous, and his judgements are clearly dictated by his private interests — he acquits his son of an assault charge, and he forces the insurance company to pay for the burnt

church. Yet when his son is killed in South Africa, Pepperleigh's pain and the support he derives from his wife display a human being within the caricature.

Similarly, Josh Smith makes dramatic changes in his hotel in order to draw people so that his liquor license will be renewed by popular request; we know he is cynically manipulating his fellow citizens, and that he intends to close the Caff and the Rats Cooler as soon as the license is renewed. Yet the kindly, sympathetic side of the man becomes visible when, at the crucial moment, he does not close up, because to do so would be petty and ungrateful. Jeff Thorpe likewise seems to be a selfish, acquisitive little man, but we discover he intends to use his wealth for the poor and the disabled — though Leacock undercuts Jeff's generous spirit by making his arithmetic suspiciously faulty (pp. 58-59). This pattern is not a formula, nor is it invariable — nothing of the kind happens in the election chapters, for instance — but it is pervasive enough to suggest that it represents one of Leacock's chief beliefs about his characters.

Even minor actions in the book often owe their appeal to this ironic vision. When the Mariposa Belle is sinking in less than six feet of water, part of the fun turns on Leacock's awareness of the difference between the way the event looks to an outsider — the reader — and the way it looks if you are on the steamer:

> Safe! Oh, yes! Isn't it strange how safe other people's adventures seem after they happen. But you'd have been scared, too, if you'd been there just before the steamer sank, and seen them bringing up all the women on to the top deck. (p. 87)

Two paragraphs later the narrator has forgotten what he said in the first flush of excitement, and now *he* scorns the danger too:

> Really, it made one positively laugh! It sounded so queer and, anyway, if a man has a sort of natural courage, danger makes him laugh. Danger? pshaw! fiddlesticks! everybody scouted the idea. Why, it is just the little things like this that give zest to a day on the water.

Reversing his usual movement, Leacock has abandoned his position beside the narrator and is now inviting us to laugh at the latter's inconsistency.

Perhaps the best illustration of Leacock's irony is afforded by the Reverend Rupert Drone, Dean of the Anglican Church. Dean Drone at first appears to be no more than a caricature of the simple country cleric. His name suggests this; so does his first appearance in the book, just after Josh Smith has begun his flamboyant career as proprietor of the old Royal Hotel:

> When the Rev. Dean Drone led off with a sermon on the text "Lord be merciful even unto this publican Matthew Six," it was generally understood as an invitation to strike Mr. Smith dead. (p. 20)

Through the first four chapters, Dean Drone remains a figure who appears only occasionally, and then for satiric purposes. (He goes on the Marine Excursion of the Knights of Pythias, for instance, with "a trolling line in case of maskinonge, and a landing net in case of pickerel, and with his eldest daughter, Lillian Drone, in case of young men.") In the fourth chapter he becomes somewhat individualized; we discover that he loves to read Greek, though he refuses to translate any; he cannot do mathematics; he is much impressed by such mechanical contrivances as the airplane. And he has had his great dream: the building of a new church.

But now that the new church has been built, Dean Drone finds it difficult to pay for. A series of attempts to raise money all result in comic catastrophe. Some members of the congregation begin to blame Mr. Drone, and we discover that he can be hurt. Leacock records the incident with a sympathy which, though it is flecked with humour, is remarkably unequivocal:

> Once . . . the rector heard some one say: "The Church would be all right if that old mugwump was out of the pulpit." It went to his heart like a barbed thorn, and stayed there.
>
> You know, perhaps, how a remark of that sort can stay and rankle, and make you wish you could hear it again to make sure of it, because perhaps you didn't hear it right, and it was a mistake after all. Perhaps no one said it, anyway. You ought to have written it down at the time. I have seen the Dean take down the encyclopeadia in the rectory, and move his finger slowly down the pages of the letter M, looking for mugwump. But it wasn't there. I have known him, in his little study upstairs, turn over the pages of the "Animals of Palestine," looking for a mugwump. But there was none there. It must have been unknown in the greater days of Judea. (p.114)

The Dean's gentleness, his respect for scholarship and his unworldliness all unite to make us feel his pain, and Leacock's direct reference to the reader ("*You* know, perhaps . . .") is an appeal for sympathy. From this point on, Dean Drone is never again the simple figure of fun he once was.

When the term "mugwump" comes up again, its effect is terrible. The climax of the Church's fund-raising efforts is the Whirlwind Campaign, which is another financial failure, and Mullins, the chairman of the Campaign, comes to give the Dean one hundred dollars which Mullins has himself contributed. Mullins later reports that the rector has been very quiet:

> Indeed, the only time when the rector seemed animated and excited in the whole interview was when Mullins said that the campaign had been ruined by a lot of confounded mugwumps. Straight away the Dean asked if those mugwumps had really prejudiced the outcome of the campaign. Mullins said there was no doubt of it, and the Dean enquired if the presence of mugwumps was fatal in matters of endeavour, and Mullins said that it was. Then the rector asked if even one mugwump was, in the Christian sense, deleterious. Mullins said that one mugwump would kill anything. After that the Dean hardly spoke at all. (p. 134)

The serious discussion of mugwumps is comic, but we are aware that something dreadful is happening to the Dean. Soon he excuses himself on the ground that he has some letters to write, but:

> The fact is that Dean Drone was not trying to write letters, but only one letter. He was writing a letter of resignation. If you have not done that for forty years it is extremely difficult to get the words. (p. 135)

The flat simplicity and the understatement of those sentences are heartbreaking. They are succeeded by a passage equally heartbreaking, in which Leacock's irony reaches perhaps its peak in the whole book; only the "Envoi" can compare with it. The Dean's efforts to write the letter lead him into some hilarious thickets of syntax and meaning. The sense of the letter keeps changing; each draft contradicts the previous one, and finally the letter looks like this:

> "There are times, gentlemen, in the life of a parish, when it comes to an epoch which bring it to a moment when it reaches a point . . . where the circumstances of the moment make the epoch such as to focus the life of the parish in that time." (pp. 137-38)

Yet the context in which this comedy occurs is the moment of final defeat for a good old man who has given his whole life to the charge he is now resigning; who has striven to serve both his gentle God and the community of which he is a devoted member; who has tried, in his humble, unworldly, rather bumbling way to leave the world a better place than he found it. Leacock snaps this essentially bitter moment into perspective by showing us that the Dean has met defeat even on the ground of his pride in his use of language. It has always been an ill-founded pride, and it has given us considerable amusement; now the Dean, too, sees the truth:

> Then the Dean saw that he was beaten, and he knew that he not only couldn't

> manage the parish but couldn't say so in proper English, and of the two the last was the bitterer discovery. (p. 138)

concludes the scene:

> He raised his head, and looked for a moment through the window at the shadow of the church against the night, so outlined that you could almost fancy that the light of the New Jerusalem was beyond it. Then he wrote, and this time not to the world at large but only to Mullins:
>
> "My dear Harry, I want to resign my charge. Will you come over and help me?"

In that last passage, the irony twists again. First, of course, we notice that the church is seen through the rector's eyes: "the light of the New Jerusalem" is an example of the comically elaborate religious terms and images through which he sees the world. But the deeper irony arises from the fact that there really *is* a light behind the church, though it is not the light of the New Jerusalem. It is the light of flames: the church is burning at the hands of an arsonist who we are later led to believe is Josh Smith. In order to solve its financial problems, the congregation fires its church; and the irony of this act is complex. It defeats the moral, the religious and the unworldly virtues which Dean Drone stands for — and for what? To solve a problem which is financial and worldly: men, Leacock seems to be saying, do not even understand, let alone obey, religious codes of conduct. The fire destroys all the Dean's illusions about the instruction he has given his flock in moral and ethical matters. Not only does the fire destroy the substance of the Dean's achievement, however, a substance which was rooted in his effectiveness as a Christian leader, but also it destroys the physical church which was the symbol of his achievement. By a further irony, the Dean himself has caused the fire, however inadvertently, through his own mismanagement. And, in a final ironic thrust, we discover that the destruction of this church, which is heavily over-insured, will completely finance a new church. The Dean's symbol is retained, but the fire which allows Mariposa to retain it obliterates its meaning and spirit.

It seems the Dean realizes something of what the burning of the church implies — or perhaps his reaction is simply one of shock:

> So stood the Dean, and as the church broke thus into a very beacon kindled upon a hill — sank forward without a sign, his face against the table, stricken. (p. 139)[8]

The Dean recovers from his stroke, but he is never fully sane again; still a

gentle old man, but now remote from the world, he suffers from hallucinations, and Leacock takes leave of him in a passage which, though coloured with humour, is suffused with compassion:

> So you will understand that the Dean's mind, [sic] is, if anything, even keener, and his head even clearer than before. And if you want proof of it, notice him there beneath the plum blossoms reading in the Greek: he has told me that he finds he can read, with the greatest ease, works in the Greek that seemed difficult before. Because his head is so clear now.
>
> And sometimes — when his head is very clear — as he sits there reading beneath the plum blossoms, he can hear them singing beyond, and his wife's voice. (pp. 147-48)

Once again there is direct reference to the reader, too: "you will understand." Looking back over the passages we have examined, you are struck by the number of such references, and by the fact that there are two extra characters in each scene: the narrator and the reader. As we have seen, neither is exempt from Leacock's humourous scrutiny. In fact, much of the humour of the book is based on the interplay among the inhabitants of Mariposa, the narrator (who is evidently not Leacock), and the reader.

THE NARRATOR is naïve, unsophisticated, baffled by such abstractions as election issues; a Mariposan to the core, he is something of a Booster and he usually seems quite unaware of moral issues. Like Gulliver at the court of Brobdingnag, he often tells a true story which he expects will display the glories of his home, but which instead exposes its hypocrisy, immorality and pettiness. Such a character is an ideal vehicle of satire, and indeed the narrator does quite unconsciously direct a good deal of the book's satiric thrust. But he is balanced by the reader, and possession of the "real" truth constantly passes back and forth between the two.

This reader-narrator interplay begins the book: the narrator, who knows what Mariposa is "really" like, shows the reader around the town, demonstrating that the surface impression is not the actual truth. ("But this quiet is mere appearance. In reality, and to those who know it, the place is a perfect hive of activity.") Is the narrator right in this and in his other comments on Mariposa? Perhaps —

and perhaps not. In the first and last chapters, Leacock's equivocating irony is brought to bear on both the city and the little town. Each has virtues which the other cannot share; each has shortcomings to which the other is immune. The wider scope which the city offers is necessarily accompanied by cold impersonality, while the small town, which provides warmth and community, lacks privacy and tends to stifle initiative. The Mariposan view of the city is instructive here. The town usually sees the city as treacherous and malign: for instance, Mullins reflects, after the Whirlwind Campaign has failed, that there are "so many skunks in Mariposa that a man might as well be in the Head Office in the city" (p. 131), and similar remarks are made throughout the book. Yet, as Desmond Pacey has pointed out, Mariposa spends a great deal of energy in trying to become a metropolis, and the narrator's comment that the town is "a hive of activity" is further evidence of this desire. There is irony, then, in Mariposa's view of the city, an irony which reflects the town's simultaneous rejection of, and longing for, city values. The overall effect of *Sunshine Sketches* is to leave us with a similarly complex awareness of the way of life symbolized by Mariposa.

To a considerable extent, the relation between reader and narrator is responsible for this awareness. That relation begins the book and it carries the same theme throughout. It emerges most clearly in the last chapter, where once again the difference between the outsider's view (this time of the whole town) and the insider's view forms the basis of an ironic coda which comments on a whole rural way of life.

Here the irony turns, to a considerable extent, on our new knowledge that both the reader and the narrator are, like the rest of the members of the Mausoleum Club, originally from Mariposa, and on their inability really to go back: we leave them, after our "mad career" on the train to Mariposa, sitting in their armchairs in their club in the city. They have accepted sophisticated city values, and they have done well there; the reader owns a "vast palace of sandstone . . . in the costlier part of the city." And they can never fully be part of Mariposa again; they notice such things as Mariposa's out-of-style clothing. Both reader and narrator see the town from the outside.

Yet as the train thunders north through the woods, we come to identify with Mariposa, with the way of life represented by the people on the train. The excitement of homecoming mounts; the train becomes the fastest, finest and most sociable train in the world; and finally we arrive at the station, while brakemen and porters cry "MARIPOSA! MARIPOSA!"

At that climactic moment Leacock ends the book by pulling us back again to

our actual positions, outside the town, smiling at it a little, and yet filled with a sense of lost youth and innocence. The reader and the narrator have paid a heavy price for their success. Though Mariposa has more than its share of stupidity and hypocrisy, it also has simplicity and vigour.

And yet life in Mariposa is more complicated, more equivocal than it seems. The narrator has discovered this as he has matured, and the ironic vision rests partly on his recognition both that Mariposa was a good place to be a child and that it would be a bad place to be an adult. He is nostalgic for Mariposa, but he does not leave the Mausoleum Club.

This recognition, however, seems to imply a contradiction in the narrator. Throughout the book, as we have seen, he has appeared to be a naïve, rather unintelligent Mariposan. Yet in the "Envoi" he is evidently a city dweller of considerable penetration and insight. Does this indicate a flaw in Leacock's conception of him? Probably not: it is more likely that Leacock conceived of the narrator as an intelligent man feigning simplicity. This would explain a good deal: the speed with which the narrator moves from cowardice to courage when the steamer sinks for instance, is more credible if the narrator is only pretending to be unaware of the inconsistency. Similarly, the intellectual sparks which glow here and there through the book — the sharp quips on college men and education, for instance, or the occasional satire on jargon and on modern business[9] — have indicated all along that the narrator's mind was more sharply honed than he would have us believe. His apparent inconsistency, then, supports the view of Mariposa we have been suggesting: he cannot go back because he cannot quite fit into the Mariposan framework, however hard he tries; he cannot accept Mariposa's people and events at their face value, though he can recognize that he may have been happier when he could. The same recognition made another boy from Mariposa build a summer home back in the small town he remembered with such affection; but the larger part of the year he spent as a professor at McGill.

All this should give us pause. For if the narrator is not as simple as he looks, what of Leacock? Is he suggesting more than he is saying?

I think he is, or more accurately, I think his book is based on a view of the human condition which is profoundly ironic. We value the truth, but we can

never know what is true; *Sunshine Sketches* is, among other things, a demonstration of the subjective way in which individuals are doomed to see the world. What is the difference between appearance and reality? How may an individual, limited as his vision must be, tell the difference between them? What is truth, said jesting Leacock, and could not supply an answer — because he could see none, or at least no way to recognize one.

Similarly, though we value our fellow men, we can never really know them either: if we are all condemned to see the world through personal, individual spectacles, then we cannot really communicate with each other; isolation is our fate, and we live and die alone. As E. M. Forster puts it, "we cannot understand each other, except in a rough and ready way; we cannot reveal ourselves, even when we want to; what we call intimacy is only a makeshift; perfect knowledge is an illusion." This sense of isolation is common enough in modern literature; Ernest Hemingway and Forster's own fiction come immediately to mind. In *Sunshine Sketches* it is mainly evident in the ironic treatment of character and in the demonstration that each man inhabits a private world. It is also visible in a negative way: three responses which attempt to counteract isolation meet in *Sunshine Sketches* and, I suspect, account for part of its appeal — laughter, romantic love, and membership in a small community.

Leacock's attitude to his material, then, is ironic in a way that is based on a deep apprehension of what it means to be human, and his humour is both a vehicle for this apprehension and a defence against the pain it necessarily involves. One always hesitates to say that humour is basically a very serious business, and Leacock himself found a good deal of fun in just that concept. Nevertheless, he saw humour as a way of thinking seriously about life; in *Humour: Its Theory and Technique* (1935), he comments:

> . . . humour in its highest meaning and its furthest reach . . . does not depend on verbal inconguities, or on tricks of sight and hearing. It finds its basis in the incongruity of life itself, the contrast between the fretting cares and the petty sorrows of the day and the long mystery of the to-morrow. Here laughter and tears become one, and humour becomes the contemplation and interpretation of our life.[10]

The contemplation and interpretation of our life. At its best, Leacock's irony leads to no less than that.

FOOTNOTES

[1] *The Rise of the Novel* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1957), p. 32.

[2] "Leacock as a Satirist," *Queen's Quarterly 58* (1951), p. 213.

[3] "On Stephen Leacock" in C. T. Bissell, ed., *Our Living Tradition* (First Series) (Toronto, 1957), p. 147.

[4] Preface to the New Canadian Library edition of *Sunshine Sketches of a Little Town* (Toronto, 1960), p. xi.

[5] Stephen Leacock, *Sunshine Sketches of a Little Town* (John Lane, London, 1912), p. 167. All further references to *Sunshine Sketches* are to this first edition, and subsequent references are inserted in parentheses in the text.

[6] A further irony, which I think a little strained: Pupkin has been sent to Mariposa at the suggestion of a friend of his father, a friend who ignores Pupkin in Mariposa. The friend turns out to be Judge Pepperleigh, Pupkin's future father-in-law, who has been a rather terrifying figure to the young man.

[7] *Last Leaves* (Toronto, 1945), p. 89.

[8] "A very beacon kindled on a hill" is another case in which a metaphor — i.e., an apparent unreality — becomes the literal truth, just as the metaphor of the enchanted prince did.

[9] On education, see pp. 18, 42, 58, 79, 123, 126, 232; on jargon, pp. 15, 81, 86, 88; on business, pp. 39, 106.

[10] *Humour: Its Theory and Technique*, (New York, 1935), p. 17.