

## BE SUBSTANTIALLY GREAT IN THY SELF:

Getting to Know C.E.W. Bean;  
Barrister, Judge's Associate, Moral Philosopher

### APPENDIX VIII

#### **Virginia Woolf's Allusion (in 1940) to Bean and Thoby Stephen at Clifton College**

**Extract from "A Sketch of the Past" by Virginia Woolf as reproduced in her  
*Moments of Being* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed, Hogarth Press, London, 1985), pp. 124-126<sup>1</sup>**

*"Yesterday (18th August 1940) five German raiders passed so close over Monks House that they brushed the tree at the gate. But being alive today, and having a waste hour on my hands – for I am writing fiction; and cannot write after twelve – I will go on with this loose story. \**

*By the time I had that room, when I was fifteen that is, "us four" as we called ourselves [Vanessa, Thoby, Virginia and Adrian] had become separate. That*

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<sup>1</sup> According to *Sir Leslie Stephen's Mausoleum Book* (Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1977) and, only incidentally, other sources:

- (a) Leslie's first wife, Harriet Marian Thackeray (1840-1875) and he were engaged on 4 December 1866 and married on 19 June 1867. Minny, as Leslie called her, was born on 28 May 1840. She died on 28 November 1875. The one child of their marriage was Laura Makepiece Stephen (1870-1945), who was born on 7 December 1870.
- (b) Leslie's second wife, Julia Prinsep Duckworth, nee Jackson (1846-1895) was born on 7 February 1846. She died on 5 May 1895. Her first husband, Herbert Duckworth (1833-1870) was born on 19 May 1833. He died on 9 September 1870. He and Julia were engaged on 1 February 1867 and married on 4 May 1867. They had three children of their marriage: George Herbert Duckworth (1868-1934), born on 5 March 1868; Stella Duckworth (1869-1897), born on 30 May 1869; and Gerald de la Etang Duckworth (1870-1937), born on 29 October 1870. Stella died on 19 July 1897, shortly after her marriage on 10 April 1897 to JW Hills.
- (c) Before their marriage the widower Leslie Stephen (born 28 November 1832 and died on 22 February 1904) and the widow Julia Duckworth were next door neighbours living in Hyde Park Gate. Leslie and his children lived at No. 11 (renumbered 20 in 1884). Julia and her children lived in No. 13 (renumbered 22 in 1884). They had known one another, as had their respective spouses, since the 1860s. Their friendship ripened into something more on 5 February 1877, although at that stage they foreswore marriage. They were married on 26 March 1878. There were four children of their marriage: Vanessa Stephen (1879-1961), born 30 May 1879; Julian Thoby Stephen, (born 8 September 1880, who died on 20 November 1906; Adeline Virginia Stephen (1882-1941), born 25 January 1882; and Adrian Leslie (1883-1948), born on 27 October 1883. Vanessa married Clive Bell (1881-1964) on 11 May 1907. Virginia married Leonard Sidney Woolf (1880-1969) on 11 May 1912. After Leslie's death in 1904 the Stephen siblings moved from their childhood home (20 Hyde Park Gate) to 46 Gordon Square, Bloomsbury.

was symbolised by our separate rooms. Yet we were not so separate as boys and girls, brothers and sisters, often become when the boys go to public schools and the sisters stay at home. Mother's and Stella's deaths, I suppose, united us. We never spoke of them. I can remember how awkwardly Thoby avoided saying 'Stella' when a ship called Stella was wrecked. (When Thoby died, Adrian and I agreed that we would go on talking about him, 'for there are so many dead people now.') This silence, we felt, covered something; something that most families had not. But without that bond, mine was from my earliest childhood so close with both Nessa and Thoby that if I describe myself I must describe them.

When Stella died Thoby was seventeen – two years older than I. But long before that I was acutely conscious of him. Even as a little boy he was dominant among us. He could impose himself. He was not clever; he was not a funny talkative child; he was a clumsy awkward little boy, very fat, bursting through his Norfolk jacket. He dominated and led in our world. But even to the grown ups he was rather formidable. Father had to be sent for once or twice: I remember Thoby struggling like a tiger with Gerald [Duckworth]. He was large and clumsy. He grew very quickly out of nursery ways. I cannot remember him childish, as Adrian was. But then mother was not so much at her ease with him as with Adrian. Nor he with her. He was not clever; but gifted. And his gifts were natural to him, naturally it came to him to look distinguished; to be silent, to draw. He would take a sheet of paper, hold it at an odd angle and begin easily, naturally, drawing a bird, not where I expected, but at some queer place, so that I could not guess how the bird would become a bird. He was not precocious; but won prizes now and then, yet failed to win a scholarship at Eton. His Latin and Greek were very rough, I think the masters said. But his essays showed great intelligence. Yet it was through him that I first heard about the Greeks. The day after he came back from Evelyns [his Preparatory School], the first time, he was very shy; and odd; and we went walking up and down the stairs together; and he told me the story of Hector and of Troy. I felt he was too shy to tell it sitting down; and so we kept walking up stairs and then down; and he told me the story rather fitfully, but excitedly. Also he told me stories about the boys at Evelyns. Those stories went on all through Evelyns, through Clifton [College], and through Cambridge [University]. I knew all his friends through those stories. He had a great power for liking people, for admiring them. And they amused him; I think I felt that he enjoyed Evelyns; and Clifton, because he liked being on his own, and held his own; and was admired, but was also dominant there too. He held his own, he put up with disagreeables; he was far more philosophic, because more in his element at school than Adrian was. And he exacted his rights. The Pup had to apologise when he put another boy [CEW Bean?] over him as head of the house; he was not going to be passed over. He was not easy to put upon. And yet he had no reason to assert himself; he did not expect to win things; he admired the boys who were good at football; good at Latin; but unenviously. I felt he had taken stock of his own powers; would come into possession of them all in good time; and enjoyed slowly and deliberately without being worried or upset whatever came his way at Clifton. He was tolerant; not critical; not precocious, biding his time, and serenely taking his place. And beneath this reserve, when he was with us, I felt,

*though he could not say a word ever about his feelings, a dumb affectionateness, a pride in us, and something melancholy too – perhaps the deaths of mother and Stella made him older than his age. And father's extraordinary demonstrative love for him. ”* [Emphasis, and reference to CEW Bean, added].

\* The material that follows is a revision of the manuscript MH/A. 5d which was transcribed on pages 107-37 in the original edition of *Moments of Being*. [1<sup>st</sup> ed, Sussex University Press, 1976].