
Broadview Press is to be commended for issuing this critical edition of Stephen Leacock's landmark work, *Sunshine Sketches of a Little Town*, meticulously edited by Carl Spadoni, author of *A Bibliography of Stephen Leacock*. First published by John Lane The Bodley Head in 1912, *Sunshine Sketches* was praised by reviewers in Britain, the United States, and Canada and the work soon established Leacock's reputation as a humorist. As Spadoni describes in his introduction, *Sunshine Sketches* remains a seminal text in the Canadian literary curriculum. Still widely read and taught in university classrooms across the country, it is relished for its incomparable depiction of life in small town Ontario during the early part of the twentieth century. Regularly described as a classic of Canadian literature, *Sunshine Sketches* has long deserved the careful editorial attention Spadoni has brought to the work.

A particular strength of this edition lies in supplementary material that seeks to contextualise and elucidate Leacock's text. The introduction is the work of a scholar who has been immersed long in his subject; it reveals an unparalleled understanding of Leacock and a deep knowledge of *Sunshine Sketches*. The introduction is divided into six sections. The first section gives biographical information about Leacock: his childhood in England and Canada; his early education; the ten years he spent teaching at Upper Canada College; his doctorate in Political Science at the University of Chicago; his popularity as Professor in Political Economy and Chairman of the Department of Economics and Political Science at McGill University; and his astonishing success as a writer of both scholarly and humorous books. Little is said, however, about Leacock's private life with his wife, Beatrix Hamilton, and their son, Stephen Lushington. Aside from comments that Leacock's "ebullient" life was never the same following the death of his wife from breast cancer in 1925 and that his son "proved to be a disappointment," we learn next to nothing about the personal circumstances that no doubt facilitated Leacock's prodigious output of one or two books a year from 1910 onward. Readers will appreciate, however, the thorough historical overview offered in two important sections of the introduction that consider the social and political context of Mariposa, and the relationship between Orillia – Leacock summered in Orillia, the inspiration for his fictional setting – and Mariposa.
Readers will be interested in the writing and publication of *Sunshine Sketches*, outlined in compelling detail. In a number of instances, Spadoni corrects misconceptions about Leacock and his work. His mother, for example, did not disapprove of Leacock’s depiction of Orillia, and the author chose to disguise the names of his characters for the first English edition of *Sunshine Sketches*. Moreover, Leacock did not correct proofs of the sketches that were serialised in the *Montreal Daily Star*, he completed the manuscript of *Sunshine Sketches* aboard an ocean liner en route from Montreal to France, and he proofread galleys of the first English edition while still in France. In tracing the literary reception of the work, Spadoni further suggests that the author resisted John Lane’s promotion of him as “The Canadian Mark Twain.” With understated humour, Spadoni describes the critical debate that wages still over the generic classification of *Sunshine Sketches* – it has been called “a near-novel, a proto-novel, a para-novel, a short-story ensemble, and a series of vignettes” – as having “all the makings of a Leacockian parody.”

Leacock’s correspondence with publishers John Lane The Bodley Head of London and Bell and Cockburn of Toronto is included as an appendix. Throughout his correspondence, Leacock is professional and affable. Increasingly confident in his work, he enjoys seeing *Sunshine Sketches* through the publication process. The opportunity to hear the author’s voice – especially one as vital as Leacock’s – lends authority and value to this edition. Finally, the inclusion of an appendix of contemporary reviews, so evocative of the culture and the time in which Leacock wrote, rounds out the rich publishing history of *Sunshine Sketches* recorded here.

For his copy text, Spadoni returns to the first English edition of *Sunshine Sketches*, with minor emendations made to the text. These changes are included as an appendix. In fact, Leacock endorsed the text of the English edition and wanted it to remain in print all his life. In arriving at his copy text, however, Spadoni did not rely on Leacock’s word. He compared and evaluated five competing texts: (i) the incomplete manuscript of *Sunshine Sketches*; (ii) the twelve-part serialisation in the *Montreal Daily Star*; (iii) the first English edition; (iv) later issues and editions; and (v) six excerpts syndicated by the Metropolitan Newspaper Service in June and July 1927. In the absence of a final manuscript – after careful assessment, the editor does not regard the extant manuscript of *Sunshine Sketches* as a final manuscript – Spadoni argues convincingly for the primacy of the text of the first English edition in the publishing history of
Leacock's work. A knowledge of Leacock's oeuvre and an understanding of the author's method of composition also inform Spadoni's choice of copy text for this edition of *Sunshine Sketches*.

Spadoni includes further supplementary material: a brief chronology of Leacock's life; annotative notes to the text; Leacock's draft outline and tables of contents; attribution of fictional references to actual people and places of Orillia; Leacock's four-act play "Sunshine in Mariposa," first published in three successive instalments in *Maclean's Magazine* between May and July 1917; a list of substantive variants between the copy text and the manuscript; a list of substantive variants between the copy text and the serialisation of *Sunshine Sketches* in the *Montreal Daily Star*; and a select bibliography. A contemporary reading of *Sunshine Sketches*, now published close to a century ago, is enhanced by the supplementary material provided by Spadoni.

In fact, this edition is at once readable and authoritative. Spadoni's thorough command of his subject is evident across his edition which is poised to become the standard text for *Sunshine Sketches of a Little Town*. In Carl Spadoni, whose editorial vision combines erudition and clarity and whose admiration for Leacock's ability as humorist is palpable, Leacock has found a most felicitous editor.

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Carter, the editor of this compilation of twenty diaries written in English by Canadian women, is well acquainted with the genre, as she uncovered five hundred archived diaries during work for her bibliography *Diaries in English by Women in Canada*. Although she could have used her own material for this volume, she requested submissions from other scholars in the field and *The Small Details of Life* is richer for it because it includes diaries in private possession.

Carter deliberately uses the word "diary" rather than "journal" to describe the "act of writing down the details of a life" and defines the diary as a text written "in the midst of a lived experience" rather