

Richard Jefferies: a Select Bibliography of Biography and Criticism

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PREFACE

The present bibliography is based on a preliminary list compiled from the unannotated bibliographies provided by Edward Thomas in *Richard Jefferies: his life and work* (125), Samuel J. Looker and Crichton Porteous in *Richard Jefferies: Man of the Fields* (197), and W.J. Keith in *Richard Jefferies: a Critical Study* (190). This preliminary list was expanded and updated from textual allusions to works unnoticed in the bibliographies, and from references in the articles read for annotation. Also consulted were:

- Abstracts of English studies. v. 1- 1958- Champaign, Ill., National Council of Teachers of English.
- Biography index. v. 1- 1946- New York, Wilson.
- British humanities index. v. 1- 1962- London, Library Association.
- Cumulative book index. v. 1- 1928- New York, Wilson.
- Dissertation abstracts international. v. 12- 1952- Ann Arbor, Mich., University Microfilms.
- Essay and general literature index. v. 1- 1934- New York, Wilson.
- Humanities index. v. 1- 1975- New York, Wilson.
- Modern Humanities Research Association. Annual bibliography of English language and literature. v. 1- 1921- London, Cambridge University Press.
- Readers' guide to periodical literature. v. 1- 1900- New York, Wilson.
- Social sciences and humanities index. v. 1-61, 1907-1974. New York, Wilson.

In accordance with the terms of the assignment only material at present held by libraries in Wellington has been annotated. (The National Library, Turnbull, General Assembly, Wellington Public, Victoria University of Wellington, and the Royal Society of New Zealand libraries were used.) However, an attempt at comprehensiveness has been made by appending a checklist of item not held in Wellington. A resurgence of interest in Jefferies is possible, as nineteenth century studies become more fashionable in university English Departments. As is apparent from the Bibliography itself, he at present receives little critical attention, and is not widely read. (*Bevis* is the sole title in print.) Assuming that this piece of work might be of interest only to the graduate student, the monograph-length studies of Thomas (125), Looker (197) and Keith (198) have been excluded from the annotated section on the grounds that they are basic works which will be known to the user.

As it has not been possible to consult many of the items in the Supplementary checklist, full bibliographical details are occasionally omitted. Entries hopefully follow AACR, with the exception that square brackets have been omitted when imprint information has been taken from the verso of the title-page.

Entries are arranged alphabetically under the year in which they were published. Bracketed numbers refer to items.

1888

1. Besant, Walter. *The Eulogy of Richard Jefferies*. London, Chatto and Windus, 1888.

A hastily-conceived exercise, said to have been completed in forty-eight hours. It occasioned—and can never atone for—the loss of eight of Jefferies' notebooks, which were lent by his widow and presumably destroyed with Besant's papers in 1901. Sadly enough, the lost notebooks appear to have been scarcely consulted, and the biography preserves nothing from them, although Besant quotes copiously from the published work

Besant's style is at once ponderous and coy: the book is heavy with apostrophe and truism, dull witticisms and unrewarding speculations. It is notorious in attributing to Jefferies a death-bed conversion: 'At the last, during the long communings of the night when he lay sleepless, happy to be free, if only for a few minutes, from pain, the simple old faith, came back to him.' (p. 355) This is almost certainly a victory of piety over veracity: Besant either ignored or did not bother to consult Jefferies' later notebooks which record a growing conviction that Christianity was mostly superstition.

The Eulogy is of little critical value, and as a factual account of Jefferies' life has been superseded entirely by the more carefully researched biographies of Edward Thomas and S.J. Looker.

1891

2. Graham, Peter A. The magic of the fields. In *Nature in books: some studies in biography*. London, Methuen, 1891. p.1-43. Reissued: Port Washington, N.Y., Kennikat Press, 1970.

A sentimental biography, vulgar and tedious. The author is excessively familiar, treating Jefferies like a personal asset. He adopts towards his subject an attitude of paternal affection, and does not hesitate to ascribe to him imaginary thoughts, feelings, and conversations. Rural descriptions in the manner of Jefferies are either precious or maudlin. Graham apparently visited Swindon, and discussed Jefferies with people who had known him, but draws heavily on Besant (1) and Jefferies' own work for his material.

An offensive essay, mercifully brief.

1892

3. Garnett, Richard. Richard Jefferies. In *The dictionary of national biography*. London, Smith, 1592. p. 702-703.

A concise factual account of Jefferies' life, outlining the subject matter of his major works. Garnett's critical comments are unremarkable: despite the beauties of their scenery the country books tend to be 'too desultory'; *Greene Ferne Farm* and *Amaryllis at the Fair*, 'though full of admirable descriptions and shrewd observation, are deficient in character and construction.' (p. 703)

1893

4. Graham, Peter A. Round about Coate. *The Art Journal*, 1893: 16-21.

A guided tour through the parish of Chisledon, which had changed little since Jefferies' youth. Graham's prose is almost intolerably ornate: 'Across the meadows and over the wheat-fields by wood and down and streamlet, the faintly trodden paths or rustic stiles invite the stranger to go, like the wind, where he listeth.' (p.16) We are left with a sense of how original

and unpretentious in Jefferies' own writing; how successfully he avoided this kind of pastoral preciosity.

1894

5. Salt, Henry S. Richard Jefferies; a study. London, Sonnenschein 1894. Reissued, without a bibliography, as *Richard Jefferies: his life and his ideals*. London, Fiffeld, 1905. 1905 edition reissued: Port Washington, N.Y., Kennikat Press, 1970.

The most fastidious of Jefferies' biographers may be provoked almost to vehemence upon certain matters of art and morality. He is, for one, vigorously opposed to blood-sports, or any 'killing mania'. Announcing that 'his early books are disfigured by many revolting details of the seamy side of sportsmanship, which are intolerable to any reader in whom the humane or artistic instinct is well developed', Salt quotes from *The Amateur Poacher* a passage describing Little John's pleasure in 'wristing' a rabbit's neck. 'This is scarcely a worthy theme for the artist', concludes the gentle rationalist and Fabian. (p.37) Such peculiarities aside, Salt is an unremarkable critic, in the main inoffensive, if limited by the literary conventions of the time. He believes Jefferies 'one of the great prose writers of his generation' (p.102) who reached the peak of his literary and intellectual achievement in *The Story of My Heart* and in the shorter seasonal rhapsodies, 'The pageant of summer' and 'Hours of spring'. Jefferies failed as a novelist because he entirely lacked 'the dramatic instinct' 'his instinct was that of the naturalist who observes and moralises rather than that of the novelist who penetrates and interprets...' (p.110)

The factual content of the book appears to derive largely from Besant (1) and Graham (2), although, unlike Besant, Salt is prone to use fictional representations as accurate autobiographical records.

1898

6. Crawford, Oswald J. Richard Jefferies: field-naturalist and litterateur. *The idler*, v.13 no.3, Oct. 1898: 289-301.

A celebration of Jefferies' country books: he is compared as a naturalist to Gilbert White. Crawford describes a personal correspondence with Jefferies which lasted three years, and includes an extract from a letter dated December 1876, in which Jefferies proposes writing a series of articles on natural history for *Chamber's Magazine*. He describes Coate reservoir and how he spent his youth sitting in a hedge 'noting the ways and habits even of moles and snails.'

1900

7. Hudson, William H. Thistle-down. In *Nature in Downland*. London Dent, 1951. p.13-15. First published: London, Longmans, 1900.

A threnodic digression, composed in Jefferies' house at Goring, thirteen years after his death. The homage of a fellow nature-writer is not without a touch of asperity. W.H. Hudson was no mystic. Claiming that Jefferies never attained the height of his powers, he does not hesitate to suggest that 'perhaps, too, that strain of intense unnatural feeling, which he so strangely misinterpreted, and which in his book just named 'i.e. *The Story of My Heart*' touches the borders of insanity, would have been outgrown.' (p.14)

1901

8. Bucke, Richard M. Richard Jefferies. In *Cosmic consciousness: a study in the evolution of the human mind*. New York, Dutton, 1901. p. 319-322.

Includes annotated excerpts from *The Story of My Heart*. Bucke deduces that Jefferies' illness prevented him from attaining a state of complete transcendence: 'he never became conscious of the Cosmic order—the vision of the "eternal wheels" of the "chain of causation" was not granted him.' (p.322)

1903

9. Saintsbury, George E. Jefferies. In *A history of nineteenth century literature, 1780-1900*. London, Macmillan, 1903. pp. 416-417.

For Saintsbury Jefferies' achievement was invested solely in 'a power of observing nature more than Wordsworthian in delicacy'. (p.417) He sees a minor, highly specialized talent prostituted to the vaguaries of popular taste. He was the victim of an age without patronage: 'In other days Jefferies was quite as likely to have been insufficiently rewarded at first by the public; but he would have had no temptation to over-write himself, or try alien tasks, and he would have stood a very good chance of a pension, or a sinecure, or an easy office in church or state, on one or other of which he might have lived at ease and written at leisure.' (p.417)

1904

10. Scott, G. Forrester. Three nature writers. *The bookman*, v. 26 June 1904: 84-88.

A brief introduction to the life and works of Isaak Walton, Gilbert White, and Richard Jefferies—all South Country men, naturalists, and artists whose prose 'inverts the ordinary proportion between man the actor and the background of lower life he moves against.' (p.84)

A pleasant little essay, of no critical interest.

1906

11. Compton-Rickett, Arthur. Richard Jefferies. In *The vagabond in literature*. London, Dent, 1906. pp.141-166. Reissued: Port Washington, K.Y., Kennikat Press, 1968.

Jefferies appears in the company of De Quincey, Whitman, Borrow, Robert Louis Stevenson and other writers who share, according to Compton-Rickett, a particular temperament. They are unconventional, introspective, detached men, 'personal or intellectual wanderers'. 'Natural revolutionaries they, with an ingrained distaste for the routine of ordinary life.' (p.3) They are united also by 'a passion for the Earth, an intense joy in the open air.' (p.4) Jefferies is studied in these terms. His sensuous apprehension of the world, his susceptibility to every manifestation of natural beauty is compared to that of Keats: his creed of Nature to that of Thoreau (Compton-Rickett disapproves thoroughly of Jefferies' conception of an alien amoral universe, 'ultra-human and without design, shape or purpose'.)

Compton-Rickett is a slightly over-indulgent writer; a florid style, but balanced, and not unattractive. A modest, rather ponderous essay, containing no critical or biographical revelations, if many pleasantly sonorous phrases. The approach, at least, is unique.

12. Lucas, E.V. Introduction. In *Bevis; the story' of a boy*. London, Duckworth, 1906. p.ix-xiv.

A small personal celebration of 'the only epic ever founded on a reservoir', devoid of critical interest. Lucas admits to occasional misgivings—perhaps the Great Battle proceeds in too orderly a fashion, and 'Did boys ever play quoits with pleasure? But these are minor objections: 'As a book for boys *Bevis* I think stands alone in its blend of joy in the open air, sympathetic understanding of boy nature, and most admirable writing.' (p.xi) An unsatisfactory essay, even for those sympathetic to Lucas' cult of boyhood: it has the air of a commissioned piece, hastily executed, and lacking the verbal accomplishment of the author's more carefully considered trifles.

1909

13. Thomas, Edward. Richard Jefferies and London. *The bookman*, v. 35, Feb. 1909: 215-219.

A description of no. 2 Woodside, Surbiton, and an account of Jefferies' London peregrinations. Thomas draws a pleasant picture of the artist taking his daily walk around Tolworth 'astonished and delighted' by the richness of the bird life, visiting Kew, 'for the enjoyment of its silence as well as for study', and rowing on the Thames at Teddington and Molesey. A salutary reminder that although Jefferies missed the Wiltshire Downs, it is simplistic to envisage a displaced countryman, cruelly estranged by alien city streets, writing only out of a fierce nostalgia for the environs of his youth. The reality is more complex. Like Aymer Malet in *World's End* he felt 'a strong, almost irresistible desire within him to mingle in the vast crowds of cities, to feel that indefinable "life" which animates the mass.' He once called London 'the only real place in the world.'

1912

14. Jackson, Holbrook. Richard Jefferies. In *All manner of folk; interpretations and studies*. London, Richards, 1912. p.146-158.

A brief and eloquent panegyric: a personal and intensely sympathetic response of Jefferies' art and thought. Jackson admires especially 'The pageant of summer', 'the most exalted and passionate interpretation of the beauty and luxury of that season to be found', and quotes from it profusely. An attractive essay, readable and quite inconsequential. There is a pleasant account (probably apocryphal) of Jefferies amid the Wiltshire peasantry: ' "Seed ye owt on the Downs?" one would inquire of another at sunset. "Nobbut Dick Jefferies moonin' about", would be the reply.' (p.146)

1915

15. Foerster, Norman. 'The vogue of Richard Jefferies'. *Publications of the Modern Language Association of America*, v. 28 December 1913: pp.530-530.

Foerster does not quite approve of Jefferies. Pace Edward Thomas Jefferies is no pantheistic mystic. *The Story of My Heart* stipulates that he holds the universe an alien and amoral mechanism: 'there is nothing human in nature... I conclude that no deity has anything to do with nature.' He had more affinity with Pater than Traherne. A recourse to Nature, as to the sculptured beauty of the Venus Accroupie, or the Titians in the National Gallery, provided an escape from human indifference into 'the intense life of the senses', (p.533-534) This sensual

absorption reached its highest intensity during the reveries on Liddington Hill. 'Like a true Rousseauistic nymphet, he has often dreamed that the higher-than-deity is a woman!' (p.535) 'If Jefferies was a "reporter of genius", concludes Foerster, 'he was also a hedonist.' (p.538)

1914

16. Willis, Fred. The ideals of Richard Jefferies. [No imprint] 1914, 8p.

A brief account of Jefferies' life and aspects of his personal philosophy, which is scarcely clarified. According to Willis Jefferies' political views were profoundly influenced by his spiritual creed. He sees a conservative radicalized by his mystical experiences: 'As he began to apprehend the importance of an ideal humanity, so his staunch allegiance to all the time-honoured institutions of his youth began to change until at length he became a communist.' (p.5) The truth is something less simple. Willis makes no attempt to document this ideological development, which is not (as he implies) reflected in any straightforward manner in Jefferies' writing. (See 68.)

1921

Henley, William E. Jefferies. In *Views and reviews: essays appreciation*. London, Kacmillan, 1921. p.161-166.

An attractive little essay, expressed in a style which is florid but controlled: a pretty trifle, as resolutely wrong-headed it is elegant. Henley writes as if he had read nothing of Jefferies later than *The amateur poacher*, which perhaps he hadn't. He presents Jefferies as an unrivalled observer of plants and animals and sunsets, a painstaking collector of facts, but no artist. Henley can detect in his work no snap, vision, or power of invention: no private intensities, nor insight into the complexities of human relationships, 'he is the Scandalous Chronicler of the warren and the rookery.... beside his stoats and hares, his pike, his rabbits and his moles, his men and women are of little moment. You seem to heard of them, and to far better purpose from others...' (p.163) 'From his work the passionate human quality is not less absent than the capacity of selection and the gift of inspiration. (p.165) There is no mention of Bevis and Mark, the Idens, Felise, Alere Flamma, or Raleigh Pamment.

1923

18. Spencer, Walter T. Walter Pater, Richard Jefferies, and the Gissings... In *Forty years in my bookshop*. London, Constable 1923. p.215-217.

Jefferies often visited Spencer's antiquarian bookshop in New Oxford Street, whilst working at the British Museum. Spencer observes that 'the author of *The gamekeeper at home* seemed hardly ever at the ease you instinctively expected from his type.' (p.216) He attributes this to Jefferies' ill health.

1924

Quiller-Couch, Sir Arthur. External. In *Adventures in criticism*. London, Cambridge University Press, 1924. p.109, 112-114.

For Sir Arthur local colour is not enough. Works like *The gamekeeper at home* are composed entirely of Externals, and are for this reason emotionally unsatisfying. They are deficient in timelessness. 'Externals' comprise the draperies of existence, the particular habitation or event: they are 'the accidents of Storytelling', as opposed to the Essentials, which are 'the abiding elements of human life—the loves, hates, fears, dreams of men. Cityfied critics are abused for being enamoured of rural trivia. Quiller-Couch quotes a rather undistinguished passage from *Wild Life in a Southern County* about gooseberries, apple-trees and horse-chestnuts, and proceeds irreverently to apply Jefferies' method to the Brompton Road: 'The thick woollen goods which appear in the haberdashers' windows through the winter—generally inside the plate glass—give way to garments of a lighter texture as the summer advances...' (p.113) It's a neat parody. The passage ends on a note of amused resignation. From Jefferies the club-novelist gathers 'that "wild, apple-tree too, are not uncommon in the hedges", and straightway he insinuates a discovery of this wonder. But it is hard on the poor countryman who, for the benefit of the street-bred reading public, must cram his books with solemn recitals of his A.B.C. and impressive announcements that two and two make four and a hedgesparrow's egg is blue.' (p.114) Perhaps to compensate for it he could read about urban slums...

1927

20. Steinhardt, Amos. Something about Richard Jefferies. Quarto Club papers, 1925-1927: 99-106.

A woodsman's appreciation of Jefferies' country books: sturdy, colloquial, and a little absurd. Steinhardt admires especially the homeliness of these works—their capriciousness and their restraint. Jefferies is careful not to tire his reader with excessive detail, he does not fib, nor generalize too readily from limited observation. Neither does he offer crude anthropomorphic explanations of animal behaviour: 'He would take nature at its face value and that was enough.' (p.105)

1928

21. Keeling Collard, Lorna. Richard Jefferies. Contemporary review, v. 134, Nov. 1928: 622-632.

A brief account of Jefferies' life and work. Some restrained and perceptive comment is marred by constant flurries of rhetorical inanity: 'From the free wind as it blew over the lonely stretches of downland he learnt freedom of thought from the great hills themselves as they swept to the boundless horizon he gained breadth of vision...' (p.624) A flair for quotation almost excuses Ms. Keeling Collard's unfortunate penchant for botanical metaphors—she constructs her essay around a series of interesting and little known passages from Jefferies' writing. She is seemingly immune to the felicities of *Greene Ferne Farm* or *Amaryllis at the Fair*, and implies that *The Dewy Morn* is a book more impossible and more feeble than the earliest romances. However, by apt quotations she manages to convey the heights of delicious absurdity attained by Jefferies' worst fiction—stories of high society 'crude and sensational in the extreme' (p.625): 'From that moment Reginald was devoted to the fair stranger. His first impulse was to run after the carriage. That he subdued for various reasons. Firstly that it went too fast. Secondly on account of the heat.' (It is uncertain whether Ms. Keeling Collard is herself amused.)

22. Thomas, Edward. Richard Jefferies. In *A literary pilgrim in England*. London, Cape, 1928. p.130-138. (The travellers' library, no. 95)

Oscar Wilde's Vivian (in *The decay of lying*) maintains that nature imitates art, and that nobody had seen fog on the Thames until Whistler painted it: 'One does not see anything until one sees its beauty. Then, and only then, does it come into existence Says Thomas: 'He knew [the land] so well... that it became a portion of himself, as if he had partly created it, as in fact he did. If we walk from Swindon to Marlborough, Devizes, Calne, or Wootton Bassett, after reading Jefferies, we do not see the same country as if we were ignorant of him.' (p.130) A pleasant account of Jefferies' migrations through Wiltshire, Surrey, and Sussex, and the evocation of the landscape in his works.

1929

23 Garnett, Edward. Richard Jefferies' *Amaryllis at the fair*. In *Friday nights: literary criticisms and appreciations*. 1st series London, Cape, 1929- P. 129-137.

A vigorous reaction to the critical strictures of Besant (1), Saintsbury (9), W.E. Henley (17) and others who value Jefferies primarily as a minute observer, a naturalist of genius, and deprecate the novels as a series of pictures bereft of dramatic intensity. Garnett recognizes that *Amaryllis at the Fair* is structurally peculiar, an idiosyncratic fusion of autobiographical fiction and zany disquisition—digressive, opinionated, devoid of plot, seemingly incomplete. Yet for him the artefact works. The narrative is not rendered inconsequential, but enhanced by its diversity and informality: 'the scenes, the descriptions, the conversations are spontaneous as life, and Jefferies' commentary on them is like Fielding's commentary, a medium by which he lives with his characters.' (p.134) A sympathetic account of Jefferies' technique, the essay makes good points obscurely. It is also marred by some rather ludicrous posturing and rhetorical flourishes of the 'Oh, candid reader' variety.

1930

24 Reid, Forrest. Minor fiction in the 'eighties. In *The eighteen-eighties: essays by fellows of the Royal Society of Literature*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1930. p. 127-130.

Jefferies is included in a discussion of the English pastoral novel. Although he approves of *Bevis*, Jefferies' other novels, including *Greene Ferne Farm*, *The Dewy Morn*, and *Amaryllis at the Fair* are dismissed as failures by the author of *The Brackwells* and *Uncle Stephen*. An estimation much in the tradition of Saintsbury (9) and W. E. Henley (17): 'He had little gift for creating character, little inventive power, little sense of construction... it was wild nature, not human nature, her loved and understood.' (p.128-129)

1931

25 Vaughan, Herbert M. Richard Jefferies. In *From fourteen biographical studies between 1702 and 1901*. London, Methuen, 1931. p. 156-175.

An essay surprising only in its banality. Vaughan finds Jefferies 'a wholesome, popular, and instructive writer' (p.172) and favours the country books: 'Of his novels, and especially of his

autobiographical works, *Bevis* and *The Story of My Heart*, frankly I have no very high opinion, though I know the latter is a fairly popular book, nor do I deny its merits,' (p.174) Liberal quotations from *The Gamekeeper at Home*, *Wild Life in a Southern County* and *Hodge and his Masters* adorn a commentary of and fatuous questions. A piece of ugly insipid remarks sentimentalism.

26 Arkell, Reginald. Richard Jefferies. London, Rich and Cowan, 1933. Reissued as Richard Jefferies and his countryside. London, Jenkins, 1945. 190p. (The country books)

Q.D. Leavis (27) called it, with reason, 'an indefensible piece of book making'. Garrulous and opinionated, Arkell constantly intrudes upon his subject, something in the bluff manner of Henry Williamson, although his sensibilities are coarser and his apostrophizing appreciably more inane. Undocumented and lacking an index, it presents no new biographical material, except that which has been invented by the author. Clumsy and tedious; a dispensible work.

1938

27. Leavis, Q.D. Lives and works of Richard Jefferies. *Scrutiny*, v.6 March 1938: 435-446.

A vigorous and timely attempt to rescue Jefferies' reputation from the hands of egregious editors ('"My Jefferies" Williamson calls him, and apostrophises and converses with him with complacent impertinence.'), from Saintsbury's faint praise, and from the intensities of outdoor enthusiasts and spiritual devotees—"There has always been a garden-suburb cult of *The Story of My Heart* which has assisted in discrediting him.' (p.437, 439) Ms Leavis also takes occasion to champion Edward. Thomas' biography and to grind a little axe with regard to Bloomsbury's noisy infatuation with W.H. Hudson— attention mere fittingly bestowed upon his brilliant predecessor.

In fact Ms Leavis values Jefferies very highly indeed:

'he recalls or embodies now Cobbett, now D.H. Lawrence, now Dickens, now Edward Thomas himself... he has too strikingly contemporary aspect as social satirist, and he is in the central and most important tradition of English prose style.' (p.437) Nor does she belittle Jefferies' achievement as a novelist, finding in *The Dewy Morn* 'one of the few real novels between *Wuthering Heights* and *Sons and Lovers* .' (p. 445) Despite these rotund vaguaries, more impressive than revealing (What tradition? And what constitutes a 'real' novel?), it is an entertaining and provocative article, comforting for those who believe Jefferies an important and unduly neglected writer, who has been too often scandalously misused by editors, biographers, and literary historians.

1944

28. Looker, Samuel J. Bibliographical discoveries in the work of Richard Jefferies. Notes and queries, Feb. 12, 1944: 91-92.

A note on the bibliographical history of the essays entitled 'The spring of the year', 'Vignettes from nature' (*Hills and the Vale*) and 'The coming of summer' (*Toilers of the Field*).

29. Thomas, Gilbert o. Richard Jefferies. In *Builders and makers; occasional studies*. London, Epworth Press, 1944. p.173-178.

A trivial and rather incoherent piece of journalism, apparently occasioned by the publication of Samuel J. Looker's anthology, *Jefferies' Countryside*. Thomas' attitude is sympathetic, if disquieteningly robust. Patently orthodox himself, he is worried by Jefferies' solitude and his doctrinal aberrations, suggesting that 'perhaps his bad health had much to do with his almost pagan worship of the sun.' (p.176) Perhaps. He values Jefferies as a 'word-painter', a brilliant verbal craftsman who died young and in a pitiful state of religious immaturity: 'Had he lived longer, his innate powers of mind as well as of sensibility might have brought him to a happier spiritual haven.' (p.177) The paternalism of so limited a critic is quite unbearable.

1946

30. Williamson, Henry. Introduction. In *A classic of English farming; Hodge and His Masters*. London, Faber, 1946. p.7-20.

Williamson is less a critic than a hero-worshipper. He quotes in full Jefferies' first letter to *The Times* on the Wiltshire agricultural labourer (published on 14 November 1672, and reprinted in *The Toilers of the Field*) and expresses gratitude for all of us. 'Bravo, Jefferies! You've given us a whole countryside, last mid-century: and it might be today.... It took a lot of your life to write this book, I know; and you . knew it wouldn't sell much, when it was done. Yet you did it. ..' (p.19) It is easy to understand Ms Leavis' disgust with this kind of vulgar fulsomeness.

1947

31. Brittain, F. Richard Jefferies. Cambridge Review, Apr. 19, 1947:366-368.

A brief comparison of Jefferies' first three biographers, Besant (1), Salt (5) and Thomas(125), and an assessment of Arkell's *Richard Jefferies and his countryside* (26). Brittain finds the latter attractive, although 'provocative': Arkell's enthusiasm for his subject encourages us to reread Jefferies himself, but his opinions are obtrusive, and at times profoundly inappropriate 'The love of hunting', he says, 'is in our blood and the country would be deadly dull without it.' For Brittain such statements are themselves 'almost enough to disqualify a man from writing about Jefferies for ever...' (P.368)

1948

32. Arkell, Reginald. Richard Jefferies and Coate. Country life, June 18, 1948: 1224-1225.

A centennial pilgrimage through Jefferies' Country, with reflections of the artist's life and work. An unmemorable piece of journalism. Includes a photograph of Coate Farmhouse.

33. Ascoli, David. Introduction. In *The gamekeeper at home, The Amateur poacher*. London, Oxford University Press, 1948. p.v-xx. (The world's classics, no. 516)

Observing that Jefferies has suffered unusually at the hands of sentimental admirers, Ascoli is sparing in praise for his subject He exercises the uncharitableness of that healthy Orthodoxy which despises all self-inflicted pain—an urge for solitude, a habit of melancholy, disillusionment... anything obsessive. Saintsbury also was offended, and he is quoted in high

seriousness 'Unfortunately for Jefferies, his philosophic background was not, like Wordsworth's, clear and cheerful, but wholly vague and partly gloomy.' (p.xiii) Ascoli is scarcely less ponderous, and the moralizing is unrestrained: 'As he grew older, this solitary communion with nature became an obsession: the obsession became a pantheistic ecstasy: and the ecstasy degenerated, as it was bound to do, into a sickness of mind no less mortal than the physical affliction which, at the end, killed him.' (p.vi) Jefferies' achievement is substantially diminished: in this view only the exacting naturalist, the observer and miniaturist, warrants acclaim. The writer's ability to recapture the fleeting moment in a wealth of visual detail, 'the power of distilling the essence of the countryside' (p.xix) represents, for Ascoli, the totality of his success.

A disappointing introduction to a charming book; a nest of platitudes.

34. Brittain, F. The centenary of Richard Jefferies. Cambridge Review, May 22, 1948: 550.

A critical review of some recent editions of Jefferies' work, published or reissued on his centenary. These include Henry Warren's projected Uniform Edition, published by Eyre and Spottiswood, and the collected edition announced by Lutterworth Press, edited by S.J. Looker. Brittain is affronted by Henry Williamson's edition of *Hodge and his masters* (1946), with its textual excisions and rearrangement of the chapters. 'One could spare some of the irrelevancies of his introduction, too, such as his assertion that the recent war was "made by the toxic town-mind".' Neither does S.J. Looker emerge unscathed. Whilst applauding his indefatigable labours as a collector and editor of Jefferies' work, Brittain finds his homage sometimes excessive. He does not agree, for instance, that the few small pieces of verse which survive justify the conclusion that Jefferies 'would have made a fine nature poet' had he lived.

35. Church, Richard. The horizon of Richard Jefferies. Picture post, v. 41, Nov. 6, 1948: 11-13.

A brief appreciation, occasioned by the centenary celebration at Swindon. Church ponders Jefferies' abnormal acuity of vision, and the mystic's intense preoccupation with the physical world. Includes photographs of Coate Water, the house at Coate Farm, and the Jefferies memorial at Barbary.

36. Clarke Mullen, Alice. Richard Jefferies. Audubon magazine, v. 50, Nov. 1948: 366-371.

'A brief glimpse into the life of a famous English nature-writer' Inspired by the Jefferies Centenary, the author hopes to interest American readers in his works, but it is difficult to imagine her doing so. A depressing piece of work, sometimes inaccurate in detail and always formidable in its simple-mindedness. To witness: 'Descended from country folk of hardy English stock, the love of the countryside was part of his natural inheritance' (p.367) 'And because his family had lived so close to the soil, he knew and understood problems of agriculture and the human nature of country people.' (p.368) Such observations abound.

37. Marshall, D.E. Richard Jefferies, 1848-1948. Contemporary Review v. 174, Nov. 1948: 299-303.

A centennial appraisal of Jefferies' life and art, dealing only in commonplaces. No attempt is made to measure the man's current reputation or to trace his critical fortunes, as might be expected. The usual comparisons with W.H. Hudson are made. Marshall is a grammarian, and an uninteresting discussion of Jefferies' style is redeemed by a little piece of exalted pedantry: 'Rarely does he fail to split an infinitive: but was not this common in the last century? Often his constructions are loose, and weaknesses such as the separation of the relative word or clause from its antecedents, occur frequently...' (p.300) Further boredom is relieved only by an observation tantalizingly obscure: 'In his greatest lyrical outpourings', exclaims Marshall, 'he suggests a vision of the world which reminds us of that of Dame Julian of Norwich when, in the fourteenth century, she saw the world, as a hazel nut.' (p.301) Not all of us.

An inoffensive, if largely unmemorable article.

38. Warren, C. Henry. Introduction. In *The gamekeeper at home*. London, Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1948. p. vii-xiii.

Jefferies Was an amateur naturalist, and his prose is sometimes clumsy ('His ear, quick to catch the pipings of bats in the dusk, was nevertheless dead to such ungrammatical discords as the split infinitive.') but his descriptions are seldom tedious, never inaccurate. Yet for him observation, however close, careful and novel, is never an end in itself. The recording of minutiae is subsumed to the total vision, the sensuous evocation of a remembered world. For Warren the casual digressive nature of the country books, their shapelessness, is essential to their effect, their feeling of complete naturalness. 'Is a country walk the less enjoyable because we can never tell what may next happen in it?' (p.xi)

39. Warren, C. Henry. Introduction to The open air. In *The Open Air*. London, Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1948. p. vii-xii.

A brief assessment of Jefferies' last collection of essays, from 'Nature on the roof' (described as 'uninspired list-making') to 'One of the new voters' and 'John Smith's shanty', sympathetic if relentlessly unsentimental portraits of labouring life in the 1880s, which might be placed among Jefferies' finest creations. That Jefferies should have devoted relatively little attention to depicting the lives of farmers and labourers saddens Warren. Ironically, Jefferies expressed regret that Gilbert White, who 'had the quickest of eyes' and 'access everywhere', failed to leave 'a natural history of the-people of his day'. Might he perhaps have been conscious also of a personal omission? Warren admires the thematic diversity of the book, the 'prodigality' of Jefferies' talent, and ventures to detect in it a prescience of approaching death: 'The end was near and he knew it, and there was still so much he had not said.' (p.vii)

40. Warren, C. Henry. Richard Jefferies. English review, v.1, Sept. 1948: 25-31.

Maintaining that the extent of Jefferies' achievement goes frequently unrecognized, Warren defends the artist, on two fronts: against the unctuous pieties of the 'wind-on-the-heath brethren', who have adopted *The story of my heart* as a sacred creed, and against those editors and academic critics who treat him solely as a gifted naturalist in the tradition of Gilbert White. Warren observes that whole anthologies of his work appear with scarcely an extract to indicate that Jefferies' recorded landscape included the human inhabitants of rural

Wiltshire. Warren considers Jefferies' description of himself as a student of human life amply justified by the portraits of his countrymen in *Hodge and his masters*, in individual essays such as 'One of the new voters' (from *The Open Air*) and 'John Smith's shanty' (from *The Toilers of the Field*), and above all by such creations as Farmer Iden in *Amaryllis at the Fair*, and old Hilary in *Round about a Great Estate*.

An interesting, well-argued essay, exquisitely illustrated by Charles Whymper.

1949

41. Brittain, P. Richard Jefferies and others. Cambridge review, Feb. 5, 1949: 338-340.

A survey of new editions and selections of Jefferies' work, including the critical opinions expressed by their editors and compilers.

42 Looker, Samuel J. W.H. Hudson and Richard Jefferies. Notes and queries, Apr. 30, 1949: 195-196.

In response to a previous note on Hudson and Jefferies (44) Looker' agrees that the two writers owe little to each other. Hudson read and admired the country books, although he mistrusted *The story of my heart*. There is no evidence that Jefferies encountered any of Hudson's work, 'with the exception of 'London sparrow', a poem published by Wilfrid Meynell in *Merry England*.

43. Warren, C. Henry. Introduction. In *Hodge and His Masters*. London, Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1949. p.v-xii.

A strangely neglected work, thinks Warren. Perhaps this is because it contradicts a popular image of Jefferies as simply a reclusive student of wildlife; a dreamy detached man, immune to human complexities—a kind of social imbecile. It was not so. A farmer's son, his view of the land was not a purely aesthetic one; he saw it as a source of wealth, the basis of production. 'The wheat is beautiful, but human life is labour' he could stare into a field and see both the gold of the harvest and the labourer's sweat. He attended the swindon police court as a reporter for the *North Wilshre Herald*, and brought to bear on a rural society the same intensity of vision he used to record life in the hedgerow. Warren seems to see *Hodge and his Masters* as primarily a study of rural types; a kind of microcosmography, marred only by an anxiety to please its readers. (The essays were written for the *Standard*, a Conservative newspaper.) Yet Jefferies' vision is not consistent, that of a propagandist, and the finest vignettes manipulate the reader's sympathies in a complex fashion: even if Warren's claim is ultimately justified, he deals too cursorily with a difficult question.

44. W.H. Hudson. Notes and queries, Mar. 5, 1949: 104.

An unsigned note repudiating a tendency among critics to bracket Hudson and Jefferies. Hudson cannot be considered a disciple; the elder by seven years, he had been writing on natural history for almost a decade before *The gamekeeper at home* appeared in 1878.

1950

45. Bullett, Gerald W. [Richard Jefferies] In *The English mystics*. London, Joseph, 1950. p.22-25.

In attempting to define his subject, Bullett quotes at length from *the Story of My Heart*, before cursorily and condescendingly discussing Jefferies' experience of 'an unutterable existence infinitely higher than deity'. One senses an antipathy to Jefferies' paganism. 'What, we may ask, can the so often repeated phrase.. mean, since nothing can be higher than that which is by definition the highest? Presumably it means higher than the particular conceptions of deity that Jefferies happened to have met with, whether the anthropomorphic personal God of popular evangelism, or the absentee potentate —disinterested First Cause of a clockwork universe—posited by Deism.' (p.24) An insensitive passage in a banal book.

1952

46. Mercer, W.C. G.M. Hopkins and Richard Jefferies. Notes and queries, May 10, 1952: 217.

Quoting a passage in which Jefferies compares the movement of a hawk struck by the breeze to that of a skater, Mercer wonders whether Hopkins may have read *Wild life in a southern county* (published in parts in the *Pall Mall Gazette*) before writing *The windhover*. However, as Ebbatson observes (66), we cannot postulate a direct connection, as Hopkin's poem was written almost a year before Jefferies' essay appeared.

47. Miller, Henry. The story of my heart. In *The books in my life*. London, Owen, 1952. p. 172-195.

The vastly loquacious and idiosyncratic annals of a long and passionate encounter with *The story of my heart*. This is scarcely a critique or 'appreciation' in the usual sense: passages from Jefferies' spiritual autobiography incite, or provide occasion for a wealth of reminiscence, personal credos, and naive philosophizing, filler, an inimitable and elusive writer, effortlessly achieves a breadth of discursiveness unsurpassed by Jefferies himself. Although his enthusiasm is infectious, this account is probably of more interest to devotees of Miller than of Jefferies.

48. Vulliamy, Colwyn JK. The mystical Jefferies. In *Rocking horse journey; some views of the British character*. London, Joseph, 1952. p.160-171.

Jefferies represents for Vulliamy a peculiarly British mode of thinking and writing—unfortunately he offers no explanation of this rather odd estimation. The novels can be 'frantically silly', the country books 'charming in a sedative, sensitive way, excellent reading for a cultured invalid' (p.163). Ultimately Jefferies' reputation will rest securely upon his spiritual autobiography, *The Story of my heart*, that 'compound of exquisite beauty, shrill petulance, harrowing pathos, and sheer ineptitude.' (p.165) Vulliamy admires Jefferies' exalted accounts of his mystical experiences, his passionate immersion in the beauty of the external world, scarcely more than he detests his idiosyncratic notions, his amateur philosophizing, and his melancholy.

An impudent and incoherent essay. Vulliamy condescends toward Jefferies; his tone implies an awareness of his own social and intellectual superiority. This isn't pleasant.

1954

49. Blench, J.W. The novels of Richard Jefferies. *Cambridge journal*, v. 7, Mar. 1954: 361-377.

An earnest, if somewhat insipid revaluation of Jefferies' best and 'unjustly very neglected' novels: *Greene Ferne Farm*, *The Dewy Morn*, and *Amaryllis at the Fair*. Its aim is to 'show Jefferies's excellences, his faculty of delicate and opulent natural description, his vigorous and felicitous use of the Wiltshire dialect, his power as a social thinker and satirist, his characteristic irony...' (p.377) Considering each book in turn, Blench isolates events and snatches of dialogue which strike him as especially well-conceived- pleasant and convincing in themselves, or throwing light on the rather complex psychology of the protagonists. Determined to oppose the popular critical conception of Jefferies as a failed novelist, incapable of creating a credible character, Blench is inclined to overstate his case: he labels *The Dewy Morn*, for instance, 'one of the finest late nineteenth century novels'. (p.367)

50. Brown, Douglas. [Richard Jefferies]. In *Thomas Hardy*. London, Longmans, 1954. p. 142-143.

A generous if passing tribute to Jefferies' craft. Brown _T believes that *The Dewy Morn* and *Amaryllis at the Fair* deserve a permanent place alongside the Wessex novels. Echoing Edward

Thomas, he proclaims that 'the insight, the candour, the modesty and the sensuousness of his prose, and the strange audacity of some strokes of invention in his narratives, lay bare a sort of poverty in all but the finest pages of Hardy.' (p.143) An exaggerated judgement, but a pleasing reaction to the undue neglect from which Jefferies' fiction has suffered.

1935

51. Williamson, Geoffrey. The eye of Richard Jefferies. *Literary guide*, no. 70, Aug. 1955: 18-19.

Comparing photographs taken of the house and farm at Coate with descriptions in *The Gamekeeper at Home*, *The Amateur Poacher*, *Wild Life in a Southern County*, *Bevis* and *Amaryllis at the Fair*, the author can detect no idealisation. 'Jefferies possessed a photographic eye for detail so that, even after a lapse of years, he could describe some scene from his earlier life with meticulous exactness.' (p.18) Includes a sketch, *Tethered horses*, from Jefferies' notebooks, which does not appear to have been reproduced elsewhere.

1956

52. Hyde, William J. Richard Jefferies and the naturalistic peasant. *Nineteenth century fiction*, v. 11, Lee. 1955: 207-217.

Hyde maintains that Jefferies was pre-eminently a journalist, and responded as such toward social conditions which demanded amelioration. He portrayed the agricultural labourer with an incisive realism unequalled by any major English novelist of the period because his professionalism allowed no retreat when reality became sordid. There are no quaintly sententious rustics, no frolicsome Grandfer Cantles among his Wiltshire peasantry. 'It is typically the journalist's world, not created by an imaginative artist but recorded of external facts set down and interpreted with little other insight than that of a ruthlessly indignant social conscience.' (p.213)

Hyde possibly overemphasizes Jefferies' role as a social propagandist, whilst diminishing the conscious artistry of creations such as *The dewy morn*, or 'A true tale of the Wiltshire labourer' (*The Toilers of the Field*) which is something more than 'the factual expose of the feature writer' (p.216).

An important article, best read in conjunction with the later, more sophisticated studies by Ross (60) and Drew (62).

1957

Coveney, Peter J. Mark Twain and Richard Jefferies. In *Poor monkey: the child in literature*. London, Rockliff, 1957. p. 185-191.

For Coveney Richard Jefferies is the purveyor of one crucial perception- the harmonizing and revelational power of Nature, a life-giving force implicitly (and sometimes explicitly) contrasted to the dehumanizing impress of industrial society. *Bevis* is seen as a minor English counterpart of *Huckleberry Finn*, the Peninsula an emotional equivalent of Huck's Territory. *Bevis* and Saint Guido (in *The open air*) belong to the romantic tradition of childhood, savage innocents abroad and at one with Nature. They are the creations of a passionate radicalism, the nearest Jefferies came to dramatizing the philosophy of *The story of my heart*— itself an account, in the Wordsworthian sense, of an education by Nature. 'His work, with all its passionate vehemence, reflects the tension of the human sensibility at the end of the nineteenth century inundated by the dehumanizing town. He heralded a revolution partially successful; but partially forgotten,' (p.191)

Coveney is a proficient literary historian and an astute critic; his thesis is argued persuasively.

54. Looker, Samuel J. Introduction. In *Field and Farm*. London, Phoenix House, 1957. p. 9-24.

Looker tells of his discovery of almost a hundred unsigned or pseudonymous articles by Jefferies which appeared in *The Live Stock Journal and Fancier's Gazette* during 1877 and 1878. Authorship tentatively attributed to Jefferies on stylistic grounds was later confirmed by documentary evidence. The essays reveal a sophisticated and detailed knowledge of farming techniques and machinery and the marketing of agricultural produce in Britain and America.

Looker takes the occasion to repudiate (justifiably) Graham's description of Jefferies as 'a half-educated peasant' (2).

1959

55. Stillinger, Jack. Hopkins' 'skate's heel' in *The Windhover*. Notes and queries, June 1959: 215-216.

Stillinger studies the image of Hopkins' kestrel soaring 'off, off forth on swing,/As a skate's heel sweeps smooth on a bow-ben', and observes that Jefferies has drawn the comparison in 'Birds climbing the air'. However it is certain that the poem antedates the essay. Stillinger concludes: 'Jefferies' comparisons merely serve as contemporary analogues, but they show that at least one other bird-watcher—on "interpreting nature as a poet" (D.N.B.)— also observed the resemblance between skater and bird.' (p.216)

1960

Williamson, Henry. Some nature writers and civilization. In *The Royal Society of Literature of the United Kingdom. Essays by divers hands*, v. 30, 1960: 1-18.

A discursive lecture about Jefferies, Coate Farm, W.H. Hudson, and (of course) Henry Williamson. It contains a mildly lachrymose report of the author's encounter, at Coate, with an ancient woman who had known Jefferies as a youth ('. . . Moony Dick, some called him. A lazy loppet, he was too. A proper atheist...') and an old man at Goring cemetery. "Are you looking for the grave of Jefferies?" "Yes," I replied. "I thought you must be, from your face," he said: "one can always tell a Jefferies lover". "Are there many?" I asked. "Just a stray one now and then, like yourself..." (p.16) Williamson also quotes in full Hudson's account of Jefferies in *Nature in Downland* (7).

1964

57. Macer Wright, D. The country of Richard Jefferies. *Country Life*, v. 136, Oct. 22, 1964: 1099-1101.

A quick reconnaissance of the Chisledon countryside. In 1964 the southern end of Coate Water remained much as Jefferies described it, and the Downs were unchanged. On Liddington Hill 'you can sit on the very spot where he sat & let your gaze wander unfettered over the wide amplitudes which, for him held all felicity.' (p.1101) Includes photographs of Liddington Hill, the house at Coate, and Benny Haylock's thatched cottage at Hodson Bottom.

1965

58. Pritchett, V.S. A Downland Jude. *New Statesman*, Aug. 6, 1965: 188.

A review of Samuel J. Looker's biography, *Richard Jefferies: Man of the fields*. Pritchett is not impressed. He finds the style sometimes deplorable, and the scraps of new material culled from Jefferies' notebooks and letters un-illuminating. His view of the artist is also severe. Assigning Jefferies' later work to 'the literature of disheartenment and self-pity, the Gissing period', he proceeds to delineate a figure almost sensational in its pathos: a displaced personality, failed novelist and mystic, sick, neurotic, humourless, impoverished and unschooled- 'a sort of Jude the Obscure baffled by not being able to put his ideas into words.' He admires without reservation only the rural miniaturist, the limpid pictorial records of *Wild Life in a Southern County* and *The Amateur Poacher*.

Pritchett writes with considerable finesse, although some of his asseverations will hardly bear close scrutiny.

59. Williamson, Henry. Richard Jefferies. *Spectator*, Aug. 20, 1965: 238-239.

Ostensibly a review of Samuel J. Looker's biography, *Richard Jefferies: man of the fields*, although Williamson offers little comment on the book other than that it 'puts everything in'—with the faint suggestion that everything is too much. About Looker himself, his editorial achievement and foibles, he is more forthcoming. Williamson's own enthusiasm is liable to express itself in fantastical observation, as when he compares Jefferies' power of 'super-sensory perception' to the 'sharp, nervous, semi-automatic awareness. . .natural to wild creatures, particularly to birds which migrate and find their way back across deserts, seas,

through mountain passes and past forests and lakes to the very place of their birth and breeding.' (p.238) Williamson suggests that Jefferies' symptoms indicate that he died of cancer.

60. Ross, Donald H. Richard Jefferies and the development of realism. Washington State University research studies, v. 34 no. 3, Sept. 1956: 135-142.

Ross studies Jefferies' development as a novelist in the light of contemporary debate about the value and function of realism in art. He ventured initially to chart the sexual imbroglios of a series of refined and sentimental lovers, probably because such was the established way to construct a novel at that time. Not until 1880, in *Greene Ferne Farm* did Jefferies introduce into his fiction the rural people and places he knew intimately. An idealist by nature, aligned by his experience with the realists, he attempted to accommodate these conflicting impulses by creating romantic protagonists and depicting secondary characters naturalistically. (We might, for instance, compare Felise, heroine in *The Dewy Morn*, with rustic figures like Mary Shaw or old Abner Brown.)

Jefferies' labourers, farmers, millers and stewards are brilliant creations. Ross comments: 'It is only when one has read Hardy and other writers on country life and people, then turned to Jefferies, that he realizes how much literary tradition dominated the others, and how uncompromising Jefferies was in not allowing his imagination to romanticize and modify the nature of the rustics.' (p.138-139). During the last decade of his life Jefferies was undoubtedly influenced by the theories of Zola: a notebook entry would indicate that he contemplated writing an English equivalent of *Les Rougan-Macquart* as early as 1884. Ross finds Jefferies' last novel, *Amaryllis at the Fairy*, naturalistic in structure and tone, and concludes that if he had lived Jefferies may have become one of the most important of the early naturalists in England.

A seminal study of Jefferies' fiction, which hopefully will modify its critical reception, and promote further explication of his influences and techniques.

51. Williams, Raymond. Introduction. In *Hodge and his masters*. London, Macgibbon, 1966. p. vii-xi. (The Pitzroy edition)

Hodge and his masters is ranked with Cobbett's *Rural rides* and Bewick's *Memoir* in terms of its contribution to the social history of rural England. It is also a work of fiction, using the visual techniques of the realist novel whilst disregarding its structural requirements. The most accomplished of the vignettes employ a method of composed observation, moving between individual figures and a way of life,, which imparts significance to each detail, transforming a factual report into a work of art. The imaginative strength of the writing lies in 'the deeply perceived connections between character and society and physical environment.' (p.x)

Williams notes the marginal and somewhat paradoxical relationship of the man to his material—the suburban writer, son of a failed small-holder, recreating the lost country of his adolescence—and the variability of his response toward it. We recognize sometimes the voice of a strenuous humanitarian protest, of 'the committed writer, who has known in depth the whole crisis of this rural civilization and whose attachments are firm and clear.' (p.x) At times we find merely the class reporter supplying his conservative audience with what they wanted

to hear, creating 'not men and women, marked (as he stressed of farmers) by individuality of character, but the gross figure, the abstraction, of Labour or Hodge.' (p.x)

An excellent introduction to some of Jefferies' finest social documentaries: regrettably brief.

1967

62. Drew, Philip. Richard Jefferies and the English countryside. *Victorian studies*, v. 11 no. 2, Dec. 1967: 181-206.

We can reveal most strikingly the breadth of Jefferies' achievement by attempting to relate his work to other well-defined modes of country writing: it embraces and modifies several disparate traditions. In constructing detailed portraits of country society Jefferies combines rustic character sketches in the manner of *Our village* or *Belford Regis* with a more serious antiquarian attempt to record local dialect, habits, and tradition before they disappeared. He belongs also among the great English amateur naturalists, of whom Gilbert White is the most accomplished, although his perception is that of an artist rather than a scientist. He conveys in his finest descriptive passages a sense of present experience, an impression apprehended in its myriad entirety rather than a series of accurately recorded facts. He writes of people as well as of plants and animals, and his preoccupations are practical rather than aesthetic. He is intensely interested in the economics of farming, in the viability of a certain way of using the land, and in the social and economic relationship of farmer and labourer. The countryside is never simply a place of retreat from the rigors of the city. Jefferies, although an imaginative artist, is more akin to Cobbett than the romantic poets: 'they were' both conscious of the countryside as the site of enormous industry, as one of the places where bitter hard work is turned into wealth, and this gives their writing on the country an unremitting grip on fret.' (p.185)

With the exception of Keith's book, *Richard Jefferies; a critical study*, this article offers the most comprehensive and perceptive analysis of Jefferies' art which has appeared to date.

1968

63. Jennings, Elizabeth. Introduction. In *The story of my heart*. London, Macmillan, 1968. p.v-xix.

An intensely sympathetic appreciation of *The story of my heart*, maintaining, without affectation, a rather pleasing solemnity of tone. (This little exercise resembles, in its mannerisms, a sensitive tract for children.) Some of Jefferies' ecstatic declarations are compared to those of more orthodox mystics, Traherne in particular. 'The words in which Jefferies speaks of his visions are often reminiscent of these other mystics and also of St. Augustine, yet his own analysis of the visions is very different from theirs... What they regard as supernatural Jefferies regards as natural.' (p.xii-xiii) Ms Jennings' commentary relies heavily on Keith's analysis of the book and has little unique critical value. A simple, pleasantly awkward piece of writing.

1972

64. Williams, Merryn. Richard Jefferies. In *Thomas Hardy and rural England*. London, Macmillan, 1972. p.33-49

Ms Williams analyses Jefferies' picture of rural society in Wiltshire, his essays into social criticism, and in particular, his shifting attitude toward the plight of the agricultural labourer. She demonstrates effectively his abiding sense of the contrast between the beauty of nature and the degradation of the men who worked in the fields, his obsession with the dehumanizing effect of poverty. Ms Williams sees Jefferies as a conservative who became increasingly radicalized during the last twelve years of his life. If, however, 'Thoughts on the labour Question' is an early work as Woolaston (68) believes, her thesis is considerably weakened.

1974

65. Daniel, Mark. Return to Jefferies' country: the making of a rustic philosopher. *Country life*, v. 156, Dec. 12, 1974: 1850-1851.

A depressing picture of Jefferies' country being gradually invaded by urban development. Provides a history of Coate Farm and the efforts of the Richard Jefferies Society to preserve James Jefferies' house. (Bevis' meadow is about to be covered by car parks, a miniature railway and a children's zoo.) Includes photographs of the Coate Farmhouse and garden where the celebrated mulberry and russet apple trees still survive.

66. Ebbatson, J.R. The Windhover and Richard Jefferies. *English*, v. 23, Spring 1974: 26-29.

A rather elaborate discussion of the parallel use of the 'skate's heel' image, noted by Mercer (46) and Stillinger (55). Observing that Jefferies could not have read Hopkin's poems, and that there is no evidence that Hopkins encountered Jefferies' work, Ebbatson isolates several instances in which the poet and the essayist saw the world alike. Jefferies, for instance, reflects on nature's pined beauty, her fondness for spot-markings, in 'The pine wood' (*The open air*). Ebbatson also ventures to detect an adumbration of inscape in Jefferies' passionate cry, voiced in 'Nature and books': I want the soul of the flowers.'

67. Lumsden, R.J. Richard Jefferies; humanist mystic. *New Humanist*, v.89, Jan. 1974: p.300-301.

For Lumsden *The Story of My Heart*, 'a record of seventeen years of questing, restless, courageous thought' (p.300) is Jefferies' finest achievement, and he provides a resume of its ideas. It remains however unclear why Jefferies is described as a 'Humanist', or what meaning the author attaches to the term.

1975

68. Woolaston, Graeme. Richard Jefferies: Thoughts on the labour question. Notes and queries, Mar. 1975: 118-119.

Salt (5), Edward Thomas, and more recently Merryn Williams (64) have cited Thoughts on the labour Question as proof that Jefferies' political thinking grew increasingly radical towards the end of his life. Woolaston believes this work was written much earlier than has been supposed. Although a drastically edited version was first published by the *Pall Mall gazette* in 1891, stylistic and palaeographical evidence indicates that the manuscript was completed in 1877 or 1878.

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