

**LAPSUS CALAMI
AND OTHER VERSES**

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Lapsus Calami and Other Verses by James Kenneth Stephen

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JAMES KENNETH STEPHEN

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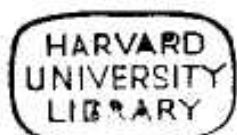
JAMES KENNETH STEPHEN

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1898

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LAPSUS CALAMI

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QUO MUSA TENDIS?

Printed November 1891

LAPSUS CALAMI AND OTHER VERSES

Collected Edition with Biographical Introduction and Portrait. Printed June 1896, Reprinted January 1898.

INTRODUCTION.

JAMES KENNETH STEPHEN was born in London on the 25th of February, 1859. He was the second son of his father, who afterwards became Mr Justice Stephen. In 1868 he went to a school at Southborough, near Tunbridge Wells, kept by the Rev. W. C. Wheeler, and in the following year to the Rev. W. T. Browning's school at Thorpe Mandeville, Banbury, which then had a great reputation as a preparatory school for College at Eton. In 1871 he was elected a Colleger at Eton, being placed second on the list, and he remained at Eton until Easter 1878, being the pupil first of Mr Oscar Browning, and afterwards of Mr F. W. Cornish, now Vice-Provost. While he was at school he worked hard at such of his studies as particularly interested him, and as hard as he thought practically necessary at those that did not. The consequence was that he distinguished himself greatly as an essay-writer, and a student of history, and did not especially distinguish himself either in classics or mathematics. He always did well enough to obtain promotion in the School on the earliest

opportunity, and he obtained an Eton Scholarship at King's, which had always been the object he set before himself, in 1878, when he had attained the usual age for leaving school.

In athletic pursuits his fortune was not dissimilar. Being big, heavy, and very strong, he took naturally to the "Wall game" of football, in which, I think from the first, he always occupied the position of "Wall," and for summer diversion became a "wet-bob." He got his "College Wall" colours, if I remember right, in 1874, and was Captain, or "Keeper of the Wall" in 1876 and 1877. In the former of those years his team terminated a long series of successive drawn matches with the "Oppidans," beating them by four "shies" to nothing, and the following year the Collegers won by ten "shies" to nothing. I believe he was one of the best "Walls" who ever played at the game, and for at least ten years—that is, nearly the rest of his life—he took a great interest in it, and seldom failed to take an eleven to play the College team of the year. In rowing he was not eminent, a certain stiffness of joints, and perhaps some disinclination to take the pains about various small things necessary to proficiency in that art, preventing his rowing in any of the "Upper Boats" except the "Monarch," to which he belonged in 1877. He could, however, for a short time, get an astonishing amount of work out of an oar, and I have heard an accomplished oarsman bitterly deplore his inability or unwillingness to learn to "get forward."

Two of the poems at the beginning of *Quo Musa Tendis?*, now printed at pp. 123-127 of this volume, show the strength and duration of his affection for Eton. Since the original appearance of *The Old School List* a melancholy interest has been added to the concluding stanza:

There were two good fellows I used to know,
—How distant it all appears!
We played together in football weather,
And messed together for years:
Now one of them's wed, and the other's dead
So long that he's hardly missed
Save by us, who messed with him years ago:
But we're all in the old School List.

The "one of them" first-mentioned in the fifth line was Harry Chester Goodhart, late Professor of Latin at Edinburgh University. He died in April 1895, at the age of thirty-seven, the last survivor of the mess of three.

In October 1878 James went into residence at King's, and speedily became one of the best-known undergraduates of his time. He read at Cambridge in much the same way as he had done his lessons at Eton. His University distinctions were that he obtained the "Members' Prize" for an English Essay, the first "Winchester Reading Prize" for reading aloud—a curious competition that many Cambridge men will remember, and the first Whewell Scholarship in International Law. He was also bracketed first in the first class in the History Tripos in 1881, a success