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GRANTED THAT KEYNES was the most influential economist of his generation, the question that other economists and wide-awake laymen have pondered is, Why? What was the touchstone of this great success? If this biography answers that question it is the book they want.

The explanation begins with the Norman Conquest when Keynes' ancestors took root in England. It had been a family of substance for centuries when Keynes was born in 1883. His father, a distinguished don at Cambridge University, devoted himself to logic, political economy, and administration; his mother, a graduate of Cambridge's first college for women, was a pioneer in social work, some of which was taken over by public agencies. Both outlived him. He had every encouragement to endeavor as measured by the highest standards, and he apparently inherited his lifelong interest in improvement and reform.

So potent does Harrod consider the influence of Keynes' background and student years at Cambridge that he devotes to them a third of this personal biography, as he calls this magnificent volume.

Economists know the outline of Keynes' work in economic thought and public affairs. They know his books and many of his multitudinous articles and speeches. Space here allows only reminders. But Harrod, who worked with Keynes, goes into all of this at length, with manifest understanding. Of each book he gives the setting, motivation, aims, method of work, outlines the influence or effect. Each of the great public events and movements with which Keynes was associated is covered.

Influences of Keynes' years at Cambridge differ greatly in intensity and variety from those in our universities. Although he rowed and played tennis, golf, and bridge, collected books and displayed keen interest in all the arts, he was early known as a brilliant student in discussion, debate, and studies—dominated by mathematics, political economy, logic, philosophy, psychology. At first he was under the influence of Alfred Marshall—not always. He was soon drawn into the highly selective and mentally stimulating small groups that these ancient universities foster, in which seminar and less formal methods reach their peak of excellence.

He was so advanced in thought and outlook that the line is faint between his student and faculty

years. His intellectual habits intensified. His famous Monday Evenings, developed from the Political Study Club, continued until the first World War. He worked with the Young Turks. He founded a liberal weekly. Throughout life he maintained close association with Cambridge, often at no salary. Always he looked for the brilliant minds among each generation of undergraduates, not limiting his selections to economists. They were brought together in small groups and given every mental stimulation he could contrive. They sharpened their keen wits, potency of ideas, power of expression, on each other. Some of the lustrous intellects in England developed from these groups. Keynes kept in touch with them. Undoubtedly it was through these individuals that he radiated much of his influence.

The manifold benefits that Keynes extended to the arts widened his influence tremendously. His early leanings were greatly stimulated by his association for a dozen years with the brilliant Bloomsbury Group which had wide influence in England and beyond. Stephen Leslie, the philosopher, Lytton Strachey, the individualistic and iconoclastic biographer, Virginia and Leonard Woolf who opened new vistas in literature, Duncan Grant, the forward-looking painter, and many more, formed a nucleus in London, fermenting with ideas, rebelling against the stuffy and regimented, seeking new ways and new outlooks. He never lost touch with them. Later such diverse spirits as the Masefields, the Sitwells, Lowe Dickinson, Bertrand Russell, G. E. Moore, Richard Kahn, and Joan Robinson were among his intimates.

From undergraduate years Keynes frequently traveled on the Continent, often with celebrated persons who had invaluable connections. Later, others felt gratified to accompany him. He drew everywhere minds that were forceful and penetrating, he loved excitement and adventure, in reality and in the realm of ideas.

His sponsorship of the arts made him eminent in fields wherein economists rarely venture. He helped to establish the Art Theater in Cambridge which presented only the best; he was active in the London Artists Association, the Arts Council of Great Britain, the National Gallery; when London was half in ruins, he founded the Committee for the Encouragement of Arts throughout Great

Britain. He devoted himself primarily to the finances, in which these instrumentalities are notoriously weak. In England's dark hours he broadcast his ideas on Relation between Art and the State. To help France make its war repayments he coaxed an appropriation from the Treasury to buy Degas' paintings for the National Gallery.

Keynes' surprising marriage to Lydia Lopokova, the prima ballerina of the Russian ballet, is to be counted among the salient influences in his life, and, in turn, a cause of his influence. Harrod divides Keynes life into the phase of criticism, 20 years; the creative phase, 10 years. The strict discipline, work, training, and control, to which the Russian ballerinas are subjected, told her what he needed for creative endeavor; her spontaneity, poise, perception, and finely attuned mind enabled her to create the right atmosphere without too much separation from friends and activities. She was with him on all his arduous later journeys, knowing that, through a heart ailment, his stressful ardent life hung by a thread. Marrying Lydia was the best thing he ever did, said Mrs. Alfred Marshall—and she should know.

Is it necessary to outline here the great phases of public life, national and international, with which Keynes was associated? A listing could fill page. Harrod goes into each in detail. The long controversy over the gold standard in England and the Bank of England, his management of England's external finances, the grinding work at Versailles and Paris after the first World War, the lost battle for economically repayable reparations from Germany, drawing up a new currency for Russia, the Keynes Plan which perhaps foreshadowed the Marshall Plan, the Council of Four, the Treaty of Peace. These are only a few.

Keynes spoke and published throughout, reaching for ever wider audiences. He began writing for the most influential newspapers and foreign journals, with an epigrammatic brilliance and cogency. He was awarded a peerage in 1942.

By World War II he believed that his vocation lay in public affairs and high international politics. His work relating to the International Mone-

tary Fund, International Trade Organization, World Economic Conference, International Bank, Bretton Woods, and the American loan negotiations, necessitating eight stays in this country, is well-known. Many of our public figures are on these pages. Keynes was frequently ill but he worked with seeming undimmed vigor. If his always relentless methods of debate (with a soft voice) at times grew embittered, in general he summoned his tact and persuasive powers to help to save Britain in the crisis.

As Harrod apparently has somewhat the same remarkable complex of talents as Keynes, this biography probably ranks with the best. His declared aim is to give a balanced story and appraisal but many pages glow with a fascination of their own. His characterizations of Keynes and these celebrities whose lives were intertwined are striking vignettes yet other chapters disclose a panorama of the social, intellectual, and political life of the times. His summing up is masterly although he says the time is not ripe for a final appraisal. As Keynes was a rationalist Harrod attempts a rational explanation of his influence. He examines, in a way that many readers will find convincing, the charges of inconsistency in the light of Keynes' advancing and pioneering spirit, and the charges of too great ability to make spectacular personal financial gain. He traces Keynes' sometimes fluctuating influence and popularity. He does not offer his valuations alone, although he classes Keynes with Adam Smith and Ricardo. Characterizations are quoted from Alfred Marshall and other friends and critics through the years.

His own belief, well substantiated, seems to be that Keynes' influence came from an amazing amalgamation of heredity, intellectual environments, a keen and exploring mind of a scintillating quality, remarkable diversity of interests and contacts, amazing versatility, a liking for concentrated and sustained work, courage and daring, and endless resource and ideas.

So the memorial services in 1946 at Westminster Abbey and at the Cathedral in Washington did not mark the end, for ideas do not die with a man.

*Caroline Sherman*