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# A BOOK ABOUT A WRITER OF BOOKS

## Wells, the Propagandist and Glorified Journalist

WHATEVER else may be said of H. G. Wells, it would probably be admitted by every one that he has one of the most alert, active and interested minds of his generation. It would not be so generally admitted that he is "the Superman in the street," as Sidney Dark, editor of Jack O'London's Weekly, calls him in the subtitle of his book, "An Outline of Wells." (G. P. Putnam's Sons.)  
There is a compliment in this title much more generous than the one in the subtitle. It involves the suggestion that Wells is so big and so varied that it is as futile for any one to write more than an outline of him, as it was for Wells himself to attempt to write more than an outline of history.

Mr. Dark, in his outline, looks on Mr. Wells with much greater approval than Mr. Wells looked on the world in his outline.

INDEED, he not only holds that Mr. Wells has an alert, active and interested mind, but that it is one of the biggest and best minds of the time. No one will deny that it is an unusual mind. Wells could not have risen to his present eminence if he had not possessed great qualities. His origins are of the humblest. His grandfather was head gardener for Lord de Lisle in Kent. His father kept a small shop in London and added to his income by becoming a professional cricket player. His mother was the daughter of a small innkeeper. She had been a lady's maid and when he was twelve years old she became a housekeeper in a large country house. Wells was intended to be a small shopkeeper like his father, but he preferred something else, and through his own exertions obtained an education and began to write.

Mr. Dark remarks that Wells is not a gentleman, meaning in the English sense of the word; and he says that Dickens was not a gentleman, either. He might have gone further and have said that many of the greatest English men of letters were not gentlemen. Shakespeare was the son of a glover-maker. Milton's father was a scrivener. Bunyan was a tinker and the son of a tinker. Johnson's father was a bookseller. Marlowe was the son of a shoemaker, and Meredith the son of a tailor. And the father of Kents kept a livery stable. The English aristocracy, with some notable exceptions, has not been distinguished for its intellectual activities. There was a time when its members could not even read and hired men to do their reading for them.

So Wells is following precedent in England, when, although not a gentleman born, he lifts himself into the aristocracy of intellect.

HE IS still in his prime, and no one can tell what he will yet do. Therefore, Mr. Dark's book will have to be followed at some time in the future by other books attempting to put him in his proper place in the history of English thought. Those books will certainly be written because Wells cannot be ignored, and they will be part of

## SOME RECENT BOOKS

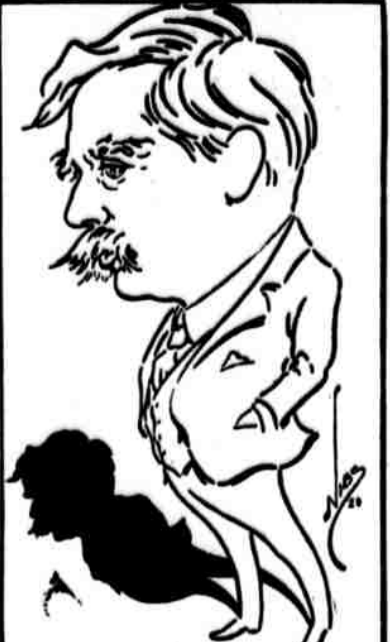
"HURRICANE WILLIAMS," that black-browed, but likable South Sea pirate who always has appeared as the central character in "Savages" and "Wild Blood," now has a book named after him, "Hurricane Williams" (Hobbs Merrill). Gordon Young gives him merely a "walk on part. Although the author of Williams is well throughout the book he makes his appearances only briefly, coming out of the dark sea at opportune moments to set things right when other pirates, bloodthirsty and as ruthless as any who ever sailed the main with Kidd, are becoming a bit too obstreperous.  
Mr. Young's new book can be said to be a good sequel to the others. It has action in every page and its characters are drawn with a fidelity to detail that is surprising. Of course it would not be a young book without a strange heroine and concluding battle that leaves a ship's deck running red with gore. But the reader will be rushing ahead so interestingly that he won't stop to compile a fatality list.

MRS. LEE THAYER gets the usual mystery yarn one better in her latest story, "Q. E. D." (Doubleday, Page & Co.), by making the search for the means of the usual murder more mysterious than the question of the identity of the mysterious criminal. "There is a woman's shriek in the night in a noisy and crowded field a man's body is found, the throat cut and the neck broken. One set of footprints—the victim's—lead to the body. There is no other clue.  
This is a sufficient framework for Mrs. Thayer to build up a mystery tale full of surprises and whirls convincing in its deductions and denouements. Which is more than can be said of many such stories.

THE successful writer of advertisements selects the type in which they are to be printed and arranges the display so that it is as effective as possible. Nevertheless, many advertisements are so badly arranged that they do not yield the returns which they should. Benjamin Sherbo, a typography expert, has published a little book, "Effective Type for Advertising," which should be useful to every advertising writer. Mr. Sherbo, who writes the book as well as publishes it, gives specimens of good typography and bad typography and he explains why the good is good and the bad is bad. The first rule is that the advertisement should attract attention and his second is that it should be easy to read. The rest of his book is elaboration of these two principles.

THE latest volume in the tales of Chekhov which the Macmillans are publishing is entitled "The Cook's Wedding." It is a collection of stories about Russian children, with a sort of burlesque of the famous Sherlock Holmes method added to give variety. The detective story is "The Swedish Match" and tells of the efforts of the London officers to discover who killed a man who had been seen in his own house for several days.

THE story of the development of the human mind is the subject of "The History of the Human Mind" by George Santayana. It is a study of the human mind from the point of view of the philosopher. The book is a study of the human mind from the point of view of the philosopher. The book is a study of the human mind from the point of view of the philosopher.



H. G. WELLS  
A cartoon of the novelist from John O'London's Weekly

## RHYTHMICAL FOOLING

An Entertaining Anthology of English and American Vers de Societe  
Whoever likes rhythmical fooling will find much pleasure in turning over the pages of "The Little Game of Society Verse" (Houghton Mifflin Company), compiled by Claude M. Fuess and Harold C. Stearns. The title does not give the correct impression of the contents of the volume, for "society verse" in English connotes several different shades of meaning from that contained in the French "vers de societe," of which the phrase purports to be a translation.

The editors of the volume have selected a pretty taste in their selections. Starting with John Donne and Shakespeare and ending with Sara Fuller and Charles W. Cullen they have included typical light verse coming within this classification. Of course, Calverley is represented, and Austin Dobson, and Fraed, and London, and Robert Louis Stevenson, William Moore and two by S. Weir Mitchell. One of the Mitchell poems is "An Old Man to an Old Maid." Frederick Locker-Lampson is represented by seven pieces, Robert Louis Stevenson, William Moore Story and Swinburne by one each. In all, about seventy-five different writers have been drawn on to fill the volume of 350 pages.

The book has for a preface an interesting essay on vers de societe based on the dictum of Brander Matthews that such verse should be distinguished by "brevity, brilliancy and buoyancy" and admitting that Horace set the pattern on which there has been no improvement. There are three indexes, one of titles, another of first lines and the last of authors.

## NEW BOOKS

General  
TEN YEARS AT THE COURT OF SAINT JAMES. By James H. Duffin. Boston: New York: E. P. Dutton & Co.  
The author, a German diplomat of the era of Lord Salisbury.  
MR. FAUST. By Arthur Davison Ficke. New York: E. P. Dutton & Co.  
A much modernized version of the Faust legend, but told in classic blank verse. Now on at the Provincetown Theatre, in New York.  
UN METODO PRACTICO PARA APRENDER A ESCRIBIR POR MEDIO DE LA TACTA. By Carlos de Caceres. A guide to touch-typing and business letters. Translated by Carlos de Caceres. New York: The World Book Co.  
OLD EUROPE'S SUICIDE. By Helgarder. General. Boston: New York: E. P. Dutton & Co.  
The writer of this chronicle of European conditions from 1812 to 1912 is a member of the British general staff and was in the West Indies during the Boer War and in the Balkans and was also a member of the British delegation to the League of Nations at Versailles. In this brief and graphic history of Europe in trying times he sees the future of the world of all his readers.  
OUR ELEVEN BILLION DOLLARS. By Robert Mountrier. New York: The Scribner.  
A study of Europe's debt to the United States.

THE JEWS. By Hilaire Belloc. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company.  
A study of this subject by a noted publicist, soldier and parliamentarian.  
THE ENORMOUS ROOM. By E. E. Cummins. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company.  
A narrative showing the seamy side of the life of a man who has lived in a French prison camp. It is tinged by a strain of humor running through it at times almost morbid realism.  
THE PSYCHOLOGY OF SOCIAL LIFE. By Dr. William D. Howells. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company.  
Dr. Howells' treatise authoritatively sets within the compass of the sciences of such social aspects of such instincts as sex, habit, and custom, and many other things. He also advances a theory as to social reform.

THE LIFE OF DONALD G. MITCHELL. By William D. Howells. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company.  
The story of a great scholar, a man of letters and a leading figure in the life of wild activities has written a series of nature studies of keen observation and profound understanding of the subject. The book is written with literary and artistic construction by Charles Livingston Bull and is a masterpiece of the art of the biographer. Mitchell appears as striking and appropriate.

THE DARK HOUSE. By E. A. Waller. New York: E. P. Dutton & Co.  
One of Mr. Waller's strong books, with a courageous and unforgettable hero, an upstart person, who despite a dark background of circumstances and reversals, triumphs at the end.

THE SECOND PERSON SINGULAR. By William D. Howells. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company.  
A romance of very modern young people against a background of old-fashioned family life.  
CROSS CURRENTS. By Katherine Havens Taylor. Philadelphia: George W. Jacobs Company.  
The story of a great surgeon but ruthless man and a very real woman of today.  
THE HIDDEN ROAD. By Wadsworth. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company.  
The story of a haunting personality changes the lives of those about her.  
A SON OF THE SAHARA. By Louise Garnett. New York: Macmillan Company.  
The story of an accidental girl and a Mohammedan lover, with clashes of race and religion.  
LOVE AND DIANA. By Concordia Merril. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company.  
A romance of love and adventure beginning in Europe and ending in Africa, contrasting the life of a young girl with the life of a young man.

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FOLLETT in The Literary Review: "In a way which baffles as much as it delights, one feels that 'Lilia Chenoworth' is a brilliant triumph, and at the same time a tragic victim, of its sheer art of presentation."

WEAVER in The Brooklyn Eagle: "'Lilia Chenoworth' is one of the finest books of the year. . . . quite adequate were he trying merely to turn out a good yarn. . . . The book is far and away above the usual run."

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