



MARY E. WILKINS.

"Ernest Russell" and write his own biography for the benefit of Mr. Drane? Were I to accuse others as wrongfully as I am myself accused, I should be served, and deservedly so, with endless writs for libel. Personally I should like to be told how to avoid being known at all save by my books—for, as the *Court Circular* obligingly says of me, "It would be much better if she could sink her personality altogether and let the public judge of her simply and solely by her writings." This is precisely what I have always desired, but apparently this is not allowed. If I refuse to grant "interviews," they are straightway invented on hearsay; and though I decline to be photographed, "fancy" likenesses of me are constantly published. (I have a scrap-book containing various portraits of myself which, thank God, are not me.) If I travel ten miles distant I am reported as having "high times in Italy and on the Riviera," and quite recently I was accredited with the ownership of a house in Venice with a garden "covered with vines," where I wrote *The Master Christian*. If you, sir, will give me any talisman of protection against this wholly undesired, vulgar and objectionable notoriety, I shall forever be grateful. I cannot very well live altogether in

one room and refuse to see any human creature, but as matters stand (owing, I suppose, to the "smart" journalist's greed for "copy") I can neither walk, drive, talk nor entertain friends without being made the subject of a paragraph, by which the paragraphist possibly may make half a crown. I do not grudge him (or her) the money, but I would pay more than a dozen half crowns to be let alone.

MARIE CORELLI.



We present our readers on this page with a recent portrait of Miss Mary E. Wilkins, whose volume of short stories is reviewed elsewhere.

Miss.
Wilkins.

This seems a good place to mention a little psychological problem that has been puzzling us for some time with regard to Miss Wilkins. When *Eben Holden* first appeared, the publishers of that book sent it to Miss Wilkins, who, in return, gave them her opinion of it. This opinion she expressed in the following words: "*Eben Holden* is simply adorable!" At any rate, this is the opinion which the publishers disseminated all over the country in their advertising columns. Now there is no

reason on earth why Miss Wilkins should not have been very much pleased with *Eben Holden*; but somehow or other we can't quite imagine her expressing her pleasure in those particular words. They don't sound like Miss Wilkins as we have come to think of her from reading her books and from studying her portrait. We wonder whether she really said the thing in just that way.

In the opening paragraph of *THE BOOKMAN* for October we told the story of a speech made by a very widely known and successful author on the occasion of the presentation of the dramatised form of his novel in his native city. There were no names given, but probably every one who read these paragraphs decided that the writer we meant was Mr. Charles Major. As a matter of fact, we did.

Since the appearance of the October number we have received several letters from people who were present on the evening that *When Knighthood Was in Flower* was first played at English's Opera House, Indianapolis. The writers of these letters are unanimous in insisting that while the story was in the main correct, an error in the quotation of Mr. Major's remarks had the effect of utterly perverting the meaning. We have gone over the matter very carefully, and we believe that a frank apology is due to Mr. Major. We are very glad to be at liberty to print the following stenographic report of Mr. Major's speech on the evening in question:

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN: It is rather a difficult matter for me to know just exactly what to say to you, except to thank you very, very sincerely for your kind reception of this play and of my book. Less than one hundred yards

from this spot, and I am glad to say less than one hundred years ago, I was born [laughter and applause], and I, therefore, feel for Indianapolis, your city, which is also my city, an affection which clings with tender pathos to the scenes of a happy childhood. My childhood in Indianapolis was a happy one. Here I underwent all the ills that childish flesh is heir to. [Laughter.] Here I had the whooping cough and the mumps and the stone bruise on my heel, sore toe, sore shins and sore head. I would that I could have them all again. [Laughter and applause.] To paraphrase one of the most beautiful lines in English poetry—you will know who wrote it when I say it—"The joys made out of ills like them are good enough for me." Here I learned to fight [laughter], and I hope I have not forgotten how. Here I learned to bear meekly the honours of infrequent victory, and here I learned to bear proudly the pains and ills of frequent and inglorious defeat. These are qualities which I believe are of infinite value to one who has to stand in the great white light—a target—for the ever ready and ever watchful critics. However, I have no fault to find with them. I have found them a goodly, kindly folk. They have been too kind to me. I thank them. As to this play, which you have received so kindly to-night, I feel that I can speak impersonally and without vanity when I say that I feel that it is all that I could expect. With the clever Paul Kester to dramatise it and the brilliant Julia Marlowe to play it [great applause], I think a dramatisation of the unabridged dictionary itself would be a success. [Renewed applause.] I really do not know what else to say to you, except to again thank you, and thank you, and thank you. I feel that I owe so much, not only for your reception of this play, but for the great kindness Indianapolis has shown me. I have had nothing but kindness from Indianapolis and Indiana—the greatest city and greatest State on earth. [Tremendous applause and cheering.] So I thank you again and again, and, although it is a little early yet, I wish you all a merry Christmas and a happy New Year. [Great applause.]



A BALLADE OF AMBITION .

Some aim to write scholastic lore
In words aglow with learning's light ;
While others would in verse outpour
Their happy souls so clear and white.
Some would achieve Fame's glorious height
By breezy screeds of babbling brooks ;
But as for me, I'd fain indite
One of the Six Best-selling Books.

With stirring tales of sea or shore
Some would the Torch of Fame ignite ;
Others Parnassus-ward would soar
On Hymns and Odes of interest slight.
Some, commendation would invite
By "Aids to Health" or "Hints to Cooks ;"
But I would publish if I might
One of the Six Best-selling Books.

'Tis easy. All one needs is Gore,
A Shipwreck or a Frantic Fight ;
Hints of fierce oaths the villain swore,
Some saws and aphorisms trite.
Although these elements seem quite
Enough for certain scribbling crooks,
I reach but in my fancy's flight
One of the Six Best-selling Books.

ENVOI :

Oh, Fame, I ask not gilding bright,
Nor brave *éditions de luxe* ;
But grant that some day I may write
One of the Six Best-selling Books.

Carolyn Wells.

AN INTERVIEW WITH NOBODY

A new star has arisen in the literary firmament in the person of Mr. Zero O. Nobody, whose recent book, *No Matter What* (being the Memoirs of Cypher Little, late major of His Majesty's Naughty-Ninth Nincompoops), has sold five hundred thousand copies before publication.

Mr. Nobody was born and erased in Nowhere, New Jersey, and is descended from a long and insignificant line of ancestors. On his mother's side he comes of the famous Anybodys of Eniol Place. He is now living at his villa home, "No-where-much," a charming house of only

one short story, painted mediocchre, with a windmill in the rear.

Mr. Nobody disclaims all the usual tricks by which authors attain success. "I have no methods, no style, no knowledge," he says. "I depend entirely upon Nothing for inspiration, and leave the rest to my publishers."

Mr. Nobody's study is characteristic of this rising young nonentity, filled with nameless knickknacks and adorned with old negatives. The walls are covered with books ; but, in accordance with the prevailing literary fashion, they are not a mere conglomerate of different authors,