

## ►► The New Books ◀◀



### The Week's Reading

**Wellington**  
By Philip Guedalla  
Harper's, \$4.00

Our knowledge of the Duke of Wellington seems to be limited to the fact that he was something disastrous that happened to Napoleon. He appears to have been much more than that; in fact, a man in his own right, living and acting in times that were made exciting by many phenomena, of which Napoleon was only one. But he had a saving reputation for dullness which served as a No Trespass sign on biographers reconnoitering historical ground for likely subjects. Unlike Napoleon, who contrived to live in the full glare of history almost all the time, Wellington, English gentleman that he was, became quite peeved once when he learned that an old army associate was taking down what he was saying. The reputation for dullness has saved him, more or less, for a biographer worthy of his steel. To move from Palmerston to Wellington is, after all, an ascent. Almost any one can attend to such obvious subject matter as Napoleon and almost every one has. But it calls for a man of genius to unwind the thick wrappings of legend, when those wrappings have served as camouflage, and reveal a man, or a woman beneath. Consider, in passing, what Mr. Strachey did with, and to, the good dull queen, Victoria. This is not to say that Mr. Guedalla chooses dull reputations that the flash of his own wit may shine the more brightly against the texture of that subject. But every writer is justified in expressing his delight in having met, superbly, the challenge of a dull reputation. Mr. Guedalla has earned every wisecrack he has made in *Wellington*.

His book is both solid and brilliant; it is a "Life" in the sense that it is a full-length portrait, in all the changes and mutations of his character and career and against a carefully etched background of the times in which he lived and the issues and controversies which engaged him. The brilliance of Mr. Guedalla's performance is not achieved at a sacrifice of detail. *Wellington* is almost 500 pages

in length, and they are solid pages. This is a biography, not a vaudeville performance or a *jeu d'esprit*. There is, for example, a very painstaking analysis of Wellington's tactics on the field of battle which made him the great soldier he was; there certainly is nothing "entertaining" about that part of the book. After reading that part, however, you will understand why Wellington was the greatest soldier of his time, but you regret—as so many of his contemporaries must have—the lack of Nelsonic heroics or of Napoleonic dash in his greatness. But Wellington's idea of a general's job was to win battles at the least possible cost in men, not to be afraid to retreat and let the enemy charge against the invincible English square. There was in Wellington, in spite of all that Mr. Guedalla could do about it, a distressing consistency and a practically unbroken progression in his career from minor success to major success, from knight to baron to earl to marquess and, finally, to duke, and a duke he was almost as many times as there were Allies against Napoleon. He was Prime Minister and Commander in Chief of the British Army and a field marshal in almost half a dozen other armies. He might have become King of Spain. Americans certainly think of his career as having begun at Waterloo, but by the time he had won that battle the English people had given him so many titles and so many honors that all they could do was vote him another grant of several hundred thousand pounds sterling. As a civilian, that is as Member of the Cabinet and Prime Minister, his conduct was consistent with the attitude of a soldier rather than with that of a politician or statesman. He opposed Reform in all consistency; the English people might have liked him for a longer period than they did had he chosen to lead the mobs rather than to oppose them.

Mr. Guedalla takes great and rewarding pains with the formative years and influences of the Duke, who started life as plain Arthur Wesley, the second son of an Irish earl who loved music. We

learn with amazement that Arthur Wesley loved music too and played the violin, but broke his fiddle when he learned that it might interfere with his career. It remained for Mr. Guedalla to make known to us the ironic note in history of Sir Arthur Wellesley stopping off at St. Helena ten years before Napoleon was to have that place imposed upon him as a residence, and to track down the very book in which the young subaltern may first have discovered the secret of the British square.

The book ends on a lovely idyllic note; the Duke, over eighty, in his great country house, playing with his grandchildren and being Dooked by the thoroughly unimpressed children of his neighbors. Mr. Guedalla has given us more than a life of the Iron Duke and a picture of his times; he has given us a study of the English character in one of its typical representations.

HARRY SALPETER.

**Only Yesterday**  
By Frederick Lewis Allen  
Harper & Brothers, \$3.00  
**It Seems Like Yesterday**  
By Russel Crouse  
Doubleday, Doran, \$5.00

It was only yesterday, as Mr. Allen says, but the effect of reading his history of the post-war decade is a strange remoteness; about many of the manifestations of those years the true sense is entirely lacking. When did we play Mah Jong? When were we saying with Coué: "Every day in every way I am getting better and better." When did we weep, and the world weep with us, for the death of Valentino? And how did we get that way? The truth is, it was not a new economic era; it was a big spree. The war raised us to a tremendous emotional pitch; all too soon for us it was over, leaving us regimented for exploitation and hot for action. We got both, good and plenty. Mr. Allen has written a grand story of those cockeyed times,



### What to Read

#### FICTION

**Maid in Waiting**, by John Galsworthy: Scribners. A quiet drama of English life. Readers of Mr. Galsworthy's Forsyte chronicles will find a few old friends.

**The Almond Tree**, by Grace Zaring Stone: Bobbs, Merrill. The story of three sisters.

**Westward Passage**, by Margaret Ayer Barnes: Houghton Mifflin. On a transatlantic steamer a happily married woman falls in love again with her divorced husband.

**Malaisie**, by Henri Fauconnier: Macmillan. Life in the Malay jungles.

**Two Against Scotland Yard**, by David Frome: Farrar & Rinehart. A readable murder mystery.

#### NON-FICTION

**The Care and Feeding of Adults**, by Logan Clendening: Knopf. A book against cranks and in behalf of those who fall for the crank's schemes.

**Theodore Roosevelt, A Biography**, by Henry F. Pringle: Harcourt, Brace. The first full and impartial biography of T. R.

**The Work, Wealth and Happiness of Mankind**, by H. G. Wells: Doubleday, Doran. The third part of Mr. Wells's massive trilogy.

**Bernard Shaw**, by Frank Harris. Simon & Schuster: An unconventional "unauthorized" biography.

**Free Wheeling**, by Ogden Nash: Simon & Schuster. Amusing light verse.

shrewd, sound and complete, from Harding's "normalcy" to Hoover's "conditions are fundamentally sound." You will read it, I predict, with some of the old excitement. Some of it will make you grin. Do you remember the King Kleagles and the Imperial Kludds? Some of it will make you wince. The Harding scandals are pieced together and ably presented. And some of it will make you gag. For example, the Gospel According to Bruce Barton and Rotary, introducing Christ as the first go-getter and Moses as the leading realtor of his day. A charming, mad and often ugly decade. If you are opposed to war, keep Mr. Allen's book for ready reference; for if war is hell, what are such fruits of peace as Teapot Dome, the Ohio gang, the Sacco-Vanzetti case, bath tub gin, and red hot mammas?

What next? Mr. Allen looks back for a wistful moment to the Victorian scenes depicted in Russel Crouse's gift book for the Christmas trade. But between those days and these stand the war and the peace with all their implications. And after all, the twenties were not entirely wasted. We have, though Mr. Allen is not so satisfactory a historian here, the basis of a healthier attitude toward sex. The fallacy of prohibition has been demonstrated for reasonable minds. The myth of the superman has been exploded. And we are just as rich as we ever were—actually.

PARKHURST WHITNEY.

**The Unknown War**  
By Winston S. Churchill  
Scribners, \$5.00

As Mr. Churchill suggests in his preface, the attention of the English-speaking world throughout 1914-18 was fastened almost exclusively upon the western front. The conflict between Russia and the Central Empires forms, for most of us, a war literally unknown. This is the first satisfactory story of the East, with its great victories of Tannenberg, the Masurian Lakes, Lodz and Warsaw.

Mr. Churchill, as a member of the British war cabinet, early became a passionate "Easterner," one of those who held that the war would be won or lost in Poland, Serbia and at Gallipoli. In *The Unknown War* he has a chance to defend and explain this belief, and he does this convincingly. The failure of the Allies, once the trench warfare of the western front became a bloody, ruinous stalemate, to take decisive action in the East he ascribes wholly to "the mighty authority of General Joffre," before whom, he testifies, Lord Kitchener habitually yielded. He relates with wrath and sympathy the wiping out of the isolated Serbian army by von Mackensen, and records his own resignation soon afterwards from the Asquith government



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NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS

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To the Editor of  
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For many years your readers have been reminded at Christmas time of the big family of little children who face a fatherless Christmas in prison-shadowed homes. May I again voice a plea on their behalf, which I hope will call forth a loving response from happier homes.

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So much has been said of gangsters and racketeers and their terrible deeds that I want to ask our friends to remember that there are thousands of men in prison of a very different type, who are patiently learning their lesson and whose families are thoroughly worthy and desperately in need of our help.

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