

**DURING THE** three-week period I was on holiday, a number of familiar faces disappeared forever from the literary scene: John Macrae, colorful and doughty publisher of the old school; Frederick Niven, author of that neglected masterpiece, "Justice of the Peace"; Ralph Henry Barbour, whose "Crimson Sweater," "Weatherby's Inn," and "Honor of the School" were delights of my boyhood; John Thomason, swashbuckling historian of World War I, and author of "Fix Bayonets"; Joe Lincoln, who rewrote the same Cape Cod chronicle year after year to the never-ending delight of an audience that asked for nothing more; Irvin Cobb, outstanding American humorist; and—most distressing to me personally—lovable, querulous, affection-craving old Hendrik Van Loon, whose unfinished autobiography, "Report to Saint Peter," has been delivered by this time, I hope, in person.

I spoke to Hendrik the day before I left New York; we arranged a radio talk on Bolivar to be given upon my return. "Your audience will think we're talking about a watch," he told me gloomily, and complained of various aches and pains. His friends had been listening to such talk for twenty-five years, however, and I thought little of it. On the morning of his death, he arose early, feeling particularly chipper, and read his morning paper. He liked the valedictory that Irvin Cobb had left behind, directing that his (Cobb's) ashes be used to fertilize a dogwood tree at planting season in Paducah. Hendrik cut the item out, and wrote a letter to his son, a lieutenant abroad with the Navy, about it. He sealed the envelope, relaxed in his chair—and died. . . .

**BOOKTRADE NEWS** of a more cheerful nature included the return of Bill Sloane from a lengthy survey of post-war publishing possibilities in China; the selection of John Hersey's brilliant "A Bell for Adano" as the new "Imperative" (the second time Hersey has won that distinction); the appointments of Stanley Salmen as new director of the Atlantic Monthly Press, Philip Wylie as editor of Farrar and Rinehart, and Angus Cameron as Editor-in-Chief of Little, Brown; and the addition of Robert Linscott to the executive editorial board of Random House. . . . For many years the first thing that most literary folk did when they hit Boston was to pick up a phone and call Bob Linscott. It will be hard to realize for a while that he

is now a New Yorker. To my way of thinking, he is one of the great editors of our time. . . .

Several important last-minute additions have been made to the Spring book lists. Walter Lippmann is completing a new one for Little, Brown, called "U. S. War Aims." Whittlesey House is preparing a collection of selected writings of the late Raymond Clapper. Roger Duvoisin is illustrating a new edition of "A Child's Garden of Verses" for Heritage. Evelyn Waugh's superb "Vile Bodies" is back in print. Hastings House sponsors Lejaren Hiller's engrossing compilation of portrait studies, "Surgery Through the Ages." (The text is by Paul Benton and John Hewlett.) Ellin Berlin's first novel, "Land I Have Chosen," is on the Doubleday list. A book called "Argentine Diary" is heralded as the first uncensored, eye-witness story of the ominous goings-on in Buenos Aires. And last but not least, that distinguished savant, James Schnozzola Durante, vows that he is writing his autobiography for Simon and Schuster. . . .

**WHEN ANDRÉ MAUROIS** went to North Africa last Spring on a special mission for the Fighting French, he had heard no word of his son for over two years. This son had been an officer in the French Army. Maurois could only hope that he had been taken prisoner somewhere, unharmed. In Casablanca, he heard that Frenchmen who lived only to lick the Nazis were being smug-

gled across the Mediterranean by the hundreds each week. "Come with me and watch them when they arrive," suggested a friend. Maurois went with his notebook in hand. The first boy who came in that night was his son!

Maurois was a guest of Fanny Butcher's in Chicago. He told her a story about General Mark Clark's contact mission in North Africa that bears repetition. The rendezvous was very hush-hush, of course, and the French officers detailed to meet the Clark party grew more and more tense as the night wore on without a hint of the prearranged signal. Suddenly the little boat which held Clark and his men glided silently into view. One French officer, a Colonel Watson (his father was English) could wait no longer. He waded waist-deep into the water, and extended a hand to the American officer in the prow of the boat.

"Watson," he identified himself.

"And I," said the American, "am Captain Holmes. I think, my dear Watson, that we have met before." The tension was broken. The vital business of the evening proceeded in an atmosphere of mutual amity and trust. . . .

Miss Butcher had a story to tell Maurois, too. She had just been listening to "Information Please" on the air. One question floored her—and the contestants: "What labor union do grave-diggers belong to?" The answer, she swears, is "The Amalgamated Cannermen and Packers." She's willing to bet money on it. . . .

**SHERLOCK HOLMES** is back in the limelight with a vengeance this Spring. Chris Morley has edited a volume of the best Conan Doyle stories about Holmes for Harcourt, S. and S. are preparing "Profile by Gaslight: An Irregular Reader about the Private Life of Sherlock Holmes." And Ellery Queen has collected an interesting assortment of tales by other authors who borrowed Doyle's great character—with or without permission—for their own purposes (Little, Brown). . . .

Carl Van Doren tells a story about Sherlock Holmes's arrival in Heaven. The angels turned out en masse to meet him; the Lord Himself descended from his throne to bid him welcome.

"Holmes," He said, "to be perfectly frank, We have a little mystery of our Own up here which you may be able to help Us solve. Adam and Eve seem to have disappeared. Nobody has been able to locate them for aeons. If you could possibly uncover them for Us. . . ."

Holmes darted to the fringe of the assemblage, and hauled two frightened, thoroughly surprised angels before the Lord. "Here they are," he said briefly.





"Thought we'd pick up that little \$2,000 bundle you told the newspapers we were stupid enough to leave behind last night."

Adam and Eve readily admitted their identities. "We got tired of being stared at and asked for autographs by every darn new angel who came up here," they explained. "We assumed aliases and these simple disguises and got away with them for centuries until this smarty-pants ferreted us out."

"How did you do it?" marveled the Lord.

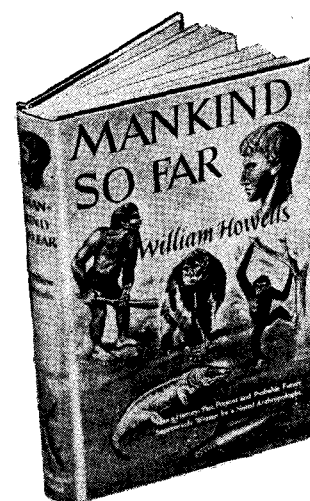
"Elementary, my dear God," said Sherlock Holmes. "They were the two who had no navels." . . .

**FRANKLIN SPIER AND AARON SUSSMAN**, publishers' advertising counsels, are dissolving a most successful partnership, and going their separate ways on May first. Neither will lack for clients. . . . Phil Duschne has the "Fifty Books of the Year," chosen by the American Institute of Graphic Arts, on convenient display in his Fifty-sixth Street shop. . . . Esther Forbes will spend part of her time doing editorial chores for Houghton Mifflin; Lee Kingman is the new head of the juvenile department there. . . . New definition of a meteorologist: a man who can look into a girl's eyes and tell whether. . . . Lieut. Col. Vincent Sheean is home on leave. Lin Yutang will be back in a few weeks. . . . Somebody heard that George Jean Nathan had been living at the Royalton Hotel for over thirty years. "Isn't it time

you were moving?" he asked. "Time I was moving!" echoed Nathan. "Moving is for sailboats!" . . . Sean O'Casey has a notion for a new play that will make him a popular fellow in Dublin. In the third act denouement, St. Patrick turns out to be an Englishman. . . . MGM perused the galley sheets of A. J. Cronin's new novel, "The Green Years," and put \$200,000 on the line for it. . . . Two crackerjack mystery stories for a long train ride: Helen Reilly's "The Opening Door" (new), and Raymond Chandler's "Farewell My Lovely" (available in a Pocket Book edition). This fellow Chandler will do until Hammett gets back into the groove. I've ordered copies of every book he ever wrote. . . .

**AND THAT JUST** about brings me up to date, and to the newest story from Washington. An officer, home from strenuous service overseas, was assigned to a desk job in the Pentagon Building. Each day for a week he shifted the location of his desk—next to the window, away from the window, into a corridor, and finally into the men's wash room. "He must be shell shocked," the authorities figured, but the officer had a different explanation. "It's the only place around here," he said grimly, "where people seem to know what they're doing."

BENNETT CERF.



*A noted anthropologist  
takes stock of the  
made-over ape who  
has become one of  
the toughest, most tenacious,  
most adaptable  
of all animals*

# MANKIND SO FAR

*by William Howells*

► "Man may represent the high-water mark of evolution, but otherwise he fits readily enough into the great framework of natural history, and that is how he should be judged." From this beginning, the whole story of the evolution of the "animal that wears clothes" unfolds in simple, dramatic sequence. Though it ends with man as he is today, a fascinating final chapter projects his future possible development to 1,000,000 A.D.

Here is the most exciting story science has to tell, and its perfect chronicler is William Howells, of the American Museum of Natural History. Written with wit as well as wisdom and authority, his **MAN-KIND SO FAR** belongs on your shelf with *Man's Rough Road* and the books of Earnest A. Hooton. 319 pages, with 60 illustrations.



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**DOUBLEDAY, DORAN**

MARCH 25, 1944

# Do You Remember Little Willie?

## *Compared to Him, Attila Was a Piker*

DOROTHY WYNN DOWNES

*"LITTLE WILLIE, in disguise,  
Poked out both his sister's eyes;  
Stepped on them to make them pop.  
Mother said, 'Now Willie, stop.'"*

Don't tell me you've forgotten Little Willie, that unutterably ruthless scamp of the turn of the century who progressed from one heartless activity to the next, with a vivacity born only of utter devotion to his work. Take, for instance, the time that:

*Into the cistern little Willie  
Pushed his little sister, Lillie;  
Mother couldn't find her daughter,  
So now we sterilize our water.*

Can anyone doubt, after reading the following bit of doggeral, that Little Willie was taken a great deal more seriously in Germany, Italy, and Japan than he ever was in the United States?

*Little Willie poached his sister  
On the kitchen range.  
'My,' said mother, coming in,  
'Don't the room smell strange?'*

The explanation of why one group of people should take seriously what another group laughs at is obvious. The Europeans view their lives as being real and earnest, while to their American cousins, life is "just a bowl of cherries," according to a song which we merry Americans sang not so long ago. The difference in Continental psychologies should be proof of the difference between the little Hermanns and little Heinrichs on one hand, and the little lads who became the men who are making our democracy great today.

Little Will killed so many members of his immediate family that it makes the revelations by "intimate friends" of Hitler's pall into insignificance. He did away with innumerable sisters in various ingenuous ways, and even managed to kill off an occasional baby brother:

*Willie scalped his baby brother,  
Left him lying hairless;  
'Willie,' said his worried mother,  
'You are getting careless.'*

This first Public Enemy Number One didn't stop at the boundary of his immediate family. His deadly path leads on to his uncles and aunts:

*Willie pushed his Aunt Elizer  
Off a rock into a geyser,  
Now he's feeling quite dejected,  
Didn't get the rise that he expected.*

The truly patient Prue of the Little

Willie series was his mother. While she can scarcely be adjudged a woman of culture, she possessed all of the savoir faire of a true woman of the world. Sometimes there was a fine feeling of careless abandon in her chiding of this, her favorite child; sometimes a note of calm despair crept in:

*Willie poisoned father's tea.  
Father died in agony.  
Mother looked extremely vexed,  
'Really, Will,' she said, 'What next?'*

Never was she really angry with her imprudent son. Perhaps she was a student of child psychology, obviously neglecting her English courses in favor of further study in her chosen field. Even when the joke was on herself, she bore it with patient endurance:

*Willie dropped a worm that wriggled  
In his mother's cup of tea.  
When she saw the joke, she giggled:  
'Ain't he smart as he can be?'*

Father, who must have been a patient man, while never playing the prominent part that mother did in Master Willie's life, came in for his share of Willie-caused plights. There was the time that:

*Willie, with a fearful curse,  
Threw the coffee pot at nurse.  
As it struck her on the nose,  
Father said, 'How straight he throws.'*

Willie wasn't the product of one mind. His earliest beginnings have been attributed to Julia A. Moore, known as "The Sweet Singer of Michigan." In 1876 her first volume of poetry was published. It contained a "Little Henry" and a "Little Susan," but not a word of Little Willie. Miss Moore's book became as popular as "pink toothbrush"—everybody had it. Clement Wood, in his book, "The



Craft of Poetry," says of Miss Moore's volume, "It became the stamping ground of newspaper humorists and parodists overnight; and among Miss Moore's amazing obituary successors was:

*Willie had a purple monkey climbing  
on a yellow stick,  
And when he sucked the paint all off  
it made him deathly sick;  
And in his latest hours he clasped  
that monkey in his hand;  
And bade goodbye to earth and went  
to a better land.  
Oh! No more he'll shoot his sister  
with his little wooden gun;  
No more he'll twist the pussy's tail  
and make her yowl, for fun.  
The pussy's tail now stands out  
straight; the gun is laid aside;  
The monkey doesn't jump around since  
little Willie died.*

This," Mr. Wood continues, "was written in dreadful earnestness."

To Col. D. Streamer (Harry Graham) goes credit for giving Little Willie the impetus that propelled him to fame. In 1902 the Colonel's book, "Ruthless Rhymes for Heartless Homes," was published. In it appeared what is probably the best known Little Willie, in the guise of Little Billy:

*Billy, in one of his nice new sashes,  
Fell in the fire and was burned to  
ashes;  
Now, although the room grows chilly,  
I haven't the heart to poke poor Billy.*

From then on Willies flowed freely from almost every quill in the nation, and it was a case of every man for himself and may the best quatrain win.

All Little Willies were not quatrains, however. Some had five lines, others six, many had eight, and some few even more. One of the sextains, with a pun ending goes:

*Willie got some Japalac,  
Very shiny, very black,  
Caught his little sister, Sou;  
Willie said, 'This is on you.'  
Little Sou was dumb with fear,  
So Willie left a Sou-veneer.*

Willie was definitely a national trend away from the Horatio Alger type, in which good was always rewarded, with interest. And perhaps it was Little Willie, and not Edgar Allan Poe, who cast the shadow foretelling the coming of the public's bent for the gruesome in literature. What could be more horrible than:

*Little Willie hung his sister,  
She was dead before we missed her.  
Willie's always up to tricks.  
Ain't he cute? He's only six.*

Or:

*Little Willie, with the shears,  
Cut off both the baby's ears.  
This made baby so unsightly,  
Mother raised her eyebrows—slightly.*

But it takes a boy with true depth