

might have been thought to need a bit of argument by way of support. But all that we get is "Stover 1996b: 54,n". Stover seems to think that his point is strengthened by the fact that he has said exactly the same thing on a previous occasion.

The quotes from Wells can be more seriously misleading. Stover frequently cites, without warning and as expressions of Wells's beliefs, words which were actually spoken by fictional characters in his novels. He puts words into Wells's mouth: for example, the statement that "Early and late Wells described his writings as a 'Literature of Power'" (*The Invisible Man* 9) is literally untrue, and unsupported by the two citations given. He invents quotations, saying of the film *Things to Come*, for example, that "Wells himself called it 'a propagandist film [for] Wellsism' (in G.P. Wells 1984: 73, 172)" (*The Invisible Man* 2, repeated on p.22 and elsewhere). The quotation is a figment of Stover's imagination. On page 172 of *H.G. Wells in Love* (edited by G.P. Wells) Wells calls *Things to Come* a "propagandist film", and on page 73 he uses the word "Wellsism" in a totally different context. He never speaks of "Wellsism" in association with *Things to Come*. Stover's quotations cannot be trusted.

The reader may ask whether any of this really matters, and some of it does not much matter. When Stover gives the wrong date for John Bunyan's imprisonment, or misconstrues Wells's phrase "probationary assistant", or mislocates Watling Street, or derives the word "dilettante" from the French rather than the Italian, we may put it down to carelessness and amiable eccentricity. When he calls Sir Jabez Flap "Sir Flap" or misunderstands the words "Now, now!" spoken by a customer at the Coach and Horses at Iping, we are faced with the vagueness about things English that is (with honourable exceptions) so widespread among American academics. But there are more serious points at issue. Stover can call Wells's Martians and Selenites "socialist" if he wants, but he cannot claim that Cavor's "brief sentence of eight words", "In the moon, every citizen knows his place", "sums up the new ethic of the managerial revolution" – which Wells supposedly supports and Stover abhors – since Wells makes George Ponderevo say exactly the same thing about the traditional England of *Tono-Bungay*: "In that English country-side of my boyhood every human being had a place. It belonged to you from your birth like the colour of your eyes, it was inextricably your destiny".

The *Tono-Bungay* quotation is one that we would not necessarily expect to find in Leon Stover's writings, but there are some quotations from Wells which go

against Stover's interpretation of "Wellsism", and yet which he cannot ignore.

Readers since Bennett have enjoyed Wells's portrayal of the Selenites as a kind of Swiftian satire; Stover asserts, on the contrary, that the slave society presided over by the Grand Lunar was intended by Wells as a utopian prophecy of the future World State. But there is still the awkward fact that Wells in 1933 described *The First Men in the Moon* as an attempt to "look at mankind from a distance and burlesque the effects of specialisation". How does Stover explain this quotation away? Burlesque, he assures us, is not the same as satire; Wells's burlesque is not necessarily a sign of disapproval; in fact, he intensely approves of Selenite society. Bernard Bergonzi had earlier observed that "the extravagant descriptions of the Selenite world suggest a satirical intention, but the general effect is extremely ambiguous". But ambiguity is exactly what Stover will not allow to the early Wells.

Patrick Parrinder

THE POLES OF WELLS'S PARADOXICAL GENIUS

H.G. Wells. *The Complete Short Stories of H.G. Wells*. Selected and edited by John Hammond. 883pp, appendix and bibliography. London: J.M. Dent, 1998. £30.00 ISBN 0-460-87964-2

I have taken the title of this review from a statement on the dust-jacket blurb of this new edition of Wells's short stories. It declares with an alliterative flourish that H.G. Wells was a master of two fields of fiction, "the magnificently extraordinary and the memorably mundane", and, it is claimed, these two "poles" come together most effectively in his short stories. The arrangement of stories in this book bears out this contention, and also gives a sense of plenitude. The stories are grouped according to the chronology of their publishing, and are listed on the contents page under their original titles – "Twelve Stories and a Dream" and so on – with the uncollected stories at the end. "The Country of the Blind" appears, therefore, in "The Door in the Wall and Other Stories" group, and at the end of the book Hammond includes the revised version of the story, together with an appendix comprising Wells's introductions to both versions.

John Hammond is ideally placed to edit such a collection. Not only does he know as much if not more about H.G. Wells than anyone else, he has also discovered a number of previously uncollected stories. *The Complete Short Stories of H.G. Wells* is intended for the general reader, and it is stressed that the stories are to be enjoyed “not meticulously studied and analysed” – a distinction I find hard to make, in fact – but it is advanced as a justification for leaving out the “critical apparatus” of notes etc. But this doesn’t matter in any case because the editor’s brief introduction manages to combine a summary of the publishing history of the short stories with a wealth of biographical information, whilst at the same time establishing an historical and literary context for the short-stories. Hammond convinces me, too, that “A Tale of the Twentieth Century” can justifiably be considered as a short-story.

The Complete Short Stories of H.G. Wells is a must for Wells enthusiasts. Admittedly the book is not cheap, but it is not unreasonably priced given the cost of so much new fiction today, and considering the fact that for the first time, all Wells’s short-stories are available in one volume. The book is also beautifully produced. When I received my copy I was immediately attracted by the bright colours and design of the dust-jacket, and the type-setting and layout is very clear, vastly preferable to that of the Benn edition. As the editor puts it: “For the first time you have before you the whole range of [Wells’s] short stories – science fiction, humour, pathos, horror, mystery and romance. Read and enjoy them” (xii).

Sylvia Hardy

Aims and Functions of the Society

The H.G. Wells Society was founded in 1960, and has its members in over twenty countries. It aims to promote widespread interest in the life, work and thought of Herbert George Wells. It organises a number of meetings and events each year, including an annual residential conference every September.

Publications

The Society publishes an annual journal and a newsletter. A fourth revised and enlarged edition of its comprehensive Wells bibliography was issued in 1986. A collected edition of Wells’s last two books, *The Happy Turning and Mind at the End of its Tether*, edited by G.P. Wells, was published in 1968 and reissued as a paperback in 1982. *The Discovery of the Future (together with the Commonsense of World Peace and The Human Adventure)* edited by Patrick Parrinder appeared in 1989. *Select Conversations with an Uncle (Now Extinct) with Two Hitherto Unreprinted Conversations*, edited by David C. Smith and Patrick Parrinder, with a foreword by Michael Foot, was published in 1992, and other reprints are currently in preparation. Copies of *Human Rights and World Order* by James Dilloway, published in 1983 to mark the fortieth anniversary of Wells’s Rights of Man, are also available.

Membership

Membership of the Society is open to anyone who subscribes to its aims and agrees to pay a subscription of £14 a year (UK and EC); couples and overseas members £17 a year. A corporate membership is £20, retired, unwaged and full-time students £8. (UK and EC), overseas £11. Corporate membership is £20. Donations for general purposes and especially toward the Society’s publishing expenses will always be gratefully received.

Subscriptions and enquiries should be addressed to:

The Secretary, Mr J.R. Hammond
Ridings
49 Beckingthorpe Drive
Bottesford
Nottingham NG13 0DN
England

Orders for Society publications, including back copies of the Wellsian should be addressed to:

John Green
29 Valence Circus
Dagenham
Essex RM8 ELU
England