

Wells Goes In For Bombs

By ADAM SAVAGE

In a weekly magazine called "Liberty" which has a wide circulation in this country, there appears an article from the pen of Mr. H. G. Wells. "Liberty" is a paper which is published for busy people who must know before they start to read one of its articles just how long it will take. This article, called "Berlin Should Be Bombed," takes thirteen minutes and forty seconds reading time. I do not know how long it took me to read it—probably much less, because I am familiar with nearly every paragraph of it. It is statement—sheer statement from beginning to end, and bears the stamp in nearly every sentence of the fluent scribbler who suffers from what James Huneker called "a buzz on the pen." That means it is written by a man who can pour out platitude and assertion in a torrent. Why the platitudes should be accepted, how the assertions are to be put into practice, no one knows—not even Mr. Wells, for he never stops for a moment to consider the million imponderables which distort his suggestions. Wells always lived in a world of his own—at least from the time when he entered the field of what he called science and nominated himself as Field-marshal of the Brass Button Brigade. He loves to lead in his world, even though the army he commands has but one unit—himself.

To give one a notion of the floundering process in writing in which he indulges, it is only necessary to quote the following example:

"The monopolization of natural resources by private ownership and private finance so that the hands of the worker cannot reach them, and the plain necessity for mankind to break through these barriers and liberate these hoarded resources, make such efforts as Communism and totalitarianism inevitable."

Here, though he does not know it, he touches upon the fundamental question which has brought every country in the world to its present pass; but having made a statement

(which is not his by any means, because it has been made by thousands since the days of Thomas More down to so humble a person as myself), he drops it and goes wandering off into the wilds of the collectivized State, then attempts to deal with dictators, high officials, free public criticism, administrative law and heaven only knows what! He runs amuck in all the paltry verbiage used by the socio-municipal-nationalizing stump-orator who spoke when two or three were gathered together at the corner of the Thames Embankment on a showery night. Oh, Mr. Wells! Oh, Mr. Wells!

There is, however, one "practical" suggestion in this article which requires thirteen minutes and forty seconds of a busy man's time to read. Wells advances the notion that Berlin should be bombed. This attack is the first step in the plan to create the world which Mr. Wells is building in Regents Park. Like the Government and Mr. Lloyd George, Wells has the "greatest respect" for the German people, but he thinks that bombs on Berlin will effect a cure for their doing to others what the Allies did to them. He says, "The Germans have shown very little regard for the sufferings their belligerence has inflicted on millions of people outside their borders." In fact, he sums up: "They have insisted on being a nuisance to all the world."

In this astounding bit of repetitive vindictiveness he does not warn his English readers that two can play at that game. The Germans may think that what is sauce for the goose is also sauce for the gander. He says: "Let the Germans take their medicine now"; although

he admits "they are potentially one of the greatest peoples upon the face of the earth." This is scarcely fair to Churchill because it is stealing his thunder. Nevertheless, it should creep into the mind of Wells that Hitler has similar ideas of the English people and, notwithstanding his respect and admiration for what they have done in building up a great empire, he might, when the first English bomb drops on Berlin, say there is only one way to teach the English people a lesson, and that is to give them some of the medicine Wells prescribes for Berlin. Oh, Mr. Wells! Oh, Mr. Wells!

Towards the end of his article, he tells us, "The ending of warfare will put no stop to the mental conflicts of mankind." This sentence indicates that Wells has not really stopped thinking; that when he makes an effort, he can write a lucid sentence. War certainly has not put a stop to the mental conflicts which Wells has suffered for many years, nor has it put an end to the mental conflicts which all men in Europe and America suffer day in and day out. To my mind, the worst of all mental conflicts which warp, distort and aggravate the minds of politicians, half-baked Socialists, sociologists, professorial economists and blue-print planners, is the desire to boss anybody and everybody but themselves. Wells is Hitler in shadow and his trouble is that the English-speaking people show not the slightest inclination to take him seriously.