

are introduced to her, which is at a very tender age.

Peter's father was an artist and he designed the little low-browed house with an enormous and very expensive roof of green slates, where Peter was born. His nursery was a perfect room in which to hatch the soul of a little boy. Its walls were done in a warm cream-coloured paint and upon them Peter's father had put the most lovely pattern of trotting and jumping horses and dancing cats and dogs and leaping lambs and a carnival of beasts. There were many other delectable points about his nursery. There was nothing casual about the early years of Peter.

His first impressions of the universe are as amusing and understanding as Mr. Wells is apt to be.

Peter could not remember a time when Joan was not in his world. From the beginning it seemed the chief fact was Mary. "Nanny," you called her, or "Mare-we," or you simply howled till she came. She was omnipresent or just round the corner night and day. Other figures were more intermittent—"Daddy," a large, loud, exciting, almost terrific thing; and "Mummy," who was soft and made gentle noises, but was, in comparison to Mary, rather a fool about one's bottle.

Arthur, Peter's father, had a theory that children should not be solitary. From their earliest years children must be accustomed to co-operation. Mary used to watch the proceedings with a cynical and irritating expression.

"Peter's tower," Peter would propose.

"Our tower," Arthur used to say.

"Dadda not put any more bricks, Peter finish it."

"Na-ow," from Joan, in a voice like a little cat. "Me finish it."

Mary's way was quite different. With a piece of chalk she would draw a line across the floor.

"That's your share, Peter; and that's yours, Joan. Them's your share of bricks, and them's yours. Now don't you think of going outside your share either of you, nowhow. Nor touch a brick that isn't yours." Whereupon there was peace once more.

Peter's father and mother were drowned under circumstances that we have not space to describe. As we have intimated, Peter and Joan were not brother and sister; Joan was what Peter's aunt, Lady Charlotte, termed in their hearing a "Bye-blow."

"Which is the Bye-blow, my dear, the boy or the gel?"

Peter made a note of "Bye-blow"—it was a lovely word. "Can't we go into the garden, now, Auntie, and play at Bye-blows?"

Mr. Wells, in attacking the present educational system and the moral training of boys, is no doubt perfectly justified, but does he imagine that to abolish a religion that has stood the test of the ages and to substitute his own theories is to

resolve the problem? If he wishes to destroy simple faith, let him at least offer something to take its place. When Mr. Wells has long since been forgotten, the old religion will exist, none the worse for his attacks.

It goes without saying that there are many interesting and arresting people in the story of Joan and Peter. Aunts Phyllis and Phœbe added their quota to the educational scheme.

"Never let Peter touch meat in any shape or form," said Aunt Phœbe. "Once a human child tastes blood the mischief is done."

"Surround him with beautiful things. Accustom him —"

She winced that Arthur should hear, but spoke as one who has a duty to perform. "Accustom him to the nude from his earliest years. Associate it with innocent amusements. Retrieve the fall." At this point Peter found his aunts over stimulating.

"He must be almost entirely lungs," said Aunt Phœbe when her voice could be heard. "Other internal organs will no doubt develop later."

When one has disentangled the story of Peter and Joan from the maze of Mr. Wells' theories and new theologies, one decides that they are both quite lovable young creatures.

Joan had some trouble to make her dear "Petah" discern that she wasn't his sister, and had no desire to be. We are glad she succeeded.

Of course the book had to end up with the war; how could it do otherwise these days?

Some of our readers will be a little bored if they attempt to read from cover to cover.

Mr. Wells is a capital novelist, but not much of a theologian, and he should stick to the former, where he is both powerful and convincing.

H. H.

#### COMING EVENTS.

*November 23rd*—National Union of Trained Nurses. Meeting to discuss the proposed Ministry of Health. Speakers: Dr. Saleeby and Miss H. L. Pearse. Chair, the Rev. H. R. L. Sheppard, 3, Vere Street, Oxford Street, W. 2.30 p.m.

*November 25th*—West London Hospital, Hammersmith. Opening Abercorn Home for the Nursing Staff by H.R.H. Princess Arthur of Connaught. 2.30 p.m.

*November 29th*—Annual Meeting of the Grand Council of the National Council of Trained Nurses of Great Britain and Ireland, 431, Oxford Street, London, W. 4 p.m.

*November 30th*—Nurses' Missionary League. A quiet Day, St. Michael's Church, Chester Square, W. 1. Apply Miss H. Y. Richardson, 52, Lower Sloane Street, S.W.

#### OUR PRIZE COMPETITION.

##### QUESTIONS.

*November 30th*—What do you know of "mustard gas" burns and their treatment?

*December 7th*—Describe the management of a newly born infant for the first week of life.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)