

Chapter 1 : World of William Clissold: A Novel at a New Angle - H. G. Wells - Google Books

The World of William Clissold is a novel by H. G. Wells published initially in three volumes. The first volume was published in September to coincide with Wells's sixtieth birthday, and the second and third volumes followed at monthly intervals.

I was born in November, , and this is November, The average duration of life in England is fifty-one and a half, so I am already eight years and a half beyond the common lot. The percentage of people who live beyond sixty is forty-seven. Beyond seventy it is thirty. Only one in five thousand lives beyond one hundred, and of this small body of centenarians two thirds are women. My expectation of life, says the table in the Almanac, is fourteen years and four months. That table in the Almanac is not a mathematical marvel, but it is close enough to the truth to serve my purpose here. In the face of these figures I cannot hide from myself that the greater part of my life has been lived. So far I have had but few physical reminders of the ebb of the years. I do not feel that I am even beginning to be old. Perhaps I grow tired more readily than I did at thirty, and my tennis is neither so hard nor so quick-witted as it used to be, but my arteries, the doctors tell me, are still young arteries. I cannot read Bradshaw nowadays, I must put on spectacles for that, and I do not like to swim in cold water any more. Yet in good daylight I can still read ordinary print with unaided eyes, and, come to think of it, I have always gasped in cold water. Maybe I have not so much lost endurance as learnt wisdom. And generally my vigour is unimpaired. It is the dates and figures that will not be denied. They show quite plainly that at most only two decades remain for me, and when they are spent my strongest will be a white-faced, rather shrunken, assisted old manâ€”"wonderful," they will say. The greater chance is that I shall be no more than a jarful of ashes and a fading memory. Possibly they may make something in time for me from these monkey glands they talk about; but I distrust these rejuvenescent extracts. I do not want merely to prolong my years as an unpleasant experiment. I may go on for some time yet by my own unaided strength, unless a serious illness catches me. Then, I have observed, if one comes back at all one comes back "aged. It is not a thing that I think about habitually. But the birthdays come round to remind me, and this year some journalist got hold of my date but added up the years wrong, and in the Evening Standard I found myself subjected to congratulations on attaining sixty. I was so startled that I did a little sum at once on the margin of the paper. For a moment I felt just as though I had missed a bank-note from a not too distended purse. But to-day I find myself retrospective. I have been caught up for a couple of days in London before I go back to my sunshine in Provence, and I am all alone. Outside it is not so much day as a saturated piece of dingy time, a stretch of chewed and damp and dirty fourth dimension between two nights. It rains fitfully, now in fine clouds, now in hysterical downpours, now in phases of drizzling undecided intermission; and the shops are lit and there are lights in the windows. There is a sort of grey discoloration filtering down from above that I suppose one must admit to be daylight. Wet omnibuses, wet taxicabs and automobiles splash and blunder by, there are a few reluctant foot passengers under wet umbrellas. Everything shines greasily with the rain like the backs of rolling porpoises. This intolerable place, they say, is the healthiest city in the world. I leave it to-morrow. I do not venture outside this room to-day. At any rate I will lunch here. No wonder old Dickon grows fat. He is in Brussels nowâ€”probably growing fatter. He does not want to grow fat. He is dining with a curious little society for the promotion of scientific finance, of which he is one of the founders. That is all I know about his business in Brussels. Then he is going on into Germany, still in pursuit of monetary ideas. His energy and industry in the cause he has taken up are prodigiousâ€”and he is nearly three years older than I. He thrives on it. No wonder he needs a comfortable resting-place here. From these rooms one might imagine him sedentary. They make me feel sedentary. But even his sedentariness has directness and vigour. There is something about this room in particular, and this desk of his and this chair of his, remarkably conducive to not going out. Before me are good square sheets of paper and quill-pens and every provocation to write. The lamp is admirably shaded. So why should I not write, and forget altogether that visible chill, that inky catarrh of a climate which is snivelling against the window-panes? I have wanted to begin so much, the thing has become so important to me that the very strength of my desire has restrained me. I have written one or two books

before, but they have been technical works of no significance to the unspecialised reader. I have written various reports, too, and between thirty and forty scientific papers. Such things seem to write themselves. The book I have in mind now is something altogether more human and difficult than that. It is not exactly an autobiography I want to write, and not exactly a book of confessions. My life has been largely spent in work; my only scandal was a public scandal and very fully reported. I do not see why I should repeat the newspapers again; much of my business I can only discuss in general terms because of my obligations to my firm and our associates, and there remains little for me to confess, even if I had the Rousseau streak in me. It is with larger affairs than my own that my projected book would deal. It is nothing, indeed, so systematic as a general philosophy of life I contemplate, but it is something rather more in that way than an autobiography would be. I should say that a description of my world best expresses what I have in view; my world and my will. I want it to be a picture of everything as it is reflected in my brain. I want it to be a comprehensive picture. The book, as I see it, should begin with my "I suppose I shall have to say" "metaphysics"; it should display my orbis terrarum, and then it should come down to the spectacle of mankind as I apprehend it and my place in that history, and so to the immediate affairs of everyday life, to moods, passions, experiences, lessons, and at last to the faith and purpose that sustain me and fill my mind at the present time and make living on worth while. The main objective is that faith and purpose. All the rest will lead up to that, to how and why I accept life and go on living. My metaphysics I can set about at once. I shall have chiefly to explain why I have no metaphysics. The reader need fear no elaboration of a system, not even a negative system. It is not so much a statement of scepticism that I have to make, as a confession of accepted ignorance. Yet that does not mean that I am "what is the word? I find most of the worlds that other people describe or take for granted much more hard and clear and definite than mine is. I am at once vaguer and more acutely critical. I have a feeling that this common-sense world is not final. It is necessitated in many ways by the conditions under which we think and communicate, and I do not regard these conditions as being fundamental to existence. The common-sense world is a practical working world and so far true, but it is not necessarily ultimately true. There are times when I feel as though it was less the sphere that enclosed me and made my all, than a sort of magic crystal into which I peered and saw myself living. I have, as it were, a sense of externality and a feeling that perhaps it might be possible, though I cannot imagine how it could be possible, to turn away and look at something else quite different from this common-sense world "another world. I never get to more than that in the way of detachment. I never get further from philosophical Positivism than that. Could anything be vaguer? It is the shadow of the ghost of a doubt. The individual in that crystal globe of time and space has a hundred thousand traits by which I know him for myself. How, then, can I be the onlooker also, of whom I know nothing at all except that he sees? This sense of externality is, perhaps, no more than a trick of my brain, like a moment of giddiness as one walks along the street. It certainly has no practical significance. I am reminded as I write of this of a queer little thing that happened to me at times, most frequently in my adolescence and when I was a young man. I do not think that it has occurred at all during the last ten or fifteen years. The visible world, remaining just as bright and clear as ever it had been, would suddenly appear to be minute. I myself did not seem to shrink to scale; it was only the universe about me that shrank. This effect would last for a few seconds or for a few minutes, and then it would pass away. I have not found anyone else who has had this particular experience, but I am sure it has happened to many other people. I have never had the converse effect of enlargement. I suppose a slight momentary change in my blood or breathing produced a change of phase in my nervous state, I perceived a difference in the feel of my vision, and my mind, a little perplexed, interpreted it in this fashion. If so there may be drugs that would have the same effect. Or there may have been some little transitory fluctuation in my sensations of optical adjustment.

Chapter 2 : The World of William Clissold: Volumes 1 & 2 by H.G. Wells

But comparing what Clissold thinks of the world and the future with where we are today, nearly years later, /is/ interesting. And sobering, to all who believe they can foresee the future development of society.

Chapter 3 : The World Of William Clissold by Wells, H G

The World of William Clissold has 15 ratings and 4 reviews. Stephen said: This is an outstanding book. I had wanted to read it for a number of years. By.

Chapter 4 : The World of William Clissold

"The World of William Clissold," Ernest Benn Ltd, London This book, which contains religious, historical, economic and sociological discussions, which expresses fits of temper and moods of doubt, is submitted as a novel, as a whole novel, and nothing but a novel, as the story of one man's adventure, body, soul and intelligence, in life.

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Chapter 7 : The World of William Clissold Book (H. G. Wells -) (ID) | eBay

While this is written as if it was the text of A certain Richard Clissold, it actually is the last book of The World of William Clissold by H.G. Wells, Published , I think.

Chapter 8 : Tasker Dunham's Yorkshire Memories: Review - H. G. Wells: The World of William Clissold

This book, which contains religious, historical, economic and sociological discussions, which expresses fits of temper and moods of doubt, is submitted as a novel, as a whole novel, and nothing but a novel, as the story of one man's adventure, body, soul and intelligence, in life.