

**WITH  
SILENT FRIENDS**

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With silent friends by Richard King

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**RICHARD KING**

**WITH  
SILENT FRIENDS**



*BY THE SAME AUTHOR*

THE SECOND BOOK OF SILENT FRIENDS  
PASSION AND POT-POURRI  
OVER THE FIRESIDE  
BELOW THE SURFACE

*THE BODLEY HEAD.*

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**WITH  
SILENT FRIENDS**

By RICHARD KING *pseud.*

*Richard King Hutchinson*

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## AUTHOR'S PREFACE

**T**O write a new Author's Preface to this, the nineteenth impression, of my little book, fills my heart with pride—pardonable pride, I hope. It brings back vividly to my mind the day in November 1917 when the book was first issued from a little printing establishment—a literary “first-born,” with every chance of being “still-born” as well. Its immediate success was the biggest—and, need I state?—the most pleasant surprise in all my life. It has given me friends in all parts of the world—and for this friendship I am, and shall always be, eternally grateful.

While revising the book for the present new edition, however, I was suddenly faced by the fact that the War was throughout referred to in the present tense. What was I to do? To write of it in the past tense would mean practically to re-write every single page. So—apologizing to my readers—I have allowed the text, in this respect, to stand as it was first printed. The Great War is over—thank God! But the memory of it—in the minds of those who lived through those tragic years—will surely never be forgotten. Its lessons are as important to-day as they were during the actual world-conflict. Peace, alas! has shown how little the world has learned even from those years of suffering and loss; but because the world

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refuses to learn from the consequences of its past tragedies, these consequences are no less real, no less reparable later on. Thus, I hope that those essays, which refer to a Better World "*after the War*," will not now be read with a smile of irony but with pity—as for a "dream" unrealized as yet. I—like so many other obscure people—believed that I once saw the "vision" of a New World; and—though clouds seem to have obscured that "vision"—I still live on in the fond belief that one day they will pass away and that my "dream" of a New Era of greater human justice and happiness will then materialize.

Finally, and in the deepest gratitude, I must thank those critics who so kindly noticed this little book when it was first published, together with those many readers all over the world who have written to me expressing their pleasure concerning the things I wrote.

To quote from the original Preface: "These essays are to be regarded merely as friendly chats 'over the fireside' in the evening—when all the world is still. If readers are amused by them, or interested; even rendered furious—in other words, 'taken out of themselves' for a brief period—I shall be repaid a thousandfold."

RICHARD KING.



## PREFATORY

FOR some time past there has appeared in the pages of *The Tatler* newspaper a serious literary article, "With Silent Friends," signed 'Richard King.' That article, alike by its quality of style, its insight and its judgment, commands attention from the thoughtful. The fact that 'Richard King' is a pseudonym in no way militates against the essential value and charm of what he writes. He is known to many of us as an indefatigable worker in the cause of our blind soldiers to whom his efforts have given abundant light in their sad darkness.

The insight and the sympathy which Richard King has displayed in his active association with the blind is admirably reflected in these pages. In them we see also the quietest influences under which the author works and dreams amid the strain and stress of war. His one great influence is Amiel, the Swiss mystic, whose *Journal Intime* was first revealed to the English public by Mrs. Humphry Ward. There will, however, be found in these pages, I think, a literary quality which not unnaturally reminds us of a brilliant essayist whose name is associated with the first *Tatler*, Richard Steele. Those finely expressed thoughts on men and books which make the eighteenth-century essayist still live for many of us have their counterpart in this delightful

essayist of the twentieth century whose outlook is upon quite another world, a world in which the railway, the steamship, the flying machine, and the telephone, have their part. Any introduction to a good book must necessarily be somewhat of an impertinence, but I have been pressed into service to say something of this author who is himself one of the most shy and retiring of men. Those who know him esteem him for his winning personality. I shall be surprised if the public which reads this little volume will not love him for the written word, and this, I am sure, is all he asks of life.

CLEMENT K. SHORTER.

*November 19th, 1917.*

With Silent Friends