

**MAINWARING**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649365531

Mainwaring by Maurice Hewlett

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**MAURICE HEWLETT**

# **MAINWARING**



NEW NOVELS

THE HOUSE    KATHARINE TYNAN

THE ROMANTIC    MAY SINCLAIR

THE PEOPLE OF THE RUINS  
EDWARD SHANKS

A TALE THAT IS TOLD  
FREDERICK NIVEN

THE LAST FORTNIGHT  
MARY AGNES HAMILTON

WANG THE NINTH  
PUTNAM WEALE

# MAINWARING

*by*

MAURICE HEWLETT



LONDON: 48 PALL MALL  
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## CHAPTER I

### SQUAB MAINWARING

THERE'S nothing for it but to begin at the beginning, I don't mean of Mainwaring for nobody knows his beginning now that he himself can't tell it—I mean rather the beginning of my commerce with him—which was at Marseilles in the 'seventies. The history of a man—I know that very well—can't be rounded up into a tale in the artist's sense. Nature won't have anything to say to your antithetical light and shade, your balance and chiaroscuro and climax. Form, which all the poets talk of and none of them understand, is no concern of Nature's, occupied with her enormous affair of production, absorption, and reproduction. Things happen in life because other things have already happened. You souse into a puddle because you have tripped over a stone; you tripped over a stone because you were looking at Thompson's wife. All is predetermined, but fortuitously, by the Fairies of gestation and birth. So Mainwaring burned his way through the England and London of the last generation because a Doctor Benjamin and Maria his wife were what they were, and did what they did—I

never knew them, nor can guess at their affairs—in far-off Ballymena, or because remoter Mainwarings and their obscurer Marias, or perhaps Bridgets, burned and fused in their loves. Heredity! Doom! Is that all? Is it so simple? And yet Mainwaring—my Mainwaring, England's (since she adopted him) Richard Denzil Blaise Mainwaring—was a genius, and could drive men like sheep down steep places into the sea; whereas Dr Benjamin his father drove nothing but a gig, and drove that so badly when drunk one foggy day that he drove it into a stone wall, overturned it and broke his neck. Yet mark: it was because of that untimely indiscretion of his that Mainwaring himself went to Marseilles, saw me there, and involved me in his dangerously heady fortunes. It was because of that—but no more philosophy. I could go on for ever—and it is a sign of age.

He had perhaps been there a year when I first went there, meaning to spend a few days in a January sun as fierce as ours of June, and in leisurely, happy contemplation of all the jolly things I might do next. My old uncle Mompesson, the Dean of St Neots, had died and left me five hundred a year, very unexpectedly. It chimed in so happily with my marked distaste for any kind of regular work that together they rang down the curtain on my acts in the Temple. I had headed due South like a belated swallow, only stopping