



MANLY Wade Wellman, who assumes the mantle of Captain Future in this issue of *STARTLING STORIES*, is a writer so well known not only to science-fictionists but to less specialized reading publics that he has not troubled to say much about himself. He has, in fact, been the subject of previous biographical sketches in this column.

Suffice it to say that the author of *THE SOLAR INVASION* was born in West Africa, son of a scientist, and has truly been around within the limits of this small sphere. A football player at the University of Utah, he has in his vast and variegated storehouse of personal knowledge a fine background of American Indian life as it is today.

From this background, he has evolved a modern Indian detective which recently won a national prize in a well-known detective story magazine. And since the Wade in his name implies that he is a direct descendant of great Confederate Cavalry General Wade Hampton, he is presently engaged upon a voluminous biography of this spade-bearded old battler.

His most recent appearance in *STARTLING STORIES* came a couple of years ago with the fondly remembered and stirring *STRANGERS ON THE HEIGHTS*. He is, in truth, a person of vast versatility and good humor, whose fame among fantacists and science-fictionists alike is richly deserved.

Feeling rightly that his previous biographical sketches provide sufficient personal introduction to *SS* readers, he has here concerned himself more with the implications of dimensional travel as hinted at in *THE SOLAR INVASION*.

Says Mr. Wellman:

To Captain Future and his friends, flight between stars is a commonplace – before we ourselves know it, it may be commonplace with us. Most of the scientific doubters have

stopped laughing and are busy over blueprints.

To reach another world of our own universe means a journey of light-years-perhaps – and it is comprehensible. To reach another world of another dimension may take only a step (in the right direction, a direction toward which no indicator can now point up) and it still beggars our imaginations, here in the twentieth century, a whole civilization less developed than Captain Future.

Some time it will happen, that journey between dimensions. The soundest physicists allow that the extra dimensions exist, beyond our narrow awareness of space and time. When the journey is first made, it may be an accident. The pioneers may never come back. Scientists and adventurers will and must go on from there, by trial and error to success, as with the first cockleshell voyages from Europe to America, the first overseas plane flights, the first attempts to reach the Moon, Venus and Mars, which attempts are surely almost upon us.

And then all the wonders that science fiction gapes at today will be commonplaces – Mars will be an irritating flat desert with little water or vegetation or other comforts, Venus an oppressive jungle, Jupiter a place where extra gravity' plays hob with your blood pressure, Pluto a wintry dim spot where you wouldn't exile your most irritating in-law. We've already looked at these places at long range, and any day now we may be flying over for a closer look, and familiarity will breed contempt. But other dimensions –

It will take a Captain Future, with an adaptable Otho, a durable Grag, and an all-wise Brain, to cope with the unthinkable and unspeakable to be met with. If they get back, maybe they won't be able to explain what they encountered, any more than you can describe differences of red, yellow and blue to a man blind from birth. We'll all have to go, and perhaps use more senses than five to do justice to the experience. After the first new dimension, it will take some time and thought to comprehend and invade the others.

And at that time, if peradventure this story still exists in a museum of curiosities, a time capsule or a dusty library vault, it will be good for a hearty cosmic laugh, for not foreseeing even the least of the true wonders of Dimension X.

– Manly Wade Wellman

(from: "Startling Stories", Fall 1946: "The Solar Invasion")