

Dornford Yates (Estate)

Dornford Yates is the pen-name of Cecil William Mercer, the son of a solicitor, who was born in Walmer, Kent, in 1885. He was educated at Harrow and Oxford, where he became President of the Oxford University Dramatic Society. He then qualified as a barrister, working for a time on the trial of the notorious 'Dr' Crippen. But his legal practice left him plenty of time for writing, and with half an eye on his cousin 'Saki' (Hector Hugh Munro), who was by that time a famous writer, Mercer began to publish stories in the *Windsor Magazine*. At the outbreak of World War I he joined the County of London Yeomanry and served in Egypt and Salonika. After the war he resumed his writing and was soon launched on a new and immensely successful career. He wrote over thirty books – light-hearted farces like *BERRY AND CO* as well as adventure stories such as *BLIND CORNER*, *SHE FELL AMONG THIEVES*, *PERISHABLE GOODS*, *BLOOD ROYAL*, *GALE WARNING* and *RED IN THE MORNING*. Although he created 'clubland heroes' of great charm and sociability, he was himself an unclubbable man. He married twice, and lived in France for many years. Forced to leave when World War II broke out, he moved to Rhodesia, where he died in 1960.

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