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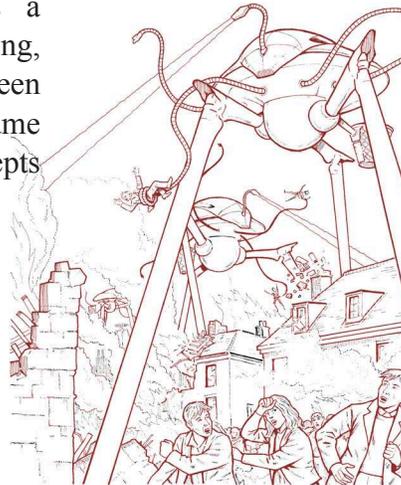
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INTRODUCTION

Herbert George Wells (1866-1946) is rare among science fiction writers — and virtually unique among wargame designers — in that he was both wildly successful and recognized as a genius during his life and long after his death alike. Wells published *Little Wars* in 1913 (Frank Palmer, London), following the financial success bestowed upon him by now-classic science fiction works like *The Time Machine* (1895), *The Invisible Man* (1897), and *The War of the Worlds* (1898).

The fact that Wells wrote and published *Little Wars* at all demonstrates a commitment to the concept of wargaming, and his execution of it reveals both his keen sense of humor and his ability as a game designer. And his devotion to the concepts



in this book can be apprehended by the observant in other works with no apparent connection to wargaming (e.g., in the 1936 film *Things to Come* — for which Wells wrote the screenplay and consulted during production — some of the characters can be observed near the beginning looking at toy soldiers and models, including the spring-loaded 4.7-inch artillery pieces he describes in this book).

Unfortunately, I was not familiar with these rules in the early 1980s, when my friend George Sieretski and I began to develop what eventually came to be known as the *Skirmish* miniatures wargaming rules. It is amazing how many of the technical problems we struggled to overcome that Wells anticipated and addressed in *Little Wars*, and how useful a copy of it would have been to us. It is also interesting to



I

OF THE LEGENDARY PAST

“LITTLE WARS” is the game of kings—
for players in an inferior social position.
It can be played by boys of every age
from twelve to one hundred and fifty—
and even later if the limbs remain
sufficiently supple,—by girls of the
better sort, and by a few rare and gifted
women. This is to be a full History
of Little Wars from its recorded and
authenticated beginning until the pre-
sent time, an account of how to make
little warfare, and hints of the most
priceless sort for the recumbent strate-
gist. . . .

But first let it be noted in passing





that there were prehistoric "Little Wars." This is no new thing, no crude novelty ; but a thing tested by time, ancient and ripe in its essentials for all its perennial freshness—like spring. There was a Someone who fought Little Wars in the days of Queen Anne; a garden Napoleon. His game was inaccurately observed and insufficiently recorded by Laurence Sterne. It is clear that Uncle Toby and Corporal Trim were playing Little Wars on a scale and with an elaboration exceeding even the richness and beauty of the contemporary game. But the curtain is drawn back only to tantalise us. It is scarcely conceivable that anywhere now on earth the Shandean Rules remain on record. Perhaps they were never committed to paper. . . .

