A Most Brilliant Talker*

ELIZABETH HEALEY

Mr. Wells was slender and pale when I first met him¹ – with remarkable blue eyes – and thick tumbled brown hair. He was very popular with his fellow students for he was sociable, amusing, friendly and a most brilliant talker – who was refreshing and stimulating – without ever showing malice or ill-nature. As a speaker in the Debating Society he never had an equal in my time.² His wit was keen and swift – his sarcasm never wounded the victims of it – for it was tempered with humour and truth. He attacked conventions, shams and humbugs with all that courage of youth – which has never failed him throughout his later life. He loved ‘cockshies’ and smashing popular beliefs. As a teacher I knew nothing of him – I have always admired and appreciated everything he has written. I have one article never reprinted – ‘Capital Punishment’³ which he wrote for the *S. S. Journal* – which I think does deserve a place in the permanent collection of his works.

* From the reminiscences (unpublished) of Elizabeth Healey.

NOTES

Elizabeth Bruce, née Healey (c 1863–1947), a fellow student with Wells at the Normal School of Science, South Kensington (1884–7) and a lifelong friend and correspondent.

1. She first met Wells as a student at the Normal School of Science (now the Imperial College of Science and Technology) in 1884. Wells was then eighteen.

2. Wells was elected to the committee of the Debating Society in his first year as a student and played an active part in the Society throughout his student years.

3. ‘On Capital Punishment’, *Science Schools Journal*, no. 23 (Feb. 1890).