

BIOGRAPHY

Yeats, the Man and the Masks, by Richard Ellmann (Macmillan, \$5.00), is based in part on unpublished MSS. opened to the author's inspection in Dublin by Mrs. Yeats. Biographically it is limited to brief glimpses of the poet's life, but it is extensive in its critical approach to Yeats's work. Ellmann gives interesting word pictures of the background, both the country and the intelligentsia.

The record of a lifetime spent in the ranks of labor is *Tomorrow Is Beautiful*, by Lucy Robins Lang (Macmillan, \$3.50). Moved some fifty odd years ago from her native Russia to a bountiful America, the author took an active interest in labor problems, and Socialism. She writes of Gompers, Green, Emma Goldman, and others. She seems to approve of anarchists, mentioning the "seven anarchist martyrs of the eighties." Somehow one gets the impression that Mrs. Lang believes she and her friends became real Americans; the reader will feel that she represents only one side of the American scene.

Proof of the adage about truth being stranger than fiction, *Bet a Million!* by Lloyd Wendt and Herman Kogan (Bobbs-Merrill, \$3.50), is the biography of the late John W. Gates. Farm boy, wire salesman, and promoter, he was what the newspapers call an "industrialist of the old school." Mergers, double-crossing, and ruining of competitors all went into the day's work. And you can learn something of Wall Street and finance from the pages dealing with the 1907 panic, when Morgan gunned for—and got—Tennessee Coal and Iron for U. S. Steel practically with the blessing of Theodore Roosevelt the trust buster.

MISCELLANEOUS

The Whole of Their Lives, by Benjamin Gitlow (Scribner's, \$3.50), is about communism in America. Gitlow calls it "a personal history and intimate portrayal of its leaders." Gitlow, an early Communist here and an organizer of the party, should know his subject, at least up to the day of his expulsion from the party. He tells, too, of some of the purging of comrades, even here in America, and of the competition between the top ranking Reds in Moscow. If it isn't all

new or "inside" information, it should be instructive.

Little Annie Oakley and Other Rugged People, by Stewart H. Holbrook (Macmillan, \$3.50), is a collection of his "fugitive pieces"—those which have already appeared in magazines. They are mostly of people and events in back history—Jesse James, Buffalo Bill, Burt L. Standish (creator of Frank Merriwell, Ned Buntline and others).

The second annual volume in the Centenary Series of American Literature *100 Years Ago*, American Writing of 1848, Edited by James P. Wood (Funk & Wagnalls, \$5.00), carries some of the famous and some of the lesser known works of its era. In addition to Thoreau and Lowell, there are selections from H. N. Hudson, W. Gilmore Sims, Charles W. Webber, and Ned Buntline and his "Mysteries and Miseries of New York."

The legislative and historical aspects of the Medal of Honor are given in a formidable volume, *The Medal of Honor of the U. S. Army* (U.S. Government Printing Office, \$4.50). It contains illustrations, names of recipients since establishment, citations, pictures of World War II winners.

The fourth and final volume of the *Album of American History, End of an Era*, James Truslow Adams, Editor in Chief (Scribner's, \$7.50), brings this pictorial history up to the year 1917. Here is the story of the Gay Nineties, the War with Spain, the advent of the horseless carriage. Art, drama, fashion, all offer nostalgia to those who were then young, and an introduction to yesterday for the youth of today.

An adventure into the mysteries of the kitchen, and of good eating, waits for you in *The Unprejudiced Palate*, by Angelo Pellegrini (Macmillan, \$3.00). The author, a college instructor, discusses the fine art of cooking, particularly of Italian dishes. With him his native cuisine, plus the temperate use of wines, constitutes one of life's privileges. Pellegrini, a native of Tuscany, doesn't rave as much over anti-pasto as he should, nor can I find mention of that queen of cheeses, *Belle Paese*. In spots the book is almost Rabelaisian.

An interesting guide to that city, *About Boston*, Sight, Sound, Flavor and Inflection, by David McCord (Doubleday, \$2.50), offers

comments and observations on things to see or things McCord has sensed. A Harvard man, he gives some of the "atmosphere" of the old school and some of the history. It is pleasant reading, even for non-Bostonians.

A little volume of the odd is *Orpheus*, A Symposium of the Arts, Edited by John Lehmann (New Directions, \$4.00). With poems, short stories, articles on art and illustrations, it is something off the beaten track. It succeeds an earlier publication, *New Writing and Daylight*.

FICTION

A novel about the farming Negro in Texas, his troubles, whether owner or tenant farmer, is *High John, the Conqueror*, by John W. Wilson (Macmillan, \$2.50). Complicated by the white landowner's venture across the color line toward the wife of the central figure, the story reveals a hopeless struggle against the powers that be.

Bride of Fortune, by Harnett T. Kane (Doubleday, \$2.75), is half love story and half the story of the Confederacy. The novel is based on the life of Varina Howell, who became

Mrs. Jefferson Davis. From Mississippi cotton country to Washington, then back to the South after Secession, the narrative unfolds its picture of mutual devotion amid the trials of the Civil War and its aftermath.

A war story, but this time by a German about Germans, makes *Stalingrad*, by Theodor Plievier (Appleton-Century-Crofts, \$3.00), somewhat different. The author relates the bitterness, from the German soldiers' side, of the siege of Stalingrad and the hopelessness of the rank and file. It is well told and a strong document. It is said to have sold more than a million copies in Europe, and is translated into English by Richard and Clara Winston.

Scott Graham Williamson can be unpleasantly realistic. *A Convoy Through the Dream* (Macmillan, \$3.50), is a story of the recent war. Its central figure, turned down by the armed forces, goes into the merchant marine in quest of the answer to the terrible threat hanging over civilization. What happened to him and to his wife, left at home, is less important physically than spiritually. Williamson knows life and people. His earlier *Fiesta at Anderson's House* was shorter, rougher, and better, but this book is also good.

Eliahu Epstein, Israel's diplomatic representative in Washington, was riding in a cab when the driver began a slam-bang political talk. Suspicious because the diplomat remained quiet, the driver demanded to know where he was from. Epstein replied vaguely: "Why, I'm from the Middle East."

"The Middle East," the driver repeated in surprise, "now I've heard of the Middle West, but the Middle East—never!"

—Jerry Klutz in *The Washington Post*

During the war, a very punctilious British officer was a long way from the resources of civilization. He sent for his first sergeant one day and asked him how long it was since the men had changed shirts.

"A month, sir," was the reply.

"But the regulations state that the men must change their shirts once a week, at least."

"They haven't any shirts to change into, sir," explained the top-kick.

"Then let them change shirts with each other."

—*Wiesbaden Post*