

As has been said, the themes chosen are not such as to pique the curiosity of the *blasés*. Others have been before Mr. Lynd in making fun of the almanac maker and professional prophet; others have written about cats; innumerable writers have had their fling at hypocrisy or have produced pleasing commentaries in verse or prose upon the several months. Oliver Wendell Holmes seems to have had more first-hand knowledge of horses and of horse-racing than has Mr. Lynd. But the triter the theme, the oftener other people have written upon it, the better Mr. Lynd appears to write upon it. Obviousness seems to excite his subtlety.

In the blandness of his nonsense, in the slyness of his references to truth, and in the well-bred assurance with which he assumes that there are, after all, generally accepted standards of value, of morals, of common sense, Mr. Lynd practices what is almost a lost art. In his avoidance of anything that smacks of the "Hee-Haw School of Humor" he should be highly acceptable to Mr. James L. Ford. Wit flourishes only when there are standards; humor requires little more than contrasts. One feels complimented by Mr. Lynd's assumption that one has standards—is, indeed, civilized. Above all, he, with great skill and great good taste, maintains the right mood and the correct air without a flaw—the mood of pleasantry rather than raillery; the air of the modest, self-appreciative, jesting philosopher.

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SELECTED POEMS. By William Butler Yeats. New York: The Macmillan Company.

For full appreciation of Mr. Yeats's poems, the Anglo-Saxon reader really needs an introductory acquaintance with Lady Gregory's *Visions and Beliefs in the West of Ireland*. At least, such an acquaintance would be somewhat helpful to the not infrequently sluggish Anglo-Saxon fancy. When one has said this, he has said, perhaps, all that need be said in relation to the fact that Mr. Yeats is an Irishman. One need not even take up the objection raised by Mr. Paul Elmer More to Mr. Yeats and his school—the objection that they are not so much Irish as romantic. On the whole, the fact that Mr. Yeats, being a poet, is an Irishman, may be regarded as secondary, and the fact that he is romantic does not necessarily blast him as a poet or as a literary influence.

After all, what the mind persistently returns to in considering Mr. Yeats's poems is Lady Gregory's *Visions and Beliefs*—the remarkable thing about which is that the stories related therein are vastly less well authenticated than are the stories collected by the Society for Psychical Research and at the same time infinitely easier to believe. This is because, like some religious dogmas discredited by science, they subtly fit in with and satisfy certain permanent susceptibilities of the human mind: in other words they mean something, are in some sense true. Judged by the same pragmatic test the doings of a poltergeist as recounted in the proceedings of the Society are absolutely untrue.

It is late in the day to discourse about Mr. Yeats's dramatic sense and about his poetic felicities. What strikes one in reading his selected poems is the vitality they derive from an impulsive faith in all manner of things unseen. They produce conviction, as the tales told by Lady Gregory's peasants produce conviction.

It is a commonplace that most faith is faith in some one else's faith. The emotion of conviction is contagious. Now, Mr. Yeats is perhaps the only living poet who can portray with naturalness and quiet conviction the doings of demons who appear in the guise of owls with human faces. To do this—to do it not pretendingly but convincingly—is supposed to be a lost art, an art lost as hopelessly as is the manner of Chaucer or the grandeur of Homer. Yet Mr. Yeats calmly practices this art, giving no sign that he thinks he is doing anything exceptional. In order to profit by this extraordinary endowment of his, one need not by any means believe in the reality of demons who appear in the form of owls having human faces. But one may be helped to believe in *something*—in purity, in heroism, in principalities and powers, mayhap in Heaven.

In Heaven, be it said—rather than “Never-never Land”, or Arcadia, or the Country behind the Moon, or one's own Ivory Tower! To Mr. Yeats the offhand criticism made by Mr. Powys upon Sir James Barrie—that the sort of thing described in *Peter Pan* is “not so much childishness as older people's damned foolishness”—distinctly does not apply. There is conviction in Mr. Yeats—if there is foolishness, he is willing to be made a fool for the sake of his beliefs, and he neither smiles nor drops a tear behind his hand.

One greatly prefers Mr. Yeats's poems to the effusions of most mystical poets, because one likes vital passions and golden imagery better than shadowy figures and questionable shapes. Mr. Yeats has a pronounced streak of the primitive in him, as every poet should have. One likes his poems better than the folklore and the barbaric literature in which so many of them find their inspiration, because they show a civilized sensitiveness. A primitive robustness of faith and a civilized sensitiveness of feeling—these explain much. And of course Mr. Yeats is an artist in words.

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FIFTY YEARS A JOURNALIST. By Melville E. Stone. Garden City: Doubleday, Page & Company.

Mr. Stone's connection with journalism began, strictly speaking, in 1864 when he served for a short period as a reporter on *The Chicago Tribune*. His career, however, really dates from 1871, the year of the great Chicago fire. At this time Mr. Stone was part owner of an iron foundry and machine shop. The property was destroyed in the conflagration, and after spending the winter in executive work in connection with the relief of the destitute, he was called upon to take charge of a newspaper. It was a day of small beginnings often leading to great careers. As a boy Mr. Stone took the family washing to a laundry