

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.

---

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

"maintained by one George M. Pullman, who had just invented a sleeping car." One of the boys who lived in Naperville, Illinois, when Melville Stone lived there, was John W. Gates.

After a considerable experience in journalism, Mr. Stone conceived the idea of establishing a one-cent daily newspaper in Chicago, and in December, 1875, the first copy of *The Chicago Daily News* was issued. One of the difficulties encountered was the unfamiliarity of the public with the one-cent coin, the smallest denomination current in the city being the five-cent piece. Some barrels of pennies had to be imported from the Philadelphia Mint and certain merchants had to be persuaded to mark their goods at 59 or 69 or 99 cents. But *The Daily News* was a fresh departure in policy as well as in price. In a day of generally venal newspapers, sheets that "gave the public what it wanted," it followed the plan of printing all the news, of telling it clearly, of granting no special favors, of keeping out undesirable advertisements.

Typically American in the traditional sense is the story of Mr. Stone's rise. His was not the day of college education taken as a matter of course, to be followed by years of professional training or by a well-paid position in some prosperous concern. Like Franklin and like Edison, he worked his way. His youth fell in a time of large new developments, great opportunities. Traditions were being built up. The decency of our modern press, the efficiency of modern newsgathering, are in no small measure due to him.

Thus the story of Mr. Stone's eventful fifty years derives its interest not merely from its reminiscent values—though it is rich in these—but from the active part that the author took in helping to create the environment we now live in. His energy gave success to what has become a great civilizing agency—the Associated Press. His exploits in "detective journalism" not only set a new standard of enterprise in newspaper work, but largely helped toward creating a sentiment for honesty and efficiency in city government. More notable throughout his story than the events with which he happened to be concerned are the opportunities that he made.

Achievements, news, international episodes, political sketches, intimate pictures, like the author's account of his friendship with Eugene Field, the careers of criminals and adventurers, insets, like the story of Lola Montez, testifying to the smallness of the world and the complexity of human relations—in this book curiosity sits down to a feast; and it is needless to comment on the importance of much of the matter that the volume contains.

The style in which the record is written deserves some comment. It is a notably concise style—the style of an old newspaper man. In few books are we aware of so little waste of vocabulary. There is an adequate emphasis on things deemed of most public interest, and the narrative even has subheads, like a "feature story." Yet this manner of telling the tale is by no means unliterary. Mr. Stone's style is comfortable to read, and it is quite equal to the realization of charm. The earlier chapters are delightful in atmosphere, and the book as a whole is far more than a chronicle.

One wonders if the present generation is not especially blessed in the matter of good autobiography. This was formerly a rarity. But now, with such books as *The Americanization of Edward Bok* and Mr. Stone's *Fifty Years a Journalist* before one, it is permissible to query whether journalism has not performed one of its best services in evoking the frank, individual, and informing type of personal life story of which we now have so many good examples. It is the habit of communicating with the public through the press which has given to these writings their openness, their assurance, their apparent trust in the soundness of public opinion.

---

THE FOLLY OF NATIONS. By Frederick Palmer. New York: Dodd, Mead & Company.

One who is about equally weary of war books—"The spirit, indeed, is willing, but the flesh is weak"—and of pleas for universal peace, may make, nevertheless, a partial exception in favor of Mr. Palmer's book. The author's philosophy is not new, but it comes with conviction. Perhaps no one who has written against the horrors of war and with the purpose of destroying its glamor has succeeded in giving the reader his views with so much essential simplicity. The necessary thing, as Mr. Palmer perceives, is to avoid argument and rhetoric so far as possible and to establish an intimate contact with the reader's mind. Something like a miracle is needed to accomplish this; we do not easily get possession of Mr. Palmer's mind, of his background of memories, of the disillusion that makes him so anti-warlike.

Few living men know more about war as it really is. For twenty-five years Mr. Palmer has been a war-correspondent, and he has had a view of every war of any importance from the Greek war of 1897 to the World War. What he essays to give his readers is not so much narrative in the usual sense—though there is a good deal of narrative, and no little "local color," too—as the evolution of a war correspondent's mind. The thrills, the zest of a young newspaper man on the field, are not concealed; neither are the grim realities, nor the shocking fatuities. Later wars, especially the Russo-Japanese, mark progressive stages of disillusion. In the end, the author turns hopefully to the young veterans of the World War as to those who have seen the falsity of war's glamor and are young enough and numerous enough to give effect to their views.

What Mr. Palmer has produced is, in fact, something like a novel in the modern style with a chapter of analysis at the end. It is much more effective than the usual harangue or the usual "fact story." Though somewhat confusing in form, and though by no means original in overt argument, its sincerity and its quality as a kind of "confession"—to say nothing of its more than half-successful art in presenting autobiography in almost the style of fiction—make it strike home.

Probably none of the excellent *reasons* against war will result in its imme-