

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.

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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-

diate disuse; but no doubt Mr. Palmer is right in feeling that if all men could get full knowledge of his own state of mind, could pass, even in imagination, through the stages through which he has passed, there would be no more fighting. One is struck by the fact that a war-correspondent, accustomed to regard bloodshed as news, should experience this development of sentiment; yet on reflection this seems entirely natural. A certain detachment, as professional observer, is, moreover, just what gives peculiar effect to Mr. Palmer's words. They affect us more than do the utterances of those who, feeling more deeply involved, speak avowedly *de profundis*, or from a hyper-sensitive conscience. Mr. Palmer seems to have neither the temperament of the typical peace advocate, nor the outraged feeling of the peace-lover compelled to participate in butchery. He does not theorize over much; he gives little sign of having been touched on the raw; he has simply arrived at quiet convictions.

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LIBERALISM AND INDUSTRY. By Ramsay Muir. Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin Company.

The question of whether or not one is a "Liberal" (or a Progressive) resolves itself into a problem of drawing rather difficult distinctions; it is all a matter of degree. But if we are willing to overlook the degrees, then most men in America are Liberals and it is to the leaders of Liberal thought that we must look for necessary adjustments. Broadly speaking, Liberalism means a desire to preserve the old value of freedom with order, together with a disposition to make needful readjustments in the social order. This frame of mind, however, is rather difficult to maintain; Liberalism runs the risk of being either narrowly individualistic, as the old Liberalism was, or merely opportunist and experimental. In practice it is, moreover, like all doctrines of the golden mean, somewhat difficult to apply.

This latter fact is well illustrated by Professor Muir's remarks about capital. It is easy enough to dispose of Socialist contentions or to point out the follies of Syndicalism. It is not difficult to admit the services of trade unionism, nor to concede to the "trusts" a certain measure of usefulness under legal control. New methods of industrial organization, grouped under the general head of industrial democracy, may be safely commended—so far as they work;—and it is easy to see that profit-sharing, so far as it may be freed from technical difficulties, is a good thing. But when one reaches the question of capital, then he is at a point of theory that will not yield to simple readjustment. Professor Muir's statement on this point is, therefore, especially interesting.

"If we mean by Capitalism," he writes, "a system in which the owners of capital invested in an industry are treated as the owners of the industry, Liberalism must declare itself opposed to Capitalism. For it is bound to contend that all the factors concerned have their own distinct and appropriate rights, and that therefore industry should be organized on a basis which will recognize the partnership of all these factors."