IN THE WORLD OF BOOKS

Forty Years an Advertising Agent.

Of the many "memoirs" and "autobiographies" which are being written and published these days there is not one that will be read with more genuine interest—by newspaper men especially—than "Forty Years an Advertising Agent," by George P. Rowell. But in point of fact the volume is so well written and is so full of contemporary human interest, that it is bound to find favor with a much larger public than those directly interested in newspapers and magazines.

The style in which it is written is a model of simplicity, and reminds one somehow of Benjamin Franklin's autobiography, not only in the mere style of the writing, but in the wholesome spirit in which it has been written. The naive confidences that are always discreet and applicable and that stop short at just the right point; the good natured personalities; the shrewd measurements of men; the philosophic sizing up of events, and the brief stories, which are told in such an artless manner, make of this volume not only a distinctly interesting book of the present and the past, but an important—perhaps the most important—contribution to the newspaper and journalistic history of this country that has ever been made.

If one should want to know something of the papers and the characteristics of the men in the newspaper business 40 years ago, in Boston and New York especially, here it is all told from a somewhat new standpoint—from the standpoint of the man who knew the men and the papers and yet was not directly affiliated with them.

The frankness with which Mr. Rowell discusses his own business—that of an advertising agent and head of an advertising agency—is positively refreshing, for it is all done without any mental reservations, until finally one becomes as deeply interested in him and the growth and development of his business, as if it were a romance, because it is all so human and so simple. You are made to feel that you are being specially confided in; that you are being told a secret.

Mr. Rowell's book consists of 52 chapters or papers, each in a sense separate and of itself interesting, but making as a whole a context that is complete. He came from the country, where as a boy he had learned habits of thrift, and went to work in the counting room of a Boston newspaper as a sort of collector, which business brought him into contact with a variety of men and such a variety of business enterprises as would scarcely have been possible in any other line. Here he remained for seven years, and during this time he learned many things that served him in good stead in after life. He got an education that could not be obtained in any school or any college. He learned something of men and of human nature and especially of the mental attitude of men toward business. He learned much about the newspaper business and about the men engaged in that line of business in Boston. All of this knowledge enabled him at the end of seven years to start into a unique business with another young man—the business of selling advertising space in newspapers.

How he built this business up from small beginnings in Boston and later moved to New York, and how the many problems of the business were met and solved, constitutes an important and interesting part of the 517 pages of this book, but the relation of this unique business to the newspapers of the country, to many of the prominent men in business and professional life in the country, is probably the most absorbing part of the work.

Here one can get a glimpse of the wrecks that have strewn the sea of journalism during the past 40 years, and of some of the journalistic successes that have been made in that time. The wrecks have been many and the rocks on which some of these ventures have foundered are worth noting. One also gets a good idea of the growth of this country in the past 40 years, especially in the newspaper field, and the changes which have taken place in the newspaper methods of doing business in that time.

The Quickening.

"The Quickening," by Francis Lynde (The Bobbs-Merrill Co.), begins with the story of a genuine old-fashioned "revival" in Paradise Valley, a little hamlet which had had no development since the close of the Civil War. Here, drawn by the exhortations of the revivalist, came the mountaineers, who under the lashings of the minister's tongue, were driven to the mourners' bench, and experienced there that remarkable—should we say hysterical?—mental state termed conversion.

Among the converts was the hero of the story, then but a boy of twelve. His mother had destined him from his cradle for the ministry, while his father had hoped that at sometime he might become a competent mechanic, as he himself was. Now the heroine enters. She is the granddaughter of an unreconstructed rebel, whose bitter hatred of the Yankees, time had not diminished. The little girl had led a life of hardship with her artist father in Paris until her tenth year, when, on the death of her father, she was brought to her grandfather's home in Paradise Valley, and made the pet of the household.

The story of the hero's education in a strict Methodist school, his doubts and questionings both of religion, and of his call to the ministry; his expulsion from the school, and return to his home; his struggles with the Yankee promoter, who had organized a company to develop the coal mines and ore beds which his father had worked on a very small scale, are of intense interest. In addition to that, the beautiful love story between this successful young business man and our heroine, who had now reached young womanhood, the complications brought about by the hero being placed in a false position with a young woman of low birth and easy virtue, and the final triumph of