

LITTLE LION

In 1937, three years after the death of Brand Whitlock, his widow Ella (Nell) published an essay Brand had written about their Pekinese dog, Mieke. The introduction was by Allan Nevins.

The flyleaf describes the story within. “ There was a lighter side to Brand Whitlock’s life in Brussels during the German invasion, a diverting interlude that was entirely foreign to the grim business of war and his many duties as Ambassador. At home he had a little Pekinese dog named Mieke; ‘Did you ever notice how much Pekinese dogs resemble little lions?’ A gift from a friend, Mieke was accepted at first with hesitation, but soon won her way into the hearts of Mr. and Mrs. Whitlock, becoming an accredited member of the family with all the rights and privileges that her royal blood demanded. Sympathetically and beautifully Mr. Whitlock has written here the biography of this little lion. In telling words the picture is painted and we see Mieke against the background of war-oppressed Brussels, we see her trip to the United States and then her return to her beloved home. We learn of her likes and dislikes, of how she lorded herself over the affections of her master and mistress, of how she hated cats, and of how she was kind to everyone but kept everyone in his place. Dog lovers will delight in this tender little book. And, as Allan Nevins says in his Introduction: ‘Those who read the essay as carefully as it deserves will find that, much as it tells of Mieke, it tells still more of the brave, sensitive, and devoted man who stood as a symbol of American aid and protection to seven million people.’”

Through Mieke some of Brand Whitlock’s inner thoughts are revealed. “On Sunday mornings I have seen her eyes widen with amazement and melt in sad reproach as she saw her mistress leave for church to worship a God whose devotees alike prayed to Him to bless them in killing one another all over the beautiful earth they profaned by those hideous engines of murder that represented the sum of their achievement in twenty centuries of what they called Christian civilization.”

A fascinating little book. Our thanks to Patrick Lynch for tracking down a copy for our collection.