

the young growing girl, helping her to relate herself to her brothers in the labor union and to her sisters who are in the service of the home and the child. Everyone can belong. It is not only a gathering together of women's unions. It provides a fellowship to which can belong the working woman and the woman of leisure and the woman's club anxious to help in bringing about the shorter working day, a wage on which a girl can live, and in hastening the time when all dangerous machinery will be protected, and every factory well-lit and ventilated. Anywhere and everywhere the man or woman who wants to see the precious gift of the girlhood of each generation conserved as carefully as the forests or the waters, can help by joining.

It is a wonderful training school for its members. The inexperienced work-girl, and the woman who has never had to earn her own living, come into touch with some of the wonderful personalities who, under the prosaic title of business agent, are helping other working girls to know their own powers.

Here is how one business agent, Melinda Scott, handled a situation that the unprotected young factory-worker has to face often: A little Polish factory girl was insulted by a foreman. She complained to the superintendent, but was told it must have been her own fault. She sent to the owner of the factory a registered letter and obtained the official receipt. No reply was forthcoming. Melinda Scott as business agent was now appealed to. She went straight to the superintendent, and told him she would call "Shop" within fifteen minutes if this foreman was not made to publicly apologize. The employer was telephoned for. He came in his motor, and within the fifteen minutes the foreman was asked for an explanation he could not give. "Very well," said the employer pointing to Miss Scott, "you do as she says and apologize." The foreman did what was asked, and the same day received his walking papers.

Could church or priest have preached a more forceful sermon on morality?

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INSENSIBILITY.

I saw him at the Carlton, in his wine,
His white broad hand along the table lay;
A waiter passed a savory made of swine,
On scraps of pastry, which he waved away,
Then looked about him over his pince-nez.

He carried all the while a genial air
Of infinite patience through that weary meal;
Stroking at moments his well-parted hair,
Or fumbling at his waistcoat, where a seal
Hung from the pocket, like a cotton-reel.

At last his friend beside him, who had read
Two or three times the evening paper through;

And answered to whatever he had said:
"Ah!"—his attention to a column drew,
Murmuring through heavy lips, "Can this be true?"

He took the paper patiently, with like
Patience began to read it and to carve
A shilling strawberry. 'Twas about the strike—
A hundred, in the cause, had sworn to starve.
He put it down, and muttered: "Let them starve!"
—H. Monro.

BOOKS

A GREAT AMERICAN NOVEL.

A Life for a Life. By Robert Herrick. Published by The Macmillan Company, New York, 1910. Price, \$1.50.

There is a bigness about Robert Herrick's latest book that renders the writing of a calm and controlled criticism difficult. The magnificent breadth of the canvas; the multiplicity of detail, touching our national life at its heights and its depths, and yet fusing all together in the grand outlines of a central theme of symphonic bigness; the acute realism of the single pictures and the splendid richness of imagination that generalizes from the Part to the Whole—all these qualities of a great prose epic this book possesses in measure overflowing. It might well be called the American "Faust," the epic of our modern national tendencies, our modern national life. Like Faust, the hero, Hugh Grant, touches life at all points, learns to know the lure of successful endeavor, and the joy of returned love,—but he sees the sting, the hellish bargain by which the desired goal is won, and at the last learns that true peace comes only through self immolation. This, roughly outlined, is the thematic note of this magnificent prose epic, written in a prose that oftentimes reaches the richness of verse, lacking only the outer form.

Hugh Grant, the foundling from the country town, follows the lure of the city, and at the outset of his endeavor encounters the two extremes of modern industrial society. The maiming of the little sewing girl in the shirt-maker's loft, and the chance meeting with the bearded "Anarch," who explains the economic reason—taught by hate—for such incidents, come as prelude to Hugh's introduction to the multi-millionaire, Alexander Arnold, and his glimpse of luxury in the Arnold home, of power in the bank controlled by Arnold—twin symbols of Success. The great electric sign "Success" that lit the attic chamber which was Hugh Grant's first—and last—home in the city sheds the glare of its artificiality over all the life that he learns to know under its watchful eye.

Helped by native ability, drawn by the lure of power, the beckoning of love, Grant mounts the ladder rapidly. But the very thing that gives him

his big success, his work for the Rainbow Falls Power Plant, also brings his downfall. For in his years of work in the mountains ideas have come to him which suddenly crystallize into the Vision, the understanding of the Injustice done by man to man under the guise of Progress, of Advancing Civilization, of Business Prosperity.

His friend the Anarch takes him through Inferno and shows him with what toll of human life and human happiness the wealth is produced that goes into the pockets of a few. The knowledge sinks deep into Hugh's heart, and parts him from the woman he loves, Arnold's beautiful daughter, the fair flower whose sweetness is drawn from untold human suffering in hundreds of other lives. Single-handed Hugh endeavors to fight the Octopus by cutting off one of its myriad tentacles, the power to harness the clouds and force men to pay tribute for the water that God provides for all. Baffled in this by the legislating creatures of the Interests, Hugh seeks refuge in self-denial. If he cannot right the wrong, he at least will not profit by it. In the great natural cataclysm that overwhelms the city—a fine bit of imaginative writing—Hugh stands at last face to face with the true soul of his love, the soul he had sought in vain before. There he meets death in the work of rescue.

The book is marvelous as a piece of strong, virile writing. Its grasp of the true state of things in a great industrial community of today is as remarkable in its conception as in its interpretation. For readers of *The Public*, however, the solution of the problem offered by the author will come as a "lame and impotent conclusion." Mere self-abnegation of him who sees the Injustice is of little or no help to the sufferers therefrom. Refusing to share in the wrong alone will not right it. And the nebulous scheme of gathering together a few hundred little ones and teaching them "the individual good will to renounce, working against the evil will to possess"—the same idea that weakens the conclusion of the strong second part of Björnson's "Beyond Human Power"—isn't going to be of much good to anybody but land monopolists, who are likely to profit hugely when these children grow up and go out into the world.

But it is too soon yet, perhaps, to ask for the great constructive work of fiction along economic lines; and the enlightening power of such a book as this can be a tremendous influence for good.

GRACE ISABEL COLBRON.

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YOUTHFUL VERSES.

Chords and Discords.—By Walter Everett Hawkins, Author of "Sweet Dreams of You." Published by the Murray Brothers Press, Washington, D. C.

Verses by a young Negro who regards himself as having "merely been the instrument through

which some peculiar unknown something has from early childhood been speaking." Some were begun when his little world "stretched just out across a few acres of corn and cotton to the little creek on the further side of the cow pasture," and "up the lane to the old schoolhouse and back again;" the others in different circumstances as his education went on. They are much the same in quality as the verses of a white boy of similar ambition, education and experience might be—probably better on the whole; and there is here and there a touch of that race expression, not bitter, which hasn't yet found its interpreter.

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GOVERNMENT BY COMMISSION.

The Dethronement of the City Boss. Being a Study of the Commission Plan as begun in Galveston, developed and extended in Des Moines, and already taken up by many other cities, East and West. By John J. Hamilton. Published by Funk & Wagnalls Company, New York and London. 1910. Price \$1.20 net.

This book, the first effort of which we are aware at systematizing the rapidly advancing history of the commission plan of city government, rightly treats the "Des Moines plan" as the type. The pioneer Galveston plan was too imperfect to count as more than a suggestion. Such a book is needed, and for so good a one there ought to be a wide demand. It tells the whole story of this municipal evolution, from Galveston to Grand Junction, and conscientiously as well as fairly. An appendix contains the text of the Des Moines charter, and the judicial opinion in support of its constitutionality. Notwithstanding the newness of the reform and the necessity for definite statement, this book is interesting as well for its style of narration and comment as for the information it gives.

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RAILWAY FINANCE.

The Earning Power of Railroads. Compiled and Edited by Floyd W. Mundy of Jas. H. Oliphant & Co. 1910. James H. Oliphant & Co., 20 Broad Street, New York City, and the Rookery, Chicago, Sole Sales Agent, Moody's Magazine, Book Department, 35 Nassau Street, New York City. Price \$2.50. Postage 12 cents.

This annual, which has been regularly published for nine years, appeals to investors as presenting "the vital facts regarding all the important railroads of the United States, Canada and Mexico," giving mileage, capitalization, bonded indebtedness, earnings, operating expenses, cost of maintenance, fixed charges, comparative statistics, etc. Such information is needed of course, not only by persons seeking opportunities for investment, but also by students of the relation of railroads to public affairs; and for their purposes a