

chipped in to make his big fortune, and so he's going to fix it so he'll be giving back a little of it as long as governments exist for the benefit of property and let the people look out for themselves."

"Dobbs!" I exclaimed as soon as I recovered from the shock of his radical remarks; "you shouldn't say such things. It's generally conceded that Rockefeller accumulated his wealth by hard work and persistent saving."

"Certainly he had the industry and did some of the saving, but does that account for the size of the pile? That burglar who went to jail the other night for breaking into my safe, worked night and day for three months fixing up his tools and watching for a good opportunity to blow it up. He got a dollar and twenty cents for his work. He saved up his day wages for three weeks before he tackled the job, to pay for dynamite and tools. If he had only got a law passed to make me keep all my money in the safe he might have made something. Of course the Rockefeller fortune was accumulated by hard work. You don't think for a minute that rebates and freight discriminations drop into our pockets without work? You don't think you are going to knock out your small competitor without work? You don't think you can work the people up to a pitch where they think a monopoly is what keeps the poor people from starving to death without work? Of course it took work to build up the great fortunes. It takes most as much work to fix things so you can make other people do the work as it does to do the work yourself, but after you get the work done and things fixed so other people do the manual labor part of it, you can take a day off now and then and hire some brains to represent you in courts and legislatures, and you can spend your time trying to persuade yourself that you are a benefactor of mankind."

"I take it by the tenor of your remarks that you do not approve of this Benevolent Foundation Fund," I ventured to say as Dobbs arose from his seat and prepared to go homeward.

"What if I don't?" said Dobbs. "My approval will make no difference to Rockefeller or the Congress that will perpetuate the beggary fund and cause the people that don't think to remark, 'What a great hearted and benevolent man that Rockefeller is; he's going to give away all his property to the poor people. What a good time they will have when the thing gets to working!' It's a good move to distract the thoughts of the people away from the real trouble, and perpetuate the monopolies. The only thing about it that puzzles me is that the monopolists really think they are a blessing to the people, and that the world cannot get along without them."

I think I would like Dobbs better if he would let me do some of the talking. I could knock the

underpinning from under some of his propositions if he would only give me a chance.

GEORGE V. WELLS.

## BOOKS

### ALEXANDER IRVINE'S LIFE STORY.

From the Bottom Up. The Life story of Alexander Irvine. Illustrated. New York. Doubleday, Page & Co. 1910. Price \$1.50 net.

"A live wire" could describe few men better than by his own account of himself this phrase fits Mr. Irvine. All the way from his impoverished boyhood in Ireland, through the British army and with a taste of the navy, on to the New York slums as a helping brother and up into the pulpit, his heart was leaping and his mind on the go.

He became a socialist, of course; one like Jack London, only that his socialism has God in it. A man who does little thinking in the abstract and much feeling in the concrete, he was as certain to become an idealistic socialist as London, with like temperament but a different personal experience, was to become a materialistic one. Thinking he sees "a great truth in the doctrine of the economic interpretation of history," he is sure he feels "a mighty truth in the spiritual interpretation of life."

Mr. Irvine's autobiographical method is candid, his style is racy, and out of it all we get what in the patter of the magazines would be called a genuine "human document." You may see a soul growing when he tells you how, after carefully preparing to preach as a pulpit candidate—

sermon time came and with it a wave of disgust that swept over my soul. "Good friends," I began; "I am not a candidate for the pastorate here. I was, a few minutes ago; but not now. Instead of doing the work of an infinite God and letting Him take care of the result, I have been trying to please you. If the Almighty will forgive me for such unfaith—such meanness—I swear that I will never do it again."

And then he preached—acceptably to God it may be, but the church didn't call him.

To illustrate "the seared, calloused, surfeited condition of the average mind in the churches," Mr. Irvine tells of a meeting of church officers at which the hell question in the creed was canvassed:

Not a man in the church believed in "everlasting damnation," but they voted unanimously to leave the hell-fire article just as they had found it. They had all subscribed to it, and it "hadn't hurt them." "Do you mean to tell me," I asked, "that none of you believe in eternal punishment, and yet you are going to force every man, woman and child who joins your church to solemnly swear before God that they do believe in it? There was a great silence. "Yes, that's exactly what's what," one man said.

The hell-fire article stayed in that creed but Mr. Irvine didn't stay long in that church.

Among Mr. Irvine's supporters in Connecticut was Bryan's friend, Philo S. Bennett, and Mr. Irvine gives this testimony regarding Mr. Bryan's relations (vol. viii, p. 379; vol. xi, p. 676), to Mr. Bennett's fortune, after Mr. Bennett had been killed in an accident:

Mrs. Bennett sent for me and I took charge of the funeral arrangements. Mr. Bryan came on at once and helped. After the funeral he read and discussed the will. I was present at several of these discussions. The sealed letter written by the dead man was the bone of contention. Then the lawyers came in and the case went into the courts. The world knew but a fragment of the truth. It looked to me at first as if a selfish motive actuated Mr. Bryan; but as I got at the details one after another, details the world can never know, I developed a profound respect for him. He was the only person involved that cared anything for the mind, will or intention of the dead man, and his entire legal battle was not that he should get what Mr. Bennett had willed him, but that the designs of his friend should not be frustrated: not merely with regard to the fifty thousand—he offered to distribute that—but with regard to the money for poor students.

Although Mr. Irvine regards his life story as only a catalogue of events, it is much more than that. It is what autobiography ought to be. There is no climbing up unto a high place and preaching down to the crowd, with one's own life story as a text. The writer lives his life over again, from milestone to milestone, and his readers live it with him—with him and not under him. That the events are facts instead of fiction is all that distinguishes this book from a good novel. The very chord which novelists endeavor to touch with the facts they invent, Mr. Irvine has touched with the facts of his own career.



## PRISON REFORM.

**Crime and Criminals.** By the Prison Reform League Publishing Company, 443 South Main St., Los Angeles, Cal.

To the general reader the interest of this book has been lessened and its message minimized by burying the fourth chapter in the body of the book instead of making it the first. Everybody is interested in the experiences of a convict, and when the story is well told and fairly told, as it is here, the mere curious interest develops into wholesome sympathy and an appetite is created for all that the book has to offer. The experiences in question are told by Griffith J. Griffiths, secretary of the Prison Reform League, who served in San Quentin prison, California, a sentence for two years on conviction of assault with a deadly weapon, an act which he insists was accidental and not criminal. His account of his own ex-

periences, his observations while in prison, the experiences of others which are included in the book, make an effective background for the humane movement he has undertaken.

We think we merely punish men and women for crime, or put them where they cannot commit crime, when we lock them up. What we really do is to put them out of sight, out of sound, into the hands of irresponsible keepers. The criminal instinct which our prisons foster, the bestiality they promote, the inhumanities they conceal, call for a complete overhauling of our penal methods. It is hardly to be hoped that society will go so far in reforming itself as to be as fair to the individual as it requires the individual without a pull to be to it, but a stride in that direction may be possible. We may at least treat the social derelicts we make with a much greater degree of humanity. If any one doubts the necessity for it or the wisdom of it, let him read this book.

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## BOOKS RECEIVED

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—**Mental and Spiritual Health.** By A. T. Schofield. Published by R. F. Fenno Co., 18 E. 17th St., New York.

—**Wages and the Price of Land.** Published by Henry Rawie, Harrison Bldg., Columbus, O. 1910. Price 25 cents.

—**A Valid Christianity for To-day.** By Charles D. Williams, Bishop of Michigan. Published by The Macmillan Co., New York. 1909.

—**Songs of the Army of the Night.** By Francis Adams. Published by A. C. Fifield, 13 Clifford's Inn, E. C., London. 1910. Price, paper 1s., cloth 2s., net.

—**Annual Report of the Director of the Mint.** For the Year Ended June 30, 1909. Published at the Government Printing Office, Washington, D. C., 1909.

—**Psychic Control Through Self-Knowledge.** By Walter Winston Kenilworth. Published by R. F. Fenno Co., 18 E. 17th St., New York. 1910. Price \$2.00 net.

—**Studies in the Gospel of the Kingdom.** Series No. 1. By Josiah Strong. Published by The American Institute of Social Service, Bible House, Astor Pl., New York. 1910.

—**The Martyrdom of Ferrer.** By Joseph McCabe. Issued for The Rationalist Press Association. Published by Watts & Co., 17 Johnson's Court, Fleet St., E. C., London. 1909.

—**Socialism and Superior Brains.** By Bernard Shaw. The Fabian Socialist Series, No. 8. Published by A. C. Fifield, 13 Clifford's Inn., E. C., London. 1910. Price, paper, 6d. net.

—**The Moral Equivalent of War.** By William James. Published by the American Association for International Conciliation. Sub-station 84 (501 W. 116th St.) New York. February, 1910.

—**Twenty-third Annual Report of the Commissioner of Labor.** 1908. Workmen's Insurance and Benefit