

## THE LIFE OF A THIEF.\*

ON every page this autobiography stamps itself as the genuine life story of a thief, and it must be quite evident to every reader of discernment that Mr. Hapgood's part in it is really only what he claims — that of transcribing and editing. No one, howsoever clever he may be, could have "thought up" some of the things which this thief details. The whole thing is a very frank confession of a fundamentally dishonest being, whose early training in the streets made it almost necessary for him to be crooked.

He describes in interesting fashion just how various kinds of theft are managed; how pockets are picked, stores robbed, people gulled and cheated in every way. The pride in his ability to thief and rob is omnipresent in this thief's confession, and when, at the end of the book, we are told that he is now on the straight road and looking for an honest job, because he has found out in the long run that crookedness does not pay, we cannot help doubting his sticking to this good resolution. He would seem to be well-nigh incapacitated for an honest life, and, despite his many falls and captures, he is a clever thief.

It has been suggested that such detailed and careful description of the manner of picking pockets and other sorts of robbery should not have been published on account of misleading the youth dishonestly inclined. This point, though it has sense, seems to us, on the whole, not well taken. We should say that few who were inclined to rob would know of the book, and therefore would not read it; while to most of its readers the so careful descriptions would put them on their guard, on the ground that forewarned is forearmed. At any rate, we have found the book interesting and worth reading as an accurate picture of a portion of the life of the other half.

\*The Autobiography of a Thief. Recorded by Hutchins Hapgood. New York: Fox, Duffield & Co. \$1.25 net.