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A LETTER ABOUT BOOKS.

**Quotation from a Letter:
by Will Levington Comfort.**

I never drew unqualified inspiration from Shakespere [*sic*], though I have read most of the plays and sonnets. One thinks at the same time of Bacon, from whose ethical essences I have taken real profit; but even more from the balanced counsels of the noble Roman, Aurelius, tough-fibered and fine-fibered enough to be an emperor and remains a man. In the same thought comes to me the spiritual faculties kindled within from the self-mastery of the slave, Epictetus. That little volume I kept warm a long time against my hip. Some of Browning's things I have actually found intact in my memory from much conning; but I have always wished that he had been a poor man forced to meet the markets for daily bread. That would have made him make words work better. In spite of this he pulled a love for me that made him unfold to my inner consciousness. He knew something of what a lover means which the world has still to learn. I would have adored the lover in Dante for one single page of his great heart story, and when I read that Beatrice said to him: 'I will make you forever a citizen of that Rome whereof the Christ is a Roman—' I could hold no more of sheer Romance!

[. . .]

"The Spoon River man actually gave me an extension of consciousness; the young and old in this environment have passed around James Stephens' 'Crock of Gold,' looking at the world differently before and after. The breath quickens in the same passage of thought to Algernon Blackwood's stories. There are three big workmen of the transition. . . . I have read James Oppenheim's little verses called 'Annie' in the same evening with some of the finest pages of rhythmic print; and

Alfred Henry Lewis' 'Wolfville Stories' to the same group who believe Romaine Rolland's 'Jean Christophe' to be one of the best productions of any artist any time. Every day that big Frenchman shows his light in the world, which is to say that he helps to uncover the light intrinsic in all men. Ellen Key's 'Love and Marriage' was a real book to me ten years ago, and one of the most potent if perverted things which I ever held in hand was the 'Poems of Aleister Crowley' "