

MEDICAL THOUGHTS, FACTS AND FANCIES.

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“ Read not to criticize, but to accept, to consider or reject.”

I think it was Epictetus, who flourished during the first half century, A.D., who told us in good Latin the fact: “ That appearances to the mind are of four kinds. Things either are what they appear to be; or, they neither are, nor appear to be; or, they are, and do not appear to be; or, they are not, and yet appear to be. Rightly to aim in all these cases is the wise man’s task.” Dear brother, write in large letters and not to be effaced these lines on the tablets of memory, for not only will they be monitors, but will remind you of perilous and unworthy motives which, if carried to the full fruition, grief and disappointment would have marked the issue. In no other learned profession do things appear in so manifold colorings, not that we are especially susceptible to well unfounded impressions and deductions, for we have been termed, and very wisely so, *easy marks* in business relations, and if applicable, certainly thus in other and many considerations that are not necessary to name.

Complicated, yet simple, as are the lines of the great Roman, whose life is guided, yet thinks it guided, scrupulously directed by his words. Different interpretations and even contrary reasonings will arise to many who may read these words of a philosopher, and in making this assertion I do not forget that Montaigne has told us “ There is more ado in interpreting interpretations than in interpreting things, and more books upon books than upon all other subjects; we do nothing but comment one upon another.” Self-study and the study of life’s apparent riddles will help us to balance things. Observation is not all, but to experience,—and it alone to a great extent as the unerring guide, we look for the unfolding and clarifying of the mysterious, wilful, yet apparent contrarities of life’s devious courses.

Yes, appearances are deceptive at this date as when Hippocrates made the assertion. Things are not what they seem, and our regrets are, and they, no doubt, are yours, that they blur our remembrances when we reflect how easy marks we have been, and continually are, we studying the subject of things that are and then do not seem to be—really will-o’-the-wisp hunters—Meleagers, in fact—blind plodders, too often, for things which appear to be, yet are not—too many pipe-dreamers—too much evidence that the great “ prerogative of mind ” is abused and