

Staying With It

"This town of Fair-speech," said Christian, "I have heard of; and as I remember, they say it is a wealthy place."

By-ends: Yes, I assure you that it is; and I have very many rich kindred there."

Christian: "Pray, who are your kindred there, if man may be so bold?"

By-ends: "Almost the whole town; and, in particular, my Lord Turn-about, my Lord Time-server, my Lord Fair-speech, from whose ancestors that town first took its name; and also Mr. Smooth-man, Mr. Facing-both-ways, and Mr. Anything; and the Parson of our Parish, Mr. Two-tongues, was my mother's own brother It is true we somewhat differ in religion from those of the stricter sort, yet but in two small points: First, we never strive against wind and tide. Secondly, we are always most zealous when Religion goes in his silver slippers; we love much to walk with him in the street, if the sun shines and people applaud him."

Christian: "If you will go with us, you must go against wind and tide; the which, I perceive, is against your opinion. You must also own Religion in his rags, as well as when in his silver slippers; and stand by him, too, when bound in irons, as well as when he walketh the streets with applause."

—John Bunyan.

To-day the Great Alchemist's test of what is at the basis of character and conduct is being applied to the nations in such a way that the whole world must listen and learn.

Through such experiences, and through the destruction, desolation and death that follow in their train, myriads of men and women shall come to question the use of life and the Purpose and the Power at the Heart of the Universe.

Yet the same crucial test is never absent from human life in ordinary times, and every day finds many souls "breasting the blows of circumstance," or succumbing in body or in mind and heart.

"The last of life for which the first was made" depends not on length of earthly days allotted to any soul. Nor is it to be judged by the dazzling tinsel of the decorations of the Vanity Fair, represented by Society (with or without a capital "S") amid which the life is lived.

What matters most is: For what do we fight and how? Is life only an opportunity for selfish gratification—none the less selfish though not necessarily sensual? Are we money-grabbing, place-hunting, and time-serving? Do we worship what the world calls "success" and follow hard after it, regardless of principle? Are we indifferent, or dead, to the ideal life, unless in so far as a formal connection with it serves to further our position in a certain "class," or makes our name one with which to bait company prospectuses? Are we engaged in the contest—in society, or church, or state—not for "peace," but for place or power "at any price?"

If so, whether or not our fellows "find us out" ere we pass to the "undiscovered country," we shall surely miss the main purpose of this life.

But if we fight for the Right as we know it, uncaring for man or devil; if we seek to follow the light given, even though it lead not to the gleam of gold; if we yield not our God-given independence; if we