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STORM IN THE NIGHT.

They shriek afar i' the east from their haunted vaults—
The winds, his horséd couriers; comes a tread
Which shakes heaven's coping. Overhead, the stars
Fall withered at the far glance of his eye.
He rides the blast, his trumpets fill the night;
All ministering powers of light and good
Fall to the gloom of the underworld, ere yet
His swift, deep-mouthed dogs of hell hunt down
Their quarry through the sky.

W. J. H.

THE FIGHT FOR APPEARANCES.

To be rather than to seem, would be a good motto for more general adoption to-day. Not that this is an age of shams above all ages that ever were. Yet we know our own times better than it is possible for us to know any other and we can judge them more fairly.

There are, of course, different opinions as to what constitutes our well-being. And if we can suppose some approximation to absolute truth to be attainable here, then the desire to be well, and to appear well, is certainly not blameworthy. But while our capacity of desiring seems to be infinite, our powers of attainment are limited and fixed by the conditions in which we find ourselves. The result is a fight and a compromise. We struggle against the conditions and vanquish some of them; we accept the others under tacit protest and restrain or modify our desires into a harmony of some kind with them.

In this process of conflict and adjustment the moral nature often suffers. The world judges us by appearances. There is nothing else for it to judge by. We alone may know ourselves. At the outset the world takes us to be what we seem to be. Subsequent manifestations on our part may change the judgment, but it is still a matter of appearance. And as the attainment of the reality which we desire and which the world approves, is often difficult or impossible, while the semblance of it is within easy reach, we sacrifice integrity on the shrine of appearance and sell our souls for a sham.

A considerable part of our social life is a fraud. The conventions of society and the laws of etiquette which condemn individuality and aim to make all men seem alike and act alike, are dishonest and fraudulent in their operation. Much of the current society talk, the complimentary allusion, the affected interest, are spurious and counterfeit. People say what they do not believe; they pretend to feel what they do not feel.

There is a large element of sham in our politics, our trade, our professions and our literary and religious activities,—all

for the sake of some supposed advantage to be gained thereby. We do not stop often enough to reflect that no such gain can compensate the soul for the loss of honesty. But essayists and preachers have descanted sufficiently on this portion of the subject. For sake of variety the present article will deal with another particular phase of the evil.

I refer to our building operations. Many of the houses that are put up now-a-days are a fraud. Those who have had to live in them during the past month can well testify that they do not fulfil the primary end of a dwelling-house, which is to afford shelter and comfort. And in the secondary consideration of architectural beauty we fall equally short, though we make some pretension in this respect. People think they must have large houses, and as they can't afford to build them thus of solid stone or brick, they give the walls a brick veneer, or the front wall at least, though the sides and the back are of plaster. If the foundation is not of stone or the roof of slate, an attempt is made by the use of paint to make them appear as if they were.

Even the walls of our greatest public buildings, which to unsophisticated minds are of massive stone, turn out to be a brick-lined shell. To the Toronto University man who had passed and repassed for four years the old King's College building in the Queen's Park, and knew not too much of its history, but looked on it through a mist of romance—to such a one what a shock was given to find while the process of demolition was going on recently, that it too was a sham. We do not build now-a-days for the gods who see everywhere, but for men who look only at the surface.

There are many buildings of much pretension in Toronto, both public and private, that are disfigured with wood or metal cornices and pillars, painted with skilful trickery to the wretched semblance of stone. Even many of our churches, which at least ought to be honest buildings, are a deception with their sham stone pinnacles, turrets and mouldings. And the new hall now being built in Toronto by the Young Men's Christian Association is also to be condemned in this respect. If some of our religious buildings are in any sense an embodiment of our religious character, what a fraud we must be, to be sure!

The interiors and furniture of some of even our best houses are no better. There is too much veneer and imitation. We paint and stain and grain and paper and plaster our walls, our doors or our furniture, until we have deceived ourselves into ignorance of what plain honesty and good taste in these matters require of us. If we cannot have the reality through and through, for the sake of heaven let us not corrupt our souls with the imitation.

In matters of dress and personal adornment, the same dishonesty and vitiated taste appears. In fact, with respect to ornament, it has come to be pretty generally understood that very little that glitters is really gold, and even a lady's sealskin coat becomes an object of suspicion.

The remedy for the evil lies with the individual. Let him break from under the base compulsion of other people's opinions—and of his own. Let him moderate his desires to the point where he can satisfy them with realities. Satisfaction and success are relative terms. There is no absolute here. High satisfactions may consist with humble desires, and being, not having, is the end of life and the measure of its fullness.

A. STEVENSON.