

of power to do man's bidding, is an insignificant looking thing, a dull drab wire, yet it is live, and the seat of concentrated power. In a calmly ordered way it moves the mills of the millions. The parading of strenuousness and the smashing of things in ungoverned haste, means spent force when the emergency arrives. A human agent of this kind accomplishes little more of the world's work than does that most uninteresting of objects extant, the victim of chronic inertia. Both go to swell the hosts of

"The seeming able who all but scored"

"The men ten-talented who still
Strangely missed of the goal."

A FIRE OF STRAW.

When the cynic wishes to indulge in a little barking at things human and divine, at times he singles out the man who makes 'retreats.' All that concentrated effort of a soul striving towards a higher plane of moral goodness, of spiritual sweetness and the light of grace, he dubs with epigrammatic spitefulness, 'a fire of straw.' Even were it no more, 'twere better than no warmth at all; better far than the unthawed heart of the selfish carper to whom enthusiasms are stranger. But there are 'retreats' that are something more than the flame that flashes up bravely in the stubble only to subside anon; there are retreats that kindle fires that endure—if only we be faithful vestals. The man does not breathe who does not feel uplifted after a day given over to frank introspection under the search light of an experienced guide. Prayer and silence invite the grace of God, and God works not in vain, but builds for aye.