

[From Life Illustrated.]

THE RELIGION OF FASHION.

BY ROYING HARRY.

Modern Christians live to win;
Cloaking ev'ry impious sin.
All for "doctrine"—catechism!
All for forms—some ancient ism!
Pomp and ceremony all;
Not the least equivocal.

Landlords sharking all the week;
On a Sunday very meek!
Landlords gripe their tenants hard;
Naught but wealth claims their regard.
Such want doctrine preached to them;
Plainer sermons they condemn.
Soothing words which lull to sleep—
Visions through the brain doth creep;
Golden visions while they dose—
Some old mortgage to foreclose.
Broker—gambler—grandest sceler!
Tell him not within the "pale,"
Gambling is a heinous crime—
Speak of that another time.
Do not analyze his deeds,
That comes not within the creeds.
Talk of doctrine—things abstruse;
Solemn words and thoughts recluse.

Smuggling merchant—false invoice!
Robbing Uncle Sam's his choice.
Quite genteels I will admit,
Damask-cushioned pew to sit.
Pompous forms are his delight;
Flowing gowns both black and white.
Talk of faith and angels dear—
Life to come, he loves to hear.
He invests in other stocks;
This is bold and orthodox.
Preachers must not vulgarize,
If pew rents they duly prize.
Talk not of commercial mart,
Else the nabob will depart.

Rich distiller (im)pious man!
Measures life by one short span.
Spirit risings in his mind,
Spirit droppings for mankind.
Stimulating in his life;
Stimulus for every strife.
How sedate he walks to church—
Seat the farthest from the porch.
Gospel droppings lull to sleep,
Spirit droppings vigils keep.
Clam'rous he for dignity,
Temperance is vulgarity!
Desecrate the pulpit not
With the name of any sot.
Gold into his coffer flows;
Victim to the almshouse goes.
Yet he pays the preacher well,
And appears respectable.
Fatal glass he gives to none,
For he sells it by the tun.

Speculator, he must reap
Other's labor while it's cheap.
From the sweat of toilsome brow,
From the man who guides the plow;
Scheming is his only trade,
While his neighbor wields the spade.
Honest dealing lauds he well,
When he buys what others sell;
Never thinks of such small talk,
When he tries his goods to hawk.
Righteous soul—escutcheon fair—
Seat next to the pulpit stair.
Preacher soothes his every fear,
While his acts his conscience sear.
Lib'ral! yes, e'en to a fault,
Where his name it will exalt.

Men of craft, unscrupulous;
For the gospel clamorous;
Talking much about the faith;
Narrow way—he one true path,
Ev'ry means to gain their end,
Through six days the world attend.
On a Sunday very prim!
Sing with loudest zeal the hymn.
Gaze about to see who's there;
If a stranger, wondrous stare!
Few come in to worship God;
Many come to wink and nod;
Else to see and to be seen,
Virtuous souls! well dressed and clean.

What a world is this we have!
Each his brother hopes to save;
While himself forgets a beam,
From his vision hides supreme.
Vanity puffs ev'ry mind;
Pride and fashion almost blind.
Costly churches, costly pews,
Love of show each heart imbues.
But for love of kindly deeds,
Love in vain forever pleads.
"Bread of life," says honest Dow,
"Cent or nibble, 'tis I vow."

If for virtue we should live,
If for love and truth we strive;
If with kindly acts we strew
Ev'ry path with sparkling dew,
Less of mis'ry, we will know,
Less of sorrow here below,
More of happiness for man,
Though his life be but a span.

[From the Independent.]

A Brown-Stone Front as the Means of Grace.

BY HENRY WARD BEECHER.

There are many persons who suppose that people who live in first-class houses, with all modern improvements, must of course be much puffed up, and that they become quite grand in their own eyes. It is true, sometimes, that fine houses have

proud people in them. But we suspect the same of very poor tenements. We can imagine a pride so reluctant of discipline, and so indocile, as to survive in spite of the experience of a first class house.

When we moved into a capacious brown-stone dwelling, our better nature, with great simplicity, whispered, "Beware of temptation." And with an ignorance quite as simple, we supposed that the thieves of grace would be found lurking in large rooms, at ambush behind cornices reproduced from old Rome, or in stately appearances!—How little did we suspect that these were harmless, and that very different elements were to moth our patience.

But let a little preliminary exultation of a new man in a new place be forgiven, ye who are now established! Remember your own household fervor on first setting up, while we recount our economic joy, and anticipations of modern conveniences that would take away all human care, and speed life upon a down-hill path, where it was to be easier to move than to stand still! Everything was admirable! The attic had within it a tank so large as better to be called a reservoir.—Down from it ran the serviceable pipes to every part of the dwelling. Each chamber had its invisible water maid in the wall, ready to spring the floods upon you by the mere turn of your hand; then the bath-room, with tub, douche, shower, and indeed various and universal squirt—up, down, and promiscuous.

The kitchen, too—the tubs with water waiting to leap into them, the long cylinder by the side of the fire, as if the range had its baby wrapped up, and set perpendicular in the corner to nurse.—But, greatest of all admirations was the furnace! This, too was interframed with the attic tank.—For it was a hot water furnace. For a time this was our peculiar pride. The water flowed down into a system of coiled tubes, which were connected with the boiler surrounding the furnace fire. The idea was, when the water got as hot as it could well bear, that it should frisk out of one end of the boiler into the pipes, and round through the whole system, and come back into the other end cooled off. Thus a complete arterial system was established—the boiler being the heart, the water the blood, the pipes at the hot end the arteries, and the return pipes at the cool end the veins—the whole inclosed in a brick chamber, from which the air warmed by this liquid heart was given off to the dwelling. It was a day of great glory when we thought the chill in the air required a fire in the furnace.—The fact was that we wanted to play with our pet, and were half vexed with the old conservative thermometer, that would not come down and admit that it was cold enough for a fire. However, we do not recollect ever afterwards to have been so eager.

In the first place, we never could raise enough heat to change the air in the house more than from cold to chill. We piled in the coal, and watched the thermometer; ran down for coal again, and ran back to watch the thermometer. We brought home coal, exchanged glances over the bill with the consulting partner, and made silent estimates of the expenses of the whole winter, if this was but the beginning. But there was the old red dragon in the cellar devouring coal remorselessly, with his long iron tail, folded and coiled, in the furnace chamber, without heat.

Thus, for a series of weeks, we fired off the furnace in the cellar at the thermometer in the parlor and never hit. But we did accomplish other things. Once the fire was driven so hard that steam began to form and rumble and blow off, very innocently; but the girls did not know that, and took to their heels for fear of being blown up. When the cause was discovered the remedy was not easy, for the furnace bottom was immovable, and fire could not be let down. But one JOAN OF ARC assailed the enemy in his own camp, and threw a bucket of water into the fire. This produced several effects; it put out the fire, it also put out so much gas, steam and ashes that the maiden was quite put out also. And more than all, it cracked the boiler. But this we did not know till some time afterwards. There were a few days of comparative rest.

The weather was mild out of doors, and cold within. It was soon reported that one of the pipes was stopped up in the chamber, for the water would not flow. The plumber was sent for. He was already well acquainted with the way to the house. He brought upon himself a laugh of ridicule by suggesting that the water had given out in the tank! Water given out? We turned inwardly pale behind the outward red of laughing. We thought we had a pocket-ocean up stairs. Up we marched, climbed up the sides, peered down to the dirty bottom of an emptied tank!

Alas, the whole house was symmetrically connected. Everything depended upon this tank; the furnace in the cellar, the range in the kitchen, the laundry department, all the washing apparatus of the chambers, the convenient china closet sink, where things were to be washed without going down stairs, the entry closets, and almost everything else, except the door bell, were made to go by water, and now the universal motive power was gone! A new system of conveniences was now developed.

We stationed an Irish engine at the force pump to throw up water into the tank from the street cistern. Blessings be on that cistern in the street! No man knew how deep that was. Like the pond in every village, nobody had ever found bottom. And so we limped along for a few days.—Mean while, the furnace having been examined, the secret of all this trouble was detected. The life-blood of the house had been ozing and flowing away through this furnace! How much would it cost to repair it?

More money than a hot-air furnace would cost, and half more than that! So we determined to clear out the pet. Alas, (again) how we fondled the favorite at first, and how contemptuously we kicked it at last! It is said that no one is a whole

man; we have partial gifts. In our own case, the gift of buying was liberally bestowed, but the talent for selling was either withheld or lay an undeveloped embryo. How to sell the old furnace and to get a new one! There is a great psychological experience there. We aroused ourselves, gave several days to contemplation, laid aside all other cares, ran from furnace to furnace, saw six or eight patterns, each one of which was better than all the others, and all of them were able to evolve vast quantities of heat, with an imaginary amount of fuel.

But fortune, that had so long persecuted us, did not presume to destroy us yet, and, as a cat with a rat, let us out of its paws for a moment's ease. In other words, we arranged with Messrs. RICHARDSON & BOYNTON to put their furnace in the place of the hot-air gentleman in brick. And to this hour we have been glad of it. A Winter and a half on Brooklyn Heights will put any furnace to proof. And we are prepared to defy the north wind, the west, or the boisterous south-west. They may heap Winter as high as they please without, we have Summer within.

But oh, the changing! It was mid-winter.—The mild weather took this chance to go South, and got in its place the niggardiest fellow that ever stood sentinel in Kamtschatka. The cellar was divided from the kitchen in part by this furnace. For two or three weeks they were chiseling the tubes apart, and getting the rubbish out of the way;—masons, tenders, iron-men, old iron and new iron, tin pipes, carpenters and then new air boxes, girls and dinner, the Irishman wheeling at the pump—all mixed in such confusion, that language under the tower of Babel was a euphonious literature in comparison. Sometimes, as we walked out, our good and loving deacons, in a delicate way, would warn us of the danger of being puffed up with the pride of a stylish house!

At length, after nearly six weeks of the coldest weather of the season, the new furnace took charge of the house. Water returned to the attic. The girls no longer dreaded being blown up by the boiler at the range. But the report came up that the sinks were stopped. After investigation, the kitchen floor must be ripped up, the great waste pipe reached by digging, and laid open. Broken tumblers, plates, and cups stopped up the pipes. Another week for this.

As we were sitting down to a dangerous peace, we walked to the window one morning, to see that our yard had disappeared! The roof of the store on which it was laid had given way, and carried down all the earth, crashing through the four stories to the ground! Just one thing more was needed—that the house itself should slide off bodily, and dump itself into the East River! Yet the misfortune was not without comfort. The store was used for grinding drugs. Ten thousand pounds of salts, ipecac, rhubarb, strychnine, and such like delicacies, were hidden beneath a hundred tons of earth—the medicine being, where many people for whom it was destined would have been, buried under ground. For several weeks afterwards, I think the bills of mortality improved in the region around.

There were a great number of other things exceedingly convenient in our house. The water pipe from the roof to the front cistern was carried down within the wall to the ground. The bitter cold froze it up. Nobody could get at it. We salted it; we poked hot irons into the tap, we took counsel, and finally let it alone.

The cornice leaked, the walls were damp, the ceiling threatened to come off; our neighbor's pipe discharged so much of its contents on the ground as to saturate the wall in our basement entry; the area overflowed into the cellar; we dug a cess pool to let it off, and cut through the cistern pipe leading to the kitchen pump. It could not be soldered with water in it, and the cistern must be run dry before that could be fixed. The attic tank gave out again. No water!

"Water, water everywhere,
And not a drop—"

to wash with.

Then came on a system of begging. We took the neighborhood in order, and went from house to house till we exhausted the patience and the cisterns of every friend within reach. Then we betook ourselves to the street pump, and for two months we and the milkmen subsisted upon that.

There was a grand arrangement of bells at our front door, which seldom failed to make everybody outside mad because they would not ring, or everybody mad inside because they rang so furiously. The contrivance was, that two bells should be rung by one wire; a common bell in the servants' entry, and a gong in the upper entry. The bell train was so heavy to draw, that it never operated till the man got mad and pulled with the strength of an ox. But then, it went off with such a crash and jingle, that one would think a band of music, with all its cymbals, had fallen through the skylight down into the entry. Thus, women, children, and modest men seldom got in, and sturdy beggars had it all their own way.

It was quite edifying to see experiments performed on that bell. A man would first give a modest pull—and then reflect what he was about to say. No one coming, he gave a longer pull, and returned to waiting and meditation. A third pull was the preface to stepping back, surveying the windows, looking into the area, when, seeing signs of unquestionable habitation, he returns with flushed face to the bell—now for it! He pulls as if he held a line by the side of a river with a thirty pound salmon on it; while all the bells go off, up and down, till the house seemed full of bells. Things are not mended when he finds the gentleman of the house is not at home! We fear that much grace has been lost at the front door.

In the midst of these luxuries of a first-class house, we sometimes would look wistfully out of the window, tempted to envy the unconscious happiness of our two-story neighbors. They had no conveniences, and were at peace, while

we had all manner of conveniences that drove us up and down stairs; now to keep the flood out, and then to bring it in; now to raise a heat, then to keep off a conflagration; so that we were but little better off at home than are those innocently insane people who leave home every summer and go into the country to take care of twenty trunks for two months. But the cruellest thing of all, as we stood at the window, was the pious looks of passers by, who seemed to say with their eyes, "A man cannot expect much grace that lives in such a fine house."

It has certainly been a means of grace to us! Never such a field for patience, such humbling of expectations and high looks. If it would not seem like trifling with serious subjects, when asked how one might attain to perfection, we should advise him to buy a first class house with modern improvements, and live in it for a year. If that did not fit him for translation he might well despair of any chance.

Ye who envy us, will you exchange with us? Ye who laugh sarcastically at ministerial luxury, will you lend us your sackcloth and take our conveniences? But those who do live in houses full of conveniences will, henceforth, be our fast friends. They will say, What if he is an Abolitionist and we Pro-Slavery? What if he is radical and we conservative? The poor fellow lives in a first class house, and is punished enough without our adding to his misfortunes!

Meanwhile, we practice the same charity. We rail no more at Fifth Avenue, and admire what saintly virtue enables so many to carry cheerful faces who live in houses with even more conveniences than ours. We are grateful for our happier lot. Though we are worse off than people in two story houses, how much better are we placed than if we lived in Fifth Avenue!

We bear our burden patiently, knowing that in the very moment of despair persons are at the very point of deliverance. Who knows but he may have a fire as well as his neighbors? One hour would suffice to set a man free from all his troubles, and permit him to walk the streets at liberty, unharrassed by plumbers, carpenters, tinners, glaziers, gas fixers, carpet fitters, bell hangers, and the whole tribe of bell pullers!

We are now living at peace. We are in a plain two story country house without 'conveniences.' We are recruiting. Nothing gets out of order. We do not wake to hear water trickling from bursted pipes; we have no chandelier to fall down; the gas never leaks; we are not afraid to use our furniture; our chairs have no linen clothes on; the carpets are without drugget. The children bless the country and a country house, in which they are not always scratching something, or hitting something with shoe, or button, or finger nails. And we already feel that a few weeks more will so far invigorate us that we shall be able to return for a ten months' life in a modern house with conveniences.

Everlasting Talkers.

There are some men and women who are undoubtedly born talkers; and it is by the constant exercise of their natural gift of talking that they manifest themselves to others. It is through this that they attract notice and establish a reputation of some sort; and if they are of any use in the world, I know not what it is unless it is to talk.

Their mind is chiefly intent on this; they have no feeling or thought; they see, hear, or read nothing which they must not tell to somebody. They are worse than a sieve, for they hold nothing of all that they receive.

It matters little to them what they say only so they keep saying something, for they cannot endure to be still. Their tongue will wag. They deem silence a crime.

They are not fastidious in their choice of company only so they have a listener. Their chief necessity is to talk to somebody about something; what is the subject or who the listener may be are matters of minor consequence.

But they require only a patient listener, for they can do all the talking—and will do it. Were they not made to talk and everybody else to listen?

Who can talk so well as they? Who knows so much, or can tell it so well? They never trip on a word. They are never lost in thought. Any attempt to check, much more to stop, the ceaseless and overwhelming torrents of words with which they inundate all who unfortunately become their victims, is wholly useless.

To run or stand and take it are the sole alternatives. A high degree of meekness becomes, under such circumstances, a necessity.

They might possibly be bluffed off by a bold, blunt man; but they could not receive a greater insult than by witnessing their natural function, their pride, the foundation of their vanity and usefulness, thus contemned, and the good which it would confer rejected.

But they will now and then stop a moment for a few words of assent or confirmation; or they will listen eagerly to a brief recital of something new, which they may afterward expand greatly to the interest if not to the truthfulness of the narration.

Their stock of information requires constant additions that they may ever have something new to offer. But as the same sermon, or speech, or lecture may be repeated a hundred times to as many interested audiences, so a gossip may repeat his tale to all the willing ears in a whole neighborhood.

But such persons are not wise, and never can be till they learn the important but difficult lesson of bridling their tongue.

Thoughts and feelings should not take the form of words till they become mature. Intellect should decide what ought to be expressed, and how.

The wise man talks for a purpose, not for the mere sake of talking. He speaks what he knows, what will injure no one, what will do good. His words have weight and are remembered, for they