

KEEP UP APPEARANCES.

Now that Kansas City is to be cleaned it should put on the appearance of cleanliness. There is everything in appearances; the alleys and cesspools may all be drained, the sewers may be distributed all over the city, and still the stranger within our gates may see things to convince him that this is a very dirty, miserable, squalid, poverty-stricken place, even though to the inhabitants it may seem the pleasantest spot on earth. For the truth about Kansas City is that its population is entirely made up of people who have come here from smaller towns. In these towns people wear cuffs only on Sundays and go about in their shirt-sleeves because they know each other so well. When a window is broken out it is mended with a pine board or a pillow; when the sidewalk is broken people walk on the stringers; when kindling is short people widen out the palings of their neighbors' fences; when the wind sweeps down the single main street of the little place it is laden with the tumble weed of the high prairie, the fragmentary newspaper from the printing office, the hay of the market near the city scales, excelsior matting from the back of the furniture store, rolling corks and peculiar odors from the drug store, and dust, shavings, paper, rags and movable refuse from everywhere in town. This habit of carelessness of appearances prevails so generally in small towns that strangers coming into the village are given to speculation as to the number of years it will be before the Indians come back and claim their own and turn civilization over to primeval barbarism.

But to the capitalists coming from the East, from New York and Chicago, from Boston and even from Europe, seeking investments in the new West, this dirt, which is more harmful to the eye than to the health, is a constant source of distrust. The Eastern man sees it and flees as from a pestilence. He sees the unpainted buildings and draws inferences about the real estate that are damaging. The capitalist sees the vacant lots in the center of the city used as neighborhood dumps and sees fences unpainted and sidewalks battered; he doesn't understand that it is only a slovenly habit which causes these things. The would-be investor ascribes this running down at the heel to poverty, and, not caring to cast his fortunes with poverty, goes to a neater locality. The slouchy, loose-buttoned, shapeless habit is expensive. Kansas City should stop it. She is getting old enough to wash her face, button her shoes, comb her hair and come down to breakfast with the rest of the family.