

travagance. Is their nothing worthier than personal adornment in which to invest their means? Are there no enterprises open to these men of fortune which would benefit the country and their fellows as well as themselves? One man spends two hundred thousand dollars upon a dwelling-house; but he might build with this sum a long row of decent cottages, to rent to people in moderate circumstances; he might enable fifty or a hundred families of workingmen to live cleanly and respectably in New York, and thus make himself a public benefactor—and that without sinking his money where he can never recover it. Or, instead of dressing a few children in silks and jewels, and robbing them of the freshness and charm of youth by these vanities, why not spend the money in sending the homeless children of the city to comfortable farm-houses in the West, where they will be trained to industry and virtuous conduct, and grow up good citizens? The sum wasted on a dozen children at a party would probably suffice to send a hundred to the West, and make honest citizens of them. In England, during the French war, useful enterprises of all kinds were originated, and prospered. There was then, as with us now, an inflated currency; great fortunes were made by speculative ventures, as here now. No doubt, too, there was extravagance; but there arose, at the same time, a spirit favorable to useful enterprises of many kinds; such as we wish could obtain amongst us. We have far better opportunities for such use of capital; we have mines, new manufactures, waste lands, to be developed and brought into profitable use; we have comparatively a new country to our back, in which the prudent capitalist can see a thousand opportunities to increase his store, and at the same time, benefit his countrymen. The citizen, therefore, who wastes his gains upon ostentatious houses, extravagant furniture, dress, or food, commits a crime against his country. And especially is extravagance culpable in New York, where, though but half the island is built upon, there is scarcely a place fit for an honest workingman to bring up his family in, or where they are not exposed to the corrupting influences of squalor and vice."