

For instance, a diamond is desired chiefly out of motives of vanity, but it is desired also because it appeals to the æsthetic sense. It is a curious fact that as soon as we mix vanity with some other motive, people begin to hide behind this other motive and conceal the vanity of which, for some reason, they seem to be ashamed. When a woman wears a diamond hatpin, and can never, by virtue of its position, see it herself, what real motive is there except vanity? Of course it may be said that she is an altruist in attempting to provide an article of beauty for other people to admire; but the real object, however she may condone or conceal it, is to display this diamond to other people and to show thereby that she is in the fashion or leading it and able financially to do so. Most articles of ornament pander chiefly to this form of vanity and come into existence largely and chiefly for this reason, although the admiration of actual beauty is a secondary element and a subterfuge.

The amusements of mankind are almost always, or to a large extent, mixed with the motive of vanity. For instance, automobiling to-day is not always indulged in for the sake of sport alone, but also for the sake of display. Equipages have always been one of the means of displaying wealth. Narcotics have always been objects desired not merely for their drug effect, but also for the effect of display. The habit of using "fine wines" and expensive drinks in entertaining has long been one of the methods of social display. Clothing even, and housing, are very often objects of vanity. In fact, historically, clothing originated as ornament, like jewelry, rather than as an actual protection from the weather. Even food is a matter of vanity to a certain extent. Feasts have been favorite occasions for the exercise of this instinct.

A few extreme examples of ostentation will help us to understand the nature of vanity. Some years ago there was an American in Florence who carried the idea of display in his equipage to the extreme of getting a chariot and