

of one which is natural and proper. Around this factitious being our leading thoughts are gathered, and to exalt its consequence our highest efforts are put forth. Its forms are as various as the varieties of human capacity and culture. They range from the loftiest exhibitions of human ambition to the lowest. For even the poet, artist, orator, sage, gifted with gifts of genius, beautiful and divine, may be drawn away through the power of vanity from the true use and meaning of his gifts, to employ them merely to attract attention to himself. Instead of living on his own God-given powers, he vainly strives to live on the breath of human repute and applause, and puts forth the one, only that he may win back the other. And from him downward through every variety of capacity and culture, passing the man of war who fights that he may be famous, downward still to that lowest form which man's ambition takes in our modern society, — that form, I mean, which seeks to mount to some summit of social consequence by a scaling-ladder of dollar bills.

To look at this matter of externalism in some of its common modes of manifestation in such a state of society as that in which we live, I would ask, what is most probably the prevailing idea of Life, and success in Life, which occupies the minds of the mass of young men and young women around us? For the sake of convenience, simply, let us keep within the commercial class. What is said of this class will, with very slight modifications, be applicable to any other class. Well, then, I would ask, what is most probably their prevailing idea of Life, and success in Life? I think it may be safely answered, that they have some vague idea of a position in society, to the attainment of which they look as the leading aim of Life.