

influence of such a production as "The Black Beauty." We may, therefore, hope that the literary movement of which we have written will result in leavening the popular mind with a truth that as yet is hardly appreciated. Readers of the *Arena* will recall the contrast, drawn a few months since by Mr. Flower, in an article entitled "The Froth and the Dregs," between the pitiable *exposé* of "high life" in Ward McAllister's egotistic "Society as I Have Found It" and the pitiful exhibit of "low life" in General Booth's "In Darkest England." In the *Forum* for July, Oswald Ottendorfer, writing of the decaying manhood of America with a somewhat pessimistic pen, traces the evil not to the admixtures consequent upon an unrestricted immigration, but to the growing tendency toward a centralization of wealth and power, with its attendant vices.* His words will bear repeating :

"It cannot be denied that symptoms are appearing in our public and private life of a decay in the character of our people. . . . The tendency toward the centralization of wealth and power is the most characteristic symptom that has appeared in the development of our public and economic life during the last thirty years. It has undermined the self-reliance of our citizens and induced them to look to the Government as a paternal power for help and assistance. It has induced them to engage in a vile chase for success, irrespective of principle and virtue. It has beguiled them into aping foreign customs and habits. It has made them forget that American citizenship is the highest type, and has caused them so far to lose their self-respect that they importune our ministers in Europe for introductions at court, and consider it their greatest ambition

* In the *Forum* for November, 1889, Mr. Thomas G. Shearman made the following calculation as to the distribution of one half the wealth of the country, based on the census of 1880 :

200 persons or families owned	\$30,000,000 each.
400 " " " "	10,000,000 "
1,000 " " " "	5,000,000 "
2,000 " " " "	2,500,000 "
6,000 " " " "	1,000,000 "
15,000 " " " "	500,000 "

In the same periodical for January of this year Mr. Shearman declares that the above estimates were in the main correct, but remarks that "there are at least seventy American estates which average \$35,000,000 each."

to splurge in all sorts of extravagances. This degeneration certainly cannot be traced to the influence of immigration. A dozen titled adventurers coming over here from Europe, who are introduced into the best circles, who turn the heads of the belles of society, and who induce our 'dudes' to imitate their snobbish follies, contribute more to corrupt the habits and customs of the best classes of our people, who consider themselves pre-eminently American, than a million of poor immigrants."

It is this snobbish extravagance which is undeniably fostering the irritation and discontent which are exhibiting themselves in many forms. That there may be such a thing as unpretentious possession of wealth is undeniable, but equally undeniable is it that such possession is not common. Lavish expenditure in a thousand different directions is by far more common. The tendency of wealth seems to be, almost inevitably, toward vain display and wasteful luxury, if not disgraceful profligacy. Were the principles advocated by Mr. Carnegie in his now famous articles on "Wealth" and "The Best Fields of Philanthropy" to be put into general practice, there would be little occasion for criticism in this direction. But they are not, and in all probability they will not be. The idea of "trusteeship" is not apt to enter the minds of the excessively rich in connection with their expenditures. It would be a most difficult thing to convince such, as a class, that they are but the guardians and administrators of trust funds, and not exclusive owners. Rarely is it that one meets with such words from representatives of this class as are to be found in the *North American Review* for July, from the pen of Baron de Hirsch, the Jewish philanthropist: "It is my inmost conviction that I must consider myself as only the temporary administrator of the wealth I have amassed, and it is my duty to contribute, in my own way, to the relief of the suffering." The essential idea of administration is service, and the tendency of large possession is to foster the feeling of mastery rather than that of ministry. It is the Spirit of the Owner of all things, who,