

It is time that some provision should be made to prevent persons who have, unfortunately, inherited more property than they know how to make use of from not only themselves going "the road to ruin," but also plunging their families into undeserved poverty. The state has an interest in the welfare of its citizens, and, if it protects the dipsomaniac against himself, why should it not tie up the hands of the hopeless spendthrift?

Restraints on extravagance have not been unknown in other systems of jurisprudence. The Roman law, which jurists have praised for its rational character, prevented prodigals from either managing their own estates, or from making wills. To quote a passage from Justinian's "Institutes": "Prodigus cui bonorum suorum administratio interdicta est testamentum facere non potest."

The Code Napoleon—the existing law of France—prohibits spendthrifts (*prodigues*) from suing, borrowing money, taking assignments of chattels, giving receipts, or mortgaging property, without the assistance of a family council, appointed by the courts. A person under such disability can lay out his own means, subject to the superintendence of the family council, but beyond this he is not a free agent. The economic qualities of the French people have been of late much discussed, both from a favourable and an unfavourable point of view; but it must be evident to all who recognize the infirmity of human nature that there is a decided advantage in this provision of the French law, if we value domestic regularity and thrift more than license and prodigality. The person who makes use of money only for the purpose of self-destruction—meaning thereby not mere ordinary suicide, but such riotous living as necessarily ends in beggary, starvation, or incurable disease—is as much a lunatic as the wretch who persists in drinking himself to death, or who perishes from the effect of monstrous vices.

The procedure for dealing with prodigals need not be complicated, or such as would lead to expensive litigation. The mode of treating lunatics who possess property would furnish an analogy, and a committee of trustees, composed of members of the family, might, under the direction of the Lord Chancellor, manage the affairs of the person proved to be incompetent for the ordinary business of life. The confinement of the prodigal would be a step only to be adopted in extreme cases, where