

"*The Drift of American Society.*"—This is a style of article not common in American publications. It speaks the truth with unusual openness and candour. The conclusion at which the writer arrives is contained in the subjoined quotation. It is a good sign of a healthy tone when men are not afraid to speak of their shortcomings. No people in the world have less cause than the Americans to be ashamed of what they have done in many of the grand duties of nations; and if in some of the great objects of life they have been carried into a dangerous extreme, the best hope of amendment lies in the consciousness of defects which they are not too proud or too self-opinionated to own.

"We are to accept as a sacred inheritance all that comes to us in the line of our antecedents, whether outward or inward, or having the worth of circumstance or of character; It is well for each family to make the most of its own heritage—to use well its patrimony, whether large or small, and treasure up all the lessons and examples of its ancestry. All the more are we to keep faithfully the great heritage of our magnificent civilization, and use our new earnings so as best to bring out, interpret, and diffuse the old wealth of the race. We are all rich by this standard, while apart from it gold and silver are but dust, and property is but a pompous name for poverty. Out of the line of culture and civilization millions of money are of no high account: but in the true line of humanity and God, a modest competence is priceless riches, and unlocks and inherits the treasures of all time. We as a people are sadly negligent of this truth, and our wealth is crude and coarse, and has hardly begun to know the true wisdom and to master the true art. If the next ten years every man of means would spend his money with an eye to this truth, and would ask not how he may follow the reigning mode, but how he may best take the highest wisdom and art of mankind, and leave the most precious heritage to those that come after him, a great revolution would be inaugurated, and a new day dawn upon our manners and entertainments, our houses, schools, museums, galleries, and churches. Heirs of the ages, we might also be their benefactors, and make the whole nation as well as our children rich with the treasures that do not perish but increase with years.

"But we must not, in our somewhat sombre moralizing, fail to see the bright side of our American society, nor forget what immense temptations we have had to struggle against in this new country, with its restless temper and ever-fevered career. If we have drifted away from some of the old landmarks, it has not been because we were idle, but too much engrossed; and now that we are in pressing danger, seriously reckoning our course, and observing our bearings, we find much to encourage the hope that we are to respect the good old loyalties with all the freshness of our young life, and to affirm the *family*, the *status*, and the *heritage* in the home, the nation, and the church, all the more freely and heartily because we have floated a little too far on the tide of *individualism*, *choice*, and *acquisition*. Shakespeare was in many things a prophet for both hemispheres; and his picture of Prince Harry, when sobered by his accession to the throne, does well as a portrait of our Young America as we wish to see him, now that his majority has come, and he is to rise to the empire of his father or come to naught, cumber the ground, and be unfit to fill a decent grave."