

to look for it was full of unmentionable horrors and was called the devil's well. And a wise man had told the people that if over the beams of the sun should penetrate this well fearful calamity would follow. So the well was always kept covered. But one night the cover was removed and not replaced, and in the morning when the sun shone, the waters of the well rose till they overflowed and filled yard and street, and square and garden, overwhelmed them all, and in a mighty torrent swept on till it reached the sea, leaving not a vestige of the city nor ought to tell where once it stood. Is there not, it has been asked, a devil's well in every city of the civilised world? In London, in Paris, in New York? Yes, and even in little Halifax? A something full of horrors into which we dare not look, but which may not always be kept down? Vast hordes of social pariahs, too wretched to fear any worse fate, too vicious to feel any compunctions, are hidden away in the garrets and cellars of the alleys and slums of all our cities. The wonder of wonders is that they remain there and do not come forth, an army of desperadoes to rob, murder, and destroy. To what does society owe its safety? To its police and standing armies? In some small degree no doubt; but chiefly to the fact that the vicious are too vicious to unite readily and try their strength with the orderly and well-to-do. If it were not for this, the one half of society would have to arm itself to the teeth against the other. At what a price is such protection as we enjoy purchased! Mr. Hill, Recorder of Birmingham, estimated the criminals of England, the country whose statistics prove it to be the lowest in crime of any in the world, to be 100,000 in number, costing at the smallest calculation 10 millions per annum and probably twice that amount.

One of the most unfavorable characteristics marking the opposite extreme of society and of course from it downwards as far as the imitation is possible, is OSTENTATION, in its lowest form, the lavish display of wealth. The desire to be rich and to be thought rich is the vulgar ambition governing modern society. Mammon is its God, money its chief good, and the human being who writes, speaks, works, or does any possible thing for aught but pay, its solitary miracle. Hence the frauds, forgeries, defalcations and embezzlements perpetuated by men of edu-