

"Patriarchs," made use of their prestige, surrounded them and overwhelmed them, so that at present these "Patriarchs" are nothing more than the nucleus of "society," a nucleus already swallowed up, as an American has said.

It is a fact that the families who are descended from the real founders of the United States, who have genealogical trees, coats-of-arms and proofs of long existence, have given way to the millionaires. The narrow Puritanism and conservative spirit common to these old families placed them in a position of inferiority in the struggle for power and money. They are now experiencing that effacement which seems to be the lot of the aristocracy everywhere.

What is called "society" in America is by no means an idle class. Like the upper *bourgeoisie* in France, it is composed of lawyers, doctors, financiers, and manufacturers. It forms a kind of Faubourg St. Germain which is more difficult of access and more exclusive than this class of society in Europe at present.

To be or not to be a member of "society" is of more interest to an American than the "to be or not to be" of Hamlet, for the American is the most materialistic person in the world. He does not trouble about doing well, but about "doing quickly." He works, builds, and constructs for himself, and not for his children. As soon as he has won in the struggle for money, he throws himself into the struggle for position.

In order to get admission among the *élite* of his country, the new millionaire gives extraordinary entertainments, spends huge sums of money in presents, and employs stratagems which would supply comedy with some very amusing scenes.