

on histories show that our young men are "smart" in crime as well as in useful enterprise. It is lamentably true that those who are hereafter to have the first opportunity for prominence in our business and political circles, are not being fitted as were those who now conduct business and form public opinion.

The energy which gave precocious prominence to young men, encouraged to an extreme, threatens society with a generation of snobs—young "blades" who have ambition without judgment, and extravagance without morals.

Whoever has an eye for character can everywhere point out the counterpart of the "fast" young man, who having heard much of Niagara determined to visit the falls. He had been absent from his accustomed haunts scarcely long enough to make the trip to Niagara, when his companions had occasion to congratulate him upon his safe return.

"Did you go through?" asked one.

"Of course I did," was the response. "I arrived at mid-night, took a lantern, and did the thing in half an hour."

"A thing for laughter, sneers and jeers
Is American aristocracy."

But it has solemn as well as satirical phases. During one week two thousand one hundred advertisements for employment were published in the New York City papers. Of these not fifty specified any productive labor for which the advertiser was competent. Little peddlers, errand boys, servants, porters and clerks throng the market, and sustain the intelligence offices, and put money into the printer's pocket; but good mechanics have no such "wants." Why? First, because there is an increasing demand for productive labor; second, respectable society discourages thorough apprenticeship at common trades. Boys must "do" their trades as the fast young man "did" Niagara.

Thorough work-men do not increase with our population, except in "genteel" employments, because American Aristoc-

racy ignores whatever smells of the shop. Children of fortunate fathers do not learn the trades which their parents practice, because in the circles where they move, mechanics are sneered at. Silly mothers and foolish fathers lose *caste* with their own children by encouraging such sneers.

In the aristocracy of birth there is respect for the past—an active pride in the memory of grand-father and grand-mother. To each other, American aristocrats can only "jingle their purses."

"The family thread they can't ascend,

Without good reason to apprehend,

They may find it waxed at the other end."

It is the crowning virtue of American democracy that it incites the humblest citizen to aspire to the highest distinction. It is the bitterest reproach of American society that it offers a high premium to successful speculation; that at whatever risk of morals or sacrifice of industry, its highest rate per cent is bestowed upon humbug.

Our political system is so opposed to the accumulative principle of monopoly, which concentrates wealth, and learning, and power into the hands of the few, that the poor and the rich, the obscure and the prominent, are continually changing places.

There is an incentive to hasten to distinction, to speculation in commerce, to risk in trade, to the advantages which open competition offers—wonderful success and melancholy failures are to be expected; but they furnish no good reason why the enjoyment of the best society should depend upon furniture and silk, upon jewelry and champagne.

Under the code of honor which the aristocracy of display requires, social distinction and even social respect, is won or lost for a young man by his accidents.

The young men I described as leaders in the business world, are not the leaders of social circles, but many of those of whom I spoke as representing "Young America" in prison houses, have been