

the large towns, but that he had constantly resisted all solicitations of that kind, being convinced that a country life, such as they led, was the most happy as well as the most innocent. All the finest feelings, he insisted, were strongest in the country—conjugal and parental affection in particular, the source of all that is good, were very much blunted in great cities, by the attention, imagination, and passion being divided among different women. 'If men will live in crowded cities,' said he, 'the women should be confined, as in Asia, in Harems.' There was an air of whimsy in all that this singular person did, as well as of sense in what he said. In the midst of this conversation, after supper, a MYSTIC air was perceived, of which the dog, who sat near the door, was suspected to have been the chymist. Every body declared for immediately turning him out of doors, as is usual in such cases, our host alone excepted. 'No,' said he, 'he shan't go out. He shall stay here, and help exhaust this vapour as well as us.' But it would be endless to enu-

merate all the wise sayings as well as the extravagancies of this Philosophical Cobbler. Suffice it to say, that after being entertained chiefly in the Pythagorean style, that is to say, on vegetables and milk; in all its modifications, for three days together, during which time my spouse joined with his wife in spinning thread and cord for the shoemakers, and I with the host in the labour of the field, and on fishing on the lake; ease and alternate labour; friendship and philanthropy unmixed with deceit, freedom of thought unrestrained by any authority or custom whatever; with a country bold and varied, and that seemed to give men room to breathe and think in, and which by the natural boundaries that diversified its face, seemed to say to every one, 'Take your own way.' All these circumstances render the remembrance of the Cobbler and his family still dear to me, who, in my opinion, enjoyed that true luxury which is, in a manner, independent of fortune; and which wealth and greatness alone are incapable of bestowing.

## AN ESSAY ON LUXURY.

[By Dr. Franklin.]

IT is wonderful how preposterously the affairs of this world are managed. Naturally one would imagine, that the interest of a few particular, should give way to general interest. But particulars manage their affairs with so much more application, industry and address, than the public do theirs, that general interest most commonly gives way to particular—We assemble parliaments and councils, to have the benefit of their collected wisdom; but we necessarily have at the same time the inconvenience of their collected passions, prejudices and private interests. By the help of these, artful men overpower their wisdom, and dupe its possessors: and if we may judge by the acts, artful edicts, all the world over, for regulating commerce, an assembly of great men is the greatest fool upon earth.

I have not yet indeed thought of a remedy for luxury. I am not sure in a great state it is capable of a remedy; nor that the evil is in itself always so great as it is represented. Suppose we include in the definition of luxury all unnecessary expence, and then let us consider whether laws to prevent such expence are possible to be executed in a great country; and

whether, if they could be executed, our people generally would be happier, or even richer. Is not the hope of one-day, being able to purchase and enjoy luxuries, a great spur to labor and industry? May not luxury therefore produce more than it consumes, if without such a spur, people would be, as they are naturally enough inclined to be lazy and indolent? To this purpose I remember a circumstance. The skipper of a shallop, employed between Cape May and Philadelphia, had done some small service, for which he refused to be paid. My wife understanding that he had a daughter, sent her a present of a new fashioned cap. Three years after, this skipper being at my house with an old farmer of Cape May, his passenger, he mentioned the cap, and how much his daughter had been pleased with it. 'But (says he) it proved a dear cap to our congregation'—'How so?'—'When my daughter appeared in it at meeting, it was so much admired, that all the girls resolved to get such caps from Philadelphia; and my wife and I computed that the whole could not have cost less than an hundred pounds.'—'True (says the farmer) but you do not tell all the story; I think the