

content with the bounties of nature, as some philosophers in love with simplicity have inculcated, the intercourse between the various different nations that inhabit the globe would cease, the positive pleasures of variety would be lost, the most vigorous faculties would lie torpid, and instead of that enlargement of mind, which is the effect of extensive communications, we should all become as narrow in our notions as the inhabitants of the rudest country that has yet been discovered, ruder far than we can almost believe, who have from our infancy participated of travelled intelligence. Helvetius, amongst many false positions and licentious reveries, observes, with much justice, that the education of man begins at his birth, and is carried on during the whole course of his life. Let it then be considered how much more ignorant the groffest of our common people would be, were there not in the great school of the world, that quantity of information brought from other countries, which is every where diffused. The lowest mechanick, though he may not have distinct and accurate science, has yet such a store of geography, of natural history, of mechanicks, and other parts of knowledge, that were his mind to be emptied of it, the wretched vacancy would amaze us.

It has always appeared to me, that there is an essential difference between different kinds of luxury, as to the perniciousness of its effects. The luxury of the table, by which the palate is irritated, and the digestive powers pushed to an extreme degree, must be hurtful to the corporeal machine, by using it too fast; and we know that in general as it grows weak, the mind grows feeble. The luxury of indolence, the fatal effects of which *improba Siren*, have ever been acknowledged, and are described with no less truth than poetical imagery in Thomson's *Castle of Indolence*, is also destructive to happiness. — But I cannot be of opinion that the luxury of magnificence and elegance in building, in planting, in dress and equipage, and in all the fine arts, ought to be at all discouraged; for I think that all these kinds of luxury promote diligence and activity, and lively enjoyment, without being at all hurtful. Thinking as I do upon this subject, I cannot perceive the wisdom of those sumptuary laws as to dress, which prevailed in ancient states, and which are to be found in some modern republics, such as Venice, Lucca, and Ferrara. I remember, that when I was at Lucca, the strange regulation that the citizens of that state shall appear dressed only in black, ap-

peared to me to be an ill-judged as well as a very dull negative provision. Surely a society of human beings, who present to each other only a dusky uniformity, is not so happy as a society where invention is exerted, and taste displayed, in all the varieties of forms and colours which are to be seen in splendid courts and brilliant assemblies. That paper of the *Spectator*, which gives a fine description of the dress of the ladies of London at the play house one evening, when the *Scornful Lady* was acted, has dwelt upon my memory since I first read it with a very pleasing gaiety. — And will it be said that delicate, agreeable sensations, which are primarily owing to ingenuity and labour, should be checked? I know not how to account for it; but I have no doubt that dress has a great deal of influence on the mind. Every one has felt himself more disposed to decorum and propriety and courtesy, when genteelly dressed, than when in slovenly apparel. Perhaps there is a general propensity in our faculties to assimilate themselves to that circumstance about us, which is most perceptible of whatever sort it is, as matter takes a form from whatever mould is applied to it. It has certainly been remarked that the most gallant men have been fond of elegance of dress. *Cæsar* was at first censured for an excess of the *cura corporis*; and a very brave modern general, Lord Mark Kerr, is celebrated equally for his determined courage and his fine clothes.

I would make a wide distinction between active luxury and passive luxury; between the enjoyment which is the effect of power of whatever species, and enjoyment which we receive by the mere motion of sense; and I am aware that luxury may frustrate its own ends by unrestrained eagerness. Sallust, after describing some of the most profligate and voluptuous effects of Roman luxury, shows us that enjoyment was prevented by impatience; *dormire prius quam somni cupido esset; non famem aut sitim; neque frigus, neque lassitudinem operiri; sed ea omnia luxu antecapere.* — 'They went to bed before they had an inclination to sleep; they did not wait for hunger or thirst, or cold, or weariness, but anticipated them by indulgence.' I cannot charge the fashionable world of this age with one of these counts, the charge of going to bed before they have an inclination to sleep, for indulgence in rest cannot justly be imputed to them; but I believe they know from fretful experience what is the effect of the other instances of anticipation.