

Gaul, Germany, and Britain were in the time of the Romans, inhabited by people little richer than our savages, and consider the wealth they at present possess, in numerous well-built cities, improved farms, rich movables, magazines stocked with valuable manufactures, to say nothing of plate, jewels, and coined money; and all this, notwithstanding their bad, wasteful, plundering governments, and their mad, destructive wars; and yet luxury and extravagant living have never suffered much restraint in those countries. Then consider the great proportion of industrious frugal farmers inhabiting the interior parts of these American States, and of whom the body of our nation consists; and judge whether it is possible that the luxury of our seaports can be sufficient to ruin such a country. If the importation of foreign luxuries could ruin a people, we should probably have been ruined long ago; for the British nation claimed a right, and practised it, of importing among us, not only the superfluities of their own production, but those of every nation under heaven; we bought and consumed them, and yet we flourished and grew rich. At present, our independent governments may do what we could not then do, discourage by heavy duties, or prevent by heavy prohibitions, such importations, and thereby grow richer; if, indeed, which may admit of dispute, the desire of adorning ourselves with fine clothes, possessing fine furniture, with elegant houses, etc., is not, by strongly inciting to labor and industry, the occasion of producing a greater value than is consumed in the gratification of that desire.

