



## Luxury

Henry Sidgwick

I have chosen Luxury for the subject of my address this evening; because I think that the employment of wealth, in what we should agree to call luxurious expenditure, is a source of considerable perplexity to moral persons who find themselves in the possession of an income obviously more than sufficient for the needs of their physical existence, and for the provision of the instruments necessary to their work in life. Such persons commonly wish to do what common morality regards as right; yet for the most part they cannot deny that they live in luxury; while at the same time it can hardly be denied that luxurious living is commonly thought to be in some degree censurable. We should be surprised to hear an earnest and thoughtful man say, except jocosely, that it was part of his plan of life to live in luxury; or to hear an earnest and thoughtful father, toiling to accumulate by industry adequate wealth for his children, say that he wished to enable them to live in luxury. Yet often there would be no doubt that the habits of his life, and the habits and expectations which he is allowing his children to form, are habits and expectations of luxurious living.

Possibly some of my hearers may think that this is only the familiar phenomenon of human frailty; that the most moral persons are continually doing many things which they know to be wrong, and that luxurious living is only one of these many things. But I submit that it would be difficult to find a parallel case in the familiar errors and shortcomings of moral persons. For these errors and shortcomings are mostly occasional deflections from the way in they regularly walk, due to transient victories of impulse over settled purpose. Doubtless appetite, resentment, vanity, egoism, frequently lead the most persons astray; but it is commonly only for a brief interval, after which they reject and repudiate the seductive impulse and return to the path of reason and duty. But the luxurious living of the high-minded and earnest among the possessors of wealth is obviously not an occasional deflection of this kind: it is a high-road on which they travel day after day and year after year, systematically and---I was going to say comfortably, but that would not be quite true; my point rather is that they travel it with a certain amount---I think at the present time a growing amount---of moral uneasiness and perplexity.

Here, perhaps, some one may think that this perplexity, if it is a perplexity, is one which interests only a very limited circle, at least from a moral point of view. It may be said that the difficulty that the rich find in trying to enter the kingdom of heaven was long ago made known to us by the highest authority; but that, fortunately for the human race, this particular obstacle affects only a few, for whose moral troubles we can hardly be called on to feel much sympathy, since to get rid of the obstacle is only too easy. I think, however, that this would be a hasty and superficial judgment. No doubt it is only a small minority of persons who are privileged to dwell in marble halls, adorned with damask hangings, and surrounded by acres of park and garden-beds; who are liable to dinners costing two guineas a head, and who habitually wear whatever substitute for purple the aesthetic fashion of this modern age prescribes. But if luxurious living is morally censurable, the censure must extend far beyond the limits of the few thousand persons who enjoy these privileges; it

must extend to all who watch this glorious profusion with mingled sympathy and envy, struggle and long to get a share of it whenever opportunity offers, and meanwhile pay it the homage of cheap imitation. Indeed, if the sin of luxurious living, like many other sins, lies mainly in the spirit and intention of expenditure, it would be easy to write an apologue that should be the reverse of the tale of the widow's mite, and show how the spirit of luxury may be fully manifested in the expenditure of sixpence on lollipops or feathers or gin.

But further, even if it were granted that the costly luxuries of the rich are really the only kind of luxuries that can possibly deserve the unfavourable judgment of the moralist, it would still be important to all classes of the community that this censure should be well considered and discriminating. For any material change in the expenditure in question would inevitably, in one way or another, have economic and social effects of a far-reaching kind, however it was brought about; and if such a change ever should be brought about, it will be largely due to the pressure of the moral opinions and sentiments of persons other than the rich.

My aim, then, this evening will be to arrive at as clear a view as possible on the following questions: (1) What luxury is; (2) Why and how far it is deserving of censure.

Let us begin by considering the definition of the term. Political economists sometimes use the term "luxury" in a wide sense, to include all forms of private consumption of wealth not necessary for the health or working efficiency of the consumer; all consumption—to put it otherwise—which is neither directly nor indirectly productive, and which, therefore, would be uneconomical, if we regarded a man merely as an industrial machine. It may seem, however, that we should keep nearer to ordinary thought and language by recognizing one or more kinds of expenditure intermediate between luxuries on the one hand and necessities on the other. Certainly we commonly speak of "luxuries, comforts, and necessities"; or, again, of "luxuries, decencies, and necessities of life"; and I think we may get a clearer idea of what we mean by "luxury" if we examine its relation to each of these intermediate terms.

When we reflect on the ordinary distinction between "luxuries" and "comforts", the difference seems to be this: "comforts" are means of protection against slight pains and annoyances such as do not materially injure health or interfere with efficiency—such annoyances as we call "discomforts";—"luxurie", on the other hand, are sources of positive pleasure whose absence would not cause discomfort. It is commonly, I think, not difficult for an individual to apply this distinction in his own case, so far as his feelings at any particular time are concerned. Thus, when I take a long railway journey on a frosty day, a thick great-coat is necessary to me, because without it I am likely to catch a cold which will impair my efficiency; a railway rug is a comfort, because without it I shall be disagreeably cold from the knees downward; a fur cloak is a luxury. But reflection shows that the difference on which this distinction turns is very largely an affair of habit, since the privation of luxuries that have become habitual usually causes discomfort and annoyance. We are told that a famous Roman epicure—Apicius—committed suicide when he had reduced his fortune to eighty thousand pounds, feeling that life was not worth living on this meagre scale; and though this is an extreme case, it is generally recognized that a rapid fall from great to moderate wealth is liable to cause positive discomfort from the sudden break of luxurious habits that it entails. But it is not, perhaps, generally recognized how very far-reaching this effect of habit is, and how largely what we call comforts are—apart from habit—really luxuries. I suppose there can be no doubt that the vast majority of Englishmen might without discomfort dispense through life with all such nervous stimulants as tea, coffee, alcohol, and tobacco—at any rate, if they had been reared from infancy without them. I do not say this without experience. I lived myself in perfect comfort between the ages of twelve and nineteen, drinking only water at all meals; and I remember that I could

not imagine why people took the trouble to manufacture tea, coffee, and wine. Yet the most hard-headed modern economist would not deprive an old woman of her tea in the workhouse; and I am told that whatever deterrent effect the prospect of imprisonment under present conditions has on our criminal classes depends largely on the deprivation of their habitual alcohol and tobacco.

It seems clear, then, that the line between luxuries and comforts is necessarily a shifting one. The commonest comforts might—apart from the effect of habit—be classed as luxuries; the most expensive luxuries may, through habit, become mere comforts, in the sense that they cannot be dispensed with without annoyance.

We have now to observe that often the annoyance which the loss of wealth causes to the loser arises solely from the fall in social position and reputation which it is rightly or wrongly believed to entail. This leads me to my second distinction—that between “luxuries” and the “decencies” of life. I here use “decencies” in a wide sense, to mean all commodities beyond necessities which we consume to avoid not physical discomfort, but social disrepute. Perhaps I may make my distinction between “decencies” and “comforts” clear by a homely illustration. Many men, I believe, find that their coats, hats, and boots are liable to be condemned by domestic criticism as not “decent” to wear in public, just when they have become most thoroughly adapted to the peculiarities of the wearer’s organism, and so most thoroughly comfortable. Half a century ago I believe that boots were altogether a “decency” rather than a comfort for a valuable and thriving part of the population of our island; at least a political economist of that date (Nassau Senior) tells us that a “Scotch peasant wears shoes to preserve not his feet, but his station in society.”

It will, therefore, be clear at once that just as the line between “luxuries” and “comforts” varies almost indefinitely with the habits of individuals, the distinctions between “luxuries” and “decencies” varies similarly with the customs and opinions of classes.

Now, if we are passing judgment on an individual accused of luxury in a bad sense, or giving advice to one desirous of avoiding it, the consideration of his formed habits and the customs of his class must be taken into account. It may sometimes be even unwise in him to break habits which it would yet have been wise not to have formed; for a struggle with habit sometimes involves a material temporary decrease of efficiency, and a hard-working man reasonably objects to impair his efficiency. The principle is no doubt a dangerous one, and easily abused; but I do not think we can deny its legitimacy within strict limits. So, again, though we should usually admire an individual who breaks through a custom of useless expenditure, we should usually shrink from imposing this as an absolute duty, and sometimes should even condemn it as unwise. A fight with custom is, like other fights, inspiriting and highly favourable to the development of moral courage; but usually, like other fights, it cannot be carried on without cost and sacrifice of some kind; and it is the part of a wise man to count the cost before undertaking it, and to measure his resources against the strength of the adversary.

But at present I only mention these considerations to exclude them. I do not now wish to consider how we are to judge individuals, but rather how we are to judge habits and customs regarded as social facts. For such habits and customs are being modified continually though slowly; and if they are bad, it is desirable that the pressure of public opinion should in one way or another be brought to bear to modify them. “They may say it is the Persian fashion, but let it be changed”, as Shakespeare has it.

From this point of view I think it convenient to avoid the necessarily shifting and relative definitions of decencies and comforts, and to fall back on the simpler distinction between “luxuries” and “necessaries”; extending, however, the term necessities to include expenditure required by such habits customs as we consider generally necessary to physical or moral well-being; e.g., habits of due cleanliness and such customs in respect of decency—

in a strict sense—as we judge important, if not indispensable, to morality. This extension is, I think, required by ordinary usage, for no one would apply the term “luxurious” in an unfavourable meaning to expenditure of this kind. And I think we shall further agree that the term is not properly applicable to expenditure that increases a man’s efficiency in the performance of his industrial or social function, so long as the increase of efficiency is not obtained at a disproportionate cost. But this requirement of due proportion between expenditure and increase of efficiency should be kept carefully in view, because in all kinds of work it is possible to increase efficiency really but wastefully by adding instruments which are of some use, but are not worth their cost. In the application of wealth, by which a competent man of business makes his income, this proportion of efficiency to cost is easily estimated, and clearly unremunerative conveniences—e.g., machines that clearly cost more labour than they save—are carefully excluded; but in the application of wealth by which an income is spent, this economic care is often thrown aside, and instruments are purchased which, while not absolutely useless for the purchaser’s ends, are at any rate of very little use in proportion to their cost,—not unfrequently of so little use that they do not even compensate the loss of time and trouble spent in taking care of them. May I take an illustration from my own calling? I have heard of a scholar who did good work in his youth and attained fame and promotion; but then his work slackened and stopped. On inquiry this was found to be due not to laziness, but to his increasing absorption in the task of buying, housing, binding, classifying, arranging, and looking after the splendid collection of books that he had formed to aid his researches.

For this form of luxury, these inconvenient conveniences, there is no defence. But I dwell on it now because, ever since moral reflection began in Europe, there have been thoughtful persons who have held that the customary luxurious expenditure of the rich on food, clothes, houses, furniture, carriages, horses, etc., consisted mainly in conveniences that were really quite uneconomic, because one way or another they caused more trouble and annoyance than they saved to their possessor. I will quote an expression of this view from a source which may surprise some of my hearers; i.e., from a work by the founder of the long line of modern political economists who are commonly supposed to exalt wealth too exclusively, and to value it unduly. Adam Smith, in 1759, wrote that “wealth and greatness are mere trinkets of frivolous utility, no more adapted for procuring ease of body or tranquillity of mind than the tweezer-cases of the lover of toys; and, like them, too, more troublesome to the person who carries them about with him than all the advantages they can afford him are commodious . . . In ease of body and peace of mind all the different ranks of life are nearly upon a level, and the beggar who suns himself by the side of the highway possesses that security which kings are fighting for.”

I have quoted this not because I believe it to be really true, but because it is interesting to find that Adam Smith believed it, and because it was a tolerably prevalent belief in his age. There is a story told by a writer of this period which may serve as another illustration: a story of a Persian king, afflicted with a strange malady, who had been informed by a wise physician that he could be cured by wearing the shirt of a perfectly happy man. It was at first supposed that there could be no difficulty in finding such a man among the upper ten thousand of Persia; but the court was searched in vain, and the city was searched in vain; and the messengers sent to prosecute the search through the country found that landowners and farmers had all their sorrows and anxieties. At length the searchers met a labourer, singing as he came home from work. Struck with his gaiety, they questioned him as to his happiness. He professed himself perfectly happy. They probed him with minute inquiries, but no flaw in his happiness was revealed. The long-sought remedy seemed to be in their hands; but, alas! the happy man wore no shirt.

Well, I think this story will show how far the thought of the nineteenth century has

travelled from the view of life that was prevalent in the age of Adam Smith and Rousseau. Perhaps it has travelled a little too far. Adam Smith was—what Rousseau certainly was not—a shrewd, calm, and disengaged observer of the facts of civilized life. He sometimes, as here, gives the rein to rhetoric, but he never lets it carry him away. And I think that his view contains an important element of truth; that it signalizes a real danger of wasted effort, growing in importance as the arts of industry grow, against which civilized man has to guard. I think that every thoughtful person, in planning his expenditure, ought to keep this danger in view, and avoid the multiplication of useless, or nearly useless, instruments—houses larger than he at all needs, servants whose services are not materially time-saving, a private carriage when walking is ordinarily better for his health and adequate for his business, and many minor superfluities which absorb the margin of income that would otherwise be available for results of real utility. Still, taking Adam Smith's statement in its full breadth, I cannot but regard it as a paradox containing more error than truth. I see no reason to doubt that the steady aim of civilized man to increase the pleasures of life by refining and complicating their means and sources—an aim which in all ages has stimulated and directed the development of industry and commerce—has been to a great extent a successful aim, so far as its immediate end is concerned.

Let us, then, putting out of sight expenditure prompted by bad habits, or imposed by useless customs, and expenditure on illusory conveniences that give more trouble than they save, concentrate our attention on luxury successful in its immediate aims—i.e., consumption that increases pleasure without materially promoting health or efficiency; and let us consider how far and on what grounds this may reasonably be thought deserving of censure. Now—if we put aside the paradoxes of stoical moralists who deny that pleasure is a good—the arguments against increasing an individual's pleasure by superfluous consumption seem to be chiefly three. It may be urged, first, that the process usually injures his health in the long run; secondly, that it impairs his efficiency for the performance of his social functions; thirdly, that the labour he causes to be spent in providing him with the means of pleasure would have produced more happiness, on the whole, if it had been spent in providing the means of pleasure for others. The first two of these considerations form the main staple of the older arguments against luxury; the third is more prominent in modern thought. I will briefly consider each in turn.

On the first of these heads—the effect of luxury on health—there is much need to meditate, but little for a layman to say. That persons of wealth and leisure are in danger of excess in sensual indulgences; that this excess is continually being committed; that it is not difficult to avoid it by care and self-control; that those who do not avoid it are palpably foolish; what more is there to say for one who is not a physician?

I remember that in one of the most polished and pointed poems that Pope ever wrote, he speaks of his father as having had a long life—"Healthy by temperance and by exercise."

The line, you see, is neither polished nor pointed; and I used to wonder how Pope's fine taste ever came to admit such a platitude, until I read the brilliant chapter in Trevelyan's *Early History of Charles James Fox*, on the manners of London society in the middle of the eighteenth century. It then occurred to me that the fact of a man of means having lived to old age, "healthy by temperance and by exercise," may have seemed to Pope so rare and remarkable that its bare statement would be impressive without any verbal adornments. Well, I hope that this has been changed in the nineteenth century; but I leave the question to the social historian the philosopher may be permitted to pass on, only remarking that the folly of sacrificing health to sensual indulgence is not the distinctive privilege of any social class. I remember that Pope, whom I have just quoted, sneers at legislation that spares the vices of the rich, "And hurls the thunders of the laws on gin."

But the legislators might have answered, that while champagne and burgundy were

slaying their thousands, “gin” was slaying its tens of thousands.

But, secondly, it is urged that, without positively injuring health, the refinement and complication of the means of physical enjoyment tend to diminish efficiency for work. Looking closer at this argument, we find that it combines two distinct objections: one is that luxury makes men lazy, disinclined for labour; the other is that it makes them soft, incapable of the prolonged, strenuous exertion and the patient endurance of disagreeable incidents which most kinds of effective work require. On the point of laziness I will speak presently. As regards softness, the objection has this element of truth in it--that the powers of sustained exertion and endurance are developed, like other powers, by practice, and that the lives of the poor provide normally an unsought training of these powers from childhood upwards, which has to be supplied artificially, if at all, in the lives of the rich. But I think experience shows that the objection is not very serious, at least for our race. Certainly, Englishmen brought up in luxury seem usually to show an adequate capacity of exertion and endurance when any strong motive is supplied for the exercise of these qualities.

We come, then, to the question of laziness, meaning by laziness a disposition to work clearly less than is good for one's self and others. There can be no doubt that the luxurious tend as a class to be lazy; the possession of the means of sensual enjoyment without labour disposes average men, if not to absolute inertia, at any rate to short working hours and long holidays. On the other hand, if luxury makes men lazy, the prospect of luxury makes them work; and if we balance the two effects on motive, I think there can be no doubt that, other things remaining the same, a society from which luxury was effectually excluded would be lazier than a society that admitted it. If it be said that the desire of luxury is a low motive, I might answer in the manner in which one of the wisest of English moralists—Butler—speaks of resentment. I should say that “it were much to, be wished that men would act on a better principle”; but that if you could suppress the desire of luxury without altering human nature in other respects, you would probably do harm, because you would diminish the general happiness by increasing laziness.

This argument is, I think, decisive from a political point of view, as a defence of a social order that allows great inequalities in the distribution of wealth for consumption. But when I hear it urged as conclusive from an ethical point of view, I am reminded of Lord Melbourne's answer to a friend whom he consulted, when premier, as to the bestowal of a vacant garter. His friend said, “Why not take it yourself? no one has a better claim.” “Well, but”, said Lord Melbourne “I don't see what I am to gain by bribing myself.” The answer is cynical in expression, but it contains a lesson for some who profess a higher moral standard than Lord Melbourne was in the habit of professing. For when we have decided that the toleration of luxury as a social fact is indispensable to the full development of human energy, the ethical question still remains for each individual, whether it is indispensable for him; whether, in order to get himself to do his duty, he requires to bribe himself by a larger share of consumable wealth than falls to the common lot. And if one answers the question in the affirmative, one must admit one's self to belong to the class of persons characterized by George Eliot as “people whose high ideals are not required to account for their actions”.

Further, the moral censor of luxury may rejoin that he admits the danger of repressing luxury without repressing laziness, and is quite willing to divide his censure equally between the two. He may even grant that, of the two, more stress should be laid on the discouragement of idleness; and that the moral repression of luxury can only be safely attempted by slow degrees, so far as we succeed in substituting nobler motives for activity—i.e., so far as we can make it natural and customary for all men, whatever their means, to choose some social function and devote themselves strenuously to its excellent performance.

But if the censor takes this line—and I think it practically a wise line—he by implication

admits the inconclusiveness of the argument against luxury as an inducement to idleness; for it implies that the two are separable, and that idleness, like softness and disease, is not an inevitable concomitant of luxurious living, but only a danger that may be guarded against.

I come, then, to the third argument—viz., that a man who lives luxuriously consumes what would have produced more happiness if he had left it to be consumed by others. It is to be observed that this is an argument not against luxury itself, so far as it is successful luxury, but against its unequal distribution; it is an argument in favour of cheap luxuries for the many instead of costly luxuries for the few. And this, I think, is generally the case with the modern censures of luxurious living as contrasted with the more ancient censures; the modern attack is rather directed against inequality in the distribution of the means of enjoyment than against the general principle of heightening the pleasures of life by refining and elaborating their means and sources; or, at any rate, if this elaboration is attacked, it is only because it involves, from a social point of view, a waste of labour. But though this makes a fundamental difference in the grounds of the attack, it does not make much difference in its objects; since it is the consumer of costly luxuries who in all ages has stood in the forefront of the controversy and borne the brunt of moral censure. Accordingly, in the little I have yet to say of luxury, I shall use the term in the special sense of costly luxury.

It must be admitted that this third objection, so far as it is valid at all, is more inevitable than the preceding ones. A man may avoid disease by care and self-control; he may avoid idleness and softness by bracing exercise of his faculties, physical and mental, while still systematically heightening his enjoyment of existence by elaborate and complex means of pleasure; but just as he cannot both eat his cake and have it, so he cannot both eat his cake and arrange that other men should eat it too, or that they should consume the simpler products of the baker's art which might have resulted from the same labour.

Need I say a word about the hoary fallacy that a man by eating his cake provides employment—and therefore cake, or at least bread—for the baker? "Time was," as Shakespeare says, "that when the brains were out the man would die"; and as the brains have been out of this fallacy generations ago, I shall consider it as slain, even though it still walks the earth with inextinguishable vitality, and occasionally reappears in the writings of the most superior persons. I shall venture to assume that, speaking generally, a man benefits others by rendering services to them, and not by requiring them to tender services to him.

Can we accept it as a generally satisfactory defence of the costly luxuries of the few that, owing to the exquisite delicacy of the palates of certain individuals, the general happiness is best promoted by the consumption of cake being reserved to them? that they are to be regarded, in fact, as the organ of humanity for the appreciation of cake? There is some truth in this, if we are considering a sudden change; since experience shows that refined luxury is liable to be wasted on persons suddenly transplanted into it late in life. But the arguments do not go far, since the same experience shows that the task of educating any class up to the standard of capacity for enjoying luxury, which is reached on the average by the wealthiest class of the age, is not a difficult task, though it requires time. It is, indeed, in most cases, an educational problem peculiarly easy of solution. Hence I do not think this consideration can weigh much against the broad fact that, even in the case of successful luxury, increase in the means of enjoyment consumed by the same individual is accompanied by increase of enjoyment in a continually diminishing ratio; so that inequality in the distribution of consumption is uneconomic from a social point of view.

A really valid defence of luxury, then, must be found, if at all, in some service which the luxurious consumer as such renders to the non-luxurious. That is, it must be shown that so-called luxury is not really such, according to our definition, but is a provision necessary for the efficient performance of some social function.

From this point of view it is sometimes said that luxury is a kind of social insurance against disaster, as providing a store of commodity on which society can draw when widespread economic losses occur through war or industrial disturbance. Such disasters would no doubt cause far graver distress if they fell on a body of human beings who had among them hardly more than the necessities of life; but though this is an argument for habitually producing a certain amount of commodities not required for health or efficiency, it is not a strong argument for distributing them unequally. The social surplus required might be nearly as well created by the cheap superfluities of the many as by the costly superfluities of the few.

Passing over other inadequate defences of luxury, I come to the only one to which I am disposed to attach weight—viz., that inequality in the distribution of superfluous commodities is required for the social function of advancing culture, enlarging the ideal of human life, and carrying it towards ever fuller perfection. Here it seems desirable to draw a distinction between the two main elements of culture—(1) the apprehension and advancement of knowledge, and (2) the appreciation and production of beauty, as it is in respect of the latter that defence is most obviously needed. No doubt in the past learning and science have been largely advanced by men of wealth; no doubt, also, the scholar or researcher at the present day requires continually more elaborate provision in the way of libraries, museums, apparatus. But these we shall properly regard not as luxuries but as the instruments of a profession or calling of high social value; and, generally speaking, there seems no reason why the pursuit of knowledge, should suffer if the expenditure of the student, inclusive of the funds devoted to the instruments of his calling, were kept free from all costly luxury and “high thinking” universally accompanied by “plain living”. And the same view may be, to a great extent at least, legitimately taken of the expenditure on the pursuit of knowledge incurred by that large majority of educated persons who can hardly hope to contribute materially to the scientific progress of mankind: so far as this expenditure tends directly or indirectly to increase the efficiency of their intellectual activities. Some portion of this may no doubt be wasted in the gratification of idle curiosity, so as to leave no intellectual profit behind; and theoretically we must except this portion from our defence of costly expenditure on intellectual pursuits. But I do not think that this exception is practically very important, considering the hesitation that a wise man will always feel in pronouncing on the uselessness of any knowledge.

Can we similarly defend the costly expenditure of the rich on the cultivation and satisfaction of aesthetic sensibilities—on literature regarded as a fine art, on music and the drama, on paintings and sculptures, on ornamental buildings and furniture, on flowers and trees and landscape-gardening of all kinds? Such expenditure is actually much larger in amount than that incurred in the pursuit of knowledge: and in considering it we reach, I think, the heart of this ancient controversy on luxury. Here, however, I have to confess that personal insight and experience fail me. I only worship occasionally in the outer court of the temple of beauty, and so I do not feel competent to hold the brief for luxury on the ground of its being a necessary condition of aesthetic progress. But though I cannot hold the brief I am prepared, as a member of the jury of educated persons, to give a verdict in favour of the defendant; so far, at least, as a sincere love of beauty is the predominant motive of the costly expenditure defended. I find that the study of history leads me continually to contemplate with sympathy and satisfaction the opulence and luxury of the few amid the hard lives of the many, because it presents itself as the practically necessary soil in which beauty and the love of beauty grow and develop; and because I see how, when new sources of high and refined, delight have thus been produced, the best and most essential of their benefits extend by degrees from the few to the many, and become abiding possessions of the race. It is possible, that in the future we may carry on artistic and aesthetic development



successfully on the basis of public and collective effort, and dispense with the lavish and costly private expenditure of the few; but till we are convinced that this is likely—and I am not yet convinced—I think we should not hamper the progress of this priceless element of human life by any censure or discouragement of luxurious living, so long as it aims at the ends and keeps within the limits which I have endeavoured briefly to determine.

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