

out of the world, would be to out Quixote Cervantes,⁹ and equally against common sense; but an endeavour to restrain this tumultuous passion, and to prove that it should not be allowed to dethrone superior powers, or to usurp the sceptre which the understanding should ever wield, appears less wild.

Youth is the season for love in both sexes; but in those days of thought and enjoyment provision should be made for the more important years of reflection takes place of sensation. But Rousseau, and most of the male writers who have followed his steps, have warmly inculcated the whole tendency of female education ought to be directed to one point—render them pleasing.

Let me reason with the supporters of this opinion who have any knowledge of human nature, do they imagine that marriage can eradicate the habitude of life? The woman who has only been taught to please will find that her charms are oblique sunbeams, and that they cannot produce much effect on her husband's heart when they are seen every day, when summer is passed and gone. Will she then have sufficient native energy to look into herself for comfort, and cultivate her dormant faculties? or not more rational to expect that she will try to please other men; and emotions raised by the expectation of new conquests; endeavour to find the mortification her love or pride has received? When the husband is to be a lover—and the time will inevitably come, her desire of pleasing then grow languid, or become a spring of bitterness; and love, perhaps the most evanescent of all passions, gives place to jealousy or vanity.

I now speak of women who are restrained by principle or prejudice; yet, nevertheless, wish to be convinced by an intrigue with real abhorrence are cruelly neglected by their husbands; or, days and weeks are spent in dreaming of the happiness enjoyed by congenial souls till their health is undermined and their spirits broken by discontent. How then can the art of pleasing be such a necessary study? it is only useful to a mistress, a chaste wife, and serious mother, should only consider her power to polish as the polish of her virtues, and the affection of her husband as one of the comforts that render her task less difficult and her life happier. Whether she be loved or neglected, her first wish should be to make herself respectable, and not to rely for all her happiness on a being subject to the infirmities with herself.

The worthy Dr. Gregory fell into a similar error. I respect his heart, but entirely disapprove of his celebrated Legacy to his Daughters.

He advises them to cultivate a fondness for dress, because a fondness for dress, he asserts, is natural to them. I am unable to comprehend what either he or Rousseau mean, when they frequently use this indefinite term. If I told us that in a pre-existent state the soul was fond of dress, and brought this inclination with it into a new body, I should listen to them with a hearty smile, as I often do when I hear a rant about innate elegance.—But if only meant to say that the exercise of the faculties will produce this habit

it is not natural; but arises, like false ambition in men, from a love of power. It goes much further; he actually recommends dissimulation, by an innocent girl to give the lie to her feelings, and not dance when gaiety of heart would make her feel eloquent without making a noise. In the name of truth and common sense, why should a woman acknowledge that she can take more exercise than in other words, that she has a sound constitution; and why, to her discredit, is she darkly to be told that men will draw conclusions from the little she thinks of?—Let the libertine draw what inference he pleases, but let no sensible mother will restrain the natural frankness of her daughter by instilling such indecent cautions. Out of the abundance of the mouth speaketh;⁴ and a wiser than Solomon hath said, that the tongue will be made clean,⁵ and not trivial ceremonies observed, which it is difficult to fulfill with scrupulous exactness when vice reigns in the heart.

It might be endeavoured to purify their heart; but can they do so when they are surrounded by understandings make them entirely dependent on their parents' employment and amusement, when no noble pursuit sets them to the study of the day, or enables them to curb the wild emotions of a virtuous man is affectation necessary? Nature has given a wider frame than man; but, to ensure her husband's affections, she has made her mind and body whilst she was discharging the duties of a daughter, wife, and mother, has allowed her constitution to retain its natural strength, and her nerves a healthy tone, is she, I should think, to be recommended to use art and feign a sickly delicacy in order to secure the love of man; but the lordly caresses of a protector will not gratify a heart that pants for, and deserves to be respected. Fondness is a passion that is not natural to friendship!

It might be granted, that all these arts are necessary; the epicure must be contented with a little, or he will sink into apathy; but have women so little sense as to be satisfied with such a condition? Can they supinely dream of being in the lap of pleasure, or the language of weariness, rather than to exert their claim to pursue reasonable pleasures and render themselves contented by practising the virtues which dignify mankind? Surely she has not the right to be idle, and to let her time pass away in idleness, when she has a rational soul who can loiter life away merely employed to adorn her person, and to amuse the languid hours, and soften the cares of a fellow-traveller who is willing to be enlivened by her smiles and tricks, when the business of life is over.

It might be said, the woman who strengthens her body and exercises her mind by managing her family and practising various virtues, become the wife of a man who is not the humble dependent of her husband; and if she, by possessing such substantial qualities, merit his regard, she will not find it necessary

4. Matthew 12.34.
5. "Wiser than Solomon": Jesus (who describes himself in comparable terms in Luke 11.31). In Luke 11.39-44 and Matthew 23.25-28, Jesus speaks of purifying the inner self and denounces the Pharisees' self-righteous observance of the letter of the law.

and the previous sentence see Gregory's own words: "I have you to dance with spirit; but you must be so far transported as to forget the delicacy of your sex.—It is thought to discover a spirit she has."

9. I.e., to outdo the idealistic but ineffectual hero of Miguel de Cervantes' *Don Quixote* (1605) in trying to accomplish the impossible.
1. "The love of dress is natural to you, and therefore it is proper and reasonable." John Gregory's *Father's Legacy to His Daughters*, 2nd ed. (London, 1775).
2. I.e., "natural."