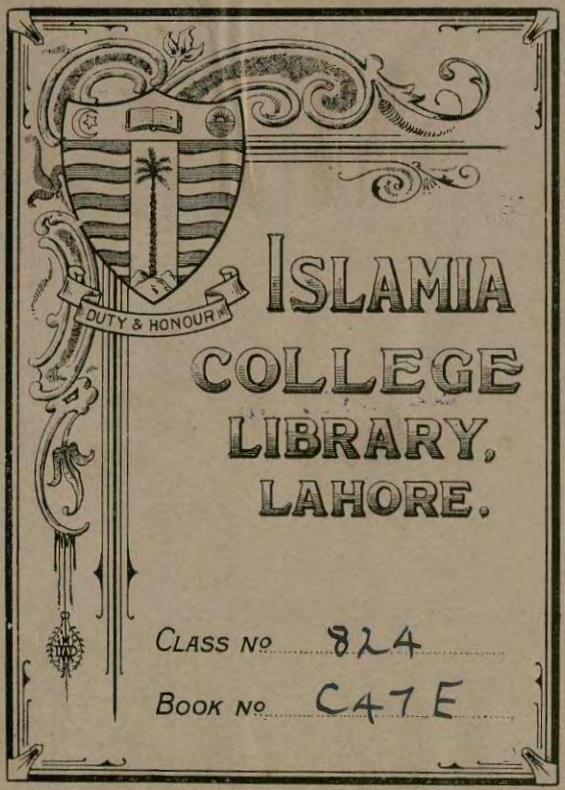
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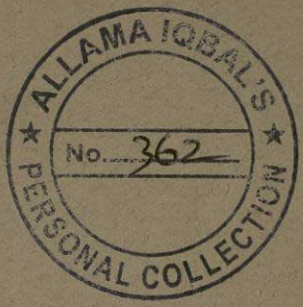
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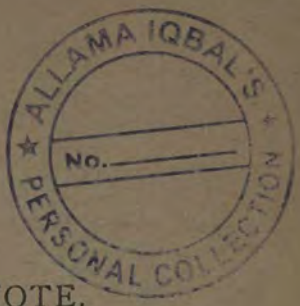
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PREFATORY NOTE.

THERE are a few foreign writers whose works have been so felicitously "Englished" that they may rank among our own classics. Such is Montaigne. Thanks to the sympathetic interpretation of John Florio, he has become as one of ourselves. In Florio, Montaigne met a contemporary and kindred spirit who was able to reproduce in English the idiomatic quality, the incisive style of the Essays. Later, John Cotton tried to improve on Florio; but his version lost in terseness and energy what it gained in faithfulness—which, after all, is not a great deal. Still, Cotton's rendering of strong and nervous prose is in its way an English masterpiece in a later literary manner,—a masterpiece endeared to us by the loving use of many an English author. It was Cotton's version that the most recognisable of Montaigne's literary descendants—Emerson—kept always at hand. And Florio's work, too, is remarkable in its associations as it is in its literary value, especially by our own Shakespeare's noted indebtedness to it. Altogether in their English dress the Essays have contended in

influence with the foremost of our own classics; and they are as fresh and fragrant as ever. If Shakespeare and Bacon, Butler, Pope, Swift, and Sterne reflect their thought and power, so do many young writers of to-day. Has not Mr. Stevenson told us that they continue to be amongst the growing influences upon his mind and character? Have we not, as evidences of their present vitality, within a year had several new editions of them, modest and sumptuous?

A biography of Montaigne is almost superfluous to the reader of the Essays; but as only a few specimens are given here it may be well to set them with a slight foreground of biographical detail. Let it not be supposed, however, that Montaigne's account of himself, frankly and persuasively egotistical as it seems to be, stands in no need of later correction. Research has discovered not a few reticences, exaggerations, and inaccuracies in the narrative; and any discerning reader will soon learn to make a judicious allowance on the score of a few obvious, if pardonable and even lovable foibles. Montaigne was often careless, sometimes forgetful, constantly vain and prejudiced; he is often to be caught tripping in his dates, which he is too lazy to verify; yet these are as nothing in the scale against his copious mellow wisdom expressed with notable force and grace so that Sainte-Beuve can style him the French Horace.

Born in 1533, Michael Eyquem, third son of Pierre Eyquem, Lord of Montaigne, was made the subject of a bold and original experiment in education. Pierre, although a sober, practical, home-loving

country gentleman, was strangely sensitive to the new intellectual tendencies of his age. He freely entertained the learned men for whom he had an almost comically profound reverence. Affected by the radical ideas of Rabelais and the educational theories debated in Italy and elsewhere, he audaciously determined to put some of them upon trial in the education of Michael. Harshness, forcing, and artificiality were to be avoided. The child was taught Latin as the language of daily speech. No one was allowed to speak anything but Latin in his hearing, and the whole household became latinised for his benefit Constraint replaced compulsion so far that the boy was awakened every morning by music. But so little was the boy wooed by these gentle methods that his disappointed father sent him to school, and later to college at Bordeaux. He showed no unusual powers but a rare taste for the Latin poets, whom he read irregularly but eagerly in truant hours. On leaving college, he seems to have studied law in his lazy fashion, and to have lived a rather gay, vagabond life. He was for some time councillor in the Parliament of Bordeaux, but discharged his functions with no great ardour or constancy. In early manhood the distractions and the fascinations of the court drew him not infrequently to Paris, where he lived according to the fashionable dissolute life of that licentious age. He is rarely frank on the subject of his amours. He seems, according to his own avowals, to have been no exception to the average courtier of his time, freely following the bent of passion and

ambition. There is, in short, nothing exceptional about his early life spent between the court, the camp and the council chamber, and at home with his father,—in Bordeaux, at Paris, and in the riding and travel which were always very enjoyable to him,—except his friendship with Etienne de la Boëtie, who endeavoured to win him from his wilder ways. This well-known friendship, which gives to Montaigne's life its chief grace and dignity, ranks with the few great passionate friendships of classic renown. Nothing need be added to Montaigne's account of it in the essay on Friendship which follows. This shows him in his ripest and rarest mood. There is more heart in it than in anything he ever wrote; and for depth of feeling and richness of insight we may rank it with, and even above, Aristotle's splendid eulogy.

It was not until his thirty-eighth year that Montaigne, disgusted with court life and the pressure of public affairs, disappointed in love, and bereft of his only true friend, settled down to a quiet, orderly, meditative life in his ancestral home. Until quite recently there remained, and perhaps still remains, the quaint inscription in which Montaigne announced his intention of retiring to spend his remaining days in peace. It runs—

"In the year of our Lord 1571, aged 38, on the eve of the Kalends of March (the last day of February), the anniversary day of his birth, Michel de Montaigne, having long been weary of the slavery of courts and public employments, takes refuge in the

bosom of the learned Virgins. He designs, in quiet and indifference to all things, to conclude there the remainder of his life, already more than half past; and he has dedicated to repose and liberty this agreeable and peaceful abode, which he has inherited from his ancestors."

This purpose was well fulfilled. Montaigne thenceforth lived in the main the life of a scholar and writer. True, he was not a hermit. He travelled at times, and once into Switzerland and into Italy, whence he was recalled by the pressing invitation of the citizens of Bordeaux to become their mayor. This invitation he refused at first, but, pressed by the king, he eventually accepted and held it for four years. He thought that he, a man of moderation, peace, and impartiality, or as he modestly and frankly put it, "a man without money, without vigilance, without experience, and without energy; but also without hate, without ambition, without avarice, and without violence," would hardly fit for office among a violent and factious people.

This employment as mayor was the only thing that seriously disturbed Montaigne's busy quietude in his rustic home. There sitting in his tower, with its prospect over a wide open country, surrounded by his books, he explored himself, meditated on the changes and chances of this mortal life, and took an inventory of uncertain and ever-veering human nature. He had a rich experience of the world to fall back upon; and had brought keen powers of observation to bear upon all he had seen and heard. He had thought and felt

deeply, and had on the whole been disappointed in his expectations of life and humanity. He had found no satisfaction in love, and death had ended the friendship that had more than anything else sweetened his life. He had found in his commerce with nobles and kings and lawyers and politicians abundance of meanness and knavery. This disillusioning is apparent in the recurrent note of sadness struck in his essays; in the combination with an Horatian gaiety of a lofty earnestness and gravity.

The source of Montaigne's so-called scepticism (which may easily be exaggerated) lies in his recognition of the irreconcilable differences in human nature; its unaccountable caprices, its variety of custom and conduct, its wavering and variable convictions. But there is always a point at which his scepticism halts; he never doubts the reality of virtue. At bottom he is always ethically sane. He never dallies with vice; and what we account coarse in him has no "nasty" morbid flavour in it. He is unashamed in the Rabelaisian sense; but is seldom as gross as his great forerunner. He is in the minor moralities a man pre-eminently of his age and race. In greater things, in his subtle penetration and in his wisdom, he is of no age, but a fellow of some of the noblest minds of all ages—a fellow, especially, of the great moralists who were his constant referees in doubt, of Plutarch and Seneca. His wisdom has the geniality and the fine "body" which theirs had. You shall find no thin abstractions in his work; and his egotism is always robust and alert—as different as

can be from the nervous, morbid, bloodless egotism of those of his countrymen who are to-day devoted to the culture of the self. He is not sick of the introspective malady as, let us say, M. Maurice Barrès is, or as Amiel was—of whom it was cleverly said that he had added himself to the number of his intellectual playthings. No, Montaigne handles himself with Socratic seriousness, and to Socratic purpose; to the thirst for self-knowledge he adds self-reverence and self-control.

Of the purely literary quality of his work, what need be said? It is vigorous, with the idiomatic, poetic strength of a man who was more than half a poet. It seems to be entirely natural, without premeditation, without artifice, without correction. Montaigne was no doubt careless, but by no means indifferent to his literary graces. He had felt the influence of the movement headed by Ronsard and the Pleiad; he had the writer's instinct and ambition to write well, above all with ease and force. But part of the charm of his work lies in the seemingly unliterary cast of it. It has no airs; it shows no straining; it is free from pretentiousness. The fact is, he did not care too much for form; he did not water down and over-polish his periods; he did not pale the ruddy glow of the first flush of thought. Indeed, he was too full of matter to vex himself over style; and he had too urgent a sense of reality and life to tolerate a posing prettiness and affectation. In the vigorous version of Florio his work has a very Shakespearian smack. Truly, the Essays

of Montaigne are by good fortune among the treasures of our national literature—great with the thought of the wise Montaigne, and, by the happy knack of one of our countrymen of Shakespeare's glorious age, almost ranking in style with the prose masterpieces of that age.

In a series of extracts such as Mons. V. Fauron has given to his countrymen, Montaigne seems not to be the Montaigne of an easy rambling habit of discourse, the Montaigne of charming irrelevancies. Though in the case of some of the Essays which follow it has been necessary to make a few omissions, they have been made with a scrupulous regard always to the style and tenour of the originals.

P. C.

THE AUTHOR TO THE READER.

READER, lo here a well-meaning Book. It doth at the first entrance forewarn thee, that in contriving the same I have proposed unto myself no other than a familiar and private end: I have no respect or consideration at all, either to thy service or to my glory: my forces are not capable of any such design. I have vowed the same to the particular commodity of my kinsfolks and friends; to the end that, losing me (which they are likely to do ere long), they may therein find some lineaments of my conditions and humours, and by that means reserve more whole, and more lively foster the knowledge and acquaintance they have had of me. Had my intention been to forestall and purchase the world's opinion and favour, I would surely have adorned myself more quaintly, or kept a more grave and solemn march. I desire therein to be delineated in mine own genuine, simple, and ordinary fashion, without contention, art, or study; for it is myself I portray. My imperfections shall therein be read to the life, and my natural form discerned, so far forth as public reverence hath permitted me. For if my fortune had been to have lived among those nations which yet are said to live under the sweet liberty of Nature's first and uncorrupted laws, I assure thee I would most willingly have portrayed myself fully and naked. Thus, gentle reader, myself am the groundwork of my book; it is then no reason thou shouldst employ thy time about so frivolous and vain a subject.

Therefore farewell

from MONTAIGNE.

The First of March, 1580.

ESSAYS OF MONTAIGNE.

OF HIS TASK AND THEME.

YEA but, will some tell me, this design in a man to make himself a subject to write of might be excused in rare and famous men, and who by their reputation had bred some desire in others of their acquaintance. It is true, I confess it, and I know that a handicraftsman will scarcely look off his work to gaze upon an ordinary man; whereas to see a notable great person come into a town, he will leave both work and shop. It ill beseemeth any man to make himself known, only he excepted that hath somewhat in him worthy of imitation, and whose life and opinions may stand as a pattern to all. Cæsar and Xenophon have had wherewithal to ground and establish their narration in the greatness of their deeds as on a just and solid ground-work. So are the journal books of Alexander the Great, the commentaries which Augustus, Cato Brutus, Sylla, and divers others had left of their guests, greatly to be desired. Such men's images are both beloved and studied, be they either in brass or stone. This admonition is most true, but it concerneth me very little.

Non recito cuiquam: nisi amicis, idque rogatus,
Non ubivis, coramve quibuslibet. In medio qui
Scripta foro recitant sunt multi, quique lavantes.[1]

My writings I read not, but to my friends, to any,
Nor eachwhere, nor to all, nor but desir'd, yet many
In market-place read theirs,
In baths, in barber's chairs.

I erect not here a statue to be set up in the market-place of a town, or in a church, or in any other public place:

Non equidem hoc studeo bullatis ut mihi nugis
Pagina turgescat:[2]

I study not, my written leaves should grow
Big-swollen with bubbled toys, which vain breaths blow.

Secreti loquimur.[3]

We speak alone,
Or one to one.

It is for the corner of a library, or to amuse a neighbour, a kinsman, or a friend of mine withal, who by this image may happily take pleasure to renew acquaintance and to reconverse with me. Others have been emboldened to speak of themselves, because they have found worthy and rich subject in themselves. I, contrariwise, because I have found mine so barren and so shallow, that it cannot admit suspicion of ostentation. I willingly judge of other men's actions; of mine, by reason of their nullity, I give small cause to judge. I find not so much good in myself, but I may speak of it without blushing. Oh, what contentment were it unto me to hear somebody that would relate the custom, the visage, the countenance, the most usual words, and the fortunes of my ancestors! Oh, how attentively

[1] Hor., *Ser.* l. i., *Sat.* iv. 73. [2] Pers., *Sat.* v. 19. [3] *Ibid.* 21.

would I listen unto it! Verily it were an argument of a bad nature, to seem to despise the very pictures of our friends and predecessors, the fashion of their garments and arms. I keep the writing, the manual seal, and a peculiar sword; and I reserve still in my cabinet certain long switches or wands which my father was wont to carry in his hand. *Paterna vestis et annulus, tanto charior est posteris, quanto erga parentes maior affectus:* "The father's garment and his ring is so much more esteemed of his successors, as their affection is greater towards their progenitors." Notwithstanding if my posterity be of another mind, I shall have wherewith to be avenged, for they cannot make so little account of me as then I shall do of them. All the commerce I have in this with the world is that I borrow the instruments of their writing, as more speedy and more easy; in requital whereof I may peradventure hinder the melting of some piece of butter in the market or a grocer from selling an ounce of pepper.

Ne toga cordyllis, ne penula desit olivis.[1]
Lest fish-fry should a fit gown want,
Lest cloaks should be for olives scant.

Et laxas scombris sæpe dabo tunicas.[2]
To long-tail'd mackerels often I,
Will side-wide (paper) coats apply.

And if it happen no man read me, have I lost my time to have entertained myself so many idle hours about so pleasing and profitable thoughts? In framing this portrait by myself, I have so often been fain to frizzle and trim me, that so I might the better extract myself, that the pattern is thereby confirmed, and in some sort formed. Drawing myself for others, I have drawn myself with purer and

[1] Mart. l. xiii., *Epig.* i. 1. [2] Catul., *Epig. Elog.* xxvii. 8.

better colours than were my first. I have no more made my book than my book hath made me. A book consubstantial to his author; of a peculiar and fit occupation. A member of my life. Not of an occupation and end strange and foreign, as all other books. Have I misspent my time to have taken an account of myself so continually and so curiously? For those who only run themselves over by fantasy, and by speech for some hours, examine not themselves so primely and exactly, nor enter they into themselves, as he doth who makes his study his work, and occupation of it; who with all his might, and with all his credit, engageth himself to a register of continuance. The most delicious pleasures, though inwardly digested, shun to leave any trace of themselves, and avoid the sight not only of the people, but of any other. How often hath this business diverted me from tedious and irksome cogitations? (and all frivolous ones must be deemed tedious and irksome). Nature hath endowed us with a large faculty to entertain ourselves apart, and often calleth us unto it; to teach us that partly we owe ourselves unto society, but in the better part unto ourselves. To the end I may in some order and project marshall my fantasy even to dote and keep it from loosing and straggling in the air, there is nothing so good as to give it a body and register so many idle imaginations as present themselves unto it. I listen to my humours and hearken to my conceits, because I must enrol them. How often, being grieved at some action, which civility and reason forbade me to withstand openly, have I disgorged myself upon them here, not without an intent of public instruction? And yet these poetical rods,

Zon dessus l'œil, zon sur le groin,
Zon sur le dos du Sagoin,

are also better imprinted upon paper than upon the quick flesh: what if I lend mine ears somewhat more attentively unto books, since I but watch if I can filch something from them wherewith to enamel and uphold mine? I never study to make a book, yet have I somewhat studied, because I had already made it (if to nibble or pinch, by the head or feet, now one author, and then another, be in any sort to study), but nothing at all to form my opinions. Yea, being long since formed to assist, to second, and to serve them. But whom shall we believe, speaking of himself in this corrupted age? since there are few or none who may believe speaking of others, where there is less interest to lie. The first part of custom's corruption is the banishment of truth; for, as Pindarus said, to be sincerely true is the beginning of a great virtue; and the first article Plato requireth in the governor of his *Commonwealth.* Nowadays, that is not the truth which is true, but that which is persuaded to others. As we call money not only that which is true and good, but also the false, so it be current. Our nation is long since taxed with this vice. For Salvianus Massiliensis, who lived in the time of Valentinian the Emperor, saith that amongst Frenchmen to lie and forswear is no vice, but a manner of speech. He that would endear this testimony might say, it is now rather deemed a virtue among them. Men frame and fashion themselves unto it as to an exercise of honour; for dissimulation is one of the notablest qualities of this age. Thus have I often considered whence this custom might arise, which we observe so religiously, that we are more sharply offended with the reproach of this vice, so ordinary in us, than with any other; and that it is the extremest injury may be done us in words, to upbraid and reproach us with a lie. Therein I find that it is natural for a man to defend himself most from such defects as we are most

tainted with. It seemeth that if we but show a motion of revenge, or are but moved at the accusation, we in some sort discharge ourselves of the blame of imputation; if we have it in effect, at least we condemn it in appearance. May it not also be that this reproach seems to enfold cowardice and faintness of heart? Is there any more manifest than for a man to eat and deny his own word? What, to deny his word wittingly? To lie is a horrible, filthy vice; and which an ancient writer setteth forth very shamefully, when he saith that whosoever lieth witnesseth that he contemneth God and therewithal feareth men. It is impossible more richly to represent the horror, the vileness, and the disorder of it; for, what can be imagined so vile and base as to be a coward towards men and a boaster towards God? Our intelligence being only conducted by the way of the word, whoso falsifieth the same betrayeth public society. It is the only instrument by means whereof our wills and thoughts are communicated; it is the interpreter of our souls. If that fail us, we hold ourselves no more, we inter-know one another no longer. If it deceive us, it breaketh all our commerce, and dissolveth all bonds of our policy. Certain nations of the new Indies (whose names we need not declare, because they are no more, for the desolation of this conquest hath extended itself to the absolute abolishing of names and ancient knowledge of places, with a marvellous and never-the-like heard example) offered human blood unto their gods, but no other than that which was drawn from their tongues and ears for an expiation of the sin of lying as well heard as pronounced. That good fellow Græcian said children were dandled with toys, but men with words. Concerning the sundry fashions of our giving the lie, and the laws of our honour in that and the changes they have received, I will refer to another time

to speak what I think and know of it, and if I can I will in the meantime learn at what time this custom took its beginning, so exactly to weigh and precisely to measure words, and tie our honour to them; for it is easy to judge that it was not anciently amongst the Romans and Grecians. And I have often thought it strange to see them wrong and give one another the lie, and yet never enter into quarrel. The laws of their duty took some other course than ours. Cæsar is often called a thief, and sometimes a drunkard to his face. We see the liberty of their invectives, which they write one against another: I mean the greatest chieftains and generals in war, of one and another nation, where words are only retorted and revenged with words, and never wrested to further consequence.

OF PEDANTISM.

I HAVE in my youth oftentimes been vexed to see a pedant brought in, in most of Italian comedies, for a vice or sport-maker, and the nickname of Magister to be of no better signification amongst us. For, myself being committed to their tuition, how could I choose but be somewhat jealous of their reputation? Indeed I sought to excuse them by reason of the natural disproportion that is between the vulgar sort and rare and excellent men, both in judgment and knowledge; forasmuch as they take a clean contrary course one from another. But when I considered the choicest men were they that most condemned them, I was far to seek, and as it were lost myself; witness our good Bellay—

Mais je hay par sur tout un scavoir pedantesque.

A pedant knowledge I
Detest out of all cry.

Yet is this custom very ancient, for Plutarch saith that Greek and scholar were amongst the Roman words of reproach and imputation. And coming afterwards to years of more discretion, I have found they had great reason, and that *magis magnos clericos, non sunt magis magnos sapientes:* "The most great clerks are not the most wisest men." But whence it may proceed that a mind rich in knowledge, and of so many things, becometh thereby never livelier nor more quick-sighted; and a gross-headed and vulgar spirit may without amendment contain the discourse and judgment of the most excellent wits the world ever produced, I still remain doubtful. To receive so many, so strange, yea and so great wits, it must needs follow (said once a lady unto me, yea one of our chiefest princesses, speaking of somebody) that a man's own wit, force, droops, and as it were diminishes itself, to make room for others. I might say, that as plants are choked by over-much moisture, and lamps dammed with too much oil, so are the actions of the mind overwhelmed by over-abundance of matter and study; which, occupied and entangled with so great a diversity of things, loseth the means to spread and clear itself; and that surcharge keepeth it low-drooping and faint. But it is otherwise, for our mind stretcheth the more by how much more it is replenished. And in examples of former times the contrary is seen, of sufficient men in the managing of public affairs, of great captains and notable counsellors in matters of estate, to have been therewithal excellently wise. And concerning philosophers, retired from all public negotiations, they have indeed sometimes been vilified by the comic

[1] Bellay.

liberty of their times, their opinions and demeanours yielding them ridiculous. Will you make them judges of the right of a process, or of the actions of a man? They are ready for it. They inquire whether there be any life yet remaining, whether any motion. Whether man be anything but an ox, what working or suffering is; what strange beasts law and justice are. Speak they of the magistrate, or speak they unto him, they do it with an irreverent and uncivil liberty. Hear they a prince or a king commended? He is but a shepherd to them, as idle as a swain busied about milking of his cattle, or shearing of his sheep; but yet more rudely. Esteem you any man the greater for possessing two hundred acres of land? They scoff at him, as men accustomed to embrace all the world as their possession. Do you boast of your nobility, because you can blazon your descent of seven or eight rich grandfathers? They will but little regard you, as men that conceive not the universal image of nature, and how many predecessors every one of us hath had, both rich and poor, kings and grooms, Greeks and Barbarians. And were you lineally descended in the fiftieth degree from Hercules, they deem it a vanity to vaunt or allege this gift of fortune. So did the vulgar sort disdain them as ignorant of the first and common things, and as presumptuous and insolent. But this Platonical lustre is far from that which our men stand in need of. They were envied as being beyond the common sort, as despising public actions, as having proposed unto themselves a particular and inimitable life, aiming and directed at certain high discourses, and from the common use; these are disdained as men beyond the ordinary fashion, as incapable of public charges, as leading an unsociable life, and professing base and abject customs, after the vulgar kind. *Odi homines ignavos opere, Philo-*

sophos sententia:[1] "I hate men that are fools in working and philosophers in speaking." As for those philosophers, I say that as they were great in knowledge so were they greater in all action. And even as they report of that Syracusan geometrician, who being taken from his bookish contemplation to show some practice of his skill, for the defence of his country, reared suddenly certain terror-moving engines, and showed effects far exceeding all men's conceit, himself notwithstanding disdaining all this his handiwork, supposing he had thereby corrupted the dignity of his art; his engines and manual works being but the apprenticeships and trials of his skill in sport. So they, if at any time they have been put to the trial of any action, they have been seen to fly so high a pitch, and with so lofty a flight, that men might apparently see their minds and spirits were through the intelligence of things become wonderfully rich and great. But some, perceiving the seat of politic government possessed by unworthy and incapable men, have withdrawn themselves from it. And he who demanded of Crates how long men should philosophise, received this answer, "Until such time as they who have the conduct of our armies be no longer blockish asses." Heraclitus resigned the royalty unto his brother. And to the Ephesians, who reproved him for spending his time in playing with children before the temple, he answered, "And is it not better to do so than to govern the public affairs in your company?" Others having their imagination placed beyond fortune and the world, found the seat of justice, and the thrones of kings, to be but base and vile. And Empedocles refused the royalty which the Agrigentines offered him. Thales sometimes accusing the cark and care men took

[1] Pacuvius, *Lips.* l. i. c. x.

about good husbandry, and how to grow rich; some replied unto him that he did as the fox, because he could not attain unto it himself; which hearing, by way of sport he would needs show by experience how he could at his pleasure become both thrifty and rich; and, bending his wits to gain and profit, erected a traffic which within one year brought him such riches as the most skilful in the trade of thriving could hardly in all their life devise how to get the like. That which Aristotle reporteth of some who called both him and Anaxagoras, and such-like men, wise and not prudent, because they cared not for things more profitable. Besides, I do not very well digest this nice difference of words that serveth my find-fault people for no excuse; and to see the base and needy fortune wherewith they are content, we might rather have just cause to pronounce them neither wise nor prudent. I quit this first reason, and think it better to say, that this evil proceedeth from the bad course they take to follow sciences; and that respecting the manner we are instructed in them, it is no wonder if neither scholars nor masters, howbeit they prove more learned, become no whit more sufficient. Verily the daily care and continual charges of our fathers aimeth at nothing so much as to store our heads with knowledge and learning; as for judgment and virtue, that is never spoken of. If a man pass by, cry out to our people, "Oh, what a wise man goeth yonder!" And of another, "Oh, what a good man is yonder!" he will not fail to cast his eyes and respect towards the former. A third crier were needful to say, "Oh, what blockheads are those!" We are ever ready to ask, "Hath he any skill in the Greek and Latin tongue? can he write well? doth he write in prose or verse?" But whether he be grown better or wiser, which should be the chiefest of his drift,

that is never spoken of. We should rather inquire who is better wise than who is more wise. We labour, and toil, and plod to fill the memory, and leave both understanding and conscience empty. Even as birds flutter and skip from field to field to pick up corn, or any grain, and without tasting the same, carry it in their bills, therewith to feed their little ones; so do our pedants glean and pick learning from books, and never lodge it further than their lips, only to disgorge and cast it to the wind. It is strange how fitly sottishness takes hold of mine example. Is not that which I do in the greatest part of this composition all one and self-same thing? I am ever here and there picking and culling, from this and that book, the sentences that please me, not to keep them (for I have no store-house to reserve them in), but to transport them into this; where, to say truth, they are no more mine than in their first place; we are (in mine opinion) never wise but by present learning, not by that which is past, and as little by that which is to come. But which is worse, their scholars and their little ones are never a whit the more fed or better nourished; but passeth from hand to hand, to this end only, thereby to make a glorious show, therewith to entertain others, and with its help to frame some quaint stories, or pretty tales, as of a light and counterfeit coin, unprofitable for any use or employment, but to reckon and cast accounts. *Apud alios loqui didicerunt, non ipsi secum. Non est loquendum, sed gubernandum:*[1] "They have learned to speak with others, not with themselves; speaking is not so requisite as government." Nature, to show that nothing is savage in whatsoever she produceth, causeth oftentimes, even in rudest and most unarted nations, productions of spirits to arise, that confront and

[1] Sen., *Epist.* cviii.

wrestle with the most artistic productions. As concerning my discourse, is not the Gascony proverb, drawn from a bagpipe, pretty and quaint? *Bouha prou bouha, mas à remuda lous dits qu'em:* "You may blow long enough, but if once you stir your fingers, you may go seek." We can talk and prate, Cicero saith thus, These are Plato's customs, these are the very words of Aristotle; but what say we ourselves? what do we? what judge we? A paroquet would say as much. This fashion puts me in mind of that rich Roman, who to his exceeding great charge had been very industrious to find out the most sufficient men in all sciences, which he continually kept about him, that if at any time occasion should be moved amongst his friends to speak of any matter pertaining to scholarship, they might supply his place, and be ready to assist him, some with discourse, some with a verse of Homer, others with a sentence, each one according to his skill or profession; who persuaded himself that all such learning was his own, because it was contained in his servants' minds. As they do whose sufficiency is placed in their sumptuous libraries. I know some, whom if I ask what he knoweth, he will require a book to demonstrate the same, and durst not dare to tell me that his posteriors are scabious, except he turn over his Lexicon to see what posteriors and scabious is. We take the opinions and knowledge of others into our protection, and that is all; I tell you they must be enfeoffed in us, and made our own. We may very well be compared unto him, who having need of fire, should go fetch some at his neighbour's chimney, where finding a good fire, should there stay to warm himself, forgetting to carry some home. What avails it us to have our bellies full of meat, if it be not digested? if it be not transchanged in us? except it nourish, augment, and strengthen us? We may

imagine that Lucullus, whom learning made and framed so great a captain without experience, would have taken it after our manner. We rely so much upon other men's arms, that we disannul our own strength. Will I arm myself against the fear of death? it is at Seneca's cost. Will I draw comfort either for myself, or any other? I borrow the same of Cicero. I would have taken it in myself, had I been exercised unto it; I love not this relative and begged-for sufficiency. Suppose we may be learned by other men's learning. Sure I am we can never be wise but by our own wisdom.

Μισῶ σοφιστὴν, ὅστις οὐχ αὑτῷ σοφός.[1]
That wise man I cannot abide,
That for himself cannot provide.

Ex quo Ennius: Nequidquam sapere sapientem, qui ipse sibi prodesse non quiret.[2] "Whereupon saith Ennius: That wise man is vainly wise, who could not profit himself."

——si cupidus, si
Venus, et Euganeâ quantumvis mollior agnâ.[3]
If covetous, if vain (not wise)
Than any lamb more base, more nice.

Non enim paranda nobis solum, sed fruenda sapientia est:[4] "For we must not only purchase wisdom, but enjoy and employ the same." Dionysius scoffeth at those grammarians who ploddingly labour to know the miseries of Ulysses, and are ignorant of their own; mocketh those musicians that so attentively tune their instruments, and never accord their manners; derideth those orators that study to speak of justice, and never put it in execution. Except our mind be the better, unless our judgment be the sounder, I had rather my scholar had employed his time in playing at

[1] *Proverb. Iamb.*
[2] Ennius.
[3] Juv., *Sat.* viii. 14.
[4] Cic., *Finib.* l. i. p.

tennis; I am sure his body would be the nimbler. See but one of these our university men or bookish scholars return from school, after he hath there spent ten or twelve years under a pedant's charge; who is so inapt for any matter? who so unfit for any company? who so to seek if he come into the world? all the advantage you discover in him is that his Latin and Greek have made him more sottish, more stupid, and more presumptuous, than before he went from home. Whereas he should return with a mind full-fraught, he returns with a wind-puffed conceit; instead of plum-feeding the same, he has only sponged it up with vanity. These masters, as Plato speaketh of sophisters (their cousins-german) of all men, are those that promise to be most profitable unto men, and alone, amongst all, that not only amend not what is committed to their charge as doth a carpenter or a mason, but impair and destroy the same, and yet they must full dearly be paid. If the law which Protagoras proposed to his disciples were followed, which was, that either they should pay him according to his word, or swear in the temple, how much they esteemed the profit they had received by his discipline, and accordingly satisfy him for his pains, my pedagogues would be aground, especially if they would stand to the oath of my experience. My vulgar Perigordian speech doth very pleasantly term such self-conceited wizards letter-ferrets, as if they would say letter-strucken men, to whom (as the common saying is) letters have given a blow with a mallet. Verily for the most part they seem to be distracted even from common sense. Note but the plain husbandman, or the unwily shoemaker, and you see them simply and naturally plod on their course, speaking only of what they know, and no further; whereas these letter-puffed pedants, because they would fain raise themselves aloft, and with their literal doctrine which

floateth up and down the superficies of their brain, arm themselves beyond other men, they incessantly intricate and entangle themselves; they utter lofty words, and speak golden sentences, but so that another man doth place, fit, and apply them. They are acquainted with Galen, but know not the disease. They will stuff your head with laws, when God wot they have not yet conceived the ground of the case. They know the theory of all things, but you must seek who shall put it in practice. I have seen a friend of mind, in mine own house, who by way of sport, talking with one of these pedantical gulls, counterfeited a kind of fustian tongue, and spake a certain gibberish, without rhyme or reason, sans head or foot, a hotch-potch of divers things, but that he did often interlace it with ink-pot terms, incident to their disputations, to amuse the bookish sot for a whole day long with debating and contending; ever thinking he answered the objections made unto him; yet was he a man of letters and reputation, a graduate, and wore a goodly formal long gown.

Vos, ô patritius sanguis, quos vivere par est
Occipiti cæco, posticæ occurrite sannæ.[1]

You noble bloods, who with a noddle blind
Should live, meet with the mock that's made behind.

Whosoever shall narrowly look into this kind of people, which far and wide hath spread itself, he shall find (as I have done) that for the most part they neither understand themselves nor others, and that their memory is many times sufficiently full-fraught, but their judgment ever hollow and empty; except their natural inclination have of itself otherwise fashioned them. As I have seen Adrianus Turnebus, who having never professed anything but study and letters,

[1] Pers., *Sat.* i. 61.

wherein he was, in mine opinion, the worthiest man that lived these thousand years, and who notwithstanding had no pedantical thing about him but the wearing of his gown, and some external fashions that could not well be reduced, and uncivilised to the courtier's cut; things of no consequence. And I naturally hate our people, that will more hardly endure a long robe uncuriously worn, than a cross, skittish mind; and that observe what leg or reverence he makes, note his garb or demeanour, view his boots or his hat, and mark what manner of man he is. For his inward parts, I deem him to have been one of the most unspotted and truly honest minds that ever was. I have sundry times of purpose urged him to speak of matters furthest from his study, wherein he was so clear-sighted, and could with so quick an apprehension conceive, and with so sound a judgment distinguish them, that he seemed never to have professed or studied other faculty than war, and matters of state. Such spirits, such natures may be termed worthy, goodly, and solid—

> —— *queis arte benigna*
> *Et meliore luto finxit præcordia Titan:*[1]
>
> Whose bowels heaven's bright Sun composed
> Of better mould, art well disposed,

that maintain themselves against any bad institution. Now it sufficeth not that our institution mar us not, it must change us to the better. There are some of our parliaments and courts who, when they are to admit of any officers, do only examine them of their learning; others, that by presenting them the judgment of some law cases, endeavour to sound their understanding. Methinks the latter keep the better style. And albeit these two parts are necessary,

[1] Juv., *Sat.* xiv. 34.

and both ought to concur in one, yet truly should that of learning be less prized than judgment, this may well be without the other, and not the other without this. For as the Greek verse saith—

> Ὡς οὐδὲν ἡ μάθησις, ἢν μὴ νοῦς παρῇ.[1]
>
> Learning nought worth doth lie,
> Be not discretion by.

Whereto serveth learning, if understanding be not joined to it? Oh would to God, that for the good of our justice, the societies of lawyers were as well stored with judgment, discretion, and conscience, as they are with learning and wit! *Non vitæ, sed scholæ discimus:*[2] "We learn not for our life, but for the school." It is not enough to join learning and knowledge to the mind, it should be incorporated into it. It must not be sprinkled, but dyed with it; and if it change not and better her estate (which is imperfect), it were much better to leave it. It is a dangerous sword, and which hindereth and offendeth her master, if it be in a weak hand, and which hath not the skill to manage the same: *Ut fuerit melius non didicisse!* "So as it were better that we had not learned." It is peradventure the cause that neither we nor divinity require much learning in women; and that Francis, Duke of Brittany, son to John V., when he was spoken unto for a marriage between him and Isabel, a daughter of Scotland, and some told him she was meanly brought up, and without any instruction of learning, answered, he loved her the better for it, and that a woman was wise enough if she could but make a difference between the shirt and doublet of her husband's. It is also no such wonder (as some say) that our ancestors did never make any great account of letters, and that even at this day (except it

[1] *Comm. Græc.*, π. et φ. ult. [2] Sen., *Epist.* cvi. f.

be by chance) they are not often found in our kings' and princes' chiefest counsels and consultations. And if the end to grow rich by them, which nowadays is altogether proposed unto us by the study of law, of physic, of pedantism, and of divinity, did not keep them in credit, without doubt you should see them as beggarly and needy, and as much vilified as ever they were. And what hurt I pray you, since they neither teach us to think well nor do well? *Postquam docti prodierunt, boni desunt:*[1] "Since men became learned, good men failed." Each other science is prejudicial unto him that hath not the science of goodness. But may not the reason I whilom sought for, also proceed thence? That our study in France, having as it were no other aim but profit, but those less whom nature hath produced to more generous offices than lucrative, giving themselves unto learning, or so briefly (before they have apprehended any liking of them, retired unto a profession that hath no community with books) there are then none left, altogether to engage themselves to study and books, but the meaner kind of people, and such as are born to base fortune, and who by learning and letters seek some means to live and enrich themselves. The minds of which people being both by natural inclination, by example, and familiar institution, of the basest stamp, do falsely reap the fruit of learning. For it is not in her power to give light unto the mind that hath none, nor to make a blind man to see. The mystery of it is not to afford him sight, but to direct it for him, to address his goings, always provided he have feet of his own, and good, straight, and capable legs. Knowledge is an excellent drug, but no drug is sufficiently strong to preserve itself without alteration or corruption, according to the fault of the vessel that contains it. Some

[1] Sen., *Epist.* xciii.

man hath a clear sight, that is not right-sighted; and by consequence seeth what good is, and doth not follow it; and seeketh knowledge, but makes no use of it. The chiefest ordinance of Plato in his *Commonwealth* is to give unto his citizens their charge according to their nature. Nature can do all, and doth all. The crook-backed, or deformed, are unfit for any exercise of the body, and crooked and misshapen minds unproper for exercises of the mind. The bastard and vulgar sort are unworthy of philosophy. When we see a man ill-shod, if he chance to be a shoemaker, we say it is no wonder, for commonly none go worse shod than they. Even so it seems that experience doth often show us a physician less healthy, a divine less reformed, and most commonly a wise man less sufficient than another. Aristo Chius had heretofore reason to say that philosophers did much hurt their auditors, forasmuch as the greatest number of minds are not apt to profit by such instructions, which, if they take not a good, they will follow a bad course: *ἀσώτους ex Aristippi, acerbos ex Zenonis schola exire:*[1] "They proceed licentious out of the school of Aristippus, but bitter out of the school of Zeno." In that excellent institution which Xenophon giveth the Persians, we find, that as other nations teach their children letters, so they taught theirs virtue. Plato said the eldest born son, in their royal succession, was thus taught. "As soon as he was born, he was delivered, not to women, but to such eunuchs as by reason of their virtue were in chiefest authority about the king. Their special charge was first to shapen his limbs and body, goodly and healthy; and at seven years of age they instructed and inured him to sit on horseback, and to ride a hunting. When he came to the age of fourteen, they delivered him into the hands of four

[1] Cic., *Nat. Deor.* l. iii.

men, that is to say the wisest, the justest, the most temperate, and the most valiant of all the nation. The first taught him religion; the second, to be ever upright and true; the third, to become master of his own desires; and the fourth, to fear nothing." It is a thing worthy great consideration, that in that excellent, and as I may term it, matchless policy of Lycurgus, and in truth, by reason of her perfection, monstrous, yet notwithstanding, so careful for the education of children, as of her principal charge, and even in the Muses' bosom and resting-place there is so little mention made of learning, as if that generous youth disdaining all other yokes but of virtue, ought only to be furnished, in lieu of tutors of learning, with masters of valour, of justice, of wisdom, and of temperance. An example which Plato hath imitated in his laws. The manner of their discipline was to propound questions unto them, teaching the judgment of men and of their actions; and if by way of reason or discourse they condemned or praised either this man or that deed, they must be told the truth and best, by which means at once they sharpened their wits, and learned the right. Astiages in Xenophon calleth Cyrus to an account of his last lesson: "It is," saith he, "that a great lad in our school, having a little coat, gave it to one of his fellows, that was of lesser stature than himself, and took his coat from him, which was too big for him. Our master having made me judge of that difference, I judged that things must be left in the state they were in, and that both seemed to be better fitted as they were. Whereupon he showed me I had done ill, because I had only considered the comeliness, where I should chiefly have respected justice, which required that none should be forced in anything which properly belonged to him, and said he was whipped for it, as we are in our country towns, when we have forgotten the first preterperfect

tense or Aoriste of τύπτω. My regent might long enough make me a prolix and cunning oration *in genere demonstrativo*, in the oratory kind of praise or dispraise, before ever he should persuade me his school is worth that. They have gone about to make the way shorter; and since sciences (even when they are right taken) can teach us nothing but wisdom, honesty, integrity, and resolution, they have at first sight attempted to put their children to the proper of effects, and instruct them, not by hearsay, but by assay of action, lively modelling and framing them, not only by precepts and words, but principally by examples and works, that it might not be a science in their mind, but rather his complexion and habitude; not to purchase, but a natural inheritance."

To this purpose, when Agesilaus was demanded what his opinion was, children should learn, he answered, "What they should do being men." It is no marvel if such an institution have produced so admirable effects. Some say that in other cities of Greece they went to seek for rhetoricians, for painters, and for musicians; whereas in Lacedæmon they sought for law-givers, for magistrates, and generals of armies. In Athens men learned to say well, but here to do well; there to resolve a sophistical argument, and to confound the imposture and amphibology of words, captiously interlaced together; here to shake off the allurements of voluptuousness, and with an undaunted courage to contemn the threats of fortune, and reject the menaces of death; those busied and laboured themselves about idle words, these after martial things; there the tongue was in continual exercise of speaking, here the mind in an ever incessant practice of well-doing. And therefore was it not strange, if Antipater requiring fifty of their children for hostages, they answered clean contrary to that we would do,

"that they would rather deliver him twice so many men," so much did they value and esteem the loss of their country's education. When Agesilaus inviteth Xenophon to send his children to Sparta, there to be brought up, it is not because they should learn rhetoric or logic, but, as himself saith, "to the end they may learn the worthiest and best science that may be—to wit, the knowledge how to obey and the skill how to command." It is a sport to see Socrates, after his blunt manner, to mock Hippias, who reporteth unto him what great sums of money he had gained, especially in certain little cities and small towns of Sicily, by keeping school and teaching letters, and that at Sparta he could not get a shilling. That they were but idiots and foolish people, who can neither measure nor esteem; nor make no account of grammar or of rhythms; and who only amuse themselves to know the succession of kings, the establishing and declination of estates, and such-like trash of flim-flam tales. Which done, Socrates forcing him particularly to allow the excellency of their form of public government, the happiness and virtue of their private life, remits unto him to guess the conclusion of the unprofitableness of his arts. Examples teach us both in this martial policy, and in all such-like, that the study of sciences doth more weaken and effeminate men's minds than corroborate and adapt them to war. The mightiest, yea the best settled estate that is now in the world is that of the Turks, a nation equally instructed to the esteem of arms and disesteem of letters. I find Rome to have been most valiant when it was least learned. The most warlike nations of our days are the rudest and most ignorant. The Scythians, the Parthians, and Tamburlane serve to verify my saying. When the Goths overran and ravaged Greece, that which saved all their libraries from the fire was that one among them

scattered this opinion, that such trash of books and papers must be left untouched and whole for their enemies, as the only mean and proper instrument to divert them from all military exercises, and amuse them to idle, secure, and sedentary occupations. When our King Charles the Eighth, in a manner without unsheathing his sword, saw himself absolute lord of the whole kingdom of Naples, and of a great part of Tuscany, the princes and lords of his train ascribed this sudden and unhoped-for victory, and facility of so noble and prodigious a conquest, only to this, that most of the princes and nobility of Italy amused themselves rather to become ingenious and wise by learning, than vigorous and warriors by military exercises.

OF THE INSTITUTION AND EDUCATION OF CHILDREN; TO THE LADY DIANA OF FOIX, COUNTESS OF GURSON.

I NEVER knew father, how crooked and deformed soever his son were, that would either altogether cast him off, or not acknowledge him for his own; and yet (unless he be merely besotted or blinded in his affection) it may not be said but he plainly perceiveth his defects, and hath a feeling of his imperfections. But so it is, he is his own. So it is in myself. I see better than any man else that what I have set down is nought but the fond imaginations of him who in his youth hath tasted nothing but the paring, and seen but the superficies of true learning, whereof he hath retained but a general and shapeless form: a smack of everything in general, but nothing to the purpose in particular. After the French manner. To be short, I know there is an art of physic, a course of laws, four parts of the mathematics, and I am not altogether ignorant

what they tend unto. And perhaps I also know the scope and drift of sciences in general to be for the service of our life. But to wade further, or that ever I tired myself with plodding upon Aristotle (the monarch of our modern doctrine) or obstinately continued in search of any one science, I confess I never did it. Nor is there any one art whereof I am able so much as to draw the first lineaments. And there is no scholar (be he of the lowest form) that may not repute himself wiser than I, who am not able to oppose him in his first lesson; and if I be forced to it, I am constrained very impertinently to draw in matter from some general discourse, whereby I examine and give a guess at his natural judgment: a lesson as much unknown to them as theirs is to me. I have not dealt or had commerce with any excellent book, except Plutarch or Seneca, from whom (as the Danaides) I draw my water, incessantly filling, and as fast emptying; something whereof I fasten to this paper, but to myself nothing at all. And touching books, history is my chief study, poesy my only delight, to which I am particularly affected; for as Cleanthes said, that as the voice being forcibly pent in the narrow gullet of a trumpet at last issueth forth more strong and shriller, so meseems that a sentence cunningly and closely couched in measure-keeping poesy darts itself forth more furiously and wounds me even to the quick. And concerning the natural faculties that are in me (whereof behold here an essay), I perceive them to faint under their own burden; my conceits and my judgment march but uncertain, and as it were groping, staggering, and stumbling at every rush. And when I have gone as far as I can I have no whit pleased myself, for the further I sail the more land I descry, and that so dimmed with fogs, and overcast with clouds, that my sight is so weakened I cannot distinguish the same. And then undertaking to

speak indifferently of all that presents itself unto my fantasy, and having nothing but mine own natural means to employ therein, if it be my hap (as commonly it is) among good authors, to light upon those very places which I have undertaken to treat of, as even now I did in Plutarch, reading his discourse of the power of imagination, wherein in regard of those wise men I acknowledge myself so weak and so poor, so dull and gross-headed, as I am forced both to pity and disdain myself, yet am I pleased with this, that my opinions have often the grace to jump with theirs, and that I follow them aloof off, and thereby possess at least that which all other men have not, which is, that I know the utmost difference between them and myself; all which notwithstanding I suffer my inventions to run abroad, as weak and faint as I have produced them, without bungling and botching the faults which this comparison hath discovered to me in them. A man had need have a strong back to undertake to march foot to foot with these kind of men. The indiscreet writers of our age, amidst their trivial compositions, intermingle and wrest in whole sentences taken from ancient authors, supposing by such filching theft to purchase honour and reputation to themselves, do clean contrary. For this infinite variety and dissemblance of lustres makes a face so wan, so ill-favoured, and so ugly, in respect of theirs, that they lose much more than gain thereby. These were two contrary humours: the philosopher Chrisippus was wont to foist in amongst his books, not only whole sentences and other long-long discourses, but whole books of other authors, as in one he brought in Euripides' *Medea*. And Apollodorus was wont to say of him, that if one should draw from out his books what he had stolen from others, his paper would remain blank. Whereas Epicurus, clean contrary to him, in three hundred volumes he left

behind him, had not made use of one allegation. It was my fortune not long since to light upon such a place: I had languishingly traced after some French words, so naked and shallow, and so void either of sense or matter, that at last I found them to be nought but mere French words; and after a tedious and wearisome travel I chanced to stumble upon an high, rich, and even to the clouds-raised piece, the descent whereof had it been somewhat more pleasant or easy, or the ascent reaching a little further, it had been excusable, and to be borne withal; but it was such a steepy down-fall, and by mere strength hewn out of the main rock, that by reading of the first six words methought I was carried into another world: whereby I perceive the bottom whence I came to be so low and deep, as I durst never more adventure to go through it; for, if I did stuff any one of my discourses with those rich spoils, it would manifestly cause the sottishness of others to appear. To reprove mine own faults in others seems to me no more insufferable than to reprehend (as I do often) those of others in myself. They ought to be accused everywhere, and have all places of sanctuary taken from them; yet do I know how over-boldly at all times I adventure to equal myself unto my filchings, and to march hand in hand with them; not without a fond hardy hope that I may perhaps be able to blear the eyes of the judges from discerning them. But it is as much for the benefit of my application as for the good of mine invention and force. And I do not furiously front, and body to body wrestle with those old champions: it is but by flights, advantages, and false offers I seek to come within them, and if I can, to give them a fall. I do not rashly take them about the neck, I do but touch them, nor do I go so far as by my bargain I would seem to do; could I but keep even with them, I should

then be an honest man; for I seek not to venture on them, but where they are strongest. To do as I have seen some, that is, to shroud themselves under other arms, not daring so much as to show their fingers' ends unarmed, and to botch up all their works (as it is an easy matter in a common subject, namely, for the wiser sort) with ancient inventions, here and there huddled up together. And in those who endeavoured to hide what they have filched from others, and make it their own, it is first a manifest note of injustice, then a plain argument of cowardliness; who having nothing of any worth in themselves to make show of, will yet under the countenance of others' sufficiency go about to make a fair offer: moreover (oh great foolishness), to seek by such cozening tricks to forestall the ignorant approbation of the common sort, nothing fearing to discover their ignorance to men of understanding (whose praise only is of value) who will soon trace out such borrowed ware. As for me, there is nothing I will do less. I never speak of others, but that I may the more speak of myself. This concerneth not those mingle-mangles of many kinds of stuff, or as the Grecians call them, Rhapsodies, that for such are published, of which kind I have (since I came to years of discretion) seen divers most ingenious and witty; amongst others, one under the name of Capilupus; besides many of the ancient stamp. These are wits of such excellence as both here and elsewhere they will soon be perceived, as our late famous writer Lipsius, in his learned and laborious work of the Politics: yet whatsoever come of it, forsomuch as they are but follies, my intent is not to smother them, no more than a bald and hoary picture of mine, where a painter hath drawn not a perfect visage, but mine own. For, howsoever, these are but my humours and opinions, and I deliver them but to show what my conceit is, and not what ought

to be believed. Wherein I aim at nothing but to display myself, who peradventure (if a new prenticeship change me) shall be another to-morrow. I have no authority to purchase belief, neither do I desire it; knowing well that I am not sufficiently taught to instruct others. Some, having read my precedent chapter, told me not long since, in mine own house, I should somewhat more have extended myself in the discourse concerning the institution of children. Now, Madam, if there were any sufficiency in me touching that subject, I could not better employ the same than to bestow it as a present upon that little lad, which ere long threateneth to make a happy issue from out your honourable womb; for, Madam, you are too generous to begin with other than a man child. And having had so great a part in the conduct of your successful marriage, I may challenge some right and interest in the greatness and prosperity of all that shall proceed from it: moreover, the ancient and rightful possession, which you from time to time have ever had, and still have, over my service, urgeth me, with more than ordinary respects, to wish all honour, welfare, and advantage to whatsoever may in any sort concern you and yours. And truly my meaning is but to show that the greatest difficulty, and importing all human knowledge, seemeth to be in this point, where the nurture and institution of young children is in question. For, as in matters of husbandry, the labour that must be used before sowing, setting, and planting, yea in planting itself, is most certain and easy. But when that which was sown, set, and planted cometh to take life, before it come to ripeness much ado and great variety of proceeding belongeth to it. So in men; it is no great matter to get them, but, being born, what continual cares, what diligent attendance, what doubts and fears, do daily wait

to their parents and tutors, before they can be nurtured and brought to any good! The foreshow of their inclination whilst they are young is so uncertain, their humours so variable, their promises so changing, their hopes so false, and their proceedings so doubtful, that it is very hard (yea, for the wisest) to ground any certain judgment or assured success upon them. Behold Cymon, view Themistocles, and a thousand others, how they have differed, and fallen to better from themselves, and deceive the expectation of such as knew them. The young whelps both of dogs and bears at first sight show their natural disposition, but men headlong embracing this custom or fashion, following that humour or opinion, admitting this or that passion, allowing of that or this law, are easily changed, and soon disguised; yet it is hard to force the natural propension or readiness of the mind, whereby it followeth that for want of heedy foresight in those that could not guide their course well, they often employ much time in vain to address young children in those matters whereunto they are not naturally addicted. All which difficulties notwithstanding, mine opinion is, to bring them up in the best and most profitable studies, and that a man should slightly pass over those fond presages, and deceiving prognostics, which we over precisely gather in their infancy. And (without offence be it said) methinks that Plato in his *Commonwealth* allowed them too-too much authority.

Madam, learning joined with true knowledge is an especial and graceful ornament, and an implement of wonderful use and consequence—namely, in persons raised to that degree of fortune wherein you are. And in good truth, learning hath not her own true form, nor can she make show of her beauteous lineaments, if she fall into

the hands of base and vile persons. [For, as famous Torquato Tasso saith: "Philosophy being a rich and noble queen, and knowing her own worth, graciously smileth upon and lovingly embraceth princes and noblemen, if they become suitors to her, admitting them as her minions, and gently affording them all the favours she can; whereas upon the contrary, if she be wooed, and sued unto by clowns, mechanical fellows, and such base kind of people, she holds herself disparaged and disgraced, as holding no proportion with them. And therefore see we by experience, that if a true gentleman or nobleman follow her with any attention, and wooed her with importunity, he shall learn and know more of her, and prove a better scholar in one year than an ungentle or base fellow shall in seven, though he pursue her never so attentively."] She is much more ready and fierce to lend her furtherance and direction in the conduct of a war, to attempt honourable actions, to command a people, to treat a peace with a prince of foreign nation, than she is to form an argument in logic, to devise a syllogism, to canvass a case at the bar, or to prescribe a receipt of pills. So (noble lady) forsomuch as I cannot persuade myself that you will either forget or neglect this point, concerning the institution of yours, especially having tasted the sweetness thereof, and being descended of so noble and learned a race,—for we yet possess the learned compositions of the ancient and noble Earls of Foix, from out whose heroic loins your husband and you take your offspring; and Francis Lord of Candale, your worthy uncle, doth daily bring forth such fruits thereof, as the knowledge of the matchless quality of your house shall hereafter extend itself to many ages,—I will therefore make you acquainted with one conceit of mine, which is contrary to the common use I hold, and that is all I am able to

afford you concerning that matter, the charge of the tutor which you shall appoint your son, in the choice of whom consisteth the whole substance of his education and bringing up; on which are many branches depending, which (forasmuch as I can add nothing of any moment to it) I will not touch at all. And for that point, wherein I presume to advise him, he may so far forth give credit unto it as he shall see just cause. To a gentleman born of noble parentage, and heir of a house that aimeth at true learning, and in it would be disciplined, not so much for game or commodity to himself (because so abject an end is far unworthy the grace and favour of the Muses, and besides, hath a regard or dependency of others), nor for external show and ornament, but to adorn and enrich his inward mind, desiring rather to shape and institute an able and sufficient man than a bare learned man; my desire is therefore that the parents or overseers of such a gentleman be very circumspect and careful in choosing his director, whom I would rather commend for having a well composed and temperate brain, than a full stuffed head, yet both will do well. And I would rather prefer wisdom, judgment, civil customs, and modest behaviour than bare and mere literal learning; and that in his charge he hold a new course. Some never cease brawling in their scholars' ears (as if they were still pouring in a tunnel) to follow their book, yet is their charge nothing else but to repeat what hath been told them before. I would have a tutor to correct this part, and that at first entrance, according to the capacity of the wit he hath in hand, he should begin to make show of it, making him to have a smack of all things, and how to choose and distinguish them, without help of others, sometimes opening him the way, other times leaving him to open it by himself. I would not have

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him to invent and speak alone, but suffer his disciple to speak when his turn cometh. Socrates, and after him Arcesilaus, made their scholars to speak first, and then would speak themselves. *Obest plerumque iis qui discere volunt, auctoritas eorum qui docent:*[1] "Most commonly the authority of them that teach hinders them that would learn."

It is therefore meet that he make him first trot on before him, whereby he may the better judge of his pace, and so guess how long he will hold out, that accordingly he may fit his strength; for want of which proportion we often mar all. And to know how to make a good choice, and how far forth one may proceed (still keeping a due measure), is one of the hardest labours I know. It is a sign of a noble, and effect of an undaunted spirit, to know how to second, and how far forth he shall condescend to his childish proceedings, and how to guide them. As for myself, I can better and with more strength walk up than down a hill. Those which, according to our common fashion, undertake with one self-same lesson, and like manner of education, to direct many spirits of divers forms and different humours, it is no marvel if among a multitude of children they scarce meet with two or three that reap any good fruit by their discipline, or that come to any perfection. I would not only have him to demand an account of the words contained in his lesson, but of the sense and substance thereof, and judge of the profit he hath made of it, not by the testimony of his memory, but by the witness of his life. That what he lately learned he causes him to set forth and portray the same into sundry shapes, and then to accommodate it to as many different and several subjects, whereby he shall perceive whether he

[1] Cic., *De Nat.* l. i.

have yet apprehended the same, and therein enfeoffed himself, at due times taking his instruction from the institution given by Plato. It is a sign of crudity and indigestion for a man to yield up his meat even as he swallowed the same; the stomach hath not wrought its full operation unless it has changed form and altered fashion of that which was given him to boil and concoct.

We see men gape after no reputation but learning, and when they say, such a one is a learned man, they think they have said enough. Our mind doth move at others' pleasure, and tied and forced to serve the fantasies of others, being brought under by authority, and forced to stoop to the lure of their bare lesson; we have been so subjected to harp upon one string that we have no way left us to descant upon voluntary; our vigour and liberty is clean extinct. *Nunquam tutelæ suæ fiunt:* "They never come to their own tuition." It was my hap to be familiarly acquainted with an honest man at Pisa, but such an Aristotelian as he held this infallible position, that a conformity to Aristotle's doctrine was the true touchstone and squire of all solid imaginations and perfect verity; for whatsoever had no coherency with it was but fond chimeras and idle humours; inasmuch as he had known all, seen all, and said all. This proposition of his being somewhat over amply and injuriously interpreted by some made him a long time after to be troubled in the inquisition of Rome. I would have him make his scholar narrowly to sift all things with discretion, and harbour nothing in his head by mere authority, or upon trust. Aristotle's principles shall be no more axioms unto him than the Stoics or Epicureans. Let this diversity of judgments be proposed unto him: if he can, he shall be able to distinguish the truth from falsehood; if not, he will remain doubtful.

Che non men che saper dubbiar m'aggrata.[1]
No less it pleaseth me
To doubt, than wise to be.

For if by his own discourse he embrace the opinions of Xenophon or of Plato, they shall be no longer theirs, but his. He that merely followeth another traceth nothing, and seeketh nothing: *Non sumus sub Rege, sibi quisque se vindicet:*[2] "We are not under a king's command; every one may challenge himself, for let him at least know that he knoweth." It is requisite he endeavour as much to feed himself with their conceits as labour to learn their precepts; which, so he know how to apply, let him hardly forget where or whence he had them. Truth and reason are common to all, and are no more proper unto him that spake them heretofore than unto him that shall speak them hereafter. And it is no more according to Plato's opinion than to mine, since both he and I understand and see alike. The bees do here and there suckle this and cull that flower, but afterwards they produce the honey, which is peculiarly their own, then is it no more thyme or marjoram. So of pieces borrowed of others, he may lawfully alter, transform, and confound them, to shape out of them a perfect piece of work, altogether his own; always provided his judgment, his travel, study, and institution tend to nothing but to frame the same perfect. Let him hardly conceal where or whence he hath had any help, and make no show of anything, but of that which he hath made himself. Pirates, pilchers, and borrowers make a show of their purchases and buildings, but not of that which they have taken from others: you see not the secret fees or bribes lawyers take of their clients, but you shall manifestly discover the alliances they make, the honours they get for

[1] Dante, *Inferno*, cant. xi. 93. [2] Sen., *Epist.* xxxiii.

their children, and the goodly houses they build. No man makes open show of his receipts, but every one of his gettings. The good that comes of study (or at least should come) is to prove better, wiser, and honester. It is the understanding power (said Epicharmus) that seeth and heareth, it is it that profiteth all and disposeth all, that moveth, swayeth, and ruleth all: all things else are but blind, senseless, and without spirit. And truly in barring him of liberty to do anything of himself, we make him thereby more servile and more coward. Who would ever inquire of his scholar what he thinketh of rhetoric, of grammar, of this or of that sentence of Cicero? Which things thoroughly feathered (as if they were oracles) are let fly into our memory; in which both letters and syllables are substantial parts of the subject. To know by rote is no perfect knowledge, but to keep what one hath committed to his memory's charge is commendable: what a man directly knoweth that will he dispose of, without turning still to his book or looking to his pattern. A mere bookish sufficiency is unpleasant. All I expect of it is an embellishing of my actions, and not a foundation of them, according to Plato's mind, who saith constancy, faith, and sincerity are true philosophy; as for other sciences, and tending elsewhere, they are but garish paintings. I would fain have Paluel or Pompey, those two excellent dancers of our time, with all their nimbleness, teach any man to do their lofty tricks and high capers, only with seeing them done, and without stirring out of his place, as some pedantical fellows would instruct our minds without moving or putting it in practice. And glad would I be to find one that would teach us how to manage a horse, to toss a pike, to shoot off a piece, to play upon the lute, or to warble with the voice, without any exercise, as these kind of men would

teach us to judge, and how to speak well, without any exercise of speaking or judging. In which kind of life, or as I may term it, prenticeship, what action or object soever presents itself unto our eyes may serve us instead of a sufficient book. A pretty prank of a boy, a knavish trick of a page, a foolish part of a lackey, an idle tale or any discourse else, spoken either in jest or earnest, at the table or in company, are even as new subjects for us to work upon: for furtherance whereof, commerce or common society among men, visiting of foreign countries, and observing of strange fashions, are very necessary, not only to be able (after the manner of our young gallants of France) to report how many paces the church of Santa Rotonda is in length or breadth, or what rich garments the courtesan Signora Livia weareth, and the worth of her hosen; or as some do, nicely to dispute how much longer or broader the face of Nero is, which they have seen in some old ruins of Italy, than that which is made for him in other old monuments elsewhere. But they should principally observe and be able to make certain relation of the humours and fashions of those countries they have seen, that they may the better know how to correct and prepare their wits by those of others. I would therefore have him begin even from his infancy to travel abroad; and first, that at one shoot he may hit two marks, he should see neighbour countries, namely, where languages are most different from ours; for unless a man's tongue be fashioned unto them in his youth, he shall never attain to the true pronunciation of them if he once grow in years. Moreover, we see it received as a common opinion of the wiser sort, that it agreeth not with reason that a child be always nuzzled, cockered, dandled, and brought up in his parents' lap or sight; forsomuch as their natural kindness, or (as I may call it) tender fondness,

causeth often even the wisest to prove so idle, so over-nice, and so base-minded. For parents are not capable, neither can they find in their hearts to see them checked, corrected, or chastised, nor endure to see them brought up so meanly, and so far from daintiness, and many times so dangerously, as they must needs be. And it would grieve them to see their children come home from those exercises that a gentleman must necessarily acquaint himself with, sometimes all wet and bemired, other times sweaty and full of dust, and to drink being either extreme hot or exceeding cold; and it would trouble them to see him ride a rough, untamed horse, or with his weapon furiously encounter a skilful fencer, or to handle or shoot off a musket; against which there is no remedy, if he will make him prove a sufficient, complete, or honest man: he must not be spared in his youth; and it will come to pass that he shall many times have occasion and be forced to shock the rules of physic.

> *Vitamque sub dio et trepidis agat*
> *In rebus.*[1]
>
> Lead he his life in open air,
> And in affairs full of despair.

It is not sufficient to make his mind strong, his muscles must also be strengthened: the mind is over-borne if it be not seconded; and it is too much for her alone to discharge two offices. I have a feeling how mine panteth, being joined to so tender and sensible a body, and that lieth so heavy upon it. And in my lecture I often perceive how my authors in their writings sometimes commend examples for magnanimity and force, that rather proceed from a thick skin and hardness of the bones. I have known men, women, and children born of so hard a constitution that a

[1] Hor. l. i., *Od.* ii. 4.

blow with a cudgel would less hurt them than a fillip would do me, and so dull and blockish that they will neither stir tongue nor eyebrows, beat them never so much. When wrestlers go about to counterfeit the philosophers' patience, they rather show the vigour of their sinews than of their heart. For the custom to bear travail is to tolerate grief: *Labor callum obducit dolori*:[1] "Labour worketh a hardness upon sorrow." He must be inured to suffer the pain and hardness of exercises, that so he may be induced to endure the pain of the colic, of cautery, of falls, of sprains, and other diseases incident to man's body: yea, if need require, patiently to bear imprisonment and other tortures, by which sufferance he shall come to be had in more esteem and account; for according to time and place the good as well as the bad man may haply fall into them; we have seen it by experience. Whosoever striveth against the laws threatens good men with mischief and extortion. Moreover, the authority of the tutor (who should be sovereign over him) is by the cockering and presence of the parents hindered and interrupted: besides the awe and respect which the household bears him, and the knowledge of the means, possibilities, and greatness of his house, are in my judgment no small lets in a young gentleman. In this school of commerce and society among men I have often noted this vice, that in lieu of taking acquaintance of others we only endeavour to make ourselves known to them; and we are more ready to utter such merchandise as we have than to engross and purchase new commodities. Silence and modesty are qualities very convenient to civil conversation. It is also necessary that a young man be rather taught to be discreetly sparing and close-handed than prodigally wasteful

[1] Cic., *Tusc. Qu.* l. ii.

and lavish in his expenses, and moderate in husbanding his wealth when he shall come to possess it. And not to take pepper in the nose for every foolish tale that shall be spoken in his presence, because it is an uncivil importunity to contradict whatsoever is not agreeing to our humour: let him be pleased to correct himself. And let him not seem to blame that in others which he refuseth to do himself, nor go about to withstand common fashions, *Licet sapere sine pompa, sine invidia:*[1] "A man may be wise without ostentation, without envy." Let him avoid those imperious images of the world, those uncivil behaviours and childish ambition wherewith, God wot, too too many are possessed; that is, to make a fair show of that which is not in him; endeavouring to be reputed other than indeed he is; and as if reprehension and new devices were hard to come by, he would by that means acquire unto himself the name of some peculiar virtue. As it pertaineth but to great poets to use the liberty of arts, so is it tolerable but in noble minds and great spirits to have a pre-eminence above ordinary fashions. *Si quid Socrates et Aristippus contra morem et consuetudinem fecerunt, idem sibi ne arbitretur licere; Magis enim illi et divinis bonis hanc licentiam assequebantur:*[2] "If Socrates and Aristippus have done aught against custom or good manner, let not a man think he may do the same; for they obtained this licence by their great and excellent good part." He shall be taught not to enter rashly into discourse or contesting, but when he shall encounter with a champion worthy his strength. And then would I not have him employ all the tricks that may fit his turn, but only such as may stand him in most stead. That he be taught to be curious in making choice of his reasons, loving pertinency, and by consequence brevity. That

[1] Sen., *Epist.* ciii. f. [2] Cic., *Off.* l. i.

above all, he be instructed to yield, yea to quit his weapons unto truth, as soon as he shall discern the same, whether it proceed from his adversary, or upon better advice from himself; for he shall not be preferred to any place of eminence above others for repeating of a prescribed part; and he is not engaged to defend any cause, further than he may approve it; nor shall he be of that trade where the liberty for a man to repent and re-advise himself is sold for ready money. *Neque, ut omnia, que præscripta et imperata sint, defendat, necessitate ulla cogitur.*[1] "Nor is he enforced by any necessity to defend and make good all that is prescribed and commanded him." If his tutor agree with my humour, he shall frame his affection to be a most loyal and true subject to his prince, and a most affectionate and courageous gentleman in all that may concern the honour of his sovereign or the good of his country, and endeavour to suppress in him all manner of affection to undertake any action otherwise than for a public good and duty. Besides many inconveniences, which greatly prejudice our liberty by reason of these particular bonds, the judgment of a man that is waged and bought, either it is less free and honest, or else it is blemished with oversight and ingratitude. A mere and precise courtier can neither have law nor will to speak or think otherwise than favourably of his master, who among so many thousands of his subjects hath made choice of him alone, to institute and bring him up with his own hand. These favours, with the commodities that follow minion courtiers, corrupt (not without some colour of reason) his liberty, and dazzle his judgment. It is therefore commonly seen that the courtier's language differs from other men's in the same state, and to be of no great credit in such matters. Let therefore his conscience and virtue

[1] Cic., *Acad. Qu.* l. iv.

shine in his speech, and reason be his chief direction. Let him be taught to confess such faults as he shall discover in his own discourses, albeit none other perceive them but himself; for it is an evident show of judgment, and effect of sincerity, which are the chiefest qualities he aimeth at. That wilfully to strive, and obstinately to contest in words, are common qualities, most apparent in basest minds; that to re-advise and correct himself, and when one is most earnest, to leave an ill opinion, are rare, noble, and philosophical conditions. Being in company, he shall be put in mind to cast his eyes round about and everywhere; for I note that the chief places are usually seized upon by the most unworthy and less capable, and that height of fortune is seldom joined with sufficiency. I have seen that whilst they at the upper end of a board were busy entertaining themselves with talking of the beauty of the hangings about a chamber, or of the taste of some good cup of wine, many good discourses at the lower end have utterly been lost. He shall weigh the carriage of every man in his calling, a herdsman, a mason, a stranger, or a traveller; all must be employed, every one according to his worth, for all helps to make up household; yea, the folly and the simplicity of others shall be as instructions to him. By controlling the graces and manners of others, he shall acquire unto himself envy of the good and contempt of the bad. Let him hardly be possessed with an honest curiosity to search out the nature and causes of all things; let him survey whatsoever is rare and singular about him; a building, a fountain, a man, a place where any battle hath been fought, or the passages of Cæsar or Charlemagne.

Quæ tellus sit lenta gelu, quæ putris ab æstu,
Ventus in Italiam quis bene vela ferat.[1]

[1] Prop. l. iv., *El.* iii. 39.

> What land is parched with heat, what clogg'd with frost.
> What wind drives kindly to th' Italian coast.

He shall endeavour to be familiarly acquainted with the customs, with the means, with the state, with the dependancies and alliances of all princes; they are things soon and pleasant to be learned, and most profitable to be known. In this acquaintance of men, my intending is that he chiefly comprehend them that live but by the memory of books. He shall, by the help of histories, inform himself of the worthiest minds that were in the best ages. It is a frivolous study, if a man list, but of invaluable worth to such as can make use of it, and as Plato saith, the only study the Lacedæmonians reserved for themselves. What profit shall he not reap, touching this point, reading the lives of our Plutarch? Always conditioned, the master bethinketh himself whereto his charge tendeth, and that he imprint not so much in his scholar's mind the date of the ruin of Carthage, as the manners of Hannibal and Scipio, nor so much where Marcellus died, as because he was unworthy of his *devoir* he died there; that he teach him not so much to know histories as to judge of them. It is amongst things that best agree with my humour, the subject to which our spirits do most diversely apply themselves. I have read in Titus Livius a number of things, which peradventure others never read, in whom Plutarch haply read a hundred more than ever I could read, and which perhaps the author himself did never intend to set down. To some kind of men it is a mere grammatical study, but to others a perfect anatomy of philosophy; by means whereof the secretest part of our nature is searched into. There are in Plutarch many ample discourses most worthy to be known; for in my judgment he is the chief work-master of such works, whereof there are a thousand, whereat he hath but

slightly glanced; for with his finger he doth but point us out a way to walk in, if we list; and is sometimes pleased to give but a touch at the quickest and main point of a discourse, from whence they are by diligent study to be drawn, and so brought into open market. As that saying of his, That the inhabitants of Asia served but one alone, because they could not pronounce one only syllable, which is Non, gave perhaps both subject and occasion to my friend Boetie to compose his book of voluntary servitude. If it were no more but to see Plutarch wrest a slight action to man's life, or a word that seemeth to bear no such sense, it will serve for a whole discourse. It is pity men of understanding should so much love brevity; without doubt their reputation is thereby better, but we the worse. Plutarch had rather we should commend him for his judgment than for his knowledge; he loveth better to leave a kind of longing desire in us of him, than a satiety. He knew very well that even in good things too much may be said; and that Alexandridas did justly reprove him who spake very good sentences to the Ephores, but they were over-tedious. "Oh, stranger," quoth he, "thou speakest what thou oughtest, otherwise then thou shouldest." Those that have lean and thin bodies stuff them up with bombasting. And such as have but poor matter will puff it up with lofty words. There is a marvellous clearness, or, as I may term it, an enlightening of man's judgment drawn from the commerce of men, and by frequenting abroad in the world; we are all so contrived and compact in ourselves, that our sight is made shorter by the length of our nose. When Socrates was demanded whence he was, he answered, not of Athens, but of the world; for he, who had his imagination more full and further stretching, embraced all the world for his native city, and extended his acquaintance,

his society, and affections to all mankind; and not as we do, that look no further than our feet. If the frost chance to nip the vines about my village, my priest doth presently argue that the wrath of God hangs over our head, and threateneth all mankind; and judgeth that the pip is already fallen upon the cannibals.

In viewing these intestine and civil broils of ours, who doth not exclaim that this world's vast frame is near unto a dissolution, and that the day of judgment is ready to fall on us? never remembering that many worse revolutions have been seen, and that whilst we are plunged in grief, and overwhelmed in sorrow, a thousand other parts of the world besides are blessed with happiness, and wallow in pleasures, and never think on us; whereas, when I behold our lives, our licence, and impunity, I wonder to see them so mild and easy. He on whose head it haileth, thinks all the hemisphere besides to be in a storm and tempest. And as that dull-pated Savoyard said, that if the silly king of France could cunningly have managed his fortune, he might very well have made himself chief steward of his lord's household, whose imagination conceived no other greatness than his master's; we are all insensible of this kind of error, an error of great consequence and prejudice. But whosoever shall present unto his inward eyes, as it were in a table, the idea of the great image of our universal mother nature, attired in her richest robes, sitting in the throne of her majesty, and in her visage shall read so general and so constant a variety; he that therein shall view himself, not himself alone, but a whole kingdom, to be in respect of a great circle but the smallest point that can be imagined, he only can value things according to their essential greatness and proportion. This great universe (which some multiply as species under one genus) is the true looking-glass wherein

we must look, if we will know whether we be of a good stamp or in the right bias. To conclude, I would have this world's frame to be my scholar's choice book. So many strange humours, sundry sects, varying judgments, divers opinions, different laws, and fantastical customs teach us to judge rightly of ours, and instruct our judgment to acknowledge his imperfections and natural weakness, which is no easy an apprenticeship. So many innovations of estates, so many falls of princes, and changes of public fortune, may and ought to teach us not to make so great account of ours. So many names, so many victories, and so many conquests buried in dark oblivion, makes the hope to perpetuate our names but ridiculous, by the surprising of ten Argo-letters, or of a small cottage, which is known but by his fall. The pride and fierceness of so many strange and gorgeous shows; the pride-puffed majesty of so many courts, and of their greatness, ought to confirm and assure our sight, undauntedly to bear the affronts and thunder-claps of ours, without feeling our eyes. So many thousands of men, low-laid in their graves before us, may encourage us not to fear, or be dismayed to go meet so good company in the other world; and so of all things else. Our life (said Pythagoras) draws near unto the great and populous assemblies of the Olympic games, wherein some, to get the glory and to win the goal of the games, exercise their bodies with all industry; others, for greediness of gain, bring thither merchandise to sell; others there are (and those be not the worst) that seek after no other good, but to mark how, wherefore, and to what end, all things are done; and to be spectators or observers of other men's lives and actions, that so they may the better judge and direct their own. Unto examples may all the most profitable discourses of philosophy be sorted, which ought to be the touchstone of

human actions, and a rule to square them by, to whom may be said,

> ——*quid fas optare, quid asper*
> *Utile nummus habet, patriæ charisque propinquis*
> *Quantum elargiri deceat, quem te Deus esse*
> *Iussit, et humana qua parte locatus es in re.*[1]
> *Quid sumus, aut quidnam victuri gignimur.*[2]
>
> What thou may'st wish, what profit may come clear,
> From new-stamped coin, to friends and country dear
> What thou ought'st give: whom God would have thee be,
> And in what part amongst men he placed thee,
> What we are, and wherefore,
> To live here we were born.

What it is to know, and not to know (which ought to be the scope of study), what valour, what temperance, and what justice is: what difference there is between ambition and avarice, bondage and freedom, subjection and liberty, by which marks a man may distinguish true and perfect contentment, and how far forth one ought to fear or apprehend death, grief, or shame.

> *Et quo quemque modo fugiátque ferátque laborem.*[3]
>
> How ev'ry labour he may ply,
> And bear, or ev'ry labour fly.

What wards or springs move us, and the causes of so many motions in us. For meseemeth that the first discourses wherewith his conceit should be sprinkled, ought to be those that rule his manners and direct his sense; which will both teach him to know himself, and how to live and how to die well. Among the liberal sciences, let us begin with that which makes us free. Indeed, they may all, in some sort stead us, as an instruction to our life, and use of it, as all other things else serve the same to

[1] Pers., *Sat.* iii. 69. [2] *Ibid.* 67. [3] Virg., *Æn.* l. iii. 853.

some purpose or other. But let us make especial choice of that which may directly and pertinently serve the same. If we could restrain and adapt the appurtenances of our life to their right bias and natural limits, we should find the best part of the sciences that now are in use, clean out of fashion with us; yea, and in those that are most in use, there are certain by-ways and deep-flows most profitable, which we should do well to leave, and according to the institution of Socrates, limit the course of our studies in those where profit is wanting.

> ——*sapere aude,*
> *Incipe: vivendi qui rectè prorogat horam,*
> *Rusticus expectat dum defluat amnis, at ille,*
> *Labitur, et labetur in omne volubilis ævum.*[1]
>
> Be bold to be wise: to begin, be strong,
> He that to live well doth the time prolong,
> Clown-like expects, till down the stream be run,
> That runs, and will run, till the world be done.

It is mere simplicity to teach our children,

> *Quid moveant Pisces, animosaque signa Leonis,*
> *Lotus et Hesperia quid Capricornus aqua.*[2]
>
> What Pisces move, or hot breath'd Leos beams,
> Or Capricornus bath'd in western streams,

the knowledge of the stars, and the motion of the eighth sphere, before their own;

> Τί Πλειάδεσσι κἀμοί τί δ' ἀστράσι βοώτεω.[3]
>
> What longs it to the seven stars, and me,
> Or those about Boötes be.

Anaximenes, writing to Pythagoras, saith, "With what sense can I amuse myself in the secrets of the stars, having

[1] Hor. l. i., *Epist.* ii. 40. [2] Prop. l. iv., *El.* i. 85.
[3] Anacr., *Od.* xvii. 10, 11.

continually death or bondage before mine eyes?" For at that time the kings of Persia were making preparations to war against his country. All men ought to say so. Being beaten with ambition, with avarice, with rashness, and with superstition, and having such other enemies unto life within him. Wherefore shall I study and take care about the mobility and variation of the world? When he is once taught what is fit to make him better and wiser, he shall be entertained with logic, natural philosophy, geometry, and rhetoric, then having settled his judgment, look what science he doth most addict himself unto, he shall in short time attain to the perfection of it. His lecture shall be sometimes by way of talk and sometimes by book; his tutor may now and then supply him with the same author, as an end and motive of his institution; sometimes giving him the pith and substance of it ready chewed. And if of himself he be not so thoroughly acquainted with books, that he may readily find so many notable discourses as are in them to effect his purpose, it shall not be amiss that some learned man be appointed to keep him company, who at any time of need may furnish him with such munition as he shall stand in need of; that he may afterward distribute and dispense them to his best use. And that this kind of lesson be more easy and natural than that of Gaza, who will make question? Those are but harsh, thorny, and unpleasant precepts; vain, idle, and immaterial words, on which small hold may be taken; wherein is nothing to quicken the mind. In this the spirit findeth substance to bide and feed upon. A fruit without all comparison much better, and that will soon be ripe. It is a thing worthy consideration, to see what state things are brought unto in this our age; and how philosophy, even to the wisest, and men of best understanding, is but an idle, vain, and fantastical

name, of small use and less worth, both in opinion and effect. I think these sophistries are the cause of it, which have forestalled the ways to come unto it. They do very ill that go about to make it seem as it were inaccessible for children to come unto, setting it forth with a wrinkled, ghastly, and frowning visage; who hath masked her with so counterfeit, pale, and hideous a countenance? There is nothing more beauteous, nothing more delightful, nothing more gamesome; and as I may say, nothing more fondly wanton: for she presenteth nothing to our eyes, and preacheth nothing to our ears, but sport and pastime. A sad and lowering look plainly declareth that that is not her haunt. Demetrius the grammarian, finding a company of philosophers sitting close together in the temple of Delphos, said unto them, "Either I am deceived, or by your plausible and pleasant looks, you are not in any serious and earnest discourse amongst yourselves;" to whom one of them, named Heracleon the Megarian, answered, "That belongeth to them who busy themselves in seeking whether the future tense of the verb *βάλλω* hath a double λ, or that labour to find the derivation of the comparatives, *χειρον*, *βελτιον*, and of the superlatives *χείριστον*, *βέλτιστον*, it is they that must chafe in entertaining themselves with their science: as for discourses of philosophy they are wont to glad, rejoice, and not to vex and molest those that use them.

Deprendas animi tormenta latentis in ægro
Corpore, deprendas et gaudia; sumit utrumque
Inde habitum facies.[1]

You may perceive the torments of the mind,
Hid in sick body, you the joys may find;
The face such habit takes in either kind.

[1] Juven., *Sat.* ix. 18.

That mind which harboureth philosophy ought by reason of her sound health make that body also sound and healthy; it ought to make her contentment to through-shine in all exterior parts; it ought to shapen and model all outward demeanours to the model of it; and by consequence arm him that doth possess it with a gracious stoutness and lively audacity, with an active and pleasing gesture, and with a settled and cheerful countenance. The most evident token and apparent sign of true wisdom is a constant and unconstrained rejoicing, whose estate is like unto all things above the moon, that is ever clear, always bright. It is Baroco and Baralipton that makes their followers prove so base and idle, and not philosophy; they know her not but by hearsay: what? Is it not she that cleareth all storms of the mind? And teacheth misery, famine, and sickness to laugh? Not by reason of some imaginary Epicycles, but by natural and palpable reasons. She aimeth at nothing but virtue; it is virtue she seeks after; which, as the school saith, is not pitched on the top of an high, steepy, or inaccessible hill; for they that have come unto her affirm that clean contrary she keeps her stand, and holds her mansion in a fair, flourishing, and pleasant plain, whence, as from an high watch tower, she surveyeth all things, to be subject unto her, to whom any man may with great facility come, if he but know the way or entrance to her palace; for the paths that lead unto her are certain fresh and shady green allies, sweet and flowery ways, whose ascent is even, easy, and nothing wearisome, like unto that of heaven's vaults. Forsomuch as they have not frequented this virtue, who gloriously, as in a throne of majesty sits sovereign, goodly, triumphant, lovely, equally delicious and courageous, protesting herself to be a professed and irreconcilable enemy to all sharpness, austerity, fear, and compulsion;

having nature for her guide, fortune and voluptuousness for her companions; they according to their weakness have imaginarily fained her to have a foolish, sad, grim, quarrelous, spiteful, threatening, and disdainful visage, with an horrid and unpleasant look; and have placed her upon a craggy, sharp, and unfrequented rock, amidst desert cliffs and uncouth crags, as a scare-crow, or bugbear, to affright the common people with. Now the tutor, which ought to know that he should rather seek to fill the mind and store the will of his disciple, as much, or rather more, with love and affection, than with awe, and reverence unto virtue, may show and tell him that poets follow common humours, making him plainly to perceive, and as it were palpably to feel, that the gods have rather placed labour and sweat at the entrances which lead to Venus' chambers, than at the doors that direct to Pallas' cabinets.

And when he shall perceive his scholar to have a sensible feeling of himself, presenting Bradamant or Angelica before him, as a mistress to enjoy, embellished with a natural, active, generous, and unspotted beauty not ugly or giant-like, but blithe and lively, in respect of a wanton, soft, affected, and artificial flaring beauty; the one attired like unto a young man, coifed with a bright shining helmet, the other disguised and dressed about the head like unto an impudent harlot, with embroideries, frizzlings, and carcanets of pearls: he will no doubt deem his own love to be a man and no woman, if in his choice he differ from that effeminate shepherd of Phrygia. In this new kind of lesson he shall declare unto him that the prize, the glory, and height of true virtue consisted in the facility, profit, and pleasure of his exercises; so far from difficulty and incumbrances, that children as well as men, the simple as soon as the wise, may come unto her. Discretion and temperance, not force or

waywardness, are the instruments to bring him unto her. Socrates (virtue's chief favourite), that he might the better walk in the pleasant, natural, and open path of her progresses, doth voluntarily and in good earnest quit all compulsion. She is the nurse and foster-mother of all human pleasures, who in making them just and upright, she also makes them sure and sincere. By moderating them, she keepeth them in ure and breath. In limiting and cutting them off whom she refuseth, she whets us on toward those she leaveth unto us; and plenteously leaves us them which Nature pleaseth, and like a kind mother giveth us over unto satiety, if not unto wearisomeness, unless we will peradventure say that the rule and bridle which stayeth the drunkard before drunkenness, the glutton before surfeiting, and the letcher before the losing of his hair, be the enemies of our pleasures. If common fortune fail her, it clearly scapes her; or she cares not for her, or she frames another unto herself, altogether her own, not so fleeting nor so rowling. She knoweth the way how to be rich, mighty, and wise, and how to lie in sweet-perfumed beds. She loveth life; she delights in beauty, in glory, and in health. But her proper and particular office is, first to know how to use such goods temperately, and how to lose them constantly. An office much more noble than severe, without which all course of life is unnatural, turbulent, and deformed, to which one may lawfully join those rocks, those incumbrances, and hideous monsters. If so it happen that his disciple prove of so different a condition, that he rather love to give ear to an idle fable than to the report of some noble voyage, or other notable and wise discourse, when he shall hear it; that at the sound of a drum or clang of a trumpet, which are wont to rouse and arm the youthly heat of his companions, turneth to another that calleth him to see a

play, tumbling, juggling tricks, or other idle lose-time sports; and who for pleasure's sake doth not deem it more delightsome to return all sweaty and weary from a victorious combat, from wrestling, or riding of a horse, than from a tennis-court or dancing-school, with the prize or honour of such exercises. The best remedy I know for such a one is, to put him prentice to some base occupation, in some good town or other, yea, were he the son of a duke; according to Plato's rule, who saith, "That children must be placed, not according to their father's conditions, but the faculties of their mind." Since it is philosophy that teacheth us to live, and that infancy, as well as other ages, may plainly read her lessons in the same, why should it not be imparted unto young scholars?

> *Udum et molle lutum est, nunc nunc properandus, et acri*
> *Fingendus sine fine rota.*[1]
>
> He's moist and soft mould, and must by-and-by
> Be cast, made up, while wheel whirls readily.

We are taught to live when our life is well-nigh spent. Many scholars have been infected with that loathsome and marrow-wasting disease before ever they came to read Aristotle's treatise of Temperance. Cicero was wont to say, "That could he out-live the lives of two men, he should never find leisure to study the lyric poets." And I find these sophisters both worse and more unprofitable. Our child is engaged in greater matters, and but the first fifteen or sixteen years of his life are due unto pedantism, the rest unto action; let us therefore employ so short time as we have to live in more necessary instructions. It is an abuse; remove these thorny quiddities of logic, whereby our life can no whit be amended, and betake ourselves to the simple discourses of philosophy; know how to choose and fitly to

[1] Pers., *Sat.* iii. 23.

make use of them: they are much more easy to be conceived than one of Boccaccio's tales. A child coming from nurse is more capable of them than he is to learn to read or write. Philosophy hath discourses, whereof infancy as well as decaying old age may make good use. I am of Plutarch's mind, which is, that Aristotle did not so much amuse his great disciple about the arts how to frame syllogisms, or the principles of geometry, as he endeavoured to instruct him with good precepts concerning valour, prowess, magnanimity, and temperance, and an undaunted assurance not to fear anything; and with such munition he sent him, being yet very young, to subdue the empire of the world, only with 30,000 footmen, 4000 horsemen, and 42,000 crowns in money. As for other arts and sciences, he saith Alexander honoured them, and commended their excellency and comeliness; but for any pleasure he took in them, his affection could not easily be drawn to exercise them.

——petite hinc juvenesque senesque
Finem animo certum, miserisque viatica canis.[1]

Young men and old, draw hence (in your affairs)
Your minds' set mark, provision for grey hairs.

It is that which Epicurus said in the beginning of his letter to Memiceus: "Neither let the youngest shun nor the oldest weary himself in philosophising, for who doth otherwise seemeth to say, that either the season to live happily is not yet come, or is already past." Yet would I not have this young gentleman pent up, nor carelessly cast off to the heedless choler, or melancholy humour of the hasty schoolmaster. I would not have his budding spirit corrupted with keeping him fast tied, and as it were labouring fourteen or fifteen hours a day poring on his

[1] Pers., *Sat.* v. 64.

book, as some do, as if he were a day-labouring man; neither do I think it fit if at any time, by reason of some solitary or melancholy complexion, he should be seen with an over-indiscreet application given to his book, it should be cherished in him, for that doth often make him both inapt for civil conversation and distracts him from better employments. How many have I seen in my days, by an over-greedy desire of knowledge, become as it were foolish? Carneades was so deeply plunged and, as I may say, besotted in it, that he could never have leisure to cut his hair or pare his nails; nor would I have his noble manners obscured by the incivility and barbarism of others. The French wisdom hath long since proverbially been spoken of as very apt to conceive study in her youth, but most inapt to keep it long. In good truth, we see at this day that there is nothing lovelier to behold than the young children of France; but for the most part they deceive the hope which was fore-apprehended of them; for when they once become men there is no excellency at all in them. I have heard men of understanding hold this opinion, that the colleges to which they are sent (of which there are store) do thus besot them; whereas to our scholar, a cabinet, a garden, the table, the bed, a solitariness, a company, morning and evening, and all hours shall be alike unto him, all places shall be a study for him; for philosophy (as a former of judgments and modeller of customs) shall be his principal lesson, having the privilege to intermeddle herself with all things and in all places. Isocrates the orator, being once requested at a great banquet to speak of his art, when all thought he had reason to answer, said, "It is not now time to do what I can, and what should now be done I cannot do it; for to present orations, or to enter into disputation of rhetoric, before a company assembled together

to be merry, and make good cheer, would be but a medley of harsh and jarring music." The like may be said of all other sciences. But touching philosophy—namely, in that point where it treateth of man, and of his duties and offices —it hath been the common judgment of the wisest that in regard of the pleasantness of her conversation she ought not to be rejected, neither at banquets nor at sports. And Plato having invited her to his solemn feast, we see how kindly she entertaineth the company with a mild behaviour, fitly suiting herself to time and place, notwithstanding it be one of his most learned and profitable discourses.

> *Æquè pauperibus prodest, locupletibus æquè,*
> *Et neglecta æquè pueris senibusque nocebit.*[1]
>
> Poor men alike, alike rich men it easeth,
> Alike it, scorned, old and young displeaseth.

So doubtless he shall less be idle than others; for even as the paces we bestow walking in a gallery, although they be twice as many more, weary us not so much as those we spend in going a set journey; so our lesson being passed over, as it were, by chance, or way of encounter, without strict observance of time or place, being applied to all our actions, shall be digested and never felt. All sports and exercises shall be a part of his study; running, wrestling, music, dancing, hunting, and managing of arms and horses. I would have the exterior demeanour or decency and the disposition of his person to be fashioned together with his mind; for it is not a mind, it is not a body that we erect, but it is a man, and we must not make two parts of him. And, as Plato saith, they must not be erected one without another, but equally be directed, no otherwise than a couple of horses matched to draw in one self-same team.

[1] Hor. l. i., *Epist.* cxxv.

And to hear him, doth he not seem to employ more time and care in the exercises of his body; and to think that the mind is together with the same exercised, and not the contrary? As for other matters, this institution ought to be directed by a sweet-severe mildness. Not as some do, who in lieu of gently bidding children to the banquet of letters, present them with nothing but horror and cruelty. Let me have this violence and compulsion removed, there is nothing that, in my seeming, doth more bastardise and dizzy a well-born and gentle nature. If you would have him stand in awe of shame and punishment, do not so much inure him to it; accustom him patiently to endure sweat and cold, the sharpness of the wind, the heat of the sun, and how to despise all hazards. Remove from him all niceness and quaintness in clothing, in lying, in eating, and in drinking; fashion him to all things, that he prove not a fair and wanton, puling boy, but a lusty and vigorous boy. When I was a child, being a man, and now am old, I have ever judged and believed the same. But amongst other things I could never away with this kind of discipline used in most of our colleges. It had peradventure been less hurtful if they had somewhat inclined to mildness or gentle entreaty. It is a very prison of captivated youth, and proves dissolute in punishing it before it be so. Come upon them when they are going to their lesson, and you hear nothing but whipping and brawling, both of children tormented and masters besotted with anger and chafing. How wide are they which go about to allure a child's mind to go to its book, being yet but tender and fearful, with a stern, frowning countenance, and with hands full of rods! Oh, wicked and pernicious manner of teaching! which Quintilian hath very well noted, that this imperious kind of authority—namely, this way of punishing of children—draws

many dangerous inconveniences within. How much more decent were it to see their school-houses and forms strewed with green boughs and flowers, than with bloody birchen twigs! If it lay in me I would do as the philosopher Speusippus did, who caused the pictures of Gladness and Joy, of Flora and of the Graces, to be set up round about his school-house. Where their profit lieth, there should also be their recreation. Those meats ought to be sugared over that are healthful for children's stomachs, and those made bitter that are hurtful for them. It is strange to see how careful Plato showeth himself in framing of his laws about the recreation and pastime of the youth of his city, and how far he extends himself about their exercises, sports, songs, leaping, and dancing, whereof he saith that severe antiquity gave the conduct and patronage unto the gods themselves—namely, to Apollo, to the Muses, and to Minerva. Mark but how far forth he endeavoureth to give a thousand precepts to be kept in his places of exercises both of body and mind. As for learned sciences, he stands not much upon them, and seemeth in particular to commend poesy but for music's sake. All strangeness and self-particularity in our manners and conditions is to be shunned as an enemy to society and civil conversation. Who would not be astonished at Demophon's complexion, chief steward of Alexander's household, who was wont to sweat in the shadow, and quiver for cold in the sun? I have seen some to startle at the smell of an apple more than at the shot of a piece; some to be frighted with a mouse, some ready to cast their gorge at the sight of a mess of cream, and others to be scared with seeing a feather bed shaken; as Germanicus, who could not abide to see a cock, or hear his crowing. There may haply be some hidden property of nature which in my judgment might easily be

removed, if it were taken in time. Institution hath gotten this upon me (I must confess with much ado), for, except beer, all things else that are man's food agree indifferently with my taste. The body being yet supple, ought to be accommodated to all fashions and customs; and (always provided his appetites and desires be kept under) let a young man boldly be made fit for all nations and companies, yea, if need be, for all disorders and surfeitings; let him acquaint himself with all fashions, that he may be able to do all things, and love to do none but those that are commendable. Some strict philosophers commend not, but rather blame Calisthenes for losing the good favour of his master Alexander, only because he would not pledge him as much as he had drunk to him. He shall laugh, jest, dally, and debauch himself with his prince. And in his debauching I would have him out-go all his fellows in vigour and constancy, and that he omit not to do evil, neither for want of strength or knowledge, but for lack of will. *Multum interest utrum peccare quis nolit, aut nesciat*:[1] "There is a great difference, whether one have no will or no wit to do amiss." I thought to have honoured a gentleman (as great a stranger, and as far from such riotous disorders as any is in France) by inquiring of him in very good company how many times in all his life he had been drunk in Germany during the time of his abode there, about the necessary affairs of our king; who took it even as I meant it, and answered three times, telling the time and manner how. I know some who for want of that quality have been much perplexed when they have had occasion to converse with that nation. I have often noted with great admiration that wonderful nature of Alcibiades, to see how easily he could suit himself to so divers

[1] Hor., *Epist.* xvii. 23.

fashions and different humours, without prejudice unto his health; sometimes exceeding the sumptuousness and pomp of the Persians, and now and then surpassing the austerity and frugality of the Lacedæmonians; as reformed in Sparta, as voluptuous in Ionia.

> *Omnis Aristippum decuit color, et status, et res.*[1]
>
> All colours, states, and things are fit
> For courtly Aristippus' wit.

Such a one would I frame my disciple,

> ——*quem duplici panno patientia velat,*
> *Mirabor, vitæ via si conversa decebit.*
>
> Whom patience clothes with suits of double kind,
> I muse, if he another way will find.
>
> *Personamque feret non inconcinnus utramque.*[2]
>
> He not unfitly may
> Both parts and persons play.

Lo, here my lessons, wherein he that acteth them, profiteth more than he that but knoweth them, whom if you see, you hear, and if you hear him you see him. God forbid, saith somebody in Plato, that to philosophise be to learn many things, and to exercise the arts. *Hanc amplissimam omnium artium bene vivendi disciplinam, vita magis quam litteris persequnti sunt.*[3] "This discipline of living well, which is the amplest of all other arts, they followed rather in their lives than in their learning or writing." Leo, Prince of the Phliasians, inquiring of Heraclides Ponticus what art he professed, he answered, "Sir, I profess neither art nor science; but I am a philosopher." Some reproved Diogenes, that being an ignorant man, he did nevertheless meddle with philosophy, to whom he replied, "So much

[1] Hor., *Epist.* xvii. 25. [2] *Ib.* 29. [3] Cic., *Tusc. Qu.* l. iv.

the more reason have I, and to greater purpose do I meddle with it." Hegesias prayed him upon a time to read some book unto him: "You are a merry man," said he; "as you choose natural and not painted right and not counterfeit figs to eat, why do you not likewise choose, not the painted and written, but the true and natural exercises?" He shall not so much repeat as act his lesson. In his actions shall he make repetition of the same. We must observe whether there be wisdom in his enterprises, integrity in his demeanour, modesty in his gestures, justice in his actions, judgment and grace in his speech, courage in his sickness, moderation in his sports, temperance in his pleasures, order in the government of his house, and indifference in his taste, whether it be flesh, fish, wine, or water, or whatsoever he feedeth upon. *Qui disciplinam suam non ostentationem scientiæ sed legem vitæ putet: quique obtemperet ipse sibi, et decretis pareat.*[1] "Who thinks his learning not an ostentation of knowledge, but a law of life, and himself obeys himself, and doth what is decreed."

The true mirror of our discourses is the course of our lives. Zeuxidamus answered one that demanded of him why the Lacedæmonians did not draw into a book the ordinances of prowess, that so their young men might read them. "It is," saith he, "because they would rather accustom them to deeds and actions than to books and writings." Compare at the end of fifteen or sixteen years one of these collegial Latinisers, who hath employed all that while only in learning how to speak, to such a one as I mean. The world is nothing but babbling and words, and I never saw man that doth not rather speak more than he ought than less. Notwithstanding half our age is consumed that way. We are kept four or five years learning to under-

[1] Cic., *Tusc. Qu.* l. ii.

stand bare words, and to join them into clauses, then as long in proportioning a great body extended into four or five parts; and five more at least ere we can succinctly know how to mingle, join, and interlace them handsomely into a subtle fashion and into one coherent orb. Let us leave it to those whose profession is to do nothing else. Being once on my journey to Orleans, it was my chance to meet upon that plain that lieth on this side Clery with two Masters of Arts, travelling toward Bordeaux, about fifty paces one from another; far off behind them, I descried a troop of horsemen, their master riding foremost, who was the Earl of Rochefoucauld; one of my servants inquiring of the first of those Masters of Arts what gentleman he was that followed him; supposing my servant had meant his fellow-scholar, for he had not yet seen the earl's train, answered pleasantly, "He is no gentleman, sir, but a grammarian, and I am a logician." Now, we that contrariwise seek not to frame a grammarian, nor a logician, but a complete gentleman, let us give them leave to misspend their time; we have elsewhere, and somewhat else of more import to do. So that our disciple be well and sufficiently stored with matter, words will follow apace, and if they will not follow gently, he shall hail them on perforce. I hear some excuse themselves that they cannot express their meaning, and make a semblance that their heads are so full stuffed with many goodly things, but for want of eloquence they can neither utter nor make show of them. It is a mere foppery. And will you know what, in my seeming, the cause is? They are shadows and chimeras, proceeding of some formless conceptions, which they cannot distinguish or resolve within, and by consequence are not able to produce them inasmuch as they understand not themselves; and if you but mark their earnestness, and how

they stammer and labour at the point of their delivery, you would deem that what they go withal is but a conceiving, and therefore nothing near down-lying; and that they do but lick that imperfect and shapeless lump of matter. As for me, I am of opinion, and Socrates would have it so, that he who had a clear and lively imagination in his mind may easily produce and utter the same, although it be in Bergamasc or Welsh, and if he be dumb, by signs and tokens.

Verbaque prævisam rem non invita sequentur.[1]
When matter we foreknow,
Words voluntary flow.

As one said, as poetically in his prose, *Cum res animum occupavere, verba ambiunt;*[2] "When matter hath possessed their minds, they hunt after words;" and another: *Ipsæ res verba rapiunt:*[3] "Things themselves will catch and carry words." He knows neither ablative, conjunctive, substantive, nor grammar, no more doth his lackey, nor any oyster-wife about the streets, and yet if you have a mind to it he will entertain you your fill, and peradventure stumble as little and as seldom against the rules of his tongue, as the best Master of Arts in France. He hath no skill in rhetoric, nor can he with a preface forestall and captivate the gentle reader's goodwill; nor careth he greatly to know it. In good sooth, all this garish painting is easily defaced, by the lustre of an in-bred and simple truth; for these dainties and quaint devices serve but to amuse the vulgar sort, unapt and incapable to taste the most solid and firm meat; as Afer very plainly declareth in Cornelius Tacitus. The ambassadors of Samos being come to Cleomenes, King of Sparta, prepared with a long prolix oration to stir him up

[1] Hor., *Art. Poet.* 311. [2] Sen., *Controv.* l. vii. præ.
[3] Cic., *De Fin.* l. iii. c. 5.

to war against the tyrant Policrates, after he had listened a good while unto them, his answer was: "Touching your exordium or beginning I have forgotten it; the middle I remember not; and for your conclusion I will do nothing in it." A fit, and (to my thinking) a very good answer; and the orators were put to such a shift, as they knew not what to reply. And what said another? The Athenians, from out two of their cunning architects, were to choose one to erect a notable great frame; the one of them more affected and self-presuming, presented himself before them, with a smooth fore-premeditated discourse about the subject of that piece of work, and thereby drew the judgments of the common people unto his liking; but the other in few words spake thus: "Lords of Athens, what this man hath said I will perform." In the greatest earnestness of Cicero's eloquence many were drawn into a kind of admiration; but Cato jesting at it, said, "Have we not a pleasant consul?" A quick, cunning argument, and a witty saying, whether it go before or come after, it is never out of season. If it have no coherence with that which goeth before, nor with what cometh after, it is good and commendable in itself. I am none of those that think a good rhyme to make a good poem; let him hardly (if so he please) make a short syllable long, it is no great matter; if the invention be rare and good, and his wit and judgment have cunningly played their part. I will say to such a one, he is a good poet, but an ill versifier.

Emunctæ naris, durus componere versus.[1]

A man whose sense could finely pierce,
But harsh and hard to make a verse.

[1] Hor, l. i., *Sat.* iv. 8.

Let a man (saith Horace) make his work lose all seams, measures, and joints.

> *Tempora certa modòsque, et quod prius, ordine verbum est.*[1]
> *Posterius facias, præponens ultima primis:*
> *Invenias etiam disjecti membra Poetæ.*[2]
>
> Set times and moods, make you the first word last,
> The last word first, as if they were new cast:
> Yet find th' unjointed poet's joints stand fast.

He shall for all that nothing gainsay himself, every piece will make a good show. To this purpose answered Menander those that chid him, the day being at hand in which he had promised a comedy, and had not begun the same, "Tut-tut," said he, "it is already finished; there wanteth nothing but to add the verse unto it;" for, having ranged and cast the plot in his mind, he made small account of feet, of measures, or cadences of verses, which indeed are but of small import in regard of the rest. Since great Ronsard and learned Bellay have raised our French poesy unto that height of honour where it now is, I see not one of these petty ballad-makers, or prentice doggerel rhymers, that doth not bombast his labours with high-swelling and heaven-disembowelling words, and that doth not marshal his cadences very near as they do. *Plus sonat quam valet:*[3] "The sound is more than the weight or worth." And for the vulgar sort, there were never so many poets, and so few good; but as it hath been easy for them to represent their rhymes, so come they far short in imitating the rich descriptions of the one, and rare inventions of the other. But what shall he do, if he be urged with sophistical subtilties about a syllogism? A gammon of bacon makes a man drink, drinking quencheth a man's thirst; ergo, a

[1] Hor. l. i., *Sat.* iv. 58. [2] *Ibid.* 62. [3] Sen., *Epist.* xl.

gammon of bacon quencheth a man's thirst. Let him mock at it, it is more witty to be mocked at than to be answered. Let him borrow this pleasant counter-craft of Aristippus: "Why shall I unbind that, which being bound, doth so much trouble me?" Some one proposed certain logical quiddities against Cleanthes, to whom Chrisippus said: Use such juggling tricks to play with children, and divert not the serious thoughts of an aged man to such idle matters. If such foolish wiles, *Contorta et aculeata sophismata*,[1] "Intricate and stinged sophisms," must persuade a lie, it is dangerous; but if they prove void of any effect, and move him but to laughter, I see not why he shall beware of them. Some there are so foolish that will go a quarter of a mile out of the way to hunt after a quaint new word, if they once get in chase: *Aut qui non verba rebus aptant, sed res extrinsecus arcessunt, quibus verba conveniant:* "Or such as fit not words to matter, but fetch matter from abroad, whereto words be fitted." And another, *Qui alicujus verbi decore placentis, vocentur ad id quod non proposuerant scribere:*[2] "Who are allured by the grace of some pleasing word, to write what they intended not to write." I do more willingly wind up a witty notable sentence, that so I may sew it upon me, than unwind my thread to go fetch it. Contrariwise, it is for words to serve and wait upon the matter, and not for matter to attend upon words, and if the French tongue cannot reach unto it, let the Gascony, or any other. I would have the matters to surmount, and so fill the imagination of him that hearkeneth, that he have no remembrance at all of the words. It is a natural, simple, and unaffected speech that I love, so written as it is spoken, and such upon the paper as it is in the mouth, a pithy, sinewy, full, strong,

[1] Cic., *Acad. Qu.* l. iv. [2] Sen., *Epist.* liii.

compendious and material speech, not so delicate and affected as vehement and piercing.

> *Hæc demum sapiet dictio quæ feriet.*[1]
>
> In fine, that word is wisely fit
> Which strikes the fence, the mark doth hit.

Rather difficult than tedious, void of affection, free, loose, and bold, that every member of it seems to make a body; not pedantical, nor friar-like, nor lawyer-like, but rather downright, soldier-like. As Suetonius calleth that of Julius Cæsar, which I see no reason wherefore he calleth it. I have sometimes pleased myself in imitating that licentiousness or wanton humour of our youths, in wearing of their garments; as carelessly to let their cloaks hang down over one shoulder; to wear their cloaks scarf or bawdrikwise, and their stockings loose hanging about their legs. It represents a kind of disdainful fierceness of these foreign embellishings, and neglect carelessness of art. But I commend it more being employed in the course and form of speech. All manner of affectation, namely, in the liveliness and liberty of France, is unseemly in a courtier. And in a monarchy every gentleman ought to address himself unto a courtier's carriage. Therefore do we well somewhat to incline to a native and careless behaviour. I like not a contexture where the seams and pieces may be seen. As in a well compact body, what need a man distinguish and number all the bones and veins severally? *Quæ veritati operam dat oratio, incomposita sit et simplex.*[2] *Quis accurate loquitur nisi qui vult putide loqui?*[3] "The speech that intendeth truth must be plain and unpolished: who speaketh elaborately but he that means to speak unfavourably?" That eloquence offereth injury unto

[1] *Epitaph on Lucan*, 6. [2] Sen., *Epist.* xl. [3] *Ib.*, *Epist.* lxxv.

things which altogether draws us to observe it. As in apparel it is a sign of pusillanimity for one to mark himself in some particular and unusual fashion, so likewise in common speech, for one to hunt after new phrases and unaccustomed quaint words, proceedeth from a scholastical and childish ambition. Let me use none other than are spoken in the halls of Paris. Aristophanes the grammarian was somewhat out of the way when he reproved Epicurus for the simplicity of his words, and the end of his art oratory which was only perspicuity in speech. The imitation of speech, by reason of the facility of it, followeth presently a whole nation. The imitation of judging and inventing comes more slow. The greater number of readers, because they have found one self-same kind of gown, suppose most falsely to hold one like body. Outward garments and cloaks may be borrowed, but never the sinews and strength of the body. Most of those that converse with me speak like unto these essays; but I know not whether they think alike. The Athenians (as Plato averreth) have for their part great care to be fluent and eloquent in their speech; the Lacedæmonians endeavour to be short and compendious; and those of Crete labour more to be plentiful in conceits than in language. And these are the best. Zeno was wont to say that he had two sorts of disciples: the one he called φιλολὸγους, curious to learn things, and those were his darlings; the other he termed λογοφίλους, who respected nothing more than the language. Yet can no man say but that to speak well is most gracious and commendable, but not so excellent as some make it; and I am grieved to see how we employ most part of our time about that only. I would first know mine own tongue perfectly, then my neighbours with whom I have most commerce. I must needs

acknowledge that the Greek and Latin tongues are great ornaments in a gentleman, but they are purchased at over-high a rate. Use it who list, I will tell you how they may be gotten better, cheaper, and much sooner than is ordinarily used, which was tried in myself. My late father, having, by all the means and industry that is possible for a man, sought amongst the wisest and men of best understanding to find a most exquisite and ready way of teaching, being advised of the inconveniences then in use, was given to understand that the lingering while and best part of our youth that we employ in learning the tongues, which cost them nothing, is the only cause we can never attain to that absolute perfection of skill and knowledge of the Greeks and Romans. I do not believe that to be the only cause. But so it is, the expedient my father found out was this: that being yet at nurse, and before the first loosing of my tongue, I was delivered to a German, who died since (a most excellent physician in France), he being then altogether ignorant of the French tongue, but exquisitely ready and skilful in the Latin. This man, whom my father had sent for the purpose, and to whom he gave very great entertainment, had me continually in his arms, and was mine only overseer. There were also joined unto him two of his countrymen, but not so learned; whose charge was to attend, and now and then to play with me; and all these together did never entertain me with other than the Latin tongue. As for others of his household, it was an inviolable rule that neither himself, nor my mother, nor man, nor maid-servant, were suffered to speak one word in my company, except such Latin words as every one had learned to chat and prattle with me. It were strange to tell how every one in the house profited therein. My father and my mother learned so much Latin, that for a need they

could understand it when they heard it spoken, even so did all the household servants, namely, such as were nearest and most about me. To be short, we were all so Latinised, that the towns round about us had their share of it; insomuch as even at this day many Latin names, both of workmen and of their tools, are yet in use amongst them. And as for myself, I was about six years old, and could understand no more French or Perigordine than Arabic; and that without art, without books, rules, or grammar, without whipping or whining, I had gotten as pure a Latin tongue as my master could speak, the rather because I could neither mingle nor confound the same with other tongues. If for an essay they would give me a theme, whereas the fashion in colleges is to give it in French, I had it in bad Latin, to reduce the same into good. And Nicholas Grouchy, who hath written *De comitiis Romanorum;* William Guerente, who hath commented Aristotle; George Buchanan, that famous Scottish poet, and Mark Antony Muret, whom (while he lived) both France and Italy to this day acknowledge to have been the best orator: all which have been my familiar tutors, have often told me that in mine infancy I had the Latin tongue so ready and so perfect, that themselves feared to take me in hand. And Buchanan, who afterwards I saw attending on the Marshal of Brissac, told me he was about to write a treatise of the institution of children, and that he took the model and pattern from mine; for at that time he had the charge and bringing up of the young Earl of Brissac, whom since we have seen prove so worthy and so valiant a captain. As for the Greek, wherein I have but small understanding, my father purposed to make me learn it by art; but by new and unaccustomed means, that is, by way of recreation and exercise. We did toss our declinations and conjugations to

and fro, as they do who by way of a certain game at tables learn both arithmetic and geometry. For, amongst other things he had especially been persuaded to make me taste and apprehend the fruits of duty and science by an unforced kind of will, and of mine own choice, and without any compulsion or rigour to bring me up in all mildness and liberty; yea, with such kind of superstition that, whereas some are of opinion that suddenly to awaken young children, and as it were by violence to startle and fright them out of their dead sleep in a morning (wherein they are more heavy and deeper plunged than we) doth greatly trouble and distemper their brains, he would every morning cause me to be awakened by the sound of some instrument; and I was never without a servant who to that purpose attended upon me. This example may serve to judge of the rest; as also to commend the judgment and tender affection of so careful and loving a father: who is not to be blamed, though he reaped not the fruits answerable to his exquisite toil and painful manuring. Two things hindered the same: first, the barrenness and unfit soil; for howbeit I were of a sound and strong constitution, and of a tractable and yielding condition, yet was I so heavy, so sluggish, and so dull, that I could not be roused (yea, were it to go to play) from out mine idle drowsiness. What I saw, I saw it perfectly; and under this heavy and as it were Lethe complexion did I breed hardy imaginations and opinions far above my years. My spirit was very slow, and would go no further than it was led by others; my apprehension blockish, my invention poor; and besides, I had a marvellous defect in my weak memory: it is therefore no wonder if my father could never bring me to any perfection. Secondly, as those that in some dangerous sickness, moved with a kind of hopeful and greedy desire of perfect health

again, give ear to every leech or empiric, and follow all counsels, the good man being exceedingly fearful to commit any oversight, in a matter he took so to heart, suffered himself at last to be led away by the common opinion which, like unto the cranes, followeth over those that go before, and yielded to custom, having those no longer about him that had given him his first directions, and which they had brought out of Italy. Being but six years old, I was sent to the College of Guienne, then most flourishing and reputed the best in France, where it is impossible to add anything to the great care he had both to choose the best and most sufficient masters that could be found to read unto me, as also for all other circumstances pertaining to my education; wherein, contrary to usual customs of colleges, he observed many particular rules. But so it is, it was ever a college. My Latin tongue was forthwith corrupted, whereof by reason of discontinuance I afterwards lost all manner of use; which new kind of institution stood me in no other stead but that at my first admittance it made me to overskip some of the lower forms, and to be placed in the highest. For at thirteen years of age, that I left the college, I had read over the whole course of philosophy (as they call it), but with so small profit that I can now make no account of it. The first taste or feeling I had of books was of the pleasure I took in reading the fables of Ovid's *Metamorphoses;* for, being but seven or eight years old, I would steal and sequester myself from all other delights, only to read them: forasmuch as the tongue wherein they were written was to me natural; and it was the easiest book I knew, and by reason of the matter therein contained most agreeing with my young age. For of King Arthur, of Launcelot du Lake, of Amadis, of Huon of Bordeaux, and such idle time-consuming and wit-besotting trash of books

wherein youth doth commonly amuse itself, I was not so much as acquainted with their names, and to this day know not their bodies, nor what they contain: so exact was my discipline. Whereby I became more careless to study my other prescribed lessons. And well did it fall out for my purpose that I had to deal with a very discreet master, who out of his judgment could with such dexterity wink at and second my untowardness, and such other faults that were in me. For by that means I read over Virgil's *Æneados*, Terence, Plautus, and other Italian comedies, allured thereunto by the pleasantness of their several subjects. Had he been so foolishly severe or so severely froward as to cross this course of mine, I think verily I had never brought anything from the college but the hate and contempt of books, as doth the greatest part of our nobility. Such was his discretion, and so warily did he behave himself that he saw and would not see: he would foster and increase my longing, suffering me but by stealth and by snatches to glut myself with those books, holding ever a gentle hand over me concerning other regular studies. For the chiefest thing my father required at their hands (unto whose charge he had committed me) was a kind of well-conditioned mildness and facility of complexion. And, to say truth, mine had no other fault but a certain dull languishing and heavy slothfulness. The danger was not, I should do ill, but that I should do nothing.

No man did ever suspect I would prove a bad but an unprofitable man, foreseeing in me rather a kind of idleness than a voluntary craftiness. I am not so self-conceited but I perceive what hath followed. The complaints that are daily buzzed in mine ears are these: that I am idle, cold, and negligent in offices of friendship and duty to my parents and kinsfolks; and touching public offices, that I

am over singular and disdainful. And those that are most injurious cannot ask, wherefore I have taken, and why I have not paid? but may rather demand, why I do not quit, and wherefore I do not give? I would take it as a favour they should wish such effects of supererogation in me. But they are unjust and over partial that will go about to exact that from me which I owe not with more rigour than they will exact from themselves that which they owe; wherein if they condemn me they utterly cancel both the gratifying of the action and the gratitude which thereby would be due to me. Whereas the active well-doing should be of more consequence, proceeding from my hand, in regard I have no passive at all. Wherefore I may so much the more freely dispose of my fortune, by how much more it is mine, and of myself that am most mine own. Notwithstanding, if I were a great blazoner of mine own actions, I might peradventure bar such reproaches, and justly upbraid some, that they are not so much offended because I do not enough as for that I may, and it lies in my power to do much more than I do. Yet my mind ceased not at the same time to have peculiar unto itself well settled motions, true and open judgments concerning the objects which it knew; which alone, and without any help or communication, it would digest. And amongst other things I verily believe it would have proved altogether incapable and unfit to yield unto force or stoop unto violence. Shall I account or relate this quality of my infancy, which was a kind of boldness in my looks, and gentle softness in my voice, and affability in my gestures, and a dexterity in conforming myself to the parts I undertook? for before the age of the

Alter ab undecimo tum me vix ceperat annus:[1]

[1] Virg., *Buc.* Ecl. viii. 39.

Years had I (to make even)
Scarce two above eleven.

I have undergone and represented the chiefest parts in the Latin tragedies of Buchanan, Guerente, and of Muret, which in great state were acted and played in our College of Guienne; wherein Andreas Goveanus, our rector principal, who as in all other parts belonging to his charge was without comparison the chiefest rector of France, and myself (without ostentation be it spoken) was reputed, if not a chief master, yet a principal actor in them. It is an exercise I rather commend than disallow in young gentlemen; and have seen some of our princes (in imitation of some of former ages), both commendably and honestly, in their proper persons act and play some parts in tragedies. It hath heretofore been esteemed a lawful exercise and a tolerable profession in men of honour, namely, in Greece. *Aristoni tragico actori rem aperit: huic et genus et fortuna honesta erant: nec ars, quia nihil tale apud Græcos pudori est, ea deformabat:*[1] "He imparts the matter to Ariston, a player of tragedies, whose progeny and fortune were both honest; nor did his profession disgrace them, because no such matter is a disparagement amongst the Grecians."

And I have ever accused them of impertinency that condemn and disallow such kinds of recreations, and blame those of injustice that refuse good and honest comedians, or (as we call them) players, to enter our good towns, and grudge the common people such public sports. Politic and well-ordered commonwealths endeavour rather carefully to unite and assemble their citizens together; as in serious offices of devotion, so in honest exercises of recreation. Common society and loving friendship is thereby cherished

[1] Liv., *Dec.* iii. l. iv.

and increased. And besides, they cannot have more formal and regular pastimes allowed them than such as are acted and represented in open view of all, and in the presence of the magistrates themselves. And if I might bear sway, I would think it reasonable that princes should sometimes, at their proper charges, gratify the common people with them, as an argument of a fatherly affection and loving goodness towards them; and that in populous and frequented cities there should be theatres and places appointed for such spectacles, as a diverting of worse inconveniences and secret actions. But to come to my intended purpose, there is no better way to allure the affection and to entice the appetite; otherwise a man shall breed but asses laden with books. With jerks of rods they have their satchels full of learning given them to keep. Which to do well one must not only harbour in himself, but wed and marry the same with his mind.

IT IS FOLLY TO REFER TRUTH OR FALSEHOOD TO OUR SUFFICIENCY.

It is not peradventure without reason that we ascribe the facility of believing and easiness of persuasion unto simplicity and ignorance; for meseemeth to have learnt heretofore that belief was, as it were, an impression conceived in our mind, and according as the same was found either more soft or of less resistance it was easier to imprint anything therein. *Ut necesse est lancem in libra ponderibus impositis deprimi: sic animum perspicuis cedere:*[1] "As it is

[1] Cic., *Acad. Qu.* l. iv.

necessary a scale must go down the balance when weights are put into it, so must a mind yield to things that are manifest." Forasmuch, therefore, as the mind being most empty and without counterpoise, so much the more easily doth it yield under the burden of the first persuasion. And that's the reason why children, those of the common sort, women, and sick folks, are so subject to be misled, and so easy to swallow gudgeons. On the other side, it is a sottish presumption to disdain and condemn that for false which unto us seemeth to bear no show of likelihood or truth, which is an ordinary fault in those who persuade themselves to be of more sufficiency than the vulgar sort. So was I sometimes wont to do, and if I heard anybody speak either of ghosts walking, of foretelling future things, of enchantments, of witchcrafts, or any other thing reported which I could not well conceive, or that was beyond my reach—

> *Somnia, terrores magicos, miracula, sagas,*
> *Nocturnos lemures, portentaque Thessala*—[1]
>
> Dreams, magic terrors, witches, uncouth wonders,
> Night-walking sprites, Thessalian conjur'd thunders—

I could not but feel a kind of compassion to see the poor and silly people abused with such follies. And now I perceive that I was as much to be moaned myself. Not that experience hath since made to discern anything beyond my former opinions; yet was not my curiosity the cause of it, but reason hath taught me that so resolutely to condemn a thing for false and impossible is to assume unto himself the advantage, to have the bounds and limits of God's will, and of the power of our common mother Nature tied to his sleeve; and that there is no greater folly in the world than to

[1] Hor. l. ii., *Ep.* ii. 208.

reduce them to the measure of our capacity and bounds of our sufficiency. If we term those things monsters or miracles to which our reason cannot attain, how many such do daily present themselves unto our sight? Let us consider through what clouds, and how blindfold we are led to the knowledge of most things that pass our hands. Verily we shall find it is rather custom than science that removeth the strangeness of them from us—

> *——jam nemo fessus saturusque videndi,*
> *Suspicere in cæli dignatur lucida templa.*[1]
>
> Now no man tir'd with glut of contemplation
> Deigns to have heav'n's bright church in admiration.

And that those things, were they newly presented unto us, we should doubtless deem them as much or more unlikely and incredible than any other.

> *——si nunc primum mortalibus adsint*
> *Ex improviso, ceu sint objecta repentè,*
> *Nil magis his rebus poterat mirabile dici,*
> *Aut minus antè quod auderent fore credere gentes.*[2]
>
> If now first on a sudden they were here
> 'Mongst mortal men, object to eye or ear,
> Nothing than these things would more wondrous be,
> Or that men durst less think ever to see.

He who had never seen a river before, the first he saw he thought it to be the ocean; and things that are the greatest in our knowledge we judge them to be the extremest that nature worketh in that kind.

> *Scilicet et fluvius qui non est maximus, ei est*
> *Qui non antè aliquem majorem vidit, et ingens*
> *Arbor homoque videtur, et omnia de genere omni*
> *Maxima quæ vidit quisque, hæc ingentia fingit.*[3]

[1] Lucret. l. ii. [2] *Ibid.* 1042. [3] Id. vi. 671.

A stream none of the greatest, may so seem
To him, that never saw a greater stream.
Trees, men, seem huge, and all things of all sorts,
The greatest one hath seen, he huge reports.

Consuetudine oculorum assuescunt animi neque admirantur, neque requirunt rationes earum rerum, quas semper vident:[1] "Minds are acquainted by custom of their eyes, nor do they admire or inquire the reason of those things which they continually behold." The novelty of things doth more incite us to search out the causes than their greatness. We must judge of this infinite power of nature with more reverence, and with more acknowledgment of our own ignorance and weakness. How many things of small likelihood are there witnessed by men worthy of credit, whereof if we cannot be persuaded we should at least leave them in suspense? For to deem them impossible is by rash presumption to presume and know how far possibility reacheth. If a man did well understand what difference there is between impossibility and that which is unwonted, and between that which is against the course of nature and the common opinion of men, in not believing rashly, and in not disbelieving easily, the rule of nothing-too-much, commanded by Chilon, should be observed. When we find in Froissart that the Earl of Foix (being in Bearne) had knowledge of the defeature at Juberoth of King John of Castile the morrow next it happened, and the means he allegeth for it, a man may well laugh at it. And of that which our annals report, that Pope Honorius, the very same day that King Philip Augustus died at Mantes, caused his public funerals to be solemnised, and commanded them to be celebrated throughout all Italy. For the authority of the witnesses hath

[1] Cic., *Nat. Deor.* l. ii.

peradventure no sufficient warrant to restrain us. But what if Plutarch, besides divers examples which he allegeth of antiquity, saith to have certainly known, that in Domitian's time the news of the battle lost by Antonius in Germany, many days' journeys thence, was published in Rome and divulged through the world the very same day it succeeded. And if Cæsar holds that it hath many times happened that report hath foregone the accident, shall we not say that those simple people have suffered themselves to be cozened and seduced by the vulgar sort, because they were not as clear-sighted as we? Is there anything more dainty, more unspotted, and more lively than Pliny's judgment, whensoever it pleaseth him to make show of it? Is there any farther from vanity? I omit the excellency of his learning and knowledge, whereof I make but small reckoning. In which of those two parts do we exceed him? Yet there is no scholar so meanly learned but will convince him of lying, and read a lecture of contradiction against him upon the progress of nature's works. When we read in Bouchet the miracles wrought by the relics of St. Hilary, his credit is not sufficient to bar us the liberty of contradicting him; yet at random to condemn all such-like histories seemeth to me a notable impudence. That famous man, St. Augustine, witnesseth to have seen a blind child to recover his sight over the relics of St. Gervaise and Protaise at Milan; and a woman at Carthage to have been cured of a canker by the sign of the holy cross, which a woman newly baptised made unto her; and Hesperius, a familiar friend of his, to have expelled certain spirits that molested his house with a little of the earth of our Saviour's sepulchre, which earth being afterwards transported into a church, a paralytic man was immediately therewith cured; and a woman going in procession, having as she passed by with a nosegay touched

the case wherein St. Stephen's bones were, and with the same afterward rubbed her eyes, she recovered her sight, which long before she had utterly lost; and divers other examples which he affirmeth to have been an assistant himself. What shall we accuse him of, and two other holy bishops, Aurelius and Maximinus, whom he calleth for his witnesses? Shall it be of ignorance, of simplicity, of malice, of facility, or of imposture? Is any man living so impudent that thinks he may be compared to them, whether it be in virtue or piety, in knowledge or judgment, in wisdom or sufficiency? *Qui ut rationem nullam afferrent, ipsa auctoritate me frangerent:*[1] "Who though they alleged no reason, yet might subdue me with their very authority." It is a dangerous fond hardiness, and of consequence, besides the absurd temerity it draws with it, to despise what we conceive not. For, after that according to your best understanding, you have established the limits of truth and bounds of falsehood, and that it is found you must necessarily believe things wherein is more strangeness than in those you deny, you have already bound yourself to abandon them. Now that which methinks brings as much disorder in our consciences, namely, in these troubles of religion wherein we are, is the dispensation Catholics make of their belief. They suppose to show themselves very moderate and skilful, when they yield their adversaries any of those articles now in question. But besides that they perceive not what an advantage it is for him that chargeth you, if you but once begin to yield and give them ground, and how much that encourageth him to pursue his point. Those articles which they choose for the lightest are oftentimes most important. Either a man must wholly submit himself to the authority of our ecclesiastical policy, or

[1] Cic., *Div.* l. i.

altogether dispense himself from it; it is not for us to determine what part of obedience we owe unto it. And moreover, I may say it, because I have made trial of it, having sometimes used this liberty of my choice, and particular election, not regarding certain points of the observance of our Church, which seem to bear a face either more vain or more strange; coming to communicate them with wise men, I have found that those things have a most solid and steady foundation, and that it is but foolishness and ignorance makes us receive them with less respect and reverence than the rest. Why remember we not what and how many contradictions we find and feel even in our own judgment? How many things served us but yesterday as articles of faith, which to-day we deem but fables? Glory and curiosity are the scourges of our souls. The latter induceth us to have an oar in every ship, and the former forbids us to leave anything unresolved or undecided.

OF FRIENDSHIP.

CONSIDERING the proceeding of a painter's work I have, a desire hath possessed me to imitate him. He maketh choice of the most convenient place and middle of every wall there to place a picture, laboured with all his skill and sufficiency; and all void places about it he filleth up with antique boscage or grotesque works, which are fantastical pictures, having no grace, but in the variety and strangeness of them. And what are these my compositions, in truth, other than antique works and monstrous bodies, patched and huddled up together of divers members, without any

certain or well ordered figure, having neither order, dependency, nor proportion, but casual and framed by chance?

Definit in piscem mulier formosa superne.[1]

A woman fair for parts superior,
Ends in a fish for parts inferior.

Touching this second point I go as far as my painter, but for the other and better part I am far behind; for my sufficiency reacheth not so far as that I dare undertake a rich, a polished, and, according to true skill, an art-like table. I have advised myself to borrow one of Steven de la Boetie, who with this kind of work shall honour all the world. It is a discourse he entitled Voluntary Servitude, but those who have not known him have since very properly re-baptised the same The Against-one. In his first youth he wrote, by way of essay, in honour of liberty against tyrants. It hath long since been dispersed amongst men of understanding, not without great and well-deserved commendations; for it is full of wit, and containeth as much learning as may be, yet doth it differ much from the best he can do. And if in the age I knew him in he would have undergone my design to set his fantasies down in writing, we should doubtless see many rare things, and which would very nearly approach the honour of antiquity; for especially touching that part of Nature's gifts, I know none may be compared to him. But it was not long of him that ever this treatise came to man's view, and I believe he never saw it since it first escaped his hands, with certain other notes concerning the edict of January, famous by reason of our intestine war, which haply may in other places find their deserved praise. It is all I could ever recover of his relics (whom when death seized, he by his last will and

[1] Hor., *Art. Poet.* 4.

testament left with so kind remembrance heir and executor of his library and writings), besides the little book I since caused to be published; to which his pamphlet I am particularly most bounden, forsomuch as it was the instrumental means of our first acquaintance. For it was shown me long time before I saw him, and gave me the first knowledge of his name, addressing and thus nourishing that unspotted friendship which we (so long as it pleased God) have so sincerely, so entire and inviolably maintained between us, that truly a man shall not commonly hear of the like, and amongst our modern men no sign of any such is seen. So many parts are required to the erecting of such a one, that it may be counted a wonder if fortune once in three ages contract the like. There is nothing to which Nature hath more addressed us than to society. And Aristotle saith that perfect law-givers have had more regardful care of friendship than of justice. And the utmost drift of its perfection is this. For generally, all those amities which are forged and nourished by voluptuousness or profit, public or private need, are thereby so much the less fair and generous, and so much the less true amities, in that they intermeddle other causes, scope, and fruit with friendship, than itself alone; nor do those four ancient kinds of friendships, natural, social, hospitable, and venerian, either particularly or conjointly beseem the same. That from children to parents may rather be termed respect. Friendship is nourished by communication, which by reason of the over-great disparity cannot be found in them, and would haply offend the duties of nature; for neither all the secret thoughts of parents can be communicated unto children, lest it might engender an unbeseeming familiarity between them, nor the admonitions and corrections (which are the chiefest offices of friendships) could be exercised

from children to parents. There have nations been found where by custom children killed their parents, and others where parents slew their children, thereby to avoid the hindrance of inter-bearing one another in after-times, for naturally one dependeth from the ruin of another. There have philosophers been found disdaining this natural conjunction. Witness Aristippus, who being urged with the affection he owed his children, as proceeding from his loins, began to spit, saying, That also that excrement proceeded from him, and that also we engendered worms and lice. And that other man, whom Plutarch would have persuaded to agree with his brother, answered, "I care not a straw the more for him, though he came out of the same womb I did." Verily the name of brother is a glorious name, and full of loving-kindness, and therefore did he and I term one another sworn brother. But this commixture, dividence, and sharing of goods, this joining wealth to wealth, and that the riches of one shall be the poverty of another, doth exceedingly distemper and distract all brotherly alliance and conjunction. If brothers should conduct the progress of their advancement and thrift in one same path and course, they must necessarily oftentimes hinder and cross one another. Moreover, the correspondence and relation that begetteth these true and mutually perfect amities, why shall it be found in these? The father and the son may very well be of a far differing complexion, and so may brothers. He is my son, he is my kinsman; but he may be a fool, a bad, or a peevish-minded man. And then according as they are friendships which the law and duty of nature doth command us, so much the less of our own voluntary choice and liberty is there required unto it. And our genuine liberty hath no production more properly her own, than that of affection and amity. Sure I am, that concerning

the same I have assayed all that might be, having had the best and most indulgent father that ever was, even to his extremest age, and who from father to son was descended of a famous house, and touching this rare-seen virtue of brotherly concord very exemplary—

> ——*et ipse*
> *Notus in fratres animi paterni.*[1]
>
> To his brothers known so kind,
> As to bear a father's mind.

To compare the affection toward women unto it, although it proceed from our own free choice, a man cannot, nor may it be placed in this rank. Her fire I confess it to be

> (——*neque enim est dea nescia nostri*
> *Quæ dulcem curis miscet amaritiem.*)[2]
>
> (Nor is that goddess ignorant of me,
> Whose bitter-sweets with my cares mixed be.)

more active, more fervent, and more sharp. But it is a rash and wavering fire, waving and divers: the fire of an ague subject to fits and stints, and that hath but slender holdfast of us. In true friendship it is a general and universal heat, and equally tempered, a constant and settled heat, all pleasure and smoothness, that hath no pricking or stinging in it, which the more it is in lustful love, the more is it but a raging and mad desire in following that which flies us,

> *Come segue la lepre il cacciatore*
> *Al freddo, al caldo, alla montagna, al lito,*
> *Ne piu l'estima poi che presa vede,*
> *E sol dietro a chi fugge affretta il piede.*[3]

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[1] Hor. l. ii., *Od.* ii. 6. [2] Catul., *Epig.* lxvi.
[3] Ariost., can. x. st. 7.

> Ev'n as the huntsman doth the hare pursue,
> In cold, in heat, on mountains, on the shore,
> But cares no more, when he her ta'en espies,
> Speeding his pace only at that which flies.

As soon as it creepeth into the terms of friendship, that is to say, in the agreement of wits, it languisheth and vanisheth away; enjoying doth lose it, as having a corporal end, and subject to satiety. On the other side, friendship is enjoyed according as it is desired; it is neither bred nor nourished, nor increaseth but in jouissance, as being spiritual, and the mind being refined by use custom. Under this chief amity these fading affections have sometimes found place in me, lest I should speak of him who in his verses speaks but too much of it. So are these two passions entered into me in knowledge one of another, but in comparison never; the first flying a high, and keeping a proud pitch, disdainfully beholding the other to pass her points far under it. Concerning marriage, besides that it is a covenant which hath nothing free but the entrance, the continuance being forced and constrained, depending elsewhere than from our will, and a match ordinarily concluded to other ends, a thousand strange knots are therein commonly to be unknit, able to break the web, and trouble the whole course of a lively affection; whereas in friendship there is no commerce or business depending on the same, but itself. Seeing (to speak truly) that the ordinary sufficiency of women cannot answer this conference and communication, the nurse of this sacred bond; nor seem their minds strong enough to endure the pulling of a knot so hard, so fast, and durable. And truly, if without that, such a genuine and voluntary acquaintance might be contracted, where not only minds had this entire jouissance, but also bodies a share of the alliance,

and where a man might wholly be engaged. It is certain that friendship would thereby be more complete and full; but this sex could never yet by any example attain unto it, and is by ancient schools rejected thence. And this other Greek licence is justly abhorred by our customs, which notwithstanding, because according to use it had so necessary a disparity of ages and difference of offices between lovers, did no more sufficiently answer the perfect union and agreement which here we require: *Quis est enim iste amor amicitiæ? cur neque deformem adolescentem quisquam amat, neque formosum senem?*[1] "For what love is this of friendship? why doth no man love either a deformed young man or a beautiful old man?" For even the picture the Academy makes of it will not (as I suppose) disavow me to say thus in her behalf. That the first fury, inspired by the son of Venus in the lover's heart, upon the object of tender youth's-flower, to which they allow all insolent and passionate violences an immoderate heat may produce, was simply grounded upon an external beauty, a false image of corporal generation; for in the spirit it had no power, the sight whereof was yet concealed, which was but in his infancy, and before the age of budding. For if this fury did seize upon a base-minded courage, the means of its pursuit were riches, gifts, favour to the advancement of dignities, and such-like vile merchandise, which they reprove. If it fell into a more generous mind, the interpositions were likewise generous. Philosophical instructions, documents to reverence religion, to obey the laws, to die for the good of his country; examples of valour, wisdom, and justice; the lover endeavouring and studying to make himself acceptable by the good grace and beauty of his mind (that of his body being long since decayed),

[1] Cic., *Tusc. Qu.* iv. c. 33.

hoping by this mental society to establish a more firm and permanent bargain. When this pursuit attained the effect in due season (for by not requiring in a lover he should bring leisure and discretion in his enterprise, they require it exactly in the beloved; forasmuch as he was to judge of an internal beauty, of difficult knowledge, and abstruse discovery), then by the interposition of a spiritual beauty was the desire of a spiritual conception engendered in the beloved. The latter was here chiefest; the corporal, accidental and second, altogether contrary to the lover. And therefore do they prefer the beloved, and verify that the gods likewise prefer the same; and greatly blame the poet Æschylus, who in the love between Achilles and Patroclus ascribeth the lover's part unto Achilles, who was in the first and beardless youth of his adolescency, and the fairest of the Grecians. After this general community, the mistress and worthiest part of it, predominant and exercising her offices (they say the most available commodity did there by redound both to the private and public). That it was the force of countries received the use of it, and the principal defence of equity and liberty, witness the comfortable loves of Hermodius and Aristogiton. Therefore name they it sacred and divine, and it concerns not them whether the violence of tyrants or the demissness of the people be against them. To conclude, all that can be alleged in favour of the Academy is to say, that it was a love ending in friendship, a thing which hath no bad reference unto the Stoical definition of love: *Amorem conatum esse amicitiæ faciendæ ex pulchritudinis specie.*[1] "That love is an endeavour of making friendship by the show of beauty." I return to my description in a more equitable and equal manner. *Omnino amicitiæ, corroboratis jam confirmatisque ingeniis et*

[1] Cic., *Tusc. Qu.* iv. c. 34.

ætatibus, judicandæ sunt:[1] "Clearly friendships are to be judged by wits, and ages already strengthened and confirmed." As for the rest, those we ordinarily call friends and amities are but acquaintances and familiarities, tied together by some occasion or commodities, by means whereof our minds are entertained. In the amity I speak of they intermix and confound themselves one in the other with so universal a commixture that they wear out and can no more find the seam that hath conjoined them together. If a man urge me to tell wherefore I loved him, I feel it cannot be expressed but by answering, because it was he, because it was myself. There is beyond all my discourse, and besides what I can particularly report of it, I know not what inexplicable and fatal power, a mean and mediatrix of this indissoluble union. We sought one another before we had seen one another, and by the reports we heard one of another which wrought a greater violence in us than the reason of reports may well bear; I think by some secret ordinance of the heavens we embraced one another by our names. And at our first meeting, which was by chance at a great feast and solemn meeting of a whole township, we found ourselves so surprised, so known, so acquainted, and so combinedly bound together, that from thenceforward nothing was so near unto us as one unto another. He wrote an excellent Latin satire since published, by which he excuseth and expoundeth the precipitation of our acquaintance, so suddenly come to her perfection. Since it must continue so short a time, and begun so late (for we were both grown men, and he some years older than myself), there was no time to be lost. And it was not to be modelled or directed by the pattern of regular and remiss friendship, wherein so many precautions of a long

[1] Cic., *Amic.*

and preallable conversation are required. This hath no other idea than of itself, and can have no reference but to itself. It is not one especial consideration, nor two, nor three, nor four, nor a thousand. It is I wot not what kind of quintessence, of all this commixture, which having seized all my will induced the same to plunge and lose itself in his, which likewise having seized all his will brought it to lose and plunge itself in mine with a mutual greediness and with a semblable concurrence. I may truly say lose, reserving nothing unto us that might properly be called our own, nor that was either his or mine. When Lelius in the presence of the Roman consuls, who after the condemnation of Tiberius Gracchus pursued all those that had been of his acquaintance, came to inquire of Caius Blosius (who was one of his chiefest friends) what he would have done for him, and that he answered, "All things." "What, all things?" replied he. "And what if he had willed thee to burn our temples?" Blosius answered, "He would never have commanded such a thing." "But what if he had done it?" replied Lelius. The other answered, "I would have obeyed him." If he were so perfect a friend to Gracchus as histories report, he needed not offend the consuls with this last and bold confession, and should not have departed from the assurance he had of Gracchus's mind. But yet those who accuse this answer as seditious understand not well this mystery, and do not presuppose in what terms he stood, and that he held Gracchus's will in his sleeve, both by power and knowledge. They were rather friends than citizens, rather friends than enemies of their country, or friends of ambition and trouble. Having absolutely committed themselves one to another, they perfectly held the reins of one another's inclination, and let this yoke be guided by virtue and conduct of reason

(because without them it is altogether impossible to combine and proportion the same). The answer of Blosius was such as it should be. If their affections miscarried, according to my meaning, they were neither friends one to other nor friends to themselves. As for the rest, this answer sounds no more than mine would do to him that would in such sort inquire of me, if your will should command you to kill your daughter, would you do it? and that I should consent unto it; for that beareth no witness of consent to do it, because I am not in doubt of my will, and as little of such a friend's will. It is not in the power of the world's discourse to remove me from the certainty I have of his intentions and judgments of mine; no one of its actions might be presented unto me, under what shape soever, but I would presently find the spring and motion of it. Our minds have jumped so unitedly together, they have with so fervent an affection considered of each other, and with like affection so discovered and sounded, even to the very bottom of each other's heart and entrails, that I did not only know his, as well as mine own, but I would (verily) rather have trusted him concerning any matter of mine than myself. Let no man compare any of the other common friendships to this. I have as much knowledge of them as another, yea of the most perfect of their kind; yet will I not persuade any man to confound their rules, for so a man might be deceived. In these other strict friendships a man must march with the bridle of wisdom and precaution in his hand; the bond is not so strictly tied but a man may in some sort distrust the same. Love him (said Chilon) as if you should one day hate him again. Hate him as if you should love him again. This precept, so abominable in this sovereign and mistress amity, is necessary and wholesome in the use of vulgar and customary friendships, towards

which a man must employ the saying Aristotle was wont so often to repeat, "Oh, you my friends; there is no perfect friend."

In this noble commerce, offices and benefits (nurses of other amities) deserve not so much as to be accounted of: this confusion so full of our wills is cause of it; for even as the friendship I bear unto myself admits no increase, by any succour I give myself in any time of need, whatsoever the Stoics allege, and as I acknowledge no thanks unto myself for any service I do unto myself, so the union of such friends, being truly perfect, makes them lose the feeling of such duties, and hate and expel from one another these words of division and difference: benefit, good deed, duty, obligation, acknowledgment, prayer, thanks, and such their like. All things being by effect common between them: wills, thoughts, judgments, goods, wives, children, honour, and life; and their mutual agreement, being no other than one soul in two bodies, according to the fit definition of Aristotle, they can neither lend nor give out to each other. See here the reason why law-makers, to honour marriage with some imaginary resemblance of this divine bond, inhibit donations between husband and wife, meaning thereby to infer that all things should peculiarly be proper to each of them, and that they have nothing to divide and share together. If in the friendship whereof I speak one might give unto another, the receiver of the benefit should bind his fellow. For, each seeking more than any other thing to do each other good, he who yields both matter and occasion is the man showeth himself liberal, giving his friend that contentment to effect towards him what he desireth most. When the philosopher Diogenes wanted money, he was wont to say that he redemanded the same of his friends, and not that he

demanded it. And to show how that is practised by effect, I will relate an ancient singular example. Eudamidas the Corinthian had two friends, Charixenus a Sycionian, and Aretheus a Corinthian. Being upon his death-bed, and very poor, and his two friends very rich, thus made his last will and testament: "To Aretheus, I bequeath the keeping of my mother, and to maintain her when she shall be old. To Charixenus the marrying of my daughter, and to give her as great a dowry as he may; and in case one of them chance to die before, I appoint the survivor to substitute his charge, and supply his place." Those that first saw this testament laughed and mocked at the same; but his heirs being advertised thereof, were very well pleased, and received it with singular contentment. And Charixenus, one of them, dying five days after Eudamidas, the substitution being declared in favour of Aretheus, he carefully and very kindly kept and maintained his mother, and of five talents that he was worth he gave two and a half in marriage to one only daughter he had, and the other two and a half to the daughter of Eudamidas, whom he married both in one day. This example is very ample, if one thing were not, which is the multitude of friends. For this perfect amity I speak of is indivisible; each man doth so wholly give himself unto his friend, that he hath nothing left him to divide elsewhere; moreover, he is grieved that he is not double, triple, or quadruple, and hath not many souls, or sundry wills, that he might confer them all upon this subject. Common friendships may be divided; a man may love beauty in one, facility of behaviour in another, liberality in one, and wisdom in another, paternity in this, fraternity in that man, and so forth; but this amity which possesseth the soul, and sways it in all sovereignty, it is impossible it should be double. If two at one instant should require help, to which would you run?

Should they crave contrary offices of you, what order would you follow? Should one commit a matter to your silence, which if the other knew would greatly profit him, what course would you take? Or how would you discharge yourself? A singular and principal friendship dissolveth all other duties, and freeth all other obligations. The secret I have sworn not to reveal to another, I may without perjury impart it unto him who is no other but myself. It is a great and strange wonder for a man to double himself; and those that talk of tripling know not nor cannot reach unto the height of it. "Nothing is extreme that hath his like." And he who shall presuppose that of two I love the one as well as the other, and that they inter-love one another, and love me as much as I love them, he multiplieth in brotherhood, a thing most singular, and a lonely one, and than which one alone is also the rarest to be found in the world. The remainder of this history agreeth very well with what I said; for, Eudamidas giveth us a grace and favour to his friends to employ them in his need; he leaveth them as his heirs of his liberality, which consisteth in putting the means into their hands to do him good. And doubtless the force of friendship is much more richly shown in his deed than in Aretheus'. To conclude, they are imaginable effects to him that hath not tasted them, and which makes me wonderfully to honour the answer of that young soldier to Cyrus, who, inquiring of him what he would take for a horse with which he had lately gained the prize of a race, and whether he would change him for a kingdom? "No, surely, my liege (said he), yet would I willingly forego him to gain a true friend, could I but find a man worthy of so precious an alliance." He said not ill in saying "could I but find." For a man shall easily find men fit for a superficial acquaintance; but in this, wherein men negotiate from the very

centre of their hearts, and make no spare of anything, it is most requisite all the wards and springs be sincerely wrought and perfectly true. In confederacies, which hold but by one end, men have nothing to provide for, but for the imperfections, which particularly do interest and concern that end and respect. It is no great matter what religion my physician or lawyer is of; this consideration hath nothing common with the offices of that friendship they owe me. So do I in the familiar acquaintances that those who serve me contract with me. I am nothing inquisitive whether a lackey be chaste or no, but whether he be diligent. I fear not a gaming muleteer, so much as if he be weak; nor a hot swearing cook, as one that is ignorant and unskilful; I never meddle with saying what a man should do in the world—there are over many others that do it—but what myself do in the world.

Mihi sic usus est: Tibi, ut opus est facto, face.[1]

So is it requisite for me;
Do thou as needful is for thee.

Concerning familiar table-talk, I rather acquaint myself with and follow a merry conceited humour, than a wise man. And in bed I rather prefer beauty than goodness; and in society or conversation of familiar discourse, I respect rather sufficiency, though without *prud'hommie*, and so of all things else. Even as he that was found riding upon an hobby-horse, playing with his children besought him who thus surprised him not to speak of it until he were a father himself, supposing the tender fondness and fatherly passion which then would possess his mind should make him an impartial judge of such an action; so would I wish to speak to such as had tried what I speak of, but knowing

[1] Ter., *Heau.* act i. sc. 1, 28.

how far such an amity is from the common use, and how seldom seen and rarely found, I look not to find a competent judge. For even the discourses which stern antiquity hath left us concerning this subject, seem to me but faint and forceless in respect of the feeling I have of it. And in that point the effects exceed the very precepts of philosophy.

Nil ego contulerim jucundo sanus amico.[1]

For me, be I well in my wit.
Nought, as a merry friend, so fit.

Ancient Menander accounted him happy that had but met the shadow of a true friend; verily he had reason to say so, especially if he had tasted of any; for truly, if I compare all the rest of my forepassed life, which although I have, by the mere mercy of God, passed at rest and ease, and except the loss of so dear a friend, free from all grievous affliction, with an ever-quietness of mind, as one that have taken my natural and original commodities in good payment, without searching any others; if, as I say, I compare it all unto the four years I so happily enjoyed the sweet company and most dear society of that worthy man, it is nought but a vapour, nought but a dark and irksome light. Since the time I lost him,

quem semper acerbum,
Semper honoratum (sic Dii voluistis) habebo.[2]

Which I shall ever hold a bitter day,
Yet ever honour'd (so my God t' obey).

I do but languish, I do but sorrow; and even those pleasures all things present me with, instead of yielding me comfort, do but redouble the grief of his loss. We were

[1] Hor. l. i., *Sat.* vii. 44. [2] Virg., *Æn.* iii. 49.

copartners in all things. All things were with us at half; methinks I have stolen his part from him.

> ——*Nec fas esse ulla me voluptate hic frui*
> *Decrevi, tantisper dum ille abest meus particeps.*[1]
> I have set down, no joy enjoy I may,
> As long as he my partner is away.

I was so accustomed to be ever two, and so inured to be never single, that methinks I am but half myself.

> *Illam mea si partem animæ tulit,*
> *Maturior vis, quid moror altera,*
> *Nec charus aeque nec superstes,*
> *Integer? Ille dies utramque*
> *Duxit ruinam.*[2]
>
> Since that part of my soul riper fate reft me,
> Why stay I here the other part he left me?
> Nor so dear, nor entire, while here I rest;
> That day hath in one ruin both opprest.

There is no action can betide me, or imagination possess me, but I hear him saying, as indeed he would have done to me; for even as he did excel me by an infinite distance in all other sufficiencies and virtues, so did he in all offices and duties of friendship.

> *Quis desiderio sit pudor aut modus,*
> *Tam chari capitis?*[3]
>
> What modesty or measure may I bear,
> In want and wish of him that was so dear?
>
> *O misero frater adempte mihi!*
> *Omnia tecum unà perierunt gaudia nostra.*
> *Quæ tuus in vita dulcis alebat amor.*[4]
> *Tu mea, tu moriens fregisti commoda frater.*[5]

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[1] Ter., *Heau.* act i. sc. 1, 97.
[2] Hor. l. ii., *Od.* xvii. 7.
[3] Id. l. i., *Od.* xxiv. 1.
[4] Catul., *Eleg.* iv. 20, 92, 23, 95.
[5] *Ibid.* 21.

Tecum unà tota est nostra sepulta anima,
Cujus ego interitu tota de mente fugavi
Hæc studia, atque omnes delicias animi.[1]
Alloquar? audiero nunquam tua verba loquentem?[2]
Nunquam ego te vita frater amabilior,
Aspician posthac? at certè semper amabo.[3]

O brother, rest from miserable me,
All our delights are perished with thee,
Which thy sweet love did nourish in my breath.
Thou all my good hast spoiled in thy death:
With thee my soul is all and whole enshrined,
At whose death I have cast out of my mind
All my mind's sweet-meats, studies of this kind;
Never shall I hear thee speak, speak with thee?
Thee brother, than life dearer, never see?
Yet shalt thou ever be belov'd of me.

But let us a little hear this young man speak, being but sixteen years of age.

Because I have found this work to have since been published (and to an ill end) by such as seek to trouble and subvert the state of our commonwealth, nor caring whether they shall reform it or no; which they have fondly inserted among other writings of their invention, I have revoked my intent, which was to place it here. And lest the author's memory should any way be interested with those that could not thoroughly know his opinions and actions, they shall understand that this subject was by him treated of in his infancy, only by way of exercise, as a subject, common, bare-worn, and wire-drawn in a thousand books. I will never doubt but he believed what he wrote, and wrote as he thought; for he was so conscientious that no lie did ever pass his lips, yea were it but in matters of sport or play; and I know, that had it been in his choice, he would rather

[1] Catul., *El.* iv. 94. [2] *Ibid.* 25. [3] *El.* i. 9.

have been born at Venice than at Sarlac; and good reason why. But he had another maxim deeply imprinted in his mind, which was, carefully to obey, and religiously to submit himself to the laws under which he was born. There was never a better citizen, nor more affected to the welfare and quietness of his country, nor a sharper enemy of the changes, innovations, new fangles, and hurly-burlies of his time. He would more willingly have employed the utmost of his endeavours to extinguish and suppress, than to favour or further them. His mind was modelled to the pattern of other best ages.

OF SOLITARINESS.

LET us leave apart this outworn comparison between a solitary and an active life; and touching that goodly saying under which ambition and avarice shroud themselves, that we are not born for our particular, but for the public good. Let us boldly refer ourselves to those that are engaged; and let them beat their conscience, if on the contrary the states, the charges, and this trash of the world are not rather sought and sued for to draw a private commodity from the public. The bad and indirect means where through in our age men canvass and toil to attain the same, do manifestly declare the end thereof to be of no great consequence. Let us answer ambition, that herself gives us the taste of solitariness. For what doth she shun so much as company? What seeketh she more than elbow-room? There is no place but there are means and ways to do well and ill. Nevertheless if the saying of Bias be true, "That the worst part is the

greatest;" or that which Ecclesiastes saith, "That of a thousand there is not one good."

> *Rari quippe boni: numero vix sunt totidem, quot*
> *Thebarum portæ, vel divitis ostia Nili:*[1]
>
> Good men are rare, so many scarce (I fear)
> As gates of Thebes, mouths of rich Nilus were.

Contagion is very dangerous in a throng. A man must imitate the vicious or hate them: both are dangerous; for to resemble them is perilous, because they are many, and to hate many is hazardous, because they are dissemblable, and merchants that travel by sea have reason to take heed that those which go in the same ship be not dissolute, blasphemers, and wicked, judging such company unfortunate. Therefore Bias said pleasantly to those that together with him passed the danger of a great storm, and called to the gods for help, "Peace, my masters, lest they should hear that you are here with me." And of a more military example, Albuqerque, viceroy in India for Emanuel, King of Portugal, in an extreme danger of a sea tempest, took a young boy upon his shoulders, for this only end, that in the common peril his innocence might be his warrant and recommending to God's favour to set him on shore; yet may a wise man live everywhere contented, yea and alone, in the throng of a palace; but if he may choose, he will (saith he) avoid the sight of it. If need require, he will endure the first; but if he may have his choice, he will choose the latter. He thinks he hath not sufficiently rid himself from vices if he must also contest with other men's faults. Charondas punished those for wicked that were convicted to have frequented lewd companies. There is nothing so dissociable and sociable

[1] Juv., *Sat.* xiii. 26.

as man, the one for his vice, the other for his nature. And I think Antisthenes did not satisfy him that upbraided him with his conversation with the wicked, saying, "That physicians live amongst the sick." Who if they stead sick men's healths, they impair their own by the infection, continual visiting, touching, and frequenting of diseases. Now (as I suppose) the end is both one, thereby to live more at leisure and better at ease. But man doth not always seek the best way to come unto it, who often supposeth to have quit affairs when he hath but changed them. There is not much less vexation in the government of a private family than in the managing of an entire state; wheresoever the mind is busied, there it is all. And though domestic occupations be less important, they are as importunate. Moreover, though we have freed ourselves from the court and from the market, we are not free from the principal torments of our life.

> ——*ratio et prudentia curas,*
> *Non locus effusi latè maris arbiter aufert.*[1]
>
> Reason and wisdom may set cares aside,
> Not place the arbiter of seas so wide.

Shift we or change we places never so often, ambition, avarice, irresolution, fear, and concupiscences never leave us.

> *Et post equitem sedet atra cura.*[2]
>
> Care, looking grim and black, doth sit
> Behind his back that rides from it.

They often follow us, even into immured cloisters, and into schools of philosophy; nor do hollow rocks, nor wearing of hair-shirts, nor continual fastings, rid us from them.

[1] Hor. l. i., *Epist.* xi. 25. [2] Hor. l. iii., *Od.* i. 39.

Hæret lateri lethalis arundo.[1]

The shaft that death implied
Sticks by the flying side.

It was told Socrates that one was no whit amended by his travel: "I believe it well (said he), for he carried himself with him."

Quid terras alio calentes
Sole mutamus? patriâ quis exul
Se quoque fugit?[2]

Why change we soils warm'd with another sun?
Who from home banished hath himself outrun?

If a man do not first discharge both himself and his mind from the burthen that presseth her, removing from place to place will stir and press her the more; as in a ship, wares well stowed and closely piled take up least room; you do a sick man more hurt than good to make him change places, you settle an evil in removing the same; as stakes or poles, the more they are stirred and shaken, the faster they stick, and sink deeper into the ground. Therefore is it not enough for a man to have sequestered himself from the concourse of people, is it not sufficient to shift place; a man must also sever himself from the popular conditions that are in us. A man must sequester and recover himself from himself.

——rupi jam vincula, dicas,
Nam luctata canis nodum arripit, attamen illa
Cùm fugit, à collo trahitur pars longa catenæ.[3]

You will say haply I my bonds have quit,
Why so the striving dog the knot hath bit;
Yet when he flies, much chain doth follow it.

We carry our fetters with us; is it not an absolute liberty;

[1] Virg., *Æn.* l. iv. 73. [2] Hor. l. ii., *Od.* xvi. 18.
[3] Pers., *Sat.* v. 138.

we still cast back our looks towards that we have left behind; our mind doth still run on it; our fancy is full of it.

> ——*nisi purgatum est pectus, quæ prælia nobis*
> *Atque pericula tunc ingratis insinuandum?*
> *Quantæ conscindunt hominem cupidinis acres*
> *Sollicitum curæ, quantîque perinde timores?*
> *Quidve superbia, spurcitia, ac petulantia, quantas*
> *Efficiunt clades, quid luxus, desidiesque?*[1]
>
> Unless our breast be purg'd, what wars must we,
> What perils then, though much displeased, see?
> How great fears, how great cares of sharp desire
> Do careful man distract, torment, enfire?
> Uncleanness, wantonness, sloth, riot, pride,
> How great calamities have these implied?

Our evil is rooted in our mind, and it cannot escape from itself.

> *In culpa est animus, qui se non effugit unquam,*[2]
>
> The mind in greatest fault must lie
> Which from itself can never fly.

Therefore must it be reduced and brought into itself. It is the true solitariness, and which may be enjoyed even in the frequency of peopled cities and kings' courts; but it is more commodiously enjoyed apart. Now since we undertake to live solitary and without company, let us cause our contentment to depend of ourselves. Let us shake off all bonds that tie us unto others. Gain we that victory over us that in good earnest we may live solitary, and therein live at our ease. Stilpon having escaped the combustion of his city, wherein he had lost both wife and children, and all his goods; Demetrius Poliorcetes, seeing him in so great a ruin of his country with an unaffrighted countenance,

[1] Lucr., l. v. 44. [2] Hor. l. i., *Epist.* xiv. 13.

demanded of him whether he had received any loss. He answered no; and that (thanks given to God) he had lost nothing of his own. It is that which Antisthenes the Philosopher said very pleasantly, "That man ought to provide himself with munitions that might float upon the water, and by swimming escape the danger of shipwreck with him." Verily "a man of understanding hath lost nothing if he yet have himself." When the city of Nola was overrun by the Barbarians, Paulinus, bishop thereof, having lost all he had there, and being their prisoner, prayed thus unto God: "O Lord, deliver me from feeling of this loss; for Thou knowest as yet they have touched nothing that is mine." The riches that made him rich, and the goods which made him good, were yet absolutely whole. Behold what it is to choose treasures well, that may be freed from injury, and to hide them in a place where no man may enter, and which cannot be betrayed but by ourselves. A man that is able may have wives, children, goods, and chiefly health, but not so tie himself unto them that his felicity depends on them. We should reserve a storehouse for ourselves, what need soever change; altogether ours, and wholly free, wherein we may hoard up and establish our true liberty, and principal retreat and solitariness, wherein we must go alone to ourselves, take out ordinary entertainment, and so privately that no acquaintance or communication of any strange thing may therein find place; there to discourse, to meditate and laugh, as without wife, without children, and goods, without train or servants; that if by any occasion they be lost it seem not strange to us to pass it over; we have a mind moving and turning in itself; it may keep itself company; it hath wherewith to offend and defend, wherewith to receive, and wherewith to give. Let us not fear

that we shall faint and droop through tedious and mind-trying idleness in this solitariness.

In solis sis tibi turba locis.

Be thou, when with thee is not any,
As good unto thyself as many.

Virtue is contented with itself, without discipline, without words, and without effects. In our accustomed actions, of a thousand there is not one found that regards us; he whom thou seest so furiously, and as it were beside himself, to clamber or crawl up the city walls or breach, as a point blank to a whole volley of shot, and another, all wounded and scarred, crazed and faint, and well-nigh hunger-starved, resolved rather to die than to open his enemy the gate and give him entrance; dost thou think he is there for himself? No, verily. It is peradventure for such a one whom neither he nor so many of his fellows ever saw, and who happily takes no care at all for them, but is therewhile wallowing up to the ears in sensuality, sloth, and all manner of carnal delights. This man, whom about midnight, when others take their rest, thou seest come out of his study, meagre looking, with eyes trilling, phlegmatic, squalid, and spauling, dost thou think that plodding on his books he doth seek how he shall become an honester man, or more wise, or more content? There is no such matter. He will either die in his pursuit, or teach posterity the measure of Plautus' verses and the true orthography of a Latin word. Who doth not willingly chop and counterchange his health, his ease, yea and his life, for glory and for reputation? the most unprofitable, vain, and counterfeit coin that is in use with us. Our death is not sufficient to make us afraid; let us also charge ourselves with that of our wives, of our children, and of our friends and people. Our own affairs

do not sufficiently trouble and vex us. Let us also drudge, toil, vex, and torment ourselves with our neighbours' and friends' matters.

> *Vah quemquàmne hominem in animum instituere, aut*
> *Parare, quod sit charius, quàm ipse est sibi?*[1]
>
> Fie, that a man should cast, that ought, than he
> Himself of himself more belov'd should be.

Solitariness, meseemeth, hath more appearance and reason in those which have given their most active and flourishing age into the world, in imitation of Thales. We have lived long enough for others, live we the remainder of our life unto ourselves: let us bring home our cogitations and inventions unto ourselves and unto our ease. It is no easy matter to make a safe retreat: it doth over-much trouble us with joining other enterprises unto it, since God gives us leisure to dispose of our dislodging. Let us prepare ourselves unto it, pack we up our baggage. Let us betimes bid our company farewell. Shake we off these violent holdfasts which elsewhere engage us, and estrange us from ourselves. These so strong bonds must be untied, and a man must eftsoons love this or that, but wed nothing but himself; that is to say, let the rest be our own, yet not so combined and glued together that it may not be sundered without flaying us, and therewithal pull away some piece of our own. The greatest thing of the world is for a man to know how to be his own. It is high time to shake off society, since we can bring nothing to it. And he that cannot lend, let him take heed of borrowing. Our forces fail us; retire we them, and shut them up into ourselves. He that can suppress and confound in himself the offices of so many amities, and of the company, let him do it. In

[1] Ter., *Adel.* act i. sc. 1, 13.

this fall, which makes us inutile, irksome, and importunate to others, let him take heed he be not importunate, irksome, and unprofitable to himself. Let him flatter, court, cherish himself, and above all let him govern himself, respecting his reason and fearing his conscience, so that he may not without shame stumble or trip in their presence. *Rarum est enim, ut satis se quisque vereatur:* "For it is a rare matter that every man sufficiently should stand in awe and reverence of himself." Socrates saith, "That young men ought to be instructed, and men exercised in well-doing; and old men withdraw themselves from all civil and military negotiations, living at their own discretion, without obligation to any certain office." There are some complexions more proper for these precepts of retreat than others. Those which have a tender and demiss apprehension, a squeamish affection, a delicate will, and which cannot easily subject or employ itself (of which both by natural condition and propense discourse I am one), will better apply themselves unto this counsel than active minds and busy spirits; which embrace all, everywhere engage, and in all things passionate themselves; that offer, that present and yield themselves to all occasions. A man must make use of all these accidental commodities, and which are without us, so long as they be pleasing to us, but not make them our principal foundation. It is not so; nor reason, nor nature permit it. Why should we against their laws subject our contentment to the power of others? Moreover, to anticipate the accidents of fortune; for a man to deprive himself of the commodities he hath in possession, as many have done for devotion, and some philosophers by discourse; to serve themselves, to lie upon the hard ground, to pull out their own eyes, to cast their riches into the sea, to seek for pain and smart (some by tormenting

this life for the happiness of another; others placing themselves on the lowest step, thereby to warrant themselves from a new fall) is the action of an excessive virtue. Let sterner and more vigorous complexions make their lurking glorious and exemplar.

> *——tuta et parvula laudo,*
> *Cùm res deficiunt, satis inter vilia fortis:*
> *Verùm ubi quid melius contingit et unctius, idem*
> *Hos sapere, et solos aio bene vivere, quorum*
> *Conspicitur nitidis fundata pecunia villis.*[1]
>
> When riches fail, I praise the safe estate,
> Though small: base things do not high thoughts abate.
> But when 'tis better, finer with me, I
> They only live well, and are wise, do cry,
> Whose coin in fair farms doth well-grounded lie.

There is work enough for me to do without going so far. It sufficeth me, under fortune's favour, to prepare myself for her disfavour; and being at ease, as far as imagination may attain unto, so represent the evil to come unto myself; even as we inure ourselves to tilts and tourneys, and counterfeit war in time of peace. I esteem not Arcesilaus the philosopher less reformed because I know him to have used household implements of gold and silver, according as the condition of his fortune gave him leave. I rather value him the more than if he had not done it, forasmuch as he both moderately and liberally made use of them. I know unto what limits natural necessity goeth; and I consider a poor almsman begging at my door to be often more plump-cheeked, in better health and liking, than I am: then do I enter into his estate, and essay to frame and suit my mind unto his bias. And so overrunning other examples, albeit I imagine death, poverty,

[1] Hor. l. i., *Epist.* xv. 42.

contempt, and sickness to be at my heels, I easily resolve myself not to apprehend any fear of that which one of less worth than myself doth tolerate and undergo with such patience: and I cannot believe that the baseness or shallowness of understanding can do more than vigour and far-seeing, or that the effects and reason of discretion cannot reach to the effects of custom and use. And knowing what slender holdfast these accessory commodities have, I omit not in full jouissance of them humbly to beseech God of his mercy (as a sovereign request) to make me contented with myself, and with the goods proceeding from me. I see some gallantly-disposed young men, who, notwithstanding their fair-seeming show, have many boxes full of pills in their coffers at home, to take when the rheum shall assail them, which so much the less they fear when they think the remedy to be at hand. So must a man do: as also if he feel himself subject to some greater infirmity, to store himself with medicaments that may assuage, supple, and stupify the part grieved. The occupation a man should choose for such a life must neither be painful nor tedious, otherwise in vain should we account to have sought our abiding there, which depends from the particular taste of every man. Mine doth no way accommodate itself to husbandry. Those that love it must with moderation apply themselves unto it.

> *Conentur sibi res, non se submittere rebus.*[1]
> Endeavour they things to them to submit,
> Not them to things (if they have Horace wit).

Husbandry is otherwise a servile office, as Sallust termeth it. It hath more excusable parts, as the care of gardening,

[1] Hor., *Epist.* i. 19.

which Xenophon ascribeth to Cyrus. A mean or mediocrity may be found between this base and vile carking care, extended and full of toiling labour, which we see in men that wholly plunge themselves therein, and that profound and extreme retchlessness to let all things go at six and seven, which is seen in others.

——Democriti pecus edit agellos
Cultaque, dum peregrè est animus sine corpore velox.[1]

Cattle destroyed Democritus his sets,
While his mind bodiless vagaries fets.

But let us hear the counsel which Pliny the younger giveth to his friend Cornelius Rufus touching this point of solitariness: "I persuade thee in this full-gorged and fat retreat wherein thou art, to remit this base and abject care of husbandry unto thy servants, and give thyself to the study of letters, whence thou mayest gather something that may altogether be thine own." He meaneth reputation: like unto Cicero's humour, who saith that he will employ his solitariness and residence from public affairs to purchase unto himself by his writings an immortal life.

——usque adeone
Scire tuum nihil est, nisi te scire hoc sciat alter?[2]

Is it then nothing worth that thou dost know,
Unless what thou dost know, thou others show?

It seemeth to be reason, when a man speaketh to withdraw himself from the world, that one should look beyond him. These do it but by halves. Indeed they set their match against the time they shall be no more; but pretend to reap the fruit of their designs, when they shall be absent from the world, by a ridiculous contradiction. The imagination of those who through devotion seek

[1] Hor., *Epist.* xii. 12. [2] Pers., *Sat.* i. 27.

solitariness, filling their minds with the certainty of heavenly promises, in the other life, is much more soundly consorted. They propose God as an object infinite in goodness and incomprehensible in power, unto themselves. The soul hath therein, in all free liberty, wherewith to glut herself. Afflictions and sorrows redound to their profit, being employed for the purchase and attaining of health and eternal gladness. Death, according to one's wish, is a passage to so perfect an estate. The sharpness of their rules is presently made smooth and easy by custom, and carnal concupiscences rejected, abated, and lulled asleep by refusing them; for nothing entertaineth them but use and exercise. This only end of another life, blessedly immortal, doth rightly merit we should abandon the pleasures and commodities of this our life. And he that can enlighten his soul with the flame of a lively faith and hope, really and constantly, in his solitariness doth build unto himself a voluptuous and delicious life, far surmounting all other lives. Therefore doth neither the end nor middle of this counsel please me. We are ever falling into a relapse from an ague to a burning fever. This plodding occupation of books is as painful as any other, and as great an enemy unto health, which ought principally to be considered. And a man should not suffer himself to be inveigled by the pleasure he takes in them: it is the same pleasure that loseth the thriving husbandman, the greedy covetous, the sinning voluptuous, and the puffed-up ambitious. The wisest men teach us sufficiently to beware and shield us from the treasons of our appetites, and to discern true and perfect pleasures from delights blended and intermingled with more pain. For most pleasures (say they) tickle, fawn upon, and embrace us, with purpose to strangle us, as did the thieves

whom the Egyptians termed Philistas. And if the headache would seize upon us before drunkenness, we would then beware of too much drinking; but sensuality, the better to entrap us, marcheth before, and hideth her track from us. Books are delightful; but if by continual frequenting them we in the end lose both health and cheerfulness (our best parts), let us leave them. I am one of those who think their fruit can no way countervail this loss. As men that have long time felt themselves enfeebled through some indisposition, do in the end yield to the mercy of physic, and by art have certain rules of life prescribed them, which they will not transgress: so he that withdraws himself, as distasted and over-tired with the common life, ought likewise to frame and prescribe this unto the rules of reason; direct and range the same by premeditation and discourse. He must bid all manner of travail farewell, what show soever it bear; and in general shun all passions that any way impeach the tranquillity of mind and body, and follow the course best agreeing with his humour.

Unusquisque sua noverit ire via.[1]

His own way every man
Tread out directly can.

A man must give to thriving husbandry, to laborious study, to toilsome hunting, and to every other exercise, the utmost bounds of pleasure; and beware he engage himself no further, if once pain begin to intermeddle itself with her; we should reserve business and negotiations only for so much as is behooveful to keep us in breath, and to warrant us from the inconveniences which the other extremity of a base, faint-hearted idleness draws after it.

[1] Propert. l. ii., *El.* xxv. 38.

There are certain barren and thorny sciences, which for the most part are forged for the multitude; they should be left for those who are for the service of the world. As for myself, I love no books but such as are pleasant and easy, and which tickle me, or such as comfort and counsel me, to direct my life and death.

> *——tacitum sylvas inter reptare salubres*
> *Curantem quidquid dignum sapiente bonôque est,*[1]
>
> Silently creeping 'midst the wholesome wood
> With care what's for a wise man and a good.

The wiser sort of men, having a strong and vigorous mind, may frame unto themselves an altogether spiritual life. But mine being common, I must help to uphold myself by corporal commodities: and age having eftsoons despoiled me of those that were most suitable to my fantasy, I instruct and sharpen my appetite to those remaining most sortable this other season. We must tooth and nail retain the use of this life's pleasures, which our years snatch from us one after another—

> *Carpamus dulcia, nostrum est,*
> *Quòd vivis: cinis et manes et fabula fies.*[2]
>
> Pluck we sweet pleasures: we thy life give thee.
> Thou shalt a tale, a ghost, and ashes be.

Now concerning the end of glory, which Pliny and Cicero propose unto us, it is far from my discourse. The most opposite humour to solitary retiring is ambition. "Glory and rest are things that cannot squat in one same form." As far as I see, these have nought but their arms and legs out of the throng, their mind and intent is further and more engaged in them than ever it was.

[1] Hor. l. i., *Epist.* iv. [2] Pers., *Sat.* v. 155.

Tun', vetule, auriculis alienis colligis escas ?[1]

Gatherest thou dotard at these years,
Fresh baits, fine food, for other's ears?

They have gone back that they might leap the better, and with a stronger motion make a nimbler offer amidst the multitude. Will you see how they shoot short by a corn's breadth? Let us but counterpoise the advice of two philosophers, and of two most different sects: the one writing to Idomeneus, the other to Lucilius, their friends, to divert them from the managing of affairs and greatness unto a solitary kind of life. "You have," say they, "lived hitherto swimming and floating adrift, come and die in the haven; you have given the past of your life unto light, give the remainder unto darkness." It is impossible to give over occupations if you do not also give over the fruits of them; therefore clear yourself from all care and glory. There is great danger lest the glittering of your fore-passed actions should over-much dazzle you, yea, and follow you even to your den. Together with other concupiscences, shake off that which cometh from the approbation of others. And touching your knowledge and sufficiency, take you no care of them; they will lose no whit of their effect, if yourself be anything the better for them. Remember but him who being demanded to what purpose he toiled so much about an art which could by no means come to the knowledge of many: "Few are enough for me; one will suffice, yea, less than one will content me," answered he. He said true: you and another are a sufficient theatre one for another; or you to yourself alone. Let the people be one unto you, and one be all the people to you. It is a base ambition to go about to draw

[1] Pers., *Sat.* i. 22.

glory from one's idleness and from one's lurking hole. A man must do as some wild beasts, which at the entrance of their caves will have no manner of footing seen. You must no longer seek what the world saith of you, but how you must speak unto yourself: withdraw yourself into yourself; but first prepare yourself to receive yourself. It were folly to trust to yourself if you cannot govern yourself. A man may as well fail in solitariness as in company; there are ways for it, until such time as you have framed yourself such that you dare not halt before yourself, and that you shall be ashamed of and bear a kind of respect unto yourself—*Obversentur species honestæ animo*:[1] "Let honest *ideas* still represent themselves before your mind."[2] Ever present Cato, Phocion, and Aristides unto your imagination, in whose presence even fools would hide their faults, and establish them as controllers of all your intentions. If they be disordered and untuned, their reverence will order and tune them again: they will contain you in a way to be contented with yourself; to borrow nothing but from yourself, to settle and stay your mind in assured and limited cogitations, wherein it may best please itself, and having gotten knowledge of true felicities, which according to the measure a man understands them, he shall accordingly enjoy, and with them rest satisfied, without wishing a further continuance either of life or name. Lo here the counsel of truly pure and purely true philosophy, not of a vainglorious, boasting, and prating philosophy, as is that of the two first.

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[1] Cic., *Tusc. Qu.* l. ii. [2] Sen., *Epist.* xi.

OF THE INEQUALITY THAT IS BETWEEN US.

PLUTARCH saith in some place that "he finds no such great difference between beast and beast, as he findeth diversity between man and man." He speaketh of the sufficiency of the mind and of internal qualities. Verily I find Epaminondas so far (taking him as I suppose him) from some that I know (I mean capable of common sense) as I could find in my heart to endear upon Plutarch, and say there is more difference between such and such a man than there is diversity between such a man and such a beast.

Hem vir viro quid præstat! [1]

O Sir, how much hath one
Another man outgone?

And that there be so many degrees of spirits as there are steps between heaven and earth, and as innumerable. But concerning the estimation of men, it is marvel that, except ourselves, no one thing is esteemed but for its proper qualities. We commend a horse because he is strong and nimble,

——*volucrem*
Sic laudamus equum, facili cui plurima palma
Fervet, et exultat rauco victoria circo, [2]

We praise the horse that bears most bells with flying,
And triumphs most in races hoarse with crying,

and not for his furniture; a greyhound for his swiftness, not for his collar; a hawk for her wing, not for her cranes or bells. Why do we not likewise esteem a man for that which is his own? He hath a goodly train of men following him, a stately palace to dwell in, so great credit amongst

[1] Ter., *Phor.* act v. sc. 3. [2] Juven., *Sat.* viii. 57.

men, and so much rent coming in. Alas, all that is about him and not in him. No man will buy a pig in a poke. If you cheapen a horse, you will take his saddle and clothes from him, you will see him bare and abroad; or if he be covered as in old times they wont to present them unto princes to be sold, it is only his least necessary parts, lest you should amuse yourself to consider his colour or breadth of his crupper; but chiefly to view his legs, his head, his eyes, and his foot, which are the most remarkable parts, and above all to be considered and required in him.

Regibus hic mos est, ubi equos mercantur, opertos
Inspiciunt, ne si facies, ut sæpe, decora
Molli fulta pede est, emptorem inducat hiantem,
Quod pulchræ clunes, breve quod caput, ardua cervix.[1]

This is kings' manner, when they horses buy,
They see him bare, lest if, as oft we try,
Fair face have soft hoofs, gull'd the buyer be,
They buttocks round, short head, high crest may see.

When you will esteem a man, why should you survey him all wrapped and enveloped? He then but showeth us those parts which are no wit his own, and hideth those from us by which alone his worth is to be judged. It is the goodness of the sword you seek after, and not the worth of the scabbard; for which peradventure you would not give a farthing if it want its lining. A man should be judged by himself, and not by his complements. And as an ancient saith very pleasantly: Do you know wherefore you esteem him tall? You account the height of his pattens. The base is no part of his stature; measure him without his stilts. Let him lay aside his riches and external honours, and show himself in his shirt. Hath he a body proper to his functions, sound

[1] Hor. l. i., *Sat.* ii. 86.

and cheerful? What mind hath he? Is it fair, capable and unpolluted, and happily provided with all her necessary parts? Is she rich of her own or of others' goods? Hath fortune nothing of hers to survey therein? If broad-waking she will look upon a naked sword; if she care not which way her life goeth from her, whether by the mouth or by the throat, whether it be settled, equable, and contented. It is that a man must see and consider, and thereby judge the extreme differences that are between us. Is he

> ——*sapiens, sibique imperiosus,*
> *Quem neque pauperies, neque mors, neque vincula terrent,*
> *Responsare cupidinibus, contemnere honores*
> *Fortis, et in seipso totus teres atque rotundus,*
> *Externi ne quid valeat per leve morari,*
> *In quem manca ruit semper fortuna?*[1]
>
> A wise man, of himself commander high,
> Whom want, nor death, nor bands can terrify,
> Resolv'd t' affront desires, honours to scorn,
> All in himself, close, round, and neatly-borne,
> As nothing outward on his smooth can stay,
> 'Gainst whom still fortune makes a lame assay.

Such a man is five hundred degrees beyond kingdoms and principalities; himself is a kingdom unto himself.

Compare unto him the vulgar troops of our men, stupid, base, servile, wavering, and continually floating on the tempestuous ocean of divers passions which toss and retoss the same, wholly depending of others. There is more difference than is between heaven and earth, and yet such is the blindness of our custom that we make little or no account of it. Whereas, if we consider a cottager and a king, a noble and a handicraftsman, a magistrate and a

[1] Hor. l. ii., *Sat.* vii. 83.

private man, a rich man and a poor, an extreme disparity doth immediately present itself unto our eyes, which, as a man may say, differ in nothing but in their clothes. In Thrace, the king was after a pleasant manner distinguished from his people, and who was much endeared. He had a religion apart; a god several unto himself, whom his subjects might no ways adore. It was Mercury; and he disdained their gods, which were Mars, Bacchus, and Diana; yet are they but pictures which make no essential dissemblance. For, as interlude players, you shall now see them on the stage play a king, an emperor, or a duke, but they are no sooner off the stage but they are base rascals, vagabond abjects, and porterly hirelings, which is their natural and original condition. Even so the emperor, whose glorious pomp doth so dazzle you in public. View him behind the curtain, and you see but an ordinary man, and peradventure more vile and more silly than the least of his subjects. *Ille beatus introrsum est; istius bracteata fælicitas est:*[1] "One is inwardly happy; another's felicity is plated and gilt over." Cowardice, irresolution, ambition, spite, anger, and envy move and work in him as in another; and fear, and care, and suspect haunt and follow him, even in the midst of his armed troops. Doth the ague, the megrim, or the gout spare him more than us? When age shall once seize on his shoulders, can then the tall yeomen of his guard discharge him of it? When the terror of ruthless, baleful death shall assail him, can he be comforted by the assistance of the gentlemen of his chamber? If he chance to be jealous or capricious, will our louting curtsies, or putting off of hats, bring him in tune again? His bedstead enchased all with gold and pearls hath no virtue to allay the pinching pangs of the colic.

[1] Sen., *Epist.* cxv.

Nec calidæ citius decedunt corpore febres,
Textilibus si in picturis ostroque rubenti
Iacteris, quàm si plebeia in veste cubandum est.[1]

Fevers no sooner from thy body fly
If thou on arras or red scarlet lie
Tossing, than if thou rest
On coverlets home-dressed.

The flatterers of Alexander the Great made him believe that he was the son of Jupiter; but being one day forehurt, and seeing the blood gush out of his wounds: "And what think you of this? (said he unto them). Is not this blood of a lively red hue, and merely human? Methinks it is not of that temper which Homer faineth to trill from the gods' wounds." Hermodorus the poet made certain verses in honour of Antigonus, in which he called him the son of Phœbus; to whom he replied, "My friend, he that emptieth my close-stool knoweth well there is no such matter." He is but a man at all assays. And if of himself he be a man ill-born, the empire of the whole world cannot restore him.

Whatsoever the goods of fortune are, a man must have a proper sense to favour them. It is the enjoying, and not the possessing of them, that makes us happy.

He is a fool, his taste is wallowish and distracted, he enjoyeth it no more than one that hath a great cold doth the sweetness of Greek wine, or a horse the riches of a costly faired furniture wherewith he is trapped. Even as Plato saith, "That health, beauty, strength, riches, and all things else he calleth good are equally as ill to the unjust as good to the just; and the evil contrariwise." And then, where the body and the soul are in ill plight, what need these external commodities? seeing the least prick of a needle and passion of the mind is able to deprive us of the pleasure

[1] Lucret. l. ii. 34.

of the world's monarchy. The first fit of an ague, or the first gird that the gout gave him, what avails his goodly titles of majesty?

> *Totus et argento conflatus, totus et auro:*[1]
> All made of silver fine,
> All gold pure from the mine.

Doth he not forthwith lose the remembrance of his palaces and states? If he be angry or vexed, can his principality keep him from blushing, from growing pale, from gnashing his teeth like a Bedlam? Now if it be a man of worth, and well born, his royalty and his glorious titles will add but little unto his good fortune.

He seeth they are but illusions and vain deceits. He may haply be of King Seleucus's advice: "That he who foreknew the weight of a sceptre, should he find it lying on the ground, he would not deign to take it up." This he said by reason of the weighty, irksome, and painful charges that are incident unto a good king. Truly, it is no small matter to govern others, since so many crosses and difficulties offer themselves, if we will govern ourselves well. Touching commanding of others, which in show seemeth to be so sweet, considering the imbecility of man's judgment, and the difficulty of choice in new and doubtful things, I am confidently of this opinion, that it is much more easy and plausible to follow than to guide; and that it is a great settling of the mind to be tied but to one beaten path, and to answer but for himself.

> *Ut satiùs multo jam sit, parere quietum,*
> *Quàm regere imperio res velle.*[2]
> Much better 'tis in quiet to obey,
> Than to desire with king's power all to sway.

[1] Tibul. i., *El.* vii. 71. [2] Luc. l. v. 1137.

Seeing Cyrus said, "That it belongs not to a man to command that is not of more worth than those whom he commandeth." But King Hieron in Xenophon addeth moreover, "That in truly enjoying of carnal sensualities, they are of much worse condition than private men, forasmuch as ease and facility depriveth them of that sour-sweet tickling which we find in them."

Pinguis amor nimiumque potens, in tædia nobis
Vertitur, et stomacho dulcis ut esca nocet.[1]

Fat, over-powerful love doth loathsome grow,
As fulsome sweetmeats stomachs overthrow.

Think we that high-minded men take great pleasure in music? The satiety thereof makes it rather tedious unto them. Feasts, banquets, revels, dancings, masks, and tourneys rejoice them that but seldom see them, and that have much desired to see them; the taste of which becometh cloysome and unpleasing to those that daily see and ordinarily have them. Nor do ladies tickle those that at pleasure and without suspect may be glutted with them. He that cannot stay till he be thirsty can take no pleasure in drinking. Interludes and comedies rejoice and make us merry, but to players they are tedious and tasteless. Which to prove, we see it is a delight for princes, and a recreation for them, sometimes to disguise themselves, and to take upon them a base and popular kind of life.

Nothing doth sooner breed a distaste or satiety than plenty. What longing lust would not be allayed to see three hundred women at his disposal and pleasure, as hath the Grand Turk in his Seraille? And what a desire and show of hawking had he reserved to himself from his ancestors, that never went abroad without seven thousand

[1] Ovid, *Amor.* l. ii., *El.* xix. 25.

falconers at least? Besides which, I think the lustre of greatness brings no small incommodities to the enjoying of sweeter pleasures; they lie too open and are too much in sight. And I wot not why a man should longer desire them to conceal or hide their fault; for what in us is indiscretion the people judgeth to be tyranny, contempt, and disdain of the laws in them. And besides the ready inclination unto vice, it seemeth they also add unto it the pleasure of gourmandising, and to prostrate public observances under their feet. Verily Plato in his *Gorgias* defineth him to be a tyrant that in a city hath leave and power to do whatever he list. And therefore often the show and publication of their vice hurteth more than the sin itself. Every man feareth to be spied and controlled, which they are even in their countenances and thoughts; all the people esteeming to have right and interest to judge of them. And we see that blemishes grow either lesser or bigger according to the eminence and light of the place where they are set, and that a mole or a wart in one's forehead is more apparently perceived than a scar in another place. And that is the reason why poets feign Jupiter's loves to have been effected under other countenances than his own; and of so many amorous shifts and love practices they impute to him, there is but one (as far as I remember) where he is to be seen in his greatness and majesty. But return we to Hieron: he also relateth how many incommodities he findeth in his royalty, being so barred that he cannot at his liberty travel to go whither he pleaseth, being as it were a prisoner within the limits of his country, and that in all his actions he is encircled and hemmed in with an importunate and tedious multitude. Truly, to see our princes all alone, sitting at their meat, beleaguered round with so many talkers, whisperers, and gazing beholders,

unknown what they are or whence they come, I have often rather pitied than envied them. King Alphonsus was wont to say that "burthen-bearing asses were in that in far better condition than kings; for their masters suffer them to feed at their ease, whereas kings cannot obtain that privilege of their servants." And it could never fall into my mind that it might be any special commodity to the life of a man of understanding to have a score of find-faults, pick-thanks, and controllers about his close-stool, nor that the service of a man that hath a thousand pounds rent a year, or that hath taken Casal, or defended Sienna, is more commodious or acceptable to him than that of a sufficient and well-experienced groom. Prince-like advantages are in a manner but imaginary pre-eminences. Every degree of fortune hath some image of principality. Cæsar termeth all the lords which in his time had justice in France to be kinglets, or petty kings. And truly, except the name of sire, we go very far with our kings. Look but in the provinces remote and far from the court; as, for example, in Brittany, the attending train, the flocking subjects, the number of officers, the many affairs, the diligent service, the obsequious ceremonies of a lord that liveth retired, and in his own house, brought up amongst his own servants, tenants, and followers. And note also the high pitch of his imaginations and humours, there is no greater royalty can be seen. He heareth no more talk of his master than of the Persian king, and happily but once a year; and knows but some far-stretched and old kindred or pedigree, which his secretary finds or keeps upon some ancient record or evidence. Verily our laws are very free, and the burthen of sovereignty doth scarcely concern a gentleman of France twice in his whole life. Essential and effectual subjection amongst us doth not respect any but

such as allure themselves unto it, and that affect to honour, and love to enrich themselves by such service. For he that can shroud and retire himself in his own home, and can manage and direct his house without suits in law, or quarrel with his neighbours, or domestic encumbrances, is as free as the Duke of Venice. *Paucos servitus, plures servitutem tenent:*[1] "Service holds few, but many hold service." But above all things Hieron seemeth to complain that he perceiveth himself deprived of all mutual friendship, reciprocal society, and familiar conversation, wherein consisteth the most perfect and sweetest fruit of human life. For what undoubted testimony of affection and goodwill can I expect or exact from him that, will he or nill he, oweth me all he hath, all he can? Can I make account of his humble speech, of his low lowting curtsey, or of his courteous offers, since it lieth not in his power to refuse them me? The honour we receive of those which fear and stand in awe of us, is no true honour. Such respects are rather due to royalty, to majesty, than to me.

> ——*maximum hoc regni bonum est,*
> *Quod facta domini cogitur populus sui*
> *Quàm ferre, tam laudare.*[2]
> This is chief good of princes' domination,
> Subjects are forced their sov'reign's acts and fashions
> To bear with patience, pass with commendations.

Do I not see that both the bad and the good king are served alike? That he who is hated and he that is beloved are both courted alike? And the one as much fawned upon as the other? My predecessor was served with the same appearances, and waited upon with the like ceremonies, and so shall my successor be. If my subjects offend me not, it is no testimony of any good affection. Wherefore

[1] Sen., *Epist.* xxii.

[2] Sen., *Thyest.*, act ii. sc. 1.

shall I take it in that sense, since they cannot if they would? No man followeth me for any friendship that is between him and me, inasmuch as no firm friendship can be contracted where is so small relation, so slender correspondence, and such disparity. My high degree hath excluded me from the commerce of men. There is too great an inequality and distant disproportion. They follow for countenance and of custom, or rather my fortune than myself, hoping thereby to increase theirs. Whatsoever they say, all they do unto me is but a gloss, and but dissimulation, their liberty being everywhere bridled and checked by the great power I have over them. I see nothing about me but inscrutable hearts, hollow minds, feigned looks, dissembled speeches, and counterfeit actions. His courtiers one day commended Julian the Emperor for ministering of rights and doing of justice. "I should easily grow proud," saith he, "for these praises, if they came from such as durst either accuse or discommend my contrary actions, should I commit any." All the true commodities that princes have are common unto them with men of mean fortune. It is for gods to mount winged horses, and to feed on ambrosia. They have no other sleep, nor no other appetite than ours. Their steel is of no better temper than that wherewith we arm ourselves. Their crown, their diadem can neither hide them from the sun, nor shelter them from the rain. Dioclesian, that wore one, so much reverenced and so fortunate, did voluntarily resign the same, to withdraw himself unto the pleasure of a private life; but a while after, the urgent necessity of public affairs requiring his presence, and that he should return to reassume his charge again, he answered those that solicited him unto it, "You would never undertake to persuade me to that had you but seen the goodly ranks of trees which myself have planted in mine orchard,

or the fair musk melons I have set in my garden." According to Anacharsis' opinion, "The happiest estate of a well-ordered commonwealth should be where, all other things being equally common, precedency should be measured and preferments suited according to virtue and desert, and the contrary according to vice." At what time King Pyrrhus undertook to pass into Italy, Cyneas, his wise and trusty counsellor, going about to make him perceive the vanity of his ambition, one day bespake him thus: "My good sir," said he, "to what end do you prepare for so great an enterprise?" He answered suddenly, "To make myself lord of Italy." "That done, what will you do then?" replied Cyneas. "I will then pass," said Pyrrhus, "into Gaul, and then into Spain." "And what afterwards?" "I will then invade Africa, and subdue the same; and at last, when I shall have brought all the world under my subjection, I will then take my rest, and live contented at mine ease." "Now, for God's sake, sir," replied Cyneas, "tell me what hinders you that you be not now, if so you please, in that estate? Wherefore do you not now place yourself where you mean to aspire, and save so much danger, so many hazards, and so great troubles as you interpose between both?"

Nimirum quia non bene norat quæ esset habendi
Finis, et omnino quoad crescat vera voluptas.[1]
The cause forsooth, he knew not what should be the end
Of having, nor how far true pleasure should extend.

I will conclude and shut up this treatise with an ancient verse, which I singularly applaud and deem fit to this purpose.

Mores cuique sui fingunt fortunam.[2]
Ev'ry man's manners and his mind,
His fortune to him frame and find.

[1] Lucr. l. v. [2] Corn. Nepos, *Vit. Attici.* Cic., *Paradox.* v.

OF THE INCONSTANCY OF OUR ACTIONS.

THOSE which exercise themselves in controlling human actions find no such let in any one part as to piece them together and bring them to one same lustre, for they commonly contradict one another so strangely, as it seemeth impossible they should be parcels of one warehouse. Young Marias is sometimes found to be the son of Mars, and other times the child of Venus. Pope Boniface the Eighth is reported to have entered into his charge as a fox, to have carried himself therein as a lion, and to have died like a dog. And who would think it was Nero, that lively image of cruelty, who being required to sign (as the custom was) the sentence of a criminal offender that had been condemned to die, that ever he should answer, "Oh, would to God I could never have written?" So near was his heart grieved to doom a man to death. The world is so full of such examples that every man may store himself; and I wonder to see men of understanding trouble themselves with sorting these parcels: since (meseemeth) irresolution is the most apparent and common vice of our nature, as witnesseth that famous verse of Publius the comedian:

Malum consilium est, quod mutari non potest.[1]

The counsel is but bad,
Whose change may not be had.

There is some appearance to judge a man by the most common conditions of his life, but seeing the natural instability of our customs and opinions, I have often thought that even good authors do ill and take a wrong

[1] Publius, *Mim. ap.*, Aul. Gell. l. xvii. c. 14.

course wilfully to opinionate themselves about framing a constant and solid contexture of us. They choose a universal air, and following that image range and interpret all a man's actions; which, if they cannot wrest sufficiently, they remit them unto dissimulation. Augustus hath escaped their hands; for there is so apparent, so sudden and continual, a variety of actions found in him through the course of his life, that even the boldest judges and strictest censurers have been fain to give him over, and leave him undecided. There is nothing I so hardly believe to be in man as constancy, and nothing so easy to be found in him as inconstancy. He that should distinctly and part by part judge of him, should often jump to speak truth. View all antiquity over, and you shall find it a hard matter to choose out of a dozen of men that have directed their life unto one certain, settled, and assured course, which is the surest drift of wisdom. For to comprehend all in one word, saith an ancient writer, and to embrace all the rules of our life into one, it is at all times to will, and not to will one same thing. I would not vouchsafe (saith he) to add anything, always provided the will be just; for, if it be unjust, it is impossible it should ever continue one. Verily, I have heretofore learned that vice is nothing but a disorder and want of measure, and by consequence it is impossible to fasten constancy unto it. It is a saying of Demosthenes (as some report) that consultation and deliberation is the beginning of all virtue, and constancy the end and perfection. If by reason or discourse we should take a certain way, we should then take the fairest; but no man hath thought on it.

Quod petiit, spernit, repetit quod nuper omisit
Æstuat, et vitæ disconvenit ordine toto.[1]

[1] Hor. l. i., *Epist.* i. 98.

He scorns that which he sought, seeks that he scorn'd of late,
He flows, ebbs, disagrees in his life's whole estate.

Our ordinary manner is to follow the inclination of our appetite this way and that way, on the left and on the right hand, upward and downward, according as the wind of occasions doth transport us; we never think on what we would have, but at the instant we would have it, and change as that beast that takes the colour of the place wherein it is laid. What we even now purposed we alter by-and-by, and presently return to our former bias; all is but changing, motion, and inconstancy:

Ducimur ut nervis alienis mobile lignum.[1]
So are we drawn, as wood is shoved,
By others' sinews each way moved.

We go not, but we are carried, as things that float, now gliding gently, now hulling violently, according as the water is either stormy or calm.

——*nónne videmus*
Quid sibi quisque velit nescire et quærere semper,
Commutare locum quasi onus deponere possit?[2]
See we not, every man in his thought's height
Knows not what he would have, yet seeks he straight
To change place, as he could lay down his weight?

Every day new toys, each hour new fantasies, and our humours move and fleet with the fleetings and movings of time.

Tales sunt hominum mentes, quali Pater ipse
Jupiter auctifero lustravit lumine terras.[3]
Such are men's minds, as that great God of might
Surveys the earth with increase bearing light.

We float and waver between divers opinions; we will

[1] Hor. l. ii., *Sat.* vii. 82. [2] Lucret. l. iii. 1070.
[3] Cic., *Fragm.*

nothing freely, nothing absolutely, nothing constantly. Had any man prescribed certain laws or established assured policies in his own head, in his life should we daily see to shine an equality of customs, an assured order and an infallible relation from one thing to another (Empedocles noted this deformity to be amongst the Agrigentines, that they gave themselves so over unto delights as if they should die to-morrow next, and built as if they should never die), the discourse thereof were easy to be made. As is seen in young Cato: he that touched but one step of it hath touched all. It is a harmony of well according tunes, and which cannot contradict itself. With us it is clean contrary, so many actions, so many particular judgments are there required. The surest way (in mine opinion) were to refer them unto the next circumstances, without entering into further search, and without concluding any other consequence of them. During the late tumultuous broils of our mangled estate, it was told me that a young woman not far from me had headlong cast herself out of a high window, with intent to kill herself, only to avoid the ravishment of a rascally base soldier that lay in her house, who offered to force her; and, perceiving that with the fall she had not killed herself, to make an end of her enterprise she would have cut her own throat with a knife, but that she was hindered by some that came into her. Nevertheless, having sore wounded herself, she voluntarily confessed that the soldier had yet but urged her with importunate requests, suing solicitations, and golden bribes, but she feared he would in the end have obtained his purpose by compulsion; by whose earnest speeches, resolute countenance, and gored blood (a true testimony of her chaste virtue), she might appear to be the lively pattern of another Lucrece, yet know I certainly that, both before that time and afterward,

she had been enjoyed of others upon easier composition. And as the common saying is: Fair and soft, as squeamish-honest as she seems, although you miss of your intent, conclude not rashly an inviolable chastity to be in your mistress; for a groom or a horse-keeper may find an hour to thrive in, and a dog hath a day. Antigonus having taken upon him to favour a soldier of his, by reason of his virtue and valour, commanded his physicians to have great care of him, and see whether they could recover him of a lingering and inward disease which had long tormented him, who, being perfectly cured, he, afterward perceiving him to be nothing so earnest and diligent in his affairs, demanded of him how he was so changed from himself, and become so cowardish: "Yourself, good sir," answered he, "have made me so by ridding me of those infirmities which so did grieve me that I made no account of my life." A soldier of Lucullus, having by his enemies been robbed of all he had, to revenge himself undertook a notable and desperate attempt upon them; and having recovered his losses, Lucullus conceived a very good opinion of him, and with the greatest shows of assured trust and loving-kindness he could bethink himself, made especial account of him, and in any dangerous enterprise seemed to trust and employ him only:

Verbis quæ timido quoque possent addere mentem.[1]

With words, which to a coward might
Add courage, had he any spright.

"Employ," said he unto him, "some wretch-stripped and robbed soldier,"

——quantumvis rusticus ibit,
Ibit eò quo vis, qui zonam perdidit, inquit,[2]

[1] Hor. l. ii., *Epist.* ii. 34. [2] *Ibid.*, 37.

None is, saith he, so clownish, but will on,
Where you will have him, if his purse be gone,

and absolutely refused to obey him. When we read that Mahomet, having outrageously rated Chasan, chief leader of his Janizers, because he saw his troops well-nigh defeated by the Hungarians, and he to behave himself but faintly in the fight, Chasan without making other reply, alone as he was, and without more ado, with his weapon in his hand, rushed furiously in the thickest throng of his enemies that he first met withal, of whom he was instantly slain. This may haply be deemed rather a rash conceit than a justification, and a new spite than a natural prowess. He whom you saw yesterday so boldly venturous, wonder not if you see him a dastardly meacock to-morrow next; for either anger or necessity, company or wine, a sudden fury or the clang of a trumpet, might rouse up his heart and stir up his courage. It is no heart nor courage so framed by discourse or deliberation. These circumstances have settled the same in him. Therefore it is no marvel if by other contrary circumstance he become a craven and change copy. This supple variation and easy yielding contradiction which is seen in us hath made some to imagine that we had two souls, and others two faculties; whereof every one as best she pleaseth accompanieth and doth agitate us; the one towards good, the other towards evil. Forasmuch as such a rough diversity cannot well sort and agree in one simple subject. The blast of accidents doth not only remove me according to his inclination; for, besides, I remove and trouble myself by the instability of my posture, and whosoever looketh narrowly about himself shall hardly see himself twice in the same state. Sometimes I give my soul one visage and sometimes another, according unto the posture or side I lay her in. If I speak diversely of myself it is because I look

diversely upon myself. All contrarities are found in her, according to some turn or removing, and in some fashion or other; shamefaced, bashful, insolent, chaste, luxurious, peevish, prattling, silent, fond, doting, laborious, nice, delicate, ingenious, slow, dull, froward, humorous, debonaire, wise, ignorant, false in words, true-speaking, both liberal, covetous, and prodigal. All these I perceive in some measure or other to be in me, according as I stir or turn myself; and whosoever shall heedfully survey and consider himself shall find this volubility and discordance to be in himself, yea and in his very judgment. I have nothing to say entirely, simply, and with solidity of myself, without confusion, disorder, blending, mingling, and, in one word, Distinguo is the most universal part of my logic. Although I ever purpose to speak good of good, and rather to interpret those things that will bear it, unto a good sense; yet is it that the strangeness of our condition admitteth that we are often urged to do well by vice itself, if well-doing were not judged by the intention only. Therefore may not a courageous act conclude a man to be valiant. He that is so, when just occasion serveth, shall ever be so, and upon all occasions. If it were an habitude of virtue and not a sudden humour, it would make a man equally resolute at all essays, in all accidents. Such alone, as in company; such in a single combat, as in a set battle. For whatsoever some say, valour is all alike, and not one in the street or town, and another in the camp or field. As courageously should a man bear a sickness in his bed as a hurt in the field, and fear death no more at home in his house than abroad in an assault. We should not then see one same man enter the breach, or charge his enemy with an assured and undoubted fierceness, and afterward having escaped that, to vex, to grieve and torment himself like

unto a silly woman, or faint-hearted milksop for the loss of a suit, or death of a child. If one chance to be carelessly base-minded in his infancy, and constantly resolute in poverty; if he be timorously fearful at sight of a barber's razor, and afterward stoutly undismayed against his enemies' swords; the action is commendable, but not the man. Divers Grecians (saith Cicero) cannot endure to look their enemy in the face, yet are most constant in their sicknesses; whereas the Cimbrians and Celtiberians are mere contrary. *Nihil enim potest esse æquabile, quod non a certa ratione proficiscatur.*[1] "For nothing can bear itself even which proceedeth not from resolved reason." There is no valour more extreme in its kind than that of Alexander; yet it is but in species, nor everywhere sufficiently full and universal. As incomparable as it is, it hath its blemishes, which is the reason that in the idlest suspicions he apprehendeth at the conspiracies of his followers against his life, we see him so earnestly to vex and so desperately to trouble himself. In search and pursuit whereof he demeaneth himself with so vehement and indiscreet an injustice, and with such a demiss fear, that even his natural reason is thereby subverted. Also the superstition wherewith he is so thoroughly tainted beareth some show of pusillanimity. And the unlimited excess of the repentance he showed for the murder of Clitus is also a witness of the inequality of his courage. Our matters are but parcels huddled up and pieces patched together, and we endeavour to acquire honour by false means and untrue tokens. Virtue will not be followed but by herself; and if at any time we borrow her mask, upon some other occasion she will as soon pull it from our face. It is a lively hue and strong dye, if the soul be once dyed with the same

[1] Cic., *Tusc. Qu.* ii. c. 27.

perfectly, and which will never fade or be gone, except it carry the skin away with it. Therefore to judge a man we must a long time follow and very curiously mark his steps; whether constancy do wholly subsist and continue upon her own foundation in him. *Cui vivendi via considerata atque provisa est:*[1] "Who hath forecast and considered the way of life;" whether the variety of occurrences make him change his pace (I mean his way, for his pace may either be hastened or slowed) let him run on; such a one (as sayeth the impresse of our good Talbot) goeth before the wind. It is no marvel (saith an old writer) that hazard hath such power over us, since we live by hazard. It is impossible for him to dispose of his particular actions that hath not in gross directed his life unto one certain end. It is impossible for him to range all pieces in order that hath not a plot or form of the total frame in his head. What availeth the provision of all sorts of colours unto one that knows not what he is to draw. No man makes any certain design of his life, and we deliberate of it but by parcels. A skilful archer ought first to know the mark he aimeth at, and then apply his hand, his bow, his string, his arrow, and his motion accordingly. Our counsels go astray because they are not rightly addressed, and have no fixed end. No wind makes for him that hath no intended port to sail unto. As for me, I allow not greatly of that judgment which some made of Sophocles, and to have concluded him sufficient in the managing of domestic matters, against the accusation of his own son, only by the sight of one of his tragedies. Nor do I commend the conjecture of the Parians, sent to reform the Milesians, as sufficient to the consequence they drew thence. In visiting and surveying the isle, they marked the lands that were best husbanded, and observed

[1] Cic., *Parad.* v.

the country houses that were best governed. And having registered the names of their owners, and afterward made an assembly of the townsmen of the city, they named and instituted those owners as new governors and magistrates, judging and concluding that being good husbands and careful of their household affairs, they must consequently be so of public matters. We are all framed of flaps and patches, and of so shapeless and diverse a contexture that every piece and every moment playeth its part. And there is as much difference found between us and ourselves as there is between ourselves and others. *Magnam rem puta, unum hominem agere:* "Esteem it a great matter to play but one man."

Since ambition may teach men both valour, temperance, liberality, yea and justice; since covetousness may settle in the mind of a shop prentice-boy, brought up in ease and idleness, a dreadless assurance to leave his home-bred ease, and forego his place of education, and in a small barque to yield himself unto the mercy of blustering waves, merciless winds, and wrathful Neptune; and that it also teacheth discretion and wisdom; and that Venus herself ministereth resolution and hardiness unto tender youth as yet subject to the discipline of the rod, and teacheth the ruthless soldier the soft and tenderly effeminate heart of women in their mother's laps—

> *Hac duce custodes furtim transgressa jacentes,*
> *Ad juvenem tenebris sola puella venit.*[1]
>
> The wench by stealeth her lodg'd guards having stript,
> By this guide, sole, i'th dark, to'th yonker skipt.

It is no part of a well-grounded judgment simply to judge ourselves by our exterior actions. A man must thoroughly

[1] Tib. l. ii., *Eleg.* i. 75.

sound himself, and dive into his heart, and there see by what wards or springs the motions stir. But forsomuch as it is a hazardous and high enterprise, I would not have so many to meddle with it as do.

OF DRUNKENNESS.

THE world is nothing but variety and dissemblance. The vices are all alike, inasmuch as they are all vices. And so do haply the Stoics mean it. But though they are equally vices, they are not equal vices; and that he who hath started a hundred steps beyond the limits

> *Quos ultra citraque nequit consistere rectum,*[1]
> On this side, or beyond the which,
> No man can hold a right true pitch—

is not of worse condition than he that is ten steps short of it, is no whit credible; and that sacrilege is not worse than the stealing of a colewort out of a garden.

> *Nec vincet ratio, tantumdem ut peccet, idemque,*
> *Qui teneros caules alieni fregerit horti,*
> *Et qui nocturnus divum sacra legerit.*[2]
>
> No reason can evict, as great or same sin taints
> Him that breaks in another's garden tender plants,
> And him that steals by night things consecrate to saints.

There is as much diversity in that as in any other thing. The confusion of order and measure of crimes is dangerous. Murderers, traitors, and tyrants have too much gain by it; it is no reason their conscience should be eased, in that

[1] Hor. l. i., *Sat.* i. 107. [2] Hor. l. i., *Sat.* iii. 115.

some other is either idle or lascivious, or less assiduous unto devotion. Every man poiseth upon his fellow's sin, and elevates his own. Even teachers do often range it ill in my conceit. As Socrates said, that the chiefest office of wisdom was to distinguish goods and evils. We others, to whom the best is ever in vice, should say the like of knowledge to distinguish vices, without which, and that very exact, both virtuous and wicked men remain confounded and unknown. Now drunkenness amongst others appeareth to me a gross and brutish vice. The mind hath more part elsewhere; and some vices there are which (if it may lawfully be spoken) have a kind of I wot not what generosity in them. Some there are that have learning, diligence, valour, prudence, wit, cunning, dexterity, and subtlety joined with them; whereas this is merely corporal and terrestrial. And the grossest and rudest nation that liveth amongst us at this day is only that which keepeth it in credit. Other vices but alter and distract the understanding, whereas this utterly subverteth the same, and astonisheth the body.

> *——cûm vini vis penetravit,*
> *Consequitur gravitas membrorum, præpediuntur*
> *Crura vacillanti, tardescit lingua, madet mens,*
> *Nant oculi, clamor, singultus, jurgia gliscunt.*[1]
>
> When once the force of wine hath inly pierced,
> Limb's heaviness is next, legs fain would go,
> But reeling cannot, tongue drawls, minds dispersed,
> Eyes swim, cries, hiccups, brabbles grow.

The worst estate of man is where he loseth the knowledge and government of himself. And amongst other things it is said that as must wine boiling and working in a vessel, works and sends upwards whatever it containeth

[1] Lucret., l. iii. 479.

in the bottom, so doth wine cause those that drink excessively of it to work up and break out their most concealed secrets.

——*tu sapientium*
Curas, et arcanum jocoso
Consilium retegis Lyæo.[1]
Thou (wine-cup) doest by wine reveal
The cares which wise men would conceal,
And close drifts at a merry meal.

Josephus reporteth that by making an ambassador to tipple-square, whom his enemies had sent unto him, he wrested all his secrets out of him. Nevertheless, Augustus having trusted Lucius Piso, that conquered Thrace, with the secretest affairs he had in hand, had never cause to be discontent with him; nor Tiberius with Cossus, to whom he imparted all his most serious counsels, although we know them both to have so given themselves to drinking of wine that they were often fain to be carried from the Senate, and both were reputed notable drunkards.

——*Hesterno inflatum venas de more Lyæo.*[2]
Veins puffed up, as it used alway
By wine which was drunk yesterday.

And as faithfully as the complot and purpose to kill Cæsar committed unto Cimber, who would daily be drunk with quaffing of wine, as unto Cassius, that drunk nothing but water, whereupon he answered very pleasantly, "What! shall I bear a tyrant that am not able to bear wine?" We see our carousing toss-pot German soldiers, when they are most plunged in their cups and as drunk as rats, to have perfect remembrance of their quarter, of the watchword, and of their files.

It is assured that antiquity hath not greatly described

[1] Hor. l. iii., *Od.* xxi. 14. [2] Virg., *Buc.* Ecl. vi. 15.

this vice. The compositions of divers philosophers speak but sparingly of it. Yea, and some of the Stoics deem it not amiss for man sometimes to take his liquor roundly, and drink drunk, thereby to recreate his spirits.

> *Hoc quoque virtutum quondam certamine magnum*
> *Socratem palmam promeruisse ferunt.*[1]
>
> They say, in this too, Socrates the wise,
> And great in virtue's combats, bares the prize.

Cato, that strict censurer and severe corrector of others, hath been reproved for much drinking.

> *Narratur et prisci Catonis*
> *Sæpe mero caluisse virtus.*[2]
>
> 'Tis said, by use of wine repeated,
> Old Cato's virtue oft was heated.

Cyrus, that so far-renowned king, amongst his other commendations, meaning to prefer himself before his brother Artaxerxes, and get the start of him, allegeth that he could drink better and tipple more than he. And amongst the best policed and formalest nations, the custom of drinking and pledging of healths was much in use. I have heard Silvius, that excellent physician of Paris, affirm that to preserve the vigour of our stomach from impairing, it is not amiss once a month to rouse up the same by this excess of drinking, and lest it should grow dull and stupid thereby to stir it up. And it is written that the Persians, after they had well tippled, were wont to consult of their chiefest affairs. My taste, my relish, and my complexion are sharper enemies unto this vice than my discourse, for besides that I captivate more easily my conceits under the authority of ancient opinions, indeed I find it to be a fond, a stupid, and a base kind of vice, but less malicious and hurtful

[1] Cor. Gal., *El.* i. [2] Hor. l. iii., *Od.* xxi. 11.

than others; all which shock and with a sharper edge wound public society. And if we cannot give ourselves any pleasure except (as they say) it cost us something, I find this vice to be less chargeable unto our conscience than others; besides, it is not hard to be prepared, difficult to be found; a consideration not to be despised. A man well advanced in years and dignity, amongst three principal commodities he told me to have remaining in life, counted this; and where shall a man more rightly find it than amongst the natural? But he took it ill, delicateness and the choice of wines is therein to be avoided. If you prepare your voluptuousness to drink it with pleasure and daintily neat, you tie yourself unto an inconvenience to drink it other than is always to be had. A man must have a milder, a loose and freer taste. To be a true drinker, a man should not have so tender and squeamish a palate. The Germans do in a manner drink equally of all sorts of wine with like pleasure. Their end is rather to gulp it down freely than to taste it kindly. And to say truth, they have it better cheap. Their voluptuousness is more plenteous and fuller. Secondarily, to drink after the French manner, as two draughts and moderately, is over-much to restrain the favours of that god. There is more time and constancy required thereunto. Our forefathers were wont to spend whole nights in that exercise, yea oftentimes they joined whole long days unto them. And a man must proportion his ordinary more large and firm. I have in my days seen a principal lord, a man of great employment and enterprises, and famous for good success, who without straining himself and eating but an ordinary meal's meat, was wont to drink little less than five bottles of wine, yet at his rising seemed to be nothing distempered, but rather, as we have found to our no small cost in managing our

affairs, over-wise and considerate. The pleasure of that whereof we would make account in the course of our life ought to be employed longer space. It were necessary, as shop-boys or labouring people, that we should refuse no occasion to drink and continually to have this desire in our mind. It seemeth that we daily shorten the use of this, and that in our houses (as I have seen in mine infancy) breakfasts, nunchions, and beavers should be more frequent and often used than nowadays they are. And should we thereby in any sort proceed towards amendment? No, verily. But it may be that we have much more given ourselves over unto paillardise and all manner of luxury than our fathers were.

The incommodities of age, which need some help and refreshing, might with some reason beget in me a desire or longing of this faculty, for it is in a man the last pleasure which the course of our years stealeth upon us. Good fellows say that natural heat is first taken in our feet; that properly belongeth to infancy. From thence it ascendeth unto the middle region, where it is settled and continueth a long time, and in mine opinion there produceth the only true and moving pleasures of this corporal life. Other delight and sensualities in respect of that do but sleep. In the end, like unto a vapour which by little and little exhaleth and mounteth aloft, it comes unto the throat and there makes her last abode. Yet could I never conceive how any man may either increase or prolong the pleasure of drinking beyond thirst, and in his imagination frame an artificial appetite, and against nature. My stomach could not well reach so far; it is very much troubled to come to an end of that which it takes for his need. My constitution is to make no account of drinking but to succeed meat, and therefore do I ever make my last draught the greatest. And forasmuch as in age we have the roof of our mouths

commonly furred with rheum, or distempered, distasted, and altered through some other evil constitution, wine seemeth better unto us and of a quicker relish, according as our pores be either more or less open and washed. At least I seldom relish the same very well, except it be the first draught I take. Anacharsis wondered to see the Grecians drink in greater glasses at the end of their meals than in the beginning. It was (as I imagine) for the very same reason that the Germans do it, who never begin to carouse but when they have well fed. Plato forbiddeth children to drink any wine before they be eighteen years of age, and to be drunk before they come to forty. But to such as have once attained the age of forty, he is content to pardon them, if they chance to delight themselves with it, and alloweth them somewhat largely to blend the influence of Dionysius in their banquets, that good god who bestoweth cheerfulness upon men, and youth unto aged men, who layeth and assuageth the passions of the mind, even as iron is made flexible by the fire; and in his profitable laws holds drinking meetings or quaffing companies as necessary and commendable (always provided there be a chief leader amongst them to contain and order them), drunkenness being a good and certain trial of every man's nature; and therewithal proper to give aged men the courage to make merry in dancing and music; things allowable and profitable, and such as they dare not undertake being sober and settled. That wine is capable to supply the mind with temperance and the body with health. Notwithstanding, these restrictions, partly borrowed of the Carthaginians, please him well. Let those forbear it that are going about any expedition of war. Let every magistrate and all judges abstain from it at what time they are to execute their charge, and to consult of public affairs. Let none bestow

the day in drinking, as the time that is due unto more serious negotiations, nor the nights wherein a man intendeth to get children. It is reported that Stilpo the philosopher, finding himself surcharged with age, did purposely hasten his end by drinking of pure wine. The like cause (though not wittingly) did also suffocate the vital forces, crazed through old age, of the philosopher Arcesilaus. But it is an old and pleasant question whether a wise man's mind were like to yield unto the force of wine.

Si munitæ adhibet vim sapientiæ.[1]

If unresisted force it bends,
'Gainst wisdom which itself defends.

Unto what vanity doth the good opinion we have of ourselves provoke us? The most temperate and perfect mind of the world finds it too great a task to keep herself upright, lest she fall by her own weakness. Of a thousand there is not one perfectly righteous and settled but one instant of her life, and question might be made whether according to her natural condition she might at any time be so. But to join constancy unto it is her last perfection. I mean if nothing should shock her, which a thousand accidents may do. Lucretius, that famous poet, may philosophise and bandy at his pleasure: lo where he lieth senseless of an amorous potion. Thinks any man that an apoplexy cannot as soon astonish Socrates as a poor labouring man? Some of them have by the force of a sickness forgot their own names, and a slight hurt hath overthrown the judgment of others. Let him be as wise as he can, in the end he is but a man; what is more frail, more miserable, or more vain? Wisdom forceth not our natural conditions.

He must seal his eyes against the blow that threateneth

[1] Hor., *Od.* xxviii. 4.

him; being near the brim of a precipice, he must cry out like a child. Nature having purposed to reserve these light marks of her authority unto herself, inexpugnable unto our reason, and to the Stoic virtue; to teach him his mortality and our insipidity. He waxeth pale for fear, he blusheth for shame, he groaneth feeling the colic, if not with a desperate and loud-roaring voice, yet with a low, smothered, and hoarse-sounding noise. Giddy-headed poets, that fain what they list, dare not so much as discharge their heroes from tears.

Let it suffice him to bridle his affections and moderate his inclinations; for it is not in him to bear them away. Plutarch himself, who is so perfect and excellent a judge of human actions, seeing Brutus and Torquatus to kill their own children, remaineth doubtful whether virtue could reach so far, and whether such men were not rather moved by some other passion. All actions beyond the ordinary limits are subject to some sinister interpretation. Forasmuch as our taste doth no more come unto that which is above it than to that which is under it. Let us omit that other sect which maketh open profession of fierceness. But when in the very same sect which is esteemed the most demiss we hear the brags of Metrodorus: *Occupavi te, Fortuna, atque cepi; omnesque aditus tuos interclusi, ut ad me aspirare non posses*:[1] "Fortune, I have prevented, caught, and overtaken thee. I have mured and rammed up all thy passages, whereby thou mightest attain unto me:" when Anaxarchus, by the appointment of Nicocreon, the tyrant of Cipres, being laid along in a trough of stone, and smitten with iron sledges, ceaseth not to cry out, "Strike, smite, and break; it is not Anaxarchus, it is but his vail you martyr so:"

[1] Metr., *Cic. Tusc. Qu.* l. v.

when we hear our martyrs in the midst of a flame cry aloud unto the tyrant, "This side is roasted enough, chop it, eat it, it is full roasted, now begin on the other:" when in *Josephus* we hear a child all to rent with biting snippers, and pierced with the breath of Antiochus, to defy him to death, cry with a loud-assured and undismayed voice, "Tyrant, thou losest time; lo, I am still at mine ease; where is that smarting pain, where are those torments, wherewith whilom thou didst so threaten me? My constancy doth more trouble thee than I have feeling of thy cruelty. Oh, faint-hearted varlet, dost thou yield when I gather strength? Make me to faint or shrink, cause me to moan or lament, force me to yield and sue for grace if thou canst; encourage thy satellites, harden thy executioners; lo, how they droop and have no more power; arm them, strengthen them, flesh them," verily we must needs confess there is some alteration and some fury (how holy soever) in those minds, when we come unto these Stoic evasions: I had rather be furious than voluptuous; the saying of Antisthenes, "Rather would I be mad than merry;" when Sextius telleth us, he had rather be surprised with pain than sensuality; when Epicurus undertakes to have the gout to wantonise and fawn upon him, and refusing ease and health, with a hearty cheerfulness defy all evils, and scornfully despising less sharp griefs, disdaining to grapple with them, he blithely desireth and calleth for sharper, more forcible and worthy of him.

Spumantemque dari, pecora inter inertia, votis
Optat aprum, aut fulvum descendere monte leonem;[1]
He wish'd, 'mongst heartless beasts, some foaming boar
Or mountain lion would come down and roar.

[1] Virg., *Æn.* l. iv. 158.

Who would not judge them to be pranks of a courage removed from his wonted seat? Our mind cannot out of her place attain so high. She must quit it and raise herself aloft, and taking the bridle in her teeth, carry and transport her man so far that afterwards he wonders at himself, and rests amazed at his actions. As in exploits of war, the heat and earnestness of the fight doth often provoke the noble-minded soldiers to adventure on so dangerous passages that afterwards, being better advised, they are the first to wonder at it. As also poets are often surprised and rapt with admiration at their own labours, and forget the trace by which they pass so happy a career. It is that which some term a fury or madness in them. And as Plato saith that a settled and reposed man doth in vain knock at Poesy's gate, Aristotle likewise saith that no excellent mind is freely exempted from some or other intermixture of folly. And he hath reason to call any startling or extraordinary conceit (how commendable soever), and which exceedeth our judgment and discourse, folly. Forsomuch as wisdom is an orderly and regular managing of the mind, and which she addresseth with measure, and conducteth with proportion, and taketh her own word for it. Plato disputeth thus: that the faculty of prophesying and divination is far above us, and that when we treat it we must be beside ourselves: our wisdom must be darkened and overshadowed by sleep, by sickness, or by drowsiness; or by some celestial fury ravished from her own seat.

OF BOOKS.

I MAKE no doubt but it shall often befall me to speak of things which are better, and with more truth, handled by such as are their crafts-masters. Here is simply an essay of my natural faculties, and no whit of those I have acquired. And he that shall tax me with ignorance shall have no great victory at my hands; for hardly could I give others reasons for my discourses that give none unto myself, and am not well satisfied with them. He that shall make search after knowledge, let him seek it where it is: there is nothing I profess less. These are but my fantasies, by which I endeavour not to make things known but by myself. They may haply one day be known unto me, or have been at other times, according as fortune hath brought me where they were declared or manifested. But I remember them no more. And if I be a man of some reading, yet I am a man of no remembering, I conceive no certainty, except it be to give notice how far the knowledge I have of it doth now reach. Let no man busy himself about the matters, but on the fashion I give them. Let that which I borrow be surveyed, and then tell me whether I have made good choice of ornaments to beautify and set forth the invention which ever comes from me. For I make others to relate (not after mine own fantasy, but as it best falleth out) what I cannot so well express, either through unskill of language or want of judgment. I number not my borrowings, but I weigh them; and if I would have made their number to prevail, I would have had twice as many. They are all, or almost all, of so famous and ancient names that methinks they sufficiently name themselves without me. If in reasons, comparisons, and arguments I transplant any into my soil, or confound them with mine own, I purposely

conceal the author, thereby to bridle the rashness of these hasty censures that are so headlong cast upon all manner of compositions, namely, young writings of men yet living; and in vulgar that admit all the world to talk of them, and which seemeth to convince the conception and public design alike. I will have them to give Plutarch a bob upon mine own lips, and vex themselves in wronging Seneca in me. My weakness must be hidden under such great credits. I will love him that shall trace or unfeather me; I mean through clearness of judgment, and by the only distinction of the force and beauty of my discourses. For myself, who for want of memory am ever to seek how to try and refine them by the knowledge of their country, know perfectly, by measuring mine own strength, that my soil is no way capable of some over-precious flowers that therein I find set, and that all the fruits of my increase could not make it amends. This am I bound to answer for if I hinder myself, if there be either vanity or fault in my discourses that I perceive not, or am not able to discern if they be shown me. For many faults do often escape our eyes; but the infirmity of judgment consisteth in not being able to perceive them when another discovereth them unto us. Knowledge and truth may be in us without judgment, and we may have judgment without them; yea, the acknowledgment of ignorance is one of the best and surest testimonies of judgment that I can find. I have no other sergeant of band to marshal my rhapsodies than fortune. And look how my humours or conceits present themselves, so I shuffle them up. Sometimes they press out thick and threefold, and other times they come out languishing one by one. I will have my natural and ordinary pace seen as loose and as shuffling as it is. As I am, so I go on plodding. And besides these are matters that a man may not be ignorant

of, and rashly and casually to speak of them. I would wish to have a more perfect understanding of things, but I will not purchase it so dear as it cost. My intention is to pass the remainder of my life quietly and not laboriously, in rest and not in care. There is nothing I will trouble or vex myself about, no not for science itself, what esteem soever it be of. I do not search and toss over books but for an honester recreation to please, and pastime to delight myself; or if I study, I only endeavour to find out the knowledge that teacheth or handleth the knowledge of myself, and which may instruct me how to die well and how to live well.

Has meus ad metas sudet oportet equus.[1]

My horse must sweating run,
That this goal may be won.

If, in reading, I fortune to meet with any difficult points, I fret not myself about them, but after I have given them a charge or two I leave them as I found them. Should I earnestly plod upon them I should lose both time and myself, for I have a skipping wit. What I see not at the first view, I shall less see it if I opinionate myself upon it. I do nothing without blitheness; and an over-obstinate continuation and plodding contention doth dazzle, dull, and weary the same; my sight is thereby confounded and diminished. I must therefore withdraw it, and at fits go to it again. Even as to judge well of the lustre of scarlet we are taught to cast our eyes over it, in running over by divers glances, sudden glimpses, and reiterated reprisings. If one book seem tedious unto me I take another, which I follow not with any earnestness, except it be at such hours as I am idle, or that I am weary with doing nothing. I am not greatly affected to new books, because ancient authors are,

[1] Propert. l. iv., *El.* i. 70.

in my judgment, more full and pithy; nor am I much addicted to Greek books, forasmuch as my understanding cannot well rid his work with a childish and apprentice intelligence. Amongst modern books merely pleasant, I esteem Boccaccio's *Decameron*, Rabelais, and the kisses of John the second (if they may be placed under this title), worth the painstaking to read them. As for *Amadis* and such-like trash of writings, they had never the credit so much as to allure my youth to delight in them. This I will say more, either boldly or rashly, that this old and heavy-passed mind of mine will no more be pleased with Aristotle, or tickled with good Ovid; his facility and quaint inventions, which heretofore have so ravished me, they can nowadays scarcely entertain me. I speak my mind freely of all things, yea, of such as peradventure exceed my sufficiency, and that no way I hold to be of my jurisdiction. What my conceit is of them is told also to manifest the proportion of my insight, and not the measure of things. If at any time I find myself distasted of Plato's *Axiochus*, as of a forceless work, due regard had to such an author, my judgment doth nothing believe itself. It is not so foolhardy, or self-conceited, as it durst dare to oppose itself against the authority of so many other famous ancient judgments which he reputeth his regents and masters, and with whom he had rather err. He chafeth with, and condemneth himself, either to rely on the superficial sense, being unable to pierce into the centre, or to view the thing by some false lustre. He is pleased only to warrant himself from trouble and unruliness. As for weakness, he acknowledgeth and ingeniously avoweth the same. He thinks to give a just interpretation to the appearances which his conception presents unto him, but they are shallow and imperfect. Most of Æsop's fables have divers senses, and

several interpretations. Those which mythologise them, choose some kind of colour well suiting with the fable; but for the most part, it is no other than the first and superficial gloss. There are others more quick, more sinewy, more essential, and more internal, into which they could never penetrate; and thus think I with them. But to follow my course, I have ever deemed that in poesy, Virgil, Lucretius, Catullus, and Horace, do doubtless by far hold the first rank; and especially Virgil in his *Georgics*, which I esteem to be the most accomplished piece of work of poesy. In comparison of which one may easily discern that there are some passages in the *Æneid* to which the author (had he lived) would no doubt have given some review or correction. The fifth book whereof is (in my mind) the most absolutely perfect. I also love Lucan, and willingly read him, not so much for his style as for his own worth and truth of his opinion and judgment. As for good Terence, I allow the quaintness and grace of his Latin tongue, and judge him wonderful conceited and apt, lively to represent the motions and passions of the mind, and the condition of our manners; our actions make me often remember him. I can never read him so often but still I discover some new grace and beauty in him. Those that lived about Virgil's time complained that some would compare Lucretius unto him. I am of opinion that verily it is an unequal comparison; yet can I hardly assure myself in this opinion whensoever I find myself entangled in some notable passage of Lucretius. If they were moved at this comparison, what would they say now of the fond, hardy, and barbarous stupidity of those which nowadays compare Ariosto unto him? Nay, what would Ariosto say of it himself?

O seclum insipiens et infacetum.[1]

[1] Catul., *Epig.* xl. 8.

O age that hath no wit,
And small conceit in it.

I think our ancestors had also more reason to cry out against those that blushed not to equal Plautus unto Terence (who makes more show to be a gentleman) than Lucretius unto Virgil. This one thing doth greatly advantage the estimation and preferring of Terence, that the father of the Roman eloquence, of men of his quality doth so often make mention of him; and the censure which the chief judge of the Roman poets giveth of his companion. It hath often come into my mind how such as in our days give themselves to composing of comedies (as the Italians, who are very happy in them) employ three or four arguments of Terence and Plautus to make up one of theirs. In one only comedy they will huddle up five or six of Boccaccio's tales. That which makes them so to charge themselves with matter is the distrust they have of their own sufficiency, and that they are not able to undergo so heavy a burden with their own strength. They are forced to find a body on which they may rely and lean themselves; and wanting matter of their own wherewith to please us, they will have the story or tale to busy and amuse us; whereas in my author's it is clean contrary: the elegancies, the perfections, and ornaments of his manner of speech make us neglect and lose the longing for his subject. His quaintness and grace do still retain us to him. He is everywhere pleasantly conceited,

Liquidus puroque simillimus amni,[1]

So clearly neat, so neatly clear,
As he a fine pure river were,

and doth so replenish our mind with his graces that we forget those of the fable. The same consideration draws

[1] Hor. l. ii., *Epist.* ii. 120.

me somewhat further. I perceive that good and ancient fantastical, new-fangled, Spagniolised and Petrarchistical poets have shunned the affectation and inquest, not only of elevations, but also of more sweet and sparing inventions, which are the ornament of all the poetical works of succeeding ages. Yet is there no competent judge that findeth them wanting in those ancient ones, and that doth not much more admire that smoothly equal neatness, continued sweetness, and flourishing comeliness of Catullus's epigrams, than all the sharp quips and witty girds wherewith Martial doth whet and embellish the conclusions of his. It is the same reason I spake of erewhile, as Martial of himself. *Minus illi ingenio laborandum fuit, in cujus locum materia successerat.*[1] "He needed the less work with his wit, in place whereof matter came in supply." The former without being moved or pricked cause themselves to be heard loud enough; they have matter to laugh at everywhere, and need not tickle themselves; whereas these must have foreign help; according as they have less spirit, they must have more body. They leap on horseback because they are not sufficiently strong in their legs to march on foot. Even as in our dances, those base-conditioned men that keep dancing schools, because they are unfit to represent the port and decency of our nobility, endeavour to get commendation by dangerous lofty tricks, and other strange tumbler-like frisks and motions. And some ladies make a better show of their countenances in those dances, wherein are divers changes, cuttings, turnings, and agitations of the body, than in some dances of state and gravity, where they need but simply to tread a natural measure, represent an unaffected carriage, and their ordinary grace. And as I have also seen some excellent lourdans or clowns, attired in their ordinary

[1] Mart., *Præf.* l. viii.

workaday clothes, and with a common homely countenance, afford us all the pleasure that may be had from their art; but prentices and learners that are not of so high a form besmear their faces, to disguise themselves, and in motions counterfeit strange visages and antics to induce us to laughter. This my conception is nowhere better discerned than in the comparison between Virgil's *Æneid* and *Orlando Furioso*. The first is seen to soar aloft with full-spread wings, and with so high and strong a pitch, ever following his point; the other faintly to hover and flutter from tale to tale, and as it were skipping from bough to bough, always distrusting his own wings, except it be for some short flight, and for fear his strength and breath should fail him, to sit down at every field's end.

Excursusque breves tentat.[1]

Out-leaps sometimes he doth assay,
But very short, and as he may.

Lo here then, concerning this kind of subjects, what authors please me best. As for my other lesson, which somewhat more mixeth profit with pleasure, whereby I learn to range my opinions and address my conditions, the books that serve me thereunto are Plutarch (since he spoke French) and Seneca; both have this excellent commodity for my humour, that the knowledge I seek in them is there so scatteringly and loosely handled, that whosoever readeth them is not tied to plod long upon them, whereof I am incapable. And so are Plutarch's little works and Seneca's *Epistles*, which are the best and most profitable parts of their writings. It is no great matter to draw me to them, and I leave them where I list. For they succeed not and depend not one of another. Both

[1] Virg., *Æn.* l. iv. 194.

jump and suit together, in most true and profitable opinions. And fortune brought them both into the world in one age. Both were tutors unto two Roman emperors; both were strangers, and came from far countries; both rich and mighty in the commonwealth, and in credit with their masters. Their instruction is the prime and cream of philosophy, and presented with a plain, unaffected, and pertinent fashion. Plutarch is more uniform and constant; Seneca more waving and diverse. This doth labour, force, and extend himself, to arm and strengthen virtue against weakness, fear, and vicious desires; the other seemeth nothing so much to fear their force or attempt, and in a manner scorneth to hasten or change his pace about them, and to put himself upon his guard. Plutarch's opinions are Platonical, gentle, and accommodable unto civil society; Seneca's stoical and epicurean, further from common use, but in my conceit more proper, particular, and more solid. It appeareth in Seneca that he somewhat inclineth and yieldeth to the tyranny of the emperors which were in his days, for I verily believe it is with a forced judgment he condemneth the cause of those noble-minded murderers of Cæsar; Plutarch is everywhere free and open-hearted; Seneca full-fraught with points and sallies; Plutarch stuffed with matters. The former doth move and inflame you more; the latter content, please, and pay you better. This doth guide you, the other drive you on. As for Cicero, of all his works, those that treat of philosophy (namely moral) are they which best serve my turn and square with my intent. But boldly to confess the truth (for since the bars of impudence were broken down all curbing is taken away), his manner of writing seemeth very tedious unto me, as doth all such-like stuff. For his prefaces, definitions, divisions, and etymologies consume the greatest part of his

works; whatsoever quick, witty, and pithy conceit is in him is surcharged and confounded by those his long and far-fetched preambles. If I bestow but one hour in reading them, which is much for me, and let me call to mind what substance or juice I have drawn from him, for the most part I find nothing but wind and ostentation in him; for he is not yet come to the arguments which make for his purpose, and reasons that properly concern the knot or pith I seek after. These logical and Aristotelian ordinances are not available for me, who only endeavour to become more wise and sufficient, and not more witty or eloquent. I would have one begin with the last point: I understand sufficiently what death and voluptuousness are; let not a man busy himself to anatomise them. At the first reading of a book I seek for good and solid reasons that may instruct me how to sustain their assaults. It is neither grammatical subtleties nor logical quiddities, nor the witty contexture of choice words or arguments and syllogisms, that will serve my turn. I like those discourses that give the first charge to the strongest part of the doubt; his are but flourishes, and languish everywhere. They are good for schools, at the bar, or for orators and preachers, where we may slumber; and though we wake a quarter of an hour after, we may find and trace him soon enough. Such a manner of speech is fit for those judges that a man would corrupt by hook or crook, by right or wrong, or for children and the common people, unto whom a man must tell all, and see what the event would be. I would not have a man go about and labour by circumlocutions to induce and win me to attention, and that (as our heralds or criers do) they shall ring out their words: Now hear me, now listen, or ho-yes. The Romans in their religion were wont to say "Hoc age," which in ours we say "Sursum corda." There

are so many lost words for me. I come ready prepared from my house. I need no allurement nor sauce, my stomach is good enough to digest raw meat. And whereas with these preparatives and flourishes, or preambles, they think to sharpen my taste or stir my stomach, they cloy and make it wallowish. Shall the privilege of times excuse me from this sacrilegious boldness, to deem Plato's Dialogisms to be as languishing, by over-filling and stuffing his matter? And to bewail the time that a man who had so many thousands of things to utter, spends about so many, so long, so vain, and idle interlocutions and preparatives? My ignorance shall better excuse me, in that I see nothing in the beauty of his language. I generally inquire after books that use sciences, and not after such as institute them. The two first, and Pliny, with others of their rank, have no *Hoc age* in them, they will have to do with men that have forewarned themselves; or if they have, it is a material and substantial *Hoc age*, and that hath its body apart. I likewise love to read the Epistles and *ad Atticum*, not only because they contain a most ample instruction of the history and affairs of his times, but much more because in them I descry his private humours. For (as I have said elsewhere) I am wonderful curious to discover and know the mind, the soul, the genuine disposition and natural judgment of my authors. A man ought to judge their sufficiency and not their customs, nor them by the show of their writings, which they set forth on this world's theatre. I have sorrowed a thousand times that ever we lost the book that Brutus wrote of Virtue. Oh, it is a goodly thing to learn the theory of such as understand the practice well. But forsomuch as the sermon is one thing and the preacher another, I love as much to see Brutus in Plutarch as in himself; I would rather make choice to know certainly

what talk he had in his tent with some of his familiar friends, the night foregoing the battle, than the speech he made the morrow after to his army; and what he did in his chamber or closet, than what in the senate or market-place. As for Cicero, I am of the common judgment, that besides learning there was no exquisite eloquence in him. He was a good citizen, of an honest, gentle nature, as are commonly fat and burly men, for so was he; but, to speak truly of him, full of ambitious vanity and remiss niceness. And I know not well how to excuse him, in that he deemed his poesy worthy to be published. It is no great imperfection to make bad verses, but it is an imperfection in him that he never perceived how unworthy they were of the glory of his name. Concerning his eloquence, it is beyond all comparison, and I verily believe that none shall ever equal it. Cicero the younger, who resembled his father in nothing but in name, commanding in Asia, chanced one day to have many strangers at his board, and amongst others one Cæstius, sitting at the lower end, as the manner is to thrust in at great men's tables. Cicero inquired of one of his men what he was, who told him his name; but he dreaming on other matters, and having forgotten what answer his man made him, asked him his name twice or thrice more: the servant, because he would not be troubled to tell him one thing so often, and by some circumstance to make him to know him better, "It is," said he, "the same Cæstius of whom some have told you that, in respect of his own, maketh no account of your father's eloquence." Cicero, being suddenly moved, commanded the said poor Cæstius to be presently taken from the table and well whipped in his presence. Lo here an uncivil and barbarous host. Even amongst those which (all things considered) have deemed his eloquence matchless and incomparable, others there

have been who have not spared to note some faults in it. As great Brutus said, that it was an eloquence broken, halting, and disjointed, *fractam et elumbem:* "Incoherent and sinewless." Those orators that lived about his age reproved also in him the curious care he had of a certain long cadence at the end of his clauses, and noted these words, *esse videatur*, which he so often useth. As for me, I rather like a cadence that falleth shorter, cut like iambics; yet doth he sometimes confound his numbers, but it is seldom. I have especially observed this one place: *Ego vero me minus diu senem esse mallem, quam esse senem, antequam essem:*[1] "But I had rather not be an old man, so long as I might be, than to be old before I should be." Historians are my right hand, for they are pleasant and easy; and therewithal the man with whom I desire generally to be acquainted may more lively and perfectly be discovered in them than in any other composition; the variety and truth of his inward conditions, in gross and by retail; the diversity of the means of his collection and composing, and of the accidents that threaten him. Now those that write of men's lives, forasmuch as they amuse and busy themselves more about counsels than events, more about that which cometh from within than that which appeareth outward, they are fittest for me. And that's the reason why Plutarch above all in that kind doth best please me. Indeed, I am not a little grieved that we have not a dozen of Laertius, or that he is not more known or better understood, for I am no less curious to know the fortunes and lives of these great masters of the world than to understand the diversity of their decrees and conceits. In this kind of study of history a man must, without distinction, toss and turn over all sorts of authors,

[1] Cic., *De Senect.*

both old and new, both French and others, if he will learn the things they so diversely treat of. But methinks that Cæsar above all doth singularly deserve to be studied, not only for the understanding of the history as of himself; so much perfection and excellency is there in him more than in others, although Sallust be reckoned one of the number. Verily, I read that author with a little more reverence and respect than commonly men read profane and human works, sometimes considering him by his actions and wonders of his greatness, and other times weighing the purity and inimitable polishing and elegancy of his tongue, which (as Cicero saith) hath not only exceeded all historians, but haply Cicero himself; with such sincerity in his judgment, speaking of his enemies, that except the false colours wherewith he goeth about to cloak his bad cause, and the corruption and filthiness of his pestilent ambition, I am persuaded there is nothing in him to be found fault with; and that he hath been over-sparing to speak of himself, for so many notable and great things could never be executed by him unless he had put more of his own into them than he setteth down. I love those historians that are either very simple or most excellent. The simple, who have nothing of their own to add unto the story, and have but the care and diligence to collect whatsoever come to their knowledge, and sincerely and faithfully to register all things, without choice or culling, by the naked truth leave our judgment more entire and better satisfied.

Such amongst others (for example's sake) plain and well-meaning Froissart, who in his enterprise hath marched with so free and genuine a purity, that having committed some oversight, he is neither ashamed to acknowledge nor afraid to correct the same, wheresoever he hath either notice or warning of it; and who representeth unto us the diversity

of the news then current and the different reports that were made unto him. The subject of an history should be naked, bare, and formless; each man according to his capacity or understanding may reap commodity out of it. The curious and most excellent have the sufficiency to cull and choose that which is worthy to be known, and may select of two relations that which is most likely: from the condition of princes and of their humours, they conclude their counsels and attribute fit words to them; they assume a just authority and bind our faith to theirs. But truly that belongs not to many. Such as are between both (which is the most common fashion), it is they that spoil all; they will needs chew our meat for us and take upon them a law to judge, and by consequence to square and incline the story according to their fantasy; for, where the judgment bendeth one way, a man cannot choose but wrest and turn his narration that way. They undertake to choose things worthy to be known, and now and then conceal either a word or a secret action from us, which would much better instruct us, omitting such things as they understand not as incredible, and happily such matters as they know not how to declare, either in good Latin or tolerable French. Let them boldly install their eloquence and discourse; let them censure at their pleasure, but let them also give us leave to judge after them; and let them neither alter nor dispense by their abridgments and choice anything belonging to the substance of the matter; but let them rather send it pure and entire with all her dimensions unto us. Most commonly (as chiefly in our age) this charge of writing histories is committed unto base, ignorant, and mechanical kind of people, only for this consideration that they can speak well; as if we sought to learn the grammar of them; and they have some reason, being only hired to

that end, and publishing nothing but their tittle-tattle to aim at nothing else so much. Thus, with store of choice and quaint words and wire-drawn phrases, they huddle up and make a hodge-pot of a laboured contexture of the reports which they gather in the market-places or such other assemblies. The only good histories are those that are written by such as commanded or were employed themselves in weighty affairs, or that were partners in the conduct of them, or that at least have had the fortune to manage others of like quality. Such in a manner are all the Grecians and Romans. For many eye-witnesses having written of one same subject (as it happened in those times when greatness and knowledge did commonly meet), if any fault or oversight have passed them, it must be deemed exceedingly light and upon some doubtful accident. What may a man expect at a physician's hand that discourseth of war, or of a bare scholar treating of princes' secret designs? If we shall but note the religion which the Romans had in that, we need no other example. Asinius Pollio found some mistaking or oversight in Cæsar's *Commentaries*, whereinto he had fallen, only because he could not possibly oversee all things with his own eyes that happened in his army, but was fain to rely on the reports of particular men, who often related untruths unto him; or else because he had not been curiously advertised and distinctly informed by his lieutenants and captains of such matters as they in his absence had managed or effected. Whereby may be seen that nothing is so hard or so uncertain to be found out as the certainty of the truth, since no man can put any assured confidence concerning the truth of a battle, neither in the knowledge of him that was general or commanded over it, nor in the soldiers that fought, of anything that hath happened amongst them; except after the manner

of a strict point of law, the several witnesses are brought and examined face to face, and that all matters be nicely and thoroughly sifted by the objects and trials of the success of every accident. Verily the knowledge we have of our own affairs is much more barren and feeble. But this hath sufficiently been handled by Bodin, and agreeing with my conception. Somewhat to aid the weakness of my memory and to assist her great defects; for it hath often been my chance to light upon books which I supposed to be new and never to have read, which I had not understanding to diligently read and run over many years before, and all bescribbled with my notes. I have a while since accustomed myself to note at the end of my book (I mean such as I propose to read but once) the time I made an end to read it, and to set down what censure or judgment I gave of it; that so it may at least at another time represent unto my mind the air and general idea I had conceived of the author in reading him. I will here set down the copy of some of my annotations, and especially what I noted upon my Guicciardini about ten years since—(for what language soever my books speak unto me I speak unto them in mine own). He is a diligent historiographer, and from whom in my conceit a man may as exactly learn the truth of such affairs as passed in his time as of any other writer whatsoever; and the rather because himself hath been an actor of most part of them and in very honourable place. There is no sign or appearance that ever he disguised or coloured any matter, either through hatred, malice, favour, or vanity; whereof the free and impartial judgments he giveth of great men, and namely of those by whom he had been advanced or employed in his important charges, as of Pope Clement the Seventh, beareth undoubted testimony. Concerning the

parts wherein he most goeth about to prevail, which are his digressions and discourses, many of them are very excellent and enriched with fair ornaments, but he hath too much pleased himself in them; for endeavouring to omit nothing that might be spoken, having so full and large a subject, and almost infinite, he proveth somewhat languishing, and giveth a taste of a kind of scholastical tedious babbling. Moreover, I have noted this, that of so several and divers arms, successes, and effects he judgeth of; of so many and variable motives, alterations, and counsels that he relateth, he never referreth any one unto virtue, religion, or conscience; as if they were all extinguished and banished from the world. And of all actions, how glorious soever in appearance they be of themselves, he doth ever impute the cause of them to some vicious and blameworthy occasion, or to some commodity and profit. It is impossible to imagine that amongst so infinite a number of actions whereof he judgeth, some one have not been produced and compassed by way of reason. No corruption could ever possess men so universally but that some one must of necessity escape the contagion; which makes me to fear he hath had some distaste or blame in his passion, and it hath happily fortuned that he hath judged or esteemed of others according to himself. In my Philip de Comines there is this: In him you shall find a pleasing, sweet, and gently gliding speech, fraught with a purely sincere simplicity, his narration pure and unaffected, and wherein the author's unspotted good meaning doth evidently appear, void of all manner of vanity or ostentation speaking of himself, and free from all affection or envy speaking of others; his discourses and persuasions accompanied more with a well-meaning zeal and mere verity than with any laboured and exquisite sufficiency, and all

through with gravity and authority, representing a man well-born and brought up in high negotiations. Upon the memoirs and history of Monsieur du Bellay: it is ever a well-pleasing thing to see matters written by those that have assayed how and in what manner they ought to be directed and managed; yet can it not be denied but that in both these lords there will manifestly appear a great declination from a free liberty of writing, which clearly shineth in ancient writers of their kind: as in the Lord of Jouinille, familiar unto Saint Louis; Eginard, Chancellor unto Charlemagne; and of more fresh memory in Philip de Comines. This is rather a declamation or pleading for King Francis against the Emperor Charles the Fifth, than a history. I will not believe they have altered or changed anything concerning the generality of matters, but rather to wrest and turn the judgment of the events many times against reason to our advantage, and to omit whatsoever they supposed to be doubtful or ticklish in their master's life. They have made a business of it: witness the recoilings of the Lords of Momorancy and Byron, which therein are forgotten; and which is more, you shall not so much as find the name of the Lady of Estampes mentioned at all. A man may sometimes colour and haply hide secret actions, but absolutely to conceal that which all the world knoweth, and especially such things as have drawn on public effects, and of such consequence, it is an inexcusable defect, or as I may say unpardonable oversight. To conclude, whosoever desireth to have perfect information and knowledge of King Francis the First, and of the things that happened in his time, let him address himself elsewhere if he will give any credit unto me. The profit he may reap here is by the particular description of the battles and exploits of war wherein these gentlemen were present;

some privy conferences, speeches, or secret actions of some princes that then lived, and the practices managed, or negotiations directed by the Lord of Langeay, in which doubtless are very many things well worthy to be known, and diverse discourses not vulgar.

OF CRUELTY.

METHINKS virtue is another manner of thing, and much more noble than the inclinations unto goodness which in us are engendered. Minds well born, and directed by themselves, follow one same path, and in their actions represent the same visage that the virtuous do. But virtue importeth and soundeth somewhat I wot not what greater and more active than by a happy complexion, gently and peaceably, to suffer itself to be led or drawn to follow reason. He that through a natural facility and genuine mildness should neglect or contemn injuries received, should no doubt perform a rare action, and worthy commendation; but he who being touched and stung to the quick with any wrong or offence received, should arm himself with reason against this furiously blind desire of revenge, and in the end after a great conflict yield himself master over it, should doubtless do much more. The first should do well, the other virtuously; the one action might be termed goodness, the other virtue. For it seemeth that the very name of virtue presupposeth difficulty, and inferreth resistance, and cannot well exercise itself without an enemy. It is peradventure the reason why we call God good, mighty, liberal, and just, but we term him not

virtuous. His works are all voluntary, unforced, and without compulsion. Of philosophers, not only Stoics, but also Epicureans—(which phrasing I borrow of the common received opinion, which is false, whatsoever the nimble saying or witty quipping of Arcesilaus implied, who answered the man that upbraided him, how divers men went from his school to the Epicureans, but none came from thence to him. I easily believe it (said he), for of cocks are many capons made, but no man could ever yet make a cock of a capon. For truly in constancy and rigour of opinion and strictness of precepts, the Epicurean sect doth in no sort yield to the Stoic. And a Stoic acknowledging a better faith than those disputers who, to contend with Epicurus and make sport with him, make him to infer and say what he never meant, wresting and wire-drawing his words to a contrary sense, arguing and syllogising, by the grammarian's privilege, another meaning by the manner of his speech, and another opinion than that they knew he had either in his mind or manners, saith that he left to be an Epicurean for this one consideration amongst others, that he findeth their pitch to be over-high and inaccessible: "And those that are called lovers of pleasures are lovers of honesty and justice, and do reverence and retain all sorts of virtue")—of Stoic and Epicurean philosophers, I say, there are divers who have judged that it was not sufficient to have the mind well placed, well ordered, and well disposed unto virtue; it was not enough to have our resolutions and discourse beyond all the affronts and checks of fortune; but that, moreover, it was very requisite to seek for occasions whereby a man might come to the trial of it. They will diligently quest and seek out for pain, smart, necessity, want, and contempt, that so they may combat them, and keep their mind in breath: "Virtue provoked adds much to itself." It is one

of the reasons why Epaminondas (who was of a third sect), by a very lawful way, refuseth some riches fortune had put into his hands, to the end (as he saith) he might have cause to strive and resist poverty, in which want and extremity he ever continued after.

Socrates did in my mind more undauntedly inure himself to this humour, maintaining for his exercise the peevish frowardness of his wife, than which no essay can be more vexful, and is a continual fighting at the sharp. Metellus of all the Roman senators he only having undertaken with the power of virtue to endure the violence of Saturninus, tribune of the people in Rome, who by main force went about to have a most unjust law pass in favour of the communalty, by which opposition, having incurred all the capital pains that Saturninus had imposed on such as should refuse it, entertained those that led him to the place of execution with such speeches: That to do evil was a thing very easy and too demissly base, and to do well where was no danger was a common thing; but to do well where was both peril and opposition was the peculiar office of a man of virtue. These words of Metellus do clearly represent unto us what I would have verified; which is, that virtue rejecteth facility to be her companion. And that an easeful, pleasant, and declining way by which the regular steps of a good inclination of nature are directed is not the way of true virtue. She requireth a craggy, rough, and thorny way. She would either have strange difficulties to wrestle withal (as that of Metellus), by whose means fortune herself is pleased to break the roughness of his course; or such inward encumbrances as the disordinate appetites and imperfections of our condition bring unto her. Hitherto I have come at good ease; but at the end of this discourse one thing cometh into my mind, which is that the

soul of Socrates, which is absolutely the most perfect that ever came to my knowledge, would, according to my account, prove a soul deserving but little commendation. For I can conceive no manner of violence or vicious concupiscence in him. I can imagine no manner of difficulty or compulsion in the whole course of his virtue. I know his reason so powerful, and so absolute mistress over him, that she can never give him way in any vicious desire, and will not suffer it so much as to breed in him. To a virtue so exquisite and so high raised as his is I can persuade nothing. Methinks I see it march with a victorious and triumphant pace, in pomp and at ease, without let or disturbance. If virtue cannot shine but by resisting contrary appetites, shall we then say it cannot pass without the assistance of vice, and oweth him this, that by his means it attaineth to honour and credit? What should also betide of that glorious and generous Epicurean voluptuousness that makes account effeminately to pamper virtue in her lap, and there wantonly to entertain it, allowing it for her recreation, shame, reproach, agues, poverty, death, and tortures? If I presuppose that perfect virtue is known by combating sorrow and patiently undergoing pain, by tolerating the fits and agonies of the gout, without stirring out of his place; if for a necessary object I appoint her sharpness and difficulty, what shall become of that virtue which hath attained so high a degree as it doth not only despise all manner of pain, but rather rejoiceth at it, and when a strong fit of the colic shall assail it, to cause itself to be tickled, as that is which the Epicureans have established, and whereof divers amongst them have by their actions left most certain proofs unto us? As also others have, whom in effect I find to have exceeded the very rules of their discipline. Witness Cato the younger: when I see him die, tearing and mangling

his entrails, I cannot simply content myself to believe that at that time he had his soul wholly exempted from all trouble or free from vexation. I cannot imagine he did only maintain himself in this march or course which the rule of the Stoic sect had ordained unto him, settled, without alteration or emotion, and impassible. There was, in my conceit, in this man's virtue over-much cheerfulness and youthfulness to stay there. I verily believe he felt a kind of pleasure and sensuality in so noble an action, and that therein he more pleased himself than in any other he ever performed in his life. "So departed he his life, that he rejoiced to have found an occasion of death." I do so constantly believe it, that I make a doubt whether he would have had the occasion of so noble an exploit taken from him. And if the goodness which induced him to embrace public commodities more than his own did not bridle me, I should easily fall into this opinion, that he thought himself greatly beholding unto fortune to have put his virtue unto so noble a trial, and to have favoured that robber to tread the ancient liberty of his country under-foot. In which action methinks I read a kind of unspeakable joy in his mind, and a motion of extraordinary pleasure, joined to a manlike voluptuousness, at what time it beheld the worthiness, and considered the generosity and haughtiness of his enterprise, not urged or set-on by any hope of glory, as the popular and effeminate judgments have judged. For that consideration is over-base to touch so generous, so haughty, and so constant a heart; but for the beauty of the thing itself, which he who managed all the springs and directed all the wards thereof, saw much more clearer, and in its perfection, than we can do. Philosophy hath done me a pleasure to judge that so honourable an action had been indecently placed in any other life than in Cato's, and

that only unto his it appertained to make such an end. Therefore did he with reason persuade both his son and the senators that accompanied him to provide otherwise for themselves. "Whereas nature had afforded Cato an incredible gravity, and he had strengthened it by continual constancy, and ever had stood firm in his purposed designs, rather to die than behold the tyrant's face." Each death should be such as the life hath been. By dying we become no other than we were. I ever interpret a man's death by his life. And if a man shall tell me of any one undaunted in appearance, joined unto a weak life, I imagine it to proceed of some weak cause, and suitable to his life. The ease therefore of his death, and the facility he had acquired by the vigour of his mind, shall we say, it ought to abate something of the lustre of his virtue. And which of those that have their spirits touched, be it never so little, with the true tincture of philosophy, can content himself to imagine Socrates only free from fear and passion in the accident of his imprisonment, of his fetters, and of his condemnation? And who doth not perceive in him not only constancy and resolution (which were ever his ordinary qualities), but also a kind of I wot not what new contentment, and careless rejoicing in his last behaviour and discourses. By the startling at the pleasure which he feeleth in clawing of his legs after his fetters were taken off, doth he not manifestly declare an equal glee and joy in his soul for being rid of his former incommodities, and entering into the knowledge of things to come? Cato shall pardon me (if he please), his death is more tragical and further extended, whereas this in a certain manner is more fair and glorious. Aristippus answered those that bewailed the same, "When I die, I pray the gods send me such a death." A man shall plainly perceive in the minds of these two men, and of such as

imitate them (for I make a question whether ever they could be matched), so perfect an habitude unto virtue, that it was even converted into their complexion. It is no longer a painful virtue, nor by the ordinances of reason, for the maintaining of which their mind must be strengthened. It is the very essence of their soul; it is her natural and ordinary habit. They have made it such by a long exercise and observing the rules and precepts of philosophy, having lighted upon a fair and rich nature. Those vicious passions which breed in us find no entrance in them. The vigour and constancy of their souls doth suppress and extinguish all manner of concupiscences so soon as they but begin to move. Now that it be not more glorious, by an undaunted and divine resolution, to hinder the growth of temptations, and for a man to frame himself to virtue, so that the very seeds of vice be clean rooted out, than by main force to hinder their progress; and having suffered himself to be surprised by the first assaults of passion, to arm and bandy himself, to stay their course and suppress them. And that this second effect be not also much fairer than to be simply stored with a facile and gentle nature, and of itself distasted and in dislike with licentiousness and vice, I am persuaded there is no doubt. For this third and last manner seemeth in some sort to make a man innocent, but not virtuous; free from doing ill, but not sufficiently apt to do well. Seeing this condition is so near unto imperfection and weakness, that I know not well how to clear their confines and distinctions. The very names of goodness and innocency are for this respect in some sort names of contempt. I see that many virtues, as chastity, sobriety, and temperance, may come unto us by means of corporal defects and imbecility. Constancy in dangers (if it may be termed constancy), contempt of death, patience in misfortunes,

may happen, and are often seen in men, for want of good judgment in such accidents, and that they are not apprehended for such as they are indeed. Lack of apprehension and stupidity do sometimes counterfeit virtuous effects. As I have often seen come to pass, that some men are commended for things they rather deserve to be blamed. An Italian gentleman did once hold this position in my presence, to the prejudice and disadvantage of his nation: that the subtilty of the Italians and the vivacity of their conceptions was so great that they foresaw such dangers and accidents as might betide them so far off that it was not to be deemed strange if in times of war they were often seen to provide for their safety, yea, before they had perceived the danger; that we and the Spaniards, who were not so wary and subtle, went further, and that before we could be frighted with any peril we must be induced to see it with our eyes, and feel it with our hands, and that even then we had no more hold; but that the Germans and Swiss, more shallow and leaden-headed, had scarce the sense and wit to re-advise themselves at what times they were even overwhelmed with misery, and the axe ready to fall on their heads. It was peradventure but in jest that he spake it, yet is it most true that in the art of warfare new trained soldiers, and such as are but novices in the trade, do often headlong and hand-over-head cast themselves into dangers with more inconsideration than afterward when they have seen and endured the first shock, and are better trained in the school of perils.

Lo here the reason why, when we judge of a particular action, we must first consider many circumstances, and thoroughly observe the man that hath produced the same before we name and censure it. But to speak a word of myself: I have sometimes noted my friends to term that

wisdom in me which was but mere fortune, and to deem that advantage of courage and patience that was advantage of judgment and opinion; and to attribute one title for another unto me, sometimes to my profit, and now and then to my loss. As for the rest, I am so far from attaining unto that chief and most perfect degree of excellency, where a habitude is made of virtue, that even of the second I have made no great trial. I have not greatly striven to bridle the desires wherewith I have found myself urged and pressed. My virtue is a virtue, or to say better innocency, accidental and casual. Had I been born with a less regular complexion, I imagine my state had been very pitiful, and it would have gone hard with me, for I could never perceive any great constancy in my soul to resist and undergo passions had they been anything violent. I cannot foster quarrels, or endure contentions in my house. So am I not greatly beholding unto myself, in that I am exempted from many vices.

I am more indebted to my fortune than to my reason for it. She hath made me to be born of a race famous for integrity and honesty, and of a very good father. I wot not well whether any part of his humours have descended into me, or whether the domestic examples and good institution of my infancy have insensibly set their helping hand unto it, or whether I were otherwise so born.

But so it is, that naturally of myself I abhor and detest all manner of vices. The answer of Antisthenes to one that demanded of him which was the best thing to be learned, "To unlearn evil," seemed to be fixed on this image, or to have an aim at this. I abhor them (I say) with so natural and so innated an opinion, that the very same instinct and impression which I sucked from my nurse I have so kept that no occasions could ever make me alter the same; no,

not mine own discourses, which, because they have been somewhat lavish in noting or taxing something of the common course, could easily induce me to some actions which this my natural inclination makes me to hate. I will tell you a wonder, I will tell it you indeed. I thereby find in many things more stay and order in my manners than in my opinion, and my concupiscence less debauched than my reason. Aristippus established certain opinions so bold in favour of voluptuousness and riches, that he made all philosophy to mutiny against him. And Epicurus, whose positions are irreligious and delicate, demeaned himself in his life very laboriously and devoutly. He wrote to a friend of his that he lived but with brown bread and water, and entreated him to send him a piece of cheese against the time he was to make a solemn feast. May it be true that to be perfectly good we must be so by a hidden, natural, and universal propriety, without law, reason, and example? The disorders and excesses wherein I have found myself engaged are not (God be thanked) of the worst. I have rejected and condemned them in myself according to their worth, for my judgment was never found to be infected by them. And on the other side I accuse them more rigorously in myself than in another. But that is all. As for the rest, I apply but little resistance unto them, and suffer myself over-easily to incline to the other side of the balance, except it be to order and impeach them from being commixed with others, which (if a man take not good heed unto himself) for the most part entertain and interchain themselves the one with the other. As for mine, I have, as much as it hath lain in my power, abridged them, and kept them as single and as alone as I could.

For, as touching the Stoics' opinion, who say that when the wise man worketh, he worketh with all his virtues

together; howbeit, according to the nature of the action, there be one more apparent than other (to which purpose the similitude of man's body might, in some sort, serve their turn; for the action of choler cannot exercise itself, except all the humours set to their helping hand, although choler be predominant), if thence they will draw a like consequence, that when the offender trespasseth, he doth it with all the vices together, I do not so easily believe them, or else I understand them not; for, in effect, I feel the contrary. They are sharp, witty subtilties, and without substance, about which philosophy doth often busy itself. Some vices I shun; but others I eschew as much as any saint can do. The Peripatetics do also disavow this connexity and indissoluble knitting together. And Aristotle is of opinion that a wise and just man may be both intemperate and incontinent. Socrates avowed unto them, who in his physiognomy perceived some inclination unto vice, that indeed it was his natural propension, but that by discipline he had corrected the same. And the familiar friends of the philosopher Stilpo were wont to say, that being born subject unto wine and women, he had, by study, brought himself to abstain from both. On the other side, what good I have, I have it by the lot of my birth; I have it neither by law nor prescription, nor by any apprenticeship. The innocency that is in me is a kind of simple, plain innocency, without vigour or art. Amongst all other vices, there is none I hate more than cruelty, both by nature and judgment, as the extremest of all vices. But it is with such a yearning and faint-heartedness, that if I see but a chicken's neck pulled off, or a pig stuck, I cannot choose but grieve, and I cannot well endure a silly dew-bedabbled hare to groan when she is seized upon by the hounds, although hunting be a violent pleasure. Those that are to

withstand voluptuousness do willingly use this argument, to show it is altogether vicious and unreasonable. That where she is in her greatest prime and chief strength, she doth so over-sway us, that reason can have no access unto us, and for a further trial, allege the experience we feel and have of it in our acquaintance with women.

Where they think pleasure doth so far transport us beyond ourselves, that our discourse, then altogether overwhelmed, and our reason wholly ravished in the gulf of sensuality, cannot by any means discharge her function. I know it may be otherwise; and if a man but please, he may sometimes, even upon the very instant, cast his mind on other conceits. But she must be strained to a higher key, and heedfully pursued.

But to return to my former discourse, I have a very feeling and tender compassion of other men's afflictions, and should more easily weep for company's sake, if possible for any occasion whatsoever I could shed tears. There is nothing sooner moveth tears in me than to see others weep, not only feignedly, but howsoever, whether truly or forcedly. I do not greatly wail for the dead, but rather envy them. Yet do I much wail and moan the dying. The cannibals and savage people do not so much offend me with roasting and eating of dead bodies, as those which torment and persecute the living. Let any man be executed by law, how deservedly soever, I cannot endure to behold the execution with an unrelenting eye. Some one going about to witness the clemency of Julius Cæsar, "He was," saith he, "tractable and mild in matters of revenge." Having compelled the pirates to yield themselves unto him, who had before taken him prisoner and put him to ransom, forasmuch as he had threatened to have them all crucified, he condemned them to that kind of death, but it was

after he had caused them to be strangled. Philemon's secretary, who would have poisoned him, had no sharper punishment of him than an ordinary death. As for me, even in matters of justice, whatsoever is beyond a simple death, I deem it to be mere cruelty; and especially amongst us, who ought to have a regardful respect that their souls should be sent to heaven, which cannot be, having first by intolerable tortures agitated, and, as it were, brought them to despair. A soldier, not long since, being a prisoner, and perceiving from aloft a tower, where he was kept, that store of people flocked together on a green, and carpenters were busy at work to erect a scaffold, supposing the same to be for him, as one desperate, resolved to kill himself, and searching up and down for something to make himself away, found nothing but an old rusty cart nail, which fortune presented him with; he took it, and therewithal, with all the strength he had, struck and wounded himself twice in the throat, but seeing it would not rid him of life, he then thrust it into his belly up to the head, where he left it fast sticking. Shortly after, one of his keepers coming in unto him, and yet living, finding him in that miserable plight, but weltering in his gore-blood and ready to gasp his last, told the magistrates of it, which, to prevent time before he should die, hastened to pronounce sentence against him; which, when he heard, and that he was only condemned to have his head cut off, he seemed to take heart of grace again, and to be sorry for what he had done, and took some comfortable drinks, which before he had refused, greatly thanking the judges for his unhoped gentle condemnation; and told them, that for fear of a more sharply-cruel and intolerable death by law, he had resolved to prevent it by some violent manner of death, having by the preparations he had seen the carpenters make, and by gathering of

people together, conceived an opinion that they would torture him with some horrible torment, and seemed to be delivered from death only by the change of it. Were I worthy to give counsel, I would have these examples of rigour, by which superior powers go about to keep the common people in awe, to be only exercised on the bodies of criminal malefactors; for, to see them deprived of Christian burial, to see them haled, disbowelled, parboiled, and quartered, might happily touch the common sort as much as the pains they make the living to endure: howbeit in effect it be little or nothing, as saith God, "Those that kill the body, but have afterwards no more to do."

It was my fortune to be at Rome upon a day that one Catena, a notorious highway thief, was executed; at his strangling no man of the company seemed to be moved to any wrath, but when he came to be quartered, the executioner gave no blow that was not accompanied with a piteous voice and hearty exclamation, as if every man had had a feeling sympathy, or lent his senses to the poor mangled wretch. Such inhuman outrages and barbarous excuses should be exercised against the rind, and not practised against the quick. The Egyptians, so devout and religious, thought they did sufficiently satisfy divine justice in sacrificing painted and counterfeit hogs unto it: an over-hardy invention to go about with pictures and shadows to appease God, a substance so essential and divine. I live in an age wherein we abound with incredible examples of this vice, through the licentiousness of our civil and intestine wars; and read all ancient stories, be they never so tragical, you shall find none to equal those we daily see practised. But that hath nothing made me acquainted with it. I could hardly be persuaded before I had seen it, that the world could have afforded so marble-hearted and savage-minded

men, that for the only pleasure of murder would commit it; then cut, mangle, and hack other members in pieces; to rouse and sharpen their wits, to invent unused tortures and unheard-of torments; to devise new and unknown deaths, and that in cold blood, without any former enmity or quarrel, or without any gain or profit, and only to this end, that they may enjoy the pleasing spectacle of the languishing gestures, pitiful motions, horror-moving yellings, deep-fetched groans, and lamentable voices of a dying and drooping man. For that is the extremest point whereunto the cruelty of man may attain. "That one man should kill another, neither being angry nor afraid, but only to look on." As for me, I could never so much as endure, without remorse or grief, to see a poor, silly, and innocent beast pursued and killed, which is harmless and void of defence, and of whom we receive no offence at all. And as it commonly happeneth, that when the stag begins to be embossed, and finds his strength to fail him, having no other remedy left him, doth yield and bequeath himself unto us that pursue him, with tears suing to us for mercy, was ever a grievous spectacle unto me. I seldom take any beast alive but I give him his liberty. Pythagoras was wont to buy fishes of fishers and birds of fowlers to set them free again.

Such as by nature show themselves bloody-minded towards harmless beasts, witness a natural propension unto cruelty. After the ancient Romans had once inured themselves without horror to behold the slaughter of wild beasts in their shows, they came to the murder of men and gladiators. Nature (I fear me) hath of her own self added unto man a certain instinct to inhumanity. No man taketh delight to see wild beasts sport and wantonly to make much one of another. Yet all are pleased to see them tug,

mangle, and intertear one another. And lest anybody should jest at this sympathy which I have with them, Divinity itself willeth us to show them some favour; and, considering that one self-same master (I mean that incomprehensible world's framer) hath placed all creatures in this his wondrous palace for his service, and that they, as well as we, are of his household, I say it hath some reason to enjoin us to show some respect and affection towards them. Pythagoras borrowed Metempsychosis of the Egyptians, but since it hath been received of divers nations, and especially of our Druids.

The religion of our ancient Gauls inferred that souls, being eternal, ceased not to remove and change place from one body to another, to which fantasy was also intermixed some consideration of divine justice. For, according to the soul's behaviours, during the time she had been with Alexander, they said that God appointed it another body to dwell in, either more or less painful, and suitable to her condition.

If the soul had been valiant, they placed it in the body of a lion; if voluptuous, in a swine; if faint-hearted, in a stag or a hare; if malicious, in a fox; and so of the rest, until that being purified by this punishment, it reassumed and took the body of some other man again.

As touching that alliance between us and beasts, I make no great account of it, nor do I greatly admit it, neither of that which divers nations, and namely of the most ancient and noble, who have not only received beasts into their society and company, but allowed them a place far above themselves, sometimes deeming them to be familiars and favoured of their gods, and holding them in a certain awful respect and reverence more than human, and others acknowledging no other god nor no other divinity than

they. "Beasts by the barbarians were made sacred for some benefit."

And the very same interpretation that Plutarch giveth unto this error, which is very well taken, is also honourable for them. For, he saith, that (for example sake) it was neither the cat nor the ox that the Egyptians adored, but that in those beasts they worshipped some image of divine faculties. In this patience and utility, and in that vivacity, or as our neighbours the Burgundians with all Germany the impatience to see themselves shut up; whereby they represented the liberty which they loved and adored beyond all other divine faculty, and so of others. But when amongst the most moderate opinions I meet with some discourses that go about and labour to show the near resemblance between us and beasts, and what share they have in our greatest privileges, and with how much likelihood they are compared unto us, truly I abate much of our presumption, and am easily removed from that imaginary sovereignty that some give and ascribe unto us above all other creatures. If all that were to be contradicted, yet is there a kind of respect and a general duty of humanity which tieth us not only unto brute beasts that have life and sense, but even unto trees and plants. Unto men we owe justice, and to all other creatures that are capable of it, grace and benignity. There is a kind of interchangeable commerce and mutual bond between them and us. I am not ashamed nor afraid to declare the tenderness of my childish nature, which is such that I cannot well reject my dog if he chance (although out of season) to fawn upon me, or beg of me to play with him.

WE TASTE NOTHING PURELY.

THE weakness of our condition causeth that things in their natural simplicity and purity cannot fall into our use. The elements we enjoy are altered; metals likewise, yea gold, must be impaired with some other stuff to make it fit for our service. Nor virtue so simple, which Ariston, Pyrrho, and Stoics made the end of their life, hath been able to do no good without composition; nor the Cyrenaic sensuality or Aristippian voluptuousness. "Of the pleasures and goods we have, there is none exempted from some mixture of evil and incommodity."

> ——*medio de fonte leporum*
> *Surgit amari aliquid, quod in ipsis floribus angat.*[1]
>
> From middle spring of sweets some bitter springs,
> Which in the very flower smartly stings.

Our exceeding voluptuousness hath some air of groaning and wailing. Would you not say it dieth of anguish? Yea, when we forge its image in her excellency we deck it with epithets of sickish and dolorous qualities: languor, effeminacy, weakness, fainting, and morbidness, a great testimony of their consanguinity and consubstantiality. Excessive joy hath more severity than jollity; extreme and full content more settledness than cheerfulness. *Ipsa fœlicitas, se nisi temperat, premit:*[2] "Felicity itself, unless it temper itself, distempers us." Ease consumeth us. It is that which an old Greek verse saith of such a sense: "The gods sell us all the goods they give us;" that is to say, they give us not one pure and perfect, and which we buy not with the price of some evil. Travail and pleasure, most unlike in nature, are notwithstanding followed together by a kind of I wot

[1] Lucr. l. iv. 12, 24. [2] Sent., *Quære*, etc.

not what natural conjunction. Socrates saith that some god attempted to huddle up together and confound sorrow and voluptuousness; but being unable to effect it, he bethought himself to couple them together, at least by the tail. Metrodorus said that in sadness there is some alloy of pleasure. I know not whether he meant anything else, but I imagine that for one to inure himself to melancholy, there is some kind of purpose of consent and mutual delight; I mean besides ambition, which may also be joined unto it. There is some shadow of delicacy and quaintness which smileth and fawneth upon us even in the lap of melancholy. Are there not some complexions that of it make their nourishment?

——est quædam flere voluptas.[1]

It is some pleasure yet
With tears our cheeks to wet.

And one Attalus, in Seneca, saith the remembrance of our last friends is as pleasing to us as bitterness in wine that is over old.

Minister veteris puer falerni
Ingere mi calices amariores;[2]

Sir boy, my servitor of good old wine,
Bring me my cup thereof, bitter, but fine.

And as of sweetly-sour apples, nature discovereth this confusion unto us; painters are of opinion that the motions and wrinkles in the face which serve to weep serve also to laugh. Verily, before one or other be determined to express which, behold the picture's success, you are in doubt toward which one inclineth. And the extremity of laughing intermingles itself with tears. *Nullum sine*

[1] Ovid., *Trist.* l. iv., *Eleg.* iii. 37. [2] Cat., *Lyr. Eleg.* xxiv. 1.

auctoramento malum est:[1] "There is no evil without some obligation." When I imagine man fraught with all the commodities may be wished, let us suppose all his several members were for ever possessed with a pleasure like unto that of generation, even in the highest point that may be: I find him to sink under the burden of his ease, and perceive him altogether unable to bear so pure, so constant, and so universal a sensuality. Truly he flies when he is even upon the nick, and naturally hasteneth to escape it, as from a step whereon he cannot stay or contain himself, and feareth to sink into it. When I religiously confess myself unto myself, I find the best good I have hath some vicious taint. And I fear that Plato in his purest virtue (I that am as sincere and loyal an esteemer thereof, and of the virtues of such a stamp, as any other can possibly be), if he had nearly listened unto it (and sure he listened very near), he would therein have heard some harsh tune of human mixture, but an obscure tune, and only sensible unto himself. Man all in all is but a botching and partly-coloured work. The very laws of justice cannot subsist without some commixture of injustice. And Plato saith they undertake to cut off hydras' heads that pretend to remove all incommodities and inconveniences from the laws. *Omne magnum exemplum habet aliquid ex iniquo, quod contra singulos utilitate publica rependitur:*[2] "Every great example hath some touch of injustice which is required by the common good against particulars," saith Tacitus. It is likewise true that for the use of life and service of public society there may be excess in the purity and perspicuity of our spirits. This piercing brightness hath over-much subtility and curiosity. They should be made heavy and dull to make them the more obedient to example and

[1] Sen., *Epig.* lxix. [2] Tacit., *Ann.* l. xiv., *Cassi.*

practice, and they must be thickened and obscured to proportion them to this shady and terrestrial life. Therefore are vulgar and less wire-drawn wits found to be more fit and happy in the conduct of affairs; and the exquisite and high-raised opinions of philosophy unapt and unfit to exercise. This sharp vivacity of the spirit, and this supple and restless volubility, troubleth our negotiations. Human enterprises should be managed more grossly and superficially, and have a good and great part of them left for the rights of fortune. Affairs need not be sifted so nicely and so profoundly. A man loseth himself about the considerations of so many contrary lustres and diverse forms. *Volutantibus res inter se pugnantes, obtorpuerant animi:*[1] "Their minds were astonished while they revolved things so different." It is that which our elders report of Simonides; because his imagination concerning the question Hieron the king had made unto him (which the better to answer he had divers days allowed him to think of it) presented sundry subtle and sharp considerations unto him; doubting which might be the likeliest, he altogether despaireth of the truth. Whosoever searcheth all the circumstances and embraceth all the consequences thereof, hindereth his election. A mean engine doth equally conduct and sufficeth for the executions of great and little weights. It is commonly seen that the best husbands and the thriftiest are those who cannot tell how they are so; and that these cunning arithmeticians do seldom thrive by it. I know a notable prattler and an excellent blazoner of all sorts of husbandry and thrift, who hath most piteously let ten thousand pounds sterling a year pass from him. I know another who saith he consulteth better than any man of his counsel, and there cannot be a

[1] Liv., *Dec.* iv. l. ii.

more proper man to see unto or of more sufficiency; notwithstanding, when he cometh to any execution, his own servants find he is far otherwise; this I say without mentioning or accounting his ill-luck.

OF ANGER AND CHOLER.

PLUTARCH is every way admirable, but especially where he judgeth of human actions. The notable things he reporteth may be perceived in the comparison of Lycurgus and Numa, speaking of the great simplicity we commit in leaving young children under the government and charge of their fathers and parents. Most of our policies or commonwealths, saith Aristotle (as the Cyclops were wont), commit the conduct of their wives and charge of their children to all men, according to their foolish humour or indiscreet fantasies. And well-nigh none but the Lacedæmonian and Cretensian have resigned the discipline of children to the laws. Who seeth not that in an estate all things depend on nurture and education? And all the while, without discretion, it is wholly left to the parents' mercy how foolish and wicked soever they be. Amongst other things, how often (walking through our streets) have I desired to have a play or comedy made in revenge of young boys, which I saw thumped, misused, and well-nigh murdered by some hare-brained, moody, and through choler-raging fathers and mothers, from out whose eyes a man might see sparkles of rage to startle.

——rabie jecur incendente feruntur
Præcipites, ut saxa jugis abrupta, quibus mons
Subtrahitur, clivoque latus pendente recedit:[1]

[1] Juv., *Sat.* vi. 548.

They headlong run with rage, which doth inflame their livers
Like stones that broken fall from mountain-tops in shivers,
The hill withdraws, and they are rolled
From hanging cliff which leaves their hold,

(And according to Hypocrates, the most dangerous infirmities are those which disfigure the face), and with a loud thundering voice often to follow children that came but lately from nurse, which after prove lame, maimed, blockish, and dull-pated with blows; and yet our laws make no account of it, as if these sprains and unjointings of limbs, or these maims were no members of our commonwealth.

Gratum est quod patriæ civem populoque dedisti,
Si facis ut patriæ sit idoneus, utilis agris,
Utilis et bellorum et pacis rebus agendis.[1]

That you to th' country give a man, 'tis acceptable,
If for the country fit you make him, for fields able,
Of peace and war for all achievements profitable.

There is no passion so much transports the sincerity of judgment as doth anger. No man would make conscience to punish that judge by death who in rage or choler had condemned an offender. And why should fathers be allowed to beat, or schoolmasters be suffered to whip children, or to punish them, being angry? It is no longer correction but revenge. Punishment is unto children as physic, and would any man endure a physician that were angry and wroth against his patient? Ourselves (did we well), during the time of our anger, should never lay hands on our servants. So long as our pulse panteth and we feel any concitation, so long remit we the party; and things will seem far otherwise unto us if we once come to our senses again, and shall better bethink us. Then is it passion that commands. It is passion that speaketh, and not we.

[1] Juv., *Sat.* xiv. 70.

Athwart it, faults seem much greater unto us, as bodies do athwart a foggy mist. Whoso is hungry useth meat, but whoso will use chastisement should never hunger nor thirst after it. Moreover, corrections given with discretion and moderation are more gently received, and with more good to him that receiveth them. Otherwise he shall never think to have been justly condemned by a man who is transported by rage and choler, and for his justification allegeth the extraordinary motions of his master, the inflammation of his face, his unwonted oaths, his chafing, his unquietness, and his rash precipitation.

Ora tument ira, nigrescunt sanguine venæ.
Lumina Gorgoneo sævius igne micant.[1]

The face with anger swells, the veins grow black with blood,
The eyes more fiercely shine than Gorgon's fiery mood.

Suetonius writeth that Caius Rabirius having by Cæsar been condemned, nothing did him so much good towards the people (to whom he appealed) to make him obtain his suit, as the sharpness and over-boldness which Cæsar had declared in that judgment. Saying is one thing and doing another. A man must consider the sermon apart and the preacher several. Those have made themselves good sport who in our days have gone about to check the verity of our church by the ministers' vice: she fetcheth her testimony from elsewhere. It is a foolish manner of arguing, and which would soon reduce all things to a confusion. An honest man may sometimes have false opinions, and a wicked man may preach truth; yea, such a one as believes it not. Verily it is a pleasing harmony when doing and saying go together. And I will not deny but saying when deeds follow is of more efficacy and authority. As said Eudamidas when he heard a philosopher discourse of war:

[1] Ovid, *Art. Am.* l. iii. 53.

these speeches are good, but he that speaks them is not to be believed, for his ears were never accustomed to hear the clang of trumpets nor rattling of drums. And Cleomenes, hearing a rhetorician speak of valour, burst out into an extreme laughter; whereat the other being offended, he said unto him: "I would do as much if it were a swallow should speak of it, but were he an eagle I should gladly hear him." Meseemeth I perceive in ancient men's writings that he who speaks what he thinketh toucheth nearer the quick than he who counterfeits. Hear Cicero speak of the love of liberty, then listen to Brutus; their words will tell you and sound in your ear, the latter was a man ready to purchase it with the price of his life. Let Cicero, that father of eloquence, treat of the contempt of death, and let Seneca discourse of the same; the first draws it on languishing, and you shall plainly perceive he would fain resolve you of a thing whereof he is not yet resolved himself. He giveth you no heart, for himself hath none; whereas the other doth rouse, animate, and inflame you. I never look upon an author, be they such as write of virtue and of actions, but I curiously endeavour to find out what he was himself. For the Ephori of Sparta, hearing a dissolute liver propose a very beneficial advice unto the people, commanded him to hold his peace, and desired an honest man to assume the invention of it unto himself, and to propound it. Plutarch's compositions, if they be well savoured, do plainly manifest the same unto us; and I am persuaded I know him inwardly: yet would I be glad we had some memories of his own life; and by the way I am fallen into this discourse, by reason of the thanks I owe unto Aulus Gellius, in that he hath left us written this story of his manners, which fitteth my story of anger. A slave of his, who was a lewd and vicious man, but yet whose ears were

somewhat fed with philosophical documents, having for some faults by him committed, by the commandment of Plutarch his master, been stripped naked, whilst another servant of his whipped him, grumbled in the beginning that he was whipped without reason and had done nothing; but in the end mainly crying out, he fell to railing and wronging his master, upbraiding him that he was not a true philosopher, as he vaunted himself to be, and how he had often heard him say that it was an unseemly thing in a man to be angry. And that he had made a book of it; and now, all plunged in rage and engulfed in choler, to cause him so cruelly to be beaten was clean contrary to his own writing. To whom Plutarch, with an unaltered and mild-settled countenance, said thus unto him: "What, thou rascal, whereby dost thou judge I am now angry? Doth my countenance, doth my voice, doth my colour, or doth my speech give thee any testimony that I am either moved or choleric? Meseemeth mine eyes are not staringly wild, nor my face troubled, nor my voice frightful or distempered. Do I wax red? Do I foam at the mouth? Doth any word escape me I may repent hereafter? Do I startle and quake? Do I rage and ruffle with anger? For to tell thee true, these are the right signs of choler and tokens of anger." Then turning to the party that whipped him: "Continue still thy work," quoth he, "whilst this fellow and I dispute of the matter." This is the report of Gellius. Architas Tarentinus, returning from a war where he had been captain-general, found his house all out of order, husbandry all spoiled, and by the ill-government of his bailiff his ground all waste and unmanured; and having called for him, said thus: "Away, bad man, for if I were not angry I would have thee whipped for this." Plato likewise, being vexed and angry with one of his slaves, commanded Speusippus to

punish him, excusing himself that now being angry he would not lay hands upon him. Charilus the Lacedæmonian, to an Helot who behaved himself over insolently and audaciously towards him, "By the gods (saith he), if I were not now angry, I would presently make thee die." It is a passion which pleaseth and flattereth itself. How many times being moved by any false suggestion, if at that instant we be presented with any lawful defence or true excuse, do we fall into rage against truth and innocency itself? Touching this purpose, I have retained a wonderful example of antiquity. Piso, in divers other respects a man of notable virtue, being angry, and chafing with one of his soldiers, who returning from forage or boot-haling, could not give him an account where he had left a fellow-soldier of his, and thereupon concluding he had killed or made him away, forthwith condemned him to be hanged. And being upon the gallows and ready to die, behold his companion who had straggled abroad, coming home, whereat all the army rejoiced very much, and after many embracings and signs of joy between the two soldiers, the hangman brought both unto Piso, all the company hoping it would be a great pleasure unto him; but it fell out clean contrary, for through shame and spite, his wrath, still burning, was redoubled, and with a sly device his passion instantly presented to his mind, he made three guilty, forsomuch as one of them was found innocent, and caused them all three to be despatched: the first soldier because he was already condemned; the second, which had straggled abroad, by reason he was the cause of his fellow's death; and the hangman for that he had not fulfilled his general's commandment. Those who have to deal with froward and skittish women have no doubt seen what rage they will fall into, if when they are most angry and chafing a man be silent and patient,

and disdain to foster their anger and wrath. Celius the orator was by nature exceedingly fretful and choleric. To one who was with him at supper, a man of a mild and gentle conversation, and who because he would not move him, seemed to approve whatever he said, and yield to him in everything, as unable to endure his peevishness should so pass without some nourishment, burst out into a rage and said unto him: "For the love of God, deny me something, that we may be two." So women are never angry but to the end a man should again be angry with them, therein imitating the laws of love. Phocion to a man who troubled his discourse with brawling and scolding at him in most injurious manner, did nothing else but hold his peace, and give him what leisure he would to vent his choler, which done, without taking any notice of it, began his discourse again where he had left it off. There is no reply so sharp as such silent contempt. Of the most choleric and testy man of France (which is ever an imperfection, but more excusable in a military man, for it must needs be granted there are in that profession some men who cannot well avoid it) I ever say he is the patientest man I know to bridle his choler; it moveth and transporteth him with such fury and violence—

> *——magno veluti cum flamma sonore*
> *Virgea suggeritur costis undantis aheni,*
> *Exultàntque æstu latices, furit intus aquai*
> *Fumidus atque alte spumis exuberat amnis,*
> *Nec jam se capit unda, volat vapor ater ad auras*[1]—
>
> As when a faggot flame with hurring sounds
> Under the ribs of boiling cauldron lies,
> The water swells with heat beyond the bounds,
> Whence steaming streams raging and foaming rise,
> Water out-runs itself, black vapours fly to skies—

[1] Virg., *Æn.* l. 462.

that he must cruelly enforce himself to moderate the same. And for my part I know no passion I were able to smother with such temper and abide with such resolution. I would not set wisdom at so high a rate. I respect not so much what he doth as how much it cost him not to do worse. Another boasted in my presence of his behaviour's order and mildness, which in truth is singular. I told him that indeed it was much, namely, in men of so eminent a quality as himself was, on whom all eyes are fixed, always to show himself in a good temper; but that the chiefest point consisted in providing inwardly and for himself; and that in mine opinion it was no discreet part inwardly to fret: which, to maintain that mark and formal outward appearance, I feared he did. Choler is incorporated by concealing and smothering the same, as Diogenes said to Demosthenes, who fearing to be seen in a tavern withdrew himself into the same. The more thou recoilest back, the further thou goest into it. I would rather persuade a man, though somewhat out of season, to give his boy a wherret on the ear, than to dissemble this wise, stern or severe countenance, to vex and fret his mind. And I would rather make show of my passions than smother them to my cost, which being vented and expressed, become more languishing and weak: better it is to let its point work outwardly, than bend it against ourselves. *Omnia vitia in aperto leviora sunt: et tunc perniciosissima, quum simulata sanitate subsidunt:*[1] "All vices are then less perilous when they lie open to be seen. but then most pernicious when they lurk under counterfeited soundness." I ever warn those of my household who by their office's authority may sometimes have occasion to be angry, first to husband their anger, then not employ it upon every slight cause; for that impeacheth the effect and

[1] Sen., *Epist.* lvi.

worth of it. Rash and ordinary brawling is converted to a custom, and that's the reason each man contemns it. That which you employ against a servant for any thieving is not perceived, because it is the same he hath sundry times seen you use against him if he have not washed a glass well or misplaced a stool. Secondly, that they be not angry in vain, but ever have regard their chiding come to his ears with whom they are offended; for commonly some will brawl before he come in their presence, and chide a good while after he is gone—

Et secum petulans amentia certat,[1]

Madness makes with itself a fray,
Which fondly doth the wanton play—

and wreak their anger against his shadow, and make the storm fall where no man is either chastised or interested but with the rumour of their voice, and sometimes with such as cannot do withal. I likewise blame those who, being angry, will brave and mutiny when the party with whom they are offended is not by. These rhodomontades must be employed on such as fear them.

Mugitus veluti cùm prima in prælia taurus
Terrificos ciet, atque irasci in cornua tentat,
Arboris obnixus trunco, ventosque lacessit
Ictibus, et sparsa ad pugnam proludit arena.[2]

As when a furious bull to his first combat moves
His terror-breeding lows, his horn to anger proves,
Striving against a tree's trunk, and the wind with strokes,
His preface made to fight with scattered sand, provokes.

When I chance to be angry it is in the earnestest manner that may be, but yet as briefly and as secretly as is possible. I lose myself in hastiness and violence, but not in trouble.

[1] Claud., *in En.* l. i. 48. [2] Virg., *Æn.* l. xii. 103.

So that let me spend all manner of injurious words at random and without all heed, and never respect to place my points pertinently, and where they may do most hurt; for commonly I employ nothing but my tongue. My boys escape better cheap in great matters than in small trifles. Slight occasions surprise me, and the mischief is that after you are once fallen into the pits it is no matter who thrusts you in, you never cease till you come to the bottom. The fall presseth, hasteneth, moveth, and furthereth itself. In great occasions I am pleased that they are so just, that everybody expects a reasonable anger to ensue. I glorify myself to deceive their expectation. Against these I bandy and prepare myself; they make me summon up my wits and threaten to carry me very far if I would follow them. I easily keep myself from falling into them, and if I stay for them I am strong enough to reject the impulsion of this passion, what violent cause soever it hath. But if it seize upon and once preoccupy me, what vain cause soever it hath, it doth clean transport me: I condition thus with those that may contest with me, when you perceive me to be first angry, be it right or wrong, let me hold on my course, I will do the like to you whenever it shall come to my lot. The rage is not engendered but by the concurrency of cholers, which are easily produced one of another, and are not born at one instant. Let us allow every man his course, so shall we ever be in peace. Oh profitable prescription, but of an hard execution! I shall some time seem to be angry for the order and direction of my house, without any just emotion. According as my age yieldeth my humours more sharp and peevish, so do I endeavour to oppose myself against them, and if I can I will hereafter enforce myself to be less froward and not so testy, as I shall have more excuse and inclinations to be so; although I

have heretofore been in their number that are least. A word more to conclude this chapter. Aristotle saith choler doth sometimes serve as arms unto virtue and valour. It is very likely: notwithstanding such as gainsay him, answer pleasantly, it is a weapon of a new fashion and strange use. For we move other weapons, but this moveth us; our hand doth not guide it, but it directeth our hand; it holdeth us, and we hold not it.

OF PROFIT AND HONESTY.

No man living is free from speaking foolish things; the ill-luck is, to speak them curiously;

> *Næ iste magno conatu magnas nugas dixerit.*
>
> This fellow sure with much ado,
> Will tell great tales and trifles too.

That concerneth not me; mine slip from me with as little care as they are of small worth, whereby they speed the better. I would suddenly quit them, for the least cost were in them. Nor do I buy or sell them but for what they weigh. I speak unto paper as to the first man I meet. That this is true, mark well what follows. To whom should not treachery be detestable, when Tiberius refused it on such great interest? One sent him word out of Germany, that if he thought it good, Arminius should be made away by poison. He was the mightiest enemy the Romans had, who had so vilely used them under Varus, and who only impeached the increase of his domination in that country. His answer was, that the people of Rome

[1] Ter., *Heaut.* act iv. sc. 1.

were accustomed to be revenged on their enemies by open courses, with weapons in hand; not by subtle sleights, nor in hugger-mugger: thus left he the profitable for the honest. He was (you will say) a cozener. I believe it; that's no wonder in men of his profession. But the confession of virtue is of no less consequence in his mouth that hateth the same, forsomuch as truth by force doth wrest it from him; and if he will not admire it in him, at least, to adorn himself, he will put it on. Our composition, both public and private, is full of imperfection; yet there is nothing in nature unserviceable, no not inutility itself; nothing thereof hath been insinuated in this huge universe but holdeth some fit place therein. Our essence is cemented with crazed qualities; ambition, jealousy, envy, revenge, superstition, despair, lodge in us, with so natural a possession, as their image is also discerned in beasts; yea, and cruelty, so unnatural a vice, for in the midst of compassion we inwardly feel a kind of bitter-sweet pricking of malicious delight to see others suffer; and children feel it also:

Suaue mari magno turbantibus æquora ventis,
E terra magnum alterius spectare laborem.[1]

'Tis sweet on grand seas, when winds waves turmoil,
From land to see another's grievous toil.

The seed of which qualities, who should root out of man, should ruin the fundamental conditions of our life. In matter of policy, likewise, some necessary functions are not only base, but faulty vices find therein a seat, and employ themselves in the stitching up of our frame, as poisons in the preservation of our health. If they become excusable because we have need of them, and that common necessity effaceth their true property, let us resign the acting of this

[1] Lucr., l. ii. 1.

part to hardy citizens, who stick not to sacrifice their honours and consciences, as those of old, their lives for their country's avail and safety. We that are more weak had best assume tasks of more ease and less hazard. The commonwealth requireth some to betray, some to lie, and some to massacre: leave we that commission to people more obedient and more pliable. Truly I have often been vexed to see our judges, by fraud or false hopes of favour or pardon, draw on a malefactor to betray his offence, employing therein both cozenage and impudence. It were fit for justice and Plato himself, who favoureth this custom, to furnish me with means more suitable to my humour. 'Tis a malicious justice, and in my conceit no less wounded it by self than by others. I answered not long since, that hardly could I betray my prince for a particular man, who should be very sorry to betray a particular man for my prince. And loath not only to deceive, but that any be deceived in me; whereto I will neither furnish matter nor occasion. In that little business I have managed between our princes, amid the divisions and sub-divisions which at this day so tear and turmoil us, I have curiously heeded that they mistake me not, nor muffled themselves in my mask. The professors of that trade hold themselves most covert; pretending and counterfeiting the greatest indifference and nearness to the cause they can. As for me, I offer myself in my liveliest reasons, in a form most mine own; a tender and young negotiator, and who had rather fail in my business than in myself. Yet hath this been hitherto with so good hap (for surely fortune is in these matters a principal actor) that few have dealt between party and party with less suspicion and more inward favour. I have in all my proceedings an open fashion, easy to insinuate and give itself credit at first acquaintance. Sincerity, plainness, and naked

truth, in what age soever, find also their opportunity and employment. Besides, their liberty is little called in question, or subject to hate, who deal without respect to their own interest. And they may truly use the answer of Hyperides unto the Athenians, complaining of his bitter invectives and sharpness of his speech: consider not my masters whether I am free, but whether I be so, without taking aught, or bettering my state by it. My liberty also hath easily discharged me from all suspicion of faintness, by its vigour (nor for bearing to speak anything, though it bit or stung them; I could not have said worse in their absence) and because it carrieth an apparent show of simplicity and carelessness. I pretend no other fruit by negotiating than to negotiate; and annex no long pursuits or propositions to it. Every action makes his particular game, win he if he can. Nor am I urged with the passion of love or hate unto great men; nor is my will shackled with anger or particular respect. I regard our kings with an affection simply lawful and merely civil, neither moved nor unmoved by private interest; for which I like myself the better. The general and just cause binds me no more than moderately, and without violent fits. I am not subject to these piercing pledges and inward gags. Choler and hate are beyond the duty of justice, and are passions fitting only those whose reason is not sufficient to hold them to their duty, *Utatur motu animi, qui uti ratione non potest:* "Let him use the motion of his mind that cannot use reason." All lawful intentions are of themselves temperate; if not, they are altered into seditious and unlawful. It is that makes me march everywhere with my head aloft, my face and heart open. Verily (and I fear not to avouch it) I could easily for a need bring a candle to Saint Michael, and another to his dragon, as the good old woman. I will

follow the best side to the fire, but not into it, if I can choose. If need require, let Montaigne, my manor-house, be swallowed up in public ruin; but if there be no such necessity, I will acknowledge myself beholding unto fortune if she please to save it; and for its safety, employ as much scope as my endeavours can afford me. Was it not Atticus who, cleaving to the right but losing side, saved himself by his moderation, in that general shipwreck of the world, amidst so many changes and divers alterations? To private men, such as he was, it was more easy. And in such kind of business I think one dealeth justly not to be too forward to insinuate or invite himself. To hold a staggering or middle course, to bear an unmoved affection, and without inclination in the troubles of his county and public divisions, I deem neither seemly nor honest: *Ea non media, sed nulla via est velut eventum expectantium, quo fortunæ consilia sua applicent:* "That is not the midway, but a mad way, or no way, as of those that expect the event with intent to apply their designs as fortune shall fall out." That may be permitted in the affairs of neighbours. So did Gelon, the tyrant of Syracuse, suspend his inclination in the barbarian wars against the Greeks, keeping ambassadors at Delphos, with presents, to watch on what side the victory would light, and to apprehend the fittest occasion of reconcilement with the victors. It were a kind of treason to do so in our own affairs and domestic matters, wherein of necessity one must resolve and take a side; but for a man that hath neither charge nor express commandment to urge him not to busy or intermeddle himself therein, I hold it more excusable (yet frame I do not this excuse for myself) than in foreign and strange wars, wherewith, according to our laws, no man is troubled against his will. Nevertheless, those who wholly engage themselves into them may carry

such an order and temper as the storm (without offending him) may glide over their head. Had we not reason to hope as much of the deceased Bishop of Orleans, Lord of Moruilliers? And I know some who at this present worthily bestir themselves, in so even a fashion or pleasing a manner, that they are likely to continue on foot, whatsoever injurious alteration or fall the heavens may prepare against us. I hold it only fit for kings to be angry with kings, and mock at those rash spirits who, from the bravery of their hearts, offer themselves to so unproportionate quarrels. For one undertaketh not a particular quarrel against a prince, in marching against him openly and courageously for his honour, and according to his duty; if he love not such a man, he doth better—at least he esteemeth him. And the cause of laws especially, and defence of the ancient state, has ever found this privilege, that such as for their own interest disturb the same, excuse (if they honour not) their defenders. But we ought not term duty (as nowadays we do) a sour rigour and intestine crabbedness, proceeding of private interest and passion; nor courage a treacherous and malicious proceeding. Their disposition to frowardness and mischief, they entitle zeal. That's not the cause doth heat them, 'tis their own interest. They kindle a war, not because it is just, but because it is war. Why may not a man bear himself between enemies featly and faithfully? Do it, if not altogether with an equal (for it may admit different measure), at least with a sober affection, which may not so much engage you to the one, that he look for all at your hands. Content yourself with a moderate proportion of their favour, and to glide in troubled waters without fishing in them. The other manner of offering one's uttermost endeavour to both sides implieth less discretion than conscience. What knows he to whom

you betray another, as much your friend as himself, but you will do the like for him when his turn shall come. He takes you for a villain; whilst that he hears you, and gathers out of you, and makes his best use of your disloyalty. For double fellows are only beneficial in what they bring, but we must look they carry away as little as may be. I carry nothing to the one which I may not (having opportunity) say unto the other, the accent only changed a little; and report either but in different or known or common things. No benefit can induce me to lie unto them; what is entrusted to my silence I conceal religiously, but take as little in trust as I can. Prince's secrets are a troublesome charge to such as have nought to do with them. I ever by my good will capitulate with them, that they trust me with very little; but let them assuredly trust what I disclose unto them. I always knew more than I would. An open speech opens the way to another, and draws all out, even as wine and love. Philippides, in my mind, answered King Lysimachus wisely when he demanded of him what of his wealth or state he should impart unto him: "Which and what you please (quoth he) so it be not your secrets." I see every one mutiny, if another conceal the depth or mystery of the affairs from him, wherein he pleaseth to employ him, or have but purloined any circumstance from him. For my part, I am content one tell me no more of his business than he will have me know or deal in; nor desire I that my knowledge exceed or strain my word. If I must needs be the instrument of cozenage, it shall at least be with safety of my conscience. I will not be esteemed a servant, nor so affectionate, nor yet so faithful, that I be judged fit to betray any man. Who is unfaithful to himself may be excused if he be faithless to his master. But princes entertain not men by halfs, and despise bounded and conditional

service. What remedy? I freely tell them my limits; for a slave I must not be but unto reason, which yet I cannot compass; and they are to blame, to exact from a free man the like subjection unto their service, and the same obligation, which they may from those they have made and bought, and whose fortune dependeth particularly and expressly on theirs. The laws have delivered me from much trouble; they have chosen me a side to follow, and appointed me a master to obey; all other superiority and duty ought to be relative unto that, and be restrained. Yet, may it not be concluded, that if my affection should otherwise transport me, I would presently afford my helping hand unto it. Will and desires are a law to themselves, actions are to receive it of public institutions. All these proceedings of mine are somewhat dissonant from our forms. They should produce no great effect, nor hold out long among us. Innocency itself could not in these times nor negotiate without dissimulation, nor traffic without lying. Neither are public functions of my diet; what my profession requires thereto, I furnish in the most private manner I can. Being a child, I was plunged into them up to the ears, and had good success; but I got loose in good time. I have often since shunned meddling with them, seldom accepted, and never required; ever holding my back towards ambition; but if not as rowers, who go forward as it were backward; yet so, as I am less beholding to resolution than to my good fortune, that I was not wholly embarked in them. For there are courses less against my taste, and more comfortable to my carriage, by which, if heretofore it had called me to the service of the commonwealth, and my advancement unto credit in the world, I know that in following the same I had exceeded the reason of my conceit. Those which commonly say

against my profession that what I term liberty, simplicity, and plainness in my behaviour, is art, cunning, and subtilty; and rather discretion than goodness, industry than nature, good wit than good hap; do me more honour than shame. But truly they make my cunning over-cunning. And whosoever hath traced me and nearly looked into my humours, I'll lose a good wager if he confess not that there is no rule in their school could, amid such crooked paths and divers windings, square and report this natural motion, and maintain an appearance of liberty and licence, so equal and inflexible; and that all their attention and wit is not of power to bring them to it. The way to truth is but one and simple, that of particular profit and benefit of affairs a man hath in charge, double, uneven, and accidental. I have often seen these counterfeit and artificial liberties in practice, but most commonly without success. They favour of Æsop's ass, who in emulation of the dog laid his two fore feet very jocundly upon his master's shoulders; but look how many blandishments the pretty dog received, under one, so many bastinadoes were redoubled upon the poor ass's back. *Id maxime quemque decet: quod est cuiusque suum maxime:*[1] "That becomes every man especially which is his own especially." I will not deprive cousinage of her rank, that were to understand the world but ill; I know it hath often done profitable service, it supporteth, yea and nourisheth the greatest part of men's vacations.

There are some lawful vices; as many actions, or good or excusable, unlawful. Justice in itself natural and universal is otherwise ordered, and more nobly distributed, than this other especial and national justice, restrained and suited to the need of our policy: *Veri juris germanæque*

[1] Cic., *Off.* l. 1.

justitiæ solidam et expressam effigiem nullam tenemus: umbra et imaginibus utimur:[1] "We have no lively nor life-like portraiture of upright law and natural justice: we use but the shadows and colours of them." So that wise Dandamys, hearing the lives of Socrates, Pythagoras, and Diogenes repeated, in other things judged them great and worthy men, but over-much subjected to the reverence of the laws; which, to authorise and second, true virtue is to decline very much from its natural vigour, and not only by their permission, but persuasions, divers vicious actions are committed and take place. *Ex Senatusconsultis plebisquescitis scelera exercentur:* "Even by decrees of counsel and by statute laws are mischiefs put in practice." I follow the common phrase, which makes a difference between profitable and honest things, terming some natural actions which are not only profitable but necessary, dishonest and filthy. As for my part, both my word and faith are as the rest, pieces of this common body; their best effect is the public service: that's ever presupposed with me. But as if one should command me to take the charge of the rolls or records of the palace, I would answer, I have no skill in them; or to be a leader of pioneers, I would say, I am called to a worthier office. Even so, who would go about to employ me, not to murder or poison, but to lie, betray, and forswear myself, I would tell him, If I have robbed or stolen anything from any man, send me rather to the gallows. For a gentleman may lawfully speak, as did the Lacedæmonians, defeated by Antipater, upon the points of their agreement: "You may impose as heavy burdens and harmful taxes upon us as you please, but you lose your time to command us any shameful or dishonest things." Every man should give himself the oath which the Egyptian

[1] Cic., *Off.* l. 3.

kings solemnly and usually presented to their judges: Not to swerve from their consciences what command soever they should receive from themselves to the contrary. In such commissions there is an evident note of ignominy and condemnation. And whosoever gives them you, accuseth you; and if you conceive them right, gives you them as a trouble and burthen. As much as the public affairs amend by your endeavours, your own impaireth; the better you do, so much the worse do you. And it shall not be new, nor peradventure without shadow of justice, that he who setteth you a work becometh your ruin. "If treason be in any case excusable it is only then, when 'tis employed to punish and betray treason." We shall find many treacheries to have been not refused, but punished by them in whose favour they were undertaken. Some rules in philosophy are both false and faint. The example proposed unto us of respecting private utility before faith given hath not sufficient power by the circumstance they add unto it. Thieves have taken you, and on your oath to pay them a certain sum of money have set you at liberty again. They err that say an honest man is quit of his word and faith without paying, being out of their hands. There is no such matter. What fear and danger hath once forced me to will and consent unto, I am bound to will and perform, being out of danger and fear. And although it have but forced my tongue and not my will, yet am I bound to make my word good and keep my promise. For my part, when it hath sometimes unadvisedly overrun my thought, yet have I made a conscience to disavow the same. Otherwise we should by degrees come to abolish all the right a third man taketh and may challenge of our promises. *Quasi verò forti viro vis possit adhiberi:*[1] "As

[1] Cic., *Off.* l. iii.

though any force could be used upon a valiant man." 'Tis only lawful for our private interest to excuse the breach of promise, if we have rashly promised things in themselves wicked and unjust. For the right of virtue ought to overrule the right of our bond. I have heretofore placed Epaminondas in the first rank of excellent men, and now recant it not. Unto what high pitch raised he the consideration of his particular duty? who never slew man he had vanquished; who for that invaluable good of restoring his country her liberty made it a matter of conscience to murder a tyrant or his accomplices without a due and formal court of law, and who judged him a bad man, how good a citizen soever, that amongst his enemies and in the fury of a battle spared not his friend or his host. Lo here a mind of a rich composition. He matched unto the most violent and rude actions of men goodness and courtesy, yea and the most choice and delicate that may be found in the school of philosophy. This so high-raised courage, so swelling and so obstinate against sorrow, death, and poverty, was it nature or art made it relent, even to the utmost strain of exceeding tenderness and debonairity of complexion? Being clothed in the dreadful livery of steel and blood, he goeth on crushing and bruising a nation, invincible to all others but to himself, yet mildly relenteth in the midst of a combat or confusion when he meets with his host or with his friend. Verily this man was deservedly fit to command in war, which in the extremest fury of his innated rage made him to feel the sting of courtesy and remorse of gentleness than when, all inflamed, it foamed with fury and burned with murder. It is a miracle to be able to join any show of justice with such actions. But it only belongeth to the unmatched courage of Epaminondas, in that confused plight, to join mildness and facility of the most gentle

behaviour that ever was unto them, yea, and pure innocency itself. And whereas one told the Mamertins that statutes were of no force against armed men; another to the tribune of the people, that the times of justice and of war were two; a third, that the confused noise of war and clangour of arms hindered him from understanding the sober voice of the laws, this man was not so much as impeached from conceiving the mild sound of civility and kindness. Borrowed he of his enemies the custom of sacrificing to the Muses (when he went to the wars) to qualify by their sweetness and mildness that martial fury and hostile surliness? Let us not fear, after so great a master, to hold that some things are unlawful, even against our fellest enemies; that public interest ought not to challenge all of all against private interest. *Manente memoria etiam in dissidio publicorum fœderum privati juris:* "Some memory of private right continuing even in disagreement of public contracts."

> ——*et nulla potentia vires*
> *Præstandi, ne quid peccet amicus, habet:*[1]
>
> No power hath so great might
> To make friends still go right.

And that all things be not lawful to an honest man, for the service of his king, the general cause and defence of the laws. *Non enim patria præstat omnibus officiis, et ipsi conducit pios habere cives in parentes:*[2] "For our country is not above all other duties; it is good for the country to have her inhabitants use piety towards their parents." It is an instruction befitting the times. We need not harden our hearts with these plates of iron and steel; it sufficeth our shoulders be armed with them. It is enough to dip our pens in ink, too much to dye them in blood. If it be

[1] Ovid, *Pont.* l. i., *El.* viii. 37. [2] Cic., *Off.* l. iii.

greatness of courage and the effect of a rare and singular virtue to neglect friendship, despise private respects and bonds, one's word and kindred, for the common good and obedience of the magistrate, it is verily able to excuse us from it if we but allege that it is a greatness unable to lodge in the greatness of Epaminondas's courage. I abhor the enraged admonitions of this other unruly spirit.

> *——dum tela micant, non vos pietatis imago*
> *Ulla, nec aduersa conspecti fronte parentes*
> *Commoveant, vultus gladio turbante verendos.*[1]
>
> While swords are brandish'd, let no show of grace
> Once move you, nor your parents face to face,
> But with your swords disturb their reverend grace.

Let us bereave wicked, bloody, and traitorous dispositions of this pretext of reason; leave we that impious and exorbitant justice, and adhere unto more human imitations. Oh, what may time and example bring to pass! In an encounter of the civil wars against Cinna, one of Pompey's soldiers having unwittingly slain his brother, who was on the other side, through shame and sorrow presently killed himself; and some years after, in another civil war of the said people, a soldier boldly demanded a reward of his captains for killing his own brother. Falsely do we argue honour, and the beauty of an action, by its profit, and conclude as ill to think every one is bound unto it, and that it is honest if it be commodious.

> *Omnia non pariter rerum sunt omnibus apta.*[2]
>
> All things alike to all
> Do not well-fitting fall.

Choose we out the most necessary and most beneficial matter of human society, it will be a marriage; yet is it

[1] Lucan, l. vii. 320. [2] Ovid, *Epist.* l. iii., *El.* viii. 7.

that the saints' counsel findeth and deemeth the contrary side more honest, excluding from it the most reverend vocation of men, as we to our races assign such beasts as are of least esteem.

OF REPENTING.

OTHERS fashion man, I repeat him, and represent a particular one but ill-made, and whom were I to form anew, he should be far other than he is; but he is now made. And though the lines of my picture change and vary, yet lose they not themselves. The world runs all on wheels. All things therein move without intermission; yea, the earth, the rocks of Caucasus, and the Pyramids of Egypt, both with the public and their own motion. Constancy itself is nothing but a languishing and wavering dance. I cannot settle my object; it goeth so unquietly and staggering, with a natural drunkenness; I take it in this plight, as it is at the instant I amuse myself about it, I describe not the essence but the passage; not a passage from age to age, or as the people reckon, from seven years to seven, but from day to day, from minute to minute. My history must be fitted to the present. I may soon change, not only fortune, but intention. It is a counter-roll of divers and variable accidents and irresolute imaginations, and sometimes contrary; whether it be that myself am other, or that I apprehend subjects by other circumstances and considerations. Howsoever, I may perhaps gainsay myself, but truth (as Demades said) I never gainsay. Were my mind settled I would not essay, but resolve myself. It is still a

prentice and a probationer. I propose a mean life and without lustre; 'tis all one. They fasten all moral philosophy as well to a popular and private life as to one of richer stuff. Every man beareth the whole stamp of human condition. Authors communicate themselves unto the world by some special and strange mark; I the first, by my general disposition, as Michael de Montaigne, not as a grammarian, or a poet, or a lawyer. If the world complain I speak too much of myself, I complain it thinks no more of itself. But is it reason, that being so private in use I should pretend to make myself public in knowledge? Or is it reason I should produce into the world, where fashion and art have such sway and command, the raw and simple effects of nature, and of a nature as yet exceeding weak? To write books without learning, is it not to make a wall without stone or such-like thing? Conceits of music are directed by art, mine by hap. Yet have I this according to learning, that never man handled subject he understood or knew better than I do this I have undertaken, being therein the most cunning man alive.

Secondly, that never man waded further into this matter, nor more distinctly sifted the parts and dependancies of it, nor arrived more exactly and fully to the end he proposed unto himself. To finish the same, I have need of naught but faithfulness, which is therein as sincere and pure as may be found. I speak truth, not my bellyful, but as much as I dare; and I dare the more the more I grow into years, for it seemeth custom alloweth old age more liberty to babble, and indiscretion to talk of itself. It cannot herein be as in trades, where the craftsman and his work do often differ. Being a man of so sound and honest conversation, wrote he so foolishly? Are such learned writings come from a man of so weak a conversation? who hath but an

ordinary conceit, and writeth excellently, one may say his capacity is borrowed, not of himself. A skilful man is not skilful in all things; but a sufficient man is sufficient everywhere, even unto ignorance. Here my book and myself march together, and keep one pace. Elsewhere one may commend or condemn the work without the workman, here not; who toucheth one toucheth the other. He who shall judge of it without knowing him shall wrong himself more than me, he that knows it hath wholly satisfied me. Happy beyond my merit if I get this only portion of public approbation, as I may cause men of understanding to think I had been able to make use and benefit of learning, had I been endowed with any, and deserved better help of memory; excuse we here what I often say, that I seldom repent myself, and that my conscience is contented with itself; not of an angel's or a horse's conscience, but as of a man's conscience. Adding ever this clause, not of ceremony, but of true and essential submission: that I speak inquiring and doubting, merely and simply referring myself, from resolution, unto common and lawful opinions. I teach not, I report; no vice is absolutely vice which offendeth not, and a sound judgment accuseth not; for the deformity and incommodity thereof is so palpable, as peradventure they have reason who say it is chiefly produced by sottishness and brought forth by ignorance, so hard is it to imagine one should know it without hating it. Malice sucks up the greatest part of her own venom, and therewith poisoneth herself. Vice leaveth, as an ulcer in the flesh, a repentance in the soul, which still scratcheth and bleedeth itself. For reason effaceth other griefs and sorrows, but engendereth those of repentance; the more irksome because inward, as the cold and heat of agues is more offensive than that which comes outward. I account

vices (but each according to their measure) not only those which reason disallows and nature condemns, but such as man's opinion hath forged as false and erroneous, if laws and custom authorise the same. In like manner there is no goodness but gladdens an honest disposition. There is truly I wot not what kind or congratulation of well doing which rejoiceth in ourselves, and a generous jollity that accompanieth a good conscience. A mind courageously vicious may happily furnish itself with security, but it cannot be fraught with this self-joining delight and satisfaction. It is no small pleasure for one to feel himself preserved from the contagion of an age so infected as ours, and to say to himself, could a man enter and see even into my soul, yet should he not find me guilty either of the affliction or ruin of anybody, nor culpable of envy or revenge, nor of public offence against the laws, nor tainted with innovation, trouble, or sedition, nor spotted with falsifying of my word; and although the liberty of times allowed and taught it every man, yet could I never be induced to touch the goods or dive into the purse of any Frenchman, and have always lived upon mine own as well in time of war as peace, nor did I ever make use of any poor man's labour without reward. These testimonies of an unspotted conscience are very pleasing, which natural joy is a great benefit unto us, and the only payment never faileth us. To ground the recompense of virtuous actions upon the approbation of others is to undertake a most uncertain or troubled foundation, namely, in an age so corrupt and times so ignorant as this is; the vulgar people's good opinion is injurious. Whom trust you in seeing what is commendable? God keep me from being an honest man, according to the description I daily see made of honour, each one by himself. *Quæ fuerant vitia, mores*

sunt: "What erst were vices are now grown fashions." Some of my friends have sometimes attempted to school me roundly, and sift me plainly, either of their own motion, or invited by me, as to an office, which to a well-composed mind, both in profit and lovingness, exceedeth all the duties of sincere amity. Such have I ever entertained with open arms of courtesy and kind acknowledgment. But now to speak from my conscience, I often found so much false measure in their reproaches and praises, that I had not greatly erred if I had rather erred than done well after their fashion. Such as we especially, who live a private life not exposed to any gaze but our own, ought in our hearts establish a touchstone, and there to touch our deeds and try our actions, and accordingly, now cherish and now chastise ourselves. I have my own laws and tribunal to judge of me, whither I address myself more than anywhere else. I restrain my actions according to other, but extend them according to myself. None but yourself knows rightly whether you be demiss and cruel, or loyal and devout. Others see you not, but guess you by uncertain conjectures. They see not so much your nature as your art. Adhere not then to their opinion, but hold unto your own. *Tuo tibi judicio est utendum. Virtutis et vitiorum grave ipsius conscientiæ pondus est; qua sublata jacent omnia:*[1] "You must use your own judgment. The weight of the very conscience of vice and virtues is heavy: take that away and all is done." But whereas it is said that repentance nearly followeth sin, seemeth not to imply sin placed in his rich array, which lodgeth in us as in his proper mansion. One may disavow and disclaim vices that surprise us, and whereto our passions transport us, but those which by long habits are rooted in a strong, and anchored in a powerful

[1] Cic., *Nat. Deor.* l. iii.

will, are not subject to contradiction. Repentance is but a denying of our will, and an opposition of our fantasies which diverts us here and there. It makes some disavow his former virtue and continency.

> *Quæ mens est hodie, cur eadem non puero fuit,*
> *Vel cur his animis incolumes non redeunt genæ?*[1]
>
> Why was not in a youth same mind as now?
> Or why bears not this mind a youthful brow?

That is an exquisite life which even in his own private keepeth itself in awe and order. Every one may play the juggler, and represent an honest man upon the stage; but within, and in bosom, where all things are lawful, where all is concealed, to keep a due rule or formal decorum, that's the point. The next degree is to be so in one's own home, and in his ordinary actions, whereof we are to give account to nobody, wherein is no study, nor art; and therefore Bias describing the perfect state or a family whereof (saith he) the master be such inwardly by himself, as he is outwardly, for fear of the laws, and respect of men's speeches. And it was a worthy saying of Julius Drusus to those workmen which for three thousand crowns offered so to reform his house that his neighbours should no more overlook into it: "I will give you six thousand (said he), and contrive it so that on all sides every man may look into it." The custom of Agesilaus is remembered with honour, who in his travel was wont to take up his lodging in churches, that the people and gods themselves might pry into his private actions. Some have been admirable to the world, in whom nor his wife, nor his servants ever noted anything remarkable. "Few men have been admired of their familiars. No man hath been a prophet, not only in his house, but in

[1] Hor., *Car.* l. iv., *Od.* x. 7.

his own country," saith the experience of histories. Even so in things of nought. And in this base example is the image of greatness discerned. In my climate of Gascony they deem it a jest to see me in print. The further the knowledge which is taken of me is from my home, of so much more worth am I. In Guienne I pay printers, in other places they pay me. Upon this accident they ground, who living and present keep close-lurking to purchase credit when they shall be dead and absent. I had rather have less. And I cast not myself into the world, but for the portion I draw from it. That done, I quit it. The people attend on such a man with wonderment, from a public act, unto his own doors; together with his robes he leaves off his part, falling so much the lower by how much higher he was mounted. View him within, there all is turbulent, disordered, and vile. And were order and formality found in him, a lively, impartial, and well-sorted judgment is required to perceive and fully to discern him in these base and private actions. Considering that order is but a dumpish and drowsy virtue: to gain a battle, perform an ambassage, and govern a people, are noble and worthy actions; to chide, laugh, sell, pay, love, hate, and mildly and justly to converse both with his own and with himself; not to relent, and not gainsay himself are things more rare, more difficult, and less remarkable.

Retired lives sustain that way, whatever some say, offices as much more crabbed and extended than other lives do. And private men (saith Aristotle) serve virtue more hardly and more highly attend her than those which are magistrates or placed in authority. We prepare ourselves unto eminent occasions more for glory than for conscience. The nearest way to come unto glory were to do that for conscience which we do for glory. And meseemeth the virtue of

Alexander representeth much less vigour in her large theatre than that of Socrates in his base and obscure exercitation. I easily conceive Socrates in the room of Alexander; Alexander in that of Socrates I cannot. If any ask the one what he can do he will answer, "Conquer the world;" let the same question be demanded of the other, he will say, "Lead my life conformably to its natural condition;" a science much more generous, more important, and more lawful.

The worth of the mind consisteth not in going high, but in marching orderly. Her greatness is not exercised in greatness; in mediocrity it is. As those which judge and touch us inwardly make no great account of the brightness of our public actions, and see they are but streaks and points of clear water surging from a bottom otherwise slimy and full of mud; so those who judge us by this gay outward appearance conclude the same of our inward constitution, and cannot couple popular faculties as theirs are, unto these other faculties which amaze them so far from their level. So do we attribute savage shapes and ugly forms unto devils. As who doth not ascribe high-raised eyebrows, open nostrils, a stern, frightful visage, and a huge body unto Tamberlaine, as is the form or shape of the imagination we have fore-conceived by the brute of his name? had any heretofore showed me Erasmus, I could hardly have been induced to think but whatsoever he had said to his boy or hostess had been adages and apophthegms. We imagine much more fitly an artificer upon his close stool than a great judge, reverend for his carriage and regardful for his sufficiency; we think that from those high thrones they should not abase themselves so low as to live. As vicious minds are often incited to do well by some strange impulsion, so are virtuous spirits moved to do ill.

They must then be judged by their settled estate, when they are near themselves, and as we say, at home, if at any time they be so; or when they are nearest unto rest, and in their natural seat. Natural inclinations are by institution helped and strengthened, but they neither change nor exceed. A thousand natures in my time have a thwart, a contrary discipline escaped toward virtue or toward vice.

Sic ubi desuetæ silvis in carcere clausæ,
Mansuevere feræ, et vultus posuere minaces,
Atque hominem didicere pati, si torrida parum
Venit in ora cruor, redeunt rabiesque furorque,
Admonitæque tument gustato sanguine fauces,
Fervet, et à trepido vix abstinet ira magistro.[1]

So when wild beasts, disused from the wood,
Fierce looks laid down, grow tame, closed in a cage,
Taught to bear man, if then a little blood
Touch their hot lips, fury returns and rage;
Their jaws by taste admonish'd swell with veins,
Rage boils, and from faint keeper scarce abstains.

These original qualities are not grubbed out, they are but covered and hidden. The Latin tongue is to me in a manner natural; I understand it better than French; but it is now forty years I have not made use of it to speak, nor much to write; yet in some extreme emotions and sudden passions, wherein I have twice or thrice fallen, since my years of discretion, and namely, once, when my father being in perfect health, fell all alone upon me in a swoon, I have ever, even from my very heart, uttered my first words in Latin; nature rushing and by force expressing itself against so long a custom; the like example is alleged of divers others. Those which in my time have attempted to correct the passions of the world by new opinions, reform the vices of appearance; those of essence they leave

[1] Lucan, l. iv. 237.

untouched if they increase them not. And their increase is much to be feared. We willingly protract all other well-doing upon these external reformations of less cost and of greater merit; whereby we satisfy good-cheap, other natural consubstantial and intestine vices. Look a little into the course of our experience. There is no man (if he listen to himself) that doth not discover in himself a peculiar form of his, a swaying form which wrestleth against the institution, and against the tempests of passions, which are contrary unto him. As for me, I feel not myself much agitated by a shock; I commonly find myself in mine own place, as are sluggish and lumpish bodies. If I am not close and near unto myself, I am never far off; my debauches or excesses transport me not much. There is nothing extreme and strange; yet have I found fits and vigorous lusts. The true condemnation, and which toucheth the common fashion of our men, is that their very retreat is full of corruption and filth. The idea of their amendment is blurred and deformed; their repentance crazed and faulty very near as much as their sin. Some, either because they are so fast and naturally joined unto vice, or through long custom have lost all sense of its ugliness. To others (of whose rank I am) vice is burdensome, but they counterbalance it with pleasure, or other occasions, and suffer it, and at a certain rate lend themselves unto it, though basely and viciously. Yet might happily so remote a disposition of measure be imagined, where with justice the pleasure might excuse the offence, as we say of profit. Not only being accidental, and out of sin, as in thefts, but even in the very exercise of it, as in the acquaintance or copulation with women; where the provocation is so violent, and as they say, sometimes unresistible. In a town of a kinsman of mine, the other day, being in Armignac, I saw a

country man, commonly surnamed the Thief, who himself reported his life to have been thus. Being born a beggar, and perceiving that to get his bread by the sweat of his brow and labour of his hands would never sufficiently arm him against penury, he resolved to become a thief, and that trade had employed all his youth safely, by means of his bodily strength; for he ever made up harvest and vintage in other men's grounds, but so far off, and in so great heaps, that it was beyond imagination one man should in one night carry away so much upon his shoulders, and was so careful to equal the prey and disperse the mischief he did, that the spoil was of less import to every particular man.

He is now in old years indifferently rich; for a man of his condition (Godamercy his trade) which he is not ashamed to confess openly, and to reconcile himself with God, he affirmeth to be daily ready, with his gettings and other good turns, to satisfy the posterity of those he hath heretofore wronged or robbed; which if himself be not of ability to perform (for he cannot do all at once) he will charge his heirs withal, according to the knowledge he hath of the wrongs by him done to every man. By this description, be it true or false, he respecteth theft as a dishonest and unlawful action, and hateth the same, yet less than pinching want; he repents but simply, for in regard it was so counterbalanced and recompensed, he repenteth not. That is not that habit which incorporates us unto vice, and confirmeth our understanding in it, nor is it that boisterous wind which by violent blasts dazzleth and troubleth our minds, and at that time confounds and overwhelms both us, our judgment, and all into the power of vice. What I do is ordinarily full and complete, and I march (as we say) all in one pace: I have not many motions that hide themselves and slink away from my reason, or which very near are not

guided by the consent of all my parts, without division, or intestine sedition: my judgment hath the whole blame or commendation, and the blame it hath once, it hath ever; for almost from its birth it hath been one of the same inclination, course, and force. And in matters of general opinions, even from my infancy, I ranged myself to the point I was to hold. Some sins there are outrageous, violent, and sudden; leave we them.

But those other sins, so often reassumed, determined, and advised upon, whether they be of complexion, or of profession and calling, I cannot conceive how they should so long be settled in one same courage, unless the reason and conscience of the sinner were thereunto inwardly privy and constantly willing. And how to imagine or fashion the repentance thereof, which, he vaunteth, doth sometimes visit him, seemeth somewhat hard unto me. I am not of Pythagoras' sect, that men take a new soul, when to receive oracles they approach the images of gods, unless he would say with all, that it must be a strange one, new, and lent him for the time; our own, giving so little sign of purification, and cleanness worthy of that office. They do altogether against the Stoical precepts, which appoint us to correct the imperfections and vices we find in ourselves, but withal forbid us to disturb the quiet of our mind. They make us believe they feel great remorse, and are inwardly much displeased with sin; but of amendment, correction, or intermission, they show us none. Surely there can be no perfect health where the disease is not perfectly removed. Were repentance put in the scale of the balance, it would weigh down sin. I find no humour so easy to be counterfeited as devotion; if one conform not his life and conditions to it, her essence is abstruse and concealed, her appearance gentle and stately.

For my part, I may in general wish to be other than I am; I may condemn and mislike my universal form, I may beseech God to grant me an undefiled reformation, and excuse my natural weakness, but meseemeth I ought not to term this repentance, no more than the displeasure of being neither Angel nor Cato. My actions are squared to what I am, and confirmed to my condition. I cannot do better; and repentance doth not properly concern what is not in our power; sorrow doth. I may imagine infinite dispositions of a higher pitch, and better governed than mine, yet do I nothing better my faculties; no more than mine arm becometh stronger, or my wit more excellent, by conceiving some others to be so. If to suppose and wish a more nobler working than ours might produce the repentance of our own, we should then repent us of our most innocent actions; forsomuch as we judge that in a more excellent nature they had been directed with greater perfection and dignity, and ourselves would do the like. When I consult with my age of my youth's proceedings, I find that commonly (according to my opinion) I managed them in order. This is all my resistance is able to perform, I flatter not myself; in like circumstances, I should ever be the same. It is not a spot, but a whole dye that stains me. I acknowledge no repentance that is superficial, mean, and ceremonious. It must touch me on all sides before I can term it repentance. It must pinch my entrails, and afflict them as deeply and thoroughly as God himself beholds me. When in negotiating many good fortunes have slipped me for want of good discretion, yet did my projects make good choice, according to the occurrences presented unto them. Their manner is ever to take the easier and surer side. I find that in my former deliberations, I proceeded, after my rules, discreetly for the subject's state propounded to me;

and in like occasions would proceed alike a hundred years hence. I respect not what now it is, but what it was, when I consulted of it. The consequence of all designs consists in the seasons; occasions pass, and matters change incessantly. I have in my time run into some gross, absurd, and important errors; not for want of good advice, but of good hap. There are secret and indivinable parts in the objects men do handle, especially in the nature of men and mute conditions without show, and sometimes unknown of the very possessors, produced and stirred up by sudden occasions. If my wit could neither find nor presage them, I am not offended with it; the function thereof is contained within its own limits. If the success bear me, and favour the side I refused, there is no remedy; I fall not out with myself: I accuse my fortune, not my endeavour; that's not called repentance. Phocion had given the Athenians some counsel, which was not followed; the matter, against his opinion, succeeding happily. "How now, Phocion (quoth one), art thou pleased the matter hath thrived so well?" "Yea (said he), and I am glad of it; yet repent not the advice I gave."

When any of my friends come to me for counsel I bestow it frankly and clearly, not as (well-nigh all the world doth) wavering at the hazard of the matter, whereby the contrary of my meaning may happen; that so they may justly find fault with my advice; for which I care not greatly. For they shall do me wrong, and it became not me to refuse them that duty. I have nobody to blame for my faults or misfortunes but myself. For in effect I seldom use the advice of other unless it be for compliment sake, and where I have need of instruction or knowledge of the fact. Marry in things wherein nought but judgment is to be employed; strange reasons may serve to sustain, but not to divert me.

I lend a favourable and courteous ear unto them all. But (to my remembrance) I never believed any but mine own. With me they are but flies and moths, which distract my will. I little regard mine own opinions, other men's I esteem as little; fortune pays me accordingly. If I take no counsel, I give as little. I am not much sought after for it, and less credited when I give it; neither know I any enterprise, either private or public, that my advice hath directed and brought to conclusion. Even those whom fortune had someway tied thereunto, have more willingly admitted the direction of other's conceit than mine. As one that am as jealous of the rights of my quiet as of those of my authority, I would rather have it thus.

Where leaving me, they jump with my profession, which is wholly to settle and contain me in myself. It is a pleasure unto me to be disinterested of other men's affairs, and disengaged from their contentions. When suits or businesses be overpast, howsoever it be, I grieve little at them. For the imagination that they must necessarily happen so, puts me out of pain; behold them in the course of the universe, and enchained in Stoical causes, your fantasy cannot by wish or imagination remove one point of them, but the whole order of things must reverse both what is past and what is to come. Moreover, I hate that accidental repentance which old age brings with it.

He that in ancient times said he was beholden to years because they had rid him of voluptuousness, was not of mine opinion. I shall never give impuissance thanks for any good it can do me: *Nec tam aversa unquam videbitur ab opere suo providentia, ut debilitas inter optima inuenta sit:* "Nor shall foresight ever be seen so averse from her own work, that weakness be found to be one of the best things." Our appetites are rare in old age; the blow overpast,

a deep satiety seizeth upon us; therein I see no conscience. Fretting care and weakness imprint in us an effeminate and drowsy virtue.

We must not suffer ourselves so fully to be carried into natural alterations as to corrupt or adulterate our judgment by them. Youth and pleasure have not heretofore prevailed so much over me, but I could ever (even in the midst of sensualities) discern the ugly face of sin; nor can the distaste which years bring on me at this instant keep me from discerning that of voluptuousness in vice. Now I am no longer in it, I judge of it as if I were still there. I who lively and attentively examine my reason, find it to be the same that possessed me in my most dissolute and licentious age; unless, perhaps, they being enfeebled and impaired by years do make some difference; and find that what delight it refuseth to afford me in regard of my bodily health, it would no more deny me than in times past for the health of my soul. To see it out of combat, I hold it not the more courageous. My temptations are so mortified and crazed as they are not worthy of its oppositions; holding but my hand before me, I becalm them. Should one present that former concupiscence unto it, I fear it would be of less power to sustain it than heretofore it hath been. I see in it by itself no increase of judgment nor access of brightness; what it now judgeth it did then. Wherefore if there be any amendment, it is but diseased. Oh, miserable kind of remedy to be beholden unto sickness for our health. It is not for our mishap, but for the good success of our judgment to perform this office. Crosses and afflictions make me do nothing but curse them. They are for people that cannot be awakened but by the whip, the course of my reason is the nimbler in prosperity. It is much more distracted and busied in the digesting of mischiefs than of

delights, I see much clearer in fair weather. Health forewarneth me as with more pleasure, so to better purpose than sickness. I approached the nearest I could unto amendment and regularity, when I should have enjoyed the same; I should be ashamed and vexed that the misery and mishap of my old age could exceed the health, attention, and vigour of my youth; and that I should be esteemed, not for what I have been, but for what I am left to be. "The happy life (in my opinion), not (as said Antisthenes) the happy death, is it that makes man's happiness in this world."

I have not preposterously busied myself to tie the tail of a philosopher unto the head and body of a varlet; nor that this paltry end should disavow and belie the fairest, soundest, and longest part of my life. I will present myself and make a general muster of my whole, everywhere uniformly. Were I to live again it should be as I have already lived. I neither deplore what is past nor dread what is to come; and if I be not deceived, the inward parts have nearly resembled the outward. It is one of the chiefest points wherein I am beholden to fortune, that in the course of my body's estate each thing hath been carried in season. I have seen the leaves, the blossoms, and the fruit; and now see the drooping and withering of it. Happily, because naturally. I bear my present miseries the more gently because they are in season, and with greater favour make me remember the long happiness of my former life. In like manner my discretion may well be of like proportion in the one and the other time; but sure it was of much more performance, and had a better grace, being fresh, jolly, and full of spirit than now that it is worn, decrepit, and toilsome.

I therefore renounce these casual and dolorous reforma-

tions. God must touch our hearts; our conscience must amend of itself, and not by reinforcement of our reason, nor by the enfeebling of our appetites. Voluptuousness in itself is neither pale nor discoloured to be discerned by blear and troubled eyes. We should affect temperance and chastity for itself, and for God's cause, who hath ordained them unto us; that which caterers bestow upon us, and which I am beholden to my colic, is for neither temperance nor chastity. A man cannot boast of contemning or combating sensuality if he see her not, or know not her grace, her force, and most attractive beauties. I know them both, and therefore may speak it. But methinks our souls in age are subject unto more importunate diseases and imperfections than they are in youth. I said so, being young, when my beardless chin upbraided me; and I say it again now that my grey beard gives me authority. We entitle wisdom, the frowardness of our humours, and the distaste of present things; but in truth we abandon not vices so much as we change them; and in my opinion for the worse. Besides a silly and ruinous pride, cumbersome tattle, wayward and unsociable humours, superstition, and a ridiculous carking for wealth, when the use of it is well-nigh lost, I find the more envy, injustice, and lewdness in it. It sets more wrinkles in our minds than on our foreheads; nor are there any spirits, or very rare ones, which in growing old taste not sourly and mustily. Man marcheth entirely towards his increase and decrease. View but the wisdom of Socrates and divers circumstances of his condemnation. I daresay he something lent himself unto it by prevarication of purpose; being so near, and at the age of seventy, to endure the benumbing of his spirit's richest pace, and the dimming of his accustomed brightness. What metamorphoses have I seen it daily make in divers

of mine acquaintances? It is a powerful malady which naturally and imperceptibly glideth into us; there is required great provision of study, heed, and precaution to avoid the imperfections wherewith it chargeth us; or at least to weaken their further progress. I find that notwithstanding all my entrenchings, by little and little it getteth ground upon me; I hold out as long as I can, but know not whither at length it will bring me. Happen what happen will, I am pleased the world know from what height I tumbled.

OF THREE COMMERCES OR SOCIETIES.

We must not cleave so fast unto our humours and dispositions. Our chiefest sufficiency is to apply ourselves to divers fashions. It is a being, but not a life, to be tied and bound by necessity to one only course. The goodliest minds are those that have most variety and pliableness in them. Behold an honourable testimony of old Cato. *Huic versatile ingenium sic pariter ad omnia fuit, ut natum ad id unum diceres, quodcunque ageret:*[1] "He had a wit so turnable for all things alike, as one would say he had been only born for that he went about to do." Were I to dress myself after mine own manner, there is no fashion so good whereto I would be so affected or tied as not to know how to leave and lose it. Life is a motion unequal, irregular, and multiform. It is not to be the friend (less the master) but the slave of oneself to follow incessantly, and be so addicted to his inclinations, as he cannot stray from them, nor wrest them. This I say now, as being extremely

[1] Liv., *Bel. Mac.* l. ix.

pestered with the importunity of my mind, forsomuch as she cannot amuse herself, but whereon she is busied; nor employ herself, but bent and whole. How light soever the subject is one gives it, it willingly amplifieth, and wire-draws the same, even unto the highest pitch of toil. Its idleness is therefore a painful trade unto me, and offensive to my health. Most wits have need of extravagant stuff, to unbenumb and exercise themselves; mine hath need of it rather to settle and continue itself. *Vitia otii negotio discutienda sunt:*[1] "The vices of idleness should be shaken off with business." For the most laborious care and principal study of it is to study itself. Books are one of those businesses that seduce it from study. At the first thoughts that present themselves it rouseth up and makes proof of all the vigour it hath. It exerciseth its function sometimes towards force, sometimes towards order and comeliness, it rangeth, moderates, and fortifieth. It hath of itself to awaken the faculties of it. Nature having given it, as unto all other, matter of its own for advantage, subjects fit enough whereon to devise and determine. Meditation is a large and powerful study to such as vigorously can taste and employ themselves therein. I had rather forge than furnish my mind.

There is no office or occupation either weaker or stronger than that of entertaining of one's thoughts according to the mind, whatsoever it be. The greatest make it their vocation, *Quibus vivere est cogitare*, to whom it is all one to live and to meditate. Nature hath also favoured it with this privilege, that there is nothing we can do so long, nor action whereto we give ourselves more ordinarily and easily. It is the work of gods (saith Aristotle), whence both their happiness and ours proceedeth. Reading serves

[1] Sen., *Epist.* lvi.

me especially to awake my conceit by divers objects; to busy my judgment, not my memory. Few entertainments then stay me without vigour and force. 'Tis true that courtesy and beauty possess me as much or more than weight and depth. And because I slumber in all other communications, and lend but the superficial parts of my attention unto them, it often befalleth me in such kind of weak and absurd discourses (discourses of countenance) to blurt out and answer ridiculous toys and fond absurdities, unworthy a child; or wilfully to hold my peace; therewithal more foolishly and uncivilly. I have a kind of raving, fanciful behaviour that retireth me into myself; and on the other side a gross and childish ignorance of many ordinary things; by means of which two qualities I have in my days committed five or six as sottish tricks as any one whosoever; which to my derogation may be reported. But to follow my purpose, this harsh complexion of mine makes me nice in conversing with men (whom I must pick and cull out for the nonce) and unfit for common actions. We live and negotiate with the people: if their behaviour importune us, if we disdain to lend ourselves to base and vulgar spirits, which often are as regular as those of a finer mould; and all wisdom is unsavoury that is not conformed to common insipience. We are no longer to intermeddle either with our or other men's affairs; and both public and private forsake such kind of people.

The least wrested and most natural proceedings of our mind are the fairest; the best occupations those which are least forced. Good God, how good an office doth wisdom unto those whose desires she squareth according to their power. There is no science more profitable. As one may, was the burden and favoured saying of Socrates: a sentence of great substance. We must address and stay our desires

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to things most easy and nearest. Is it not a fond, peevish humour in me to disagree from a thousand to whom my fortune joineth me, without whom I cannot live, to adhere unto one or two that are out of my commerce and conversion; or rather to a fantastical conceit, or fanciful desire, for a thing I cannot obtain? My soft behaviours and mild manners, enemies to all sharpness and foes to all bitterness, may easily have discharged me from envy and contention. To be beloved, I say not, but not to be hated, never did man give more occasion. But the coldness of my conversation hath with reason robbed me of the goodwill of many, which may be excused if they interpret the same to other or worse sense. I am most capable of getting rare amities and continuing exquisite acquaintances. For so as with so greedy hunger I snatch at such acquaintances as answer my taste and square with my humour. I so greedily produce and headlong cast myself upon them that I do not easily miss to cleave unto them, and where I light on to make a steady impression. I have often made happy and successful trial of it.

In vulgar worldly friendships I am somewhat cold and barren, for my proceeding is not natural if not unresisted and with hoisted-full sails. Moreover, my fortune having inured and allured me, even from my infancy, to one sole singular and perfect amity, hath verily in some sort distasted me from others, and over deeply imprinted in my fantasy that it is a beast sociable and for company, and not of troupe, as said an ancient writer. So that it is naturally a pain unto me to communicate myself by halves and with modification, and that servile or suspicious wisdom which in the conversation of these numerous and imperfect amities is ordained and proposed unto us, prescribed in these days especially, wherein one cannot speak of the world but

dangerously or falsely. Yet I see that who (as I do) makes for his end the commodities of his life (I mean essential commodities) must avoid as a plague these difficulties and quaintness of humour.

I should commend a high raised mind that could both bend and discharge itself, that wherever her fortune might transport her she might continue constant, that could discourse with her neighbours of all matters, as of her building, of her hunting, and of any quarrel, and entertain with delight a carpenter or a gardener. I envy those which can be familiar with the meanest of his followers, and vouchsafe to contract friendship and frame discourse with their own tenants. Nor do I like the advice of Plato, ever to speak imperiously unto our attendants without blitheness and sense of any familiarity, be it to men or women servants. For, besides my reason, it is inhumanity and injustice to attribute so much unto that prerogative of fortune and the government. Where less inequality is permitted between the servant and master, is in my conceit the more indifferent. Some others study to rouse and raise the mind, but I to abase and prostrate mine; it is not faulty but in extension.

Narras et genus Æaci,
Et pugnata sacro bella sub Ilio.
Quo Chium pretio cadum
Mercemur, quis aquam temperet ignibus,
Quo præbente domum, et quota
Pelignis caream frigoribus, taces.[1]

You tell of Æacus the pedigree;
The wars at sacred Troy you do display.
You tell not at what price a hogshead we
May buy of the best wine; who shall allay
Wine-fire with water, at whose house to hold,
At what a-clock I may be kept from cold.

[1] Hor., *Car.* l. ii. 3, *Od.* xix.

Even as the Lacedæmonian valour had need of moderation, and of sweet and pleasing sounds of flutes to flatter and allay it in time of war, lest it should run headlong into rashness and fury; whereas all other nations use commonly piercing sounds and strong shouts, which violently excite and inflame their soldiers' courage. So think I (against ordinary custom) that in the employment of our spirit we have for the most part more need of lead than wings, of coldness and quiet than of heat and agitation. Above all, in my mind, the only way to play the fool well is to seem wise among fools, to speak as though one's tongue were ever bent to *Fauelar in punta di forchetta:*[1] "To syllabise or speak mincingly." One must lend himself unto those he is with, and sometimes affect ignorance. Set force and subtilty aside. In common employments 'tis enough to reserve order Drag yourself even close to the ground, they will have it so. The learned stumble willingly on this block, making continual muster and open show of their skill, and dispersing their books abroad, and have in these days so filled the closets and possessed the ears of ladies that if they retain not their substance, at least they have their countenance, using in all sorts of discourse and subject, how base or popular soever, a new, an affected and learned fashion of speaking and writing.

> *Hoc sermone pavent, hoc iram, gaudia, curas,*
> *Hoc cuncta effundunt animi secreta, quid ultrà?*
> *Concumbunt docte.*[2]
>
> They in this language fear, in this they fashion
> Their joys, their cares, their rage, their inward passion;
> What more? they learned are in copulation.

And allege Plato and Saint Thomas for things which the first man they meet would decide as well, and stand for as

[1] Italian proverb.

[2] Juv., *Sat.* vi. 189.

good a witness. Such learning as could not enter into their mind hath stayed on their tongues. If the well-born will give any credit unto me, they shall be pleased to make their own and natural riches to prevail and be of worth. They hide and shroud their forms under foreign and borrowed beauties. It is great simplicity for anybody to smother and conceal his own brightness, to shine with a borrowed light. They are buried and entombed under the art of CAPSVLATOTÆ. It is because they do not sufficiently know themselves. The world contains nothing of more beauty. It is for them to honour arts, and to beautify embellishment. What need they more than to live beloved and honoured. They have and know but too much in that matter. There needs but a little rousing and inflaming of the faculties that are in them.

When I see them meddling with rhetoric, with law, and with logic, and such-like trash, so vain and unprofitable for their use, I enter into fear that those who advise them to such things do it that they may have more law to govern them under that pretence. For what other excuse can I devise for them? It is sufficient that without us they may frame or rule the grace of their eyes unto cheerfulness, unto severity, and unto mildness; and season a "No" with frowardness, with doubt, and with favour; and require not an interpreter in discourses made for their service. With this learning they command without control, and over-rule both regents and schools. Yet if it offend them to yield us any pre-eminence, and would for curiosity's sake have part in books also, poesy is a study fit for their purpose, being a wanton, amusing, subtle, disguised, and prattling art; all in delight, all in show, like to themselves. They may also select divers commodities out of history. In moral philosophy they may take the discourses which enable them to

judge of our humours, to censure our conditions, and to avoid our guiles and treacheries; to temper the rashness of their own desires, to husband their liberty; lengthen the delights of life, gently to bear the inconstancy of a servant, the peevishness or rudeness of a husband, the importunity of years, the unwelcomeness of wrinkles, and such-like mind-troubling accidents. Lo here the most and greatest share of learning I would assign them.

There are some particular, retired, and close dispositions. My essential form is fit for communication and production. I am all outward and in appearance born for society and unto friendship. The solitude I love and commend is especially but to retire my affections and redeem my thoughts unto myself; to restrain and close up, not my steps, but my desires and my cares, resigning all foreign solicitude and trouble, and mortally shunning all manner of servitude and obligation; and not so much the throng of men as the importunity of affairs. Local solitariness (to say truth) doth rather extend and enlarge me outwardly; I give myself to State business and to the world more willingly when I am all alone. At the court, and in press of people, I close and slink into mine own skin. Assemblies thrust me again into myself. And I never entertain myself so fondly, so licentiously, and so particularly, as in places of respect and ceremonious discretion. Our follies make me not laugh, but our wisdoms do. Of mine own complexion, I am no enemy to the agitations and stirrings of our courts; I have there passed great part of my life, and am inured to be merry in great assemblies; so it be by intermission, and suitable to my humour.

But this tenderness and coyness of judgment (whereof I speak) doth perforce tie me unto solitariness. Yea, even in mine own house, in the midst of a numerous family and

most frequented houses, I see people more than a good many, but seldom such as I love to converse or communicate withal. And there I reserve, both for myself and others, an unaccustomed liberty; making truce with ceremonies, assistance, and invitings, and such other troublesome ordinances of our courtesies (O servile custom and importunate manner); there every man demeaneth himself as he pleaseth, and entertaineth what his thoughts affect; whereas I keep myself silent, meditating and close, without offence to my guests or friends.

The men whose familiarity and society I hunt after are those which are called honest, virtuous, and sufficient; the image of whom distaste and divert me from others. It is (being rightly taken) the rarest of our forms; and a form or fashion chiefly due unto nature.

The end or scope of this commerce is principally and simply familiarity, conference, and frequentation; the exercise of minds, without other fruit. In our discourses all subjects are alike to me: I care not though they want either weight or depth; grace and pertinency are never wanting; all therein is tainted with a ripe and constant judgment, and commixed with goodness, liberty, cheerfulness, and kindness. It is not only in the subject of laws and affairs of princes that our spirit showeth its beauty, grace, and vigour; it showeth them as much in private conferences. I know my people by their very silence and smiling, and peradventure discover them better at a table than sitting in serious counsel.

Hippomacus said he discerned good wrestlers but by seeing them march through a street. If Learning vouchsafe to step into our talk, she shall not be refused; yet must not she be stern, mastering, imperious, and importunate, as commonly she is; but assistant and docile of herself.

Therein we seek for nothing but recreation and pastime; when we shall look to be instructed, taught and resolved, we will go seek and sue to her in her throne. Let her, if she please, keep from us at that time; for, as commodious and pleasing as she is, I presume that for a need we could spare her presence, and do our business well enough without her. Wits well born, soundly bred and exercised in the practice and commerce of men, become gracious and plausible of themselves. Art is but the check-rule and register of the productions uttered and conceits produced by them.

The company of fair and society of honest women is likewise a sweet commerce for me: *Nam nos quoque oculos eruditos habemus*:[1] "For we also have learned eyes." If the mind have not so much to solace herself as in the former, the corporal senses, whose part is more in the second, bring it to a proportion near unto the other, although in mine opinion not equal. But it is a society wherein it behoveth a man somewhat to stand upon his guard; and especially those that are of a strong constitution, and whose body can do much, as in me. In my youth I heated myself therein and was very violent; and endured all the rages and furious assaults which poets say happen to those who, without order or discretion, abandon themselves over-loosely and riotously unto it. True it is indeed that the same lash hath since stood me instead of an instruction.

> *Quicunque Argolico de classe Capharea fugit,*
> *Semper ab Euboicis vela retorquet aquis.*[2]
>
> Greek sailors that Capharean rocks did fly,
> From the Eubœan seas their sails still ply.

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[1] Cic., *Parad.*

[2] Ovid, *Trist.* l. i., *El.* i. 83.

It is folly to fasten all one's thoughts upon it, and with a furious and indiscreet affection to engage himself unto it; but on the other side, to meddle with it without love or bond of affection, as comedians do, to play a common part of age and manners, without aught of their own but bare-conned words, is verily a provision for one's safety, and yet but a cowardly one; as is that of him who would forego his honour, his profit, or his pleasure, for fear of danger; for it is certain that the practisers of such courses cannot hope for any fruit able to move or satisfy a worthy mind.

One must very earnestly have desired that whereof he would enjoy an absolute delight: I mean, though fortune should unjustly favour their intention, which often happeneth, because there is no woman, how deformed or unhandsome soever, but thinks herself lovely, amiable, and praiseworthy, either for her age, her hair or gait (for there are generally more fair than foul ones); and the Brachmanian maids wanting other commendations, by proclamation for that purpose, made show of their matrimonial parts unto the people assembled, to see if thereby at least they might get them husbands. By consequence there is not one of them but upon the first oath one maketh to serve her, will very easily be persuaded to think well of herself. Now this common treason and ordinary protestations of men in these days must needs produce the effects experience already discovereth; which is, that either they join together, and cast away themselves on themselves to avoid us, or on their side follow also the example we give them: acting their part of the play without passion, without care, and without love, lending themselves to this intercourse: *Neque affectui suo aut alieno obnoxiæ:* "Neither liable to their own nor other folk's

affection." They think, according to Lyssas' persuasions in Plato, they may so much the more profitably and commodiously yield unto us, by how much less we love them: wherein it will happen as in comedies, the spectators shall have as much or more pleasure as the comedians. For my part, I no more acknowledge Venus without Cupid, than a motherhood without an offspring: they are things which interlend and interowe one another their essence. Thus doth this cozening rebound on him that useth it, and as it cost him little, so gets he not much by it. Those which made Venus a goddess have respected that her principal beauty was incorporal and spiritual. But she whom these kind of people hunt after is not so much as human, nor also brutal; but such as wild beasts would not have her so filthy and terrestrial. We see that imagination inflames them, and desire or lust urgeth them, before the body: we see in one and other sex, even in whole herds, choice and distinctions in their affections, and amongst themselves, acquaintances of long-continued goodwill and liking. And even those to whom age denieth bodily strength do yet bray, neigh, roar, skip and wince for love. Before the deed we see them full of hope and heat; and when the body hath played his part, even tickle and tingle themselves with the sweetness of that remembrance: some of them swell with pride at parting from it, others all weary and glutted, ring out songs of glee and triumph. Who makes no more of it but to discharge his body of some natural necessity, hath no cause to trouble others with so curious preparation. It is no food for a greedy and clownish hunger. As one that would not be accounted better than I am, thus much I will display of my youth's wanton errors: not only for the danger of one's health that follows the game (yet could I not avoid two, although light

and cursory assaults), but also for contempt, I have not much been given to mercenary and common acquaintances. I have coveted to set an edge on that sensual pleasure by difficulty, by desire, and for some glory. And liked Tiberius' fashion, who in his amours was swayed as much by modesty and nobleness as by any other quality. And Flora's humour, who would prostitute herself to none worse than dictators, consuls, or censors, and took delight in the dignity and greatness of her lovers, doth somewhat suit with mine. Surely glittering pearls and silken clothes add something unto it, and so do titles, nobility, and a worthy train. Besides which, I made high esteem of the mind, yet so as the body might not justly be found fault withal; for, to speak my conscience, if either of the two beauties were necessarily to be wanting, I would rather have chosen to want the mental, whose use is to be employed in better things. But in the subject of love, a subject that chiefly hath reference unto the two senses of seeing and touching, something may be done without the graces of the mind, but little or nothing without the corporal. Beauty is the true availful advantage of women: it is so peculiarly theirs, that ours, though it require some features and different allurements, is not in her right cue or true bias, unless confused with theirs; childish and beardless. It is reported that such as serve the great Turk under the title of beauty (whereof the number is infinite) are dismissed at furthest when they once come to the age of two and twenty years. Discourse, discretion, together with the offices of true amity, are better found amongst men; and therefore govern they the world's affairs. These two commerces or societies are accidental and depending of others; the one is troublesome and tedious for its rarity, the other withers with old age: nor could they have

sufficiently provided for my life's necessities. That of books, which is the third, is much more solid sure and much more ours; some other advantages it yieldeth to the two former, but hath for her share constancy and the facility of her service. This accosteth and secondeth all my course, and everywhere assisteth me: it comforts me in age and solaceth me in solitariness; it easeth me of the burden of a wearisome sloth, and at all times rids me of tedious companies; it abateth the edge of fretting sorrow, on condition it be not extreme and over-insolent. To divert me from any importunate imagination or insinuating conceit, there is no better way than to have recourse unto books; with ease they allure me to them, and with facility they remove them all. And though they perceive I neither frequent nor seek them, but wanting other more essential, lively, and more natural commodities, they never mutiny or murmur at me; but still entertain me with one and self-same visage. He may well walk afoot that leads his horse by the bridle, saith the proverb. And our James, king of Naples and Sicily, who being fair, young, healthy, and in good plight, caused himself to be carried abroad in a plain waggon or screen, lying upon a homely pillow of coarse feathers, clothed in a suit of home-spun grey, and a bonnet of the same, yet royally attended on by a gallant troop of nobles, of litters, coaches, and of all sorts of choice led horses, a number of gentlemen and officers, represented a tender and wavering austerity. The sick man is not to be moved that hath his health in his sleeve. In the experience and use of his sentence, which is most true, consisteth all the commodity I reap of books. In effect, I make no other use of them than those who know them not. I enjoy them, as a miser doth his gold; to know that I may enjoy them when I list, my mind is settled and satisfied with the right

of possession. I never travel without books, nor in peace nor in war; yet do I pass many days and months without using them. It shall be anon, say I, or to-morrow, or when I please; in the meanwhile the time runs away, and passeth without hunting me. For it is wonderful what repose I take, and how I continue in this consideration, that they are at my elbow to delight me when time shall serve; and in acknowledging what assistance they give unto my life. This is the best munition I have found in this human peregrination, and I extremely bewail those men of understanding that want the same. I accept with better will all other kinds of amusements, how slight soever, forsomuch as this cannot fail me. At home I betake me somewhat the oftener to my library, whence all at once I command and survey all my household. It is seated in the chief entry of my house; thence I behold under me my garden, my base-court, my yard, and look even into most rooms of my house. There without order, without method, and by piecemeal I turn over and ransack now one book and now another. Sometimes I muse and rave; and walking up and down I indite and register these my humours, these my conceits. It is placed on the third storey of a tower. The lowermost is my chapel; the second a chamber with other lodgings, where I often lie, because I would be alone. Above it is a great wardrobe. It was in times past the most unprofitable place of all my house. There I pass the greatest part of my life's days, and wear out most hours of the day. I am never there at nights. Next unto it is a handsome neat cabinet, able and large enough to receive fire in winter, and very pleasantly windowed. And if I feared not care more than cost (care which drives and diverts me from all business), I might easily join a convenient gallery of a hundred paces long and twelve broad

on each side of it, and upon one floor; having already, for some other purpose, found all the walls raised unto a convenient height. Each retired place requireth a walk. My thoughts are prone to sleep if I sit long. My mind goes not alone, as if ledges did move it. Those that study without books are all in the same case. The form of it is round, and hath no flat side, but what serveth for my table and chair. In which bending or circling manner at one look it offereth me the full sight of all my books, set round about upon shelves or desks, five racks one upon another. It hath three bay windows, of a far-extending, rich, and unresisted prospect, and is in diameter sixteen paces void. In winter I am less continually there; for my house (as the name of it importeth) is perched upon an over-peering hillock, and hath no part more subject to all weathers than this; which pleaseth me the more, both because the access unto it is somewhat troublesome and remote, and for the benefit of the exercise which is to be respected; and that I may the better seclude myself from company and keep encroachers from me, there is my seat that is my throne. I endeavour to make my rule therein absolute, and to sequester that only corner from the community of wife, of children, and of acquaintance. Elsewhere I have but a verbal authority of confused essence. Miserable in my mind is he who in his own home hath nowhere to be to himself; where he may particularly court, and at his pleasure hide or withdraw self. Ambition payeth her followers well to keep them still in open view, as a statue in some conspicuous place. *Magna servietus est magna fortuna:*[1] "A great fortune is a great bondage." They cannot be private so much as at their privy. I have deemed nothing so rude in the austerity of the life which our church-

[1] Sen., *Conf. ad Pel.* c. xxvi.

men affect as that in some of their companies they institute a perpetual society of place, and a numerous assistance amongst them in anything they do. For I deem it somewhat more tolerable to be ever alone than never be able to be so. If any say to me, It is a kind of vilifying the Muses to use them only for sport and recreation, he wots not as I do what worth, pleasure, sport, and pastime is of; I had well-nigh termed all other ends ridiculous. I live from hand to mouth, and, with reverence be it spoken, I live but to myself: there end all my designs. Being young, I studied for ostentation; then a little to enable myself and become wiser; now for delight and recreation, never for gain. A vain conceit and lavish humour I had after this kind of stuff; not only to provide for my need, but somewhat further to adorn and embellish myself withal: I have since partly left it. "Books have and contain divers pleasing qualities to those that can duly choose them." But "no good without pains; no roses without prickles." It is a pleasure not absolutely pure and neat; no more than all others; it hath its inconveniences attending on it, and sometimes weighty ones. The mind is therein exercised, but the body (the care whereof I have not yet forgotten) remaineth therewhilst without action, and is wasted, and ensorrowed. I know no excess more hurtful for me, nor more to be avoided by me, in this declining age. Lo here my three most favoured and particular employments. I speak not of those I owe of duty to the world.

HOW ONE OUGHT TO GOVERN HIS WILL.

In regard of the common sort of men, few things touch me, or (to speak properly) sway me; for it is reason they touch, so they possess us not. I have great need, both by study and discourse, to increase this privilege of insensibility, which is naturally crept far into me. I am not wedded unto many things, and by consequence not passionate of them. I have my sight clear, but tied to few objects; my senses delicate and gentle, but my apprehension and application hard and dull. I engage myself with difficulty. As much as I can I employ myself wholly to myself. And in this very subject I would willingly bridle and uphold my affection, lest it be too far plunged therein, seeing it is a subject I possess at the mercy of others, and over which fortune hath more interest than myself. So as even in my health, which I so much esteem, it were requisite not to desire, nor so carefully to seek it, as thereby I might light upon intolerable diseases. We must moderate ourselves betwixt the hate of pain and the love of pleasure. Plato sets down a mean course of life between both. But to affections that distract me from myself, and divert me elsewhere, surely to such I oppose myself with all my force. Mine opinion is, that one should lend himself to others, and not give himself but to himself. Were my will easy to engage or apply itself, I could not continue: I am ever tender both by nature and custom.

Fugax rerum, securaque in otia natus.[1]
Avoiding active business,
And born to secure idleness.

Contested and obstinate debates, which in the end would

[1] Ovid, *Trist.* l. iii., *Eleg.* ii. 9.

give mine adversary advantage, the issue which would make my earnest pursuit ashamed, would perchance torment me cruelly. If I vexed as other men, my soul should never have strength to bear the alarms and emotions that follow such as embrace much. She would presently be displaced by this intestine agitation. If at any time I have been urged to the managing of strange affairs, I have promised to undertake them with my hand, but not with my lungs and liver; to charge, and not to incorporate them into me; to have a care, but nothing at all to be overpassionate of them: I look to them, but I hatch them not. I work enough to dispose and direct the domestic troubles within mine own entrails and veins, without harbouring, or importune myself with any foreign employments; and am sufficiently interested with my proper, natural, and essential affairs, without seeking others' businesses. Such as know how much they owe to themselves, and how many offices of their own they are bound to perform, shall find that nature hath given them this commission fully ample and nothing idle. Thou hast business enough within thyself, therefore stray not abroad: men give themselves to hire. Their faculties are not their own, but theirs to whom they subject themselves; their inmates, and not themselves, are within them. This common humour doth not please me. We should thriftily husband our mind's liberty, and never engage it but upon just occasions, which if we judge impartially are few in number. Look on such as suffer themselves to be transported and swayed, they do it everywhere; in little as well as in great matters, to that which concerneth as easy as to that which toucheth them not. They thrust themselves indifferently into all actions, and are without life if without tumultuary agitation. *In negotiis sunt negotii causa:* "They are busy that they may not be idle, or

weakness of his age had long before tied him, neglecting the care of his health and family, in a manner despising his life, which as one engaged for them he much endangered, riding long and painful journeys for them. Such a one was he, which humour proceeded from the bounty and goodness of his nature. Never was mind more charitable or more popular. This course, which I commend in others, I love not to follow. Neither am I without excuse. He had heard that a man must forget himself for his neighbour; that in respect of the general the particular was not to be regarded. Most of the world's rules and precepts hold this train to drive us out of ourselves into the wide world, to the use of public society. They presumed to work a goodly effect in distracting and withdrawing us from ourselves, supposing we were by a natural instinct too-too much tied unto it; and to this end have not spared to say anything. For to the wise it is no novelty to preach things as they serve, and not as they are. Truth hath her lets, discommodities, and incomparabilities with us. We must not often deceive others lest we beguile ourselves; and feeble our eyes, and dull our understanding, thereby to repair and amend them. *Imperiti enim judicant, et qui frequenter in hoc ipsum fallendi sunt, ne errent:* "For unskilful men judge, who must often even therefore be deceived, lest they err and be deceived." When they prescribe us to love three, four, yea fifty degrees of things before ourselves, they present us with the art of shooters, who to come near the mark take their aim far above the same. To make a crooked stick straight we bend in the contrary way. I suppose that in the times of Pallas, as we see in all other religions, they had some apparent mysteries of which they made show to all the people, and others more high and secret, to be imparted only to such as were professed. It is

likely that the true point of friendship which every man oweth to himself is to be found in these. Not a false amity, which makes us embrace glory, knowledge, riches, and such-like, with a principal and immoderate affection as members of our being; nor an effeminate and indiscreet friendship, wherein happeneth as to the ivy, which corrupts and ruins the walls it claspeth; but a sound and regular amity, equally profitable and pleasant. Whoso understandeth all her duties and exerciseth them, he rightly is endenized in the Muses' cabinet; he hath attained the type of human wisdom and the perfection of our happiness. This man, knowing exactly what he oweth to himself, findeth that he ought to employ the use of other men and of the world unto himself; which to perform he must contribute the duties and offices that concern him unto public society. He that lives not somewhat to others liveth little to himself. *Qui sibi amicus est, scito hunc amicum omnibus esse:*[1] "He that is friend to himself, know he is friend to all." The principal charge we have is every man his particular conduct. And for this only we live here. As he that should forget to live well and religiously, and by instructing and directing others should think himself acquitted of his duty, would be deemed a fool; even so, who forsaketh to live healthy and merrily himself, therewith to serve another, in mine opinion taketh a bad and unnatural course. I will not that in any charge one shall take in hand he refuse or think much of his attention, of his labour, of his steps, of his speech, of his sweat, and if need be of his blood.

> ——*non ipse pro charis amicis,*
> *Aut patria timidus perire.*[2]
>
> Not fearing life to end
> For country or dear friend.

[1] Sen., *Epist.* vi. f.

[2] Hor., *Car.* l. iv., *Od.* ix. 51.

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But it is only borrowed and accidentally, the mind remaining ever quiet and in health, nor without action, but without vexation or passion; simply to move or be doing costs it so little that even sleeping it is moving and doing; but it must have its motion with discretion, for the body receiveth the charges imposed on him, justly as they are; but the spirit extendeth them, and often to his hindrance makes them heavy, giving them what measure it pleaseth. Like things are effected by divers efforts and different contentions of will; the one may go without the other, for how many men do daily hazard themselves in war which they regard not, and press into the danger of the battles, the loss whereof shall no whit break their next sleep? Whereas some man in his own house, free from this danger, which he durst not so much as have looked towards it, is for the war's issue more passionate, and therewith hath his mind more perplexed than the soldier that therein employeth both his blood and life. I know how to deal in public charges without departing from myself; this sharpness and violence of desires hindereth more than stead the conduct of what we undertake, filling us with impatience to the events, either contrary or slow, and with bitterness and jealousy toward those with whom we negotiate. We never govern that thing well wherewith we are possessed and directed.

> ——*Male cuncta ministrat*
> *Impetus.*
>
> Fury and haste do lay all waste,
> Misplacing all, disgracing all.

He who therein employeth but his judgment and direction proceeds more cheerfully, he feigns, he yields, he defers at his pleasure according to the occasions of necessity; he fails of his attempt without torment or affliction, ready and prepared

for a new enterprise. He marcheth always with the reins in his hand. He that is besotted with this violent and tyrannical intention doth necessarily declare much indiscretion and injustice. The violence of his desire transports him. They are rash motions, and if fortune help not much, of little fruit. Philosophy wills us to banish choler in the punishment of offences; not to the end revenge should be more moderate, but contrary, more weighty and surely set on; whereunto this violence seemeth to be a let. Choler doth not only trouble but wearieth the executioner's arms. This passionate heat dulleth and consumes their force. As in too much speed, *festinatio tarda est:* "hastiness is slow." Haste makes waste, and hinders and stays itself: *Ipsa se velocitas implicat:* "Swiftness entangles itself." As for example, according as by ordinary custom I perceive, covetousness hath no greater let than itself. The more violent and extended it is, the less effectual and fruitful. Commonly it gathers wealth more speedily, being masked with a show of liberality. A very honest gentleman and my good friend was likely to have endangered the health of his body by an over-passionate attention and earnest affection to the affairs of a prince who was his master. Which master hath thus described himself unto me: that as another he discerneth and hath a feeling of the burden of accidents; but such as have no remedy, he presently resolveth to suffer with patience. For the rest, after he hath appointed necessary provisions, which by the vivacity and nimbleness of his wit he speedily effects, he then attends the event with quietness. Verily, I have seen in him, at one instant a great carelessness and liberty, both in his actions and countenance, even in important and difficult affairs. I find him more magnanimous and capable in bad than in good fortune. His losses are to him more glorious than his

victories, and his mourning than his triumphs. Consider how in mere vain and frivolous actions, as at chess, tennis, and such-like sports, this earnest and violent engaging with an ambitious desire to win doth presently call both mind and limbs into disorder and indiscretion. Wherein a man doth both dazzle his sight and distemper his whole body. He who demeaneth himself with most moderation both in winning and losing is ever nearest unto himself, and hath his wits best about him. The less he is moved or passionate in play the more safely doth he govern the same, and to his great advantage. We hinder the mind's seizure and holdfast by giving her so many things to seize upon. Some we should only present unto her, others fasten upon her, and others incorporate unto her. She may see and feel all things, but must only feed on herself; and be instructed in that which properly concerneth her, and which merely belongeth to her essence and substance. The laws of nature teach us what is just and fit for us. After the wise men have told us that according to nature no man is indigent or wanteth, and that each one is poor but in his own opinion, they also distinguish subtly the desires proceeding from nature from such as grow from the disorders of our fantasy. Those whose end may be discerned are merely hers; and such as fly before us, and whose end we cannot attain, are properly ours. Want of goods may easily be cured, but the poverty of the mind is incurable.

Nam si quod satis est homini, id satis esse potesset,
Hoc sat erat, nunc, quum hoc non est, qui credimus porro
Divitias ullas animum mi explere potesse?

If it might be enough, that is enough for man,
This were enough, since it is not, how think we can
Now any riches fill
My mind and greedy will?

Socrates seeing great store of riches, jewels, and precious stuff carried in pomp through the city, "Oh, how many things (quoth he) do not I desire!" Metrodorus lived daily with the weight of twelve ounces of food; Epicurus with less; Metrocles in winter lay with sheep, and in summer in the cloisters of churches. *Sufficit ad id natura, quod poscit*;[1] "Nature is sufficient for that which it requires." Cleanthes lived by his hands, and boasted that if Cleanthes would, he could nourish another Cleanthes. If that which nature doth exactly and originally require at our hands for the preservation of our being is over little (as in truth what it is, and how good cheap our life may be maintained, cannot better be known or expressed than by consideration that it is so little, and for the smallness thereof, it is out of fortune's reach, and she can take no hold of it), let us dispense something else unto ourselves, and call the custom and condition of every one of us by the name of Nature. Let us tax, and stint, and feed ourselves according to that measure; let us extend both our appurtenances and reckonings thereunto. For so far, meseems, we have some excuse. Custom is a second nature, and no less powerful. What is wanting to custom, I hold it a defect; and I had well-nigh as lief one should deprive me of my life as refrain or much abridge me of my state wherein I have lived so long. I am no more upon terms of any great alteration nor to thrust myself into a new and unusual course, no not toward augmentation; it is no longer time to become other or be transformed; and as I should complain if any great adventure should now befall me, and grieve it came not in time that I might have enjoyed the same,

Quo mihi fortuna, si non conceditur uti?[2]

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[1] Sen., *Epist.* xc. [2] Hor. l. i., *Epist.* v. 12.

> Whereto should I have much,
> If I to use it grudge.

I should likewise be grieved at any inward purchase. I were better in a manner never, than so late, to become an honest man, and well practised to live when one hath no longer life. I who am ready to depart this world could easily be induced to resign the share of wisdom I have learned concerning the world's commerce to any other man new come into the world. It is even as good as mustard after dinner. What need have I of that good which I cannot enjoy? Whereto serveth knowledge if one have no head? It is an injury and disgrace of fortune to offer us those presents which, forsomuch as they fail us when we should most need them, fill us with a just spite. Guide me no more; I can go no longer. Of so many dismemberings that sufficiency hath, patience sufficeth us. Give the capacity of an excellent treble to a singer that hath his lungs rotten, and of eloquence to a hermit confined into the deserts of Arabia. There needs no art to further a fall. The end finds itself in the finishing of every work. My world is at an end, my form is expired. I am wholly of the time past, and am bound to authorise the same, and thereto conform my issue. I will say this by way of example, that the eclipsing or abridging of ten days, which the Pope hath lately caused, hath taken me so low that I can hardly recover myself. I follow the years wherein we were wont to count otherwise; so long and ancient a custom doth challenge and recall me to it again. I am thereby enforced to be somewhat an heretic, incapable of innovation though corrective. My imagination maugre my teeth runs still ten days before or ten behind, and whispers in mine ears, "This rule toucheth those which are to come." If health itself, so sweetly pleasing, comes to me but by fits, it is rather to give

me cause of grief than possession of itself: I have nowhere left me to retire it. Time forsakes me, without which nothing is enjoyed. How small account should I make of these great elective dignities I see in the world, and which are only given to men ready to leave the world, wherein they regard not so much how duly they shall discharge them as how little they shall exercise them; from the beginning they look to the end. To conclude, I am ready to finish this man, not to make another. By long custom this form is changed into substance, and substance and fortune into nature. I say, therefore, that amongst us feeble creatures each one is excusable to count that his own which is comprehended under measure, and yet beyond these limits is nothing but confusion.

It is the largest extension we can grant our rights. The more we amplify our need and possession, the more we engage ourselves to the crosses of fortune and adversities. The career of our desires must be circumscribed, and tied to strict bounds of nearest and contiguous commodities. Moreover, their course should be managed, not in a straight line having another end, but round, whose two points hold together, and end in ourselves with a short compass. The actions governed without this reflection, I mean a near and essential reflection, as those of the covetous, of the ambitious, and so many others that run directly point-blank, the course of which carrieth them away before them, are erroneous and crazed actions. Most of our vocations are like plays. *Mundus universus exercet histrioniam:* "All the world doth practise stage-playing." We must play our parts duly, but as the part of a borrowed personage. Of a visage and appearance we should not make a real essence, nor proper of that which is another. We cannot distinguish the skin from the shirt; it is sufficient to

disguise the face without deforming the breast. I see some transform and transubstantiate themselves into as many new forms and strange beings as they undertake charges; and who emprelate themselves even to the heart and entrails; and entrain their offices, even sitting on their close stool. I cannot teach them to distinguish the salutations and cappings of such as regard them from those that respect either their office, their train, or their mule. *Tantum se fortunæ permittunt, etiam ut naturam dediscant;* "They give themselves so much over to fortune as they forget nature." They swell in mind and puff up their natural discourse according to the dignity of their office. The Mayor of Bordeaux, and Michael, Lord of Montaigne, have ever been two, by an evident separation. To be an advocate or a treasurer, one should not be ignorant of the craft incident to such callings. An honest man is not compatible for the vice and folly of his trade, and therefore ought not to refuse the exercise of it. It is the custom of his country, and there is profit in it. We must live by the world, and such as we find it, so make use of it. But the judgment of an emperor should be above his empire, and to see and consider the same as a strange accident. He should know how to enjoy himself apart, and communicate himself as James and Peter, at least to himself. I cannot so absolutely or so deeply engage myself. When my will gives me to any party, it is not with so violent a bond that my understanding is thereby infected. In the present intestine trouble of our state my interest hath not made me forget neither the commendable qualities of our adversaries, nor the reproachful of those I have followed. They partially extol whatever is on their side; I do not so much as excuse the greater number of my friends' actions. A good orator loseth not his grace by pleading against me. The intricate

ness of our debate removed, I have maintained myself in equanimity and pure indifferency. *Neque extra necessitates belli, præcipuum odium gero:* "Nor bear I capital hatred when I am out of the necessity of war." Wherein I glory, for that commonly I see men err in the contrary. Such as extend their choler and hatred beyond their affairs (as most men do) show that it proceeds elsewhence, and from some private cause; even as one being cured of an ulcer, and his fever remaineth still, declareth it had a more hidden beginning. It is the reason they bear none unto the cause in general, and forsomuch as it concerneth the interest of all and of the state; but they are vexed at it, only for this, that it toucheth them in private. And therefore are they distempered with a particular passion, both beyond justice and public reason. *Non tam omnia universi, quam ea, quæ ad quemque pertinent, singuli carpebant:* "All did not so much find fault with all, as every one with those that appertained to every one." I will have the advantage to be for us, which though it be not I enrage not, I stand firmly to the sounder parts. But I affect not to be noted a private enemy to others, and beyond general reason I greatly accuse this vicious form of obstinate contesting. He is of the League because he admireth the grace of the Duke of Guise; or he is a Huguenot, forsomuch as the King of Navarre's activity amazeth him. He finds fault in the king's behaviours, therefore he is seditious in his heart. I would not give the magistrate my voice that he had reason to condemn a book, because an heretic was therein named and extolled to be one of the best poets of this age. Dare we not say that a thief hath a good leg if he have so indeed? If she be a strumpet, must she needs have a stinking breath? In wiser ages revoked they the proud title of Capitolinus they had formerly given to Marcus Manlius as the preserver of

religion and public liberty? Suppressed they the memory of his liberality, his deeds of arms, and military rewards granted to his virtues, because to the prejudice of his country's laws he afterwards affected a royalty? If they once conceive a hatred against an orator or an advocate, the next day he becometh barbarous and uneloquent. I have elsewhere discoursed of zeal which hath driven good men into like errors. For myself I can say that he doth wickedly, and this virtuously. Likewise, in prognostics or sinister events of affairs, they will have every man blind or dull in his own cause, and that our persuasion and judgment serve not the truth but the project of our desires. I should rather err in the other extremity? So much I fear my desire might corrupt me, considering I somewhat tenderly distrust myself in things I most desire. I have in my days seen wonders in the indiscreet and prodigious facility of people, suffering their hopes and beliefs to be led and governed as it hath pleased and best fitted their leaders, above a hundred discontents, one in the neck of another, and beyond their fantasies and dreams. I wonder no more at those whom the apish toys of Apollonius and Mahomet have seduced and blinded. Their sense and understanding is wholly smothered in their passion. Their discretion hath no other choice but what pleaseth them and furthereth their cause, which I had especially observed in the beginning of our distempered factions and factious troubles. This other which is grown since by imitation surmounteth the same, whereby I observe that it is an inseparable quality of popular errors. The first being gone on, opinions intershock one another, following the wind as waves do. They are no members of the body, if they may renounce it, if they follow not the common course. But truly they wrong the just parties when they seek to help them with fraud or deceits.

I have always contradicted the same. This mean is for sick brains; the healthy have surer and honester ways to maintain their resolutions, and excuse all contrary accidents. The heavens never saw so weighty a discord and so harmful a hatred as that between Cæsar and Pompey, nor ever shall hereafter. Meseemeth, notwithstanding I see in those noble and heroic minds an exemplar and great moderation of the one toward the other, it was a jealousy of honour and emulation of command which transported them, not to a furious and indiscreet hatred, without malice or detraction. In their sharpest exploits I discover some relics of respect and cinders of well-meaning affection. And I imagine that had it been possible, either of them desired rather to effect his purpose without overthrowing his competitor than by working his utter ruin. Note how contrary the proceeding was between Sylla and Marius. We must not run headlong after our affections and private interests. As in my youth I ever opposed myself to the motions of love, which I felt to usurp upon me, and laboured to diminish its delights, lest in the end it might vanquish and captivate me to its mercy; so do I now in all other occasions which my will apprehendeth with an over great appetite. I bend to the contrary of my disposition as I see the same plunged and drunk with its own wine. I shun so far forth to nourish her pleasure as I may not revoke it without a bloody loss. Those minds which through stupidity see things but by halves enjoy this happiness, that such as be hurtful offend them least. It is a spiritual leprosy that hath some show of health, and such a health as philosophy doth not altogether condemn. But yet it may not lawfully be termed wisdom, as we often do. And after this manner did in former times somebody mock Diogenes, who, in the dead of winter, went all naked, embracing an image of snow to try

his patience, who, meeting him in this order, said thus unto him: "Art thou now very cold?" "Nothing at all," answered Diogenes. "What thinkest thou to do then that is either hard or exemplar by standing in the cold?" replied the other. "To measure constancy we must necessarily know sufferance." But such minds as must behold cross events and fortune's injuries in their height and sharpness, which must weigh and taste them according to their natural bitterness and charge, let them employ their skill and keep themselves from embracing the causes and divert their approaches. What did King Cotis? He paid liberally for that goodly and rich vessel which one had presented unto him, but forsomuch as it was exceeding brittle he presently broke it himself, that so betimes he might remove so easy an occasion of choler against his servants. I have in like sort shunned confusion in my affairs, and sought not to have my goods contiguous to my neighbours, and to such as I am to be linked in strict friendship, whence commonly ensue causes of alienation and unkindness. I have heretofore loved the hazardous play of cards and dice. I have long since left it; only for this, that notwithstanding any fair semblance I made in my losses I was inwardly disquieted. Let a man of honour, who is to take a lie or endure an outrageous wrong, and cannot admit a bad excuse for payment or satisfaction, avoid the progress of contentious altercations. I shun melancholic complexions and froward men as infected. And in matters I cannot talk of without interest and emotion I meddle not with them, except duty constrain me thereunto. *Melius non incipient quam desinent:* "They shall better not begin than leave off." The surest way is then to prepare ourselves before occasion. I know that some wise men have taken another course, and have not feared to engage and

vehemently to insinuate themselves into divers objects. Those assure themselves of their own strength, under which they shroud themselves against all manner of contrary events, making mischiefs to wrestle one against another by vigour and virtue of patience—

> *Velut rupes vastum quæ prodit in æquor,*
> *Obvia ventorum furiis, expostaque ponto.*
> *Vim cunctam atque minas perfert cœlique marisque,*
> *. . . ipsa immota manens.*[1]
>
> Much like a rock which buts into the main,
> Meeting with wind's rage, to the sea laid plain,
> It doth the force of skies and seas sustain,
> Endure their threats, yet doth unmov'd remain.

Let us not imitate these examples; we shall not attain them. They opinionate themselves resolutely to behold, and without perturbation to be spectators of their country's ruin, which whilom possessed and commanded their full will. As for our vulgar minds, therein is too much effort and roughness. Cato quit thereby the noblest life that ever was. We silly ones must seek to escape the storm further off. We ought to provide for apprehension and not for patience, and avoid the blows we cannot withstand. Zeno seeing Chremonides, a young man whom he loved, approach to sit near him, rose up suddenly. Cleanthes asking him the reason: I understand (saith he) that physicians above all things prescribe rest, and forbid emotion in all tumours. Socrates saith not: Yield not to the allurements of beauty; maintain it, enforce yourselves to the contrary. Shun her (saith he), run out of her sight and company, as from a violent poison that infecteth and stingeth far off. And his good disciple, feigning or reciting, but in mine opinion rather

[1] Virg., *Æn.* l. x. 693.

reciting than feigning, the matchless perfections of the great Cyrus, describeth him distrusting his forces to withstand the blandishments or allurements of the divine beauty of that famous Panthea his captive, committing the visitation and guard of her to another that had less liberty than himself. And likewise the Holy Ghost saith, *Ne nos inducas in tentationem :*[1] "And lead us not into temptation." We pray not that our reason be not encountered and vanquished by concupiscences, but that it be not so much as assayed therewith ; that we be not reduced to an estate where we should but suffer the approaches, solicitations, and temptations of sin ; and we entreat our Lord to keep our conscience quiet, fully perfectly free from all commerce of evil. Such as say they have reason for their revenging passion, or any other mind-troubling perturbation, say often truth, as things are, but not as they were. They speak to us when the causes of their error are by themselves fostered and advanced. But retire further backward, recall their causes to their beginning ; there you surprise and put them to a non-plus. Would they have their fault be less because it is more ancient ; and that of an unjust beginning, the progress be just ? He that (as I do) shall wish his country's welfare, without fretting or pining himself, shall be grieved, but not swoon, to see it threatening, either in his own downfall, or a continuance no less ruinous. Oh, silly, weak barque, whom both waves, winds, and pilot hull and toss to so contrary designs:

——*in tam diversa, magister,*
Ventus et unda trahunt.
Master the wave and wind
So divers ways do bind.

Who gapes not after the favour of princes, as after a thing

[1] Matthew vi. 13.

without which he cannot live, nor is much disquieted at the coldness of their entertainment or frowning countenance, nor regardeth the inconstancy of their will. Who hatcheth not his children or huggeth not honours, with a slavish propension, nor leaves to live commodiously having once lost them. Who doth good namely for his own satisfaction, nor is much vexed to see men censure of his actions against his merit. A quarter of an ounce of patience provideth for such inconveniences. I find ease in this receipt: redeeming myself in the beginning as good cheap as I can, by which means I perceive myself to have escaped much trouble and manifold difficulties. With very little force I stay these first motions of my perturbations, and I abandon the subject which begins to molest me, and before it transport me. He that stops not the loose shall hardly stay the course. He that cannot shut the door against them shall never expel them being entered. He that cannot attain an end in the beginning shall not come to an end of the conclusion; nor shall he endure the fall that could not endure the starts of it. *Etenim ipsæ se impellunt, ubi semel a ratione discessum est, ipsaque sibi imbecillitas indulget, in altumque provehitur imprudens: nec reperit locum consistendi:*[1] "For they drive themselves headlong, when once they are parted and past reason, and weakness soothes itself, and unawares is carried into the deep, nor can it find a place to tarry in." I feel betimes the low winds, which are forerunners of the storm, buzz in mine ears and sound and try me within:

> ——*ceu flamina prima*
> *Cum deprensa fremunt sylvis, et cæca volutant*
> *Murmura, venturos nautis prodentia ventos.*[2]

[1] Cic., *Tusc. Qu.* l. iv. [2] Virg., *Æn.* l. x. 97.

> At first blasts in the woods perceiv'd to go,
> Whistle, and darkly speak in murmurs low,
> Foretelling mariners what winds will grow.

How often have I done myself an apparent injustice to avoid the danger I should fall into by receiving the same, happily worse, from the judges after a world of troubles, and of foul and vile practices, more enemies to my natural disposition than fire or torment. *Convenit à litibus quantum licet, et nescio an paulo plus etiam quam licet, abhorrentem esse; est enim non modo liberale, paululum nonnunquam de suo jure decedere, sed inter dum etiam fructuosum:*[1] "As much as we may, and it may be more than we may, we should abhor brabbling and lawing; for it is not only an ingenious part, but sometimes profitable also at sometimes to yield a little of our right." If we were wise indeed, we should rejoice and glory, as I heard once a young gentleman, born of a very good house, very wittily and unfeignedly rejoice with all men that his mother had lost her suit; as if it had been a cough, an ague, or any other irksome burthen. The favours which fortune might have given me, as alliances and acquaintances with such as have sovereign authority in those things, I have in my conscience done much instantly to avoid employing them to others' prejudice, and not over-value my rights above their worth. To conclude, I have so much prevailed by my endeavours (in a good hour I may speak it) that I am yet a virgin for any suits in law, which have notwithstanding not omitted gently to offer me their service, and under pretence of lawful titles insinuate themselves into my allowance, would I but have given ear unto them. And as a pure maiden from quarrels, I have without important offence, either passive or active, lingered out a long life, and never heard worse than mine

[1] Cic., *Off.* I.

own name, a rare grace of heaven. Our greatest agitations have strange springs and ridiculous causes. What ruin did our last Duke of Burgundy run into for the quarrel of a cart-load of sheep-skins? And was not the graving of a seal the chief cause of the most horrible breach and topsy-turvy that ever this world's frame endured? For Pompey and Cæsar are but the new buddings and continuation of two others. And I have seen in my time the wisest heads of this realm assembled with great ceremony and public charge about treaties and agreements, the true deciding whereof depended in the meanwhile absolutely and sovereignly of the will and consultations held in some ladies' pate or cabinet, and of the inclination of some silly woman. Poets have most judiciously looked into this, who but for an apple have set all Greece and Asia on fire and sword. See why that man doth hazard both his honour and life on the fortune of his rapier and dagger; let him tell you whence the cause of that contention ariseth; he cannot without blushing, so vain and so frivolous is the occasion. To embark him, there needs but little advisement, but being once in, all parts do work. There are greater provisions required, more difficult and important. How far more easy it is not to enter than to get forth? We must proceed contrary to the briar, which produceth a long and straight stake at the first springing; but after, as tired and out of breath, it makes many and thick knots, as if they were pauses, showing to have no more that vigour and constancy. We should rather begin gently and leisurely, and keep our strength and breath for the perfection of the work. We direct affairs at the beginning, and hold them at our mercy, but being once undertaken, they guide and transport us, and we must follow them. Yet may it not be said that this counsel hath freed me from difficulties, and that I have not

been often troubled to control and bridle my passions, which are not always governed according to the measure of occasions, whose entrances are often sharp and violent. So is it that thence may be reaped good fruit and profit, except for those who in well-doing are not satisfied with any benefit, if their reputation be in question. For in truth such an effect is not counted of but by every one to himself. You are thereby better satisfied, but not more esteemed, having reformed yourself before you come into action or the matter was in sight; yet not this only, but in all other duties of life, their course which aim at honour is diverse from that which they propound unto themselves that follow order and reason. I find some that inconsiderately and furiously thrust themselves into the lists, and grow slack in the course. As Plutarch saith, that "such as by the vice of bashfulness are soft and tractable to grant whatsoever is demanded, are afterwards as prone and facile to recant and break their word." In like manner, he that enters lightly into a quarrel is subject to leave it as lightly. The same difficulty which keeps ne from embracing the same should incite me, being once moved and therein engaged, to continue resolute. It is an ill custom. Being once embarked, one must either go on or sink. "Attempt coldly (said Bias), but pursue hotly." For want of judgment our hearts fail us, which is also less tolerable. Most agreements of our modern quarrels are shameful and false; we only seek to save appearances, and therewhilst betray and disavow our true intentions. We salve the deed; we know how we spake it, and in what sense the bystanders know it; yea, and our friends to whom we would have our advantages known. It is to the prejudice of our liberty and interest of our resolution's honour that we disavow our thoughts and seek for starting-holes in falsehood to make our agreements. We

belie ourselves to salve a lie we have given to another. We must not look whether your action or word may admit another interpretation, but it is your own true and sincere construction that you must now maintain, whatsoever it cost you. It is to your virtue and to your conscience that men speak; parts that ought not to be disguised. Leave we these base courses, wrangling shifts, and verbal means, to pettifogging lawyers. The excuses and reparations, or satisfactions, which daily I see made, promised, and given to purge indiscretion, seem to me more foul than indiscretion itself; better were it for one to offend his adversary again, than in giving him such satisfaction to wrong himself so much. You have braved him moved by choler, and now you seek to pacify and flatter him in your cold and better sense; thus you abase yourself more than you were before exalted. I find no speech so vicious in a gentleman as I deem any recantation he shall make dishonourable, especially if it be wrested from him by authority; forsomuch as obstinacy is in him more excusable than cowardice. Passions are to me as easy to be avoided as they are difficult to be moderated. *Exscinduntur facilius animo, quam temperantur:* "They are more easily rooted out of the mind than brought to good temper." He that cannot attain to this noble Stoical impassibility, let him shroud himself in the bosom of this my popular stupidity. What they did by virtue I inure myself to do by nature. The middle region harboureth storms; the two extremes contain philosophers and rural men, they concur in tranquillity and good hap.

Felix qui potuit rerum cognoscere causas,
Atque metus omnes et inexorabile fatum
Subjecit pedibus, strepitumque Acherontis avari.
Fortunatus et ille, Deos qui novit agrestes,
Panaque, Silvanumque senem, Nymphasque sorores.[1]

[1] Virg., *Geor.* l. ii. 490.

Happy is he that could of things the causes find,
And subject to his feet all fearfulness of mind,
Inexorable fate, and noise of greedy hell.
And happy he with country gods acquainted well,
Pan and old Sylvan knows,
And all the sister shrowes.

The beginnings of all things are weak and tender, we must therefore be clear-sighted in beginnings; for, as in their budding we discern not the danger, so in their full growth we perceive not the remedy. I should have encountered a thousand crosses daily more hard to be digested in the course of ambition, than it hath been uneasy for me to stay the natural inclination that led me unto them.

——jure perhorrui
Late conspicuum tollere verticem.[1]
I have been much afraid for causes right,
To raise my foretop far abroad to sight.

All public actions are subject to uncertain and divers interpretations, for too many heads judge of them. Some say of this my city employment (whereof I am content to speak a word, not that it deserves it, but to make a show of my manners in such things) I have demeaned myself like one that is too slowly moved, and with a languishing affection; and they are not altogether void of reason. I strive to keep my mind and thoughts quiet. *Cum semper natura, tum etiam ætate jam quietus:* "Both ever quiet by nature, and now because of years." And if at any time they are debauched to some rude and piercing impression it is in truth without my consent, from which natural slackness one must not therefore infer any proof of disability; for want of care and lack of judgment are two things; and

[1] Hor., *Car.* l. iii. 16, 18.

less, unkindness and ingratitude toward those citizens who to gratify me employed the utmost of all the means they could possibly, both before they knew me and since; and who did much more for me in appointing me my charge the second time, than in choosing me the first. I love them with all my heart, and wish them all the good that may be; and truly if occasion had been offered I would have spared nothing to have done them service. I have stirred and laboured for them as I do for myself. They are good people, warlike and generous, yet capable of obedience and discipline and fit for good employment, if they be well guided. They say likewise that I passed over this charge of mine without any deed of note or great show. It is true. Moreover, they accuse my cessation, when as all the world was convicted of too much doing; I have a most nimble motion where my will doth carry me. But this point is an enemy unto perseverance. Whosoever will make use of me according to myself, let him employ me in affairs that require vigour and liberty; that have a short, a straight, and therewithal a hazardous course: I may peradventure somewhat prevail therein. Whereas if it be tedious, crafty, laborious, artificial, and intricate, they shall do better to address themselves to some other man. All charges of importance are not difficult. I was prepared to labour somewhat more earnestly if there had been great need, for it lies in my power to do something more than I make show of, and than I love to do. To my knowledge, I have not omitted any motion that duty required earnestly at my hands. I have easily forgotten those which ambition blendeth with duty and cloaketh with her title. It is they which most commonly fill the eyes and ears and satisfy men. Not the thing itself, but the appearance

payeth them. If they hear no noise they imagine we sleep. My humours are contrary to turbulent humours; I could pacify an inconvenience or trouble without troubling myself, and chastise a disorder without alteration.

Have I need of choler and inflammation, I borrow it and therewith mask myself; my manners are musty, rather wallowish than sharp; I accuse not a magistrate that sleepeth, so they that are under it sleep also. So sleep the laws. For my part I commend a gliding, an obscure and reposed life. *Neque submissam et abjectam, neque se efferentem.*[1] "Neither too abject and submissive, nor vaunting itself too much." But my fortune will have it so; I am descended of a family that hath lived without noise and tumult, and of long continuance particularly ambitious of integrity. Our men are so framed to agitation and ostentations that goodness, moderation, equity, constancy, and such quiet and mean qualities are no more heard of. Rough bodies are felt, smooth ones are handled imperceptibly. Sickness is felt, health little or not at all; nor things that anoint us, in regard of such as sting us; it is an action for one's reputation and private commodity, and not for the common good, to refer that to be done in the market-place which a man may do in the counsel-chamber; and at noonday what might have been effected the night before; and to be jealous to do that himself which his fellow can perform as well. So did some surgeons of Greece show the operations of their skill upon scaffolds in view of all passengers, thereby to get more practice and custom. They suppose that good orders cannot be understood but by the sound of a trumpet. Ambition is no vice for petty companions, and for such endeavours as ours. One said to Alexander: "Your father will leave you a great command, easy and

[1] Cic., *Off.* l. i.

peaceful;" the boy was envious of his father's victories and of the justice of his government. He would not hav enjoyed the world's empire securely and quietly. Alcibiades in Plato loveth rather to die young, fair, rich, noble, learned, and all that in excellence, than to stay in the state of such a condition. This infirmity is happily excusable in so strong and full a mind. When these petty, wretched souls are therewith inveigled, and think to publish their fame, because they have judged a cause rightly, or continued the order in guarding of a city's gates; by how much more they hoped to raise their head, so much more do they show their simplicity. This petty well-doing hath neither body nor life. It vanisheth in the first month, and walks but from one corner of a street to another. Entertain therewith your son and your servant, and spare not. As that ancient fellow, who having no other auditor of his praises and applauding of his sufficiency, boasted with his chamber-maid, exclaiming: "Oh Perette! what a gallant and sufficient man thou hast to thy master!" If the worst happen, entertain yourselves in yourselves; as a counsellor of my acquaintance, having disgorged a rabble of paragraphs with an extreme contention and like foolishness, going out of the counsel-chamber to a place near unto it, was heard very conscientiously to utter these words to himself: *Non nobis, Domine, non nobis, sed nomini tuo da gloriam:*[1] "Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto thy name give the glory." He that cannot otherwise, let him pay himself out of his own purse. Fame doth not so basely prostitute itself, nor so cheap. Rare and exemplar actions, to which it duly belongeth, could not brook the company of this innumerable multitude of vulgar petty actions. Well may a piece of marble raise your titles high as you list, because you have repaired a

[1] Psalm cxv. 1.

piece of an old wall, or cleansed a common ditch, but men of judgment will never do it. Report followeth not all goodness, except difficulty and rarity be joined thereunto. Yea, simple estimation, according to the Stoics, is not due to every action proceeding from virtue. Neither would they have him commended who through temperance abstaineth from an old blear-eyed woman. Such as have known the admirable qualities of Scipio the African, renounce the glory which Panætius ascribeth from gifts, as a glory, not his alone, but peculiar to that age. We have pleasures sortable to our fortune; let us not usurp those of greatness. Our own are more natural. They are the more solid and firm by how much the meaner. Since it is not for conscience, at least for ambition let us refuse ambition. Let us disdain this insatiate thirst of honour and renown, base and beggarly, which makes us so suppliantly to crave it of all sorts of people: *Quæ est ista laus quæ possit e macello peti?*[1] "What praise is this, which may be fetched out of the shambles?" By abject means, and at what vile rate soever. To be thus honoured is merely a dishonour. Learn we to be no more greedy of glory than we are capable of it. To be proud of every profitable and innocent action, is it fit for men to whom it is extraordinary and rare. They will value it for the price it cost them. According as a good effect is more resounding, I abate of its goodness: the jealousy I conceive it is produced more because it is so resounding than because it is good. What is set out to show is half sold. Those actions have more grace which carelessly and under silence pass from the hands of a workman, and which some honest man afterward chooseth and redeemeth from darkness, to thrust them into the

[1] Cic., *De Fin.* l. ii.

world's light: only for their worth. *Mihi quidem laudabiliora videntur omnia, quæ sine venditatione, et sine populo teste fiunt:*[1] "All things in sooth seem to me more commendable that are performed with no ostentation, and without the people to witness," said the most glorious man of the world. I had no care but to preserve and continue, which are deaf and insensible effects. Innovation is of great lustre; but interdicted in times when we are most urged, and have to defend ourselves but from novelties; abstinence from doing is often as generous as doing, but it is not so apparent. My small worth is in a manner all of this kind. To be short, the occasions in this my charge have seconded my complexion, for which I con them hearty thanks. Is there any man that desireth to be sick, to see his physician set a work? And should not that physician be well whipped who to put his art in practice would wish the plague to infect us? I was never possessed with this impious and vulgar passion, to wish that the troubled and distempered state of this city might raise and honour my government. I have most willingly lent them my hand to further and shoulders to aid their ease and tranquillity. He that will not thank me for the good order and for the sweet and undisturbed rest which hath accompanied my charge, cannot at least deprive me of that part which by the title of my good fortune belongeth unto me. This is my humour, that I love as much to be happy as wise, and attribute my successes as much to the mere grace of God as to the mean furtherance of my operation. I had sufficiently published to the world my sufficiency in managing of such public affairs; nay, there is something in me worse than insufficiency, which is, that I am not much displeased therewith, and that I endeavour not greatly to cure it, considering

[1] Cic., *Tusc. Qu.* l. ii.

the course of life I have determined to myself. Nor have I satisfied myself in this employment, but have almost attainted what I had promised unto myself; yet have I much exceeded what I had promised those with whom I was to negotiate, for I willingly promise somewhat less than I can perform or hope to accomplish. Of this I am assured, I have never left offence or hatred among them. To have left either regret or desire of me, this know I certainly, I have not much affected it.

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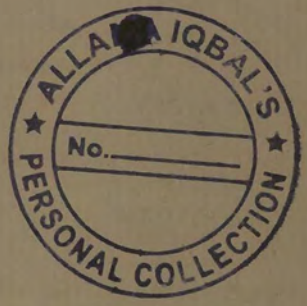
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