THE ESSAYS OF
Michel de Montaigne
Translated By Charles Cotton
Edited, with some account of the Life of the Author, and Notes
By W. CAREW HAZLITT
Complete in Two Volumes
VOLUME II
A. L. BURT COMPANY, PUBLISHERS, NEW YORK
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CHAP.</th>
<th>CONTENTS</th>
<th>PAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I.</td>
<td>Of the inconstancy of our actions.</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II.</td>
<td>Of drunkenness.</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III.</td>
<td>A custom of the Isle of Cea.</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV.</td>
<td>To-morrow's a new day.</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V.</td>
<td>Of conscience.</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VI.</td>
<td>Use makes perfect.</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VII.</td>
<td>Of judging of the death of another</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VIII.</td>
<td>That the mind hinders itself.</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IX.</td>
<td>That our desires are augmented by difficulty.</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X.</td>
<td>Of glory.</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XI.</td>
<td>Of presumption.</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XII.</td>
<td>Of giving the lie.</td>
<td>118</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XIII.</td>
<td>Of liberty of conscience.</td>
<td>123</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XIV.</td>
<td>That we taste nothing pure</td>
<td>128</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XV.</td>
<td>Against idleness.</td>
<td>131</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XVI.</td>
<td>Of posting.</td>
<td>136</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XVII.</td>
<td>Of ill means employed to a good end.</td>
<td>137</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XVIII.</td>
<td>Of the Roman grandeur.</td>
<td>141</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XIX.</td>
<td>Not to counterfeit being sick.</td>
<td>143</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XX.</td>
<td>Of thumbs.</td>
<td>145</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XXI.</td>
<td>Cowardice the mother of cruelty</td>
<td>147</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XXII.</td>
<td>All things have their season</td>
<td>158</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XXIII.</td>
<td>Of virtue.</td>
<td>160</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XXIV.</td>
<td>Of a monstrous child.</td>
<td>168</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XXV.</td>
<td>Of anger.</td>
<td>170</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XXVI.</td>
<td>Defense of Seneca and Plutarch.</td>
<td>178</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XXVII.</td>
<td>The story of Spurina.</td>
<td>185</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XXVIII.</td>
<td>Observation on the means to carry on a war according to Julius Cæsar</td>
<td>193</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XXIX.</td>
<td>Of three good women.</td>
<td>203</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XXX.</td>
<td>Of the most excellent men</td>
<td>211</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XXXI.</td>
<td>Of the resemblance of children to their fathers</td>
<td>219</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAP.</td>
<td>CONTENTS</td>
<td>PAGE.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XXXII.</td>
<td>Of profit and honesty</td>
<td>251</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XXXIII.</td>
<td>Of repentance</td>
<td>268</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XXXIV.</td>
<td>Of three commerces</td>
<td>283</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XXXV.</td>
<td>Of diversion</td>
<td>296</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XXXVI.</td>
<td>Upon some verses of Virgil</td>
<td>308</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XXXVII.</td>
<td>Of coaches</td>
<td>374</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XXXVIII.</td>
<td>Of the inconvenience of greatness</td>
<td>395</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XXXIX.</td>
<td>Of the art of conference</td>
<td>401</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XL.</td>
<td>Of vanity</td>
<td>426</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XLI.</td>
<td>Of managing the will</td>
<td>492</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XLII.</td>
<td>Of cripples</td>
<td>517</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XLIII.</td>
<td>Of physiognomy</td>
<td>529</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XLIV.</td>
<td>Of experience</td>
<td>561</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INDEX.</td>
<td></td>
<td>623</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ESSAYS OF MONTAIGNE.

CHAPTER I.

OF THE INCONSTANCY OF OUR ACTIONS.

Such as make it their business to oversee human actions, do not find themselves in anything so much perplexed as to reconcile them and bring them into the world's eye with the same luster and reputation; for they commonly so strangely contradict one another that it seems impossible they should proceed from one and the same person. We find the younger Marius one while a son of Mars, and another, a son of Venus. Pope Boniface VIII. entered, it is said, into his papacy like a fox, behaved himself in it like a lion and died like a dog; and who could believe it to be the same Nero, the perfect image of all cruelty, who, having the sentence of a condemned man brought to him to sign, as was the custom, cried out, "O, that I had never been taught to write!"* so much it went to his heart to condemn a man to death. All story is full of such examples, and every man is able to produce so many to himself, or out of his own practice or observation, that I sometimes wonder to see men of understanding give themselves the trouble of sorting these pieces, considering that irresolution appears to me to be the most common and manifest vice of our nature; witness the famous verse of the player Publius,

"Malum consilium est, quod mutari non potest."†

There seems some reason in forming a judgment of a man from the most usual methods of his life; but, considering the natural instability of our manners and opinions, I have often thought even the best authors a little out in

* Seneca, De Clementia, ii. 1.

† "'Tis evil counsel that will admit no change."—Pub. MIM. ex Aul. Gell., xvii. 14.
so obstinately endeavoring to make of us any constant and solid contexture; they choose a general air of a man, and according to that interpret all his actions, of which, if they cannot bend some to a uniformity with the rest, they are presently imputed to dissimulation. Augustus has escaped them, for there was in him so apparent, sudden, and continual variety of actions all the whole course of his life, that he has slipped away clear and undecided from the most daring critics. I can more hardly believe a man's constancy than any other virtue, and believe nothing sooner than the contrary. He that would judge of a man in detail and distinctly, bit by bit, would oftener be able to speak the truth. It is a hard matter, from all antiquity, to pick out a dozen men who have formed their lives to one certain and constant course, which is the principal design of wisdom; for to comprise it all in one word, says one of the ancients,* and to contract all the rules of human life into one, "it is to will, and not to will, always one and the same thing: I will not vouchsafe," says he, "to add, provided the will be just, for if it be not just, it is impossible it should be always one." I have indeed formerly learned that vice is nothing but irregularity and want of measure, and therefore 'tis impossible to fix constancy to it. "'Tis a saying of Demosthenes, "that the beginning of all virtue is consultation and deliberation; the end and perfection, constancy." If we would resolve on any certain course by reason, we should pitch upon the best, but nobody has thought on't.

"Quod petiiit, spernit; repetit, quod nuper omisit; 
Æstuat, et vitæ disconvenit ordine toto "†

Our ordinary practice is to follow the inclinations of our appetite, be it to the left or right, upward or downward, according as we are wafted by the breath of occasion. We never meditate what we would have till the instant we have a mind to have it; and change like that little creature which receives its color from what it is laid upon. What we but just now proposed to ourselves we immediately

† "That which he sought he despises; what he has lost, he seeks. He fluctuates, and ties from that to this: his whole life a contradiction."—Horace, Ep., 1, i. 98.
alter, and presently return again to it; 'tis nothing but shifting and inconstancy:

"Ducimur, ut nervis alienis mobile lignum." *

We do not go, we are driven; like things that float, now leisurely then with violence, according to the gentleness or rapidity of the current:

"Nonne videmus,
Quid sibi quisque velit, nescire, et quaerere semper;
Commutare locum, quasi onus deponere possit?" †

Every day a new whimsy, and our humors keep motion with the time.

"Tales sunt hominum mentes, quali pater ipse
Juppiter auctiferas lustravit lumine terras." ‡

We fluctuate between various inclinations; we will nothing freely, nothing absolutely, nothing constantly.§ In anyone who had prescribed and established determinate laws and rules in his head for his own conduct, we should perceive an equality of manners, an order and an infallible relation of one thing or action to another, shine through his whole life; Empedocles observed this discrepancy in the Agrigentines, that they gave themselves up to delights, as if every day was their last, and built as if they had been to live for ever.|| The judgment would not be hard to make, as is very evident in the younger Cato; he who therein has found one step, it will lead them to all the rest; "'Tis a harmony of very according sounds, that cannot jar. But with us 'tis quite contrary; every particular action requires a particular judgment. The surest way to steer, in my opinion, would be to take our measures from the nearest allied circumstances, without engaging in a longer inquisi-

* "We are turned about as tops turn with the thong."—Horace, Sat. ii. 7, 82.
‡ "Do we not see them, uncertain what they would have, and always asking for something new, and to get rid of a burthen."—Lucretius, iii. 1070.
‡ "Such are the minds of men, that they change as the days that father Jupiter sends on the earth."—Cicero, Frag. Poet., lib. x.
§ Seneca, Ep., 52.
|| Diogenes Laertius Life of Empedocles, i. 8.
tion, or without concluding any other consequence. I was
told, during the civil disorders of our poor kingdom,
that a maid, hard by the place where I then was, had
thrown herself out of a window to avoid being forced by a
common soldier who was quartered in the house; she was
not killed by the fall, and therefore, repeating her attempt
would have cut her own throat, had she not been pre-
vented; but having, nevertheless, wounded herself to some
show of danger, she voluntarily confessed that the soldier
had not as yet importuned her otherwise than by courtship,
earnest solicitation, and presents; but that she was afraid
that in the end he would have proceeded to violence, all
which she delivered with such a countenance and accent,
and withal embroiled in her own blood, the highest testi-
mony of her virtue, that she appeared another Lucretia;
and yet I have since been very well assured that both before
and after she was not so difficult a piece. And, accord-
ing to my host's tale in Ariosto, be as handsome a man and
as worthy a gentleman as you will, do not conclude too
much upon your mistress' inviolable chastity for having
been repulsed; you do not know but she may have a better
stomach to your muleteer.

Antigonus, having taken one of his soldiers into a great
degree of favor and esteem for his virtue and valor, gave
his physicians strict charge to cure him of a long and in-
ward disease under which he had a great while languished
and observing that, after his cure, he went much more
coldly to work than before, he asked him what had so
altered and cowed him: "Yourself, sir," replied the other,
"by having eased me of the pains that made me weary of
my life."* Lucullus' soldier having been rifled by the
enemy, performed upon them in revenge a brave exploit, by
which having made himself a gainer, Lucullus, who had
conceived a good opinion of him from that action, went
about to engage him in some enterprise of very great dan-
ger, with all the plausible persuasions and promises he
could think of:

"Verbis, quae timido quoque possent addere mentem: "†

* Plutarch, Life of Pelopidas, c.1.
† "Words which would have inspired the greatest coward."—
Horace, Ep., ii. 2, 1, 2.
“Pray employ,” answered he, “some miserable plundered soldier in that affair;”

“Quantumvis rusticus, ibit, Ibit eo, quo vis, qui zonam perdidit, inquit;” *

and flatly refused to go. When we read that Mohammed having furiously rated Chasan, Bassa of the Janazaries, because he had seen the Hungarians break into his squadrons, and himself behave very ill in the business, and that Chasan, instead of any other answer, rushed furiously alone, scimitar in hand, into the first body of the enemy where he was presently cut to pieces, we are not to look upon that action, peradventure, so much as vindication as a turn of mind, not so much proceeding from natural valor as from a sudden despite. The man you saw yesterday so adventurous and brave, you must not think it strange to see him as great a poltroon the next: anger, necessity, company, wine, or the sound of the trumpet had roused his spirits: this is no valor formed and established by reason, but accidentally created by such circumstances, and therefore it is no wonder, if by contrary circumstances it appear quite another thing.

These supple variations and contradictions so manifest in us, have given occasion to some to believe that man has two souls; other two distinct powers that always accompany and incline us, the one toward good and the other toward ill, according to their own nature and propension; so abrupt a variety not being imaginable to flow from one and the same source.

For my part, the puff of every accident not only carries me along with it according to its own proclivity, but moreover I discompose and trouble myself by the instability of my own posture; and whoever will look narrowly into his own bosom, will hardly find himself twice in the same condition. I give to my soul sometimes one face and sometimes another, according to the side I turn her to. If I speak variously of myself, it is because I consider myself variously; all the contrarieties are there to be found in one corner or another; after one fashion or another: bashful, insolent; chaste, lustful; prating, silent; laborious, delicate; ingenious, heavy; melancholic, pleasant; lying, true:

* "Let some poor fellow, who has lost his purse, go on your errand, said he.”—Idem, ibid., ii. 2, 39.
knowing, ignorant; liberal, covetous, and prodigal: I find all this in myself, more or less, according as I turn myself about; and whoever will sift himself to the bottom, will find in himself and even in his own judgment, this vulubility and discordance. I have nothing to say of myself entirely, simply, and solidly without mixture and confusion. *Distinguo* is the most universal member of my logic. Though I always intend to speak well of good things, and rather to interpret such things as fall out in the best sense than otherwise, yet such is the strangeness of our condition, that we are often pushed on to do well even by vice itself, if well-doing were not judged by the intention only. One gallant action, therefore ought not to conclude a man valiant; if a man were brave indeed, he would be always so, and upon all occasions. If it were a habit of valor and not a sally, it would render a man equally resolute in all accidents; the same alone as in company; the same in lists as in a battle: for, let them say what they will, there is not one valor for the pavement and another for the field; he would bear a sickness in his bed as bravely as a wound in the field; and no more fear death in his own house than at an assault. We should not then see the same man charge into a breach with a brave assurance, and afterward torment himself like a woman for the loss of a trial at law or the death of a child; when, being an infamous coward, he is firm in the necessities of poverty; when he shrinks at the sight of a barber's razor and rushes fearless upon the swords of the enemy, the action is commendable, not the man.

Many of the Greeks, says Cicero,* cannot endure the sight of an enemy, and yet are courageous in sickness; the Cimbrians and Celtiberians quite contrary; "*nihil enim potest esse equabile, quod non a certa ratione proficiscatur.*"† No valor can be more extreme in its kind than that of Alexander: but it is of but one kind nor full enough throughout, nor universal. Incomparable as it is, it has yet some blemishes; of which his being so often at his wits' end upon every light suspicion of his captains, conspiring against his life, and the carrying himself in that inquisition with so

* Cicero, *Tusc. Quæs.*, ii. 27.

†"Nothing can be regular that does not proceed from a fixed ground or reason."—Cicero, *Tusc. Quæs.*, c. 26.
much vehemence and indiscreet injustice, and with a fear that subverted his natural reason, is one pregnant instance. The superstition also, with which he was so much tinted, carries along with it some image of pusillanimity; and the excess of his penitence for the murder of Clytus is also a testimony of the unevenness of his courage. All we perform is no other than a cento, as a man may say, of several pieces, and we would acquire honor by a false title. Virtue cannot be followed but for herself, and if one sometimes borrows her mask to some other purpose, she presently pulls it away again. "Tis a vivid and strong tincture which, when the soul has once thoroughly imbibed it, will not out but with the piece. And, therefore, to make a right judgment of a man, we are long and very observingly to follow his trace: if constancy does not there stand firm upon her own proper base, "cui vivendi via considerata atque prorisa est," * if the variety of occurrences makes him alter his pace (his path, I mean, for the pace may be faster or slower) let him go; such a one runs before the wind, "Avant le vent," as the motto of our Talebot has it.

'Tis no wonder, says one of the ancients, that chance has so great a dominion over us, since it is by chance we live. It is not possible for any one who has not designed his life for some certain end, to dispose his particular actions; it is impossible for any one to arrange the pieces, who has not the whole form already contrived in his imagination. Of what use are colors to him that knows not what he is to paint? No one lays down a certain design for his life, and we only deliberate thereof by pieces. The archer ought first to know at what he is to aim, and then accommodate his arm, bow, string, shaft, and motion to it; our counsels deviate and wander, because not leveled to any determinate end. No wind serves him who addresses his voyage to no certain port. I cannot acquiesce in the judgment given by one in the behalf of Sophocles,† who concluded him capable of the management of domestic affairs, against the accusation of his son, from having read one of his tragedies.

*"If the way of his life is thoroughly considered and traced out." Cicero, Paradox, V. I.
† Cicero, De Senect., c. 7.
Neither do I allow of the conjecture of the Parians,* sent to regulate the Milesians, sufficient for such a consequence, as they from thence derived: coming to visit the island, they took notice of such grounds as were best husbanded, and such country-houses as were best governed; and having taken the names of the owners, when they had assembled the citizens, they appointed these farmers for new governors and magistrates; concluding that they, who had been so provident in their own private concerns, would be so of the public too. We are all lumps, and of so various and inform a contexture, that every piece plays, every moment, its own game, and there is as much difference between us and ourselves as between us and others; "magnam rem puta, unum hominem agere." † Since ambition can teach men valor, temperance, and liberality, and even justice too; seeing that avarice can inspire the courage of a shop-boy, bred and nursed up in obscurity and ease, with the assurance to expose himself so far from the fireside to the mercy of the waves and angry Neptune in a frail boat; that she further teaches discretion and prudence; and that even Venus can inflate boys under the discipline of the rod with boldness and resolution, and infuse masculine courage into the heart of tender virgins in their mothers' arms:

"Hac duce, custodes furtim transgressa jacentes,  
Ad juvenem tenebris sola puella venit:" ‡

'tis not all the understanding has to do, simply to judge us by our outward actions; it must penetrate the very soul, and there discover by what springs the motion is guided. But that being a high and hazardous undertaking, I could wish that fewer would attempt it.

* Herodotus, lib. v.  
† "Esteeim it a great thing always to act as one and the same man,"—Seneca, Ep., 120.  
‡ "She leading, the tender virgin, furtively evading her guardian steals in the dark to her young lover's arms."—Tibullus ii. 1, 75.
CHAPTER II.

OF DRUNKENNESS.

The world is nothing but variety and dissemblance: vices are all alike, as they are vices, and peradventure the Stoic understand them so; but although they are equally vices, yet they are not at all equal vices; and he who has transgressed the ordinary bounds of a hundred paces,

"Quos ultra, citraque nequit consistere rectum," *

should not be in a worse condition than he that has advanced but ten, is not to be believed; or that sacrilege is not worse than stealing a cabbage:

"Nec vincet ratio hoc, tantumdem ut peccet, idemque,
   Qui teneros caules alieni fregerit horti,
   Et qui nocturnus divum sacua legerit." †

There is in this as great diversity is in anything whatever. The confounding of the order and measure of sins is dangerous: murderers, traitors, and tyrants get too much by it, and it is not reasonable they should flatter their consciences, because another man is idle, lascivious, or not assiduous at his devotion. Every one lays weight upon the sin of his companions, but lightens his own. Our very instructors themselves rank them sometimes, in my opinion, very ill. As Socrates said that the principal office of wisdom was to distinguish good from evil, we, the best of whom are vicious, ought also to say the same of the science of distinguishing between vice and vice, without which, and that very exactly performed, the virtuous and the wicked will remain confounded and unrecognized.

Now, among the rest, drunkenness seems to me to be a gross and brutish vice. The soul has greater part in the rest, and there are some vices that have something, if a man may so say, of generous in them; there are vices wherein there is a mixture of knowledge, diligence, valor, prudence, dexterity and address; this one is totally corporeal and earthly. And the rudest nation this day in Europe is that alone where it is in fashion. Other vices discompose the

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* "Beyond or within which, right is not."—Horace, Sat. i. 1, 107.

† Idem, Ibid. iii. 115. The sense is given in the preceding passage of the text.
understanding: this totally overthrows it and renders the body stupid.

"Cum vini vis penetravit . . .
Consequitur gravitas membrorum, præpediuntur
Crura vacillanti, tardescit lingua, madet mens,
Nant oculi; clamor, singultus, jurgia, gliscunt." *

The worst state of man is that wherein he loses the knowledge and government of himself. And 'tis said, among other things upon this subject, that, as the must fermenting in a vessel, works up to the top whatever it has in the bottom, so wine, in those who have drunk beyond measure, vents the most inward secrets.

"Tu sapientium
Curas et arcanum jocosò
Consilium retegis Lyæo." †

Josephus tells us that by giving an ambassador the enemy had sent to him his full dose of liquor, he wormed out his secrets. And yet, Augustus, committing the most inward secrets of his affairs to Lucius Piso, who conquered Thrace, never found him faulty in the least, no more than Tiberius did Cossus, with whom he intrusted his whole counsels, though we know they were both so given to drink that they have often been fain to carry both the one and the other drunk out of the senate.

"Hesterno inflatum venas, de more, Lyæo." ‡

And the design of killing Cæsar was as safely communicated to Cimber, though he would often be drunk, as to Cassius, who drank nothing but water.§ We see our Germans, when drunk as the devil, know their post, remember the word, and keep to their ranks:

* "When the power of wine has penetrated us, a heaviness of the limbs follows, the legs of the tottering person are impeded; the tongue grows torpid, the mind is dimmed, the eyes swim, noise, hiccups, and quarrels arise."—Lucretius, i. 3, 475.

† "Thou in thy cups blabbest out the secret counsels of the wise".—Horace, Od. xxii. 1, 14.

‡ "Their veins yet full, as usual, of yesterday's wine."—Virgil, Eccl. VI. 15.

§ As to which Cassius pleasantly said: "What, shall I bear a tyrant, I who cannot bear wine?"
I could not have believed there had been so profound, senseless, and dead a degree of drunkenness had I not read in history that Attalus, having, to put a notable affront upon him, invited to supper the same Pausanias, who upon the very same occasion afterward killed Philip of Macedon, a king who by his excellent qualities gave sufficient testimony of his education in the house and company of Epaninondas, made him drink to such a pitch that he could after abandon his beauty, as of a hedge strumpet, to the muleteers and servants of the basest office in the house. And I have been further told by a lady whom I highly honor and esteem, that near Bordeaux and about Castres where she lives, a country woman, a widow of chaste repute, perceiving in herself the first symptoms of breeding, innocently told her neighbors that if she had a husband she should think herself with child; but the causes of suspicion every day more and more increasing, and at last growing up to a manifest proof, the poor woman was reduced to the necessity of causing it to be proclaimed in her parish church, that whoever had done that deed and would frankly confess it, she did not only promise to forgive, but moreover to marry him, if he liked the motion; whereupon a young fellow that served her in the quality of a laborer, encouraged by this proclamation, declared that he had one holiday found her, having taken too much of the bottle, so fast asleep by the chimney and in so indecent a posture, that he could conveniently do his business without waking her; and they yet live together man and wife.

It is true that antiquity has not much decried this vice; the writings even of several philosophers speak very tenderly of it, and even among the Stoics there are some who advise folks to give themselves sometimes the liberty to drink, nay, to drunkenness, to refresh the soul.

"Hoc quoque virtutum quondam certamine, magnum Socratem palmam promeruisse ferunt." 

* "Nor is a victory easily obtained over men so drunk, they can scarce speak or stand."—Juvenal, Sat. xvi. 47.

† "And the great Socrates is said, in these drinking bouts, to have carried off the palm."—Cornel. Gallus., Ep., i. 47.
That censor and reprover of others, Cato, was reproached that he was a hard drinker.

"Narratur et prisci Catonis
Sepe mero caluisse virtus." *

Cyrus, that so renowned king, among the other qualities by which he claimed to be preferred before his brother Artaxerxes, urged this excellence, that he could drink a great deal more than he. And in the best governed nations this trial of skill in drinking is very much in use. I have heard Silvius, an excellent physician of Paris, say that lest the digestive faculties of the stomach should grow idle, it were not amiss once a month to rouse them by this excess, and to spur them lest they should grow dull and rusty; and one author tells us that the Persians used to consult about their most important affairs after being well warmed with wine.

My taste and constitution are greater enemies to this vice than I am; for besides that I easily submit my belief to the authority of ancient opinions, I look upon it indeed as an unmanly and stupid vice, but less malicious and hurtful than the others, which, almost all, more directly jostle public society. And if we cannot please ourselves but it must cost us something, as they hold, I find this vice costs a man’s conscience less than the others, besides that it is of no difficult preparation, nor hard to be found, a consideration not altogether to be despised. A man well advanced both in dignity and age, among three principal commodities that he said remained to him of life, reckoned to me this for one, and where would a man more justly find it than among the natural conveniences? But he did not take it right, for delicacy and the curious choice of wines is therein to be avoided. If you found your pleasure upon drinking of the best, you condemn yourself to the penance of drinking of the worst. Your taste must be more indifferent and free; so delicate a palate is not required to make a good toper. The Germans drink almost indifferently of all wines with delight: their business is to pour down and not to taste; and it’s so much the better for them; their pleasure is so much the more plentiful and nearer at hand. Secondly, to drink, after the French

* "And of the elder Cato it is said, that his virtue was often warmed with wine."—Horace, Od. xxi. 3, 11.
fashion, but at two meals, and then very moderately, is to be too sparing of the favors of the god. There is more time and constancy required than so. The ancients spent whole nights in this exercise, and oftentimes added the day following to eke it out, and therefore we are to take greater liberty and stick closer to our work. I have seen a great lord of my time, a man of high enterprise and famous success, that without setting himself to it, and after his ordinary rate of drinking at meals, drank not much less than five quarts of wine, and at his going away appeared but too wise and discreet, to the detriment of our affairs. The pleasure we hold in esteem for the course of our lives ought to have a greater share of our time dedicated to it; we should, like shop-boys and laborers, refuse no occasion nor omit any opportunity of drinking, and always have it in our minds. Methinks we every day abridge and curtail the use of wine, and that the after-breakfasts, dinner snatches, and collations I used to see in my father’s house, when I was a boy, were more usual and frequent then than now.

Is it that we pretend to a reformation? Truly, no; but it may be we are more addicted to Venus than our fathers were. They are too exercises that thwart and hinder one another in their vigor. Lechery weakens our stomach on the one side, and on the other, sobriety renders us more spruce and amorous for the exercise of love.

’Tis not to be imagined what strange stories I have heard my father tell of the chastity of that age wherein he lived. It was for him to say it, being both by art and nature cut out and finished for the service of ladies. He spoke well and little; ever mixing his language with some illustration out of authors most in use, especially in Spanish. Marcus Aurelius * was very frequent in his mouth. His behavior was grave, humble, and very modest; he was very solicitous of neatness and propriety both in his person and clothes, whether on horseback or afoot; he was monstrously punctual of his word; and of a conscience and religion generally tending rather toward superstition than otherwise. For a man of little stature, very strong, well proportioned, and well knit; of a pleasing countenance, inclining to brown, and very adroit in all noble exercises. I have yet in the

* Guevara’s Marcus Aurelius.
house to be seen canes poured full of lead, with which they say he exercised his arms for throwing the bar or the stone, or in fencing; and shoes with leaden soles to make him lighter for running or leaping. Of his vaulting he has left little miracles behind him; I have seen him when past three score laugh at our exercises, and throw himself in his furred gown into the saddle, make the tour of a table upon his thumbs, and scarce ever mount the stairs into his chamber without taking three or four steps at a time. But as to what I was speaking of before, he said there was scarce one woman of quality of ill fame in a whole province: he would tell of strange privacies, and some of them his own, with virtuous women, free from any manner of suspicion of ill; and for his own part solemnly swore he was a virgin at his marriage; and yet it was after a long practice of arms beyond the mountains, of which wars he left us a journal under his own hand, wherein he has given a precise account from point to point of all passages, both relating to the public and to himself. And he was, moreover, married at a well advanced maturity, in the year 1528, the three-and-thirtieth year of his age, upon his way home from Italy. But let us return to our bottle.

The inconveniences of old age, that stand in need of some refreshment and support, might with reason beget in me a desire of this faculty, it being as it were the last pleasure the course of years deprives us of. The natural heat, say the good-fellows, first seats itself in the feet: that concerns infancy; thence it mounts into the middle region, where it makes a long abode and produces, in my opinion, the sole true pleasures of human life; all other pleasures in comparison sleep; toward the end, like a vapor that still mounts upward, it arrives at the throat, where it makes its final residence, and concludes the progress. I do not, nevertheless, understand how a man can extend the pleasure of drinking beyond thirst, and forge in his imagination an appetite artificial and against nature; my stomach would not proceed so far; it has enough to do to deal with what it takes in for its necessity. My constitution is not to care for drink but as following eating and washing down my meat, and for that reason my last draught is always the greatest. And seeing that in old age we have our palate furred with phlegms or depraved by some other ill constitution, the wine tastes better to us as the pores are cleaner
washed and laid more open. At least, I seldom taste the first glass well. Anacharsis wondered * that the Greeks drank in greater glasses toward the end of a meal than at the beginning; which was, I suppose, for the same reason the Germans do the same, who then begin the battle of drink.

Plato † forbids children wine till eighteen years of age, and to get drunk till forty; but, after forty, gives them leave to please themselves, and to mix a little liberally in their feasts the influence of Dionysos, that good deity who restores to younger men their gayety, and to old men their youth; who mollifies the passions of the soul, as iron is softened by fire; and in his laws allows such merry meetings, provided they have a discreet chief to govern and keep them in order, as good and of great utility; drunkenness being, he says, a true and certain trial of every one's nature, and, withal, fit to inspire old men with mettle to divert themselves in dancing and music; things of great use, and that they dare not attempt when sober. He, moreover, says that wine is able to supply the soul with temperance and the body with health. Nevertheless, these restrictions, in part borrowed from the Carthaginians, please him: ‡ that men forbear excesses in the expeditions of war; that every judge and magistrate abstain from it when about the administrations of his place or the consultations of the public affairs; that the day is not to be employed with it, that being a time due to other occupations, nor the night on which a man intends to get children.

'Tis said that the philosopher Stilpo, when oppressed with age, purposely hastened his end by drinking pure wine. § The same thing, but not designed by him, despatched also the philosopher Arcesilaus. ¶

But, 'tis an old and pleasant question, whether the soul of a wise man can be overcome by the strength of wine?

"Si munite adhibet vim sapientiae." ¶

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* Diogenes Laertius, i. 104. † Laws, ii.
‡ Laws, ii. § Diogenes Laertis, ii. 12.
¶ Idem, iv. 44.
¶ Horace, Od. iii 28, 4. The sense is in the preceding passage of the text.
To what vanity does the good opinion we have of ourselves push us? The most regular and most perfect soul in the world has but too much to do to keep itself upright, and from being overthrown by its own weakness. There is not one of a thousand that is right and settled so much as one minute in a whole life, and that may not very well doubt, whether according to her natural condition she ever can be; but to join constancy to it is her utmost perfection; I mean when nothing should jostle and discompose her, which a thousand accidents may do. ’Tis to much purpose that the great poet Lucretius keeps such a clatter with his philosophy, when, behold! he goes mad with a love philter. Is it to be imagined that an apoplexy will not stun Socrates as well as a porter? Some men have forgotten their own names by the violence of a disease; and a slight wound has turned the judgment of others topsy-turvey. Let him be as wise as he will, after all he is but a man; and than that what is there more frail, more miserable, or more nothing? Wisdom does not force our natural dispositions.

"Sudores itaque, et pallorem exsistere toto
Corpore, et infringi linguam, vocemque aboriri,
Caligare oculos, sonere aures, succidere artus,
Denique concidere, ex animi terrore, videmus:" *

he must shut his eyes against the blow that threatens him; he must tremble upon the margin of a precipice, like a child; nature having reserved these light marks of her authority, not to be forced by our reason and the stoic virtue, to teach man his mortality and our weakness; he turns pale with fear, red with shame, and groans with the cholic, if not with desperate outcry, at least with hoarse and broken voice:

"Humani a se nihil alienum putet." †

The poets, that feign all things at pleasure, dare not acquit their greatest heroes of tears:

* "Sweat and paleness come over the whole body, the tongue is rendered powerless, the voice dies away, the eyes are darkened, there is ringing in the ears, the limbs sink under us by the influence of fear."—LUcretius, iii. 155.

† "Let him not think himself exempt from that which is incidental to other men."—Terence, Heauton., i. 1,25.
"Sic fatur lacrymans, classique immittit habenas." *

'Tis sufficient for a man to curb and moderate his inclinations, for totally to suppress them is not in him to do. Even our great Plutarch, that excellent and perfect judge of human actions, when he sees Brutus and Torquatus kill their children, begins to doubt whether virtue could proceed so far, and to question whether these persons had not rather been stimulated by some other passion.† All actions exceeding the ordinary bounds are liable to sinister interpretation, forasmuch as our liking no more holds with what is above than with what is below it.

Let us leave that other sect, that sets up an express profession of scornful superiority;‡ but when even in that sect,§ reputed the most quiet and gentle, we hear these rhodomontades of Metrodorus: "Occupavi te, Fortuna, atque cepi: omnesque aditus tuos interclusi ut ad me aspirare non possess;" || when Anaxarchus, by command of Nicoecreon the tyrant of Cyprus, was put into a stone mortar, and laid upon with mauls of iron, ceases not to say, "Strike, batter, break, 'tis not Anaxarchus, 'tis but his sheath that you pound and bray so;"¶ when we hear our martyrs cry out to the tyrant in the middle of the flame: "This side is roasted enough, fall to and eat, it is enough done; fall to work with the other;"** when we hear the child in Josephus‖ torn piece-meal with pincers, defying Antiochus, and crying out with a constant and assured voice: "Tyrant, thou iosest thy labor, I am still at ease; where is the pain, where are the torments with

* "Thus said he weeping, and then set sail with his fleet."—Virgil, Æneid, vi. 1.
† Plutarch, Life of Publicola, c. 3.
‡ The Stoics. Cotton wrote: "Let us leave this other sect, and make a downright profession of fierceness."
§ The Epicureans.
∥ "Fortune, I have got the better of thee, and have made all the avenues so sure thou canst not come at me."—Cicero, Tusc. Quæs., v. 9.
¶ Diogenes Laertius, ix. 58.
** This is what Prudentius makes St. Laurence say, in his book entitled Περὶ ατεχνανῶν (concerning crowns), Hymn ii. 401.
‖ Doe Macc., c. 8.
which thou didst so threaten me? Is this all thou canst do? My constancy torments thee more than thy cruelty does me. Oh, pitiful coward, thou faintest, and I grow stronger; make me complain, make me bend, make me yield if thou canst; encourage thy guards, cheer up thy executioners; see, see they faint, and can do no more; arm them, flesh them anew, spur them up;” truly, a man must confess that there is some frenzy, some fury, how holy soever, that at that time possesses those souls. When we come to these Stoical sallies: “I had rather be mad than voluptuous,” a saying of Antisthenes; Μανεῖν μαλλον, ἡ ἡσθείνυ.* When Sextius tells us, “he had rather be fettered with affliction than pleasure;” when Epicurus takes upon him to play with his gout, and, refusing health and ease, defies all torments, and despising the lesser pains, as disdaining to contend with them, he covets and calls out for others sharper, more violent, and more worthy of him;

“Spumantemque dari, pecora inter inertia, votis
Optat aprum, aut fulvum descendere monte leonem.” †

who but must conclude that these are wild sallies pushed on by a courage that has broken loose from its place? Our soul cannot from her own seat reach so high; ’tis necessary she must leave it, raise herself up, and, taking the bridle in her teeth, transport her man so far that he shall afterward himself be astonished at what he has done; as, in war the heat of battle impels generous soldiers to perform things of so infinite danger, as afterward, recollecting them they themselves are the first to wonder at; as it also fares with the poets, who are often rapt with admiration of their own writings, and know not where again to find the track through which they performed so fine a career; which also is in them called fury and rapture. And as Plato says,‡ ’tis no purpose for a sober-minded man to knock at the door of poesy: so Aristotle says§ that no excellent soul is exempt from a mixture of madness; and he has reason to

* Aulus Gellius, ix. 5.
† “And instead of timid beasts, wishes some yellow lion or foaming boar would come from the mountain.”—Æneid, iv. 158.
‡ Seneca, De Tranquillitate Animi, c. 15.
§ Problems, sect. 30.
call all transports, how commendable soever, that surpass our own judgment and understanding, madness; forasmuch as wisdom is a regular government of the soul, which is carried on with measure and proportion, and for which she is to herself responsible. Plato* argues thus, that the faculty of the prophesying is so far above us, that we must be out of ourselves when we meddle with it, and our prudence must either be obstructed by sleep or sickness, or lifted from her place by some celestial rapture.

CHAPTER III.

A CUSTOM OF THE ISLE OF CEA.†

If to philosophize be, as 'tis defined, to doubt, much more to write at random and play the fool, as I do ought to be reputed doubting, for it is for novices and freshmen to inquire and to dispute, and for the chairman to moderate and determine. My moderator is the authority of the divine will, that governs us without contradiction, and that is seated above these vain and human contestations.

Philip having forcibly entered into Peloponneseus, and some one saying to Damidas that the Lacedaemonians were likely very much to suffer if they did not in time reconcile themselves to his favor: "Why, you pitiful fellow," replied he, "what can they suffer who do not fear to die?" It being also asked of Agis, which way a man might live free? "Why," said he, "by despising death." These, and a thousand other sayings to the same purpose, distinctly sound of something more than the patient attending the stroke of death when it shall come; for there are several accidents in life far worse to suffer than death itself. Witness the Lacedaemonian boy taken by Antigonus, and sold for a slave, who being by his master commanded to some base employment: "Thou shalt see," says the boy, "whom thou hast bought; it would be a shame for me to serve,

* Timæus.
† See Nodier, p. 209 Charron seems to have recollected the maxim that "imitation is the sincerest flattery." But Pascal evidently studied this chapter very attentively, and in his Pensees has borrowed several hints from it.
being so near the reach of liberty,” and having so said, threw himself from the top of the house. Antipater severely threatening the Lacedæmonians, that he might the better incline them to acquiesce in a certain demand of his: “If thou threatenest us with more than death,” replied they, “we shall the more willingly die;” and to Philip, having written them word that he would frustrate all their enterprises; “What, wilt thou also hinder us from dying?” This is the meaning of the sentence,* That the wise man lives as long as he ought, not so long as he can; and that the most obliging present Nature has made us, and which takes from us all color of complaint of our condition, is to have delivered into our own custody the keys of life; she has only ordered one door into life, but a hundred thousand ways out. We may be straightened for earth to live upon, but earth sufficient to die upon can never be wanting, as Boiocalus answered the Romans. † Why dost thou complain of this world? it detains thee not; thy own cowardice is the cause, if thou livest in pain. There needs no more to die but to will to die:

"Ubique mors est; optime hoc cavit deus.  
Erribere vitam nemo non homini potest;  
At nemo mortem; mille ad hanc aditus patent." ‡

Neither is it a recipe for one disease only; § death is the infallible cure of all; ’tis a most assured port that is never to be feared, and very often to be sought. It comes all to one, whether a man give himself his end, or stays to receive it by some other means; whether he pays before his day, or stay till his day of payment come; from whencesoever, it comes, it is still his; in what part soever the thread breaks, there’s the end of the clew. The most voluntary death is the finest. Life depends upon the pleasure of others; death upon our own. We ought not to accommodate ourselves to our own humor in anything so much as in this. Reputation is not concerned in such

* Seneca, Ep., 70.
† Tacitus, Annal. xiii. 56.
‡ “Death is everywhere; heaven has well provided for that. Any one may deprive us of life; no one can deprive us of death. To death there are a thousand avenues.”—Seneca, Thcib., i. 1 151.
§ Seneca, Ep., 69, 71.
an enterprise; 'tis folly to be concerned by any such apprehension. Living is slavery if the liberty of dying be wanting. The ordinary method of cure is carried on at the expense of life; they torment us with caustics, incisions, and amputations of limbs; they interdict aliment and exhaust our blood; one step farther and we are cured indeed and effectually. Why is not the jugular vein as much at our disposal as the median vein? For a desperate disease a desperate cure. Servius the grammarian, being tormented with the gout, could think of no better remedy than to apply poison to his legs, to deprive them of their sense; let them be gouty at their will, so they were insensible of pain. God gives us leave enough to go when He is pleased to reduce us to such a condition that to live is far worse than to die. 'Tis weakness to truckle under infirmities, but it's madness to nourish them. The Stoics say,† that it is living according to nature in a wise man to take his leave of life, even in the height of prosperity, if he do it opportunely; and in a fool to prolong it, though he be miserable, provided he be not indigent of those things which they repute to be according to nature. As I do not offend the law against thieves when I embezzle my own money and cut my own purse; nor that against incendiaries when I burn my own wood; so am I not under the lash of those made against murderers for having deprived myself of my own life. Hegesias said,‡ that as the condition of life did so, the condition of death ought to depend upon our own choice. And Diogenes meeting the philosopher Speusippus, so blown up with an inveterate dropsy that he was fain to be carried in a litter, and by him saluted with the compliment, "I wish you good health." "No health to thee," replied the other, "who art content to live in such a condition."§ And in fact, not long after, Speusippus, weary of so languishing a state of life, found a means to die.

But this does not pass without admitting a dispute; for many are of opinion that we cannot quit this garrison of the world without the express command of Him who has

* Pliny, Nat. Hist., xxv. 3.
† Cicero, De Finib., iii. 13.
‡ Diogenes Laertius, ii. 94.
§ Idem, iv. 3.
placed us in it; and that it appertains to God who has placed us here, not for ourselves only but for His glory and the service of others, to dismiss us when it shall best please Him, and not for us to depart without His license; that we are not born for ourselves only, but for our country also, the laws of which require an account from us upon the score of their own interest, and have an action of manslaughter good against us; and if these fail to take cognisance of the fact, we are punished in the other world as deserters of our duty:

"Proxima deinde tenent mæstî loca, qui sibi letum
Insontes perperere manu, lucemque perosi
Priecere animas."**

There is more constancy in suffering the chain we are tied to than in breaking it, and more pregnant evidence of fortitude in Regulus than in Cato; 'tis indiscretion and impatience that push us on to these precipices: no accidents can make true virtue turn her back; she seeks and requires evils, pains, and grief, as the things by which she is nourished and supported; the menaces of tyrants, racks, and tortures serve only to animate and rouse her:

"Duris ut ilex tonsa bipennibus
Nigræ seraci frondis in Algido,
Per damna, per caedes, ab ipso
Ducit opes, animumque ferro." †

And as another says:

"Non est, ut putas, virtus, pater,
Timere vitam; sed malis ingentibus
Obstare, nec se vertere, ac retro dare." ‡

Or as this:

* "In the next place, come those melancholic souls, who, though free from guilt, were by their own hands slain, and, hating light sought death"—Æneid, vi. 434.

† "As in Mount Algidus, the sturdy oak even from the axe's hard stroke derives new vigor, and spreads, by amputations, a fuller and richer head."—Horace, Od., iv. 4, 57.

‡ "Father, 'tis no virtue to fear to live; virtue consists in with-standing great evils, and not in retiring and shrinking from them." Seneca, Theb., i. 190.
"Rebus in adversis facile est contemnere mortem; Fortius ille facit, qui miser esse potest." *

'Tis cowardice, not virtue, to lie squat in a furrow, under a tomb, to evade the blows of fortune; virtue never stops nor goes out of her path, for the greatest storm that blows:

"Si fractus illabatur orbis, Impavidum ferient ruinae." †

For the most part, the flying from other inconveniences brings us to this; nay, endeavoring to evade death, we often run into its very mouth:

"Hic, rogo, non furor est, ne moriare, mori?" ‡

like those who, for fear of a precipice, throw themselves headlong into it;

"Multos in summum periculum misit Venturi timor ipse mali: fortissimus ille est, Qui promptus metuenda pati, si cominus instent, Et differre potest." §

"Usque adeo, mortis formidine, vitae Percipit humanos odium, lucisque videndae, Ut sibi consciscant morienti pectore leuthum, Obliti fontem curarum hunc esse timorem." ¶

Plato, in his laws, assigns an ignominious sepulture to him who has deprived his nearest and best friend, namely himself, of life and his destined course, being neither compelled, so to do by public judgment, by any sad and inevitable accident of fortune, nor by any insupportable

* "The wretched may well despise and laugh at death; but he is braver far who can live wretched."—Martial, xi. 56, 15.

† "Should the world's axis crack, the ruins will but crush a fearless head."—Horace, Od. iii. 3, 7.

‡ "Tell me, is it not madness, that one should die for fear of dying?"—Martial, ii. 80, 2.

§ "The fear of future ills often makes men run into extreme danger; he is truly brave who boldly dares withstand the mischiefs he apprehends, when they confront him, and can be deferred."—Lucan, vii; 104.

¶ "Death to that degree so frightens some men, that causing them to hate both life and light, they kill themselves, miserably forgetting that this same fear is the fountain of their cares."—Lucretius, iii. 79.
disgrace, but merely pushed on by cowardice, and the
imbécility of a timorous soul. And the opinion that makes
so little of life, is ridiculous; for it is our being, 'tis all we
have. Things of a nobler and more elevated being may,
indeed, reproach ours; but it is against nature for us to
comply and make little account of ourselves; 'tis a disease
particular to man, and not discerned in any other creatures,
to hate and despise itself. And it is a vanity of the same
stamp to desire to be something else than that what we are;
the effect of such a desire does not at all touch us, forasmuch
as it is contradicted and hindered in itself. He that
desires of a man to be made an angel, does nothing for
himself; he would be never the better for it; for, being no
more, who shall rejoice or be sensible of this benefit for
him?

"Debet enim, misere cui forte, aegreque futurum est,
Ipse quoque esse in eo tum tempore, cum male possit
Accidere."* 

Security, indolence, impassibility, the privation of the
evils of this life, which we pretend to purchase at the
price of dying are of no manner of advantage to us: that
man evades war to very little purpose, who can have no
fruition of peace; and as little to the purpose does he avoid
trouble who cannot enjoy repose.

Among those of the first of these two opinions, there
has been great debate, what occasions are sufficient to
justify the meditation of self-murder, which they call
εὐαγώγησιν ἕξαγγέλλον.† For though they say that men must
often die for trivial causes, seeing those that detain us in
life are of no very great weight, yet there is to be some
limit. There are fantastic and senseless humors that
have prompted not only individual men, but whole nations
to destroy themselves, of which I have elsewhere given
some examples; and we further read of the Milesian
virgins, that, by a furious compact, they hanged them-
selves one after another till the magistrate took order in it,
enacting that the bodies of such as should be found so
hanged, should be drawn by the same halter stark naked

* "For he to whom misery and pain are to be in the future, must
himself then exist, when these ills befall him."—Idem, Ibid., 874.
† "A reasonable exit."—Diogenes Laertius, Life of Zeno.
through the city.* When Threicion † tried to persuade Cleomenes to despatch himself, by reason of the ill posture of his affairs, and, having missed a death of more honor in the battle he had lost, to accept of this the second in honor to it, and not to give the conquerors leisure to make him undergo an ignominious death or an infamous life; Cleomenes, with a courage truly Stoic and Lacedæmonian, rejected his counsel as unmanly and mean; "That," said he, "is a remedy that can never be wanting, but which a man is never to make use of while there is an inch of hope remaining:" telling him, "that it was some, times constancy and valor to live; that he would that even his death should be of use to his country, and would make of it an act of honor and virtue." Threicion, notwithstanding, thought himself in the right, and did his own business; and Cleomenes afterward did the same, but not till he had first tried the utmost malevolence of fortune. All the inconveniences in the world are not considerable enough that a man should die to evade them; and, besides, there being so many, so sudden and unexpected changes in human things, it is hard rightly to judge when we are at the end of our hope.

"Sperat et in sæva victus gladiator arena, 
Sit licet infesto pollice turba minax." ‡

All things, says an old adage, § are to be hoped for by a man while he lives; ay, but, replies Seneca, why should this rather be always running in a man’s head that fortune can do all things for the living man, than this, that fortune has no power over him that knows how to die? Josephus. || when engaged in so near and apparent danger, a whole people being violently bent against him, that there was no visible means of escape, nevertheless, being, as he himself says, in this extremity counseled by one of his friends to

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* Plutarch, Virtuous Deeds of Women.
† Idem, Life of Cleomenes, calls him Therycion.
‡ "The gladiator conquered in the lists hopes on, though the menacing spectators, turning their thumb, order him to die."—PENTADIUS, De Spe, ap. VIRGIL, Catalctla.
§ Seneca, Ep., 70.
|| Josephus, De Vitâ Suâ.
despatch himself, it was well for him that he yet maintained himself in hope, for fortune diverted the accident beyond all human expectation, so that he saw himself delivered without any manner of inconvenience. Whereas Brutus and Cassius, on the contrary, threw away the remains of the Roman liberty, of which they were the sole protectors, by the precipitation and temerity wherewith they killed themselves before the due time and a just occasion. Monsieur d’Anguien,* at the battle of Cerisolles,† twice attempted to run himself through, despairing of the fortune of the day, which went indeed very untowardly on that side of the field where he was engaged, and by that precipitation was very near depriving himself of the enjoyment of so brave a victory. I have seen a hundred hares escape out of the very teeth of the greyhounds. “Aliquis carnifici suo superstes fuit.” ‡

“Multa dies, variusque labor mutabilis ævi
Rettulit in melius; multos altera revisens
Lusit, et in solido rursus fortunæ locavit.” §

Pliny says there are but three sorts of diseases, to escape which a man has good title to destroy himself; the worst of which is the stone in the bladder, when the urine is suppressed.|| Seneca says those only which for a long time are discomposing the functions of the soul. And some there have been who, to avoid a worse death, have chosen

* Montluc, Comment.
† In 1544.
‡ “Some have survived their executioners.”—Seneca, Ep., 13.
§ “Length of days, and the various labor of changeful time, have brought things to a better state; fortune turning, shows a reverse face, and again restores men to prosperity.”—Aenida, xi. 425.
|| “In the quarto edition of these essays, in 1588, Pliny is said to mention two more, viz., a pain in the stomach, and the headache, which, he says (lib. xxv. c. 3.), were the only three distempers, almost, for which men killed themselves: as to their right of killing themselves, he does not mention a word of it here; and I cannot conceive why Montaigne, who, at first, entered thoroughly into Pliny’s sense, by saying that, according to this author, it was the custom for men to kill themselves, in order to be rid of any one of these three distempers made him say afterward, that they had a right to kill themselves for this very end.”—Coste.
one to their own liking. Democritus, general of the Ætolians, being brought prisoner to Rome, found means to make his escape by night: but close pursued by his keepers, rather than suffer himself to be retaken, he fell upon his own sword and died.* Antinous and Theodotus, their city of Epirus being produced by the Romans to the last extremity, gave the people counsel universally to kill themselves; but, these preferring to give themselves up to the enemy, the two chiefs went to seek the death they desired, rushing furiously upon the enemy, with intention to strike home but not to ward a blow. The Island of Goza being taken some years ago by the Turks, a Sicilian, who had two beautiful daughters marriageable killed them both with his own hand, and their mother, running in to save them, to boot, which having done, sallying out of the house with a cross-bow and harquebus, with two shots he killed two of the Turks nearest to his door, and drawing his sword, charged furiously in among the rest, where he was suddenly enclosed and cut to pieces, by that means delivering his family and himself from slavery and dishonor. The Jewish women, after having circumcised their children, threw them and themselves down a precipice to avoid the cruelty of Antigonus. I have been told of a person of condition in one of our prisons, that his friends, being informed that he would certainly be condemned, to avoid the ignominy of such a death suborned a priest to tell him that the only means of his deliverance was to recommend himself to such a saint, under such and such vows, and to fast eight days together without taking any manner of nourishment, what weakness or faintness soever he might find in himself during the time; he followed their advice, and by that means destroyed himself before he was aware, not dreaming of death or any danger in the experiment. Scribonia advising her nephew Libo to kill himself rather than await the stroke of justice, told him† that it was to do other people's business to preserve his life to put it after into the hands of those who within three or four days would fetch him to execution; and that it was to serve his enemies to keep his blood to gratify their malice.

We read in the Bible that Nicanor,‡ the persecutor of

* Livy, xxxvii. 46.         † Seneca, Ep., 70.
† Machabees, xiv. 37.
the law of God, having sent his soldiers to seize upon the good old man Razis, surnamed in honor of his virtue the father of the Jews: the good man, seeing no other remedy, his gates burned down, and the enemy ready to seize him, choosing rather to die nobly than to fall into the hands of his wicked adversaries and suffer himself to be cruelly butchered by them, contrary to the honor of his rank and quality, stabbed himself with his own sword, but the blow, for haste, not having been given home, he ran and threw himself from the top of a wall headlong among them, who separating themselves and making room, he pitched directly upon his head; notwithstanding which, feeling yet in himself some remains of life, he renewed his courage, and starting up upon his feet all bloody and wounded as he was, and making his way through the crowd to a precipitous rock, there, through one of his wounds drew out his bowels which, tearing and pulling to pieces with both his hands, he threw among his pursuers, all the while testifying and invoking the Divine vengeance upon them for their cruelty and injustice.

Of violences offered to the conscience, that against the chastity of woman is, in my opinion, most to be avoided, forasmuch as there is a certain pleasure naturally mixed with it, and for that reason the dissent therein cannot be sufficiently perfect and entire, so that the violence seems to be mixed with a little consent of the forced party. The ecclesiastical history has several examples of devout persons who have embraced death to secure them from the outrages prepared by tyrants against their religion and honor. Pelagia and Sophronia, both canonized, the first of these precipitated herself with her mother and sisters into the river to avoid being forced by some soldiers, and the last also killed herself to avoid being ravished by the Emperor Maxentius.

It may, peradventure, be an honor to us in future ages, that a learned author of this present time, and a Parisian, takes a great deal of pains to persuade the ladies of our age rather to take any other course than to enter into the horrid meditation of such a despair. I am sorry he had never heard, that he might have inserted it among his other stories, the saying of a woman, which was told me at Toulouse, who had passed through the handling of some soldiers: "God be praised," said she, "that once at least
in my life, I have had my fill without sin." In truth, these cruelties are very unworthy the French good nature, and also, God be thanked, our air is very well purged of them since this good advice: 'tis enough that they say "no" in doing it according to the rule of the good

Marot.*

History is everywhere full of those who by a thousand ways have exchanged a painful and irksome life for death. Lucius Aruntius killed himself, to fly, he said, both the future and the past.† Granius Silvanus and Statius Proximus, after having been pardoned by Nero, killed themselves; ‡ either disdaining to live by the favor of so wicked a man, or that they might not be troubled, at some other time, to obtain a second pardon, considering the proclivity of his nature to suspect and credit accusations against worthy men. Spargapises, the son of Queen Tomyris, being a prisoner of war to Cyrus, made use of the first favor Cyrus showed him, in commanding him to be unbound, to kill himself, having pretended to no other benefit of liberty, but only to be revenged of himself for the disgrace of being taken..§ Bogez, governor in Eion for King Xerxes, being besieged by the Athenian army under the conduct of Cimon, refused the conditions offered, that he might safe return into Asia with all his wealth, impatient to survive the loss of a place his master had given him to keep; wherefore, having defended the city to the last extremity, nothing being left to eat, he first threw all the gold and whatever else the enemy could make booty of into the river Strymon, and then causing a great pile to be set on fire, and the throats of all the women, children, concubines, and servants to be cut, he threw their bodies into the fire, and at last leaped into it himself.

Ninachetuen, an Indian lord, so soon as he heard the first whisper of the Portuguese viceroy's determination to dispossess him, without any apparent cause, of his command in Malacca, to transfer it to the king of Campar, he took this resolution with himself: he caused a scaffold,

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* "Un doux nenny, avec un doux sourire
Est tant honnesté."—MAROT.

† Tacitus, Annal., vi. 48. ‡ Idem, ibid., xv. 71.
§ Herodotus, i. 213.
more long than broad, to be erected, supported by columns royally adorned with tapestry and strewed with flowers and abundance of perfumes; all which being prepared, in a robe of cloth of gold, set full of jewels of great value, he came out into the street, and mounted the steps to the scaffold, at one corner of which he had a pile lighted of aromatic wood. Everybody ran to see to what end these unusual preparations were made; when Ninachetuen, with a manly but displeased countenance, set forth how much he had obliged the Portuguese nation, and with how unspotted fidelity he had carried himself in his charge; that having so often, sword in hand, manifested in the behalf of others, that honor was much more dear to him than life, he was not to abandon the concern of it for himself: that fortune denying him all means of opposing the affront designed to be put upon him, his courage at least enjoined him to free himself from the sense of it, and not to serve for a fable to the people, nor for a triumph to men less deserving than himself; which having said, he leaped into the fire.

Sextilia, the wife of Scaurus, and Paxea, the wife of Labeo, to encourage their husbands to avoid the dangers that pressed upon them, wherein they had no other share than conjugal affection, voluntarily sacrificed their own lives to serve them in this extreme necessity for company and example.* What they did for their husbands, Cocceius Nerva did for his country, with less utility though with equal affection; this great lawyer, flourishing in health, riches, reputation, and favor with the emperor, had no other cause to kill himself but the sole compassion of the miserable state of the Roman republic.† Nothing can be added to the beauty of the death of the wife of Fulvius, a familiar favorite of Augustus: Augustus having discovered that he had vented an important secret he had intrusted him withal, one morning that he came to make his court received him very coldly and looked frowningly upon him. He returned home, full of despair, where he sorrowfully told his wife that, having fallen into this misfortune he was resolved to kill himself: to which she roundly replied, "'Tis but reason you should, seeing that

* Tacitus, Annal., vi. 29.  † Idem, ibid., 26.
having so often experienced the incontinence of my tongue, you could not take warning; but let me kill myself first,” and without any more saying ran herself through the body with a sword.* Vibius Virius, despairing of the safety of his city besieged by the Romans, and of their mercy, in the last deliberation of his city’s senate, after many arguments conducing to that end, concluded that the most noble means to escape fortune was by their own hands: telling them that the enemy would have them in honor, and Hannibal would be sensible how many faithful friends he had abandoned; inviting those who approved of his advice to come to a good supper he had ready at home, where, after they had eaten well, they would drink together of what he had prepared; a beverage, said he, that will deliver our bodies from torments, our souls from insult, and our eyes and ears from the sense of so many hateful mischiefs, as the conquered suffer from cruel and implacable conquerors. I have, said he, taken order for fit persons to throw our bodies into a funeral pile before my door so soon as we are dead. Many enough approved this high resolution, but few imitated it; seven-and-twenty senators followed him, who after having tried to drown the thought of this fatal determination in wine, ended the feast with the mortal mess; and embracing one another, after they had jointly deplored the misfortune of their country, some retired home to their own houses, others stayed to be burned with Vibius in his funeral pyre; and were all of them so long in dying, the vapor of the wine having prepossessed the veins, and by that means deferred the effect of the poison, that some of them were within an hour of seeing the enemy inside the walls of Capua, which was taken the next morning, and of undergoing the miseries they had at so dear a rate endeavored to avoid.† Taurea Jubellius, another citizen of the same country, the Consul Fulvius returning from the shameful butchery he had made of two hundred and twenty-five senators, called him back fiercely by name, and having made him stop: “Give the word,” said he, “that somebody may despatch me after the massacre of so many others.

* Plutarch on Loquacity, c. 9.
† Livy, xxvi. 1315.
that thou mayest boast to have killed a much more valiant man than thyself.” Fulvius disdaining him as a man out of his wits, and also having received letters from Rome censuring the inhumanity of his execution which tied his hands, Jubellius proceeded: “Since my country has been taken, my friends dead, and having with my own hands slain my wife and children to rescue them from the desolation of this ruin, I am denied to die the death of my fellow-citizens, let me borrow from virtue vengeance on this hated life,” and therewithal drawing a short sword he carried concealed about him, he ran it through his own bosom, falling down backward, and expiring at the consul’s feet.*

Alexander, laying siege to a city of the Indies, those within, finding themselves very hardly set, put on a vigorous resolution to deprive him of the pleasure of his victory, and accordingly burned themselves in general, together with their city, in despite of his humanity: a new kind of war, where the enemies sought to save them, and they to destroy themselves, doing, to make themselves sure of death, all that men do to secure life.†

Astapa, a city of Spain, finding itself weak in walls and defense to withstand the Romans, the inhabitants made a heap of all their riches and furniture in the public place; and, having ranged upon this heap all the women and children, and piled them round with wood and other combustible matter to take sudden fire, and left fifty of their young men for the execution of that whereon they had resolved, they made a desperate sally, where, for want of power to overcome, they caused themselves to be every man slain. The fifty, after having massacred every living soul throughout the whole city, and put fire to this pile, threw themselves lastly into it, finishing their generous liberty, rather after an insensible, than after a sorrowful and disgraceful manner, giving the enemy to understand, that if fortune had been so pleased, they had as well the courage to snatch from them victory as they had to frustrate and render it dreadful, and even mortal to those who, allured by the splendor of the gold melting in this flame, having approached it, a great number were there suffocated and

* Idem, ibid., 15.  † Diodorus Siculus, xviii. 18.
burned, being kept from retiring by the crowd that followed after. *

The Abydeans, being pressed by King Philip, put on the same resolution; but, not having time, they could not put it in effect. The king, who was struck with horror at the rash precipitation of this execution (the treasure and movables that they had condemned to the flames being first seized), drawing off his soldiers, granted them three day's time to kill themselves in, that they might do it with more order and at a greater ease: which time they filled with blood and slaughter beyond the utmost excess of all hostile cruelty, so that not so much as any one soul was left alive that had power to destroy itself. † There are infinite examples of like popular resolutions which seem the more fierce and cruel in proportion as the effect is more universal, and yet are really less so than when singly executed; what arguments and persuasion cannot do with individual men, they can do with all, the ardor of society ravishing particular judgments.

The condemned who would live to be executed in the reign of Tiberius, forfeited their goods and were denied the rights of sepulture; those who, by killing themselves, anticipated it, were interred, and had liberty to dispose of their estates by will. ‡

But men sometimes covet death out of hope of a greater good. "I desire," says St. Paul, § "to be with Christ," and "who shall rid me of these bands?" Cleombrotus of Ambracia. || having read Plato's Phædo, entered into so great a desire of the life to come that, without any other occasion, he threw himself into the sea. By which it appears how improperly we call this voluntary dissolution, despair, to which the eagerness of hope often inclines us, and, often, a calm and temperate desire proceeding from a mature and deliberate judgment. Jacques du Chastel, bishop of Soissons, in St. Louis' foreign expedition, seeing the king and whole army upon the point of returning into France, leaving the affairs of religion imperfect, took a

* Livy, xxviii. 22, 23. † Idem, xxxi. 17, 18.
‡ Tacitus, Annal., vi. 29.
§ Ep. to the Philippians, i. 23.
|| Cicero, Tusc. Quaes. i. 34.
resolution rather to go into paradise; wherefore having taken solemn leave of his friends; he charged alone, in the sight of every one, into the enemy's army, where he was presently cut to pieces. In a certain kingdom of the new-discovered world, upon a day of solemn procession, when the idol they adore is drawn about in public upon a chariot of marvelous greatness: besides that many are then seen cutting off pieces of their flesh to offer to him, there are a number of others who prostrate themselves upon the place, causing themselves to be crushed and broken to pieces under the weighty wheels, to obtain the veneration of sanctity after death, which is accordingly paid them. The death of the bishop, sword in hand, has more of magnanimity in it, and less of sentiment, the ardor of combat taking away part of the latter.

There are some governments who have taken upon them to regulate the justice and opportunity of voluntary death. In former times there was kept in our city of Marseilles, a poison prepared out of hemlock, at the public charge, and those who had a mind to hasten their end, having first, before the six hundred, who were their senate, given account of the reasons and motives of their design, and it was not otherwise lawful, than by leave from the magistrate and upon just occasion to do violence to themselves.* The same law was also in use in other places.

Sextus Pompeius, in his expedition into Asia, touched at the isle of Cea in Negropont: it happened while he was there, as we have it from one that was with him,† that a woman of great quality, having given an account to her citizens why she was resolved to put an end to her life, invited Pompeius to her death, to render it the more honorable, an invitation that he accepted; and having long tried in vain by the power of his eloquence, which was very great, and persuasion, to divert her from that design, he acquiesced in the end in her own will. She had passed the age of four score and ten in a very happy state, both of body and mind: being then laid upon her bed, better dressed than ordinary and leaning upon her elbow, "The gods," said she, "oh Sextus Pompeius and rather those I

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* Valerius Maximus, ii. 6, 7.
† Idem, ibid., vi. 8.
leave than those I go to seek, reward thee, for that thou hast not disdained to be both the counselor of my life and the witness of my death. For my part, having always experienced the smiles of fortune, for fear lest the desire of living too long may make me see the contrary face, I am going, by a happy end, to dismiss the remains of my soul, leaving behind two daughters of my body and a legion of nephews;" which having said, with some exhortations to her family to live in peace, she divided among them her goods, and recommending her domestic gods to her eldest daughter, she boldly took the bowl that contained the poison, and having made her vows and prayers to Mercury to conduct her to some happy abode in the other world, she roundly swallowed the mortal poison. This being done, she entertained the company with the progress of its operation, and how the cold by degrees seized the several parts of her body one after another, till having in the end told them it began to seize upon her heart and bowels, she called her daughters to do the last office and close her eyes.

Pliny * tells us of a certain Hyperborean nation where, by reason of the sweet temperature of the air, lives rarely ended but by the voluntary surrender of the inhabitants, who, being weary of, and satiated with living, had the custom, at a very old age, after having made good cheer, to precipitate themselves into the sea from the top of a certain rock, assigned for that service. Pain and the fear of a worse death seem to me the most excusable incitements.†

CHAPTER IV.

TO-MORROW'S A NEW DAY.

I give, and I think with good reason, the palm to Jacques Amyot of all our French writers, not only for the simplicity and purity of his language, wherein he excels all others, nor for his constancy in going through so long a work,‡

* Nat. Hist., iv. 12.
† See Cicero, Tusc. Quaes., ii. 27; and Rousseau's Nouvelle Héloïse, liv. ii. lett. 1 and 2.
‡ The translation of Plutarch.
nor for the depth of his knowledge, having been able so successfully to smooth and unravel so knotty and intricate an author (for let people tell me what they will, I understand nothing of Greek, but I meet with sense so well united and maintained throughout his whole translation, that certainly he either knew the true fancy of the author, or having, by being long conversant with him, imprinted a vivid and general idea of that of Plutarch in his soul, he has delivered us nothing that either derogates from, or contradicts him), but above all, I am the most taken with him for having made so discreet a choice of a book so worthy and of so great utility wherewith to present his country. We dunces had been lost, had not this book raised us out of the dirt; by this favor of his we dare now speak and write; the ladies are able to read to schoolmasters; 'tis our breviary. If this good man be yet living, I would recommend to him Xenophon, to do as much by that; 'tis a much more easy task than the other, and consequently more proper for his age. And, besides, though I know not how, methinks he does briskly and clearly enough trip over steps another would have stumbled at, yet nevertheless his style seems to be more his own where he does not encounter those difficulties, and rolls away at his own ease.

I was just now reading this passage where Plutarch* says of himself, that Rusticus being present at a declamation of his at Rome, there received a packet from the emperor, and deferred to open it till all was done: for which, says he, all the company highly applauded the gravity of this person. 'Tis true, that being upon the subject of curiosity and of that eager passion for news, which makes us with so much indiscretion and impatience leave all to entertain a new-comer, and without any manner of respect or outcry, tear open on a sudden, in what company soever, the letters that are delivered to us, he had reason to applaud the gravity of Rusticus upon this occasion; and might moreover have added to it the commendation of his civility and courtesy, that would not interrupt the current of his declamation. But I doubt whether any one can commend his prudence; for receiving unexpected letters, and especially from an emperor, it might have fallen out that the deferring to

* Of Curiosity, c. 14.
read them might have been of great prejudice. The vice opposite to curiosity is negligence, to which I naturally incline, and wherein I have seen some men so extreme that one might have found letters sent them three or four days before, still sealed up in their pockets.

I never open any letters directed to another, not only those intrusted with me, but even such as fortune has guided to my hand; and am angry with myself if my eyes unawares steal any contents of letters of importance he is reading when I stand near a great man. Never was man less inquisitive or less prying into other men’s affairs than I.

In our father’s days, Monsieur de Boutières had like to have lost Turin from having, while engaged in good company at supper, delayed to read information that was sent him of the treason plotted against that city where he commanded. And this very Plutarch* has given me to understand, that Julius Cæsar had preserved himself, if, going to the senate the day he was assassinated by the conspirators, he had read a note which was presented to him by the way. He tells also† the story of Archias, the tyrant of Thebes, that the night before the execution of the design Pelopidas had plotted to kill him to restore his country to liberty, he had a full account sent him in writing by another Archias, an Athenian, of the whole conspiracy, and that, this packet having been delivered to him while he sat at supper, he deferred the opening of it, saying, which afterward turned to a proverb in Greece, “To-morrow is a new day.” ‡

A wise man may, I think, out of respect to another, as not to disturb the company, as Rusticus did, or not to break off another affair of importance in hand, defer to read or hear any new thing that is brought him; but for his own interest or particular pleasure, especially if he be a public minister, that he will not interrupt his dinner or break his sleep is inexcusable. And there was ancietly at Rome, the consular place, § as they called it, which was the most honor-

* Life of Cæsar, c. 17.
† In his Treatise on the Demon of Socrates, c. 27.
‡ So in Cotton and in Coste. The French is “à demain les affaires;” business to-morrow.
§ Plutarch, Table Talk, i. 3, 2.
able at the table, as being a place of most liberty, and of more convenient access to those who came in to speak to the person seated there; by which it appears, that being at meat, they did not totally abandon the concern of other affairs and incidents. But when all is said, it is very hard in human actions to give so exact a rule upon moral reasons, that fortune will not therein maintain her own right.

CHAPTER V.

OF CONSCIENCE.

The Sieur de la Bransse, my brother and I, traveling one day together during the time of our civil wars, met a gentleman of good fashion. He was of the contrary party, though I did not know so much, for he pretended otherwise: and the mischief on’t is, that in this sort of war the cards are so shuffled, your enemy not being distinguished from yourself by any apparent mark either of language or habit, and being nourished under the same law, air and manners, it is very hard to avoid disorder and confusion. This made me afraid myself of meeting any of our troops in a place where I was not known, that I might not be in fear to tell my name, and peradventure of something worse; as it had befallen me before, where, by such a mistake, I lost both men and horses, and among others an Italian gentleman my page, whom I bred with the greatest care and affection, was miserably slain, in whom a youth of great promise and expectation was extinguished. But the gentleman my brother and I met had so desperate, half-dead a fear upon him at meeting with any horse, or passing by any of the towns that held for the king, that I at last discovered it to be alarms of conscience. It seemed to the poor man as if through his visor and the crosses upon his cassock, one would have penetrated into his bosom and read the most secret intentions of his heart; so wonderful is the power of conscience. It makes us betray, accuse and fight against ourselves, and for want of other witnesses, to give evidence against ourselves.

"Occultum quatiens animo tortore flagellum."*
This story is in every child's mouth: Bessus the Pæonian, being reproached for wantonly pulling down a nest of young sparrows and killing them, replied, that he had reason to do so, seeing that those little birds never ceased falsely to accuse him of the murder of his father. This parricide had till then been concealed and unknown, but the revenging fury of conscience caused it be to discovered by him himself, who was to suffer for it. Hesiod corrects the saying of Plato, that punishment closely follows sin, it being as he says, born at the same time with it. Whoever expects punishment already suffers it, and whoever has deserved it expects it. Wickedness contrives torments against itself:

"Malum consilium, consultori pessimum:" §
as the wasp stings and hurts another, but most of all itself, for it there loses its sting and its use forever,

"Vitasque in vulnere ponunt." ||

Cantliarides have somewhere about them, by a contrariety of nature, a counterpoison against their poison. In like manner, at the same time that men take delight in vice, there springs in the conscience a displeasure that afflicts us sleeping and waking with various tormenting imaginations:

"Quippe ubi se multi, per somnia sæpe loquentes, Aut morbo delirantes, protraxe ferantur, Et celata diu in medium peccata dedisse." **

Apollodorus dreamed that he saw himself flayed by the Scythians and afterward boiled in a caldron, and that his heart muttered these words: "I am the cause of all these mischiefs that have befallen thee." ¶¶ Epicurus said that

* Plutarch on Divine Justice, c. viii. 9.  † Ibid.
† Seneca, Ep., 105, at the end.
§ "Ill designs are worst to the contriver."—Apud Aul. Gellium, iv. 5.
|| "And leave their own lives in the wound."—Virgil, Geo., iv. 238.
¶ Plutarch on Divine Justice, c. ix.

**"The guilty often, by talking in their sleep or raving in a fever reveal sins long concealed."—Lucretius, v. 1157.

¶¶ "Apollodorus was tyrant of Cassandria, in Macedonia."—Plutarch ubi supra, c. 9: Polyænus, iv. 6, 18.
no hiding hole could conceal the wicked, since they could never assure themselves of being hid while their conscience discovered them to themselves.*

"Prima est nesc ultio, quod se
Judice nemo nocens absolvitur." †

As an ill conscience fills us with fear, so a good one gives us greater confidence and assurance; and I can truly say that I have gone through several hazards with a more steady pace in consideration of the secret knowledge I had of my own will and the innocence of my intentions.

"Conscia mens ut quicquid sua est, ita concipit intra
Pectora pro facto semperque metumque suo." ‡

Of this are a thousand examples; but it will be enough to instance three of one and the same person. Scipio, being one day accused before the people of Rome of some crimes of a very high nature, instead of excusing himself or flattering his judges: "It will become you well," said he, "to sit in judgment upon a head, by whose means you have the power to judge all the world." § Another time all the answer he gave to several impeachments brought against him by a tribune of the people, instead of making his defense: "Let us go, citizens," said he, "let us go render thanks to the gods for the victory they gave me over the Carthaginians as this day," || and advancing himself before toward the temple, he had presently all the assembly and his very accuser himself following at his heels. And Petilius, having been set on by Cato to demand an account of the money that had passed through his hands in the province of Antioch, Scipio being come into the senate to that purpose, produced a book from under his robe, wherein he told them was an exact account of his receipts and disbursements; but being required to deliver

* Seneca, Ep., 97.
† "'Tis the first punishment of sin that no man absolves himself." —Juvenal, xiii. 2.
‡ "As a man's conscience is, so within hope or fear prevails, suiting to his design." —Ovid, Fast., i. 485.
§ Plutarch, How Far a Man may Praise Himself; c. 5.
|| Valerius Maximus, iii. 7.
it to the prothonotary to be examined, he refused, saying, he would not do himself so great a disgrace; and in the presence of the whole senate tore the book with his own hands to pieces.* I do not believe that the most seared conscience could have counterfeited so great an assurance. He had naturally too high a spirit and was accustomed to too high a fortune, says Titius Livius, to know how to be criminal, and to lower himself to the meanness of defending his innocence. The putting men to the rack is a dangerous invention, and seems to be rather a trial of patience than of truth. Both he who has the fortitude to endure it conceals the truth, and he who has not; for why should pain sooner make me confess what really is, than force me to say what is not? And, on the contrary, if he who is not guilty of that whereof he is accused, has the courage to undergo those torments, why should not he who is guilty have the same, so fair a reward as life being in his prospect? I believe the ground of this invention proceeds from the consideration of the force of conscience: for, to the guilty, it seems to assist the rack to make him confess his fault, and to shake his resolution; and, on the other side, that it fortifies the innocent against the torture. But when all is done 'tis, in plain truth, a trial full of uncertainty and danger: what would not a man say, what would not a man do, to avoid so intolerable torments?

"Etiam innocentes cogit mentiri dolor."†

Whence it comes to pass, that him whom the judge has racked that he may not die innocent, he makes him die both innocent and racked. A thousand and a thousand have charged their own heads by false confessions, among whom I place Philotas, considering the circumstances of the trial Alexander put upon him and the progress of his torture.‡ But so it is that some say it is the least evil human weakness could invent; very inhumanly, notwithstanding, and to very little purpose, in my opinion.

* Livy, xxxviii. 54, 55.
† "Pain will make the most innocent lie."—Publius Syrus, De Delore.
‡ Quintus Curtius, vi. 7.
Many nations less barbarous in this than the Greeks and Romans who call them so, repute it horrible and cruel to torment and pull a man to pieces for a fault of which they are yet in doubt. How can he help your ignorance? Are not you unjust, that, not to kill him without cause, do worse than kill him? And that this is so, do but observe how often men prefer to die without reason than undergo this examination, more painful than execution itself; and that oft times by its extremity anticipates execution, and performs it. I know not where I had this story: * but it exactly matches the conscience of our justice in this particular. A country-woman, to a general of a very severe discipline, † accused one of his soldiers that he had taken from her children the little soup meat she had left to nourish them withal, the army having consumed all the rest; but of this proof there was none. The general, after having cautioned the woman to take good heed to what she said, for that she would make herself guilty of a false accusation if she told a lie, and she persisting, he presently caused the soldier’s belly to be ripped up to clear the truth of the fact, and the woman was found to be in the right. An instructive sentence.

CHAPTER VI.

USE MAKES PERFECT.

’Tis not to be expected that argument and instruction, though we never so voluntarily surrender our belief to what is read to us, should be of force to lead us on so far as to action, if we do not, over and above, exercise and form the soul by experience to the course for which we design it; it will, otherwise, doubtless find itself at a loss when it comes to the pinch of the business. This is the reason, why those among the philosophers who were ambitious to attain to a greater excellence, were not contented to await the severities of fortune in the retirement and repose of their own habitations, lest she should have surprised them raw and inexpert in the combat, but sallied out to meet her, and purposely threw themselves into the

* It is in Froissart, vol. iv. c. 87.
† Bajazet, i.
proof and difficulties. Some of them abandoned riches to exercise themselves in a voluntary poverty; others sought out labor and an austerity of life, to inure them to hardships and inconveniences; others have deprived themselves of their dearest members, as of sight, and of the instruments of generation, lest their too delightful and effeminate service should soften and debauch the stability of their souls.

But in dying, which is the greatest work we have to do, practice can give us no assistance at all. A man may by custom fortify himself against pain, shame, necessity, and such like accidents, but, as to death, we can experiment it but once, and are all apprentices when we come to it. There have, anciently, been men so excellent managers of their time that they have tried, even in death itself, to relish and taste it, and who have bent their utmost faculties of mind to discover what this passage is, but they are none of them come back to tell us the news:

"Nemo expergitus exstat,
Frigida quem semel est vitai posa sequuta." *

Canius Julius, † a noble Roman, of singular constancy and virtue, having been condemned to die by that scoundrel Caligula, besides many marvelous testimonies that he gave of his resolution, as he was just going to receive the stroke of the executioner, was asked by a philosopher, a friend of his: "Well, Canius, whereabout is your soul now? what is she doing? What are you thinking of?" "I was thinking," replied the other, "to keep myself ready, and the faculties of my mind full settled and fixed, to try if in this short and quick instant of death, I could perceive the motion of the soul when she parts from the body, and whether she has any sentiment at the separation that I may after come again, if I can, to acquaint my friends with it." This man philosophizes not unto death only, but in death itself. What a strange assurance was this, and what bravery of courage, to desire his death should be a lesson to him, and to have leisure to think of other things in so great an affair?

* "No one was ever known to wake who has once fallen into the cold sleep of death."—Lucretius, iii. 942.
† See Seneca, De Tranquillitate Animi, c. 14.
"Jus hoc animi morientis habebat." *

And yet I fancy, there is a certain way of making it familiar to us, and in some sort of making trial what it is. We may gain experience, if not entire and perfect, yet such, at least, as shall not be totally useless to us, and that may render us more confident and more assured. If we cannot overtake it, we may approach it and view it, and if we do not advance so far as the fort, we may at least discover and make ourselves acquainted with the avenues. It is not without reason that we are taught to consider sleep as a resemblance of death; with how great facility do we pass from waking to sleeping, and with how little concern do we lose the knowledge of light and of ourselves. Peradventure, the faculty of sleeping would seem useless and contrary to nature, since it deprives us of all action and sentiment, were it not that by it nature instructs us that she has equally made us to die as to live; and in life presents to us the eternal state she reserves for us after it, to accustom us to it and to take from us the fear of it. But such as have by some violent accident fallen into a swoon, and in it have lost all sense, these, methinks, have been very near seeing the true and natural face of death; for as to the moment of the passage, it is not to be feared that it brings with it any pain or displeasure, forasmuch as we can have no feeling without leisure; our sufferings require time, which in death is so short and so precipitous, that it must necessarily be insensible. They are the approaches that we are to fear, and these may fall within the limits of experience.

Many things seem greater by imagination than they are in effect; I have passed a good part of my life in a perfect and entire health; I say, not only entire, but, moreover, sprightly and wanton. This state, so full of verdure, jollity, and vigor, made the consideration of sickness so formidable to me, that when I came to experience it, I found the attacks faint and easy in comparison with what I had apprehended. Of this I have daily experience; if I am under the shelter of a warm room, in a stormy and tempestuous night, I wonder how people can live abroad, and am afflicted for those who are out in the fields; if I am there myself, I do not wish to be anywhere else. This

* "This mighty power of mind he had dying."—Lucan, viii. 636.
one thing of being always shut up in a chamber I fancied insupportable; but I was presently inured to be so impris-
oned a week, nay a month together, in a very weak, disor-
dered, and sad condition: and I have found that, in the
time of my health, I much more pitied the sick, than I
think myself to be pitied when I am so, and that the force
of my imagination enhances near one-half of the essence
and reality of the thing. I hope that when I come to die
I shall find it the same, and that, after all, it is not worth
the pains I take, so much preparation and so much assis-
tance as I call in, to undergo the stroke. But at all events,
we cannot give ourselves too much advantage.

In the time of our third, or second troubles (I do not
well remember which), going one day abroad to take the
air, about a league from my own house, which is seated in
the very center of all the bustle and mischief of the late
civil wars in France; thinking myself in all security and
so near to my retreat that I stood in need of no better
equipage, I had taken a horse that went very easy upon
his pace, but was not very strong. Being upon my return
home, a sudden occasion falling out to make use of this
horse in a kind of service that he was not accustomed to,
one of my train, a lusty, tall fellow, mounted upon a strong
German horse that had a very ill mouth, fresh and
vigorously, to play the brave and set on ahead of his fellows,
comes thundering full speed in the very track where I was,
rushing like a Colossus upon the little man and the little
horse, with such a career of strength and weight, that he
turned us both over and over, topsy-turvy with our heels
in the air; so that there lay the horse overthrown and
stunned with the fall, and I ten or twelve paces from him
stretched out at length, with my face all battered and
broken, my sword which I had had in my hand, above ten
paces beyond that, and my belt broken all to pieces, with-
out motion or sense any more than a stock. 'Twas the only
swoon I was ever in till that hour in my life. Those who
were with me, after having used all the means they could
to bring me to myself, concluding me dead, took me up
in their arms, and carried me with very much difficulty
home to my house, which was about half a French league
from thence. On the way, having been for more than two
hours given over for a dead man, I began to move and to
fetch my breath; for so great abundance of blood was
fallen into my stomach, that nature had need to rouse her forces to discharge it. They then raised me upon my feet, where I threw off a whole bucket of clots of blood, as this I did also several times by the way. This gave me so much ease, that I began to recover a little life, but so leisurely and by so small advances, that my first sentiments were much nearer the approaches of death than life:

"Perche, dubiosa ancor del suo ritorno,  
Non s'assicura attonita la mente." *

The remembrance of his accident, which is very well imprinted in my memory, so naturally representing to me the image and idea of death, has in some sort reconciled me to that untoward adventure. When I first began to open my eyes, it was with so perplexed, so weak and dead a sight, that I could yet distinguish nothing but only discern the light.

"Come quel ch'or apre, or'chiude  
Gli occhi, mezzo tra'l sonno è l'esser desto." †

As to the functions of the soul, they advanced with the same pace and measure with those of the body. I saw myself all bloody, my doublet being stained all over with the blood I had vomited. The first thought that came into my mind was, that I had a harquebus shot in my head, and, indeed, at the time there were a great many fired round about us. Methought my life but just hung upon my lips: and I shut my eyes, to help, methought, to thrust it out, and took a pleasure in languishing and letting myself go. It was an imagination that only superficially floated upon my soul, as tender and weak as all the rest, but really, not only exempt from anything displeasing, but mixed with that sweetness that people feel when they glide into a slumber.

I believe it is the very same condition those people are in, whom we see swoon with weakness in the agony of death; I am of opinion that we pity them without

* "For the soul doubtful as to its return, could not compose itself."—Tasso, Gerso, lib. xii. 74.

† "A man now opening, now shutting his eyes, between sleep and waking." Idem Ibid., viii. 26.
cause, supposing them agitated with grievous dolors, or that their souls suffer under painful thoughts. It has ever been my belief, contrary to the opinion of many, and particularly of La Boetie, that those whom we see so subdued and stupefied at the approaches of their end, or oppressed with the length of the disease, or by accident of an apoplexy of falling sickness,

"Vi morbi sepe coactus
Ante oculos aliquis nostros, ut fulminis ictu,
Concidit, et spumas agit; ingemit, et fremit artus;
Desipit, extentat nervos, torquetur, anhelat.
Inconstanter et in jactando membra fatigat;" *

or hurt in the head, whom we hear to mutter, and by fits to utter grievous groans; though we gather from these signs by which it seems as if they had some remains of consciousness, and that there are movements of the body;

I have always believed, I say both the body and the soul benumbed and asleep,

"Vivet, et est vitae nescius ipse suae," †

and could not believe that in so great a stupefaction of the members and so great a defection of the senses, the soul could maintain any force within to take cognizance of herself, and that, therefore, they had no tormenting reflections to make them consider and be sensible of the misery of their condition, and consequently were not much to be pitied.

I can, for my part, think of no state so insupportable and dreadful, as to have the soul vivid and afflicted, without means to declare itself; as one should say of such as are sent to execution with their tongues first cut out (were it not that in this kind of dying, the most silent seems to me the most graceful, if accompanied with a grave and constant countenance); or of those miserable prisoners, who fall into the hands of the base hangman soldiers of this age, by whom they are tormented with all sorts of inhuman usage to compel them to some excessive and impossi-

*"Compelled by the force of disease, we often see men as thunder struck, fall, groan, and foam, tremble, stretch, writhe, breathe short, and in strugglings tire out their strength."—Lucretius, iii. 485.

† "He lives, but does not know that he is alive."—Ovid, Trist. i. 3, 12.
ble rason; kept, in the meantime, in such condition and place, where they have no means of expressing or signifying their thoughts and their misery. The poets have feigned some gods who favor the deliverance of such as suffer under a languishing death;

"Hunc ego Diti
Sacrum jussa fero, teque isto corpore solvo;" *

both the interrupted words, and the short and irregular answers one gets from them sometimes, by bawling and keeping a clutter about them; or the motions which seem to yield some consent to what we would have them do, are no testimony, nevertheless, that they live, an entire life at least. So it happens to us in the yawning of sleep, before it has fully possessed us, to perceive, as in a dream, what is done about us, and to follow the last things that are said with a perplexed and uncertain hearing which seems but to touch upon the borders of the soul; and make answers to the last words that have been spoken to us, which have more in them of chance than sense.

Now seeing I have in effect tried it, I have no doubt but I have hitherto made a right judgment; for first, being in a swoon, I labored to rip open the buttons of my doublet with my nails, for my sword was gone; and yet I felt nothing in my imagination that hurt me; for we have many motions in us that do not proceed from our direction;

"Semianimesque micant digiti, ferrumque retractant;" †

so falling people extend their arms before them by a natural impulse, which prompts our limbs to offices and motions without any commission from our reason.

' Falciferos memorant currus abscondere membra
Ut tremere in terra, videatur ab artibus id quod
Decidit abscessum; cum mens tanen atque hominis vis,
Mobilitate mali, non quit sentire dolorem.' ‡

* "I by command offer to Pluto this, and from that body dismiss the soul."—Æneid, iv. 702.

† "Half-dead fingers grope about, and seek to grasp again the sword—." Idem, x. 396.

‡ "They tell how limbs by scythe-bearing chariots are lopped off, but yet move and tremble on the ground; and yet the mind of him from whom the limb is taken, by the swiftness of the blow feels no pain."—Lucretius, iii. 642.
My stomach was so oppressed with the coagulated blood, that my hands moved to that part, of their own voluntary motion, as they frequently do to the part that itches, without being directed by our will. There are several animals, and even men, in whom one may perceive the muscles to stir and tremble after they are dead. Every one experimentally knows, that there are some members, which grow stiff and flag without his leave. Now, those passions which only touch the outward bark of us, cannot be said to be ours: to make them so, there must be a concurrence of the whole man; and the pains which are felt by the hand or the foot while we are sleeping, are none of ours.

As I drew near my own house, where the alarm of my fall was already got before me, and that my family were come out to meet me, with the hubbub usual in such cases, not only did I make some little answer to some questions which were asked me, but they moreover tell me, that I was sufficiently collected to order them to bring a horse to my wife whom I saw struggling and tiring herself on the road, which is hilly and rugged.* This consideration should seem to proceed from a soul that retained its functions; but it was nothing so with me. I knew not what I said or did, and they were nothing but idle thoughts in the clouds, that were stirred up by the senses of the eyes and ears, and proceeded not from me. I knew not for all that, whence I came or whither I went, neither was I capable to weigh and consider what was said to me: these were light effects, that the senses produced of themselves as of custom; what the soul contributed was in a dream, lightly touched, licked and bedewed by the soft impression of the senses. Notwithstanding, my condition was, in truth, very easy and quiet; I had no affliction upon me, either for others or myself; it was an extreme languor and weakness, without any manner of pain. I saw my own house, but knew it not. When they had put me to bed I found an inexpressible sweetness in that repose; for I had been desperately tugged and lugged by those poor

* Which Cotton thus singularly renders: "I had so much sense, as to order that a horse I saw trip and falter in the way, which is mountainous and uneasy, should be given to my wife." And he is followed by Coste.
people who had taken the pains to carry me upon their arms a very great and a very rough way, and had in so doing all quite tired out themselves, twice or thrice one after another. They offered me several remedies, but I would take none, certainly believing that I was mortally wounded in the head. And, in earnest, it had been a very happy death, for the weakness of my understanding deprived me of the faculty of discerning, and that of my body of the sense of feeling; I was suffering myself to glide away so sweetly and after so soft and easy a manner, that I scarce find any other action less troublesome than that was. But when I came again to myself and to resume my faculties,

"Ut tandem sensus convalure mei," *

which was two or three hours after, I felt myself on a sudden involved in terrible pain, having my limbs battered and ground with my fall, and was so ill for two or three nights after, that I thought I was once more dying again, but a more painful death, having concluded myself as good as dead before, and to this hour am sensible of the bruises of that terrible shock. I will not here omit, that the last thing I could make them beat into my head, was the memory of this accident, and I had it over and over again repeated to me, whither I was going, from whence I came, and at what time of the day this mischance befell me, before I could comprehend it. As to the manner of my fall, that was concealed from me in favor to him who had been the occasion, and other flim-flams were invented. But a long time after, and the very next day that my memory began to return and to represent to me the state wherein I was, at the instant that I perceived this horse coming full drive upon me (for I had seen him at my heels, and gave myself for gone, but this thought had been so sudden, that fear had had no leisure to introduce itself) it seemed to me like a flash of lightning that had pierced my soul, and that I came from the other world.

This long story of so light an accident would appear vain enough, were it not for the knowledge I have gained by it for my own use; for I do really find, that to get

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* "When at length my lost senses again returned."—Ovid, Trist., i. 3, 14.
acquainted with death, needs no more but nearly to approach it. Every one, as Pliny says, * is a good doctrine to himself, provided he be capable of discovering himself near at hand. Here, this is not my doctrine, 'tis my study; and is not the lesson of another, but my own; and if I communicate it, it ought not to be ill taken, for that which is of use to me, may also, peradventure, be useful to another. As to the rest, I spoil nothing, I make use of nothing but my own; and if I play the fool, 'tis at my own expense and nobody else is concerned in't; for 'tis a folly that will die with me, and that no one is to inherit. We hear but two or three of the ancients, † who have beaten this road, and yet I cannot say if it was after this manner, knowing no more of them but their names. No one since has followed the track; 'tis a rugged road, more so than it seems, to follow a pace so rambling and uncertain, as that of the soul; to penetrate the dark profundities of its intricate internal windings; to choose and lay hold of so many little nimble motions; 'tis a new and extraordinary undertaking, and that withdraws us from the common and most recommended employments of the world. "Tis now many years since that my thoughts have had no other aim and level than myself, and that I have only pried into and studied myself: or, if I study any other thing, 'tis to apply it to or rather in myself. And yet I do not think it a fault, if, as others do by other much less profitable sciences, I communicate what I have learned in this, though I am not very well pleased with my own progress. There is no description so difficult, nor doubtless of so great utility, as that of a man's self and withal, a man must curl his hair and set out and adjust himself, to appear in public; now I am perpetually tricking myself out, for I am eternally upon my own description. Custom has made all speaking of a man's self vicious, and positively interdicts it, in hatred to the boasting that seems inseparable from the testimony men give of themselves:


† As Archilochus and Alcæus among the Greeks, and Lucullus among the Romans.—Coste.
Instead of blowing the child's nose, this is to take his nose off altogether. I think the remedy worse than the disease. But, allowing it to be true that it must of necessity be presumption to entertain people with discourses of one's self, I ought not, pursuing my general design, to forbear an action that publishes this infirmity of mine, nor conceal the fault which I not only practice but profess. Notwithstanding, to speak my thought freely, I think that the custom of condemning wine, because some people will be drunk, is itself to be condemned; a man cannot abuse anything but what is good in itself; and I believe that this rule has only regard to the popular vice. They are bits for calves, with which neither the saints whom we hear speak so highly of themselves, nor the philosophers, nor the divines, will be curbed; neither will I, who am as little the one as the other. If they do not write of it expressly, at all events, when the occasions arise, they don't hesitate to put themselves on the public highway. Of what does Socrates treat more largely than of himself? To what does he more direct and address the discourses of his disciples, than to speak of themselves, not of the lesson in their book, but of the essence and motion of their souls? We confess ourselves religiously to God and our confessor; as our neighbors do to all the people. But some will answer that we there speak nothing but accusation against ourselves; why then, we say all; for our very virtue itself is faulty and penitable. My trade and art is to live; he that forbids me to speak according to my own sense, experience, and practice, may as well enjoin an architect not to speak of building according to his own knowledge, but according to that of his neighbor; according to the knowledge of another, and not according to his own. If it be vainglory for a man to publish his own virtues, why does not Cicero prefer the eloquence of Hortensius, and Hortensius that of Cicero? Peradventure they mean, that I should give testimony of myself by works and effects, not barely by words. I chiefly paint

* "The avoiding a mere fault often leads us into a greater."—Horace, De arte poetica, verse 31.

† The Protestants.
my thoughts, a subject void of form and incapable of operative production; 'tis all that I can do to couch it in this airy body of the voice; the wisest and devoutest men have lived in the greatest care to avoid all apparent effects. Effects would more speak of fortune than of me; they manifest their own office and not mine, but uncertainly and by conjecture; patterns of some one particular virtue. I expose myself entire; 'tis a body where, at one view, the veins, muscles, and tendons are apparent, every one of them in its proper place; here the effect of a cold; there of the heart beating, very dubiously. I do not write my own acts, but myself and my essence.

I am of opinion that a man must be very cautious how he values himself, and equally conscientious to give a true report, be it better or worse, impartially. If I thought myself perfectly good and wise, I would rattle it out to some purpose. To speak less of one's self than what one really is, is folly, not modesty; and to take that for current pay, which is under a man's value, is pusillanimity and cowardice, according to Aristotle.* No virtue assists itself with falsehood; truth is never a matter of error. To speak more of one's self than is really true, is not always mere presumption; 'tis, moreover, very often folly; to be immeasurably pleased with what one is, and to fall into an indiscreet self-love, is in my opinion the substance of this vice. The most sovereign remedy to cure it, is to do quite contrary to what these people direct who, in forbidding men to speak of themselves, consequently, at the same time, interdict thinking of themselves too. Pride dwells in the thought; the tongue can have but a very little share in it.

They fancy that to think of one's self is to be delighted with one's self; to frequent and converse with one's self, to be over-indulgent; but this excess springs only in those who take but a superficial view of themselves, and dedicate their main inspection in their affairs; who call it mere reverie and idleness to occupy one's self with one's self and the building one's self up a mere building of castles in the air; who look upon themselves as a third person only, a stranger. If any one be in rapture with his own knowledge looking only on those below him, let him but turn his eye

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upward toward past ages, and his pride will be abated, when he shall there find so many thousand wits that trample him under foot. If he enter into a flattering presumption of his personal valor, let him but recollect the lives of Scipio, Epaminondas; so many armies, so many nations, that leave him so far behind them. No particular quality can make any one proud, that will at the same time put the many other weak and imperfect ones he has in the other scale, and the nothingness of human condition to make up the weight. Because Socrates had alone digested to purpose the precept of his god, "to know himself," and by that study arrived at the perfection of setting himself at naught, he only was reputed worthy the title of a sage. Whosoever shall so know himself, let him boldly speak it out.

CHAPTER VII.

OF JUDGING OF THE DEATH OF ANOTHER.

When we judge of another's assurance in death, which, without doubt, is the most remarkable action of human life, we are to take heed of one thing, which is that men very hardly believe themselves to have arrived to that period. Few men come to die in the opinion that it is their latest hour; and there is nothing wherein the flattery of hope more deludes us; it never ceases to whisper in our ears, "others have been much sicker without dying; your condition is not so desperate as 'tis thought; and, at the worst, God has done other miracles." Which happens by reason that we set too much value upon ourselves; it seems as if the universality of things were in some measure to suffer by our dissolution, and that it commiserates our condition, forasmuch as our disturbed sight represents things to itself erroneously, and that we are of opinion they stand in as much need of us as we do of them, like people at sea, to whom mountains, fields, cities, heaven and earth are tossed at the same rate as they are:

"Provehimur portu, terræque urbesque recedunt:"

Whoever saw old age that did not applaud the past and

* "We sail out of port, and cities and lands recede."—Æneid, iii. 72.
condemn the present time, laying the fault of his misery and discontent upon the world and the manners of men?

"Jamque caput quassans, grandis suspirat arator . . .
Et cum tempora temporibus presentia confert
Præteritis; laudat fortunas sæpe parentis,
Et crepat antiquum genus ut pietate reple tum." *

We will make all things go along with us; whence it follows that we consider our death as a very great thing, and that does not so easily pass, nor without the solemn consultation of the stars: "tot circa unum caput tumultuantes deos," † and so much the more think it, as we more value ourselves. "What, shall so much knowledge be lost, with so much damage to the world, without a particular concern of the destinies? Does so rare and exemplary a soul cost no more the killing than one that is common and of no use to the public? This life, that protects so many others, upon which so many others lives depend, that employs so vast a number of men in his service, that fills so many places, shall it drop off like one that hangs but by its own simple thread?" None of us lays it enough to heart, that he is but one: thence proceeded those words of Cæsar to his pilot, more tumid than the sea that threatened him:

"Italian si coelo auctore, recusas,
Me, pete: sola tibi causa hæc est justa timoris,
Vectorem non nosce tuum; perrumpe procellas,
Tutela secure mei." ‡

And these,

"Credit jam digna periculær Caesar
Fatis esse suis; tantusque evertere, dixit

* "Now the old plowman sighs and shakes his head, and compares present times with those that are past; he lands his predecessors' happiness, and talks of the great piety of the old race."—Lucretius, ii. 1165.

† "All the gods in agitation about one man."—Seneca, Sueton, i. 4.

‡ "If you decline to sail to Italy under the gods' protection, trust to mine; the only just cause that you have to fear is, that you do not know your passenger; sail on, secure in my guardianship."—Lucan, v. 579.
Me superis labor est, parva quem puppesedentem,
Tam magno petiere mari; *

and that idle fancy of the public, that the sun bore on his face mourning for his death a whole year:

"Ille etiam extincto miseratus Cæsare Romam,
Cumcaput obscura nitidum ferrugine texit: †

and a thousand of the like, wherewith the world suffers itself to be so easily imposed upon, believing that our interests affect the heavens, and that their infinity is concerned at our ordinary actions. "Non tanta ccelo societas nobiscum est, ut nostro fato mortalis sit ille quoque siderum fulgor." ‡

Now, to judge of constancy and resolution in a man who does not yet believe himself to be certainly in danger, though he really is, is not reason; and 'tis not enough that he die in this posture, unless he purposely put himself into it for this effect. It commonly falls out in most men that they set a good face upon the matter and speak with great indifference, to acquire reputation, which they hope afterward, living, to enjoy. Of all whom I have seen die, fortune has disposed their countenances and no design of theirs; and even of those who in ancient times have made away with themselves, there is much to be considered whether it were a sudden or a lingering death. That cruel Roman emperor would say of his prisoners, that he would make them feel death, and if any one killed himself in prison, "that fellow has made an escape from me;" he would spin out death and make it felt by torments.

"Vidimus et toto quamvis in corporo caeso
Nil animæ lethale datum, moremque nefandæ,
Durum sævitæ, pereuntis parcere morti." §

* "Cæsar now deemed these dangers worthy of his destiny; 'What!' said he, 'is it for the gods so great a task to overthrow me, that they must be fain to assail me with great seas in a poor little bark.'"—Lucan, v. 653.

† "Cæsar being dead, the sun in mourning clouds, pitying Rome clothed himself."—Virgil, Georg., i. 466.

‡ "There is no such alliance between us and heaven, than the brightness of the stars should be made mortal by our death."—Pliny, Nat. Hist., ii. 8.

§ "We have seen in tortured bodies, among the wounds, none that have been mortal, inhuman mode of dire cruelty, that means to kill, but will not let men die."—Lucan, iv. i. 78.
In plain truth, it is no such great matter for a man in health and in a temperature state of mind, to resolve to kill himself; it is very easy to brag before one comes to the push, insomuch that Heliogabalus, the most effeminate man in the world, among his lowest sensualities, could forecast to make himself die delicately, when he should be forced thereto; and that his death might not give the lie to the rest of his life, had purposely built a sumptuous tower, the front and base of which were covered with planks enriched with gold and precious stones, thence to precipitate himself; and also caused cords twisted with gold and crimson silk to be made, wherewith to strangle himself; and a sword with the blade of gold to be hammered out to fall upon: and kept poison in vessels of emerald and topaz wherewith to poison himself, according as he should like to choose one of these ways of dying:

"Impiger . . . et fortis virtute coacta." *

Yet in respect of this person, the effeminacy of his preparations makes it more likely that he would have thought better on't, had he been put to the test. But in those who with greater resolution have determined to despatch themselves, we must examine whether it were with one blow which took away the leisure of feeling the effect: for it is to be questioned, whether perceiving life, by little and little, to steal away, the sentiment of the body mixing itself with that of the soul, and the means of repenting being offered, whether, I say, constancy and obstinacy in so dangerous an intention would have been found.

In the civil wars of Caesar, Lucius Domitius, being taken in the Abruzzi, † and thereupon poisoning himself, afterward repented. It has happened in our time, that a certain person being resolved to die and not having gone deep enough at the first thrust, the sensibility of the flesh opposing his arm, gave himself two or three wounds more, but could never prevail upon himself to thrust home. While Plautius Silvanus was upon his trial, Urgulania, his grandmother, sent him a poniard with which, not being

* "Resolute and brave by a forced valor."—Idem, iv. 798.

† La Brasse, which Cotton, or more probably his printer, translates Prussia.
able to kill himself, he made his servants cut his veins.* Albucilla in Tiberius' time having, to kill himself, struck with too much tenderness, gave his adversaries opportunity to imprison and put him to death their own way. † And that great leader, Demosthenes, after his rout in Sicily, did the same; ‡ and C. Fimbria, having struck himself too weakly, entreated his servant to despatch him. On the contrary, Ostorius, who could not make use of his own arm, disdained to employ that of his servant to any other use but only to hold the poniard straight and firm; and running his breast full drive against it, thrust himself through. § "Tis, in truth, a morsel that is to be swallowed without chewing, unless a man be thoroughly resolved; and yet Adrian the emperor caused his physician to mark and encircle on his pap the mortal place where the man who had received orders to that effect was to stab him. For this reason it was that Caesar being asked what death he thought to be the most desired, made answer, "The least premeditated, and the shortest." ¶ If Caesar dared to say it, it is no cowardice in me to believe it. "A short death," says Pliny, ¶ "is the sovereign good hap of human life." People do not much care to recognize it. No one can say that he is resolute for death who fears to deal with it and cannot undergo it with his eyes open: they whom we see in criminal punishments run to their death and hasten and press their execution, do it not out of resolution, but because they will not give themselves leisure to consider it; it does not trouble them to be dead, but to die:

"Emori nolo, sed me esse mortuum, nihil aestimo."**

'tis a degree of constancy to which I have experimented, that I can arrive, like those who plunge into dangers, as into the sea, with their eyes shut.

There is nothing, in my opinion, more illustrious in the life of Socrates, than that he had thirty whole days wherein to ruminate upon the sentence of his death, to have digested

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* Tacitus, Annals, iv. 22. † Idem, ibid., vi. 48. ‡ Plutarch, Life of Nicias, c. 10. § Tacitus, Annals, xvi. 15. ¶ Suetonius, in vita, c. 87. ¶ Nat. Hist., vii. 53.

** "I have no mind to die, but I have no objection to be dead."—EPICARMUS, apud CICERO, Tusc. Quæs., i. 8.
it all that time with a most assured hope, without care, and without alteration, and with a series of words and actions rather careless and indifferent, than any way stirred or discomposed by the weight of such a thought.

That Pomponius Atticus, to whom Cicero writes so often, being sick, caused Agrippa his son-in-law and two or three more of his friends, to be called to him, and told them, that having found all means practiced upon him for his recovery to be in vain, and that all he did to prolong his life, also prolonged and augmented his pain, he was resolved to put an end both to the one and the other, desiring them to approve of his determination, or, at least, not to lose their labor in endeavoring to dissuade him. Now, having chosen to destroy himself by abstinence, his disease was thereby cured: the remedy, that he had made use of to kill himself, restored him to health. His physicians and friends, rejoicing at so happy an event, and coming to congratulate him, found themselves very much deceived, it being impossible for them to make him alter his purpose, he telling them, that as he must one day die, and was now so far on his way, he would save himself the labor of beginning another time. * This man, having surveyed death at leisure, was not only not discouraged at its approach, but eagerly sought it; for being content that he had engaged in the combat, he made it a point of bravery to see the end; 'tis far beyond not fearing death to taste and relish it.

The story of the philosopher Cleanthes is very like this: he had his gums swollen and rotten; his physicians advised him to great abstinence: having fasted two days, he was so much better that they pronounced him cured, and permitted him to return to his ordinary course of diet: he, on the contrary, already tasting some sweetness in this faintness of his, would not be persuaded to go back, but resolved to proceed, and to finish what he had so far advanced. †

Tullius Marcellinus, a young man of Rome, having a mind to anticipate the hour of his destiny, to be rid of a disease that was more trouble to him than he was willing to endure, though his physicians assured him of a certain, though not sudden, cure, called a council of his friends to deliberate about it; of whom, some, says Seneca, gave him

* Neopos, Life of Atticus, c. 22.
† Diogenes Laertius, viii. 176.
the counsel that out of unmanliness they would have taken themselves: others, out of flattery, such as they thought he would best like: but a Stoic said this to him: "Do not concern thyself, Marcellinus, as if thou didst deliberate of a thing of importance; 'tis no great matter to live; thy servants and beasts live: but it is a great thing to die handsomely, wisely and firmly. Do but think how long thou hast done the same things, eat, drink and sleep, drink, sleep and eat: we incessantly wheel in the same circle. Not only ill, and insupportable accidents, but even the satiety of living, inclines a man to desire to die." Marcellinus did not stand in need of a man to advise, but of a man to assist him; his servants were afraid to meddle in the business; but this philosopher gave them to understand that domestics are suspected, even when it is in doubt whether the death of the master were voluntary or no; otherwise, that it would be of as ill example to hinder him, as to kill him, for as much as

"Invitum qui servat, idem facit occidenti."*

He then told Marcellinus, that it would not be unbecoming, as what is left on the tables when we have eaten, is given to the attendants, so, life being ended, to distribute something to those who have been our servants. Now Marcellinus was of a free and liberal spirit; he, therefore, divided a certain sum of money among his servants, and consoled them. As to the rest, he had no need of steel nor of blood; he resolved to go out of this life and not to run out of it; not to escape from death, but to essay it. And to give himself leisure to deal with it, having forsaken all manner of nourishment, the third day following, after having caused himself to be sprinkled with warm water, he fainted by degrees, and not without some kind of pleasure, as he himself declared.†

In fact, such as have been acquainted with these faintings, proceeding from weakness, say that they are therein sensible of no manner of pain, but, rather, feel a kind of delight, as in the passage to sleep and rest. These are studied and digested deaths.

— Horat., De Arte Poet., 467.

† Seneca, Ep., 77.
But to the end that Cato only may furnish out the whole example of virtue, it seems as if his good destiny had put his ill one into the hand with which he gave himself the blow, seeing he had the leisure to confront and struggle with death, reinforcing his courage in the danger, instead of letting it go less. And if I had had to represent him in his supreme station, I should have done it in the posture of tearing out his bloody bowels, rather than with his sword in his hand, as did the statuaries of his time, for this second murder was much more furious than the first.

CHAPTER VIII.

THAT THE MIND HINDERS ITSELF.

’Tis a pleasant imagination to fancy a mind exactly balanced between two equal desires; for, doubtless, it can never pitch upon either, forasmuch as the choice and application would manifest an inequality of esteem; and were we set between the bottle and the ham, with an equal appetite to drink and eat, there would doubtless be no remedy but we must die of thirst and hunger. To provide against this inconvenience, the Stoics,* when they are asked whence the election in the soul of two indifferent things proceeds, and that makes us, out of a great number of crowns, rather take one than another, they being all alike, and there being no reason to incline us to such a preference, make answer, that this movement of the soul is extraordinary and irregular, entering into us by a foreign, accidental, and fortuitous impulse. It might rather, methinks, be said, that nothing presents itself to us wherein there is not some difference, how little soever; and that, either by the sight or touch, there is always some choice, that, though it be imperceptibly, tempts and attracts us; so, whoever shall presuppose a packthread equally strong throughout, it is utterly impossible it should break; for, where will you have the breaking to begin? and that it should break altogether is not in nature. Whoever, also, should hereunto join the geometrical propositions that, by the certainty of their demonstrations, conclude the

* Plutarch, Contradictions of the Stoic Philosophers.
contained to be greater than the containing, the center to be as great as its circumference, and that find out two lines incessantly approaching each other, which yet can never meet, and the philosopher's stone, and the quadrature of the circle, where the reason and the effect are so opposite, might, peradventure, find some argument to second this bold saying of Pliny, "Solum certum nihil esse certi, et homine nihil miserius aut superbius." *

CHAPTER IX.

THAT OUR DESIRES ARE AUGMENTED BY DIFFICULTY.

There is no reason that has not its contrary, says the wisest of the philosophers. I was just now ruminating on the excellent saying one of the ancients alleges for the contempt of life: "No good can bring pleasure, unless it be that for the loss of which we are beforehand prepared;" "In aequo est dolor amissae rei, et timor amittere" † meaning by this that the fruition of life cannot be truly pleasant to us, if we are in fear of losing it. It might, however, be said, on the contrary, that we hug and embrace this good so much the more earnestly, and with so much greater affection, by how much we see it the less assured and fear to have it taken from us: for it is evident, as fire burns with greater fury when cold comes to mix with it, that our will is more obstinate by being opposed:

"Si nunquam Danaen habuisset ahenea turris,
Non esset Danae de Jove facta parens;" ‡

and that there is nothing naturally so contrary to our taste as satiety which proceeds from facility; nor anything that so much whets it, as rarity and difficulty: "Omnium rerum voluptas ipso, quo debet fugare, periculo crescit." §

* "It is only certain that there is nothing certain, and that nothing is more miserable or more proud than man." —Nat Hist., ii. 7.

† "The grief of losing a thing, and the fear of losing it, are equal." —Seneca, Ep., 98.

‡ "If Danae had not had a brazen tower, Danae had never been made a mother by Jove." —Ovid, Amor., ii. 19, 27.

§ "The pleasure of all things increases by the same danger that should deter it." —Seneca, De Benef., vii. 9.
“Galla, nega; satiatur amor, nisi gaudia torment.”*

To keep love in breath, Lycurgus † made a decree that the married people of Lacedæmon should never enjoy one another but by stealth; and that it should be as great a shame to take them in bed together as committing with others. The difficulty of assignations, the danger of surprise, the shame of the morning,

“Et languor, et silentium, . . .
Et latere petitus imo spiritus:” ‡

these are what give the hautgout to the sauce? How many very wantonly pleasant sports spring from the most decent and modest language of the works on love? Pleasure itself seeks to be heightened with pain; it is much sweeter when it smart and has the skin rippled. The courtesan Flora said she never lay with Pompey, but that she made him wear the prints of her teeth.§

“Quod petiere, premunt arcte, faciuntque dolorem
Corporis, et dentes inlidunt sepe labellis . . .
Et stimuli subsunt, qui instigant iedere ad ipsum,
Quodcunque est, rabies unde ille germina surgunt.”||

And so it is in everything: difficulty gives all things their estimation; the people of Ancona, in the Marches†† more readily make their vows to St. James,** and those of Galicia to our Lady of Loretto; they make wonderful to-do at Liége about the baths of Lucca, and in Tuscany about those of Spa:†† there are few Romans seen in the fencing school of Rome, which is full of French. The great Cato also, as

* "Galla, refuse me; love is glutted with joys that are not attended with trouble.”—Martial, iv. 37.
† Plutarch, Life of Lycurgus.
‡ "And languor, and silence, and sighs, coming from the innermost heart.”—Hor., Epod., xi. 9.
§ Plutarch, Life of Pompey, c. 1.
|| "What they have sought they press with such close ardor as to give pain; on the lips fix the teeth, and every kiss indents: urged by latent stimulus the part to wound.”—Lucretius, iv. 1079.
†† Notre Dame de Loretto is a church at Ancona, Italy.
** Of Compostella in Galicia. †† Spa.
much as any of us, nauseated his wife while she was his, and longed for her when in the possession of another. I was fain to turn out into the paddock an old stallion, as he was not to governed when he smelt a mare: the facility presently sated him as toward his own, but toward strange mares, and the first that passed by the pale of his pasture, he would again fall to his importunate neighings and his furious heats as before. Our appetite contemns and passes by what it has in possession, to run after that it has not:

"Transvolat in medio posita, et fugientia captat." *

To forbid us anything is to make us have a mind to’t:

"Nisi tu servare puellam
Incipis, incipiet desinere esse, mea:” †

to give it wholly up to us is to beget in us contempt. Want and abundance fall into the same inconvenience:

"Tibi quod superest, mihi quod desit, dolet.” ‡

Desire and fruition equally afflict us. The rigors of mistresses are troublesome, but facility, to say truth, still more so; forasmuch as discontent and anger spring from the esteem we have of the thing desired, heat and actuate love, but satiety begets disgust; ’tis a blunt, dull, stupid, tired, and slothful passion.

"Si qua volet regnare diu, contemmat amantem.” §

"Contemnite, amantes:
Sic hodie veniet, si qua negatit heri.” ¶

Why did Poppea invent the use of a mask to hide the beauties of her face, but to enhance it to her lovers? ¶

* "He slight her who is close at hand, and runs after her who flees from him.”—Horace, Sat., i. 2, 108.

† "If you do not guard your mistresse, she will soon begin to be no longer mine.”—Ovid, Amor., ii. 19, 47.

‡ "Your superfluities trouble you, and what I want troubles me.”—Terence, Phorm., i. 3, 9.

§ "She who would long retain her power must use her lover ill.”—Ovid, Amor., ii. 19, 33.

¶ "If lovers should affect to slight their mistresses, she that yesterday said nay will to-day come and offer herself.”—Propertius, ii. 14, 19.

Tacitus, Annal., xiii. 45.
Why have they veiled, even below the heels, those beauties that every one desires to show, and that every one desires to see? Who do they cover with so many hindrances, one over another, the parts where our desires and their own have their principal seat? And to what serve those great bastion farthingales, with which our ladies fortify their haunches, but to allure our appetite, and to draw us on by removing them farther from us?

“Et fugit ad salices, et se cupid ante videri.” *

“Interdum tunica duxit operta moram.” †

To what use serves the artifice of this virgin modesty, this grave coldness, this severe countenance, this professing to be ignorant of things, that they know better than we who instruct them in them, but to increase in us the desire to overcome, control, and trample under foot at pleasure, all this ceremony and all these obstacles? For there is not only pleasure, but, moreover, glory, in conquering and debauching that soft sweetness and that childish modesty, and to reduce a cold and matron-like gravity to the mercy of our ardent desires: 'tis a glory, say they, to triumph over modesty, chastity, and temperance; and whoever dissuades ladies from those qualities, betrays both them and himself. We are to believe that their hearts tremble with affright, that the very sound of our words offends the purity of their ears, that they hate us for talking so, and only yield to our importunity by a compulsive force. Beauty, all powerful as it is, has not wherewithal to make itself relished without the mediation of these little arts. Look into Italy, where there is the most and the finest beauty to be sold, how it is, nevertheless, necessitated to have recourse to extrinsic means and other artifices to render itself charming, and yet, in truth, whatever it may do, being venal and public, it remains feeble and languishing; even as in virtue itself, of two like effects, we notwithstanding, look upon that as the fairest and most worthy, wherein the most trouble and hazard are set before us.

'Tis an effect of the divine Providence to suffer the holy Church to be afflicted, as we see it, with so many storms

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* "She flies to the osiers, but first takes care to be seen going there."—Virgil, *Eclog.*, iii. 65.

† "The hidden robe sometimes checks love."—Propertius, *Sat.*, i. 15, 6.
and troubles, by this opposition to rouse pious souls, and
to awaken them from that drowsy lethargy wherein, by so
long tranquillity, they had been immersed. If we should
lay the loss we have sustained in the number of those who
have gone astray, in the balance against the benefit we
have had by being again put in breath, and by having our
zeal and strength revived by reason of this opposition, I
know not whether the utility would not surmount the
damage.

We have thought to tie the nuptial knot of our mar-
rriages more fast and firm by having taken away all means
of dissolving it; but the knot of the will and affection is
so much the more slackened and made loose, by how much
that of constraint is drawn closer; and, on the contrary,
that which kept the marriages at Rome so long in honor
and inviolate, was the liberty every one who so desired had
to break them; they kept their wives the better, because
they might part with them if they would; and, in the full
liberty of divorce, five hundred years and more passed away
before any one made use on't.*

"Quod licet, ingratum est; quod non licet, acirius urit." †

We might here introduce the opinion of an ancient upon
this occasion, "that executions rather whet than dull the
edge of vices: that they do not beget the care of doing
well, that being the work of reason and discipline but only
a care not to be taken in doing ill:"

"Latius excisae pestis contagia serpunt." ‡

I do not know that this is true; but I experimentally
know, that never civil government was by that mean
reformed; the order and regimen of manners depend upon
some other expedient.

* "Il se passa cinq cent ans et plus, avant que nul s'en servist," which Cotton renders, "They lived fifty years and more," etc., and Coste follows him. The reference is to Valerius Maximus, ii. 1. 4.

† "What you may, is displeasing; what is forbidden, whets the
appetite."—Ovid, Amor., ii. 19, 3.

‡ "The plague-sore being lanced, the infection spreads all the
more."—Rutilius, Itinerar., i. 397.
The Greek histories make * mention of the Argippians, neighbors to Scythia, who live without either rod or stick for offense; where not only no one attempts to attack them, but whoever can fly thither is safe, by reason of their virtue and sanctity of life, and no one is so bold as to lay hands upon them; and they have applications made to them to determine the controversies that arise between men of other countries. There is a certain nation, where the enclosures of gardens and fields they would preserve, are made only of a string of cotton; and, so fenced, is more firm and secure than by our hedges and ditches. "Furem signata sollicitant . . . aperta effractarius preterit." †

Peradventure, the facility of entering my house, among other things, has been a means to preserve it from the violence of our civil wars: defense allures attempt, and defiance provokes an enemy. I enervated the soldiers' design by depriving the exploit of danger and all manner of military glory, which is wont to serve them for pretense and excuse: whatever is bravely, is ever honorably, done, at a time when justice is dead. I render them the conquest of my house cowardly and base; it is never shut to any one that knocks; my gate has no other guard than a porter, and he of ancient custom and ceremony, who does not so much serve to defend it as to offer it with more decorum and grace; I have no other guard nor sentinel than the stars. A gentleman would play the fool to make a show of defense, if he be not really in a condition to defend himself. He, who lies open on one side, is everywhere so; our ancestors did not think of building frontier garrisons. The means of assaulting, I mean without battery or army, and of surprising our houses, increases every day more and more beyond the means to guard them; men's wits are generally bent that way; in invasion every one is concerned: none but the rich in defense. Mine was strong for the time when it was built; I have added nothing to it of that kind, and should fear that its strength might turn against myself; to which we are to consider that a peaceable time would require it should be dismantled. There is danger never to be able to regain it, and it would be very

* Herodotus, iv. 23.
† "Things sealed up invite a thief: housebreakers pass by open doors."—Seneca, Epist., 68.
hard to keep; for in intestine dissensions, your man may be of the party you fear; and where religion is the pretext, even a man’s nearest relations become unreliable, with some color of justice. The public exchequer will not maintain our domestic garrisons; they would exhaust it: we ourselves have not the means to do it without ruin, or, which is more inconvenient and injurious, without ruining the people. The condition of my loss would be scarcely worse. As to the rest, you there lose all: and even your friends will be more ready to accuse your want of vigilance and your improvidence, and your ignorance of, and indifference to your own business, then to pity you. That so many garrisoned houses have been undone whereas this of mine remains, makes me apt to believe that they were only lost by being guarded; this gives an enemy both an invitation and color of reason; all defense shows a face of war. Let who will come to me in God’s name; but I shall not invite them; ’tis the retirement I have chosen for my repose from war. I endeavor to withdraw this corner from the public tempest, as I also do another corner in my soul. Our war may put on what forms it will, multiply and diversify itself into new parties; for my part, I shall not budge. Among so many garrisoned houses, I am the only person in France, of my condition that I know of, who have purely intrusted mine to the protection of heaven, without removing either plate, deeds, or hangings. I will neither fear nor save myself by halves. If a full acknowledgment can acquire the Divine favor, it will stay with me to the end: if not, I have still continued long enough to render my continuance remarkable and fit to be recorded. How? Why, I have lived thirty years.

CHAPTER X.

OF GLORY.

There is the name and the thing; the name is a voice which denotes and signifies the thing; the name is no part of the thing, nor of the substance; ’tis a foreign piece joined to the thing, and outside it.
God, who is all fullness in Himself and the height of all perfection, cannot augment or add anything to Himself within; but His name may be augmented and increased by the blessing and praise we attribute to His exterior works: which praise seeing we cannot incorporate it in Him, forasmuch as He can have no accession of good, we attribute to His name, which is the part out of Him that is nearest to us. Thus is it that to God alone glory and honor appertain; and there is nothing so remote from reason as that we should go in quest of it for ourselves; for, being indigent and necessitous within, our essence being imperfect, and having continual need of amelioration, 'tis to that we ought to employ all our endeavor. We are all hollow and empty; 'tis not with wind and voice that we are to fill ourselves; we want a more solid substance to repair us: a man starving with hunger would be very simple to seek rather to provide himself with a gay garment than with a good meal: we are to look after that whereof we have most need. As we have it in our ordinary prayers, "Gloria in excelsis Deo, et in terra pax hominibus."* We are in want of beauty, health, wisdom, virtue, and such like essential qualities: exterior ornaments should be looked after when we have made provision for necessary things. Divinity treats amply and more pertinently of this subject, but I am not much versed in it.

Chrysippus and Diogenes† were the earliest and firmest advocates of the contempt of glory; and maintained that among all pleasures, there was none more dangerous nor more to be avoided, than that which proceeds from the approbation of others. And, in truth, experience makes us sensible of many very hurtful reasons in it. There is nothing that so poisons princes as flattery, nor anything whereby wicked men more easily obtain credit and favor with them; nor panderism so apt and so usually made use of to corrupt the chastity of women as to wheedle and entertain them with their own praises. The first charm the Syrens made use of to allure Ulysses is of this nature:

* "Glory be to God on high, and on earth peace to men."—St. Luke, ii. 14.
† Cicero, De Finib., iii. 17.
"Deça vers nous, deça, otres-louable Ulysse,  
Et le plus grand honneur dont la Grece fleurisse."

These philosophers said, that all the glory of the world was not worth an understanding man's holding out his finger to obtain it:

"Gloria quantalibet quid erit, si gloria tantum est?"

I say for it alone; for it often brings several commodities along with it, for which it may justly be desired: it acquires us good will, and renders us less subject and exposed to insult and offense from others, and the like. It was also one of the principal doctrines of Epicurus; for this precept of his sect, conceal thy life, that forbids men to encumber themselves with public negotiations and offices, also necessarily presupposes a contempt of glory, which is the world's approbation of those actions we produce in public. He that bids us conceal ourselves, and to have no other concern but for ourselves, and who will not have us known to others, would much less have us honored and glorified; and so advises Idomeneus not in any sort to regulate his actions by the common reputation or opinion, except so as to avoid the other accidental inconveniences that the contempt of men might bring upon him.

Those discourses are, in my opinion, very true and rational; but we are, I know not how, double in ourselves, which is the cause that what we believe we do not believe, and cannot disengage ourselves from what we condemn. Let us see the last and dying words of Epicurus; they are grand, and worthy of such a philosopher, and yet they carry some touches of the recommendation of his name and of that humor he had decried by his precepts. Here is a letter that he dictated a little before his last gasp:

"Epicurus to Hermachus, greeting.

"While I was passing over the happy and last day of

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* "Come hither to us, oh admirable Ulysses, come hither, thou greatest ornament and pride of Greece."—HOMER, Odysseus, xii. 184.

† "What is glory, be it as glorious as it may be, if it be no more than glory?"—JUVENAL, Sat., vii. 81.

‡ Plutarch, Whether the saying, Conceal thy life, is well said.

§ Cicero, De Finibus, ii. 30.
my life, I write this, but at the same time, afflicted with such pain in my bladder and bowels that nothing can be greater, but it was recompensed with the pleasure the remembrance of my inventions and doctrines brought to my soul. Now, as the affection thou hast ever from thy infancy borne toward me and philosophy requires, take upon thee the protection of Metrodorus' children."

This is the letter. And that which makes me interpret that the pleasure he says he had in his soul concerning his inventions, has some reference to the reputation he hoped for thence after his death, is the manner of his will in which he gives order that Amynomachus and Timocrates, his heirs should, every January, defray the expense of the celebration of his birthday as Hermachus should appoint: and also the expense that should be made the twentieth of every month in entertaining the philosophers, his friends, who should assemble in honor of the memory of him and of Metrodorus. *

Carneades was head of the contrary opinion, and maintained that glory was to be desired for itself, even as we embrace our posthumous issue for themselves, having no knowledge nor enjoyment of them.† This opinion has not failed to be the more universally followed, as those commonly are that are most suitable to our inclinations. Aristotle gives it the first place among external goods; and avoids, as too extreme vices, the immoderate either seeking or evading it.‡ I believe that, if we had the books Cicero wrote upon this subject, we should there find pretty stories; for he was so possessed with this passion, that, if he had dared, I think he could willingly have fallen into the excess that others did, that virtue itself was not to be coveted, but upon the account of the honor that always attends it:

"Paulum sepultæ distat inertiae
Celata virtus:" §

* Cicero, De Finibus, ii. 30.
† "It is not Carneades whom Cicero charges with this opinion, but other philosophers of Zeno's sect."—Coste.
‡ Moral. ad Nicom., ii. 7.
§ "Virtue concealed little differs from dead sloth."—Horace, Od. iv. 9, 29.
which is an opinion so false, that I am vexed it could ever enter into the understanding of a man that was honored with the name of philosopher.

If this were true, men need not be virtuous but in public; and we should be no further concerned to keep the operations of the soul, which is the true seat of virtue, regular and in order, than as they are to arrive at the knowledge of others. Is there no more in it, then, but only slyly and with circumspection to do ill? "If thou knowest," says Carneades, * "of a serpent lurking in a place where, without suspicion, a person is going to sit down, by whose death thou expectest an advantage, thou dost ill if thou dost not give him caution of his danger; and so much the more because the action is to be known by none but thyself." If we do not take up of ourselves the rule of well-doing, if impunity pass with us for justice, to how many sorts of wickedness shall we every day abandon ourselves? I do not find what Sextus Pudentius did, in faithfully restoring the treasure that C. Plotius had committed to his sole secrecy and trust, † a thing that I had often done myself so commendable, as I should think it an execrable baseness had we done otherwise; and I think it of good use in our days to recall the example of P. Sextilius Rufus, whom Cicero, ‡ accuses to have entered upon an inheritance contrary to his conscience, not only not against law, but even by the determination of the laws themselves; and M. Crassus and Q. Hortensius, § who, by reason of their authority and power, having been called in by a stranger to share in the succession of a forged will, that so he might secure his own part, satisfied themselves with having no hand in the forgery, and refused not to make their advantage and to come in for a share: secure enough, if they could shroud themselves from accusations, witnesses, and the cognizance of the laws: "Meminerint Deum se habere testem, id est (ut ego arbitror) metem suam." ||

Virtue is a very vain and frivolous thing, if it derive its recommendation from glory; and 'tis to no purpose that we endeavor to give it a station by itself, and separate it

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* Cicero, De Finibus, ii. 18. † Idem, ibid., 18.
‡ Idem, ibid., 17. § Cicero, De Offic., iii. 18.
|| "Let them consider they have God to witness, that is (as I interpret it) their own consciences."—Cicero, De Offic., iii. 10.
from fortune; for what is more accidental than reputation? "Profecto fortuna in omnire dominatur: ea res cunctas exlibidine magis, quam ex vero, celebrat, obscuratque." So to order it that actions may be known and seen is purely the work of fortune; 'tis chance that helps us to glory, according to its own temerity. I have often seen her go before merit, and often very much outstrip it. He who first likened glory to a shadow did better than he was aware of; they are both of them things pre-eminently vain: glory also, like a shadow, goes sometimes before the body, and sometimes in length infinitely exceeds it. They who instruct gentlemen only to employ their valor for the obtaining of honor, "quasi non sit honestum, quod nobilitatum non sit;" what do they intend by that but to instruct them never to hazard themselves if they are not seen, and to observe well if there be witnesses present who may carry news of their valor, whereas a thousand occasions of well-doing present themselves which cannot be taken notice of? How many brave individual actions are buried in the crowd of a battle? Whoever shall take upon him to watch another's behavior in such a confusion is not very busy himself, and the testimony he shall give of his companion's deportment will be evidence against himself. "Vera et sapiens animi magnitudo, honestum illud, quod maxime naturam sequitur, in factis positum, non in gloria, judicat." All the glory that I pretend to derive from my life is that I have lived in it quiet; in quiet, not according to Metrodorus, or Arcesilaus, or Aristippus, but according to myself. For seeing philosophy has not been able to find out any way to tranquillity that is good in common, let every one seek it in particular.

To what do Caesar and Alexander owe the infinite grandeur of their renown but to fortune? How many men has she extinguished in the beginning of their progress, of

* "Fortune rules in all things, and advances and depresses things more out of her own will than of right and justice."—Sallust, Catilina, c. 8.

† "As though it were not a virtue, unless celebrated."—Cicero, De Offic., i. 4.

‡ "The true and wise magnanimity judges that the bravery which most follows nature more consists in act than glory."—Cicero, De Offic., i. 19.
whom we have no knowledge, who brought as much courage to the work as they, if their adverse hap had not cut them off in the first sally of their arms? Among so many and so great dangers I do not remember I have anywhere read that Cæsar was ever wounded; a thousand have fallen in less dangers than the least of those he went through. An infinite number of brave actions must be performed without witness and lost, before one turns to account. A man is not always on the top of a breach, or at the head of an army, in the sight of his general, as upon a scaffold; a man is often surprised between the hedge and the ditch; he must run the hazard of his life against a henroost; he must dislodge four rascally musketeers out of a barn; he must prick out single from his party, and alone make some attempts, according as necessity will have it. And whoever will observe will, I believe, find it experimentally true, that occasions of the least luster are ever the most dangerous; and that in the wars of our own times there have more brave men been lost in occasions of little moment, and in the dispute about some little paltry fort, than in places of greatest importance, and where their valor might have been mere honorably employed.

Who thinks his death unworthy of him if he do not fall in some signal occasion, instead of illustrating his death willfully obscures his life, suffering in the meantime many very just occasions of hazarding himself to slip out of his hands; and every just one is illustrious enough, every man's conscience being a sufficient trumpet to him. "Gloria nostra est testimonium conscientiae nostræ." He who is only a good man that men may know it, and that he may be the better esteemed when 'tis known: who will not do well but upon condition that his virtue may be known to men: is one from whom much service is not to be expected.

"Credo ch' el resto di quel verno cose
Facesse degne di tenerne conto;
Ma fur sin da quel tempo si nascose,
Che non e colpa mia s' or 'non le conto:
Perche Orlando a far l' ope virtuose,
Più ch' a narrare poi, sempre era pronto;

* "For our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience."—2 Corinthians, i. 1.
Nè mai fu alcuno de' suoi fatti espresso,  
Se non quando ebbe i testimoni appresso." *

A man must go to the war upon the account of duty, and expect the recompense that never fails brave and worthy actions, how private soever, or even virtuous thoughts—the satisfaction that a well-disposed conscience receives in itself in doing well. A man must be valiant for himself, and upon account of the advantage it is to him to have his courage seated in a firm and secure place against the assaults of fortune:

"Virtus, repulsæ nescia sordidæ  
Intaminatis fulget honoribus:  
Nec sumit, aut ponit secures  
Arbitrio popularis auræ." †

It is not for outward show that the soul is to play its part, but for ourselves within, where no eyes can pierce but our own; there she defends us from the fear of death, of pain, of shame itself; there she arms us against the loss of our children, friends, and fortunes; and when opportunity presents itself, she leads us on to the hazards of war, "non emolumento aliquo, sed ipsius honestatis decore." ‡ This profit is of much greater advantage, and more worthy to be coveted and hoped for, than honor and glory, which are no other than a favorable judgment given of us.

A dozen men must be called out of a whole nation to judge about an acre of land; and the judgment of our inclinations and actions, the most difficult and most important matter that is, we refer to the voice and determination of the rabble, the mother of ignorance, injustice, and inconstancy. Is it reasonable that the life of a wise man should depend upon the judgment of fools? "An quidquam stultius, quam, quos singulos contemnas, eos aliquid

* "The rest of the winter, I presume, was spent in actions worthy of narration, but they were done so secretly that if I do not tell them I am not to blame, for Orlando was more bent to do great acts than to boast of them, so that no deeds of his were ever known but those that had witnesses."—ARIOSTO, Orlando Furioso, xi. 81.

† "Virtue, repudiating all base repulse, shines in taintless honors, nor takes nor leaves dignities at the mere will of the vulgar."—HORACE, Od., iii. 2, 17.

‡ "Not for any profit or advantage, but for the beauty of virtue."—CICERO, De Finib., i. 10.
He that makes it his business to please them, will have enough to do and never have done; 'tis a mark that can never be aimed at or hit: "Nil tam inestimabile est, quam animi multitudinis."† Demetrius pleasantly said of the voice of the people, that he made no more account of that which came from above than of that which came from below. Cicero says more: "Ego hoc judico, si quando turpe non sit, tamen non esse non turpe, quam id à multitudine laudatur." ‡ No art, no activity of wit, could conduct our steps so as to follow so wandering and so irregular a guide; in this windy confusion of the noise of vulgar reports and opinions that drive us on, no way worth anything can be chosen. Let us not propose to ourselves so floating and wavering an end; let us follow constantly after reason; let the public approbation follow us there, if it will; and as it wholly depends upon fortune, we have no reason sooner to expect it by any other way than that. Even though I would not follow the right way because it is right. I should, however, follow it as having experimentally found that, at the end of the reckoning, 'tis commonly the most happy and of greatest utility: "Dedit hoc providentia hominibus munus, ut honesta magis juvarent." § The mariner of old said thus to Neptune, in a great tempest: "Oh God, thou mayest save me if thou wilt, and if thou wilt, thou mayest destroy me; but, however, I will steer my rudder true.‖ I have seen in my time a thousand men supple, mongrel, ambiguous, whom no one doubted to be more wordly wise than I, destroy themselves, where I have saved myself:

* "Can anything be more foolish than to think that those you despise single can be any other when joined together?"—CICERO, Tusc. Quest., v. 36.

† "Nothing is to be so little understood as the minds of the multitude."—LIVY, xxxi. 34.

‡ "I am of opinion, that though a thing be not foul in itself, yet it cannot but become so when commended by the multitude."—CIC., De Finib., ii. 15.

§ "This gift Providence has given to men, that honest things should be the most useful."—QUINTILIAN, Inst. Orat, i, 12.

‖ Seneca, Ep. 85.
“Risi successu posse carere dolos.” *

Paulus Æmilius, going on the glorious expedition of Macedonia, above all things charged the people of Rome not to speak of his actions during his absence. † Oh, the license of judgments is a great disturbance to great affairs! forasmuch as every one has not the firmness of Fabius against common, adverse, and injurious tongues, who rather suffered his authority to be dissected by the vain fancies of men, than to do less well in his charge with a favorable reputation and the popular applause.

There is I know not what natural sweetness in hearing one’s self commended; but we are a great deal too fond of it:

"Laudari haud metuam, neque enim mihi cornea fibra est:
Sed recti finemque, extremumque esse recuso,
Euge tuum, et belle.” ‡

I care not so much what I am in the opinion of others, as what I am in my own; I would be rich of myself, and not by borrowing. Strangers see nothing but events and outward appearances; everybody can set a good face on the matter, when they have trembling and terror within; they do not see my heart, they see but my countenance.

'Tis with good reason that men decry the hypocrisy that is in war; for what is more easy to an old soldier than to shift in a time of danger, and to counterfeit the brave when he has no more heart than a chicken? There are so many ways to avoid hazarding a man’s own person, that we have deceived the world a thousand times before we come to be engaged in a real danger: and even then, finding ourselves in an inevitable necessity of doing something, we can make shift for that time to conceal our apprehensions by setting a good face on the business, though the heart beats within; and whoever had the use of the Platonic ring, § which ren-

* “I have laughed to see cunning fail of success.”—Ovid, Heroid, i. 18.
† Livy, xliv. 22.
‡ “I don’t dislike being praised, for my heart is not made of horn; but I deny that ‘excellent—admirably done,’ are the terms and final aim of virtue.”—Persius, i. 47.
§ The ring of Gyges, Plato, Republic, ii. 3; Cicero, De Office iii. 9.
ders those invisible that wear it, if turned inward toward the palm of the hand, a great many would very often hide themselves when they ought most to appear, and would repent being placed in so honorable a post, when necessity must make them bold.

"Falsus honor juvat, et mendax infamia terret
Quem, nisi mendosum et mendacem?"*

Thus we see how all the judgments that are founded upon external appearances, are marvelously uncertain and doubtful; and that there is no so certain testimony as every one is to himself. In these, how many soldier's boys are companions of our glory? he who stands firm in an open trench, what does he in that more than fifty poor pioneers who open to him the way and cover it with their own bodies for fivepence a day pay, do before him?

"Non si quid turbida Roma
Elevet, accedas; examenque improbum in illa
Castiges trutina: nec te quæsiveris extra."†

The dispersing and scattering our names into many mouths, we call making them more great; we will have them there well received, and that this increase turn to their advantage, which is all that can be excusable in this design. But the excess of this disease proceeds so far that many covet to have a name, be it what it will. Trogus Pompeius says‡ of Herostratus, and Titus Livius§ of Manlius Capitolinus, that they were more ambitious of a great reputation than of a good one. This is very common; we are more solicitous that men speak of us, than how they speak: and it is enough for us that our names are often mentioned, be it after what manner it will. It should seem that to be known, is in some sort to have a man's life.

* "False honor pleases, and calumny affrights, the guilty and the liar."—Horace, Ep., i. 16, 39.

† "Do not, if turbid Rome should disparage anything, agree with it, nor correct a false balance by that scale; seek not thyself out of thyself."—Persius, Sat i. 5.

‡ It is not Trogus Pompeius, of whom, indeed, only an abridgment by Justin remains. The passage is in Valerius Maximus, viii. 14, Ex. 5.

§ vi. 11.
and its duration in others' keeping. I, for my part, hold that I am not, but in myself; and of that other life of mine which lies in the knowledge of my friends, to consider it naked and simply in itself, I know very well that I am sensible of no fruit nor enjoyment from it but by the vanity of a fantastic opinion; and when I shall be dead, I shall be still and much less sensible of it; and shall, withal, absolutely lose the use of those real advantages that sometimes accidentally follow it. I shall have no more handle whereby to take hold of reputation, neither shall it have any whereby to take hold of or to cleave to me; for to expect that my name should be advanced by it, in the first place, I have no name that is enough my own; of two that I have, one is common to all my race, and, indeed, to others also; there are two families at Paris and Montpellier, whose surname is Montaigne, another in Brittany, and one in Xaintonge, De La Montaigne. The transposition of one syllable only would suffice so to ravel our affairs that I shall share in their glory, and they, peradventure, shall partake of my shame: and, moreover, my ancestors have formerly been surnamed Eyquem, a name wherein a family well known in England is at this day concerned. As to my other name, every one may take it that will, and so, perhaps, I may honor a porter in my own stead. And, besides, though I had a particular distinction by myself, what can it distinguish when I am no more? Can it point out and favor inanity?

"Nunc levior cippus non imprimit ossa.
Laudat posteritas; nunc non e manibus illis,
Nunc non e tumulo, fortunataque favilla,
Nascuntur violæ:"

but of this I have spoken elsewhere. As to what remains, in a great battle where ten thousand men are maimed or killed, there are not fifteen who are taken notice of; it must be some very eminent greatness, or some consequence of great importance that fortune has added to it, that signalizes a private action, not of a harquebuser only, but of a great captain; for to kill a man, or two, or ten: to expose

* "The tomb will not press with less weight upon my bones. Posterity may praise: what then? not from my manes, not from the tomb, not from the ashes, will violets grow."—Persius, Sat i. 37.
a man's self bravely to the utmost peril of death, is, indeed, something in every one of us, because we there hazard all; but for the world's concern, they are things so ordinary, and so many of them are every day seen, and three must of necessity be so many of the same kind to produce any notable effect, that we cannot expect any particular renown from it:

"Casus multis hic cognitus, ac jam
Tritus, et e medio fortunae ductus acervo." *

Of so many thousands of valiant men who have died within these fifteen hundred years in France with their swords in their hands, not a hundred have come to our knowledge. The memory, not of the commanders only, but of battles and victories, is buried and gone; the fortunes of above half of the world, for want of a record, stir not from their place, and vanish without duration. If I had unknown events in my possession, I should think with great ease to out-do those that are recorded, in all sorts of examples. Is it not strange that even of the Greeks and Romans, with so many writers and witnesses, and so many rare and noble exploits, so few are arrived at our knowledge?

"Ad nos vix tennis famae perlabitur aura." †

It will be much if a hundred years hence, it be remembered in gross that in our times there were civil wars in France. The Lacedæmonians, entering into battle, sacrificed to the Muses, ‡ to the end that their actions might be well and worthily written, looking upon it as a divine and no common favor, that brave acts should find witnesses that could give them life and memory. Do we expect that at every musket shot we receive, and at every hazard we run, there must be a register ready to record it? and, besides, a hundred registers may enrol them whose commentaries will not last above three days, and will never come to the sight of any one. We have not the thousandth part of ancient

* "The accident is known to many, and now trite; and drawn from the midst of Fortune's heap."—Juvenal, Sat. xiii. 9.

† "An obscure rumor scarce is hither come."—Aeneid, vii. 646.

‡ Plutarch, Apothegms of the Ancients.
writings; 'tis fortune that gives them a shorter or longer life, according to her favor; and 'tis permissible to doubt whether those we have be not the worst, not having seen the rest. Men do not write histories of things of so little moment: a man must have been general in the conquest of an empire or a kingdom; he must have won two-and-fifty set battles, and always the weaker in number, as Caesar did: ten thousand brave fellows and many great captains lost their lives valiantly in his service, whose names lasted no longer than their wives and children lived:

"Quos fama obscura recondit." *

Even those we see behave themselves the best, three months or three years after they have been knocked on the head, are no more spoken of than if they had never been. Whoever will justly consider, and with due proportion, of what kind of men and of what sort of actions the glory sustains itself in the records of history, will find that there are very few actions and very few persons of our times who can there pretend any right. How many worthy men have we known to survive their own reputation, who have seen and suffered the honor and glory most justly acquired in their youth, extinguished in their own presence? And for three years of this fantastic and imaginary life we must go and throw away our true and essential life, and engage ourselves in a perpetual death! The sages propose to themselves a nobler and more just end in so important an enterprise: "Recte facti, fecisse merces est: officii fructus, ipsum officium est." † It were, peradventure, excusable in a painter or other artisan, or in a rhetorician or a grammarian, to endeavor to raise himself a name by his works; but the actions of virtue are too noble in themselves to seek any other reward than from their own value, and especially to seek it in the vanity of human judgments.

If this false opinion, nevertheless, be of such use to the public as to keep men in their duty; if the people are thereby stirred up to virtue; if princes are touched to see the world bless the memory of Trajan, and abominate that

* "Buried in oblivion."—Elements, v. 302.

† "The reward of a thing well done is to have done it" (Seneca, Ep. 8). The fruit of a good service is the service itself.
of Nero; if it moves them to see the name of that great beast, once so terrible and feared, so freely cursed and reviled by every schoolboy, let it by all means increase, and be as much as possible nursed up and cherished among us; and Plato, bending his whole endeavor to make his citizens virtuous, also advises them not to despise the good repute and esteem of the people; and says it falls out, by a certain divine inspiration, that even the wicked themselves ofttimes, as well by word as opinion, can rightly distinguish the virtuous from the wicked. This person and his tutor are both marvelous and bold artificers everywhere to add divine operations and revelations where human force is wanting. "Ut tragici poetae confugient ad deum, cum explicare argumenti exitum non possunt:" * and, peradventure, for this reason it was that Timon, railing at him called him the great forger of miracles.† Seeing that men by their insufficiency, cannot pay themselves well enough with current money, let the counterfeit be superadded. 'Tis a way that has been practiced by all the legislators; and there is no government that has not some mixture either of ceremonial vanity or of false opinion, that serves for a curb to keep the people in their duty. 'Tis for this that most of them have their originals and beginnings fabulous, and enriched with supernatural mysteries; 'tis this that has given credit to bastard religions, and caused them to be countenanced by men of understanding; and for this, that Numa and Sertorius, to possess their men with a better opinion of them, fed them with this foppery; one, that the nymph Egeria, the other that his white hind, brought them all their counsels from the gods. And the authority that Numa gave to his laws, under the title of the patronage of this goddess, Zoroaster, legislator of the Bactrians and Persians, gave to his under the name of the god Oromazis; Trismegistus, legislator of the Egyptians, under that of Mercury; Xamolxis, legislator of the Scythians, under that of Vesta; Charondas, legislator of the Chalcidians, under that of Saturn; Minos, legislator of the Candiots, under that of Jupiter: Lycurgus, legislator of the Lacedæmonians, under that of Apollo; and Draco

* * As tragic poets fly to some god when they cannot explain the issue of their argument."—CICERO, De Nat. Deor., i. 20.
† Diogenes Laertius, Life of Plato, iii. 26.
and Solon, legislators of the Athenians, under that of Minerva. And every government has a god at the head of it; the others falsely, that truly, which Moses set over the Jews at their departure out of Egypt. The religion of the Bedouins, as the Sire de Joinville reports, among other things, enjoined a belief that the soul of him among them who died for his prince, went into another body more happy, more beautiful, and more robust than the former, by which means they much more willingly ventured their lives:

"In ferrum mens prona viris, animæque capaces
Mortis, et ignavum est rediturn par cere vitæ." *

This is a very comfortable belief, however erroneous. Every nation has many such examples of its own; but this subject would require a treatise by itself.

To add one word more to my former discourse, I would advise the ladies no longer to call that honor which is but their duty; "Ut enim consuetudo loquitur, id solum dictur honestum, quod est populari fama gloriosum;" † their duty is the mark, their honor but the outward rind. Neither would I advise them to give this excuse for payment of their denial: for I presuppose that their intentions, their desire, and will, which are things wherein their honor is not at all concerned, forasmuch as nothing thereof appears without, are much better regulated than the effects:

"Quæ, quia non licet, non sacit, illa facit:" ‡

The offense, both toward God and in the conscience, would be as great to desire as to do it: and, besides, they are actions so private and secret of themselves, as would be easily enough kept from the knowledge of others, wherein the honor consists, if they had not another respect to their duty, and the affection they bear to chastity, for itself.

* "Men invite the steel and seek death: 'tis base to save a life that is to return."—Lucan, i. 461.

† "According to the vulgar notion, which only approves that as honorable that is glorious by the public voice."—Cicero, De Finibus, ii. 15.

‡ "She who only refuses, because 'tis forbidden to consent, consents."—Ovid, Amor., ii. 4, 4.
Every woman of honor will much rather choose to lose her honor, than to hurt her conscience.

CHAPTER XI.

OF PRESUMPTION.

There is another sort of glory, which is the having too good an opinion of our own worth. "Tis an inconsiderate affection with which we flatter ourselves, and that represents us to ourselves other than we truly are; like the passion of love, and that lends beauties and graces to the object, and makes those who are caught by it, with a depraved and corrupt judgment, consider the thing which they love other and more perfect than it is.

I would not, nevertheless, for fear of failing on this side, that a man should not know himself aright, or think himself less than he is; the judgment ought in all things to maintain its rights; 'tis all the reason in the world he should discern in himself, as well as in others, what truth sets before him; if it be Cæsar, let him boldly think himself the greatest captain in the world. We are nothing but ceremony; ceremony carries us away, and we leave the substance of things: we hold by the branches, and quit the trunk and the body; we have taught the ladies to blush when they hear that but named which they are not at all afraid to do; we dare not call our members by their right names, yet are not afraid to employ them in all sorts of debauchery; ceremony forbids us to express by words things that are lawful and natural, and we obey it; reason forbids us to do things unlawful and ill, and nobody obeys it. I find myself here fettered by the laws of ceremony; for it neither permits a man to speak well of himself, nor ill; we will leave it there for this time.

They whom fortune (call it good or ill) has made to pass their lives in some eminent degree, may by their public actions manifest what they are; but they whom she has only employed in the crowd, and of whom nobody will say a word unless they speak themselves, are to be excused if they take the boldness to speak of themselves to such as are interested to know them; by the example of Lucilius,
he always committed to paper his actions and thoughts, and there portrayed himself such as he found himself to be: "Nec id Rutilio et Scauro citra fidem, aut obtrectationi fuit." 

I remember, then, that from my infancy there was observed in me I know not what kind of carriage and behavior, that seemed to relish of pride and arrogance. I will say this, by the way, that it is not unreasonable to suppose that we have qualities and inclinations so much our own, and so incorporate in us, that we have not the means to feel and recognize them; and of such natural inclinations the body will retain a certain bent, without our knowledge or consent. It was an affectation conformed with his beauty, that made Alexander carry his head on one side, and caused Alcibiades to lisp; Julius Caesar scratched his head with one finger, † which is the fashion of a man full of troublesome thoughts; and Cicero, as I remember, was wont to pucker up his nose, a sign of a man given to scoffing; such motions as these may imperceptibly happen in us. There are other artificial ones which I meddle not with, as salutations and congees, by which men acquire, for the most part unjustly, the reputation of being humble and courteous; one may be humble out of pride. I am prodigal enough of my hat, especially in summer, and never am so saluted but that I pay it again from persons of what quality soever, unless they be in my own service. I should make it my request to some princes whom I know, that they would be more sparing of that ceremony, and bestow that courtesy where it is more due; for being so indiscreetly and indifferently conferred on all,

* "He confided his secret thoughts to his writings, as to a tried friend, and for good and evil, sought no other confidant; hence it came to pass, that the old man’s life is there all seen as on a votive tablet."—Horace, Sat. ii. 1, 30.

† "Nor were Rutilius or Scaurus misbelieved or condemned for writing their memoirs."—Tacitus, Agricola, c. 1.

‡ Plutarch, in vita. c. 1.
it is thrown away to no purpose; if it be without respect of persons, it loses its effect. Among irregular deport-ment, let us not not forget that haughty one of the Emperor Constantius,* who always in public held his head upright and stiff, without bending or turning on either side, not so much as to look upon those who saluted him on one side, planting his body in a rigid immovable posture, without suffering it to yield to the motion of his coach, not daring so much as to spit, blow his nose, or wipe his face before people. I know not whether the gestures that were observed in me were of this first quality, and whether I had really any occult propension to this vice, as it might well be; and I cannot be responsible for the motions of the body; but as to the motions of the soul, I must here confess what I think of the matter.

This glory consists of two parts; the one in setting too great a value upon ourselves, and the other in setting too little a value upon others. As to the one, methinks these considerations ought, in the first place, to be of some force; I feel myself importuned by an error of the soul that displeases me, both as it is unjust, and still more as it is troublesome; I attempt to correct it, but I cannot root it out: and this is, that I lessen the just value of things that I possess, and overvalue things, because they are foreign, absent, and none of mine; this humor spreads very far.

As the prerogative of the authority makes husbands look upon their own wives with a vicious disdain, and many fathers their children; so I, between two equal merits should always be swayed against my own; not so much that the jealousy of my advancement and bettering troubles my judgment, and hinders me from satisfying myself, as that of itself possession begets a contempt of what it holds and rules. Foreign governments, manners, and languages, insinuate themselves into my esteem; and I am sensible that Latin allures me by the favor of its dignity to value it above its due, as it does with children, and the common sort of people: the domestic government, house, horse, of my neighbor, though no better than my own, I prize above my own, because they are not mine. Besides that I am very ignorant in my own affairs, I am struck by the assurance that every one has of himself: whereas, there is

* Ammianus Marcellinus, xxi. 14.
scarcely anything that I am sure I know, or that I dare be responsible to myself that I can do: I have not my means of doing anything in condition and ready, and am only instructed therein after the effect; as doubtful of my own force as I am of another’s. Whence it comes to pass that if I happen to do anything commendable, I attribute it more to my fortune than industry, forasmuch as I design everything by chance and in fear. I have this, also, in general, that of all the opinions antiquity has held of men in gross, I most willingly embrace and adhere to those that most contemn and undervalue us, and most push us to naught; methinks, philosophy has never so fair a game to play as when it falls upon our vanity and presumption; when it most lays open our irresolution, weakness, and ignorance. I look upon the too good opinion that man has of himself to be the nursing mother of all the most false opinions, both public and private. Those people who ride astride upon the epicycle of Mercury, who see so far into the heavens, are worse to me than a tooth-drawer that comes to draw my teeth; for in my study, the subject of which is man, finding so great a variety of judgments, so profound a labyrinth of difficulties, one upon another, so great diversity and uncertainty, even in the school of wisdom itself, you may judge, seeing these people could not resolve upon the knowledge of themselves and their own condition, which is continually before their eyes, and within them, seeing they do not know how that moves, which they themselves move, nor how to give us a description of the springs they themselves govern and make use of, how can I believe them about the ebbing and flowing of the Nile. The curiosity of knowing things has been given to man for a scourge, says the holy Scripture.

But to return to what concerns myself; I think it would be very difficult for any other man to have a meaner opinion of himself; nay, for any other to have a meaner opinion of me than I have of myself: I look upon myself as one of the common sort, saving in this, that I have no better an opinion of myself; guilty of the meanest and most popular defects, but not disowning or excusing them; and I do not value myself upon any other account than because I know my own value. If there be any vanity in the case, ’tis superficially infused into me by the treachery of my complexion, and has no body that my judgment can discern:
I am sprinkled, but not dyed. For in truth, as to the effects of the mind, there is no part of me, be it what it will, with which I am satisfied; and the approbation of others makes me not think the better of myself. My judgment is tender and nice, especially in things that concern myself; I ever repudiate myself, and feel myself float and waver by reason of my weakness. I have nothing of my own that satisfies my judgment. My sight is clear and regular enough, but, at working, it is apt to dazzle; as I most manifestly find in poetry: I love it infinitely, and am able to give a tolerable judgment of other men’s works; but, in good earnest, when I apply myself to it, I play the child, and am not able to endure myself. A man may play the fool in everything else, but not in poetry;

"Mediocribus esse poetis
Non dii, non homines, non concessere columnæ."*

I would to God this sentence was written over the doors of all our printers, to forbid the entrance of so many rhymesters!

"Verum
Nihil securius est malo poeta."†

Why have not we such people?‡ Dionysius the father valued himself upon nothing so much as his poetry; at the Olympic games, with chariots surpassing all the others in magnificence, he sent also poets and musicians to present his verses, with tent and pavilions royally gilt and hung with tapestry. When his verses came to be recited, the excellence of the delivery at first attracted the attention of the people; but when they afterwards came to poise the meanness of the composition, they first entered into disdain, and continuing to nettle their judgments, presently proceeded to fury, and ran to pull down and tear to pieces all his pavilions: and, that his chariots neither performed anything to purpose in the race, and that the ship which

* "Neither men, nor gods, nor the pillars (on which the poets offered their writings), permit mediocrity in poets."—Horace, De Arte Poet., 372.

† "The truth is, that nothing is more confident than a bad poet."—Martial, xii. 63, 13.

‡ As those about to be mentioned.
brought back his people failed of making Sicily, and was by the tempest driven and wrecked upon the coast of Tarentum, they certainly believed was through the anger of the gods, incensed, as they themselves were, against that paltry poem; and even the mariners who escaped from the wreck seconded this opinion of the people: to which also the oracle that foretold his death seemed to subscribe; which was, "that Dionysius should be near his end, when he should have overcome those who were better than himself," which he interpreted of the Carthaginians, who surpassed him in power; and having war with them, often declined the victory, not to incur the sense of this prediction, but he understood it ill; for the god indicated the time of the advantage, that by favor and injustice he obtained at Athens over the tragic poets, better than himself, having caused his own play called the Leneians to be acted in emulation; presently after which victory he died, and partly of the excessive joy he conceived at the success.*

What I find tolerable of mine, is not so really and in itself, but in comparison of other worse things, that I see well enough received. I envy the happiness of those who can please and hug themselves in what they do; for 'tis an easy thing to be so pleased, because a man extracts that pleasure from himself, especially if he be constant in his self-conceit. I know a poet, against whom the intelligent and the ignorant, abroad and at home, both heaven and earth exclaim that he has but very little notion of it; and yet for all that he has never a whit the worse opinion of himself; but is always falling upon some new piece, always contriving some new invention, and still persists in his opinion, by so much the more obstinately, as it only concerns him to maintain it.

My works are so far from pleasing me, that as often as I review them, they digest me:

"Cum relego, scripsisse pudet; quia plurima cerno.
Me quoque, qui feci, judice, digna lini."†

* Diodorus Siculus, xv. 74. The play, however, was called the "Ransom of Hector." It was the games at which it was acted that were called Leneian.

† "When I reperuse, I blush at what I have written; I ever see one passage after another that, I the author, being the judge, consider should be erased."—Ovid, De Ponte, i. 5, 15.
I have always an idea in my soul, and a sort of disturbed image which presents me as in a dream with a better form than that I have made use of; but I cannot catch it nor fit it to my purpose; and even that idea is but of the meaner sort. Hence I conclude that the productions of those great and rich souls of former times are very much beyond the utmost stretch of my imagination or my wish: their writings do not only satisfy and fill me, but they astound me, and ravish me with admiration; I judge of their beauty; I see it, if not to the utmost, yet so far at least as 'tis possible for me to aspire. Whatever I undertake, I owe a sacrifice to the Graces, as Plutarch says of some one,* to conciliate their favor;

“Si quid enim placet,
Si quid dulce hominum sensibus infuit,
Debentur lepidis omnia Gratiis.” †

They abandon me throughout; all I write is rude; polish and beauty are wanting: I cannot set things off to any advantage; my handling adds nothing to the matter; for which reason I must have it forcible, very full, and that has luster of its own. If I pitch upon subjects that are popular and gay, 'tis to follow my own inclination, who do not affect a grave and ceremonious wisdom, as the world does; and to make myself more sprightly, but not my style more wanton, which would rather have them grave and severe: at least, if I may call that a style, which is an informal and irregular way of speaking, a popular jargon, a proceeding without definition, division, conclusion, perplexed like that Amafanius and Rabirius. ‡ I can neither please nor delight, nor even tickle my readers: the best story in the world is spoiled by my handling, and becomes flat; I cannot speak but in rough earnest, and am totally unprovided of that facility which I observe in many of my acquaintance, of entertaining the first comers and keeping a whole company in breath, or taking up the ear of a prince with all sorts of discourse without wearying themselves: they never

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* Xenocrates in the Precepts of Marriage, c. 26.
† "If anything please that I write, if it infuse delight into men's minds, all is due to the charming Graces." The verses are probably by some modern poet.
‡ Cicero, Acad., i. 2.
want matter by reason of the faculty and grace they have in taking hold of the first thing that starts up, and accommodating it to the humor and capacity of those with whom they have to do. Princes do not much affect solid discourses, nor I to tell stories. The first and easiest reasons, which are commonly the best taken, I know not how to employ: I am an ill orator to the common sort. I am apt of everything to say the extremest that I know. Cicero is of opinion* that in treatises of philosophy the exordium is the hardest part; if this be true, I am wise in sticking to the conclusion. And yet we are to know how to wind the string to all notes, and the sharpest is that which is the most seldom touched. There is at least as much perfection in elevating an empty as in supporting a weighty thing. A man must sometimes superficially handle things, and sometimes push them home. I know very well that most men keep themselves in this lower form from not conceiving things otherwise than by this outward bark; but I likewise know that the greatest masters, and Xenophon and Plato are often seen to stoop to this low and popular manner of speaking and treating of things, but supporting it with graces which never fail them.

Further, my language has nothing in it that is facile and polished; 'tis rough, free, and irregular, and as such pleases, if not my judgment, at all events my inclination, but I very well perceive that I sometimes give myself too much rein, and that by endeavoring to avoid art and affectation I fall into the other inconvenience:

"Brevis esse laboro,
Obscurus fio." †

Plato says, ‡ that the long or the short are not properties that either take away or give value to language. Should I attempt to follow the other more moderate, united, and regular style, I should never attain to it; and though the short round periods of Sallust best suit with my humor, yet I find Caesar much grander and harder to imitate; and though my inclination would rather prompt me to imitate

* De Universo, c. 2.
† "Endeavoring to be brief, I become obscure."—Hor., Art. Poet., 25.
‡ Republic, x.
Seneca's way of writing, yet I do, nevertheless, more esteem that of Plutarch. Both in doing and speaking I simply follow my own natural way; whence, peradventure, it falls out that I am better at speaking than writing. Motion and action animate words, especially in those who lay about them briskly, as I do, and grow hot. The comportment, the countenance, the voice, the robe, the place, will set off some things that of themselves would appear no better than prating. Massalla complains in Tacitus* of the straightness of some garments in his time, and of the fashion of the benches where the orators were to declaim, that were a disadvantage to their eloquence.

My French tongue is corrupted, both in the pronunciation and otherwise, by the barbarism of my country. I never saw a man who was a native of any of the provinces on his side of the kingdom who had not a twang of his place of birth, † and that was not offensive to ears that were purely French. And yet it is not that I am so perfect in my Perigordin: for I can no more speak it than High Dutch, nor do I much care. 'Tis a language (as the rest about me on every side, of Poitou, Xaintonge, Angoumousin, Limosin, Auvergne), a poor, drawling, scurvy language. There is, indeed, above us toward the mountains a sort of Gascon spoken, that I am mightily taken with: blunt, brief, significant, and in truth a more manly and military language than any other I am acquainted with, as sinewy, powerful, and pertinent as the French is graceful, neat, and luxuriant.

As to the Latin, which was given me for my mother tongue, I have, by discontinuance, lost the use of speaking it, and, indeed, of writing it too, wherein I formerly had a particular reputation, ‡ by which you may see how insignificant I am on that side.

Beauty is a thing of great recommendation in the correspondence among men; 'tis the first means of acquiring the favor and good liking of one another, and no man is so barbarous and morose as not to perceive himself in some sort struck with its attraction. The body has a great share in our being, has an eminent place there, and there-

* De Oratoribus, toward the end.
† Qui ne sentit bien evidemment son ramage.
‡ Je me faisois appeller Maistre Jehan.
fore its structure and composition are of very just consideration. They who go about to disunite and separate our two principal parts from one another are to blame; we must, on the contrary, reunite and rejoin them. We must command the soul not to withdraw and entertain itself apart, not to despise and abandon the body (neither can she do it but by some apish counterfeit), but to unite herself close to it, to embrace, cherish, assist, govern, and advise it, and to bring it back and set it into the true way when it wanders; in sum, to espouse and be a husband to it, so that their effects may not appear to be diverse and contrary, but uniform and concurring. Christians have a particular instruction concerning this connection, for they know that the Divine justice embraces this society and juncture of body and soul, even to the making the body capable of eternal rewards; and that God has an eye to the whole man's ways, and will that he receive entire chastisement or reward according to his demerits or merits. The sect of the Peripatetics, of all sects the most sociable, attribute to wisdom this sole care equally to provide for the good of these two associate parts: and the other sects, in not sufficiently applying themselves to the consideration of this mixture, show themselves to be divided, one for the body and the other for the soul, with equal error, and to have lost sight of their subject, which is Man, and their guide, which they generally confess to be Nature. The first distinction that ever was among men, and the first consideration that gave some pre-eminence over others, 'tis likely was the advantage of beauty:

"Agros divisere atque dedere
Pro facie cujusque, et viribus, ingenaeque;
Nam facies multum valuit, viresque vigebant."*

Now I am of something lower than the middle stature, a defect that not only borders upon deformity, but carries withal a great deal of inconvenience along with it, especially for those who are in office and command; for the authority which a graceful presence and a majestic mien beget, is wanting. C. Marius did not willingly enlist any soldiers

*"They distributed and conferred the lands to every man according to his beauty, strength, or understanding, for beauty and strength had first influence."—Lucretius, v. 1109.
who were not six feet high.* The courtier† has, indeed, reason to desire a moderate stature in the gentlemen he is setting forth, rather than any other, and to reject all strangeness that should make him be pointed at. But if I were to choose whether this medium must be rather below than above the the common standard, I would not have it so in a soldier. Little men, says Aristotle,‡ are pretty but not handsome; and greatness of soul is discovered in a great body, as beauty is in a conspicuous stature: the Ethiopians and Indians, says he,§ in choosing their kings and magistrates, had regard to the beauty and stature of their persons. They had reason; for it creates respect in those who follow them, and is a terror to the enemy to see a leader of a brave and goodly stature march at the head of a battalion.

"Ipse inter primos prestanti corpore Turnus
Vertitur, arma tenens, et toto vertice supra est." ‖

Our holy and heavenly king, of whom every circumstance is most carefully and with the greatest religion and reverence to be observed, has not himself rejected bodily recommendation, "Speciosus forma prae filius hominum." ‖ And Plato,** together with temperance and fortitude, requires beauty in the conservators of his republic. It would vex you that a man should apply himself to you among your servants to inquire where monsieur is, and that you should only have the remainder of the compliment of the hat that is made to your barber or your secretary; as it happened to poor Philopoemen,‖‖ who arriving the first of all his company at an inn where he was expected, the hostess who knew him not, and saw him an unsightly fellow, employed

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* Vegetius, i. 5.
† Il Cortigiano, of Balthasar Castiglioni.
‡ Moral. ad Nicom., iv., 7
§ Politics, iv. 4.
‖ "In the first rank marched Turnus, brandishing his weapon, taller by a head than all the rest."—Virgil, Æneid, vii. 783.
"He is fairer than the children of men."—Psalm xlv. 2.
** Republic, vii.
‖‖ Plutarch, in vita, c. i.
him to go help her maids a little to draw water, and make a fire against Philopoemen’s coming: the gentlemen of his train arriving presently after, and surprised to see him busy in this fine employment, for he failed not to obey his landlady’s command, asked him what he was doing there. “I am,” said he, “paying the penalty of my ugliness.”

The other beauties belong to women; the beauty of stature is the only beauty of men. Where there is a contemptible stature, neither the largeness and roundness of the forehead, nor the whiteness and sweetness of the eyes, nor the moderate proportion of the nose, nor the littleness of the ears and mouth, nor the evenness and whiteness of the teeth, nor the thickness of a well-set brown beard, shining like the husk of a chestnut, nor curled hair, nor the just proportion of the head, nor a fresh complexion, nor a pleasing air of a face, nor a body without any offensive scent, nor the just proportion of limbs, can make a handsome man. I am, as to the rest, strong and well knit; my face is not puffed, but full, and my complexion between jovial and melancholic, moderately sanguine and hot,

“Unde rigent setis mihi crura, et pectora villis;”* my health vigorous and sprightly, even to a well advanced age, and rarely troubled with sickness. Such I was, for I do not now make any account of myself, now that I am engaged in the avensues of old age, being already past forty:

“Minutatim vires et robur adultum
Frangit, et in partem pejorem liquitur ætas;”† what shall be from this time forward, will be but a half-being, and no more me. I every day escape and steal away from myself:

“Singula de nobis anni prædantur euntes;”‡ Agility and address I never had, and yet am the son of a very active and sprightly father, who continued to be so

* “Whence ’tis my thighs and breast bristle with hair.”—Martial, ii. 36. 5.
† “Time by degrees breaks our strength, and makes us grow feeble.”—Lucretius, ii. 1131.
‡ “Of the fleeting years each steals something from me.”—Horace, Ep., ii. 2.
to an extreme old age. I have scarce known any man of
his condition, his equal in all bodily exercises: as I have
seldom met with any who have not excelled me, except in
running, at which I was pretty good. In music or singing,
for which I have a very unfit voice, or to play on any sort
of instrument, they could never teach me anything. In
dancing, tennis, or wrestling, I could never arrive to more
than an ordinary pitch; in swimming, fencing, vaulting,
and leaping, to none at all. My hands are so clumsy that
I cannot even write so as to read it myself, so that I had
rather do what I have scribbled over again, than take upon
me the trouble to make it out. I do not read much better
than I write, and feel that I weary my auditors: otherwise,
not a bad clerk. I cannot decently fold up a letter, nor
could ever make a pen, or carve at table worth a pin, nor
saddle a horse, nor carry a hawk and fly her, nor hunt the
dogs, nor lure a hawk, nor speak to a horse. In fine, my
bodily qualities are very well suited to those of my soul;
there is nothing sprightly, only a full and firm vigor: I
am patient enough of labor and pains, but it is only when
I go voluntary to work, and only so long as my own desire
prompts me to it,

"Molliter austerum studio fallente laborem:"*

otherwise, if I am not allured with some pleasure, or have
other guide than my own pure and free inclination, I am
good for nothing: for I am of a humor that, life and
health excepted, there is nothing for which I will bite my
nails, and that I will purchase at the price of torment of
mind and constraint:

"Tanti mihi non sit opaci
Omnis arena Tagi, quodque in mare volvitur aurum."†

Extremely idle, extremely given up to my own inclination
both by nature and art, I would as willingly lend a man
my blood as my pains. I have a soul free and entirely its
own, and accustomed to guide itself after its own fashion;
having hitherto never had either master or governor im-
posed upon me; I have walked as far as I would, and at

* "The labor we delight in physics pain."—Horace, Sat ii. 2, 12,
Cf. Shakespeare's Macbeth. ii. 3.

† "I would not buy rich Tagus sands so dear, nor all the gold that
lies in the sea."—Juvenal, Sat. iii. 54.
the pace that best pleased myself; that is it that has rendered me unfit for the service of others, and has made me of no use to any one but myself.

Nor was there any need of forcing my heavy and lazy disposition; for being born to such a fortune as I had reason to be contented with (a reason, nevertheless, that a thousand others of my acquaintance would have rather made use of for a plank upon which to pass over in search of higher fortune, to tumult and disquiet), and with as much intelligence as I required, I sought for no more, and also got no more:

"Non agimus tumidis velis Aquilone secundo,
Non tamen adversis ætatem duceimus Austris;
Viribus, ingénió, specie, virtute, loco, re,
Extremi primorum, extremis usque priores."*

I had only need of what was sufficient to content me: which nevertheless is a government of soul, to take it right, equally difficult in all sorts of conditions, and that, of custom, we see more easily found in want than in abundance: forasmuch, peradventure, as according to the course of our other passions, the desire of riches is more sharpened by their use than by the need of them: and the virtue of moderation more rare than that of patience; and I never had anything to desire, but happily to enjoy the estate that God by His bounty had put into my hands. I have never known anything of trouble, and have had little to do in anything but the management of my own affairs: or, if I have, it has been upon condition to do it at my own leisure and after my own method; committed to my trust by such as had a confidence in me, who did not importune me, and who knew my humor; for good horsemen will make shift to get service out of a rusty and broken-winded jade.

Even my infancy was trained up after a gentle and free manner, and exempt from any rigorous subjection. All this has helped me to a complexion delicate and incapable of solicitude, even to that degree that I love to have my losses and the disorders wherein I am concerned, concealed

* "The northern wind does not agitate my sails; nor Auster trouble my course with storms. In strength, talent, figure, virtue, honor, wealth, I am short of the foremost, but before the last."—Horace, Ep. ii. 2, 201.
from me. In the account of my expenses, I put down what my negligence costs me in feeding and maintaining it;

"Hæc nempe supersunt
Quæ dominum fallunt, quæ prosunt furibus."* 

I love not to know what I have, that I may be less sensible of my loss; I entreat those who serve me, where affection and integrity are absent, to deceive me with something like a decent appearance. For want of constancy enough to support the shock of adverse accidents to which we are subject, and of patience seriously to apply myself to the management of my affairs, I nourish as much as I can this in myself, wholly leaving all to fortune "to take all things at the worst, and to resolve to bear that worst with temper and patience;" that is the only thing I aim at, and to which I apply my whole meditation. In a danger, I do not so much consider how I shall escape it, as of how little importance it is, whether I escape it or no; should I be left dead upon the place, what matter? Not being able to govern events, I govern myself, and apply myself to them, if they will not apply themselves to me. I have no great art to evade, escape from or force fortune, and by prudence to guide and incline things to my own bias. I have still less patience to undergo the troublesome and painful care therein required; and the most uneasy condition for me is to be suspended on urgent occasions, and to be agitated between hope and fear.

Deliberation, even in things of lightest moment, is very troublesome to me; and I find my mind more put to it to undergo the various tumblings and tossings of doubt and consultation, than to set up its rest and to acquiesce in whatever shall happen after the die is thrown. Few passions break my sleep, but of deliberations, the least will do it. As in roads, I preferably avoid those that are sloping and slippery, and put myself into the beaten track how dirty or deep soever, where I can fall no lower, and there seek my safety; so I love misfortunes that are purely so, that do not torment and tease me with the uncertainty of their growing better; but that at the first push plunge me directly into the worst that can be expected:

* "That overplus, which the owner knows not of, but which benefit the thieves."—Horace, Ep. i. 645.
"Dubia plus torquent mala." *

In events, I carry myself like a man; in the conduct, like a child. The fear of the fall more fevers me than the fall itself. The game is not worth the candle. The covetous man fares worse with his passion than the poor, and the jealous man than the cuckold; and a man ofttimes loses more by defending his vineyard than if he gave it up. The lowest walk is the safest; 'tis the seat of constancy; you have there need of no one but yourself; 'tis there founded and wholly stands upon its own basis. Has not this example of a gentleman very well known, some air of philosophy in it? He married, being well advanced in years, having spent his youth in good fellowship, a great talker and a great jeerer, calling to mind how much the subject of cuckoldry had given him occasion to talk and scoff at others. To prevent them from paying him in his own coin he married a wife from a place where any one may have flesh for his money; "Good-morrow strumpet;" "good-morrow, cuckold;" and there was not anything wherewith he more commonly and openly entertained those who came to see him, than with this design of his, by which he stopped the private chattering of mockers, and blunted all the point from this reproach.

As to ambition, which is neighbor, or rather daughter to presumption, fortune, to advance me, must have come and taken me by the hand; for to trouble myself for an uncertain hope, and to have submitted myself to all the difficulties that accompany those who endeavor to bring themselves into credit in the beginning of their progress, I could never have done it:

"Spem pretio non emo:" †

I apply myself to what I see and to what I have in my hand, and go not very far from the shore;

"Alter remus aquas, alter tibi radat arenas:" ‡

* "Doubtful ills plague us worst."—Seneca, Agamemnon, ii, 1, 47.

† "I will not purchase hope with ready money."—Terence, Adelphi, ii. 3, 11.

‡ "One oar plunging into the sea, the other raking the sands."—Propertius, iii. 3, 23.
and besides, a man rarely arrives to these advancements but in first hazarding what he has of his own; and I am of opinion, that if a man have sufficient to maintain him in the condition wherein he was born and brought up, 'tis a great folly to hazard that upon the uncertainty of augmenting it. He to whom fortune has denied whereon to set his foot, and to settle a quiet and composed way of living, is to be excused if he venture what he has, because, happen what will, necessity puts him upon shifting for himself:

"Capienda rebus in malis praeceps via est:" *

and I rather excuse a younger brother for exposing what his friends have left him to the courtesy of fortune, than him with whom the honor of his family is entrusted, who cannot be necessitous but by his own fault. I have found a much shorter and more easy way, by the advice of the good friends I had in my younger days, to free myself from any such ambition, and to sit still;

"Cui sit conditio dulcis sine pulvere palmæ;" †

judging rightly enough of my own strength, that it was not capable of any great matters; and calling to mind the saying of the late Chancellor Olivier, ‡ that the French were like monkeys that swarm up a tree from branch to branch, and never stop till they come to the highest, and there show their breech.

"Turpe est, quod nequæs, capiti committere pondus,
Et pressum inflexo mox dare terga genu."§

I should find the best qualities I have useless in this age; the facility of my manners would have been called weakness and negligence; my faith and conscience, scrupulosity and superstition; my liberty and freedom would have been reputed troublesome, inconsiderate, and rash. Ill luck is good for something. It is good to be born in a very

* "A desperate case must have a desperate course."—Seneca, Agamemnon, ii. 1, 47.

† "What more agreeable condition, than to have gained the palm without the dust of the course."—Horace, Ep. i. 1, 51.

‡ He died in 1560.

§ "It is a shame to load the head so that it cannot bear the burthen, and the knees give way."—Propertius, iii. 9, 5.
depraved age; for so, in comparison of others, you shall be reputed virtuous cheaply; he who in our days is but a parricide and a sacrilegious person, is an honest man and a man of honor:

"Nunc, si depositum non inficiatur amicus,
Si reddat veterem cum tota ærugine follem,
Prodigiosa fides, et Tuscis digna libellis,
Quæque coronata lustrari debeat agna."*

and never was time or place wherein princes might propose to themselves more assured or greater rewards for virtue and justice. The first who shall make it his business to get himself into favor and esteem by those ways, I am much deceived if he do not and by the best title outstrip his competitors: force and violence can do something, but not always all. We see merchants, country justices, and artisans, go cheek by jowl with the best gentry in valor and military knowledge: they perform honorable actions, both in public engagements and private quarrels; they fight duels, they defend towns in our present wars; a prince stifles his special recommendation, renown, in this crowd; let him shine bright in humanity, truth, loyalty, temperance, and especially in justice; marks rare, unknown, and exiled; 'tis by no other means but by the sole good will of the people that he can do his business; and no other qualities can attract their good will like those, as being of the greatest utility to them: "Nil est tam populare, quam bonitas."

By this standard, I had been great and rare, just as I find myself now pigmy and vulgar by the standard of some past ages, wherein, if no other better qualities concurred, it was ordinary and common to see a man moderate in his revenges, gentle in resenting injuries, religious of his word, neither double nor supple, nor accommodating his faith to the will of others, or the turns of the times: I would rather see all affairs go to wreck and ruin than falsify my faith to secure

* "Nowadays, if a friend does not deny his trust, but restores the old purse with all its rusty coin untouched, 'tis a prodigious faith, that ought to be enrolled in gold, among the Tuscan annals, and a crowned lamb should be sacrificed to such exemplary integrity."—Juvenal, Sat. xiii. 60.

† "Nothing is so popular as goodness."—Cicero, Pro Liger., c. 12.
them. For as to this new virtue of feigning and dissimulation, which is now in so great credit, I mortally hate it; and of all vices find none that evidences so much baseness and meanness of spirit. 'Tis a cowardly and servile humor to hide and disguise a man's self under a visor, and not to dare to show himself what he is; 'tis by this our servants are trained up to treachery; being brought up to speak what is not true, they make no conscience of a lie. A generous heart ought not to believe its own thoughts; it will make itself seen within; all there is good, or at least, human. Aristotle* reputes it the office of magnanimity openly and professedly to love and hate; to judge and speak with all freedom; and not to value the approbation or dislike of others in comparison of truth. Apollonius† said, it was for slaves to lie, and for freemen to speak truth: 'tis the chief and fundamental part of virtue; we must love it for itself. He who speaks truth because he is obliged so to do, and because it serves him, and who is not afraid to lie when it signifies nothing to anybody, is not sufficiently true. My soul naturally abominates lying, and hates the very thought of it. I have an inward shame and a sharp remorse, if sometimes a lie escape me; as sometimes it does, being surprised by occasions that allow me no premeditation. A man must not always tell all, for that were folly: but what a man says should be what he thinks, otherwise 'tis knavery. I do not know what advantage men pretend to by eternally counterfeiting and dissembling, if not, never to be believed when they speak the truth; it may once or twice pass with men; but to profess the concealing their thought, and to brag, as some of our princes have done, that they would burn their shirts if they knew their true intentions, which was a saying of the ancient Metellus of Macedon;‡ and that they who know not how to dissemble know not how to rule,§ is to give warning to all who have anything to do with them, that all they say is nothing but lying and deceit: "Quo quis versuitior et callidior est, hoc invisior et suspectior, de-

* Moral. ad Nicom., iv. 8.
† Philostratus, p. 409 of ed. of 1709.
‡ Aurelius Victor, De Vir. Illust., c. 66.
§ It was a saying of Louis XI.
tracta opinione probitatis:" * it were a great simplicity in any one to lay any stress either on the countenance or word of a man, who has put on a resolution to be always another thing without than he is within, as Tiberius did; and I cannot conceive what part such persons can have in conversation with men, seeing they produce nothing that is received as true: whoever is disloyal to truth, is the same to falsehood also.

Those of our time, who have considered in the establishment of the duty of a prince, the good of his affairs only, and have preferred that to the care of his faith and conscience, might have something to say to a prince whose affairs fortune had put into such a posture that he might forever establish them by only once breaking his word: but it will not go so; they often buy in the same market; they make more than one peace and enter into more than one treaty in their lives. Gain tempts to the first breach of faith, and almost always presents itself, as in all other ill acts, sacrileges, murders, rebellions, treasons, as being undertaken for some kind of advantage; but this first gain has infinite mischievous consequences, throwing this prince out of all correspondence and negotiation, by this example of infidelity. Soliman, of the Ottoman race, a race not very solicitous of keeping their words or compacts, when, in my infancy he made his army land at Otranto, being informed that Mercurino de' Gratinare, and the inhabitants of Castro were detained prisoners, after having surrendered the place, contrary to the articles of their capitulation, sent orders to have them set at liberty, saying that having other great enterprises in hand in those parts, the disloyalty, though it carried a show of present utility, would for the future bring on him a disrepute and distrust of infinite prejudice.

Now, for my part, I had rather be troublesome and indiscreet, than a flatterer and a dissembler. I confess that there may be some mixture of pride and obstinacy in keeping myself so upright and open as I do, without any consideration of others; and methinks I am a little too free, where I ought least to be so, and that I grow hot by

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* "By how much any one is more subtle and cunning, by so much is he hated and suspected, the opinion of his integrity being lost and gone."—CICERO, De Offf, ii. 9.
the opposition of respect; and it may be also, that I suffer myself to follow the propension of my own nature for want of art: using the same liberty, speech and countenance toward great persons, that I bring with me from my own house; I am sensible how much it declines toward incivility and indiscretion: but, besides that I am so bred, I have not a wit supple enough to evade a sudden question and to escape by some evasion, nor to feign a truth, nor memory enough to retain it so feigned; nor, truly, assurance enough to maintain it, and so play the brave out of weakness. And therefore it is that I abandon myself to candor, always to speak as I think, both by complexion and design leaving the event to fortune. Aristippus was wont to say,* that the principal benefit he had extracted from philosophy was that he spoke freely and openly to all.

Memory is a faculty of wonderful use, and without which the judgment can very hardly perform its office; for my part I have none at all. What any one will propound to me, he must do it piecemeal, for to answer a speech consisting of several heads I am not able. I could not receive a commission by word of mouth, without a note-book. And when I have a speech of consequence to make, if it be long, I am reduced to the miserable necessity of getting by heart word for word, what I am to say; I should otherwise have neither method nor assurance, being in fear that my memory would play me a slippery trick. But this way is no less difficult to me than the other; I must have three hours to learn three verses. And besides, in a work of a man's own, the liberty and authority of altering the order, of changing a word, incessantly varying the matter, makes it harder to stick in the memory of the author. The more I mistrust it the worse it is; it serves me best by chance; I must solicit it negligently; for if I press it, 'tis confused, and after it once begins to stagger, the more I sound it, the more it is perplexed; it serves me at its own hour, not at mine.

And the same defect I find in my memory, I find also in several other parts. I fly command, obligation, and constraint; that which I can otherwise naturally and easily do, if I impose it upon myself by an express and strict injunction, I cannot do it. Even the members of my

* Diogenes Laertius, ii. 68.
body, which have a more particular jurisdiction of their own, sometimes refuse to obey me, if I enjoin them a necessary service at a certain hour. This tyrannical and compulsive appointment baffles them; they shrink up either through fear or spite, and fall into a trance. Being once in a place where it is looked upon as the greatest courtesy imaginable not to pledge those who drink to you, though I had there all liberty allowed me, I tried to play the good fellow, out of respect to the ladies who were there, according to the custom of the country; but there was sport enough; for this threatening and preparation, that I was to force myself contrary to my custom and inclination, so stopped my throat that I could not swallow one drop, and was deprived of drinking so much as with my meat; I found myself gorged, and my thirst quenched by the quantity of drink that my imagination had swallowed. This effect is most manifest in such as have the most vehement and powerful imagination; but it is natural, notwithstanding, and there is no one who does not in some measure feel it. They offered an excellent archer, condemned to die, to save his life, if he would show some notable proof of his art, but he refused to try, fearing lest the too great contention of his will should make him shoot wide, and that instead of saving his life, he should also lose the reputation he had got of being a good marksman. A man who thinks of something else, will not fail to take over and over again the same number and measure of steps, even to an inch, in the place where he walks; but if he make it his business to measure and count them, he will find that what he did by nature and accident, he cannot so exactly do by design.

My library, which is of the best sort of country libraries, is situated in a corner of my house; if anything comes into my head that I have a mind to look at or to write there, lest I should forget it in but going across the court, I am fain to commit it to the memory of some other. If I venture in speaking to digress never so little from my subject, I am infallibly lost, which is the reason that I keep myself, in discourse, strictly close. I am forced to call the men who serve me either by the names of their offices or their country; for names are very hard for me to remember. I can tell, indeed, that there are three syllables, that it has a harsh sound, and that it begins or ends with such a let
ter, but that's all: and if I should live long, I do not doubt but I should forget my own name, as some others have done. Messala Corvinus was two years without any trace of memory, which is also said of Georgius Trapezuntius. For my own interest, I often meditate what a kind of life theirs was, and if, without this faculty, I should have enough left to support me with any manner of ease; and prying narrowly into it, I fear that this privation, if absolute, destroys all the other functions of the soul:

"Plenus rimarum sum, hae atque illae perfluuo." *

It has befallen me more than once to forget the watch-word I had three hours before given or received, and to forget where I had hidden my purse; whatever Cicero is pleased to say, † I help myself to lose what I have a particular care to lock safe up. "Memoria certe non modo Philosophiam, sed omnis vitae usum, omnesque artes, una maxime continet." ‡ Memory is the receptable and case of science: and therefore mine being so treacherous, if I know little, I cannot much complain. I know, in general, the names of the arts, and of what they treat, but nothing more. I turn over books; I do not study them. What I retain I no longer recognize as another's; 'tis only what my judgment has made its advantage of, the discourses and imaginations in which it has been instructed: the author, place, words, and other circumstances, I immediately forget; and I am so excellent at forgetting, that I no less forget my own writings and compositions than the rest. I am very often quoted to myself and am not aware of it. Whoever should inquire of me where I had the verses and examples that I have here huddled together, would puzzle me to tell him, and yet I have not borrowed them but from famous and known authors, not contenting myself that they were rich, if I, moreover, had them not from rich and honorable hands, where there is a concurrence of authority with reason. It is no great wonder

* "I'm full of chinks, and leak out every way."—Ter., Eunuchus, ii. 2, 23.

† De Senectute, c. 7.

‡ "It is certain that memory contains not only philosophy, but all the arts and all that appertain to the use of life."—Cicero, Acad., ii. 7.
if my book run the same fortune that other books do, and if my memory lose what I have written as well as what I have read, and what I give as well as what I receive.

Besides the defect of memory, I have others which very much contribute to my ignorance; I have a slow and heavy wit, the least cloud stops its progress, so that, for example, I never proposed to it any never so easy a riddle that it could find out; there is not the least idle subtlety that will not gravel me; in games, where wit is required, as chess, draughts, and the like, I understand no more than the common movements. I have a slow and perplexed apprehension, but what it once apprehends, it apprehends well, for the time it retains it. My sight is perfect, entire, and discovers at a very great distance, but is soon weary and heavy at work, which occasions that I cannot read long, but am forced to have one to read to me. The younger Pliny * can inform such as has not experimented it themselves, what, and how important, an impediment this is to those who addict themselves to study.

There is no so wretched and coarse a soul, wherein some particular faculty is not seen to shine; no soul so buried in sloth and ignorance, but it will sally at one end or another; and how it comes to pass that a man blind and asleep to everything else, shall be found sprightly, clear, and excellent in some one particular effect, we are to inquire of our masters: but the beautiful souls are they that are universal, open, and ready for all things; if not instructed, at least capable of being so; which I say to accuse my own; for whether it be through infirmity or negligence (and to neglect that which lies at our feet, which we have in our hands, and what nearest concerns the use of life, is far from my doctrine) there is not a soul in the world so awkward as mine, and so ignorant of many common things, and such as a man cannot without shame fail to know. I must give some examples.

I was born and bred up in the country, and among husbandmen; I have had business and husbandry in my own hands ever since my predecessors, who were lords of the estate I now enjoy, left me to succeed them; and yet I can neither cast accounts, nor reckon my counters; most of

* Epist., v. 3.
our current money I do not know, nor the difference between one grain and another, either growing or in the barn, if it be not too apparent; and scarcely can distinguish between the cabbage and lettuce in my garden. I do not so much as understand the names of the chief instruments of husbandry, nor the most ordinary elements of agriculture, which the very children know; much less the mechanic arts, traffic, merchandise, the variety and nature of fruits, wines and viands, nor how to make a hawk fly, nor to physic a horse or a dog. And, since I must publish my whole shame ’tis not above a month ago, that I was trapped in my ignorance of the use of leaven to make bread, or to what end it was to keep wine in the vat. They conjectured of old at Athens,* an aptitude for the mathematics in him they saw ingeniously bavin up a burthen of brushwood. In earnest, they would draw a quite contrary conclusion from me, for give me the whole provision and necessities of a kitchen, I should starve. By these features of my confession men may imagine others to my prejudice: but whatever I deliver myself to be, provided it be such as I really am, I have my end; neither will I make any excuse for committing to paper such mean and frivolous things as these; the meanness of the subject compels me to it. They may, if they please, accuse my project, but not my progress; so it is, that without anybody’s needing to tell me, I sufficiently see of how little weight and value all this is, and the folly of my design: ’tis enough that my judgment does not contradict itself, of which these are the essays:

“Nasatus sis usque licet, sis denique nasus,
Quantum nolleurit ferre rogatus Atlas;
Et possis ipsum tu deridere Latinum,
Non potes in nugas dicere plura meas,
Ipse ego quam dixi: quid dentem dente juvabit
Rodere 2 carne opus est, si satur esse velis,
Ne perdas operam; qui se miratur, in illos
Virus habe; nos hac novimus esse nihil.”†

* “Diogenes Laertius relates this story (ix. 58) of Protagoras, of Abdera, and so does Aulus Gellius, v. 3. Montaigne’s memory probably failed him as to the locality.
† “Let your nose be as keen as it will, be all nose, and even a nose so great that Atlas will refuse to bear it; if asked, could you even excel Latinus in scoffing; against my trifles you could say no more than I myself have said; then to what end contend tooth
I am not obliged to refrain from uttering absurdities, provided I am not deceived in them and know them to be such; and to trip knowingly, is so ordinary with me, that I seldom do it otherwise, and rarely trip by chance. "Tis no great matter to add ridiculous actions to the temerity of my humor, since I cannot ordinarily help supplying it with those that are vicious.

I was present one day at Barleduc,* when King Francis II., for a memorial of René, king of Sicily, was presented with a portrait he had drawn of himself; why is it not, in like manner, lawful for every one to draw himself with a pen as he did with a crayon? I will not therefore omit this blemish, though very unfit to be published, which is irresolution; a very great defect, and very incommodious in the negotiations of the affairs of the world; in doubtful enterprises, I know not which to choose:

"Ne si, ne no, nel cor mi suona intero."†

I can maintain an opinion, but I cannot choose one. By reason that in human things, to what sect soever we incline, many appearances present themselves that confirm us in it (and the philosopher Chrysippus said,‡ that he would of Zeno and Cleanthes, his masters, learn their doctrines only; for, as to proofs and reasons, he should find enough of his own), which way soever I turn, I still furnish myself with causes, and likelihood enough to fix me there; which makes me detain doubt and the liberty of choosing, till occasion presses; and then, to confess the truth, I, for the most part, throw the feather into the wind, as the saying is, and commit myself to the mercy of fortune; a very light inclination and circumstance carries me along with it:

"Dum in dubio est animus, paulo momento hoc atque illuc impellitur."§

against tooth? You must have flesh, if you want to be full; lose not your labor then; cast your venom upon those that admire themselves; I know already that these things are worthless."—Mart. xiii. 2.

* September, 1559.

† "My heart does not tell me either yes or no."—PETRARCH.

‡ Diogenes Laertius, vii. 1, 79.

§ "The mind being in doubt, in short time is driven this way and that."—TERENCE, Andr., i. 6, 32.
The uncertainty of my judgment is so equally balanced in most occurrences, that I could willingly refer it to be decided by the chance of a die: and I observe, with great consideration of our human infirmity, the examples that the divine history itself has left us of this custom of referring to fortune and chance the determination of election in doubtful things: "Sors ecidit super Matthiam."* Human reason is a two-edged and dangerous sword: observe in the hands of Socrates, her most intimate and familiar friend, how many several points it has. I am thus good for nothing but to follow and suffer myself to be easily carried away with the crowd; I have not confidence enough in my own strength to take upon me to command and lead; I am very glad to find the way beaten before me by others. If I must run the hazard of an uncertain choice, I am rather willing to have it under such a one as is more confident in his opinions than I am in mine, whose ground and foundation I find to be very slippery and unsure.

Yet, I do not easily change, by reason that I discern the same weakness in contrary opinions: "Ipsa consuetudo asseantiendi periculosae esse videtur, et lubrica;" † especially in political affairs, there is a large field open for changes and contestation:

"Justa pari premitur veluti cum pondere libra,
Prona, nec hac plus parte sedet, nec surgit ab illa." ‡

Macchiavelli's writings, for example, were solid enough for the subject, yet were they easy enough to be controverted; and they who have taken up the cudgels against him, have left as great a facility of controverting theirs; there was never wanting in that kind of argument, replies and replies upon replies, and as infinite a contexture of debates, as our wrangling lawyers have extended in favor of long suits:

† "The very custom of assenting seems to be dangerous and slippery."—CICERO, leud., ii. 21.
‡ "As a just balance pressed with equal weight, neither dips nor rises on either side."—TIBULLUS, iv. 41.
the reasons having little other foundation than experience, and the variety of human events presenting us with infinite examples of all sorts of forms. An understanding person of our times says: That whoever would, in contradiction to our almanacs, write cold where they say hot, and wet where they say dry, and always put the contrary to what they foretell; if he were to lay a wager, he would not care which side he took, excepting where no uncertainty could fall out, as to promise excessive heats at Christmas, or extremity of cold at midsummer. I have the same opinion of these political controversies; be on which side you will, you have as fair a game to play as your adversary, provided you do not proceed so far as to jostle principles that are too manifest to be disputed. And yet, in my conceit, in public affairs, there is no government so ill, provided it be ancient and has been constant, that is not better than change and alteration. Our manners are infinitely corrupt, and wonderfully incline to the worse; of our laws and customs there are many that are barbarous and monstrous: nevertheless, by reason of the difficulty of reformation, and the danger of stirring things, if I could put something under to stop the wheel, and keep it where it is, I would do it with all my heart:

"Numquam adeo fædis, adeoque pudendis
Utimur exemplis, ut non pejora supersint," †

The worst thing I find in our state is instability, and that our laws, no more than our clothes, cannot settle in any certain form. It is very easy to accuse a government of imperfection, for all mortal things are full of it: it is very easy to beget in a people a contempt of ancient observances; never any man undertook it but he did it; but to establish a better regimen in the stead of that which a man has overthrown, many who have attempted it have foundered. I very little consult my prudence in my conduct; I am willing to let it be guided by the public rule. Happy the people who do what they are commanded, better

* "It is a fight wherein we exhaust each other by mutual wounds."—Horace, Epist. ii. 2, 97.

† "The examples we produce, are not so shamefu and foul but that far worse remain behind."—Juvenal, viii. 183.
than they who command, without tormenting themselves as to the causes; who suffer themselves gently to roll after the celestial revolution! Obedience is never pure nor calm in him who reasons and disputes.

In fine, to return to myself: the only thing by which I esteem myself to be something, is that wherein never any man thought himself to be defective; my recommendation is vulgar and common, for who ever thought he wanted sense? It would be a proposition that would imply a contradiction in itself; 'tis a disease that never is where it is discerned; 'tis tenacious and strong, but what the first ray of the patient's sight nevertheless pierces through and disperses, as the beams of the sun do thick and obscure mists: to accuse one's self would be to excuse in this case, and to condemn, to absolve. There never was porter or the silliest girl, that did not think they had sense enough to do their business. We easily enough confess in others an advantage of courage, strength, experience, activity, and beauty; but an advantage in judgment we yield to none; and the reasons that proceed simply from the natural conclusions of others, we think, if we had but turned our thoughts that way, we should ourselves have found out as well as they. Knowledge, style, and such parts as we see in others' works, we are soon aware of, if they excel our own: but for the simple products of the understanding, every one thinks he could have found out the like in himself, and is hardly sensible of the weight and difficulty, if not (and then with much ado), in an extreme and incomparable distance. And whoever should be able clearly to discern the height of another's judgment, would be also able to raise his own to the same pitch. So that it is a sort of exercise, from which a man is to expect very little praise; a kind of composition of small repute. And, besides, for whom do you write? The learned, to whom the authority appertains of judging books, know no other value but that of learning, and allow of no other proceeding of wit but that of erudition and art: if you have mistaken one of the Scipios for another, what is all the rest you have to say worth? Whoever is ignorant of Aristotle, according to their rule, is in some sort ignorant of himself; vulgar souls cannot discern the grace and force of a lofty and delicate style. Now these two sorts of men take up the world. The third sort into whose hands you fall, of souls that are regular and strong of themselves, is
so rare, that it justly has neither name nor place among us; and 'tis so much time lost to aspire unto it, or to endeavor to please it.

'Tis commonly said that the justest portion nature has given us of her favors, is that of sense; for there is no one who is not contented with his share: is it not reason? whoever should see beyond that, would see beyond his sight. I think my opinions are good and sound, but who does not think the same of his own? One of the best proofs I have that mine are so, is the small esteem I have of myself; for had they not been very well assured, they would easily have suffered themselves to have been deceived by the peculiar affection I have to myself, as one that place it almost wholly in myself, and do not let much run out. All that others distribute among an infinite number of friends and acquaintance, to their glory and grandeur, I dedicate to the repose of my own mind and to myself; that which escapes thence is not properly by my direction:

"Mihi nempe valere et vivere doctus."*

Now I find my opinions very bold and constant in condemning my own imperfection. And, to say the truth, 'tis a subject upon which I exercise my judgment, as much as upon any other. The world looks always opposite; I turn my sight inward, and there fix and employ it. I have no other business but myself, I am eternally meditating upon myself, considering and tasting myself. Other men's thoughts are ever wandering abroad, if they will but see it; they are still going forward;

"Nemo in sese tentat descendere;"†

for my part, I circulate in myself. This capacity of trying the truth, whatever it be, in myself, and this free humor of not over easily subjecting my belief, I owe principally to myself; for the strongest and most general imaginations I have are those that, as a man may say, were born with me; they are natural and entirely my own. I produced them crude and simple, with a strong and bold production, but a little troubled and imperfect; I have since established and fortified them with the authority of others and the sound

* "To live and to do well for myself."—Lucretius, v. 959.
† "No one thinks of descending into himself."—Persius, iv. 23.
examples of the ancients, whom I have found of the same judgment; they have given me faster hold, and a more manifest fruition and possession of that I had before embraced. The reputation that every one pretends to of vivacity and promptness of wit, I seek in regularity; the glory they pretend to from a striking and signal action, or some particular excellence, I claim from order, correspondence, and tranquillity of opinions and manners: "Omnino si quidquam est decorum, nihil est propecto magis, quam equabilitas universæ vitae, tum singularum actionum, quam conservare non possis, si, aliorum naturam imitans, omittas tuam." *

Here, then, you see to what degree I find myself guilty of this first part, that I said was the vice of presumption. As to the second, which consists in not having a sufficient esteem for others, I know not whether or no I can so well excuse myself; but whatever comes on’t I am resolved to speak the truth. And whether, peradventure, it be that the continual frequentation I have had with the humors of the ancients, and the idea of those great souls of past ages, put me out of taste both with others and myself, or that, in truth, the age we live in produces but very indifferent things, yet so it is that I see nothing worthy of any great admiration. Neither, indeed, have I so great an intimacy with many men as is requisite to make a right judgment of them; and those with whom my condition makes me the most frequent, are, for the most part, men who have little care of the culture of the soul, but that look upon honor as the sum of all blessings, and valor as the height of all perfection.

What I see that is fine in others I very readily commend and esteem: nay, I often say more in their commendation than I think they really deserve, and give me myself so far leave to lie, for I cannot invent a false subject: my testimony is never wanting to my friends in what I conceive deserves praise, and where a foot is due I am willing to give them a foot and a half; but to attribute to them qualities that they have not, I cannot do it, nor openly

* "If anything be entirely decorous, nothing certainly can be more so than an equability in the whole life, and in every particular action of it; which thou canst not possibly observe and keep, if imitating other men’s natures thou layest aside thy own."—CICERO, De Offic., i. 31.
defend their imperfections. Nay, I frankly give my very enemies their due testimony of honor; my affection alters, my judgment does not, and I never confound my animosity with other circumstances that are foreign to it; and I am so jealous of the liberty of my judgment that I can very hardly part with it for any passion what ever. I do myself a greater injury in lying than I do him of whom I tell a lie. This commendable and generous custom is observed of the Persian nation, that they spoke of their mortal enemies and with whom they were at deadly war, as honorably and justly as their virtues deserved.

I know men enough that have several fine parts; one wit, another courage, another address, another conscience, another language, one, one science, another, another; but a generally great man, and who has all these brave parts together, or any one of them to such a degree of excellence that we should admire him or compare him with those we honor of times past, my fortune never brought me acquainted with; and the greatest I ever knew, I mean for the natural parts of the soul, was Etienne De la Boetie; his was a full soul indeed, and that had every way a beautiful aspect: a soul of the old stamp, and that had produced great effects had his fortune been so pleased, having added much to those great natural parts by learning and study.

But how it comes to pass I know not, and yet it is certainly so, there is as much vanity and weakness of judgment in those who profess the greatest abilities, who take upon them learned callings and bookish employments as in any other sort of men whatever; either because more is required and expected from them, and that common defects are excusable in them, or because the opinion they have of their own learning makes them more bold to expose and lay themselves too open, by which they lose and betray themselves. As an artificer more manifests his want of skill in a rich matter he has in hand, if he disgrace the work by ill handling and contrary to the rules required, than in a matter of less value; and men are more displeased at a disproportion in a statue of gold than in one of plaster; so do these when they advance things that in themselves and in their place would be good; for they make use of them without discretion, honoring their memories at the expense of their understandings, and making themselves ridiculous by honoring Cicero, Galen, Ulpian, and St. Jerome alike.
I willingly fall again into the discourse of the vanity of our education, the end of which is not to render us good and wise, but learned, and she has obtained it. She has not taught us to follow and embrace virtue and prudence, but she has imprinted in us their derivation and etymology; we know how to decline virtue, if we know not how to love it: if we do not know what prudence is really and in effect, and by experience, we have it, however, by jargon and heart: we are not content to know the extraction, kindred, and alliances of our neighbors; we desire, moreover, to have them our friends and to establish a correspondence and intelligence with them; but this education of ours has taught us definitions, divisions, and partitions of virtue, as so many surnames and branches of a genealogy, without any further care of establishing any familiarity or intimacy between her and us. It has culled out for our initiatory instruction not such books as contain the soundest and truest opinions, but those that speak the best Greek and Latin, and by their fine words has instilled into our fancy the vainest humors of antiquity.

A good education alters the judgment and manners; as it happened to Polemon,* a lewd and debauched young Greek, who going by chance to hear one of Xenocrates' lectures, did not only observe the eloquence and learning of the reader, and not only brought away the knowledge of some fine matter, but a more manifest and a more solid profit, which was the sudden change and reformation of his former life. Whoever found such an effect of our discipline?

"Faciasne, quod olim
Mutatus Polemon? ponas insignia morbi
Fasciolas, cubital, focalia; potus ut ille
Dicitur ex collo furtim carpsisse coronas,
Postquam est impransi correptus voce magistri." †

That seems to me to be the least contemptible condition of men, which by its plainness and simplicity is seated in the

* Diogenes Laertius, Life of Polemon.
† "Will you do what reformed Polemon did of old? will you lay aside the joys of your disease, your garters, capuchin, muffler, as he in his cups is said to have secretly torn off his garlands from his neck, when he heard what that temperate teacher said."—Horace, Sat., ii. 3, 253.
lowest degree, and invites us to a more regular course. I find the rude manners and language of country people commonly better suited to the rule and prescription of true philosophy, than those of our philosophers themselves: "Plus sapit vulgus, quia tantum, quantum opus est, sapit."*

The most remarkable men, as I have judged by outward appearance (for to judge of them according to my own method, I must penetrate a great deal deeper) for soldiers and military conduct, were the duke of Guise, who died at Orleans, and the late Marshal Strozzi; and for men of great ability and no common virtue, Olivier, and De l'Hospital, chancellors of France. Poetry, too, in my opinion, has flourished in this age of ours: we have abundance of very good artificers in the trade; D'Aurat, Beza, Buchanan, L'Hospital, Montdoré, Turnebus: as to the French poets, I believe they raised their art to the highest pitch to which it can ever arrive; and in those parts of it wherein Ronsard and du Bellay excel, I find them little inferior to the ancient perfection. Adrian Turnebus knew more, and what he did know, better than any man of his time, or long before him. The lives of the last duke of Alva, and of our Constable de Montmorency, were both of them great and noble, and that had many rare resemblances of fortune; but the beauty and glory of the death of the last, in the sight of Paris and of his king, in their service, against his nearest relations, at the head of an army through his conduct victorious, and by a sudden stroke, in so extreme old age, merits methinks to be recorded among the most remarkable events of our times. As also the constant goodness, sweetness of manners, and conscientious facility of Monsieur de la Noue, in so great an injustice of armed parties (the true school of treason, inhumanity, and robbery), wherein he always kept up the reputation of a great and experienced captain.

I have taken a delight to publish in several places the hopes I have of Marie de Gournay le Jars, my adopted daughter,† and certainly beloved by me with more than a

* "The vulgar are so much the wiser, because they only know what is needful for them to know."—LACTANTIUS, Instit. Div., iii. 5.

† She was adopted by him in 1588. See Leon Feugere's Made moiselle de Gournay, Étude sur sa vie et ses ouvrages.
paternal love, and enveloped in my solitude and retirement as one of the bests parts of my own being; I have no longer regard to anything in this world but her. And if a man may presage from her youth, her soul will one day be capable of very great things; and among others, of the perfection of that sacred friendship, to which we do not read that any of her sex could ever yet arrive; the sincerity and solidity of her manners are already sufficient for it, and her affection towards me more than superabundant, and such, in short, as that there is nothing more to be wished, if not that the apprehension she has of my end, being now five and fifty years old, might not so much afflict her. The judgment she made of my first Essays, being a woman, so young, and in this age, and alone in her own country; and the famous vehemence wherewith she loved me, and desired my acquaintance solely from the esteem she had thence of me, before she ever saw my face, is an incident very worthy of consideration.

Other virtues have had little or no credit in this age; but valor is become popular by our civil wars; and in this, we have souls brave even to perfection, and in so great number that the choice is impossible to be made.

This is all of extraordinary and not common grandeur that has hitherto arrived at my knowledge.

CHAPTER XII.

OF GIVING THE LIE.

Well, but some one will say to me, this design of making a man's self the subject of his writing, were indeed excusable in rare and famous men, who by their reputation had given others a curiosity to be fully informed of them. It is most true, I confess and know very well, that a mechanic will scarce lift his eye from his work to look at an ordinary man, whereas a man will forsake his business and his shop to stare at an eminent person when he comes into a town. It misbecomes any other to give his own character, but him who has qualities worthy of imitation, and whose life and opinions may serve for example: Cæsar and Xenophon had a just and solid foundation whereon to found their narrations, in the greatness of their own performances;
and it were to be wished that we had the journals of Alexander the Great, the commentaries that Augustus, Cato, Sylla, Brutus, and others left of their actions; of such persons men love and contemplate the very statues even in copper and marble.

This remonstrance is very true; but it very little concerns me:

"Non recito cuiquam, nisi amicos, idque rogatus;
Non ubivis, coramve quibuslibet, in medio qui
Scripta foro recitant, sunt multi, quique lavantes."*

I do not here form a statue to erect in the great square of a city, in a church, or any public place:

"Non equMem hoc studeo, bullatis ut milii nugis,
Pagina turgescat...
Secreti loquimur:"†

'tis for some corner of a library, or to entertain a neighbor, a kinsman, a friend, who has a mind to renew his acquaintance and familiarity with me in this image of myself. Others have been encouraged to speak of themselves, because they found the subject worthy and rich; I, on the contrary, am the bolder, by reason the subject is so poor and sterile that I cannot be suspected of ostentation. I judge freely of the actions of others; I give little of my own to judge of, because they are nothing: I do not find so much good in myself, that I cannot tell it without blushing.

What contentment would it not be to me to hear any one thus relate to me the manners, faces, countenances, the ordinary words and fortunes of my ancestors? how attentively should I listen to it! In earnest, it would be evil nature to despise so much as the pictures of our friend and predecessors, the fashion of their clothes and arms. I preserve their writing, seal, and a particular sword they wore, and have not thrown the long staves my father used to carry in his hand, out of my closet: "Patera vestis, et annulus, tanto charior est posteris, quanto erga parentes

* "I repeat my poems only to my friends, and when asked to do so; not before every one, and everywhere; there are plenty of reciters in the open market place and at the baths."—HORACE, Sat. i. 4, 73. Montaigne has substituted in the text rogatus for coactus.

† "I study not to make my pages swell with empty trifles; you and I are talking in private."—PERSIUS, Sat. v. 19.
major affectus."* If my posterity, nevertheless, shall be of another mind, I shall be revenged on them; for they cannot care less for me, than I shall then do for them. All the traffic that I have in this with the public, is that I borrow their utensils of writing, which are more easy and most at hand; and in recompense shall, peradventure, keep a pound of butter in the market from melting in the sun:

"Ne toga cordyllis, ne penula desit olivis;" †

"Et laxas scombris sæpe dabo tunicas;" ‡

And though nobody should read me, have I lost my time in entertaining myself so many idle hours, in so pleasing and useful thoughts? In molding this figure upon myself, I have been so often constrained to temper and compose myself in a right posture that the copy is truly taken, and has in some sort formed itself; painting myself for others, I represent myself in a better coloring than my own natural complexion. I have no more made my book, than my book has made me: 'tis a book consubstantial with the author, of a peculiar design, a member of my life, and whose business is not designed for others, as that of all other books is. In giving myself so continual and so exact an account of myself, have I lost my time? For they who sometimes cursorily survey themselves only, do not so strictly examine themselves, nor penetrate so deep, as he who makes it his business, his study, and his employment, who intends a lasting record, with all his fidelity, and with all his force. The most delicious pleasures digested within, avoid leaving any trace of themselves, and avoid the sight not only of the people, but of any other person. How often has this work diverted me from troublesome thoughts? and all that are frivolous should be reputed so. Nature has presented us with a large faculty of entertaining ourselves alone; and often calls us to it, to teach us that we owe ourselves in part to society, but chiefly and mostly to our-

* "A father's garment and ring is by so much dearer to his posterity, as they had the greater affection toward him."—St. Aug., De Civit. Dei. i. 13.

† "I shall furnish olives and plaice with a coat, and cover mackerel with a garment."—Martial, xiii. 1, 1.

‡ Catullus, xc. 14, 8.
selves. That I may habituate my fancy even to meditate in some method and to some end, and to keep it from losing itself and roving at random, 'tis but to give to body and to record all the little thoughts that present themselves to it. I give ear to my whimsies, because I am to record them. It often falls out, that being displeased at some action that civility and reason will not permit me openly to reprove, I here disgorge myself, not without design of public instruction: and also these poetical lashes:

"Zon sus l’œil, zon sur le groin,
Zon sur le dos du sagoin," *

imprint themselves better upon paper than upon the flesh. What if I listen to books a little more attentively than ordinary, since I watch if I can purloin anything that may adorn or support my own? I have not at all studied to make a book, but I have in some sort studied because I had made it; if it be studying to scratch and pinch now one author, and then another, either by the head or foot, not with any design to form opinions from them, but to assist, second, and fortify those I already have embraced.

But whom shall we believe in the report he makes of himself in so corrupt an age? considering there are so few, if any at all, whom we can believe when speaking of others, where there is less interest to lie. The first thing done in the corruption of manners is banishing truth; for, as Pindar says, † to be true is the beginning of a great virtue, and the first article that Plato requires in the governor of his Republic. The truth of these days is not that which really is, but what every man persuades another man to believe; as we generally give the name of money not only to pieces of the just alloy, but even to the false also, if they will pass. Our nation has long been reproached with this vice; for Salvianus Massiliensis, who lived in the time of the Emperor Valentinian, says that lying and forswearing themselves is with the French not a vice, but a way of speaking. ‡ He who would enhance this testimony, might say that it is now a virtue in them; men form and fashion themselves to

* "A slap on his eye, a slap on his snout, a slap on Sagoin' back."
—Marot, Fripelippes, Valet de Marot à Sagoin.
† Clement of Alexandria, Strom., vi. 10; Stobæus, Serm., xi.
‡ Salvianus, de Gubernatione Dei, i. 14.
it as to an exercise of honor; for dissimulation is one of the most notable qualities of this age.

I have often considered whence this custom that we so religiously observe should spring, of being more highly offended with the reproach of a vice so familiar to us than with any other, and that it should be the highest insult that can in words be done us to reproach us with a lie. Upon examination, I find that it is natural most to defend the defects with which we are most tainted. It seems as if by resenting and being moved at the accusation, we in some sort acquit ourselves of the fault; though we have it in effect, we condemn it in outward appearance. May it not also that this reproach seems to imply cowardice and feebleness of heart? of which can there be a more manifest sign than to eat a man's own words—nay, to lie against a man's own knowledge? Lying is a base vice; a vice that one of the ancients portrays in the most odious colors when he says, "that it is to manifest a contempt of God, and withal a fear of men." * It is not possible more fully to represent the horror, baseness, and irregularity of it; for what can a man imagine more hateful and contemptible than to be a coward toward men, and valiant against his Maker? Our intelligence being by no other way communicable to one another but by a particular word, he who falsifies that betrays public society. "Tis the only way by which we communicate our thoughts and wills; 'tis the interpreter of the soul, and if it deceives us, we no longer know nor have further tie upon one another; if that deceive us, it breaks all our correspondence, and dissolves all the ties of government. Certain nations of the newly discovered Indies (I need not give them names, seeing they are no more; for, by wonderful and unheard-of example, the desolation of that conquest has extended to the utter abolition of names and the ancient knowledge of places) offered to their gods human blood, but only such as was drawn from the tongue and ears, to expiate for the sin of lying, as well heard as pronounced. The good fellow of Greece † was wont to say that children were amused with toys and men with words.

As to the diverse usage of giving the lie, and the laws of honor in that case, and the alterations they have received,

* Plutarch, Life of Lysander, c. 4. † Lysander. Id., ib.
l shall defer saying what I know of them to another time, and shall learn, if I can, in the meanwhile, at what time the custom took beginning of so exactly weighing and measuring words, and of making our honor so interested in them; for it is easy to judge that it was not anciently among the Greeks and Romans; and I have often thought it strange to see them rail at and give one another the lie without any further quarrel. Their laws of duty steered some other course than ours. Caesar is sometimes called thief, and sometimes drunkard, to his teeth.* We see the liberty of invectives they practiced upon one another, I mean the greatest chiefs of war of both nations, where words are only revenged with words, and never proceed any farther.

CHAPTER XIII.

OF LIBERTY OF CONSCIENCE.

'Tis usual to see good intentions, if carried on without moderation, push men on to very vicious effects. In this dispute which has at this time engaged France in a civil war, the better and the soundest cause, no doubt, is that which maintains the ancient religion and government of the kingdom. Nevertheless, among the good men of that party (for I do not speak of those who only make a pretense of it, either to execute their own particular revenges or to gratify their avarice, or to conciliate the favor of princes, but of those who engage in the quarrel out of true zeal to religion and a holy desire to maintain the peace and government of their country), of these I say, we see many whom passion transports beyond the bounds of reason, and sometimes inspires with counsels that are unjust and violent, and, moreover, rash.

It is certain that in those first times, when our religion began to gain authority with the laws, zeal armed many against all sorts of pagan books, by which the learned suffered an exceeding great loss, a disorder that I conceive to have done more prejudice to letters than all the flames of the barbarians. Of this Cornelius Tacitus is a very good

* Plutarch, Pompey, c. 16; Cato of Utica, c. 7.
testimony; for though the Emperor Tacitus,* his kinsman, had, by express order, furnished all the libraries in the world with it, nevertheless one entire copy could not escape the curious examination of those who desired to abolish it for only five or six idle clauses that were contrary to our belief.

They had also the trick easily to lend undue praises to all the emperors who did anything for us, and universally to condemn all the actions of those who were our adversaries as is evidently manifest in the Emperor Julian, surnamed the Apostle, † who was, in truth, a very great and rare man, a man in whose soul philosophy was imprinted in the best characters, by which he professed to govern all his actions; and, in truth, there is no sort of virtue of which he has not left behind him very notable examples; in chastity (of which the whole of his life gave manifest proof) we read the same of him, that was said of Alexander and Scipio, that being in the flower of his age for he was slain by the Parthians at one and thirty, of a great many very beautiful captives, he would not so much as look upon one. ‡ As to his justice, he took himself the pains to hear the parties, and although he would out of curiosity inquire what religion they were of, nevertheless, the hatred he had to ours never gave any counterpoise to the balance. He made himself several good laws, and cut off a great part of the subsidies and taxes imposed and levied by his predecessors. §

We have two good historians who were eyewitnesses of his actions; one of whom, Marcellinus, in several places of his history, || sharply reproves an edict of his whereby he interdicted all Christians, rhetoricians and grammarians to keep school, or to teach, and says he could wish that act of

* Vopiscus, in vita, c. 10.
† The character of the Emperor Julian was censured, when Montaigne was at Rome, in 1581, by the master of the Sacred Palace, who, however, as Montaigne tells us in his journey (ii. 35), referred it to his conscience to alter what he should think in bad taste. This Montaigne did not do, and this chapter supplied Voltaire with the greater part of the praises he bestowed upon the emperor.—(Leclerc.)
‡ Ammianus Marcellinus, xxiv. 8.
§ Idem, xxii. 10; xxv. 5, 6.
|| Idem, xxii. 10, etc.
his has been buried in silence: it is probable that, had he done any more severe thing against us, he, so affectionate as he was to our party, would not have passed it over in silence. He was, indeed, sharp against us; but yet no cruel enemy; for our own people * tell this story of him, that one day, walking about the city of Chalcedon, Maris, bishop of the place, was so bold as to tell him that he was impious, and an enemy to Christ, at which, say they, therein affecting a philosophical patience, he was no further moved than to reply, "Go, poor wretch, and lament the loss of thy eyes," to which the bishop replied again, "I thank Jesus Christ for taking away my sight, that I may not see thy impudent face." But this action of his savors nothing of the cruelty that he is said to have exercised toward us. "He was," says Eutropius,† my other witness, "an enemy to Christianity, but without putting his hand to blood." And, to return to his justice, there is nothing in that whereof he can be accused, the severity excepted he practiced in the beginning of his reign against those who had followed the party of Constantius, his predecessor. ‡ As to his sobriety, he lived always a soldier’s kind of life; and kept a table in the most profound peace, like one that prepared and inured himself to the austerities of war.§ His vigilance was such, that he divided the night into three or four parts, of which the least was dedicated to sleep: the rest was spent either in visiting the state of his army and guards, in person, or in study; || for among other rare qualities, he was very excellent in all sorts of learning. "Tis said of Alexander the Great, that being in bed, for fear lest sleep should divert him from his thoughts and studies, he had always a basin set by his bedside, and held one of his hands out with a ball of copper in it, to the end, that, beginning to fall asleep, and his fingers leaving their hold, the ball, by falling into the basin, might awake him. But the other had his soul so bent upon what he had a mind to do, and so little disturbed with fumes by reason of his singular abstinence, that he had no need of any such invention. As to his military experience, he was excellent in all

* Sozomenus, Hist. Eccl., v. 4. † x. 8.
‡ Ammianus Marcellinus, xxii. 2.
§ Idem, xvi. 2. || Id., ib.
the qualities of a great captain, as it was likely he should, being almost all his life in a continual exercise of war, and most of that time with us in France, against the Germans and Franks: we hardly read of any man who ever saw more dangers, or who made more frequent proofs of his personal valor.

His death has something in it parallel with that of Epaminondas, for he was wounded with an arrow, and tried to pull it out, and had done so, but that, being edged, it cut and disabled his hand. He incessantly called out, that they should carry him again into the heat of the battle to encourage his soldiers, who very bravely disputed the fight without him, till night parted the armies. * He stood obliged to his philosophy for the singular contempt he had for his life, and all human things. He had a firm belief of the immortality of the soul.

In matter of religion, he was wrong throughout; and was surnamed the Apostate for having relinquished ours; though, methinks, 'tis more likely that he had never thoroughly embraced it, but had dissembled out of obedience to the laws, till he came to the empire. He was, in his own so superstitious, that he was laughed at for 'tis by those of his own time, of the same opinion, who jeeringly said, that had he got the victory over the Parthians, he had destroyed the breed of oxen in the world to supply his sacrifices. † He was, moreover, besotted with the art of divination, and gave authority to all sorts of predictions. He said, among other things, at his death, that he was obliged to the gods, and thanked them, in that they would not cut him off by surprise, having long before advertised him of the place and hour of his death, nor by a mean and unmanly death, more becoming lazy and delicate people; nor by a death that was languishing, long, and painful; and that they had thought him worthy to die after that noble manner, in the progress of his victories, in the flower of his glory. ‡ He had a vision like that of Marcus Brutus, that first threatened him in Gaul, and afterward appeared to him in Persia just before his death. § These words that some make him say when he felt himself wounded: "Thou

* Ammianus Marcellinus, xxv. 3.  † Idem, xxv. 6.
‡ Idem, xxiv. 4.  § Idem, xx. 5; xxv. 2.
hast overcome, Nazarene;" * or as others, "Content thyself, Nazarene;" would hardly have been omitted, had they been believed, by my witnesses who, being present in the army, have set down to the least motions and words of his end; no more than certain other miracles that are reported about it.

And to return to my subject, he long nourished, says Marcellinus,† paganism in his heart; but all his army being Christians, he durst not own it. But in the end, seeing himself strong enough to dare to discover himself, he caused the temples of the gods to be thrown open, and did his utmost to set on foot and to encourage idolatry. Which the better to effect, having at Constantinople found the people disunited, and also the prelates of the church divided among themselves, having convened them all before him, he earnestly admonished them to calm those civil dissensions, and that every one might freely, and without fear, follow his own religion.‡ Which he the more sedulously solicited, in hope that this licence would augment the schisms and factions of their division, and hinder the people from reuniting, and consequently fortifying themselves against him by their unanimous intelligence and concord; having experience by the cruelty of some Christians, that there is no beast in the world so much to be feared by man as man; these are very nearly his words.

Therein this is very worthy of consideration, that the Emperor Julian made use of the same receipt of liberty of conscience to inflame the civil dissensions, that our kings do to extinguish them. So that a man may say on one side, that to give the people the reins to entertain every man his own opinion, is to scatter and sow division, and, as it were, to lend a hand to augment it, there being no legal impediment or restraint to stop or hinder their career; but, on the other side, a man may also say, that to give the people the reins to entertain every man his own opinion, is to mollify and appease them by facility and toleration, and to dull the point which is whetted and made sharper by singularity, novelty, and difficulty: and I think it is better for the honor of the devotion of our kings, that not having

* Theodoretus, Hist. Eccl., iii. 20.
† Marcellinus, xxi. 2.
‡ Idem, xxii. 3.
been able to do what they would, they have made a show of being willing to do what they could.

CHAPTER XIV.

THAT WE TASTE NOTHING PURE.

The imbecility of our condition is such that things cannot, in their natural simplicity and purity, fall into our use; the elements that we enjoy are changed, and so 'tis with metals; and gold must be debased with some other matter to fit it for our service. Neither has virtue, so simple as that which Aristo, Pyrrho, and also the Stoics, made the end of life; nor the Cyrenaic and Aristippic pleasure, been without mixture useful to it. Of the pleasure and goods that we enjoy, there is not one exempt from some mixture of ill and inconvenience:

"Medio de fonte leporum,
Surgit amari alliquid, quod in ipsis floribus angat." *

Our extremest pleasure has some air of groaning and complaining in it; would you not say that it is dying of pain? Nay when we frame the image of it in its full excellence, we stuff it with sickly and painful epithets and qualities, languor, softness, feebleness, faintness, morbidezza: a great testimony of their consanguinity and consubstantiality. The most profound joy has more of severity than gayety in it. The highest and fullest contentment offers more of the grave than of the merry; "Ipsa felicitas, se nisi temperat, premit." † Pleasure chews and grinds us; according to the old Greek verse, ‡ which says that the gods sell us all the goods they give us; that is to say, that they give us nothing pure and perfect, and that we do not purchase but at the price of some evil.

Labor and pleasure, very unlike in nature, associate, nevertheless, by I know not what natural conjunction.

* "In the very source of our pleasure, there is something that is bitter, and that vexes even the flowers."—Lucretius, iv. 1130.
† "Even felicity, unless it moderate itself, oppresses."—Seneca, Ep. 74.
‡ Epicharmus, in Xenophon, Mem. Socrates, ii. 1, 20.
Socrates says,* that some god tried to mix in one mass and to confound pain and pleasure, but not being able to do it, he bethought him at least, to couple them by the tail. Metrodorus† said that in sorrow there is some mixture of pleasure. I know not whether or no he intended anything else by that saying; but for my part, I am of opinion that there is design, consent, and complacency in giving a man's self up to melancholy. I say, that beside ambition, which may also have a stroke in the business, there is some shadow of delight and delicacy which smiles upon and flatters us even in the very lap of melancholy. Are there not some constitutions that feed upon it?

"Est quaedam flere voluptas." ‡

and one Attalus in Seneca § says, that the memory of our lost friends is as grateful to us, as bitterness in wine, when too old, is to the palate—

"Minister vetuli, puer, Falerni
Inger' mi calices amaroires" ||

and as apples that have a sweet tartness.

Nature discovers this confusion to us; painters hold that the same motions and screwings of the face that serve for weeping, serve for laughter too; and indeed, before the one or the other be finished, do but observe the painter's manner of handling, and you will be in doubt to which of the two the design tends; and the extreme of laughter does, at last bring tears. "Nullum sine auctoramento malum est." ¶

When I imagine man abounding with all the conveniences that are to be desired (let us put the case that all his members were always seized with a pleasure like that of generation, in its most excessive height) I feel him melting under the weight of his delight, and see him utterly

‡ "'Tis a certain kind of pleasure to weep."—Ovid, Trist., iv. 3, 27.
§ Ep. 70.
¶ "Boy, when you pour out old Falernian wine, the bitterest put into my bowl."—Catullus, xxvii. 1.
¶¶ "No evil is without its compensation."—Seneca, Ep. 69.
unable to support so pure, so continual, and so universal a pleasure. Indeed, he is running away while he is there, and naturally makes haste to escape as from a place where he cannot stand firm, and where he is afraid of sinking.

When I religiously confess myself to myself, I find that the best virtue I have has in it some tincture of vice; and I am afraid that Plato, in his purest virtue (I, who am as sincere and loyal a lover of virtue of that stamp, as any other whatever) if he had listened and laid his ear close to himself, and he did so no doubt, would have heard some jarring sound of human mixture, but faint and only perceptible to himself. Man is wholly and throughout but patch and motley. Even the laws of justice themselves cannot subsist without mixture of injustice; insomuch that Plato says,* they undertake to cut off the hydra’s head, who pretend to clear the law of all inconveniences. “Omne magnum exemplum habet aliquid ex iniquo, quod contra singulos utilitate publica rependitur;”† says Tacitus.

It is likewise true, that for the use of life and the service of public commerce, there may be some excesses in the purity and perspicacity of our minds; that penetrating light has in it too much of subtlety and curiosity: we must a little stupefy and blunt them to render them more obedient to example and practice, and a little veil and obscure them, the better to proportion them to this dark and earthly life. And therefore common and less speculative souls are found to be more proper for and more successful in the management of affairs; and the elevated and exquisite opinions of philosophy unfit for business. This sharp vivacity of soul, and the supple and restless volubility attending it, disturb our negotiations. We are to manage human enterprises more superficially and roughly, and leave a great part to fortune; it is not necessary to examine affairs with so much subtlety and so deep: a man loses himself in the consideration of so many contrary

* Republic iv. 5.

† “Every great example has in it some mixture of injustice, which recompenses the wrong done to particu men by the public utility.” —Tacitus, Annals, xiv. 44.
clusters, and so many various forms; "Volutantibus res inter se pugnantes, obdornuerant . . . animi."*

"Tis what the ancients say of Simonides, that by reason his imagination suggested to him, upon the question King Hiero had put to him† (to answer which he had had many days to meditate in), several sharp and subtle considerations, while he doubted which was the most likely, he totally despaired of the truth.

He who dives into and in his inquisition comprehends all circumstances and consequences, hinders his elections: a little engine well handled is sufficient for executions, whether of less or greater weight. The best managers are those who can worst give account how they are so; while the greatest talkers, for the most part, do nothing to purpose: I know one of this sort of men, and a most excellent discoursor upon all sorts of good husbandry, who has miserably let a hundred thousand livres yearly revenue slip through his hands; I know another who talks, who better advises than any man of his counsel, and there is not in the world a fairer show of soul and understanding than he has; nevertheless, when he comes to the test, his servants find him quite another thing; not to make any mention of his misfortunes.

CHAPTER XV.
AGAINST IDLENESS.

The Emperor Vespasian, being sick of the disease whereof he died, did not for all that neglect to inquire after the state of the empire; and even in bed continually despatched very many affairs of great consequence; for which, being reproved by his physician, as a thing prejudicial to his health, "An emperor," said he, "must die standing."‡ A fine saying, in my opinion, and worthy a great prince. The Emperor Adrian since made use of the same words,§

* "While they considered of things so indifferent in themselves, they were astonished, and knew not what to do."—Livy, xxxii. 20.
† What God was.—Cicero, De. Nat. Deor., i. 22.
‡ Suetonius, in vita, c. 24.
§ Spartian, Verus, c. 6.
and kings should be often put in mind of them, to make them know that the great office conferred upon them of the command of so many men, is not an employment of ease; and that there is nothing can so justly disgust a subject, and make him unwilling to expose himself to labor and danger for the service of his prince, than to see him, in the meantime, devoted to his ease and frivolous amusement: and to be solicitous of his preservation who so much neglects that of his people.

Whoever will take upon him to maintain that 'tis better for a prince to carry on his wars by others, than in his own person, fortune will furnish him with examples enough of those whose lieutenants have brought great enterprises to a happy issue, and of those also whose presence has done more hurt than good: but no virtuous and valiant prince, can with patience endure so dishonorable councils. Under color of saving his head, like the statue of a saint, for the happiness of his kingdom, they degrade him from and declare him incapable of his office, which is military throughout. I know one* who had much rather be beaten, than to sleep while another fights for him; and who never without jealousy heard of any brave thing done even by his own officers in his absence. And Soliman I. said, with very good reason, in my opinion, that victories obtained without the master were never complete. Much more would he have said that that master ought to blush for shame, to pretend to any share in the honor, having contributed nothing to the work, but his voice and thought; nor even so much of those, considering that in such work as that the direction and command that deserve honor are only such as are given upon the spot, and in the heat of the business. No pilot performs his office by standing still. The princes of the Ottoman family, the chiefest in the world in military fortune, have warmly embraced this opinion, and Bajazet II., with his son who swerved from it, spending their time in science and other retired employments, gave great blows to their empire: and Amurath III., now reigning, following their example, begins to find the same. Was it not Edward III., king of England, who said this of our Charles V.: "There never was king who so seldom put on his armor, and yet never king who

* Probably Henry IV.
cut me out so much work." He had reason to think it strange, as an effect of chance more than of reason. And let those seek out some other to join with them than me, who will reckon the kings of Castile and Portugal among the warlike and magnanimous conquerors, because at the distance of twelve hundred leagues from their lazy abode by the conduct of their captains, they made themselves masters of both Indies; of which it has to be known if they would have had even the courage to go and in person enjoy them.

The Emperor Julian said yet further, that a philosopher and a brave man ought not so much as to breathe: that is to say, not to allow any more to bodily necessities than what we cannot refuse; keeping the soul and body still intent and busy about honorable, great, and virtuous things. He was ashamed if any one in public saw him spit, or sweat (which is said by some, also, of the Lacedæmonian young men, and which Xenophon says of the Persian)* forasmuch as he conceived that exercise, continual labor, and sobriety, ought to have dried up all those superfluities. What Seneca says† will not be unfit for this place; which is, that the ancient Romans kept their youth always standing, and taught them nothing that they were to learn sitting.

"Tis a generous desire to wish to die usefully and like a man, but the effect lies not so much in our resolution as in our good fortune; a thousand have proposed to themselves in battle, either to overcome or to die, who have failed both in the one and the other, wounds and imprisonment crossing their design and compelling them to live against their will. There are diseases that overthrow even our desires, and our knowledge. Fortune ought not to second the vanity of the Roman legions, who bound themselves by oath, either to overcome or die: "Victor, Marcus Fabi, revertar ex acie: si fallo, Jovem patrem, Gradivumque Martem aliosque iratos invoco deos." ‡ The Portuguese say that in a certain place of their conquest of the Indies, they met with soldiers, who had condemned themselves,

* Cyrop., i. 2, 16.
† Ep. 88.
‡ "I will return, Marcus Fabius, a conqueror, from the fight; and if I fail, I wish the indignation of Jove, Mars, and the other offended gods may light upon me."—Livy, ii. 45.
with horrible execrations, to enter into no other composition but either to cause themselves to be slain, or to remain victorious; and had their heads and beards shaved in token of this vow. 'Tis to much purpose for us to hazard ourselves and to be obstinate: it seems as if blows avoided those who present themselves too briskly to them, and do not willingly fall upon those who too willingly seek them, and so defeat them of their design. Such there have been, who, after having tried all ways, not having been able with all their endeavor to obtain the favor of dying by the hand of the enemy, have been constrained, to make good their resolution of bringing home the honor of victory or of losing their lives, to kill themselves even in the heat of battle. Of which there are other examples, but this is one; Philistus, general of the naval army of Dionysius the younger against the Syracusans, presented them battle, which was sharply disputed, their forces being equal: in this engagement, he had the better at the first, through his own valor: but the Syracusans drawing about his galley to environ him, after having done great things in his own person to disengage himself and hoping for no relief, with his own hand he took away the life he had so liberally, and in vain exposed to the enemy.*

Muley Moloch, king of Fez, who lately won against Sebastian, king of Portugal, the battle so famous for the death of three kings, and for the transmission of that great kingdom to the crown of Castile, was extremely sick when the Portuguese entered in a hostile manner into his dominions; and from that day forward grew worse and worse, still drawing nearer to and foreseeing his end: yet never did man better employ his own sufficiency more vigorously and bravely than he did upon this occasion. He found himself too weak to undergo the pomp and ceremony of entering into his camp, which after their manner is very magnificent, and therefore resigned that honor to his brother; but this was all of the office of a general that he resigned; all the rest of greatest utility and necessity he most exactly and gloriously performed in his own person; his body lying upon a couch, but his judgment and courage upright and firm to his last gasp, and in some sort beyond it. He might have wasted his enemy, indiscreetly advanced

* Plutarch, Life of Dionysius, c. 8.
into his dominions, without striking a blow; and it was a very unhappy occurrence, that for want of a little life or somebody to substitute in the conduct of this war and the affairs of a troubled state, he was compelled to seek a doubtful and bloody victory, having another by a better and surer way already in his hands. Notwithstanding, he wonderfully managed the continuance of his sickness in consuming the enemy, and in drawing them far from the assistance of their navy and the ports they had on the coast of Africa, even till the last day of his life, which he designedly reserved for this great battle. He arranged his battallia in a circular form, environing the Portuguese army on every side, which round circle coming to close in and to draw up close together, not only hindered them in the conflict (which was very sharp through the valor of the young invading king) considering that they had every way to present a front, but prevented their flight after the defeat, so that finding all passages possessed and shut up by the enemy, they were constrained to close up together again, "concernanturque non solum cede, sed etiam fuga,"* and there they were slain in heaps upon one another, leaving to the conqueror a very bloody and entire victory. Dying, he caused himself to be carried and hurried from place to place where most need was, and passing along the files, encouraged the captains and soldiers one after another; but a corner of his main battallia being broken, he was not to be held from mounting on horseback with his sword in his hand; he did his utmost to break from those about him, and to rush into the thickest of the battle, they all the while withholding him, some by the bridle, some by his robe, and others by his stirrups. This last effort totally overwhelmed the little life he had left; they again laid him upon his bed; but coming to himself, and starting as it were out of his swoon, all other faculties failing, to give his people notice that they were to conceal his death (the most necessary command he had then to give, that his soldiers might not be discouraged with the news) he expired with his finger upon his mouth, the ordinary sign of keeping silence. Who ever lived so long and so far into death? who ever died so erect, or more like a man? The most extreme degree of courageously treating death,

* "Piled up not only in slaughter but in flight."
and the most natural, is to look upon it not only without astonishment but without care, continuing the wonted course of life even into it, as Cato did, who entertained himself in study, and went to sleep, having a violent and bloody death in his heart, and the weapon in his hand with which he was resolved to despatch himself.

CHAPTER XVI.

OF POSTING.

I HAVE been none of the least able in this exercise, which is proper for men of my pitch, short and well knit; but I give it over; it shakes us too much to continue it long. I was just now reading,* that King Cyrus, the better to have news brought him from all parts of the empire, which was of a vast extent, caused it to be tried how far a horse could go in a day without baiting, and at that distance appointed men, whose business it was to have horses always in readiness, to mount those who were despatched to him; and some say, that this swift way of posting is equal to that of the flight of cranes.

Cæsar says, † that Lucius Vibullius Rufus, being in great haste to carry intelligence to Pompey, rode night and day, still taking fresh horses for the greater diligence and speed; and he himself, as Suetonius reports, ‡ traveled a hundred miles a day in a hired coach; but he was a furious courier, for where the rivers stopped his way he passed them by swimming, without turning out of his way to look for either bridge or ford. Tiberius Nero, going to see his brother Drusus, who was sick in Germany, traveled two hundred miles in four and twenty hours, having three coaches. § In the war the Romans had against King Antiochus, T. Sempronius Gracchus, says Livy, "Per dispositus equos prope incredibili celeritate ab Amphissa tertio die Pellam pervenit." ¶ And it appears that they

* In Xenoph., Cyrop., viii. 6, 9.
† De Bell. Civ., iii. 11.
‡ In vita, c. 57.
§ Pliny, Nat. Hist., vii. 20.
¶ "Upon horses purposely laid in, he, by an almost incredible speed, rode in three days from Amphissa to Pella."—Livy, xxxviii. 7.
were established posts, and not horses purposely laid in upon this occasion.

Cecina's invention to send back news to his family was much more quick, for he took swallows along with him from home, and turned them out toward their nests when he would send back any news; setting a mark of some color upon them to signify his meaning, according to what he and his people had before agreed upon.*

At the theater at Rome masters of families carried pigeons in their bosoms to which they tied letters when they had a mind to send any orders to their people at home; and the pigeons were trained up to bring back an answer. D. Brutus made use of the same device when besieged in Mutina,† and others, elsewhere, have done the same.

In Peru they rode post upon men, who took them upon their shoulders in a certain kind of litters made for that purpose, and ran with such agility that, in their full speed, the first couriers transferred their load to the second without making any stop.

I understand that the Wallachians, who are the grand signor's couriers, perform wonderful diligence, by reason they have liberty to dismount the first person they meet upon the road, giving him their own tired horses; and that to preserve themselves from being weary, they gird themselves straight about the middle with a broad girdle; but I could never find any benefit from this.

CHAPTER XVII.

OF ILL MEANS EMPLOYED TO A GOOD END.

There is wonderful relation and correspondence in this universal government of the works of nature, which very well makes it appear that it is neither accidental nor carried on by divers masters. The diseases and conditions of our bodies are, in like manner, manifest in states and governments; kingdoms and republics are founded, flourish, and decay with age as we do. We are subject to a repulsion of humors, useless and dangerous: whether of those

* Pliny, Nat. Hist., x. 24
† Idem, ibid., 77.
that are good (for even those the physicians are afraid of; and seeing we have nothing in us that is stable, they say that a too brisk and vigorous perfection of health must be abated by art, lest our nature, unable to rest in any certain condition, and not having whither to rise to mend itself make too sudden and too disorderly a retreat; and therefore prescribe wrestlers to purge and bleed, to qualify that superabundant health), or else a repletion of evil humors, which is the ordinary cause of sickness. States are very often sick of the like repletion, and various sorts of purgations have commonly been applied. Sometimes a great multitude of families are turned out to clear the country, who seek out new abodes elsewhere and encroach upon others. After this manner our ancient Franks came from the remotest part of Germany to seize upon Gaul, and to drive thence the first inhabitants; so was that infinite deluge of men made up who came into Italy under the conduct of Brennus and others; so the Goths and Vandals, and also the people who now possess Greece, left their native country to go settle elsewhere, where they might have more room; and there are scarce two or three little corners in the world that have not felt the effect of such removals. The Romans by this means erected their colonies; for, perceiving their city to grow immeasurably populous, they eased it of the most unnecessary people, and sent them to inhabit and cultivate the lands conquered by them; sometimes also they purposely maintained wars with some of their enemies, not only to keep their own men in action, for fear lest idleness the mother of corruption, should bring upon them some worse inconvenience,

"Et patimur longae pacis mala; saevior armis
Luxuria incumbit:" *

but also to serve for a blood-letting to their republic, and a little to evaporate the too vehement heat of their youth, to prune and clear the branches from the stock too luxuriant in wood; and to this end it was that they maintained so long a war with Carthage.

In the treaty of Bretigny, Edward III., king of England, would not, in the general peace he then made with our

* "We suffer the ills of a long peace; for luxury is more pernicious than war."—*Juvenal*, vi. 291.
king, comprehend the controversy about the duchy of Brittany, that he might have a place wherein to discharge himself of his soldiers, and that the vast number of English he had brought over to serve him in his expedition here might not return back into England. And this also was one reason why our King Philip consented to send his son John upon a foreign expedition, that he might take along with him a great number of hot young men who were then in his pay.

There are many in our times who talk at this rate, wishing that this hot emotion that is now among us might discharge itself in some neighboring war, for fear lest all the peccant humors that now reign in this politic body of ours may diffuse themselves farther, keep the fever still in the height, and at last cause our total ruin; and, in truth, a foreign is much more supportable than a civil war; but I do not believe that God will favor so unjust a design as to offend and quarrel with others for our own advantage.

"Nil mihi tam valde placeat, Rhamnusia virgo, Quod temere invitis suscipiatur heris." [*]

And yet the weakness of our condition often pushes us upon the necessity of making use of ill means to a good end. Lycurgus, the most virtuous and perfect legislator that ever was, invented this very unjust practice of making the Helots, who were their slaves, drunk by force, to the end that the Spartans, seeing them so lost and buried in wine, might abhor the excess of this vice.† And yet those were still more to blame, who of old gave leave that criminals, to what sort of death soever condemned, should be cut up alive by the physicians, that they might make a true discovery of our inward parts, and build their art upon greater certainty; for, if we must run into excesses, it is more excusable to do it for the health of the soul, than that of the body; as the Romans trained up the people to valor, and the contempt of dangers and death, by those furious spectacles of gladiators and fencers, who having to fight it out to the last, cut, mangled, and killed one another in their presence:

* "Oh Nemesis, let me never so strongly desire to receive anything to the wrong of the lawful owner."—CATAULLUS, lxviii. 77.

† Plutarch, in vita, c. 21.
"Quid vesani aliud sibi vult ars impia ludi,
Quid mortes juvenum quid sanguine pasta voluptas?" *

and this custom continued till the Emperor Theodosius' time.

"Arripe dilatam tua, dux, in tempora famam,
Quodque patris superest, successor laudis habeto
Nullus in urbe cadat, cujus sit poena voluptas . . .
Jam solis contenta feris, infamis arena
Nulla cruentatis homicidia ludat in armis." †

It was, in truth, a wonderful example, and of great advantage for the training up of people, to see every day before their eyes a hundred, two hundred, nay, a thousand couples of men armed against one another, cut one another to pieces with so great a constancy of courage, that they were never heard to utter so much as one syllable of weakness or commiseration; never seen to turn their backs, nor so much as to make one cowardly step to evade a blow, but rather exposed their necks to the adversary’s sword and presented themselves to receive the stroke; and many of them, when wounded to death, have sent to ask the spectators if they were satisfied with their behavior, before they lay down to die upon the place. It was not enough for them to fight and to die bravely, but cheerfully too; insomuch that they were hissed and cursed if they made any hesitation about receiving their death. The very girls themselves set them on:

"Consurgit ad ictus,
Et, quoties victor ferrum jugulo inserit, illa
Delicias ait esse suas, pectusque jacentis
Virgo modesta jubet converso pollice rumpi." ‡

* "What other end the impious art of the gladiators, the slaughter of young men, the delight in the effusion of blood."—PRUDENTIUS, Contra Symmachum, ii. 643.

† "Prince, take the honors delayed for thy reign, and be successor to thy fathers; henceforth let none at Rome be slain for sport. Let beast's blood stain the infamous arena, and no more homicides be there acted."—Idem, ibid.

‡ "The modest virgin is so delighted with the sport, that she applauds the blow, and when the victor bathes his sword in his fellow's throat, she is delighted, and, with turned thumb, orders him to rip up the bosom of the prostrate victim."—PRUDENTIUS, Contra Symmachum, 617.
The first Romans only condemned criminals to this example: but they afterward employed innocent slaves in the work, and even freemen too, who sold themselves to this purpose, nay, moreover, senators and knights of Rome, and also women:

"Nunc caput in mortem vendunt, et funus arenæ,
Atque hostem sibi quisque parat, cum bella quiescunt."

"Hos inter fremitus novosvue lusus . . .
Stat sexus rudis insciusque ferri,
Et pugnas capitis improbus viriles;"

which I should think strange and incredible, if we were not accustomed, every day, to see in our own wars many thousands of men of other nations, for money to stake their blood and their lives in quarrels wherein they have no manner of concern

CHAPTER XVIII.

OF THE ROMAN GRANDEUR.

I WILL only say a word or two of this infinite argument, to show the simplicity of those who compare the pitiful grandeur of these times with that of Rome. In the seventh book of Cicero's Familiar Epistles (and let the grammarians put out that surname of familiar if they please, for in truth it is not very proper; and they who instead of familiar have substituted "ad familiares," may gather something to justify them for so doing, out of what Suetonius says in the Life of Cæsar,† that there was a volume of letters of his, '"ad familiares") there is one § directed to Cæsar, then in Gaul, wherein Cicero repeats these words, which were in the end of another letter that Cæsar had written to him:

“As to what concerns Marcus Furius, whom you have recommended to me, I will make him king of Gaul, and if

* "They sell themselves to death, and, since the wars are ceased, each for himself a foe prepared."—Manilius, Astron., iv. 225.
† "Amidst these tumults and new sports, the tender sex, unskilled in arms, immodestly engaged in manly fights."—Statius, Sylv., i. 6, 51.
‡ c. 56.
§ Cicero, Ep. Fam., vii. 5.
you would have me advance any other friend of yours send him to me." It was no new thing for a simple citizen of Rome, as Caesar then was, to dispose of kingdoms, for he took away that of King Deiotarus from him, to give it to a gentleman of the city of Pergamus, called Mithridates;* and they who wrote his life, record several cities sold by him; and Suetonius says, † that he had once from King Ptolemy three millions and six hundred thousand crowns, which was very like selling him his own kingdom.

"Tot Galatæ, tot Pontus, tot Lydia, nummis."‡

Marcus Antonius said, § that the grandeur of the people of Rome was not so much seen in what they took, as in what they gave; and, indeed, some ages before Antonius, they had dethroned one among the rest with so wonderful authority, that in all the Roman history I have not observed anything that more denotes the height of their power. Antiochus possessed all Egypt, and was, moreover, ready to conquer Cyprus, and other appendages of that empire: when being upon the progress of his victories, C. Popilius came to him from the senate, and at their first meeting refused to take him by the hand, till he had first read his letters, which after the king had read, and told him he would consider of them, Popilius made a circle about him with the stick he had in his hand, saying, "Return me an answer, that I may carry it back to the senate before thou stirrest out of this circle." Antiochus, astonished at the roughness of so positive a command, after a little pause, replied, "I will obey the Senate's command;" and then it was that Popilius saluted him as a friend to the people of Rome.|| After having quitted claim to so great a monarchy, and in such a torrent of successful fortune, upon three words in writing, in earnest he had reason, as he afterward did, to send the senate word by his ambassadors, that he had received their order with the same respect as if it had been sent by the immortal gods.

*Idem, De Divin., ii. 37.
† In vita, c. 54.
‡ "So much for Galatia, so much for Pontus, so much for Lydia."
—Claudius, in Eutrop., i. 203.
§ Plutarch's Life of Antony, c. 8.
|| Livy, xiv. 12.
All the kingdoms that Augustus gained by the right of war, he either restored to those who had lost them, or presented them to strangers. And Tacitus, in reference to this, speaking of Cogidunus, king of England, gives us, by a marvelous touch, an instance of that infinite power: the Romans, says he, were from all antiquity accustomed to leave the kings they had subdued in possession of their kingdoms under their authority, "that they might have even kings to be their slaves:" "Ut haberent instrumenta servitutis et reges."* "Tis probable that Soliman, whom we have seen make a gift of Hungary and other principalities, had therein more respect to this consideration, than to that he was wont to allege, viz., that he was glutted and overcharged with so many monarchies and so much dominion, as his own valor and that of his ancestors had acquired.

CHAPTER XIX.

NOT TO COUNTERFEIT BEING SICK.

There is an epigram in Martial, and one of the very good ones—for he has of all sorts—where he pleasantly tells the story of Cælius, who, to avoid making his court to some great men of Rome, to wait their rising, and to attend them abroad, pretended to have the gout; and the better to color this anointed his legs, and had them lapped up in a great many swathings, and perfectly counterfeited both the gesture and countenance of a gouty person; till in the end, fortune did him the kindness to make him one indeed.

"Tantum cura potest, et ars dolore!\nDesit fingere Cælius podagram,"†

I think I have read somewhere in Appian,‡ a story like this, of one who to escape the proscriptions of the triumvirs


† "The power of counterfeiting maladies is so great, that Cælius no longer needs to feign the gout; he has got it."—Martial, Ep. vii. 39, 8.

‡ De Bell. Civil., iv.
of Rome, and the better to be concealed from the discovery of those who pursued him, having hidden himself in a disguise, would yet add this invention, to counterfeit having but one eye; but when he came to have a little more liberty, and went to take off the plaster he had a great while worn over his eye, he found he had totally lost the sight of it indeed, and that it was absolutely gone. 'Tis possible that the action of sight was dulled from having been so long without exercise, and that the optic power was wholly retired into the other eye: for we evidently perceive that the eye we keep shut sends some part of its virtue to its fellow, so that it will swell and grow bigger; and so inaction, with the heat of ligatures and plasters, might very well have brought some gouty humor upon this dissembler of Martial.

Reading in Froissart the vow of a troop of young English gallants, to keep their left eyes bound up till they had arrived in France and performed some notable exploit upon us, I have often been tickled with the conceit; suppose it had befallen them as it did the Roman, and they had returned with but an eye apiece to their mistresses, for whose sakes they had made this ridiculous vow.

Mothers have reason to rebuke their children when they counterfeit having but one eye, squinting, lameness, or any other personal defect: for, besides that their bodies being then so tender may be subject to take an ill bent; fortune, I know not how, sometimes seems to delight in taking us at our word; and I have heard several examples related of people who have become really sick, by only feigning to be so. I have always used, whether on horseback or on foot, to carry a stick in my hand, and even to affect doing it with an elegant air; many have threatened that this fancy would one day be turned into necessity; if so, I should be the first of my family to have the gout.

But let us a little lengthen this chapter, and add another anecdote concerning blindness. Pliny reports * of one who dreaming he was blind, found himself so indeed in the morning without any preceding infirmity in his eyes. The force of imagination might assist in this case, as I have said elsewhere, and Pliny seems to be of the same opinion; but it is more likely that the motions which the body felt

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* Nat. Hist., vii. 50.
within, of which physicians, if they please, may find out the cause, taking away his sight, were the occasion of his dream.

Let us add another story, not very improper for this subject, which Seneca relates in one of his epistles: * "You know," says he, writing to Lucilius, "that Harpaste, my wife's fool, is thrown upon me as an hereditary charge, for I have naturally an aversion to those monsters; and if I have a mind to laugh at a fool, I need not seek him far, I can laugh at myself. This fool has suddenly lost her sight; I tell you a strange, but a very true thing: she is not sensible that she is blind, but eternally importunes her keeper to take her abroad, because she says the house is dark. That what we laugh at in her, I pray you to believe happens to every one of us; no one knows himself to be avaricious or grasping; and, again, the blind call for a guide, while we stray of our own accord. I am not ambitious, we say; but a man cannot live otherwise at Rome; I am not wasteful, but the city requires a great outlay; 'tis not my fault if I am choleric—if I have not yet established any certain course of life: 'tis the fault of youth. Let us not seek our disease out of ourselves; 'tis in us, and planted in our bowels; and the mere fact that we do not perceive ourselves to be sick, renders us more hard to be cured. If we do not betimes begin to see to ourselves, when shall we have provided for so many wounds and evils wherewith we abound? And yet we have a most sweet and charming medicine in philosophy; for of all the rest we are sensible of no pleasure till after the cure; this pleases and heals at once." This is what Seneca says, that has carried me from my subject, but there is advantage in the change.

CHAPTER XX.

OF THUMBS.

Tacitus reports,† that among certain barbarian kings their manner was, when they would make a firm obligation, to join their right hands close to one another, and

* Ep. 50.  
† Annal, xii. 47.
intertwist their thumbs; and when, by force of straining, the blood it appeared in the ends, they lightly pricked them with some sharp instrument, and mutually sucked them.

Physicians say, that the thumbs are the master fingers of the hand, and that their Latin etymology is derived from "pollere."* The Greeks called them Αυτιχειο, as who should say, another hand. And it seems that the Latins also sometimes take it in this sense for the whole hand;

"Sed nec vocibus excitata blandis,
Molli pollice nec rogata, surgit."†

It was at Rome a signification of favor to depress and turn in the thumbs:

"Fautor utroque tuum laudabit pollice ludum:"‡

and of disfavor to elevate and thrust them outward:

"Converso pollice vulgi,
Quemlibet occidunt populariter.".§

The Romans exempted from war all such as were maimed in the thumbs, as having no more sufficient strength to hold their weapons. Augustus confiscated the strength of a Roman knight, who had maliciously cut off the thumbs of two young children he had, to excuse them from going into the armies:‖ and before him, the senate, in the time of the Italic war, had condemned Caius Vatienus to perpetual imprisonment, and confiscated all his goods, for having purposely cut off the thumb of his left hand, to exempt himself from that expedition.¶ Some one, I have forgotten

* To be powerful. This seems taken from Macrobius, Saturn., vii. 13, who took it in his turn from Atticus Capito.—Coste.

† "Neither to be excited by soft words, or by the thumb."—Mart., xii. 98, 8.

‡ "Thy patron will applaud thy sport with both thumbs."—Horace, Ep. i. 18, 66.

§ "The populace with reverted thumbs, kill all that come before them."—Juvenal, iii. 36.

‖ Suetonius, in vita, c. 24.

¶ Valerius Maximus, v. 3, 8. According to Le Clerc the word poltroon comes to us through the French from pollice truncus.
who,* having won a naval battle, cut off the thumbs of all his vanquished enemies, to render them incapable of fighting and of handling the oar. The Athenians also caused the thumbs of the Eginatans to be cut off, to deprive them of the superiority in the art of navigation.†

In Lacedæmon, pedagogues chastised their scholars by biting their thumb.‡

CHAPTER XXI.

COWARDICE THE MOTHER OF CRUELTY.

I have often heard it said, that cowardice is the mother of cruelty: and I have found by experience, that malicious and inhuman animosity and fierceness are usually accompanied with feminine weakness. I have seen the most cruel people and upon frivolous occasions, apt to cry. Alexander, the tyrant of Pheres, durst not be a spectator of tragedies in the theater, for fear lest his citizens should see him weep at the misfortunes of Hecuba and Andromache, who himself without pity caused so many people every day to be murdered.§ Is it not meanness of spirit that renders them so pliable to all extremities? Valor, whose effect is only to be exercised against resistance—

“Nec nisi bellantis gaudet cervice juvenci” ||

stops when it sees the enemy at its mercy; but pusillanimity, to say that it was also in the game, not having dared to meddle in the first act of danger, takes as its part, the second of blood and massacre. The murders in victories are commonly performed by the rascality and hangers-on of an army, and that which causes so many unheard-of cruelties in domestic wars is, that the dregs of the people are fleshe in being up to the elbows in blood, and ripping

* Philocles, one of the Athenian general in the Peloponnesian war.—Idem.

† Valerius Maximus, ix. 2, Ext. 8; Cicero, De Offic., iii. 11.

‡ Plutarch, Life of Lyceurgus, c. 14.

§ Plutarch, Life of Pelopidas, c. 15.

|| "Nor delights in killing a bull unless he resists."—Claudius, Ep. ad Hadrianum, v. 30.
up bodies that lie prostrate at their feet, having no sense of any other valor:

"Et lupus, et turpes instant morientibus ursi,
Et quaeunque minor nobilitate fera est: *

like cowardly curs, that in the house worry and tear the skins of wild beasts, they dare not come in the field. What is it in these times of ours that makes our quarrels mortal; and that, whereas our fathers had some degrees of revenge, we now begin with the last in ours, and at the first meeting nothing is to be said but, kill? What is this but cowardice?

Every one is sensible that there is more bravery and disdain in subduing an enemy, than in cutting his throat; and in making him yield, than in putting him to the sword: besides that the appetite of revenge is better satisfied and pleased because its only aim is to make itself felt. And this is the reason why we do not fall upon a beast or a stone when they hurt us, because they are not capable of being sensible of our revenge; and to kill a man is to save him from the injury and offense we intend him. And as Bias cried out to a wicked fellow, "I know that sooner or later thou wilt have thy reward, but I am afraid I shall not see it;" † and pitied the Orchomenians that the penitence of Lyciscus for the treason committed against them, came at a season when there was no one remaining alive of those who had been interested in the offense, and whom the pleasure of this penitence should affect; ‡ so revenge is to be pitied, when the person on whom it is executed is deprived of means of suffering under it: for as the avenger will look on to enjoy the pleasure of his revenge, so the person on whom he takes revenge, should be a spectator too, to be afflicted and to repent. "'He will repent it," we say, and because we have given him a pistol-shot through the head, do we imagine he will repent? On the contrary, if we but observe, we shall find, that he makes mouths at us in falling, and is so far from penitency, that he does not so much as

* "Wolves and the filthy bears, and all the baser beasts, fall upon the dying."—Ovid, Trist., iii. 5, 35.

† Plutarch, on the Delay in Divine Justice, c. 2.

‡ It is not Bias who pitied the Orchomenians, but Patroclus, one of the other interlocutors in the dialogue.
repine at us; and we do him the kindest office of life, which is to make him die insensibly, and soon: we are afterward to hide ourselves, and to shift and fly from the officers of justice, who pursue us, while he is at rest. Killing is good to frustrate an offense to come, not to revenge one that is already past; and more an act of fear than of bravery; of prudence than of courage; of defense than of enterprise. It is manifest that by it we lose both the true end of revenge and the care of our reputation; we are afraid, if he lives he will do us another injury as great as the first; 'tis not out of animosity to him, but care of thyself, that thou gettest rid of him.

In the kingdom of Narsingua this expedition would be useless to us, where not only soldiers, but tradesmen also, end their differences by the sword. The king never denies the field to any who wish to fight; and when they are persons of quality, he looks on, rewarding the victor with a chain of gold, for which any one who pleases may fight with him again, so that, by having come off from one combat, he has engaged himself in many.

If we thought by virtue to be always masters of our enemies, and to triumph over them at pleasure, we should be sorry they should escape from us as they do, by dying: but we have a mind to conquer, more with safety than honor, and, in our quarrel, more pursue the end than the glory.

Asinius Pollio who, as being a worthy man, was the less to be excused, committed a like error, when, having written a libel against Plancus, he forbore to publish it till he was dead; which is to bite one's thumb at a blind man, to rail at one who is deaf, to wound a man who has no feeling, rather than to run the hazard of his resentment. And it was also said of him, that it was only for hobgoblins to wrestle with the dead.

He who stays to see the author die, whose writings he intends to question, what does he say but that he is weak in his aggressiveness? It was told to Aristotle that some one had spoken ill of him: "Let him do more," said he, "let him whip me too, provided I am not there."

Our fathers contented themselves with revenging an insult with the lie, the lie with a box of the ear, and so

* Diogenes Laertius, ix. 18.
forward; they were valiant enough not to fear their adversaries, living and provoked: we tremble for fear, so long as we see them on foot. And that this is so, does not our noble practice of these days, equally to prosecute to death both him that has offended us and him we have offended, make it out? 'Tis also a kind of cowardice that has introduced the custom of having seconds, thirds, and fourths in our duels; they were formerly duels; they are now skirmishes, rencontre, and battles. Solitude was, doubtless, terrible to those who were the first inventors of this practice, "Quam in se cunque minimum fiduciae esset,"* for naturally, any company whatever is consolatory in danger. Third persons were formerly called in to prevent disorder and foul play only, and to be witness of the fortune of the combat; but now they have brought it to this pass that the witnesses themselves engage; whoever is invited cannot handsomely stand by as an idle spectator, for fear of being suspected either of want of affection or of courage. Besides the injustice and unworthiness of such an action, of engaging other strength and valor in the protection of your honor than your own, I conceive it a disadvantage to a brave man, and who wholly relies upon himself, to shuffle his fortune with that of a second; every one runs hazard enough himself without hazarding for another, and has enough to do to assure himself in his own valor for the defense of his life, without intrusting a thing so dear in a third man's hand. For, if it be not expressly agreed upon before, to the contrary, 'tis a combined party of all four, and if your second be killed, you have two to deal withal, with good reason; and to say that it is foul play, it is so indeed, as it is, well armed, to attack a man who has but the hilt of a broken sword in his hand, or, clear and untouched, a man who is desperately wounded: but if these be advantages you have got by fighting, you may make use of them without reproach. The disparity and inequality are only weighed and considered from the condition of the combatants when they began; as to the rest, you must take your chance; and though you had, alone, three enemies upon you at once, your two companions being killed, you have no more wrong done you, than I should do in a battle, by running a man through whom

* "They had little confidence in themselves."
I should see engaged with one of our own men, with the like advantage. The nature of society will have it so that where there is troop against troop, as where our duke of Orleans challenged Henry, king of England, a hundred against a hundred; three hundred against as many, as the Argians against the Lacedæmonians; three to three, as the Horatii against the Curiatii, the multitude on either side is considered but as one single man; the hazard, wherever there is company, being confused and mixed.

I have a domestic interest in this discourse; for my brother, the Sieur de Matecoulom, was at Rome asked by a gentleman with whom he had no great acquaintance and who was a defendant challenged by another, to be his second; in this duel, he found himself matched with a gentleman much better known to him. (I would fain have an explanation of these rules of honor, which so often shock and confound those of reason.) After having despatched his man, seeing the two principals still on foot and sound, he ran in to disengage his friend. What could he do less? should he have stood still, and if chance would have ordered it so, have seen him he was come thither to defend killed before his face? what he had hitherto done helped not the business; the quarrel was yet undecided. The courtesy that you can, and certainly ought to show to your enemy, when you have reduced him to an ill condition and have a great advantage over him, I do not see how you can do it, where the interest of another is concerned, where you are only called in as an assistant, and the quarrel is none of yours; he could neither be just nor courteous, at the hazard of him he was there to serve. And he was therefore enlarged from the prisons of Italy at the speedy and solemn request of our king. Indiscreet nation! we are not content to make our vices and follies known to the world by report only, but we must go into foreign countries, there to show them what fools we are. Put three Frenchmen into the deserts of Libya, they will not live a month together without fighting; so that you would say this peregrination were a thing purposely designed to give foreigners the pleasure of our tragedies, and, for the most part, to such as rejoice and laugh at our miseries. We go into Italy to learn to fence, and fall to practice at the expense of our lives before we have learned
it; and yet, by the rule of discipline, we should put the theory before the practice. We discover ourselves to be but learners:

"Primitæ juvenum miseræ, bellique futuri
Dura rudimenta.”

I know that fencing is an art very useful to its end (in a duel between two princes, cousin-germans, in Spain, the elder, says Livy,† by his skill and dexterity in arms, easily overcoming the greater and more awkward strength of the younger), and of which the knowledge, as I experimentally know, has inspired some with courage above their natural measure; but this is not properly valor, because it supports itself upon address and is founded upon something besides itself. The honor of combat consists in the jealousy of courage and not of skill; and therefore I have known a friend of mine, famed as a great master in this exercise, in his quarrels make choice of such arms as might deprive him of this advantage and that wholly depended upon fortune and assurance, that they might not attribute his victory rather to his skill in fencing than his valor. When I was young, gentlemen avoided the reputation of good fencers as injurious to them, and learned to fence with all imaginable privacy as a trade of subtlety, derogating from true and natural valor.

"Non schivar, non parar, non ritirarsi,
Voglion costor, nè qui destrezza ha parte;
Non danno i colpi or finti, or pieni, or scarsi!
Toglie l’ira e il furor l’uso dell’arte.
Odî le spade orribilmente utarsi
A mezzo il ferro; il pie d’orma non parte,
Sempre è il piè fermo, e la man sempre in moto;
Nè scende taglio in van, nè punta à voto.”†

* "Fatal to the youth their first essays; hard the rudiments of future war.”—Virgil, Æneid, xi. 156. The text has juvenis and propinqui instead of futuri.
† xxviii. 21.
‡ "They neither shrank, nor vantage sought of ground,
They travers’d not, nor skipped from part to part,
Their blows were neither false, nor feigned found:
In fight, their rage would let them use no art.
Their swords together clash with dreadful sound,
Their feet stand fast, and neither stir nor start,
Butts, tilting and barriers, the images of warlike fights, were the exercises of our forefathers: this other exercise is so much the less noble, as it only respects a private end; that teaches us to destroy one another against law and justice and that every way always produces very ill effects. It is much more worthy and more becoming to exercise ourselves in things that strengthen than that weaken our government and that tend to the public safety and common glory. Publius Rutilius, Consul,* was the first who taught the soldiers to handle their arms with skill, and joined art with valor, not for the use of private quarrel, but for war and the quarrels of the people of Rome; a popular and civil defense. And besides the example of Caesar,† who commanded his men to shoot chiefly at the face of Pompey's soldiers in the battle of Pharsalia, a thousand other commanders have also bethought them to invent new forms of weapons and new ways of striking and defending, according as occasion should require.

But as Philopoemen ‡ condemned wrestling, wherein he excelled, because the preparatives that were therein employed were differing from those that appertain to military discipline, to which alone he conceived men of honor ought wholly to apply themselves; so it seems to me that this address to which we form our limbs, those writhings and motions young men are taught in this new school, are not only of no use, but rather contrary and hurtful to the practice of fight in battle; and also our people commonly make use of particular weapons and peculiarly designed for duel; and I have known when it has been disapproved, that a gentleman challenged to fight with rapier and poniard appeared in the array of a man-at-arms; and that another should take his cloak instead of his poniard. It is worthy of consideration that Laches in Plato,§ speaking of a learning to fence after our manner, says that he

They move their hands, steadfast their feet remain.
Nor blow, nor foin they strook or thrust in vain."
—Tasso, Gerus. Lib. c. 12, st. 55, Fairfax's translation.

* Valerius, Maximus, ii. 3, 2.
† Plutarch, in vita, c. 12.
‡ Idem, in vita, c. 12.
§ In the Dialogue entitled Laches.
never knew any great soldier come out of that school, especially the masters of it; and, indeed, as to them, our experience tells as much. As to the rest, we may at least conclude that they are qualities of no relation or correspondence; and in the education of the children of his government, Plato * interdicts the art of boxing, introduced by Amycus and Epeius, and that of wrestling by Antæus and Cercyo, because they have another end than to render youth fit for the service of war and contribute nothing to it. But I see that I have somewhat strayed from my theme.

The Emperor Maurice, being advertised by dreams and several prognostics, that one Phocas, an obscure soldier, should kill him, questioned his son-in-law Philip who this Phocas was, and what were his nature, qualities, and manners; and so soon as Philip, among other things, had told him that he was cowardly and timorous, the emperor immediately concluded then that he was a murderer and cruel. What is it that makes tyrants so sanguinary? 'Tis only the solicitude for their own safety, and that their faint hearts can furnish them with no other means of securing themselves than in exterminating those who may hurt them, even so much as women, for fear of a scratch:

"Cuncta ferit, dum cuncta timet." †

The first cruelties are exercised for themselves: thence springs the fear of a just revenge, which afterward produces a series of new cruelties, to obliterate one another. Philip, king of Macedon, who had so much to do with the people of Rome, agitated with the horror of so many murders committed by his order, and doubting of being able to keep himself secure from so many families, at divers times mortally injured and offended by him, resolved to seize all the children of those he had caused to be slain, to despatch them daily one after another, and so to establish his own repose. ‡

Fine matter is never impertinent, however placed; and

† "He strikes at all, who fears all."—Claudius, in Eutrop., i. 182.
‡ Livy, xl. 3.
therefore I, who more consider the weight and utility of what I deliver than its order and connection, need not fear in this place to bring in an excellent story, though it be a little by-the-by; for when they are rich in their own native beauty, and are able to justify themselves, the least end of a hair will serve to draw them into my discourse.

Among others condemned by Philip,* Herodicus, prince of Thessaly, had been one; he had moreover after him caused his two sons-in-law to be put to death, each leaving a son very young behind him. Theoxena and Archo were their two widows. Theoxena, though highly courted to it, could not be persuaded to marry again: Archo married Poris, the greatest man among the Ænians, and by him had a great many children, whom she dying, left at a very tender age. Theoxena, moved with a maternal charity toward her nephews, that she might have them under her own eyes and in her own protection, married Poris: when presently comes a proclamation of the king's edict. This brave spirited mother, suspecting the cruelty of Philip, and afraid of the insolence of the soldiers toward these charming and tender children, was so bold as to declare that she would rather kill them with her own hands than deliver them. Poris, startled at this protestation, promised her to steal them away, and to transport them to Athens, and there commit them to the custody of some faithful friends of his. They took, therefore, the opportunity of an annual feast which was celebrated at Ænia in honor of Æneas, and thither they went. Having appeared by day at the public ceremonies and banquet, they stole the night following into a vessel laid ready for the purpose, to escape away by sea. The wind proved contrary, and finding themselves in the morning within sight of the land whence they had launched over night, and being pursued by the guards of the port, Poris perceiving this, labored all he could to make the mariners do their utmost to escape from the pursuers. But Theoxena, frantic with affection and revenge, in pursuance of her former resolution, prepared both weapons and poison, and exposing them before them; "Go to, my children," said she, "death is now the only means of your defense and liberty, and shall administer occasion to the gods to exercise their sacred justice: these

* Livy, xl. 4.
sharp swords, and these full cups, will open you the way into it: courage, fear nothing! And thou, my son, who art the eldest, take this steel into thy hand, that thou mayest the more bravely die.” The children having on one side so powerful a counselor, and the enemy at their throats on the other, ran all of them eagerly upon what was next to hand; and, half dead, were thrown into the sea. Theoxena, proud of having so gloriously provided for the safety of her children, clasping her arms with great affection about her husband’s neck, “Let us, my friend, follow these boys, and enjoy the same sepulcher they do;” and so, having embraced, they threw themselves headlong into the sea; so that the ship was carried back without the owners into the harbor.

Tyrants, at once both to kill and to make their anger felt, have pumped their wit to invent the most lingering deaths. They will have their enemies despatched, but not so fast that they may not have leisure to taste their vengeance. And, therein, they are mightily perplexed; for if the torments they inflict are violent, they are short; if long, they are not then so painful as they desire; and thus plague themselves in choice of the greatest cruelty. Of this we have a thousand examples in antiquity, and I know not whether we, unawares, do not retain some traces of this barbarity.

All that exceeds a simple death appears to me absolute cruelty. Our justice cannot expect that he, whom the fear of dying by being beheaded or hanged will not restrain, should be any more awed by the imagination of a languishing fire, pincers, or the wheel. And I know not, in the meantime, whether we do not throw them into despair; for in what condition can be the soul of a man, expecting four and twenty hours together to be broken upon a wheel, or after the old way, nailed to a cross. Josephus * relates, that in the time of the war the Romans made in Judæa, happening to pass by where they had three days before crucified certain Jews, he among them knew three of his own friends, and obtained the favor of having them taken down, of whom two, he says, died, the third lived a great while after.

Chalcondylas, a writer of good credit, in the records he

* In the Hist. of his Life.
has left behind him of things that happened in his time, and near him,* tells us, as of the most excessive torment, of that the Emperor Mohammed very often practiced, of cutting off men in the middle by the diaphragm with one blow of a scimitar, whence it followed that they died as it were two deaths at once; and both the one part, says he, and the other, were seen to stir and strive a great while after in very great torment. I do not think there was any great suffering in this motion: the torments that are the most dreadful to look on are not always the greatest to endure; and I find those that other historians relate to have been practiced by him upon the Epiriot lords, are more horrid and cruel, where they were condemned to be flayed alive piecemeal, after so malicious a manner that they continued fifteen days in that misery.

As also these other two following: Croesus, † having caused a gentleman, the favorite of his brother Pantaleon, to be seized, carried him into a fuller’s shop, where he caused him to be scratched and carded with the cards and combs belonging to that trade till he died. George Sechel, chief commander of the peasants of Poland, who committed so many mischiefs under the title of the Crusade, being defeated in battle and taken by the Vayvod of Transylvania, was three days bound naked upon the rack, exposed to all sorts of torments that any one could contrive against him; during which time many other prisoners were kept fasting; in the end, he living and looking on, they made his beloved brother Lucat, for whom alone he entreated, taking upon himself the blame of all their evil actions, drink his blood, and caused twenty of his most favored captains to feed upon him, tearing his flesh in pieces with their teeth, and swallowing the morsels. The remainder of his body and his bowels, so soon as he was dead, were boiled, and others of his followers compelled to eat them.

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* Hist. of the Turks, lib. x. † Herodotus, i. 92.
All things have their season.

Such as compare Cato the Censor with the younger Cato, who killed himself, compare two beautiful natures, much resembling one another. The first acquired his reputation several ways, and excels in military exploits and the utility of his public employments; but the virtue of the younger, besides that it were blasphemy to compare any to it in vigor, was much more pure and unblemished. For who can acquit the Censor of envy and ambition, having dared to jostle the honor of Scipio, a man in goodness and all other excellent qualities infinitely beyond him, or any other of his time? That which they report of him among other things, that in his extreme old age he put himself upon learning the Greek tongue with so greedy an appetite, as if to quench a long thirst, does not seem to me to make much for his honor; it being properly what we call falling into second childhood. All things have their seasons, even the best, and a man may say his Paternoster out of time; as they accused T. Quintus Flaminius, that being general of an army, he was seen praying apart in the time of a battle that he won.†

"Imponit finem sapiens et rebus honestis." ‡

Eudemondidas, seeing Xenocrates when very old, still very intent upon his school lectures: "When will this man be wise," said he, "if he is yet learning?" And Philopoemen, to those who extolled King Ptolemy for every day inuring his person to the exercise of arms: "It is not," said he, "commendable in a king of his age to exercise himself in these things; he ought now really to employ them." The young are to make their preparations, the old to enjoy them, say the sages;§ and the greatest vice they observe in us is that our desires incessantly grow young again; we are always re-beginning to live.

* Plutarch, Life of Cato the Censor, c. i.
† Plutarch, Parallel of T. Quintus Flaminius with Philopoemen, sec. 2.
‡ "The wise man limits even honest things."—Juvenal, vi. 444.
§ Seneca, Ep. 36.
Our studies and desires should sometime be sensible of age; yet we have one foot in the grave and still our appetites and pursuits spring every day anew within us:

"Tu secanda marmora
Locas sub ipsum funus, et, sepulcri
Immemor, struis domos." *

The longest of my designs is not of above a year's extent; I think of nothing now but ending; rid myself of all new hopes and enterprises; take my last leave of every place I depart from, and every day dispossess myself of what I have. "Olim jam nec perit quicquam mihi, nec acquiritur... plus superest viatici quam vie." †

"Vixi, et, quem dederat cursum fortuna, peregi." ‡

'Tis, indeed, the only comfort I find in my old age, that it mortifies in me several cares and desires wherewith my life has been disturbed; the care how the world goes, the care of riches, of grandeur, of knowledge, of health, of myself. There are men who are learning to speak at a time when they should learn to be silent forever. A man may always study, but he must not always go to school: what a contemptible thing is an old Abecedarian!§

"Diversos diversa juvant; non omnibus annis
Omnia conveniunt." ||

If we must study, let us study what is suitable to our present condition, that we may answer as he did, who being asked to what end he studied in his decrepit age, "that I may go out better," said he, "and at greater ease." Such a study was that of the younger Cato, feeling his end approach, and which he met with in Plato's Discourse of the

* "When death is close at hand, you have marble cut for use, and, forgetful of the tomb, build houses."—Horace, Od. ii. 17, 18.
† "Henceforward I will neither lose nor expect to get: I have more wherewith to defray my journey, than I have way to go."—Seneca, Ep. 77.
‡ "I have lived and finished the career Fortune placed before me."—Aenid iv. 653.
§ Seneca, Ep. 36.
|| "Various things delight various men; all things are not for all ages."—Gall., Eleg., i. 104.
Eternity of the Soul: not, as we are to believe, that he was not long before furnished with all sorts of ammunition for such a departure; for of assurance, an established will and instruction, he had more than Plato had in all his writings: his knowledge and courage were in this respect above philosophy; he applied himself to this study, not for the service of his death; but, as a man whose sleeps were never disturbed in the importance of such a deliberation, he also, without choice or change, continued his studies with the other accustomed actions of his life. The night that he was denied the praetorship he spent in play; that wherein he was to die he spent in reading.* The loss either of life or of office was all one to him.

CHAPTER XXIII.

OF VIRTUE.

I find by experience, that there is a vast difference between the starts and sallies of the soul, and a resolute and constant habit; and very well perceive that there is nothing we may not do, nay, even to the surpassing the Divinity itself, says a certain person,† forasmuch as it is more to render a man's self impassible by his own study and industry, than to be so by his natural condition; and even to be able to conjoin to man's imbecility and frailty a God-like resolution and assurance; but it is by fits and starts; and in the lives of those heroes of times past there are sometimes miraculous sallies, and that seem infinitely to exceed our natural force; but they are indeed only sallies and 'tis hard to believe, that these so elevated qualities in a man can so thoroughly tinct and imbue the soul that they should become ordinary, and, as it were, natural in him. It accidentally happens even to us, who are but abortive births of men sometimes to dart out our souls, when roused by the discourses or example of others, much beyond their ordinary stretch; but 'tis a kind of passion which pushes and pricks them on, and in some sort ravishes them from themselves: but, this whirlwind once blown over,

* Seneca, Ep. 71 and 104.
† Idem, Ep. 73; De Providentia, c. 5.
we see that they insensibly flag and slacken of themselves, if not to the lowest degree, at least so as to be no more the same; insomuch as that upon every trivial occasion, the losing of a hawk, or the breaking of a glass, we suffer ourselves to be moved little less than one of the common people. I am of opinion, that order, moderation, and constancy excepted, all things are to be done by a man, that is very imperfect and defective in general. Therefore it is, say the Sages, that to make a right judgment of a man, you are chiefly to pry into his common actions, and surprise him in his everyday habit.

Pyrrho, he who erected so pleasant a knowledge upon ignorance, endeavored, as all the rest who were really philosophers did, to make his life correspond with his doctrine. And because he maintained the imbecility of human judgment to be so extreme as to be incapable of any choice or inclination, and would have it perpetually wavering and suspended, considering and receiving all things as indifferent, 'tis said,* that he always comported himself after the same manner and countenance: if he had begun a discourse, he would always end what he had to say, though the person he was speaking to had gone away: if he walked, he never stopped for any impediment that stood in his way, being preserved from precipices, the jostle of carts, and other like accidents, by the care of his friends: for, to fear or to avoid anything, had been to shock his own propositions, which deprived the senses themselves of all election and certainty. Sometimes he suffered incision and cauteries with so great constancy, as never to be seen so much as to wince. 'Tis something to bring the soul to these imaginations; 'tis more to join the effects, and yet not impossible; but to conjoin them with such perseverance and constancy as to make them habitual, is certainly, in attempts so remote from the common usage, almost incredible to be done. Therefore it was, that being one day taken in his house terribly scolding with his sister, and being reproached that he therein transgressed his own rules of indifference: "What!" said he, "must this foolish woman also serve for a testimony to my rules?" Another time, being seen to defend himself against a dog: "It is," said he, "very hard totally to put off man; and

* Diogenes Laertius, in vita, ix. 63.
we must endeavor and force ourselves to resist and encounter things, first by effects, but at least by reason and argument."

About seven or eight years since, a husbandman yet living, but two leagues from my house, having long been tormented with his wife's jealousy, coming one day home from his work, and she welcoming him with her accustomed railing, entered into so great fury that with a sickle he had yet in his hand, he totally cut off all those parts that she was jealous of and threw them in her face. And, 'tis said that a young gentleman of our nation, brisk and amorous, having by his perseverance at last mollified the heart of a fair mistress, enraged, that upon the point of fruition he found himself unable to perform, and that

"Non viriliter
Iners senile penis extulerat caput,"

so soon as ever he came home he deprived himself of the rebellious member, and sent it to his mistress, a cruel and bloody victim for the expiation of his offense. If this had been done upon mature consideration, and upon the account of religion, as the priests of Cybele did, what should we say of so high an action?

A few days since, at Bergerac, within five leagues of my house, up the river Dordogne, a woman having overnight been beaten and abused by her husband, a choleric ill-conditioned fellow, resolved to escape from his ill-usage at the price of her life; and going so soon as she was up the next morning to visit her neighbors, as she was wont to do, and having let some words fall in recommendation of her affairs, she took a sister of hers by the hand, and led her to the bridge; whither being come, and having taken leave of her in jest as it were, without any manner of alteration in her countenance, she threw herself headlong from the top into the river, and was there drowned. That which is the most remarkable in this is, that this resolution was a whole night forming in her head.

But is quite another thing with the Indian women; for it being the custom there for the men to have many wives,

* Diogenes Laertius, in vita, 66.

† Tibullus, Priap. Carm., 84. ("extulit" in the original text.)
and the best beloved of them to kill herself at her husband's decease, every one of them makes it the business of her whole life to obtain this privilege and gain this advantage over her companions; and the good offices they do their husbands aim at no other recompense but to be preferred in accompanying him in death.

"Ubi mortiferos jacta est fax ultima lecto,
    Uxorum fuis stat pia turba comis;
Et certamen habent lethi, quae viva sequatur
    Conjugium; pudor est non licuisse mori.
Ardent victrices, et flammea pectora praebent,
    Impouuntque suis ora perusta viris."*

A certain author of our times reports that he has seen in those oriental nations this custom in practice, that not only the wives bury themselves with their husbands, but even the slaves he has enjoyed also; which is done after this manner: the husband being dead, the widow may if she will (but few will), demand two or three months' respite wherein to order her affairs. The day being come, she mounts on horseback, dressed as fine as at her wedding, and with a cheerful countenance says she is going to sleep with her spouse, holding a looking-glass in her left hand and an arrow in the other. Being thus conducted in pomp, accompanied with her kindred and friends and a great concourse of people in great joy, she is at last brought to the public place appointed for such spectacles: this is a great space, in the midst of which is a pit full of wood, and adjoining to it a mount raised four or five steps, upon which she is brought and served with a magnificent repast: which being done, she falls to dancing and singing, and gives order, when she thinks fit, to kindle the fire. This being done, she descends, and taking the nearest of her husband's relations by the hand, they walk to the river close by, where she strips herself stark naked, and having distributed her clothes and jewels to her friends plunges herself into the water, as if there to cleanse herself from her sins; coming out thence, she wraps herself in a yellow linen of five-and-

* "When they threw the torch on the funeral bed, the pious wives with hair disheveled, stand around striving which, living shall accompany her spouse; and are ashamed that they may not die; they who are preferred, expose their breasts to the flame, and their scorched lips embrace those of the dead husband."—Propertius, iii. 13, 17.
twenty ells long, and again giving her hand to this kinsman of her husband's, they return back to the mount, where she makes a speech to the people, and recommends her children to them, if she have any. Between the pit and the mount, there is commonly a curtain drawn to screen the burning furnace from their sight, which some of them, to manifest the greater courage, forbid. Having ended what she has to say, a woman presents her with a vessel of oil, wherewith to anoint her head and her whole body, which when done with she throws into the fire, and in an instant precipitates herself after. Immediately, the people throw a great many billets and logs upon her that she may not be long in dying, and convert all their joy into sorrow and mourning. If they are persons of meaner condition, the body of the defunct is carried to the place of sepulture, and there placed sitting, the widow kneeling before him, embracing the dead body; and they continue in this posture while the people build a wall about them, which so soon as it is raised to the height of the woman's shoulders, one of her relations comes behind her, and taking hold of her head, twists her neck; so soon as she is dead, the wall is presently raised up, and closed, and there they remain entombed.

There was, in this same country, something like this in their gymnosophists; for not by constraint of others nor by the impetuosity of a sudden humor, but by the express profession of their order, their custom was, as soon as they arrived at a certain age, or that they saw themselves threatened by any disease, to cause a funeral pile to be erected for them, and on the top a stately bed, where, after having joyfully feasted their friends and acquaintance, they laid them down with so great resolution, that fire being applied to it, they were never seen to stir either hand or foot; * and after this manner, one of them, Calanus by name, expired in the presence of the whole army of Alexander the Great.† And he was neither reputed holy nor happy among them, who did not thus destroy himself, dismissing his soul purged and purified by the fire, after having consumed all that was earthly and mortal. This

* Quintus Curtius, viii. 9.
† Plutarch, Life of Alexander, c. 21.
constant premeditation of the whole life is that which makes the wonder.

Among our other controversies, that of Fatum has also crept in; and to tie things to come, and even our own wills, to a certain and inevitable necessity, we are yet upon this argument of time past; “Since God foresees that all things shall so fall out, as doubtless He does, it must then necessarily follow, that they must so fall out;” to which our masters reply: “that the seeing anything come to pass as we do, and as God Himself also does (for all things being present with Him, He rather sees, than foresees) is not to compel an event: that is, we see because things do fall out, but things do not fall out because we see: events cause knowledge, but knowledge does not cause events. That which we see happen, does happen; but it might have happened otherwise: and God, in the catalogue of the causes of events which He has in His prescience, has also those which we call accidental and voluntary, depending upon the liberty. He has given our free will, and knows that we do amiss because we would do so.”

I have seen a great many commanders encourage their soldiers with this fatal necessity: for if our time be limited to a certain hour, neither the enemies’ shot, nor our own boldness, nor our flight and cowardice, can either shorten or prolong our lives. This is easily said, but see who will be so persuaded; and if it be so that a strong and lively faith draws along with it actions of the same kind, certainly this faith we so much brag of, is very light in this age of ours, unless the contempt it has of works makes it disdain their company. So it is, that to this very purpose the Sire de Joinville, as credible a witness as any other whatever, tells us of the Bedouins, a nation among the Saracens, with whom the king St. Louis had to do in the Holy Land, that they, in their religion, so firmly believe the number of every man’s days to be from all eternity prefixed and set down by an inevitable decree, that they went naked to the wars, excepting a Turkish sword, and their bodies only covered with a white linen cloth: and for the greatest curse they could invent when they were angry, this was always in their mouths: “Accursed be thou, as he that arms himself for fear of death.” This is a testimony of faith very much beyond ours. And of this sort is that also that two friars of Florence gave in our fathers'
days.* Being engaged in some controversy of learning, they agreed to go both of them into the fire in the sight of all the people, each for the verification of his argument, and all things were already prepared, and the thing just upon the point of execution, when it was interrupted by an unexpected accident.

A young Turkish lord, having performed a notable exploit in his own person in the sight of both armies, that of Amurath and that of Huniades, ready to join battle, being asked by Amurath, what in such tender and inexperienced years (for it was his first sally into arms) had inspired him with so brave a courage, replied, that his chief tutor for valor was a hare. "For being," said he, "one day a-hunting, I found a hare sitting; and though I had a brace of excellent greyhounds with me, yet methought it would be best for sureness to make use of my bow; for she sat very fair. I then fell to letting fly my arrows, and shot forty that I had in my quiver, not only without hurting, but without starting her from her form. At last I slipped my dogs after her, but to no more purpose than I had shot: by which I understood that she had been secured by her destiny; and that neither darts nor swords can wound without the permission of fate, which we can neither hasten nor defer." This story may serve, by the way, to let us see how flexible our reason is to all sorts of images.

A person of great years, name, dignity, and learning, boasted to me that he had been induced to a certain very important change in his faith by a strange and whimsical incitation, and one otherwise so inadequate, that I thought it much stronger, taken the contrary way: he called it a miracle, and so I look upon it, but in a different sense. The Turkish historians say, that the persuasion those of their nation have imprinted in them of the fatal and unalterable prescription of their days, manifestly conduces to the giving them great assurance in dangers. And I know a great prince who makes very fortunate use of it, whether it may be that he really believes it, or that he makes it his excuse for so wonderfully hazarding himself: let us hope fortune may not be too soon weary of her favor to him.

There has not happened in our memory a more admirable effect of resolution, than in those two who conspired

* April, 7th 1498. One of them was Savonarola.
the death of the Prince of Orange.* "Tis marvelous how
the second who executed it, could ever be persuaded into
an attempt, wherein his companion, who had done his ut-
most, had had so ill success; and after the same method,
and with the same arms, to go attack a lord, armed with so
recent a late lesson of distrust, powerful in followers and
bodily strength, in his own hall, amid his guards, and in
a city wholly at his devotion. Assuredly, he employed a
very resolute arm and a courage inflamed with furious
passion. A poniard is surer for striking home, but by
reason that more motion and force of hand is required than
with a pistol, the blow is more subject to be put by or
hindered. That this man did not run to a certain death, I
make no great doubt; for the hopes any one could flatter
him withal, could not find place in any sober understanding,
and the conduct of his exploit sufficiently manifests that
he had no want of that, no more than of courage. The
motives of so powerful a persuasion may be diverse, for
our fancy does what it will, both with itself and us. The
execution that was done near Orleans † was nothing like
this; there was in this more of chance than vigor; the
wound was not mortal, if fortune had not made it so, and
to attempt to shoot on horseback, and at a great distance,
by one whose body was in motion from the motion of his
horse, was the attempt of a man who had rather miss his
blow than fail of saving himself. This was apparent from
what followed; for he was so astonished and stupefied with
the thought of so high an execution, that he totally lost
his judgment both to find his way to flight and to govern
his tongue. What needed he to have done more than to
fly back to his friends across a river? "Tis what I have
done in less dangers, and that I think of very little hazard,
how broad soever the river may be, provided your horse
have easy going in, and that you see on the other side easy
landing according to the stream. The other ‡ when they
pronounced his dreadful sentence, "I was prepared for

* The first of these was Jehan de Jaureguy, who wounded the
prince 18th March, 1582; the second, by whom the prince was killed
10th July, 1584, was Balthazar Gerard.

† The murder of the duke of Guise by Poltrot.

‡ Balthazar Gerard.
this," said he, "beforehand, and I will make you wonder at my patience."

The Assassins, a nation bordering upon Phœnicia, are reputed among the Mohammedans a people of very great devotion, and purity of manners. They hold that the nearest way to gain paradise is to kill some one of a contrary religion; which is the reason they have often been seen, being but one or two, and without armor, to attempt against powerful enemies at the price of a certain death and without any consideration of their own danger. So was our Count Raymond of Tripoli assassinated (which word is derived from their name) in the heart of his city,* during our enterprises of the Holy War: and likewise Conrad, marquis of Monserrat,† the murderers at their execution bearing themselves with great pride and glory that they had performed so brave an exploit.

CHAPTER XXIV.

OF A MONSTROUS CHILD.

This story shall go by itself; for I will leave it to physicians to discourse of. Two days ago I saw a child that two men and a nurse, who said they were the father, the uncle, and the aunt of it, carried about to get money by showing it, by reason it was so strange a creature. It was, as to all the rest, of a common form and could stand upon its feet; could go and gabble much like other children of the same age: it had never as yet taken any other nourishment but from the nurse's breasts, and what, in my presence, they tried to put into the mouth of it it only chewed a little and spat it out again without swallowing; the cry of it seemed indeed a little odd and particular, and it was just fourteen months old. Under the breast it was joined to another child, but without a head and which had the spine of the back without motion, the rest entire; for though it had one arm shorter than the other, it had been broken by accident at their birth; they were joined breast to breast, and as if a lesser child sought to throw its arms about the neck of one something bigger. The juncture

* In 1151.
† At Tyre, April 24th, 1192.
and thickness of the place where they were conjoined was not above four fingers, or thereabouts, so that if you thrust up the imperfect child you might see the navel of the other below it, and the joining was between the paps and the navel. The navel of the imperfect child could not be seen, but all the rest of the belly, so that all that was not joined of the imperfect one, as arms, buttocks, thighs, and legs, hung dangling upon the other, and might reach to the mid-leg. The nurse, moreover, told us that it urinated at both bodies, and that the members of the other were nourished, sensible, and in the same plight with that she gave suck to, excepting that they were shorter and less. This double body and several limbs relating to one head might be interpreted a favorable prognostic to the king,* of maintaining these various parts of our state under the union of his laws; but lest the event should prove otherwise, 'tis better to let it alone, for in things already past there needs no divination, "Ut quum facta sunt, tum ad conjecturam aliqua interpretatione revocentur;" † as 'tis said of Epimenides, that he always prophesied things past.

I have lately seen a herdsman in Medoc, of about thirty years of age, who has no sign of any genital parts; he has three holes by which he incessantly voids his water; he is bearded, has desire and covets the society of women.

Those that we call monsters are not so to God, who sees in the immensity of His work the infinite forms that He has comprehended therein; and it is to be believed that this figure which astonishes us has relation to some other figure of the same kind unknown to man. From His all wisdom nothing but good, common, and regular proceeds; but we do not discern the disposition and relation. "Quod crebro videt, non miratur, eliamsi, cur fiat, neciat. Quod ante non vidit, id, si evenerit, ostentum esse censet." ‡ Whatever falls out contrary to custom we say is contrary to nature, but nothing, whatever it be, is contrary to her. Let, therefore, this universal and natural reason expel the

* Henry III.

† "So as when they come to pass, they should then by some interpretation be recalled to conjecture."—Cicero, De Divin., ii. 31.

‡ "What he often sees he does not admire, though he be ignorant how it comes to pass. But when a thing happens he never saw before, that he looks upon as a portent."—Idem, Ibid., ii. 22.
error and astonishment that novelty brings along with it.

CHAPTER XXV.

OF ANGER.

Plutarch is admirable throughout, but especially where he judges of human actions. What fine things does he say in the comparison of Lycurgus and Numa upon the subject of our great folly in abandoning children to the care and government of their fathers? The most of our civil governments, as Aristotle says, * leave, after the manner of the Cyclops, to every one the ordering of their wives and children, according to their own foolish and indiscreet fancy; and the Lacedaemonian and Cretan are almost the only governments that have committed the education of children to the laws. Who does not see that in a state all depends upon their nurture and bringing up? and yet they are left to the mercy of parents, let them be as foolish and ill-conditioned as they may, without any manner of discretion.

Among other things, how often have I, as I have passed along our streets, had a good mind to get up a farce, to revenge the poor boys whom I have seen flayed, knocked down, and miserably beaten by some father or mother, when in their fury, and mad with rage? You shall see them come out with fire and fury sparkling in their eyes.

"Rabie jecur incendente, feruntur,
Præcipites; ut saxa jugis abrupta, quibus mons
Subtrahitur, clivoque latus pendente recedit;" †

(and according to Hippocrates, the most dangerous maladies are they that disfigure the countenance), with a roaring and terrible voice, very often against those that are but newly come from nurse, and there they are lamed and spoiled with blows, while cur justice takes no cognizance

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*Moral. ad Nicom., x. 9.

† "They are headlong borne with burning fury as great stones torn from the mountains, by which the steep sides are left naked and bare."—Juvenal, Sat. vi. 647.
of it, as if these maims and dislocations were not executed upon members of our commonwealth:

"Gratum est, quod patriæ civem populoque dedisti,
Si factis, ut patriæ sit idoneus, utilis agris,
Utilis et bellorum et pacis rebus agendis." *

There is no passion that so much transports men from their right judgment as anger. No one would demur upon punishing a judge with death who should condemn a criminal on the account of his own choler; why, then, should fathers and pedagogues be any more allowed to whip and chastise children in their anger? 'Tis then no longer correction, but revenge. Chastisement is instead of physic to children; and should we endure a physician who should be animated against and enraged at his patient?

We ourselves, to do well, should never lay a hand upon our servants while our anger lasts. When the pulse beats, and we feel emotion in ourselves, let us defer the business; things will indeed appear otherwise to us when we are calm and cool. 'Tis passion that then commands, 'tis passion that speaks, and not we. Faults seen through passion appear much greater to us than they really are, as bodies do when seen through a mist.† He who is hungry uses meat; but he who will make use of chastisement should have neither hunger nor thirst to it. And moreover, chastisements that are inflicted with weight and discretion, are much better received and with greater benefit by him who suffers; otherwise, he will not think himself justly condemned by a man transported with anger and fury, and will allege his master's excessive passion, his inflamed countenance, his unwonted oaths, his emotion and precipitous rashness, for his own justification:

"Ora tument ira, nigrescunt sanguine venæ,
Lumina Gorgoneo saevius igne micant."‡

Suetonius reports § that Caius Rabirius having been con-

* "It is well when to thy country and the people thou hast given a citizen, provided thou make him fit for his country's service; useful to till the earth, useful in affairs of war and peace."—Idem, ibid., xiv. 70.

† Plutarch, That we should Restrain Anger, c. 11.

‡ "Their faces swell, their veins grow black with rage, and their eyes sparkle with Gorgonian fire."—Ovid, De Art. Amandi, iii. 503.

§ Life of Cæsar, c. 12.
denmed by Cæsar, the thing that most prevailed upon the people (to whom he had appealed) to determine the cause in his favor, was the animosity and vehemence that Cæsar had manifested in that sentence.

Saying is one thing and doing is another; we are to consider the sermon and the preacher distinctly and apart. These men, though they had a pretty business in hand, who in our times have attempted to shake the truth of our church by the vices of her ministers; she extracts her testimony elsewhere; 'tis a foolish way of arguing and that would throw all things into confusion. A man, whose morals are good, may have false opinions, and a wicked man may preach truth, even though he believe it not himself. 'Tis doubtless a fine harmony when doing and saying go together; and I will not deny but that saying, when the actions follow, is not of greater authority and efficacy, as Eudamidas said,* hearing a philosopher talk of military affairs: "These things are finely said, but he who speaks them is not to be believed, for his ears have never been used to the sound of the trumpet." And Cleomenes, † hearing an orator declaiming upon valor, burst out into laughter, at which the other being angry; "I should," said he to him, "do the same if it were a swallow that spoke of this subject; but if it were an eagle I should willingly hear him." I perceive, methinks, in the writings of the ancients, that he who speaks what he thinks, strikes much more home than he who only feigns. Hear Cicero speak of the love of liberty; hear Brutus speak of it, the mere written words of this man sound as if he would purchase it at the price of his life. Let Cicero, the father of eloquence, treat of the contempt of death; let Seneca do the same; the first languishingly draws it out, so that you perceive he would make you resolve upon a thing on which he is not resolved himself; he inspires you not with courage, for he himself has none; the other animates and inflames you. I never read an author, even of those who treat of virtue and of actions, that I do not curiously inquire what kind of a man he was himself; for the Ephori at Sparta, seeing a dissolute fellow propose a wholesome advice to the people, commanded him to hold his peace, and entreated a

* Plutarch, Apothegeums of the Lacedaemonians.
† Idem, ibid.
virtuous man to attribute to himself the invention, and to propose it. * Plutarch's writings, if well understood, sufficiently bespeak their author, and so that I think I know him even into his soul; and yet I could wish that we had some fuller account of his life. And I am thus far wandered from my subject, upon the account of the obligation I have to Aulus Gellius, for having left us in writing † this story of his manners, that brings me back to my subject of anger. A slave of his, a vicious, ill-conditioned fellow, but who had the precepts of philosophy often ringing in his ears, having for some offense of his been stripped by Plutarch's command, while he was being whipped, muttered at first, that it was without cause and that he had done nothing to deserve it; but at last falling in good earnest to exclaim against and rail at his master, he reproached him that he was no philosopher, as he had boasted himself to be: that he had often heard him say it was indecent to be angry, nay, had written a book to that purpose; and that the causing him to be so cruelly beaten, in the height of his rage, totally gave the lie to all his writings, to which Plutarch calmly and coldly answered. "How, ruffian," said he, "by what dost thou judge that I am now angry? Does either my face, my color, or my voice give any manifestation of my being moved? I do not think my eyes look fierce, that my countenance appears troubled, or that my voice is dreadful; am I red, do I foam, does any word escape my lips I ought to repent? Do I start? Do I tremble with fury? For those, I tell thee, are the true signs of anger." And so turning to the fellow that was whipping him, "Ply on thy work," said he, "while this gentleman and I dispute." This is the story.

Archytas Tarentinus, returning from a war wherein he had been captain-general, found all things in his house in very great disorder, and his lands quite out of tillage, through the ill husbandry of his receiver, and having caused him to be called to him: "Go," said he, "if I were not in anger I would soundly drub your sides." ‡ Plato likewise, being highly offended with one of his slaves, gave Speusippus order to chastise him, excusing himself from

* Aulus Gellius, xviii. 3.
† Idem, i. 26.
‡ Cicero, Tusc. Quaes, iv. 36.
doing it because he was in anger. * And Carillus, a Lacædæmonian, to a Helot, who carried himself insolently toward him: "By the Gods," said he, "if I was not angry, I would immediately cause thee to be put to death." †

"Tis a passion that is pleased with and flatters itself. How often, being moved under a false cause, if the person offending makes a good defense and presents us with a just excuse, are we angry against truth and innocence itself? In proof of which, I remember a marvelous example of antiquity.

Piso, otherwise a man of very eminent virtue, ‡ being moved against a soldier of his, for that returning alone from forage he could give him no account where he had left a companion of his, took it for granted that he had killed him, and presently condemned him to death. He was no sooner mounted upon the gibbet, but behold his wandering companion arrives, at which all the army were exceedingly glad, and after many embraces of the two comrades, the hangman carried both the one and the other into Piso's presence, all those present believing it would be a great pleasure even to himself; but it proved quite contrary; for through shame and spite, his fury, which was not yet cool, redoubled; and by a subtlety which his passion suddenly suggested to him, he made three criminal for having found one innocent, and caused them all to be despatched: the first soldier, because sentence had passed upon him; the second, who had lost his way, because he was the cause of his companion's death; and the hangman, for not having obeyed the order which had been given him.

Such as have had to do with testy and obstinate women, may have experimented into what a rage it puts them, to oppose silence and coldness to their fury, and that a man disdains to nourish their anger. The orator Celius was wonderfully choleric by nature; and to one who supped in his company, a man of a gentle and sweet conversation, and who, that he might not move him, approved and consented to all he said; he, impatient that his ill humor should

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* Seneca, De Ira, iii. 12. † Plutarch, Apothegms.
‡ "Montaigne, for what reason I know not, gives him a better character than Seneca, who, De Ira lib. i. cap. 18, says, though he was free from many vices that he was ill-tempered and extremely rigorous."—Coste.
thus spend itself without aliment: "For the love of the gods deny me something," said he, "that we may be two." *

Women, in like manner, are only angry, that others may be angry again, in imitation of the laws of love. Phocion, to one who interrupted his speaking by injurious and very opprobrious words, made no other return than silence, and to give him full liberty and leisure to vent his spleen; which he having accordingly done, and the storm blown over without any mention of this disturbance, he proceeded in his discourse where he had left off before.† No answer can nettle a man like such a contempt.

Of the most choleric man in France (anger is always an imperfection, but more excusable in a soldier, for in that trade it cannot sometimes be avoided) I often say, that he is the most patient man that I know, and the most discreet in bridling his passions; which rise in him with so great violence and fury.

"Magno veluti cum flamma sonore
Virgea suggeritur costis undantis aheni
Exsultantque æstu latices, furit intus aquai,
Fumidus, atque altè spumis exuberat amnis,
Nec jam se capit unda; volat vapor ater ad auras;"‡

that he must of necessity cruelly constrain himself to moderate it. And for my part, I know no passion which I could with so much violence to myself attempt to cover and conceal: I would not set wisdom at so high a price; and do not so much consider what a man does, as how much it costs him to do no worse.

Another boasted himself to me of the regularity and sweetness of his manners, which are in truth very singular; to whom I replied, that it was indeed something, especially in persons of so eminent a quality as himself, upon whom every one had their eyes, to present himself always well-tempered to the world; but that the principal thing was to make provision for within and for himself; and that it

* Seneca, De Ira, iii. 8.
† Plutarch, Instructions for those who manage State Affairs, c. 10.
‡ "When with loud crackling noise, a fire of sticks is applied to the boiling caldron's side, by the heat in frisky bells the liquor dances: but within the water rages and high the smoky fluid in foam overflows. Nor can the wave now contain itself: in pitchy steam it flies all abroad."—_Aenid_, vii. 462.
was not, in my opinion, very well to order his business inwardly to grate himself, which I was afraid he did in putting on and outwardly maintaining this visor and regular appearance.

A man incorporates anger by concealing it, as Diogenes told Demosthenes, who, for fear of being seen in a tavern, withdrew himself the more retiredly into it: "The more you retire, the farther you enter in."* I would rather advise that a man should give his servant a box of the ear a little unseasonably, than rack his fancy to present this grave and composed countenance; and had rather discover my passions than brood over them at my own expense; they grow less in venting and manifesting themselves; and 'tis much better their point should wound others without, than be turned toward ourselves within. "Omnia vitia in aperto leviora sunt: et tunc perniciosissima, quum, simulata sanitate, subsidunt." † I admonish all those who have authority to be angry in my family, in the first place to manage their anger and not to lavish it upon every occasion, for that both lessens the value and hinders the effect: rash and incessant scolding runs into custom, and renders itself despised; and what you lay out upon a servant for a theft, is not felt, because it is the same he has seen you a hundred times employ against him for having ill washed a glass, or set a stool out of place. Secondly, that they be not angry to no purpose, but make sure that their reprehension reach him with whom they are offended; for, ordinarily, they rail and bawl before he comes into their presence, and continue scolding an age after he is gone;

"Et secum petulans amentia certat:" ‡

they attack his shadow, and drive the storm in a place where no one is either chastised or concerned, but in the clamor of their voice. I likewise in quarrels condemn those who huff and vapor without an enemy; those rodomontades should be reserved to discharge upon the offending party:

* Diogenes Laertius, Life of Diogenes the Cynic, vi. 34.
† "All vices are less dangerous when open to be seen, and then most pernicious when they lurk under a dissembled good nature." —Seneca, Ep., 56.
‡ "And petulant madness contends with itself."—Claudian, in Eutrop., i. 237.
"Mugitus veluti cum prima in prælia taurus
Terrificos ciet, atque irasci in cornua tentat,
Arboris obnixus truncus, ventosque lacescit
Ictibus, et sparsa ad pugnam proludit arena."*

When I am angry, my anger is very sharp but withal very short, and as private as I can; I lose myself indeed in promptness and violence, but not in trouble; so that I throw out all sorts of injurious words at random, and without choice, and never consider pertinently to dart my language where I think it will deepest wound, for I commonly make use of no other weapon in my anger than my tongue. My servants have a better bargain of me in great occasions than in little; the light ones surprise me; and the mischief on't is, that when you are once upon the precipice, 'tis no matter who gave you the push, for you always go to the bottom; the fall urges, moves, and makes haste of itself. In great occasions this satisfies me, that they are so just every one expects a reasonable indignation, and then I glorify myself in deceiving their expectation; against these, I fortify and prepare myself; they disturb my head, and threaten to transport me very far, should I follow them. I can easily contain myself from entering into one of these passions, and am strong enough, when I expect them, to repel their violence, be the cause never so great; but if a passion once prepossess and seize me, it carries me away, be the cause never so small. I bargain thus with those who may contend with me; when you see me moved first, let me alone, right or wrong; I'll do the same for you. The storm is only begot by a concurrence of angers, which easily spring from one another, and are not born together. Let every one have his own way, and we shall be always at peace. A profitable advice, but hard to execute. Sometimes also it falls out that I put on a seeming anger, for the better governing of my house, without any real emotion. As age renders my humors more sharp, I study to oppose them, and will, if I can, order it so, that for the future I may be so much the less peevish and hard to please, as I have more excuse and inclination to be so, although I have

* "As when a bull to usher in the fight makes dreadful bellowings, and whets his horns against the trunk of a tree, with blows he beats the air, and preludes to the fight by spurning the sand."—
Æneid. xii. 103.
heretofore been reckoned among those who have the greatest patience.

A word more to conclude this chapter. Aristotle says,* that anger sometimes serves for arms to virtue and valor. 'Tis likely it may be so, nevertheless, they who contradict him† pleasantly answer, that 'tis a weapon of novel use, for we move all other arms, this moves us; our hands guide it not, 'tis it that guides our hands; it hold us, we hold not it.

CHAPTER XXVI.
DEFENSE OF SENECA AND PLUTARCH.

The familiarity I have with these two authors, and the assistance they have lent to my age and to my book, wholly compiled of what I have borrowed from them, oblige me to stand up for their honor.

As to Seneca, among a million of little pamphlets that those of the so-called reformed religion disperse abroad for the defense of their cause (and which sometimes proceed from so good a hand, that 'tis pity his pen is not employed in a better subject), I have formerly seen one, that to make up the parallel he would fain find out between the government of our late poor King Charles IX., and that of Nero, compares the late cardinal of Lorraine with Seneca; their fortunes, in having both of them been the prime ministers in the government of their princes, and in their manners, conditions and deportments to have been very near alike. Wherein, in my opinion, he does the said cardinal a very great honor; for though I am one of those who have a very high esteem for his wit, eloquence, and zeal to religion and the service of his king, and his good fortune to have lived in an age wherein it was so novel, so rare, and also so necessary for the public good to have an ecclesiastical person of such high birth and dignity, and so sufficient and capable of his place; yet, to confess the truth, I do not think his capacity by many degrees near to the other, nor his virtue either so clean, entire, or steady, as that of Seneca.

* Moral. ad Nicom., iii. 8.  
† Seneca De Ira, i. 16.
Now the book whereof I speak, to bring about its design, gives a very injurious description of Seneca, having borrowed its reproaches from Dion the historian, whose testimony I do not at all believe; for besides that he is inconsistent, that after having called Seneca one while very wise, and again a mortal enemy to Nero's vices, makes him elsewhere avaricious, an usurer, ambitious, effeminate, voluptuous, and a false pretender to philosophy, his virtue appears so vivid and vigorous in his writings, and his vindication is so clear from any of these imputations, as of his riches and extraordinarily expensive way of living, that I cannot believe any testimony to the contrary. And besides it is much more reasonable to believe the Roman historians in such things than Greeks and foreigners.

Now Tacitus * and the rest speak very honorably both of his life and death; and represent him to us a very excellent and virtuous person in all things; and I will allege no other reproach against Dion's report but this, which I cannot avoid, namely, that he has so weak a judgment in the Roman affairs, that he dares to maintain Julius Caesar's cause against Pompey, and that of Antony against Cicero.

Let us now come to Plutarch: Jean Bodin is a good author of our times, and a writer of much greater judgment than the rout of scribblers of his age, and who deserves to be carefully read and considered. I find him, though, a little bold in this passage of his Method of history, where he accuses Plutarch not only of ignorance (wherein I would have let him alone; for that is beyond my criticism) but that he "often writes things incredible, and absolutely fabulous:" these are his own words. If he had simply said, that he had delivered things otherwise than they really are, it had been no great reproach; for what we have not seen, we are forced to receive from other hands, and take upon trust, and I see that he purposely sometimes variously relates the same story; as the judgment of the three best captains that ever were, given by Hannibal; 'tis one way in the Life of Flaminous, and another in that of Pyrrhus. But to charge him with having taken incredible

* Tacitus, Annal, xiii. 11; xiv. 53-55; xv. 60—64. Tacitus, however, relates several circumstances as to Seneca which are very censurable.
and impossible things for current pay, is to accuse the
most judicious author in the world of want of judgment.
And this is his example; "as," says he, "when he relates
that a Lacedæmonian boy suffered his bowels to be torn
out by a fox-cub he had stolen, and kept it still concealed
under his coat till he fell down dead, rather than he would
discover his theft." * I find, in the first place, this example
ill-chosen, forasmuch as it is very hard to limit the power
of the faculties of the soul, whereas we have better authority
to limit and know the force of the bodily limbs; and there-
fore, if I had been he, I should rather have chosen an ex-
ample of this second sort; and there are some of these less
credible: and among others, that which he relates of
Pyrrhus, that "all wounded as he was, he struck one of his
enemies, who was armed from head to foot, so great a blow
with his sword, that he clave him down from his crown
to his seat, so that the body was divided into two parts." †
In this example I find no great miracle, nor do I admit the
salvo with which he excuses Plutarch, where he added these
words, "as 'tis said," to suspend our belief: for unless it
be in things received by authority, and the reverence to
antiquity or religion, he would never have himself admitted
or enjoined us to believe things incredible in themselves;
and that these words, "as 'tis said," are not put in this
place to that effect, is easy to be seen, because he elsewhere
relates to us, upon this subject, of the patience of the
Lacedæmonian children, examples happening in his time
more unlikely to prevail upon our faith; as what Cicero
has also testified ‡ before him, as having, as he says been
upon the spot: that even to their times there were children
found who, in the trial of patience they were put to
before the altar of Diana, suffered themselves to be there
whipped till the blood ran down all over their bodies, not
only without crying out, but without so much as a groan
and some till they there voluntarily lost their lives: and
that which Plutarch also, among a hundred other wit-
nesses, relates, that at a sacrifice, a burning coal having
fallen into the sleeve of a Lacedæmonian boy, as he was
censing, he suffered his whole arm to be burned, till the
smell of the broiling flesh was perceived by those present.

* Life of Lycurgus, c. 14
† Life of Pyrrhus, c. 12.
‡ Tusc. Quæs., ii. 14, v. 27.
There was nothing, according to their custom, wherein their reputation was more concerned, nor for which they were to undergo more blame and disgrace, than in being taken in theft. I am so fully satisfied of the greatness of those people, that his story does not only not appear to me as to Bodin, incredible; but I do not find it so much as rare and strange. The Spartan history is full of a thousand more cruel and rare examples; and is, indeed, all miracle in this respect.

Marcellinus, concerning theft, reports* that in his time there was no sort of torments which could compel the Egyptians, when taken in this act, though a people very much addicted to it, so much as to tell their name.

A Spanish peasant, being put to the rack as to the accomplices of the murder of the Prétor Lucius Piso, cried out in the height of the torment, "that his friends should not leave him, but look on in all assurance; and that no pain had the power to force from him one word of confession," which was all they could get the first day. The next day, as they were leading him a second time to another trial, strongly disengaging himself from the hands of his guards, he furiously ran his head against a wall, and beat out his brains. †

Epicharis, having tired and glutted the cruelty of Nero's satellites and undergone their fire, their beating, their racks a whole day together, without one syllable of confession of her conspiracy: being the next day brought again to the rack, with her limbs almost torn to pieces, conveyed the lace of her robe with a running noose over one of the arms of her chair, and suddenly slipping her head into it, with the weight of her own body hanged herself. ‡ Having the courage to die in that manner, is it not to be presumed that she purposely lent her life to the trial of her fortitude the day before, to mock the tyrant, and encourage others to the like attempt?

And whoever will inquire of our troopers the experiences they have had in our civil wars, will find effects of patience and obstinate resolution in this miserable age of ours, and among this rabble even more effeminate than the

* Lib xxii. cap. 16. † Tacitus, Annals, iv. 45.
‡ Idem, ibid., xv. 57.
Egyptians, worthy to be compared with those we have just related of the Spartan virtue.

I know there have been simple peasants among us who have endured the soles of their feet to be broiled upon a gridiron, their finger-ends to be crushed with the cock of a pistol, and their bloody eyes squeezed out of their heads by force of a cord twisted about their brows, before they would so much as consent to a ransom. I have seen one left stark naked for dead in a ditch, his neck black and swollen, with a halter yet about it with which they had dragged him all night at a horse's tail, his body wounded in a hundred places, with stabs of daggers that had been given him, not to kill him, but to put him to pain and to affright him, who had endured all this, and even to being speechless and insensible, resolved, as he himself told me, rather to die a thousand deaths (as indeed, as to matter of suffering, he already had) before he would pay a penny; and yet he was one of the richest husbandmen of all the country. How many have been seen patiently to suffer themselves to be burned and roasted for opinions taken upon trust from others, and by them not at all understood? I have known a hundred and a hundred women (for Gascony has a certain prerogative for obstinacy) whom you might sooner have made eat fire than forsake an opinion they had conceived in anger. They are all the more exasperated by blows and constraint. And he that made the story of the woman who, in defiance of all correction, threats, and bastinadoes, ceased not to call her husband lousy knave; and who being plunged over head and ears in water, yet lifted her hands above her head and made a sign of cracking lice, feigned a tale of which, in truth, we every day see a manifest image in the obstinacy of women, And obstinacy is the sister of constancy, at least in vigor and stability.

We are not to judge what is possible and what is not, according to what is credible and incredible to our apprehension, as I have said elsewhere;* and it is a great fault, and yet one that most men are guilty of which, nevertheless, I do not mention with any reflection upon Bodin, to make a difficulty or believing that in another which they could not or would not do themselves. Every

* Book i. chap. 26.
one thinks that the sovereign stamp of human nature is imprinted in him, and that from it all others must take their rule; and that all proceedings which are not like his are feigned and false. What brutal stupidity! Is anything of another's actions or faculties proposed to him? the first thing he calls to the consultation of his judgment is his own example; and as matters go with him, so they must of necessity do with all the world besides. O dangerous and intolerable folly! For my part, I consider some men as infinitely beyond me, especially among the ancients, and yet, though I clearly discern my inability to come near them by a thousand paces, I do not forbear to keep them in sight, and to judge of what so elevates them, of which I perceive some seeds in myself, as I also do of the extreme meanness of some other minds, which I neither am astonished at nor yet misbelieve. I very well perceive the turns those great souls take to raise themselves to such a pitch, and admire their grandeur: and those flights that I think the bravest I could be glad to imitate; where though I want wing, yet my judgment readily goes along with them.

The other example he introduces of "things incredible and wholly fabulous," delivered by Plutarch* is, that "Agesilaus was fined by the Ephori for having wholly engrossed the hearts and affections of his citizens to himself alone." And herein I do not see what sign of falsity is to be found: clearly Plutarch speaks of things that must needs be better known to him than to us; and it was no new thing in Greece to see men punished and exiled for this very thing of being too acceptable to the people; witness the ostracism and petalism.†

There is yet in this place another accusation laid against Plutarch which I cannot well digest, wherein Bodin says that he has sincerely paralleled Romans with Romans, and Greeks among themselves, but not Romans with Greeks; witness, says he, Demosthenes and Cicero, Cato and Aristides, Sylla and Lysander, Marcellus and Lysander, holding that he has favored the Greeks in giving them so unequal companions. This is

* Life of Agesilaus, c. 1.
† Ostracism, at Athens, was banishment for ten years; Petalism, at Syracuse, was banishment for five years.
really to attack what in Plutarch is most excellent and most to be commended: for in his parallels (which is the most admirable part of all his works, and with which, in my opinion, he is himself the most pleased) the fidelity and sincerity of his judgments equal their depth and weight: he is a philosopher who teaches us virtue. Let us see whether we cannot defend him from this reproach of falsity and prevarication. All that I can imagine could give occasion to this censure is the great and shining luster of the Roman names which we have in our minds; it does not seem likely to us that Demosthenes could rival the glory of a consul, proconsul, and prætor of that great Republic: but if a man consider the truth of the thing, and the men in themselves, which is Plutarch’s chiefest aim, and will rather balance their manners, their natures, and parts, than their fortunes. I think, contrary to Bodin, that Cicero and the elder Cato come far short of the men with whom they are compared. I should sooner, for his purpose, have chosen the example of the younger Cato compared with Phocion, for in this couple there would have been a more likely disparity, to the Roman’s advantage. As to Marcellus, Sylla, and Pompey, I very well discern that their exploits of war are greater and more full of pomp and glory than those of the Greeks, whom Plutarch compares with them: but the bravest and most virtuous actions, any more in war than elsewhere, are not always the most renowned. I often see the names of captains obscured by the splendor of other names of less desert; witness Labenius, Ventidius, Telesinus, and several others. And to take it by that were I to complain on the behalf of the Greeks, could I not say, that Camillus was much less comparable to Themistocles, the Gracchi to Agis and Cleomenes and Numa to Lycurgus? But ’tis folly to judge at one view, of things that have so many aspects. When Plutarch compares them, he does not, for all that, make them equal; who could more learnedly and sincerely have marked their distinctions? Does he parallel the victories, feats of arms, the force of the armies conducted by Pompey, and his triumphs, with those of Agesilaus? "I do not believe," says he, * "that Xenophon himself, if he were now living, though he were allowed to write what-

* Parallel of Pompey and Agesilaus.
ever pleased him to the advantage of Agesilans, would
dare to bring them into comparison." Does he speak of
paralleling Lysander to Sylla. There is," says he, "no
comparison either in the number of victories, or in the
hazard of battles, for Lysander only gained two naval
battles," etc.* This is not to derogate from the Romans; for
having only simply named them with the Greeks, he can have
done them no injury, what disparity soever there may be
between them: and Plutarch does not entirely oppose them
to one another; there is no preference in general; he only
compares the pieces and circumstances, one after another,
and gives of every one a particular and separate judgment.
Wherefore if any one could convict him of partiality, he
ought to pick out some one of those particular judgments,
or say, in general, that he was mistaken in comparing such
a Greek to such a Roman, when there were others more fit
and better resembling to parallel him to.

CHAPTER XXVII.

THE STORY OF SPURINA.

PHILOSOPHY thinks she has not ill employed her talent,
when she has given the sovereignty of the soul and the
authority of restraining our appetites, to reason. Among
which, they who judge that there is none more violent than
those which spring from love, have this opinion also, that
they seize both body and soul; and possess the whole man,
so that even health depends upon them, and medicine
is sometimes constrained to pimp for them; but one might,
on the contrary also say, that the mixture of the body
brings an abatement and weakening; for such desires are
subject to satiety, and capable of material remedies.

Many, being determined to rid their souls from the con-
tinual alarms of this appetite, have made use of incision
and amputation of the rebelling members; others have
subdued their force and ardor by the frequent application
of cold things, as snow and vinegar. The sackcloths of our
ancestors were for this purpose, which is cloth woven of
horse-hair, of which some of them made shirts, and others

* Parallel of Sylla and Lysander,
girdles, to torture and correct their reins. A prince, not long ago, told me, that in his youth, upon a solemn festival in the court of King Francis I., where everybody was very finely dressed, he would needs put on his father's hair shirt which was still kept in the house; but how great soever his devotion was, he had not patience to wear it till night, and was sick a long time after; adding withal, that he did not think there could be any youthful heat so fierce that the use of this recipe would not mortify, and yet perhaps he never essayed the most violent; for experience shows us, that such emotions are often seen under rude and slovenly clothes, and that a hair shirt does not always render those chaste who wear it.*

Xenocrates proceeded with greater rigor in this affair; for his disciples, to make trial of his continency, having slipped Lais, that beautiful and famous courtesan, into his bed, quite naked, excepting the arms of her beauty and her wanton allurements, her philters, finding, that in despite of his reason and philosophical rules, his unruly flesh began to mutiny, he caused those members of his to be burned that he found consenting to this rebellion.† Whereas the passions which wholly reside in the soul, as ambition, avarice, and the rest, find the reason much more to do, because it cannot there be helped but by its own means; neither are those appetites capable of satiety, but grow sharper and increase by fruition;

The sole example of Julius Cæsar may suffice to demonstrate to us the disparity of these appetites; for never was man more addicted to amorous delights than he: of which one testimony is the peculiar care he had of his person, to such a degree, as to make use of the most lascivious means to that end then in use, as to have all the hairs of his body twitched off, and to wipe all over with perfumes with the extremest nicety.‡ And he was a beautiful person in himself, of a fair complexion, tall, and sprightly, full faced, with quick hazel eyes, if we may believe Suetonius; for

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* In the original there is a play on the words haire and here, the former meaning a clice or hair shirt, derived from a coarse habit worn by the people of Cilicia, and the latter a poor feeble creature, un pauvre here.

† Diogenes Laërtius, in vita, iv. 7.

‡ Suetonius, in vita, c. 45.
the statues of him that we see at Rome do not in all points answer this description. Besides his wives, whom he four times changed, without reckoning the amors of his boyhood with Nicomedes, king of Bithynia, he had the maidenhood of the renowned Cleopatra, queen of Egypt, witness the little Cæsario whom he had by her. * He also made love to Eunoe, † queen of Mauritania; and at Rome to Posthumia, the wife of Servius Sulpitius; to Lollio, the wife of Gabinius; to Tertulla, the wife of Crassus, and even to Mutia, wife of the great Pompey; which was the reason, the Roman historians say, that she was repudiated by her husband, which Plutarch confesses to be more than he knew; and the Curios, both father and son, afterward reproached Pompey, when he married Cæsar's daughter, that he had made himself son-in-law to a man who had made him cuckold, and one whom he himself was wont to call Ægisthus. Besides all these, he entertained Servilia, Cato's sister and mother to Marcus Brutus, whence, every one believes, proceeded the great affection he had to Brutus by reason that he was born at a time when it was likely he might be his son. So that I have reason, methinks, to take him for a man extremely given to this debauch, and of a very amorous constitution. But the other passion of ambition, with which he was exceedingly infected, arising in him to contend with the former, it was soon compelled to give way.

And here calling to mind Mohammed, who won Constantinople, and finally exterminated the Grecian name, I do not know where these two passions were so evenly balanced; equally an indefatigable lecher and soldier: but where they both meet in his life and jostle one another, the quarreling passion always gets the better of the amorous one; and this, though it was out of its natural season, never regained an absolute sovereignty over the other till he had arrived at an extreme old age, and unable to undergo the fatigues of war.

What is related for a contrary example, of Ladislaus, king of Naples, is very remarkable; that being a great captain, valiant and ambitious, he proposed to himself for

* Plutarch, Life of Cæsar, c. 13.
† Suetonius, ubi supra, c. 50, etc.
the principal end of his ambition; the execution of his pleasure and the enjoyment of some rare and excellent beauty. His death sealed up all the rest: for having by a close and tedious siege reduced the city of Florence to so great distress that the inhabitants were compelled to capitulate about surrender, he was content to let them alone, provided they would deliver up to him a beautiful maid he had heard of in their city; they were forced to yield to it, and by a private injury to avert the public ruin. She was the daughter of a famous physician of his time, who, finding himself involved in so foul a necessity, resolved upon a high attempt. As every one was lending a hand to trick up his daughter and to adorn her with ornaments and jewels to render her more agreeable to this new lover, he also gave her a handkerchief most richly wrought, and of an exquisite perfume, an implement they never go without in those parts, which she was to make use of at their first approaches. This handkerchief, poisoned with his greatest art, coming to be rubbed between the chafed flesh and open pores, both of the one and the other, so suddenly infused the poison, that immediately converting their warm into a cold sweat they presently died in one another's arms.*

But I return to Cæsar. His pleasures never made him steal one minute of an hour, nor go one step aside from occasions that might any way conduce to his advancement. This passion was so sovereign in him over all the rest, and with so absolute authority possessed his soul, that it guided him at pleasure. In truth, this troubles me, when, as to everything else, I consider the greatness of this man, and the wonderful parts wherewith he was endued; learned to that degree in all sorts of knowledge that there is hardly any one science of which he has not written; † so great an orator that many have preferred his eloquence to that of Cicero, and he, I conceive, did not think himself inferior to him in that particular, for his two anti-Catos were written to counterbalance the eloquence that Cicero had expended in his Cato. As to the rest, was ever soul so vigilant, so active, and so patient of labor as his? and, doubtless, it

* See as to this adventure, which is highly problematical, Sismondi's Hist. des Republiques Italiennes, viii. 210.

† Suetonius, in vita, c. 55, 56.
was embellished with many rare seeds of virtue, lively, natural, and not put on; he was singularly sober: so far from being delicate in his diet, that Oppius relates, * how that having one day at table set before him medicated instead of common oil in some sauce, he ate heartily of it, that he might not put his entertainer out of countenance. Another time he caused his baker to be whipped for serving him with a finer than ordinarv sort of bread. † Cato himself was wont to say of him, that he was the first sober man who ever made it his business to ruin his country. ‡ And as to the same Cato’s calling him one day drunkard, it fell out thus: being both of them in the senate, at a time when Catiline’s conspiracy was in question, of which Caesar was suspected, one came and brought him a letter sealed up. Cato, believing that it was something the conspirators gave him notice of, required him to deliver it into his hand, which Caesar was constrained to do, to avoid farther suspicion. It was by chance a love-letter that Servilia, Cato’s sister, had written to him which, Cato having read, he threw it back to him, saying, “There, drunkard.” § This, I say, was rather a word of disdain and anger than an express reproach of this vice, as we often rate those who anger us with the first injurious words that come into our mouths, though nothing due to those we are offended at; to which may be added that the vice which Cato cast in his dish is wonderfully near akin to that wherein he had trapped Caesar; for Bacchus and Venus, according to the proverb, very willingly agree; but with me Venus is most sprightly when I am the most sober.

The examples of his sweetness and clemency to those by whom he had been offended are infinite: I mean, besides those he gave during the time of the civil wars, which, as plainly enough appears by his writings, he practiced to cajole his enemies, and to make them less afraid of his future dominion and victory. But I must also say, that if these examples are not sufficient proofs of his natural sweetness, they, at least, manifest a marvelous confidence

* Idem, ibid., c. 53. † Idem, ibid., c. 48.
‡ Idem, ibid., c. 53. § Plutarch, Life of Cato, c. 7.
¶ “Montaigne, in book ii. c. 11, writes with greater justice of this affected clemency of Cæsar.”—Le Clerc.
and grandeur of courage in this person. He has often been known to dismiss whole armies, after having overcome them, to his enemies, without ransom, or deigning so much as to bind them by oath, if not to favor him, at least no more to bear arms against him; he has three or four times taken some of Pompey's captain's prisoners, and as often set them at liberty. Pompey declared all those to be enemies who did not follow him to the war; he proclaimed all those to be his friends who sat still and did not actually take arms against him. * To such captains of his as ran away from him to go over to the other side, he sent, moreover, their arms, horses, and equipage: the cities he had taken by force he left at full liberty to follow which side they pleased, imposing no other garrison upon them but the memory of his gentleness and clemency. He gave strict and express charge, the day of his great battle of Pharsalia, that, without the utmost necessity, no one should lay a hand upon the citizens of Rome. † These, in my opinion, were very hazardous proceedings, and 'tis no wonder if those in our civil war, who, like him, fight against the ancient estate of their country, do not follow his example; they are extraordinary means, and that only appertain to Caesar's fortune, and to his admirable foresight in the conduct of affairs. When I consider the incomparable grandeur of his soul, I excuse victory that it could not disengage itself from him, even in so unjust and so wicked a cause.

To return to his clemency: we have many striking examples in the time of his government, when, all things being reduced to his power, he had no more need to dissemble. Caius Memmius had written very severe orations against him, which he had as sharply answered; yet he did not soon after forbear to use his interest to make him consul. ‡ Caius Calvus, who had composed several injurious epigrams against him, having employed many of his friends to mediate a reconciliation with him, Caesar voluntarily persuaded himself to write first to him. And our good Catullus, who had so rudely ruffled him under the name of Mamurra, § coming to offer his excuses to him, he made the

* Suetonius, in vita, c. 75. † Idem, ibid., c. 75.
‡ Suetonius, in vita, c. 78. § Catullus, Carm., 29.
same day sit at his table.* Having intelligence of some who spoke ill of him, he did no more, but only by a public oration declare that he had notice of it. He still less feared his enemies than he hated them; some conspiracies and cabals that were made against his life being discovered to him, he satisfied himself in publishing by proclamation that they were known to him, without further prosecuting the conspirators. †

As to the respect he had for his friends: Caius Oppius, being with him upon a journey, and finding himself ill, he left him the only lodging he had for himself, and lay all night upon the hard ground in the open air. ‡ As to what concerns his justice, he put a beloved servant of his to death for lying with a noble Roman’s wife, though there was no complaint made. § Never had man more moderation in his victory, nor more resolution in his adverse fortune.

But all these good inclinations were stifled and spoiled by his furious ambition, by which he suffered himself to be so transported and misled that one may easily maintain, that this passion was the rudder of all his actions: of a liberal man, it made him a public thief to supply this bounty and profusion, and made him utter this vile and unjust saying, “That if the most wicked and profligate persons in the world had been faithful in serving him toward his advancement, he would cherish and prefer them to the utmost of his power, as much as the best of men.” || It intoxicated him with so excessive a vanity, as to dare to boast in the presence of his fellow-citizens, that he had made the great commonwealth of Rome a name without form and without body; and to say that his answers for the future should stand for laws; †† and also to receive the body of the senate coming to him, sitting; to suffer himself to be adored, and to have divine honors paid to him** in his own presence. To conclude, this sole vice, in my opinion, spoiled in him the most rich and beautiful nature that ever was, and has rendered his name abominable to all good men, in that he would erect his glory upon the ruins

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* Suetonius, in vita, 73.
† Idem, ibid., 72.
‡ Idem, ibid., 72.
§ Idem, ibid., 78.
|| Suetonius, in vita, 72.
†† Suetonius, ibid., 73.
** Idem, ibid., 73.
of his country and the subversion of the greatest and most flourishing republic the world shall ever see.

There might, on the contrary, many examples be produced of great men whom pleasures have made to neglect the conduct of their affairs, as Mark Antony and others; but where love and ambition should be in equal balance, and come to jostle, with equal forces, I make no doubt but the last would win the prize.

To return to my subject; 'tis much to bridle our appetites by the argument of reason, or, by violence, to contain our members within their duty; but to lash ourselves for our neighbor's interest, and not only to divest ourselves of the charming passion that tickles us, of the pleasure we feel in being agreeable to others, and courted and beloved of every one, but also to conceive a hatred against the graces that produce that effect, and to condemn our beauty because it inflames others; of this, I confess, I have met with few examples. But this is one. Spurina, a young man of Tuscany,

"Qualis gemma micat, fulvum quae dividit aurum,
Aut collo decus, aut capiti: vel quale per artem
Inclusum buxo, aut Oricia terebitho
Lucet ebur," *

being endowed with a singular beauty, and so excessive that the chastest eyes could not chastely behold its rays: not contenting himself with leaving so much flame and fever as he everywhere kindled without relief, entered into a furious spite against himself and those great endowments nature had so liberally conferred upon him, as if a man were responsible to himself for the faults of others, and purposely slashed and disfigured, with many wounds and scars, the perfect symmetry and proportion that nature had so curiously imprinted in his face.† To give my free opinion, I more admire than honor such actions: such excesses are enemies to my rules. The design was conscientious and good, but certainly a little defective in prudence. What! if his deformity served afterward to make others guilty of the sin of hatred or contempt; or of envy at the glory of so

* "As a gem shines enchased in yellow gold an ornament on the neck or head, or as ivory has luster, set by art in boxwood or Orician ebony."—Eneid. x. 134.

† Valerius Maximus, v. ex 1.
rare a recommendation; or of calumny, interpreting this humor a mad ambition! Is there any form from which vice cannot, if it will, extract occasion to exercise itself, one way or another? It had been more just, and also more noble, to have made of these gifts of God a subject of exemplary regularity and virtue.

They who retire themselves from the common offices, from that infinite number of troublesome rules that fetter a man of exact honesty in civil life, are in my opinion very discreet, what peculiar sharpness of constraint soever they impose upon themselves in so doing. 'Tis in some sort a kind of dying to avoid the pain of living well. They may have another reward; but the reward of difficulty I fancy they can never have; nor, in uneasiness, that there can be anything more or better done than the keeping one's self upright amid the waves of the world, truly and exactly performing all parts of our duty. 'Tis, peradventure, more easy to keep clear of the sex, than to maintain one's self aright in all points in the society of a wife; and a man may with less trouble adapt himself to entire abstinence, than to the due dispensation of abundance. Use, carried on according to reason, has in it more of difficulty than abstinence; moderation is a virtue that gives more work than suffering; the well living of Scipio has a thousand fashions, that of Diogenes but one; this as much excels the ordinary lives in innocence, as the most accomplished excel them in utility and force.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

OBSERVATION ON THE MEANS TO CARRY ON A WAR ACCORDING TO JULIUS CÆSAR.

'Tis related of many great leaders that they have had certain books in particular esteem, as Alexander the Great, Homer; Scipio Africanus, Xenophon; Marcus Brutus, Polybius; Charles V., Philip de Comines; and 'tis said that, in our times, Machiavelli is elsewhere still in repute: but the late Marshal Strozzi, who took Cæsar for his man, doubtless made the best choice, seeing that his book indeed ought to be the breviary of every soldier, as being the true and most excellent pattern of all military art. And,
moreover, God knows with what grace and beauty he has embellished that rich matter, with so pure, delicate, and perfect expression, that, in my opinion, there are no writings in the world comparable to his, as to that business.

I will set down some rare and particular passages of his wars, that remain in my memory.

His army, being in some consternation upon the rumor that was spread of the great forces that King Juba was leading against him, instead of abating the apprehension which his soldiers had conceived at the news and of lessening to them the forces of the enemy, having called them all together to encourage and reassure them, he took a quite contrary way to what we are used to do, for he told them that they need no more trouble themselves with inquiring after the enemy’s forces, for that he was certainly informed thereof, and then told them of a number much surpassing both the truth and the report that was current in his army; * following the advice of Cyrus in Xenophon, forasmuch as the deception is not of so great importance to find an enemy weaker than we expected, than to find him really very strong, after having been made to believe that he was weak.

It was always his use to accustom his soldiers simply to obey, without taking upon them to control, or so much as to speak of their captain’s designs, which he never communicated to them but upon the point of execution; and he took a delight, if they discovered anything of what he intended, immediately to change his orders to deceive them; and to that purpose, would often when he had assigned his quarters in a place, pass forward and lengthen his day’s march, especially if it was foul and rainy weather. †

The Swiss, in the beginning of his wars in Gaul, having sent to him to demand a free passage over the Roman territories, though resolved to hinder them by force, he nevertheless spoke kindly to the messengers, and took some respite to return an answer, to make use of that time for the calling his army together. ‡ These silly people did not know how good a husband he was of his time: for he often repeats that it is the best part of a captain to know how to

* Suetonius, in vita, 66.  † Suetonius, in vita, 65.
‡ Cæsar, De Bell. Gall., i. 7.
make use of occasions; and his diligence in his exploits is, in truth, unheard of and incredible.

If he was not very conscientious in taking advantage of an enemy under color of a treaty of agreement, he was as little so in this, that he required no other virtue in a soldier but valor only, and seldom punished any other faults but mutiny and disobedience. He would often after his victories turn them loose to all sorts of license, dispensing them for some time from the rules of military discipline, saying withal that he had soldiers so well trained up that, powdered and perfumed, they would run furiously to the fight.* In truth, he loved to have them richly armed, and made them wear engraved, gilded, and damasked armor, to the end that the care of saving it might engage them to a more obstinate defense.† Speaking to them, he called them by the name of fellow-soldiers,‡ which we yet use; which his successor, Augustus, reformed, supposing he had only done it upon necessity, and to cajole those who merely followed him as volunteers:

"Rheni mihi Caesar in undis
Dux erat; hic socius; facinus quos inquinat, aequat:" §

but that this carriage was too mean and low for the dignity of an emperor and general of an army, and therefore brought up the custom of calling them soldiers only.‖

With this courtesy Cæsar mixed great severity to keep them in awe; the ninth legion having mutinied near Placentia, he ignominiously cashiered them, though Pompey was then yet on foot, and received them not again to grace till after many supplications; he quieted them more by authority and boldness than by gentle ways.¶

In that place where he speaks of his passage over the Rhine to Germany, he says** that, thinking it unworthy of

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* Suetonius, in vita, c. 67.
† Idem, ibid.
‡ Idem, ibid.
§ "At the passage of the Rhine Cæsar was my general; here he is, at Rome, my fellow. Crime renders all its accomplices equal." — LUCAN, v. 289.
‖ Suetonius, Life of Augustus, c. 25.
¶ Suetonius, in vita, c. 69.
** De Bello Gall., iv. 17.
the honor of the Roman people to waft over his army in vessels, he built a bridge that they might pass over dry-foot. There it was that he built that wonderful bridge of which he gives so particular a description: for he nowhere so willingly dwells upon his actions as in representing to us the subtility of his inventions in such kind of things.

I have also observed this, that he set a great value upon his exhortations to the soldiers before the fight; for where he would show that he was either surprised or reduced, to a necessity of fighting, he always brings in this, that he had not so much as leisure to harangue his army. Before that great battle with those of Tournay, "Caesar," says he,* "having given order for everything else, presently ran where fortune carried him to encourage his people, and meeting with the tenth legion had no more time to say anything to them but this, that they should remember their wonted valor; not be astonished, but bravely sustain the enemy's encounter, and seeing the enemy had already approached within a dart's cast, he gave the signal for battle; and going suddenly thence elsewhere, to encourage others, he found that they were already engaged." Here is what he tells us in that place. His tongue, indeed, did him notable service upon several occasions, and his military eloquence was, in his own time, so highly reputed, that many of his army wrote down his harangues as he spoke them; by which means there were volumes of them collected that existed a long time after him. He had so particular a grace in speaking, that they who were particularly acquainted with him, and Augustus among others, hearing those orations read, could distinguish even to the phrases and words that were not his.†

The first time that he went out of Rome with any public command, he arrived in eight days at the river Rhone, having with him in his coach a secretary or two before him who were continually writing, and him who carried his sword behind him.‡ And certainly, though a man did nothing but go on, he could hardly attain that promptiude with which, having been everywhere victorious in Gaul, he

* Idem, ibid., ii. 21.
† Suetonius, in vita, c. 55.
‡ Plutarch, Life of Cæsar, c. 12.
left it, and following Pompey to Brundusium in eighteen days’ time he subdued all Italy; returned from Brundusium to Rome; from Rome went into the very heart of Spain, where he surmounted extreme difficulties in the war against Afranius and Petreius, and in the long siege of Marseilles; thence he returned into Macedonia, beat the Roman army at Pharsalia, passed thence in pursuit of Pompey into Egypt, which he also subdued; from Egypt he went into Syria and the territories of Pontus, where he fought Pharnaces; thence into Africa, where he defeated Scipio and Juba; again returned through Italy, where he defeated Pompey’s sons:

"Ocyor et coeli flammis, et tigride feeta." *

"Ac veluti montis saxum de vertice praeceps
Cum ruit avulsum vento, seu turbidus imber
Proluit, aut annis solvit sublapsa vetustas,
Fertur in abruptum magno mors improbus actu,
Exultatque solo, silvas, armenta, virosque,
Involvens secum." †

Speaking of the siege of Avaricum, he says, ‡ that it was his custom to be night and day with the pioneers. In all enterprises of consequence he always reconnoitred in person, and never brought his army into quarters till he had first viewed the place, and, if we may believe Suetonius, when he resolved to pass over into England, he was the first man that sounded the passage. §

He was wont to say that he more valued a victory obtained by counsel than by force, and in the war against Petreius and Afranius, fortune presenting him with an occasion of manifest advantage, he declined it, saying, ‖ that he hoped, with a little more time, but less hazard, to overthrow his enemies. He there also played a notable part in

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* "Swifter than lightning, or the cub-bearing tigress."—Lucan, v. 405.
† "As a stone torn from the mountain’s top by the wind or rain torrents, or loosened by age, falls massive with mighty force, bounds here and there, in its course sweeps all before it, woods, herds, and men."—Aenid, xii. 684.
‡ De Bello Gall., vii. 24.
§ In vita, c. 58.
‖ De Bello Civ., i. 72.
commanding his whole army to pass the river by swimming, without any manner of necessity:

"Rapuitque ruens in prælia miles,
Quod fugiens timuisset, iter; mox uda receptis
Membra fovent armis, gelidosque à gurgite, cursu
Restituunt artus." *

I find him a little more temperate and considerate in his enterprises than Alexander, for this man seems to seek and run headlong upon dangers like an impetuous torrent which attacks and rushes against everything it meets, without choice or discretion.

"Sic tauriformis volvitur Aufidus,
Qui regna Dauni perfiuit Appuli,
Dum sævit, horrendamque cultis
Diluviem meditatur agris; †

and, indeed, he was a general in the flower and first heat of his youth, whereas Cæsar took up the trade at a ripe and well advanced age; to which may be added that Alexander was of a more sanguine, hot, and choleric constitution, which he also inflamed with wine, from which Cæsar was very abstinent.

But where necessary occasion required, never did any man venture his person more than he; so much so, that for my part, methinks I read in many of his exploits a determinate resolution to throw himself away to avoid the shame of being overcome. In this great battle with those of Tournay, he charged up to the head of the enemies without his shield, just as he was seeing the van of his own army beginning to give ground; † which also several other times befell him. Hearing that his people were besieged, he passed through the enemy's army in disguise to go and encourage them with his presence. § Having crossed over to Dyrrahchium with very slender forces, and seeing the remainder of his army which he had left to Antony's con-

* "The soldiers rush through away to fight which they would have been afraid to have taken in flight. Then with their armor they cover wet limbs, and by running restore warmth to their numbed joints."—Lucan, iv. 151.

† "So the biforked Aufidus, which waters the realm of the Apulian Daunus, when raging, threatens a fearful deluge to the tilled ground."—Horat., Od. iv. 14, 25.

‡ De Bello Gall., ii. 25.

§ Suetonis in vita, c. 58.
duct slow in following him, he undertook alone to repass
the sea in a very great storm,* and privately stole away to
fetch the rest of his forces, the ports on the other side being
seized by Pompey, and the whole sea being in his posses-
sion. And as to what he performed by force of hand, there
are many exploits that in hazard exceed all the rules of
war: for with how small means did he undertake to subdue
the kingdom of Egypt, and afterward to attack the forces
of Scipio and Juba, ten times greater than his own? These
people had, I know not what, more than human confidence
in their fortune; and he was wont to say that men must
embark, and not deliberate, upon high enterprises. After
the battle of Pharsalia, when he had sent his army away
before him into Asia, and was passing in one single vessel
the strait of the Hellespont, he met Lucius Cassius at sea
with ten tall men-of-war, when he had the courage not
only to stay his coming, but to sail up to him and summon
him to yield, which he did.†

Having undertaken that furious siege of Alexia, where
there were fourscore thousand men in garrison, all Gaul
being in arms to raise the siege and having set an army on
foot of a hundred and nine thousand horse, ‡ and of two
hundred and forty thousand foot, what a boldness and
vehement confidence was it in him that he would not give
over his attempt, but resolved upon two so great diffi-
culties?—which nevertheless he overcame; and, after hav-
ing won that great battle against those without, soon re-
duced those within to his mercy. The same happened to
Lucullus at the siege of Tigranocerta against King
Tigranes, but the condition of the enemy was not the same,
considering the effeminacy of those with whom Lucullus
had to deal. I will here set down two rare and extra-
ordinary events concerning the siege of Alexia; one, that
the Gauls having drawn their powers together to encounter
Cæsar, after they had made a general muster of all their
forces, resolved in their council of war to dismiss a good
part of this great multitude, that they might not fall into

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* Idem, ibid., Lucan, v. 519.
† Idem, in vita, c. 62.
‡ Cæsar, De Bello Gall., vii. 64, says eight thousand horse
only.
confusion.* This example of fearing to be too many is new; but, to take it right, it stands to reason that the body of any army should be of a moderate greatness, and regulated to certain bounds, both out of respect to the difficulty of providing for them, and the difficulty of governing and keeping them in order. At least it is very easy to make it appear by example, that armies monstrous in number have seldom done anything to purpose. According to the saying of Cyrus in Xenophon, "'Tis not the number of men, but the number of good men, that gives the advantage;" the remainder serving rather to trouble than assist. And Bajazet principally grounded his resolution of giving Tamerlane battle, contrary to the opinion of all his captains, upon this that his enemies numberless number of men gave him assured hopes of confusion. Scanderbeg, a very good and expert judge in such matters, was wont to say that ten or twelve thousand reliable fighting men were sufficient to a good leader to secure his reputation in all sorts of military occasions. The other thing I will here record, which seems to be contrary both to the custom and rules of war, is, that Vercingetorix, who was made general of all the parts of the revolted Gaul, should go shut up himself in Alexia; † for he who has the command of a whole country ought never to shut himself up but in case of such last extremity that the only place he has left is in concern, and that the only hope he has left is in the defense of that city; otherwise he ought to keep himself always at liberty, that he may have the means to provide, in general, for all parts of his government.

To return to Cæsar. He grew, in time, more slow and more considerate, as his friend Oppius witnesses: ‡ conceiving that he ought not lightly to hazard the glory of so many victories, which one blow of fortune might deprive him of. "'Tis what the Italians say, when they would reproach the rashness and foolhardiness of young people, calling them Bisognosi d'onore, "necessitous of honor," and that being in so great a want and dearth of reputation, they have reason to seek it at what price soever, which

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* Cæsar, De Bello Gall., vii. 71.
† Idem, ibid., vil. 68
* Suetonius, Life of Cæsar, c. 60.
they ought not to do, who have acquired enough already. There may reasonably be some moderation, some satiety, in this thirst and appetite of glory, as well as in other things: and there are enough people who practice it.

He was far remote from the religious scruples of the ancient Romans, who would never prevail in their wars, but by dint of pure and simple valor; and yet he was more conscientious than we should be in these days, and did not approve all sorts of means to obtain a victory. In the war against Ariovistus, while he was parleying with him, there happened some commotion between the horsemen, which was occasioned by the fault of Ariovistus' light horse, wherein, though Caesar saw he had a very great advantage of the enemy, he would make no use on't, lest he should have been reproached with a treacherous proceeding.*

He was always wont to wear rich garments and of a shining color in battle, that he might be the more remarkable and better observed.

He always carried a stricter and tighter hand over his soldiers when near an enemy.† When the ancient Greeks would accuse any one of extreme insufficiency, they would say, in common proverb, that he could neither read nor swim; he was of the same opinion, that swimming was of great use in war, and himself found it so; for when he had to use diligence, he commonly swam over the rivers in his way; for he loved to march on foot, as also did Alexander the Great. Being in Egypt forced, to save himself, to go into a little boat, and so many people leaping in with him that it was in danger of sinking, he chose rather to commit himself to the sea, and swam to his fleet, which lay two hundred paces off, holding in his left hand his tablets, and drawing his coat-armor in his teeth, that it might not fall into the enemy's hand, and at this time he was of a pretty advanced age.‡

Never had any general so much credit with his soldiers: in the beginning of the civil wars, his centurions offered him to find every one a man-at-arms at his own charge, and the foot soldiers to serve him at their own expense; those

* De Bello Gall., i. 46.
† Suetonius, in vita, c. 65.
‡ Suetonius, in vita, c. 64.
who were most at their ease, moreover, undertaking to defray the more necessitous. The late Admiral Chastillon showed us the like example in our civil wars; for the French of his army provided money out of their own purses to pay the foreigners that were with him. There are but rarely found examples of so ardent and so ready an affection among the soldiers of elder times, who kept themselves strictly to their rules of war: passion had a more absolute command over us than reason; and yet it happened in the war against Hannibal, that by the example of the people of Rome, in the city, the soldiers and captains refused their pay in the army, and in Marcellus’ camp those were branded with the name of Mercenaries who would receive any. Having got the worst of it near Dyrrachium, his soldiers came and offered themselves to be chastised and punished, so that there was more need to comfort than reprove them. One single cohort of his withstood four of Pompey’s legions above four hours together, till they were almost all killed with arrows, so that there were a hundred and thirty thousand shafts found in the trenches. A soldier called Scaeva, who commanded at one of the avenues, invincibly maintained his ground, having lost an eye, with one shoulder and one thigh shot through and his shield hit in two hundred and thirty places. It happened that many of his soldiers being taken prisoners, rather chose to die than promise to join the contrary side. Gran- inus Petroninus was taken by Scipio in Africa: Scipio having put the rest to death, sent him word that he gave him his life, for he was a man of quality and quæstor, to whom Petronius sent answer back, that Cæsar’s soldiers were wont to give others their lives, and not to receive it; and immediately with his own hand killed himself.

* Idem, ibid., 68
† Gaspard de Coligny, assassinated in the St. Bartholomew massacre, August 24th, 1572.
‡ Suetonius, Life of Cæsar, c. 68.
§ Idem, ibid. Cæsar, De Bello Gall., iii. 53, makes the number thirty thousand only.
¶ Cæsar, De Bello Gall., iii. 53. Suetonius, Life of Cæsar, c. 68.
†† Suetonius, ibid., 68.
** Plutarch, Life of Cæsar, c. 5.
Of their fidelity there are infinite examples: among them, that which was done by those who were besieged in Salona, a city that stood for Cæsar against Pompey, is not, for the rarity of an accident that there happened, to be forgotten. Marcus Octavius kept them close besieged; they within being reduced to the extremest necessity of all things, so that to supply the want of men, most of them being either slain or wounded, they had manumitted all their slaves, and had been constrained to cut off all the women’s hair to make ropes for their war engines, besides a wonderful dearth of victuals, and yet continuing resolute never to yield. After having drawn the siege to a great length, by which Octavius was grown more negligent and less attentive to his enterprise, they made choice of one day about noon, and having first placed the women and children upon the walls to make a show, sallied upon the besiegers with such fury, that having routed the first, second, and third body, and afterward the fourth, and the rest, and beaten them all out of their trenches, they pursued them even to their ships, and Octavius himself was fain to fly to Dyrrachium where Pompey lay. * I do not at present remember that I have met with any other example where the besieged ever gave the besieger a total defeat, and won the field; nor that a sortie ever achieved the result of a pure and entire victory.

CHAPTER XXIX.

OF THREE GOOD WOMEN.

They are not by the dozen, as every one knows, and especially in the duties of marriage, for that is a bargain full of so many nice circumstances that ’tis hard a woman’s will should long endure such a restraint; men, though their condition be something better under that tie, have yet enough to do. The true touch and test of a happy marriage have respect to the time of the companionship, if it has been constantly gentle, loyal, and agreeable. In our age, women commonly reserve the publication of their good offices, and their vehement affection toward their husbands

* Cæsar, De Bello Civ., iii. 9.
until they have lost them, or at least, till then defer the testimonies of their good will: a too slow testimony, and unseasonable. By it they rather manifest that they never loved them till dead: their life is nothing but trouble; their death, full of love and courtesy. As fathers conceal their affection from their children, women, likewise, conceal theirs from their husbands, to maintain a modest respect. This mystery is not for my palate; 'tis to much purpose that they scratch themselves and tear their hair. I whisper in a waiting-woman's or secretary's ear: "How were they, how did they live, together?" I always have that good saying in my head: "Jactantius mierent, que minus dolent."* Their whimpering is offensive to the living, and vain to the dead. We should willingly give them leave to laugh after we are dead, provided they will smile upon us while we are alive. Is it not enough to make a man revive in pure spite, that she who spat in my face while I was in being, shall come to kiss my feet when I am no more? If there be any honor in lamenting a husband, it only appertains to those who smiled upon them while they had them; let those who wept during their lives laugh at their deaths, as well outwardly as within. Therefore, never regard those blubbered eyes and that pitiful voice; consider her deportment, her complexion, the plumpness of her cheeks under all those formal veils; 'tis there she talks plain French. There are few who do not mend upon, and health is a quality that cannot lie. That starched and ceremonious countenance looks not so much back as forward, and is rather intended to get a new husband than to lament the old. When I was a boy, a very beautiful and virtuous lady, who is yet living, the widow of a prince, wore somewhat more ornament in her dress than our laws of widowhood allow, and being reproached with it, she made answer, that it was because she was resolved to have no more love affairs, and would never marry again.

I have here, not at all dissenting from our customs, made choice of three women, who have also expressed the utmost of their goodness and affection about their husbands' deaths; yet are they examples of another kind than are now in use, and so austere that they will hardly be drawn into imitation.

* "They make the most ado who are least concerned."—Tacitus, Annal., ii. 77, writing of Germanicus.
The young Pliny * had near a house of his in Italy a neighbor who was exceedingly tormented with certain ulcers in his private parts. His wife seeing him so long to languish, entreated that he would give her leave to see and at leisure to consider of the condition of his disease, and that she would freely tell him what she thought. This permission being obtained, and she having curiously examined the business, found it impossible he could ever be cured, and that all he had to hope for or expect, was a great while to linger out a painful and miserable life, and therefore, as the most sure and sovereign remedy, resolutely advised him to kill himself. But finding him a little tender and backward in so rude an attempt: "Do not think my friend," said she, "that the torments I see thee endure are not as sensible to me as to thyself, and that to deliver myself from them, I will not myself make use of the same remedy I have prescribed to thee. I will accompany thee in the cure as I have done in the disease; fear nothing, but believe that we shall have pleasure in this passage that is to free us from so many miseries, and we will go happily together." Which having said, and roused up her husband’s courage, she resolved that they should throw themselves headlong into the sea out of a window that overlooked it, and that she might maintain to the last the loyal and vehement affection wherewith she had embraced him during his life, she would also have him die in her arms: but lest they should fail, and should quit their hold in the fall through fear, she tied herself fast to him by the waist, and so gave up her own life to procure her husband’s repose. This was a woman of mean condition; and among that class of people, ’tis no very new thing to see some examples of rare virtue:

"Extrema per illos
Justitia excedens terris vestigia fecit."†

The other two were noble and rich, where examples of virtue are rarely lodged.

Arria, the wife of Cecina Paetus, † a consular person, was

* Ep. vl. 24.
† "Justice when she left the earth, took her last steps among them."—Virgil, Georg., ii. 473.
‡ Pliny, Ep. iii. 16.
the mother of another Arria, the wife of Thrasea Pætus, he whose virtue was so renowned in the time of Nero, and by this son-in-law, the grandmother of Fannia: for the resemblance of the names of these men and women, and their fortunes, have led to several mistakes. This first Arria, her husband Cecina Pætus, having been taken prisoner by some of the Emperor Claudius’ people, after Scribonianus’ defeat whose party he had embraced in the war, begged of those who were to carry him prisoner to Rome, that they would take her into their ship, where she should be of much less charge and trouble to them than a great many persons they must otherwise have to attend her husband, and that she alone would undertake to serve him in his chamber, his kitchen and all other offices. They refused; whereupon she put herself into a fisher boat she hired on the spot, and in that manner followed him from Sclavonia. When she had come to Rome, Junia, the widow of Scribonianus, having one day, from the resemblance of their fortune, accosted her in the emperor’s presence; she rudely repulsed her with these words, “I,” said she, “speak to thee, or give ear to anything thou sayest! to thee in whose lap Scribonianus was slain, and thou art yet alive!” These words, with several other signs, gave her friends to understand that she would undoubtedly despatch herself, impatient of supporting her husband’s misfortunes. And Thrasea, her son-in-law, beseeching her not to throw away herself, and saying to her, “What! if I should run the same fortune that Cecina has done, would you that your daughter, my wife, should do the same?” “Would I?” replied she, “yes, yes, I would: if she had lived as long, and in as good understanding with thee, as I have done with my husband.” These answers made them more careful of her, and to have a more watchful eye to her proceedings. One day, having said to those who looked to her; “Tis to much purpose that you take all this pains to prevent me; you may indeed make me die an ill death, but to keep me from dying is not in your power;” she in a sudden frenzy started from a chair whereon she sat, and with all her force dashed her head against the wall, by which blow being laid flat in a swoon, and very much wounded, after they had again with great ado brought her to herself: “I told you,” said she, “that if you refuse me some easy way of dying, I should find out another, how
painfulsoever." The conclusion of so admirable a virtue was this: her husband Pætus, not having resolution enough of his own to despatch himself, as he was by the emperor's cruelty enjoined, one day, among others, after having first employed all the reasons and exhortations which she thought most prevalent to persuade him to it, she snatched the poniard he wore from his side, and holding it ready in her hand, for the conclusion of her admonitions: "Do thus Pætus," said she, and in the same instant giving herself a mortal stab in the breast, and then drawing it out of the wound, presented it to him, ending her life with this noble, generous, and immortal saying, "Pæte, non dolet," having time to pronounce no more but those three never-to-be-forgotten words: "Pætus, it is not painful:"

"Casta suo gladium cum traderet Arria Pæto
Quem de visceribus traxorat ipsa sui.
Si qua fides, vulnus quod feci non dolet, inquit,
Sed quod tu facies, id mihi, Pæte, dolet." *

The action was much more noble in itself, and of a braver sense than the poet expressed it; for she was so far from being deterred by the thought of her husband's wound and death and her own, that she had been their promotress and adviser: but having performed this high and courageous enterprise for her husband's only convenience, she had even in the last gasp of her life no other concern but for him, and of dispossessing him of the fear of dying with her. Pætus presently struck himself to the heart with the same weapon, ashamed, I suppose, to have stood in need of so dear and precious an example.†

Pompeia Paulina, a young and very noble Roman lady, had married Seneca in his extreme old age. Nero, his fine pupil sent his guards to him to denounce the sentence of death, which was performed after this manner: When the Roman emperors of those times had condemned any man of quality, they sent to him by their officers to choose what death he would and to execute it within such or such

* "When the chaste Arria gave to Pætus the reeking sword she had drawn from her breast, 'Believe me,' she said, 'Pætus, the wound I have made hurts not, but 'tis the wound thou wilt make that hurts me.'"—MARTIAL, i. 14.

†Tacitus, Annal., xv. 61-64.
a time, which was limited according to the degree of their indignation to a shorter or a longer respite, that they might therein have better leisure to dispose their affairs, and sometimes depriving them of the means of doing it by the shortness of the time; and if the condemned seemed unwilling to submit to the order, they had people ready at hand to execute it either by cutting the veins of the arms and legs, or by compelling them by force to swallow a draught of poison. But persons of honor would not abide this necessity, but made use of their own physicians and surgeons for this purpose. Seneca, with a calm and steady countenance, heard their charge, and presently called for paper to write his will, which being by the captain refused, he turned himself toward his friends, saying to them, "Since I cannot leave you any other acknowledgment of the obligation I have to you, I leave you at least the best thing I have, namely, the image of my life and manners, which I entreat you to keep in memory of me, that by so doing you may acquire the glory of sincere and real friends." And therewithal, one while appeasing the sorrow he saw in them with gentle words, and presently raising his voice to reprove them: "What," said he, "are become of all our brave philosophical precepts? What are become of all the provisions we have so many years laid up against the accidents of fortune? Is Nero's cruelty unknown to us? What could we expect from him who had murdered his mother and his brother, but that he should put his tutor to death who had brought him up?" After having spoken these words in general, he turned himself toward his wife, and embracing her fast in his arms, as, her heart and strength failing her, she was ready to sink down with grief, he begged of her, for his sake, to bear this accident with a little more patience, telling her, that now the hour was come wherein he was to show, not by argument and discourse, but effect, the fruit he had acquired by his studies, and that he really embraced his death, not only without grief, but moreover with joy. "Wherefore, my dearest," said he, "do not dishonor it with thy tears, that it may not seem as if thou lovost thyself more than my reputation. Moderate thy grief, and comfort thyself in the knowledge thou hast had of me and my actions, leading the remainder of thy life in the same virtuous manner thou hast hitherto done." To which
Paulina, having a little recovered her spirits, and warmed the magnanimity of her courage with a most generous affection, replied, "No, Seneca," said she, "I am not a woman to suffer you to go alone in such a necessity: I will not have you think that the virtuous examples of your life have not taught me how to die: and when can I ever better or more fittingly do it, or more to my own desire, than with you? and therefore assure yourself I will go along with you." Then Seneca, taking this noble and generous resolution of his wife in good part, and also willing to free himself from the fear of leaving her exposed to the cruelty of his enemies after his death: "I have, Paulina," said he, "instructed thee in what would serve thee happily to live; but thou more covetest. I see, the honor of dying: in truth I will not grudge it thee; the constancy and resolution in our common end are the same, but the beauty and glory of thy part are much greater." Which being said, the surgeons, at the same time, opened the veins of both their arms, but as those of Seneca were more shrunk up, as well with age as abstinence, made his blood flow too slowly, he moreover commanded them to open the veins of his thighs; and lest the torments he endured might pierce his wife's heart, and also to free himself from the affliction of seeing her in so sad a condition, after having taken a very affectionate leave of her, he entreated she would suffer them to carry her into her chamber, which they accordingly did. But all those incisions being not yet enough to make him die, he commanded Statius Anneus, his physician, to give him a draught of poison, which had not much better effect; for by reason of the weakness and coldness of his limbs, it could not arrive at his heart. Wherefore they were forced to superadd a very hot bath, and then, feeling his end approach, whilst he had breath he continued excellent discourses upon the subject of his present condition, which the secretaries wrote down so long as they could hear his voice, and his last words were long after in high honor and esteem among men and it is a great loss to us that they have not come down to our times. Then, feeling the last pangs of death, with the bloody water of the bath he bathed his head, saying, "This water I dedicate to Jupiter the deliverer." Nero, being presently informed of all this, fearing lest the death of Paulina, who was one of the best-
born ladies of Rome, and against whom he had no particular unkindness, should turn to his reproach, sent orders in all haste to bind up her wounds, which her attendants did without her knowledge, she being already half dead, and without all manner of sense. Thus, though she lived contrary to her own design, it was very honorably and befitting her own virtue, her pale complexion ever after manifesting how much life had run from her veins.

These are my three very true stories, which I find as entertaining and as tragic as any of those we make out of our own heads wherewith to amuse the common people; and I wonder that they who are addicted to such relations, do not rather cull out ten thousand very fine stories, which are to be found in books that would save them the trouble of invention, and be more useful and diverting; and he who would make a whole and connected body of them, would need to add nothing of his own, but the connection only, as it were the solder of another metal; and might by this means embody a great many true events of all sorts, disposing and diversifying them according as the beauty of the work should require, after the same manner almost, as Ovid has made up his Metamorphoses* of the infinite number of various fables.

In the last couple, this is, moreover, worthy of consideration, that Paulina voluntarily offered to lose her life for the love of her husband, and that her husband had formerly also forborne to die for the love of her. We may think there is no just counterpoise in this exchange; but according to his stoical humor, I fancy he thought he had done as much for her, in prolonging his life upon her account, as if he had died for her. In one of his letters to Lucilius, after he has given him to understand that, being seized with an ague in Rome, he presently took coach to go to a house he had in the country, contrary to his wife's opinion, who would have him stay, and that he had told her that the ague he was seized with was not a fever of the body but of the place, it follows thus: "She let me go," says he, "giving me a strict charge of my health. Now I, who know that her life is involved in mine, begin to make much of myself, that I may preserve her. And I lose the privilege

* The edition of 1588 has, "as Ariosto has ranged in a series that vast number of divers fables."
my age has given me, of being more constant and resolute in many things, when I call to mind that in this old fellow there is a young girl who is interested in his health. And since I cannot persuade her to love me more courageously, she makes me more solicitously love myself; for we must allow something to honest affections, and, sometimes, though occasions importune us to the contrary, we must call back life, even though it be with torment: we must hold the soul fast in our teeth, since the rule of living, among good men, is not so long as they please, but as long as they ought. He that loves not his wife or his friend so well as to prolong his life for them, but will obstinately die, is too delicate and too effeminate: the soul must impose this upon itself, when the utility of our friends so requires; we must sometimes lend ourselves to our friends, and when we would die for ourselves must break that resolution for them. "Tis a testimony of grandeur of courage to return to life for the consideration of another, as many excellent persons have done: and 'tis a mark of singular good nature to preserve old age (of which the greatest convenience is the indifference as to its duration, and a more stout and disdainful use of life), when a man perceives that his office is pleasing, agreeable, and useful to some person by whom he is very much beloved. And a man reaps by it a very pleasing reward; for what can be more delightful than to be so dear to his wife, as upon her account he shall become dearer to himself? Thus has my Paulina loaded me not only with her fears, but my own; it has not been sufficient to consider how resolutely I could die, but I have also considered how irresolutely she would bear my death. I am enforced to live, and sometimes to live is magnanimity." These are his own words, as excellent as they everywhere are.

CHAPTER XXX.

OF THE MOST EXCELLENT MEN.

If I should be asked my choice among all the men who have come to my knowledge, I should make answer, that methinks I find three more excellent than all the rest.

One of them Homer: not that Aristotle and Varro, for
example, were not, peradventure, as learned as he; nor
that possibly Virgil was not equal to him in his own art,
which I leave to be determined by such as know them
both. I who, for my part, understand but one of them,
can only say this, according to my poor talent, that I do
not believe the Muses themselves could ever go beyond the
Roman:

"Tale facit carmen docta testudine, quale
Cynthia impositis temperat articulis:" *

and yet in this judgment we are not to forget that it is
chiefly from Homer that Virgil derives his excellence; that
he is his guide and teacher; and that one touch of the
Iliad has supplied him with body and matter out of which
to compose his great and divine Æneid. I do not reckon
upon that, but mix several other circumstances that render
to me this poet admirable, even as it were above human
condition. And, in truth, I often wonder that he who has
produced, and, by his authority, given reputation in the
world to so many deities, was not defied himself. Being
blind and poor, living before the sciences were reduced into
rule and certain observation, he was so well acquainted
with them, that all those who have since taken upon them
to establish governments, to carry on wars, and to write
either of religion or philosophy, of what sect soever, or of
the arts, have made use of him as of a most perfect
instructor in the knowledge of all things, and of his books
as of a treasury of all sorts of learning;

"Qui, quid sit pulcrum, quid turpe, quid utile, quid non,
Plenius ac melius Chrysippo et Crantor dixit:" †

and as this other says,

"A quo, ceu fonte perenni,
Vatum Pieris ora rigantur aquis;" ‡

* "He sings to his learned lute verses such as Apollo would
sing."—Propertius, ii 34, 79.

† "Who tells us what is good, what evil: what useful, what not
useful, fuller and better than Chrysippus or Crantor?"—Horace,
Ep. i. 2, 3.

‡ "From whose never-failing spring the poet drinks in Pierian
waters."—Ovid, Amor., iii. 9, 25.
and the other,

"Add the companions of the Muses, among whom Homer alone holds the scepter." — Lucretius, iii. 1050.

† "From whose full-flowing stream all later poets have drawn out verses, and have made bold to turn the mighty stream into their little rivulets, all rich in the inheritance of one man." Manlius, Astron., ii. 8.

‡ Velleius Paterculus, i. 5.
§ Poetics, c. 24.
‖ Pliny, Nat. Hist., vii. 29.
¶ Plutarch, Life of Alexander, c. 2.
** Idem, Apothe-gms of the Lacedaemonians.
judgment of Plutarch,* that he is the only author in the world that never glutted nor disgusted his readers, presenting himself always another thing, and always flourishing in some new grace. That wanton Alcibiades, having asked one, who pretended to learning, for a book of Homer, gave him a box of the ear because he had none, † which he thought as scandalous, as we should, if we found one of our priests without a Breviary. Xenophanes complained one day to Hiero, the tyrant of Syracuse, that he was so poor he had not wherewithal to maintain two servants. "What!" replied he, "Homer who was much poorer than thou art, keeps above ten thousand, though he is dead." ‡ What did Panætius leave unsaid when he called Plato the Homer of the philosophers?" § Besides, what glory can be compared to his? Nothing is so frequent in men's mouths as his name and works, nothing so known and received as Troy, Helen, and the war about her, when perhaps there was never any such thing. Our children are still called by names that he invented above three thousand years ago; who does not know Hector and Achilles? Not only some particular families, but most nations also seek their origin in his inventions. Mohammed, the second of that name, emperor of the Turks, writing to our Pope Pius II., "I am astonished," says he, "that the Italians should appear against me, considering that we have our common descent from the Trojans, and that it concerns me as well as it does them to revenge the blood of Hector upon the Greeks, whom they countenance against me." ¶ Is it not a noble farce wherein kings, republics, and emperors have so many ages played their parts, and to which the vast universe serves for a theatre? Seven Grecian cities contended for his birth, so much honor even his obscurity helped him to!

"Smyrna, Rhodos, Colophon, Salamis, Chios, Argos, Athenæ."‖

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* In his Treatise on Loquacity. c. 5, 8.
† Plutarch, Life of Alcibiades, c. 3.
‡ Plutarch, Apothegeoms of the kings, Hiero.
§ Cicero, Tusc. Quæs. i. 32.
¶ The letter is, however, altogether problematical.
‖ Aulus Gellius, iii. 11.
The other * is Alexander the Great. For whoever will consider the age at which he began his enterprises, the small means by which he effected so glorious a design, the authority he obtained in such mere youth with the greatest and most experienced captains of the world, by whom he was followed, the extraordinary favor wherewith fortune embraced and favored so many hazardous, not to say rash, exploits,


that grandeur, to have at the age of three and thirty years passed victorious through the whole habitable earth, and in half a life to have attained to the utmost of what human nature can do; so that you cannot imagine its just duration and the continuation of his increase in valor and fortune, up to a due maturity of age, but that you must withal imagine something more than man; to have made so many royal branches to spring from his soldiers, leaving the world, at his death, divided among four successors, simple captains of his army, whose posterity so long continued and maintained that vast possession; so many excellent virtues as he was master of, justice, temperance, liberality, truth in his word, love toward his own people, and humanity toward those he overcame; for his manners, in general, seem, in truth, incapable of any manner of reproach, although some particular and extraordinary actions of his may fall under censure. But it is impossible to carry on such great things as he did within the strict rules of justice; such as he are to be judged in gross, by the main end of their actions. The ruin of Thebes and Persepolis, the murder of Menander, and of Ephestion's physician, the massacre of so many Persian prisoners at one time, of a troop of Indian soldiers, not without prejudice to his word, and of the Cosseians, so much as to the very children, are indeed sallies that are not well to be excused.† For, as to Clitus, the fault was more than mended in his repen-

* That is, Montaigne's second great man.
† "Bearing down all who sought to withstand him, and pleased to force his way though by ruin."—Lucan, i. 149
‡ Plutarch, Life of Alexander, c. 18 and 22; Quintus Curtius, x. 4, 5.
tance, and that very action, as much as any other whatever, manifests the sweetness of his nature, a nature most excellently formed to goodness; and it was ingeniously said of him, that he had his virtues by nature, and his vices by fortune.* As to his being a little given to bragging, a little too impatient of hearing himself ill spoken of, and as to those mangers, arms, and bits he caused to be strewed in the Indies, † all those little vanities, methinks, may very well be allowed to his youth, and the prodigious prosperity of his fortune. And who will consider withal his so many military virtues, his diligence, foresight, patience, discipline, subtlety, magnanimity, resolution, and good fortune, wherein (though he had not had the authority of Hannibal to assure us) he was the first of men, the admirable beauty and symmetry of his person, even to a miracle, his majestic port and awful mien, in a face so young, ruddy and radiant;

"Qualis, ubi Oceani perfusus Lucifer unda,
Quem Venus ante alios astrorum diligit ignes,
Extulit os sacrum celo, tenebrasque resolvit;"

the excellence of his knowledge and capacity; the duration and grandeur of his glory, pure, clean, without spot or envy, and that long after his death it was a religious belief that his very medals brought good fortune to all who carried them about them; § and that more kings and princes have written his actions than other historians have written the actions of any other king or prince whatever; and that to this very day the Mohammedans, who despise all other histories, admit of and honor his alone, by a special privilege; whoever, I say, will seriously consider these particulars, will confess that all these things put together, I had reason to prefer him before Caesar himself, who alone could make me doubtful in my choice, and it cannot be denied that there was more of his own in his

* Quintus Curtius, x 5.
† Plutarch, in vita, c. 19, Diodorus Siculus, xvii. 95, etc.
‡ "As when, bathed in the waves of ocean, Lucifer, whom Venus loves beyond the other stars, has displayed his venerable aspect in the heavens, and dispersed the darkness."—Enied, iii. 589.
§ Trebellius Pollio, Trigenta Tyraun, c. 14.
exploits, and more of fortune in those of Alexander. They were in many things equal, and peradventure, Cæsar had some greater qualities; they were two fires, or two torrents, overrunning the world by several ways:

"Et velut immissi diversis partibus ignes
Arentem in silvam, et virgulta sonantia lauro:
Aut ubi decursu rapido de montibus altis
Dant sonitum spumosi amnes, et in œquora current,
Quisque suum populatus iter:"

but though Cæsar's ambition had been more moderate, it would still be so unhappy, having the ruin of his country and universal mischief to the world for its abominable object, that, all things raked together and put into the balance, I must needs incline to Alexander's side.

The third, and, in my opinion, the most excellent, is Epaminondas. Of glory he has not near so much as the other two (which, for that matter, is but a part of the substance of the thing); of valor and resolution, not of that sort which is pushed on by ambition, but of that which wisdom and reason can plant in a regular soul, he had all that could be imagined. Of this virtue of his, he has, in my idea, given as ample proof as Alexander himself or Cæsar; for although his warlike exploits were neither so frequent nor so full, they were yet, if duly considered in all their circumstances, as important as bravely fought, and carried with them as manifest testimony of valor and military conduct, as those of any whatever. The Greeks have done him the honor, without contradiction, to pronounce him the greatest man of their nation;† and to be the first of Greece, is easily to be the first in the world. As to his knowledge, we have this ancient judgment of him, "That never any man knew so much, and spake so little as he;"
‡ for he was of the Pythagorean sect; but when he did speak, never any man spake better; an excellent orator, and of powerful persuasion. But as to his manners and conscience, he infinitely surpassed all

* "And as fires applied in several parts to a dry grove of crackling laurels; or as with impetuous fall from the steep mountains, torrents pour down to the ocean, each bearing all down before them."—Aeneid, xii 521.

† Diodorus Siculus, xv. 88; Pausanias, viii. 11, etc.
‡ Plutarch, On the Daemon of Socrates, c. 23.
men who ever undertook the management of affairs; for
in this one thing, which ought chiefly to be considered,
which alone truly denotes "s for what we are, and which
alone I make counterbalance all the rest put together,
he comes not short of any philosopher whatever, not even
of Socrates himself. Innocence, in this man, is a quality
peculiar, sovereign, constant, uniform, incorruptible, com-
pared with which, it appears in Alexander subject to some-
thing else subaltern, uncertain, variable, effeminate, and
fortuitous.

Antiquity has judged that in thoroughly sifting all the
other great captains, there is found in every one some
peculiar quality that illustrates his name; in this man only,
there is a full and equal virtue throughout, that leaves
nothing to be wished for in him, whether in private or
public employment, whether in peace or war; whether
to live gloriously and grandly, and to die; I do not
know any form or fortune of man that I so much honor
and love.

'Tis true that I look upon his obstinate poverty, as it is
set out by his best friends, as a little too scrupulous and
nice; and this is the only feature, though high in itself
and well worthy of admiration, that I find so rugged as not
to desire to imitate, to the degree it was in him.

Scipio Æmilianus alone, could one attribute to him as
brave and magnificent an end, and as profound and univer-
sal a knowledge, might be put into the other scale of
the balance. Oh, what an injury has time done me, to
deprive me of the sight of two of the most noble lives
which, by the common consent of all the world, one of the
greatest of the Greeks, and the other of the Romans, were
in all Plutarch. What a matter! what a workman!

For a man that was no saint, but, as we say a gentle-
man, of civilian and ordinary manners, and of a moderate
ambition, the richest life that I know, and full of the
richest and most to be desired parts, all things considered,
is, in my opinion, that of Alcibiades.

But as to what concerns Epaminondas, I will here, for
the example of an excessive goodness, add some of his
opinions: he declared, that the greatest satisfaction he
ever had in his whole life, was the contentment he gave
his father and mother by his victory at Leuctra; * wherein

* Plutarch, Life of Coriolanus, c. 2.
his deference is great, preferring their pleasure before his own, so just and so full of so glorious an action. He did not think it lawful, even to restore the liberty of his country, to kill a man without knowing a cause: * which made him so cold in the enterprise of his companion Pelopidas for the relief of Thebes. He was also of opinion, that men in battle ought to avoid the encounter of a friend who was on the contrary side, and to spare him. † And his humanity, even toward his enemies themselves, having rendered him suspected to the Boeotians, for that, after he had miraculously forced the Lacedaemonians to open to him the pass which they had undertaken to defend at the entry into the Morea, near Corinth, he contented himself with having charged through them, without pursuing them to the utmost, he had his commission of general taken from him, very honorably upon such an account, and for the shame it was to them upon necessity afterward to restore him to his command, and so to manifest how much upon him depended their safety and honor; victory like a shadow attending him wherever he went; and indeed the prosperity of his country, as being from him derived, died with him. ‡

CHAPTER XXXI.

OF THE RESEMBLANCE OF CHILDREN TO THEIR FATHERS.

This faggotting up of so many divers pieces is so done that I never set pen to paper, but when I have too much idle time, and never anywhere but at home; so that it is compiled after divers interruptions and intervals, occasions keeping me sometimes many months elsewhere. As to the rest I never correct my first by any second conceptions; I, peradventure, may alter a word or so: but 'tis only to vary the phrase, and not to destroy my former meaning. I have a mind to represent the progress of my humors, and that every one may see each piece as it came from the forge. I could wish I had begun sooner, and had taken

*Idem, On the Dæmon of Socrates, c. 4.
†Idem, ibid., c. 17.
‡Diodorus Siculus, xv. 88: Corn. Nepos, in vita, c. 10.
more notice of the course of my mutations. A servant of mine whom I employed to transcribe for me, thought he had got a prize by stealing several pieces from me, where-with he was best pleased; but it is my comfort that he will be no greater a gainer than I shall be a loser by the theft. I am grown older by seven or eight years since I began; nor has it been without some new acquisition: I have, in that time, by the liberality of years, been acquainted with the stone: their commerce and long converse do not well pass away without some such inconvenience. I could have been glad that of other infirmities age has to present long-lived men withal, it had chosen some one that would have been more welcome to me, for it could not possibly have laid upon me a disease, for which, even from my infancy, I have had so great a horror; and it is, in truth, of all the accidents of old age, that of which I have ever been most afraid. I have often thought with myself, that I went on too far; and that in so long a voyage I should at last run myself into some disadvantage; I perceived and have often enough declared, that it was time to depart, and that life should be cut off in the sound and living part, according to the surgeon’s rule in amputations; and that nature made him pay very strict usury, who did not in due time pay the principal. And yet I was so far from being ready, that in the eighteen months time or thereabout, that I have been in this uneasy condition, I have so inured myself to it as to be content to live on in it; and have found wherein to comfort myself, and to hope: so much are men enslaved to their miserable being, that there is no condition so wretched they will not accept, provided they may live! Hear Mæcenas,

"Debilem facito manu,
Debilem pede, coxa,
Lubricos quate dentes;
Vita dum superest, bene est." *

And Tamerlane, with a foolish humanity, palliated the fantastic cruelty he exercised upon lepers, when he put all he could hear of to death, to deliver them, as he pretended, from the painful life they lived. For there was not one of them who would not rather have undergone a triple leprosy

* "Maim both hands and feet, legs and thighs; knock out my teeth: while there’s life, ’tis well."—Apud SENECa, Ep. 101
than be deprived of his being. And Antisthenes the Stoic,* being very sick, and crying out, "Who will deliver me from these evils?" Diogenes, who had come to visit him, "This," said he, presenting him a knife, "presently, if thou wilt." "I do not mean from my life," he replied, "but from my disease." The sufferings that only attack the mind, I am not so sensible of as most other men; and this partly out of judgment, for the world looks upon several things as dreadful or to be avoided at the expense of life, that are almost indifferent to me: partly, through a dull and insensible complexion I have in accidents which do not point blank hit me; and that insensibly I look upon as one of the best parts of my natural condition: but essential and corporeal pains I am very sensible of. And yet, having long since foreseen them, though with a sight weak and delicate and softened with the long and happy health and quiet that God has been pleased to give me the greatest part of my time, I had in my imagination fancied them so insupportable, that, in truth, I was more afraid than I have since found I had cause: by which I am still more fortified in this belief, that most of the faculties of the soul, as we employ them, more trouble the repose of life than they are any way useful to it.

I am in conflict with the worst, the most sudden, the most painful, the most mortal, and the most irremediable of all diseases; I have already had the trial of five or six very long and very painful fits; and yet I either flatter myself, or there is even in this state what is very well to be endured by a man who has his soul free from the fear of death, and of the menaces, conclusions, and consequences which physic is ever thundering in our ears; but the effect even of pain itself is not so sharp and intolerable as to put a man of understanding into rage and despair. I have at least this advantage by my stone, that what I could not hitherto prevail upon myself to resolve upon, as to reconciling and acquainting myself with death, it will perfect; for the more it presses upon and importunes me, I shall be so much the less afraid to die. I had already gone so far as only to love life for life's sake, but my pain will dissolve this intelligence; and, God grant that in the end, should the sharpness of it be once greater than I shall be able to

* Or rather the Cynic. See Diogenes Laërtius, vi. 18.
bear, it does not throw me into the other no less vicious extreme, to desire and wish to die!

"Summum nec metuas diem, nec optes:" *

they are two passions to be feared, but the one has its remedy much nearer at hand than the other.

As to the rest, I have always found the precept, that so rigorously enjoins a resolute countenance and disdainful and indifferent comportment in the toleration of infirmities, to be merely ceremonial. Why should philosophy, which only has respect to life and effects, trouble itself about these external appearances? Let us leave that care to actors and masters of rhetoric, who set so great a value upon our gestures. Let her allow this vocal frailty to disease, if it be neither cordial nor stomachic, and permit the ordinary ways of expressing grief by sighs, sobs, palpitations, and turning pale, that nature has put out of our power; provided the courage be undaunted, and the tones not expressive of despair, let her be satisfied. What matter the wringing of our hands, if we do not wring our thoughts? She forms us for ourselves, not for others; to be, not to seem; let her be satisfied with governing our understanding which she has taken upon her the care of instructing; that, in the fury of the colic, she maintain the soul in a condition to know itself, and to follow its accustomed way, contending with, and enduring not meanly truckling, under pain; moved and heated, not subdued and conquered, in the contention; capable and discourse and other things, to a certain degree. In such extreme accidents, 'tis cruelty to require so exact a composenedness. 'Tis no great matter that we make a wry face, if the mind plays its part well; if the body find itself relieved by complaining, let it complain; if agitation ease it, let it tumble and toss at pleasure; if it seem to find the disease evaporate (as some physicians hold that it helps women in delivery) in making loud outcries, or if this do but divert its torments, let it roar as it will. Let us not command this voice to sally, but stop it not. Epicurus † not only forgives his sage for crying out in torments, but advises him to it: "*Pugiles etiam, quum fervunt, in iacundis caestibus inge-

* "Neither to wish, nor fear, to die."—Martial, x. 47.
† Diogenes Laertius, x. 118.
miscunt, quia profundenda voce omne corpus intenditur, venitque plaga vehementior."* We have enough to do to deal with the disease, without troubling ourselves with these superfluous rules.

Which I say in excuse of those whom we ordinarily see impatient in the assaults of this malady; for as to what concerns myself, I have passed it over hitherto with a little better countenance, and contented myself with groaning without roaring out; not, nevertheless, that I put any great constraint upon myself to maintain this exterior decorum, for I make little account of such an advantage; I allow herein as much as the pain requires; but either my pains are not so excessive, or I have more than ordinary patience. I complain, I confess, and am a little impatient in a very sharp fit, but I do not arrive to such a degree of despair as he who with

“Ejulatu, questu, gemitu, fremitibus
Resonando, multum flebiles voces refert:"†

I try myself in the depth of my dolor, and have always found that I was in a capacity to speak, think, and give a rational answer as well as at any other time, but not so firmly, being troubled and interrupted by the pain. When I am looked upon by my visitors to be in the greatest torment, and that they therefore forbear to trouble me, I often essay my own strength, and myself set some discourse on foot, the most remote I can contrive from my present condition. I can do anything upon a sudden endeavor, but it must not continue long. Oh, what pity 'tis I have not the faculty of that dreamer in Cicero, † who dreaming he was lying with a wench, found he had discharged his stone in the sheets! My pains strangely disappetite me that way. In the intervals from this excessive torment, when my ureters only languish without any great dolor, I pres-

* "When men fight with the caestus, they groan in striking, because the whole strength of body goes along with the voice, and the blow is laid on with greater force."—CICERO, Tusc. Quæs., ii. 23.

† "Howling, roaring, groaning with a thousand noises, expressing his torment in a dismal voice."—Verses of ATTICS, in his Philoctetes, quoted by Cicero, De Finib, ii. 29; Tusc. Quæs., ii. 14.

‡ De Divin. ii. 69.
ently feel myself in my wonted state, forasmuch as my soul takes no other alarm but what is sensible and corporal, which I certainly owe to the care I have had of preparing myself by meditation against such accidents:

"Laborum
Nulla mihi nova nunc facies inopinaque surgit;
Omnia praecipi, atque animo mecum ante peregi."*

I am, however, a little roughly handled for a learner, and with a sudden and sharp alteration, being fallen in an instant from a very easy and happy condition of life into the most uneasy and painful that can be imagined. For besides that it is a disease very much to be feared in itself, it begins with me after a more sharp and severe manner than it is used to do with other men. My fits come so thick upon me that I am scarcely ever at ease; yet I have hitherto kept my mind so upright that, provided I can still continue it, I find myself in a much better condition of life than a thousand others, who have no fever nor other disease but what they create to themselves for want of meditation.

There is a certain sort of crafty humility that springs from presumption, as this, for example, that we confess our ignorance in many things, and are so courteous as to acknowledge that there are in the works of nature some qualities and conditions that are imperceptible to us, and of which our understanding cannot discover the means and causes; by this so honest and conscientious declaration we hope to obtain that people shall also believe us as to those that we say we do understand. We need not trouble ourselves to seek out foreign miracles and difficulties; me-thinks, among the things that we ordinarily see, there are such incomprehensible wonders as surpass all difficulties of miracles. What a wonderful thing it is that the drop of seed from which we are produced should carry in itself the impression not only of the bodily form, but even of the thoughts and inclinations of our fathers! Where can that drop of fluid matter contain that infinite number of forms? and how can they carry on these resemblances with so temerarious and irregular a progress that the son shall be like

* "No aspect of pain or trouble can now rise, which by its novelty can surprise me. To me no new shape of suffering can seem new or unexpected; I have anticipated them all, and weighed them over beforehand."—Aenid, vi. 103.
his great-grandfather, the nephew like his uncle? In the family of Lepidus at Rome there were three, not successively but by intervals who were born with the same eye covered with a cartilage.* At Thebes there was a race that carried from their mother's womb the form of the head of a lance, and he who was not born so was looked upon as illegitimate.† And Aristotle says that in a certain nation, where the women were in common, they assigned the children to their fathers by their resemblance.‡

'Tis to be believed that I derive this infirmity from my father, for he died wonderfully tormented with a great stone in his bladder, he was never sensible of his disease till the sixty-seventh year of his age; and before that had never felt any menace or symptoms of it, either in his reins, sides, or any other part, and had lived, till then, in a happy, vigorous state of health, little subject to infirmities, and he continued seven years after, in this disease, dragging on a very painful end of life. I was born above five and twenty years before his disease seized him, and in the time of his most flourishing and healthful state of body, his third child in order of birth, where could his propension to this malady lie lurking all that while? And he being then so far from the infirmity, how could that small part of his substance wherewith he made me, carry away so great an impression for its share? and how so concealed, that till five and forty years after, I did not begin to be sensible of it? being the only one to this hour, among so many brothers and sisters, and all by one mother, that was ever troubled with it. He that can satisfy me in this point, I will believe him in as many other miracles as he pleases; always provided that, as their manner is, he do not give me a doctrine much more intricate and fantastic than the thing itself for current pay.

Let the physicians a little excuse the liberty I take, for by this same infusion and fatal insinuation it is that I have received a hatred and contempt of their doctrine; the an-


† Plutarch, in his treatise of the persons whose punishment is delayed by God, chap. xix.; but he does not say that those of this race, who had not this mark, as some had not, were deemed illegitimate.”—Coste.

‡ Herodotus, iv. 180.
tipathy I have against their art is hereditary. My father lived three score and fourteen years, my grandfather sixty-nine, my great-grandfather almost fourscore years, without ever tasting any sort of physic: and, with them, whatever was not ordinary diet, was instead of a drug. Physic is grounded upon experience and examples: so is my opinion. And is not this an express and very advantageous experience? I do not know that they can find me in all their records three that were born, bred and died under the same roof, who have lived so long by their conduct. They must here of necessity confess, that if reason be not, fortune at least is on my side, and with physicians, fortune goes a great deal further than reason. Let them not take me now at a disadvantage; let them not threaten me in the subdued condition wherein I now am; that were treachery. In truth, I have enough the better of them by these domestic examples, that they should rest satisfied. Human things are not usually so constant; it has been two hundred years, save eighteen, that this trial has lasted, for the first of them was born in the year 1402: 'tis now, indeed, very good reason that this experience should begin to fail us. Let them not, therefore, reproach me with the infirmities under which I now suffer; is it not enough that I for my part have lived seven and forty years in good health? though it should be the end of my career, 'tis of the longer sort.

My ancestors had an aversion to physic by some occult and natural instinct: for the very sight of a potion was loathsome to my father. The Seigneur de Gaviac, my uncle by the father's side, a churchman, and a valetudinary from his birth, and yet who made that crazy life hold out to sixty-seven years, being once fallen into a furious fever, it was ordered by the physicians he should be plainly told that if he would not make use of help (for so they call that which is very often quite contrary), he would infallibly be a dead man. The good man, though terrified with this dreadful sentence, yet replied, "I am then a dead man." But God soon after made the prognostic false. The youngest of the brothers—there were four of them—and by many years the youngest, the Sieur de Bussaguet, was the only one of the family who made use of medicine, by reason I suppose, of the commerce he had with the other arts, for he was a counselor in the court of parliament,
and it succeeded so ill with him, that being in outward appearance, of the strongest constitution, he yet died before any of the rest, the Sieur de Saint Michel only excepted.

'Tis possible I may have derived this natural antipathy to physic from them; but had there been no other consideration in the case, I would have endeavored to have overcome it; for all these conditions that spring in us without reason, are vicious, 'tis a kind of disease that we should wrestle with. It may be I had naturally this propension; but I have supported and fortified it by arguments and reasons which have established in me the opinion I am of. For I also hate the consideration of refusing physic for the nauseous taste: I should hardly be of that humor, who hold health to be worth purchasing by all the most painful cauteries and incisions that can be applied. And with Epicurus, * I conceive that pleasures are to be avoided, if greater pains be the consequence, and pains to be coveted, that will terminate in greater pleasures. Health is a precious thing, and the only one, in truth, meriting that a man should lay out, not only his time, sweat, labor and goods, but also his life itself to obtain it; forasmuch as, without it, life is wearisome and injurious to us: pleasure, wisdom, learning, and virtue, without it, wither away and vanish; and to the most labored and solid discourses that philosophy would imprint in us to the contrary, we need no more but oppose the image of Plato being struck with an epilepsy or apoplexy; and, in this presupposition, to defy him to call the rich faculties of his soul to his assistance. All means that conduce to health can neither be too painful nor too dear to me. But I have some other appearances that make me strangely suspect all this merchandise. I do not deny but that there may be some art in it, that there are not among so many works of nature, things proper for the conservation of health: that is most certain: I very well know there are some simples that moisten and others that dry; I experimentally know that radishes are windy, and senna-leaves purging; and several other such experiences I have, as that mutton nourishes me, and wine warms me: and Solon said "that eating was physic against the malady hunger." I do not disapprove the use

* Cicero, Tusc. Quæs., v. 33. Diogenes Laertius, x. 129.
we make of things the earth produces, nor doubt, in the least, of the power and fertility of nature, and of its application to our necessities: I very well see that pikes and swallows live by her laws; but I mistrust the inventions of our mind, our knowledge and art, to countenance which, we have abandoned nature and her rules, and wherein we keep no bounds nor moderation. As we call the piling up of the first laws that fall into our hands, justice, and their practice and dispensation very often foolish and very unjust; and as those who scoff at and accuse it, do not nevertheless, blame that noble virtue itself, but only condemn the abuse and profanation of that sacred title; so in physic I very much honor that glorious name, its propositions, its promises, so useful for the service of mankind; but the ordinances it foists upon us, between ourselves, I neither honor nor esteem.

In the first place, experience makes me dread it; for among all my acquaintance, I see no people so soon sick, and so long before they are well, as those who take much physic; their very health is altered and corrupted by their frequent prescriptions. Physicians are not content to deal only with the sick, but they will moreover corrupt health itself, for fear men should at any time escape their authority. Do they not, from a continual and perfect health, extract suspicion of some great sickness to ensue? I have been sick often enough, and have always found my sicknesses easy enough to be supported (though I have made trial of almost all sorts) and as short as those of any other, without their help, or without swallowing their ill-tasting doses. The health I have is full and free, without other rule or discipline than my own custom and pleasure. Every place serves me well enough to stay in, for I need no other conveniences, when I am sick, than what I must have when I am well. I never disturb myself that I have no physician, no apothecary, nor any other assistance, which I see most other sick men more afflicted at than they are with their disease. What! Do the doctors themselves show us more felicity and duration in their own lives, that may manifest to us some apparent effect of their skill?

There is not a nation in the world that has not been many ages without physic; and these the first ages, that is to say, the best and most happy; and the tenth part of the world knows nothing of it yet; many nations are
ignorant of it to this day, where men live more healthful and longer than we do here, and even among us the common people live well enough without it. The Romans were six hundred years before they received it; and after having made trial of it, banished it from their city at the instance of Cato the Censor, * who made it appear how easy it was to live without it, having himself lived four score and five years, and kept his wife alive to an extreme old age, not without physic, but without a physician: for everything that we find to be healthful to life may be called physic. He kept his family in health, as Plutarch says, † if I mistake not, with hare's milk; as Pliny reports, ‡ that the Arcadians cured all manner of diseases with that of a cow; and Herodutus says, § the Lybians generally enjoy rare health, by a custom they have, after their children are arrived to four years of age, to burn and cauterize the veins of their head and temples, by which means they cut off all defluxions of rheum for their whole lives. And the country people of our province make use of nothing, in all sorts of distempers, but the strongest wine they can get, mixed with a great deal of saffron and spice, and always with the same success.

And to say the truth, of all this diversity and confusion of prescriptions, what other end and effect is there after all, but to purge the belly? which a thousand ordinary simples will do as well; and I do not know whether such evacuations be so much to our advantage as they pretend, and whether nature does not require a residence of her excrements to a certain proportion, as wine does of its lees to keep it alive: you often see healthful men fall into vomitings and fluxes of the belly by some extrinsic accident, and make a great evacuation of excrements, without any preceding need, or any following benefit, but rather with hurt to their constitution. *Tis from the great Plato, ||

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* Pliny, Nat. Hist., xxix. 1. He, however, says that physicians were not banished from Rome until long after the death of Cato.
† In vita, c. 12.
‡ Nat. Hist., xxv. 8.
§ Book iv. c. 187. Herodotus, however, only says that by this means they profess to attain the end.
|| In the Timæus.
that I lately learned, that of three sorts of motions which are natural to us, purging is the worst, and that no man unless he be a fool, ought to take anything to that purpose but in the extremest necessity. Men disturb and irritate the disease by contrary oppositions; it must be the way of living that must gently dissolve, and bring it to its end. The violent gripings and contest between the drug and the disease, are ever to our loss, since the combat is fought within ourselves, and that the drug is an assistant not to be trusted, being in its own nature an enemy to our health and by trouble having only access into our condition. Let it alone a little; the general order of things that takes care of fleas and moles, also takes care of men, if they will have the same patience that fleas and moles have, to leave it to itself. "'Tis to much purpose we cry out "Bihore," * tis a way to make us hoarse, but not to hasten the matter. 'Tis a proud and uncompassionate order; our fears, our despair displease and stop it from, instead of inviting it to our relief; it owes its course to the disease, as well as to health; and will not suffer itself to be corrupted in favor of the one to the prejudice of the other's right, for it would then fall into disorder. Let us, in God's name follow it; it leads those that follow, and those who will not follow it, drags along, both their fury and physic together.† Order a purge for your brain, it will there be much better employed than upon your stomach.

One asking a Lacedæmonian what had made him live so long, he made answer, "The ignorance of physic;" and so Emperor Adrian continually exclaimed as he was dying, that the crowd of physicians had killed him.‡ A bad wrestler turned physician: "Courage," says Diogenes to him, "thou hast done well, for now thou wilt throw those who had formerly thrown thee." § But they have this advantage, according to Nicocles, that the sun gives light to their success and the earth covers their failures.|| And

* A term used by the Languedoc wagoners to hasten their horses.
† Seneca, Ep. 107.
‡ Xiphilinus, in epitome Dion. vita Adriani.
§ Diogenes Laertius, vi. 62.
|| Collection of the monks Antonius and Maximus, c. 146.
besides, they have a very advantageous way of making use of all sorts of events; for what fortune, nature, or any other cause (of which the number is infinite), produces of good and healthful in us, it is the privilege of physic to attribute to itself; all the happy successes that happen to the patient, must be thence derived; the accidents that have cured me, and a thousand others, who do not employ physicians, physicians usurp to themselves: and as to ill accidents, they either absolutely disown them, in laying the fault upon the patient, by such frivolous reasons as they are never at a loss for; as "he lay with his arms out of bed," or "he was disturbed with the rattling of a coach;"

"Rhedarum transitus arcto
Vicorum inflexu;" *

or "somebody had set open the casement," or "he had lain upon his left side;" or "he had some disagreeable fancies in his head;" in sum, a word, a dream, or a look, seems to them excuse sufficient wherewith to palliate their own errors; or, if they so please, they even make use of our growing worse, and do their business in this way which can never fail them; which is by buzzing us in the ear when the disease is more enflamed by their medicaments, that it had been much worse but for those remedies; he, whom from an ordinary cold they have thrown into a double tertian-ague, had but for them been in a continued fever. They do not much care what mischief they do, since it turns to their own profit. In earnest, they have reason to require a very favorable belief from their patients; and, indeed, it ought to be a very easy one, to swallow things so hard to be believed. Plato said † very well, that physicians were the only men who might lie at pleasure, since our health depends upon the vanity and falsity of their promises.

Æsop, a most excellent author, and of whom few men discover all the graces, pleasantly represents to us the tyrannical authority physicians usurp over poor creatures, weakened and subdued by sickness and fear, when he tells

*He heard the wheels running in the narrow turning of the street."—Juvenal, iii. 236.

† In the Republic, iii.
us,* that a sick person, being asked by his physician what operation he found of the potion he had given him: "I have sweated very much," says the sick man. "That's good," says the physician. Another time, having asked how he felt himself after his physic: "I have been very cold, and have had a great shivering upon me," said he. "That is good," replied the physician. After the third potion he asked him again how he did: "Why, I find myself swollen, and puffed up," said he, "as if I had a dropsy." "That is very well," said the physician. One of his servants coming presently after to inquire how he felt himself, "Truly, friend," said he, "with being too well I am about to die."

There was a more just law in Egypt, by which the physician, for the first three days, was to take charge of his patient; at the patient's own risk and cost: but those three days being past, it was to be at his own. For what reason is it, that their patron, Æsculapius, should be struck with thunder for restoring Hippolitus from death to life,

"Nam Pater omnipotens, aliquem indignatus ab umbris
Mortalem infernis ad lumina surgere vitae,
Ipse repertorem medicinæ talis, et artis,
Fulmine Phæbigenam Stygias detrusit ad undas;"

and his followers be pardoned, who send so many souls from life to death? A physician, boasting to Nicocles that his art was of great authority: "It is so, indeed," said Nicocles, "than can with impunity kill so many people."‡

As to what remains, had I been of their counsel, I would have rendered my discipline more sacred and mysterious; they begun well, but they have not ended so. It was a good beginning to make gods and demons the authors of their science, and to have used a peculiar way of speaking

* Fable 13.

‡ "Then the Almighty Father, offended that any mortal should rise to the light of life from the infernal shades, struck the son of Phæbus with his forked lightning, to the Stygian lake."—Æneid, vii. 770.

‡ "In p. 622, chap. 146, of the collection of the monks, just mentioned, printed at the end of Stobæus. Barbeyræc thinks that this Nicocles, who here banters a certain quack, is the famous King of Salamina, to whom Socrates addressed one of his orations."—Coste.
and writing, notwithstanding that philosophy concludes it folly to persuade a man to his own good by an unintelligible way: "Ut si quis medicus imperet, ut sumat:"

"Terrigenam, herbigradam, domipotam, sanguina cassam." *

It was a good rule in their art, and that accompanies all other vain, fantastic, and supernatural arts, that the patient’s belief should prepossess them with good hope and assurance of their effects and operation: a rule they hold to that degree, as to maintain that the most inexpert and ignorant physician is more proper for a patient who has confidence in him, than the most learned and experienced, whom he is not so acquainted with. Nay, even the very choice of most of their drugs is in some sort mysterious and divine; the left foot of a tortoise, the urine of a lizard, the dung of an elephant, the liver of a mole, blood drawn from under the right wing of a white pigeon; and for us who have the stone (so scornfully they use us in our miseries) the excrement of rats beaten to powder, and such like trash and fooleries which rather carry a face of magical enchantment than of any solid science. I omit the odd number of their pills, the destination of certain days and feasts of the year, the superstition of gathering their simples at certain hours, and that so austere and very wise countenance and carriage which Pliny himself so much derides. But they have, as I said, failed in that they have not added to this fine beginning, the making their meetings and consultations more religious and secret, where no profane person should have admission, no more than in the secret ceremonies of Æsculapius; for by the reason of this it falls out that their irresolution, the weakness of their arguments, divinations and foundations, the sharpness of their disputes,† full of hatred, jealousy, and self-consideration, coming to be discovered by every one, a man must be marvelously blind not to see that he runs a very great hazard in their hands. Who ever saw one physician approve of another’s prescription, without taking something

* Cicero, De Divin., 1, 2. "Describing it by the epithets of an animal trailing with its slime over the herbage, without blood or bones, and carrying its house upon its back, meaning simply a snail."
—Coste.
† Pliny, Nat. Hist., xxix. 1.
away, or adding something to it? by which they sufficiently betray their tricks, and make it manifest to us that they therein more consider their own reputation, and consequently their profit, than their patient's interest. He was a much wiser man of their tribe, who of old gave it as a rule, that only one physician should undertake a sick person; for if he do nothing to purpose, one single man's default can bring no great scandal upon the art of medicine; and, on the contrary, the glory will be great, if he happen to have success; whereas, when there are many, they at every turn bring a disrepute upon their calling, forasmuch as they oftener do hurt than good. They ought to be satisfied with the perpetual disagreement which is found in the opinions of the principal masters and ancient authors of this science, which is only known to men well read, without discovering to the vulgar the controversies and various judgments which they still nourish and continue among themselves.

Will you have one example of the ancient controversy in physic? Herophilus* lodges the original cause of all diseases in the humors; Erasistratus, in the blood of the arteries; Asclepiades, in the invisible atoms of the pores; Alcmaeon, in the exuberance or defect of our bodily strength; Diocles, in the inequality of the elements of which the body is composed, and in the quality of the air we breathe; Strato, in the abundance, crudity, and corruption of the nourishment we take; and Hippocrates lodges it in the spirits. There is a certain friend of theirs,† whom they know better than I, who declares upon this subject, "that the most important science in practice among us, as that which is intrusted with our health and conservation, is, by ill luck, the most uncertain, the most perplexed, and agitated with the greatest mutations." There is no great danger in our mistaking the height of the sun, or the fraction of some astronomical computation: but here, where our whole being is concerned, 'tis not wisdom to abandon ourselves to the mercy of the agitation of so many contrary winds.

Before the Peloponnesian war, there was no great talk of this science. Hippocrates brought it into repute; what-

* Celsus, Preface to the First Book.
† Pliny, Nat. Hist., xxix. 1.
ever he established, Chrysippus overthrew; after that, Erasistratus, Aristotle's grandson, overthrew what Chrysippus had written; after these, the Empirics started up, who took a quite contrary way to the ancients in the management of this art; when the credit of these began a little to decay, Herophilus set another sort of practice on foot, which Asclepiades in turn stood up against, and overthrew; then, in their turn the opinions first of Themisio, and then of Musa, and after that those of Vectius Valens, a physician famous through the intelligence he had with Messalina, came in vogue; the empire of physic in Nero's time was established in Thessalus, who abolished and condemned all that had been held till his time; this man's doctrine was refuted by Crinas of Marseilles, who first brought all medicinal operations under the Ephemerides and motions of the stars, and reduced eating, sleeping, and drinking to hours that were most pleasing to Mercury, and the moon; his authority was soon after supplanted by Charinus, a physician of the same city of Marseilles; a man who not only controverted all the ancients methods of physic, but moreover the usage of hot baths, that had been generally, and for so many ages in common use; he made men bathe in cold water, even in winter, and plunged his sick patients in the natural waters of streams. No Roman till Pliny's time had ever vouchsafed to practice physic; that office was only performed by Greeks and foreigners, as 'tis now among us French, by those who sputter Latin; for, as a very great physician says, we do not easily accept the medicine we understand, no more than we do the drugs we ourselves gather. If the nations whence we fetch our guaiacum, sarsaparilla, and China wood, have physicians, how great a value must we imagine, by the same recommendation of strangeness, rarity, and dear purchase, do they set upon our cabbage and parsley? for who would dare to contemn things so far fetched, and sought out at the hazard of so long and dangerous a voyage?

Since these ancient mutations in physic, there have been infinite others down to our own times, and, for the most part, mutations entire and universal, as those, for example, produced by Paracelsus, Fioravanti, and Argentier; for they, as I am told, not only alter one recipe, but the whole contexture and rules of the body of physic, accusing all others of ignorance and imposition who have practiced
before them. At this rate, in what a condition the poor patient must be, I leave you to judge.

If we were even assured that, when they make a mistake that mistake of theirs would do us no harm, though it did us no good, it were a reasonable bargain to venture the making ourselves better without any danger of being made worse. Æsop tells a story,* that one who had bought a Morisco slave, believing that his black complexion was accidental in him, and occasioned by the ill usage of his former master, caused him to enter into a course of physic, and with great care to be often bathed and purged: it happened that the Moor was nothing amended in his tawny complexion, but he wholly lost his former health. How often do we see physicians impute the death of their patients to one another? I remember that some years ago, there was an epidemic disease, very dangerous, and for the most part mortal, that raged in the towns about us: the storm being over which had swept away an infinite number of men, one of the most famous physicians of all the country, presently after published a book upon that subject, wherein, upon better thoughts, he confesses, that the letting blood in that disease was the principal cause of so many mishaps. Moreover, their authors hold that there is no physic that has not something hurtful in it. And if even those of the best operation in some measure offend us, what must those do that are totally misapplied? For my own part, though there were nothing else in the case, I am of opinion, that to those who loathe the taste of physic, it must needs be a dangerous and prejudicial endeavor to force it down at so incommodious a time, and with so much aversion, and believe that it marvelously distempers a sick person at a time when he has so much need of repose. And moreover, if we but consider the occasions upon which they usually ground the cause of our diseases, they are so light and nice, that I thence conclude a very little error in the dispensation of their drugs may do a great deal of mischief. Now, if the mistake of a physician be so dangerous, we are in but a scurvy condition; for it is almost impossible but he must often fall into those mistakes: he had need of too many parts, considerations, and circumstances, rightly to level his design:

* Fable 76.
he must know the sick person's complexion, his temperament, his humors, inclinations, actions, nay, his very thoughts and imaginations; he must be assured of the external circumstances, of the nature of the place, the quality of the air and season, the situation of the planets, and their influences: he must know in the disease, the causes, prognostics, affections, and critical days; in the drugs, the weight, the power of working, the country, figure, age, and dispensation, and he must know how rightly to proportion and mix them together, to beget a just and perfect symmetry; wherein if there be the least error, if among so many springs there be but any one out of order, 'tis enough to destroy us. God knows with how great difficulty most of these things are to be understood: for (for example) how shall a physician find out the true sign of the disease, every disease being capable of an infinite number of indications? How many doubts and controversies have they among themselves upon the interpretation of urines? otherwise, whence should the continual debates we see among them about the knowledge of the disease proceed? how could we excuse the error they so oft fall into, of taking fox for martin? In the diseases I have had, though there were ever so little difficulty in the case, I never found three of one opinion: which I instance, because I love to introduce examples wherein I am myself concerned.

A gentleman at Paris was lately cut for the stone by order of the physicians, in whose bladder, being accordingly so cut, there was found no more stone than in the palm of his hand; and, in the same place, a bishop, who was my particular good friend, having been earnestly pressed by the majority of the physicians in town, whom he consulted, to suffer himself to be cut, to which also, upon their word, I used my interest to persuade him, when he was dead, and opened, it appeared that he had no malady but in the kidneys. They are least excusable for any error in this disease, by reason that it is in some sort palpable; and 'tis thence, that I conclude surgery to be much more certain, by reason that it sees and feels what it does, and so goes less upon conjecture; whereas the physicians have no speculum matricis, by which to examine our brains, lungs, and liver.

Even the very promises of physic are incredible in themselves; for, having to provide against divers and contrary
accidents that often afflict us at one and the same time, and that have almost a necessary relation, as the heat of the liver, and the coldness of the stomach, they will needs persuade us, that of their ingredients one will heat the stomach, and the other will cool the liver; one has its commission to go directly to the kidneys, nay even to the bladder, without scattering its operations by the way, and is to retain its power and virtue through all those turns and meanders, even to the place to the service of which it is designed, by its own occult property; this will dry the brain; that will moisten the lungs. Of all this bundle of things having mixed up a potion, is it not a kind of madness to imagine or to hope that these differing virtues should separate themselves from one another in this mixture and confusion, to perform so many various errands? I should very much fear that they would either lose or change their tickets, and disturb one another’s quarters. And who can imagine but that, in this liquid confusion, these faculties must corrupt, confound and spoil one another? And is not the danger still more, when the making up of this medicine is intrusted to the skill and fidelity of still another, to whose mercy we again abandon our lives?

As we have doublet and breeches makers, distinct trades, to clothe us, and are so much the better fitted, seeing that each of them meddles only with his own business, and has less to trouble his head with than the tailor who undertakes all; and as, in matter of diet, great persons, for their better convenience and to the end they may be better served, have cooks for the different offices, this for soups and potages, that for roasting, instead of which if one cook should undertake the whole service, he could not so well perform it; so also as to the cure of our maladies. The Egyptians had reason to reject this general trade of physician; and to divide the profession: to each disease, to each part of the body, its particular workman;* for that part was more properly and with less confusion cared for, seeing the person looked to nothing else. Ours are not aware that he who provides for all, provides for nothing; and that the entire government of this microcosm is more than they are able to undertake. While they were afraid

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* Herodotus, ii. 84.
of stopping a dysentery, lest they should put the patient into a fever, they killed me a friend,* who was worth more than the whole pack of them put together. They counterpoise their own divinations with the present evils; and because they will not cure the brain to the prejudice of the stomach, they injure both with their dissentient and tumultuary drugs.

As to the variety and weakness of the rationale of this profession, they are more manifest in it than in any other art; aperitive medicines are proper for a man subject to the stone, by reason that opening and dilating the passages they helped forward the slimy matter whereof gravel and stone are engendered, and convey that downward which begins to harden and gather in the reins; aperitive things are dangerous for a man subject to the stone, by reason that, opening and dilating the passages, they help forward the matter proper to create the gravel toward the reins, which by their own propension being apt to seize it, 'tis not to be imagined but that a great deal of what has been conveyed thither must remain behind: moreover, if the medicine happen to meet with anything too large to be carried through all the narrow passages it must pass to be expelled, that obstruction, whatever it is, being stirred by these aperitive things and thrown into those narrow passages, coming to stop them, will occasion a certain and most painful death. They have the like uniformity in the counsels they give us for the regiment of life; it is good to make water often, for we experimentally see that in letting it lie long in the bladder we give it time to settle the sediment which will concrete into a stone: it is good not to make water often; for the heavy excrements it carries along with it will not be voided without violence, as we see by experience that a torrent that runs with force washes the ground it rolls over much cleaner than the course of a slow and tardy stream; so, it is good to have often to do with women, for that opens the passages and helps to evacuate gravel; it is also very ill to have often to do with women, because it heats, tires, and weakens the reins. It is good to bathe frequently in hot water, forasmuch as that relaxes and mollifies the places where the gravel and stone lie; it is also ill by reason that this application of external

* Etienne de la Boëtie.
heat helps the reins to bake, harden, and petrify the matter so disposed. For those who are taking baths it is most healthful to eat little at night, to the end that the waters they are to drink the next morning may have a better operation upon an empty stomach; on the other hand it is better to eat little at dinner, that it hinder not the operation of the waters, while it is not yet perfect, and not to oppress the stomach so soon after the other labor, but leave the office of digestion to the night, which will much better perform it than the day, when the body and soul are in perpetual moving and action. Thus do they juggle and cant in all their discourses at our expense; and they cannot give me one proposition against which I cannot erect a contrary of equal force. Let them, then, no longer exclaim against those who in this trouble of sickness suffer themselves to be gently guided by their own appetite and the advice of nature, and commit themselves to the common fortune.

I have seen in my travels almost all the famous baths of Christendom, and for some years past have begun to make use of them myself: for I look upon bathing as generally wholesome, and believe that we suffer no little inconveniences in our health by having left off the custom that was generally observed, in former times, almost by all nations, and is yet in many, of bathing every day; and I cannot imagine but that we are much the worse by having our limbs crusted and our pores stopped with dirt. And as to the drinking of them, fortune has in the first place rendered them not at all unacceptable to my taste; and secondly, they are natural and simple, which at least carry no danger with them, though they may do us no good, of which the infinite crowd of people of all sorts and complexions who repair thither I take to be a sufficient warranty; and although I have not there observed any extraordinary and miraculous effects, but that on the contrary, having more narrowly than ordinary inquired into it, I have found all the reports of such operations that have been spread abroad in those places ill-grounded and false, and those that believe them (as people are willing to be gull'd in what they desire) deceived in them, yet I have seldom known any who have been made worse by those waters, and a man cannot honestly deny but that they beget a better appetite, help digestion, and do in some sort revive us, if
we do not go too late and in too weak a condition, which I would dissuade every one from doing. They have not the virtue to raise men from desperate and inveterate diseases, but they may help some light indisposition, or prevent some threatening alteration. He who does not bring along with him so much cheerfulness as to enjoy the pleasure of the company he will there meet, and of the walks and exercises to which the amenity of those places invite us, will doubtless lose the best and surest part of their effect. For this reason I have hitherto chosen to go to those of the most pleasant situation, where there was the best conveniency of lodging, provision, and company, as the baths of Baguères in France, those of Plombières, on the frontiers of Germany and Lorraine, those of Baden in Switzerland, those of Lucca in Tuscany, and especially those of Della Villa, which I have the most and at various seasons frequented.

Every nation has particular opinions touching their use, and particular rules and methods in using them; and all of them, according to what I have seen, almost with like effect. Drinking them is not at all received in Germany; the Germans bathe for all diseases, and will lie dabbling in the water almost from sun to sun; in Italy, where they drink nine days, they bathe at least thirty, and commonly drink the water mixed with some other drugs to make it work the better. Here we are ordered to walk to digest it; there we are kept in bed after taking it till it be wrought off, our stomachs and feet having continually hot cloths applied to them all the while; and as the Germans have a particular practice generally to use cupping and scarification in the bath, so the Italians have their doccie, which are certain little streams of this hot water brought through pipes, and with these bathe an hour in the morning, and as much in the afternoon, for a month together, either the head, stomach, or any other part where the evil lies. There are infinite other varieties of customs in every country, or rather there is no manner of resemblance to one another. By this, you may see that this little part of physic to which I have only submitted, though the least depending upon art of all others, has yet a great share of the confusion and uncertainty everywhere else manifest in the profession.

The poets put what they would say with greater emphasis and grace; witness these two epigrams:
ESSAYS OF MONTAIGNE.

"Alcon hesterno signum Jovis attigit: ille, Quamvis marmoreus, vim patitur medici. Ecce hodie, jussus transferri, ex æde vetusta, Effertur, quamvis sit Deus atque lapis:" *

and the other:

"Lotus nobiscum est, hilaris coevavit; et idem Inventus mane est mortuus Andragoras. Tam subitse mortis causam, Faustine, requiris? In somnis medicum viderat Hermocrates:" †

upon which I will relate two stories.

The Baron de Caupene, in Chalosse, and I, have between us the advowson of a benefice of great extent, at the foot of our mountains; called Lahontau. It is with the inhabitants of this angle, as 'tis said of those of the Val d'Angrougne: they lived a peculiar sort of life, their fashions, clothes, and manners distinct from other people; ruled and governed by certain particular laws and usages, received from father to son, to which they submitted, without other constraint than the reverence to custom. This little state had continued from all antiquity in so happy a condition, that no neighboring judge was ever put to the trouble of inquiring into their doings; no advocate was ever retained to give them counsel, no stranger ever called in to compose their differences; nor was ever any of them seen to go a-begging. They avoided all alliances and traffic with the outer world, that they might not corrupt the purity of their own government; till, as they say, one of them, in the memory of man having a mind spurred on with a noble ambition, took it into his head, to bring his name into credit and reputation, to make one of his sons something more than ordinary, and having put him to learn to write in a neighboring town, made him at last a brave village notary. This fellow, having acquired such dignity, began to disdain their ancient customs, and to buzz into the people's ears the pomp of the

* "Alcon yesterday touched Jove's statue, which, although marble, suffered the force of medicine: to-day order being given it should be taken from the old temple, where it stood, it was carried out. Although a god, and made of stone, it is about to be buried." —Ausonius, Ep. 74.

† "Andragoras bathed, supped gayly, went well to bed last night; in the morning he was found dead. Wouldst thou know, Faustinus, what caused this sudden death? He dreamed that he saw Doctor Hermocrates." —Martial, vi. 53.
other parts of the nation; the first prank he played was to advise a friend of his, whom somebody had offended by sawing off the horns of one of his goats, to make his complaint to the royal judges thereabout, and so he went on from one to another, till he had spoiled and confounded all. In the tail of this corruption, they say, there happened another, and of worse consequence, by means of a physician, who falling in love with one of their daughters, had a mind to marry her and to live among them. This man first of all began to teach them the names of fevers, colds, and imposthumes; the seat of the heart, liver, and intestines, a science till then utterly unknown to them; and instead of garlic, with which they were wont to cure all manner of diseases how painful or extreme soever, he taught them, though it were but for a cough, or any little cold, to take strange mixtures, and began to make a trade not only of their health but of their lives. They swear till then they never perceived the evening air to be offensive to the head; that to drink, when they were hot, was hurtful, and that the winds of autumn were more unwholesome than those of spring; that, since this use of physic, they find themselves oppressed with a legion of unaccustomed diseases, and that they perceive a general decay in their ancient vigor, and their lives are cut shorter by the half. This is the first of my stories.

The other is, that before I was afflicted with the stone, hearing that the blood of a be-goat was with many in very great esteem, and looked upon as a celestial manna rained down upon these latter ages for the good and preservation of the lives of men, and having heard it spoken of by men of understanding for an admirable drug, and of infallible operation; I, who have ever thought myself subject to all the accidents that can befall other men, had a mind, in my perfect health, to furnish myself with this miracle, and therefore gave order to have a goat fed at home according to the recipe: for he must be taken in the hottest month of all summer, and must only have aperitive herbs given him to eat, and white wine to drink. I came home by chance the very day he was to be killed; and some one came and told me, that the cook had found two or three great balls in his paunch, that rattled against one another among what he had eaten. I was curious to have all his entrails brought before me, where, having caused the skin that
enclosed them to be cut, there tumbled out three great
lumps, as light as sponges, so that they appeared to be
hollow; but, as to the rest, hard and firm without, and
spotted and mixed all over with various dead colors; one
was perfectly round, and of the bigness of an ordinary ball;
the other two something less, of an imperfect roundness, as
seeming not to be arrived at their full growth. I find, by
inquiry of people accustomed to open these animals, that it
is a rare and unusual accident. 'Tis likely these are stones
of the same nature with ours: and if so, it must needs be
a very vain hope in those who have the stone, to extract their
cure from the blood of a beast that was himself about to
die of the same disease. For to say that the blood does not
participate of this contagion, and does not thence alter its
wonted virtue, it is rather to be believed than nothing is
engendered in a body but by the conspiracy and communica-
tion of all the parts; the whole mass works together,
though one part contributes more to the work than another,
according to the diversity of operations: wherefore it is very
likely that there was some petrifying quality in all the parts
of this goat. It was not so much for fear of the future,
and for myself, that I was curious in this experiment,
but because it falls out in mine, as it does in many other
families, that the women store up such little trumperies
for the service of the people, using the same recipe in
fifty several diseases, and such a recipe as they will not
take themselves, and yet triumph when they happen to be
successful.

As to what remains I honor physicians, not according
to the precept* for their necessity (for to this passage may
be opposed another of the prophet reproving King Asa for
having recourse to a physician), but for themselves, having
known many very good men of that profession, and most
worthy to be beloved. I do not attack them; 'tis their art
I inveigh against, and do not much blame them for making
their advantage of our folly, for most men do the same.
Many callings, both of greater and of less dignity than
theirs, have no other foundation or support than public
abuse. When I am sick I send for them if they be near,
only to have their company, and pay them as others do. I
give them leave to command me to keep myself warm,

* Eccles, xxxviii. 1.
because I naturally love to do it, and to appoint leeks or lettuce for my broth; to order me white wine or claret; and so as to all other things, which are indifferent to my palate and custom. I know very well that I do nothing for them in so doing, because sharpness and strangeness are incidents of the very essence of physic. Lycurgus ordered wine for the sick Spartans: Why? because they abominated the drinking it when they were well; as a gentleman, a neighbor of mine, takes it as an excellent medicine in his fever, because naturally he mortally hates the taste of it. How many do we see among them of my humor, who despise taking physic themselves, are men of a liberal diet, and live a quite contrary sort of life to what they prescribe others? What is this but flatly to abuse our simplicity? for their own lives and health are no less dear to them than ours are to us, and consequently they would accommodate their practice to their rules, if they did not themselves know how false these are.

'Tis the fear of death and of pain, impatience of disease, and a violent and indiscreet desire of a present cure, that so blind us; 'tis pure cowardice that makes our belief so pliable and easy to be imposed upon: and yet most men do not so much believe as they acquiesce and permit; for I hear them find fault and complain as well as we; but they resolve at last, "What should I do then?" As if impatience were of itself a better remedy than patience. Is there any one of those who have suffered themselves to be persuaded into this miserable subjection, who does not equally surrender himself to all sorts of impostures? who does not give up himself to the mercy of whoever has the impudence to promise him a cure? The Babylonians carried their sick into the public square; the physician was the people; every one who passed by, being in humanity and civility obliged to inquire of their condition, gave some advice according to his own experience.* We do little better; there is not so simple a woman whose chatterings and drenches we do not make use of; and according to my humor, if I were to take physic, I would sooner choose to take theirs than any other, because at least, if they do no good, they will do no harm. What Homer † and Plato said of the Egyptians, that they were all physicians, may

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* Herodotus, i. 197.  
† Odyssey, iv. 231.
be said of all nations; there is not a man among any of them who does not boast of some rare recipe, and who will not venture it upon his neighbor, if he will let him. I was the other day in company where some of my* fraternity told us of a new sort of pills made up of a hundred and odd ingredients; it made us very merry, and was a singular consolation, for what rock could withstand so great a battery? And yet I hear from those who have made trial of it, that the least atom of gravel will not stir for't.

I cannot take my hand from the paper, before I have added a word or two more concerning the assurance they give us of the infallibility of their drugs, from the experiments they have made.

The greatest part, I should say above two-thirds, of the medicinal virtues, consist in the quintessence, or occult property of simples, of which we can have no other instruction than use and custom; for quintessence is no other than a quality of which we cannot by our reason find out the cause. In such proofs, those they pretend to have acquired by the inspiration of some demon, I am content to receive (for I meddle not with miracles); and also the proofs which are drawn from things that, upon some other account, often fall into use among us; as if in the wool, wherewith we are wont to clothe ourselves, there has accidentally some occult desiccative property been found out of curing kibed heels, or as if in the radish we eat for food, there has been found out some aperitive operation. Galen reports, that a man happened to be cured of a leprosy by drinking wine out of a vessel into which a viper had crept by chance. In this example we find the means and a very likely guide and conduct to this experience, as we also do in those that physicians pretend to have been directed to by the example of some beasts. But in most of their other experiments wherein they affirm they have been conducted by fortune, and to have had no other guide than chance, I find the progress of this information incredible. Suppose man looking round about him upon the infinite number of things, plants, animals, metals; I do not know where he would begin his trial; and though his first fancy should fix him upon an elk's horn, wherein there must be a very pliant and easy belief, he will yet find himself as

* "Meaning who were troubled with the stone."—COTTON.
perplexed in his second operation. There are so many maladies and so many circumstances presented to him, that before he can attain the certainty of the point to which the perfection of his experience should arrive, human sense will be at the end of its lesson; and before he can, among this infinity of things, find out what this horn is; among so many diseases, what is epilepsy; the many complexions in a melancholy person; the many seasons in winter; the many nations in the French; the many ages in age; the many celestial mutations in the conjunction of Venus and Saturn; the many parts in man’s body, may, in a finger; and being, in all this, directed neither by argument, conjecture, example, nor divine inspirations, but merely by the sole motion of fortune, it must be by a perfectly artificial, regular, and methodical fortune. And after the cure is performed, how can he assure himself that it was not because the disease had arrived at its period or an effect of chance? or the operation of something else that he had eaten, drunk, or touched that day? or by virtue of his grandmother’s prayers? And, moreover, had this experiment been perfect, how many times was it repeated, and this long beadroll of haps and concurrences strung anew by chance to conclude a certain rule? And when the rule is concluded, by whom, I pray you? Of so many millions, there are but three men who take upon them to record their experiments: must fortune needs just hit one of these? What if another, and a hundred others, have made contrary experiments? We might, peradventure, have some light in this, were all the judgments and arguments of men known to us: but that three witnesses, three doctors, should lord it over all mankind, is against reason: it were necessary that human nature should have deputed and culled them out, and that they were declared our comptrollers by express letters of attorney.

"TO MADAME DE DURAS."

"MADAME:—The last time you honored me with a visit, you found me at work upon this chapter, and as these trifles may one day fall into your hands, I would also that they testify in how great honor the author will take any

* Marguerite de Gramont, widow of Jean de Durfort, Seigneur de Duras, who was killed near Leghorn, leaving no posterity.
favor you shall please to show them. You will there find
the same air and mien you have observed in his conversa-
tion; and though I could have borrowed some better or
more favorable garb than my own, I would not have done
it: for I require nothing more of these writings, but to pre-
sent me to your memory such as I naturally am. The
same conditions and faculties you have been pleased to
frequent and receive with much more honor and courtesy
than they deserve, I would put together (but without alter-
ation or change) in one solid body, that may peradventure
continue some years, or some days, after I am gone; where
you may find them again when you shall please to refresh
your memory, without putting you to any greater trouble;
neither are they worth it. I desire you should continue
the favor of your friendship to me, by the same qualities
by which it was acquired.

"I am not at all ambitious that any one should love and
esteem me more dead than living. The humor of Tiber-
rius* is ridiculous, but yet common, who was more solici-
tous to extend his renown to posterity than to render him-
self acceptable to men of his own time. If I were one of
those to whom the world could owe commendation, I would
give out of it one-half to have the other in hand; let their
praises come quick and crowding about me, more thick
than long, more full than durable; and let them cease, in
God's name, with my own knowledge of them, and when
the sweet sound can no longer pierce my ears. It were an
idle humor to essay, now that I am about to forsake the
commerce of men, to offer myself to them by a new recom-
mendation. I make no account of the goods I could not
employ in the service of my life. Such as I am, I will be
elsewhere than in paper: my art and industry have been
ever directed to render myself good for something; my
studies, to teach me to do, and not to write. I have made
it my whole business to frame my life: this has been my
trade and my work; I am less a writer of books than any-
thing else. I have coveted understanding for the service
of my present and real conveniences, and not to lay up a
stock for my posterity. He who has anything of value in
him, let him make it appear in his conduct, in his ordinary
discourses, in his courtships, and his quarrels: in play, in

* Tacitus, Annal., vi. 46.
bed, at table, in the management of his affairs, in his economics. Those whom I see make good books in ill breeches, should first have mended their breeches, if they would have been ruled by me. Ask a Spartan, whether he had rather be a good orator or a good soldier; and if I was asked the same question, I would rather choose to be a good cook, had I not one already to serve me. Good God! Madame, how should I hate the reputation of being a pretty fellow at writing, and an ass and an inanity in everything else! Yet I had rather be a fool in anything than to have made so ill a choice wherein to employ my talent. And I am so far from expecting to gain any new reputation by these follies, that I shall think I come off pretty well if I lose nothing by them of that little I had before. For besides that this dead and mute painting will take from my natural being, it has no resemblance to my better condition, but is much lapsed from my former vigor and cheerfulness, growing faded and withered: I am toward the bottom of the barrel, which begins to taste of the lees.

"As to the rest, madame, I should not have dared to make so bold with the mysteries of physic, considering the esteem that you and so many others have of it, had I not had encouragement from their own authors. I think there are of these among the old Latin writers but two, Pliny and Celsus: if these ever fall into your hands, you will find that they speak much more rudely of their art than I do: I but pinch it, they cut its throat. Pliny,* among other things, twits them with this, that when they are at the end of their rope, they have a pretty device to save themselves, by recommending their patients, whom they have teased and tormented with their drugs and diets to no purpose, some to vows and miracles, others to the hot baths. (Be not angry, madame; he speaks not of those in our parts, which are under the protection of your house, and all Gramontius.) They have a third way of saving their own credit, of ridding their hands of us and securing themselves from the reproaches we might cast in their teeth of our little amendment, when they have had us so long in their hands that they have not one more invention left wherewith to amuse us, which is, to send us to the better

* Nat. Hist., xxix. 1.
air of some other country. This, madame, is enough: I hope you will give me leave to return to my discourse, from which I have so far digressed, the better to divert you."

It was, I think, Pericles,* who being asked how he did: "you may judge," says he, "by these," showing some little scrolls of parchment he had tied about his neck and arms.† By which he would infer, that he must needs be very sick when he was reduced to a necessity of having recourse to such idle and vain fopperies, and of suffering himself to be so equipped. I dare not promise but that I may one day be so much a fool as to commit my life and death to the mercy and government of physicians; I may fall into such a frenzy; I dare not be responsible for my future constancy; but then, if any one ask me how I do, I may also answer, as Pericles did, "You may judge by this," showing my hand clutching six drachms of opium. It will be a very evident sign of a violent sickness: my judgment will be very much out of order; if once fear and impatience get such an advantage over me, it may very well be concluded that there is a dreadful fever in my mind.

I have taken the pains to plead this cause, which I understand indifferently, a little to back and support the natural aversion to drugs and the practice of physic, I have derived from my ancestors; to the end it may not be a mere stupid and inconsiderate aversion, but have a little more form; and also, that they who shall see me so obstinate in my resolution against all exhortations and menaces that shall be given me, when my infirmity shall press hardest upon me, may not think 'tis mere obstinacy in me; or any one so ill-natured, as to judge it to be any motive of glory; for it would be a strange ambition to seek to gain honor by an action my gardener or my groom can perform as well as I. Certainly, I have not a heart too tumorous and windy, that I should exchange so solid a pleasure as health, for an airy and imaginary pleasure: glory, even that of the four sons of Aymon, is too dear bought by a man of my humor, if it cost him three swinging fits of the stone. Give me health, in God's name! Such as love physic, may also have good, great, and convincing considerations; I do not hate opinions contrary to

* Plutarch, in vita, c. 24.  † i.e., Amulets.
my own; I am so far from being angry to see a discrepancy between mine and other men’s judgments, and from rendering myself unfit for the society of men, from being of another sense and party than mine, that on the contrary (the most general way that nature has followed being variety, and more in souls than bodies, forasmuch as they are of a more supple substance, and more susceptible of forms) I find it much more rare to see our humors and designs jump and agree. And there never were, in the world, two opinions alike, no more than two hairs, or two grains; the most universal quality is diversity.

CHAPTER XXXII.

OF PROFIT AND HONESTY.

No man is free from speaking foolish things; but the worst on’t is, when a man studies to play the fool.

"Næ iste magno conatu magnas nugas dixerit." *

This does not concern me; mine slip from me with as little care as they are of little value, and ’tis the better for them. I would presently part with them for what they are worth, and neither buy nor sell them, but as they weigh. I speak on paper as I do to the first person I meet; and that this is true, observe what follows.

To whom ought not treachery to be hateful when Tiberius refused it in a thing of so great importance to him? He had word sent him from Germany that if he thought fit, they would rid him of Arminius by poison; † this was the most potent enemy the Romans had, who had defeated them so ignominiously under Varus, and who alone prevented their aggrandizement in those parts. He returned answer, “that the people of Rome were wont to revenge themselves of their enemies by open ways, and with their swords in their hands, and not clandestinely and by fraud:” wherein he quitted the profitable for the honest. You will tell me that he was a braggadocio; I believe so

* "Truly he, with a great effort, will say some mighty trifle.”—Terence, Heaut., act iii. s. 4. The text is “Ne ista hercle magno jam conatu magnas nugas dixerit.”

† Tacitus, Annal., ii. 88.
too: and 'tis no great miracle in men of his profession. But the acknowledgement of virtue is not less valid in the mouth of him who hates it, forasmuch as truth forces it from him, and if he will not inwardly receive it, he at least puts it on for a decoration.

Our outward and inward structure is full of imperfection; but there is nothing useless in nature, not even inutility itself; nothing has insinuated itself into this universe that has not therein some fit and proper place. Our being is cemented with sickly qualities: ambition, jealousy, envy, revenge, superstition, and despair have so natural a possession in us, that its image is discerned in beasts; nay, and cruelty, so unnatural a vice; for even in the midst of compassion we feel within I know not what tart-sweet titillation of ill-natured pleasure in seeing others suffer; and the children feel it:

"Suave mari magno, turbantibus æquora ventis,
E terra magnum alterius spectate laborem:" *

of the seeds of which qualities, whoever should divest men would destroy the fundamental conditions of human life. Likewise, in all governments there are necessary offices, not only abject, but vicious also. Vices there help to make up the seam in our piecing, as poisons are useful for the conservation of health. If they become excusable because they are of use to us, and that the common necessity covers their true qualities, we are to resign this part to the strongest and boldest citizens, who sacrifice their honor and conscience as others of old sacrificed their lives, for the good of their country: we who are weaker, take upon us parts both that are more easy and less hazardous. The public weal requires that men should betray, and lie, and massacre; let us leave this commission to men who are more obedient and more supple.

In earnest, I have often been troubled to see judges, by fraud and false hopes of favor or pardon, allure a criminal to confess his fact, and therein to make use of cozenage and impudence. It would become justice, and Plato himself, who countenances this manner of proceeding, to furnish me with other means more suitable to my

* "It is sweet, when the winds disturb the waters of the vast sea, to witness from land the peril of other persons."—Lucretius, ii. 1.
own liking: this is a malicious kind of justice; and I look upon it as no less wounded by itself than by others. I said not long since to some company in discourse, that I should hardly be drawn to betray my prince for a particular man, who should be much ashamed to betray any particular man for my prince; and I do not only hate deceiving myself, but that any one should deceive through me; I will neither afford matter nor occasion to any such thing.

In the little I have had to mediate between our princes* in the divisions and subdivisions by which we are at this time torn to pieces. I have been very careful that they should neither be deceived in me, nor deceive others by me. People of that kind of trading are very reserved, and pretend to be the most moderate imaginable and nearest to the opinions of those with whom they have to do; I expose myself in my stiff opinion, and after a method the most my own; a tender negotiator, a novice, who had rather fail in the affair than be wanting to myself. And yet it has been hitherto with so good luck (for fortune has doubtless the best share in it), that few things have passed from hand to hand with less suspicion or more favor and privacy. I have a free and open way that easily insinuates itself and obtains belief with those with whom I am to deal, at the first meeting. Sincerity and pure truth, in what age soever, pass for current: and besides, the liberty and freedom of a man who treats without any interest of his own, is never hateful or suspected, and he may very well make use of the answer of Hyperides to the Athenians, who complained of his blunt way of speaking: "My masters, do not consider whether or no I am free, but whether I am so without a bribe, or without any advantage to my own affairs."† My liberty of speaking has also easily cleared me from all suspicion of dissembling by its vehemency, leaving nothing unsaid, how home and bitter soever (so that I could have said no worse behind their backs), and in that it carried along with it a manifest show of simplicity and indifference. I pretend to no other

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* Between the King of Navarre, afterward Henry IV., and the Duc de Guise — See De Thou, De Vita, sua, iii. 9.

† Plutarch, on the Difference between a Flatterer and a Friend, c 24.
fruit by acting than to act, and add to it no long arguments or propositions; every action plays its own game, win if it can.

As to the rest, I am not swayed by any passion, either of love or hatred, toward the great, nor have my will captivated either by particular injury or obligation. I look upon our kings with an affection simply loyal and respectful, neither prompted nor restrained by any private interest, and I love myself for it. Nor does the general and just cause attract me otherwise than with moderation, and without heat. I am not subject to those penetrating and close compacts and engagements. Anger and hatred are beyond the duty of justice; and are passions only useful to those who do not keep themselves strictly to their duty by simple reason: "Utatur motu annui, qui uti ratione non potest."* All legitimate and equitable intentions are temperate and equable of themselves; if otherwise, they degenerate into seditious and unlawful. This is it which makes me walk everywhere with my head erect, my face and my heart open. To confess the truth, and I am not afraid to confess it, I should easily, in case of need, hold up one candle to St. Michael and another to his dragon, like the old woman; I will follow the right side even to the fire, but excluding the fire if I can. Let Montaigne be overwhelmed in the public ruin, if need be; but if there be no need, I should think myself obliged to fortune to save me, and I will make use of all the length of line my duty allows for his preservation. Was it not Atticus,f who being of the just but losing side, preserved himself by his moderation in that universal shipwreck of the world, among so many mutations and diversities? For private man, as he was, it is more easy; and in such kind of work, I think a man may justly not be ambitious to offer and insinuate himself. For a man, indeed, to be wavering and irresolute, to keep his affection unmoved and without inclination in the troubles of his country and public divisions, I neither think it handsome nor honest: "Ea non media sed nulla via est, volut eventum exspectantium, quo

* "He only employs his passion who can make no use of his reason."—CICERO, Tusc. Quæs., iv. 25.

† Cornelius Nepos in vita, c. 6.
fortune consilia sua applicent." * This may be allowed in our neighboring affairs, and thus Gelo the tyrant of Syracuse † suspended his inclination in the war between the Greeks and barbarians, keeping a resident ambassador with presents at Delphos, to watch and see which way fortune would incline, and then take fit occasion to fall in with the victors. It would be a kind of treason to proceed after this manner in our own domestic affairs, wherein a man must of necessity be of the one side or the other; though for a man who has no office or express command to call him out, to sit still, I hold it more excusable (and yet I do not excuse myself upon these terms) than in foreign expeditions, to which, however, according to our laws, no man is pressed against his will. And yet even those who wholly engage themselves in such a war, may behave themselves with such temper and moderation that the storm may fly over their heads without doing them any harm. Had we not reason to hope such an issue in the person of the late Sieur de Morvilliers, bishop of Orleans? ♦ And I know among those who behave themselves most bravely in the present war, some whose manners are so gentle, obliging, and just, that they will certainly stand firm, whatever event Heaven is preparing for us. I am of opinion that it properly belongs to kings only to quarrel with kings; and I laugh at those bully-rooks who, out of wantonness of courage, present themselves to so disproportionate disputes; for a man has never the more particular quarrel with a prince, by marching openly and boldly against him for his own honor and according to his duty; if he does not love such a person, he does better, he esteems him. And notably the cause of the laws and of the ancient government of a kingdom, has this always annexed to it, that even those, who for their own private interest invade them, excuse, if they do not honor, the defenders.

But we are not, as we nowadays do, to call peevishness and inward discontent, that spring from private interest and

* "That is not a middle way, but no way, to await events, by which they refer their resolutions to fortune."—LiVY, xxxii. 21.

† Herodotus, vii. 163.

‡ An able negotiator, who, though protected by the Guises, and strongly supporting them, was yet very far from persecuting the Reformists. He died 1577.
passion, duty: nor a treacherous and malicious conduct, courage; they call their propension to mischief and violence, zeal: 'tis not the cause, but their interest, that inflames them; they kindle and begin a war, not because it is just, but because it is war.

A man may very well behave himself commodiously, and loyally too, among those of the adverse party; carry yourself if not with the same equal affection (for that is capable of different measure), at least with an affection moderate, well-tempered, and such as shall not so engage you to one party, that it may demand all you are able to do for that side, content yourself with a moderate proportion of their favor and good-will; and to swim in troubled waters without fishing in them.

The other way, of offering a man's self and the utmost service he is able to do, both to one party and the other, has still less of prudence in it than conscience. Does not he to whom you betray another, to whom you were as welcome as to himself, know that you will at another time do as much for him? He holds you for a villain; and in the meantime hears what you will say, gathers intelligence from you, and works his own ends out of your disloyalty; double-dealing men are useful for bringing in, but we must have a care they carry out as little as is possible.

I say nothing to one party, that I may not, upon occasion, say to the other, with a little alteration of accent; and report nothing but things either indifferent or known, or what is of common consequence. I cannot permit myself, for any consideration, to tell them a lie. What is intrusted to my secrecy, I religiously conceal; but I take as few trusts of that nature upon me as I can. The secrets of princes are a troublesome burthen to such as are not interested in them. I very willingly bargain that they trust me with little, but confidently rely upon what I tell them. I have ever known more than I desired. One open way of speaking introduces another open way of speaking, and draws out discoveries, like wine and love. Phillipides, in my opinion, answered King Lysimachus very discreetly, who, asking him what of his estate he should bestow upon him? "What you will," said he, "provided it be none of your secrets."* I see every one is displeased if the bottom of

* Plutarch, On Curiosity, c. 4.
the affair be concealed from him wherein he is employed, or that there be any reservation in the thing: for my part, I am content to know no more of the business than what they would have me employ myself in, nor desire that my knowledge should exceed or restrict what I have to say. If I must serve for an instrument of deceit, let it be at least, with a safe conscience; I will not be reputed a servant either so affectionate, or so loyal, as to be fit to betray anyone: he who is unfaithful to himself, is excusably so to his master. But they are princes who do not accept men by halves, and despise limited and conditional services; I cannot help it; I frankly tell them how far I can go; for a slave I should not be, but to reason, and I can hardly submit even to that. And they also are to blame to exact from a freeman the same subjection and obligation to their service that they do from him they have made and bought, or whose fortune particularly and expressly depends upon theirs. The laws have delivered me from a great anxiety; they have chosen a side for me, and given me a master; all other superiority and obligation ought to be relative to that, and cut off from all other. Yet this is not to say, that if my affection should otherwise incline me, my hand should presently obey it; the will and desire are a law to themselves; but actions must receive commission from the public appointment.

All this proceeding of mine is a little dissonant from the ordinary forms; it would produce no great effects, nor be of any long duration; innocence itself could not, in this age of ours, either negotiate without dissimulation, or traffic without lying; and, indeed, public employments are by no means for my palate; what my profession requires, I perform after the most private manner that I can. Being young, I was engaged up to the ears in business, and it succeeded well; but I disengaged myself in good time. I have often since avoided meddling in it, rarely accepted, and never asked it; keeping my back still turned to ambition; but, if not like rowers who so advance backward, yet so, at the same time, that I am less obliged to my resolution than to my good fortune, that I was not wholly embarked in it. For there are ways less displeasing to my taste, and more suitable to my ability, by which, if she had formerly called me to the public service, and my own advancement toward the world's opinion, I know I should, in spite of
all my own arguments to the contrary, have pursued them. Such as commonly say, in opposition to what I profess, that what I call freedom, simplicity, and plainness in my manners, is art and subtlety, and rather prudence than goodness, industry than nature, good sense than good luck, do me more honor than disgrace; but, certainly, they make my subtlety too subtle: and whoever has followed me close, and pryed narrowly into me, I will give him the victory, if he does not confess that there is no rule in their school that could match this natural motion, and maintain an appearance of liberty and license, so equal and inflexible, through so many various and crooked paths, and that all their wit and endeavor could never have led them through. The way of truth is one and simple; that of particular profit, and the commodity of affairs a man is intrusted with, is double, unequal, and casual. I have often seen these counterfeit and artificial liberties practiced, but for the most part, without success; they relish of Aesop's ass who, in emulation of the dog, obligingly clapped his two fore feet upon his master's shoulders; but as many caresses as the dog had for such an expression of kindness, twice as many blows with a cudgel had the poor ass for his compliment: "Id maxime quemque decet, quod est cujusque sumum maxime."* I will not deprive deceit of its due; that were but ill to understand the world; I know it has often been of great use, and that it maintains and supplies most men's employment. There are vices that are lawful, as there are many actions, either good or excusable, that are not lawful in themselves.

The justice which in itself is natural and universal, is otherwise and more nobly ordered, than that other justice, which is special, national, and constrained to the ends of government: "Veri juris germanaeque justitiae solidam et expressam effigiem nullam tenemus; umbra et imaginibus utimur;" † insomuch that the sage Dandamis,‡ hearing the

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* "That best becomes every man, that he is best at."—Cicero, De Offic., i. 31.

† "We retain no solid and express effigies of true right and justice; we have only the shadow and images of it."—Cicero, De Offic., iii. 17.

‡ An Indian sage who lived in the time of Alexander the Great.—Plutarch, Life of Alexander c. 20. Strabo (book xv.) calls him Mandanis.
lives of Socrates, Pythagoras and Diogenes read, judged them to be great men every way, excepting that they were too much subjected to the reverence of the laws which, to second and authorize, true virtue must abate very much of its original vigor; many vicious actions are introduced, not only by their permission, but by their advice: "Ex senatus consultis plebisque scelera exercentur."* I follow the common phrase that distinguishes between profitable and honest things, so as to call some natural actions, that are not only profitable but necessary, dishonest, and foul.

But let us proceed in our examples of treachery: two pretenders to the kingdom of Thrace† were fallen into dispute about their title; the emperor hindered them from proceeding to blows: but one of them, under color of bringing things to a friendly issue by an interview, having invited his competitor to an entertainment in his own house, imprisoned and killed him. Justice required that the Romans should have satisfaction for this offense; but there was a difficulty in obtaining it by ordinary ways; what, therefore, they could not do legitimately, without war and without danger, they resolved to do by treachery; and what they could not honestly do, they did profitably. For which end, one Pomponius Flaccus was found to be a fit instrument. This man, by dissembled words and assurances, having drawn the other into his toils, instead of the honor and favor he had promised him, sent him bound hand and foot to Rome. Here one traitor betrayed another, contrary to common custom: for they are full of mistrust, and 'tis hard to overreach them in their own art: witness the sad experience we have lately had.‡

Let who will be Pomponius Flaccus, and there are enough who would: for my part, both my word and my faith are, like all the rest, parts of this common body: their best effect is the public service; this I take for presupposed. But should one command me to take charge of the courts of law and lawsuits, I should make answer, that I understood

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* "Crimes are commited by the consent of the magistrates and the common laws."—Seneca, Ep., 95.

† Rhescuporis and Cotys.—Tacitus, Annal., ii. 65.

‡ Montaigne here probably refers to the feigned reconciliation between Catherine de Médici and Henry, Duc de Guise, in 1588.
it not; or the place of a leader of pioneers, I would say, that I was called to a more honorable employment; so likewise, he that would employ me to lie, betray, and forswear myself, though not to assassinate or to poison, for some notable service, I should say, "If I have robbed or stolen anything from any man, send me rather to the galleys." For it is permissible in a man of honor to say, as the Lacedaemonians did,* having been defeated by Antipater, when just upon concluding an agreement: "You may impose as heavy and ruinous taxes upon us as you please, but to command us to do shameful and dishonest things, you will lose your time, for it is to no purpose." Every one ought to make the same vow to himself, that the kings of Egypt made their judges solemnly swear,† that they would not do anything contrary to their consciences, though never so much commanded to it by themselves. In such commissions, there is evident mark of ignominy and condemnation; and he who gives it, at the same time accuses you, and gives it, if you understand it right, for a burden and a punishment. As much as the public affairs are bettered by your exploit, so much are your own the worse, and the better you behave yourself in it, 'tis so much the worse for yourself; and it will be no new thing, nor, peradventure, without some color of justice, if the same person ruin you, who set you on work.

If treachery can be in any case excusable, it must be only so when it is practiced to chastise and betray treachery. There are examples enough of treacheries, not only rejected, but chastised and punished by those in favor of whom they were undertaken. Who is ignorant of Fabricius' sentence against the physician of Pyrrhus?

But this we also find recorded, that some persons have commanded a thing, who afterward have severely avenged the execution of it upon him they had employed, rejecting the reputation of so unbridled an authority, and disowning so abandoned and base a servitude and obedience. Jaropolc, duke of Russia,‡ tampered with a gentleman of Hungary to betray Boleslaus, king of Poland, either by killing him, or

* Plutarch, Difference between a Flatterer and a Friend, c. 21.
† Idem, Apothegms of the Kings.
‡ Martin Cromer, De Rebus Polon., liv. v. p. 131, ed. 1555.
by giving the Russians opportunity to do him some notable mischief. This worthy went ably to work; he was more assiduous than before in the service of that king, so that he obtained the honor to be of his council, and one of the chiefest in his trust. With these advantages, and taking an opportune occasion of his master's absence, he betrayed Vislicza, a great and rich city, to the Russians, which was entirely sacked and burned, and not only all the inhabitants of both sexes, young and old, put to the sword, but moreover a great number of neighboring gentry, whom he had drawn thither to that end. Jaropele, his revenge being thus satisfied and his anger appeased, which was not, indeed, without pretense (for Boleslaus had highly offended him, and after the same manner) and sated with the fruit of this treachery, coming to consider the foulness of it, with a sound judgment and clear from passion, looked upon what had been done with so much horror and remorse, that he caused the eyes to be bored out and the tongue and shameful parts to be cut off of him who had performed it.

Antigonus* persuaded the Agaraspidian soldiers † to betray Eumenes, their general, his adversary, into his hands; but after he had caused him, so delivered, to be slain, he would himself be the commissioner of the divine justice for the punishment of so detestable a crime and committed them into the hands of the governor of the province, with express command, by whatever means, to destroy and bring them all to an evil end, so that of that great number of men, not so much as one ever returned again into Macedonia; the better he had been served, the more wickedly he judged it to be, and meriting greater punishment.

The slave who betrayed the place where his master P. Sulpicius lay concealed, was, according to the promise of Sylla's proscription, manumitted for his pains; but according to the promise of the public justice, which was free from any such engagement, he was thrown headlong from the Tarpeian rock.‡

Our King Clovis, instead of the arms of gold he had

* Plutarch, Life of Eumenes, c. 9.
† The soldiers bearing silver shields. Cotton translates it "Agaraspides' soildiers."
‡ Valerius Maximus, vi. 5, 7.
promised them, caused three of Caracie's servants to be hanged after they had betrayed their master to him, though he had debauched them to it; he hanged them with the purse of their reward about their necks: after having satisfied his second and special faith, he satisfied the general and first.

Mohammed II. having resolved to rid himself of his brother, out of jealousy of state, according to the practice of the Ottoman family, he employed one of his officers in the execution; who, pouring a quantity of water too fast into him, choked him. This being done, to expiate the murder, he delivered the murderer into the hands of the mother of him he had so caused to be put to death, for they were only brothers by the father's side; she, in his presence, ripped up the murderer's bosom, and with her own hands rifled his breast for his heart, tore it out, and threw it to the dogs. And even to the worst people it is the sweetest thing imaginable, having once gained their end by a vicious action, to foist, in all security, into it some show of virtue and justice, as by way of compensation and conscientious correction; to which may be added, that they look upon the ministers of such horrid crimes as upon men who reproach them with them, and think by their deaths to erase the memory and testimony of such proceedings.

Or if, perhaps, you are rewarded, not to frustrate the public necessity for that extreme and desperate remedy, he who does it cannot for all that, if he be not such himself, but look upon you as an accursed and execrable fellow, and conclude you a greater traitor than he does, against whom you are so; for he tries the malignity of your disposition by your own hands, where he cannot possibly be deceived, you having no object of preceding hatred to move you to such an act; but he employs you as they do condemned malefactors in executions of justice, an office as necessary as dishonorable. Besides the baseness of such commissions, there is, moreover, a prostitution of conscience. Seeing that the daughter of Sejanus could not be put to death by the law of Rome because she was a virgin, she was, to make it lawful, first ravished by the hangman and

* Or rather Cararie. See Gregory of Tours, ii. 41.

† Tacitus, Annal., v. 9.
then strangled: not only his hand but his soul is slave to the public convenience.

When Amurath I., more grievously to punish his subjects who had taken part in the parricide rebellion of his son, ordained that their nearest kindred should assist in the execution, I find it very handsome in some of them to have rather chosen to be unjustly thought guilty of the parricide of another than to serve justice by a parricide of their own. And where I have seen, at the taking of some little fort by assault in my time, some rascals who to save their own lives, would consent to hang their friends and companions, I have looked upon them to be of worse condition than those who were hanged. "Tis said * that Witold, prince of Lithuania, introduced into that nation the practice that the criminal condemned to death should with his own hand execute the sentence, thinking it strange that a third person, innocent of the fault, should be made guilty of homicide.

A prince, when by some urgent circumstance or some impetuous and unforeseen accident that very much concerns his state, compelled to forfeit his word and break his faith, or otherwise forced from his ordinary duty, ought to attribute this necessity to a lash of the divine rod; vice it is not, for he has given up his own reason to a more universal and more powerful reason; but, certainly, 'tis a misfortune; so that if any one should ask me what remedy? "None," say I, "if he were really racked between these two extremes; sed videat, ne queratur latebra perjurio, † he must do it; but if he did it without regret, if it did not grieve him to do it, 'tis a sign his conscience is in a scurvy condition." If there be a person to be found of so tender a conscience as to think no cure whatever worth so important a remedy, I shall like him never the worse; he could not more excusably or more decently perish. We cannot do all we would, so that we must often, as the last anchorage, commit the protection of our vessels to the simple conduct of heaven. To what more just necessity does he reserve himself? What is less possible for him to do than what he cannot do but at the expense of his faith and honor, things that, perhaps, ought to be dearer to him than his own safety, or even the safety of his people. Though he should, with folded arms, only

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* Cromer, De Rebus Polon., lib. xvi.
† Cicero, De Offic., iii. 29.
call God to his assistance, has he not reason to hope that
the divine goodness will not refuse the favor of an extra-
ordinary arm to just and pure hands? These are dangerous
examples, rare and sickly exceptions to our natural rules;
we must yield to them, but with great moderation and cir-
cumspection; no private utility is of such importance that
we should upon that account strain our consciences to such
a degree: the public may be, when very manifest and of
very great concern.

Timoleon made a timely expiation for his strange exploit
by the tears he shed, calling to mind that it was with a
fraternal hand that he had slain the tyrant; and it justly
pricked his conscience that he had been necessitated to pur-
chase the public utility at so great a price as the violation
of his private morality. Even the senate itself, by his
means delivered from slavery, durst not positively deter-
mine of so high a fact, and divided into two so important
and contrary aspects; but the Syracusans,* sending at the
same time to the Corinthians to solicit their protection, and
to require of them a captain fit to re-establish their city in
its former dignity and to clear Sicily of several little tyrants
by whom it was oppressed, they deputed Timoleon for that
service, with this cunning declaration; "that according as
he should behave himself well or ill in his employment,
their sentence should incline either to favor the deliverer
of his country, or to disfavor the murderer of his brother." This fantastic conclusion carries along with it some excuse,
by reason of the danger of the example, and the impor-
tance of so strange an action; and they did well to dis-
charge their own judgment of it, and to refer it to others
who were not so much concerned. But Timoleon's com-
portment in this expedition soon made his cause more
clear, so worthily and virtuously he demeaned himself
upon all occasions; and the good fortune that accompanied
him in the difficulties he had to overcome in this noble
employment, seemed to be strewed in his way by the gods,
favorably conspiring for his justification.
The end of this matter is excusable, if any can be so;
but the profit of the augmentation of the public revenue,
that served the Roman senate for a pretense to the foul
conclusion I am going to relate, is not sufficient to warrant
any such injustice.

* Plutarch (Life of Timoleon. c. 3), says twenty years after.
Certain cities had redeemed themselves and their liberty by money, by the order and consent of the senate, out of the hands of L. Sylla: the business coming again in question, the senate condemned them to be taxable as they were before, and that the money they had disbursed for their redemption should be lost to them.* Civil war often produces such villainous examples; that we punish private men for confiding in us when we were public ministers: and the self-same magistrate makes another man pay the penalty of his change, that has nothing to do with it; the pedagogue whips his scholar for his docility; and the guide beats the blind man whom he leads by the hand; a horrid image of justice.

There are rules in philosophy that are both false and weak. The example that is proposed to us for preferring private utility before faith given, has not weight enough by the circumstance they put to it; robbers have seized you, and after having made you swear to pay them a certain sum of money, dismiss you. "Tis not well done to say, that an honest man can be quit of his oath without payment, being out of their hands. "Tis no such thing; what fear has once made me willing to do, I am obliged to do it, when I am no longer in fear; and though that fear only prevailed with my tongue without forcing my will, yet am I bound to keep my word. For my part, when my tongue has sometimes inconsiderately said something that I did not think, I have made a conscience of disowning it: otherwise, by degrees, we shall abolish all the right another derives from our promises and oaths. "Quasi vero fortis viro vis possit adhiberi."† And 'tis only lawful, upon the account of private interest to excuse breach of promise when we have promised something that is unlawful and wicked in itself; for the right of virtue ought to take place of the right of any obligation of ours.

I have formerly‡ placed Epaminondas in the first rank of excellent men and do not repent it. How high did he stretch the consideration of his own particular duty? he

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* Cicero, De Offic., iii. 22.
† "As though a man of true courage could be compelled."—Cicero, De Offic., iii. 30.
‡ Book ii. c. 36.
who never killed a man whom he had overcome; who, for the inestimable benefit of restoring the liberty of his country, made conscience of killing a tyrant or his accomplices, without due form of justice:* and who concluded him to be a wicked man, how good a citizen soever otherwise, who among his enemies in battle spared not his friend and his guest. This was a soul of a rich composition: he married goodness and humanity, nay, even the tenderest and most delicate in the whole school of philosophy, to the roughest and most violent human actions. Was it nature or art that had intenerated that great courage of his, so full, so obstinate against pain and death and poverty, to such an extreme degree of sweetness and compassion? Dreadful in arms and blood, he overran and subdued a nation invincible by all others but by him alone; and yet in the heat of an encounter, could turn aside from his friend and guest.† Certainly he was fit to command in war, who could so rein himself with the curb of good nature, in the height and heat of his fury, a fury inflamed and foaming with blood and slaughter. "Tis a miracle to be able to mix any image of justice with such violent actions: and it was only possible for such a steadfastness of mind as that of Epaminondas, therein to mix sweetness and the facility of the gentlest manners and purest innocence. And whereas one‡ told the Mamertines, that statutes were of no resistance against armed men; and another § told the tribune of the people, that the time of justice and of war were distinct things; and a third said‖ that the noise of arms deafened the voice of laws, this man in all such rattle was not deaf to that of civility and pure courtesy. Had he not borrowed from his enemies‖ the custom of sacrificing to the Muses when he went to war, that they might, by their sweetness and gayety, soften his martial and rigorous fury? Let us not fear, by the example of so great a master to believe that there is something unlawful, even against

* Plutarch, on the Daemon of Socrates, c. 4 and 24.
† Idem, ubi supra, c. 17.
‡ Plutarch, Life of Pompey, c. 3.
§ Idem, Life of Cesar, c. 11.
‖ Idem, Life of Marius, c. 10.
‖ The Lacedæmonians.
an enemy; and that the common concern ought not to require all things of all men, against private interest: "Manente memoria, etiam in dissidio publicorum fæderum privati juris:"

"Et nulla potestia vires Praestandi, ne quid peccet amicus, habet;" à

and that all things are not lawful to an an honest man for the service of his prince, the laws, or the general quarrel: "Non enim patria praestat omnibus officiis... et ipsi cundecit pios habere eves in parentes." ñ "Tis an instruction proper for the time wherein we live; we need not harden our courage with these arms of steel; 'tis enough to that our shoulders are inured to them; 'tis enough to dip our pens in ink, without dipping them in blood. If it be grandeur of courage, and the effect of a rare and singular virtue, to contemn friendship, private obligations, a man's word and relationship, for the common good and obedience to the magistrate, 'tis certainly sufficient to excuse us, that 'tis a grandeur that could have no place in the grandeur of Epaminondas' courage.

I abominate those mad exhortations of this other discomposed soul. §

"Dum tela micant, non vos pietatis imago Ulla, nec adversa conspecti fronte parentes Commoveant; vultus gladio turbate verendos." ¶

Let us deprive wicked, bloody, and treacherous natures of such a pretense of reason; let us set aside this guilty and extravagant justice, and stick to more human imita-

* "The memory of private right still remains amid public dissensions."—Livy, xxv. 18.

† "No power on earth can sanction treachery against a friend."—Ovid, De Pont., i. 7. 37.

‡ "The duty to one's country does not supersede all other duties—the country itself requires that its citizens should act piously toward their parents."—Cicero, De offic., iii. 23, who however, puts the matter interrogatively.

§ Julius Cæsar.

¶ "When swords are drawn, let no idea of love, nor the face even of a father presented to you, move you: mutilate with your sword those venerable features."—Lucan, viii. 320.
tious. How great things can time and example do! In an encounter of the civil war against China, one of Pompey’s soldiers having unawares killed his brother, who was of the contrary party, he immediately for shame and sorrow killed himself; * and some years after in another civil war of the same people a soldier demanded a reward of his officer for having killed his brother.†

A man but ill proves the honor and beauty of an action by its utility; and very erroneously concludes that every one is obliged to it, and that it becomes every one to do it, if it be of utility:

“Omnia non pariter rerum sunt omnibus apta,” ‡

Let us take that which is most necessary and profitable for human society; it will be marriage; and yet the council of the saints find the contrary much better, excluding from it the most venerable vocation of man; as we design those horses for stallions, of which we have the least esteem.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

OF REPENTANCE.

Others form man; I only report him: and represent a particular one, ill fashioned enough, and whom, if I had to model him anew, I should certainly make something else than what he is: but that’s past recalling. Now, though the features of my picture alter and change, ’tis not, however, unlike: the world eternally turns round; all things therein are incessantly moving, the earth, the rocks of Caucasus, and the pyramids of Egypt, both by the public motion and their own. Even constantcy itself is no other but a slower and more languishing motion. I cannot fix my object; ’tis always tottering and reeling by a natural giddiness: I take it as it is at the instant I consider it; I do not paint its being, I paint its passage; not a passing

* Tacitus, Hist., iii. 51.
† Idem, ibid.
‡ “All thing are not equally fit for all men.”—Propertius, iii. 9, 7.
from one age to another, or, as the people say, from seven to seven years, but from day to day, from minute to minute. I must accommodate my history to the hour: I may presently change, not only by fortune, but also by intention. 'Tis a counterpart of various and changeable accidents, and of irresolute imaginations, and, as it falls out, sometimes contrary: whether it be that I am then another self, or that I take subjects by other circumstances and considerations: so it is, that I may peradventure contradict myself, but, as Demades said, I never contradict the truth. Could my soul once take footing, I would not essay but resolve: but it is always learning and making trial.

I propose a life ordinary and without lustre: 'tis all one; all moral philosophy may as well be applied to a common and private life, as to one of richer composition: every man carries the entire form of human condition. Authors communicate themselves to the people by some especial and extrinsic mark; I, the first of any, by my universal being; as Michael de Montaigne, not as a grammarian, a poet, or a lawyer. If the world find fault that I speak too much of myself, I find fault that they do not so much as think of themselves. But is it reason, that being so particular in my way of living, I should pretend to recommend myself to the public knowledge? And is it also reason that I should produce to the world, where art and handling have so much credit and authority, crude and simple effects of nature, and of a weak nature to boot? Is it not to build a wall without stone or brick, or some such thing, to write books without learning and without art? The fancies of music are carried on by art; mine by chance. I have this, at least, according to discipline, that never any man treated of a subject he better understood and knew, than I what I have undertaken, and that in this I am the most understanding man alive: secondly, that never any man penetrated farther into his matter, nor better and more distinctly sifted the parts and sequences of it, nor ever more exactly and fully arrived at the end he proposed to himself. To perfect it, I need bring nothing but fidelity to the work; and that is there, and the most pure and sincere that is anywhere to be found. I speak truth, not so much as I would, but as much as I dare; and I dare a little the more, as I grow older; for, methinks, custom allows to age more liberty of prating, and more indiscretion of talk-
ing of a man's self. That cannot fall out here, which I often see elsewhere, that the work and the artificer contradict one another: "Can a man of such sober conversation have written so foolish a book?" Or "Do so learned writings proceed from a man of so weak conversation?" He who talks at a very ordinary rate, and writes rare matter, 'tis to say that his capacity is borrowed and not his own. A learned man is not learned in all things: but a sufficient man is sufficient throughout, even to ignorance itself; here my book and I go hand in hand together. Elsewhere men may commend or censure the work, without reference to the workman; here they cannot: who touches the one, touches the other. He who shall judge of it without knowing him, will more wrong himself than me; he who does know him, gives me all the satisfaction I desire. I shall be happy beyond my desert, if I can obtain only thus much from the public approbation, as to make men of understanding perceive that I was capable of profiting by knowledge, had I had it; and that I deserved to have been assisted by a better memory.

Be pleased here to excuse what I often repeat, that I very rarely repent, and that my conscience is satisfied with itself, not as the conscience of an angel, or that of a horse, but as the conscience of a man; always adding this clause, not one of ceremony, but a true and real submission, that I speak inquiring and doubting, purely and simply referring myself to the common and accepted beliefs for the resolution. I do not teach, I only relate.

There is no vice that is absolutely a vice which does not offend, and that a sound judgment does not accuse; for there is in it so manifest a deformity and inconvenience, that, peradventure, they are in the right who say that it is chiefly begotten by stupidity and ignorance: so hard is it to imagine that a man can know without abhorring it. Malice sneaks up the greatest part of its own venom, and poisons itself.* Vice leaves repentance in the soul, like an ulcer in the flesh, which is always scratching and lacerating itself: for reason effaces all other grief and sorrows, but it begets that of repentance, which is so much the more grievous, by reason it springs within, as the cold and heat of fevers are more sharp than those that only strike upon the outward

* Seneca, Ep. 81.
skin. I hold for vices (but every one according to its proportion), not only those which reason and nature condemn, but those also which the opinion of men, though false and erroneous, have made such, if authorized by law and custom.

There is likewise no virtue which does not rejoice a well-descended nature; there is a kind of, I know not what, congratulation in well doing that gives us an inward satisfaction, and a generous boldness that accompanies a good conscience: a soul daringly vicious may, peradventure, arm itself with security, but it cannot supply itself with this complacency and satisfaction. "Tis no little satisfaction to feel a man’s self preserved from the contagion of so depraved an age, and to say to himself: "Whoever could penetrate into my soul would not there find me guilty either of the affliction or ruin of any one, or of revenge or envy, or any offense against the public laws, or of innovation or disturbance, or failure of my word; and though the license of the time permits and teaches every one so to do, yet have I not plundered any Frenchman’s goods, or taken his money, and have lived upon what is my own, in war as well as in peace; neither have I set any man to work without paying him his hire.” These testimonies of a good conscience please, and this natural rejoicing is very beneficial to us, and the only reward that we can never fail of.

To ground the recompense of virtuous actions upon the approbation of others is too uncertain and unsafe a foundation, especially in so corrupt and ignorant an age as this, wherein the good opinion of the vulgar is injurious: upon whom do you rely to show you what is recommendable? God defend me from being an honest man, according to the descriptions of honor I daily see every one make of himself. "Quae fuerant vitia, mores sunt.”* Some of my friends have at times schooled and scolded me with great sincerity and plainness, either of their own voluntary motion, or by me entreated to it as to an office, which to a well-composed soul surpasses not only in utility, but in kindness all other offices of friendship: I have always received them with the most open arms, both of courtesy and acknowledgment; but, to say the truth, I have often

* "What before were vices are now right manners."—Seneca, Ep., 39.
found so much false measure, both in their reproaches and praises, that I had not done much amiss, rather to have done ill, than to have done well according to their notions. We, who live private lives, not exposed to any other view than our own, ought chiefly to have settled a pattern within ourselves by which to try our actions; and according to that, sometimes to encourage and sometimes to correct ourselves. I have my laws and my judicature to judge of myself, and apply myself more to these than to any other rules: I do, indeed, restrain my actions according to others; but extend them not by any other rule than my own. You yourself only know if you are cowardly and cruel, loyal and devout: others see you not, and only, guess at you by uncertain conjectures, and do not so much see your nature as your art; rely not therefore upon their opinions, but stick to your own: "Tuo tibi judicio est utendum... Virtutis et vitiorum grave ipsius conscientiae pondus est: qua sublata, jacent omnia."*

But the saying that repentance immediately follows the sin seems not to have respect to sin in its high estate, which is lodged in us as in its own proper habitation. One may disown and retract the vices that surprise us, and to which we are hurried by passions; but those which by a long habit are rooted in a strong and vigorous will are not subject to contradiction. Repentance is no other but a recanting of the will and an opposition to our fancies, which lead us which way they please. It makes this person disown his former virtue and continency:

"Quae mens est hodie, cur eadem non puero fuit? Vel cur his animis incolumes non reduent genae?"†

'Tis an exact life that maintains itself in due order in private. Every one may juggle his part, and represent an honest man upon the stage: but within, and in his own bosom, where all may do as they list, where all is concealed, to be regular—there's the point. The next degree is to be

* "Thou must employ thy own judgment upon thyself; great is the weight of thy own conscience in the discovery of thy own virtues and vices: that being taken away, all things are lost."—CICERO, De Nat. Dei, iii. 35, Tusc. Quæs., i. 25.

† "Why was I not of the same mind when I was a boy that I am now? or why do not the ruddy cheeks of my youth return to help me now?"—HORACE, Od., iv. 10, 7.
so in his house, and in his ordinary actions, for which we are accountable to none, and where there is no study nor artifice. And therefore Bias, setting forth the excellent state of a private family, says: "of which* the master is the same within, by his own virtue and temper, that he is abroad, for fear of the laws and report of men." And it was a worthy saying of Julius Drusus,† to the masons who offered him, for three thousand crowns, to put his house in such a posture that his neighbours should no longer have the same inspection into it as before; "I will give you," said he, "six thousand to make it so that everybody may see into every room." Tis honorably recorded of Agesilans,‡ that he used in his journeys always to take up his lodgings in temples, to the end that the people and the gods themselves might pry into his most private actions. Such a one has been a miracle to the world, in whom neither his wife nor servant has ever seen anything so much as remarkable; few men have been admired by their own domestics; no one was ever a prophet, not merely in his own house, but in his own country, says the experience of histories;§ 'tis the same in things of naught, and in this low example the image of a greater is to be seen. In my country of Gascony, they look upon it as a drollery to see me in print; the further off I am read from my own home, the better I am esteemed. I am fain to purchase printers in Guienne; elsewhere they purchase me. Upon this it is that they lay their foundation who conceal themselves present and living, to obtain a name when they are absent and dead. I had rather have a great deal less in hand, and do not expose myself to the world upon any other account than my present share; when I leave it I quit the rest. See this functionary whom the people escort in state, with wonder and applause, to his very door; he puts off the pageant with his robe, and falls so much the lower by how much he was higher exalted: in himself within, all is tumult and degraded. And though all should be regular

* Plutarch, Banquet of the Seven Sages.
† He is called so by Plutarch in his Instructions to those who Manage State Affairs, but he was, in reality, Marcus Livius Drusus, the famous tribune, as we find in Paterculus.
‡ Plutarch, in vita, c. 5.
§ No man is a hero to his valet-de-chambre, said Marshal Catinat.
there, it will require a vivid and well-chosen judgment to perceive it in these low and private actions; to which may be added, that order is a dull, somber virtue. To enter a breach, conduct an embassy, govern a people, are actions of renown: to reprehend, laugh, sell, pay, love, hate, and gently and justly converse with a man's own family, and with himself; not to relax, not to give a man's self the lie more rare and hard, and less remarkable. By which means, retired lives, whatever is said to the contrary, undergo duties of as great or greater difficulty than the others do; and private men, says Aristotle,* serve virtue more painfully and highly, than those in authority do: we prepare ourselves for eminent occasions, more out of glory than conscience. The shortest way to arrive at glory, would be to do that for conscience which we do for glory: and the virtue of Alexander appears to me of much less vigor in his great theater, than that of Socrates in his mean and obscure employment. I can easily conceive Socrates in the place of Alexander, but Alexander in that of Socrates, I cannot. Who shall ask the one what he can do, he will answer, "Subdue the world:" and who shall put the same question to the other, he will say, "Carry on human life conformably with its natural condition;"† a much more general, weighty, and legitimate science than the other.

The virtue of the soul does not consist in flying high, but in walking orderly; its grandeur does not exercise itself in grandeur, but in mediocrity. As they who judge and try us within, make no great account of the luster of our public actions, and see they are only streaks and rays of clear water springing from a slimy and muddy bottom: so, likewise, they who judge of us by this gallant outward appearance, in like manner conclude of our internal constitution; and cannot couple common faculties, and like their own, with the other faculties that astonish them, and are so far out of their sight. Therefore it is, that we give such savage forms to demons: and who does not give Tamerlane great eyebrows, wide nostrils, a dreadful visage, and a prodigious stature, according to the imagina-

* Moral. ad Nicom., x. 7.
† Montaigne added here, "To do for the world that for which he came into the world," but he afterward erased these words from the manuscript.—Naigeon.
tion he has conceived by the report of his name? Had any one formerly brought me to Erasmus, I should hardly have believed but that all was adage and apothegm he spoke to his man or his hostess. We much more aptly imagine an artisan upon his close-stool, or upon his wife, than a great president venerable by his port and sufficiency: we fancy that they, from their high tribunals, will not abase themselves so much as to live. As vicious souls are often incited by some foreign impulse to do well, so are virtuous souls to do ill; they are therefore to be judged by their settled state, when they are at home, whenever that may be; and, at all events, when they are nearer repose, and in their native station.

Natural inclinations are much assisted and fortified by education: but they seldom alter and overcome their institution: a thousand natures of my time have escaped toward virtue or vice, through a quite contrary discipline;

"Sic ubi desuetæ silvis in carcere clause
Mansuevere fære, et vultus posnere minaces,
Atque hominem didicere pati, si torrida parvus
Venit in ora cruor, redeunt rabiesque furorque,
Admoniteque tumult gustato sanguine fauces;
Fervet, et a trepido vix abstinet ira magistro;"

these original qualities are not to be rooted out; they may be covered and concealed. The Latin tongue is as it were natural to me; I understand it better than French; but I have not been used to speak it, nor hardly to write it these forty years. Yet, upon extreme and sudden emotions which I have fallen into twice or thrice in my life, and once, seeing my father in perfect health fall upon me in a swoon, I have always uttered my first outcries and ejaculations in Latin; nature starting up, and forcibly expressing itself, in spite of so long a discontinuation; and this example is said of many others.

They who in my time have attempted to correct the manners of the world by new opinions, reform seeming

* "So savage beasts, when shut up in cages, and grown unaccustomed to the woods, become tame, and lay aside their fierce looks, and submit to the rule of man; if again they taste blood, their rage and fury return, their jaws are erected by thirst of blood, and they scarcely forbear to assail their trembling masters."—LuCAN, iv. 237.
vices, but the essential vices they leave as they were, if indeed, they do not augment them; and augmentation is, therein, to be feared; we defer all other well doing upon the account of these external reformations, of less cost and greater show, and thereby expiate cheaply, for the other natural consubstantial and intestine vices. Look a little into our experience: there is no man, if he listen to himself, who does not in himself discover a particular and governing form of his own, that jostles his education, and wrestles with the tempest of passions that are contrary to it. For my part, I seldom find myself agitated with surprises; I always find myself in my place, as heavy and unwieldy bodies do; if I am not at home, I am always near at hand; my dissipations do not transport me very far, there is nothing strange nor extreme in the case; and yet I have sound and vigorous turns.

The true condemnation, and which touches the common practice of men, is, that their very retirement itself is full of filth and corruption; the idea of their reformation composed; their repentance sick and faulty, very nearly as much as their sin. Some, either from having been linked to vice by a natural propension, or long practice, cannot see its deformity. Others (of which constitution I am) do indeed feel the weight of vice, but they counterbalance it with pleasure, or some other occasion; and suffer, and lend themselves to it, for a certain price, but viciously and basely. Yet there might, haply, be imagined so vast a disproportion of measure, where with justice the pleasure might excuse the sin, as we say of utility; not only if accidental, and out of sin, as in thefts, but the very exercise of sin, as in the enjoyment of women, where the temptation is violent, and it is said, sometimes not to be overcome.

Being the other day at Armaignac, on the estate of a kinsman of mine, I there saw a country fellow who was by every one nicknamed the thief. He thus related the story of his life; that being born a beggar, and finding that he should not be able, so as to be clear of indigence, to get his living by the sweat of his brow, he resolved to turn thief, and by means of his strength of body, had exercised this trade all the time of his youth in great security; for he ever made his harvest and vintage in other men's grounds, but a great way off, and in so great quantities, that it was
not to be imagined one man could have carried away so much in one night upon his shoulders; and, moreover, was careful equally to divide and distribute the mischief he did, that the loss was of less importance to every particular man. He is now grown old, and rich for a man of his condition, thanks to his trade, which he openly confesses to every one. And to make his peace with God, he says, that he is daily ready by good offices to make satisfaction to the successors of those he has robbed, and if he do not finish (for to do it all at once he is not able) he will then leave it in charge to his heirs to perform the rest, proportionally to the wrong he himself only knows he has done to each. By this description, true or false, this man looks upon theft as a dishonest action, and hates it, but less than poverty, and simply repents; but to the extent he has thus recompensed, he repents not. This is not that habit which incorporates us into vice, and conforms even our understanding itself to it; nor is it that impetuous whirlwind that by gusts troubles and blinds our souls and for the time precipitates us, judgment and all, into the power of vice.

I customarily do what I do thoroughly and make but one step on't; I have rarely any movement that hides itself and steals away from my reason, and that does not proceed in the matter by the consent of all my faculties, without division or intestine sedition; my judgment is to have all the blame or all the praise; and the blame it once has, it has always; for almost from my infancy it has ever been one; the same inclination; the same turn, the same force; and as to universal opinions, I fixed myself from my childhood in the place where I resolved to stick. There are some sins that are impetuous, prompt, and sudden; let us set them aside; but in these other sins so often repeated, deliberated, and contrived, whether sins of complexion or sins of profession and vocation, I cannot conceive that they should have so long been settled in the same resolution, unless the reason and conscience of him who has them, be constant to have them; and the repentance he boasts to be inspired with on a sudden, is very hard for me to imagine or form. I follow not the opinion of the Pythagorean sect, "that men take up a new soul when they repair to the images of the gods to receive their oracles," unless he mean that it must needs be extrinsic, new, and lent for the time; our own showing so little sign of purification and cleanness, fit for such an office.
They act quite contrary to the stoical precepts, who do indeed, command us to correct the imperfections and vices we know ourselves guilty of, but forbid us therefore to disturb the repose of our souls; these make us believe that they have great grief and remorse within; but of amendment, correction, or interruption, they make nothing appear. It cannot be a cure if the malady be not wholly discharged; if repentance were laid upon the scale of the balance, it would weigh down sin. I find no quality so easy to counterfeit as devotion, if men do not conform their manners and life to the profession; its essence is abstruse and occult; the appearances easy and ostentations.

For my own part, I may desire in general to be other than I am; I may condemn and dislike my whole form, and beg of Almighty God for an entire reformation, and that He will please to pardon my natural infirmity: but I ought not to call this repentance, methinks, no more, than the being dissatisfied that I am not an angel or Cato. My actions are regular, and conformable with what I am, and to my condition; I can do no better; and repentance does not properly touch things that are not in our power; sorrow does. I imagine an infinite number of natures more elevated and regular than mine; and yet I do not for all that improve my faculties, no more than my arm or will grow more strong and vigorous for conceiving those of another to be so. If to conceive and wish a nobler way of acting than that we have, should produce a repentance of our own, we must then repent us of our most innocent actions, forasmuch as we may well suppose that in a more excellent nature they would have been carried on with greater dignity and perfection; and we would that ours were so. When I reflect upon the deportments of my youth, with that of my old age, I find that I have commonly behaved myself with equal order in both, according to what I understand: this is all that my resistance can do. I do not flatter myself; in the same circumstances I should do the same things. It is not a patch, but rather an universal tincture, with which I am stained. I know no repentance, superficial, half-way and ceremonious: it must sting me all over before I can call it so, and must prick my bowels as deeply and universally as God sees into me.

As to business, many excellent opportunities have escaped me for want of good management; and yet my
deliberations were sound enough, according to the occurrences presented to me: 'tis their way to choose always the easiest and safest course. I find that, in my former resolves, I have proceeded with discretion, according to my own rule, and according to the state of the subject proposed, and should do the same a thousand years hence in like occasions; I do not consider what it is now, but what it was then, when I deliberated on it: the force of all counsel consists in the time; occasions and things eternally shift and change. I have in my life committed some important errors, not for want of good understanding, but for want of good luck. There are secret, and not to be foreseen, parts in matters we have in hand, especially in the nature of men; mute conditions, that make no show, unknown sometimes even to the possessors themselves, that spring and start up by incidental occasions; if my prudence could not penetrate into nor foresee them, I blame it not: 'tis commissioned no further than its own limits; if the event be too hard for me, and take the side I have refused, there is no remedy; I do not blame myself, I accuse my fortune, and not my work; this cannot be called repentance.

Phocion, having given the Athenians an advice that was not followed, and the affair nevertheless succeeding contrary to his opinion, some one said to him; "Well, Phocion, art thou content that matters go so well?" "I am very well content," replied he, "that this has happened so well, but I do not repent that I counseled the other."* When any of my friends address themselves to me for advice, I give it candidly and clearly, without sticking, as almost all other men do, at the hazard of the thing's falling out contrary to my opinion, and that I may be reproached for my counsel; I am very indifferent as to that, for the fault will be theirs for having consulted me, and I could not refuse them that office.†

I, for my own part, can rarely blame anyone but myself for my oversights and misfortunes, for indeed I seldom solicit the advice of another, if not by honor of ceremony, or excepting where I stand in need of information, special

* Plutarch, Apotegm.
† We may give advice to others, says Rochefoucauld, but we cannot supply them with the wit to profit by it.
science, or as to matter of fact. But in things wherein I stand in need of nothing but judgment, other men's reasons may serve to fortify my own, but have little power to dissuade me; I hear them all with civility and patience: but to my recollection, I never made use of any but my own. With me, they are but flies and atoms, that confound and distract my will; I lay no great stress upon my opinions; but I lay as little upon those of others, and fortune rewards me accordingly: if I receive but little advice, I also give but little. I am seldom consulted, and still more seldom believed, and know no concern, either public or private, that has been mended or bettered by my advice. Even they whom fortune had in some sort tied to my direction, have more willingly suffered themselves to be governed by any other counsels than mine. And as a man who am as jealous of my repose as of my authority, I am better pleased that it should be so; in leaving me there, they humor what I profess, which is to settle and wholly contain myself within myself. I take a pleasure in being uninterested in other men's affairs, and disengaged from being their warranty, and responsible for what they do.

In all affairs that are past, be it how it will, I have very little regret; for this imagination puts me out of my pain, that they were so to fall out; they are in the great revolution of the world, and in the chain of stoical causes: your fancy cannot, by wish and imagination, move one tittle, but that the great current of things will not reverse both the past and the future.

As to the rest, I abominate that incidental repentance which old age brings along with it. He, who said of old, * that he was obliged to his age for having weaned him from pleasure, was of another opinion than I am; I can never think myself beholden to impotency, for any good it can do to me; "Nec tam averse unquam videbitur ab opere suo providentia, ut debilitas inter optima inventa sit." † Our appetites are rare in old age; a profound satiety seizes us after the act; in this I see nothing of conscience; chagrin and weakness imprint in us a drowsy and rheumatic virtue.

† "Nor can Providence ever be seen so averse to her own work, that debility should be ranked among the best things."—QUINTILIAN, Instit. Orat., v. 12.
We must not suffer ourselves to be so wholly carried away by natural alterations, as to suffer our judgments to be imposed upon by them. Youth and pleasure have not formerly so far prevailed with me, that I did not well enough discern the face of vice in pleasure; neither does the distaste that years have brought me, so far prevail with me now, that I cannot discern pleasure in vice. Now that I am no more in my flourishing age, I judge as well of these things as if I were. In I, who narrowly and strictly examine it, find my reason the very same it was in my most licentious age, except, perhaps, that 'tis weaker and more decayed by being grown older; and I find that the pleasure it refuses me upon the account of my bodily health, it would no more refuse now, in consideration of the health of my soul, than at any time heretofore. I do not repute it the more valiant for not being able to combat; my temptations are so broken and mortified, that they are not worth its opposition; holding but out my hands, I repel them. Should one present the old concupiscence before it, I fear it would have less power to resist it than heretofore; I do not discern that in itself it judges anything otherwise now, than it formerly did, nor that it has acquired any new light: wherefore, if there be convalescence, 'tis an enchanted one. Miserable kind of remedy, to owe one's health to one's disease! 'Tis not that our misfortune should perform this office, but the good fortune of our judgment. I am not to be made to do anything by persecutions and afflictions, but to curse them: that is for people who cannot be roused but by a whip. My reason is much more free in prosperity, and much more distracted, and put to't to digest pains than pleasures; I see best in a clear sky; health admonishes me more cheerfully, and to better purpose, than sickness. I did all that in me lay to reform and regulate myself from pleasures, at a time when I had health and vigor to enjoy them; I should be ashamed and envious, that the misery and misfortune of my old age should have credence over my good, healthful, sprightly, and vigorous years; and that men should estimate me, not by what I have been, but by what I have ceased to be.

In my opinion, 'tis the happy living, and not (as Antis-

* "Old though I am, for ladies' love unfit,
   The power of beauty I remember yet."—CHAUCEER.
thenes* said) the happy dying, in which human felicity consists. I have not made it my business to make a monstrous addition of a philosopher's tail to the head and body of a libertine; nor would I have this wretched remainder give the lie to the pleasant, sound, and long part of my life: I would present myself uniformly throughout. Were I to live my life over again, I should live it just as I have lived it; I neither complain of the past, nor do I fear the future; and if I am not much deceived, I am the same within that I am without. 'Tis one main obligation I have to my fortune, that the succession of my bodily estate has been carried on according to the natural seasons; I have seen the grass, the blossom, and the fruit; and now see the withering; happily, however, because naturally. I bear the infirmities I have the better, because they came not till I had reason to expect them, and because also they make me with greater pleasure remember that long felicity of my past life. My wisdom may have been just the same in both ages; but it was more active, and of better grace while young and sprightly, than now it is when broken, peevish and uneasy. I repudiate, then, these casual and painful reformations. God must touch our hearts; our consciences must amend of themselves, by the aid of our reason, and not by the decay of our appetites; pleasure is, in itself, neither pale nor discolored, to be discerned by dim and decayed eyes.

We ought to love temperance for itself, and because God has commanded that and chastity; but that which we are reduced to by catarrhs, and for which I am indebted to the stone, is neither chastity nor temperance; a man cannot boast that he despises and resists pleasure, if he cannot see it, if he knows not what it is, and cannot discern its graces, its force, and most alluring beauties; I know both the one and the other, and may therefore the better say it. But, methinks, our souls, in old age, are subject to more troublesome maladies and imperfections than in youth; I said the same when young and when I was reproached with the want of a beard; and I say so now that my gray hairs give me some authority. We call the difficulty of our humors and the disrelish of present things wisdom; but, in truth, we do not so much forsake vices as we change them, and, in my opinion, for

* Diogenes Laertius, vi. 5.
worse! Besides a foolish and feeble pride, an impertinent prating, froward and insociable humors, superstition, and a ridiculous desire of riches when we have lost the use of them, I find there more envy, injustice and malice. Age imprints more wrinkles in the mind than it does on the face; and souls are never, or very rarely seen, that in growing old do not smell sour and musty. Man moves all together, both toward his perfection and decay. In observing the wisdom of Socrates, and many circumstances of his condemnation, I should dare to believe, that he in some sort himself purposely, by collision, contributed to it, seeing that, at the age of seventy years, he might fear to suffer the lofty motions of his mind to be cramped, and his wonted luster obscured. * What strange metamorphoses do I see age every day make in many of my acquaintance! 'Tis a potent malady, and that naturally and imperceptibly steals into us; a vast provision of study and great precaution are required to evade the imperfections it loads us with, or at least, to weaken their progress. I find that, notwithstanding all my entrenchments, it gets foot by foot upon me; I make the best resistance I can, but I do not know to what at last it will reduce me. But fall out what will, I am content the world may know, when I am fallen, from what I fell.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

OF THREE COMMERCE.

We must not rivet ourselves so fast to our humors and complexions; our chiefest sufficiency is to know how to apply ourselves to divers employments. 'Tis to be, but not to live, to keep a man's self tied and bound by necessity to one only course; those are the bravest souls that have in them the most variety of pliancy. Of this here is an honorable testimony of the elder Cato: "Huius versatile ingenium sic pariter ad omnia fruit, ut natum ad id unum divers, quodcunque ageret." † Had I liberty to set myself forth

* Xenophon, indeed, tells us expressly that this was the purpose of Socrates in making so haughty a defense.

† "His parts were so pliable to all uses, that a man would think he had been born only for precisely that which he was at any time doing."—Livy, xxxix. 49.
after my own mode, there is no so graceful fashion to which I would be so fixed, as not to be able to disengage myself from it; life is an unequal, irregular, and multiform motion. ’Tis not to be a friend to one’s self, much less a master—'tis to be a slave, incessantly to be led by the nose by one’s self, and to be so fixed in one’s previous inclinations, that one cannot turn aside, nor writhe’s one’s neck out of the collar. I say this now in this part of my life, wherein I find I cannot easily disengage myself from the importunity of my soul, which cannot ordinarily amuse itself but in things of limited range, nor employ itself otherwise than entirely and with all its force; upon the lightest subject offered it swells and stretches it to that degree as therein to employ its utmost power; wherefore, its idleness is to me a very painful labor, and very prejudicial to my health. Most men’s minds require foreign matter to exercise and enliven them; mine has rather need of it to sit still and repose itself. “Vitia otii negotio discutienda sunt.”* for its chiefest and hardest study is to study itself. Books are to it a sort of employment that debauch it from its study. Upon the first thoughts that possess it, it begins to bustle and make trial of its vigor in all directions, exercises its power of handling, now making trial of force, now fortifying, moderating, and ranging itself by the way of grace and order. It has of its own wherewith to rouse its faculties: nature has given to it, as to all others, matter enough of its own to make advantage of, and subjects proper enough where it may either invent or judge.

Meditation is a powerful and full study to such as can effectually taste and employ themselves; I had rather fashion my soul than furnish it. There is no employment, either more weak or more strong, than that of entertaining a man’s own thoughts, according as the soul is; the greatest men make it their whole business, “quibus vivere est cogitare;† nature has therefore favored it with this privilege, that there is nothing we can do so long, nor any action to which we more frequently and with greater facility addict

* "The vices of sloth are to be shaken off by business."—
SENECA, Ep. 56.

† "To whom to live is to think."—CICERO, Tusc. Quæs., v. 33.
ourselves. 'Tis the business of the gods, says Aristotle,* and from which both their beatitude and ours proceed.

The principal use of reading to me is, that by various objects it raises my reason, and employs my judgment, not my memory. Few conversations detain me without force and effort; it is true that beauty and elegance of speech take as much or more with me than the weight and depth of the subject; and forasmuch as I am apt to be sleepy in all other communication, and give but the rind of my attention, it often falls out that in such poor and pitiful discourses, mere chatter, I either make drowsy, unmeaning answers, unbecoming a child, and ridiculous, or more foolishly and rudely still, maintain an obstinate silence; I have a pensive way that withdraws me into myself, and, with that, a heavy and childish ignorance of many very ordinary things, by which two qualities I have earned this, that men may truly relate five or six as ridiculous tales of me as of any other man whatever.

But, to proceed in my subject, this difficult complexion of mine renders me very nice in my conversation with men, whom I must cull and pick out for my purpose; and unfits me for common society. We live and negotiate with the people; if their conversation be troublesome to us, if we disdain to apply ourselves to mean and vulgar souls (and the mean and vulgar are often as regular as those of the finest thread, and all wisdom is folly that does not accommodate itself to the common ignorance), we must no more intermeddle either with other men's affairs or our own; for business, both public and private, has to do with these people. The least forced and most natural motions of the soul are the most beautiful; the best employments, those that are least strained. Good God! how good an office does wisdom to those whose desires it limits to their power! that is the most useful knowledge: "what a man can," was ever the sentence Socrates was so much in love with. A motto of great substance.

We must moderate and adapt our desires to the nearest and easiest to be acquired things. Is it not a foolish humor of mine to separate myself from a thousand to whom my fortune has conjoined me, and without whom I cannot live, and cleave to one or two who are out of my

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* Moral. ad Nicom, x. 8.
intercourse; or, rather a fantastic desire of a thing I cannot obtain? My gentle and easy manners, enemies of all sourness and harshness, may easily enough have secured me from envy and animosities; to be beloved, I do not say, but never any man gave less occasion of being hated; but the coldness of my conversation has, reasonably enough, deprived me of the good will of many, who are to be excused if they interpret it in another and worse sense.

I am very capable of contracting and maintaining rare and exquisite friendships; for, by reason that I so greedily seize upon such acquaintance as fit my liking, I throw myself with such violence upon them that I hardly fail to stick, and to make an impression where I hit; as I have often made happy proof. In ordinary friendships I am somewhat cold and shy, for my motion is not natural, if not with full sail; besides which, my fortune having in my youth given me a relish for one sole and perfect friendship has, in truth, created in me a kind of distaste to others, and too much imprinted in my fancy that it is a beast of company, as the ancient said, but not of the herd.* And also I have a natural difficulty of communicating myself by halves, with the modifications and the servile and jealous prudence required in the conversation of numerous and imperfect friendships: and we are principally enjoined to these in this age of ours, when we cannot talk of the world but either with danger or falsehood.

Yet do I very well discern, that he who has the conveniences (I mean the essential conveniences) of life for his end, as I have, ought to fly these difficulties and delicacy of humor, as much as the plague. I should commend a soul of several stages, that knows both how to stretch and to slacken itself; that finds itself at ease in all conditions whither fortune leads it; that can discourse with a neighbor, of his building, his hunting, his quarrels; that can chat with a carpenter or a gardener with pleasure. I envy those who can render themselves familiar with the meanest of their followers, and talk with them in their own way; and dislike the advice of Plato,† that men should always speak in a magisterial tone to their servants, whether men or women, without being sometimes facetious and familiar; for

* Plutarch, On the Plurality of Friends, c. 2.
† Laws, vi.
besides the reasons I have given, 'tis inhuman and unjust, to set so great a value upon this pitiful prerogative of fortune; and the polities, wherein less disparity is permitted between masters and servants, seem to me the most equitable. Others study how to raise and elevate their minds; I, how to humble mine, and to bring it low; 'tis only vicious in extension.

"Narras et genus Æaci,
Et pugnata sacro bella sub Ilio;
Quo Chium pretio cadum
Mercemur, quis aquam temperet ignibus,
Quo praebente domum, et quota,
Pelignis caream frigoribus, taces."

Thus, as the Lacedaemonian valor stood in need of moderation, and of the sweet and harmonious sound of flutes to soften it in battle, lest they should precipitate themselves into temerity and fury, whereas all other nations commonly make use of harsh and shrill sounds, and of loud and imperious cries, to incite and heat the soldier's courage to the last degree: so, methinks, contrary to the usual method, in the practice of our minds, we have for the most part more need of lead than of wings; of temperance and composedness than of ardor and agitation. But, above all things, 'tis in my opinion egregiously to play the fool, to put on the grave airs of a man of lofty mind among those who are nothing of the sort: ever to speak in print, "favelar in punta di forchetta."  

You must let yourself down to those with whom you converse; and sometimes affect ignorance: lay aside power and subtilty in common conversation; to preserve decorum and order 'tis enough—nay, crawl on the earth, if they so desire it.

The learned often stumble at this stone; they will always be parading their pedantic science, and strew their books everywhere; they have, in these days, so filled the cabinets and ears of the ladies with them, that if they have lost the substance, they at least retain the words; so as in all dis-

* "You tell us long stories about the race of Æacus, and the battles fought at sacred Ilium; but what to give for a cask of Chian wine, who shall prepare the warm bath, and in whose house, and when we shall brave the Pelignian cold, you do not tell us."—HORACE, Od. iii. 19. 3.

† "To talk with the point of a fork."
course upon all sorts of subjects, how mean and common soever, they speak and write after a new and learned way;

"Hoc sermone pavent, hoc iram. gaudia, curas,
Hoc cuncta effundunt animi secreta; quid ultra?
Concumbunt docte;"*

and quote Plato and Aquinas, in things the first man they meet could determine as well; the learning that cannot penetrate their souls, hangs still upon the tongue.† If people of quality will be persuaded by me, they shall content themselves with setting out their proper and natural treasures, they conceal and cover their beauties under others that are none of theirs: 'tis a great folly to put out their own light and shine by a borrowed luster: they are interred and buried under art, "de capsula totae." ‡ It is because they do not sufficiently know themselves, or do themselves justice: the world has nothing fairer than they; 'tis for them to honor the arts, and to paint painting. What need have they of anything, but to live beloved and honored? They have, and know, but too much for this: they need do no more but rouse and heat a little the faculties they have of their own. When I see them tampering with rhetoric, law, logic, and other drugs, so improper and unnecessary for their business, I begin to suspect that the men who inspire them with such fancies, do it that they may govern them upon that account; for what other excuse can I contrive? It is enough that they can, without our instruction, compose the graces of their eyes to gayety, severity, sweetness, and season a denial with asperity, suspense, or favor: they need not another to interpret what we speak for their service; with this knowledge, they command with a switch, and rule both the tutors and the schools. But if, nevertheless, it angers them to give place to us in anything whatever, and will, out of curiosity, have their share in books, poetry is a diversion proper for them; 'tis a wanton, subtle, dissembling and prating art, all pleasure and all

* "In this same learned language do they express their fears, their anger, their joys, their cares; in this pour out all their secrets; what more? they lie with their lovers learnedly."—Juvenal, vi. 189.

† It may be seen from this passage that "Les Precieuses" are of older date than those of the Hotel de Rambouillet.—Louandré.

‡ "Painted and perfumed from head to foot."—Seneca, Ep. 115.
show, like themselves. They may also extract several commodities from history. In philosophy, out of the moral part of it, they may select such instructions as will teach them to judge of our humors and conditions, to defend themselves from our treacheries, to regulate the ardor of their own desires, to manage their liberty, to lengthen the pleasures of life, and gently to bear the inconstancy of a lover, the rudeness of a husband, and the importunity of years, wrinkles, and the like. This is the utmost of what I would allow them in the sciences.

There are some particular natures that are private and retired: my natural way is proper for communication, and apt to lay me open; I am all without and in sight, born for society and friendship. The solitude that I love myself and recommend to others, is chiefly no other than to withdraw my thoughts and affections into myself; to restrain and check, not my steps, but my own cares and desires, resigning all foreign solicitude, and mortaly avoiding servitude and obligation, and not so much the crowd of men, as the crowd of business. Local solitude, to say the truth, rather gives me more room, and sets me more at large; I more readily throw myself upon affairs of state and the world, when I am alone; at the Louvre, and in the bustle of the court, I fold myself within my own skin; the crowd thrusts me upon myself; and I never entertain myself so wantonly, with so much license, or so especially, as in places of respect and ceremonious prudence: our follies do not make me laugh, but our wisdom does. I am naturally no enemy to a court life; I have therein passed a good part of my own, and am of a humor cheerfully to frequent great company, provided it be by intervals and at my own time: but this softness of judgment whereof I speak, ties me perforce to solitude. Even at home, amidst a numerous family, and in a house sufficiently frequented, I see people enough, but rarely such with whom I delight to converse; and I there reserve both for myself and others an unusual liberty: there is in my house no such thing as ceremony, ushering, or waiting upon people down to the coach, and such other troublesome ceremonies as our courtesy enjoins (Oh, servile and importunate custom!) Every one there governs himself according to his own method; let who will speak his thoughts I sit mute, meditating and shut up in my closet, without any offense to my guests.
The men, whose society and familiarity I covet, are those they call sincere and able men; and the image of these makes me disrelish the rest. It is, if rightly taken, the rarest of our forms, and a form that we chiefly owe to nature. The end of this commerce is simply privacy, frequentation and conference, the exercise of souls, without other fruit. In our discourse, all subjects are alike to me; let there be neither weight, nor depth, 'tis all one; there is yet grace and pertinency; all there is tinted with a mature and constant judgment, and mixed with goodness, freedom, gayety, and friendship. 'Tis not only in talking of the affairs of kings and state, that our wits discover their force and beauty, but every whit as much in private conferences. I understand my men even by their silence and smiles; and better discover them, perhaps, at table, than in the council. Hippomachus said * very well, "that he could know the good wrestlers by only seeing them walk in the street." If learning please to step into our talk, it shall not be rejected, not magisterial, imperious, and importunate, as it commonly is, but suffragan and docile itself; we there only seek to pass away our time; when we have a mind to be instructed and preached to, we will go seek this in its throne; please let it humble itself to us for the nonce; for, useful and profitable as it is, I imagine that, at need, we may manage well enough without it, and do our business without its assistance. A well-descended soul, and practiced in the conversation of men, will of herself render herself sufficiently agreeable; art is nothing but the counterpart and register of what such souls produce.

The conversation also of beautiful and well-bred women is for me a sweet commerce: "Nam nos quoque oculos eruditos habemus." † If the soul has not therein so much to enjoy, as in the first, the bodily senses, which participate more of this, bring it to a proportion near to, though, in my opinion, not equal to the other. But 'tis a commerce wherein a man must stand a little upon his guard, especially those of a warm temperament, such as mine. I ‡ there scalded myself in my youth, and suffered all the

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* Plutarch, Life of Dion., c. 1.
† "For we also have eyes that are versed in the matter."—CICERO, Paradox, v. 2.
‡ "The burned child dreads the fire," here interpolates Cotton.
torments that poets say are to befall those who precipitate themselves into love without order and judgment; it is true, that the whipping has made me wiser since:

"Quicumque Argolica de classe Capharea fugit,  
Semper ab Euboicis vela retorquet aquis." *

'Tis folly to fix all a man's thoughts upon it and to engage in it with a furious and indiscreet affection; but, on the other hand, to engage there without love and without inclination, like comedians, to play a common part, without putting anything to it of his own but words, is indeed to provide for his safety, but, withal, after as cowardly a manner as he who should abandon his honor, profit, or pleasure, for fear of ordinary danger; for it is certain that from such a practice, they who set it on foot can expect no fruit that can please or satisfy a noble soul. A man must have, in good earnest, desired that which he, in good earnest, expects to have a pleasure in enjoying; I say, though fortune should unjustly favor their dissimulation; which often falls out, because there is none of the sex, let her be as ugly as the devil, who does not think herself well worthy to be beloved, and who does not prefer herself before other women: either for her youth, the color of her hair, or her graceful motion (for there are no more women universally and throughout ugly, than there are women universally and throughout beautiful, § and such of the Brahmin virgins as have no other beauty to recommend them, the people being assembled by the common crier to that effect, come out into the market place to expose their matrimonial parts to public view, to try if these at least are not of temptation sufficient to get them husbands); consequently, there is not one who does not easily suffer herself to be overcome by the first vow that is made to serve her. Now from this common and ordinary treachery of the men of the present day, that must fall out which we already experimentally see, either that they rally together, and separate themselves by themselves to evade us, or else form their discipline by the example we give them, play their parts of the farce as we

* "Whoever of the Grecian fleet has escaped the Capharean rocks, ever takes care to steer from those of the Eubocean sea."—OVID, Trist., i. 1, 83.

† Which Cotton translates: for generally there are no more foul than fair.
do ours, and give themselves up to the sport, without passion, care, or love: "Necque affectui suo, aut alieno obnociet:" * believing, according to the persuasion of Lysias in Plato, † that they may with more utility and convenience surrender themselves up to us the less we love them; where it will fall out, as in comedies, that the people will have as much pleasure or more than the comedians. For my part, I no more acknowledge a Venus without a Cupid, than a mother without issue: they are things that mutually lend and owe their essence to one another. Thus this cheat recoils upon him who is guilty of it; it does not cost him much, indeed, but he also gets little or nothing by it. They who have made Venus a goddess have taken notice that her principal beauty was incorporeal and spiritual: but the Venus whom these people hunt after is not so much as human, nor indeed brutal; the very beasts will not accept it so gross and so earthly; we see that imagination and desire often heat and incite them before the body does; we see in both the one sex and the other, they have in the herd choice and particular election in their affections, and that they have among themselves a long commerce of good will. Even those to whom old age denies the practice of their desire, still tremble, neigh, and twitter for love; we see them, before the act, full of hope and ardor, and when the body has played its game, yet please themselves with the sweet remembrance of the past delight; some that swell with pride after they have performed, and others who, tired and sated, still by vociferation express a triumphing joy. He who has nothing to do but only to discharge his body of a natural necessity, need not trouble others with so curious preparations; it is not meat for a gross, coarse appetite.

As one who does not desire that men should think me better than I am, I will here say this as to the errors of my youth. Not only from the danger of impairing my health (and yet I could not be so careful but that I had two light mischances), but moreover upon the account of contempt, I have seldom given myself up to common and mercenary embraces; I would heighten the pleasure by the difficulty,

* "Incappable of attachment, insensible to that of others."—TACI TUS, Annal., xiii. 45.

† In Phaed.
by desire, and a certain kind of glory; and was of Tiberius’ mind, who * in his amours was as much taken with modesty and birth as any other quality; and of the courtesan Flora’s humor, † who never prostituted herself to less than a dictator, a consul, or a censor, and took pleasure in the dignity of her lovers. Doubtless pearls and gold tissue, titles and train, add something to it.

As to the rest, I had a great esteem for wit, provided the person was not exceptional; for, to confess the truth, if the one or the other of these two attractions must of necessity be wanting, I should rather have quitted that of the understanding, that has its use in better things; but in the subject of love, a subject principally relating to the senses of seeing and touching, something may be done without the graces of the mind; without the graces of the body, nothing. Beauty is the true prerogative of women, and so peculiarly their own, that ours, though naturally requiring another sort of feature, is never in its luster but when youthful and beardless, a sort of confused image of theirs. ’Tis said, that such as serve the Grand Signior upon the account of beauty, who are an infinite number, are, at the latest, dismissed at two and twenty years of age. Reason, prudence, and the offices of friendship are better found among men, and therefore it is, that they govern the affairs of the world.

These two commerces are fortuitous, and depending upon others; the one is troublesome by its rarity, the other withers with age, so that they could never have been sufficient for the business of my life. That of books, which is the third, is much more certain, and much more our own. It yields all other advantages to the two first; but has the constancy and facility of its service for its own share. It goes side by side with me in my whole course, and everywhere assisting me: it comforts me in my old age and solitude; it eases me of a troublesome weight of idleness, and delivers me at all hours from company that I dislike: it blunts the point of griefs, if they are not extreme, and have not got an entire possession of my soul. To divert myself from a troublesome fancy, ’tis but to run to my books; they presently fix me to them and drive the other out of my thoughts; and do not mutiny at seeing that I

* Tacitus, Annal., vi. 1.
† Bayle, art. Flora; Brantôme, Des Femmes Galantes.
have only recourse to them for want of other more real, natural, and lively commodities; they always receive me with the same kindness. He may well go afoot, they say, who leads his horse in his hand; and our James, king of Naples and Sicily, who, handsome, young and healthful, caused himself to be carried about on a barrow, extended upon a pitiful mattress in a poor robe of gray cloth, and a cap of the same, but attended withal by a royal train of litters, led horses of all sorts, gentlemen and officers, did yet herein represent a tender and unsteady authority: "The sick man is not to be pitied, who has his cure in his sleeve." In the experience and practice of this maxim, which is a very true one, consists all the benefit I reap from books; and yet I make as little use of them, almost, as those who know them not: I enjoy them as a miser doth his money, in knowing that I may enjoy them when I please; my mind is satisfied with this right of possession. I never travel without books, either in peace or war; and yet sometimes I pass over several days, and sometimes months, without looking on them; I will read by and by, say I do myself, or to-morrow, or when I please; and in the interim time steals away without any inconvenience. For it is not to be imagined to what degree I please myself and rest content in this consideration that I have them by me to divert myself with them when I am so disposed, and to call to mind what a refreshment they are to my life. "Tis the best viaticum I have yet found out for this human journey and I very much pity those men of understanding who are unprovided of it. I the rather accept of any other sort of diversion, how light soever, because this can never fail me.

When at home, I a little more frequent my library, whence I overlook at once all the concerns of my family. "Tis situated at the entrance into my house, and I thence see under me my garden, court, and base-court, and almost all parts of the building. There I turn over now one book and then another, on various subjects without method or design. One while I meditate, another I record and dictate, as I walk to and fro, such whimsies as these I present to you here. "Tis in the third story of a tower, of which the ground room is my chapel, the second story a chamber with a withdrawing-room and closet, where I often lie to be more retired; and above is a great wardrobe. This for-
merly was the most useless part of the house. I there pass away both most of the days of my life and most of the hours of those days. In the night I am never there. There is by the side of it a cabinet handsome enough, with a fireplace very commodiously contrived, and plenty of light; and were I not more afraid of the trouble than the expense—the trouble that frights me from all business, I could very easily adjoin on either side, and on the same floor, a gallery of an hundred paces long, and twelve broad, having found walls already raised for some other design, to the requisite height. Every place of retirement requires a walk; my thoughts sleep if I sit still; my fancy does not go by itself, as when my legs move it; and all those who study without a book are in the same condition. The figure of my study is round, and there is no more open wall than what is taken up by my table and my chair, so that the remaining parts of the circle present me a view of all my books at once, ranged upon five rows of shelves round about me. It has three noble and free prospects, and is sixteen paces in diameter. I am not so continually there in winter; for my house is built upon an eminence, as its name imports, and no part of it is so much exposed to the wind and weather as this, which pleases me the better, as being of more difficult access and a little remote, as well upon the account of exercise, as also being there more retired from the crowd. 'Tis there that I am in my kingdom, and there I endeavor to make myself an absolute monarch, and to sequester this one corner from all society, conjugal, filial, and civil; elsewhere I have but verbal authority only, and of a confused essence. That man, in my opinion, is very miserable, who has not at home where to be by himself, where to entertain himself alone, or to conceal himself from others. Ambition sufficiently plagues her proselytes, by keeping them always in show, like the statue of a public square: "Magna servitus est magna fortuna."* They cannot so much as be private in the water-closet.† I have thought nothing so severe in the austerity of life that our monks affect, as what I have observed in some of their communities; namely, by rule to have a perpetual society of place, and numerous

* "A great fortune is a great slavery."—Seneca, De Consol, ad Paltyb., c. 26.

† "Ills n'ont pas seulement leur retraict pour retraicte."
persons present in every action whatever; and think it much more supportable to be always alone, than never to be so.

If any one shall tell me that it is to undervalue the muses, to make use of them only for sport and to pass away the time, I shall tell him that he does not know, so well as I, the value of the sport, the pleasure, and the pastime; I can hardly forbear to add that all other end is ridiculous. I live from hand to mouth, and, with reverence be it spoken, I only live for myself; there all my designs terminate. I studied, when young, for ostentation; since, to make myself a little wiser; and now for my diversion, but never for any profit. A vain and prodigal humor I had after this sort of furniture, not only for the supplying my own need, but, moreover, for ornament and outward show, I have since quite cured myself of.

Books have many charming qualities to such as know how to choose them; but every good has its ill; 'tis a pleasure that is not pure and clean, no more than others: it has its inconveniences, and great ones too. The soul indeed is exercised therein; but the body, the care of which I must withal never neglect, remains in the meantime without action, and grows heavy and somber. I know no excess more prejudicial to me, nor more to be avoided in this my declining age.

These have been my three favorite and particular occupations; I speak not of those I owe to the world by civil obligation.

CHAPTER XXXV.

OF DIVERSION.

I was once employed to console a lady truly afflicted; most of their mournings are put on for outward ceremony,

"Uberibus semper lacrymis, semperque, paratis,
In statione sua, atque expectantibus illam,
Quo jubeat manare modo." *

A man goes the wrong way to work when he opposes this passion; for opposition does but irritate and make

* "A woman has ever a fountain of tears ready to gush up whenever she requires to make use of them."—Juvenal, vi. 272.
them more obstinate in sorrow; the evil is exasperated by being contended with. We see, in common discourse, that what I have indifferently let fall from me, if any one takes it up to controvert it, I justify it with the best arguments I have; and much more a thing wherein I had a real interest. And, besides, in so doing, you enter roughly upon your operation; whereas the first addresses of a physician to his patient should be gracious, gay, and pleasing; never did any ill-looking morose physician do anything to purpose. On the contrary, then, a man should, at the first approaches favor their grief, and express some approbation of their sorrow. By this intelligence you obtain credit to proceed further, and by a facile and insensible gradation fall into discourses more solid and proper for their cure. I whose aim it was principally to gull the company who had their eyes fixed upon me, took it into my head only to palliate the disease. And, indeed, I have found by experience that I have an unlucky hand in persuading. My arguments are either too sharp and dry, or pressed too roughly, or not home enough. After I had some time applied myself to her grief, I did not attempt to cure her by strong and lively reasons, either because I had them not at hand, or because I thought to do my business better another way; neither did I make choice of any of those methods of consolation which philosophy prescribes: that what we complain of is no evil, according to Cleanthes;* that it is a light evil according to the Peripatetics; that to bemoan one's self is an action neither commendable nor just, according to Chrysippus; nor this of Epicurus, more suitable to my way, of shifting the thoughts from afflicting things to those that are pleasing; nor making a bundle of all these together, to make use of upon occasion, according to Cicero; but, gently bending my discourse, and by little and little digressing, sometimes to subjects nearer, and sometimes more remote from the purpose, according as she was more intent on what I said, I imperceptibly led her from that sorrowful thought, and kept her calm and in good humor while I continued there. I herein made use of diversion. They who succeeded me in the same service, did not for all that find any amendment in her, for I had not gone to the root.

* Cicero, Tusc. Quæs., iii. 31.
I, peradventure, may elsewhere have glanced upon some sort of public diversions; and the practice of military ones, which Pericles * made use of in the Peloponnesian war, and a thousand others in other places, to withdraw the adverse forces from their own countries, is too frequent in history. It was an ingenious evasion † whereby the Sieur d’Himbercourt saved both himself and others in the city of Liège, into which the duke of Burgundy, who kept it besieged, had made him enter to execute the articles of their promised surrender: the people being assembled by night to consider of it, began to mutiny against the agreement, and several of them resolved to fall upon the commissioners, whom they had in their power; he, feeling the gusts of this first storm of the people who were coming to rush into his lodgings, suddenly sent out to them two of the inhabitants of the city (of whom he had some with him) with new and milder terms to be proposed in their council, which he had then and there contrived for his need. These two diverted the first tempest, carrying back the enraged rabble to the town-hall to hear and consider of what they had to say. The deliberation was short; a second storm arose as violent as the other, whereupon he despatched four new mediators of the same quality to meet them, protesting that he had now better conditions to present them with, and such as would give them absolute satisfaction, by which means the tumult was once more appeased, and the people again turned back to the conclave. In fine, by this dispensation of amusements, one after another, diverting their fury and dissipating it in frivolous consultations, he laid it at last asleep till the day appeared, which was his principal end.

This other story that follows is also of the same category: Atalanta, a virgin of excelling beauty and of wonderful disposition of body, to disengage herself from the crowd of a thousand suitors who sought her in marriage, made this proposition, that she would accept of him for a husband who would equal her in running, upon condition that they who failed should lose their lives. There were enough who thought the prize very well worth the hazard, and who suffered the cruel penalty of the contract. Hippomenes,
about to make trial after the rest, made his address to the
goddess of love, imploring her assistance; and she granting
his request, gave him three golden apples, and instructed
him how to use them. The race beginning, as Hippomenes
perceived his mistress to press hard up to him, he, as it
were by chance, let fall one of these apples; the maid,
taken with the beauty of it, failed not to step out of her
way to pick it up:

"Obstupuit virgo, nitidique cupidine pomi
Declinat cursus, aurumque volubile tollit." *

He did the same, when he saw his time, by the second and
the third, till by so diverting her, and making her lose so
much ground, he won the race. When physicians cannot
stop a catarrh, they divert and turn it into some other less
dangerous part. And I find also that this is the most
ordinary practice for the diseases of the mind: "Abducen-
dus etiam nonnumquam animus est ad alia studia, sollici-
tudines, curas, negotia; loci denique mutatione, tanquam
egroti non convalescentes sepe curandus est." † "Tis to
little effect directly to jostle a man’s infirmities; we neither
make him sustain nor repel the attack; we only make him
decline and evade it.

This other lesson is too high and too difficult: 'tis for
men of the first form of knowledge purely to insist upon
the thing, to consider and judge it; it belongs to a Socrates
only, to meet death with an ordinary countenance, to grow
acquainted with it, and to sport with it; he seeks no con-
solation out of the thing itself; dying appears to him a
natural and indifferent accident; 'tis there that he fixes his
sight and resolution, without looking elsewhere. The dis-
ciples of Hegesias, ‡ who starved themselves to death, ani-
mated thereto by his fine lectures, and in such numbers
that King Ptolemy ordered he should be forbidden to enter-

* "The virgin, dazzled at beholding the glittering apple, and
eager to possess it, stopped her career, and seized the rolling gold." Ovid, Metam., x. 666.

† "The mind is sometimes to be diverted to other studies,
thoughts, cares, and business: and lastly, by change of place, as sick
persons who do not recover are ordered change of air."—Cicero,
Tusc. Quæs., iv. 35.

‡ Cicero, Tusc. Quæs., i. 34.
tain his followers with such homicidal doctrines, did not consider death in itself, neither did they judge of it; it was not there they fixed their thoughts; they ran toward and aimed at a new being.

The poor wretches whom we see brought upon the scaffold, full of ardent devotion, and therein, as much as in them lies, employing all their senses, their ears in hearing the instructions given them, their eyes and hands lifted up toward heaven, their voices in loud prayers, with a vehement and continual emotion, do doubtless things very commendable and proper for such a necessity: we ought to commend them for their devotion, but not properly for their constancy; they shun the encounter, they divert their thoughts from the consideration of death, as children are amused with some toy or other, when the surgeon is going to give them a prick with his lancet. I have seen some, who, casting their eyes upon the dreadful instruments of death round about, have fainted, and furiously turned their thoughts another way; such as are to pass a formidable precipice, are advised either to shut or to avert their eyes.

Subrius Flavius, being by Nero's command to be put to death, and by the hand of Niger, both of them great captains, when they led him to the place appointed for his execution, seeing the grave that Niger had caused to be hollowed to put him into, ill-made: "Neither is this," said he, turning to the soldiers who guarded him, "according to military discipline." And to Niger, who exhorted him to keep his head firm; "Do but thou strike as firmly," said he.* And he very well foresaw what would follow, when he said so; for Niger's arm so trembled, that he had several blows at his head before he could cut it off. This man seems to have had his thoughts rightly fixed upon the subject.

He who dies in a battle, with his sword in his hand, does not then think of death, he feels or considers it not; the ardor of the fight diverts his thought another way. A worthy man of my acquaintance, falling, as he was fighting a duel, and feeling himself nailed to the earth by nine or ten thrusts of his enemy, every one present called to him to think of his conscience; but he has since told me, that

* Tacitus, Annal., xv. 67.
though he very well heard what they said, it nothing moved him, and that he never thought of anything but how to disengage and revenge himself. He afterward killed his man in that very duel. He who brought to L. Silanus the sentence of death, did him a very great kindness, in that having received his answer, that he was well prepared to die, but not by base hands, he ran upon him with his soldiers to force him, and as he, unarmed as he was, obstinately defended himself with his fists and feet, he made him lose his life in the contest, by that means dissipating and diverting in a sudden and furious rage the painful apprehension of the lingering death to which he was designed.

We always think of something else; either the hope of a better life comforts and supports us, or the hope of our children’s worth, or the future glory of our name, or the leaving behind the evils of this life, or the vengeance that threatens those who are the causes of our death, administers consolation to us:

"Spero equidem mediis, si quid pia numina possunt,
Supplicia hausurum scopulis, et nomine Dido
Sæpe vocaturum. . .
Audiam; et hæc manes veniet mihi fama sub imos." *

Xenophon was sacrificing with a crown upon his head, when one came to bring him news of the death of his son Gryllus, slain in the battle of Mantinea; at the first surprise of the news, he threw his crown to the ground; but understanding by the sequel of the narrative, the manner of a most brave and valiant death, he took it up and replaced it upon his head. † Epicurus himself, at his death, consoles himself upon the utility and eternity of his writings: ‡ "Omnes claru et nobilitatu labores fiunt tolerables:"§ and the same wound, the same fatigue, is not, says Xenophon, || so intolerable to a general of an army as

* "If the gods have any power, I hope that, split on a rock, thou shalt on Dido call; I shall know thy fate, by report, conveyed me to the shades below "—Æneid, iv. 382, 387.
† Valerius Maximus, iv. 10, Ext 2.
‡ In his letter to Harmachus, or Idomenes. Cicero, De Finib., ii. 20, Diogenes Laertius, x. 22.
§ "All labors that are illustrious and renowned, are supportable."—Cicero, Tusc. Quæs., ii. 26.
|| Idem. ibid.
to a common soldier. Epaminondas died much more cheerful having been informed that the victory remained to him:* "Hæc sunt solatia, hæc fomenta summorum dolorum;"† and such like circumstances amuse, divert, and turn our thoughts from the consideration of the thing in itself. Even the arguments of philosophy are always edging and glancing on the matter, so as scarce to rub its crust; the greatest man of the first philosophical school, and superintendent over all the rest, the great Zeno forms this syllogism against death: "No evil is honorable; but death is honorable: therefore death is no evil;‡ against drunkenness this: "No one commits his secrets to a drunkard; but every one commits his secrets to a wise man: therefore a wise man is no drunkard."§ Is this to hit the white? I love to see that these great and leading souls cannot rid themselves of our company: perfect men as they are, they are yet simply men.

Revenge is a sweet passion, of great and natural impression; I discern it well enough, though I have no manner of experience of it. From this not long ago to divert a young prince, I did not tell him that he must, to him who had struck him upon the one cheek, turn the other, upon account of charity; nor go about to represent to him the tragical events that poetry attributes to this passion; I did not touch upon that string; but I busied myself to make him relish the beauty of a contrary image: and, by representing to him what honor, esteem, and good will he would acquire by clemency and good nature diverted him to ambition. Thus a man is to deal in such cases.

If your passion of love be too violent, disperse it, say they, and they say true; for I have often tried it with advantage: break it into several desires, of which let one be regent, if you will, over the rest; but, lest it should tyrannize and domineer over you, weaken and protract, by dividing and diverting it;

"Cum morosa vago singultiet inguine vena."||

* Cornelius Nepos, in vita, c. 9.
† "These are lenitives, and fomentations to the greatest pains."
   —Cicero, Tusc. Quæs., ii. 23.
‡ Seneca, Ep. 82.
§ Seneca, Ep, 83.
|| "When you are tormented with fierce desire, satisfy it with the first person that presents herself."—Persius, Sat. vi. 73.
"Conjicito humorem collectum in corpora quæque." *

and look to't in time, lest it prove too troublesome to deal with, when it has once seized you.

"Si non prima novis conturbes vulnera plagis, Volgivagaque vagus venere ante recentia cures." †

I was once wounded with a vehement displeasure, and withal, more just than vehement; I might peradventure have lost myself in it, if I had merely trusted to my own strength. Having need of a powerful diversion to disengage me, by art and study I became amorous, wherein I was assisted by my youth: love relieved and rescued me from the evil wherein friendship had engaged me. "Tis in everything else the same: a violent imagination hath seized me: I find it a nearer way to change, than to subdue it; I depute, if not one contrary, yet another at least, in its place. Variation ever relieves, dissolves, and dissipates.

If I am not able to contend with it, I escape from it; and in avoiding it, slip out of the way, and make my doubles: shifting place, business, and company, I secure myself in the crowd of other thoughts and fancies, where it loses my trace, and I escape.

After the same manner does nature proceed, by the benefit of inconstancy; for time, which she has given us for the sovereign physician of our passions, chiefly works by this, that supplying our imaginations with other and new affairs, it loosens and dissolves the first apprehension, how strong soever. A wise man little less sees his friend dying at the end of five and twenty years, than on the first year; and according to Epicurus, no less at all; for he did not attribute any alleviation of afflictions, either to their foresight, or their antiquity; but so many other thoughts traverse this, that it languishes and tires at last.

Alcibiades, ‡ to divert the inclination of common rumors, cut off the ears and tail of his beautiful dog, and turned him out into the public place, to the end that, giving the people this occasion to prate, they might let his other actions alone. I have also seen, for this same end of di-

* Lucretius, vi. 1062, to the like effect.
† "Unless you cure old wounds by new."—Lucretius, iv. 1067.
‡ Plutarch, in vita, c. 4.
vert the opinions and conjectures of the people and to stop their mouths, some women conceal their real affections by those that were only counterfeit; but I have also seen some of them, who in counterfeiting have suffered themselves to be caught indeed, and who have quitted the true and original affection for the feigned: and so have learned that they who find their affections well placed are fools to consent to this disguise: the public and favorable reception being only reserved for this pretended lover, one may conclude him a fellow of very little address and less wit, if he does not in the end put himself into your place, and you into his; this is to cut out and make up neatly a shoe for another to draw on.

A little thing will turn and divert us, because a little thing holds us. We do not much consider subjects in gross and singly; they are little and superficial circumstances or images that touch us, and the outward useless rinds that peel off from the subjects themselves.

"Foliculos ut nunc teretes æstate cicadæ
Linquunt." *

Even Plutarch himself laments his daughter for the little apish tricks of her infancy.† The remembrance of a farewell, of the particular grace of an action, of a last recommendation, afflicts us. The sight of Cæsar's robe troubled all Rome, which was more than his death had done. Even the sound of names ringing in our ears, as "my poor master," "my faithful friend," "alas, my dear father," or, "my sweet daughter," afflict us. When these repetitions annoy me, and that I examine it a little nearer, I find 'tis no other but a grammatical and word complaint; I am only wounded with the word and tone, as the exclamations of preachers very often work more upon their auditory than their reasons, and as the pitiful eyes of a beast killed for our service; without my weighing or penetrating meanwhile into the true and solid essence of my subject:

"His se stimuli dolor ipse laccissit;" ‡

* "Such as the husks we find grasshoppers leave behind them in summer."—LUcretius, v. 801.

† Consolation to his Wife on the Death of their Daughter, c. 1.

‡ "With these incitements grief provokes itself."—LUcretius, ii. 42.
These are the foundations of our mourning.

The obstinacy of my stone to all remedies, especially those in my bladder, has sometimes thrown me into so long suppressions of urine for three or four days together, and so near death, that it had been folly to have hoped to evade it, and it was much rather to have been desired, considering the miseries I endure in those cruel fits. Oh, that good emperor,* who caused criminals to be tied that they might die for want of urination, was a great master in the hangman’s science! Finding myself in this condition, I considered by how many light causes and objects imagination nourished in me the regret of life; of what atoms the weight and difficulty of this dislodging was composed in my soul; to how many idle and frivolous thoughts we give way in so great an affair; a dog, a horse, a book, a glass, and what not, were considered in my loss; to others, their ambitious hopes, their money, their knowledge, not less foolish considerations in my opinion than mine. I look upon death carelessly when I look upon it universally, as the end of life. I insult over it in gross, but in detail it domineers over me; the tears of a footman, the disposing of my clothes, the touch of a friendly hand, a common consolation, discourages and softens me. So do the complaints in tragedies agitate our souls with grief; and the regrets of Dido and Ariadne, impulsive even those who believe them not in Virgil and Catullus. 'Tis a symptom of an obstinate and obdurate nature, to be sensible of no emotion, as 'tis reported for a miracle, of Polemon; but then he did not so much as alter his countenance at the biting of a mad dog that tore away the calf of his leg;† and no wisdom proceeds so far as to conceive so vivid and entire a cause of sorrow, by judgment that it does not suffer increase by its presence, when the eyes and ears have their share; parts that are not to be moved but by vain accidents.

Is it reason that even the arts themselves should make an advantage of our natural stupidity and weakness? An orator, says rhetoric in the farce of his pleading, shall be moved with the sound of his own voice and feigned emotions, and suffer himself to be imposed upon by the passion

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* Tiberius. Suetonius, in vita, c. 62.
† Diogenes Laertius, in vita, c. 17.
he represents; he will imprint in himself a true and real
grief, by means of the part he plays, to transmit it to the
judges, who are yet less concerned than he; as they do who
are hired at funerals to assist in the ceremony of sorrow,
who sell their tears and mourning by weight and measure;
for although they act in a borrowed form, nevertheless, by
habituating and settling their countenances to the occasion,
'tis most certain they often are really affected with an actual
sorrow. I was one, among several others of his friends,
who conveyed the body of Monsieur de Gramont * to
Soissons from the siege of La Fere, where he was slain; I
observed that in all places we passed through we filled the
people we met with lamentations and tears by the mere
solemn pomp of our convoy, for the name of the defunct
was not there so much as known. Quintilian reports † to
have seen comedians so deeply engaged in a mourning part
that they could not give over weeping when they came
home, and who, having taken upon them to stir up passion
in another, have themselves espoused it to that degree as to
find themselves infected with it, not only to tears, but,
moreover, with paleness, and the comportment of men
really overwhelmed with grief.

In a country near our mountains the women play Priest
Martin, that is to say, both priest and clerk, for as they
augment the regret of the deceased husband by the
remembrance of the good and agreeable qualities he was
master of, they also at the same time make a register of
and publish his imperfections; as if of themselves to enter
into some composition, and divert themselves from com-
passion to disdain; and yet with much better grace than
we, who, when we lose an acquaintance, strive to give him
new and false praises, and to make him quite another
thing when we have lost sight of him than he appeared to
us when we did see him; as if regret were an instructive
thing, or as if tears, by washing our understandings,
cleared them. For my part, I henceforth renounce all
favorable testimonies men would give of me, not because
I shall be worthy of them, but because I shall be dead.

Whoever shall ask a man, "What interest have you in

* Philibert, Comte de Gramont et de Guiche, husband of La Belle
Corisande. He was killed in 1580.
† Institut. Orat., vi. 2, sub fin.
this siege?" "The interest of example," he will say, "and of the common obedience to my prince; I pretend to no profit by it; and for glory, I know how small a part can reflect upon such a private man as I; I have here neither passion nor quarrel." And yet you shall see him the next day quite another man, chafing and red with fury, ranged in battle for the assault; 'tis the glittering of so much steel, the fire and noise of our cannon and drums, that have infused this new rancor and fury into his veins. A frivolous cause, you will say. How a cause? There needs none to agitate the mind; a mere whimsy without body and without subject will rule and agitate it; let me think of building castles in Spain, my imagination suggests to me conveniences and pleasures with which my soul is really tickled and pleased. How often do we torment our mind with anger or sorrow by such shadows, and engage ourselves in fantastic passions that impair both soul and body? What astonished, fleering, confused grimaces does this raving put our faces into! what sallies and agitations both of members and voices does it inspire us with? Does it not seem that this individual man has false visions amid the crowd of others with whom he has to do, or that he is possessed with some internal demon that persecutes him? Inquire of yourself, where is the object of this mutation? is there anything but us in nature, which inanity sustains, over which it has power? Cambyses, from having dreamed that his brother should be one day king of Persia, put him to death: a beloved brother, and one in whom he had always confided.* Aristodemus, king of the Messenians, killed himself out of fancy of ill omen, from I know not what howling of his dogs; † and King Midas did as much upon the account of some foolish dream he had dreamed. ‡ 'Tis to prize life at its just value, to abandon it for a dream. And yet hear the soul triumph over the miseries and weakness of the body, and that it is exposed to all attacks and alterations; truly it has reason so to speak!

"O prima infelix fingenti terra Prometheo!
Hic parum cauti pectoris egit opus.

* Herodotus, iii. 30.
† Plutarch, On Superstition, c. 9.
‡ Idem, ibid.
Corpora dispones, mentem non vidit in arte; 
Recta animi primum debuit esse via."*

CHAPTER XXXVI.

UPON SOME VERSES OF VIRGIL.

By how much profitable thoughts are more full and solid, by so much are they also more cumbersome and heavy: vice, death, poverty, diseases, are grave and grievous subjects. A man should have his soul instructed in the means to sustain and contend with evils, and in the rules of living and believing well; and often rouse it up, and exercise it in this noble study; but in an ordinary soul it must be by intervals and with moderation; it will otherwise grow besotted if continually intent upon it. I found it necessary, when I was young, to put myself in mind and solicit myself to keep me to my duty: gayety and health do not, they say, so well agree with those grave and serious meditations; I am at present in another state: the conditions of age but too much put me in mind, urge me to wisdom, and preach to me. From the excess of sprightliness I am fallen into that of severity, which is much more troublesome: and for that reason I now and then suffer myself purposely a little to run into disorder, and occupy my mind in wanton and youthful thoughts, wherewith it diverts itself. I am of late but too reserved, too heavy, and too ripe; years every day read to me lectures of coldness and temperance. This body of mine avoids disorder, and dreads it; 'tis now my body's turn to guide my mind toward reformation; it governs, in turn, and more rudely and imperiously than the other; it lets me not an hour alone, sleeping or waking, but is always preaching to me death, patience, and repentance. I now defend myself from temperance, as I have formerly done from pleasure; it draws me too much back, and even to stupidity. Now I will be master of myself, to all intent and purposes; wisdom has its excesses, and has no less need of moderation than folly. Therefore, lest I should wither, dry up, and

* "Oh wretched clay, first formed by Prometheus. In his attempt, what little wisdom did he show. In framing bodies, he did not apply his art to form the mind which should have been his first care."—Propertius, iii. 5, 7.
overcharge myself with prudence, in the intervals and truces my infirmities allow me,

"Mens intenta suis ne siet usque malis." *

I gently turn aside, and avert my eyes from the stormy and cloudy sky I have before me, which, thanks be to God I regard without fear, but not without meditation and study, and amuse myself in the remembrance of my better years:

"Animus quo perdidit, optat,
Atque in praeterita se totus imagine versat." †

Let childhood look forward, and age, backward; is not this the signification of Janus' double face? Let years haul me along if they will, but it shall be backward, as long as my eyes can discern the pleasant season expired, I shall now and then turn them that way; though it escape from my blood and veins, I shall not, however, root the image of it out of my memory:

"Hoc est
Vivere bis, vita posse priore frui." ‡

Plato ordains § that old men should be present at the exercises, dances, and sports of young people, that they may rejoice in others for the activity and beauty of body which is no more in themselves, and call to mind the grace and comeliness of that flourishing age; and wills that in these recreations the honor of the prize should be given to that young man who has most diverted the company. I was formerly wont to mark cloudy and gloomy days as extraordinary; these are now my ordinary days; the extraordinary are the clear and bright; I am ready to leap out of my skin for joy, as for an unwonted favor, when nothing happens me. Let me tickle myself, I cannot force a poor smile from this wretched body of mine; I am only

* "That my mind may not eternally be intent upon my ills."
—Ovid, Trist. iv. 1, 4. The text has né foret.

† "The mind wishes to have what it had lost, and throws itself wholly in the memory of the past."—Petronius, c. 128.

‡ "'Tis to live twice to enjoy one's former life again."—Martial, x. 23, 7.

§ Laws, ii.
merry in conceit and in dreaming, by artifice to divert the melancholy of age; but, in faith, it requires another remedy than a dream. A weak contest of art against nature. 'Tis great folly to lengthen and anticipate human incommodities, as every one does; I had rather be a less while old than be old before I am really so.* I seize on even the least occasions of pleasure I can meet. I know very well, by hearsay, several sorts of prudent pleasures, effectually so, and glorious to boot; but opinion has not power enough over me to give me an appetite to them. I covet not so much to have them magnanimous, magnificent, and pompous, as I do to have them sweet, facile and ready: "A natura discedimus; populo nos damus, nullius rei bona auctori."† My philosophy is in action, in natural and present practice, very little in fancy; what if I have a mind to play at cob-nut or to whip a top!

"Non ponebat enim rumores ante saltem." ‡

Pleasure is a quality of very little ambition; it thinks itself rich enough of itself without any addition of repute; and is best pleased where most retired. A young man should be whipped who pretends to a taste in wine and sauces; there was nothing which, at that age, I less valued or knew; now I begin to learn; I am very much ashamed on't; but what should I do? I am more ashamed and vexed at the occasions that put me upon't. 'Tis for us to dote and trifle away the time, and for young men to stand upon their reputation and nice punctilios; they are going toward the world and the world's opinion; we are retiring from it: "Sibi arma, sibi equos, sibi hastas, sibi clarum, sibi palam, sibi natationes, et cursus habeant: nobis senibus ex lusionibus multis, talos relinquant et tesseras;" § the laws themselves send us home. ¶ I can do no less in favor

* Cicero, De Senectute, c. 19.
† "We depart from nature and give ourselves to the people, who understand nothing."—Seneca, Ep. 99.
‡ "He did not sacrifice his health to idle rumors."—Ennius, apud Cicero, De Offic., i. 24.
§ "Let them reserve to themselves arms, horses, spears, clubs, tennis, swimming, and races; and of all the sports leave to us old men cards and dice."—Cicero, De Senec., c. 16.
¶ Idem, ibid., c. 11.
of this wretched condition into which my age has thrown me, than furnish it with toys to play withal, as they do children; and, in truth, we become such. Both wisdom and folly will have enough to do to support and relieve me by alternate services in this calamity of age:

"Misce stultitiam consiliis brevem." *

I accordingly avoid the lightest punctures; and those that formerly would not have rippled the skin, now pierce me through and through: my habit of body is now so naturally declining to ill: "In fragili corpore, odio sa omnis offensio est;" †

"Mensque pati durum sustinet aegra nihil." ‡

I have ever been very susceptibly tender as to offenses; I am much more tender now, and open throughout:

"Et minime vires frangere quassa valent." §

My judgment restrains me from kicking against and murmuring at the inconveniences that nature orders me to endure, but it does not take away my feeling them: I, who have no other thing in my aim but to live and be merry, would run from one end of the world to the other to seek out one good year of pleasant and jocund tranquillity. A melancholic and dull tranquillity may be enough for me, but it benumbs and stupefies me; I am not contented with it. If there be any person, any knot of good company in country or city, in France, or elsewhere, resident, or in motion, who can like my humor, and whose humors I can like, let them but whistle and I will run and furnish them with essays in flesh and bone.

Seeing it is the privilege of the mind to rescue itself from old age, I advise mine to it with all the power I have; let it meanwhile continue green, and flourish if it can, like mistletoe upon a dead tree. But I fear 'tis a traitor; it has contracted so strict a fraternity with the body that it

* "Short follies mingle with wisdom."—Horace, Od. iv. 12, 27.
† "To a decrepit body every shock is insupportable."—Cicero, De Senec., c. 18.
‡ "And a sick mind can endure nothing that is hard."—Ovid, De Ponto., i. 5, 18.
§ "And little force suffices to break what was cracked before."—Ibid., De Tris., iii. 11, 22.
leaves me at every turn, to follow that in its need. I wheedle and deal with it apart in vain; I try to much purpose to wean it from this correspondence, to much effect quote to it Seneca and Catullus, and represent to it beautiful ladies and royal masques: if its companion have the stone, it seems to have it too; even the faculties that are most peculiarly and properly its own cannot then perform their functions, but manifestly appear stupefied and asleep; there is no sprightliness in its productions, if there be not at the same time an equal proportion in the body too.

Our masters are to blame, that in searching out the causes of the extraordinary motions of the soul, besides attributing it to a divine ecstasy, love, martial fierceness, poesy, wine, they have not also attributed a part to health: a boiling, vigorous, full, and lazy health, such as formerly the verdure of yOUTH and security, by fits, supplied me withal; that fire of sprightliness and gayety darts into the mind flashes that are lively and bright beyond our natural light, and of all entHusiasms the most jovial, if not the most extravagant. It is, then, no wonder if a contrary state stupefy and clog my spirit, and produce a contrary effect:

"Ad nullum consurgit opus, cum corpore languet," *

and yet would have me obliged to it for giving, as it wants to make out, much less consent to this stupidity, than is the ordinary case with men of my age. Let us, at least, while we have truce, drive away incommodities and difficulties from our commerce;

"Dum licet, obducta solvatur fronte senectus:" †

"Tetrica sunt amœnanda jocularibus." ‡ I love a gay and civil wisdom, and fly from all sourness and austerity of manners, all grumness of visage being suspected by me,

"Tristemque vultus tetrici arrogantiam." §

* "When the mind is languishing the body is good for nothing." —PSEUDO GALLUS, i. 125.
† "While we can, let us banish old age from the brow." —HEROD., Ep. xiii. 7.
‡ "Sour things are to be sweetened with those that are pleasant." —SIDONIUS APPOLIN., Ep. i. 9.
§ "The arrogant sadness of a crabbed face." —AUCTOR INCERT.
I am very much of Plato’s opinion, who says that facile or harsh humors are great indications of the good or ill disposition of the mind. Socrates had a constant countenance, but serene and smiling; not sourly constant, like the elder Crassus, whom no one ever saw laugh. † Virtue is a pleasant and gay quality. 

I know very well that few will quarrel with the license of my writings, who have not more to quarrel with in the license of their own thoughts: I conform myself well enough to their inclinations, but I offend their eyes. ’Tis a fine humor to strain the writings of Plato, to wrest his pretended intercourses with Phaedo, Dion, Stella, ‡ and Archeanassa. “Non pudeat dicere, quod non pudet sentire.” § I hate a froward and dismal spirit, that slips over all the pleasures of life and seizes and feeds upon misfortunes; like flies, that cannot stick to a smooth and polished body, but fix and repose themselves upon craggy and rough places; and like cupping-glasses, that only suck and attract bad blood.

As to the rest, I have enjoined myself to dare to say all that I dare to do; even thoughts that are not to be published, displease me; the worst of my actions and qualities do not appear to me so evil, as I find it evil and base not to dare to own them. Every one is wary and discreet in confession, but men ought to be so in action; the boldness of doing ill is in some sort compensated and restrained by the boldness of confessing it. Whoever will oblige himself to tell all, should oblige himself to do nothing that he must be forced to conceal. I wish that this excessive license of mine may draw men to freedom, above these timorous and mincing virtues, sprung from our imperfections; and that at the expense of my immoderation, I may reduce them to reason. A man must see and study his vice to correct it; they who conceal it from others, commonly conceal it from


† Pliny, Nat. Hist., vii. 19.

‡ Montaigne gives the Latin form of the Greek name Aster.

§ "Let us not be ashamed to speak, what we are not ashamed to think."
themselves; and do not think it close enough, if they them-
selves see it: they withdraw and disguise it from their own
consciences: "Quare vitia sua nemo confitetur? Quia etiam
mune in illis est; somniurn narrare, vigilantis est."* The
diseases of the body explain themselves by their increase;
we find that to be the gout which we called a rheum or a
strain; the diseases of the soul, the greater they are, keep
themselves the most obscure; the most sick are the least
sensible; therefore it is, that with an unrelenting hand,
they must often, in full day, be taken to task, opened, and
torn from the hollow of the heart. As in doing well, so in
doing ill, the mere confession is sometimes satisfac-
tion. Is there any deformity in doing amiss, that can excuse us
from confessing ourselves? It is so great a pain to me
to dissemble, that I evade the trust of another’s secrets,
wanting the courage to disavow my knowledge. I can
keep silent; but deny I cannot without the greatest
trouble and violence to myself imaginable: to be very
secret, a man must be so by nature not by obligation. 'Tis
little worth, in the service of a prince, to be secret, if a man
be not a liar to boot. If he who asked Thales the Milesian,
whether he ought solemnly to deny that he had committed
adultery, had applied himself to me, I should have told
him, that he ought not to do it; for I look upon lying as
a worse fault than the other. Thales advised him quite
contrary,+ bidding him swear, to shield the greater fault by
the less: nevertheless, this counsel was not so much an
election, as a multiplication, of vice. Upon which, let us
say this by-the-by, that we deal well with a man of con-
science, when we propose to him some difficulty in counter-
poise of the vice; but when we shut him up between two
vices, he is put to a hard choice: as Origen was, either to
idolatrize, or to suffer himself to be carnally abused by a
great Ethiopian slave they brought to him. He submitted
to the first condition, and wrongly people say. And yet
those women of our times are not much out, according to
their error, who protest they had rather burden their con-
scences with ten men than one mass.

* "Why does no man confess his vices? because he is yet in them;
th'is for a waking man to tell his dream."—Seneca, Ep. 53.

+ Montaigne’s memory here plays him one of its "scurvy tricks,"
for the question being put to Thales, his answer was: "But is not
perjury worse than adultery?"—Diogenes Laertius, in vita, i. 36.
If it be indiscretion so to publish one's errors, yet there is no great danger that it pass into example and custom; for Aristo said,* that the winds men most fear, are those that lay them open. We must tuck up this ridiculous rag that hides our manners: they send their consciences to the stews, and keep a starched countenance: even traitors and assassins espouse the laws of ceremony and there fix their duty. So that neither can injustice complain of incivility nor malice of indiscretion. "Tis pity but a bad man should be a fool to boot and that outward decency should palliate his vice: this rough-cast only appertains to a good and sound wall, that deserves to be preserved and whitened.

In favor of the Huguenots, who condemn our auricular and private confession, I confess myself in public, religiously and purely: St. Augustin, Origen and Hippocrates, have published the errors of their opinions; I, moreover, of my manners. I am greedy of making myself known,† and I care not to how many, provided it be truly; or to say better, I hunger for nothing, but I mortally hate to be mistaken by those who come to learn my name. He who does all things for honor and glory, what can he think to gain by showing himself to the world in a visor and by concealing his true being from the people? Praise a humpback for his stature, he has reason to take it for an affront; if you are a coward, and men commend you for your valor, is it of you they speak? They take you for another. I should like him as well, who glorifies himself in the compliments and congees that are made him as if he were master of the company, when he is one of the least of the train. Archelaus, king of Macedon, walking along the street, somebody threw water on his head, which they who were with him said he ought to punish: "Ay but," said he, "whoever it was, he did not throw the water upon me, but upon him whom he took me to be."‡ Socrates being told that people spoke ill of him, "Not at all," said he,

* Plutarch, On Curiosity, c. 3.

† In the edition of Bordeaux, Montaigne adds these words: "A pleasant fancy; many things that I would not say to a particular individual, I say to the people; and, as to my most secret thoughts, send my most intimate friends to my book."

‡ Plutarch, Apothegeums of the Kings.
"there is nothing in me of what they say." * For my part, if any one should recommend me as a good pilot, as being very modest, or very chaste, I should owe him no thanks; and so, whoever should call me traitor, robber or drunkard, I should be as little concerned. They who do not rightly know themselves, may feed themselves with false appro-bations; not I, who see myself and who examine myself even to my very bowels, and who very well know what is my due. I am content to be less commended, provided I am better known. I may be reputed a wise man in such a sort of wisdom as I take to be folly. I am vexed that my Essays only serve the ladies for a common movable, a book to lay in the parlor window; this chapter shall prefer me to the closet. I love to traffic with them a little in private; public conversation is without favor and without savor. In farewells, we oftener than not heap our affections toward the things we take leave of; I take my last leave of the pleasures of this world; these are our last embraces.

But to come to my subject: what has rendered the act of generation, an act so natural, so necessary, and so just, a thing not to be spoken of without blushing and to be excluded from all serious and regular discourse? We boldly pronounce, kill, rob, betray, † but the other we dare only to mutter between the teeth. Is it to say, the less we expend in words, we may pay so much the more in thinking? For it is certain that the words least in use, most seldom written, and best kept in, are the best and most generally known; no age, no manners, are ignorant of them, no more than the word bread: they imprint themselves in every one, without being expressed, without voice, and without figure; and the sex that most practices it, is bound to say least of it. 'Tis an act that we have placed in the franchise of silence, from which to take it is a crime, even to accuse and judge it; neither dare we reprehend it but by periphrasis and picture. A great favor to a criminal to be so execrable that justice thinks it unjust to touch and see him; free and safe by the benefit of the severity of his condemnation. Is it not here as in matter of books, that sell better and become more public for being

* Diogenes, Laertius, in vita, ii. 34.
† Cicero, Ep. fam., ix. 22.
suppressed? For my part, I will take Aristotle at his word who says,* that "Bashfulness is an ornament to youth, but a reproach to old age." These verses are preached in the ancient school, a school that I much more adhere to than the modern: its virtues appear to me to be greater and the vices less:

"Ceux qui par trop fuyant Venus estrivent,
Faillent autant que ceulx qui trop la suyvent."‡

"Tu, dea, tu rerum naturam sola gubernas,
Nec sine te quicquam dias in luminis oras
Exoritur, neque fit laetum, nec anabile quicquam." ‡

I know not who could set Pallas and the Muses at variance with Venus, and make them cold toward Love; but I see no deities so well met, or that are more indebted to one another. Who will deprive the Muses of amorous imaginations, will rob them of the best entertainment they have, and of the noblest matter of their work: and who will make Love lose the communication and service of poesy, will disarm him of his best weapons: by this means, they charge the god of familiarity and good will, and the protecting goddesses of humanity and justice, with the vice of ingratitude and unthankfulness. I have not been so long cashiered from the state and service of this god, that my memory is not still perfect in his force and value;

"Agnosco veteris vestigia flammæ;" §

There are yet some remains of heat and emotion after the fever;

"Nec mihi deficiat calor hic, hiemantibus annis!" ||

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* Moral. ad Nicom., iv. 9.

‡ "They err as much who too much forbear Venus, as they who are too frequent in her rites."—A translation by Amyot from Plutarch.

A philosopher should converse with princes.

‡ "Thou, goddess, alone governest nature: without thee nothing comes into light; nothing is pleasant, nothing joyful."—Lucretius, i. 22.

§ "Some footsteps there are still of my old flame."—Iliad, iv. 23.

|| "I would not be deserted by the heat of youth in my winter age." This line appears to be taken from a modern author.
Withered and drooping as I am, I feel yet some remains of that past ardor:

"Qual l'alto Egeo, perche Aquilone o Noto
Cessi, che tutto prima il volse e scosse,
Non's accheta egli pero; ma'l suono e'l moto
Ritien del l' onde anco agitate e grosse:" *

but from what I understand of it, the force and power of this god are more lively and animated in the picture of poesy than in their own essence,

"Et versus digitos habet:" †

it has, I know not what kind of air more amorous than love itself. Venus is not so beautiful, naked, alive, and panting, as she is here in Virgil:

"Dixerat; et niveis hinc atque hinc diva lacertis
Cunctantem amplexu molli foræ. Ille repente
Acceptit solitam flammam; notusque medullas
Intravit calor, et labefacta per ossa ecurrat:
Non secus atque olim tonitru cum rupta corusco
Ignæa rima micans percurrat lumine nimbos.

. . . Ea verba loquutus,
Optatos dedit amplexus; placidumque petivit
Conjugis infusus gremio per membra soporem." ‡

All that I find fault with in considering it is, that he has represented her a little too passionate for a married Venus; in this discreet kind of coupling, the appetite is not usually so wanton, but more grave and dull. Love hates that people should hold of any but itself, and goes but faintly to work in familiarities derived from any other title, as marriage is: alliance, dowry, therein sway by reason, as much or more than grace and beauty. Men do not marry

* "As Ægean seas, when storms be calmed again,
That rolled their tumbling waves with troublous blasts,
Do yet of tempests passed, some show retain,
And here and there their swelling billows cast."—Fairfax.
† "Verse has fingers."—Adapted from Juvenal, iv. 196.
‡ "The goddess spoke, and throwing round him her snowy arms
in soft embraces caresses him hesitating. Suddenly, he caught the
wonted flame, and the well-known warmth pierced his marrow, and
ran thrilling through his shaken bones; just as when at times, with
thunder, a stream of fire in lightning flashes shoots across the skies.
Having spoken these words, he gave her the wished embrace, and in
the bosom of his spouse dissolved away."—Aeneid, viii. 387 and 392.
for themselves, let them say what they will; they marry as much or more for their posterity and family; the custom and interest of marriage concern our race much more than us; and therefore it is, that I like to have a match carried on by a third hand rather than a man’s own, and by another man’s liking than that of the party himself; and how much is all this opposite to the conventions of love? And also it is a kind of incest to employ in this venerable and sacred alliance, the heat and extravagance of amorous license, as I think I have said elsewhere.* A man, says Aristotle, must approach his wife with prudence and temperance, lest in dealing too lasciviously with her, the extreme pleasure make her exceed the bounds of reason. What he says upon the account of conscience, the physicians say upon the account of health: “that a pleasure excessively lascivious, voluptuous, and frequent, makes the seed too hot, and hinders conception:” ’tis said, elsewhere, that to a languishing congression, as this naturally is, to supply it with a due and fruitful heat, a man must do it but seldom, and by notable intermissions,

“That they may seize the gifts of Venus, and enclose them in their bosom.” — Virg., Georg., iii. 137.

* Book i. c. 29.
self nothing, 'tis in estimate infinitely below virtue: * 'tis a virtue, if it be one, that is artificial and apparent, depending upon time and fortune; various in form, according to the country; living and mortal; without birth, as the river Nile; genealogical and common; of succession and similitude; drawn by consequence, and a very weak one. Knowledge, strength, goodness, beauty, riches, and all other qualities, fall into communication and commerce, but this is consummated in itself, and of no use to the service of others. There was proposed to one of our kings the choice of two concurrents for the same command, of whom one was a gentleman, the other not; he ordered, that without respect to quality, they should choose him who had the most merit; but where the worth of the competitors should appear to be entirely equal, they should have respect to birth: this was justly to give it its rank. A young man unknown, coming to Antigonus to make suit for his father's command, a valiant man, lately dead: "Friend," said he,† "in such preferments as these, I have not so much regard to the nobility of my soldiers as to their prowess." And, indeed, it ought not to go as it did with the officers of the kings of Sparta, trumpeters, fiddlers, cooks, the children of whom always succeeded to their places, how ignorant soever, and were preferred before the most experienced in the trade. They of Calicut make of nobles a sort of persons above human: they are interdicted marriage and all but warlike employments: they may have of concubines their fill, and the women as many lovers, without being jealous of one another; but 'tis a capital and irremissible crime to couple with a person of meaner condition than themselves; and they think themselves polluted, if they have but touched one in walking along; and supposing their nobility to be marvelously interested and injured in it, kill such as only approach a little too near them: insomuch that the ignoble are obliged to cry out as they walk, like the gondoliers of Venice, at the turnings of streets for fear of jostling; and the nobles command them to step aside to what part they please: by which means these avoid what they repute a

* "If nobility be virtue, it loses its quality in all things wherein not virtuous: and if it be not virtue, 'tis a small matter."—La Bruyere.

† Plutarch, on False Modesty, c. 10.
perpetual ignominy, and those certain death. No time, no favor of the prince, no office, or virtue, or riches, can ever prevail to make a plebeian become noble; too which this custom contributes, that marriages are interdicted between different trades; the daughter of a shoemaker is not permitted to marry a carpenter; and the parents are obliged to train up their children precisely in their own callings, and not put them to any other trade; by which means the distinction and continuance of their position is maintained.

A good marriage, if there be any such, rejects the company and conditions of love, and tries to represent those of friendship. "Tis a sweet society of life, full of constancy, trust, and an infinite number of useful and solid services and mutual obligations; which any woman who has a right taste,

"Optato quam junxit lumine tæda." *

would be loath to serve her husband in quality of a mistress. If she be lodged in his affection as a wife, she is more honorably and securely placed. When he purports to be in love with another, and works all he can to obtain his desire, let any one but ask him, on which he had rather a disgrace should fall, his wife or his mistress, which of their misfortunes would most afflict him, and to which of them he wishes the most grandeur, the answer to these questions is out of dispute in a sound marriage.

And that so few are observed to be happy, is a token of its price and value. If well formed and rightly taken, 'tis the best of all human societies; we cannot live without it, and yet we do nothing but decry it. It happens, as with cages, the birds without despair to get in, and those within despair of getting out. Socrates, being asked, † whether it was more commodious to take a wife, or not; "Let a man take which course he will," said he, "he will be sure to repent." "Tis a contract to which the common saying, "Homo homini, aut deus, aut lupus," ‡ may very fitly be applied; there must be a concurrence of many qualities in the construction. It is found nowadays more convenient

* "United to a desired object."—Catullus, lxiv: 79.
† Diogenes Laertins, in vita, ii. 33.
‡ "Man to man is either a god or a wolf."—Erasmi. Adag.
for simple and plebeian souls, where delights, curiosity, and idleness do not so much disturb it; but extravagant humors, such as mine, that hate all sorts of obligation and restraint, are not so proper for it:

"Et mihi dulce magis resoluto vivere collo." *

Might I have had my own will, I would not have married Wisdom herself, if she would have had me. But 'tis too much purpose to evade it; the common custom and usance of life will have it so. The most of my actions are guided by example, not by choice, and yet I did not go to it of my own voluntary motion; I was led and drawn to it by extrinsic occasions, for not only things that are incommodious in themselves, but also things however ugly, vicious, and to be avoided, may be rendered acceptable by some condition or accident; so unsteady and vain is all human resolution! and I was persuaded to it, when worse prepared, and less tractable than I am at present, that I have tried what it is: and as great a libertine as I am taken to be, I have in truth more strictly observed the laws of marriage, than I either promised or expected. 'Tis in vain to kick, when a man has once put on his fetters: a man must prudently manage his liberty; but having once submitted to obligation, he must confine himself within the laws of common duty, at least, do what he can toward it. They who engage in this contract, with a design to carry themselves in it with hatred and contempt, do an unjust and inconvenient thing; and the fine rule that I hear pass from hand to hand among the women, as a sacred oracle,

"Sers ton mary comme ton maistre,  
Et t'en garde comme d'un traistre," †

which is to say, comport thyself toward him with a dissembled, inimical, and distrustful reverence (a cry of war and defiance), is equally injurious and hard. I am too mild for such rugged designs; to say the truth, I am not arrived to that perfection of ability and refinement of wit, to confound reason with injustice, and to laugh at all rule

* "I like better to live unfettered"—PSEUDO GALLUS, i. 61.

† "Serve thy husband as thy master, but guard thyself against him as from a traitor."
and order that does not please my palate; because I hate superstition, I do not presently run into the contrary extreme of irreligion. If a man does not always perform his duty, he ought at least to love and acknowledge it; 'tis treachery to marry without espousing.

Let us proceed.

Our poet represents a marriage happy in good intelligence, wherein nevertheless there is not much loyalty. Does he mean, that it is not impossible but a woman may give the reins to her own passion, and yield to the importunities of love, and yet reserve some duty toward marriage, and that it may be hurt, without being totally broken? A serving man may cheat his master, whom nevertheless he does not hate. Beauty, opportunity, and destiny (for destiny has also a hand in't),

"Fatum est in partibus illis
Quas sinus abscondit; nam, si tibi sidera cessent,
Nil faciet longi mensura incognita nervi;" *

have attached her to a stranger; though not so wholly, peradventure, but that she may have some remains of kindness for her husband. They are two designs, that have several paths leading to them, without being confounded with one another; a woman may yield to a man she would by no means have married, not only for the condition of his fortune, but for those also of his person. Few men have made a wife of a mistress, who have not repented it. And even in the other world, what an unhappy life does Jupiter lead with his, whom he had first enjoyed as a mistress? † "Tis, as the proverb runs, to befoul a basket and then put it upon one's head. I have in my time, in a good family, seen love shamefully and dishonestly cured by marriage; the considerations are widely different. We love at once, without any tie, two things contrary in themselves.

Socrates was wont to say, ‡ that the city of Athens pleased as ladies do whom men court for love; every one

* "There is a fatality about the hidden parts; let nature have endowed you however liberally, 'tis of no use, if your good star fails you in the nick of time."—Juvenal, ix. 32.
† Iliad, xiv. 295.
‡ Ælian, Var. Hist., xii. 52.
loved to come thither to take a turn, and pass away his time; but no one liked it so well as to espouse it, that is, to inhabit there, and to make it his constant residence. I have been vexed to see husbands hate their wives only because they themselves do them wrong; we should not, at all events, methinks, love them the less for our own faults; they should at least upon the account of repentance and compassion, be dearer to us.

They are different ends, he says, and yet in some sort compatible; marriage has utility, justice, honor, and constancy for its share; a flat, but more universal pleasure; love founds itself wholly upon pleasure, and, indeed, has it more full, lively and sharp; a pleasure inflamed by difficulty; there must be in it sting and smart; 'tis no longer love, if without darts and fire. The bounty of ladies is too profuse in marriage, and dulls the point of affection and desire; to evade which inconvenience, do but observe what pains Lycurgus and Plato take in their laws.

Women are not to blame at all, when they refuse the rules of life that are introduced into the world, forasmuch as the men made them without their consent. There is naturally contention and brawling between them and us; and the strictest friendship we have with them, is yet mixed with tumult and tempest. In the opinion of our author, we deal inconsiderately with them in this; after we have discovered, that they are, without comparison, more able and ardent in the practice of love than we, and that the old priest testified as much, who had been one while a man, and then a woman,

"Venus huic erat utraque nota:"*

and moreover, that, we have learned from their own mouths the proof that, in several ages, was made by an emperor and empress of Rome, † both famous for ability in that affair! for he in one night deflowered ten Sarmatian virgins who were his captives: but ‡ she had five-and-

* "To whom either Venus was known."—TIRESIAS. OVID. Metam., iii. 323.
† Proculus.
‡ Messalina, wife of the Emperor Claudius.
twenty bouts in one night, changing her man according to her need and liking,

"Adhuc ardens rigidæ tentigine vulvae:
Et lassata viris, nondum satiata, recessit;"

and that upon the dispute which happened in Catalonia, wherein a wife complaining of her husband’s too frequent addresses to her, not so much, as I conceive, that she was incommodated by it (for I believe no miracles out of religion) as under this pretense, to curtail and curb in this, which is the fundamental act of marriage, the authority of husbands over their wives, and to show that their frowardness and malignity go beyond the nuptial bed, and spurn under foot even the graces and sweets of Venus; the husband, a man truly brutish and unnatural, replied that even on fasting days he could not subsist with less than ten courses: whereupon came out that notable sentence of the queen of Arragon, by which, after mature deliberation of her council, this good queen, to give a rule and example to all succeeding ages of the moderation required in a just marriage, set down six times a day as a legitimate and necessary stint; surrendering and quitting a great deal of the needs and desires of her sex, that she might, she said, establish an easy, and consequently, a permanent and immutable rule. Hereupon the doctors cry out; what must the female appetite and concupiscence be, when their reason, their reformation and virtue, are taxed at such a rate? considering the divers judgments of our appetites; for Solon, master of the law school, taxes us at but three a month,† that men may not foil in point of conjugal frequentation: after having, I say, believed and preached all this,‡ we go and enjoin them continency for their particular share, and upon the extremest penalties.

There is no passion so hard to contend with as this, which we would have them only resist, not simply as an ordinary vice, but as an execrable abomination, worse than irreligion and parricide; while we, at the same time, go to’t without offense or reproach. Even those among us,

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* "Ardent still, she retired, fatigued, but not satisfied."—Juvenal, vi. 128.
† Plutarch on Love.
‡ The greater ardoir of women.
who have tried the experiment, have sufficiently confessed what difficulty, or rather impossibility, they have found by material remedies to subdue, weaken, and cool the body. We, on the contrary, would have them at once sound, vigorous, plump, high-fed, and chaste; that is to say, both hot and cold, for the marriage, which we tell them is to keep them from burning, is but small refreshment to them as we order the matter. If they take one whose vigorous age is yet boiling, he will be proud to make it known elsewhere;

"Sit tandem pudor; aut eamus in jus; Multis mentula millibus redempta, Non est hæ tua, Basse; venăidis tī;" *

Polemon the philosopher was justly by his wife brought before the judge for sowing in a barren field the seed that was due to one that was fruitful: if, on the other hand, they take a decayed fellow, they are in a worse condition in marriage than either maids or widows. We think them well provided for, because they have a man to lie with, as the Romans concluded Clodia Læta, a vestal nun, violated, because Caligula had approached her, though it was declared he did no more but approach her: but, on the contrary, we by that increase their necessity, forasmuch as the touch and company of any man whatever rouses their desires, that in solitude would be more quiet. And to the end 'tis likely, that they might render their chastity more meritorious by this circumstance and consideration, Boleslaus and Kinge, his wife, king and queen of Poland, vowed it by mutual consent, being in bed together, on their very wedding day, and kept their vow in spite of all matrimonial conveniences.

We train them up from their infancy to the traffic of love; their grace, dressing, knowledge, language, and whole instruction tend that way: their governesses imprint nothing in them but the idea of love, if for nothing else but by continually representing it to them, to give them a distaste for it. My daughter, the only child I have, is now of an age that forward young women are allowed to be married at; she is of a slow, thin, and tender complexion,

* "If you don't mend your ways, Battus, we shall go to law: your vigor, bought by your wife with many thousands, is no longer yours: 'tis sold to her."—MARTIAL, xii. 90.
and has accordingly been brought up by her mother after a retired and particular manner, so that she but now begins to be weaned from her childish simplicity. She was one day reading before me in a French book, where she happened to meet the word fouteau, the name of a tree very well known;* the woman to whose conduct she is committed stopped her short a little roughly, and made her skip over that dangerous step. I let her alone, not to trouble their rules, for I never concern myself in that sort of government; feminine polity has a mysterious procedure; we must leave it to them; but if I am not mistaken, the commerce of twenty lackeys could not, in six months' time, have so imprinted in her fancy the meaning, usage, and all the consequences of the sound of these wicked syllables, as this good old woman did by reprimand and interdiction.

"Motus doceri gaudet Ionicos
Matura virgo, et frangitur artubus
Jam nunc, et incestos amores
De tenero meditatur ungui." †

Let them but give themselves the rein a little, let them but enter into liberty of discourse, we are but children to them in this science. Hear them but describe our pursuits and conversation, they will very well make you understand that we bring them nothing they have not known before, and digested without our help. Is it perhaps, as Plato says, that they have formerly been debauched young fellows? I happened one day to be in a place where I could hear some of their talk without suspicion; I am sorry I cannot repeat it. By'r lady, said I, we had need go study the phrases of Amadis, and the tales of Boccaccio and Aretin, to be able to discourse with them: we employ our time to much purpose indeed. There is neither word, example, nor step they are not more perfect in than our books; 'tis a discipline that springs with their blood,

* The beechn-tree; the name resembles in sound an obscene French word.

† "The maid ripe for marriage delights to learn Ionic dances, and to imitate those lascivious movements. Nay, already from her infancy she meditates criminal amours."—Horace, iii. 6, 21, the text has fingitur.
which these good instructors, nature, youth, and health are continually inspiring them with; they need not learn, they breed it:

"Nec tantum niveo gavisa est ulla columbo,
Compar, vel si quid dicitur improbius,
Oscula mordenti semper decerpere rostro,
Quantum præcipue multivola est mulier" †

So that if the natural violence of their desire were not a little restrained by fear and honor, which were wisely contrived for them, we should be all ashamed. All the motions in the world resolve into and tend to this conjunction; 'tis a matter infused throughout: 'tis a center to which all things are directed. We yet see the edicts of the old and wise Rome, made for the service of love; and the precepts of Socrates for the instruction of courtesans:

"Necnon libelli Stoici, inter sericos
Jacere pulvilos amant:" ‡

Zeno, among his laws, also regulated the motions to be observed in getting a maidenhood. What was the philosopher Strato's book of "Carnal Conjunction?" § And what did Theophrastus treat of in those he intituled, the one "The Lover," and the other "Of Love?" ‖ Of what Aristippus in his "Of Former Delights?" What do the so long and lively description in Plato of the loves of his time pretend to? and the book called "The Lover," of Demetrius Phalereus? ‡ and Clinias, or the Ravished Lover, of Hera-

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* "Venus herself made them what they are." — Virg. Geor., iii. 267.

† "No milk white-dove, or if there be a thing more lascivious, takes so much delight in kissing as women, wishful for every man she sees." — Catullus, lxvi. 125.

‡ "There are writings of the Stoics which we find lying upon silken cushions." — Horace, Epod., viii. 15.

§ Dioegnes Laertius, v. 59

‖ Idem, v. 43.

‡ Idem, ibid., 81.
lies;* and that of Antisthenes, "Of Getting Children," or, "Of Weddings," † and the other, "Of the Master or the Lover?" And that of Aristo: "Of Amorous Exercises?" ‡ What those of Cleanthes: one, "Of Love," the other, "Of the Art of Loving?"§ The amorous dialogues of Sphæerus?∥ and the fable of Jupiter and Juno, of Chrysippus, impudent beyond all toleration?¶ And his fifty so lascivious epistles? I will let alone the writings of the philosophers of the Epicurean sect, protectress of voluptuousness. Fifty deities were, in time past, assigned to this office; and there have been nations** where, to assuage the lust of those who came to their devotion, they kept men and women in their temples for the worshippers to lie with; and it was an act of ceremony to do this before they went to prayers: "Nimirum propter continentiam incontinentia necessatia est; incendium ignibus extinguitur." ††

In the greatest part of the world, that member of our body was deified; in the same province, some flayed off the skin to offer and consecrate a piece; others offered and consecrated their seed. In another, the young men publicly cut through betwixt the skin and the flesh of that part in several places, and thrust pieces of wood into the openings as long and thick as they would receive; and of these pieces of wood afterward made a fire as an offering to their gods; and were reputed neither vigorous nor chaste, if by the force of that cruel pain, they seemed to be at all dismayed. Elsewhere the most sacred magistrate was reverenced and acknowledged by that member: and in several ceremonies the effigy of it was carried in pomp to the honor of various divinities. The Egyptian ladies, in their Bacchanalia, each carried one finely-carved of wood about their necks, as large and heavy as she could so carry it; besides which, the statue of their god presented one, which in greatness surpassed all the rest of his body.‡‡ The married women,

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* Diogenes Laertius, v., 87.
† Idem, vi. 15.
‡ Idem, vii., 163.
§ Idem, vii. 175.
∥ Idem, ibid., 178.
¶ Idem, ibid., 187.
** Babylon, Cyprus, Heliopolis in Phœnicia.
†† "Doubtless incontinency is necessary for continency's sake; a conflagration is extinguished by fire."
‡‡ Herodotus, ii. 48, says "nearly as large as the body itself"
near the place where I live, make of their kerchiefs the figure of one upon their foreheads, to glorify themselves in the enjoyment they have of it; and coming to be widows, they throw it behind, and cover it with their headcloths. The most modest matrons of Rome thought it an honor to offer flowers and garlands to the god Priapus; and they made the virgins, at the time of their espousals, sit upon his shameful parts. And I know not whether I have not in my time seen some air of like devotion. What was the meaning of that ridiculous thing our forefathers wore on the forepart of their breeches, and that is still worn by the Swiss? To what end do we make a show of our implements in figure under our gaskins, and often, which is worse, above their natural size, by falsehood and imposture? I have half a mind to believe that this sort of vestment was invented in the better and more conscientious ages, that the world might not be deceived, and that every one should give a public account of his proportions; the simple nations wear them yet, and near about the real size. In those days, the tailor took measure of it, as the shoemaker does now of a man's foot. That good man, who, when I was young, gelded so many noble and ancient statues in his great city, that they might not corrupt the sight of the ladies, according to the advice of this other ancient worthy, "Flagitii principium est, nudare inter cives corpora," should have called to mind, that, as in the mysteries of the Bona Dea all masculine appearance was excluded, he did nothing, if he did not geld horses and asses, in short, all nature:

"Ommem adeo genus in terris, hominumque, serarumque,  
Et genus æqueorum, pecudes, picture volucres,  
In furias ignemque ruunt."  

The gods, says Plato,§ have given us one disobedient and unruly member that, like a furious animal, attempts, by

* "Cod-pieces worn."—COTTON.
† "'Tis the beginning of wickedness to show their nudities in public."—ENNIUS, ap. CICERO, Tusce Quæs., iv. 33.
‡ "So that all living things, men and animals, wild or tame, and fish and gaudy fowl, rush to this flame of love."—VIRGIL, Georg, iii. 244.
§ In the Timæus, toward the end.
The violence of its appetite, to subject all things to it; and so they have given to women one like a greedy and ravenous animal, which, if it be refused food in season, grows wild, impatient of delay, and infusing its rage into their bodies, stops the passages, and hinders respiration, causing a thousand ills, till, having imbibed the fruit of the common thirst, it has plentifully bedewed the bottom of their matrix. Now my legislator* should also have considered, that, peradventure, it were a cluster and more fruitful usage to let them know the fact as it is betimes, than permit them to guess according to the liberty and heat of their own fancy; instead of the real parts they substitute, through hope and desire, others that are three times more extravagant: and a certain friend of mine lost himself by producing his in place and time when the opportunity was not present to put them to their more serious use. What mischief do not those pictures of prodigious dimension do that the boys make upon the staircases and galleries of the royal houses? they give the ladies a cruel contempt of our natural furniture. And what do we know but that Plato, after other well-instituted republics, ordered that the men and women, old and young, should expose themselves naked to the view of one another, in his gymnastic exercises, upon that very account? The Indian women who see the men stark naked, have at least cooled the sense of seeing. And let the women of the kingdom of Pegu say what they will, who below the waist have nothing to cover them but a cloth slit before, and so straight, that what decency and modesty soever they pretend by it, at every step all is to be seen, that it is an invention to allure the men to them, and to divert them from boys, to whom that nation is generally inclined; yet peradventure, they lose more by it than they get, and one may venture to say, that an entire appetite is more sharp than one already half-glutted by the eyes. Livia was wont to say, that to a virtuous woman a naked man was but a statue.† The Lacedæmonian woman, more virgins when wives than our daughters are, saw every day the young men of their city stripped naked in their exer-

* The pope who, as Montaigne has told us, took it into his head to geld the statues.
† Dion, Life of Tiberius.
cises, themselves little heeding to cover their thighs in walking, believing themselves, says Plato, sufficiently covered by their virtue without any other robe. But those of whom St. Augustine* speaks, have given nudity a wonderful power of temptation, who have made it a doubt, whether women at the day of judgment shall rise again in their own sex, and not rather in ours, for fear of tempting us again in that holy state. In brief, we allure and flesh them by all sorts of ways; we incessantly heat and stir up their imagination, and then we find fault. Let us confess the truth; there is scarce one of us who does not more apprehend the shame that accrues to him by the vices of his wife than by his own, and that is not more solicitous (a wonderful charity) of the conscience of his virtuous wife than of his own; who had not rather commit theft and sacrilege, and that his wife was a murdereress and a heretic, than that she should not be more chaste than her husband; an unjust estimate of vices. Both we and they are capable of a thousand corruptions more prejudicial and unnatural than lust; but we weigh vices, not according to nature, but according to our interest; by which means they take so many unequal forms.

The austerity of our decrees renders the application of women to this vice more violent and vicious than its own condition needs, and engages it in consequences worse than their cause; they will readily offer to go to the law courts to seek for gain, and to the wars to get reputation, rather than, in the midst of ease and delights, to have to keep so difficult a guard. Do not they very well see that there is neither merchant nor soldier who will not leave his business to run after this sport, or the porter or cobbler, toiled and tired out as they are with labor and hunger?

"Num tu, quæ tennit dives Achæmenes,  
Aut pinguis Phrygiae Mygdonias opes,  
Permutare velis crine Licymnieæ,  
Plenas aut Arabum domos,  
Dum fragrantia detorquet ad oscula  
Cervicem, aut facili sævitia negat,  
Quæ poscente magis gaudeat eripi,  
Interdum rapere occupet?" †

* De Civit. Dei, xxii. 17.
† "Would you not exchange all the wealth Achæmenes once
I do not know whether the exploits of Alexander and Caesar really surpass the resolution of a beautiful young woman, bred up after our fashion in the light and commerce of the world, assailed by so many contrary examples, and yet keeping herself entire in the midst of a thousand continual and powerful solicitations. There is no doing more difficult than that not doing, nor more active: I hold it more easy to carry a suit of armor all the days of one's life than a maidenhood; and the vow of virginity of all others is the most noble, as being the hardest to keep: "Diaboli virtus in lumbis est," says St. Jerome. * We have doubtless, resigned to the ladies the most difficult and most vigorous of all human endeavors, and let us resign to them the glory too. This ought to encourage them to be obstinate in it; 'tis a brave thing for them to defy us, and to spurn under foot that vain pre-eminence of valor and virtue that we pretend to have over them; they will find, if they do but observe it, that they will not only be much more esteemed for it but also much more beloved. A gallant man does not give over his pursuit for being refused, provided it be a refusal of chastity, and not of choice; we may swear, threaten, and complain to much purpose; we therein do but lie, for we love them all the better: there is no allurement like modesty, if it be not rude and crabbed. 'Tis stupidity and meanness to be obstinate against hatred and disdain; but against a virtuous and constant resolution, mixed with good will, 'tis the exercise of a noble and generous soul. They may acknowledge our service to a certain degree, and give us civilly to understand that they disdain us not; for the law that enjoins them to abominate us because we adore them, and to hate us because we love them, is certainly very cruel, if but for the difficulty of it. Why should they not give ear to our offers and requests, so long as they are kept within the bounds of modesty? wherefore should we fancy them had, all the riches of the king of fertile Phrygia, all the treasures of the Arabians, for one ringlet of Licymnias' hair, when she turns her head to you for fragrant kisses, or with easily assuaged anger denies them, which she would rather by far you took by force, and sometimes herself snatches one?"—Horace, Od. ii. 12, 21.

* St. Jerome contra Jovinian. ii. 72, Ed. 1537. Montaigne thus translates the passage on the margin of a copy of his essays: "Car la vertu du diable est aux roignous."
to have other thoughts within, and to be worse than they seem? A queen of our time ingeniously said, "that to refuse these courtesies is a testimony of weakness in women and a self-accusation of facility, and that a lady could not boast of her chastity who was never tempted." The limits of honor are not cut so short; they may give themselves a little rein, and relax a little without being faulty; there lies on the frontier some space free, indifferent and neuter. He that has beaten and pursued her into her fort is a strange fellow if he be not satisfied with his fortune; the price of the conquest is considered by the difficulty. Would you know what impression your service and merit have made in her heart? Judge of it by her behavior. Some may grant more, who do not grant so much. The obligation of a benefit wholly relates to the good will of those who confer it: the other coincident circumstances are dumb, dead, and casual; it costs her dearer to grant you that little, than it would do her companion to grant all. If in anything rarity give estimation, it ought especially in this: do not consider how little it is that is given, but how few have it to give; the value of money alters according to the coinage and stamp of the place. Whatever the spite and indiscretion of some may make them say in the excess of their discontent, virtue and truth will in time recover all the advantage. I have known some whose reputation has for a great while suffered under slander, who have afterward been restored to the world's universal approbation by their mere constancy without care or artifice; every one repents, and gives himself the lie for what he has believed and said; and from girls a little suspected they have been afterward advanced to the first rank among the ladies of honor. Somebody told Plato that all the world spoke ill of him. "Let them talk," said he, "I will live so as to make them change their note." Besides the fear of God, and the value of so rare a glory, which ought to make them look to themselves, the corruption of the age we live in compels them to it; and if I were they, there is nothing I would not rather do than intrust my reputation in so dangerous hands. In my time the pleasure of telling (a pleasure little inferior to that of doing) was not permitted but to those who had some faithful and only friend; but now the ordinary discourse and common table-talk is nothing but boasts of favors re-
ceived and the secret liberality of ladies. In earnest, 'tis too abject, too much meanness of spirit, in men to suffer such ungrateful, indiscreet, and giddy-headed people so to persecute, forage, and rifle those tender and charming favors.

This our immoderate and illegitimate exasperation against this vice springs from the most vain and turbulent disease that afflicts human minds, which is jealousy;

" Quis vetat apposito lumen de lumine sumi? 
Dent licet assidue, nil tamen inde perit; "*

she, and envy, her sister, seem to me to be the most foolish of the whole troop. As to the last, I can say little about it; 'tis a passion that, though said to be so mighty and powerful, had never to do with me. As to the other, I know it by sight, and that's all. Beasts feel it; the shepherd Cratis, having fallen in love with a she-goat, the he-goat, out of jealousy, came to butt him as he lay asleep, and beat out his brains.† We have raised this fever to a greater excess by the examples of some barbarous nations; the best disciplined have been touched with it, and 'tis reason, but not transported:

" Ense maritali nemo confossus adulter 
Purpureo Stygias sanguine tinxit aquas: " ‡

Lucullus, Caesar, Pompey, Antony, Cato, and other brave men were cuckolds, and knew it, without making any bustle about it; there was in those days but one coxcomb, Lepidus, § that died for grief that his wife had used him so.

* "Who says that one light should not be lighted from another light? Let them give ever so much, as much ever remains to lose." —Ovid, De Art Amandi., iii. 93. The measure of the last line is not good, but the words are taken from the epigram in the Catalecta entitled Priapus.

† Aelian, On Animals, xii. 42.

‡ "Never did adulterer slain by a husband stain with purple blood the Stygian waters."

§ "The father of the Triumvir."—Plutarch, Life of Pompey, c. 5.
and the god of our poet, when he surprised one of his companions with his wife, satisfied himself by putting them to shame only,

"Atque aliquis de dis non tristibus optat
   Sic fieri turpis:"  

and nevertheless took anger at the lukewarm embraces she gave him, complaining that upon that account she was grown jealous of his affection:

"Quid causas petis ex alto? fiducia cessit
   Quo tibi, diva, mei?"

nay, she entreats arms for a bastard of hers,

"Arma rogo genitrix nato," §

which are freely granted; and Vulcan speaks honorably of Æneas,

"Arma acri facienda viro,"

with in truth, a more than human humanity. And I am willing to leave this excess of kindness to the gods:

"Nec divis homines componer æquum est." ¶

As to the confusion of children, besides that the gravest legislators ordain and affect it in their republics, it touches not the women, where this passion is, I know not how, much better seated:

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* "Wretched man! when, taken in the fact, thou wilt be dragged out of doors by the heels, and suffer the punishment of thy adultery." —Catullus, xv. 17.

† "One of the merry gods said he should himself like to be so disgraced." —Ovid, Metam., iv. 187.

‡ "Why make question thus? Where, goddess, is your confidence in me?" —Virgil, Æneid, viii. 395.

§ "A mother for her son asks armor." —Idem, ibid., 383.

¶ "Armor must be made for a valiant hero." —Idem, ibid., 441.

* "Nor is it fit to compare men with gods." —Catullus, lxviii. 141.
When jealousy seizes these poor souls, weak and incapable of resistance, 'tis pity to see how miserably it torments and tyrannizes over them; it insinuates itself into them under the title of friendship, but after it has once possessed them, the same causes that served for a foundation of good will serve them for a foundation of mortal hatred. 'Tis, of all the diseases of the mind, that which the most things serve for aliment, and the fewest for remedy: the virtue, health, merit, reputation of the husband are incendiaries of their fury and ill will:

"Nullæ sunt inimicitiae, nisi amoris, acerbæ." †

This fever defaces and corrupts all they have of beautiful and good besides; and there is no action of a jealous woman, let her be how chaste and how good a housewife soever, that does not relish of anger and wrangling: 'tis a furious agitation, that rebounds them to an extremity quite contrary to its cause. This was very manifest in one Octavius at Rome, who, having lain with Pontia Posthumia, found his love so much augmented by fruition, that he solicited with all importunity to marry her, which seeing he could not persuade her to, this excessive affection precipitated him to the effects of the most cruel and mortal hatred, for he killed her. ‡ In like manner, the ordinary symptoms of this other amorous disease are intestine hatreds, private conspiracies, and cabals,

"Notumque furens quid femina possit," §

and a rage which so much the more frets itself, as it is compelled to excuse itself by a pretense of good will.

Now, the duty of chastity is of a vast extent; is it their will that we would have them restrain? That is a very

* "Often was Juno, the greatest of the goddesses, enraged by her husband's daily infidelities."—CATULLUS, lxviii. 138.

† "No hate is implacable except the hatred of love."—PROPERTIUS, ii. 8, 3.

‡ Tacitus, Annal., xiii. 44.

§ "Every one knows what an angry woman is capable of doing."—ENeid, v. 21.
supple and active thing: a thing very nimble, to be stayed. How? if dreams sometimes engage them so far that they cannot deny them: it is not in them, nor, peradventure, in chastity itself, seeing that is a female, to defend itself from lust and desire. If we are only to trust to their will, what a case are we in, then? Do but imagine what crowding there would be among men in pursuance of the privilege to run full speed, without tongue or eyes, into every woman's arms who would accept them. The Scythian women put out the eyes of all their slaves and prisoners of war, that they might have their pleasure of them, and they never the wiser.* Oh, the furious advantage of opportunity! Should any one ask me, what was the first thing to be considered in love matters, I should answer, that it was how to take a fitting time; and so the second; and so the third—'tis a point that can do everything. I have sometimes wanted fortune, but I have also sometimes been wanting to myself in matters of attempt. There is greater temerity required in this age of ours, which our young men excuse, under the name of heat; but should women examine it more strictly, they would find that it rather proceeds from contempt. I was always superstitiously afraid of giving offense, and have ever had a great respect for her I loved: besides, he who in this traffic takes away the reverence, defaces at the same time the luster. I would in this affair have a man a little play the child, the timorous, and the servant. If not altogether in this, I have in other things some air of the foolish bashfulness whereof Plutarch makes mention; and the course of my life has been divers ways hurt and blemished with it; a quality very ill suiting my universal form: and, indeed, what are we but sedition and discrepancy? I am as much out of countenance to be denied as I am to deny; and it so much troubles me to be troublesome to others, that on occasions where duty compels me to try the good will of any one in a thing that is doubtful and that will be chargeable to him, I do it very faintly, and very much against my will: but if it be for my

* Herodotus, iv. 2, says that the Scythians put out the eyes of their slaves, engaged in drawing milk from the mares, which was their sustenance; not a very obvious reason. Montaigne's version of the matter is more comprehensible.
own particular (whatever Homer truly says, * that modesty is a foolish virtue in an indigent person), I commonly commit it to a third person to blush for me, and deny those who employ me with the same difficulty: so that it has sometimes befallen me to have had a mind to deny when I had not the power to do it.

'Tis folly, then to attempt to bridle in women a desire that is so powerful in them, and so natural to them. And when I hear them brag of having so maidly and so temperate a will, I laugh at them: they retire too far back. If it be an old toothless trot, or a young dry consumptive thing, though it be not altogether to be believed, at least they may say it with more similitude of truth. But they who still move and breathe, talk at that ridiculous rate to their own prejudice, by reason that inconsiderate excuses are a kind of self-accusation; like a gentleman, a neighbor of mine, suspected to be insufficient,

"Languidior tenera cui pendens sicula beta,  
Nunquam se medium sustulit ad tunicam," †

who three or four days after he was married, to justify himself, went about boldly swearing that he had ridden twenty stages the night before: an oath that was afterward made use of to convict him of his ignorance in that affair, and to divorce him from his wife. Besides, it signifies nothing, for there is neither continency nor virtue where there are no opposing desires. It is true they may say, but we will not yield; saints themselves speak after that manner. I mean those who boast in good gravity of their coldness and insensibility, and who expect to be believed with a serious countenance; for when 'tis spoken with an affected look, when their eyes give the lie to their tongue, and when they talk in the cant of their profession which always goes against the hair, 'tis good sport. I am a great servant of liberty and plainness; but there is no remedy; if it be not wholly simple or childish, 'tis silly, and unbecoming ladies in this commerce, and presently runs into impudence. Their disguises and figures only serve to cozen fools; lying is there in its seat of honor; 'tis a by-way, that by a back door leads us to truth. If we

* Odyssey, xvii. 347.
† Catullus, lxvii. 21. The sense is in the context.
cannot curb their imagination, what would we have from them. Effects? There are enough of them that evade all foreign communication, by which chastity may be corrupted;

"Illud sœpe facit, quod sine teste facit;" *

and those which we fear the least, are, peradventure, most to be feared; their sins that make the least noise are the worst:

"Offendor mãcha simpliciore minus." †

There are ways by which they may lose their virginity without prostitution, and, which is more, without their knowledge: "Obsterix, virginis cujusdam integritatem manu velut explorans, sive malevolentia, sive inscitia, sive casu, dum inspicit, perdidit." ‡ Such a one, by seeking her maidenhood, has lost it; another by playing with it, has destroyed it. We cannot precisely circumscribe the actions, we interdict them; they must guess at our meaning under general and doubtful terms; the very idea we invent for their chastity is ridiculous: for, among the greatest examples arrived at my knowledge, Fatua, the wife of Faunus, is one: who never, after her marriage, suffered herself to be seen by any man whatever: § and the wife of Hiero, ‖ who never perceived her husband's stinking breath, imagining that it was common to all men. They must become insensible and invisible to satisfy us.

Now let us confess that the knot of this judgment of duty principally lies in the will; there have been husbands who have suffered cuckoldom, not only without reproach or taking offense at their wives, but with singular obligation to them and great commendation of their virtue. Such a woman has been, who prized her honor above her

* "He often does that which he does without a witness."—Martial, vii. 62, 6.

† "I am much more offended than with a professed strumpet."—Idem, vi. 7, 6.

‡ "By malevolence, or unskillfulness, or accident, midwives, seeking with the hand to test a girl's virginity, have sometimes destroyed it."—St. Augustine, De Civit. Dei, i. 18.

§ Varro, ap. Lactantius, i. 22.

‖ Plutarch, Apotheogms of the Ancient Kings. article Hiero.
life, and yet has prostituted it to the furious lust of a mortal enemy, to save her husband's life, and who, in so doing did that for him she would not have done for herself! This is not the place wherein we are to multiply these examples; they are too high and rich to be set off with so poor a foil as I can give them here; let us reserve them for a nobler place; but for examples of ordinary luster, do we not every day see women among us who surrender themselves for their husbands' sole benefit, and by their express order and mediation? and, of old, Phaulius the Argian who offered his to King Philip out of ambition: * as Galba † did it out of civility, who having entertained Mæcenas at supper, and observing that his wife and he began to cast sheep's eyes at one another and to compplot love by signs, let himself sink down upon his cushion, like one in a profound sleep, to give opportunity to their desires: which he handsomely confessed, for, at the same time, a servant making bold to lay hands on the plate that stood upon the table, he frankly cried, "What, you rogue? do you not see that I only sleep for Mæcenas?" Such a woman there may be, whose manners may be lewd enough, and yet whose will may be more reformed than another, who outwardly carries herself after a more regular manner. As we see some, who complain of having vowed chastity before they knew what they did; and I have also known others really complain of having been given up to debauchery before they were of the years of discretion. The vice of the parents, or the impulse of nature, which is a rough counselor, may be the cause.

In the east Indies, ‡ though chastity is of singular reputation, yet custom permitted a married woman to prostitute herself to any one who presented her with an elephant, and that with glory to have been valued at so high a rate. Phædo the philosopher, a man of birth, after the taking of his country Elis, made it his trade to prostitute the beauty of his youth, so long as it lasted, to any one that would, for money, thereby to gain his living; § and Solon was the first in Greece, 'tis said, who by his laws gave liberty to women, at the expense of their chastity, to provide for the necessitates

* Plutarch On Love, c. 16.
† Idem, ibid.
‡ Arrian, Hist. Indie., c. 17.
§ Diogenes Laertius, ii. 105; but he tells us that Phædo being a slave, was violated by his master.
of life; a custom that Herodotus says had been received in many governments before his time. And besides, what fruit is there of this painful solicitude? * For what justice soever there is in this passion, we are yet to consider whether it turns to account or no: does any one think to curb them, with all his industry?

"Pone seram; cohibe: sed quis custodiet ipsos
Custodes? cauta est, et ab illis incipit uxor." †

What commodity will not serve their turn, in so knowing an age?

Curiosity is vicious throughout; but 'tis pernicious here. 'Tis folly to examine into a disease for which there is no physic that does not inflame and make it worse; of which the shame grows still greater, and more public by jealousy, and of which the revenge more wounds our children than it heals us. You wither and die in the search of so obscure a proof. How miserably have they of my time arrived at that knowledge, who have been so unhappy as to have found it out? If the informer, does not at the same time apply a remedy and bring relief, 'tis an injurious information, and that better deserves a stab than the lie. We no less laugh at him who takes pains to prevent it, than at him who is a cuckold, and knows it not. The character of cuckold is indelible: who once has it carries it to his grave; the punishment proclaims it more than the fault. It is to much purpose to drag out of obscurity and doubt our private misfortunes, thence to expose them on tragic scaffolds; and misfortunes that only hurt us by being known; for we say a good wife, or a happy marriage, not that they are really so, but because no one says to the contrary. Men should be so discreet as to evade this tormenting and unprofitable knowledge: and the Romans had a custom, when returning from any expedition, to send home before to acquaint their wives with their coming, that they might not surprise them; ‡ and to this purpose it is, that a certain nation has introduced a custom, that the priest shall on the wedding-day

* i.e., jealousy.
† "Put on a lock; shut them up under a guard; but who shall guard the guard? she knows what she is about, and will begin with them."—Juvenal, vi. 346.
‡ Plutarch, Questions on Roman Affairs, c. 9.
unlock the bride's cabinet, to free the husband from the
doubt and curiosity of examining in the first assault, whether
she comes a virgin to his bed, or that she has been at the
trade before.

But the world will be talking. I know a hundred honest
men cuckold, that are handsomely, and not discreditably
met; a worthy man is pitied, but not disesteemed for it.
Order it so that your virtue may conquer your misfortune;
that good men may curse the occasion, and that he who
wrongs you may tremble but to think on't. And, moreover, who escapes being talked of at the same rate, from
the least even to the greatest?

"Tot qui legionibus imperitavit,
Et melior quam tu multis fuit, improbe, rebus." *

You hear how many honest men are reproached with this
in your presence; you may believe that you are no more
spared behind your back. Nay, the very ladies will be
laughing too; and what are they so apt to laugh at in this
virtuous age of ours, as at a peaceable and well-composed
marriage? There is not one among you but has made
somebody cuckold: and nature runs much in parallel, in
compensation, and turn for turn. The frequency of this
accident ought long since to have made it more easy; 'tis
now passed into custom.

Miserable passion! which has this also, that it is incom-
municable.

"Fors etiam nostris invidit questibus aures." †

for to what friend dare you intrust your griefs, who, if he
does not laugh at them, will not make use of the occasion
to get a share of the quarry? The sharps, as well as the
sweets of marriage, are kept secret by the wise; and among
its other troublesome conditions this to a prating fellow,
as I am, is one of the chief, that custom has rendered it
indecent and prejudicial to communicate to any one all
that a man knows and all that a man feels.

To give women the same counsel against jealousy, would
be so much time lost; their very being is so made up of

* "He who has commanded so many legions, many a man much
better far than you, you rascal."—Lucretius, iii. 1039, 1041.

† "Spiteful fortune also refuses ear to our complaints."—Catullus,
lxvii. 170.
suspicion, vanity, and curiosity, that to cure them by any legitimate way is not to be hoped. They often recover of this infirmity by a form of health much more to be feared than the disease itself; for as there are enchantments that cannot take away the evil, but by throwing it upon another, they also willingly transfer this fever to their husbands, when they shake it off themselves. And yet I know not, to speak truth, whether a man can suffer worse from them than their jealousy; 'tis the most dangerous of all their conditions, as the head is of all their members. Pittacus used to say,* that every one had his trouble, and that his was the jealous head of his wife; but for which he should think himself perfectly happy. A mighty inconvenience, sure, which could poison the whole life of so just, so wise, and so valiant a man; what must we other little fellows do? The senate of Marseilles had reason to grant him his request who begged leave to kill himself that he might be delivered from the clamor of his wife; for 'tis a mischief that is never removed but by removing the whole piece; and that has no remedy but flight or patience, though both of them very hard. He was, methinks, an understanding fellow who said, 'twas a happy marriage between a blind wife and a deaf husband.

Let us also consider whether the great and violent severity of obligation we enjoin them, does not produce two effects contrary to our design: namely, whether it does not render the pursuants more eager to attack, and the women more easy to yield. For as to the first, by raising the value of the place we raise the value and the desire of the conquest. Might it not be Venus herself, who so cunningly enhanced the price of her merchandise, by making the laws her bawds; knowing how insipid a delight it would be that was not heightened by fancy and hardness to achieve? In short, 'tis all swine's flesh, varied by sauces, as Flamininius' host said.† Cupid is a roguish god, who makes it his sport to contend with devotion and justice: 'tis his glory that his power mates all powers, and that all other rules give place to his;

* Plutarch, On Contentment, c. 11.
† Livy, xxxv. 49.
As to the second point; should we not be less cuckolds, if we less feared to be so? according to the humor of women whom interdiction incites, and who are more eager, being forbidden.

"Ubi velis, nolunt; ubi nolis, volunt ulter; Concessa pudet ire via."  

What better interpretation can we make of Messalina's behavior? She, at first, made her husband a cuckold in private, as in the common use: but, bringing her business about with too much ease, by reason of her husband's stupidity, she soon scorned that way, and presently fell to making open love, to own her lovers, and to favor and entertain them in the sight of all: she would make him know and see how she used him. This animal, not to be roused with all this, and rendering her pleasures dull and flat by his too stupid facility, by which he seemed to authorize and make them lawful; what does she? Being the wife of a living and healthful emperor, and at Rome, the theater of the world, in the face of the sun, and with solemn ceremony, and to Silius, who had long before enjoyed her, she publicly marries herself one day that her husband was gone out of the city.§ Does it not seem as if she was going to become chaste by her husband's negligence? or that she sought another husband who might sharpen her appetite by his jealousy, and who by watching should incite her? But the first difficulty she met with was also the last: this beast suddenly roused: these sleepy, sluggish sort of men are often the most dangerous; I have found by experience, that this extreme toleration, when it comes to dissolve, produces the most severe revenge; for taking fire on a sudden, anger and fury being combined in one, discharge their utmost force at the first onset,

* "And seeks out matter for his crimes."—Ovid, Trist., iv. 1, 34.

† "You will, they won't; you will not, they insist; they will not go in permitted paths."—Terence, Eunuchus, act iv., sc. 8, v. 43.

‡ Lucan, ii. 446.

he put her to death, and with her a great number of those with whom she had intelligence, and even one of them who could not help it, and whom she had caused to be forced to her bed with scourges.†

What Virgil says of Venus and Vulcan, Lucretius had better expressed of a stolen enjoyment between her and Mars:

*Belli fera moena Mavors
Armi potens regit, in gremium qui sepe tuum se
Rejicit, æterno devinctas vulnere amoris

Pascit amore avidos inhians in te, Dea, visus,
Eque tuo pendet resupini spiritus ore:
Hunc tu, Diva, tuo recubantem corpore sancto
Circumfusa super, suaveis ex ore loquelas
Funde.”‡

When I consider this rejicit, pascit, inhians, molli, fovei, medullas labefacta, pendet, percurririt, and that noble circumfusa, mother of the gentle infusus; I contemn those little quibbles and verbal allusions that have been since in use. Those worthy people stood in need of no subtilty to disguise their meaning; their language is downright, and full of natural and continued vigor; they are all epigram; not only the tail, but the head, body, and feet. There is nothing forced, nothing languishing, but everything keeps the same pace: "Contextus totus virilis est; non sunt circa floresculos occupati.”§

"Tis not a soft eloquence, and without offense only; 'tis nervous and solid, that does not so much please, as it fills and ravishes the greatest minds. When I see these brave forms of expression, so lively, so profound, I

* "He let loose his whole fury.”—Aeneid, xii. 499.
† Tacitus, Annal., xi. 36.
‡ "Mars the god of wars, who controls the cruel tasks of war, often reclines on thy bosom, and greedily drinks love at both his eyes, vanquished by the eternal wound of love: and his breath, as he reclines, hangs on thy lips; bending thy head over him as he lies upon thy sacred person, pour forth sweet and persuasive words.”—Lucretius, i. 28.
§ "The whole contexture is manly; they don’t occupy themselves with little flowers of rhetoric.”—Seneca, Ep. 33.
do not say that 'tis Well said, but Well thought. 'Tis the sprightliness of the imagination that swells and elevates the words: "Pectus est quod disertum facit."* Our people call language, judgment, and fine words, full conceptions. This painting is not so much carried on by dexterity of hand, as by having the object more vividly imprinted in the soul. Gallus speaks simply, because he conceives simply: Horace does not content himself with a superficial expression; that would betray him; he sees farther and more clearly into things; his mind breaks into and rummages all the magazine of words and figures wherewith to express himself, and he must have them more than ordinary because his conception is so. Plutarch says, † that he sees the Latin tongue by the things: 'tis here the same; the sense illuminates and produces the words, no more words of air, but of flesh and bone; they signify more than they say. Moreover, those who are not well skilled in a language, present some image of this; for in Italy, I said whatever I had a mind to in common discourse, but in more serious talk, I durst not have trusted myself with an idiom that I could not wind and turn out of its ordinary pace; I would have a power of introducing something of my own.

The handling and utterance of fine wits is that which sets off language; not so much by innovating it, as by putting it to more vigorous and various services, and by straining, bending, and adapting it to them. They do not create words, but they enrich their own, and give them weight and signification by the uses they put them to, and teach them unwonted notions, but withal, ingeniously and discreetly. And how little this talent is given to all, is manifest by the many French scribblers of this age; they are bold and proud enough not to follow the common road, but want of invention and discretion ruins them; there is nothing seen in their writings but a wretched affectation of a strange new style, with cold and absurd disguises, which instead of elevating, depress the matter; provided they can but trick themselves out with new words, they care not what they signify; and to bring in a new word by the head.

* "The heart makes the eloquence."—QUINTILIAN, x. 7.
† Life of Demosthenes, c. 1.
and shoulders, they leave the old one, very often more sinewy and significant than the other.

There is stuff enough in our language, but there is a defect in cutting out; for there is nothing that might not be made out of our terms of hunting and war, which is a fruitful soil to borrow from; and forms of speaking, like herbs, improve and grow stronger by being transplanted. I find it sufficiently abundant, but not sufficiently pliable and vigorous; it commonly quails under a powerful conception; if you would maintain the dignity of your style, you will often perceive it to flag and languish under you, and there Latin steps in to its relief, as Greek does to others. Of some of these words I have just picked out we do not so easily discern the energy, by reason that the frequent use of them has in some sort abased their beauty, and rendered it common; as in our ordinary language there are many excellent phrases and metaphors to be met with, of which the beauty is withered by age, and the color is sullied by too common handling; but that nothing lessens the relish to an understanding man, nor does it derogate from the glory of those ancient authors who, 'tis likely, first brought those words into that luster.*

The sciences treat of things too refinedly, after an artificial, very different from the common and natural way. My page makes love, and understands it; but read to him Leo Hebraeus † and Ficinus, where they speak of love, its thoughts and actions, he understands it not. I do not find in Aristotle most of my ordinary motions; they are there covered and disguised in another robe for the use of the schools. Well may they speed; but were I of the trade, I would as much naturalize art as they artify nature. Let us let Bembo and Equicola alone.

When I write, I can very well spare both the company and the remembrance of books, lest they should interrupt my progress; and also, in truth, the best authors too much humble and discourage me; I am very much of the

* Compare with this passage Henri Estienne's "Precevellence du Langage François," and his "Conformité du Langage François avec le Grec," of which two works M. Leon Feugere has published an edition, with notes.

† Leo, the Jew, Ficinus, Cardinal Bembo, and Mario Equicola all wrote treatises on Love.
painter’s mind, who, having represented cocks most wretchedly ill, charged all his boys not to suffer any natural cock to come into his shop; and had rather need to give myself a little luster, of the invention of Antigenides the musician, who, when he was to sing or play, took care beforehand that the auditory should, either before or after, be glutted with some other ill musicians. But I can hardly be without Plutarch; he is so universal, and so full, that upon all occasions, and what extravagant subject soever you take in hand, he will still be at your elbow and hold out to you a liberal and not to be exhausted hand of riches and embellishments. It vexes me that he is so exposed to be the spoil of those who are conversant with him: I can scarce cast an eye upon him but I purloin either a leg or a wing.

And also for this design of mine ’tis convenient for me to write at home, in a wild country, where I have nobody to assist or relieve me; where I hardly see a man who understands the Latin of his Pater noster, and of French as little, if not less. I might have it better elsewhere, but then the work would have been less my own; and its principal end and perfection is to be exactly mine. I readily correct an accidental error, of which I am full, as I run carelessly on; but for my ordinary and constant imperfections, it were a kind of treason to put them out. When another tells me, or that I say to myself, “Thou art too thick of figures; this is a word of Gascon growth: that is a dangerous phrase (I do not reject any of those that are used in the common streets of France; they who would fight custom with grammar are fools); this is an ignorant discourse: this is a paradoxical discourse; that is going too far: thou makest thyself too merry at times: men will think thou sayest a thing in good earnest which thou only speakest in jest.” “Yes,” say I, “but I correct the faults of inadvertence, not those of custom. Do I not talk at the same rate throughout? Do I not represent myself to the life? ’Tis enough that I have done what I designed; all the world knows me in my book, and my book in me.”

Now I have an apish, imitating quality; when I used to write verses (and I never made any but Latin) they evidently discovered the poet I had last read, and some of my first essays have a little exotic taste: I speak something
another kind of language at Paris than I do at Montaigne. Whoever I steadfastly look upon easily leaves some impression of his upon me; whatever I consider I usurp, whether a foolish countenance, a disagreeable look, or a ridiculous way of speaking; and vices most of all, because they seize and stick to me, and will not leave hold without shaking. I swear more by imitation than by complexion: a murderous imitation, like that of the apes so terrible both in stature and strength, that Alexander met with in a certain country of the Indies, and which he would have had much ado any other way to have subdued; but they afforded him the means by that inclination of theirs to imitate whatever they saw done; for by that, the hunters were taught to put on shoes in their sight, and to tie them fast with many knots, and to muffle up their heads in caps all composed of running nooses, and to seem to anoint their eyes with glue; so did those poor beasts employ their imitation to their own ruin: they glued up their own eyes, haltered and bound themselves. The other faculty of playing the mimic, and ingeniously acting the words and gestures of another, purposely to make people merry and to raise their admiration, is no more in me than in a stock. When I swear my own oath 'tis only, by God! of all oaths the most direct. They say that Socrates swore by the dog; * Zeno had for his oath the same interjection at this time in use among the Italians, Cappari; † Pythagoras swore by water and air. ‡ I am so apt, without thinking of it, to receive these superficial impressions, that if I have Majesty or Highness in my month three days together, they come out instead of Excellency and Lordship eight days after; and what I say to-day in sport and fooling I shall say the same to-morrow seriously. Wherefore, in writing, I more unwillingly undertake beaten arguments, lest I should handle them at another's expense. Every subject is equally fertile to me: a fly will serve the purpose, and 'tis well if this I have in hand has not been undertaken at the recommendation of as flighty a will. I may begin with that which pleases me best, for the subjects are all linked to one another.

* Ælian, De Animal., xvii. 251.
† Diogenes Laertius, vii. 32. Cappari, or Capparis, is the caper-tree.
‡ Idem, viii. 6.
But my soul displeases me in that it ordinarily produces its deepest and most airy conceits and which please me best, when I least expect or study for them, and which suddenly vanish, having, at the instant, nothing to apply them to; on horseback, at table, and in bed: but most on horseback, where I am most given to think. My speaking is a little nicely jealous of silence and attention: if I am talking my best, who ever interrupts me, stops me. In traveling, the necessity of the way will often put a stop to discourse; besides which I, for the most part, travel without company fit for regular discourses, by which means I have all the leisure I would to entertain myself. It falls out as it does in my dreams; while dreaming I recommend them to my memory (for I am apt to dream that I dream), but, the next morning, I may represent to myself of what complexion they were, whether gay, or sad, or strange, but what they were, as to the rest, the more I endeavor to retrieve them, the deeper I plunge them in oblivion. So of thoughts that come accidentally into my head, I have no more but a vain image remaining in my memory; only enough to make me torment myself in their quest to no purpose.

Well, then, laying books aside, and more simply and materially speaking, I find, after all, that Love is nothing else but the thirst of enjoying the object desired; or Venus any other thing than the pleasure of discharging one's vessels, just as the pleasure nature gives in discharging other parts, that either by immoderation or indiscretion become vicious. According to Socrates,* love is the appetite of generation, by the mediation of beauty. And when I consider the ridiculous titillation of this pleasure, the absurd, crack-brained, wild motions with which it inspires Zeno and Cratippus, the indiscreet rage, the countenance inflamed with fury and cruelty in the sweetest effects of love, and then that austere air, so grave, severe, ecstatic, in so wanton an action; that our delights and our excrements are promiscuously shuffled together; and that the supreme pleasure brings along with it, as in pain, fainting and complaining; I then believe it to be true as Plato says;† that the gods made man for their sport.

* In Plato's Banquet.
† Laws, i. 13, viii. 10.
ESSAYS OF MONTAIGNE.

"Quaenam ista jocandi
Sævitia!" *

and that it was in mockery that nature has ordered the most agitative of actions and the most common, to make us equal and to put fools and wise men, beasts and us, on a level. Even the most contemplative and prudent man, when I imagine him in this posture, I hold him an impudent fellow to pretend to be prudent and contemplative; they are the peacocks’ feet, that abate his pride.

"Ridentem dicere verum
Quid vetat?" †

They who banish serious imaginations from their sports, do, says one, like him who dares not adore the statue of a saint, if not covered with a veil. We eat and drink, indeed, as beasts do; but these are not actions that obstruct the functions of the soul, in these we maintain our advantage over them; this other action subjects all other thought, and by its imperious authority makes an ass of all Plato’s divinity and philosophy; and yet there is no complaint of it. In everything else a man may keep some decorum, all other operations submit to the rules of decency; this cannot so much as in imagination appear other than vicious or ridiculous: find out, if you can, therein any serious and discreet procedure. Alexander said, ‡ that he chiefly knew himself to be mortal by this act, and sleeping; sleep suffocates and suppresses the faculties of the soul; the familiarity with women likewise dissipates and exhausts them: doubtless 'tis a mark, not only of our original corruption, but also of our vanity and deformity.

On the one side, nature pushes us on to it, having fixed the most noble, useful, and pleasant of all her functions to this desire; and, on the other side, leaves us to accuse and avoid it, as insolent and indecent, to blush at it, and to recommend abstinence. Are we not brutes, to call that work brutish which begets us? People of so many differing religions have concurred in several proprieties, as sacrifices, lamps, burning incense, fasts, and offerings; and

* "With a sportive cruelty."—CLAUDIAN in Eutrop., i. 24.
† "What prevents us from speaking truth in jest."—HORACE, Sat. i. 1, 24.
‡ Plutarch, How to Distinguish a Flatterer from a Friend. c, 23,
among others, in the condemning this act; all opinions tend that way, besides the widespread custom of circumcision, which may be regarded as a punishment. We have, peradventure, reason to blame ourselves for being guilty of so foolish a production as man, and to call the act, and the parts that are employed in the act, shameful (mine, truly, are now shameful and pitiful). The Esseniens, of whom Pliny speaks, * kept up their country for several ages without either nurse or baby-clouts, by the arrival of strangers who, following this pretty humor, came continually to them: a whole nation being resolute, rather to hazard a total extermination, than to engage themselves in female embraces, and rather to lose the succession of men, than to beget one. 'Tis said, † that Zeno never had to do with a woman but once in his life, and then out of civility, that he might not seem too obstinately to disdain the sex. Every one avoids seeing a man born, every one runs to see him die; to destroy him, a spacious field is sought out, in the face of the sun; but, to make him, we creep into as dark and private a corner as we can; 'tis a man's duty to withdraw himself bashfully from the light to create; but 'tis glory and the fountain of many virtues to know how to destroy what we have made; the one is injury, the other favor; for Aristotle says that to do any one a kindness, in a certain phrase of his country, is to kill him. The Athenians, to couple the disgrace of these two actions, having to purge the isle of Delos, and to justify themselves to Apollo, interdicted at once all birth and burials in the precincts thereof. ‡ "Nostri nosmet penilet." §

There are some nations that will not be seen to eat. I know a lady, and of the best quality, who has the same opinion, that chewing disfigures the face, and takes away much from the ladies' grace and beauty; and therefore unwillingly appears at a public table with an appetite; and I know a man also, who cannot endure to see another eat, nor himself to be seen eating; and who is more shy of

* Nat. Hist., v. 17.
† Diogenes Laertius, vii. 13. What is there said, however, is that Zeno seldom had commerce with boys, lest he should be deemed a very misogynist.
‡ Thucydides, iii. 104.
§ "We are ashamed of ourselves."—Terence, Phormi., i. 3, 20.
company when putting in than when putting out. In the Turkish empire, there are a great number of men, who to excel others, never suffer themselves to be seen when they make their repast; who never have any more than one a week; who cut and mangle their faces and limbs; who never speak to any one; fanatic people who think to honor their nature by disnaturating themselves; who value themselves upon their contempt of themselves, and purport to grow better by being worse. What monstrous animal is this, that is a horror to himself, to whom his delights are grievous, and who weds himself to misfortune? There are people who conceal their life,

"Exsilioque domos et dulcia limina mutant," *

and withdraw them from the sight of other men; who avoid health and cheerfulness, as dangerous and prejudicial qualities. Not only many sects, but many peoples, curse their birth, and bless their death; and there is a place where the sun is abominated, and darkness adored. We are only ingenious in using ourselves ill; 'tis the real quarry our intellects fly at; and intellect, when misapplied, is a dangerous tool!

"O miser! quorum gaudia crimen habent!"†

Alas, poor man! thou hast enough inconveniences that are inevitable, without increasing them by thine own invention; and art miserable enough by nature, without being so by art; thou hast real and essential deformities enough, without forging those that are imaginary. Dost thou think thou art too much at ease, unless half thy ease is uneasy? dost thou find that thou hast not performed all the necessary offices that nature has enjoined thee, and that she is idle in thee, if thou dost not oblige thyself to other and new offices? Thou dost not stick to infringe her universal and undoubted laws; but stickest to thy own special and fantastic rules, and by how much more particular, uncertain, and contradictory they are, by so much thou employest thy whole endeavor in them; the laws of

* "And quit for exile their homes and pleasant abodes."—Virgil, Georg., ii. 511.

† "O wretched men, whose pleasures are a crime!"—Pseudo-Gallus, i. 180.
thy parish occupy and bind thee; those of God and the world concern thee not. Run but a little over the examples of this kind; thy life is full of them.

While the verses of these two poets treat so reservedly and discreetly of wantonness as they do, methinks they discover it much more openly. Ladies cover their necks with network, priests cover several sacred things, and painters shadow their pictures to give them greater luster: and 'tis said that the sun and wind strike more violently by reflection than in a direct line. The Egyptian wisely answered him who asked him what he had under his cloak; "it is hid under my cloak," said he, "that thou mayest not know what it is:" † but there are certain other things that people hide only to show them. Hear this fellow who speaks plainer,

"Et nudum pressi corpus ad usque meum:" ‡

methinks, I am eunuched with the expression. Let Martial turn up Venus' coats as high as he may, he cannot show her so naked; he, who says all that is to be said, gluts and disgusts us. He who is afraid to express himself, draws us on to guess at more than is meant; there is treachery in this sort of modesty, and specially when they half open, as these do, § so fair a path to imagination. Both the action and description should relish of theft.

The more respectful, more timorous, more coy, and secret love of the Spaniards and Italians pleases me. I know not who of old wished his throat as long as that of a crane, that he might the longer taste what he swallowed: || it had been better wished as to this quick and precipitous pleasure, especially in such natures as mine that have the fault of being too prompt. To stay its flight and delay it with preambles; all things—a glance, a bow, a word, a sign, stand for favor and recompense between them. Were it not an excellent piece of thrift in him who could dine on the steam of the roast? 'Tis a passion that mixes with

* Virgil and Lucretius.
† Plutarch, On Curiosity, c. 3.
‡ "And pressed her naked body to mine."—Ovid, Amor., i. 5, 24.
§ Virgil and Lucretius.
|| Athenæus, i. 6.
very little solid essence, far more vanity and feverish raving; and we should serve and pay it accordingly. Let us teach the ladies to set a better value and esteem upon themselves, to amuse and fool us: we give the last charge at the first onset; the French impetuosity will still show itself; by spinning out their favors, and exposing them in small parcels, even miserable old age itself will find some little share of reward, according to its worth and merit. He who has no fruition but in fruition, who wins nothing unless he sweeps the stakes, who takes no pleasure in the chase but in the quarry, ought not to introduce himself in our school: the more steps and degrees there are, so much higher and more honorable is the uppermost seat; we should take a pleasure in being conducted to it, as in magnificent palaces, by various porticoes and passages, long and pleasant galleries, and many windings. This disposition of things would turn to our advantage; we should there longer stay and longer love; without hope and without desire we proceed not worth a pin. Our conquest and entire possession is what they ought infinitely to dread: when they wholly surrender themselves up to the mercy of our fidelity and constancy they run a mighty hazard; they are virtues very rare and hard to be found; the ladies are no sooner ours, than we are no more theirs:

"Posquam cupidæ mentis satiata libido est,
Verba nihil metuere, nihil perjuria curant;"*

And Thrasonides, † a young man of Greece, was so in love with his passion that, having gained a mistress' consent, he refused to enjoy her, that he might not by fruition quench and stupefy the unquiet ardor of which he was so proud, and with which he so fed himself. Dearness is a good sauce to meat: do but observe how much the manner of salutation, particular to our nation, has, by its faculties, made kisses, which Socrates ‡ says are so powerful and dangerous for the stealing of hearts, of no esteem. It is a nauseous custom and injurious for the ladies, that they must be obliged to lend their lips to every fellow who has

* "When our desires are once satisfied, we care little for oaths and promises."—Catullus, ixiv. 147.

† Diogenes Laertius, vii. 130.

‡ Xenophon, Mem. on Socrates, i. 3, 11.
three footmen at his heels, however disgusting he may be in himself,

"Cujus livida naribus caninis
Dependet glacies, rigetque barba . . .
Centum occurrere malo culilingis:" *

and we ourselves do not get much by it; for as the world is divided, for three beautiful women we must kiss threescore ugly ones; and to a tender stomach, like those of my age, an ill kiss overpays a good one.

In Italy they passionately court even their common women who sell themselves for money, and justify the doing so by saying, "that there are degrees of fruition, and that by such service they would procure for themselves that which is most entire; the women sell nothing but their bodies; the will is too free and too much its own to be exposed to sale." So that these say, 'tis the will they undertake; and they have reason. 'Tis indeed the will that we are to serve and gain by wooing. I abhor to imagine mine, a body without affection: and this madness is, methinks, cousin-german to that of the boy, who would needs pollute the beautiful statue of Venus, made by Praxiteles; † or that of the furious Egyptian, who violated the dead carcass of a woman he was embalming; ‡ which was the occasion of the law then made in Egypt, that the corpses of beautiful young women, of those of good quality, should be kept three days before they should be delivered to those whose office it was to take care for the interment. § Periander did more wonderfully, who extended his conjugal affection (more regular and legitimate) to the enjoyment of his wife Melissa after she was dead.|| Does it not seem a lunatic humor in the Moon, seeing she could no otherwise enjoy her darling Endymion, to lay him for several months asleep, and to please herself with the fruition of a boy, who stirred not but in his sleep? I likewise say that we love a body without a soul or sentiment when we love a body without its consent and concurring desire. All enjoyments are not alike: there are some that are etic and languishing:

* Martial, vii. 94.
† Valerius Maximus, vii. 1, 11.
‡ Herodotus, ii. 89.
§ Idem, ibid.
|| Diogenes Laertius, i. 96.
a thousand other causes besides good will may procure us this favor from the ladies; this is not a sufficient testi-
mony of affection: treachery may lurk there, as well as elsewhere: they sometimes go to’t by halves,

"Tanquam thura merumque parent . . .
Absentem, marmoreamve putes;" *

I know some who had rather lend that than their coach, and who only impart themselves that way. You are to examine whether your company pleases them upon any other account, or, as some strong-chined groom, for that only; in what degree of favor and esteem you are with them,

"Tibi si datur unij
Quo lapide illa diem candidiore notet." †

What if they eat your bread with the sauce of a more pleasing imagination?

"Te tenet, absentes alios suspirat amores." ‡

What? have we not seen one in these days of ours who made use of this act for the purpose of a most horrid revenge, by that means to kill and poison, as he did, a worthy lady?

Such as know Italy will not think it strange if, for this subject, I seek not elsewhere for examples; for that nation may be called the regent of the world in this. They have more generally handsome and fewer ugly women than we: but for rare and excellent beauties we have as many as they. I think the same of their intellects: of those of the common sort, they have evidently far more: brutishness is immeasurably rarer there; but in individual characters, of the highest form, we are nothing indebted to them. If I should carry on the comparison, I might say, as touching valor, that, on the contrary, it is, to what it is with them, common and natural with us; but sometimes we see them possessed of it to such a degree as surpasses the greatest

*"As if they were performing some sacrifice; you would think them absent, or marble."—Martial, xi. 103, 12; and 59, 8.

†"Whether she gives herself to thee only, and marks thy day out with the whiter stone."—Catullus, lxvii. 147.

‡ "She has you in her arms, but her thoughts are with another lover."—Tibullus, i. 6, 35.
examples we can produce. The marriages of that country are defective in this; their custom commonly imposes so rude and so slavish a law upon the women, that the most distant acquaintance with a stranger is as capital an offense as the most intimate; so that all approaches being rendered necessarily substantial, and seeing that all comes to one account, they have no hard choice to make; and when they have broken down the fence, we may safely presume they get on fire. "Luxuria ipsis vinculis, sicut fera bestia, irritata, deinde emissa." * They must give them a little more rein;

"Vidi ego nuper equum, contra sua fre na tenacem, 
Ore reluctanti fulminis ire modo;" †

the desire of company is allayed by giving it a little liberty. We are pretty much in the same case: they are extreme in constraint, we in license. "Tis a good custom we have in France, that our sons are received into the best families, there to be entertained and bred up pages, as in a school of nobility; and 'tis looked upon as a discourtesy and an affront to refuse this to a gentleman. I have taken notice (for so many families, so many differing forms) that the ladies, who have been strictest with their maids, have had no better luck than those who allowed them a greater liberty. There should be moderation in these things; one must leave a great deal of their conduct to their own discretion; for, when all comes to all, no discipline can curb them throughout. But it is true withal that she who comes off with flying colors from a school of liberty, brings with her whereon to repose more confidence than she who comes away sound from a severe and strict school.

Our fathers dressed up their daughters' looks in bashfulness and fear (their courage and desires being the same); we ours in confidence and assurance; we understand nothing of the matter; we must leave it to the Sarmatian women, who may not live with a man till with their own

* "Lust, like a wild beast, being more excited by being bound, breaks from his chains with greater wilderness."—Livy, xxxiv. 4.

† "I saw, the other day, a horse struggling against his bit, rush like a thunderbolt."—Ovid, Amor., iii. 4, 13.
hands they have first killed another in battle. * For me, who have no other title left me to these things but by the ears, 'tis sufficient if, according to the privilege of my age, they retain me for one of their counsel. I advise them then, and us men too, to abstinence; but if the age we live in will not endure it, at least modesty and discretion. For, as in the story of Aristippus † who, speaking to some young men who blushed to see him go into a scandalous house, said: "The vice is in not coming out, not in going in," let her who has no care of her conscience, have yet some regard to her reputation; and though she be rotten within, let her carry a fair outside at least.

I commend a gradation and delay in bestowing their favors: Plato declares that, in all sorts of love, facility and promptness are forbidden to the defendant. 'Tis a sign of eagerness, which they ought to disguise with all the art they have, so rashly, wholly, and hand-over-head to surrender themselves. In carrying themselves orderly and measuredly in the granting their last favors, they much more allure our desires and hide their own. Let them still fly before us, even those who have most mind to be overtaken: they better conquer us by flying, as the Scythians did. To say the truth, according to the law that nature has imposed upon them, it is not properly for them either to will or desire; their part is to suffer, obey, and consent: and for this it is that nature has given them a perpetual capacity, which in us is but at times and uncertain; they are always fit for the encounter, that they may be always ready when we are so, "Pati natœ." ‡ And whereas she has ordered that our appetites shall be manifest by a prominent demonstration, she would have theirs to be hidden and concealed within, and has furnished them with parts improper for ostentation, and simply defensive. Such proceedings as this that follows must be left to the Amazonian license: Alexander marching his army through Hyrcania, Thalestris, queen of the Amazons, came with three hundred light horse of her own sex, well mounted and armed, having left the remainder of a very great army

* Herodotus, iv. 177.
† Diogenes Laertius, ii. 69.
‡ "Born to suffer."—Seneca, Ep. 95.
that followed her, behind the neighboring mountains, to give him a visit; where she publicly and in plain terms told him that the fame of his valor and victories had brought her thither to see him, and to make him an offer of her forces to assist him in the pursuit of his enterprises: and that finding him so handsome, young, and vigorous, she, who was also perfect in all those qualities, advised that they might lie together, to the end that from the most valiant woman of the world, and the bravest man then living, there might spring some great and wonderful issue for the time to come. Alexander returned her thanks for all the rest, but to give leisure for the accomplishment of her last demand, he detained her thirteen days in that place, which were spent in royal feasting and jollity, for the welcome of so courageous a princess.*

We are, almost throughout, unjust judges of their actions, as they are of ours; I confess the truth when it makes against me, as well as when 'tis on my side. 'Tis an abominable intemperance that pushes them on so often to change, and that will not let them limit their affection to any one person whatever; as is evident in that goddess, to whom are attributed so many changes and so many lovers. But 'tis true withal, that 'tis contrary to the nature of love, if it be not violent; and contrary to the nature of violence, if it be constant. And they who wonder, exclaim, and keep such a clutter to find out the causes of this frailty of theirs, as unnatural and not to be believed, 'how comes it to pass they do not discern how often they are themselves guilty of the same, without any astonishment or miracle at all? It would, peradventure, be more strange to see the passion fixed; 'tis not a simply corporeal passion; if there be no end to avarice and ambition, there is doubtless no more in desire; it still lives after satiety; and 'tis impossible to prescribe either constant satisfaction, or end; it ever goes beyond its possession. And by that means inconstancy, peradventure, is in some sort more pardonable in them than in us: they may plead, as well as we, the inclination to variety and novelty common to us both; and secondly, without us, that they buy a pig in a poke: Joan, queen of Naples, caused her first husband Andreasso to be hanged at the bars of her window in a

* Diodorus Siculus, xvii. 16; Quintus Curtius, vi. 5.
halter of gold and silk, woven with her own hand, because in matrimonial performances she neither found his parts nor abilities answer the expectation she had conceived from his stature, beauty, youth, and activity, by which she had been caught and deceived. They may say, there is more pains required in doing than in suffering; and so they are on their part always at least provided for necessity, whereas on our part it may fall out otherwise. For this reason it was that Plato * wisely made a law, that before marriage, to determine of the fitness of persons, the judges should see the young men who pretended to it stripped stark naked, and the women but to the girdle only. When they come to try us, they do not, perhaps, find us worthy of their choice:

"Experta latus, madidoque simillima loro
 Inguina, nec lassa stare coacta manu,
 Deserit imbelles thalamos." †

'Tis not enough that a man's will be good; weakness and insufficiency lawfully break a marriage,

"Et querendum aliunde foret nervosius illud,
 Quod posset zonam solvere virginam:" ‡

why not? and according to her own standard, an amorous intelligence, more licentious and active,

"Si blando nequeat superesse labori." §

But it is not great impudence to offer our imperfections and imbecilities, where we desire to please and leave a good opinion and esteem of ourselves? For the little that I am able to do now,

"Ad unum Mollis opus."

I would not trouble a woman, that I am to reverence and fear.

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* Laws, xi.
† "After using every endeavor to arouse him to action, she quits the barren couch."—Martial, vii. 58.
‡ "And seeks a more vigorous lover to undo her virgin zone."—Catullus, lxvii. 27.
§ "If his strength be unequal to the pleasant task."—Virgil, Georg., iii. 127.
|| "Fit but for once."—Horace, Epod. xii. 15.
"Fuge suspicari,
Cujus undenum trepidavit aetas
Claudare lustrum."*

Nature should satisfy herself in having rendered this age miserable, without rendering it ridiculous too. I hate to see it, for one poor inch of pitiful vigor which comes upon it but thrice a week, to strut and set out itself with as much eagerness as if it could do mighty feats; a true flame of flax; and laugh to sec it so boil and bubble and then in a moment so congealed and extinguished. This appetite ought to appertain only to the flower of beautiful youth: trust not to its seconding that indefatigable, full, constant, magnanimous ardor you think in you, for it will certainly leave you in the lurch at your greatest need; but rather transfer it to some tender, bashful, and ignorant boy, who yet trembles at the rod and blushes;

"Indum sanguineo veluti violaverit ostro
Si quis ebur, vel mista rubent ubi lilia multa
Alba rosa." †

Who can stay till the morning without dying for shame to behold the disdain of the fair eyes of her who knows so well his fumbling impertinence,

"Et taciti fecere tamen convicia vultus," ‡

has never had the satisfaction and the glory of having cudgeled them till they were weary, with the vigorous performance of one heroic night. When I have observed any one to be vexed with me, I have not presently accused her levity, but have been in doubt, if I had not reason rather to complain of nature; she has doubtless used me very uncivilly and unkindly,

"Si non longa satis, si non bene mentula crassa:
Nimirum sapiunt, videntque parvam
Matronae quoque mentulam illibenter;" §

* "Fear not him whose eleventh lustrum is closed."—Horace, Od. ii. 4, 12, limits it to the eighth.

† "As Indian ivory streaked with crimson, or white lilies mixed with the damask rose."—Aeneid, xii. 67.

‡ "Though she nothing say, her looks betray her anger."—Ovid, Amor., i. 7, 21.

§ The first of these verses is the commencement of an epigram of the Veterum Poetarum Catalecta, and the two others are from an
and done me a most enormous injury. Every member I have, as much one as another, is equally my own, and no other more properly makes me a man than this.

I universally owe my entire picture to the public. The wisdom of my instruction consists in liberty, in truth, in essence: disclaiming to introduce those little, feigned, common, and provincial rules into the catalogue of its real duties; all natural, general, and constant, of which civility and ceremony are daughters indeed, but illegitimate. We are sure to have the vices of appearance, when we shall have had those of essence; when we have done with these, we run full drive upon the others, if we find it must be so; for there is danger that we shall fancy new offices, to excuse our negligence toward the natural ones and to confound them; and to manifest this, is it not seen that in places where faults are crimes, crimes are but faults; that in nations where the laws of decency are most rare and most remiss, the primitive laws of common reason are better observed: the innumerable multitude of so many duties stifling and dissipating our care. The application of ourselves to light and trivial things diverts us from those that are necessary and just. Oh, how these superficial men take an easy and plausible way in comparison of ours! These are shadows wherewith we palliate and pay one another; but we do not pay, but inflame the reckoning toward that great Judge who tucks up our rags and tatters above our shameful parts, and stickles not to view us all over, even to our inmost and most secret ordures: it were a useful decency of our maidenly modesty, could it keep him from this discovery. In fine, whoever could reclaim man from so scrupulous a verbal superstition, would do the world no great disservice. Our life is divided between folly and prudence: whoever will write of it but what is reverend and canonical, will leave above the one-half behind. I do not excuse myself to myself; and if I did, it should rather be for my excuses that I would excuse myself, than for any other fault: I excuse myself of certain humors, which I think more strong in number than those that are on my side. In consideration of which, I will further say this

epigram in the same collection (Ad Matrones). They describe, untranslatably, Montaigne’s charge against nature, indicated in the previous passage.
(for I desire to please every one, though it will be hard to
do, "esse unum hominem accommodatum ad tantum morum
ac sermonum et voluntatum varietatem,"*) that they ought
not to condemn me for what I make authorities, received
and approved by so many ages, to utter: and that there is
no reason that for want of rhyme, they should refuse me
the liberty they allow even to churchmen of our nation
and time, and these among the most notable, of which here
are two of their brisk verses,

"Rimula, dispeream, ni monogramma tua est." †

"Un vit d'amoy la contente et bien traicte:" ‡

besides how many others. I love modesty, and 'tis not out
of judgment that I have chosen this scandalous way of
speaking; 'tis nature that has chosen it for me. I com-
mend it not, no more than other forms that are contrary to
common use: but I excuse it, and by circumstances both
general and particular, alleviate its accusation.

But to proceed. Whence, too, can proceed that usurpa-
tion of sovereign authority you take upon you over the
women, who favor you at their own expense,

"Si furtiva dedit nigra munuscula nocte," §

so that you presently assume the interest, coldness, and
authority of a husband? 'Tis a free contract: why do you
not then keep to it, as you would have them do? there is
no prescription upon voluntary things. 'Tis against the
form, but it is true withal, that I in my time have con-
ducted this bargain as much as the nature of it would per-
mit, as conscientiously and with as much color of justice,
as any other contract; and that I never pretended other
affection than what I really had, and have truly
acquainted them with its birth, vigor, and declination, its
fits and intermissions: a man does not always hold on at the
same rate. I have been so sparing of my promises, that I

* "For a man to conform to such a variety of manners, discourses,
† Beza, Juvenilia.
‡ St. Gelais, Œuvres Poetiques, p. 99, ed. of Lyons, 1574.
§ "If, in the silence of night, she has permitted stolen pleasures."
—CATULLUS, lxviii. 145.
think I have been better than my word. They have found me faithful even to service of their inconstancy, a confessed and sometimes multiplied inconstancy. I never broke with them while I had any hold at all, and what occasion soever they have given me, never broke with them to hatred or contempt; for such privacies, though obtained upon never so scandalous terms, do yet oblige to some good will. I have sometimes, upon their tricks and evasions, discovered a little indiscreet anger and impatience; for I am naturally subject to rash emotions, which though light and short, often spoil my market. At any time they have consulted my judgment, I never stuck to give them sharp and paternal counsels, and to pinch them to the quick. If I have left them any cause to complain of me, 'tis rather to have found in me, in comparison of the modern use, a love foolishly conscientious, than anything else. I have kept my word in things wherein I might easily have been dispensed; they sometimes surrendered themselves with reputation, and upon articles that they were willing enough should be broken by the conqueror. I have, more than once, made pleasure in its greatest effort strike to the interest of their honor; and where reason importuned me, have armed them against myself; so that they ordered themselves more decorously and securely by my rules, when they frankly referred themselves to them, than they would have done by their own. I have ever, as much as I could, wholly taken upon myself alone the hazard of our assignations, to acquit them; and have always contrived our meetings after the hardest and most unusual manner, as less suspected, and, moreover, in my opinion, more accessible. They are chiefly more open, where they think they are most securely shut; things least feared are least interdicted and observed; one may more boldly dare what nobody thinks you dare, which by its difficulty becomes easy. Never had any man his approaches more impertinently generative; *this way of loving is more according to discipline: but how ridiculous it is to our people, and how ineffectual, who better knows than I? yet I shall not repent me of it; I have nothing there more to lose;

* In the original manuscript, Montaigne had here added; "the desire to generate should be purely legitimate," but he struck this out (Naigeon).
On the contrary, also, if it were for me to begin again, certainly it should be by the same method and the same progress, how fruitless soever it might be to me; folly and insufficiency are commendable in an incommendable action; the farther I go from their humor in this, I approach so much nearer to my own. As to the rest, in this traffic, I did not suffer myself to be totally carried away; I pleased myself in it, but did not forget myself; I retained the little sense and discretion that nature has given me, entire for their service and my own; a little emotion, but no dotage. My conscience, also, was engaged in it, even to debauch and licentiousness; but, as to ingratitude, treachery, malice, and cruelty, never. I would not purchase the pleasure of this vice at any price, but content myself with its proper and simple cost: "Nullum intra sevitium est." ¶ I almost equally hate a stupid and slothful laziness, as I do a toilsome and painful employment; this pinches, the other lays me asleep. I like wounds as well as bruises, and cuts as well as dry blows. I found in this commerce, when I was the most able for it, a just moderation between these extremes. Love is a sprightly, lively, and gay agitation; I was neither troubled nor afflicted with it, but heated, and, moreover, disordered; a man must stop there; it hurts nobody but fools. A young man asked the philosopher Panetius, if it was becoming a wise man to be in love?

* "The holy wall, by my votive table, shows that I have hanged up my wet clothes in honor of the powerful god of the sea."—Horace, Ód. i. 5, 13.

¶ "If you seek to make these things certain by reason, you would act as wisely as he who should seek to be mad in his full senses."—Terence, Eun., act i. sc. 1, v. 16.

‡ "Nothing is a vice in itself."—Seneca, Ep. 95.
“Let the wise man look to that,” answered he, *"but let
not thou and I, who are not so, engage ourselves in so
stirring and violent an affair, that enslaves us to others,
and renders us contemptible to ourselves.” He said true,
that we are not to intrust a thing so precipitous in itself,
to a soul that has not wherewithal to withstand its assaults
and disprove practically the saying of Agesilaus, † that
prudence and love cannot live together. ’Tis a vain em-
ployment, ’tis true, unbecoming, shameful, and illegitimate;
but carried on after this manner, I look upon it as whole-
some, and proper to enliven a drowsy soul, and to rouse up
a heavy body; and, as an experienced physician, I would
prescribe it to a man of my form and condition, as soon as
any other recipe whatever, to rouse and keep him in vigor
till well advanced in years, and to defer the approaches
of age. While we are but in the suburbs, and that the
pulse yet beats,

"Dum nova canities, dum prima et recta senectus,
Dum superest Lachesis quod torqueat, et pedibus me
Porto meis, nullo dextram subeunte bacillo,” ‡

we have need to be solicited and tickled by some such
nipping incitation as this. Do but observe what youth,
vigor, and gayety it inspired Anacreon withal: and Socrates,
who was then older than I, speaking of an amorous object:
“Leaning,” said he,§ “my shoulder to her shoulder, and
my head to hers, as we were reading together in a book, I
felt, without dissembling, a sudden sting in my shoulder
like the biting of a flea, which I still felt above five days
after, and a continual itching crept into my heart.” So
that merely the accidental touch, and of a shoulder,
heated and altered a soul cooled and enervated by age,
and the strictest liver of all mankind. And, pray, why
not? Socrates was a man, and would neither be, nor seem,
any other thing. Philosophy does not contend against

* Seneca, Ep. 117.
† Plutarch, in vita, c. 4.
‡ "While the hair is as yet but gray, while age is still straight-
shouldered, while there still remains something for Lachesis to spin,
while I walk on my own legs, and need no staff to lean upon.”—
Juvenal, iii. 26.
§ Xenophon, Banquet, iv. 27.
natural pleasures, provided they be moderate: and only preaches moderation, not a total abstinence; the power of its resistance is employed against those that are adulterate and strange. Philosophy says that the appetites of the body ought not to be augmented by the mind, and ingeniously warns us not to stir up hunger by satiety; not to stuff, instead of merely filling, the belly; to avoid all enjoyments that may bring us to want; and all meats and drinks that bring thirst and hunger: as, in the service of love, she prescribes us to take such an object as may simply satisfy the body's need, and does not stir the soul, which ought only barely to follow and assist the body, without mixing in the affair. But have I not reason to hold, that these precepts, which, indeed, in my opinion, are somewhat over strict, only concern a body in its best plight; and that in a body broken with age, as in a weak stomach, 'tis excusable to warm and support it by art, and by the mediation of the fancy, to restore the appetite and cheerfulness it has lost of itself.

May we not say that there is nothing in us, during this earthly prison, that is purely either corporeal or spiritual; and that we injuriously break up a man alive; and that it seems but reasonable that we should carry ourselves as favorably, at least, toward the use of pleasure as we do toward that of pain? Pain was (for example) vehement even to perfection in the souls of the saints by penitence: the body had there naturally a share by the right of union, and yet might have but little part in the cause; and yet are they not contented that it should barely follow and assist the afflicted soul; they have afflicted itself with grievous and special torments, to the end that by emulation of one another the soul and body might plunge man into misery by so much more salutiferous as it is more severe. In like manner, is it not injustice, in bodily pleasures, to subdue and keep under the soul, and say that it must therein be dragged along as to some enforced and servile obligation and necessity? 'Tis rather her part to hatch and cherish them, there to present herself, and to invite them, the authority of ruling belonging to her; as it is also her part, in my opinion, in pleasures that are proper to her, to inspire and infuse into the body all the sentiment it is capable of, and to study how to make them sweet and useful to it. For it is good reason, as they say, that the body
should not pursue its appetites to the prejudice of the mind; but why is it not also reason that the mind should not pursue hers to the prejudice of the body?

I have no other passion to keep me in breath. What avarice, ambition, quarrels, lawsuits do for others who, like me, have no particular vocation, love would much more commodiously do; it would restore to me vigilance, sobriety, grace, and the care of my person; it would reassure my countenance, so that the grimaces of old age, those deformed and dismal looks, might not come to disgrace it; would again put me upon sound and wise studies, by which I might render myself more loved and esteemed, clearing my mind of the despair of itself and of its use, and redintegrating it to itself; would divert me from a thousand troublesome thoughts, a thousand melancholic humors that idleness and the ill posture of our health loads us withal at such an age; would warm again, in dreams at least, the blood that nature is abandoning; would hold up the chin, and a little stretch out the nerves, the vigor and gayety of life of that poor man who is going full drive toward his ruin. But I very well understand that it is a commodity hard to recover: by weakness and long experience our taste is become more delicate and nice; we ask most when we bring least, and are harder to choose when we least deserve to be accepted; and knowing ourselves for what we are, we are less confident and more distrustful; nothing can assure us of being beloved, considering our condition and theirs. I am out of countenance to see myself in company with those young wanton creatures,

"Cujus in indomito constantior inguine nervus,
Quam nova collibus arbor inhæret." *

To what end should we go insinuate our misery amid their gay and sprightly humor?

"Possint ut juvenes visere fervidi,
Multo non sine risu,
Dilapsam in cinere facem." †

They have strength and reason on their side; let us give way; we have nothing to do there: and these blossoms of

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* "Ever ready for love."—Horace, Epod. xii. 19.
† "That fervid youth may behold, not without laughter, a burning torch worn to ashes."—Horace, Od. iv. 13, 26.
springing beauty suffer not themselves to be handled by such benumbed hands nor dealt with by mere material means, for, as the old philosopher* answered one who jeered him because he could not gain the favor of a young girl he made love to, "Friend, the hook will not stick in such soft cheese." It is a commerce that requires relation and correspondence; the other pleasures we receive may be acknowledged by recompenses of another nature, but this is not to be paid but with the same kind of coin. In earnest, in this sport, the pleasure I give more tickles my imagination than that they give me; now, he has nothing of generosity in him who can receive pleasure where he confers none—it must needs be a mean soul that will owe all, and can be content to maintain relations with persons to whom he is a continual charge; there is no beauty, grace, nor privacy so exquisite that a gentleman ought to desire at this rate. If they can only be kind to us out of pity, I had much rather die than live upon charity. I would have right to ask, in the style wherein I heard them beg in Italy: "Fate ben per voi," † or after the manner that Cyrus exhorted his soldiers, "Who loves himself let him follow me." "Consort yourself," some one will say to me, "with women of your own condition, whom like fortune will render more easy to your desire." Oh ridiculous and insipid composition!

"Nolo
Barbam vellere mortuo leoni." ‡

Xenophon§ lays it for an objection and an accusation against Menon, that he never made love to any but old women. For my part, I take more pleasure in but seeing the just and sweet mixture of two young beauties, or only in meditating on it in my fancy, than myself in acting second in a piteous and imperfect conjunction; I leave

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* Bion.
† "Do good for yourself."
‡ "I would not pluck the beard from a dead lion."—Martial, x. 90, 9.
§ Anabasis, ii. 6, 15.
|| Which Cotton renders, "Than to be myself an actor in the second with a deformed creature."
that fantastic appetite to the Emperor Galba,* who was only for old curried flesh; and to this poor wretch,

"O, ego Di faciant talem te cernere possim,
   Caraque mutatis oscula ferre comis,
   Amplectique meis corpus non pingue lacertis!" †

Among chief deformities I reckon forced and artificial beauties; Hemon, ‡ a young fellow of Chios, thinking by fine dressing to acquire the beauty that nature had denied him, came to the philosopher Arcesilas and asked him if it was possible for a wise man to be in love—"Yes," replied he, "provided it be not with a farded and adulterated beauty like thine." Ugliness of a confessed antiquity is to me less old and less ugly than another that is polished and plastered up. Shall I speak it, without the danger of having my throat cut? love, in my opinion, is not properly and naturally in its season, but in the age next to childhood;

"Quem si puellarum insereres choro,
   Mille sagaces falleret hospites,
   Discrimen obscurum, solutis
   Crinibus ambiguoque vultu;" §

nor beauty neither; for whereas Homer extends it so far as to the budding of the beard, but to himself has remarked this as rare; and the reason why the Sophist Bion so pleasantly called the first appearing hairs of adolescence Aristogitons and Harmodius, || is sufficiently known. I find it in virility already in some sort a little out of date, though not so much as in old age;

"Importunus enim transvolat aridas
   Quercus:" ¶

* Seutonius, in vita, c. 21.

† Ovid, who (Ex. Ponto, i. 4, 49) thus writes to his wife: "Oh, would to heaven that such I might see thee, and kiss thy dear locks changed into gray, and embrace thy withered body."

‡ Diogenes Laertius, iv. 34. The question was whether a wise man could love him. Cotton has "Emonez, a young courtesan of Chios."

§ "Who in the company of girls, with his disheveled hair and ambiguous face would deceive the subtlest there, so difficult is it to say whether he is girl or boy."—Horace, Od. ii. 5, 21.

|| Plutarch, On Love. c. 34.

¶ "It flies from withered oaks."—Horace, Od., iv. 13, 9.
and Marguerite, queen of Navarre, like a woman, very far extends the advantage of women, ordaining that it is time at thirty years old, to convert the title of fair into that of good. The shorter authority we give to love over our lives 'tis so much the better for us. Do but observe his port; 'tis a beardless boy. Who knows not how, in his school they proceed contrary to all order; study, exercise, and usage are there ways for insufficiency; there novices rule; "Amor ordinem nescit."* Doubtless his conduct is much more graceful when mixed with inadvertency and trouble; miscarriages and ill successes give him point and grace; provided it be sharp and eager, 'tis no great matter whether it be prudent or no; do but observe how he goes reeling, tripping, and playing: you put him in the stocks when you guide him by art and wisdom; and he is restrained of his divine liberty when put into those hairy and callous clutches.

As to the rest, I often hear the women set out this intelligence as entirely spiritual, and disdain to put the interest the senses there have into consideration; everything there serves; but I can say that I have often seen that we have excused the weakness of their understandings in favor of their outward beauty, but have never yet seen that in favor of mind, how mature and full soever, any of them would hold out a hand to a body that was never so little in decadence. Why does not some one of them take it into her head to make that noble practical bargain between body and soul, purchasing a philosophical and spiritual intelligence and generation at the price of her thighs, which is the highest price she can get for them? Plato ordains in his laws that he who has performed any signal and advantageous exploit in war may not be refused during the whole expedition, his age or ugliness notwithstanding, a kiss or any other amorous favor from any woman whatever. What he thinks to be so just in recommendation of military valor, why may it not be the same in recommendation of any other good quality? and why does not some woman take a fancy to possess over her companions the glory of this chaste love? I may well say chaste,

* "Love knows no rule."—St. Jerome, Letter to Chromatius.
the vices that are stifled in the thought are not the worst.

To conclude this notable commentary, which has escaped from me in a torrent of babble, a torrent sometimes impetuous and hurtful.

"Ut missum sponsi furtivo munere malum
Procurrît casto virginis e gremio,
Quod miserae oblitæ molli sub veste locatum,
Dum aventus matris prosilit, excutitur,
Atque illud prono preceps agitur decursu:
Huic manat tristi conscius ore rubor."†

I say that males and females are cast in the same mold, and that, education and usage excepted, the difference is not great. Plato indifferently invites both the one and the other to the society of all studies, exercises, and vocations, both military and civil, in his commonwealth; and the philosopher Antisthenes rejected all distinction between their virtue and ours.† It is much more easy to accuse one sex than to excuse the other; ’tis according to the saying "The Pot and the Kettle."

CHAPTER XXXVII.

OF COACHES.

It is very easy to verify, that great authors, when they write of causes, not only make use of those they think to be the true causes, but also of those they believe not to be so, provided they have in them some beauty and invention; they speak true and usefully enough, if it be ingeniously. We cannot make ourselves sure of the supreme cause, and

* "For when they engage in love’s battle, his sterile ardor lights up but as the flame of a straw."—Virgil, Georg., iii. 98.

† "As when an apple, sent by a lover secretly to his mistress, falls from the chaste virgin’s bosom, where she had quite forgotten it, when, starting at her mother’s coming in, it is shaken out and rolls over the floor, before her eyes, a conscious blush covers her face.”—Catullus, lxv. 19.

‡ Diogenes, Laertius vi. 12.
therefore clutter a great many together, to see if it may not accidentally be among them,

"Namque unam dicere causam
Non satis est, verum plures, unde una tamen sit." *

Will you ask me, whence comes the custom of blessing those who sneeze? We break wind three several ways; that which sallies from below is too filthy; that which breaks out from the mouth carries with it some reproach of having eaten too much; the third eruption is sneezing, which because it proceeds from the head, and is without offense, we give it this civil reception: do not laugh at this distinction; for they say 'tis Aristotle's.†

I think I have read in Plutarch ‡ (who of all the authors I ever conversed with is he who has best mixed art with nature, and judgment with knowledge), his giving as a reason for the rising of the stomach in those who are at sea, that it is occasioned by fear; having first found out some reason by which he proves that fear may produce such an effect. I, who am very subject to it, know well that this cause concerns not me; and know it, not by argument, but by necessary experience. Without instancing what has been told me, that the same thing often happens in beasts, especially hogs who are out of all apprehension of danger; and what an acquaintance of mine told me of himself that, though very subject to it, the disposition to vomit has three of four times gone off him, being very afraid in a violent storm, as it happened to that ancient, "Pejus vexabar, quam ut periculum mihi succurreret;" § I was never afraid upon the water, nor, indeed, in any other peril (and I have had enough before my eyes that would have sufficed, if death be one), so as to be astounded and to lose my judgment. Fear springs sometimes as much from want of judgment as from want of courage. All the dangers I have been in I have looked upon without winking, with an open, sound, and entire sight; and, indeed, a man must have courage to fear. It formerly served me better than

* Lucretius, vi. 704. The sense is in the preceding passage.
† Problem, s. 331; Quaest. 9.
‡ On natural Causes, c. 11.
§ "I was too frightened to be ill."—Seneca, Ep. 53.
other help, so to order and regulate my retreat, that it was, if not without fear, nevertheless without affright and astonishment; it was agitated, indeed, but not amazed or stupefied. Great souls go yet much farther, and present to us flights, not only steady and temperate, but moreover lofty. Let us make a relation of that which Alcibiades reports of Socrates, his fellow in arms: "I found him," says he,* "after the rout of our army, him and Lachez, last among those who fled, and considered him at my leisure and in security, for I was mounted upon a good horse, and he on foot, as he had fought. I took notice, in the first place, how much judgment and resolution he showed, in comparison of Lachez, and then the bravery of his march, nothing different from his ordinary gait; his sight firm and regular, considering and judging what passed about him, looking one while upon those, and then upon others, friends and enemies, after such a manner as encouraged those, and signified to the others that he would sell his life dear to any one who should attempt to take it from him, and so they came off; for people are not willing to attack such kind of men, but pursue those they see are in a fright." This is the testimony of this great captain, which teaches us, what we every day see, that nothing so much throws us into dangers as an inconsiderate eagerness of getting ourselves clear of them: "Quo timoris minus est, eo minus ferme periculi est."† Our people are to blame who say that such a one is afraid of death, when they would express that he thinks of it and foresees it: foresight is equally convenient in what concerns us, whether good or ill. To consider and judge of danger, is, in some sort, the reverse to being astounded. I do not find myself strong enough to sustain the force and impetuousity of this passion of fear, nor of any other vehement passion whatever: if I was once conquered and beaten down by it, I should never rise again very sound. Whoever should once make my soul lose her footing, would never set her upright again: she retastes and researches herself too profoundly, and too much to the quick, and therefore would never let the wound she had received heal and cicatrize. It has been

* Plato, Banquet.

† "When there is least fear there is for the most part least danger." —Livy, xxii. 5.
well for me that no sickness has yet discomposed her: at every charge made upon me, I preserve my utmost opposition and defense; by which means the first that should rout me would keep me from rallying again. I have no after-game to play: on which side soever the inundation breaks my banks, I lie open, and am drowned without remedy. Epicurus says,* that a wise man can never become a fool; I have an opinion reverse to this sentence, which is that he who has once been a very fool, will never after be very wise. God grants me cold according to my cloth, and passions proportionable to the means I have to withstand them: nature having laid me open on the one side, has covered me on the other; having disarmed me of strength, she has armed me with insensibility and an apprehension that is regular, or, if you will, dull,

I cannot now long endure (and when I was young could much less) either coach, litter, or boat, and hate all other riding but on horseback, both in town and country. But I can bear a litter worse than a coach; and, by the same reason, a rough agitation upon the water, whence fear is produced, better than the motions of a calm. At the little jerks of oars, stealing the vessel from under us, I find, I know not how, both my head and my stomach disordered: neither can I endure to sit upon a tottering chair. When the sail or the current carries us equally, or that we are towed, the equal agitation does not disturb me at all: 'tis an interrupted motion that offends me, and, most of all when most slow: I cannot otherwise express it. The physicians have ordered me to squeeze and gird myself about the bottom of the belly with a napkin to remedy this evil; which however I have not tried, being accustomed to wrestle with my own defects, and overcome them myself.

Would my memory serve me, I should not think my time ill spent in setting down here the infinite variety that history presents us of the use of coaches in the service of war: various, according to the nations, and according to the age; in my opinion, of great necessity and effect; so that it is a wonder that we have lost all knowledge of them. I will only say this, that very lately, in our fathers' time, the Hungarians made very advantageous use of them.

* Diogenes Laertius, x. 117.
against the Turks; having in every one of them a target and a musketeer, and a number of harquebuses piled ready and loaded, and all covered with a pavésade like a galliot. They formed the front of their battle with three thousand such coaches, and after the cannon had played, made them all pour in their shot upon the enemy, who had to swallow that volley before they tasted of the rest, which was no little advance; and that done, these chariots charged into their squadrons to break them and open a way for the rest: besides the use they might make of them to flank the soldiers in a place of danger when marching to the field, or to cover a post, and fortify it in haste. In my time, a gentleman on one of our frontiers, unwieldy of body, and finding no horse able to carry his weight, having a quarrel, rode through the country in a chariot of this fashion, and found great convenience in it. But let us leave these chariots of war.

As if their effeminacy had not been sufficiently known by better proofs, the last kings of our first race traveled in a chariot drawn by four oxen. Marc Antony was the first at Rome who caused himself to be drawn in a coach by lions, and a singing wench with him.†

Heliogabalus did since as much, calling himself Cybele, the mother of the gods; and also drawn by tigers, taking upon him the person of the god Bacchus; he also sometimes harnessed two stags to his coach, another time four dogs, and another, four naked wenches, causing himself to be drawn by them in pomp, stark naked too. The Emperor Firmus caused his chariot to be drawn by ostriches of a prodigious size, so that it seemed rather to fly than roll.

The strangeness of these inventions puts this other fancy in my head: that it is a kind of pusillanimity in monarchs, and a testimony that they do not sufficiently understand themselves what they are, when they study to make themselves honored and to appear great by excessive expense: it were indeed excusable in a foreign country, but among their own subjects, where they are in sovereign command,

* "A defense of shields ranged by one another."—COTTON.
† Which Cotton translates "as if the insignificancy of coaches."
‡ Cytheris, the actress.—PLUTARCH's Life of Antony, c. 3.
and may do what they please, it derogates from their dignity the most supreme degree of honor to which they can arrive: just as, methinks, it is superfluous in a private gentleman to go finely dressed at home; his house, his attendants, and his kitchen, sufficiently answer for him. The advice that Isocrates* gives his king, seems to be grounded upon reason; that he should be splendid in plate and furniture; forasmuch as it is an expense of duration that devolves on his successors; and that he should avoid all magnificences that will in a short time be forgotten. I loved to go fine when I was a younger brother, for want of other ornament; and it became me well: there are some upon whom their rich clothes weep. We have strange stories of the frugality of our kings about their own persons and in their gifts: kings who were great in reputation, valor, and fortune. Demosthenes vehemently opposes the law of his city that assigned the public money for the pomp of their public plays and festivals: he would that their greatness should be seen in numbers of ships well equipped, and good armies well provided for; and there is good reason to condemn Theophrastus† who, in his Book on Riches, establishes a contrary opinion, and maintains that sort of expense to be the true fruit of abundance. They are delights, says Aristotle, ‡ that only please the baser sort of the people, and that vanish from the memory so soon as the people are sated with them, and for which no serious and judicious man can have any esteem. This money would, in my opinion, be much more royally, as more profitably, justly, and durably, laid out in ports, havens, walls, and fortifications; in sumptuous buildings, churches, hospitals, colleges, the reforming of streets and highways; wherein Pope Gregory XIII. will leave a laudable memory to future times: and wherein our Queen Catherine would to long posterity manifest her natural liberality and munificence, did her means supply her affection. Fortune has done me a great despite, in interrupting the noble structure of the Pont-Neuf of our great city, and depriving me of the hope of seeing it finished before I die.

* Discourse to Nicocles.
† Cicero, De Offic., ii. 16.
‡ Idem, ibid.
Moreover, it seems to the subjects, who are spectators of these triumphs, that their own riches are exposed before them, and that they are entertained at their own expense: for the people are apt to presume of kings, as we do of our servants, that they are to take care to provide us all things necessary in abundance, but not touch it themselves: and therefore the Emperor Galba, being pleased with a musician who played to him at supper, called for his money box, and gave him a handful of crowns that he took out of it, with these words: "This is not the public money, but my own." Yet it so falls out that the people, for the most part, have reason on their side, and that the princes feed their eyes with what they have need of to fill their bellies.

Liberality itself is not in its true luster in a sovereign hand: private men have therein the most right: for, to take it exactly, a king has nothing properly his own; he owes himself to others: authority is not given in favor of the magistrate, but of the people; a superior is never made so for his own profit, but for the profit of the inferior, and a physician for the sick person, and not for himself: all magistracy, as well as all art, has its end out of itself: "Nulla ars in se versatur:" * wherefore the tutors of young princes, who make it their business to imprint in them this virtue of liberality, and preach to them to deny nothing and to think nothing so well spent as what they give (a doctrine that I have known in great credit in my time), either have more particular regard to their own profit than to that of their master, or ill understand to whom they speak. It is too easy a thing to inculcate liberality on him who has as much as he will to practice it with at the expense of others; and, the estimate not being proportioned to the measure of the gift but to the measure of the means of him who gave it, it comes to nothing in so mighty hands; they find themselves prodigal, before they can be reputed liberal. And it is but a little recommendation, in comparison with other royal virtues: and the only one, as the tyrant Dionysius said, † that suits well

* "No art is ever closed within itself."—Cicero, De Finib., v. 6.
† Plutarch, Apothegms.
with tyranny itself. I should rather teach him this verse of the ancient laborer,

"Τῇ χείρι δεῖ σπείρειν, άλλά μή ἀλῶ τὸ γυλακῶ;"*

he must scatter it abroad, and not lay it on a heap, in one place: and that, seeing he is to give, or, to say better, to pay and restore to so many people according as they have deserved, he ought to be a loyal and discreet disposer. If the liberality of a prince be without measure or discretion, I had rather he were covetous.

Royal virtue seems most to consist in justice; and of all the parts of justice that best denotes a king which accompanies liberality, for this they have particularly reserved to be performed by themselves, whereas all other sorts of justice they remit to the administration of others. An immoderate bounty is a very weak means to acquire for them good will; it checks more people than it allures:

"Quo in pluris usus sis, minus in multos uli possis. . . .

Quid autem est stultius, quam, quod liberenter facias, curare ut id diutius facere non possis;" † and if it be conferred without due respect of merit, it puts him out of countenance who receives it, and is received ungraciously. Tyrants have been sacrificed to the hatred of the people by the hands of those very men they have unjustly advanced; such kind of men ‡ thinking to assure to themselves the possession of benefits unduly received, if they manifest to have him in hatred and disdain of whom they hold them, and in this associate themselves to the common judgment and opinion.

The subjects of a prince excessive in gifts grow excessive in asking, and regulate their demands, not by reason, but by example. We have, seriously, very often reason to blush at our own impudence: we are overpaid, according to justice, when the recompense equals our service, for do

* "That whoever will have a good crop must sow with his hand, and not pour out of the sack."—Idem, Whether the Ancients were more excellent in Arms than in Learning.

† "By how much more you use it to many, by so much less will you be in a capacity to use it to many more. And what greater folly can there be than to order it so that what you would willingly do, you cannot do long."—Cicero, De Offic., ii. 15.

‡ "Buffoons, panders, fiddlers and such rag amuffins," etc., ed of 1588.
we owe nothing of natural obligation to our princes? If he bear our charges, he does too much; 'tis enough that he contribute to them: the overplus is called benefit, which cannot be exacted: for the very name Liberality sounds of Liberty.

There is no end on't, as we use it; we never reckon what we have received; we are only for the future liberality: wherefore, the more a prince exhausts himself in giving, the poorer he grows in friends. How shall he satisfy immoderate desires, that still increase as they are fulfilled? He who has his thoughts upon taking, never thinks of what he has taken; covetousness has nothing so properly and so much its own as ingratitude.

The example of Cyrus will not do amiss in this place, to serve the kings of these times for a touchstone to know whether their gifts are well or ill bestowed, and to see how much better that emperor conferred them than they do, by which means they are reduced to borrow of unknown subjects, and rather of them whom they have wronged, than of them on whom they have conferred their benefits, and so receive aids, wherein there is nothing of gratuitous but the name. Crœsus reproached him with his bounty, and cast up to how much his treasure would amount if he had been a little closer-handed. He had a mind to justify his liberality, and therefore sent dispatches into all parts to the grandees of his dominions whom he had particularly advanced, entreating every one of them to supply him with as much money as they could, for a pressing occasion, and to send him particulars of what each could advance. When all these answers were brought to him, every one of his friends, not thinking it enough barely to offer him so much as he had received from his bounty, and adding to it a great deal of his own, it appeared that the sum amounted to a great deal more than Crœsus' reckoning. Whereupon Cyrus: "I am not," said he, "less in love with riches than other princes, but rather a better husband; you see with how small a venture I have acquired the inestimable treasure of so many friends, and how much more faithful treasurers they are to me than mercenary men without obligation or affection would be: and my money better laid up than in chests, bringing upon me the hatred, envy, and contempt of other princes." *

*Xenophon, Cyropædia. viii. 9.
The emperors excused the superfluity of their plays and public spectacles by reason that their authority in some sort (at least in outward appearance) depended upon the will of the people of Rome, who time out of mind, had been accustomed to be entertained and caressed with such shows and excesses. But they were private citizens, who had nourished this custom to gratify their fellow-citizens and companions (and chiefly out of their own purses) by such profusion and magnificence; it had quite another taste when the masters came to imitate it: "Pecuniarum translatio a justis dominis ad a licenon debet liberalis viserti."* Philip, seeing that his son went about by presents to gain the affection of the Macedonians, reprimanded him in a letter after this manner; "What! hast thou a mind that thy subjects shall look upon thee as their cash-keeper and not as their king? Wilt thou tamper with them to win their affections? Do it, then, by the benefits of thy virtue, and not by those of thy chest."† And yet it was, doubtless, a fine thing to bring and plant within the amphitheater a great number of vast trees, with all their branches in their full verdure, representing a great shady forest, disposed in excellent order; and, the first day, to throw into it a thousand ostriches and a thousand stags, a thousand boars and a thousand fallow-deer, to be killed and disposed of by the people: the next day to cause a hundred great lions, a hundred leopards, and three hundred bears to be killed in his presence; and for the third day, to make three hundred pair of gladiators fight it out to the last, as the Emperor Probus did.‡ It was also very fine to see those vast amphitheaters, all faced with marble without, curiously wrought with figures and statues, and the inside sparkling with rare decorations and enrichments,

"Baltheus en gemmis, en illita porticus auro:"§

* "The transferring of money from the right owners to strangers ought not to have the title of liberality."—Cicero, De Offic., i. 14.
† Cicero, De Offic., ii. 15.
‡ Vopiscus, in vita, c. 19.
§ "A belt glittering with jewels and a portico overlaid with gold."—Calpurnius, Eplog., vii. 47. Vitruvius says that a Baltheus was a belt round the bottom of a column.
all the sides of this vast space filled and environed, from
the bottom to the top, with three or four score rows of seats,
all of marble also, and covered with cushions,

"Exeat, inquit,
   Si pudor est, et de pulvino surgat equestri,
Cujus res legi non sufficit."*

where a hundred thousand men might sit at their ease:
and the place below, where the games were played, to make
it, by art, first open and cleave in chasms, representing
caves that vomited out the beasts designed for the spect-
tacle; and then, secondly, to be overflowed by a deep sea,
full of sea monsters, and laden with ships of war, to repre-
sent a naval battle: and, thirdly, to make it dry and even
again for the combat of the gladiators; and, for the fourth
scene, to have it strown with vermilion grain and storax,†
instead of sand, there to make a solemn feast for all
that infinite number of people; the last act of one only
day.

"Quoties los descendentis arenæ
Vidimus in partes, ruptaque voragine terræ
Emersisse feras, et eisdem sæpe latebris
Aurea cum croceo creverunt arbuta libro!...
Nec solum nobis silvestria cernere monstra
Contigit; æquoreos ego cum certantibus ursis
Spectavi vitulos, et equorum nomine dignum,
Sed deforme pecus."‡

Sometimes they made a high mountain advance itself,
covered with fruit trees and other leafy trees, sending down
rivulets of water from the top, as from the mouth of a
fountain; otherwheres, a great ship was seen to come roll-

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* "Go out, for shame, he cries, and quit the equestrian cushions,
all ye whose fortunes do not, by law, entitle you to be there."—
Juvenal, iii. 135. The Equites were required to possess a fortune
of 400 sestercia (£3,229), and they sat on the first fourteen rows
behind the orchestra.

† A resinous gum.

‡ "How often have we seen one part of the theater sink in, and
from a chasm in the earth wild beasts vomited, and then presently
give birth to a grove of gilded trees, that put forth blossoms of
enameled flowers. Nor yet of sylvan marvels alone had we sight;
I saw sea-calves fight with bears, and a deformed sort of monsters
which, by their shape, we might call sea-horses." -Calpurnius,
Eclog., vii. 64,
ing in, which opened and divided of itself, and after having disgorged from the hold four or five hundred beasts for fight, closed again, and vanished without help. At other times, from the floor of this place, they made spouts of perfumed water dart their streams upward, and so high as to sprinkle all that infinite multitude. To defend themselves from the injuries of the weather, they had that vast place one while covered over with purple curtains of needlework, and by and by with silk of one or another color, which they drew off or on in a moment, as they had a mind.

"Quamvis non modico caleant spectacula sole,
Vela reducunter, cum venit Hermogenes." *

The network also that was set before the people to defend them from the violence of these turned out beasts, was woven of gold:

"Auro quoque torta refulgent
Retia." †

If there be anything excusable in such excesses as these, it is where the novelty and invention create more wonder than the expense; even in these vanities, we discover how fertile those ages were in other kind of wits than these of ours. It is with this sort of fertility, as with all other products of nature; not that she there and then employed her utmost force: we do not go; we rather run up and down, and whirl this way and that; we turn back the way we came. I am afraid our knowledge is weak in all senses; we neither see far forward nor far backward; our understanding comprehends little, and lives but a little while; 'tis short both in extent of time and extent of matter.

"Vixere fortas ante Agamennona
Multi, sed omnes illacrymabilas
Urgentur, ignotique longa
Nocte." ‡

* "The curtains, though the sun should scorch the spectators, are drawn in when Hermogenes appears."—MARTIAL, xii. 29, 15. This Hermogenes was a noted thief.

† "The woven nets were refulgent with gold."—CALPURNIUS, Eclog., vii. 55.

‡ "Many brave men lived before Agamemnon, but all are buried in oblivion unmourned."—HORACE, Od. iv. 9, 25.
And the narrative of Solon,† of what he had got out of the Egyptian priests, touching the long life of their state, and their manner of learning and preserving foreign histories, is not, methinks, a testimony to be slighted upon this consideration. "Et supera bellum Thebanum, et funera Trojae, Multi alias alii quoque res cecinere poetae:"* Though all that has arrived, by report, of our knowledge of times past should be true, and known by some one person, it would be less than nothing in comparison of what is unknown. And of this same image of the world, which glides away while we live upon it, how wretched and limited is the knowledge of the most curious; not only of particular events, which fortune often renders exemplary and of great concern, but of the state of great governments and nations, a hundred more escape us than ever come to our knowledge. We make a mighty business of the invention of artillery and printing, which other men at the other end of the world, in China, had a thousand years ago. Did we but see as much of the world as we do not see, we

* "And before the Theban war, and the destruction of Troy, other poets have sung other events."—Lucretius, v. 327. Montaigne here diverts himself in giving Lucretius’ words a construction directly contrary to what they bear in the poem. Lucretius puts the question, "Why if the earth had existed from all eternity, there had not been poets, before the Theban war, to sing men’s exploits (Coste).

† See the Timæus.

‡ "Could we see on all parts the unlimited magnitude of regions and extent of times, upon which the mind being intent, could wander so far and wide, that no limit is to be seen, in which it can bound its eye, we should, in that infinite immensity, discover an innumerable variety of forms."—Cicero, De Nat. Deor., i. 20. Here also Montaigne puts a sense quite different from what the words bear in the original; but the application he makes of them is so happy that one would declare they were actually put together only to express his own sentiments. "Et temporum" is an addition by Montaigne; and instead of "infinita vis innumerabilium appareret formarum," it is in Cicero, "infinita vis innumerabilium volitat atomorum." These two last show that Cicero treats of quite a different matter than Montaigne (Coste).
should perceive, we may well believe, a perpetual multiplication and vicissitude of forms. There is nothing single and rare in respect of nature, but in respect of our knowledge, which is a wretched foundation whereon to ground our rules, and that represents to us a very false image of things. As we nowadays vainly conclude the declension and decrepitude of the world, by the arguments we extract from our own weakness and decay;

"Jamque adeo est affecta ætas effoet aque tellus;" *

so did he† vainly conclude as to its birth and youth, by the vigor he observed in the wits of his time, abounding in novelties and the invention of divers arts:

"Verum, ut opinor, habet novitatem summa, recensque
Natura est mundi, neque pridem exordia cepit:
Quare etiam quædam nunc artes expoliuntur,
Nunc etiam angescunt; nunc addita navigiis sunt
Multa." †

Our world has lately discovered another (and who will assure us that it is the last of its brothers, since the Daëmons, the Sybils, and we ourselves have been ignorant of this till now?) as large, well peopled, and fruitful, as this whereon we live; and yet so raw and childish, that we are still teaching it its A B C; 'tis not above fifty years since it knew neither letters, weights, measures, vestments, corn nor vines; it was then quite naked in the mother's lap, and only lived upon what she gave it. If we rightly conclude of our ends, and this poet of the youthfulness of that age of his, that other world will only enter into the light when this of ours shall make its exit; the universe will fall into paralysis; one member will be useless, the other in vigor. I am very much afraid that we have greatly precipitated its declension and ruin by our contagion; and that we have sold it our opinions and our arts at a very dear rate. It was an infant world, and yet we

* "Our age is feeble, and the earth less fertile."—Lucretius, ii. 1151.
† Lucretius.
‡ "But as I am of opinion, the whole of the world is of recent origin; whence it is that some are still being refined, and some just on the increase; many improvements are being made in shipping matters."—Lucretius, v. 331.
have not whipped and subjected it to our discipline, by the advantage of our natural worth and force, neither have we won it by our justice and goodness, nor subdued it by our magnanimity. Most of their answers, and the negotiations we have had with them, witness that they were nothing behind us in pertinency and clearness of natural understanding. The astonishing magnificence of the cities of Cusco and Mexico, and among many other things, the garden of the king, where all the trees, fruits, and plants, according to the order and stature they have in a garden, were excellently formed in gold; as, in his cabinet, were all the animals bred upon his territory and in its seas; and the beauty of their manufactures, in jewels, feathers, cotton, and painting, gave ample proof that they were as little inferior to us in industry. But as to what concerns devotion, observance of the laws, goodness, liberality, loyalty, and plain dealing, it was of use to us that we had not so much as they; for they have lost, sold, and betrayed themselves by this advantage over us.

As to boldness and courage, stability, constancy against pain, hunger, and death, I should not fear to oppose the examples I find among them, to the most famous examples of elder times, that we find in our records on this side of the world. For, as to those who subdued them, take but away the tricks and artifices they practiced to gull them, and the just astonishment it was to those nations, to see so sudden and unexpected an arrival of men with beards, differing in language, religion, shape, and countenance, from so remote a part of the world, and where they had never heard there was any habitation, mounted upon great unknown monsters, against those who had not only never seen a horse, but had never seen any other beast trained up to carry a man or any other loading; shelled in a hard and shining skin, with a cutting and glittering weapon in his hand, against them, who, out of wonder at the brightness of a looking-glass or a knife, would truck great treasures of gold and pearl; and who had neither knowledge, nor matter with which, at leisure, they could penetrate our steel: to which may be added the lightning and thunder of our cannon and harquebuses, enough to frighten Cæsar himself, if surprised, with so little experience, against people naked, except where the invention of a little quilted cotton was in use, without other arms, at the most, than
brows, stones, staves, and bucklers of wood; people surprised
under color of friendship and good faith, by the curiosity
of seeing strange and unknown things; take but away, I
say, this disparity from the conquerors, and you take away
all the occasion of so many victories. When I look upon
that invincible ardor wherewith so many thousands of
men, women, and children, so often presented and threw
themselves into inevitable dangers for the defense of their
gods and liberties; that generous obstinacy to suffer all
extremities and difficulties, and death itself, rather than
submit to the dominion of those by whom they had been
so shamefully abused; and some of them choosing to die
of hunger and fasting, being prisoners, rather than to accept
of nourishment from the hands of their so basely victorious
enemies: I see, that whoever would have attacked them
upon equal terms of arms, experience, and number, would
have had a hard, and, peradventure, a harder game to play,
than in any other war we have seen.

Why did not so noble a conquest fall under Alexander,
or the ancient Greeks and Romans; and so great a revolu-
tion and mutation of so many empires and nations, fall
into hands that would have gently leveled, rooted up, and
made plain and smooth whatever was rough and savage
among them, and that would have cherished and propa-
gated the good seeds that nature had there produced;
mixing not only with the culture of land and the ornament
of cities, the arts of this part of the world, in what was
necessary, but also the Greek and Roman virtues, with
those that were original of the country? What a repara-
tion had it been to them, and what a general good to the
whole world, had our first examples and deportments in
those parts allured those people to the admiration and
imitation of virtue, and had begotten between them and us
a fraternal society and intelligence? How easy had it been
to have made advantage of souls so innocent, and so eager
to learn, having, for the most part, naturally so good incli-
nations before? Whereas on the contrary, we have taken
advantage of their ignorance and inexperience, with greater
case to incline them to treachery, luxury, avarice, and
toward all sorts of inhumanity and cruelty, by the pattern
and example of our manners. Who ever enhanced the
price of merchandise at such a rate? So many cities
leveled with the ground, so many nations exterminated, so
many millions of people fallen by the edge of the sword, and the richest and most beautiful part of the world turned upside down, for the traffic of pearl and pepper? Mechanic victories! Never did ambition, never did public animosities engage men against one another in such miserable hostilities, in such miserable calamities.

Certain Spaniards, coasting the sea in quest of their mines, landed in a fruitful and pleasant and very well peopled country, and there made to the inhabitants their accustomed professions: "that they were peaceable men, who were come from a very remote country, and sent on the behalf of the king of Castile, the greatest prince of the habitable world, to whom the pope, God's vicegerent upon earth, had given the principality of all the Indies; that if they would become tributaries to him, they should be very gently and courteously used;" at the same time requiring of them victuals for their nourishment, and gold wherewith to make some pretended medicine; setting forth, moreover, the belief in one only God, and the truth of our religion, which they advised them to embrace, whereunto they also added some threats. To which they received this answer: "That as to their being peaceable, they did not seem to be such, if they were so. As to their king, since he was fain to beg, he must be necessitous and poor; and he who had made him this gift, must be a man who loved dissension, to give that to another which was none of his own, to bring it into dispute against the ancient possessors. As to victuals, they would supply them; that of gold they had little; it being a thing they had in very small esteem as of no use to the service of life, whereas their only care was to pass it over happily and pleasantly: but that what they could find excepting what was employed in the service of their gods, they might freely take. As to one only God, the proposition had pleased them well; but that they would not change their religion, both because they had so long and happily lived in it, and that they were not wont to take advice of any but their friends, and those they knew: as to their menaces, it was a sign of want of judgment, to threaten those whose nature and power were to them unknown; that, therefore, they were to make haste to quit their coast, for they were not used to take the civilities and professions of armed men and strangers in good part; otherwise they should do by them as they had done by
those others," showing them the heads of several executed men round the walls of their city. A fair example of the babble of these children. But so it is that the Spaniards did not, either in this or in several other places, where they did not find the merchandise they sought, make any stay or attempt, whatever other conveniences were there to be had; witness my Cannibals. *

Of the two most puissant monarchs of that world, and, peradventure, of this, kings of so many kings, and the last they turned out, he of Peru, having been taken in a battle, and put to so excessive a ransom as exceeds all belief, and it being faithfully paid, and he having, by his conversation, given manifest signs of a frank, liberal, and constant spirit, and of a clear and settled understanding, the conquerors had a mind, after having exacted one million three hundred and twenty-five thousand and five hundred weight of gold, besides silver, and other things which amounted to no less (so that their horses were shod with massy gold), still to see, at the price of what disloyalty and injustice whatever, what the remainder of the treasures of this king might be, and to possess themselves of that also. To this end a false accusation was preferred against him, and false witnesses brought to prove that he went about to raise an insurrection in his provinces, to procure his own liberty; whereupon, by the virtuous sentence of those very men who had by this treachery conspired his ruin, he was condemned to be publicly hanged, after having made him buy off the torment of being burned alive, by the baptism they gave immediately before execution; a horrid and unheard-of barbarity which, nevertheless, he underwent without giving way either in word or look, with a truly grave and royal behavior. After which, to calm and appease the people, aroused and astounded at so strange a thing, they counterfeited great sorrow for his death, and appointed most sumptuous funerals.

The other king of Mexico,† having for a long time defended his beleaguered city, and having in this siege manifested the utmost of what suffering and perseverance can do, if ever prince and people did, and his misfortune having delivered him alive into his enemies' hands, upon

* The title of Chapter xxx. of Book i.
† Guatimosin.
articles of being treated like a king, neither did he in his captivity discover anything unworthy of that title. His enemies, after their victory, not finding so much gold as they expected, when they had searched and rifled with their utmost diligence, they went about to procure discoveries by the most cruel torments they could invent upon the prisoners they had taken: but having profited nothing by these, their courage being greater than their torments, they arrived at last to such a degree of fury, as, contrary to their faith and the law of nations, to condemn the king himself, and one of the principal nobleman of his court to the rack, in the presence of one another. This lord, finding himself overcome with pain, being environed with burning coals, pitifully turned his dying eyes toward his master, as it were to ask him pardon that he was able to endure no more; whereupon the king darting at him a fierce and severe look, as reproaching his cowardice and pusillanimity, with a harsh and constant voice said to him thus only: "And what dost thou think I suffer? am I in a bath? am I more at ease than thou?" Whereupon the other immediately quailed under the torment and died upon the spot. The king, half roasted, was carried thence; not so much out of pity (for what compassion ever touched so barbarous souls, who, upon the doubtful information of some vessel of gold to be made a prey of, caused not only a man, but a king, so great in fortune and desert, to be broiled before their eyes), but because his constancy rendered their cruelty still more shameful. They afterward hanged him, for having nobly attempted to deliver himself by arms from so long a captivity and subjection, and he died with a courage becoming so magnanimous a prince.

Another time, they burned in the same fire, four hundred and sixty men alive at once, the four hundred of the common people, the sixty, the principal lords of a province, mere prisoners of war. We have these narratives from themselves: for they not only own it, but boast of it and publish it. Could it be for a testimony of their justice, or their zeal to religion? Doubtless these are ways too differing and contrary to so holy an end. Had they proposed to themselves to extend our faith, they would have considered that it does not amplify in the possession of territories, but in the gaining of men; and would have more than satisfied themselves with the slaughters occasioned by the necessity
of war, without indifferently mixing a massacre, as upon wild beasts, as universal as fire and sword could make it: having only, by intention, saved so many as they meant to make miserable slaves of, for the work and service of their mines; so that many of the captains were put to death upon the place of conquest, by order of the kings of Castile, justly offended with the horror of their deportment, and almost all of them hated and disesteemed. God meritoriously permitted that all this great plunder should be swallowed up by the sea in transportation, or in the civil wars wherewith they devoured one another: and most of the men themselves were buried in a foreign land, without any fruit of their victory.

That the revenue from these countries, though in the hands of so parsimonious and so prudent a prince,* so little answers the expectation given of it to his predecessors, and to that original abundance of riches which was found at the first landing in those new discovered countries (for though a great deal be fetched thence, yet we see 'tis nothing in comparison of that which might be expected) is, that the use of coin was there utterly unknown, and that consequently their gold was found all hoarded together, being of no other use but for ornament and show, as a furniture reserved from father to son by many puissant kings, who were ever draining their mines to make this vast heap of vessels and statues for the decoration of their palaces and temples; whereas our gold is always in motion and traffic; we cut it into a thousand small pieces, and cast it into a thousand forms, and scatter and disperse it in a thousand ways. But suppose our kings should thus hoard up all the gold they could get in several ages, and let it lie idle by them.

Those of the kingdom of Mexico were in some sort more civilized, and more advanced in arts, than the other nations about them. Therefore did they judge, as we do, that the world was near its period, and looked upon the desolation we brought among them as a certain sign of it. They believed that the existence of the world was divided into five ages, and in the life of five successive suns, of which four had already ended their time, and that this which gave them light was the fifth. The first perished, with all other

* Philip II.
creatures, by an universal inundation of water; the second by the heavens falling upon us and suffocating every living thing; to which age they assigned the giants, and showed bones to the Spaniards according to the proportion of which the stature of men amounted to twenty feet; the third by fire, which burned and consumed all; the fourth by an emotion of the air and wind, which came with such violence as to beat down even many mountains, wherein the men died not, but were turned into baboons (what impressions will not the weakness of human belief admit?*) After the death of this fourth sun, the world was twenty-five years in perpetual darkness: in the fifteenth of which a man and a woman were created, who restored the human race: ten years after, upon a certain day, the sun appeared newly created, and since the account of their years takes beginning from that day: the third day after its creation the ancient gods died, and the new ones were since born daily. After what manner they think this last sun shall perish my author knows not; but their number of this fourth change agrees with the great conjunction of stars which eight hundred and odd years ago, as astrologers suppose, produced great alterations and novelties in the world.

As to pomp and magnificence, upon the account of which I engaged in this discourse, neither Greece, Rome, nor Egypt, whether for utility, difficulty, or state, can compare any of their works with the highway to be seen in Peru, made by the kings of the country, from the city of Quito to that of Cusco (three hundred leagues). straight, even, five-and-twenty paces wide, paved and provided on both sides with high and beautiful walls; and close by them, and all along on the inside, two perennial streams, bordered with a beautiful sort of a tree which they call Molly. In this work, where they met with rocks and mountains, they cut them through, and made them even, and filled up pits and valleys with lime and stone to make them level. At the end of every day's journey are beautiful palaces, furnished with provisions, vestments, and arms, as well for travelers as for the armies that are to pass that way. In the estimate of this work I have reckoned the difficulty which is especially considerable in that place; they did not

* The weakness has taken another turn with some of our modern sages, who have turned baboons into men.
build with any stones less than ten feet square, and had no other conveniency of carriage but by drawing their load themselves by force of arm, and knew not so much as the art of scaffolding, nor any other way of standing to their work, but by throwing up earth against the building as it rose higher, taking it away again when they had done.

Let us here return to our coaches. Instead of these, and of all other sorts of carriages, they caused themselves to be carried upon men's shoulders. This last king of Peru, the day that he was taken, was thus carried between two upon staves of gold, and set in a chair of gold in the middle of his army. As many of these sedan-men as were killed to make him fall (for they would take him alive), so many others (and they contended for it) took the place of those who were slain, so that they could never beat him down, what slaughter soever they made of these people, till a light-horseman, seizing upon him, brought him down.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

OF THE INCONVENIENCE OF GREATNESS.

Since we cannot attain unto it, let us revenge ourselves by railing at it; and yet it is not absolutely railing against anything, to proclaim its defects, because they are in all things to be found, how beautiful or how much to be coveted soever. Greatness, has in general, this manifest advantage, that it can lower itself when it pleases, and has, very near, the choice of both the one and the other condition; for a man does not fall from all heights; there are several from which one may descend without falling down. It does, indeed, appear to me that we value it at too high a rate, and also overvalue the resolution of those whom we have either seen, or heard, have contemned it, or displaced themselves of their own accord: its essence is not so evidently commodious that a man may not, without a miracle, refuse it. I find it a very hard thing to undergo misfortunes, but to be content with a moderate measure of fortune and to avoid greatness I think a very easy matter. 'Tis methinks, a virtue to which I, who am no conjuror, could without any great endeavor arrive. What, then, is to be expected from them that would yet put into consider-
ation the glory attending this refusal, wherein there may lurk worse ambition than even in the desire itself, and fruition of greatness? Forasmuch as ambition never comports itself better, according to itself, than when it proceeds by obscure and unfrequented ways.

I incite my courage to patience, but I rein it as much as I can toward desire. I have as much to wish for as another, and allow my wishes as much liberty and indiscretion; but, yet it never befell me to wish for either empire or royalty, or the eminency of those high and commanding fortunes: I do not aim that way; I love myself too well. When I think to grow greater 'tis but very moderately, and by a compelled and timorous advancement, such as is proper for me in resolution, in prudence, in health, in beauty, and even in riches too; but this supreme reputation, this mighty authority, oppress my imagination; and, quite contrary to that other,* I should, peradventure, rather choose to be the second or third in Perigord, than the first at Paris: at least, without lying, rather the third at Paris than the first. I would neither dispute, a miserable unknown, with a nobleman's porter, nor make crowds open in adoration as I pass. I am trained up to a moderate condition, as well by my choice as fortune; and have made it appear, in the whole conduct of my life and enterprises, that I have rather avoided than otherwise the climbing above the degree of fortune wherein God has placed me by my birth: all natural constitution is equally just and easy. My soul is so sneaking that I measure not good fortune by the height, but by the facility.

But if my heart be not great enough, 'tis open enough to make amends, at any one's request, freely to lay open its weakness. Should any one put me upon comparing the life of L. Thorius Balbus, a brave man, handsome, learned, healthful, understanding, and abounding in all sorts of conveniences and pleasures, leading a quiet life, and all his own, his mind well prepared against death, superstition, pain, and other incumbrances of human necessity, dying at last, in battle, with his sword in his hand, for the defense of his country, on the one part; and on the other part, the life of M. Regulus, so great and high as is known to every one, and his end admirable; the one without name and

* Julius Cæsar.
without dignity, the other exemplary, and glorious to wonder. I should doubtless say as Cicero did, could I speak as well as he.* But if I was to compare them with my own,† I should then also say that the first is as much according to my capacity, and from desire, which I conform to my capacity, as the second is far beyond it; that I could not approach the last but with veneration, the other I could readily attain by use.

But let us return to our temporal greatness, from which we are digressed. I disrelish all dominion, whether active or passive. Otanes,‡ one of the seven who had right to pretend to the kingdom of Persia, did, as I should willingly have done, which was, that he gave up to his concurrents his right of being promoted to it, either by election or by lot, provided that he and his might live in the empire out of all authority and subjection, those of the ancient laws excepted, and might enjoy all liberty that was not prejudicial to these, being as impatient of commanding as of being commanded.

The most painful and difficult employment in the world, in my opinion, is worthily to discharge the office of a king. I excuse more of their mistakes than men commonly do, in consideration of the intolerable weight of their function, which astounds me. 'Tis hard to keep measure in so immeasurable a power; yet so it is, that it is, even to those who are not of the best nature, a singular incitement to virtue, to be seated in a place where you cannot do the least good that shall not be put upon record; and where the least benefit redounds to so many men, and where your talent of administration, like that of preachers, principally addresses itself to the people, no very exact judge, easy to deceive, and easily content. There are few things wherein we can give a sincere judgment, by reason that there are few wherein we have not, in some sort, a private interest. Superiority and inferiority, dominion and subjection, are bound to a natural envy and contest, and must of necessity perpetually intrench upon one another. I believe neither the one nor the other touching the rights of the other

* Cicero, De Finibus, ii. 20, gives the preference to Regulus, and proclaims him the happier man.
† "Touch it in my own phrase," says Cotton.
‡ Herodotus, iii. 83.
party; let reason therefore, which is inflexible and without passion, determine when we can avail ourselves of it. 'Tis not above a month ago that I read over two Scotch authors contending upon this subject, of whom he who stands for the people makes kings to be in a worse condition than a carter; and he who writes for monarchy places them some degrees above God Almighty in power and sovereignty.

Now, the inconveniency of greatness that I have made choice of to consider in this place, upon some occasion that has lately put it into my head, is this: there is not, peradventure, anything more pleasant in the commerce of men than the trials that we make against one another, out of emulation of honor and worth, whether in the exercises of the body or in those of the mind, wherein sovereign greatness can have no true part. And, in earnest, I have often thought that by force of respect itself men use princes disdainfully and injuriously in that particular; for the thing I was infinitely offended at in my childhood, that they who exercised with me forbore to do their best because they found me unworthy of their utmost endeavor, is what we see happen to them daily, every one finding himself unworthy to contend with them. If we discover that they have the least desire to get the better of us, there is no one who will not make it his business to give it them, and who will not rather betray his own glory than offend theirs; and will, therein, employ so much force only as is necessary to save their honor. What share have they, then, in the engagement, where every one is on their side? Methinks I see those Paladins of ancient times presenting themselves to jousts and battle with enchanted arms and bodies. Brisson,* running against Alexander, purposely missed his blow, and made a fault in his career; Alexander chid him for it, but he ought to have had him whipped. Upon this consideration Carneades said,† that "the sons of princes learned nothing right but to ride; by reason that, in all their other exercises, every one bends and yields to them; but a horse, that is neither a flatterer nor a courtier, throws

* Plutarch, On Satisfaction or Tranquillity of the Mind. But in his essay, How a Man may Distinguish a Flatterer from a Friend, he calls him Chriso.

† Plutarch, How a Man, etc., ubi supra.
the son of a king with no more ceremony than he would throw that of a porter."

Homer was fain to consent that Venus, so sweet and delicate a goddess as she was, should be wounded at the battle of Troy, thereby to ascribe courage and boldness to her; qualities that cannot possibly be in those who are exempt from danger. The gods are made to be angry, to fear, to run away, to be jealous, to grieve, to be transported with passions, to honor them with the virtues that, among us, are built upon these imperfections. Who does not participate in the hazard and difficulty can claim no interest in the honor and pleasure that are the consequents of hazardous actions. 'Tis pity a man should be so potent that all things must give way to him; fortune therein sets you too remote from society, and places you in too great a solitude. This easiness and mean facility of making all things bow under you is an enemy to all sorts of pleasure: 'tis to slide, not to go; 'tis to sleep, and not to live. Conceive man accompanied with omnipotence: you overwhelm him; he must beg disturbance and opposition as an alms: his being and his good are in indigence.*

Their good qualities are dead and lost; for they can only be perceived by comparison, and we put them out of this: they have little knowledge of true praise, having their ears deafened with so continual and uniform an approbation. Have they to do with the stupidest of all their subjects? they have no means to take any advantage of him, if he but say: "'Tis because he is my king," he thinks he has said enough to express, that he, therefore, suffered himself to be overcome. This quality stifles and consumes the other true and essential qualities: they are sunk in the royalty; and leave them nothing to recommend themselves with but actions that directly concern and serve the function of their place; 'tis so much to be a king, that this alone remains to them. The outer glare that environs him conceals and shrouds him from us; our sight is there repelled and dissipated, being filled and stopped by this prevailing light. The senate awarded the prize of eloquence

* In the Bordeaux copy, Montaigne here adds, "Evil to man is, in its turn, good; and good, evil. Neither is pain always to be shunned, nor pleasure always to be pursued."
to Tiberius; he refused it, esteeming that though it had been just, he could derive no advantage from a judgment so partial, and that was so little free to judge.

As we give them all advantages of honor, so do we soothe and authorize all their vices and defects, not only by approbation, but by imitation also. Every one of Alexander's followers carried his head on one side, as he did;* and the flatterers of Dionysius ran against one another in his presence, and stumbled at and overturned whatever was under foot, to show they were as purblind as he.† Hernia itself has also served to recommend a man to favor; I have seen deafness affected; and because the master hated his wife, Plutarch‡ has seen his courtiers repudiate theirs, whom they loved: and, which is yet more, uncleanness and all manner of dissolution have so been in fashion; as also disloyalty, blasphemy, cruelty, heresy, superstition, irreligion, effeminacy, and worse, if worse there be; and by an example yet more dangerous than that of Mithridates§ flatterers who as their master pretended to the honor of a good physician, came to him to have incisions and cauteries made in their limbs; for these others suffered the soul, a more delicate and noble part, to be cauterized.

But to end where I began; the Emperor Adrian, disputing with the philosopher Favorinus about the interpretation of some word, Favorinus soon yielded him the victory; for which his friends rebuking him: "You talk simply," said he, "would you not have him wiser than I, who commands thirty legions?" || Augustus wrote verses against Asinius Pollio, and "I," said Pollio, "say nothing, for it is not prudence to write in contest with him who has

* Plutarch on the Difference, etc., ubi supra.

† Idem, ibid., who, however, only gives one instance, and in this he tells us that the man visited his wife privately.

‡ Ubi supra.

§ Idem, ibid.

|| Spartian, Life of Adrian, c. 15.
power to prescribe;"* and he had reason; for Dionysius, because he could not equal Philoxenus in poesy and Plato in discourse, condemned the one to the quarries, and sent the other to be sold for a slave into the island of Ægina.†

CHAPTER XXXXIX.

OF THE ART OF CONFERENCE.

"Tis a custom of our justice to condemn some for a warning to others. To condemn them for having done amiss, were folly, as Plato says,‡ for what is done can never be undone; but 'tis to the end they may offend no more, and that others may avoid the example of their offense: we do not correct the man we hang; we correct others by him. I do the same; my errors are sometimes natural, incorrigible, and irremediable;§ but the good which virtuous men do to the public, in making themselves imitated, I, peradventure, may do in making my manners avoided:

"Nonne vides, Albiut male vivat filius? utque Barrus inops? magnum documentum, ne patriam rem Perdere quis velit;" ||

publishing and accusing my own imperfections, some one will learn to be afraid of them. The parts that I most esteem in myself, derive more honor from decrying than from commending myself: which is the reason why I so often fall into, and so much insist upon that strain. But, when all is summed up, a man never speaks of himself without loss; a man's accusations of himself are always believed; his praises never. There may, peradventure, be some of my own complexion who better instruct myself by

* Macrobes, Saturn, ii. 4.
† Plutarch, On Satisfaction of mind, c. 10. Diogenes Laertius, however, in his Life of Plato, iii. 18, says that Plato's offense was the speaking too freely to the tryant.
‡ Laws, xi. 934.
§ In one of his copies, Montaigne struck out the word "irremediable."
|| "Observe the wretched condition of wealthy Albius' son, and the poverty of Barrus: a good lesson for young heirs not to fool away their patrimony."—Horace, Sat. i. 4, 109.
contrariety than by similitude, and by avoiding than by imitation. The elder Cato had an eye to this sort of discipline, when he said, "that the wise may learn more of fools than fools can of the wise;" and Pausanias tells us of an ancient player upon the harp, who was wont to make his scholars go to hear one who played very ill, who lived over against him, that they might learn to hate his discords and false measures. The horror of cruelty more inclines me to clemency, than any example of clemency could possibly do. A good rider does not so much mend my seat, as an awkward attorney or a Venetian on horseback; and a clownish way of speaking more reforms mine than the most correct. The ridiculous and simple look of another always warns and advises me; that which pricks, rouses and incites much better than that which tickles. The time is now proper for us to reform backward: more by dissenting than by agreeing; by differing more than by consent. Profiting little by good examples, I make use of those that are ill, which are everywhere to be found; I endeavor to render myself as agreeable as I see others offensive; as constant as I see others fickle; as affable as I see others rough; as good as I see others evil: but I propose to myself impracticable measures.

The most fruitful and natural exercise of the mind, in my opinion, is conversation; I find the use of it more sweet than of any other action of life; and for that reason it is that, if I were now compelled to choose, I should sooner, I think, consent to lose my sight, than my hearing and speech. The Athenians, and also the Romans, kept this exercise in great honor in their academies; the Italians retain some traces of it to this day, to their great advantage, as is manifest by the comparison of our understandings with theirs. The study of books is a languishing and feeble motion that heats not, whereas conversation teaches and exercises at once. If I converse with an understanding man, and a rough disputant, he presses hard upon me, and pricks me on both sides; his imaginations raise up mine to more than ordinary pitch; jealousy, glory, and contention, stimulate and raise me up to something above myself; and concurrence is a quality totally offensive in discourse. But, as our minds fortify themselves by the communication of vigorous and regular understandings, 'tis not to be expressed how much they lose and degenerate
by the continual commerce and frequentation we have with such as are mean and weak; there is no contagion that spreads like that; I know sufficiently by experience what 'tis worth a yard. I love to discourse and dispute, but it is with but few men, and for myself; for to do it as a spectacle and entertainment to great persons, and to make of a man's wit and words competitive parade, is, in my opinion, very unbecoming a man of honor.

Folly is a scurvy quality; but not to be able to endure it, to fret and vex at it, as I do, is another sort of disease little less troublesome than folly itself; and is the thing that I will now accuse in myself. I enter into conference, and dispute with great liberty and facility, forasmuch as opinion meets in me with a soil very unfit for penetration, and wherein to take any deep root; no propositions astonish me, no belief offends me, though never so contrary to my own; there is no so frivolous and extravagant fancy that does not seem to me suitable to the production of human wit. We, who deprive our judgment of the right of determining, look indifferently upon the diverse opinions, and if we incline not our judgment to them, yet we easily give them the hearing. Where one scale is totally empty, I let the other wavering under old wives' dreams; and I think myself excusable, if I prefer the odd number; Thursday rather than Friday; if I had rather be the twelfth or fourteenth, than the thirteenth at table; if I had rather, on a journey, see a hare run by me than cross my way, and rather give my man my left foot than my right, when he comes to put on my stockings. All such whimsies as are in use among us, deserve at least a hearing; for my part, they only with me import inanity, but they import that. Moreover, vulgar and casual opinions are something more than nothing in nature; and he who will not suffer himself to proceed so far, falls, peradventure, into the vice of obstinacy, to avoid that of superstition.

The contradictions of judgments, then, neither offend nor alter, they only rouse and exercise me. We evade correction, whereas we ought to offer and present ourselves to it, especially when it appears in the form of conference, and not of authority. At every opposition, we do not consider whether or no it be just, but, right or wrong, how to disengage ourselves; instead of extending the arms, we thrust out our claws. I could suffer myself to be rudely
handled by my friend, so much as to tell me that I am a fool, and talk I know not of what. I love stout expressions among gentlemen, and to have them speak as they think; we must fortify and harden our hearing against this tenderness of the ceremonious sound of words. I love a strong and manly familiarity and conversation; a friendship that pleases itself in the sharpness and vigor of its communication, like love in biting and scratching; it is not vigorous and generous enough, if it be not quarrelsome, if it be civilized and artificial, if it treads nicely and fears the shock: "Neque enim disputari, sine reprehensione, potest."* When any one contradicts me, he raises my attention, not my anger; I advance toward him who controverts, who instructs me; the cause of truth ought to be the common cause both of the one and the other. What will the angry man answer? Passion has already confounded his judgment; agitation has usurped the place of reason. It were not amiss that the decision of our disputes should pass by wager; that there might be a material mark of our losses, to the end we might the better remember them; and that my man might tell me: "Your ignorance and obstinacy cost you last year, at several times, a hundred crowns." I hail and caress truth in what quarter soever I find it, and cheerfully surrender myself, and open my conquered arms as far off as I can discover it; and, provided it be not too imperiously, take a pleasure in being reproved, and accommodate myself to my accusers, very often more by reason of civility than amendment, loving to gratify and nourish the liberty of admonition by my facility of submitting to it, and this even at my own expense.

Nevertheless, it is hard to bring the men of my time to it; they have not the courage to correct, because they have not the courage to suffer themselves to be corrected; and speak always with dissimulation in the presence of one another. I take so great a pleasure in being judged and known, that it is almost indifferent to me in which of the two forms I am so; my imagination so often contradicts and condemns itself, that 'tis all one to me if another do it, especially considering that I give his reprehension no greater authority than I choose; but I break with him, who carries himself so high, as I know of one who repents

* "Neither can a man dispute, but he must contradict."—Cicero, De Finit. i. 8.
his advice, if not believed, and takes it for an affront if it be not immediately followed. That Socrates always received smilingly the contradictions offered to his arguments, a man may say arose from his strength of reason; and that, the advantage being certain to fall on his side, he accepted them as matter of new victory. But we see, on the contrary, that nothing in argument renders our sentiment so delicate, as the opinion of pre-eminence, and disdain of the adversary; and that, in reason, 'tis rather for the weaker to take in good part the oppositions that correct him and set him right. In earnest, I rather choose the company of those who ruffle me than of those who fear me; 'tis a dull and hurtful pleasure to have to do with people who admire us and approve of all we say. Antisthenes commanded his children* never to take it kindly or for a favor, when any man commended them. I find I am much prouder of the victory I obtain over myself, when, in the very ardivor of dispute, I make myself submit to my adversary's force of reason, than I am pleased with the victory I obtain over him through his weakness. In fine, I receive and admit of all manner of attacks that are direct, how weak soever; but I am too impatient of those that are made out of form. I care not what the subject is, the opinions are to me all one, and I am almost indifferent whether I get the better or the worse. I can peaceably argue a whole day together, if the argument be carried on with method; I do not so much require force and subtlety as order; I mean the order which we every day observe in the wranglings of shepherds and shop-boys, but never among us; if they start from their subject, 'tis out of incivility, and so 'tis with us; but their tumult and impatience never put them out of their theme; their argument still continues its course; if they interrupt and do not stay for one another, they at least understand one another. Any one answers too well for me, if he answers what I say: when the dispute is irregular and disordered, I leave the thing itself, and insist upon the form with anger and indiscretion; falling into a willful, malicious, and imperious way of disputation, of which I am afterward ashamed. 'Tis impossible to deal fairly with a fool: my judgment is not only corrupted under the hand of so impetuous a master, but my conscience also.

* Plutarch, On False Shame, c. 12.
Our disputes ought to be interdicted and punished as well as other verbal crimes: what vice do they not raise and heap up, being always governed and commanded by passion? We first quarrel with their reasons, and then with the men. We only learn to dispute that we may contradict: and so, every one contradicting and being contradicted, it falls out that the fruit of disputation is to lose and annihilate truth. Therefore it is that Plato in his Republic † prohibits this exercise to fools and ill-bred people. To what end do you go about to inquire of him, who knows nothing to the purpose? A man does no injury to the subject, when he leaves it to seek how he may treat it; I do not mean by an artificial and scholastic way, but by a natural one, with a sound understanding. What will it be in the end? One flies to the east, the other to the west; they lose the principal, dispersing it in the crowd of incidents: after an hour of tempest, they know not what they seek; one is low, the other high, and a third wide. One catches at a word and a simile; another is no longer sensible of what is said in opposition to him, and thinks only of going on at his own rate, not of answering you another, finding himself too weak to make good his rest, fears all, refuses all, at the very beginning, confounds the subject; or, in the very height of the dispute, stops short and is silent, by a peevish ignorance affecting a proud contempt or a foolishly modest avoidance of further debate; provided this man strikes, he cares not how much he lays himself open; the other counts his words, and weighs them for reasons; another only brawls, and uses the advantage of his lungs. Here’s one who learnedly concludes against himself, and another who deafens you with prefaces and senseless digressions; another falls into downright railing, and seeks a quarrel after the German fashion, to disengage himself from a wit that presses too hard upon him; and a last man sees nothing into the reason of the thing, but draws a line of circumvallation about you of dialectic clauses, and the formulas of his art.

Now, who would not enter into distrust of sciences, and doubt whether he can reap from them any solid fruit for

* This paragraph is almost literally copied into the "Art de Penser," or "Logique du Port Royal," iii. 21, 7.
† Book vii., sub fin.
the service of life, considering the use we put them to?

"Nihil sanantibus litteris." * Who has got understanding by his logic? Where are all her fair promises? "Nec ad melius vivendum, nec ad commodius disserendum." † Is there more noise or confusion in the scolding of fishwives than in the public disputes of men of this profession? I had rather my son should learn in a tap-house to speak, than in the schools to prate. Take a master of arts, and confer with him; why does he not make us sensible of this artificial excellence? and why does he not captivate women and ignoramuses, as we are, with admiration at the steadiness of his reasons, and the beauty of his order? why does he not sway and persuade us to what he will? why does a man, who has so much advantage in matter and treatment mix railing, indiscretion, and fury in his disputations? Strip him of his gown, his hood, and his Latin, let him not batter our ears with Aristotle, pure and simple, ‡ you will take him for one of us, or worse. While they torment us with this complication and confusion of words, it fares with them, methinks, as with jugglers; their dexterity imposes upon our senses, but does not at all work upon our belief; this legerdemain excepted, they perform nothing that is not very ordinary and mean: for being the more learned, they are none the less fools. § I love and honor knowledge as much as they that have it, and in its true use 'tis the most noble and the greatest acquisition of men; but in such as I speak of (and the number of them is infinite), who build their fundamental sufficiency and value upon it, who appeal from their understanding to their memory, "sub aliena umbrâ latentes," || and who can do nothing but by book, I hate it, if I dare to say so, worse than stupidity itself. In my country, and in my time, learning improves fortunes enough, but not minds; if it meet with those that are dull

† "It neither makes a man live better nor talk better." —Cicero, De Fin., i. 19.
‡ Tout pur et tout crud. "Aristotle who is wholly pure and wholly believed." —Cotton.
§ So Hobbes said that if he had learned as much as the college pedants he should be as great a blockhead as they.
|| "Cowering under foreign shelter." —Seneca, Ep. 33
and heavy, it overcharges and suffocates them, leaving them a crude and undigested mass; if airy and fine, it purifies, clarifies, and subtilizes them, even to exinanition.  'Tis a thing of almost indifferent quality; a very useful accession to a well-born soul, but hurtful and pernicious to others; or rather a thing of very precious use, that will not suffer itself to be purchased at an under rate; in the hand of some 'tis a scepter, in that of others a fool's bauble.

But let us proceed. What greater victory can you expect than to make your enemy see and know that he is not able to encounter you? When you get the better of your argument, 'tis truth that wins; when you get the advantage of form and method, 'tis then you who win. I am of opinion that in Plato and Xenophon Socrates disputes more in favor of the disputants than in favor of the dispute, and more to instruct Euthydemus and Protagoras in the knowledge of their impertinence, than in the impertinence of their art. He takes hold of the first subject like one who has a more profitable end than to explain it—namely, to clear the understandings that he takes upon him to instruct and exercise. To hunt after truth is properly our business, and we are inexcusable if we carry on the chase impertinently and ill; to fail of seizing it is another thing, for we are born to inquire after truth: it belongs to a greater power to possess it. It is not, as Democritus said, hid in the bottom of the deeps, but rather elevated to an infinite height in the divine knowledge.* The world is but a school of inquisition: it is not who shall enter the ring, but who shall run the best courses. He may as well play the fool who speaks true, as he who speaks false, for we are upon the manner, not the matter, of speaking. 'Tis my humor as much to regard the form as the substance, and the advocate as much as the cause, as Alcibiades ordered we should: and every day pass away my time in reading authors without any consideration of their learning; their manner is what I look after, not their subject. And just so do I hunt after the conversation of any eminent wit, not that he may teach me, but that I may know him, and that knowing him, if I think him worthy of imitation, I may imitate him. Every man may speak truly, but to speak methodically, prudently, and fully, is a talent that few men

* Lactantius, Divin. Institut., iii. 28.
have. The falsity that proceeds from ignorance does not offend me, but the foppery of it. I have broken off several treaties that would have been of advantage to me by reason of the impertinent contestations of those with whom I treated. I am not moved once in a year at the faults of those over whom I have authority, but upon the account of the ridiculous obstinacy of their allegations, denials, excuses, we are every day going together by the ears; they neither understand what is said, nor why, and answer accordingly; 'tis enough to drive a man mad. I never feel any hurt upon my head but when 'tis knocked against another, and more easily forgive the vices of my servants than their boldness, importunity, and folly; let them do less, provided they understand what they do; you live in hope to warm their affection to your service, but there is nothing to be had or to be expected from a log.

But what, if I take things otherwise than they are? Perhaps I do; and therefore it is that I accuse my own impatience, and hold, in the first place, that it is equally vicious both in him that is in the right, and in him that is in the wrong; for 'tis always a tyrannic sourness not to endure a form contrary to one’s own: and, besides, there cannot, in truth, be a greater, more constant, nor more irregular folly than to be moved and angry at the follies of the world, for it principally makes us quarrel with ourselves; and the old philosopher * never wanted occasion for his tears while he considered himself. Miso, one of the seven sages, of a Timonian and Democratic humor, being asked, † “What he laughed at, being alone?” “That I do laugh alone,” answered he. How many ridiculous things, in my own opinion, do I say and answer every day that comes over my head? and then how many more, according to the opinions of others? If I bite my own lips, what ought others to do? In fine, we must live among the living, and let the river run under the bridge, without our care, or, at least, without our disturbance. In truth, why do we meet a man with a hunch-back, or any other deformity without being moved, and cannot endure the encounter of a deformed mind without being angry? this vicious sourness sticks more to the judge than to the crime. Let us

* Heraclitus, Juvenal, x. 32.
† Diogenes Laertius, i. 108.
always have this saying of Plato in our mouths: "Do not I think things unsound, because I am not sound in myself? Am I not myself in fault? may not my observations reflect upon myself?" a wise and divine saying, that lashes the most universal and common error of mankind. Not only the reproaches that we throw in the face of one another, but our reasons also, our arguments and controversies, are reboundable upon us, and we wound ourselves with our own weapons: of which antiquity has left me enough grave examples. It was ingeniously and home-said by him, who was the inventor of this sentence:

"Stercus cuique suum bene olet." *

We see nothing behind us; we mock ourselves an hundred times a day, when we deride our neighbors; and we detest in others the defects which are more manifest in us, and which we admire with marvelous inadvertency and impudence. It was but yesterday that I heard a man of understanding and of good rank, as pleasantly as justly scoffing at the folly of another, who did nothing but torment everybody with the catalogue of his genealogy and alliances, above half of them false (for they are most apt to fall into such ridiculous discourses, whose qualities are most dubious and least sure), and yet, would he have looked into himself, he would have discerned himself to be no less intemperate and wearisome in extolling his life's pedigree. Oh, importunate presumption, with which the wife sees herself armed by the hands of her own husband! Did he understand Latin we should say to him:

"Agesis, hae non insanit satis sua sponte: instiga." †

I do not say that no man should accuse another, who is not clean himself—for then no one would ever accuse—clean from the same sort of spot; but I mean that our judgment, falling upon another who is then in question, should not, at the same time, spare ourselves, but sentence us with an inward and severe authority. 'Tis an office of charity, that he who cannot reclaim himself from a vice, should, nevertheless, endeavor to remove it from another,

* "Every man thinks his own excrements smell well." —ERASMUS, Adag.
† "Come! of herself she is not mad enough: urge her on."—TERENCE, And., iv. 2, 9.
in whom, peradventure, it may not have so deep and so malignant a root; neither do I think it an answer to the purpose to tell him who reproves me for my fault that he himself is guilty of the same. What of that? The reproof is, notwithstanding, true and of very good use. Had we a good nose, our own ordure would stink worse to us, forasmuch as it is our own: and Socrates is of opinion that whoever should find himself, his son, and a stranger guilty of any violence and wrong, ought to begin with himself, present himself first to the sentence of justice, and implore, to purge himself, the assistance of the hand of the executioner; in the next place, he should proceed to his son, and lastly, to the stranger. If this precept seem too severe, he ought at least to present himself the first, to the punishment of his own conscience.

The senses are our first and proper judges, which perceive not things but by external accidents; and 'tis no wonder, if in all the parts of the service of our society, there is so perpetual and universal a mixture of ceremonies and superficial appearances; insomuch that the best and most effectual part of our politics therein consist. 'Tis still man with whom we have to do, of whom the condition is wonderfully corporal. Let those who, of these late years, would erect for us such a contemplative and immaterial an exercise of religion, not wonder if there be some who think it had vanished and melted through their fingers, had it not more upheld itself among us as a mark, title, and instrument of division and faction, than by itself. As in conference, the gravity, robe, and fortune of him who speaks, oftentimes gives reputation to vain arguments and idle words, it is not to be presumed but that a man, so attended and feared, has not in him more than ordinary sufficiency; and that he to whom the king has given so many offices and commissions and charges, he so supercilious and proud, has not a great deal more in him, than another who salutes him at so great a distance, and who has no employment at all. Not only the words, but the grimaces also of these people, are considered and put into the account, every one making it his business to give them some fine and solid interpretation. If they stoop to the common conference, and that you offer anything but approbation and reverence, they then knock you down with the authority of their experience: they have
heard, they have seen, they have done so and so: you are crushed with examples. I should tell them, that the fruit of a surgeon’s experience, is not the history of his practice, and his remembering that he has cured four people of the plague and three of the gout, unless he knows how thence to extract something whereon to form his judgment, and to make us sensible that he is thence become more skillful in his art. As in a concert of instruments, we do not hear a lute, a harpsichord, or a flute alone, but one entire harmony, the result of all together. If travel and offices have improved them, ’tis a product of their understanding to make it appear. ’Tis not enough to reckon experiences, they must weigh and sort them, digest and distil them, to extract the reasons and conclusions they carry along with them. There were never so many historians: it is, indeed, good and of use to read them, for they furnish us everywhere with excellent and laudable instructions from the magazine of their memory, which, doubtless, is of great concern to the help of life; but ’tis not that we seek for now: we examine whether these relators and collectors of things are commendable themselves.

I hate all sorts of tyranny, whether verbal or effectual: I am very ready to oppose myself against those vain circumstances that delude our judgments by the senses; and keeping my eye close upon those extraordinary grandees, I find that at best they are but men, as others are:

“Rarus enim ferme sensus communis in illa
Fortuna.” *

Peradventure, we esteem and look upon them for less than they are, by reason they undertake more, and more expose themselves; they do not answer to the charge they have undertaken. There must be more vigor and strength in the bearer than in the burden; he who has not lifted as much as he can, leaves you to guess that he has still a strength beyond that, and that he has not been tried to the utmost of what he is able to do; he who sinks under his load, makes a discovery of his best, and the weakness of his shoulders. This is the reason that we see so many silly souls among the learned, and more than those of the better sort: they would have made good husbandmen, good

* “In those high fortunes, common sense is rare.”—Juvenal, viii. 73.
merchants, and good artisans: their natural vigor was cut out to that proportion. Knowledge is a thing of great weight, they faint under it: their understanding has neither vigor nor dexterity enough to set forth and distribute, to employ or make use of this rich and powerful matter; it has no prevailing virtue but in a strong nature; and such natures are very rare—and the weak ones, says Socrates,* corrupt the dignity of philosophy in the handling; it appears useless and vicious, when lodged in an ill-contrived mind. They spoil and make fools of themselves.

"Humani qualis simulator simius oris,
Quem puer arridens pretioso stamine serum
Velavit, nudasque nates ac terga reliquit,
Ludibrium mensis."†

Neither it is enough for those who govern and command us, and have all the world in their hands, to have a common understanding, and to be able to do the same that we can; they are very much below us, if they be not infinitely above us: as they promise more, so they are to perform more.

And yet silence is to them, not only a countenance of respect and gravity, but very often of good advantage too: for Megabysus, going to see Apelles in his painting room, stood a great while without speaking a word, and at last began to talk of his paintings, for which he received this rude reproof: "Whilst thou wast silent, thou seemest to be some extraordinary person, by reason of thy chains and rich habit; but now that we have heard thee speak, there is not the meanest boy in my shop that does not despise thee."‡ Those princely ornaments, that mighty state, did not permit him to be ignorant with a common ignorance, and to speak impertinently of painting; he ought to have kept this external and presumptive knowledge by silence. To how many puppies of my time has a sullen and silent fashion procured the opinion of prudence and capacity!

Dignities and offices are of necessity conferred more by

* Plato, Republic, vi.

† "Just like an ape, simulator of the human face, whom a wanton boy has dizzened up in rich silks above, but left the lower parts bare, for the amusement of the guests."—CLAUDIAN, in Eutrop, i. 303.

fortune than upon the account of merit; and we are often to blame, to condemn kings when these are misplaced: on the contrary, 'tis a wonder they should have so good luck, where there is so little skill;

"Principis est virtus maxima, nosse suos,"

for nature has not given them a sight that can extend to so many people, to discern which excels the rest, nor to penetrate into our bosoms, where the knowledge of our wills and best value lies: they must choose us by conjecture and by groping; by the family, wealth, learning, and the voice of the people, which are all very feeble arguments. Whoever could find out a way by which they might judge by justice, and choose men by reason, would, in this one thing, establish a perfect form of government.

"Ay, but he brought that great affair to a very good pass." That is, indeed, to say something, but not to say enough: for this sentence is justly received, "That we are not to judge of counsels by events." The Carthaginians punished the ill counsels of their captains, though the issue was successful; and the people of Rome often denied a triumph for great and very advantageous victories because the conduct of their general was not answerable to his good fortune. We ordinarily see, in the actions of the world, that fortune, to show us her power in all things, and who takes a pride in abating our presumption, seeing she could not make fools wise, has made them fortunate in emulation of virtue; and most favors those operations the web of which is most purely her own; whence it is that we daily see the simplest among us bring to pass great business, both public and private; and, as Seiramnes, the Persian, answered those who wondered that his affairs succeeded so ill, considering that his deliberations were so wise, "that he was sole master of his designs, but that success was wholly in the power of fortune;" these may answer the same, but with a contrary turn. Most worldly affairs are performed by themselves.

* "'Tis the chief virtue of a prince to know the people about him."—Martial, viii. 15.
† Ovid, Heroid., ii. 85.
‡ Livy, xxxviii. 48.
§ "Plutarch, Apothegeus of the Ancient Kings, etc.
ESSAYS OF MONTAIGNE. 415

"Fata viam inveniunt;" *

the event often justifies a very foolish conduct; our inter-
position is little more than as it were a running on by rote,
and more commonly a consideration of custom and example,
than of reason. Being formerly astonished at the greatness
of some affair, I have been made acquainted with their
motives and address by those who had performed it, and
have found nothing in it but very ordinary counsels; and
the most common and usual are indeed, perhaps, the most
sure and convenient for practice, if not for show. What if
the plainest reasons are the best seated? the meanest,
lowest, and most beaten more adapted to affairs? To
maintain the authority of the counsels of kings, it needs
not that profane persons should participate of them, or see
further into them than the outmost barrier; he who will
husband its reputation must be reverenced upon credit and
taken altogether. My consultation somewhat rough-hews
the matter, and considers it lightly by the first face it
presents: the stress and main of the business I have referred
to heaven:

"Permitte divis cætera." †

Good and ill fortune are, in my opinion, two sovereign
powers; 'tis folly to think that human prudence can play
the part of fortune; and vain is his attempt who presumes
to comprehend both causes and consequences, and by the
hand to conduct the progress of his design; and most espe-
cially vain in the deliberations of war. There was never
greater circumspection and military prudence than some-
times is seen among us; can it be that men are afraid to
lose themselves by the way, that they reserve themselves
to the end of the game? I moreover affirm that our wis-
dom itself and consultation, for the most part commit
themselves to the conduct of chance; my will and my
reason are sometimes moved by one breath, and sometimes
by another; and many of these movements there are that
govern themselves without me; my reason has uncertain
and casual agitations and impulsions:

* "The destinies find the way."—Æneid, iii. 395.
† "Leave the rest to the gods."—Horace, Od. i. 9, 9.
"Vertuntur species animorum, et pectora motus
Nunc alios, alios, dum nubila ventus agebat
Concipiunt." *

Let a man but observe who are of greatest authority in cities, and who best do their own business; we shall find that they are commonly men of the least parts; women, children and madmen have had the fortune to govern great kingdoms equally well with the wisest princes, and Thucydides says, † that the stupid more ordinarily do it than those of better understandings; we attribute the effects of their good fortune to their prudence:

"Ut quisque Fortuna utitur,
Ita praecellet; atque exinde sapere illum omnes dicimus;" ‡

wherefore I say unreservedly, events are a very poor testimony of our worth and parts.

Now, I was upon this point, that there needs no more but to see a man promoted to dignity; though we knew him but three days before a man of little regard, yet an image of grandeur of sufficiency insensibly steals into our opinion, and we persuade ourselves that, being augmented in reputation and train, he is also increased in merit; we judge of him, not according to his worth, but as we do by counters, according to the prerogative of his place. If it happen so that he fall again, and be mixed with the common crowd, every one inquires with amazement into the cause of his having been raised so high. "Is this he," say they; "was he no wiser when he was in place? § Do princes satisfy themselves with so little? Truly, we were in good hands." This is a thing that I have often seen in my time. Nay, even the very disguise of grandeur represented in our comedies in some sort moves and gulls us. That which I myself adore in kings is the crowd of their adorers: all

* "Their thoughts vary, and the motions of their minds are as inconstant as the clouds before the wind."—Virgil, Georg., i. 420.

† iii. 37. Harangue of Cleon.

‡ "He makes his way who knows how to use Fortune, and so succeeding all men call him wise."—Plautus, Pseudol., ii. 3, 13.

§ Ny seavoir il autre chose quand il y estort. Which Cotton renders, "I could he make no better provision for himself when he was in place."
reverence and submission are due to them, except that of the understanding: my reason is not obliged to bow and bend; my knees are. Melanthius being asked what he thought of the tragedy of Dionysius? "I could not see it," said he, "it was so clouded with language;"* so most of those who judge of the discourses of great men ought to say, "I did not understand his words, they were so clouded with gravity, grandeur, and majesty." Antisthenes † one day entreated the Athenians to give order that asses might be employed in tilling the ground as well as the horses were; to which it was answered that those animals were not destined for such a service; "That's all one," replied he, "you have only to order it; for the most ignorant and incapable men you employ in your commands of war incontinently become worthy enough, because you employ them;" to which the custom of so many people who canonize the king they have chosen out of their own body, and are not content only to honor, but must adore them, comes very near. The people of Mexico, after the ceremonies of their king's coronation are over, dare no more look him in the face; but, as if they had deified him by his royalty, among the oaths they make him take to maintain their religion, their laws and liberalities, to be valiant, just, and mild, he moreover swears to make the sun run his course in his wonted light, to drain the clouds at fit seasons, to make rivers run their course, and to cause the earth to bear all things necessary for his people.

I differ from this common fashion and am more apt to suspect the capacity when I see it accompanied with that grandeur of fortune and public applause; we are to consider of what advantage it is to speak when a man pleases, to choose his subject, to interrupt or change it, with a magisterial authority; to protect himself from the oppositions of others by a nod, a smile, or silence, in the presence of an assembly that trembles with reverence and respect. A man of a prodigious fortune coming to give his judgment upon some slight dispute that was foolishly set on foot at his table, began in these words: "It can be no other but a liar or a fool that will say otherwise than so and so." Pursue this philosophical point with a dagger in your hand.

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* Plutarch, On Hearing, c. 7.
† Diogenes Laertius, vi. 8.
There is another observation I have made, from which I draw great advantage; which is, that in conferences and disputes, every word that seems to be good, is not immediately to be accepted. Most men are rich in borrowed sufficiency: a man may very well say a good thing, give a good answer, cite a good sentence, without at all seeing the force of either the one or the other. That a man may not understand all he borrows, may perhaps be verified in myself. A man must not always presently yield, what truth or beauty soever may seem to be in the opposite argument; either he must stoutly meet it, or retire, under color of not understanding it, to try, on all parts how it is lodged in the author. It may happen that we entangle ourselves, and help to strengthen the point itself. I have sometimes, in the necessity and heat of the combat, made answers that have gone through and through, beyond my expectation or hope: I only gave them in number, they were received in weight. As, when I contend with a vigorous man, I please myself with anticipating his conclusions, I ease him of the trouble of explaining himself, I strive to forestall his imagination while it is yet springing and imperfect; the order and pertinency of his understanding warm and threaten me afar off: I deal quite contrary with the others; I must understand, and presuppose nothing but by them. If they determine in general words, "this is good, that is naught," and that they happen to be in the right, see if it be not fortune that hits it off for them: let them a little circumscribe and limit their judgment; why, or how, it is so. These universal judgments that I see so common, signify nothing; these are men who salute a whole people, in a crowd together; they, who have a real acquaintance, take notice of and salute them individually and by name. But 'tis a hazardous attempt; and from which I have, more than every day, seen it fall out, that weak understandings, having a mind to appear ingenious, in taking notice, as they read a book, of what is best and most to be admired, fix their admiration upon something so very ill chosen, that instead of making us discern the excellence of the author, they make us see their own ignorance. This exclamation is safe enough; "This is fine," after having heard a whole page of Virgil; and by that the cunning sort of fools save themselves; but to undertake to follow him line by line, and, with an expert and tried judgment, to observe
where a good author excels himself, weighing the words, phrases, inventions, and various excellencies, one after another; take heed of that; "Videndum est, non modo quid quisque loquatur, sed etiam quid quisque sentiat, alque etiam quid de causâ quisque sentiat."* I every day hear fools say things that are not foolish: they say a good thing: let us examine how far they understand it, whence they have it, and what they mean by it. We help them to make use of this fine expression, of this fine sentence, which is none of theirs: they only have it in keeping; they have bolted it out at a venture; we place it for them in credit and esteem. You take them by the hand: to what purpose? they do not think themselves obliged to you for it, and become more fools still; don’t help them; let them alone; they will handle the matter like people who are afraid of burning their fingers; they dare change neither its seat nor light, nor break into it; shake it never so little, it slips through their fingers; they give it up, be it never so strong or fair; they are fine weapons, but ill hafted. How many times have I seen the experience of this? Now, if you come to explain anything to them, and to confirm them, they catch at it, and presently rob you of the advantage of your interpretation; "It was what I was about to say; it was just my idea; if I did not express it so, it was for want of language." Mere buzz! Malice itself must be employed to correct this arrogant ignorance. Hegesias’ dogma, † "that we are neither to hate nor accuse, but instruct,” has reason elsewhere; but here ’tis injustice and inhumanity to relieve and set him right who stands in no need on’t, and is the worse for’t. I love to let them step deeper into the mire and so deep, that, if it be possible, they may at last discern their error.

Folly and absurdity are not to be cured by bare admonition; and what Cyrus answered to him, who importuned him to harangue his army, upon the point of battle, "that men do not become valiant and warlike upon a sudden, by a fine oration, no more than a man becomes a good musician

* "A man is not only to examine what every one says, but also what every one thinks, and for what reason every one thinks.”—CICERO, Offic., i. 41.
† Diogenes Laertius, ii. 95.
by hearing a fine song," * may properly be said of such an admonition as this. "These are apprenticeships that are to be served beforehand, by a long and continued education. We owe this care and this assiduity of correction and instruction to our own people; but to go preach to the first passer-by, and to become tutor to the ignorance and folly of the first we meet, is a thing that I abhor. I rarely do it, even in private conversation, and rather give up the whole thing than proceed to these initiatory and school instructions; my humor is unfit either to speak or write for beginners; but for things that are said in common discourse, or among other things, I never oppose them either by word or sign, how false or absurd soever.

As to the rest, nothing vexes me so much in folly, as that it is more satisfied with itself than any reason can reasonably be. "Tis unfortunate that prudence forbids us to satisfy and trust ourselves, and always dismisses us timorous and discontented; whereas obstinacy and temerity fill those who are possessed with them with joy and assurance. "Tis for the most ignorant to look at other men over the shoulder, always returning from the combat full of joy and triumph. And moreover, for the most part, this arrogance of speech and gayety of countenance gives them the better of it in the opinion of the audience, which is commonly weak and incapable of well judging and discerning the real advantage. Obstination of opinion and heat in argument are the surest proofs of folly; is there anything so assured, resolute, disdainful, contemplative, serious, and grave as the ass?

May we not include under the title of conference and communication the quick and sharp repartees which mirth and familiarity introduce among friends, pleasantly and wittily jesting and rallying with one another? "Tis an exercise for which my natural gayety renders me fit enough, and which, if it be not so tense and serious as the other I spoke of but now, is, as Lycurgus thought, no less smart and ingenious, nor of less utility.† For my part, I contribute to it more liberty than wit, and have therein more of luck than invention; but I am perfect in suffering, for I endure a retaliation that is not only tart, but indiscreet to

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* Xenophon, Cyropædia, iii. 23.
† Plutarch, in vita, c. 11.
boot, without being moved at all; and whoever attacks me, if I have not a brisk answer immediately ready, I do not study to pursue the point with a tedious and impertinent contest, bordering upon obstinacy, but let it pass, and hanging down cheerfully my ears, defer my revenge to another and better time; there is no merchant that always gains. Most men change their countenance and their voice where their wits fail, and by an unseasonable anger, instead of revenging themselves, accuse at once their own folly and impatience. In this jollity, we sometimes pinch the secret strings of our imperfections which, at another and graver time, we cannot touch without offense, and so profitably give one another a hint of our defects.

There are other sports of hand, rude and indiscreet, after the French manner, that I mortally hate; my skin is very tender and sensible; I have in my time seen two princes of the blood buried upon that very account. 'Tis unhandsome to fight in play.

As to the rest, when I have a mind to judge of any one I ask him how far he is contented with himself; to what degree his speaking or his work pleases him. I will none of these fine excuses, "I did it only in sport:

'Ablatum mediis opus est incedibus istud."†

I was not an hour about it: I have never looked at it since." Well, then, say I, lay these aside, and give me a perfect one, such as you would be measured by. And then, what do you think is the best thing in your work? is it this part or that? is it grace or the matter, the invention, the judgment, or the learning? For I find that men are, commonly, as wide of the mark in judging of their own works, as of those of others; not only by reason of the kindness they have for them, but for want of capacity to know and distinguish them; the work, by its own force and fortune, may second the workman, and sometimes outstrip him, beyond his invention and knowledge. For my part, I judge of the value of other men's works more obscurely than of my own; and place the essays, now high, now low, with great doubt and inconstancy. There are several

* Jeux de main, i. e., practical jokes, rough play.

† "This work came from the anvil unfinished."—Ovid., Trist., i. 6, 29.
books that are useful upon the account of their subjects, from which the author derives no praise; and good books, as well as good works, that shame the workman. I may write the manner of our feasts, and the fashion of our clothes, and may write them ill; I may publish the edicts of my time, and the letters of princes that pass from hand to hand; I may make an abridgment of a good book (and every abridgment of a good book is a foolish abridgment) which book shall come to be lost; and so on: posterity will derive a singular utility from such compositions; but what honor shall I have unless by great good fortune? Most part of the famous books are of this condition.

When I read Philip de Comines, doubtless a very good author, several years ago, I there took notice of this for no vulgar saying, "That a man must have a care not to do his master so great service, that at last he will not know how to give him his just reward;" but I ought to commend the invention, not him, because I met with it in Tacitus, not long since: "Beneficiumque usque lata sunt, dum videntur exsolvi posse; ubi multum antevenere, pro gratia odium redditur;" * and Seneca vigorously says, "Nam qui putat esse turpe, non reddere, non vult esse cui reddat:" † Q. Cicero says more faintly, "Qui se non putat satisfacere amicus esse nullo modo potest." ‡ The subject according to what it is, may make a man looked upon as learned and of good memory; but to judge in him the parts that are most his own and the most worthy, the vigor and beauty of his soul, one must first know what is his own and what is not; and in that which is not his own, how much we are obliged to him for the choice, disposition, ornament, and language he has there presented us with. What if he has borrowed the matter and spoiled the form, as it often falls out? We, who are little read in books, are in this strait, that when we meet with a high fancy in some new poet, or some strong argument in a preacher, we dare not, never-

* "Benefits are so far acceptable as they are in a capacity of being recompensed; but once exceeding that, hatred is returned instead of thanks."—Tacitus, Annal., iv. 18.

† "For he who thinks it a shame not to requite would not have the man live to whom he owes return."—Seneca, Ep. 81.

‡ "Who thinks himself behindhand in obligation can by no means be a friend."—Q. Cicero, De Petitione Consul, c. 9.
theless, commend it till we have first informed ourselves, through some learned man, if it be the writer's own, or borrowed from some other; until that I always stand upon my guard.

I have lately been reading the history of Tacitus quite through without interrupting it with anything else (which but seldom happens with me, it being twenty years since I have stuck to any one book an hour together), and I did it at the instance of a gentleman for whom France has a great esteem, as well for his own particular worth, as upon the account of a constant form of capacity and virtue which runs through a great many brothers of them. I do not know any author in a public narrative who mixes so much consideration of manners and particular inclinations; and I am of a quite contrary opinion to him, holding that, having especially to follow the lives of the emperors of his time, so various and extreme in all sorts of forms, so many notable actions as their cruelty especially produced in their subjects, he had a stronger and more attractive matter to treat of than if he had had to describe battles and universal commotions; so that I often find him sterile, running over those brave deaths as if he feared to trouble us with their multitude and length. This form of history is by much the most useful; public movements depend most upon the conduct of fortune, private ones upon our own. "Tis rather a judgment than a deduction* of history; there are in it more precepts than stories; it is not a book to read, 'tis a book to study and learn; 'tis full of sententious opinions, right or wrong; 'tis a nursery of ethic and politic discourses for the use and ornament of those who have any place in the government of the world. He always argues by strong and solid reasons, after a pointed and subtle manner, according to the affected style of that age, which was so in love with an inflated manner, that where point and sublety were wanting in things it supplied these with lofty and swelling words. "Tis not much unlike the style of Seneca: I look upon Tacitus as more sinewy, and Seneca as more sharp. His pen seems most proper for a troubled and sick state, as ours at present is; you would often say that he paints and pinches us.

They who doubt his good faith sufficiently accuse them-

* "'Narration."—Ed. of 1558.
selves of being his enemy upon some other account. His opinions are sound, and lean to the right side in the Roman affairs. And yet I am angry at him for judging more severely of Pompey than consists with the opinion of those worthy men who lived in the same time, and had dealings with him; and to have reputed him on a par with Marius and Sylla, excepting that he was more close.* Other writers have not acquitted his intention in the government of affairs from ambition and revenge; and even his friends were afraid that victory would have transported him beyond the bounds of reason, but not to so immeasurable a degree as theirs; † nothing in his life threatened such express cruelty and tyranny. Neither ought we to set suspicion against evidence; and therefore I do not believe Plutarch in this matter. That his narrations were genuine and straightforward may, perhaps, be argued from this very thing, that they do not always apply to the conclusions of his judgments, which he follows according to the bias he has taken, very often beyond the matter he presents us withal, which he has not deigned to alter in the least degree. He needs no excuse for having approved the religion of his time, according as the laws enjoined, and to have been ignorant of the true; this was his misfortune, not his fault.

I have principally considered his judgment, and am not very well satisfied therewith throughout; as these words in the letter that Tiberius, old and sick, sent to the senate.‡ "What shall I write to you, sirs, or how should I write to you, or what should I not write to you at this time? May the gods and the goddesses lay a worse punishment upon me than I am every day tormented with, if I know!" I do not see why he should so positively apply them to a sharp remorse that tormented the conscience of Tiberius; at least, when I was in the same condition, I perceived no such thing.

And this also seemed to me a little mean in him that, having to say that he had borne an honorable office in Rome, he excuses himself that he does not say it out of ostentation; § this seems, I say, mean for such a soul as his; for not to speak roundly of a man's self implies some

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* Hist., ii. 38.
† Marius and Sylla.
‡ Annal., v. 6.
§ Ibid., xi. 11.
want of courage; a man of solid and lofty judgment, who judges soundly and surely, makes use of his own example upon all occasions, as well as those of others; and gives evidence as freely of himself as of a third person. We are to pass by these common rules of civility, in favor of truth and liberty. I dare not only speak of myself, but to speak only of myself; when I write of anything else, I miss my way and wander from my subject. I am not so indiscreetly enamored of myself, so wholly mixed up with and bound to myself, that I cannot distinguish and consider myself apart, as I do a neighbor or a tree: 'tis equally a fault not to discern how far a man's worth extends, and to say more than a man discovers in himself. We owe more love to God than to ourselves, and know Him less; and yet speak of Him as much as we will.

If the writings of Tacitus indicate anything true of his qualities, he was a great personage, upright and bold, not of a superstitious but of a philosophical and generous virtue. One may think him a little too bold in his relations: as where he tells us, that a soldier carrying a burden of wood, his hands were so frozen and so stuck to the load that they there remained closed and dead, being severed from his arms.* I always in such things bow to the authority of so great witnesses.

What also he says, that Vespasian, by the favor of the god Serapis, cured a blind woman at Alexandria by anointing her eyes with his spittle, and I know not what other miracle, † he says by the example and duty of all good historians. They record all events of importance; and among public incidents are the popular rumors and opinions. 'Tis their part to relate common beliefs, not to regulate them; that part concerns divines and philosophers, directors of consciences: and therefore it was that this companion of his, and a great man like himself, very wisely said: "Equidem plura transcribo, quam credo: nam nec affirmare sustineo, de quibus dubito, nec subducere quae accepi;" ‡ and this other: "Hec neque affirmare neque refellere operae

* Annal., xiii. 35.
† Hist., iv. 81.
‡ "Truly, I set down more things than I believe, for I can neither affirm things whereof I doubt, nor suppress what I have heard."—QUINTUS CURTIUS, ix. 1.
"pretium est; famæ rerum standum est."* And writing in an age wherein the belief of prodigies began to decline, he says he would not, nevertheless, forbear to insert in his Annals, and to give a relation of things received by so many worthy men, and with so great reverence of antiquity; 'tis very well said. Let them deliver to us history, more as they receive it than as they believe it. I, who am monarch of the matter whereof I treat, and who am accountable to none, do not, nevertheless, always believe myself: I often hazard sallies of my own wit, wherein I very much suspect myself, and certain verbal quibbles, at which I shake my ears; but I let them go at a venture. I see that others get reputation by such things; 'tis not for me alone to judge. I present myself standing and lying, before and behind, my right side and my left, and in all my natural postures. Wits, though equal in force, are not always equal in taste and application.

This is what my memory presents to me in gross, and with uncertainty enough; all judgments in gross are weak and imperfect.

CHAPTER XL.

OF VANITY.

There is, peradventure, no more manifest vanity than to write of it so vainly. That which divinity has so divinely expressed to us† ought to be carefully and continually meditated by understanding men. Who does not see that I have taken a road, in which, incessantly and without labor, I shall proceed so long as there shall be ink and paper in the world? I can give no account of my life by my actions; fortune has placed them too low; I must do it by my fancies. And yet I have seen a gentleman who only communicated his life by the workings of his belly; you might see in his house a show of a row of basins of seven or eight days' excrements; that was all his study, all his discourse; all other talk stunk in his nostrils. Here,

* "'Tis neither worth the while to affirm or to refute these things; we must stand to report."—Livy, i. Pref., and viii. 6.
† "Vanity of vanities; all is vanity."—Eccles. i. 2.
but not so nauseous, are the excrements of an old mind, sometimes thick, sometimes thin, and always indigested. And when shall I have done representing the continual agitation and mutation of my thoughts, as they come into my head, seeing that Diomedes wrote six thousand books upon the sole subject of grammar? * What, then, ought prating to produce, since prattling and the first beginning to speak, stuffed the world with such a horrible number of volumes? So many words about words only. Oh Pythagoras, why didst not thou allay this tempest? They accused one Galba of old for living idly; he made answer, “That every one ought to give account of his actions but not of his leisure.” † He was mistaken, for justice has also cognizance and correction over holiday-makers. ‡

But there should be some restraint of law against foolish and impertinent scribblers, as well as against vagabonds and idle persons; which if there were, both I and a hundred others would be banished the kingdom. I do not speak this in jest: scribbling seems to be a sign of a disordered and licentious age: When did we write so much as since our civil wars? when the Romans so much, as when their commonwealth was upon the point of ruin? Besides that, the refining of wits does not make people wiser in a government: this idle employment springs from this, that every one applies himself negligently to the duty of his vocation, and is easily debauched from it. The corruption of the age is made up by the particular contribution of every individual man; some contribute treachery, others injustice, irreligion, tyranny, avarice, cruelty, according to their power; the weaker sort contribute folly, vanity, and idleness; of these I am one. It seems as if it were the season for vain things, when the hurtful oppress us; in a time when doing ill is common, to do but what signifies nothing is a kind of commendation. "Tis my com-

* Here Montaigne’s memory again plays him a scurvy trick. It was not Diomedes, but Didymus, the grammarian, who, as Seneca (Ep. 88) tells us, wrote four thousand books on questions of vain literature, which was the principal study of the ancient grammarian (Coste.)

† This was the Emperor Galba.—Suetonius, in vita, c. 9.

‡ “Ceux qui choment,” which Cotton renders, “Will have an account even of those that glean, which is one of the laziest employments.”
fort, that I shall be one of the last who shall be called in question; and while the greater offenders are being brought to account, I shall have leisure to amend; for it would, methinks, be against reason to punish little inconveniences, while we are infested with the greater. As the physician Philotimius said to one who presented him his finger to dress, and who he perceived, both by his complexion and his breath, had an ulcer in his lungs: "Friend, it is not now time to concern yourself about your fingers' ends."*

And yet I saw, some years ago, a person, whose name and memory I have in very great esteem, in the very height of our great disorders, when there was neither law nor justice, nor magistrate who performed his office, no more than there is now, publish I know not what pitiful reformatory changes about cloths, cookery, and law chicanery. Those are amusements wherewith to feed a people that are ill-used, to show that they are not totally forgotten. Those others do the same, who insist upon prohibiting particular ways of speaking, dances, and games, to a people totally abandoned to all sorts of execrable vices. 'Tis no time to bathe and cleanse one's self when one is seized by a violent fever; 'tis for the Spartans alone to fall to combing and curling themselves, when they are just upon the point of running headlong into some extreme danger of their life.

For my part, I have yet a worse custom, that if my shoe go awry, I let my shirt and my cloak do so too; I scorn to mend myself by halves. When I am in a bad plight, I fasten upon the mischief; I abandon myself through despair; I let myself go toward the precipice, and, as the saying is, "throw the helve after the hatchet;" I am obstinate in growing worse, and think myself no longer worth my own care; I am either well or ill throughout. 'Tis a favor to me, that the desolation of this kingdom falls out in the desolation of my age: I better suffer that my ill be multiplied, than if my well had been disturbed.† The words I utter in mishap are words of anger: my courage sets up its bristles, instead of letting them down;

* Plutarch, How we may Distinguish a Flatterer from a Friend, c. 31.

† That, being ill, I should grow worse, than that, being well, I should grow ill.
and, contrary to others, I am more devout in good than in evil fortune, according to the precept of Xenophon,* if not according to his reason; and am more ready to turn up my eyes to heaven to return thanks, than to crave. I am more solicitous to improve my health, when I am well, than to restore it when I am sick; prosperities are the same discipline and instruction to me that adversities and rods are to others. As if good fortune were a thing inconsistent with good conscience, men never grow good but in evil fortune. Good fortune is to me a singular spur to modesty and moderation: an entreaty wins, a threat checks me; favor makes me bend, fear stiffens me.

Among human conditions this is common enough: to be better pleased with foreign things than with our own, and to love innovation and change:

"Ipsa dies ideo nos grato perluit haustu,
Quod permutatis hora recurrit equis."†

I have my share. Those who follow the other extreme, of being quite satisfied and pleased with and in themselves, of valuing what they have above all the rest, and of concluding no beauty can be greater than what they see, if they are not wiser than we, are really more happy; I do not envy their wisdom, but their good fortune.

This greedy humor of new and unknown things helps to nourish in me the desire of travel; but a great many more circumstances contribute to it; I am very willing to quit the government of my house. There is, I confess, a kind of convenience in commanding, though it were but in a barn, and in being obeyed by one's people; but 'tis too uniform and languid a pleasure, and is, moreover, of necessity mixed with a thousand vexatious thoughts: one while the poverty and the oppression of your tenants: another, quarrels among neighbors: another, the trespasses they make upon you, afflict you;

"Aut verberatae grandine vinae,
Fundusque mundax, arbore nunc aquas

* Cyropædia, i. 6, 3.
† "The light of day itself shines more pleasantly upon us because it changes its horses every hour." Spoke of a water hour glass, adds Cotton.
and that God scarce in six months sends a season wherein
your bailiff can do his business as he should; but that if
it serves the vines, it spoils the meadows;

"Ant nimiis torrent fervoribus aetherius sol,

Aut subiti perimunt imbres, gelidæque pruinæ,

Flabraque ventorum violento turbine vexant;"†

to which may be added, the new and neat-made shoe of the
man of old, that hurts your foot;‡ and that a stranger
does not understand how much it costs you, and what you
contribute, to maintain that show of order that is seen in
your family, and that, peradventure, you buy too dear.

I came late to the government of a house: they whom
nature sent into the world before me long eased me of that
trouble; so that I had already taken another bent more
suitable to my humor. Yet, for so much as I have seen,
'tis an employment more troublesome than hard; whoever
is capable of anything else, will easily do this. Had I a
mind to be rich, that way would seem too long; I had
served my kings, a more profitable traffic than any other.
Since I pretend to nothing but the reputation of having
got nothing or dissipated nothing, conformably to the rest
of my life, improper either to do good or ill of any moment,
and that I only desire to pass on, I can do it, thanks be to
God, without any great endeavor. At the worst, ever-
more prevent poverty by lessening your expense; 'tis that
which I made my great concern, and doubt not but to do
it before I shall be compelled. As to the rest, I have
sufficiently settled my thoughts to live upon less than I

* "Or hail-smit vines, or trees damaged by the rains, or years of
dearth, or summer's heat burning up the petals, or the destructive
force of winter."—Horatius, Od. iii. 1, 29.

† "Either the scorching sun burns up your fields, or sudden rains
or frosts destroy your harvests, or a violent wind carries away all
before it."—Lucretius, v. 216.

‡ Leclerc maliciously suggests that this is a sly hit at Montaigne's
wife, the man of old being the person mentioned in Plutarch's Life
of Paulus Emilius, c. 3, who, when his friends reproached him for
repudiating his wife, whose various merits they extolled, pointed to
his shoe, and said, "That looks a nice well-made shoe to you, but I
alone know where it pinches."
have, and live contentedly: "Non estimatione census, verum victu atque cultu, terminantur pecuniae modus."* My real need does not so wholly take up all I have, that Fortune has not whereon to fasten her teeth without biting to the quick. My presence, heedless and ignorant as it is, does me great service in my domestic affairs; I employ myself in them, but it goes against the hair, finding that I have this in my house, that though I burn my candle at one end by myself, the other is not spared.

Journeys do me no harm but only by their expense, which is great, and more than I am well able to bear, being always wont to travel with not only a necessary, but a handsome equipage; I must make them so much shorter and fewer; I spend therein but the froth, and what I have reserved for such uses, delaying and deferring my motion till that be ready. I will not that the pleasure of going abroad spoil the pleasure of being retired at home; on the contrary, I intend they shall nourish and favor one another. Fortune has assisted me in this, that since my principal profession in this life was to live at ease, and rather idly than busily, she has deprived me of the necessity of growing rich to provide for the multitude of my heirs. If there be not enough for one, of that whereof I had so plentifully enough, at his peril be it; his imprudence will not deserve that I should wish him any more. And every one, according to the example of Phocion, provides sufficiently for his children who so provides for them as to leave them as much as was left him. I should by no means like Crates' way. He left his money in the hands of a banker with this condition—"That if his children were fools, he should then give it to them; if wise, he should then distribute it to the most foolish of the people;" † as if fools, for being less capable of living without riches, were more capable of using them.

At all events, the damage occasioned by my absence seems not to deserve, so long as I am able to support it, that I should waive the occasions of diverting myself by that troublesome assistance.

There is always something that goes amiss. The affairs,

* "'Tis not by the value of possessions, but by our daily needs that our riches are truly estimated."—CICERO, Paradox, vi. 3.
† Diogenes Laertius, vi. 88.
one while of one house, and then of another, tear you to pieces; you pry into everything too near; your perspicacity hurts you here, as well as in other things. I steal away from occasions of vexing myself, and turn from the knowledge of things that go amiss; and yet I cannot so order it, but that every hour I jostle against something or other that displeases me; and the tricks that they most conceal from me, are those that I the soonest come to know; some there are that, not to make matters worse, a man must himself help to conceal. Vain vexations; vain sometimes, but always vexatious. The smallest and slightest impediments are the most piercing: and as little letters most tire the eyes, so do little affairs most disturb us. The rout of little ills more offend than one, how great soever. By how much domestic thorns are numerous and slight, by so much they prick deeper and without warning, easily surprising us when least we suspect them.* I am no philosopher; evils oppress me according to their weight, and they weigh as much according to the form as matter, and very often more. If I have therein more perspicacity than the vulgar, I have also more patience; in short, they weigh with me, if they do not hurt me. Life is a tender thing, and easily molested. Since my age has made me grow more pensive and morose, "Nemo enim resistit sibi, cum caeperit impelli," † for the most trivial cause imaginable, I irritate that humor, which afterward nourishes and exasperates itself of its own motion; attracting and heaping up matter upon matter whereon to feed:

"Stillicidi casus lapidem cavat:"

these continual tricklings consume and ulcerate me. Ordinary inconveniences are never light, they are continual and

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*In the edition of 1588, Montaigne here adds: "Now Homer shows us clearly enough how surprise gives the advantage; who represents Ulysses weeping at the death of his dog, and not weeping at the tears of his mother; the first accident, trivial as it was, got the better of him coming upon him quite unexpectedly; he sustained the second, though more potent, because he was prepared for it. 'Tis light occasions that humble our lives."

† "No man resists himself, after he once begins to yield."—Seneca, Ep. 13.

‡ "An ever-falling drop hollows out a stone."—Lucretius, i. 314.
inseparable, especially when they spring from the members of a family, continual and inseparable.* When I consider my affairs at distance and in gross, I find, because perhaps my memory is none of the best, that they have gone on hitherto improving beyond my reason or expectation; my revenue seems greater than it is; its prosperity betrays me: but when I pry more narrowly into the business, and see how all things go,

"Turn vero in curas animum diducimus omnes;" †

I have a thousand things to desire and to fear. To give them quite over, is very easy for me to do; but to look after them without trouble, is very hard. 'Tis a miserable thing to be in a place where everything you see employs and concerns you; and I fancy that I more cheerfully enjoy the pleasures of another man's house, and with greater and a purer relish, than those of my own. Diogenes answered according to my humor him who asked him what sort of wine he liked the best: "That of another," said he.‡

My father took a delight in building at Montaigne, where he was born; and in all the government of domestic affairs I love to follow his example and rules, and I shall engage those who are to succeed me, as much as in me lies, to do the same. Could I do better for him, I would; and am proud that his will is still performing and acting by me. God forbid, that in my hands I should ever suffer any image of life, that I am able to render to so good a father, to fail. And wherever I have taken in hand to strengthen some old foundations of walls, and to repair some ruinous buildings, in earnest I have done it more out of respect to his design, than my own satisfaction; and am angry at myself, that I have not proceeded further to finish the beginnings he left in his house, and so much the more, because I am very likely to be the last possessor of my race, and to give the last hand to it. For, as to my own particular application, neither the pleasure of building,

* Members du mesnage, which Cotton renders, "spring from the concerns of good husbandry."

† "Then my breast is oppressed with all sorts of cares."—Aeneid, v. 720.

‡ Diogenes Laertius, vi. 54.
which they say is so bewitching, nor hunting, nor gardens, nor the other pleasures of a retired life, can much amuse me. And 'tis what I am angry at myself for, as I am for all other opinions that are incommodious to me; which I would not so much care to have vigorous and learned, as I would have them easy and convenient for life; they are true and sound enough, if they are useful and pleasing. Such as hear me declare my ignorance in husbandry, whisper in my ear that it is disdain, and that I neglect to know its instruments, its seasons, its order, how they dress my vines, how they graft, and to know the names and forms of herbs and fruits, and the preparing the meat on which I live, the names and prices of the stuffs I wear, because, say they, I have set my heart upon some higher knowledge; they kill me in saying so. This were folly,* and rather stupidity than glory; I had rather be a good horseman than a good logician:

"Quin tu aliquid saltem potius, quorum indiget usus, Viminibus mollique paras detexere junco."†

We occupy our thoughts about the general, and about universal causes and conducts, which will very well carry on themselves without our care; and leave our own business at random, and Michael much more our concern than man. Now I am, indeed, for the most part at home; but I would be there better pleased than anywhere else:

"Sit meæ sedes utinam senectæ, Sit modus lasso maris, et viarum, Militiæque."‡

I now not whether or no I shall bring it about. I could wish that, instead of some other member of his succession, my father had resigned to me the passionate affection he had in his old age to his household affairs; he was happy in that he could accommodate his desires to his fortune, and satisfy himself with what he had; political philosophy may to much purpose condemn the meanness and sterility of my employment, if I can once come to relish it, as he did. I

* "It is not disdain, it is folly."—Ed. of 1588.
† "Why rather not find useful employments, and make osier and reed basket."—Virgil, Eelog., ii. 71.
‡ "Let my old age have a fixed seat, my repose from seas, journeys, warfare."—Horace, Od. ii. 6, 6.
am of opinion that the most honorable calling is to serve the public, and to be useful to many; "Fructus enim ingenii et virtutis, omnisque praestantiae, tum maximus capitur, quum in proximum quemque confertur."* for myself, I disclaim it; partly out of conscience (for where I see the weight that lies upon such employments, I perceive also the little means I have to supply it; and Plato, a master in all political governement himself, nevertheless, took care to abstain from it), and partly out of cowardice. I content myself with enjoying the world without bustle; only to live an excusable life, and such as may neither be a burden to myself nor to any other.

Never did any man more fully and feebly suffer himself to be governed by a third person than I should do, had I any one to whom to intrust myself. One of my wishes at this time should be, to have a son-in-law that knew handsomely how to cherish my old age, and to rock it asleep; into whose hands I might deposit, in full sovereignty, the management and use of all my goods, that he might dispose of them as I do, and get by them what I get, provided that he on his part were truly acknowledging, and a friend. But we live in a world where loyalty of one's own children is unknown.

He who has the charge of my purse in my travels, has it purely and without control; he could cheat me thoroughly if he came to reckoning; and, if he is not a devil, I oblige him to deal faithfully with me by so entire a trust. "Muli fallere docuerunt, dum timent falli; et aliis jus peccandi, suspicando, fecerunt." † The most common security I take of my people is ignorance; I never presume any to be vicious till I have first found them so; and repose the most confidence in the younger sort, that I think are least spoiled by ill example. I had rather be told at two months' end that I have spent four hundred crowns, than to have my ears battered every night with three, five, seven: and I have been, in this way, as little robbed as another. It is

* "We then most enjoy wit, virtue, and all sorts of merit, when they are shared with these nearest to us."—CICERO, de Amicit., c. 19.

† "Many have taught others to deceive by fearing to be deceived, and, by suspecting them, have given them a title to do ill."—SENeca, Epist., 3.
true, I am willing enough not to see it; I, in some sort, purposely, harbor a kind of perplexed, uncertain knowledge of my money: up to a certain point, I am content to doubt. One must leave a little room for the infidelity or indiscretion of a servant; if you have left enough, in gross, to do your business, let the overplus of Fortune's liberality run a little more freely at her mercy; 'tis the gleaner's portion. After all, I do not so much value the fidelity of my people, as I contempt their injury. What a mean and ridiculous thing it is for a man to study his money, to delight in handling and telling it over and over again! 'Tis by this avarice makes its approaches.

In eighteen years that I have had my estate in my own hands, I could never prevail with myself either to read over my deeds, or examine my principal affairs, which ought, of necessity, to pass under my knowledge and inspection. 'Tis not a philosophical disdain of worldly and transitory things; my taste is not purified to that degree, and I value them at as great a rate, at least, as they are worth; but 'tis, in truth, an inexcusable and childish laziness and negligence. What would I not rather do than read a contract? or than, as a slave to my own business, tumble over a company of old musty writings? or, which is worse, those of another man, as so many do nowadays, to get money? I grudge nothing but care and trouble, and endeavor nothing so much as to be careless and at ease. I had been much fitter, I believe, could it have been without obligation and servitude, to have lived upon another man's fortune than my own: and, indeed, I do not know, when I examine it nearer, whether, according to my humor, what I have to suffer from my affairs and servants, has not in it something more abject, troublesome, and tormenting than there would be in serving a man better born than myself, who would govern me with a gentle rein, and a little at my own ease: "Servitus obedientia est fracti animi et abjecti, arbitrio carentis suo." * Crates did worse, who threw himself into the liberty of poverty, only to rid himself of the inconveniences and cares of his house. This is what I would not do; I hate poverty equally with pain; but I could be content to change the kind of life I live for another that was humbler and had fewer affairs.

* "Servitude is the obedience of a subdued and abject mind wanting its own free will."—CICERO, Paradox, v. 1.
When absent from home, I strip myself of all these thoughts, and should be less concerned for the ruin of a tower, than I am, when present, at the fall of a tile. My mind is easily composed at distance, but suffers as much as that of the meanest peasant when I am at home; the reins of my bridle being wrongly put on, or a strap flapping against my leg, will keep me out of humor a day together. I raise my courage well enough against inconveniences; lift up my eyes I cannot.

"Sensus, o superi, sensus."*

I am at home responsible for whatever goes amiss. Few masters (I speak of those of medium condition, such as mine), and if there be any such, they are more happy, can rely so much upon another, but that the greatest part of the burden will lie upon their own shoulders. This takes much from my grace in entertaining visitors, so that I have, peradventure, detained some rather out of expectation of a good dinner, than by my own behavior; and lose much of the pleasure I ought to reap at my own house from the visitation and assembling of my friends. The most ridiculous carriage of a gentleman in his own house, is to see him bustling about the business of the place, whispering one servant, and looking an angry look at another; it ought insensibly to slide along, and to represent an ordinary current; and I think it unhandsome to talk much to our guests of their entertainment, whether by way of bragging or excuse. I love order and cleanliness.

"Et cantharus et lanx
Ostendunt mihi me"†—

more than abundance: and at home have an exact regard to necessity, little to outward show. If a footman falls to cuffs at another man's house, or stumble and throw a dish before him as he is carrying it up, you only laugh and make a jest on't; you sleep while the master of the house is arranging a bill of fare with his steward for your morrow's entertainment. I speak according as I do myself: quite appreciating, nevertheless, good husbandry in general,

* "The senses, oh, ye gods, the senses."
† "The dishes and the glasses showing me my own reflection."—Horace, Ep. i. 5, 23.
and how pleasant, quiet and prosperous household management, carried regularly on, is to some natures; and not wishing to fasten my own errors and inconveniences to the thing, nor to give Plato the lie, who looks upon it as the most pleasant employment to every one to do his particular affairs without wrong to another.*

When I travel I have nothing to care for but myself, and the laying out my money; which is disposed of by one single precept; too many things are required to the raking it together; in that I understand nothing; in spending, I understand a little, and how to give some show to my expense, which is indeed its principal use; but I rely too ambitiously upon it, which renders it unequal and difform, and, moreover, immoderate, in both the one and the other aspect; if it make a show, if it serve the turn, I indiscreetly let it run; and as indiscreetly tie up my purse-strings, if it does not shine and does not please me. Whatever it be, whether art or nature, that imprints in us the condition of living by reference to others, it does us much more harm than good; we deprive ourselves of our own utilities, to accommodate appearances to the common opinion; we care not so much what our being is, as to us and in reality, as what it is to the public observation. Even the goods of the mind, and wisdom itself, seems fruitless to us, if only enjoyed by ourselves, and if it produce not itself to the view and approbation of others. There is a sort of men whose gold runs in streams underground imperceptibly; others expose it all in plates and branches, so that to the one a liard† is worth a crown, and to the others the inverse: the world, esteeming its use and value, according to the show. All over-nice solicitude about riches smells of avarice: even the very disposing of it, with a too systematic and artificial liberality is not worth a painful superintendence and solicitude: he that will order his expense to just so much, makes it too pinched and narrow. The keeping or spending are, of themselves, indifferent things, and receive no color of good or ill, but according to the application of the will.

The other cause that tempts me out to these journeys is, inaptitude for the present manners in our state. I could

* Letter ix. to Architas.

† A piece of copper money worth three farthings (Cotton).
easily console myself for this corruption in regard to the public interest;

"Perjoraque sæcula ferri
Temporibus, quorum sceleri non invenit ipsa
Nomen, et a nullo posuit natura metallo;" *

but not to my own. I am, in particular, too much oppressed by them: for, in my neighborhood, we are, of late, by the long license of our civil wars, grown old in so riotous a form of state,

"Quippe ubi fas versum atque nefas,” †

that in earnest, ’tis a wonder how it can subsist.

"Armati terram exercent, semperque recentes
Convectare juvat prædas, et vivere rapto.” ‡

In fine, I see by our example, that the society of men is maintained and held together, at what price soever; in what condition soever they are placed, they still close and stick together, both moving and in heaps; as ill united bodies, that shuffled together without order, find of themselves a means to unite and settle, often better than they could have been disposed by art. King Philip mustered up a rabble of the most wicked and incorrigible rascals he could pick out, and put them all together into a city he had caused to be built for that purpose, which bore their name;§ I believe that they, even from vices themselves, erected a government among them, and a commodious and just society. I see, not one action, or three, or a hundred, but manners, in common and received use, so ferocious, especially in inhumanity and treachery, which are to me the worst of all vices, that I have not the heart to think of them without horror; and almost as much admire as I detest them: the exercise of these signal villainies carries with it as great signs of vigor and force of soul, as of error and disorder.

* "An age, worse than the iron times, for whose crimes there is no name, and which have no similitude in any of Nature's metals.” —JUVENAL, xiii. 28.

† "Where wrong is right, and right wrong."—VIRGIL, Geor., i. 504.

‡ "Men plow, girt with arms; ever delighting in fresh robberies, and living upon spoil."—Æn nid, vii. 748.

§ Πονηρπόλις, the city of rogues (Pliny, Nat. Hist., iv. 11.)
Necessity reconciles and brings men together; and this accidental connection afterward forms itself into laws: for there have been such, as savage as any human opinion could conceive, who, nevertheless, have maintained their body with as much health and length of life as any Plato or Aristotle could invent. And certainly, all these descriptions of polities, feigned by art, are found to be ridiculous and unfit to be put in practice.

These great and tedious debates about the best form of society, and the most commodious rules to bind us, are debates only proper for the exercise of our wits; as in the arts there are several subjects, which have their being in agitation and controversy, and have no life but there. Such an idea of government might be of some value in a new world; but we take a world already made, and formed to certain customs; we do not beget it, as Pyrrha or Cadmus did. By what means soever we may have the privilege to redress and reform it anew, we can hardly writhe it from its wonted bent, but we shall break all. Solon being asked, whether he had established the best laws he could for the Athenians; "Yes," said he, "of those they would have received." Varro excuses himself after the same manner: "that if he were to begin to write of religion, he would say what he believed; but seeing it was already received, he would write rather to use than nature."

Not according to opinion, but in truth and reality, the best and most excellent government for every nation is that under which it is maintained: its form and essential convenience depend upon custom. We are apt to be displeased at the present condition; but I, nevertheless, maintain that to desire command in a few* in a republic, or another sort of government in monarchy than that already established, is both vice and folly.

"Ayme l’estat, tel que tu le veois estre:
S’il est royal ayme la royauté,
S’il est de peu, ou bien communauté,
Ayme l’aussi; car Dieu t’y a faict naistre."†

* i. e. an oligarchy.
† "Love the government, such as you find it. If it be royal, love royalty; if a republic, love it, for God himself created thee therein."
So wrote the good Monsieur de Pibrac,* whom we have lately lost, a man of so excellent a wit, such sound opinions and such gentle manners. This loss, and that at the same time we have had of Monsieur de Foix,† are of so great importance to the crown, that I do not know whether there is another couple in France worthy to supply the places of these two Gascons, in sincerity and wisdom in the king's council. They were both variously great men, and certainly according to the age, rare and great, each of them in his kind: but what destiny was it that placed them in these times, men so remote from and so disproportioned to our corruption and intestine tumults?

Nothing presses so hard upon a state as innovation: change only gives form to injustice and tyranny. When any piece is loosened, it may be proper to stay it; one may take care that the alteration and corruption natural to all things do not carry us too far from our beginnings and principles; but to undertake to found so great a mass anew, and to change the foundations of so vast a building, is for them to do, who to make clean, efface; who reform particular defects by an universal confusion, and cure diseases by death: "Non tam commutandarum quam evertendarum rerum cupidit."‡ The world is unapt to be cured; and so impatient of anything that presses it, that it thinks of nothing but disengaging itself at what price soever. We see by a thousand examples, that it ordinarily cures itself to its cost. The discharge of a present evil is no cure, if there be not a general amendment of condition. The surgeon's end is not only to cut away the dead flesh; that is but the progress of his cure; he has a care, over and above, to fill up the wound with better and more natural flesh, and to restore the member to its due state. Whoever only proposes to himself to remove that which offends him, falls short: for good does not necessarily succeed evil; another

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* Gui du Faur, Seigneur de Pibrac, author of Quatrains, etc., died 1584.

† Privy councilor and ambassador to Venice.

‡ "Not so desirous of changing, as of overthrowing things."—Cicero, De Offic., ii. 1.
evil may succeed, and a worse, as it happened to Cæsar's murderers, who brought the republic to such a pass, that they had reason to repent the meddling with the matter. The same has since happened to several others, even down to our own times; the French, my contemporaries, know it well enough. All great mutations shake and disorder a state.

Whoever would look direct at a cure, and well consider of it before he began, would be very willing to withdraw his hands from meddling in it. Pacuvius Calavius corrected the vice of this proceeding by a notable example. His fellow-citizens were in mutiny against their magistrates; he being a man of great authority in the city of Capua, found means one day to shut up the senators in the palace; and calling the people together in the market place, there told them that the day was now come wherein at full liberty they might revenge themselves on the tyrants by whom they had been so long oppressed, and whom he had now, all alone and unarmed, at his mercy. He then advised that they should call these out, one by one, by lot, and should individually determine as to each, causing whatever should be decreed to be immediately executed; with this proviso, that they should, at the same time, depute some honest man in the place of him who was condemned, to the end there might be no vacancy in the senate. They had no sooner heard the name of one senator but a great cry of universal dislike was raised up against him. "I see," says Pacuvius, "that he must out; he is a wicked fellow; let us look out a good one in his room." Immediately there was a profound silence, every one being at a stand whom to choose. But one, more impudent than the rest, having named his man, there arose yet a greater consent of voices against him, an hundred imperfections being laid to his charge, and as many just reasons why he should not stand. These contradictory humors growing hot, it fared worse with the second senator and the third, there being as much disagreement in the election of the new, as consent in the putting out of the old. In the end growing weary of this bustle to no purpose, they began, some one way and some another, to steal out of the assembly: every one carrying back this resolution in his mind, that the oldest
and best known evil was ever more supportable than one that was new and untried. *

Seeing how miserably we are agitated (for what have we not done)!

"Eheu! cicatricum et sceleris pudet,
Fratrumque: quid nos dura refugimus
Ætas? quid intactum nefasti
Liquimus? Unde manus inventus
Metu Deorum continuit? quibus
Pepercit aris." †

I do not presently conclude.

"Ipsa si velit Salus,
Servare prorsus non potest hanc familiam;" ‡

we are not, peradventure, at the last gasp. The conservation of states is a thing that, in all likelihood, surpasses our understanding; a civil government is, as Plato says, § a mighty and puissant thing, and hard to be dissolved; it often continues against mortal and intestine diseases, against the injury of unjust laws, against tyranny, the corruption and ignorance of magistrates, the license and sedition of the people. In all our fortunes, we compare ourselves to what is above us, and still look toward those who are better; but let us measure ourselves with what is below us: there is no condition so miserable wherein a man may not find a thousand examples that will administer consolation. "Tis our vice that we more unwillingly look upon what is above, than willingly upon what is below; and Solon was used to say, ‖ that "whoever would make a heap of all the ills together, there is no one who would not rather choose to bear away the ills he has than to come to an equal division with all other men from that heap, and take his share." Our government is, indeed, very sick, but there

* Livy, xxiii. 3.
† "Fie on our crimes and our fratricides: What crime does this bad age shrink from? What wickedness is left undone? What youth is restrained from evil by the fear of the gods? What altar is spared?"—Horace, Od. i. 33, 35.
‡ "If the goddess Salus herself wished to save this family, she could not do it."—Terence, Adelph., iv. 7, 43.
§ Republic, viii. 2.
‖ Valerius Maximus, vii. 2. Ext. 2.
have been others more sick, without dying. The gods play at tennis with us and bandy us every way:

"Enimvero Dii nos homines quasi pilas habent." *

The stars have fatally destined the state of Rome for an example of what they could do in this kind; in it are comprised all the forms and adventures that concern a state: all that order or disorder, good or evil fortune, can do. Who, then, can despair of his condition, seeing the shocks and commotions wherewith Rome was tumbled and tossed, and yet withstood them all? If the extent of dominion be the health of a state (which I by no means think it is, and Isocrates pleases me when he instructs Nicocles not to envy princes who have large dominions, but those who know how to preserve those which have fallen into their hands), that of Rome was never so sound as when it was most sick. The worst of her forms was the most fortunate; one can hardly discern any image of government under the first emperors; it was the most horrible and tumultuous confusion that can be imagined: it endured it, notwithstanding, and therein continued, preserving not a monarchy limited within its own bounds, but so many nations so differing, so remote, so ill-affected, so confusedly commanded, and so unjustly conquered:

"Nec gentibus ullis
Commodat in populum, terrae pelagique potentem,
Invidiam fortuna suam." †

Everything that totters does not fall. The contexture of so great a body holds by more nails than one; it holds even by its antiquity, like old buildings, from which the foundations are worn away by time, without rough-cast or mortar, which yet live and support themselves by their own weight:

"Nec jam validis radicibus hærens,
Pondere tuta suo est." †

* Plautus. Prologue to the Captive, translated by Montaigne in the preceding passage.
† "Fortune never gave it to any nation to satisfy its hatred against the people, masters of the seas and of the earth."—Lucan, i. 82.
‡ Lucan, i. 138. The translation is expressed in the preceding sentence.
Moreover, it is not rightly to go to work, to examine only the flank and the foss, to judge of the security of a place; we must observe which way approaches can be made to it, and in what condition the assailant is: few vessels sink with their own weight, and without some exterior violence. Now, let us every way cast our eyes: everything about us totters; in all the great states, both of Christendom and elsewhere, that are known to us, if you will but look, you will there see evident menace of alteration and ruin:

"Et sua sunt illis incommoda; parque per omnes Tempestas." *

Astrologers may very well, as they do, warn us of great revolutions and imminent mutations: their prophecies are present and palpable, they need not go to heaven to foretell this. There is not only consolation to be extracted from this universal combination of ills and menaces, but, moreover, some hopes of the continuation of our state, forasmuch as, naturally nothing falls where all falls: universal sickness is particular health: conformity is antagonistic to dissolution. For my part, I despair not, and fancy that I discover ways to save us:

"Deus hæc fortasse benigna
Reductet in sedem vice." †

Who knows but that God will have it happen, as in human bodies that purge and restore themselves to a better state by long and grievous maladies, which render them more entire and perfect health than that they took from them? That which weighs the most with me is, that in reckoning the symptoms of our ill, I see as many natural ones, and that heaven sends us, and properly its own, as of those that our disorder and human imprudence contribute to it. The very stars seem to declare that we have already continued long enough, and beyond the ordinary term. This also afflicts me, that the mischief which nearest threatens us, is not an alteration in the entire and solid mass, but its

* "They all share in the mischief; the tempest rages everywhere" —_Ithaca_, ii.

† "God will, perchance by a favorable turn, restore us to our former position."—_Horace_, _Epod_, xiii. 7.
dissipation and divulsion, which is the most extreme of our fears.

I, moreover, fear, in these fantasies of mine, the treachery of my memory, lest, by inadvertence, it should make me write the same thing twice. I hate to examine myself, and never review, but very unwillingly, what has once escaped my pen. I here set down nothing new. These are common thoughts, and having, peradventure, conceived them an hundred times, I am afraid I have set them down somewhere else already. Repetition is everywhere troublesome, though it were in Homer; but 'tis ruinous in things that have only a superficial and transitory show. I do not love over insisting, even in the most profitable things, as in Seneca; and the usage of his stoical school displeases me, to repeat, upon every subject, at full length and width the principles and presuppositions that serve in general, and always to reallege anew common and universal reasons.

My memory grows cruelly worse every day;

"Pocula Lethæos ut si ducentia somnos, 
Arente fauce traxerim," *

I must be fain for the time to come (for hitherto, thanks be to God, nothing has happened much amiss), whereas others seek time and opportunity to think of what they have to say, to avoid all preparation, for fear of tying myself to some obligation upon which I must insist. To be tied and bound to a thing puts me quite out, and to depend upon so weak an instrument as my memory. I never read this following story that I am not offended at it with a personal and natural resentment: Lyncestes, accused of conspiracy against Alexander,† the day that he was brought out before the army, according to the custom, to be heard as to what he could say for himself, had learned a studied speech, of which, haggling and stammering, he pronounced some words. While growing more and more perplexed, while struggling with his memory, and trying to recollect what he had to say, the soldiers nearest to him charged their pikes against him and killed him, looking upon him as convict; his confusion and silence served them for a

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* "As if in great thirst I had drunk Lethe's oblivious flood."—Horace, Epod., xiv. 3.

† Quintus Curtius, vii. 1.
consecration; for having had so much leisure to prepare himself in prison, they concluded that it was not his memory that failed him, but that his conscience tied up his tongue and stopped his mouth. And, truly, well said; the place, the assembly, the expectation, astound a man, even when he has but the ambition to speak well; what can a man do when it is an harangue upon which his life depends? For my part, the very being tied to what I am to say is enough to loose me from it. When I wholly commit and refer myself to my memory, I lay so much stress upon it that it sinks under me; it grows dismayed with the burden. So much as I trust to it, so much do I put myself out of my own power, even to the finding it difficult to keep my own countenance; and have been sometimes very much put to it to conceal the slavery wherein I was engaged; whereas my design is to manifest, in speaking, a perfect calmness both of face and accent, and casual and unpremeditated motions, as rising from present occasions, choosing rather to say nothing to purpose than to show that I came prepared to speak well, a thing especially unbecoming a man of my profession, and of too great obligation on him who cannot retain much. The preparation begets a great deal more expectation than it will satisfy. A man often strips himself to his doublet, to leap no further than he would have done in his gown: "Nihil est his, qui placere volunt, tam adversarium, quam expectatio."* It is recorded of the orator Curio,† that when he proposed the division of his oration into three or four parts, or three or four arguments or reasons, it often happened either that he forgot some one, or added one or two more. I have always avoided falling into this inconvenience, having ever hated these promises and prescriptions, not only out of distrust of my memory, but also because this method relishes too much of the artist: "Simpliora militares decent."‡ "Tis enough that I have promised to myself never again to take upon me to speak in a place of respect, for as to speaking, when a man reads his speech, besides that it is very absurd,

* "Nothing is so great an adversary to those who make it their business to please, as expectation."—Cicero, Acad., ii. 4.
† Idem, Brutus, c. 60.
‡ "Simplicity becomes warriors."—Quintilian, Instit. Orat., xi. 1.
it is a mighty disadvantage to those who naturally could give
it a grace by action; and to rely upon the mercy of my
present invention, I would much less do it; 'tis heavy and
perplexed, and such as would never furnish me in sudden
and important necessities.

Permit, reader, this essay its course also, and this further
sitting to finish the rest of my picture: I add, but I correct
not. First, because I conceive that a man having once
parted with his labors to the world, he has no further right
to them; let him do better if he can, in some new undertak-"'
ing, but not adulterate what he has already sold. Of
such dealers nothing should be bought till after they are
dead. Let them well consider what they do before they
produce it to the light: who hastens them? My book
is always the same, saving that upon every new edition
(that the buyer may not go away quite empty) I take the
liberty to add (as 'tis but an ill-jointed mosaic) some few
bits over and above; they are but over-weight, that do not
disfigure the primitive form of the essays, but, by a little
ambitious subtlety, give a kind of particular value to every
one of those that follow. Thence, however, will easily
happen some transposition of chronology, my stories
taking place according to their patness, and not always
according to their age.

Secondly, because as to what concerns myself, I fear to
lose by change: my understanding does not always go for-ward, it goes backward too. I do not much less suspect
my fancies for being the second or the third, than for being
the first, or present, or past; we often correct ourselves as
foolishly as we do others. I am grown older by a great
many years since my first publications, which were in the
year 1580: but I very much doubt whether I am grown
an inch the wiser. I now, and I anon, are two several
persons; but whether better, I cannot determine. It were
a fine thing to be old, if we only traveled toward improve-
ment; but 'tis a drunken, stumbling, reeling, infirm
motion: like that of reeds, which the air casually waves to
and fro at pleasure. Antiochus had in his youth strongly
written in favor of the academy; in his old age, he wrote
as much against it; would not, which of these two soever I
should follow, be still Antiochus? After having established
the uncertainty, to go about to establish the certainty of
human opinions, was it not to establish doubt, and not cer-
tainty, and to promise, that had he had yet another age to live, he would be always upon terms of altering his judgment, not so much for the better, as for something else?

The public favor has given me a little more confidence than I expected; but what I most fear is, lest I should glut the world with my writings; I had rather, of the two, nettle my reader, than tire him, as a learned man of my time has done. Praise is always pleasing, let it come from whom, or upon what account it will; yet ought a man to understand why he is commended, that he may know how to keep up the same reputation still; imperfections themselves may get commendation. The vulgar and common estimation is seldom happy in hitting; and I am much mistaken, if, among the writings of my time, the worst are not those which have most gained the popular applause. For my part, I return my thanks to those good-natured men, who are pleased to take my weak endeavors in good part; the faults of the workmanship are nowhere so apparent, as in a matter which of itself has no recommendation. Blame not me, reader, for those that slip in here, by the fancy or inadvertency of others; every hand, every artisan, contribute their own materials; I neither concern myself with orthography (and only care to have it after the old way) nor pointing, being very inexpert both in the one and the other. Where they wholly break the sense, I am very little concerned, for they at least discharge me; but where they substitute a false one, as they so often do, and wrest me to their conception, they ruin me. When the sentence, nevertheless, is not strong enough for my proportion, a civil person ought to reject it as spurious, and none of mine. Whoever shall know how lazy I am, and how indulgent to my own humor, will easily believe that I had rather write as many more essays, than be tied to revise these over again for so childish a correction.

I said elsewhere, that being planted in the very center of this new religion, I am not only deprived of any great familiarity with men of other kind of manners than my own, and of other opinions, by which they hold together, as by a tie that supersedes all other obligations; but, moreover, I do not live without danger, among men to whom all things are equally lawful, and of whom the most part cannot offend the laws more than they have already done; from which the extremest degree of license proceeds. All
the particular circumstances respecting me being summed up together, I do not find one man of my country, who pays so dear for the defense of our laws both in loss and damages (as the lawyers say *) as myself; and some there are who vapor and brag of their zeal and constancy, that if things were justly weighed, do much less than I. My house, as one that has ever been open and free to all comers, and civil to all (for I could never persuade myself to make it a garrison of war, war being a thing that I prefer to see as remote as may be), has sufficiently merited popular kindness, and so that it would be a hard matter justly to insult over me upon my own dunghill; and I look upon it as a wonderful and exemplary thing, that it yet continues a virgin from blood and plunder during so long a storm, and so many neighboring revolutions and tumults. For to confess the truth, it had been possible enough for a man of my complexion to have shaken hands with any one constant and continued form whatever; but the contrary invasions and incursions, alternations and vicissitudes of fortune round about me, have hitherto more exasperated than calmed and mollified the temper of the country, and involved me, over and over again, with invincible difficulties and dangers.

I escape, 'tis true, but am troubled that it is more by chance, and something of my own prudence, than by justice; and am not satisfied to be out of the protection of the laws, and under any other safeguard than theirs. As matters stand, I live, above one half, by the favors of others; which is an untoward obligation. I do not like to owe my safety either to the generosity or affection of great persons, who allow me my legality and my liberty, nor to the obliging manners of my predecessors, or my own; for what if I were another kind of man? If my deportment, and the frankness of my conversation, or relationship, oblige my neighbors, 'tis cruel that they should acquit themselves of that obligation in only permitting me to live, and that they may say "We allow him the free liberty of having divine service read in his own private chapel when it is interdicted in all churches round about, and allow him the use of his goods and his life, as one who protects our wives and cattle in time of need." For my house has for many descents

* "Lucro cessante, emergente damno."—JOHANNEAN.
shared in the reputation of Lycurgus the Athenian, who
was the general depositary and guardian of the purses of
his fellow-citizens.* Now I am clearly of opinion that a
man should live by right and by authority, and not either
by recompense or favor. How many gallant men have
rather chosen to lose their lives than to be debtors for them?
I hate to subject myself to any sort of obligation, but above
all, to that which binds me by the duty of honor. I
think nothing so dear as what has been given me, and this
because my will lies at pawn under the title of gratitude,
and more willingly accept of services that are to be sold;
I feel that for the last I give nothing but money, but for
the other I give myself.

The knot that binds me by the laws of courtesy binds
me more than that of civil constraint; I am much more
at ease when bound by a scrivener, than by myself. Is it
not reason that my conscience should be much more en-
gaged when men simply rely upon it? In a bond, my faith
owes nothing, because it has nothing lent it; let them trust
to the security they have taken without me. I had much
rather break the wall of a prison, and the laws themselves
than my own word. I am nice, even to superstition, in
keeping my promises, and, therefore, upon all occasions,
have a care to make them uncertain and conditional. To
those of no great moment, I add the jealousy of my own
rule, to make them weight; it wracks and oppresses me
with its own interest. Even in actions wholly my own and
free, if I once say a thing, I conceive that I have bound
myself, and that delivering it to the knowledge of another,
I have positively enjoined it my own performance. Me-
thinks I promise it, if I but say it: and therefore am not
apt to say much of that kind. The sentence that I pass
upon myself is more severe than that of a judge, who only
considers the common obligation; but my conscience looks
upon it with a more severe and penetrating eye. I lag in
those duties to which I should be compelled if I did not

* Plutarch, Lives of the Ten Orators, Lycurgus, c. 1.
† "Even that which is well done, is only just when 'tis voluntary."—Cicero, De Offic., i. 9.
where necessity draws me, I love to let my will take its own course: "Quia quicquid imperio cogitum exigentimagis, quam praestanti, acceptum referetur." I know some who follow this rule, even to injustice; who will sooner give than restore sooner lend than pay, and will do them the least good to whom they are most obliged. I don't go so far as that, but I'm not far off.

I so much love to disengage and disobligate myself, that I have sometimes looked upon ingratitude, affronts, and indignities which I have received from those to whom either by nature or accident I was bound in some duty of friendship, as an advantage to me; taking this occasion of their ill usage, for an acquittance and discharge of so much of my debt. And though I still continue to pay them all the external offices of public reason, I notwithstanding, find a great saving in doing that upon the account of justice which I did upon the score of affection, and am a little eased of the attention and solicitude of my inward will: "Est prudentis sustinere, ut currum, sic impetum benevolentia;" 'tis in me, too urging and pressing where I take; at least, for a man who loves not to be strained at all. And this husbanding my friendship serves me for a sort of consolation in the imperfections of those in whom I am concerned. I am very sorry they are not such as I could wish they were, but then I also am spared somewhat of my application and engagement toward them. I approve of a man who is the less fond of his child for having a scald head, or for being crooked; and not only when he is ill-conditioned, but, also, when he is of unhappy disposition, and imperfect in his limbs (God himself has abated so much from his value and natural estimation), provided he carry himself in this coldness of affection with moderation

* "That which the laws compel, I do with little will."—Terence, Amulph., iii. 3, 44. The text has: "Quod vos jus cogit, vix voluntate impetret."

† "For whatever is compelled by power, is more imputed to him that exacts than to him that performs."—Valerius Maximus, ii. 2, 6.

‡ "'Tis the part of a wise man to keep a curbing hand upon the impetus of friendship, as upon that of his horse."—Cicero, De Amicit., c. 17.
and exact justice: proximity, with me, lessens not defects, but rather aggravates them.

After all, according to what I understand in the science of benefit and acknowledgment, which is a subtle science, and of great use, I know no person whatever more free and less indebted than I am at this hour. What I do owe, is simply to common and natural obligations; as to anything else,* no man is more absolutely clear:

Nec sunt mihi nota potentum
Munera.†

Princes give me a great deal, if they take nothing from me; and do me good enough, if they do me no harm; that's all I ask from them. Oh, how am I obliged to Almighty God, that he was pleased I should immediately receive from his bounty all I have, and especially reserved all my obligation to himself! How earnestly do I beg of his holy compassion, that I may never owe essential thanks to any one! Oh happy liberty wherein I have thus far lived! May it continue with me to the last. I endeavor to have no express need of any one: "In me omnis spes est mihi." ‡

'Tis what every one may do in himself, but more easily they whom God has placed in a condition exempt from natural and urgent necessities. It is a wretched and dangerous thing to depend upon others; we ourselves, in whom is ever the most just and safest dependence, are not sufficiently sure. I have nothing mine but myself, and yet the possession is, in part, defective and borrowed. I fortify myself both in courage, which is the strongest assistant, and also in fortune, therein wherewith to satisfy myself, though everything else should forsake me. Eleus Hippias not only furnished himself with knowledge, that he might, at need, cheerfully retire from all other company to enjoy the Muses; nor only with the knowledge of philosophy, to teach his soul to be contented with itself, and bravely to subsist without outward conveniences, when fate would have it so; he was, moreover, so careful as to learn to cook,

* Or, as the edition of 1588 has it, "to foreign obligations and benefits."

† "The gifts of great men are unknown to me."—Æneid, xii. 529.
‡ "All my hope is in myself."—Terence, Adelph., iii. 5, 9.
to shave himself, to make his own clothes, his own shoes and drawers, to provide for all his necessities in himself and to wean himself from the assistance of others.* A man more freely and cheerfully enjoys borrowed conveniences, when it is not an enjoyment forced and constrained by need; and when he has, in his own will and fortune, the means to live without them. I know myself very well; but 'tis hard for me to imagine any so pure liberality of any one toward me, any so frank and free hospitality, that would not appear to me discreditable, tyrannical, and tainted with reproach, if necessity had reduced me to it. As giving is an ambitious and authoritative quality, so is accepting a quality of submission; witness the insulting and quarrelsome refusal that Bajazet made of the presents that Tamerlane sent him; and those that were offered on the part of the Emperor Solyman to the emperor of Calicut, so angered him, that he not only rudely rejected them, saying, that neither he nor any of his predecessors had ever been wont to take, and that it was their office to give; but, moreover, caused the ambassadors sent with the gifts to be put into a dungeon. When Thetis, says Aristotle,† flatters Jupiter; when the Lacedæmonians flatter the Athenians, they do not put them in mind of the good they have done them, which is always odious, but of the benefits they have received from them. Such as I see so frequently employ every one in their affairs, and thrust themselves into so much obligation, would never do it, did they but relish as I do the sweetness of a pure liberty, and did they but weigh, as wise men should, the burden of obligation: 'tis, sometimes, peradventure, fully paid, but 'tis never dissolved. 'Tis a miserable slavery to a man who loves to be at full liberty in all respects. Such as know me, both above and below me in station, are able to say whether they have ever known a man less importuning, soliciting, entreating, and pressing upon others than I. If I am so, and a degree beyond all modern example, 'tis no great wonder, so many parts of my manners contributing to it: a little natural pride, an impatience of being refused, the moderation of my desires and designs, my incapacity for business, and my most

* Cicero, De Orat., iii. 32.

† Moral. ad Nicom., iv. 3.
beloved qualities, idleness and freedom; by all these together I have conceived a mortal hatred to being obliged to any other, or by any other than myself. I leave no stone unturned to do without it, rather than employ the bounty of another in any light or important occasion or necessity whatever. My friends strangely trouble me, when they ask me to ask a third person; and I think it costs me little less to disengage him who is indebted to me, by making use of him, than to engage myself to him who owes me nothing. These conditions being removed, and provided they require of me nothing of any great trouble or care (for I have declared mortal war against all care), I am very ready to do every one the best service I can.* But I have yet more avoided receiving than sought occasions of giving, and moreover, according to Aristotle, it is more easy.† My fortune has allowed me but little to do others good withal, and the little it can afford, is put into a pretty close hand. Had I been born a great person, I should have been ambitious to have made myself beloved, not to make myself feared or admired: shall I more plainly express it? I should more have endeavored to please than to profit others. Cyrus very wisely, and by the mouth of a great captain, and still greater philosopher, prefers his bounty and benefits much before his valor and war-like conquests;‡ and the elder Scipio, wherever he would raise himself in esteem, sets a higher value upon his affability and humanity, than on his prowess and victories, and has always this glorious saying in his mouth: “That he has given his enemies as much occasion to love him as his friends.” I will then say, that if a man must, of necessity, owe something, it ought to be by a more legitimate title than that whereof I am speaking, to which the necessity of this miserable war compels me; and not in so great a debt as that of my total preservation both of life and fortune: it overwhelms me.

I have a thousand times gone to bed in my own house

* The edition of 1588 here adds: “I have been very willing to seek occasion to do people a good turn, and to attach them to me; and methinks there is no more agreeable employment for our means.”

† Moral. ad Nicom., ix. 7.

‡ Xenophon, Cyrop., viii. 4, 4.
with an apprehension that I should be betrayed and murdered that very night; compounding with fortune, that it might be without terror and with quick despatch; and, after my Paternoster, have cried out,

"Impius hæc tam culta novalia miles habebit!" *

What remedy? 'tis the place of my birth, and that of most of my ancestors; they have here fixed their affection and name. We inure ourselves to whatever we are accustomed to; and in so miserable a condition as ours is, custom is a great bounty of nature, which benumbs our senses to the sufferance of many evils. A civil war has this with it worse than other wars have, to make us stand sentinels in our own houses:

"Quam miserum, porta vitam muroque tueri, Vixque suaæ tutum viribus esse domus!" †

"Tis a grievous extremity for a man to be jostled even in his own house and domestic repose. The country where I live is always the first in arms, and the last that lays them down, and where there is never an absolute peace:

"Tam quoque, cum pax est, trepidant formidine belli. Quoties pacem fortuna lacessit; Hac iter est belliss . . . Melius, Fortuna, dedisses Orbe sub Eoo sedem, gelidaque sub Arcto, Errantesque domos." ‡

I sometimes extract the means to fortify myself against these considerations, from indifference and indolence, which, in some sort, bring us on to resolution. It often befalls me to imagine and expect mortal dangers with a kind of delight: I stupidly plunge myself headlong, into death, without considering or taking a view of it, as into a deep and obscure abyss which swallows me up at one leap, and involves me in an instant in a profound sleep, without any sense of pain. And in these short and violent

* "Shall impious soldiers have these new plowed grounds."—Virgil, Ecl. i. 71.
† "'Tis miserable to protect one's life by doors and walls, and to be scarcely safe in one's own house."—Ovid, Trist., iv. 1, 69.
‡ "Even when there's peace, there is here still the fear of war: when Fortune troubles peace, this is ever the way by which war passes."—Ovid, Trist., iii. 10, 67.
deaths, the consequence that I foresee administers more consolation to me than the effect does fear. They say, that as life is not better for being long, so death is better for being not long. I do not so much evade being dead, as I enter into confidence with dying. I wrap and shroud myself in the storm that is to blind and carry me away with the fury of a sudden and insensible attack. Moreover, if it should fall out, that, as some gardeners say, roses and violets spring more odoriferous near garlic and onions, by reason that the last suck and imbibe all the ill odor of the earth; so, if these depraved natures should also attract all the malignity of my air and climate, and render it so much better and purer by their vicinity, I should not lose all. That cannot be; but there may be something in this, that goodness is more beautiful and attractive when it is rare; and that contrariety and diversity fortify and consolidate well-doing within itself, and inflame it by the jealousy of opposition and by glory. Thieves and robbers, of their special favor, have no particular spite at me; no more have I to them: I should have my hands too full. Like consciences are lodged under several sorts of robes; like cruelty, disloyalty, rapine; and so much the worse, and more falsely when the more secure and concealed under color of the laws. I less hate an open professed injury than one that is treacherous; an enemy in arms, than an enemy in a gown. Our fever has seized upon a body that is not much the worse for it; there was fire before and now 'tis broken out into a flame; the noise is greater, not the evil. I ordinarily answer such as ask me the reason of my travels, "That I know very well what I fly from, but not what I seek." If they tell me that there may be as little health among foreigners, and that their manners are no better than ours; I first reply, that it is hard to be believed,

"Tam multae scelerum facies!" *

secondly, that it is always gain to change an ill condition for one that is uncertain; and that the ills of others ought not to afflict us so much as our own.

I will not here omit that I never mutiny so much against France, that I am not perfectly friends with Paris; that city has ever had my heart from my infancy, and it

* "So many forms of crime have we."—Virgil, Georg., i. 506.
has fallen out, as of excellent things, that the more beautiful cities I have seen since, the more the beauty of this still wins upon my affection. I love her for herself, and more in her own native being, than in all the pomp of foreign and acquired embellishments. I love her tenderly, even to her warts and blemishes. I am French only by this great city, great in people, great in the felicity of her situation; but, above all, great and incomparable in variety and diversity of commodities: the glory of France, and one of the most noble ornaments of the world. May God keep our divisions far remote from her. * Entire and united, I think her sufficiently defended from all other violences. I give her caution that, of all sorts of people, those will be the worst that shall set her in discord; I have no fear for her, but of herself; and, certainly, I have as much fear for her as for any other part of the kingdom. While she shall continue, I shall never want a retreat, where I may stand at bay, sufficient to make me amends for parting with any other retreat.

Not because Socrates has said so, but because it is, in truth, my own humor, and, peradventure, not without some excess, I look upon all men as my compatriots, and embrace a Polander as a Frenchman, preferring the universal and common tie to all national ties whatever. I am not much taken with the sweetness of a native air: acquaintance wholly new and wholly my own, appear to me full as good as the other common and fortuitous ones with our neighbors: friendships that are purely of our own acquiring ordinarily carry it above those to which the communication of climate or of blood oblige us. Nature has placed us in the world free and unbound: we imprison ourselves in certain straits, like the kings of Persia, who obliged themselves to drink no other water but that of the river Choaspes, † foolishly quitted claim to their right in all other streams, and, so far as concerned themselves, dried up all the other rivers of the world. What Socrates did toward his end, to look upon a sentence of banishment as worse than a sentence of death against him, I shall, I

* "Dieu en chasse loing nos divisions," which Cotton renders, "Of his goodness compose our differences, and deliver us from this civil war."

† Plutarch, On Exile, c. 5; Ælian, Var. Hist., xii. 40.
think, never be either so decrepit or so strictly habituated to my own country to be of that opinion. These celestial lives have images enough that I embrace more by esteem than affection; and they have some also so elevated and extraordinary that I cannot embrace them so much as by esteem, forasmuch as I cannot conceive them. That fancy was singular in a man who thought the whole world his city; it is true that he disdained travel, and had hardly ever set his foot out of the Attic territories. What say you to his complaint of the money his friends offered to save his life, and that he refused to come out of prison by the mediation of others, in order not to disobey the laws in a time when they were otherwise so corrupt? These examples are of the first kind for me: of the second, there are others that I could find out in the same person; many of these rare examples surpass the force of my action, but some of them, moreover, surpass the force of my judgment.

Besides these reasons, travel is in my opinion a very profitable exercise; the soul is there continually employed in observing new and unknown things, and I do not know, as I have often said, a better school wherein to model life than by incessantly exposing to it the diversity of so many other lives, fancies, and usances, and by making it relish so perpetual a variety of forms of human nature. The body is, therein, neither idle nor overwrought; and that moderate agitation puts it in breath. I can keep on horse-back, tormented with the stone as I am, without alighting or being weary, eight or ten hours together.

"Vires ultra sortemque senectae:"

No season is enemy to me but the parching heat of a scorching sun; for the umbrellas made use of in Italy, ever since the time of the ancient Romans, more burden a man's arm than they relieve his head. I would fain know how it was that the Persians, so long ago, and in the infancy of luxury, made ventilators where they wanted them, and planted shades, as Xenophon reports they did. I love rain, and to dabble in the dirt, as well as ducks do. The change of air and climate never touches me; every sky is alike; I am only troubled with inward alterations which I breed within myself, and those are not so frequent

* "Beyond the strength and ordinary lot of age."—_Aeneid_, vi. 114.
in travel. I am hard to be got out, but being once upon
the road, I hold out as well as the best. I take as much
pains in little as in great attempts, and am as solicitous to
equip myself for a short journey, if but to visit a neigh-
bor, as for the longest voyage. I have learned to travel
after the Spanish fashion, and to make but one stage of a
great many miles; and in excessive heats I always travel
by night, from sunset to sunrise. The other method of
baiting by the way, in haste and hurry to gobble up a
dinner is, especially in short days, very inconvenient. My
horses perform the better; never any horse tired under
me that was able to hold out the first day's journey. I
water them at every brook I meet, and have only a care
they have so much way to go before I come to my inn, as
will digest the water in their bellies. My unwillingness to
rise in a morning gives my servants leisure to dine at their
case before they set out; for my own part, I never eat too
late; my appetite, comes to me in eating, and not else; I
am never hungry but at table.

Some of my friends blame me for continuing this travel-
ing humor, being married and old. But they are out
in't; 'tis the best time to leave a man's house, when he
has put it into a way of continuing without him, and
settled such order as corresponds with its former govern-
ment. 'Tis much greater imprudence to abandon it to a
less faithful housekeeper, and who will be less solicitous
to look after your affairs.

The most useful and honorable knowledge and employ-
ment for the mother of a family is the science of good
housewifery. I see some that are covetous indeed, but
very few that are good managers. 'Tis the supreme
quality of a woman, which a man ought to seek before
any other, as the only dowry that must ruin or preserve
our houses. Let men say what they will, according to the
experience I have learned, I require in married women the
economical virtue above all other virtues; I put my wife
't, as a concern of her own, leaving her, by my absence,
the whole government of my affairs. I see and am vexed
to see, in several families I know, monsieur about dinner
time come home all jaded and ruffled about his affairs,
when madam is still pouncing and tricking up herself, for-
sooth, in her closet; this is for queens to do, and that's
a question, too; 'tis ridiculous and unjust that the laziness
of our wives should be maintained with our sweat and labor. No man, so far as in me lies, shall have a clearer, a more quiet, and free fruition of his estate than I. If the husband bring matter, nature herself will that the wife find the form.

As to the duties of conjugal friendship, that some think to be impaired by these absences, I am quite of another opinion. It is, on the contrary, an intelligence that easily cools by a too frequent and assiduous companionship. Every strange woman appears charming, and we all find by experience that being continually together is not so pleasing, as to part for a time and meet again. These interruptions fill me with fresh affection toward my family, and render my house more pleasant to me. Change warms my appetite to the one and then to the other. I know that the arms of friendship are long enough to reach from the one end of the world to the other, and especially this, where there is a continual communication of offices that rouse the obligation and remembrance. The Stoics say, that there is so great connection and relation among the sages, that he who dines in France nourishes his companion in Egypt; and that whoever does but hold out his finger, in what part of the world soever, all the sages upon the habitable earth feel themselves assisted by it. Fruition and possession principally appertain to the imagination; it more fervently and constantly embraces what it is in quest of, than what we hold in our arms. Let a man but consider and cast up his daily thoughts, and he will find, that he is most absent from his friend, when in his company; his presence relaxes your attention, and gives your thoughts liberty to absent themselves at every turn, and upon every occasion. When I am away at Rome, I keep and govern my house, and the conveniences I there left; see my wall rise, my trees shoot, and my revenue increase or decrease, very near as well as when I am there:

"Ante oculos errat domus, errat forma locorum."*

If we enjoy nothing but what we touch, we may say farewel to the money in our chests, and to our sons when they are gone a hunting. We will have them nearer to us; in

* "My house and the forms of places are ever present to my eye."—Ovid, Trist., iii. 4, 57.
the garden, or half a day’s journey from home, far? What is ten leagues; far or near? If near, what is eleven, twelve, or thirteen, and so by degrees. In earnest, if there be a woman who can tell her husband what step ends the near and what step begins the remote, I would advise her to stop between:

"Excludat jurgia finis..."

Utor permissio; caudæque pilos ut equinae
Paulatim vello, et demo unum, demo etiam unum,
Dum cadat elusus ratione ruentis acervi:"

and let them boldly call philosophy to their assistance; in whose teeth it may be cast, that seeing it neither discerns the one nor the other end of the joint, between the too much and the little, the long and the short, the light and the heavy, the near and the remote; that seeing it discovers neither the beginning nor the end, it must needs judge very uncertainly of the middle: "Rerum natura nullam nobis dedit cognitionem finium."† Are they not still wives and friends to the dead, who are not at the end of this, but in the other world? We embrace not only the absent, but those who have been, and those who are not yet. We do not promise in marriage to be continually twisted and linked together, like some little animals that we see, or, like the bewitched folks of Kerenty,‡ tied together like dogs; and a wife ought not to be so greedily enamored of her husband’s foreparts, that she cannot endure to see him turn his back, if occasion be. But may not this saying of that excellent painter of women’s humors be here introduced, to show the reason of their complaints?

"Uxor, si cesses, aut te amare cogitat,
Aut tete amari, aut potare, aut animo obsequi;
Et tibi bene esse soli, cum sibi sit male;”§

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* "Let the boundary end all disputes..." I use the permission, and, as the man in the fable, pluck out the hairs of the horse’s tail gradually; now one, then another, so I take away this, and then that, and thus outwit my opponent."—Horace, Ep. ii. 1, 38, 45.

† "Nature has given to us no knowledge of the end of things.”—Cicero, Acad., ii. 29.

‡ Karantia, a town in the isle of Rugen. See Saxo Grammaticus, Hist. of Denmark, book xiv.

§ "Your wife, if you stay abroad, thinks that you love, or are beloved; or that you are drinking or amusing yourself somehow or other; that all the pleasure is yours, and hers all the care.”—Terence, Adelph., act i., sc. 1, v. 7.
or may it not be, that of itself opposition and contradiction entertain and nourish them; and that they sufficiently accommodate themselves, provided they incommode you?

In true friendship, wherein I am perfect, I more give myself to my friend, than I endeavor to attract him to me; I am not only better pleased in doing him service, than if he conferred a benefit upon me, but, moreover, had rather he should do himself good than me, and he most obliges me when he does so; and if absence be either more pleasant or convenient for him, 'tis also more acceptable to me than his presence; neither is it properly absence, when we can write to one another. I have sometimes made good use of our separation from one another: we better filled, and further extended the possession of life in being parted. He* lived, enjoyed, and saw for me, and I for him, as fully as if he had himself been there: one part of us remained idle, and we were too much blended in one another when we were together; the distance of place rendered the conjunction of our wills more rich. This insatiable desire of personal presence, a little implies weakness in the fruition of souls.

As to what concerns age, which is alleged against me, 'tis quite contrary; 'tis for youth to subject itself to common opinions, and to curb itself to please others; it has wherewithal to please both the people and itself; we have but too much ado to please ourselves alone. As natural conveniences fail, let us supply them with those that are artificial. 'Tis injustice to excuse youth for pursuing its pleasures, and to forbid old men to seek them. When young, I concealed my wanton passions with prudence; now I am old, I chase away melancholy by debauch.† And thus do the Platonic laws forbid men to travel till forty or fifty years old,‡ so that travel might be more useful and instructive in so mature an age. I should sooner subscribe to the second article of the same Laws, which forbids it after threescore.

* La Boetie.

† This debauch (desbauche) evidently means the diversion of travel, which is the subject of so large a portion of this essay; not debauch in its ordinary sense.

‡ Plato, Laws, book xii.
journey." What care I for that? I neither undertake it to return, nor to finish it: my business is only to keep myself in motion, while motion pleases me; I only walk for the walk's sake. They, who run after a benefice or a hare, run not; they only run who run at base, and to exercise their running. My design is divisible throughout: it is not grounded upon any great hopes; every day concludes my expectation: and the journey of my life is carried on after the same manner. And yet I have seen places enough a great way off, where I could have wished to have stayed. And why not, if Chrysippus, Cleanthes, Diogenes, Zeno, Antipater, so many sages of the sourest sect, readily abandoned their country, without occasion of complaint, and only for the enjoyment of another air.* In earnest, that which most displeases me in all my travels is, that I cannot resolve to settle my abode where I should best like, but that I must always propose to myself to return, to accommodate myself to the common humor.

If I feared to die in any other place than that of my birth; if I thought I should die more uneasily, remote from my own family, I should hardly go out of France; I should not, without fear, step out of my parish; I feel death always twitching me by the throat, or by the back. But I am of another temper; 'tis in all places alike to me. Yet, might I have my choice, I think I should rather choose to die on horseback than in a bed; out of my own house, and far from my own people. There is more heartbreakingly than consolation in taking leave of one's friends; I am willing to omit that civility, for that, of all the offices of friendship, is the only one that is unpleasant; and I could, with all my heart, dispense with that great and eternal farewell. If there be any convenience in so many standers by, it brings an hundred inconveniences along with it. I have seen many dying miserably, surrounded with all this train: 'tis a crowd that chokes them. 'Tis against duty, and is a testimony of little kindness and little care, to permit you to die in repose; one torments your eyes, another your ears, another your tongue; you have neither sense nor member that is not worried by them. Your heart is wounded with compassion to hear the mourning of friends; and per-

* All these sages quitted their native countries in order to live at Athens.—Plutarch, On Exile, c. 12.
haps, with anger, to hear the counterfeit condolences of pretenders. Whoever has been delicate and sensitive, when well, is much more so when ill. In such a necessity, a gentle hand is required, accommodating to his sentiment, to scratch him just in the place where he itches, otherwise scratch him not at all. If we stand in need of a wise woman* to bring us into the world, we have much more need of a still wiser man to help us out of it. Such a one, and a friend to boot, a man ought to purchase at any cost for such an occasion. I am not yet arrived to that pitch of disdainful vigor, that is fortified in itself, that nothing can assist, or disturb; I am of a lower form; I endeavor to hide myself; and to escape from this passage, not by fear, but by art. I do not intend in this act of dying to make proof and show of my constancy. For whom should I do it? all the right and interest I have in reputation will then cease. I content myself with a death involved within itself, quiet, solitary, and all my own, suitable to my retired and private life; quite contrary to the Roman superstition, where a man was looked upon as unhappy who died without speaking, and who had not his nearest relations to close his eyes. I have enough to do to comfort myself, without having to console others; thoughts enough in my head, not to need that circumstances should possess me with new; and matter enough to occupy me without borrowing. This affair is out of the part of society; 'tis the act of one single person. Let us live and be merry among our friends; let us go rapine and die among strangers; a man may find those, for his money, who will shift his pillow and rub his feet, and will trouble him no more than he would have them; who will present to him an indifferent countenance, and suffer him to govern himself, and to complain according to his own method.

I wean myself daily by my reason from this childish and inhuman humor, of desiring by our suffering to move the compassion and mourning of our friends: we stretch our own incommodities beyond their just extent when we extract tears from others; and the constancy which we commend in every one in supporting his adverse fortune, we accuse and reproach in our friends when the evil is our own; we are not satisfied that they should be sensible of our

* Sage-femme, the French term for a midwife.
condition only, unless they be, moreover, afflicted. A man should diffuse joy, but, as much as he can, smother grief. He who makes himself lamented without reason, is a man not to be lamented when there shall be real cause: to be always complaining, is the way never to be lamented; by making himself always in so pitiful a taking, he is never commiserated by any. He who makes himself out dead when he is alive, is subject to be thought living, when he is dying. I have seen some who have taken it ill when they have been told that they looked well, and that their pulse was good; restrain their smiles, because they betrayed a recovery, and be angry at their health because it was not to be lamented: and, which is a great deal more, these were not women. I describe my infirmities, such as they really are, at most, and avoid all expressions of evil prognostic and composed exclamations. If not mirth, at least a temperate countenance in the standers by, is proper in the presence of a wise sick man. he does not quarrel with health, for seeing himself in a contrary condition; he is pleased to contemplate it sound and entire in others, and at least to enjoy it for company: he does not, for feeling himself melt away, abandon all living thoughts, nor avoid ordinary discourse. I would study sickness while I am well; when it has seized me, it will make its impression real enough, without the help of my imagination. We prepare ourselves beforehand for the journeys we undertake, and resolve upon them; we leave the appointment of the hour when, to take horse to the company, and in their favor defer it.

I find this unexpected advantage in the publication of my manners, that it in some sort serves me for a rule. I have, at times, some consideration of not betraying the history of my life: this public declaration obliges me to keep my way, and not to give the lie to the image I have drawn of my qualities, commonly less deformed and contradictory than consists with the malignity and infirmity of the judgments of this age. The uniformity and simplicity of my manners produce a face of easy interpretation; but because the fashion is a little new and not in use, it gives too great opportunity to slander. Yet so it is, that whoever would fairly assail me, I think I so sufficiently assist his purpose in my known and avowed imperfections, that he may that way satisfy his ill-nature, without fighting
with the wind. If I myself, to anticipate accusation and discovery, confess enough to frustrate his malice, as he conceives, 'tis but reason that he make use of his right of amplification, and to wire-draw my vices as far as he can; attack has its rights beyond justice; and let him make the roots of those errors I have laid open to him, shoot up into trees: let him make his use, not only of those I am really affected with, but also of those that only threaten me; injurious vices, both in quality and number; let him endgel me that way. I should willingly follow the example of the philosopher Bion: Antigonus being about to reproach him with the meanness of his birth, he presently cut him short with this declaration: "I am," said he,* "the son of a slave, a butcher, and branded, and of a strumpet my father married in the lowest of his fortune; both of them were whipped for offenses they had committed. An orator bought me, when a child, and finding me a pretty and hopeful boy, bred me up, and when he died left me all his estate, which I have transported into this city of Athens, and here settled myself to the study of philosophy. Let the historians never trouble themselves with inquiring about me: I will tell them about it." A free and generous confession enervates reproach, and disarms slander. So it is, that, one thing with another, I fancy men as often commend as undervalue me beyond reason; as methinks also, from my childhood, in rank and degree of honor, they have given me a place rather above than below my right. I should find myself more at ease in a country where these degrees were either regulated or not regarded. Among men, when an altercation about the precedence either of walking or sitting exceeds three replies, 'tis reputed uncivil. I never stick at giving or taking place out of rule, to avoid the trouble of such ceremony; and never any man had a mind to go before me but I permitted him to do it.

Besides this profit I make of writing of myself, I have also hoped for this other advantage, that if it should fall out that my humor should please or jump with those of some honest man before I die, he would then desire and seek to be acquainted with me. I have given him a great deal of made-way; for all that he could have, in many

* Diogenes Laertius, iv. 46.
years, acquired by close familiarity, he has seen in three days in this memorial, and more surely and exactly. A pleasant fancy: many things that I would not confess to any one in particular, I deliver to the public, and send my best friends to a bookseller's shop, there to inform themselves concerning my most secret thoughts;

"Excutienda damus præcordia." *

Did I, by good direction, know where to seek any one proper for my conversation, I should certainly go a great way to find him out: for the sweetness of suitable and agreeable company cannot in my opinion, be bought too dear. Oh! what a thing is a true friend! how true is that old saying, that the use of a friend is more pleasing and necessary than the elements of water and fire!

To return to my subject: there is, then, no great harm in dying privately, and far from home; we conceive ourselves obliged to retire from natural actions less unseemly, and less terrible than this. But, moreover, such as are reduced to spin out a long languishing life, ought not, perhaps, to wish to trouble a great family with their continual miseries; therefore the Indians, in a certain province, thought it just to knock a man on the head when reduced to such a necessity; and in another of their provinces, they all forsook him to shift for himself as well as he could. To whom do they not, at last, become tedious and insupportable? the ordinary offices of life do not go that length. You teach your best friends to be cruel perforce; hardening wife and children by long use neither to regard nor to lament your sufferings. The groans of the stone are grown so familiar to my people, that nobody takes any notice of them. And though we should extract some pleasure from their conversation (which does not always happen by reason of the disparity of conditions, which easily begets contempt or envy toward any one whatever), is it not too much to make abuse of this half a lifetime? The more I should see them constrain themselves out of affection to be serviceable to me, the more I should be sorry for their pains. We have liberty to lean, but not to lay our whole weight upon others, so as to prop ourselves by their ruin; like him who caused little children's

* "We give our hearts to be examined."—Persius, v. 22.
throats to be cut to make use of their blood for the cure of a disease he had; or that other, who was continually supplied with tender young girls to keep his old limbs warm in the night, and to mix the sweetness of their breath with his, sour and stinking. Decrepitude is a solitary quality. I am sociable even to excess, yet I think it reasonable that I should now withdraw my troubles from the sight of the world, and keep them to myself. Let me shrink and draw up myself in my own shell, like a tortoise, and learn to see men without hanging upon them. I should endanger them in so slippery a passage: 'tis time to turn my back to company.

"But, in these travels, you will be taken ill in some wretched place, where nothing can be had to relieve you." I always carry most things necessary about me; and besides, we cannot evade fortune if she once resolves to attack us. I need nothing extraordinary when I am sick, I will not be beholden to my bolus to do that for me which nature cannot. At the very beginning of my fevers and sicknesses that cast me down, while still entire, and but little disordered in health, I reconcile myself to Almighty God by the last Christian offices, and find myself by so doing less oppressed and more easy, and have got, methinks, so much the better of my disease. And I have yet less need of a notary or counselor than of a physician. What I have not settled of my affairs when I was in health, let no one expect I should do it when I am sick. What I will do for the service of death is always done; I dare not so much as one day defer it, and if nothing be done, 'tis as much as to say either that doubt hindered my choice (and sometimes 'tis well chosen not to choose), or that I was positively resolved not to do anything at all.

I write my book for few men and for few years. Had it been matter of duration, I should have put it into firmer language. According to the continual variation that ours has been subject to, up to this day, who can expect that its present form should be in use fifty years hence? It slips every day through our fingers, and since I was born, it is altered above one-half. We say that it is now perfect; and every age says the same of its own. I shall hardly trust

* In the edition of 1588 Montaigne here adds: "I should readily advise Venice as a retreat in this decrepitude of life."
to that, so long as it varies and changes as it does. "Tis for good and useful writings to rivet it to them, and its reputation will go according to the fortune of our state. For which reason I am not afraid to insert in it several private articles, which will spend their use among the men that are now living, and that concern the particular knowledge of some who will see further into them than every common reader. I will not, after all, as I often hear dead men spoken of, that men should say of me: "He judged he lived so and so; he would have done this or that; could he have spoken when he was dying, he would have said so or so, and have given this thing or t’other; I knew him better than any." Now, as much as decency permits, I here discover my inclinations and affections; but I do it more willingly and freely by word of mouth to any one who desires to be informed. So it is that in these memoirs, if any one observe, he will find that I have either told or designed to tell all; what I cannot express, I point out with my finger:

"Verum animo satis hæc vestigia parva sagaci
Sunt, per quæ possis cognoscere caetera tute."*

I leave nothing to be desired, or to be guessed at, concerning me. If people must be talking of me, I would have it to be justly and truly: I would come again, with all my heart, from the other world to give any one the lie who should report me other than I was, though he did it to honor me. I perceive that people represent, even living men, quite another thing than what they really are; and had I not stoutly defended a friend, whom I have lost, they would have torn him into a thousand contrary pieces.

To conclude the account of my poor humors, I confess that in my travels I seldom reach my inn but that it comes into my mind to consider whether I could—there be sick, and dying, at my ease. I desire to be lodged in some private part of the house, remote from all noise, ill scents, and smoke. I endeavor to flatter death by these frivolous circumstances; or, to say better, to discharge myself from all other incumbrances, that I may have nothing to do,

* "By these footsteps a sagacious mind may easily find all other matters."—Lucretius, i. 403.
† De la Boetie.
nor be troubled with anything but that, which will lie heavy enough upon me without any other load. I would have my death share in the ease and conveniences of my life; 'tis a great part of it, and of great importance, and I hope it will not in the future contradict the past. Death has some forms that are more easy than others, and receives divers qualities, according to every one's fancy. Among the natural deaths, that which proceeds from weakness and stupor I think the most favorable; among those that are violent, I can worse endure to think of a precipice than of the fall of a house that will crush me in a moment, and of a wound with a sword than of a harquebus shot; I should rather have chosen to poison myself with Soerates, than stab myself with Cato. And, though it be all one, yet my imagination makes as great a difference as between death and life, between throwing myself into a burning furnace and plunging into the channel of a river: so idly does our fear more concern itself in the means than the effect. It is but an instant, 'tis true, but withal an instant of such weight, that I would willingly give a great many days of my life to pass it over after my own fashion. Since every one's imagination renders it more or less terrible, and since every one has some choice among the several forms of dying, let us try a little further to find some one that is wholly clear from all offense. Might not one render it even voluptuous, as they did who died with Antony and Cleopatra?* I set aside the brave and exemplary efforts produced by philosophy and religion: but, among men of little mark, there have been found some such as Petronius and Tigellinus at Rome,† condemned to despatch themselves, who have, as it were, rocked death asleep with the delicacy of their preparations; they have made it slip and steal away in the height of their accustomed diversions, among girls and good fellows; not a word of consolation, no mention of making a will, no ambitious affectation of constancy, no talk of their future condition; among sports, feasting, wit, and mirth, com-

* Montaigne refers to the society of Synapothanoumenes, "bands of those who would die together," formed by Antony and Cleopatra after the battle of Actium and who engaged to die with them.—Plutarch, Life of Antony, c. 15.

† Tacitus, Annal., xvi. 19; Hist., i. 72.
mon and indifferent discourses, music, and amorous verses. Were it not possible for us to imitate this resolution, after a more decent manner? Since there are deaths that are good for fools, deaths good for the wise, let us find out such as are fit for those who are between both. My imagination suggests to me one that is easy, and, since we must die, to be desired. The Roman tyrants thought they did, in a manner, give a criminal life, when they gave him the choice of his death. But was not Theophrastus, that so delicate, so modest, and so wise a philosopher, compelled by reason when he dared say this verse, translated by Cicero,

"Vitam regit fortuna, non sapientia?"

Fortune assists the facility of the bargain of my life, having placed it in such a condition that for the future it can be neither advantage nor hindrance to those who are concerned in me; 'tis a condition that I would have accepted at any time of my life; but in this occasion of trussing up my baggage, I am particularly pleased that in dying I shall neither do them good nor harm. She has so ordered it, by a cunning compensation, that they who may pretend to any considerable advantage by my death will, at the same time, sustain a material inconvenience. Death sometimes is more grievous to us, in that it is grievous to others, and interests us in their interest as much as in our own, and sometimes more.

In this convenience of lodging that I desire, I mix nothing of pomp and amplitude—I hate it rather; but a certain plain neatness, which is oftenest found in places where there is less of art, and that Nature has adorned with some grace that is all her own. "Non ampliter, sed munditer convivium."† "Plus salis quam sumptus."‡ And besides, 'tis for those whose affairs compel them to travel in the depth of winter through the Grisons country, to be surprised upon the way with great inconveniences. I, who for the most part travel for my pleasure, do not


† "To eat not largely, but cleanly."—Nepos, Life of Atticus,
c 13

‡ "Rather enough than costly."—Nonius, vi. 19.
order my affairs so ill. If the way be foul on my right hand, I turn on my left; if I find myself unfit to ride, I stay where I am; and, so doing, in earnest I see nothing that is not as pleasant and commodious as my own house. 'Tis true, that I always find superfluous superfluous, and observe a kind of trouble even in abundance itself. Have I left anything behind me unseen, I go back to see it; 'tis still on my way; I trace no certain line, either straight or crooked.* Do I not find in the place to which I go what was reported to me—as it often falls out that the judgments of others do not jump with mine, and that I have found their reports for the most part false—I never complain of losing my labor: I have, at least, informed myself that what was told me was not true.

I have a constitution of body as free, and a palate as indifferent, as any man living: the diversity of manners of several nations only effects me in the pleasure of variety: every usage has its reason. Let the plate and dishes be pewter, wood, or earth; my meat be broiled or roasted; let them give me butter or oil, of nuts or olives, hot or cold, 'tis all one to me; and so indifferent, that growing old, I accuse this generous faculty, and would wish that delicacy and choice should correct the indiscretion of my appetite, and sometimes help my stomach. When I have been abroad out of France, and that people, out of courtesy, have asked me if I would be served after the French manner, I laughed at the question, and always frequented tables the most filled with foreigners. I am ashamed to see my countrymen besotted with this foolish humor of quarreling with forms contrary to their own; they seem to be out of their element when out of their own village: wherever they go, they keep to their own fashion, and abominate those of strangers. Do they meet with a compatriot in Hungary? Oh the happy chance! They are thencefoward inseparable; they cling together, and their whole discourse is to condemn the barbarous manners they see about them. And why barbarous, but because they are not French? And those have made the best use of their travels, who have observed most to speak against. Most of them go, for no other end but to come back again; they proceed in their travel with vast gravity and circumspection, with a silent and incommuni-

* Rousseau has translated this passage in his Emile, book v.
cable prudence, preserving themselves from the contagion of an unknown air. What I am saying of them puts me in mind of something like it I have at times observed in some of our young courtiers; they will not mix with any but men of their own sort, and look upon us as men of another world, with disdain or pity. Put them upon any discourse but the intrigues of the court, and they are utterly at a loss; as very owls and novices to us as we are to them. "Tis truly said, that a well-bred man is a compound man. I, on the contrary, travel very much sated with our own fashions; I do not look for Gascons in Sicily; I have left enough of them at home: I rather seek for Greeks and Persians; they are the men I endeavor to be acquainted with, and the men I study; 'tis there that I bestow and employ myself. And which is more, I fancy that I have met with but few customs that are not as good as our own; I have not, I confess, traveled very far; scarce out of the sight of the vanes of my own house.

As to the rest, most of the accidental company a man falls into upon the road, beget him more trouble than pleasure; I waive them as much as I civilly can, especially now that age seems in some sort to privilege and sequester me from the common forms. You suffer for others, or others suffer for you; both of them inconveniences of importance enough, but the latter appears to me the greater. "Tis a rare fortune, but of inestimable solace, to have a worthy man, one of a sound judgment, and of manners conformable to your own, who takes a delight to bear you company. I have been at an infinite loss for such upon my travels. But such a companion should be chosen and acquired from your first setting out. There can be no pleasure to me without communication: there is not so much as a sprightly thought comes into my mind, that it does not grieve me to have produced alone, and that I have no one to communicate it to. "Si cum hac exceptione detur sapientia, ut illum inclusam teneam, nec enuntiem, rejiciam." * This other has strained it one note higher: "Si contigerit ea vita sapienti ut omnium rerum affluentibus copis, quamvis omnia, quae cognitione digna sunt, summo otio secum

* "If wisdom were conferred with this condition, that I must keep it to myself, and not communicate it to others, I would none of it."—Seneca, Ep. 6.
ipse consideret et contempletur, tamen, si solitudo tanta sit, ut hominem videre non possit, excedat e vita.” * Architas pleases me when he says, “that it would be unpleasant even in heaven itself, to wander in those great and divine celestial bodies without a companion.” † But yet ’tis much better to be alone, than in foolish and troublesome company. Aristippus loved to live as a stranger in all places:

“Me si fata meis paterentur ducere vitam
Auspicis,” ‡

I should choose to pass the greatest part of my life on horseback.

“Visere gestiens,
Qua parte debaccentur ignes,
Qua nebulae, pluviique rores.” §

“Have you not more easy diversions at home? What do you there want? Is not your house situated in a sweet and healthful air, sufficiently furnished, and more than sufficiently large? Has not the royal majesty been more than once there entertained with all its train? Are there not more below your family in good ease than there are above it in eminence? Is there any local, extraordinary, indigestible thought that afflicts you?”

“Quae te nunc coquat, et vexet sub pectore fixa.” ¶

“Where do you think to live without disturbance?”
“Nunquam simpliciter Fortuna indulget.” † You see,

* “If such a condition of life should happen to a wise man, that in the greatest plenty of all conveniences he might, at the most undisturbed leisure, consider and contemplate all things worth the knowing, yet if his solitude be such that he must not see a man, he had much better die.”—CICERO, De Offic., i. 43.

† Cicero, De Amicit., c. 23.

‡ “If the fates would let me live in my own way.”—ÆNEID, iv. 340.

§ “Visit the regions where the sun burns, where are the thick rain-clouds and the frosts.”—HORACE, Od. iii. 3, 54.

¶ “That in your breast troubles and wears you.”—CICERO, De Senect., c. 1. Ex Ennio.

†† “Fortune’s favors are never unmixed.”—QUINTUS CURTIUS, iv. 14.
then, it is only you that trouble yourself; you will every-
where follow yourself, and everywhere complain; for there
is no satisfaction here below, but either for brutish or for
divine souls. He who, on so just an occasion, has no con-
tentment, where will he think to find it? How many thou-
ands of men terminate their wishes in such a condition as
yours? Do but reform yourself; for that is wholly in your
own power, whereas, you have no other right but patience
toward fortune: "Nulla placiili quies est nisi quam ratio
composuit." *

I see the reason of this advice, and see it perfectly well;
but he might sooner have done, and more pertinently, in
bidding me in one word, be wise; that resolution is beyond
wisdom; 'tis her precise work and product. Thus the
physician keeps preaching to a poor languishing patient to
"be cheerful;" but he would advise him a little more dis-
crely in bidding him "be well." For my part, I am but
a man of the common sort. 'Tis a wholesome precept,
certain, and easy to be understood, "Be content with what
you have," that is to say, with reason; and yet to follow
this advice is no more in the power of the wise men of the
world than in me. 'Tis a common saying, but of a terrible
extent: what does it not comprehend? All things fall
under discretion and qualification. I know very well that,
to take it by the letter, this pleasure of traveling is a tes-
timony of uneasiness and irresolution, and, in sooth, these
two are our governing and predominating qualities. Yes,
I confess, I see nothing, not so much as in a dream, in a
wish, whereon I could set up my rest; variety only, and
the possession of diversity, can satisfy me; that is, if any-
thing can. In traveling, it pleases me that I may stay
where I like, without inconvenience, and that I have a
place wherein commodiously to divert myself. I love a
private life, because 'tis my own choice that I love it, not
by any dissenting from or dislike of public life, which, per-
adventure, is as much according to my complexion. I serve
my prince more cheerfully, because it is by the free election
of my own judgment and reason, without any particular
obligation; and that I am not reduced and constrained so
to do for being rejected or disliked by the other party; and

* "There is no tranquillity but that which reason confers."—
Seneca, Ep. 56.
so of all the rest; I hate the morsels that necessity carves me; any commodity upon which I had only to depend would have me by the throat:

"Alter remus aquas, alter mihi radat arenas;"*

one cord will never hold me fast enough. You will say there is vanity in this way of living. But where is there not? All these fine precepts are vanity, and all wisdom is vanity "Dominus novit cognitiones sapientum, quoniam vanæ sunt." † These exquisite subtleties are only fit for sermons; they are discourses that will send us all saddled into the other world. Life is a material and corporal motion, an action imperfect and irregular of its own proper essence; I make it my business to serve it according to itself.

"Quisque suos patimur manes."‡

"Sic est faciendum, ut contra naturam universam nihil contendamus; ea tamen conservata, propriam sequamur." § To what end are these elevated points of philosophy, upon which no human being can rely? and those rules that exceed both our use and force?

I see often that we have theories of life set before us which neither the proposer, nor those who hear him, have any hope nor, which is more, any inclination to follow. Of the same sheet of paper whereon the judge has but just written a sentence against an adulterer, he steals a piece whereon to write a love-letter to his companion’s wife. She whom you have but just now illicitly embraced will presently, even in your own hearing, more loudly inveigh against the same fault in her companion than a Portia would do; || and men there are who will condemn others to

* "Let me have one oar in the water, and with the other rake the shore."—Propertius. iii. 3, 23.

† "The Lord knoweth the thoughts of the wise, that they are vain."—Ps. xcviii. 11; 1 Cor. iii. 20.

‡ "We each of us suffer our own particular demon."—Æneid, vi. 743.

§ "We must so order it as by no means to contend against universal nature; but yet, that rule being observed, to follow our own."—Cicero, De Offic., i. 31.

|| The chaste daughter of Cato of Utica.
death for crimes that they themselves do not repute so much as faults. I have, in my youth, seen a man of good rank* with one hand present to the people verses that excelled both in wit and debauchery, and with the other, at the same time, the most ripe and pugnacious theological reformation that the world has been treated withal these many years. And so men proceed; we let the laws and precepts follow their way; ourselves keep another course, not only from debauchery of manners, but ofttimes by judgment and contrary opinion. Do you hear a philosophical lecture; the invention, eloquence, pertinency immediately strike upon your mind, and move you; there is nothing that touches or stings your conscience; 'tis not to this they address themselves. Is not this true? It made Aristo say, that neither a bath nor a lecture did anyt, unless it scoured and made men clean? † One may stop at the outward skin; but it is after the marrow is picked out: as, after we have quaffed off the wine out of a fine cup, we examine the design and workmanship. In all the courts of ancient philosophy, this is to be found, that the same teacher publishes rules of temperance, and at the same time lessons in love and wantonness: Xenophon, in the very bosom of Clinias, wrote against the Aristippic virtue. 'Tis not there is any miraculous conversion in it that makes them thus wavering; 'tis that Solon represents himself, sometimes in his own person, and sometimes in that of a legislator; one while he speaks for the crowd, and another for himself; taking the free and natural rules for his own share, feeling assured of a firm and entire health:

"Curentur dubii medicis majoribus ëgri." ‡

Antisthenes§ allows a sage to love, and to do whatever he thinks convenient, without regard to the laws: forasmuch as he is better advised than they, and has a greater knowledge of virtue. His disciple Diogenes said,|| that "men to

* No doubt Theodore Beza.
† Plutarch on Hearing, c. 3.
‡ "Desperate maladies require the best doctors."—Juvenal, xiii. 124.
§ Diogenes Laertius, vi. 11.
|| Idem, ibid., 38.
perturbations were to oppose reason; to fortune, courage; to the laws, nature." For tender stomachs, constrained and artificial recipes must be prescribed: good and strong stomachs serve themselves simply with the prescriptions of their own natural appetite; after this manner do our physicians proceed, who eat melons and drink iced wines, while they confine their patients to syrups and sops. "I know not," said the courtesan Lais, "what they may talk of books, wisdom, and philosophy; but these men knock as often at my door as any others." At the same rate that our license carries us beyond what is lawful and allowed, men have, often beyond universal reason, stretched the precepts and rules of our life:

"Nemo satis credit tantum delinquere, quantum Permittas."*

It were to be wished that there was more proportion between the command and the obedience; and the mark seems to be unjust to which one cannot attain. There is no so good man, who so squares all his thoughts and actions to the laws, that he is not faulty enough to deserve hanging ten times in his life; and he may well be such a one, as it were great injustice and great harm to punish and ruin:

"Ole, quid ad te
De cute quid faciat ille, vel illa sua?" †

and such a one there may be, who has no way offended the laws, who nevertheless, would not deserve the character of a virtuous man, and whom philosophy would justly condemn to be whipped; so unequal and perplexed is this relation. We are so far from being good men, according to the laws of God, that we cannot be so according to our own: human wisdom never yet arrived at the duties it had itself prescribed; and could it arrive there, it would still prescribe to itself others beyond, to which it would ever aspire and pretend; so great an enemy to consistency is our human condition. Man enjoins himself to be necessarily in fault: he is not very discreet to cut out his own

* "No one thinks he has done ill to the full extent of what he may."—Juvenal, xiv. 233.
† "Olus, what is it to thee what he or she does with their skin?"—Martial, vii. 9, 1.
duty, by the measure of another being than his own. To whom does he prescribe that which he does not expect any one should perform? Is he unjust in not doing what it is impossible for him to do? The laws which condemn us not to be able, condemn us for not being able.

At the worst, this disform liberty of presenting ourselves two several ways, the actions after one manner, and the reasoning after another, may be allowed to those who only speak of things; but it cannot be allowed to those who speak of themselves, as I do; I must march my pen as I do my feet. The common life ought to have relation to the other lives; the virtue of Cato was vigorous beyond the reason of the age he lived in; and for a man who made it his business to govern others, a man dedicated to the public service, it might be called a justice, if not unjust, at least vain, and out of season. Even my own manners, which differ not above an inch from those current among us, render me, nevertheless, a little rough and unsociable at my age. I know not whether it be without reason that I am disgusted with the world I frequent; but I know very well that it would be without reason, should I complain of its being disgusted with me, seeing I am so with it. The virtue that is assigned to the affairs of the world, is a virtue of many wavings, corners, and elbows, to join and adapt itself to human frailty, mixed and artificial, not straight, clear, constant, nor purely innocent. Our annals to this very day reproach one of our kings for suffering himself too simply to be carried away by the conscientious persuasions of his confessor; affairs of state have bolder precepts:

"Exeat aula
Qui vult esse pius."*

I formerly tried to employ in the service of public affairs, opinions and rules of living, as rough, new, unpolished or unpolluted, as they were either born with me, or brought away from my education, and wherewith I serve my own turn, if not so commodiously, at least securely, in my own particular concerns; a scholastic and novice virtue; but I have found them unapt and dangerous. He who goes into a crowd, must now go one way, and then another, keep his

* "Let him who will be pious retire from the court."—Lucan, viii. 493.
elbows close, retire, or advance, and quit the straight way, according to what he encounters; and must live not so much according to his own method, as to that of others; not according to what he proposes to himself, but according to what is proposed to him, according to the time, according to the men, according to the occasions. Plato says,* that whoever escapes from the world's handling with clean breeches, escapes by miracle: and says withal, that when he appoints his philosopher the head of a government, he does not mean a corrupt one like that of Athens, and much less such a one as this of ours, wherein wisdom itself would be to seek. A good herb, transplanted into a soil contrary to its own nature, much sooner conforms itself to the soil, than it reforms the soil to it. I find, that if I had wholly to apply myself to such employments, it would require a great deal of change and new modeling in me, before I could be any way fit for it. And though I could so far prevail upon myself (and why might I not with time and diligence work such a feat), I would not do it. The little trial I have had of public employment has been so much disgust to me; I feel at times temptations toward ambition, rising in my soul; but I obstinately oppose them:

"At tu, Catulle, obstinatus obdura."†

I am seldom called to it and as seldom offer myself uncalled; liberty and laziness, the qualities most predominant in me, are qualities diametrically contrary to that trade. We cannot well distinguish the faculties of men; they have divisions and limits hard and delicate to choose; to conclude from the discreet conduct of a private life, a capacity for the management of public affairs, is to conclude ill; a man may govern himself well, who cannot govern others so; and compose Essays, who could not work effects: men there may be who can order a siege well, who would ill marshal a battle; who can speak well in private, who would ill harangue a people or a prince; nay, 'tis peradventure rather a testimony in him who can do the one, that he cannot do the other, than otherwise. I find that elevated souls are not

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* Republic, vi.
† "But thou, Catullus, be thou firm to the last."—Catullus, viii. 19.
much more proper for mean things, than mean souls are for high ones. Could it be imagined that Socrates should have administered occasion of laughter, at the expense of his own reputation, to the Athenians, for having never been able to sum up the votes of his tribe to deliver it to the council? Truly, the veneration I have for the perfections of this great man deserves that his fortune should furnish, for the excuse of my principal imperfections, so magnificent an example. Our sufficiency is cut out into small parcels; mine has no latitude, and is also very contemptible in number. Saturninus,* to those who had conferred upon him the command in chief, "Companions," said he, "you have lost a good captain, to make of him a bad general."

Whoever boasts, in so sick a time as this, to employ a true and sincere virtue in the world's service, either knows not what it is, opinions growing corrupt with manners (and in truth, to hear them describe it, to hear the most of them glorify themselves in their deportments, and lay down their rules; instead of painting virtue, they paint pure vice and injustice, and so represent it false in the education of princes); or if he does know it, boasts unjustly and let him say what he will, does a thousand things of which his own conscience must necessarily accuse him. I should willingly take Seneca's word of the experience he made upon the like occasion, provided he would deal sincerely with me. The most honorable mark of goodness in such a necessity, is freely to confess both one's own faults and those of others; with the power of its virtue to stay one's inclination toward evil; unwillingly to follow this propension; to hope better, to desire better. I perceive that in these divisions wherein we are involved in France, every one labors to defend his cause; but, even the very best of them with dissimulation and disguise: he, who would write roundly of the true state of the quarrel, would write rashly and wrongly. The most just party is at best but a member of a decayed and worm-eaten body; but of such a body, the member that is least affected, calls itself sound, and with good reason, forasmuch as our qualities have no title but in comparison; civil innocence is measured according to times and places. Imagine this in Xenophon, related as a fine commendation

*One of the thirty tyrants in the time of the Emperor Gallienus.
—Trebellius Pollio, Trig. Tyr., c. 23.
of Agesilaus: that, being entreated by a neighboring prince with whom he had formerly had war, to permit him to pass through his country, he granted his request, giving him free passage through Peloponnesus; and not only did not imprison or poison him, being at his mercy, but courteously received him according to the obligation of his promise, without doing him the least injury or offense. To such ideas as theirs this were an act of no special note; elsewhere, and in another age, the frankness and magnanimity of such an action would be thought wonderful; our crack- rope capets* would have laughed at it, so little does the Spartan innocence resemble that of France. We are not without virtuous men, but 'tis according to our notions of virtue. Whoever has his manners established in regularity above the standard of the age he lives in, let him either wrest or blunt his rules, or, which I would rather advise him to, let him retire, and not meddle with us at all, what will he get by it?

"Egregium sanctumque virum si cerno, binembri
Hoc monstum puer, et miranti jam sub aratro
Piscibus inventis, et foetae comparo mule."†

One may regret better times, but cannot fly from the present; we may wish for other magistrates, but we must, notwithstanding, obey those we have; and, peradventure, 'tis more laudable to obey the bad than the good. So long as the image of the ancient and received laws of this monarchy shall shine in any corner of the kingdom, there will I be. If they unfortunately happen to thwart and contradict one another, so as to produce two parts, of doubtful and difficult choice, I will willingly choose to withdraw and escape the tempest; in the meantime nature or the hazards of war may lend me a helping hand. Between Caesar and Pompey, I should frankly have declared myself; but, as among the three robbers who came after,‡ a man must have been necessitated either to hide himself, or have

* Capets, so called from their short capes, were the students of Montaigne College at Paris, and were held in great contempt.

† "If I should happen to see an exemplary and good man, I should be astonished at the prodigy, and liken it to a two-headed boy, or a fish turned up by the plow, or a teeming mule."—Juvenal, xiii. 64.

‡ Octavius, Mark Antony, and Lepidus.
gone along with the current of the time; which I think one may fairly do when reason no longer guides.

"Quo diversus abis?" *

This medley is a little from my subject; I go out of my way; but 'tis rather by license than oversight; my fancies follow one another, but sometimes at a great distance, and look toward one another, but 'tis with an oblique glance. I have read a dialogue of Plato,† of the like motley and fantastic composition, the beginning about love, and all the rest to the end about rhetoric; they stick not at these variations, and have a marvelous grace in letting themselves be carried away at the pleasure of the wind, or at least to seem as if they were. The titles of my chapters do not always comprehend the whole matter; they often denote it by some mark only, as these others, Andria, the Eunuchus;‡ or these, Sylla, Cicero, Torquatus. I love a poetic progress, by leaps and skips; 'tis an art, as Plato says, light, nimble, demoniac.§ There are pieces in Plutarch where he forgets his theme; where the proposition of his argument is only found by incidence, stuffed and half stifled in foreign matter. Do but observe his footings in the Daemon of Socrates. Lord! how beautiful are these frolicsome sallies, those variations and digressions, and then, most of all, when they seem most fortuitous, and introduced for want of heed. 'Tis the indiligent reader who loses my subject, and not I; there will always be found some words or other in a corner, that is to the purpose, though it lie very close. I ramble indiscrimately and tumultuously; my style and my wit wander at the same rate. He must fool it a little who would not be deemed wholly a fool, say both the precepts, and, still more, the examples of our masters. A thousand poets flag and languish after a prosaic manner; but the best old prose (and I strew it here up and down indifferently for verse) shines throughout with the luster, vigor and boldness of poetry, and not without some air of its fury. And certainly prose ought to have the pre-eminence in speaking. The

* "Whither dost thou run wandering?" — Æneid, v. 166.
† The Phædrus.
‡ Of Terence.
§ i. e., Supernatural.
poet, says Plato,* seated upon the muses' tripod, pours out
with fury whatever comes into his mouth, like the pipe of a
fountain, without considering and weighing it; and things
escape him of various colors, of contrary substance, and
with an irregular torrent. Plato himself is throughout
poetical; and the old theology, as the learned tell us, is
all poetry; and the first philosophy is the original lan-
guage of the gods. I would have my matter distinguish
itself; it sufficiently shows where it changes, where it con-
cludes, where it begins, and where it rejoins, without inter-
lacing it with words of connection introduced for the relief
of weak or negligent ears, and without explaining myself.
Who is he that had not rather not be read at all, than after
a drowsy or cursory manner? " _Nihil est tam utile, quod
in transitu prosit._"† If to take a book in hand were to
take it in head;‡ to look upon it were to consider it; and
to run it slightly over were to make it a man's own, I were
then to blame to make myself out so ignorant as I say I
am. Seeing I cannot fix the attention of my reader by the
weight of what I write, _manco malo_, I am much mistaken
if I should chance to do it by my intricacies. "Nay, but he
will afterward repent that he ever perplexed himself about
it." 'Tis very true, but he will yet be there perplexed.
And, besides, there are some humors in which intelligence
produces disdain; who will think better of me for not
understanding what I say, and will conclude the depth of
my sense by its obscurity; which, to speak in good sooth,
I mortally hate; and would avoid it if I could. Aristotle
boasts somewhere in his writings.§ that he affected it: a
vicious affectation. The frequent breaks into chapters that
I made my method in the beginning of my book, having
since seemed to me to dissolve the attention before it was
raised, as making it disdain to settle itself to so little, I, upon
that account, have made them longer, such as require pro-
position and assigned leisure. In such an employment, to
whom you will not give an hour you give nothing; and you

* Laws, vi. page 719.
† "Nothing can be so profitable, as to be so when negligently
read."—Seneca, Ep. 2.
‡ "Si prendre des livres, estoit les apprendre;" which Cotton ren-
ders: "If to take a book in hand were to read it."
§ Aulus Gellius, xx. 5.
do nothing for him for whom you only do it while you are doing something else. To which may be added that I have, peradventure, some particular obligation to speak only by halves, to speak confusedly and discordantly. I am therefore angry at this trouble-feast reason, and its extravagant projects that worry one's life, and its opinions, so fine and subtle, though they be all true; I think too dear bought and too inconvenient. On the contrary, I make it my business to bring vanity itself in repute, and folly too, if it produce me any pleasure; and let myself follow my own natural inclinations, without carrying too strict a hand upon them.

I have seen elsewhere palaces in ruins, and statues both of gods and men: these are men still. 'Tis all true; and yet, for all that, I cannot so often revisit the tomb of that so great and so puissant city, that I do not admire and reverence it. The care of the dead is recommended to us; now, I have been bred up from my infancy with these dead; I had knowledge of the affairs of Rome, long before I had any of those of my own house; I knew the capitol and its plan, before I knew the Louvre; and the Tiber, before I knew the Seine. The qualities and fortunes of Lucullus, Metellus, and Scipio, have ever run more in my head than those of any of my own country; they are all dead; so is my father as absolutely dead as they, and is removed as far from me and life in eighteen years, as they are in sixteen hundred; whose memory, nevertheless, friendship and society, I do not cease to hug and embrace with a perfect and lively union. Nay, of my own inclination, I pay more service to the dead; they can no longer help themselves, and therefore, methinks, the more require my assistance; 'tis there that gratitude appears in its full luster. Benefits are not so generously placed, where there is retrogradation and reflection. Arcesilaus,† going to visit Ctesibius who was sick, and finding him in a very poor condition, privately conveyed some money under his pillow; and by concealing it from him, acquitted him, moreover, from the acknowledgment due to such a benefit. Such as have merited from me friendship and gratitude, have never lost these by being no more; I have better and more carefully paid them when gone and ignorant of what I did; I speak most af-

* Rome.
† Diogenes Laertius, v. 17.
fectionately of my friends, when they can no longer know it. I have had a hundred quarrels in defending Pompey, and for the cause of Brutus: this acquaintance yet continues between us; we have no other hold even on present things but by fancy. Finding myself of no use to this age I throw myself back upon that other; and am so enamored of it, that the free, just, and flourishing state of that ancient Rome (for I neither love it in its birth nor its old age) interests me to a degree of passion; and therefore I cannot so often revisit the places of their streets and houses and those ruins profound as the Antipodes, that it does not always put me into the dumps. Is it by nature, or through error of fancy, that the sight of places which we know have been frequented and inhabited by persons whose memories are recommended in story, in some sort works more upon us than to hear a recital of their acts or to read their writings? "Tantavis admonitionis inest in locis. . . . . Et id quidem in haec urbe infinitum; quacumque, enim ingredimur, in aliquam historiam vestigia ponimus."* It pleases me to consider their face, port, and vestments; I ruminate those great names between my teeth, and make them ring in my ears: "Ego illos veneror, et tantis nominibus semper assurgo." † Of things that are in some part great and admirable, I admire even the common parts; I could wish to see them talk, walk and sup. It were ingratitude to contemn the relics and images of so many worthy and valiant men as I have seen live and die, and who, by their example, give us so many good instructions, knew we how to follow them.

And, moreover, this very Rome that we now see, deserves to be beloved; so long, and by so many titles, confederate to our crown; the only common and universal city; the sovereign magistrate that commands there, is equally acknowledged elsewhere; 'tis the metropolitan city of all the Christian nations; the Spaniard and Frenchman is there at home; to be a prince of that state, there needs no more but to be of Christendom wheresoever. There is no place upon earth, that heaven has embraced with such an influence and

* "So great a power of admonition is in places; and truly in this city so infinite, that which way soever we go we tread upon some history."—Cicero, De Fin., v. 1, 2.

† "I reverence them, and rise up in honor of so great names."—Seneca, Ep. 64.
constancy of favor; her very ruins are grand and glorious.

"Laudandis pretiosior ruinis;" * she yet in her very tomb retains the marks and images of empire: "Ut palam sit, uno in loco quadentis opus esse naturæ." † Some would blame and be angry at themselves to perceive themselves tickled with so vain a pleasure: our humors are never too vain that are pleasant: let them be what they may, if they constantly content a man of common understanding, I could not have the heart to blame him.

I am very much obliged to fortune, in that, to this very hour, she has offered me no outrage beyond what I was well able to bear. Is it not her custom to let those live in quiet by whom she is not importuned?

"Quanto quisque sibi plura negaverit,  
A diis plura feret: nil cupientium  
Nudus castra peto. . . .  
Multa petentibus  
Desunt multa." ‡

If she continue her favor, she will dismiss me very well satisfied:

"Nihil supra  
Deos lacesso." §

But beware a shock: there are a thousand who perish in the port. I easily comfort myself for what shall here happen when I shall be gone; present things trouble me enough:

"Fortunæ cætera mando." ||

Besides, I have not that strong obligation that they say ties men to the future, by the issue that succeeds to their

* "More precious from her glorious ruins."—SIDONIUS APOLLINARIS, Carm., xxii.; NARBO, v. 62.

† "That it may be manifest that nature is in this one place enamored of her own work."—PLINY, Nat. Hist., iii. 5.

‡ "The more a man denies himself, the more the gods give him. Poor as I am, I seek the company of those who ask nothing; they who desire much, will be deficient in much."—HORACE, Od. iii. 16, 21, 42.

§ "I ask the gods for no more."—HORACE, Od., ii. 18, 11.

|| "I leave the rest to fortune."—OVID, Metam., ii. 140.
name and honor; and peradventure, ought less to covet them, if they are to be so much desired. I am but too much tied to the world, and to this life, of myself: I am content to be in fortune's power by circumstances properly necessary to my being, without otherwise enlarging her jurisdiction over me; and have never thought, that to be without children was a defect that ought to render life less complete or less contented: a sterile vocation has its conveniences too. Children are of the number of things that are not so much to be desired, especially now, that it would be so hard to make them good: "Bona jam nec nasci licet, ita corrupta sunt semina;" * and yet they are justly to be lamented by such as lose them when they have them.

He who left me my house in charge, foretold that I was like to ruin it, considering my humor so little inclined to look after household affairs. But he was mistaken; for I am in the same condition now as when I first entered into it, or rather somewhat better; and yet without office, or any place of profit.

As to the rest, if fortune has never done me any violent or extraordinary injury, neither has she done me any particular favor; whatever we derive from her bounty, was there above a hundred years before my time: I have, as to my own particular, no essential and solid good that I stand indebted for to her liberality. She has, indeed, done me some airy favors, honorary and titular favors, without substance, and those, in truth, she has not granted, but offered me, who God knows, am all material, and who take nothing but what is real and indeed massive too, for current pay: and who, if I dare confess so much, should not think avarice much less excusable than ambition; nor pain less to be avoided than shame; nor health less to be coveted than learning, or riches than nobility.

Among those empty favors of hers, there is none that so much pleases vain humor natural to my country, as an authentic bull of a Roman burgess-ship, that was granted me when I was last there, glorious in seals and gilded letters; and granted with all gracious liberality. And because 'tis couched in a mixed style, more or less favorable, and that I could have been glad to have seen a copy of it before it had passed the seal, I will, to satisfy such as

* "Nothing good can be borne now, the seed is so corrupt."—TERTULLIAN, De Pudicitia.
are sick of the same curiosity I am, transcribe it here in its exact form.


"Quum, veteri more et instituto, cupide illisem per studioseque suscepti sint, qui virtute ac nobilitate praestantes, magno Reipublicae nostrae usui atque ornamento fuissent, vel esse aliquando possent: Nos, majorum nostrorum exemplo atque auctoritate permuti, praecipam hanc consuetudinem nobis imitandam ac servandam fore censemus. Quamobrem quum Illustrissimus Michael Montanus, eques Sancti Michaelis, et a cubiculo regis Christianissimi, Romani nominis studiosissimus, et familae laude atque splendore, et propriis virtutum meritis dignissimus sit, qui summo, Senatus Populique Romani judicio ac studio in Romanam civitatem adsciscatur; placere Senatui P. Q. R. Illustrissimum Michaelem Montanum, rebus omnibus orantissimum, atque huic inelyto Populo carissimum, ipsum posterosque in Romanam civitatem adscribi, ornarique omnibus et praeitiis et honoribus, quibus illi fruuntur, qui cives patri- cique Romani nati, aut jure optimo facti sunt. In quo censere Senatum P. Q. R. se non tam illi jus civitatis largiri, quam debitum tribuere, neque magis beneficiium dare, quam ab ipso accipere, qui, hoc civitatis munere accipiendo, singulari civitatem ipsum ornamento atque honore affecerit. Quam quidem S. C. auctoritatem iidem Conservatores per senatus P. Q. R. scribas in acta referri, atque in Capitolii curia servari, privilegiumque hujusmodi fieri, solitoque urbis sigillo communiri curarunt. Anno ab urbe condita CXC.CCC.XXXI.; post Christum natum M.D.LXXXI. 3 idus Martii.

Horatius Fuscus,

Vincent. Martholus,
Sacri S. P. Q. R. scriba."*

* "On the report made to the Senate by Orazio Massimi, Marzo Cecio, Alessandro Muti, conservators of the city of Rome, concerning the right of Roman citizenship to be granted
Being, before, burgess of no city at all, I am glad to be created one of the most noble that ever was or ever shall be. If other men would consider themselves at the rate I do, they would, as I do, discover themselves to be full of inanity and foppery; to rid myself of it, I cannot, without making myself away. We are all steeped in it, as well one as another; but they who are not aware on’t have somewhat the better bargain; and yet, I know not, whether they have or no.

This opinion and common usage to observe others more than ourselves, has very much relieved us that way; tis a very displeasing object: we can there see nothing but misery and vanity: nature, that we may not be dejected with the sight of our own deformities, has wisely thrust to the most illustrious Michael de Montaigne, knight of the Order of St. Michael, and gentleman of the chamber in ordinary to the most Christian King, the Senate and people of Rome have decreed:

"Considering that by ancient usage, those have ever been adopted among us with ardor and eagerness, who, distinguished in virtue and nobility, have served and honored our republic, or might do so in the future, we, full of respect for the example and authority of our ancestors, consider that we should imitate and follow this laudable custom. Wherefore, the most illustrious Michael de Montaigne, knight of the Order of St. Michael, and gentleman of the chamber in ordinary to the most Christian King, most zealous for the Roman name, being by the rank and distinction of his family, and by his personal qualities, highly worthy to be admitted to the rights of Roman citizenship by the supreme judgment and suffrage of the senate and people of Rome: it has pleased the senate and people of Rome, that the most illustrious Michael de Montaigne, adorned with every species of merit, and very dear to this noble people, should be inscribed as a Roman citizen, both in regard to himself and to his posterity, and admitted to enjoy all the honors and advantages reserved for those who were born citizens and patricians of Rome, or who have become such by right of their good title thereunto. And herein the senate and people of Rome consider that they are less conferring a gift, than paying a debt, and that it is less a service they render than a service they receive from him, who, in accepting this citizenship, honors and gives luster to the city itself. The Conservators have caused this Senatus Consultus to be transcribed by the Secretaries of the Roman senate and people, to be deposited among the archives of the Capitol, and have drawn up this Act, sealed with the common seal of the city. A.U.C. 2331, A.C. 1581, 3d March.

Orazio Fosco,
Secretary of the Sacred Senate and of the Roman People.

Vincente Martoli,
Secretary of the Sacred Senate and of the Roman People.
the action of seeing outward. We go forward with the current: but to turn back toward ourselves is a painful motion; so is the sea moved and troubled when the waves rush against one another. Observe, says every one, the motions of the heavens, of public affairs; observe the quarrel of such a person, take notice of such a one's pulse, of such another's last will and testament; in sum, be always looking high or low, on one side, before, or behind you. It was a paradoxical command anciently given us by the god of Delphos: "Look into yourself; discover yourself; keep close to yourself; call back your mind and will, that elsewhere consume themselves into yourself; you run out, you spill yourself; carry a more steady hand: men betray you, men spill you, men steal you from yourself. Dost thou not see that this world we live in keeps all its sight confined within, and its eyes open to contemplate itself? 'Tis always vanity for thee, both within and without; but 'tis less vanity when less extended. Excepting thee, oh man, said that god, everything studies itself first, and has bounds to its labors and desires, according to its need. There is nothing so empty and necessitous as thou, who embracest the universe; thou art the explorator without knowledge; the magistrate without jurisdiction: and, after all, the fool of the farce."

CHAPTER XLI.

OF MANAGING THE WILL.

Few things, in comparison of what commonly affect other men, move, or to say better, possess me: for 'tis but reason they should concern a man, provided they do not possess him. I am very solicitous, both by study and argument, to enlarge this privilege of insensibility, which is in me naturally raised to a pretty degree, so that consequently I espouse and am very much moved with very few things. I have a clear sight enough, but I fix it upon very few objects; I have a sense delicate and tender enough; but an apprehension and application hard and negligent. I am very unwilling to engage myself; as much as in me lies, I employ myself wholly on myself, and even in that subject should rather choose to curb and restrain my affec-
tion from plunging itself over head and ears into it, it being a subject that I possess at the mercy of others, and over which fortune has more right than I; so that even as to health, which I so much value, 'tis all the more necessary for me not so passionately to covet and heed it, than to find diseases so insupportable. A man ought to moderate himself between the hatred of pain and the love of pleasure; and Plato* lets down a middle path of life between the two. But against such affections as wholly carry me away from myself, and fix me elsewhere, against those, I say, I oppose myself with my utmost power. 'Tis my opinion that a man should lend himself to others, and only give himself to himself. Were my will easy to lend itself out, and to be swayed, I should not stick there; I am too tender, both by nature and use:

"Fugax rerum, securaque in otia natus." †

Hot and obstinate disputes wherein my adversary would at last have the better, the issue that would render my heat and obstinacy disgraceful, would peradventure vex me to the last degree. Should I set myself to it at the rate that others do, my soul would never have the force to bear the emotion and alarms of those who grasp at so much; it would immediately be disordered by this inward agitation. If, sometimes, I have been put upon the management of other men's affairs, I have promised to take them in hand, but not into my lungs and liver; to take them upon me, not to incorporate them: to take pains, yes: to be impasioned about it, by no means; I have a care of them, but I will not sit upon them. I have enough to do to order and govern the domestic throng of those that I have in my own veins and bowels, without introducing a crowd of other men's affairs; and am sufficiently concerned about my own proper and natural business, without meddling with the concerns of others. Such as know how much they owe to themselves, and how many offices they are bound to of their own, find that nature has cut them out work enough of their own to keep them from being idle. "Thou hast business enough at home, look to that."

Men let themselves out to hire; their faculties are not

† "Born and bred up in negligence and ease."—Ovid, De Trist., iii. 2, 9.
for themselves, but for those to whom they have enslaved themselves; 'tis their tenants occupy them, not themselves. This common humor pleases not me. We must be thrifty of the liberty of our souls, and never let it out but upon just occasions, which are very few, if we judge aright. Do but observe such as have accustomed themselves to be at every one's call; they do it indifferently upon all, as well little as great occasions; in that which nothing concerns them, as much as in what imports them most. They thrust themselves in indifferently wherever there is work to do and obligation; and are without life when not in tumultuous bustle: "In negotiis sunt, negotii causa."* It is not so much that they will go, as it is that they cannot stand still; like a rolling stone that cannot stop till it can go no further. Occupation, with a certain sort of men, is a mark of understanding and dignity; their souls seek repose in agitation, as children do by being rocked in a cradle; they may pronounce themselves as serviceable to their friends, as they are troublesome to themselves. No one distributes his money to others, but every one distributes his time and his life; there is nothing of which we are so prodigal as of these two things, of which to be thrifty would be both commendable and useful. I am of a quite contrary humor; I look to myself, and commonly covet with no great ardor what I do desire; and desire little; and I employ and busy myself at the same rate, rarely and temperately. Whatever they take in hand, they do it with their utmost will and vehemence. There are so many dangerous steps, that, for the more safety, we must a little lightly and superficially glide over the world, and not rush through it. Pleasure itself is painful in profundity:

"Incedis per ignes,
Suppositoris cinerdi doloso."†

The parliament of Bordeaux chose me mayor of their city, at a time when I was at a distance from France,‡ and

* "They only seek business for business' sake."—Seneca, Ep. 22.
† "You tread on fire, hidden under deceitful ashes."—Horace, Od. ii 1, 7.
‡ At the baths Della Villa, near Lucca, September, 1581; see Montaigne's Travels, ii. 448.
still more remote from any such thought. I entreated to be excused, but I was told by my friends that I had committed an error in so doing, and the greater because the king had, moreover, interposed his command in that affair. 'Tis an office that ought to be looked upon so much more honorable, as it has no other salary nor advantage than the bare honor of its execution. It continues two years, but may be extended by a second election, which very rarely happens; it was to me, and had never been so but twice before; some years ago to Monsieur de Lanssac, and lately to Monsieur de Biron, marshal of France, in whose place I succeeded; and I left mine to Monsieur de Matignon, marshal of France also; proud of so noble a fraternity—

"Uterque bonus pacis bellique minister." *

Fortune would have a hand in my promotion, by this particular circumstance which she put in of her own, not altogether vain; for Alexander disdained the ambassadors of Corinth, who came to offer him a burgess-ship of their city; but when they proceeded to lay before him that Bacchus and Hercules were also in the register, he graciously accepted the offer.

At my arrival, I faithfully and conscientiously represented myself to them for such as I find myself to be—a man without memory, without vigilance, without experience, and without vigor; but withal, without hatred, without ambition, without avarice, and without violence; that they might be informed of my qualities, and know what they were to expect from my service. And the knowledge they had had of my father, and the honor they had for his memory, having been the only motive to confer this favor upon me, I plainly told them that I should be very sorry anything should make so great an impression upon me, as their affairs and the concerns of their city had made upon him, while he held the government to which they had preferred me. I remembered, when a boy, to have seen him in his old age cruelly tormented with these public affairs, neglecting the soft repose of his own house, to which the declension of his age had reduced him for several years before, the management of his own affairs, and his

* "Both able ministers in peace, and good in war."—Aeneid, xi. 658.
health; and certainly despising his own life, which was in
great danger of being lost, by being engaged in long and
painful journeys on their behalf. Such was he; and this
humor of his proceeded from a marvelous good nature;
never was there a more charitable and popular soul. Yet
this proceeding which I commend in others, I do not love
to follow myself, and am not without excuse.

He had learned that a man must forget himself for his
neighbor, and that the particular was of no manner of
consideration in comparison with the general. Most of the
rules and precepts of the world run this way; to drive us
out of ourselves into the street for the benefit of public
society: they thought to do a great feat to divert and
remove us from ourselves, assuming we were but too much
fixed there, and by a too natural inclination; and have
said all they could to that purpose: for 'tis no new thing
for the sages to preach things as they serve, not as they are.
Truth has its obstructions, inconveniences, and incompati-
bilities with us; we must often deceive, that we may not
deceive ourselves; and shut our eyes and our understand-
ings, to redress and amend them: "Imperiti enim judicant,
et qui frequenter in hoc ipsum fallendi sunt, ne errent." *

When they order us to love three, four, or fifty degrees of
things above ourselves, they do like archers, who, to hit
the white, take their aim a great deal higher than the
butt; to make a crooked stick straight, we bend it the
contrary way.

I believe that in the Temple of Pallas, as we see in all
other religions, there were apparent mysteries to be exposed
to the people; and others, more secret and high, that were
only to be shown to such as were professed; 'tis likely that
in these the true point of friendship that every one owes to
himself is to be found; not a false friendship, that makes
us embrace glory, knowledge, riches, and the like, with a
principal and immoderate affection, as members of our
being; nor an indiscreet and effeminate friendship, where-
in it happens, as with ivy, that it decays and ruins the
walls it embraces; but a sound and regular friendship,
equally useful and pleasant. He who knows the duties of
this friendship and practices them, is truly of the cabinet

* "For the ignorant judge, and therefore are oft to be deceived
lest they should err."—QUINTIL., Inst. Orat., xi. 17.
council of the Muses, and has attained to the height of human wisdom and of our happiness; such an one, exactly knowing what he owes to himself, will on his part find that he ought to apply to himself the use of the world and of other men; and to do this, to contribute to public society the duties and offices appertaining to him. He who does not in some sort live for others, does not live much for himself. "Qui sibi amicus est, scito hunc amicum omnibus esse." The principal charge we have, is, to every one his own conduct; and 'tis for this only that we here are. As he who should forget to live a virtuous and holy life, and should think he acquitted himself of his duty in instructing and training others up to it, would be a fool; even so he who abandons his own particular healthful and pleasant living, to serve others therewith, takes, in my opinion, a wrong and unnatural course.

I would not that men should refuse, in the employments they take upon them, their attention, pains, eloquence, sweat, and blood if need be:

"Non ipse pro caris amicis
Aut patria, timidus perire:" ¶

but 'tis only borrowed, and accidentally; his mind being always in repose and in health; not without action, but without vexation, without passion. To be simply acting costs him so little, that he acts even sleeping; but it must be set on going with discretion; for the body receives the offices imposed upon it, just according to what they are; the mind often extends and makes them heavier at its own expense, giving them what measure it pleases. Men perform like things with several sorts of endeavor, and different contention of will; the one does well enough without the other: for how many people hazard themselves every day in war without any concern which way it goes; and thrust themselves into the dangers of battles, the loss of which will not break their next night's sleep? and such a man may be at home, out of the danger which he dared not have looked upon, who is more passionately concerned for

* "'He who is his own friend is a friend to everybody else.'—Seneca, Ep. 6.
¶ "'Not afraid to die for beloved friends, and for his country.'—Horace, Od. iv. 9, 51.
the issue of this war, and whose soul is more anxious about events, than the soldier who therein stakes his blood and his life. I could have engaged myself in public employments without quitting my own matters a nail’s breadth, and have given myself to others, without abandoning myself. This sharpness and violence of desires more hinder than they advance the execution of what they undertake; fill us with impatience against slow or contrary events, and with heat and suspicion against those with whom we have to do. We never carry on that thing well by which we are prepossessed and led:

"Male cuncta ministrat
Impetus." *

He who therein employs only his judgment and address proceeds more cheerfully: he counterfeits, he gives way, he defers quite at his ease, according to the necessities of occasions; he fails in his attempt without trouble and affliction, ready and entire for a new enterprise; he always marches with the bridle in his hand. In him who is drunk with this violent and tyrannic intention, we discover, of necessity, much imprudence and injustice; the impetuosity of his desire carries him away; these are rash motions, and, if fortune do not very much assist, of very little fruit. Philosophy directs that, in the revenge of injuries received, we should strip ourselves of choler; not that the chastisement should be less, but, on the contrary, that the revenge may be the better and more heavily laid on, which, it conceives, will be by this impetuosity hindered. For anger not only disturbs, but, of itself, also wearies the arms of those who chastise; this fire benumbs and wastes their force; as in precipitation, "festinatio tarda est" †—"haste trips up its own heels," fetters, and stops itself; "Ipse se velocitas implicat." ‡ For example, according to what I commonly see, avarice has no greater impediment than itself; the more bent and vigorous it is, the less it takes together, and commonly sooner grows rich when disguised in a visor of liberality.

* "Passionate heat carries on things ill."—Statius, Thebaid, x. 704.
† Quintus Curtius, ix. 9, 12.
‡ Seneca, Ep. 44.
A very honest gentleman, and a particular friend of mine, had liked to have cracked his brains by a too passionate attention and affection to the affairs of a certain prince, his master; which master* has thus set himself out to me; "that he foresees the weight of accidents as well as another, but that in those for which there is no remedy, he presently resolves upon suffering; in others, having taken all the necessary precautions which by the vivacity of his understanding he can presently do, he quietly awaits what may follow." And, in truth, I have accordingly seen him maintain a great indifference and liberty of actions and serenity of countenance, in very great and difficult affairs: I find him much greater, and of greater capacity in adverse than in prosperous fortune: his defeats are to him more glorious than his victories, and his mourning than his triumph.

Do but consider, that even in vain and frivolous actions, as at chess, tennis, and the like, this eager and ardent engaging with an impetuous desire, immediately throws the mind and members into indiscretion and disorder: a man astounds and binders himself; he who carries himself more moderately both toward gain and loss, has always his wits about him; the less peevish and passionate he is at play, he plays much more advantageously and surely.

As to the rest, we hinder the mind's seizure and hold, in giving it so many things to seize upon: some things we should only offer to it; tie it to others, and with others incorporate it. It can feel and discern all things, but ought to feed upon nothing but itself; and should be instructed in what properly concerns itself, and that is properly of its own having and substance. The laws of nature teach us what justly we need. After the sages have told us that no one is indigent according to nature, and that every one is so according to opinion,† they very subtly distinguish between the desires that proceed from her, and those that proceed from the disorder of our own fancy: those of which we can see the end are hers; those that fly before us, and of which we can see no end, are our own: the poverty of goods is easily cured; the poverty of the soul is irreparable:

* Probably the king of Navarre, afterward Henry IV.

† Seneca, Ep., 16.
ESSAYS OF MONTAIGNE.

"Nam si, quod satis est homini, id satis esse potesset
Hoc sat erat: nunc, quem hoc non est, qui credimus porro
Divitias uellas animum mi explere potesse?" *

Socrates, seeing a great quantity of riches, jewels, and furniture carried in pomp through the city: "How many things are there," said he, "that I do not want." † Metrodorus lived on twelve ounces a day; Epicurus upon less: Metrocles slept in winter abroad among sheep; in summer in the cloisters of churches; "Sufficient ad id natura, quod poscit." ‡ Cleanthes lived by the labor of his own hands, and boasted that Cleanthes, if he would, could yet maintain another Cleanthes.

If that which nature exactly and originally requires of us for the conservation of our being, be too little (as in truth what it is, and how good cheap life may be maintained, cannot be better expressed than by this consideration that it is so little that by its littleness it escapes the gripes and shock of fortune), let us allow ourselves a little more; let us call every one of our habits and conditions, nature; let us rate and treat ourselves by this measure; let us stretch our appurtenances and accounts so far; for so far, I fancy, we have some excuse. Custom is a second nature, and no less powerful. What is wanting to my custom, I reckon is wanting to me; and I should be almost as well content that they took away my life, as cut me short in the way wherein I have so long lived. I am no longer in condition for any great change, nor to put myself into a new and unwonted course, not even to augmentation. 'Tis past the time for me to become other than what I am; and as I should complain of any great good hap that should now befall me, that it came not in time to be enjoyed:

"Quo mihi fortunas, si non conceditur uti?" §

* "For if what is for man enough, could be enough, it were enough; but since it is not so, how can I believe than any wealth can give my mind content." —Lucilius, apud Nonium Marcellinum, v. sec. 98.

† Cicero, Tusc. Quæs., v. 32.


§ "What is the good of fortune to me if I can't use it?" —Horace, Ep. i. 5, 12.
so should I complain of any inward acquisition. It were almost better never, than so late, to become an honest man, and well fit to live, when one has no longer to live. I, who am about to make my exit out of the world, would easily resign to any newcomer; who should desire it, all the prudence I am now acquiring in the world's commerce; after meat, mustard. I have no need of goods, of which I can make no use; of what use is knowledge to him who has lost his head? 'Tis an injury and unkindness in fortune to tender us presents that will only inspire us with a just despite that we had them not in their due season. Guide me no more; I can no longer go. Of so many parts as make up a sufficiency, patience is the most sufficient. Give the capacity of an excellent treble to a chorister who has rotten lungs, and eloquence to a hermit, exiled into the deserts of Arabia. There needs no art to help a fall; the end finds itself of itself at the conclusion of every affair. My world is at an end, my form expired; I am totally of the past, and am bound to authorize it, and to conform my outgoing to it. I will here declare, by way of example, that the pope's late ten days' diminution* has taken me so aback that I cannot well reconcile myself to it; I belong to the years wherein we kept another kind of account. So ancient and so long a custom challenges my adherence to it, so that I am constrained to be somewhat heretical on that point: incapable of any, though corrective, innovation. My imagination, in spite of my teeth, always pushes me ten days forward or backward, and is ever murmuring in my ears: "This rule concerns those who are to begin to be." If health itself, sweet as it is, returns to me by fits, 'tis rather to give me cause of regret than possession of it; I have no place left to keep it in. Time leaves me; without which nothing can be possessed. Oh, what little account should I make of those great elective dignities that I see in such esteem in the world, that are never conferred but upon men who are taking leave of it; wherein they do not so much regard how well the man will discharge his trust, as how short his administration will be: from the very entry they look at the exit. In short, I am about finishing

* Gregory XIII., in 1582, reformed the Calendar, and, in consequence, in France they all at once passed from the 9th to the 20th December.
this man, and not rebuilding another. By long use, this form is in me turned into substance, and fortune into nature.

I say, therefore, that every one of us feeble creatures is excusable in thinking that to be his own which is comprised under this measure; but withal, beyond these limits, 'tis nothing but confusion; 'tis the largest extent we can grant to our own claims. The more we amplify our need and our possession, so much the more do we expose ourselves to the blows and adversities of fortune.* The career of our desires ought to be circumscribed and restrained to a short limit of near and contiguous commodities; and their course ought, moreover, to be performed not in a right line that ends elsewhere, but in a circle, of which the two points, by a short wheel, meet and terminate in ourselves. Actions that are carried on without this reflection—a near and essential reflection, I mean—such as those of ambitious and avaricious men, and so many more as run point-blank, and whose career always carries them before themselves, such actions, I say, are erroneous and sickly.

Most of our business is farce: "Mundus universus exercet histrionam." † We must play our part properly, but withal as the part of a borrowed personage; we must not make real essence of a mask and outward appearance; nor of a strange person, our own; we cannot distinguish the skin from the shirt: 'tis enough to meal the face, without mealimg the breast. I see some who transform and transubstantiate themselves into as many new shapes and new beings as they undertake new employments; and who strut and fume even to the heart and liver, and carry their state along with them even to the close-stool: I cannot make them distinguish the salutations made to themselves from those made to their commission, their train, or their mule: "Tantum se fortuna permittunt, etiam ut naturam dediscant." ‡ They swell and puff up their souls, and their natural way of speaking, according to the height of their

* "L'homme tient par ses vœux à mille choses: plus il augmente ses attachements, plus il multiplie ses peines."—ROUSSEAU, Emile, liv. v.

† Petronius Arbiter, iii. 8

‡ "They so much give themselves up to fortune, as even to forget their nature."—QUINTUS CURTIUS, ii. 2.
magisterial place. The mayor of Bordeaux and Montaigne have ever been two by very manifest separation. Because one is an advocate or a financier, he must not ignore the knavery there is in such callings; an honest man is not accountable for the vice or absurdity of his employment, and ought not on that account refuse to take the calling upon him: 'tis the usage of his country, and then there is money to be got by it; a man must live by the world, and make his best of it, such as it is. But the judgment of an emperor ought to be above his empire, and see and consider it as a foreign accident; and he ought to know how to enjoy himself apart from it, and to communicate himself as James and Peter, to himself, at all events.

I cannot engage myself so deep and so entire; when my will gives me to anything, 'tis not with so violent an obligation that my judgment is infected with it. In the present broils of this kingdom, my own interest has not made me blind to the laudable qualities of our adversaries, nor to those that are reproachable in those of men of our party. Others adore all of their own side; for my part, I do not so much as excuse most things in those of mine: a good work has never the worse grace with me for being made against me. The knot of the controversy excepted, I have always kept myself in equanimity and pure indifference: "Neque extra necessitates velli, præcipuam odium gero;"* for which I am pleased with myself; and the more, because I see others commonly fail in the contrary direction. Such as extend their anger and hatred beyond the dispute in question, as most men do, show that they pring from some other occasion and private cause; like one, who, being cured of an ulcer, has yet a fever remaining, by which it appears that the ulcer had another more concealed beginning. The reason is that they are not concerned in the common cause; because it is wounding to the state and general interest; but are only nettled by reason of their particular concern. This is why they are so especially animated, and to a degree so far beyond justice and public reason: "Non tam omnia universi, quam ea quae ad quemque pertinent, singuli capebant."† I would have the advantage on our side, but if

* "And have no express hatred beyond the necessity of war."

† "Every one was not so much angry against things in general, as against those that particularly concerned himself."—Livy, xxxiv. 36.
it be not, I shall not run mad. I am heartily for the right party; but I do not want to be taken notice of as an especial enemy to others, and beyond the general quarrel. I am a mortal enemy to this vicious form of censure: “He is of the League, because he admires the duke of Guise; he is astonished at the king of Navarre’s energy, and therefore he is a Huguenot; he finds such and such faults in the king’s conduct, he is therefore seditious in his heart;” and I would not grant to the magistrate himself that he did well in condemning a book, because it had placed a heretic* among the best poets of the time. Shall we not dare to say of a thief, that he has a handsome leg? If a woman be a strumpet, must it needs follow that she has a stinking breath? Did they in the wisest ages revoke the proud title of Capitolinum they had before conferred on Marcus Manlius, as conservator of religion and the public liberty, and stifle the memory of his liberality, his feats of arms, and military recompenses granted to his valor, because he afterward aspired to the sovereignty, to the prejudice of the laws of his country? If we take a hatred against an advocate, he will not be allowed, the next day, to be eloquent. I have elsewhere spoken of the zeal that pushed on worthy men to the like faults. For my part, I can say, “Such a one does this thing ill, and another thing virtuously and well.” So in the prognostics, or sinister events of affairs, they would have every one in his party blind or a blockhead, and that our persuasion and judgment should subserve not truth, but to the project of our desires. I should rather incline toward the other extreme; so much I fear being suborned by my desire; to which may be added that I am a little tenderly distrustful of things that I wish.

I have in my time, seen wonders in the indiscreet and prodigious facility of people in suffering their hopes and belief to be led and governed, which way has best pleased and served their leaders, despite a hundred mistakes one upon another, despite mere dreams and phantasms. I no more wonder at those who have been blinded and seduced by the fooleries of Appollonius and Mahomet. Their sense and understanding are absolutely taken away by their passion; their discretion has no more any other choice than

* Theodore de Beza.
that which smiles upon them, and encourages their cause. I had principally observed this in the beginning of our intestine distempers; that other, which has sprung up since, in imitating, has surpassed it; by which I am satisfied that it is a quality inseparable from popular errors; after the first that rolls, opinions drive on one another like waves with the wind: a man is not a member of the body, if it be in his power to forsake it, and if he do not roll the common way. But, doubts, they wrong the just side, when they go about to assist it with fraud; I have ever been against that practice: 'tis only fit to work upon weak heads; for the sound, there are surer and more honest ways to keep up their courage and to excuse adverse accidents.

Heaven never saw a greater animosity than that between Cæsar and Pompey, nor ever shall; and yet I observe, methinks, in those brave souls, a great moderation toward one another; it was a jealousy of honor and command which did not transport them to a furious and indiscreet hatred, and was without malignity and detraction; in their hottest exploits upon one another, I discover some remains of respect and good will; and am therefore of opinion that, had it been possible, each of them would rather have done his business without the ruin of the other than with it. Take notice how much otherwise matters went with Marius and Sylla.

We must not precipitate ourselves so headlong after our affections and interests. As, when I was young, I opposed myself to the progress of love which I perceived to advance too fast upon me, and had a care lest it should at last become so pleasing as to force, captivate, and wholly reduce me to its mercy; so I do the same upon all other occasions where my will is running on with too warm an appetite. I lean opposite to the side it inclines to, as I find it going to plunge and make itself drunk with its own wine; I evade nourishing its pleasure so far, that I cannot recover it without infinite loss. Souls that, through their own stupidity, only discern things by halves, have this happiness that they smart less with hurtful things; 'tis a spiritual leprosy that has some show of health, and such a health as philosophy does not altogether contemn; but yet we have no reason to call it wisdom, as we often do. And after this manner some one anciently mocked Diogenes, who, in the depth of winter and stark naked, went hugging an
image of snow for a trial of his endurance; the other seeing him in this position, "Art thou now very cold?" said he "Not at all," replied Diogenes. "Why then," said the other, "what difficult and exemplary thing dost thou think thou dost in embracing that snow?" * To take a true measure of constancy, one must necessarily know what the suffering is.

But souls that are to meet with adverse events and the injuries of fortune, in their depth and sharpness, that are to weigh and taste them according to their natural weight and bitterness let such show their skill in avoiding the causes and diverting the blow. What did King Cotys do? † He paid liberally for the rich and beautiful vessel that had been presented to him, but, seeing it was exceedingly brittle, he immediately broke it, betimes to prevent so easy a matter of displeasure against his servants. In like manner, I have willingly avoided all confusion in my affairs, and never coveted to have my estate contiguous to those of my relations, and such with whom I coveted a strict friendship; for thence matter of unkindness and falling out often proceeds. I formerly loved the hazardous games of cards and dice; but have long since left them off, only for this reason that, with whatever good air I carried my losses, I could not help feeling vexed within. A man of honor, who ought to be touchingly sensible of the lie or of an insult, and who is not to take a scurvy excuse for satisfaction, should avoid occasions of dispute. I shun melancholy, crabbed men, as I would the plague; and in matters I cannot talk of without emotion and concern, I never meddle, if not compelled by my duty: "Melius non incipient, quam desinent." ‡ The surest way, therefore, is to prepare one's self beforehand for occasions.

I know very well that some wise men have taken another way, and have not feared to grapple and engage to the utmost upon several subjects; these are confident of their own strength, under which they protect themselves in all

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* Plutarch, Notable sayings of the Lacedaemonians: Diogenes Laertius, vi. 25.

† Plutarch, Notable sayings of the Ancient Kings: Cotys.

‡ "A man had better never to have begun, than to have to desist."—Seneca, Ep. 72.
ill successes, making their patience wrestle and contend with disaster:

"Velut rupes, vastum quæ prodit in aequor,
Obvia ventorum furias, expostaque ponto,
Vim cunctam atque minas perfert coelique marisque;
Ipsa immota manens."*

Let us not attempt these examples; we shall never come up to them. They set themselves resolutely, and without agitation, to behold the ruin of their country, which possessed and commanded all their will; this is too much and too hard a task for our commoner souls. Cato gave up the noblest life that ever was, upon this account; we meaner spirits must fly from the storm as far as we can; we must provide for sentiment, and not for patience, and evade the blows we cannot meet. Zeno, seeing Chremonides, a young man whom he loved, draw near to sit down by him, suddenly started up; and Cleanthes demanding of him the reason why he did so, "I hear," said he, "that physicians especially order repose, and forbid emotion in all tumors." † Socrates does not say, "Do not surrender to the charms of beauty; stand your ground, and do your utmost to oppose it." "Fly it," says he; "shun the fight and encounter of it, as of a powerful poison that darts and wounds at a distance." ‡ And his good disciple,§ feigning or reciting, but, in my opinion, rather reciting than feigning the rare perfections of the great Cyrus, makes him distrustful of his own strength to resist the charms of the divine beauty of that illustrious Panthea, his captive, and committing the visiting and keeping her to another, who could not have so much liberty as himself. And the Holy Ghost in like manner: "Ne nos inducas in tentationem."¶ We do not pray that our reason may not be combated and overcome by concupiscence, but that it should not be so much as tried by it; that we should not be brought into a

* "As a rock standing among the vast billows, exposed to the furious winds and the raging flood, remains unmoved, and defies all the force of seas and skies."—Virgil, Òneid, x. 693.

† Diogenes Laertius, vii. 17.
‡ Xenophon, Mem. of Socrates, i. 3, 13.
§ Idem, Cyropædia, i. 3, 3.
¶ "Lead us not into temptation."—St. Matthew, vi. 13.
state wherein we are so much as to suffer the approaches, solicitations, and temptations of sin; and we beg of Almighty God to keep our consciences quiet, fully and perfectly delivered from all commerce of evil.

Such as say that they have reason for their revenging passion, or any other sort of troublesome agitation of mind, often say true, as things now are, but not as they were: they speak to us when the causes of their error are by themselves nourished and advanced; but look backward—recall these causes to their beginning—and there you will put them to a nonplus. Will they have their faults less, for being of longer continuance; and that of an unjust beginning, the sequel can be just? Whoever shall desire the good of his country, as I do, without fretting or pining himself, will be troubled, but will not swoon to see it threatening either its own ruin, or a no less ruinous continuance; poor vessel, that the waves, the winds, and the pilot toss and steer to so contrary designs!

"In tam diversa, magister, Ventus, et unda, trahunt."* 

He who does not gape after the favor of princes, as after a thing he cannot live without, does not much concern himself at the coldness of their reception and countenance, nor at the inconstancy of their wills. He who does not brood over his children or his honors, with a slavish propensity, ceases not to live commodiously enough after their loss. He who does good principally for his own satisfaction, will not be much troubled to see men judge of his actions contrary to his merit. A quarter of an ounce of patience will provide sufficiently against such inconveniences. I find ease in this receipt, redeeming myself in the beginning as cheap as I can; and find that by this means I have escaped much trouble and many difficulties. With very little ado I stop the first sally of my emotions, and leave the subject that begins to be troublesome, before it transports me. He who stops not the start, will never be able to stop the career; he, who cannot keep them out, will never get them out when they are once got in; and he who cannot crush them at the beginning, will never do it after; nor ever keep himself from falling, if he cannot

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* Buchanan. The translation is in the previous passage.
recover himself when he first begins to totter: "Etenim ipsae se impellunt; ubi semel a ratione discissum est; ipsa-que sibi imbecillitas indulget, in altumque provehitur imprudens, nec reperit locum consistendi."* I am betimes sensible of the little breezes that begin to sing and whistle in the shrouds, the fore-runners of the storm:

"Ceu flamina prima
Cum deprensa fremunt sylvis, et ceca voluntant
Murmura, venturos nautis prodentia ventos." †

How often have I done myself a manifest injustice, to avoid the hazard of having yet a worse done me by the judges, after an age of vexations, dirty and vile practices, more enemies to my nature than fire or the rack? "Convenit a litibus, quantum licet, et nescio an paulo plus etiam quam licet, abhorrentem esse: estenim non modo liberale, paululum nonnuncum de suo jure decedere, sed inrect- dum etiam fructuosum." ‡ Were we wise, we ought to rejoice and boast, as I one day heard a young gentleman of a good family very innocently do, that his mother had lost her cause, as if it had been a cough, a fever, or something very troublesome to keep. Even the favors that fortune might have given me through relationship or acquaintance with those who have sovereign authority in those affairs, I have very conscientiously and very carefully avoided employing them to the predjudice of others, and of advancing my pretensions above their true right. In fine, I have so much prevailed by my endeavors (and happily I may say it), that I am to this day a virgin from all suits in law; though I have had very fair offers made me, and with very just title would I have hearkened to them; and a virgin from quarrels too. I have almost passed over a long life without any offense of moment, either active or passive, or without

* "For they throw themselves headlong when once they lose their reason, and frailty so far indulges itself, that it is unawares carried out into the deep, and can find no port wherein to come to an anchor."—CICERO, Tusc. Quæs., iv. 18.

† "As when the rising winds, checked by woods, send out dull murmurs, portending a storm to the mariner."—Æneid. x. 97

‡ "A man should be an enemy to all lawsuits as much as he may, and I know not whether not something more; for 'tis not only liberal, but sometimes also advantageous, too, a little to recede from one's right."—CICERO, De Offic., ii. 18.
ever hearing a worse word than my own name: a rare favor of heaven.

Our greatest agitations have ridiculous springs and causes: what ruin did our last duke of Burgundy run into about a cartload of sheepskins?* And was not the graving of a seal the first and principal cause of the greatest commotion that this machine of the world ever underwent?† for Pompey and Cæsar were but the offsets and continuation of the two others: and I have in my time seen the wisest heads in this kingdom assembled with great ceremony, and at the public expense, about treaties and agreements, of which the true decision, in the meantime, absolutely depended upon the ladies' cabinet council, and the inclination of some foolish woman.

The poets very well understood this, when they put all Greece and Asia to fire and sword about an apple. Inquire why that man hazards his life and honor upon the fortune of his rapier and dagger; let him acquaint you with the occasion of the quarrel; he cannot do it without blushing; 'tis so idle and frivolous.

A little thing will engage you in it; but being once embarked, all the cords draw; great provisions are then required, more hard and more important. How much easier is it not to enter in, than it is to get out? Now we should proceed contrary to the reed, which, at its first springing produces a long and straight shoot, but afterward, as if tired and out of breath, it runs into thick and frequent joints and knots, as so many pauses which demonstrate that it has no more its first vigor and firmness; 'twere better to begin gently and coldly, and to keep one's breath and vigorous efforts for the height and stress of the business. We guide affairs in their beginnings, and have them in our own power; but afterward, when they are once at work, 'tis they that guide and govern us, and we are to follow them.

Yet do I not mean to say that this counsel has discharged me of all difficulty, and that I have not often had enough to do to curb and restrain my passions; they are not always to be governed according to the measure of occa-

* Mem. de Comines, lib. v. c. 1.

† i. e., The civil war between Marius and Sylla; see Plutarch's Life of Marius, c. 3.
sions, and often have their entries very sharp and violent. But still good fruit and profit may thence be reaped; except for those who in well-doing are not satisfied with any benefit, if reputation be wanting; for, in truth, such an effect is not valued but by every one to himself; you are better contented, but not more esteemed, seeing you reformed yourself before you got into the whirl of the dance, or that the provocative matter was in sight. Yet not in this only, but in all other duties of life also, the way of those who aim at honor is very different from that they proceed by, who propose to themselves order and reason. I find some, who rashly and furiously rush into the lists, and cool in the course. As Plutarch says, that those who, through false shame, are soft and facile to grant whatever is desired of them, are afterward as facile to break their word and to recant; so he who enters lightly into a quarrel is apt to go as lightly out of it. The same difficulty that keeps me from entering into it, would, when once hot and engaged in quarrel, incite me to maintain it with great obstinacy and resolution. "Tis the tyranny of custom; when a man is once engaged, he must go through with it, or die. "Undertake coldly," said Bias, "but pursue with ardor." * For want of prudence, men fall into want of courage, which is still more intolerable.

Most accommodations of the quarrels of these days of ours are shameful and false; we only seek to save appearances, and in the meantime betray and disavow our true intentions; we salve over the fact. We know very well how we said the thing, and in what sense we spoke it, and the company know it, and our friends whom we have wished to make sensible of our advantage, understand it well enough too: 'tis at the expense of our frankness and of the honor of our courage, that we disown our thoughts, and seek refuge in falsities, to make matters up. We give ourselves the lie, to excuse the lie we have given to another. You are not to consider if your word or action may admit of another interpretation; 'tis your own true and sincere interpretation, your real meaning in what you said or did, that you are thenceforward to maintain, whatever it cost you. Men speak to your virtue and conscience, which are not things to be put under a mask; let us leave these

* Diogenes Laertius, i. 87.
pitiful ways and expedients to the jugglers of the law. The excuses and reparations that I see every day made and given to repair indiscretion, seem to me more scandalous than the indiscretion itself. It were better to affront your adversary a second time, than to offend yourself by giving him so unmanly a satisfaction. You have braved him in your heat and anger, and you would flatter and appease him in your cooler and better sense; and by that means lay yourself lower and at his feet, whom before you pretended to overtop. I do not find anything a gentleman can say so vicious in him, as unsaying what he has said is infamous, when to unsay it is authoritatively extracted from him; forasmuch as obstinacy is more excusable in a man of honor than pusillanimity. Passions are as easy for me to evade, as they are hard for me to moderate: "Exscinduntur faciulis animo, quam temperantur."* He, who cannot attain the noble Stoical impassibility, let him secure himself in the bosom of this popular stolidity of mine; what they performed by virtue, I inure myself to do by temperament. The middle region harbors storms and tempests; the two extremes, of philosophers and peasants, concur in tranquillity and happiness:

"Felix, qui potuit rerum cognoscere causas,
Atque metus omnes et inexorabile fatum
Subjicit pedibus, strepitumque Acherontis avari!
Fortunatus et ille, Deos qui novit agrestes,
Panaque, Sylvanumque senem, Nymphasque sorores!"†

The births of all things are weak and tender; and therefore we should have our eyes intent on beginnings; for as when, in its infancy, the danger is not perceived, so when it is grown up, the remedy is as little to be found. I had every day encountered a million of crosses, harder to digest in the progress of ambition, than it has been hard for me to curb the natural propulsion that inclined me to it:

"Jure perborri
Late conspicuum tollere verticem." ‡

* "They are more easily to be eradicated than governed."
† "Happy is he who has discovered the causes of things, and tramples under foot all fear, all concern, as to inexorable fate, or as to the roaring of greedy Acheron: he is blest who knows the country gods, Pan, old Sylvanus, and the sister nymphs."—Virgil. Georg., ii. 490.
‡ "I ever justly feared to raise my head too high."—Horace, Od iii. 16, 18.
All public actions are subject to various and uncertain interpretations; for too many heads judge of them. Some say of this civic employment of mine* (and I am willing to say a word or two about it, not that it is worth so much, but to give an account of my manners in such things), that I have behaved myself in it as a man not sufficiently easy to be moved, and with a languishing affection; and they have some color for what they say. I endeavored to keep my mind and my thoughts in repose, "Cum semper natura, tum etiam ætate jam quietus;" † and if they sometimes lash out upon some rude and sensible impression, 'tis in truth without my advice. Yet from this natural heaviness of mine, men ought not to conclude a total inability in me (for want of care and want of sense are two very different things), and much less any unkindness or ingratitude toward that corporation, who employed the utmost means they had in their power to oblige me, both before they knew me and after; and they did much more for me in choosing me anew, than in conferring that honor upon me at first. I wish them all imaginable good; and assuredly had occasion been, there is nothing I would have spared for their service; I did for them, as I would have done for myself. 'Tis a good, warlike, and generous people, but capable of obedience and discipline, and of whom the best use may be made, if well guided. They say also that my administration passed over without leaving any mark or trace. Good! They moreover accuse my cessation in a time when everybody almost was convicted of doing too much. I am impatient to be doing where my will spurs me on; but this itself is an enemy to perseverance. Let him who will make use of me according to my own way, employ me in affairs where vigor and liberty are required, where a direct, short, and, moreover, a hazardous conduct are necessary; I may do something; but if it must be long, subtle, laborious, artificial and intricate, he had better call in somebody else. All important offices are not necessarily difficult: I came prepared to do somewhat rougher work, had there been great occasion; for it is in my power to do something more than I do, or

* The Bordeaux mayoralty.

† "As being always quiet by nature, so also now by age."—CICERO, De Petit. Consul., c. 2.
than I love to do. I did not, to my knowledge, omit anything that my duty really required. I easily forgot those offices that ambition mixes with duty and palliates with its title; these are they that, for the most part, fill the eyes and ears, and give men the most satisfaction; not the thing but the appearance contents them, if they hear no noise, they think men sleep. My humor is no friend to tumult; I could appease a commotion without commotion and chastise a disorder without being myself disorderly; if I stand in need of anger and inflammation, I borrow it, and put it on. My manners are languid, rather faint than sharp. I do not condemn a magistrate who sleeps, provided the people under his charge sleep as well as he: the laws in that case sleep too. For my part, I commend a gliding, staid, and silent life: "Neque submissam et abjectam, neque se efferentem;"* my fortune will have it so. I am descended from a family that has lived without luster or tumult, and, time out of mind, particularly ambitious of a character for probity.

Our people nowadays are so bred up to bustle and ostentation, that good nature, moderation, equability, constancy, and such like quiet and obscure qualities, are no more thought on or regarded. Rough bodies make themselves felt; the smooth are imperceptibly handled: sickness is felt, health little or not at all; no more than the oils that foment us, in comparison of the pains for which we are fomented. "Tis acting for one's particular reputation and profit, not for the public good, to refer that to be done in the public squares which one may do in the council chamber; and to noonday what might have been done the night before; and to be jealous to do that himself which his colleague can do as well as he; so were some surgeons of Greece wont to perform their operations upon scaffolds in the sight of the people, to draw more practice and profit. They think that good rules cannot be understood, but by the sound of trumpet. Ambition is not a vice of little people, nor of such modest means as ours. One said to Alexander: "Your father will leave you a great dominion, easy and pacific;" this youth was emulous of his father's victories, and of the justice of his government; he would

* "Not subject, nor abject, but not obtrusive."—Cicero, De Offic., i. 34.
not have enjoyed the empire of the world in ease and peace. Alcibiades, in Plato, had rather die young, beautiful, rich, noble, and learned, and all this in full excellence, than to stop short of such condition; this disease is, peradventure, excusable in so strong and so full a soul. When wretched and dwarfish souls gull and deceive themselves, and think to spread their fame for having given right judgment in an affair, or maintained the discipline of the guard of a gate of their city, the more they think to exalt their heads the more they show their tails. This little well-doing has neither body nor life; it vanishes in the first mouth, and goes no farther than from one street to another. Talk of it by all means to your son or your servant, like that old fellow who, having no other auditor of his praises, nor approver of his valor, boasted to his chambermaid, crying. "Oh, Perrette, what a brave, clever man hast thou for thy master!" At the worst, talk of it to yourself, like a councilor of my acquaintance, who, having disgorged a whole cartful of law jargon with great heat and as great folly, coming out of the council chamber to make water, was heard very complacently to mutter between his teeth; "Non nobis, domine, non nobis, sed nomini tuo da glori-am:" * He who gets it of nobody else, let him pay himself out of his own purse.

Fame is not prostituted at so cheap a rate; rare and exemplary actions, to which it is due, would not endure the company of this prodigious crowd of petty daily performances. Marble may exalt your titles, as much as you please, for having repaired a roof of wall or cleansed a public sewer; but not men of sense. Renown does not follow all good deeds, if novelty and difficulty be not conjoined; nay, so much as mere esteem, according to the Stoics, is not due to every action that proceeds from virtue; nor will they allow him bare thanks, who, out of temperance, abstains from an old blear-eyed hag. Those who have known the admirable qualities of Scipio Africanus, deny him the glory that Panætius attributes to him, of being abstinent from gifts, as a glory not so much his as that of the age he lived in. † We have pleasures suitable

* "Not unto us, oh Lord, not to us; but unto Thy name be the glory."—Psalm cxiii. 1.
† Cicero, De Offic., ii. 22.
to our lot: let us not usurp those of grandeur; our own are more natural, and by so much more solid and sure, as they are lower. If not for that of conscience, yet at least for ambition's sake, let us reject ambition; let us disdain that thirst of honor and renown, so low and mendicant, that it makes us beg it of all sorts of people ("Quae est ista laus que pessit e macello peti?" *) by abject means, and at what cheap rate soever: 'tis dishonorable to be so honored. Let us learn to be no more greedy, than we are capable, of glory. To be puffed up with every action that is innocent or of use, is only for those with whom such things are extraordinary and rare; they will value it as it costs them. The more a good effect makes a noise the more do I abate of its goodness as I suspect that it was more performed for the noise, than upon account of the goodness; exposed upon the stall, 'tis half sold. Those actions have much more grace and luster, that slip from the hand of him that does them, negligently and without noise, and that some honest man thereafter finds out and raises from the shade, to produce it to the light upon its own account. "Mihi quidem laudabiliiora videntur omnia, quae sine venditatioine, et sine populore teste fiunt," † says the most ostentations man that ever lived.

I had but to conserve and to continue, which are silent and insensible effects; innovation is of great luster; but 'tis interdicted in this age, when we are pressed upon and have nothing to defend ourselves from but novelties. To forbear doing is often as generous as to do; but 'tis less in the light, and the little good that I have in me is of this kind. In fine occasions in this employment of mine have been confederate with my humor, and I heartily thank them for it. Is there any who desires to be sick, that he may see his physician at work? and would not that physician deserve to be whipped, who should wish the plague among us, that he might put his art in practice? I have never been of that wicked humor, and common enough, to desire that troubles and disorders in this city should elevate and honor my government; I have ever heartily

* "What praise is that which is to be got in the market place?"—Cicero, De Fin., ii. 15.

† "All things truly seem more laudable to me that are performed without ostentation, and without the testimony of the people."—Idem, Tusc. Quæs., ii. 26.
contributed all I could to their tranquillity and ease. He who will not thank me for the order, the sweet and silent calm that has accompanied my administration, cannot, however, deprive me of the share that belongs to me, by title of my good fortune. And I am of such a composition that I would as willingly be lucky as wise, and had rather owe my successes purely to the favor of Almighty God than to any operation of my own. I had sufficiently published to the world my unfitness for such public offices; but I have something in me yet worse than incapacity itself; which is, that I am not much displeased at it, and that I do not much go about to cure it, considering the course of life that I have proposed to myself. Neither have I satisfied myself in this employment; but I have very near arrived at what I expected from my own performance, and have much surpassed what I promised them with whom I had to do; for I am apt to promise something less than what I am able to do and than what I hope to make good. I assure myself that I have left no offense or hatred behind me; to leave regret or desire for me among them, I at least know very well that I never much aimed at it:

"Mene huic confidere monstro!
Mene salis placidi vultum, fluctusque quietos
Ignorare?"*

CHAPTER XLII.

OF CRIPPLES.

'Tis now two or three years ago that they made the year ten days shorter in France.† How many changes may we expect should follow this reformation! it was really moving heaven and earth at once. Yet nothing for all that stirs from its place; my neighbors still find their seasons of sowing and reaping, the opportunities of doing their business, the hurtful and propitious days, just at the same

* "Should I place confidence in this monster? Should I be ignorant of the dangers of that seeming placid sea, those now quiet waves?"—Virgil, Ænide, v. 849.

† See note as to this in the preceding chapter.
time where they had, time out of mind, assigned them; there was no more error perceived in our old use, than there is amendment found in the alteration; so great an uncertainty there is throughout; so gross, obscure, and obtuse is our perception. 'Tis said that this regulation might have been carried on with less inconvenience, by subtracting for some years, according to the example of Augustus, the Bissextile, which is in some sort a day of impediment and trouble, till we had exactly satisfied this debt, the which itself is not done by this correction, and we yet remain some days in arrear; and yet, by this means, such order might be taken for the future, arranging that after the revolution of such or such a number of years the supernumerary day might be always thrown out, so that we could not, henceforward, err above four and twenty hours in our computation. We have no other account of time but years; the world has for many ages made use of that only; and yet it is a measure that to this day we are not agreed upon, and one that we still doubt what form other nations have variously given to it, and what was the true use of it. What does this saying of some mean, that the heavens in growing old bow themselves down nearer toward us, and put us into an uncertainty even of hours and days? and that which Plutarch says of the months, that astrology had not in his time determined as to the motion of the moon; what a fine condition are we in to keep records of things past!

I was just now ruminating, as I often do, what a free and roving thing human reason is. I ordinarily see that men, in things propounded to them, more willingly study to find out reasons, than to ascertain truth; they slip over presuppositions, but are curious in examination of consequences; they leave the things and fly to the causes. Pleasant praters! The knowledge of causes only concerns him who has the conduct of things; not us, who are merely to undergo them, and who have perfectly fall and accomplished use of them, according to our need, without penetrating into the original and essence; wine is none the more pleasant to him who knows its first faculties. On the contrary, both the body and the soul interrupt and weaken the right they have of the use of the world and of them-

* Roman Questions, c. 24.
selves, by mixing with it the opinion of learning; effects concern us, but the means not at all. To determine and to distribute appertain to superiority and command; as it does to subjection to accept. Let me reprehend our custom. They commonly begin thus: ‘How is such a thing done?’ Whereas they should say, ‘Is such a thing done?’ Our reason is able to create a hundred other worlds, and to find out the beginnings and contexture; it needs neither matter nor foundation: let it but run on, it builds as well in the air as on the earth, and with inanity as well as with matter:

‘Dare pondus idonea fumo.’ *

I find that almost throughout we should say, ‘There is no such thing,’ and should myself often make use of this answer, but I dare not: for they cry that it is an evasion produced from ignorance and weakness of understanding; and I am fain, for the most part, to juggle for company and prate of frivolous subjects and tales that I believe never a word of; besides that in truth, ’tis a little rude and quarrelsome flatly to deny a stated fact; and few people but will affirm, especially in things hard to be believed, that they have seen them, or at least will name witnesses whose authority will stop our mouths from contradiction. In this way, we know the foundations and means of things that never were; and the world scuffles about a thousand questions, of which both the Pro and the Con are false. ‘Ha finitima sunt falsa veris, . . . ut in præcipitem locum non debeat se sapiens committere.’† Truth and lies are faced alike; their port, taste, and proceedings are the same, and we look upon them with the same eye. I find that we are not only remiss in defending ourselves from deceit, but that we seek and offer ourselves in vanity, as a thing conformable to our being.

I have seen the birth of many miracles of my time; which, although they were abortive, yet have we not failed to foresee what they would have come to, had they lived their full age. ’Tis but finding the end of the clew, and a man may wind off as much as he will; and there is a

* ‘Able to give weight to smoke.’—Persius, v. 20.

† ‘False things are so like the true, that a wise man should not trust himself upon the precipice.’—Cicero, Acad., ii. 21.
greater distance between nothing and the least thing in the world, than there is between this and the greatest. Now the first that are imbued with this beginning of novelty, when they set out with their tale, find, by the oppositions they meet with, where the difficulty of persuasion lies, and so calk up that place with some false pieces;* besides that, "Insita hominibus libidine alendi de industria rumores," † we naturally make a conscience of restoring what has been lent us, without some usury and accession of our own. The particular error first makes the public error, and afterward, in turn, the public error makes the particular one;‡ and thus all this vast fabric goes forming and piling itself up from hand to hand, so that the remotest witness knows more about it than those who were nearest, and the last informed is better persuaded than the first. 

'Tis a natural progress: for whoever believes anything, thinks it a work of charity to persuade another into the same opinion; which the better to do, he will make no difficulty of adding as much of his own invention, as he conceives necessary to this tale to encounter the resistance or want of conception he meets with in others. I myself, who make a great conscience of lying, and am not very solicitous of giving credit and authority to what I say, yet find that in the arguments I have in hand, being heated with the opposition of another, or by the proper warmth of my own narration, I swell and puff up my subject by voice, motion, vigor and force of words, and moreover, by extension and amplification, not without some prejudice to the naked truth; but I do it conditionally withal, that to the first who brings me to myself and who asks me the plain and bare truth I presently surrender my passion, and deliver the matter to him without exaggeration, without emphasis, or any painting of my own. A quick and earnest way of speaking, as mine is, is apt to run into hyperbole. There is nothing to which men commonly are more

* Voltaire says of this passage, "He who would learn to doubt, should read this whole chapter of Montaigne, the least methodical of all philosophers, but the wisest and the most amiable."—*Melanges Historiques*, xvii. 694, ed. of Lefevre.

† "Men having a natural desire to nourish reports."—*Livy*, xxviii. 24.

inclined, than to make way for their own opinions; where the ordinary means fail us, we add command, force, fire and sword. "Tis a misfortune to be at such a pass, that the best test of truth is the multitude of believers, in a crowd, where the number of fools so much exceeds the wise. "Quasi vero quidquam sit tam valde, quam nil sapere, vulgare." * "Sanitatis patrocinium est, insanientium turba." † "Tis hard to resolve a man's judgment against the common opinions: the first persuasion, taken from the very subject itself, possesses the simple, and from themdiffuses itself to the wise under the authority of the number and antiquity of the witnesses. For my part, what I should not believe from one, I should not believe from a hundred and one and I do not judge opinions by years.

"Tis not long since one of our princes, in whom the gout had spoiled an excellent nature and sprightly disposition, suffered himself to be so far persuaded with the report made to him of the marvelous operations of a certain priest, who by words and gestures cured all sorts of diseases, as to go a long journey to seek him out, and by the force of his mere imagination, for some hours, so persuaded and laid his legs asleep, as to obtain that service from them they had a long time forgotten. Had fortune heaped up five or six such like incidents, it had been enough to have brought this miracle into nature. There was afterward discovered so much simplicity and so little art in the architect of these operations, that he was thought too contemptible to be punished; as would be thought of most such things, were they well examined. "Miramur ex intervallo fallentia." ‡ So does our sight often represent to us strange images at a distance, that vanish on approaching near: "Nunquam ad liquidum fama perducitur." §

"Tis wonderful from how many idle beginnings and frivolous causes such famous impressions commonly proceed. This it is that obstructs information; for while we seek

* "As if anything were so common as ignorance."—Cicero, De Divin., ii.
† "The multitude of fools is a protection to the wise."—St. Augustine, De Civit. Dei, vi. 10.
‡ "We admire at distance things that deceive."—Seneca, Ep. 118, 2.
§ "Report is never fully substantiated."—Quintius Curtius, ix. 2.
out causes and solid and weighty ends, worthy of so great a name, we lose the true ones; they escape our sight by their littleness. And, in truth, a very prudent, diligent, and subtle inquisition is required in such searches, indifferent, and not prepossessed. To this very hour, all these miracles and strange events have concealed themselves from me: I have never seen greater monster or miracle in the world than myself: one grows familiar with all strange things by time and custom, but the more I frequent and the better I know myself, the more does my own deformity astonish me, the less I understand myself.

The principal right of advancing and producing such accidents, is reserved to fortune. Riding the other day through a village, about two leagues from my house, I found the place yet hot with the rumor of a miracle that had lately failed of success there; wherewith first the neighborhood had been several months amused; then the neighboring provinces began to take it up, and to run thither in great companies of all sorts of people. A young fellow of the place had one night in sport counterfeited the voice of a spirit in his own house, without any other design at present, but only for sport; but this having succeeded with him better than he expected, to illustrate his farce with more actors he associated with him a stupid silly country girl, and at last there were three of them, of the same age and understanding, who from domestic lectures proceeded to public preaching, hiding themselves under the altar of the church, never speaking but by night, and forbidding any light to be brought. From words which tended to the conversion of the world and threats of the day of judgment (for those are subjects under the authority and reverence of which imposture most securely lurks), they proceeded to visions and gestures so simple and ridiculous, that nothing could hardly be so gross in the sports of little children. Yet had fortune never so little favored the design, who knows to what height this juggling might have at last arrived? These poor devils are at present in prison and are like shortly to pay for the common folly; and I know not whether some judge will not also make them smart for his. We see clearly into this, which is discovered, but in many things of the like nature, that exceed our knowledge, I am of opinion that we ought to suspend our judgment, whether as to rejection or as to reception.
Great abuses in the world are begotten, or, to speak more boldly, all the abuses of the world are begotten, by our being taught to be afraid of professing our ignorance, and that we are bound to accept all things we are not able to refute: we speak of all things by precepts and decisions. The style at Rome was, that even that which a witness deposed to having seen with his own eyes, and what a judge determined with his most certain knowledge, was couched in this form of speaking; "it seems to me." They make me hate things that are likely, when they would impose them upon me as infallible. I love these words which mollify and moderate the temerity of our propositions: "peradventure; in some sort; some; 'tis said; I think," and the like: and had I been set to train up children I had put this way of answering into their mouths, inquiring and not resolving; "What does this mean? I understand it not; it may be: is it true?" so that they should rather have retained the form of pupils, at threescore years old, than to go out doctors, as they do, at ten. Whoever will be cured of ignorance, must confess it.

Iris is the daughter of Thaumas;* admiration is the foundation of all philosophy; inquisition, the progress; ignorance, the end. But there is a sort of ignorance, strong and generous, that yields nothing in honor and courage to knowledge; an ignorance, which to conceive requires no less knowledge than to conceive knowledge itself. I read in my younger years a trial that Coras,† a counselor of Toulouse, printed, of a strange incident, of two men who presented themselves the one for the other. I remember (and I hardly remember anything else) that he seemed to have rendered the imposture of him whom he judged to be guilty, so wonderful and so far exceeding both our knowledge and his own, who was the judge, that I thought it a very bold sentence that condemned him to be hanged. Let us have some form of decree that says, "The court understands nothing of the matter;" more freely and ingeniously

* That is, of admiration (Θαυμα Θαυματος). "She (Iris, the rain bow) is beautiful, and for that reason, because she has a face to be admired (admirabilem), she is said to have been the daughter of Thaumas."—Cicero, De Nat. Deor., iii. 20.

† A celebrated Calvinist lawyer, born at Toulouse 1513, and assassinated there Oct. 4th, 1572.
than the Areopagites did, who, finding themselves perplexed with a cause they could not unravel, ordered the parties to appear again after a hundred years.

The witches of my neighborhood run the hazard of their lives, upon the report of every new author who seeks to give body to their dreams. To accommodate the examples that Holy writ gives us of such things, most certain and irrefragable examples, and to tie them to our modern events, seeing that we neither see the causes nor the means will require another sort of wit than ours. It, peradventure, only appertains to that sole all-potent testimony to tell us. "This is, and that is, and not that other." God ought to be believed, and certainly with very good reason; but not one among us, for all that, who is astonished at his own narration (and he must of necessity be astonished, if he be not out of his wits), whether he employ it about other men's affairs, or against himself.

I am plain and heavy, and stick to the solid and the probable, avoiding those ancient reproaches, "Majorem fidem homines adhibent iis, quæ non intelligunt.—Cupidinu humani ingenii, libertius obscura creduntur." * I see very well that men get angry, and that I am forbidden to doubt, upon pain of execrable injuries; a new way of persuading! Thank God, I am not to be cuffed into belief. Let them be angry with those who accuse their opinion of falsity; I only accuse it of difficulty and boldness, and condemn the opposite affirmation equally, if not so imperiously, with them. He who will establish his proposition by authority and huffing, discovers his reason to be very weak. For a verbal and scholastic altercation, let them have as much appearance as their contradictors; "Videantur sane, non affirmantur modo;" † but in the real consequence they draw from it, these have much the advantage. "To kill men," ‡ a

* "Men are most apt to believe what they least understand: and through the lust of human wit, obscure things are more easily credited." The second sentence is from Tacitus, Hist., i. 22.

† "Let them state the probabilities, but not affirm."—CICERO, Acad., ii. 27.

‡ Coste has "to convince men," but the text has tuer, "to kill," and so Cotton gives it. The introduction of the proposition at this place is not of obvious congruity. But it may be read as deprecating the putting to death such people as Montaigne is here writing about.
clear and shining light is required; and our life is too real and essential, to warrant these supernatural and fantastic accidents.

As to drugs and poisons, I throw them out of my count, as being the worst sorts of homicides: yet even in this, 'tis said, that men are not always to rely upon the personal confessions of these people; for they have sometimes been known to accuse themselves of the murder of persons who have afterward been found living and well. In these other extravagant accusations, I should be apt to say, that it is sufficient a man, what recommendation soever he may have, be believed as to human things; but of what is beyond his conception, and of supernatural effect, he ought then only to be believed, when authorized by a supernatural approbation. The privilege it has pleased Almighty God to give to some of our witnesses, ought not to be lightly communicated and made cheap. I have my ears battered with a thousand such flim-flams as these: "Three persons saw him such a day in the east; three, the next day in the west; at such an hour, in such a place, and in such habit;" in earnest, I should not believe myself. How much more natural and likely do I find it that two men should lie, than that one man in twelve hours' time should fly with the wind from east to west? How much more natural that our understanding should be carried from its place by the volubility of our disordered minds, than that one of us should be carried by a strange spirit upon a broom-staff, flesh and bones as we are, up the shaft of a chimney? Let not us seek illusions from without and unknown, we who are perpetually agitated with illusions domestic and our own. Methinks one is pardonable in disbelieving a miracle, at least, at all events where one can elude its verification as such, by means not miraculous; and I am of St. Augustine's opinion, that "'tis better to lean toward doubt than assurance, in things hard to prove and dangerous to believe."

'Tis now some years ago, that I traveled through the territories of a sovereign prince, who, in my favor, and to abate my incredulity, did me the honor to let me see, in his own presence, and in a private place, ten or twelve prisoners of this kind, and among others, an old hag, a real witch in foulness and deformity, who long had been famous in that profession. I saw both proofs and free con-
fessions, and I know not what insensible mark upon the miserable creature: I examined and talked with her and the rest as much and as long as I would, and gave the best and soundest attention I could, and I am not a man to suffer my judgment to be made captive by prepossession. In the end, and in all conscience, I should rather have prescribed them hellebore than hemlock: "Captisque res magis mentibus, quam consceleratis, similis visa," * justice has its corrections proper for such maladies. As to the oppositions and arguments that worthy men have made to me, both there, and often in other places, I have met with none that have convinced me, and that have not admitted a more likely solution than their conclusions. It is true, indeed, that the proofs and reasons that are founded upon experience and fact, I do not go about to untie, neither have they any end; I often cut them, as Alexander did the Gordian knot. After all, 'tis setting a man's conjectures at a very high price, upon them to cause a man to be roasted alive.

We are told by several examples, as Præstantius of his father, that being more profoundly sleep than men usually are, he fancied himself to be a mare, and that he served the soldiers for a sumpter; and what he fancied himself to be, he really proved. † If sorcerers dream so materially; if dreams can sometimes so incorporate themselves with effects, still I cannot believe that therefore our will should be accountable to justice; which I say as one who am neither judge nor privy councilor, and who think myself by many degrees unworthy so to be, but a man of the common sort, born and vowed to the obedience of the public reason, both in its words and acts. He who should record my idle talk as being to the prejudice of the pettiest law, opinion, or custom of his parish, would do himself a great deal of wrong, and me much more; for, in what I say, I warrant no other certainty, but that 'tis what I had then in my thought, a tumultuous and wavering thought. All I say is by way of discourse, and nothing by way of advice: "Nec me pudet, ut istos, fateri nescire, quod nes-

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* "The thing was rather to be attributed to madness, than malice." —Livy, viii. 18.

† St. Augustine, De Civit. Dei, xviii. 18.
I should not speak so boldly, if it were my due to be believed; and so I told a great man, who complained of the tartness and contentiousness of my exhortations. Perceiving you to be ready and prepared on one part, I propose to you the other, with all the diligence and care I can, to clear your judgment, not to compel it. God has your hearts in his hands, and will furnish you with the means of choice. I am not so presumptuous even as to desire that my opinions should bias you in a thing of so great importance: my fortune has not trained them up to so potent and elevated conclusions. Truly, I have not only a great many humors, but also a great many opinions, that I would endeavor to make my son dislike, if I had one. What, if the truest are not always the most commodious to man, being of so wild a composition.

Whether it be to the purpose or not, 'tis no great matter: 'tis a common proverb in Italy, that he knows not Venus in her perfect sweetness, who has never lain with a lame mistress. Fortune, or some particular incident, long ago put this saying into the mouths of the people; and the same is said of men as well as of women; for the queen of the Amazons answered the Scythian who courted her to love, "'Lame men perform best."† In this feminine republic, to evade the dominion of the males, they lamed them in their infancy—arms, legs, and other members that gave them advantage over them, and only made use of them in that wherein we in these parts of the world, make use of them. I should have been apt to think, that the shuffling pace of the lame mistress added some new pleasure to the work, and some extraordinary titillation to those who were at the sport; but I have lately learned that ancient philosophy has itself determined it,‡ which says that the legs and thighs of lame women, not receiving, by reason of their imperfection, their due aliment, it falls out that the genital parts above are fuller and better supplied and much more vigorous; or else, that this defect, hindering exercise, they who are troubled with it less dissipate their strength, and come more entire to the sports of Venus;

* "Neither am I ashamed, as they are, to confess my ignorance of what I do not know."—Cicero, Tuse. Quae., i. 25.
† Aristotel. χαλός οἰρεῖ.
which, also, is the reason why the Greeks decried the women weavers as being more hot than other women by reason of their sedentary trade, which they carry on without any great exercise of the body. What is it we may not reason of, at this rate? I might also say of these, that the joggling about while so sitting at work, rouses and provokes their desire, as the swinging and jolting of coaches does that of our ladies.

Do not these examples serve to make good what I said at first: that our reasons often anticipate the effect, and have so infinite an extent of jurisdiction, that they judge and exercise themselves even on an inanity itself and non-existency? Besides the flexibility of our invention to forge reasons of all sorts of dreams, our imagination is equally facile to receive impressions of falsity by very frivolous appearances; for, by the sole authority of the ancient and common use of this proverb, I have formerly made myself believe that I have had more pleasure in a woman, by reason she was not straight, and accordingly reckoned that deformity among her graces.

Torquato Tasso, in the comparison he makes between France and Italy,* says he has observed that our legs are generally smaller than those of the Italian gentlemen, and attributes the cause of it to our being continually on horseback; which is the very same cause from which Suetonius draws a quite opposite conclusion, for he says,† on the contrary, that Germanicus had made his legs bigger by the continuation of the same exercise. Nothing is so supple and erratic as our understanding; it is like the shoe of Theramenes, fit for all feet. It is double and diverse; and the matters are double and diverse too. "Give me a drachm of silver," said a Cynic philosopher to Antigonus. "That is not a present befitting a king," replied he. "Give me then a talent," said the other. "That is not a present befitting a Cynic."‡

"Seu plures calor ille vias et caeca relaxat
Spiramenta, novas veniat qua succus in herbas:
Seu durat magis, et venas astringit hiantes;

* Paragone dell' Italia alla Francia, p. 11, ed. 1585.
† Life of Caligula, s. 3.
‡ Seneca, De Beneficiis, ii. 17.
“Ogni medaglia ha il suo riverso.”† This is the reason why Clitomachus said of old that Carneades had outdone the labors of Hercules, in having eradicated consent from men, that is to say, opinion and the temerity of judging. This so vigorous fancy of Carneades sprung, in my opinion anciently from the impudence of those who made profession of knowledge, and their immeasurable self-conceit. Æsop was set to sale with two other slaves; the buyer asked the first of these what he could do; he, to enhance his own value, promised mountains and marvels, saying he could do this and that, and I know not what; the second said as much of himself, or more; when it came to Æsop’s turn, and that he was also asked what he could do; “Nothing,” said he, “for these two have taken up all before me; they can do everything.” So has it happened in the school of philosophy; the pride of those who attributed the capacity of all things to the human mind, created in others, out of despite and emulation, this opinion that it is capable of nothing; the one maintain the same extreme in ignorance that the others do in knowledge; to make it undeniably manifest that man is immoderate throughout, and can never stop but of necessity and the want of ability to proceed further.

CHAPTER XLIII.

OF PHYSIOGNOMY.

Almost all the opinions we have are taken on authority and trust; and ’tis not amiss; we could not choose worse than by ourselves, in so weak an age. That image of Socrates’ discourses, which his friends have transmitted to us, we approve upon no other account than a reverence to public sanction; ’tis not according to our own knowledge; they

* "Whether the heat opens more passages and secret pores through which the sap may be derived into the new born herbs; or whether it rather hardens and binds the gaping veins that the small showers and keen influence of the violent sun, or penetrating cold of Boreas, may not hurt them."—Virg., Georg., i. 89.

† “Every medal has its reverse.”—Italian Proverb.
are not after our way; if anything of the kind should spring up now, few men would value them. We discern no graces that are not pointed and puffed out and inflated by art; such as glide on in their own purity and simplicity easily escape so gross a sight as ours; they have a delicate and concealed beauty, such as requires a clear and purified sight to discover its secret light. Is not simplicity, as we take it, cousin-german to folly, and a quality of reproach? Socrates makes his soul move a natural and common motion; a peasant said this; a woman said that; he has never anybody in his mouth but carters, joiners, cloggers, and masons; his are inductions and similitudes drawn from the most common and known actions of men; every one understands him. We should never have recognized the nobility and splendor of his admirable conceptions under so mean a form; we, who think all things low and flat, that are not elevated by learned doctrine, and who discern no riches but in pomp and show. This world of ours is only formed for ostentation; men are only puffed up with wind, and are banded to and fro like tennis-balls. He proposed to himself no vain and idle fancies; his design was to furnish us with precepts and things that more really and fitly serve the use of life;

"Servare modu, finemque tenere, Naturamque sequi." *

He was also always one and the same,† and raised himself, not by starts but by complexion, to the highest pitch of vigor; or, to say better, mounted not at all, but rather brought down, reduced and subjected all asperities and difficulties to his original and natural condition; for, in Cato 'tis most manifest, that 'tis a procedure extended far beyond the common ways of men: in the brave exploits of his life, and in his death, we find him always mounted upon the great horse; whereas the other ever creeps upon the ground, and with a gentle and ordinary pace, treats of the most useful matters, and bears himself, both at his death and in the rudest difficulties that could present themselves, in the ordinary way of human life.

* "To keep a just mean, to observe just limits, and to follow Nature."—Lucan, ii. 381.
† Cicero, De Offic., i. 26.
It has fallen out well, that the man most worthy to be known and to be presented to the world for example, should be he of whom we have the most certain knowledge; he has been pried into by the most clear-sighted men that ever were; the testimonies we have of him are admirable both in fidelity and fullness. "Tis a great thing that he was able so to order the pure imaginations of a child, that, without altering or wresting them, he thereby produced the most beautiful effects of our soul: he presents it neither elevated nor rich; he only represents it sound, but assuredly with a brisk and full health. By these common and natural springs, by these ordinary and popular fancies, without being moved or put out, he set up not only the most regular, but the most high and vigorous beliefs, actions, and manners that ever were. "Tis he who brought again from heaven, where she lost her time, human wisdom, to restore her to man, with whom her most just and greatest business lies. See him plead before his judges; observe by what reasons he rouses his courage to the hazards of war; with what arguments he fortifies his patience against calumny, tyranny, death, and the perverseness of his wife; you will find nothing in all this borrowed from arts and sciences: the simplest may there discover their own means and strength; 'tis not possible more to retire or to creep more low. He has done human nature a great kindness, in showing it how much it can do of itself.

We are all of us richer than we think we are; but we are taught to borrow and to beg, and brought up more to make use of what is another's than of our own. Man can in nothing fix himself to his actual necessity: of pleasure, wealth, and power, he grasps at more than he can hold; his greediness is incapable of moderation. And I find that in curiosity of knowing he is the same; he cuts himself out more work than he can do, and more than he needs to do: extending the utility of knowledge, to the full of its matter: "Ut omnium rerum, sic litterarum quoque, intemperantia laboramus." * And Tacitus† had reason to commend the mother of Agricola, for having restrained her son in his too violent appetite of learning.

* "We carry intemperance into the study of literature, as well as into everything else."—Seneca, Ep. 106.

† Life of Agricola, c. 4.
'Tis a good, if duly considered, which has in it, as the other goods of men have, a great deal of vanity and weakness, proper and natural to itself, and that costs very dear. Its acquisition is far more hazardous than that of all other meat or drink; for, as to other things, what we have bought we carry home in some vessel, and there have full leisure to examine our purchase, how much we shall eat or drink of it, and when: but sciences we can, at the very first, stow into no other vessel than the soul; we swallow them in buying, and return from the market, either already infected or amended: there are some that only burden and overcharge the stomach, instead of nourishing; and, moreover, some, that under color of curing, poison us. I have been pleased, in places where I have been, to see men in devotion vow ignorance as well as chastity, poverty, and penitence: 'tis also a gelding of our unruly appetites, to blunt this cupidity that spurs us on to the study of books, and to deprive the soul of this voluptuous complacency that tickles us with the opinion of knowledge: and 'tis plenarily to accomplish the vow of poverty, to add unto it that of the mind. We need little doctrine to live at our ease; and Socrates teaches us, that this is in us, and the way how to find it, and the manner how to use it. All our sufficiency which exceeds the natural is well-nigh superfluous and vain: 'tis much if it does not rather burden and cumber us than do us good: "Paucis opus est literis ad mentem bonam:" * 'tis a feverish excess of the mind; a tempestuous and unquiet instrument. Do but recollect yourself, and you will find in yourself natural arguments against death, true, and the fittest to serve you in time of necessity; 'tis they that make a peasant, and whole nations, die with as much firmness as a philosopher. Should I have died less cheerfully before I had read Cicero's Tusculans? I believe not; and when I find myself at the best, I perceive that my tongue is enriched indeed, but my courage little or nothing elevated by them; that is just as nature framed it at first, and defends itself against the conflict, only after a natural and ordinary way. Books have not so much served me for instruction as exercise. What if knowledge, trying to arm us with new defenses against natural inconveniences, has

* "Very little learning is needed to form a sound mind."—Seneca, Ep. 106.
more imprinted in our fancies their weight and greatness, than her reasons and subtleties to secure us from them? They are subtleties, indeed, with which she often alarms us to little purpose. Do but observe, how many slight and frivolous, and, if nearly examined, incorporeal arguments, the closest and wisest authors scatter about one good one: they are but verbal quirks and fallacies to amuse and gull us: but forasmuch as it may be with some profit, I will sift them no further; many of that sort are here and there dispersed up and down this book, either borrowed or by imitation. Therefore one ought to take a little heed not to call that force which is only a pretty knack of writing, and that solid which is only sharp, or that good which is only fine: "Quae magis gustata, quam potata delectant:"

* everything that pleases, does not nourish: "Ubi non ingenii, sed animi negotium agitur."

To see the trouble that Seneca gives himself to fortify himself against death; to see him so sweat and pant to harden and encourage himself, and bustle so long upon this perch, would have lessened his reputation with me, had he not very bravely held himself at the last. His so ardent and frequent agitations discover that he was in himself impetuous and passionate ("Magnus animus remissius loquitur, et securius... nonest alius ingenio, alius animo color"

†); he must be convinced at his own expense; and he in some sort discovers that he was hard pressed by his enemy. Plutarch's way, by how much it is more disdainful and farther stretched, is, in my opinion, so much more manly and persuasive; and I am apt to believe that his soul had more assured and more regular motions. The one more sharp, pricks and makes us start, and more touches the soul; the other more constantly solid, forms, establishes, and supports us, and more touches the understanding. That ravishes the judgment, this wins it. I have likewise seen other writings, yet more reverenced than these, that in the representation of the conflict they main-

* "Which more delight in the tasting, than in being drunk off."
—Cicero, Tusc. Quaes., v. 5.

† "Where the question is not about the wit, but about the soul."
—Seneca, Ep. 75.

‡ "A great courage speaks more calmly and more securely. The mind and the soul wear the same livery."
tain against the temptations of the flesh, paint them so sharp, so powerful and invincible, that we ourselves, who are of the common herd, are as much to wonder at the strangeness and unknown force of their temptation, as at the resisting it.

To what end do we so arm ourselves with this harness of science? Let us look down upon the poor people that we see scattered upon the face of the earth, prone and intent upon their business, that neither know Aristotle nor Cato, example nor precept; from these nature every day extracts effects of constancy and patience, more pure and manly than those we so inquisitively study in the schools; how many do I ordinarily see who slight poverty, how many who desire to die, or who die without alarm or regret? He who is now digging in my garden, has this morning buried his father or his son. The very names by which they call diseases, sweeten and mollify the sharpness of them; the phthisic is with them no more than a cough, dysentery but a looseness, the pleurisy but a stitch; and, as they gently name them, so they patiently endure them; they are very great and grievous indeed, when they hinder their ordinary labor; they never keep their beds but to die.

"Simplex illa et aperta virtus in obscurum et solertem scientiam versa est." *

I was writing this about a time when a great load of our intestine troubles for several months lay with all its weight upon me; I had the enemy at my door on one side, and the free-booters, worse enemies than they, on the other, "Non armis, sed vitius, certatur;" † and underwent all sorts of military injuries at once:

"Hostis adest dextra laveaque a parte timendus.
Vicinoque malo terret utrumque latus." ‡

A monstrous war! Other wars are bent against strangers, this against itself, destroying itself with its own poison. It is of so malignant and ruinous a nature, that it ruins

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* "That plain and simple virtue is converted into an obscure and subtle knowledge."—Seneca, Ep. 95.
† "The fight is not with arms, but with vices."—Idem.
‡ "Right and left a formidable enemy presses on me, and threatens me on both sides with present danger."—Ovid, De Ponto, i. 3, 57.
itself with the rest: and with its own rage mangles and tears itself to pieces. We more often see it dissolve of itself, than through scarcity of any necessary thing, or by force of the enemy. All discipline evades it: it comes to compose sedition, and is itself full of it; would chastise disobedience, and itself is the example; and, employed for the defense of the laws, rebels against its own. What a condition are we in! Our physic makes us sick!

"Nostre mal s'empoisonne
Du secours qu'on luy donne"

"Exuperat magis, ægrescitque medendo." *

"Omnia fanda, nefanda, malo permista furore,
Justificam nobis mentem avertere deorum." †

In the beginning of these popular maladies, one may distinguish the sound from the sick: but when they come to continue, as ours have done, the whole body is then infected from head to foot; no part is free from corruption, for there is no air that men so greedily draw in, that diffuses itself so soon and that penetrates so deep, as that of license. Our armies only subsist and are kept together by the cement of foreigners; for of Frenchmen there is now no constant and regular army to be made. What a shame it is! there is no longer any discipline but what we see in the borrowed soldiers. As to ourselves, our conduct is at discretion, and that not of the chief, but every one at his own. The general has a harder game to play within, than he has without; he it is who has to follow, to court the soldiers, to give way to them; he alone has to obey: all the rest is dissolution and free license. It please me to observe how much pusillanimity and cowardice there is in ambition; by how abject and servile ways it must arrive at its end; but it displeases me to see good and generous natures, and that are capable of justice, every day corrupted in the management and command of this confusion. Long toleration begets habit; habit, consent and imitation. We had ill-formed souls enough, without spoiling those that were

* "Our disease is poisoned with its very remedies."—Æneid, xii. 46. The French verses are a translation by Mademoiselle de Gournay.

† "Right and wrong, all shuffled together in this wicked fury, have deprived us of the gods' protection."—Catullus, De Nuptiis Pelei et Thetidos, v. 405.
generous and good; so that if we hold on, there will scarcely remain any with whom to intrust the health of this state of ours, in case fortune chance to restore it:

"Hunc saltatem everso juvenem succurrere seco, 
Ne prohibete." *

What is become of the old precept, "That soldiers ought more to fear their chief than the enemy?" † and of that wonderful example, that an orchard being enclosed within the precincts of a camp of the Roman army, was seen at their dislodgment the next day in the same condition, not an apple, though ripe and delicious, being pulled off, but all left to the possessor? I could wish that our youth, instead of the time they spend in less fruitful travels, and less honorable employments would bestow one half of that time in being an eyewitness of naval exploits, under some good captain of Rhodes, and the other half in observing the discipline of the Turkish armies; for they have many differences and advantages over ours; one of these is, that our soldiers become more licentious in expeditions, theirs more temperate and circumspect; for the thefts and insolencies committed upon the common people, which are only punished with a cudgel in peace, are capital in war; for an egg taken by a Turkish soldier without paying for it, fifty blows with a stick is the fixed rate; for anything else, of what sort or how trivial soever, not necessary to nourishment, they are presently impaled or beheaded without mercy. I am astonished in the history of Selim, the most cruel conqueror that ever was, to see that when he subdued Egypt, the beautiful gardens about Damascus being all open, and in a conquered land, and his army encamped upon the very place, should be left untouched by the hands of the soldiers, by reason they had not received the signal of pillage.

But is there any disease in a government, that it is worth while to physic with such a mortal drug? ‡ No, said Favonius, not even the tyrannical usurpation of a

* "Forbid not, at least, that this young man repair this ruined age."—Virgil, Georg., i. 500. Montaigne probably refers to Henry, king of Navarre, afterward Henry IV.

† Valerius Maximus, ext. 2.

‡ i.e., as civil war.
commonwealth. Plato, likewise, will not consent that a man should violate the peace of his country in order to cure it, and by no means approves of a reformation that disturbs and hazards all, and that is to be purchased at the price of the citizen's blood and ruin; determining it to be the duty of a good patriot in such a case to let it alone, and only to pray to God for his extraordinary assistance: and he seems to be angry with his great friend Dion, for having proceeded somewhat after another manner. I was a Platonist in this point, before I knew there had ever been such a man as Plato in the world. And if this person ought absolutely to be rejected from our society (he who by the sincerity of his conscience, merited from the divine favor to penetrate so far into the Christian light, through the universal darkness wherein the world was involved in his time), I do not think it becomes us to suffer ourselves to be instructed by a heathen how great an impiety it is not to expect from God any relief simply his own and without our co-operation. I often doubt, whether among so many men as meddle in such affairs, there is not to be found some one of so weak understanding as to have been really persuaded that he went toward reformation by the worst of deformations; and advanced toward salvation by the most express causes that we have of most assured damnation; that by overthrowing government, the magistracy, and the laws, in whose protection God has placed him, by dismembering his good mother, and giving her limbs to be mangled by her old enemies, filling fraternal hearts with parricidal hatreds, calling devils and furies to his aid, he can assist the most holy sweetness and justice of the divine law. Ambition, avarice, cruelty, and revenge, have not sufficient natural impetuosity of their own; let us bait them with the glorious titles of justice and devotion. There cannot a worse state of things be imagined, than where wickedness comes to be legitimate, and assumes with the magistrates' permission, the cloak of virtue: "Nihil in speciem fallacios, quam prava religio, ubi deorum numen pretendentur sceleribus."* The extremest sort of injustice, according to Plato,† is where that which is unjust, should be reputed for just.

* "Nothing has a more deceiving face than false religion, where devotion is pretended by wicked men."—Livy, xxxix. 16.
† Republic, ii. 4.
The common people then suffered very much, and not present damage only,

"Undique totis
Usque adeo turbatur agris," *

but future too; the living were to suffer, and so were they who were yet unborn; they stripped them, and consequently myself, even of hope, taking from them all they had laid up in store to live on for many years:

"Quae nequent secum ferre aut abducere, perdunt;
Et cremat insontes turba scelestia casas . .
Muris nulla fides, squalent populatibus agri." †

Besides this shock, I suffered others: I underwent the inconveniences that moderation brings along with it in such a disease: I was robbed on all hands; to the Ghibelin I was a Guelph, and to the Guelph a Ghibelin: one of my poets expresses this very well, but I know not where it is.‡ The situation of my house, and my friendliness with my neighbors, presented me with one face; my life and my actions with another. They did not lay formal accusations to my charge, for they had no foundation for so doing; I never hide my head from the laws, and whoever would have questioned me, would have done himself a greater prejudice than me; they were only mute suspicions that were whispered about, which never want appearance in so confused a mixture, no more than envious or idle heads. I commonly myself lend a hand to injurious presumptions that fortune scatters abroad against me, by a way I have ever had of evading to justify, excuse, or explain myself; conceiving, that it were to compromise my conscience—to plead in its behalf; "Perspicuitas enim argumentatione elevatur;" § and, as if every one saw as clearly into me

* "Such great disorders overtake our fields on every side."—Virgil, Eelogs., i. 11.
† "What they cannot bear away, they spoil; and the wretches burn harmless houses; walls cannot secure their masters, and the fields are wasted and spoiled."—Ovid, Trist., iii. 10, 35; Claudianus, in Entrop., i. 244.
‡ "So Tories call e Whig, and Whigs a Tory."—Pope, after Horace.
§ "The clearness of a cause is clouded by argumentation."—Cicero, De Nat. Deor., iii. 4.
as I do myself, instead of retiring from an accusation, I step up to meet it, and rather give it some kind of color by an ironical and scoffing confession, if I do not sit totally mute, as of a thing not worth my answer. But such as look upon this kind of behavior of mine as too haughty a confidence, have as little kindness for me as they who interpret it the weakness of an indefensible cause; namely, the great folks, toward whom want of submission is the great fault, harsh toward all justice that knows and feels itself, and is not submissive, humble, and suppliant: I have often knocked my head against this pillar. So it is, that at what then befell me, an ambitious man would have hanged himself, and a covetous man would have done the same. I have no manner of care of getting:

"Si mihi, quod nunc est, etiam minus; et mihi vivam Quod superest ævi, si quid superesse volent dii: " *

but the losses that befell me by the injury of others, whether by theft or violence, go almost as near my heart, as they would do to that of the most avaricious man. The offense troubles me, without comparison, more than the loss. A thousand several sorts of mischiefs fell upon me in the neck of one another; I could more cheerfully have borne them all at once.

I was already considering to whom, among my friends, I might commit a helpless and decrepit age; and having turned my eyes quite round, I found myself bare. To let one's self fall plum down, and from so great a height, it ought to be in the arms of a solid, vigorous, and fortunate friendship: these are very rare, if there be any. At last, I saw that it was safest for me to trust to myself in my necessity: and if it should so fall out, that I should be but upon cold terms in fortune's favor, I should so much the more pressingly recommend me to my own, and attach myself and look to myself all the more closely. Men on all occasions throw themselves upon foreign assistance to spare their own, which is alone certain and sufficient to him who knows how therewith to arm himself. Every one runs elsewhere, and to the future, forasmuch as no one is arrived at himself. And I was satisfied that they were

* "May I keep what I have, or even less; and live for myself what of life remains, if the gods grant me remaining years."—Horace, Ep. i. 18, 107.
profitable inconveniences; forasmuch as, first, ill scholars are to be admonished with the rod, when reason will not do, as a crooked piece of wood is by fire and straining reduced to straightness. I have a great while preached to myself to stick close to my own concerns, and separate myself from the affairs of others: yet I am still turning my eyes aside. A bow, a kind word or look from a great person tempts me; of which God knows how little scarcity there is in these days, and how little they signify. I, moreover, without wrinkling my forehead, hearken to the persuasions offered me, to draw me into the open market place, and so gently refuse, as if I were half willing to be overcome. Now for so indocile a spirit blows are required; this vessel which thus chops and cleaves, and is ready to fall one piece from another, must have the hoops forced down with good sound strokes of a mallet. Secondly, that this accident served me for exercise to prepare me for worse, if I, who both by the benefit of fortune, and by the condition of my manners, hoped to be among the last, should happen to be one of the first assailed by this storm; instructing myself betimes to constrain my life, and fit it for a new state. The true liberty is to be able to do what a man will with himself: "Potentissimus est, qui se habet in potestate."* In an ordinary and quiet time, a man prepares himself for moderate and common accidents; but in the confusion wherein we have been for these thirty years, every Frenchman, whether in particular or in general, sees himself every hour upon the point of the total ruin and overthrow of his fortune: by so much the more ought he to have his courage supplied with the strongest and most vigorous provisions. Let us thank fortune, that has not made us live in an effeminate, idle, and languishing age; some who could never have been so by other means, will be made famous by their misfortunes. As I seldom read in histories the confusions of other states without regret that I was not present, the better to consider them, so does my curiosity make me in some sort please myself in seeing with my own eyes this notable spectacle of our public death, its form and symptoms; and since I cannot hinder it, I am content to have been destined to be present therein, and thereby to instruct myself. So do we eagerly covet to see, though but in shadow and the

* "He is most potent, who is master of himself."—Seneca. 

Ep, 90.
fables of theaters, the pomp of tragic representations of human fortune; 'tis not without compassion at what we hear, but we please ourselves in rousing our displeasure, by the rarity of these pitiable events. Nothing tickles that does not pinch. And good historians skip over, as stagnant water and dead sea, calm narrations, to occupy themselves with wars and seditions, which they know are most acceptable to the readers.

I question whether I can decently confess with how small a sacrifice of its repose and tranquillity, I have passed over above the one-half of my life amid the ruin of my country. I make my patience somewhat too cheap, in accidents that do not absolutely assail myself; and do not so much regard what they take from me, as what remains safe, both within and without. There is comfort in evading, one while this, another while that, of the evils that are leveled, at ourselves too, at last, but at present hurt others only about us; as also, that in matters of public interest, the more universally my affection is dispersed, the weaker it is: to which may be added, that it is half true: "Tantum ex publicis malis sentimus, quantum ad privatias res pertinet;"* and that the health from which we fell was so ill, that itself relieves the regret we should have for it. It was health, but only in comparison with the sickness that has succeeded it: we are not fallen from any great height; the corruption and brigandage which are in dignity and office, seem to me the most insupportable: we are less injuriously rifled in a wood, than in a place of security. It was an universal juncture of particular members, each rotten in emulation of the others: and most of them with inveterate ulcers, that neither admitted nor required any cure. This convulsion, therefore, really more animated than pressed me, by the assistance of my conscience, which was not only at peace within itself, but elevated, and I did not find any reason to complain of myself. Also, as God never sends evils, any more than goods, absolutely pure to men, my health continued at that time more than usually good; and, as I can do nothing without it, there are few things that I cannot do with it. It afforded me means to rouse up all my faculties, and to lay my hand

* "We are only so far sensible of public evils, as they respect our private affairs."—Livy, xxx. 44.
before the wound that would else, peradventure, have gone farther; and I experienced, in my patience, that I had some stand against fortune; and that it must be a great shock could throw me out of the saddle. I do not say this to provoke her to give me a more vigorous charge: I am her humble servant, and submit to her pleasure; let her be content in God's name. Do you ask if I am sensible of her assaults? Yes, certainly. But, as those who are possessed and oppressed with sorrow, sometimes suffer themselves, nevertheless, by intervals to taste a little pleasure, and are sometimes surprised with a smile, so have I so much power over myself, as to make my ordinary condition quiet and free from disturbing thoughts; yet I suffer myself, withal, by fits to be surprised with the stings of those unpleasing imaginations that assault me, while I am arming myself to drive them away, or at least to wrestle with them.

But behold another aggravation of the evil which befell me in the tail of the rest! both without doors and within I was assailed with a most violent plague, violent in comparison of all others; for as sound bodies are subject to more grievous maladies, forasmuch as they are not to be forced but by such, so my very healthful air, where no contagion, however near, in the memory of man, ever took footing, coming to be corrupted, produced most strange effects:

"Mista senum et juvenum densatatur funera; nullum
Sæva caput Proserpina fugit;"*

I had to suffer this pleasant condition, that the sight of my house was frightful to me; whatever I had there was without guard, and left to the mercy of any one who wished to take it. I myself, who am so hospitable, was in very great distress for a retreat for my family; a distracted family, frightful both to its friends and itself, and filling every place with horror where it attempted to settle, having to shift its abode so soon as any one's finger began but to ache; all diseases are then concluded to be the plague, and people do not stay to examine whether they are so or no. And the mischief on't is, that, according to the rules of art, in every danger that a man comes near, he must un-

* "Old and young were buried in mixed heaps. No one escaped cruel Proserpine."—Horace, i. 28, 19.
dergo a quarantine, in fear of the evil, your imagination all the while tormenting you at pleasure, and turning even your health itself into a fever. Yet all this would have much less affected me, had I not withal been compelled to be sensible of the sufferings of others, and miserably to serve six months together for a guide to this caravan; for I carry my own antidotes within myself, which are resolution and patience. Apprehension, which is particularly feared in this disease, does not much trouble me; and, if being alone, I should have been taken, it had been a less cheerless and more remote departure; 'tis a kind of death that I do not think of the worst sort; 'tis commonly short, stupid, without pain, and consoled by the public condition; without ceremony, without mourning, without a crowd. But as to the people about us, the hundredth part of them could not be saved:

"Vides desertaque regna
Pastorum, et longe saltus lateque vacantes."*

In this place my largest revenue is pure manual labor; what an hundred man plowed for me, lay a long time fallow.

But then, what example of resolution did we not see in the simplicity of all this people? Generally, every one renounced all care of life; the grapes, the principal wealth of the country, remained untouched upon the vines; every man indifferently prepared for and expected death, either to-night or to-morrow, with a countenance and voice so far from fear, as if they had come to terms with this necessity, and that it was an universal and inevitable sentence. 'Tis always such; but how slender hold has the resolution of dying? The distance and difference of a few hours, the sole consideration of company, renders its apprehension various to us. Observe these people; by reason that they die in the same month, children, young people, and old, they are no longer astonished at it: they no longer lament. I saw some who were afraid of staying behind, as in a dreadful solitude: and I did not commonly observe any other solicitude among them, than that of sepulture; they were troubled to see the dead bodies scattered about the fields, at the mercy of the

*"You would have seen the fields a desert, and everywhere forsaken groves."—Virgil, Georg., iii. 478.
wild beasts, that presently flocked thither. How differing are the fancies of men! the Neorites, a nation subjected by Alexander, threw the bodies of their dead into the deepest and less frequented part of their woods, on purpose to have them there eaten; the only sepulture reputed happy among them.* Some, who were yet in health, dug their own graves; others laid themselves down in them while alive; and a laborer of mine, in dying, with his hands and feet pulled the earth upon him. Was not this to nestle and settle himself to sleep at greater ease? A bravery in some sort like that of the Roman soldiers, who, after the battle of Cannae, were found with their heads thrust into holes in the earth, which they had made, and in suffocating themselves, with their own hands pulled the earth about their ears.† In short, a whole province was, by the common usage, at once brought to a course, nothing inferior in undauntedness to the most studied and premeditated resolution.

Most of the instructions of science to encourage us herein have in them more of show than of force, and more of ornament than of effect. We have abandoned Nature, and will teach her what to do; teach her who so happily and so securely conducted us; and in the meantime, from the footsteps of her instruction, and that little which, by the benefit of ignorance, remains of her image imprinted in the life of this rustic rout of unpolished men, science is constrained every day to borrow patterns for her disciples of constancy, tranquillity and innocence. It is pretty to see that these persons full of so much fine knowledge, have to imitate this foolish simplicity, and this in the primary actions of virtue; and that our wisdom must learn even from beasts, the most profitable instructions in the greatest and most necessary concerns of our life; as, how we are to live and die, manage our property, love and bring up our children, maintain justice: a singular testimony of human infirmity; and that this reason we so handle at our pleasure, finding evermore some diversity and novelty, leaves in us no apparent trace of nature. Men have done with nature as perfumers with oils: they have sophisticated her with so many argumentations and far-

* Diodorus Siculus, xvii. 105.
† Livy, xxii. 51.
fetched discourses, that she is become variable and particular to each, and has lost her proper, constant, and universal face; so that we must seek testimony from beasts, not subject to favor, corruption, or diversity of opinions. It is, indeed, true that even these themselves do not always go exactly in the path of nature, but wherein they swerve, it is so little that you may always see the track; as horses that are led, make many bounds and curvets, but 'tis always at the length of the halter, and they still follow him that leads them; and as a young hawk takes its flight, but still under the restraint of its tether. "Exsilia, tormenta, bella, morbos, naufragia meditare, . . . ut nullo sis malo tiro." * What good will this curiosity do us, to anticipate all the inconveniences of human nature, and to prepare ourselves with so much trouble against things which, peradventure, will never befall us? "Parem passis tristitiam facit, pati posse;" † not only the blow, but the wind of the blow strikes us; or, like phrenetic people—for certainly it is a frenzy—to go immediately and whip yourself, because it may so fall out that Fortune may one day make you undergo it; and to put on your furred gown at midsummer, because you will stand in need of it at Christmas! Throw yourselves, say they, into the experience of all the evils, the most extreme evils that can possibly befall you, and so be assured of them. On the contrary, the most easy and most natural way, would be to banish even the thoughts of them; they will not come soon enough; their true being will not continue with us long enough: our mind must lengthen and extend them; we must incorporate them in us beforehand, and there entertain them, as if they would not otherwise sufficiently press upon our senses. "We shall find them heavy enough when they come," says one of our masters, of none of the tender sects, but of the most severe; "in the meantime, favor thyself; believe what pleases thee best: what good will it do thee to anticipate thy ill fortune, to lose the present for fear of the future; and to make thyself miserable now, because thou

* "Meditate upon banishments, tortures, wars, diseases, and shipwrecks, that thou mayest not be a novice in any disaster."—Seneca, Ep., 91, 107.

† "It troubles men as much that they may possibly suffer, as if they really did suffer."—Idem, ibid. 74.
art to be so in time?" These are his words. Science, indeed, does us one good office, in instructing us exactly as to the dimensions of evils,

"Curis acuens mortalia corda!"*

'Twere pity that any part of their greatness should escape our sense and knowledge.

'Tis certain that, for the most part, the preparation for death has administered more torment than the thing itself. It was of old truly said, and by a very judicious author, "Minus afficit sensus fatigatio, quam cogitatio."† The sentiment of present death sometimes, of itself, animates us with a prompt resolution not to avoid a thing that is utterly inevitable: many gladiators have been seen in the olden time, who, after having fought timorously and ill, have courageously entertained death, offering their throats to the enemies' sword and bidding them despatch. The sight of future death requires a courage that is slow, and consequently hard to be got. If you know not how to die, never trouble yourself; nature will, at the time, fully and sufficiently instruct you: she will exactly do that business for you; take you no care—

"Incertam frustra, mortales, funeris horam Quæritis, et qua sit mors aditura via." . . .

"Poena minor, certam subito perferre ruinam; Quod timeas, gravius sustinuisse diu."‡

We trouble life by the care of death, and death by the care of life: the one torments, the other frights us. It is not against death that we prepare, that is too momentary a thing; a quarter of an hour's suffering, without consequence, and without damage, does not deserve especial precepts: to say the truth, we prepare ourselves against the preparations of death. Philosophy ordains that we should always have death before our eyes, to see and con-

* "Sharpening mortals by care."—Virgil, Georg., i. 123.

† "Suffering itself less afflicts the senses than the apprehension of suffering."—Quintilian, Inst. Orat., i. 12.

‡ "Mortals, in vain you seek to know the hour of death, and how it will come upon you."—Propertius, ii. 27, 1. "'Tis less painful to undergo sudden destruction: 'tis hard to bear that which you long fear."—Incert. Auct.
sider it before the time, and then gives us rules and precautions to provide that this foresight and thought do us no harm: just so do physicians, who throw us into diseases, to the end they may have whereon to employ their drugs and their art. If we have not known how to live, 'tis injustice to teach us how to die, and make the end deform from all the rest: if we have known how to live firmly and quietly, we shall know how to die so too. They may boast as much as they please, *"Tota philosophorum vita, commentatio mortis est;"* but I fancy that, though it be the end, it is not the aim of life; 'tis its end, its extremity, but not nevertheless its object; it ought itself to be its own aim and design; its true study is to order, govern, and suffer itself. In the number of several other offices, that the general and principal chapter of Knowing how to live comprehends, is this article of Knowing how to die; and, did not our fears give it weight, one of the lightest too.

To judge of them by utility and by the naked truth, the lessons of simplicity are not much inferior to those which learning teaches us: nay, quite the contrary. Men differ in sentiment and force; we must lead them to their own good according to their capacities and by various ways:

*"Quo me cumque rapit tempestas, deferor hospes."* †

I never saw any peasant among my neighbors cogitate with what countenance and assurance he should pass over his last hour; nature teaches him not to think of death till he is dying; and then he does it with a better grace than Aristotle, upon whom death presses with a double weight, both of itself and of so long a premeditation; and, therefore, it was the opinion of Caesar, that the least premeditated death was the easiest and the most happy. *"Plus dolet quam necesse est, qui anti dolet, quam necesse est."* ‡ The sharpness of this imagination springs from our curiosity: 'tis thus we ever impede ourselves, desiring to anticipate and regulate natural prescripts. It is only for

* "That the whole life of a philosopher is the meditation of his death."—Cicero, Tusc. Quæs., i. 30.

† "Wherever the tempest drives me, there I abide as a guest."—Horace, Ep. i. 1, 15.

‡ "He grieves me more than is necessary, who grieves before it is necessary."—Seneca, Ep. 95.
the doctors to dine worse for it, when in the best health, and to frown at the image of death; the common sort stand in need of no remedy or consolation, but just in the shock, and when the blow comes; and consider ou't no more than just what they endure. Is it not, then, as we say, that the stolidity and want of apprehension in the vulgar give them that patience in present evils, and that profound carelessness of future sinister accidents? That their souls, in being more gross and dull, are less penetrable and not so easily moved? If it be so, let us henceforth, in God's name, teach nothing but ignorance: 'tis the utmost fruit the sciences promise us, to which this stolidity so gently leads its disciples.

We have no want of good masters, interpreters of natural simplicity. *Socrates* shall be one; for, as I remember, he speaks something to this purpose to the judges who sat upon his life and death.* "I am afraid, my masters, that if I entreat you not to put me to death, I shall confirm the charge of my accusers, which is, that I pretend to be wiser than others, as having some more secret knowledge of things that are above and below us. I have neither frequented nor known death, nor have ever seen any person that has tried its qualities, from whom to inform myself. Such as fear it, presuppose they know it; as for my part, I neither know what it is, nor what they do in the other world. Death is, peradventure, an indifferent thing; peradventure, a thing to be desired. 'Tis nevertheless to be believed, if it be a transmigration from one place to another, that it is a bettering of one's condition to go and live with so many great persons deceased, and to be exempt from having any more to do with unjust and corrupt judges; if it be an annihilation of our being, 'tis yet a bettering of one's condition to enter into a long and peaceable night; we find nothing more sweet in life than quiet repose and a profound sleep, without dreams. The things that I know to be evil, as to injure one's neighbor, and to disobey one's superior, whether it be God or man, I carefully avoid; such as I do not know whether they be good or evil, I cannot fear them. If I am to die and leave you alive, the gods alone only know whether it will go better with you or with

* That which follows is taken from Apology of Socrates in Plato, chap. 17, etc.
me. Wherefore, as to what concerns me, you may do as you shall think fit. But according to my method of advising just and profitable things, I say that you will do your consciences more right, to set me at liberty, unless you see further into my cause than I do; and, judging according to my past actions, both public and private, according to my intentions, and according to the profit that so many of our citizens, both young and old, daily extract from my conversation, and the fruit that you all reap from me, you cannot more duly acquit yourself toward my merit, than in ordering that, my poverty considered, I should be maintained at the Prytaneum, at the public expense, a thing that I have often known you, with less reason, grant to others. Do not impute it to obstinacy or disdain, that I do not, according to the custom, supplicate and go about to move you to commiseration. I have both friends and kindred, not being, as Homer says,* begotten of wood or of a stone, no more than others, who might well present themselves before you with tears and mourning, and I have three desolate children with whom to move you to compassion; but I should do a shame to our city at the age I am, and in the reputation of wisdom which is now charged against me, to appear in such an abject form. What would men say of the other Athenians? I have always admonished those who have frequented my lectures, not to redeem their lives by an unbecoming action; and in the wars of my country, at Amphipolis, Potidea, Delia, and other expeditions where I have been, I have effectually manifested how far I was from securing my safety by my shame. I should, moreover, compromise your duty, and should invite you to unbecoming things; for 'tis not for my prayers to persuade you, but for the pure and solid reasons of justice. You have sworn to the gods to keep yourselves upright; and it would seem as if I suspected you, or would recriminate upon you that I do not believe that you are so; and I should testify against myself, not to believe them as I ought, mistrusting their conduct, and not purely committing my affair into their hands. I wholly rely upon them; and 'hold myself assured they will do in this what shall be most fit both for you and for me; good men, whether living or dead, have no reason to fear the gods."

* Odyssey, xix. 163.
Is not this an innocent child's pleading of an unimaginable loftiness, true, frank, and just, unexampled? and in what a necessity employed! Truly, he had very good reason to prefer it before that which the great orator Lysias had penned for him: admirably couched, indeed, in the judiciary style; but unworthy of so noble a criminal. Had a suppliant voice been heard out of the mouth of Socrates, that lofty virtue had struck sail in the height of its glory; and ought his rich and powerful nature to have committed her defense to art, and, in her highest proof, have renounced truth and simplicity, the ornaments of his speaking, to adorn and deck herself with the embellishments of figures, and the flourishes of a premeditated speech? He did very wisely, and like himself, not to corrupt the tenor of an incorrupt life,* and so sacred an image of the human form, to spin out his decrepitude another year, and to betray the immortal memory of that glorious end. He owed his life not to himself, but to the example of the world; had it not been a public damage, that he should have concluded it after a lazy and obscure manner? Assuredly, that careless and indifferent consideration of his death deserved that posterity should consider it so much the more, as indeed they did; and there is nothing so just in justice than that which fortune ordained for his recommendation; for the Athenians abominated all those who had been causers of his death to such a degree, that they avoided them as excommunicated persons, and looked upon everything as polluted that had been touched by them; no one would wash with them in the public baths, none would salute or own acquaintance with them: so that, at last, unable longer to support this public hatred, they hanged themselves.

If any one shall think that, among so many other examples that I had to choose out of in the sayings of Socrates for my present purpose, I have made an ill choice of this, and shall judge this discourse of his elevated above common conceptions, I must tell them that I have purposely selected it; for I am of another opinion, and hold it to be a discourse, in rank and simplicity, much below and behind common conceptions. He represents, in an inartificial boldness and infantine security, the pure and first

* Seneca, Ep. 31.
impression and ignorance of nature; for it is to be believed that we have naturally a fear of pain, but not of death, by reason of itself; 'tis a part of our being, and no less essential than living. To what end should nature have begotten in us a hatred to it and a horror of it, considering that it is of so great utility to her in maintaining the succession and vicissitude of her works? and that in this universal republic, it conduces more to birth and augmentation, than to loss or ruin?

"Sic rerum summa novatur." *

"Mille animas una necata dedit." †

"The failing of one life is the passage to a thousand other lives." Nature has imprinted in beasts the care of themselves and of their conservation; they proceed so far as to be timorous of being worse, of hitting or hurting themselves, of our haltering and beating them, accidents subject to their sense and experience; but that we should kill them, they cannot fear, nor have they the faculty to imagine and conclude such a thing as death; it is said, indeed, that we see them not only cheerfully undergo it, horses for the most part neighing and swans singing when they die, but, moreover, seek it at need, of which elephants have given many examples.

But besides, is not the way of arguing which Socrates here makes use of, equally admirable both in simplicity and vehemence? Truly, it is much more easy to speak like Aristotle, and to live like Caesar, than to speak and live as Socrates did; there lies the extreme degree of perfection and difficulty; art cannot reach it. Now, our faculties are not so trained up: we do not try, we do not know them; we invest ourselves with those of others, and let our own lie idle; as some one may say of me, that I have here only made a nosegay of culled flowers, and have brought nothing of my own but the thread that ties them.

In earnest, I have so far yielded to the public opinion, that those borrowed ornaments accompany me, but I would not have them totally cover and hide me; that is quite contrary to my design, who desire to make a show of nothing but what is my own, and what is my own by nature; and had I taken my own advice, I had at all hazards spoken

* Lucretius, ii. 74. † Ovid, Fasti, i. 380.
purely alone. I more and more load myself every day,* beyond my purpose and first method, upon the account of idleness and the humor of the age. If it misbecome me, as I believe it does, 'tis no matter; it may be of use to some others. Such there are who quote Plato and Homer, who never saw either of them; and as I also have taken things out of places far enough distant from their source. Without pains and without learning, having a thousand volumes about me in the place where I write, I can presently borrow, if I please, from a dozen such scrap-gatherers, people about whom I do not much trouble myself, wherewith to trick up this treatise of Physiognomy; there needs no more but a preliminary epistle of the German cut to stuff me with illustrations. And so 'tis we go a begging for a ticklish glory, cheating the sottish world. These lumber pies of commonplaces, wherewith so many furnish their studies, are of little use but to common subjects, and serve but to show us, and not to direct us: a ridiculous fruit of learning that Socrates so pleasantly discusses against Euthydemus. I have seen books made of things that were never either studied or understood; the author committing to several of his learned friends the examination of this and t'other matter to compile it, contenting himself, for his share, with having projected the design, and by his industry to have tied together this faggot of unknown provisions; the ink and paper, at least, are his. This is to buy or borrow a book, and not to make one; 'tis to show men not that he can make a book, but that, whereof they may be in doubt, he cannot make one. A president, in my hearing, boasted that he had cluttered together two hundred and odd commonplaces in one of his judgments; in telling which, he deprived himself of the glory he had got by it: in my opinion, a pusillanimous and absurd vanity for such a subject and such a person. I do quite contrary; and among so many borrowed things, am glad if I can steal one, disguising and altering it for some new service; at the hazard of having it said that 'tis for want

* In fact, the first edition of the Essays (Bordeaux, 1580), has very few quotations. These became more numerous in the edition of 1588; but the multitude of classical texts which at times encumber Montaigne's page, only dates from the posthumous edition of 1595: he had made these collections in the four last years of his life, as an amusement of his "idleness."—Leclerc.
of understanding its natural use; I give it some particular address of my own hand, to the end it may not be so absolutely foreign. These set their thefts in show, and value themselves upon them, and so have more credit with the the laws than I; we naturalists* think that there is a great and incomparable preference in the honor of invention over that of quotation.

*If I would have spoken by learning, I had spoken sooner; I had written in a time nearer to my studies, when I had more wit and better memory; and should sooner have trusted to the vigor of that age than of this, would I have professed writing. And what if this gracious favor‡ which fortune has lately offered me upon the account of this work, had befallen me in that time of my life, instead of this, wherein 'tis equally desirable to possess, soon to be lost! Two of my acquaintance, great men in this faculty, have, in my opinion, lost half, in refusing to publish at forty years old, that they might stay till threescore. Maturity has its defects as well as green years, and worse; and old age is as unfit for this kind of business as for any other. He who commits his decrepitude to the press, plays the fool if he thinks to squeeze anything out thence, that does not relish of dreaming, dotage and draveling; the mind grows costive and thick in growing old. I deliver my ignorance in pomp and state, and my learning meagerly and poorly: this accidentally and accessorially, that principally and expressly; and write specifically of nothing, but nothing, nor of any science but of that inscience. I have chosen a time when my life, which I am to give an account of, lies wholly before me: what remains has more to do with death; and of my death itself, should I find it a prating death, as others do, I would willingly give an account at my departure.

Socrates was a perfect exemplar in all great qualities, and I am vexed that he had so deformed a face and body as is said, and so unsuitable to the beauty of his soul, himself being so amorous and such an admirer of beauty: Nature did him wrong. There is nothing more probable than the conformity and relation of the body to the soul: "Ipsi animi magni reperit, qui in corpore locati sint:

* Lovers of the natural and true.

‡ His acquaintance with Mademoiselle de Gournay.
multa enim e corpore existunt, quae acuant mentem: multa, quae obtundunt;"* this refers to an unnatural ugliness and deformity of limbs; but we call ugliness also an unseemliness at first sight, which is principally lodged in the face, and disgusts us on very slight grounds, by the complexion, a spot, a rugged countenance, for some reasons often wholly inexplicable, in members nevertheless of good symmetry and perfect. The deformity, that clothed a very beautiful soul in La Boetie, † was of this predicament; that superficial ugliness, which nevertheless is always the most imperious, is of least prejudice to the state of the mind, and of little certainty in the opinion of men. The other, which by a more proper name, is called deformity, more substantial, strikes deeper in. Not every shoe of smooth shining leather, but every shoe well made, shows the shape of the foot within. As Socrates said of his, it betrayed equal ugliness in his soul, had he not corrected it by education; ‡ but in saying so, I believe he did but scoff, as his custom was; never so excellent a soul made itself.

I cannot often enough repeat how great an esteem I have for beauty, that potent and advantageous quality; he called it "a short tyranny," and Plato, "the privilege of nature." We have nothing that excels it in reputation; it has the first place in the commerce of men; it presents itself in the front; seduces and prepossesses our judgments with great authority and wonderful impression. Phryne had lost her cause in the hands of an excellent advocate, if, opening her robe, she had not corrupted her judges by the luster of her beauty.§ And I find that Cyrus, Alexander, and Caesar, the three masters of the world, never neglected beauty in their greatest affairs; no more did the first Scipio. The same word in Greek signifies both fair and good; || and the Holy Word often says good, when it means

* "It is of great consequence in what bodies souls are placed, for many things spring from the body that sharpen the mind, and many that blunt and dull it."—CICERO, Tusc. Quæs., i. 33.

† Which Cotton translates "of Boeotia."

‡ Cicero, Tusc. Quæs., iv. 37; De Facto, c. 5.

§ Sextus Empiricus adversus Mathematicos, x. 1, and Quintilian, Inst. Orat., ii. 15; but Athenæus attributes the honor of her victory to Hyperides, the celebrated orator, who was her counsel.

|| Καλός κάγαδος.
fair; I should willingly maintain the priority in good things, according to the song that Plato * calls an idle thing, taken out of some ancient poet; “health, beauty, riches.” Aristotle says that the right of command appertains to the beautiful; and that, when there is a person whose beauty comes near the images of the gods, veneration is equally due to him. † To him who asked why people oftener and longer frequent the company of handsome persons: “That question,” said he, “is only to be asked by the blind.” ‡ Most of the philosophers, and the greatest, paid for their schooling, and acquired wisdom by the favor and mediation of their beauty. Not only in the men that serve me, but also in the beasts, I consider it within two fingers’ breadth of goodness.

And yet I fancy that those features and molds of face, and those lineaments, by which men guess at our internal complexions and our fortunes to come, is a thing that does not very directly and simply lie under the chapter of beauty and deformity, no more than every good odor and serenity of air promises health, nor all fog and stink, infection in a time of pestilence. Such as accuse ladies of contradicting their beauty by their manners, do not always hit right; for, in a face which is none of the best, there may dwell some air of probity and trust; as on the contrary, I have read, between two beautiful eyes, menaces of a dangerous and malignant nature. There are favorable physiognomies, so that in a crowd of victorious enemies, you shall presently choose, among men you never saw before, one rather than another, to whom to surrender, and with whom to intrust your life; and yet not properly upon the consideration of beauty.

A person’s look is but a feeble warranty; and yet it is something considerable too; and if I had to lash them, I would most severely scourge the wicked ones who belie and betray the promises that nature has planted in their foreheads; I should with greater severity punish malice under a mild and gentle aspect. It seems as if there were some lucky and some unlucky faces; and I believe there is some art in distinguishing affable from merely simple faces, severe from rugged, malicious from pensive, scornful from

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* In the Gorgias.
† Politics, i. 3.
‡ Diogenes Laertius, v. 20.
melancholic, and such other bordering qualities. There are beauties which are not only haughty, but sour, and others that are not only gentle but more than that, insipid; to prognosticate from them future events, is a matter that I shall leave undecided.

I have, as I have said elsewhere, as to my own concern, simply and implicitly embraced this ancient rule, "That we cannot fail in following Nature," and that the sovereign precept is to "conform ourselves to her." I have not, as Socrates did, corrected my natural composition by the force of reason, and have not in the least disturbed my inclination by art; I have let myself go as I came; I contend not; my two principal parts live, of their own accord, in peace and good intelligence, but my nurse's milk, thank God, was tolerably wholesome and good. Shall I say this by the way? that I see, in greater esteem than 'tis worth, and in use solely among ourselves, a certain image of scholastic probity, a slave to precepts, and fettered with hope and fear. I would have it such as that laws and religions should not make, but perfect and authorize it; that finds it has wherewithal to support itself without help, born and rooted in us from the seed of universal reason, imprinted in every man by nature. That reason which straightens Socrates from his vicious bend, renders him obedient to the gods and men of authority in his city; courageous in death, not because his soul is immortal, but because he is mortal. "Tis a doctrine ruinous to all government, and much more hurtful than ingenious and subtle, which persuades the people that a religious belief is alone sufficient, and without conduct, to satisfy the divine justice. Use demonstrates to us a vast distinction between devotion and conscience.

I have a favorable aspect, both in form and interpretation.

"Quid dixi, habere me? imo habui, Chreme." *

"Heu! tantum attriti corporis ossa vides;" †

and that makes quite a contrary show to that of Socrates. It has often befallen me, that upon the mere credit of my

* "Have, did I say? no, Chremes, I had."—TERENCE, Heaut., act 1. sc. 1, v. 42.
† "Alas, of a worn body thou but seest the bones."
presence and air, persons who had no manner of knowledge of me, have put a very great confidence in me, whether in their own affairs or mine; and I have in foreign parts thence obtained singular and rare favors. But the two following examples are, peradventure, worth particular relation: a certain person planned to surprise my house and me in it; his scheme was to come to my gates alone, and to be importunate to be let in. I knew him by name, and had fair reason to repose confidence in him, as being my neighbor and something related to me. I caused the gates to be opened to him, as I do to every one. There I found him, with every appearance of alarm, his horse panting, and all in a foam. He presently popped in my ears this flim-flam: "That, about half a league off, he had met with a certain enemy of his, whom I also knew, and had heard of their quarrel; that his enemy had given him a very brisk chase, and that having been surprised in disorder, and his party being too weak, he had fled to my gates for refuge; and that he was in great trouble for his followers, whom (he said) he concluded to be all either dead or taken." I innocently did my best to comfort, assure, and refresh him. Shortly after came four or five of his soldiers, who presented themselves in the same countenance and affright, to get in too; and after them more, and still more, very well mounted and armed, to the number of five and twenty or thirty, pretending that they had the enemy at their heels. This mystery began a little to awaken my suspicion; I was not ignorant what an age I lived in, how much my house might be envied, and I had several examples of others of my acquaintance to whom a mishap of this sort had happened. But, thinking there was nothing to be got by having begun to do a courtesy, unless I went through with it, and that I could not disengage myself from them without spoiling all, I let myself go the most natural and simple way, as I always do, and invited them all to come in. And in truth I am naturally very little inclined to suspicion and distrust; I willingly incline toward excuse and the gentlest interpretation; I take men according to the common order, and do not more believe in those perverse and unnatural inclinations, unless convinced by manifest evidence, than I do in monsters and miracles; and I am, moreover, a man who willingly commit myself to Fortune, and throw myself headlong into her arms; and I have hitherto found more reason to applaud than to blame myself for so doing, hav-
ing ever found her more discreet about, and a greater friend to my affairs, than I am myself. There are some actions in my life whereof the conduct may justly be called difficult, or, if you please, prudent; of these, supposing the third part to have been my own, doubtless the other two-thirds were absolutely hers. We make, methinks, a mistake, in that we do not enough trust heaven with our affairs, and pretend to more from our own conduct than appertains to us: and therefore it is that our designs so often miscarry. Heaven is jealous of the extent that we attribute to the right of human prudence above its own, and cuts it all the shorter by how much the more we amplify it. The last comers remained on horseback in my courtyard, while their leader, who was with me in the parlor, would not have his horse put up in the stable, saying he should immediately retire, so soon as he had news of his men. He saw himself master of his enterprise, and nothing now remained but its execution. He has since several times said (for he was not ashamed to tell the story himself) that my countenance and frankness had snatched the treachery out of his hands. He again mounted his horse; his followers, who had their eyes intent upon him, to see when he would give the signal, being very much astonished to find him come away and leave his prey behind him.

Another time, relying upon some truce, just published in the army, I took a journey through a very ticklish country. I had not ridden far but I was discovered, and two or three parties of horse, from various places, were sent out to seize me; one of them overtook me on the third day, and I was attacked by fifteen or twenty gentlemen in visors, followed at a distance by a band of foot soldiers. I was taken, withdrawn into the thick of a neighboring forest, dismounted, robbed, my trunks rifled, my money-box taken, and my horses and equipage divided among new masters. We had, in this copse, a very long contest about my ransom, which they set so high, that it was manifest I was not known to them. They were, moreover, in a very great debate about my life; and, in truth, there were various circumstances that clearly showed the danger I was in.

"Tunc animis opus, Ænea, tunc pectore firme."

* "Then, Æneas, there was needed an undaunted courage."—Æneid, vi. 261.
I still insisted upon the truce, too willing they should have
the gain of what they had already taken from me, which was
not to be despised, without promise of any other ransom.
After two or three hours that we had been in this place,
and that they had mounted me upon a pitiful jade that
that was not likely to run from them, and committed me
to the guard of fifteen or twenty harquebusers, and dis-
persed my servants to others, having given order that they
should carry us away prisoners several ways, and I being
already got some two or three musket-shots from the
place,

"Jam prece Pollucis, jam Castoris, implorata," *

behold a sudden and unexpected alteration; I saw the
chief return to me with gentler language, making search
among the troopers for my scattered property, and caus-
ing as much as could be recovered, to be restored to me,
even to my money-box; but the best present they made me,
was my liberty, for the rest did not much concern me at
that time. The true cause of so sudden a change, and of
this reconsideration, without any apparent impulse, and of
so miraculous a repentance, in such a time, in a planned
and deliberate enterprise, and become just by usage (for, at
the first dash, I plainly confessed to them of what party I
was, and whither I was going), truly, I do not yet rightly
understand. The most prominent among them, who
pulled off his visor and told me his name, repeatedly told
me at the time over and over again, that I owed my
deliverance to my countenance, and the liberty and bold-
ness of my speech, that rendered me unworthy of such a
misadventure, and should secure me from its repetition.
'Tis possible that the Divine goodness willed to make use
of this vain instrument for my preservation; and it, more-
over, defended me the next day from other and worse
ambushes, of which these my assailants had given me
warning. The last of these two gentlemen is yet living,
himself to tell the story; the first was killed not long ago.

If my face did not answer for me, if men did not read in
my eyes and in my voice the innocence of my intention, I
had not lived so long without quarrels and without giving
offense, seeing the indiscreeet liberty I take to say, right or

* "Having prayed for the aid of Castor and Pollux."—Catullus,
lxvi. 65.
wrong, whatever comes into my head, and to judge so rashly of things. This way may, with reason, appear uncivil, and ill adapted to our way of conversation; but I have never met with any who judged it outrageous or malicious, or that took offense at my liberty, if he had it from my own mouth; words repeated have another kind of sound and sense. Nor do I hate any person; and I am so slow to offend, that I cannot do it, even upon the account of reason itself; and when occasion has required me to sentence criminals, I have rather chosen to fail in point of justice than to do it: "Ut magis peccari nolim, quam satis animi ad vindicanda peccata habeam." *

Aristotle, 'tis said, was reproached for having been too merciful to a wicked man: "I was, indeed," said he, "merciful to the man, but not to his wickedness." † Ordinary judgments exasperate themselves to punishment by the horror of the fact: but it cools mine; the horror of the first murder makes me fear a second; and the deformity of the first cruelty makes me abhor all imitation of it. That may be applied to me, who am but a Knave of Clubs, which was said of Charillus, king of Sparta: "He cannot be good, seeing he is not evil to the wicked." ‡ Or thus—for Plutarch delivers it both these ways, as he does a thousand other things, variously and contradictorily—"He must needs be good, because he is so even to the wicked." § Even as in lawful actions, I dislike to employ myself, when for such as are displeased at it; so, to say the truth, in unlawful things, I do not make conscious enough of employing myself, when for such as are willing.

* "So that I had rather men should not commit faults, than that I should have the heart to condemn them." —Livy, xxix. 21.

† Diogenes Laertius, v. 17.

‡ Plutarch, On Envy and Hatred.

§ "I cannot imagine in which of Plutarch's essays Montaigne found this version." —Coste.
There is no desire more natural than that of knowledge. We try all ways that can lead us to it; where reason is wanting, we therein employ experience.

"Per varios usus artem experientia fecit, 
Exemplo monstrante viam," *

which is a means much more weak and cheap; but truth is no great thing, that we ought not to disdain any mediation that will guide us to it. Reason has so many forms, that we know not to which to take; experience has no fewer; the consequence we would draw from the comparison of events is unsure, by reason they are always unlike. There is no quality so universal in this image of things, as diversity and variety. Both the Greeks and the Latins, and we, for the most express example of similitude, employ that of eggs; and yet there have been men, particularly one at Delphos, who could distinguish marks of difference among eggs so well, that he never mistook one for another; and, having many hens, could tell which had laid it. Dissimilitude intrudes itself of itself in our works; no art can arrive at perfect similitude: neither Perrozet, nor any other cardmarker, can so carefully polish and blanch the backs of his cards, that some gamesters will not distinguish them by seeing them only shuffled by another. Resemblance does not so much make one, as difference makes another. Nature has obliged herself to make nothing other, that was not unlike.

And yet I am not much pleased with his opinion, who thought by the multitude of laws to curb the authority of judges, in cutting out for them their several parcels; he was not aware that there is as much liberty and latitude in the interpretation of laws, as in their form; and they but fool themselves, who think to lessen and stop our disputes by recalling us to the express words of the Bible: forasmuch as our mind does not find the field less spacious wherein to controvert the sense of another, than to deliver his own; and as if there were less animosity and tartness

* "By various proofs, experience has made art: example showing the way." —Manilus, i. 59.
in commentary than in invention. We see how much he was mistaken; for we have more laws in France than all the rest of the world put together, and more than would be necessary for the government of all the worlds of Epicurus: "Ut olim flagitiis, sic nunc legibus laboramus:"* and yet we have left so much to the opinions and decisions of our judges, that there never was so full a liberty or so full a license. What have our legislators gained by culling out a hundred thousand particular cases, and by applying to these a hundred thousand laws? This number holds no manner of proportion with the infinite diversity of human actions; the multiplication of our inventions will never arrive at the variety of examples; add to these a hundred times as many more, it will still not happen, that of events to come, there shall one be found that, in this vast number of millions of events so chosen and recorded, shall so tally with any other one, and be so exactly coupled and matched with it, that there will not remain some circumstance and diversity which will require a diverse judgment. There is little relation between our actions, which are in perpetual mutation, and fixed and immutable laws; the most to be desired, are those that are the most rare, the most simple and general: and I am even of opinion, that we had better have none at all, than to have them in so prodigious a number as we have.

Nature always gives them better and happier than those we make ourselves. Witness the picture of the Golden Age of the poets, and the state wherein we see nations live, who have no other: some there are, who for their only judge, take the first passer-by that travels along their mountains,† to determine their cause: and others who, on their market day, choose out some one among them upon the spot to decide their controversies. What danger would there be, that the wisest among us should so determine ours, according to occurrences, and at sight, without obligation of example and consequence? For every foot, its own shoe. King Ferdinand, sending colonies to the Indies, wisely provided that they should not carry along with

* "So that as formerly we were oppressed with wickedness, we are now oppressed with laws."—Tacitus, Annal., iii. 25.

† Coste is of opinion that Montaigne here refers more especially to the little republic of San Marino.
them any students of the long-robe, for fear lest suits should get footing in that new world, as being a science in its own nature, the mother of altercation and division: judging with Plato,* "that lawyers and physicians are the pests of a country."

Whence does it come to pass that our common language, so easy for all other uses, becomes obscure, and unintelligible in wills and contracts? and that he who so clearly expresses himself, in whatever else he speaks or writes, cannot find in these, any way of declaring himself that does not fall into doubt and contradiction? if it be not that the princes of that art, applying themselves with a peculiar attention to cull out portentous words and to contrive artificial sentences, have so weighed every syllable, and so thoroughly sifted every sort of quirking connection, that they are now confounded and intangled in the infinity of figures and minute divisions, and can no more fall within any rule or prescription, nor any certain intelligence: "Confusum est, quidquid usque in pulverem sectum est." † As you see children trying to bring a mass of quicksilver to a certain number of parts; the more they press and work it, and endeavor to reduce it to their own will, the more they irritate the liberty of this generous metal; it evades their endeavor, and sprinkles itself into so many separate bodies as frustrate all reckoning; so is it here; for in subdividing these subtleties, we teach men to increase their doubts; they put us into a way of extending and diversifying difficulties, and lengthen and disperse them. In sowing and retailing questions, they make the world fructify and increase in uncertainties and disputes, as the earth is made fertile by being crumbled and dug deep: "Difficultatim facit doctrina." ‡ We doubted of Ulpian, and are now still more perplexed with Bartolus and Baldus. We should efface the trace of this innumerable diversity of opinions; not adorn ourselves with it, and fill posterity with crotchets. I know not what to say to it; but experience makes it manifest, that so many interpretations dissipate truth, and break it. Aristotle

* Republic, iii.
† "Whatever is beaten into powder is confused."—Seneca, Ep. 89.
‡ "Doctrine begets difficulty."—Quintilian, Instil. Orat., x. 3.
wrote to be understood; if he could not do this, much less will another that is not so good at it; and a third than he who expressed his own thoughts. We open the matter, and spill it in pouring out: of one subject we make a thousand, and in multiplying and subdividing them, fall again into the infinity of atoms of Epicurus. Never did two men make the same judgment of the same thing; and it is impossible to find two opinions exactly alike, not only in several men, but in the same man, at diverse hours. I often find matter of doubt in things of which the commentary has disdained to take notice; I am most apt to stumble in an even country, like some horses that I have known, that make most trips in the smoothest way.

Who will not say that glosses augment doubts and ignorance, since there’s no one book to be found, either human or divine, which the world busies itself about, whereof the difficulties are cleared by interpretation. The hundredth commentator passes it on to the next, still more knotty and perplexed than he found it. When were we ever agreed among ourselves: “this book has enough; there is now no more to be said about it?” This is most apparent in the law; we give the authority of law to infinite doctors, infinite decrees, and as many interpretations: yet do we find any end of the need of interpreting? is there, for all that, any progress or advancement toward peace, or do we stand in need of any fewer advocates and judges, than when this great mass of law was yet in its first infancy? On the contrary, we darken and bury intelligence; we can no longer discover it, but at the mercy of so many fences and barriers. Men do not know the natural disease of the mind; it does nothing but ferret and inquire, and is eternally wheeling, juggling, and perplexing itself like silk-worms, and then suffocates itself in its work; “Mus in pice.” * It thinks it discovers at a great distance, I know not what glimpse of light and imaginary truth; but while running to it, so many difficulties, hindrances and new inquisitions cross it, that it loses its way, and is made drunk with the motion: not much unlike Æsop’s dogs, that seeing something like a dead body floating in the sea, and not being able to approach it, set to work to drink the water and lay the passage dry, and so choked themselves. To

* “A mouse in a pitch barrel.”
which, what one Crates* said of the writings of Heraclitus, falls pat enough, "that they required a reader who could swim well," so that the depth and weight of his doctrine might not overwhelm and stifle him. "Tis nothing but particular weakness that makes us content with what others or ourselves have found out in this chase after knowledge: one of better understanding will not rest so content; there is always room for one to follow, nay, even for ourselves; and another road: there is no end of our inquisitions: our end is in the other world. "Tis a sign either that the mind has grown short-sighted when it is satisfied, or that it has got weary. No generous mind can stop in itself; it will still tend further, and beyond its power; it has sallied beyond its effects; if it do not advance and press forward, and retire, and rush and wheel about, 'tis but half alive: its pursuits are without bound or method; its aliment is admiration, the chase, ambiguity, which Apollo sufficiently declared in always speaking to us in a double, obscure, and oblique sense; not feeding, but amusing and puzzling us. "Tis an irregular and perpetual motion, without model and without aim; its inventions heat, pursue, and inter-produce one another.

"Ainsi veoid on, en un ruisseau coulant,
Sans fin l'une eau, apres l'autre roulant;
Et tout de reng, d'une eternel conduit,
L'une snyt l'autre, et l'une l'autre fuyt.
Par cette-cy, celle-là est poulsee,
Et cette-cy par l'autre est devancée:
Tousiours l'eau va dans l'eau; et tousiours est-ce
Mesme ruisseau, et tousiours eau diverse." *

There is more ado to interpret interpretations than to interpret things; and more books upon books than upon any other subject; we do nothing but comment upon one

* "Not Crates, but Socrates."—Diogenes Laertius. ii. 12, 22.
† Etienne de la Boetie; thus translated by Cotton:

"So in a running stream one wave we see
After another roll incessantly,
And as they glide each does successively
Pursue the other, each the other fly;
By this that's evermore pushed on, and this
By that continually preceded is;
The water still does into water swill,
Still the same brook, but different water still."
another. Every place swarms with commentaries; of authors there is great scarcity. Is it not the principal and most reputed knowledge of our later ages to understand the learned? Is it not the common and final end of all studies? Our opinions are grafted upon one another; the first serves as a stock to the second, the second to the third, and so forth; thus step by step we climb the ladder: whence it comes to pass that he who is mounted highest, has often more honor than merit, for he is got up but an inch upon the shoulders of the last but one.

How often, and, peradventure, how foolishly, have I extended my book, to make it speak of itself; foolishly, if for no other reason but this, that it should remind me of what I say of others who do the same; that the frequent amorous glances they cast upon their work witness that their hearts pant with self-love; and that even the disdainful severity wherewith they scourge them, are but the dandlings and caressings of maternal love; as Aristotle, whose valuing and undervaluing himself often springs from the same air of arrogance.* My own excuse is, that I ought in this to have more liberty than others, forasmuch as I write specifically of myself and of my writings, as I do of my other actions; that my theme turns upon itself; but I know not whether others will accept this excuse.

I have observed in Germany, that Luther has left as many divisions and disputes about the doubt of his opinions, and more than he himself raised upon the Holy Scriptures. Our contest is verbal: I ask what nature is, what pleasure, circle and substitution are? the question is about words, and is answered accordingly. A stone is a body; but if a man should further urge: "And what is a body?"—"Substance." "And what is substance?" and so on, he would drive the respondent to the end of his Calepin.† We exchange one word for another, and often for one less understood. I better know what Man is, than I know what Animal is, or Mortal, or Rational. To satisfy one doubt, they pop me in the ear with three; 'tis the Hydra's head. Socrates asked Menon, "What virtue

† Calepin (Ambrogio da Calepio), a famous lexicographer of the fifteenth century. His Polyglot Dictionary became so famous, that Calepin became a common appellation for a lexicon.
was."* "There is," says Menon, "the virtue of a man and of a woman, of a magistrate and of a private person, of an old man and of a child." "Very fine," cried Socrates, "we were in quest of one virtue, and thou hast brought us a whole swarm." We put one question, and they return us a whole hive. As no event, no face, entirely resembles another, so do they not entirely differ: an ingenious mixture of nature. If our faces were not alike, we could not distinguish man from beast; if they were not unlike, we could not distinguish one man from another; all things hold by some similitude; every example halts and the relation which is drawn from experience is always faulty and imperfect. Comparisons are ever coupled at one end or the other; so do the laws serve, and are fitted to every one of our affairs, by some wrested, biased, and forced interpretation.

Since the ethic laws, that concern the particular duty of every one in himself, are so hard to be framed, as we see they are, 'tis no wonder if those which govern so many particulars are much more so. Do but consider the form of this justice that governs us; 'tis a true testimony of human weakness, so full is it of error and contradiction. What we find to be favor and severity in justice—and we find so much of them both, that I know not whether the medium is as often met with—are sickly and unjust members of the very body and essence of justice. The country people run to bring me news in great haste, that they have just left in a forest of mine a man with a hundred wounds upon him, who was yet breathing, and begged of them water for pity's sake, and help to carry him to some place of relief; they tell me they dared not go near him, but have run away, lest the officers of justice should catch them there; and as happens to those who are found near a murdered person, they should be called in question about this accident, to their utter ruin, having neither money nor friends to defend their innocence. What could I have said to these people? 'Tis certain that this office of humanity would have brought them into trouble.

How many innocent people have we known that have been punished, and this without the judge's fault; and how many that have not arrived at our knowledge? This

* Plato; In Menon.
happened in my time: certain men were condemned to die for a murder committed: their sentence, if not pronounced, at least determined and concluded on. The judges, just in the nick, are informed by the officers of an inferior court hard by, that they have some men in custody, who have directly confessed the murder, and made an indubitable discovery of all the particulars of the fact. Yet it was gravely deliberated whether or not they ought to suspend the execution of the sentence already passed upon the first accused: they considered the novelty of the example judicially, and the consequence of reversing judgments; that the sentence was passed, and the judges deprived of repentance; and in the result, the poor devils were sacrificed by the forms of justice. Philip, or some other,* provided against a like inconvenience, after this manner. He had condemned a man in a great fine toward another by an absolute judgment. The truth some time after being discovered, he found that he had passed an unjust sentence. On one side was the reason of the cause; on the other side, the reason of the judicial forms: he in some sort satisfied both, leaving the sentence in the state it was, and out of his own purse recompensing the condemned party. But he had to do with a reparable affair; my men were irreparably hanged. How many condemnations have I seen, more criminal than the crimes themselves?

All which makes me remember the ancient opinions † "That 'tis of necessity a man must do wrong by retail, who will do right in gross; and injustice in little things, who would come to do justice in great: that human justice is formed after the model of physic, according to which, all that is useful is also just and honest; and of what is held by the Stoics, that Nature herself proceeds contrary to justice in most of her works: and of what is received by the Cyrenaics, that there is nothing just of itself, ‡ but that customs and laws make justice: and what the Theodorians held, that theft, sacrilege, and all sorts of uncleanness, are just in a sage, if he knows them to be profitable to him."§

* It was Philip, king of Macedon.
† Plutarch, Instructions for Statesmen, c. 21.
‡ Diogenes Laertius, ii. 92.
§ Idem, i. 99.
There is no remedy: I am in the same case that Alcibiades was,* that I will never, if I can help it, put myself into the hands of a man who may determine as to my head; where my life and honor shall more depend upon the skill and diligence of my attorney than on my own innocence. I would venture myself with such justice as would take notice of my good deeds, as well as my ill; where I had as much to hope as to fear: indemnity is not sufficient pay to a man who does better than not to do amiss. Our justice presents to us but one hand, and that the left hand, too; let him be who he may, he shall be sure to come off with loss.

In China, of which kingdom the government and arts, without commerce with, or knowledge of ours, surpass our examples in several excellent features, and of which the history teaches me how much greater and more various the world is than either the ancients or we have been able to penetrate, the offices deputed by the prince to visit the state of his provinces, as they punish those who behave themselves ill in their charge, so do they liberally reward those who have conducted themselves better than the common sort, and beyond the necessity of their duty; these there present themselves, not only to be approved but to get; not simply to be paid, but to have a present made to them.

No judge, thank God, has ever yet spoken to me in the quality of a judge, upon any account whatever, whether my own or that of another, whether criminal or civil; nor no prison has ever received me, not even as a visitor. Imagination renders the very outside of a jail displeasing to me; I am so enamored of liberty, that should I be interdicted the remotest corner of the Indies, I should live a little less at my ease; and while I can find earth or air open in any other part of the world, I shall never lurk in any place where I must hide myself. Good God! how ill should I endure the condition wherein I see so many people, nailed to a corner of the kingdom, deprived of the right to enter the principal cities and courts, and the liberty of the public roads, for having quarreled with our laws. If those under which I live should but wag a finger at me by way of menace, I would immediately go seek out

* Plutarch, in vita, c. 23.
others, let them be where they would. All my little prudence in the civil wars wherein we are now engaged, is employed that they may not hinder my liberty of coming and going.

Now, the laws keep up their credit, not for being just, but because they are laws; 'tis the mystic foundation of their authority; they have no other, and it well answers their purpose. They are often made by fools, still oftener by men who, out of hatred to equality, fail in equity; but always by men, vain and irresolute authors. There is nothing so much, nor so grossly, nor so ordinarily faulty, as the laws. Whoever obeys them because they are just, does not justly obey them as he ought. Our French laws, by their irregularity and deformity, lend, in some sort, a helping hand to the disorder and corruption that all manifest in their dispensation and execution; the command is so perplexed and inconstant, that it in some sort excuses alike disobedience, and defect in the interpretation, the administration and the observation of it. What fruit, then, soever we may extract from experience, that will little advantage our institution, which we draw from foreign examples, if we make so little profit of that we have of our own, which is more familiar to us, and, doubtless, sufficient to instruct us in that whereof we have need. I study myself more than any other subject; 'tis my metaphysic, my physic.

"Qua Deus hanc mundi temperet arte domum;
Qua venit exoriens, qua deficit, unde coactis
Cornibus in plenum menstrua luna reedit;
Unde salo superant venti, quid flame captet
Eurus, et in nubes unde perennis aqua;
Sit ventura dies, mundi quae subruit arces,* . .
Quaerite, quos agitat mundi labor."†

In this university, I suffer myself to be ignorantly and negligently led by the general law of the world; I shall know it well enough when I feel it; my learning cannot

* "By what art God governs this home of the universe: whence comes the moon, whither she goes; how it is that she fills her horn and comes to the full every month; whence winds are frequent on the main; what the east wind courts with its blasts; and whence the clouds are perpetually supplied with water; whether a day is to come which is to uproot the world."—Propertius, iii. 5, 26.

† "Seek ye whom the cares of the world trouble."—Lucan, i. 417.
make it alter its course; it will not change itself for me; 'tis folly to hope it, and a greater folly to concern one's self about it, seeing it is necessarily alike, public and common. The goodness and capacity of the governor ought absolutely to discharge us of all care of the government; philosophical inquisitions and contemplations serve for no other use but to increase our curiosity. The philosophers, with great reason, send us back to the rules of nature; but they have nothing to do with so sublime a knowledge; they falsify them, and present us her face painted with too high and too adulterate a complexion, whence spring so many different pictures of so uniform a subject. As she has given us feet to walk with, so has she given us prudence to guide us in life; not so ingenious, robust, and pompous a prudence, as that of their invention; but yet one that is easy, quiet, and salutary, and that very well performs what the other promises, in him who has the good luck to know how to employ it sincerely and regularly, that is to say, according to nature. The most simply to commit one's self to nature, is to do it most wisely. Oh, what a soft, easy, and wholesome pillow is ignorance and incuriosity, whereon to repose a well-contrived head!

I had rather understand myself well in myself, than in Cicero. Of the experience I have of myself, I find enough to make me wise, if I were but a good scholar: whoever will call to mind the excess of his past anger, and to what a degree that fever transported him, will see the deformity of this passion better than in Aristotle, and conceive a more just hatred against it; whoever will remember the ills he has undergone, those that have threatened him, and the light occasions that have removed him from one state to another, will by that prepare himself for future changes, and the knowledge of his condition. The life of Caesar has no greater example for us than our own: though popular and of command, 'tis still a life subject to all human accidents. Let us but listen to it; we apply to ourselves all whereof we have principal need; whoever shall call to memory how many and many times he has been mistaken in his own judgment, is he not a great fool if he does not ever after suspect it? When I find myself convinced, by the reason of another, of a false opinion, I do not so much learn what he has said to me that is new, and the particular ignorance—that would be no great acquisition—as, in
general, I learn my own debility and the treachery of my understanding, whence I extract the reformation of the whole mass. In all my other errors, I do the same, and find from this rule great utility to life; I regard not the species and individual, as a stone that I have stumbled at; I learn to suspect my steps throughout, and am careful to place them right. To learn that a man has said or done a foolish thing is nothing: a man must learn that he is nothing but a fool, a much more ample and important instruction. The false steps that my memory has so often made, even then when it was most secure and confident of itself, are not idly thrown away; it may now swear to me and assure me as much as it will, I shake my ears, and dare not trust it; the first opposition that is made to its testimony, puts me into suspense, and I dare not rely upon it in anything of moment, nor warrant it in another person's concerns; and were it not that what I do for want of memory, others do more often for want of good faith, I should always, in matter of fact, rather choose to take the truth from another's mouth, than from my own. If every one would pry into the effects and circumstances of the passions that sway him, as I have done into those which I am most subject to, he would see them coming, and would a little break their impetuosity and career; they do not always seize us on a sudden; there is threatening and degrees:

"Fluctus uti primo coepit cum albescere vento,  
Paulatim sese tollit mare, et altius undas  
Erigit, inde imo consurgit ad aethera fundo."  *

Judgment holds in me a magisterial seat; at least it carefully endeavors to make it so: it leaves my appetites to take their own course, hatred and friendship, nay even that I bear to myself, without change or corruption; if it cannot reform the other parts according to its own model, at least it suffers not itself to be corrupted by them, but plays its game apart.

That advice to every one, "to know themselves," should be of important effect, since the god of wisdom and light  

* "As at the first breath of the winds, the sea begins to foam, and swells, thence higher swells, and higher raises the waves, till at length they seem to rise to the sky."—Aeneid, vii. 528.
† Apollo.
caused it to be written on the front of his temple,* as comprehending all he had to advise us. Plato says also, that prudence is no other thing than the execution of this ordinance; and Socrates minutely verifies it in Xenophon. The difficulties and obscurity are not discerned in any science but by those who are got into it; for a certain degree of intelligence is required to be able to know that a man knows not: and we must push against a door to know whether it be bolted against us or no; whence this Platonic subtlety springs, that "nor they who know are to inquire, forasmuch as they know; nor they who do not know forasmuch as to inquire they must know what they inquire of." So in this, "of knowing a man's self," that every man is seen so resolved and satisfied with himself, that every man thinks himself sufficiently intelligent, signifies that every one knows nothing about the matter; as Socrates gives Euthydemus to understand.† I, who profess nothing else, therein find so infinite a depth and variety that all the fruit I have reaped from my learning serves only to make me sensible how much I have to learn. To my weakness, so often confessed, I owe the propension I have to modesty, to the obedience of belief prescribed me, to a constant coldness and moderation of opinions, and a hatred of that troublesome and wrangling arrogance, wholly believing and trusting in itself, the capital enemy of discipline and truth. Do but hear them domineer; the first fopperies they utter, 'tis in the style wherewith men establish religions and laws. "Nihil est turpius, quam cognitioni et perceptioni, assertionem approbationemque praecurrere." ‡ Aristarchus said, that anciently there were scarce seven sages to be found in the world; and in his time scarce so many fools; have not we more reason than he to say so in this age of ours? Affirmation and obstinacy are express signs of want of wit. A fellow has stumbled and knocked his nose against the ground a hundred times in a day, and yet he will be at his Ergo's as resolute and sturdy as before; so that one would conclude he had had some new soul and vigor of understanding infused into

* At Delphi.
† Xenophon's Mem. of Socrates, iv. 2, 24.
‡ "Nothing is worse than that assertion and decision should precede knowledge and perception."—Cicero, Acad., i. 13.
him since, and that it happened to him, as to that ancient son of the earth, who took fresh courage and vigor by his fall:

"Cui cum tetigere parentem,
Jam defecta vigent renovato ropore membra:" *

does not this incorrigible coxcomb think that he assumes a new understanding, by undertaking a new dispute? 'Tis by my own experience that I accuse human ignorance, which is, in my opinion, the surest part of the world's school. Such as will not conclude it in themselves, by so vain an example as mine, or their own, let them believe it from Socrates, the master of masters; for the philosopher Aristhenes,† said to his disciples, "Let us go and hear Socrates: I will be a pupil with you;" and, maintaining this doctrine of the Stoic sect, "that virtue was sufficient to make a life completely happy, having no need of any other thing whatever:" except of the force of Socrates, added he.

The long attention that I employ in considering myself, also fits me to judge tolerably of others; and there are few things whereof I speak better and with better excuse. I happen very often more exactly to see and distinguish the qualities of my friends than they do themselves; I have astonished some with the pertinence of my description, and have given them warning of themselves. By having from my infancy been accustomed to contemplate my own life in those of others, I have acquired a complexion studious in that particular; and when I am once intent upon it, I let few things about me, whether countenances, humors, or discourses, that serve to that purpose, escape me. I study all, both what I am to avoid, and what I am to follow. Also in my friends, I discover by their productions their inward inclinations; not by arranging this infinite variety of so diverse and unconnected actions into certain species and chapters, and distinctly distributing my parcels and divisions under known heads and classes;

* "Whose broken limbs, touching his mother earth, immediately new force and vigor acquired."—Lucan, iv. 599.

† Diogenes Laertius, vi. 2.
"Sed neque quam multae species, et nomine quae sint, Est numeros." *

The wise speak, and deliver their fancies more specifically, and piece by piece; I, who see no further into things than as use informs me, present mine generally without rule and experimentally: I pronounce my opinion by disjointed articles, as a thing that cannot be spoken at once and in gross: relation and conformity are not to be found in such low and common souls as ours. Wisdom is a solid and entire building, of which every piece keeps its place and bears its mark; "Sola sapientia in se tota conversa est." † I leave it to artists, and I know not whether or no they will be able to bring it about, in so perplexed, minute, and fortuitous a thing, to marshal into distinct bodies this infinite diversity of faces, to settle our inconstancy, and set it in order. I do not only find it hard to piece our actions to one another, but I, moreover, find it hard properly to design each by itself by any principal quality, so ambiguous and variform they are, with diverse lights. That which is remarked for rare in Perseus, king of Macedon, "that his mind fixing itself to no one condition, wandered in all sorts of living, and represented manners so wild and vagabond, that it was neither known to himself or any other ‡ what kind of man he was," seems almost to fit all the world; and, especially, I have seen another of his make, to whom I think this conclusion might more properly be applied; no moderate settledness, still running headlong from one extreme to another, upon occasions not to be guessed at; no line of path without traverse and wonderful contrariety; no one quality simple and unmixed; so that the best guess men can one day make will be, that he affected and studied to make himself known by being not to be known. A man had need have sound ears to hear himself frankly criticised; and as there are few who can endure to hear it without being nettled, those who hazard the undertaking it to us manifest a singular effect of friendship; for 'tis to love sincerely indeed, to venture to wound and offend us, for

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* "But not the number of their species and names; they are too many."—Virgil, Georg., ii. 103.

† "Wisdom only is wholly within itself."—Cicero, De Fin., iii. 7.

‡ Livy, xli. 20.
our own good. I think it harsh to judge a man whose ill qualities are more than his good ones: Plato requires three things in him who will examine the soul of another: knowledge, benevolence, boldness."

I am sometimes asked, what I should have thought myself fit for, had any one designed to make use of me in my younger years;

"Dum melior vires sanguis dabat, æmula necdum
Temporibus geminis canebat sparsa senectus:" 

"for nothing," say I; and I am very willing to profess not knowing how to do anything, that I may so be excused from enslaving myself to another. But I had told the truth to that master of mine, and had regulated his manners, if he had so pleased; not in gross, by scholastic lessons, which I understand not, and from which I see no true reformation spring in those that do; but by observing them by leisure, at all opportunities, and simply and naturally judging them as an eyewitness, distinctly one by one; giving him to understand upon what terms he was in the common opinion, in opposition to his flatterers. There is none of us who would not be worse than kings, if so continually corrupted as they are with that sort of vermin; and we see that Alexander, that great king and philosopher, could not defend himself from them. I should have had fidelity, judgment, and freedom enough for that purpose. It would be a nameless office, otherwise it would lose its grace and its effect; and 'tis a part that is not indifferently fit for all men: for truth itself has not the privilege to be spoken at all times and indiscriminately: its use, noble as it is, has its circumscriptions and limits. It often falls out, as the world goes, that a man lets it slip into the ear of a prince, not only to no purpose, but moreover injuriously and unjustly; and no man shall make me believe that a virtuous remonstrance may not be viciously applied, and that the interest of the substance is not often to give way to that of the form.

For such a purpose, I would have a man who is content with his own fortune,

* Plato, Gorgias.

† "While better blood gave my limbs vigor, and before envious old age had whitened my head."—Æneid, v. 415
"Quod sit, esse velit; nihilque malit," *

and of moderate station; forasmuch as, on the one hand, he would not be afraid to touch his master's heart to the quick, for fear by that means of losing his preferment; and, on the other hand, being of no high quality, he would have more easy communication with all sorts of people. I would have this office limited to only one person; for to allow the privilege of this liberty and privacy to many, would beget an inconvenient irreverence; and of that one, I would above all things require the fidelity of silence.

A king is not to be believed, when he brags of his constancy in standing the shock of the enemy for his glory, if, for his profit and amendment, he cannot stand the liberty of a friend's advice, which has no other power but to pinch his ear, the remainder of its effect being still in his own hands. Now, there is no condition of men whatever who stand in so great need of true and free advice and warning, as they do; they sustain a public life, and have to satisfy the opinion of so many spectators, that, as those about them conceal from them whatever should divert them from their own way, they insensibly find themselves involved in the hatred and detestation of their people, often upon occasions which they might have avoided without any prejudice even of their pleasures themselves, had they been advised and set right in time. Their favorites commonly have more regard to themselves than to their master; and indeed it answers with them, forasmuch as, in truth, most offices of real friendship, when applied to the sovereign, are under a rude and dangerous hazard, † so that therein there is great need, not only of very great affection and freedom, but of courage too.

In fine, all this hodge-podge which I scribble here, is nothing but a register of the essays of my own life, which, for the internal soundness, is exemplary enough, to take instruction against the grain; but as to bodily health, no man can furnish out more profitable experience than I, who present it pure, and no way corrupted and changed by art or opinion. Experience is properly upon its own dunghill in the subject of physic, where reason wholly gives it place:

* "Who is pleased with what he is, and desires nothing further."
† Tacitus, Hist., 1, 15.
Tiberius said that whoever had lived twenty years ought to be responsible to himself for all things that were hurtful or wholesome to him, and know how to order himself without physic; * and he might have learned it of Socrates, who, advising his disciples to be solicitous of their health as a chief study, added that it was hard if a man of sense, having a care to his exercise and diet, did not better know than any physician what was good or ill for him. And physic itself professes always to have experience for the test of its operations; so Plato had reason to say that, to be a right physician, it would be necessary that he who would become such, should first himself have passed through all the diseases he pretends to cure, and through all the accidents and circumstances whereof he is to judge. 'Tis but reason they should get the pox, if they will know how to cure it; for my part, I should put myself into such hands; the others but guide us, like him who paints seas and rocks and ports sitting at table, and there makes the model of a ship sailing in all security; but put him to the work itself, he knows not at which end to begin. They make such a description of our maladies, as a town-crier does of a lost horse or dog—such a color, such a height, such an ear—but bring it to him, and he knows it not, for all that. If physic should one day give me some good and visible relief, then, truly, I will cry out in good earnest:

"Tandem efficaci do manus scientiae."†

The arts that promise to keep our bodies and souls in health promise a great deal; but, withal, there are none that less keep their promise. And, in our time, those who make profession of these arts among us, less manifest the effects than any other sort of men; one may say of them, at the most, that they sell medicinal drugs; but that they are physicians, a man cannot say. † I have lived long enough

* All that Suetonius says in his Life of Tiberius, is that this emperor, after he was thirty years old, governed his health without the aid of physicians; and what Plutarch tells us, in his essay on the Rules and Precepts of Health, is that Tiberius said that the man who, having attained sixty years, held out his pulse to a physician was a fool.

† "Show me an efficacious science, and I will take it by the hand."
   —Horace, xvii. 1.

‡ The edition of 1588 adds: "Judging by themselves, and those who are ruled by them."
to be able to give an account of the custom that has carried me so far; for him who has a mind to try it, as his taster, I have made the experiment. Here are some of the articles, as my memory shall supply me with them; I have no custom that has not varied according to circumstances; but I only record those that I have been best acquainted with, and that hitherto have had the greatest possession of me.

My form of life is the same in sickness as in health; the same bed, the same hours, the same meat, and even the same drink, serve me in both conditions alike; I add nothing to them but the moderation of more or less, according to my strength and appetite. My health is, to maintain my wonted state without disturbance. I see that sickness puts me off it on one side, and if I will be ruled by the physicians, they will put me off on the other; so that by fortune and by art I am out of my way. I believe nothing more certainly than this, that I cannot be hurt by the use of things to which I have been so long accustomed. 'Tis for custom to give a form to a man's life, such as it pleases him; she is all in all in that: 'tis the beverage of Circe, that varies our nature as she best pleases. How many nations, and but three steps from us, think the fear of the night-dew, that so manifestly is hurtful to us, a ridiculous fancy; and our own watermen and peasants laugh at it. You make a German sick if you lay him upon a mattress, as you do an Italian if you lay him on a feather-bed; and a Frenchman, if without curtains or fire. A Spanish stomach cannot hold out to eat as we can; nor ours to drink like the Swiss. A German made me very merry at Augsburg, by finding fault with our hearths, by the same arguments which we commonly make use of in decrying their stoves: for, to say the truth, the smothered heat, and then the smell of that heated matter of which the fire is composed, very much offend such as are not used to them; not me; and, indeed, the heat being always equal, constant and universal, without flame, without smoke, and without the wind that comes down our chimney, they may many ways sustain comparison with ours. Why do we not imitate the Roman architecture? for they say that anciently fires were not made in the houses, but on the outside, and at the foot of them, whence the heat was conveyed to the whole fabric by pipes contrived in the wall, which
were drawn twining about the rooms that were to be warmed: which I have seen plainly described somewhere in Seneca.* This German hearing me commend the conveniences and beauties of this city, which truly deserves it, began to compassionate me that I had to leave it; and the first inconvenience he alleged to me was, the heaviness of head that the chimneys elsewhere would bring upon me. He had heard some one make this complaint, and fixed it upon us, being by custom deprived of the means of perceiving it at home. All heat that comes from the fire weakens and dulls me; and yet Evenus said, that fire was the best condiment of life: I rather choose any other way of making myself warm.

We are afraid to drink our wines, when toward the bottom of the cask; in Portugal those juices are reputed delicious, and it is the beverage of princes. In short, every nation has many customs and usages that are not only unknown to other nations, but savage and miraculous in their sight. What should we do with those people who admit of no evidence that is not in print, who believe not men if they are not in a book, nor truth, if it be not of competent age? we dignify our fopperies, when we commit them to the press: 'tis of a great deal more weight to say, "I have read such a thing," than if you only say, "I have heard such a thing." But I, who no more disbelieve a man's mouth than his pen, and who know that men write as indiscreetly as they speak, and who look upon this age as one that is past, as soon quote a friend as Aulus Gellius or Macrobius; and what I have seen, as what they have written. And, as 'tis held of virtue, that it is not greater for having continued longer, so do I hold of the truth, that for being older it is none the wiser. I often say that it is mere folly that makes us run after foreign and scholastic examples; their fertility is the same now that it was in the time of Homer and Plato. But is it not that we seek more honor from the quotation, than from the truth of the matter in hand? As if it were more to the purpose, to borrow our proofs from the shops of Vascosan or Plantin, † than from what is to be seen in our own village; or else, indeed, that we have not the wit to cull out and make useful what we see before us, and to judge of it clearly enough to draw it into

* Seneca, Ep. 90.
† Eminent printers.
example; for if we say that we want authority to give faith to our testimony, we speak from the purpose; forasmuch as, in my opinion, of the most ordinary, common, and known things, could we but find out their light, the greatest miracles of nature might be formed, and the most wonderful example, especially upon the subject of human actions.

Now, upon this subject, setting aside the examples I have gathered from books, and what Aristotle says* of Andron the Argian, that he traveled over the arid sands of Lybia without drinking: a gentleman, who has very well behaved himself in several employments, said, in a place where I was, that he had ridden from Madrid to Lisbon, in the heat of summer, without any drink at all. He is very healthful and vigorous for his age, and has nothing extraordinary in the use of his life, but this, to live sometimes two or three months, nay, a whole year, as he has told me, without drinking. He is sometimes thirsty, but he lets it pass over, and he holds that it is an appetite which easily goes off of itself; and he drinks more out of caprice than either for need or pleasure.

Here is another example: 'tis not long ago that I found one of the learnedest men in France, and a man of considerable fortune, studying in a corner of a hall that they had separated for him with tapestry, and about him a rabble of his servants making all sorts of noise and confusion. He told me, and Seneca almost says the same of himself,† he made an advantage of this uproar; that, beaten with this rattle, he so much the more collected and retired himself into himself for contemplation, and that this tempest of voices repercussed his thoughts within himself; when a student at Padua, he had his study so long situated amid the rattle of coaches and the tumult of the square, that he not only formed himself to the contempt, but even to the use of noise, for the service of his studies. Socrates answered Alcibiades, who was astonished how he could endure the perpetual scolding of his wife, "Why," said he, "as those do who are accustomed to the ordinary noise of wheels drawing water."‡ I am quite otherwise; I have a

* Diogenes Laertius, iv. 81.
† Epist. 56.
‡ Diogenes Laertius, ii. 36.
tender head and easily discomposed; when 'tis bent upon anything, the least buzzing of a fly tears it into pieces.

Seneca in his youth having, by the example of Sextius, put on a positive resolution of eating nothing that had had life, and for a whole year dispensed with animal food, and, as he said,* with pleasure: only left off, that he might not be suspected of taking up this rule from some new religion by which it was prescribed: he adopted, in like manner, from the precepts of Attalus a custom not to lie upon any sort of bedding that gave way under his weight, and, even to his old age, made use of such as would not yield to any pressure. What the usage of his time made him account roughness, that of ours makes us look upon as effeminacy.

Do but observe the difference between the way of living of my laborers and my own; the Scythians and Indians have nothing more remote both from my capacity and my manners. I have picked up boys from begging, to serve me: who soon after have quitted both my kitchen and livery, only that they might return to their former course of life; and I found one afterward, picking mussels out of the sewer for his dinner, whom I could neither by entreaties nor threats reclaim from the sweetness he found in indigence. Beggars have their magnificences and delights, as well as the rich, and, 'tis said, their dignities and polities. These are effects of custom; she can mold us, not only into what form she pleases (the sages say† we ought to apply ourselves to the best, which she will soon make easy to us), but also to change and variation, which is the most noble and most useful instruction of all she teaches us. The best of my bodily conditions is that I am flexible and not very obstinate: I have inclinations more my own and ordinary, and more agreeable than others; but I am diverted from them with very little ado, and easily slip into a contrary course. A young man ought to cross his own rules, to awaken his vigor and to keep it from growing faint and rusty; and there is no course of life so weak and sottish, as that which is carried on by rule and discipline;

* Ep. 108.
† Pythagoras, in Stobæus, Serm. 29.
"Ad primum lapidem vectari quum placet, hora
Sumitur ex libro; si prurit frictus ocelli
Angulus, inspecta genesi, collyria quaerit;” *

he shall often throw himself even into excesses, if he will take my advice; otherwise the least debauch will destroy him, and render him troublesome and disagreeable in company. The worst quality in a well-bred man is over fastidiousness, and an obligation to a certain particular way; and it is particular, if not pliable and supple. It is a kind of reproach, not to be able, or not to dare, to do what we see those about us do; let such as these stop at home. It is in every man unbecoming, but in a soldier vicious and intolerable; who, as Philopoemen said, ought to accustom himself to every variety and inequality of life.

Though I have been brought up, as much as was possible, to liberty and independence, yet so it is that, growing old, and having by indifference more settled upon certain forms (my age is now past instruction, and has henceforward nothing to do but to keep itself up as well as it can), custom has already, ere I was aware, so imprinted its character in me, in certain things, that I look upon it as a kind of excess to leave them off; and, without a force upon myself, cannot sleep in the day-time, nor eat between meals; nor breakfast, nor go to bed, without a great interval between eating and sleeping, as of three hours after supper; nor get children but before I sleep, nor standing upon my feet; nor endure my own sweat; nor quench my thirst either with pure water or pure wine; nor keep my head long bare, nor cut my hair after dinner; and I should be as uneasy without my gloves as without my shirt, or without washing when I rise from table or out of my bed; and I could not lie without a canopy and curtains, as if they were essential things. I could dine without a tablecloth, but without a clean napkin, after the German fashion, very incommodeously; I foul them more than the Germans or Italians do, and make but little use either of spoon or fork. I am sorry they did not keep up the fashion, begun after the example of kings, to change our napkins at every service, as they do our plates. We are told of that laborious soldier Marius, that growing old, he became nice in his drink, and

* "If he would be carried but a mile, he, for the proper hour, consults his almanac; if he but rub the corner of his eye, he chooses the salve by his horoscope."—Juvenal, vi. 576.
never drank but out of a particular cup of his own:* I, in like manner, have suffered myself to fancy a certain form of glasses, and not willingly to drink in common glasses, no more than from a strange common hand: all metal offends me in comparison of a clear and transparent matter: let my eyes taste too, according to their capacity. I owe several other such niceties to custom. Nature has also, on the other side, helped me to some of hers; as not to be able to endure more than two full meals in one day, without overcharging my stomach, nor a total abstinence from one of those meals without filling myself with wind, drying up my mouth, and dulling my appetite; the finding great inconvenience from overmuch evening air; for of late years in night marches, which often happen to be all night long, after five or six hours my stomach begins to be queasy, with a violent pain in my head, so that I always vomit before the day can break. When the others go to breakfast, I go to sleep; and when I rise, I am as brisk and gay as before. I had always been told that the night dew never rises but in the beginning of the night; but for some years past, long and familiar intercourse with a lord, possessed with the opinion that the night dew is more sharp and dangerous about the declining of the sun, an hour or two before it sets, which he carefully avoids, and despises that of the night, he almost impressed upon me, not so much his reasoning as his experiences. What, shall mere doubt and inquiry strike our imagination, so as to change us? Such as absolutely and on a sudden give way to these propensions, draw total destruction upon themselves. I am sorry for several gentlemen who, through the folly of their physicians have in their youth and health wholly shut themselves up: it were better to endure a cough, than, by disuse, forever to lose the commerce of common life in things of so great utility. Malignant science to interdict us the most pleasant hours of the day! Let us keep our possession to the last; for the most part, a man hardens himself by being obstinate and corrects his constitution, as Cæsar did the falling-sickness, by dint of contempt. A man should addict himself to the best rules, but not enslave himself to them, except to such, if there be any such, where obligation and servitude are of profit.

* Plutarch, That we should restrain Anger, c. 18.
Both kings and philosophers go to stool, and ladies too; public lives are bound to ceremony; mine, that is obscure and private, enjoys all natural dispensation: soldier and Gascon are also qualities a little subject to indiscretion; wherefore I shall say of this act of relieving nature, that it is desirable to refer it to certain prescribed and nocturnal hours, and compel one's self to this by custom, as I have done; but not to subject one's self, as I have done in my declining years, to a particular convenience of place and seat for that purpose, and make it troublesome by long sitting: and yet, in the fouler offices, is it not in some measure excusable to require more care and cleanliness? "Natura homo mundum et elegans animal est." * Of all the actions of nature, I am the most impatient of being interrupted in that. I have seen many soldiers troubled with the unruliness of their bellies; whereas mine and I never fail of our punctual assignation, which is at leaping out of bed, if some indispensable business or sickness does not molest us.

I think then, as I said before, that sick men cannot better place themselves anywhere in more safety, than in sitting still in that course of life wherein they have been bred and trained up; change, be it what it will, distempers and puts one out. Do you believe that chestnuts can hurt a Perigourdin or a Lucchese, or milk and cheese the mountain people? We enjoin them not only a new, but a contrary, method of life; a change that the healthful cannot endure. Prescribe water to a Breton of three score and ten; shut a seaman up in a stove; forbid a Basque footman to walk: you will deprive them of motion, and in the end of air and light.

"An vivere tanti est?
Cogimur a suetis animum suspendere rebus,
Atque, ut vivamus, vivere desinimus.
Hos superesse reor, quibus et spirabilis aer
Et lux, qua regimur, redditur ipsa gravis." †

* "Man is by nature a clean and delicate creature."—Seneca, Ep. 92.

† "Is life worth so much? They make us deprive ourselves of things to which we are accustomed; and, that we may live, we must cease to live. . . . I can't conceive that they still live, to whom light and air, by which they live, are forbidden."—Pseudo-Gallus, Erlog. i. 155, 247.
If they do no other good, they do this at least, that they prepare patients betimes for death, by little and little undermining and cutting off the use of life.

Both well and sick, I have ever willingly suffered myself to obey the appetites that pressed upon me. I give great authority to my propensions and desires; I do not love to cure one disease by another; I hate remedies that are more troublesome than the disease itself. To be subject to the stone and subject to abstain from eating oysters, are two evils instead of one: the disease torments us on the one side, and the remedy on the other. Since we are ever in danger of mistaking, let us rather run the hazard of a mistake, after we have had the pleasure. The world proceeds quite the other way, and thinks nothing profitable that is not painful; it has great suspicion of facility. My appetite, in various things, has of its own accord happily enough accommodated itself to the health of my stomach. Relish and pungency in sauces were pleasant to me when young but my stomach disliking them since, my taste incontinently followed. Wine is hurtful to sick people, and 'tis the first thing that my mouth then finds distasteful, and with an invincible dislike. Whatever I take against my liking, does me harm; and nothing hurts me, that I eat with appetite and delight. I never received harm by any action that was very pleasant to me; and accordingly have made all medicinal conclusions largely give way to my pleasure; and I have, when I was young,

"Quem circumcursans huc atque huc sepe Cupido
Fulgebat crocina splendidus in tunica," *

given myself the rein as licentiously and inconsiderately to the desire that was predominant in me, "Et militavi non sine gloria," † as any other whomsoever; yet more in continuation and holding out, than in sally:

"Sex me vix memini sustinuisse vices." ‡

'Tis certainly a misfortune and a miracle at once, to con-

* "When Cupid fluttering round me here and there, shone in his rich purple mantle."—CATULLUS, lxvi. 133.
† "And fought not ingloriously."—HORACE, Od. iii. 26, 2.
‡ "I can scarcely rembember six bouts in one night."—OVID, Amor., iii. 7, 26.
fess at what a tender age I first came under the subjection of love: it was indeed, by chance; for it was long before the years of choice or knowledge; I do not remember myself so far back; and my fortune may well be coupled with that of Quartilla, who could not remember when she was a maid:

"Inde tragus, celeresque pili, mirandaque matri
Barba meae."*

Physicians modify their rules according to the violent longings that happen to sick persons, ordinarily with good success; this great desire cannot be imagined so strange and vicious, but that nature must have a hand in it. And then how easy a thing is it to satisfy the fancy? In my opinion, this part wholly carries it, at least, above all the rest. The most grievous and ordinary evils are those that fancy loads us with; this Spanish saying mighty pleases in several senses; "Defienda me Dios de my." † I am sorry when I am sick, that I have not some longing that might give me the pleasure of satisfying it; all the rules of physic would hardly be able to divert me from it. I do the same when I am well; I can see very little more to be hoped or wished for. "Twere pity a man should be so weak and languishing, as not to have even wishing left to him.

The art of physic is not so fixed, that we need be without authority for whatever we do; it changes according to climates and moons; according to Fernel and to Scaliger.‡ If your physician does not think it good for you to sleep, to drink wine, or to eat such and such meats, never trouble yourself; I will find you another that shall not be of his opinion; the diversity of medical arguments and opinions embraces all sorts of forms. I saw a miserable sick person panting and burning for thirst, that he might be cured, who was afterward laughed at for his pains by another physician, who condemned that advice as prejudicial to him: had he not tormented himself to good purpose? There lately died of the stone, a man of that profession, who had made use of extreme abstinence to contend with his disease:

* "My precocious beard astonished my mother."—MARTIAL, xi. 22, 7.
† "God defend me from myself."
‡ Physicians to Henry II.
his fellow-physicians say that, on the contrary, this abstinence had dried him up, and baked the gravel in his kidneys.

I have observed, that both in wounds and sicknesses, speaking discomposes and hurts me, as much as any irregularity I can commit. My voice pains and tires me, for 'tis loud and forced; so that when I have gone to whisper some great persons about affairs of consequence, they have often desired me to moderate my voice.

This story deserves a place here. Someone * in a certain Greek school speaking loud as I do, the master of the ceremonies sent to him to speak softly: "Tell him, then, he must send me," replied the other, "the tone he would have me speak in." To which the other replied, "That he should take the tone from the ears of him to whom he spake." It was well said, if to be understood: "Speak according to the affair you are speaking about to your auditor," for if it mean, "'tis sufficient that he hear you; or, govern yourself by him," I do not find it to be reason. The tone and motion of my voice carries with it a great deal of the expression and signification of my meaning, and 'tis I who am to govern it, to make myself understood: there is a voice to instruct, a voice to flatter, and a voice to reprehend. I will not only that my voice reach him, but, peradventure, that it strike and pierce him. When I rattle my footman with sharp and bitter language, it would be very pretty for him to say, "Pray, master, speak lower, I hear you very well." "Est quaedam vox ad auditum accommodata, non magnitudine, sed proprietate." † Speaking is half his who speaks, and half his who hears; the latter ought to prepare himself to receive it, according to its bias; as with tennis players, he who receives the ball, shifts and prepares, according as he sees him move who strikes the stroke, and according to the stroke itself.

Experience has, moreover, taught me this, that we ruin ourselves by impatience. Evils have their life and limits, their diseases and their recovery.

The constitution of maladies is formed by the pattern of the constitution of animals; they have their fortune and

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* Carneades. Diogenes Laertius, iv. 63.
† "There is a certain voice accommodated to the hearing, not by its loudness, but by its propriety."—QUINTILIAN, xi. 3.
their days limited from their birth; he who attempts imperiously to cut them short by force in the middle of their course, lengthens and multiplies them, and incenses instead of appeasing them. I am of Brantor's opinion, that "we are neither obstinately and willfully to oppose evils, nor truckle under them for want of courage; but that we are naturally to give way to them, according to their condition and our own." We ought to grant free passage to diseases; I find they stay less with me, who let them alone; and I have lost some, reputed the most tenacious and obstinate, by their own decay, without help and without art, and contrary to its rules. Let us a little permit Nature to take her own way; she better understands her own affairs than we. "But such an one died;" and so shall you: if not of that disease, of another. And how many have not escaped dying, who have had three physicians always at their tails? Example is a vague and universal mirror, and of various reflections. If it be a delicious medicine, take it: 'tis always so much present good. I will never stick at the name nor the color, if it be pleasant and grateful to the palate: pleasure is one of the chiepest kinds of profit. I have suffered colds, gouty defluxions, relaxations, palpitations of the heart, meagrim, and other accidents, to grow old and die in time a natural death; I have so lost them when I was half fit to keep them: they are sooner prevailed upon by courtesy than hustling. We must patiently suffer the laws of our condition; we are born to grow old, to grow weak, and to be sick, in despite of all medicine. "Tis the first lesson the Mexicans teach their children; so soon as ever they are born they thus salute them: "Thou art come into the world, child, to endure: endure, suffer and say nothing." "Tis injustice to lament that which has befallen any one, which may befall every one: "Indignare, si quid in te inique proprie constitutum est."*

See an old man who begs of God that he will maintain his health vigorous and entire; that is to say, that he restore him to youth:

"Stulte, quid hæc frustra votis puerilibus optas?" ♦

* "Then be angry, when there is anything unjustly decreed against thee alone."—Seneca, Ep. 91.

♦ "Why, you blockhead, pray such childish prayers in vain?"—Ovid, Trist., iii. 8, 11.
is it not folly? his condition is not capable of it. The gout, the stone, and indigestion are symptoms of long years; as heat, rains, and winds are of long journeys. Plato does not believe that Æsculapius troubled himself to provide, by regimen to prolong life in a weak and wasted body, useless to his country and to his profession, or to beget healthful and robust children; and does not think this care suitable to the divine justice and prudence, which is to direct all things to utility. My good friend, your business is done; nobody can restore you; they can, at the most, but patch you up, and prop you a little, and by that means prolong your misery an hour or two:

"Non secus instantem cupiens fulcire ruinam,
Diversis contra nititur obiicibus;
Donee certa dies, omni compage soluta,
Ipsum cum rebus subruat auxilium." *

We must learn to suffer what we cannot evade; our life, like the harmony of the world, is composed of contrary things—of diverse tones, sweet and harsh, sharp and flat, sprightly and solemn: the musician who should only effect some of these, what would he be able to do? he must know how to make use of them all, and to mix them; and so we should mingle the goods and evils which are consubstantial with our life; our being cannot subsist without this mixture, and the one part is no less necessary to it than the other. To attempt to kick against natural necessity, is to represent the folly of Ctesiphon who undertook to kick with his mule. †

I consult little about the alterations I feel; for these doctors take advantage; when they have you at their mercy, they cudgel your ears with their prognostics; and having once surprised me, weakened with sickness, injuriously handled me with their dogmas and magisterial fopperies—one while menacing me with great pains, and another with approaching death—by which threats I was indeed moved and shaken, but not subdued nor jostled from my place; and though my judgment was neither

* "Like one who, desiring to stay an impending ruin, places various props against it, till, in a short time, the house, the props, and all, giving way, fall together."—Psuedo-Gallus, i. 171.
† Plutarch, How to restrain Anger, c. 8
altered nor distracted, yet it was at least disturbed; 'tis always agitation and combat.

Now, I use my imagination as gently as I can, and would discharge it, if I could, of all trouble and contest; a man must assist, flatter, and deceive it, if he can; my mind is fit for that office; it needs no appearances throughout; could it persuade as it preaches, it would successfully relieve me. Will you have an example? It tells me: "that 'tis for my good to have the stone; that the structure of my age must naturally suffer some decay, and it is now time it should begin to disjoin and to confess a breach; 'tis a common necessity, and there is nothing in it either miraculous or new; I therein pay what is due to old age, and I cannot expect a better bargain; that society ought to comfort me, being fallen into the most common infirmity of my age; I see everywhere men tormented with the same disease, and am honored by the fellowship, forasmuch as men of the best quality are most frequently afflicted with it; 'tis a noble and dignified disease; that of such as are struck with it, few have it to a less degree of pain; that these are put to the trouble of a strict diet and the daily taking of nauseous potions, whereas I owe my better state purely to my good fortune; for some ordinary broths of Eringo or burst-wort that I have twice or thrice taken to oblige the ladies who, with greater kindness than my pain was sharp, would needs present me half of theirs, seemed to me equally easy to take and fruitless in operation, the others have to pay a thousand vows to Æsculapius, and as many crowns to their physicians, for the voiding a little gravel, which I often do by the aid of nature; even the decorum of my countenance is not disturbed in company; and I can hold my water ten hours, and as long as any man that is in perfect health. The fear of this disease," says mind, "formerly affrighted thee, when it was unknown to thee; the cries and despairing groans of those who make it worse by their impatience, begot a horror in thee. 'Tis an infirmity that punishes the members by which thou hast most offended. Thou art a conscientious fellow:"

"Que venit indigne pæna, dolenda venit."*

* "We are entitled to complain of a punishment that we have not deserved."—Ovid, Heroid., v. 8.
"consider this chastisement; 'tis very easy in comparison of others, and inflicted with a paternal tenderness; do but observe how late it comes; it only seizes on and incommodes that part of thy life, which is, one way and another sterile and lost; having, as it were by composition, given time for the license and pleasures of thy youth. The fear and the compassion that the people have of this disease serve thee for matter of glory; a quality, whereof if thou hast thy judgment purified, and that thy reason has something cured it, thy friends, notwithstanding, discern some tincture in thy complexion. 'Tis a pleasure to hear it said of one's self: what strength of mind, what patience! Thou art seen to sweat with pain, to turn pale and red, to tremble, to vomit blood, to suffer strange contractions and convulsions, at times to let great tears drop from thine eyes, to urine thick, black, and dreadful water, or to have it suppressed by some sharp and craggy stone, that cruelly pricks and tears the neck of the bladder, while all the while thou entertainest the company with an ordinary countenance; drolling by fits with thy people; making one in a continuous discourse, now and then making excuse for thy pain, and representing thy suffering less than it is. Dost thou call to mind the men of past time, who so greedily sought diseases to keep their virtue in breath and exercise? Put the case that nature sets thee on and impels thee to this glorious school, into which thou wouldst never have entered of thy own free will. If thou tellest me that it is a dangerous and mortal disease, what others are not so? for 'tis a physical cheat to except any that they say do not go direct to death; what matters if they go thither by accident, or if they easily slide and slip into the path that leads us to it? But thou dost not die because thou art sick; thou diest because thou art living; death kills thee without the help of sickness; and sickness has deferred death in some, who have lived longer by reason that they thought themselves always dying; to which may be added, that as in wounds, so in diseases, some are medicinal and wholesome. The stone is often no less long-lived than you; we see men with whom it has continued from their infancy even to their extreme old age; and if they had not broken company, it would have been with them longer still; you more often kill it than it kills you. And though it should present to you the image of approaching death,
were it not a good office to a man of such an age, to put him in mind of his end? And, which is worse, thou hast no longer anything that should make thee desire to be cured. Whether or no, common necessity will soon call thee away. Do but consider how skillfully and gently she puts thee out of concern with life, and weans thee from the world; not forcing thee with a tyrannical subjection, like so many other infirmities which thou seest old men afflicted withal, that hold them in continual torment, and keep them in perpetual and unintermitted weakness and pains, but by warnings and instructions at intervals, intermixing long pauses of repose, as it were to give thee opportunity to meditate and ruminate upon thy lesson, at thy own ease and leisure. To give thee means to judge aright, and to assume the resolution of a man of courage, it presents to thee the state of thy entire condition, both in good and evil; and one while a very cheerful and another an insupportable life, in one and the same day. If thou embracest not death, at least thou shakest hands with it once a month; whence thou hast more cause to hope that it will one day surprise thee without menace; and that being so often conducted to the water side, but still thinking thyself to be upon the accustomed terms, thou and thy confidence will at one time or another be unexpectedly wafted over.* A man cannot reasonably complain of diseases that fairly divide the time with health."

I am obliged to fortune for having so often assaulted me with the same sort of weapons; she forms and fashions me by use, hardens and habituates me, so that I can know within a little for how much I shall be quit. For want of natural memory, I make one of paper; and as any new symptom happens in my disease, I set it down, whence it falls out that, having now almost passed through all sorts of examples, if anything astounding threatens me, turning over these little loose notes, as the Sybil's leaves, I never fail of finding matter of consolation from some favorable prognostic in my past experience. Custom also makes me hope better for the time to come; for, the conduct of this clearing out having so long continued, 'tis to be believed that nature will not alter her course, and that no other worse accident will happen than what I already feel. And

* i. e., over the Styx.
besides, the condition of this disease is not unsuitable to my prompt and sudden complexion; when it assaults me gently, I am afraid, for 'tis then for a great while; but it has, naturally, brisk and vigorous excesses; it claws me to purpose for a day or two. My kidneys held out an age without alteration; and I have now almost lived another, since they changed their state; evils have their periods, as well as goods; peradventure, the infirmity draws toward an end. Age weakens the heat of my stomach, and its digestion being less perfect sends this crude matter to my kidneys; why, at a certain revolution, may not the heat of my kidneys be also abated, so that they can no more petrify my phlegm, and nature find out some other way of purgation. Years have evidently helped me to drain certain rheums; and why not these excrements which furnish matter for gravel? But is there anything delightful in comparison of this sudden change, when from an excessive pain, I come, by the voiding of a stone, to recover, as by a flash of lightning, the beautiful light of health, so free and full, as it happens in our sudden and sharpest colics? Is there anything in the pain suffered, that one can counterpoise to the pleasure of so sudden an amendment? Oh, how much does health seem the more pleasant to me, after a sickness so near and so contiguous, that I can distinguish them in the presence of one another, in their greatest show; when they appear in emulation, as if to make head against and dispute it with one another! As the Stoics say that vices are profitably introduced to give value to and to set off virtue, we can, with better reason and less temerity of conjecture, say that nature has given us pain for the honor and service of pleasure and indolence. When Socrates, after his fetters were knocked off, felt the pleasure of that itching which the weight of them had caused in his legs, he rejoiced to consider the strict alliance between pain and pleasure; how they are linked together by a necessary connection, so that by turns they follow and mutually beget one another; and cried out to the good fellow Æsop, that he ought out of this consideration, to have taken matter for a fine fable.

The worst that I see in other diseases is, that they are not so grievous in their effect, as they are in their issue: a man is a whole year in recovering, and all the while full of weakness and fear. There is so much hazard, and so
many steps to arrive at safety, that there is no end on't:
before they have unmuffled you of a kerchief, and then of
a cap, before they allow you to walk abroad and take the
air, to drink wine, to lie with your wife, or eat melons, 'tis
odds you relapse into some new distemper. The stone has
this privilege, that it carries itself clean off: whereas the
other maladies always leave behind them some impression
and alteration that render the body subject to a new disease,
and lend a hand to one another. Those are excusable that
content themselves with possessing us, without extending
farther, and introducing their followers; but courteous and
kind are those whose passage brings us any profitable issue.
Since I have been troubled with the stone, I find myself
freed from all other accidents, much more, methinks, than
I was before, and have never had any fever since; I argue
that the extreme and frequent vomitings that I am subject
to, purge me: and, on the other hand, my distastes for
this and that, and the strange fasts I am forced to keep,
digest my peccant humors, and nature, with those stones,
voids whatever there is in me superfluous and hurtful.
Let them never tell me that it is a medicine too dear bought:
for what avail so many stinking draughts, so many caustics,
inecisions, sweats, setons, diets, and so many other methods
of cure, which often, by reason we are not able to undergo
their violence and importunity, bring us to our graves?
So that when I have the stone, I look upon it as physic;
when free from it, as an absolute deliverance.

And here is another particular benefit of my disease;
which is, that it always plays its game by itself, and lets
me play mine, if I have only courage to do it; for, in its
greatest fury, I have endured it ten hours together on
horseback. Do but endure only; you need no other
regimen: play, run, dine, do this and t'other, if you can;
your debauch will do you more good than harm; say as
much to one that has the pox, the gout, or hernia. The
other diseases have more universal obligations; rack our
actions after another kind of manner, disturb our whole
order, and to their consideration engage the whole state of
life: this only pinches the skin; it leaves the understanding
and the will wholly at our own disposal, and the tongue, the
hands, and the feet; it rather awakens than stupefies you.
The soul is struck with the ardor of a fever, overwhelmed
with an epilepsy, and displaced by a sharp megrim, and,
in short, astounded by all the diseases that hurt the whole mass, and the most noble parts; this never meddles with the soul; if anything goes amiss with her, 'tis her own fault, she betrays, dismounts, and abandons herself. There are none but fools who suffer themselves to be persuaded, that this hard and massive body which is baked in our kidneys is to be dissolved by drinks; wherefore, when it is once stirred, there is nothing to be done but to give it passage; and, for that matter, it will itself make one.

I moreover observe this particular convenience in it, that it is a disease wherein we have little to guess at: we are dispensed from the trouble into which other diseases throw us by the uncertainty of their causes, conditions, and progress; a trouble that is infinitely painful: we have no need of consultations and doctoral interpretations; the senses well enough inform us both what it is and where it is.

By such like arguments, weak and strong, as Cicero with the disease of his old age, I try to rock asleep and amuse my imagination, and to dress its wounds. If I find them worse to-morrow, I will provide new stratagems. That this is true: I am come to that pass of late, that the least motion forces pure blood out of my kidneys: what of that? I move about, nevertheless, as before, and ride after my hounds with a juvenile and insolent ardor; and hold that I have very good satisfaction for an accident of that importance, when it costs me no more but a dull heaviness and uneasiness in that part; 'tis some great stone that wastes and consumes the substance of my kidneys and my life, which I by little and little evacuate, not without some natural pleasure, as an excrement henceforward superfluous and troublesome. Now if I feel anything stirring, do not fancy that I trouble myself to consult my pulse or my urine, thereby to put myself upon some annoying prevention; I shall soon enough feel the pain, without making it more and longer, by the disease of fear. He who fears he shall suffer, already suffers what he fears. To which may be added, that the doubts and ignorance of those who take upon them to expound the designs of nature and her internal progressions, and the many false prognostics of their art, ought to give us to understand that her ways are inscrutable and utterly unknown; there is great uncertainty, variety, and obscurity in what she either promises or
threatens. Old age excepted, which is an indubitable sign of the approach of death, in all other accidents I see few signs of the future, whereon we may ground our divination. I only judge of myself by actual sensation, not by reasoning: to what end, since I am resolved to bring nothing to it but expectation and patience? Will you know how much I get by this? observe those who do otherwise, and who rely upon so many diverse persuasions and counsels; how often the imagination presses upon them, without any bodily pain. I have many times amused myself, being well and in safety, and quite free from these dangerous attacks, in communicating them to the physicians as then beginning to discover themselves in me; I underwent the decree of their dreadful conclusions, being, all the while quite at my ease, and so much the more obliged to the favor of God, and better satisfied of the vanity of this art.

There is nothing that ought so much to be recommended to youth as activity and vigilance: our life is nothing but movement. I bestir myself with great difficulty, and am slow in everything, whether in rising, going to bed, or eating: seven of the clock in the morning is early for me; and where I rule, I never dine before eleven, nor sup till after six. I formerly attributed the cause of the fevers and other diseases I fell into, to the heaviness that long sleeping had brought upon me; and have ever repented going to sleep again in the morning. Plato is more angry at excess of sleeping, than at excess of drinking. I love to lie hard and alone, even without my wife, as kings do; and well covered with clothes. They never warm my bed, but since I have grown old, they give me at need warm cloths to lay at my feet and stomach. They found fault with the great Scipio, that he was a great sleeper; not, in my opinion, for any other reason, than that men were displeased, that he alone should have nothing in him to be found fault with. If I am anything fastidious in my way of living, 'tis rather in my lying than anything else; but, generally, I give way and accommodate myself, as well as any one, to necessity. Sleeping has taken up a great part of my life, and I yet continue, at the age I now am, to sleep eight or nine hours together. I wean myself to my

† Plutarch, That it is necessary a Prince should be Learned.
advantage, from this propension to sloth, and am evidently the better for so doing. I find the change a little hard indeed, but in three days 'tis over; and I see but few who live with less sleep, when need requires, and who more constantly exercise themselves, or to whom long journeys are less troublesome. My body is capable of a firm, but not of a violent or sudden agitation. I evade of late violent exercises, and such as make me sweat, wherein my limbs grow weary before they are hot. I can stand a whole day together, and am never weary of walking: but from my youth, I have ever preferred to ride upon paved roads; on foot, I get up to the breech in dust; and little fellows as I am are subject in the streets to be elbowed and jostled, for want of presence; I have ever loved to repose myself, whether sitting or lying, with my heels as high or higher than my seat.

There is no profession more pleasant than the military, a profession both noble in its execution (for valor is the stoutest, proudest, and most generous of all virtues), and noble in its cause: there is no utility either more universal or more just, than the protection of the peace and grandeur of one's country. The company of so many noble, young, and active men delights you: the ordinary sight of so many tragic spectacles; the freedom of the conversation, without art; a masculine and unceremonious way of living, please you; the variety of a thousand several actions; the encouraging harmony of martial music, that ravishes and inflames both your ears and souls; the honor of this occupation, nay, even its hardships and difficulties, which Plato holds so light that, in his Republic, he makes women and children share in them, are delightful to you. You put yourselves voluntarily upon particular exploits and hazards, according as you judge of their luster and importance; and, a volunteer, find even life itself excusably employed,

"Pulchrumque mori succurrit in armis." *

To fear common dangers that concern so great a multitude of men; not to dare to do what so many sorts of souls, what a whole people dare, is for a heart that is poor and mean beyond all measure: company encourages even

* "'Tis fine to die sword in hand."—_Enocid_, ii. 317.
children. If others excel you in knowledge, in graceful-
ness, in strength, or fortune, you have third causes to
blame for that; but to give place to them in stability of
mind, you can blame no one for that but yourself. Death
is more abject, more languishing and troublesome in bed
than in battle; fevers and catarrhs as painful and mortal as
a musket-shot. Whoever has fortified himself valiantly to
bear the accidents of common life, need not raise his cour-
age to be a soldier. "Vivere, mi Lucili, militare est."*

I do not remember that I ever had the itch; and yet
scratching is one of nature's sweetest gratifications, and
nearest at hand; but the smart follows too near. I use it
most in my ears, which are often apt to itch.

I came into the world with all my senses entire, even to
perfection. My stomach is commodiously good, as also is
my head and my breath; and, for the most part, uphold
themselves so in the height of fevers. I have passed the
age to which some nations, not without reason, have pre-
scribed so just a term of life, that they would not suffer
men to exceed it; and yet I have some intermissions,
though short and inconstant, so clean and sound as to be
little inferior to the health and pleasantness of my youth.
I do not speak of vigor and sprightliness; 'tis not reason
they should follow me beyond their limits:

"Non hoc amplius est liminis, aut aquae,
Cælestis, patiens latus."†

My face and eyes presently discover my condition; all
my alteration begin there, and appear somewhat worse
than they really are; my friends often pity me, before I
feel the cause in myself. My looking-glass does not frighten
me: for even in my youth it has befallen me more than
once to have a scurvy complexion and of ill prognostic,
without any great consequence, so that the physicians, not
finding any cause within answerable to that outward altera-
tion, attributed it to the mind and to some secret passion
that tormented me within; but they were deceived. If
my body would govern itself as well, according to my rule,
as my mind does, we should move a little more at our ease.

* "To live, my Lucilius, is to make war."—Seneca, Ep. 96.
† "I am no longer able to stand waiting at a door in the rain."—Horace, Od., iii. 10, 9.
My mind was then not only free from trouble, but, moreover, full of joy and satisfaction, as it commonly is, half by its complexion, half by its design:

"Nec vitiant artus aegrae contagia mentis." *

I am of the opinion that this temperature of my soul has often raised my body from its lapses; this is often depressed; if the other be not brisk and gay, 'tis at least tranquil and at rest. I had a quartan ague four or five months, that made me look miserably ill; my mind was always, if not calm, yet pleasant. If the pain be without me, the weakness and languor do not much afflict me; I see various corporal faintings, that beget a horror in me but to name, which yet I should less fear than a thousand passions and agitations of the mind that I see about me. I make up my mind no more to run; 'tis enough that I can crawl along; nor do I more complain of the natural decadence that I feel in myself:

"Quis tumidum guttur miratur in Alpibus?" †

than I regret that my duration shall not be as long and entire as that of an oak.

I have no reason to complain of my imagination; I have had few thoughts in my life that have so much as broken my sleep, except those of desire, which have awakened without afflicting me. I dream but seldom, and then of chimeras and fantastic things, commonly produced from pleasant thoughts, and rather ridiculous than sad; and I believe it to be true that dreams are faithful interpreters of our inclinations; but there is art required to sort and understand them:

"Res, quæ in vita usurpant homines, cogitant, curant, vident,
Quaque agunt vigilantes, agitantque, ea si cui in somno accidunt,
Minus mirandum est." ‡

* "The troubles of the body never affected my mind."—Ovid, Trist., iii. 8, 25.
† "No man is surprised to see a goitre in the Alps."—Juvenal, xiii. 162.
‡ "Tis no wonder if what men practice, think, care for, see and do when waking, should also run in their heads and disturb them when they are asleep."—Attius, cited in Cicero, De divin., i. 22.
Plato moreover says,* that 'tis the office of prudence to draw instructions of divination of future things from dreams; I don’t know about this, but there are wonderful instances of it that Socrates, Xenophon, and Aristotle, men of irreproachable authority, relate. Historians say† that the Atlantes never dream; who also never eat any animal food, which I add, forasmuch as it is, peradventure, the reason why they never dream, for Pythagoras ordered a certain preparation of diet to beget appropriate dreams.‡ Mine are very gentle, without any agitation of body or expression of voice. I have seen several of my time wonderfully disturbed by them. Theon, the philosopher, walked in his sleep, and so did Pericles’ servant, and that upon the tiles and top of the house.§

I hardly ever choose my dish at table, but take the next at hand, and unwillingly change it for another. A confusion of meats and a clutter of dishes displease me as much as any other confusion; I am easily satisfied with few dishes; and am an enemy to the opinion of Favorinus that in a feast they should snatch from you the meat you like, and set a plate of another sort before you; and that 'tis a pitiful supper, if you do not sate your guests with the rumps of various fowls, the beccafico only deserving to be all eaten. I usually eat salt meats, and yet I love bread that has no salt in it; and my baker never sends up other to my table, contrary to the custom of the country. In my infancy, what they had most to correct in me was the refusal of things that children commonly best love, as sugar, sweetmeats, and march-panes. My tutor contended with this aversion to delicate things, as a kind of over-nicety; and indeed 'tis nothing else but a difficulty of taste, in anything it applies itself to. Whoever cures a child of an obstinate liking for brown bread, bacon, or garlic, cures him also of pampering his palate. There are some who affect temperance and plainness, by wishing for beef and ham among pheasant and partridge; 'tis all very fine; this is delicacy upon delicacies; 'tis the taste of effeminacy that disrelishes ordinary and accustomed things; "Per

* In the Timæus, p. 71.
† Herodotus, iv. 184, Pomponius Mela, i. 8.
‡ Cicero, De Divin., ii. 58.
§ Diogenes Laertius, ix. 82.
que luxuria divitiarum tædio ludi.”* Not to make good cheer with what another is enjoying, and to be curious in what a man eats, is the essence of this vice:

"Si modica coenare times olus omne patella." †

There is, indeed, this difference, that, 'tis better to oblige one's appetite to things that are most easy to be had, but 'tis always vice to oblige one's self: I formerly said a kinsman of mine was over-nice, who, by being in our galleys, had unlearned the use of beds and to undress when he went to sleep.

If I had any sons I should willingly wish them my fortune: the good father that God gave me, who has nothing of me but the acknowledgment of his goodness, but truly 'tis a very hearty one, sent me from my cradle to be brought up in a poor village of his, and there continued me all the while I was at nurse, and still longer, bringing me up to the meanest and the most common way of living: "Magna pars libertatis est bene moratus venter." ‡ Never take upon yourselves, and much less give up to your wives, the care of their nourishment; leave this to fortune, under popular and natural laws; leave it to custom to train them up to frugality and hardship, that they may rather descend from rigors than mount up to them. This humor of his yet aimed at another end to make me familiar with the people and the condition of men who most need our assistance; considering that I should rather regard them who extend their arms to me, than those who turn their backs upon me; and for this reason it was, that he provided me godfathers of the meanest fortune, to oblige and attach me to them.

Nor has his design succeeded altogether ill: for, whether upon the account of the more honor in such a condescension, or out of a natural compassion that has a very great power over me, I have an inclination toward the meaner sort of people. The faction which I should con-

* "The caprices of luxury which would escape the tediousness of riches."—Seneca, Ep. 18.

† "If you can't be content with herbs in a small dish for supper."—Horace, Ep. i. 5, 2.

‡ "A well governed stomach is a great part of liberty."—Seneca, Ep. 123.
damn in our civil wars, I should more sharply condemn, flourishing and successful; it would half reconcile me to it, should I see it miserable and overwhelmed. How much do I admire the generous humor of Chelonis, daughter and wife to kings of Sparta! while her husband, Cleombrotus, in the commotion of her city, had the advantage over Leonidas, her father, she, like a good daughter, stuck close to her father in all his misery and exile, in opposition to the conqueror. But so soon as the chance of war turned, she changed her will with the change of fortune, and bravely turned to her husband’s side, whom she accompanied throughout where his ruin carried him; admitting, as it appears to me, no other choice than to cleave to the side that stood most in need of her, and where she could best manifest her compassion.* I am naturally more apt to follow the example of Flaminiius, who rather gave his assistance to those who had most need of him than to those who had power to do him good, than I do to that of Pyrrhus, who was of an humor to truckle under the great, and to domineer over the poor.

Long sittings at meat both trouble me and do me harm; for, be it for want of moderation, or that I was so accustomed when a child, I eat all the while I sit. Therefore it is that at my own house, though the meals there are of the shortest, I usually sit down a little while after the rest, after the manner of Augustus; † but I do not imitate him in rising also before the rest of the company; on the contrary, I love to sit still a long time after; and to hear them talk, provided I am none of the talkers; for I tire and hurt myself with speaking upon a full stomach, as much as I find it pleasant and very wholesome to argue and to strain my voice before dinner.

The ancient Greeks and Romans had more reason than we in sitting apart for eating, which is a principal action of life, if they were not prevented by other extraordinary business, many hours and the greatest part of the night; eating and drinking more deliberately than we do, who perform all our actions post-haste; and in extending this natural pleasure to more leisure and better use, inter-

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* Plutarch, Lives of Agis and Cleomenes, c. 5.
† Suetonius, in vita, c. 74.
mixing with their meals pleasant and profitable conversation.

They whose concern it is to have a care of me, may very easily hinder me from eating anything they think will do me harm; for in such matters I never covet nor miss anything I do not see; but withal, if it once comes in my sight, 'tis in vain to persuade me to forbear; so that when I design to fast, I must be kept apart from the supper-table, and must have only so much given me, as is required for a prescribed collation; for if I sit down to table, I forget my resolution. When I order my cook to alter the manner of dressing any dish, all my family know what it means, that my stomach is out of order, and that I shall not touch it.

I love to have all meats, that will endure it, very little boiled or roasted, and prefer them very high, and even, as to several, quite gone. Nothing but hardness generally offends me (of any other quality I am as patient and indifferent as any man I have known); so that, contrary to the common humor, even in fish it often happens that I find them both too fresh and too firm: not for want of teeth, which I ever had good, even to excellence, and which age does but now begin to threaten: I have always been used every morning to rub them with a napkin, and before and after dinner. God is favorable to those whom he makes to die by degrees; 'tis the only benefit of old age; the last death will be so much the less painful; it will kill but a quarter of a man or but half a one at most. I have one tooth lately fallen out without drawing and without pain: it was the natural term of its duration; and that part of my being and several others, are already dead, others half dead, of those that were most active, and in highest esteem during my vigorous years; 'tis so I melt and steal away from myself. What a folly it would be in my understanding, to apprehend the height of this fall, already so much advanced, as if it were from the very top! I hope I shall not. I, in truth, receive a principal consolation in meditating my death, that it will be just and natural, and that henceforward I cannot herein either require or hope from destiny any other but unlawful favor. Men make themselves believe that we formerly had, as greater stature, so, longer lives, but they deceive themselves; and Solon, who was of those elder times, limits
the duration of life to threescore and ten years. I, who have so much and so universally adored that ἀριστον μέτρον* of ancient times; and who have concluded the most moderate measures to be the most perfect, shall I pretend to an immeasurable and prodigious old age? Whatever happens contrary to the course of nature, may be troublesome; but what comes according to her, should always be pleasant: "Omnia, quae secundum naturam fiunt, sunt habenda in bonis."† And so Plato likewise says,‡ that the death which is occasioned by wounds and diseases is violent; but that which comes upon us, old age conducting us to it, is of all others the most easy, and in some sort delicious. "Vitam adolescentibus vis aufert, senibus maturitas."§ Death mixes and confounds itself throughout with life; decay anticipates its hour, and shoulders itself even into the course of our advance. I have portraits of myself taken at five and twenty, and five and thirty years of age; I compare them with that lately drawn; how variously is it no longer me; how much more is my present image unlike the former, than unlike that I shall go out of the world with? It is too much to abuse nature, to make her trot so far that she must be forced to leave us, and abandon our conduct, our eyes, teeth, legs, and all the rest, to the mercy of a foreign and begged assistance, and to resign us into the hands of art, being weary of following us herself.

I am not very fond either of salads or fruits, except melons. My father hated all sorts of sauces; I love them all. Eating too much hurts me; but, as to the quality of what I eat, I do not yet certainly know that any sort of meat disagrees with my stomach; neither have I observed that either full moon or decrease, spring or autumn, have any influence upon me. We have in us notions that are inconstant and for which no reason can be given: for example, I found radishes first grateful to my stomach, since that nauseous, and now again grateful. In several other things, I find my stomach and appetite vary after the same

* "The mean is best."
† "All things that are done according to nature, are to be accounted good."—Cicero, De Senect., c. 19.
‡ In Timæus.
§ "Young men are taken away by force, old men by maturity."—Cicero, ubi sup.
manner; I have changed again and again from white wine to claret, from claret to white.

I am a great lover of fish, and consequently make my fasts feasts, and feasts fasts: and I believe what some people say, that it is more easy of digestion than flesh. As I make a conscience of eating flesh upon the fish-days, so does my taste make a conscience of mixing fish and flesh; the difference between them seems to me too remote.

From my youth, I have sometimes kept out of the way at meals; either to sharpen my appetite against the next morning (for, as Epicurus fasted and made lean meals to accustom his pleasure to make shift without abundance, I, on the contrary, do it to prepare my pleasure to make better and more cheerful use of abundance); or else I fasted to preserve my vigor for the service of some action of body or mind; for both the one and the other of these is cruelly dulled in me by repletion; and, above all things, I hate that foolish coupling of so healthful and sprightly a goddess with that little belching god, bloated with the fumes of his liquor; *—or to cure my sick stomach, or for want of fit company; for I say, as the same Epicurus did, that one is not so much to regard what he eats, as with whom; and I commend Chilo, that he would not engage himself to be at Periander's feast till he first was informed who were to be the other guests; no dish is so acceptable to me, nor no sauce so appetizing, as that which is extracted from society. I think it more wholesome to eat more leisurely and less, and to eat oftener; but I would have appetite and hunger attended to; I should take no pleasure to be fed with three or four pitiful and stinted repasts a day, after a medicinal manner; who will assure me, that, if I have a good appetite in the morning, I shall have the same at supper? But, we old fellows especially, let us take the first opportune time of eating, and leave to almanac makers hopes and prognostics. The utmost fruit of my health is pleasure; let us take hold of the present and known. I avoid the invariable in these laws of fasting; he who would have one form serve him, let him avoid the continuing it; we harden ourselves in it, our strength is there stupefied and laid asleep; six months after, you shall find your stomach so inured to it, that all you have got is

* i. e., Montaigne did not approve of coupling Bacchus with Venus.
the loss of your liberty of doing otherwise but to your prejudice.

I never keep my legs and thighs warmer in winter than in summer; one simple pair of silk stockings is all. I have suffered myself, for the relief of my colds, to keep my head warmer; and my belly on the account of my colic; my diseases in a few days habituated themselves thereto, and disdained my ordinary provisions; we soon get from a coif to a kerchief over it, from a simple cap to a quilted hat; the trimmings of the doublet must not merely serve for ornament; there must be added a hare's skin or a vulture's skin, and a cap under the hat; follow this gradation, and you will go a very fine way to work. I will do nothing of the sort, and would willingly leave off what I have begun. If you fall into any new inconvenience, all this is labor lost, you are accustomed to it; seek out some other. Thus do they destroy themselves, who submit to be pestered with these enforced and superstitious rules; they must add something more, and something more after that; there is no end on't.

For what concerns our affairs and pleasures, it is much more commodious, as the ancients did, to lose one's dinner, and defer making good cheer till the hour of retirement and repose, without breaking up a day; and so was I formerly used to do. As to health, I since by experience find, on the contrary, that it is better to dine, and that the digestion is better while awake. I am not very used to be thirsty, either well or sick; my mouth is, indeed, apt to be dry, but without thirst; and commonly I never drink but with thirst that is created by eating, and far on in the meal; I drink pretty well for a man of my pitch; in summer, and at a relishing meal, I do not only exceed the limits of Augustus,* who drank but thrice, precisely; but not to offend Democritus' rule, who forbade that men should stop at four times as an unlucky number, I proceed at need to the fifth glass, about three half-pints; for the little glasses are my favorites, and I like to drink them off, which other people avoid as an unbecoming thing. I mix my wine sometimes with half, sometimes with the third part water; and when I am at home, by an ancient custom that my father's physician prescribed both to him

* Suetonius, in vita, c. 77.
and himself, they mix that which is designed for me in the buttery, two or three hours before 'tis brought in. 'Tis said, that Cranaus, king of Athens, was the inventor of this custom of dashing wine with water; whether useful or no, I have heard disputed. I think it more decent and wholesome for children to drink no wine till after sixteen or eighteen years of age. The most usual and common method of living is the most becoming; all particularity, in my opinion, is to be avoided; and I should as much hate a German who mixed water with his wine, as I should a Frenchman who drank it pure. Public usage gives the law in these things.

I fear a fog, and fly from smoke as from the plague; the first repairs I fell upon in my own house, were the chimneys and houses of office, the common and insupportable defects of all old buildings; and among the difficulties of war, I reckon the choking dust they make us ride in a whole day together. I have a free and easy respiration; and my colds for the most part go off without offense to the lungs, and without a cough.

The heat of summer is more an enemy to me than the cold of winter; for, besides the incommmodity of heat, less remediable than cold, and besides the force of the sunbeams that strike upon the head, all glittering light offends my eyes, so that I could not now sit at dinner over against a flaming fire.

To dull the whiteness of paper, in those times when I was more wont to read, I laid a piece of glass upon my book, and found my eyes much relieved by it. I am to this hour * ignorant of the use of spectacles; and I can see as far as ever I did, or any other. 'Tis true, that in the evening I begin to find a little disturbance and weakness in my sight if I read; an exercise I have always found troublesome, especially by night. Here is one step back and a very manifest one; I shall retire another; from the second to the third, and so to the fourth, so gently, that I shall be stark blind before I shall be sensible of the age and decay of my sight; so artificially do the Fatal sisters untwist our lives. And so I doubt whether my hearing begins to grow thick; and you will see I shall have half lost it, when I shall still lay the fault on the voices of those who speak to

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* "To the age of fifty-four."—Ed. of 1588.
me. A man must screw up his soul to a high pitch, to make it sensible how it ebbs away.

My walking is quick and firm; and I know not which of the two, my mind or my body, I have most to do to keep in the same state. That preacher is very much my friend who can oblige my attention a whole sermon through; in places of ceremony, where every one's countenance is so starched, where I have seen the ladies keep even their eyes so fixed, I could never order it so, that some part or other of me did not lash out; so that though I was seated, I was never settled.* As the philosopher Chrysippus' maid said of her master, that he was only drunk in his legs, † for it was his custom to be always kicking them about in what place soever he sat; and she said it, when the wine having made all his companions drunk, he found no alteration in himself at all; it may have been said of me from my infancy that I had either folly or quicksilver in my feet, so much stirring and unsettledness there is in them, wherever they are placed.

'Tis indecent, besides the hurt it does to one's health, and even to the pleasure of eating, to eat so greedily as I do; I often bite my tongue, and sometimes my fingers, in my haste. Diogenes meeting a boy eating after that manner, gave his tutor a box on the ear. ‡ There were men at Rome that taught people to chew, as well as to walk, with a good grace. I lose thereby the leisure of speaking, which gives great relish to the dinner-table, provided the discourse be suitable, that is, pleasant and short.

There is jealousy and envy among our pleasures; they cross and hinder one another; Alcibiades, a man who well understood how to make good cheer, banished even music from the table, that it might not disturb the entertainment of discourse, for the reason, as Plato§ tells us, "that it is the custom of ordinary people to call fiddlers and singing men to feasts, for want of good discourse and pleasant talk, with which men of understanding know how to entertain one

* The edition of 1588 here adds: "And as to gesticulation, I am never without a switch in my hand walking or riding."

† Diogenes Laertius, vii. 183.
‡ Plutarch, That Virtue may be Taught, c. 2.
§ In the Protagoras.
another." Varro* requires all this in entertainments: "Persons of graceful presence and agreeable conversation, who are neither silent nor babblers; neatness and delicacy, both of meat and place; and fair weather." The art of dining well is no slight art, the pleasure not a slight pleasure; neither the greatest captains nor the greatest philosophers have disdained the use or science of eating well. My imagination has delivered three repasts to the custody of my memory, which fortune rendered soveraignly sweet to me, upon several occasions in my more flourishing age; my present state excludes me; for every one, according to the good temper of body and mind—wherein he then finds himself, furnishes for his own share a particular grace and savor. I, who but crawl upon the earth, hate this inhuman wisdom, that will have us despise and hate all culture of the body; I look upon it as an equal injustice to loathe natural pleasures as to be too much in love with them.

Xerxes was a coxcombical blockhead who, environed with all human delights, proposed a reward to him who could find out others;† but he is not much less so who cuts off any of those pleasures that nature has provided for him. A man should neither pursue nor avoid them, but receive them. I receive them, I confess, a little too warmly and kindly, and easily suffer myself to follow my natural propensions. We have no need to exaggerate their inanity; they themselves will make us sufficiently sensible of it, thanks to our sick wet-blanket mind, that puts us out of taste with them as with itself; it treats both itself and all it receives, one while better, and another worse, according to its insatiable, vagabond, and versatile essence:

"Sincerum est nisi vas, quodcunque infundis, acescit." ‡

I, who boast that I so curiously and particularly embrace the conveniences of life, find them, when I most nearly consider them, very little more than wind. But what? We are all wind throughout; and, moreover, the wind itself, more discreet than we, loves to bluster and shift from corner to corner; and contents itself with its proper offices, with-

* Aulus Gellius, xiii. 11.
† Cicero, Tusc. Quæs., v. 7.
‡ "Unless the vessel be clean, it will sour whatever you put into it."—Horace, Ep. i. 2, 54.
out desiring stability and solidity—qualities that nothing belong to it.

The pure pleasures, as well as the pure displeasures, of the imagination, say some, are the greatest, as was expressed by the balance of Critolaus.* ’Tis no wonder; it makes them to its own liking, and cuts them out of the whole cloth; of this I every day see notable examples, and, per-adventure, to be desired. But I, who am of a mixed and heavy condition, cannot snap so soon at this one simple object, but that I negligently suffer myself to be carried away with the present pleasures of the general human law, intellectually sensible, and sensibly intellectual. The Cyrenaic philosophers will have it that as corporal pains, so corporal pleasures are more powerful, both as double and as more just. There are some, as Aristotle says,† who out of a savage kind of stupidity dislike them; and I know others who out of ambition do the same. Why do they not, moreover, forswear breathing? why do they not live of their own? why not refuse light, because it shines gratis, and costs them neither pains nor invention? Let Mars, Pallas, or Mercury afford them their light by which to see, instead of Venus, Ceres, and Bacchus.‡ Will they not seek the quadrature of the circle, even when on their wives? I hate that we should be enjoined to have our minds in the clouds, when our bodies are at table; I would not have the mind nailed there, nor wallow there; I would have it take place there and sit, but not lie down. Aristippus maintained nothing but the body, as if he had no soul; Zeno stickled only for the soul, as if he had no body; both of them faultily. Pythagoras, they say, followed a philosophy that was all contemplation; Socrates one that was all conduct and action; Plato found a mean between the two; but they only say this for the sake of talking. The true point is found in Socrates; and Plato is much more Socratic than Pythagoric, and it becomes him better. When I dance, I dance; when I sleep, I sleep. Nay, when I walk

* Cicero, Tusc. Quæs., v. 17, who, however applies this balance to a very different purpose.—Coste.
† Moral. ad Nicom., ii. 7.
‡ "These boastful humors may counterfeit some content, for what will not fancy do? But as to wisdom, there is no touch of it."—Ed. fo 1588
alone in a beautiful orchard, if my thoughts are some part of the time taken up with foreign occurrences, I some part of the time call them back again to my walk, to the orchard, to the sweetness of the solitude, and to myself.

Nature has with a motherly tenderness observed this, that the actions she has enjoined us for our necessity should be also pleasant to us; and she invites us to them, not only by reason, but also by appetite, and 'tis injustice to infringe her laws. When I see both Caesar and Alexander in the thickest of their greatest business, so fully enjoy human and corporal pleasures,* I do not hold that they slackened their souls, but wound them up higher, by vigor of courage, subjecting these violent employments and laborious thoughts to the ordinary usage of life; wise, had they believed the last was their ordinary, the first their extraordinary vocation. We are great fools. "He has passed over his life in idleness," say we: "I have done nothing to-day." What? have you not lived? that is not only the fundamental, but the most illustrious of all your occupations. "Had I been put to the management of great affairs, I should have made it seen what I could do." Have you known how to meditate and manage your life, you have performed the greatest work of all. For a man to show and set out himself, nature has no need of fortune; she equally manifests herself in all stages, and behind a curtain as well as without one. Have you known how to regulate your conduct, you have done a great deal more than he who has composed books. Have you known how to take repose, you have done more than he who has taken cities and empires.

The great and glorious masterpiece of man is to know how to live to purpose; all other things, to reign, to lay up treasure, to build, are, at most, but little appendices and props. I delight to see a general of an army, at the foot of a breach he is presently to assault, give himself up entire and free at dinner, to talk and be merry with his friends; to see Brutus, when heaven and earth were conspired against him and the Roman liberty, stealing some hours of the night from his rounds to read and abridge Polybius, in all security. "Tis for little souls, that truckle under the

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* In the manuscript additions to the Bordeaux copy we find: "Enjoy so fully pleasures so natural, and consequently so necessary and just."
weight of affairs, not from them to know how clearly to disengage themselves, not to know how to lay them aside and take them up again:

"O fortes, pejoraque passi
Mecum sepe viri nunc vino pellite curas:
Cras ingens iterabimus sequor."

Whether it be in jest or earnest, that the theological and Sorbonical wine, and their feasts, are turned into a proverb, I find it reasonable they should dine so much more commodiously and pleasantly, as they have profitably and seriously employed the morning in the exercise of their schools. The conscience of having well spent the other hours, is the just and savory sauce of the dinner-table. The sages lived after that manner; and that inimitable emulation to virtue, which astonishes us both in the one and the other Cato, that humor of theirs, so severe as even to be importunate, gently submits itself and yields to the laws of the human condition, of Venus and Bacchus; according to the precepts of their sect, that require the perfect sage to be as expert and intelligent in the use of natural pleasures as in all other duties of life: "Cui cor sapiat, et et sapiat palatus." *

Relaxation and facility, methinks, wonderfully honor and best become a strong and generous soul. Epaminondas did not think that to take part, and that heartily, in songs and sports and dances with the young men of his city, were things that in any way derogated from the honor of his glorious victories and the perfect purity of manners that was in him. And among so many admirable actions of Scipio, the grandfather, a person worthy to be reputed of a heavenly extraction, there is nothing that gives him a greater grace than to see him carelessly and childishly trifling at gathering and selecting shells, and playing at quoits † upon the seashore with Lælius; and, if it was foul

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* "Brave spirits, who have often suffered sorrow with me, drink cares away: to-morrow we will set sail on the great sea."—Horace, Od., i. 7. 30.

† "He that has a learned soul has a learned palate too."—Cicero, De Fin., ii 8.

‡ The name of this game in the text is cornichon va devant, which is not quoits, but, as the "Dictionnaire de Trevoux" describes it, a sort of game wherein two persons contend which of them shall soonest pick up some object.
weather, amusing and pleasing himself in representing by writing in comedies the meanest and most popular actions of men; * or having his head full of that wonderful enterprise of Hannibal and Africa, visiting the schools in Sicily, and attending philosophical lectures, improving himself, to the blind envy of his enemies at Rome. Nor is there anything more remarkable in Socrates than that, old as he was, he found time to make himself taught dancing and playing upon instruments, and thought it time well spent; but this same man was seen in an ecstasy, standing upon his feet a whole day and a night together, in the presence of all the Grecian army, surprised and ravished with some profound thought. He was the first who, among so many valiant men of the army, ran to the relief of Alcibiades, oppressed with the enemy; shielded him with his own body, and disengaged him from the crowd, by absolute force of arms. It was he who, in the Delian battle, raised and saved Xenophon when fallen from his horse; and who, among all the people of Athens, enraged as he was at so unworthy a spectacle, first presented himself to rescue Theramenes, whom the thirty tyrants were hauling to execution by their satellites, and desisted not from his bold enterprise but at the remonstrance of Theramenes himself, though he was only followed by two more in all. He was seen, when courted by a beauty with whom he was in love, to maintain at need a severe abstinence. He was seen ever to go to the wars, and walk upon ice, with bare feet; to wear the same robe winter and summer; to surpass all his companions in patience of bearing hardships, and to eat no more at a feast than at his own private dinner. He was seen, for seven and twenty years together, to endure hunger, poverty, the indocility of his children, and the claws of his wife, with the same countenance; and, in the end, calumny, tyranny, imprisonment, fetters, and poison. But was this man obliged to drink full b Cannons by any rule of civility? he was also the man of the whole army, with whom the advantage in drinking remained. And he never refused to play at cob-nut, nor to ride the hobby-horse with children, and it became him well; for all actions, says philosophy, equally become and equally honor a wise man. We have enough

* "A representin par escr ipt, en comedies," etc. Louandre says these comedies were the comedies of Terence, and adds that some of these details apply to the second Scipio.
wherewithal to do it, and we ought never to be weary of presenting the image of this great man in all the patterns and forms of perfections. There are very few examples of life, full and pure; and we wrong our teaching every day, to propose to ourselves those that are weak and imperfect, scarce good for any one service, and rather pull us back; corrupters rather than correctors of manners. The people deceive themselves; a man goes much more easily indeed by the ends, where the extremity serves for a bound, a stop, and guide, than by the middle way, large and open; and according to art, more than according to nature: but withal much less nobly and commendably.

Grandeur of soul consists not so much in mounting and in pressing forward, as in knowing how to govern and circumscribe itself; it takes everything for great, that is enough, and demonstrates itself better in moderate than in eminent things. There is nothing so fine and legitimate as well and duly to play the man; nor science so arduous as well and naturally to know how to live this life; and of all the infirmities we have, 'tis the most savage to despise our being.

Whoever has a mind to send his soul abroad, when the body is ill at ease, to preserve it from the contagion, let him, by all means, do it if he can: but, otherwise, let him on the contrary favor and assist it, and not refuse to participate of its natural pleasures with a conjugal complacency, bringing to it, if it be the wiser, moderation, lest by indiscretion they should get confounded with pleasure. Intemperance is the pest of pleasure; and temperance is not its scourge, but rather its seasoning. Eudoxus, who therein established the sovereign good, and his companions, who set so high a value upon it, tasted it in its most charming sweetness, by the means of temperance, which in them was singular and exemplary.

I enjoin my soul to look upon pain and pleasure with an eye equally regular, "Eodem enim vilium est effusio animi in lætitia, quo in dolore contractio." * and equally firm; but the one gayly and the other severely, and, so far as it is able, to be as careful to extinguish the one, as to extend the other. The judging rightly of good brings along with it

* "'Tis by the same vice that we dilate ourselves in mirth and contract ourselves in sorrow."—Cicero, Tusc. Quæs., iv. 31.
the judging soundly of evil; pain has something of the inevitable in its tender beginnings, and pleasure something of the evitable in its excessive end. Plato* couples them together, and wills that it should be equally the office of fortitude to fight against pain, and against the immoderate and charming blandishments of pleasure; they are two fountains, from which whoever draws, when and as much as he needs, whether city, man, or beast, is very fortunate. The first is to be taken medicinally and upon necessity, and more scantily; the other for thirst, but not to drunkenness. Pain, pleasure, love, and hatred are the first things that a child is sensible of; if, when reason comes, they apply it to themselves, that is virtue.

I have a special nomenclature of my own; I "pass away time," when it is ill and uneasy, but when 'tis good I do not pass it away; "I taste it over again and stick to it;" one must run over the ill, and settle upon the good. This ordinary phrase of pastime, and passing away the time, represents the usage of those wise sort of people who think they cannot do better with their lives than to let them run out and slide away, pass them over, and balk them, and, as much as they can, ignore them, and shun them as a thing of troublesome and contemptible quality; but I know it to be another kind of thing, and find it both valuable and commodious, even in its latest decay, wherein I now enjoy it; and nature has delivered it into our hands in such and so favorable circumstances, that we have only ourselves to blame if it be troublesome to us, or slide unprofitably away: "Stulti vita ingrata est, trepida est, tota in futurum fertur."† Nevertheless, I compose myself to lose mine without regret; but withal as a thing that is perishable by its condition, not that it troubles or annoys me. Nor does it properly well become any not to be displeased when they die, excepting such as are pleased to live. There is good husbandry in enjoying it; I enjoy it double to what others do; for the measure of its fruition depends upon the more or less of our application to it. Now especially that I perceive mine to be so short in time, I will extend it in weight; I will stop the promptitude of its flight by the promptitude

* Laws, i.

† "The life of a fool is uneasy, timorous, and wholly bent upon the future."—Seneca, Ep. 15.
of my grasp; and by the vigor of using it compensate the speed of its running away; by how much the possession of living is more short, I must make it so much deeper and more full.

Others feel the pleasure of content and prosperity; I feel it too, as well as they, but not as it slides and passes by; one should study, taste, and ruminate upon it, to render condign thanks to Him who grants it to us. They enjoy the other pleasures as they do that of sleep, without knowing it. To the end that even sleep itself should not so stupidly escape from me, I have formerly caused myself to be disturbed in my sleep, so that I might the better and more sensibly relish and taste it. I ponder with myself of content; I do not skim over, but sound it; and I bend my reason, now grown perverse and peevish, to entertain it. Do I find myself in any calm composedness? is there any pleasure that tickles me? I do not suffer it to dally with my senses only, I associate my soul to it too; not there to engage itself, but therein to take delight; not there to lose itself, but to be present there; and I employ it, on its part, to view itself in this prosperous state, to weigh and appreciate its happiness, and to amplify it. It reckons how much it stands indebted to Almighty God that its conscience and the intestine passions are in repose; that it has the body in its natural disposition, orderly and competently enjoying the soft and soothing functions, by which He of His grace is pleased to compensate the sufferings wherewith His justice at His good pleasure chastises us. It reflects how great a benefit it is to be so protected, that, which way soever it turns its eye, the heavens are calm around it. No desire, no fear or doubt, troubles the air; no difficulty, past, present, or to come, that its imagination may not pass over without offense. This consideration takes great luster from the comparison of different conditions; and therefore it is that I present to my thought, in a thousand aspects, those whom fortune or their own error torments and carries away; and those, who more like to me, so negligently and incuriously receive their good fortune. Those are men who pass away their time, indeed; they pass over the present, and that which they possess, to give themselves up to hope, and for vain shadows and images which fancy puts into their heads:
which hasten and prolong their flight, according as they are pursued. The fruit and end of their pursuit is to pursue; as Alexander said, that the end of his labor was to labor:

"Nil actum credens, cum quid superesset agendum;"†

For my part then, I love life, and cultivate it, such as it has pleased God to bestow it upon us. I do not desire it should be without the necessity of eating and drinking; and I should think myself inexcusable to wish it had been twice as long: "Sapiens divitiarum naturalium quæsitor accerimus;" ‡ nor that we should support ourselves by putting only a little of that drug into our mouths, by which Epimenides took away his appetite, and kept himself alive; § nor that we should stupidly beget children with our fingers or heels, but, rather, with reverence be it spoken, that we might voluptuously beget them with our fingers and heels; nor that the body should be without desire, and without titillation. These are ungrateful and wicked complaints. I accept kindly, and with gratitude, what nature has done for me; am well pleased with it, and proud of it. A man does wrong to the great omnipotent Giver of all things, to refuse, annul, or disfigure his gift; all goodness Himself, He has made everything good: "Omnia quæ secundum naturam sunt, æstimatione digna sunt." ¶

Of philosophical opinions, I preferably embrace those that are most solid, that is to say the most human, and most our own: my discourse is, suitable to my manners, low and humble; philosophy plays the child, to my thinking, when it puts itself upon its Ergos, to preach to us that

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* "Such as those forms which after death are said to flutter about; or those dreams which delude the senses in sleep."—Aeneid, x. 641.

† "Thinking nothing done, if anything is left to do."—Lucan, ii. 657.

‡ "A wise man eagerly desires natural riches."—Seneca, Ep. 119.

§ Diogenes Laertius, i. 114.

¶ "All things that are according to nature are worthy of esteem."—Cicero, De FIN., iii. 6.
'tis a barbarous alliance to marry the divine with the earthly, the reasonable with the unreasonable, the severe with the indulgent, the honest with the dishonest; that pleasure is a brutish quality, unworthy to be tasted by a wise man; that the sole pleasure he extracts from the enjoyment of a fair young wife, is a pleasure of his conscience to perform an action according to order, as to put on his boots for a profitable journey. Oh, that its followers had no more right, nor nerves, nor juice, in getting their wives' maidenhoods, than in its lessons.

That is not what Socrates says, who is its master and ours: he values, as he ought, bodily pleasure; but he prefers that of the mind, as having more force, constancy, facility, variety, and dignity. This, according to him, goes by no means alone—he is not so fantastic—but only it goes first; temperance, with him, is the moderatrix, not the adversary of pleasure. Nature is a gentle guide, but not more sweet and gentle, than prudent and just: "Intrandum est in rerum naturam, et penitus, quid ea postulet, pervidendum."* I hunt after her foot throughout; we have confounded it with artificial traces; and that academic and peripatetic good, which is, "to live according to it," becomes, by this means, hard to limit and explain; and that of the Stoics, cousin-german to it, which is "to consent to nature." Is it not an error to esteem any actions less worthy, because they are necessary? And yet they will not beat it out of my head, that it is not a very convenient marriage of pleasure with necessity, with which, says an ancient, the gods always conspire. To what end do we dismember by divorce a building united by so close and brotherly a correspondence? Let us, on the contrary, confirm it by mutual offices; let the mind rouse and quicken the heaviness of the body, and the body stay and fix the levity of the soul. "Qui, velut summum bonum, laudat animae naturam, et, tanquam malum, naturam carnis accusat, professo et animam carnali-ter appetit, et carnem carnaliter fugit; quoniam id vanitate sentit humana, non veritate divina."† In this present that

* "A man must search into the nature of things, and examine what she requires."—CICERO, De FIN., v. 16.

† "He who commends the nature of the soul as the supreme good, and condemns the nature of the flesh as evil, certainly, both carnally desires the soul, and carnally flies the flesh, because he is so possessed, through human vanity, and not by divine truth."—ST. AUGUSTIN, De Civit. Dei, xiv. 5.
God has made us, there is nothing unworthy our care; we stand accountable, even to a hair; and 'tis no slight commission to man, to conduct man according to his condition; 'tis express, plain, and the principal injunction of all, and the Creator has seriously and strictly enjoined it. Authority has alone power to work upon common understandings, and is of more weight in a foreign language; therefore let us again charge with it in this place: "Subtilitia proprium quas non dixerit, ignave et contumaciter facere, qua facienda sunt; et alio corpus impellere, alio animum; distrahique inter diversissimos motus?"* To make this apparent, ask any one, some day, to tell you what whimsies and imaginations he put into his pate, upon the account of which he diverted his thoughts from a good meal, and regrets the time he spends in eating: you will find there is nothing so insipid in all the dishes at your table, as this wise meditation of his (for the most part we had better sleep than wake to the purpose we wake); and that his discourses and notions are not worth the worst mess there. Though they were the ecstasies of Archimedes himself, what then? I do not here speak of, nor mix with the rabble of us ordinary men, and the vanity of the thoughts and desires that divert us, those venerable souls, elevated by the ardent of devotion and religion, to a constant and conscientious meditation of divine things, who, by the energy of vivid and vehement hope, prepossessing the use of the external nourishment, the final aim and last step of Christian desires, the sole, constant, and incorruptible pleasure, disdain to apply themselves to our necessitous, fluid and ambiguous conveniences, and easily resign to the body the care and use of sensual and temporal pasture: 'tis a privileged study. Between ourselves, I have ever observed supercelestial opinions and subterraneous manners to be of singular accord.

Æsop, that great man, saw his master make water as he walked: "What, then," said he, "must we dung as we run?" Let us manage our time as well as we can, there will yet remain a great deal that will be idle and ill employed. The mind has not other hours enough wherein to do its business, without disassociating itself from the body, in that

* "Who will not say, that it is the property of folly, slothfully and contumaciously to perform what is to be done, and to bend the body one way and the mind another, and to be distracted between wholly different motions?"—Seneca, Ep. 74.
little space it must have for its necessity. They would put
themselves out of themselves, and escape from being men;
'tis folly; instead of transforming themselves into angels,
they transform themselves into beasts; instead of elevating,
they lay themselves lower. These transcendental humors
affright me, like high and inaccessible cliffs and precipices;
and nothing is hard for me to digest in the life of Socrates
but his ecstasies and communication with demons; nothing
so human in Plato as that for which they say he was called
divine; and of our sciences, those seem to be the most
terrestrial and low that are highest mounted; and I find
nothing so humble and mortal in the life of Alexander,
as his fancies about his immortalization. Philotas pleasantly
quipped him in his answer: he congratulated him by letter
concerning the oracle of Jupiter Hammon, which had placed
him among the gods: "Upon thy account, I am glad of it,
but the men are to be pitied who are to live with a man,
and to obey him, who exceeds and is not contented with
the measure of a man."* "Diis te minorem quod geris,
imperas." † The pretty inscription wherewith the Athenians
honored the entry of Pompey into their city, is conform-
able to my sense: "By so much thou art a god, as thou
confessest thee a man." ‡ "Tis an absolute and, as it were, a
divine perfection, for a man to know how loyally to enjoy
his being. We seek other conditions, by reason we do not
understand the use of our own; and go out of ourselves,
because we know not how there to reside. 'Tis to much
purpose to go upon stilts, for, when upon stilts, we must
yet walk with our legs; and when seated upon the most
elevated throne in the world, we are but seated upon our
breech. The fairest lives, in my opinion, are those which
regularly accommodate themselves to the common and
human model; without miracle, without extravagance.
Old age stands a little in need of a more gentle treatment.

* Quintus Curtius, vi. 9.

† "Because thou carriest thyself lower than the gods, thou
rulest."—Horace, Od., iii. 6, 5.

‡ Plutarch, Life of Pompey, c. 7.
Let us recommend it to God, the protector of health and wisdom, but withal, let it be gay and sociable.

"Frui paratis et valido mihi
Latoē, dones, et, precor, integra
Cum mente; nec turpem senectam
Degere, nec Cithara carentem." *

* "Grant it to me, Apollo, that I may enjoy what I have in good health; let me be sound in body and in mind; let me live in honor when old, nor let music be wanting."—Horace, Od., i. 31, 17.
INDEX.

ABORIGINES of America, their characteristics, i. 219.
Abuses, the source of, ii. 523.
Abyda, suicide of the inhabitants of, ii. 33.
 Abyssinians, their love for horses, i. 324.
Accident to Montaigne, account of an, ii. 45 et seq.
Accomplishments, suitable, should be sought, i. 257.
Accusation, instance of a false, ii. 42.
Achaeans, their hatred of double-dealing in war, i. 22.
Acting, on, i. 178.
Actions, intention is judge of our, i. 27; noble, are easily obscured, 236; of the soul, the three, 497; inconstancy of our, ii. 1; men not to be judged by their outward, ii. 8.
Adventure with robbers, ii. 558.
Advice of friends, ii. 271-279.
Advice, the great need to kings of good, ii. 577.
ÆEmilius, Paulus, ii. 77.
Æneid and Orlando Furioso compared, i. 395.
Æsop's fables, i. 392.
Æsop on physicians, ii. 231; anecdote of, 529.
Affectation to be avoided, i. 172.
Affection of fathers to their children, i. 365; of parents to their children is second only to self-preservation, 366; is natural, 366; superiority of to fear, 374; of authors for their books, 383, 384; of animals, 458.
Affections, our, carry themselves beyond us, i. 10.
Age, on, i. 358; rare to die of old, 359; Roman laws relating to, 359; at which the greatest human actions have been performed, 360; the advantages and disadvantages of, ii. 282, 283.
Agesilaus, anecdote of, ii. 273; saying of, on love, ii. 368.
Agrigentines, careless mode of living among the, ii. 3.
Aim, a fixed, is necessary to the soul, i. 29.
Alcibiades, ii. 218; his wonderful constitution, i. 167.
Alexander the Great and Betis, governor of Gaza, i. 4; his noble refusal to use treachery against Darius, 26; his alteration in the calendar, 112; confidence of, in his physician, 119; a pattern of hazardous actions, 119; and his flatterers, 291; his horse Bucephalus, 319; valor of, ii. 6; his murder of Clytus, 7; and his love for Homer, 213; on, 214; and Cæsar compared, 216; and the apes, 350; and Brisson, anecdote of, 398; and Thalestris, 360.
Alexander VI., Pope, his death, i. 226.
Alexia, the siege of, ii. 199.
Alfonso XI., king of Castile, impious proclamation of, i. 20.
All things have their season, ii. 158.
Alva, duke of, treachery of, i. 27.
Amadis of Gaul, i. 392.
Ambassadors, the duty of, i. 52; Persian custom as to, 54.
Ambition, i. 254; the effects of, 243.
America, supposed notions of, among the ancients, i. 208; what the discoverers thought was its size, etc., 208; characteristics of the aborigines of, 211; opinion of the inhabitants of, on French customs, 221; discovery of, ii. 387; courage of the aborigines of, 388.
Americans, their treatment of prisoners, i. 215; custom of, in war, 216.
Amphitheater, the Roman, ii. 383.
Amurath, sacrifice of, at the taking of the Isthmus, i. 206.
Amusements, on, ii. 309.
Amyot, Jacques, the purity and simplicity of his writings, ii. 35.
Anacharsis on the happiest state of government, i. 297.
Ancients, parsimony of the, i. 340.
Androclus and the lion, story of, i. 466.
Anger, of, ii. 170; great power of, 171; and hatred not to be fostered, 495.
Angoulême, miracle at the siege of, by King Clovis, i. 227.
Animals sacred among the ancients, i. 419; their power of communicating with each other, 437; affection of, 458.
Antigenides the musician, ii. 349.
Antigonus, his treatment of traitors, ii. 261.
Antisthenes, anecdotes of, i. 427, ii. 417; on the privileges of the sages, 478.
Antony rode in a coach drawn by lions, ii. 378.
Ants, instinct of, i. 454.
Anxiety of mind about the future, causes unhappiness, i. 10.
Apelles, anecdote of, ii. 413.
Apes, Alexander and the, ii. 350.
Apology for Raimond de Sebonde, i. 420.
Apologies, on, ii. 511.
Arcesilaus, method of, with his pupils, i. 145; his death from drinking, ii. 15; the philosopher, anecdote of, ii. 372.
Archelaus of Macedon, anecdote of, ii. 315.
Archias, tyrant of Thebes, story of, ii. 37.
Areopagus, custom of the, i. 573; the court of, ii. 524.
Argippians, customs of, ii. 67.
Argue, how to, ii. 404.
Argument, advantages of, ii. 402.
Arguments, we should not yield at once to, ii. 418; on foolish, ii. 571.
Aristippus and Dionysius the tyrant, i. 411.
Aristotle, on a saying of Solon, i. 12; his method of teaching, 162; on meditation, ii. 285; saying of, on bashfulness, 317.
Arming of soldiers, Lycurgus and Hannibal on, i. 313.
Armor, on the use of, i. 386; not worn by Alexander, 386; excessive weight of, 387.
Arms, coats of, i. 308.
Arms of the Parthians, i. 386; of the Gauls, 337; of the Roman soldiers, 388.
Arras, capture of, by Louis XI., i. 264.
Arria, the story of, ii. 205.
Artybius, a Persian general, death of, i. 318.
Art of conference, of the, ii. 401.
Asia, customs of the peoples of, in war, i. 313.
Assassins, the ii. 168.
Assyrian horses very fierce, i. 324.
Atalanta, the story of, ii. 298.
Ataraxia, i. 497.
Atheism, on, i., 428, 429.
Athenians, characteristics of, i. 137; injustice of, after the battle of Arginusse, 17; how they treated the judges of Socrates, ii. 550.
Athens, Socrates on the city of, ii. 323.
Atticus, Pomponius, death of, ii. 59.
Augustine, St., on belief in miracles, ii. 525.
Augustus, clemency of, toward Cinna, i. 114.
Authors, favorite, of Montaigne, i. 139; affection of, for their books, 383, 384.
Avarice, the disadvantages of, i. 277; its cause, 280; the causes of, 369; the meanness of, ii. 436.
B, Gascon changes in the sound of the letter, i. 489.
Babylonian custom with their sick, ii. 245.
Bad company, punishment for keeping, i. 243.
Bajazet, death of, i. 326.
Band or Scarf, the order of the, instituted by Alphonso, king of Spain, i. 323.
Bartolus, and Baldus, i. 594.
Bashfulness, ii. 317.
Bath, customs of the ancients at the, i. 328.
Bathing very common in Germany and Italy, ii. 241.
Baths and springs, ii. 240; in Germany, Italy, Switzerland, France, etc., 241.
Battles on foot more fierce and better disputed than cavalry engagements, i. 320.
Beasts subject to power of imagination, i. 90.
Beauty of body, on the definition of, i. 472; various opinions relative to, among various nations, 472; advantage of, ii. 93; and wit, which to be preferred, 293; the power of, 554.
Beauvais, bishop of, his conduct in war, i. 286.
Bedouins, religious belief of, ii. 83; belief of, in fate, 165.
Bees, defense of a besieged city by, i. 464.
Beginnings of events should be carefully watched, ii. 512.
Behavior of persons sentenced to death, i. 263.
Belief in improbabilities, on, ii. 524.
Bellay, M. du, Montaigne's opinions of his memoirs, i. 403.
Benefits, on giving and receiving, ii. 453.
Besieged city, should its governor parley, i. 21.
Bessus the Peonian, how he was convicted of parricide, ii. 39.
INDEX.

Betis, governor of Gaza, obstinate silence of, i. 4.
Bible, danger arising from so many translations of, i. 352.
Bion, saying of, on grief, i. 19, 20; death-bed repentance of, 428; and
Alexander, anecdote of, ii. 467.

Birds, instinct of, i. 456.
Birth of Montaigne, i. ix.
Boccacio's Decameron, i. 392.

Bodily pleasures inferior to those of the mind, ii. 618.
Bodin, Jean, on Plutarch, ii. 179.
Body, involuntary movements of our, i. 87.
Books, on the choice of, i. 253; condemned to be burned, first instance
of, 383; Montaigne's choice of, 392; the advantages of, ii. 293;
Montaigne's enjoyment of, 293; not to be used in excess, 296;
the study of, not so useful as conversation, 402; the composition
of, 552; the difficulties in, increased by comments, 564.
Bordeaux, Montaigne elected mayor of, in his absence, ii. 494; Monta-
taine on his conduct of the mayoralty of, 513.
Borromeo, Cardinal, his austere mode of life, i. 276.
Borrowing of money, i. 279.
Brahmin customs, ii. 291.
Brazil, people of, only die of old age, i. 483.
Breach of faith, when lawful, ii. 265.
Bretigny, the treaty of, ii. 138.
Brisson and Alexander, anecdote of, ii. 398.
Brutes, insane fury of, i. 19.
Bucephalus, the horse of Alexander, i. 319.
Building, Montaigne's reasons for, ii. 433.
Bull of citizenship of Rome granted to Montaigne, ii. 489.
Burning of books, when first introduced, i. 383.
Business, Montaigne's aversion from, ii. 436.

Cæsar Borgia, death of, i. 226.
Cæsar, Julius, description of his oratory, i. 172; an excellent horse-
man, 319; liberality of, 361; Montaigne's opinion of his writings,
399; clemency of, ii. 414; on death, 58; style of, 91; disposition
of, 186; ambition of, 188; courage of, 196; popularity of,
among his soldiers, 201; and Alexander compared, 216; and
Pompey, the enmity between, honorable and without malignity,
505.
Calendar, alteration in, by Alexander the Great, i. 112; reformation
of, by Gregory XIII., ii. 501, 518.
Calepin the lexicographer, ii. 506.
Calicut, customs of, ii. 320.
Caligula, foolish revenge of, i. 20.
Canius, Julius, saying of, on death, ii. 43.
Cannes, punishment inflicted by the Romans for cowardice at, i. 50;
conduct of Roman soldiers after, ii. 544.
Cannibals, i. 207.
Carneades, his thirst for knowledge, i. 163; doctrine of, respecting
glory, ii. 71.
Carthage, panic at the capture of, i. 57.
Carthaginians, cunning nature of, i. 22; discovery of new lands by, 209.
INDEX.

Caste, on, ii. 330.
Caste, on, ii. 330.
Caste, on, ii. 330.
Caste, on, ii. 330.

Castelnaudari, fifty heretics burned at, i. 266.

Cato, anecdote of, i. 301: parsimony of, 340; a hard drinker, ii. 12; death of, 60, and Socrates compared, 530; Cato, the younger, a pattern of virtue and constancy, i. 237; death of, 407.

Cato, comparison of the two, ii 158.

Catullus, Montaigne’s opinion of, i. 392.

Caunians, custom of, on sacred days, i. 535.

Cavalry engagements not so fierce as battles on foot, i. 320.

Celts, custom of the isle of, ii. 19; suicide of a woman of, 34.

Celtiberians, disposition of, ii. 7.

Cemeteries in cities, why established by Lycurgus, i. 71.

Ceremony at interviews of princes, i. 46; the power of, ii. 84; Montaigne’s dislike of 289; the effects of, 305.

Chaldeans, register kept by, i. 583.

Chameleons, changes of color in the, i 456.

Chance, we live by, ii. 7; the dangers of games of, 506.

Change of climate, effects of, i. 585; of scene, the advantages of, ii. 461.

Changes in the English laws, i. 590.

Characteristics of inhabitants of various Greek cities, i. 136.

Charondas, his punishment for cowardice, i. 50; ordinance of, to prevent alteration in the laws, 107; his punishment for keeping bad company, 244.

Chastel, Jacques du, bishop of Soissons, suicide of, ii. 33.

Chastity of Lacedaemonian women, ii. 331; instances of extreme, 340.

Chevalerier, i. 326.

Child, of a monstrous, ii. 168.

Children, difficulty of choosing the proper training for, i. 143; how they should be educated, 143; should be taught silence and modesty, 150; disposal of, Plato’s precept as to, 161; injured by long hours of teaching, 162; affection of fathers to their, 365; how they should be trained and treated by their parents, 369; how they should be corrected, 369; how they should address their parents, 374; resemblance of, to their fathers, ii. 219.

China, the government of, ii. 569.

Christian religion useful and just, i. 109; enjoins obedience to the laws, 109; the secrets of, not to be indiscriminately dispersed, 352; the feelings which it should inspire, 424.

Chronicles of the Chaldeans, i. 583; of Sais, 583.

Cicero on the decay of oracles, i. 38; and the younger Pliny compared, 256; Montaigne’s opinion of, 396; his dislike for letters in his old age, 495; and Seneca compared, ii. 172; Cicero, the younger, anecdote of, i. 398.

Cimbrians, disposition of, ii. 7.

Cinna, clemency of Augustus toward, i. 114.

Citizenship of Rome granted to Montaigne, ii. 489.

Civil war in France, ii. 534.

Plato, on, ii. 537.

Civility, every city and society has its own forms of, i. 47; in excess troublesome, 47.
Cleanthes the philosopher, death of, ii. 59.
Clemency superior to revenge, i. 118; of Cæsar, 414.
Cleomenes, maxim on conduct of war, i. 25; treachery of, at Argos, 25.
Climate, effects of change of, i. 585.
Clodomir, king of Aquitaine, his death, i. 312.
Clothes, custom of wearing, i. 231; not intended by nature, 231.
Clovis, his treatment of traitors, ii. 261.
Clytus murdered by Alexander, ii. 7.
Coaches, of, ii. 374; Montaigne's dislike of, 377; use of in war, 377.
Coats of arms, i. 308.
Cogidunus, king of England, ii. 143.
Cold, intense, on march to Luxemburg, i. 233; during retreat of the ten thousand, 234.
Colleges, the discipline of, too strict, i. 165.
Comines, Philip de, Montaigne's opinion of, i. 403.
Commentaries, the excessive number of, written, ii. 566.
Commentators often make books more difficult, ii. 564.
Commerces, on three, ii. 283.
Companions in traveling, on the choice of, ii. 474.
Compulsion not to be used in the education of children, i. 164.
Conceit, on, ii. 515.
Conference, of the art of, ii. 401.
Confession forced by the rack, ii. 41; Montaigne's practice of, 315; of one's own faults most honorable, 482.
Conjugal love, i. 2.
Conrad III., emperor, anecdote of, i. 2.
Conscience, the laws of, proceed from custom, i. 103; on, ii. 38; power of, 39; advantage of a clear, 40; on liberty of, 123.
Consolation, the true method of, ii. 207.
Constancy and revolution, the law of, i. 43; not to be looked for in a man, ii. 2; how truly to estimate, 506; and patience, the best examples of, to be found among the unlearned, 533.
Constantinople, empire, of, founded and ended by a Constantine, i. 227.
Constantius, emperor, haughty demeanor of, ii. 86.
Contentment, importance of, i. 249.
Contradictions in our actions, ii. 1.
Conversation, the uses of, i. 51. 148; on, ii. 285; of women, 290; the most fruitful exercise of the mind, 402; highly esteemed by the Romans and Athenians, 402; of what kind it should be, 404.
Coronation customs in Mexico, ii. 417.
Correction of children, the proper mode of, i. 369; should be welcomed, ii. 403.
Cortez, Fernando, in Mexico, i. 206.
Cossitius, Lucius, turned from a woman into a man, i. 81.
Cotys, anecdote of, ii. 506.
Countenance, the, betrays the thoughts, i. 87.
Counterfeit being sick, not to, ii. 143.
Courage the same everywhere, i. 120; instances of great, 120.
Courtesy and good manners, knowledge of, a necessary study, i. 47.
INDEX.

Cowardice, punishment of, i. 49; the mother of cruelty, ii. 147
Crassus, gloomy disposition of, ii. 313.
Cratis, death of, ii. 335.
Creation, the lessons taught by, i. 430.
Creatures, strange, in various countries, i. 524.
Crecey, battle of, i. 285.
Cretans, customs of, i. 103.
Crime brings its own punishment, ii. 39.
Cripples, power of, i. 97; of, ii. 517.
Cruelty of Portuguese to prisoners, i. 215; of, 404; Montaigne's hatred of, 414; prevalence of, 416; men naturally inclined to, 417; cowardice the mother of, ii. 147; of the Spaniards toward the aborigines of Mexico and Peru, 391.
Cunning of the Lacedæmonians at Platea, i. 43; of a mule, 460.
Curiosity, advantages of honest, i. 152, prompted by novelty, 181; on, 354, 506.
Custom, force of, i. 94; power of, over our minds, 97; comes to us by nature, 104; strange, of the Turks, 274; is no virtue, 363; of the ancient Gauls in the treatment of their children, 378; of the Isle of Cea, ii. 19; of the Babylonians with their sick, 245; of the Brahmin virgins, 291; of the Scythian women, 338; a second nature, 500.
Customs, strange, of foreign nations, i. 97; in dress, 106; of the aborigines of America, 217; in wearing clothes, 231; at the bath, 328; of salutation, 329; at meals, 329; of mourning, 332; of the ancients to obtain the favor of the gods, 519; of the Argiprians, ii. 67; of foreign countries appear strange, 579.
Cuttle-fish, habit of, according to Aristotle, i. 447.
Cyrus, reverence of, to religion, i. 15; foolish passion of, 20; a hard drinker, ii. 12; his system of post horses, 136.

Danger, nothing noble can be done without, i. 119.
Darius, his animosity against the Athenians, i. 31.
Daughter, Montaigne's adopted, ii. 117, 326.

Death is no counterfeiting or dissimulation, i. 59; day, our, should be judge of all the foregoing years, 60; contempt of, taught by virtue, 62; euphemisms for, 64; frequent examples of, cause us to have it ever in our minds, 66; uncertainty of, 68; the soul can never be at rest while in fear of, 73; contempt of, the surest foundation of religion, 74; to prepare for, the perpetual work of life, 75; why less dreadful in war than at home, 79; behavior of persons sentenced to, 263; the delay of, worse than death itself, 269; opinions of the Getae on, 519; on judging of another's, 619; a cure for all diseases, ii. 20; to be sought, not feared, 20; the Stoics on, 21; desired from high motives, 33; of the Constable de Montmorency, 117; how most courageously to meet, 135; of Epanimonidas, 302; Plutarch and Seneca on, 533, when close at hand not such a cause of fear as when remote, 546; the least premeditated, the easiest, 547.
Deaths caused by sudden emotion, i. 8; strange instances of, 65; more before than after thirty-five, 65; book on, by Diæarbus, 72.
INDEX.

Deceit ought to be corrected in childhood, i. 96.
Defeats sometimes more triumphant than victories, i. 218.
Defense of a besieged city by bees, i. 464.
Defense of Seneca and Plutarch, ii. 178.
Definitions, on, ii. 566.
Delphi, answer of the oracle at, ii. 492.
Democritus and Heraclitus compared, i. 335; and the figs, 506.
Demosthenes on virtue, ii. 2; on the expenditure of public money, 379.
Dependence on others dangerous, ii. 453.
Descent of Plato, i. 533.
Desires are augmented by difficulties, ii. 62, 359; must be moderated, 285; ought to be limited and moderated, 500.
Despair, a general should not drive the enemy to, i. 311.
D’Estissac, Madame, i. 365.
Destriers, derivation of, i. 317.
Dexterity on horseback, instances of, i. 326.
Diary, advantages of keeping a, i. 230.
Dice, the danger of, ii. 506.
Didymus, his six thousand books on grammar, etc., ii. 427.
Difficulties in books increased by commentators, ii. 564; augment our desires, 62.
Dignities, on the conferring of, ii. 413.
Diogenes and Timon compared, i. 335.
Diomedon, an Athenian captain, speech of, on his trial, i. 17.
Dionysius, the elder, cruelty of, i. 3; death of, from joy, 9; and the miser, 351; the play of, called “The Ransom of Hector,” ii. 89.
Dioscorides, an island, now called Zocotora, i. 354.
Discipline, value of, i. 53; of the Roman armies, ii. 536; of the Turkish armies, 536.
Discovery of America, i. 209; ii. 387.
Diseases and deaths caused by imagination, i. 80; and their remedies, ii. 587.
Disguise assumed by some generals in battle, i. 314.
Dislikes, strange, of some persons, i. 165.
Disposition of women, i. 376, 379; of the Celtiberians, ii. 7; of the Cimbrians, 7.
Dissimulation, ii. 102.
Diversion, of, ii. 296.
Diversions of youth, Plato on the, i. 164.
Divination, art of, originated among the Tuscans, i. 40; Pacuvius on, 42; attempt to eradicate the art of by Xenophanes, 42; abuse of, 214.
Divine ordinances to be soberly judged, i. 222; authority claimed by ancient legislators, ii. 82.
Diviners, Scythian treatment of false, i. 214.
Divorces rare in Rome, ii. 66.
Dogs, instinct of, i. 448, 451; training of, 449.
Dogmatists, the sect of, i. 501.
Double-dealing, the vice of, ii. 256.
Dreams, on, ii. 351; on the interpretation of, 600.
Dress, custom in, i. 106.
Index. 631

Drinking, French and German habits in, ii. 12; Greek customs in 15; Plato on, 15; deaths from, 16.

Drugs, the choice of by physicians, ii. 233.

Drunkenness, ii. 9; effects of, 10; among the Germans, 11; not decried by the Ancients, 12; allowed by the Stoics, 12; Silvius, a physician of Paris on, 12.

Drusus, anecdote of, ii. 273.

Duel, account of a, i. 227.

Dueling, ii. 150.

Duras, letter to Madame de, ii. 247.

Duties of a king difficult to perform, ii. 397.

Duty of ambassadors, i. 52; of a wise man, i. 336.

Dying persons, regrets of, i. 70.

Dying, the sensation of, ii. 46; the act of, not painful, 46; on various conditions of, 464; Roman superstitions on, 465.

Early marriages unadvisable, i. 370.

Earth, the motion of the, by whom first told, i. 579.

Eating and drinking, Montaigne's habits of, ii. 605.

Economy, the highest virtue in women, ii. 460.

Education, faults of, i. 127; of children, 138; the sum of true, 156; Lacedaemonian system of, 167; of Montaigne, 174; of the ancient Persians, 135; maxim of Socrates on, 249; on, ii. 116; assists and fortifies the natural inclinations, 275.

Edward I., dying command of, to his son, i. 13, 14.

Edward the Black Prince at the siege of Limousins, i. 1.

Egmont, Count, beheaded, i. 27.

Egotism, on, ii. 52; the remedy for, 53.

Egyptian custom of reminding guests of death, i. 68.

Egyptians, sacrificial customs of, i. 416; power of, to endure torture, ii. 182.

Eloquence, when it flourished most at Rome, i. 337; less needed in a monarchical government, 337; of an Italian cook, 383; the source of, ii. 346.

Emulation, the pleasures of, ii. 398.

Enchantments, the credit of, due to imagination, i. 82.

Endurance of pain, instances of, i. 272–275.

Enemies, should they be attacked in their own country or waited for, i. 314–316.

English laws, changes in, i. 590.

Enmity between Cæsar and Pompey honorable and without malignity, ii. 505.

Epaminondas, his conduct on his trial, i. 3; on mutability of fortune, 60; on, ii. 217, 265; death of, 302.

Ephemeral creatures, i. 74.

Epicureans and Stoics compared, i. 404.

Epicurus dispensed his sages from all care of the future, i. 11; on the laws, 566; doctrines of, ii. 70; letter of, to Hermachus, ibid.; will of, 71; on his own writings, 301.

Equality is the soul of equity, i. 76.

Errors of opinion arise in medium understandings, i. 344; of physicians, ii. 237; on the growth of, 520.
Essays, Montaigne's method in writing, i. 333.
Essenians, custom of the, ii. 353.
Eumenes besieged in Nova by Antigonus, i. 23.
European nations compared, i. 409, 410.
Events, various, from the same counsel, i. 113.
Excellent men, the most, ii. 211.
Excess in dress and living, how to overcome, i. 298.
Excess of zeal to be avoided, ii. 535.
Execution of the daughter of Sejanus, ii. 262.
Executions, how carried out in Lithuania, ii. 262.
Exercise necessary to children, i. 149.
Experience, the uses of, ii. 412; on, 561.
Extempore speaking, i. 37; Montaigne unable to speak, 37.
Eye, power of the, i. 91.
Eyquem, the surname of Montaigne's ancestors, ii. 79.

Faith, necessity of a true, i. 431; when lawful to break, ii. 265; on breaking, 451.
Falsehood and truth, Pythagorean definition of, i. 33.
Fame does not follow all good deeds, ii. 515.
Familiarity breeds contempt, ii. 63.
Fashions readily changed, i. 327.
Fate, ii. 165; Bedouin belief in, 165.
Father, the use of the name of, i. 374.
Fathers, affection of, to their children, i. 365.
Faults, free confession of one's own, most honorable, ii. 482.
Fear, on, i. 54; a passion which soonest upsets our judgment, 55; effects of, 55; instances of, 55; a cause of perpetual anguish, 57; more insupportable than death, 57; called by the Greeks "panic," 57.
Fear of torture, effects of, i. 415; of illness worse than illness itself, ii. 44.
Features, variety in, ii. 555.
Feraulez, his generosity, i. 282.
Fidelity engendered by trust, i. 119.
Flatterers, subserviency of, ii. 400.
Florentines, custom of, in declaring war, i. 22.
Folly, not to be cured by advice, ii. 419; obstinacy a proof of, 420; self-satisfied, 420.
Foreign customs appear strange, ii. 579.
Fortune, the mutability of, i. 59; the power of, 117; instances of strange, 226; our use and not our possession of, renders us happy, 292; events in war depend on, 317; the power of, in the world, ii. 414.
Free life, the true means of, ii. 20.
Freedom, true, i. 296.
French gentlemen, remarkable courage of three, i. 1; children, characteristics of, 163; riders the most graceful, 326; customs of the ancient, 327; and Germans compared with other nations, 410; disposed to fighting, ii. 151; French writers on, 347; language, on the, 348; and Italians compared, 358.
INDEX.

Friends, on the advice of, ii. 271, 279.
Friendship, i. 184; different kinds of, 186; definition of, by Cicero, 190; instances of, 191; perfect, is indivisible, 194; Montaigne's disposition to contract, ii. 286.
Froissart, i. 400.
Fulvia, suicide of, ii. 30.
Functions of the soul, the various, i. 333.
Funeral ceremonies, i. 12-16; customs of Narsinga, 264; custom of the Scythians, 446.
Future, anxiety about, causes unhappiness, i. 10.
Future life, Mohammed on, i. 515.

Galba and Mæcenas, anecdote of, ii. 341.
Gascon horses, the fame of, i. 323; changes in the sound of the letter "b," 489; obstinacy, ii. 182.
Gascony, troubled state of, ii. 457; warlike spirit of the people of, 458; plague in, 542; condition of, during the plague, 543.
Gauls, customs of the ancient, i. 331; habits of the ancient, with reference to marriages, 370; custom of the, in education of their children, 378.
Gelo of Syracuse, cunning of, ii. 255.
Generals, custom of some, to assume disguise in battle, i. 314.
Germans, compared with other nations, i. 410; their habits of drinking, ii. 12; constant practice of bathing among, 241.
Getae, their opinions on death and immortality, i. 519.
Gifts, on giving and receiving, ii. 453.
Giving the lie, on, ii. 118.
Gladiators, advantage of shows of, ii. 139.
Glory and reputation, anxiety for, the most common folly, i. 284.
Glory, on, ii. 68; teaching of Epicurus on, 70; teaching of Carneades on, 71.
Goat, the blood of a male, used for the stone, ii. 243.
Goats, instinct of, i. 382.
God, opinions of the ancient philosophers on the nature of, i. 511.
God's justice and power inseparable, i. 349.
Good and evil, i. 262.
Government, one defect in our, i. 229; Anacharsis on the happiest state of, 297; definition of a perfect, 414; the best for every nation, 440.
Grammarians, ancient, ridiculed by Dionysius, i. 130.
Gramont, Monsieur de, funeral of, ii 306.
Grandeur, of the Roman, ii. 141.
Great events rise from little causes, ii. 509.
Greatness, of the inconvenience of, ii. 395, advantage of, 395.
Greek, a term of reproach among the Romans, i. 124.
Gregory XIII., reformation of the calendar by, ii. 501-518.
Guicciardini, Montaigne's opinion of, i. 402.
Guide-fish, i. 468.
Guienne, derivation of, i. 304.
Guise, duke of, treatment of a conspirator by, i. 113; murder of, ii. 167.
Gyges, the ring of, ii. 77.
Gymnosophists, the, ii. 164.
Gypsies, habits of, i. 272.

Habit, the force of, ii. 72.
Halicyns or kingfishers, i. 470.
Happiness should not be judged till after death, i. 58; in what it consists, ii. 281.
Hares, some in the Indies poisonous, i. 612.
Harmodius and Aristogiton, their friendship, i. 190.
Hatred and anger not to be fostered, ii. 503.
Health, importance of, i. 475, ii. 228, 311; and sickness, their effects on the spirits, etc., i. 572.
Hegesias, on the duty of a wise man, i. 336; the philosopher, his lectures on death, ii. 299.
Heliodorus, bishop of Tricca, i. 383.
Heliogabalus, his preparations for death, ii. 57.
Hemon of Chios, anecdote of, ii. 372.
Henry VII., treachery of, toward duke of Suffolk, i. 27.
Heptameron, the, i. 413.
Heronius and Democritus compared, i. 335.
Heretics, fifty, burned at Castelnaudari, i. 266.
Hilary, St., bishop of Poictiers, i. 225.
Hindrance of the mind to itself, ii. 60.
Hippomenes and Atalanta, the story of, ii. 298.
Historians, various classes of, i. 400; the duty of, in relating incredible events, ii. 425.
History, how to read, i. 52; less hazardous to write of the past than of the present, 92; advantages of reading, 152; Montaigne's preference for, 399, 400; how it should be written, 401; Romans and Greeks the best writers of, and why, 401.
Home education, disadvantages of, i. 148.
Homer, on, ii. 211.
Honesty and profit, of, ii. 251.
Honor, not to communicate a man's, i. 284; the middle the seat of, 331; on recompenses of, 361.
Honors and titles, Montaigne's disregard of, ii. 488.
Horace, Montaigne's opinion of, i. 392.
Horn, count, beheaded, i. 27.
Horse, account of Caesar's, i. 319; exercise recommended, 319.
Horses of war, or destriers, i. 317; training of, by Mamelukes, 318, 319; fame of the Gascon, 323; love of the Abyssinians for, 324; Assyrian very fierce, 324; blood of, drunk by Scythians, 324; what the Indians thought of them when first discovered, 324, 325; eating serpents, 326.
Horsemens, the French the most graceful, i. 326; dexterity of, 326.
Housekeeping, on, ii. 430; the troubles of, 431.
Housewifery, the most honorable and profitable knowledge for the mother of a family, ii. 460.
Human happiness, in what it consists, ii. 281.
Hungarians, their custom in war, i. 217, 218; use of coaches in war, by, ii. 377.
Husbandry a servile employment, i. 251.
INDEX.

Hyposphagma, i. 612.

Idanthyrses, king of Scythia, his answer to Darius, i. 44.
Idleness, i. 28; of mind causes follies and extravagances, 28; against, ii. 131.
Ignatius, father and son, slain by each other, i. 229.
Ill means employed to a good end, ii. 137.
Imagination, the force of, i. 80; effects of, 83-85; power of, over beasts, 90; effects of, infectious, 90; makes things greater than they are, 351.
Imitators more hurtful than inventors, i. 108.
Immortality of the soul, Plato's arguments on, i. 428; by whom first introduced, 561.
Impetuosity, the dangers and disadvantages of, ii. 498.
Inclinations, we are led by our, ii. 3.
Inconstancy, of our actions, ii. 1; the benefit of, 303.
Inconvenience of greatness, ii. 395.
Indians, war custom of, i. 14; custom of, with respect to an enemy overcome by the king in person, 48; custom of, after defeat, 222; their opinion of horses, 325; sacrifices of, ii. 122; of America, courage of, 388.
Inequality among us, i. 287.
Infirmity, faults of, to be distinguished from faults of malice, i. 49.
Injury caused by want of moderation, ii. 123.
Injustices done in life cannot be amended after death, i. 27.
Innovation and change, love of, natural to man, ii. 429.
Innovations dangerous in states, ii. 441.
Instinct of animals, i. 439, 445, 448, et seq.; of birds, 456.
Institution of orders of merit, i. 361.
Intention is judge of our actions, i. 27.
Interests, our, not to be followed too precipitately, ii. 505.
Interpretation of dreams, ii. 600.
Iphigenia, sacrifice of, i. 7.
Isocrates, anecdote of, i. 163; advice of, to his king, ii. 379.
Isthmus, sacrifice of Amurath at the taking of, i. 206.
Italian language, the, i. 551; proverb, ii. 527.
Italians great letter-writers, i. 261; compared with other nations, 410; and French compared, ii. 353; marriage laws of the, 358.

James, king of Naples and Sicily, ii. 293.
Jaropelc, duke of Russia, his treatment of a traitor, ii. 261.
Jealousy, the effects of, ii. 337; natural to women, 344.
Jews, cruel treatment of, by John, king of Portugal, i. 265.
Joachim, a Calabrian abbot, his prophetical book, i. 42.
Johannes Secundus, i. 392.
Jokes, on practical, ii. 421.
Joy, deaths caused by sudden, i. 9.
Jubellius, suicide of, ii. 31.
Judged, how a man should be, i. 289.
Judging of the death of another, on, i. 618.
INDEX.

Judgment soonest upset by fear, i. 55; uncertainty of our, 310; should be used in everything, 332.
Juggernaut, the, ii. 33.
Julian, the Apostate, his justice, i. 297; his character, ii. 124, 125; death of, 126; his vision, 126.
Justice and power of God inseparable, i. 349; the virtue of kings, ii. 379.
Justus Lipsius, i. 589.

Karenyt, marriages in the town of, ii. 462.
Kindness, the pleasure derived from, ii. 271.
Kings, the duties of, difficult to perform, ii. 397; the danger of opposing, 400; their need of good advisers, 577.
Kissing, on, ii. 356.
Knighthood, orders of, i. 361.
Knowledge, the true end of, i. 134; the end of virtue, 159; the desire for, how injurious, 491; insecurity of our, ii. 386; the desire of, natural, 561.
Know thyself, ii. 573.

Labor and pleasure, the union of, ii. 129.
Lacedæmonian system of education, i. 167; valor had to be moderated, ii. 287; women, chastity of, 331.
Lacedæmonians, ceremony of, at the interment of their kings, i. 12; cunning of, at Plataea, 43; the greatest legislators and generals, 137; natural high spirit of the, ii. 29; custom of, on entering battle, 180; answer of, to Antipater, 60.
Ladislaus, death of, ii. 187.
Lælius and Scipio, friendship of, i. 286.
Lahontan, the life of the inhabitants of, ii. 242.
Language, on the French, ii. 348; obscure and unintelligible, in legal documents, 563.
Latin, how learned by Montaigne, i. 174.
Laugh, the same things make us cry and, i. 239.
Law in Egypt relative to physicians, ii. 232; the, frequently punishes the innocent for the guilty, 568.
Laws should not be altered without good reasons, i. 94; danger of altering, easily, 107; an alteration in, sometimes necessary, 112; suspended by Agesilaus for twenty-four hours, 112; sumptuary, 298; Epicurus and Plato on, 566; changes in the English, 590, whence they derive their authority, 595; number of, excessive, 591.
Lawsuits, Montaigne free from, all his life, ii. 509.
Learning expands the mind, i. 125; uselessness of superficial, 129; without understanding, useless, 133; a little is a dangerous weapon, 133; much, not required in women, 133; effects of, on the temper, 138; effects of, on the Roman nation, 138; the conduct of our lives is the true mirror of our, 168; may be over-valued, 421; the advantages and dangers of, ii. 531.
Legislators of ancient nations claimed divine authority, ii. 82.
Leo, Emperor, his prophetical book, i. 42.
Lepidus, commands of, respecting his funeral, i. 16.
INDEX.

Leprosy, strange cure of a, ii. 518.
Letter-writers, the Italians great, i. 261.
Letter-writing, Montaigne on his own, i. 261.
Liars, on, i. 30; have need of a good memory, 32.
Liberality of mind, Montaigne's, i. 235.
Liberality of Caesar, i. 361.
Liberality, on, ii. 379; must be joined with justice, 380; excess of, injurious, 381.
Liberty of conscience, on, ii. 123.
Liberty, what is true, ii. 540; Montaigne's love of, 570.
Libraries, how preserved by the Goths, i. 138.
Library, Montaigne's, ii. 294.
Lie, on giving the, ii. 118.
Lies and untruth, difference between, i. 32.
Life, how to judge of a man's, i. 60; main object of, pleasure, 61; all expect a long, 65; the perpetual work of, 75; what the usefulness of, consists in, 78; the true object of, ii. 610.
Lion and Androclus, story of the, i. 466.
Literature and learning, opposition to, in former times, i. 490; none at Sparta, 491.
Literature, effects of love on, ii. 317.
Lithuanian custom of execution of criminals, ii. 263.
Little causes give rise to great events, ii. 509.
Lord's prayer, the, should be more frequently used, i. 348.
Louis XI., confidence of, in his subjects, i. 120.
Louis, Saint, his penance, i. 275.
Love toward women, i. 187; definition of, by the Stoics, 190; of children is next to self-preservation, 366; how to cure excessive, ii. 302; effects of, on literature, 317; the definition of, 351.
Lucan, death of, i. 384.
Lucretia, a French, ii. 4.
Lucretius, Montaigne's opinion of, i. 393.
Lycas, the philosopher, his madness, i. 488.
Lycurgus, his object in establishing cemeteries in cities, i. 71; means adopted by, to prevent alteration in his laws, 107; his civil regimen perfect, 135; on thieving, 592; law of, on married life, ii. 63.
Lying, on, ii. 314; on the habit of, among the French, 121.
Macedon, no orators in, i. 338.
Magpie, Plutarch's anecdote of a, i. 451.
Mahomet's opposition to learning, i. 490.
Mamelukes, their training of horses, i. 318–319.
Man, insignificance of, compared with his maker, i. 433.
Management of the will, on the, ii. 492.
Marcellinus, death of, ii. 59.
Marcius, Quintus, a Roman legate, cunning of, i. 21.
Mare's milk greatly esteemed by the Tartars, i. 325.
Marguerite of Navarre, ii. 373.
Marie de Gournay le Jars, Montaigne's adopted daughter, ii. 117–326.
Marius and Sylla, the bitter enmity between, ii. 505.
Marriage, i. 188; on the obligations of, ii. 344; laws of the Italians, 358; laws of Plato, 360.
Marriages, Plato on, i. 41; between relations, 202; early, disadvantages of, 370; the proper age for, 370; customs of various nations with respect to the age for, 371; of love, ii. 319.
Marseilles, old custom at, i. 107.
Martinella, a bell rung for a month previous to declaration of war by the Florentines, i. 22.
Masks invented by Poppea, ii. 64.
Massilian horses well trained, i. 323.
Mayor of Bordeaux, Montaigne on his conduct as, ii. 494.
Meals, customs at, i. 330; Montaigne’s habits at, ii. 604.
Meditating in the business of others to be avoided, ii. 493.
Meditation, the power of, ii. 284; Aristotle on, 285.
Memory, treacherous, of Montaigne, i. 30; and understanding distinct, 30; advantages of a bad, 31; liars have need of a good, 32; importance of, ii. 104; Montaigne’s defective, 104; Montaigne on his, 446.
Men should be judged for themselves, and not for their possessions, i. 288; of the most excellent, ii. 211.
Mentalippus, a tragedy of Euripides, i. 354.
Messalina, conduct of, ii. 345.
Mexican custom of the king in wearing clothes, i. 234.
Mexico, account given of the king to Fernando Cortez, i. 206; magnificence of the cities of, ii. 388; cruel treatment of the king of, by the Spaniards, 392; belief of the aborigines of, respecting the creation and progress of the world, 393; civilization of the aborigines of, 394; custom in, at the coronation of a king, 417.
Midas, king of Phrygia, i. 587.
Military men, the faith of, is very uncertain, i. 24.
Military profession, the, ii. 598; proper to the French nobility, i. 364.
Milk, mare’s, greatly esteemed by the Tartars, i. 325.
Mind hindered by itself, ii. 61.
Minds long lain idle run into extravagancies and follies, i. 28; innumerable degrees of, 287.
Miracle at the siege of Angoulême, i. 227; at the siege of Arona, 227.
Miracles, reported, i. 183; reported by Tacitus, ii. 425; on the origin of, 521.
Miraculous transmissions of news, i. 182.
Mithridates and his flatterers, ii. 400.
Moderation, i. 200; injuries caused by want of, ii. 123.
Mohammed, the emperor, cruelty of, ii. 157; disposition of, 187.
Mohammed II, his murder of his brother, ii. 262.
Mohammedans, objection of, to the teaching of rhetoric, i. 337.
Monarchical government, eloquence less needed in, i. 337.
Monarchy, the troubles of, i. 293.
Money matters, Montaigne on, i. 277; on borrowing, 278; on saving, 279; Montaigne’s carelessness in, ii. 435.
Monstrous child, of a, ii. 168.
Montaigne, his disposition free from any violent passions, i. 10; his memory treacherous, 30; not talkative, 31; date of his birth, 64; his fear of death, 66, his disposition, 66, 176; always prepared for death, 68; most sensible of the power of imagination, 80; his description of his own style, 92, his aversion from novelty, 107; his reasons for abstaining from politics, 110; his objection to physic, 117; his favorite authors, 139; his education, 174; how he learned Latin and Greek, 175; his tutors, 175; his youth, 176; passed through college at the age of thirteen, 177; his powers of acting at the age of twelve, 178; his liberality of mind, 235; power of poetry over, 233; his choice of books, 258; on his own Essays, 258; on his own style of writing, 260; on his own letters, 260; his three habits in money matters; 277, his method in writing Essays, 332; married at the age of thirty-three, 370; his imperfect knowledge of Greek, 391, his opinion of the classic poets, 392, his habit of making notes in books, 402; on his own character, 410; his tenderness of disposition, 414, 419; on drunkenness, ii. 12, his father, description of, 13; his objection to inquisitiveness, 37; his swooning on one occasion, 45; on self-study, 51; his ancestors surnamed Eyquem, 79; description of himself, 95; his natural disposition, 96; his adopted daughter, 117, 320; his antipathy to physic, 225; his hatred of lying, 236; his capability of contracting friendship, 256; naturally open and free, 289; his dislike of ceremony, 289; his enjoyment of books, 293; his description of his library, 294; his dislike of a gloomy disposition, 313; his practice of confession, 315; his desire of fame, 315; description of his daughter, 326; his dislike to coaches, 377, his love of traveling, 429; his father's love of building, 433; his dislike of public life, 434; his carelessness in money matters, 435; his aversion from business, 436; his hatred of poverty, 436, on his memory, 446; on the composition of his Essays, 448; the date of his first publications, 448; his dislike of being under obligations, 452; his love for Paris, 457; his preference for giving to receiving benefits, 463; his carelessness relative to meals, 473; his love of a private life, 476; his dislike of compulsion in any matter, 476; on the titles and contents of his Essays, 484; on the rambling nature of his Essays, 484; his dislike of obscurity in writings, 485; his reason for increasing the length of some of his later Essays, 485; his reflections over the ruins of Rome, 487; his quiet life, 488, granted the citizenship of Rome, 289; his dislike to interfering in the business of others 493; elected mayor of Bordeaux, 494; re-elected, 494; his account of his own disposition, 495; on his conduct as mayor of Bordeaux, 518; his great love of liberty, 570; his mode of life, 579; his rules as to meals, 604

Montmorency, Monsieur de, his treatment of the defenders of Pavia i. 48; death of, ii. 117.

Motion of the earth, by whom first told, i. 579.

Motions of the body express various sentiments, i. 433.

Motto of Socrates, a, ii 285.

Mourning, customs of, i. 332.
INDEX.

Mule, cunning of a, i. 460.
Muley Moloch, king of Fez, death of, ii. 134, 135.
Mullets, cunning of, i. 468.
Murder discovered by a dog, i. 464.
Mussidan (Mucidau), complaints of treachery at taking of, i. 24.
Mutiny, how to act in time of, i. 122.

Names derived in France from estates, i. 307; can be assumed by any person, 309; number of personages of the same, in history, 309.
Narsinga, funeral customs of, i. 264, ii. 418.
Natural inclinations assisted by education, ii. 274; the difficulty of altering, 275.
Natural disposition of Montaigne open and free, ii. 289.
Nature, the lesson of, on life and death, i. 79; inclines us to society, 186; of a man may be seen in small as well as great things, 335; the force of, ii. 275; opposed to the laws, 479.
Necessity of exercise to the soul, ii. 42.
Negligence the opposite of curiosity, ii. 37.
Neorites, burial customs of the, ii. 544.
Nero and his two soldiers, anecdote of, i. 12.
News, miraculous transmission of, i. 182.
Niobe, i. 7.
Noble actions are easily obscured, i. 236.
Not to counterfeit being sick, ii. 143.
Notre Dame la Grande at Poitiers, origin of the foundation of, i. 305.
Novelty prompts curiosity, i. 181; Montaigne's aversion from, i. 10.
Numidian cavalry accustomed to have a second horse in battle, i. 318.

Oaths, on, ii. 350.
Obligations of marriage, on the, ii. 344.
Obscurity in writings to be avoided, ii. 485; of language in legal documents, 563.
Obstination, a quality of mean souls, i. 151; justly punishable, 47; a proof of folly, 420; of the Gascons, ii. 182.
Occupation necessary to some, ii. 493.
Odors, effect of various, i. 347.
Offices, on the conferring of, ii. 411.
Old, the, should give place to the young, i. 372.
Old age, rare to die of, i. 359; infirmities of, 374; the only cause of death in Brazil, 483.
Olivier, Chancellor, saying of, on the French, ii. 100.
Opinions of the ancient philosophers on the nature of God, i. 511; on future life, 515.
Opposition increases our desires, ii. 359.
Oracles, Cicero on the decay of, i. 38; when they began to lose credit, 38.
Orange, assassination of the prince of, ii. 167.
Orators not esteemed in well-ordered republics, i. 336; none in Persia or Macedon, 338.
Oratory of Cesar described by Suetonius, i. 172; different styles of, 173.
INDEX.

Order of the Band or Scarf, rules of, i. 323; of St. Michael, 362, of the Saint-Esprit, 364.
Orders of merit, institution of, i. 361; advantages of, 361; of knighthood, 361; of merit should not be made common, 362.
Ordinances, Divine, to be soberly judged, i. 222.
Oriental princes, pride and arrogance of, i. 48.
Oriental custom of widows, ii. 162.
Origen, his recantation of Christianity, ii. 314.
Orlando Furioso and Æneid compared, i. 395.
Orosius, bishop of Selves, i 353.
Ostracism and Pelatism, ii. 183.
Oxen, instinct of, i. 450.
Pacuvius Calavius, how he quieted a disturbance at Capua, ii. 442.
Pain, contempt of, i. 268; the cause of our impatience of, 269, 270; to be lessened by patience, 269, we must not give way to, 271; instances of endurance of, 272, not always to be avoided, 485; and pleasure, the connection between, ii. 591, 592.
Panic at the capture of Carthage, i. 57.
Paracelsus on physic, i. 580.
Parents should not be niggardly to their children, i. 368; how they should treat their children, 369, how they should be addressed by their children, 374.
Paris, offensive smells in, i. 348; Montaigne's love for, ii. 457.
Parley, ought the governor of a besieged place himself to go out to, i. 21, the hour of, is dangerous, 24; cities taken during a, 25.
 Parsimony of the ancients, i. 340.
Parthians, their custom to do all business on horseback, i. 319; of the arms of the, 386, 388.
Passions, effects of various, ii. 8.
Pastimes, on, ii. 615
Patience, pain to be lessened by, i. 269; the advantages of, ii. 508.
Pedantic displays, ii. 288.
Pedantry, i. 124; how termed in Perigordian patois, 131.
Pelagia and Sophronia, their deaths, ii. 28.
Pelopidas, his conduct on his trial, i. 3.
Penance, instances of, i. 275.
Perceus, instances of, i. 346; Scythian use of, 347; use of, by king of Tunis in dishes, 347.
Periander, unnatural conduct of, ii. 357.
Pericles and Thucydides, i. 336.
Perseus of Macedon, his death, i. 302.
Persia, no orators in, i. 338.
Persians, education among, i. 135.
Persian kings, custom of, with their wives, i. 204.
Peru, cruel treatment of the king of, by the Spaniards, ii. 391.
Peteronius, death of, ii. 292.
Phalarica, a weapon of the Italians, i. 321.
Pharsalia, Plutarch's account of, i. 314.
Philip of Macedon, his opinion of the Romans, i. 207; city of rogues founded by, ii. 439.
Philistus, death of, ii. 134.
Philopæmen, personal appearance of, ii. 94.
Philosophers, bravery of, i. 45; ignorance of the world among the ancient, 125; various sayings of, ii. 18.
Philosophical discourses, advantages of, i. 158.
Philosophize, to, what it is, ii. 19.
Philosophy, to study, is to learn to die, i. 61; what is true, 146; should be taught early, 161; the design of, 496; not opposed to moderate pleasures, ii. 368; the foundation, progress, and end of, 523.
Phocion, anecdote of, ii. 279.
Phryne, ii. 642.
Physic, Montaigne's objection to, i. 117, ii. 496; Paracelsus on, i. 580.
Physicians and their treatment of patients, i. 89; tricks of, ii. 228; instances of persons living long without, 229; Esop on, 231; law in Egypt relative to, 232; their choice of drugs, 233; eminent among the ancients, 234; errors of, 237; Tiberius on, 578; disagreements among, 587.
Physiognomy, of, ii. 529.
Pibrac, Monsieur de, ii. 441.
Pigeons used for carrying messages, ii. 137.
Piso, the judgment of, ii. 174.
Pity reported a vice among the Stoics, i. 2.
Pleasure, of, ii. 184.
Pleasure, two kinds of, i. 62; none produced by riches of themselves, 283; not always to be pursued, 485; and labor, the union of ii. 128; felt in the troubles of others, 252; derived from well-doing, 271; and pain, the connection between, 592.
Pleasures to be avoided even at the expense of life, i. 222; satiety of, tires, 294; in moderation not opposed to philosophy, ii. 368.
Pliny the younger and Cicero compared, i. 256.
Plutarch, saying of, on pets, i. 19; Montaigne's opinion of, 395; and Seneca compared, 395; preference of, 399; and Seneca, defense of, ii. 178; on sea-sickness, 375; on certain of his writings, 484; and Seneca on death, 533.
Poesie populaire, i. 345.
Poetry easier to write than to understand, i. 237; power of, over Montaigne, 238.
Poets, Montaigne's opinion of the classic, i. 392.
Poisonous sea-hares, i. 612.
Politeness, Margaret of Navarre on, i. 46.
Politics, Montaigne's reasons for abstaining from, i. 110.
Polverates of Samos and his ring, i. 520.
Polypus, changes of color in the, i. 455, 456.
Pompeia Paulina, the story of, ii. 207.
Pompey pardoned the city of the Mamertines for the sake of Zeno, i. 4.
INDEX.

Ponderopolis, the city of rogues, founded by Philip, ii. 439.
Pont-Neuf, building of the, ii. 379.
Poppea, invention of masks by, ii. 64.
Portuguese, cruelty of, to prisoners, i. 215.
Posting, on, ii. 136.
Poverty, Montaigne’s dread of, ii. 436; of soul irreparable, 499.
Power, we are not bound beyond our, i. 27; and justice of God inseparable, 349.
Practice makes perfect, ii. 42.
Prayer, the Lord’s, should be more frequently used, i. 348; true, cannot enter into an impure soul, 356.
Prayers on, i. 348; not to be lightly used, 349; too much used for fashion’s sake, 350; Pythagorean doctrine about, 357.
Presumption natural to man, i. 436; on, ii. 84; consists of two parts, 86.
Priest Martín, what it is, ii. 306.
Princes, the actions of, are to be judged after their decease, i. 11; ceremony at interviews of, 46.
Private life, Montaigne’s love of, ii. 476.
Probus, the emperor, his great show in the Roman amphitheater, ii. 383.
Procrastination, consequences of, ii. 37.
Profession, the military, ii. 598; the military, proper to the French nobility, i. 364.
Profit of one is damage to another, i. 93; and honesty, of, ii. 251.
Prognostications, on, i. 38.
Promises, on keeping, ii. 451.
Property, loss of, not a real loss, i. 246; on the disposition of, by will, 379.
Prophecies, ambiguous wording of, i. 42.
Prophecying, Plato on, ii. 19.
Prophtical book of Emperor Leo, i. 42; book of Joachim, a Calabrian abbot, 42.
Protagoras, his rule of payment from his pupils, i. 131.
Protogenes, the painter, singular fortune to, i. 228.
Proverb, an Italian, ii. 283; a Spanish, 527.
Providence often acts by the rule of reason, i. 226.
Prudence, excessive, an enemy to all noble and generous exploits, i. 120.
Psalms, the, not to be lightly used, i. 351.
Psaumenitus, king of Egypt, conduct of, when captured by Cambyses, i. 6.
Public affairs, the evils of being engaged in, ii. 257; life, the most honorable, 435; life opposed to innocence of morals, 480.
Publications, date of Montaigne’s first, ii. 448.
Pulpit, a slow speaker best suited to the, i. 36.
Punishment of cowardice, i. 49; crime brings its own, ii. 39; the object of, 401.
Pure, that we taste, nothing, ii. 128.
Pyrrho, anecdote of, ii. 268; his manners and character, 500.
Pyrrhonism, i. 500.
Pyrrhus, his opinion of the Romans, i. 207; and Cyneas, anecdote of, 297.
Pythagoras, his mode of teaching, i. 157; on transmigration of souls, 561.

Pythagorean doctrine about prayers, i. 357.

Qualifications of a tutor, i. 144; of a king, i. 293.

Quito, road from, to Cusco, its magnificence, ii. 394.

Quotations, Montaigne on his own, i. 258; on, ii. 552.

Rabelais, i. 392.

Regillus, a Roman Prætor, treachery of, at Phocæa, i. 24.

Regulus, anecdote of, i. 340; and Balbus compared, ii. 596.

Reggio, city of, taken by Dionysius, i. 3; Phyton, governor of, his courage, 3.

Religion, the surest foundation of, is contempt of death, i. 74; secrets of the Christian, not to be indiscriminately dispersed, i. 353; ancient opinions on, 509; of the Bedouins, ii. 83; effects of the new, in Gascony, 485.

Remedies, on, ii. 533.

Riders, the French, the most graceful, i. 326.

Ring of Gyges, ii. 77.

Roads in Peru, magnificence of, ii. 394.

Robbers, Montaigne's adventures with, ii. 558.

Rogues, city of, founded by Philip, ii. 439.

Roman senators, generosity of, i. 21; soldiers, endurance of, 388; eloquence, when it flourished most, 337; grandeur of, the, ii. 141; haughtiness, 142; treatment of traitors, 261; women, unchastity of, 335; soldiers, discipline of, 536; conduct of, after the battle of Cannæ, 544.

Romans, treachery of, at Casilinum, i. 25; fondness of, for shows and spectacles, ii. 383.

Rome, superiority of ancient to modern, i. 478; an example of
various kinds of governments, ii. 444; the influence of the
ruins of, on Montaigne, 486; the praises of, 487; Montaigne
granted the citizenship of, 490.
Rote, to learn by, is no knowledge, i. 146.

Sacrifices of the Indians, ii. 122.
Sacrificial customs of the Egyptians, i. 416.
Saint-Esprit, order of the, i. 364.
St. Michael, order of, i. 362.
Sais, story told by the priests of, to Solon, i. 207.
Sais, chronicles of the city of, ii. 523.
Salutation, style of, ii. 91.
Saluzzo, Francis M. de, treachery of, from superstition, i. 39.
Santoues, the i. 350. n.
Sarmatian women, custom of the, ii. 338.
Scribblers, on, ii. 427.
Scythian practice in fighting, i. 44; women, custom of, ii. 338.
Scythians, superstition among, i. 90; attachment of, to their ancient
customs, 104; their treatment of false prophets, 214, 215; custom
of, to drink horses' blood, 324; funeral customs of the, 446.
Sea, enroachments of, in France, i. 209.
Sea-sickness, Plutarch on, ii. 375.
Season, all things have their, ii. 158.
Sebonde, Raimond de, his book, i. 421.
Sechel, George, cruel death of, ii. 157.
Secrets of the Christian religion not to be indiscriminately dispersed,
ii. 352; on keeping, ii. 256.
Sedentary occupation, the effects of, ii. 528.
Sejanus, execution of the daughter of, ii. 262.
Self-dependence most important, i. 248; ii. 453.
Self-respect essential for solitude, i. 255.
Self-depreciation is foolish, i. 364.
Self-love foolish and presumptuous, ii. 53.
Senators, Roman, nobleness of, i. 21.
Seneca, Montaigne's opinion of, i. 395; and Plutarch compared, 395;
and Plutarch, defense of, ii. 178; death of, 207; and Tacitus
compared, 423; and Plutarch on death, 533.
Sense, ii. 113
Serpents eaten by horses, i. 326.
Shyness, instances of, ii. 353.
Sick, not to counterfeit being, ii. 143.
Sickness and health, their effects on the spirits, etc., i. 572.
Silence and modesty, necessity of, among children, i. 150.
Silence, the advantages of, ii. 413.
INDEX.

Simonides, ii. 131.
Sleep, i. 300; want of, a cause of death, 302; a resemblance of death, ii. 41; Zeno on, 557; Montaigne’s habits as to, 600.
Smells, i. 346; offensive, in Paris and Venice, 348.
Sneezing, customs relative to, ii. 375.
Society, we are naturally inclined to, i. 186; what kind of, desired by Montaigne, ii. 289.
Socrates, disregard of, for funeral ceremonies, i. 16; on bravery in battle, 43; reply of, to his judges, 74; method of; with his pupils, 145; the character of, 406; his defense before the Athenians, ii. 258; a motto of, 285; appearance of, 313; on marriage, 321; on the city of Athens, 323; courage of, 376; and Cato compared, 530; the simplicity of his defense, 530; his “Apology,” 548; conduct of the Athenians toward the judges of, 550; deformed in face and body, 553.
Soldiers, how they should be armed, i. 312; Lycurgus and Hannibal on the arming of, 313.
Solitude, i. 242; what dispositions it suits, 249; sought by the religious, 251; in traveling, on, ii. 473.
Solon, maxim of, that none can be judged happy till after death, i. 12; on the mutability of fortune, 59; conduct of, on the death of his son, 593; laws of, respecting women, ii. 341; on his laws for Athens, 440.
Somnambulism, ii. 601.
Sophocles. death of, from joy, i. 9.
Sorrow, a quality always hurtful, i. 6; forbidden by the Stoics, 6; effects of sudden, 7.
Soul, the, discharges her passions upon false objects where the true are wanting, i. 18; inclined to deceive itself, 19; needs a fixed aim, 29; can never be at rest while in fear of death, 73; what are its scourges, 184; the various functions of, 333, 334; the three actions of, 497; the ancient philosophers on the nature of, 546; on the seat of, 548; immortality of, by whom first introduced, 558; transports of, ii. 19; the virtue of, 274; the true grandeur of, defined, 615.
Souls, transmigration of, i. 561.
Spaniards, treachery of, at Genoa, i. 26; warlike habits of the ancient, 276; cruel conduct of, toward the aborigines of Peru and Mexico, ii. 391.
Spaniards and Italians, manners of, ii. 355.
Sparta, absence of literature and learning from, i. 491.
Speaker, a slow, best suited to the pulpit, i. 36.
Speech, quick and slow, i. 36; not necessary, 443.
Spurina, the story of, ii. 185.
Stilpo, a philosopher, his death from drinking, ii. 15.
Stoics and Epicureans compared, i. 404.
Stone, the disease of the, ii. 243, 305, 592.
Stories often repeated become wearisome, i. 31.
Study of courtesy and good manners necessary, i. 47; injury from excessive, 253.
Styles of Cesar and Sallust, ii. 91.
Suabians, custom of the, i. 323.
INDEX.

Subrius, Flavius, his death, ii. 300.
Subtleies, on vain, i. 342.
Suicide, the Stoics on, ii. 20; objections to, 21; cowardice of, 22; what occasions are sufficient to justify, ii. 24; of Milesian virgins, 24; instances of, 25 et seq.; failures in attempts at, 59.
Sumptuary laws, i. 298.
Sun, opinions of the ancient philosophers on the composition of the, i. 537.
Superstition among Scythians, i. 90; among the Romans on dying, ii. 465.
Superstitions, i. 180.
Suspicion a great torment, i. 119.
Swallows used for sending messages, ii. 137.
Swiss, habits of mothers among, i. 272.
Swoon, sensations of a, ii. 46.
Swine, used for sending messages, ii. 137.
Syracuse, custom of, in commencing and carrying on war, i. 22.
Thales of Miletus, anecdote of, i. 540; on lying, ii. 314.
Talestris, queen of the Amazons and Alexander, ii. 360.
Thasians, reply of Agesilaus to, i. 530.
Thebes, capture of, i. 5.
Theft, persons of good birth given to, i. 368; Lycurgus on, 592.
Theodorus on the duty of a wise man, i. 336.
Theoherus, the story of, ii. 155.
Thief, anecdote of a, ii. 276.
Thoughts betrayed by the countenance, i. 87.
Thraces, custom of, in a thunderstorm, i. 20; kings, custom of, in religion, 290.
Thrasyllus cured of his madness, i. 488.
Three good women, ii. 203.
Thucydides, his opinion of Pericles, i. 336.
Thumbs, of, ii. 145.
Tiberius, letter of, to the senate, ii. 424; on physicians, 578.
Time, we are all too prodigal of our, ii. 494.
Timoleon sent by the Corinthians to assist the Syracusans, ii. 264.
Timon and Diogenes compared, i. 335.
Titles and honors, Montaigne's disregard for, ii. 244.
To-morrow is a new day, ii. 35.
Torture, effects of fear of, i. 415.
Training of children, difficulty of choosing the proper, i. 143; of horses by Mamelukes, 318, 319; of Massilian horses, 323.

Traitors how punished for their treachery, ii. 261, 262.

Translations of the Bible, danger arising from so many, i. 352

Transmigration of souls believed in by the ancient Gauls, i. 417; of souls, Pythagoras on, 561.

Transports of the soul, ii. 19.

Transubstantiation, i. 527.

Travel, the advantages and true end of, i. 457; ii. 313.

Travelers, habits of, ii. 472.

Traveling, Montaigne’s love of, ii. 429; Montaigne’s reasons for, 438; Montaigne’s system of, 460; Platonic laws on, 463; companions, on the choice of, 473.

Treachery, instances of, in war, i. 25; of the duke of Alva, 27; gives rise to mistrust, ii. 259; when excusable, 260; Montaigne’s hatred of, 457.

Trifles serve to divert, ii. 304.

Troubles, small, the most wearing, ii. 432; should not be anticipated, 545.

Trust engenders fidelity, i. 119.

Truth and falsehood, Pythagorean definition of, i. 33; and error, a folly to measure by our own capacity, 180; the teaching of, 433; importance of, ii. 102; the simplicity of, 256; the search after, the object of our lives, 408.

Turkish practice in fighting, i. 43; soldiers, discipline of, ii. 536.

Turks, strange custom of, i. 274; courage of some prisoners, 565.

Turnebus, Adrian, the most learned man, i. 132.

Tuscans originated the art of divination, i. 40.

Tutors, qualifications of, i. 144; of Montaigne, 177.

Tyrant, Plato’s definition of a, i. 294.

Tyrants always cowards, ii. 154; cruel revenge of, 156.

Uncertainty of our judgment, i. 310.

Understanding and memory distinct, i. 30; essential to true learning, 133.

Untruth and lies, difference between, i. 32.

Use makes perfect, ii. 42; of books, 294.

Usefulness of life, in what it consists, i. 78.

Vain subtleties, on, i. 342.

Valor has its bounds, i. 47; the highest degree of virtue, 364; of the Lacedæmonians excessive, ii. 287.

Vanity, of, ii. 426; displayed in funeral rites, i. 16; of words, 336.

Varus, anecdote of, ii. 251.

Vaux, Henri de, besieged by the English in commery, i. 23.

Venice, offensive smells in, i. 348.

Ventriloquism, an instance of, ii. 522.

Verses of Virgil, on some, ii. 308.

Vespasian, dying words of, ii. 131; miracle performed by, 425.

Vibius Virius, suicide of, ii. 31.

Vice the cause of repentance, ii. 270; how to correct, 313.
INDEX.

Vices not all equal, ii. 9; on the lawfulness of some, 258.
Virgil, Montaigne's opinion of, i. 392; on, ii. 212; on some verses of, 308.
Virtue, benefits of i. 62; teaches contempt of death, 62; the end of knowledge, 159; pushed to extremes is injurious, 202; etymology of, 304; defined, 404; Demosthenes on, ii. 2; must be followed for her own sake, 7; of, 160; of the soul, in what it consists, 274; the standard of, has varied in different ages, 482.
Vision of Julian the Apostate, ii. 127.
Visions and enchantments owe their credit to imagination, i. 82.
Visitors, on the reception of, ii. 437.
Wagering at times useful, and when, ii. 404.
Wallachia, posting in, ii. 137.
War has many privileges, i. 25; customs of aborigines of America, 215; customs of Hungarians, 217; song of the aborigines of America, 219; a maxim of, 311; customs of the peoples of Asia in, 313; events in, depend on fortune, 317; horses or destriers, 317; use of coaches in, ii. 377; in France, civil, 534.
Wealth and power desired in excess by men, ii. 531.
Weather, on, ii. 459.
Widows, custom of, in the east, ii. 163.
Wife, the qualifications of a, i. 133.
Will, on managing the, ii. 492.
William, great number of that name in Aquitaine, i. 305.
Wills, unwillingness of men to make their, i. 64; on the making of, 378, 379; Plato on making of, 380.
Wine, on the use of, ii. 607.
Wisdom does not force our natural dispositions, ii. 16.
Wit and beauty, on, which to be preferred, ii. 293.
Witch, description of a, ii. 525.
Witches, superstition regarding, i. 90.
Women, much learning not required in, i. 133; love to, 187; natural disposition of, 376, 379; the danger of leaving sole control of property to, by will, 381; conversation of, ii. 290; laws of Solon respecting, 341; naturally jealous, 344.
Words, the vanity of, i. 336.
World, the, a great book, i. 155; Mexican theories respecting the creation, etc., of, ii. 393.
Writing and speaking, the proper qualities of, i. 172.

Xanthians, suicides among, during the siege by Brutus, i. 265.
Xenocrates and Lais, ii. 186.
Xenophanes, the Colophonian, tried to eradicate the art of divination, i. 42.
Xenophilus, long life of, i. 63.
Xenophon, his precepts on war not to be followed, i. 25; conduct of, on hearing of the death of his son, ii. 301.
Xerxes, foolish passion of, i. 20; at the crossing of the Hellespont, 241, 242.

Zeal, excess of, to be avoided, ii. 492.
Zeno, on certain arguments of, ii. 302; chastity of, 353.
Zisca, John, dying command of, to his soldiers, i. 14.
Zocotora, formerly called Dioscorides, i. 353, 354.

THE END.
Hazlitt, W.C.
Michel de Montaigne
PQ
1641
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1892
vol. 2