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MICHEL EYQUEM DE MONTAIGNE.

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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 I.

NEW YORK:
A. L. BURT, PUBLISHER.

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THE AUTHOR TO THE READER.*

READER, thou hast here an honest book; it doth at the outset forewarn thee that, in contriving the same, I have proposed to myself no other than a domestic and private end: I have had no consideration at all either to thy service or to my glory. My powers are not capable of any such design. I have dedicated it to the particular commodity of my kinsfolk and friends, so that, having lost me (which they must do shortly), they may therein recover some traits of my conditions and humors, and by that means preserve more whole, and more life-like, the knowledge they had of me. Had my intention been to seek the world's favor, I should surely have adorned myself with borrowed beauties: I desire therein to be viewed as I appear in mine own genuine, simple, and ordinary manner, without study and artifice: for it is myself I paint. My defects are therein to be read to the life, and my imperfections and my natural form, so far as public reverence hath permitted me. If I had lived among those nations, which (they say) yet dwell under the sweet liberty of nature's primitive laws, I assure thee I would most willingly have painted myself quite fully and quite naked. Thus, reader, myself am the matter of my book: there's no reason thou shouldst employ thy leisure about so frivolous and vain a subject. Therefore, farewell.

From Montaigne, the 12th June, 1580.†

* Omitted by Cotton.

† So in the edition of 1595; the edition of 1588 has 12th June, 1588.

PREFACE.

THE Essays of Montaigne, which are at once the most celebrated and the most permanent of his productions, form a magazine out of which such writers as Bacon and Shakespeare did not disdain to help themselves; and indeed, as Hallam observes, the Frenchman's literary importance largely results from the share which his mind had in influencing other minds, coeval and subsequent. But, at the same time, estimating the value and rank of the essayist, we are not to leave out of the account the drawbacks and the circumstances of the period: the imperfect state of education, the comparative scarcity of books, and the limited opportunities of intellectual intercourse.

Montaigne freely borrowed of others, and he has found men willing to borrow of him as freely. We need not wonder at the reputation which he with seeming facility achieved. He was, without being aware of it, the leader of a new school in letters and morals. His book was different from all others which were at that date in the world. It diverted the ancient currents of thought into new channels. It told its readers with unexampled frankness, what its writer's opinion was about men and things, and threw what must have been a strange kind of new light on many matters but darkly understood. Above all, the Essayist uncased himself, and made his intellectual and physical organism public property. He took the world into his confidence on all subjects. His essays were a sort of literary anatomy, where we get a diagnosis of the writer's mind, made by himself at different levels and under a large variety of operating influences.

The text of these volumes is taken from the first edition of Cotton's version, printed in 3 vols. 8vo, 1685–6. In the earliest impression the errors of the press are corrected merely as far as page 240 of the first volume, and all the editions follow one another. That of 1685–6 was the only one which the translator lived to see. He died in 1687.

It was considered imperative to correct Cotton's translation by a careful collation with the *variorum* edition of the original, Paris, 1854, 4 vols, 8vo or 12mo, and parallel passages from Florio's earlier undertaking have occasionally been inserted at the foot of the page. A sketch of the Life of the Author is subjoined.

The besetting sin of both Montaigne's translators seems to have been a propensity for reducing his language and phraseology to the language and phraseology of the age and country to which they belonged, and, moreover, for inserting paragraphs and words, not here and there only, but constantly and habitually, from an evident desire and view to elucidate or strengthen their author's meaning. The result has generally been unfortunate; and I have, in the case of all these interpolations on Cotton's part, felt bound, where I did not cancel them, to throw them down into the notes, not thinking it right that Montaigne should be allowed any longer to stand sponsor for what he never wrote; and reluctant, on the other hand, to suppress the intruding matter entirely, where it appeared to possess a value of its own.

Nor is redundancy or paraphrase the only form of transgression in Cotton, for there are places in his author which he thought proper to omit, and it is hardly necessary to say that the restoration of all such matter to the text was considered essential to its integrity and completeness.

W. C. H.

BARNES COMMON, SURREY,
January, 1892.

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SOME ACCOUNT OF THE LIFE OF MONTAIGNE.

THE author of the Essays was born on the last day of February, 1533, at the château of St. Michel de Montaigne. His father, Pierre Eyquem, écuyer, was successively first jurat of the town of Bordeaux (1530), sub-mayor (1536), Jurat for the second time in 1540, procureur in 1546, and at length mayor from 1553 to 1556. He was a man of austere probity, who had "a particular regard for honor and for propriety in his person and attire . . . a mighty good faith in his speech, and a conscience and a religious feeling inclining to superstition, rather than to the other extreme." * Pierre Eyquem bestowed great care on the education of his children, especially on the practical side of it. To associate closely his son Michel with the people, and attach him to those who stand in need of assistance, he caused him to be held at the font by persons of the meanest position; subsequently he put him out to nurse with a poor villager, and then, at a later period, made him accustom himself to the most common sort of living, taking care, nevertheless, to cultivate his mind, and superintend its development without the exercise of undue rigor or constraint. Michel, who gives us the minutest account of his earliest years, charmingly narrates how they used to awake him by the sound of some agreeable music, and how he learned Latin, without suffering the rod or shedding a tear, before beginning French, thanks to the German teacher whom his father had placed near him, and who never addressed him except in the language of Virgil and Cicero. The study of Greek took precedence. At six years of age young Montaigne went to the College of Guienne at Bordeaux, where he had as preceptors the most eminent scholars of the sixteenth century, Nicolas Grouchy, Guerente, Muret, and Buchanan. At thirteen

* Essays, ii. 2.

he had passed through all the classes, and as he was destined for the law he left school to study that science. The next information that we have is that in 1554 he received the appointment of councilor in the Parliament of Bordeaux; in 1559 he was at Bar-le-Duc with the court of Francis II., and in the year following he was present at Rouen to witness the declaration of the majority of Charles IX.

Between 1556 and 1563 commenced his romantic friendship with Etienne de la Boetie, whom he had met, as he tells us, by pure chance at some festive celebration in the town. From their very first interview the two found themselves drawn irresistibly toward one another, and during six years this alliance was foremost in the heart of Montaigne, as it was afterward in his memory, when death had severed it.

Although in his Essays (i. 27) he blames severely those who, contrary to the advice of Aristotle, marry before five and thirty, Montaigne, in 1566, in his thirty-third year, espoused Françoise de Chassaigne, daughter of a councilor in the Parliament of Bordeaux. The title of Gentleman in Ordinary to the king, which he assumes in a preface, and which Henry II. gives him in a letter; what he says as to the commotions of courts, where he passed a portion of his life; the instructions which he wrote under the dictation of Catherine de Medici for King Charles IX.; and his noble correspondence with Henry IV., leave no doubt as to the part which he played in the transactions of those times; and we find an unanswerable proof of the esteem in which he was held by the most exalted personages in a letter which was addressed to him by Charles at the time he was admitted to the Order of St. Michael, which was, as he informs us himself, the highest honor of the French noblesse.

Several passages in the Essays seem to indicate that Montaigne not only took military service, but that he was actually in numerous campaigns with the Catholic armies; and on his monument he is represented in a coat of mail, with his casque and gauntlets on his right side, and a lion at his feet, alike symbols of a share in military transactions.

But, on his arrival at his thirty-eighth year, he resolved to dedicate to study and contemplation the remaining term

of his life; and on his birthday, the last of February 1571, he caused a Latin inscription to this effect to be placed upon one of the walls of his château.

Montaigne was at this date unknown to the world of letters, except as a translator and an editor. In 1569 he published a translation of the "Natural Theology" of Raymond de Sebonde, which he had solely undertaken to please his father. In 1571 he caused to be printed at Paris certain *opuscula* of Etienne de la Boetie. At the very outset of his retirement from public engagements, Montaigne was exclusively occupied with reading and reflection, and acquired the habit of setting down his thoughts just as they occurred to him. Those thoughts became a book, and the first draft of that book, which was to confer immortality on the writer, appeared at Bordeaux in 1580. Montaigne was then fifty-seven; he had suffered for some years past from renal colic and gravel; and it was with the necessity of distraction from his pain, and the hope of deriving relief from the waters, that he undertook at this time his Italian tour of which an itinerary, dictated to his secretary, is extant, and has been separately printed.

Montaigne traveled, just as he wrote, completely at his ease, and without the least constraint, turning, just as he fancied, from the common or ordinary roads taken by tourists. The good inns, the soft beds, the fine views, attracted his notice at every point, and in his observations on men and things he confines himself chiefly to the practical side.

At Rome he at first put up at the Orso,* but subsequently hired, at twenty crowns a month, three fine furnished rooms in the house of a Spaniard, who included in these terms the use of the kitchen fire. What most annoyed him in the Eternal City was the number of Frenchmen he met, who all saluted him in his native tongue; but otherwise he was very comfortable, and his stay extended to five months.

Skeptical as Montaigne shows himself in his books, yet during his sojourn at Rome he manifested a great regard for religion. He solicited the honor of being admitted to

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* In 1882 the municipality of Rome let into the wall of this hotel a marble tablet commemorative of Montaigne's visit there, as well as of his receipt of civic honors.

kiss the feet of the Holy Father, Gregory XIII.; and the pontiff exhorted him always to continue in the devotion of which he had hitherto exhibited to the the church and the service of the Most Christian King.

"He met at San Sisto a Muscovite ambassador, the second who had come to Rome since the pontificate of Paul III. This minister had despatches from his court for Venice, addressed to the *Grand Governor of the Signory*. The court of Muscovy had at that time such limited relations with the other powers of Europe, and it was so imperfect in its information, that it thought Venice to be a dependency of the Holy See."

Before quitting Rome, Montaigne received his diploma of citizenship, by which he was greatly flattered; and after a visit to Tivoli he set out for Loretto, stopping at Ancona, Fano, and Urbino. He arrived at the beginning of May, 1581, at Bagno della Villa, where he established himself, in order to try the waters.

The greater part of the entries in the Journal, giving the account of these waters, and of the travels, down to Montaigne's arrival at the first French town on his homeward route, are in Italian, because he wished to exercise himself in that language.

The minute and constant watchfulness of Montaigne over his health and over himself might lead one to suspect that excessive fear of death which degenerates into cowardice. But was it not rather the fear of the operation for the stone, at that time really formidable?

He was still at the waters of La Villa, when, on the 7th September, 1581, he learned by letter that he had been elected mayor of Bordeaux on the 1st August preceding. This intelligence made him hasten his departure; and from Lucca he proceeded to Rome. He again made some stay in that city, and he there received the letter of the jurats of Bordeaux, notifying to him officially his election to the mayoralty, and inviting him to return as speedily as possible. He left for France accompanied by young D'Estissac and several other gentlemen, who escorted him a considerable distance; but none went back to France with him, not even his traveling companion. He passed by Padua, Milan, Mont Cenis, and Chambery; thence he went on to Lyons, and lost no time in repairing to his château, after an absence of seventeen months and eight days.

"The gentleman of Bordeaux," says he, "elected me mayor of their town while I was at a distance from France, and far from the thought of such a thing. I excused myself; but they gave me to understand that I was wrong in so doing, it being also the command of the king that I should stand." This is the letter which Henry III. wrote to him on the occasion:

"MONSIEUR DE MONTAIGNE:—Inasmuch as I hold in great esteem your fidelity and zealous devotion to my service, it has been a pleasure to me to learn that you have been chosen mayor of my town of Bordeaux. I have had the agreeable duty of confirming the selection, and I did so the more willingly, seeing that it was made during your distant absence; wherefore it is my desire, and I require and command you expressly, that you proceed without delay to enter on the duties to which you have received so legitimate a call. And so you will act in a manner very agreeable to me, while the contrary will displease me greatly. Praying God, M. de Montaigne, to have you in his holy keeping.

"Written at Paris, the 25th day of November 1581.

"HENRI.

"A Monsieur de MONTAIGNE,

"Knight of my Order, Gentleman in Ordinary of my "Chamber, being at present in Rome."

Montaigne, in his new employment, the most important in the province, obeyed the axiom, that a man may not refuse a duty, though it absorb his time and attention, and even involve the sacrifice of his blood. Placed between two extreme parties, ever on the point of getting to blows, he showed himself in practice what he is in his book, the friend of a middle and temperate policy.

He applied himself in an especial manner to the maintenance of peace between the two religious factions which at that time divided the town of Bordeaux; and at the end of his two first years of office his grateful fellow-citizens conferred on him (in 1583) the mayoralty for two years more, a distinction which had been enjoyed, as he tells us, only twice before. On the expiration of his official career, after four years' duration, he could say fairly enough of himself,

that he left behind him neither hatred nor cause of offense.

In the midst of the cares of government, Montaigne found leisure to revise and enlarge his essays, which since their appearance in 1580, had been continually receiving augmentations in the form of additional chapters or papers. Two more editions were printed in 1582 and 1587; and during this time the author, while making alterations in the original text, composed part of the third book. He went to Paris to make arrangements for the publication of his enlarged labors, and a fourth impression in 1588 was the result. He remained in the capital some time on this occasion, and it was now that he met for the first time Mademoiselle de Gournay. Gifted with an active and inquiring spirit, and, above all, possessing a sound and healthy tone of mind, Mademoiselle de Gournay had been carried from her childhood with that tide which set in with the sixteenth century toward controversy, learning, and knowledge. She learned Latin without a master; and when, at the age of eighteen, she accidentally became possessor of a copy of the essays, she was transported with delight and admiration.

She quitted the chateau of Gournay, to come and see him. We cannot do better, in connection with this journey of sympathy, than to repeat the words of Pasquier: "That young lady, allied to several great and noble families of Paris proposed to herself no other marriage than with her honor, enriched with the knowledge gained from good books, and, beyond all others from the essays of M. de Montaigne, who making in the year 1588, a lengthened stay in the town of Paris, she went there for the purpose of forming his personal acquaintance; and her mother, Madam de Gournay, and herself took him back with them to their chateau, where, at two or three different times, he spent three months altogether, most welcome of visitors." It was from this moment that Mademoiselle de Gournay dated her adoption as Montaigne's daughter, a circumstance which has tended to confer immortality upon her in a far greater measure than her own literary productions.

Montaigne, on leaving Paris, stayed a short time at Blois, to attend the meeting of the States-General; and it is known that he was commissioned, about this period, to negotiate between Henry of Navarre (afterward Henry IV.)

and the duke of Guise. De Thou assures us that Montaigne enjoyed the confidence of the principal persons of his time. The president, who calls him a frank man without constraint, tells us that, walking with him and Pasquier in the court at the castle of Blois, he heard him pronounce some very remarkable opinions on contemporary events, and he adds that Montaigne had foreseen that the troubles in France could not end without witnessing the death of either the king of Navarre or of the duke of Guise. He had made himself so completely master of the views of these two princes, that he told De Thou that the king of Navarre would have been prepared to embrace Catholicism, if he had not been afraid of being abandoned by his party, and that the duke of Guise, on his part, had no particular repugnance to the confession of Augsburg, for which the cardinal of Lorraine, his uncle, had inspired him with a liking, if it had not been for the peril involved in quitting the Romish communion. It would have been easy for Montaigne to play, as we call it, a great part in politics, and create for himself a lofty position; but his motto was, *Otio et libertati;* and he returned quietly home to compose a chapter for his next edition on "The Inconveniences of Greatness."

The author of the essays was now fifty-five. The malady which tormented him grew only worse and worse with years; and yet he occupied himself continually with reading, meditating, and composition. He employed the years 1589, 1590, and 1591, in making fresh additions to his book; and even in the approaches of old age he might fairly anticipate many happy hours, when he was attacked by quinsy, depriving him of the power of utterance. Pasquier, who has left us some details of his last hours, narrates that he remained three days in full possession of his faculties, but unable to speak, so that, in order to make known his desires he was obliged to resort to writing; and as he felt his end drawing near, he begged his wife to summon certain of the gentlemen who resided in the neighborhood to bid them a last farewell. When they had arrived, he caused mass to be celebrated in his apartment; and just as the priest was elevating the host, Montaigne fell forward, with his arms extended in front of him, on the bed, and so expired. He was in his sixtieth year. It was the 13th of September, 1592.

Montaigne was buried near his own house; but a few months after his decease, his remains were removed to the church of a Commandery of St. Antoine at Bordeaux.* His monument was restored in 1803 by a descendant. It was seen about 1858 by an English traveler (Mr. St. John),† and was then in good preservation

In 1595 Mademoiselle de Gournay published a new edition of Montaigne's Essays, and the first with the latest emendations of the author, from a copy presented to her by his widow, and which has not been recovered, although it is known to have been in existence some years after the date of the impression made on its authority.

Coldly as Montaigne's literary productions appear to have been received by the generation immediately succeeding his own age, his genius grew into just appreciation in the seventeenth century, when such great spirits arose as La Bruyère, Molière, La Fontaine, and Madame de Sévigné. "Oh," exclaimed the Chatelaine des Rochers, "what capital company he is, the dear man! he is my old friend; and just for the reason that he is so, he always seems new. My God! how full is that book of sense!" Balzac said that he had carried human reason as far and as high as it could go, both in politics and in morals. On the other hand, Malebranche and the writers of Port Royal were against him; some reprehended the licentiousness of his writings; others their impiety, materialism, and Epicureanism. Even Pascal, who had carefully read the Essays, and gained no small profit by them, did not spare his re-

* The Paris correspondent of the *Daily News*, under date of the 13th March, 1886, writes: "The remains of Montaigne were on Thursday morning removed to the vault of the new University buildings at Bordeaux. Several speeches were made, and M. de Brons, a descendant of Montaigne, thanked the Municipal Council who defrayed the cost of the monument. That illustrious Bordelais, who much more than Descartes may be regarded as the father of French philosophy, had a direct action on the mind of Shakespeare. Victor Hugo claimed for Montaigne the honor of having led the greatest English poet from the *concetti* of the Italian school to the graver form of thought of which 'Hamlet' is an example. Shakspeare having possessed a copy of Montaigne's Essays, Victor Hugo concluded that he marked, learned, and inwardly digested them—a good modern book being a rarity in those days."

† "Montaigne the Essayist," by Bayle St. John, 1858, 2 vols. 8vo, is one of the most delightful books of the kind.

proaches. But Montaigne has outlived detraction. As time has gone on, his admirers and borrowers have increased in number, and his Jansenism, which recommended him to the eighteenth century, may not be his least recommendation in the nineteenth. Here we have certainly, on the whole, a first-class man, and one proof of his masterly genius seems to be, that his merits and his beauties are sufficient to induce us to leave out of consideration blemishes and faults which would have been fatal to an inferior writer.*

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*One of the most recent contributions to the biography of Montaigne is a volume by Michel de Mahugrin, entitled: "Montaigne. Son Origine, sa Famille." Bordeaux, 1875.

ESSAYS OF MONTAIGNE.

CHAPTER I.

THAT MEN BY VARIOUS WAYS ARRIVE AT THE SAME END.

THE MOST usual way of appeasing the indignation of such as we have any way offended, when we see them in possession of the power of revenge, and find that we absolutely lie at their mercy, is by submission, to move them to commiseration and pity; and yet bravery, constancy, and resolution, however quite contrary means, have sometimes served to produce the same effect.*

Edward, Prince of Wales (the same who so long governed our Guienne, a personage whose condition and fortune have in them a great deal of the most notable and most considerable parts of grandeur), having been highly incensed by the Limousins, and taking their city by assault, was not, either by the cries of the people, or the prayers and tears of the women and children, abandoned to slaughter and prostrate at his feet for mercy, to be stayed from prosecuting his revenge; till, penetrating further into the town, he at last took notice of three French gentlemen, † who with incredible bravery, alone sustained the whole power of his victorious army. Then it was that consideration and respect unto so remarkable a valor first stopped the torrent of his fury, and that his

* Florio's version begins thus: "The most vsuall waie to appease those minds wee have offended, when revenge lies in their hands, and that we stand at their mercie, is by submission to move them to commiseration and pity: Neuerthelesse, courage, constancie, and resolution (means altogether opposite) have sometimes wrought the same effect."

† These were John de Villemur, Hugh de la Roche, and Roger de Beaufort.— FROISSART, i. c. 289.

clemency, beginning with these three cavaliers, was afterward extended to all the remaining inhabitants of the city.

Scanderbeg, Prince of Epirus, pursuing one of his soldiers with the purpose to kill him, the soldier, having in vain tried by all the ways of humility and supplication to appease him, resolved, as his last refuge, to face about and await him sword in hand; which behavior of his gave a sudden stop to his captain's fury, who, for seeing him assume so notable a resolution, received him into grace; an example, however, that might suffer another interpretation with such as have not read of the prodigious force and valor of that prince.

The Emperor Conrad III. having besieged Guelph, Duke of Bavaria, * would not be prevailed upon, what mean and unmanly satisfactions soever were tendered to him, to condescend to milder conditions than that the ladies and gentlewomen only who were in the town with the duke might go out without violation of their honor, on foot, and with so much only as they could carry about them. Whereupon they, out of magnanimity of heart, presently contrived to carry out, upon their shoulders, their husbands and children, and the duke himself; a sight at which the emperor was so pleased, that, ravished with the generosity of the action, he wept for joy, and immediately extinguishing in his heart the mortal and capital hatred he had conceived against this duke, he from that time forward treated him and his with all humanity. The one and the other of these two ways would with great facility work upon my nature; for I have a marvelous propensity to mercy and mildness, and to such a degree that I fancy of the two I should sooner surrender my anger to compassion than to esteem. And yet pity is reputed a vice among the Stoics, who will that we succor the afflicted, but not that we should be so affected with their sufferings as to suffer with them. I conceived these examples not ill suited to the question in hand, and the rather because therein we observe these great souls assaulted and tried by these two several ways, to resist the one without relenting, and to be shook and subjected by the other. It may be true that to suffer a man's heart to be totally

* In 1140, in Weinsberg, Upper Bavaria.

subdued by compassion may be imputed facility, effeminacy and over-tenderness; whence it comes to pass that the weaker natures, as of women, children, and the common sort of people, are the most subject to it; but after having resisted and disdained the power of groans and tears, to yield to the sole reverence of the sacred image of Valor, this can be no other than the effect of a strong and inflexible soul enamored of and honoring masculine and obstinate courage. Nevertheless, astonishment and admiration may, in less generous minds, beget a like effect: witness the people of Thebes, who, having put two of their generals upon trial for their lives for having continued in arms beyond the precise term of their commission, very hardly pardoned Pelopidas, who, bowing under the weight of so dangerous an accusation, made no manner of defense for himself, nor produced other arguments than prayers and supplications; whereas, on the contrary, Epaminondas, falling to recount magniloquently the exploits he had performed in their service, and, after a haughty and arrogant manner reproaching them with ingratitude and injustice, they had not the heart to proceed any further in his trial, but broke up the court and departed, the whole assembly highly commending the high courage of this personage.*

Dionysius the elder, after having, by a tedious siege and through exceeding great difficulties, taken the city of Reggio, and in it the governor Phyton, a very gallant man, who had made so obstinate a defense, was resolved to make him a tragical example of his revenge: in order whereunto he first told him, "That he had the day before caused his son and all his kindred to be drowned." To which Phyton returned no other answer but this: "That they were then by one day happier than he." After which, causing him to be stripped, and delivering him into the hands of the tormentors, he was by them not only dragged through the streets of the town, and most ignominiously and cruelly whipped, but moreover villified with most bitter and contumelious language; yet still he maintained his courage entire all the way, with a strong voice and undaunted countenance proclaiming the honorable and glorious cause of his death; namely, for that he would not

* Plutarch, How far a Man may praise Himself, c. 5.

deliver up his country into the hands of a tyrant; at the same time denouncing against him a speedy chastisement from the offended gods. At which Dionysius, reading in his soldiers' looks, that instead of being incensed at the haughty language of this conquered enemy, to the contempt of their captain and his triumph, they were not only struck with admiration of so rare a virtue, but moreover inclined to mutiny, and were even ready to rescue the prisoner out of the hangman's hands, he caused the torturing to cease, and afterward privately caused him to be thrown into the sea.*

Man (in good earnest) is a marvelous vain, fickle, and unstable subject, and on whom it is very hard to form any certain and uniform judgment. For Pompey could pardon the whole city of the Mamertines, though furiously incensed against it, upon the single account of the virtue and magnanimity of one citizen, Zeno,† who took the fault of the public wholly upon himself; neither entreated other favor, but alone to undergo the punishment for all: and yet Sylla's host having in the city of Perugia‡ manifested the same virtue, obtained nothing by it, either for himself or his fellow-citizens.

And, directly contrary to my first examples, the bravest of all men, and who was reputed so gracious to all those he overcame, Alexander, having, after many great difficulties, forced the city of Gaza, and, entering, found Betis, who commanded there, and of whose valor in the time of this siege he had most marvelous manifest proof, alone forsaken by all his soldiers, his armor hacked and hewed to pieces, covered all over with blood and wounds, and yet still fighting in the crowd of a number of Macedonians, who were laying on him on all sides, he said to him, nettled at so dear-bought a victory (for, in addition to the other damage, he had two wounds newly received in his own person), "Thou shalt not die, Betis, as thou dost intend; be sure thou shalt suffer all the torments that can be inflicted on a captive." To which menace the other returning no other answer, but only a fierce and disdainful

* Diod. Sic., xiv. 29.

† Plutarch calls him Stheno, and also Sthemnus and Sthenis.

‡ Plutarch says Preneste, a town of Latium.

look: "What," says Alexander, observing his haughty and obstinate silence, "is he too stiff to bend a knee? Is he too proud to utter one suppliant word! Truly, I will conquer this silence; and if I cannot force a word from his mouth, I will, at least extract a groan from his heart." And thereupon converting his anger into fury, presently commanded his heels to be bored through, causing him, alive, to be dragged, mangled, and dismembered at a cart's tail.* Was it that the height of courage was so natural and familiar to this conqueror, that because he could not admire, he respected it the less? Or was it that he conceived valor to be a virtue so peculiar to himself, that his pride could not, without envy, endure it in another? Or was it that the natural impetuosity of his fury was incapable of opposition? Certainly, had it been capable of moderation, it is to be believed that in the sack and desolation of Thebes, to see so many valiant men, lost and totally destitute of any further defense, cruelly massacred before his eyes, would have appeased it: where there were above six thousand put to the sword, of whom not one was seen to fly, or heard to cry out for quarter; but, on the contrary, every one running here and there to seek out and to provoke the victorious enemy to help them to an honorable end. Not one was seen who, however weakened with wounds, did not in his last gasp yet endeavor to revenge himself, and with all the arms of a brave despair, to sweeten his own death in the death of an enemy. Yet did their valor create no pity, and the length of one day was not enough to satiate the thirst of the conqueror's revenge, but the slaughter continued to the last drop of blood that was capable of being shed, and stopped not till it met with none but unarmed persons, old men, women, and children, of them to carry away to the number of thirty thousand slaves.

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* Quintus Curtius, iv. 6. This act of cruelty has been doubted, notwithstanding the statement of Curtius.

CHAPTER II.

OF SORROW.

No man living is more free from this passion than I, who yet neither like it in myself nor admire it in others, and yet generally the world, as a settled thing, is pleased to grace it with a particular esteem, clothing therewith wisdom, virtue, and conscience. Foolish and sordid guise!* The Italians have more fitly baptized by this name † malignity; for 'tis a quality always hurtful, always idle and vain; and as being cowardly, mean, and base, it is by the Stoics expressly and particularly forbidden to their sages.

But the story ‡ says that Psammenitus, king of Egypt, being defeated and taken prisoner by Cambyses, king of Persia, seeing his own daughter pass by him as prisoner, and in a wretched habit, with a bucket to draw water, though his friends about him were so concerned as to break out into tears and lamentations, yet he himself remained unmoved, without uttering a word, his eyes fixed upon the ground; and seeing, moreover, his son immediately after led to execution, still maintained the same countenance; till spying at last one of his domestic and familiar friends dragged away among the captives, he fell to tearing his hair and beating his breast, with all the other extravagances of extreme sorrow.

A story that may very fitly be coupled with another of the same kind, of recent date, of a prince of our own nation, who being at Trent, and having news there brought him of the death of his elder brother, a brother on whom depended the whole support and honor of his house, and soon after of that of a younger brother, the second hope of his family, and having withstood these two assaults with an exemplary resolution; one of his servants happening a few days after to die, he suffered his constancy to be over-

* "No man is more free from this passion than I, for I neither love nor regard it: albeit the world hath vndertaken, as it were vpon covenant, to grace it with a particular favour. Therewith they adorne age, vertue, and conscience, Oh foolish and base ornament!"—Florio, 1613, p. 3.

† La Trèstezza.

‡ Herodotus, iii. 14.

come by this last accident; and, parting with his courage, so abandoned himself to sorrow and mourning, that some from thence were forward to conclude that he was only touched to the quick by this last stroke of fortune; but, in truth, it was, that being before brimful of grief, the least addition overflowed the bounds of all patience. Which, I think, might also be said of the former example, did not the story proceed to tell us that Cambyses asking Psammenitus, "Why, not being moved at the calamity of his son and daughter, he should with so great impatience bear the misfortune of his friend?" "It is," answered he, "because only this last affliction was to be manifested by tears, the two first far exceeding all manner of expression."

And, peradventure, something like this might be working in the fancy of the ancient painter,* who having, in the sacrifice of Iphigenia, to represent the sorrow of the assistants proportionably to the several degrees of interest every one had in the death of this fair innocent virgin, and having, in the other figures, lain out to the utmost power of his art, when he came to that of her father, he drew him with a veil over his face, meaning thereby that no kind of countenance was capable of expressing such a degree of sorrow. Which is also the reason why the poets feign the miserable mother, Niobe having first lost seven sons, and then afterwards as many daughters (overwhelmed with her losses), to be at last transformed into a rock—

"Diriguisse malis," †

thereby to express that melancholic, dumb and deaf stupefaction, which benumbs all our faculties, when oppressed with accidents greater than we are able to bear. And, indeed, the violence and impression of an excessive grief must of necessity astonish the soul, and wholly deprive her of her ordinary functions: as it happens to every one of us, who, upon any sudden alarm of very ill news, find ourselves surprised, stupefied, and in a manner deprived of all power of motion, so that the soul, beginning to vent itself in tears and lamentations, seems to free and disengage itself from

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* Cicero, Orator., c. 22; Pliny, xxxv. 10.

† "Petrified with her misfortunes."—Ovid, Met., vi. 304.

the sudden oppression, and to have obtained some room to work itself out at greater liberty.

"Et via vix tandem voci laxata dolore est." *

In the war that Ferdinand made upon the widow of King John of Hungary, about Buda, a man-at-arms was particularly taken notice of by every one for his singular gallant behavior in a certain encounter; and, unknown, highly commended, and lamented, being left dead upon the place: but by none so much as by Raisciac, a German lord, who was infinitely enamored of so rare a valor. The body being brought off, and the count, with the common curiosity coming to view it, the armor was no sooner taken off but he immediately knew him to be his own son, a thing that added a second blow to the compassion of all the beholders; only he, without uttering a word, or turning away his eyes from the woeful object, stood fixedly contemplating the body of his son, till the vehemency of sorrow having overcome his vital spirits, made him sink down stone-dead to the ground.

"Chi puo dir com' egli arde, è in picciol fuoco," †

say the Innamoratos, when they would represent an insupportable passion,

"Misero quod omnes
Eripit sensus mihi. Nam simul te,
Lesbia, aspexi, nihil est super mi,
Quod loquar amens.
Lingua sed torpet: tenuis sub artus
Flamma dimanat; sonitu suopte
Tinniunt aures; gemina teguntur
Lumina nocte." ‡

Neither is it in the height and greatest fury of the fit

* "And at length and with difficulty is a passage opened by grief for words."—*Æneid*, xi. 151.

† "He who can express in words the ardor of his love, has but little love to express."—PETRARCA, Sonnetto 137.

‡ "Love deprives me of all my faculties: Lesbia, when once in thy presence, I have not left the power to tell my distracting passion; my tongue becomes torpid; a subtle flame creeps through my veins; my ears tingle in deafness; my eyes are veiled with darkness."—CATULLUS, EPIG., li. 5.

that we are in a condition to pour out our complaints or our amorous persuasions, the soul being at that time overburdened, and laboring with profound thoughts; and the body dejected and languishing with desire; and thence it is that sometimes proceed those accidental impotencies that so unseasonably surprise the lover, and that frigidity which by the force of an immoderate ardor seizes him even in the very lap of fruition.* For all passions that suffer themselves to be relished and digested are but moderate.

"Curæ leves loquuntur, ingentes stupent." †

A surprise of unexpected joy does likewise often produce the same effect:

"Ut me conspexit venientem, et Troja circum,
Arma amens vidit, magnis exterrita monstris,
Diriguit visu in medio, calor ossa reliquit,
Labitur, et longo vix tandem tempore fatur."‡

Besides the examples of the Roman lady, who died for joy to see her son safe returned from the defeat of Cannæ; and of Sophocles and of Dionysius the Tyrant,§ who died of joy; and of Thalna, who died in Corsica, reading news of the honors the Roman senate had decreed in his favor, we have, moreover, one in our time, of Pope Leo X., who, upon news of the taking of Milan, a thing he had so ardently desired, was rapt with so sudden an excess of joy that he immediately fell into a fever and died.‖ And for a more notable testimony of the imbecility of human

* The edition of 1588 has here, "An accident not unknown to myself."

† "Light griefs can speak: deep sorrows are dumb."—*Seneca, Hyppol.*, act ii. scene 3.

‡ "When she beheld me advancing, and saw, with stupefaction, the Trojan arms around me, terrified with so great a prodigy, she fainted away at the very sight: vital warmth forsook her limbs: she sinks down, and, after a long interval, with difficulty speaks."—*Æneid*, iii. 306.

§ Pliny, vii. 53. Diod. Siculus, however (xv. c. 20), tells us that Dionysius "was so overjoyed at the news that he made a great sacrifice upon it to the gods; prepared sumptuous feasts, to which he invited all his friends, and therein drank so excessively that it threw him into a very bad distemper."

‖ Guicciardini, Storia d'Italia, vol. xiv.

nature it is recorded by the ancients * that Diodorus the dialectician died upon the spot, out of an extreme passion of shame, for not having been able in his own school, and in the presence of a great auditory, to disengage himself from a nice argument that was propounded to him. I, for my part, am very little subject to these violent passions; I am naturally of a stubborn apprehension, which also, by reasoning, I every day harden and fortify.

CHAPTER III.

THAT OUR AFFECTIONS CARRY THEMSELVES BEYOND US.

SUCH as accuse mankind of the folly of gaping after future things, and advise us to make our benefit of those which are present, and to set up our rest upon them, as having no grasp upon that which is to come, even less than that which we have upon what is past, have hit upon the most universal of human errors, if that may be called an error to which nature herself has disposed us, in order to the continuation of her own work, prepossessing us, among several others, with this deceiving imagination, as being more jealous of our action than afraid of our knowledge.

We are never present with, but always beyond ourselves; fear, desire, hope, still push us on toward the future, depriving us, in the meantime, of the sense and consideration of that which is to amuse us with the thought of what shall be, even when we shall be no more.† "*Calamitosus est animus futuri anius.*"‡

We find this great precept often repeated in Plato, "Do thine own work, and know thyself." Of which two parts, both the one and the other generally comprehend our whole duty, and do each of them in like manner involve the other; for who will do his own work aright will find that his first lesson is to know what he is, and that which is proper to himself; and who rightly understands himself will never mistake another man's work for his own, but

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* Pliny, *ut suprâ.*

† Rousseau, Emile, livre ii.

‡ "Mind anxious about the future is unhappy."—Seneca, Epist. 98.

will love and improve himself above all other things, will refuse superfluous employments, and reject all unprofitable thoughts and propositions. As folly, on the one side, though it should enjoy all it desire, would notwithstanding never be content, so, on the other, wisdom, acquiescing in the present, is never dissatisfied with itself.* Epicurus dispenses his sages from all foresight and care of the future.

Among those laws that relate to the dead, I look upon that to be very sound, by which the actions of princes are to be examined after their decease.† They are equals with, if not masters of the laws, and, therefore, what justice could not inflict upon their persons, 'tis but reason should be executed upon their reputations and the estates of their successors—things that we often value above life itself. 'Tis a custom of singular advantage to those countries where it is in use, and by all good princes to be desired, who have reason to take it ill, that the memories of the wicked should be used with the same reverence and respect with their own. We owe subjection and obedience to all our kings, whether good or bad, alike, for that has respect unto their office; but as to esteem and affection, these are only due to their virtue. Let us grant to political government to endure them with patience, however unworthy; to conceal their vices; and to assist them with our recommendation in their indifferent actions, while their authority stands in need of our support. But, the relation of prince and subject being once at an end, there is no reason we should deny the expression of our real opinions to our own liberty and common justice, and especially to interdict to good subjects the glory of having reverently and faithfully served a prince, whose imperfections were to them so well known; this were to deprive posterity of a useful example. And such as, out of respect to some private obligation, unjustly espouse and vindicate the memory of a faulty prince, do private right at the expense of public justice. Livy does very truly say ‡ "That the language of men bred up in courts is always full of vain ostentation and false testimony, every one indifferently

* Cicero, Tusc. Quæ., 57, v. 18.

† Diod. Sic., i. 6.

‡ xxxv. 48.

magnifying his own master, and stretching his commendation to the utmost extent of virtue and sovereign grandeur." Some may condemn the freedom of those two soldiers who so roundly answered Nero to his beard; the one being asked by him why he bore him ill-will? "I loved thee," answered he, "whilst thou wert worthy of it, but since thou art become a parricide, an incendiary, a player and a coachman, I hate thee as thou dost deserve." And the other why he should attempt to kill him? "Because," said he, "I could think of no other remedy against thy perpetual michiefs."* But the public and universal testimonies that were given of him after his death (and so will be to all posterity, both of him and all other wicked princes like him), of his tyrannies and abominable deportment, who, of a sound judgment, can reprove them.

I am scandalized, that in so sacred a government as that of the Lacedæmonians there should be mixed so hypocritical a ceremony at the interment of their kings; where all their confederates and neighbors, and all sorts and degrees of men and woman, as well as their slaves, cut and slashed their foreheads in token of sorrow, repeating in their cries and lamentations that that king (let him have been as wicked as the devil) was the best that ever they had;† by this means attributing to his quality the praise that only belongs to merit, and that of right is due to supreme desert, though lodged in the lowest and most inferior subject.

Aristotle, who will still have a hand in everything, makes a *quære* upon the saying of Solon, that none can be said to be happy until he be dead; "whether, then, he who has lived and died according to his heart's desire, if he have left an ill-repute behind him, and that his posterity be miserable, can be said to be happy?" While we have life and motion, we convey ourselves by fancy and preoccupation, whither and to what we please; but once out of being, we have no more any manner of communication with that which is, and it had therefore been better said by Solon that man is never happy, because never so till after he is no more.

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* Tacitus, Annal., xv. 67.

* Herod., vi. 98.

"Quisquam
Vix radicitus e vita se tollit, et eicit
Sed facit esse sui quiddam super inscius ipse,
Nec removet satis a projecto corpore sese, et
Vindicat." *

Bertrand de Glesquin, dying at the siege of the Castle of Randon, near unto Puy, in Auvergne, the besieged were afterward, upon surrender, enjoined to lay down the keys of the place upon the corpse of the dead general. Bartholomew d'Alviano, the Venetian general, happening to die in the service of the republic in Brescia, and his corpse being to be carried through the territory of Verona, an enemy's country, most of the army were of opinion to demand safe-conduct from the Veronese; but Theodoro Trivulsio opposed the motion, rather choosing to make his way by force of arms, and to run the hazard of a battle, saying it was by no means fit that he who in his life was never afraid of his enemies should seem to apprehend them when he was dead. In truth, in affairs of the same nature, by the Greek laws, he who made suit to an enemy for a body to give it burial renounced his victory, and had no more right to erect a trophy, and he to whom such suit was made was reputed victor. By this means it was that Nicias lost the advantage he had visibly obtained over the Corinthians, and that Agesilaus, on the contrary, assured that he had before very doubtfully gained over the Bœotians. †

These things might appear strange, had it not been a general practice in all ages not only to extend the concern of ourselves beyond this life, but, moreover, to fancy that the favor of heaven does not only very often accompany us to the grave, but has also, even after life, a concern for our ashes. Of which there are so many ancient examples (to say nothing of those of our own observation) that it is not necessary I should longer insist upon it. Edward I., king of England, having in the long wars between him and Robert, king of Scotland, had experience of how great

* "Scarcely one man can, even in dying, wholly detach himself from the idea of life, in his ignorance he must needs imagine that there is in him something that survives him, and cannot sufficiently separate or emancipate himself from his prostrate carcass."—LUCRETIUS, iii. 890.

† Plutarch, Life of Nicias, c. ii.; Life of Agesilaus, c. vi.

importance his own immediate presence was to the success of his affairs, having ever been victorious in whatever he undertook in his own person, when he came to die, bound his son, in a solemn oath, that so soon as he should be dead he should boil his body till the flesh parted from the bones, and bury the flesh, reserving the bones to carry continually with him in his army, so often as he should be obliged to go against the Scots, as if destiny had inevitably attached victory even to his remains. John Zisca, the same who, in vindication of Wicliffe's heresies, troubled the Bohemian state, left order that they should flay him after his death, and of his skin make a drum to carry in the war against his enemies, fancying it would contribute to the continuation of the successes he had always obtained in the wars against them. In like manner certain of the Indians, in their battles with the Spaniards, carried with them the bones of one of their captains, in consideration of the victories they had formerly obtained under his conduct. And other people of the same New World carry about with them, in their wars, the relics of valiant men who have died in battle, to incite their courage and advance their fortune. Of which examples the first reserve nothing for the tomb but the reputation they have acquired by their former achievements, but these attribute to them a certain present and active power.

The proceeding of Captain Bayard is of a better composition, who, finding himself wounded to death with a harquebus shot, and being importuned to retire out of the fight, made answer that he would not begin at the last gasp to turn his back to the enemy; and, accordingly, still fought on, till feeling himself too faint and no longer able to sit his horse, he commanded his steward to set him down at the foot of a tree, but so that he might die with his face toward the enemy, which he did.

I must yet add another example, equally remarkable for the present consideration with any of the former. The Emperor Maximilian, great grandfather to the now King Philip, * was a prince endowed throughout with great and extraordinary qualities, and among the rest with a singular beauty of person, but had withal a humor very contrary to that of other princes, who for the despatch of

* Philip II. of Spain.

their most important affairs convert their close-stool into a chair of state, which was, that he would never permit any of his bedchamber, how familiar soever, to see him in that posture, and would steal aside to make water as religiously as a virgin, shy to discover either to his physician or any other whomsoever those parts that we are accumstomed to conceal. I myself, who have so impudent a way of talking, am, nevertheless, naturally so modest this way, that unless at the importunity of necessity or pleasure, I scarcely ever communicate to the sight of any, either those parts or actions that custom orders us to conceal, wherein I suffer more constraint than I conceive is very well becoming a man, especially of my profession. But he nourished this modest humor to such a degree of superstition as to give express orders in his last will that they should put him on drawers so soon as he should be dead; to which, methinks, he would have done well to have added that he should be blindfolded, too, that put them on. The charge that Cyrus left with his children, that neither they, nor any other, should either see or touch his body after the soul was departed from it, * I attribute to some superstitious devotion of his; for both his historian and himself, among their great qualities, strewed the whole course of their lives with a singular respect and reverence to religion.

I was by no means pleased with a story, told me by a man of very great quality, of a relation of mine, and one who had given a very good account of himself both in peace and war, that, coming to die in a very old age, of excessive pain of the stone, he spent the last hours of his life in an extraordinary solicitude about ordering the honor and ceremony of his funeral, pressing all the men of condition who came to see him to engage their word to attend him to his grave; importuning this very prince, who came to visit him at his last gasp, with a most earnest supplication that he would order his family to be there, and presenting before him several reasons and examples to prove that it was a respect due to a man of his condition; and seemed to die content, having obtained this promise, and appointed the method and order of his funeral parade. I have seldom heard of so persistent a vanity.

Another, though contrary curiosity (of which singularity,

* Xenophon, Cyrop., viii. 7.

also, I do not want domestic example), seems to be somewhat akin to this, that a man shall cudgel his brains at the last moments of his life, to contrive his obsequies to so particular and unusual a parsimony as of one servant with a lantern. I see this humor commended, and the appointment of Marcus Emilius Lepidus, who forbade his heirs to bestow upon his hearse even the common ceremonies in use upon such occasions.* Is it yet temperance and frugality to avoid expense and pleasure of which the use and knowledge are imperceptible to us? See, here, an easy and cheap reformation. If instruction were at all necessary in this case, I should be of opinion that in this, as in all other actions of life, each person should regulate the matter according to his fortune; and the philosopher Lycon prudently ordered his friends to dispose of his body where they should think most fit, and as to his funeral, to order it neither too superfluous nor too mean.† For my part, I should wholly refer the ordering of this ceremony to custom, and shall, when the time comes, accordingly leave it to their discretion, to whose lot it shall fall to do me that last office. "*Totus hic locus est contemnendus in nobis, non negligendus in nostris*;"‡ and it was a holy saying of a saint, "*Curatio funeris, conditio sepulturæ, pompa exsequiarum, magis sunt vivorum solatia, quam subsidia mortuorum.*"§ Which made Socrates answer Crito, who, at the hour of his death, asked him how he would be buried: "How you will," said he.‖ If I were to concern myself beyond the present about this affair, I should be most tempted, as the greatest satisfaction of this kind, to imitate those who in their lifetime entertain themselves with the ceremony and honors of their own obsequies beforehand, and are pleased with beholding their own dead countenance in marble. Happy are they who can gratify their senses by insensibility, and live by their death!

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* Livy, Epit. of Lib. xlviii.

† Diog. Laertius, v. 74.

‡ "The place of our sepulture is wholly to be contemned by us, but not to be neglected by our friends."—CICERO, *Tusc.* i. 45.

§ "The care of funerals, the place of sepulture, the pomps of obsequies, are rather consolations to the living than any benefit to the dead."—AUGUST., *de Civit. Dei*, i. 12.

‖ Plato, Phædo, *sub fin.*

I am ready to conceive an implacable hatred against all popular domination, though I think it the most natural and equitable of all, so oft as I call to mind the inhuman injustice of the people of Athens, who, without remission, or once vouchsafing to hear what they had to say for themselves, put to death their brave captains newly returned triumphant from a naval victory they had obtained over the Lacedæmonians near the Arginusian Isles, the most bloody and obstinate engagement that ever the Greeks fought at sea; because (after the victory) they followed up the blow and pursued the advantages presented to them by the rule of war, rather than stay to gather up and bury their dead. And the execution is yet rendered more odious by the behavior of Diomedon, who, being one of the condemned, and a man of most eminent virtue, political and military, after having heard the sentence, advancing to speak, no audience till then having been allowed, instead of laying before them his own cause, or the impiety of so cruel a sentence, only expressed a solicitude for his judges' preservation, beseeching the gods to convert this sentence to their good, and praying that, for neglecting to fulfill the vows which he and his companions had made (with which he also acquainted them) in acknowledgment of so glorious a success, they might not draw down the indignation of the gods upon them; and so without more words went courageously to his death.*

Fortune, a few years after, punished them in the same kind; for Chabrias, captain-general of their naval forces, having got the better of Pollis, admiral of Sparta, at the Isle of Naxos, totally lost the fruits of his victory, one of very great importance to their affairs, in order not to incur the danger of this example, and so that he should not lose a few bodies of his dead friends that were floating in the sea, gave opportunity to a world of living enemies to sail away in safety, who afterward made them pay dear for this unseasonable superstition:

> "Quæris, quo jaceas, post obitum, loco?
> Quo non nata jacent." †

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* Diod. Sic., xiii 31.

† "Dost ask where thou shalt lie when dead? Where things not born lie, that never being had."—SENECA, *Troa. Choro.*, ii. 30.

This other restores the sense of repose to a body without a soul; "*Neque sepulcrum, quo recipiatur, habeat: portum corporis, ubi, remissa humana vita, corpus requiescat a malis.*" * As nature demonstrates to us that several dead things retain yet an occult relation to life; wine changes its flavor and complexion in cellars, according to the changes and seasons of the vine from whence it came; and the flesh of venison alters its condition in the powdering tub, and its taste according to the laws of the living flesh of its kind, as it is said.

CHAPTER IV.

THAT THE SOUL DISCHARGES HER PASSIONS UPON FALSE OBJECTS, WHERE THE TRUE ARE WANTING.

A GENTLEMAN † of my country, marvelously tormented with the gout, being importuned by his physicians totally to abstain from all manner of salt meats, was wont pleasantly to reply, that in the extremity of his fits he must needs have something to quarrel with, and that railing at and cursing, one while the Bologna sausages, and another the dried tongues and the hams, was some mitigation to his pain. But, in good earnest, as the arm when it is advanced to strike, if it miss the blow, and goes by the wind, it pains us; and as also that, to make a pleasant prospect, the sight should not be lost and dilated in vague air, but have some bound and object to limit and circumscribe it at a reasonable distance.

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* "Nor let him have a selpulcher wherein he may be received, a haven for his body: where, being gone, that body may rest freed from its woes."—ENNIUS, *ap.* CICERO, *Tusc.*, i. 44.

† "A gentleman of ours exceedingly subject to the growt, being instantly solicited by his Physitians to leave all manner of salt-meates, was wont to answer pleasantly, that when the fittes or panges of the disease tooke him, hee would have somebody to quarell with; and that crying and cursing, now against Boloni sausege, and sometimes by railing against salt-meates, tongues, and gammons of bakon, he found some ease."—FLORIO, 1613, p. 9.

"Ventus ut amittit vires, nisi robore densæ
Occurrant Sylvæ, spatro diffusus inani." *

So it seems that the soul, being transported and discomposed, turns its violence upon itself, if not supplied with something to oppose it, and therefore always requires an object at which to aim and whereon to act. Plutarch says† of those who are delighted with little dogs and monkeys, that the armorous part that is in us, for want of a legitimate object, rather than lie idle, does after that manner forge and create one false and frivolous. And we see that the soul, in its passions, inclines rather to deceive itself, by creating a false and fantastical subject, even contrary to its own belief, than not to have something to work upon. After this manner brute beasts direct their fury to fall upon the stone or weapon that has hurt them, and with their teeth even execute revenge upon themselves for the injury they have received from another.

"Pannonis haud aliter post ictum sævior ursa,
Cui jaculum parva Lybis amentavit habena,
Se rotat in vulnus, telumque irata receptum
Impetit, et secum fugientem circuit hastam." ‡

What causes of the misadventures that befall us do we not invent? what is it that we do not lay the fault to, right or wrong, that we may have something to quarrel with? It is not those beautiful tresses you tear, nor is it the white bosom that in your anger you so unmercifully beat, that with an unlucky bullet have slain your beloved brother; quarrel with something else. Livy, speaking of the Roman army in Spain, says that for the loss of the two brothers,§ their great captains, "*Flere omnes repente, et offensare capita.*" ‖ 'Tis a common practice. And the philosopher Bion said, pleasantly, of the king, who by handfuls pulled

* "As winds lose their force, and are dispersed in empty space, when not confined by dense woods."—LUCAN, iii. 362.

† Life of Pericles, at the beginning.

‡ "As the bear, made fiercer by the wound from the Lybian's thong-hurled dart, turns round upon the wound, and attacking the received spear, contorts it, as she flies."—LUCAN, vi. 220.

§ Publius and Cneius Scipio.

‖ "They all at once wept, and tore their hair."—LIVY, xxv. 37.

his hair off his head for sorrow, "Does this man think that baldness is a remedy for grief?" * Who has not seen peevish gamesters chew and swallow the cards and swallow the dice in revenge for the loss of their money? Xerxes whipped the sea, and wrote a challenge to Mount Athos; Cyrus employed a whole army, several days at work, to revenge himself of the river Gyndas, for the fright it had put him into in passing over it; and Caligula demolished a very beautiful palace for the pleasure his mother had once enjoyed there.†

I remember there was a story current, when I was a boy, that one of our neighboring kings‡ having received a blow from the hand of God, swore he would be revenged, and, in order to do it, made proclamation that for ten years to come no one should pray to Him, or so much as mention Him throughout his dominions, or, so far as his authority went, believe in Him; by which they meant to paint not so much the folly as the vainglory of the nation of which this tale was told. They are vices that always go together, but in truth such actions as these have in them still more of presumption than want of wit. Augustus Cæsar, having been tossed with a tempest at sea, fell to defying Neptune, and, in the pomp of the Circensian games, to be revenged, deposed his statue from the place it had among the other deities. Wherein he was still less excusable than the former, and less than he was afterward when, having lost a battle under Quintilius Varus in Germany, in rage and despair he went running his head against the wall, crying out, "O Varus! give me back my legions!" for these exceed all folly, forasmuch as impiety is joined therewith, invading God himself, or at least Fortune, as if she had ears that were subject to our batteries; like the Thracians, who when it thunders or lightens, fall to shooting against heaven with Titanian vengeance, as if by flights of arrows they intended to bring God to reason. Though the ancient poet in Plutarch tells us:

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* Cicero, Tusc., iii. 26.

†"Pleasure—unless *plaisir* were originally a misprint for de-*plaisir*—must be here understood ironically, for the house was one in which she had been imprisoned."—SENECA, *De Ira.*, iii. 22.

‡ Probably Alfonso XI. of Castile.

"Point ne se faut couroucer aux affaires,
Il ne leur chault de toutes nos choleres." *

But we can never enough decry the disorderly sallies of our minds.

CHAPTER V.

WHETHER THE GOVERNOR OF A PLACE BESIEGED OUGHT HIMSELF TO GO OUT TO PARLEY.

QUINTUS MARCIUS,† the Roman legate in the war against Persius, king of Macedon, to gain time wherein to reinforce his army, set on foot some overtures of accommodation, with which the king being lulled asleep, concluded a truce for some days, by this means giving his enemy opportunity and leisure to recruit his forces, which was afterward the occasion of the king's final ruin. Yet the elder senators, mindful of their forefathers' manners, condemned this proceeding as degenerating from their ancient practice, which, they said, was to fight by valor, and not by artifice, surprises, and night-encounters; neither by pretended flight nor unexpected rallies to overcome their enemies; never making war till having first proclaimed it, and very often assigned both the hour and place of battle. Out of this generous principle it was that they delivered up to Pyrrhus his treacherous physician, and to the Etrurians their disloyal schoolmaster. This was, indeed, a procedure truly Roman, and nothing allied to the Grecian subtlety, nor to the Punic cunning, where it was reputed a victory of less glory to overcome by force than by fraud. Deceit may serve for a need, but he only confesses himself overcome who knows he is neither subdued by policy nor misadventure, but by dint of valor, man to man, in a fair and just war. It very well appears, by the discourse of these good old senators, that this fine sentence was not yet received among them:

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* "We must not trouble the gods with our affairs; they take no heed of our angers and disputes."—PLUTARCH.

† Livy, xlii. 37.

"Dolus, an virtus, quis in hoste requirat?" *

The Achaians, says Polybius,† abhorred all manner of double-dealing in war, not reputing it a victory unless where the courage of the enemy was fairly subdued. "*Eam vir sanctus et sapiens sciet veram esse victoriam, quæ, salva fide et integra dignitate, parabitur,*" ‡ says another:

"Vosne velit, an me, regnare hera, quidve ferat, fors virtute experiamur." §

In the kingdom of Ternate, among those nations which we so broadly call barbarians, they have a custom never to commence war till it be first proclaimed; adding withal an ample declaration of what means they have to do it with, with what and how many men, what ammunitions, and what, both offensive and defensive, arms; but also that being done, if their enemies do not yield and come to an agreement, they conceive it lawful to employ without reproach in their wars any means which may help them to conquer.

The ancient Florentines were so far from seeking to obtain any advantage over their enemies by surprise, that they always gave them a month's warning before they drew their army into the field, by the continual tolling of a bell they called Martinella. ‖

For what concerns ourselves, who are not so scrupulous in this affair, and who attribute the honor of the war to him who has the profit of it, and who after Lysander¶ say, "Where the lion's skin is too short, we must eke it out with a bit from that of the fox;" the most usual occasions of surprise are derived from this practice, and we hold that

* "What matters whether by valor or by stratagem we overcome the enemy?"—*Æneid*, ii. 390.

† xiii. 1.

‡ "An honest and prudent man will acknowledge that only to be a true victory which is obtained without violation of his own good faith, or blemish upon his own honor.—FLORUS, i. 12."

§ "Whether you or I shall rule, or what shall happen, let us determine by valor."—ENNIUS, *ap.* CICERO, *De. Offic.*, i. 12.

‖ After St. Martin.

¶ Plutarch in Vita, c. 4.

there are no moments wherein a chief ought to be more circumspect, and to have his eye so much at watch, as those of parleys and treaties of accommodation; and it is, therefore, become a general rule among the martial men of these latter times, that a governor of a place never ought, in a time of siege, to go out to parley. It was for this that in our father's days the Seigneurs de Montmord and de l'Assigni, defending Mouson * against the Count de Nassau, were so highly censured. But yet, as to this, it would be excusable in that governor who, going out, should, notwithstanding, do it in such manner that the safety and advantage should be on his side; as Count Guido di Pangone did at Reggio (if we are to believe Bellay, for Guicciardini says it was he himself) when the Seigneur de l'Escut approached to parley, who stepped so little away from his fort, that a disorder happening in the interim of parley, not only Monsieur de l'Escut and his party who were advanced with him, found themselves by much the weaker, insomuch that Alessandro de Trivulcio was there slain, but he himself was constrained, as the safest way, to follow the count, and, relying upon his honor, to secure himself from the danger of the shot within the walls of the town.

Eumenes, being shut up in the city of Nora by Antigonus, and by him importuned to come out to speak with him, as he sent him word it was fit he should to a greater man than himself, and one who had now an advantage over him, returned this noble answer. "Tell him," said he, "that I shall never think any man greater than myself while I have my sword in my hand," and would not consent to come out to him till first according to his own demand, Antigonus had delivered him his own nephew Ptolomeus in hostage. †

And yet some have done very well in going out in person to parley, on the word of the assailant: witness Henry de Vaux, a cavalier of Champagne, who being besieged by the English in the Castle of Commercy, and Bartholomew de Brunes, who commanded at the leaguer, having so sapped the greatest part of the castle without, that nothing remained but setting fire to the props to bury the besieged

* Pont-à-Mousson.

† Plutarch, Life of Eumenes, c. 5.

under the ruins, he requested the said Henry to come out to speak with him for his own good, which he did with three more in company; and his ruin being made apparent to him, he conceived himself singularly obliged to his enemy, to whose discretion he and his garrison surrendered themselves; and fire being presently applied to the mine, the props no sooner began to fail, but the castle was immediately blown up from its foundations, no one stone being left upon another.

I could, and do, with great facility, rely upon the faith of another; but I should very unwillingly do it in such a case, as it should thereby be judged that it was rather an effect of my despair and want of courage than voluntarily and out of confidence and security in the faith of him with whom I had to do.

CHAPTER VI.

THAT THE HOUR OF PARLEY IS DANGEROUS.

I SAW, notwithstanding, lately at Mussidan,* a place not far from my house, that those who were driven out thence by our army, and others of their party, highly complained of treachery, for that during a treaty of accommodation, and in the very interim that their deputies were treating, they were surprised and cut to pieces; a thing that, peradventure, in another age, might have had some color of foul play; but as I have just said, the practice of arms in these days is quite another thing, and there is now no confidence in an enemy excusable till the treaty is finally sealed; and even then the conqueror has enough to do to keep his word: so hazardous a thing it is to intrust the observation of the faith a man has engaged to a town that surrenders upon easy and favorable conditions, to the license of a victorious army, and to give the soldier free entrance into it in the heat of blood.

Lucius Æmilius Regillus, the Roman prætor, having lost his time in attempting to take the city of Phocæa by force, by reason of the singular valor wherewith the inhabitants defended themselves, conditioned, at last, to receive them

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* Mucidan.

as friends to the people of Rome, and to enter the town, as into a confederate city, without any manner of hostility, of which he gave them all assurance; but having, for the greater pomp, brought his whole army in with him, it was no more in his power, with all the endeavor he could use, to restrain his people: so that, avarice and revenge trampling under foot both his authority and all military discipline, he there saw a considerable part of the city sacked and ruined before his face.

Cleomenes was wont to say, "that what mischief soever a man could do his enemy in time of war was above justice, and nothing accountable to it in the sight of gods and men." And so having concluded a truce with those of Argos for seven days, the third night after, he fell upon them when they were all buried in sleep, and put them to the sword, alleging that there had no nights been mentioned in the truce; but the gods punished this subtle perfidy.

In a time of parley also, and while the citizens were relying upon their safety warrant, the city of Casilinum was taken by surprise, and that even in the age of the justest captains and the most perfect Roman military discipline; for is it not said that it is not lawful for us, in time and place, to make advantage of our enemies' want of understanding, as well as their want of courage.

And, doubtless, war has naturally many privileges that appear reasonable even to the prejudice of reason. And therefore here the rule fails, "*Neminem id agere ut ex alterius prædetur inscitia.*" * But I am astonished at the great liberty allowed by Xenophon in such cases, and that both by precept and by the example of several exploits of his complete emperor; an author of very great authority, I confess, in those affairs, as being in his own person both a great captain and a philosopher of the first form of Socrates' disciples; and yet I cannot consent to such a measure of license as he dispenses in all things and places.

Monsieur d'Aubigny, besieging Capua, and playing a furious battery against it, Signor Fabricio Colonna, governor of the town, having from a bastion begun to parley, and his soldiers in the meantime being a little more remiss in their guard, our people entered the place at

* "No one should prey upon another's folly."—CICERO, *De Offic.*, iii. 17.

unawares, and put them all to the sword. And of later memory, at Yvoy, Signor Juliano Romero having played that part of a novice to go out to parley with the constable, at his return found his place taken. But, that we might not escape scot-free the Marquess of Pescara having laid siege to Genoa, where Duke Octaviano Fregosa commanded under our protection, and the articles between them being so far advanced that it was looked upon as a done thing, and upon the point to be concluded, the Spaniards in the meantime having slipped in, made use of this treachery as an absolute victory. And since, at Ligny, in Barrois, where the Count de Brienne commanded, the emperor having in his own person beleaguered that place, and Bertheville, the said count's lieutenant, going out to parley, while he was capitulating, the town was taken.

> "Fu il vincer sempremai laudabil cosa,
> Vincasi o per fortuna, o per ingegno,"*

say they. But the philsopher Chrysippus was of another opinion, wherein I also concur; for he was used to say that those who run a race ought to employ all the force they have in what they are about, and to run as fast as they can; but that it is by no means fair in them to lay any hand upon their adversary to stop him, nor to set a leg before him to throw him down.† And yet more generous was the answer of that great Alexander to Polypercon, who was persuading him to take the advantage of the night's obscurity to fall upon Darius. "By no means," said he; "it is not for such a man as I am to steal a victory, '*Malo me fortunæ pœniteat, quam victoriæ pudeat.*'" ‡

> "Atque idem fugientem haud est dignatus Oroden
> Sternere, nec jacta caecum dare cuspide vulnus:
> Obvius, adversoque occurrit, seque viro vir
> Contulit, haud furto melior, sed fortibus armis" §

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* "Victory is ever worthy of praise, whether obtained by valor or by wisdom."—ARIOSTO, xv. 1.

† Cicero, De Offic., iii. 10.

‡ "I had rather complain of ill fortune than be ashamed of victory."—QUINT. CURT., iv 13.

§ "He deigned not to cut off Orodes as he fled or with the darted spear to give him a wound unseen; but overtaking him, he confronted him, face to face, and encounted man to man: superior, not in stratagem, but in valiant arms."—ÆNEID, x. 732.

CHAPTER VII.

THAT THE INTENTION IS JUDGE OF OUR ACTIONS.

'Tis a saying, "that death discharges us of all our obligations." I know some who have taken it in another sense. Henry VII., king of England, articled with Don Philip, son to Maximilian the emperor, or (to place him more honorably) father to the Emperor Charles V., that the said Philip should deliver up the duke of Suffolk of the White Rose, his enemy, who was fled into the low countries, into his hands; which Philip accordingly did, but upon condition, nevertheless, that Henry should attempt nothing against the life of the said duke; but coming to die, the king in his last will commanded his son to put him to death immediately after his decease. And, lately, in the tragedy that the duke of Alva presented to us in the persons of the Counts Horn and Egmont at Brussels,* there were very remarkable passages, and one among the rest, that Count Egmont (upon the security of whose word and faith Count Horn had come and surrendered himself to the duke of Alva) earnestly entreated that he might first mount the scaffold, to the end that death might disengage him from the obligation he had passed to the other. In which case, methinks, death did not acquit the former of his promise, and that the second was discharged from it without dying. We cannot be bound beyond what we are able to perform, by reason that effect and performance are not at all in our power, and that, indeed, we are masters of nothing but the will, in which, by necessity, all the rules and whole duty of mankind are founded and established: therefore Count Egmont, conceiving his soul and will indebted to his promise, although he had not the power to make it good, had doubtless been absolved of his duty, even though he had outlived the other; but the king of England willfully and premeditately breaking his faith, was no more to be excused for deferring the execution of his infidelity till after his death than Herodotus' mason, who having inviolably, during the time of his life, kept the secret of the treasure of the king of Egypt, his master, at his death discovered it to his children.†

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* Decapitated 4th June, 1568.

† Herod., ii. 121.

I have taken notice of several in my time, who, convicted by their consciences of unjustly detaining the goods of another, have endeavored to make amends by their will, and after their decease; but they had as good do nothing, as either in taking so much time in so pressing an affair, or in going about to remedy a wrong with so little dissatisfaction or injury to themselves. They owe, over and above, something of their own; and by how much their payment is more strict and incommodious to themselves, by so much is their restitution more just and meritorious. Penitency requires penalty; but they yet do worse than these, who reserve the declaration of a mortal animosity against their neighbor to the last gasp, having concealed it during their life, wherein they manifest little regard of their own honor, irritating the party offended in their memory; and less to their conscience, not having the power, even out of respect to death itself, to make their malice die with them, but extending the life of their hatred even beyond their own. Unjust judges, who defer judgment to a time wherein they can have no knowledge of the cause! For my part, I shall take care, if I can, that my death discover nothing that my life has not first and openly declared.

CHAPTER VIII.

OF IDLENESS.

As we see some grounds that have long lain idle and untilled, when grown rich and fertile by rest, to abound with and spend their virtue in the product of innumerable sorts of weeds and wild herbs that are unprofitable, and that to make them perform their true office, we are to cultivate and prepare them for such seeds as are proper for our service; and as we see women that, without knowledge of man, do sometimes of themselves bring forth inanimate and formless lumps of flesh, but that to cause a natural and perfect generation they are to be husbanded with another kind of seed; even so it is with minds, which if not applied to some certain study that may fix and restrain them, run into a thousand extravagances, eternally roving here and there in the vague expanse of the imagination—

"Sicut aquæ tremulum labris ubi lumen ahenis,
Sole repercussum, aut radiantis imagine lunæ,
Omnia pervolitat late loca; jamque sub auras
Erigitur, summique ferit laquearia tecti" *

—in which wild agitation there is no folly, nor idle fancy they do not light upon:

"Velut ægri somnia, vanæ
Finguntur species." †

The soul that has no established aim loses itself, for, as it is said:

"Quisquis ubique habitat, Maxime, nusquam habitat,"‡

When I lately retired to my own house, with a resolution, as much as possibly I could to avoid all manner of concern in affairs, and to spend in privacy and repose the little remainder of time I have to live, I fancied I could not more oblige my mind than to suffer it at full leisure to entertain and divert itself, which I now hoped it might henceforth do, as being by time become more settled and mature; but I find:

"Variam semper dant otia mentem," §

that, quite contrary, it is like a horse that has broken from his rider, who voluntarily runs into a much more violent career than any horseman would put him to, and creates me so many chimeras and fantastic monsters, one upon another, without order or design, that, the better at leisure to contemplate their strangeness and absurdity, I have begun to commit them to writing, hoping in time to make it ashamed of itself.

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* "As when on brazen vats of water the trembling beams of light, reflected from the sun, or from the image of the radiant moon, swiftly float over every place around, and now are darted up on high, and strike the ceilings of the lofty roof."—*Æneid*, viii. 22.

† "As sick men's dreams, creating vain phantasms."—HOR., *De Arte Poetica*, 7.

‡ "He who lives everywhere, lives nowhere."—*Martial*, vii. 73.

§ "Leisure ever creates varied thought."—LUCAN, iv. 704.

CHAPTER IX.

OF LIARS.

THERE is not a man living whom it would so little become to speak from memory as myself, for I have scarcely any at all, and do not think that the world has another so marvelously treacherous as mine. My other faculties are all sufficiently ordinary and mean; but in this I think myself very rare and singular and deserving to be thought famous. Besides the natural inconvenience I suffer by it (for, certes, the necessary use of memory considered, Plato had reason when he called it a great and powerful goddess), in my country, when they would say a man has no sense, they say, such a one has no memory; and when I complain of the defect of mine, they do not believe me, and reprove me, as though I accused myself for a fool: not discerning the difference between memory and understanding, which is to make matters still worse for me. But they do me wrong; for experience, rather, daily shows us on the contrary, that a strong memory is commonly coupled with infirm judgment. They do me, moreover (who am so perfect in nothing as in friendship), a great wrong in this, that they make the same words which accuse my infirmity, represent me for an ungrateful person: they bring my affections into question upon the account of my memory, and from a natural imperfection, make out a defect of conscience. "He has forgot" says one, "this request or that promise; he no more remembers his friends; he has forgot to say or do, or conceal such and such a thing, for my sake." And, truly, I am apt enough to forget many things, but to neglect anything my friend has given me in charge, I never do it. And it should be enough, methinks, that I feel the misery and inconvenience of it, without branding me with malice, a vice so contrary to my humor.

However, I derive these comforts from my infirmity; first, that it is an evil from which principally I have found reason to correct a worse, that would easily enough have grown upon me, namely, ambition; the defect being intolerable in those who take upon them public affairs. That, as several like examples in the progress of nature demonstrate to us, she has fortified me in my other faculties pro-

portionably as she has left me unfurnished in this; I should otherwise have been apt implicitly to have reposed my mind and judgment upon the bare report of other men, without ever setting them to work upon their own force, had the inventions and opinions of others been ever present with me by the benefit of memory. That by this means I am not so talkative, for the magazine of the memory is ever better furnished with matter than that of the invention. Had mine been faithful to me, I had ere this deafened all my friends with my babble, the subjects themselves arousing and stirring up the little faculty I have of handling and employing them, heating and extending my discourse, which were a pity: as I have observed in several of my intimate friends, who, as their memories supply them with an entire and full view of things, begin their narrative so far back, and crowd it with so many impertinent circumstances, that though the story be good in itself, they make a shift to spoil it; and if otherwise, you are either to curse the strength of their memory or the weakness of their judgment: and it is a hard thing to close up a discourse, and to cut it short, when you have once started; there is nothing wherein the force of a horse is so much seen as in a round and sudden stop. I see even those who are pertinent enough, who would, but cannot stop short in their career; for while they are seeking out a handsome period to conclude with, they go on at random, straggling about upon impertinent trivialities, as men staggering upon weak legs. But, above all, old men who retain the memory of things past, and forget how often they have told them, are dangerous company; and I have known stories from the mouth of a man of very great quality, otherwise very pleasant in themselves, become very wearisome by being repeated a hundred times over and over again to the same people.

Secondly, that, by this means, I the less remember the injuries I have received; insomuch that, as the ancient said,* I should have a register of injuries, or a prompter, as Darius, who, that he might not forget the offense he had received from those of Athens, so oft as he sat down to dinner, ordered one of his pages three times to repeat in his ear, "Sir, remember the Athenians;"† and then,

* Cicero, Pro Ligar., c. 12.

† Herod., v. 105.

again, the places which I revisit, and the books I read over again, still smile upon me with a fresh novelty.

It is not without good reason said "that he who has not a good memory should never take upon him the trade of lying." I know very well that the grammarians* distinguish between an *untruth* and a *lie*, and say that to tell an *untruth* is to tell a thing that is false, but that we ourselves believe to be true; and that the definition of the word *to lie* in Latin, from which our French is taken, is to tell a thing which we know in our conscience to be untrue; and it is of this last sort of liars only that I now speak. Now, these do either wholly contrive and invent the untruths they utter, or so alter and disguise a true story that it ends in a lie. When they disguise and often alter the same story according to their own fancy, 'tis very hard for them, at one time or another, to escape being trapped, by reason that the real truth of the thing, having first taken possession of the memory, and being there lodged and impressed by the medium of knowledge and science, it will be difficult that it should not represent itself to the imagination, and shoulder out falsehood, which cannot there have so sure and settled footing as the other; and the circumstances of the first true knowledge evermore running in their minds, will be apt to make them forget those that are illegitimate, and only forged by their own fancy. In what they wholly invent, forasmuch as there is no contrary impression to jostle their invention, there seems to be less danger of tripping; and yet even this also, by reason it is a vain body, and without any hold, is very apt to escape the memory, if it be not well assured. Of which I have had very pleasant experience, at the expense of such as profess only to form and accommodate their speech to the affair they have in hand, or to the humor of the great folks to whom they are speaking; for the circumstances to which these men stick not to enslave their faith and conscience being subject to several changes, their language must vary accordingly: whence it happens that of the same thing they tell one man that it is this, and another that it is that, giving it several colors; which men, if they once come to confer notes, and find out the cheat, what becomes of this fine art? To which may be added, that

* Nigidius, Aulus Gellius, xi. 11; Nonius, v. 80.

they must of necessity very often ridiculously trap themselves; for what memory can be sufficient to retain so many different shapes as they have forged upon one and the same subject? I have known many in my time very ambitious of the repute of this fine wit; but they do not see that if they have the reputation of it, the effect can no longer be.

In plain truth, lying, is an accursed vice. We are not men, nor have other tie upon one another, but by our word. If we did but discover the horror and gravity of it, we should pursue it with fire and sword, and more justly than other crimes. I see that parents commonly, and with indiscretion enough, correct their children for little innocent faults, and torment them for wanton tricks, that have neither impression nor consequence; whereas, in my opinion, lying only, and which is of something a lower form, obstinacy, are the faults which are to be severely whipped out of them, both in their infancy and in their progress, otherwise they grow up and increase with them; and after a tongue has once got the knack of lying, 'tis not to be imagined how impossible it is to reclaim it: whence it comes to pass that we see some, who are otherwise very honest men, so subject and enslaved to this vice. I have an honest lad to my tailor, whom I never knew guilty of one truth, no, not when it had been to his advantage. If *falsehood* had, like *truth*, but one face only, we should be upon better terms; for we should then take for certain the contrary to what the liar says: but the reverse of *truth* has a hundred thousand forms, and a field indefinite, without bound or limit. The Pythagoreans make *good* to be certain and finite, and *evil*, infinite and uncertain. There are a thousand ways to miss the white, there is only one to hit it. For my own part, I have this vice in so great horror, that I am not sure I could prevail with my conscience to secure myself from the most manifest and extreme danger by an impudent and solemn lie. An ancient father says "that a dog we know is better company than a man whose language we do not understand." "*Ut externus alieno non sit hominis vice.*" * And how much less sociable in false speaking than silence?

* "As a foreigner cannot be said to supply to us the place of a man."—PLINY, "Nat. Hist.," vii. 1; whose text, however, is "*pene non sit*," etc.

King Francis I. bragged that he had, by this means, nonplussed Francisco Taverna, ambassador of Francisco Sforza, duke of Milan, a man very famous for his science in talking in those days. This gentleman had been sent to excuse his master to his majesty about a thing of very great consequence, which was this: the king, still to maintain some intelligence with Italy, out of which he had lately been driven, and particularly with the duchy of Milan, had thought it convenient to have a gentleman on his behalf to be with that duke: an ambassador in effect, but in outward appearance a private person who pretended to reside there upon his own particular affairs; for the duke, much more depending upon the emperor, especially at a time when he was in a treaty of a marriage with his niece, daughter to the king of Denmark, and now dowager of Lorraine, could not manifest any practice and conference with us, but very much to his own prejudice. For this commission one Merveille, a Milanese gentleman, and an equerry to the king, being thought very fit, was accordingly despatched thither with private credentials, and instructions as ambassador, and with other letters of recommendation to the duke about his own private concerns, the better to mask and color the business; and was so long in that court, that the emperor at last had some inkling of his real employment there; which was the occasion of what followed after, as we suppose; which was, that under pretense of some murder, his trial was in two days despatched, and his head in the night struck off in prison. Messire Francisco being come, and prepared with a long conterfeit history of the affair (for the king had applied himself to all the princes of Christendom, as well as to the duke himself, to demand satisfaction), had his audience at the morning council; where, after he had for the support of his cause laid open several plausible justifications of the fact, that his master never looked upon this Merveille for other than a private gentleman, and his own subject, who was there only in order to his own business, neither had he ever lived after any other aspect; absolutely disowning that he had ever heard he was one of the king's household, or that his majesty so much as knew him, so far was he from taking him for an ambassador: the king, in his turn, pressing him with several objections and demands, and sifting him on all hands, graveled him

at last by asking, why, then, the execution was performed by night, and as it were by stealth? At which the poor confounded ambassador, the more handsomely to disengage himself, made answer, that the duke would have been very loath, out of respect to his majesty, that such an execution should have been performed by day. Any one may guess if he was not well rated when he came home, for having so grossly tripped in the presence of a prince of so delicate a nostril as King Francis.

Pope Julius II. having sent an ambassador to the king of England to animate him against King Francis, the ambassador having had his audience, and the king, before he would give an answer, insisting upon the difficulties he should find in setting on foot so great a preparation as would be necessary to attack so potent a king, and urging some reasons to that effect, the ambassador, very unseasonably, replied that he had also himself considered the same difficulties, and had represented them to the pope. From which saying of his, so directly opposite to the thing propounded, and the business he came about, which was immediately to incite him to war, the king first derived argument (which also he afterward found to be true), that this ambassador, in his own mind, was on the side of the French; of which having advertised the pope, his estate at his return home was confiscated, and he himself very narrowly escaped the losing of his head.*

CHAPTER X.

OF QUICK OR SLOW SPEECH.

"Onc ne furent à touts toutes graces donnees;" †

so we see in the gift of eloquence, wherein some have such a facility and promptness, and that which we call a *present* wit so easy, that they are ever ready upon all occasions, and never to be surprised; and others more heavy and slow, never venture to utter anything but what they have

* Erasmi Op. (1703), iv. col. 684.

† "All graces were never yet given to any one man."—A verse in one of La Brebis' Sonnets.

long premeditated, and taken great care and pains to fit and prepare.

Now, as we teach young ladies those sports and exercises which are most proper to set out the grace and beauty of those parts wherein their chiefest ornament and perfection lie, so it should be in these two advantages of eloquence, to which the lawyers and preachers of our age seem principally to pretend. If I were worthy to advise, the slow speaker, methinks, should be more proper for the pulpit, and the other for the bar: and that because the employment of the first does naturally allow him all the leisure he can desire to prepare himself, and besides, his career is performed in an even and unintermitted line, without stop or interruption; whereas the pleader's business and interest compels him to enter the lists upon all occasions, and the unexpected objections and replies of his adverse party jostle him out of his course, and put him, upon the instant, to pump for new and extempore answers and defenses. Yet, at the interview between Pope Clement and King Francis at Marseilles, it happened, quite contrary, that Monsieur Poyet, a man bred up all his life at the bar, and in the highest repute for eloquence, having the charge of making the harangue to the pope committed to him, and having so long meditated on it beforehand, as, so they said, to have brought it ready made along with him from Paris; the very day it was to have been pronounced, the pope, fearing something might be said that might give offense to the other prince's ambassadors who were there attending on him, sent to acquaint the king with the argument which he conceived most suiting to the time and place, but, by chance, quite another thing to that Monsieur de Poyet had taken so much pains about: so that the fine speech he had prepared was of no use, and he was upon the instant to contrive another; which finding himself unable to do, Cardinal du Bellay was constrained to perform that office. The pleader's part is, doubtless, much harder than that of the preacher, and, yet, in my opinion, we see more passable lawyers than preachers, at all events in France. It should seem that the nature of wit is to have its operation prompt and sudden, and that of judgment, to have it more deliberate and more slow. But he who remains totally silent, for want of leisure to prepare himself to speak well, and he also whom leisure does noways benefit to better speaking, are equally unhappy.

'Tis said of Severus Cassius that he spoke best extempore; that he stood more obliged to fortune than to his own diligence; that it was an advantage to him to be interrupted in speaking, and tha his adversaries were afraid to nettle him, lest his anger should redouble his eloquence. I know experimentally, the disposition of nature so impatient of a tedious and elaborate premeditation, that if it do not go frankly and gayly to work, it can perform nothing to purpose. We say of some compositions that they stink of oil and of the lamp, by reason of a certain rough harshness that laborious handling imprints upon those where it has been employed. But besides this, the solicitude of doing well, and a certain striving and contending of a mind too far strained and overbent upon its undertaking, breaks and hinders itself like water, that by force of its own pressing violence and abundance, cannot find a ready issue through the neck of a bottle or a narrow sluice. In this condition of nature, of which I am now speaking, there is this also, that it would not be disordered and stimulated with such passions as the fury of Cassius (for such a motion would be too violent and rude); it would not be jostled but solicited; it would be roused and heated by unexpected, sudden, and accidental occasions. If it be left to itself, it flags and languishes; agitation, only, gives it grace and vigor. I am always worst in my own possession: and when wholly at my own disposition: accident has more title to anything that comes from me than I; occasion, company, and even the very rising and falling of my own voice, extract more from my fancy than I can find when I sound and employ it by myself. By which means, the things I say are better than those I write, if either were to be preferred, where neither is worth anything. This, also, befalls me, that I do not find myself where I seek myself, and I light upon things more by chance than by any inquisition of my own judgment. I perhaps sometimes hit upon something when I write, that seems quaint and sprightly to me, though it will appear dull and heavy to another. But let us leave these fine compliments; every one talks thus of himself according to his talent. But when I come to speak, I am already so lost that I know not what I was about to say, and in such cases a stranger often finds it out before me. If I should make erasures so often as this inconvenience befalls me, I should make

clean work; occasion will, at some other time, lay it as visible to me as the light, and make me wonder what I should stick at.

CHAPTER XI.

OF PROGNOSTICATIONS.

FOR WHAT concerns oracles, it is certain that a good while before the coming of Jesus Christ, they had begun to lose their credit; for we see that Cicero is troubled to find out the cause of their decay, and he has these words: "*Cur isto modo jam Oracula Delphis non eduntur, non modo nostra ætate, sed jam diu; ut nihil possit esse contemptius?*" * But as to the other prognostics, calculated from the anatomy of beasts at sacrifices (to which purpose Plato does, in part, attribute the natural constitution of the intestines of the beasts themselves), the scraping of poultry, the flight of birds—"*Aves quasdam . . . rerum augurandarum causa natas esse putamus*" †—claps of thunder, the overflowing of rivers—"*Multa cernunt Aruspices, multa Augures provident, multa oraculis declarantur, multa vaticinationibus, multa somniis, multa portentis*" ‡—and others of the like nature, upon which antiquity founded most of their public and private enterprizes, our religion has totally abolished them. And although there yet remain among us some practices of divination from the stars, from spirits, from the shapes and complexions of men, from dreams and the like (a notable example of the wild curiosity of our nature to grasp at and anticipate future things, as if we had not enough to do to digest the present)—

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* "What is the reason that the oracles at Delphos are no longer uttered: not merely in this age of ours, but for a long time past nothing is more in contempt?"—CICERO, *De Divin.*, ii. 57.

† "We think some sorts of birds are purposely created to serve the purposes of augury."—CICERO, *De Natura Deor.*, ii. 64.

‡ "The Aruspices discern many things, the Augurs foresee many things, many things are announced by oracles, vaticinations, dreams, and protents."—CICERO, *De Natura Deor.*, ii. 65.

"Cur hanc tibi, recto Olmypi,
Sollicitis visum mortalibus addere curam,
Noscant venturas ut dira per omina clades? . . .
Sit subitum, quodcumque paras; sit cœca futuri
Mens hominum fati, liceat sperare timenti." *

(*"Ne utile quidem est scire quid futurum sit: miserum est enim, nihil proficientem angi"* †) yet are they of much less authority now than heretofore. Which makes the example of Francis, marquis of Saluzzo, so much more remarkable; who being lieutenant to King Francis I. in his army beyond the mountains, infinitely favored and esteemed in our court, and obliged to the king's bounty for the marquisate itself, which had been forfeited by his brother; and as to the rest, having no manner of provocation given him to do it, and even his own affection opposing any such disloyalty, suffered himself to be so terrified, as it was confidently reported, with the fine prognostics that were spread abroad everywhere in favor of the Emperor Charles V., and to our disadvantage (especially in Italy, where these foolish prophecies were so far believed, that at Rome great sums of money were ventured out upon return of greater when the prognostics came to pass, so certain they made themselves of our ruin), that having often bewailed to those of his acquaintance who were most intimate with him, the mischiefs that he saw would inevitably fall upon the crown of France, and the friends he had in that court, he revolted and turned to the other side; to his own misfortune, nevertheless, what constellation soever governed at that time. But he carried himself in this affair like a man agitated with divers passions; for having both towns and forces in his hands, the enemy's army under Antonio de Leyva close by him, and we not at all suspecting his design, it had been in his power to have done more than he did; for we lost no men by this infidelity of his, nor any town, but Fossano only, and that after a long siege and a brave defense.‡

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* "Why, ruler of Olympus, hast thou to anxious, careworn mortals added this care, that they should know by omens future slaughter? . . . Send, unlooked for, the ills thou hast in store for them. Let human minds be blind to future things. Let hope, amid our fears, have some place."—LUCAN, ii. 14.

† "It is useless to know what shall come to pass; it is a miserable thing to be tormented to no purpose."—CICERO, *De Natura Deor.*, iii. 6.

‡ In 1536.

"Prudens futuri temporis exitum
Caliginosa nocte premit Deus,
Ridetque, si mortalis ultra
Fas trepidat." *

"Ille potens sui
Lætusque deget, cui licet in diem
Dixisse, vixi! cras vel atra
Nube polum pater occupato,
Vel sole puro."†

"Lætus in præsens animus; quod ultra est,
Oderit curare." ‡

And those who take this sentence in a contrary sense interpret it amiss:§ "*Ista sic reciprocantur, ut et si divinatio sit, dii sint; et si dii sint, sit divinatio.*"‖ Much more wisely Pacuvius—

"Nam istis, qui linguam avium intelligunt,
Plusque ex alieno jecore sapiunt, quam ex suo,
Magis audiendum, quam auscultandum, censeo." ¶

The so celebrated art of divination among the Tuscans took its beginning thus: A laborer striking deep with his culter into the earth, saw the demigod Tages ascend, with an infantine aspect, but endued with a mature and senile

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* "A wise God covers with thick night the path of the future, and laughs at the man who alarms himself without reason."—HOR., *Od.*, iii. 29.

† "He lives happy and master of himself, who can say, as each day passes on, 'I HAVE LIVED;' no matter whether to-morrow the great Father shall give us a clouded sky or a clear day."—HOR., *Od.*, iii. 29.

‡ "A mind happy, cheerful in the present state, will take good care not to think of what is beyond it."—*Ibid.*, ii. 25.

§ "Et ceulx, qui croyent ce mot, au contraire, le croyent à tort."—Fr. I do not understand what is meant by the following passage in Coste's version, edit. 1811, i. 47, note: "It" (the meaning of the passage) "has been quite mistaken in Mr. Cotton's English translation of Montaigne." In Coste the text is: "And they who put a contrary sense on this passage, misunderstand it."

‖ "These things have that reciprocate, that if there be divination, there must be deities; and if deities, divination."—CICERO, *De Divin.*, i. 6.

¶ "As to those who understand the language of birds, and who rather consult the livers of animals than their own, I had rather hear them than attend to them."—*Ibid.*, 57, *ex* Pacuvio.

wisdom. Upon the rumor of which, all the people ran to see the sight, by whom his words and science, containing the principles and means to attain to this art, were recorded, and kept for many ages.* A birth suitable to its progress! I, for my part, should sooner regulate my affairs by the chance of a die than by such idle and vain dreams. And, indeed, in all republics, a good share of the government has ever been referred to chance. Plato, in the civil regimen that he models according to his own fancy, leaves to it the decision of several things of very great importance, and will, among other things, that marriages should be appointed by lot, attributing so great importance to this accidental choice as to ordain that the children begotten in such wedlock be brought up in the country, and those begotten in any other be thrust out as spurious and base; yet so, that if any of those exiles, notwithstanding, should, per-adventure, in growing up give any good hope of himself, he might be recalled, as, also, that such as had been retained, should be exiled, in case they gave little expectation of themselves in their early growth.

I see some who are mightily given to study and comment upon their almanacs, and produce them for authority when anything has fallen out pat; and, for that matter, it is hardly possible but that these alleged authorities sometimes stumble upon a truth among an infinite number of lies. "*Quis est enim, qui totum diem jaculans non aliquando collineet?*" † I think never the better of them for some such accidental hit. There would be more certainty in it if there were a rule and a truth of always lying. Besides, nobody records their flimflams and false prognostics, forasmuch as they are infinite and common; but if they chop upon one truth, that carries a mighty report, as being rare, incredible, and prodigious. So Diogenes, surnamed the Atheist, answered him in Samothrace, who, showing him in the temple the several offerings and stories in painting of those who had escaped shipwreck, said to him, "Look, you who think the gods have no care of human things, what do you say to so many persons preserved from death by their especial favor?" "Why, I

* Cicero, De Divin., ii. 23.

† "For who shoots all day at butts that does not sometimes hit the white?"—CICERO, *De Divin.*, ii. 59.

say," answered he, "that their pictures are not here who were cast away, who are by much the greater number." *

Cicero observes that of all the philosphers who have acknowledged a deity, Xenophanes the Colophonian only has endeavored to eradicate all manner of divination :† which makes it the less a wonder if we have now and then seen some of our princes, sometimes to their own cost, rely too much upon these fopperies. I had given anything with my own eyes to see those two great marvels, the book of Joachim the Calabrian abbot, which foretold all the future popes, their names and forms ; and that of the Emperor Leo, which prophesied all the emperors and patriarchs of Greece. This I have been an eyewitness of, that in public confusions, men astonished at their fortune, have abandoned their own reason, superstitiously to seek out in the stars the ancient causes and menaces of their present mishaps, and in my time have been so strangely successful in it, as to make me believe that this being an amusement of sharp and volatile wits, those who have been versed in this knack of unfolding and untying riddles, are capable, in any sort of writing, to find out what they desire. But above all, that which gives them the greatest room to play in, is the obscure, ambiguous, and fantastic gibberish of their prophetic canting, where their authors deliver nothing of clear sense, but shroud all in riddle, to the end that posterity may interpret and apply it according to its own fancy.

Socrates' demon might, perhaps, be no other but a certain impulsion of the will, which obtruded itself upon him without the advice or consent of his judgment ; and in a soul so enlightened as his was, and so prepared by a continual exercise of wisdom and virtue, 'tis to be supposed, those inclinations of his, though sudden and undigested, were very important and worthy to be followed. Every one finds in himself some image of such agitations, of a prompt, vehement, and fortuitous opinion ; and I may well allow them some authority, who attribute so little to our prudence, and who also myself have had some, weak in reason, but violent in persuasion and dissausion, which were most frequent with Socrates,‡ by which I

* Cicero, Ne Natura Deor., i. 37.

† Cicero, De Divin., i. 3.

‡ Plato, Theages.

have suffered myself to be carried away so fortunately, and so much to my own advantage, that they might have been judged to have had something in them of a divine inspiration.

CHAPTER XII.

OF CONSTANCY.

THE law of resolution and constancy does not imply that we ought not, as much as in us lies, to decline and secure ourselves from the mischiefs and inconveniences that threaten us; nor, consequently, that we shall not fear lest they should surprise us: on the contrary, all decent and honest ways and means of securing ourselves from harms, are not only permitted, but, moreover, commendable, and the business of constancy chiefly is, bravely to stand to, and stoutly to suffer those inconveniences which are not possibly to be avoided. So that there is no supple motion of body, nor any movement in the handling of arms, how irregular or ungraceful soever, that we need condemn, if they serve to protect us from the blow that is made against us.

Several very warlike nations have made use of a retreating and flying way of fight as a thing of singular advantage, and, by so doing, have made their backs more dangerous to their enemies than their faces. Of which kind of fighting the Turks still retain something in their practice of arms; and Socrates, in Plato, laughs at Laches, who had defined fortitude to be a standing firm in the ranks against the enemy. "What!" says he, "would it, then, be a reputed cowardice to overcome them by giving ground?" urging, at the same time, the authority of Homer, who commends in Æneas the science of flight. And whereas Laches, considering better o' it, admits the practice as to the Scythians, and, in general, all cavalry whatever, he agains attacks him with the example of the Lacedæmonian foot—a nation of all other the most obstinate in maintaining their ground—who, in the battle of Platæa, not being able to break into the Persian phalanx, bethought themselves to disperse and retire, that by the enemy supposing they fled, they might break and disunite that vast body of men in the pursuit, and by that stratagem obtained the victory.

As for the Scythians, 'tis said of them, that when Darius went his expedition to subdue them, he sent, by a herald, highly to reproach their king, that he always retired before him, and declined a battle ; to which Idanthyrses,* for that was his name, returned answer, that it was not for fear of him, or of any man living, that he did so, but that it was the way of marching in practice with his nation, who had neither tilled fields, cities, nor houses to defend, or to fear the enemy should make any advantage of ; but that if he had such a stomach to fight, let him but come to view their ancient places of sepulture, and there he should have his fill.

Nevertheless, as to cannon-shot, when a body of men are drawn up in the face of a train of artillery, as the occasion of war often requires, it is unhandsome to quit their post to avoid the danger, forasmuch as by reason of its violence and swiftness we account it inevitable; and many a one, by ducking, stepping aside, and such other motions of fear, has been, at all events, sufficiently laughed at by his companions. And yet, in the expedition that the Emperor Charles V. made against us into Provence, the Marquis de Guast going to reconnoiter the city of Arles, and advancing out of the cover of a windmill, under favor of which he had made his approach, was perceived by the Seigneurs de Bonneval and the seneschal of Agenois, who were walking upon the *théâtre aux arènes ;* † who having shown him to the Sieur de Villiers, commissary of the artillery, he pointed a culverin so admirably well, and leveled it so exactly right against him, that had not the marquis, seeing fire given to it, slipped aside, it was certainly concluded the shot had taken him full in the body. And, in like manner, some years before, Lorenzo de Medici, duke of Urbino [Florence] and father to the queen-mother,‡ laying siege to Mondolpho, a place in the territories of the vicariat in Italy, seeing the cannoneer give fire to a piece that pointed directly against him, it was well for him that he ducked, for otherwise the shot, that only razed the top of his head, had doubtless hit him full in the breast. To say truth, I do not think that

* Herod, iv. 127.

† A theater where public shows of riding, fencing, etc., were exhibited.

‡ Catherine de Medici, mother of Henry III.

these evasions are performed upon the account of judgment; for how can any man living judge of high or low aim on so sudden an occasion? And it is much more easy to believe that fortune favored their apprehension, and that it might be as well at another time to make them face the danger, as to seek to avoid it. For my own part, I confess I cannot forbear starting when the rattle of a arquebus thunders in my ears on a sudden, and in a place where I am not to expect it, which I have also observed in others, braver fellows than I.

Neither do the Stoics pretend that the soul of their philosopher need be proof against the first visions and fantasies that surprise him; but, as to a natural subjection, consent that he should tremble at the terrible noise of thunder, or the sudden clatter of some falling ruin, and be affrighted even to paleness and convulsion; and so in other passions, provided his judgment remain sound and entire, and that the seat of his reason suffer no concussion nor alteration, and that he yield no consent to his fright and discomposure. To him who is not a philosopher a fright is the same thing in the first part of it, but quite another thing in the second; for the impression of passions does not remain superficially in him, but penetrates farther, even to the very seat of reason, infecting and corrupting it, so that he judges according to his fear, and conforms his behavior to it.* In this verse you may see the true state of the wise Stoic learnedly and plainly expressed:

"Mens immota manet: lachrymæ volvuntur inanes." †

The peripatetic sage does not exempt himself totally from perturbations of mind, but he moderates them.

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* These reflections are taken from Aulus Gellius, xix. 1, who in his turn translated them from the fifth book, now lost, of the Memoirs of Arrian on Epictetus.

† "Though tears flow, the mind remains unmoved."—VIRGIL, *Æneid*, iv. 449.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE CEREMONY OF THE INTERVIEW OF PRINCES.

THERE is no subject so frivolous that does not merit a place in this rhapsody. According to our common rule of civility, it would be a notable affront to an equal, and much more to a superior, to fail of being at home, when he has given you notice he will come to visit you. Nay, Queen Margaret of Navarre * further adds, that it would be a rudeness in a gentleman to go out, as we so often do, to meet any that is coming to see him, let him be of what high condition soever; and that it is more respectful and more civil to stay at home and to receive him, if only upon the account of missing him by the way, and that it is enough to receive him at the door, and to wait upon him. For my part, who as much as I can endeavor to reduce the ceremonies of my house, I very often forget both the one and the other of these vain offices. If, peradventure, some one may take offense at this, I can't help it; it is much better to offend him once than myself every day, for it would be a perpetual slavery. To what end do we avoid the servile attendance of courts, if we bring the same trouble home to our own private houses? It is also a common rule in all assemblies, that those of less quality are to be first upon the place, by reason that it is more due to the better sort to make others wait and expect them.

Nevertheless, at the interview between Pope Clement and King Francis at Marseilles, † the king, after he had taken order for the necessary preparations for his reception and entertainment, withdrew out of the town, and gave the pope two or three days respite for his entry, and to repose and refresh himself, before he came to him. And in like manner, at the assignation of the pope and the emperor ‡ at Bologna, the emperor gave the pope opportunity to come thither first, and came himself after; for which the reason given was this, that at all the interviews of such princes, the greater ought to be first at the appointed

* Marguerite de Valois, authoress of the "Heptameron."

† In 1533. ‡ Charles V. in 1532.

place, especially before the other in whose territories the interview is appointed to be, intimating thereby a kind of deference to the other, it appearing proper for the less to seek out and to apply themselves to the greater, and not the greater to them.

Not every country only, but every city, and every society has its particular forms of civility. There was care enough to this taken in my education, and I have lived in good company enough to know the formalities of our own nation, and am able to give lessons in it. I love to follow them, but not to be so servilely tied to their observation that my whole life should be enslaved to ceremonies, of which there are some so troublesome that, provided a man omits them out of discretion, and not for want of breeding, it will be every whit as handsome. I have seen some people rude, by being over-civil and troublesome in their courtesy.

Still, these excesses excepted, the knowledge of courtesy and good manners is a very necessary study. It is, like grace and beauty, that which begets liking and an inclination to love one another at the first sight, and in the very beginning of acquaintance; and, consequently, that which first opens the door and intromits us to instruct ourselves by the example of others, and to give examples ourselves, if we have any worth taking notice of and communicating.

CHAPTER XIV.

THAT MEN ARE JUSTLY PUNISHED FOR BEING OBSTINATE IN THE DEFENSE OF A FORT THAT IS NOT IN REASON TO BE DEFENDED.

VALOR has its bounds as well as other virtues, which, once transgressed, the next step is into the territories of vice; so that by having too large a proportion of this heroic virtue, unless a man be very perfect in its limits, which upon the confines are very hard to discern, he may very easily unawares run into temerity, obstinacy, and folly. From this consideration it is that we have derived the custom, in times of war, to punish, even with death, those who are obstinate to defend a place that by the rules

of war is not tenable; otherwise men would be so confident upon the hope of impunity, that not a henroost but would resist and seek to stop an army.

The constable, Monsieur de Montmorency, having at the siege of Pavia been ordered to pass the Ticino, and to take up his quarters in the Faubourg St. Antonio, being hindered by a tower at the end of the bridge, which was so obstinate as to endure a battery, hanged every man he found within it for their labor. And again, accompanying the dauphin in his expedition beyond the Alps, and taking the castle of Villano by assault, and all within it being put to the sword by the fury of the soldiers, the governor and his ensign only excepted, he caused them both to be trussed up for the same reason; as also did Captain Martin du Bellay, then governor of Turin, with the governor of St. Bony, in the same country, all his people having been cut in pieces at the taking of the place.

But forasmuch as the strength or weakness of a fortress is always measured by the estimate and counterpoise of the forces that attack it—for a man might reasonably enough despise two culverins, that would be a madman to abide a battery of thirty pieces of cannon—where also the greatness of the prince who is master of the field, his reputation and the respect that is due unto him, are also put into the balance, there is danger that the balance be pressed too much in that direction And it may happen that a man is possessed with so great an opinion of himself and his power, that thinking it unreasonable any place should dare to shut its gates against him, he puts all to the sword where he meets with any opposition, while his fortune continues; as is plain, in the fierce and arrogant forms of summoning towns and denouncing war, savoring so much of barbarian pride and insolence, in use among the Oriental princes, and which their successors to this day do yet retain and practice. And in that part of the world where the Portuguese subdued the Indians, they found some states where it was a universal and inviolable law among them that every enemy overcome by the king in person, or by his lieutenant, was out of composition, both of ransom and mercy.

So that above all things a man should take heed, if he can, of falling into the hands of a judge who is an enemy and victorious.

CHAPTER XV.

OF THE PUNISHMENT OF COWARDICE.

I ONCE heard of a prince, and a great captain, having a narration given him as he sat at table of the proceeding against Monsieur de Vervins, who was sentenced to death for having surrendered Boulogne to the English,* openly maintaining that a soldier could not justly be put to death for want of courage. And in truth 'tis reason that a man should make a great difference between faults that merely proceed from infirmity, and those that are visibly the effects of treachery and malice: for, in the last, we act against the rules of reason that nature has imprinted in us; whereas, in the former, it seems as if we might produce the same nature, who left us in such a state of imperfection and weakness of courage, for our justification. Insomuch that many have thought we are not fairly questionable for anything but what we commit against our conscience; and it is partly upon this rule that those ground their opinion who disapprove of capital and sanguinary punishments inflicted upon heretics and misbelievers; and theirs also who hold that an advocate or a judge is not accountable for having from mere ignorance failed in his administration.

But as to cowardice, it is certain that the most usual way of chastising it is by ignominy and disgrace; and it is supposed that this practice was first brought into use by the legislator Charondas; and that, before his time, the laws of Greece punished those with death who fled from a battle; whereas he ordained only that they should be for three days exposed in the public place, dressed in woman's attire, hoping yet for some service from them, having awakened their courage by this open shame: "*Suffundere malis hominis sanguinem, quam effundere.*" † It appears also that the Roman laws did anciently punish those with death who had run away; for Ammianus Marcellinus says that the Emperor Julian commanded ten of his soldiers,

* To Henry VIII. in 1544.

† "Rather bring the blood into a man's cheek than let it out of his body."—TERTULLIAN in his "Apologetics."

who had turned their backs in an encounter against the Parthians, to be first degraded, and afterward put to death, according, says he, to the ancient laws,* and yet, elsewhere, for the like offense, he only comdemned others to remain among the prisoners, under the baggage ensign. The severe punishment the people of Rome inflicted upon those who fled from the battle of Cannæ, and those who ran away with Cneius Fulvius at his defeat, did not extend to death. And yet, methinks, 'tis to be feared, lest disgrace should make such delinquents desperate, and not only faint friends, but enemies.

Of late memory,† the Seigneur de Franget,‡ lieutenant to the Marshal de Chattilion's company, having by the Marshal de Chabannes been put in government of Fuentarabia, in the place of Monsieur de Lude, and having surrendered it to the Spaniard, he was for that condemned to be degraded from all nobility, and both himself and his posterity declared ignoble, taxable, and forever incapable of bearing arms, which severe sentence was afterward accordingly executed at Lyons.§ And, since that, all the gentlemen who were in Guise when the Count of Nassau entered into it, underwent the same punishment, as several others have done since for the like offense. Notwithstanding, in case of such a manifest ignorance or cowardice as exceeds all ordinary example, 'tis but reason to take it for a sufficient proof of treachery and malice, and for such to be punished.

CHAPTER XVI.

A PROCEEDING OF SOME AMBASSADORS.

I OBSERVE in my travels this custom, ever to learn something from the information of those with whom I confer (which is the best school of all others), and to put my

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* Ammianus Marcellinus, xxiv. 4; xxv. 1.

† In 1523.

‡ Martin du Bellay in his Memoirs calls him Frauget.

§ In 1536.

company upon those subjects they are the best able to speak of:

> "Basti al nocchiero ragionar de' venti,
> Al bifolco dei tori; et le sue piaghe
> Conti'l guerrier; conti'l pastor gli armenti." *

For it often falls out that, on the contrary, every one will rather choose to be prating of another man's province than his own, thinking it so much new reputation acquired; witness the jeer Archidamus put upon Periander, "that he had quitted the glory of being an excellent physician to gain the repute of a very bad poet.† And do but observe how large and ample Cæsar is to make us understand his inventions of building bridges and contriving engines of war,‡ and how succinct and reserved in comparison, where he speaks of the offices of his profession, his own valor, and military conduct. His exploits sufficiently prove him a great captain, and that he knew well enough; but he would be thought an excellent engineer to boot; a quality something different, and not necessary to be expected in him. The elder Dionysius was a very great captain, as it befitted his fortune he should be; but he took very great pains to get a particular reputation by poetry, and yet he was never cut out for a poet.§ A gentleman of the long robe being not long since brought to see a study furnished with all sorts of books, both of his own and all other faculties, took no occasion at all to entertain himself with any of them, but fell very rudely and magisterially to descant upon a barricade placed on the winding stair before the study door, a thing that a hundred captains and common soldiers see every day without taking any notice or offense.

> "Optat ephippia bos piger, optat arare caballus." ‖

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* "Let the sailor content himself with talking of the winds; the herd of his oxen; the soldier of his wounds; the shepherd of his flocks."—An Italian translation of PROPERTIUS, ii. 1, 43.

† Plutarch, Apoth. of the Lacedæmonians, *in voce* Archidamus.

‡ De Bello Gall., iv. 17.

§ Diod. Sic. xv. 6.

‖ "The lazy ox desires a saddle and bridle; the horse wants to plow."—HOR., *Ep.*, i. 14, 43.

By this course a man shall never improve himself, nor arrive at any perfection in anything. He must, therefore, make it his business always to put the architect, the painter, the statuary, every mechanic artisan, upon discourse of their own capacities.

And, to this purpose, in reading histories, which is everybody's subject, I use to consider what kind of men are the authors: if they be persons that profess nothing but mere letters, I, in and from them, principally observe and learn style and language; if physicians, I the rather incline to credit what they report of the temperature of the air, of the health and complexions of princes, of wounds and diseases; if lawyers, we are from them to take notice of the controversies of rights and wrongs, the establishment of laws and civil government, and the like; if divines, the affairs of the church, ecclesiastical censures, marriages, and dispensations; if courtiers, manners and ceremonies; if soldiers, the things that properly belong to their trade, and, principally, the accounts of the actions and enterprises wherein they were personally engaged; if ambassadors, we are to observe negotiations, intelligences, and practices, and the manner how they are to be carried on.

And this is the reason why (which perhaps I should have lightly passed over in another) I dwelt upon and maturely considered one passage in the history written by Monsieur de Langey,* a man of very great judgment in things of that nature: after having given a narrative of the fine oration Charles V. had made in the Consistory at Rome, and in the presence of the bishop of Mascon and Monsieur du Velly, our ambassadors there, wherein he had mixed several injurious expressions to the dishonor of our nation; and among the rest, "that if his captains and soldiers were not men of another kind of fidelity, resolution, and sufficiency in the knowledge of arms than those of the king, he would immediately go with a rope about his neck and sue to him for mercy" (and it should seem the emperor had really this, or a very little better opinion of our military men, for he afterward, twice or thrice in his life, said the very same thing); as also, that he challenged the king to fight him in his shirt with rapier and poniard in a boat. The said Sieur de Langey, pursuing his history, adds

* Martin du Bellay, in his Memoirs, liv. v.

that the forenamed ambassadors, sending a despatch to the king of these things, concealed the greatest part, and particularly the two last passages. At which I could not but wonder that it should be in the power of an ambassador to dispense with anything which he ought to signify to his master, especially of so great importance as this, coming from the mouth of such a person, and spoken in so great an assembly; and I should rather conceive it had been the servant's duty faithfully to have represented to him the whole thing as it passed, to the end that the liberty of selecting, disposing, judging, and concluding might have remained in him: for either to conceal or to disguise the truth for fear he should take otherwise it than he ought to do, and lest it should prompt him to some extravagant resolution, and, in the meantime, to leave him ignorant of his affairs, should seem, methinks, rather to belong to him who is to give the law than to him who is only to receive it; to him who is in supreme command, and not to him who ought to look upon himself as inferior, not only in authority, but also in prudence and good counsel. I, for my part, would not be so served in my little concerns.

We so willingly slip the collar of command upon any pretense whatever, and are so ready to usurp upon dominion, every one does so naturally aspire to liberty and power, that no utility whatever derived from the wit or valor of those he employs ought to be so dear to a superior as a downright and sincere obedience. To obey more upon the account of understanding than of subjection, is to corrupt the office of command;* insomuch that P. Crassus, the same whom the Romans reputed five times happy, at the time when he was consul in Asia, having sent to a Greek engineer to cause the greater of two masts of ships that he had taken notice of at Athens to be brought to him, to be employed about some engine of battery he had a design to make; the other, presuming upon his own science and sufficiency in those affairs, thought fit to do otherwise than directed, and to bring the less, which, according to the rules of art, was really more proper for the use to which it was designed; but Crassus, though he gave ear to his reasons with great patience, would not, however, take them, how sound or convincing soever, for

* Taken from Aulus Gellius, i. 13.

current pay, but caused him to be well whipped for his pains, valuing the interest of discipline much more than that of the work in hand.

Notwithstanding, we may on the other side consider that so precise and implicit an obedience as this is only due to positive and limited commands. The employment of ambassadors is never so confined, many things in their management of affairs being wholly referred to the absolute sovereignty of their own conduct; they do not simply execute, but also, to their own discretion and wisdom, form and model their master's pleasure. I have, in my time, known men of command checked for having rather obeyed the express words of the king's letters, than the necessity of the affairs they had in hand. Men of understanding do yet, to this day, condemn the custom of the kings of Persia to give their lieutenants and agents so little rein, that, upon the least arising difficulties, they must fain have recourse to their further commands; this delay, in so vast an extent of dominion, having often very much prejudiced their affairs; and Crassus, writing to a man whose profession it was best to understand those things, and pre-acquainting him to what use this mast was designed, did he not seem to consult his advice, and in a manner invite him to interpose his better judgment?

CHAPTER XVII.

OF FEAR.

"Obstupui, steterunt quecomæ et vox faucibus hæsit." *

I AM † NOT so good a naturalist (as they call it) as to

* "I was amazed, my hair stood on end, and my voice stuck in my throat."—VIRGIL, *Æneid*, ii. 774.

† "I am no good naturalist (as they say), and I know not well by what springs feare doth worke in vs but well I wot it is a strange passion; and as Physitians say, there is none doth sooner transport our judgment out of its due seat. Verily, I have seene divers become madde and senselesse for feare yea, and him who is most setled, and best resolved, it is certaine that whilest his fitte continueth it begetteth many strange dazelings, and terrible amazements in him. I omit to speake of the vulgar sort, to whom it sometimes representeth strange apparitions, as their fathers and grandfathers ghosts, risen out of their

discern by what secret springs fear has its motion in us; but, be this as it may, 'tis a strange passion, and such a one that the physicians say there is no other whatever that sooner dethrones our judgment from its proper seat; which is so true, that I myself have seen very many become frantic through fear; and, even in those of the best settled temper, it is most certain that it begets a terrible astonishment and confusion during the fit. I omit the vulgar sort, to whom it one while represents their great-grandsires risen out of their graves in their shrouds, another while hobgoblins, specters, and chimeras; but even among soldiers, a sort of men over whom, of all others, it ought to have the least power, how often has it converted flocks of sheep into armed squadrons, reeds and bullrushes into pikes and lances, friends into enemies, and the French white cross into the red cross of Spain! When Monsieur de Bourbon took Rome,* an ensign who was upon guard at Borgo San Pietro was seized with such a fright upon the first alarm, that he threw himself out at a breach with his colors upon his shoulder, and ran directly upon the enemy, thinking he had retreated toward the inward defenses of the city, and with much ado, seeing Monsieur de Bourbon's people, who thought it had been a sally upon them, draw up to receive him, at last came to himself, and saw his error; and then facing about, he retreated full speed through the same breach by which he had gone out, but not till he had first blindly advanced above three hundred paces into the open field. It did not, however, fall out so well with Captain Julio's ensign, at the time when St. Paul was taken from us by the Count de Bures and Monsieur de Reu, for he, being so astonished with fear as to throw himself, colors and all, out at a porthole, was immediately cut to pieces by the enemy; and in the same siege, it was a very memorable fear that so seized, contracted, and froze up the heart of a gentleman, that he sank down, stone-dead, in the breach, without any manner of wound or hurt at all. The like madness does sometimes push on a whole multitude; for in one of the encounters that Germanicus had with the

graves, and in their winding sheetes: and to others it sometimes sheweth Larves, Hobgoblins, Robbin-good-fellowes, and such other Bug-beares and Chimærres."—FLORIO, 1613, p. 27.

* In 1527.

Germans, two great parties were so amazed with fear that they ran two opposite ways, the one to the same place from which the other had fled.* Sometimes it adds wings to the heels, as in the two first: sometimes it nails them to the ground, and fetters them from moving; as we read of the Emperor Theophilus, who, in a battle he lost against the Agarenes, was so astonished and stupefied that he had no power to fly—"*adeo pavor etiam auxilia formidat*"† till such time as Manuel, one of the principal commanders of his army, having jogged and shaked him so as to rouse him out of his trance, said to him, "Sir, if you will not follow me, I will kill you; for it is better you should lose your life than, by being taken, lose your empire."‡ But fear does then manifest its utmost power when it throws us upon a valiant despair, having before deprived us of all sense both of duty and honor. In the first pitched battle the Romans lost against Hannibal, under the consul Sempronius, a body of ten thousand foot, that had taken fright, seeing no other escape for their cowardice, went and threw themselves headlong upon the great battalion of the enemies, which with marvelous force and fury they charged through and through, and routed with a very great slaughter of the Carthaginians, thus purchasing an ignominious flight at the same price they might have gained a glorious victory.§

The thing in the world I am most afraid of is fear, that passion alone, in the trouble of it, exceeding all other accidents. What affliction could be greater or more just than that of Pompey's friends, who, in his ship, were spectators of that horrible murder? Yet so it was, that the fear of the Egyptian vessels they saw coming to board them, possessed them with so great alarm that it is observed they thought of nothing but calling upon the mariners to make haste, and by force of oars to escape away, till being arrived at Tyre, and delivered from fear, they had leisure to turn their thoughts to the loss of their captain, and to give vent

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* Tacit., Annal., i. 63.

† "So much does fear dread even the means of safety."—QUINT. CURT., ii. 11.

‡ Zonaras, lib. iii.

§ Livy, xxi. 56.

to those tears and lamentations that the other more potent passion had till then suspended.*

"Tum pavor sapientiam omnem mihi ex animo expectorat." †

Such as have been well banged in some skirmish, may yet, all wounded and bloody as they are, be brought on again the next day to charge; but such as have once conceived a good sound fear of the enemy, will never be made so much as to look him in the face. Such as are in immediate fear of losing their estates, of banishment, or of slavery, live in perpetual anguish, and lose all appetite and repose; whereas such as are actually poor, slaves, or exiles, oftimes live as merrily as other folk. And the many people who, impatient of the perpetual alarms of fear, have hanged or drowned themselves, or dashed themselves to pieces, give us sufficiently to understand that fear is more importunate and insupportable than death itself.

The Greeks acknowledge another kind of fear, differing from any we have spoken of yet, that surprises us without any visible cause, by an impulse from heaven, so that whole nations and whole armies have been struck with it. Such a one was that which brought so wonderful a desolation upon Carthage, where nothing was to be heard but affrighted voices and outcries; where the inhabitants were seen to sally out of their houses as to an alarm, and there to charge, wound, and kill one another, as if they had been enemies come to surprise their city. All things were in disorder and fury till, with prayers and sacrifices, they had appeased their gods; ‡ and this is that they call a panic terror.§

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* Cicero, Tusc., iii. 26.

† "Then fear drove out all intelligence from my mind."—ENNIUS, *ap.* CICERO, *Tusc.*, iv. 8.

‡ Diod. Sic., xv. 7.

§ Ibid.; Plutarch on Isis and Osiris, c. 8.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THAT MEN ARE NOT TO JUDGE OF OUR HAPPINESS TILL AFTER DEATH.*

"Scilicet ultima semper
Exspectanda dies homini est; dicique beatus
Ante obitum nemo supremaque funera debet."†

THE very children know the story of King Crœsus to this purpose, who being taken prisoner by Cyrus, and by him condemned to die, as he was going to execution cried out, "O Solon, Solon!" which being presently reported to Cyrus, and he sending to inquire of him what it meant, Crœsus gave him to understand that he now found the teaching Solon had formerly given him true to his cost, which was, "That men, however fortune may smile upon them, could never be said to be happy till they had been seen to pass over the last day of their lives," by reason of the uncertainty and mutability of human things, which, upon very light and trivial occasions, are subject to be totally changed into a quite contrary condition. And so it was that Agesilaus made answer to one who was saying what a happy young man the king of Persia was, to come so young to so mighty a kingdom; "'Tis true," said he, "but neither was Priam unhappy at his years." ‡ In a short time, kings of Macedon, successors to that mighty Alexander, became joiners and scriveners at Rome; a tyrant of Sicily, a pedant at Corinth; a conquerer of one-half of the world and general of so many armies, a miserable suppliant to the rascally officers of a king of Egypt: so much did the prolongation of five or six months of life cost the great Pompey; and, in our fathers' days, Ludovico Sforza, the tenth duke of Milan, whom all Italy had so long truckled under, was seen to die a wretched prisoner at Loches, but not till he had lived ten years in captivity,§

* Charron has borrowed with unusual liberality from this and the succeeding chapter. See Nodier, Questions, p. 206.

† "We should all look forward to our last day: no one can be called happy till he is dead and buried."—OVID, *Met.*, iii. 135.

‡ Plutarch, Apoth. of the Lacedæmonians.

§ He was imprisoned by Louis XI. in an iron cage.

which was the worst part of his fortune. The fairest of all queens,* widow to the greatest king in Europe, did she not come to die by the hand of an executioner? Unworthy and barbarous cruelty! And a thousand more examples there are of the same kind; for, it seems, that as storms and tempests have a malice against the proud and overtowering heights of our lofty buildings, there are also spirits above that are envious of the grandeurs here below.

> "Usque adeo res humanas vis abdita quædam
> Obterit, et pulchros fasces, sævasque secures
> Proculcare, ac ludibrio sibi habere videtur." †

And it should seem, also, that Fortune sometimes lies in wait to surprise the last hour of our lives, to show the power she has, in a moment, to overthrow what she was so many years in building, making us cry out with Laberius—

> "Nimirum hac die
> Una plus vixi mihi, quam vivendum fuit." ‡

And, in this sense, this good advice of Solon may reasonably be taken; but he, being a philosopher (with which sort of men the favors and disgraces of Fortune stand for nothing, either to the making a man happy or unhappy, and with whom grandeurs and powers are accidents of a quality almost indifferent) I am apt to think that he had some further aim, and that his meaning was, that the very felicity of life itself, which depends upon the tranquillity and contentment of a well-descended spirit, and the resolution and assurance of a well-ordered soul, ought never to be attributed to any man till he has first been seen to play the last, and doubtless, the hardest act of his part. There may be disguise and dissimulation in all the rest: where these fine philosophical discourses are only put on, and where accident, not touching us to the quick, give us leisure to maintain the same gravity of aspect; but, in this last scene of death, there is no more counterfeiting: we

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* Mary, Queen of Scots.

† "So true it is, that some occult power upsets human affairs, the glittering fasces and the cruel axes spurns under foot, and seems to makes sport of them."—LUCRETIUS, v. 1231.

‡ "I have lived longer by this one day than I should have done." —MACROBIUS, ii. 7.

must speak out plain, and discover what there is of pure and clean in the bottom of the pot.

> "Nam veræ voces tum demum pectore ab imo
> Ejiciuntur; et eriptur persona, manet res." *

Wherefore, at this last, all the other actions of our life ought to be tried and sifted; 'tis the master-day, 'tis the day that is judge of all the rest, "'tis the day," says one of the ancients,† "that must be judge of all my foregoing years." To death do I refer the assay of the fruit of all my studies: we shall then see whether my discourses came only from my mouth or from my heart. I have seen many by their death give a good or an ill repute to their whole life. Scipio, the father-in-law of Pompey, in dying, well wiped away the ill opinion that till then every one had conceived of him.‡ Epaminondas being asked which of the three he had in greatest esteem, Chabrias, Iphicrates, or himself, "You must first see us die," said he, "before that question can be resolved." § And, in truth, he would infinitely wrong that man who would weigh him without the honor and grandeur of his end.

God has ordered all things as it has best pleased Him; but I have, in my time, seen three of the most execrable persons that ever I knew in all manner of abominable living, and the most infamous to boot, who all died a very regular death, and in all circumstances composed, even to perfection. There are brave and fortunate deaths: I have seen death cut the thread of the progress of a prodigious advancement, and in the height and flower of its increase, of a certain person,‖ with so glorious an end that, in my opinion, his ambitious and generous designs had nothing in them so high and great as their interruption. He arrived, without completing his course, at the place to which his ambition aimed, with greater glory than he could either have hoped or desired, anticipating by his fall the name

* "Then at last truth issues from the heart; the visor's gone, the man remains."—LUCRETIUS, iii. 57.

† Seneca, Ep. 102.

‡ Seneca, Ep., 24.

§ Plutarch, Apoth.

‖ Montaigne, doubtless, refers to his friend Etienne de la Boetie, at whose death in 1563 he was present.

and power to which he aspired in perfecting his career. In the judgment I make of another man's life, I always observe how he carried himself at his death; and the principal concern I have for my own is that I may die well—that is, patiently and tranquilly.

CHAPTER XIX.

THAT TO STUDY PHILOSOPHY IS TO LEARN TO DIE.

CICERO says* "that to study philosophy is nothing but to prepare one's self to die." The reason of which is, because study and contemplation do in some sort withdraw from us our soul, and employ it separately from the body, which is a kind of apprenticeship and a resemblance of death; or else, because all the wisdom and reasoning in the world do in the end conclude in this point, to teach us not to fear to die. And to say the truth, either our reason mocks us, or it ought to have no other aim but our contentment only, nor to endeavor anything but, in sum, to make us live well, and, as the Holy Scripture says,† at our ease. All the opinions of the world agree in this, that pleasure is our end, though we make use of divers means to attain it: they would, otherwise, be rejected at the first motion; for who would give ear to him that should propose affliction and misery for his end? The controversies and disputes of the philosophical sects upon this point are merely verbal—"*Transcurramus solertissimas nugas*"‡—there is more in them of opposition and obstinacy than is consistent with so sacred a profession; but whatsoever personage a man takes upon himself to perform, he ever mixes his own part with it.

Let the philosphers say what they will, the main thing at which we all aim, even in virtue itself, is pleasure. It amuses me to rattle in their ears this word, which they so nauseate to hear; and if it signify some supreme pleasure

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* Tusc., i. 31.

† Eccles. iii. 12, where, however, the exact text is, "For a man to rejoice and to do good in his life."

‡ "Let us skip over those subtle trifles."—SENECA, *Ep.* 117.

and excessive contentment, it is more due to the assistance of virtue than to any other assistance whatever. This pleasure, for being more gay, more sinewy, more robust, and more manly, is only the more seriously voluptuous, and we ought to give it the name of pleasure, as that which is more favorable, gentle, and natural, and not that of vigor, from which we have denominated it. The other, and meaner pleasure, if it could deserve this fair name, it ought to be by way of competition, and not of privilege. I find it less exempt from traverses and inconveniences than virtue itself; and, besides that the enjoyment is more momentary, fluid, and frail, it has its watchings, fasts, and labors, its sweat and its blood; and, moreover, has particular to itself so many several sorts of sharp and wounding passions, and so dull a satiety attending it, as equal it to the severest penance. And we mistake if we think that these incommodities serve it for a spur and a seasoning to its sweetness (as in nature one contrary is quickened by another), or say, when we come to virtue, that like consequences and difficulties overwhelm and render it austere and inaccessible; whereas, much more aptly than in voluptuousness, they ennoble, sharpen, and heighten the perfect and divine pleasure they procure us. He renders himself unworthy of it who will counterpoise its cost with its fruit, and neither understands the blessing nor how to use it. Those who preach to us that the quest of it is craggy, difficult, and painful, but its fruition pleasant, what do they mean by that but to tell us that is always unpleasing? For what human means will ever attain its enjoyment? The most perfect have been fain to content themselves to aspire unto it, and to approach it only, without ever possessing it. But they are deceived, seeing that of all the pleasures we know, the very pursuit is pleasant. The attempt ever relishes of the quality of the thing to which it is directed, for it is a good part of, and consubstantial with, the effect. The felicity and beatitude that glitters in Virtue, shines throughout all her appurtenances and avenues, even to the first entry and utmost limits.

Now, of all the benefits that virtue confers upon us, the contempt of death is one of the greatest, as the means that accommodates human life with a soft and easy tranquillity, and gives us a pure and pleasant taste of living, without which all other pleasure would be extinct. Which is the

reason why all the rules center and concur in this one article. And although they all in like manner, with common accord, teach us also to despise pain, poverty, and the other accidents to which human life is subject, it is not, nevertheless, with the same solicitude, as well by reason these accidents are not of so great necessity, the greater part of mankind passing over their whole lives without ever knowing what poverty is, and some without sorrow or sickness, as Xenophilus the musician, who lived a hundred and six years in perfect and continual health; as also because, at the worst, death can, whenever we please, cut short and put an end to all other inconveniences. But as to death, it is inevitable:

> "Omnes eodem cogimur; omnium
> Versatur urna serius ocius
> Sors exitura, et nos in æternum
> Exilium impositura cymbæ," *

and, consequently, if it frights us, 'tis a perpetual torment, for which there is no sort of consolation. There is no way by which it may not reach us. We may continually turn our heads this way and that, as in a suspected country, "*quæ, quasi saxum Tantalo, semper impendet.*" † Our courts of justice often send back condemned criminals to be executed upon the place where the crime was committed; but, carry them to fine houses by the way, prepare for them the best entertainment you can—

> "Non Siculæ dapes
> Dulcem elaborabunt saporem:
> Non avium citharæque cantus
> Somnum reducent." ‡

Do you think they can relish it? and that the fatal end of their journey being continually before their eyes, would not alter and deprave their palate from tasting these regalios?

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* "We are all bound one voyage; the lot of all, sooner or later, is to come out of the urn. All must to eternal exile sail away."—HOR., *Od.*, ii. 3, 25.

† "Ever, like Tantalus' stone, it hangs over us."—CICERO, *De Finib.*, i. 18.

‡ "Sicilian dainties will not tickle their palates, nor the melody of birds or harps bring back sleep."—HOR., *Od.*, iii. 1, 18.

"Audit iter, numeratque dies, spatioque viarum
Metitur vitam; torquetur peste futura." *

The end of our race is death; 'tis the necessary object of our aim, which, if it fright us, how is it possible to advance a step without a fit of ague? The remedy the vulgar use is not to think on't; but from what brutish stupidity can they derive so gross a blindness? They must bridle the ass by the tail.

"Qui capite ipse suo instituit vestigia retro," †

'tis no wonder if he be often trapped in the pitfall. They affright people with the very mention of death, and many cross themselves, as it were the name of the devil. And because the making a man's will is in reference to dying, not a man will be persuaded to take a pen in hand to that purpose till the physician has passed sentence upon him, and totally given him over, and then between grief and terror, God knows in how fit a condition of understanding he is to do it.

The Romans, by reason that this poor syllable *death* sounded so harshly to their ears, and seemed so ominous, found out a way to soften and spin it out by a periphrasis, and instead of pronouncing such a one is dead, said, "Such a one has lived," or "Such a one has ceased to live;" ‡ for, provided there was any mention of life in the case, though past, it carried yet some sound of consolation. And from them it is that we have borrowed our expression, "The late monsieur such and such a one." Peradventure, as the saying is, the term we have lived is worth our money. I was born between eleven and twelve o'clock in the forenoon the last day of February, 1533, according to our computation, beginning the year the 1st of January,§ and it is

* "He considers the route, computes the time of traveling, measuring his life by the length of the journey, and torments himself by thinking of the blow to come."—CLAUDIANUS, in *Ruf.*, ii. 137.

† "Who in his folly seeks to advance backwards."—LUCRETIUS, iv. 474.

‡ Plutarch, Life of Cicero, c. 22.

§ This was in virtue of an ordinance of Charles IX. in 1563. Previously the year commenced at Easter, so that the 1st January, 1563 became the first day of the year 1564.

now just fifteen days since I was complete nine-and-thirty years old ; I make account to live, at least, as many more.* In the meantime, to trouble a man's self with the thought of a thing so far off, were folly. But what ? Young and old die upon the same terms; no one departs out of life otherwise than if he had but just before entered into it; neither is any man so old and decrepit, who, having heard of Methuselah, does not think he has yet twenty years good to come. Fool that thou art, who has assured unto thee the term of life ? Thou dependest upon physicians' tales : rather consult effects and experience. According to the common course of things, 'tis long since that thou hast lived by extraordinary favor : thou hast already outlived the ordinary term of life. And that is so, reckon up thy acquaintance, how many more have died before they arrived at thy age than have attained unto it ; and of those who have ennobled their lives by their renown, take but an account, and I dare lay a wager thou wilt find more who have died before than after five-and-thirty years of age. It is full both of reason and piety too, to take example by the humanity of Jesus Christ Himself ; now, He ended His life at three-and-thirty years. The greatest man, that was no more than a man, Alexander, died also at the same age. How many several ways has death to surprise us ?

> "Quid quisque, vitet, nunquam homini satis
> Cautum est in horas." †

To omit fevers and pleurisies, who would ever have imagined that a duke of Brittany‡ should be pressed to death in a crowd as that duke was, at the entry of Pope Clement, my neighbor, into Lyons ? § Hast thou not seen one of our kings‖ killed at a tilting, and did not one of his ancestors die by the jostle of a hog ?¶ Æschylus,

* Montaigne did not realize his expectation, as he died in 1592.

† "Be as cautious as he may, man can never foresee the danger that may at any hour befall him."—HOR., *O.* ii. 13.

‡ John II. died 1305.

§ This neighbor, Clement V., was Bertrand de Got, Archbishop of Bordeaux.

‖ Henry II., killed in a tournament, July 10, 1559.

¶ Philip, eldest son of Louis le Gros.

threatened with the fall of a house, was to much purpose circumspect to avoid that danger, seeing that he was knocked on the head by a tortoise falling out of an eagle's talons in the air.* Another was choked with a grape-stone; † an emperor killed with the scratch of a comb in combing his head. Æmilius Lepidus with a stumble at his own threshold, and Aufidius‡ with a jostle against the door as he entered the council-chamber. And between the very thighs of woman, Cornelius Gallus the prætor; Tigillinus, captain of the watch at Rome; Ludovico, son of Guido di Gonzaga, Marquis of Mantua; and (of worse example) Speusippus, a Platonic philosopher,§ and one of our popes. The poor judge Bebius gave adjournment in a case for eight days, but he himself meanwhile, was condemned by death, and his own stay of life expired. While Caius Julius, the physician, was anointing the eyes of a patient, death closed his own; and, if I may bring in an example of my own blood, a brother of mine, Captain St. Martin, a young man, three-and-twenty years old, who had already given sufficient testimony of his valor, playing a match at tennis, received a blow of a ball a little above his right ear, which, as it gave no manner of sign of wound or contusion, he took no notice of it, nor so much as sat down to repose himself, but, nevertheless, died within five or six hours after, of an apoplexy occasioned by that blow.

These so frequent and common examples passing every day before our eyes, how is it possible a man should disengage himself from the thought of death, or avoid fancying that it has us, every moment, by the throat? What matter is it, you will say, which way it comes to pass, provided a man does not terrify himself with the expectation? For my part, I am of this mind, and if a man could by any means avoid it, though by creeping under a calf's skin, I am one that should not be ashamed of the shift; all I aim at is, to pass my time at my ease, and the recreations that will most contribute to it, I take hold of, as little glorious and exemplary as you will.

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* Val. Max., ix. 12, ext. 2.

† Idem, ibid., ext. 8.

‡ Pliny, Nat. Hist., vii. 33.

§ As to Speusippus, Diogenes Laertius (iv. 9) says he killed himself, tired of old age and infirmity.

"Prætulerim . . . delirus inersque videri,
Dum mea delectent mala me, vel denique fallant,
Quam sapere, et ringi." *

But 'tis folly to think of doing anything that way. They go, they come, they gallop and dance, and not a word of death. All this is very fine: but withal, when it comes either to themselves, their wives, their children, or friends, surprising them at unawares and unprepared, then what torment, what outcries, what madness and despair! Did you ever see anything so subdued, so changed, and so confounded? A man must, therefore, make more early provision for it; and this brutish negligence, could it possibly lodge in the brain of any man of sense (which I think utterly impossible), sells us its merchandise too dear. Were it an enemy that could be avoided, I would then advise to borrow arms even of cowardice itself; but seeing it is not, and that it will catch you as well flying and playing the poltroon, as standing to't like an honest man—

"Nempe et fugacem persequitur virum,
Nec parcit imbellis juventæ
Poplitibus timidoque tergo." †

And seeing that no temper of arms is of proof to secure us—

"Ille licet ferro cautus se condat, et ære,
Mors tamen inclusum protrahet inde caput" ‡

—let us learn bravely to stand our ground, and fight him. And to begin to deprive him of the greatest advantage he has over us, let us take a way quite contrary to the common course. Let us disarm him of his novelty and strangeness, let us converse and be familiar with him, and have nothing so frequent in our thoughts as death. Upon all occasions represent him to our imagination in his every shape; at the stumbling of a horse, at the falling of a tile, at the least prick with a pin, let us presently consider, and

* "I had rather seem mad or a sluggard, so that my defects are agreeable to myself, or that I am not painfully conscious of them, than be wise and captious."—HOR., *Ep.*, ii. 2, 126.

† "He pursues the flying poltroon, nor spares the hamstrings of the unwarlike youth who turns his back."—Idem, ibid., iii. 2, 14.

‡ "Let him hide beneath iron or brass in his fear, death will pull his head out of his armor."—PROPERTIUS, iii. 18.

say to ourselves, "Well, and what if it had been death itself?" and, thereupon, let us encourage and fortify ourselves. Let us evermore, amidst our jollity and feasting, set the remembrance of our frail condition before our eyes, never suffering ourselves to be so far transported with our delights, but that we have some intervals of reflecting upon, and considering how many several ways this jollity of ours tends to death, and with how many dangers it threatens it. The Egyptians were wont to do after this manner, who in the height of their feasting and mirth, caused a dried skeleton of a man to be brought into the room to serve for a memento to their guests.

"Omnem crede diem tibi diluxisse supremum:
Grata superveniet, quæ non sperabitur, hora." *

Where death waits for us is uncertain; let us look for him everywhere. The premeditation of death is the premeditation of liberty; he who has learned to die, has unlearned to serve. There is nothing of evil in life, for him who rightly comprehends that the privation of life is no evil: to know how to die, delivers us from all subjection and constraint. Paulus Æmilius answered him whom the miserable king of Macedon, his prisoner, sent to entreat him that he would not lead him in his triumph, "Let him make that request to himself." †

In truth, in all things, if nature do not help a little, it is very hard for art and industry to perform anything to purpose. I am in my own nature not melancholic, but meditative; and there is nothing I have more continually entertained myself withal than imaginations of death, even in the most wanton time of my age:

"Jucundum quum ætas florida ver ageret." ‡

In the company of ladies, and at games, some have perhaps thought me possessed with some jealousy, or the uncertainty of some hope, while I was entertaining myself

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*"Think each day, when past, is thy last: the next day, as unexpected, will be the more welcome."—HOR., *Ep.*, i. 4, 13.

† Plutarch, Life of Paulus Æmilius, c. 17; Cicero, Tusc., v. 40.

‡ "When my florid age rejoiced in pleasant spring."—CATULLUS, lxviii.

with the remembrance of some one, surprised, a few days before, with a burning fever of which he died, returning from an entertainment like this, with his head full of idle fancies of love and jollity, as mine was then, and that, for aught I knew, the same destiny was attending me.

"Jam fuerit, nec post unquam revocare licebit." *

Yet did not this thought wrinkle my forehead any more than any other. It is impossible but we must feel a sting in such imaginations as these, at first; but with often turning and re-turning them in one's mind, they, at last, become so familiar as to be no trouble at all; otherwise, I, for my part, should be in a perpetual fright and frenzy; for never man was so distrustful of his life, never man so uncertain as to its duration. Neither health, which I have hitherto ever enjoyed very strong and vigorous, and very seldom interrupted, does prolong, nor sickness contract my hopes. Every minute, methinks, I am escaping, and it eternally runs in my mind, that what may be done to-morrow, may be done to-day. Hazards and dangers do, in truth, little or nothing hasten our end; and if we consider how many thousands more remain and hang over our heads, besides the accident that immediately threatens us, we shall find that the sound and the sick, those that are abroad at sea, and those that sit by the fire, those who are engaged in battle, and those who sit idle at home, are the one as near it as the other. "*Nemo altero fragilior est: nemo in crastinum sui certior.*" † For anything I have to do before I die, the longest leisure would appear too short, were it but an hour's business I had to do.

A friend of mine the other day turning over my tablets, found therein a memorandum of something I would have done after my decease, whereupon I told him, as it was really true, that though I was no more than a league's distance only from my own house, and merry and well, yet when that thing came into my head, I made haste to write it down there, because I was not certain to live till I came home. As a man that am eternally brooding over my own

* "Presently the present will have gone, never to be recalled." —LUCRETIUS, iii. 928.

† "No man is more fragile than another: no man more certain than another of to-morrow."—SENECA, *Ep.*, 91.

thoughts, and confine them to my own particular concerns, I am at all hours as well prepared as I am ever like to be, and death, whenever he shall come, can bring nothing along with him I did not expect long before. We should always, as near as we can, be booted and spurred, and ready to go, and, above all things, take care, at that time, to have no business with any one but one's self:

> "Quid brevi fortes jaculamur ævo
> Multa?" *

for we shall there find work enough to do, without any need of addition. One man complains, more than of death, that he is thereby prevented of a glorious victory; another, that he must die before he has married his daughter, or educated his children; a third seems only troubled that he must lose the society of his wife; a fourth, the conversation of his son, as the principal comfort and concern of his being. For my part, I am, thanks be to God, at this instant in such a condition, that I am ready to dislodge, whenever it shall please Him, without regret for anything whatsoever. I disengage myself throughout from all worldly relations; my leave is soon taken of all but myself. Never did any one prepare to bid adieu to the world more absolutely and unreservedly, and to shake hands with all manner of interest in it, than I expect to do. The deadest deaths are the best.

> "'Miser, O miser,' aiunt, 'omnia ademit
> Una dies infesta mihi tot præmia vitæ.'" †

And the builder,

> "'Manent,' says he, 'opera interrupta, minæque
> Murorum ingentes.'" ‡

A man must design nothing that will require so much time to the finishing, or, at least, with no such passionate desire to see it brought to perfection. We are born to action.

> "Quum moriar medium solvar et inter opus." §

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* "Why, for so short a life, tease ourselves with so many projects?"—HOR., *Od.*, ii. 16, 17.

† "'Wretch that I am,' they cry, 'one fatal day has deprived me of so many joys of life.'"—LUCRETIUS, iii. 911.

‡ "The works remain incomplete, the tall pinnacles of the walls unmade."—*Æneid*, iv. 88, where *manent* is *pendent*.

§ "When I shall die, let it be doing that I had designed."—OVID, *Amor.*, ii. 10, 36.

I would always have a man to be doing, and, as much as in him lies, to extend and spin out the offices of life; and then let death take me planting my cabbages, indifferent to him, and still less of my garden's not being finished. I saw one die, who, at his last gasp, complained of nothing so much as that destiny was about to cut the thread of a chronicle history he was then compiling, when he was gone no farther than the fifteenth or sixteenth of our kings.

> "Illud in his rebus non addunt, nec tibi earum
> Jam desiderium rerum super insidit una."*

We are to discharge ourselves from these vulgar and hurtful humors. To this purpose it was that men first appointed the places of sepulture adjoining the churches, and in the most frequented places of the city, to accustom, says Lycurgus,† the common people, women, and children, that they should not be startled at the sight of a corpse, and to the end, that the continual spectacle of bones, graves, and funeral obsequies should put us in mind of our frail condition.

> "Quin etiam exhilarare viris convivia cæde
> Mos olim, et miscere epulis spectacula dira
> Certantum ferro, sæpe et super ipsa cadentum
> Pocula, respersis non parco sanguine mensis."‡

And as the Egyptains after their feasts were wont to present the company with a great image of death, by one that cried out to them, "Drink and be merry, for such shalt thou be when thou art dead;" so it is my custom to have death not only in my imagination, but continually in my mouth. Neither is there anything of which I am so inquisitive, and delight to inform myself, as the manner of men's deaths, their words, looks, and bearing; nor any places in history I am so intent upon; and it is manifest enough, by my crowding in examples of this kind, that I have a particular fancy for that subject. If I were a writer

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* "They do not add, that dying, we have no longer a desire to possess things."—LUCRETIUS, iii. 913.

† Plutarch, in Vita.

‡ "It was formerly the custom to enliven banquets with slaughter, and to combine with the repast the dire spectacle of men contending with the sword, the dying in many cases falling upon the cups, and covering the tables with blood."—SILIUS ITALICUS, xi. 51.

of books, I would compile a register, with a comment, of the various deaths of men: he who should teach men to die, would at the same time teach them to live. Dicearchus made one, to which he gave that title; but it was designed for another and less profitable end. *

Peradventure, some one may object, that the pain and terror of dying so infinitely exceed all manner of imagination, that the best fencer will be quite out of his play when it comes to the push. Let them say what they will: to premeditate is doubtless a very great advantage; and besides, is it nothing to go so far, at least, without disturbance or alteration? Moreover, nature herself assists and encourages us: if the death be sudden and violent, we have not leisure to fear; if otherwise, I perceive that as I engage further in my disease, I naturally enter into a certain loathing and disdain of life. I find I have much more ado to digest this resolution of dying, when I am well in health, than when languishing of a fever; and by how much I have less to do with the commodities of life, by reason that I begin to lose the use and pleasure of them, by so much I look upon death with less terror. Which makes me hope, that the farther I remove from the first, and the nearer I approach to the latter, I shall the more easily exchange the one for the other. And, as I have experienced in other occurrences, that, as Cæsar says, † things often appear greater to us at a distance than near at hand, I have found, that being well, I have had maladies in much greater horror than when really afflicted with them. The vigor wherein I now am, the cheerfulness and delight wherein I now live, make the contrary estate appear in so great a disproportion to my present condition, that, by imagination, I magnify those inconveniences by one-half, and apprehend them to be much more troublesome, than I find them really to be, when they lie the most heavy upon me; I hope to find death the same.

Let us but observe in the ordinary changes and declinations we daily suffer, how nature deprives us of the light and sense of our bodily decay. What remains to an old man of the vigor of his youth and better days?

"Heu! senibus vitæ portio quanta manet." ‡

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* Cicero, De Offic., ii. 5.

† De Bello Gall., vii. 84.

‡ "Alas, to old men how small a portion of life is left!"—MAXIMIAN, *vel* PSEUDO-GALLUS, i. 16.

Cæsar, to an old weather-beaten soldier of his guards, who came to ask him leave that he might kill himself, taking notice of his withered body and decrepit motion, pleasantly answered, "Thou fanciest, then, that thou art yet alive." * Should a man fall into this condition on the sudden, I do not think humanity capable of enduring such a change: but nature, leading us by the hand, an easy and, as it were, an insensible pace step by step conducts us to that miserable state, and by that means makes it familiar to us, so that we are insensible of the stroke when our youth dies in us, though it be really a harder death than the final dissolution of a languishing body, than the death of old age; forasmuch as the fall is not so great from an uneasy being to none at all, as it is from a sprightly and flourishing being to one that is troublesome and painful. The body, bent and bowed, has less force to support a burden; and it is the same with the soul, and therefore it is, that we are to raise her up firm and erect against the power of this adversary. For, as it is impossible she should ever be at rest, while she stands in fear of it; so, if she once can assure herself, she may boast (which is a thing as it were surpassing humàn condition) that it is impossible that disquiet, anxiety, or fear, or any other disturbance, should inhabit or have any place in her.

"Non vultus instantis tyranni
Mente quati solida, neque Auster
Dux inquieti turbidus Adriæ,
Nec fulminantis magna Jovis manus." †

She is then become sovereign of all her lusts and passions, mistress of necessity, shame, poverty, and all the other injuries of fortune. Let us, therefore, as many of us as can, get this advantage; 'tis the true and sovereign liberty here on earth, that fortifies us wherewithal to defy violence and injustice, and to contemn prisons and chains.

"In manicis et
Compedibus sævo te sub custode tenebo.

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* Seneca, Ep., 77.

† "Not the menacing look of a tyrant shakes her well-settled soul, nor turbulent Auster, the prince of the stormy Adriatic, nor yet the strong hand of thundering Jove, such a temper moves."—HOR., *Od.*, iii. 3.

"Ipse Deus, simul atque volam, me solvet. Opinor,
Hoc sentit; moriar, mors ultima linea rerum est." *

Our very religion itself has no surer human foundation than the contempt of death. Not only the argument of reason invites us to it—for why should we fear to lose a thing, which being lost cannot be lamented?—but, also, seeing we are threatened by so many sorts of death, is it not infinitely worse eternally to fear them all, than once to undergo one of them? And what matters it, when it shall happen, since it is inevitable? To him that told Socrates, "The thirty tyrants have sentenced thee to death;" "And nature them," said he.† What a ridiculous thing it is to trouble ourselves about taking the only step that is to deliver us from all trouble! As our birth brought us the birth of all things, so in our death is the death of all things included. And therefore to lament that we shall not be alive a hundred years hence, is the same folly as to be sorry we were not alive a hundred years ago. Death is the beginning of another life. So did we weep, and so much it cost us to enter into this, and so did we put off our former veil in entering into it. Nothing can be a grievance that is but once. Is it reasonable so long to fear a thing that will so soon be despatched? Long life, and short, are by death made all one; for there is no long, nor short, to things that are no more. Aristotle tells us that there are certain little beasts upon the banks of the river Hypanis, that never live above a day: they which die at eight of the clock in the morning, die in their youth, and those that die at five in the evening, in their decrepitude:‡ which of us would not laugh to see this moment of continuance put into the consideration of weal or woe? The most and the least, of ours, in comparison with eternity, or yet with the duration of mountains, rivers, stars, trees, and even of some animals, is no less ridiculous.§

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* "I will keep thee in fetters and chains, in custody of a surly keeper. A god will, when I ask him, set me free. This god I think is death. Death is the term of all things."—HOR., *Ep.*, i 16, 76.

† "Socrates was not condemed to death by the thirty tyrants, but by the Athenians.—DIOEGNES LAERTIUS, ii. 35.

‡ Cicero, Tusc., i. 39.

§ Seneca, Consol. ad Marciam, c. 20.

But nature compels us to it. "Go out of this world," says she, "as you entered into it; the same pass you made from death to life, without passion or fear, the same, after the same manner, repeat from life to death. Your death is a part of the order of the universe, 'tis a part of the life of the world.

"'Inter se mortales mutua vivunt
. . . . . .
Et, quasi cursores, vitai lampada tradunt.'*

"Shall I exchange for you this beautiful contexture of things? 'Tis the condition of your creation; death is a part of you, and while you endeavor to evade it, you evade yourselves. This very being of yours that you now enjoy is equally divided between life and death. The day of your birth is one day's advance toward the grave.

"'Prima, quæ vitam dedit, hora carpsit.'†
"'Nascentes morimus, finisque ab origine pendet.'‡

"All the whole time you live, you purloin from life, and live at the expense of life itself. The perpetual work of your life is but to lay the foundation of death. You are in death, while you are in life, because you still are after death, when you are no more alive; or, if you had rather have it so, you are dead after life, but dying all the while you live; and death handles the dying much more rudely than the dead, and more sensibly and essentially. If you have made your profit of life, you have had enough of it; go your way satisfied.

"'Cur non ut plenus vitæ conviva recedis?'§

"If you have not known how to make the best use of it, if it was unprofitable to you, what need you to care to lose it, to what end would you desire longer to keep it?

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* "Mortals, amongst themselves, live by turns, and, like the runners in the games, give up the lamp, when they have won the race, to the next comer.—LUCRETIUS, ii. 75, 78.

† "The first hour that gave us life, took away also an hour."—SENECA, *Her. Fur.*, 3 Chor. 874.

‡ "As we are born, we die, and the end commences with the beginning."—MANILIUS, *Ast.*, iv. 16.

§ "Why not depart from life, as a sated guest from a feast?"—LUCRETIUS, iii. 951.

"'Cur amplius addere quæris,
Rursum quod pereat malé, èt ingratum occidat omne?'*

"Life in itself is neither good nor evil; it is the scene of good or evil, as you make it. And, if you have lived a day, you have seen all: one day is equal and like to all other days. There is no other light, no other shade; this very sun, this moon, these very stars, this very order and disposition of things, is the same your ancestors enjoyed, and that shall also entertain your posterity.

"'Non alium videre patres, aliumve nepotes
Aspicient.'†

"And, come the worst that can come, the distribution and variety of all the acts of my comedy are performed in a year. If you have observed the revolution of my four seasons, they comprehend the infancy, the youth, the virility, and the old age of the world: the year has played his part, and knows no other art but to begin again; it will always be the same thing.

"'Versamur ibidem, atque insumus usque.'‡
"'Atque in se sua per vestigia volvitur annus.'§

"I am not prepared to create for you any new recreations.

"'Nam tibi præterea quod machiner, inveniamque
Quod placeat, nihil est; eadem sunt omnia semper.'‖

"Give place to others, as others have given place to you. Equality is the soul of equity. Who can complain of being comprehended in the same destiny, wherein all are involved. Besides, live as long as you can, you shall by that nothing shorten the space you are to be dead; 'tis all to no

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* "Why seek to add longer life, merely to renew ill-spent time, and be again tormented?"—LUCRETIUS, iii. 914.

† "Your grandsires saw no other things; nor will your posterity."—MANILIUS, i. 529.

‡ "We are even turning in the same circle, ever therein confined."—LUCRETIUS, iii. 1093.

§ "The year is even turning round in the same footsteps."—VIRGIL, *Georg.*, ii. 402.

‖ "I can devise, nor find anything else to please you: 'tis the same thing over and over again."—LUCRETIUS, iii. 957.

purpose; you shall be every whit as long in the condition you so much fear, as if you had died at nurse.

> "'Licet quot vis viven do vincere secla,
> Mors æterna tamen nihilominus illa manebit.'*

"And yet I will place you in such a condition as you shall have no reason to be displeased.

> "'In vera nescis nullum fore morte alium te,
> Qui possit vivus tibi te lugere peremptum,
> Stansque jacentem.'†

"Nor shall you so much as wish for the life you are so concerned about.

> "'Nec sibi enim quisquam tum se vitamque requirit.‡
>
> . . . . . .
>
> Nec desiderium nostri nos afficit ullum.'§

"Death is less to be feared than nothing, if there could be anything less than nothing.

> "'Multo . . . mortem minus ad nos esse putandum,‖
> Si minus esse potest, quam quod nihil esse videmus.'

"Neither can it any way concern you, whether you are living or dead: living, by reason that you are still in being; dead because you are no more. Moreover, no one dies before his hour: the time you leave behind was no more yours, than that was lapsed and gone before you came into the world; nor does it any more concern you.

> "'Respice enim, quam nil ad nos anteacta vetustas
> Temporis æterni fuerit."¶

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* "Live triumphing over as many ages as you will, death still will remain eternal."—LUCRETIUS, iii. 1103.

† "Know you not that, when dead, there can be no other living self to lament you dead, standing on your grave."—*Idem, ibid.*, 898.

‡ "No one then troubles himself about himself, or about life."—*Idem, ibid.*, 932.

§ "Nor has any regret about himself."—*Idem, ibid.*, 935.

‖ "Death would seem much less to us—if indeed there could be less in that which we see to be nothing."—*Idem, ibid.*, 939.

¶ "Consider, how as nothing to us is the old age of times past."—LUCRETIUS, iii. 985.

"Wherever your life ends, it is all there. The utility of living consists not in the length of days, but in the use of time; a man may have lived long, and yet lived but a little. Make use of time while it is present with you. It depends upon your will, and not upon the number of days, to have a sufficient length of life. Is it possible you can imagine never to arrive at the place toward which you are continually going? and yet there is no journey but hath its end. And, if company will make it more pleasant or more easy to you, does not all the world go the self-same way?

"'Omnia te, vitâ perfuncta, sequentur.'*

"Does not all the world dance the same brawl that you do? Is there anything that does not grow old, as well as you? A thousand men, a thousand animals, a thousand other creatures, die at the same moment that you die:

"'Nam nox nulla diem, neque noctem aurora sequuta est,
Quæ non audierit mistos vagitibus ægris
Ploratus, mortis comites et funerisiatri.'†

"To what end should you endeavor to draw back, if there be no possibility to evade it? you have seen examples enough of those who have been well pleased to die, as thereby delivered from heavy miseries; but have you ever found any who have been dissatisfied with dying? It must, therefore, needs be very foolish to condemn a thing you have neither experimented in your own person, nor by that of any other. Why dost thou complain of me and of destiny? Do we do thee any wrong? Is it for thee to govern us, or for us to govern thee? Though, peradventure thy age may not be accomplished, yet thy life is: a man of low stature is as much a man as a giant: neither men nor their lives are measured by the ell. Chiron refused to be immortal, when he was acquainted with the conditions under which he was to enjoy it, by the god of time itself and its duration, his father Saturn. Do but

* "All things, then, life over, must follow thee."—*Idem, Ibid.*, 981.

† "No night has followed day, no day has followed night, in which there has not been heard sobs and sorrowing cries, the companions of death and funerals."—*Idem*, v. 579.

seriously consider how much more insupportable and painful an immortal life would be to man than what I have already given him. If you had not death, you would externally curse me for having deprived you of it; I have mixed a little bitterness with it, to the end, that seeing of what convenience it is, you might not too greedily and indiscreetly seek and embrace it: and that you might be so established in this moderation, as neither to nauseate life, nor have an antipathy for dying, which I have decreed you shall once do, I have tempered the one and the other between pleasure and pain. It was I that taught Thales, the most eminent of your sages, that to live and to die were indifferent; which made him, very wisely, answer him, 'Why then he did not die?' 'Because,' said he, 'it is indifferent.'* Water, earth, air, and fire, and the other parts of this creation of mine, are no more instruments of thy life than they are of thy death. Why dost thou fear thy last day? it contributes no more to thy dissolution, than every one of the rest: the last step is not the cause of lassitude; it does but confess it. Every day travels toward death: the last only arrives at it." These are the good lessons our mother Nature teaches.

I have often considered with myself whence it should proceed, that in war the image of death, whether we look upon it in ourselves or in others, should, without comparison, appear less dreadful than at home in our own houses (for if it were not so, it would be an army of doctors and whining milksops), and that being still in all places the same, there should be, notwithstanding, much more assurance in peasants and the meaner sort of people, than in others of better quality. I believe, in truth, that it is those terrible ceremonies and preparations wherewith we set it out, that more terrify us than the thing itself; a new, quite contrary way of living; the cries of mothers, wives, and children: the visits of astounded and afflicted friends; the attendance of pale and blubbering servants; a dark room, set round with burning tapers; our beds environed with physicians and divines; in sum, nothing but ghostliness and horror round about us: we seem dead and buried already. Children are afraid even of those they are best acquainted with, when disguised in a visor; and so 'tis

* Diogenes Laertius, i. 35.

with us; the visor must be removed as well from things as from persons; that being taken away, we shall find nothing underneath but the very same death that a mean servant, or a poor chambermaid, died a day or two ago, without any manner of apprehension. Happy is the death that leaves us no leisure to prepare things for all this foppery.*

CHAPTER XX.

OF THE FORCE OF IMAGINATION.

"FORTIS *imaginatio generat casum,*"* say the schoolmen.

I am one of those who are most sensible of the power of imagination: every one is jostled by it, but some are overthrown by it. It has a very piercing impression upon me; and I make it my business to avoid, wanting force to resist it. I could live by the sole help of healthful and jolly company: the very sight of another's pain materially pains me, and I often usurp the sensations of another person. A perpetual cough in another tickles my lungs and throat. I more unwillingly visit the sick in whom by love and duty I am interested, than those I care not for, to whom I less look. I take possession of the disease I am concerned at, and take it to myself. I do not at all wonder that fancy should give fevers and sometimes kill such as to allow it too much scope, and are too willing to entertain it. Simon Thomas was a great physician of his time: I remember, that happening one day at Toulouse to meet him at a rich old fellow's house, who was troubled with weak lungs, and discoursing with his patient about the method of his cure, he told him, that one thing which would be very conducive to it, was to give me such occasion to be pleased with his company, that I might come often to see him, by which means, and by fixing his eye upon the freshness of my complexion, and his imagination upon the sprightliness and vigor that glowed in my youth, and possessing all his senses with the flouishing age wherein I then was, his habit to body might, peradventure, be amended; but he forgot

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* Seneca, Ep., 120.

* "A strong imagination begets the event itself."—*Axiom. Scholast.*

to say that mine, at the same time, might be made worse. Gallus Vibius so long cudgeled his brains to find out the essence and motions of madness, that, in the end, he himself went out of his wits, and to such a degree, that he could never after recover his judgment; and might brag that he was become a fool by too much wisdom. Some there are who through fear anticipate the hangman; and there was the man, whose eyes being unbound to have his pardon read to him, was found stark dead upon the scaffold, by the stroke of imagination. We start, tremble, turn pale, and blush, as we are variously moved by imagination; and, being a-bed, feel our bodies agitated with its power to that degree, as even sometimes to expiring. And boiling youth, when fast asleep, grows so warm with fancy, as in a dream to satisfy amorous desires:

> "Ut, quasi transactis sæpe omnibu' rebu' profundant
> Fluminis ingentes fluctus, vestemque cruentent." *

Although it be no new thing to see horns grown in a night on the forehead of one that had none when he went to bed, notwithstanding, what befell Cippus, king of Italy,† is memorable; who having one day been a very delighted spectator of a bull-fight, and having all the night dreamed that he had horns on his head, did, by the force of imagination, really cause them to grow there. Passion gave to the son of Crœsus ‡ the voice which nature had denied him. And Antiochus fell into a fever, inflamed with the beauty of Stratonice, too deeply imprinted in his soul.§ Pliny pretends to have seen Lucius Cossitius, who from a woman was turned into a man upon her very wedding-day. ‖ Pontanus and others report the like metamorphosis to have happened in these latter days in Italy. And, through the vehement desire of him and his mother,

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* Lucretius, iv. 1029. The sense of the citation is given in the preceding passage of the text.

† Val. Max., v. 7; Pliny, xi. 58. Cippus was not king of Italy, but a Roman prætor, whom divination had informed that if he returned to Rome, he would become king of Italy, and he preferred to remain in exile.

‡ Herodotus, i. 85.

§ Lucian, on the Syrian goddess.

‖ Pliny, Nat. Hist,, vii. 4.

"Vota puer solvit, quæ fœmina voverat, Iphis."*

Myself passing by Vitry le François, † saw a man the bishop of Soissons had, in confirmation, called Germain, whom all the inhabitants of the place had known to be a girl till two-and-twenty years of age, called Mary. He was, at the time of my being there, very full of beard, old, and not married. He told us, that by straining himself in a leap his male instruments came out; and the girls of that place have, to this day, a song, wherein they advise one another not to take too great strides, for fear of being turned into men, as Mary Germain was. It is no wonder if this sort of accident frequently happen; for if imagination have any power in such things, it is so continually and vigororously bent upon this subject, that to the end it may not so often relapse into the same thought and violence of desire, it were better, once for all, to give these young wenches the things they long for.

Some attribute the scars of King Dagobert and of St. Francis to the force of imagination. It is said, that by it bodies will sometimes be removed from their places; and Celsus tells us of a priest whose soul would be ravished into such an ecstasy that the body would, for a long time, remain without sense or respiration. St. Augustine makes mention of another,‡ who, upon the hearing of any lamentable or doleful cries, would presently fall into a swoon, and be so far out of himself, that it was in vain to call, bawl in his ears, pinch or burn him, till he voluntarily came to himself; and then he would say, that he had heard voices as it were afar off, and did feel when they pinched and burned him; and to prove that this was no obstinate dissimulation in defiance of his sense of feeling, it was manifest, that all the while he had neither pulse nor breathing.

'Tis very probable, that visions, enchantments, and all extraordinary effects of that nature, derive their credit principally from the power of imagination, working and

* "Iphis, become a boy, paid the gifts which, as a woman, he had promised."—OVID, *Met.*, ix. 793, where it is *dona*, not *vota*, and see the story *ibid.*, 714.

† In September, 1580, as related in his Travels.

‡ Restitutus; De Civit. Dei, xiv. 24.

making its chiefest impression upon vulgar and more easy souls, whose belief is so strangely imposed upon, as to think they see what they do not see.

I am not satisfied whether those pleasant ligatures * with which this age of ours is so occupied, that there is almost no other talk, are not mere voluntary impressions of apprehension and fear ; for I know, by experience, in the case of a particular friend of mine, one for whom I can be as responsible as for myself, and a man that cannot possibly fall under any manner of suspicion of insufficiency, and as little of being enchanted, who having heard a companion of his make a relation of an unusual frigidity that surprised him at a very unseasonable time ; being afterward himself engaged upon the same account, the horror of the former story on a sudden so strangely possessed his imagination, that he ran the same fortune the other had done ; and from that time forward, the scurvy remembrance of his disaster running in his mind and tyrannizing over him, he was subject to relapse into the same misfortune. He found some remedy, however, for this fancy in another fancy, by himself frankly confessing and declaring beforehand to the party with whom he was to have to do, this subjection of his, by which means, the agitation of his soul was, in some sort, appeased ; and knowing that, now, some such misbehavior was expected from him, the restraint upon his faculties grew less. And afterward, at such times as he was in no such apprehension, when setting about the act (his thoughts being then disengaged and free, and his body in its true and natural estate) he was at leisure to cause the part to be handled and communicated to the knowledge of the other party, he was totally freed from that vexatious infirmity. After a man has once done a woman right, he is never after in danger of misbehaving himself with that person, unless upon the account of some excusable weakness. Neither is this disaster to be feared, but in adventures where the soul is over-extended with desire or respect, and especially, where the opportunity is of an unforeseen and pressing

* *Les nouements d'aiguillettes*, as they were called, knots tied by some one, at a wedding, on a strip of leather, cotton, or silk, and which, especially when passed through the wedding-ring, were supposed to have the magical effect of preventing a consummation of the marriage, until they were untied. See Louandre, La Sorcellerie, Paris, 1853, p. 73.

nature; in those cases, there is no means for a man to defend himself from such a surprise, as shall put him altogether out of sorts. I have known some, who have secured themselves from this mischance, by coming half sated elsewhere, purposely to abate the ardor of the fury, and others, who, being grown old, find themselves less impotent by being less able; and one, who found an advantage in being assured by a friend of his, that he had a counter-charm of enchantments that would secure him from this disgrace. The story itself is not much amiss, and therefore you shall have it.

A count of a very great family, and with whom I was very intimate, being married to a fair lady, who had formerly been courted by one who was at the wedding, all his friends were in very great fear; but especially an old lady his kinswoman, who had the ordering of the solemnity, and in whose house it was kept, suspecting his rival would offer foul play by these sorceries. Which fear she communicated to me. I bade her rely upon me: I had, by chance, about me a certain flat plate of gold, whereon were graven some celestial figures, supposed good against sunstroke or pains in the head, being applied to the suture; where, that it might the better remain firm, it was sewed to a ribbon to be tied under the chin; a foppery cousin-german to this of which I am speaking. Jaques Pelletier,* who lived in my house, had presented this to me for a singular rarity. I had a fancy to make some use of this knack, and therefore privately told the count, that he might possibly run the same fortune other bridegrooms had sometimes done, especially some one being in the house, who, no doubt, would be glad to do him such a courtesy: but let him boldly go to bed. For I would do him the office of a friend, and, if need were, would not spare a miracle it was in my power to do, provided he would engage to me, upon his honor, to keep it to himself; and only, when they came to bring him his caudle,† if matters had not gone well with him, to give me such a sign, and leave the rest to me. Now he had had his ears so battered, and his mind so prepossessed with the eternal tattle of this business, that when

* A celebrated physician, died 1582.

† A custom in France to bring the bridegroom a caudle in the middle of the night, on his wedding-night.

he came to't, he did really find himself tied with the trouble of his imagination, and, accordingly, at the time appointed, gave me the sign. Whereupon, I whispered him in the ear, that he should rise, under pretense of putting us out of the room, and after a jesting manner pull my nightgown from my shoulders—we were of much about the same height—throw it over his own, and there keep it till he had performed what I had appointed him to do, which was, that when we were all gone out of the chamber he should withdraw to make water, should three times repeat such and such words, and as often do such and such actions; that at every of the three times, he should tie the ribbon I put into his hand about his middle, and be sure to place the medal that was fastened to it, the figures in such a posture, exactly upon his reins, which being done, and having the last of the three times so well girt and fast tied the ribbon that it could neither untie nor slip from its place, let him confidently return to his business, and withal not forget to spread my gown upon the bed, so that it might be sure to cover them both. These ape's tricks are the main of the effect, our fancy being so far seduced as to believe that such strange means must, of necessity, proceed from some abstruse science: their very inanity gives them weight and reverence. And, certain it is, that my figures approved themselves more venerian than solar, more active than prohibitive. 'Twas a sudden whimsey, mixed with a little curiosity, that made me do a thing so contrary to my nature; for I am an enemy to all subtle and counterfeit actions, and abominate all manner of trickery, though it be for sport, and to an advantage; for though the action may not be vicious in itself, its mode is vicious.

Amasis, king of Egypt,* having married Laodice, a very beautiful Greek virgin, though noted for his abilities elsewhere, found himself quite another man with his wife, and could by no means enjoy her; at which he was so enraged, that he threatened to kill her, suspecting her to be a witch. As 'tis usual in things that consist in fancy, she put him upon devotion, and having, accordingly, made his vows to Venus, he found himself divinely restored the very first night after his oblations and sacrifices. Now women are to blame to entertain us with that disdainful

* Herodotus, ii. 181.

coy, and angry countenance, which extinguishes our vigor, as it kindles our desire; which made the daughter-in-law of Pythagoras * say, "That the woman who goes to bed to a man, must put off her modesty with her petticoat, and put it on again with the same." The soul of the assailant being disturbed with many several alarms, readily loses the power of performance; and whoever the imagination has once put this trick upon, and confounded with the shame of it (and she never does it but at the first acquaintance, by reason men are then more ardent and eager, and also, at this first account a man gives of himself, he is much more timorous of miscarrying), having made an ill beginning, he enters into such fever and despite at the accident, as are apt to remain and continue with him upon following occasions.

Married people, having all their time before them, ought never to compel or so much as to offer at the feat, if they do not find themselves quite ready; and it is less unseemly to fail of handselling the nuptial sheets, when a man perceives himself full of agitation and trembling, and to await another opportunity at more private and more composed leisure, than to make himself perpetually miserable, for having misbehaved himself and been baffled at the first assault. Till possession be taken, a man that knows himself subject to this infirmity, should leisurely and by degrees make several little trials and light offers, without obstinately attempting, at once, to force an absolute conquest over his own mutinous and indisposed faculties. Such as know their members to be naturally obedient, need take no other care but only to counterplot their fantasies.

The indocile liberty of this member is very remarkable, so importunately unruly in its timidity and impatience, when we do not require it, and so unseasonably disobedient when we stand most in need of it: so imperiously contesting in authority with the will, and with so much haughty obstinacy denying all solicitation, both of hand and mind. And yet, though his rebellion is so universally complained of, and that proof is thence deduced to condemn him, if he had, nevertheless, feed me to plead his cause, I should,

* Theano, the lady in question, was the wife, not the daughter-in-law of Pythagoras.

peradventure, bring the rest of his fellow-members into suspicion of complotting this mischief against him, out of pure envy at the importance and pleasure especial to his employment; and to have, by confederacy, armed the whole world against him, by malevolently charging him alone, with their common offense. For let any one consider, whether there is any one part of our bodies that does not often refuse to perform its office at the precept of the will, and that does not often exercise its function in defiance of her command. They have every one of them passions of their own, that rouse and awaken, stupefy and benumb them, without our leave or consent. How often do the involuntary motions of the countenance discover our inward thoughts, and betray our most private secrets to the bystanders. The same cause that animates this member does also, without our knowledge, animate the lungs, pulse, and heart, the sight of a pleasing object imperceptibly diffusing a flame through all our parts, with a feverish motion. Is there nothing but these veins and muscles that swell and flag without the consent, not only of the will, but even of our knowledge also? We do not command our hairs to stand on end, nor our skin to shiver either with fear or desire; the hands often convey themselves to parts to which we do not direct them; the tongue will be interdict, and the voice congealed, when we know not how to help it. When we have nothing to eat, and would willingly forbid it, the appetite does not, for all that, forbear to stir up the parts that are subject to it, no more nor less than the other appetite we were speaking of, and in like manner, as unseasonably leaves us, when it thinks fit. The vessels that serve to discharge the belly have their own proper dilatations and compressions, without and beyond our concurrence, as well as those which are destined to purge the reins; and that which, to justify the prerogative of the will, St. Agustine urges,* of having seen a man who could command his rear to discharge as often together as he pleased, Vives, his commentator, yet further fortifies with another example in his time, of one that could break wind in tune; but these cases do not suppose any more pure obedience in that part; for is anything commonly more tumultuary or indiscreet? To which let me

* De Civit. Dei, xiv. 24.

add, that I myself knew one so rude and ungoverned, as for forty years together made his master vent with one continued and unintermitted outbursting, and 'tis like will do so till he die of it. And I could heartily wish that I only knew by reading how often a man's belly, by the denial of one single puff, brings him to the very door of an exceeding painful death ; and that the emperor,* who gave liberty to let fly in all places, had at the same time given us power to do it. But for our will, in whose behalf we prefer this accusation, with how much greater probability may we reproach herself with mutiny and sedition, for her irregularity and disobedience ? Does she always will what we would have her to do ? Does she not often will what we forbid her to will, and that to our manifest prejudice ? Does she suffer herself, more than any of the rest, to be governed and directed by the results of our reason ? To conclude, I should move, in the behalf of the gentleman, my client, it might be considered, that in this fact, his cause being inseparably and indistinctly conjoined with an accessory, yet he only is called in question, and that by arguments and accusations which cannot be charged upon the other ; whose business, indeed, it is sometimes inopportunely to invite, but never to refuse, and invite, moreover, after a tacit and quiet manner ; and therefore is the malice and injustice of his accusers most manifestly apparent. But be it how it will, protesting against the proceedings of the advocates and judges, Nature will, in the meantime, proceed after her own way, who had done but well had she endowed this member with some particular privilege ; the author of the sole immortal work of mortals ; a divine work, according to Socrates ; and love, the desire of immortality, and himself an immortal demon.

Some one, perhaps, by such an effect of imagination may have had the good luck to leave behind him here, the scrofula, which his companion who has come after, has carried with him into Spain. And 'tis for this reason you may see why men in such cases require a mind prepared for the thing that is to be done. Why do the physicians possess, beforehand, their patients' credulity with so many

* The Emperor Claudius who, however, according to Suetonius (Vita, c. 32), only intended to authorize this singular privilege by an edict.

false promises of cure, if not to the end, that the effect of imagination may supply the imposture of their decoctions? They know very well that a great master of their trade has given it under his hand, that he has known some with whom the very sight of physic would work. All which conceits come now into my head by the remembrance of a story that was told me by a domestic apothecary of my father's, a blunt Swiss, a nation not much addicted to vanity and lying, of a merchant he had long known at Toulouse, who being a valetudinary, and much afflicted with the stone had often occasion to take clysters, of which he caused several sorts to be prescribed him by the physicians, according to the accidents of his disease: which, being brought him, and none of the usual forms, as feeling if it were not too hot, and the like, being omitted, he lay down, the syringe advanced, and all ceremonies performed, injection alone excepted; after which, the apothecary being gone, and the patient accommodated as if he had really received a clyster, he found the same operation and effect that those do who have taken one, indeed; and if at any time the physician did not find the operation sufficient, he would usually give him two or three more doses, after the same manner. And the fellow swore, that to save charges (for he paid as if he had really taken them) this sick man's wife, having sometimes made trial of warm water only, the effect discovered the cheat, and finding these would do no good, was fain to return to the old way.

A woman fancying she had swallowed a pin in a piece of bread, cried and lamented as though she had an intolerable pain in her throat, where she thought she felt it stick; but an ingenious fellow that was brought to her, seeing no outward tumor nor alteration, supposing it to be only a conceit taken at some crust of bread that had hurt her as it went down, caused her to vomit, and, unseen, threw a crooked pin into the basin, which the woman no sooner saw, but believing she had cast it up, she presently found herself eased of her pain. I myself knew a gentleman, who having treated a large company at his house, three or four days after bragged in jest (for there was no such thing), that he had made them eat of a baked cat; at which a young gentlewoman, who had been at the feast, took such a horror, that falling into a violent vomiting and fever, there was no possible means to save her. Even brute beasts

are subject to the force of imagination as well as we; witness dogs, who die of grief for the loss of their masters; and bark and tremble and start in their sleep; so horses will kick and whinny in their sleep.

Now all this may be attributed to the close affinity and relation between the soul and the body intercommunicating their fortunes; but 'tis quite another thing when the imagination works not only upon one's own particular body, but upon that of others also. And as an infected body communicates its malady to those that, approach or live near it, as we see in the plague, the smallpox, and sore eyes, that run through whole families and cities—

> "Dum spectant oculi læsos, læduntur et ipsi;
> Multaque corporibus transitione nocent" *

—so the imagination, being vehemently agitated, darts out infection capable of offending the foreign object. The ancients had an opinion of certain women of Scythia, that being animated and enraged against any one, they killed him only with their looks. Tortoises and ostriches hatch their eggs with only looking on them, which infers, that their eyes have in them some ejaculative virtue. And the eyes of witches are said to be assailant and hurtful:

> "Nescio quis teneros oculus mihi fascinat agnos." †

Magicians are no very good authority with me. But we experimentally see that women impart the marks of their fancy to the children they carry in the womb; witness her that was brought to bed of a Moor; and there was presented to Charles the emperor and king of Bohemia, a girl from about Pisa, all over rough and covered with hair, whom her mother said to be so conceived by reason of a picture of St. John the Baptist that hung within the curtains of her bed.

It is the same with beasts; witness Jacob's sheep, and the hares and patridges that the snow turns white upon the mountains. There was at my house, a little while ago, a cat seen watching a bird upon the top of a

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* "When we look at people with sore eyes, our own eyes become sore. Many things are hurtful to our bodies by this sort of transition."—OVID, *De Rem. Amor.*, 615.

† "Some eye, I know not whose, is bewitching my tender lambs."—VIRGIL, *Eclog.*, iii. 103.

tree: these, for some time, mutually fixing their eyes one upon another, the bird at last let herself fall dead into the cat's claws, either dazzled by the force of its own imagination, or drawn by some attractive power of the cat. Such as are addicted to the pleasures of the field have, I make no question, heard the story of the falconer, who having earnestly fixed his eyes upon a kite in the air, laid a wager that he would bring her down with the sole power of his sight, and did so, as it was said, for the tales I borrow I charge upon the consciences of those from whom I have them. The discourses are my own, and found themselves upon the proofs of reason, not of experience; to which every one has liberty to add his own examples; and who has none, let him not forbear, the number and varieties of accidents considered, to believe that there are plenty of them: if I do not apply them well, let some other do it for me. And, also, in the subject of which I treat, our manners and notions, testimonies and instances, how fabulous soever, provided they are possible, serve as well as the true; whether they have really happened or no, at Rome or Paris, to John or Peter 'tis still within the verge of human capacity, which serves me to good use. I see, and make my advantage of it, as well in shadow as in substance; and among the various readings thereof in history, I cull out the most rare and memorable to fit my own turn. There are authors whose only end and design it is, to give an account of things that have happened; mine, if I could arrive unto it, should be to deliver of what may happen. There is a just liberty allowed in the schools, of supposing similitudes, when they have none at hand. I do not, however, make any use of that privilege, and as to that matter, in superstitious religion, surpass all historical authority. In the examples which I here bring in, of what I have heard, read, done, or said, I have forbidden myself to dare to alter even the most light and indifferent circumstances: my conscience does not falsify one tittle; what my ignorance may do, I cannot say.

And this it is that makes me sometimes doubt in my own mind, whether a divine, or a philosopher, and such men of exact and tender prudence and conscience, are fit to write history: for how can they stake their reputation upon a popular faith? how be responsible for the opinions

of men they do not know? and with what assurance deliver their conjectures for current pay? Of actions performed before their own eyes, wherein several persons were actors, they would be unwilling to give evidence upon oath before a judge; and there is no man, so familiarly known to them, for whose intentions they would become absolute caution. For my part, I think it less hazardous to write of things past, than present, by how much the writer is only to give an account of things every one knows he must of necessity borrow upon trust.

I am solicited to write the affairs of my own time, by some who fancy I look upon them with an eye less blinded with passion than another, and have a clearer insight into them by reason of the free access fortune has given me to the heads of various factions; but they do not consider, that to purchase the glory of Sallust, I would not give myself the trouble, sworn enemy as I am to obligation, assiduity, or perseverance; that there is nothing so contrary to my style as a continued narrative, I so often interrupt, and cut myself short in my writing for want of breath; I have neither composition nor explanation worth anything, and am ignorant, beyond a child, of the phrases and even the very words proper to express the most common things; and for that reason it is, that I have undertaken to say only what I can say, and have accommodated my subject to my strength: should I take one to be my guide, peradventure I should not be able to keep pace with him; and in the freedom of my liberty, might deliver judgments, which upon better thoughts, and according to reason, would be illegitimate and punishable. Plutarch would tell us, of what he has delivered to us, that it is the work of others: that his examples are all and everywhere exactly true: that they are useful to posterity, and are presented with a luster that will light us the way to virtue, is his own work. It is not of so dangerous consequence, as in a medicinal drug, whether an old story be so or no.

CHAPTER XXI.

THAT THE PROFIT OF ONE MAN IS THE DAMAGE OF ANOTHER

DEMADES the Athenian* condemned one of his city, whose trade it was to sell the necessaries for funeral ceremonies upon pretense that he demanded unreasonable profit and that that profit could not accrue to him but by the death of a great number of people. A judgment that appears to be ill grounded, forasmuch as no profit whatever can possibly be made but at the expense of another, and that by the same rule he should condemn all gain of what kind soever. The merchant only thrives by the debauchery of youth; the husbandman by the dearness of grain; the architect by the ruin of buildings; lawyers, and officers of justice, by the suits and contentions of men; nay, even the honor and office of divines are derived from our death and vices. A physician takes no pleasure in the health even of his friends, says the ancient Greek comic writer, nor a soldier in the peace of his country, and so of the rest.† And, which is yet worse, let every one but dive into his own bosom, and he will find his private wishes spring and his secret hopes grow up at another's expense. Upon which consideration it comes into my head, that Nature does not in this swerve from her general polity; for physicians hold, that the birth, nourishment, and increase of everything is the dissolution and corruption of another:

> "Nam quodcumque suis mutatum finibus exit,
> Continuo hoc mors est illius, quod fuit ante." ‡

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* Seneca, De Beneficiis, vi. 38, whence nearly the whole of this chapter is taken.

† See Rousseau, *Emile*, book iii.

‡ "For, whatever from its own confines passes changed, this is at once the death of that which before it was."—LUCRETIUS, ii. 752.

CHAPTER XXII.

OF CUSTOM, AND THAT WE SHOULD NOT EASILY CHANGE A LAW RECEIVED.

He* seems to have had a right and true apprehension of the power of custom, who first invented † the story of a country-woman who, having accustomed herself to play with and carry a young calf in her arms, and daily continuing to do so as it grew up, obtained this by custom, that, when grown to be a great ox, she was still able to bear it. For, in truth, custom is a violent and treacherous schoolmistress. She, by little and little, slily and unperceived, slips in the foot of her authority, but having by this gentle and humble beginning, with the benefit of time, fixed and established it, she then unmasks a furious and tyrannic countenance, against which we have no more the courage or the power so much as to lift up our eyes. We see her, at every turn, forcing and violating the rules of nature: "*Usus efficacissimus rerum omnium magister.*" ‡ I refer to her Plato's cave in his Republic, and the physicians, who so often submit the reasons of their art to her authority; as the story of that king, who by custom brought his stomach to that pass, as to live by poison, and the maid that Albertus reports to have lived upon spiders. In that new world of the Indies, there were found great nations, and in very differing climates, who were of the same diet, made provision of them, and fed them for their tables; as also, they did grasshoppers, mice, lizards, and bats; and in a time of scarcity of such delicacies, a toad was sold for six crowns, all which they cook, and dish up with several sauces. There were also others found, to

* Let us take Florio's rendering of this curious passage: "My opinion is, that he conveied aright of the force of custome, that first invented this tale, how a countrey-woman having enured herselfe to cherish and beare a young calfe in her armes, which continuing, shee got such a custome, that when he grew to be a great oxe, shee carried him still in her armes."—Edit. 1613, p. 46.

† Stobæus, Serm. xxix.

‡ "Custom is the best master of all things."—Pliny, *Nat. Hist.*, xxvi. 2.

whom our diet, and the flesh we eat, were venomous and mortal. "*Consuetudinis magna vis est: pernoctant venatores in nive: in montibus uri se patiuutur: pugiles cæstibus contusi, ne ingemiscunt quidem.*"*

These strange examples will not appear so strange if we consider what we have ordinary experience of, how much custom stupefies our senses. We need not go to what is reported of the people about the cataracts of the Nile; and what philosophers believe of the music of the spheres, that the bodies of those circles being solid and smooth, and coming to touch and rub upon one another, cannot fail of creating a marvelous harmony, the changes and cadences of which cause the revolutions and dances of the stars; but that the hearing sense of all creatures here below, being universally, like that of the Egyptians, deafened, and stupefied with the continual noise, cannot, how great soever, perceive it.† Smiths, millers, pewterers, forgemen and armorers could never be able to live in the perpetual noise of their own trades, did it strike their ears with the same violence that it does ours.

My perfumed doublet gratifies my own smelling at first; but after I have worn it three days together, 'tis only pleasing to the bystanders. This is yet more strange, that custom, notwithstanding long intermissions and intervals, should yet have the power to unite and establish the effect of its impressions upon our senses, as is manifest in such as live near unto steeples and the frequent noise of the bells. I myself lie at home in a tower, where every morning and evening a very great bell rings out the *Ave Maria:* the noise shakes my very tower, and at first seemed insupportable to me; but I am so used to it, that I hear it without any manner of offense, and often without awaking at it.

Plato ‡ reprehending a boy for playing at nuts, "Thou

* "The power of custom is very great: huntsmen will lie out all night in the snow, or suffer themselves to be burned up by the sun on the mountains: boxers, however hurt by the cæstus, never utter a groan."—CICERO, *Tusc.*, ii. 17.

† This passage is taken from Cicero's "Dream of Scipio," see his "De Republica," vi. 11. The Egyptians were said to be stunned by the noise of the cataracts.

‡ Diogenes Laeritus, iii. 38. But he whom Plato censured was not a boy playing at nuts, but a man throwing dice.

reprovest me," says the boy, "for a very little thing." "Custom," replied Plato, "is no little thing." I find that our greatest vices derive their first propensity from our most tender infancy, and that our principal education depends upon the nurse. Mothers are mightily pleased to see a child writhe off the neck of a chicken, or to please itself with hurting a dog or a cat; and such wise fathers there are in the world, who look upon it as a notable mark of a martial spirit, when they hear a son miscall, or see him domineer over a poor peasant, or a lackey, that dares not reply, nor turn again; and a great sign of wit, when they see him cheat and overreach his playfellow by some malicious treachery and deceit. Yet these are the true seeds and roots of cruelty, tyranny, and treason; they bud and put out there, and afterward shoot up vigorously, and grow to prodigious bulk, cultivated by custom. And it is a very dangerous mistake to excuse these vile inclinations upon the tenderness of their age, and the triviality of the subject; first, it is nature that speaks, whose declaration is then more sincere, and inward thoughts more undisguised, as it is more weak and young; secondly, the deformity of cozenage does not consist nor depend upon the difference between crowns and pins; but I rather hold it more just to conclude thus: why should he not cozen in crowns since he does it in pins, than as they do, who say they only play for pins, they would not do it if it were for money? Children should carefully be instructed to abhor vices for their own contexture; and the natural deformity of those vices ought so to be represented to them, that they may not only avoid them in their actions, but especially so to abominate them in their hearts, that the very thought, should be hateful to them, with what mask soever they may be disguised.

I know very well, for what concerns myself, that from having been brought up in my childhood to a plain and straightforward way of dealing, and from having had an aversion to all manner of juggling and foul play in my childish sports and recreations (and, indeed, it is to be noted, that the plays of children are not performed in play, but are to be judged in them as their most serious actions), there is no game so small wherein from my own bosom naturally, and without study or endeavor, I have not an

extreme aversion for deceit. I shuffle and cut and make as much clatter with the cards, and keep as strict account for farthings, as it were for double pistoles; when winning or losing against my wife and daughter, 'tis indifferent to me, as when I play in good earnest with others, for round sums. At all times, and in all places, my own eyes are sufficient to look to my fingers; I am not so narrowly watched by any other, neither is there any I have more respect to.

I saw the other day, at my own house, a little fellow, a native of Nantes, born without arms, who has so well taught his feet to perform the services his hands should have done him, that truly these have half forgotten their natural office; and, indeed, the fellow calls them his hands; with them he cuts anything, charges and discharges a pistol, threads a needle, sews, writes, puts off his hat, combs his head, plays at cards and dice, and all this with as much dexterity as any other could do who had more, and more proper, limbs to assist him. The money I gave him—for he gains his living by showing these feats—he took in his foot, as we do in our hand. I have seen another who, being yet a boy, flourished a two-handed sword, and, if I may so say, handled a halberd with the mere motions of his neck and shoulders for want of hands; tossed them into the air, and caught them again, darted a dagger, and cracked a whip as well as any coachman in France.

But the effects of custom are much more manifest in the strange impressions she imprints in our minds, where she meets with less resistance. What has she not the power to impose upon our judgments and beliefs? Is there any so fantastic opinion (omitting the gross impostures of religions, with which we see so many great nations, and so many understanding men, so strangely besotted; for this being beyond the reach of human reason, any error is more excusable in such as are not endued, through the divine bounty, with an extraordinary illumination from above), but, of other opinions, are there any so extravagant, that she has not planted and established for laws in those parts of the world upon which she has been pleased to exercise her power? And therefore that ancient exclamation was exceeding just: "*Non pudet physicum, id est speculatorem*

venatoremque naturæ, ab animis consuetudine imbutis quærere testimonium veritatis?" *

I do believe, that no so absurd or ridiculous fancy can enter into human imagination, that does not meet with some example of public practice, and that, consequently, our reason does not ground and back up. There are people, among whom it is the fashion to turn their backs upon him they salute, and never look upon the man they intend to honor. There is a place, where, whenever the king spits, the greatest ladies of his court put out their hands to receive it; and another nation, where the most eminent persons about him stoop to take up his ordure in a linen cloth. Let us here steal room to insert a story.

A French gentleman was always wont to blow his nose with his fingers (a thing very much against our fashion), and he justifying himself for so doing, and he was a man famous for pleasant repartees, he asked me, what privilege this filthy excrement had, that we must carry about us a fine handkerchief to receive it, and, which was more, afterward to lap it carefully up, and carry it all day about in our pockets, which, he said, could not but be much more nauseous and offensive, than to see it thrown away, as we did all other evacuations. I found that what he said was not altogether without reason, and by being frequently in his company, that slovenly action of his was at last grown familiar to me; which nevertheless we make a face at, when we hear it reported of another country. Miracles appear to be so, according to our ignorance of nature, and not according to the essence of nature: the continually being accustomed to anything, blinds the eye of our judgment. Barbarians are no more a wonder to us, than we are to them; nor with any more reason, as every one would confess if after having traveled over those remote examples, men could settle themselves to reflect upon, and rightly to confer them with their own. Human reason is a tincture almost equally infused into all our opinions and manners, of what form soever they are; infinite in matter, infinite in diversity. But I return to my subject.

There are peoples, where, his wife and children excepted,

* "Is it not a shame for a natural philosopher, that is, for an observer and hunter of nature, to seek testimony of the truth from minds prepossessed with custom?"—CICERO, *De Natura Deor.*, i. 30. The text has *petere*, not *quærere*.

no one speaks to the king but through a tube. In one and the same nation, the virgins discover those parts that modesty should persuade them to hide, and the married women carefully cover and conceal them. To which, this custom, in another place, has some relation, where chastity, but in marriage, is of no esteem, for unmarried women may prostitute themselves to as many as they please, and being got with child, may lawfully take physic, in the sight of every one, to destroy their fruit. And, in another place, if a tradesman marry, all of the same condition, who are invited to the wedding, lie with the bride before him; and the greater number of them there is, the greater is her honor, and the opinion of her ability and strength: if an officer marry, 'tis the same, the same with a laborer, or one of mean condition, but then, it belongs to the lord of the place to perform that office; and yet a severe loyalty during marriage is afterward strictly enjoined. There are places where brothels of young men are kept for the pleasure of women; where the wives go to war as well as the husbands, and not only share in the dangers of battle, but, moreover, in the honors of command. Others, where they wear rings not only through their noses, lips, cheeks, and on their toes, but also weighty gimmals of gold thrust through their paps and buttocks; where, in eating, they wipe their fingers upon their thighs, genitories, and the soles of their feet: where children are excluded, and brothers and nephews only inherit; and elsewhere, nephews only, saving in the succession of the prince: where, for the regulation of community in goods and estates, observed in the country, certain sovereign magistrates have committed to them the universal charge and overseeing of the agriculture, and distribution of the fruits, according to the necessity of every one: where they lament the death of children, and feast at the decease of old men; where they lie ten or twelve in a bed, men and their wives together: where women, whose husbands come to violent ends, may marry again, and others not: where the condition of women is looked upon with such contempt, that they kill all the native females, and buy wives of their neighbors to supply their use; where husbands may repudiate their wives without showing any cause, but wives cannot part from their husbands, for what cause soever; where husbands may sell their wives in case of sterility; where they boil the bodies

of their dead, and afterward pound them to a pulp, which they mix with their wine, and drink it; where the most coveted sepulture is to be eaten with dogs, and elsewhere by birds; where they believe the souls of the blessed live in all manner of liberty, in delightful fields, furnished with all sorts of delicacies, and that it is these souls, repeating the words we utter, which we call echo; where they fight in the water, and shoot their arrows with the most mortal aim, swimming; where, for a sign of subjection, they lift up their shoulders, and hang down their heads; where they put off their shoes when they enter the king's palace; where the eunuchs, who take charge of the sacred women, have, moreover, their lips and noses cut off, that they may not be loved; where the priests put out their own eyes, to be better acquainted with their demons, and the better to receive their oracles; where every one makes to himself a deity of what he likes best; the hunter of a lion or a fox, the fisher of some fish; idols of every human action or passion; in which place, the sun, the moon, and the earth are the principal deities, and the form of taking an oath is, to touch the earth, looking up to heaven; where both flesh and fish is eaten raw; where the greatest oath they take is, to swear by the name of some dead person of reputation, laying their hand upon his tomb; where the new year's gift the king sends every year to the princes, his vassals, is fire, which being brought, all the old fire is put out, and the neighboring people are bound to fetch the new, every one for themselves, upon pain of high treason; where, when the king, to betake himself wholly to devotion, retires from his administration (which often falls out), his next successor is obliged to do the same, and the right of the kingdom devolves to the third in succession; where they vary the form of government, according to the seeming necessity of affairs; depose the king when they think good, substituting certain elders to govern in his stead, and sometimes transferring it into the hands of the commonalty; where men and women are both circumcised and also baptized; where the soldier, who in one or several engagements, has been so fortunate as to present seven of the enemies' heads to the king, is made noble: where they live in that rare and unsociable opinion of the mortality of the soul; where the women are delivered without pain or fear: where the women wear copper leggings upon both legs, and if a louse

bite them, are bound in magnanimity to bite them again, and dare not marry, till first they have made their king a tender of their virginity, if he please to accept it: where the ordinary way of salutation is by putting a finger down to the earth, and then pointing it up toward heaven: where men carry burdens upon their heads, and women on their shoulders; where the women make water standing, and the men squatting: where they send their blood in token of friendship, and offer incense to the men they would honor, like gods: where, not only to the fourth, but in any other remote degree, kindred are not permitted to marry: where the children are four years at nurse, and often twelve; in which place, also, it is accounted mortal to give the child suck the first day after it is born: where the correction of the male children is peculiarly designed to the fathers, and to the mothers of the girls; the punishment being to hang them by the heels in the smoke: where they circumcise the women: where they eat all sorts of herbs, without other scruple than of the badness of the smell: where all things are open—the finest houses, furnished in the richest manner, without doors, windows, trunks, or chests to lock, a thief being there punished double what they are in other places: where they crack lice with their teeth like monkeys, and abhor to see them killed with one's nails: where in all their lives they neither cut their hair nor pare their nails; and, in another place, pare those of the right hand only, letting the left grow for ornament and bravery: where they suffer the hair on the right side to grow as long as it will, and shave the other; and in the neighboring provinces, some let their hair grow long before, and some behind, shaving close the rest: where parents let out their children, and husbands their wives, to their guests to hire: where a man may get his own mother with child and fathers make use of their own daughters or sons, without scandal: where at their solemn feasts they interchangeably lend their children to one another, without any consideration of nearness of blood. In one place, men feed upon human flesh; in another, 'tis reputed a pious office for a man to kill his father at a certain age; elsewhere, the fathers dispose of their children, while yet in their mothers' wombs, some to be preserved and carefully brought up, and others to be abandoned or made away. Elsewhere the old husbands lend their wives to young men; and in another place they are in common,

without offense; in one place particularly, the women take it for a mark of honor to have as many gay fringed tassels at the bottom of their garment, as they have lain with several men. Moreover, has not custom made a republic of women separately by themselves? has it not put arms into their hands, and made them raise armies and fight battles? And does she not, by her own precept, instruct the most ignorant vulgar, and make them perfect in things which all the philosophy in the world could never beat into the heads of the wisest men? For we know entire nations, where death was not only despised, but entertained with the greatest triumph; where children of seven years old suffered themselves to be whipped to death, without changing countenance; where riches were in such contempt, that the meanest citizen would not have deigned to stoop to take up a purse of crowns. And we know regions, very fruitful in all manner of provisions, where, notwithstanding, the most ordinary diet, and that they are most pleased with, is only bread, cresses, and water. Did not custom, moreover, work that miracle in Chios that, in seven hundred years, it was never known that ever maid or wife committed any act to the prejudice of her honor.

To conclude; there is nothing, in my opinion, that she does not, or may not do; and, therefore, with very good reason it is, that Pindar calls her the queen, and empress of the world.* He that was seen to beat his father, and reproved for so doing, made answer, that it was the custom of their family: that, in like manner his father had beaten his grandfather, his grandfather his great-grandfather, "And this," says he, pointing to his son, "when he comes to my age, shall beat me." And the father, whom the son dragged and hauled along the streets, commanded him to stop at a certain door, for he himself, he said, had dragged his father no farther, that being the utmost limit of the hereditary outrage the sons used to practice upon the fathers in their family. It is as much by custom as infirmity, says Aristotle,† that women tear their hair, bite their nails, and eats coals and earth, and, more by

* Pindar says this of the Law: *Νόμος παντῶν βασιλεύς;* but Herodotus, in citing these words (iii. 38), applies to *νόμος* the sense of custom.

† Moral, Nicomac., vii. 6.

custom than nature, that men abuse themselves with one another.

The laws of conscience, which we pretend to be derived from nature, proceed from custom; every one, having an inward veneration for the opinions and manners approved and received among his own people, cannot, without very great reluctance, depart from them, nor apply himself to them without applause. In times past, when those of Crete would curse any one, they prayed the gods to engage him in some ill custom.* But the principal effect of its power is, so to seize and ensnare us, that it is hardly in us to disengage ourselves from its gripe, or so to come to ourselves, as to consider of and to weigh the things it enjoins. To say the truth, by reason that we suck it in with our milk, and that the face of the world presents itself in this posture to our first sight, it seems as if we were born upon condition to follow on this track; and the common fancies that we find in repute everywhere about us, and infused into our minds with the seed of our fathers, appear to be the most universal and genuine: from whence it comes to pass, that whatever is off the hinges of custom, is believed to be also off the hinges of reason; how unreasonably, for the most part, God knows.

If, as we who study ourselves, have learned to do, every one who hears a good sentence, would immediately consider how it does any way touch his own private concern, every one would find that it was not so much a good saying, as a severe lash to the ordinary stupidity of his own judgment; but men receive the precepts and admonitions of truth, as directed to the common sort, and never to themselves; and instead of applying them to their own manners, do only very ignorantly and unprofitably commit them to memory. But let us return to the empire of custom.

Such people as have been bred up to liberty, and subject to no other dominion but the authority of their own will, look upon all other form of government as monstrous and contrary to nature. Those who are inured to monarchy do the same; and what opportunity soever fortune presents them with to change, even then, when with the greatest difficulties they have disengaged themselves from one master, that was troublesome and grievous to them, they

* Val. Max., vii. 2, ext. 15.

presently run, with the same difficulties, to create another; being unable to take into hatred subjection itself.

'Tis by the mediation of custom, that every one is content with the place where he is planted by nature; and the Highlanders of Scotland no more pant after Touraine, than the Scythians after Thessaly. Darius asking certain Greeks what they would take to assume the custom of the Indians, of eating the dead bodies of their fathers (for that was their use, believing they could not give them a better, nor more noble sepulture, than to bury them in their own bodies), they made answer, that nothing in the world should hire them to do it; but having also tried to persuade the Indians to leave their custom, and, after the Greek manner, to burn the bodies of their fathers, they conceived a still greater horror at the notion.* Every one does the same, for use veils from us the true aspect of things.

> "Nil adeo magnum, nec tam mirabile quidquam
> Principio, quod non minuant mirarier omnes
> Paullatim." †

Taking upon me once to justify something in use among us, and that was received with absolute authority for a great many leagues round about us, and not content, as men commonly do, to establish it only by force of law and example, but inquiring still farther into its origin, I found the foundation so weak, that I who made it my business to confirm others, was very near being dissatisfied myself. 'Tis by this receipt that Plato ‡ undertakes to cure the unnatural and preposterous loves of his time, as one which he esteems of sovereign virtue; namely, that the public opinion condemns them; that the poets, and all other sorts of writers, relate horrible stories of them; a recipe, by virtue of which the most beautiful daughters no more allure their father's lust; nor brothers, of the finest shape and fashion, their sisters' desire; the very fables of Thyestes, Œdipus, and Macareus, having with the harmony of their song, infused

* Herodotus, iii. 38.

† "There is nothing, at first, so grand, so admirable, which, by degrees, people do not regard with less admiration."—LUCRETIUS, ii. 1027.

‡ Laws, viii. 6.

this wholesome opinion and belief into the tender brains of children. Chastity is, in truth, a great and shining virtue, and of which the utility is sufficiently known; but to treat of it, and to set it off in its true value, according to nature, is as hard as 'tis easy to do so according to custom, laws, and precepts. The fundamental and universal reasons are of very obscure and difficult research, and our masters either lightly pass them over, or not daring so much as to touch them, precipitate themselves into the liberty and protection of custom, there puffing themselves out and triumphing to their heart's content: such as will not suffer themselves to be withdrawn from this original source, do yet commit a greater error, and subject themselves to wild opinions; witness Chrysippus * who, in so many of his writings, has strewed the little account he made of incestuous conjunctions, committed with how near relations soever.

Whoever would disengage himself from this violent prejudice of custom, would find several things received with absolute and undoubting opinion, that have no other support than the hoary head and riveled face of ancient usage. But the mask taken off, and things being referred to the decision of truth and reason, he will find his judgment as it were altogether overthrown, and yet restored to a much more sure estate. For example, I shall ask him, what can be more strange than to see a people obliged to obey laws they never understood; bound in all their domestic affairs, as marriages, donations, wills, sales and purchases to rules they cannot possibly know, being neither written nor published in their own language, and of which they are of necessity to purchase both the interpretation and the use? Not according to the ingenious opinion of Isocrates,† who counseled his king to make the traffics and negotiations of his subjects, free, frank, and of profit to them, and their quarrels and disputes burdensome, and laden with heavy impositions and penalties; but, by a prodigious opinion, to make sale of reason itself, and to give to laws a course of merchandise. I think myself obliged to fortune that, as our historians report, it was a Gascon gentleman, a countryman of mine, who first opposed Charlemagne, when he attempted to impose upon us Latin and imperial laws.

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* Sextus Empiricus; Pyrrhon. Hypotyp., i. 14.

† Discourse to Nicocles.

What can be more savage, than to see a nation where, by lawful custom, the office of a judge is bought and sold, where judgments are paid for with ready money, and where justice may legitimately be denied to him that has not wherewithal to pay; a merchandise in so great repute, as in a government to create a fourth estate of wrangling lawyers, to add to the three ancient ones of the church, nobility and people; which fourth estate, having the laws in their own hands, and sovereign power over men's lives and fortunes, makes another body separate from nobility: whence it comes to pass, that there are double laws, those of honor and those of justice, in many things altogether opposite one to another; the nobles as rigorously condemning a lie taken, as the other do a lie revenged: by the law of arms, he shall be degraded from all nobility and honor who puts up with an affront; and by the civil law, he who vindicates his reputation by revenge incurs a capital punishment; he who applies himself to the law for reparation of an offense none to his honor, disgraces himself; and he who does not, is censured and punished by the law. Yet of these two so different things, both of them referring to one head, the one has the charge of peace, the other of war; these have the profit, these the honor; those the wisdom, these the virtue; those the word, these the action; those justice, these valor; those reason, these force; those the long robe, these the short: divided between them.

For what concerns indifferent things, as clothes, who is there seeking to bring them back to their true use, which is the body's service and convenience, and upon which their original grace and fitness depend; for the most fantastic, in my opinion, that can be imagined, I will instance among others, our flat caps, that long tail of velvet that hangs down from our women's heads, with its party-colored trappings; and that vain and futile model of a member we cannot in modesty so much as name, which nevertheless we make show and parade of in public. These considerations, notwithstanding, will not prevail upon any understanding man to decline the common mode; but, on the contrary, methinks, all singular and particular fashions are rather marks of folly and vain affectation, than of sound reason, and that a wise man ought, within, to withdraw and retire his soul from the crowd, and there keep it at liberty and in power to judge freely of things; but, as to externals, abso-

lutely to follow and conform himself to the fashion of the time. Public society has nothing to do with our thoughts, but the rest, as our actions, our labors, our fortunes, and our lives, we are to lend and abandon them to its service, and to the common opinion; as did that good and great Socrates who refused to preserve his life by a disobedience to the magistrate, though a very wicked and unjust one: for it is the rule of rules, the general law of laws, that every one observe those of the place wherein he lives.

*Νόμοις ἕπεσθαι τοῖσιν ἐγχωρίοις καλόν.**

And now to another point. It is a very great doubt, whether any so manifest benefit can accrue from the alteration of a law received, let it be what it will, as there is danger and inconvenience in altering it; forasmuch as government is a structure composed of divers parts and members joined and united together, with so strict connection, that it is impossible to stir so much as one brick or stone, but the whole body will be sensible of it. The legislator of the Thurians † ordained, that whosoever would go about either to abolish an old law, or to establish a new, should present himself with a halter about his neck to the people to the end, that if the innovation he would introduce should not be approved by every one, he might immediately be hanged; and he of the Lacedæmonians employed his life, to obtain from his citizens a faithful promise, that none of his laws should be violated.‡ The Ephorus who so rudely cut the two strings that Phrynis had added to music, never stood to examine whether that addition made better harmony, or that by its means the instrument was more full and complete; it was enough for him to condemn the invention, that it was a novelty, and an alteration of the old fashion. Which also is the meaning of the old rusty sword carried before the magistracy of Marseilles.§

For my own part, I have a great aversion from novelty, what face or what pretense soever it may carry along with it, and have reason, having been an eyewitness of the great

* "It is good to obey the laws of one's country."—*Excerpta ex Trag. Græcis,* Grotio interp., 1626, p. 937.

† Charondas ; Diot Sic., xii. 24.

‡ Lycurgus ; Plutarch, in Vita, c. 22.

§ Val. Max., ii. 6, 7.

evils it has produced. For those for which for so many years have lain so heavy upon us, it is not wholly accountable; but one may say, with color enough, that it has accidentally produced and begotten the mischiefs and ruin that have since happened, both without and against it; it, principally, we are to accuse for these disorders.

"Heu! patior telis vulnera facta meis." *

They who give the first shock to a state, are almost naturally the first overwhelmed in its ruin; the fruits of public commotion are seldom enjoyed by him who was the first motor; he beats and disturbs the water for another's net. The unity and contexture of this monarchy, of this grand edifice, having been ripped and torn in her old age, by this thing called innovation, has since laid open a rent, and given sufficient admittance to such injuries: the royal majesty with greater difficulty declines from the summit to the middle, then it falls and tumbles headlong from the middle to the bottom. But if the inventors do the greater mischief, the imitators are more vicious, to follow examples of which they have felt and punished both the horror and the offense. And if there can be any degree of honor in ill-doing, these last must yield to the others the glory of contriving, and the courage of making the first attempt. All sorts of new disorders easily draw, from this primitive and ever-flowing fountain, examples and precedents to trouble and discompose our government; we read in our very laws, made for the remedy of this first evil, the beginning and pretenses of all sorts of wicked enterprises; and that befals us, which Thucydides said of the civil wars of his time,† that, in favor of public vices, they gave them new and more plausible names for their excuse, sweetening and disguising their true titles; which must be done, forsooth, to reform our conscience and belief: "*honesta oratio est;*"‡ but the best pretence for innovation is of very dangerous consequence: "*adeo nihil motum ex antiquo probabile est.*"§ And freely to speak my thoughts,

* "Alas! the wounds were made by my own weapons."—OVID, *Ep. Phyll. Demophoonti*, vers. 48.

† Book iii. c. 52.

‡ "Fine words truly."—TER., *And.*, i. 1, 114.

§ "We are ever wrong in changing ancients ways."—LIVY, xxxiv. 54.

it argues a strange self-love and great presumption to be so fond of one's own opinions, that a public peace must be overthrown to establish them, and to introduce so many inevitable mischiefs, and so dreadful a corruption of manners, as a civil war and the mutations of state consequent to it, always bring in their train, and to introduce them, in a thing of so high concern, into the bowels of one's own country. Can there be worse husbandry than to set up so many certain and knowing vices against errors that are only contested and disputable? And are there any worse sorts of vices than those committed against a man's own conscience, and the natural light of his own reason? The senate, upon the dispute between it and the people about the administration of their religion, was bold enough to return this evasion for current pay: "*Ad deos id magis, quam ad se, pertinere: ipsos visuros, ne sacra sua polluantur;*"* according to what the oracle answered to those of Delphos who, fearing to be invaded by the Persians, in the Median war, inquired of Apollo, how they should dispose of the holy treasure of his temple; whether they should hide, or remove it to some other place? He returned them answer, that they should stir nothing from thence, and only take care of themselves, for he was sufficient to look to what belonged to him.†

The Christian religion has all the marks of the utmost utility and justice: but none more manifest than the severe injunction it lays indifferently upon all to yield absolute obedience to the civil magistrate, and to maintain and defend the laws. Of which, what a wonderful example has the divine wisdom left us, that, to establish the salvation of mankind, and to conduct His glorious victory over death and sin, would do it after no other way, but at the mercy of our ordinary forms of justice, subjecting the progress and issue of so high and so salutiferous an effect, to the blindness and injustice of our customs and observances; sacrificing the innocent blood of so many of His elect, and so long a loss of so many years, to the maturing of this inestimable fruit? There is a vast difference between the

* "Those things more belong to the gods to determine than to them; let the gods, therefore, take care that their sacred mysteries were not profaned."—LIVY, x. 6.

† Herodotus, viii. 36

case of one who follows the forms and laws of his country, and of another who will undertake to regulate and change them; of whom the first pleads simplicity, obedience, and example for his excuse, who, whatever he shall do, it cannot be imputed to malice; 'tis at the worst but misfortune: "*Quis est enim, quem non moveat clarissimis monumentis testata consignataque antiquisas?*" * besides what Isocrates says,† that defect is nearer allied to moderation than excess: the other is a much more ruffling gamester; for whosoever shall take upon him to choose and alter, usurps the authority of judging, and should look well about him, and make it his business to discern clearly the defect of what he would abolish, and the virtue of what he is about to introduce.

This so vulgar consideration, is that which settled me in my station, and kept even my most extravagant and ungoverned youth under the rein, so as not to burden my shoulders with so great a weight, as to render myself responsible for a science of that importance, and in this to dare what in my better and more mature judgment I durst not do in the most easy and indifferent things I had been instructed in, and wherein the temerity of judging is of no consequence at all; it seeming to me very unjust to go about to subject public and established customs and institutions to the weakness and instability of a private and particular fancy (for private reason has but a private jurisdiction), and to attempt that upon the divine, which no government will endure a man should do, upon the civil laws; with which, though human reason has much more commerce than with the other, yet are they sovereignly judged by their own proper judges, and the extreme sufficiency serves only to expound and set forth the law and custom received, and neither to wrest it, nor to introduce anything of innovation. If, sometimes, the divine providence has gone beyond the rules to which it has necessarily bound and obliged us men, it is not to give us any dispensation to do the same; those are masterstrokes of the divine hand, which we are not to imitate,

* "For who is there that antiquity, sealed and attested with so many glorious monuments, cannot move?"—CICERO, *De Divin.*, i. 40.

† Ad Nicocl., p. 21.

but to admire, and extraordinary examples, marks of express and particular purposes, of the nature of miracles, presented before us for manifestations of its almightiness, equally above both our rules and force, which it would be folly and impiety to attempt to represent and imitate; and that we ought not to follow, but to contemplate with the greatest reverence: acts of his personage, and not for us. Cotta very opportunely declares: "*Quum de religione agitur, Ti. Coruncanium, P. Scipionem, P. Scævolam pontifices maximos, non Zenonem, aut Cleanthem, aut Chrysippum, sequor.*"* God knows in the present quarrel of our civil war, where there are a hundred articles to dash out and to put in, great and very considerable, how many there are who can truly boast they have exactly and perfectly weighed and understood the grounds and reasons of the one and the other party; 'tis a number, if they make any number, that would be able to give us very little disturbance. But what becomes of all the rest, under what ensigns do they march, in what quarter do they lie? Theirs have the same effect with other weak and ill-applied medicines; they have only set the humors they would purge more violently in work, stirred and exasperated by the conflict, and left them still behind. The potion was too weak to purge, but strong enough to weaken us; so that it does not work, but we keep it still in our bodies, and reap nothing from the operation but intestine gripes and dolors.

So it is, nevertheless, that Fortune, still reserving her authority in defiance of whatever we are able to do or say, sometimes presents us with a necessity so urgent, that 'tis requisite the laws should a little yield and give way; and when one opposes the increase of an innovation that thus intrudes itself by violence, to keep a man's self in so doing in all places and in all things within bounds and rules against those who have the power, and to whom all things are lawful that may any way serve to advance their design, who have no other law nor rule but what serves best to their own purpose, 'tis a dangerous obligation and an intolerable inequality:

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* "When matter of religion is in question, I am governed by T. Coruncanius, P. Scipio, P. Scævola, the high priests, and not by Zeno, Cleanthes, or Chrysippus.—CICERO, *De Natura Deor.* iii.2.

"Aditum nocendi perfido præstat fides,"*

forasmuch as the ordinary discipline of a healthful state does not provide against these extraordinary accidents; it presupposes a body that supports itself in its principal members and offices, and a common consent to its obedience and observation. A legitimate proceeding is cold, heavy, and constrained, and not fit to make head against a headstrong and unbridled proceeding. 'Tis known to be, to this day, cast in the dish of those two great men, Octavius and Cato, in the two civil wars of Sylla and Cæsar, that they would rather suffer their country to undergo the last extremities, than relieve their fellow-citizens at the expense of its laws, or be guilty of any innovation; for, in truth, in these last necessities, where there is no other remedy, it would, peradventure, be more discreetly done to stoop and yield a little to receive the blow, than, by opposing without possibility of doing good, to give occasion to violence to trample all under foot; and better to make the laws do what they can when they cannot do what they would. After this manner did he † who suspended them for four-and-twenty hours, and he who, for once, shifted a day in the calendar, and that other ‡ who of the month of June made a second of May. The Lacedæmonians themselves, who were so religious observers of the laws of their country, being straitened by one of their own edicts, by which it was expressly forbidden to choose the same man twice to be admiral; and on the other side, their affairs necessarily requiring that Lysander should again take upon him that command, they made one Aratus admiral, 'tis true, but withal, Lysander went superintendent of the navy; and, by the same subtlety, one of their ambassadors being sent to the Athenians to obtain the revocation of some decree, and Pericles remonstrating to him, that it was forbidden to take away the tablet wherein a law had once been engrossed, he advised him to turn it only; that being not forbidden; and Plutarch commends Philopœmen, that being born to command, he knew how to do

* "Putting faith in a treacherous person, opens the door to harm.—SENECA, in *Œdip.*, act iii. verse 686.

† Agesilaus. ‡ Alexander the Great.

it, not only according to the laws but also to overrule even the laws themselves, when the public necessity so required.

CHAPTER XXIII.

VARIOUS EVENTS FROM THE SAME COUNSEL.

JACQUES AMIOT, grand almoner of France, one day related to me this story, much to the honor of a prince of ours (and ours he was upon several very good accounts, though originally of foreign extraction),* that in the time of our first commotions at the siege of Rouen,† this prince having been advertised by the queen-mother of a conspiracy against his life, and in her letters particular notice being given him of the person who was to execute the business (who was a gentleman of Anjou, or of Main, and who to this effect ordinarily frequented this prince's house) discovered not a syllable of this intelligence to any one whatever; but going, the next day, to St. Catherine's Mount, from which our battery played against the town (for it was during the time of the siege), and having in company with him the said lord almoner, and another bishop, he saw this gentleman, who had been denoted to him, and presently sent for him; to whom, being come before him, seeing him already pale and trembling with the conscience of his guilt, he thus said, "Monsieur," such a one, "you guess what I have to say to you; your countenance discovers it; 'tis in vain to disguise your practice, for I am so well informed of your business, that it will but make worse for you, to go about to conceal or deny it: you know very well such and such passages" (which were the most secret circumstances of his conspiracy), "and therefore be sure, as you tender your own life, to confess to me the whole truth of the design." The poor man seeing himself thus trapped and convicted (for the whole business had been discovered to the queen by one of the accomplices), was in such a taking, he knew not

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* The Duc de Guise, surnamed Le Balafré. † In 1562.

what to do; but, folding his hands, to beg and sue for mercy, he threw himself at his prince's feet, who taking him up, proceeded to say, "Come sir; tell me, have I at any time done you offense? or have I, through private hatred or malice, offended any kinsman or friend of yours? It is not above three weeks that I have known you; what inducement, then, could move you to attempt my death?" To which the gentleman with a trembling voice, replied, "That it was no particular grudge he had to his person, but the general interest and concern of his party, and that he had been put upon it by some who had persuaded him it would be a meritorious act, by any means, to extirpate so great and so powerful an enemy of their religion." "Well," said the prince, "I will now let you see how much more charitable the religion is that I maintain, than that which you profess: yours has counseled you to kill me, without hearing me speak, and without ever having given you any cause of offense; and mine commands me to forgive you, convict as you are, by your own confession of a design to kill me without reason.* Get you gone: let me see you no more; and if you are wise, choose, henceforward, honester men for your counselors in your designs."†

The Emperor Augustus‡ being in Gaul, had certain information of a conspiracy L. Cinna was contriving against him; he therefore resolved to make him an example; and, to that end, sent to summon his friends to meet the next morning in counsel. But the night between he passed in great unquietness of mind, considering that he was about to put to death a young man, of an illustrious family, and nephew to the great Pompey, and this made him break out into several passionate complainings. "What, then," said he, "is it possible that I am to live in perpetual anxiety and alarm, and suffer my would-be assassin, meantime, to walk abroad at liberty? Shall he go unpunished, after having conspired against my life, a life that I have hitherto defended in so many civil wars, in so many battles by land and by sea? And after having settled the universal peace of the whole world, shall this man be pardoned, who has

* Imitated by Voltaire. See Nodier, *Questions*, p. 165.

† Dampmartin, La Fortune de la Cour, liv. ii. p. 139.

‡ This story is taken from Seneca, De Clementiâ, i. 9.

conspired not only to murder, but to sacrifice me?"—for the conspiracy was to kill him at sacrifice. After which, remaining for some time silent, he began again, in louder tones, and exclaimed against himself saying: "Why livest thou, if it be for the good of so many that thou shouldst die? must there be no end of thy revenges and cruelties? Is thy life of so great value that so many mischiefs must be done to preserve it?" His wife Livia, seeing him in this perplexity: "Will you take a woman's counsel?" said she. "Do as the physicians do, who when the ordinary recipes will do no good, make trial of the contrary. By severity you have hitherto prevailed nothing; Lepidus has followed Salvidienus; Murena, Lepidus; Cæpio, Murena, Egnatius, Cæpio. Begin now, and try how sweetness and clemency will succeed. Cinna is convict; forgive him, he will never henceforth have the heart to hurt thee, and it will be an act to thy glory." Augustus was well pleased that he had met with an advocate of his own humor; wherefore, having thanked his wife, and, in the morning, countermanded his friends he had before summoned to council, he commanded Cinna all alone to be brought to him; who being accordingly come, and a chair by his appointment set him, having ordered all the rest out of the room, he spake to him after this manner: "In the first place, Cinna, I demand of thee patient audience; do not interrupt me in what I am about to say, and I will afterward give thee time and leisure to answer. Thou knowest, Cinna,* that having taken thee prisoner in the enemy's camp, and thou an enemy, not only so become, but born so, I gave thee thy life, restore to thee all thy goods, and, finally, put thee in so good a posture, by my bounty of living well and at thy ease, that the victorious envied the conquered. The sacerdotal office which thou madest suit to me for, I conferred upon thee, after having denied it to others, whose fathers have ever borne arms in my service. After so many obligations, thou hast undertaken to kill me." At which Cinna crying out that he was very far from entertaining any so wicked a thought: "Thou dost not keep thy promise, Cinna," continued Augustus, "that thou

* This passage, borrowed from Seneca, has been paraphrased in verse by Corneille. See Nodier, Questions de la Littérature légale, 1828, pp. 7, 160. The monologue of Augustus in this chapter is also from Seneca. *Ibid.*, 164.

wouldst not interrupt me. Yes, thou hast undertaken to murder me in such a place, on such a day, in such and such company, and in such a manner." At which words, seeing Cinna astounded and silent, not upon the account of his promise so to be, but interdict with the weight of his conscience: "Why," proceeded Augustus, "to what end wouldst thou do it? Is it to be emperor? Believe me, the republic is in very ill condition, if I am the only man between thee and the empire. Thou art not able so much as to defend thy own house, and but t'other day was baffled in a suit, by the opposed interest of a mere manumitted slave. What, hast thou neither means nor power in any other thing, but only to undertake Cæsar? I quit the throne, if there be no other than I to obstruct thy hopes. Canst thou believe that Paulus, that Fabius, that the Cossii and the Servilii, and so many noble Romans, not only so in title, but who by their virtue, honor their nobility, would suffer or endure thee?" After this, and a great deal more that he said to him (for he was two long hours in speaking), "Now go, Cinna, go thy way: I give thee that life as traitor and parricide which I before gave thee in the quality of an enemy. Let friendship from this time forward begin between us, and let us show whether I have given, or thou hast received thy life with the better faith;" and so departed from him. Some time after, he preferred him to the consular dignity, complaining that he had not the confidence to demand it; had him ever after for his very great friend, and was, at last, made by him sole heir to all his estate. Now, from the time of this accident which befel Augustus in the fortieth year of his age, he never had any conspiracy or attempt against him, and so reaped the due reward of this his so generous clemency. But it did not so happen with our prince, his moderation and mercy not so securing him, but that he afterward fell into the toils of the like treason* so vain and futile a thing is human prudence; throughout all our projects, counsels and precautions. Fortune will still be mistress of events.

We repute physicians fortunate when they hit upon a lucky cure, as if there was no other art but theirs that could not stand upon its own legs, and whose foundations

* The Duc de Guise was assassinated in 1563 by Poltrot.

are too weak to support itself upon its own basis; as if no other art stood in need of Fortune's hand to help it. For my part, I think of physic as much good or ill as any one would have me: for, thanks be to God, we have no traffic together. I am of a quite contrary humor to other men, for I always despise it; but when I am sick, instead of recanting, or entering into composition with it, I begin, moreover, to hate and fear it, telling them who importune me to take physic, that at all events they must give me time to recover my strength and health, that I may be the better able to support and encounter the violence and danger of their potions. I let Nature work, supposing her to be sufficiently armed with teeth and claws to defend herself from the assaults of infirmity, and to uphold that contexture, the dissolution of which she flies and abhors. I am afraid, lest, instead of assisting her when close grappled and struggling with disease, I should assist her adversary, and burden her still more with work to do.

Now, I say, that not in physic only, but in other more certain arts, Fortune has a very great part. The poetic raptures, the flights of fancy, that ravish and transport the author out of himself, why should we not attribute them to his good fortune, since he himself confesses that they exceed his sufficiency and force, and acknowledges them to proceed from something else than himself, and that he has them no more in his power than the orators say they have those extraordinary motions and agitations that sometimes push them beyond their designs. It is the same in painting, where touches shall sometimes slip from the hand of the painter, so surpassing both his conception and his art, as to beget his own admiration and astonishment. But fortune does yet more evidently manifest the share she has in all things of this kind, by the graces and elegances we find in them, not only beyond the intention, but even without the knowledge of the workman: a competent reader often discovers in other men's writings other perfections than the author himself either intended or perceived, a richer sense and more quaint expression.

As to military enterprises, every one sees how great a hand fortune has in them. Even in our counsels and deliberations there must, certainly, be something of chance and good-luck mixed with human prudence; for all that our wisdom can do alone is no great matter; the more

piercing, quick, and apprehensive it is, the weaker it finds itself, and is by so much more apt to mistrust itself. I am of Sylla's opinion;* and when I closely examine the most glorious exploits of war, I perceive, methinks, that those who carry them on make use of counsel and debate only for custom's sake, and leave the best part of the enterprise to Fortune, and, relying upon her aid, transgress, at every turn, the bounds of military conduct and the rules of war. There happen, sometimes, fortuitous alacrities and strange furies in their deliberations, that for the most part prompt them to follow the worst grounded counsels, and swell their courage beyond the limits of reason. Whence it happened that several of the great captains of old, to justify those rash resolutions, have been fain to tell their soldiers, that they were invited to such attempts by some inspiration, some sign and prognostic.

Wherefore, in this doubt and uncertainty, that the shortsightedness of human wisdom to see and choose the best (by reason of the difficulties that the various accidents and circumstances of things bring along with them) perplexes us withal, the surest way in my opinion, did no other consideration invite us to it, is to pitch upon that wherein is the greatest appearance of honesty and justice; and, not being certain of the shortest, to keep the straightest and most direct way: as in the two examples I have just given, there is no question but it was more noble and generous in him who had received the offense to pardon it than to do otherwise. If the former† miscarried in it, he is not, nevertheless, to be blamed for his good intention; neither does any one know, if he had proceeded otherwise, whether by that means he had avoided the end his destiny had appointed for him; and he had, moreover, lost the glory of so humane an act.

You will read in history of many who have been in such apprehension, that the most part have taken the course to meet and anticipate conspiracies against them by punishment and revenge; but I find very few who have reaped any advantage by this proceeding; witness so many Roman

* "Who freed his great deeds from envy, by ever attributing them to his good fortune, and finally by surnaming himself Faustus, the lucky."—PLUTARCH, "How far a Man may praise Himself," c. 9.

† The Duc de Guise.

emperors. Whoever finds himself in this danger, ought not to expect much either from his vigilance or power; for how hard a thing is it for a man to secure himself from an enemy, who lies concealed under the countenance of the most assiduous friend we have, and to discover and know the wills and inward thoughts of those who are in our personal service. 'Tis to much purpose to have a guard of foreigners about one, and to be always fenced about with a pale of armed men; whosoever despises his own life is always master of that of another man.* And, moreover, this continual suspicion, that makes a prince jealous of all the world, must of necessity be a strange torment to him. Therefore it was that Dion, being advertised that Callippus watched all opportunities to take away his life, had never the heart to inquire more particularly into it, saying that he had rather die than live in that misery, that he must continually stand upon his guard, not only against his enemies, but his friends also; † which Alexander much more vividly and more roundly manifested in effect, when, having notice by a letter from Parmenio that Philip, his most beloved physician, was by Darius' money corrupted to poison him, at the same time that he gave the letter to Philip to read, drank off the potion he had brought him.‡ Was not this to express a resolution, that if his friends had a mind to despatch him out of the world, he was willing to give them opportunity to do it? This prince is, indeed, the sovereign pattern of hazardous actions; but I do not know whether there be another passage in his life, wherein there is so much firm courage as in this, nor so illustrious an image of the beauty and greatness of his mind.

Those who preach to princes so circumspect and vigilant a jealousy distrust, under color of security, preach to them ruin and dishonor; nothing noble can be performed without danger. I know a person, naturally of a very great daring and enterprising courage, whose good fortune is continually marred by such persuasions, that he keep himself close surrounded by his friends, that he must not hearken to any reconciliation with his ancient enemies, that he must stand aloof, and not trust his person in hands

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* Seneca, Ep , 4. † Plutarch, Apothegms.

‡ Quintus Curtius, iii. 6.

stronger than his own, what promises or offers soever they may make him, or what advantages soever he may see before him. And I know another, who has unexpectedly advanced his fortunes by following a clear contrary advice.

Courage, the reputation and glory of which men seek with so greedy an appetite, presents itself, when need requires, as magnificently in cuerpo as in full armor; in a closet, as in a camp; with arms pendant, as with arms raised.

This over-circumspect and wary prudence is a mortal enemy to all high and generous exploits. Scipio, to sound Syphax's intention, leaving his army, abandoning Spain, not yet secure nor well settled in his new conquest, could pass over into Africa in two small ships, to commit himself in an enemy's country, to the power of a barbarian king, to a faith untried and unknown, without obligation, without hostage, under the sole security of the grandeur of his own courage, his good fortune, and the promise of his high hopes.* "*Habita fides ipsam plerumque fidem obligat.*" † In a life of ambition and glory, it is necessary to hold a stiff rein upon suspicion: fear and distrust invite and draw on offense. The most mistrustful of our kings ‡ established his affairs principally by voluntarily committing his life and liberty into his enemies' hands, by that action manifesting that he had absolute confidence in them, to the end they might repose as great an insurance in him. Cæsar only opposed the authority of his countenance and the haughty sharpness of his rebukes to his mutinous legions in arms against him:

> "Stetit aggere fultus
> Cespitis, intrepidus vultu: meruitque timeri,
> Nil metuens." §

But it is true, withal, that this undaunted assurance is not to be represented in its simple and entire form, but by such whom the apprehension of death, and the worst that can happen, does not terrify and affright; for to represent

* Livy, xxviii. 17.

† "Trust often obliges fidelity."—*Idem.* xxii. 22.

‡ Louis XI. See Comines, Mem., lib. ii. c. 5-7.

§ "He stood on a mound, his face all intrepid, and merited to be feared, he fearing nothing."—LUCAN, v. 316.

a pretended resolution with a pale and doubtful countenance and trembling limbs, for the service of an important reconciliation, will effect nothing to purpose. 'Tis an excellent way to gain the heart and will of another, to submit and intrust one's self to him provided it appear to be freely done, and without the constraint of necessity, and in such a condition that a man manifestly does it out of a pure and entire confidence in the party, at least, with a countenance clear from any cloud of suspicion. I saw, when I was a boy, a gentleman, who was governor of a great city, upon occasion of a popular commotion and fury, not knowing what other course to take, go out of a place of very great strength and security, and commit himself to the mercy of the seditious rabble, in hopes by that means to appease the tumult before it grew to a more formidable head; but it was ill for him that he did so, for he was there miserably slain. But I am not, nevertheless, of opinion that he committed so great an error in going out as men commonly reproach his memory withal, as he did in choosing a gentle and submissive way for the effecting his purpose, and in endeavoring to quiet this storm, rather by obeying than commanding, and by entreaty rather than remonstrance; and I am inclined to believe that a gracious severity, with a soldier-like way of commanding, full of security and confidence, suitable to the quality of his person, and the dignity of his command, would have succeeded better with him; at least, he had perished with greater decency and reputation. There is nothing so little to be expected or hoped for from this many-headed monster, in its fury, as humanity and good-nature; it is much more capable of reverence and fear. I should also reproach him, that having taken a resolution (in my judgment rather brave than rash) to expose himself, weak and naked, in this tempestuous sea of enraged madmen, he ought to have stuck to his text, and not for an instant to have abandoned the high part he had undertaken; whereas, coming to discover his danger nearer hand, and his nose happening to bleed, he again changed that demiss and fawning countenance he had at first put on, into another of fear and amazement, filling his voice with entreaties and his eyes with tears, and, endeavoring so to withdraw and secure his person, that carriage more inflamed their fury, and soon brought the effects of it upon him.

It was upon a time intended that there should be a general muster of several troops in arms (and that is the most proper occasion of secret revenges, and there is no place where they can be executed with greater safety), and there were public and manifest appearances, that there was no safe coming for some, whose principal and necessary office it was to review them. Whereupon, a consultation was held, and several counsels were proposed, as in a case that was very nice, and of great difficulty; and, moreover, of grave consequence. Mine, among the rest, was, that they should by all means avoid giving any sign of suspicion, but that the officers who were most in danger should boldly go, and with cheerful and erect countenances ride boldly and confidently through the ranks, and that instead of sparing fire (which the counsels of the major part tended to) they should entreat the captains to command the soldiers to give round and full volleys in honor of the spectators, and not to spare their powder. This was accordingly done, and served so good use, as to please and gratify the suspected troops, and thenceforward to beget a mutual and wholesome confidence and intelligence among them.

I look upon Julius Cæsar's way of winning men to him as the best and finest that can be put in practice. First, he tried by clemency to make himself beloved even by his very enemies, contenting himself, in detected conspiracies, only publicly to declare, that he was pre-acquainted with them; which being done, he took a noble resolution to await without solicitude or fear, whatever might be the event, wholly resigning himself to the protection of the gods and fortune: for, questionless, in this state he was at the time when he was killed.

A stranger having publicly said, that he could teach Dionysius, the tyrant of Syracuse, an infallible way to find out and discover all the conspiracies his subjects could contrive against him, if he would give him a good sum of money for his pains, Dionysius, hearing of it, caused the man to be brought to him, that he might learn an art so necessary to his preservation. The man made answer, that all the art he knew, was, that he should give him a talent, and afterward boast that he had obtained a singular secret from him. Dionysius liked the invention, and accordingly caused six hundred crowns to be counted out to him. * It

* Plutarch, Apothegms.

was not likely he should give so great a sum to a person unknown, but upon the account of some extraordinary discovery, and the belief of this served to keep his enemies in awe. Princes, however, do wisely to publish the informations they receive of all the practices against their lives, to possess men with an opinion they have so good intelligence that nothing can be plotted against them, but they have present notice of it. The duke of Athens did a great many foolish things in the establishment of his new tyranny over Florence: but this especially was most notable, that having received the first intimation of the conspiracies the people were hatching against him, from Matteo di Moroso, one of the conspirators, he presently put him to death, to suppress that rumor, that it might not be thought any of the city disliked his government.

I remember I have formerly read a story* of some Roman of great quality who, flying the tyranny of the Triumvirate, had a thousand times by the subtlety of as many inventions escaped from falling into the hands of those that pursued him. It happened one day that a troop of horse, which was sent out to take him, passed close by a brake where he was squat, and missed very narrowly of spying him; but he considering, at this point, the pains and difficulties wherein he had so long continued, to evade the strict and incessant searches that were every day made for him, the little pleasure he could hope for in such a kind of life, and how much better it was for him to die once for all, than to be perpetually at this pass, he started from his seat, called them back, showed them his form,† and voluntarily delivered himself up to their cruelty, by that means to free both himself and them from further trouble. To invite a man's enemies to come and cut his throat, seems a resolution a little extravagant and odd; and yet I think he did better to take that course, than to live in continual feverish fear of an accident for which there was no cure. But seeing all the remedies a man can apply to such a disease, are full of unquietness and uncertainty, 'tis better with a manly courage to prepare one's self for the worst that can happen, and to extract some consolation from this, that we are not certain the thing we fear will ever come to pass.

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* In Appian's Civil Wars, book iv.

† *i.e.*, as of a squatting hare.

CHAPTER XXIV.

OF PEDANTRY.

I WAS often, when a boy, wonderfully concerned to see, in the Italian farces, a pedant always brought in for the fool of the play, and that the title of magister was in no greater reverence among us: for being delivered up to their tuition, what could I do less than be jealous of their honor and reputation? I sought, indeed, to excuse them by the natural incompatibility between the vulgar sort and men of a finer thread, both in judgment and knowledge, forasmuch as they go a quite contrary way to one another: but in this, the thing I most stumbled at was, that the finest gentlemen were those who most despised them; witness our famous poet Du Bellay—

"Mais je hay par sur tout un sçavoir pedantesque." *

And 'twas so in former times; for Plutarch says, that Greek and Scholar were terms of reproach and contempt among the Romans. But since, with the better experience of age, I find they had very great reason so to do, and that "*magis magnos clericos non sunt magis magnos sapientes.*"† But whence it should come to pass, that a a mind enriched with the knowledge of so many things should not become more quick and sprightly, and that a gross and vulgar understanding should lodge within it, without correcting and improving itself, all the discourses and judgments of the greatest minds the world ever had, I am yet to seek. To admit so many foreign conceptions, so great and so high fancies, it is necessary (as a young lady, one of the greatest princesses of the kingdom, said to me once, speaking of a certain person) that a man's own brain must be crowded and squeezed together into a less compass, to make room for the others; I should be apt to conclude, that as plants are suffocated and drowned with too much nourishment, and lamps with too much oil, so with too much study and matter is the active part of the understanding which, being embarrassed, and confounded

* "Of all things I hate pedantic learning"—DU BELLAY.

† "The greatest clerks are not the wisest men."—A proverb given in Rabelais' Gargantua, i. 39.

with a great diversity of things, loses the force and power to disengage itself, and, by the pressure of this weight, is bowed, subjected and doubled up. But it is quite otherwise; for our soul stretches and dilates itself proportionably as it fills; and in the examples of elder times, we see, quite contrary, men very proper for public business, great captains, and great statesmen, very learned withal.

And, as to the philosophers, a sort of men remote from all public affairs, they have been sometimes also despised by the comic liberty of their times; their opinions and manners making them appear to men of another sort ridiculous. Would you make them judges of a lawsuit, of the actions of men? they are ready to take it upon them, and straight begin to examine if there be life, if there be motion, if man be any other than an ox;* what it is to do and to suffer? what animals, law and justice are? Do they speak of the magistrate, or to him, 'tis with a rude, irreverent, and indecent liberty. Do they hear their prince, or a king commended, they make no more of him than of a shepherd, goatherd, or neatherd: a lazy Coridon, occupied in milking and shearing his herds and flocks, but more rudely and harshly than the herd or shepherd himself. Do you repute any man the greater for being lord of two thousand acres of land? they laugh at such a pitiful pittance, as laying claim themselves to the whole world for their possession. Do you boast of your nobility, as being descended from seven rich successive ancestors? they look upon you with an eye of contempt, as men who have not a right idea of the universal image of nature, and that do not consider how many predecessors every one of us has had, rich, poor, kings, slaves, Greeks, and barbarians; and though you were the fiftieth descendant from Hercules, they look upon it as a great vanity, so highly to value this, which is only a gift of fortune. And 'twas so the vulgar sort contemned them, as men ignorant of the most elemen-

* "If Montaigne has copied all this from Plato's "Theatetes," p. 127, F. (as it is plain by all which he has added immediately after, that he has taken it from that dialogue), he has grossly mistaken Plato's sentiment, who says here no more than this, that the philosopher is so ignorant of what his neighbor does, that he scarce knows whether he is a man, or some other animal: *τὸν τοῖουτον ὁ μὲν πλησίον καὶ ὁ γείτων λέληθεν, οὐ μονὸν ὅτι πεαττει, ἀλλὰ λίγου καὶ εἐ ἀνθρωπος ἐστιν ἤ τι ἄλλο θρέμμα.*"—COSTE.

tary and ordinary things; as presumptuous and insolent.*

But this Platonic picture is far different from that these pedants are presented by. Those were envied for raising themselves above the common sort, for despising the ordinary actions and offices of life, for having assumed a particular and inimitable way of living, and for using a certain method of high-flight and obsolete language, quite different from the ordinary way of speaking: but these are contemned as being as much below the usual form, as incapable of public employment, as leading a life and conforming themselves to the mean and vile manners of the vulgar:

"Odi homines ignava opera, philosopha sententia." †

For what concerns the philosophers, as I have said, if they were great in science, they were yet much greater in action. And, as it is said of the geometrician of Syracuse,‡ who having been disturbed from his contemplation to put some of his skill in practice for the defense of his country, that he suddenly set on foot dreadful and prodigious engines, that wrought effects beyond all human expectation; himself, notwithstanding, disdaining all this handiwork, and thinking in this he had played the mere mechanic, and violated the dignity of his art, of which these performances of his he accounted but trivial experiments and playthings: so they, whenever they have been put upon the proof of action, have been seen to fly to so high a pitch, as made it very well appear their souls were marvelously elevated, and enriched by the knowledge of things. But some of them seeing the reins of government in the hands of incapable men, have avoided all management of political affairs; and he who demanded of Crates, how long it was necessary to philosophize, received this answer: "Till our armies are no more commanded by fools." § Heraclitus resigned the royalty to his brother; and, to the Ephesians, who reproached him that he spent

* See preceding note.

† "I hate men who jabber about philosophy, but do nothing."—PACUVIUS, *ap. Gellium*, xiii. 8.

‡ Archimedes.

§ Diogenes Laertius, vi. 92.

his time in playing with children before the temple: "Is it not better," said he, "to do so, than to sit at the helm of affairs in your company?"* Others having their imagination advanced above the world and fortune, have looked upon the tribunals of justice, and even the thrones of kings, as paltry and contemptible; insomuch, that Empedocles refused the royalty that the Agrigentines offered to him.† Thales, once inveighing in discourse against the pains and care men put themselves to to become rich, was answered by one in the company, that he did like the fox, who found fault with what he could not obtain. Whereupon, he had a mind, for the jest's sake, to show them to the contrary; and having, for this occasion, made a muster of all his wits, wholly to employ them in the service of profit and gain, he set a traffic on foot, which in one year brought him in so great riches, that the most experienced in that trade could hardly in their whole lives, with all their industry, have raked so much together.‡ That which Aristotle reports of some who called both him and Anaxagoras, and others of their profession, wise but not prudent, in not applying their study to more profitable things—though I do not well digest this verbal distinction—that will not, however, serve to excuse my pedants, for to see the low and necessitous fortune wherewith they are content, we have rather reason to pronounce that they are neither wise nor prudent.

But letting this first reason alone, I think it better to say, that this evil proceeds from their applying themselves the wrong way to the study of the sciences; and that, after the manner we are instructed, it is no wonder if neither the scholars nor the masters become, though more learned, ever the wiser, or more able. In plain truth, the cares and expense our parents are at in our education, point at nothing, but to furnish our heads with knowledge; but not a word of judgment and virtue. Cry out, of one that passes by, to the people: "Oh, what a learned man!" and of another, "Oh, what a good man!"§ they will

* Idem, ix. 63.

† Idem, Empedocles, viii. 63.

‡ Diogenes Laertius, Thales, i 26; Cicero, De Divin., i. 49.

§ Translated from Seneca, Ep., 88.

not fail to turn their eyes, and address their respect to the former. There should then be a third crier, "Oh, the blockheads!" Men are apt presently to inquire, does such a one understand Greek or Latin? Is he a poet? or does he write in prose? But whether he be grown better or more discreet, which are qualities of principal concern, these are never thought of. We should rather examine, who is better learned, than who is more learned.

We only labor to stuff the memory, and leave the conscience and the understanding unfurnished and void. Like birds who fly abroad to forage for grain, and bring it home in the beak, without tasting it themselves, to feed their young; so our pedants go picking knowledge here and there, out of books, and hold it at the tongue's end, only to spit it out and distribute it abroad. And here I cannot but smile to think how I have paid myself in showing the foppery of this kind of learning, who myself am so manifest an example; for, do I not the same thing throughout almost this whole composition? I go here and there, culling out of several books the sentences that best please me, not to keep them (for I have no memory to retain them in), but to transplant them into this; where, to say the truth, they are no more mine than in their first places. We are, I conceive, knowing only in present knowledge, and not at all in what is past, no more than in that which is to come. But the worst on't is, their scholars and pupils are no better nourished by this kind of inspiration; and it makes no deeper impression upon them, but passes from hand to hand, only to make a show, to be tolerable company, and to tell pretty stories, like a counterfeit coin in counters, of no other use or value but to reckon with, or to set up at cards. "*Apud alios loqui didicerunt, non ipsi secum.*" * "*Non est loquendum, sed gubernandum.*" † Nature, to show that there is nothing barbarous where she has the sole conduct, oftentimes, in nations where art has the least to do, causes productions of wit, such as may rival the greatest effects of art whatever. In relation to what I am now speaking of, the Gascon

* "They have learned to speak from others, not from themselves." —CICERO, *Tusc. Quæ.*, v. 36.

† "Speaking is not so necessary as governing."—SENECA, *Ep.* 108.

proverb, derived from a cornpipe, is very quaint and subtle. "*Bouha prou bouha, mas a remuda lous dits qu'em.*"* We can say, Cicero says thus; these were the manners of Plato; these are the very words of Aristotle; but what do we say ourselves? What do we judge? A parrot would say as much as that.

And this puts me in mind of that rich gentleman of Rome, † who had been solicitous, with very great expense, to procure men that were excellent in all sorts of science, whom he had always attending his person, to the end, that when among his friends any occasion fell out of speaking of any subject whatsoever, they might supply his place, and be ready to prompt him, one with a sentence of Seneca, another with a verse of Homer, and so forth, every one according to his talent; and he fancied this knowledge to be his own, because it was in the heads of those who lived upon his bounty; as they, also, do whose learning consists in having noble libraries. I know one, who, when I question him what he knows, he presently calls for a book to show me, and dares not venture to tell me so much as that he has piles in his posteriors, till first he has consulted his dictionary, what piles and posteriors are.

We take other men's knowledge and opinions upon trust; which is an idle and superficial learning. We must make it our own. We are in this very like him who, having need of fire, went to a neighbor's house to fetch it, and finding a very good one there, sat down to warm himself without remembering to carry any with him home.‡ What good does it do us to have the stomach full of meat if it do not digest, if it be not incorporated with us, if it does not nourish and support us? Can we imagine that Lucullus, whom letters, without any manner of experience, made so great a captain, learned to be so after this perfunctory manner? § We suffer ourselves to lean and rely so strongly upon the arm of another, that we destroy our own strength and vigor. Would I fortify myself against the

* "You may blow till your eyes start out; but if once you offer to stir your fingers, it is all over."

† Calvisius Sabinus; Seneca, Ep., 27.

‡ Plutarch, How a Man should Listen.

§ Cicero, Acad., ii. 1.

fear of death, it must be at the expense of Seneca: would I extract consolation for myself or my friend, I borrow it from Cicero. I might have found it in myself, had I been trained to make use of my own reason. I do not like this relative and mendicant understanding; for though we could become learned by other men's learning, a man can never be wise but by his own wisdom.

*Μισῶ σοφιστὴν, ὅστις οὐχ ἀυτῷ σοφός.**

Whence Ennius, "*Nequidquam sapere sapientem, qui ipse sibi prodesse non quiret.*" †

"Si cupidus, si
Vanus, et Euganea quantumvis mollior agna." ‡

"*Non enim paranda nobis solum, sed fruenda sapientia est.*" §

Dionysius ‖ laughed at the grammarians, who cudgeled their brains to inquire into the miseries of Ulysses, and were ignorant of their own; at musicians, who were so exact in tuning their instruments, and never tuned their manners; at orators, who made it a study to declare what is justice, but never took care to do it. If the mind be not better disposed, if the judgment be no better settled, I had much rather my scholar had spent his time at tennis, for, at least, his body would by that means be in better exercise and breath. Do but observe him when he comes back from school, after fifteen or sixteen years that he has been there, there is nothing so unfit for employment; all you shall find he has got, is, that his Latin and Greek have only made him a greater coxcomb than when he went from home. He should bring back his soul replete with good literature, and he brings it only swelled and puffed up with vain and

* "I hate the wise man, who in his own concern is not wise." EURIPIDES, *ap. Cicero, Ep. Fam.*, xiii. 15.

† "That wise man knows nothing, who cannot profit himself by his wisdom."—CICERO, *De Offic.*, iii. 15.

‡ "If he be grasping, or a boaster, or softer than an Euganean lamb."—JUVENAL, *Sat.*, viii. 14.

§ "For wisdom is not only to be acquired, but to be utilized."—CICERO, *De Finib.*, i. 1.

‖ It was not Dionysius, but Diogenes the cynic. Diogenes Laertius, vi. 27.

empty shreds and patches of learning; and has really nothing more in him than he had before.*

These pedants of ours, as Plato says of the Sophists, their cousins-german, are, of all men, they who most pretend to be useful to mankind, and who alone, of all men, not only do not better and improve that which is committed to them, as a carpenter or a mason would do, but make them much worse, and make us pay them for making them worse, to boot. If the rule which Protagoras proposed to his pupils were followed—either that they should give him his own demand, or make affidavit upon oath in the temple how much they valued the profit they had received under his tuition, and satisfy him accordingly—my pedagogues would find themselves sorely graveled, if they were to be judged by the affidavits of my experience. Our common Perigordian patois very pleasantly calls these pretenders to learning, *lettre-ferits*, as a man should say, letter-marked—men on whom letters have been stamped by the blow of a mallet. And, in truth, for the most part, they appear to be deprived even of common sense; for you see the husbandman and the cobbler go simply and fairly about their business, speaking only of what they know and understand; whereas these fellows, to make parade and to get opinion, mustering this ridiculous knowledge of theirs, that floats on the superficies of the brain, are perpetually perplexing and entangling themselves in their own nonsense. They speak fine words sometimes, 'tis true, but let somebody that is wiser apply them. They are wonderfully well acquainted with Galen, but not at all with the disease of the patient; they have already deafened you with a long ribble-row of laws, but understand nothing of the case in hand; they have the theory of all things, let who will put it in practice.

I have sat by, when a friend of mine, in my own house, for sport-sake has with one of these fellows counterfeited a jargon of Galimatias, patched up of phrases without head or tail, saying that he interlarded here and there some terms that had relation to their dispute, and held the coxcomb in play a whole afternoon together, who all the while thought he had answered pertinently and learnedly to all

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*Plato, Protagoras.

his objections; and yet this was a man of letters, and reputation, and a fine gentleman of the long robe.

> "Vos, O patricius sanguis, quos vivere par est
> Occipiti cæco, pasticæ occurrite sannæ." *

Whosoever shall narrowly pry into and thoroughly sift this sort of people, wherewith the world is so pestered, will, as I have done, find, that for the most part, they neither understand others, nor themselves: and that their memories are full enough, but the judgment totally void and empty; some excepted, whose own nature has of itself formed them into better fashion. As I have observed, for example, in Adrian Turnebus, who having never made other profession than that of mere learning only, and in that, in my opinion, he was the greatest man that has been these thousand years, had nothing at all in him of the pedant, but the wearing of his gown, and a little exterior fashion, that could not be civilized to courtier ways, which in themselves are nothing. I hate our people, who can worse endure an ill-contrived robe than an ill-contrived mind, and take their measure by the leg a man makes, by his behavior, and so much as the very fashion of his boots, what kind of man he is. For within there was not a more polished soul upon earth. I have often purposely put him upon arguments quite wide of his profession, wherein I found he had so clear an insight, so quick an apprehension, so solid a judgment, that a man would have thought he had never practiced any other thing, but arms, and been all his life employed in affairs of state. These are great and vigorous natures,

> "Queis arte benigna
> Et meliore luto finxit præcordia Titan," †

that can keep themselves upright in despite of a pedantic education. But it is not enough that our education does not spoil us; it must, moreover, alter us for the better.

Some of our parliaments, when they are to admit officers, examine only their learning; to which some of the others

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* "O you, of patrician blood, whose fortune it is to live without eyes in the back of your head, beware of grimaces at you from behind."—PERSIUS, *Sat.*, i. 61.

† "Whom benign Titan (Prometheus) has framed of better clay."—JUVENAL, xiv. 34.

also add the trial of understanding, by asking their judgment of some case in law; of these the latter, methinks, proceed with the better method; for although both are necessary, and that it is very requisite they should be defective in neither, yet, in truth, knowledge is not so absolutely necessary as judgment; the last may make shift without the other, but the other never without this. For as the Greek verse says:

"'Ὡς οὐδὲν ἡ μάθησις ἦν μὴ νοῦς παρῇ.'"*

Would to God that, for the good of our judicature, these societies were as well furnished with understanding and conscience as they are with knowledge. "*Non vitæ, sed scolæ discimus.*" † We are not to tie learning to the soul, but to work and incorporate them together; not to tincture it only, but to give it a thorough and perfect die; which, if it will not take color, and meliorate its imperfect state, it were without question better to let it alone. 'Tis a dangerous weapon, that will hinder and wound its master, if put into an awkward and unskillful hand: "*Ut fuerit melius non didicisse.*" ‡

And this, peradventure, is the reason why neither we nor theology require much learning in women; and that Francis, duke of Brittany, son of John V., one talking with him about his marriage with Isabella the daughter of Scotland, and adding that she was homely bred, and without any manner of learning, made answer, that he liked her the better, and that a woman was wife enough if she could distinguish her husband's shirt from his doublet.§ So that it is no great wonder, as they make of it, that our ancestors had letters in no greater esteem, and that even to

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* "To what use serves learning, if the understanding be away." *Apud Stobæus*, tit. iii. p. 37 (1609).

† "We do not study for the service of our future life, but only for the school."—SENECA, *Ep.*, 106.

‡ "So that it were better never to have learned at all."—CICERO. *Tus. Quæs.*, ii. 4.

§ "Nos pères sur ce point étoient bien gens sensés,
Qui disoient qu'une femme en sait toujours assez,
Quand la capacité de son esprit se hausse
A connoître un pourpoint d'avec un haut-de-chausse."
—MOLIERE, *Femmes savantes*, act ii. sc. 7.

this day, they are but rarely met with in the principal councils of princes; and if the end and design of acquiring riches, which is the only thing we propose to ourselves, by the means of law, physic, pedantry, and even divinity itself, did not uphold and keep them in credit, you would, without doubt, see them in as pitiful a condition as ever. And what loss would this be, if they neither instruct us to think well nor to do well? "*Postquam docti prodierunt, boni desunt.*"* All other knowledge is hurtful to him who has not the science of goodness.

But the reason I glanced upon but now, may it not also hence proceed, that, our studies in France having almost no other aim but profit, except as to those who, by nature born to offices and employments rather of glory than gain, addict themselves to letters, if at all, only for so short a time (being taken from their studies before they can come to have any taste of them, to a profession that has nothing to do with books), there ordinarily remain no others to apply themselves wholly to learning, but people of mean condition, who in that only seek the means to live; and by such people, whose souls are, both by nature and by domestic education and example, of the basest alloy, the fruits of knowledge are immaturely gathered and ill digested, and delivered to their recipients quite another thing. For it is not for knowledge to enlighten a soul that is dark of itself, nor to make a blind man see. Her business is not to find a man's eyes, but to guide, govern and direct them, provided he have sound feet and straight legs to go upon. Knowledge is an excellent drug, but no drug has virtue enough to preserve itself from corruption and decay, if the vessel be tainted and impure wherein it is put to keep. Such a one may have a sight clear enough who looks asquint, and consequently sees what is good, but does not follow it, and sees knowledge, but makes no use of it. Plato's principal institution in his Republic is to fit his citizens with employments suitable to their nature. Nature can do all, and does all. Cripples are very unfit for exercises of the body, and lame souls for exercises of the mind. Degenerate and vulgar souls are unworthy of philosophy. If we see a shoemaker with his shoes out at

* Seneca, Ep., 95. "Since the *savans* have made their appearance among us, the good people have become eclipsed."—ROUSSEAU, *Discours sur les Lettres.*

the toes, we say, 'tis no wonder; for, commonly, none go worse shod than they, In like manner, experience often presents us a physician worse physicked, a divine less reformed, and (constantly) a scholar of less sufficiency, than other people.

Old Aristo of Chios had reason to say, that philosphers did their auditors harm, forasmuch as most of the souls of those that heard them were not capable of making benefit of instructions, which, if not applied to good, would certainly be applied to ill: "*ἀσώτους ex Aristippi acerbos ex Zenonis schola exire.*"*

In the excellent institution that Xenophon attributes to the Persians, we find that they taught their children virtue, as other nations do letters. Plato tell us, that the eldest son in their royal succession was thus brought up; so soon as he was born he was delivered, not to women, but to eunuchs of the greatest authority about their kings for their virtue, whose charge it was to keep his body healthful and in good plight; and after he came to seven years of age, to teach him to ride and to go a-hunting. When he arrived at fourteen he was transferred into the hands of four, the wisest, the most just, the most temperate, and most valiant of the nation; of whom the first was to instruct him in religion, the second to be always upright and sincere, the third to conquer his appetites and desires, and the fourth to despise all danger.

'Tis a thing worthy of very great consideration, that in that excellent, and, in truth, for its perfection, prodigious form of civil regimen set down by Lycurgus, though so solicitous of the education of children, as a thing of the greatest concern, and even in the very seat of the Muses, he should make so little mention of learning; as if that generous youth, disdaining all other subjection but that of virtue, ought to be supplied, instead of tutors to read to them arts and sciences, with such masters as should only instruct them in valor, prudence, and justice; an example that Plato has followed in his laws. The manner of their discipline was to propound to them questions in judgment upon men and their actions; and if they commended or

* "They proceeded effeminate debauchees from the school of Aristippus, and churls and cynics from that of Zeno."—CICERO, *De Natura Deor.*, iii. 31.

condemned this or that person or fact, they were to give a reason for so doing; by which means they at once sharpened their understanding, and learned what was right. Astyages, in Xenophon,* asks Cyrus to give an account of his last lesson;† and thus it was, "A great boy in our school, having a little short cassock, by force took a longer from another that was not so tall as he, and gave him his own in exchange; whereupon I, being appointed judge of the controversy, gave judgment, that I thought it best each should keep the coat he had, for that they both of them were better fitted with that of one another than with their own: upon which my master told me, I had done ill, in that I had only considered the fitness of the garments, whereas I ought to have considered the justice of the thing, which required that no one should have anything forcibly taken from him that is his own." And Cyrus adds that he was whipped for his pains, as we are in our villages for forgetting the first aorist of τυπτῶ.

My pedant must make me a very learned oration, *in genere demonstrativo,* before he can persuade me that his school is like unto that. They knew how to go the readiest way to work; and seeing that science, when most rightly applied and best understood, can do no more but teach us prudence, moral honesty, and resolution, they thought fit, at first hand, to initiate their children with the knowledge of effects, and to instruct them, not by hearsay and rote, but by the experiment of action, in lively forming and molding them; not only by words and precepts, but chiefly by works and examples; to the end it might not be a knowledge in the mind only, but its complexion and habit: not an acquisition, but a natural possession. One asking to this purpose, Agesilaus, what he thought most proper for boys to learn? "What they

* Cyropædia, i. 3.

† Cotton's version of this story commences differently, and includes a passage which is not in any of the editions of the original before me. "Mandane, in Xenophon, asking Cyrus how he would do to learn justice, and the other virtues among the Medes, having left all his masters behind him in Persia? He made answer that he had learned those things long since; that his master had often made him a judge of the differences among his schoolfellows, and had one day whipped him for giving a wrong sentence."—W. C. H.

ought to do when they come be men," said he.* It is no wonder, if such an institution produced so admirable effects.

They used to go, it is said, to the other cities of Greece, to inquire out rhetoricians, painters, and musicians; but to Lacedæmon for legislators, magistrates, and generals of armies; at Athens they learned to speak well: here to do well; there to disengage themselves from a sophistical argument, and to unravel the imposture of captious syllogisms; here to evade the baits and allurements of pleasure, and with a noble pleasure and resolution to conquer the menaces of fortune and death; those cudgeled their brains about words, these made it their business to inquire into things; there was an eternal babble of the tongue, here a continual exercise of the soul. And therefore it is nothing strange if, when Antipater demanded of them fifty children for hostages, they made answer, quite contrary to what we should do, that they would rather give him twice as many full-grown men, so much did they value the loss of their country's education. When Agesilaus courted Xenophon to send his children to Sparta to be bred, "it is not," said he, "there to learn logic or rhetoric, but to be instructed in the noblest of all sciences, namely, the science to obey, and to command." †

It is very pleasant to see Socrates, after his manner, rallying Hippias,‡ who recounts to him what a world of money he has got, especially in certain little villages of Sicily, by teaching school, and that he made never a penny at Sparta. "What a sottish and stupid people," says Socrates, "are they, without sense or understanding, that make no account either of grammar or poetry, and only busy themselves in studying the genealogies and successions of their kings, the foundations, rises, and declensions of states, and such tales of a tub!" After which, having made Hippias from one step to another acknowledge the excellency of their form of public administration, and the felicity and virtue of their private life, he leaves him to

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* Plutarch, Apothegms of the Lacedæmonians. Rousseau adopts the expression in his "Discours sur les Lettres."

† Plutarch, Life of Agesilaus, c. 7.

‡ Plato, Hippias Major.

guess at the conclusion he makes of the inutilities of his pedantic arts.

Examples have demonstrated to us, that in military affairs, and all others of the like active nature, the study of sciences more softens and untempers the courages of men, than it in any way fortifies and excites them. The most potent empire, that at this day appears to be in the whole world, is that of the Turks, a people equally inured to the estimation of arms and the contempt of letters. I find Rome was more valiant before she grew so learned. The most warlike nations at this time in being are the most rude and ignorant; the Scythians, the Parthians, Tamerlane, serve for sufficient proof of this. When the Goths overran Greece, the only thing that preserved all the libraries from the fire was, that some one possessed them with an opinion, that they were to leave this kind of furniture entire to the enemy, as being most proper to divert them from the exercise of arms, and to fix them to a lazy and sedentary life. When our King Charles VIII., almost without striking a blow, saw himself possessed of the kingdom of Naples and a considerable part of Tuscany, the nobles about him attributed this unexpected facility of conquest to this, that the princes and nobles of Italy, more studied to render themselves ingenious and learned, than vigorous and warlike.*

CHAPTER XXV.

OF THE EDUCATION OF CHILDREN.

To Madame Diane de Foix, Comtesse de Gurson.

I NEVER yet saw that father, but let his son be never so decrepit or deformed, would not, notwithstanding, own him: not, nevertheless, if he were not totally besotted, and blinded with his paternal affection, that he did not well enough discern his defects: but that with all defaults, he was still his. Just so, I see better than any other, that all I write here are but the idle reveries of a man that has

*"Il est de la dernière évidence," says Rousseau in his Discourse "Si le rétablissement des sciences et des arts a contribué à épurer les mœurs, qu'il y a plus d'erreurs dans l'académie des Sciences que dans tout un peuple de Hurons."

only nibbled upon the outward crust of sciences in his nonage, and only retained a general and formless image of them; who has got a little snatch of everything, and nothing of the whole, *à la Françoise.* For I know, in general, that there is such a thing as physic, as jurisprudence; four parts in mathematics, and, roughly, what all these aim and point at; and peradventure, I yet know farther, what sciences in general pretend unto, in order to the service of our life: but to dive farther than that, and to have cudgeled my brains in the study of Aristotle, the monarch of all modern learning, or particularly addicted myself to any one science, I have never done it; neither is there any one art of which I am able to draw the first lineaments and dead color; insomuch that there is not a boy of the lowest form in a school, that may not pretend to be wiser than I, who am not able to examine him in his first lesson, which, if I am at any time forced upon, I am necessitated, in my own defense, to ask him, unaptly enough, some universal questions, such as may serve to try his natural understanding; a lesson as strange and unknown to him, as his is to me.

I never seriously settled myself to the reading any book of solid learning but Plutarch and Seneca; and there, like the Danaides, I eternally fill, and it as constantly runs out; something of which drops upon this paper, but little or nothing stays with me. History is my particular game as to matter of reading, or else poetry, for which I have particular kindness and esteem: for, as Cleanthes said, as the voice, forced through the narrow passage of a trumpet, comes out more forcible and shrill; so, methinks, a sentence pressed within the harmony of verse, darts out more briskly upon the understanding, and strikes my ear and apprehension with a smarter and more pleasing effect. As to the natural parts I have, of which this is the essay, I find them to bow under the burden; my fancy and judgment do but grope in the dark, tripping and stumbling in the way, and when I have gone as far as I can, I am in no degree satisfied; I discover still a new and greater extent of land before me, with a troubled and imperfect sight and wrapped up in clouds, that I am not able to penetrate. And taking upon me to write indifferently of whatever comes into my head, and therein making use of nothing but my own proper and natural means, if it befall me, as

ofttimes it does, accidentally to meet in any good author, the same heads and commonplaces upon which I have attempted to write (as I did but just now in Plutarch's "Discourse of the Force of Imagination"), to see myself so weak and so forlorn, so heavy and so flat, in comparison of those better writers, I at once pity or despise myself. Yet do I please myself with this, that my opinions have often the honor and good fortune to jump with theirs, and that I go in the same path, though at a very great distance, and can say, "Ah, that is so." I am farther satisfied to find, that I have a quality, which every one is not blessed withal, which is, to discern the vast difference between them and me; and notwithstanding all that, suffer my own inventions, low and feeble as they are, to run on in their career, without mending or plastering up the defects that this comparison has laid open to my own view. And, in plain truth, a man had need of a good strong back to keep pace with these people. The indiscreet scribblers of our times, who among their laborious nothings, insert whole sections and pages out of ancient authors, with a design, by that means, to illustrate their own writings, do quite contrary; for this infinite dissimilitude of ornaments renders the complexion of their own compositions so sallow and deformed, that they lose much more than they get.

The philosophers, Chrysippus and Epicurus, were in this of two quite contrary humors: the first not only in his books mixed passages and sayings of other authors, but entire pieces, and, in one, the whole "Medea" of Euripides; which gave Apollodorus occasion to say, that should a man pick out of his writings all that was none of his, he would leave him nothing but blank paper: whereas the latter, quite contrary, in three hundred volumes that he left behind him, has not so much as any one quotation.*

I happened the other day upon this piece of fortune; I was reading a French book, where after I had a long time run dreaming over a great many words, so dull, so insipid, so void of all wit or common sense, that indeed they were only French words; after a long and tedious travel, I came at last to meet with a piece that was lofty, rich, and elevated to the very clouds; of which, had I found either the

* Diogenes Laertius, Chrysippus, vii. 181; Epicurus, x. 26.

declivity easy or the ascent gradual, there had been some excuse; but it was so perpendicular a precipice, and so wholly cut off from the rest of the work, that, by the six first words, I found myself flying into the other world, and thence discovered the vale whence I came so deep and low, that I have never had since the heart to descend into it any more. If I should set out one of my discourses with such rich spoils as these, it would but too evidently manifest the imperfection of my own writing. To reprehend the fault in others that I am guilty of myself, appears to me no more unreasonable, than to condemn, as I often do, those of others in myself: they are to be everywhere reproved, and ought to have no sanctuary allowed them. I know very well how audaciously I myself, at every turn, attempt to equal myself to my thefts, and to make my style go hand in hand with them, not without a temerarious hope of deceiving the eyes of my reader from discerning the difference; but withal, it is as much by the benefit of my application, that I hope to do it, as by that of my invention or any force of my own. Besides, I do not offer to contend with the whole body of these champions, nor hand to hand with any one of them: 'tis only by flights and little light attempts that I engage them; I do not grapple with them, but try their strength only, and never engage so far as I make a show to do. If I could hold them in play, I were a brave fellow; for I never attack them, but where they are most sinewy and strong. To cover a man's self (as I have seen some do) with another man's armor, so as not to discover so much as his fingers' ends; to carry on a design (as it is not hard for a man that has anything of a scholar in him, in an ordinary subject to do) under old inventions, patched up here and there with his own trumpery, and then to endeavor to conceal the theft, and to make it pass for his own, is first injustice and meanness of spirit in those who do it, who having nothing in them of their own fit to procure them a reputation, endeavor to do it by attempting to impose things upon the world in their own name, which they have no manner of title to; and, next, a ridiculous folly to content themselves with acquiring the ignorant approbation of the vulgar by such a pitiful cheat, at the price at the same time of degrading themselves in the eyes of men of understanding, who turn up their noses at all this borrowed incrustation, yet whose praise alone is

worth the having. For my own part, there is nothing I would not sooner do than that, neither have I said so much of others, but to get a better opportunity to explain myself. Nor in this do I glance at the composers of centos, who declare themselves for such; of which sort of writers I have in my time known many very ingenious, and particularly one under the name of Capilupus, besides the ancients. These are really men of wit, and that make it appear they are so, both by that and other ways of writing; as for example, Lipsius, in that learned and laborious contexture of his politics.

But, be it how it will, and how inconsiderable soever these essays of mine may be, I will say I never intended to conceal them, no more than my old bald grizzled pate before them, where the painter has presented you not with a perfect face, but with mine. For these are my own particular opinions and fancies, and I deliver them as only what I myself believe, and not for what is to be believed by others. I have no other end in this writing, but only to discover myself, who, also, shall, peradventure, be another thing tomorrow, if I chance to meet any new instruction to change me. I have no authority to be believed, neither do I desire it, being too conscious of my own inerudition to be able to instruct others.

A friend of mine, then, having read the preceding chapter, the other day told me, that I should a little farther have extended my discourse on the education of children.* Now, madame, if I had any sufficiency in this subject, I could not possibly better employ it, than to present my best instructions to the little gentleman that threatens you shortly with a happy birth (for you are too generous to begin otherwise than with a male); for having had so great a hand in the treaty of your marriage, I have a certain particular right and interest in the greatness and prosperity of the issue that shall spring from it; besides that, your having had the best of my services so long in possession, sufficiently obliges me to desire the honor and advantage of all wherein you

* "Which, how fit I am to do, let my friends flatter me if they please, I have in the meantime no such opinion of my own talent, as to promise myself any very good success from my endeavor." This passage would appear to be an interpolation by Cotton. At all events I do not find it in the original editions before me or in Coste.—W. C. H.

shall be concerned. But, in truth, all I understand as to that particular is only this, that the greatest and most important difficulty of human science is the education of children. For as in agriculture, the husbandry that is to precede planting, as also planting itself, is certain, plain, and well known; but after that which is planted comes to life, there is a great deal more to be done, more art to be used, more care to be taken, and much more difficulty to cultivate and bring it to perfection; so it is with men; it is no hard matter to get children; but after they are born, then begins the trouble, solicitude, and care rightly to train, principle, and bring them up. The symptoms of their inclinations in that tender age are so obscure, and the promises so uncertain and fallacious, that it is very hard to establish any solid judgment or conjecture upon them. Look at Cimon, for example, and Themistocles, and a thousand others, who very much deceived the expectation men had of them. Cubs of bears and puppies readily discover their natural inclination ; but men, so soon as ever they are grown up, applying themselves to certain habits, engaging themselves in certain opinions, and conforming themselves to particular laws and customs, easily alter, or at least disguise, their true and real disposition; and yet it is hard to force the propension of nature. Whence it comes to pass, that for not having chosen the right course, we often take very great pains, and consume a good part of our time in training up children to things, for which, by their natural constitution, they are totally unfit. In this difficulty, nevertheless, I am clearly of opinion, that they ought to be elemented in the best and most advantageous studies, without taking too much notice of, or being too superstitous in those light prognostics they give of themselves in their tender years, and to which Plato, in his Republic, gives, methinks, too much authority.

Madame, science, is a very great ornament, and a thing of marvelous use, especially in persons raised to that degree of fortune in which you are. And, in truth, in persons of mean and low condition, it cannot perform its true and genuine office, being naturally more prompt to assist in the conduct of war, in the government of peoples, in negotiating the leagues and friendships of princes and foreign nations, than in forming a syllogism in logic, in pleading a process in law, or in prescribing a dose of pills in physic.

Wherefore, madame, believing you will not omit this so necessary feature in the education of your children, who yourself have tasted its sweetness, and are of a learned extraction (for we yet have the writings of the ancient Counts of Foix, from whom my lord, your husband, and yourself, are both of you descended, and Monsieur de Candale, your uncle, every day obliges the world with others, which will extend the knowledge of this quality in your family for so many succeeding ages), I will, upon this occasion, presume to acquaint your ladyship, with one particular fancy of my own, contrary to the common method, which is all I am able to contribute to your service in this affair.

The charge of the tutor you shall provide for your son, upon the choice of whom depends the whole success of his education, has several other great and considerable parts and duties required in so important a trust, besides that of which I am about to speak: these, however, I shall not mention, as being unable to add anything of moment to the common rules: and in this, wherein I take upon me to advise, he may follow it so far only as it shall appear advisable.

For a boy of quality then, who pretends to letters not upon the account of profit (for so mean an object as that is unworthy of the grace and favor of the Muses, and moreover, in it a man directs his service to and depends upon others), nor so much for outward ornament, as for his own proper and peculiar use, and to furnish and enrich himself within, having rather a desire to come out an accomplished cavalier than a mere scholar or learned man; for such a one, I say, I would, also, have his friends solicitous to find him out a tutor, who has rather a well-made than a well-filled head;* seeking, indeed, both the one and the other, but rather of the two to prefer manners and judgment to mere learning, and that this man should exercise his charge after a new method.

'Tis the custom of pedagogues to be eternally thundering in their pupil's ears, as they were pouring into a funnel, while the business of the pupil is only to repeat what the others have said: now I would have a tutor to correct this

* "*Tete bien faite*, an expression created by Montaigne, and which has remained a part of our language."—SERVAN.

error, and, that at the very first, he should, according to the capacity he has to deal with, put it to the test, permitting his pupil himself to taste things, and of himself to discern and choose them, sometimes opening the way to him, and sometimes leaving him to open it for himself; that is, I would not have him alone to invent and speak, but that he should also hear his pupil speak in turn. Socrates, and since him Arcesilaus, made first their scholars speak, and then they spoke to them.* "*Obest plerumque iis, qui discere volunt, auctoritas eorum, qui docent.*"† It is good to make him, like a young horse, trot before him that he may judge of his going and how much he is to abate of his own speed, to accommodate himself to the vigor and capacity of the other. For want of which due proportion we spoil all; which also to know how to adjust, and to keep within an exact and due measure, is one of the hardest things I know, and 'tis the effect of a high and well-tempered soul to know how to condescend to such puerile motions and to govern and direct them. I walk firmer and more secure up hill than down.

Such as, according to our common way of teaching, undertake, with one and the same lesson, and the same measure of direction, to instruct several boys of differing and unequal capacities, are infinitely mistaken; and 'tis no wonder, if in a whole multitude of scholars, there are not found above two or three who bring away any good account of their time and discipline. Let the master not only examine him about the grammatical construction of the bare words of his lesson, but about the sense and substance of them, and let him judge of the profit he has made, not by the testimony of his memory, but by that of his life. Let him make him put what he has learned into a hundred several forms, and accommodate it to so many several subjects, to see if he yet rightly comprehends it, and has made it his own, taking instruction of his progress by the pedagogic institutions of Plato.‡ 'Tis a sign of crudity and indigestion to disgorge what we eat in the same condition

* Diogenes Laertius, iv. 36.

† "The authority of those who teach, is very often an impediment to those who desire to learn."—CICERO, *De Natura Deor.*, i. 5.

‡ *i.e.*, the pedagogic method followed by Socrates, in the dialogues of Plato.

it was swallowed; the stomach has not performed its office unless it have altered the form and condition of what was committed to it to concoct. Our minds work only upon trust, when bound and compelled to follow the appetite of another's fancy, enslaved and captivated under the authority of another's instruction; we have been so subjected to the trammel, that we have no free, nor natural pace of our own; our own vigor and liberty are extinct and gone: "*Nunquam tutelæ suæ fiunt.*" *

I was privately carried at Pisa to see a very honest man, but so great an Aristotelian, that his most usual thesis was: "That the touchstone and square of all solid imagination, and of all truth, was an absolute conformity to Aristotle's doctrine; and that all besides was nothing but inanity and chimera; for that he had seen all, and said all." A position, that for having been a little too injuriously and broadly interpreted, brought him once and long kept him in great danger of the Inquisition at Rome.

Let him make him examine and thoroughly sift everything he reads, and lodge nothing in his fancy upon simple authority and upon trust. Aristotle's principles will then be no more principles to him, than those of Epicurus and the Stoics: let this diversity of opinions be propounded to, and laid before him; he will himself choose, if he be able; if not, he will remain in doubt.

"Che, non men che saper, dubbiar m' aggrata," †

for, if he embrace the opinions of Xenophon and Plato, by his own reason, they will no more be theirs, but become his own. Who follows another, follows nothing, finds nothing, nay, is inquisitive after nothing. "*Non sumus sub rege; sibi quisque se vindicet.*" ‡ Let him at least, know that he knows. It will be necessary that he imbibe their knowledge, not that he be corrupted with their precepts; and no matter if he forgot where he had his learning, provided he know how to apply it to his own use. Truth and reason are common to every one, and are no more his who spake them

* "They are ever in wardship.—SENECA, *Ep.*, 33.

† "I love to doubt, as well as to know."—DANTE, *Inferno*, xi. 93.

‡ "We are under no king; let each look to himself."—SENECA, *Ep.*, 33.

first, than his who speaks them after: 'tis no more according to Plato, than according to me, since both he and I equally see and understand them. Bees cull their several sweets from this flower and that blossom, here and there where they find them, but themselves afterward make the honey, which is all and purely their own, and no more thyme and marjoram: so the several fragments he borrows from others, he will transform and shuffle together to compile a work that shall be absolutely his own; that is to say, his judgment: his instruction, labor and study, tend to nothing else but to form that. He is not obliged to discover whence he got the materials that have assisted him, but only to produce what he has himself done with them. Men that live upon pillage and borrowing, expose their purchases and buildings to every one's view: but do not proclaim how they came by the money. We do not see the fees and perquisites of a gentleman of the long robe; but we see the alliances wherewith he fortifies himself and his family, and the titles and honors he has obtained for him and his. No man divulges his revenue; or at least, which way it comes in: but every one publishes his acquisitions. The advantages of our study are to become better and more wise. 'Tis, says Epicharmus, the understanding that sees and hears, 'tis the understanding that improves everything, that orders everything, and that acts, rules, and reigns: all other faculties are blind, and deaf, and without soul. And certainly we render it timorous and servile, in not allowing it the liberty and privilege to do anything of itself. Whoever asked his pupil what he thought of grammar or rhetoric, and of such and such a sentence of Cicero? Our masters stick them, full feathered, in our memories, and there establish them like oracles, of which the letters and syllables are of the substance of the thing. To know by rote, is no knowledge, and signifies no more but only to retain what one has intrusted to our memory. That which a man rightly knows and understands, he is the free disposer of at his own full liberty, without any regard to the author from whence he had it or fumbling over the leaves of his book. A mere bookish learning is a poor, paltry learning; it may serve for ornament, but there is yet no foundation for any superstructure to be built upon it, according to the opinion of Plato, who says that constancy, faith, and sincerity, are the true philos-

ophy, and the other sciences, that are directed to other ends, mere adulterate paint. I could wish that Paluel or Pompey, those two noted dancers of my time, could have taught us to cut capers, by only seeing them do it, without stirring from our places, as these men pretend to inform the understanding, without ever setting it to work; or that we could learn to ride, handle a pike, touch a lute, or sing, without the trouble of practice, as these attempt to make us judge and speak well, without exercising us in judging or speaking. Now in this initiation of our studies and in their progress, whatsoever presents itself before us is book sufficient; a roguish trick of a page, a sottish mistake of a servant, a jest at the table, are so many new subjects.

And for this reason, conversation with men is of very great use and travel into foreign countries; not to bring back (as most of our young monsieurs do) an account only of how many paces Santa Rotonda* is in circuit; or of the richness of Signora Livia's petticoats; or, as some others, how much Nero's face, in a statue in such an old ruin, is longer and broader than that made for him on some medal; but to be able chiefly to give an account of the humors, manners, customs and laws of those nations where he has been, and that we may whet and sharpen our wits by rubbing them against those of others. I would that a boy should be sent abroad very young, and first, so as to kill two birds with one stone, into those neighboring nations whose language is most differing from our own, and to which, if it be not formed betimes, the tongue will grow too stiff to bend.

And also 'tis the general opinion of all, that a child should not be brought up in his mother's lap. Mothers are too tender, and their natural affection is apt to make the most discreet of them all so overfond, that they can neither find in their hearts to give them due correction for the faults they commit, nor suffer them to be inured to hardships and hazards, as they ought to be. They will not endure to see them return all dust and sweat from their exercise, to drink cold drink when they are hot, nor see them mount an unruly horse, nor take a foil in hand against a rude fencer, or so much as to discharge a carbine. And yet there is no remedy; whoever will breed a boy to be

* The Pantheon of Agrippa.

good for anything when he comes to be a man, must by no means spare him when young, and must very often transgress the rules of physic:

> "Vitamque sub dio, et trepidis agat
> In rebus." *

It is not enough to fortify his soul: you are also to make his sinews strong; for the soul will be oppressed if not assisted by the members, and would have too hard a task to discharge two offices alone. I know very well, to my cost, how much mine groans under the burden, from being accommodated with a body so tender and indisposed, as eternally leans and presses upon her; and often in my reading perceive that our masters, in their writings, make examples pass for magnanimity and fortitude of mind, which really are rather toughness of skin and hardness of bones; for I have seen men, women, and children, naturally born of so hard and insensible a constitution of body, that a sound cudgeling has been less to them than a flirt with a finger would have been to me, and that would neither cry out, wince, nor shrink, for a good swinging beating; and when wrestlers counterfeit the philosophers in patience, 'tis rather strength of nerves than stoutness of heart. Now to be inured to undergo labor, is to be accustomed to endure pain: "*labor callum obducit dolori.*" † A boy is to be broken into the toil and roughness of exercise, so as to be trained up to the pain and suffering of dislocations, cholics, cauteries, and even imprisonment and the rack itself; for he may come, by misfortune, to be reduced to the worst of these, which (as this world goes) is sometimes inflicted on the good as well as the bad. As for proof, in our present civil war whoever draws his sword against the laws, threatens the honestest men with the whip and the halter.

And, moreover, by living at home, the authority of this governor, which ought to be sovereign over the boy he has received into his charge, is often checked and hindered by the presence of parents; to which may also be added, that the respect the whole family pay him, as their master's son,

* "Let him live in the open air, and ever in movement about something."—HORACE, *Od.*, ii. 3, 5.

† "Labor hardens us against pain."—CICERO, *Tusc. Quæs.*, ii. 15.

and the knowledge he has of the estate and greatness he is heir to, are, in my opinion, no small inconveniences in these tender years.

And yet, even in this conversing with men I spoke of but now, I have observed this vice, that instead of gathering observations from others, we make it our whole business to lay ourselves upon them, and are more concerned how to expose and set out our own commodities, than how to increase our stock by acquiring new. Silence, therefore, and modesty are very advantageous qualities in conversation. One should, therefore, train up this boy to be sparing and a husband of his knowledge when he has acquired it; and to forbear taking exceptions at or reproving every idle saying or ridiculous story that is said or told in his presence; for it is a very unbeoming rudeness to carp at everything that is not agreeable to our own palate. Let him be satisfied with correcting himself, and not seem to condemn everything in another he would not do himself, nor dispute it as against common customs. "*Licet sapere sine pompa, sine invidia.*" * Let him avoid these vain and uncivil images of authority, this childish ambition of coveting to appear better bred and more accomplished, than he really will, by such carriage, discover himself to be. And, as if opportunities of interrupting and reprehending were not to be omitted, to desire thence to derive the reputation of something more than ordinary. For as it becomes none but great poets to make use of the poetical license, so it is intolerable for any but men of great and illustrious souls to assume privilege above the authority of custom; "*si quid Socrates aut Aristippus contra morem et consuetudinem fecerunt, idem sibi ne arbitretur licere: magnis enim illi et divinis bonis hanc licentiam assequebantur.*" † Let him be instructed not to engage in discourse or dispute but with a champion worthy of him, and, even there, not to make use of all the little subtleties that may seem pat for his purpose, but only such arguments as may best serve him. Let him be taught to be curious in the election and

* "Let him be wise without ostentation, without envy."—SENECA, *Ep.*, 103.

† "If Socrates and Aristippus have transgressed the rules of good conduct or custom, let him not imagine that he is licensed to do the same; for it was by great and sovereign virtues that they obtained this privilege."—CICERO, *De Offic.*, i. 41.

choice of his reasons, to abominate impertinence, and, consequently, to affect brevity; but, above all, let him be lessoned to acquiesce and submit to truth so soon as ever he shall discover it, whether in his opponent's argument, or upon better consideration of his own; for he shall never be preferred to the chair for a mere clatter of words and syllogisms, and is no further engaged to any argument whatever, than as he shall in his own judgement approve it: nor yet is arguing a trade, where the liberty of recantation and getting off upon better thoughts, are to be sold for ready money: "*neque, ut omnia, quæ præscripta et imperata sint, defendat, necessitate ulla cogitur.*" *

If his governor be of my humor, he will form his will to be a very good and loyal subject to his prince, very affectionate to his person, and very stout in his quarrel; but withal he will cool in him the desire of having any other tie to his service than public duty. Besides several other inconveniences that are inconsistent with the liberty every honest man ought to have, a man's judgment, being bribed and prepossessed by these particular obligations, is either blinded and less free to exercise its function, or is blemished with ingratitude and indiscretion. A man that is purely a courtier, can neither have power nor will to speak or think otherwise than favorably and well of a master, who, among so many millions of other subjects, has picked out him with his own hand to nourish and advance; this favor, and the profit flowing from it, must needs, and not without some show of reason, corrupt his freedom and dazzle him; and we commonly see these people speak in another kind of phrase than is ordinarily spoken by others of the same nation, though what they say in that courtly language is not much to be believed.

Let his conscience and virtue be eminently manifest in his speaking, and have only reason for their guide. Make him understand, that to acknowledge the error he shall discover in his own argument, though only found out by himself, is an effect of judgment and sincerity, which are the principal things he is to seek after; that obstinacy and contention are common qualities, most appearing in mean

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* "Neither is there any necessity upon him, that he should defend all things that are recommended to and enjoined him."—CICERO, *Acad.*, ii. 3.

souls; that to revise and correct himself, to forsake an unjust argument in the height and heat of dispute, are rare, great, and philosophical qualities. Let him be advised; being in company, to have his eye and ear in every corner, for I find that the places of greatest honor are commonly seized upon by men that have least in them, and that the greatest fortunes are seldom accompanied with the ablest parts. I have been present when, while they at the upper end of the chamber have only been commending the beauty of the arras, or the flavor of the wine, many things that have been very finely said at the lower end of the table have been lost or thrown away. Let him examine every man's talent; a peasant, a bricklayer, a passenger: one may learn something from every one of these in their several capacities, and something will be picked out of their discourse whereof some use may be made at one time or another; nay, even the folly and impertinence of others will contribute to his instruction. By observing the graces and manners of all he sees, he will create to himself an emulation of the good, and a contempt of the bad.

Let an honest curiosity be suggested to his fancy of being inquisitive after everything; whatever there is singular and rare near the place where he is, let him go and see it; a fine house, a noble fountain, an eminent man, the place where a battle has been anciently fought, the passages of Cæsar and Charlemagne:

> "Quæ tellus sit lenta gelu, quæ putris ab æstu,
> Ventus in Italiam quis bene vela ferat."*

Let him inquire into the manners, revenues and alliances of princes, things in themselves very pleasant to learn, and very useful to know.

In this conversing with men, I mean also, and principally, those who only live in the records of history; he shall, by reading those books, converse with the great and heroic souls of the best ages. 'Tis an idle and vain study to those who make it by so doing it after a negligent manner, but to those who do it with care and observation, 'tis a study of inestimable fruit and value; and the only study, as Plato reports, that the Lacedæmonians reserved to themselves.†

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* "What country is bound in frost, what land is friable with heat, what wind serves fairest for Italy."—PROPERTIUS, iv. 3. 39.

† Hippias Major.

What profit shall he not reap as to the business of men, by reading the lives of Plutarch? But, withal, let my governor remember to what end his instructions are principally directed, and that he do not so much imprint in his pupil's memory the date of the ruin of Carthage, as the manners of Hannibal and Scipio; nor so much where Marcellus died, as why it was unworthy of his duty that he died there. Let him not teach him so much the narrative parts of history as to judge them; the reading of them, in my opinion, is a thing that of all others we apply ourselves unto with the most differing measure. I have read a hundred things in Livy that another has not, or not taken notice of at least; and Plutarch has read a hundred more there than ever I could find, or than, peradventure, that author ever wrote; to some it is merely a grammar study, to others the very anatomy of philosophy, by which the most abstruse parts of our human nature penetrate. There are in Plutarch many long discourses very worthy to be carefully read and observed, for he is, in my opinion, of all others the greatest master in that kind of writing; but there are a thousand others which he has only touched and glanced upon, where he only points with his finger to direct us which way we may go if we will, and contents himself sometimes with giving only one brisk hit in the nicest article of the question, whence we are to grope out the rest. As, for example, where he says* that the inhabitants of Asia came to be vassals to one only, for not having been able to pronounce one syllable, which is No. Which saying of his gave perhaps matter and occasion to La Boetie† to write his "Voluntary Servitude." Only to see him pick out a light action in a man's life, or a mere word that does not seem to amount even to that, is itself a whole discourse. 'Tis to our prejudice that men of understanding should so immoderately affect brevity; no doubt their reputation is the better by it, but in the meantime we are the worse. Plutarch had rather we should applaud his judgment than commend his knowledge, and had rather leave us with an appetite to read more, than glutted with that we have already read. He

* In the "Essay on False Shame."

† Born at Sarlat in Perigord, 1st November, 1530, died 18th August, 1563. Of his works, all unpublished during his life, there is a complete edition, Paris, 1846.

knew very well, that a man may say too much even upon the best subjects, and that Alexandridas justly reproached him who made very good but too long speeches to the Ephori, when he said: "Oh stranger! thou speakest the things thou shouldst speak, but not as thou shouldst speak them."* Such as have lean and spare bodies stuff themselves out with clothes; so they who are defective in matter, endeavor to make amends with words.

Human understanding is marvelously enlightened by daily conversation with men, for we are, otherwise, compressed and heaped up in ourselves, and have our sight limited to the length of our own noses. One asking Socrates of what country he was, he did not make answer, of Athens, but of the world;† he whose imagination was fuller and wider, embraced the whole world for his country, and extended his society and friendship to all mankind; not as we do, who look no further than our feet. When the vines of my village are nipped with the frost, my parish priest presently concludes, that the indignation of God is gone out against all the human race, and that the cannibals have already got the pip. Who is it, that seeing the havoc of these civil wars of ours, does not cry out, that the machine of the world is near dissolution, and that the day of judgment is at hand; without considering, that many worse things have been seen, and that, in the meantime, people are very merry in a thousand other parts of the earth for all this? For my part, considering the license and impunity that always attend such commotions, I wonder they are so moderate, and that there is no more mischief done. To him who feels the hailstones patter about his ears, the whole hemisphere appears to be in storm and tempest; like the ridiculous Savoyard, who said very gravely, that if that simple king of France could have managed his fortune as he should have done, he might in time have come to have been steward of the household to the duke his master: the fellow could not, in his shallow imagination, conceive that there could be anything greater than a duke of Savoy. And, in truth, we are all of us, insensibly, in this error, an error of a very great weight and very pernicious consequence. But who-

* Plutarch, Apothegms of the Lacdæmonians.

† Cicero, Tusc. Quæs., v. 37; Plutarch on Exile, c. 4.

ever shall represent to his fancy, as in a picture, that great image of our mother Nature, in her full majesty and luster, whoever in her face shall read so general and so constant a variety; whoever shall observe himself in that figure, and not himself but a whole kingdom, no bigger than the least touch or prick of a pencil in comparison of the whole, that man alone is able to value things according to their true estimate and grandeur.

This great world which some do yet multiply as several species under one genus, is the mirror wherein we are to behold ourselves, to be able to know ourselves as we ought to do in the true bias. In short, I would have this to be the book my young gentleman should study with the most attention. So many humors, so many sects, so many judgments, opinions, laws and customs, teach us to judge aright of our own, and inform our understanding to discover its imperfection and natural infirmity, which is no trivial speculation. So many mutations of states and kingdoms, and so many turns and revolutions of public fortune, will made us wise enough to make no great wonder of our own. So many great names, so many famous victories and conquests drowned and swallowed in oblivion, render our hopes ridiculous of eternizing our names by the taking of half-a-score of light horse, or a henroost, which only derives its memory from its ruin. The pride and arrogance of so many foreign pomps and ceremonies, the tumorous majesty of so many courts and grandeurs, accustom and fortify our sight without astonishment or winking to behold the lustre of our own; so many millions of men, buried before us, encourage us not to fear to go seek such good company in the other world: and so of all the rest. Pythagoras was wont to say,* that our life resembles the great and populous assembly of the Olympic games, wherein some exercise the body, that they may carry away the glory of the prize; others bring merchandise to sell for profit; there are, also, some (and those none of the worst sort) who pursue no other advantage than only to look on, and consider how and why everything is done, and to be spectators of the lives of other men, thereby the better to judge of and regulate their own.

To examples may fitly be applied all the profitable dis-

* Cicero, Tusc. Quæs., v. 3.

courses of philosophy, to which all human actions, as to their best rule, ought to be especially directed: a scholar shall be taught to know—

> "Quid fas optare, quid asper
> Utile nummus habet; patriæ carisque propinquis
> Quantum elargiri deceat; quem te Deus esse
> Jussit, et humana qua parte locatus es in re;
> Quid sumus, aut quidnam victuri gignimur," *

what it is to know, and what to be ignorant; what ought to be the end and design of study; what valor, temperance and justice are; the difference between ambition and avarice, servitude and subjection, license and liberty; by what token a man may know true and solid contentment; how far death, affliction, and disgrace are to be apprehended:

> "Et quo quemque modo fugiatque feratque laborem;" †

by what secret springs we move, and the reason of our various agitations and irresolutions: for, methinks, the first doctrine with which one should season his understanding, ought to be that which regulates his manners and his sense; that teaches him to know himself, and how both well to die and well to live. Among the liberal sciences, let us begin with that which makes us free; not that they do not all serve in some measure to the instruction and use of life, as all other things in some sort also do; but let us make choice of that which directly and professedly serves to that end. If we are once able to restrain the offices of human life within their just and natural limits, we shall find that most of the sciences in use are of no great use to us, and even in those that are, that there are many very unnecessary cavities and dilatations which we had better let alone, and following Socrates' direction, limit the course of our studies to those things only where is a true and real utility:

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* "Learn what it is right to wish; what is the true use of coined money; how much it becomes us to give in liberality to our country and our dear relations; whom and what the Diety commanded thee to be; and in what part of the human system thou art placed; what we are and to what purpose engendered."—PERSIUS, iii. 69.

† "And how you may shun or sustain every hardship."—VIRGIL *Æneid*, iii. 459.

"Sapere aude,
Incipe; vivendi recte vui prorogat horam,
Rusticus exspectat, dum defluat amnis; at ille
Labitur et labetur in omne volubilis œvum."*

'Tis a great foolery to teach our children—

"Quid moveant Pisces, animosaque signa Leonis,
Lotus et Hesperia quid Capricornus aqua," †

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

"Τί Πλειάδεσσι καμοί;
Τί δ' ἀστράσιν Βοώτεω;" ‡

Anaximenes writing to Pythagoras,§ "To what purpose," said he, "should I trouble myself in searching out the secrets of the stars, having death or slavery continually before my eyes?" for the kings of Persia were at that time preparing to invade his country. Every one ought to say thus, "Being assaulted, as I am by ambition, avarice, temerity, superstition, and having within so many other enemies of life, shall I go cudgel my brains about the world's revolutions?"

After having taught him what will make him more wise and good, you may then entertain him with the elements of logic, physics, geometry, rhetoric, and the science which he shall then himself most incline to, his judgment being beforehand formed and fit to choose, he will quickly make his own. The way of instructing him ought to be sometimes by discourse, and sometimes by reading, sometimes his governor shall put the author himself, which he shall think most proper for him, into his hands, and some-

* "Dare to be wise; begin: he who defers the hour of living well, is like the clown, waiting till the river shall have flowed out; but the river still runs on, and will run on, with constant course, to ages without end."—HORACE, *Ep.*, i. 2, 40.

† "What influence Pisces have, or the sign of angry Leo, or Capricorn laving in the Hesperian wave."—PROPERTIUS, iv. 1, 89.

‡ "What care I about the Pleiades or the stars of Taurus?"—ANACREON, *Ode* xvii. 10.

§ Diog. Laert., ii. 4.

times only the marrow and substance of it; and if himself be not conversant enough in books to turn to all the fine discourses the books contain for his purpose, there may some man of learning be joined to him, that upon every occasion shall supply him with what he stands in need of, to furnish it to his pupil. And who can doubt, but that this way of teaching is much more easy and natural than that of Gaza,* in which the precepts are so intricate, and so harsh, and the words so vain, lean, and insignificant, that there is no hold to be taken of them, nothing that quickens and elevates the wit and fancy, whereas here the mind has what to feed upon and to digest. This fruit, therefore, is not only without comparison, much more fair and beautiful; but will also be much more early ripe.

'Tis a thousand pities that matters should be at such a pass in this age of ours, that philosophy, even with men of understanding, should be looked upon as a vain and fantastic name, a thing of no use, no value, either in opinion or effect, of which I think those ergotisms and petty sophistries, by prepossessing the avenues to it, are the cause. And people are much to blame to represent it to children for a thing of so difficult access, and with such a frowning, grim, and formidable aspect. Who is it that has disguised it thus, with this false, pale, and ghostly countenance? There is nothing more airy, more gay, more frolic, and I had like to have said, more wanton. She preaches nothing but feasting and jollity; a melancholic anxious look shows that she does not inhabit there. Demetrius the grammarian finding in the temple of Delphos a knot of philosophers set chatting together, said to them,† "Either I am much deceived, or by your cheerful and pleasant countenances, you are engaged in no very deep discourse." To which one of them, Heracleon the Megarean, replied: "'Tis for such as are puzzled about inquiring whether the future tense of the verb βάλλω be spelt with a double λ or that hunt after the derivation of the comparatives χείρον and βέλτιον, and the superlatives χείριστον and βέλτιστον, to knit their brows while discoursing of their science, but as to philosophical discourses, they always divert and cheer

* Theodore Gaza, rector of the Academy of Ferrara.

† Plutarch, Treatise on Oracles which have ceased.

up those that entertain them, and never deject them or make them sad." *

> "Deprendas animi tormenta latentis in ægro
> Corpore; deprendas et gaudia; sumit utrumque
> Inde habitum facies." †

The soul that lodges philosophy, ought to be of such a constitution of health, as to render the body in like manner healthful too; she ought to make her tranquillity and satisfaction shine so as to appear without, and her contentment ought to fashion the outward behavior to her own mold, and consequently to fortify it with a graceful confidence, an active and joyous carriage, and a serene and contented countenance. The most manifest sign of wisdom is a continual cheerfulness; her state is like that of things in the regions above the moon, always clear and serene. 'Tis Baroco and Baralipton‡ that render their disciples so dirty and ill-favored, and not she; they do not so much as know her but by hearsay. What! It is she that calms and appeases the storms and tempests of the soul, and who teaches famine and fevers to laugh and sing; and that, not by certain imaginary epicycles, but by natural and manifest reasons. She has virtue for her end; which is not, as the schoolmen say, situate upon the summit of a perpendicular, rugged, inaccessible precipice: such as have approached her find her, quite on the contrary, to be seated in a fair, fruitful, and flourishing plain, from whence she easily discovers all things below; to which place any one may, however, arrive, if he know but the way, through shady, green, and sweetly flourishing avenues, by a pleasant, easy, and smooth descent, like that of the celestial vault. 'Tis for not having frequented this supreme, this beautiful, triumphant, and amiable, this equally delicious and courageous virtue, this so professed and implacable enemy to anxiety, sorrow, fear, and constraint, who, having nature for her

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* "How charming is divine philosophy!
Not harsh and crabbed, as dull fools suppose;
But musical as is Apollo's lute."
—MILTON, *Comus.*

† "You may discern the torments of mind lurking in a sick body; you may discern its joys: each habit the face assumes from the mind."—JUVENAL, ix. 18.

‡ Two terms of the ancient scholastic logic.

guide, has fortune and pleasure for her companions, that they have gone, according to their own weak imaginations and created this ridiculous, this sorrowful, querulous, despiteful, threatening, terrible image of it to themselves and others, and placed it upon a rock apart, among thorns and brambles, and made of it a hobgoblin to affright people.

But the governor that I would have, that is such a one as knows it to be his duty to possess his pupil with as much or more affection than reverence to virtue, will be able to inform him, that the poets * have evermore accommodated themselves to the public humor, and make him sensible, that the gods have planted more toil and sweat in the avenues of the cabinets of Venus than in those of Minerva. And when he shall once find him begin to apprehend, and shall represent to him a Bradamante or an Angelica † for a mistress, a natural, active, generous, and not a viragoish, but a manly beauty, in comparison of a soft, delicate, artificial, simpering, and affected form; the one in the habit of a heroic youth, wearing a glittering helmet, the other tricked up in curls and ribbons like a wanton minx; he will then look upon his own affection as brave and masculine, when he shall choose quite contrary to that effeminate shepherd of Phrygia.

Such a tutor will make a pupil digest this new lesson, that the height and value of true virtue consists in the facility, utility, and pleasure of its exercise; so far from difficulty, that boys, as well as men, and the innocent as well as the subtle, may make it their own: it is by order, and not by force, that it is to be acquired. Socrates, her first minion, is so averse to all manner of violence, as totally to throw it aside, to slip into the more natural facility of her own progress: 'tis the nursing mother of all human pleasures, who in rendering them just, renders them also pure and permanent; in moderating them, keeps them in breath and appetite; in interdicting those which she herself refuses, whets our desire to those that she allows; and, like a kind and liberal mother, abundantly allows all that nature requires, even to satiety, if not to lassitude: unless we mean to say, that the regimen which stops the toper before he has drunk himself drunk, the glutton before he has eaten

* Hesiod, Ἔργ. καὶ Ἡμ., v. 287. † Heroines of Ariosto.

to a surfeit, and the lecher before he has got the pox, is an enemy to pleasure. If the ordinary fortune fail, she does without it, and forms another, wholly her own, not so fickle and unsteady as the other. She can be rich, be potent and wise, and knows how to lie upon soft perfumed beds: she loves life, beauty, glory, and health; but her proper and peculiar office is to know how to regulate the use of all these good things, and how to lose them without concern: an office much more noble than troublesome, and without which the whole course of life is unnatural, turbulent, and deformed, and there it is indeed, that men may justly represent those monsters upon rocks and precipices.

If this pupil shall happen to be of so contrary a disposition, that he had rather hear a tale of a tub than the true narrative of some noble expedition or some wise and learned discourse; who at the beat of drum, that excites the youthful ardor of his companions, leaves that to follow another that calls to a morris or the bears; who would not wish, and find it more delightful and more excellent, to return all dust and sweat victorious from a battle, than from tennis or from a ball, with the prize of those exercises; I see no other remedy, but that he be bound prentice in some good town to learn to make minced pies, though he were the son of a duke; according to Plato's precept, that children are to be placed out and disposed of, not according to the wealth, qualities, or condition of the father, but according to the faculties and the capacity of their own souls.

Since philosophy is that which instructs us to live and that infancy has there its lessons as well as other ages, why is it not communicated to children betimes?

"Udum et molle lutum est; nunc, nunc properandus, et acri
Fingendus sine fine rota."*

They begin to teach us to live when we have almost done living. A hundred students have got the pox before they have come to read Aristotle's lecture on temperance. Cicero said, that though he should live two men's ages, he should never find leisure to study the lyric poets; and I find these sophisters yet more deplorably unprofitable. The boy we would breed has a great deal less time to spare; he owes but the first fifteen or sixteen years of his life to education;

* "The clay is moist and soft: now, now make haste, and form the pitcher on the rapid wheel."—PERSIUS, iii. 23.

the remainder is due to action. Let us, therefore, employ that short time in necessary instruction. Away with the thorny subtleties of dialectics, they are abuses, things by which our lives can never be amended: take the plain philosophical discourses, learn how rightly to choose, and then rightly to apply them; they are more easy to be understood than one of Bocaccio's novels; a child from nurse is much more capable of them, than of learning to read or to write. Philosophy has discourses proper for childhood, as well as for the decrepit age of men.

I am of Plutarch's mind, that Aristotle did not so much trouble his great disciple with the knack of forming syllogisms, or with the elements of geometry, as with infusing into him good precepts concerning valor, prowess, magnanimity, temperance, and the contempt of fear; and with this ammunition, sent him, while yet a boy, with no more than thirty thousand foot, four thousand horse, and but forty-two thousand crowns, to subjugate the empire of the whole earth. For the other arts and sciences, he says, Alexander highly indeed commended their excellence and charm, and had them in very great honor and esteem, but not ravished with them to that degree, as to be tempted to affect the practice of them in his own person.

> "Petite hinc, juvenesque senesque,
> Finem animo certum, miserisque viatica canis."*

Epicurus, in the beginning of his letter to Meniceus,† says, "That neither the youngest should refuse to philosophize, nor the oldest grow weary of it." Who does otherwise, seems tacitly to imply, that either the time of living happily is not yet come, or that it is already past. And yet, for all that, I would not have this pupil of ours imprisoned and made a slave to his book; nor would I have him given up to the morosity and melancholic humor of a sour, ill-natured pedant; I would not have his spirit cowed and subdued, by applying him to the rack, and tormenting him, as some do, fourteen or fifteen hours a day, and so make a pack-horse of him. Neither should I think it good, when, by reason of a solitary and melancholic com-

* "Young men and old men derive hence a certain end to the mind, and stores for miserable gray hairs."—PERSIUS, v. 64.

† Diogenes Laertius, x. 122.

plexion, he is discovered to be overmuch addicted to his book, to nourish that humor in him; for that renders him unfit for civil conversation, and diverts him from better employments. And how many have I seen in my time totally brutified by an immoderate thirst after knowledge? Carneades was so besotted with it, that he would not find time as so much as to comb his head or to pare his nails.* Neither would I have his generous manners spoiled and corrupted by the incivility and barbarism of those of another. The French wisdom was anciently turned into proverb: "early, but of no continuance." And, in truth, we yet see, that nothing can be more ingenious and pleasing than the children of France; but they ordinarily deceive the hope and expectation that have been conceived of them; and grown up to be men, have nothing extraordinary or worth taking notice of: I have heard men of good understanding say, these colleges of ours to which we send our young people (and of which we have but too many) make them such animals as they are.†

But to our little monsieur, a closet, a garden, the table, his bed, solitude and company, morning and evening, all hours shall be the same, and all places to him a study; for philosophy, who, as the formatrix of judgment and manners, shall be his principal lesson, has that privilege to have a hand in everything. The orator Isocrates, being at a feast entreated to speak of his art, all the company were satisfied with and commended his answer: "It is not now a time," said he, "to do what I can do; and that which it is now time to do, I cannot do." ‡ For to make orations and rhetorical disputes in a company met together to laugh and make good cheer, had been very unseasonable and improper, and as much might have been said of all the other sciences. But as to what concerns philosophy, that part of it at least that treats of man, and of his offices and duties, it has been the common opinion of all wise men, that, out of respect to the sweetness of her conversation, she is ever to be admitted in all sports and entertainments. And Plato, having invited her to his feast, we see

* Idem, iv. 62.

† Hobbes said that if he had been in college as long as other people he should have been as great a blockhead as they —W. C. H.

‡ Plutarch, Symp., i. 1.

after how gentle and obliging a manner, accommodated both to time and place, she entertained the company, though in a discourse of the highest and most important nature.

> "Æque pauperibus prodest locupletibus æque;
> Et, neglecta, æque pueris senibusque nocebit." *

By this method of instruction, my young pupil will be much more and better employed than his fellows of the college are. But as the steps we take in walking to and fro in a gallery, though three times as many, do not tire a man so much as those we employ in a formal journey, so our lesson, as it were accidentally occurring, without any set obligation of time or place, and falling naturally into every action, will insensibly insinuate itself. By which means our very exercises and recreations, running, wrestling, music, dancing, hunting, riding, and fencing, will prove to be a good part of our study. I would have his outward fashion and mien, and the disposition of his limbs, formed at the same time with his mind. 'Tis not a soul, 'tis not a body that we are training up, but a man, and we ought not to divide him. And, as Plato says, we are not to fashion one without the other, but make them draw together like two horses harnessed to a coach. By which saying of his, does he not seem to allow more time for, and to take more care of, exercises for the body, and to hold that the mind, in a good proportion, does her business at the same time too?

As to the rest, this method of education ought to be carried on with a severe sweetness, quite contrary to the practice of our pedants, who, instead of tempting and alluring children to letters by apt and gentle ways, do in truth present nothing before them but rods and ferules, horror and cruelty. Away with this violence! away with this compulsion! than which, I certainly believe nothing more dulls and degenerates a well-descended nature. If you would have him apprehend shame and chastisement, do not harden him to them: inure him to heat and cold, to wind and sun, and to dangers that he ought to despise; wean him from all effeminacy and delicacy in clothes and

* "It profits poor and rich alike, but, neglected, equally hurts old and young."—HORACE, *Ep.*, i. 1, 25.

lodging, eating and drinking; accustom him to everything, that he may not be a Sir Paris, a carpet-knight, but a sinewy, hardy, and vigorous young man. I have ever from a child to the age wherein I now am, been of this opinion, and am still constant to it. But among other things, the strict government of most of our colleges has evermore displeased me; peradventure, they might have erred less perniciously on the indulgent side. 'Tis a real house of correction of imprisoned youth. They are made debauched, by being punished before they are so. Do but come in when they are about their lesson, and you shall hear nothing but the outcries of boys under execution, with the thundering noise of their pedagogues drunk with fury. A very pretty way this, to tempt these tender and timorous souls to love their book, with a furious countenance, and a rod in hand! A cursed and pernicious way of proceeding! Besides what Quintilian has very well observed,* that this imperious authority is often attended by very dangerous consequences, and particularly our way of chastising. How much more decent would it be to see their classes strewed with green leaves and fine flowers, than with the bloody stumps of birch and willows? Were it left to my ordering, I should paint the school with the pictures of joy and gladness; Flora and the Graces, as the philosopher Speusippus did his.† Where their profit is, let them there have their pleasure too. Such viands as are proper and wholesome for children, should be sweetened with sugar, and such as are dangerous to them, embittered with gall. 'Tis marvelous to see how solicitous Plato is in his Laws concerning the gayety and diversion of the youth of his city, and how much and often he enlarges upon their races, sports, songs, leaps, and dances: of which, he says, that antiquity has given the ordering and patronage particularly to the gods themselves, to Apollo, Minerva, and the Muses. He insists long upon, and is very particular in giving innumerable precepts for exercises; but as to the lettered sciences, says very little, and only seems particularly to recommend poetry upon the account of music.

All singularity in our manners and conditions is to be avoided as inconsistent with civil society. Who would not be astonished at so strange a constitution as that of Demo-

* Inst. Orat., i. 3.

† Diogenes Laertius, iv. 1.

phoon, steward to Alexander the Great, who sweated in the shade, and shivered in the sun? * I have seen those who have run from the smell of a mellow apple with greater precipitation than from a harquebus shot, others afraid of a mouse; others vomit at the sight of cream; others ready to swoon at the making of a feather bed; Germanicus could neither endure the sight nor the crowing of a cock. I will not deny, but that there may, peradventure, be some occult cause and natural aversion in these cases; but, in my opinion, a man might conquer it, if he took it in time. Precept has in this wrought so effectually upon me, though not without some pains on my part, I confess, that beer excepted, my appetite accommodates itself indifferently to all sorts of diet.

Young bodies are supple; one should, therefore, in that age bend and ply them to all fashions and customs: and provided a man can contain the appetite and the will within their due limits, let a young man, in God's name, be rendered fit for all nations and all companies, even to debauchery and excess, if need be; that is, where he shall do it out of complacency to the customs of the place. Let him be able to do everything, but love to do nothing but what is good. The philosophers themselves do not justify Callisthenes for forfeiting the favor of his master Alexander the Great, by refusing to pledge him a cup of wine. Let him laugh, play, wench, with his prince; nay, I would have him, even in his debauches, too hard for the rest of the company, and to excel his companions in ability and vigor, and that he may not give over doing it, either through defect of power or knowledge how to do it, but for want of will. "*Multum interest, utrum peccare ali quis nolit, an nesciat.*" † I thought I passed a compliment upon a lord, as free from those excesses as any man in France, by asking him before a great deal of very good company, how many times in his life he had been drunk in Germany, in the time of his being there about his majesty's affairs; which he also took as it was intended, and made answer. "Three times;" and withal, told us the whole story of his debauches. I know some, who for want of this faculty,

* Sextus Empiricus; Pyrrhon. Hypotyp., i. 14.

† "There is a vast difference between forbearing to sin, and not knowing how to sin."—SENECA, *Ep.*, 90.

have found a great inconvenience in negotiating with that nation. I have often with great admiration reflected upon the wonderful constitution of Alcibiades, who so easily could transform himself to so various fashions without any prejudice to his health; one while outdoing the Persian pomp and luxury, and another, the Lacedæmonian austerity and frugality; as reformed in Sparta, as voluptuous in Ionia.

"Omnis Aristippum decuit color, et status, et res."*

I would have my pupil to be such a one,

"Quem duplici panno patientia velat,
Mirabor, vitæ via si conversa decebit,
Personamque feret non inconcinnus utramque." †

These are my lessons, and he who puts them in practice shall reap more advantage than he who has had them read to him only, and so only knows them. If you see him, you hear him; if you hear him, you see him. God forbid, says one in Plato, that to philosophize were only to read a great many books, and to learn the arts. "*Hanc amplissimam omnium artium bene vivendi disciplinam, vita magis quam literis, persequuti sunt.*"‡ Leo, prince of the Phliasians, asking Heraclides Ponticus§ of what art or science he made profession; "I know," said he, "neither art nor science, but I am a philosopher." One reproaching Diogenes, that, being ignorant, he should pretend to philosophy: "I therefore," answered he, "pretend to it with so much the more reason." Hegesias entreated that he would read a certain book to him: "You are pleasant," said he; "you choose those figs that are true and natural, and not those that are painted; why do you not also choose exercises which are naturally true, rather than those written?" ‖

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* "Every complexion of life, every station and circumstance, well became Aristippus."—HORACE, *Ep.*, xvii. 23.

† "I should admire him who with patience bearing a patched garment, bears well a changed fortune, acting both parts equally well."—*Id.*, *ib.*, 25.

‡ "They have proceeded to this discipline of living well, which of all arts is the greatest, by their lives, rather than by their reading."—CICERO, *Tusc. Quæs.*, iv. 3.

§ It was not Heraclides of Pontus who made this answer, but Pythagoras.

‖ Diogenes Laertius, vi. 48.

The lad will not so much get his lesson by heart as he will practice it: he will repeat it in his actions. We shall discover if there be prudence in his exercises, if there be sincerity and justice in his deportment, if there be grace and judgment in his speaking; if there be constancy in his sickness; if there be modesty in his mirth, temperance in his pleasures, order in his domestic economy, indifference in his palate, whether what he eats or drinks be flesh or fish, wine or water. "*Qui disciplinam suam non ostentationem scientiæ, sed legem vitæ putet: quique obtemperet ipse sibi, et decretis pareat.*"* The conduct of our lives is the true mirror of our doctrine. Zeuxidamus, to one who asked him, why the Lacedæmonians did not commit their constitutions of chivalry to writing, and deliver them to their young men to read, made answer, that it was because they would inure them to action, and not amuse them with words. With such a one, after fifteen or sixteen years' study, compare one of our college Latinists, who has thrown away so much time in nothing but learning to speak. The world is nothing but babble; and I hardly ever yet saw that man who did not rather prate too much, than speak too little. And yet half of our age is embezzled this way: we are kept four or five years to learn words only, and to tack them together into clauses; as many more to form them into a long discourse, divided into four or five parts; and other five years, at least, to learn succinctly to mix and interweave them after a subtle and intricate manner: let us leave all this to those who make a profession of it.

Going one day to Orleans, I met in the plain on this side Clery, two pedants traveling toward Bordeaux, about fifty paces distant from one another; and a good way further behind them, I discovered a troop of horse, with a gentleman at the head of them, who was the late Monsieur le Comte de la Rochefoucauld. One of my people inquired of the foremost of these dominies, who that gentleman was that came after him; he, having not seen the train that followed after, and thinking his companion was meant, pleasantly answered: "He is not a gentleman, he is a grammarian, and I am a logician." Now we who, quite

* "Who considers his own discipline, not as a vain ostentation of science, but as a law and rule of life; and who obeys his own decrees, and the laws he has prescribed to himself."—CICERO, *Tusc. Quæs.*, ii. 4.

contrary, do not here pretend to breed a grammarian or a logician, but a gentleman, let us leave them to throw away their time at their own fancy: our business lies elsewhere. Let but our pupil be well furnished with things, words will follow but too fast; he will pull them after him if they do not voluntarily follow. I have observed some to make excuses, that they cannot express themselves, and pretend to have their fancies full of a great many very fine things, which yet, for want of eloquence, they cannot utter; 'tis a mere shift, and nothing else. Will you know what I think of it? I think they are nothing but shadows of some imperfect images and conceptions that they know not what to make of within, nor consequently bring out: they do not yet themselves understand what they would be at, and if you but observe how they haggle and stammer upon the point of parturition, you will soon conclude, that their labor is not to delivery, but about conception, and that they are but licking their formless embryo. For my part, I hold, and Socrates commands it, that whoever has in his mind a sprightly and clear imagination, he will express it well enough in one kind of tongue or another, and, if he be dumb, by signs

"Verbaque prævisam rem non invita sequentur." *

And as another as poetically says in his prose, "*Quum res animum occupavere, verba ambiunt:*" † and this other, "*Ipsæ res verbe rapiunt.*" ‡ He knows nothing of ablative, conjunctive, substantive, or grammar, no more than his lackey, or a fishwife of the Petit Pont; and yet these will give you a bellyful of talk, if you will hear them, and peradventure shall trip as little in their language as the best masters of art in France. He knows no rhetoric, nor how in a preface to bribe the benevolence of the courteous reader; neither does he care to know it. Indeed all this fine decoration of painting is easily effaced by the luster of a simple and blunt truth: these fine flourishes serve only

* "Once a thing is conceived in the mind, the words to express it soon present themselves."—HORACE, *De Arte Poetica*, v. 311.

† "When things are once in the mind, the words offer themselves readily."—SENECA, *Controvers.* iii., proem.

‡ "The things themselves force words to express them."—CICERO, *De Finib.*, iii. 5.

to amuse the vulgar of themselves incapable of more solid and nutritive diet, as Aper very evidently demonstrates in Tacitus.* The ambassadors of Samos, prepared with along and elegant oration, came to Cleomenes, king of Sparta, to incite him to a war against the tyrant Polycrates; who, after he had heard their harangue with great gravity and patience, gave them this answer: "As to the exordium, I remember it not, nor consequently the middle of your speech; and for what concerns your conclusion, I will not do what you desire:"† a very pretty answer this methinks, and a pack of learned orators most sweetly graveled. And what did the other man say? The Athenians were to choose one of two architects for a very great building they had designed; of these, the first, a pert affected fellow, offered this service in a long premeditated discourse upon the subject of the work in hand, and by his oratory inclined the voices of the people in his favor; but the other in three words: "Oh, Athenians, what this man says, I will do."‡ When Cicero was in the height and heat of an eloquent harangue, many were struck with admiration; but Cato only laughed,§ saying: "We have a pleasant consul."‖ Let it go before, or come after, a good sentence or a thing well said, is always in season; if it either suit well with what went before, nor has much coherence with what follows after, it is good in itself. I am none of those who think that good rhyme makes a good poem. Let him make short long, and long short if he will, 'tis no great matter; if there be invention, and that the wit and judgment have well performed their offices, I will say, here's a good poet, but an ill rhymer.

"Emunctæ naris, durus componere versus."¶

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* Dialogue on Orators, c. 19.

* Plutarch, Apothegms of the Lacedæmonians.

‡ Plutarch, Instructions to Statesmen, c. 4.

§ Plutarch, Life of Cato, c. 6.

‖ Ridiculum consulem.

¶ "Of delicate humor, but of rugged versification."—HORACE *Sat.*, iv. 8.

Let a man, says Horace, divest his work of all method and measure,

> "Tempora certa modosque, et, quod prius ordine verbum est,
> Posterius facias, præponens ultima primis ·
> Invenias etiam disjecti membra poetæ," *

he will never the more lose himself for that; the very pieces will be fine by themselves. Menander's answer had this meaning, who being reproved by a friend, the time drawing on at which he had promised a comedy, that he had not yet fallen in hand with it: "It is made, and ready," said he, "all but the verses." † Having contrived the subject, and disposed the scenes in his fancy, he took little care for the rest. Since Ronsard and Du Bellay have given reputation to our French poesy, every little dabbler, for aught I see, swells his words as high, and makes his cadences very near as harmonious as they. "*Plus sonat, quam valet.*" ‡ For the vulgar, there were never so many poetasters as now; but though they find it no hard matter to imitate their rhyme, they yet fall infinitely short of imitating the rich descriptions of the one, and the delicate invention of the other of these masters.

But what will become of our young gentleman, if he be attacked with the sophistic subtlety of some syllogism? "A Westphalia ham makes a man drink, drink quenches thirst; therefore, a Westphalia ham quenches thirst." Why, let him laugh at it; it will be more discretion to do so, than to go about to answer it: § or let him borrow this pleasant evasion from Aristippus: "Why should I trouble myself to untie that, which, bound as it is, gives me so much trouble?" ‖ One offering at this dialectic juggling against Cleanthes, Chrysippus took him short, saying, "Reserve these baubles to play with children, and do not

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* "Take away certain rhythms and measures, and change the order of the words, putting that which should be first last, and the last first, still these misplaced members have all the elements of poetry."—HORACE, *Sat.*, i. 4, 58.

† Plutarch, Whether the Athenians more excelled in Arms or in Letters.

‡ "More sound than sense."—SENECA, Ep., 40.

§ Idem. ibid., 49.

‖ Diogenes Laertius, ii. 70.

by such fooleries divert the serious thoughts of a man of years."* If these ridiculous subleties, "*contorta et aculeata sophismata,*" † as Cicero calls them, are designed to possess him with an untruth, they are dangerous; but if they signify no more than only to make him laugh, I do not see why a man need to be fortified against them. There are some so ridiculous, as to go a mile out of their way to hook in a fine word: "*Aut qui non verba rebus aptant, sed res extrinsecus arcessunt, quibus verba conveniant*‡ And as another says, "*Qui alicujus verbi decore placentis, vocentur ad id, quod non proposuerant scribere.*" § I for my part rather bring in a fine sentence by head and shoulder to fit my purpose, than divert my designs to hunt after a sentence. On the contrary words are to serve, and to follow a man's purpose; and let Gascon come in play where French will not do. I would have things so excelling, and so wholly possessing the imagination of him that hears, that he should have something else to do, than to think of words. The way of speaking that I love, is natural and plain, the same in writing as in speaking, and a sinewy and muscular way of expressing a man's self, short and pithy, not so elegant and artificial as prompt and vehement:

"Hæc demum sapiet dictio, quæ feriet;" ‖

rather hard than wearisome; free from affectation; irregular, incontinuous, and bold; where every piece makes up an entire body; not like a pedant, a preacher, or a pleader, but rather a soldier-like style, as Suetonius calls that of Julius Cæsar; and yet I see no reason why he

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* Idem, vii. 183.

† Cicero Acad., ii. 24.

‡ "Who do not fit words to the subject, but seek out for things quite from the purpose to fit the words."—QUINTILIAN, viii. 3.

§ "Who by their fondness of some fine sounding word are tempted to something they had no intention to treat of."—SENECA, *Ep.*, 59.

‖ "That has most weight and wisdom which pierces the ear."—Epitaph on Lucan, in Fabricus, Biblioth. Lat., ii. 10.

should call it so.* I have ever been ready to imitate the negligent garb, which is yet observable among the young men of our time, to wear my cloak on one shoulder, my cap on one side, a stocking in disorder, which seems to express a kind of haughty disdain of these exotic ornaments, and a contempt of the artificial; but I find this negligence of much better use in the form of speaking. All affectation, particularly in the French gayety and freedom, is ungraceful in a courtier, and in a monarchy every gentleman ought to be fashioned according to the court model; for which reason, an easy and natural negligence does well. I no more like a web where the knots and seams are to be seen, than a fine figure, so delicate, that a man may tell all the bones and veins. "*Quæ veritati operam dat oratio, incomposita sit et simplex.*" † "*Quis accurate loquitur, nisi qui vult putide loqui?*" ‡ That eloquence prejudices the subject it would advance, that wholly attracts us to itself. And as in our outward habit, 'tis a ridiculous effeminacy to distinguish ourselves by a particular and unusual garb or fashion; so in language, to study new phrases, and to affect words that are not of current use, proceeds from a puerile and scholastic ambition. May I be bound to speak no other language than what is spoken in the market places of Paris! Aristophanes the grammarian was quite out, when he reprehended Epicurus for his plain way of delivering himself, and the design of his oratory, which was only perspicuity of speech.§ The imitation of words, by its own facility, immediately disperses itself through a whole people; but the imitation of inventing and fitly applying those words, is of a slower progress. The generality of readers, for having found a like robe, very mistakenly imagine they have the same body and inside too, whereas force and sinews are never to

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* Montaigne's difficulty arose from the imperfect text before him —"Eloquentia militari; qua re aut æquavit," etc.; whereas the proper reading is "Eloquentia, militarique re, aut æquavit," etc. Suetonius, Life of Julius Cæsar, c. 55.

† "Let the language that is dedicated to truth be plain and unaffected."—SENECA, *Ep.*, 40.

‡ "For who studies to speak too accurately, that does not at the same time design to perplex his auditory?"—*Idem*, *Ep.*, 75.

§ Diogenes Laertius, x. 13.

be borrowed; the gloss and outward ornament, that is, words and elocution, may. Most of those I converse with, speak the same language I here write; but whether they think the same thoughts I cannot say. The Athenians, says Plato,* study fullness and elegancy of speaking; the Lacedæmonians affect brevity, and those of Crete to aim more at the fecundity of conception than the fertility of speech; and these are the best. Zeno used to say, that he had two sorts of disciples, one that he called φιλολόγους, curious to learn things, and these were his favorites; the other, λογοφίλους, that cared for nothing but words. Not that fine speaking is not a very good and commendable quality; but not so excellent and so necessary as some would make it; and I am scandalized that our whole life should be spent in nothing else. I would first understand my own language, and that of my neighbors with whom most of my business and conversation lies.

No doubt but Greek and Latin are very great ornaments, and of very great use, but we buy them too dear. I will here discover one way, which has been experimented in my own person, by which they are to be had better cheap, and such may make use of it as will. My late father having made the most precise inquiry that any man could possibly make among men of the greatest learning and judgment, of an exact method of education, was by them cautioned of this inconvenience then in use, and made to believe, that the tedious time we applied to the learning of the tongues of them who had them for nothing, was the sole cause we could not arrive to the grandeur of soul and perfection of knowledge, of the ancient Greeks and Romans. I do not, however, believe that to be the only cause. However, the expedient my father found out for this was, that in my infancy, and before I began to speak, he committed me to the care of a German, who since died a famous physician in France, totally ignorant of our language, but very fluent, and a great critic in Latin. This man, whom he had fetched out of his own country, and whom he entertained with a very great salary for this only end, had me continually with him: to him there were also joined two others, of inferior learning, to attend me, and to relieve him; who all of them spoke to me in no other language but Latin.

* Stobæus, Serm. xxxiv.

As to the rest of his family, it was an inviolable rule, that neither himself, nor my mother, man nor maid, should speak anything in my company, but such Latin words as every one had learned only to gabble with me.* It is not to be imagined how great an advantage this proved to the whole family; my father and my mother by this means learned Latin enough to understand it perfectly well, and to speak it to such a degree as was sufficient for any necessary use; as also those of the servants did who were most frequently with me. In short, we Latined it at such a rate, that it overflowed to all the neighboring villages, where there yet remain, that have established themselves by custom, several Latin appellations of artisans and their tools. As for what concerns myself, I was above six years of age before I understood either French or Perigordin, any more than Arabic; and without art, book, grammar, or precept, whipping, or the expense of a tear, I had, by that time, learned to speak as pure Latin as my master himself, for I had no means of mixing it up with any other. If, for example, they were to give me a theme after the college fashion, they gave it to others in French, but to me they were to give it in bad Latin, to turn it into that which was good. And Nicholas Grouchy, who wrote a book "De Comitiis Romanorum," William Guerente, who wrote a comment upon Aristotle; George Buchanan, that great Scotch poet; and Mark Antony Muret (whom both France and Italy have acknowledged for the best orator of his time), my domestic tutors, have all of them often told me, that I had in my infancy, that language so very fluent and ready, that they were afraid to enter into discourse with me. And particularly Buchanan, whom I since saw attending the late Mareschal de Brissac, then told me, that he was about to write a treatise of education, the example of which he intended to take from mine, for he was then tutor to that Count de Brissac who afterward proved so valiant and so brave a gentleman.

As to Greek, of which I have but a mere smattering, my father also designed to have it taught me by a devise,

* These passages are the basis of a small volume by the Abbé Mangin, "Education de Montaigne; ou, L'Art d'enseigner le Latin à l'instar des mères latines."

but a new one, and by way of sport; tossing our declensions to and fro, after the manner of those who, by certain games at tables and chess, learn geometry and arithmetic. For he, among other rules, had been advised to make me relish science and duty by an unforced will, and of my own voluntary motion, and to educate my soul in all liberty and delight, without any severity or constraint; which he was an observer of to such a degree, even of superstition, if I may say so, that some being of opinion that it troubles and disturbs the brains of children suddenly to wake them in the morning, and to snatch them violently and over-hastily from sleep (wherein they are much more profoundly involved than we), he caused me to be wakened by the sound of some musical instrument, and was never unprovided of a musician for that purpose. By this example you may judge of the rest, this alone being sufficient to recommend both the prudence and the affection of so good a father, who is not to be blamed if he did not reap fruits answerable to so exquisite a culture. Of this, two things were the cause: first, a sterile and improper soil; for, though I was of a strong and healthful constitution, and of a disposition tolerably sweet and tractable, yet I was, withal, so heavy, idle, and indisposed, that they could not rouse me from my sloth, not even to get me out to play. What I saw, I saw clearly enough, and under this heavy complexion nourished a bold imagination, and opinions above my age. I had a slow wit, that would go no faster than it was led; a tardy understanding, a languishing invention, and above all, incredible defect of memory; so that, it is no wonder, if from all these nothing considerable could be extracted. Secondly, like those, who, impatient of a long and steady cure, submit to all sorts of prescriptions and recipes, the good man being extremely timorous of any way failing in a thing he had so wholly set his heart upon, suffered himself at last to be overruled by the common opinions; which always follow their leader as a flight of cranes, and complying with the method of the time, having no more those persons he had brought out of Italy, and who had given him the first model of education, about him, he sent me at six years of age to the College of Guienne, at that time the best and most flourishing in France. And there it was not possible to add anything to the care he had to provide me the most

able tutors, with all other circumstances of education, reserving also several particular rules contrary to the college practice; but so it was, that with all these precautions it was a college still. My Latin immediately grew corrupt, of which also by discontinuance I have since lost all manner of use; so that this new way of education served me to no other end, than only at my first coming to prefer me to the first forms; for at thirteen years old, that I came out of the college, I had run through my whole course (as they call it), and, in truth, without any manner of advantage, that I can honestly brag of, in all this time.

The first thing that gave me any taste for books, was the pleasure I took in reading the fables of Ovid's Metamorphoses, and with them I was so taken, that being but seven or eight years old, I would steal from all other diversions to read them, both by reason that this was my own natural language, the easiest book that I was acquainted with, and for the subject, the most accommodated to the capacity of my age: for, as for Lancelot of the Lake, Amadis of Gaul, Huon of Bordeaux, and such trumpery, which children are most delighted with, I had never so much as heard their names, no more than I yet know what they contain; so exact was the discipline wherein I was brought up. But this was enough to make me neglect the other lessons that were prescribed me; and here it was infinitely to my advantage, to have to do with an understanding tutor, who very well knew discreetly to connive at this and other truantries of the same nature; for by this means I ran through Virgil's Æneid, and then Terence, and then Plautus, and then some Italian comedies, allured by the sweetness of the subject; whereas had he been so foolish as to have taken me off this diversion, I do really believe, I had brought nothing away from the college but a hatred of books, as almost all our young gentlemen do. But he carried himself very discreetly in that business, seeming to take no notice, and allowing me only such time as I could steal from my other regular studies, which whetted my appetite to devour those books. For the chief things my father expected from their endeavors to whom he had delivered me for education, were affability and good humor; and, to say the truth, my manners had no other vice but sloth and want of mettle. The fear was not that I should do ill, but that I should

do nothing; nobody prognosticated that I should be wicked, but only useless; they foresaw idleness, but no malice; and I find it falls out accordingly. The complaints I hear of myself are these: "He is idle, cold in the offices of friendship and relation, and in those of the public, too particular, too disdainful." But the most injurious do not say, "Why has he taken such a thing? Why has he not paid such a one?" but, "Why does he part with nothing? Why does he not give?" And I should take it for a favor that men would expect from me no greater effects of supererogation than these. But they are unjust to exact from me what I do not owe, far more rigorously than they require from others that which they do owe. In condemning me to it, they efface the gratification of the action, and deprive me of the gratitude that would be my due for it; whereas the active well-doing ought to be of so much the greater value from my hands, by how much I have never been passive that way at all. I can the more freely dispose of my fortune the more it is mine, and of myself the more I am my own. Nevertheless, if I were good at setting out my own actions, I could, peradventure, very well repel these reproaches, and could give some to understand, that they are not so much offended, that I do not enough, as that I am able to do a great deal more than I do.

Yet for all this heavy disposition of mine, my mind, when retired into itself, was not altogether without strong movements, solid and clear judgments about those objects it could comprehend, and could also, without any helps, digest them; but, among other things, I do really believe, it had been totally impossible to have made it to submit by violence and force. Shall I here acquaint you with one faculty of my youth? I had great assurance of countenance, and flexibility of voice and gesture, in applying myself to any part I undertook to act: for before—

"Alter ab undecimo tum me vix ceperat annus," *

I played the chief parts in the Latin tragedies of Buchanan, Guerente, and Muret, that were presented in our college of Guienne with great dignity; now Andreas Goveanus, our principal, as in all other parts of his charge, was, without

* "I had just entered on my twelfth year."—VIRGIL, *Bucol.*, 39.

comparison, the best of that employment in France; and I was looked upon as one of the best actors. 'Tis an exercise that I do not disapprove in young people of condition; and I have since seen our princes, after the example of some of the ancients, in person handsomely and commendably perform these exercises; it was even allowed to persons of quality to make a profession of it in Greece. "*Aristoni tragico actori rem aperit: huic et genus et fortuna houesta erant: nec ars, quia nihil tale apud Græcos pudori est, ea deformabat.*" * Nay, I have always taxed those with impertinence who condemn these entertainments, and with injustice those who refuse to admit such comedians as are worth seeing into our good towns, and grudge the people that public diversion. Well-governed corporations take care to assemble their citizens, not only to the solemn duties of devotion, but also to sports and spectacles. They find society and friendship augmented by it; and, besides, can there possibly be allowed a more orderly and regular diversion than what is performed in the sight of every one, and, very often, in the presence of the supreme magistrate himself? And I, for my part, should think it reasonable, that the prince should sometimes gratify his people at his own expense, out of paternal goodness and affection; and that in populous cities there should be theaters erected for such entertainments, if but to divert them from worse and private actions.

To return to my subject, there is nothing like alluring the appetite and affections; otherwise you make nothing but so many asses laden with books; by dint of the lash, you give them their pocketful of learning to keep; whereas, to do well, you should not only lodge it with them, but make them espouse it.

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* "He imparted this affair to Aristo the tragedian, a man of a good family and fortune, which did neither of them receive any blemish by that profession; nothing of this kind being reputed a disparagement in Greece."—LIVY, xxiv. 24.

CHAPTER XXVI.

THAT IT IS FOLLY TO MEASURE TRUTH AND ERROR BY OUR OWN CAPACITY.

'Tis not, perhaps, without reason, that we attribute facility of belief and easiness of persuasion, to simplicity and ignorance; for I fancy I have heard belief compared to the impression of a seal upon the soul, which by how much softer and of less resistance it is, is the more easy to be impressed upon. "*Ut necesse est, lancem in libia, ponderibus impositis, deprimi, sic animum perspicuis cedere.*" * By how much the soul is more empty and without counterpoise, with so much greater facility it yields under the weight of the first persuasion. And this is the reason that children, the common people, women, and sick folks, are most apt to be led by the ears. But then, on the other hand, 'tis a foolish presumption to slight and condemn all things for false that do not appear to us probable; which is the ordinary vice of such as fancy themselves wiser than their neighbors. I was myself once one of those; and if I heard talk of dead folks walking, of prophecies, enchantments, witchcrafts, or any other story I had no mind to believe,

> "Somnia, terrores magicos, miracula, sagas,
> Nocturnos lemures, portentaque Thessala." †

I presently pitied the poor people that were abused by these follies. Whereas I now find, that I myself was to be pitied as much, at least, as they; not that experience has taught me anything to alter my former opinions, though my curiosity has endeavored that way; but reason has instructed me, that thus resolutely to condemn anything for false and impossible, is arrogantly and impiously to circumscribe and limit the will of God, and the power of our mother nature, within the bounds of my own capacity, than which no folly can be greater. If we give the names of

* "As the scale of the balance must give way to the weight that presses it down, so the mind must of necessity yield to demonstration."—Cicero, *Acad.*, ii. 12.

† "Dreams, magic terrors, marvels, sorceries, hobgoblins, and Thessalian prodigies."—Horace, *Ep.*, ii. 2, 208.

monster and miracle to everything our reason cannot comprehend, how many are continually presented before our eyes? Let us but consider through what clouds, and as it were groping in the dark, our teachers lead us to the knowledge of most of the things about us; assuredly we shall find that it is rather custom than knowledge that takes away their strangeness—

> "Jam nemo, fessus saturusque videndi,
> Suspicere in cœli dignatur lucida templa;" *

and that if those things were now newly presented to us, we should think them as incredible, if not more, than any others.

> "Si nunc primum mortalibus adsint
> Ex improviso, si sint objecta repente,
> Nil magis his rebus poterat mirabile dici,
> Aut minus ante quod auderent fore credere gentes."†

He that had never seen a river, imagined the first he met with to be the sea; and the greatest things that have fallen within our knowledge, we conclude the extremes that nature makes of the kind.

> "Scilicet et fluvius qui non est maximus, ei'st
> Qui non ante aliquem majorem vidit; et igens
> Arbor, homoque videtur, et omnia de genere omni
> Maxima quæ vidit quisque, hæc igentia fingit."‡

"*Consuetudine oculorum assuescunt animi, neque admirantur, neque requirunt rationes earum rerum, quas semper vident.*" § The novelty, rather than the greatness of things, tempts us to inquire into their causes. We are to judge with more reverence, and with greater acknowl-

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* "Weary of the sight, now no one deigns to look up to heaven's lucid temples."—LUCRETIUS, ii. 1037. The text has *satiate videndi.*

† Lucretius, ii. 1037. The sense of the passage is in the preceding sentence.

‡ "A little river seems to him who has never seen a larger river, a mighty stream; and so with other things—a tree, a man—anything appears greatest of the kind that never knew a greater."—LUCRETIUS, vi. 674.

§ "Things grow familiar to men's minds by being often seen; so that they neither admire, nor are inquisitive about, things they daily see."—CICERO, *De Natura Deor.*, lib. ii. 38.

edgement of our own ignorance and infirmity, of the infinite power of nature. How many unlikely things are there testified by people worthy of faith, which, if we cannot persuade ourselves absolutely to believe, we ought at least to leave them in suspense; for, to condemn them as impossible, is by a temerarious presumption to pretend to know the utmost bounds of possibility. Did we rightly understand the difference between the impossible and the unusual, and between that which is contrary to the order and course of nature, and contrary to the common opinion of men, in not believing rashly, and on the other hand, in not being too incredulous, we should observe the rule of *Ne quid nimis*, enjoined by Chilo.*

When we find in Froissart, that the Count de Foix† knew in Bearn the defeat of John, king of Castile, at Juberoth the next day after it happened, and the means by which he tells us he came to do so, we may be allowed to be a little merry at it, as also at what our annals report, that Pope Honorius, the same day that King Philip Augustus died at Mantes, performed his public obsequies at Rome, and commanded the like throughout Italy, the testimony of these authors not being, perhaps, of authority enough to restrain us. But what if Plutarch, besides several examples that he produces out of antiquity, tells us, he knows of certain knowledge, that in the time of Domitian, the news of the battle lost by Anthony in Germany, was published at Rome, many days' journey from thence, and dispersed throughout the whole world, the same day it was fought; and if Cæsar was of opinion, that it has often happened, that the report has preceded the incident,‡ shall we not say, that these simple people have suffered themselves to be deceived with the vulgar, for not having been so clear-sighted as we? Is there anything more delicate, more clear, more sprightly, than Pliny's judgment, when he is pleased to set it to work? Anything more remote from vanity? Setting aside his learning, of which I make less account, in which of these

* *Μηδὲν ἄγαν.* Aristotle in his Rhetoric, lib. xi. cap. 12, and Pliny (Nat. Hist., lib. vii. cap. 32) ascribe this maxim to Chilo, as does Diogenes Lærtius in the "Life of Thales," lib. i. sec. 41, but he afterward ascribes it to Solon, in his "Life of Solon," lib, i. sec. 63. It has been also attributed to others.

† In 1385.

‡ Civil Wars, iii. 36.

excellences do any of us excel him? And yet there is scarce a young schoolboy that does not convict him of untruth, and that pretends not to instruct him in the progress of the works of nature.

When we read in Bouchet the miracles of St. Hilary's relics, away with them: his authority is not sufficient to deprive us of the liberty of contradicting him; but generally and offhand to condemn all such like stories, seems to me a singular impudence. That great St. Augustin * testifies to have seen a blind child recover sight upon the relics of St. Gervaise and St. Protasius at Milan; a woman at Carthage cured of a cancer, by the sign of the cross made upon her by a woman newly baptized; Hesperius, a familiar friend of his, to have driven away the spirits that haunted his house, with a little earth of the sepulcher of our Lord; which earth, being also transported thence into the church, a paralytic to have there been suddenly cured by it; a woman in a procession, having touched St. Stephen's shrine with a nosegay, and rubbing her eyes with it, to have recovered her sight, lost many years before; with several other miracles of which he professes himself to have been an eyewitness; of what shall we accuse him and the two holy bishops, Aurelius and Maximinus, both of whom he attests to the truth of these things? Shall it be of ignorance, simplicity and facility; or of malice and imposture? Is any man now living so impudent as to think himself comparable to them in virtue, piety, learning, judgment, or any kind of perfection? "*Qui ut rationem nullam afferent, ipsa auctoritate me frangerent.*" † 'Tis a presumption of great danger and consequence, besides the absurd temerity it draws after it, to contemn what we do not comprehend. For after, according to your fine understanding, you have established the limits of truth and error, and that, afterward, there appears a necessity upon you of believing stranger things than those you have contradicted, you are already obliged to quit your limits. Now, that which seems to me so much to disorder our consciences in the commotions we are now in concerning re-

* De Civ. Dei, xxii. 8.

† "Who, though they should give me no reason for what they affirm, convince me with their sole authority."—CICERO, *Tusc. Quæs.*, i. 21.

ligion, is the Catholics dispensing so much with their belief. They fancy they appear moderate, and wise, when they grant to their opponents some of the articles in question; but, besides that they do not discern what advantage it is to those with whom we contend, to begin to give ground and to retire, and how much this animates our enemy to follow his blow; these articles which they select as things indifferent, are sometimes of very great importance. We are either wholly and absolutely to submit ourselves to the authority of our ecclesiastical polity, or totally throw off all obedience to it: 'tis not for us to determine what and how much obedience we owe to it. And this I can say, as having myself made trial of it, that having formerly taken the liberty of my own swing and fancy, and omitted or neglected certain rules of the discipline of our church, which seemed to me vain and strange: coming afterward to discourse of it with learned men, I have found those same things to be built upon very good and solid ground and strong foundation; and that nothing but stupidity and ignorance makes us receive them with less reverence than the rest. Why do we not consider what contradictions we find in our own judgments; how many things were yesterday articles of our faith, that to-day appear no other than fables? Glory and curiosity are the scourges of the soul; the last prompts us to thrust our noses into everything, the other forbids us to leave anything doubtful and undecided.

CHAPTER XXVII.

OF FRIENDSHIP.

HAVING considered the proceedings of a painter that serves me, I had a mind to imitate his way. He chooses the fairest place and middle of any wall, or panel, wherein to draw a picture, which he finishes with his utmost care and art, and the vacuity about it he fills with grotesques, which are odd fantastic figures without any grace but what they derive from their variety, and the extravagance of their shapes. And in truth, what are these things I scribble, other than grotesques and monstrous bodies,

made of various parts, without any certain figure, or any other than accidental order, coherence, or proportion?

"Desinit in piscem mulier, formosa superne." *

In this second part I go hand in hand with my painter; but fall very short of him in the first and the better, my power of handling not being such, that I dare to offer at a rich piece, finely polished, and set off according to art. I have therefore thought fit to borrow one of Estienne de la Boetie, and such a one as shall honor and adorn all the rest of my work—namely, a discourse that he called Voluntary Servitude; but, since, those who did not know him have properly enough called it "Le contre Un." He wrote in his youth † by way of essay, in honor of liberty against tyrants; and it has since run through the hands of men of great learning and judgment, not without singular and merited commendation; for it is finely written, and as full as anything can possibly be. And yet one may confidently say it is far short of what he was able to do; and if in that more mature age, wherein I had the happiness to know him, he had taken a design like this of mine, to commit his thoughts to writing, we should have seen a great many rare things, and such as would have gone very near to have rivaled the best writings of antiquity: for in natural parts especially, I know no man comparable to him. But he has left nothing behind him, save this treatise only (and that, too, by chance, for I believe he never saw it after it first went out of his hands), and some observations upon that edict of January,‡ made famous by our civil wars, which also shall elsewhere, peradventure, find a place. These were all I could recover of his remains, I to whom, with so affectionate a remembrance, upon his deathbed, he by his last will bequeathed his library and papers, the little book of his works only excepted, which I committed to the press.§ And this particular obligation I have to this treatise of his, that it was the occasion of my

* "A fair woman in her upper form terminates in a fish's tail."—HORACE, *De Arte Poetica*, v. 4.

† "Not being as yet eighteen years old."—Edition of 1588.

‡ 1562, which granted to the Huguenots the public exercise of their religion.

§ Paris, 1571, *chez* Frederic Morel.

first coming acquainted with him; for it was showed to me long before I had the good fortune to know him; and gave me the first knowledge of his name, proving the first cause and foundation of a friendship which we afterward improved and maintained, so long as God was pleased to continue us together, so perfect, inviolate, and entire, that certainly the like is hardly to be found in story, and among the men of this age there is no sign nor trace of any such thing in use; so much concurrence is required to the building of such a one, that 'tis much, if fortune bring it but once to pass in three ages.

There is nothing to which nature seems so much to have inclined us, as to society; and Aristotle says,* that the good legislators had more respect to friendship than to justice. Now the most supreme point of its perfection is this: for, generally, all those that pleasure, profit, public or private interest create and nourish, are so much the less beautiful and generous, and so much the less friendships, by how much they mix another cause, and design, and fruit in friendship, than itself. Neither do the four ancient kinds, natural, social, hospitable, venerian, either separately or jointly, make up a true and perfect friendship.

That of children to parents is rather respect: friendship is nourished by communication, which cannot, by reason of the great disparity, between these, but would rather perhaps offend the duties of nature; for neither are all the secret thoughts of fathers fit to be communicated to children, less it beget an indecent familiarity between them; nor can the advices and reproofs, which is one of the principal offices of friendship, be properly performed by the son to the father. There are some countries where 'twas the custom for children to kill their fathers; and others, where the fathers killed their children, to avoid their being an impediment one to another in life; and naturally the expectations of the one depend upon the ruin of the other. There have been great philosophers who have made nothing of this tie of nature, as Aristippus for one, who † being pressed home about the affection he owed to his children, as being come out of him, presently fell to spit, saying, that this also came out of him, and that we also breed

* Moral. ad Nicomac., viii.

† Diogenes Laertius, ii. 31.

worms and lice; and that other, that Plutarch endeavored to reconcile to his brother;* "I make never the more account of him," said he, "for coming out of the same hole." This name of brother does indeed carry with it a fine and delectable sound, and for that reason, he and I called one another brothers, but the complication of interests, the division of estates, and that the wealth of the one should be the poverty of the other, strangely relax and weaken the fraternal tie: brothers pursuing their fortune and advancement by the same path, 'tis hardly possible, but they must of necessity often jostle and hinder one another. Besides, why is it necessary that the correspondence of manners, parts, and inclinations, which begets the true and perfect friendships, should always meet in these relations? The father and the son may be of quite contrary humors, and so of brothers: he is my son, he is my brother; but he is passionate, ill-natured, or a fool. And moreover, by how much these are friendships that the law and natural obligation impose upon us, so much less is there of our own choice and voluntary freedom; whereas that voluntary liberty of ours has no production more promptly and properly its own than affection and friendship. Not that I have not in my own person experimented all that can possibly be expected of that kind, having had the best and most indulgent father, even to his extreme old age, that ever was, and who was himself descended from a family for many generations famous and exemplary for brotherly concord.

> "Et ipse
> Notus in fratres animi paterni." †

We are not here to bring the love we bear to women, though it be an act of our own choice, into comparison; nor rank it with the others. The fire of this, I confess,

> "Neque enim est dea nescia nostri
> Quæ dulcem curis miscet amaritiem," ‡

is more active, more eager, and more sharp: but withal,

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* On Brotherly Love, c. 4.

† "And I myself noted for paternal love toward my brothers."—HORACE, *Ode* ii. 2, 6.

‡ "Nor is the goddess unknown to me, who mixes a pleasing sorrow with my love's flame."—CATULLUS, lxviii. 17.

'tis more precipitant, fickle, moving and inconstant; a fever subject to intermissions and paroxysms, that has seized but on one part of us. Whereas in friendship, 'tis a general and universal fire, but temperate and equal, a constant established heat, all gentle and smooth, without poignancy or roughness. Moreover, in love, 'tis no other than frantic desire for that which flies from us:

> "Come segue la repre il cacciatore
> Al freddo, al caldo, alla montagna, al lito;
> Ne piu l' estima poi che presa vede;
> E sol dietro a chi fugge affretta il piede:" *

so soon as it enters into the terms of friendship, that is to say, into a concurrence of desires, it vanishes and is gone, fruition destroys it, as having only a fleshly end, and such a one as is subject to satiety. Friendship, on the contrary, is enjoyed proportionably as it is desired; and only grows up, is nourished and improves by enjoyment, as being of itself spiritual, and the soul growing still more refined by practice. Under this perfect friendship, the other fleeting affections have in my younger years found some place in me, to say nothing of him, who himself so confesses but too much in his verses; so that I had both these passions, but always so, that I could myself well enough distinguish them, and never in any degree of comparison with one another; the first maintaining its flight in so lofty and so brave a place, as with disdain to look down, and see the other flying at a far humbler pitch below.

As concerning marriage, besides that it is a covenant, the entrance into which only is free, but the continuance in it forced and compulsory, having another dependence than that of our own freewill, and a bargain commonly contracted to other ends, there almost always happens a thousand intricacies in it to unravel, enough to break the thread and to divert the current of a lively affection: whereas friendship has no manner of business or traffic with aught but itself. Moreover, to say truth, the ordinary talent of women is not such as is sufficient to maintain the conference and communication required to the support of this sacred tie; nor do they appear to be endued with con-

* "As the hunter pursues the hare, through cold and heat, over hill and dale, but, so soon as it is taken, no longer cares for it, and only delights in chasing that which flees from him."—ARIOSTO, x. 7.

stancy of mind, to sustain the pinch of so hard and durable a knot. And doubtless, if without this, there could be such a free and voluntary familiarity contracted where not only the souls might have this entire fruition, but the bodies also might share in the alliance, and a man be engaged throughout, the friendship would certainly be more full and perfect; but it is without example that this sex has ever yet arrived at such perfection; and by the common consent of the ancient schools, it is wholly rejected from it.

That other Grecian license is justly abhorred by our manners; which also, from having, according to their practice, a so necessary disparity of age and difference of offices between the lovers, answered no more to the perfect union and harmony that we here require, than the other: "*quis est enim iste amor amicitiæ? cur neque deformem adolescentem quisquam amat, neque formosum senem?*" * Neither will that very picture that the Academy presents of it, as I conceive, contradict me, when I say, that this first fury inspired by the son of Venus into the heart of the lover, upon sight of the flower and prime of a springing and blossoming youth, to which they allow all the insolent and passionate efforts that an immoderate ardor can produce, was simply founded upon external beauty, the false image of corporal generation; for it could not ground this love upon the soul, the sight of which as yet lay concealed, was but now springing, and not of maturity to blossom: that this fury, if it seized upon a low spirit, the means by which it preferred its suit were rich presents, favor in advancement to dignities, and such trumpery, which they by no means approve: if on a more generous soul, the pursuit was suitably generous, by philosophical instructions, precepts to revere religion, to obey the laws, to die for the good of one's country; by examples of valor, prudence, and justice, the lover studying to render himself acceptable by the grace and beauty of his soul, that of his body being long since faded and decayed, hoping by this mental society to establish a more firm and lasting contract. When this courtship came to effect in due season (for that which they do not require in the lover, namely, leisure and

* "For what is that love of friendship? why does no one love a deformed youth, or a comely old man?"—CICERO, *Tusc. Quæs.*, iv. 33.

discretion in his pursuit, they strictly require in the person loved, forasmuch as he is to judge of an internal beauty, of difficult knowledge and abstruse discovery), then there sprung in the person loved the desire of a spiritual conception by the mediation of a spiritual beauty. This was the principal; the corporeal, an accidental and secondary matter: quite the contrary as to the lover. For this reason they prefer the person beloved, maintaining that the gods in like manner preferred him too, and very much blame the poet Æschylus for having, in the loves for Achilles and Patroclus, given the lover's part to Achilles, who was in the first flower and pubescency of his youth, and the handsomest of all the Greeks. After this general community, the sovereign and most worthy part presiding and governing, and performing its proper offices, they say, that thence great utility was derived, both by private and public concerns: that it constituted the force and power of the countries where it prevailed, and the chiefest security of liberty and justice. Of which the salutiferous loves of Harmonius and Aristogiton are instances. And therefore it is that they called it sacred and divine, and conceive that nothing but the violence of tyrants and the baseness of the common people are inimical to it. Finally, all that can be said in favor of the Academy, is, that it was a love which ended in friendship, which well enough agrees with the Stoical definition of love: "*Amorem conatum esse amicitiæ faciendæ ex pulchritudinis specie.*"*

I return to my own more just and true description. "*Omnino amicitiæ, corroboratis jam confirmatisque, et ingeniis, et ætatibus, judicandæ sunt.*" † For the rest, what we commonly call friends and friendships, are nothing but acquaintance and familiarities, either occasionally contracted or upon some design, by means of which there happens some little intercourse between our souls. But in the friendship I speak of, they mix and work themselves into one piece, with so universal a mixture, that there is no more sign of the seam by which they were first con-

* "Love is a desire of contracting friendship arising from the beauty of the object."—CICERO, *Tusc, Quæs.*, vi. 34.

† "Those are only to be reputed friendships, that are fortified and confirmed by judgment and length of time."—CICERO, *De Amicit.*, c. 20.

joined. If a man should importune me to give a reason why I loved him, I find it could no otherwise be expressed, than by making answer: because it was he, because it was I. There is, beyond all that I am able to say, I know not what inexplicable and fated power that brought on this union. We sought one another long before we met, and by the characters we heard of one another, which wrought upon our affections more than, in reason, mere reports should do; I think 'twas by some secret appointment of heaven. We embraced in our names; and at our first meeting, which was accidentally at a great city entertainment, we found ourselves so mutually taken with one another, so acquainted, and so endeared between ourselves, that from thenceforward nothing was so near to us as one another. He wrote an excellent Latin satire, since printed, wherein he excuses the precipitation of our intelligence, so suddenly come to perfection, saying, that destined to have so short a continuance, as begun so late (for we were both full-grown men, and he some years the older), there was no time to lose, nor were we tied to conform to the example of those slow and regular friendships that require so many precautions of long preliminary conversation. This has no other idea than that of itself, and can only refer to itself: this is no one special consideration, nor two, nor three, nor four, nor a thousand; 'tis I know not what quintessence of all this mixture, which, seizing my whole will, carried it to plunge and lose itself in his, and that having seized his whole will, brought it back with equal concurrence and appetite to plunge and lose itself in mine. I may truly say lose, reserving nothing to ourselves, that was either his or mine.*

When Lælius, † in the presence of the Roman consuls, who after they had sentenced Tiberius Gracchus, prosecuted all those who had had any familiarity with him also, came to ask Caius Blosius, who was his chiefest friend how much he would have done for him, and that he made answer: "All things." "How! All things!" said Lælius. "And what if he had commanded you to fire our temples?" "He would never have commanded me that," replied Blosius. "But what if he had?" said Lælius. "I would

* All this relates to Estienne de la Boetie.

† Cicero, De Amicit., c. 11.

have obeyed him," said the other. If he was so perfect a friend to Gracchus, as the histories report him to have been, there was yet no necessity of offending the consuls by such a bold confession, though he might still have retained the assurance he had of Gracchus' disposition. However, those who accuse this answer as seditious, do not well understand the mystery; nor presuppose, as it was true, that he had Gracchus' will in his sleeve, both by the power of a friend, and the perfect knowledge he had of the man: they were more friends than citizens, more friends to one another than either friends or enemies to their country, or than friends to ambition and innovation; having absolutely given up themselves to one another, either held absolutely the reins of the other's inclination; and suppose all this guided by virtue, and all this by the conduct of reason, which also without these it had not been possible to do, Blosius' answer was such as it ought to be. If any of their actions flew out of the handle, they were neither (according to my measure of friendship) friends to one another, nor to themselves. As to the rest, this answer carries no worse sound, than mine would do to one that should ask me: "If your will should command you to kill your daughter, would you do it?" and that I should make answer, that I would; for this expresses no consent to such an act, forasmuch as I do not in the least suspect my own will, and as little that of such a friend. 'Tis not in the power of all the eloquence in the world, to dispossess me of the certainty I have of the intentions and resolutions of my friend: nay, no one action of his, what face soever it might bear, could be presented to me, of which I could not presently, and at first sight, find out the moving cause. Our souls had drawn so unanimously together, they had considered each other with so ardent an affection, and with the like affection laid open the very bottom of our hearts to one another's view, that I not only knew his as well as my own; but should certainly in any concern of mine have trusted my interest much more willingly with him, than with myself.

Let no one therefore, rank other common friendships with such a one as this. I have had as much experience of these, as another, and of the most perfect of their kind: but I do not advise that any should confound the rules of the one and the other, for they would find themselves

much deceived. In those other ordinary friendships, you are to walk with bridle in your hand, with prudence and circumspection, for in them the knot is not so sure, that a man may not half suspect it will slip. "Love him," said Chilo, * "so, as if you were one day to hate him; and hate him so, as you were one day to love him." This precept, though abominable in the sovereign and perfect friendship I speak of, is nevertheless very sound, as to the practice of the ordinary and customary ones, and to which the saying that Aristotle had so frequent in his mouth, "Oh my friends, there is no friend;" † may very fitly be applied. In this noble commerce, good offices, presents, and benefits, by which other friendships are supported and maintained, do not deserve so much as to be mentioned; and the reason is the concurrence of our wills; for as the kindness I have for myself, receives no increase, for anything I relieve myself withal in time of need (whatever the Stoics say), and as I do not find myself obliged to myself for any service I do myself: so the union of such friends, being truly perfect, deprives them of all idea of such duties, and makes them loathe and banish from their conversation these words of division and distinction, benefit, obligation, acknowledgment entreaty, thanks, and the like. All things, wills, thoughts, opinions, goods, wives, children, honors, and lives, being in effect common between them, and that absolute concurrence of affections being no other than one soul in two bodies (according to that very proper definition of Aristotle), ‡ they can neither lend nor give anything to one another. This is the reason why the lawgivers, to honor marriage with some resemblance of this divine alliance, interdict all gifts between man and wife; inferring by that, that all should belong to each of them, and that they have nothing to divide or to give to each other.

If, in the friendship of which I speak, one could give to the other, the receiver of the benefit would be the man that obliged his friend; for each of them contending and above all things studying how to be useful to the other, he that administers the occasion is the liberal man, in giving his friend the satisfaction of doing that toward him,

* Aulus Gellius, i. 3. † Diogenes Laertius, v. 21.

‡ Idem, v. 20.

which above all things he most desires. When the philosopher Diogenes wanted money, he used to say,* that he redemanded it of his friends, not that he demanded it. And to let you see the practical working of this, I will here produce an ancient and singular example; † Eudamidas a Corinthian had two friends, Charixenus a Sycionian, and Areteus a Corinthian; this man coming to die, being poor, and his two friends rich, he made his will after this manner. "I bequeath to Areteus the maintenance of my mother, to support and provide for her in her old age; and to Charixenus I bequeath the care of marrying my daughter, and to give her as good a portion as he is able; and in case one of these chance to die, I hereby substitute the survivor in his place." They who first saw this will, made themselves very merry at the contents: but the legatees being made acquainted with it, accepted it with very great content; and one of them, Charixenus, dying within five days after, and Areteus, by that means, having the charge of both duties devolved solely to him, he nourished the old woman with very great care and tenderness, and of five talents he had in estate, he gave two and a half in marriage with an only daughter he had of his own, and two and a half in marriage with the daughter of Eudamidas, and in one and the same day solemnized both their nuptials.

This example is very full, if one thing were not to be objected, namely, the multitude of friends: for the perfect friendship I speak of is indivisible; each one gives himself so entirely to his friend, that he has nothing left to distribute to others: on the contrary, is sorry that he is not double, treble, or quadruple, and that he has not many souls, and many wills, to confer them all upon this one object. Common friendships will admit of division; one may love the beauty of this person, the good-humor of that, the liberality of a third, the paternal affection of a fourth, the fraternal love of a fifth, and so of the rest: but this friendship that possesses the whole soul, and there rules and sways with an absolute sovereignty, cannot possibly admit of a rival. If two at the same time should call to you for succor, to which of them would you run?

* Idem, vi. 46.

* From the "Toxaris" of Lucian, c. 22.

Should they require of you contrary offices, how could you serve them both? Should one commit a thing to your silence, that it were of importance to the other to know, how would you disengage yourself? A unique and particular friendship dissolves all other obligations whatsoever: the secret I have sworn not to reveal to any other, I may without perjury communicate to him who is not another, but myself. 'Tis miracle enough certainly, for a man to double himself, and those that talk of tripling, talk they know not of what. Nothing is extreme, that has its like; and he who shall suppose, that of two, I love one as much as the other, that they mutually love one another too, and love me as much as I love them, multiplies into a confraternity the most single of units, and whereof, moreover, one alone is the hardest thing in the world to find. The rest of this story suits very well with what I was saying; for Eudamidas, as a bounty and favor, bequeaths to his friends a legacy of employing themselves in his necessity; he leaves them heirs to this liberality of his, which consists in giving them the opportunity of conferring a benefit upon him; and doubtless, the force of friendship is more eminently apparent in this act of his, than in that of Areteus. In short, these are effects not to be imagined nor comprehended by such as have not experience of them, and which make me infinitely honor and admire the answer of that young soldier to Cyrus, by whom being asked how much he would take for a horse with which he had won the prize of a race, and whether he would exchange him for a kingdom? "No, truly, sir," said he, "but I would give him with all my heart, to get thereby a true friend, could I find out any man worthy of that alliance." * He did not say ill in saying, "could I find:" for though one may almost everywhere meet with men sufficiently qualified for a superficial acquaintance, yet in this, where a man is to deal from the very bottom of his heart, without any manner of reservation, it will be requisite, that all the wards and springs be truly wrought, and perfectly sure.

In confederations that hold but by one end, we are only to provide against the imperfections that particularly concern that end. It can be of no importance to me of what religion my physician or my lawyer is; this consideration

* Xenophon, Cyropædia, viii. 3.

has nothing in common with the offices of friendship which they owe me; and I am of the same indifference in the domestic acquaintance my servants must necessarily contract with me. I never inquire, when I am to take a footman, if he be chaste, but if he be diligent; and am not solicitous if my muleteer be given to gaming, as if he be strong and able; or if my cook be a swearer, if he be a good cook. I do not take upon me to direct what other men should do in the government of their families (there are plenty that meddle enough with that), but only give an account of my method in my own.

"Mihi sic usus est: tibi, ut opus est facto, face." *

For table-talk, I prefer the pleasant and witty before the learned and the grave; in bed, beauty before goodness; in common discourse, the ablest speaker, whether or no there be sincerity in the case. And, as he that was found astride upon a hobby-horse, playing with his children, entreated the person who had surprised him in that posture to say nothing of it till himself came to be a father,† supposing that the fondness that would then possess his own soul. would render him a fairer judge of such an action; so I, also, could wish to speak to such as have had experience of what I say: though, knowing how remote a thing such a friendship is from the common practice, and how rarely it is to be found, I despair of meeting with any such judge. For even these discourses left us by antiquity upon this subject, seem to me flat and poor, in comparison of the sense I have of it, and in this particular, the effects surpass even the precepts of philosophy.

"Nil ego contulerim jucundo sanus amico." ‡

The ancient Menander declared him to be happy that had had the good fortune to meet with but the shadow of a friend: § and doubtless he had good reason to say so,

* "This has been my way; as for you, do as you think fit."—TERENCE, *Heaut.*, i. 1, 28.

† Plutarch, Life of Agesilaus, c. 9.

‡ "While I have sense left to me, there will never be anything more acceptable to me than an agreeable friend."—HORACE, *Sat.*, i. 5, 44.

§ Plutarch on Brotherly Love, c. 3.

especially if he spoke by experience; for in good earnest, if I compare all the rest of my life, though, thanks be to God, I have passed my time pleasantly enough, and at my ease, and the loss of such a friend excepted, free from any grievous affliction, and in great tranquillity of mind, having been contented with my natural and original commodities, without being solicitous after others; if I should compare it all, I say, with the four years I had the happiness to enjoy the sweet society of this excellent man, 'tis nothing but smoke, an obscure and tedious night. From the day that I lost him,

> "Quem semper acerbum,
> Semper honoratum (sic dî, voluistis) habebo," *

I have only led a languishing life; and the very pleasures that present themselves to me, instead of administering anything of consolation, double my affliction for his loss. We were halves throughout, and to that degree, that methinks, by outliving him, I defraud him of his part.

> "Nec fas esse ulla me voluptate hic frui
> Decrevi, tantisper dum ille abest meus particeps," †

I was so grown and accustomed to be always his double in all places and in all things, that methinks I am no more than half of myself.

> "Illam meæ si partem animæ tulit
> Maturior vis, quid moror altera?
> Nec carus æque, nec superstes
> Integer? Ille dies utramque
> Duxit Ruinam." ‡

There is no action or imagination of mine wherein I do not miss him; as I know that he would have missed me: for as he surpassed me by infinite degrees in virtue and

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* "A day to me forever sad, forever sacred, so have you willed, ye gods."—ÆNEID, v. 49.

† "I have determined that it will never be right for me to enjoy any pleasure, so long as he, with whom I shared in all pleasures, is away."—TERENCE, *Heaut.*, i. 1, 97.

‡ "If that half of my soul were snatched away from me by an untimely stroke, why should the other stay? That which remains will not be equally dear, will not be a whole: the same day will involve the destruction of both."—HORACE, *Ode* ii. 17, 5.

all other accomplishments, so he also did in the duties of friendship.

> "Quis desiderio sit pudor, aut modus
> Tam cari capitis?" *

> "O misero frater adempte mihi!
> Omnia tecum una perierunt gaudia nostra,
> Quæ tuus in vita dulcis alebat amor.
> Tu mea, tu moriens fregisti commoda, frater;
> Tecum una tota est nostra sepulta anima:
> Cujus ego interitu tota de mente fugavi
> Hæc studia, atque omnes delicias animi.
> Alloquar? audiero nunquam tua verba loquentem?
> Nunquam ego te, vita frater amabilior,
> Aspiciam posthac; at certe semper amabo;" †

But let us hear a boy of sixteen speak ‡ . . . §

Because I have found that that work has been since brought out, and with a mischievous design, by those who aim at disturbing and changing the condition of our government, without troubling themselves to think whether they are likely to improve it: and because they have mixed up his work with some of their own performance, I have

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* "What shame can there be, or measure, in lamenting so dear a friend?"—HORACE, *Ode* i. 24, 1.

† "Oh brother, taken from me miserable, with thee, all our joys have vanished, those joys which, in thy life, thy dear love nourished. Dying, thou, my brother, hast destroyed all my happiness. My whole soul is buried with thee. Thou dead, I have bidden adieu to the muses, to all the studies which charmed my mind. No more can I speak to thee; no more hear thy voice. Never again shall I see thee, oh brother dearer to me than life. Naught remains, but that I love thee while life shall endure."—CATULLUS, lxviii., 20; lxv. 9.

‡ In Cotton's translation, the work referred to is "those memoirs upon the famous edict of January," of which mention has already been made in the present edition. The edition of 1580, however, and the variorum edition of Louandre, which has been here adopted, indicate no particular work; but the edition of 1580 has it "this boy of eighteen years" (which was the age at which La Boetie wrote his "Servitude Volontaire"), and speaks of "a boy of sixteen" as occurring only in the common editions, and it would seem tolerably clear that this more important work was, in fact, the production to which Montaigne refers, and that the proper reading of the text should be "eighteen years."

§ What the boy spoke is not, however, given by Montaigne, and for the reason furnished in the ensuing sentence.

refrained from inserting it here. But that the memory of the author may not be injured, nor suffer with such as could not come near hand to be acquainted with his principles, I here give them to understand that it was written by him in his boyhood, and that by way of exercise only, as a common theme that has been tumbled and tossed by a thousand writers. I make no question but that he himself believed what he wrote, being so conscientious that he would not so much as lie in jest: and I moreover know, that could it have been in his own choice, he had rather have been born at Venice than at Sarlac, and he had reason. But he had another maxim sovereignly imprinted in his soul, very religiously to obey and submit to the laws under which he was born. There never was a better citizen, more affectionate to his country; nor a greater enemy to all the commotions and innovations of his time: so that he would much rather have employed his talent to the extinguishing of those civil flames, than have added any fuel to them; he had a mind fashioned to the model of better ages. But in exchange of this serious piece, I will present you with another of a more gay and frolic air, from the same hand, and written at the same age.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

NINE-AND-TWENTY SONNETS OF ESTIENNE DE LA BOETIE.

To Madame de Grammont, Comtesse De Guissen.

MADAME, I offer to your ladyship nothing of mine, either because it is already yours, or because I find nothing in my writings worthy of you: but I have a great desire that these verses, into what part of the world soever they may travel, may carry your name in the front, for the honor will accrue to them, by having the great Corisande d'Andoins for their safe conduct. I conceive this present, madame, so much the more proper for you, both by reason there are few ladies in France who are so good judges of poetry, and make so good use of it as you do; as also, that there is none who can give it the spirit and life that you can, by that rich and incomparable voice nature has added to your other perfections. You will find, madame, that these verses deserve your esteem, and will agree with me

in this, that Gascony never yielded more invention, finer expression, or that more evidence themselves to flow from a master hand. And be not jealous, that you have but the remainder of what I published some years since, under the patronage of Monsieur de Foix, your worthy kinsman; for, certainly, these have something in them more sprightly and luxuriant, as being written in a greener youth, and inflamed with a noble ardor that one of these days I will tell you, madame, in your ear. The others were written later, when he was a suitor for marriage, and in honor of his wife, and already relishing of I know not what matrimonial coldness. And for my part, I am of the same opinion with those who hold that poesy appears nowhere so gay as in a wanton and irregular subject.*

CHAPTER XXIX.

OF MODERATION.

As if we had an infectious touch, we, by our manner of handling, corrupt things that in themselves are laudable and good: we may grasp virtue so that it becomes vicious, if we embrace it too stringently and with too violent a desire. Those who say there is never any excess in virtue, forasmuch as it is not virtue when it once becomes excess, only play upon words:

> "Insani sapiens nomen ferat, æquus iniqui
> Ultra quam satis est, virtutem si petat ipsam." †

This is a subtle consideration of philosophy. A man may both be too much in love with virtue, and be excessive in a just action. Holy writ agrees with this, Be not wiser than you should, but be soberly wise.‡ I have known a

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* "These nine-and-twenty sonnets that were inserted here by Montaigne, were printed in Abel Angelier's quarto edition, Paris, 1588. They scarce contain anything in them but amorous complaints, expressed in a very rough style, discovering the follies and outrages of a restless passion, overgorged, as it were, with jealousies, fears, and suspicions."—Coste.

† "The wise man is no longer wise, the just man no longer just, if he seek to carry his love for wisdom or virtue beyond that which is necessary."—Horace, *Ep.*, i. 6, 15.

‡ St. Paul, Epistle to the Romans, xii. 3.

great man * prejudice the opinion men had of his devotion, by pretending to be devout beyond all examples of others of his condition. I love temperate and moderate natures. An immoderate zeal, even to that which is good, even though it does not offend, astonishes me, and puts me to study what name to give it. Neither the mother of Pausanias,† who was the first instructor of her son's process, and threw the first stone toward his death, nor Posthumius the dictator,‡ who put his son to death, whom the ardor of youth had successfully pushed upon the enemy a little more advanced than the rest of his squadron, appear to me altogether as strange; and I should neither advise nor like to follow so savage a virtue, and that costs so dear.§

* "It is like that Montaigne meant Henry III., King of France. The Cardinal d'Ossat, writing to Louise, the queen-dowager, told her, in his frank manner, that he had lived as much or more like a monk than a monarch (Letter xxiii). And Pope Sextus V., speaking of that prince one day to the Cardinal de Joyeuse, protector of the affairs of France, said to him pleasantly, 'There is nothing that your king hath not done, and does not do still, to be a monk, nor anything that I have not done, not to be a monk.'"—COSTE.

†"Montaigne would here give us to understand, upon the authority of Diodorus of Sicily, that Pausanias' mother gave the first hint of the punishment that was to be inflicted on her son. 'Pausanias,' says this historian, 'perceiving that the ephori, and some other Lacedæmonians aimed at apprehending him, got the start of them, and went and took sanctuary in Minerva's temple: and the Lacedæmonians, being doubtful whether they ought to take him from thence in violation of the franchise there, it is said that his own mother came herself to the temple, but spoke nothing, nor did anything more than lay a piece of brick, which she brought with her, on the threshold of the temple, which, when she had done, she returned home. The Lacedæmonians, taking the hint from the mother, caused the gate of the temple to be walled up, and by this means starved Pausanias, so that he died with hunger, etc. (lib. xi. cap. 10, of Amyot's translation.) The name of Pausanias' mother was Alcithea, as we are informed by Thucydides' scholiast, who only says that it was reported, that when they set about walling up the gates of the chapel in which Pausanias had taken refuge, his mother Alcithea laid the first stone." Diodorus Siculus, xi. 45.—COSTE.

‡ Val. Maximus, ii. 7.

§ "Opinions differ as to the truth of this fact. Livy thinks he has good authority for rejecting it, because it does not appear in history that Posthumius was branded with it as Titus Manlius was about one hundred years after his time; for Manlius, having put his son to death for the like cause, obtained the odious name of Imperiosus, and since that time Manliana Imperia has been used as a term to signify

The archer that shoots over, misses as much as he that falls short, and 'tis equally troublesome to my sight to look up at a great light, and to look down into a dark abyss. Callicles in Plato* says that the extremity of philosophy is hurtful, and advises not to dive into it beyond the limits of profit; that, taken moderately, it is pleasant and useful; but that in the end, it renders a man brutish and vicious, a contemner of religion and the common laws, an enemy to civil conversation and all human pleasures, incapable of all public administration, unfit to either assist others or to relieve himself, and a fit object for all sorts of injuries and affronts. He says true; for in its excess, it enslaves our natural freedom, and, by an impertinent subtlety, leads us out of the fair and beaten way that nature has traced for us.

The love we bear to our wives is very lawful, and yet theology thinks fit to curb and restrain it. As I remember, I have read in one place of St. Thomas Aquinas,† where he condemns marriages within any of the forbidden degrees, for this reason, among others, that there is some danger, lest the friendship a man bears to such a women, should be immoderate; for if the conjugal affection be full and perfect between them, as it ought to be, and that it be over and above surcharged with that of kindred too, there is no doubt, but such an addition will carry the husband beyond the bounds of reason.

Those sciences that regulate the manners of men, divinity and philosophy, will have their say in everything: there is no action so private and secret that can escape their inspection and jurisdiction. They are best taught, who are best able to control and curb their own liberty: women expose their nudities as much as you will upon the account of pleasure, though in the necessities of physic they are alto-

orders that are too severe; Manliana Imperia, says Livy, were not only horrible for the time present, but of a bad example to posterity. And this historian makes no doubt but such commands would have been actually styled Posthumiana Imperia, if Posthumius had been the first who set so barbarous an example (Livy, lib. iv. cap. 29, and lib. viii. cap. 7). But, however, Montaigne has Valer. Maximus on his side, who says expressly, that Posthumius caused his son to be put to death, and Diodorus of Sicily (lib. xii. cap. 19)."—COSTE.

* In the Gorgias.

† Secunda Secundæ, Quæst. 154, art. 9.

gether as shy. I will, therefore, in their behalf* teach the husbands, that is, such as are too vehement in the exercise of the matrimonial duty—if such there still be—this lesson, that the very pleasures they enjoy in the society of their wives are reproachable if immoderate, and that a licentious and riotous abuse of them, is a fault as reprovable here as in illicit connections. Those immodest and debauched tricks and postures, that the first ardor suggests to us in this affair, are not only indecently but detrimentally practiced upon our wives. Let them at least learn impudence from another hand; they are ever ready enough for our business, and I for my part always went the plain way to work.

Marriage is a solemn and religious tie, and therefore the pleasure we extract from it should be a sober and serious delight, and mixed with a certain kind of gravity; it should be a sort of discreet and conscientious pleasure. And seeing that the chief end of it is generation, some make a question, whether when men are out of hopes of that fruit, as when they are superannuated or already with child, it be lawful to embrace our wives: 'tis homicide, according to Plato.† Certain nations (the Mohammedan, among others) abominate all conjunction with women with child, others also, with those who are in their courses. Zenobia would never admit her husband for more than one encounter, after which she left him to his own swing for the whole time of her conception, and not till after that would again receive him :‡ a brave and generous example of conjugal continence. It was doubtless from some lascinious poet,§ and one that himself was in great distress for a little of this sport, that Plato borrowed this story: that Jupiter was one day so hot upon his wife, that not having so much patience as till she could get to the couch, he threw her upon the floor, where the vehemence of pleasure made him forget the great and important resolutions he had but newly taken with the rest of the gods, in his

* Coste translates this : "on the part of philosophy and theology," observing that but few wives would think themselves obliged to Montaigne for any such lesson to their husbands.

† Laws, 8.

‡ Trebellius Pollio, Triginta Tyran., c. 30.

§ The lascivious poet is Homer: see his Iliad, xiv. 294,

celestial council; and to brag that he had had as good a bout, as when he got her maidenhead, unknown to their parents.

The kings of Persia were wont to invite their wives to the beginning of their festivals; but when the wine began to work in good earnest, and that they were to give the reins to pleasure, they sent them back to their private apartments, that they might not participate in their immoderate lust, sending for other women in their stead, with whom they were not obliged to so great a decorum of respect.* All pleasures and all sorts of gratifications are not properly and fitly conferred upon all sorts of persons. Epaminondas had committed to prison a young man for certain debauches; for whom Pelopidas mediated, that at his request he might be set at liberty, which Epaminondas denied to him, but granted it at the first word to a wench of his, that made the same intercession; saying, that it was a gratification fit for such a one as she, but not for a captain.† Sophocles being joint prætor with Pericles, seeing accidentally a fine boy pass by: "Oh, what a charming boy is that!" said he. "That might be very well," answered Pericles, "for any other than a prætor, who ought not only to have his hands, but his eyes, too, chaste.‡ Ælius Verus, the emperor, answered his wife, who reproached him with his love to other women, that he did it upon a conscientious account, forasmuch as marriage was a name of honor and dignity, not of wanton and lascivious desire; § and our ecclesiastical history preserves the memory of that woman in great veneration, who parted from her husband because she would not comply with his indecent and inordinate desires. In fine, there is no pleasure so just and lawful, where intemperance and excess are not to be condemned.

But, to speak the truth, is not man a most miserable creature the while? It is scarce, by his natural condition, in his power to taste one pleasure pure and entire; and yet must he be contriving doctrines and precepts to curtail that little he has; he is not yet wretched enough, unless by art and study, he augment his own misery.

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* Plutarch, Precepts of Marriage, c. 14.

† Idem, Instructions to Statesmen.

‡ Cicero, De Offic., i. 40.

§ Spartian in Vita, c. 5.

"Fortunæ miseras auximus arte vias." *

Human wisdom makes as ill use of her talent, when she exercises it in rescinding from the number and sweetness of those pleasures that are naturally our due, as she employs it favorably and well, in artificially disguising and tricking out the ills of life, to alleviate the sense of them. Had I ruled the roast, I should have taken another and more natural course which, to say the truth, is both commodious and holy, and should, peradventure, have been able to have limited it too; notwithstanding that both our spiritual and corporal physicians, as by compact between themselves, can find no other way to cure, nor other remedy for the infirmities of the body and the soul, than by misery and pain. To this end, watchings, fastings, hair-shirts, remote and solitary banishments, perpetual imprisonments, whips and other afflictions, have been introduced among men; but so, that they should carry a sting with them, and be real afflictions indeed; and not fall out as it once did to one Gallio, who having been sent an exile into the isle of Lesbos, news was not long after brought to Rome, that he there lived as merry as the day was long; and that what had been enjoined him for a penance, turned to his pleasure and satisfaction; whereupon the senate thought fit to recall him home to his wife and family, and confine him to his own house, to accommodate their punishment to his feeling and apprehension.† For to him whom fasting would make more healthful and more sprightly, and to him to whose palate fish were more acceptable than flesh, the prescription of these would have no curative effect; no more than in the other sort of physic, where drugs have no effect upon him who swallows them with appetite and pleasure: the bitterness of the potion and the abhorrence of the patient are necessary circumstances to the operation. The nature that would eat rhubarb like buttered turnips, would frustrate the use and virtue of it; it must be something to trouble and disturb the stomach, that must purge and cure it; and here the common rule, that things are cured by their contraries, fails; for in this, one ill is cured by another.

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* "We artifically augment the wretchedness of fortune."—PROPERTIUS, lib. iii. 7, 44.

† Tacitus, Annal., vi. 3.

This belief a little resembles that other so ancient one, of thinking to gratify the gods and nature, by massacre and murder; an opinion universally once received in all religions. And still, in these later times wherein our fathers lived, Amurath at the taking of the Isthmus, immolated six hundred young Greeks to his father's soul, in the nature of a propitiatory sacrifice for his sins. And in those new countries discovered in this age of ours, which are pure and virgin yet, in comparison of ours, this practice is in some measure everywhere received: all their idols reek with human blood, not without various examples of horrid cruelty: some they burn alive, and take, half broiled, off the coals to tear out their hearts and entrails; some, even women, they flay alive, and with their bloody skins clothe and disguise others. Neither are we without great examples of constancy and resolution in this affair: the poor souls that are to be sacrificed, old men, women, and children, themselves going about some days before to beg alms for the offering of their sacrifice, presenting themselves to the slaughter, singing and dancing with the spectators.

The ambassadors of the king of Mexico, setting out to Fernando Cortez the power and greatness of their master, after having told him, that he had thirty vassals, of whom each was able to raise an hundred thousand fighting men, and that he kept his court in the fairest and best fortified city under the sun, added at last, that he was obliged yearly to offer to the gods fifty thousand men. And it is affirmed, that he maintained a continual war, with some potent neighboring nations, not only to keep the young men in exercise, but principally, to have wherewithal to furnish his sacrifices with his prisoners of war. At a certain town in another place, for the welcome of the said Cortez, they sacrificed fifty men at once. I will tell you this one tale more, and I have done; some of these people being beaten by him, sent to acknowledge him, and to treat with him of a peace, whose messengers carried him three sorts of gifts, which they presented in these terms: "Behold, lord, here are five slaves: if thou art a furious god that feedeth upon flesh and blood, eat these, and we will bring thee more; if thou art an affable god, behold here incense and feathers; but if thou art a man, take these fowls and these fruits that we have brought thee."

CHAPTER XXX.

OF CANNIBALS.

When King Pyrrhus invaded Italy, having viewed and considered the order of the army the Romans sent out to meet him: "I know not," said he, "what kind of barbarians," (for so the Greeks called all other nations) "these may be; but the disposition of this army, that I see, has nothing of barbarism in it." * As much said the Greeks of that which Flaminius brought into their country; † and Philip, beholding from an eminence the order and distribution of the Roman camp formed in his kingdom by Publius Sulpicius Galba, spake to the same effect. ‡ By which it appears how cautious men ought to be of taking things upon trust from vulgar opinion, and that we are to judge by the eye of reason, and not from common report.

I long had a man in my house that lived ten or twelve years in the New World, discovered in these latter days, and in that part of it where Villegaignon landed,§ which he called Antarctic France. This discovery of so vast a country seems to be of very great consideration. I cannot be sure, that hereafter there may not be another, so many wiser men than we having been deceived in this. I am afraid our eyes are bigger than our bellies, and that we have more curiosity than capacity; for we grasp at all, but catch nothing but wind.

Plato brings in Solon,‖ telling a story that he had heard from the priests of Sais in Egypt, that of old, and before the Deluge, there was a great island called Atlantis, situate directly at the mouth of the Straits of Gibraltar, which contained more countries than both Africa and Asia put together; and that the kings of that country, who not only possessed that isle, but extended their dominion so far into the continent that they had a country of Africa as far as Egypt, and extending in Europe to Tuscany, attempted to

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* Plutarch, Life of Phyrrhus, c. 8.

† Idem, Life of Flaminius, c. 3.

‡ Livy, xxxi. 34.

§ At Brazil, in 1557.

‖ In Timæus.

encroach even upon Asia, and to subjugate all the nations that border upon the Mediterranean Sea, as far as the Black Sea; and to that effect overran all Spain, the Gauls, and Italy, so far as to penetrate into Greece, where the Athenians stopped them: but that sometime after, both the Athenians, and they and their island, were swallowed by the Flood.

It is very likely that this extreme irruption and inundation of water made wonderful changes and alterations in the habitations of the earth, as 'tis said that the sea then divided Sicily from Italy—

> "Hæc loca, vi quondam, et vasta convulsa ruina,
> Dissiluisse ferunt, quum protenus utraque tellus
> Una foret." *

—Cyprus from Syria, the isle of Negropont from the continent of Bœotia, and eleswhere united lands that were separate before, by filling up the channel between them with sand and mud:

> "Sterilisque diu palus, aptaque remis,
> Vicinas urbes alit, et grave sentit aratrum." †

But there is no great appearance that this isle was this New World so lately discovered: for that almost touched upon Spain, and it were an incredible effect of an inundation, to have tumbled back so prodigious a mass, above twelve hundred leagues: besides that our modern navigators have already almost discovered it to be no island, but *terra firma*, and continent with the East Indies on the one side, and with the lands under the two poles on the other side; or, if it be separate from them, it is by so narrow a strait and channel, that it none the more deserves the name of an island for that.

It should seem, that in this great body, there are two sorts of motions, the one natural, and the other febrific, as there are in ours. When I consider the impression that our river of Dordoigne has made in my time, on the right

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* "These lands, they say, once with violence and vast desolation convulsed, burst asunder, which erewhile were one."—ÆNEID, iii. 414.

† "That which was once a sterile marsh, and bore vessels on its bosom, now feeds neighboring cities, and admits the plow."—HORACE, *De Arte Poeticâ*, v. 65.

bank of its descent, and that in twenty years it has gained so much, and undermined the foundations of so many houses, I perceive it to be an extraordinary agitation: for had it always followed this course, or were hereafter to do it, the aspect of the world would be totally changed. But rivers alter their course, sometimes beating against the one side, and sometimes the other, and sometimes quietly keeping the channel. I do not speak of sudden inundations, the causes of which everybody understands. In Medoc, by the seashore, the Sieur d'Arsac, my brother, sees an estate he had there, buried under the sands which the sea vomits before it: where the tops of some houses are yet to be seen, and where his rents and domains are converted into pitiful barren pasturage. The inhabitants of this place affirm, that of late years the sea has driven so vehemently upon them, that they have lost above four leagues of land. These sands are her harbingers: and we now see great heaps of moving sand, that march half a league before her, and occupy the land.

The other testimony from antiquity, to which some would apply this discovery of the New World, is in Aristotle; at least, if that little book of unheard-of miracles be his. He there tells us, that certain Carthaginians, having crossed the Atlantic Sea without the Straits of Gibraltar, and sailed a very long time, discovered at last a great and fruitful island, all covered over with wood, and watered with several broad and deep rivers; far remote from all *terra-firma*, and that they, and others after them, allured by the goodness and fertility of the soil, went thither with their wives and children, and began to plant a colony. But the senate of Carthage perceiving their people by little and little to diminish, issued out an express prohibition, that none, upon pain of death, should transport themselves thither; and also drove out these new inhabitants; fearing, 'tis said, lest in process of time they should so multiply as to supplant themselves and ruin their state. But this relation of Aristotle no more agrees with our new-found lands than the other.

This man that I had was a plain ignorant fellow, and therefore the more likely to tell truth: for your better bred sort of men are much more curious in their observation, 'tis true, and discover a great deal more, but then they gloss upon it, and to give the greater weight to what

they deliver and allure your belief, they cannot forbear a little to alter the story; they never represent things to you simply as they are, but rather as they appeared to them, or as they would have them appear to you, and to gain the reputation of men of judgment, and the better to induce your faith, are willing to help out the business with something more than is really true, of their own invention. Now, in this case, we should either have a man of irreproachable veracity, or so simple that he has not wherewithal to contrive, and to give a color of truth to false relations, and who can have no ends in forging an untruth. Such a one was mine; and besides, he has at divers times brought to me several seamen and merchants who at the same time went the same voyage. I shall therefore content myself with his information, without inquiring what the cosmographers say to the business. We should have topographers to trace out to us the particular places where they have been; but for having had this advantage over us, to have seen the Holy Land, they would have the privilege, forsooth, to tell us stories of all the other parts of the world besides. I would have every one write what he knows, and as much as he knows, but no more; and that not in this only, but in all other subjects; for such a person may have some particular knowledge and experience of the nature of such a river, or such a fountain, who, as to other things, knows no more than what everybody does, and yet to keep a clutter with this little pittance of his, will undertake to write the whole body of physics: a vice from which great inconveniences derive their original.

Now, to return to my subject, I find that there is nothing barbarous and savage in this nation, by anything that I can gather, excepting, that every one gives the title of barbarism to everything that is not in use in his own country. As, indeed, we have no other level of truth and reason, than the example and idea of the opinions and customs of the place wherein we live: there is always the perfect religion, there the perfect government, there the most exact and accomplished usage of all things. They are savages at the same rate that we say fruit are wild, which nature produces of herself and by her own ordinary progress; whereas in truth, we ought rather to call those wild, whose natures we have changed by our artifice, and diverted from the common order. In those, the genuine,

most useful and natural virtues and properties are vigorous and sprightly, which we have helped to degenerate in these, by accommodating them to the pleasure of our own corrupted palate. And yet for all this our taste confesses a flavor and delicacy, excellent even to emulation of the best of ours, in several fruits wherein those countries abound without art or culture. Neither is it reasonable that art should gain the pre-eminence of our great and powerful mother nature. We have so surcharged her with the additional ornaments and graces we have added to the beauty and riches of her own works by our inventions, that we have almost smothered her; yet in other places, where she shines in her own purity and proper luster, she marvelously baffles and disgraces all our vain and frivolous attempts.

> "Et veniunt hederæ sponte sua melius;
> Surgit et in solis formosior arbutus antris;
> Et volucres nulla dulcius arte canunt." *

Our utmost endeavors cannot arrive at so much as to imitate the nest of the least of birds, its contexture, beauty, and convenience: not so much as the web of a poor spider.

All things, says Plato,† are produced either by nature, by fortune, or by art; the greatest and most beautiful by the one or the other of the former, the least and the most imperfect by the last.

These nations then seem to me to be so far barbarous, as having received but very little form and fashion from art and human invention, and consequently to be not much remote from their original simplicity. The laws of nature, however, govern them still, not as yet much vitiated with any mixture of ours: but 'tis in such purity, that I am sometimes troubled we were not sooner acquainted with these people, and that they were not discovered in those better times, when there were men much more able to judge of them than we are. I am sorry that Lycurgus and Plato had no knowledge of them: for to my apprehension, what we now see in those nations, does not only surpass all

* "The ivy grows best spontaneously; the arbutus best in shady caves; and the wild notes of birds are sweeter than art can teach." —PROPERTIUS, i. 2, 10.

† Laws, 10.

the pictures with which the poets have adorned the golden age, and all their inventions in feigning a happy state of man, but, moreover, the fancy and even the wish and desire of philosophy itself; so native and so pure a simplicity, as we by experience see to be in them, could never enter into their imagination, nor could they ever believe that human society could have been maintained with so little artifice and human patchwork. I should tell Plato, that it is a nation wherein there is no manner of traffic, no knowledge of letters, no science of numbers, no name of magistrate or political superiority; no use of service, riches or poverty, no contracts, no successions, no dividends, no properties, no employments, but those of leisure, no respect of kindred, but common, no clothing, no agriculture, no metal, no use of corn or wine; the very words that signify lying, treachery, dissimulation, avarice, envy, detraction, pardon, never heard of.* How much would he find his imaginary republic short of his perfection? "*Viri a diis recentes.*" †

* This is the famous passage which Shakespeare, through Florio's version, 1603, or ed. 1613, p. 102, has employed in the "Tempest," ii. 1. It may be interesting in such a case to compare the two translations: "They [Lycurgus and Plato] could not imagine a genuitie so pure and simple, as we see it by experience, nor ever beleeve our societie might be maintained with so little arte and humane combination. It is a nation, would I answere Plato, that hath no kinde of traffike, no knowledge of letters, no intelligence of numbers, no name of magistrate, nor of politike superioritie; no vse of service, of riches, or of poverty; no contracts, no successions, no dividences, no occupation but idle; no respect of kinred, but common; no apparrell but naturall, no manuring of lands, no vse of wine, corne, or mettle. The very words that import lying, falsehood treason, dissimulation, covetousness, envie, detraction, and pardon, were never heard of amongst them. How dissonant would hee finde his imaginary commonwealth from this perfection?

"*Hos natura modos primum dedit.*

"Nature at first vprise,
These manners did devise.

Furthermore they live in a country of so exceeding pleasant and temperate situation, that as my testimonies have tolde me it is very rare to see a sicke body amongst them; and they have further assured me, they never saw any man there, shaking with the palsie, toothlesse, with eyes dropping, or crooked and stooping through age."—*Shakespeare's Library*, iv. 7.

† "Men fresh from the gods."—SENECA, *Ep.*, 90.

"Hos natura modos primum dedit." *

As to the rest, they live in a country very pleasant and temperate, so that, as my witnesses inform me, 'tis rare to hear of a sick person, and they moreover assure me, that they never saw any of the natives, either paralytic, blear-eyed, toothless, or crooked with age. The situation of their country is along the seashore, enclosed on the other side toward the land, with great and high mountains, having about a hundred leagues in breadth between. They have great store of fish and flesh, that have no resemblance to those of ours: which they eat without any other cookery, than plain boiling, roasting and broiling. The first that rode a horse thither, though in several other voyages he had contracted an acquaintance and familiarity with them, put them into so terrible a fright, with his centaur appearance, that they killed him with their arrows before they could come to discover who he was. Their buildings are very long, and of capacity to hold two or three hundred people, made of the barks of tall trees, reared with one end upon the ground, and leaning to and supporting one another, at the top, like some of our barns, of which the coverings hang down to the very ground, and serves for the side walls. They have wood so hard, that they cut with it, and make their swords of it, and their grills of it to broil their meat. Their beds are of cotton, hung swinging from the roof, like our easman's hammocks, every man his own, for the wives lie apart from their husbands. They rise with the sun, and so soon as they are up, eat for all day, for they have no more meals but that: they do not then drink, as Suidas reports of some other people of the East that never drank at their meals; but drink very often all day after, and sometimes to a rousing pitch. Their drink is made of a certain root, and is of the color of our claret, and they never drink it but lukewarm. It will not keep above two or three days; it has a somewhat sharp, brisk taste, is nothing heady, but very comfortable to the stomach; laxative to strangers, but a very pleasant beverage to such as are accustomed to it. They make use, instead of bread, of a certain white compound, like Coriander comfits; I have tasted of it; the taste is sweet and a little flat. The

* "These were the manners first taught by nature."—VIRGIL, *Georgics*, ii. 20.

whole day is spent in dancing. Their young men go a-hunting after wild beasts with bows and arrows; one part of their women are employed in preparing their drink the while, which is their chief employment. One of their old men, in the morning before they fall to eating, preaches to the whole family, walking from the one end of the house to the other, and several times repeating the same sentence, till he has finished the round, for their houses are at least a hundred yards long. Valor toward their enemies and love toward their wives, are the two heads of his discourse, never failing in the close, to put them in mind, that 'tis their wives who provide them their drink warm and well seasoned. The fashion of their beds, ropes, swords, and of the wooden bracelets they tie about their wrists, when they go to fight, and of the great canes, bored hollow at one end, by the sound of which they keep the cadence of their dances, are to be seen in several places, and among others, at my house. They shave all over, and much more neatly than we, without other razor than one of wood or stone. They believe in the immortality of the soul, and that those who have merited well of the gods, are lodged in that part of heaven where the sun rises, and the accursed in the west.

They have I know not what kind of priests and prophets, who very rarely present themselves to the people, having their abode in the mountains. At their arrival, there is a great feast, and solemn assembly of many villages: each house, as I have described, makes a village, and they are about a French league distant from one another. This prophet declaims to them in public, exhorting them to virtue and their duty: but all their ethics are comprised in these two articles, resolution in war, and affection to their wives. He also prophesies to them events to come, and the issues they are to expect from their enterprises, and prompts them to or diverts them from war: but let him look to't; for if he fail in his divination, and anything happen otherwise than he has foretold, he is cut into a thousand pieces, if he be caught, and condemned for a false prophet: for that reason, if any of them has been mistaken, he is no more heard of.

Divination is a gift of God, and therefore to abuse it, ought to be a punishable imposture. Among the Scythians, where their diviners failed in the promised effect, they

were laid, bound hand and foot, upon carts loaded with furze and bavins, and drawn by oxen, on which they were burned to death.* Such as only meddle with things subject to the conduct of human capacity, are excusable in doing the best they can: but those other fellows that come to delude us with assurances of an extraordinary faculty, beyond our understanding, ought they not to be punished, when they do not make good the effect of their promise, and for the temerity of their imposture?

They have continual war with the nations that live further within the mainland, beyond their mountains, to which they go naked, and without other arms than their bows and wooden swords, fashioned at one end like the heads of our javelins. The obstinacy of their battles is wonderful, and they never end without great effusion of blood: for as to running away, they know not what it is. Every one for a trophy brings home the head of an enemy he has killed, which he fixes over the door of his house. After having a long time treated their prisoners very well, and given them all the regales they can think of, he to whom the prisoner belongs, invites a great assembly of his friends. They being come, he ties a rope to one of the arms of the prisoner, of which, at a distance, out of his reach, he holds the one end himself, and gives to the friend he loves best the other arm to hold after the same manner; which being done, they two, in the presence of all the assembly, despatch him with their swords. After that they roast him, eat him among them, and send some chops to their absent friends. They do not do this, as some think, for nourishment, as the Scythians anciently did, but as a representation of an extreme revenge; as will appear by this: that having observed the Portuguese, who were in league with their enemies, to inflict another sort of death upon any of them they took prisoners, which was to set them up to the girdle in the earth, to shoot at the remaining part till it was stuck full of arrows, and then to hang them, they thought those people of the other world (as being men who had sown the knowledge of a great many vices among their neighbors, and who were much greater masters in all sorts of mischief than they) did not exercise this sort of revenge without a meaning, and that

* Herodotus, iv. 69.

it must needs be more painful than theirs, they began to leave their old way, and to follow this. I am not sorry that we should here take notice of the barbarous horror of so cruel an action, but that, seeing so clearly into their faults, we should be so blind to our own. I conceive there is more barbarity in eating a man alive, than when he is dead; in tearing a body limb from limb by racks and torments, that is yet in perfect sense; in roasting it by degrees; in causing it to be bitten and worried by dogs and swine (as we have not only read, but lately seen, not among inveterate and mortal enemies, but among neighbors and fellow-citizens, and, which is worse, under color of piety and religion), than to roast and eat him after he is dead.

Chrysippus and Zeno, the two heads of the Stoic sect, were of opinion that there was no hurt in making use of our dead carcasses, in what way soever for our necessity, and in feeding upon them too;* as our own ancestors, who being besieged by Cæsar in the city Alexia, resolved to sustain the famine of the siege with the bodies of their old men, women, and other persons who were incapable of bearing arms.

> "Vascones, ut fama est, alimentis talibus usi
> Produxere animas." †

And the physicians make no bones of employing it to all sorts of use, either to apply it outwardly; or to give it inwardly for the health of the patient. But there never was any opinion so irregular, as to excuse treachery, disloyalty, tyranny, and cruelty, which are our familiar vices. We may then call these people barbarous, in respect to the rules of reason: but not in respect to ourselves, who in all sorts of barbarity exceed them. Their wars are throughout noble and generous, and carry as much excuse and fair pretense, as that human malady is capable of; having with them no other foundation than the sole jealousy of valor. Their disputes are not for the conquest of new lands, for these they already possess are so fruitful by nature, as to supply them without labor or concern, with all things necessary, in such abundance that they have no need to

* Diogenes Laertius, vii. 188.

† "'Tis said the Gascons with such meats appeased their hunger."—JUVENAL, *Sat.*, xv. 93.

enlarge their borders. And they are moreover, happy in this, that they only covet so much as their natural necessities require: all beyond that, is superfluous to them: men of the same age call one another generally brothers, those who are younger, children; and the old men are fathers to all. These leave to their heirs in common the full possession of goods, without any manner of division, or other title than what nature bestows upon her creatures, in bringing them into the world. If their neighbors pass over the mountains to assault them, and obtain a victory, all the victors gain by it is glory only, and the advantage of having proved themselves the better in valor and virtue: for they never meddle with the goods of the conquered, but presently return into their own country, where they have no want of anything necessary, nor of this greatest of all goods, to know happily how to enjoy their condition and to be content. And those in turn do the same; they demand of their prisoners no other ransom, than acknowledgment that they are overcome: but there is not one found in an age, who will not rather choose to die than make such a confession, or either by word or look, recede from the entire grandeur of an invincible courage. There is not a man among them who had not rather be killed and eaten, than so much as to open his mouth to entreat he may not. They use them with all liberality and freedom, to the end their lives may be so much the dearer to them; but frequently entertain them with menaces of their approaching death, of the torments they are to suffer, of the preparations making in order to it, of the mangling their limbs, and of the feast that is to be made, where their carcass is to be the only dish. All which they do, to no other end, but only to extort some gentle or submissive word from them, or to frighten them so as to make them run away, to obtain this advantage that they were terrified, and that their constancy was shaken; and indeed, if rightly taken, it is in this point only that a true victory consists.

> "Victoria nulla est,
> Quam quæ confessos animo quoque subjugat hostes." *

The Hungarians, a very warlike people, never pretend

* "No victory is complete, which the conquered do not admit to be so,"—CLAUDIUS, *De Sexto Consulatu Honorii*, v. 248.

further than to reduce the enemy to their discretion; for having forced this confession from them, they let them go without injury or ransom, excepting, at the most, to make them engage their word never to bear arms against them again. We have sufficient advantages over our enemies that are borrowed and not truly our own; it is the quality of a porter, and no effect of virtue, to have stronger arms and legs; it is a dead and corporeal quality to set in array; 'tis a turn of fortune to make our enemy stumble, or to dazzle him with the light of the sun; 'tis a trick of science and art, and that may happen in a mean base fellow, to be a good fencer. The estimate and value of a man consist in the heart and in the will: there his true honor lies. Valor is stability, not of legs and arms, but of the courage and the soul; it does not lie in the goodness of our horse or our arms: but in our own. He that falls obstinate in his courage—"*Si succiderit, de genu pugnat*" *—he who, for any danger of imminent death, abates nothing of his assurance; who, dying, yet darts at his enemy a fierce and disdainful look, is overcome not by us, but by fortune; † he is killed, not conquered; the most valiant are sometimes the most unfortunate. There are defeats more triumphant than victories. Never could those four sister victories, the fairest the sun ever beheld, of Salamis, Platæa, Mycale, and Sicily, venture to oppose all their united glories, to the single glory of the discomfiture of King Leonidas and his men, at the pass of Thermopylæ. Whoever ran with a more glorious desire and greater ambition, to the winning, than Captain Iscolas to the certain loss of a battle? ‡ Who could have found out a more subtle invention to secure his safety, than he did to assure his destruction? He was set to defend a certain pass of Peloponnesus against the Arcadians, which, considering the nature of the place and the inequality of forces, finding it utterly impossible for him to do, and seeing that all who were presented to the enemy, must certainly be left upon the place; and on the other side, reputing it unworthy of his own virtue and magnanimity and of the Lacedæmonian name to fail in any

* "If his legs fail him he fights on his knees."—SENECA, *De Providentia*, c. 2.

† Idem, De Constantia Sapientis, c. 6.

‡ Diodorus Siculus, xv. 64.

part of his duty, he chose a mean between these two extremes after this manner; the youngest and most active of his men, he preserved for the service and defense of their country, and sent them back; and with the rest, whose loss would be of less consideration, he resolved to make good the pass, and with the death of them, to make the enemy buy their entry as dear as possibly he could; as it fell out, for being presently environed on all sides by the Arcadians, after having made a great slaughter of the enemy, he and his were all cut in pieces. Is there any trophy dedicated to the conquerors, which was not much more due to these who were overcome? The part that true conquering is to play, lies in the encounter, not in the coming off; and the honor of valor consists in fighting, not in subduing.

But to return to my story: these prisoners are so far from discovering the least weakness, for all the terrors that can be represented to them that, on the contrary, during the two or three months they are kept, they always appear with a cheerful countenance; importune their masters to make haste to bring them to the test, defy, rail at them, and reproach them with cowardice, and the number of battles they have lost against those of their country. I have a song made by one of these prisoners, wherein he bids them "come all, and dine upon him, and welcome, for they shall withal eat their own fathers and grandfathers, whose flesh has served to feed and nourish him. These muscles," says he, "this flesh and these veins, are your own: poor silly souls as you are, you little think that the substance of your ancestors' limbs is here yet; notice what you eat, and you will find in it the taste of your own flesh:" in which song there is to be observed an invention that nothing relishes of the barbarian. Those that paint these people dying after this manner, represent the prisoner spitting in the faces of his executioners and making wry mouths at them. And 'tis most certain, that to the very last gasp, they never cease to brave and defy them both in word and gesture. In plain truth, these men are very savage in comparison of us; of necessity, they must either be absolutely so or else we are savages; for there is a vast difference between their manners and ours.

The men there have several wives, and so much the greater number, by how much they have the greater reputation for valor. And it is one very remarkable feature in

their marriages, that the same jealousy our wives have to hinder and divert us from the friendship and familiarity of other women, those employ to promote their husbands' desires, and to procure them many spouses; for being above all things solicitous of their husbands' honor, 'tis their chiefest care to seek out, and to bring in the most companions they can, forasmuch as it is a testimony of the husband's virtue. Most of our ladies will cry out, that 'tis monstrous; whereas in truth, it is not so; but a truly matrimonial virtue, and of the highest form. In the Bible, Sarah, with Leah and Rachel, the two wives of Jacob, gave the most beautiful of their handmaids to their husbands; Livia preferred the passions of Augustus to her own interest;* and the wife of King Deiotarus, Stratonice, did not only give up a fair young maid that served her to her husband's embraces, but moreover carefully brought up the children he had by her, and assisted them in the succession to their father's crown.

And that it may not be supposed, that all this is done by a simple and servile obligation to their common practice, or by any authoritative impression of their ancient custom, without judgment or reasoning and from having a soul so stupid, that it cannot contrive what else to do, I must here give you some touches of their sufficiency in point of understanding. Besides what I repeated to you before, which was one of their songs of war, I have another, a love-song, that begins thus: "Stay, adder, stay, that by thy pattern my sister may draw the fashion and work of a rich ribbon, that I may present to my beloved, by which means thy beauty and the excellent order of thy scales shall forever be preferred before all other serpents." Wherein the first couplet, "Stay, adder," etc., makes the burden of the song. Now I have conversed enough with poetry to judge thus much: that not only, there is nothing of barbarous in this invention, but, moreover, that it is perfectly Anacreontic. To which may be added, that their language is soft, of a pleasing accent, and something bordering upon the Greek terminations.

Three of these people, not foreseeing how dear their knowledge of the corruptions of this part of the world will one day cost their happiness and repose, and that the

* Suetonius, Life of Augustus, c. 71.

effect of this commerce will be their ruin, as I presuppose it is in a very fair way (miserable men to suffer themselves to be deluded with desire of novelty and to have left the serenity of their own heaven, to come so far to gaze at ours!) were at Rouen at the time that the late King Charles IX. was there. The king himself talked to them a good while, and they were made to see our fashions, our pomp, and the form of a great city. After which, some one asked their opinion, and would know of them, what of all the things they had seen, they found most to be admired? To which they made answer, three things, of which I have forgotten the third, and am troubled at it, but two I yet remember. They said, that in the first place they thought it very strange, that so many tall men wearing beards, strong, and well armed, who were about the king ('tis like they meant the Swiss of his guard) should submit to obey a child, and that they did not rather choose out one among themselves to command. Secondly (they have a way of speaking in their language, to call men the half of one another), that they had observed, that there were among us men full and crammed with all manner of commodities, while, in the meantime, their halves were begging at their doors, lean, and half-starved with hunger and poverty; and they thought it strange that these necessitous halves were able to suffer so great an inequality and injustice, and that they did not take the others by the throats, or set fire to their houses.

I talked to one of them a great while together, but I had so ill an interpreter, and one who was so perplexed by his own ignorance to apprehend my meaning, that I could get nothing out of him of any moment. Asking him, what advantage he reaped from the superiority he had among his own people (for he was a captain, and our mariners called him king), he told me: to march at the head of them to war. Demanding of him further, how many men he had to follow him? he showed me a space of ground, to signify as many as could march in such a compass, which might be four or five thousand men; and putting the question to him, whether or no his authority expired with the war? he told me this remained: that when he went to visit the villages of his dependence, they plained him paths through the thick of their woods, by which he might pass at his ease. All this does not sound very ill, and the last was not at all amiss, for they wear no breeches.

CHAPTER XXXI.

THAT A MAN IS SOBERLY TO JUDGE OF THE DIVINE ORDINANCES.

THE true field and subject of imposture are things unknown, forasmuch as, in the first place, their very strangeness lends them credit, and moreover, by not being subjected to our ordinary reasons, they deprive us of the means to question and dispute them. For which reason, says Plato,* it is much more easy to satisfy the hearers, when speaking of the nature of the gods than of the nature of men, because the ignorance of the auditory affords a fair and large career and all manner of liberty in the handling of abstruse things. Thence it comes to pass, that nothing is so firmly believed, as what we least know; nor any people so confident, as those who entertain us with fables, such as your alchemists, judicial astrologers, fortune-tellers, and physicians,† *id genus omne ;* ‡ to which I would willingly, if I durst, join a pack of people that take upon them to interpret and control the designs of God himself, pretending to find out the cause of every accident, and to pry into the secrets of the divine will, there to discover the incomprehensible motives of His works; and although the variety, and the continual discordance of events, throw them from corner to corner, and toss them from east to west, yet do they still persist in their vain inquisition, and with the same pencil to paint black and white.

In a nation of the Indies, there is this commendable custom, that when anything befalls them amiss in any encounter or battle, they publicly ask pardon of the sun, who is their god, as having committed an unjust action, always imputing their good or evil fortune to the divine justice, and to that submitting their own judgment and reason. 'Tis enough for a Christian to believe that all things come from God, to receive them with acknowledgment of His divine and inscrutable wisdom, and also

* In Critias.

† It must be borne in mind that not only in the time of Montaigne, but in the later days of Molière, the general body of so-called physicians were mere empirics and charlatans.—W. C. H.

‡ "And all that sort of people."—HORACE, *Sat.*, i. 2, 2.

thankfully to accept and receive them, with what face soever they may present themselves. But I do not approve of what I see in use, that is, to seek to affirm and support our religion by the prosperity of our enterprises. Our belief has other foundation enough, without going about to authorize it by events: for the people being accustomed to such plausible arguments as these and so proper to their taste, it is to be feared, lest when they fail of success they should also stagger in their faith; as in the war wherein we are now engaged upon the account of religion, those who had the better in the business of Rochelabeille;* making great brags of that success, as an infallible approbation of their cause, when they came afterward to excuse their misfortunes of Moncontour and Jarnac, † by saying they were fatherly scourges and corrections that they had not a people wholly at their mercy, they make it manifestly enough appear, what it is to take two sorts of grist out of the same sack, and with the same mouth to blow hot and cold. It were better to possess the vulgar with the solid and real foundations of truth. 'Twas a fine naval battle that was gained under the command of Don John of Austria a few months since ‡ against the Turks; but it has also pleased God at other times to let us see as great victories at our own expense. In fine, 'tis a hard matter to reduce divine things to our balance, without waste and losing a great deal of the weight. And who would take upon him to give a reason, that Arius, and his Pope Leo, the principal heads of the Arian heresy, should die, at several times, of so like and strange deaths (for being withdrawn from the disputation, by a griping in the bowels, they both of them suddenly gave up the ghost upon the stool), and would aggravate this divine vengeance by the circumstances of the place, might as well add the death of Heliogabalus, who was also slain in a house of office. And, indeed, Irenæus was involved in the same fortune. God, being pleased to show us, that the good have something else to hope for and the wicked something else to fear, than the fortunes or misfortunes of this world, manages and applies these according to His own occult will and pleasure, and deprives us of the means foolishly

* In May, 1569.

† In 1569.

‡ That of Lepanto, October 7, 1571.

to make thereof our own profit. And those people abuse themselves who will pretend to dive into these mysteries by the strength of human reason. They never give one hit that they do not receive two for it; of which St. Augustine makes out a great proof upon his adversaries. 'Tis a conflict, that is more decided by strength of memory, than by the force of reason. We are to content ourselves with the light it pleases the sun to communicate to us, by virtue of his rays; and who will lift up his eyes to take in a greater, let him not think it strange, if for the reward of his presumption, he there lose his sight. "*Quis hominum potest scire consilium Dei? aut quis poterit cogitare quid velit Dominus?*"*

CHAPTER XXXII.

THAT WE ARE TO AVOID PLEASURES, EVEN AT THE EXPENSE OF LIFE.

I HAD long ago observed most of the opinions of the ancients to concur in this, that it is high time to die, when there is more ill than good in living, and that to preserve life to our own torment and inconvenience, is contrary to the very rules of nature, as these old laws instruct us.

Ἢ ζῆν ἀλύπως, ἢ θανεῖν εὐδαιμόνως.
Καλὸν τὸ θνῃσκεῖν οἷς ὕβριν τὸ φῆν φέρει.
Κρεῖσσον τὸ μὴ ζῆν ἐστιν, ἢ ζῆν ἀθλίως.†

But to push this contempt of death so far as to employ it to the removing our thoughts from the honors, riches, dignities, and other favors, and goods, as we call them, of fortune, as if reason were not sufficient to persuade us to avoid them, without adding this new injunction, I had never seen it either commanded or practiced, till this passage of Seneca‡ fell into my hands; who advising Lucilius, a man of great power and authority about the emperor, to

* "Who among men can know the counsel of God? or who can think what the will of the Lord is?"—*Sapient.*, ix. 13.

† "Either tranquil life, or happy death. It is well to die when life is wearisome. It is better to die than to live miserable."—STOBÆUS, *Serm.*, xx.

‡ Ep., 22.

alter his voluptuous and magnificent way of living, and to retire himself from this worldly vanity and ambition, to some solitary, quiet, and philosophical life, and the other alleging some difficulties: "I am of opinion," says he, "either that thou leave that life of thine, or life itself; I would, indeed, advise thee to the gentle way, and to untie, rather than to break, the knot thou hast indiscreetly knit, provided, that if it be not otherwise to be untied, thou resolutely break it. There is no man so great a coward, that had not rather once fall than to be always falling." I should have found this counsel conformable enough to the Stoical roughness: but it appears the more strange, for being borrowed from Epicurus, who writes the same thing upon the like occasion to Idomeneus. And I think I have observed something like it, but with Christian moderation, among our own people.

St. Hilary, Bishop of Poictiers, that famous enemy of the Arian heresy, being in Syria had intelligence thither sent him, that Abra his only daughter, whom he left at home under the eye and tuition of her mother, was sought in marriage by the greatest nobleman of the country, as being a virgin virtuously brought up, fair, rich, and in the flower of her age; whereupon he wrote to her (as appears upon record), that she should remove her affection from all the pleasures and advantages proposed to her; for that he had in his travels found out a much greater and more worthy fortune for her, a husband of much greater power and magnificence, who would present her with robes and jewels of inestimable value; wherein his design was to dispossess her of the appetite and use of worldly delights, to join her wholly to God; but the nearest and most certain way to this, being, as he conceived, the death of his daughter; he never ceased, by vows, prayers, and orisons, to beg of the Almighty, that He would please to call her out of this world, and to take her to Himself; as accordingly it came to pass; for soon after his return, she died, at which he expressed a singular joy. This seems to outdo the other, forasmuch as he applies himself to this means at the outset, which they only take subsidiarily; and, besides, it was toward his only daughter. But I will not omit the latter end of this story, though it be from my purpose; St. Hilary's wife, having understood from him how the death of their daughter was brought about by his desire and

design, and how much happier she was, to be removed out of this world than to have stayed in it, conceived so vivid an apprehension of the eternal and heavenly beatitude, that she begged of her husband, with the extremest importunity, to do as much for her; and God, at their joint request, shortly after calling her to Him, it was a death embraced with singular and mutual content.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

THAT FORTUNE IS OFTENTIMES OBSERVED TO ACT BY THE RULES OF REASON.

THE INCONSTANCY and various motions of fortune* may reasonably make us expect she would present us with all sorts of faces. Can there be a more express act of justice than this? The Duke of Valentinois,† having resolved to poison Adrian, Cardinal of Corneto, with whom Pope Alexander VI., his father and himself, were to sup in the Vatican, he sent before a bottle of poisoned wine, and withal, strict order to the butler to keep it very safe. The pope being come before his son, and calling for drink, the butler supposing this wine had not been so strictly recommended to his care, but only upon the account of its excellency, presented it forthwith to the pope, and the duke himself coming in presently after, and being confident they had not meddled with his bottle, took also his cup; so that the father died immediately upon the spot, and the son, after having been long tormented with sickness, was reserved to another and a worse fortune.‡

Sometimes she seems to play upon us, just in the nick of an affair: Monsieur d'Estrée, at that time ensign to Monsieur de Vendôme, and Monsieur de Licques, lieutenant in the company of the Duc d'Ascot, being both pretenders to the Sieur de Fouquerolles' sister,§ though of several parties

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* The term *Fortune*, so often employed by Montaigne, and in passages where he might have used that of Providence was censured by the doctors who examined his Essays, when he was at Rome in 1581. (See his Travels, ii. 35 and 76.)—W. C. H.

† Cæsar Borgia.—W. C. H.

‡ Guicciardini, Storia d'Italia, lib. vi.

§ Martin du Bellay, Mém., ii.

(as it oft falls out among frontier neighbors), the Sieur de Licques carried her; but on the same day he was married, and which was worse, before he went to bed to his wife, the bridegroom having a mind to break a lance in honor of his new bride, went out to skirmish near St. Omer, where the Sieur d'Estrée proving the stronger, took him prisoner, and the more to illustrate his victory, the lady herself was fain—

> "Conjugis ante coacta novi dimittere collum,
> Quam veniens una atque altera rursus hyems
> Noctibus in longis avidum saturasset amorem" *

—to request him of courtesy, to deliver up his prisoner to her, as he accordingly did, the gentlemen of France never denying anything to ladies.

Does she not seem to be an artist here? Constantine the son of Helen, founded the empire of Constantinople, and so many ages after, Constantine, the son of Helen, put an end to it. Sometimes she is pleased to emulate our miracles: we are told, that King Clovis besieging Angoulême, the walls fell down of themselves by divine favor: and Bouchet has it from some author, that King Robert having sat down before a city, and being stolen away from the siege to go keep the feast of St. Aignan at Orleans, as he was in devotion at a certain part of the mass, the walls of the beleaguered city, without any manner of violence, fell down with a sudden ruin. But she did quite contrary in our Milan war; for Captain Rense laying siege for us to the city Arona, † and having carried a mine under a great part of the wall, the mine being sprung, the wall was lifted from its base, but dropped down again nevertheless, whole and entire, and so exactly upon its foundation, that the besieged suffered no inconvenience by that attempt.

Sometimes she plays the physician. Jason of Pheres ‡ being given over by the physicians, by reason of an imposthume in his breast, having a mind to rid himself of his pain, by death at least, threw himself in a battle desperately into the thickest of the enemy, where he was so for-

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* "Compelled to abstain from embracing her new spouse in her arms, before two winters pass in succession, during their long nights had satiated her eager love."—CATULLUS, lxviii. 81.

† Martin du Bellay, Mém., liv ii. fol. 86.

‡ Pliny, Nat. Hist., vii. 50.

tunately wounded quite through the body, that the imposthume broke and he was perfectly cured. Did she not also excel painter Protogenes in his art? who * having finished the picture of a dog quite tired and out of breath, in all the other parts excellently well to his own liking, but not being able to express, as he would, the slaver and foam that should come out of its mouth, vexed and angry at his work, he took his sponge, which by cleaning his pencils had imbided several sorts of colors, and threw it in a rage against the picture, with an attempt utterly to deface it; when fortune guiding the sponge to hit just upon the mouth of the dog, it there performed what all his art was not able to do. Does she not sometimes direct our counsels and correct them? Isabel, queen of England, having to sail from Zealand unto her own kingdom, † with an army, in favor of her son, against her husband, had been lost, had she come into the port she intended, being there laid wait for by the enemy; but fortune, against her will, threw her into another haven, where she landed in safety. And that man of old who, throwing a stone at a dog, hit and killed his mother-in-law, had he not reason to pronounce this verse,

Ταυτόματον ἡμῶν χαλλίω βουλευεται; ‡

Icetes had contracted with two soldiers to kill Timoleon at Adrana in Sicily.§ These villains took their time to do it when he was assisting at a sacrifice, and thrusting into the crowd, as they were making signs to one another, that now was a fit time to do their business, in steps a third, who with a sword takes one of them full drive over the pate, lays him dead upon the place and runs away, which the other seeing, and concluding himself discovered and lost, runs to the altar and begs for mercy, promising to discover the whole truth, which as he was doing, and laying open the full conspiracy, behold the third man, who being apprehended, was, as a murderer, thrust and hauled by the people through the press, toward Timoleon, and the other most eminent persons of the assembly, before whom being brought, he cries out for pardon, pleading that he had justly slain his father's murderer; which he, also,

* Idem, ibid., xxxv. 10.

† In 1326.

‡ "Fortune has more judgment than we."—MENANDER.

§ Plutarch, Life of Timoleon, c. 7.

proving upon the spot, by sufficient witnesses, whom his good fortune very opportunely supplied him withal, that his father was really killed in the city of the Leontines, by that very man on whom he had taken his revenge, he was presently awarded ten Attic * minæ, for having had the good fortune, by designing to revenge the death of his father, to preserve the life of the common father of Sicily. Fortune, truly, in her conduct surpasses all the rules of human prudence.

But to conclude: is there not a direct application of her favor, bounty, and piety manifestly discovered in this action? Ignatius the father and Ignatius the son, being proscribed by the triumvirs of Rome, resolved upon this generous act of mutual kindness, to fall by the hands of one another, and by that means to frustrate and defeat the cruelty of the tyrants; and accordingly, with their swords drawn, ran full drive upon one another, where fortune so guided the points, that they made two equally mortal wounds, affording withal so much honor to so brave a friendship, as to leave them just strength enough to draw out their bloody swords, that they might have liberty to embrace one another in this dying condition, with so close and hearty an embrace, that the executioners cut off both their heads at once, leaving the bodies still fast linked together in this noble bond, and their wounds joined mouth to mouth, affectionately sucking in the last blood and remainder of the lives of each other.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

OF ONE DEFECT IN OUR GOVERNMENT.

My father, who for a man that had no other advantages than experience and his own natural parts, was nevertheless of a very clear judgment, formerly told me that he once had thoughts of endeavoring to introduce this practice; that there might be in every city a certain place assigned to which such as stood in need of anything might repair, and have their business entered by an officer appointed for that purpose. As for example: I want a chapman to buy my pearls: I want one that has pearls to sell;

* The old Attic mina was seventy-five drachmas.

such a one wants company to go to Paris; such a one seeks a servant of such a quality; such a one a master; such a one such an artificer; some inquiring for one thing, some for another, every one according to what he wants. And doubtless these mutual advertisements would be of no contemptible advantage to the public correspondence and intelligence: for there are evermore conditions that hunt after one another, and for want of knowing one another's occasions leave men in very great necessity.

I have heard to the great shame of the age we live in, that in our very sight, two most excellent men for learning died so poor that they had scarce bread to put in their mouths: Lilius Gregorius Giraldus in Italy, and Sebastianus Castalio in Germany: and I believe there are a thousand men would have invited them into their families, with very advantageous conditions, or have relieved them where they were, had they known their wants. The world is not so generally corrupted, but that I know a man that would heartily wish the estate his ancestors have left him, might be employed, so long as it shall please fortune to give him leave to enjoy it, to secure rare and remarkable persons of any kind, whom misfortune sometimes persecutes to the last degree, from the dangers of necessity; and at least place them in such a condition, that they must be very hard to please, if they are not contented.

My father in his domestic economy had this rule (which I know how to commend, but by no means to imitate), namely, that besides the day-book or memorial of household affairs, where the small accounts, payments and disbursements, which do not require a secretary's hand, were entered, and which a steward always had in custody, he ordered him whom he employed to write for him, to keep a journal, and in it to set down all the remarkable occurrences, and daily memorials of the history of his house; very pleasant to look over, when time begins to wear things out of memory, and very useful sometimes to put us out of doubt when such a thing was begun, when ended; what visitors came, and when they went; our travels, absences, marriages, and deaths; the reception of good or ill news; the change of principal servants, and the like. An ancient custom, which I think it would not be amiss for every one to revive in his own house; and I find I did very foolishly in neglecting it.

CHAPTER XXXV.

OF THE CUSTOM OF WEARING CLOTHES.

WHATEVER I shall say upon this subject, I am of necessity to invade some of the bounds of custom, so careful has she been to shut up all the avenues. I was disputing with myself in this shivering season, whether the fashion of going naked in those nations lately discovered is imposed upon them by the hot temperature of the air, as we say of the Indians and Moors, or whether it be the original fashion of mankind. Men of understanding, forasmuch as all things under the sun, as the holy writ declares, are subject to the same laws, were wont in such considerations as these, where we are to distinguish the natural laws from those that have been imposed by man's invention, to have recourse to the general polity of the world, where there can be nothing counterfeit. Now all other creatures being sufficiently furnished with all things necessary for the support of their being,* it is not to be imagined, that we only should be brought into the world in a defective and indigent condition, and in such a state as cannot subsist without external aid. Therefore it is, that I believe, that as plants, trees, and animals, and all things that have life, are seen to be by nature sufficiently clothed and covered to defend them from the injuries of weather,

> "Proptereaque fere res omnes aut corio sunt,
> Aut seta, aut conchis, aut callo, aut cortice tectæ," †

so were we; but as those who by artificial light put out that of the day, so we by borrowed forms and fashions have destroyed our own. And 'tis plain enough to be seen that 'tis custom only which renders that impossible that otherwise is nothing so; for of those nations who have no manner of knowledge of clothing, some are situated under the same temperature that we are, and some in much colder climates. And besides, our most tender parts are always exposed to the air, as the eyes, mouth, nose, and ears; and

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* Montaigne's expression is, "With needle and thread."—W.C.H.

† "And that for this reason nearly all things are clothed with skin, or hair, or shells, or bark, or some such thing."—LUCRETIUS, iv. 936.

our country laborers, like our ancestors in former times, go with their breasts and bellies open. Had we been born with a necessity upon us of wearing petticoats and breeches there is no doubt but nature would have fortified those parts she intended should be exposed to the fury of the seasons, with a thicker skin, as she has done the finger-ends, and the soles of the feet. And why should this seem hard to believe? I observe much greater distance between my habit and that of one of our country boors, than between his and that of a man who has no other covering but his skin. How many men, especially in Turkey, go naked upon the account of devotion? Some one asked a beggar, whom he saw in his shirt in the depth of winter as brisk and frolic as he who goes muffled up to the ears in furs, how he was able to endure to go so? "Why, sir," he answered, "you go with your face bare: I am all face." The Italians have a story of the duke of Florence's fool, whom his master asking, how, being so thinly clad, he was able to support the cold, when he himself, warmly wrapped up as he was, was hardly able to do it? "Why," replied the fool, "use my receipt to put on all your clothes you have at once, and you'll feel no more cold than I." King Massinissa,* to an extreme old age, could never be prevailed upon to go with his head covered, how cold, stormy, or rainy soever the weather might be; which also is reported of the Emperor Severus. Herodotus tells us,† that in the battles fought between the Egyptians and the Persians, it was observed both by himself and by others, that of those who were left dead upon the field, the heads of the Egyptians were without comparison harder than those of the Persians, by reason that the last had gone with their heads always covered from their infancy, first with biggons, and then with turbans, and the others always shaved and bare. King Agesilaus continued to a decrepit age, to wear always the same clothes in winter that he did in summer.‡ Cæsar, says Suetonius, § marched always at the head of his army, for the most part on foot, with his head bare, whether it was rain or sunshine, and as much is said of Hannibal:

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* Cicero, De Senectute, c. 10.

† iii. 12.

‡ Plutarch in Vita.

§ In Vita, c. 58.

"Tum vertice nudo,
Excipere insanos imbres, cœlique ruinam." *

A Venetian who had long lived in Pegu, and has lately returned thence, writes that the men and women of that kingdom, though they cover all their other parts, go always barefoot and ride so, too; and Plato very earnestly advises for the health of the whole body, to give the head and the feet no other clothing, than what nature has bestowed. He whom the Poles have elected for their king,† since ours came thence, who ‡ is, indeed, one of the greatest princes of this age, never wears any gloves, and in winter or whatever weather can come, never wears other cap abroad than that he wears at home. Whereas I cannot endure to go unbuttoned or untied; my neighboring laborers would think themselves in chains, if they were so braced. Varo § is of opinion, that when it was ordained we should be bare in the presence of the gods and before the magistrate, it was so ordered rather upon the score of health, and to inure us to the injuries of the weather, than upon the account of reverence; and since we are now talking of cold, and Frenchmen use to wear variety of colors (not I myself, for I seldom wear other than black or white in imitation of my father), let us add another story out of Captain Martin du Beliay, who affirms,‖ that in the march to Luxembourg, he saw so great frost, that the munition wine was cut with hatchets and wedges, and delivered out to the soldiers by weight and that they carried it away in baskets; and Ovid,

"Nudaque consistunt, formam servantia testæ,
Vina; nec hausta meri, sed data frusta, bibunt."¶

At the mouth of the Lake Mæotis, the frosts are so very sharp, that in the very same place where Mithridates' lieu-

* "Bareheaded he marched in snow, exposed to pouring rain and the utmost rigor of the weather."—SILIUS ITALICUS, i 250.

† Stephen Bathory.

‡ *i. e.*, Stephen Bathory, and not Henry III.

§ Pliny, Nat. Hist., xxviii. 6.

‖ In 1543, Martin Du Bellay, Mém., liv. x. fol. 478.

¶ "The wine went out of the cask, retains the form of the cask; and is given out not in cups, but in bits."—OVID, *Trist.*, iii. 10, 23.

tenant had fought the enemy dry-foot and given them a notable defeat, the summer following he obtained over them a naval victory. The Romans fought at a very great disadvantage, in the engagement they had with the Carthaginians near Placentia, by reason that they went to the charge with their blood fixed and their limbs numbed with cold; whereas Hannibal had caused great fires to be dispersed quite through his camp to warm his soldiers, and oil to be distributed among them, to the end that anointing themselves, they might render their nerves more supple and active, and fortify the pores against the violence of the air and freezing wind, which raged in that season.*

The retreat the Geeeks made from Babylon into their own country, is famous for the difficulties and calamities they had to overcome; of which this was one, that being encountered in the mountains of Armenia with a horrible storm of snow, they lost all knowledge of the country and of the ways, and being driven up, were a day and a night without eating or drinking; most of their cattle died, many of themselves starved to death, several struck blind with the driving hail and the glittering of the snow, many of them maimed in their fingers and toes, and many stiff and motionless with the extremity of the cold, who had yet their understanding entire.†

Alexander saw a nation, where they bury their fruit-trees in winter, to protect them from being destroyed by the frost,‡ and we also may see the same.

But, so far as clothes go, the king of Mexico changed four times a day his apparel, and never put it on again, employing that he left off in his continual liberalities and rewards; and neither pot, dish, nor other utensil of his kitchen or table was ever served twice.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

OF CATO THE YOUNGER.

I AM not guilty of the common error, of judging another by myself. I easily believe that in another's humor

* Livy, xx. 54.

† Xenophon, Exp. of Cyrus, iv. 5.

‡ Quintus Curtius, vii. 3.

which is contrary to my own; and though I find myself engaged to one certain form, I do not oblige others to it, as many do; but believe and apprehend a thousand ways of living; and, contrary to most men, more easily admit of difference than uniformity among us.* I as frankly as any one would have me, discharge a man from my humors and principles, and consider him according to his own particular model. Though I am not continent myself, I nevertheless sincerely approve the continence of the Feuillans and Capuchins, and highly commend their way of living. I insinuate myself by imagination into their place, and love and honor them the more for being other than I am. I very much desire that we may be judged every man by himself, and would not be drawn into the consequence of common examples. My own weakness nothing alters the esteem I ought to have for the force and vigor of those who deserve it. "*Sunt qui nihil suadent, quam quod se imitari posse confidunt.*" † Crawling upon the slime of the earth, I do not for all that cease to observe up in the clouds the inimitable height of some heroic souls. 'Tis a great deal for me to have my judgment regular and just, if the effects cannot be so, and to maintain this sovereign part, at least, free from corruption: tis something to have my will right and good where my legs fail me. This age wherein we live, in our part of the world at least, is grown so stupid, that not only the exercise, but the very imagination of virtue is defective, and seems to be no other but college jargon:

> "Virtutem verba putant, ut
> Lucum ligna:" ‡

"*Quam vereri deberent, etiam si percipere non possent.*" §

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* "I am not possessed with this common errour, to judge of others according to what I am my selfe. I am easie to beleeve things differing from my selfe. Though I be engaged to one forme, I do not tie the world vnto it, as every man doth. And I beleeve and conceive a thousand manners of life, contrary to the common sorte."—FLORIO, ed. 1613, p. 113.

† "There are who persuade nothing but what they believe they can imitate themselves."—CICERO, *De Orator.*, c. 7.

‡ "They think words virtue, as they think mere wood a sacred grove."—HORACE, *Ep.*, i. 6, 31.

§ "Which they ought to reverence, though they cannot comprehend."—CICERO, *Tusc. Quæs.*, v. 2.

'Tis a gewgaw to hang in a cabinet, or at the end of the tongue, as on the tip of the ear, for ornament only. There are no longer virtuous actions extant; those actions that carry a show of virtue have yet nothing of its essence; by reason that profit, glory, fear, custom, and other such like foreign causes, put us on the way to produce them. Our justice also, valor, courtesy, may be called so too, in respect to others and according to the face they appear with to the public; but in the doer it can by no means be virtue, because there is another end proposed, another moving cause. Now virtue owns nothing to be hers, but what is done by herself and for herself alone.

In that great battle of Platæa, that the Greeks under the command of Pausanias gained against Mardonius and the Persians, the conquerors, according to their custom, coming to divide among them the glory of the exploit, attributed to the Spartan nation the pre-eminence of valor in the engagement. The Spartans, great judges of virtue, when they came to determine to what particular man of their nation the honor was due of having the best behaved himself upon this occasion, found that Aristodemus had of all others hazarded his person with the greatest bravery; but did not, however, allow him any prize, by reason that his virtue had been incited by a desire to clear his reputation from the reproach of his miscarriage at the business of Thermopylæ, and to die bravely to wipe off that former blemish.

Our judgments are yet sick, and obey the humor of our depraved manners. I observe most of the wits of these times pretend to ingenuity, by endeavoring to blemish and darken the glory of the bravest and most generous actions of former ages, putting one vile interpretation or another upon them, and forging and supposing vain causes and motives for the noble things they did: a mighty subtlety indeed! Give me the greatest and most unblemished action that ever the day beheld, and I will contrive a hundred plausible drifts and ends to obscure it. God knows, whoever will stretch them out to the full, what diversity of images our internal wills suffer under. They do not so maliciously play the censurers, as they do it ignorantly and rudely in all their detractions.

The same pains and license that others take to blemish and bespatter these illustrious names, I would willingly

undergo to lend them a shoulder to raise them higher. These rare forms, that are culled out by the consent of the wisest men of all ages, for the world's example, I should not stick to augment in honor, as far as my invention would permit, in all the circumstances of favorable interpretation; and we may well believe that the force of our invention is infinitely short of their merit. 'Tis the duty of good men to portray virtue as beautiful as they can, and there would be nothing wrong should our passion a little transport us in favor of so sacred a form. What these people do, on the contrary, they either do out of malice, or by the vice of confining their belief to their own capacity; or, which I am more inclined to think, for not having their sight strong, clear, and elevated enough to conceive the splendor of virtue in her native purity: as Plutarch complains, that in his time some attributed the cause of the younger Cato's death to his fear of Cæsar, at which he seems very angry, and with good reason: and by this a man may guess how much more he would have been offended with those who have attributed it to ambition. Senseless people! He would rather have performed a noble, just, and generous action, and to have had ignominy for his reward, than for glory. That man was in truth a pattern that nature chose out to show to what height human virtue and constancy could arrive.

But I am not capable of handling so rich an argument, and shall therefore only set five Latin poets together, contending in the praise of Cato; and, incidentally, for their own too. Now, a well-educated child will judge the two first, in comparison of the others, a little flat and languid; the third more vigorous, but overthrown by the extravagance of his own force; he will then think, that there will be room for one or two gradations of invention to come to the fourth, and, mounting to the pitch of that, he will lift up his hands in admiration; coming to the last, the first by some space* (but a space that he will swear is not to be filled up by any human wit), he will be astounded, he will not know where he is.

And here is a wonder: we have far more poets than judges and interpreters of poetry; it is easier to write it than to understand it. There is, indeed, a certain low and moder-

* The *longum intervallum* of Virgil.—W. C. H.

ate sort of poetry, that a man may well enough judge by certain rules of art; but the true, supreme, and divine poesy is above all rules and reason. And whoever discerns the beauty of it with the most assured and most steady sight, sees no more than the quick reflection of a flash of lightning: it does not exercise but ravishes and overwhelms our judgment. The fury that possesses him who is able to penetrate into it, wounds yet a third man by hearing him repeat it; like a loadstone that not only attracts the needle, but also infuses into it the virtue to attract others. And it is more evidently manifest in our theaters, that the sacred inspiration of the Muses, having first stirred up the poet to anger, sorrow, hatred, and out of himself, to whatever they will, does moreover by the poet possesses the actor, and by the actor cansecutively all the spectators. So much do our passions hang and depend upon one another.*

Poetry has ever had that power over me from a child, to transpierce and transport me: but this vivid sentiment that is natural to me, has been variously handled by variety of forms, not so much higher or lower (for they were ever the highest of every kind), as differing in color. First, a gay and sprightly fluency; afterwards, a lofty and penetrating subtlety; and lastly, a mature and constant vigor. Their names will better express them; Ovid, Lucan, Virgil.

But our poets are beginning their career:

"Sit Cato, dum vivit, sane vel Cæsare major," *

says one.

"Et invictum, devicta morte, Catonem,"†

says the second. And the third, speaking of the civil wars between Cæsar and Pompey.

"Victrix causa diis placuit, sed victa Catoni."‡

And the fourth, upon the praises of Cæsar,

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* All these images are taken from Plato's Ion.

* "Let Cato, while he live, be greater than Cæsar."—MARTIAL, vi. 32.

† "And Cato invincible, death being overcome."—MANILIUS, *Astron.*, iv. 87.

‡ "Heaven approves the conquering cause, but Cato the conquered." —LUCAN, i. 128.

"Et cuncta terrarum subacta,
Præter atrocem animum Catonis."*

And the master of the choir, after having set forth all the great names of the greatest Romans, ends thus:

"His dantem jura Catonem." †

CHAPTER XXXVII.

THAT WE LAUGH AND CRY FOR THE SAME THING.

WHEN we read in history, that Antigonus was very much displeased with his son for presenting him the head of King Pyrrhus his enemy, but newly slain fighting against him, and that seeing it, he wept:‡ and that René, Duke of Lorraine, also lamented the death of Charles, Duke of Burgundy, whom he had himself defeated,§ and appeared in mourning, at his funeral: and that in the battle of d'Auray (which Count Montfort obtained over Charles de Blois, his competitor for the duchy of Brittany), ‖ the conqueror meeting the dead body of his enemy, was very much afflicted at his death, we must not presently cry out,

"E cosi avven, che l' animo ciascuna
Sua passion sotto 'l contrario manto,
Ricopre, con la vista or'chiara, or' bruna." ¶

When Pompey's head was presented to Cæsar, the histories tell us,** that he turned away his face, as from a sad and unpleasing object. There had been so long an intelligence and society between them in the management of the public affairs, so great a community of fortunes, so many

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* "And conquered all but the indomitable mind of Cato."—HORACE *Od.*, ii. 1. 23.

† "Cato giving laws to all the rest."—ÆNEID, viii. 670.

‡ Plutarch, Life of Pyrrhus.

§ Before Nancy, in 1477.

‖ September 29, 1364.

¶ "And thus it happens that the mind of each veils its passion under a different appearance, sad beneath a smiling visage, gay beneath a somber air."—PETRARCH.

** Plutarch, Life of Cæsar, c. 13.

mutual offices, and so near an alliance, that this countenance of his ought not to suffer under any misinterpretation; or to be suspected for either false or counterfeit, as this other seems to believe:

> "Tutumque putavit
> Jam bonus esse socer; lacrymas non sponte cadentes,
> Effudit, gemitusque expressit pectore læto;" *

for though it be true that the greatest part of our actions are no other than visor and disguise, and that may sometimes be true that

> "Hæredis fletus sub persona risus est." †

yet, in judging of these accidents, we are to consider how much our souls are oftentimes agitated with divers passions. And as they say that in our bodies there is a congregation of divers humors, of which that is the sovereign which, according to the complexion we are of, is commonly most predominant in us: so, though the soul have in it divers motions to give it agitation, yet must there of necessity be one to overrule all the rest, though not with so necessary and absolute a dominion but that through the flexibility and inconstancy of the soul, those of less authority may upon occasion reassume their place and make a little sally in turn. Thence it is, that we see not only children, who innocently obey and follow nature, often laugh and cry at the same thing, but not one of us can boast, what journey soever he may have in hand that he has the most set his heart upon, but when he comes to part with his family and friends, he will find something that troubles him within; and though he refrain his tears yet he puts his foot in the stirrup with a sad and cloudy countenance. And what gentle flame so ever may warm the heart of modest and well-born virgins, yet are they fain to be forced from about their mother's necks to be put to bed to their husbands, whatever this boon companion is pleased to say:

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* "And now he thought it safe to play the kind father-in-law, he shed forced tears, and from a joyful breast sent forth sighs and groans."—LUCAN, ix. 1037.

† "The heir's tears behind the mask are smiles."—PUBLIUS SYRUS, *apud Gellium*, xvii. 14.

"Estne novis nuptis odio Venus? anne parentum,
Frustrantur falsis gaudia lachrymulis,
Ubertim thalami quasi intra limia fundunt?
Non, ita me divi, vera gemunt, juverint." *

Neither is it strange to lament a person dead, whom a man would by no means should be alive. When I rattle my man, I do it with all the mettle I have, and load him with no feigned, but downright real curses; but the heat being over, if he should stand in need of me, I should be very ready to do him good: for I instantly turn the leaf. When I call him calf and coxcomb, I do not pretend to entail those titles upon him forever; neither do I think I give myself the lie in calling him an honest fellow presently after. No one quality engrosses us purely and universally. Were it not the sign of a fool to talk to one's self, there would hardly be a day or hour wherein I might not be heard to grumble and mutter to myself and against myself, "Confound the fool!" and yet I do not think that to be my definition. Who for seeing me one while cold and presently very fond toward my wife, believes the one or the other to be counterfeited, is an ass. Nero, taking leave of his mother whom he was sending to be drowned, was nevertheless sensible of some emotion at this farewell, and was struck with horror and pity. 'Tis said, that the light of the sun is not one continuous thing, but that he darts new rays so thick one upon another that we cannot perceive the intermission:

"Largus enim liquidi fons luminis, ætherius sol,
Irrigat assidue cœlum candore recenti,
Suppeditatque novo confestim lumine lumen."†

Just so the soul variously and imperceptibly darts out her passions.

Artabanus coming by surprise once upon his nephew Xerxes, chid him for the sudden alteration of his countenance. He was considering the immeasurable greatness

* "Is Venus really so alarming to the new-made bride, or does she honestly oppose to her parents' rejoicing the tears she so abundantly sheds on entering the nuptial chamber? No, by the gods, these are no true tears."—CATULLUS, lxvi. 15.

† "Exhaustless source of liquid light, the ethereal sun, inundates the heavens with splendor, ever renewing itself, still replacing its rays with new rays."—LUCRETIUS, v. 282.

of his forces passing over the Hellespont for the Grecian expedition: he was first seized with a palpitation of joy, to see so many millions of men under his command, and this appeared in the gayety of his looks: but his thoughts at the same instant suggesting to him that of so many lives, within a century at most, there would not be one left, he presently knit his brows and grew sad, even to tears.

We have resolutely pursued the revenge of an injury received, and been sensible of a singular contentment for the victory; but we shall weep notwithstanding. 'Tis not for the victory, though, that we shall weep: there is nothing altered in that: but the soul looks upon things with another eye and represents them to itself with another kind of face; for everything has many faces and several aspects.

Relations, old acquaintance, and friendships, possess our imaginations and make them tender for the time, according to their condition; but the turn is so quick, that 'tis gone in a moment,

> "Nil adeo fieri celeri ratione videtur,
> Quam si mens fieri proponit, et inchoat ipsa.
> Ocius ergo animus, quam res se perciet ulla,
> Ante oculos quorum in promptu natura videtur;" *

and therefore, if we would make one continued thing of all this succession of passions, we deceive ourselves. When Timoleon laments the murder he had committed upon so mature and generous deliberation, he does not lament the liberty restored to his country, he does not lament the tyrant, but he laments his brother; one part of his duty is performed; let us give him leave to perform the other.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

OF SOLITUDE.

LET US pretermit that long comparison between the active and the solitary life; and as for the fine saying with which

* "Nothing therefore so prompt as the soul when it propounds anything to be done and begins to do it. It is more active than anything which we see in nature."—LUCRETIUS, iii. 183.

ambition and avarice palliate their vices, that we are not born for ourselves but for the public,* let us boldly appeal to those who are in public affairs; let them lay their hands upon their hearts, and then say whether, on the contrary, they do not rather aspire to titles and offices and that tumult of the world to make their private advantage at the public expense. The corrupt ways by which in this our time they arrive at the height to which their ambitions aspire, manifestly enough declares that their ends cannot be very good. Let us tell ambition, that it is she herself who gives us a taste of solitude; for what does she so much avoid as society? What does she so much seek as elbow-room? A man may do well or ill everywhere: but if what Bias says be true,† that the greatest part is the worse part, or what the preacher says: there is not one good of a thousand;

> "Rari quippe boni: numero vix sunt totidem quot
> The barum portæ, vel divitis ostia Nili,"‡

the contagion is very dangerous in the crowd. A man must either imitate the vicious or hate them: both are dangerous things, either to resemble them because they are many or to hate many because they are unresembling to ourselves.§ Merchants who go to sea are in the right, when they are cautious that those who embark with them in the same bottom, be neither dissolute blasphemers nor vicious other ways, looking upon such society as unfortunate. And therefore it was that Bias pleasantly said to some, who being with him in a dangerous storm implored the assistance of the gods: "Peace, speak softly," said he, "that they may not know you are here in my company."‖ And of more pressing example, Albuquerque, viceroy in the Indies for Emmanuel, king of Portugal, in an extreme peril of shipwreck took a young boy upon his shoulders,

* This is the eulogium passed by Lucan on Cato of Utica, ii. 383.

† Diogenes Lærtius, in vitâ.

‡ "Good men are scarce: we could hardly reckon up as many as there are gates to Thebes, or mouths to the Nile."—JUVENAL, *Sat.*, xiii. 26.

§ Seneca, Ep., 7.

‖ Diognes Lærtius, in vitâ.

for this only end that, in the society of their common danger, his innocence might serve to protect him, and to recommend him to the divine favor, that they might get safe to shore. 'Tis not that a wise man may not live everywhere content, and be alone in the very crowd of a palace: but if it be left to his own choice, the schoolman will tell you that he should fly the very sight of the crowd: he will endure it, if need be; but if it be referred to him, he will choose to be alone. He cannot think himself sufficiently rid of vice, if he must yet contend with it in other men. Charondas punished those as evil men who were convicted of keeping ill company.* There is nothing so unsociable and sociable as man, the one by his vice, the other by his nature. And Antisthenes, in my opinion did not give him a satisfactory answer, who reproached him with frequenting ill company, by saying that the physicians lived well enough among the sick:† for if they contribute to the health of the sick, no doubt but by the contagion, continual sight of, and familiarity with diseases, they must of necessity impair their own.

Now the end, I take it, is all one, to live at more leisure and at one's ease: but men do not always take the right way. They often think they have totally taken leave of all business, when they have only exchanged one employment for another: there is little less trouble in governing a private family than a whole kingdom. Whenever the mind is perplexed it is in an entire disorder, and domestic employments are not less troublesome for being less important. Moreover, for having shaken off the court and the exchange, we have not taken leave of the principal vexations of life:

> "Ratio et prudentia curas,
> Non locus effusi late maris arbiter, aufert;"‡

ambition, avarice, irresolution, fear, and inordinate desires, do not leave us because we forsake our native country:

> "Et
> Post equitem sedet atra cura:" §

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* Diodorus Siculus, xii. 4.

† Diogenes Lærtius, Life of Antisthenes.

‡ "Reason and prudence, not a place with a commanding view of the great ocean, banish care."—HORACE, *Ep.*, i. 2.

§ "Black care sits behind the horseman."—HORACE, *Od.*, iii. 1. 40

they often follow us even to cloisters and philosophical schools; nor deserts, nor caves, hair-shirts, nor fasts, can disengage us from them:

"Hæret lateri lethalis arundo." *

One telling Socrates, that such a one was nothing improved by his travels: "I very well believe it," said he, "for he took himself along with him."†

"Quid terras alio calentes
Sole mutamus? patriæ quis exsul
Se quoque fugit?" ‡

If a man do not first discharge both himself and his mind of the burden with which he finds himself oppressed, motion will but make it press the harder and sit the heavier, as the lading of a ship is of less encumbrance when fast and bestowed in a settled posture. You do a sick man more harm than good in removing him from place to place; you fix and establish the disease by motion, as stakes sink deeper and more firmly into the earth by being moved up and down in the place where they are designed to stand. Therefore, it is not enough to get remote from the public; 'tis not enough to shift the soil only; a man must flee from the popular conditions that have taken possession of his soul, he must sequester and come again to himself.

"Rupi jam vincula, dicas:
Nam luctata canis nodum arripit; attamen illi.
Quum fugit, a collo trahitur pars longa catenæ." §

We still carry our fetters along with us. 'Tis not an absolute liberty; we yet cast back a look upon what we have left behind us; the fancy is still full of it:

"Nisi purgatum est pectus, quæ prælia nobis
Atque pericula tunc ingratis insinuandum?
Quantæ conscindunt hominem cupedinis acres

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* "The fatal shaft sticks in the wounded side."—ÆNEID, iv. 73.

† Seneca, Ep., 104.

‡ "Why do we seek climates warmed by another sun? Who is the man that by fleeing from his country, can also flee from himself?"—HORACE, *Od.*, ii. 16, 18.

§ "You say, perhaps, you have broken your chain: the dog who after long efforts has broken his chain, still in his flight drags a heavy portion of it after him."—PERSIUS, *Sat.*, v. 158.

Sollicitum curæ? quantique perinde timores?
Quidve superbia, spurcitia, ac petulantia, quantas
Efficiunt clades? quid luxus, desidiesque?" *

Our disease lies in the mind, which cannot escape from itself;

"In culpa est animus, qui se non effugit unquam," †

and therefore is to be called home and confined within itself: that is the true solitude, and that may be enjoyed even in populous cities and the courts of kings, though more commodiously apart.

Now, since we will attempt to live alone, and to waive all manner of conversation among men, let us so order it that our content may depend wholly upon ourselves; let us dissolve all obligations that ally us to others; let us obtain this from ourselves, that we may live alone in good earnest, and live at our ease too.

Stilpo having escaped from the fire that consumed the city where he lived, and wherein he had lost his wife, children, goods, and all that ever he was master of, Demetrius Poliorcetes seeing him, in so great a ruin of his country, appear with a serene and undisturbed countenance, asked him if he had received no loss? To which he made answer, no; and that, thanks be to God, nothing was lost of his.‡ This also was the meaning of the philosopher Antisthenes, when he pleasantly said, that "men should furnish themselves with such things as would float, and might with the owner escape the storm; § and certainly a wise man never loses anything if he have himself. When the city of Nola was ruined by the barbarians, Paulinus, who was bishop of that place, having there lost all he had, and himself a prisoner, prayed after this manner: "O Lord, defend me from being sensible of this loss; for Thou know-

* "But unless the mind is purified, what internal combats and dangers must we incur in spite of all our efforts! How many bitter anxieties, how many terrors, follow upon unregulated passion! What destruction befalls us from pride, lust, petulant anger! What evils arise from luxury and sloth!"—LUCRETIUS, v. 4.

† Horace, Ep., i. 14, 13. The citation is translated in the preceding passage.

‡ Seneca, Ep., 7.

§ Diogenes Laertius, vi. 6.

est they have yet touched nothing of that which is mine." * The riches that made him rich, and the goods that made him good, were still kept entire. This it is to make choice of treasures that can secure themselves from plunder and violence, and to hide them in such a place into which no one can enter, and that is not to be betrayed by any but ourselves. Wives, children, and goods must be had, and especially health, by him that can get it; but we are not so to set our hearts upon them that our happiness must have its dependence upon them; we must reserve a backshop, wholly our own and entirely free, wherein to settle our true liberty, our principal solitude and retreat. And in this we must for the most part entertain ourselves with ourselves, and so privately that no exotic knowledge or communication be admitted there; there to laugh and to talk, as if without wife, children, goods, train, or attendance, to the end, that when it shall so fall out that we must lose any or all of these, it may be no new thing to be without them. We have a mind pliable in itself, that will be company; that has herewithal to attack and to defend, to receive and to give: let us not then fear in this solitude to languish under an uncomfortable vacuity.

"In solis sis tibi turba locis." †

Virtue is satisfied with herself, without discipline, without words, without effects. In our ordinary actions there is not one of a thousand that concerns ourselves. He that thou seest scrambling up the ruins of that wall, furious and transported, against whom so many harquebus-shots are leveled; and that other all over scars, pale, and fainting with hunger, and yet resolved rather to die than to open the gates to him; dost thou think that these men are there upon their own account? No; peradventure in the behalf of one whom they never saw and who never concerns himself for their pains and danger, but lies wallowing the while in sloth and pleasure; this other slavering, bleareyed, slovenly fellow, that thou seest come out of his study after midnight, dost thou think he has been tumbling over books, to learn how to become a better man, wiser, and more content? No such matter; he will there end his

* St. Augustin, De Civit. Dei, i. 10.

† "In solitude, be company for thyself."—TIBULLUS, vi. 13, 12.

days, but he will teach posterity the measure of Plautus verses and the true orthography of a Latin word. Who is it that does not voluntarily exchange his health, his repose, and his very life for reputation and glory, the most useless, frivolous, and false coin that passes current among us. Our own death does not sufficiently terrify and trouble us; let us, moreover, charge ourselves with those of our wives, children, and family: our own affairs do not afford us anxiety enough; let us undertake those of our neighbors and friends, still more to break our brains and torment us.

> "Vah! quemquamne hominem in animum instituere, aut
> Parare, quod sit carius, quam ipse est sibi?" *

Solitude seems to me to wear the best favor, in such as have already employed their most active and flourishing age in the world's service; after the example of Thales. We have lived enough for others, let us at least live out the small remnant of life for ourselves; let us now call in our thoughts and intentions to ourselves, and to our own ease and repose. 'Tis no light thing to make a sure retreat; it will be enough for us to do without mixing other enterprises. Since God gives us leisure to order our removal, let us make ready, truss our baggage, take leave betimes of the company, and disentangle ourselves from those violent importunities that engage us elsewhere and separate us from ourselves.

We must break the knot of our obligations, how strong soever, and hereafter love this or that, but espouse nothing, but ourselves: that is to say, let the remainder be our own, but not so joined and so close as not to be forced away without flaying us or tearing out part of our whole. The greatest thing in the world is for a man to know that he is his own. 'Tis time to wean ourselves from society, when we can no longer add anything to it; he who is not in a condition to lend must forbid himself to borrow. Our forces begin to fail us: let us call them in and concentrate them in and for ourselves. He that can cast off within himself and resolve the offices of friendship and company, let him do it. In this decay of nature which renders him useless, burdensome and importunate to others, let him

* "Ah, can any man discover or devise anything dearer than he is to himself?"—TERENCE, *Adel.*, i. 1, 13.

take care not to be useless, burdensome and importunate to himself. Let him soothe and caress himself, and above all things be sure to govern himself with reverence to his reason and conscience to that degree as to be ashamed to make a false step in their presence. "*Rarum est enim, ut satis se quisque vereatur.*" * Socrates † says, that boys are to cause themselves to be instructed, men to exercise themselves in well-doing, and old men to retire from all civil and military employments, living at their own discretion, without the obligation to any office. There are some complexions more proper for these precepts of retirement than others. Such as are of a soft and dull apprehension, and of a tender will and affection not readily to be subdued or employed, whereof I am one, both by natural condition and by reflection, will sooner incline to this advice, than active and busy souls, which embrace all, engage in all, are hot upon everything, which offer, present, and give themselves up to every occasion. We are to use these accidental and extraneous commodities, so far as they are pleasant to us, but by no means to lay our principal foundation there; 'tis no true one: neither nature nor reason allows it so to be. Why therefore should we, contrary to their laws, enslave our own contentment to the power of another? To anticipate also the accidents of fortune, to deprive ourselves of the conveniences we have in our own power, as several have done upon the account of devotion, and some philosophers by reasoning; to be one's own servant, to lie hard, to put out our own eyes, to throw our wealth into the river, to seek out grief; these, by the misery of this life, aiming at bliss in another; those, by laying themselves low to avoid the danger of falling: all such are acts of an excessive virtue. The stoutest and most resolute natures render even their hiding away glorious and exemplary:

> "Tuta et parvula laudo,
> Quum res deficiunt, satis inter vilia fortis:
> Verum; ubi quid melius contingit et unctius, idem
> Hos sapere, et solos aio bene vivere, quorum
> Conspicitur nitidis fundata pecunia villis." ‡

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* "For 'tis rarely seen that men have respect and reverence enough for themselves."—QUINTILIAN, x. 7.

† Stobæus, Serm. xli.

‡ "When I run short, I laud a humble and safe condition, content

A great deal less would serve my turn well enough. 'Tis enough for me, under fortune's favor, to prepare myself for her disgrace, and, being at my ease, to represent to myself, as far as my imagination can stretch, the ill to come; as we do at jousts and tiltings, where we counterfeit war in the greatest calm of peace. I do not think Arcesilaus the philosopher the less temperate and virtuous, for knowing that he made use of gold and silver vessels, when the condition of his fortune allowed him so to do; * I have indeed a better opinion of him, than if he had denied himself what he used with liberality and moderation. I see the utmost limits of natural necessity: and considering a poor man begging at my door, ofttimes more jocund and more healthy than I myself am, I put myself into his place, and attempt to dress my mind after his mode; and running, in like manner, over other examples, though I fancy death, poverty, contempt, and sickness treading on my heels, I easily resolve not to be affrighted, forasmuch as a less than I takes them with so much patience; and am not willing to believe that a less understanding can do more than a greater, or that the effects of precept cannot arrive to as great a height as those of custom. And knowing of how uncertain duration these accidental conveniences are, I never forget, in the height of all my enjoyments, to make it my chiefest prayer to Almighty God, that he will please to render me content with myself and the condition wherein I am. I see young men very gay and frolic, who nevertheless keep a mass of pills in their trunk at home, to take when they've got a cold, which they fear so much the less, because they think they have remedy at hand. Every one should do in like manner, and, moreover, if they find themselves subject to some more violent disease, should furnish themselves with such medicines as may numb and stupefy the part.

The employment a man should choose for such a life, ought neither to be a laborious nor an unpleasing one; otherwise 'tis to no purpose at all to be retired. And this depends upon every one's liking and humor. Mine has no

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with little: when things turn round, then I change my note, and say that none are wise or know how to live, but those who have plenty of money to lay out in shining villas."—HORACE, *Ep.*. i. 15, 42.

* Diogenes Laertius, iv. 38.

manner of complacency for husbandry and such as love it ought to apply themselves to it with moderation.

"Conentur sibi res, non se submittere rebus." *

Husbandry is otherwise a very servile employment, as Sallust calls it;† though some parts of it are more excusable than the rest, as the care of gardens, which Xenophon attributes to Cyrus; ‡ and a mean may be found out between the sordid and low application, so full of perpetual solicitude, which is seen in men who make it their entire business and study, and the stupid and extreme negligence, letting all things go at random, which we see in others:

"Democriti pecus edit agellos
Cultaque, dum peregre est animus sine corpore velox." §

But let us hear what advice the younger Pliny ‖ gives his friend Caninius Rufus upon the subject of solitude: "I advise thee, in the full and plentiful retirement wherein thou art, to leave to thy hinds the care of thy husbandry, and to addict thyself to the study of letters, to extract from thence something that may be entirely and absolutely thine own." By which he means reputation; like Cicero, who says, that he would employ his solitude and retirement from public affairs, to acquire by his writings an immortal life.¶

"Usque adeone
Scire tuum, nihil est, nisi te scire hoc, sciat alter?" **

It appears to be reason, when a man talks of retiring from the world, that he should look quite out of himself. These do it but by halves: they design well enough for themselves when they shall be no more in it; but still they pretend to

* "Endeavor to make circumstances subject to me, and not me subject to circumstances."—HORACE, *Ep.*, i. 1. 19, whose text, however, is, "Et mihi res, non me rebus, subjungere conor."

† Catiline, c. 4.

‡ Economics, iv. 20.

§ "Democritus' cattle eat his corn and spoil his fields, while his mind ranges abroad without the body."—HORACE, *Ep.*, i. 12.

‖ Ep., i. 3.

¶ Cicero, Orator., c. 43.

** "Is all thy learning nothing, unless another knows that thou knowest?"—PERSIUS, *Sat.*, i. 23.

extract the fruits of that design from the world, when absent from it, by a ridiculous contradiction.

The imagination of those who seek solitude upon the account of devotion, filling their hopes and courage with certainty of divine promises in the other life, is much more rationally founded. They propose to themselves God, an infinite object in goodness and power; the soul has there wherewithal, at full liberty, to satiate her desires: afflictions and sufferings turn to their advantage, being undergone for the acquisition of eternal health and joy; death is to be wished and longed for, where it is the passage to so perfect a condition; the asperity of the rules they impose upon themselves is immediately softened by custom, and all their carnal appetites baffled and subdued, by refusing to humor and feed them, these being only supported by use and exercise. This sole end therefore of another happy and immortal life is that, which really merits that we should abandon the pleasures and conveniences of this; and he who can really and constantly inflame his soul with the ardor of this vivid faith and hope, erects for himself in solitude a more voluptuous and delicious life than any other sort of living whatever.

Neither the end then nor the means of this advice,* pleases me, for we often fall out of the frying-pan into the fire. This † book employment is as painful as any other, and as great an enemy to health, which ought to be the first thing considered; neither ought a man to be allured with the pleasure of it, which is the same that destroys the frugal, the avaricious, the voluptuous, and the ambitious man. The sages give us caution enough to beware the treachery of our desires, and to distinguish true and entire pleasures from such as are mixed and complicated with greater pain. For the most of our pleasures, say they, wheedle and caress only to strangle us, like those thieves the Egyptians called Philistæ; if the headache should come before drunkenness, we should have a care of drinking too much: but pleasure, to deceive us, marches before and con-

* Of Pliny to Rufus.

† "This plodding occupation of bookes is as painfull as any other, and as great an enemie vnto health, which ought principally to be considered. And a man should not suffer himselfe to be inveagled by the pleasure he takes in them."—FLORIO, edit. 1613, p. 122.

ceals her train. Books are pleasant, but if, by being over-studious, we impair our health and spoil our good-humor, the best pieces we have, let us give it over; I, for my part, am one of those who think, that no fruit derived from them can recompense so great a loss. As men who have long felt themselves weakened by indisposition, give themselves up at last to the mercy of medicine and submit to certain rules of living, which they are for the future never to transgress; so he who retires, weary of, and disgusted with the common way of living, ought to model this new one he enters into by the rules of reason, and to institute and establish it by premeditation and reflection. He ought to have taken leave of all sorts of labor, what advantage soever it may promise, and generally to have shaken off all those passions which disturb the tranquillity of body and soul, and then choose the way that best suits with his own humor:

"Unusquisque sua noverit ire via."*

In husbandry, study, hunting, and all other exercises, men are to proceed to the utmost limits of pleasure, but must take heed of engaging further, where trouble begins to mix with it. We are to reserve so much employment only as is necessary to keep us in breath and defend us from the inconveniences that the other extreme of a dull and stupid laziness brings along with it. There are sterile knotty sciences, chiefly hammered out for the crowd; let such be left to them who are engaged in the world's service. I for my part care for no other books, but either such as are pleasant and easy, to amuse me, or those that comfort and instruct me how to regulate my life and death:

"Tactium sylvas inter reptare salubres,
Curantem, quidquid dignum sapienti bonoque est."†

Wiser men, having great force and vigor of soul, may propose to themselves a rest wholly spiritual: but for me, who have a very ordinary soul, it is very necessary to support myself with bodily conveniences; and age having of

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* Propertius, lib. ii. 25, 38. Montaigne translates the passage in the preceding paragraph.

† "Silently meditating in the healthy groves, what best becomes a wise and honest man."—HORACE, *Ep.*, i. 4.

late deprived me of those pleasures that were more acceptable to me, I instruct and whet my appetite to those that remain, but more suitable to this other season. We ought to hold with all our force, both of hands and teeth, the use of the pleasures of life that our years, one after another, snatch away from us.

> "Carpamus dulcia; nostrum est,
> Quod vivis; cinis, et manes, et fabula fies." *

Now, as to the end that Pliny and Cicero propose to us, of glory; 'tis infinitely wide of my account. Ambition is of all others the most contrary humor to solitude; glory and repose are things that cannot possibly inhabit in one and the same place. For so much as I understand, these have only their arms and legs disengaged from the crowd; their soul and intention remain engaged behind more than ever:

> "Tun', vetule, auriculis alienis colligis escas?" †

they have only retired to take a better leap, and by a stronger motion to give a brisker charge into the crowd. Will you see how they shoot short? Let us put into the counterpoise the advice of two philosophers, ‡ of two very different sects, writing, the one to Idomeneus, the other to Lucilius, their friends, to retire into solitude from worldly honors and affairs. "You have," say they, "hitherto lived swimming and floating; come now, and die in the harbor; you have given the first part of your life to the light, give what remains to the shade. It is impossible to give over business, if you do not also quit the fruit; therefore disengage yourselves from all concern of name and glory; 'tis to be feared the luster of your former actions will give you but too much light, and follow you into your most private retreat. Quit with other pleasures that which proceeds from the approbation of another man: and as to

* "Let us pluck life's sweets, 'tis for them we live: by and by we shall be ashes, a ghost, a mere subject of talk."—PERSIUS, *Sat.*, v. 151.

† "Dost thou, old man, collect food for others' ears?"—PERSIUS, *Sat.*, i. 22.

‡ Epicurus and Seneca. See Seneca, Ep., 21, who cites a passage from the Letter of Epicurus to Idomeneus, differing from that given by Diogenes Laertius.

your knowledge and parts, never concern yourselves; they will not lose their effect if yourselves be the better for them. Remember him, who being asked why he took so much pains in an art that could come to the knowledge of but few persons? 'A few are enough for me,' replied he; 'I have enough with one, I have enough with never an one.'* He said true; you and a companion are theatre enough to one another, or you to yourself. Let the people be to you one, and be you one to the whole people.† 'Tis an unworty ambition to think to derive glory from a man's sloth and privacy: you are to do like the beasts of chase, who efface the track at the entrance into their den.‡ You are no more to concern yourself how the world talks of you, but how you are to talk to yourself. Retire yourself into yourself, but first prepare yourself there to receive yourself: it were a folly to trust yourself in your own hands, if you cannot govern yourself.§ A man may miscarry alone as well as in company. Till you have rendered yourself one before whom you dare not trip, and till you have a bashfulness and respect for yourself, '*Obversentur species honestæ animo;*'‖ present continually to your imagination Cato, Phocion and Aristides, in whose presence the fools themselves will hide their faults, and make them controllers of all your intentions; should these deviate from virtue, your respect to those will set you right; they will keep you in the way to be contented with yourself; to borrow nothing of any other but yourself; to stay and fix your soul in certain and limited thoughts, wherein she may please herself, and having understood the true and real goods, which men the more enjoy the more they understand, to rest satisfied, without desire of prolongation of life or name." This is the precept of the true and natural philosophy, not of a boasting and prating philosophy, such as that of the two former.¶

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* Seneca, Ep., 7.

† Idem, Ep., 7, ascribes these words to Democritus.

‡ Idem, Ep., 68.

§ Idem, Ep., 25.

‖ "Let just and honest things be ever present to the mind."—CICERO, *Tusc. Quæs.*, ii. 22.

¶ Pliny the younger and Cicero.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

A CONSIDERATION UPON CICERO.

ONE word more by way of comparison between these two. There are to be gathered out of the writings of Cicero and the younger Pliny (but little, in my opinion, resembling his uncle in his humors) infinite testimonies of a beyond measure ambitious nature; and among others, this for one, that they both, in the sight of all the world, solicit the historians of their time not to forget them in their memoirs; and fortune, as if in spite, has made the vanity of those requests live upon record down to this age of ours, while she has long since consigned the histories themselves to oblivion. But this exceeds all meanness of spirit in persons of such a quality as they were, to think to derive any great renown from babbling and prating, even to the publishing of their private letters to their friends, and so withal, that though some of them were never sent, the opportunity being lost, they nevertheless presented them to the light, with this worthy excuse that they were unwilling to lose their labors and lucubrations. Was it not very well becoming two consuls of Rome, sovereign magistrates of the republic that commanded the world, to spend their leisure in contriving quaint and elegant missives, thence to gain the reputation of being versed in their own mother tongues.* What could a pitiful schoolmaster have done worse, whose trade it was thereby to get a living? If the acts of Xenophon and Cæsar had not far transcended their eloquence, I scarce believe they would ever have taken the pains to have written them; they made it their business to recommend not their speak-

* "Cicero writing to Lucecius, Ep., 12, lib. v., and Pliny to Tacitus, Ep., 33, lib. vii., with this most remarkable difference, that the first earnestly desired his friend not to attach himself scrupulously to the rules of, but boldly to leap the barriers of truth in his favor. 'Te planè etiam atque etiam rogo, ut et ornes ea vehementius etiam quam fortasse sentis et in ea leges historiæ negligas;' whereas Pliny declares expressly, that he does not desire Tacitus to give the least offense to the truth, 'Quanquam non exigo ut excedas rei actæ modum. Nam nec historia debet egredi veritatem, et honeste factis veritas sufficit.' One would have thought that Montaigne should, in justice to Pliny, have distinguished him from Cicero in this particular."—COSTE.

ing but their doing. And could the perfection of eloquence have added a luster suitable to a great personage, certainly Scipio and Lælius had never resigned the honor of their comedies, with all the luxuriances and elegancies of the Latin tongue, to an African slave; for that the work was theirs, its beauty and excellence sufficiently declare; Terence himself confesses as much, and I should take it ill from any one that would dispossess me of that belief.

'Tis a kind of mockery and offense to extol a man for qualities misbecoming his condition, though otherwise commendable in themselves, but such as ought not, however, to be his chief talent; as if a man should commend a king for being a good painter, a good architect, a good marksman, or a good runner at the ring: commendations that add no honor, unless mentioned altogether and in the train of those that are properly applicable to him, namely, justice and the science of governing and conducting his people both in peace and war. At this rate, agriculture was an honor to Cyrus, and eloquence and the knowledge of letters to Charlemagne. I have in my time known some, who by writing have acquired both their titles and fortune, disown their apprenticeship, corrupt their style, and affect ignorance in so vulgar a quality (which also our nation holds to be rarely seen in very learned hands) and to seek a reputation by better qualities. Demosthenes' companions in the embassy to Philip, extolling that prince as handsome, eloquent, and a stout drinker, Demosthenes, said that those were commendations more proper for a woman, an advocate, or a sponge, than for a king.*

> "Imperet bellante prior, jacentem
> Lenis in hostem," †

'Tis not his profession to know either how to hunt or to dance well;

> "Orabunt causas alii, cœlique meatus
> Describent radio, et fulgentia sidera dicent;
> Hic regere imperio populos sciat." ‡

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* Plutarch, Life of Demosthenes, c. 4.

† "In the fight, overthrow your enemy, but be merciful to him when fallen."—HORACE, *Carm. Sæc.*, v. 51.

‡ "Let others plead at the bar, or describe the spheres, and point out the glittering stars; let this man learn to rule the nation."—ÆNEID, vi. 849.

Plutarch says, moreover, that to appear so excellent in these less necessary qualities is to produce witness against a man's self, that he has spent his time and applied his study ill, which ought to have been employed in the acquisition of more necessary and more useful things. So that Philip, king of Macedon, having heard that great Alexander his son sing once at a feast to the wonder of the best musicians there: "Art not thou ashamed," said he to him, "to sing so well?" † And to the same Philip a musician, with whom he was disputing about some things concerning his art: "Heaven forbid, sir," said he, "that so great a misfortune should ever befall you as to understand these things better than I." A king should be able to answer as Iphicrates did the orator, who pressed upon him in his invective after this manner: "And what art thou that thou bravest it at this rate? art thou a man at arms, art thou an archer, are thou a pikeman?" "I am none of all this; but I know how to command all these." And Antisthenes took it for an argument of little value in Ismenias that he was commended for playing excellently well upon a flute.

I know very well, that when I hear any one dwell upon the language of my essays, I had rather a great deal he would say nothing: 'tis not so much to elevate the style as to depress the sense, and so much the more offensively as they do it obliquely; and yet I am much deceived if many other writers deliver more worth noting as to the matter, and, how well or ill soever, if any other writer has sown things much more material, or at all events more downright, upon his paper than myself. To bring the more in, I only muster up the heads; should I annex the sequel I should trebly multiply the volume. And how many stories have I scattered up and down in this book, that I only touch upon, which should any one more curiously search into, they would find matter enough to produce infinite essays. Neither those stories nor my quotations always serve simply for example, authority, or ornament; I do not only regard them for the use I make of them: they carry sometimes besides what I apply them to, the seed of a more rich and a bolder matter, and sometimes, collaterally, a more delicate sound both to myself who will say no more about it in this place, and to others who shall be of my humor.

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† Plutarch, Life of Pericles, c. 1.

But returning to the speaking virtue; I find no great choice between not knowing to speak anything but ill, and not knowing to speak anything but well. "*Non est ornamentum virile concimitas.*" * The sages tell us that as to what concerns knowledge, 'tis nothing but philosophy; and as to what concerns effects, 'tis nothing but virtue, which is generally proper to all degrees and to all orders.

There is something like this in these two other philosophers,† for they also promise eternity to the letters they write to their friends; but 'tis after another manner, and by accommodating themselves, for a good end, to the vanity of another; for they write to them that if the concern of making themselves known to future ages, and the thirst of glory, do yet detain them in the management of public affairs, and make them fear the solitude and retirement to which they would persuade them, let them never trouble themselves more about it, forasmuch as they shall have credit enough with posterity to insure them that were there nothing else but the letters thus written to them, those letters will render their names as known and famous, as their own public actions could do.‡ And besides this difference, these are not idle and empty letters, that contain nothing but a fine jingle of well-chosen words and delicate couched phrases, but, rather, replete and abounding with grand discourses of reason, by which a man may render himself not more eloquent, but more wise, and that instruct us not to speak, but to do well. Away with that eloquence that enchants us with itself, and not with actual things! unless you will allow that of Cicero to be of so supreme a perfection, as to form a complete body of itself.

And of him I shall further add one story we read of him to this purpose, wherein his nature will much more manifestly be laid open to us. He was to make an oration in public, and found himself a little straitened in time to make himself ready at his ease; when Eros, one of his slaves, brought him word that the audience was deferred till the next day, at which he was so ravished with joy that he enfranchised him for the good news.§

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* "Symmetrical neatness of style is no manly ornament."—SENECA, *Ep.*, 115.

† Epicurus and Seneca.

‡ Seneca, Ep., 21.

§ Plutarch, Apothegms, art. Cicero

Upon this subject of letters, I will add this more to what has been already said, that it is a kind of writing wherein my friends think I can do something; and I am willing to confess I should rather have chosen to publish my whimsies that way than any other, had I had to whom to write; but I wanted such a settled intercourse, as I once had, to attract me to it, to raise my fancy, and to support me. For to traffic with the wind, as some others have done, and to forge vain names to direct my letters to, in a serious subject, I could never do it but in a dream, being a sworn enemy to all manner of falsification. I should have been more diligent and more confident had I had a judicious and indulgent friend whom to address, than thus to expose myself to the various judgments of a whole people, and I am deceived if I had not succeeded better. I have naturally a humorous and familiar style, but it is a style of my own, not proper for public business, but like the language I speak, too compact, irregular, abrupt, and singular; and as to letters of ceremony that have no other substance than a fine contexture of courteous words, I am wholly to seek. I have neither faculty nor relish for those tedious offers of service and affection; I believe little in them from others, and I should not forgive myself should I say to others more than I myself believe. 'Tis doubtless, very remote from the present practice; for there never was so abject and servile prostitution of tenders: life, soul, devotion, adoration, vassal, slave, and I cannot tell what, as now; all which expressions are so commonly and so indifferently posted to and fro by every one and to every one, that when they would profess a greater and more respectful inclination upon more just occasions, they have not wherewithal to express it. I mortally hate all air of flattery, which is the cause that I naturally fall into a shy, rough, and crude way of speaking, that, to such as do not know me, may seem a little to relish of disdain. I honor those most to whom I show the least honor, and where my soul moves with the greatest cheerfulness, I easily forgot the ceremonies of look and gesture, and offer myself faintly and bluntly to them to whom I am the most devoted: methinks they should read it in my heart, and that the expression of my words does but injure the love I have conceived within. To welcome, take leave, give thanks, accost, offer my service, and such verbal formali-

ties, as the ceremonious laws of our modern civility enjoin, I know no man so stupidly unprovided of language as myself; and I have never been employed in writing letters of favor and recommendation, that he, in whose behalf it was written, did not think my mediation cold and imperfect. The Italians are great printers of letters, I do believe I have at least an hundred several volumes of them; of all which those of Annibal Caro seem to me to be the best. If all the paper I have scribbled to the ladies at the time when my hand was really prompted by my passion, were now in being, there might, peradventure, be found a page worthy to be communicated to our young inamoratos, that are besotted with that fury. I always write my letters post-haste—so precipitately, that though I write intolerably ill, I rather choose to do it myself, than to employ another; for I can find none able to follow me: and I never transcribe any. I have accustomed the great ones who know me to endure my blots and dashes, and upon paper without fold or margin. Those that cost me the most pains, are the worst; when I once begin to draw it in by head and shoulders, 'tis a sign that I am not there. I fall to without without premeditation or design; the first word begets the second, and so to the end of the chapter. The letters of this age consist more in fine edges and prefaces than in matter. Just as I had rather write two letters than close and fold up one, and always assign that employment to some other, so, when the real businesss of my letter is despatched, I would with all my heart transfer it to another hand to add those long harangues, offers, and prayers, that we place at the bottom, and should be glad that some new custom would discharge us of that trouble; as also of superscribing them with a long ribble-row of qualities and titles, which for fear of mistakes, I have often not written at all, and especially to men of the long robe and finance; there are so many new offices, such an infinite dispensation and ordering of titles of honor, that 'tis hard to set them forth aright: yet being so dearly bought, they are neither to be mistaken nor omitted without offense. I find the same fault likewise with loading the fronts and title-pages of the books we commit to the press with such a cluster of titles.

CHAPTER XL.

THAT THE RELISH OF GOOD AND EVIL DEPENDS IN A GREAT MEASURE UPON THE OPINION WE HAVE OF THEM.

MEN (says an ancient Greek sentence)* are tormented with the opinions they have of things and not by the things themselves. It were a great victory obtained for the relief of our miserable human condition, could this proposition be established for certain and true throughout. For if evils have no admission into us but by the judgment we ourselves make of them, it should seem that it is, then, in our own power to despise them or to turn them to good. If things surrender themselves to our mercy, why do we not convert and accommodate them to our advantage? If what we call evil and torment is neither evil nor torment of itself, but only that our fancy gives it that quality, it is in us to change it, and, it being in our own choice, if there be no constraint upon us we must certainly be very strange fools to take arms for that side which is most offensive to us, and to give sickness, want, and contempt a bitter and nauseous taste, if it be in our power to give them a pleasant relish, and if, fortune simply providing the matter, 'tis for us to give it the form. Now, that what we call evil is not so of itself, or at least to that degree that we make it, and that it depends upon us to give it another taste and complexion (for all comes to one), let us examine how that can be maintained.

If the original being of those things we fear had power to lodge itself in us by its own authority, it would then lodge itself alike, and in like manner, in all; for men are all of the same kind, and saving in greater and less proportions, are all provided with the same utensils and instruments to conceive and to judge: but the diversity of opinions we have of those things clearly evidences that they only enter us by composition; one person, peradventure, admits them in their true being, but a thousand others give them a new and contrary being in them. We hold death, poverty, and pain for our principal enemies; now, this death, which some repute the most dreadful of all dreadful things, who does not know that others call it

* Manual of Epictetus, c. 10.

the only secure harbor from the storms and tempests of life, the sovereign good of nature: the sole support of liberty, and the common and prompt remedy of all evils? And as the one expect it with fear and trembling, the others support it with greater ease than life. This blade complaints of its facility:

> "Mors! utinam pavidos vitæ subducere nolles.
> Sed virtus te sola daret!" *

But let us leave these boastful courages. Theodorus answered Lysimachus, who threatened to kill him, "Thou wilt do a brave feat," said he, "to arrive at the force of a cantharides." † The majority of philosophers are observed to have either purposely anticipated, or hastened and assisted, their own death. How many ordinary people do we see led to execution, and that not to a simple death, but mixed with shame and sometimes with grievous torments, appear with such assurance, whether though firm courage or natural simplicity, that a man can discover no change from their ordinary condition; settling their domestic affairs, commending themselves to their friends, singing, preaching, and addressing the people, nay, sometimes sallying into jests, and drinking to their companions, quite as well as Socrates?

One that they were leading to the gallows told them they must not take him through such a street, lest a merchant who lived there should arrest him by the way for an old debt. Another told the hangman he must not touch his neck for fear of making him laugh, he was so ticklish. Another answered his confessor, who promised him he should that day sup with our Lord, "Do you go then," said he, "in my room; for I for my part keep fast to-day." Another having called for drink, and the hangman having drunk first, said he would not drink after him, for fear of catching some evil disease. Everybody has heard the tale of the Picard, to whom being upon the ladder they presented a common wench, telling him (as our law does sometimes permit) that if he would marry her they would save his life; he, having awhile considered her and per-

* "O death! I would have thee spare the coward, and that valor alone should merit thee."—LUCAN, iv. 580.

† Cicero, Tusc. Quæs., v. 40.

ceiving that she halted: "Come, tie up, tie up," said he, "she limps." And they tell another story of the same kind, of a fellow in Denmark, who being condemned to lose his head, and the like condition being proposed to him upon the scaffold, refused it, by reason the girl they offered him had hollow cheeks and too sharp a nose. A servant at Toulouse being accused of heresy, for the sum of his belief referred himself to that of his master, a young student, prisoner with him, choosing rather to die than suffer himself to be persuaded that his master could err. We read that of the inhabitants of Arras, when Louis XI. took that city, a great many let themselves be hanged, rather than they would say, God save the king. And among that mean-souled race of men, the buffoons, there have been some, who would not leave their fooling at the very moment of death. One that the hangman was turning off the ladder cried: "Launch the galley," an ordinary saying of his. Another, whom at the point of death his friends had laid upon a bed of straw before the fire, the physician asking him where his pain lay: "Between the bench and the fire," said he, and the priest, to give him extreme unction, groping for his feet which his pain had made him pull up to him; "You will find them," said he, "at the end of my legs." To one who being present exhorted him to reccomend himself to God: "Why, who goes thither?" said he; and the other replying: "It will presently be yourself, if it be His good pleasure." "Shall I be sure to be there by to-morrow night?" said he. "Do but recommend yourself to Him," said the other, "and you will soon be there." "It were best then," said he, "to carry my recommendations myself."

In the kingdom of Narsinga to this day, the wives of their priests are buried alive with the bodies of their husbands; all other wives are burned at their husband's funerals, which they not only firmly but cheerfully undergo. At the death of their king, his wives, and concubines, his favorites, all his officers, and domestic servants, who make up a whole people present themselves so gayly to the fire, where his body is burned, that they seem to take it for a singular honor to accompany their master in death. During our late war of Milan, where there happened so many takings and retakings of towns, the people, impatient of so many changes of fortune, took such a resolution to die, that I have heard my

father say, he there saw a list taken of five-and-twenty masters of families who made themselves away in one week's time: an incident somewhat resembling that of the Xanthians who, being besieged by Brutus, precipitated themselves—men, women, and children—into such a furious appetite of dying, that nothing can be done to evade death which they did not to avoid life; insomuch that Brutus had much difficulty in saving very few.*

Every opinion is of force enough to cause itself to be espoused at the expense of life. The first article of that valiant oath that Greece took and observed in the Median war, was that every one should sooner exchange life for death, than their own laws for those of Persia. What a world of people do we see in the wars between the Turks and the Greeks, rather embrace a cruel death than uncircumcise themselves to admit of baptism? An example of which no sort of religion is incapable.

The kings of Castile having banished the Jews out of their dominions, John, king of Portugal, in consideration of eight crowns a head, sold them a retreat into his for a certain limited time; upon condition that the time fixed coming to expire they should be gone, and he to furnish them with shipping to transport them into Africa. The limited day came, which once lapsed they were given to understand that such as were afterward found in the kingdom should remain slaves; vessels were very slenderly provided; and those who embarked in them were rudely and villianously used by the seamen, who besides other indignities, kept them cruising upon the sea, one while forward and another backward, till they had spent all their provisions and were constrained to buy of them at so dear a rate and so long withal, that they set them not on shore till they were all stripped to the very shirts. The news of this inhuman usage being brought to those who remained behind, the greater part of them resolved upon slavery, and some made a show of changing religion. Emanuel, the successor of John, being come to the crown, first set them at liberty, and afterward altering his mind, ordered them to depart his country, assigning three ports for their passage. He hoped, says Bishop Osorious, no contemptible Latin historian of these later times, that the favor of the

* "Only fifty were saved."—PLUTARCH, *Life of Brutus*, c. 8.

liberty he had given them having failed of converting them to Christianity, yet the difficulty of committing themselves to the mercy of the mariners and of abandoning a country they were now habituated to and were grown very rich in, to go and expose themselves in strange and unknown regions, would certainly do it. But finding himself deceived in his expectation, and that they were all resolved upon the voyage, he cut off two of the three ports he had promised them, to the end that the length and incommodity of the passage might reduce some; or that he might have opportunity, by crowding them all into one place, the more conveniently to execute what he had designed, which was to force all the children under fourteen years of age from the arms of their fathers and mothers, to transport them from their sight and conversation, into a place where they might be instructed and brought up in our religion. He says that this produced a most horrid spectacle: the natural affection between the parents and their children, and moreover their zeal to their ancient belief, contending against this violent decree, fathers and mothers were commonly seen making themselves away, and by a yet much more rigorous example, precipitating out of love and compassion their young children into wells and pits, to avoid the severity of this law. As to the remainder of them, the time that had been prefixed being expired, for want of means to transport them they again returned into slavery. Some also turned Christians, upon whose faith, as also that of their posterity, even to this day, which is a hundred years since, few Portuguese can yet rely; though custom and length of time are much more powerful counselors in such changes than all other constraints whatever. In the town of Castelnaudari, fifty heretic Albigeois at one time suffered themselves to be burned alive in one fire rather than they would renounce their opinions. "*Quoties non modo ductores nostri,*" says Cicero,* "*sed universi etiam exercitus, ad non dubiam mortem concurrerunt?*" I have seen an intimate friend of mine run headlong upon death with a real affection, and that was rooted in his heart by divers plausible arguments which he would never permit me to dispossess him of, and upon the first honorable occasion that offered itself to him, precipitate himself into it, without any manner or visible

* "How often have, not only our leaders, but whole armies, run to a certain and manifest death."—*Tusc. Quæs.*, i. 37.

reason, with an obstinate and ardent desire of dying. We have several examples in our own times of persons, even young children, who for fear of some little inconvenience have despatched themselves. And what shall we not fear, says one of the ancients * to this purpose, if we dread that which cowardice itself has chosen for its refuge?

Should I here produce a long catalogue of those of all sexes and conditions and sects, even in the most happy ages, who have either with great constancy looked death in the face, or voluntarily sought it, and sought it not only to avoid the evils of this life, but some purely to avoid the satiety of living, and others for the hope of a better condition elsewhere, I should never have done. Nay, the number is so infinite that in truth I should have a better bargain on't to reckon up those who have feared it. This one therefore shall serve for all: Pyrrho, the philosopher, being one day in a boat in a very great tempest, showed to those he saw the most affrighted about him, and encouraged them by the example of a hog, that was there, nothing at all concerned at the storm. † Shall we then dare to say that this advantage of reason, of which we so much boast and upon the account of which we think ourselves masters and emperors over the rest of all creation, was given us for a torment? To what end serves the knowledge of things if it renders us more unmanly? If we thereby lose the tranquillity and repose we should enjoy without it? and if it put us into a worse condition than Pyrrho's hog? Shall we employ the understanding that was conferred upon us for our greatest good to our own ruin; setting ourselves against the design of nature and the universal order of things, which intend that every one should make use of the faculties, members, and means he has to his own best advantage?

But it may, peradventure, be objected against me: your rule is true enough as to what concerns death; but what will you say of indigence? What will you, moreover, say of pain, which Aristippus, Hieronimus, and most of the sages have reputed the worst of evils; and those who have denied it by word of mouth, have, however, confessed it in effect? Posidonius being extremely tormented with a sharp and painful disease, Pompeius came to visit him,

poverty

* Seneca, Ep., 70. † Diogenes Laertius, ix. 68.

excusing himself that he had taken so unseasonable a time to come to hear him discourse of philosophy; "The gods forbid," said Posidonius to him, "that pain should ever have the power to hinder me from talking," and thereupon fell immediately upon a discourse of the contempt of pain: * but, in the meantime, his own infirmity was playing its part and plagued him to purpose; to which he cried out, "Thou mayest work thy will, pain, and torment me with all the power thou hast, but thou shalt never make me say that thou art an evil." This story that they make such a clutter withal, what has it to do, I fain would know, with the contempt of pain? He only fights it with words, and in the meantime, if the shootings and dolors he felt did not move him, why did he interrupt his discourse? Why did he fancy he did so great a thing in forbearing to confess it an evil? All does not here consist in the imagination; our fancies may work upon other things: but here is the certain science that is playing its part, of which our senses themselves are judges:

"Qui nisi sunt veri, ratio quoque falsa sit omnis." †

Shall we persuade our skins that the jerks of a whip agreeably tickle us, or our taste that a potion of aloes is *vin de Graves?* Pyrrho's hog is here in the same predicament with us; he is not afraid of death, 'tis true, but if you beat him he will cry out to some purpose. Shall we force the general law of nature, which in every living creature under heaven is seen to tremble under pain? The very trees seem to groan under the blows they receive. Death is only felt by reason, forasmuch as it is the motion of an instant;

"Aut fuit, aut veniet; nihil est præsentis in illa" ‡
"Morsque minus pœnæ, quam mora mortis, habet;" §

a thousand beasts, a thousand men, are sooner dead than

* Cicero, Tusc. Quæs., ii. 13.

† "Which, if they be not true, reason itself must be wholly false too."—LUCRETIUS, iv. 486.

‡ "Death has been, or will come: there is nothing of the present in it."—ESTIENNE DE LA BOETIE, *Satires.*

§ "The delay of death is more painful than death itself."—OVID, *Ep. Ariadne to Theseus,* v. 42.

threatened. That also which we principally pretend to fear in death is pain, its ordinary forerunner: yet, if we may believe a holy father, "*malam mortem non facit, nisi quod sequitur mortem.*"* And I should yet say, more probably, that neither that which goes before nor that which follows after is at all of the appurtenances of death.

We excuse ourselves falsely: and I find by experience that it is rather the impatience of the imagination of death that makes us impatient of pain, and that we find it doubly grievous as it threatens us with death. But reason accusing our cowardice for fearing a thing so sudden, so inevitable, and so insensible, we take the other as the more excusable pretense. All ills that carry no other danger along with them but simply the evils themselves, we treat as things of no danger: the toothache or the gout, painful as they are, yet being not reputed mortal, who reckons them in the catalogue of diseases?

But let us presuppose that in death we principally regard the pain; as also there is nothing to be feared in poverty, but the miseries it brings along with it, of thirst, hunger, cold, heat, watching, and the other inconveniences it makes us suffer, still we have nothing to do with anything but pain. I will grant, and very willingly, that it is the worst incident of our being (for I am the man upon earth who the most hates and avoids it, considering that hitherto. I thank God, I have had so little traffic with it), but still it is in us, if not to annihilate, at least to lessen it by patience; and though the body and the reason should mutiny, to maintain the soul, nevertheless, in good condition. Were it not so, who had ever given reputation to virtue, valor, force, magnanimity, and resolution? where were their parts to be played, if there were no pain to be defied? "*Avida est periculi virtus.*" † Were there no lying upon the hard ground, no enduring, armed at all points, the meridianal heats, no feeding upon the flesh of horses and asses, no seeing a man's self hacked and hewed to pieces, no suffering a bullet to be pulled out from among the shattered bones, no sewing up, cauterizing and searching the wounds, by what means were the advantage

* "'Tis not death that is the evil, but that which follows it."—ST. AUGUSTIN, *De Civit, Dei*, i. 11.

† "Courage is greedy of danger."—SENECA, *De Providentia*, c. 4.

we covet to have over the vulgar to be acquired? 'Tis far from flying evil and pain, what the sages say, that of actions equally good, a man should most covet to perform that wherein there is greater labor and pain. "*Non est enim hilaritate, nec lascivia, nec risu, aut joco, comite levitatis, sed sæpe etiam tristes firmitate et constantia sunt beati.*"* And for this reason it has ever been impossible to persuade our forefathers but that the victories obtained by dint of force, and the hazard of war, were not more honorable than those performed in great security by stratagem or practice.

"Lætius est, quoties magno sibi constat honestum." †

Besides, this ought to be our comfort, that naturally, if the pain be violent, 'tis but short; and if long, nothing violent, "*si gravis, brevis; si longus, levis.*" ‡ Thou wilt not feel it long, if thou feelest it too much; it will either put an end to itself or to thee; it comes to the same thing; if thou canst not support it it will export thee. "*Memineris maximos morte finiri; parvos multa habere intervalla requietis; mediocrium nos esse dominos: ut si tolerabiles sint, feramus; sin minus, e vita, quum ea non placeat, tanquam e theatro exeamus.*" § That which makes us suffer pain with so much impatience, is the not being accustomed to repose our chiefest contentment in the soul; that we do not enough rely upon her who is the soul and sovereign mistress of our condition. The body, saving in the greater or less proportion, has but one and the same bent and bias: whereas the soul is variable into all sorts of forms, and subjects to herself, and to her own empire, all things whatsoever, both the senses of the body and all

* "For men are not only happy by mirth and wantonness, by laughter and jesting, the companion of levity, but ofttimes the graver sort reap felicity from their firmness and constancy."—CICERO, *De Finib.*, ii. 10.

† "A good deed is all the more a satisfaction by how much the more it has cost us."—LUCAN, ix. 404.

‡ Cicero, De Finib., ii. 29.

§ "Remember that the greatest pains are terminated by death; that slighter pains have long intermissions of repose, and that we are masters of the more moderate sort: so that, if they be tolerable, we bear them; if not, we can go out of life, as from a theater where the entertainment does not please us."—CICERO, *De Finib.*, i 15.

other accidents: and therefore it is that we ought to study her, to inquire into her, and to rouse up all her powerful faculties. There is neither reason, force, nor prescription that can anything prevail against her inclination and choice. Of so many thousands of biasses that she has at her disposal, let us give her one proper to our repose and conservation, and then we shall not only be sheltered and secured from all manner of injury and offense, but moreover gratified and obliged, if she will, with evils and offenses. She makes her profit indifferently of all things; error, dreams, serve her to good use, as loyal matter to lodge us in safety and contentment. 'Tis plain enough to be seen that 'tis the sharpness of our mind that gives the edge to our pains and pleasures: beasts that have no such thing, leave to their bodies their own free and natural sentiments, and consequently in every kind very near the same, as appears by the resembling application of their motions. If we would not disturb in our members the jurisdiction that appertains to them in this, 'tis to be believed it would be the better for us, and that nature has given them a just and moderate temper both to pleasure and pain; neither can it fail of being just, being equal and common. But seeing we have enfranchised ourselves from her rules to give ourselves up to the rambling liberty of our own fancies, let us at least help to incline them to the most agreeable side. Plato* fears our too vehemently engaging ourselves with pain and pleasure, forasmuch as these too much knit and ally the soul to the body: whereas I rather quite contrary, by reason it too much separates and disunites them. As an enemy is made more fierce by our flight, so pain grows proud to see us truckle under her. She will surrender upon much better terms to them who make head against her: a man must oppose and stoutly set himself against her. In retiring and giving ground, we invite and pull upon ourselves the ruin that threatens us. As the body is more firm in an encounter the more stiffly and obstinately it applies itself to it, so is it with the soul.

But let us come to examples, which are the proper commodity for fellows of such feeble force as myself; where we shall find that it is with pain as with stones that receive

* In the Phædo.

a brighter or a more languishing luster, according to the foil they are set in, and that it has no more room in us than we are pleased to allow it: "*tantum doluerunt, quantum doloribus se inseruerunt.*"* We are more sensible of one little touch of a surgeon's lancet than of twenty wounds with a sword in the heat of fight. The pains of child-bearing, said by the physician and by God himself † to be very great, and which our women keep so great a clutter about—there are whole nations that make nothing of them. To say nothing of the Lacedæmonian women, what alteration can you see in our Switzers' wives of the guard, saving, as they trot after their husbands, you see them to-day with the child hanging at their backs, that they carried yesterday in their bellies? The counterfeit gypsies we have among us go themselves to wash theirs so soon as they come into the world, in the first river they meet. Besides so many loose wenches as daily steal their children out in generation, as before they stole them in in conception, that fair and noble wife of Sabinus, a patrician of Rome, for another's interest, alone, without help, without crying out, or so much as a groan, endured the bearing of twins.‡ A poor simple boy of Lacedæmon having stolen a fox (for they more fear the shame of stupidity in stealing than we do the punishment of the knavery), and having got it under his coat, rather endured the tearing out of his bowels than he would discover his theft. § And another offering incense at a sacrifice, suffered himself to be burned to the bone by a coal that fell into his sleeve, rather than disturb the ceremony. And there have been a great number, for a sole trial of virtue, following their institutions, who have at seven years old endured to be whipped to death without changing their countenance. And Cicero has seen them fight in parties, with fists, feet, and teeth, till they have fainted and sunk down, rather than confess themselves overcome. "*Nunquam naturam mos vinceret; est enim ea semper invicta; sed nos, umbris, deliciis, otio, languore, desidia animum infecimus;*

* "They suffered so much the more, by how much the more they gave way to suffering."—ST. AUGUSTIN, *De Civit. Dei*, i. 10.

† Genesis iii. 16.

‡ Plutarch on Love, c. 34.

§ Idem, Life of Lycurgus, c. 14.

opinionibus maloque more delinitum, molivinius." * Every one knows the story of Scævola, that having slipped into the enemy's camp to kill their general, and having missed his blow, to repair his fault, by a more strange invention and to deliver his country, he boldly confessed to Porsenna, who was the king he had a purpose to kill, not only his design, but moreover added that there were then in his camp a great number of Romans, his accomplices in the enterprise, as good men as he; and to show what a one he himself was, having caused a pan of burning coals to be brought, he saw and endured his arm to broil and roast, till the king himself, conceiving horror at the sight, commanded the pan to be taken away.† What would you say of him that would not vouchsafe to respite his reading in a book while he was under incision? ‡ And of the other that persisted to mock and laugh in contempt of the pains inflicted on him; § so that the provoked cruelty of the executioners that had him in handling, and all the inventions of tortures redoubled upon him, one after another, spent in vain, gave him the bucklers? But he was a philospher, But what! a gladiator of Cæsar's endured, laughing all the while, his wounds to be searched, lanced, and laid open: "*Quis mediocris gladiator ingemuit? Quis vultum mutavit unquam? Quis non modo stetit, verum etiam decubuit turbiter? Quis, quum decubuisset, ferrum recipere jussus, collum contraxit?*" ‖ Let us bring in the women too. Who has not heard at Paris of her that caused her face to be flayed only for the fresher complexion of a new skin? There are who have drawn good

* "Custom would never conquer nature, for she is ever invincible, but we have corrupted the mind with shadows, wantonness, negligence, and sloth; vain opinions and corrupt manners have rendered it effeminate and mean."—CICERO, *Tusc. Quæs.*, v. 27.

† Livy, ii. 12.

‡ Seneca, Ep., 78.

§ Ibid. Montaigne probably refers to Anaxarchus, whom Nicocreon, tyrant of Cyprus, had cut to pieces.

‖ "What, even the least notable, gladiator ever so much as uttered a groan? Which of them ever so much as changed countenance? Which of them, standing or even falling, did so ignominiously? Which of them, when he was down, and commanded to receive the stroke of the sword, ever shrunk in his neck?"—CICERO, *Tusc. Quæs.*, ii. 17.

and sound teeth to make their voices more soft and sweet, or to place the other teeth in better order. How many examples of the contempt of pain have we in that sex? What can they not do, what do they fear to do, for never so little hopes of an addition to their beauty?

> "Vellere queis cura est albos a stirpe capillos,
> Et faciem, dempta pelle, referre novam."*

I have seen some of them swallow sand, ashes, and do their utmost to destroy their stomachs, to get pale complexions. To make a fine Spanish body, what racks will they not endure of girding and bracing, till they have notches in their sides cut into the very quick, and sometimes to death?

It is an ordinary thing with several nations at this day to wound themselves in good earnest to gain credit to what they profess; of which our king† relates notable examples of what he has seen in Poland and done toward himself.‡ But besides this, which I know to have been imitated by some in France, when I came from that famous assembly of the Estates at Blois, I had a little before seen a maid in Picardy, who to manifest the ardor of her promises, as also her constancy, give herself, with a bodkin she wore in her hair, four or five good lusty stabs in the arm, till the blood gushed out to some purpose. The Turks give themselves great scars in honor of their mistresses, and to the end they may the longer remain, they presently clap fire to the wound, where they hold it an incredible time to stop the blood and form the cicatrice; people that have been eyewitnesses of it have both written and sworn it to me. But for ten aspers § there are there every day fellows to be found that will give themselves a good deep slash in the arms or thighs. I am willing, however, to have the testimonies nearest to us when we have most need of them; for Christendom furnishes us with enough. After the example of our blessed Guide, there have been many who have

* "Who carefully pluck out their gray hairs by the roots, and renew their faces by peeling off the old skin."—TIBULLUS, i. 8, 45.

† Henry III.

‡ And see De Thou Hist., lib.. lviii.

§ A Turkish coin worth about a penny.

crucified themselves. We learn by testimony very worthy of belief, * that King St. Louis wore a hair-shirt till in his old age his confessor gave him a dispensation to leave it off: and that every Friday he caused his shoulders to be drubbed by his priest with five small chains of iron which were always carried about among his night accouterments for that purpose.

William, our last duke of Guienne, the father of this Eleanor who has transmitted that duchy into the houses of France and England, continually for ten or twelve years before he died wore a suit of armor under a religious habit by way of penance. Fulke, Count of Anjou, went as far as Jerusalem, there to cause himself to be whipped by two of his servants, with a rope about his neck, before the sepulcher of our Lord. But do we not, moreover, every Good Friday, in various places, see great numbers of men and women beat and whip themselves till they lacerate and cut the flesh to the very bones? I have often seen it, and 'tis without any enchantment; and it was said there were some among them (for they go disguised) who for money undertook by this means to save harmless the religion of others, by a contempt of pain, so much the greater, as the incentives of devotion are more effectual than those of avarice. Q. Maximus buried his son when he was a consul, and M. Cato his, when prætor elect, and L. Paulus both his, within a few days one after another, with such a countenance as expressed no manner of grief.† I said once merrily of a certain person, that he had disappointed the divine justice; for the violent death of three grown-up children of his being one day sent him, for a severe scourge, as it is to be supposed, he was so far from being afflicted at the accident, that he rather took it for a particular grace and favor of heaven. I do not follow these monstrous humors, though I lost two or three at nurse, if not without grief, at least without repining, and yet there is hardly any accident that pierces nearer to the quick. I see a great many other occasions of sorrow, that should they happen to me, I should hardly feel; and have despised some, when they have befallen me, to which the world have given so terrible a figure that I should blush to boast of my constancy: "*Ex quo intelligitur, non in*

* Joinville.

† Cicero Tusc. Quæs., iii. 28.

*natura, sed in opinione, esse ægritudinem."** Opinion is a powerful party, bold, and without measure. Whoever so greedily hunted after security and repose as Alexander and Cæsar did after disturbance and difficulties? Teres, the father of Sitalces, † was wont to say that when he had no wars, he fancied there was no difference between him and his groom.‡ Cato, the consul, to secure some cities of Spain from revolt, only interdicting the inhabitants from wearing arms, a great many killed themselves: "*ferox gens, nullam vitam rati sine armis esse.*" § How many do we know who have forsaken the calm and sweetness of a quiet life at home, among their acquaintance, to seek out the horror of uninhabitable deserts; and having precipitated themselves into so abject a condition as to become the scorn and contempt of the world, have hugged themselves with the conceit, even to affectation. Cardinal Borromeo, who died lately ‖ at Milan, amid all the jollity that the air of Italy, his youth, birth, and great riches, invited him to, kept himself in so austere a way of living that the same robe he wore in summer served him for winter too; he had only straw for his bed, and his hours of vacancy from the affairs of his employment he continually spent in study, upon his knees, having a little bread and a glass of water set by his book, which was all the provision of his repast, and all the time he spent in eating.

I know some who consentingly have acquired both profit and advancement from cuckoldom, of which the bare name only affrights so many people.

If the sight be not the most necessary of all our senses, 'tis at least the most pleasant: but the most pleasant and most useful of all our members seem to be those of generation; and yet a great many have conceived a mortal hatred against them only for this, that they were too pleasant, and have deprived themselves of them only for their value: as much thought he of his eyes that put them

* "By which one may understand that grief is not in nature, but in opinion."—CICERO, *Tusc. Quæs.*, iii. 28.

† King of Thrace. ‡ Plutarch Apothegms.

§ "A fierce people, who thought there was no life without war."—LIVY, xxxiv. 17.

‖ In 1584.

out. The generality and more solid sort of men look upon abundance of children as a great blessing; I, and some others, think it as a great benefit to be without them. And when you ask Thales why he does not marry, he tells you, because he has no mind to leave any posterity behind him.*

That our opinion gives the value to things is very manifest in the great number of those which we do, not so much prizing them, as ourselves, and never considering either their virtues of their use, but only how dear they cost us, as though that were a part of their substance; and we only repute for value in them, not what they bring to us, but what we add to them. By which I understand that we are great economizers of our expense: as it weighs, it serves for so much as it weighs. Our opinion will never suffer it to want of its value: the price gives value to the diamond; difficulty to virtue; suffering to devotion; and griping to physic. A certain person,† to be poor, threw his crowns into the same sea to which so many come, in all parts of the world, to fish for riches. Epicurus says ‡ that to be rich is no relief, but only an alteration, of affairs. In truth, it is not want, but rather abundance, that creates avarice. I will deliver my own experience concerning this affair.

I have since my childhood lived in three sorts of conditions. The first, which continued for some twenty years, I passed over without any other means but what were casual and depending upon the allowance and assistance of others, without stint, but without certain revenue. I then spent my money so much the more cheerfully, and with so much the less care how it went, as it wholly depended upon my over-confidence of fortune. I never lived more at my ease; I never had the repulse of finding the purse of any of my friends shut against me, having enjoined myself this necessity above all other necessities whatever, by no means to fail of payment at the appointed time, which also they have a thousand times respited, seeing how careful I was to satisfy them; so that I practiced at once a thrifty, and withal, a kind of alluring honesty.

* Diogenes Laertius, i. 26.

† Aristippus.

‡ Seneca, Ep., 17.

I naturally feel a kind of pleasure in paying, as if I eased my shoulders of a troublesome weight and freed myself from an image of slavery; as also that I find a ravishing kind of satisfaction in pleasing another, and doing a just action. I except payments where the trouble of bargaining and reckoning is required; and in such cases, where I can meet with nobody to ease me of that charge, I delay them, how scandalously and injuriously soever, all I possibly can, for fear of the wranglings for which both my humor and way of speaking are so totally improper and unfit. There is nothing I hate so much as driving a bargain; 'tis a mere traffic of cozenage and impudence: where, after an hour's cheapening and dodging, both parties abandon their word and oath for fivepence profit or abatement. Yet I always borrowed at great disadvantage, for wanting the confidence to speak to the person myself, I committed my request to the persuasion of a letter, which usually is no very successful advocate, and is of very great advantage to him who has a mind to deny. I, in those days, more jocundly and freely referred the conduct of my affairs to the stars, than I have since done to my own providence and judgment. Most good managers look upon it as a horrible thing to live always thus in uncertainty, and do not consider, in the first place that the greatest part of the world live so: how many worthy men have wholly abandoned their own certainties, and yet daily do it, to the winds, to trust to the inconstant favor of princes and of fortune? Cæsar ran above a million of gold, more than he was worth, in debt, to become Cæsar; and how many merchants have begun their traffic by the sale of their farms, which they sent into the Indies,

"Tot per impotentia *freta?*" *

In so great a siccity of devotion as we see in these days, we have a thousand and a thousand colleges, that pass it over commodiously enough, expecting every day their dinner from the liberality of heaven. Secondly, they do not take notice that this certitude upon which they so much rely, is not much less uncertain and hazardous than hazard itself. I see misery as near beyond two thousand crowns

* "Over so many stormy seas."—CATULLUS, iv. 18.

a year as if it stood close by me; for besides that it is in the power of chance to make a hundred breaches to poverty through the greatest strength of our riches—there being very often no mean between the highest and the lowest fortune—

"Fortuna vitrea est: tum, quum splendet, frangitur,"*

and to turn all our barricadoes and bulwarks topsy-turvy, I find that, by divers causes, indigence is as frequently seen to inhabit with those who have estates as with those that have none; and that, peradventure, it is then far less grievous when alone than when accompanied with riches. These flow more from good management than from revenue; "*Faber est suæ quisque fortunæ*;† " and an uneasy, necessitous, busy, rich man seems to me more miserable than he that is simply poor. "*In divitiis inopes, quod genus egestatis gravissimum est.*" ‡ The greatest and most wealthy princes are by poverty and want driven to the most extreme necessity; for can there be any more extreme than to become tyrants and unjust usurpers of their subjects' goods and estates?

My second condition of life was to have money of my own; wherein I so ordered the matter that I had soon laid up a very notable sum out of a mean fortune; considering with myself that that only was to be reputed having which a man reserves from his ordinary expense, and that a man cannot absolutely rely upon revenue he hopes to receive, how clear soever the hope may be. For what, said I, if I should be surprised by such or such an accident? And after such like vain and vicious imaginations, would very learnedly, by this hoarding of money, provide against all inconveniences; and could, moreover, answer such as objected to me that the number of these was too infinite, that if I could not lay up for all, I could, however, do it at least for some and for many. Yet was not this done without a great deal of solicitude and anxiety of mind; I

* "Fortune is glass: in its greatest brightest it breaks."—*Ex.* MIM., *Publius Syrus.*

† "Every one is the maker of his own fortune."—SALLUS, *De Repub. Ord.*, i. 1.

‡ "Poor in the midst of riches, which is the worst of poverties.' —SENECA, *Ep.*, 74.

kept it very close, and though I dare talk so boldly of myself, never spoke of my money, but falsely, as others do, who being rich, pretend to be poor, and being poor, pretend to be rich, dispensing their consciences from ever telling sincerely what they have: a ridiculous and shameful prudence. Was I going a journey? methought I was never enough provided: and the more I loaded myself with money, the more also was I loaded with fear, one while of the danger of the roads, another of the fidelity of him who had the charge of my baggage, of whom, as some others that I know, I was never sufficiently secure if I had him not always in my eye. If I chanced to leave my cash-box behind me, oh, what strange suspicions and anxiety of mind did I enter into, and, which was worse, without daring to acquaint anybody with it. My mind was eternally taken up with such things as these, so that, all things considered, there is more trouble in keeping money than in getting it. And if I did not altogether so much as I say, or was not really so scandalously solicitous of my money as I have made myself out to be, yet it cost me something at least to restrain myself from being so. I reaped little or no advantage by what I had, and my expenses seemed nothing less to me for having the more to spend; for, as Bion said, * the hairy men are as angry as the bald to be pulled; and after you are once accustomed to it and have once set your heart upon your heap, it is no more at your service; you cannot find in your heart to break it: 'tis a building that you will fancy must of necessity all tumble down to ruin if you stir but the least pebble; necessity must first take you by the throat before you can prevail upon yourself to touch it; and I would sooner have pawned anything I had, or sold a horse, and with much less constraint upon myself, than have made the least breach in that beloved purse I had so carefully laid by. But the danger was that a man cannot easily prescribe certain limits to this desire (they are hard to find in things that a man conceives to be good), and to stint this good husbandry so that it may not degenerate into avarice: men still are intent upon adding to the heap and increasing the stock, from sum to sum, till at last they vilely deprive themselves of the enjoyment of their own

* Seneca, De Tranquillitate Animi, c. 8.

proper goods, and throw all into reserve, without making any use of them at all. According to this rule, they are the richest people in the world who are set to guard the walls and gates of a wealthy city. All moneyed men I conclude to be covetous. Plato * places corporal or human goods in this order: health, beauty, strength and riches; and riches, says he, are not blind, but very clear-sighted, when illuminated by prudence. Dionysius the son † did a very handsome act upon this subject: he was informed that one of the Syracusans had hid a treasure in the earth, and thereupon sent to the man to bring it to him, which he accordingly did, privately reserving a small part of it only to himself, with which he went to another city, where being cured of his appetite of hoarding, he began to live at a more liberal rate; which Dionysius hearing, caused the rest of his treasure to be restored to him, saying, that since he had learned to use it, he very willingly returned it back to him.

I continued some years in this hoarding humor, when I know not what good demon fortunately put me out of it, as he did the Syracusan, and made me throw abroad all my reserve at random, the pleasure of a certain journey I took at very great expense having made me spurn this fond love of money underfoot; by which means I am now fallen into a third way of living (I speak what I think of it), doubtless much more pleasant and regular, which is, that I live at the height of my revenue; sometimes the one, sometimes the other may perhaps exceed, but 'tis very little and but rarely that they differ. I live from hand to mouth, and content myself in having sufficient for my present and ordinary expense; for as to extraordinary occasions, all the laying up in the world would never suffice. And 'tis the greatest folly imaginable to expect that fortune should ever sufficiently arm us against herself; 'tis with our own arms that we are to fight her; accidental ones will betray us in the pinch of the business. If I lay up, 'tis for some near land contemplated purpose; not to purchase lands of which I have no need, but to purchase pleasure. "*Non esse cupidum, pecunia est; non esse emacem, vertigal*

* Laws.

† Or rather the father, according to Plutarch in his Apothegms.

est." * I neither am in any great apprehension of wanting, nor in desire of any more; "*divinarum fructus est in copia; copiam declarat satietas.*" † And I am very well pleased that this reformation in me has fallen out in an age naturally inclined to avarice, and that I see myself cleared of a folly so common to old men, and the most ridiculous of all human follies.

Feraulez, a man that had run through both fortunes, and found that the increase of substance was no increase of appetite either to eating or drinking, sleeping or the enjoyment of his wife, and who on the other side felt the care of his economics lie heavy upon his shoulders, as it does on mine, was resolved to please a poor young man, his faithful friend, who panted after riches, and made him a gift of all his, which were excessively great, and, moreover, of all he was in the daily way of getting by the liberality of Cyrus, his good master, and by the war; conditionally that he should take care handsomely to maintain and plentifully to entertain him as his guest and friend; which being accordingly done, they afterward lived very happily together, both of them equally content with the change of their condition.‡ 'Tis an example that I could imitate with all my heart; and I very much approve the fortune of the aged prelate whom I see to have so absolutely stripped himself of his purse, his revenue, and care of his expense, committing them one while to one trusty servant, and another while to another, that he has spun out a long succession of years, as ignorant, by this means, of his domestic affairs as a mere stranger. The confidence in another man's virtue is no light evidence of a man's own, and God willingly favors such a confidence. As to what concerns him of whom I am speaking, I see nowhere a better governed house, more nobly and constantly maintained, than his. Happy to have regulated his affairs to so just a proportion that his estate is sufficient to do it without his care or trouble, and without any hindrance,

* "Not to be covetous, is money not to be mad after buying, is revenue."—CICERO, *Paradox*, vi. 3

† "The fruit of riches is in abundance, and content declares abundance."—*Idem, ibid.*, vi 2.

‡ Xenophon, Cyropædia, viii. 3.

either in the spending or laying it up, to his other more quiet employments, and more suitable both to his place and liking.

Plenty, then, and indigence depend upon the opinion every one has of them; and riches no more than glory or health have other beauty or pleasure than he lends them by whom they are possessed. Every one is well or ill at ease, according as he so finds himself; not he whom the world believes, but he who believes himself to be so, is content; and in this alone belief gives itself being and reality. Fortune does us neither good nor hurt; she only presents us the matter and seed, which our soul, more powerful than she, turns and applies as she best pleases; the sole cause and sovereign mistress of her own happy or unhappy condition. All external accessions receive taste and color from the internal constitution, as clothes warm us, not with their heat, but our own, which they are fit to cover and nourish; he who would shield therewith a cold body, would do the same service for the cold, for so snow and ice are preserved. And certes, after the same manner that study is a torment to an idle man, abstinence from wine to a drunkard, frugality to the spendthrift, and exercise to a lazy, tender-bred fellow, so it is of all the rest. The things are not so painful and difficult of themselves, but our weakness or cowardice makes them so. To judge of great and high matters requires a suitable soul; otherwise we attribute the vice to them which is really our own. A straight oar seems crooked in the water: it does not only import that we see the thing, but how and after what manner we see it.*

After all this,† why among so many discourses that by so many arguments persuade men to despise death and to endure pain, can we not find out one that helps us? And of so many sorts of imaginations as have so prevailed upon others as to persuade them to do so, why does not every one apply some one to himself, the most suitable to his own humor? If he cannot digest a strong-working decoction to eradicate the evil, let him at least take a lenitive to ease it. "*Opinio est quædam effeminata ac*

* See Seneca, Ep., 81.

† The rest of the chapter is mainly taken from Seneca, Ep., 81.

levis, nec in dolore magis, quam eadem in voluptate: qua quum liquescimus, fluimusque mollitia, apis aculeum sine clamore ferre non possumus. Totum in eo est, ut tibi imperes." * As to the rest, a man does not transgress philosophy by permitting the acrimony of pains and human frailty to prevail so much above measure; for they constrain her to go back to her unanswerable replies: "If it be ill to live in necessity, at least there is no necessity upon a man to live in necessity:" † "No man continues ill long but by his own fault." He who has neither the courage to die nor the heart to live, who will neither resist nor fly, what can we do with him?

CHAPTER XLI.

NOT TO COMMUNICATE A MAN'S HONOR.

OF ALL the follies of the world, that which is most universally received is the solicitude of reputation and glory; which we are fond of to that degree as to abandon riches, peace, life and health, which are effectual and substantial goods, to pursue this vain phantom and empty word, that has neither body nor hold to be taken of it.

> "La fama, ch' invaghisce a un dolce suono,
> Gli superbi mortali, et par si bella
> E un eco, un sogno, anzi d'un sogno un' ombra
> Ch' ad ogni vento si dilegua e sgombra." ‡

And of all the irrational humors of men, it should seem that the philosophers themselves are among the last, and the most reluctant to disengage themselves from this: 'tis the most restive and obstinate of all; "*quia etiam bene proficientes animos tentare non cessat.*" § There is not

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* "There is in pain, not less than in pleasure, a sort of light and effeminate opinion, by which, while we rest and wallow in ease, we cannot endure so much as the stinging of a bee without roaring. The whole business is to command one's self."—CICERO, *Tusc. Quæs.*, ii. 22.

† Seneca, Ep., 12.

‡ "Fame, which with alluring sound charms proud mortals, and appears so fair, is but an echo, a dream, nay, the shadow of a dream, which a breath disperses and dissolves."—TASSO, *Gerus.*, xiv. 63.

§ "Because it ceases not to assail even the best disciplined minds."—ST. AUGUSTIN, *De Civit. Dei.* v. 14.

any one of which reason so clearly accuses the vanity; but it is so deeply rooted in us that I dare not determine whether any one ever clearly discharged himself from it or no. After you have said all and believed all has been said to its prejudice, it produces so intestine an inclination in opposition to your best arguments that you have little power to resist it; for, as Cicero says,* even those who most controvert it, would yet that the books they write about it should visit the light under their own names, and seek to derive glory from seeming to despise it. All other things are communicable and fall into commerce: we lend our goods and stake our lives for the necessity and service of our friends; but to communicate a man's honor and to robe another with a man's own glory, is very rarely seen.

And yet we have some examples of that kind. Catulus Luctatius in the Cimbrian war, having done all that in him lay to make his flying soldiers face about upon the enemy, ran himself at last away with the rest, and counterfeited the coward, to the end his men might rather seem to follow their captain than to fly from the enemy;† which was to abandon his own reputation in order to cover the shame of others. When Charles V. came into Provence in the year 1537, 'tis said that Antonio de Leva, seeing the emperor positively resolved upon this expedition, and believing it would redound very much to his honor, did, nevertheless. very stiffly oppose it in the council, to the end that the entire glory of that resolution should be attributed to his master, and that it might be said his own wisdom and foresight had been such as that, contrary to the opinion of all, he had brought about so great an enterprise; which was to do him honor at his own expense. The Thracian ambassadors coming to comfort Archileonida, the mother of Brasidas, upon the death of her son, and commending him to that height as to say he had not left his like behind him, she rejected this private and particular commendation to attribute it to the public; "Tell me not that," said she; "I know the city of Sparta has many citizens both greater and of greater worth than he."‡ In the battle of Crecy,

* Oration for Archias, c. 11.

† Plutarch, Life of Marius, c. 8.

‡ Plutarch, Apothegms of the Lacedæmonians, art. Brasidas.

the Prince of Wales, being then very young, had the vanguard committed to him: the main stress of the battle happened to be in that place, which made the lords who were with him, finding themselves overmatched, send to King Edward to advance to their relief. He inquired of the condition his son was in, and being answered that he was alive and on horseback: "I should, then, do him wrong," said the king, "now to go and deprive him of the honor of winning this battle he has so long and so bravely sustained; what hazard soever he runs, that shall be entirely his own;" and accordingly would neither go nor send, knowing that if he went, it would be said all had been lost without his succor, and that the honor of the victory would be wholly attributed to him. "*Semper enim quod postremum adjectum est, id rem totam videtur traxisse.*" * Many, at Rome, thought, and would usually say, that the greatest of Scipio's acts were in part due to Lælius, whose constant practice it was still to advance and support Scipio's grandeur and renown without any care of his own.† And Theopompus, king of Sparta, to him who told him the republic could not miscarry since he knew so well how to command, "'Tis rather," answered he, "because the people know so well how to obey." ‡ As women succeeding to peerages had, notwithstanding their sex, the privilege to attend and give their votes in the trials that appertained to the jurisdiction of peers; so the ecclesiastical peers, notwithstanding their profession, were obliged to attend our kings in their wars, not only with their friends and servants, but in their own persons. As the bishop of Beauvais did who being with Philip Augustus at the battle of Bouvines, had a notable share in that action; but he did not think it fit for him to participate in the fruit and glory of that violent and bloody trade. He, with his own hand, reduced several of the enemy that day to his mercy, whom he delivered to the first gentleman he met either to kill or receive them to quarter, referring the whole execution to this other hand; and he did this with regard to William, Earl of

* "For the last stroke to a business seems to effect performance of the whole action."—LIVY, xxvii. 45.

† Plutarch, Instructions for Statesmen, c. 7.

‡ Idem, Apothegms of the Lacedæmonians, art. Theopompus.

Salisbury, whom he gave up to Messire Jehan de Nesle.* With a like subtlety of conscience to that I have just named, he would kill but not wound, and for that reason ever fought with a mace.† And a certain person of my time, being reproached by the king that he had laid hands on a priest, stiffly and positively denied he had done any such thing: the meaning of which was, he had cudgelled and kicked him.

CHAPTER XLII.

OF THE INEQUALITY AMONG US.

PLUTARCH says somewhere ‡ that he does not find so great a difference between beast and beast as he does between man and man; which he says in reference to the internal qualities and perfections of the soul. And, in truth I find so vast a distance between Epaminondas, according to my judgment of him, and some that I know, who are yet men of good sense, that I could willingly enhance upon Plutarch, and say that there is more difference between such and such a man than there is between such a man and such a beast:

> "Hem! vir viro quid præstat!" §

and that there are as many and innumerable degrees of minds as there are cubits between this and heaven. But as touching the estimate of men, 'tis strange that, ourselves excepted, no other creature is esteemed beyond its proper qualities; we commend a horse for his strength and sureness of foot,

> "Volucrem
> Sic laudamus equum facili cui plurima palma
> Fervet, et exsultat rauco victoria circo," ‖

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* Mém. de Jean de Tillet, Troyes, 1578, p. 220.

† Mezeray, Hist. de France.

‡ In the essay, The Brute Creation exercises Reason.

§ "Ah! how much may one man surpass another!"—TERENCE, *Eunuchus*, ii. 3, 1.

‖ "So we praise the swift horse, for whom many an applauding hand glows, and victory exults among the hoarse shouts of the circus."—JUVENAL, viii. 57.

and not for his rich caparison; a greyhound for his speed of heels, not for his fine collar; a hawk for her wing, not for her jesses and bells. Why, in like manner, do we not value a man for what is properly his own? He has a great train, a beautiful palace, so much credit, so many thousand pounds a year: all these are about him, but not in him. You will not buy a pig in a poke: if you cheapen a horse,* you will see him stripped of his housing-cloths, you will see him naked and open to your eye; or if he be clothed, as they anciently were wont to present them to princes to sell, 'tis only on the less important parts, that you may not so much consider the beauty of his color or the breadth of his crupper, as principally to examine his legs, eyes, and feet, which are the members of greatest use:

> "Regibus hic mos est: ubi equos mercantur, opertos
> Inspiciunt; ne, si facies, ut sæpe, decora
> Molli fulta pede est, emptorem inducat hiantem,
> Quod pulchræ clunes, breve quod caput, ardua cervix:" †

why, in giving your estimate of a man, do you prize him wrapped and muffled up in clothes? He then discovers nothing to you but such parts as are not in the least his own, and conceals those by which alone one may rightly judge of his value. 'Tis the price of the blade that you inquire into, not of the scabbard: you would not peradventure bid a farthing for him, if you saw him stripped. You are to judge him by himself, and not by what he wears; and, as one of the ancients very pleasantly said: "Do you know why you repute him tall? You reckon withal the height of his pattens." ‡ The pedestal is no part of the statue. Measure him without his stilts; let him lay aside his revenues and his titles, let him present himself in his shirt. Then examine if his body be sound and sprightly, active and disposed to perform its functions. What soul has he? Is she beautiful, capable, and happily provided of all her faculties? Is she rich of what is her own or of what she has borrowed? Has fortune no hand in the

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* Seneca, Ep., 80.

† "When kings and great folks buy horses, as 'tis the custom, in their housings, they take care to inspect very closely, lest a short head, a high crest, a broad haunch, and ample chest stand upon an old beaten hoof, to gull the buyer."—HORACE, *Sat.*, i. 2, 86.

‡ Seneca, Ep., 76.

affair? Can she, without winking, stand the lightning of swords? is she indifferent whether her life expire by the mouth or through the throat? Is she settled, even and content? This is what is to be examined, and by that you are to judge of the vast differences between man and man. Is he

> "Sapiens, sibique imperiosus,
> Quem neque pauperies, neque mors, neque vincula terrent;
> Responsare cupidinibus, contemnere honores
> Fortis; et in seipso totus teres atque rotundus,
> Externi ne quid valeat per læve morari;
> In quem manca ruit semper fortuna?" *

such a man is five hundred cubits above kingdoms and duchies; he is an absolute monarch in and to himself.

> "Sapiens, . . . Pol! ipse fingit fortunam sibi;" †

what remains for him to covet or desire?

> "Nonne videmus,
> Nil aliud sibi naturam latrare, nisi ut, quoi
> Corpore sejunctus dolor absit, mente fruatur,
> Jucundo sensu, cura semotu' metuque?" ‡

Compare with such a one the common rabble of mankind, stupid and mean-spirited, servile, instable, and continually floating with the tempest of various passions, that tosses and tumbles them to and fro, and all depending upon others, and you will find a greater distance than between heaven and earth; and yet the blindness of common usage, is such that we make little or no account of it; whereas, if we consider a peasant and a king, a nobleman and a vassal, a magistrate and a private man, a rich man and a poor, there appears a vast disparity, though they differ no more, as a man may say, than in their breeches.

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* "The wise man, who has command over himself: whom neither poverty, nor death, nor chains affright; who has the strength and courage to restrain his appetites and to contemn honors; who has his all within himself; a mind well turned and even balanced, like a smooth and perfect ball, which nothing external can stop in its course; whom fortune assails in vain."—HORACE, *Sat.*, ii. 7, 83.

† "The wise man is the master of his own fortune."—PLAUTUS, *Trin.*, ii. 2, 84.

‡ "Do we not see that man's nature asks no more than that, free from bodily pain, he may exercise his mind agreeably, exempt from fear and anxiety."—LUCRETIUS, ii. 16.

In Thrace the king was distinguished from his people after a very pleasant and especial manner; he had a religion by himself, a god all his own, and which his subjects were not to presume to adore, which was Mercury, while, on the other hand, he disdained to have anything to do with theirs, Mars, Bacchus, and Diana. And yet they are no other than pictures that make no essential dissimilitude; for as you see actors in a play representing the person of a duke or an emperor upon the stage, and immediately after return to their true and original condition of valets and porters, so the emperor, whose pomp and luster so dazzle you in public,

> "Scilicet et grandes viridi cum luce smaragdi
> Auro includuntur, teriturque thalassina vestis
> Assidue, et Veneris sudorem exercita potat;" *

do but peep behind the curtain, and you will see nothing more than ordinary man, and peradventure more contemptible than the meanest of his subjects: "*ille beatus introrsum est, istius bracteata felicitas est;*" † cowardice, irresolution, ambition, spite, and envy agitate him as much as another.

> "Non enim gazæ, neque consularis,
> Summovet lictor miseros tumultus
> Mentis, et curas laqueata circum
> Tecta volantes." ‡

Care and fear attack him even in the center of his battalions.

> "Re veraque metus hominum, curæque sequaces
> Nec metuunt sonitus arnorum, nec fera tela;
> Audacterque inter reges, rerumque potentes
> Versantur, neque fulgorem reverentur ab auro." §

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* "Because he wears great emeralds richly set in gold, darting green luster; and the sea-blue silken robe, worn with pressure, and moist with illicit love."—LUCRETIUS, iv. 1123.

† "True happiness lies within, the other is but a counterfeit felicity."—SENECA, *Ep.*, 115.

‡ "For not treasures, nor the consular lictor, can remove the miserable tumults of the mind, nor cares that fly about gilded ceilings."—HORACE, *Od.*, ii. 16, 9.

§ "The fears and pursuing cares of men fear not the clash of arms nor points of darts, and mingle boldly with great kings and potentates, and respect not their purple and glittering gold."—LUCRETIUS, ii. 47.

Do fevers, gout, and apoplexies spare him any more than one of us? When old age hangs heavy upon his shoulders, can the yeomen of his guard ease him of the burden? When he is astounded with the apprehension of death, can the gentlemen of his bedchamber comfort and assure him? When jealousy or any other caprice swings in his brain, can our compliments and ceremonies restore him to his good-humor? The canopy embroidered with pearl and gold he lies under has no virtue against a violent fit of the colic.

> "Nec calidæ citius decedunt corpore febres
> Textilibus si in picturis, ostroque rubenti
> Jactaris, quam si plebeia in veste cubandum est." *

The flatterers of Alexander the Great possessed him that he was the son of Jupiter; but being one day wounded, and observing the blood stream from his wound: "What say you now, my masters," said he, "is not this blood of a crimson color and purely human? This is not of the complexion of that which Homer makes to issue from the wounded gods." † The poet Hermodorus had written a poem in honor of Antigonus, wherein he called him the son of the sun: "He who has the emptying of my close-stool," said Antigonus, "knows to the contrary." ‡ He is but a man at best, and if he be deformed or ill qualified from his birth, the empire of the universe cannot set him to rights;

> "Puellæ
> Hunc rapiant; quidquid calcaverit hic, rosa fiat," §

what of all that, if he be a fool? Even pleasure and good fortune are not relished without vigor and understanding.

> "Hæc perinde sunt, ut illius animus, qui ea possidet:
> Qui uti scit, ei bona; illi qui non utitur recte, mala." ‖

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* "Fevers quit a man no sooner because he is stretched on a couch of rich tapestry than if he be in a course blanket."—*Idem*, ii. 34.

† Plutarch, Apothegms, art. Alexander.

‡ Idem, ibid., art. Antigonus.

§ "What though girls carry him off; though, wherever he steps, there spring up a rose?"—PERSIUS, *Sat.*, ii. 38.

‖ "Things are, as are the souls of their possessors; good, if well used; ill, if abused."—TERENCE, *Heart.* 3, 21.

Whatever the benefits of fortune are, they yet require a palate fit to relish them. 'Tis fruition, and not possession that renders us happy.

> "Non domus et fundus, non æris ascervus, et auri,
> Ægroto domini deduxit corpore febres,
> Non animo curas. Valeat possessor oportet,
> Qui comportatis rebus bene cogitat uti:
> Qui cupit, aut metuit, juvat illum sic domus aut res,
> Ut lippum pictæ tabulæ, fomenta podagram." *

He is a sot, his taste is palled and flat; he no more enjoys what he has than one that has a cold relishes the flavor of canary, or than a horse is sensible of his rich caparison. Plato is in the right when he tells us that health, beauty, vigor, and riches, and all the other things called goods, are equally evil to the unjust as good to the just, and the evil on the contrary the same. And therefore where the body and the mind are in disorder, to what use serve these external conveniences; considering that the least prick with a pin, or the least passion of the soul, is sufficient to deprive one of the pleasure of being sole monarch of the world. At the first twitch of the gout it signifies much to be called sir and your majesty,

> "Totus et argento conflatus, totus et auro;" †

does he not forget his palaces and grandeurs? If he be angry, can his being a prince keep him from looking red and looking pale, and grinding his teeth like a madman? Now, if he be a man of parts and of right nature, royalty adds very little to his happiness;

> "Si ventri bene, si lateri est, pudibusque tuis, nil
> Divitiæ poterunt regales addere majus;" ‡

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* "'Tis not lands, or heaps of gold and silver, that can banish fevers from the body of the sick owner, or cares from his mind. The possessor must be sound and healthy, if he would have the true realization of his wealth. To him who is covetous, or timorous, his house and land are as a picture to a blind man, or a fomentation to a gouty man."—HORACE, *Ep.*, i. 2, 47.

† "A mass of gold and silver."—TIBULLUS, i. 2, 70.

‡ "If your stomach is sound, your lungs and feet in good order, you need no regal riches to make you happy." — HORACE, *Ep.* i. 12, 5.

he discerns 'tis nothing but counterfeit and gullery. Nay, perhaps he would be of King Seleucus' opinion, that he who knew the weight of a scepter would not stoop to pick it up, if he saw it lying before him, so great and painful are the duties incumbent upon a good king.* Assuredly it can be no easy task to rule others, when we find it so hard a matter to govern ourselves; and as to dominion, that seems so charming, the frailty of human judgment and the difficulty of choice in things that are new and doubtful considered, I am very much of opinion that it is far more easy and pleasant to follow than to lead; and that it is a great settlement and satisfaction of mind to have only one path to walk in, and to have none to answer for but a man's self;

> "Ut satius multo jam sit parere quietum.
> Quam regere imperio res velle."†

To which we may add that saying of Cyrus, that no man was fit to rule but he who in his own worth was of greater value than those he was to govern; but King Hiero in Xenophon says further, that in the fruition even of pleasure itself they are in a worse condition than private men; forasmuch as the opportunities and facility they have of commanding those things at will takes off from the delight that ordinary folks enjoy.

> "Pinguis amor, nimiumque patens, in tædia nobis
> Vertitur, et, stomacho dulcis ut esca, nocet."‡

Can we think that the singing boys of the choir take any great delight in music? the satiety rather renders it troublesome and tedious to them. Feasts, balls, masquerades and tiltings delight such as but rarely see, and desire to see them; but having been frequently at such entertainments, the relish of them grows flat and insipid. Nor do women so much delight those who make a common practice of the sport. He who will not give himself leisure to be thirsty can never find the true pleasure of

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* Plutarch, If a Sage should meddle with Affairs of State, c. 12.

† "'Tis much better calmly to obey than wish to rule."—LUCRETIUS, v. 1126.

‡ "Love that is listless and too facile becomes wearisome, as insipid meats are nauseous to the stomach."—OVID, *Amor.*, ii. 19, 25.

drinking. Farces and tumbling tricks are pleasant to the spectators, but a wearisome toil to those by whom they are performed. And that this is so, we see that princes divert themselves sometimes in disguising their quality, awhile to depose themselves, and to stoop to the poor and ordinary way of living of the meanest of their people.

> "Plerumque gratæ principibus vices,
> Mundæque parvo sub lare pauperum,
> Cœnæ, sine aulæis et ostro,
> Sollicitam explicuere frontem." *

Nothing is so distasteful and clogging as abundance. What appetite would not be baffled to see three hundred women at its mercy, as the grand signor has in his seraglio? And, of his ancestors, what fruition or taste of sport did he reserve to himself, who never went hawking without seven thousand falconers? And besides all this, I fancy that this luster of grandeur brings with it no little disturbance and uneasiness upon the enjoyment of the most tempting pleasures; the great are too conspicuous and lie too open to every one's view. Neither do I know to what end a man should more require of them to conceal their errors, since what is only reputed indiscretion in us, the people in them brand with the names of tyranny and contempt of the laws, and, besides their proclivity to vice, are apt to hold that it is a heightening of pleasure to them, to insult over and to trample upon public observances. Plato, indeed, in his "Gorgias," defines a tyrant to be one who in a city has license to do whatever his own will leads him to do; and by reason of this impunity, the display and publication of their vices do ofttimes more mischief than the vice itself. Every one fears to be pried into and overlooked; but princes are so, even to their very gestures, looks and thoughts, the people conceiving they have right and title to be judges of them: besides that the blemishes of the great naturally appear greater by reason of the eminence and luster of the place where they are seated, and that a mole or a wart appears greater in them than a

* "The rich and great are often pleased with variety; and a plain supper in a poor cottage, where there are neither tapestry nor beds of purple, has made their anxious brow smooth."—HORACE, *Od.*, iii. 29, 13, which has *divibitus*, not *principibus*.

wide gash in others. And this is the reason why the poets fain the amours of Jupiter to be performed in the disguises of so many borrowed shapes, and that among the many amorous practices they lay to his charge, there is only one, as I remember, where he appears in his own majesty and grandeur.

But let us return to Hiero, who further complains of the inconveniences he found in his royalty, in that he could not look abroad and travel the world at liberty, being as it were a prisoner in the bounds and limits of his own dominion, and that in all his actions he was evermore surrounded with an importunate crowd. And in truth, to see our kings sit all alone at table, environed with so many people prating about them, and so many strangers staring upon them, as they always are, I have often been moved rather to pity than to envy their condition. King Alfonso was wont to say, that in this, asses were in a better condition than kings, their masters permitting them to feed at their own ease and pleasure, a favor that kings cannot obtain of their servants. And it has never come into my fancy that it could be of any great benefit to the life of a man of sense to have twenty people prating about him when he is at stool; or that the services of a man of ten thousand livres a year, or that has taken Casale or defended Siena, should be either more commodious or more acceptable to him, than those of a good groom of the chamber who understands his place. The advantages of sovereignty are in a manner but imaginary: every degree of fortune has in it some image of principality. Cæsar calls all the lords of France, having free franchise within their own demesnes, roitelets or petty kings; and in truth, the name of sire excepted, they go pretty far toward kingship; for do but look into the provinces remote from court, as Brittany, for example, take notice of the train, the vassals, the officers, the employment, service, ceremony, and state of a lord who lives retired from court in his own house, among his own tenants and servants; and observe withal, the flight of his imagination, there is nothing more royal; he hears talk of his master once a year, as of a king of Persia, without taking any further recognition of him, than by some remote kindred his secretary keeps in some musty record. And, to speak the truth, our laws are easy enough, so easy that a gentleman of

France scarce feels the weight of sovereignty pinch his shoulders above twice in his life. Real and effectual subjection only concerns such among us as voluntarily thrust their necks under the yoke, and, who design to get wealth and honors by such services: for a man that loves his own fireside, and can govern his house without falling by the ears with his neighbors or engaging in suits of law, is as free as a duke of Venice. "*Paucos servitus, plures servitutem tenent.*" *

But that which Hiero is most concerned at is, that he finds himself stripped of all friendship, deprived of all mutual society, wherein the true and most perfect fruition of human life consists. For what testimony of affection and good will can I extract from him that owes me, whether he will or no, all that he is able to do? Can I form any assurance of his real respect to me, from his humble way of speaking and submissive behavior, when these are ceremonies it is not in his choice to deny? The honor we receive from those that fear us, is not honor; those respects are paid to royalty and not to me.

> "Maximum hoc regni bonum est,
> Quod facta domini cogitur populus sui
> Quam ferre, tam laudare." †

Do I not see that the wicked and the good king, he that is hated and he that is beloved, have the one as much reverence paid him as the other? My predecessor was, and my successor shall be, served with the same ceremony and state. If my subjects do me no harm, 'tis no evidence of any good affection; why should I look upon it as such, seeing it is not in their power to do it if they would? No one follows me or obeys my commands, upon the account of any friendship between him and me; there can be no contracting of friendship, where there is so little relation and correspondence: my own height has put me out of the familiarity of and intelligence with men: there is too great disparity and disproportion between us. They follow me

* "Servitude enchains few, but many enchain themselves to servitude."—SENECA, *Ep.*, 22.

† "'Tis the greatest benefits of kings, that their subjects are bound, whatever they say or do, not only to submit, but also to praise it."—Idem., *Thyestes* ii. 1, 30.

either upon the account of decency or custom; or rather my fortune, than me, to increase their own. All they say to me, or do for me, is but outward paint, appearance, their liberty being on all parts restrained by the great power and authority I have over them. I see nothing about me but what is dissembled and disguised.

The Emperor Julian being one day applauded by his courtiers for his exact justice: "I should be proud of these praises," said he, "did they come from persons that durst condemn or disapprove the contrary, in case I should do it."* All the real advantages of princes are common to them with men of meaner condition ('tis for the gods to mount winged horses and feed upon ambrosia): they have no other sleep, nor other appetite than we; the steel they arm themselves withal, is of no better temper than that we also use; their crowns neither defend them from the rain nor the sun.

Diocletian, who wore a crown so fortunate and revered, resigned it to retire to the felicity of a private life; and some time after, the necessity of public affairs requiring that he should reassume his charge, he made answer to those who came to court him to it: "You would not offer," said he, "to persuade me to this had you seen the fine order of the trees I have planted in my orchard, and the fair melons I have sown in my garden."†

In Anacharsis' opinion, the happiest state of government would be where, all other things being equal, precedency should be measured out by the virtues, and repulses by the vices of men.‡

When King Pyrrhus prepared for his expedition into Italy, his wise counselor Cyneas, to make him sensible of the vanity of his ambition: "Well, sir," said he, "to what end do you make all this mighty preparation?" "To make myself master of Italy," replied the king. "And what after that is done?" said Cyneas. "I will pass over into Gaul and Spain," said the other. "And what then?" "I will then go to subdue Africa; and lastly, when I have brought the whole world to my subjection, I will sit down and rest content at my own ease." "For God's sake, sir,"

* Ammianus Marcellinus, xxii 10.

† Aurelius Victor, art Diocletian.

‡ Plutarch, Banquet of the Seven Sages, c. 13.

replied Cyneas, "tell me what hinders that you may not, if you please, be now in the condition you speak of? Why do you not now at this instant, settle yourself in the state you seem to aim at, and spare all the labor and hazard you interpose?"*

> "Nimirum, quia non bene norat, quæ esset habendi
> Finis, et omnino quoad crescat vera voluptas."†

I will conclude with an old versicle, that I think very apt to the purpose. "*Mores cuique sui fingunt fortunam.*"‡

CHAPTER XLIII.

OF SUMPTUARY LAWS.

THE way by which our laws attempt to regulate idle and vain expenses in meat and clothes seems to be quite contrary to the end designed. The true way would be to beget in men a contempt of silks and gold, as vain, frivolous, and useless; whereas we augment to them the honors, and enhance the value of such things, which, sure, is a very improper way to create a disgust. For to enact that none but princes shall eat turbot, shall wear velvet or gold lace, and interdict these things to the people, what is it but to bring them into a greater esteem, and to set every one more agog to eat and wear them? Let kings leave off these ensigns of grandeur; they have others enough besides; those excesses are more excusable in any other than a prince. We may learn by the example of several nations better ways of exterior distinction of quality (which, truly, I conceive to be very requisite in a state) enough, without fostering to this purpose such corruption and manifest inconvenience. 'Tis strange how suddenly and with how much ease custom in these indifferent things establishes itself and becomes authority. We had scarce

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* Idem, Pyrrhus, c. 7.

† "Truly because they do not know what is the proper limit of acquisition, and how far real pleasure extends."—LUCRETIUS, v. 1431. The text has *quia non cognovit.*

‡ "Every man frames his own fortune"—CORNELIUS NEPOS, *Life of Atticus*, c. ii.

worn cloth a year, in compliance with the court, for the mourning of Henry II., but that silks were already grown into such contempt with every one, that a man so clad was presently concluded a citizen: silks were divided between the physicians and surgeons, and though all other people almost went in the same habit, there was, notwithstanding, in one thing or other, sufficient distinction of the several conditions of men. How suddenly do greasy chamois and linen doublets become the fashion in our armies, while all neatness and richness of habit fall into contempt? Let kings but lead the dance and begin to leave off this expense, and in a month the business will be done throughout the kingdom, without edict or ordinance; we shall all follow. It should be rather proclaimed, on the contrary, that no one should wear scarlet or goldsmiths' work, but courtesans and tumblers.

Zeleucus with the like invention, reclaimed the corrupted manners of the Locrians.* His laws were, that no free woman should be allowed any more than one maid to follow her, unless she was drunk: nor was to stir out of the city by night, wear jewels of gold about her, or go in an embroidered robe, unless she was a professed and public prostitute: that bravos excepted, no man was to wear a gold ring, nor be seen in one of those effeminate robes woven in the city of Miletum. By which infamous exceptions, he discreetly diverted his citizens from superfluities and pernicious pleasures, and it was a project of great utility to attract men by honor and ambition to their duty and obedience.

Our kings can do what they please in such external reformations; their own inclination stands in this case for a law: "*quicquid principes faciunt, præcipere videntur.*"† Whatever is done at court passes for a rule through the the rest of France. Let the courtiers fall out with these abominable breeches, that discover so much of those parts should be concealed; these great bellied doublets, that make us look like I know not what, and are so unfit to admit of arms; these long effeminate locks of hair; this foolish custom of kissing what we present to our equals, and our

* Diodorus Siculus, xii. 20.

† "What princes themselves do, they seem to enjoin to others." —QUINTIL. *Declam.*, 3.

hands in saluting them, a ceremony in former times only due to princes. Let them not permit that a gentleman shall appear in place of respect without his sword, unbuttoned and untrussed, as though he came from the house of office; and that, contrary to the custom of our forefathers and the particular privilege of the nobles of this kingdom, we stand a long time bare to them in what place soever, and the same to a hundred others, so many tiercelets and quartelets of kings we have got nowadays and also other the like innovations and degenerate customs: they will see them all presently vanish and cried down. These are, 'tis true, but superficial errors; but they are of ill augury, and enough to inform us that the whole fabric is crazy and tottering, when we see the roughcast of our walls to cleave and split.

Plato in his Laws† esteems nothing of more pestiferous consequence to his city than to give young men the liberty of introducing any change in their habits, gestures, dances, songs and exercises, from one form to another; shifting from this to that, hunting after novelties, and applauding the inventors; by which means manners are corrupted and the old institutions come to be nauseated and despised. In all things, saving only in those that are evil, a change is to be feared; even the change of seasons, winds, viands, and humors. And no laws are in their true credit, but such to which God has given so long a continuance that no one knows their beginning, or that there ever was any other.

CHAPTER XLIV.

OF SLEEP.

Reason directs that we should always go the same way, but not always at the same pace. And, consequently, though a wise man ought not so much to give the reins to human passions as to let him deviate from the right path, he may, notwithstanding, without prejudice to his duty, leave it to them to hasten or to slacken his speed, and not fix himself like a motionless and insensible Colossus.

† Book vii.

Could virtue itself put on flesh and blood, I believe the pulse would beat faster going on to an assault than in going to dinner; that is to say, there is a necessity she should heat and be moved upon this account. I have taken notice, as of an extraordinary thing, of some great men, who in the highest enterprises and most important affairs have kept themselves in so settled and serene a calm, as not at all to break their sleep. Alexander the Great, on the day assigned for that furious battle between him and Darius, slept so profoundly and so long in the morning, that Parmenio was forced to enter his chamber, and coming to his bedside, to call him several times by his name, the time to go to fight compelling him so to do. The Emperor Otho, having put on a resolution to kill himself that night, after having settled his domestic affairs, divided his money among his servants, and set a good edge upon a sword he had made choice of for the purpose, and now staying only to be satisfied whether all his friends had retired in safety, he fell into so sound a sleep that the gentlemen of his chamber heard him snore. The death of this emperor has in it circumstances paralleling that of the great Cato, and particularly this just related: for Cato being ready to despatch himself, while he only stayed his hand in expectation of the return of a messenger he had sent to bring him news whether the senators he had sent away were put out from the port of Utica, he fell into so sound a sleep, that they heard him snore in the next room; and the man, whom he had sent to the port, having awakened him to let him know that the tempestuous weather had hindered the senators from putting to sea, he despatched away another messenger, and composing again himself in the bed, settled to sleep, and slept till by the return of the last messenger he had certain intelligence they were gone.* We may here further compare him with Alexander in the great and dangerous storm that threatened him by the sedition of the tribune Metellus who, attempting to publish a decree for the calling in of Pompey with his army into the city, at the time of Catiline's conspiracy, was only and that stoutly opposed by Cato, so that very sharp language and bitter menaces passed between them in the senate about that affair; but it was the next

* Plutarch, Life of Cato of Utica, c. 19.

day, in the forenoon, that the controversy was to be decided; where Metellus, besides the favor of the people, and of Cæsar—at that time of Pompey's faction—was to appear accompanied with a rabble of slaves and gladiators; and Cato only fortified with his own courage and constancy; so that his relations, domestics, and many virtuous people of his friends were in great apprehensions for him; and to that degree, that some there were who passed over the whole night without sleep, eating, or drinking, for the danger they saw him running into; his wife and sisters did nothing but weep and torment themselves in his house; whereas he, on the contrary, comforted every one, and after having supped after his usual manner, went to bed, and slept profoundly till morning, when one of his fellow-tribunes roused him to go to the encounter. The knowledge we have of the greatness of this man's courage by the rest of his life, may warrant us certainly to judge that his indifference proceeded from a soul so much elevated above such accidents, that he disdained to let it take any more hold of his fancy than any ordinary incident.

In the naval engagement that Augustus won of Sextus Pompeius in Sicily, just as they were to begin the fight, he was so fast asleep that his friends were compelled to wake him to give the signal of battle: and this was it that gave Mark Antony afterward occasion to reproach him that he had not the courage so much as with open eyes to behold the order of his own squadrons, and not to have dared to present himself before the soldiers, till first Agrippa had brought him news of the victory obtained. But as to the young Marius, who did much worse (for the day of his last battle against Sylla, after he had marshaled his army and given the word and signal of battle, he laid him down under the shade of a tree to repose himself, and fell so fast asleep that the rout and flight of his men could hardly waken him, he having seen nothing of the fight), he is said to have been at that time so extremely spent and worn out with labor and want of sleep, that nature could hold out no longer. Now, upon what has been said, the physicians may determine whether sleep be so necessary that our lives depend upon it: for we read that King Perseus of Macedon, being prisoner at Rome, was killed by being kept from sleep; but Pliny instances such as have lived long without sleep. Herodotus speaks of nations where the

men sleep and wake by half-years. And they who write the life of the sage Epimenides, affirm that he slept seven-and-fifty years together.

CHAPTER XLV.

OF THE BATTLE OF DREUX.

Our battle of Dreux* is remarkable for several extraordinary incidents; but such as have no great kindness for M. de Guise nor much favor his reputation, are willing to have him thought to blame, and that his making a halt and delaying time with the forces he commanded, while the constable, who was general of the army, was racked through and through with the enemy's artillery, his battalion routed, and himself taken prisoner, is not to be excused; and that he had much better have run the hazard of charging the enemy in flank, than staying for the advantage of falling in upon the rear, to suffer so great and so important a loss. But, besides what the event demonstrated, he who will consider it without passion or prejudice, will easily be induced to confess that the aim and design not of a captain only, but of every private soldier, ought to regard the victory in general; and that no particular occurrences, how nearly soever they may concern his own interest, should divert him from that pursuit. Philopœmen,† in an encounter with Machanidas, having sent before a good strong party of his archers and slingers to begin the skirmish, and these being routed and hotly pursued by the enemy, who, pushing on the fortune of their arms and in that pursuit passing by the battalion where Philopœmen was, though his soldiers were impatient to fall on, he did not think fit to stir from his post nor to present himself to the enemy to relieve his men, but having suffered these to be chased and cut in pieces before his face, charged in upon the enemy's foot when he saw them left unprotected by the horse, and notwithstanding that

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* December 19, 1562, in which the Catholics, under the command of the Duc de Guise and the Constable de Montmorency, defeated the Protestants commanded by the Prince de Conde. See Sismondi, Hist. des Français vol. xviii. p. 354.

† Plutarch, in vita, c. 6.

they were Lacædemonians, yet taking them in the nick, when thinking themselves secure of the victory they began to disorder their ranks; he did this business with great facility, and then put himself in pursuit of Machanidas. Which case is very like that of Monsieur de Guise.

In that bloody battle between Agesilaus and the Bœotians, which Xenophon,* who was present at it, reports to be the sharpest that he had ever seen, Agesilaus waved the advantage that fortune presented him, to let the Bœotian battalions pass by and then to charge them in the rear, how certain soever he might make himself of the victory, judging it would rather be an effect of conduct than valor to proceed that way; and, therefore, to show his prowess, rather chose with a marvelous ardor of courage to charge them in the front; but he was well beaten and well wounded for his pains, and constrained at last to disengage himself, and to take the course he had at first neglected; opening his battalion to give way to this torrent of Bœotians, and they being passed by, taking notice that they marched in disorder, like men who thought themselves out of danger, he pursued and charged them in flank; yet could not so prevail as to bring it to so general a rout, but that they leisurely retreated, still facing about upon him till they had retired to safety.

CHAPTER XLVI.

OF NAMES.

WHAT variety of herbs soever are shuffled together in the dish, yet the whole mass is swallowed up under one name of a sallet. In like manner, under the consideration of names, I will make a hodge-podge of divers articles.

Every nation has certain names, that, I know not why, are taken in no good sense, as with us, John, William, Benedict. In the genealogy of princes, also, there seems to be certain names fatally affected, as the Ptolemies of Egypt, the Henries in England, the Charleses in France, the Baldwins in Flanders, and the Williams of our ancient Aquitaine, from whence, 'tis said, the name of Guyenne

* Quoted by Plutarch, Life of Agesilaus.

has its derivation;* which would seem far fetched were there not as crude derivations in Plato himself.

Item, 'tis a frivolous thing in itself, but nevertheless worthy to be recorded for the strangeness of it, that is written by an eyewitness, that Henry, duke of Normandy, son of Henry II., king of England, making a great feast in France, the concourse of nobility and gentry were so great, that being, for sport's sake, divided into troops, according to their names, in the first troop, which consisted of Williams, there were found an hundred and ten knights sitting at the table of that name, without reckoning the ordinary gentlemen and servants.

It is as pleasant to distinguish the tables by the names of the guests, as it was in the Emperor Geta, to distinguish the several courses of his meat by the first letters of the meats themselves; so that those that began with B, were served up together, as brawn, beef, bream, bustards, beccaficos; and so of the others. Item, there is a saying, that it is a good thing to have a good name, that is to say, credit and a good repute: but, besides this, it is really convenient to have a well-sounding name, such as is easy of pronunciation and easy to be remembered, by reason that kings and other great persons do by that means the more easily know and the more hardly forget us; and indeed, of our own servants we more frequently call and employ those whose names are most ready upon the tongue. I myself have seen Henry II., when he could not for his heart hit of a gentleman's name of our country of Gascony, and moreover, was fain to call one of the queen's maids of honor, by the general name of her race, her own family name being so difficult to pronounce or remember. And Socrates thinks it worthy a father's care to give fine names to his children.

Item, 'tis said, that the foundation of Notre Dame la Grande, at Poitiers, took its original from hence, that a debauched young fellow formerly living in that place, having got to him a wench, and, at her first coming in, asking her name, and being answered that it was Mary, he felt himself so suddenly darted through with the awe of religion and the reverence to that sacred name of the

* Aquitania, the old designation of the country—L'Aquitaine, L'Aquienne, La Guienne.

Blessed Virgin, that he not only immediately sent the girl away, but became a reformed man and so continued the remainder of his life; and that, in consideration of this miracle, there was erected upon the place where this young man's house stood, first a chapel dedicated to our Lady and afterward the church that we now see standing there. This vocal and auricular reproof wrought upon the conscience, and that right into the soul; this that follows, insinuated itself merely by the senses. Pythagoras being in company with some wild young fellows, and perceiving that, heated with the feast, they complotted to go violate an honest house, commanded the singing wench to alter her wanton airs; and by a solemn, grave, and spondaic music, gently enchanted and laid asleep their ardor.*

Item, will not posterity say that our modern reformation has been wonderfully delicate and exact, in having not only combated errors and vices and filled the world with devotion, humility, obedience, peace, and all sorts of virtue; but in having proceeded so far as to quarrel with our ancient baptismal names of Charles, Louis, Francis, to fill the world with Methuselahs, Ezekiels, and Malachis, names of a more spiritual sound? A gentleman, a neighbor of mine, a great admirer of antiquity, and who was always extolling the excellences of former times in comparison with this present age of ours, did not, among the rest, forget to dwell upon the lofty and magnificent sound of the gentlemen's names of those days, Don Grumedan, Quedregan, Agesilan, which but to hear named he conceived to denote other kind of men than Pierre, Guillot, and Michel.

Item, I am mightily pleased with Jacques Amyot for leaving, throughout a whole French oration, the Latin names entire, without varying and garbling them to give them a French cadence. It seemed a little harsh and rough at first; but already custom, by the authority of his Plutarch, has overcome that novelty. I have often wished that such as write histories in Latin would leave our names as they find them and as they are; for in making Vaudemont into Vallemontanus, and metamorphosing names to make them suit better with the Greek or Latin, we know not where we are, and with the persons of the men lose the benefit of the story.

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* Sextus Empiricus, Advers. Mathem., book vi.

To conclude, 'tis a scurvy custom and of very ill consequence that we have in our kingdom of France to call every one by the name of his manor or seigneury; 'tis the thing in the world that the most prejudices and confounds families and descents. A younger brother of a good family, having a manor left him by his father, by the name of which he has been known and honored, cannot handsomely leave it; ten years after his decease it falls into the hands of a stranger, who does the same: do but judge whereabouts we shall be concerning the knowledge of these men. We need look no further for examples than our own royal family, where every partition creates a new surname, while, in the meantime, the original of the family is totally lost. There is so great liberty taken in these mutations, that I have not in my time seen any one advanced by fortune to any extraordinary condition who has not presently had genealogical titles added to him, new and unknown to his father, and who has not been inoculated into some illustrious stem by good-luck; and the obscurest families are the most apt for falsification. How many gentlemen have we in France who by their own account are of royal extraction? more, I think, than who will confess they are not. Was it not a pleasant passage of a friend of mine? There were several gentlemen assembled together about the dispute of one seigneur with another; which other had, in truth, some pre-eminence of titles and alliances above the ordinary gentry. Upon the debate of this prerogative, every one, to make himself equal to him, alleged, this one extraction, that another; this, the near resemblance of name, that, of arms: another, an old worm-eaten patent; the very least of them was great-grandchild to some foreign king. When they came to sit down to dinner, my friend, instead of taking his place among them, retiring with most profound congés entreated the company to excuse him for having hitherto lived with them at the saucy rate of a companion; but being now better informed of their quality, he would begin to pay them the respect due to their birth and grandeur, and that it would ill become him to sit down among so many princes; ending this farce with a thousand reproaches: "Let us, in God's name, satisfy ourselves with what our fathers were contented with, with what we are. We are great enough, if we rightly understand how to maintain it. Let us not disown

the fortune and condition of our ancestors, and let us lay aside these ridiculous pretenses, that can never be wanting to any one that has the impudence to allege them."

Arms have no more security than surnames. I bear azure powdered with trefoils, or with a lion's paw of the same armed gules in fesse. What privilege has this to continue particularly in my house? A son-in-law will transport it into another family, or some paltry purchaser will make them his first arms. There is nothing wherein there is more change and confusion.

But this consideration leads me, perforce, into another subject. Let us pry a little narrowly into, and, in God's name, examine upon what foundation we erect this glory and reputation for which the world is turned topsy-turvy: wherein do we place this renown that we hunt after with so much pains? It is, in the end, Peter or William that carries it, takes it into his possession, and whom it only concerns. Oh, what a valiant faculty is hope, that in a mortal subject, and in a moment, makes nothing of usurping infinity, immensity, eternity, and of supplying its master's indigence, at its pleasure, with all things he can imagine or desire! Nature has given us this passion for a pretty toy to play withal. And this Peter or William, what is it but a sound when all is done? or three or four dashes with a pen, so easy to be varied that I would fain know to whom is to be attributed the glory of so many victories, to Guesquin, to Glesquin, or to Gueaquin? * and yet there would be something of greater moment in the case than in Lucian,† that Sigma should serve Tau with a process; for,

> "Non levia aut ludicra petuntur
> Præmia;" ‡

the chase is there in very good earnest: the question is, which of these letters is to be rewarded for so many sieges, battles, wounds, imprisonments, and services done to the crown of France, by this famous constable?

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* The actual name is, as in Froissart, Du Guesclin, though the old writers variously call him Guesquin, Du Gueclin, Du Guyaquin Du Guesquin, Guesquinius, Guesclinius, Guesquinas, etc.

† Judgment of the Vowels.

‡ "They aim at no slight or trivial rewards."—*Æneid*, xii., 764.

Nicholas Denisot * never concerned himself further than the letters of his name, of which he has altered the whole contexture to build up by anagram the Count d'Alsinois, whom he has handsomely endowed with the glory of his poetry and painting. The historian Suetonius † was satisfied with only the meaning of his name, which made him cashier his father's surname, Lenis, to leave Tranquillus successor to the reputation of his writings. Who would believe that Captain Bayard ‡ should have no honor but what he derives from the deeds of Peter Terrail; and that Antonio Iscalin § should suffer himself to his face to be robbed of the honor of so many navigations and commands at sea and land by Captain Paulin and the Baron de la Garde? Secondly, these are dashes of the pen common to a thousand people. How many are there, in every family, of the same name and surname? and how many more in several families, ages, and countries? History tells us of three of the name of Socrates, of five Platos, of eight Aristotles, of seven Xenophons, of twenty Demetriuses, and of twenty Theodores; and how many more she was not acquainted with we may imagine. Who hinders my groom from calling himself Pompey the Great? But after all, what virtue, what authority, or what secret springs are there that fix upon my deceased groom, or the other Pompey, who had his head cut off in Egypt, this glorious renown, and these so much honored flourishes of the pen, so as to be of any advantage to them?

"Id cinerem et manes credis curare sepultos?" ‖

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* Painter and poet, born at Mans, 1515.

† Life of Otho, c. 10.

‡ Pierre du Terrail, Chevalier de Bayard.

§ Antonio Iscalin, called Paulin, from the place of his birth, a town in the Albigeois, and who is called in De Thou's History, Antonius Iscalinus Adhemarus (and oftener Adæmarus), Polinius Garda. He took the name of De la Garde from a corporal of that name, who passing one day through Paulin with a company of foot-soldiers, took a fancy to him and carried him off with him to make him his boy. He distinguished himself by his wit, valor, and conduct in the several employments which he had, as general of the galleys, ambassador to the Porte and to England. See his eulogium in Brantôme's Memoirs of Illustrious Men.

‖ "Do you believe the dead regard such things?"—*Æneid*, iv. 34.

What sense have the two companions in greatest esteem among men, Epaminondas, of this fine verse that has been so many ages current in his praise,

"Consiliis nostris laus est attrita laconum;" *

or Africanus, of this other,

"A sole exoriente, supra Mæotis Paludes
Nemo est qui factis me æquiparare queat." †

Survivors indeed tickle themselves with these fine phrases, and by them incited to jealousy and desire, inconsiderately and according to their own fancy, attribute to the dead this their own feeling, vainly flattering themselves that they shall one day in turn be capable of the same character. However,

"Ad hæc se
Romanus, Graiusque, et Barbarus induperator
Erexit; causas discriminis atque laboris
Inde habuit: tanto major famæ sitis est, quam
Virtutis." ‡

CHAPTER XLVII.

OF THE UNCERTAINTY OF OUR JUDGMENT.

WELL says this verse:

Εκέων δέ κολὺς νόμος ἔνθα καὶ ἔνθα.§

For example:

"Vince Annibal', e non seppe usar' poi
Ben la vittoriosa sua ventura." ‖

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* "The glory of the Spartans is extinguished by my counsels."—CICERO, *Tusc. Quæs.*, v. 17.

† "From where the sun rises over the Palus Mæotis, to where it sets, there is no one whose acts can compare with mine."—Idem, ibid.

‡ "For these the Roman, the Greek, the Barbarian commander hath aroused himself; hath undergone danger and toil: so much greater is the thirst for fame than the thirst for virtue."—JUVENAL, x. 137.

§ "There is everywhere enough liberty of arguing both for and against, on both sides."—*Iliad*, xx. 249.

"‖ Hannibal conquered, but knew not how to make the best use of his victories"—PETRARCH, *Son.* 83.

Such as would improve this argument, and condemn the oversight of our leaders in not pushing home the victory at Moncontour, or accuse the king of Spain of not knowing how to make his best use of the advantage he had against us at St. Quentin,* may conclude these oversights to proceed from a soul already drunk with success, or from a spirit which, being full and overgorged with this beginning of good fortune, had lost the appetite of adding to it, already having enough to do to digest what it had taken in: he has his arms full, and can embrace no more: unworthy of the benefit fortune has conferred upon him and the advantage she had put into his hands: for what utility does he reap from it, if, notwithstanding, he give his enemy respite to rally and make head against him? What hope is there that he will dare at another time to attack an enemy reunited and recomposed, and armed anew with anger and revenge, who did not dare to pursue them when routed and unmanned by fear?

"Dum fortuna calet, dum conficit omnia terror."†

But withal, what better opportunity can he expect than that he has lost? 'Tis not here, as in fencing, where the most hits gain the prize; for so long as the enemy is on foot, the game is new to begin, and that is not to be called a victory that puts not an end to the war. In the encounter where Cæsar had the worst, near the city of Oricum, he reproached Pompey's soldiers that he had been lost had their general known how to overcome;‡ and afterward clawed him in a very different fashion when it came to his turn.

But why may not a man also argue, on the contrary, that it is the effect of a precipitous and insatiate spirit not to know how to bound and restrain its coveting; that it is to abuse the favors of God to exceed the measure He has prescribed them: and that again to throw a man's self into danger after a victory obtained is again to expose himself to the mercy of fortune: that it is one of the greatest discretions in the rule of war not to drive an

* August 10, 1556.

† "Whilst fortune's in the heat, and terror seizes upon all the enemy."—LUCAN, vii. 734.

‡ Plutarch, Life of Cæsar, c. 11.

enemy to despair? Sylla and Marius in the social war, having defeated the Marsians, seeing yet a body of reserve that, prompted by despair, was coming on like enraged brutes to dash in upon them, thought it not convenient to stand their charge. Had not Monsieur de Foix's ardor transported him so furiously to pursue the remains of the victory of Ravenna, he had not obscured it by his own death. And yet the recent memory of his example served to preserve Monsieur d'Anguien from the same misfortune at the battle of Serisoles. 'Tis dangerous to attack a man you have deprived of all means to escape but by his arms, for necessity teaches violent resolutions: "*gravissimi sunt morsus irritatæ necessitatis.*" *

"Vincitur haud gratis, jugulo qui provocat hostem." †

This was it that made Pharax withhold the king of Lacedæmon, who had won a battle against the Mantineans, from going to charge a thousand Argians, who had escaped in an entire body from the defeat, but rather let them steal off at liberty, that he might not encounter valor whetted and enraged by mischance.‡ Clodomir, king of Aquitaine, after his victory pursuing Gondemar, king of Burgundy, beaten and making off as fast as he could for safety, compelled him to face about and make head, wherein his obstinacy deprived him of the fruit of his conquest, for he there lost his life.

In like manner, if a man were to choose whether he would have his soldiers richly and sumptuously accoutered or armed only for the necessity of the matter in hand, this argument would step in to favor the first, of which opinion was Sertorius, Philopœmen, Brutus, Cæsar,§ and others, that it is to a soldier an inflaming of courage and a spur to glory to see himself in brave attire; and withal a motive to be more obstinate in fight, having his arms, which are in a manner his estate and whole inheritance, to defend; which is the reason, says Xenophon,‖ why those

* "Enraged necessity bites deepest."—PORTIUS LATRO. *Declam.*

† "He who presents himself to the foe, sells his life dear."—LUCAN iv. 275.

‡ Diodorus Siculus, xii. 25.

§ Suetonius, Cæsar, c. 67.

‖ Cyropædia, iv. 4.

of Asia carried their wives and concubines, with their choicest jewels and greatest wealth, along with them to the wars. But then these arguments would be as ready to stand up for the other side; that a general ought rather to lessen in his men their solicitude of preserving themselves than to increase it; that by such means they will be in a double fear of hazarding their persons, as it will be a double temptation to the enemy to fight with greater resolution where so great booty and so rich spoils are to be obtained; and this very thing has been observed in former times, notably to encourage the Romans against the Samnites. Antiochus, showing Hannibal the army he had raised, wonderfully splendid and rich in all sorts of equipage, asked him if the Romans would be satisfied with that army? "Satisfied?" replied the other, "yes, doubtless, were their avarice never so great." * Lycurgus not only forbade his soldiers all manner of bravery in their equipage, but, moreover, to strip their conquered enemies, because he would; as he said, that poverty and frugality should shine with the rest of the battle. †

At sieges and elsewhere, where occasion draws us near to the enemy, we willingly suffer our men to brave, rate, and affront him with all sorts of injurious language; and not without some color of reason: for it is of no little consequence to take from them all hopes of mercy and composition, by representing to them that there is no fair quarter to be expected from an enemy they have incensed to that degree, nor other remedy remaining but in victory. And yet Vitellius found himself deceived in this way of proceeding; for having to do with Otho, weaker in the valor of his soldiers, long unaccustomed to war and effeminated with the delights of the city, he so nettled them at last with injurious language, reproaching them with cowardice and regret for the mistresses and entertainments they had left behind at Rome, that by this means he inspired them with such resolution as no exhortation had had the power to have done, and himself made them fall upon him, with whom their own captains before could by no means prevail. And, indeed, when they are injuries that touch to the quick, it may very well fall out that he

* Aulus Gellius, v. 5.

† Plutarch, Apothegms of the Lacedæmonians, art. Lycurgus.

who went unwillingly to work in the behalf of his prince will fall to't with another sort of mettle when the quarrel is his own.

Considering of how great importance is the preservation of the general of an army, and that the universal aim of an enemy is leveled directly at the head, upon which all the others depend, the course seems to admit of no dispute, which we know has been taken by so many great captains of changing their habits and disguising their persons upon the point of going to engage. Nevertheless, the inconvenience a man by so doing runs into is not less than that he thinks to avoid; for the captain, by this means being concealed from the knowledge of his own men, the courage they should derive from his presence and example happens by degrees to cool and to decay: and not seeing the wonted marks* and ensigns of their leader, they presently conclude him either dead, or that, despairing of the business, he is gone to shift for himself. And experience shows us that both these ways have been successful and otherwise. What befell Pyrrhus in the battle he fought against the consul Levinus in Italy will serve us to both purposes; for though by shrouding his person under the armor of Megacles and making him wear his own, he undoubtedly preserved his own life, yet, by that very means, he was withal very near running into the other mischief of losing the battle. Alexander, Cæsar, and Lucullus loved to make themselves known in a battle by rich accouterments and armor of a particular luster and color; Agis, Agesilaus, and that great Gilippus,† on the contrary, used to fight obscurely armed, and without any imperial attendance or distinction.

Among other oversights Pompey is charged withal at the battle of Pharsalia, he is condemned for making his army stand still to receive the enemy's charge; "by reason that" (I shall here steal Plutarch's own words, which are better than mine) ‡ "he by so doing deprived himself of the violent impression the motion of running adds to the first shock of arms, and hindered that clashing of the combatants against one another which is wont to give them greater

* As at the battle of Ivry, in the person of Henry the Great.

† Diodorus Siculus, xiii. 33.

‡ Life of Pompey, c. 19.

impetuosity and fury; especially when they come to rush in with their utmost vigor, their courages increasing by the shouts and career; 'tis to render the soldiers' ardor, as a man may say, more reserved and cold." This is what he says. But if Cæsar had come by the worse, why might it not as well have been urged by another, that, on the contrary, the strongest and most steady posture of fighting is that wherein a man stands planted firm without motion; and that they who are steady upon the march, closing up, and reserving their force within themselves for the push of the business, have a great advantage against those who are disordered, and who have already spent half their breath in running on precipitately to the charge? Besides that an army is a body made up of so many individual members, it is impossible for it to move in this fury with so exact a motion as not to break the order of battle, and that the best of them are not engaged before their fellows can come on to help them. In that unnatural battle between the two Persian brothers, the Lacedæmonian Clearchus, who commanded the Greeks of Cyrus' party, led them on softly and without precipitation to the charge; but coming within fifty paces, hurried them on full speed, hoping in so short a career both to keep their order and to husband their breath, and at the same time to give the advantage of impetuosity and impression both to their persons and their missile arms. Others have regulated this question as to their armies thus: if your enemy come full drive upon you, stand firm to receive him; if he stand to receive you, run full drive upon him.*

In the expedition of the Emperor Charles V. into Provence, King Francis was put to choose either to go meet him in Italy or to await him in his own dominions; wherein though he very well considered of how great advantage it was to preserve his own territory entire and clear from the troubles of war, to the end that being unexhausted of its stores, it might continually supply men and money at need; that the necessity of war requires at every turn to spoil and lay waste the country before us, which cannot very well be done upon one's own; to which may be added, that the country-people do not so easily digest such a havoc by those of their own party as from an enemy, so that seditions and

* Plutarch, Precepts of Marriage, c. 34.

commotions might by such means be kindled among us; that the license of pillage and plunder (which are not to be tolerated at home) is a great ease and refreshment against the fatigues and sufferings of war; and that he who has no other prospect of gain than his bare pay, will hardly be kept from running home, being but two steps from his wife and his own house; that he who lays the cloth is ever at the charge of the feast; that there is more alacrity in assaulting than defending; and that the shock of a battle's loss in our own bowels is so violent as to endanger the disjointing of the whole body, there being no passion so contagious as that of fear, that is so easily believed, or that so suddenly diffuses itself; and that the cities that should hear the rattle of this tempest at their gates, that should take in their captains and soldiers yet trembling and out of breath, would be in danger in this heat and hurry to precipitate themselves upon some untoward resolution: notwithstanding all this, so it was that he chose to recall the forces he had beyond the mountains and to suffer the enemy to come to him. For he might, on the other hand, imagine that, being at home and among his friends, he could not fail of plenty of all manner of conveniences; the rivers and passes he had at his devotion would bring him in both provisions and money in all security, and without the trouble of convoy; that he should find his subjects by so much the more affectionate to him, by how much their danger was more near and more pressing; that having so many cities and barriers to secure him, it would be in his power to give the law of battle at his own opportunity and advantage; and that, if it pleased him to delay the time, under cover and at his ease he might see his enemy founder and defeat himself with the difficulties he was certain to encounter, being engaged in an hostile country, where before, behind, and on every side war would be made upon him; no means to refresh himself or to enlarge his quarters, should diseases infest them, or to lodge his wounded men in safety; no money, no victuals, but at the point of the lance; no leisure to repose and take breath; no knowledge of the ways or country to secure him from ambushes and surprises; and in case of losing a battle, no possible means of saving the remains. Neither is there want of example in both these cases.

Scipio thought it much better to go and attack his enemy's territories in Africa than to stay at home to defend

his own and to fight him in Italy, and it succeeded well with him. But, on the contrary, Hannibal in the same way ruined himself by abandoning the conquest of a foreign country, to go and defend his own. The Athenians having left the enemy in their own dominions to go over into Sicily, were not favored by fortune in their design; but Agathocles, king of Syracuse found her favorable to him when he went over into Africa and left the war at home.

By which examples we are wont to conclude, and with some reason, that events, especially in war, for the most part depend upon fortune, who will not be governed by nor submit unto human reasons, and prudence, according to the poet,

> "Et male consultis pretium est: prudentia fallit:
> Nec fortuna probat causas, sequiturque merentes,
> Sed vaga per cunctos nullo discrimine fertur.
> Scilicet est aliud, quod nos cogatque regatque
> Majus, et in proprias ducat mortalia leges."*

But, to take the thing right, it should seem that our counsels and deliberations depend as much upon fortune as anything else we do, and that she engages our very reason and arguments in her uncertainty and confusion. "We argue rashly and adventurously," says Timæus in Plato, by reason that, as well as ourselves, our discourses have great participation with the temerity of chance."

CHAPTER XLVIII.

OF WAR-HORSES, OR DESTRIERS.

I HERE have become a grammarian, I who never learned any language but by rote, and who do not yet know adjectives, conjunction, or ablative. I think I have read that the Romans had a sort of horses, by them called *funales* or *dextrarios,* which were either led horses, or horses laid on at several stages to be taken fresh upon occasion, and thence it is that we call our horses of service *destriers;* and our

* "There may be good in ill counsel: prudence is deceitful and uncertain: fortune does not inquire into causes as matter of course, nor aid the most deserving, but turns hither and thither without discrimination. For there is a greater power which directs and rules us and conducts things according to his own laws."—MINALIUS, iv. 95.

romances commonly use the phrase of *adestrer* for *accompagner*, to accompany. They also called those that were trained in such sort, that running full speed, side by side, without bridle or saddle, the Roman gentlemen armed at all pieces, would shift and throw ourselves from one to the other, *desultorios equos*. The Numidian men-at-arms had always a led horse in one hand, besides that they rode upon, to change in the heat of battle: "*quibus, desultorum in modum, binos trahentibus, equos, interacerrimam sæpe pugnam, in recentem equum, ex fesso, armatis transultare mos erat: tanta velocitas ipsis, tamque docile equorum genus.*" * There are many horses trained to help their riders so as to run upon any one that appears with a drawn sword, to fall both with mouth and heels upon any that front or oppose them: but it often happens that they do more harm to their friends than to their enemies; and moreover, you cannot lose them from their hold, to reduce them again into order, when they are once engaged and grappled, by which means you remain at the mercy of their quarrel. It happened very ill to Artybius, general of the Persian army, fighting, man to man, with Onesilus, king of Salamis, to be mounted upon a horse trained after this manner, it being the occasion of his death, the squire of Onesilus cleaving the horse down with a scythe, between the shoulders as it was reared up upon his master.† And what the Italians report that in the battle of Fornova King Charles' horse, with kicks and plunges, disengaged his master from the enemy that pressed upon him, without which he had been slain, sounds like a very great chance, if it be true.‡ The Mamalukes

* "Whose use it was, leading along two horses, after the manner of the horse-vaulters in a circus armed as they were, in the heat of fight, to leap from a tired horse to a fresh one; so active were the men, and the horses so docile."—LIVY, xxiii. 29.

† Herodotus, v. 111, 112.

‡ In the narrative which Philip de Comines has given of this battle, in which he himself was present (lib. viii. ch. 6), he tells us of wonderful performances by the horse on which the king was mounted. The name of the horse was Savoy, and it was the most beautiful horse he had ever seen. During the battle the king was personally attacked, when he had nobody near him but a valet de chambre, a little fellow, and not well armed. "The king," says Philip de Comines, "had the best horse under him in the world, and therewith he stood his ground bravely, till a number of his men, not a great way from him arrived at the critical minute."

make their boast that they have the most ready horses of any cavalry in the world; that by nature and custom they were taught to know and distinguish the enemy, and to fall foul upon him with mouth and heels, according to a word or sign given; as also to gather up with their teeth darts and lances scattered upon the field, and present them to their riders, on the word of command. 'Tis said, both of Cæsar and Pompey, that among their other excellent qualities they were both very good horsemen, and particularly of Cæsar, that in his youth, being mounted on the bare back, without saddle or bridle, he could make the horse run, stop, and turn, and perform all its airs, with his hands behind him.* As nature designed to make of this person and of Alexander, two miracles of military art, so one would say she had done her utmost to arm them after an extraordinary manner: for every one knows that Alexander's horse, Bucephalus, had a head inclining to the shape of a bull; that he would suffer himself to be mounted and governed by none but his master, and that he was so honored after his death as to have a city erected to his name.† Cæsar had also one which had forefeet like those of a man, his hoofs being divided in the form of fingers, which likewise was not to be ridden by any but Cæsar himself, who after his death, dedicated his statue to the goddess Venus.‡

I do not willingly alight when I am once on horseback, for it is the place where, whether well or sick, I find myself most at ease. Plato§ recommends it for health, as also Pliny says it is good for the stomach and the joints. Let us go further into this matter since here we are.

We read in Xenophon‖ a law forbidding any one who was master of a horse to travel on foot. Trogus and Justin¶ say that the Parthians were wont to perform all offices and ceremonies, not only in war but also all affairs whether public or private, make bargains, confer, entertain, take the air, and all on horseback; and that the greatest distinction between freemen and slaves among them was that the one rode on horseback and the other

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* Plutarch, in vita, c. 5.

† Aulus Gellius, v. 2.

‡ Suetonius, Life of Cæsar, c. 61.

§ Laws, vii.

‖ Cyropædia, iv. 3.

¶ Justin, book 41.

went on foot, an institution of which King Cyrus was the founder.

There are several examples in the Roman history (and Suetonius more particularly observes it of Cæsar *) of captains who, on pressing occasions, commanded their cavalry to alight, both by that means to take from them all hopes of flight, as also for the advantage they hoped in this sort of fight. "*Quo haud dubie superat Romanus,*" says Livy. † And so the first thing they did to prevent the mutinies and insurrections of nations of late conquest was to take from them their arms and horses, and therefore it is that we so often meet in Cæsar: "*arma proferri, jumenta produci, obsides dari jubet.*"‡ The Grand Signior to this day suffers not a Christian or a Jew to keep a horse of his own throughout his empire.

Our ancestors, and especially at the time they had war with the English, in all their greatest engagements and pitched battles fought for the most part on foot, that they might have nothing but their own force, courage, and constancy to trust to in a quarrel of so great concern as life and honor. You stake (whatever Chrysanthes in Xenophon § says to the contrary) your valor and your fortune upon that of your horse; his wounds or death bring your person into the same danger; his fear or fury shall make you reputed rash or cowardly; if he have an ill mouth, or will not answer to the spur, your honor must answer for it. And, therefore, I do not think it strange that those battles were more firm and furious than those that are fought on horseback:

> "Cædebant pariter, pariterque ruebant
> Victores victique; neque his fuga nota, neque illis."‖

Their battles were much better disputed. Nowadays there are nothing but routs: "*primus clamor atque impetus rem decernit.*"‡ And the means we choose to make use of

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* Suetonius, in vita, c. 60.

† "Wherein the Romans did questionless excel."—Livy, ix. 22.

‡ "He commandeth the arms to be produced, the horses brought out and hostages to be given."—*De Bello Gall.*, vii. 11.

§ Cyropædia, iv. 3.

‖ "They fight and fall pell-mell, victors and vanquished; flight unthought of by either.—*Æneid*, x. 756.

¶ "The first shout, the first charge puts an end to the business."—Livy, xxv. 41.

in so great a hazard should be as much as possible at our own command: wherefore I should advise to choose weapons of the shortest sort, and such of which we are able to give the best account. A man may repose more confidence in a sword he holds in his hand than in a bullet he discharges out of a pistol, wherein there must be a concurrence of several circumstances to make it perform its office, the powder, the stone, and the wheel: if any of which fail it endangers your fortune. A man himself strikes much surer than the air can direct his blow.

> "Et, quo ferre velint, permittere vulnera ventis:
> Ensis habet vires; et gens quæcumque virorum est,
> Bella gerit gladiis." *

But of that weapon I shall speak more fully when I come to compare the arms of the ancients with those of modern use; only, by the way, the astonishment of the ear abated, which every one grows familiar with in a short time, I look upon it as a weapon of very little execution, and hope we shall one day lay it aside. That missile weapon which the Italians formerly made use of both with fire and by sling was much more terrible: they called a certain kind of javelin, armed at the point with an iron three feet long, that it might pierce through and through an armed man, Phalarica, which they sometimes in the field darted by hand, sometimes from several sorts of engines for the defense of beleaguered places; the shaft being rolled round with flax, wax, rosin, oil, and other combustible matter, took fire in its flight, and lighting upon the body of a man or his target, took away all the use of arms and limbs. And yet, coming to close fight, I should think they would also damage the assailant, and that the camp being as it were planted with these flaming truncheons, would produce a common inconvenience to the whole crowd.

> "Magnum stridens contorta Phalarica venit,
> Fulminis acta modo." †

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* "Where it lists, the wind bestows the arrow wound: the sword needs strength of arm: manly nations prefer to fight with the sword."—LUCAN, viii. 384.

† "The Phalarica, launched like lightning, flies through the air with a loud rushing sound."—*Æneid*, ix. 705.

They had moreover, other devices which custom made them perfect in (which seem incredible to us who have not seen them), by which they supplied the effects of our powder and shot. They darted their spears with so great force as oft-times to transfix two targets and two armed men at once, and pin them together. Neither was the effect of their slings, less certain of execution or of shorter carriage:

"*Saxis globosis . . . funda, mare apertum incessentes . . . coronas modici circuli, magno ex intervallo loci, assueti trajicere, non capita modo hostium vulnerabant, sed quem locum destinassent.*" *

These pieces of battery had not only the execution of but the thunder of our cannon also:

"*Ad ictus mœnium cum terribili sonitu editos, pavor et trepidatio cepit.*" †

The Gauls, our kinsmen in Asia, abominated these treacherous missile arms, it being their use to fight, with greater bravery, hand to hand.

"*Non tam patentibus plagis moventur . . . ubi latior quam altior plaga est, etiam gloriosius se pugnare putant: iidem quum aculeus sagittæ aut glandis abditæ introrsus tenui vulnere in speciem urit . . . tum in rabiem et pudorem tam parvæ perimentis pestis versi, prosternunt corpora humi.*" ‡

A pretty description of something very like a harquebus-shot. The ten thousand Greeks in their long and famous retreat met with a nation who very much galled them with great and strong bows, carrying arrows so long, that, taking them up, one might return them back like a dart, and with them pierce a buckler and an armed man

* "Culling round stones from the beach for their slings; and with these practicing over the waves, so as from a great distance to throw within a very small circuit, they became able not only to wound an enemy in the head, but hit any other part at pleasure."—LIVY, xxxviii.29.

† "At the battery of the walls, performed with a terrible noise, the defendants began to fear and tremble."—LIVY, xxxviii, 5.

‡ "They are not so much concerned about large gashes—the bigger and deeper the wound, the more glorious do they esteem the combat: but when they find themselves tormented by some arrow-head or bullet lodged within, but presenting little outward show of wound, transported with shame and anger to perish by so imperceptible a destroyer, they fall to the ground."—Idem, ibid., 21.

through and through.* The engines that Dionysius invented at Syracuse to shoot vast massy darts and stones of a prodigious greatness, with so great impetuosity and at so great a distance, came very near to our modern inventions.

But in this discourse of horses and horsemanship, we are not to forget the pleasant posture of one Maistre Pierre Pol, a doctor of divinity, upon his mule, whom Monstrelet reports always to have ridden aside through the streets of Paris like a woman. He says also, elsewhere, that the Gascons had terrible horses, that would wheel in their full speed, which the French, Picards, Flemings and Brabanters looked upon as a miracle, "having never seen the like before," which are his very words.

Cæsar † speaking of the Suabians: "in the charges they make on horseback," says he, "they often throw themselves off to fight on foot, having taught their horses not to stir in the meantime from the place, to which they presently run again upon occasion; and according to their custom, nothing is so unmanly and so base as to use saddles or pads, and they despise such as make use of those conveniences: insomuch that, being but a very few in number, they fear not to attack a great many." That which I have formerly wondered at, to see a horse made to perform all his airs with a switch only and the reins upon his neck, was common with the Massilians, who rode their horses without saddle or bridle.

> "Et gens, quæ nudo residens Massylia dorso,
> Ora levi flectit, frænorum nescia, virga." ‡

> "Et Numidæ infræni cingunt." §

"Equi sine frœnis, deformis ipse cursus, rigida cervice, et extento capite currentium." ‖

King Alphonso,¶ he who first instituted the Order of the Band or Scarf in Spain, among other rules of the order,

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* Xenophon, Anab., v. 2.

† De Bello Gall., iv. 1.

‡ "The Massylians, mounted on the bare backs of their horses, bridleless, guide them by a mere switch."—LUCAN, iv. 682.

§ "The Numidians guiding their horses without bridles."—*Æneid*, iv. 41.

‖ "The career of a horse without a bridle is ungraceful; the neck extended stiff and the nose thrust out."—LIVY, xxxv. 11.

¶ Alfonso XI., King of Leon and Castile, died 1350.

gave them this, that they should never ride mule or mulet, upon penalty of a mark of silver; this I had lately out of Guevara's Letters, whoever gave these the title of Golden Epistles, had another kind of opinion of them than I have. The courtier* says, that till his time it was a disgrace to a gentleman to ride on one of these creatures: but the Abyssinians, on the contrary. the nearer they are to the person of Prester John, love to be mounted upon large mules, for the greatest dignity and grandeur.

Xenophon tells us,† that the Assyrians were fain to keep their horses fettered in the stable, they were so fierce and vicious; and that it required so much time to loose and harness them, that to avoid any disorder this tedious preparation might bring upon them in case of surprise, they never sat down in their camp till it was first well fortified with ditches and ramparts. His Cyrus, who was so great a master in all manner of horse service, kept his horses to their due work, and never suffered them to have anything to eat till first they had earned it by the sweat of some kind of exercise. The Scythians when in the field and in scarcity of provisions used to let their horses' blood which they drank, and sustained themselves by that diet:

"Venit et epoto Sarmata pastus equo." ‡

Those of Crete, being besieged by Metellus, were in so great necessity for drink that they were fain to quench their thirst with their horses' urine. §

To show how much cheaper the Turkish armies support themselves than our European forces, 'tis said, that besides the soldiers drink nothing but water and eat nothing but rice and salt flesh pulverized (of which every one may easily carry about with him a month's provision) they know how to feed upon the blood of their horses as well as the Muscovite and Tartar, and salt it for their use.

These new-discovered people of the Indies when the Spaniards first landed among them, had so great an

* The "Cortegiano" of Balthasar Castiglione, published in 1528.

† Cyropædia, iii. 3.

‡ "The Scythian comes, who feeds on horse-flesh."—MARTIAL, *Spectac.*, lib. Ep. 3, v. 4.

§ Val. Max., vii. 6, ext 1.

opinion both of the men and horses, that they looked upon the first as gods and the other as animals ennobled above their nature; insomuch that after they were subdued, coming to the men to sue for peace and pardon, and to bring them gold and provisions, they failed not to offer of the same to the horses, with the same kind of harangue to them they had made to the others: interpreting their neighing for a language of truce and friendship.

In the other Indies, to ride upon an elephant was the first and royal place of honor; the second to ride in a coach with four horses; the third to ride upon a camel; and the last and least honor to be carried or drawn by one horse only.* Some one of our late writers tells us that he has been in countries in those parts, where they ride upon oxen with pads, stirrups, and bridles, and very much at their ease.

Quintus Fabius Maximus Rutilianus, in a battle with the Samnites, seeing his horse, after three or four charges, had failed of breaking into the enemy's battalion, took this course, to make them unbridle all their horses and spur their hardest, so that having nothing to check their career, they might through weapons and men open the way to his foot, who by that means gave them a bloody defeat.† The same command was given by Quintus Fulvius Flaccus against the Celtiberians: "*Id quum majore vi equorum facietis, si effrænatos in hostes equos immittis; quod sæpe Romanos equites cum laude fecisse sua, memoriæ proditum est . . . detractisque frænis, bis ultro citroque cum magna strage hostium, infractis omnibus hastis, transcurrerunt.*" ‡

The duke of Muscovy was anciently obliged to pay this reverence to the Tartars, that when they sent an embassy to him he went out to meet them on foot, and presented them with a goblet of mares' milk (a beverage of greatest esteem among them), and if, in drinking, a drop fell by

* Arian Hist. Ind., c. 17.

† Livy, vii. 30.

‡ "You will do your business with greater advantage of your horses' strength, if you send them unbridled upon the enemy, as it is recorded the Roman horse to their great glory have often done; their bits being taken off they charged through and again back through the enemy's ranks with great slaughter, breaking down all their spears."—Idem, xl. 40.

chance upon their horse's mane, he was bound to lick it off with his tongue. The army that Bajazet had sent into Russia was overwhelmed with so dreadful a tempest of snow, that to shelter and preserve themselves from the cold, many killed and embowelled their horses, to creep into their bellies and enjoy the benefit of that vital heat. Bajazet, after that furious battle wherein he was overthrown by Tamerlane, was in a hopeful way of securing his own person by the fleetness of an Arabian mare he had under him, had he not been constrained to let her drink her fill at the ford of a river in his way, which rendered her so heavy and indisposed, that he was afterward easily overtaken by those that pursued him. They say indeed, that to let a horse stale takes him off his mettle, but, as to drinking, I should rather have thought it would refresh her.

Crœsus, marching his army through certain waste lands near Sardis, met with an infinite number of serpents, which the horses devoured with great appetite, and which Herodotus says * was a prodigy of ominous portent to his affairs.

We call a horse *cheval entire*, that has his mane and ears entire, and no other will pass muster. The Lacedæmonians, having defeated the Athenians in Sicily, returning triumphant from the victory into the city of Syracuse, among other insolences, caused all the horses they had taken to be shorn and led in triumph. Alexander fought with a nation called Dahæ, whose discipline it was to march two and two together armed on one horse, to the war; and being in fight one of them alighted, and so they fought on horseback and on foot, one after another by turns.

I do not think that for graceful riding any nation in the world excels the French. A good horseman, according to our way of speaking, seems rather to have respect to the courage of the man than address in riding. Of all that ever I saw, the most knowing in that art, who had the best seat and the best method in breaking horses, was Monsieur de Carnavalet, who served our King Henry II.

I have seen a man ride with both his feet upon the sad-

* Book i. c. 78.

dle, take off his saddle, and at his return take it up again and replace it, riding all the while full speed; having galloped over a cap, make at it very good shots backward with his bow; take up anything from the ground, setting one foot on the ground and the other in the stirrup: with twenty other ape's tricks, which he got his living by.

There has been seen in my time at Constantinople two men upon one horse, who, in the height of its speed, would throw themselves off and into the saddle again by turn; and one who bridled and saddled his horse with nothing but his teeth; another who between two horses, one foot upon one saddle and the other upon the other, carrying another man upon his shoulders, would ride full career, the other standing bolt upright upon him and making very good shots with his bow; several who would ride full speed with their heels upward, and their heads upon the saddle between several scimitars, with the points upward, fixed in the harness. When I was a boy, the prince of Sulmona, riding a rough horse at Naples to all his airs, held reals under his knees and toes, as if they had been nailed there, to show the firmness of his seat.

CHAPTER XLIX.

OF ANCIENT CUSTOMS.

I SHOULD willingly pardon our people for admitting no other pattern or rule of perfection than their own peculiar manners and customs; for 'tis a common vice, not of the vulgar only, but almost of all men, to walk in the beaten road their ancestors have trod before them. I am content, when they see Fabricius or Lælius, that they look upon their countenance and behavior as barbarous, seeing they are neither clothed nor fashioned according to our mode. But I find fault with their singular indiscretion in suffering themselves to be so blinded and imposed upon by the authority of the present usage, as every month to alter their opinion, if custom so required, and that they should so vary their judgment in their own particular concern.

When they wore the busk of their doublets up as high as their breasts, they stiffly maintained that they were in their proper place; some years after, it was slipped down between

their thighs, and then they could laugh at the former fashion as uneasy and intolerable. The fashion now in use makes them absolutely condemn the other two with so great resolution and so universal consent, that a man would think there was a certain kind of madness crept in among them, that infatuates their understandings to this strange degree. Now, seeing that our change of fashions is so prompt and sudden, that the inventions of all the tailors in the world cannot furnish out new whim-whams enow to feed our vanity withal, there will often be a necessity that the despised forms must again come in vogue, and these immediately after fall into the same contempt; and that the same judgment must, in the space of fifteen or twenty years, take up half-a-dozen not only divers but contrary opinions, with an incredible lightness and inconstancy; there is not any of us so discreet, who suffers not himself to be gulled with this contradiction, and both in external and internal sight to be insensibly blinded.

I will here muster up some old customs that I have in memory, some of them the same with ours, the others different, to the end, that bearing in mind this continual variation of human things, we may have our judgment more clearly and firmly settled.

The thing in use among us of fighting with rapier and cloak, was in practice among the Romans also: "*Sinistras sagis involvunt, gladioque distringunt,*" * says Cæsar; and he † observes a vicious custom of our nation, that continues yet among us, which is to stop passengers we meet upon the road, to compel them to give an account who they are, and to take it for an affront and just cause of quarrel if they refuse to do it.

At the baths, which the ancients made use of every day before they went to dinner, and as frequently as we wash our hands, they at first only bathed their arms and legs; ‡ but afterward, and by a custom that has continued for many ages in most nations of the world, they bathed stark naked in mixed and perfumed water, looking upon it as a great simplicity to bathe in mere water. The most delicate and affected perfumed themselves all over three or

* "They wrapped their cloaks upon the left arm, and drew their swords."—*De Bello Civili.*, i. 75.

† Idem, lib. v.

‡ Seneca, Ep., 86.

four times a day. They often caused their hair to be pinched off, as the women of France have some time since taken up a custom to do their foreheads,

"Quod pectus, quod cruri tibi, quod brachia vellis," *

though they had ointments proper for that purpose,

"Psilotro nitet, aut acida latet oblita creta." †

They delighted to lie soft, and alleged it as a great testimony of hardiness, to lie upon a mattress. They ate lying upon beds, much after the manner of the Turks in this age:

"Inde thoro pater Æneas sic orsus ab alto." ‡

And 'tis said of the younger Cato, § that after the battle of Pharsalia, being entered into a melancholy disposition at the ill posture of the public affairs, he took his repasts always sitting, assuming a strict and austere course of life. It was also their custom to kiss the hands of great persons; the more to honor and caress them. And meeting with friends, they always kissed in salutation, as do the Venetians:

"Gratatusque darem cum dulcibus oscula verbis." ‖

In petitioning or saluting any great man, they used to lay their hands upon his knees. Pasicles, the philosopher, brother of Crates, instead of laying his hand upon his knee laid it upon the private parts, and being roughly repulsed by him to whom he made that indecent compliment: "What," said he, "is not that part your own as well as the other?" ¶ They used to eat fruit, as we do, after dinner. ** They wiped their fundaments (let the

* "You pluck the hairs out of your breast, your arms, and thighs."—MARTIAL, ii. 62, 1.

† "She shines with unguents, or with chalk dissolved in vinegar." —Idem, vi. 93, 9.

‡ "Thus Father Æneas, from his high bed of state, spoke."—*Æneid*, ii. 2.

§ Plutarch, in vita, c. 15.

‖ "And kindest words I would mingle with kisses."—OVID, *De Pont.*, iv. 9, 13.

¶ Diogenes Laertius, vi. 89.

** Horace, Sat. i. 3, 6.

ladies, if they please, mince it smaller) with a sponge, which is the reason that *spongia* is a smutty word in Latin; which sponge was fastened to the end of a stick as appears by the story of him who, as he was led along to be thrown to the wild beasts in the sight of the people, asking leave to do his business and having no other way to despatch himself, forced the sponge and stick down his throat and choked himself.* They used to wipe, after coition, with perfumed wool.

> "At tibi nil faciam; sed lota mentula lana." †

They had in the streets of Rome vessels and little tubs for passengers to urine in:

> "Pusi sæpe lacum propter, se, ac dolia curta.
> Somno devincti, credunt extollere vestem."‡

They had collation between meals, and had, in summer, cellars of snow to cool their wine; and some there were who made use of snow in winter, not thinking their wine cool enough, even at that cold season of the year. The men of quality had their cupbearers and carvers, and their buffoons to make them sport. They had their meat served up in winter upon chafing dishes, which were set upon the table; and had portable kitchens (of which I myself have seen some) wherein all their service was carried about with them.

> "Has vobis epulas habete, lauti:
> Nos offendimur ambulante cæna." §

In summer, they had a contrivance to bring fresh and clear rills through their lower rooms, wherein were great store of living fish which the guests took out with their own hands to be dressed every man according to his own liking. Fish has ever had this pre-eminence, and keeps it still, that the grandees, as to them, all pretend to be cooks; and indeed the taste is more delicate than that of

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* Seneca, Ep., 70.

† Martial, xi. 58, 11.

‡ "The little boys in their sleep often think they are near the public urinal, and raise their coats to make use of it."—LUCRETIUS, iv. 1024.

§ "Do you, if you please, esteem these feasts for my part, I do not like the ambulatory suppers."—MARTIAL, vii. 48, 4.

flesh, at least to my fancy. But in all sorts of magnificence, debauchery, and voluptuous inventions of effeminacy and expense, we do, in truth, all we can to parallel them, for our wills are as corrupt as theirs: but we want ability to equal them; our force is no more able to reach them in their vicious, than in their virtuous qualities, for both the one and the other proceeded from a vigor of soul which was without comparison greater in them than in us. And souls, by how much the weaker they are, by so much have they less power to do either very well or very ill.

The highest place of honor among them was the middle. The name going before, or following after, either in writing or speaking, had no signification of grandeur, as is evident by their writings; they will as soon say Oppius and Cæsar, as Cæsar and Oppius; and me and thee, as thee and me. This is the reason that made me formerly take notice in the life of Flaminius, in our French Plutarch,* of one passage, where it seems as if the author, speaking of the jealousy of honor between the Ætolians and Romans, about the winning of a battle they had with their joined forces obtained, made it of some importance, that in the Greek songs they had put the Ætolians before the Romans: if there be no amphibology in the words of the French translation.

The ladies, in their baths, made no scruple of admitting men among them, and, moreover, made use of their serving-men to rub and annoint them:

> "Inguina succinctus nigri tibi servus aluta
> Stat, quoties calidis nuda foveris aquis."†

They all powdered themselves with a certain powder, to moderate their sweats.

The ancient Gauls, says Sidonius Apollinaris,‡ wore their hair long before, and the hinder part of the head shaved, a fashion that begins to revive in this vicious and effeminate age.

The Romans used to pay the watermen their fare at

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* By Amyot, c. 5.

† "A slave—his middle girded with a black apron—stands before you, when, naked, you take a hot bath."—MARTIAL, vii. 35, 1.

‡ Carm, v. 239.

their first stepping into the boat, which we never do till after landing.

> "Dum æs exigitur, dum mula ligatur,
> Tota abit hora."*

The women used to lie on the side of the bed next the wall: and for that reason they called Cæsar, "*spondum regis Nicomedis.*"† They took breath in their drinking, and watered their wine:

> "Quis puer ocius
> Restinguet ardentis falerni
> Pocula prætereunte lympha?"‡

And the roguish looks and gestures of our lackeys were also in use among them:

> "Oh, Jane, a tergo quem nulla ciconia pinsit,
> Nec manus auriculas imitata est mobilis albas,
> Nec linguæ, quantum sitiat canis Appula, tantum."§

The Argian and Roman ladies mourned in white,‖ as ours did formerly and should do still, were I to govern in this point. But there are whole books on this subject.

CHAPTER L.

OF DEMOCRITUS AND HERACLITUS.

THE judgment is an utensil proper for all subjects, and will have an oar in everything: which is the reason, that in these essays I take hold of all occasions where, though it happen to be a subject I do not very well understand, I

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* "While the fare's paying, and the mule is being harnessed, a whole hour's time is past."—HORACE, *Sat.* i. 5, 13.

† "The bed of King Nicomedes."—SUETONIUS, *Life of Cæsar*, 49.

‡ "What boy will quickly come and cool the heat of the Falernian wine with clear water?"—HORACE, *Od.* ii. 2, 18.

§ "Oh, Janus, whom no crooked fingers, simulating a stork, peck at behind your back, whom no quick hands deride behind you, by imitating the motion of the white ears of the ass, against whom no mocking tongue is thrust out, as the tongue of the thirsty dog in the dog-days."—PERSIUS, i. 58.

‖ Herodian, iv. 2, 6.

try however, sounding it at a distance, and finding it too deep for my stature, I keep me on the shore; and this knowledge that a man can proceed no further, is one effect of its virtue, yea, one of those of which it is most proud.* One while in an idle and frivolous subject, I try to find out matter whereof to compose a body, and then to prop and support it; another while, I employ it in a noble subject, one that has been tossed and tumbled by a thousand hands, wherein a man can scarce possibly introduce anything of his own, the way being so beaten on every side that he must of necessity walk in the steps of another: in such a case, 'tis the work of the judgment to take the way that seems best, and of a thousand paths, to determine that this or that is the best. I leave the choice of my arguments to fortune, and take that she first presents to me; they are all alike to me, I never design to go through any of them; for I never see all of anything: neither do they who so largely promise to show it to others. Of a hundred members and faces that everything has, I take one, one while to look it over only, another while to ripple up the skin, and sometimes to pinch it to the bones: I give a stab, not so wide but as deep as I can, and am for the most part tempted to take it in hand by some new light I discover in it. Did I know myself less, I might perhaps venture to handle something or other to the bottom, and to be deceived in my own inability; but sprinkling here one word and there another, patterns cut from several pieces and scattered without design and without engaging myself too far, I am not responsible for them, or obliged to keep close to my subject, without varying at my own liberty and pleasure, and giving up myself to doubt and uncertainty, and to my own govering method, ignorance.

All motion discovers us: the very same soul of Cæsar, that made itself so conspicuous in marshaling and commanding the battle of Pharsalia, was also seen as solicitous and busy in the softer affairs of love and leisure. A man makes a judgment of a horse, not only by seeing him when he is showing off his paces, but by his very walk, nay, and by seeing him stand in the stable.

Among the functions of the soul, there are some of a

* Which Cotton translates, "even in the most inconsidering sort of men;" the text being, "ouy, de ceux dont il se vante le plus."

lower and meaner form; he who does not see her in those inferior offices as well as in those of nobler note, never fully discovers her; and, peradventure, she is best shown where she moves her simpler pace. The winds of passions take most hold of her in her highest flights; and the rather by reason that she wholly applies herself to, and exercises her whole virtue upon, every particular subject, and never handles more than one thing at a time, and that not according to it, but according to herself. Things in respect to themselves have, peradventure, their weight, measures and conditions; but when we once take them into us, the soul forms them as she pleases. Death is terrible to Cicero, coveted by Cato, indifferent to Socrates. Health, conscience, authority, knowledge, riches, beauty, and their contraries, all strip themselves at their entering into us, and receive a new robe, and of another fashion, from the soul; and of what color, brown, bright, green, dark, and of what quality, sharp, sweet, deep, or superficial, as best pleases each of them, for they are not agreed upon any common standard of forms, rules, or proceedings; every one is a queen in her own dominions. Let us, therefore, no more excuse ourselves upon the external qualities of things; it belongs to us to give ourselves an account of them. Our good or ill has no other dependence but on ourselves. 'Tis there that our offerings and our vows are due, and not to fortune: she has no power over our manners; on the contrary, they draw and make her follow in their train, and cast her in their own mold. Why should not I judge of Alexander at table, ranting and drinking at the prodigious rate he sometimes used to do? Or, if he played at chess? what string of his soul was not touched by this idle and childish game? I hate and avoid it, because it is not play enough, that it is too grave and serious a diversion, and I am ashamed to lay out as much thought and study upon it as would serve to much better uses. He did not more pump his brains about his glorious expedition into the Indies, nor than another in unraveling a passage upon which depends the safety of mankind. To what a degree does this ridiculous diversion molest the soul, when all her faculties are summoned together upon this trivial account! and how fair an opportunity she herein gives every one to know and to make a right judgment of himself? I do not more thoroughly sift myself in any

other posture than this: what passion are we exempted from in it? Anger, spite, malice, impatience, and a vehement desire of getting the better in a concern wherein it were more excusable to be ambitious of being overcome; for to be eminent, to excel above the common rate in frivolous things, nowise befits a man of honor. What I say in this example may be said in all others. Every particle, every employment of man manifests him equally with any other.

Democritus and Heraclitus were two philosophers, of whom the first, finding human condition ridiculous and vain, never appeared abroad but with a jeering and laughing countenance; whereas Heraclitus commiserating that same condition of ours, appeared always with a sorrowful look, and tears in his eyes:

> "Alter
> Ridebat, quoties a limine moverat unum
> Protuleratque pedem; flebat contrarius alter." *

I am clearly for the first humor: not because it is more pleasant to laugh than to weep, but because it expresses more contempt and condemnation than the other, and I think we can never be despised according to our full desert. Compassion and bewailing seem to imply some esteem of and value for the thing bemoaned; whereas the things we laugh at are by that expressed to be of no moment. I do not think that we are so unhappy as we are vain, or have in us so much malice as folly; we are not so full of mischief as inanity; nor so miserable as we are vile and mean. And therefore Diogenes, who passed away his time in rolling himself in his tub, and made nothing of the great Alexander esteeming us no better than flies, or bladders puffed up with wind, was a sharper and more penetrating, and, consequently in my opinion, a juster judge than Timon, surnamed the Man-hater; for what a man hates he lays to heart. This last was an enemy to all mankind, who passionately desired our ruin, and avoided our conversation as dangerous, proceeding from wicked and depraved natures: the other valued us so little that we could neither trouble nor infect him by our example; and left us to herd

* "The one always, when he stepped over his threshold, laughed at the world, the other always wept."—JUVENAL, *Sat.*, x. 28.

one with another, not out of fear, but from contempt of our society: concluding us as incapable of doing good as ill.

Of the same strain was Statilius' answer, when Brutus courted him into the conspiracy against Cæsar; he was satisfied that the enterprise was just, but he did not think mankind worthy of a wise man's concern;* according to the doctrine of Hegesias, who said, that a wise man ought to do nothing but for himself, forasmuch as he only was worthy of it:† and to the saying of Theodorus, that it was not reasonable a wise man should hazard himself for his country, and endanger wisdom for a company of fools.‡ Our condition is as ridiculous at risible.

CHAPTER LI.

OF THE VANITY OF WORDS.

A RHETORICIAN of times past said, that to make little things appear great was his profession. This was a shoemaker, who can make a great shoe for a little foot.§ They would in Sparta have sent such a fellow to be whipped for making profession of a tricky and deceitful art; and I fancy that Archidamus, who was king of that country, was a little surprised at the answer of Thucydides, when inquiring of him, which was the better wrestler, Pericles or he, he replied, that it was hard to affirm; for when I have thrown him, said he, he always persuades the spectators that he had no fall and carries away the prize.‖ The women who paint, pounce, and plaster up their ruins, filling up their wrinkles and deformities, are less to blame, because it is no great matter whether we see them in their natural complexions; whereas these make it their business to deceive not our sight only but our judgments, and to adulterate and corrupt the very essence of things. The republics that have maintained themselves in a regular and well-modeled government, such as those of Lacedæmon and Crete, had orators in no very great esteem. Aristo wisely defined rhetoric to be "a science to persuade the people;"¶

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* Plutarch, Life of Brutus, c. 3.
† Diogenes Laertius, ii. 95.
‡ Idem, ibid.
§ A saying of Agesilaus.
‖ Plutarch, Life of Pericles, c. 5.
¶ Quintilian, ii. 15.

Socrates and Plato "an art to flatter and deceive."* And those who deny it in the general description, verify it throughout in their precepts. The Mohammedans will not suffer their children to be instructed in it, as being useless, and the Athenians, perceiving of how pernicious consequence the pratice of it was, it being in their city of universal esteem, ordered the principal part, which is to move the affections, with their exordiums and perorations, to be taken away. 'Tis an engine invented to manage and govern a disorderly and tumultuous rabble, and that never is made use of, but like physic to the sick, in a discomposed state. In those where the vulgar or the ignorant, or both together, have been all-powerful and able to give the law, as in those of Athens, Rhodes, and Rome, and where the public affairs have been in a continual tempest of commotion, to such places have the orators always repaired. And in truth, we shall find few persons in those republics who have pushed their fortunes to any great degree of eminence without the assistance of eloquence. Pompey, Cæsar, Crassus, Lucullus, Lentulus, Metellus, thence took their chiefest spring, to mount to that degree of authority at which they at last arrived, making it of greater use to them than arms, contrary to the opinion of better times; for, L. Volumnius speaking publicly in favor of the election of Q. Fabius and Pub. Decius, to the consular dignity: "These are men," said he, "born for war and great in execution; in the combat of the tongue altogether wanting; spirits truly consular. The subtle, eloquent, and learned are only good for the city, to make prætors of, to administer justice." † Eloquence most flourished at Rome when the public affairs were in the worst condition and most disquieted with intestine commotions; as a free and untilled soil bears the worst weeds. By which it should seem that a monarchical government has less need of it than any other: for the stupidity and facility natural to the common people, and that render them subject to be turned and twined and led by the ears by this charming harmony of words, without weighing or considering the truth and reality of things by the force of reason: this facility, I say, is not easily found in a single person, and it is also more

* In the Gorgias.

† Livy, x. 22.

easy by good education and advice to secure him from the impression of this poison. There was never any famous orator known to come out of Persia or Macedon.

I have entered into this discourse upon the occasion of an Italian I lately received into my service, and who was clerk of the kitchen to the late Cardinal Caraffa till his death. I put this fellow upon an account of his office; when he fell to discourse of this palate-science, with such a settled countenance and magisterial gravity, as if he had been handling some profound point of divinity. He made a learned distinction of the several sorts of appetites; of that a man has before he begins to eat, and of those after the second and third service; the means simply to satisfy the first, and then to raise and actuate the other two; the ordering of the sauces, first in general, and then proceeded to the qualities of the ingredients and their effects; the differences of salads according to their seasons, those which ought to be served up hot, and which cold; the manner of their garnishment and decoration to render them acceptable to the eye. After which he entered upon the order of the whole service, full of weighty and important considerations.

> "Nec minimo sane discrimine refert,
> Quo gestu lepores, et quo gallina secetur;" *

and all this set out with lofty and magnificent words, the very same we make use of when we discourse of the government of an empire. Which learned lecture of my man brought this of Terence into my memory:

> "Hoc salsum est, hoc adustum est, hoc lautum est parum:
> Illud recte; iterum sic memento: sedulo
> Moneo, quæ possum, pro mea sapientia.
> Postremo, tanquam in speculum, in patinas, Demea,
> Inspicere jubeo, et moneo, quid facto usus sit."†

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* 'Nor with less discrimination observes how we should carve a hare, and how a hen."—JUVENAL, *Sat.* v. 123.

† "This is too salt, that's burned, that's not washed enough, that's well; remember to do so another time. Thus do I ever advise them to have things done properly, according to my capacity; and lastly, Demea, I command my cooks to look into every dish as if it were a mirror, and tell them what they should do."—TERENCE, *Adelph.*, iii. 3, 71.

And yet even the Greeks themselves very much admired and highly applauded the order and disposition that Paulus Æmilius observed in the feast he gave them at his return from Macedon.* But I do not here speak of effects, I speak of words only.

I do not know whether it may have the same operation upon other men that it has upon me, but when I hear our architects thunder out their bombast words of pilasters, architraves, and cornices, of the Corinthian and Doric orders, and such like jargon, my imagination is presently possessed with the palace of Apollidon;† when, after all, I find them but the paltry pieces of my own kitchen door.

To hear men talk of metonomies, metaphors, and allegories, and other grammar words, would not one think they signified some rare and exotic form of speaking? And yet they are phrases that are no better than the chatter of my chambermaid.

And this other is a gullery of the same stamp, to call the offices of our kingdom by the lofty titles of the Romans, though they have no similitude of function, and still less of authority and power. And this also, which I doubt will one day turn to the reproach of this age of ours, unworthily and indifferently to confer upon any we think fit the most glorious surnames with which antiquity honored but one or two persons in several ages. Plato carrried away the surname of Divine, by so universal a consent that never any one repined at it, or attempted to take it from him; and yet the Italians, who pretend, and with good reason, to more sprightly wits and sounder sense than the other nations of their time, have lately bestowed the same title upon Aretin, in whose writings, save tumid phrases set out with smart periods, ingenious indeed but far-fetched and fantastic, and the eloquence, be it what it may, I see nothing in him above the ordinary writers of his time, so far is he from approaching the ancient divinity. And we make nothing of giving the surname of great to princes who have nothing more than ordinary in them.

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* Plutarch, in vita, c. 15.

† A necromancer who figures in "Amadis of Gaul."

CHAPTER LII.

OF THE PARSIMONY OF THE ANCIENTS.

ATTILUS REGULUS, the general of the Roman army in Africa, in the height of all his glory and victories over the Carthaginians, wrote to the republic to acquaint them that a certain hind he had left in trust with his estate, which was in all but seven acres of land, had run away with all his instruments of husbandry, and entreating therefore, that they would please to call him home, that he might take order in his own affairs, lest his wife and children should suffer by this disaster. Whereupon the senate appointed another to manage his business, caused his losses to be made good, and ordered his family to be maintained at the public expense.*

The elder Cato,† returning consul from Spain, sold his war-horse to save the money it would have cost in bringing it back by sea into Italy; and being governor of Sardinia, he made all his visits on foot, without other train than one officer of the Republic who carried his robe and a censer for sacrifices, and for the most part carried his trunk himself. He bragged that he had never worn a gown that cost above ten crowns, nor had ever sent above tenpence to the market for one day's provision; and that as to his country houses, he had not one that was rough-cast on the outside.

Scipio Æmilianus,‡ after two triumphs and two consulships, went an embassy with no more than seven servants in his train. 'Tis said that Homer had never more than one, Plato three, and Zeno, founder of the sect of Stoics, none at all.§ Tiberius Gracchus was allowed but fivepence halfpenny a day when employed as public minister about the public affairs, and being at that time the greatest man of Rome. ‖

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* Val. Max., iv. 4, 6.

† Plutarch, in vita, c. 3.

‡ Val. Max., iv, 3. 13.

§ Seneca, Consolat. ad Helv. c. 12.

‖ Plutarch, in vita, c. 4.

CHAPTER LIII.

OF A SAYING OF CÆSAR.

IF WE would sometimes bestow a little consideration upon ourselves and employ the time we spend in prying into other men's actions, and discovering things without us, in examining our own abilities, we should soon perceive of how infirm and decaying material this fabric of ours is composed. Is it not a singular testimony of imperfection that we cannot establish our satisfaction in any one thing, and that even our own fancy and desire should deprive us of the power to choose what is most proper and useful for us? A very good proof of this is the great dispute that has ever been among the philosophers, of finding out man's sovereign good, that continues yet, and will eternally continue, without solution or accord.

> "Dum abest quod avemus, id exsuperare videtur
> Cætera; post aliud, quum contigit illud, avemus,
> Et sitis æqua tenet." *

Whatever it is that falls into our knowledge and posession, we find that it satisfies not, and we still pant after things to come and unknown, inasmuch as those present do not suffice for us; not that, in my judgment, they have not in them wherewith to do it, but because we seize them with an unruly and immoderate haste:

> "Nam quum vidit hic, ad victum quæ flagitat usus,
> Et per quæ possent vitam consistere tutam,
> Omnia jam ferme mortalibus esse parata;
> Divitiis homines, et honore, et laude potentes
> Affluere, atque bona natorum excellere fama;
> Nec minus esse domi cuiquam tamen anxia corda,
> Atque animum infestis cogi servire querelis:
> Intellexit ibi vitium vas efficere ipsum,
> Omniaque, illius vitio, corrumpitier intus,
> Quæ collata foris et commoda quæque venirent." †

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* "That which we desire seems the most desirable thing in the world; then, when we have got it, we want something else; 'tis ever the same thirst."—LUCRETIUS, iii. 1095.

† "For when he saw that almost all things necessarily required for subsistence, and which may render life confortable, are already prepared to their hand, that men may abundantly attain wealth,

Our appetite is irresolute and fickle; it can neither keep nor enjoy anything with a good grace: and man concluding it to be the fault of the things he is possessed of, fills himself with and feeds upon the idea of things he neither knows nor understands, to which he devotes his hopes and his desires, paying them all reverence and honor, according to the saying of Cæsar: "*Communi fit vitio naturæ, ut invisis, latitantibus atque incognitis rebus magis confidamus, vehementiusque exterreamur.*" *

CHAPTER LIV.

OF VAIN SUBTLETIES.

THERE are a sort of little knacks and frivolous subtleties from which men sometimes expect to derive reputation and applause: as poets, who compose whole poems with every line beginning with the same letter; we see the shapes of eggs, globes, wings, and hatchets cut out by the ancient Greeks by the measure of their verses, making them longer or shorter, to represent such or such a figure. Of this nature was his employment who made it his business to compute into how many several orders the letters of the alphabet might be transposed, and found out that incredible number mentioned in Plutarch. I am mightily pleased with the humor of him,† who having a man brought before him that had learned to throw a grain of

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honor, praise, may rejoice in the reputation of their children, yet that, notwithstanding, every one has none the less in his heart and home anxieties and a mind enslaved by wearing complaints, he saw that the vessel itself was in fault, and that all good things which were brought into it from without were spoiled by its own imperfections."—LUCRETIUS, vi. 9.

* "'Tis the common vice of nature, that we at once repose most confidence, and receive the greatest apprehensions, from things unseen, concealed, and unknown."—*De Bello Civil.*, xi. 4.

† "Alexander, as may be seen in Quintil. Institut. Orat., lib. ii. cap. 20, where he defines *Ματαιοτεχνία*,' to be a certain unnecessary imitation of art, which really does neither good nor harm, but is as unprofitable and ridiculous as was the labor of that man who had so perfectly learned to cast small peas through the eye of a needle at a good distance that he never missed one, and was justly rewarded for it, as is said, by Alexander, who saw the performance, with a bushel of peas.' "—COSTE.

millet with such dexterity and assurance as never to miss the eye of a needle; and being afterward entreated to give something for the reward of so rare a performance, he pleasantly, and, in my opinion, justly ordered a certain number of bushels of the same grain to be delivered to him, that he might not want wherewith to exercise so famous an art. 'Tis a strong evidence of a weak judgment when men approve of things for their being rare and new, or for their difficulty where worth and usefulness are not conjoined to recommend them.

I come just now from playing with my own family at who could find out the most things that hold by their two extremities; as sire, which is a title given to the greatest person in the nation, the king, and also to the vulgar, as merchants, but never to any degree of men between. The women of great quality are called dames, inferior gentlewomen, demosielles, and the meanest sort of women, dames, as the first. The cloth of state over our tables is not permitted but in the palaces of princes and in taverns. Democritus said,* that gods and beast had sharper sense than men, who are of a middle form. The Romans wore the same habit at funerals and feasts. It is most certain that an extreme fear and an extreme ardor of courage equally trouble and relax the belly. The nickname of Trembling, with which they surnamed Sancho XII., king of Navarre, tells us that valor will cause a trembling in the limbs as well as fear. Those who were arming that king, or some other person, who upon the like occasion was wont to be in the same disorder, tried to compose him by representing the danger less he was going to engage himself in: "You understand me ill," said he, "for could my flesh know the danger my courage will presently carry it into, it would sink down to the ground." The faintness that surprises us from frigidity or dislike in the exercises of Venus are also occasioned by a too violent desire and an immoderate heat. Extreme coldness and extreme heat boil and roast. Aristotle says, that sows of lead will melt and run with cold and the rigor of winter just as with a vehement heat. Desire and satiety fill all the gradations above and below pleasure with pain. Stupidity and wisdom meet in the same center of sentiment and resolution,

* Plutarch, De Placit. Philosoph., iv. 10.

in the suffering of human accidents. The wise control and triumph over ill, the others know it not: these last are, as a man may say, on this side of accidents, the others are beyond them, who after having well weighed and considered their qualities, measured and judged them what they are, by virtue of a vigorous soul leap out of their reach; they disdain and trample them underfoot, having a solid and well-fortified soul, against which the darts of fortune, coming to strike, must of necessity rebound and blunt themselves, meeting with a body upon which they can fix no impression; the ordinary and middle condition of men are lodged between these two extremities consisting of such as perceive evils, feel them, and are not able to support them. Infancy and decrepitude meet in the imbecility of the brain; avarice and profusion in the same thirst and desire of getting.

A man may say with some color of truth that there is an Abecedarian ignorance that precedes knowledge, and a doctoral ignorance that comes after it; an ignorance that knowledge creates and begets, at the same time that it despatches and destroys the first. Of mean understandings, little inquisitive, and little instructed, are made good Christians, who by reverence and obedience simply believe and are constant in their belief. In the average understandings and the middle sort of capacities, the error of opinion if begotten; they follow the appearance of the first impression, and have some color of reason on their side to impute our walking on in the old beaten path to simplicity and stupidity, meaning us who have not informed ourselves by study. The higher and nobler souls, more solid and clear-sighted, make up another sort of true believers, who by a long and religious investigation of truth, have obtained a clearer and more penetrating light into the Scriptures, and have discovered the mysterious and divine secret of our ecclesiastical polity; and yet we see some, who by the middle step, have arrived at that supreme degree with marvelous fruit and confirmation, as to the utmost limit of Christian intelligence, and enjoy their victory with great spiritual consolation, humble acknowledgment of the divine favor, reformation of manners, and singular modesty. I do not intend with these to rank those others, who to clear themselves from all suspicion of their former errors and to satisfy us that they are sound and firm,

render themselves extremely indiscreet and unjust, in the carrying on our cause, and blemish it with infinite reproaches of violence and oppression. The simple peasants are good people, and so are the philosophers, or whatever the present age calls them, men of strong and clear reason, and whose souls are enriched with an ample instruction of profitable sciences. The mongrels who have disdained the first form of the ignorance of letters, and have not been able to attain to the other (sitting between two stools, as I and a great many more of us do), are dangerous, foolish, and importunate; these are they that trouble the world. And therefore it is that I, for my own part, retreat as much as I can toward the first and natural station, whence I so vainly attempted to advance.

Popular and purely natural poesy* as in it certain artless graces, by which she may come into comparison with the greatest beauty of poetry perfected by art: as we see in our Gascon villanels and the songs that are bought us from nations that have no knowledge of any manner of science, nor so much as to the use of writing. The middle sort of poesy between these two is despised, of no value honor, or esteem.

But see that the path once laid open to the fancy, I have found, as it commonly falls out, that what we have taken for a difficult exercise and a rare subject, proves to be nothing so, and that after the invention is once warm, it finds out an infinite number of parallel examples. I shall only add this one—that, were these essays of mine considerable enough to deserve a critical judgment, it might then, I think, fall out that they would not much take with common and vulgar capacities, nor be very acceptable to the singular and excellent sort of men; the first would not understand them enough, and the last too much; and so they may hover in the middle region.

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* "The term *poesie populaire* was employed, for the first time, in the French language on this occasion. Montaigne created the expression, and indicated its nature."—AMPERE.

CHAPTER LV.

OF SMELLS.

IT HAS been reported of some, as of Alexander the Great, that their sweat exhaled an odoriferous smell, occasioned by some rare and extraordinary constitution, of which Plutarch and others have been inquisitive into the cause. But the ordinary constitution of human bodies is quite otherwise, and their best and chiefest excellency is to be exempt from smell. Nay, the sweetness even of the purest breath has nothing in it of greater perfection than to be without any offensive smell, like those of healthful children, which made Plautus say,

> "Mulier tum bene olet, ubi nihil olet." *

And such as make use of fine exotic perfumes are with good reason to be suspected of some natural imperfection which they endeavor by these odors to conceal.

To smell, though well, is to stink.

> "Rides nos, Coracine, nil olentes:
> Malo, quam bene olere, nil olere."†

And elsewhere,

> "Posthume, non bene olet, qui bene semper olet." ‡

I am nevertheless a great lover of good smells, and as much abominate the ill ones, which also I scent at a greater distance, I think, than other men:

> "Namque sagacius unus odoror,
> Polypus, an gravis hirsutis cubet hircus in alis
> Quam canis acer, ubi latcat sus." §

Of smells, the simple and natural seem to me the most pleasing. Let the ladies look to that, for 'tis chiefly their

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* "She smells sweetest who smells not at all."—PLAUTUS, *Mostel*, i. 3. 116.

† "You laugh at me, Coracinus, because I am not scented; I would, rather than smell sweet, not smell at all."—MARTIAL, vi. 55, 4.

‡ "Posthumus, he who ever smells of scents does not smell well."—MARTIAL, ii. 12, 14.

§ "My nose is quicker to scent a fetid sore or a rank armpit, than a dog to smell out the hidden sow."—HORACE, *Epod.* xii. 4

concern: amid the most profound barbarism,* the Scythian women, after bathing, were wont to powder and crust their faces and all their bodies with a certain odoriferous drug, growing in their country, which being cleansed off, when they came to have familiarity with men, they were found perfumed and sleek. 'Tis not to be believed how strangely all sorts of odors cleave to me, and how apt my skin is to imbibe them. He that complains of nature that she has not furnished mankind with a vehicle to convey smells to the nose, had no reason; for they will do it themselves, especially to me; my very mustachios, which are full, perform that office; for if I stroke them but with my gloves or handkerchief, the smell will not out a whole day: they manifest where I have been, and the close, luscious, devouring, viscid, melting kisses of youthful ardor in my wanton age left a sweetness upon my lips for several hours after. And yet I have ever found myself little subject to epidemic diseases, that are caught, either by conversing with the sick or bred by the contagion of the air, and have escaped from those of my time, of which there have been several sorts in our cities and armies. We read of Socrates † that, though he never departed from Athens, during the frequent plagues that infested that city, he only was never infected.

Physicians might, I believe, extract greater utility from odors than they do, for I have often observed that they cause an alteration in me and work upon my spirits according to their several virtues; which makes me approve of what is said, that the use of incense and perfumes in churches, so ancient and so universally received in all nations and religions, was intended to cheer us, and to rouse and purify the senses, the better to fit us for contemplation.

I could have been glad, the better to judge of it, to have tasted the culinary art of those cooks who had so rare a way of seasoning exotic odors with the relish of meats; as it was particularly observed in the service of the king of Tunis, who in our days ‡ landed at Naples to have an interview with Charles the emperor. His dishes were larded with

* "En la plus espesse barbarie," which Cotton singularly converts into "the wildest parts of Barbary," and Coste follows him thither.

† Diogenes Laertius, ii. 25.

‡ Muley-Hassam, in 1543.

odoriferous drugs, to that degree of expense that the cookery of one peacock and two pheasants amounted to a hundred ducats to dress them after their fashion; and when the carver came to cut them up, not only the dining-room but all apartments of his palace and the adjoining streets were filled with an aromatic vapor which did not presently vanish.

My chiefest care in choosing my lodgings is always to avoid a thick and stinking air: and those beautiful cities, Venice and Paris, very much lessen the kindness I have for them, the one by the offensive smell of her marshes, and the other of her dirt.

CHAPTER LVI.

OF PRAYERS.

I PROPOSE formless and undetermined fancies, like those who publish doubtful questions, to be after disputed upon in the schools, not to establish truth but to seek it; and I submit them to the judgments of those whose office it is to regulate, not my writings and actions only, but moreover my very thoughts. Let what I here set down meet with correction or applause, it shall be of equal welcome and utility to me, myself beforehand condemning as absurd and impious, if anything shall be found, through ignorance or inadvertency, couched in this rhapsody, contrary to the holy resolutions and prescriptions of the Catholic Apostolic and Roman church, into which I was born and in which I will die. And yet, always submitting to the authority of their censure, which has an absolute power over me, I thus rashly venture at everything, as in treating upon this present subject.

I know not if or no I am wrong; but since, by a particular favor of the divine bounty, a certain form of prayer has been prescribed and dictated to us, word by word, from the mouth of God Himself, I have ever been of opinion that we ought to have it in more frequent use than we yet have; and if I were worthy to advise, at the sitting down to and rising from our tables, at our rising from and going to bed, and in every particular action wherein prayer is used, I would that Christians always make use of the Lord's Prayer, if not alone, yet at least always. The church may lengthen and diversify prayers, according to the necessity of our in-

struction, for I know very well that it is always the same in substance and the same thing: but yet such a privilege ought to be given to that prayer, that the people should have it continually in their mouths; for it is most certain that all necessary petitions are comprehended in it, and that it is infinitely proper for all occasions. 'Tis the only prayer I use in all places and conditions, and which I still repeat instead of changing; whence it also happens that I have no other so entirely by heart as that.

It just now came into my mind, whence it is we should derive that error of having recourse to God in all our designs and enterprises, to call Him to our assistance in all sorts of affairs, and in all places where our weakness stands in need of support, without considering whether the occasion be just or otherwise; and to invoke His name and power, in what state soever we are, or action we are engaged in, however vicious. He is, indeed, our sole and unique protector, and can do all things for us: but though He is pleased to honor us with his sweet paternal alliance, He is, notwithstanding, as just as He is good and mighty; and more often exercises His justice than His power, and favors us according to that, and not according to our petitions.

Plato in his Laws,* makes three sorts of belief injurious to the Gods; "that there are none; that they concern not themselves about our affairs; that they never refuse anything to our vows, offerings, and sacrifices." The first of these errors (according to his opinion), never continued rooted in any man from his infancy to his old age; the other two, he confesses, men might be obstinate in.

God's justice and His power are inseparable; 'tis in vain we invoke His power in an unjust cause. We are to have our souls pure and clean, at that moment at least wherein we pray to Him, and purified from all vicious passions; otherwise we ourselves present Him the rods wherewith to chastise us; instead of repairing anything we have done amiss, we double the wickedness and the offense when we offer to Him, to whom we are to sue for pardon, an affection full of irreverence and hatred. Which makes me not very apt to applaud those whom I observe to be so frequent

* Book x. at the beginning.

on their knees, if the actions nearest to the prayer do not give me some evidence of amendment and reformation,

> "Si, nocturnus adulter,
> Tempora Santonico velas adoperta cucullo."*

And the practice of a man who mixes devotion with an execrable life seems in some sort more to be condemned than that of a man conformable to his own propension, and dissolute throughout; and for that reason it is that our church denies admittance to and communion with men obstinate and incorrigible in any notorious wickedness. We pray only by custom and for fashion's sake; or, rather, we read or pronounce our prayers aloud, which is no better than an hypocritical show of devotion; and I am scandalized to see a man cross himself thrice at the Benedicite, and as often at Grace (and the more, because it is a sign I have in great veneration and continual use, even when I yawn†), and to dedicate all the other hours of the day to acts of malice, avarice, and injustice. One hour to God, the rest to the devil, as if by composition and compensation. 'Tis a wonder to see actions so various in themselves succeed one another with such an uniformity of method as not to interfere nor suffer any alteration, even upon the very confines and passes from the one to the other. What a prodigious conscience must that be that can be at quiet within itself while it harbors under the same roof, with so agreeing and so calm a society, both the crime and the judge?

A man whose whole meditation is continually working upon nothing but impurity which he knows to be so odious to Almighty God, what can he say when he comes to speak to Him? He draws back, but immediately falls into a relapse. If the object of divine justice and the presence of his Maker did, as he pretends, strike and chastise his soul, how short soever the repentance might be, the very fear of offending the infinite Majesty would so often present itself to his imagination that he would soon see himself master of those vices that are most natural and vehement

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* "If a night adulterer, thou covered thy head with a Santonic cowl."—JUVENAL, *Sat.* viii. 144. The Santones were the people who inhabited Saintonge in France, from whom the Romans derived the use of hoods or cowls covering the head and face.

† "Mesmement quand je baaille," which Cotton renders, "upon solemn occasions."

in him. But what shall we say of those who settle their whole course of life upon the profit and emolument of sins, which they know to be mortal? How many trades and vocations have we admitted and countenanced among us, whose very essence is vicious? And he that confessing himself to me, voluntarily told me that he had all his lifetime professed and practiced a religion, in his opinion damnable and contrary to that he had in his heart, only to preserve his credit and the honor of his employments, how could his courage suffer so infamous a confession? What can men say to the divine justice upon this subject? Their repentance consisting in a visible and manifest reparation, they lose the color of alleging it both to God and man. Are they so impudent as to sue for remission without satisfaction and without penitence? I look upon these as in the same condition with the first: but the obstinacy is not there so easy to be overcome. This contrariety and volubility of opinion so sudden, so violent, that they feign, are a kind of miracle to me: they present us with the state of an indigestible agony of mind.

It seemed to me a fantastic imagination in those who, these late years past, were wont to reproach every man they knew to be of any extraordinary parts, and made profession of the Catholic religion, that it was but outwardly; maintaining, moreover, to do him honor forsooth, that whatever he might pretend to the contrary he could not but in his heart be of their reformed opinion. An untoward disease, that a man should be so riveted to his own belief as to fancy that others cannot believe otherwise than as he does; and yet worse, that they should entertain so vicious an opinion of such great parts as to think any man so qualified, should prefer any present advantage of fortune to the promises of eternal life and the menaces of eternal damnation. They may believe me: could anything have tempted my youth, the ambition of the danger and difficulties in the late commotions had not been the least motives.

It is not without very good reason, in my opinion, that the church interdicts the promiscuous, indiscreet, and irreverent use of the holy and divine psalms, with which the Holy Ghost inspired King David. We ought not to mix God in our actions, but with the highest reverence and caution; that poesy is too holy to be put to no other use than to exercise the lungs and to delight our ears; it ought

to come from the conscience, and not from the tongue. It is not fit that a prentice in his shop, among his vain and frivolous thoughts, should be permitted to pass away his time and divert himself with such sacred things. Neither is it decent to see the Holy Book of the holy mysteries of our belief tumbled up and down a hall or a kitchen; they were formerly mysteries, but are now become sports and recreations. 'Tis a book too serious and too venerable to be cursorily or slightly turned over: the reading of the Scripture ought to be a temperate and premeditated act, and to which men should always add this devout preface, *sursum corda,* preparing even the body to so humble and composed a gesture and countenance as shall evidence a particular veneration and attention. Neither is it a book for every one to fist, but the study of select men set apart for that purpose, and whom Almighty God has been pleased to call to that office and sacred function: the wicked and ignorant grow worse by it. 'Tis not a story to tell, but a history to revere, fear, and adore. Are not they then pleasant men, who think they have rendered this fit for the people's handling, by translating it into the vulgar tongue? Does the understanding of all therein contained only stick at words? Shall I venture to say further, that by coming so near to understand a little, they are much wider of the whole scope than before. A pure and simple ignorance and wholly depending upon the exposition of qualified persons, was far more learned and salutary than this vain and verbal knowledge, which has only proved the nurse of temerity and presumption.

And I do further believe that the liberty every one has taken to disperse the sacred writ into so many idioms carries with it a great deal more of danger than utility. The Jews, Mohammedans, and almost all other peoples, have reverentially espoused the language wherein their mysteries were first conceived, and have expressly, and not without color of reason, forbidden the alteration of them into any other. Are we assured that in Biscay and in Brittany there are enough competent judges of this affair to establish this translation into their own language? The universal church has not a more difficult and solemn judgment to make. In preaching and speaking the interpretation is vague, free, mutable, and of a piece by itself; so 'tis not the same thing.

One of our Greek historians justly censures the age he lived in, because the secrets of the Christian religion were dispersed into the hands of every mechanic, to expound and argue upon, according to his own fancy, and that we ought to be much ashamed, we who by God's especial favor enjoy the pure mysteries of piety, to suffer them to be profaned by the ignorant rabble; considering that the Gentiles expressly forbade Socrates, Plato, and the other sages to inquire into or so much as to mention the things committed to the priests of Delphi; and he says, moreover, that the factions of princes upon theological subjects are armed not with zeal but fury; that zeal springs from the divine wisdom and justice, and governs itself with prudence and moderation, but degenerates into hatred and envy, producing tares and nettles instead of corn and wine when conducted by human passions. And it was truly said by another, who, advising the Emperor Thedosius, told him, that disputes did not so much rock the schisms of the church asleep, as it roused and animated heresies; that, therefore, all contentions and dialectic disputations were to be avoided, and men absolutely to acquiesce in the prescriptions and formulas of faith established by the ancients. And the Emperor Andronicus having overheard * some great men at high words in his palace with Lapodius about a point of ours of great importance, gave them so severe a check as to threaten to cause them to be thrown into the river if they did not desist. The very women and children nowadays take upon them to lecture the oldest and most experienced men about the ecclesiastical laws; whereas the first of those of Plato † forbids them to inquire so much as into the civil laws, which were to stand instead of divine ordinances; and, allowing the old men to confer among themselves or with the magistrate about those things, he adds, provided it be not in the presence of young or profane persons.

A bishop ‡ has left in writing that at the other end of the world there is an aisle, by the ancients called Dioscor-

* Andronicus Comnena, Nicetas, ii. 4, who, however, mentions no Lapodius.

† Laws, Book i.

‡ Osorius, Bishop of Silves, author of "De Rebus Gestis Emmanuelis regis Lusitaniæ."

ides* abundantly fertile in all sorts of trees and fruits, and of an exceedingly healthful air; the inhabitants of which are Christians, having churches and altars, only adorned with crosses without any other images, great observers of fasts and feasts, exact payers of their tithes to the priests, and so chaste, that none of them is permitted to have to do with more than one woman in his life; † as to the rest, so content with their condition, that environed with the sea they know nothing of navigation, and so simple that they understand not one syllable of the religion they profess and wherein they are so devout: a thing incredible to such as do not know that the pagans, who are so zealous idolaters, know nothing more of their gods than their bare names and their statues. The ancient beginning of "Menalippus," a tragedy of Euripides, ran thus,

> "O Jupiter! for that name alone
> Of what thou art to me is known." ‡

I have also known in my time some men's writings found fault with for being purely human and philosophical, without any mixture of theology; and yet, with some show of reason, it might, on the contrary, be said that the divine doctrine, as queen and regent of the rest, better keeps her state apart, that she ought to be sovereign throughout, not subsidiary and suffragan, and that, peradventure, grammatical, rhetorical, logical examples may elsewhere be more suitably chosen, as also the material for the stage, games, and public entertainments, than from so sacred a matter; that divine reasons are considered with greater veneration and attention by themselves, and in their own proper style, than when mixed with and adapted to human discourse; that is, is a fault much more often observed that the divines write too humanly, than that the humanists write not theologically enough. Philosophy, says St. Chrysostom, has long been banished the holy schools, as an handmaid altogether useless and thought unworthy to look, so much as in passing by the door, into the sanctuary of the holy treasures of the celestial doctrine; that the human way of speaking is of a much lower form and ought

* Now Zocotora.

† What Osorius says is that these people only had one wife at a time.

‡ Plutarch, Treatise on Love, c. 12.

not to adopt for herself the dignity and majesty of divine eloquence. Let who will *verbis indisciplinatis* * talk of fortune, destiny, accident, good and evil hap, and other such like phrases, according to his own humor; I for my part propose fancies merely human and merely my own, and that simply as human fancies, and separately considered, not as determined by any decree from heaven, incapable of doubt or dispute; matter of opinion not matter of faith; things which I discourse of according to my own notions, not as I believe, according to God; after a laical, not clerical, and yet always after a very religious manner, as children prepare their exercises, not to instruct, but to be instructed.

And might it not be said, that an edict enjoining all people but such as are public professors of divinity, to be very reserved in writing of religion, would carry with it a very good color of utility and justice—and to me, among the rest peradventure, to hold my prating? I have been told that even those who are not of our church nevertheless among themselves expressly forbid the name of God to be used in common discourse, not so much even by way of interjection, exclamation, assertion of a truth, or comparison; and I think them in the right: upon what occasion soever we call upon God to accompany and assist us, it ought always to be done with the greatest reverence and devotion.

There is, as I remember, a passage in Xenophon where he tells us that we ought so much the more seldom to call upon God, by how much it is hard to compose our souls to such a degree of calmness, patience, and devotion as it ought to be in at such a time; otherwise our prayers are not only vain and fruitless, but vicious: "forgive us," we say, "our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us;" what do we mean by this petition but that we present to God a soul free from all rancor and revenge? And yet we make nothing of invoking God's assistance in our vices, and inviting Him into our unjust designs:

"Quæ, nisi seductis, nequeas committere divis;" †

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* "In undisciplined language."—ST. AUGUSTIN, *De Civit. Dei*, x. 29.

† "Which you can only impart to the gods privately."—PERSIUS, ii. 4.

the covetous man prays for the conservation of his vain and superfluous riches; the ambitious for victory and the good conduct of his fortune; the thief calls Him to his assistance, to deliver him from the dangers and difficulties that obstruct his wicked designs, or returns Him thanks for the facility he has met with in cutting a man's throat; at the door of the house men are going to storm or break into by force of a petard, they fall to prayers for success, their intentions and hopes full of cruelty, avarice, and lust.

> "Hoc igitus, quo tu Jovis aurem impellere tentas,
> Dic agedum Staio: proh 'Juppiter! o bone, clamet,
> Juppiter!' At sese non clamet Juppiter ipse." *

Marguerite, queen of Navarre, tells† of a young prince, who, though she does not name him, is easily enough by his great qualities to be known, who going upon an amorous assignation to lie with an advocate's wife of Paris, his way thither being through a church, he never passed that holy place going to or returning from his pious exercise, but he always kneeled down to pray. Wherein he would employ the divine favor, his soul being full of such virtuous meditations, I leave others to judge, which, nevertheless, she instances for a testimony of singular devotion. But this is not the only proof we have that women are not very fit to treat of theological affairs.‡

A true prayer and religious reconciling of ourselves to Almighty God cannot enter into an impure soul, subject at the very time to the dominion of Satan. He who calls God to his assistance while in a course of vice, does as if a cutpurse should call a magistrate to help him, or like those who introduce the name of God to the attestation of a lie.

> "Tacito mala vota susurro
> Concipimus." §

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* "That to which you would seek to persuade Jupiter ask of Staius. What would he say? 'Oh Jupiter! Oh good Jupiter!' would he cry. Think you Jupiter himself would not cry out upon it?"—PERSIUS, ii. 21.

† In the Heptameron.

‡ Which Cotton translates: "It is by this proof only that a man may conclude no man," etc.

§ "We whisper our guilty prayers."—LUCAN, v. 104.

There are few men who durst publish to the world the prayers they make to Almighty God:

> "Haud cuivis promptum est, murmurque, humilesque susurros
> Tollere de templis, et aperto vivere voto."*

And this is the reason why the Pythagoreans would have them always public and heard by every one, to the end they might not prefer indecent or unjust petitions as this man:

> "Clare quum dixit, Apollo!
> Labra movet, metuens audiri: Pulcra Laverna
> Da mihi fallere, da justum sanctumque videri;
> Noctem peccatis, et fraudibus objice nubem." †

The gods severely punished the wicked prayers of Œdipus in granting them: he had prayed that his children might among themselves determine the succession to his throne by arms, and was so miserable as to see himself taken at his word. We are not to pray that all things may go as we would have them, but as most concurrent with prudence.

We seem, in truth, to make use of our prayers as of a kind of gibberish, and as those do who employ holy words about sorceries and magical operations; and as if we reckoned the benefit we are to reap from them as depending upon the contexture, sound, and jingle of words, or upon the grave composing of the countenance. For having the soul contaminated with concupiscence, not touched with repentance, or comforted by any late reconciliation with God, we go to present Him such words as the memory suggests to the tongue, and hope from thence to obtain the remission of our sins. There is nothing so easy, so sweet, and so favorable, as the divine law: it calls and invites us to her, guilty and abominable as we are; extends her arms and receives us into her bosom, foul and polluted as we at present are, and are for the future to be. But then, in re-

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* "'Tis not convenient for every one to bring the prayers he mutters, out of the temple, and to give his wishes to the public ear."—PERSIUS, ii. 6.

† "He first exclaims aloud, Apollo! Then gently moving his lips, fearful to be heard, he murmurs: Oh fair Laverna, grant me the talent to deceive and cheat; yet all the while to appear holy and just; shroud my sins with night, and my frauds with a sable cloud."—HORACE, *Ep.* i. 16, 59. Laverna was the goddess of thieves.

turn, we are to look upon her with a respectful eye; we are to receive this pardon with all gratitude and submission, and for that instant at least, wherein we address ourselves to her, to have the soul sensible of the ills we have committed, and at enmity with those passions that seduced us to offend her; neither the gods nor good men (says Plato *) will accept the present of a wicked man.

> "Immunis aram si tetigit manus,
> Non sumptuosa blandior hostia
> Mollivit aversos Penates
> Farre pio, et saliente mica." †

CHAPTER LVII

OF AGE.

I CANNOT allow of the way in which we settle for ourselves the duration of our life. I see that the sages contract it very much in comparison of the common opinion: "What," said the younger Cato to those who would stay his hand from killing himself, "am I now of an age to be reproached that I go out of the world too soon?" And yet he was but eight-and-forty years old.‡ He thought that to be a mature and advanced age, considering how few arrive unto it. And such as, soothing their thoughts with I know not what course of nature, promise to themselves some years beyond it, could they be privileged from the infinite number of accidents to which we are by a natural subjection exposed, they might have some reason so to do. What an idle conceit is it to expect to die of a decay of strength, which is the effect of extremest age, and to propose to ourselves no shorter lease of life than that, considering it is a kind of death of all others the most rare and very seldom seen? We call that only a natural death; as if it were contrary to nature to see a man break his neck with a fall, be drowned in shipwreck, be snatched away with a pleurisy or the plague, and as if our ordinary condition did not expose

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* Laws, iv.

† "If a pure hand touch the altar, the pious offering of a small cake and a few grains of salt will appease the offended gods more effectually than costly sacrifices."—HORACE, *Od.*, iii, 23, 17.

‡ Plutarch, in vita, c. 20.

us to these inconveniences. Let us no longer flatter ourselves with these fine words; we ought rather, peradventure, to call that natural, which is general, common, and universal.

To die of old age is a death rare, extraordinary, and singular, and therefore, so much less natural than the others 'tis the last and extremest sort of dying: and the more remote, the less to be hoped for. It is indeed, the bourn beyond which we are not to pass, and which the law of nature has set as a limit, not to be exceeded: but it is, withal, a privilege she is rarely seen to give us to last till then. 'Tis a lease she only signs by particular favor, and it may, be to one only in the space of two or three ages, and then with a pass to boot, to carry him through all the traverses and difficulties she has strewed in the way of this long career. And therefore my opinion is, that when once forty years we should consider it as an age to which very few arrive. For seeing that men do not usually proceed so far, it is a sign that we are pretty well advanced; and since we have exceeded the ordinary bounds, which is the just measure of life, we ought not to expect to go much further; having escaped so many precipices of death whereinto we have seen so many other men fall, we should acknowledge that so extraordinary a fortune as that which has hitherto rescued us from those eminent perils, and kept us alive beyond the ordinary term of living, is not likely to continue long.

'Tis a fault in our very laws to maintain this error: these say that a man is not capable of managing his own estate till he be five-and-twenty years old, whereas he will have much ado to manage his life so long. Augustus cut off five years from the ancient Roman standard, * and declared, that thirty years old was sufficient for a judge. Servius Tullius superseded the knights of above seven-and-forty years of age from the fatigues of war; † Augustus dismissed them at forty-five; though methinks it seems a little unreasonable that men should be sent to the fireside till five-and-fifty or sixty years of age. I should be of opinion that our vocation and employment should be as far as possible extended for the public good: I find the fault on the other side, that they do not employ us early enough.

* Suetonius, in vita, c. 12. † Aulus Gelius, x. 28.

This emperor was arbiter of the whole world at nineteen, and yet would have a man to be thirty before he could be fit to determine a dispute about a gutter.

For my part, I believe our souls are adult at twenty as much as they are ever like to be, and as capable then as ever. A soul that has not by that time given evident earnest of its force and virtue will never after come to proof. The natural qualities and virtues produce what they have of vigorous and fine, within that term or never.

> "Si l'espine nou picque quand nai
> A pene que picque jamai," *

as they say in Dauphiné.

Of all the great human actions I ever heard or read of, of what sort soever, I have observed, both in former ages and our own, more were performed before the age of thirty than after; and this ofttimes in the very lives of the same men. May I not confidently instance in those of Hannibal and his great concurrent Scipio? The better half of their lives they lived upon the glory they had acquired in their youth; great men after, 'tis true, in comparison of others; but by no means in comparison of themselves. As to my own particular, I do certainly believe that since that age, both my understanding and my constitution have rather decayed than improved, and retired rather than advanced. 'Tis possible, that with those who make the best use of their time, knowledge and experience may increase with their years; but vivacity, promptitude, steadiness, and other pieces of us, of much greater importance, and much more essentially our own, languish and decay.

> "Ubi jam validis quassatum est viribus ævi
> Corpus, et obtusis ceciderunt viribus artus,
> Claudicat ingenium, delirat linquaque, mensque." †

Sometimes the body first submits to age, sometimes the mind; and I have seen enough who have got a weakness in their brains before either in their legs or stomach; and

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* "If the thorn does not prick at its birth, 'twill hardly ever prick at all."

† "When once the body's shaken by the violence of time, blood and vigor ebbing away, the judgment then also halts, the tongue trips, and the mind dotes."—LUCRITIUS, iii. 452.

by how much the more it is a disease of no great pain to the sufferer, and of obscure symptoms, so much greater is the danger. For this reason it is that I complain of our laws, not that they keep us too long to our work, but that they set us to work too late. For the frailty of life considered, and to how many ordinary and natural rocks it is exposed, one ought not to give up so large a portion of it to childhood, idleness and apprenticeship.*

CHAPTER LVIII.

OF RECOMPENSES OF HONOR.

THEY who write the life of Augustus Cæsar, † observe this in his military discipline, that he was wonderfully liberal of gifts to men of merit, but that as to the true recompenses of honor he was as sparing; yet he himself had been gratified by his uncle with all the military recompenses before he had ever been in the field. It was a pretty invention, and received into most governments of the world, to institute certain vain and in themselves valueless distinctions to honor and recompense virtue, such as the crowns of laurel, oak, and myrtle, the particular fashion of some garment, the privilege to ride in a coach in the city, or at night with a torch, some peculiar place assigned in public assemblies, the prerogative of certain additional names and titles, certain distinctions in the bearing of coats of arms, and the like, the use of which, according to the several humors of nations, has been variously received, and yet continues.

We in France, as also several of our neighbors, have orders of knighthood that are instituted only for this end. And 'tis, in earnest, a very good and profitable custom to find out an acknowledgment for the worth of rare and excellent men, and to satisfy them with rewards that are not at all chargeable either to prince or people. And that which has been always found by ancient experience, and which we have heretofore observed among ourselves, that

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* Which Cotton thus renders: "Birth though noble, ought not to share so large a vacanacy, and so tedious a course of education."

† Suetonius, Life of Augustus, c. 25.

men of quality have ever been more jealous of such recompenses than of those wherein there was gain and profit, is not without very good ground and reason. If with the reward, which ought to be simply a recompense of honor, they should mix other commodities and add riches, this mixture, instead of procuring an increase of estimation, would debase and abate it. The Order of St. Michael, which has been so long in repute among us, had no greater commodity, than that it had no communication with any other commodity, which produced this effect, that formerly there was no office or title whatever to which the gentry pretended with so great desire and affection as they did to that; no quality that carried with it more respect and grandeur, valor and worth more willingly embracing and with greater ambition aspiring to a recompense purely its own, and rather glorious than profitable. For, in truth, other gifts have not so great a dignity of usage, by reason they are laid out upon all sorts of occasions; with money a man pays the wages of a servant, the diligence of a courier, dancing, vaulting, speaking, and the meanest offices we receive; nay, and reward vice with it too, as flattery, treachery, and pimping; and therefore 'tis no wonder if virtue less desires and less willingly receives this common sort of payment, than that which is proper and peculiar to her, throughout generous and noble. Augustus had reason to be more sparing of this than the other, by how much honor is a privilege that extracts its principal esteem from rarity; and so virtue itself.

"Cui malus est nemo, quis bonus esse potest?" *

We do not intend it for a commendation when we say that such a one is careful in the education of his children, by reason it is a common act, how just and well done soever; no more than we commend a great tree, where the whole forest is the same. I do not think that any citizen of Sparta glorified himself much upon his valor, it being the universal virtue of the whole nation; and as little upon his fidelity and contempt of riches. There is no recompense becomes virtue, how great soever, that is once passed into a custom; and I know not withal whether we can ever call it great, being common.

* "To whom none seems ill, who can seem good?"—MARTIAL, xii. 82.

Seeing, then, that these remunerations of honor have no other value and estimation but only this, that few people enjoy them, 'tis but to be liberal of them to bring them down to nothing. And though there should be now more men found than in former times worthy of our order,* the estimation of it nevertheless should not be abated, nor the honor made cheap; and it may easily happen that more may merit it; for there is no virtue that so easily spreads as that of military valor. There is another virtue, true, perfect, and philosophical, of which I do not speak, and only make use of the word in our common acceptation, much greater than this and more full, which is a force and assurance of the soul, equally despising all sorts of adverse accidents, equable, uniform, and constant, of which ours is no more than one little ray. Use, education, example, and custom can do all in all to the establishment of that whereof I am speaking, and with great facility render it common, as by the experience of our civil wars is manifest enough; and whoever could at this time unite us all, Catholic and Huguenot, into one body, and set us upon some brave common enterprise, we should again make our ancient military reputation flourish. It is most certain that in times past the recompense of this order had not only a regard to valor, but had a further prospect; it never was the reward of a valiant soldier but of a great captain; the science of obeying was not reputed worthy of so honorable a guerdon. There was therein a more universal military expertness required; and that comprehended the most and the greatest qualities of a military man, "*Neque enim eædem, militares et imperatoriæ, artes sunt,*" † as also, besides, a condition suitable to such a dignity. But, I say, though more men were worthy than formerly, yet ought it not to be more liberally distributed, and it were better to fall short in not giving it at all to whom it should be due, than forever to lose, as we have lately done, the fruit of so profitable an invention. No man of spirit will deign to advantage himself with what is in common with many; and such of the present time as have least merited this recompense themselves, make the greater show of disdain-

* Montaigne was of the Order of St. Michael.

† "For the military knowledge required in a common soldier and a general are not the same."—LIVY, xxv. 19.

ing it, in order thereby to be ranked with those to whom so much wrong has been done by the unworthy conferring and debasing the distinction which was their particular right.

Now, to expect that in obliterating and abolishing this, suddenly to create and bring into credit a like institution, is not a proper attempt for so licentious and so sick a time as this wherein we now are; and it will fall out that the last will from its birth incur the same inconveniences that have ruined the other.* The rules for dispensing this new order had need to be extremely clipped and bound under great restrictions, to give it authority; and this tumultuous season is incapable of such a curb: besides that, before this can be brought into repute, 'tis necessary that the memory of the first, and of the contempt into which it is fallen, be buried in oblivion.

This place might naturally enough admit of some discourse upon the consideration of valor, and the difference of this virtue from others; but Plutarch having so often handled this subject, I should give myself an unnecessary trouble to repeat what he has said. But this is worth considering that our nation places valor, *vaillance*, in the highest degree of virtue, as its very word evidences, being derived from *valeur*, and that, according to our use, when we say a man of high worth, a good man, in our court style 'tis to say a valiant man, after the Roman way, for the general appellation of virtue with them, takes etymology from *vis*, force. The proper, sole, and essential profession of the French noblesse is that of arms: and 'tis likely that the first virtue which discovered itself among men and has given to some advantage over others was that by which the strongest and most valiant have mastered the weaker, and acquired a particular authority and reputation, whence came to it that dignified appellation; or else, that these nations, being very warlike, gave the preeminence to that of the virtues which was most familiar to them; just as our passion and the feverish solicitude we have of the chastity of women occasions that to say, a good woman, a woman of worth, a woman of honor and virtue, signifies merely a chaste woman: as if, to oblige them to

* Montaigne refers to the Order of the Saint-Esprit, instituted by Henry III. in 1578.

that one duty, we were indifferent as to all the rest, and gave them the reins in all other faults whatever to compound for that one of incontinence.

CHAPTER LIX.

OF THE AFFECTION OF FATHERS TO THEIR CHILDREN.

To Madame D'Estissac:

MADAME, if the strangeness and novelty, of my subject which are wont to give value to things, do not save me, I shall never come off with honor from this foolish attempt: but 'tis so fantastic, and carries a face so unlike the common use, that this, peradventure, may make it pass. 'Tis a melancholic humor, and consequently a humor very much an enemy to my natural complexion, engendered by the pensiveness of the solitude into which for some years past I have retired myself, that first put into my head this idle fancy of writing. Wherein, finding myself totally unprovided and empty of other matter, I presented myself to myself for argument and subject. 'Tis the only book in the world of its kind, and of a wild and extravagant design. There is nothing worth remark in this affair but that extravagancy: for in a subject so vain and frivolous, the best workman in the world could not have given it a form fit to recommend it to any manner of esteem.

Now, madame, having to draw my own picture to the life, I had omitted one important feature, had I not therein represented the honor I have ever had for you and your merits; which I have purposely chosen to say in the beginning of this chapter, by reason that among the many other excellent qualities you are mistress of, that of the tender love you have manifested to your children, is seated in one of the highest places. Whoever knows at what age Monsieur D'Estissac, your husband, left you a widow, the great and honorable matches that have since been offered to you, as many as to any lady of your condition in France, the constancy and steadiness wherewith, for so many years, you have sustained so many sharp difficulties, the burden and conduct of affairs which have persecuted you in every corner of the kingdom, and are not yet weary of tormenting you, and the happy direction you have given

to all these, by your sole prudence or good fortune, will easily conclude with me that we have not so vivid an example as yours of maternal affection in our times. I praise God, madame, that it has been so well employed; for the great hopes Monsieur D'Estissac, your son, gives of himself, render sufficient assurance that when he comes of age you will reap from him all the obedience and gratitude of a very good man. But, forasmuch as by reason of his tender years, he has not been capable of taking notice of those offices of extremest value he has in so great number received from you, I will, if these papers shall one day happen to fall into his hands, when I shall neither have mouth nor speech left to deliver it to him, that he shall receive from me a true account of those things, which shall be more effectually manifested to him by their own effects, by which he will understand that there is not a gentleman in France who stands more indebted to a mother's care; and that he cannot, in the future, give a better nor more certain testimony of his own worth and virtue than by acknowledging you for that excellent mother you are.

If there be any law truly natural, that is to say, any instinct that is seen universally and perpetually imprinted in both beasts and men (which is not without controversy), I can say, that in my opinion, next to the care every animal has of its own preservation, and to avoid that which may hurt him, the affection that the begetter bears to his offspring holds the second place in this rank. And seeing that nature appears to have recommended it to us, having regard to the extension and progression of the successive pieces of this machine of hers, 'tis no wonder if, on the contrary, that of children toward their parents is not so great. So which we may add this other Aristotelian consideration,* that he who confers a benefit on any one, loves him better than he is beloved by him again: that he to whom is owing, loves better than he who owes; and that every artificer is fonder of his work, than, if that work had sense, it would be of him; by reason that it is dear to us *to be,* and *to be* consists in movement and action; therefore every one has in some sort a being in his work. He who confers a benefit exercises a fine and honest action; he who receives it exercises the useful only. Now the useful is

* Moral. Nicom., ix. 7.

much less lovable than the honest; the honest is stable and permanent, supplying him who has done it with a continual gratification. The useful loses itself, easily slides away, and the memory of it is neither so fresh nor so pleasing. Those things are dearest to us that have cost us most, and giving is more charitable than receiving.

Since it has pleased God to endue us with some capacity of reason, to the end we may not, like brutes, be servilely subject and enslaved to the laws common to both, but that we should by judgment and a voluntary liberty apply ourselves to them, we ought, indeed, something to yield to the simple authority of nature, but not suffer ourselves to be tyrannically hurried away and transported by her; reason alone should have the conduct of our inclinations. I, for my part, have a strange disgust for those propensions that are started in us without the mediation and direction of the judgment, as, upon the subject I am speaking of, I cannot entertain that passion of dandling and caressing infants scarcely born, having as yet neither motion of soul nor shape of body distinguishable, by which they can render themselves amiable, and have not willingly suffered them to be nursed near me. A true and regular affection ought to spring and increase with the knowledge they give us of themselves, and then, if they are worthy of it, the natural propension walking hand in hand with reason, to cherish them with a truly paternal love; and so to judge, also, if they be otherwise, still rendering ourselves to reason, notwithstanding the inclination of nature. 'Tis oft-times quite otherwise; and, most commonly, we find ourselves more taken with the running up and down, the games, and puerile simplicities of our children, than we do, afterward, with their most complete actions; as if we had loved them for our sport, like monkeys, and not as men; and some there are, who are very liberal in buying them balls to play withal, who are very close-handed for the least necessary expense when they come to age. Nay, it looks as if the jealousy of seeing them appear in and enjoy the world when we are about to leave it, rendered us more niggardly and stingy toward them; it vexes us that they tread upon our heels, as if to solicit us to go out; if this were to be feared, since the order of things will have it so that they cannot, to speak the truth, be nor live, but at the expense of our being and life, we should never meddle with being fathers at all.

For my part, I think it cruelty and injustice not to receive them into the share and society of our goods, and not to make them partakers in the intelligence of our domestic affairs when they are capable, and not to lessen and contract own expenses to make the more room for theirs, seeing we beget them to that effect. 'Tis unjust that an old fellow, broken and half dead, should alone, in a corner of the chimney, enjoy the money that would suffice for the maintenance and advancement of many children, and suffer them, in the meantime, to lose their best years for want of means to advance themselves in the public service and the knowledge of men. A man by this course drives them to despair, and to seek out by any means, how unjust or dishonorable soever, to provide for their own support; as I have, in my time, seen several young men of good extraction so addicted to stealing that no correction could cure them of it. I know one of a very good family, to whom, at the request of a brother of his, a very honest and brave gentleman, I once spoke on this account, who made answer, and confessed to me roundly, that he had been put upon this dirty practice by the severity and avarice of his father; but that he was now so accustomed to it that he could not leave it off. And, at that very time, he was trapped stealing a lady's rings, having come into her chamber as she was dressing with several others. He put me in mind of a story I had heard of another gentleman, so perfect and accomplished in this fine trade in his youth, that, after he came to his estate and resolved to give it over, he could not hold his hands, nevertheless, if he passed by a shop where he saw anything he liked, from catching it up, though it put him to the shame of sending afterward to pay for it. And I have myself seen several so habituated to this quality that even among their comrades they could not forbear filching, though with intent to restore what they had taken. I am a Gascon, and yet there is no vice I so little understand as that; I hate it something more by disposition than I condemn it by reason; I do not so much as desire anything of another man's. This province of ours is, in plain truth, a little more decried than the other parts of the kingdom; and yet we have several times seen, in our times, men of good families of other provinces, in the hands of justice, convicted of abominable thefts. I fear this vice is, in some sort, to be attributed to the forementioned vice of the fathers.

And if a man should tell me, as a lord of very good understanding once did, that "he hoarded up wealth, not to extract any other fruit and use from his parismony, but to make himself honored and sought after by his relations; and that age having deprived him of all other power, it was the only remaining remedy to maintain his authority in his family, and to keep him from being neglected and despised by all around," in truth, not only old age, but all other imbecility, according to Aristotle,* is the promoter of avarice; that is something, but it is physic for a disease that a man should prevent the birth of. A father is very miserable who has no other hold on his children's affection than the need they have of his assistance, if that can be called affection; he must render himself worthy to be respected by his virtue and wisdom, and beloved by his kindness and the sweetness of his manners; even the very ashes of a rich matter have their value; and we are wont to have the bones and relics of worthy men in regard and reverence. No old age can be so decrepit in a man who has passed his life in honor, but it must be venerable, especially to his children, whose soul he must have trained up to their duty by reason, not by necessity and the need they have of him, not by harshness and compulsion.

> "Et errat longe, mea quidem sententia,
> Qui imperium credat esse gravius, aut stabilius,
> Vi quod fit, quam illud, quod amicitia adjungitur." †

I condemn all violence in the education of a tender soul that is designed for honor and liberty. There is I know not what of servile in rigor and constraint; and I am of opinion that what is not to be done by reason, prudence, and address, is never to be affected by force. I myself was brought after that manner; and they tell me that in all my first age I never felt the rod but twice, and then very slightly. I practiced the same method with my children, who all of them died at nurse, except Leonora, my only daughter, and who arrived to the age of five years and upward without other correction for her childish faults (her mother's indulgence easily concurring) than words only,

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* Moral. Nicom., iv. 3.

† "He greatly errs, in my opinion, who thinks that empire more absolute and durable which is acquired by force than that which gentleness and friendship create."—TERENCE, *Adelph.*, i. 1, 40.

and those very gentle; in which kind of proceeding, though my end and expectation should be both frustrated, there are other causes enough to lay the fault on without blaming my discipline, which I know to be natural and just, and I should, in this, have yet been more religious toward the males, as less born to subjection and more free; and I should have made it my business to fill their hearts with ingenuousness and freedom. I have never observed other effects of whipping than to render boys more cowardly, or more willfully obstinate.

Do we desire to be beloved of our children? Will we remove from them all occasion of wishing our death (though no occasion of so horrid a wish can either be just or excusable, "*Nullum scelus rationem habet*" *), let us reasonably accommodate their lives with what is in our power. In order to this, we should not marry so young that our age shall in a manner be confounded with theirs; for this inconvenience plunges us into many very great difficulties, and especially the gentry of the nation, who are of a condition wherein they have little to do, and who live upon their rents only: for elsewhere, with people who live by their labor, the pluralty and company of children is an increase to the common stock; they are so many new tools and instruments wherewith to grow rich.

I married at three-and-thirty years of age, and concur in the opinion of thirty-five, which is said to be that of Aristotle.† Plato will have nobody marry before thirty: but he has reason to laugh at those who undertook the work of marriage after five-and-fifty, and condemns their offspring as unworthy of aliment and life. Thales gave the truest limits, who, young and being importuned by his mother to marry, answered, "That it was too soon," and, being grown into years and urged again, "That it was too late."‡ A man must deny opportunity to every inopportune action. The ancient Gauls § looked upon it as a very horrid thing

* "No wickedness is founded on reason."—LIVY, xxviii. 28.

† Aristotle, Politics, vii. 16, says thirty-seven, not thirty-five.—COSTE.

‡ Diogenes Laertius, Life of Thales, i. 26.

§ Cæsar, De Bello Gallico, vi. 21, who, however, says this not of the Gauls, but of the Germans.

for a man to have society with a woman before he was twenty years of age, and strictly recommended to the men who designed themselves for war the keeping their virginity till well grown in years, forasmuch as courage is abated and diverted by the use of women.

> "Mà or congiunto à giovinetta sposa,
> E lieto omai de' figli, era invilito
> Negli affetti di padre et di marito." *

Muleasses, king of Tunis,† he whom the Emperor Charles V. restored to his kingdom, reproached the memory of his father Mahomet with the frequentation of women, styling him loose, effeminate, and a getter of children.‡ The Greek history observes of Iccus the Tarentine, of Chryso, Astyllus, Diopompus, and others, that to keep their bodies in order for the Olympic games and such like exercises, they denied themselves during that preparation all commerce with Venus.§ In a certain country of the Spanish Indies men were not permitted to marry till after forty years of age, and yet the girls were allowed to marry at ten. 'Tis not time for a gentleman of five-and-thirty years old to give place to his son who is twenty; he, being himself in a condition to serve both in the expeditions of war and in the court of his prince, has need of all his equipage; and yet, doubtless, ought to allow his son a share, but not so great a one as wholly to disfurnish himself; and for such a one the saying that fathers have ordinarily in their mouths, that they will not put off their clothes before they go to bed, is proper enough.

But a father worn out with age and infirmities, and deprived by his weakness and want of health of the common society of men, wrongs himself and his to rake together a great mass of treasure. He has lived long enough, if he be wise, to have a mind to strip himself to go to bed, not to his very shirt, I confess, but to that, and a good warm dressing-gown; the remaining pomps, of which he has no further use, he ought voluntarily to surrender to those to

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* "Now, married to a young wife and happy in children, his old courage is abated by his love as father and husband."—TASSO, *Gierus*, x. 39.

† Muley-Hassam.

‡ Of whom he had thirty-four.

§ Plato, De Leg, viii.

whom by the order of nature they belong. 'Tis reason he should refer the use of these things to them, seeing that nature has reduced him to such a state that he cannot enjoy them himself; otherwise there is doubtless malice and envy in the case. The greatest act of the Emperor Charles V. was that when, in imitation of some of the ancients of his own quality, confessing it but reason to strip ourselves when our clothes encumber and grow too heavy for us, and to lie down when our legs begin to fail us, he resigned his possessions, grandeur, and power to his son, when he found himself failing in vigor and steadiness for the conduct of his affairs suitable with the glory he had therein acquired.

> "Solve senescentem mature sanus equum, ne
> Peccet ad extremum ridendus, et ilia ducat." *

This fault of not perceiving betimes and of not being sensible of the feebleness and extreme alteration that age naturally brings both upon body and mind, which, in my opinion, is equal, if indeed the soul has not more than half, has lost the reputation of most of the great men in the world. I have known in my time, and been intimately acquainted with persons of great authority, whom one might easily discern marvelously lapsed from the sufficiency I knew they were once endued with, by the reputation they had acquired in their former years, whom I could heartily, for their own sakes, have wished at home at their ease, discharged of their public or military employments, which were now grown too heavy for their shoulders. I have formerly been very familiar in a gentleman's house, a widower and very old, though healthy and cheerful enough: this gentleman had several daughters to marry and a son already of ripe age, which brought upon him many visitors, and a great expense, neither of which well pleased him, not only out of consideration of frugality, but yet more for having, by reason of his age, entered into a course of life far differing from ours. I told him one day, a little boldly as I used to do, that he would do better to give us younger folk room, and to leave his principal house (for he had but that well placed and furnished), to his son, and himself retire to an estate he had hard by, where nobody would

* "Dismiss the old horse in good time, lest, failing in the lists, the spectators laugh."—HORACE, *Epist.* i. 1, 8.

trouble his repose, seeing he could not otherwise avoid being importuned by us, the condition of his children considered. He took my advice afterward, and found an advantage in so doing.

I do not mean that a man should so install them as not to reserve to himself a liberty to retract; I, who am now arrived to the age wherein such things are fit to be done, would resign to them the enjoyment of my house and goods, but with a power of revocation if they should give me cause to alter my mind; I would leave to them the use, that being no longer convenient for me; and, of the general authority and power over all, would reserve as much as I thought good to myself: having always held that it must needs be a great satisfaction to an aged father himself to put his children into the way of governing his affairs, and to have power during his own life to control their behavior, supplying them with instruction and advice from his own experience, and himself to transfer the ancient honor and order of his house into the hands of those who are to succeed him, and by that means to satisfy himself as to the hopes he may conceive of their future conduct. And in order to this I would not avoid their company; I would observe them near at hand, and partake, according to the condition of my age, of their feasts and jollities. If I did not live absolutely among them, which I could not do without annoying them and their friends, by reason of the morosity of my age and the restlessness of my infirmities, and without violating also the rules and order of living I should then have set down to myself, I would, at least, live near them in some retired part of my house, not the best in show, but the most commodious. Nor, as I saw, some years ago, a dean of St. Hilary of Poitiers, by his melancholy given up to such a solitude, that at the time I came into his chamber it had been two and twenty years that he had not stepped one foot out of it, and yet had all his motions free and easy, and was in good health, saving a cold that fell upon his lungs; he would, hardly once in a week, suffer any one to come in to see him; he always kept himself shut up in his chamber alone, except that a servant brought him, once a day, something to eat, and did then but just come in and go out again. His employment was to walk up and down, and read some book, for he was a bit of a scholar; but, as to the rest, obstinately bent to die in

this retirement, as he soon after did. I would endeavor by pleasant conversation to create in my children a warm and unfeigned friendship and good will toward me, which in well descended natures is not hard to do; for if they be furious brutes, of which this age of ours produces thousands, we are then to hate and avoid them as such.

I am angry at the custom of forbidding chidren to call their father by the name of father, and to enjoin them another, as more full of respect and reverence, as if nature had not sufficiently provided for our authority. We call Almighty God Father, and disdain to have our children call us so; I have reformed this error in my family.* And 'tis also folly and injustice to deprive children, when grown up, of familiarity with their father, and to carry a scornful and austere countenance toward them, thinking by that to keep them in awe and obedience; for it is a very idle farce that, instead of producing the effect designed, renders fathers distasteful, and, which is worse, ridiculous to their own children. They have youth and vigor in possession, and consequently the breath and favor of the world; and therefore receive these fierce and tyrannical looks—mere scarecrows—of a man without blood, either in his heart or veins, with mockery and contempt. Though I could make myself feared, I had yet much rather make myself beloved: there are so many sorts of defects in old age, so much imbecility, and it is so liable to contempt, that the best acquisition a man can make is the kindness and affection of his own family; command and fear are no longer his weapons. Such an one I have known who, having been very imperious in his youth, when he came to be old, though he might have lived at his full ease, would ever strike, rant, swear, and curse: the most tempestuous master in France: fretting himself with unnecessary suspicion and vigilance. And all this rumble and clutter but to make his family cheat him the more; of his barn, his kitchen, cellar, nay, and his very purse too, others had the greatest use and share, while he keeps his keys in his pocket much more carefully than his eyes. While he hugs himself with the frugality of the pitiful pittance of a wretched and niggardly table, everythings goes to rack and ruin in every corner of his house, in play, drink, all sorts of profusion,

* As did Henry IV. of France; see his Life by Péréfixe.—COSTE.

making sport in their junkets with his vain anger and fruitless parsimony. Every one is a sentinel against him, and if, by accident, any wretched fellow that serves him is of another humor, and will not join with the rest, he is presently rendered suspected to him, a bait that old age very easily bites at of itself. How often has this gentleman boasted to me in how great awe he kept his family, and how exact an obedience and reverence they paid him! How clearly he saw into his own affairs!

"Ille solus nescit omnia." *

I do not know any one that can muster more parts, both natural and acquired, proper to maintain dominion, than he; yet he is fallen from it like a child. For this reason it is that I have picked out him among several others that I know of the same humor, for the greatest example. It were matter for a question in the schools, whether he is better thus or otherwise. In his presence, all submit to and bow to him, and give so much way to his vanity that nobody ever resists him; he has his fill of assents, of seeming fear, submission, and respect. Does he turn away a servant? he packs up his bundle, and is gone; but 'tis no further than just out of his sight: the steps of old age are so slow, the senses so troubled, that he will live and do his old office in the same house a year together without being perceived. And after a fit interval of time, letters are pretended to come from a great way off, very humble, suppliant, and full of promises of amendment, by virtue of which he is again received into favor. Does monsieur make any bargain, or prepare any despatch that does not please? 'tis suppresed, and causes afterward forged to excuse the want of execution in the one or answer in the other No letters being first brought to him, he never sees any but those that shall seem fit for his knowledge. If by accident they fall first into his own hand, being used to trust somebody to read them to him, he reads extempore what he thinks fit, and often makes such a one ask him pardon who abuses, and rails at him in his letter. In short, he sees nothing but by an image prepared and designed beforehand, and the most satisfac-

* "He alone is ignorant of all that is passing."—TERENCE, *Adelph.*, iv. 2, 9.

tory they can invent, not to rouse and awaken his ill-humor and choler. I have seen, under various aspects, enough of these modes of domestic government, long-enduring, constant, to the like effect.

Women * are evermore addicted to cross their husbands: they lay hold with both hands on all occasions to contradict and oppose them; the first excuse serves for a plenary justification. I have seen one who robbed her husband wholesale, that, as she told her confessor, she might distribute the more liberal alms. Let who will trust to that religious dispensation. No management of affairs seems to them of sufficient dignity, if proceeding from the husband's assent; they must usurp it either by insolence or cunning, and always injuriously, or else it has not the grace and authority they desire. When, as in the case I am speaking of, 'tis against a poor old man and for the children, then they make use of this title to serve their passion with glory; and, as for a common service easily cabal and combine against his government and dominion. If they be males grown up in full and flourishing health, they presently corrupt, either by force or favor, steward, receivers, and all the rout. Such as have neither wife nor son do not so easily fall into this misfortune; but withal more cruelly and unworthily. Cato the elder in his time said: So many servants, so many enemies; consider, then, whether according to the vast difference between the purity of the age he lived in and the corruption of this of ours, he does not seem to show us, that wife, son, and servant, are so many enemies to us? 'Tis well for old age that it is always accompanied with want of perception, ignorance, and a facility of being deceived. For should we see how we are used and would not acquiesce, what would become of us? especially in such an age as this, where the very judges who are to determine our controversies are usually partisans to the young and interested in the cause. In case the discovery of this cheating escape me, I cannot at least fail to discern that I am very fit to be cheated. And can a man ever enough exalt the value of a friend, in comparison with these civilities? The very image of it which I see in beasts, so pure and uncorrupted,

* Cotton here politely interpolates "especially the perverse and elder sorts."

how religiously do I respect it! If others deceive me, yet do I not, at least, deceive myself in thinking I am able to defend myself from them, or in cudgeling my brains to make myself so. I protect myself from such treasons in my own bosom, not by an unquiet and tumultuous curiosity, but rather by diversion and resolution. When I hear talk of any one's condition, I never trouble myself to think of him; I presently turn my eyes upon myself to see in what condition I am; whatever concerns another relates to me; the accident that has befallen him gives me caution, and rouses me to turn my defense that way. We every day and every hour say things of another that we might more properly say of ourselves, could we but apply our observation to our own concerns, as well as extend it to others. And several authors have in this manner prejudiced their own cause by running headlong upon those they attack, and darting those shafts against their enemies, that are more properly, and with greater advantage, to be turned upon themselves.

The late Mareschal de Montluc having lost his son, who died in the island of Madeira, in truth a very worthy gentleman and of great expectation, did to me, among his other regrets, very much insist upon what a sorrow and heartbreaking it was that he had never made himself familiar with him; and by that humor of paternal gravity and grimace to have lost the opportunity of having an insight into and of well knowing his son, as also of letting him know the extreme affection he had for him, and the worthy opinion he had of his virtue. "That poor boy," said he, "never saw in me other than a stern and disdainful countenance, and is gone in a belief that I neither knew how to love him nor esteem him according to his desert. For whom did I reserve the discovery of that singular affection I had for him in my soul? Was it not he himself, who ought to have had all the pleasure of it, and all the obligation? I constrained and racked myself to put on and maintain this vain disguise, and have by that means deprived myself of the pleasure of his conversation, and, I doubt, in some measure, his affection, which could not but be very cold to me, having never other from me than austerity, nor felt other than a tyrannical manner of

proceeding."* I find this complaint to be rational and rightly apprehended: for, as I myself know by too certain experience, there is no so sweet consolation in the loss of friends as the conscience of having had no reserve or secret for them, and to have had with them a perfect and entire communication. Oh my friend, † am I the better for being sensible of this; or am I the worse? I am, doubtless, much the better. I am consoled and honored, in the sorrow for his death. Is it not pious and a pleasing office of my life to be always upon my friend's obsequies? Can there be any joy equal to this privation?

I open myself to my family, as much as I can, and very willingly let them know the state of my opinion and good will toward them, as I do to everybody else: I make haste to bring out and present myself to them; for I will not have them mistaken in me, in anything. Among other particular customs of our ancient Gauls, this, as Cæsar reports, ‡ was one, that the sons never presented themselves before their fathers, nor durst ever appear in their company in public, till they began to bear arms; as if they would intimate by this, that it was also time for their fathers to receive them into their familiarity and acquaintance.

I have observed yet another sort of indiscretion in fathers of my time, that, not contented with having deprived their children, during their own long lives, of the share they naturally ought to have had in their fortunes, they afterward leave to their wives the same authority over their estates, and liberty to dispose of them according to their own fancy. And I have known a certain lord, one of the principal officers of the crown, who, having in his prospect, by right of succession, about fifty thousand crowns yearly revenue, died necessitous and overwhelmed with debt, at above fifty years of age; his mother in her extremest decrepitude, being yet in possession of all his property, by the will of his father, who had, for his part, lived till near four score years old. This appears to me by no means reasonable. And therefore I think it of

* Madame de Sévigné tells us that she never read this passage without tears in her eyes. "My God!" she exclaims, "how full is this book of good sense!"

† La Botiee.

‡ De Bello Gall., vi. 18.

very little advantage, to a man, whose affairs are well enough, to seek a wife who encumbers his estate with a very great fortune; there is no sort of foreign debt that brings more ruin to families than this: my predecessors have ever been aware of that danger and provided against it, and so have I. But those who dissuade us from rich wives, for fear they should be less tractable and kind, are out in their advice to make a man lose a real commodity for so frivolous a conjecture. It costs an unreasonable woman no more to pass over one reason than another; they cherish themselves most where they are most wrong. Injustice allures them, as the honor of their virtuous actions does the good: and the more riches they bring with them, they are so much the more good-natured, as women, who are handsome, are all the more inclined and proud to be chaste.

'Tis reasonable to leave the administration of affairs to the mothers till the children are old enough, according to law, to manage them; but the father has brought them up very ill, if he cannot hope that, when they come to maturity, they will have more wisdom and ability in the management of affairs than his wife, considering the ordinary weakness of the sex. It were, notwithstanding, to say the truth, more against nature to make the mothers depend upon the discretion of their children; they ought to be plentifully provided for, to maintain themselves according to their quality and age, by reason that necessity and indigence are much more unbecoming and insupportable to them than to men; the son should rather be cut short than the mother.

In general, the most judicious distribution of our goods, when we come to die, is, in my opinion, to let them be distributed according to the custom of the country; the laws have considered the matter better than we know how to do, and 'tis wiser to let them fail in their appointment, than rashly to run the hazard of miscarrying in ours. Nor are the goods properly ours, since by civil prescription and without us, they are all destined to certain successors. And although we have some liberty beyond that, yet I think we ought not, without great and manifest cause, to take away that from one which his fortune has allotted him, and to which the public equity gives him title; and that it is against reason to abuse this liberty, in making it

serve our own frivolous and private fancies. My destiny has been kind to me in not presenting me with occasions to tempt me and divert my affection from the common and legitimate institution. I see many with whom 'tis time lost to employ a long exercise of good offices: a word ill taken obliterates ten years' merit; he is happy who is in a position to oil their good will at this last passage. The last action carries it: not the best and most frequent offices, but the most recent and present do the work. These are people that play with their wills as with apples or rods, to gratify or chastise every action of those who pretend to an interest in their care. 'Tis a thing of too great weight and consequence, to be so tumbled and tossed and altered every moment, and wherein the wise determine once for all, having above all things regard to reason and the public observance. We lay these masculine substitutions too much to heart, proposing a ridiculous eternity to our names. We are, moreover, too superstitious in vain conjectures as to the future, that we derive from the words and actions of children. Peradventure they might have done me an injustice, in dispossessing me of my right, for, having been the most dull and heavy, the most slow and unwilling at my book, not of all my brothers only, but of all the boys in the whole province: whether about learning my lesson, or about any bodily exercise. 'Tis a folly to make an election out of the ordinary course upon the credit of these divinations wherein we are so often deceived. If the ordinary rule of descent were to be violated, and the destinies corrected in the choice they have made of our heirs, one might more plausibly do it upon the account of some remarkable and enormous personal deformity, a permanent and incorrigible defect, and in the opinion of us French, who are great admirers of beauty, an important prejudice.

The pleasant dialogue between Plato's legislator and his citizens will be an ornament to this place.* "What," said they, feeling themselves about to die, "may we not dispose of our own to whom we please? Gods, what cruelty that it shall not be lawful for us, according as we have been served and attended in our sickness, in our old age, in our affairs, to give more or less to those whom we have found

* Laws, lib. xi.

most diligent about us, at our own fancy and discretion!" To which the legislator answers thus: "My friends, who are now without question, very soon to die, it is hard for you in the condition you are, either to know yourselves, or what is yours, according to the delphic inscription. I, who make the laws, am of opinion, that you neither are yourselves your own, nor is that yours of which you are possessed. Both your goods and you belong to your families, as well those past as those to come; but, further, both your family and goods much more appertain to the public. Wherefore, lest any flatterer in your old age or in your sickness, or any passion of your own, should unseasonably prevail with you to make an unjust will, I shall take care to prevent that inconvenience; but, having respect both to the universal interest of the city and that of your particular family, I shall establish laws, and make it by good reasons appear, that private convenience ought to give place to the common benefit. Go then cheerfully where human necessity calls you. It is for me, who regard no more the one thing than the other, and who, as much as in me lies, am provident of the public interest, to have a care as to what you leave behind you."

To return to my subject; it appears to me that women are very rarely born to whom the prerogative over men, the maternal and natural excepted, is in any sort due, unless it be for the punishment of such, as in some amorous fever, have voluntarily submitted themselves to them: but that in no way concerns the old ones, of whom we are now speaking. This consideration it is which has made us so willingly to enact and give force to that law, which was never yet seen by any one, by which women are excluded the succession to our crown: and there is hardly a government in the world where it is not pleaded, as it is here, by the probability of reason that authorizes it, though fortune has given it more credit in some places than in others. 'Tis dangerous to leave the disposal of our succession to their judgment, according to the choice they shall make of children, which is often fantastic and unjust; for the irregular appetites and depraved tastes, they have during the time of their being with child, they have at all other times in the mind. We commonly see them fond of the most weak, ricketty, and deformed children; or of those, if they have such, as are still hanging at the breast. For not

having sufficient force of reason to choose and embrace that which is most worthy, they the more willingly suffer themselves to be carried away, where the impressions of nature are most alone; like animals that know their young no longer than they give them suck. As to the rest, it is easy by experience to be discerned that this natural affection to which we give so great authority has but very weak roots. For a very little profit, we every day tear their own children out of the mother's arms, and make them take ours in their room: we make them abandon their own to some pitiful nurse, to whom we disdain to commit ours, or to some she-goat, forbidding them, not only to give them suck, what danger soever they run thereby, but, moreover, to take any manner of care of them, that they may wholly be occupied with the care of and attendance upon ours; and we see in most of them an adulterate affection, more vehement than the natural, begotten by custom toward the foster children and a greater solicitude for the preservation of those they have taken care of, than of their own. And that which I was saying of goats was upon this account; that it is ordinary all about where I live, to see the countrywomen, when they want milk of their own for their children, to call goats to their assistance; and I have at this hour two men-servants that never sucked woman's milk more than eight days after they were born. These goats are immediately taught to come to suckle the little children, know their voices when they cry, and come running to them. If any other than this foster-child be presented to them, they refuse to let it suck; and the child in like manner will refuse to suck another goat. I saw one the other day from whom they had taken away the goat that used to nourish it, by reason the father had only borrowed it of a neighbor; the child would not touch any other they could bring, and died, doubtless of hunger. Beasts as easily alter and corrupt their natural affection as we: I believe that in what Herodotus relates of a certain district of Lybia, there are many mistakes; he says that the women are there in common; but that the child so soon as it can go, finds him out in the crowd for his father, to whom he is first led by his natural inclination.

Now, to consider this simple reason for loving our children, that we have begot them, therefore calling them our second selves, it appears, methinks, that there is another

kind of production proceeding from us, that is of no less recommendation: for that which we engender by the soul, the issue of our understanding, courage, and abilities, springs from nobler parts than those of the body, and that are much more our own: we are both father and mother in this generation. These cost us a great deal more and bring us more honor, if they have anything of good in them. For the value of our other children is much more theirs than ours; the share we have in them is very little; but of these, all the beauty, all the grace and value are ours; and also they more vividly represent us than the others. Plato adds, that these are immmortal children that immortalize and deify their fathers, as Lycurgus, Solon, Minos. Now, histories being full of examples of the common affection of fathers to their children, it seems not altogether improper to introduce some few of this other kind. Heliodorus, that good bishop of Tricca, rather chose to lose the dignity, profit, and devotion of so venerable a prelacy, than to lose his daughter;* a daughter that continues to this day very graceful and comely; but, peradventure, a little too curiously and wantonly tricked, and too amorous for an ecclesiastical and sacerdotal daughter. There was one Labienus at Rome, a man of great worth and authority, and among other qualities, excellent in all sorts of literature; who was, as I take it, the son of that great Labienus, the chief of Cæsar's captains in the wars of Gaul; and who, afterward, siding with Pompey the Great, so valiantly maintained his cause, till he was by Cæsar defeated in Spain. This Labienus, of whom I am now speaking, had several enemies, envious of his virtue, and, 'tis likely, the courtiers and minions of the emperors of his time who were very angry at his freedom and the paternal humor which he yet retained against tyranny, with which it is to be supposed he had tinctured his books and writings. His adversaries prosecuted several pieces he had published before the magistrate at Rome, and prevailed so far against him, as to have them condemned to the fire. It was in him that this new example of punishment was begun, which was afterward continued against others at Rome, to punish even writings and studies with death.† There would not be

* *i.e.*, His History of Theagines and Chariclea.

† Seneca, Controv., lib. v.

means and matter enough of cruelty, did we not mix with them things that nature has exempted from all sense and suffering, as reputation and the products of the mind, and did we not communicate corporal punishments to the teachings and monuments of the Muses. Now Labienus could not suffer this loss, nor survive these his so dear issue; and therefore caused himself to be conveyed and shut up alive in the monument of his ancestors, where he made shift to kill and bury himself at once. 'Tis hard to show a more vehement paternal affection than this. Cassius Severus, a man of great eloquence and his very intimate friend, seeing his books burned, cried out that by the same sentence they should as well condemn him to the fire too, seeing that he carried in his memory all that they contained.* The like accident befell Cremutius Cordus, who being accused of having in his books commended Brutus and Cassius, that dirty, servile, and corrupt senate, and worthy a worse master than Tiberius, condemned his writings to the flame. He was willing to bear them company and killed himself with fasting. The good Lucan, being condemned by that rascal Nero, at the last gasp of his life when the greater part of his blood was already spent through the veins of his arms which he had caused his physician to open to make him die, and when the cold had seized upon all his extremities, and began to approach his vital parts, the last thing he had in his memory was some of the verses of his "Battle of Pharsalia," which he recited, dying with them in his mouth. What was this, but taking a tender and paternal leave of his children, in imitation of the valedictions and embraces wherewith we part from ours, when we come to die, and an effect of that natural inclination, that suggests to our remembrance in this extremity, those things which were dearest to us during the time of our life?

Can we believe that Epicurus, who, as he says himself, dying at the intolerable pain of the stone, had all his consolation in the beauty of the doctrine he left behind him, could have received the same satisfaction from many children, though never so well-conditioned and brought up, had he had them, as he did from the production of so many rich writings? Or that, had it been in his choice to

* Idem, ibid.

have left behind him a deformed and untoward child, or a foolish and ridiculous book, he, or any other man of his understanding, would not rather have chosen to have run the first misfortune than the other? It had been, for example, peradventure, an impiety in St. Augustin, if on the one hand, it had been proposed to him to bury his writings, from which religion has received so great fruit, or on the other, to bury his children, had he had them, had he not rather chosen to bury his children. And I know not whether I had not much rather have begot a very beautiful one, through society with the Muses, than by lying with my wife. To this, such as it is, what I give it, I give absolutely and irrevocably, as men do to their bodily children. That little I have done for it, is no more at my own disposal; it may know many things that are gone from me, and from me hold that which I have not retained; and which, as well as a stranger, I should borrow thence, should I stand in need. If I am wiser than my book, it is richer than I. There are few men addicted to poetry, who would not be much prouder to be father to the Æneid than to the handsomest youth of Rome; and who would not much better bear the loss of the one than of the other. For according to Aristotle,* the poet, of all artificers, is the fondest of his work. 'Tis hard to believe that Epaminondas, who boasted that in lieu of all posterity he left two daughters behind him that would one day do their father honor (meaning the two victories he obtained over the Lacedæmonians), would willingly have consented to exchange these for the most beautiful creatures of all Greece; or that Alexander or Cæsar ever wished to be deprived of the grandeur of their glorious exploits in war, for the convenience of children and heirs, how perfect and accomplished soever. Nay, I make a great question, whether Phidias or any other excellent sculptor would be so solicitous of the preservation and continuance of his natural children, as he would be of a rare statue, which with long labor and study he had perfected according to art. And to those furious and irregular passions that have sometimes inflamed fathers toward their own daughters, and mothers toward their own sons, the like is also found in this other sort of parentage: witness what is related of

* Moral. Nicom., ix. 7.

Pygmalion who, having made the statue of a woman of singular beauty, fell so passionately in love with this work of his, that the gods in favor of his passion inspired it with life.

> "Tentatum mollescit ebur, positóque rigore,
> Subsidit digitis." *

CHAPTER LX.

OF THE ARMS OF THE PARTHIANS.

'Tis an ill custom and unmanly that the gentlemen of our times have got, not to put on arms but just upon the point of the most extreme necessity, and to lay them by again, so soon as ever there is any show of the danger being over; hence many disorders arise; for every one bustling and running to his arms just when be should go to charge, has his cuirass to buckle on when his companions are already put to rout. Our ancestors were wont to give their head-piece, lance and gauntlets to be carried, but never put off the other pieces so long as there was any work to be done. Our troops are now cumbered and rendered unsightly with the clutter of baggage and servants who cannot be from their masters, by reason they carry their arms. Titus Livius speaking of our nation, "*Intolerantissima laboris corpora vix arma humeris gerebant.*" * Many nations do yet, and did anciently, go to war without defensive arms, or with such, at least, as were of very little proof:

> "Tegmina queis capitum, raptus de subere cortex." *

Alexander, the most adventurous captain that ever was, very seldom wore armor, and such among us as slight it, do not by that much harm to the main concern; for if we see some killed for want of it, there are few less whom the lumber of arms helps to destroy, either by being over-burthened, crushed, and cramped with their weight, by a

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† "The ivory grows pliant under his touch."—Ovid, *Metam.*, x. 283.

* "Their bodies were so impatient of labor, that they could scarce endure to wear their arms."—Livy, x. 28.

† "Covering their heads with a piece of cork."—*Æneid*, vii. 742.

rude shock, or otherwise. For, in plain truth, to observe the weight and thickness of the armor we have now in use, it seems as if we only sought to defend ourselves, and are rather loaded than secured by it. We have enough to do to support its weight, being so manacled and immured, as if we were only to contend with our own arms, and as if we had not the same obligation to defend them, that they have to defend us. Tacitus * gives a pleasant description of the men at arms among our ancient Gauls, who were so armed as only to be able to stand, without power to harm or to be harmed, or to rise again if once struck down. Lucullus, † seeing certain soldiers of the Medes, who formed the van of Tigranes' army, heavily armed and very uneasy, as if in prisons of iron, thence conceived hopes with great ease to defeat them, and by them began his charge and victory. And now that our musketeers are in credit, I believe some invention will be found out to immure us for our safety, and to draw us to the war in castles, such as those the ancients loaded their elephants withal.

This humor is far differing from that of the younger Scipio, who sharply reprehended his soldiers for having planted caltrops under water, in a ditch by which those of the town he held besieged might sally out upon him; saying, that those who assaulted should think of attacking, and not to fear; suspecting with good reason, that this stop they had put to the enemies, would make themselves less vigilant upon their guard. He said also to a young man, who showed him a fine buckler he had, that he was very proud of, "It is a very fine buckler indeed, but a Roman soldier ought to repose greater confidence in his right hand than in his left."

Now 'tis nothing but the not being used to wear it that makes the weight of our armor so intolerable:

> "L'usbergo in dosso haveano, et l'elmo in testa,
> Due di questi guerrier, de' quali io canto;
> Ne notte o di, d' appoi ch' entraro in questa
> Stanza, gl'haveano mai messi da canto;
> Che facile a portar come la vesta
> Era lor, perche in uso l'havean tanto:"‡

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* Annals, iii. 43. † Plutarch, in vita, c. 13.

‡ "Two of the warriors, of whom I sing, had on each his helmet and cuirass, and never had night or day once laid them by, while here they were; those arms, by long practice, were so easy grown and light to bear."—ARIOSTO, cant. xii. 30.

the Emperor Caracalla was wont to march on foot, completely armed, at the head of his army. The Roman infantry always carried not only a morion, a sword, and a shield (for as to arms, says Cicero, they were so accustomed to have them always on, that they were no more trouble to them than their own limbs, "*arma enim, membra militis esse dicunt*" *), but, moreover, fifteen days' provision, together with a certain number of stakes, wherewith to fortify their camp, sixty pounds in weight. And Marius' soldiers, laden at the same rate, were inured to march in order of battle five leagues in five hours, and sometimes, upon any urgent occasion, six. Their military discipline was much ruder than ours, and accordingly produced much greater effects. The younger Scipio, reforming his army in Spain, ordered his soldiers to eat standing, and nothing that was dressed. The jeer that was given a Lacedæmonian soldier is marvelously pat to this purpose, who, in an expedition of war was reproached for having been seen under the roof of a house: they were so inured to hardship that, let the weather be what it would, it was a shame to be seen under any other cover than the roof of heaven. We should not march our people very far at that rate.

As to what remains, Marcellinus,† a man bred up in the Roman wars, curiously observes the manner of the Parthians arming themselves, and the rather, for being so different from that of the Romans. "They had," says he, "armor so woven as to have all the scales fall over one another like so many little feathers; which did nothing hinder the motion of the body, and yet were of such resistance, that our darts hitting upon them, would rebound" (these were the coats of mail our forefathers were so constantly wont to use). And in another place;‡ "they had," says he, "strong and able horses, covered with thick tanned hides of leather, and were themselves armed *cap-à-pié* with great plates of iron, so artificially ordered, that in all parts of the limbs, which required bending, they lent themselves to the motion. One would have said, that they had been men of iron; having armor for the head so neatly fitted, and so naturally representing the form of a face, that they were nowhere vulnerable, save at two little round holes that gave them a

* Cicero, Tusc. Quæs., ii. 16.

† Ammianus Marcellinus, xxiv. 7. ‡ Idem, xxv. 1.

little light, corresponding with their eyes, and certain small chinks about their nostrils, through which they, with great difficulty, breathed,"

> "Flexilis inductis animatur lamina membris,
> Horribilis visu; credas simulacra moveri
> Ferrea cognatoque viros spirare metallo.
> Par vestitus equis: ferrata fronte minantur,
> Ferratosque movent, securi vulneris, armos." *

'Tis a description very near resembling the equipage of the men-at-arms in France, with their barded horses. Plutarch says,† that Demetrius caused two complete suits of armor to be made for himself and for Alcimus, a captain of the greatest note and authority about him, of six score pounds weight each, whereas the ordinary suits weighed but half so much.

CHAPTER LXI.

OF BOOKS.

I MAKE no doubt but that I often happen to speak of things that are much better and more truly handled by those who are masters of the trade. You have here purely an essay of my natural parts, and not of those acquired; and whoever shall catch me tripping in ignorance, will not in any sort get the better of me; for I should be very unwilling to become responsible to another for my writings, who am not so to myself, nor satisfied with them. Whoever goes in quest of knowledge, let him fish for it where it is to be found; there is nothing I so little profess. These are fancies of my own, by which I do not pretend to discover things but to lay open myself; they may, peradventure, one day be known to me, or have formerly been, according as fortune has been able to bring me in place where they have been explained; but I have utterly forgotten it; and if I am a man of some reading, I am a man of no retention; so that I can promise no certainty, more than

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* "Plates of steel are placed over the body so flexible that, dreadful to be seen, you would think these not living men, but moving images. The horses like-armed, wear spikes in front, and move secured from wounds by armor on their iron shoulders."—CLAUD. *in Ruf.*, ii. 358.

† Life of Demetrius, c. 6.

to make known to what point the knowledge I now have has risen. Therefore, let none lay stress upon the matter I write, but upon my method in writing it. Let them observe, in what I borrow, if I have known how to choose what is proper to raise or help the invention, which is always my own: For I make others say for me, not before but after me, what either for want of language or want of sense, I cannot myself so well express. I do not number my borrowings, I weigh them: and had I designed to raise their value by number, I had made them twice as many; they are all, or within a very few, so famed and ancient authors, that they seem, methinks, themselves sufficiently to tell who they are, without giving me the trouble. In reasons, comparisons, and arguments, if I transplant any into my own soil, and confound them among my own, I purposely conceal the author, to awe the temerity of those precipitate censors who fall upon all sorts of writings, particularly the late ones, of men yet living, and in the vulgar tongue which puts every one into a capacity of criticising and which seem to convict the conception and design as vulgar also. I will have them give Plutarch a fillip on my nose, and rail against Seneca when they think they rail at me. I must shelter my own weakness under these great reputations. I shall love any one that can unplume me, that is, by clearness of understanding and judgment, and by the sole distinction of the force and beauty of the discourse. For I who, for want of memory, am at every turn at a loss to pick them out of their national livery, am yet wise enough to know, by the measure of my own abilities, that my soil is incapable of producing any of those rich flowers that I there find growing; and that all the fruits of my own growth are not worth any one of them. For this, indeed, I hold myself responsible; if I get in my own way; if there be any vanity and defect in my writings which I do not of myself perceive nor can discern, when pointed out to me by another; for many faults escape our eye, but the infirmity of judgment consists in not being able to discern them when, by another laid open to us. Knowledge and truth may be in us without judgment, and judgment also without them; but the confession of ignorance is one of the finest and surest testimonies of judgment that I know. I have no other officer to put my writings in rank and file, but

only fortune. As things come into my head, I heap them one upon another; sometimes they advance in whole bodies, sometimes in single file. I would that every one should see my natural and ordinary pace, irregular as it is; I suffer myself to jog on at my own rate. Neither are these subjects which a man is not permitted to be ignorant in, or casually and at a venture, to discourse of. I could wish to have a more perfect knowledge of things, but I will not buy it so dear as it costs. My design is to pass over easily, and not laboriously, the remainder of my life; there is nothing that I will cudgel my brains about; no, not even knowledge, of what value soever.

I seek, in the reading of books, only to please myself, by an honest diversion; or, if I study, 'tis for no other science than what treats of the knowledge of myself, and instructs me how to die and how to live well.

"Has meus ad metas sudet oportet equus." *

I do not bite my nails about the difficulties I meet with in my reading; after a charge or two, I give them over. Should I insist upon them, I should both lose myself and time; for I have an impatient understanding, that must be satisfied at first; what I do not discern at once, is by persistence rendered more obscure. I do nothing without gayety; continuation and a too obstinate endeavor, darkens, stupefies, and tires my judgment. My sight is confounded and dissipated with poring; I must withdraw it, and refer my discovery to new attempts; just as to judge rightly of the luster of scarlet, we are taught to pass the eye lightly over it, and again to run it over at several sudden and reiterated glances. If one book do not please me, I take another; and never meddle with any, but at such times as I am weary of doing nothing. I care not much for new ones, because the old seem fuller and stronger; neither do I converse much with Greek authors, because my judgment cannot do its work with imperfect intelligence of the material.†

Among books that are simply pleasant, of the moderns,

* "My horse must be trained to this course."—PROPERTIUS, iv. 1, 70.

† Montaigne refers to his imperfect knowledge of the Greek language.

Boccaccio's Decameron, Rabelais, and the Basia of Johannes Secundus (if those may be ranged under the title) are worth reading for amusement. As to Amadis, and such kind of stuff, they had not credit to take me, so much as in my childhood. And I will, moreover, say, whether boldly or rashly, that this old, heavy soul of mine is now no longer tickled with Ariosto, no, nor with Ovid; his facility and inventions with which I was formerly so ravished, are now of no more relish, and I can hardly have the patience to read them. I speak my opinion freely of all things, even of those that, perhaps, exceed my capacity, and that I do not conceive to be, in any wise, under my jurisdiction. And, accordingly, the judgment I deliver, is to show the measure of my own sight, and not of the things I make so bold to criticise. When I find myself disgusted with Plato's "Axiochus,"* as with a work, with due respect to such an author be it spoken, without force, my judgment does not believe itself: it is not so arrogant as to oppose the authority of so many other famous judgments of antiquity, which it considers as its tutors and masters, and with whom it is rather content to err; in such a case, it condemns itself either to stop at the outward bark, not being able to penetrate to the heart, or to consider it by some false light. It is content with only securing itself from trouble and disorder; as to its own weakness, it frankly acknowledges and confesses it. It thinks it gives a just interpretation to the appearances by its conceptions presented to it; but they are weak and imperfect. Most of the fables of Æsop have diverse senses and meanings of which the mythologists chose some one that quadrates well to the fable; but, for the most part, 'tis but the first face that presents itself and is superficial only; there yet remain others more vivid, essential, and profound, into which they have not been able to penetrate; and just so 'tis with me.

But, to pursue the business of this essay, I have always thought that, in poesy, Virgil, Lucretius, Catullus, and Horace by many degrees excel the rest; and signally, Virgil in his Georgics, which I look upon as the most accomplished

‡ The "Axiochus" is not by Plato, as Diogenes Laertius admitted. It is attributed by some to Æschines the Socratic, and by others to Xenocrates of Chalcedon.—LE CLERC.

piece in poetry; and in comparison of which a man may easily discern that there are some places in his Æneids, to which the author would have given a little more of the file, had he had leisure: and the fifth book of his Æneids seems to me the most perfect. I also love Lucan, and willingly read him, not so much for his style, as for his own worth, and the truth and solidity of his opinions and judgments. As for Terence, that model of the refined elegancies and grace of the Latin tongue, I find him admirable in his vivid representation of our manners and the movements of the soul; our actions throw me at every turn, upon him; and I cannot read him so often that I do not still discover some new grace and beauty. Such as lived near Virgil's time were scandalized that some should compare him with Lucretius. I am, I confess, of opinion that the comparison is, in truth, very unequal; a belief that, nevertheless, I have much ado to assure myself in, when I come upon some excellent passage in Lucretius. But if they were so angry at this comparison, what would they say to the brutish and barbarous stupidity of those who, nowadays, compare him with Ariosto? Would not Ariosto himself say

"O seclum insipiens et inficetum!" *

I think the ancients had more reason to be angry with those who compared Plautus with Terence, though much nearer the mark, than Lucretius with Virgil. It makes much for the estimation and preference of Terence, that the father of Roman eloquence has him so often, and alone of his class, in his mouth; and the opinion that the best judge of Roman poets† has passed upon his companion. I have often observed that those of our times, who take upon them to write comedies (in imitation of the Italians, who are happy enough in that way of writing), take three or four plots of those of Plautus or Terence to make one of their own, and crowd five or six of Boccaccio's novels into one single comedy. That which make them so load themselves with matter is the diffidence they have of being able to support themselves with their own strength. They must find out something to lean to; and not having of

* "O stupid and tasteless age!"—CATULLUS, xliii. 8.

* Horace, de Art. Poetica, 279.

their own stuff wherewith to entertain us, they bring in the story to supply the defect of language. It is quite otherwise with my author; the elegance and perfection of his way of speaking makes us lose the appetite of his plot; his refined grace and elegance of diction everywhere occupy us: he is so pleasant throughout,

"Liquidus, puroque simillimus amni,"*

and so possesses the soul with his graces that we forget those of his fable. This same consideration carries me further: I observe that the best of the ancient poets have avoided affectation and the hunting after, not only fantastic Spanish and Petrarchal elevations, but even the softer and more gentle touches, which are the ornament of all succeeding poesy. And yet there is no good judgment that will condemn this in the ancients, and that does not incomparably more admire the equal polish, and that perpetual sweetness and flourishing beauty of Catullus' epigrams, than all the stings with which Martial arms the tails of his. This is by the same reason that I gave before, and as Martial says of himself: "*Minus illi ingenio laborandum fuit, in cujus locum materia successerat.*" † The first, without being moved, or without getting angry, make themselves sufficiently felt; they have matter enough of laughter throughout, they need not tickle themselves; the others have need of foreign assistance; as they have the less wit they must have the more body; they mount on horseback, because they are not able to stand on their own legs. As in our balls, those mean fellows who teach to dance, not being able to represent the presence and dignity of our noblesse, are fain to put themselves forward with dangerous jumping, and other strange motions and tumblers' tricks; and the ladies are less put to it in dances, where there are various coupees, changes, and quick motions of body, than in some other of a more sedate kind, where they are only to move a natural pace, and to represent their ordinary grace and presence. And so I have seen good drolls, when in their own everyday clothes, and with the same face they always wear, give us all the pleasure of their

* "Liquid, and like a crystal stream."—HORACE, *Ep.*, ii. 2, 120.

† "He had all the less for his wit to do that the subject itself supplied what was necessary."—MARTIAL, *præf. ad lib.* viii.

art, when their apprentices, not yet arrived at such a pitch of perfection, are fain to meal their faces, put themselves into ridiculous diguises, and make a hundred grotesque faces to give us whereat to laugh. This conception of mine is nowhere more demonstrable than in comparing the Æneid with Orlando Furioso; of which we see the first, by dint of wing, flying in a brave and lofty place, and always following his point; the latter, fluttering and hopping from tale to tale, as from branch to branch, not daring to trust his wings but in very short flights, and perching at every turn, lest his breath and strength should fail;

"Excursusque breves tentat."*

These, then, as to this sort of subjects, are the authors that best please me.

As to what concerns my other reading, that mixes a little more profit with the pleasure, and whence I learn how to marshal my opinions and conditions, the books that serve me to this purpose are Plutarch, since he has been translated into French, and Seneca. Both of these have this notable convenience suited to my humor, that the knowledge I there seek is discoursed in loose pieces, that do not require from me any trouble of reading long, of which I am incapable. Such are the minor works of the first and the epistles of the latter, which are the best and most profiting of all their writings. 'Tis no great attempt to take one of them in hand, and I give over at pleasure; for they have no sequence or dependence upon one another. These authors, for the most part, concur in useful and true opinions; and there is this parallel between them, that fortune brought them into the world about the same century: they were both tutors to two Roman emperors: both sought out from foreign countries: both rich and both great men. Their instruction is the cream of philosophy, and delivered after a plain and pertinent manner. Plutarch is more uniform and constant; Seneca more various and waving: the last toiled and bent his whole strength to fortify virtue against weakness, fear, and vicious appetites; the other seems more to slight their power, and to disdain to alter his pace and to stand upon his guard. Plutarch's opinions are Platonic, gentle, and accommo-

* "Making short runs."—VIRGIL, *Georgics*, iv. 194.

dated to civil society; those of the other are Stoical and Epicurean, more remote from the common use, but, in my opinion, more individually commodious and more firm. Seneca seems to lean a little to the tyranny of the emperors of his time, and only seems; for I take it for certain that he speaks against his judgment when he condemns the action of the generous murderers of Cæsar. Plutarch is frank throughout: Seneca abounds with brisk touches and sallies; Plutarch with things that heat and move you more; this contents and pays you better: he guides us, the other pushes us on.

As to Cicero, those of his works that are most useful to my design are they that treat of philosophy, especially moral. But boldly to confess the truth (for since one has passed the barriers of impudence, off with the bridle), his way of writing, and that of all other long-winded authors, appears to me very tedious: for his prefaces, definitions, divisions, and etymologies take up the greatest part of his work: whatever there is of life and marrow is smothered and lost in the long preparation. When I have spent an hour in reading him, which is a great deal for me, and try to recollect what I have thence extracted of juice and substance, for the most part I find nothing but wind; for he is not yet come to the arguments that serve to his purpose, and to the reasons that properly help to form the knot I seek. For me, who only desire to become more wise, not more learned or eloquent, these logical and Aristotelian dispositions of parts are of no use. I would have a man begin with the main proposition. I know well enough what death and pleasure are; let no man give himself the trouble to anatomize them to me. I look for good and solid reasons, at the first dash, to instruct me how to stand their shock, for which purpose neither grammatical subtleties nor the quaint contexture of words and argumentations are of any use at all. I am for discourses that give the first charge into the heart of the redoubt; his languish about the subject; they are proper for the schools, for the bar, and for the pulpit, where we have leisure to nod, and may awake a quarter of an hour after, time enough to find again the thread of the discourse. It is necessary to speak after this manner to judges, whom a man has a desire to gain over, right or wrong, to children and common people, to whom a man must say all, and see what will come of it.

I would not have an author make it his business to render me attentive: or that he should cry out fifty times *Oyez*, as the heralds do. The Romans, in their religious exercises, began with *Hoc age:* as we in ours do with *Sursum corda;* these are so many words lost to me: I come already fully prepared from my chamber. I need no allurement, no invitation, no sauce; I eat the meat raw, so that, instead of whetting my appetite by these preparatives, they tire and pall it. Will the license of the time excuse my sacriligious boldness if I censure the dialogism of Plato himself as also dull and heavy, too much stifling the matter, and lament so much time lost by a man, who had so many better things, to say, in so many long and needless preliminary interlocutions? My ignorance will better excuse me in that I understand not Greek so well as to discern the beauty of his language. I generally choose books that use sciences, not such as only lead to them. The two first, and Pliny, and their like, have nothing of this *Hoc age;* they will have to do with men already instructed; or if they have, 'tis a substantial *Hoc age,* and that has a body by itself. I also delight in reading the Epistles to Atticus, not only because they contain a great deal of the history and affairs of his time, but much more because I therein discover much of his own private humors; for I have a singular curiosity, as I have said elsewhere, to pry into the souls and the natural and true opinions of the authors with whom I converse. A man may indeed judge of their parts, but not of their manners nor of themselves, by the writings they exhibit upon the theater of the world. I have a thousand times lamented the loss of the treatise Brutus wrote upon virtue, for it is well to learn the theory from those who best know the practice. But seeing the matter preached and the preacher are different things, I would as willingly see Brutus in Plutarch, as in a book of his own. I would rather choose to be certainly informed of the conference he had in his tent with some particular friends of his the night before a battle, than of the harangue he made the next day to his army; and of what he did in his closet and his chamber, than what he did in the public square and in the senate. As to Cicero, I am of the common opinion that, learning excepted, he had no great natural excellence. He was a good citizen, of an affable nature, as all fat, heavy men, such as he was, usually are; but given to ease, and

had, in truth, a mighty share of vanity and ambition. Neither do I know how to excuse him for thinking his poetry fit to be published; 'tis no great imperfection to make ill verses, but it is an imperfection not to be able to judge how unworthy his verses were of the glory of his name. For what concerns his eloquence, that is totally out of all comparison, and I believe it will never be equaled. The younger Cicero, who resembled his father in nothing but in name, while commanding in Asia, had several strangers one day at his table, and among the rest, Cestius seated at the lower end, as men often intrude to the open tables of the great. Cicero asked one of his people who that man was, who presently told him his name; but he, as one who had his thoughts taken up with something else, and who had forgotten the answer made him, asking three or four times, over and over again, the same question, the fellow, to deliver himself from so many answers and to make him know him by some particular circumstance; "'Tis that Cestius," said he, "of whom it was told you, that he makes no great account of your father's eloquence in comparison of his own." At which Cicero, being suddenly nettled, commanded poor Cestius presently to be seized, and caused him to be very well whipped in his own presence;* a very discourteous entertainer! Yet even among those, who, all things considered, have reputed his eloquence incomparable, there have been some, who have not stuck to observe some faults in it; as that great Brutus his friend, for example who said it was a broken and feeble eloquence, *fractam et elumbem.*† The orators also, nearest to the age wherein he lived, reprehended in him the care he had of a certain long cadence in his periods, and particularly took notice of these words, *esse videatur*, which he there so often makes use of.‡ For my part, I more approve of a shorter style, and that comes more roundly off. He does, though, sometimes shuffle his parts more briskly together, but 'tis very seldom. I have myself taken notice of this one passage: "*Ego vero me minus diu senem mallem, quam esse senem antequam essem.*" §

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* Seneca, Suasor, 8.

† Tacitus, De Oratoribus, c. 18.

‡ Idem, Ibid., c. 23.

§ "I had rather be old a brief time, than be old before old age."—CICERO, *De Senect.*, c. 10.

The historians are my right ball, for they are pleasant and easy, and where man, in general, the knowledge of whom I hunt after, appears more vividly and entire than anywhere else:* the variety and truth of his internal qualities, in gross and piecemeal, the diversity of means by which he is united and knit, and the accidents that threaten him. Now those that write lives, by reason they insist more upon counsels than events, more upon what sallies from within, than upon what happens without, are the most proper for my reading; and, therefore, above all others, Plutarch is the man for me. I am very sorry we have not a dozen Laertii,† or that he was not further extended; for I am equally curious to know the lives and fortunes of these great instructors of the world, as to know the diversities of their doctrines and opinions. In this kind of study of histories, a man must tumble over, without distinction, all sorts of authors, old and new, French or foreign, there to know the things of which they variously treat. But Cæsar, in my opinion, particularly deserves to be studied, not for the knowledge of the history only, but for himself, so great an excellence and perfection he has above all the rest, though Sallust be one of the number. In earnest, I read this author with more reverence and respect than is usually allowed to human writings; one while considering him in his person, by his actions and miraculous greatness, and another in the purity and inimitable polish of his language, wherein he not only excels all other historians, as Cicero confesses,‡ but, peradventure, even Cicero himself; speaking of his enemies with so much sincerity in his judgment, that, the false colors with which he strives to palliate his evil cause, and the ordure of his pestilent ambition excepted, I think there is no fault to be objected against him, saving this, that he speaks too sparingly of himself, seeing so many great things could not have been performed under his conduct, but that his own personal acts, must necessarily have had a greater share in them than he attributes to them.

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* *i.e.*, The easiest of my amusements, the right ball, at tennis, being that which coming to the player from the right hand, is much easier played with.—COSTE.

† Diogenes Laertius, who wrote the lives of the philosophers.

‡ Cicero, Brutus, c. 75.

I love historians, whether of the simple sort, or of the higher order. The simple, who have nothing of their own to mix with it, and who only make it their business to collect all that comes to their knowledge, and faithfully to record all things, without choice or discrimination, leave to us the entire judgment of discerning the truth. Such, for example among others, is honest Froissart, who has proceeded in his undertaking with so frank a plainess that, having committed an error, he is not ashamed to confess, and correct it in the place where the finger has been laid, and who represents to us even the variety of rumors that were then spread abroad, and the different reports that were made to him; 'tis the naked and inform matter of history, and of which every one may make his profit, according to his understanding. The more excellent sort of historians have judgment to pick out what is most worthy to be known; and, of two reports, to examine which is the most likely to be true: from the condition of princes and their humors, they conclude their counsels, and attribute to them words proper for the occasion; such have title to assume the authority of regulating our belief to what they themselves believe; but, certainly, this privilege belongs to very few. For the middle sort of historians, of which the most part are, they spoil all; they will chew our meat for us; they take upon them to judge of, and consequently, to incline the history to their own fancy; for if the judgment lean to one side, a man cannot avoid wresting and writhing his narrative to that bias; they undertake to select things worthy to be known, and yet often conceal from us such a word, such a private action, as would much better instruct us; omit, as incredible, such things as they do not understand, and peradventure some, because they cannot express them well in good French or Latin. Let them display their eloquence and intelligence, and judge according to their own fancy: but let them, withal, leave us something to judge of after them, and neither alter nor disguise, by their abridgments and at their own choice, anything of the substance of the matter, but deliver it to us pure and entire in all its dimensions.

For the most part, and especially in these latter ages, persons are culled out for this work from among the common people, upon the sole consideration of well-speak-

ing, as if we were to learn grammar from them; and the men so chosen have fair reason, being hired for no other end and pretending to nothing but babble, not to be very solicitous of any part but that, and so, with a fine jingle of words, prepare us a pretty contexture of reports they pick up in the streets. The only good histories are those that have been written by the persons themselves who held command in the affairs whereof they write, or who participated in the conduct of them, or, at least, who have had the conduct of others of the same nature. Such are almost all the Greek and Roman histories: for, several eye-witnesses having written of the same subject, in the time when grandeur and learning commonly met in the same person, if there happen to be an error, it must of necessity be a very slight one, and upon a very doubtful incident. What can a man expect from a physician who writes of war, or from a mere scholar, treating of the designs of princes? If we could take notice how scrupulous the Romans were in this, there would need but this example: Asinius Pollio found in the histories of Cæsar himself, something misreported, a mistake occasioned, either by reason he could not have his eye in all parts of his army at once and had given credit to some individual persons who had not delivered him a very true account; or else, for not having had too perfect notice given him by his lieutenants of what they had done in his absence. * By which we may see, whether the inquisition after truth be not very delicate, when a man cannot believe the report of a battle from the knowledge of him who there commanded, nor from the soldiers who were engaged in it, unless, after the method of a judicial inquiry, the witnesses be confronted and objections considered upon the proof of the least detail of every incident. In good earnest the knowledge we have of our own affairs, is much more obscure: but that has been sufficiently handled by Bodin, and according to my own sentiment. † A little to aid the weakness of my memory (so extreme that it has happened to me more than once, to take books again into my hand as new and unseen, that I had carefully read over a few

* Suetonius, Life of Cæsar, c. 56.

† In the work, by Jean Bodin, entitled "Methodus ad facilem historiarum cognitionem." 1566.

years before, and scribbled with my notes) I have adopted a custom of late, to note at the end of every book (that is, of those I never intend to read again) the time when I made an end on't, and the judgment I had made of it, to the end that this might, at least, represent to me the character and general idea I had conceived of the author in reading it; and I will here transcribe some of those annotations. I wrote this, some ten years ago, in my Guicciardini (of what language soever my books speak to me in, I always speak to them in my own): "He is a diligent historiographer, from whom, in my opinion, a man may learn the truth of the affairs of his time, as exactly as from any other; in the most of which he was himself also a personal actor, and in honorable command. There is no appearance that he disguised anything, either upon the account of hatred, favor, or vanity; of which the free censures he passes upon the great ones, and particularly, those by whom he was advanced and employed in commands of great trust and honor, as Pope Clement VII., give ample testimony. As to that part which he thinks himself the best at, namely his digressions and discourses, he has indeed some very good, and enriched with fine features; but he is too fond of them: for, to leave nothing unsaid, having a subject so full, ample, almost infinite, he degenerates into pedantry and smacks a little of scholastic prattle. I have also observed this in him, that of so many souls and so many effects, so many motives and so many counsels as he judges, he never attributes any one to virtue, religion, or conscience, as if all these were utterly extinct in the world: and of all the actions, how brave soever in outward show they appear in themselves, he always refers the cause and motive to some vicious occasion or some prospect of profit. It is impossible to imagine but that, among such an infinite number of actions as he makes mention of, there must be some one produced by the way of honest reason. No corruption could so universally have infected men that some one would not escape the contagion: which makes me suspect, that his own taste was vicious, whence it might happen that he judged other men by himself."

In my Philip de Comines, there is this written: "You will here find the language sweet and delightful, of a natural simplicity, the narration pure, with the good faith of the

author conspicuous therein; free from vanity, when speaking of himself, and from affection or envy, when speaking of others: his discourses and exhortations rather accompanied with zeal and truth, than with any exquisite sufficiency; and, throughout, authority and gravity, which bespeak him a man of good extraction, and brought up in great affairs."

Upon the Memoirs of Monsieur du Bellay I find this: "'Tis always pleasant to read things written by those that have experienced how they ought to be carried on; but withal, it cannot be denied but there is a manifest decadence in these two lords* from the freedom and liberty of writing that shine in the elder historians, such as the Sire de Joinville, the familiar companion of St. Louis; Eginhard, chancellor to Charlemagne: and of later date, Philip de Comines. What we have here is rather an apology for King Francis, against the Emperor Charles V., than history. I will not believe that they have falsified anything, as to matter of fact; but they make a common practice of twisting the judgment of events, very often contrary to reason, to our advantage, and of omitting whatsoever is ticklish to be handled in the life of their master; witness the proceedings of Messieurs de Montmorency and de Biron, which are here omitted: nay, so much as the very name of Madame d'Estampes is not here to be found. Secret actions an historian may conceal; but to pass over in silence what all the world knows and things that have drawn after them public and such high consequences, is an inexcusable defect. In fine, whoever has a mind to have a perfect knowledge of King Francis and the events of his reign, let them seek it elsewhere, if my advice may prevail. The only profit a man can reap from these Memoirs is in the special narrative of battles and other exploits of war wherein these gentlemen were personally engaged; in some words and private actions of the princes of their time, and in the treaties and negotiations carried on by the Seigneur de Langey, where there are everywhere things worthy to be known, and discourses above the vulgar strain.

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* Martin du Bellay and Guillaume de Langey, brothers, who jointly wrote the Memoirs.

CHAPTER LXII.

OF CRUELTY.

I FANCY virtue to be something else, and something more noble, than good nature, and the mere propension to goodness, that we are born into the world withal. Well-disposed and well-descended souls pursue, indeed, the same methods, and represent in their actions the same face that virtue itself does: but the word virtue imports something more great and active than merely for a man to suffer himself by a happy disposition, to be gently and quietly drawn to the rule of reason. He who, by a natural sweetness and facility, should despise injuries received, would, doubtless, do a very fine and laudable thing; but he who, provoked and nettled to the quick by an offense, should fortify himself with the arms of reason against the furious appetite of revenge, and, after a great conflict, master his own passion, would certainly do a great deal more. The first would do well; the latter virtuously: one action might be called goodness, and the other virtue; for, methinks, the very name of virtue presupposes difficulty and contention, and cannot be exercised without an opponent. 'Tis for this reason, perhaps, that we call God good, mighty, liberal, and just; but we do not call him virtuous, being that all His operations are natural and without endeavor.* It has been the opinion of many philosophers, not only Stoics, but Epicureans—(and this addition † I borrow from the vulgar opinion, which is false, notwithstanding the witty conceit of Arcesi-

* Rousseau, in his "Emile," book v., adopts this passage, almost in the same words.

† "Montaigne stops here to make his excuse for thus naming the Epicureans with the Stoics, in conformity to the general opinion that the Epicureans were not so rigid in their morals as the Stoics, which is not true in the main, as he demonstrates at one view. This involved Montaigne in a tedious parenthesis, during which it is proper that the reader be attentive, that he may not entirely lose the thread of the argument. In some later editions of this author, it has been attempted to remedy this inconvenience, but without observing that Montaigne's argument is rendered more feeble and obscure by such vain repetitions: it is a license that ought not to be taken, because he who publishes the work of another, ought to give it as the other composed it. But, in Mr. Cotton's translation, he was so puzzled with this enormous parenthesis that he has quite left it out."—COSTE.

laus in answer to one, who, being reproached that many scholars went from his school to the Epicurean, but never any from thence to his school, said in answer, "I believe it indeed; numbers of capons being made out of cocks, but never any cocks out of capons."* For, in truth, the Epicurean sect is not at all inferior to the Stoic in steadiness, and the rigor of opinions and precepts. And a certain Stoic, showing more honesty than those disputants, who, in order to quarrel with Epicurus, and to throw the game into their hands, make him say what he never thought, putting a wrong construction upon his words, clothing his sentences, by the strict rules of grammar, with another meaning, and a different opinion from that which they knew he entertained in his mind, and in his morals, the Stoic, I say, declared that he abandoned the Epicurean sect, upon this, among other considerations, that he thought their road too lofty and inaccessible; *Et ii qui* φιληδονοι *vocanturs unt* φιλόκαλοι *et* φιλοδίκαιοι, *omnesque virtutes et colunt et retinent"* †)—these philosophers say that it is not enough to have the soul seated in a good place, of a good temper, and well disposed to virtue; it is not enough to have our resolutions and our reasoning fixed above all the power of fortune, but that we are, moreover, to seek occasions wherein to put them to the proof: they would seek pain, necessity, and contempt, to contend with them and to keep the soul in breath: "*Multum sibi adjicit virtus lacessita.*"‡ 'Tis one of the reasons why Epaminondas who was yet of a third sect,§ refused the riches fortune presented to him by very lawful means; because, said he, "I am to contend with poverty," in which extreme he maintained himself to the last. Socrates put himself, methinks, upon a ruder trial, keeping for his exercise a confounded scolding wife; which was fighting at sharps. Metellus having, of all the Roman senators alone attempted, by the power of virtue, to withstand the violence of Saturninus, tribune of the people at

* Diogenes Laertius, Life of Arcesilaus, lib. iv. § 43.

† "And those whom we call lovers of pleasure, being, in effect, lovers of honor and justice, cultivate and practice all the virtues." —CICERO, *Ep. Fam.*, xv. 1, 19.

‡ Virtue is much strengthened by combats."—SENECA, *Ep.* 15.

§ The Pythagorean.

Rome, who would, by all means, cause an unjust law to pass in favor of the commons, and by so doing, having incurred the capital penalties that Saturninus had established against the dissentient, entertained those who, in this extremity, led him to execution with words to this effect: That it was a thing too easy and too base to do ill; and that to do well where there was no danger was a common thing; but that to do well where there was danger was the proper office of a man of virtue.* These words of Metellus very clearly represent to us what I would make out, viz., that virtue refuses facility for a companion; and that the easy, smooth, and descending way by which the regular steps of a sweet disposition of nature are conducted is not that of a true virtue; she requires a rough and stormy passage; she will have either exotic difficulties to wrestle with, like that of Metellus, by means whereof fortune delights to interrupt the speed of her career, or internal difficulties, that the inordinate appetites and imperfections of our condition introduce to disturb her.

I am come thus far at my ease; but here it comes into my head that the soul of Socrates, the most perfect that ever came to my knowledge, should, by this rule, be of very little recommendation; for I cannot conceive in that person any the least motion of a vicious inclination: I cannot imagine there could be any difficulty or constraint in the course of his virtue: I know his reason to be so powerful and sovereign over him that she would never have suffered a vicious appetite so much as to spring in him. To a virtue so elevated as his, I have nothing to oppose. Methinks I see him march, with a victorious and triumphant pace, in pomp and at his ease, without opposition or disturbance. If virtue cannot shine bright, but by the conflict of contrary appetites, shall we then say that she cannot subsist without the assistance of vice, and that it is from her that she derives her reputation and honor? What then, also, would become of that brave and generous Epicurean pleasure, which makes account that it nourishes virtue tenderly in her lap, and there makes it play and wanton, giving it for toys to play withal, shame, fevers, poverty, death, and torments? If I presuppose that a perfect virtue manifests itself in contending, in patient

* Plutarch, Life of Marius, c. 10.

enduring of pain, and undergoing the uttermost extremity of the gout, without being moved in her seat; if I give her troubles and difficulty for her necessary objects: what will become of a virtue elevated to such a degree, as not only to despise pain, but, moreover, to rejoice in it, and to be tickled with the daggers of a sharp gout, such as the Epicureans have established, and of which many of them, by their actions, have given most manifest proofs? As have several others, who I find to have surpassed in effects even the very rules of their discipline; witness the younger Cato: when I see him die, and tearing out his own bowels, I am not satisfied simply to believe that he had then his soul totally exempt from all trouble and horror: I cannot think that he only maintained himself in the steadiness that the Stoical rules prescribed him; temperate, without emotion and imperturbed. There was, methinks, something in the virtue of this man too sprightly and fresh to stop there; I believe that, without doubt, he felt a pleasure and delight in so noble an action, and was more pleased in it than in any other of his life: "*Sic abiit è vita, ut causam moriendi nactum se esse gauderet.*" * I believe it so thoroughly that I question whether he would have been content to have been deprived of the occasion of so brave an execution; and if the goodness that made him embrace the public concern more than his own, withheld me not, I should easily fall into an opinion that he thought himself obliged to fortune for having put his virtue upon so brave a trial, and for having favored that thief† in treading underfoot the ancient liberty of his country. Methinks I read in this action I know not what exaltation in his soul, and an extraordinary and manly emotion of pleasure when he looked upon the generosity and height of his enterprise:

"Deliberata morte ferocior." ‡

not stimulated with any hope of glory, as the popular and effeminate judgments of some have concluded (for that

* "He quitted life, rejoicing that a reason for dying had arisen."—CICERO, *Tusc. Quæs.*, i. 30.

† Cæsar.

‡ "Bolder because he had determined to die."—HORACE, *Od.* i. 37, 29.

consideration was too mean and low to possess so generous, so haughty, and so determined a heart as his), but for the very beauty of the thing in itself, which he who had the handling of the springs discerned more clearly and in its perfection than we are able to do. Philosophy has obliged me in determining that so brave an action had been indecently placed in any other life than that of Cato; and that it only appertained to his to end so; notwithstanding, and according to reason, he commanded his son and the senators who accompanied him to take another course in their affairs: "*Catoni, quum incredibilem natura tribuisset gravitatem, eámque ipse perpetua constantia roboravisset, sempérque in proposito consilio permansisset, moriendum potius, quàm tyranni vultus aspiciendus, erat.*" * Every death ought to hold proportion with the life before it; we do not become others for dying. I always interpret the death by the life preceding; and if any one tell me of a death strong and constant in appearance, annexed to a feeble life, I conclude it produced by some feeble cause, and suitable to the life before. The easiness then of this death and the facility of dying he had acquired by the vigor of his soul; shall we say that it ought to abate anything of the luster of his virtue? And who, that has his brain never so little tinctured with the true philosophy, can be content to imagine Socrates only free from fear and passion in the accident of his prison, fetters and condemnation? and that will not discover in him not only firmness and constancy (which was his ordinary condition), but, moreover, I know not what new satisfaction, and a frolic cheerfulness in his last words and actions? In the start he gave with the pleasure of scratching his leg when his irons were taken off, does he not discover an equal serenity and joy in his soul for being freed from past inconveniences, and at the same time to enter into the knowledge of things to come? Cato shall pardon me, if he please; his death indeed is more tragical and more lingering; but yet this is, I know not how, methinks, finer. Aristippus, to one that was lamenting this death: "The gods grant me such a one," said he.† A man

* "Nature having endued Cato with an incredible gravity, which he had also fortified with a perpetual constancy, without ever flagging in his resolution, he must of necessity rather die than see the face of the tyrant."—CICERO, *De Offic.*, i. 31.

† Diogenes Laertius, ii. 76.

discerns in the soul of these two great men and their imitators (for I very much doubt whether there were ever their equals) so perfect a habitude to virtue, that it was turned to a complexion. It is no longer a laborious virtue nor the precepts of reason, to maintain which the soul is so racked, but the very essence of their soul, its natural and ordinary habit; they have rendered it such by a long practice of philosophical precepts having lit upon a rich and fine nature; the vicious passions that spring in us can find no entrance into them: the force and vigor of their soul stifle and extinguish irregular desires, so soon as they begin to move.

Now, that it is not more noble, by a high and divine resolution, to hinder the birth of temptations, and to be so formed to virtue, that the very seeds of vice are rooted out, than to hinder by main force their progress; and, having suffered ourselves to be surprised with the first motions of the passions, to arm ourselves and to stand firm to oppose their progress, and overcome them; and that this second effect is not also much more generous than to be simply endowed with a facile and affable nature, of itself disaffected to debauchery and vice, I do not think can be doubted; for this third and last sort of virtue seems to render a man innocent, but not virtuous; free from doing ill, but not apt enough to do well: considering also, that this condition is so near neighbor to imperfection and cowardice, that I know not very well how to separate the confines and distinguish them; the very names of goodness and innocence are, for this reason, in some sort grown into contempt. I very well know that several virtues, as chastity, sobriety, and temperance, may come to a man through personal defects. Constancy in danger, if it must be so called, the contempt of death, and patience in misfortunes, may ofttimes be found in men for want of well judging of such accidents, and not apprehending them for such as they are. Want of apprehension and stupidity sometimes counterfeit virtuous effects: as I have often seen it happen, that men have been commended for what really merited blame. An Italian lord once said this, in my presence, to the disadvantage of his own nation: that the subtlety of the Italians, and the vivacity of their conceptions were so great, and they foresaw the dangers and accidents that might befall them so far off, that it was not to be thought strange, if they were often in

war, observed to provide for their safety, even before they had discovered the peril; that we French and the Spaniards, who were not so cunning, went on further, and that we must be made to see and feel the danger before we would take the alarm; but that even then we could not stick to it. But the Germans and Swiss, more heavy and thick-skulled, had not the sense to look about them, even when the blows were falling about their ears. Peradventure, he only talked so for mirth's sake; and yet it is most certain that in war raw soldiers rush into danger with more precipitancy than after they have been well cudgeled:

> "Haud ignarus . . . . quantum nova gloria in armis,
> Et prædulce decus, primo certamine possit." *

For this reason it is that, when we judge of a particular action, we are to consider the circumstances, and the whole man by whom it is performed, before we give it a name.

To instance in myself: I have sometimes known my friends call that prudence in me, which was merely fortune; and repute that courage and patience, which was judgment and opinion; and attribute to me one title for another, sometimes to my advantage and sometimes otherwise. As to the rest, I am so far from being arrived at the first and most perfect degree of excellence, where virtue is turned into habit, that even of the second I have made no great proofs. I have not been very solicitous to curb the desires by which I have been importuned. My virtue is a virtue, or rather an innocence, casual and accidental. If I had been born of a more irregular complexion, I am afraid I should have made scurvy work; for I never observed any great stability in my soul to resist passions, if they were never so little vehement: I have not the knack of nourishing quarrels and debates in my own bosom, and, consequently, owe myself no great thanks that I am free from several vices.

> "Si vitiis mediocribus et mea paucis
> Mendosa est natura, alioqui recta; velut si
> Egregio inspersos reprehendas corpore nævos:" †

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* "Not ignorant, how hope of glory excites the young soldier in the first essay of arms."—*Æneid*, xi. 154.

† "If my nature be chargeable only with slight and few vices, and I am otherwise of recititude, the venial faults will be no more than moles on a fair body."—HORATIUS, *Sat.* i. 6, 65.

I owe it rather to my fortune than my reason. She has caused me to be descended of a race famous for integrity and of a very good father; I know not whether or no he has infused into me part of his humors, or whether domestic examples and the good education of my infancy have insensibly assisted in the work, or, if I was otherwise born so;

> "Seu Libra, seu me Scorpius adspicit
> Formidolosus, pars violentior,
> Natalis horæ, seutyrannus
> Hesperiæ Capricornus undæ:" *

but so it is, that I have naturally a horror for most vices. The answer of Antisthenes to him who asked him, which was the best apprenticeship "to unlearn evil," seems to point at this. I have them in horror, I say, with a detestation so natural, and so much my own, that the same instinct and impression I brought of them with me from my nurse, I yet retain, and no temptation whatever has had the power to make me alter it. Not so much as my own discourses, which in some things lashing out of the common road might seem easily to license me to actions that my natural inclination makes me hate. I will say a prodigious thing, but I will say it however: I find myself in many things more under reputation by my manners than by my opinion, and my concupiscence less debauched than my reason. Aristippus instituted opinions so bold in favor of pleasure and riches as set all the philosophers against him: but as to his manners, Dionysius the tyrant, having presented three beautiful women before him, to take his choice, he made answer, that he would choose them all, and that Paris got himself into trouble for having preferred one before the other two: but, having taken them home to his house, he sent them back untouched. His servant finding himself overladen upon the way, with the money he carried after him, he ordered him to pour out and throw away that which troubled him. And Epicurus, whose doctrines were so irreligious and effeminate, was in his life very laborious and devout; he wrote to a friend of his that he lived only upon biscuit and water,

* "Whether I was born under the Balance, or under Scorpio, formidable at the natal hour, or under Capricorn, ruler of the occidental seas."—HORACE, *Od.* ii. 117.

entreating him to send him a little cheese, to lie by him against he had a mind to make a feast.* Must it be true, that to be a perfect good man, we must be so by an occult, natural, and universal propriety, without law, reason, or example? The debauches wherein I have been engaged, have not been, I thank God, of the worst sort, and I have condemned them in myself, for my judgment was never infected by them; on the contrary, I accuse them more severely in myself than in any other; but that is all, for, as to the rest, I oppose too little resistance and suffer myself to incline too much to the other side of the balance, excepting that I moderate them, and prevent them from mixing with other vices, which, for the most part will cling together, if a man have not a care. I have contracted and curtailed mine, to make them as single and as simple as I can:

"Nec ultra
Errorem foveo." †

For as to the opinion of the Stoics, who say, "That the wise man when he works, works by all the virtues together though one be most apparent, according to the nature of the action;" and herein the similitude of a human body might serve them somewhat, for the action of anger cannot work unless all the humors assist it, though choler predominate; —if they will thence draw a like consequence, that when the wicked man does wickedly, he does it by all the vices together, I do not believe it to be so, or else I understand them not, for I by effect find the contrary. These are sharp, unsubstantial subtleties, with which philosophy sometimes amuses itself. I follow some vices, but I fly others as much as a saint would do. The Peripatetics also disown this indissoluble connection; and Aristotle is of opinion that a prudent and just man may be intemperate and inconsistent. Socrates confessed to some who had discovered a certain inclination to vice in his physiognomy, that it was, in truth, his natural propension, but that he had by discipline corrected it.‡ And such as were familiar with the philosopher Stilpo said, that being born with

* Diogenes Laertius, x. 11.

† "Not carry wrong further."—JUVENAL, viii. 164.

‡ Cicero, Tusc. Quæs., iv. 17.

addiction to wine and women, he had by study rendered himself very abstinent both from the one and the other.*

What I have in me of good, I have, quite contrary, by the chance of my birth; and hold it not either by law, precept, or any other instruction: the innocence that is in me is a simple one; little vigor and no art. Among other vices, I mortally hate cruelty, both by nature and judgment as the very extreme of all vices; nay, with so much tenderness that I cannot see a chicken's neck pulled off, without trouble, and cannot, without impatience, endure the cry of a hare in my dog's teeth, though the chase be a violent pleasure. Such as have sensuality to encounter, freely make use of this argument, to show that it is altogether "vicious and unreasonable; that when it is at the height, it masters us to that degree that a man's reason can have no access,"† and instance our own experience in the act of love,

> "Quum jam præsagit gaudia corpus,
> Atque in eo est Venus, ut muliebria conserat arva." ‡

wherein they conceive that the pleasure so transports us, that our reason cannot perform its office, while we are in such ecstasy and rapture. I know very well it may be otherwise, and that a man may sometimes, if he will, gain this point over himself to sway his soul, even in the critical moment, to think of something else; but then he must ply it to that bent. I know that a man may triumph over the utmost effort of this pleasure: I have experienced it in myself, and have not found Venus so imperious a goddess, as many, and much more virtuous men than I, declare. I do not consider it a miracle, as the queen of Navarre does in one of the tales of her Heptameron (which is a very pretty book of that kind) nor for a thing of extreme difficulty, to pass whole nights, where a man has all the convenience and liberty he can desire, with a long-coveted mistress, and yet be true to the pledge first given to satisfy himself with kisses and such like endearments, without pressing any further. I conceive that the example of the pleasure of the chase would be more proper; wherein though the pleasure

* Cicero, De Fato, c. 5.

† Idem, De Senect., c. 12.

‡ Lucretius, iv. 1099. The sense is in the preceding passage of the text.

be less, there is the higher excitement of unexpected joy; giving no time for the reason, taken by surprise, to prepare itself for the encounter, when after a long quest the beast starts up on a sudden in a place where, peradventure, we least expected it; the shock and the ardor of the shouts and cries of the hunters so strike us, that it would be hard for those who love this lesser chase, to turn their thoughts, upon the instant, another way; and the poets make Diana triumph over the torch and shafts of Cupid:

> "Quis non malarum, quas amor curas habet,
> Hæc inter obliviscitur?" *

To return to what I was saying before, I am tenderly compassionate of others' afflictions, and should readily cry for company, if, upon any occasion whatever, I could cry at all. Nothing tempts my tears, but tears, and not only those that are real and true, but whatever they are, feigned or painted. I do not much lament the dead, and should envy them rather; but I very much lament the dying. The savages do not so much offend me, in roasting and eating the bodies of the dead, as they do who torment and persecute the living. Nay, I cannot look so much as upon the ordinary executions of justice, how reasonable soever, with a steady eye. Some one having to give testimony of Julius Cæsar's clemency; "he was," says he, "mild in his revenges. Having compelled the pirates to yield by whom he had before been taken prisoner and put to ransom; forasmuch as he had threatened them with the cross, he indeed condemned them to it, but it was after they had been first strangled. He punished his secretary Philemon, who had attempted to poison him, with no greater severity than mere death." Without naming that Latin author,† who thus dares to allege as a testimony of mercy the killing only of those by whom we have been offended, it is easy to guess that he was struck with the horrid and inhuman examples of cruelty practiced by the Roman tyrants.

For my part, even in justice itself, all that exceeds a simple death appears to me pure cruelty; especially in us who ought, having regard to their souls, to dismiss them

* "Who among such delights, would not remove out of his thoughts the anxious cares of love."—HORACE, *Epod.*, ii.37.

† Suetonius, Life of Cæsar, c. 74.

in a good and calm condition; which cannot be, when we have agitated them by insufferable torments. Not long since a soldier who was a prisoner, perceiving from a tower where he was shut up, that the people began to assemble to the place of execution, and that the carpenters were busy erecting a scaffold, he presently concluded that the preparation was for him; and therefore entered into a resolution to kill himself, but could find no instrument to assist him in his design except an old rusty cart-nail that fortune presented to him. With this he first gave himself two great wounds about his throat, but finding these would not do, he presently afterwards gave himself a third in the belly, where he left the nail sticking up to the head. The first of his keepers who came in found him in this condition; yet alive, but sunk down and exhausted by his wounds. To make use of time, therefore, before he should die, they made haste to read his sentence; which having done, and he hearing that he was only condemned to be beheaded, he seemed to take new courage, accepted wine which he had before refused, and thanked his judges for the unhoped-for mildness of their sentence; saying, that he had taken a resolution to despatch himself for fear of a more severe and insupportable death, having entertained an opinion, by the preparations he had seen in the place, that they were resolved to torment him with some horrible execution, and seemed to be delivered from death, in having it changed from what he apprehended.

I should advise that those examples of severity, by which 'tis designed to retain the people in their duty, might be exercised upon the dead bodies of criminals; for to see them deprived of sepulture, to see them boiled and divided into quarters, would almost work as much upon the vulgar, as the pain they make the living endure; though that in effect be little or nothing, as God himself says, "Who kill the body, and, after that, have no more that they can do;" * and the poets singularly dwell upon the horrors of this picture, as something worse than death:

> "Heu! reliquias semiassi regis, denudatis ossibus,
> Per terram sanie delibutas fœde divexarier." †

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* Luke xii. 4.

† "Alas! that the half-burned remains of these kings, and their bared bones, should be shamefully dragged through the dirt."—CICERO, *Tusc. Quæs.*, i. 44.

I happened to come by one day, accidentally, at Rome, just as they were upon executing Catena, a notorious robber: he was strangled without any emotion of the spectators, but when they came to cut him in quarters the hangman gave not a blow that the people did not follow with a doleful cry and exclamation, as if every one had lent his sense of feeling to the miserable carcass. Those inhuman excesses ought to be exercised upon the bark, and not upon the quick. Artaxerxes, in almost a like case, moderated the severity of the ancient laws of Persia, ordaining that the nobility who had committed a fault, instead of being whipped, as they were used to be, should be stripped only and their clothes whipped for them; and that whereas they were wont to tear off their hair, they should only take off their high-crowned tiara.* The so devout Egyptians thought they sufficiently satisfied the divine justice by sacrificing hogs in effigy and representation; a bold invention to pay God, so essential a substance, in picture only and in show.

I live in a time wherein we abound in incredible examples of this vice, through the license of our civil wars; and we see nothing in ancient histories more extreme than what we have proof of every day, but I cannot, any the more, get used to it. I could hardly persuade myself, before I saw it with my eyes, that there could be found souls so cruel and fell, who, for the sole pleasure of murder, would commit it; would hack and lop off the limbs of others; sharpen their wits to invent unusual torments and new kinds of death, without hatred, without profit, and for no other end but only to enjoy the pleasant spectacle of the gestures and motions, the lamentable groans and cries of a man dying in anguish. For this is the utmost point to which cruelty can arrive: "*Ut homo hominem, non iratus, non timens, tantum spectaturus, occidat.*" † For my own part, I cannot without grief see so much as an innocent beast pursued and killed that has no defense; and from which we have received no offense at all; and that which frequently happens, that the stag we hunt, finding himself

* Plutarch, Notable Sayings of the Ancient Kings.

† "That a man should kill a man without being angry, or without fear, only for the pleasure of the spectacle."—SENECA *Ep.*, 90.

weak and out of breath, and seeing no other remedy, surrenders himself to us who pursue him, imploring mercy by his tears,

> "Questuque cruentus,
> Atque imploranti similis," *

has ever been to me a very unpleasing sight; and I hardly ever take a beast alive that I do not presently turn out again. Pythagoras bought them of fishermen and fowlers to do the same:

> "Primoque a cæde ferarum,
> Incaluisse puto maculatum sanguine ferrum." †

Those natures that are sanguinary toward beasts discover a natural propension to cruelty. After they had accustomed themselves at Rome to spectacles of the slaughter of animals, they proceeded to those of the slaughter of men, to the gladiators. Nature has, herself, I fear, imprinted in man a kind of instinct to inhumanity; nobody takes pleasure in seeing beasts play with and caress one another, but every one is delighted with seeing them dismember, and tear one another to pieces. And that I may not be laughed at for the sympathy I have with them, theology itself enjoins us some favor in their behalf; and considering that one and the same master has lodged us together in this palace for his service, and that they, as well as we, are of his family, it has reason to enjoin us some affection and regard to them. Pythagoras borrowed the metempsychosis from the Egyptians; but it has since been received by several nations, and particularly by our Druids:

> "Morte carent animæ; semperque, priore relicta
> Sede, novis domibus vivunt, habitantque receptæ." ‡

The religion of our ancient Gauls maintained that souls, being eternal, never ceased to remove and shift their places from one body to another; mixing moreover with this

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* "Who, bleeding, by his tears seems to crave mercy."—*Æneid*, vii. 501.

† "I think 'twas slaughter of wild beasts that first stained the steel of man with blood."—OVID, *Met.*, xv. 106.

‡ "Souls never die, but, having left one seat, are received into new houses."—OVID, *Met.*, xv. 158.

fancy some consideration of divine justice; for according to the deportments of the soul, while it had been in Alexander, they said that God assigned it another body to inhabit, more or less painful, and proper for its condition.

> "Muta ferarum
> Cogit vincla pati; truculentos ingerit ursis,
> Prædonesque lupis; fallaces vulpibus addit:
> Atque ubi per varios annos, per mille figuras
> Egit, Lethæo purgatos flumine, tandem
> Rursus ad humanæ revocat primordia formæ:" *

if it had been valiant, he lodged it in the body of a lion; if voluptuous, in that of a hog; if timorous, in that of a hart or hare; if malicious, in that of a fox, and so of the rest, till having purified it by this chastisement, it again entered into the body of some other man:

> "Ipse ego, nam memini, Trojani tempore belli
> Panthoïdes Euphorbus eram."†

As to the relationship between us and beasts, I do not much admit of it; nor of that which several nations, and those among the most ancient and most noble, have practiced, who have not only received brutes into their society and companionship, but have given them a rank infinitely above themselves, esteeming them one while familiars and favorites of the gods, and having them in more than human reverence and respect; others acknowledged no other god or divinity than they. "*Belluæ à barbaris propter beneficium consecratæ:*" ‡

> "Crocodilon adorat
> Pars hæc; illa pavet saturam serpentibus ibin:
> Effigies sacri hic nitet aurea cercopitheci;

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* "He made them wear the silent chains of brutes, the bloodthirsty souls he enclosed in bears; the thieves in wolves; the sly in foxes; where after having, through successive years and a thousand forms, finished these careers, purging them well in Lethe's flood, at last he replaces them in humam bodies."—CLAUDIAN, *Contra Ruf.*, ii. 482.

† "For I myself remember that in the days of the Trojan war, I was Euphorbus, son of Pantheus."—OVID, *Met.*, xv. 160; and see DIOGENES LÆRTIUS, *Life of Pythagoras.*

‡ "The barbarians consecrated beasts, out of opinion of some benefit received by them."—CICERO, *De Natura Deor.*, i. 36.

Hic piscem fluminis, illic
Oppida tota canem venerantur." *

And the very interpretation that Plutarch† gives to this error, which is very well conceived, is advantageous to them: for he says that it was not the cat or the ox, for example, that the Egyptians adored: but that they, in those beasts, adored some image of the divine faculties: in this, patience and utility; in that vivacity, or, as with our neighbors the Burgundians and all the Germans, impatience to see themselves shut up; by which they represented liberty, which they loved and adored above all other godlike attributes, and so of the rest. But when, among the more moderate opinions, I meet with arguments that endeavor to demonstrate the near resemblance between us and animals, how large a share they have in our greatest privileges, and with how much probability they compare us together, truly I abate a great deal of our presumption, and willingly resign that imaginary sovereignty that is attributed to us over other creatures.

But supposing all this were not true, there is, nevertheless, a certain respect, a general duty of humanity, not only to beasts that have life and sense, but even to trees and plants. We owe justice to men, and graciousness and benignity to other creatures that are capable of it; there is a certain commerce and mutual obligation between them and us. Nor shall I be afraid to confess the tenderness of my nature so childish, that I cannot well refuse to play with my dog, when he the most unseasonably importunes me so to do. The Turks have alms and hospitals for beasts. The Romans had public care to the nourishment of geese, by whose vigilance their capitol had been preserved. The Athenians made a decree that the mules and moyls which had served at the building of the temple called Hecatompedon should be free and suffered to pasture at their own choice, without hindrance.‡ The Agrigentines§ had a com-

* "This place adores the crocodile; another dreads the ibis, feeder on serpents: here you may behold the statue of a monkey shining in gold: here men venerate a river fish; there whole towns worship a dog."—JUVENAL, xv. 2.

† On Isis and Osiris, c. 39.

‡ Plutarch, Life of Cato the Censor, c. 3.

§ Diogenes Siculus, xiii. 17.

mon use solemnly to inter the beasts they had a kindness for, as horses of some rare quality, dogs, and useful birds, and even those that had only been kept to divert their children; and the magnificence that was ordinary with them in all other things, also particularly appeared in the sumptuosity and numbers of monuments erected to this end, and which remained in their beauty several ages after. The Egyptians* buried wolves, bears, crocodiles, dogs and cats in sacred places, embalmed their bodies, and put on mourning at their death. Cimon gave an honorable sepulture to the mares with which he had three times gained the prize of the course at the Olympic Games.† The ancient Xantippus caused his dog to be interred on an eminence near the sea, which has ever since retained the name,‡ and Plutarch says, that he had a scruple about selling for a small profit to the slaughterer an ox that had been long in his service.§

CHAPTER LXIII.

APOLOGY FOR RAIMOND DE SEBONDE.

LEARNING is, in truth, a very useful and a very considerable quality; such as despise it merely discover their own folly: but yet I do not prize it at the excessive rate some others do; as Herillus the philosopher for one, who therein places the sovereign good, and maintained that it was merely in her to render us wise and contented,‖ which I do not believe; no more than I do what others have said, that learning is the mother of all virtue, and that all vice proceeds from ignorance. If this be true, it is subject to a very long interpretation. My house has long been open to men of knowledge and is very well known to them; for my father, who governed it fifty years and more, inflamed with the new ardor with which Francis I. embraced letters and brought them into esteem, with great diligence and expense hunted after the acquaintance of learned men, receiving them at his house as persons sacred, and who had

* Idem, Ibid.

† Herodotus, book ii.

‡ Plutarch, *ut supra.*

§ Idem, Ibid.

‖ Diogenes Lærtius, vii. 165.

some particular inspiration of divine wisdom; collecting their sayings and sentences as so many oracles, and with so much the greater reverence and religion, as he was the less able to judge; for he had no knowledge of letters, no more than his predecessors. For my part I love them well, but I do not adore them. Among the rest, Peter Bunel, a man of great reputation for knowledge in his time, having, with others of his sort, stayed some days at Montaigne in my father's company, he presented him, at his departure, with a book intituled "*Theologia naturalis; sive Liber creaturarum magistri Raimondi de Sebonde;*"* and knowing that the Italian and Spanish tongues were familiar to my father, and this book being written in Spanish worked up with Latin terminations, he hoped that with little help he might be able to make it turn to account, and therefore recommend it to him as a very useful piece and proper for the time wherein he gave it to him which, was when the novel doctrines of Martin Luther began to be in vogue, and in many places to stagger our ancient belief: wherein he was very well advised, justly, in his own reason, forseeing that the beginning of this distemper would easily run into an execrable atheism; for the vulgar not having the faculty of judging of things themselves, suffering themselves to be carried away by fortune and appearance, after having once been inspired with the boldness to despise and question those opinions they had before had in extremest reverence, such as are those wherein their salvation is concerned, and that some of the articles of their religion have been brought into doubt and dispute, they very soon throw all other parts of their belief into the same uncertainty, they having in them no other authority or foundation than the others that had already been discomposed, and shake off all the impressions they had received from the authority of the laws or the reverence of ancient custom as a tryannical yoke,

"Nam cupide conculcatur nimis ante metutum:" †

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* "Raymond de Sebonde, or Sebon, or Sabaude, or Sebeyde," as he was variously named, was a professor of medicine, philosophy, and theology at Toulouse, about 1430. The work was first printed at Daventer about 1484.

† "For people eagerly spurn that of which they were before most in awe."—LUCRETIUS, v. 1139.

resolving to admit nothing for the future to which they had not first interposed their own decrees, and given their special consent.

Now, my father, a little before his death, having accidentally found this book under a heap of other neglected papers, commanded me to translate it for him into French. It is all very well to translate such authors as this, where is little but the matter itself to express; but those wherein ornament of language and elegance of style are a main endeavor, are dangerous to attempt, especially when a man is to turn them into a weaker idiom. It was a strange and a new occupation for me, but having by chance, at that time, little else to do, and not being able to resist the command of the best father that ever was, I did it as well as I could; and he was so well pleased with it as to order it to be printed, which after his death, was done.* I found the imaginations of this author exceedingly fine, the contexture of his work well followed up, and his design full of piety. And because many people take a delight in reading it, and particularly the ladies, to whom we owe the most service, I have often been called upon to assist them to clear the book of two principal objections. His design is hardy and bold; for he undertakes, by human and natural reasons, to establish and make good against the atheists all the articles of the Christian religion: wherein, to speak the truth, he is so firm and so successful that I do not think it possible to do better upon that subject, and believe that he has been equaled by none. This work seeming to me to be too beautiful and too rich for an author whose name is so little known, and of whom all that we know is that he was a Spaniard, who professed physic at Toulouse about two hundred years ago, I inquired of Adrian Turnebus, who knew all things, what he thought of the book. He made answer, that he fancied it was some abstract drawn from St. Thomas Aquinas, for that, in truth, his mind, full of infinite learning and admirable subtlety, was alone capable of those thoughts. Be this as it may, and whoever was the author and inventor (and 'tis not reasonable, without greater occasion, to deprive Sebonde of that title), he was a man of great sufficiency and most admirable parts.

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* In 1569, it is dedicated "A Monsieur de Montagne, le Père"

The first thing they reprehend in his work is, that Christians are to blame to repose upon human reasons their belief, which is only conceived by faith and the particular inspiration of divine grace. In which objection there appears to be something of over-zeal of piety, and therefore we are to endeavor to satisfy those who put it forth with the greater mildness and respect. This were a task more proper for a man well read in divinity than for me, who know nothing of it: nevertheless, I conceive that in a thing so divine, so high, and so far transcending all human intelligence as is this Truth with which it has pleased the goodness of Almighty God to enlighten us, it is very necessary that He should, moreover, lend us his assistance, by extraordinary privilege and favor, to conceive and imprint it in our understandings; and I do not believe that means purely human are, in any sort, capable of doing it; for, if they were, so many rare and excellent souls, so abundantly furnished with natural power, in former ages, had not failed, by their reason, to arrive at this knowledge. 'Tis faith alone that vividly and certainly comprehends the deep mysteries of our religion; but withal, I do not say that it is not a brave and a very laudable attempt to accommodate the natural and human capabilities that God has endowed us with to the service of our faith. It is not to be doubted but that it is the most noble use we can put them to, and that there is no design or occupation more worthy of a Christian man than to make it the aim and end of all his thoughts and studies to embellish, extend, and amplify the truth of his belief. We do not satisfy ourselves with serving God with our souls and understanding only; we, moreover, owe and render Him a corporal reverence, and apply our limbs, motions, and external things to do Him honor; we must here do the same, and accompany our faith with all the reason we have, but always with this reservation, not to fancy that it is upon us that it depends, nor that our arguments and endeavors can arrive at so supernatural and divine a knowledge. If it enter not into us by an extraordinary infusion; if it only enter, not only by arguments of reason, but, moreover, by human ways, it is not in us in its true dignity and splendor, and yet I am afraid we only have it by this way. If we held upon God by the mediation of a lively faith; if we held upon God by Him and not by us; if we had a

divine basis and foundation, human accidents would not have the power to shake us as they do; our fortress would not surrender to so weak a battery; the love of novelty, the constraint of princes, the success of one party, the rash and fortuitous change of our opinions, would not have the power to stagger and alter our belief. We should not then leave it to the mercy of every novel argument, nor abandon it to the persuasions of all the rhetoric in the world; we should withstand the fury of these waves with an unmoved and unyielding constancy:

> "Illisos fluctus rupes ut vasta refundit,
> Et varias circum latrantes dissipat undas
> Mole sua." *

If we were but touched with this ray of divinity, it would appear throughout; not only our words, but our works also, would carry its brightness and luster; whatever proceeded from us would not be seen illuminated with this noble light. We ought to be ashamed that in all the human sects there never was sectary, what difficulty and strange novelty soever his doctrine imposed upon him, who did not, in some measure, conform his life and deportment to it; whereas so divine and heavenly an institution as ours only distinguishes Christians by the name. Will you see the proof of this? compare our manners with those of a Mohammedan or pagan; you will still find that we fall very short, whereas, having regard to the advantage of our religion, we ought to shine in excellence at an extreme, an incomparable distance, and it should be said of us, "Are they so just, so charitable, so good? Then they are Christians." All other signs are common to all religions; hope, trust, events, ceremonies, penance, martyrs; the peculiar mark of our truth ought to be our virtue, as it is also the most heavenly and difficult mark, and the most worthy product of truth. And therefore our good St. Louis was in the right, who, when the king of the Tartars, who had become a Christian, designed to visit Lyons to kiss the pope's feet, and there to be an eyewitness of the sanctity he hoped to find in our manners, immediately diverted him from his purpose, for fear lest our disorderly

* "As a vast rock repels the rolling waves, and dissipates the waters raging about her by its mass." Verses by an anonymous author in the praise of Ronsard, imitating the Æneid, vii. 587.

way of living should, on the contrary, put him out of conceit with so holy a belief.* Yet it happened quite otherwise, since, to him who going to Rome to the same end, and there seeing the dissoluteness of the prelates and people of that time, settled himself all the more firmly in our religion, considering how great the force and divinity of it must necessarily be that could maintain its dignity and splendor among so much corruption and in so vicious hands. If we had but one single grain of faith we should move mountains from their places, says the sacred Word;† our actions would then be directed and accompanied by the divinity, would not be merely human; they would have in them something of miraculous as well as our belief: "*Brevis est institio vitæ honestæ beatæque, si credas.*" ‡ Some impose upon the world that they believe that which they do not believe; others, more in number, make themselves believe that they believe, not being able to penetrate into what it is to believe; and we think it strange if, in the civil wars which at this time disorder our state, we see events float and vary after a common and ordinary manner, which is because we bring nothing there but our own. The justice which is in one of the parties, is only there for ornament and cloak; it is indeed alleged, but 'tis not there received, settled, or espoused: it is there as in the mouth of an advocate, not as in the heart and affection of the party. God owes His extraordinary assistance to faith and religion, not to our passions: men are the conductors and herein make use for their own purposes of religion; it ought to be quite contrary. Observe if it be not by our own hands that we guide and train it, and draw it, like wax, into so many figures, at variance with a rule in itself so direct and firm. When has this been more manifest than in France in our days? They who have taken it on the left hand, they who have taken it on the right, they who call it black, they who call it white, alike employ it to their violent and ambitious designs, and conduct it with a progress so conform in riot and injustice that they render the diversity they pretend in their opinions, in a thing whereon the conduct and rule of our life depends, doubtful

* Joinville, c. 19.

† Matthew, xvii. 19.

‡ "Believe, and the way to virtuous and happy life is a short one."—QUINTILIAN, xii. 11.

and hard to believe. Could one see manners more exactly the same, more uniform, issue from the same school and discipline? Do but observe with what horrid impudence we toss divine arguments to and fro, and how irreligiously we have rejected and retaken them, according as fortune has shifted our places in these intestine storms. This so solemn proposition, "Whether it be lawful for a subject to rebel and take up arms against his prince for the defense of his religion:" do you remember in whose mouths last year the affirmative of it was the prop of one party; of what other party the negative was the pillar? and hearken now from what quarter come the voice and instruction of both the one and the other; and if arms make less noise and rattle for this cause than for that. We condemn those to the fire who say that truth must be made to bear the yoke of our necessity; and how much worse does France than say it? Let us confess the truth; whoever should draw out from the army, ay, from that raised by the king's authority, those who take up arms out of pure zeal and affection to religion, and also those who only do it to protect the laws of their country, or for the service of their prince, would hardly be able, out of all these put together, to muster one complete company. Whence does it proceed that there are so few to be found who have maintained the same will and the same progress in our public movements, and that we see them one while go but a foot-pace, and another run full speed, and the same men, one while damaging our affairs by their violent heat and acrimony, and another while by their coldness, indifference and slowness, but that they are impelled by special and casual considerations, according to the diversity of circumstances?

I evidently perceive that we do not willingly afford to devotion any other offices but those that best suit with our own passions; there is no hostility so admirable as the Christain; our zeal performs wonders when it seconds our inclinations to hatred, cruelty, ambition, avarice, detraction, rebellion: but moved against the hair toward goodness, benignity, moderation, unless by miracle some rare and virtuous disposition prompt us to it, we stir neither hand nor foot. Our religion is intended to extirpate vices; whereas it screens, nourishes, incites them. We must not mock God. If we did believe in Him, I do not say by faith, but with a simple belief, that is to say (and I speak

it to our great shame), if we did believe Him, or knew Him as any other history, or as one of our companions, we should love him above all other things, for the infinite goodness and beauty that shine in Him: at least, He would go equal in our affections with riches, pleasures, glory, and our friends. The best of us is not so much afraid to offend Him, as he is afraid to offend his neighbor, his kinsman, his master. Is there any so weak understanding that having, on one side, the object of one of our vicious pleasures, and on the other, in equal knowledge and persuasion, the state of an immortal glory, would exchange the one against the other? And yet we ofttimes renounce this out of pure contempt: for what tempts us to blaspheme, if not, peradventure, the very desire to offend? The philosopher Antisthenes, as the priest was initiating him in the mysteries of Orpheus, telling him that those who professed themselves of that religion were certain to receive perfect and eternal felicity after death: "If thou believest that," answered he, "why dost not thou die thyself?"* Diogenes, more rudely, according to his manner, and more remote from our purpose, to the priest that in like manner preached to him to become of his religion that he might obtain the happiness of the other world: "What," said he, "thou wouldst have me believe that Agesilaus and Epaminondas, those so great men, shall be miserable, and that thou, who art but a calf, and canst do nothing to purpose, shalt be happy because thou art a priest?"† Did we receive these great promises of eternal beatitude with the same reverence and respect that we do a philosophical lecture, we should not have death in so great horror:

> "Non jam se moriens dissolvi conquereretur;
> Sed magis ire foras, vestemque relinquere, ut anguis
> Gauderet, prælonga senex aut cornua cervus." ‡

"I am willing to be dissolved," we should say, "and to be with Jesus Christ."§ The force of Plato's arguments con-

* Diogenes Laertius, vi. 4.

† Ibid., vi. 39.

‡ "We should not, then, dying, repine to be dissolved, but rather step out of doors cheerfully, and, with the snake, be glad to cast our old slough; or, with the old stag, to get clear of the old horns." LUCRETIUS, iii. 612.

§ St. Paul, Philippians i. 23.

cerning the immortality of the soul sent some of his disciples to untimely graves, that they might the sooner enjoy the things he had made them hope for.

All this is a most evident sign that we only receive our religion after our own fashion, by our own hands, and no otherwise than other religions are received. Either we are in the country where it is in practice, or we bear a reverence to its antiquity, or to the authority of the men who have maintained it, or we fear the menaces it fulminates against unbelievers, or are allured by its promises. These considerations ought, 'tis true, to be applied to our belief, but as subsidiaries only, for they are human obligations; another religion, other testimonies, the like promises and threats, might in the same way imprint a quite contrary belief. We are Christians by the same title that we are Perigordins or Germans. And what Plato says,* that there are few men so obstinate in their atheism whom a pressing danger will not reduce to an acknowledgment of the divine power, does not concern a true Christian; 'tis for mortal and human religions to be received by human recommendation. What kind of faith can we expect that should be, that cowardice and feebleness of heart plant and establish in us? A pleasant faith, that does not believe what it believes, but for want of courage to disbelieve it. Can a vicious passion, such as inconstancy and astonishment, cause any regular product in our souls? They are confident in their own judgment, says he,† that what is said of hell and future torments is all feigned: but the occasion of making the experiment presenting itself when old age or diseases bring them to the brink of the grave, the terror of death by the horror of their future condition, inspires them with a new belief. And by reason that such impressions render them timorous, he forbids in his laws all such threatening doctrines, and all persuasion that anything of ill can befall a man from the gods, excepting for his greater good, when they happen to him, and for a medicinal effect. They say of Bion that, infected with the atheism of Theodorus, he had long had religious men in great scorn and contempt, but that, death surprising him, he gave himself up to the most extreme superstition; as if the gods withdrew and

* Laws, x.

† Plato, Republic.

returned according to the necessities of Bion.* Plato and these examples would conclude that we are brought to a belief of God either by reason or by force. Atheism being a proposition, unnatural and monstrous, difficult also and very hard to sink into human understanding, how arrogant and irregular soever that may be, there are enough seen, out of vanity and pride, to be the authors of extraordinary and reforming opinions, and to outwardly affect their profession, who, if they are such fools, have nevertheless not had the power to plant them in their conscience; they will not fail to lift up their hands toward heaven if you give them a good thrust with a sword in the breast; and when fear or sickness has abated and deadened the licentious fervor of this giddy humor, they will readily return, and very discreetly suffer themselves to be reconciled to the public faith and examples. A doctrine seriously digested is one thing; quite another thing are those superficial impressions which, springing from the disorder of an unhinged understanding, float at random and uncertainly in the fancy. Miserable and senseless men, who strive to be worse than they can!

The error of paganism and the ignorance of our sacred truth made the great soul of Plato, but great only in human greatness, fall yet into this other vicinous mistake, "that children and old men are most susceptible of religion," as if it sprang and derived its reputation from our weakness. The knot that ought to bind the judgment and the will, that ought to restrain the soul and join it to the creator, should be a knot that derives its foldings and strength, not from our considerations, from our reasons and passions, but from a divine and supernatural constraint, having but one form, one face, and one luster, which is the authority of God and His divine grace. Now, our heart and soul being governed and commanded by faith, 'tis but reason that they should muster all our other faculties, for as much as they are able to perform, to the service and assistance of their design. Neither is it to be imagined that all this machine has not some marks imprinted upon it by the hand of the mighty architect, and that there is not in the things of this world, some image,

* Sebonde, Theol. Nat., c. 24, after Diogenes Laertius, Life of Bion.

that in some measure resembles the workman who has built and formed them. He has in his stupendous works left the character of his divinity, and 'tis our own weakness only that hinders us from discerning it. 'Tis what He Himself is pleased to tell us, that He manifests His invisible operations to us, by those that are visible; Sebonde applied himself to this laudable study, and demonstrates to us that there is not any part or member of the world that disclaims or derogates from its maker.* It were to do a wrong to the divine goodness, did not the universe consent to our belief; the heavens, the earth, the elements, our bodies and our souls, all these concur to this, if we can but find out the way to use them. They instruct us if we are capable of instruction; for this world is a most sacred temple, into which man is introduced, there to contemplate statues, not the works of a mortal hand, but such as the divine purpose has made the objects of sense, the sun, the stars, the waters, and the earth, to represent those that are intelligible to us. "The invisible things of God," says St. Paul,† "from the creation of the world, His eternal power and Godhead," are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made.

> "Atque adeo faciem cœli non invidet orbi
> Ipse Deus, vultusque suos, corpusque recludit
> Semper volvendo; seque ipsum inculcat, et offert;
> Ut bene cognosci possit, doceatque videndo
> Qualis eat, doceatque suas attendere leges." ‡

Now our human reasons and discourses are but sterile and undigested matter; the grace of God is its form; 'tis that which gives to it fashion and value. As the virtuous actions of Socrates and Cato remain vain and fruitless, for not having had the love and obedience of the true Creator of all things for their end and object, and for not having known God, so is it with our imaginations and discourses; they have a kind of body, but it is an inform mass, without fashion and without light, if faith and God's grace be not

* Theol. Nat., c. 24. † Romans, i. 20.

‡ "And God Himself does not envy to men the seeing heaven's face; but ever revolving. He still renews its face and body to our view; and Himself so inculcates into our minds that we may well know Him, instructing us by seeing Him what He is, how He moves, and to obey His laws."—MANILIUS, iv. 907.

added to it. Faith coming to tint and illustrate Sebonde's arguments, renders them firm and solid, so that they are capable of serving for direction and first guide to a learner to put him into the way of this knowledge: they, in some measure, form him to and render him capable of the grace of God, by means whereof he afterward completes and perfects himself in the truth of belief. I know a man of authority, bred up to letters, who has confessed to me that he had been reclaimed from the errors of misbelief by Sebonde's arguments. And should they be stripped of this ornament and of the assistance and approbation of the faith and be looked upon as mere human fancies only, to contend with those who are precipitated into the dreadful and horrible darkness of irreligion, they will even then be found as solid and firm, as any others of the same class that can be opposed against them; so that we shall be ready to say to our opponents,

"Si melius quid habes, arcesse; vel imperium fer."*

Let them admit the force of our proofs, or let them show us others, and upon some other subject, better woven and of finer thread. I am, unawares, half engaged in the second objection, to which I proposed to make answer in the behalf of Sebonde.

Some say that his arguments are weak and unfit to make good what he proposes, and undertake with great ease to confute them. These are to be a little more roughly handled; for they are more dangerous and malicious than the first. Men willingly wrest the sayings of others to favor their own prejudicated opinions; to an atheist all writings tend to atheism; he corrupts the most innocent matter with his own venom. These have their judgments so prepossessed that they cannot relish Sebonde's reasons. As to the rest, they think we give them very fair play in putting them into the liberty of fighting our religion with weapons merely human, which, in its majesty, full of authority and command, they durst not attack. The means that I use, and that I think most proper, to subdue this frenzy, is to crush and spurn under foot pride and human arrogance; to make them sensible of the inanity, vanity, and nothing-

* "If you have anything better to say, say it; otherwise, yield."—HORACE, *Ep.*, i. 5, 6.

ness of man; to wrest the wretched arms of their reason out of their hands; to make them bow down and bite the ground, under the authority and reverence of the divine majesty. 'Tis to this alone that knowledge and wisdom appertain; 'tis this alone that can make a true estimate of itself, and from which we purloin whatever we value ourselves upon:

"Οὐ γὰρ ἐᾷ φρονεειν ὁ Θεὸς μεγα ἄλλον ἢ εαυτον." *

Let us subdue this presumption, the first foundation of the tyranny of the evil spirit. "*Deus superbis resistit: humilibus autem dat gratiam.*" † Understanding is in all the gods, says Plato,‡ and not at all, or very little, in men. Now it is, in the meantime, a great consolation to a Christian man, to see our frail and mortal parts so fitly suited to our holy and divine faith, that when we employ them on the subjects of their own mortal and frail nature, they are not, even there, more equally or more firmly applied. Let us see, then, if man has in his power other reasons more forcible than those of Sebonde; that is to say, if it be in him to arrive at any certainty by argument and reason.

For St. Augustin,§ disputing against these people, has good cause to reproach them with injustice, in that they maintain the parts of our belief to be false that our reason cannot establish; and, to show that a great many things may be and may have been, of which our nature could not found the reason and causes, he proposes to them certain known and indubitable experiences wherein men confess they have no insight; and this he does, as all other things, with a close and ingenious inquisition. We must do more than this, and make them know that, to convict the weakness of their reason, there is no necessity of culling out rare examples: and that it is so defective and so blind, that there is no so clear facility clear enough for it: that to it the easy and the hard is all one; that all subjects equally, and nature in general, disclaims its authority, and rejects its mediation.

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* "God will not permit that any one shall be wiser than He."—HERODOTUS, vii. 10.

† "God resists the proud; but gives grace to the humble."—1 *Peter*, v. 5.

‡ Timæus.

§ De Civit. Dei, xxi. 5.

What does truth mean, when she preaches to us to fly worldly philosophy, * when she so often inculcates to us,† that our wisdom is but folly in the sight of God; that the vainest of all vanities is man; that the man who presumes upon his wisdom, does not yet know what wisdom is; and that man, who is nothing, if he thinks himself to be anything, but seduces and deceives himself? These sentences of the Holy Ghost so clearly and vividly express that which I would maintain, that I should need no other proof against men who would, with all humility and obedience, submit to its authority; but these will be whipped at their own expense; and will not suffer a man to oppose their reason, but by itself.

Let us then now consider a man alone, without foreign assistance, armed only with his own proper arms, and unfurnished of the divine grace and wisdom, which is all his honor, strength, and the foundation of his being; let us see what certainty he has in this fine equipment. Let him make me understand by the force of his reason, upon what foundations he has built those great advantages he thinks he has over other creatures: what has made him believe, that this admirable movement of the celestial arch, the eternal light of those planets and stars that roll so proudly over his head, the fearful motions of that infinite ocean, were established, and continue so many ages, for his service and convenience? Can anything be imagined to be so ridiculous that this miserable and wretched creature, who is not so much as master of himself, but subject to the injuries of all things, should call himself master and emperor of the world, of which he has not power to know the least part, much less to command it. And this privilege which he attributes to himself, of being the only creature in this grand fabric that has the understanding to distinguish its beauty and its parts, the only one who can return thanks to the architect, and keep account of the revenues and disbursements of the world; who, I wonder, sealed for him this privilege? Let us see his letters-patent for this great and noble charge; were they granted in favor of the wise only? few people would be concerned in that: are fools and wicked persons worthy so extraordinary a favor,

* St. Paul, Colossians, ii. 8.

† Idem, 1 Corinthians, iii. 19.

and, being the worst part of the world, to be preferred before the rest? Shall we believe this man? "*quorum igitur causa qui dixerit effectum esse mundum? Eorum scilicet animantium, quæ ratione utuntur; hi sunt dii et homines, quibus profecto nihil est melius:*" * we can never sufficiently decry the impudence of this conjunction. But wretched creature, what has he in himself worthy of such an advantage? To consider the incorruptible existence of the celestial bodies, their beauty, grandeur, their continual revolution, by so exact a rule;

> "Quum suspicimus magna cœlestia mundi
> Templa super, stellisque micantibus æthera fixum,
> Et venit in mentem lunæ solisque viarum;" †

to consider the dominion and influence those bodies have, not only over our lives and fortunes,

> "Facta etenim et vitas hominum suspendit ab astris," ‡

but even over our inclinations, our thoughts and wills, which they govern, incite, and agitate at the mercy of their influences, as our reason finds and tells us;

> "Speculataque longe,
> Deprendit tacitis dominantia legibus astra,
> Et totum alterna mundum ratione moveri,
> Fatorumque vices certis discurrere signis;" §

to see that not merely a man, not merely a king, but that monarchies, empires, and all this lower world, follow the least dance of these celestial motions,

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* Balbus, the Stoic. "For whose sake shall we, therefore, conclude that the world was made? For theirs who have the use of reason: these are gods and men, than whom certainly nothing can be better."—CICERO, *De Nat. Deor.*, ii. 54.

† "When we behold the heavenly arch above, and the vast ether studded with glittering stars, and observe the courses of the sun and moon."—LUCRETIUS, v. 1203.

‡ "Men's lives and actions depend on the stars."—MANILIUS, iii. 58.

§ "Comtemplating the distant stars, he finds that they rule by silent laws; that the world is regulated by alternate causes, and that he can discern by certain signs the turns of destiny."—*Idem*, i. 60.

"Quantaque quam parvi faciant discrimina motus . . .
Tantum est hoc regnum, quod regibus imperat ipsis;" *

if our virtue, our vices, our knowledge and science, this very discourse we frame of the power of the stars, and this comparison, between them and us, proceed, as our reason supposes, by their means and favor;

"Furit alter amore,
Et pontum tranare potest, et vertere Trojam.
Alterius sors est scribendis legibus apta.
Ecce patrem nati perimunt, natosque parentes;
Mutuaque armati coeunt in vulnera fratres.
Non nostrum hoc bellum est; coguntur tanta movere,
Inque suas ferri pœnas, lacerandaque membra.
. . . . . .
Hoc quoque fatale est, sic ipsam expendere fatum." †

If we derive this little portion of reason we have from the bounty of heaven, how is it possible that reason should ever make us equal to it? how subject its essence and conditions to our knowledge? Whatever we see in these bodies astonishes us: "*Quæ molitio, quæ ferramenta, qui vectes, quæ machinæ, qui ministri tanti operis fuerunt?*" ‡ Why do we deprive it of soul, of life, and reason? Have we discovered in it any immovable and insensible stupidity, we who have no commerce with the heavens but by obedience? Shall we say that we have discovered in no other creature but man the use of a reasonable soul! What! have we seen anything like the sun? does he cease to be, because we have seen nothing like him? and do his motions cease, because there are no others like them? If what we have not seen is not, our knowledge is wonderfully contracted: "*Quæ sunt tantæ animi angustiæ?*" § Are they not dreams of

* "How great changes each little motion brings: so great is this kingdom that it governs kings themselves."—*Idem,* i. 55; iv. 93.

† One mad with love may cross the sea, and overturn Troy; another's fate is to write laws. Sons kill their fathers, fathers kill their sons: one armed brother wounds another armed brother. These wars are not ours: 'tis fate that compels men to punish themselves thus, and thus to lacerate themselves . . . 'Tis fate that compels me to write of fate."—MANILIUS, iv. 79, 118.

‡ "What contrivance, what tools. what levers, what engines, what workmen, were employed about so stupendous a work?"—CICERO, *De Nat. Deor.*, i. 8.

§ "How narrow are our understandings?"—*Idem., ibid.*, i. 31.

human vanity, to make the moon a celestial earth? there to fancy mountains and vales, as Anaxagoras did? there to fix habitations and human abodes, and plant colonies for our convenience, as Plato and Plutarch have done, and of our earth to make a beautiful and luminous star? *"Inter cætera mortalitatis incommoda et hoc est, caligo mentium; nec tantum necessitas errandi, sed errorum amor."* * *"Corruptible corpus aggravat animam, et deprimit terrena inhabitatii sensum multa cogitantem."* †

Presumption is our natural and original disease. The most wretched and frail of all creatures is man; and withal the proudest. He feels and sees himself lodged here in the dirt and filth of the world, nailed and riveted to the worst and deadest part of the universe, in the lowest story of the house, and most remote from the heavenly arch, with animals of the worst condition‡ of the three, and yet in his imagination will be placing himself above the circle of the moon, and bringing heaven under his feet. 'Tis by the vanity of the same imagination that he equals himself to God, attributes to himself divine qualities, withdraws and separates himself from the crowd of other creatures, cuts out the shares of animals his fellows and companions, and distributes to them portions of faculties and force as himself thinks fit. How does he know, by the strength of his understanding, the secret and internal motions of animals? and from what comparison between them and us does he conclude the stupidity he attributes to them? When I play with my cat, who knows whether I do not make her more sport than she makes me? we mutually divert one another with our monkey-tricks: if I have my hour to begin or to refuse, she also has hers. Plato, in his picture of the Golden Age under Saturn,§ reckons, among the chief advantages that a man then had, his communication with

* Among the other inconveniences of mortality this is one, to have the understanding clouded, and not only a necessity of erring but a love of error."—SENECA, *De Ira*, ii. 9.

† "The corruptible body stupifies the soul, and the earthly habitation dulls the faculties of the imagination."—ST. AUGUSTINE, *De Civit. Dei*, xii. 15 (Coste).

‡ Of those that creep on the earth, as distinguished from those that fly and swim.

§ Politics.

beasts, of whom inquiring and informing himself, he knew the true qualities and differences of them all, by which he acquired a very perfect intelligence and prudence, and led his life far more happily than we could do: need we a better proof to condemn human impudence in the concern of beasts? This great author was of opinion that nature, for the most part, in the corporal form she gave them had only regard to the use of prognostics that were in his time thence derived. The defect that hinders communication between them and us, why may it not be on our part as well as theirs? 'Tis yet to determine where the fault lies that we understand not one another; for we understand them no more than they do us; by the same reason they may think us to be beasts as we think them. 'Tis no great wonder if we understand not them when we do not understand a Basque or the Troglodytes; and yet some have boasted that they understood these, as Apollonius Tyaneus, Melampus, Tiresias, Thales, and others. And seeing that, as cosmographers report, there are nations that receive a dog for their king,* they must of necessity be able to give some interpretation of his voice and motions. We must observe the parity between us: we have some tolerable apprehension of their sense, and so have beasts of ours, and much in the same proportion. They caress us, they threaten us, and they beg of us, and we do the same to them. As to the rest, we manifestly discover that they have a full and absolute communication among themselves, and that they perfectly understand one another, not only those of the same, but of divers kinds.

"Et mutæ pecudes, et denique secla ferarum
Dissimiles suerunt voces variasque ciere,
Cum metus aut dolor est, aut quum jam gaudia gliscunt." †

By one kind of barking, the horse knows a dog is angry; of another sort of a bark, he is not afraid. Even in the very beasts that have no voice at all, we easily conclude, from the social offices we observe among them, some other

* Pliny, Nat. Hist., vi. 30.

† "The tame herds, and the wilder sorts of brutes, utter dissonant and various sounds, as fear, or pain, or pleasure influences them."—LUCRETIUS, v. 1058.

sort of communication; their very motions converse and consult:

> "Non alia longe ratione, atque ipsa videtur
> Protrahere ad gestum pueros infantia linguæ."*

And why not, as well as our mutes, dispute, contest, and tell stories by signs? of whom I have seen some, by practice, so supple and active in that way that, in earnest, they wanted nothing of the perfection of making themselves understood. Lovers are angry, reconciled, entreat, thank, appoint, and in short, speak all things by their eyes;

> "E'l silentio ancor suole
> Aver prieghi e parole." †

What of the hands? We require, promise, call, dismiss, threaten, pray, supplicate, deny, refuse, interrogate, admire, number, confess, repent, confound, blush, doubt, instruct, command, incite, encourage, swear, testify, accuse, condemn, absolve, abuse, despise, defy, despite, flatter, applaud, bless, humiliate, mock, reconcile, recommend, exalt, entertain, congratulate, complain, grieve, despair, wonder, exclaim, and what not, with a variation and multiplication to the emulation of speech. With the head we invite, demur, confess, deny, give the lie, welcome, honor, reverence, disdain, demand, turn out, rejoice, lament, reject, caress, rebuke, submit, huff, encourage, threaten, assure, inquire. What of the eyebrows? What of the shoulders? There is not a motion that does not speak, and in an intelligible language without discipline, and a public language that every one understands: whence it should follow, the variety and use distinguished from those of others, that this should rather be judged the special property of human nature. I omit what particular necessity on the sudden suggest to those who are in need; the alphabets upon the fingers, grammars in gesture, and the sciences which are only by them exercised and expressed, and the nations that Pliny reports to have no other language.‡ An ambassador

* "By the like reason the want of language in children renders it necessary for them to have recourse to gestures."—LUCRETIUS, v. 1029.

† "Even silence in a lover can express entreaty."—TASSO, *Aminta*, ii. Chor.

‡ Book vi. c. 30.

of the city of Abdera, after a long harangue to Agis, king of Sparta, demanded of him. "Well, sir, what answer must I return to my fellow citizens?" "That I have given thee leave," said he, "to say what thou wouldst, and as much as thou wouldst, without ever speaking a word." * Is not this a silent speaking, and very easy to be understood?

As to the rest, what is there in our intelligence that we do not see in the operations of animals? Is there a polity better ordered, the offices better distributed, and more inviolably observed and maintained, than that of bees? Can we imagine that such and so regular a distribution of employments can be carried on without reason and prudence?

> "His quidam signis atque hæc exempla sequuti,
> Esse apibus partem divinæ mentis, et haustus
> Æthereos dixere." †

The swallows that we see at the return of the spring, searching all the corners of our houses for the most commodious places wherein to build their nests, do they seek without judgment, and among a thousand, choose out the most proper for their purpose, without discretion? In that elegant and admirable contexture of their buildings, can birds rather make choice of a square figure than a round, of an obtuse than of a right angle, without knowing their properties and effects? Do they bring water and then clay without knowing that the hardness of the latter grows softer by being wet? Do they mat their palaces with moss or down, without foreseeing that their tender young will lie more safe and easy? Do they secure themselves from the rainy winds, and place their lodgings toward the east, without knowing the different qualities of those winds, and considering that one is more wholesome than the other? Why does the spider make her web tighter in one place and slacker in another? Why now make one sort of knot and then another, if she has not deliberation, thought, and conclusion? We sufficiently discover in most of their works how much animals excel us, and how weak our art is to imitate them. We see, nevertheless, in

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* Plutarch, Apothegms of the Lacedæmonians.

† "From which signs and examples some have held that there is in bees a portion of the divine intelligence and a heavenly emanation."—VIRGIL, *Georg.*, iv. 219.

our ruder performances that we there employ all our faculties, and apply the utmost power of our souls; why do we not conclude the same of them? Why should we attribute to I know not what natural and servile inclination the works that surpass all we can do by nature and art? Wherein, before we are aware, we give them a mighty advantage over us, in making nature, with a maternal sweetness, to accompany and lead them, as it were, by the hand, to all the actions and commodities of their life, while she leaves us to chance and fortune, and to seek out, by art, the things that are necessary to our conversation; at the same time denying us the means of being able, by any instruction or contention of understanding, to arrive at the natural sufficiency of beasts; so that their brutish stupidity surpasses in all conveniences all that our divine intelligence can do. Really, at this rate, we might with great reason call her an unjust stepmother: but it is nothing so: our polity is not so irregular and deformed.

Nature has been universally kind to all her creatures, and there is not one she has not amply furnished with all means necessary for the conversation of its being; for the common complaints that I hear men make (as the license of their opinions one while lifts them up to the clouds, and then again depresses them to the Antipodes), that we are the only animal abandoned, naked upon the bare earth, tied and bound, not having wherewithal to arm and clothe us, but by the spoil of others; whereas nature has covered all other creatures with shells, husks, bark, hair, wool, prickles, leather, down, feathers, scales, silk, according to the necessities of their being; has armed them with talons, teeth, horns, wherewith to assault and defend, and has herself taught them that which is most proper for them, to swim, to run, to fly, and to sing, whereas man neither knows how to walk, speak, eat, or do anything but weep, without teaching.

"Tum porro puer, ut sævis projectus ab undis
Navita, nudus humi jacet, infans, indigus omni
Vitali auxilio, quum primum in luminis oras
Nixibus ex alvo matris natura profudit,
Vagituque locum lugubri complet; ut æquum est
Cui tantum in vita restet transire malorum.
At variæ crescunt pecudes, armenta, feræque,
Nec crepitacula eis opus est, nec cuiquam adhibenda est
Almæ nutricis blanda atque infracta loquela;

Nec varias quærunt vestes pro tempore cæli:
Denique non armis opus est, non mœnibus altis,
Queis sua tutentur, quando omnibus omnia large
Tellus ipsa parit, naturaque dædala rerum:" *

Those complaints are false: there is in the polity of the world a greater equality and more uniform relation. Our skins are as sufficient to defend us from the injuries of the weather, as theirs from them: witness several nations that still know not the use of clothes. Our ancient Gauls were but slenderly clad, no more than the Irish, our neighbors, in so cold a climate. But we may better judge of this by ourselves: for all those parts that we are pleased to expose to the wind and the air, the face, the hands, the lips, the shoulders, the head, according to various custom, are found very able to endure it: if there be a tender part about us, and that seems to be in danger of cold, it should be the stomach where the digestion is, and yet our fathers had this always open, and our ladies, tender and delicate as they are, go sometimes half bare as low as the navel. Nor is the binding and swathing of infants any more necessary; and the Lacedæmonian mothers brought up theirs in all of liberty motion of members, without any ligature at all.† Our crying is common to us, with most other animals, and there are but few creatures that are not observed to groan and bemoan themselves a long time after they come into the world, forasmuch as it is a behavior suitable to the weakness wherein they find themselves. As to the usage of eating, it is in us, as in them, natural, and without instruction;

"Sentit enim vim quisque suam quam possit abuti: "‡

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* "Then the infant, like a mariner tossed by raging seas upon the shore, lies naked on the earth, destitute at his very birth, of all supports of life, from the time when, nature first presenting him to the day, he fills the air with doleful cries, as foreseeing life's future miseries; but beasts, wild and tame, of themselves grow up: they need no rattle, no nurse with soothing words to teach them to talk. they do not look out for different robes according to the seasons: and need no arms nor walls to protect them and their goods: earth and nature in all abundance produce all things whereof they have need." —LUCRETIUS, v. 223.

† Plutarch, Life of Lycurgus, c. 13.

‡ "For every one soon finds out his natural force, to use or abuse." —LUCRETIUS, v. 1032.

Who doubts but an infant, arrived to the strength of feeding himself, may shift to seek his food? and the earth produces and offers him wherewithal to supply his necessity without other culture and art, and if not at all times, no more does she do it to beasts; witness the provision we see ants and other creatures hoard up against the dead seasons of the year. The late discovered nations, so abundantly furnished with meat and natural drink, without trouble or preparation, give us to understand that bread is not our only food, and that without tillage our mother nature has provided us abundantly with all we stand in need of; nay, it would appear, still more fully and plentifully than she does at present, when we have mixed up these with our own industry:

> "Et tellus nitidas fruges, vinetaque læta
> Sponte sua primum mortalibus ipsa creavit;
> Ipsa dedit dulces fœtus et pabula læta;
> Quæ nunc vix nostro grandescunt aucta labore,
> Conterimusque boves, et vires agricolarum:" *

The depravity and irregularity of our appetite outstrip all the inventions we can contrive to satisfy it.

As to arms, we have more that are natural than most other animals, more various motions of the limbs, and naturally and without lessons, extract more service from them: those that are trained up to fight naked, are seen to throw themselves upon hazard like our own; if some beasts surpass us in this advantage, we surpass several others. And the industry of fortifying the body and protecting it by acquired means we have by instinct and natural precept; as, for examples: the elephant sharpens and whets the teeth he makes use of in war (for he has particular ones for that service which he spares and never employs at all to any other use); when bulls go to fight, they toss and throw the dust about them; boars whet their tusks; and the ichneumon, when he is about to engage with the crocodile, fortifies his body by covering and encrusting it all over with close-wrought, well-kneaded slime, as with a cuirass: why shall we not say, that it is also natural for us to arm ourselves with wood and iron?

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* "The earth at first spontaneously afforded choice fruits and wines to mankind; gave them prolific herds, and glowing harvests, which now scarcely by art more abundantly yield, though men and oxen strive to improve the soil."—LUCRETIUS, ii. 1157.

As to speech, it is certain that, if it be not natural, it is not necessary. Nevertheless, I believe that a child who had been brought up in absolute solitude, remote from all society of men (which would be a trial very hard to make) would have some kind of speech to express his meaning: and 'tis not to be supposed that nature would have denied that to us which she has given to several other animals: for what other than speech is the faculty we observe in them of complaining, rejoicing, calling to one another for succor, and the softer murmurings of love, which they perform with the voice? And why should they not speak to one another? they speak very well to us, and we to them; in how many several ways do we speak to our dogs, and they answer us? We converse with them in another sort of language and other appellations than we do with birds, hogs, oxen, and horses; and alter the idiom according to the kind.

> "Dosi per entro loro schiera bruna
> S'ammusa l'uno con l'altra formica,
> Forse a spiar lor via et lor fortuna." *

Lactantius † seems to attribute to beasts not only speech, but laughter also. And the difference of language which is manifest among us, according to the variety of countries, is also observed in animals of the same kind: Aristotle,‡ in proof of this, instances the various calls of partridges, according to the situation of places:

> "Variæque volucres. . .
> Longe alias alio faciunt in tempore voces. . .
> Et partim mutant cum tempestatibus una
> Raucisonos cantus." §

But it is yet to be known what language this child would speak; and of this what is said by guess has no great weight. If any one should allege to me, in opposition to this opinion, that those who are naturally deaf, speak not:

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* "So among their sable bands, one ant with one another is seen to communicate: observe, perhaps, each other's ways and ask what prizes they have brought home."—DANTE, *Purg.*, c. xxvi. 34.

† Instit. Divin., iii. 10.

‡ Hist. of Animals, lib, iv. c. 9.

§ "Various birds make quite different notes; some their hoarse songs change with the seasons."—LUCRETIUS, v. 1077, 1080, 2, 3.

I answer that this follows not only because they could not receive the instruction of speaking by the ear, but because the sense of hearing, of which they are deprived, has relation to that of speaking, holding together by a natural tie; in such manner, that what we speak we must first speak to ourselves within, and make it first sound in our own ears, before we can utter it to others.

All this I have said to prove the resemblance there is in human things, and to bring us back and join us to the crowd: we are neither above nor below the rest. All that is under heaven, says the wise man, runs one law and one fortune:

> "Indupedita suis fatalibus omnia vinclis." *

There is indeed some difference; there are orders and degrees; but 'tis under the aspect of one same nature:

> "Res . . . quæque suo ritu procedit; et omnes
> Fœdere naturæ certo discrimina servant." †

Man must be compelled and restrained within the bounds of this polity. Wretched being, he is really not in a condition to step over the rail; he is fettered and circumscribed, he is subjected to a co-ordinate obligation with the other creatures of his class, and of a very humble condition, without any prerogative or pre-eminence true and real; that which he attributes to himself, by vain fancy and opinion, has neither body nor taste. And if it be so, that he only of all the animals has this privilege of the imagination, and this irregularity of thoughts representing to him that which is, that which is not, and that he would have, the false and the true: 'tis an advantage dearly bought, and of which he has very little reason to be proud; for from that springs the principal fountain of all the evils that befall him, sin, sickness, irresolution, affliction, despair. I say then (to return to my subject) that there is no probability to induce a man to believe, that beasts by natural and compulsory tendency, do the same things that we do by our choice and industry; we ought from like effects, to conclude like

* "All things are bound in the same fatal chains."—LUCRETIUS, v. 874.

† "All things proceed by their own rules, and observe the limits of nature's law."—*Idem, ibid.*, 921.

faculties, and from greater effects greater faculties, and consequently confess, that the same reason, the same method by which we operate, are common with them, or that they have others that are better. Why should we imagine in them this natural constraint who experience no such effect in ourselves? Add to which, that it is more honorable to be guided and obliged to act regularly by a natural and irresistible condition, and nearer allied to the divinity, than to act regularly by a licentious and fortuitous liberty, and more safe to intrust the reins of our conduct in the hands of nature than in our own. The vanity of our presumption is the cause that we had rather owe our sufficiency to our own strength than to her bounty, and that we enrich the other animals with natural goods, and renounce them in their favor, to honor and ennoble ourselves with goods acquired; very foolishly in my opinion; for I should as much value parts naturally and purely my own, as those I had begged and obtained from education: it is not in our power to obtain a nobler reputation, than to be favored of God and nature.

For this reason, consider the fox, of which the people of Thrace make use when they desire to pass over the ice of some frozen river, turning him out before them to that purpose; should we see him lay his ear upon the bank of the river, down to the ice, to listen if from a more remote or nearer distance he can hear the noise of the water's current, and according as he finds by that the ice to be of a less or greater thickness, retire or advance:* should we not have reason thence to believe that he had the same thoughts in his head that we should have upon the like occasion, and that it is a ratiocination and consequence drawn from natural sense: "that which makes a noise, runs; that which runs, is not frozen: what is not frozen is liquid; and that which is liquid yields to impression?" For to attribute this to a vivacity of the sense of hearing without meditation and consequence, is a chimera that cannot enter into the imagination. We may suppose the same of the many subtleties and inventions with which beasts protect themselves from enterprises we plot against them.

And if we would make an advantage of this that it is

* Plutarch, On the Industry of Animals, c. 12.

in our power to seize them, to employ them in our service, and to use them at our pleasure, 'tis but still the same advantage we have over one another. We have our slaves upon these terms; and the Climacidæ:* were they not women in Syria who, being on all fours, served for a step-ladder, by which the ladies mounted the coach? And the majority of free persons surrender, for very trivial advantages, their life and being into the power of another; the wives and concubines of the Thracians contended who should be chosen to be slain upon their husband's tomb.† Have tyrants ever failed of finding men enough devoted to their service; some of them moreover, adding this necessity of accompanying them in death as in life? whole armies have so bound themselves to their captains. ‡ The form of the oath in that rude school of fencers, who were to fight it out to the last, was in these words: "We swear to suffer ourselves to be chained, burned, beaten, killed with the sword, and to endure all that true gladiators suffer from their master, religiously engaging both bodies and souls in his service;" §

> "Ure meum, si vis, flamma caput, et pete ferro
> Corpus, et in torto verbere terga seca." ‖

This was an obligation indeed, and yet there were, in some years, ten thousand who entered into it and lost themselves in it. When the Scythians interred their king, they strangled upon his body the most beloved of his concubines, his cup-bearer, the master of his horse, his chamberlain, the usher of his chamber, and his cook; and upon his anniversary they killed fifty horses, mounted by fifty pages, whom they had impaled up the spine of the back to the throat, and there left them planted in parade about his tomb.¶ The men that serve us do it more cheaply, and for a less careful and favorable usage than that we entertain

* Plutarch, How to distinguish a Flatterer from a Friend.

† Herodotus, v. 5.

‡ Cæsar, De Bell. Gall., iii. 22.

§ Petronius, Sat., c. 117.

‖ "Burn my head with fire if you will, wound me with steel, and scourge my shoulders with twisted wire."—TIBULLUS, i. 90, 21.

¶ Herodotus, iv. 71.

our hawks, horses, and dogs with. To what solicitude do we not submit for the convenience of these? I do not think that servants of the most abject condition would willingly do that for their masters, that princes think it an honor to do for these beasts. Diogenes seeing his relations solicitous to redeem him from servitude: "They are fools," said he, "'tis he that keeps and feeds me is my servant, not I his." * And they, who make so much of beasts, ought rather to be said to serve them, than to be served by them. And, withal, they have this more generous quality, that one lion never submitted to another lion, nor one horse to another, for want of courage. As we go to the chase of beasts, so do tigers and lions to the chase of men, and they do the same execution one upon another, dogs upon hares, pikes upon tench, swallows upon flies, sparrowhawks upon blackbirds and larks:

> "Serpente ciconia pullos
> Nutrit, et inventa per devia rura lacerta, . . .
> Et leporem aut capream famulæ Jovis et generosæ
> In saltu venantur aves." †

We divide the quarry, as well as the pains and labor of the chase, with our hawks and hounds; and above Amphipolis in Thrace, the hawkers and wild falcons equally divide the prey; ‡ as also, along the lake Mæotis, if the fisherman does not honestly leave the wolves an equal share of what he has caught, they presently go and tear his nets in pieces. And as we have a way of hunting that is carried on more by subtlety than force, as angling with line and hook, there is also the like among animals. Aristotle says, § that the cuttle-fish casts a gut out of her throat as long as a line, which she extends and draws back at pleasure; and as she perceives some little fish approach, she lets it nibble upon the end of this gut, lying herself concealed in the sand or mud, and by little and little draws it in, till the little fish is so near her, that at one spring she may surprise it.

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* Diogenes, Laertius, vi. 75.

† "The stork feeds her young with snakes and lizards sound in by-places. Jove's eagle hunts in the woods for hares and kids, and so the nobler birds of prey."—JUVENAL, xiv. 74, 81.

‡ Pliny, Nat. Hist., x. 8.

§ Plutarch, On the Industry of Animals, c. 28.

As to what concerns strength, there is no creature in the world exposed to so many injuries as man: we need not a whale, an elephant or a crocodile, nor any such animals, of which one alone is sufficient to defeat a great number of men, to do our business: lice are sufficient to vacate Sylla's dictatorship; and the heart and life of a great and triumphant emperor is the breakfast of a little worm.*

Why should we say that it is only for man by knowledge, improved by art and meditation, to distinguish the things commodious for his being, and proper for the cure of his diseases from those which are not so; to know the virtues of rhubarb and fern: when we see the goats of Candia, when wounded with an arrow, among a million of plants choose out dittany for their cure, and the tortoise, when she has eaten of a viper, immediately go to look out for marjoram to purge her; the dragon rubs and clears his eyes with fennel; the storks give themselves clysters of sea-water; the elephants draw out, not only of their own bodies and those of their companions, but out of the bodies of their masters too (witness the elephant of King Porus, whom Alexander defeated) † the dart and javelins thrown at them in battle, and that so dexterously that we ourselves could not do it with so little pain; why do not we say here also that this is knowledge and prudence? For to allege to their disparagement that 'tis by the sole instruction and dictate of nature that they know all this, is not to take from them the dignity of knowledge and prudence, but with greater reason to attribute it to them than to us, for the honor of so infallible a mistress. Chrysippus, ‡ though in all other things so scornful a judge of the condition of animals as any other philosopher whatever, considering the motions of a dog who, coming to a place where three ways meet, either to hunt after his master he has lost, or in pursuit of some game that flies before him, goes snuffing first in one of the ways and then in another, and after having made himself sure of two, without finding the trace of what he seeks, throws himself into the

* Sylla died of the disease in question at the age of sixty.

† Plutarch, *ubi supra*, c. 12.

‡ Sextus Empiritus, Pyrrh., Hypot., i. 14.

third without examination, is forced to confess that this reasoning is in the dog: "I have followed my master by foot to this place; he must, of necessity, be gone by one of these three ways; he is not gone this way nor that; he must then infallibly be gone this other:" and that assuring himself by such reasoning and conclusion, he makes no use of his nose in the third way nor ever lays it to the ground, but suffers himself to be carried on by the force of reason. This mode, which is purely logical, and this method of propositions divided and conjoined, and the right enumeration of parts, is it not every whit as good that the dog knows all this of himself as if he had learned it of Trapezuntius? *

Nor are animals incapable of being instructed after our method. We teach blackbirds, ravens, pies, and parrots to speak; and the facility wherewith we see them render their voices and breath so supple and pliant to be formed and confined within a certain number of letters and syllables, evinces that they have a reasoning examination of things within that makes them so docile and willing to learn.

Everybody, I believe, is glutted with the several sorts of tricks that tumblers teach their dogs; the dances where they do not miss any one cadence of the sound they hear; the many various motions and leaps they make them perform by the command of a word. But I observe with more admiration this effect, which, nevertheless, is very common, in the dogs that lead the blind both in the country and in cities: I have taken notice how they stop at certain doors, where they are wont to receive alms; how they avoid the encounter of coaches and carts, even where they have suffiicient room to pass; I have seen them, along the trench of a town, forsake a plain and even path, and take a worse, only to keep their masters further from the ditch. How could a man have made this dog understand that it was his office to look to his master's safety only, and to despise his own convenience to serve him? And how had he the knowledge that a way was large enough for him that was

* Georgius Trapezuntius, or George of Trebizond, born 1396, died 1486; a learned translator of and commentator upon Aristotle and other authors. Cotton renders it: "By rules of art." Coste ludicrously translates it: By knowledge of that phrase in geometry which they call a trapezium."

not so for a blind man? Can all this be apprehended without ratiocination?

I must not omit what Plutarch says* he saw of a dog at Rome with the Emperor Vespasian, the father, at the theater of Marcellus: this dog served a player who acted a farce of several gestures and several personages, and had therein his part. He had, among other things, to counterfeit himself for some time dead, by reason of a certain drug he was supposed to have eaten: after he had swallowed a piece of bread, which passed for the drug, he began after awhile to tremble and stagger, as if he was astounded: at last, stretching himself out stiff, as if he had been dead, he suffered himself to be drawn and dragged from place to place, as it was his part to do; and afterward, when he knew it to be time, he began first gently to stir, as if newly awakened out of profound sleep, and lifting up his head, looked about him after such a manner as astonished all the spectators.

The oxen that served in the royal gardens of Susa to water them and turn certain great wheels to draw water for that purpose, to which buckets were fastened (such as there are many in Languedoc), being ordered every one to draw a hundred turns a day, they were so accustomed to this number that it was impossible by force to make them draw one turn more, but, their task being performed, they would suddenly stop and stand still.† We are almost men before we can count a hundred, and have lately discovered nations that have no knowledge of numbers at all.

There is still more understanding required in the teaching of others than in being taught; now, setting aside what Democritus held,‡ and proved, that most of the arts we have were taught us by other animals, as the spider has taught us to weave and sew, the swallow to build, the swan and nightingale music, and several animals, in imitating them, to take medicines: Aristotle§ is of opinion that the nightingales teach their young ones to sing and spend a great deal of time and care in it, whence it happens that those we bring up in cages and that have not had time to learn of

* On the Industry of Animals, c. 18.

† Plutarch, *ubi supra.* c. 20.

‡ Idem, ibid., c. 14.

§ Idem, ibid., c, 18.

their parents, lose much of the grace of their singing: we may judge by this that they improve by discipline and study: and even among the wild birds they are not all one and alike; every one has learned to do better or worse, according to its capacity; and so jealous are they of one another while learning, that they content with emulation, and with so vigorous a contention, that sometimes the vanquished fall dead upon the spot, the breath rather failing than the voice. The younger ruminate pensive, and begin to imitate some broken notes; the disciple listens to the master's lessons, and gives the best account it is able; they are silent by turns; one may hear faults corrected and observe reprehensions of the teacher.* "I have formerly seen," says Arrian, "an elephant having a cymbal hung at each leg, and another fastened to his trunk, at the sound of which all the others danced round him, rising and falling at certain cadences, as they were guided by the instrument, and it was delightful to hear this harmony." In the spectacles of Rome, there were ordinarily seen elephants taught to move and dance to the sound of the voice, dances wherein were several changes and steps, and cadence very hard to learn." † And some have been seen, in private, so intent upon their lesson as to practice it by themselves, that they might not be chidden nor beaten by their masters.‡

But this other story of the magpie, of which we have Plutarch himself for warrant,§ is very strange; she was in a barber's shop at Rome, and did wonders in imitating with her voice whatever she heard. It happened one day that certain trumpeters stood a good while sounding before the shop. After that, and all the next day, the magpie was pensive, dumb, and melancholy, which everybody wondered at and thought that the noise of the trumpets had thus stupefied and dazed her, and that her voice was gone with her hearing; but they found at last that it was a profound meditation and a retiring into herself, her thoughts exercising and preparing her voice to imitate the sound of those trumpets; so that the first voice she uttered was perfectly

* Pliny, Nat. Hist., x. 29.

† Plutarch, *ubi supra*, c. 12.

‡ Idem, ibid., c. 12. Pliny, Nat. Hist., viii. 3.

§ *Ubi Supra* c. 18.

to imitate their strains, stops, and changes: having for this new lesson, quitted and disdained all she had learned before.

I will not omit this other example of a dog, which the same Plutarch (I can't tell them in order, as to which I get confused; nor do I observe it here any more than elsewhere in my work) says* he saw on shipboard: this dog being puzzled how to get at the oil that was in the bottom of a jar and which he could not reach with his tongue, by reason of the narrow mouth of the vessel, went and fetched stones, and let them fall into the jar, till he made the oil rise so high, that he could reach it. What is this but an effect of a very subtle capacity? 'Tis said that the ravens of Barbary do the same, when the water they would drink is too low.† This action is something akin to what Juba, a king of their nation, relates of the elephants‡ that, when by the craft of the hunter, one of them is trapped in certain deep pits prepared for them, and covered over with brush to deceive them, all the rest diligently bring a great many stones and logs of wood to raise the bottom so that he may get out. But this animal in several other features comes so near to human capacity, that I should particularly relate all that experience has delivered to us, I should easily have granted me what I ordinarily maintain, namely, that there is more difference between such and such a man, than between such a man and such a beast. The keeper of an elephant, in a private house of Syria, robbed him every meal of the half of his allowance: one day his master would himself feed him and poured the full measure of barley he had ordered for his allowance into his manger; at which the elephant, casting an angry look at his keeper, with his trunk separated the one half from the other, and thrust it aside, thus declaring the wrong that was done him. And another, having a keeper that mixed stones with his corn to make up the measure, came to the pot where he was boiling flesh for his own dinner, and filled it with ashes.§ These are particular facts: but that which all the world has seen, and all the world knows, is that in all the armies of the East one of their greatest elements of strength was elephants, with whom they did without comparison far more

* *Ubi supra*, c. 12.

† Idem, ibid., c. 10.

‡ Plutarch, *ubi supra*, c. 12.

§ Idem, ibid., c. 12.

execution, than we do now with our artillery, which is, as it were, in their stead in a day of battle (as may easily be judged by such as are read in ancient history);

> "Siquidem Tyrio servire solebant
> Annibali, et nostris ducibus, regique Molosso
> Horum majores, et dorso ferre cohortes,
> Partem aliquam belli, et euntem in prælia turrim."*

They must of necessity very confidently have relied upon fidelity and understanding of these beasts, when they entrusted them with the vanguard of a battle, where the least stop they should have made, by reason of the bulk and heaviness of their bodies, and the least fright that should have made them face about upon their own people, had been enough to spoil all. And there are but few examples where it has happened that they have fallen foul upon their own troops, whereas we ourselves break into our own battalions and rout one another. They had the commission, not of one simple movement only, but of many several things they were to perform in the battle; as the Spaniards did to their dogs in their new conquest of the Indies, to whom they gave pay and allowed them a share in the spoil; and those animals showed as much dexterity and judgment in pursuing the victory and stopping the pursuit, in charging and retiring as occasion required, and in distinguishing their friends from their enemies, as they did ardor and fierceness.†

We more admire and value things that are unusual and strange than those of ordinary observation; I had not else so long insisted upon these examples: for I believe, whoever shall strictly observe what we ordinarily see in those animals we have among us, may there find as wonderful effects as those we fetch from remote countries and ages. 'Tis one same nature that rolls her course, and whoever has sufficiently considered the present state of things, might certainly conclude as to both the future and the past. I have formerly seen men brought hither by sea, from very distant countries, whose language not being understood by

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* "The ancestors of these served in the armies of Carthaginian Hannibal, and of our own captains, and of the Molossian king (Pyrrhus); upon their backs they used to bear whole cohorts when they went to war."—JUVENAL, xii. 107.

† And see Pliny, viii. 40; Olear., Var. Hist., xiv. 46.

us, and, moreover, their mien, countenance, and dress, being quite different from ours, which of us did not repute them savages and brutes? Who did not attribute it to stupidity and want of common sense, to see them mute, ignorant of the French tongue, ignorant of our salutations, cringes, our port and behavior, from which, of course, all human nature must take its pattern and example. All that seems strange to us, and what we do not understand we condemn. The same thing happens also in the judgment we make of beasts. They have several conditions like to ours; from those we may by comparison draw some conjecture; but of those qualities that are particular to them, how know we what to make of them? The horses, dogs, oxen, sheep, birds, and most of the animals that live among us, know our voices, and suffer themselves to be governed by them; so did Crassus' lamprey, that came when he called it;* as also do the eels that are in the lake Arethusa; and I have seen ponds where the fishes run to eat at a certain call of those who used to feed them,

> "Nomen habent, et ad magistri
> Vocem quisque sui venit citatus;" †

We may judge from that. We may also say that elephants have some share of religion,‡ forasmuch as, after several washings and purifications, they are observed to lift up their trunks like arms, and fixing their eyes toward the rising sun, continue long in meditation and contemplation, at certain hours of the day of their own motion without instruction or precept. But because we do not see any such signs in other animals, we cannot thence conclude that they are without religion, nor form any judgment of what is concealed from us; as we discern something in this action§ which the philosopher Cleanthes took notice of because it something resembles our own; he saw, he says, ants go from their ant-hill carrying the dead body of an ant toward another ant-hill, from which several other ants came out to meet them, as if to speak with them; whither,

* Plutarch, *ubi supra*, c. 24.

† "Each has its own name, and comes at the master's call."—MARTIAL, iv. 29, 6.

‡ Pliny, Nat. Hist., viii. 1.

§ Plutarch, *ubi supra*, c. 12.

after having been some while together, the last returned, to consult, you may suppose, with their fellow-citizens, and so made two or three journeys, by reason of the difficulty of capitulation: in the conclusion, the last-comers brought the first worm out of their burrow, as it were for the ransom of the defunct, which the first laid upon their backs and carried home, leaving the dead body to the others. This was the interpretation that Cleanthes gave of this transaction, as manifesting that those creatures that have no voice are not, nevertheless, without mutual communication and dealings, whereof 'tis through our own defect that we do not participate, and for that reason foolishly take upon us to pass our judgment upon it. But they yet produce other effects much beyond our capacity, to which we are so far from being able to arrive by imitation, that we cannot so much as by imagination conceive them. Many are of opinion that in the great and last naval engagement that Antony lost to Augustus, his admiral galley was stayed in the middle of her course by the little fish the Latins call Remora, by reason of the property she has of staying all sorts of vessels to which she fastens herself.* And the Emperor Caligula, sailing with a great navy upon the coast of Romania, his galley alone was suddenly stayed by the same fish; which he caused to be taken, fastened as it was to the keel of his ship, very angry that such a little animal could resist at once the sea, the wind and the force of all his oars, by being merely fastened by the beak to his galley (for it is a shell-fish); and was moreover, not without great reason, astonished that being brought to him in the long-boat it had no longer the strength it had in the water.† A citizen of Cyzicus formerly acquired the reputation of a good mathematician ‡ from having learned the ways of the hedgehog: he has his burrow open in divers places and to several winds, and foreseeing the wind that is to come stops the hole on that side, which the citizen observing, gave the city certain prediction of the wind which was presently to blow. The chameleon takes his color from the place upon which he is laid; but the poly-

* Pliny, xxxii. 1. Remora, "delay, hindrance."

† Pliny, xxxii. 1.

‡ Or rather, perhaps, astrologer.—Plutarch, *ubi supra*, c. 15.

pus* gives himself what color he pleases, according to occasion, either to conceal himself from what he fears, or from what he has a design to seize: in the chameleon 'tis a passive, but in the polypus 'tis an active change. We have some changes of color, as in fear, anger, shame, and other passions, that alter our complexion; but it is by the effect of suffering, as with the chameleon. It is in the power of the jaundice, indeed, to make us turn yellow, but 'tis not in the power of our own will. Now these effects that we discern in other animals, much greater than our own, imply some more excellent faculty in them, unknown to us; as, 'tis to be presumed, are several other qualities and capacities of theirs of which no appearance reaches us.

Among all the predictions of elder times, the most ancient and the most certain were those taken from the flights of birds; † we have nothing like it, not anything so much to be admired. That rule and order of moving the wing, from which were prognosticated the consequences of future things, must of necessity be guided by some excellent means to so noble an operation; for to attribute this great effect to any natural disposition, without the intelligence, consent and reason of the creature by which it is produced, is an opinion evidently false. And, in proof, the torpedo has this quality, not only to benumb all the members that touch her, but even through the nets to transmit a heavy dullness into the hands of those that move and handle them; nay, it is further said that, if one pour water upon her, he will feel this numbness mount up the water to the hand and stupefy the feeling through the water.‡ This is a miraculous force; but 'tis not useless to

* Plutarch, *ubi supra* , c. 28.

† Sextus Empiric. Pyrr. Hyp., i. 14.

‡ " Montaigne would mislead us here, or rather, is misled himself; for, because the torpedo benumbs the members of those who touch it, and because the cranes, swallows, and the other birds of passage change their climate according to the seasons of the year, it by no means follows that the predictions, pretended to be derived from the flight of birds, are founded on certain faculties, which those birds have, of discovering things future to such as take the pains to watch their various motions. The vivacity of our author's genius has made him, in this place, confound things together that are very different. For the properties of the torpedo, cranes, and swallows, appear from sensible effects; but the predictions said to be derived from the flight of certain birds, by virtue of the rule and method of the motion

the torpedo; she knows it and makes use of it; for to catch the prey she desires she will bury herself in the mud, that other fishes, swimming over her, struck and benumbed with this coldness of hers, may fall into her power. Cranes, swallows and other birds of passage, by shifting their abodes according to the seasons, sufficiently manifest the knowledge they have of their divining faculty, and put it in use. Huntsmen assure us that to cull out from among a great many puppies, that which ought to be preserved for the best, the simple way is to refer the choice to the dam, as thus: take them and carry them out of the kennel, and the first she brings back, will certainly be the best; or if you make a show as if you would environ the kennel with fire, the one she first catches up to save: by which it appears they have a sort of prognostic that we have not; or that they have some capacity in judging of their whelps other and clearer than we have.

The manner of coming into the world, of engendering, nourishing, acting, moving, living and dying of beasts, is so near to ours, that whatever we retrench from their moving causes and add to our own condition above theirs, can by no means proceed from any meditation of our own reason. For the regimen of our health, physicians propose to us the example of the beasts' way of living; for this saying has in all times been in the mouth of the people:

> "Tenez chaulds les piods et la teste;
> Au demourant vivez en beste." *

Generation is the principle of natural action. We have a

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of their wings, are only founded upon human imaginations, the reality whereof was never proved; which have varied according to times and places, and which, at length, have lost all credit with the very people that were the most possessed with them. but I am of opinion, that Montaigne only makes use here of the divining faculty of the birds, to puzzle those dogmatists who decide so positively, that the animals have neither reason nor intellect; in this he has imitated Sextus Empiricus, in Pyrr. Hypot., lib. i. cap. 14, p. 16, who, attacking the dogmatist on this very article, says expressly, 'That it cannot be denied, that the birds have the use of speech, and more penetration than we have; because not only by their knowledge of the present, but also of things future, they discover the latter, to such as are capable of understanding them, by their voice, and several other means.'"—COSTE.

* "Keep warm your feet and head; as to the rest, live like a beast."

certain disposition of members most proper and convenient for us in that affair: nevertheless, some order us to conform to the posture of brutes, as the most effectual:

> "More ferarum,
> Quadrupedumque magis ritu plerumque putantur
> Concipere uxores: quia sic loca sumere possunt,
> Pectoribus positis; sublatis semin lumbis," *

and condemn as hurtful those indecent and indiscreet motions the women have superadded to the work; recalling them to the example and practice of the beasts of their own sex, more sober and modest:

> "Nam mulier prohibet se concipere atque repugnat,
> Clunibus ipsa viri Venerem si læta retractet,
> Atque exossato ciet omni pectore fluctus.
> Ejicit enim sulci recta regione viaque
> Vomerem, atque locis avertit seminis ictum." †

If it be justice to render to every one his due, the beasts that serve, love, and defend their benefactors, and that pursue and fall upon strangers and those who offend them, do in this represent a certain air of our justice: as also in observing a very equitable equality in the distribution of what they have to their young. As to friendship, they have it, without comparison, more vivid and constant than men have. King Lysimachus' dog, Hyrcanus,‡ his master being dead, lay upon his bed, obstinately refusing either to eat or drink, and the day that his body was burned, he took a run and leaped into the fire, where he was consumed. As also did the dog of one Pyrrhus,§ for he would not stir from off his master's bed from the time that he died; and when they carried him away let himself be carried with him, and at last leaped into the pile where they burned his master's body. There are certain inclinations of affection which sometimes spring in us without the consultation of reason and by a fortuitous temerity, which others call sympathy: of this beasts are as capable as we. We see horses form an acquaintance with one another, that we have much ado to make them eat or travel when sep-

* Lucretius, iv. 1261. The sense is given the text.

† Lucretius, iv. 1266. The sense is given in the text.

‡ Plutarch, *ubi supra*, c. 15. § Idem, ibid.

arated; we observe them to fancy a particular color in those of their own kind, and where they meet it, run to it with great joy and demonstrations of good will, and to have a dislike and hatred for some other color. Animals have choice, as well as we, in their amours, and cull out their mistresses; neither are they exempt from our extreme and implacable jealousies and envies.

Desires are either natural and necessary, as to eat and drink; or natural and not necessary, as the coupling with females; or neither natural or necessary: of which last sort are almost all the desires of men; they are all superfluous and artificial; for 'tis not to be believed how little will satisfy nature, how little she has left us to desire; our rag-outs and kickshaws are not of her reputation; the Stoics say that a man may live on an olive a day; our delicacy in our wines is no part of her instruction, nor the over-charging the appetites of love:

"Numquid ego a te
Magno prognatum deposco consule cunnum." *

These irregular desires, that ignorance of good and a false opinion have infused into us, are so many that they almost exclude all the natural, just as if there were so great a number of strangers in a city as to thrust out the natural inhabitants, and, usurping their ancient rights and privileges, extinguish their authority and power. Animals are much more regular than we, and keep themselves with greater moderation within the limits nature has prescribed; but yet not so exactly, that they have not some analogy with our debauches: and as there have been known furious desires that have compelled men to the love of beasts, so there have been examples of beasts that have fallen in love with us, and admit monstrous affections between different kinds: witness the elephant, who was rival to Aristophanes the grammarian, in the love of a young flower-girl in the city of Alexandria, which was nothing behind him in all the offices of a very passionate suitor; for going through the market where they sold fruit, he would take some in his trunk and carry it to her: he would as much as possible keep her always in his sight, and would sometimes put his trunk under her neckerchief into her bosom to feel her

* Horace, Sat. i., 2, 69, as much as to say the maid's as good as the mistress.

breasts.* They tell also of a dragon in love with a maid; and of a goose enamored of a child in the town of Asopus: of a ram that was a lover of the minstreless Glaucia; † and there are every day baboons furiously in love with women. We also see certain male animals that are fond of the males of their own kind. Oppianus ‡ and others give us some examples of the reverence that beasts have to their kindred in their copulation, § but experience often shows us the contrary:

> "Nec habetur turpe juvencæ
> Ferre patrem tergo; fit equo sua filia conjux;
> Quasque creavit, init percudes caper, ipsaque cujus
> Semine concepta est, ex illo concepit ales." ‖

For malicious subtlety, can there be a more pregnant example than in the philosopher Thale's mule? He, laden with salt and fording a river, and by accident stumbling there, so that the sacks that he carried were all wet, perceiving that by the melting of the salt his burthen was somewhat lighter, never failed, so often as he came to any river to lie down with his load; till his master, discovering the knavery, ordered that he should be laden with wool, wherein finding himself mistaken he ceased to practice that device.¶ There are several that are the very image of our avarice, for we see them infinitely solicitous to catch all they can and hide it with exceeding great care, though they never make any use of it at all. As to thrift, they surpass us not only in the foresight and laying up and saving for the time to come, but they have moreover a great deal of the science

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* Plutarch, on the Industry of Animals, c. 17.

† Idem, ibid. ‡ Poem on Hunting, i. 236.

§ Of this there is a very remarkable instance, which I met in Varro de Re Rustica, lib. ii. c. 7. "As incredible as it may seem, it ought to be remembered, that a stallion refusing absolutely to leap his mother, the groom thought fit to carry him to her with a cloth over his head, which blinded him, and by that means he forced him to cover her, but taking off the veil as soon as he got off her, the stallion furiously rushed upon him, and bit him till he killed him."—Coste.

‖ The heifer thinks it no shame to take her sire upon her back; the horse his daughter leaps; goats increase the herd by those they have begot; birds of all sorts live in common, and by the seed they were conceived conceive."—Ovid, *Metam.*, x. 325.

¶ Plutarch, *ubi supra*, c. 15: Ælian., Hist. Anim., vii. 42.

necessary thereto. The ants bring abroad into the sun their grain and seeds to air, refresh, and dry them, when they perceive them to mold and grow musty, lest they should decay and rot. But the caution and foresight they exhibit in gnawing their grains of wheat, surpass all imagination of human prudence: for by reason that the wheat does not always continue sound and dry, but grows soft, thaws and dissolves, as if it were steeped in milk, while hastening to germination, for fear lest it should shoot and lose the nature and property of a magazine for their subsistence, they nibble off the end by which it should shoot and sprout.

As to what concerns war, which is the greatest and most pompous of human actions, I would very fain know, whether we would use that for an argument of some prerogative, or, on the contrary, for a testimony of our weakness and imperfection; for, in truth, the science of undoing and killing one another, and of ruining and destroying our own kind, has nothing in it so tempting as to make it coveted by beasts who have it not:

> "Quando leoni
> Fortior eripuit vitam leo? quo nemore unquam
> Expiravit aper majoris dentibus apri?" *

Yet are they not universally exempt; witness the furious encounters of bees, and the enterprises of the princes of the two opposite armies:

> "Sæpe duobus
> Regibus incessit magno discordia motu;
> Continuoque animos vulgi et trepidantia bello
> Corda licet longe præsciscere." †

I never read this divine description but that, methinks, I there see human folly and vanity represented in their true and lively colors: for these preparations for war that so frighten and astound us with their noise and tumult, this rattle of guns, drums, and confused voices,

> "Fulgur ibi ad cœlum se tollit, totaque circum
> Ære renidescit tellus, subterque virum vi

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* "What stronger lion ever took the life from a weaker? or in what forest was it ever known that a small boar fell by the teeth of a larger boar?"—JUVENAL, xv. 160.

† "Often, between two kings, animosities arise with great commotion· then, straight, the common sort are heard from afar, preparing for the war."—VIRGIL, *Georg.*, iv. 67.

Excitur pedibus sonitus, clamoreque montes
Icti rejectant voces ad sidera mundi." *

In this dreadful embattling of so many thousands of armed men, and so great fury, ardor, and courage, 'tis pleasant to consider by what idle occasions they are excited, and by how light ones appeased;

"Paridis propter narratur amorem
Græcia Barbariæ diro collisa duello;" †

all Asia was ruined and destroyed for the ungoverned lust of one Paris: the envy of one single man, a despite, a pleasure or a domestic jealousy, causes that ought not to set two oyster wenches by the ears, is the soul and mover of all this mighty bustle. Shall we believe those who are themselves the principal authors of these mischiefs? Let us then hear the greatest and most victorious emperor that ever was making sport of, and with marvelous ingenuity turning into a jest, the many battles fought both by sea and land, the blood and lives of five hundred thousand men that followed his fortune, and the power and riches of two parts of the world, drained for the service of his expeditions;

"Quod futuit Glaphyran Antonius, hanc mihi pænam
Fulvia constituit, se quoque uti futuam.
Fulviam ego ut futuam? Quid, si me Manius oret
Pædicem, faciam? Non puto, si sapiam.
Aut futue, aut pugnemus, ait. Quid, si mihi vita
Charior est ipsa mentula? Signa canant." ‡

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* "When the glancing ray of arms rises heavenward, and the earth glows with beams of shining brass, and is trampled by horses and by men, and the rocks struck by the various cries reverberate the sounds to the skies."—LUCRETIUS, ii. 325.

† "By reason of Paris' love, Greece and the Barbarians engaged in dire warfare."—HORACE, *Ep.*, i. 2, 6.

‡ Martial, x. 21. This epigram was composed by Augustus, but the luscious Latin conveys such gross and licentious ideas that there would be no excuse for translating the lines without softening them. The following French version of Fontenelle, in his Dialogues of the dead, lets us entirely into Augustus' meaning:

"Parce qu' Antoine est charmé de Glaphire,
Fulvie a ses beaux yeux me veut assujettir.
Antoine est infidele: Eh bien donc? Est-ce a dire
Que des fautes d'Antoine on me fera patir?

(I use my Latin with the liberty of conscience you are pleased to allow me.) Now this great body, with so many fronts and motions as seem to threaten heaven and earth;

> "Quam multi Lybico volvuntur marmore fluctus,
> Sævis ubi Orion hybernis conditur undis,
> Vel cum sole novo densæ torrentur aristæ,
> Aut Hermi campo, aut Lyciæ flaventibus arvis;
> Scuta sonant, pulsuque pedum tremit excita tellus:"*

this furious monster, with so many heads and arms, is yet man, feeble, calamitous, and miserable; 'tis but an ant-hill of ants disturbed and provoked;

> "It nigrum campis agmen:" †

a contrary wind, the croaking of a flight of ravens, the stumble of a horse, the casual passage of an eagle, a dream, a voice, a sign, a morning mist, are any one of them, sufficient to beat down and overturn him. Dart but a sunbeam in his face, he is melted and vanished: blow but a little dust in his eyes, as our poet says of the bees, and all our standards and legions, with the great Pompey himself at the head of them, are routed and crushed to pieces: for it was he, as I take it,‡ that Sertorius beat in Spain with those brave arms, which also served Eumenes against Antigonus, and Surena against Crassus:

> Qui? moy? que je serve Fulvie?
> A ce compte on verroit se retirer vers moy
> Mille Epouses mal satisfaites.
> *Aime moi,* me dit elle, *ou combattons.* Mais quoy?
> Elle est bien laide? Allons, sonez trompettes."—COSTE.

* "As the innumerable waves that roll on the Lybian shore, when stormy Orion, winter returning, plunges into the waters; or as the golden ears, scorched by the summer's rays, on Hermus banks of fruitful Lycia, the bright shields dreadfully resound, and as the soldiers march, their footing shakes the ground."—*Æneid,* vii. 718.

† "The black troop marches to the field."—VIRGIL, *Æneid,* iv. 404.

‡ Here Montaigne had reason to be a little distrustful of his memory; for it was not against Pompey that Sertorius made use of this stratagem, but against the Caracitanians, a people of Spain, who lived in deep caves dug in a rock, where it was impossible to force them.—See Plutarch, Life of Sertorius, cap. 6.

"Hi motus animorum, atque hæc certamina tanta,
Pulveris exigui jactu compressa quiescent." *

Let us but slip our flies after them, and even these will have the force and the courage to disperse them. Within recent memory, the Portuguese besieging the city of Tamly in the territory of Xiatine, the inhabitants of the place brought a number of hives, of which are great plenty in that place, upon the wall, and with fire drove the bees so furiously upon the enemy that they gave over the enterprise and trussed up their baggage, not being able to stand their attacks and stings; and so the city, by this new sort of relief, was freed from the danger with so wonderful a fortune, that at their return it was found that the bees had not lost so much as one combatant.† The souls of emperors and cobblers are cast in the same mold; the weight and importance of the actions of princes considered, we persuade ourselves that they must be produced by some as weighty and important causes: but we are deceived; for they are pushed on and pulled back in their movements by the same springs that we are in our little matters: the same reason that makes us wrangle with a neighbor, causes a war between princes; the same reason that makes us whip a lackey, falling into the hands of a king makes him ruin a whole province. They are as prompt and as easily moved as we, but they are able to do more mischief; in a gnat and an elephant the passion is the same.

As to what concerns fidelity, there is no animal in the world so treacherous as man. Our histories have recorded the eager pursuit that dogs have made after the murderers of their masters. King Pyrrhus, observing a dog that watched a dead man's body, and understanding that he had for three days together performed that office, commanded that the body should be burned, and took the dog along with him. One day, as he was at a general muster of his army, this dog saw his master's murderers, and with great bark-

* "These commotions of their minds, and this so mighty fray, quashed by the throw of a little dust, will cease."—VIRGIL, *Georgics*, iv. 86.

† Cotton has, "On their return from the pursuit they had not lost so much as one man." But the text has "Au retour du combat il ne s'en trouva *une seule* a dire." Coste jocosly questions how Montaigne could have been in a position to determine this point.

ing and extreme signs of anger flew upon them, by this first accusation awaking the revenge of this murder, which was soon after perfected by form of justice.* As much was done by the dog of the sage Hesiod, which convicted the sons of Ganyctor of Naupactus of the murder committed on the person of his master.† Another dog, put to guard a temple at Athens, having spied a sacrilegious thief who carried away the finest jewels, fell to barking at him with all the force he had; but, the warders not awaking at the noise, he followed him, and, day being broken, kept off at a short distance, without losing sight of him; if he offered him anything to eat, he would not take it, but would wag his tail at all the passengers he met, and took whatever they gave him at their hands; and if the thief laid down to sleep, he likewise stayed upon the spot. The news of this dog having come to the warders of the temple, they put themselves upon the pursuit, inquiring as to the color of the dog, and at last found him in the city of Cromyon, and the thief also, whom they brought back to Athens, where he had his reward: and the judges taking cognizance of this good office, ordered a certain measure of corn for the dog's daily sustenance, at the public charge, and the priests to take care of it. Plutarch ‡ delivers this story for a most certain truth, and as one that happened in the age wherein he lived.

As to gratitude (for it seems to me, we had need bring this word into a little greater repute) this one example, which Apion § reports himself to have been an eyewitness of, shall suffice. "One day," says he, "that at Rome they entertained the people with the fighting of several strange

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* Plutarch on the Industry of Animals, c. 12.

† Idem, ibid. ‡ *Ubi supra*, c. 12.

§ "Aulus Gellius (lib. v. c. 14) has transmitted this story to us, on the credit of Apion a learned man, says he, but whose great ostentation renders him, perhaps, too verbose in the narration of things, which he says he had heard or read: as to this fact, Apion relates, that he was an eyewitness of it at Rome, and Seneca (lib. ii. cap. 19.) confirms it, in some measure, by these few words: 'Leonem in amphitheatro spectavimus qui unum e bestiariis agnitum, quum quondam ejus fuisset magister, protexit ab impetu bestiarum.' 'We saw a lion in the amphitheater, who, finding a man there condemned to fight with the beasts, who had formerly been his master, protected him from the fury of the other beasts.'"

beasts, and principally of lions of an unusual size. There was one among the rest who, by his furious deportment, by the strength and largeness of his limbs, and by his loud and dreadful roaring, attracted the eyes of all the spectators. Among the other slaves, that were presented to the people in this combat of beasts, there was one Androclus, of Dacia belonging to a Roman lord of consular dignity. This lion, having seen him at a distance, first made a sudden stop, as it were, in a wondering posture; and then softly approached nearer in a gentle and peaceable manner, as if it were to enter into acquaintance with him; this being done, and being now assured of what he sought, he began to wag his tail, as dogs do when they flatter their masters, and to kiss and lick the hands and thighs of the poor wretch, who was beside himself and almost dead with fear. Androclus having, by this kindness of the lion, a little come to himself, and having taken so much heart as to consider and recognize him, it was a singular pleasure to see the joy and caresses that passed between them. At which the people breaking into loud acclamations of joy, the emperor caused the slave to be called, to know from him the cause of so strange an event. He thereupon told him a new and a very wonderful story: 'My master, said he, being proconsul in Africa, I was constrained by his severity and cruel usage, being daily beaten, to steal from him and to run away. And to hide myself securely from a person of so great authority in the province, I thought it my best way to fly to the solitudes, sands, and uninhabitable parts of that country, resolved, in case the means of supporting life should fail me, to make some shift or other to kill myself. The sun being excessively hot at noon, and the heat intolerable, I found a retired and almost inaccessible cave, and went into it. Soon after there came in to me this lion with one foot wounded and bloody, complaining and groaning with the pain he endured: at his coming I was exceedingly afraid, but he having espied me hid in a corner of his den, came gently to me, holding out and showing me his wounded foot, as if he demanded my assistance in his distress. I then drew out a great splinter he had got there, and growing a little more familiar with him, squeezing the wound, thrust out the dirt and gravel that he had got into it, wiped and cleansed it as well as I could. He, finding himself something better and much

eased of his pain, lay down to repose, and presently fell asleep with his foot in my hand. From that time forward, he and I lived together in this cave three whole years, upon the same diet; for of the beasts that he killed in hunting he always brought me the best pieces, which I roasted in the sun for want of fire, and so ate them. At last growing weary of this wild and brutish life, the lion being one day gone abroad to hunt for our ordinary provision, I escaped from thence, and the third day after was taken by the soldiers, who brought me from Africa to this city to my master, who presently condemned me to die, and to be exposed to the wild beasts. Now, by what I see, this lion was also taken soon after, who would now recompense me for the benefit and cure that he had received at my hands.' This is the story that Androclus told the emperor, which he also conveyed from hand to hand to the people: wherefore at the universal request, he was absolved from his sentence and set at liberty; and the lion was, by order of the people, presented to him. We afterward saw," says "Apion, Androclus leading this lion, in nothing but a small leash, from tavern to tavern at Rome, and receiving what money everybody would give him, the lion being so gentle, as to suffer himself to be covered with the flowers that the people threw upon him; every one that met him saying: 'There goes the lion that entertained the man; there goes the man that cured the lion.'"

We often lament the loss of the beasts we love, and so do they the loss of us:

> "Post, bellator equus, positis insignibus, Æthon
> It lacrymans, guttisque humectat grandibus ora." *

As some nations have wives in common, and some others have every man his own: is not the same evident among beasts, and marriages better kept than ours? As to the society and confederation they make among themselves, to league themselves together, and to give one another mutual assistance, is it not manifest that oxen, hogs, and other animals, at the cry of any of their kind that we offend, all the herd run to his aid, and embody for his defense? When the fish scarus has swallowed the angler's hook, his fellows all crowd about him, and gnaw the line

* "Next, Æthon his warhorse came, without any of his trappings, and weeping with heavy tears."—*Æneid*, xi. 89.

in pieces; and if by chance one be got into the net, the others present him their tails on the outside, which he holding fast with his teeth, they after that manner disengage and draw him out.* Mullets, when one of their companions is engaged, cross the line over their back, and with a fin they have there, indented like a saw, cut and saw it asunder.† As to the particular offices that we receive from one another for the service of life, there are several like examples among them. 'Tis said that the whale never moves that he has not always before him a little fish, like the sea-gudgeon, for this reason called the guide-fish, whom the whale follows, suffering himself to be led and turned with as great facility as the helm guides the ship: in recompense of which service, whereas all other things, whether beast or vessel, that enter into the dreadful gulf of this monster's mouth, are immediately lost and swallowed up, this little fish retires into it in great security, and there sleeps, during which time the whale never stirs; but as soon as it goes out, he immediately follows: and if by accident he lose sight of his little guide, he goes wandering here and there, and strikes his sides against the rocks, like a ship that has lost her rudder; which Plutarch‡ testifies to have seen off the Island of Anticyra. There is a like society between the little bird called the wren and the crocodile; the wren serves for a sentinel over this great animal; and if the ichneumon, his mortal enemy, approach to fight him, this little bird, for fear lest he should surprise him asleep, both with his voice and bill rouses him and gives him notice of his danger; he feeds on this monster's leavings, who receives him familiarly into his mouth, suffering him to peck into his jaws and between his teeth, and thence to take out the bits of flesh that remain; and when he has a mind to shut his mouth he gives the bird warning to go out, by closing it by little and little, without bruising or doing it any harm at all.§ The shellfish called naker ‖ lives also in the same intelligence with the shrimp, a little animal of the lobster kind, serving him in the nature of usher and porter, sitting at the opening of the shell which the naker keeps always gap-

* Plutarch, *ubi supra*, c. 26.

† Idem, ibid.

‡ Idem, ibid.

§ Plutarch, *ubi supra*, c. 26.

‖ The mother of pearl oyster.

ing and open, till the shrimp sees some little fish proper for their prey within the hollow of the shell, and then it enters too, and pinches the naker to the quick, so that she is forced to close her shell, where they two together devour the prey they have trapped into their fort.* In the manner of living of the tunnies, we observe a singular knowledge of the three parts of mathematics: as to astrology, they teach it to men, for they stay in the place where they are surprised by the brumal solstice, and never stir thence till the next exquinox; for which reason Aristotle himself attributes to them this science; as to geometry and arithmetic, they always form their array in the figure of a cube, every way square, and make up the body of a battalion, solid, close, and environed with six equal sides; so that swimming in this square order, as large behind as before, whoever in seeing them can count one rank, may easily number the whole troop, by reason that the depth is equal to the breadth, and the breadth to the length.†

As to magnanimity, it will be hard to give a better instance of this than in the example of the great dog, sent to Alexander the Great from India. They first brought him a stag to encounter, next a boar, and after that a bear; all these he slighted, and disdained to stir from his place; but when he saw a lion he immediately roused himself, evidently manifesting that he declared that alone worthy to enter the lists with him.‡ As to what concerns repentance and the acknowledgment of faults, 'tis reported of an elephant, that having, in the impetuosity of his rage, killed his keeper, he fell into so extreme a sorrow that he would never after eat, but starved himself to death.§ And as to clemency, 'tis said of a tiger, the most inhuman of all beasts: that a kid having been put into him, he suffered two days' hunger rather than hurt it, and on the third broke the cage he was shut up in, to go seek elsewhere for prey, not choosing to fall upon the kid, his friend and guest.‖ And as to the laws of familiarity and

* Plutarch, *ubi supra*, c. 26, and Cicero, De Natura Deor., ii. 49.

† Plutarch, *ubi supra*.

‡ Plutarch, *ubi supra*, c. 14.

§ Arrian, Hist. Indic., c. 14.

‖ Plutarch, *ubi supra*, c. 19.

agreement, formed by converse, it commonly occurs that we bring up cats, dogs, and hares tame together.

But that which seamen experimentally know, and particularly in the Sicilian sea, of the quality of the halcyons, surpasses all human thought; of what kind of animal has nature so highly honored the hatching, birth, and production? The poets, indeed, say that the Island of Delos, which before was a floating island, was fixed for the service of Latona's lying-in; but the gods ordered that the whole ocean should be stayed, made stable and smoothed, without waves, without wind or rain, while the halcyon lays her eggs, which is just about the solstice, the shortest day of the year, so that, by this halcyon's privilege, we have seven days and seven nights in the very heart of winter, wherein we may sail without danger. Their females never have to do with any other male but their own, whom they always accompany (without ever forsaking him) all their lives; if he happen to be weak and broken with age, they take him upon their shoulders, carry him from place to place, and serve him till death. But the most inquisitive into the secrets of nature could never yet arrive at a knowledge of the marvelous fabric wherewith the halcyon builds the nest for her little ones, nor guess at the matter. Plutarch,* who had seen and handled many of them, thinks it is the bones of some fish which she joins and binds together, interlacing them, some lengthwise, and others across, and adding ribs and hoops in such manner that she forms, at last, a round vessel fit to launch, which being done, and the building finished, she carries it to the wash of the beach, where the sea beating gently against it, shows her where she is to mend what is not well jointed and knit, and where better to fortify the seams that are leaky and that open at the waves; and, on the contrary, what is well built and has had the due finishing, the beating of the waves so closes and binds together that it is not to be broken or cracked by blows, either of stone or iron, without very much ado. And that which is still more to be admired is the proportion and figure of the cavity within, which is composed and proportioned after such a manner as not possibly to receive or admit any other thing than the bird that built it; for to

* *Ubi supra.*

anything else it is so impenetrable, close and shut, that nothing can enter, not so much as the water of the sea. This is a very clear description of this building, and borrowed from a very good hand; and yet, methinks, it does not give us sufficient light into the difficulty of this architecture. Now, from what vanity can it proceed to place lower than ourselves, and disdainfully to interpret effects that we can neither imitate nor comprehend?

To pursue a little further this equality and correspondence between us and beasts: the privilege our soul so much glorifies herself upon of bringing all things she conceives to her own condition, of stripping all things that come to her of their mortal and corporal qualities, of ordering and placing the things she conceives worthy her taking notice of, divesting them of their corruptible qualities, and making them lay aside length, breadth, depth, weight, color, smell, roughness, smoothness, hardness, softness, and all sensible incidents, as mean and superfluous vestments, to accommodate them to her own immortal and spiritual condition: the Paris, just as Rome and Paris, that I have in my soul, the Paris that I imagine, I imagine and conceive it without greatness and without place, without stone, without plaster, without wood: this very same privilege, I say, seems to be evidently in beasts: for a horse, accustomed to trumpets, the rattle of musket-shot and the bustle of battles, whom we see start and tremble in his sleep stretched upon his litter, as if he were in fight, it is certain that he conceives in his soul the beat of drum without noise, an army without arms, and without body:

> "Quippe videbis equos fortes, cum membra jacebunt
> In somnis, sudare tamen, spirareque sæpe,
> Et quasi de palma summas contendere vires." *

The hare that a greyhound imagines in his sleep, after which we see him so pant while he sleeps, so stretch out his tail, shake his legs, and perfectly represent all the motions of a course, is a hare without skin and without bones:

> "Venantumque canes in molli sæpe quiete
> Jactant crura tamen sudito, vocesque repente

* "You shall see strong horses in their sleep, sweat and snort, and seem as if, with all their force, they were striving to win the race."—LUCRETIUS, iv. 988.

Mittunt, et crebras reducunt naribus auras,
Ut vestigia si teneant inventa ferarum:
Experge factique sequuntur inania sæpe
Cervorum simulacra, fugæ quasi dedita cernant;
Donec discussis redeant erroribus ad se." *

We often observe the bandogs snarl in their dreams, and afterward bark out, and start up on a sudden, as if they perceived some stranger at hand: this stranger, that their soul discerns, is a spiritual and imperceptible man, without dimension, without color, and without being:

"Consueta domi catulorum blanda propago
Degere, sæpe levem ex oculis volucremque soporem
Discutere, et corpus de terra corripere instant,
Proinde quasi ignotas facies atque ora tuantur."†

As to beauty of the body, before I proceed any further, I would know whether or not we are agreed about the description. 'Tis likely we do not well know what beauty is in nature, and in general, since to human and our own beauty we give so many diverse forms, of which were there any natural rule and prescription we should know it in common, as we do the heat of the fire. But we fancy its forms according to our own appetite and liking:

"Turpis Romano Belgicus ore color." ‡

Indians paint it black and tawny, with great swollen lips, big flat noses, and load the cartilage between the nostrils with great rings of gold to make it hang down to the mouth; as also the nether lip, with great hoops, enriched with jewels, that weigh them down to fall upon the chin, it being with them a special grace to show their teeth even below the roots. In Peru, the greatest ears are the most beautiful, and they stretch them out as far as they can by art; and a man, now living, says that he has seen in an

* "Hounds often in their quiet rest suddenly throw out their legs and bark, and breathe quick and short, as if they were in full chase upon a burning scent: nay, being waked, pursue imagined stags, as if they had them in real view, till at last, discovering the mistake, they return to themselves."—*Idem, ibid.*, 992.

† "Often our caressing house-dogs, shaking slumber from their eyes, will rise up suddenly, as if they saw strange faces."—*Idem, ibid.*, 999.

‡ "The Belgic complexion of a German lass ill becomes a Roman face."—PROPERTIUS, ii. 17, 26.

eastern nation this care of enlarging them in so great repute, and the ear laden with such ponderous jewels, that he did with great ease put his arm, sleeve and all, through the bore of an ear. There are, elsewhere, nations that take great care to blacken their teeth, and hate to see them white; elsewhere, people that paint them red. Not only in Biscay, but in other places, the women are reputed more beautiful for having their heads shaved, and, this moreover, in certain frozen countries, as Pliny reports.* The Mexicans esteem a low forehead a great beauty, and though they shave all other parts they nourish hair on the forehead, and increase it by art; and have great breasts in such reputation, that they make boast to give their children suck over their shoulders: we should paint deformity so. The Italians fashion beauty gross and massive; the Spaniards, gaunt and slender; and among us, one makes it white, another brown; one soft and delicate, another strong and vigorous; one will have his mistress soft and gentle, another haughty and majestic. Just as the preference in beauty is given by Plato to the spherical figure, the Epicureans give it to the pyramidal or the square, and cannot swallow a god in the form of a ball.† But, be it how it will, nature has no more privileged us above her common laws in this than in the rest; and if we will judge ourselves aright, we shall find that if there be some animals less favored in this than we, there are others, and in great number, that are more so, "*a multis animalibus decore vincimur;*"‡ even of our terrestrial compatriots; for, as to those of the sea, setting the figure aside, which cannot fall into any manner of comparison, being so wholly another thing, in color, cleanness, smoothness, and disposition, we sufficiently give place to them; and no less in all qualities, to the aërial. And this prerogative that the poets make such a mighty matter of, our erect statue, looking towards heaven, our original,

> "Pronaque cum spectent animalia cætera terram,
> Os homini sublime dedit, cœlumque tueri

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* Book vi. c. 13.

† Plato, Timæus.

‡ "Many animals surpass us in beauty."—SENECA, *Epist.*, 124.

Jussit, et erectos ad sidera tollere vultus,"*

is merely poetical; for there are several little beasts that have their sight absolutely turned towards heaven; and I find the countenance of camels and ostriches much higher raised, and more erect than ours. What animals have not their faces forward and in front, and do not look just as we do, and do not in their natural posture discover as much of heaven and earth as man? And what qualities of our bodily constitution, in Plato and Cicero, may not indifferently serve a thousand sorts of beasts? Those that most resemble us, are the ugliest and most abject of all the herd; for, as to outward appearance and form of visage, such are the baboons and monkeys:

"Simia quam similis, turpissima bestia, nobis?" †

and, for the internal and vital parts, the hog. In earnest, when I imagine man stark naked, even that sex that seems to have the greatest share of beauty, his defects, natural subjections, and imperfections, I find that we have more reason than any other animal to cover ourselves. We are readily to be excused for borrowing of those creatures to which nature has in this been kinder than to us, to trick ourselves with their beauties and hide ourselves under their spoils—their wool, feathers, hair, silk. Let us observe, as to the rest, that man is the sole animal whose nudities offend his own companions, and the only one who, in his natural actions, withdraws and hides himself from his own kind. And really, 'tis also an effect worth consideration, that they, who are masters in the trade, prescribe as a remedy for amorous passions the full and free view of the body a man desires; so that, to cool his ardor, there needs no more but a full liberty to see and contemplate what he loves:

"Ille quod obscœnas in aperto corpore partes
Viderat, in cursu qui fuit, hæsit amor:"‡

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* "Whereas other animals bow their prone looks to the earth, he gave it to men to look erect, to behold the heavenly arch."—OVID, *Met.*, i. 84.

† "How like to man is that most beastly of all beasts, the ape?"—ENNIUS, *ap.* Cicero, *Nat. Deor.*, lib. i.

‡ "He that in full ardor has disclosed to him the secret parts of his mistress in open view, flags in his hot career."—OVID, *De Rem. Amor.*, v. 429.

and although this recipe may, peradventure, proceed from a refined and cold humor; it is, notwithstanding, a very great sign of our weakness, that use and acquaintance should disgust us with one another.

It is not modesty so much as cunning and prudence, that makes our ladies so circumspect in refusing us admittance to their closets, before they are painted and tricked up for public view:

> "Nec Veneres nostras hoc fallit; quo magis ipsæ
> Omnia summopere hos vitæ postscenia celant,
> Quos retinere volunt, adstrictoque esse in amore:" *

whereas in several animals there is nothing that we do not love, and that does not please our senses; so that from their very excrements we not only extract wherewith to heighten our sauces, but also our richest ornaments and perfumes. This discourse reflects upon none but the ordinary sort of women, and is not so sacrilegious as to seek to comprehend those divine, supernatural, and extraordinary beauties, whom we occasionally see shining among us like stars under a corporeal and terrestrial veil.

As to the rest, the very share that we allow to beasts of the bounty of nature, by our own confession, is very much to their advantage; we attribute to ourselves imaginary and fantastic goods, future and absent goods, for which human capacity cannot, of herself, be responsible: or goods that we falsely attribute to ourselves by the license of opinion, as reason, knowledge and honor; and leave to them, for their share, essential, manageable and palpable goods, as peace, repose, security, innocence and health; health, I say, the fairest and richest present that nature can make us. Insomuch that philosophy, even the Stoic,† is so bold as to say that Heraclitus and Pherecides could they have exchanged their wisdom for health, and have delivered themselves, the one of his dropsy and the other of the lice disease that tormented him, by the bargain, they had done well. By which they set a still greater value upon wisdom, comparing and putting it in the balance with health, than they do in this other proposition, which is also theirs: they

* "Of this our ladies are well aware: and it makes them with such care behind the scenes remove all those defects that may check the flame of their lovers."—LUCRETIUS, iv. 1182.

† Plutarch, on the Common Conceptions against the Stoics, c. 8.

say that if Circe had presented to Ulysses two potions, the one to make a fool become a wise man, and the other to make a wise man become a fool, Ulysses, ought rather to have chosen the last than to consent that Circe should change his human figure into that of a beast; and say that wisdom itself would have spoken to him after this manner: "Forsake me, let me alone, rather than lodge me under the body and figure of an ass." How, then, will the philosophers abandon this great and divine wisdom for this corporeal and terrestrial covering? it is then not by reason, by discourse, by the soul, that we excel beasts: 'tis by our beauty, our fair complexion, our fine symmetry of parts, for which we must quit our intelligence, our prudence and all the rest. Well, I accept this frank and free confession: certainly, they knew that those parts upon which we so much value ourselves are no other than vain fancy. If beasts, then, had all the virtue, knowledge, wisdom, and stoical perfection, they would still be beasts, and would not be comparable to man, miserable, wicked, insensate man. For, in fine, whatever is not as we are is nothing worth; and God Himself to procure esteem among us must put Himself into that shape, as we shall show anon: by which it appears that it is not upon any true ground of reason, but by a foolish pride and vain opinion that we prefer ourselves before other animals, and separate ourselves from their condition and society.

But, to return to what I was upon before, we have for our part, inconstancy, irresolution, incertitude, sorrow, superstition, solicitude about things to come even after we shall be no more, ambition, avarice, jealousy, envy, irregular, frantic and untamable appetites, war, lying, disloyalty, detraction and curiosity. Doubtless, we have strangely overpaid this fine reason upon which we so much glorify ourselves, and this capacity of judging and knowing, if we have brought it at the price of this infinite number of passions to which we are eternally subject: unless we shall yet think fit, as Socrates does,* to add this notable prerogative above beasts, that whereas nature has prescibed to them certain seasons and limits for the delights of Venus, she has given us the reins at all hours, and all seasons. "*Ut vinum ægrotis, quia prodest raro, nocet sæpissime.*

* Xenophon, Mem. on Socrates, i. 4, 12.

melius est non adhibere omnino, quam, spe dubiæ salutis, in apertam perniciem incurrere: sic haud scio, an melius fuerit humano generi motum istum celerum cogitationis, acumen, solertiam, quam rationem vocamus, quoniam pestifera sint multis, admodum paucis salutaria, non dari omnino, quam tam munifice et tam large dari."* Of what advantage can we conceive the knowledge of so many things was to Varro and Aristotle? Did it exempt them from human inconveniences? Were they by it freed from the accidents that lie heavy upon the shoulders of a porter? Did they extract from their logic any consolation for the gout? or, from knowing that this humor is lodged in the joints, did they feel it the less? Did they enter into composition with death by knowing that some nations rejoice at his approach? or with cuckoldry, by knowing that in some part of the world wives are in common? On the contrary, having been reputed the greatest men for knowledge, the one among the Romans and the other among the Greeks, and in a time when learning most flourished, we have not heard, nevertheless, that they had any particular excellence in their lives: nay, the Greek had enough to do to clear himself from some notable blemishes in his. Have we observed that pleasure and health have had a better relish with him who understands astrology and grammar than with others?

"Illiterati num minus nervi rigent?"†

and shame and poverty less troublesome?

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* "As it falls out that wine often hurts the sick, and very rarely does them good, it is better not to give them any at all than to run into a manifest danger, out of hope of an uncertain benefit; so I know not whether it had not been better for mankind that this quick motion, this penetration of imagination, this subtlety, that we call reason, had not been given to man at all; considering how pestiferous it is to many, and healthful but to few, than to have been conferred in so abundant manner, and with so liberal a hand."—CICERO, *De Nat. Deor.*, iii. 27.

† The plowman is as fit for Venus' service as his master."—HORATIUS, *Epod.*, VIII. v. 17.

"Scilicet et morbis, et debilitate carebis,
Et luctum et curam effugies, et tempora vitæ
Longa tibi post hæc fato meliore dabuntur." *

I have known in my time a hundred artisans, a hundred laborers, wiser and more happy than the rectors of the university, and whom I had much rather have resembled. Learning, methinks, has its place among the necessary things of life, as glory, nobility, dignity, or, at the most, as beauty, riches, and such other qualities, which, indeed are useful to it; but remotely, and more by fantasy than by nature. We need scarcely more offices, rules, and laws of living in our society than cranes and emmets do in theirs; and yet we see that these carry themselves very regularly without erudition. If man were wise, he would take the true value of everything according as it was most useful and proper to his life. Whoever will number us by our actions and deportments, will find many more excellent men among the ignorant than among the learned: ay, in all sorts of virtue. The old Rome seems to me to have been of much greater value, both for peace and war, than that learned Rome that ruined itself; and though all the rest should be equal, yet integrity and innocence would remain to the ancients, for they inhabit singularly well with simplicity. But I will leave this discourse that would lead me farther than I am willing to follow; and shall only say this farther: 'tis only humility and submission that can make a complete good man. We are not to leave to each man's own judgment the knowledge of his duty; we are to prescribe it to him, and not suffer him to choose it at his own discretion: otherwise, according to the imbecility and infinite variety of our reasons and opinions, we should at last forge for ourselves duties that would (as Epicurus † says) enjoin us to eat one another.

The first law that ever God gave to man was a law of pure obedience: it was a commandment, naked and simple, wherein man had nothing to inquire after or to dispute, forasmuch as to obey is the proper office of a rational soul acknowledging a heavenly superior and benefactor. From

* "Thou shall be free from disease and infirmity, and avoid care and sorrow: and thy life shall be prolonged, and with better days."—JUVENAL, xiv. 156.

† Or rather, the Epicurean Colotes.

obedience and submission spring all other virtues, as all sin does from self-opinion. And, on the contrary, the first temptation that, by the devil, was offered to human nature, its first poison, insinuated itself by the promises that were made to us of knowledge and wisdom: "*Eritis sicut dii, scientes bonum et malum.*" * And the sirens, in Homer,† to allure Ulysses and draw him within the danger of their snares offered to give him knowledge. The plague of man is the opinion of wisdom; and for this reason it is that ignorance is so recommended to us by our religion, as proper to faith and obedience: "*Cavete, ne quis vos decipiat per philosophiam et inanes seductiones, secundum elementa mundi.*" ‡ There is in this a general consent among all sects of philosophers, that the sovereign good consists in the tranquility of the soul and body: but where shall we find it?

> "Ad summam, sapiens uno minor est Jove, dives,
> Liber, honoratus, pulcher, rex denique regum;
> Præcipue sanus, nisi cum pituita molesta est." §

It seems, in truth, that nature, for the consolation of our miserable and wretched state, has only given us presumption for our inheritance; 'tis, as Epictetus says, ‖ "that man has nothing properly his own, but the use of his opinions;" we have nothing but wind and smoke for our portion. The gods have health in essence, says philosophy, and sickness in intelligence; man on the contrary, possesses his goods by fancy, his ills in essence. We have had reason to magnify the power of our imagination, for all our goods are only in dream. Hear this poor calamitous animal huff: "there is nothing," says Cicero, "so charming as the occupation of letters; of those letters, I say, by means whereof the infinity of things, the immense grandeur

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* "Ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil."—*Genesis*, iii. 5.

† Odyssey, xii. 188.

‡ "Take heed lest any man deceive you by philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, and the rudiments of the world."—St. Paul, *Colossians*, ii. 8.

§ "He that is wise is inferior to none but Jove alone, honored, rich, free, fair, in short, a king of kings, and in capital health, unless when he has a cold."—Horatius, *Ep.*, i. 1, 106.

‖ Manual, c. ii.

of nature, the heavens, even in this world, the earth, and the seas are discovered to us. 'Tis they that have taught us religion, moderation, the grandeur of courage, and that have rescued our souls from obscurity, to make her see all things, high, low, first, middle, last, and 'tis they that furnish us wherewith to live happily and well, and conduct us to pass over our lives without displeasure and without offense." * Does not this man seem to speak of the condition of the ever-living and almighty God? Yet, as to the effect, a thousand little country-women have lived lives more equal, more sweet and constant than his.

> "Deus ille fuit, deus, inclute Memmi,
> Qui princeps vitæ rationem invenit eam, quæ
> Nunc appellatur sapientia; quique per artem
> Fluctibus e tantis vitam, tantisque tenebris,
> In tam tranquilla et tam clara luce locavit:"†

Here are very fine, very brave words: but a very light accident put this same man's understanding in a worse condition than that of the meanest shepherd, ‡ notwithstanding this instructing God, this divine wisdom. Of the same stamp of impudence is the promise of Democritus' book, "I am going to speak of all things;" § and that foolish title that Aristotle prefixes to one of his, "of the mortal gods," ‖ and the judgment of Chrysippus, "that Dion was as virtuous as God;" ¶ and my friend Seneca does, indeed, acknowledge that God has given him life, but that to live well is his own; conformably with this

* Cicero, Tusc. Quæs., i. 26.

† "That god, great Memmus, was a god indeed, who first found out that *rationale* of life which is now called wisdom; and who by such art removed life from its tempests and darkness into so calm and clear a light."—LUCRETIUS, v. 8.

‡ "This was Lucretius who, in the verses preceding this period, speaks so pompously of Epicurus and his doctrine: for a love potion that was given him either by his wife or his mistress, so much disturbed his reason, that the violence of his disorder only afforded him a few lucid intervals, which he employed in composing his book, and at last made him kill himself. Eusebius's Chronicon." —COSTE.

§ Cicero, Acad., ii. 23.

‖ Idem, De Finibus, ii. 13.

¶ Plutarch, On the Common Conceptions of the Stoics.

other, "*In virtute vere gloriamur; quod non contingeret, si id donum a Deo, non a nobis, haberemus;*" * this is also Seneca's saying, "That the wise man has fortitude equal with God; but in human frailty, wherein he surpasses Him." † There is nothing so ordinary as to meet with sallies of the like temerity; there is none of us who takes so much offence to see himself equaled to God, as he does to see himself undervalued by being ranked with other animals; so much more are we jealous of our own interest, than of that of our Creator. But we must trample under foot this foolish vanity, and briskly and boldly shake the ridiculous foundations upon which these false opinions are based. So long as man shall believe he has any means and power of himself, he will never acknowledge what he owes to his master, his eggs shall always be chickens, as the saying is: we must therefore strip him to his shirt. Let us see some notable example of the effect of his philosophy; Posidonius, being tormented with a disease so painful as made him writhe his arms and gnash his teeth, thought he sufficiently baffled the pain by crying out against it: "Thou dost exercise thy malice to much purpose; I will not confess that thou art an evil." ‡ He is as sensible of the pain as my footman, but he mightily values himself upon bridling his tongue, at least, and restraining it within the laws of his sect: "*re succumbere non oportebat, verbis gloriantem.*" § Arcesilaus, being ill of the gout, and Carneades coming to see him, was returning, troubled at his condition; the other calling back and showing him his feet and then his breast: "There is nothing come from these hither," ‖ said he. This has somewhat a better grace, for he feels himself in pain and would be disengaged from it; but his heart, notwithstanding, is not conquered or enfeebled by it; the other stands more obstinately to his

* "We truly glory in our virtue, which would not be if it was given us of God and not by ourselves."—CICERO, *De Nat. Deor.*, iii. 36.

† Ep. 53, *sub. fin.*

‡ Cicero, Tusc. Quæs., ii. 25.

§ "It did not become him that spoke so big, to confess his frailty when he came to the test."—*Idem, ibid.*, ii. 13.

‖ Cicero, De Finibus, v. 31.

work, but, I fear, rather verbally than really. And Dionysius Heracleotes, afflicted with a vehement smarting in his eyes, was reduced to quit these stoical resolutions. * But, though knowledge could in effect do, as they say, and could blunt the point and dull the edge of the misfortunes that attend us, what does she more than what ignorance does more simply and evidently? The philosopher Pyrrho, being at sea in very great danger by reason of a mighty storm, presented nothing to those who were with him to imitate in this extremity but the security of a hog they had on board that was looking at the tempest quite unconcerned.† Philosophy, when she has said all she can, refers us at last to the example of a wrestler or a muleteer, in which sort of people we commonly observe much less apprehension of death or sense of pain and other infirmities, and more endurance, than ever knowledge furnished any one with who was not born to those infirmities, and of himself prepared for them by a natural habit. ‡ What is the cause that we make incisions and cut the tender limbs of an infant, and those of a horse, more easily than our own, but ignorance only? How many has mere force of imagination made ill. We often see men cause themselves to be let blood, purged, and physicked, to be cured of diseases they only feel in opinion. When real infirmities fail us, knowledge lends us hers: that color, this complexion, portends some catarrhous defluxion; this hot season threatens us with a fever: this breach in the lifeline of your left hand gives you notice of some near and notable indisposition: and at last it roundly attacks health itself, saying, this sprightliness and vigor of youth cannot continue in this posture, there must be blood taken, and the fever abated, lest it turn to your prejudice. Compare the life of a man subject to such imaginations with that of a laborer, who suffers himself to be led by his natural appetite, measuring things only by the present sense, without

* Idem, ibid. "Cicero says elsewhere (Tusc. Quæs., ii. 25); that this philosopher, having a disorder in his kidneys, exclaimed aloud, that the notion which he had before conceived of pain was false."—COSTE.

† "A previous knowledge of evils rather sharpens than modifies the sense of them."—ED. of 1588.

‡ Diogenes Laertius, ix. 69.

knowledge and without prognostics—who is only ill when he is ill; whereas the other has the stone in his soul before he has it in his bladder; as if it were not time enough to suffer evil when it shall come, he must anticipate it by fancy and run to meet it. What I say of physic may generally serve as example in other sciences: and hence is derived that ancient opinion of the philosophers,* who placed the sovereign good, in discerning the weakness of our judgment. My ignorance affords me as much occasion of hope as of fear; and having no other rule of my health than that of the examples of others, and of events I see elsewhere upon the like occasions, I find of all sorts, and rely upon the comparisons that are most favorable to me. I receive health with open arms, free, full, and entire, and by so much the more whet my appetite to enjoy it, by how much it is at present less ordinary and more rare; so far am I from troubling its repose and sweetness, with the bitterness of a new and constrained manner of living. Beasts sufficiently show us how much the agitation of the soul brings infirmities and diseases upon us. That which is told us of the people of Brazil that they never die but of old age, is attributed to the serenity and tranquillity of the air they live in; but I attribute it to the serenity and tranquillity of their soul, free from all passion, thought, or employments, continuous or unpleasing, as people that pass over their lives in an admirable simplicity and ignorance, without letters, without law, without king, or any manner of religion. Whence comes this which we find by experience, that the coarsest and most rough-hewn clowns are the most able and the most to be desired in amorous performances, and that the love of a muleteer often renders itself more acceptable than that of a gentleman, if it be not, that the agitation of the soul in the latter disturbs his corporal ability, dissolves and tires it, as it also troubles and tires itself? What more usually puts the soul beside herself, and throws her into madness, than her own promptness, vigor and agility—in short her own proper force? Of what is the most subtle folly made, but of the most subtle wisdom? As great friendships spring from great enmities, and vigorous healths from mortal diseases: so from the rare and quick agitations of our souls, proceed the most wonder-

* The Skeptics.

ful and wildest frenzies; 'tis but a half turn of the toe from the one to the other.* In the actions of madmen, we see how nearly madness resembles the most vigorous operations of the soul. Who does not know how indiscernible the difference is between madness and the gay flights of a sprightly soul, and the effects of a supreme and extraordinary virtue? Plato says, that melancholic persons are the most capable of discipline and the most excellent; nor indeed is there in any so great a propension to madness. Infinite wits are ruined by their own proper force and vivacity: what a condition, through his own agitation and promptness of fancy, is one of the most judicious, ingenious, and best formed to the ancient and true poesy, of any of the Italian poets† lately fallen into! Has he not great obligation to this vivacity that has destroyed him, to this light that has blinded him? to this exact and subtle apprehension of reason, that has put him beside his reason? to his close and laborious search after science, that has reduced him to stupidity? to that rare aptitude to the exercises of the soul, that has rendered him without exercise and without soul? I was more angry, if possible, than compassionate, to see him at Ferrara ‡ in so pitiful a condition surviving himself, forgetting both himself and his works which, without his knowledge, though before his face, have been published, deformed and incorrect.

Would you have a man sound, would you have him regular, and in a steady and secure posture? muffle him up in the shades of stupidity and sloth. We must be made beasts to be made wise, and hoodwinked before we can govern ourselves. And if one shall tell me that the advantage of having a cold and blunted sense of pain and other evils, brings this disadvantage along with it, to render us, consequently, less eager and sensible also in the fruition of goods and pleasures; this is true: but the misery of our condition is such that we have not so much to enjoy as to avoid, and that the extremest pleasure does not affect us to the degree that a light grief does: "*segnius homines bona quam mala*

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* "Great wits to madness, sure, are near allied,
And thin partitions do their bounds divide."

† Tasso.

‡ In November, 1580.

sentiunt." * We are not so sensible of the most perfect health, as we are of the least sickness:

"Pungit
In cute vix summa violatum plagula corpus;
Quando valere nihil quemquam movet. Hoc juvat unum
Quod me non torquet latus, aut pes: cætera quisquam
Vix queat aut sanum sese, aut sentire valentem." †

Our well-being is nothing but the privation of ill-being: and this is the reason why that sect of philosophers which sets the greatest value upon pleasure, has fixed it chiefly in insensibility of pain. To be free from ill, is the greatest good that man can hope for, as Ennius says,

"Nimium boni est, cui nihil est mali;" ‡

for that very tickling and sting which are in certain pleasures, and that seem to raise us above simple health and insensibility; that active, moving, and, I know not how, itching and biting pleasure, even that very pleasure itself aims at nothing but insensibility as its mark. The lust, that carries us headlong to women's embraces, is directed to no other end but only to cure the torment of our ardent and furious desires, and only requires to be glutted and laid at rest and delivered from that fever; and so of the rest. I say then that, if simplicity conducts us to a state free from evil, it leads us to a very happy one, according to our condition. And yet we are not to imagine it so leaden an insensibility as to be totally without sense: for Crantor had very good reason to controvert the insensibility of Epicurus, if founded so deep that the very first attack and birth of evils were not to be perceived. "I do not approve such an insensibility as is neither possible nor to be desired; I am well content not to be sick; but, if I am, I would know that I am so; and if a caustic be applied or incisions made in any part, I would feel them." § In truth,

* "Men are less sensitive to pleasure than to pain."—LIVY, xxx. 21.

† "The body is vexed with a little sting that scarcely penetrates the skin, while the most perfect health is not perceived. This only pleases me, that neither side nor foot is plagued; except these, scarce any one can tell, whether he's in health or no."—LA BOETIE, *Poemata.*

‡ Ennius, ap. Cicero, De Finib., ii. 13.

§ Cicero, Tusc. Quæs., iii. 7.

whoever would take away the knowledge and sense of evil, would, at the same time, eradicate the sense of pleasure, and, in short, annihilate man himself: "*Istud nihil dolere, non sine magna mercede contingit immanitatis in animo, stuporis in corde.*" * Evil appertains to man in its turn; neither is pain always to be avoided, nor pleasure always pursued.

'Tis a great advantage to the honor of ignorance that knowledge itself throws us into its arms when she finds herself puzzled to fortify us against the weight of evils; she is constrained to come to this composition, to give us the reins, and permit us to fly into the lap of the other, and to shelter ourselves under her protection from the strokes and injuries of fortune. For what else is her meaning when she instructs us to divert our thoughts from the ills that press upon us, and entertain them with the meditation of pleasures past and gone; to comfort ourselves in present afflictions with the remembrance of fled delights, and to call to our succor a vanished satisfaction, to oppose it to what lies heavy upon us? "*Levationes ægritudinum in avocationea cogitand a molestia, et revocatione ad contemplandas voluptates ponit:*" † if it be not that where power fails her she will supply it with policy, and make use of a supple trip, when force of limbs will not serve the turn? For not only to a philosopher, but to any man in his right wits, when he has upon him the thirst of a burning fever, what satisfaction, can it be to remember the pleasure of drinking Greek wine? it would rather be to make matters worse:

"Che ricordarsi il ben doppia la noja," ‡

Of the same stamp is the other counsel that philosophy gives; only to remember past happiness and to forget the troubles we have undergone; § as if we had the science of

* "An insensibility, that is not to be purchased but at the price of the humanity of the soul and of stupidity in the body."—*Idem, ibid.*, vi.

† "The way to dissipate present grief is to recall to contemplation past pleasures."—CICERO, *Tusc. Quæs.*, iii. 15.

‡ "The remembrance of pleasure doubles the sense of present pain."

§ Cicero, Tusc. Quæs., iii. 15.

oblivion in our power: 'tis a counsel for which we are never a straw the better:

"Suavis laborum est præteritorum memoria." *

How? Is philosophy, that should arm me to contend with fortune, and steel my courage to trample all human adversities under foot arrived at this degree of cowardice, to make me hide my head and save myself by these pitiful and ridiculous shifts? for the memory represents to us not what we choose but what it pleases; nay, there is nothing that so much imprints anything in our memory as a desire to forget it: and 'tis a sure way to retain and keep anything safe in the soul, to solicit her to lose it. This is false: "*Est situm in nobis, ut et adversa quasi perpetua oblivione obruamus, et secunda jucunde et suaviter meminerimus;*" † and this is true, "*Memini etiam quæ nolo: oblivisci non possum quæ volo.*" ‡ And whose counsel is this? his, "*qui se unus sapientem profiteri sit ausus;*" §

"Qui genus humanum ingenio superavit, et omnes
Præstinxit, stellas exortus uti ætherius sol." ‖

To empty and disfurnish the memory, is not this the true and proper way to ignorance?

"Iners malorum remedium ignorantia est." ¶

We find several other like precepts whereby we are permitted to borrow from the vulgar frivolous appearances where reason in all her vivacity and vigor, cannot do the

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* "The memory of the past evils is sweet."—EURIPIDES, apud CICERO, *De Finib.*, ii. 32.

† "And it is in our power to bury, as it were, in a perpetual oblivion all adverse accidents, and to retain a pleasant and delightful memory of our successes."—CICERO, *De Finib.*, i. 17.

‡ "I also remember what I would not; but I cannot forget what I would."—CICERO. *De Finib.*, i. 32.

§ "Who alone durst profess himself a wise man (Epicurus)."—*Idem ibid.*, ii. 3.

‖ "Who all mankind surpassed in genius, effacing them as the rising sun puts out the stars."—LUCRETIUS, iii. 1056.

¶ "Ignorance is but a dull remedy for evils."—SENECA, *Œdip.*, act iii. 7.

feat, provided they administer satisfaction and comfort; where they cannot cure the wound, they are content to palliate and benumb it. I believe they will not deny me this, that if they could establish order and constancy in a state of life that could maintain itself in ease and pleasure by some debility of judgment, they would accept it:

> "Potare, et spargere flores
> Incipiam, patiarque vel inconsultus haberi." *

There would be a great many philosophers of Lycas' mind; this man being otherwise of very regular manners, living quietly and contentedly in his family, and not failing in any office of his duty, either toward his own people or strangers, and very carefully preserving himself from hurtful things, was nevertheless, by some distemper in his brain, possessed with a conceit that he was perpetually in the theater, viewing the several entertainments, and enjoying the amusements and the shows and the best comedies in the world: and being cured by the physicians of his frenzy, had much ado to forbear endeavoring by process of law to compel them to restore him again to his pleasing imaginations:

> "Pol! me occidistis, amici,
> Non servastis, ait; cui sic extorta voluptas,
> Et demptus per vim mentis gratissimus error:" †

with a madness like that of Thrasylaus, the son of Pythodorus, who had grown to believe that all the ships that weighed anchor from the port of Pyræus and that came into the haven, only made their voyages for his profit, congratulating himself on their happy navigation, and receiving them with the greatest joy. His brother Crito having caused him to be restored to his better understanding, he infinitely regretted that sort of condition wherein he had lived with so much delight and free from all anxiety.‡ 'Tis

* "I will drink and strew flowers, though the world should think me mad."—HORACE, *Ep.*, i. 5, 14.

† "By heaven! he said, you have killed me, my friends, and not saved me; my dear delights and pleasing error by my returning sense are taken from me."—HORACE, *Ep.* ii. 2, 138.

‡ Athenæus, book xii., Ælian, Var. Hist., iv. 25, where he is called Thrasyllus.

according to the old Greek verse, "that there is a great deal of convenience in not being over wise."

Ἐν τῷ φρονεῖν γὰρ μηδὲν, ἥδιστος βίος.*

And Ecclesiastes,† "In much wisdom is much grief; and he that increaseth knowledge increaseth sorrow."

Even that to which philosophy consents in general that last remedy which she applies to all sorts of necessities, to put an end to the life we are not able to endure. "*Placet? pare. Non placet? quacunque vis, exi. . . Pungit dolor, vel fodiatsane: si nudus es, da jugulum: sin tectus armis Vulcaniis, id est fortitudine, resiste;*" ‡ and these words so used in the Greek festivals, "*Aut bibat, aut abeat*" § that sound better upon the tongue of a Gascon, who naturally changes the b into v than upon that of Cicero:‖

> "Vivere si recte nescis, decede peritis.
> Lusisti satis, edisti satis, atque bibisti;
> Tempus abire tibi est, ne potum largius æquo
> Rideat, et pulset lasciva decentius ætas:"¶

what is it other than a confession of his impotency, and a retreating not only to ignorance, to be there in safety, but even to stupidity, insensibility, and nonentity?

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* Sophocles, Ajax, ver. 552.

† Chap. i. 18.

‡ "Does it please? bear it. Not please? go out, how thou wilt. Does grief prick thee? nay, if it stab thee too: if thou art weaponless, present thy throat: if covered with the arms of Vulcan, that is fortitude, resist it."—Adapted from SENECA, *Ep.*, 70, and CICERO, *Tusc. Quæs.*, ii. 14.

§ "Let him drink or go."—CICERO, *ubi supra*, v. 41.

‖ This remark upon the Gascon pronunciation, which chooses to alter b into v, is only to be applied to the word *bibat*, otherwise it would not be very properly intended here; because, if the b in the word *abeat* was changed into v, it would mar the construction which Montaigne would put, according to Cicero, upon this phrase, "Aut bibat, aut abeat."—COSTE.

¶ "If thou canst not live right, give place to those that can; thou hast eaten, drunk, amused thyself to thy content; 'tis time to make departure, lest being overdosed the young ones first laugh at thee, and then turn thee out."—HORACE, *Ep.* ii. 2, 213.

"Democritum postquam matura vetustas
Admonuit memorem, motus languescere mentis:
Sponte sua letho caput obvius obtulit ipse."*

'Tis what Antisthenes said, "That a man must either make provision of sense to understand, or of a halter to hang himself:" † and what Chrysippus alleged upon this saying of the poet Tyrtæus, "Or to arrive at virtue or at death:" ‡ and Crates said, "That love could be cured by hunger if not by time; and if a man disliked these two remedies, by a rope." § That Sextius of whom both Seneca and Plutarch ‖ speak with so high an encomium, having applied himself (all other things set aside) to the study of philosophy, resolved to throw himself into the sea, finding the progress of his studies too tedious and slow. He ran to find death since he could not overtake knowledge. These are the words of the law upon this subject: "If, peradventure some great inconvenience happen, for which there is no remedy, the haven is near and a man may save himself by swimming out of his body, as out of a leaky skiff; for 'tis the fear of dying, and not the love of life, that ties the fool to his body."

As life renders itself by simplicity more pleasant, so, also more innocent and better, as I was saying before. The simple and ignorant, says St. Paul, raise themselves up to heaven, and take possession of it; and we, with all our knowledge plunge ourselves into the infernal abyss. I am neither swayed by Valentinian, ¶ a professed enemy to all knowledge and literature; nor by Licinus, both Roman emperors, who called them the poison and pest of all politic government: nor by Mohammed; who, as I have heard interdicted all manner of learning to his followers; but the example of the great Lycurgus and his authority, with the reverence of the divine Lacedæmonian policy, so great, so admirable, and so long flourishing in virtue and happiness without any institution or practice of letters, ought certainly to be of very great weight. Such as return from

* "So soon as, through age, Democritus found a manifest decadence in his mind, he himself went to meet death."—LUCRETIUS, iii. 1052.

† Contradictions of the Stoic Philosophers, c. 14.

‡ Idem, ibid.

§ Diog. Laert., vi. 86.

‖ On Amendment in Virtue.

¶ Or rather Valens.

the new world discovered by the Spaniards in our father's days can testify to us how much more honestly and regularly those nations live, without magistrate and without laws, than ours do, where there are more officers and laws than there are other sorts of men, or than there are lawsuits:

> "Di cittatore piene, e di libelli,
> D'esamine, e di carte di procure,
> Hanno le mani et il seno, e gran fastelli
> Di chiose, di consigli, e di letture;
> Per cuile faculta de' poverelli
> Non sino mai nelle città sicure;
> Hanno dietro e pinanzi, e d'ambi i lati,
> Notai, procuratori, e avvocati." *

It was what a Roman senator said of the later ages, that their predecessors' breath stank of garlic, but their stomachs were perfumed with a good conscience; and that on the contrary, those of his time were all sweet odour without, but stank within of all sorts of vices;† that is to say, as I interpret it, that they abounded with learning and eloquence, but were very defective in moral honesty. Incivility, ignorance, simplicity, roughness, are the natural companions of innocence; curiosity, subtlety and knowledge bring malice in their train; humility, fear, obedience and affability, which are the principal things that support and maintain human society, require an empty and docile soul, and little presuming upon itself. Christians have a special knowledge how natural and original an evil curiosity is in man: the thirst of knowledge, and the desire to become more wise, was the first ruin of human kind, and the way by which it precipitated itself into eternal damnation. Pride is his ruin and corruption: 'tis pride that diverts

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* Ariosto, xiv. 84.

> "Her lap was full of writs and of citations,
> Of process of actions and arrest,
> Of bills, of answers, and of replications,
> In Courts of Delegates and of Requests,
> To grieve the simple with great vexations:
> She had resorting to her as her guests,
> Attending on her circuits and her journeys,
> Scriveners and clerks, and lawyers and attorneys."
>
> Sir John Harrington's translation.

† Varro, cited by Nonius Marcellus, *in verbo* Cepe.

him from the common path, and makes him embrace novelties, and rather choose to be head of a troop, lost and wandering in the path of perdition, to be tutor and teacher of error and lies, than to be a disciple in the school of truth, suffering himself to be led and guided by the hand of another, in the right and beaten road. 'Tis, peradventure, the meaning of this old Greek saying; *Ἡ δεισιδαιμονία καθάπερ πατρὶ τῷ τύφῳ πείθεται.** Oh presumption, how much dost thou hinder us!

After that Socrates was told that the god of wisdom had attributed to him the title of sage, he was astonished at it,† and searching and examining himself throughout, could find no foundation for this divine decree: he knew others as just, temperate, valiant, and learned as himself, and more eloquent, handsome, and more profitable to their country than he. At last, he concluded that he was not distinguished from others nor wise but only because he did not think himself so, and that his god considered the self-opinion of knowledge and wisdom as a singular stupidity of man; and that his best doctrine was the doctrine of ignorance, and simplicity his best wisdom. The sacred word declares those miserable who have an opinion of themselves: "Dust and ashes," says it to such, "what hast thou wherein to glorify thyself?" And in another place, "God has made man like unto a shadow," of which who can judge, when by the removing of the light it shall be vanished? It is nothing but of us.

Our strength is so far from being able to comprehend the divine height, that of the works of our Creator those best bear his mark and are best His, which we the least understand. To meet with an incredible thing, is an occasion with Christians to believe.‡ It is all the more reason that it is against human reason; if it were according to reason, it would no longer be a miracle; if it had an example, it would be no longer a singular thing. "*Melius scitur Deus nesciendo,*" § says St. Augustine; and Tacitus,

* "That superstition follows pride and obeys it as if it were a father."

† Plato, Apology of Socrates.

‡ "Credo quia impossibile."—ST. AUGUSTIN.

§ "God is better known by not knowing."—AUGUSTINE, *De Ordine*, ii. 16.

"*Sanctius est ac reverentius de actis Deorum credere quam scire;*" * and Plato thinks there is something of impiety in inquiring too curiously into God, the world, and the first causes of things: "*atque illum quidem parentem hujus universitatis invenire, difficile; et quam jam inveneris, indicare in vulgus, nefas,*" † says Cicero. We pronounce, indeed, power, truth, justice, which are words that signify some great thing; but that thing we neither see nor conceive. We say that God fears, that God is angry, that God loves:

"Immortalia mortali sermone notantes:" ‡

which are all agitations and emotions that cannot be in God, according to our form, nor can we imagine it, according to His. It only belongs to God to know Himself, and to interpret His own works; and He does it in our language, to stoop and descend to us who grovel upon the earth. How can prudence, which is the choice between good and evil, be properly attributed to Him, whom no evil can touch? How the reason and intelligence, which we make use of, so as by obscure to arrive at apparent things, seeing that nothing is obscure to Him? and justice, which distributes to every one what appertains to him, a thing created by the society and community of men: how is that in God? how temperance? how the moderation of corporal pleasures, that have no place in the divinity? Fortitude to support pain, labor, and dangers, as little appertains to Him as the rest, these three things having no access to Him: § for which reason Aristotle holds him ‖ equally exempt from virtue and vice: "*neque gratia neque ira teneri potest; quod quæ talia essent, imbecilla essent omnia.*" ¶

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* "It is more holy and reverend to believe the works of God, than to know them."—TACITUS, *De Mor. Germ.*, c. 34.

† "To find out the parent of the world is very hard: and when found out, to reveal him to the vulgar, is sin."—CICERO, translation from the *Timæus.*

‡ "Giving to things immortal mortal names."—LUCRETIUS, v. 122.

§ All this is taken from Cicero, De Natura Deor., iii. 15.

‖ Moral ad Nicom., vii. 1.

¶ "He can be affected neither with favor nor indignation because both those are the effects of frailty."—CICERO, *De Natura Deor.*

The participation we have in the knowledge of truth, such as it is, is not acquired by our own force: God has sufficiently given us to understand that by the testimony He has chosen out of the common people, simple and ignorant men, whom he has been pleased to employ to instruct us in His admirable secrets. Our faith is not of our own acquiring, 'tis purely the gift of another's bounty; 'tis not by meditation or by virtue of our own understanding that we have acquired our religion, but by foreign authority and command; the weakness of our judgment more assists us than force, and our blindness more than our clearness of sight; 'tis rather by the mediation of our ignoorance than of our knowledge that we know anything of of the divine Wisdom. 'Tis no wonder if our natural and earthly means cannot conceive that supernatural and heavenly knowledge: let us bring nothing of our own, but obedience and subjection; for, as it is written, "I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent. Where is the wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the disputer of this world? Hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? For after that in the wisdom of God, the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe." *

Should I examine, finally, whether it be in the power of man to find out that which he seeks, and if that quest wherein he has busied himself so many ages has enriched him with any new force or any solid truth: I believe he will confess, if he speaks from his conscience, that all he has got by so long an inquisition is only to have learned to know his own weakness. We have only by long study confirmed and verified the natural ignorance we were in before. The same has fallen out to men truly wise which befall ears of corn; they shoot and raise their heads high and pert, while empty; but when full and swollen with grain in maturity, began to flag and droop; so, men having tried and sounded all things, and having found in that accumulation of knowledge and provision of so many various things, nothing massive and firm, nothing but vanity, have quitted their presumption and acknowledged their natural condition. 'Tis what Velleius reproaches Cotta with,

* 1 Corinthians i. 19, 20, 21.

and Cicero, that what they had learned of Philo, was that they had learned nothing.* Pherecydes, one of the seven sages, writing to Thales upon his deathbed: "I have," said he, "given order to my people, after my interment to carry my writings to thee. If they please thee and the other sages, publish them; if not, suppress them. They contain no certainty with which I myself am satisfied. I pretend not to know the truth or to attain unto it; I rather open than discover things.† The wisest man that ever was,‡ being asked what he knew, made answer, he knew this, that he knew nothing. But which he verified what has been said, that the greatest part of what we know is the least of what we do not know, that is to say, that even what we think we know, is but a piece, and a very little one, of our ignorance. We know things in dreams, says Plato, and are ignorant of them in reality. "*Omnes pene veteres, nihil cognosci, nihil percipi, nihil sciri posse dixerunt: angustos sensus, imbecilles animos, brevia curricula vitæ.*"§ And of Cicero himself, who stood indebted to his learning for all he was, Valerius says,‖ that in his old age he began to disrelish letters, and when most occupied with them, it was in independence of any party: following what he thought probable, now in one sect and then in another, evermore wavering under the doubts of the Academy: "*Dicendum est, sed ita, ut nihil affirmem, quæram omnia, dubitans plerumque, et mihi diffidens.*" ¶

I should have too fine a game should I consider man in his common way of living and in gross: and yet I might do it by his own rule, who judges truth, not by the weight but by the number of votes. Let us leave the people alone,

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* Cicero, De Natura Deor., i. 17.

† Diogenes Laertius, i. 22. ‡ Socrates.

§ "Almost all the ancients have declared, that there is nothing can be known, nothing can be understood; the senses are too weak; men's minds too weak, and the course of life too short."—CICERO, *Acad.*, i. 12.

‖ Valerius Maximus.

¶ "I am to speak, but so as to affirm nothing: I shall inquire into all things, but for the most part in doubt, and distrustful of myself." —CICERO, *De Divin.*, ii. 3.

"Qui vigilans stertit,
Mortua cui vita est prope jam, vivo atque videnti;" *

who neither feel nor judge themselves, and let most of their natural faculties lie idle. I will take man in his highest state. Let us consider him in that small number of men, excellent and culled out from the rest, who having been endowed with a grand and special natural force, have, moreover, hardened and whetted it by care, study, and art, and raised it to the highest pitch of wisdom to which it can possibly arrive. They have adjusted their souls in all senses and all biases; have propped and supported them with all foreign helps proper for them, and enriched and adorned them with all they could borrow for their advantage, both within and without the world: these are they in whom is placed the supremest height to which human nature can attain. They have regulated the world with polities and laws; they have instructed it with arts and sciences, and further instructed it by the example of their admirable conduct. I shall make account of none but such men as these, their testimony and experience; let us examine how far they have proceeded, and on what they reposed their surest hold; the maladies and defects that we shall find among these men, the rest of the world may very boldly also declare to be their own.

Whoever goes in search of anything, must come to this, either to say that he has found it, or that it is not to be found, or that he is yet upon the quest. All philosophy is divided into these three kinds: her design is to seek out truth, knowledge, and certainty. The Peripatetics, Epicureans, Stoics, and others, have thought they had found it: these have established the sciences that we have, and have treated of them as of certainties. Clitomachus, Carneades, and the Academics, have despaired in their quest, and concluded that truth could not be conceived by our capacity; the result with these is all weakness and human ignorance; this sect has had the most and most noble followers. Pyrrho and other skeptics or epichists, whose dogmas were held by many of the ancients to have been taken from Homer, the seven sages, Archilocus, Euripides, Zeno, Democritus, and Xenophanes, say, that they are

* "Who waking snore; whose life is little better than death; though living and awake."—LUCRETIUS, iii. 1061, 1059.

yet upon the search of truth: these conclude that the others who think they have found it out are infinitely deceived; and that it is too daring a vanity in the second sort to determine that human reason is not able to attain unto it; for to establish the standard of our power, to know and judge the difficulty of things, is a great and extreme knowledge, of which they doubt whether man is capable:

> "Nil sciri si quis putat, id quoque nescit
> An sciri possit quo se nil scire fatetur." *

The ignorance that knows itself, judges, and condemns itself, is not an absolute ignorance; to be this, it must be ignorant of itself; so that the profession of the Pyrrhonians is to waver, doubt, and inquire, not to make themselves sure of or responsible to themselves for anything. Of the three actions of the soul, the imaginative, the appetitive, and the consenting, they receive the two first; the last they hold ambiguous, without inclination or approbation, one way or the other, however slight. Zeno represented by motion his imagination of these divisions of the faculties of the soul: an open and expanded hand signified Appearance; a hand half shut and the fingers a little bent, Consent; a clutched fist, Comprehension; when with the left hand he yet pressed the fist closer, Knowledge. † Now this situation of their judgment, upright and inflexible, receiving all objects without application or consent, led them to their Ataraxy, which is a condition of life, peaceable, temperate, and exempt from the agitations we receive by the impression of the opinion and knowledge that we think we have of things; from which spring fear, avarice, envy, immoderate desires, ambition, pride, superstition, love of novelty, rebellion, disobedience, obstinacy, and the greatest part of bodily ills; nay, by this they exempt themselves from the jealousy of their discipline; for they debate after a very gentle manner; they fear no rejoinder in their disputes; when they affirm that heavy things descend, they would be sorry to be believed, and love to be contradicted, to engender

* "He that says nothing can be known, does not know whether anything can be known, when he confesses that he knows nothing."—LUCRETIUS, iv. 470.

† Cicero, Acad., ii. 47.

doubt and suspense of judgment, which is their end. They only put out their propositions to contend with those they think we have in our belief. If you take their arguments, they will as readily maintain the contrary; 'tis all one to them; they have no choice. If you maintain that snow is black, they will argue, on the contrary, that it is white; if you say it is neither the one nor the other, they will maintain that 'tis both. If you hold, as of certain judgment, that you know nothing of it they will maintain that you do: yes, and if, by an affirmative axiom, you assure them that you doubt, they will argue against you that you doubt not, or that you cannot judge and determine that you doubt. And by this extremity of doubt, which jostles itself, they separate and divide themselves from many opinions, even of those that have several ways maintained doubt and ignorance. Why shall not they be allowed, say they, as well as the dogmatists, one to say green, another yellow; why may not they also doubt? Can anything be proposed to us to grant or deny which it shall not be permitted to consider as ambiguous? And where others are carried away, either by the custom of their country or by the instruction of parents, or by accident, as by a tempest, without judging and without choice, nay, and for the most part before the age of discretion, to such or such an opinion, to the sect of the Stoics or Epicureans, to which they are enslaved and fast bound, as to a thing they cannot shake off, "*ad quamcum que disciplinam, velut tempestate, delati, ad eam, tanquam ad saxum, adhærescunt;*"* why shall not these likewise be permitted to maintain their liberty and to consider things without obligation or slavery? "*Hoc liberiores et solutiores, quod integra illis est judicandi potestas.*"† Is it not of some advantage to be disengaged from the necessity that curbs others? is it not better to remain in suspense than to entangle one's self in the innumerable errors that human fancy has produced? is it not much better to suspend one's persuasion than to intermeddle with these wrangling and seditious divisions? What shall

* "To whatever discipline they are carried, as by a tempest, they cleave to it as to a rock."—CICERO, *Acad.*, ii. 3.

† "In this more unconstrained and free, because they have the greater power of judging."—*Idem. ibid.*

I choose? "What you please, provided you do choose."* A very foolish, but one, nevertheless, to which all the dogmatists seem to point; by which we are not permitted to be ignorant of that of which we are ignorant. Take the most eminent side, that of the greatest reputation; it will never be so sure, that to defend it you will not be forced to attack and contend with a hundred and a hundred adversaries; is it not better to keep out of this hurly-burly? You are permitted to embrace, with as much zeal as honor and life, Aristotle's opinion of the immortality of the soul, and to give the lie to Plato thereupon, and shall they be interdicted from doubting it? If it be lawful for Panætius to maintain his opinion about augury, dreams, oracles, vaticinations, of which things the Stoics make no doubt at all, why may not a wise man dare to do the same in all things which this man dared to do in those he had learned of his masters, and established by the common consent of the school whereof he is a professor and a member? If it be a child that judges, he knows not what it is: if a sage, he is prepossessed. They have reserved for themselves a marvelous advantage in battle, having eased themselves of the care of defense; if you strike them, 'tis no matter, provided they strike too; and they make everything serve their purpose; if they overcome, your argument is lame; if you, theirs: if they fail, they verify ignorance; if you fail, you do it: if they prove that nothing is known, it is well; if they cannot prove it 'tis equally well: "*Ut quum in eadem re paria contrariis in partibus momenta inveniuntur, facilius abutra que parte assertio sustineatur:*" † and they pretend to find out with much greater facility why a thing is false than why 'tis true; that which is not, than that which is; and what they do not believe, than what they do. Their way of speaking is, "I affirm nothing; it is no more so than so, or than either one nor t'other; I understand it not. Appearances are everywhere equal: the law of speaking *pro* or *con.*, is the same: nothing seems true that may not seem false." Their sacramental word is ἐπέχω, that is to say "I hold on, I do not budge."

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* Idem, ibid., ii. 43.

† "So that, when equal reasons happen *pro* and *con.* in the same matter, the judgment may, on both sides, be more easily suspended." —CICERO, *Acad.*, i. 12.

This is the burden of their song, and others of like stuff. The effect of it is a pure, entire, perfect, and absolute suspension of the judgment: they make use of their reason to inquire and debate, but not to fix and determine. Whoever shall imagine a perpetual confession of ignorance, a judgment without bias or inclination, upon any occasion whatever, conceives a true idea of Pyrrhonism. I express this fancy as well as I can, by reason that many find it hard to conceive; and the authors themselves represent it somewhat variously and obscurely.

As to what concerns the actions of life, they are in this of the common fashion; they yield and lend themselves to the natural inclinations, to the power and impulse of passions, to the constitutions of laws and customs, and to the tradition of arts: "*Non enim nos Deus ista scire, sed tantummodo uti, voluit.*"* They suffer their ordinary actions to be guided by these things without any dispute or judgment; for which reason, I cannot well reconcile with this argument what is said of Pyrrho; they represent him stupid and immovable, leading a kind of savage and unsociable life, getting in the way of the jostle of carts, going upon the edge of precipices, and refusing to accommodate himself to the laws. This is to exaggerate his discipline; he would never make himself a stock or a stone, he would show himself a living man, discoursing, reasoning, enjoying all natural conveniences and pleasures, employing and making use of all his corporal and spiritual faculties, in rule and reason; the fantastic, imaginary and false privileges that man has usurped of lording it, of ordaining and establishing, he utterly quitted and renounced. There is no sect but is constrained to permit its sage to follow many things not comprehended, perceived, or consented to in its rules, if he means to live: and if he goes to sea he follows that design, not knowing whether it will be successful to him or no, and relies upon the tightness of the vessel, the experience of the pilot, the fitness of the season; probable circumstances only, according to which he is bound to go, and suffer himself to be governed by appearances, provided there be no express and manifest contrariety in them. He has a body, he has a soul; the senses push him, the mind

* "For God would not have us know, but only use those things." CICERO, *Divin.*, i. 78.

spurs him on; and although he do not find in himself this proper and singular mark of judging, nor perceive that he ought not to engage his consent, considering that there may be some false, equal to these true appearances, yet does he not for all that fail of carrying on the offices of his life fully, freely and conveniently. How many arts are there that profess to consist more in conjecture than in knowledge, that decide not upon true and false, and only follow that which seems true? There is, say they, true and false, and we have in us wherewith to seek it, but not to fix it when we touch it. We are much more prudent in letting ourselves be carried away by the swing of the world without inquisition; a soul clear from prejudice has a marvelous advance toward tranquillity and repose. Men who judge and control their judges never duly submit to them.

How much more docile and easy to be governed, both in the laws of religion and civil polity, are simple and incurious minds, than those over-vigilant and pedagoguish wits that will still be prating of divine and human causes? There is nothing in human invention that carries so great a show of likelihood and utility as this; this presents man, naked and empty, confessing his natural weakness, fit to receive some foreign force from above; unfurnished of human, and therefore more apt to receive divine knowledge; setting aside his own judgment to make more room for faith; not misbelieving, nor establishing any doctrine against the laws and common observances; humble, obedient, disciplinable, studious, a sworn enemy of heresy, and consequently freeing himself from vain and irreligious opinions introduced by false sects; 'tis a blank paper prepared to receive from the finger of God such forms as He shall please to write upon it. The more we resign and commit ourselves to God, and the more we renounce ourselves, of the greater value are we. Take in good part, says Ecclesiastes, the things that present themselves to thee, as they seem and taste from hand to mouth: the rest is out of thy knowledge. "*Dominus novit cogitationes hominum, quoniam vanæ sunt.*" *

Thus we see that, of the three general sects of philosphy, two make open profession of doubt and ignorance; and in that of the Dogmatists, which is the third, it is easy to

* "The Lord knoweth the thoughts of men, that they are but vanity.—*Psalm* xciv. 11.

discover that the greatest part of them only assume a face of assurance that they may have the better air: they have not so much thought to establish any certainty for us, as to show us how far they have proceeded in their search of truth, "*Quam docti fingunt magis quam norunt.*"* Timæus, having to instruct Socrates in what he knew of the gods, the world and men, proposes to speak to him as a man to a man, and that it is sufficient if his reasons are as probable as those of another: for that exact reasons were neither in his nor in any other mortal hand. Which one of his followers has thus imitated: "*Ut potoro, explicabo; nec tamen ut Pythius Apollo, certa ut sint et fixa, quæ dixero; sed ut homunculus, probabilia conjoctura sequens;*"† and this upon the natural and common subject of the contempt of death: he has elsewhere translated from the very words of Plato: "*Si forte, deorum natura ortuque mundi disserentes, minus id, quod habemus in animo, consequimur, haud erit mirum; æquum est enim meninisse, et me, qui disseram, hominem, esse, et vos, qui judicetis; ut, si probabilia dicentur, nihil ultra requiratis.*"‡ Aristotle ordinarily heaps up a great number of other opinions and beliefs, to compare them with his own, and to let us see how much he has gone beyond them, and how much nearer he approaches to probability: for truth is not to be judged by the authority and testimony of others; which made Epicurus religiously avoid quoting them in his writings. This is the prince of all dogmatists, and yet we are told by him that much knowledge administers to many occasion of doubting the more;§ we see him sometimes purposely so shroud and

* "Which the learned rather feign than know."

† "I will, as well as I am able, explain; yet not as Pythius Apollo, that what I say should be fixed and certain, but like an ordinary man that follows probabilities by conjecture."—CICERO, *Tusc. Quæs.*, lib. i. 9.

‡ "If perchance, when we discourse of the nature of gods, and the world's original, we cannot do it as the desire, it will be no great wonder. For it is just you should remember that both I who speak, and you who are to judge, are men; so that if probable things are delivered, you should require and expect no more."—CICERO, ex. *Timæo*, c. 3

§ "Qui plura novit, eum majora sequuntur dubia." This thought does not belong to Aristotle; it is attributed to Æneas Silvius, who became Pope as Pius II.—NAIGEON.

muffle up himself in thick and inextricable obscurity, that we know not what use to make of his advice; it is, in fact, a Pyrrhonism under a resolutive form. Hear Cicero's protestation, who expounds to us another's fancy by his own: "*Qui requirunt, quid de quaque re ipsi sentiamus, curiosiu sid faciunt, quam necesse est. Hæc in philosphia ratio contra omnia disserendi, nullamque rem aperte judicandi, profecta a Socrates, repetita ab Arcesilao, confirmata à Carneade, usque ad nostram viget ætatem. Hi simus, qui omnibus veris falsa quædam ad juncta esse dicamus, tanta similitudine, ut in iis nulla insit certe judicandi et assentiendi nota.*"* Why has not Aristotle only but most of the philosphers, affected difficulty, if not to emphasize the vanity of the subject, and amuse the curiosity of our mind, by giving it this bare hollow bone to pick. Clitomachus affirmed that he could never discover, by Carneade's writings, what opinion he was of.† This was what made Epicurus affect to be abstruse, and that procured Heraclitus to be surnamed σκοτεινος.‡ Difficulty is a coin the learned make use of like jugglers, to conceal the inanity of their art, and which human sottishness easily takes for current pay:

> "Clarus, ob obscuram linguam, magis inter inanes . . .
> Omnia enim stolidi magis admirantur, amantque,
> Inversis quæ sub verbis latitantia cernunt." §

Cicero ‖ reprehends some of his friends for giving more of their time to the study of astrology, law, logic, and geometry, than they were worth, saying that they were by these

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* "They who desire to know what we think of everything, are more inquisitive than is necessary. This practice in philosophy, of disputing against everything, and of absolutely concluding nothing, begun by Socrates, repeated by Arcesilaus, and confirmed by Carneades, has continued in use even to our own times. We are of those who declare that there is so great a mixture of things false amongst all that are true, and they so resemble one another, that there can be in them no certain mark to direct us, either to judge or assent."—CICERO, *De Nat. Deor.*, i. 5.

† Cicero, Acad., ii. 45.

‡ Obscure.

§ "He got a great name, among the weak-witted, especially by reason of the obscurity of his language: for fools admire and love rather such things as are wrapped in dubious phrase."—LUCRETIUS, i. 640.

‖ De Offic., i. 6.

diverted from the duties of life, more profitable and more worthy studies; the Cyrenaic philosophers * equally despised natural philosophy and logic. Zeno, in the very beginning of the books of the commonwealth, declared all the liberal arts of no use.† Chrysippus said that what Plato and Aristotle had written concerning logic, they had only done in sport and by way of exercise, and could not believe that they spoke in earnest of so vain a thing; Plutarch says the same of metaphysics; and Epicurus would have said as much of rhetoric, grammar, poesy, mathematics, and, natural philosophy excepted, of all the sciences, and Socrates of them all, excepting that of manners and of life; whatever any one required to be instructed in by him, he would ever, in the first place, demand an account of the conditions of his life present and past, which he examined and judged, esteeming all other learning subordinate and supernumerary to that, "*Parum mihi placeant eæ literæ quæ ad virtutem doctoribus nihil profuerunt.*" ‡ Most of the arts have been, in like manner, decried by the same knowledge; but these men did not consider that it was from the purpose to exercise their wits in those very matters wherein there was no solid advantage.

As to the rest, some have looked upon Plato as a dogmatist, others as a doubter; others, in some things the one, and in other things the other. Socrates, the conductor of his dialogisms, is eternally upon questions and stirring up disputes, never determining, never satisfying; and professes to have no other science but that of opposing himself. Homer, their author, has equally laid the foundations of all the sects of philosophy, to show how indifferent it was which way we should choose. 'Tis said that ten several sects sprung from Plato; and, in my opinion, never did any instruction halt and waver, if his does not.

Socrates said that wise women, § in taking upon them the trade of helping others to bring forth, left the trade of bringing forth themselves; and that he by the title of a sage

* Diogenes Laertius, ii. 92.

† Idem, ibid., vii. 32.

‡ "That learning is in small repute with me, which nothing helped the teachers themselves to virtue."—SALLUST, *De Bello Jug.*, c. 85.

§ Midwives, called wise women in French: *Sages femmes.*

man, which the gods had conferred upon him, was disabled, in his virile and mental love, of the faculty of bringing forth; contenting himself to help and assist those who could, to open their nature, anoint the passes, facilitate the birth, judge of the infant, baptize it, nourish it, fortify it, swathe it, circumcise it; exercising and employing his understanding in the perils and fortunes of others.

It is so with the most part of this third sort of authors, as the ancients have observed in the writings of Anaxagoras, Democritus, Parmenides, Xenophanes, and others: they have a way of writing doubtful in substance and design, rather inquiring than teaching, though they mix their style with some dogmatical periods. Is not the same thing seen in Seneca and Plutarch? how many contradictions are there to be found in these, if a man pry narrowly into them? The reconcilers of the jurisconsults ought first to reconcile them, each for himself. Plato seems to have affected this method of philosophizing in dialogues, to the end that he might with greater decency from several mouths deliver the diversity and variety of his own fancies. To treat variously of things is to treat of them as well as conformably, and better, that is to say, more copiously and with greater profit. Let us take example from ourselves; judicial judgments are the highest points of dogmatical and determinative speaking: and yet those which our parliaments present to the people, the most exemplary, and most proper to nourish in them the reverence due to that dignity, principally through the sufficiency of the persons exercising it, derive their beauty, not so much from the conclusion, which with them is of daily occurrence and common to every judge, as from the dispute and heat of diverse and contrary arguments that questions of law permit. And the largest field for reprehension that some philosophers have against others is drawn from the diversities and contradictions wherewith every one of them finds himself perplexed; either on purpose, to show the vacillation of human wit concerning everything; or ignorantly compelled by the volubility and incomprehensibility of all matter; which is the meaning of this phrase; in a slippery and sliding place let us suspend our belief; for, as Euripides says:

"The works of God in various ways perplex us:" *

* Plutarch, on Miracles which have ceased.

like that which Empedocles, as if rapt with a divine fury and compelled by truth, often strewed here and there in his writings. "No, no; we feel nothing, we see nothing; all things are concealed from us; there is not one thing of which we can positively says it is;" * according to the divine saying: "*Cogitationes mortalium timidæ, et incertæ adinventiones nostræ, et providentiæ.*" † It is not to be thought strange if men, despairing to overtake what they hunt after, have not yet lost the pleasure of the chase, study being of itself an employment pleasant, and so pleasant that among the pleasures the Stoics forbid that also which proceeds from the exercise of the intellect, will have it curbed, and find a kind of intemperance in thirsting too much after knowledge.

Democritus‡ having eaten figs at his table that tasted of honey, fell presently to consider within himself whence they should derive this unusual sweetness; and to be satisfied in it, was about to rise from the table to see the place whence the figs had been gathered; which his maid observing, and having understood the cause, she smilingly told him that he need not trouble himself about that, for she had put them into a vessel in which there had been honey. He was vexed that she had thus deprived him of the occasion of this inquisition and robbed his curiosity of matter to work upon. "Go thy way," said he, "thou hast done me wrong; but for all that I will seek out the cause, as if it were natural;" and would willingly have found out some true reason for a false and imaginary effect. This story of a famous and great philosopher very clearly represents to us the studious passion, that puts us upon the pursuit of things of the acquisition of which we despair. Plutarch gives a like example of one who would not be satisfied in that whereof he was in doubt, that he might not lose the pleasure of inquiring into it; like the other, who would not that his physician should allay the thirst of his fever that he might not lose the pleasure of

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* Cicero, Acad., ii. 5. Sextus Empiricus, Adver. Mathem.

† "For the thoughts of mortal men are timid; and our devices are but uncertain."—*Wisdom*, c. 9, ver. 14.

‡ Plutarch Table Talk, qui.10. lib. i., where, however, Democritus is described as eating, not figs, but cucumbers.—COSTE.

quenching it by drinking. "*Satius est supervacna dis cere, quam nihil.*"* As in all sorts of feeding, there is often only the mere pleasure of eating, and that what we take, which is acceptable to the palate, is not always nourishing or wholesome; so that which our understandings extract from learning does not cease to be pleasant, though there be nothing in it either nutritive or healthful. Thus say they; the consideration of nature is a diet proper for our minds; it raises and elevates us, makes us disdain low and terrestrial things, by comparing them with those that are celestial and high: even the inquisition of great and occult things is very pleasant, even to those who acquire no other benefit than the reverence and fear of judging it. This is what they profess.† The vain image of this sickly curiosity is yet more manifest in this other example that they so often urge; Eudoxus ‡ wished and begged of the gods, that he might once see the sun near at hand, to comprehend its form, greatness, and beauty, though on the condition that he should thereby be immediately burned. He would, at the price of his life, purchase a knowledge of which the use and possession should at the same time be taken from him; and for this sudden and vanished knowledge, lose all the other knowledges he had in the present, or might afterward acquire.

I cannot easily persuade myself that Epicurus, Plato, and Pythagoras have given us their Atoms, Ideas, and Numbers for current pay: they were too wise to establish their articles of faith upon things so disputable and so uncertain. But, in the then obscurity and ignorance of the world, each of these great personages endeavored to present some kind or other of image of light; and worked their brains for inventions that might, at all events, have a pleasant and subtle appearance, provided that, false as they were, they might make good their ground against those that would oppose them: "*Unicuique ista pro ingenio finguntur, non ex scientiæ ai.*" §

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* "Tis better to learn more than is necessary than nothing at all."—SENECA, *Ep.* 88.

† Cicero, Acad. ii. 41.

‡ Diogenes Laertius, *in vita.*

§ "These things every one fancies according to his wit, and not by any power of knowledge."—SENECA, *Suasor.*, 4.

One of the ancients, who was reproached that he professed philosophy, of which he nevertheless, in his own judgment, made no great account, answered that this was truly to philosophize. They would consider all, balance everything, and found this an employment well suited to our natural curiosity; some things they have written for the benefit of public society, as their religions, and, for that consideration, it was but reasonable that they should not examine public opinions too closely, that they might not disturb the common obedience to the laws and customs of their country.

Plato treats of this mystery with a raillery manifest enough; for where he writes as for himself, he gives no certain rule; when he plays the legislator, he borrows a magisterial and positive style, and boldly there foists in his most fantastic inventions as fit to persuade the vulgar as ridiculous to be believed by himself, knowing very well how fit we are to receive all sorts of impressions, especially the most immoderate and violent: and therefore in his laws he takes singular care that nothing be sung in public but poetry, of which the fabulous relations tend to some useful end; it being so easy to imprint all sorts of phantoms in the human mind, that it were injustice not to feed them rather with profitable untruths than with untruths that are unprofitable or hurtful. He says very plainly in his Republic,* "that it is very often necessary for the profit of men to deceive them." It is very easy to distinguish that some of the sects have more followed truth; and others utility, by which the last have gained their reputation. 'Tis the misery of our condition, that often that which presents itself to our imagination for the most true does not also appear the most useful to life; the boldest sects, as the Epicurean, Pyrrhonian, the new Academic, are yet, after all is said and done, constrained to submit to the civil law.

Other subjects there are that they have tumbled and tossed, some to the right and others to the left, every one endeavoring, right or wrong, to give them some kind of color; for having found nothing so abstruse that they would not venture to touch it, they are often forced to forge weak and ridiculous conjectures, not that they them-

* Book V.

selves look upon them as any foundation, nor as establishing any certain truth, but merely for exercise: "*Non tam id sensisse quod dicerent, quam exercere ingenia materiæ difficultate videntur voluisse.*"* And if we did not take it thus, how should we palliate so great inconstancy, variety, and vanity of opinions as we see have been produced by those excellent and admirable souls? as, for example, what can be more vain than to imagine to dominate God by our analogies and conjectures? to regulate Him and the world by our capacities and our laws? and to make use, at the expense of the Divinity, of that small portion of knowledge He has been pleased to impart to our natural condition? and, because we cannot extend our sight to His glorious throne, to have brought Him down to our corruption and our miseries?

Of all human and ancient opinions concerning religion, that seems to me the most likely and most excusable that recognized in God and incomprehensible power, the original and preserver of all things, all goodness, all perfection, receiving and taking in good part the honor and reverence that man paid unto Him, under what method, name, or ceremonies soever:

> "Jupiter omnipotens, rerum, regumque deumque
> Progenitor, genitrixque."†

This zeal has universally been looked upon from heaven with a gracious eye. All governments have reaped fruit from their devotion: impious men and actions have everywhere had suitable result. Pagan histories recognize dignity, order, justice, prodigies and oracles, employed for their profit and instruction, in their fabulous religions: God, peradventure, through his mercy, vouchsafing by these temporal benefits, to cherish the tender principles of a kind of brutish knowledge that natural reason gave them of Him amid the deceiving images of their dreams. Not only deceiving and false, but impious also, and injurious, are those that man has forged from his own invention;

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* "Not so much that they themselves believed what they said, as that they seemed to have had a mind to exercise their wits in the difficulty of the matter."—*Auct. Incert.*

† "All powerful Jove, father and mother of the world, of kings and gods."—VALERIUS, SORANUS, apud St. Augustine, *De civit Dei* vii. 9.

and of all the religions that St. Paul found in repute at Athens, that which they had dedicated to THE UNKNOWN GOD seemed to him the most to be excused. *

Pythagoras shadowed the truth a little more closely, judging that the knowledge of this first Cause and Being of beings ought to be indefinite, without prescription, without declaration; that it was nothing else than the extreme effort of our imagination toward perfection, every one amplifying the idea according to his capacity. But if Numa attempted to conform the devotion of his people to this project, to attach them to a religion purely mental, without any prefixed object and material mixture, he undertook a thing of no use; the human mind could never support itself floating in such an infinity of inform thoughts; it requires some certain image thereof to be presented according to its own model. The Divine Majesty had thus, in some sort, suffered Himself to be circumscribed in corporal limits for our advantage; His supernatural and celestial sacraments have signs of our earthly condition; His adoration is by sensible offices and words, for 'tis man that believes and prays. I omit the other arguments upon this subject: but a man would have much ado to make me believe that the sight of our crucifixes, that the picture of our Saviour's piteous passion, that the ornaments and ceremonious motions of our churches, that the voices accommodated to the devotion of our thoughts, and that emotion of the senses, do not warm the souls of the people with a religious passion of very advantageous effect.

Of those,† to whom they have given a body, as necessity required in that universal blindness, I should, I fancy, most incline to those who adored the sun,

"La lumière commune,
L'œil du monde; et si Dieu au chef porte des yeulx,
Les rayons du soleil sont ses yeulx radieux,
Qui donnent vie a touts, nous maintiennent et gardent,
Et les faicts des humains en ce monde regardent:
Ce beau, ce grand soleil, qui nous faict les saisons,
Selon qu'il entre ou sort de ses douze maisons;
Qui remplit l'univers de ses vertus cogneuës;
Qui d'un traict de ses yeulx nous dissipe les nuës.
L'esprit, l'ame du monde, ardent et flamboyant;

* Acts xvii. 23.

† *i. e.* Divinities.

En la course d'un jour tout le ciel tournoyant;
Plein d'immense grandeur, rond, vagabond, et ferme;
Lequel tient dessoubs luy tout le monde pour terme:
En repos, sans repos; oysif, et sans sejour;
Fils aisné de nature, et le pere du jour:" †

forasmuch as besides this grandeur and beauty of his, 'tis the piece of this machine that we discover at the remotest distance from us, and, by that means, so little known that they were pardonable for entering into so great admiration and reverence of it.

Thales,† who first inquired into this matter, believed God to be a spirit, that made all things of water: Anaximander, that the gods were always dying and re-entering into life at divers seasons, and that there were an infinite number of worlds: Anaximenes, that the air was God, that He was produced and immense, ever moving. Anaxagoras was the first who held that the description and system of all things were conducted by the power and reason of an infinite spirit. Alcmæon gave divinity to the sun, moon, and stars, and to the soul. Pythagoras made God a spirit diffused through the nature of all things, from which our souls are extracted: Parmenides, a circle surrounding the heaven and supporting the world by the heat of light. Empedocles pronounced the four elements, of which all things are composed, to be gods: Protagoras had nothing to say, whether they were or not, or what they were: Democritus was one while of opinion that the images of

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* Thus translated from Ronsard by Cotton:—

" The common light that shines indifferently
On all alike, the worlds enlightening eyes,
And if the Almighty ruler of the skies
Has eyes, the sunbeams are His radiant eyes,
That life to all impart, maintain, and guard,
And all men's actions upon earth regard.
This great, this beautiful, and glorious sun,
That seasons gives by revolution;
That with His influence fills the universe,
And with one glance does sullen shades disperse.
Life, soul of the world, that flaming in His sphere,
Surrounds the heavens in one day's career,
Immensely great, moving, yet firm and round,
Who the whole world below has fixed His bound,
At rest without rest, idle without stay,
Nature's first son, and father of the day."

† Cicero, De Nat. Deor., i. 10, etc.,

objects and their orbs were gods; another while, the nature that darts out these images, and again, our science and intelligence. Plato divides his belief into several opinions: he says in his Timæus, that the father of the world cannot be named; in his Laws, that men are not to inquire into his being; and elsewhere, in the same books, he makes the world, the heavens, the stars, the earth, and our souls, gods; admitting, moreover, those which have been received by ancient institution in every republic. Xenophon reports a like perplexity in Socrates' doctrine; one while, that men are not to inquire into the form of God, and presently makes him maintain that the sun is God, and the soul, God; first, that there is but one God, and afterward that there are many. Speusippus, the nephew of Plato, makes God a certain power governing all things, and that it is animal. Aristotle, one while says it is the mind, and another while the world; now he gives this world another master, and again makes God the heat of heaven. Xenocrates makes eight; five named among the planets, the sixth composed of all the fixed stars, as of so many members; the seventh and the eighth, the sun and the moon. Heraclides Ponticus does nothing but float in his opinions, and finally deprives God of sense and makes him shift from one form to another: and at last says, that 'tis heaven and earth. Theophrastus wanders in the same irresolution among his various fancies, attributing the superintendence of the world one while to the understanding, another while to heaven, and then to the stars: Strato says 'tis nature having the power of generation, augmentation and diminution, without form and sentiment: Zeno says 'tis the law of nature commanding good and prohibiting evil, which law is animal; and abolishes the accustomed gods, Jupiter, Juno and Vesta: Diogenes Apolloniates says 'tis air. Xenophanes makes God round, seeing and hearing, not breathing, and having nothing in common with human nature. Aristo thinks the form of God to be incomprehensible, deprives Him of sense, and knows not whether He be animal or something else: Cleanthes one while supposes Him to be reason, another while the world, then the soul of nature, and then the supreme heat surrounding and enveloping all things. Perseus, Zeno's disciple, was of opinion that men have given the title of gods to such as have added any notable advantage to human life, and even

to profitable things themselves. Chrysippus made a confused heap of all the preceding lucubrations, and reckons, among a thousand forms of gods that he makes, the men also that have been deified. Diagoras and Theodorus flatly denied that there were any gods at all. Epicurus makes the gods shining, transparent, and perflable,* lodged, as between two forts, between two worlds, secure from blows; clothed in a human figure and with such members as we have, which members are to them of no use:

> "Ego deum genus esse semper dixi, et dicam cœlitum;
> Sed eos non curare opinor, quid agat humanum genus."†

Trust to your philosophy; my masters, and brag that you have found the bean in the cake, with all this rattle from so many philosophical heads! The perplexity of so many worldly forms has gained this for me, that manners and opinions contrary to mine do not so much displease as instruct me; nor so much make me proud, as they humble me in comparing them; and all other choice than what comes from the express and immediate hand of God, seems to me a choice of very little prerogative. The politics of the world are no less opposed upon this subjeet than the schools: by which we may understand that fortune itself is not more variable and diverse, nor more blind and inconsiderate than our reason. The things that are most unknown are the most proper to be deified; wherefore, to make gods of ourselves, as the ancients did, exceeds the extremest weakness of understanding. I should much rather have gone along with those who adored the serpent, the dog, or the ox; forasmuch as their nature and their being are less known to us, and that we are more at liberty to imagine what we please of those beasts, and to attribute to them extraordinary faculties; but to have made gods of our own condition, of which we should know the imperfection, and to have attributed to them desire, anger, revenge, marriages, generation, alliances, love and jealousy, our members and bones, our fevers and pleasures, our

* That can be blown through.

† "I have ever thought, and still think, there are gods above, but I do not conceive that they care what men do."—ENNIUS, apud, Cicero, *ubi supra.*

death and obsequies, this must needs proceed from a marvelous intoxication of human understanding:

> "Quæ procul usque adeo divino ab numine distant,
> Inque deum numero quæ sint indigna videri." *

"*Formæ, ætates, vestitus, ornatus noti sunt: genera, conjugia, cognationes, omniaque traducta ad similitudinem imbecillitatis humanæ; nam et perturbatis animis inducuntur; accipimus enim deorum cupiditates, ægritudines, iracundias;*" † as having attributed divinity not only to faith, virtue, honor, concord, liberty, victory, piety, but also to voluptuousness, fraud, death, envy, old age, misery; to fear, fever, ill fortune, and other injuries of our frail and transitory life:

> "Quid juvat hoc, templis nostros inducere mores?
> O curvæ in terris animinæ, et cœlestium inanes!"‡

The Egyptians, with an impudent prudence, interdicted, upon pain of hanging, that any one should say that their gods Serapis and Isis had formerly been men, and yet no one was ignorant that they had been such, and their effigies represented with the finger upon the mouth, signified, says Varro,§ this mysterious decree to their priests, to conceal their mortal original, as it must, by necessary consequence, annul all the veneration paid to them. Seeing that man so much desired to equal himself to God, he had done better, says Cicero,‖ to have attracted the divine conditions to himself, and have drawn them down hither below, than to send his corruption and misery up on high: but, in truth, he has in several ways done both the one and the other, with like vanity of opinion.

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* "Which things are so remote from the divine nature, that they are unworthy to be ranked among the gods."—LUCRETIUS, v. 123.

† "Their forms, ages, clothes, and ornaments are known: their descents, marriages, and kindred, and all appropriated to the similitude of human weakness; for they are represented to us with anxious minds, and we read of the lusts, sickness, and anger of the gods."—CICERO, *De Natura Deor.*, ii. 28.

‡ "Into our temples to what end introduce our own corrupt manners? O souls, bending to the earth, devoid of all heavenly sentiments!"—PERSIUS, ii. 61, 62.

§ Cited by St. Augustin, De Civit. Dei, xviii. 5.

‖ Tusc. Quæs. i., 26.

When the philosophers search narrowly into the hierarchy of their gods, and make a great bustle about distinguishing their alliances, offices, and power, I cannot believe they speak with any seriousness. When Plato describes Pluto's verger to us, and the bodily pleasure or pains that await us after the ruin and annihilation of our bodies, and accommodates them to the notions we have of them in this life:

> "Secreti celant calles, et myrtea circum
> Sylba tegit; curæ non ipsa in morte relinquunt;" *

When Mahommed promises his followers a paradise hung with tapestry, adorned with gold and precious stones, furnished with wenches of excelling beauty, rare wines and delicate dishes, I easily discern that these are mockers who accommodate their promises to our stupidity, to attract and allure us by hopes and opinions suitable to our mortal appetite. And yet some among us are fallen into the like error, promising to themselves, after the resurrection, a terrestrial and temporal life, accompanied with all sorts of worldly conveniences and pleasures. Can we believe that Plato, he who had such heavenly conceptions, and was so conversant with Divinity as thence to derive the name of the divine Plato, ever thought that the poor creature, man, had anything in him applicable to that incomprehensible power? and that he believed that the weak holds we are able to take were capable, or the force of our understanding robust enough to participate of eternal beatitude or pain? We should then tell him, on behalf of human reason: if the pleasures thou dost promise us in the other life are of the same kind that I have enjoyed here below, that has nothing in common with infinity: though all my five natural senses should be loaded with pleasure and my soul full of all the contentment it could hope or desire, we know what all this amounts to; all this would be nothing: if there be anything of mine there, there is nothing divine; if it be no more than what may belong to our present condition, it cannot be reckoned; all contentment of mortals is mortal: the recognition of our parents, children, and friends, if that can touch and delight us in the other world, if there it still continue a sat-

* "Secret paths hide them, and myrtle groves environ them; their cares do not leave them when they die."—*Æneid*, vi. 443.

isfaction to us, we still remain in earthly and infinite conveniences: we cannot, as we ought, conceive the grandeur of those high and divine promises, if we can in any sort conceive them; to have a worthy imagination of them, we must imagine them unimaginable, inexplicable, and incomprehensible, and absolutely another thing than any in our miserable experience. "Eye hath not seen," says St. Paul, "nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him."* And if to render us capable of them, our being be reformed and changed (as thou, Plato, sayest by thy purifications), it must be so extreme and total a change that, by physical doctrine, it will be no more to us;

> "Hector erat tunc cum bello certabat; at ille
> Tractus ab Æmonio, non erat Hector, equo:"†

it must be something else that must receive these recompenses:

> "Quod mutatur . . . dissolvitur; interit ergo;
> Trajiciuntur enim partes, atque ordine migrant."‡

For, in Pythagoras' metempsychosis, and the change of habitation that he imagined in souls, can we believe that the lion in whom the soul of Cæsar is enclosed espouses Cæsar's passions, or that the lion is he? If it were still Cæsar, they would be in the right who, controverting this opinion with Plato, reproach him that the son might be seen to ride his mother transformed into a mule, and the like absurdities. And can we believe that in the mutations that are made of the bodies of animals into others of the same kind, the newcomers are not other than their predecessors? From the ashes of a phœnix a worm, they say,§ is engendered, and from that another phœnix; who can imagine that this second phœnix is not other than the first? We see our silk worms as it were die and wither; and from

* 1 Corinthians ii. 9, after Isaiah lxiv. 4.

† "He was Hector while he was fighting; but when dragged by Achilles' steeds, he was no longer Hector."—OVID, *Trist.*, iii. 11, 27.

‡ "What is changed is dissolved, and therefore perishes; the parts are separated, and depart from their order."—LUCRETIUS, iii. 756.

§ Pliny, Nat. Hist., x. 2.

this withered body a butterfly is produced, and from that another worm; how ridiculous would it be to imagine that this were still the first? that which has once ceased to be is no more:

> "Nec, si materiam nostram collegerit ætas
> Post obitum, rursumque redegerit, ut sita nunc est,
>
> Atque iterum nobis fuerint data lumina vitæ,
> Pertineat quidquam tamen ad nos id quoque factum;
> Interrupta semel cum sit repetentia nostra."*

And, Plato, when thou sayest, in another place, that it shall be the spiritual part of man that will be concerned in the fruition of the recompenses of another life, thou tellest us a thing wherein there is as little appearance of truth:

> "Scilicet, avolsis radicibus, ut nequit ullam
> Dispicere ipse oculus rem, seorsum corpore toto;"†

for, by this account, it would no more be man, nor consequently us, who should be concerned in this enjoyment: for we are composed of two principally essential parts, the separation of which is the death and ruin of our being:

> "Inter enim ject est vitai pausa, vageque
> Deerarunt passim motus ab sensibus omnes:"‡

we cannot say that the man suffers when the worms feed upon his members and that the earth consumes them:

> "Et nihil hoc adnos, qui coitu conjugioque
> Corporis atque animæ consistimus uniter apit."§

Moreover, upon what foundation of their justice can the gods take notice of or reward man after his death, for his good and virtuous actions, since it was they themselves who

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* "Nor, though time should collect after death our atoms, and restore them to the form they had before, and give us again new light of life, would that new figure concern us at all; the sense of our being, once interrupted, is gone."—LUCRETIUS, iii. 859.

† "No more than eyes once torn from their sockets can ever after see anything."—*Ibid.*, 562.

‡ "For, when life is extinct, all motions of sense are dispersed and banished."—*Ibid.*, 872.

§ "That is nothing to us whose being solely consists in the strict union of body and soul."—*Ibid.*, 857.

put them in the way and mind to do them? And why should they be offended at and punish him for evil actions, since they themselves have created him in so frail a condition, and that, with one glance of their will, they might prevent him from evil doing? Might not Epicurus, with great color of human reason, object this to Plato, did he not often save himself with this sentence: "That it is impossible to establish anything certain of the immortal nature by the mortal?" She does nothing but err throughout, but especially when she meddles with divine things. Who more evidently perceives this than we? For although we have given her certain and infallible principles, and though we have enlightened her steps with the sacred lamp of the truth that it has pleased God to communicate to us, we daily see, nevertheless, that if she swerve never so little from the ordinary path, and that she stray from or wander out of the way set out and beaten by the Church, how immediately she loses, confounds, and fetters herself, tumbling and floating in this vast, turbulent, and waving sea of human opinions, without restraint and without any determinate end: so soon as she loses that great and common road she enters into a labyrinth of a thousand several paths.

Man cannot be anything but what he is, nor imagine beyond the reach of his capacity. "'Tis a greater presumption," says Plutarch,* "in them who are but men to attempt to speak and discourse of the gods and demigods, than it is in a man, utterly ignorant of music, to judge of singing; or in a man who never saw a camp to dispute about arms and martial affairs, presuming, by some light conjecture, to understand the effects of an art to which he is totally a stranger." Antiquity, I fancy, thought to put a compliment upon and to add something to the divine grandeur in assimilating it to man, investing it with his faculties and adorning it with his fine humors and most shameful necessities; offering to it our aliments to eat, our dances, mummeries, and farces to divert it, our vestments to cover it, and our houses to inhabit; caressing it with the odors of incense and the sounds of music, with festoons and nosegays; and, to accommodate it to our vicious passions, flattering its justice with inhuman vengeance, delighting it with

* Why Divine Justice sometimes defers Punishment.

the ruin and dissipating of things by it created and preserved: as Tiberius Sempronius who burned the rich spoils and arms he had gained from the enemy in Sardinia as a sacrifice to Vulcan, and Paulus Æmilius those of Macedonia to Mars and Minerva: and as Alexander, arriving at the Indian ocean, threw several great vessels of gold into the sea in favor of Thetis, and, moreover, loaded her altars with a slaughter, not of innocent beasts only, but of men also; as several nations, and ours among the rest, were ordinarily used to do, and I believe there is no nation under the sun that has not done the same:

> "Sulmone creatos
> Quatuor hic juvenes, totidem, quos educat Ufens,
> Viventes rapit, inferias quos immolet umbris." *

The Getæ hold themselves to be immortal, and that death is nothing but a journey to Zamolxis, their god. Once in every five years they despatch some one among them to him, to entreat of him such necessaries as they require. This envoy is chosen by lot, and the form of his despatch, after having been instructed by word of mouth what he is to say, is that of those present three hold out so many javelins, against which the rest throw his body with all their force. If he happen to be wounded in a mortal part and that he immediately die, 'tis reputed a certain sign of divine favor; if he escape he is looked upon as a wicked and execrable wretch, and another is deputed after the same manner in his stead. Amestris, the wife of Xerxes,† having grown old, caused at once fourteen young men of the best families of Persia to be buried alive, according to the religion of the country, to gratify some infernal deity. And to this day the idols of Themixtitan are cemented with the blood of little children, and they delight in no sacrifice but of these pure and infantine souls: a justice thirsty of innocent blood!

> "Tantum religio potuit suadere malorum." ‡

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* "Four sons of Sulmo, and as many more whom Ufens bred, he seized alive, to offer them a sacrifice to the infernal gods." *Æneid*, x. 517.

† Herod. vii.

‡ "Religion can persuade men to so many ills and mischiefs."—LUCRETIUS, i. 102.

The Carthaginians immolated their own children to Saturn; and such as had none of their own bought of others,* the father and mother being further obliged to attend the ceremony with a gay and contented countenance.

It was a strange fancy to seek to gratify the divine goodness with our affliction: like the Lacedæmonians who regaled their Diana with the tormenting of young boys, whom they caused to be whipped for her sake, very often to death: † it was a savage humor to think to gratify the Architect by the subversion of His building, and to think to take away the punishment due to the guilty by punishing the innocent; and that poor Iphigenia, at the port of Aulis, should by her death and sacrifice acquit toward God the whole army of the Greeks from all the crimes they had committed;

> "Et casta inceste, nubendi tempore in ipso
> Hostia concideret mactatu mœsta parentis;" ‡

and that those two noble and generous souls of the two Decii, father and son, to incline the favor of the gods to be propitious to the affairs of Rome, should throw themselves headlong into the thickest of the enemy. "*Quæ fuit tanta deorum iniquitas, ut placari populo Romano non possent, nisi tales viri occidissent?*" § To which may be added, that it is not for the criminal to cause himself to be scourged according to his own measure nor at his own time; but that it wholly belongs to the judge, who considers nothing as chastisement but the pain he appoints, and cannot deem that punishment which proceeds from the consent of him who suffers: the divine vengeance presupposes an absolute dissent in us, both for its justice and our own penalty. And therefore it was a ridiculous humor of Polycrates the tyrant of Samos, ‖ who, to interrupt the continued course

* Plutarch, On Superstition.

† Plutarch, Notable Sayings of the Lacedæmonians.

‡ "And that the chaste girl, on the very eve of her nuptials, should die, a sad victim, immolated by her father."—LUCRETIUS, i. 99.

§ "How great an injustice in the gods was it that they could not be reconciled to the people of Rome unless such men perished?"—CICERO, *De Nat. Deor.*, iii. 6.

‖ Herodotus, iii. 41.

of his good fortune and to balance it, went and threw the dearest and most precious jewel he had into the sea, fancying by this voluntary mishap he bribed and satisfied the revolution and vicissitude of fortune; and she, to mock his folly, ordered it so that the same jewel came again into his hands, found in the belly of a fish. And then to what end are those tearings and demembrations of the Corybantes, the Menades, and in our times of the Mohammedans, who slash their faces, bosoms, and members to gratify their prophet: seeing that the offense lies in the will, not in the breast, eyes, genitories, in plumpness, in the shoulders, or the throat? "*Tantus est perturbatæ mentis, et sedibus suis pulsæ furor, ut sic dii placentur, quemadmodum ne homines quidem sæviunt.*"* The use of this natural contexture has not only respect to us, but also to the service of God and of other men; and 'tis as unjust willfully to wound or hurt it, as to kill ourselves upon any pretense whatever; it seems to be great cowardice and treason to exercise cruelty upon and to destroy the functions of the body, stupid and servile, in order to spare the soul the trouble of governing them according to reason; "*ubi iratos deos timent, qui sic propitios habere merentur. . . . In regiæ libidinis voluptatem castrati sunt quidam; sed nemo sibi, ne vir esset, jubente domino, manus intulit.*" † So did they fill their religion with many ill effects:

> "Sæpius olim
> Religio peperit scelerosa atque impi facta." ‡

Now nothing about us can, in any sort, be compared or likened unto the divine nature that will not blemish and tarnish it with so much imperfection. How can that infinite beauty, power and goodness admit of any correspond-

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* "So great is the fury and madness of troubled minds when once displaced from the seat of reason: as if the gods should be appeased with what even men are not so mad as to approve."—ST. AUGUSTINE, *De Civit. Dei*, vi. 10.

† "Where are they so afraid of the anger of the gods as to merit their favor at that rate? Some, indeed, have been made eunuchs for the lust of princes: but no man at his master's command has put his own hand to unman himself."—ST. AUGUSTIN, *ubi supra*, after Seneca.

‡ "In olden times religion inspired great and impious crimes."—LUCRETUIS, i. 83.

ence or similitude to so abject a thing as we are, without extreme wrong and dishonor to His divine greatness? "*Infirmum Dei fortius est hominibus: et stultum Dei sapientius est hominibus.*"* Stilpo the philosopher being asked whether the gods were delighted with our adorations and sacrifices: "You are indiscreet," answered he; "let us withdraw apart if you talk of such things." † Nevertheless, we prescribe Him bounds, we keep His power besieged by our reasons (I call reason our reveries and dreams with the dispensation of philosophy, which says, that the wicked man, and even the fool, go mad by reason, but 'tis by a particular form of reason); we will subject him to the vain and feeble appearances of our understanding; Him who has made both us and our understanding. Because nothing is made of nothing, God, therefore, could not have made the world without matter. What! has God put into our hands the keys and most secret springs of His power; is He obliged not to exceed the limits of our knowledge? Put the case, oh man, that thou hast been able here to mark some footsteps of His effects: dost thou, therefore, think that He has therein employed all He can, and has crowded all His forms and all His ideas in this work? Thou seest nothing but the order and regulation of this little vault wherein thou art lodged—if thou dost see so much—whereas His divinity has an infinite jurisdiction beyond; this part is nothing in comparison of the whole:

> "Omnia cum cœlo, terraque, marique,
> Nil sunt ad summam summai totius omnem:" ‡

'tis a municipal law that thou allegest; thou knowest not what is the universal. Tie thyself to that to which thou art subject, but not Him; He is not of thy brotherhood, thy fellow-citizen, or companion. If He has in some sort communicated Himself unto thee, 'tis not to debase Himself to thy littleness, nor to make thee controller of His power; the human body cannot fly to the clouds. 'Tis for thee the sun runs without resting every day his ordinary course;

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* "For the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men."—1 *Cor.* i. 25.

† Diogenes Laertius, ii 117.

‡ "All things, heaven, earth, and sea, fall short in the account with the totality of the great All."—LUCRETIUS, v. 679.

the bounds of the seas and the earth cannot be confounded; the water is unstable and without firmness; a wall, unless it be broken, is inpenetrable to a solid body; a man cannot preserve his life in the flames; he cannot be both in heaven and upon earth, and corporally in a thousand places at once. 'Tis for thee, that He has made these rules; 'tis thee, that they concern; He manifested to the Christians, that He enfranchised them all, when it pleased Him. And, in truth, why, almighty as He is, should He have limited His power within any certain bounds? In favor of whom should He have renounced His privilege? Thy reason has in no other thing more of likelihood and foundation, than in that wherein it persuades thee that there is a plurality of worlds;

> "Terramque, et solem, lunam, mare, cætera quæ sunt,
> Non esse unica, sed numero magis innumerali:" *

the most eminent minds of elder times believed it, and some of this age of ours, compelled by the appearances of human reason, do the same; forasmuch as in this fabric that we behold there is nothing single and one,

> "Quum in summa res nulla sit una,
> Unica quæ gignatur, et unica solaque crescat," †

and that all the kinds are multiplied in some number or other; by which it seems not to be likely that God should have made this work only without a companion, and that the matter of this form should have been totally exhausted in this sole individual;

> "Quare etiam atque etiam tales fateare necesse est,
> Esse alios alibi congressus materiai,
> Qualis hic est, avido complexu quem tenet æther:" ‡

especially if it be a living creature, which its motions render so credible that Plato affirms it, § and that many of

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* "Earth, sun, moon, sea, and the rest that are, are not single, but rather innumerable."—LUCRETIUS, ii. 1085.

† "Since there is nothing single in this mighty mass, that can alone beget, or alone increase."—*Ibid*, 1077.

‡ "Wherefore it is quite necessary to confess that there must elsewhere be the like aggregation of matter, just as that which ether holds in strict embrace."—*Ibid.*, 1064.

§ In the Timæus.

our people either confirm it or do not venture to deny it: no more than that ancient opinion, that the heaven, the stars, and other members of the world, are creatures composed of body and soul, mortal in respect of their composition, but immortal by the determination of the Creator. Now, if there be many worlds, as Democritus, Epicurus, and almost all philosophy has believed, how do we know that the principles and rules of this of ours in like manner concern the rest? They may, peradventure, have another form and another polity. Epicurus * supposes them, either like or unlike. We see in this world an infinite difference and variety, merely by distance of places; neither corn nor wine, nor any of our animals are to be seen in that new corner of the world discovered by our fathers; 'tis all there another thing; and, in times past, do but consider in how many parts of the world they had no knowledge either of Bacchus or Ceres. If Pliny and Herodotus are to be believed, there are, in certain places, kinds of men very little resembling us; and there are mongrel and ambiguous forms, between the human and brutal natures; there are countries, where men are born without heads, having their mouth and eyes in their breast: † where they are all hermaphrodites; where they go on all fours; where they have but one eye in the forehead, and a head more like that of a dog than like one of ours. ‡ Where they are half fish the lower part, and live in the water; where the women bear at five years old, and live but eight; where the head and skin of the forehead are so hard, that a sword will not enter it, but rebounds; where men have no beards; nations that know not the use of fire; and others that eject their seed of a black color. § What shall we say of those that naturally change themselves into wolves, colts, and then into men again. ‖ And if it be true, as Plutarch says, ¶ that in some place of the Indies, there are men without mouths, who nourish themselves with the smell of certain odors, how many of our descriptions are false? Man, at this rate, becomes more ludicrous and, peradven-

* Diogenes Laertius, x. 85.

† Herodotus, iv. 4.

‡ Pliny, Nat. Hist., viii.

§ Herodotus, iii.

‖ Pliny (viii.) merely mentions these stories as impudent lies.

¶ "On the Face of the Moon."—PLINY, *Nat. Hist.*, vii.

ture, quite incapable of reason and society; the disposition and cause of our internal structure would, for the most part, be to no purpose.

Moreover, how many things are there in our own knowledge that oppose those fine rules we have cut out for and prescribed to nature? And yet we must undertake to circumscribe God himself! How many things do we call miraculous and contrary to nature? this is done by every nation and by every man, according to the measure of their ignorance; how many occult properties and quintessences do we discover? For, with us, to go "according to nature," is no more but to go "according to our intelligence," as far as that is able to follow, and as far as we are able to see into it; all beyond that must be monstrous and irregular. Now, by this account, all things shall be monstrous to the wisest and most understanding men; for human reason has persuaded them that it has no manner of ground or foundation, not so much as to be assured that snow is white; and Anaxagoras affirmed it to be black;* if there be anything, or if there be nothing; if there be knowledge or ignorance, which Metrodorus of Chios denied that man was able to determine;† or whether we live, as Euripides doubts, "whether the life we live is life, or whether that we call death be not life:"

> "*Τίς δ' οἶδεν εἰ ζῆν τοῦθ', κέκληται θανεῖν,*
> *Τὸ ζῆν δὲ, θνήσκειν ἔστι·*"‡

and not without some appearance; for why do we, from this instant which is but a flash in the infinite course of an eternal night, and so short an interruption of our perpetual and natural condition, death possessing all that passed before and all the future of this moment, and also a good part of the moment itself, derive the title of being? Others swear there is no motion at all,§ as the followers of Melissus, and that nothing stirs; for if there be nothing but One, neither can that spherical motion be of any use to him, nor the motion from one place to another, as Plato proves; others

* Cicero, Acad., ii. 23 and 31; Ep. ad Quint. Frat., ii. 13.

† Idem, Acad., ib.; Sextus Empiricus, p. 146.

‡ See Plato, Gorgias, p. 300; Diogenes Laertius, Life of Pyrrho; Sextus Empiricus Pyrrh. Hyp. iii. 24.

§ Diogenes Laertius, Life of Melissus.

say there's neither generation nor corruption in nature. Protagorus * says that there is nothing in nature but doubt; that a man may equally dispute of all things. Nausiphanes, that of things which seem to be, nothing is more than it is not: that there is nothing certain but uncertainty; † Parmenides, that of that which it seems there is no one thing in general; that there is but One; ‡ Zeno,§ that there's no One, and that there is nothing: if there were One, it would either be in another or in itself; if it be in another, they are two; if it be in itself, they are yet two; the comprehending and the comprehended. According to these doctrines, the nature of things is no other than a shadow, either vain or absolutely false.

This way of speaking in a Christian man has ever seemed to me very indiscreet and irreverent: "God cannot die; God cannot contradict Himself; God cannot do this, or that." I do not like to have the divine power so limited by the laws of men's mouths; and the idea which presents itself to us in those propositions, ought to be more religiously and reverently expressed.

Our speaking has its failings and defects, as well as all the rest: grammar is that which creates most disturbance in the world: our suits only spring from disputation as to the interpretation of laws; and most wars proceed from the inability of ministers clearly to express the conventions and treaties of amity among princes. How many quarrels, and those of how great importance, has the doubt of the meaning of this syllable *Hoc* created in the world? ‖ Let us take the conclusion that logic itself presents us as manifestly clear: if you say it is fine weather, and that you say true, it is, then, fine weather. Is not this a very certain

* Ibid., Life of Protagoras.

† Seneca, Ep. 88.

‡ Aristotle, Metaphys., lib. i. c. 5. Cicero, Quæst. Acad., iv. 37, attributes the saying to Xenophanes.

§ "This Zeno must be the Zeno of Eleus, the disciple of Parmenides. The Pyrrhonians reckoned him one of their sect. Diogenes Laertius, Life of Pyrrho, lib. ix. s. 72. Montaigne here has also copied Seneca, Ep. 88, where after these words, 'Were I to believe Parmenides, there is nothing besides one,' he adds immediately, 'If Zeno, there is not so much as one.'"—COSTE.

‖ In allusion to the dispute as to transubstantiation.

form of speaking? and yet it will deceive us; that it will do so, let us follow the example: if you say, I lie, and that you say true, then you do lie. The art, reason and force of the conclusion of this are the same with the other; and yet we are graveled. The Pyrrhonian philosophers, I see, cannot express their general conception in any kind of speaking; for they would require a new language on purpose: ours is all formed of affirmative propositions, which are totally hostile to them; insomuch that when they say, "I doubt," they are presently taken by the throat, to make them confess that at least they know and are assured of this, that they do doubt. And so they have been compelled to shelter themselves under this medicinal comparison, without which their humor would be inexplicable: when they pronounce, "I know not;" or, "I doubt;" they say that this proposition carries of itself with the rest, no more nor less than rhubarb that drives out the ill humors and carries itself off with them.* This fancy is more certainly understood by interrogation: What do I know? as I bear it in the emblem of a balance.

See what use we make of this irreverent way of speaking: † in the present disputes about our religion, if you press the adversaries too hard, they will roundly tell you, "that it is not in the power of God to make it so that His body should be in paradise and upon earth, and in several places at once." And see what advantage the old scoffer ‡ makes of this! "At least," says he, "it is no little consolation to man to see that God cannot do all things; for he cannot kill himself though he would, which is the greatest privilege we have in our condition: he cannot make mortals immortal, nor revive the dead, nor make it so that he who has lived has not, nor that he who has had honors, has not had them, having no other power over the past than that of oblivion. And that the comparison of a man to God may yet be made out by pleasant examples, he cannot order it so that twice ten shall not be twenty." This is what he says, and what a Christian ought to take heed shall not escape his lips; whereas, on the contrary, it seems as if all

* Diogenes Laertius, ix. 76.

† *i. e.*, That God cannot do this or that.

‡ "That scoffer Pliny," ed. of 1580.

men studied this impudent kind of blasphemous language, to reduce God to their own measure:

> "Cras vel atra
> Nube polum Pater occupato,
> Vel sole puro, non tamen irritum,
> Quodcumque retro est, efficiet, neque
> Diffinget, infectumque reddet,
> Quod fugiens semel hora vexit." *

When we say that the infinity of ages, as well past as to come, are but one instant with God: that His goodness, wisdom, and power are the same with His essence, our mouths speak it, but our understandings apprehend it not. And yet such is our outrageous opinion of ourselves, that we must make the divinity pass through our sieve; and from this proceed all the dreams and errors with which the world abounds, when we reduce and weigh in our balance a thing so far above our poise. "*Mirum, quo procedat improbitas cordis humani, parvulo aliquo invitata successu.*" † How magisterially and insolently do the Stoics reprove Epicurus for maintaining that the truly good and happy Being appertained only to God, and that the sage had nothing but a shadow and resemblance of it? How daringly have they bound God to destiny (a thing, that, by my consent, none that bears the name of a Christian shall ever do again); while Thales, Plato and Pythagoras have enslaved him to necessity. This arrogance of attempting to discover God with our weak eyes, has been the cause that an eminent person of our nation, ‡ has attributed to the divinity a corporal form; and is the reason of what happens among us every day of attributing to God important events, by a special appointment: because they sway with us, they conclude that they also sway with Him, and that He has a more intent and vigilant regard to them than to others of less moment, or of ordinary course: "*Magna Dii curant;*

* "Let it shine or rain to-morrow, this cannot alter the past, nor uncreate and render void that which was enjoyed yesterday."—HORACE, *Od.*, iii. 29, 43.

† "'Tis wonderful to what the wickedness of man's heart will proceed, if elevated with the least success."—PLINY, *Nat. Hist.*, ii. 23.

‡ Tertullian.

parva negligunt:" * observe his example; he will clear this to you by his reason: "*Nec in regnis quidem reges omnia minima curant;"* † as if to that King of kings it were more or less to subvert a kingdom or to move the leaf of a tree: or as if His providence acted after another manner in inclining the event of a battle than in the leap of a flea. The hand of His government is laid upon everything after the same manner, with the same power and order; our interest does nothing toward it; our inclinations and measures sway nothing with Him: "*Deus ita artifex magnus in magnis, ut minor non sit in parvis."* ‡ Our arrogance sets this blasphemous comparison ever before us. Because our employments are a burthen to us, Strato has courteously been pleased to exempt the gods from all offices, as their priests are; he makes nature produce and support all things; and with her weights and motions make up the several parts of the world, discharging human nature from the awe of divine judgments: "*Quod beatum æternumque sit, id nec habere negotii quidquam, nec exhibere alteri."* § Nature wills that in like things there should be a like relation; the infinite number of mortals, therefore, concludes a like number of immortals; the infinite things that kill and destroy presuppose as many that preserve and profit. As the souls of the gods without tongue, eyes, or ear, each of them feels among themselves what the others feel, and judge our thoughts; so the souls of men, when at liberty and loosed from the body, either by sleep, or some ecstasy, divine, foretell, and see things, which, while joined to the body, they could not see. "Men," says St. Paul, "professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man." ‖ Do but take notice of the jugglery in the ancient deification: after the grand and

* "The gods concern themselves with great matters, but slight the small."—CICERO, *De Natura Deor.*, ii. 66.

† "Neither do kings in their administration take notice of minor matters."—*Idem, ibid.*, iii. 35.

‡ "God, so great an artificer in great things, is no less so in the least."—ST. AUGUSTIN, *De. Civ. Div.*, xi. 22.

§ "What is blessed and eternal, has neither any business itself nor gives any to another."—CICERO, *De Natura Deor.*, i. 17.

‖ Romans v. 22, 23.

stately pomp of the funeral, so soon as the fire began to mount to the top of the pyramid and to catch hold of the hearse where the body lay, they, at the same time, turned out an eagle, which, flying upward, signified that the soul went into paradise; we have still a thousand medals, and particularly of that virtuous Faustina,* where this eagle is represented carrying these deified souls with their heels upward, toward heaven. 'Tis pity that we should fool ourselves with our own fopperies and inventions;

"Quod finxere, timent:"†

like children who are frightened with the face of their playfellow that they themselves have smeared and smutted, "*Quasi quidquam infelicius sit homine, cui sua figmenta dominantur.*" ‡ 'Tis far from honoring Him who made us, to honor him whom we have made. Augustus had more temples than Jupiter, served with as much religion and belief of miracles. The Thasians, in return for the benefits they had received from Agesilaus, coming to bring him word that they had canonized him: "Has your nation," said he to them,§ "the power to make gods of whom they please? Pray first deify some one among yourselves, and when I see what advantage he has by it, I will thank you for your offer." Man is certainly stark mad; he cannot make a flea, and yet he will be making gods by dozens. Hear what Trismegistus says in praise of our sufficiency: "Of all the wonderful things, it surmounts all wonder, that man could find out the divine nature and make it." And take here the arguments of the school of philosophy itself,

"Nosse cui divos et cœli numina soli,
Aut soli nescire, datum:" ‖

"if there be a God,¶ He is a corporeal creature; if He be

* The term *virtuous* is here, of course, applied ironically.

† "They fear what they themselves have invented."—LUCAN., i. 486.

‡ "As if anything could be more unhappy than man, who is domineered over by his own imagination."

§ Plutarch, Apothegms of the Lacedæmonians.

‖ "To whom alone it is given to know the deities of heaven, or know that we can know them not."—LUCAN, i. 452.

¶ This passage is taken from Cicero, De Natura Deor., ii. and iii.

a corporeal creature, He has sense; and if he has sense, He is subject to corruption. If He be without a body, He is without a soul, and consequently without action: and if He have a body it is perishable." Is not here a triumph? "We are incapable of having made the world; there must, then, be some more excellent nature that has put a hand to the work. It were a foolish and ridiculous arrogance to esteem ourselves the most perfect thing of this universe: there must, then, be something that is better and more perfect, and that is God. When you see a stately and stupendous edifice, though you do not know who is the owner of it, you would yet conclude it was not built for rats: and this divine structure that we behold of the celestial palace, have we not reason to believe that is the residence of some possessor, who is much greater than we? Is not the highest always the most worthy; and we are placed lowest to Him. Nothing without a soul and without reason can produce a living creature capable of reason; the world produces us; the world, then, has soul and reason. Every part of us is less than we: we are part of the world; the world, therefore, is endued with wisdom and reason, and that more abundantly than we. 'Tis a fine thing to have a great government: the government of the world, then, appertains to some happy nature. The stars do us no harm: they are, then, full of goodness. We have need of nourishment; then so have the gods also; and they feed upon the vapors of the earth. Wordly goods are not goods to God; therefore they are not goods to us. Offending, and being offended, are equally testimonies of imbecility: 'tis, therefore, folly to fear God. God is good by His nature; man by his industry, which is more. The divine and human wisdom have no other distinction, but that the first is eternal: but duration is no accession to wisdom; therefore, we are companions. We have life, reason, and liberty; we esteem goodness, charity, and justice: these qualities, then, are in him."* In fine, the building and destroying, the conditions of the divinity, are forged by man, according as they bear relation to himself. What a pattern! what a model! Let us stretch, let us raise and swell human qualities as much as we please:

* The preceding passages are taken from Cicero, De Natura Deor., lib. ii., *passim.*

puff up thyself, poor creature, yet more and more, and more.

"Non, si te ruperis, inquit." *

"*Profecto non Deum, quem cogitare non possunt, sed semet ipsos pro illo cogitantes, non illum, sed seipsos, non illi, sed sibi comparant.*"† In natural things the effects but half relate to their causes: what about this? it is above the order of nature; its condition is too elevated, too remote, and too mighty to permit itself to be bound and fettered by our conclusions. 'Tis not through ourselves that we arrive at that place: our ways lie too low: we are no nearer heaven on the top of Mount Cenis, than at the bottom of the sea: take the distance with your astrolabe. They debase God even to the carnal knowledge of women, to so many times, to so many propagations: Paulina the wife of Saturnius, a matron of great reputation at Rome, thinking she lay with the god Serapis,‡ found herself in the arms of a lover of hers, through the pandarism of the priests of the temple. Varro, the most subtle and most learned of all the Latin authors, in his book of theology, writes§ that the sacristan of Hercules' temple throwing dice with one hand for himself and with the other for Hercules, played after that manner with him for a supper and a wench: if he won, at the expense of the offerings; if he lost, at his own. He lost, and paid the supper and the wench. Her name was Laurentina; she saw by night this god in her arms, who, moreover told her that the first she met the next day should give her a heavenly reward; which proved to be Taruncius,‖ a rich young man who took her home to his house and in time left her his

* "Not if thou burst, said he."—HORACE, *Sat.* ii. 3, 19.

† "Certainly they do not imagine God, whom they cannot imagine; but they imagine themselves in His stead: they do not compare Him, but themselves, not to Him, but to themselves." ST. AUGUSTIN, *De Civit. Dei,* xii. 15.

‡ Or Anubis; according to Josephus, Jewish Antiquities, lib. xviii. c. 4.

§ St Augustin, De Civit, Dei, vi.

‖ Or Tarutius. Plutarch, Life of Romulus; c. 3, who calls the lady Larentia, and says that Tarutius was a very old man.

heiress. She, in her turn, thinking to do a thing that would be pleasing to this god, left the people of Rome her heirs, and therefore had divine honors voted to her. As if it were not sufficient that Plato was originally descended from the gods by a double line, and that he had Neptune for the common father of his race,* it was certainly believed at Athens that Aristo, having a mind to enjoy the fair Perictione, could not, and was warned by the god Apollo in a dream to leave her unpolluted and untouched till she should first be brought to bed.† These were the father and mother of Plato. How many ridiculous stories are there of like cuckoldings committed by the gods against poor mortals? and how many husbands injuriously disgraced in favor of their children? In the Mohammedan religion there are plenty of Merlins‡ found by the belief of the people, that is to say, children without fathers, spiritual, divinely conceived in the wombs of virgins, and who bear a name that signifies as much in their language.

We are to observe that to every creature nothing is more dear and estimable than its own being; the lion, the eagle, dolphin, prizing nothing beyond their own kind, and that everything refers the qualities of all other things to its own proper qualities, which we may indeed extend or contract, but that's all; for beyond that relation and principle, our imagination cannot go, can guess at nothing else, nor possibly go out thence or stretch beyond it. From which spring these ancient conclusions: "Of all forms, the most beautiful is that of man; therefore God must be of that form. No one can be happy without virtue, nor virtue be without reason, and reason cannot inhabit anywhere but in a human shape: God is therefore clothed in a human shape."§ "*Ita est informatum anticipatumque mentibus nostris, ut homins quum de Deo cogitet, forma occurat humana.*"‖ Therefore it was that Xenophanes pleasantly

* Diogenes Laertius, Life of Plato, book iii.

† Diogenes Laertius, Life of Plato, book iii; Plutarch, Table Talk, viii. 1.

‡ The Magician Merlin.

§ Cicero, De Natura Deor., 18.

‖ "It is so imprinted in our minds, and the fancy is so prepossessed with it, that when a man thinks of God, a human figure ever presents itself to the imagination."—*Idem, ibid.*, 27.

said,* that if beasts frame any gods to themselves, as 'tis likely they do, they make them certainly such as themselves are, and glorify themselves therein as we do. For why may not a goose say thus: "All parts of the universe have I an interest in; the earth serves me to walk upon, the sun to light me, the stars to spread their influence upon me; I have such an advantage by the winds, such conveniences by the waters: there is nothing that yon heavenly roof looks upon so favorably as me; I am the darling of nature. Is it not man that feeds, lodges, and serves me? 'Tis for me that he sows, and grinds; if he eats me, he does the same by his fellow man, and so do I the worms that kill and devour him." As much might be said by a crane, and more magnificently, upon the account of the liberty of his flight, and the possession of that high and beautiful region: "*Tam blanda conciliatrix, et tam sui est lena ipsa natura.*"†

By the same consequence, the destinies are, then, for us, for us the world; it shines, it thunders for us; creator and creatures all are for us: 'tis the mark and point to which the universality of things is directed. Look into the records that philosophy has kept, for two thousand years and more, of the affairs of heaven; the gods all that while have neither acted nor spoken but for man: she does not allow them any other consultation or vocation. See them, here, against us in war:

> "Domitosque Herculea manu
> Telluris juvenes, unde periculum
> Fulgens contremuit domus
> Saturni veteris."‡

And here see them participate of our troubles, to make a return for having so often shared in theirs:

> "Neptunus muros, magnoque emota tridenti
> Fundamenta quatit, totamque a sedibus urbem

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* Eusebius, Prep, Evangel., xiii. 13.

† "So flattering and wheedling is nature to herself."—CICERO *De Natura Deor.*, i. 27.

‡ "The sons of earth, subdued by the hand of Hercules, in the rude shock made old Saturn's sparkling palace shake."—HORACE, *Od.*, ii. 12, 6.

Eruit: hic Juno Scæas sævissima portas
Prima tenet." *

The Caunians, jealous of the authority of their own especial gods, arm themselves on the days of their devotion, and run all about their precincts cutting and slashing the air with their swords, by that means to drive away and banish all foreign gods out of their territory.† Their powers are limited according to our necessity; this divinity cures horses, that men, this the plague, that the scurf, that the cough; one, one sort of itch, another another: "*Adeo minimis etiam rebus prava religio inserit deos.*"‡ This makes the grapes grow; that has presidence over lechery; this the superintendence over merchandise; for every sort of artisan a god: this has his province and credit in the east; that in the west:

"Hic illius arma . . . Hic currus fuit."§

"O sancte Apollo, qui umbilicum certum terrarum optines!"‖

"Pallada Cecropidæ, Minoia Creta Dianam,
Vulcanum tellus Hypsipylæa colit,
Junonem Sparte, Pelopeiadesque Mycenæ;
Pinigerum Fauni Mænalis ora caput;
Mars Latio venerandus erat:"¶

this deity has only one town or one family in his possession; that lives alone; this in company either voluntary or upon necessity,

"Junctaque sunt magno templa nepotis avo." **

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* "Neptune with his massive trident made the walls and foundations shake, and overturned the whole city; here cruel Juno first occupied the Scæan gates."—*Æneid*, ii. 610.

† Herodotus, i. 172.

‡ "At such a rate does false religion create gods for the most contemptible uses."—LIVY, xxvii. 23.

§ "Here were her arms, here her chariot."—*Æneid*, i. 16.

‖ "O sacred Phœbus, who hast sway over the navel of the earth."—CICERO, *De Div.*, ii. 56.

¶ "The Athenians worship Pallas, the Crete of Minos, Diana: Vulcan is worshipped on the Lemnian shore; Sparta and Mycene adore Juno; the Arcadians worship Faunus; Mars in Latium was adored."—OVID, *Fast.*, iii 81.

** "Temples to the grandson are joined to that of the great-grandfather."—*Idem, ibid.*, i. 294.

there are some so common and mean (for the number amounts to six-and-thirty thousand *) that they must pack five or six together to produce one ear of corn, and thence take their several names; three to a door, that of the plank, that of the hinge, and that of the threshold; four to a child, protectors of his swathing clouts, his drink, meat, sucking; some certain, some uncertain and doubtful; some that are not yet entered paradise.

> "Quos, quoniam cœli nondum dignamur honore,
> Quas dedimus, certe terras, habitare sinamus." †

There are among them physicians, poets, lawyers: some, a mean between the divine and human nature, mediators between God and us; adored with a certain second and diminutive sort of adoration; infinite in titles and offices; some good, others evil; some old and decrepit, some that are mortal: for Chrysippus‡ was of opinion that in the last conflagration of the world all the gods will have to die except Jupiter. Man forges a thousand pretty societies between God and him: is He not his countryman?

> "Jovis incunabula Creten." §

This is the excuse that, upon consideration of this subject, Scævola, a high priest, and Varro, a great divine, in their time make us: "That it is necessary the people should be ignorant of many things that are true, and believe many things that are false:" "*Quum veritatem, qua liberetur, inquirat: credatur ei expedire, quod fallitur.*" ‖ Human eyes cannot perceive things but by the forms they know: and do we not remember what a leap miserable Phaeton took for attempting to govern the reins of his father's horses with a mortal hand? Our mind falls into as great a profundity, and is after the same manner bruised and shattered by its own temerity. If you ask

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* Hesiod, Opera et Dies, ver. 252, says thirty thousand.

† "Whom, since we think them not yet worthy of heaven, we permit to inhabit the earth we have given."—OVID, *Met.*, i. 194.

‡ Plutarch, On the Common Conceptions, etc.

§ "Crete, the birthplace of Jove."—OVID, *Met.*, viii. 99.

‖ "Seeing he inquires into the truth so that he may be made free, 'tis thought fit he would be deceived."—ST. AUGUSTIN, *De Civit. Dei*, iv. 31.

philosophy of what matter is heaven, of what the sun, what answer will she return, but that it is of iron, or, with Anaxagoras, of stone, or some other material that she makes use of? If a man inquire of Zeno what nature is? "A fire," says he, * "artisan, proper for generation, proceeding regularly." Archimedes, master of that science which attributes to itself the precedence before all others for truth and certainty: "The sun," says he, "is a god of red-hot iron." Was not this a fine imagination, extracted from the beauty and inevitable necessity of geometrical demonstrations? yet not so inevitable and useful, but that Socrates† thought it was enough to know so much of geometry only as to measure the land a man bought or sold; and that Polyænus,‡ who had been a great and famous master in it, despised it, as full of falsity and manifest vanity, after he had once tasted the delicate fruits of the effeminate garden of Epicurus. Socrates in Xenophon, § concerning this proposition of Anaxagoras, reputed by antiquity learned above all others in celestial and divine matters, says that he had cracked his brain, as all men do who too immoderately search into knowledges which nothing appertain unto them: when he made the sun to be a burning stone, he did not consider that a stone does not shine in the fire; and which is worse, that it will there consume; and in making the sun and fire one, that fire does not turn complexions black in shining upon them; that we are able to look fixedly upon fire: and that fire kills herbs and plants. 'Tis Socrates' opinion, and mine too, that it is best judged of heaven not to judge of it at all. Plato having occasion in his "Timæus" to speak of demons: "This undertaking," says he, "exceeds our ability; we are to believe those ancients who said they were begotten by them: 'tis against reason to refuse faith to the children of the gods, though what they say should not be proved by any necessary or probable reasons, seeing they engage to speak of domestic and quite familiar things."

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* Cicero, De Natura Deor., ii. 22.

† Xenophon, Mem of Socrates, ib. 7, 2.

‡ Cicero, Acad., ii. 38.

§ *Ubi supra.*

Let us see if we have a little more light in the knowledge of human and natural things. Is it not a ridiculous attempt for us to devise for those, to whom by our own confession our knowledge is not able to attain, another body, and to lend a false form of our own invention; as is manifest in the motion of the planets, to which, seeing our wits cannot possibly arrive nor conceive their natural conduct, we lend them material, heavy, and substantial springs of our own, by which to move:

> "Temo aureus, aurea summæ
> Curvatura rotæ, radiorum argenteus ordo:" *

you would say that we had had coach-makers, wheelwrights, and painters that went up on high to make engines of various movements, and to range the wheels and interlacings of the heavenly bodies of differing colors about the axis of Necessity, according to Plato: †

> "Mundus domus est maxima rerum,
> Quam quinque altitonæ fragmine zonæ
> Cingunt, per quam limbus pictus bis sex signis
> Stellimicantibus, altus in obliquo æthere, lunæ
> Bigas acceptat:" ‡

these are all dreams and fantastic follies. Why will not Nature please, once for all, to lay open her bosom to us, and plainly discover to us the means and conduct of her movements, and prepare our eyes to see them? Good God, what blunders, what mistakes should we discover in our poor science! I am mistaken if it apprehend any one thing as it really is: and I shall depart hence more ignorant of all other things than of my own ignorance.

Have I not read in Plato this divine saying, that "Nature is nothing but an enigmatic poesy?" § as if a man might

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* "A golden beam, wheels of gold, and silver spokes."—OVID, *Met.*, ii. 107.

† Republic, x. 12.

‡ "The world is the great home of all things, which five thundering zones enfold, through which a girdle, painted with twelve sparkling constellations, shines high in the oblique roof, marks the diurnal course, and receives the two-horsed chariot of the moon."—VARRO, in *Catal.*

§ "Montaigne has here mistaken Plato's sense, whose words, in Alcibiades, ii. p. 42, C., are these: *Ἔστι τε φυσει ποιητικὴ ἡ σύμπασα αἰνιγματωδης*—'All poetry is in its nature enigmatical.' Plato

peradventure, say, a veiled and shaded picture, breaking out here and there with an infinite variety of false lights to puzzle our conjectures. "*Latent ista omnia crassis occultata et circumfusa tenebris; ut nulla acies humani ingenii tanta sit, quæ penetrare in cœlum, terram intrare possit.*"* And certainly philosophy is no other than a sophisticated poesy. Whence do the ancient writers extract their authorities but from the poets? and the first of them were poets themselves, and wrote accordingly. Plato himself is but a disconnected poet: Timon injuriously calls him the great forger of miracles. † All superhuman sciences make use of the poetic style. Just as women for themselves make use of teeth of ivory where the natural are wanting, and instead of their true complexion make one of some foreign matter; legs of cloth or felt, and plumpness of cotton, and in the sight and knowledge of every one paint, patch, and trick up themselves with false and borrowed beauty: so does science (and even our law itself has, they say, legal fictions whereon it builds the truth of its justice): she gives us, in presupposition and for current pay, things which she herself informs us were invented; for these epicycles, eccentric and concentric, which astrology makes use of to carry on the motions of the stars, she gives us as the best she could contrive upon that subject: as also, in all the rest, philosophy presents us, not that which really is or what she really believes, but what she has contrived with the most plausible likelihood and the fairest aspect, Plato ‡ upon the subject of the state of human bodies and those of beasts: "I should know that what I have said is truth," says he, "had I the confirmation of an oracle; but

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says this by reason of a verse in Homer's Margites, which he explains, and which, indeed, has something in it that is enigmatical. Either Montaigne did not see this passage in Plato, or else he read it without closely examining it. Nature is certainly a riddle with respect to us; but it does not appear very plain in what sense it may be called enigmatical poetry. Montaigne himself, to whom his term appears so divine, does not explain it to us very clearly."—COSTE.

* "All those things lie concealed and involved in so caliginous an obscurity, that no point of human wit can be so sharp as to pierce heaven, or penetrate the earth."—CICERO, *Acad.*, ii. 39.

† Or, rather, of platitudes. Diogenes Laertius, Life of Plato, 22.

‡ In the Timæus.

this I will affirm, that what I have said is the most likely to be true of anything I could say."

'Tis not to heaven only that she sends her ropes, engines, and wheels; let us consider a little what she says of ourselves and of our contexture; there is not more retrogradation, trepidation, accession, recession, aberration, in the stars and celestial bodies than they have found out in this poor little human body. Truly they have good reason upon that very account to call it the Little World,* so many tools and parts have they employed to erect and build it. To accommodate the motions they see in man, the various functions and faculties that we find in ourselves, into how many parts have they divided the soul? in how many places lodged, into how many orders have they divided, to how many stories have they raised this poor creature man, besides those that are natural and to be perceived? and how many offices and vocations have they assigned him? They make of him an imaginary public thing; 'tis a subject that they hold and handle; and they have full power granted to them to rip, place, displace, piece, and stuff it, every one according to his own fancy, and yet to this day they possess it not. They cannot, not in reality only but even in dreams, so govern it that there will not be some cadence or sound that will escape their architecture, enormous as it is, and botched with a thousand false and fantastic patches. And it is not reason to excuse them; for though we are content with painters when they paint heaven, earth, seas, mountains, remote islands, if they gave us but some slight mark of them, and, as of things unknown, are satisfied with a feigned and obscure shadowing forth; yet when they come to draw us by the life, or any other subject which is known and familiar to us, we then require of them a perfect and exact representation of lineaments and colors, and despise them if they fail in it.

I am very well pleased with the Milesian girl who, observing the philosopher Thales to be always contemplating the celestial arch and with eyes ever gazing upward, laid something in his way that he might stumble at, to put him in mind that it would be time to take up his thoughts about things in the clouds when he had provided for those under

* Microcosmos.

his feet. Certes, she advised him very well, rather to look to himself than to gaze at heaven; * for, as Democritus says, by the mouth of Cicero, "*Quod est ante pedes nemo spectat: cœli scrutantur plagas.*" † But our condition will have it so that the knowledge of what we have in hand is as remote from us, and as much above the clouds as that of the stars: as Socrates says in Plato, that whoever tampers with philosophy may be reproached as Thales was by the woman, that he sees nothing of that which is before him; for every philosopher is ignorant of what his neighbor does; yes, and of what he does himself, and is ignorant of what they both are, whether beasts or men.

And these people who find Sebonde's arguments too weak, who are ignorant of nothing, who govern the world, and who know all things,

> "Quæ mare compescænt causæ; quid temperet annum,
> Stellæ sponte sua, jussæve, vagentur et errent;
> Quid premat obscurum lunœ, quid proferat orbem,
> Quid velit et possit rerum concordia discors;" ‡

have they not sometimes in their books sounded the difficulties they have met with of knowing their own being? We see very well that the finger moves, that the foot moves, that some parts have motion of themselves without our leave, and that others work by our direction; that one sort of apprehension occasions blushing, another paleness; such an imagination works upon the spleen only, another upon the brain; one occasions laughter, another tears; another stupefies and astounds all our senses and arrests the movements of our members; at one object the stomach will rise, at another a member that lies somewhat lower: but how

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* "She was maid-servant to Thales according to Plato, from whom this story is taken; but he does not say that he stumbled at anything laid in his way by his servant, but that, as he was walking along, with his eyes lifted up to the stars, he fell into a well."—COSTE.

† "No man regards what is under his feet; they are always prying toward heaven."—CICERO, *De Divin.*, ii. 13. It is not a saying of Democritus, but a line of poetry directed by Cicero against Democritus.

‡ "What governs the sea, what rules the year, whether the planets move spontaneously or under compulsion, what obscures the moon, what the concording discord of all things will or can effect."—HORACE, *Epist.*, i. 12, 16.

spiritual impression should make such a breach into a massive and solid subject, and the nature of the connection and contexture of these admirable springs and movements, never man yet knew: "*Omnia incerta ratione, et in naturæ majestate, abdita,*" * says Pliny; and St. Augustin: "*modus, quo corporibus adhærent spiritus . . . omnio mirus est, nec comprehendi ab homine potest; et hoc ipse homo est;*" † and yet it is not so much as doubted; for the opinions of men are received according to ancient beliefs, by authority and upon trust, as if it were religion and law: that which is commonly held about it is an accepted jargon; this assumed truth, with all its clutter of arguments and proofs, is admitted as a firm and solid body that is no more to be shaken, no further to be judged of; on the contrary, every one, as best he may, corroborates and fortifies this received belief with the utmost power of his reason, which is a supple utensil, pliable and to be accommodated to any figure: and thus the world comes to be filled with lies and fopperies. The reason that men do not doubt of so few things is that they never examine common impressions; they do not dig to the root where the faults and weakness lie; they only debate about the branches: they do not ask whether such and such a thing be true, but if it has been so and so understood; it is not inquired whether Galen said anything to purpose, but whether he said this or that. In truth there was very good reason that this curb and constraint on the liberty of our judgments and this tyranny over our beliefs, should be extended to the schools and arts; the god of scholastic knowledge is Aristotle; 'tis irreligion to question any of his decrees, as it was those of Lycurgus at Sparta; his doctrine is magisterial law, which peradventure, is as false as another. I do not know why I should not as willingly accept either the ideas of Plato, or the atoms of Epicurus, or the *plenum* and *vaccum* of Leucippus and Democritus, or the water of Thales, or the infinity of nature of Anaximander,‡ or the air of Diogenes, or the numbers

* "All things are uncertain to reason, and concealed in the majesty of nature."—PLINY, ii. 37.

† "The manner whereby souls adhere to bodies is altogether marvelous, and cannot be conceived by man, and yet this union is man."—ST. AUGUSTIN, *De Civit. Dei*, xxi. 10.

‡ Sextus Empiricus, Pyrr., iii. 4.

and symmetry of Pythagoras, or the infinity of Parmenides, or the one of Musæus, or the water and fire of Apollodorus, or the similar parts of Anaxagoras, or the discord and friendship of Empedocles, or the fire of Heraclitus, or any other opinion of that infinite confusion of opinions and determinations which this fine human reason produces by its certitude and clear-sightedness in everything it meddles withal, as I should the opinion of Aristotle upon this subject of the principles of natural things; which principles he builds of three pieces, matter, form, and privation. And what can be more vain than to make inanity itself the cause of the production of things? privation is a negative: by what fancy could he make them the cause and original of things that are? And yet all this was not to be controverted, but as an exercise of logic; nothing was to be discussed to bring it into doubt, but only to defend the author of the school from foreign objections: his authority is the *non ultra,* beyond which it was not permitted to inquire.

It is very easy upon granted foundations to build whatever we please: for according to the law and ordering of this beginning, the other parts of the structure are easily carried on without any mishap. By this way, we find our reason well grounded and discourse at a venture; for our masters prepossess and gain beforehand as much room in our belief as is necessary for them toward concluding afterward what they please, as geometricians do by their postulates; the consent and approbation we allow them, giving them power to draw us to the right and left, and to whirl us about at their own pleasure. Whoever is believed upon his presuppositions is our master and our god: he will take the level of his foundations so ample and so easy that by them he may mount us up to the clouds, if he so please. In this practice and communication of science we have taken the saying of Pythagoras, "that every expert ought to be believed in his own art," for current pay; the dialectician refers the signification of words to the grammarian; the rhetorician borrows the state of arguments from the dialectician; the poet his measures from the musician; the geometrician his proportions from the arithmetician; the metaphysicians take physical conjectures as their foundations; for every science has its principles presupposed, by which human judgment is everywhere limited.

If you drive against the barrier where the principal error lies, they have presently this sentence in their mouths; "that there is no disputing with persons who deny principles;" now men can have no principles, if not revealed to them by the Divinity; of all the rest, the beginning, the middle, and the end are nothing but dream and vapor. To those who contend upon presupposition, we must, on the contrary, presuppose to them the same axiom upon which the dispute is: for every human presupposition, and every declaration has as much authority one as another, if reason do not make the difference. Wherefore they are all to be put into the balance, and first the general and those that tyrannize over us. The persuasion of certainty is a certain testimony of folly and extreme uncertainty; and there are not a more foolish sort of men, nor that are less philosophers, than the Philodoxes of Plato:* we must inquire whether fire be hot, whether snow be white, if we know of any such things as hard or soft.

And as to those answers of which they made old stories; as to him who doubted if there were any such thing as heat, whom they bid throw himself into the fire; and to him who denied the coldness of ice, whom they bade to put a cake of ice into his bosom; these are pitiful things, altogether unworthy of the profession of philosophy. If they had let us alone in our natural state, to receive the appearance of things without us according as they present themselves to us by our senses, and had permitted us to follow our own natural appetites, simple and regulated by the condition of our birth, they might have had reason to talk at that rate; but 'tis from them that we have learned to make ourselves judges of the world; 'tis from them that we derive this fancy, "that human reason is controller-general of all that is without and within the roof of heaven that comprehends everything, that can do everything, by the means of which everything is known and understood." This answer would be good among cannibals, who enjoy the happiness of a long, quiet, and peaceable life without Aristotle's precepts, and without the knowl-

* "'Persons who are possessed of opinions of which they know not the grounds, whose heads are intoxicated with words, who see and affect only the appearances of things.' This is taken from Plato, who has characterized them very particularly at the end of the fifth book of his Republic."—COSTE.

edge of the name of physics; this answer would, peradventure, be of more value and greater force than all those they borrow from their reason and invention; of this all animals would be capable with us, and all things where the power of the law of nature is yet pure and simple; but this they have renounced. They must not tell us, "it is true, for you see and feel it to be so:" they must tell me whether I really feel what I think I feel; and if I do feel it, they must then tell me why I feel it, and how, and what; let them tell me the name, origin, parts and junctures of heat and cold; the qualities of agent and patient; or let them give up their profession, which is not to admit or approve of anything but by the way of reason; that is their test in all sorts of essays; but certainly, 'tis a test full of falsity, error, weakness, and defect.

How can we better prove this than by itself? if we are not to believe her, when speaking of herself, she can hardly be thought fit to judge of foreign things: if she know anything, it must at least be her own being and abode; she is in the soul, and either a part or an effect of it; for true and essential reason, from which we by a false color borrow the name, is lodged in the bosom of the Almighty; there is her habitation and retreat, 'tis thence she imparts her rays, when God is pleased to impart any beam of it to mankind, as Pallas issued from her father's head to communicate herself to the world.

Now let us see what human reason tells us of herself and of the soul: nor of the soul in general, of which almost all philosophy makes the celestial and first bodies participants, nor of that which Thales * attributed even to things reputed inanimate, drawn on so to do by the consideration of the loadstone; but of that which appertains to us, and that we ought the best to know:

> "Ignoratur enim, quæ sit natura animal;
> Nata sit; an, contra, nascentibus insinuetur;
> Et simul intereat nobiscum morte dirempta,
> An tenebris Orci visat, vastasque lacunas,
> An pecudes alias divinitus insinuet se."†

* Diogenes Laertius, i. 24.

† "None know the nature of the soul, whether it be born with us, or be infused into us at our birth: whether it dies with us, or descends to the shades below, or whether the gods transmit it into other animals."—LUCRETIUS, i. 113.

Crates and Dicæarches * were taught by it,† that there was no soul at all: but that the body stirs by a natural motion: Plato, ‡ that it was a substance moving of itself; Thales, a nature without repose; § Asclepiades, an exercising of the senses; Hesiod and Anaximander, a thing composed of earth and water; Parmenides, of earth and fire; Empedocles, of blood; ‖

"Sanguineam vomit ille animam;" ¶

Posidonius, Cleanthes, and Galien, that it was the heat or a hot complexion:

"Igneus est ollis vigor, et cœlestis origo;" **

Hippocrates, a spirit diffused all over the body; Varro, that it was an air received at the mouth, heated in the lungs, moistened in the heart, and diffused throughout the whole body. Zeno, the quintessence of the four elements; †† Heraclides Ponticus, that it was the light; Xenocrates and the Egyptians, a moveable number; the Chaldæans, a virtue without any determinate form:

"Habitum quemdam vitalem corporis esse,
Harmoniam Græci quam dicunt:" ‡‡

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* "Apud Sext. Empir. Pyrrh. Hypot., lib. ii. cap. 5., p 57 et adv. Mathem., *περὶ ἀνθρώπου*, p. 201. 'Dicæarchus Phærecratem quemdam Phthiotam senem — disserentem inducit nihil esse omnino animum,' etc."—CICERO, *Tusc. Quæs.*, lib. i. c. 10.

† *i. e.*, Human reason.

‡ De Legibus, x.

§ According to Plutarch, De Placitis Philosophorum, lib. iv. cap. 2, which moves of itself, *αὐτοκίνητον*.

‖ "Empedocles animum esse censet, cordi suffusum sanguine."—CICERO, *Tusc. Quæs.*, lib. i. cap. 6.

¶ "He vomits up his bloody soul."—VIRGIL, *Æneid*, ix. 349.

** "Their vigor is of fire, and descended from the gods."—*Idem, ibid.*, vi. 730.

†† "I know not where Montaigne had this; for Cicero expressly says that this quintessence, or fifth nature, is a thought of Aristotle, who makes the soul to be composed of it; and that Zeno thought the soul to be fire.—Cicero, Tusc. Quæs., lib. i. cap. 9 and 10. After this, Cicero adds, 'That Aristotle calls the mind, which he derives from the fifth nature, Entelechia, a new-coined word, signifying a perpetual motion.' "—COSTE.

‡‡ "A certain vital habit which the Greeks call a harmony."—LUCRETIUS, iii. 100.

let us not forget Aristotle, who held the soul to be that which naturally causes the body to move, which he calls Entelechia, with as cold an invention as any of the rest; for he neither speaks of the essence, nor of the original, nor of the nature of the soul, but only takes notice of the effect; Lactantius, Seneca and most of the dogmatists, have confessed that it was a thing they did not understand: and after all this enumeration of opinions, "*harum sententiarum quæ vara sit, Deus aliquis viderit:*" says Cicero;* I know, by myself, says St. Bernard,† how incomprehensible God is, seeing I cannot comprehend the parts of my own being. Heraclitus,‡ who was of opinion that every place was full of souls and demons, nevertheless maintained that no one could advance so far toward the knowledge of the soul, as ever to arrive at it; so profound was its essence.

Neither is there less controversy and debate about seating it. Hippocrates and Hierophilus place it in the ventricle of the brain; § Democritus and Aristotle throughout the whole body: ‖

> "Ut bona sæpe valetudo quum dicitur esse
> Corporis, et non est tamen hæc pars ulla valentis;" ¶

Epicurus, in the stomach:

> "Hic exsultat enim pavor ac metus; hæc loca circum
> Lætitiæ mulcent;" **

the Stoics, about and within the heart; Erasistratus, adjoining the membrane of the epicranion; Empedocles, in the blood, as also Moses,†† which was the reason why he inter-

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* "Of these opinions, which is the true, let some God determine." —*Tusc.*, i. 11.

† De Anima, c. 1.

‡ Diogenes Laertius, in vita.

§ Plutarch De Placitis Philosophorum, lib. iv., cap. 5.

‖ Sextus Empiricus adv. Mathem., p. 201.

¶ "As when good health is often said to be a part of the body, whereas of a healthy man 'tis no part."—LUCRETIUS, iii. 103.

** "This is the seat of terror and fear; here is the place where joys exist."—*Idem ibid.*, 142.

†† Genesis, iv.; Leviticus vii. 26.

dicted eating the blood of beasts because the soul is there seated: Galien thought, that every part of the body had its soul; Strato * placed it between the eyebrows; "*Qua facie quidem sit animus, aut ubi habitet, ne quærendum quidem est:*" † says Cicero. I very willingly deliver this author to you in his own words: for why spoil the language of eloquence? besides that it were no great prize to steal the matter of his inventions; they are neither very frequent, nor of any great weight, and sufficiently known. But the reason why Chrysippus argues it to be about the heart, as all the rest of that sect do, is not to be omitted. "It is," says he,‡ "because when we would affirm anything, we lay our hand upon our breasts: and when we will pronounce ἐγώ, which signifies I, we let the lower mandible sink toward the stomach." This place ought not to be over-slipped without a remark upon the futility of so great a man; for besides that these considerations are infinitely light in themselves, the last is only a proof to the Greeks that they have their souls lodged in that part: no human judgment is so vigilant that it does not sometime sleep. Why should we be afraid to speak? We see the Stoics, § fathers of human prudence, have found out that the soul of a man crushed under a ruin, long labors and strives to get out, like a mouse caught in a trap, before it can disengage itself from the burden. Some hold that the world was made to give bodies, by way of punishment, to the spirits, fallen by their own fault, from the purity wherein they had been created, the first creation having been no other than incorporeal; and that according as they are more or less remote from their spirituality, so are they more or less lightly or heavily incorporated, and that thence proceeds the variety of so much created matter. But the spirit that, for his punishment, was invested with the body of the sun, must certainly have a very rare and particular measure of thirst.

The extremities of our perquisition all fall into and terminate in a misty astonishment, as Plutarch says, ‖ of the

* De Placitis Philos., iv. 5.

† "What figure the soul is of, or what part it inhabits, is not to be inquired into."—CICERO, *Tuscul.*, i. 28.

‡ Galien, De Placitis Hippocrates et Platonis, ii. 2.

§ Seneca, Ep. 57.

‖ Life of Theseus.

testimony of histories, that as in charts and maps the utmost bounds of known countries are filled up with marshes, impenetrable forests, deserts, and uninhabitable places; and this is the reason why the most gross and childish ravings are most found in those authors who treat of the most elevated subjects, and proceed the furthest in them, losing themselves in their own curiosity and presumption. The beginning and the end of knowledge are equally foolish; observe to what a pitch Plato flies in his poetic clouds; do but take notice there of the gibberish of the gods; but what did he dream of when he defined man to be a two-legged animal, without feathers: * giving those who had a mind to deride him, a pleasant occasion; for, having pulled off the feathers of a live capon, they went about calling it the Man of Plato.

And what of the Epicureans? out of what simplicity did they first imagine that their atoms, which they said were bodies having some weight and a natural motion downward, had made the world; till they were put in mind by their adversaries that, according to this description, it was impossible they should unite and join to one another, their fall being so direct and perpendicular, and producing parallel lines throughout? wherefore they were fain thereafter to add a fortuitous and lateral motion, and, moreover, to furnish their atoms with hooked tails, by which they might unite and cling to one another; and even then do not those who attack them upon this second invention, put them hardly to it? "If the atoms have by chance formed so many sorts of figures, why did it never fall out that they made a house or a shoe? why, at the same rate, should we not believe that an infinite number of Greek letters, strown all over a place, might fall into the contexture of the Ilaid?" †

"Whatever is capable of reason," says Zeno, ‡ "is better than that which is not capable: there is nothing better than the world: the world is therefore capable of reason." Cotta, § by this same argumentation, makes the world a

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* Diogenes Laertius, in vita, 40.

† Cicero, De Nat. Deor., ii. 57.

‡ Idem, ibid., 37.

§ Idem, ibid., iii. 9.

mathematician; and 'tis also made a musician and an organist by this other argumentation of Zeno; "the whole is more than a part; we are capable of wisdom, and are part of the world; therefore the world is wise." There are infinite like examples, not merely of arguments that are false in themselves, but silly; that do not hold together, and that accuse their authors not so much of ignorance as of imprudence, in the reproaches the philosophers throw in one another's teeth upon the dissensions in their opinions and sects.

Whoever should bundle up a lusty faggot of the fooleries of human wisdom, would produce wonders. I willingly muster up these few as patterns in their way not less profitable than more moderate instructions. Let us judge by these what opinion we are to have of man, of his sense and reason, when in these great persons, who have raised human knowledge so high, so many gross and manifest errors and defects are to be found!

For my part, I would rather believe that they have treated of knowledge casually, and as a toy with both hands, and have contended about reason as of a vain and frivolous instrument, setting on foot all sorts of inventions and fancies, sometimes more sinewy, and sometimes weaker. This same Plato, who defines man as if he were a fowl, says elsewhere,* after Socrates, "that he does not, in truth, know what man is, and that he is a member of the world the hardest to understand." But this variety and instability of opinions, they tacitly lead us as it were by the hand to this resolution of their irresolution. They profess not always to deliver their opinions barefaced and apparent; they have one while disguised them in the fabulous shadows of poesy, and another while under some other mask; our imperfection carries this also along with it, that raw meat is not always proper for our stomachs; we must dry, alter, and mix it. These men do the same; they often conceal their real opinions and judgments, and falsify them to accommodate themselves to the public use. They will not make an open profession of ignorance and of the imbecility of human reason, that they may not frighten children; but they sufficiently discover it to us under the appearance of a troubled and inconstant science.

* In the first Alcibiades.

I advised a person in Italy, who had a great mind to speak Italian, that provided he only had a desire to make himself understood, without being ambitious otherwise to excel, that he should simply make use of the first words that came to the tongue's end, Latin, French, Spanish, or Gascon, and then by adding the Italian termination, he could not fail of hitting upon some idiom of the country, either Tuscan, Roman, Venetian, Piedmontese, or Neapolitan, and to apply himself to some one of those many forms: I say the same of philosophy; she has so many faces, so much variety, and has said so many things, that all our dreams and fantasies are there to be found: human imagination can conceive nothing, good or bad, that is not there; "*Nihil tam absurdè dici potest, quod non dicatur ab liquo philosophorum.*" * And I am the more willing to expose my own whimsies to the public, forasmuch as though they are spun out of myself and without any pattern, I know they will be found related to some ancient humor, and there will be no want of some one to say, "That's whence he took it." My manners are natural; I have not called in the assistance of any discipline to frame them: but weak as they are, when it came into my head to lay them open to the world's view, and that, to expose them to the light in a little more decent garb, I went about to help them with reasons and examples: it was a wonder to myself incidentally to find them comformable to so many philosophical discourses and examples. I never knew what regimen my life was of till after it was near worn out and spent: a new figure, an unpremeditate and accidental philosopher.

But to return to our soul:† that Plato has placed reason in the brain, anger in the heart, and concupiscence in the liver, 'tis likely that it was rather an interpretation of the movements of the soul than that he intended a division and separation of it, as of a body, into several members. And the most likely of their opinions is, that 'tis always a soul, that, by its faculty, reasons, remembers, comprehends, judges, desires and exercises all its other operations by divers instruments of the body; as the pilot guides his

* "Nothing can be so absurdly said, that has not been said before by some of the philosophers."—CICERO, *De Divin.*, ii. 58.

† Second part of the Timæus; and see Diogenes Lærtius, Life of Plato.

ship according to his experience of it: now tightening, now slacking, the cordage, one while hoisting the mainyard or moving the rudder, by one and the same power carrying on so many several effects; and that it is lodged in the drain, which appears from this that the wounds and accibents which touch that part immediately offend the faculties of the soul; and 'tis not incongruous that it should thence diffuse itself into the other parts of the body:

> "Medium non deserit unquam
> Cœli Phœbus iter; radiis tamen omnia lustrat;" *

as the sun sheds from heaven its light and influence, and fills the world with them:

> "Cætera pars animæ, per totum dissita corpus,
> Paret, et ad numen mentis nomenque movetur." †

Some have said, that there was a general soul, as it were a great body, from which all the particular souls were extracted, and thither again returned, always restoring themselves to that universal matter:

> "Deum namque ire per omnes
> Terrasque, tractusque maris, cœlumque profundum:
> Hinc pecudes, armenta, viros, genus omne ferarum,
> Quemque sibi tenues nascentem arcessere vitas;
> Scilicet huc reddi deinde, ac resoluta referri
> Omnia: nec morti esse locum:" ‡

others, that they only rejoined and reunited themselves to it; others, that they were produced from the divine substance; others, by the angels, of fire and air; others, that they were from all antiquity; some, that they were created at the very point of time the bodies wanted them; others made them descend from the orb of the moon, and return thither; the generality of the ancients, that they were begotten from father to son, after a like manner and production with all other natural things: raising their argument from the likeness of children to their fathers:

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* "Phœbus never deviates from his central way, yet enlightens all things with his rays."—CLAUDIUS, *De Sexto Consul. Hon.*, v. 411.

† "The other part of the soul, diffused all over the body, obeys the divinity and great name of the mind."—LUCRETIUS, iii. 144.

‡ "They believe that God circulates through all the earth, sea, and high heavens; thence animals, men, all the kinds of wild animals, draw the breath of life, and thither return when the body is dissolved: there is no place for death."—VIRGIL, *Geor.*, iv. 221.

"Instillata patris virtus tibi;
Fortes creantur fortibus, et bonis;"*

and that we see descend from fathers to their children, not only bodily marks, but moreover a resemblance of humors, complexions and inclinations of the soul:

"Denique cur acris violentia triste leonum
Seminium sequitur? vulpes dolus, et fuga cervos
A patribus datur, et patrius pavor incitat artus?"

. . . . . .

Si non, certa suo quai semine seminioque
Vis animi pariter crescit cum corpore toto?"†

that thereupon the divine justice is grounded, punishing in the children the faults of their fathers; forasmuch as the contagion of paternal vices is in some sort imprinted in the soul of children, and that the disorders of their will extend to them:‡ moreover, that if souls had any other derivation than a natural consequence and that they had been some other thing out of the body, they would retain some memory of their first being, the natural faculties that are proper to them of discoursing, reasoning, and remembering, being considered:

"Si in corpus nascentibus insinuatur,
Cur super anteactam ætatem meminisse nequimus;
Nec vestigia gestarum rerum ulla tenemus?"§

for to make the condition of our souls such as we would have it to be, we must presuppose them all-knowing, when in their natural simplicity and purity; and this being so, they had been such, while free from the prison of the body, as well before they entered into it, as we hope they shall be after they are gone out of it: and this former knowl-

* "The virtues of the father have been infused into thee. The brave spring from the brave, the good from the good."—HOR. *Od.*, iv. 4, 29.

† "For why should ferocity ever spring from the fierce lion's seed? why craft from the fox? why fear from the stag? Why should his readiness to fly descend to him from his father? . . . but that the soul has germs like the body, and still increases as the body increases."—LUCRETIUS, iii. 741,746.

‡ Plutarch, Why the Divine Justice, etc.

§ "If it be infused in our bodies at our birth, why do we retain no memory of our preceding life, and why not remember anything we did before?"—LUCRETIUS, iii. 671.

edge, it should follow, they should remember being yet in the body, as Plato said,* "That what we learn is no other than a remembrance of what we knew before;" a thing which every one by experience may maintain to be false; forasmuch, in the first place, as we remember what we have been taught: and as, if the memory purely performed its office, it would at least suggest to us something more than what we have been taught: secondly, that which she knew, being in her purity, was a true knowledge, knowing things, as they are, by her divine intelligence: whereas here we make her receive falsehood and vice, when we tell her of these, and herein she cannot employ her reminiscence, that image and conception having never been planted in her. To say that the corporeal presence so suffocates her natural faculties that they are there utterly extinguished, is, first, contrary to this other belief of acknowledging her power to be so great, and those operations of it that men sensibly perceive in this life to be so admirable, as to have thereby concluded this divinity and past eternity, and the immortality to come:

> "Nam si tantopere est animi mutata potestas,
> Omnis ut actarum exciderit retinentia rerum,
> Non, ut opinor, ea ab letho jam longior errat."†

Furthermore, 'tis here with us, and not elsewhere, that the powers and effects of the soul ought to be considered: all the rest of her perfections are vain and useless to her; 'tis by her present condition that all her immortality is to be rewarded and paid, and of the life of man only that she is to render an account. It had been injustice to have stripped her of her means of power; to have disarmed her, in order in the time of her captivity and imprisonment, of her weakness and infirmity, in the time wherein she is under force and constraint, to pass my sentence and condemnation of infinite and perpetual duration; and insist upon the consideration of so short a time, peradventure a life of but an hour or two, or at the most but of a century, which have no more proportion to infinity than an instant:

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* In the Phædo.

† "For if the mind be changed to that degree that it has lost all memory of past things, this, I confess, appears to me not much different from death."—LUCRETIUS, iii. 674.

from this momentary interval, to ordain and definitely determine her whole being: it were an unreasonable disproportion to acquire an eternal recompense in return for so short a life. Plato* to save himself from this inconvenience, will have future rewards limited to the term of a hundred years, relatively to human duration; and among ourselves several have given them temporal limits: by this they judged that the generation of the soul followed the common condition of human things, as also her life, according to the opinion of Epicurus and Democritus, which has been the most received, pursuant to these fine notions: that we see it born as soon as the body is capable of it; that we see it increase in vigor as the corporeal vigor increases; that its feebleness in infancy is very manifest, then its better form and maturity, and finally, its declension in old age, and its decrepitude:

> "Gigni pariter cum corpore, et una
> Crescere sentimus, pariterque senescere mentem:"†

they perceived it to be capable of divers passions, and agitated with several painful motions, whence it fell into lassitude and uneasiness; capable of alteration and change, of cheerfulness, of dullness, of faintness; subject to diseases and injuries of its own, as the stomach or the foot:

> "Mentem sanari, corpus ut ægrum,
> Cernimus, et flecti medicina posse videmus:"‡

dazzled and intoxicated with the fumes of wine; jostled from her seat by the vapors of a burning fever; laid asleep by the application of some medicaments, and roused by others:

> "Corpoream naturam animi esse necesse est,
> Corporeis quoniam telis ictuque laborat:"§

they saw it astounded and all its faculties overthrown by

* Republic, x.

† "We see that souls are born with the bodies, with them increase, with them decay."—LUCRETIUS, iii. 446.

‡ "We see sick minds cured as well as sick bodies by the help of medicines."— *Idem, ibid.*, 509.

§ "The soul must, of necessity, be corporeal, for we see it suffer from wounds and blows."—LUCRETIUS, iii. 509.

the mere bite of a mad dog, and in that condition, to have no such stability of reason, no such sufficiency, no such virtue, no philosophical resolution, no such resistance as could exempt it from the subjection of these accidents; the slaver of a contemptible cur, shed upon the hand of Socrates, to shake all his wisdom and all his so great and well regulated imaginations, and so to annihilate them as that there remained no trace or footstep of his former knowledge:

> "Vis . . . anamai
> Conturbatur, et . . . divisa seorsum
> Disjectatur, eodem illo distracta veneno:" *

and this poison to find no more resistance in this great soul, than in that of an infant of four years old; a poison sufficient to make all philosophy, if it were incarnate, furious and mad; insomuch that Cato, so stiff-necked against death and fortune, could not endure the sight of a looking-glass or of water, confounded with horror and affright at the danger of falling, by the contagion of a mad dog, into the disease called by physicians hydrophobia:

> "Vis morbi distracta per artus
> Turbat agens animam, spumantes æquore salso
> Ventorum ut validis fervescunt viribus undæ." †

Now, as to this particular, philosophy has sufficiently armed man to encounter all other accidents, either with patience, or if the search of that costs too dear, by an infallible defeat, in totally depriving himself of all sentiment: but these are expedients that are only of use to a soul being itself and in its full power, capable of reason and deliberation: but not at all proper for this inconvenience, where, even in a philosopher, the soul becomes the soul of a madman, troubled, overturned, and lost: which many occasions may produce, as a too vehement agitation that any violent passion of the soul may beget in itself, or a wound in a certain part of the person, or vapors from the stomach, any of which may stupefy the understanding and turn the brain.

> "Morbis in corporis avius errat
> Sæpe animus; dementit enim, deliraque fatur;

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* "The power of the soul is disturbed, overthrown, and dispersed abroad by the same poison."—*Idem, ibid.*, 491.

† "The violence of the disease diffused throughout the limbs, disturbs the soul, as at sea, the foaming waves swell and boil, stirred by the strong winds."—*Idem, ibid.*

Interdumque gravi lethargo fertur in altum
Æterumque soporem, occulis nutuque cadenti." *

The philosophers, methinks, have scarcely touched this string, no more than another of the same importance; they have this dilemma continually in their mouths to console our mortal condition: "The soul is either mortal or immortal; if mortal, it will suffer no pain; if immortal, it will change for the better." They never touch the other branch: "What if she change for the worse," and leave to the poets the menaces of future torments; but thereby they make for themselves a good game. These are two omissions that I often meet with in their discourses: I return to the first.

This soul loses the use of the sovereign stoical good, so constant and so firm: our fine human wisdom must here yield and give up its arms. As to the rest, they also considered, by the vanity of human reason, that the mixture and association of two so contrary things as the mortal and the immortal, was unimaginable:

"Quippe etenim mortale æterno jungere, et una
Consentire putare, et fungi mutua posse,
Desipere est. Quid enim diversius esse putandum est,
Aut magis inter se disjunctum discrepitansque,
Quam mortale quod est, immortali atque perenni,
Junctum, in concilio sævas tolerare procellas?" †

Moreover, they perceived the soul declining in death, as well as the body:

"Simul ævo fessa fatiscit:" ‡

which, according to Zeno, the image of sleep sufficiently demonstrates to us; for he looks upon it as a fainting and fall of the soul, as well as of the body; "*Contrahi animum et quasi labi putat atque decidere.*" § And what they per-

* "For when the body is sick, the mind often shares in the disease; wanders, grows wild, and raves, and sometimes by a heavy lethargy is cast into a profound and everlasting sleep; the eyes close, the head sinks."—LUCRETIUS, iii. 464.

† "For to join the mortal and the eternal, and think they can agree and work together, is folly. For what things are more differing or more distinct between themselves, and more opposed than the mortal and the immortal and eternal, joined together in order to undergo cruel storms?"—*Idem, ibid.*, 801.

‡ "It yields up the body to old age."—LUCRETIUS, iii. 459.

§ "He thinks the mind is transported, and that it slips and falls."—CICERO, *De Divin.*, ii. 58.

ceived in some, that the soul maintained its force and vigor to the last gasp of life, they attributed to the variety of diseases; as it is observable in men at the last extremity, that some retain one sense and some another; one the hearing, and another the smell, without any alteration; and that there is no so universal a deprivation, that some parts do not remain entire and vigorous:

> "Non a lo pacto, quam si, pes cum dolet ægri,"
> In nullo caput interea sit forte dolore." *

The sight of our judgment has the same relation to truth that the owl's eyes have to the splendor of the sun, says Aristotle.† By what can we better convict it than by so gross blindness in so apparent a light? For as to the contrary opinion of the immortality of the soul, which Cicero says was first introduced, at all events by the testimony of books, by Pherecides Syrius ‡ in the time of King Tullus, though others attribute it to Thales, and others to others, 'tis the part of human science that is treated of with the most doubt and the greatest reservation. The most positive dogmatists are, on this point principally, constrained to fly to the refuge of the Academy. No one knows what Aristotle has established upon this subject, any more than all the ancients in general, who handle it with a wavering belief: "*Rem gratissimam promittentium magis, quam probantium;*" § he conceals himself in clouds of words and difficult and unintelligible fancies, and has left to his sect as great a dispute about his judgment, as about the matter itself.

Two things rendered this opinion plausible to them: one, that without the immortality of souls there would be nothing whereon to ground the vain hopes of glory, which is a consideration of wonderful repute in the world; the other, that it is a very profitable impression, as Plato says,‖

* "A sick man's foot may be in pain, yet his head be free from any malady."—LUCRETIUS, iii. 111.

† Metaphysics, ii. 1.

‡ Of Syros, Cicero, Tusc. Quæs., i. 17.

§ "A thing more satisfactory in the promise, than in the proof." —SENECA, *Ep.* 102.

‖ Laws, x. 13.

that vices, though they escape the discovery and cognizance of human justice, are still within the reach of the divine, which will pursue them even after the death of the guilty. Man is excessively solicitous to prolong his being, and has, to the utmost of his power, provided for it; monuments are erected for the conservation of the body, and from glory to transmit the name; impatient of his fortune he has employed all his wit and opinion in the rebuilding of himself, and in the sustenance of himself by his productions. The soul, by reason of its anxiety and impotence, being unable to stand by itself, wanders up and down to seek support in consolations, hopes, and other external circumstances, to which she adheres and fixes; and how light or fantastic soever invention pronounces them to it, relies more willingly and with greater assurance upon them, than upon itself. But 'tis wonderful to observe, how short the most constant and firm maintainers of this just and clear persuasion of the immortality of the soul fall, and how weak their arguments are, when they go about to prove it by human reason: "*Somnia sunt non docentis, sed optantis,*" * says one of the ancients. By which testimony man may know, that he owes the truth he himself finds out to fortune and accident; since, even when it is fallen into his hand, he has not wherewith to hold and maintain it, and that his reason has not force to make use of it. All things produced by our own reasoning and understanding whether true or false, are subject to incertitude and controversy. 'Twas for the chastisement of our pride, and for the instruction of our misery and incapacity, that God wrought the perplexity and confusion of the old tower of Babel. Whatever we undertake without His assistance, whatever we see without the lamp of His grace, is but vanity and folly; we corrupt and debase by our weakness the very essence of truth, which is uniform and constant, when fortune puts it into our possession. What course soever man takes of himself, God still permits it to come to the same confusion, the image whereof He so vividly represents to us in the just chastisement wherewith He crushed Nimrod's presumption, and frustrated the vain attempt of his pyramid; "*Perdam sapientiam sapientium, et*

* "They are dreams, not of the teacher but of the wisher."—CICERO, *Acad.*, ii. 38.

prudentiam prudentium regrobabo."* The diversity of idioms and languages with which He disturbed this work, what are they other than this infinite and perpetual altercation and discordance of opinions and reasons, which accompany and confound the vain building of human wisdom, and to very good effect? For what would hold us if we had but the least grain of knowledge? This saint has very much obliged me: "*Ipsa veritatis occultatio aut humilitatis exercitatio est, aut elationis attritio.*" † To what a pitch of presumption and insolence do we raise our blindness and folly!

But to return to my subject: it was truly very good reason that we should be beholden to God only, and to the favor of His grace, for the truth of so noble a belief, since from His sole bounty we receive the fruit of immortality, which consists in the enjoyment of eternal beatitude. Let us ingenuously confess that God alone has dictated it to us, and faith; for 'tis no lesson of nature and our own reason: and whoever will inquire into his own being and power, both within and without, otherwise than by this divine privilege: whoever shall consider man impartially and without flattery, will see nothing in him of efficacy or faculty that relishes of anything but death and earth. The more we give, and confess to owe and render to God, we do it with the greater Christianity. That which this Stoic philosopher says he holds from the fortuitous consent of the popular voice, had it not been better had he held it from God? "*Cum de animorum æternitate disserimus, non leve momentum apud nos habet consensus hominum aut timentium inferos, aut colentium. Utor hac publica persusione.*"‡

Now, the weakness of human arguments upon this subject is particularly manifested by the fabulous circumstances they have superadded as consequences of this

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* "I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent."—ST. PAUL., 1 *Cor.* i. 19.

† "The very obscurity of the truth is either an exercise of humility or a crushing of pride."—ST. AUGUSTIN, *De Civit. Dei*, xi. 22.

‡ "When we discourse of the immortality of souls, the consent of men that either fear or adore the infernal powers, is of no small moment. I make use of this public persuasion."—SENECA, *Epist.*, 117.

opinion, to find out of what condition this immortality of ours was. Let us omit the Stoics: (" *Usuram nobis largiuntur tanquam cornicibus: diu mansuros aiunt animos; semper, negant:*" *) who give to souls a life after this, but finite. The most universal and received fancy, and which continues down to our times in various places, is that of which they make Pythagoras the author: not that he was the original inventor, but because it received a great deal of weight and repute by the authority of his approbation; and this is, that souls at their departure out of us do nothing but shift from one body to another, from a lion to a horse, from a horse to a king, continually traveling at this rate from habitation to habitation. And he himself said that he remembered he had been Æthalides, since that Euphorbus, and afterward Hermotimus, and finally from Pyrrhus was passed into Pythagoras, having a memory of himself of two hundred and six years.† And some have added that these very souls at times remount to heaven and come down again:

> " O pater, anne aliquas ad cœlum hinc ire putandum est
> Sublimes animas, iterumque ad tarda reverti
> Corpora? quæ lucis miseris tam dira cupido." ‡

Origen makes them eternally to go and come, from a better to a worse estate. The opinion that Varro § makes mention of is, that after four hundred and forty years' revolution they are reunited to their first bodies; Chrysippus held that this would happen after a certain space of time unknown and unlimited. Plato, ‖ who professes to have derived from Pindar and the ancient poets the belief that souls are to undergo infinite vicissitudes of mutation, for which the soul is prepared, having neither punishment nor reward in the other world, but what is temporal, as its life here is

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* " They give us long life, as also they do to crows; they say our soul shall continue long, but that it shall continue always they deny."—CICERO, *Tusc. Quæs.*, i. 31.

† Diogenes Laertius, in vita.

‡ " O father, is it to be believed that some sublime souls should hence mount to heaven and thence return to dull flesh."—VIRGIL, *Æneid*, vi. 719.

§ Cited by St. Augustin, De Civit. Dei, xxii. 28.

‖ In the Menon.

but temporal, concludes that it has a singular knowledge of the affairs of heaven, of hell, of the world, through all which it has passed, repassed, and made stay in several voyages; fit matters for her memory. Observe her progress elsewhere:* "he who has lived well is reunited to the star to which he is assigned: he who has lived ill removes into a woman, and, if he do not there reform, is again removed into a beast of condition suitable to his vicious manners, and will see no end of his punishments till he return to his natural constitution, and has by the force of reason purged himself from the gross, stupid, and elementary qualities he was polluted with." But I will not omit the objection the Epicureans make against this transmigration from one body to another; 'tis a pleasant one: they ask, "what expedient would be found out if the number of dying should chance to be greater than that of those who are coming into the world? for the souls turned out of their old habitation would scuffle and crowd which should first get possession of this new lodging." And they further demand, "how they should pass away their time while waiting till a new quarter were made ready for them: or, on the contrary, if more animals should be born than die, the bodies, they say, would be put in an ill condition while awaiting a soul to be infused into them; and it would fall out that some bodies would die before they had been alive.

> "Denique connubia ad veneris, partusque ferarum
> Esse animas præsto, deridiculum esse videtur;
> Et spectare immortales mortalia membra
> Innumero numero, certareque præproperanter
> Inter se, quæ prima potissimaque insinuetur." †

Others have arrested the soul in the body of the deceased, with it to animate serpents, worms, and other beasts which are said to be bred out of the corruption of our limbs, and even out of our ashes; others divide it into two parts, the one mortal, the other immortal; others make it corporeal,

* Plato in the Timæus.

† "It seems ridiculous that souls should be always awaiting the coupling and birth of animals, and that immortals should in vast numbers crowd about mortal germs, and strive and contend with eagerness which should first possess them."—LUCRETIUS, iii. 777.

and nevertheless immortal; some take it immortal without science or knowledge. And some have believed that devils were made of the souls of the damned, and this has been the fancy of some among ourselves, as Plutarch thinks that gods are made of those that are saved; for there are few things which that author is so positive in as he is in this; ever maintaining, elsewhere, a doubtful and ambiguous way of expression: "We are to hold," says he,* "and steadfastly to believe, that the souls of virtuous men, both according to nature and to the divine justice, become saints, and from saints demigods, and from demigods, after they are perfectly, as in sacrifices of purgation, cleansed and purified, being delivered from all passibility and all mortality, they become, not by any civil decree but in real truth, and according to all probability of reason, entire and perfect god, receiving a most happy and glorious end." But who desires to see him, he who is the most sober and moderate of the whole tribe, lay about him with greater boldness, and relate his miracles upon this subject, I refer him to his Treatise of the Moon, and his Dæmon of Socrates, where he may, as evidently as in any other place whatever, satisfy himself that the mysteries of philosophy have many strange things in common with those of poesy; the human understanding losing itself in attempting to sound and search all things to the bottom, just as we, tired and worn out with a long course of life, relapse into infancy. Such are the fine and certain instructions which we extract from human knowledge concerning the soul.

Neither is there less temerity in what it teaches us touching our corporeal parts. Let us choose out one or two examples, for otherwise we should lose ourselves in this vast and troubled ocean of medicinal errors. Let us see whether, at least, they agree about the matter whereof men produce one another; for as to their first production it is no wonder, if in a thing so high and so long since past, human understanding finds itself perplexed and dissipated. Archelaus the naturalist, whose disciple and favorite Socrates was, according to Aristoxenus, said,† that both men and beasts were made of a lacteous slime, expressed by the

* Life of Romulus.

† Diogenes Laertius, ii. 17.

heat of the earth: Pythagoras says,* that our seed is the foam of our better blood: Plato,† that it is the distillation of the marrow of the backbone, which he argues from the circumstance that that part is first sensible of being weary of the work: Alcmeon,‡ that is a part of the substance of the brain, and this is shown, says he, inasmuch as it causes weakness of the eyes in those immoderately labor in that exercise: Democritus,§ that it is a substance extracted from the whole mass of the body: Epicurus,‖ that it is extracted from soul and body: Aristotle, an excrement drawn from the aliment of the blood, the last which is diffused through our members: others, that it blood concocted and digested by the heat of the genitories, which they judge by reason that in excessive endeavors a man voids pure blood; wherein there seems to be the most likelihood, could a man extract any probability from so infinite a confusion. Now, to bring this seed to do its work, how many contrary opinions are set on foot! Aristotle and Democritus are of opinion that women¶ have no sperm, and that it is nothing but a sweat that they distil in the heat of pleasure and motion, and that contributes nothing at all to generation: Galen, on the contrary, and his followers, believe that without the concurrence of seeds there can be no generation. Here, again, are the physicians, the philosophers, the lawyers, and the divines, by the ears with our wives, about the dispute, "for what time women carry their fruit;" and I, for my part, by the example of myself, side with those who maintain that a woman goes eleven months with child. The world is built upon this experience; there is not so simple a little woman that cannot give her judgment in all these controversies, and yet we cannot agree.

Here is enough to evidence that man is no better instructed in the knowledge of himself in his corporeal than in his spiritual part. We have proposed himself to himself, and his reason to his reason, to see what she could say. I think I have sufficiently demonstrated how little she understands herself in herself; and who understands not

* Plutarch, Opinions of the Philosophers, v. 3.

† Idem, ibid.

‡ Idem, ibid.

§ Idem, ibid.

‖ Idem, ibid.

¶ Plutarch (*ubi supra*) adds Zeno to Aristotle, and says expressly that Democritus believed that the females shed their seed.

himself in himself, in what can he possibly understand? "*Quasi vero mensuram ullius rei possit agere, qui sui nesciat.*"* Truly, Protagoras told us a pretty flam, † in making man the measure of all things who never knew so much as his own; if it be not he, his dignity will not permit that any other creature should have this advantage; now, he being so contrary in himself, and one judgment so incessantly subverting another, this favorable proposition was but a mockery, which led us necessarily to conclude the nullity of the compass and compasser. When Thales ‡ reputes the knowledge of man very difficult for man, he, at the same time gives him to understand, that all other knowledge is impossible to him.

You, for whom I have taken the pains, contrary to my custom, to write so long a discourse, will not refuse to maintain your Sebonde by the ordinary forms of arguing wherein you are every day instructed, and in this will exercise your study. For this last fencing trick is never to be made use of but as an extreme remedy; 'tis a desperate thrust, wherein you are to quit your own arms to make your adversary abandon his; and a secret sleight, which must be very rarely and very reservedly put in practice. 'Tis great temerity to lose yourself, that you may destroy another; you must not die to be revenged, as Gobrias did; for, hotly grappling in combat with a Persian lord, Darius coming in, sword in hand, and fearing to strike lest he should kill Gobrias, he called out to him boldly to fall on, though he should run them both through at once.§ I have known weapons and conditions of single combat, without quarter, and wherein he who proposed them, put himself and his adversary upon terms of inevitable death to them both, censured as unjust. The Portuguese, in the Indian Sea, took certain Turks prisoners, who, impatient of their captivity, resolved (and it succeeded), by striking some ship nails against one another and making a spark fall into the barrels of powder that were in the place where they

* "As if he could understand the measure of any other thing, that knows not his own."—PLINY, *Nat. Hist.*, ii. 1.

† Apud Sextus Empiricus, Advers. Mathem., p. 148.

‡ Diogenes Laertius, in vita.

§ Herodotus, iii. 78.

were confined, to blow up and reduce themselves, their masters, and the vessels to ashes. We touch here the out-pale and utmost limits of the sciences, wherein the extremity is vicious, as in virtue. Keep yourselves in the common road; it is not good to be so subtle and cunning. Remember the Tuscan proverb—

"Chi troppo s'assottiglia, si scavezza." *

I advise you, in all your opinions and meditations, as well as in your manners and all other things, to keep yourself moderate and reserved, and to avoid all novelty and strangeness; I am an enemy to all out-of-the-way proceedings. You who by the authority of your greatness, and yet more by the advantages which those qualities give you that are more your own, may, with the twinkle of an eye, command whom you please, should give this charge to some professor of letters, who might, after a much better manner, have sustained and illustrated these things to you. But here is as much as you will stand in need of.

Epicurus said of the laws, that the worst were so necessary for us, that without them men would devour one another; and Plato affirms, that without laws we should live like beasts. Our mind is a wandering, dangerous, and temerarious tool; it is hard to couple any order or measure to it; and in my time, those who are endued with some rare excellence above others, or any extraordinary vivacity of understanding, we see almost all of them lash out into license of opinions and manners; 'tis almost a miracle to find one temperate and socially tractable. There's all the reason in the world to limit the human mind within the strictest limits possible; in study, as in all the rest, we ought to have its steps and advances numbered and fixed, and that the limits of its inquisition be bounded by art. It is curbed and fettered by religions, laws, customs, sciences, precepts, mortal and immortal penalties, and rewards; and yet we see that by its volubility and dissolvability it escapes from all these bounds; 'tis a vain body which has nothing to lay hold on; or to seize a various and difform body, incapable of being either bound or held. Truly, there are few souls so regular, firm, and well de-

* "If you draw your thread too fine it will break."—PETRARCA, *Canz.*, xi. 48.

scended, that are to be trusted with their own conduct, and that can, with moderation, and without temerity, sail in the liberty of their own judgments, beyond the common and received opinions; 'tis more expedient to put them under pupilage. The mind is a dangerous weapon, even to the possessor, if he knows not discreetly how to use it; and there is not a beast to whom a headboard can more properly be given to keep his looks down and before his feet, and to hinder him from wandering here and there out of the tracks which custom and the laws have laid before him: therefore it will be much better for you to keep yourself in the beaten path, let it be what it will, than to fly out at a venture with this unbridled liberty. If any of these new doctors should seek to exercise his ingenuity in your presence, at the expense both of your soul and his own, to avoid this dangerous plague, which is every day laid in your way, this preservative, in extremest necessity, will prevent the contagion of this poison from offending either you or your company.

The liberty, then, and frolic forwardness of these ancient wits, produced in philosophy and human sciences, several sects of different opinions, each undertaking to judge and make choice of what he would stick to and maintain. But now that men go all one way, "*Qui certis quibusdam destinatisque sententiis addicti et consecrati sunt, ut etiam, quæ non probant, cogantur defendere,*"* and that we receive the arts by civil authority and decree, so that the schools have but one pattern and a like circumscribed institution and discipline, we no longer take notice what the coin weighs and is really worth, but every one receives it according to the estimate that the common approbation and the ordinary course put upon it: the alloy is not disputed, but how much it is current for. In like manner, all things pass; we take physic as we do geometry, and tricks of hocus-pocus, enchantments, codpiece-points, correspondence with souls of the dead, prognostications, domifications,† and even this ridiculous pursuit of the philoso-

* "Who are so tied and obliged to certain beliefs, that they are bound to defend even those they do not approve."—CICERO, *Tusc. Quæs.*, ii. 2.

† The dividing of the heavens into twelve squares or houses, for astrological purposes.

pher's stone, all things pass for current pay, without scruple or contradiction. We need to know no more but that Mars' house is in the middle of the triangle of the hand, that of Venus in the thumb, and that of Mercury in the little finger; that when the table-line cuts the tubercle of the forefinger, 'tis a sign of cruelty; that when it falls short of the middle finger, and that the natural medium line makes an angle with the vital in the same side, 'tis a sign of a miserable death; that if, in a woman, the natural line be open, and does not close the angle with the vital, this denotes that she will not be very chaste; I leave you to judge whether a man, thus qualified, may not pass with reputation and esteem in all companies.

Theophrastus said that human knowledge, guided by the senses, might judge of the causes of things to a certain degree; but that being arrived at extreme and first causes, it must stop short, and retire, by reason either of its own infirmity, or the difficulty of things. 'Tis a moderate and gentle opinion, that our own understanding may conduct us to the knowledge of some things, and that it has certain measures of power, beyond which 'tis temerity to employ it; this opinion is plausible, and introduced by men of well-composed minds. But 'tis hard to limit our mind; 'tis inquisitive and greedy, and will no more stop at a thousand, than at fifty paces; having experimentally found that, where in one man has failed, another has hit; that was what unknown to one age, the age following has explained; and that arts and sciences are not cast in a mold, but are formed and perfected by degrees, by often handling and polishing, as bears leisurely lick their cubs into shape; what my force cannot discover, I do not yet desist to sound and to try; and, handling and kneading this new matter over and over again, turning and heating it, I lay open to him, that shall succeed me, a kind of facility to enjoy it more at his ease, and make it more manageable and supple for him:

> "Ut Hymettia sole
> Cera remollescit, tractataque pollice multas
> Vertitur in facies, ipsoque fit utilis usu:" *

as much will the second do to the third, which is the reason

* "As Hymettian wax grows softer in the sun, and tempered by the fingers assumes various forms, and is rendered fit for use."—Ovid, *Met.*, x. 284.

that difficulty ought not to make me despair; and my own incapacity as little; for 'tis only my own.

Man is as capable of all things, as of some: and if he confess, as Theophrastus says, the ignorance of first causes and principles, let him boldly surrender to me all the rest of his knowledge: if he is defective in foundation, his reason is on the ground: disputation and inquisition have no other aim but principles; if this do not stop his career, he runs into an infinite irresolution. "*Non potest aliud alio magis minusve comprehendi, quoniam omnium rerum una est definitio comprehendendi.*"* Now, 'tis very likely that if the soul knew anything, it would in the first place know itself; and if it knew anything out of itself, it would be its own body and case, before anything else: if we see the gods of physic, to this very day, debating about our anatomy,

"Mulciber in Trojam, pro Troja stabat Apollo:"†

when are we to expect that they will be agreed? We are nearer neighbors to ourselves than the whiteness of snow or the weight of stones are to us: if man does not know himself, how should he know his functions and powers? It is not, peradventure, that we have not some real knowledge in us, but 'tis by chance; and forasmuch as errors are received into our soul by the same way, after the same manner and by the same conduct, it has not wherewithal to distinguish them, nor wherewithal to choose the truth from falsehood.

The Academics admitted a certain inclination of judgment, and thought it too crude to say, "that it was not more likely that snow was white than black, and that we were no more assured of the motion of a stone thrown by the hand than of that of the eighth sphere;" and to avoid this difficulty and strangeness, which can, in truth, not easily lodge in our imagination, though they conclude that we are in no sort capable of knowledge, and that truth is engulfed in so profound an abyss as is not to be penetrated by human sight: yet do they acknowledge some things to be more likely than others, and received into their judgment this

* "One thing can be no more or less comprehended than another, because there is only one definition of comprehending all things."—CICERO, *Acad.*, ii. 41.

† "Vulcan against, for Troy Apollo stood."—OVID. *Trist.*, i. 2, 5.

faculty that we have a power to incline to one appearance more than to another: they allowed this propension, interdicting all resolution. The opinion of the Pyrrhonians is more bold, and also more likely for this Academic inclination, and this propension to one proposition rather than to another, what is it other than a recognition of some more apparent truth in this than in that? If our understanding be capable of the form, lineaments, comportment, and face of truth, it would as well see it entire as by halves, springing and imperfect: this appearance of likelihood, which makes them rather take the left hand than the right, augments it: multiply this ounce of verisimilitude that turns the scales, to a hundred, to a thousand ounces: it will happen in the end that the balance will itself end the controversy, and determine one choice and one entire truth. But how is it they suffer themselves to incline to and be swayed by probability, if they know not the truth itself? How should they know the simulitude of that whereof they do not know the essence? Either we can absolutely judge, or absolutely we cannot. If our intellectual and sensible faculties are without root or foundation, if they only float and waver about, 'tis to no purpose that we suffer our judgment to be carried away by any part of their operation, what appearance soever it may seem to present to us; and the surest and most happy seat of our understanding would be that where it kept itself temperate, upright, and inflexible, without tottering and without agitation: "*Inter visa vera, aut falsa, ad animi assensum, nihil interest.**" That things do not lodge in us in their form and essence, and do not there make their entry by their own force and authority, we sufficiently see: because if it were so, we should receive them after the same manner: wine would have the same relish with the sick as with the healthful; he who has his finger chapped or benumbed would find the same hardness in wood or iron that he handles that another does; outside subjects, then, submit themselves to our disposal, and are seated in us as we please. Now, if on our part we received anything without alteration, if human grasp were capable and strong enough to seize on truth by our own means, these being common to all men, this truth would be conveyed from

* "As between things that seem, whether true or false, it signifies nothing to the assent of the mind."—CICERO, *Acad.*, ii. 28.

hand to hand from one to another; and, at least there would be some one thing to be found in the world, among so many as there are, that would be believed by men with an universal consent; but this, that there is no one proposition that is not debated and controverted among us, or that may not be, makes it very manifest that our natural judgment does not very clearly comprehend what it embraces; for my judgment cannot make itself accepted by the judgment of my companion, which is a sign that I seized it by some other means than by a natural power that is in me and in all other men.

Let us lay aside this infinite confusion of opinions which we see even among the philosophers themselves, and this perpetual and universal dispute about the knowledge of things; for this is very truly presupposed, that men—I mean those highest and best born in knowledge, and of the greatest parts—are not agreed about any one thing, not even that heaven is over our heads, for they that doubt of everything also doubt of that; and they who deny that we are able to comprehend anything, say that we have not comprehended that the heaven is above our heads; and these two opinions are without comparison the stronger in number.

Besides this infinite diversity and division, through the trouble that our judgment gives to ourselves, and the uncertainty that every one is sensible of in himself, 'tis easy to perceive that its seat is very unstable and unsecure. How variously do we judge of things? how often do we alter our opinions? What I hold and believe to-day, I hold and believe with my whole belief: all my instruments and engines seize and take hold of this opinion, and become responsible to me for it as much as in them lies; I could not embrace nor preserve any truth with greater assurance than I do this; I am wholly and entirely possessed with it: but has it not befallen me, not only once, but a thousand times, and every day, to have embraced some other thing with the same instruments, and in the same condition, which I have since judged to be false? A man must, at least, become wise at his own expense; if I have often found myself betrayed under this color, if my touch prove ordinarily false and my balance unequal and unjust, what assurance can I now have more than at other times? is it not folly to suffer myself to be so often deceived by my guide?

Nevertheless, let fortune remove and shift us five hundred times from place to place, let her do nothing but incessantly empty and fill into our belief, as into a vessel, other and other opinions, yet still the present and the last is the one certain and infallible: for this we must abandon goods, honor, life, health, and all.

> "Posterior . . . res illa reperta
> Perdit et immutat sensus ad pristina quæque." *

Whatever is preached to us, whatever we learn, we should still remember that it is man that gives and man that receives; 'tis a mortal hand that presents it to us, 'tis a mortal hand that accepts it. The things that come to us from heaven have the sole right and authority of persuasion, the sole mark of truth: which also wo do not see with our own eyes nor receive by own means: that great and sacred image could not abide in so wretched a habitation, if God, for this end, did not prepare it, if God did not, by His particular and supernatural grace and favor, fortify and reform it. At least our frail and defective condition ought to make us comport ourselves with more reservedness and moderation in our innovations and changes: we ought to remember that whatever we receive into the understanding we often receive things that are false, and that it is by the same instruments that so often give themselves the lie, and are so often deceived.

Now, it is no wonder they should so often contradict themselves, being so easy to be turned and swayed by very light occurrences. It is certain that our apprehension, our judgment, and the faculties of the soul in general, suffer according to the movements and alterations of the body, which alterations are continual: are not our wits more sprightly, our memory more prompt, our discourse more lively, in health than in sickness? Do not joy and gayety make us receive subjects that present themselves to our souls, quite otherwise than care and melancholy? Do you believe that the verses of Catullus or of Sappho please an old doting miser as they do a vigorous and amorous young man? Cleomenes, the son of Anaxandridas, being sick, his friends reproached him that he had humors and whimsies that were new and unaccustomed: "I believe it," said he,

* "The last thing we find out is ever the best, and makes us disrelish all the former."—LUCRETIUS, v. 1413.

"neither am I the same man now as when I am in health: being now another thing, my opinions and fancies are also other than they were before." * In our courts of justice 'tis said of criminals, when they find the judges in a good humor, gentle and mild, "*gaudeat de bona fortuna.*" † For it is most certain that men's judgments are sometimes more prone to condemnation, more sharp and severe, and at others more facile, easy, and inclined to excuse. He that carries with him from his house, the pain of the gout, jealousy, or theft by his man, having his whole soul possessed with anger, it is not to be doubted but that his judgment will be warped in that direction. That venerable senate of the Areopagus was wont to hear and determine by night, for fear lest the sight of the parties might corrupt their justice. The very air itself and the serenity of heaven will cause some mutation in us, according to the Greek verses rendered in Cicero,

> "Tales sunt hominum mentes, quali pater ipse
> Juppiter auctifera lustravit lampade terras." ‡

'Tis not only fevers, debauches, and great accidents that overthrow our judgment; the least things in the world will do it; and we are not to doubt, though we are not sensible of it, but that if a continued fever can overwhelm the soul, a tertian will in some proportionate measure alter it; if an apoplexy can stupefy and totally extinguish the sight of our understanding, we are not to doubt but that a great cold will dazzle it, and consequently there is hardly a single hour in a man's life wherein our judgment is in its due place and right condition, our bodies being subject to so many continual changes, and replete with so many several sorts of springs, that I believe what the physicians say, how hard it is but that there will not be always some one or other out of order.

As to what remains, this malady does not very easily discover itself, unless it be extreme and past remedy; forasmuch as reason goes always lame and halting, and that

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* Plutarch, Apothegms of the Lacedæmonians.

† "Let him rejoice in his good fortune."

‡ "The minds of men are dark or serene, as the day is foul or fair." —*From* HOMER'S *Odyssey*, xviii. 135.

as well with falsehood as with truth; and therefore 'tis hard to discover her deviations and mistakes. I always call that appearance of meditation which every one forges in himself, reason: this reason, of the condition of which there may be a hundred contrary ones about the same subject, is an instrument of lead and wax, ductile, pliable, and accommodable to all sorts of biases and to all measures, so that nothing remains but the knowledge how to turn and mold it. How uprightly soever a judge may resolve to act, if he do not well look to himself, which few care to do, his inclination to friendship, to relationship, to beauty, or revenge, and not only things of that weight, but even the fortuitous instinct that makes us favor one thing more than another, and that, without the reason's leave, puts the choice upon us in two equal subjects, or some other shadowy futility may insensibly insinuate into his judgment the recommendation or disfavor of a cause, and make the balance dip.

I, who watch myself as narrowly as I can, and who have my eyes continually bent upon myself, like one that has no great business elsewhere to do,

> "Quis sub Arcto
> Rex gelidæ metuatur oræ,
> Quid Tridatem terreat, unice
> Securus," *

dare hardly tell the vanity and weakness I find in myself; my foot is so unstable and stands so slippery, I find it so apt to totter and reel, and my sight so disordered, that fasting I am quite another man than when full; if health and a fair day smile upon me, I am a very good fellow; if a corn trouble my toe, I am sullen, out of humor, and inaccessible. The same pace of a horse seems to me one while hard and another easy; the same way, one while shorter and another while longer; the same form, one while more, and another while less, taking. Now I am for doing everything, and then for doing nothing at all; what pleases me now would be a trouble to me at another time. I have a thousand senseless and casual humors within myself; either I am possessed by melancholy, or swayed by choler; now, by its own private authority,

* "Secure, whatever king rules the stubborn north, or what affrights Tiridates."—Hor., *Od.* i. 26, 3.

sadness predominates in me, and, by and by, I am as merry as a cricket. When I take a book in hand, I have discovered admirable graces in such and such passages, and such as have struck my soul: let me light upon them at another time, I may turn and toss, tumble and rattle the leaves to much purpose; 'tis then to me a shapeless and unrecognizable mass. Even in my own writings, I do not always find the air of my first fancy: I know not what I meant to say; and am often put to it to correct and pump for a new sense, because I have lost the first that was better. I do nothing but go and come: my judgment does not always advance; it floats and wanders.

> "Velut minuta magno
> Deprensa navis in mari, vesaniente vento." *

Very often, as I am apt to do, having for sport and exercise undertaken to maintain an opinion contrary to my own, my mind bending and applying itself that way, so strongly engages me there, that I no longer discern the reason of my former belief, and forsake it. I am, as it were, drawn on to the side to which I lean, be it what it will, and carried away by my own weight.

Every one would almost say the same of himself, if he considered himself as I do; preachers very well know that the emotions which steal upon them in speaking animate them toward belief; and in a passion we are more stiff in the defense of our proposition, receive a deeper impression of it and embrace it with greater vehemence and approbation, then we do in our colder and more temperate senses. You give your counsel a simple brief of your cause; he returns you a dubious and uncertain answer: you feel that he is indifferent which side he takes: have you fee'd him well that he may consider it the better? does he begin to be really concerned? and do you find him truly interested and zealous in your quarrel? His reason and learning will by degrees grow hot in your cause; a manifest and undoubted truth presents itself to his understanding; he discovers an altogether new light in your business, and does in good earnest believe and persuade himself that it is so. Nay, I do not know whether the ardor that springs from spite and obstinacy, against the power and

* "Like a small bark upon the great sea, when the winds ruffle it."—CATULLUS, *Ep.* xxv. 12.

violence of the magistrate and danger, or the interest of reputation, may not have made some men, even to the stake, maintain the opinion for which, at liberty and among friends, he would not have burned the tip of his finger. The shocks and jostles that the soul receives from the passions of the body can do much in it, but its own can do a great deal more; to the which it is so subjected that, peradventure, it may be established that it has no other pace and motion but from the breath of those winds, without the agitation of which it would be becalmed and without action, like a ship in the open sea, to which the winds have denied their assistance: and whoever should maintain this, siding with the Peripatetics, would do us no great wrong, seeing it is very well known that most of the finest actions of the soul proceed from and stand in need of this impulse of the passions; valor, they say, cannot be perfect without the assistance of anger; "*Semper Ajax fortis, fortissimus tamen in furore,*"* neither do we encounter the wicked and the enemy vigorously enough, if we be not angry; nay, the advocate has to inspire the judges with anger, to obtain justice.

Strong desires moved Themistocles, moved Demosthenes, and have pushed on the philosophers to work, watching, and pilgrimages; they lead us to honor, learning, health, all very useful ends: and this weakness of the soul in suffering anxiety and trouble serves to breed in the conscience penitence and repentance, and to make us see in the scourge of God and political troubles, the chastisement of our offenses. Compassion is a spur to clemency; and prudence to preserve and govern ourselves is aroused by our fear; and how many brave actions have been born of ambition? how many by presumption? In a word, there is no eminent and sprightly virtue without some irregular agitation. Should not this be one of the reasons that moved the Epicureans to discharge God from all care and solicitude of our affairs, because even the effects of His goodness could not be exercised in our behalf, without disturbing His repose, by the means of passions, which are so many spurs and instruments pricking on the soul to virtuous actions? or have they thought otherwise, and taken

* "Ajax was always brave, but most so, when in a fury."—CICERO *Tusc. Quæs.*, iv. 23.

them for tempests that shamefully hurry the soul from her tranquillity? "*Ut maris tranquillitas intelligitur, nulla, ne mimina quidem, aura fluctus commovente: sic animi quietus et placatus status cernitur, quum perturbatio nulla est, qua moveri queat.*"*

What varieties of sense and reason, what contrarieties of imaginations, do the diversity of our passions, present to us? What assurance, then, can we take of a thing so mobile and unstable, subject, by its condition, to the dominion of trouble, and never going other than a forced and borrowed pace? If our judgment be in the power even of sickness and perturbation; if it be from craze and temerity that it has to receive the impression of things, what security can we expect from it?

Is it not a great boldness in philosophy to believe that men perform the greatest actions, those nearest approaching the divinity, when they are furious, mad, and beside themselves? † we are to better ourselves by the deadening and privation of our reason; the two natural ways to enter into the cabinet of the gods, and there to foresee the course of destiny, are fury and sleep: ‡ this is pleasant to consider; by the dislocation that passions cause in our reason, we become virtuous; by its extirpation, occasioned by fury, or the image of death, we become diviners and prophets. I was never so willing to believe philosophy in anything as in this. 'Tis a pure enthusiasm wherewith sacred truth has inspired the spirit of philosophy, which makes it confess, contrary to its own proposition, that the most calm, composed, and healthful estate of the soul that philosophy can seat it in, is not its best condition: our wisdom is less wise than folly: our dreams are worth more than our meditation: the worst place we can take is in ourselves. But does not philosophy think that we are wise enough to remark that the voice that the spirit utters, when dismissed from man, so clear-sighted, so grand, so perfect, and while it is in man, so terrestrial, ignorant, and obscure, is a voice

* "As it is understood to be a calm at sea when there is not the least breath of air stirring, so the state of the soul is discerned to be quiet and appeased, when there is to perturbation to move it."—CICERO, *Tusc. Quæs.*, v. 6.

† Plato, Phædrus.

‡ Cicero, De Div., i. 57.

proceeding from the spirit which is in obscure, terrestrial, and ignorant man, and, for this reason, a voice not to be trusted and believed?

I have no great experience of these vehement agitations, being of a soft and heavy complexion, the most of which surprise the soul on a sudden, without giving it leisure to recollect itself: but the passion that is said to be produced by idleness in the hearts of young men, though it proceed leisurely and with a measured progress, evidently manifests to those who have tried to oppose its power, the violence our judgment suffers in the alteration and conversion. I have formerly attempted to withstand and repel it; for I am so far from being one of those who invite vices, that I do not so much as follow them, if they do not haul me along: I perceived it to spring, grow, and increase in despite of my resistance, and at last, living and seeing as I was, wholly to seize and possess me, so that, as if newly roused from drunkenness, the images of things began to appear to me quite other than they were wont to be; I evidently saw the person I desired, grow and increase in advantages of beauty, and to expand and develop fairer by the influence of my imagination; the difficulties of my pursuit to grow more easy and smooth; and both my reason and conscience to be laid aside: but, this fire being evaporated, in an instant, as from a flash of lightning, I was aware that my soul resumed another kind of sight, another state, and another judgment; the difficulties of retreat appeared great and invincible, and the same things had quite another taste and aspect than the heat of desire had presented them to me. Which of these most probably? Pyrrho himself knows nothing about it. We are never without sickness: fevers have their hot and cold fits; from the effects of an ardent passion, we fall into a shivering passion; as far as I had advanced, so much I retired:

> "Qualis ubi alterno procurrens gurgite, pontus,
> Nunc ruit ad terras, scopulosque superjacit undam
> Spumeus, extremamque sinu perfundit arenam;
> Nunc rapidus retro, atque æstu revoluta resorbens
> Saxa, fugit, littusque vado labente relinquit." *

* "As when the sea, rolling with alternate tides, now rushes on the land and foaming throws over the rocks its waves, and with its skirts overflows the extremity of the strand: now, with rapid motion, and sucking in the stones, rolled back with the tide in its retreat, and with the ebbing current leaves the shore."—*Æneid*, xi. 624.

Now, from the knowledge of this volubility of mine, I have accidentally begot in myself a certain constancy of opinion, and have not much altered those that were first and natural in me: for what appearance soever there may be in novelty, I do not easily change, for fear of losing by the bargain: and since I am not capable of choosing, I take other men's choice, and keep myself in the state wherein God has placed me; I could not otherwise prevent myself from perpetual rolling. Thus have I, by the grace of God, preserved myself entire, without anxiety or trouble of conscience, in the ancient belief of our religion, amid so many sects and divisions as our age has produced. The writings of the ancients, the best authors I mean, being full and solid, tempt and carry me which way almost they will: he, that I am reading, seems always to have the most force, and I find that every one of them in turn has reason, though they contradict one another. The facility that good wits have of rendering everything they would recommend likely, and that there is nothing so strange to which they will not undertake to give color enough to deceive such a simplicity as mine, this evidently shows the weakness of their testimony. The heavens and the stars have been three thousand years in motion; all the world were of that belief, till Cleanthes the Samian,* or, according to Theophrastus, Nicetas of Syracuse, bethought him to maintain that it was the earth that moved, turning about its axis by the oblique circle of the zodiac; and in our time Copernicus has so grounded this doctrine, that it very regularly serves to all astrological consequences: what use can we make of this, except that we need not much care which is the true opinion? And who knows but that a third, a thousand years hence, may overthrow the two former?

> "Sic volvenda ætas commutat tempora rerum;
> Quod fuit in pretio, fit nullo denique honore;
> Porro aliud succedit, et e contemptibus exit,
> Inque dies magis appetitur, floretque repertum
> Laudibus, et miro est mortales inter honore." †

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* Plutarch on the Face of the Moon, c. 4.

† "For thus revolving time changes the seasons of things; that which was once in estimation becomes of no reputation at all, while another thing succeeds and bursts forth from contempt, is daily more sought, and, when found, flourishes among mankind, with praise and wonderful honor."—LUCRETIUS, v. 1275.

So that when any new doctrine presents itself to us, we have great reason to mistrust it, and to consider that before it was set on foot, the contrary had been in vogue; and that as that has been overthrown by this, a third invention in time to come, may start up which may knock the second on the head. Before the principles that Aristotle introduced were in reputation, other principles contented human reason, as these satisfy us now. What letters-patent have these, what particular privilege, that the career of our invention must be stopped by them, and that to them should appertain for all time to come the possession of our belief? They are no more exempt from being thrust out of doors than their predecessors were. When any one presses me with a new argument, I ought to consider that what I cannot answer, another may: for to believe all likelihoods that a man cannot himself confute, is great simplicity; it would by that means come to pass, that all the vulgar, and we are all of the vulgar, would have their belief as turnable as a weathercock; for the soul, being so easily imposed upon and without resisting power, would be forced incessantly to receive other and other impressions, the last still effacing all footsteps of that which went before. He that finds himself weak, ought to answer as in law questions, that he will speak with his counsel; or will refer himself to the wise from whom he received his teaching. How long is it that physic has been practiced in the world? 'Tis said that a newcomer, called Paracelsus, changes and overthrows the whole order of ancient rules, and maintains that till now it has been of no other use but to kill men. I believe that he will easily make this good: but I do not think it were wisdom to venture my life in making trial of his new experiments. We are not to believe every one, says the precept, because every one can say all things. A man of this profession of novelties and physical reformations, not long since told me that all the ancients were notoriously mistaken in the nature and motions of the winds, which he would evidently demonstrate to me, if I would give him the hearing. After I had with some patience heard his arguments, which were all full of likelihood of truth: "What then," said I, "did those that sailed according to Theophrastus, make way westward when they had the prow toward the east? did they go sideward or backward?"

"That was according to fortune," answered he; "but, be that as it may, they were mistaken." I then replied that I had rather follow effects than reason. Now these things often clash, and I have been told that in geometry, which pretends to have gained the highest point of certainty among all the sciences, there are found inevitable demonstrations that subvert the truth of all experience: as Jacques Peletier told me at my own house, that he had found out two lines stretching themselves one toward the other to meet, which, nevertheless, he affirmed, though extended to all infinity, could never reach to touch one another. And the Pyrrhonians make no other use of their arguments and their reason than to ruin the appearance of experience; and 'tis a wonder how far the suppleness of our reason has followed them in this design of controverting the evidence of effects: for they affirm that we do not move, that we do not speak, and that there is neither weight nor heat, with the same force of argument, that we affirm the most likely things. Ptolemy, who was a great man, had established the bounds of this world of ours: all the ancient philosophers thought they had the measure of it, excepting some remote isles that might escape their knowledge; it had been Pyrrhonism, a thousand years ago, to doubt the science of cosmography, and the opinions that every one had thence received: it was heresy to believe in Antipodes; and behold! in this age of ours there is an infinite extent of *terra firma* discovered, not an island or a particular country, but a part very nearly equal in greatness to that we knew before. The geographers of our times stick not to assure us, that now all is found, all is seen:

"Nam quod adest præsto, placet, et pollere videtur."*

But the question is whether, if Ptolemy was therein formerly deceived, upon the foundations of his reason, it were not very foolish to trust now in what these later people say: and whether it is not more likely that this great body, which we call the world, is not quite another thing than what we imagine.

Plato says that it changes its aspect in all respects; that

* "What is pleasant pleases, and seems the best."—LUCRETIUS, v. 1411.

the heavens, the stars, and the sun have all of them sometimes motions retrograde to what we see, changing east into west. The Egyptian priests told Herodotus, that from the time of their first king, which was eleven thousand and odd years before (and they showed him the effigies of all their kings in statues taken from the life), the sun had four times altered his course; that the sea and the earth alternately change into one another; that the beginning of the world is undetermined: Aristotle and Cicero both say the same; and one among us is of opinion that it has been from all eternity, is mortal, and renewed again by successive vicissitudes, calling Solomon and Isaiah to witness: and this to evade these objections that God has once been a creator without a creature, that He had had nothing to do; that He abandoned this idleness by putting His hand to this work; and that, consequently, He is subject to changes. In the most famous of the Greek schools,* the world is taken for a god, made by another god greater than he, and is composed of a body; and of a soul fixed in his center, and dilating himself, by musical numbers, to his circumference; divine, infinitely happy, infinitely great, infinitely wise, and eternal: in him are other gods, the sea, the earth, the stars, who entertain one another with a harmonious and perpetual agitation and divine dance: sometimes meeting, sometimes retiring; concealing, discovering themselves; changing their order, one while before, and another behind. Heraclitus† was positive that the world was composed of fire, and, by the order of destiny, was one day to be enflamed and consumed in fire, and then to be again renewed. And Apuleius says of men: "*Sigillatim mortales, cunctim perpetui.*" ‡ Alexander wrote to his mother § the narration of an Egyptian priest, drawn from their monuments, testifying the antiquity of that nation to be infinite, and comprising the birth and progress of other countries. Cicero and

* That of Plato.

† Diogenes Laertius, ix. 8.

‡ "That they are mortal in particular, and immortal in general." —*De Deo Socratis.*

§ The letter is most probably apocryphal; at all events it is now lost.

Diodorus* say, that in their time, the Chaldeans kept a register of four hundred thousand and odd years; Aristotle, Pliny,† and others, that Zoroaster flourished six thousand years before Plato's time. Plato says that they of the city of Sais have records in writing of eight thousand years, and that the city of Athens was built a thousand years before the said city of Sais. Epicurus, that at the same time things are here as we see them, they are alike and in the same manner in several other worlds; which he would have delivered with greater assurance, had he seen the similitudes and concordances of the new discovered world of the West Indies, with ours present and past, in so many strange examples.

In earnest, considering what has arrived at our knowledge from the course of this terrestrial polity, I have often wondered to see in so vast a distance of places and times, such a concurrence of so great a number of popular and wild opinions, and of savage manners and beliefs which by no tendency seem to proceed from our natural meditation. Human wit is a great worker of miracles. But this relation has in it circumstances especially extraordinary; 'tis found to be in names also and a thousand other things: for they discovered nations there that, for aught we know, never heard of us, where circumcision was in use:‡ where there were states and great civil governments maintained by women only without men; where our fasts and Lent were represented, to which was added the abstinence from women: where our crosses were several ways in repute: here they were made use of to honor and adorn their sepultures; there they were erected, and notably that of St. Andrew, to protect people from nocturnal visions, and to lay upon the cradles of infants against enchantments: elsewhere, there was found one of wood, of very great stature, which was adored as the god of rain, and this a long way into the main land, and there was also seen an express image of our shriving-priests, with the use of miters the celibacy of the priesthood, the art of divination by the entrails of sacrificed beasts, abstinence from all sorts of

* Cicero, De Div., 1. 19; Diodorus, ii. 31.

† Nat. Hist., xxx. 1.

‡ Many of these illustrations are altogether disputable.

flesh and fish in their diet, the custom of priests officiating in a particular and not the vulgar language: and this fancy that the first god was expelled by a second, his younger brother: that men were created with all sorts of conveniences, which have since been taken from them for their sins, their territory changed, and their natural condition made worse: that they were of old overwhelmed by the inundation of waters from heaven; that but few families escaped, who retired into the caves of high mountains, the mouths of which they stopped so that the waters could not get in, having shut up, together, with themselves, several sorts of animals; that when they perceived the rain to cease, they sent out dogs, which returning clean and wet, they judged that the water was not much abated; afterward, sending out others, and seeing them return dirty, they issued out to repeople the world which they found only full of serpents. In one place some found the persuasion of a day of judgment, insomuch that the people were marvelously displeased with the Spaniards for disturbing the bones of the dead in rifling the sepultures for riches, saying that those bones, so disordered, could not easily rejoin; traffic by exchange, and no other way; fairs and market for that end: dwarfs and deformed people for the ornament of the tables of princes; the use of falconry, according to the nature of their hawks; tyrannical subsidies: great refinements in gardens; dances, tumbling tricks, music of instruments, coats of arms, tennis-courts, dice and games of hazard, wherein they are sometimes so eager and hot, as to stake and play themselves and their liberty; physic, no otherwise than by charms; the way of writing in cipher; the belief of only one first man, the father of all nations: the adoration of a god, who formerly lived a man in perfect virginity, fasting and penitence, preaching the law of nature and the ceremonies of religion, and who vanished from the world without a natural death; the belief in giants; the custom of making themselves drunk with their beverages and drinking to the utmost; religious ornaments painted with bones and dead men's skulls: surplices, holy water sprinkling; wives and servants who present themselves with emulation to be burned and interred with the dead husband or master; a law by which the eldest succeeds to all the estate, no other portion being left for the younger but obedience: the custom that

upon promotion to a certain office of great authority, the promoted is to take upon him a new name and to leave that he had before: another to strew lime upon the knee of the new-born child, with these words: "From dust thou camest, and to dust thou must return:" the art of augury. These vain shadows of our religion, which are observable in some of these examples, are testimonies of its dignity and divinity; not only has it in some sort insinuated itself into all the infidel nations on this side of the world, by a certain imitation, but into these barbarians also, as by a common and supernatural inspiration; for we found there the belief of purgatory, but of a new form; that which we give to the fire, they give to the cold, and imagine that souls are both purged and punished by the rigor of an excessive coldness. And this example puts me in mind of another pleasant diversity: for as there were on the one hand, found people who took a pride to unmuffle the glands of their members, and clipped off the prepuce after the Mohammedan and Jewish manner, there were others who made so great a scruple about laying it bare, that they carefully pursed it up with little strings to keep that end from peeping into the air; and of this diversity, that whereas we, to honor kings and festivals, put on the best clothes we have, in some of these regions, to express their disparity and submission to their king, his subjects present themselves before him in their vilest habits, and, entering his palace, throw some old tattered garment over their better apparel, to the end that all the luster and ornament may solely remain in him. But to proceed.

If nature enclose within the bounds of her ordinary progress, as well as all other things, the beliefs, judgments, and opinions of men: if they have their revolution, their season, their birth and death, like cabbages; if the heavens agitate and rule them at their pleasure, what magisterial and permanent authority are we to attribute to them? If we experimentally see that the form of our being depends upon the air, upon the climate, and upon the soil where we are born, and not only the color, the stature, the complexion, and the countenances, but moreover the very faculties of the soul itself; "*et plaga cœli non solum ad robur corporum, sed etiam animorum facit,*" * says Vegetius;

* "The climate is of great efficacy, not only to the strength of bodies, but to that of souls also."—VEGETIUS, i. 2.

and that the goddess who founded the city of Athens chose to situate it in a temperature of air fit to make men sharp, as the Egyptian priests told Solon, "*Athenis tenue cœlum; ex quo etiam acutiores putantur Attici: crassum Thevis; itaque pingues Thebani, et valentes;*" * so that as fruits and animals are born differing, men should also be born more or less warlike, just, temperate, and docile; here given to wine, elsewhere to theft or lechery; here inclined to superstition, elsewhere to misbelief; in one place to liberty, in another to servitude; capable of one science or of one art; dull or ingenious, obedient or mutinous, good or ill, according as the place where they are seated inclines them; and assume a new complexion, if removed like trees: which was the reason why Cyrus would not grant the Persians leave to quit their rough and craggy country to remove to another more pleasant and level, saying,† that soft and fertile soils made men effeminate and unfertile. If we see one while one art, one belief flourish, and another while another, through some celestial influence: such an age produce such natures and incline mankind in such and such direction: the spirits of men one while gay and another grum, like our fields: what becomes of all those fine prerogatives we so soothe ourselves with? Seeing that a wise man may be mistaken, a hundred men, a hundred nations, nay, that even human nature itself, as we believe, is many ages wide in one thing or another, what assurance have we that she sometimes is not mistaken, or not in this very age of ours?

Methinks, among other testimonies of our imbecility, this ought not to be forgotten, that man cannot, by his own wish and desire, find out what is necessary for him; that, not in fruition only, but in imagination and wish, we cannot agree about what we would have to content us. Let us leave it to our thought to cut out and make up at its pleasure: it cannot so much as covet what is proper for it, and satisfy itself:

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* "The air of Athens is subtle and thin: whence also the Athenians are reputed to be more acute: and at Thebes more gross and thick, wherefore the Thebans are looked upon as more heavy-witted and stronger of body."—CICERO, *De Fato*, c. 4.

† Herodotus, ix. 121.

"Quid enim ratione timenus,
Aut cupimus? Quid tam dextro pede concipis, ut te
Conatus non pœniteat, votique peracti?"*

And therefore it was that Socrates begged nothing of the gods but what they knew to be best for him; and the, both private and public, prayers of the Lacedæmonians were only simply to obtain good and useful things, referring the choice and selection of these to the discretion of the Supreme Power: †

"Conjugium petimus, partumque uxoris; at illis
Notum, qui pueri, qualisque futura sit uxor;" ‡

and Christians pray to God "that His will may be done:" that they may not fall into the inconvenience the poets feign of King Midas. He prayed to the gods that all he touched might be turned into gold: his prayer was heard: his wine was gold, his bread was gold, the feathers of his bed, his shirt and clothes were all turned into gold, so that he found himself overwhelmed under the fruition of his desire, and enriched with an intolerable commodity, and was fain to unpray his prayers:

"Attonitus novitate mali, divesque, miserque,
Effugere optat opes, et, quæ modo voverat, odit." §

To instance in myself: when young, I desired of fortune above all things the order of St. Michael, which was then the utmost distinction of honor among the French noblesse, and very rare. She pleasantly gratified my longing; instead of raising me and lifting me up from my own place to attain it, she was much kinder to me, for she brought it so low and made it so cheap that it stooped down to my shoulders, and lower. Cleobis and Biton, ‖ Trophonius

* "For with what reason does man wish or fear? What is there however dexterously conceived, that afterward he may not repent, both the attempt, and even the success."—JUVENAL x. 4.

† Plato, Second Alcibiades.

‡ "We pray for a wife and children, they above only know when we have them what they will prove."—*Idem, Ibid.*, 352.

§ "Astonished at the strangeness of the evil, at once rich and poor, he wishes now to escape wealth, and hates the thing for which before he prayed."—OVID, *Met.*, xi. 128.

‖ Herodotus, i. 31.

and Agamedes, * having requested, the first of their goddess, the last of their god, a recompense worthy of their piety, had death for a reward; so differing are the heavenly opinions concerning what is fit for us from our own. God might grant us riches, honors, life, and health itself, sometimes to our hurt; for everything that is pleasing to us is not always good for us. If he send us death or an increase of sickness, instead of a cure, "*Virga tua et baculus tuus ipsa me consolata sunt.*" † He does it by the reasons of His providence, which better and more certainly discerns what is proper for us than we can do; and we ought to take it in good part, as coming from a wise and most friendly hand;

> "Si consilium vis:
> Permittes ipsis expendere numinibus, quid
> Conveniat nobis, rebusque sit utile nostris . . .
> Carior est illis homo quam sibi:" ‡

for to require from them honors, or commands, is to ask them to throw you into a battle, set you upon a cast at dice, or something of the like nature, whereof the issue is to you unknown and the fruit doubtful.

There is no so sharp and violent dispute among the philosophers, as about the question of the sovereign good of man; out of which, by the calculation of Varro, § there arose two hundred and fourscore and eight sects. "*Qui autem de summo bono dissentit, de tota philosophiæ ratione disputat.*" ‖

> "Tres mihi convivæ prope dissentire videntur,
> Poscentes vario multum diversa palato:
> Quid dem? Quid non dem? Renuis tu, quod jubet alter;
> Quod petis, id sane est invisum acidumque duobus:" ¶

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* Plutarch, Consolation to Apollonius, c. 14.

† "Thy rod and thy staff they comfort me."—*Psalm* xxiii. 4.

‡ "If you will be ruled by me, leave it to the gods to consider what is useful for us and our affairs, for man is dearer to them than he is to himself."—JUVENAL, x. 346.

§ St. Augustine, De Civit. Dei, xix. 2.

‖ "For whoever enters into controversy concerning the supreme good, disputes upon the whole reason of philosophy.—CICERO, *De Finibus*, v. 5.

¶ "Three guests of mine wholly differ, each man's palate requiring something that the others do not like. What am I to do?

nature should say the same to their contests and debates. Some say that our well-being lies in virtue, others in pleasure, others in our submitting to nature; one in knowledge, another in being exempt from pain, another, in not suffering ourselves to be carried away by appearances: and this fancy seems to have relation to that of the ancient Pythagoras,

> "Nil admirari, prope res est una, Numici,
> Solaque, quæ possit facere et servare beatum;" *

which is the point of the Pyrrhonian sect: Aristotle † attributes the being amazed at nothing to magnanimity, and Archesilaus said,‡ that constancy and a right and inflexible state of judgment were the true goods, consent and application vices and evils; it is true that in being thus positive and establishing it by certain axiom, he quitted Pyrrhonism; for the Pyrrhonians, when they say that Ataraxy, § which is the immobility of the judgment, is the sovereign good, do not design to say it affirmatively; but the same motion of the soul which makes them avoid precipices and take shelter from the evening damp, presents to them this fancy, and makes them refuse another.

How much do I wish, that while I live, either some other, or Justus Lipsius, the most learned man now living, of a most polished and judicious understanding, truly resembling my Turnebus, had the will and health and leisure sufficient candidly and carefully as possible to collect into a register, according to their divisions and classes, the opinions of ancient philosophy on the subject of our being and our manners; their controversies, the succession and reputation of the parts, the application of the lives of the authors and their disciples to their own precepts on mem-

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What give? What not give? You refuse what the others desire: what you seek the two others say is detestable."—HORACE, *Epist.*, ii. 2, 61.

* "Not to admire is all the art I know,
To make men happy, and keep them so."
—HORACE, *Epist.*, i. 6, 1.

"Admire," in the sense of not being surprised at anything.

† Moral. ad Nicom., iv. 3.

‡ Sextus Empiricus, Pyrrh., Hypot., i. 33.

§ Perfect tranquillity.

orable and exemplary occasions: what a beautiful and useful work that would be!

To continue: if it be from ourselves that we are to extract the rules of our manners, upon what a confusion are we thrown? for that which our reason advises us to as the most probable, is generally for every one to obey the laws of his country, as was the advice of Socrates, inspired, he tells us, by a divine counsel; and thence what results but that our duty has no other rule than what is accidental? Truth ought to have a like and universal visage: if man could know equity and justice that had a body and a true being, he would not fetter it to the conditions of this country or that; it would not be from the whimsies of the Persians or Indians that virtue would receive its form. There is nothing more subject to perpetual agitation than the laws: since the time that I was born, I have known those of the English, our neighbors, three or four times changed, not only in matters of civil regimen, which is that wherein constancy may be dispensed with, but in the most important subject that can be, namely, religion: at which I am the more troubled and ashamed, because it is a nation with which those of my province have formerly had so great familiarity and acquaintance, that there yet remain in my house some traces of our ancient kindred. And here with us at home, I have known a thing that was a capital offense become lawful; and we who hold others to it, are likewise, according to the chances of war, in a possibility of being found one day guilty of high treason, both divine and human, should our justice fall into the power of injustice, and, after a few years' possession, taking a quite contrary being. How could that ancient god * more clearly accuse the ignorance of human knowledge concerning the Divine being, and give men to understand that their religion was but a thing of their own contrivance, useful to bind their society, than in declaring as he did to those who came to his tripod for instruction, "that every one's true worship was that which he found in use in the place where he chanced to be?" Oh God, what infinite obligation have we to the benignity of our sovereign Creator, for having disabused our belief from these wandering and arbitrary devotions, and for having seated it upon the eternal foun-

* Apollo.

dation of His Holy Word? What will, then, philosophy say to us in this necessity? Why, "that we follow the laws of our country," that is to say, that floating sea of the opinions of a republic or a prince that will paint justice for me in as many colors and reform it as many ways as there are changes of passion in themselves: I cannot suffer my judgment to be so flexible. What kind of goodness is that which I see to-day in repute, and that to-morrow shall be in none, and which the crossing of a river makes a crime? What truth is it that these mountains enclose, and which is a lie in the world beyond them?

But they are pleasant, when to give some certainty to the laws, they say that there are some firm, perpetual and immutable, which they call natural, that are imprinted in mankind by the condition of their own proper being; and of these, some reckon up three, some four, some more, and some less, a sign that it is a mark as doubtful as the rest. Now they are so unfortunate (for what can I call it else but misfortune, that of so infinite a number of laws there should not be found one at least that fortune and the temerity of chance has suffered to be universally received by the consent of all nations?)—they are, I say, so miserably unfortunate, that of these three or four select laws there is not so much as one that is not contradicted and disowned, not only by one nation but by many. Now the only likely sign by which they can argue or infer some laws to be natural, is the universality of approbation; for we should, without doubt, follow by common consent that which nature had really ordained for us; and not only every nation, but every particular man would resent the force and violence that any one should do him, who would impel him to anything contrary to this law. Let them produce me but one of this condition. Protagoras and Aristo gave no other essence to the justice of laws, than the authority and opinion of the legislator; and that, these put aside, the honest and the good would lose their qualities, and remain empty names of indifferent things: Thrasymachus in Plato* is of opinion that there is no other law but the convenience of the superior. There is not anything wherein the world is so various as in laws and customs; such a thing is abominable here, which is elsewhere in esteem, as

* Republic.

in Lacedæmon dexterity in stealing; marriages within degrees of consanguinity are capitally interdicted among us; they are elsewhere in honor:

> "Gente esse feruntur,
> In quibus et nato genitrix, et nata parenti,
> Jungitur et pietas geminato crescit amore;" *

the murder of infants, the murder of fathers, community of wives, traffic in robberies, license in all sorts of voluptuousness; in short, there is nothing so extreme that is not allowed by the custom of some nation or other.

It is credible that there are natural laws, as we see in other creatures, but they are lost in us; this fine human reason everywhere so insinuating itself to govern and command, as to shuffle and confound the face of things, according to its own vanity and inconstancy; "*Nihil itaque amplius nostrum est; quod nostrum dico, artis est.*"† Subjects have divers aspects and divers considerations; and from this the diversity of opinions principally proceeds; one nation considers a subject in one aspect and stops there; another takes it in another aspect.

There is nothing of greater horror to be imagined than for a man to eat his father; and yet the nations whose custom anciently it was so to do,‡ looked upon it as a testimony of piety and natural affection, seeking thereby to give their progenitors the most worthy and honorable sepulture; storing up in themselves and as it were in their own marrow, the bodies and relics of their fathers; and in some sort vivifying and regenerating them by transmutation into their living flesh, by means of nourishment and digestion; it is easy to consider what a cruelty and abomination it must have appeared to men possessed and imbued with this superstition, to throw their father's remains to the corruption of the earth and the nourishment of beasts and worms.

Lycurgus considered in theft, the vivacity, diligence,

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* "'Tis said there are some nations where mothers marry their sons, fathers their daughters, and love is enhanced by the double tie." —OVID, *Met.*, x. 331.

† "Therefore nothing is any longer truly ours: what we call ours belongs to art."

‡ "Sextus Empiricus Pyrr. Hypo., ii. 24.

boldness, and dexterity, of purloining anything from our neighbors, and the utility that redounded to the public that every one should look more narrowly to the conservation of what was his own; and believed that from this double institution of assailing and defending advantage was to be made for military discipline (which was the principal science and virtue to which he would inure that nation) of greater consideration than the disorder and injustice of taking another man's goods.

Dionysius the tyrant offered Plato a robe of the Persian fashion, long, damasked, and perfumed; Plato refused it, saying that, being born a man he would not willingly dress himself in woman's clothes; but Aristippus accepted it, with this answer, that no accouterment could corrupt a chaste courage.* His friends reproaching him with meanness of spirit, for laying it no more to heart that Dionysius had spit in his face; "Fishermen," said he, "suffer themselves to be dashed with the waves of the sea from head to foot to catch a gudgeon."† Diogenes was washing cabbages, and seeing him pass by: "If thou couldst live on cabbage," said he, "thou wouldst not fawn upon a tyrant," to whom Aristippus replied: "And if thou knewest how to live amongst men, thou wouldst not be washing cabbages."‡ This reason finds appearance for divers effects; 'tis a pot with two ears that a man may take by the right or left:

> "Bellum, o terra hospita, portas:
> Bello armantur equi; bellum hæc armenta minantur.
> Sed tamen idem olim curru succedere sueti
> Quadrupedes, et frena jugo concordia ferre,
> Spes est pacis." §

Solon, being importuned by his friends not to shed powerless and unprofitable tears for the death of his son: "It is for that reason that I the more justly shed them,"

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* Diogenes Laertius, ii. 78.

† Idem, ibid., 67.

‡ Idem, ibid , 68.

§ "War, oh foreign land, thou bringest us; horses are armed for war, these herds threaten war; and yet these animals having long with patience borne the yoke and yielded to the reins before, there is hope of peace."—*Æneid,* iii. 539.

said he, "because they are powerless and unprofitable." * Socrates' wife exasperated her grief by this circumstance; "Oh, how unjustly do these wicked judges put him to death!" "Why," replied he, "hadst thou rather they should justly execute me?" † We have our ears bored; the Greeks looked upon that as a mark of slavery.‡ We retire in private to enjoy our wives; the Indians do it in public.§ The Scythians immolated strangers in their temples; elsewhere temples were a refuge.‖

> "Inde furor vulgi, quod numina vicinorum
> Odit quisque locus, cum solos credat habendos
> Esse deos, quos ipse colit."¶

I have heard of a judge, who, where he met with a sharp conflict between Bartolus and Baldus,** and some point discussed with many contrarieties, wrote in the margin of his note-book: "A question for a friend," that is to say that truth was there so controverted and confused that in a like cause he might favor which of the parties he thought fit. 'Twas only for want of wit that he did not write, "A question for a friend," throughout; the advocates and judges of our time find bias enough in all causes to accommodate them to what they themselves think fit. In so infinite a science, depending upon the authority of so many opinions, and so abitrary a subject, it cannot but be that an extreme confusion of judgments must arise. There is hardly any suit so clear wherein opinions do not very much differ; what one court has determined, another determines quite contrary, and itself also contrary at another time. By this license, which is a marvelous blemish on the ceremonious authority and luster of our justice, we see frequent examples of persons not abiding

* Diogenes Laertius, i. 63.

† Idem, ii. 35.

‡ Sextus Empiricus, iii. 24; Plutarch, Life of Cicero, c. 26.

§ Idem, i. 14, iii. 24.

‖ Idem, ibid.

¶ "Hence the popular fury, that every locality hates its neighbors' gods, and fancies that there are no real gods but their own."—JUVENAL, xv. 371.

** Two eminent jurisconsults.

by decrees, but running from judge to judge, and court to court, to decide one and the same cause.

As to the liberty of philosophical opinions concerning vice and virtue, 'tis not necessary to be expatiated upon, as therein are found many opinions that are better concealed than published to weak minds. Arcesilaus said,* that in fornication it was no matter how, or with whom it was committed: "*Et obscœnas voluptates, si natura requirit, non genere, aut loco, aut ordine, sed forma, ætate, figura, metiendas Epicurus putat*† . . . *ne amores quidem sanctos a sapiente alienos esse arbitrantur*‡ . . . *quæramus, ad quam usque ætatem juvenes amandi sint.*" These two last stoical quotations, and the reproach that Dicæarchus threw in the teeth of Plato himself upon this account, show how much the soundest philosophy indulges license and excess very remote from common usage.

Laws derive their authority from possession and use: 'tis dangerous to trace them back to their beginning; they grow great and ennoble themselves, like our rivers, by running; follow them upward to their source, 'tis but a little spring, scarce discernible, that swells thus and thus fortifies itself by growing old. Do but consult the ancient considerations that gave the first motion to this famous torrent, so full of dignity, awe, and reverence; you will find them so light and weak that it is no wonder if these people, who weigh and reduce everything to reason, and who admit nothing by authority or upon trust, have their judgments very remote and differing from those of the public. It is no wonder if people, who take their pattern from the first image of nature, should, in most of their opinions, swerve from the common path: as, for example, few among them would have approved of the strict conditions of our marriages, and most of them have been for having women in common and without obligation: they would refuse our ceremonies. Chrysippus § said that a philosopher would

* Plutarch, Rules and measures of health, c. 5.

† "And obscene pleasures, if nature requires, Epicurus thinks are not to be measured, either by kind, place, or order, but by age and beauty. Neither are holy loves thought to be interdicted to the sages—we are to inquire till what age young men are to be loved."—CICERO, *Tusc. Quæs.*, v. 33; *Idem, De Finib.*, iii. 20; SENECA; *Ep.* 123.

‡ Cicero, Tusc. Quæs , iv. 34.

§ Plutarch, Contradictions of the Stoic Philosophers, c. 31.

make a dozen somersaults and turned up his tail without his breeches for a dozen of olives: this philosopher would hardly have advised Calisthenes to have refused to Hippoclides* the fair Agarista, his daughter, for having seen him stand on his head upon a table. Metrocles let wind a little indiscreetly in disputation in the presence of his school, and kept himself hid in his own house for shame, till Crates coming to visit him, and adding to his consolations and reasons the example of his own liberty, falling to let wind with him who should let most, cured him of that scruple, and, withal, drew him to his own Stoical sect, more free than that more reserved one of the Peripatetics, of which he had been till then.† That which we call decency, not to dare to do that in public which it is decent enough to do in private, the Stoics call foppery; and to mince it and be so modest as to conceal and disown what nature, custom, and our desires publish and proclaim of our actions, they reputed a vice; but the others thought it was to undervalue the mysteries of Venus, to draw them out of her private temples to expose them to the view of the people: and that to bring them out from behind the curtain was to lose them. Modesty is a thing of weight; secrecy, reserve, circumspection, are parts of esteem: that pleasure does very rightly when, under the visor of virtue, she desires not to be prostituted in the open streets, trodden under foot, and exposed to the public view, wanting the dignity and convenience of her private cabinets. Hence some say that to put down public stews is not only to disperse fornication into all places that was assigned to one, but, moreover, by the very difficulty, to incite idlers to this vice:

> "Mæchus es Aufidiæ, qui vir, Scœvine, fuisti;
> Rivalis fuereat qui tuus, ille vir est.
> Cur aliena placet tibi, quæ tua non placet uxor?
> Numquid securus non potes arrigere?" ‡

This experience diversifies itself in a thousand examples:

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* Herodotus, vi. 129. † Diogenes Laertius, vi. 94.

‡ "Thou, Cervinus, once Aufidia's husband, art now her gallant. He who was once your rival is now her husband. How is it that she who now pleases thee, being another's, did not please thee when thou wert her husband? Must your vigor be needs roused by difficulties?"—MARTIAL, iii. 70.

"Nullus in urbe fuit tota, qui tangere vellet
Uxorem gratis, Cæciliane, tuam,
Dum licuit sed nunc, positis custodibus, ingens
Turba fututorum est. Ingeniosus homo es." *

A philosopher† being taken in the very act, and asked what he was doing, coolly replied, "I am planting a man;" no more blushing to be so caught than if they had found him planting garlic.

It is, I suppose out of tenderness and respect to the natural modesty of mankind that a great and religious author‡ is of opinion that this act is so necessarily bound to privacy and shame that he cannot persuade himself there could be any absolute performance in those impudent embraces of the cynics, but that they only made it their business to represent lascivious gestures to maintain the impudence of their schools' profession; and that to eject what shame had withheld it was afterward necessary for them to withdraw into the shade. But he had not thoroughly examined their debauches: for Diogenes, playing the beast with himself in public, wished in the presence of all who saw him that he could fill his belly by that exercise.§ To those who asked him why he did not find out a more commodious place to eat in than the open street, he made answer, "because I am hungry in the open street."‖ The women philosophers who mixed with their sect, mixed also with their persons in all places without reservation; and Hipparchia was not received into Crate's society but upon conditions that she should in all things follow the uses and customs of his rule.¶ These philosophers set a great price upon virtue, and renounced all other discipline but the moral: and yet in all their actions they attributed the sovereign authority to the election of their sage as above the laws, and gave no other curb to voluptousness but

* "Not a man in the whole city, Cæcilianus, would touch your wife gratis, while it was easy to do so: now that you have set guards upon her, there's a whole crowd mad after her. Oh, you're a clever fellow."—MARTIAL, i. 74.

† Diogenes the Cynic.

‡ St. Augustin, De Civit. Dei. xiv. 20.

§ Diogenes Laertius, vi. 69.

‖ Idem, vii. 58.

¶ Idem, vi. 96.

moderation only, and the conservation of the liberty of others.

Heraclitus and Protagoras,* forasmuch as wine seemed bitter to the sick and pleasant to the sound; the rudder crooked in the water and straight when out, and such like contrary appearances as are found in subjects, thence argued that all subjects had in themselves the causes of these appearances; and that there was some bitterness in the wine which had sympathy with the sick man's taste, and the rudder some bending quality, sympathizing with him who looks upon it in the water, and so of all the rest; which is as much as to say that all is in all things, and, consequently, nothing in any one, for where all is, there is nothing.

This opinion put me in mind of the experience we have, that there is no sense nor aspect of anything, whether bitter or sweet, straight or crooked, that human wit does not find out in the writings it undertakes to rummage over. Into the simplest, purest, and most perfect speaking that can possibly be, how many lies and falsities have we suggested? What heresy has not there found ground and testimony sufficient to set forth and defend itself? 'Tis on this account that the authors of such errors will never surrender this proof of the testimony of the interpretation of words. A person of dignity who would prove to me by authority the search of the philosopher's stone wherein he was over head and ears engaged, alleged to me the other day, five or six passages in the Bible upon which he said he first founded his attempt, for the discharge of his conscience (for he is a divine); and in truth the invention was not only amusing, but, moreover, very well accommodated to the defense of this fine science.

By this way the reputation of divining fables is acquired; there is no fortune-teller, if he have but this authority that people will condescend to turn over and curiously peep into all the folds and glosses of his words, but we may make him, like the sybils, say what we will. There are so many way of interpretation that it will be hard but that, either obliquely or in a direct line, an ingenious wit will find out in every subject some air that will serve for his purpose; therefore 'tis we find a cloudy and ambitious style in so

* Sextus Empiricus, i. 29.

frequent and ancient use. Let the author but contrive to attract and busy posterity about his predictions; which not only his own parts but as much or more the accidental favor of the matter itself may effect; that, as to the rest, he express himself foolishly or subtlely, somewhat obscurely and contradictorily, 'tis no matter: a number of wits, shaking and sifting him, will bring out a great many several forms, either according to his own, or collateral, or contrary to it, which will all redound to his honor; he will see himself enriched, by the means of his disciples, like the regents of colleges by their pupils at Landy.* This is it which has given reputation to many things of no worth at all; that has brought several writings into vogue, and given them the fame of containing all sorts of matter that can be desired; one and the same thing receiving a thousand and a thousand images and various considerations, even as many as we please.

Is it possible that Homer could design to say all that they make him say, and that he devised so many and so various figures as that divines, lawgivers, captains, philosphers, all sorts of men who treat of sciences, how variously and oppositely soever, should cite him, and support their arguments by his authority, as the sovereign master of all offices, works, and artisans; counselor-general of all enterprises? whoever has had occasion for oracles and predictions has there found sufficient to serve his turn. 'Tis wonderful how many and how admirable concurrences an intelligent person and a particular friend of mine has there found out in favor of our religion, and he cannot easily be put out of the conceit that this was Homer's design: and yet he is as well acquainted with that author as any man whatever of our time; and so what he has found out there in favor of our religion, many anciently found there in favor of theirs. Do but observe how Plato is tumbled and tossed about: every one ennobling his own opinions by applying him to himself, makes him take what side he pleases; they draw him in and engage him in all the new opinions the world receives, and make him, according to the different course of things, differ from himself; they make him, according to their sense, disavow the manners and customs

* A present which the scholars gave their master at the Fair of Landy, held yearly at St. Denis, by institution of King Dagobert in 629.

lawful in his age, because they are unlawful in ours: and all this with vivacity and power, according to the force and sprightliness of the wit of the interpreter. From the same foundation that Heraclitus and this sentence of his had, "that all things have in them those forms that we discern in them," Democritus drew a quite contrary conclusion—namely, "that subjects had nothing at all in them of what we there find;" and, forasmuch as honey is sweet to one and bitter to another, he thence argued that it was neither sweet nor bitter. The Pyrrhonians would say that they know not whether it is sweet or bitter, or neither the one nor the other, or both; for these always gain the highest point of dubitation. The Cyrenaics held that nothing was perceptible from without, and that that only was perceptible which internally touched us, as grief and pleasure; acknowledging neither tone nor color, but certain affections only that we receive from them, and that man's judgment had no other seat. Protagoras believed that "what seemed to every one was true to every one." The Epicureans lodged all judgment in the senses, both in the knowledge of things and in pleasure. Plato would have the judgment of truth, and truth itself, derived from opinions and the senses, appertain to the mind and cogitation.

This discourse has put me upon the consideration of the senses, in which lie the greatest foundation and proof of our ignorance. Whatsoever is known is doubtless known by the faculty of the knower; for seeing the judgment proceeds from the operation of him who judges, 'tis reason that he perform this operation by his means and will, not by the constraint of another, as would happen if we knew things by the power and according to the law of their essence. Now all knowledge is conveyed to us by the senses, they are our masters:

> "Via qua munita fidei
> Proxima fert humanum in pectus, templaque mentis:" *

science begins by them, and is resolved into them. After all, we should know no more than a stone, if we did not know that there is sound, odor, light, taste, measure, weight, softness, hardness, sharpness, color, smoothness, breadth, and depth; these are the platform and principles

* "It is the path by which faith finds its way to enter the human heart and the temple of the mind."—LUCRETIUS, v. 103.

of all the structure of our knowledge, and, according to some, science is nothing else but sensation. He that could make me contradict the senses would have me by the throat, he could not make me go further back; the senses are the beginning and the end of human knowledge:

> "Invenies primis ab sensibus esse creatam
> Notitiam veri; neque sensus posse refelli . . .
> Quid majore fide porro, quam sensus, haberi
> Debet?" *

Attribute to them the least we can, we must still of necessity grant them this, that it is by their means and mediation that all our instruction is directed. Cicero says, † that Chrysippus, having attempted to depreciate the force and virtue of the senses, presented to himself arguments and so vehement oppositions to the contrary, that he could not satisfy them; whereupon Carneades, who maintained the contrary side, boasted that he would make use of the same words and arguments that Chrysippus had done wherewith to controvert him, and therefore, thus cried out against him: "Oh miserable! thy force has destroyed thee." ‡ There can, in our estimate, be nothing absurd to a greater degree than to maintain that fire does not warm, that light does not shine, and that there is no weight nor solidity in iron, which are knowledges conveyed to us by the senses; there is no belief or knowledge in man that can be compared to that for certainty.

The first consideration I have upon the subject of the senses is, that I make a doubt whether man is furnished with all natural senses. I see several animals that live an entire and perfect life, some without sight, others without hearing: who knows whether to us also one, two or three, or many other senses, may not be wanting? For if any one be wanting, our examination cannot discover the defect. 'Tis the privilege of the senses to be the utmost limit of our discovery; there is nothing beyond them that

* "You will find that all knowledge of truth is first conveyed to the soul by the senses. The senses cannot be disputed. Upon what can we more safely rely than on them?"—LUCRETIUS, iv. 279, 483.

† Acad., ii. 27.

‡ Plutarch, Contradictions of the Stoic Philosophers.

can assist us in exploration, not so much as one sense in the discovery of another:

> "An poterunt oculosaures reprehendere? an aures
> Tactus? an hunc porro tactum sapor arguet oris?
> An confutabunt nares, oculive revincent?" *

they all constitute the extremest limits of our ability:

> "Seorsum quique potestas
> Divisa est, sua vis cuique est." †

It is impossible to make a man, naturally blind, conceive that he does not see; impossible to make him desire sight, or to regret his defect; for which reason we ought not to derive any assurance from the soul's being contented and satisfied with those we have, considering that it cannot be sensible herein of its infirmity and imperfection, if there be any such thing. It is impossible to say anything to this blind man, either by argument or similitude, that can possess his imagination with any apprehension of light, color, or sight; nothing remains behind that can push on the senses to evidence. Those that are born blind, whom we hear to wish they could see, it is not that they understand what they desire: they have learned from us that they want something, that there is something to be desired that we have which they can name indeed, and speak of its effects and consequence; but yet they know not what it is, nor at all apprehend it.

I have seen a gentleman of a good family who was born blind, or at least blind from such an age that he knows not what sight is, who is so little sensible of his defect that he makes use, as we do, of words proper for seeing, and applies them after a manner wholly special and his own. They brought him a child to whom he was godfather: having taken him into his arms: "Good God," said he, "what a fine child is this; how beautiful to look upon, what a pleasant face he has!" He will say, like one of us, "this room has a very fine prospect; it is clear weather; the sun shines bright:" and, moreover, hunting, tennis

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* "Can ears correct the eyes, or eyes the touch, or can touch be checked by tasting; or can nose or eyes confute other faculties?"—LUCRETIUS, iv. 487.

† "Each has its own special power assigned to it, and its strength is its own." *Idem, Ibid.*, 490.

and butts being our exercises, as he has heard, he has taken a liking to them, makes them his exercises, and believes he has as good a share of the sport as we have; and will express himself as angry or pleased as the best of us all, and yet knows nothing of it but by the ear. One cries out to him, "Here's a hare," when he is upon some even plain where he may safely ride; and afterward, when they tell him the hare is killed, he will be as proud of it as he hears others say they are. He will take a tennis ball in his left hand and strike it away with the racket: he will shoot with a musket at random, and is contented with what his people tell him, that he is over or beside the mark.

Who knows whether all humankind commit not the like absurdity, for want of some sense, and that through this default, the greatest part of the face of things is concealed from us? What do we know but that the difficulties which we find in several works of nature do not thence proceed? and that several effects of animals, which exceed our capacity, are not produced by the faculty of some sense that we are defective in? and whether some of them have not by this means a life more full and entire than ours? We seize an apple as it were with all our senses: we there find redness, smoothness, odor, and sweetness: but it may have other virtues beside these, as drying up or binding, to which no sense of ours can have any reference.* Is it not likely that there are sentient faculties in nature that are fit to judge and discern what we call the occult properties in several things, as for the loadstone to attract iron; and that the want of such faculties is the cause that we are ignorant of the true essence of such things? 'Tis, peradventure, some particular sense that gives cocks to understand what hour it is at midnight and when it grows to be toward day, and that makes them crow accordingly; that teaches chickens, before they have any experience of what they are, to fear a sparrow-hawk, and not a goose or a peacock, though birds of a much larger size; that cautions them of the hostile quality the cat has against them, and makes them not fear a dog; to arm themselves against the mewing, a kind of flattering voice, of the one, and not against the barking, a shrill and threatening voice, of the

* All this is taken from Sextus Empiricus, Pyrrh., Hypot., i. 14.

other; that teaches wasps, ants and rats to select the best pear and the best cheese, before they have tasted them, and which inspires the stag, the elephant, the serpent, with the knowledge of a certain herb proper for their cure. There is no sense that has not a mighty dominion, and that does not by its power introduce an infinite number of knowledges. If we were defective in the intelligence of sounds, of harmony, and of the voice, it would cause an unimaginable confusion in all the rest of our science; for, besides what appertains to the proper effect of every sense, how many arguments, consequences, and conclusions do we draw as to other things, by comparing one sense with another? Let an understanding man imagine human nature originally produced without the sense of seeing, and consider what ignorance and trouble such a defect would bring upon him, what a darkness and blindness in the soul; he will see by that of how great importance to the knowledge of truth the privation of such another sense, or of two, or three, should we be so deprived, would be. We have formed a truth by the consultation and concurrence of our five senses; but, peradventure, we should have the consent and contribution of eight or ten, to make certain discovery of it in its essence.

The sects that controvert the knowledge of man, do it principally by the uncertainty and weakness of our senses; for since all knowledge is by their means and mediation conveyed unto us, if they fail in their report, if they corrupt or alter what they bring us from without, if the light which by them creeps into the soul be obscured in the passage, we have nothing else to hold by. From this extreme difficulty all these fancies proceed; "that every subject has in itself all we there find: that it has nothing in it, of what we think we there find;" and that of the Epicureans, "that the sun is no bigger than 'tis judged by our sight to be:"

> "Quidquid id est, nihilo fertur majore figura,
> Quam, nostris oculis quam cernimus, esse vietur;" *

"that the appearances, which represent a body great to him that is near, and less to him that is more remote, are both true."

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* "But be it what it will, in our esteem, it is no bigger than it seems to our eyes."—LUCRETIUS, iv. 380, 387.

"Nec tamen hic oculos falli concedimus hilum—
Proinde animi vitium hoc oculis adfingere noli;" *

and resolutely, "that there is no deceit in the senses; that we are to lie at their mercy, and seek elsewhere reasons to excuse the difference and contradictions we there find, even to the inventing of lies and other flams (they go that length) rather than accuse the senses." Timagoras vowed that, by pressing or turning his eye, he could never perceive the light of the candle to double, and that the seeming so proceeded from the vice of opinion, and not from the organ. The most absurd of all absurdities, according to the Epicureans, is in denying the force and effect of the senses:

"Proinde, quod in quoque est his visum tempore, verum est.
Et, si non poterit ratio dissolvere causam,
Cur ea, quæ fuerint juxtim quadrata, procul sint
Visa rotunda; tamen præstat rationis egentem
Reddere mendose causas utrinsque figuræ,
Quam manibus manifesta suis emittere quoquam,
Et violare fidem primam, et convellere tota
Fundamenta, quibus nixatur vita, salusque:
Non modo enim ratio ruat omnis, vita quoque ipsa
Concidat extemplo, nisi credere sensibus ausis,
Præcipitesque locos vitare et cætera quæ sint
In genere hoc fugienda." †

This so desperate and unphilosophical advice, expresses only this, that human knowledge cannot support itself but by reason that it is unreasonable, foolish, and mad; but that it is better that man, to set a greater value upon himself, should make use of this or any other remedy how fantastic soever, than confess his necessary ignorance; a truth so disadvantageous to him. He cannot avoid owning that

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* "Yet we deny that the eye is deluded, do not then charge it with the soul's fault."—*Idem, ibid.*

† "Therefore, whatever has to them at any time seemed true, is true, and if our reason cannot explain why things seem to be square when near, and at a greater distance appear round, tis better for him that's at fault in reasoning to give of each figure a false cause, than to permit manifest things to go out of his hands, to give the lie to his first belief, and overthrow all the foundations on which life and safety depend; for not alone reason, but life itself will fall together with sudden ruin, unless we dare trust our senses to avoid precipices, and other such like dangers that are to be avoided"—LUCRETIUS, iv. 499.

the senses are the sovereign lords of his knowledge; but they are uncertain and falsiafible in all circumstances; 'tis there that he is to fight it out to the last; and if his just forces fail him, as they do, supply that defect with obstinacy, temerity, and impudence. If what the Epicureans say be true, viz., "that we have no knowledge, if the appearances of the senses be false;" and if that also be true, which the Stoics say; "that the appearances of the senses are so false that they can furnish us with no manner of knowledge," we shall conclude, to the disadvantage of these two great dogmatical sects, that there is no science at all.

As to what concerns the error and uncertainty of the operation of the senses, every one may furnish himself with as many examples as he pleases; so ordinary are the faults and tricks they put upon us. In the echo of a valley, the sound of the trumpet seems to meet us, which comes from some place behind:

> "Exstantesque procul medio de gurgite montes,
> Classibus inter quos liber, patet exitus, iidem
> Apparent, et longe divolsi licet, ingens
> Insula conjunctis tamen ex his una videtur . . .
> Et fugere ad puppim colles campique videntur,
> Quos agimus præter navim, velisque volamus . . .
> Denique ubi in medio nobis equus acer obhæsit
> Flumine, et in rapides amnis conspeximus undas;
> Stantis equi corpus transversum ferre videtur
> Vis, et in adversum flumen contrudere raptim."*

just as a musket bullet under the forefinger, the middle finger being lapped over it, feels so like two that a man will have much ado to persuade himself there is but one, the senses so vividly representing them as two. For that the senses are very often masters of our reason and constrain it to receive impressions which it judges and knows to be false, is frequently seen. I set aside the sense of feeling, that has its functions nearer, more vivid and

* "And mountains rising up at a distance from the middle of the sea, between which a free passage for ships is open, yet appear, though far separated, one vast island united of the two, . . . and the hills and plains, past which we row or sail, seem to flee away astern. When a spirited horse sticks fast with us in the middle of a river, and we look down into the stream, the horse seems to be carried by its force in a contrary direction, though he stands still."—LUCRETIUS, iv. 398, 390; 421.

substantial, that so often by the effect of the pains it inflicts on the body subverts and overthrows all those fine stoical resolutions, and compels him to cry out from his belly, who has resolutely established this doctrine in his soul, "that the gout and all other pains and diseases are indifferent things, not having the power to abate anything of the sovereign felicity wherein the sage is seated by his virtue;" there is no heart so effeminate that the rattle and sound of our drums and trumpets will not inflame with courage; nor so sullen that the sweetness of music will not rouse and cheer; nor a soul so stubborn that will not feel itself struck with some reverence in considering the somber vastness of our churches, the variety of ornaments and order of our ceremonies, and in hearing the solemn music of our organs, and the grace and devout harmony of our voices; even those who come in with contempt, feel a certain shivering in their hearts, and something of dread that makes them begin to doubt their opinion. For my part, I do not find myself strong enough to hear an ode of Horace or Catullus sung by a beautiful young mouth, without emotion; and Zeno* had reason to say that the voice is the flower of beauty. Some one once wanted to make me believe that a certain person, whom all we Frenchmen know, had imposed upon me in repeating some verses that he had made; that they were not the same upon the paper that they were in the air, and that my eyes would make a contrary judgment of them to my ears; so great a power has pronunciation to give fashion and value to works that are left to the efficacy and modulation of the voice. Therefore Philoxenus was not so much to blame who, hearing one give an ill accent to some composition of his, stamped on and broke certain earthen vessels of his, saying: "I break what is thine, because thou spoilest what is mine." † To what end did those men, who have with a positive resolution destroyed themselves, turn away their faces that they might not see the blow that was by themselves appointed? and that those, who for their health, desire and command incisions and cauteries cannot endure the sight of the preparations, instruments, and operations of the surgeons? seeing that the sight is not in any way to participate in the pain? are

* Diogenes Laertius, iv. 23. † Ibid. 36.

not these proper examples to verify the authority the senses have over the reason? 'Tis to much purpose that we know these tresses were borrowed from a page or a lackey; that this red came from Spain, and that white and polish from the ocean; our sight will nevertheless compel us to confess the object more agreeable and more lovely against all reason; for in this there is nothing of its own.

> "Auferimur cultu; gemmis auroque teguntur
> Crimina; pars minima est ipsa puella sui.
> Sæpe, ubi sit quod ames, inter tam multa requiras;
> Decipit hac oculos ægide dives amor." *

What a strange power do the poets attribute to the senses, who make Narcissus so desperately in love with his own shadow?

> "Cunctaque miratur, quibus est mirabilis ipse;
> Se cupit imprudens, et, qui probat, ipse probatur;
> Dumque petit, petitur: pariterque accendit, et ardet:" †

and Pygmalion's judgment so troubled by the impression of the sight of his ivory statue, that he loves and adores it as if it were a living woman?

> "Oscula dat, reddique putat; sequiturque, tenetque,
> Et credit tactis digitos insidere membris;
> Et metuit, pressos veniat ne livor in artus." ‡

Let a philosopher be put into a cage of small thin-set bars of iron, and hang him on the top of the high tower of Nôtre Dame of Paris; he will see by manifest reason, that he cannot possibly fall, and yet he will find, unless he have been used to the tiler's trade, that he cannot help but that the excessive height will frighten and astound him; for we

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* "We are gulled by adornments; defects are hidden by jewels and gold, the girl is of herself the smallest part. Often, when among so many decorations we seek for her we love, wealthy love deceives our eyes with this mask."—OVID, *De Remedio Amor.*, i. 343.

† "He admires all things by which he is admired; silly fellow, he desires himself; the praises which he gives, he claims; he seeks, and is sought; he is inflamed and inflames."—OVID, *Met.*, iii. 424.

‡ "He kisses, and believes that he is kissed again, seizes her, embraces her; he thinks her limbs yield to the pressure of his fingers, and fears lest they should become black and blue with his ardor."—OVID, *Met.*, x. 256. The text has *loquiturque*, not *sequiturque*.

have enough to do to assure ourselves in the galleries of our steeples, if they are railed with an open baluster, although they are of stone; and some there are that cannot endure so much as to think of it. Let there be a beam thrown over between these two towers, of breadth sufficient to walk upon, there is no philosophical wisdom so firm that can give us the courage to walk over it, as we should do upon the ground. I have often tried this upon our mountains in these parts, and though I am not one who am much subject to be afraid of such things, yet I was not able to endure to look into that infinite depth without horror and trembling in legs and arms, though I stood above my length from the edge of the precipice, and could not have fallen down unless I had chosen. I also observed that what height soever the precipice were, provided there were some tree or some jutting out of a rock a little to support and divide the sight, it a little eases our fears and gives some assurance, as if they were things by which in falling we might have some help; but that direct precipices we are not able to look upon without being giddy; "*ut despici sine vertigine simul oculorum animique non possit;*"* which is a manifest imposture of the sight. And therefore it was, that the fine philosopher† put out his own eyes to free the soul from being diverted by them, and that he might philosophize at greater liberty; but by the same rule, he should have stopped up his ears; which Theophrastus says are the most dangerous instruments about us for receiving violent impressions to alter and disturb us; and, in short, should have deprived himself of all his other senses, that is to say, of his life and being; for they have all the power to command our soul and reason. "*Fit etiam sæpe specie quadam, sæpe vocum gravitate et cantibus, ut pellantur animi vehementius: sæpe etiam cura et timore.*"‡ Physicians hold that there are certain com-

* "Not to be seen without dizziness of the eyes and mind."—LIVY, xliv. 6.

† Democritus, in Cic de Finibus, v. 29. But Cicero only spoke of it as of a thing uncertain; and Plutarch says positively that it is a falsehood. See his discourse of Curiosity, xi.

‡ "For it often falls out that minds are more vehemently struck by some slight, by the loud sound of the voice, or by singing; and ofttimes by grief and fear."—CICERO, *De Divin.*, i. 37.

plexions that are agitated by some sounds and instruments even to fury. I have seen some who could not hear a bone gnawed under the table without impatience; and there is scarce any man who is not disturbed at the sharp and shrill noise that the file makes in grating upon the iron; and so, to hear chewing near them or to hear any one speak who has any impediment in the throat or nose, will move some people even to anger and hatred. Of what use was that piping prompter of Gracchus, who softened, raised, and moved his master's voice while he declaimed at Rome, if the movements and quality of the sound had not the power to move, and alter the judgments of the auditory? Truly, there is wonderful reason to keep such a clutter about the firmness of this fine piece that suffers itself to be turned and twined by the motions and accidents of so light a wind!

The same cheat that the senses put upon our understanding, they have in turn put upon them; the soul also sometimes has its revenge; they lie and contend which should most deceive one another. What we see and hear when we are transported with passion, we neither see nor hear as it is:

> "Et solem geminum, et duplices se ostendere Thebas:" *

the object that we love appears to us more beautiful than it really is:

> "Multimodis igitur pravas turpesque videmus
> Esse in deliciis, summoque in honore vigere:" †

and that we hate, more ugly. To a discontented and afflicted man, the light of the day seems dark and overcast. Our senses are not only corrupted, but very often utterly stupefied by the passions of the soul; how many things do we see, that we do not take notice of if the mind be occupied with other thoughts?

> "In rebus quoque apertis noscere possis,
> Sinon advertas animum, proinde esse, quasi omni
> Tempore semotæ fuerint, longeque remotæ;" ‡

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* "The sun seemed two suns, and Thebes a double city."—*Æneid* iv. 470.

† "We often see the ugly and the, vile held in highest honor and warmest love."—LUCRETIUS, iv. 1152.

‡ "Nay, as to the most distinct objects, you may observe that unless the mind take notice of them, they are no more seen than if they were at the end of the world."—LUCRETIUS, iv. 812.

it seems as though the soul retires within and amuses the powers of the senses. And so both the inside and the outside of man is full of infirmities and falsehood.

They who have compared our life to a dream were, peradventure, more in the right than they were aware of. When we dream, the soul lives, works, exercises all its faculties, neither more nor less than when awake; but if more gently and obscurely, yet not so much certainly, that the difference should be as great as between night and the meridianal brightness of the sun; nay, as between night and shade, there she sleeps, here she slumbers, but whether more or less, 'tis still dark and Cimmerian darkness. We wake sleeping, and sleep waking. I do not see so clearly in my sleep; but as to my being awake, I never find it clear enough and free from clouds: moreover, sleep, when it is profound, sometimes rocks even dreams themselves asleep; but our waking is never so sprightly that it rightly and thoroughly purges and dissipates those reveries which are awaking dreams, and worse than dreams. Our reason and soul receiving those fancies and opinions that come in dreams, and authorizing the actions of our dreams, in like manner as they do those of the day, why do we not doubt whether our thought and action is not another sort of dreaming, and our waking a certain kind of sleep?

If the senses be our first judges, it is not our own that we are alone to consult; for in this faculty beasts have as great, or greater, right than we: it is certain that some of them have the sense of hearing more quick than man, others that of seeing, others that of feeling, others that of touch and taste. Democritus said,* that the gods and brutes had the sensitive faculties much more perfect than man. Now, between the effects of their senses and ours, the difference is extreme; our spittle cleanses and dries up our wounds; it kills the serpent.

> "Tantaque in his rebus distantia, differitasque est,
> Ut quod aliis cibus est, aliis fuat acre venemum.
> Sæpe etenim serpens, hominis contacta saliva,
> Disperit, ac sese mandendo conficit ipsa." †

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* Plutarch, On the Opinions of the Philosophers, iv. 10.

† "And in those things the difference is so great that what is one

What quality do we attribute to our spittle, either in respect to ourselves or to the serpent? by which of the two senses shall we prove the true essence that we seek? Pliny says,* that there are certain sea-hares in the Indies that are poison to us, and we to them, insomuch that with the least touch we kill them: which shall be truly poison, the man or the fish? which shall we believe, the fish of the man, or the man of the fish? One quality of the air infects a man that does the ox no harm; some other infects the ox, but hurts not the man: which of the two shall in truth and nature be the pestilent quality? To them who have the jaundice all things seem yellow and paler than to us:

> "Lurida prætera fiunt, quæcunque tuentur
> Arquati." †

They who are troubled with the disease that the physicians call hyposphagma, which is a suffusion of blood under the skin, see all things red and bloody.‡ What do we know but that these humors, which thus alter the operations of sight, predominate in beasts and are usual with them? for we see some whose eyes are yellow like our people who have the jaundice, and others of a bloody color; to these 'tis likely that the color of objects seems other than to us; which judgment of the two shall be right? for it is not said that the essence of things has a relation to man only; hardness, whiteness, depth, and sharpness have reference to the service and knowledge of animals as well as to us, and nature has equally designed them for their use. When we press down the eye, the body that we look upon we perceive to be longer and more extended; many beasts have their eyes so pressed down: this length therefore is, peradventure, the true form of that body, and not that which our eyes give it in their usual state. If we close the lower part of the eye, things appear double to us:

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man's poison is another man's meat; for serpents often, when touched with human spittle, go mad, and bite themselves to death." —LUCRETIUS, iv. 638.

* Nat. Hist., xxxii. 1.

† "Whatever jaundiced eyes view looks yellow."—LUCRETIUS, iv. 333.

‡ Sextus Empiricus, i. 14.

> " Bina lucernarum florentia lumina flammis
> Et duplicas hominum facies et corpora bina." *

If our ears be obstructed or the passage stopped with anything, we receive the sound quite otherwise than we usually do;† the animals likewise, who have either the ears hairy or but a very little hole instead of an ear, do not, consequently, hear as we do, but another kind of sound. We see at festivals and theaters that painted glass of a certain color reflecting the light of the flambeaux, and all things in the room appear to us green, yellow, or violet:

> " Et vulgo faciunt id lutea russaque vela,
> Et ferrugina, cum, magnis intenta theatris,
> Per malos vulgata trabesque, trementia fluctant:
> Namque ibi concessum caveai subter, et omnem
> Scaenai speciem, patrum, matrumque, deorumque
> Inficiunt, coguntque suo fluitare colore:" ‡

'tis likely that the eyes of animals, which we see to be of divers colors, produce the appearance of bodies to them the same with their eyes.

We should, therefore, to make a right judgment of the operations of the senses, be first agreed with beasts; and secondly, among ourselves, which we by no means are, but enter at every turn into dispute, seeing that one man hears, sees, or tastes something otherwise than another does; and contests as much as upon any other thing about the diversity of the images that the senses represent to us. A child, by the ordinary rule of nature, hears, sees, and tastes otherwise than a man of thirty years old, and he than one of threescore; the senses are in some more obscure and dusky, and in others more open and quick. We receive things variously, acccording as we are and according as they appear to us; now, our perception being so uncertain and controverted, it is no wonder if we are told that we may declare that snow appears white to us, but that to affirm

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* "Two lights in the lamps seem blossoming with flames; and each man appears to have a double body and two heads."—LUCRETIUS, iv. 451.

† Sextus Empiricus, i. 14.

‡ "And thus yellow, red, and purple curtains, stretched over the spacious theatre, sustained by poles and pillars, wave about in the air, and whole streams of colors flow from the top, and tinge the scenes, and men, and women, and gods."—LUCRETIUS, iv. 75.

that it is in its own essence really so, is more than we are able to justify: and this foundation being shaken, all the knowledge in the world must of necessity fall to pieces. Then our senses themselves hinder one another: a picture seems raised and embossed to the sight, in the handling it seems flat to tho touch:* shall we say that musk, which delights the smell and is offensive to the taste, is agreeable or no? there are herbs and unguents proper for one part of the body, that are hurtful to another: honey is pleasant to the taste, but not pleasant to the sight.† Those rings which are cut in the form of feathers, and which they call *pennes sans fin*, the eye cannot determine their size, or help being deceived by the imagination that on one side they are not larger, and on the other side become gradually narrower, and this even when you have them round the finger; yet when the touch comes to test them, it finds them of equal size and alike throughout. They who, to assist their lust, were wont in ancient times to make use of magnifying glasses to represent the members they were to employ, larger than they were, and by ocular tumidity to please themselves the more:‡ to which of the two senses did they give the prize, whether to the sight, that represented the members as large and great as they would desire, or to the touch, which presented them little and contemptible? Are they our senses that supply the subject with these different conditions, and have the subjects themselves nevertheless but one? as we see in the bread we eat, it is nothing but bread, but by being eaten it becomes bones, blood, flesh, hair and nails,

> "Ut cibus in membra atque artus cum diditur omnes,
> Disperit, atque aliam naturam sufficit ex se;" §

the humidity‖ sucked up by the root of a tree, becomes trunk, leaf, and fruit; and the air, being but one, is modulated in a trumpet to a thousand sorts of sounds: are they our senses, I would fain know, that in like manner form these subjects into so many divers qualities, or have they

* Sextus Empiricus, Pyrrh. Hypo., i. 14. † Idem, ibid.

‡ Seneca, Nat. Quæst., i. 16.

§ "As meats diffused through all the members lose their former nature, and become a new substance."—LUCRETIUS, iii. 703.

‖ Sextus Empiricus, *ubi supra.*

them really such in themselves? and, in the face of this doubt, what can we determine of their true essence? Moreover, since the accidents of disease, delirium or sleep, make things appear otherwise to us than they do to the healthful, the sane, and those that are awake, is it not likely that our right posture of health and understanding, and our natural humors, have also wherewith to give a being to things that have relation to their own condition, and to accommodate them to themselves, as well as when these humors are disordered; and our health as capable of giving them its aspect, as sickness? Why* has not the temperate a certain form of objects relative to it, as well as the intemperate; and why may it not as well stamp it with its own character as the other? He whose mouth is out of taste, says the wine is flat; the healthful man commends its flavor, and the thirsty its briskness. Now, our condition always accommodating things to itself, and transforming them according to itself, we cannot know what things truly are in themselves, seeing that nothing comes to us but what is falsified and altered by the senses. Where the compass, the square, and the rule are crooked, all proportions drawn from them, all the buildings erected by those guides, must of necessity be also defective; the uncertainty of our senses renders everything uncertain that they produce:

> "Denique ut in fabrica, si prava est regula prima,
> Normaque si fallax rectis regionibus exit,
> Et libella aliqua si ex parti claudicat hilum;
> Omnia mendose fieri, atque obstipa necessum est,
> Frava, cubantia, prona, supina, atque absona tecta:
> Jam ruere ut quædam videantur velle, ruantque
> Prodita judiciis fallacibus omnia primis:
> Sic igitur ratio tibi rerum prava necesse est,
> Falsaque sit, falsis quæcumque a sensibus orta est." †

and, after all, who can be fit to judge of, and to determine these differences? As we say, in controversies of religion, that we must have a judge neither inclining to the one side, nor to the other, free from all choice and affection, which cannot be among Christians; just so it falls out in this: for if he be old, he cannot judge of the sense of old

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* Idem, ibid.

† Lucretius, iv. 514. The sense is given in the preceding passage of the text.

age, being himself, a party in the case: if young, there is the same exception; healthful, sick, asleep, or awake, he is still the same incompetent judge: we must have some one exempt from all these qualities, so that without preoccupation of judgment, he may judge of these propositions as of things indifferent to him; and, by this rule, we must have a judge that never was.

To judge of the appearances that we receive of subjects, we ought to have a judicatory instrument; to prove this instrument, we must have demonstration; to verify this demonstration, an instrument: and here we are upon the wheel.* Seeing the senses cannot determine our dispute, being themselves full of uncertainty, it must be reason that must do it; but no reason can be established but upon the foundation of another reason; and so we run back to all infinity. Our fancy does not apply itself to things that are foreign, but is conceived by the mediation of the senses, and the senses do not comprehend a foreign subject, but only their own passions; so that fancy and appearance are no part of the subject, but only of the passion and sufferance of the sense; which passion and subject are several things; wherefore, whoever judges by appearances, judges by another thing than the subject. And to say that the passions of the senses convey to the soul the quality of external subjects by resemblance: how can the soul and understanding be assured of this resemblance, having of itself no communication with the external subjects? as they who never knew Socrates, cannot, when they see his portrait, say it is like him. Now, whoever would, notwithstanding, judge by appearances; if it be by all, it is impossible, because they hinder one another by their contrarieties and discrepancies, as we by experience see: shall some select appearances govern the rest? you must verify these select by another select, the second by the third, and consequently, there will never be any end on't. Finally, there is no constant existence, either of the objects' being nor of our own; both we and our judgment, and all mortal things, are evermore incessantly running and rolling, and, consequently, nothing certain can be established from the one to the other, both the judging and the judge being in a continual motion and mutation.

* "Nous voyla au rouet," arguing in a circle.

We have no communication with Being, by reason that all human nature is ever in the midst, between being born and dying, giving but an obscure appearance and shadow, a weak and uncertain opinion, of itself, and if, peradventure, you fix your thought to apprehend your being, it would be but like grasping water: for the more you clutch your hand to squeeze and hold what is in its own nature flowing, so much the more you lose what you would grasp and hold. So, seeing that all things are subject to pass from one change to another, reason, that there looks for a real substance, finds itself deceived, not being able to apprehend anything that is subsistent and permanent, because that everything is either entering into being, and is not yet wholly arrived at it, or begins to die before it is born. Plato said,* that bodies had never any existence, not even birth; conceiving that Homer had made the ocean and Thetis, father and mother of the gods, to show us that all things are in a perpetual fluctuation, motion, and variation: the opinion of all the philosophers, as he says, before his time, Parmenides only excepted, who would not allow things to have motion, on the power whereof he sets a mighty value. Pythagoras was of opinion, that all matter was flowing and unstable: the Stoics, that there is no time present, and that what we call Present is nothing but the juncture and meeting of the future and the past: Heraclitus,† that never any man entered twice into the same river: Epicharmus, that he who borrowed money but an hour ago, does not owe it now; and that he who was invited overnight to come the next day to dinner, comes nevertheless uninvited, considering that they are no more the same men, but are become others; and "that there could not be found a mortal substance twice in the same condition: for by the suddenness and quickness of change, it one while dispenses and another reassembles; it comes and goes, after such a manner, that what begins to be born never arrives to the perfection of being, forasmuch as that birth is never finished and never stays as being at an end, but, from the seed, is evermore changing and shifting from one to another: as from human seed is first made in the mother's womb a formless embryo, then a formed child, then, in due course, delivered thence a sucking infant: afterward it becomes a

* In the Theatetes. † Seneca, Ep., 58.

boy, then a lad, then a man, then a middle-aged man, and at last a decrepit old man; so that age and subsequent generation are always destroying and spoiling that which went before."

> "Mutat enim mundi naturam totius ætas,
> Ex alioque alius status excipere omnia debet;
> Nec manet illa sui similis res; omnia migrant,
> Omnia commutat natura, et vertere cogit." *

"And yet we foolishly fear one kind of death, whereas we have already passed and daily pass so many others: for not only, as Heraclitus said, the death of fire is the generation of air, and the death of air the generation of water: but we may still more manifestly discern it in ourselves; the flower of youth dies and passes away when age comes on, and youth is terminated in the flower of age of a full-grown man, infancy in youth, and the first age dies in infancy; yesterday died in to-day, and to-day will die in to-morrow, and there is nothing that remains in the same state, or that is always the same thing; and that it is so let this be the proof; if we are always one and the same, how comes it then to pass, that we are now pleased with one thing, and by and by with another? how comes it to pass that we love or hate contrary things, that we praise or condemn them? how comes it to pass that we have different affections, and no more retain the same sentiment in the same thought? For it is not likely that without mutation we should assume other passions; and that which suffers mutation does not remain the same, and if it be not the same, it is not at all: but the same that the being is, does, like it, unknowingly change and alter, becoming evermore another from another thing: and, consequently, the natural senses abuse and deceive themselves, taking that which seems, for that which is, for want of well knowing what that which is, is. But what is it then that truly is eternal; that is to say that never had beginning nor never shall have ending, and to which time can bring no mutation: for time is a mobile thing, and that appears as in a shadow, with a matter evermore flowing and running, without ever remaining stable and perma-

* "Time changes the nature of the whole world, and one state gives all things a new state: nothing remains like itself, but all things range; nature changes everything."—LUCRETIUS, v. 826.

nent: and to which those words appertain, Before, and After, Has been, or Shall be: which, at first sight, evidently show that it is not a thing that is; and it were a great folly, and an apparent falsity, to say that that is, which is not yet in being, or that has already ceased to be; and as to these words, Present, Instant, and Now, by which it seems that we principally support and found the intelligence of time, reason discovering, presently destroys it; for it immediately divides and splits it into the future and past, as, of necessity, considering it divided in two. The same happens to nature which is measured, as to time that measures it: for she has nothing more subsisting and permanent than the other, but all things are therein either born, or being born, or dying. So that it were a sinful saying to say of God, who is He who only IS, that HE was or that HE SHALL BE: for those are terms of declension, passages and vicissitude of what cannot continue nor remain in being: wherefore we are to conclude that God only IS, not according to any measure of time, but according to an immutable and motionless eternity, not measured by time, nor subject to any declension; before whom nothing was, and after whom nothing shall be, either more new or more recent, but a real BEING, that with one sole Now fills the FOREVER, and there is nothing that truly is, but HE alone, without one being able to say, HE HAS BEEN, OR SHALL BE, without beginning, and without end." *

To this so religious conclusion of a pagan, I shall only add this testimony of one of the same condition, for the close of this long and tedious discourse, which would furnish me with endless matter." "Oh, what a vile and abject thing," says he, † "is man, if he do not raise himself above humanity?" 'Tis a good word and a profitable desire, but withal absurd; for to make the handful bigger than the hand, and the armful larger than the arm, and to hope to stride further than our legs can reach, is impossible and monstrous; or that man should rise above himself and humanity: for he cannot see but with his eyes, nor seize

* The whole of the passage between commas is copied word for word from Plutarch on the word Εἰ, c. 12.

† Seneca, Nat. Quæs., 1 Præf.

but with his power. He shall rise if God will extraordinarily lend him His hand; he shall rise, by abandoning and renouncing his own proper means, and by suffering himself to be raised and elevated by means purely celestial. It belongs to our Christian faith, and not to his stoical virtue, to pretend to that divine and miraculous metamorphosis.

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