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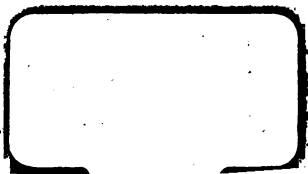
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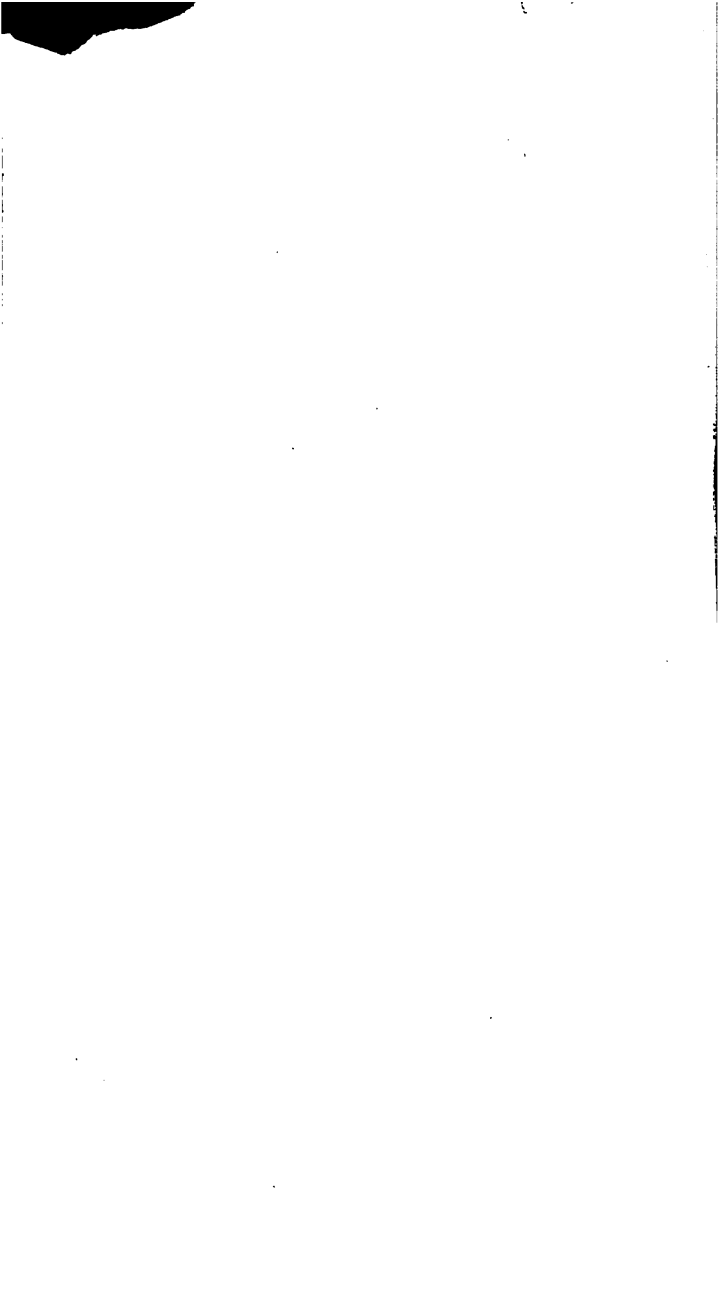
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SENeca's  
MORALS,

BY WAY OF  
ABSTRACT.

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TO WHICH IS ADDED,

*A Discourse,*

UNDER THE TITLE OF  
*AN AFTER THOUGHT.*

---

By Sir ROGER L'ESTRANGE, KNT.

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## To the Reader.

IT has been a long time in my thought to turn *Seneca* into *English*: But whether a *translation*, or an *abstract*, was the question. A *translation* I perceive it must not be, at least, for several reasons: First, it is a thing already done to my hand, and above sixty years standing; though with as little credit perhaps, to the author, as satisfaction to the reader. Secondly, there is a great deal in him, that is wholly foreign to my business: As his philosophical treatises of *meteors*, *earthquakes*, the original of *rivers*; several frivolous disputes betwixt the *Epicurians* and the *Stoicks*, &c. to say nothing of the frequent repetitions of the same thing again in other words (wherein he very handsomely excuses himself, by saying, *that he does but inculcate over and over the same counsels, to those that over and over commit the same faults.*) Thirdly, his excellency consists rather in a *rhapsody* of divine and extraordinary *hints* and *notions*, than in any regulated *method* of discourse; so that to take him as he lies, and so go through with him, were utterly inconsistent with the *order* and *credity* which I propound; my principal design being only to digest, and common-place his *morals*, in such sort, that any man, upon occasion, may know where to find them. And I have kept myself so close to this proposition, that I have reduced all his *scattered ethics* to their *proper heads*, without any additions of my own, more than of absolute necessity for the tacking of them together. Some other man in my place would perhaps make you twenty apologies for his want of skill and address, in governing this affair; but these are *formal* and *pedantic fooleries*: as if any man that takes himself for a cockcomb in his own heart, would afterwards make himself one in print too. This *abstract*, such as it is, you are extremely welcome to; and I am sorry it is no better, both for your sake and my own. For if it were written up to the spirit of the *original*, it would be one of the most valuable presents that ever any private man bestowed upon the public. And this too, even in the judgment of both parties, as well christian as heathen: Of which in its due place.

NEXT to my choice of the *author* and of the *subject*, together with the manner of handling it, I have likewise had some regard in this publication, to the timing of it, and to the preference of this topic of benefits above all others, for the ground work of my first essay. We are fallen into an age of vain philosophy (as the holy apostle calls it) and so desperately overrun with *drolls* and *sceptics*, that there is hardly any thing so certain or so sacred, that is not exposed to question or contempt. Insomuch, that betwixt the *hypocrite* and the *atheist*, the very foundations of religion and good manners are shaken, and the two tables of the decalogue dashed to pieces, the one against the other: The laws of government are subjected to the fancies of the w

gar ; public authority to the private passions and opinions of the people ; and the supernatural motions of grace confounded with the common dictates of nature. In this state of corruption, who so fit as a good honest *Christian-Pagan*, for a moderator among *Pagan-Christians* ?

To pass now from the general scope of the whole work, to the particular argument of the first part of it : I pitched upon the theme of benefits, gratitude, and ingratitude, to begin withal, as an earnest of the rest, and a lecture expressly calculated for the unthankfulness of these times : The foulest undoubtedly, and the most execrable of all others since the very apostacy of the angels : Nay, I durst but suppose a possibility of mercy for those damned spirits, that they might ever be taken into favor again, my charity would hope even better for them, than we have found from some of our revolters ; and that they would so behave themselves, as not to incur a second forfeiture. And to carry the resemblance yet one point further, they do both of them agree in an implacable malice against those of their fellows that keep their stations. But, alas ! what could ingratitude do, without hypocrisy, the inseparable companion of it ; and, in effect, the bolder, and the blacker devil of the two ? For *Lucifer* himself never had the face to lift up his eyes to heaven, and talk to the Almighty at the familiar rate of our pretended patriots and zealots, and at the same time to make him party to a cheat. It is not for nothing that the Holy Ghost has denounced so many woes, and redoubled so many cautions against hypocrites : Plainly intimating at once, how dangerous a snare they are to mankind, and no less odious to God himself : Which is sufficiently denoted in the force of that dreadful expression. [*And your portion shall be with hypocrites.*] You will find in the holy scriptures (as I have formerly observed) that God has given the grace of repentance to persecutors, idolaters, murderers, adulterers, &c. But I am mistaken, if the whole bible affords you any one instance of a converted hypocrite.

To descend now from truth itself to our own experience : Have we not seen, even in our days, a most pious (and almost faultless) prince brought to the scaffold by his own subjects ? The most glorious constitution upon the face of the earth, both ecclesiastical and civil, torn to pieces, and dissolved ! The happiest people under the sun enslaved ? Our temples sacrilegiously profaned ; and a license given to all sorts of heresy and outrage ? And by whom, but by a race of hypocrites, who had nothing in their mouths all the while, but *the purity of the gospel, the honor of the king, and the liberty of the people* : Assisted underhand with defamatory papers, which were levelled at the king himself, through the sides of his most faithful ministers ? This project succeeded so well against one government, that it is now again set afoot against another. : And by some of the very actors too in that *tragedy*, and after a most gracious pardon also ; when Providence had laid their necks and their fortunes at his majesty's feet. It is a wonderful thing that libels and libellers, the most infamous of practices, and of men ; the most unmanly sneaking methods, and instruments of mischief ; the very bane of human society ; and the plague of all governments : It is a wonderful thing (I say) that these engines and engineers should ever find credit enough in

the world to engage a party : But, it would be still more wonderful, if the same trick should pass twice upon the same people, in the same age, and from the very same impostors. This contemplation has carried me a little out of my way, but it has at length brought me to my text again ; for there is in the bottom of it, the highest opposition imaginable, of ingratitude and obligation.

THE reader will in some measure be able to judge by this taste, what he is farther to expect : That is to say, as to the cast of my design, and the simplicity of the style and dress : for that will still be the same, only accompanied with variety of matter. Whether it pleases the world or no, the care is taken : And yet I could wish that it might be as delightful to others upon the perusal, as it has been to me in the speculation. Next to the gospel itself, I do look upon it as the most sovereign remedy against the miseries of human nature ; and I have ever found it so, in all the injuries and distresses of an unfortunate life. You may read more of him, if you please, in the Appendix, which I have here subjoined to this work, concerning the authority of his writings and the circumstances of his life, as I have extracted them out of *Lipsius*.

## Of Seneca's Writings.

IT appears that our author had among the ancients three professed enemies. In the first place *Cicero*, who cull'd his writings, and without time ; alluding to the starts of his fancy, and the incoherence of his sentences. But *Seneca* was never the worse for the censure of a person that propounded even the suppressing of *Homer* himself, and of casting *Virgil* and *Livy* out of all public libraries. The next was *Quintilian* ; who tasks him for being too bold with the eloquence of former times, and falling in that point himself ; and likewise for being so quaint and full in his expressions : Which *Tacitus* imputes, in part to the freedom of his own particular inclination, and partly to the humour of the times. He is also charged by *Julian* as no poet and philosopher ; but with all this, he allow'd him to be a man very studious and diligent of growth and correction, and well read in all sorts of literature : a severe reprover of vice ; most deserving to be read and studied with the reading, if it were only for his own sake.

that if his judgment had been answerable to his wit, it had been much the more for his reputation; but he wrote whatever came next; so that I would advise the reader (says he) to distinguish where he himself did not: For there are many things in him, not only to be approved, but admired; and it was great pity that he, that could do what he would, should not always make the best choice. His third adversary is *Agellius*, who falls upon him for his stile, and a kind of tinkling in his sentences, but yet commends him for his piety and good counsels. On the other side *Columella* calls him a man of excellent wit and learning; *Pliny*, the prince of erudition; *Tacitus* gives him the character of a wise man, and a fit tutor for a prince; *Dio* reports him to have been the greatest man of his age.

Of those pieces of his that are extant, we shall not need to give any particular account: And of those that are lost, we cannot, any farther than by lights to them from other authors, as we find them cited much to his honor; and we may reasonably compute them to be the greater part of his works. That he wrote several poems in his banishment, may be gathered partly from himself: But more expressly out of *Tacitus*, who says, "that he was reproached with his applying himself to poetry, after he saw that *Nero* took pleasure in it, out of a design to curry favour." *St. Jerome* refers to a discourse of his concerning matrimony. *Lactantius* takes notice of his history, and his books of moralities: *St. Augustine* quotes some passages of his out of a book of superstition: Some references we meet with to his books of exhortations. *Fabius* makes mention of his dialogues: And he himself speaks of a treatise of his own, concerning earthquakes, which he wrote in his youth. But the opinion of an epistolary correspondence that he had with *St. Paul*, does not seem to have much colour for it.

SOME few fragments however of those books of his that are wanting, are yet preserved in the writings of other eminent authors; sufficient to shew the world how great a treasure they have lost, by the excellency of that little that is left.

*SENECA*, says, *Lactantius*, was the sharpest of all the stoicks; how great a veneration has he for the Almighty! As for instance; discoursing of a violent death: Do you not understand, says he, the majesty, and the authority of

your Judge : He is the supreme Governor of Heaven and earth, and the God of all your Gods ; and it is upon him that all those powers depend which we worship for Deities. *Moreover, in his exhortations.* This God, says he, when he laid the foundations of the universe, and entered upon the greatest and the best work in nature, in the ordering of the government of the world ; though he was himself all in all, yet he substituted other subordinate ministers, as the servants of his commands. *And in how many other things does this heathen speak of God, like one of us !*

• *WHICH the acute Seneca (says Lactantius again) saw in his exhortations.* We says he, have our dependence elsewhere, and should look up to that Power, to which we are indebted for all that we can pretend to that is good.

AND again, Seneca says very well in his morals : They worship the images of the Gods. *Lib. 21. Cap. 2.* says he, kneel to them, and adore them ; they are hardly ever from them, either plying them with offerings of sacrifices : And yet after all this reverence to the image, they have no regard at all to the workman that made it.

LACTANTIUS again. An invective (says Seneca in his exhortations) is the master-piece of most of our philosophers ; and if they fall upon the subject of avarice, lust, ambition, they lash out into such excess of bitterness, as if railing were a mark of their profession. They make me think of gally pots in an apothecary's shop, that have remedies without and poison within.

LACTANTIUS still. *He that would know all things, let him read Seneca ; the most lively describer of public vices, and manners, and the smartest reprehender of them.* *Lib. 3. Cap. 9.*

AND again : *As Seneca has in the books of moral philosophy :* He is the brave man, whose splendor and authority is the least part of his greatness, that can look death in the face without trouble, or surprise ; who if his body were to be broken upon the wheel, or melted lead to be poured down his throat, would be less concerned for the pain itself, than for the dignity of bearing it.



## TO THE READER.

“any thing, must express their sorrows, and their rejoicings, to the highest degree.” But there is only a certain time, *says he*, for this freak, and once in a year people may be allowed to be mad. I came into the capitol, *says Seneca*, where the several Deities had their several servants and attendants, their lictors, their dressers, and all in posture and action, as if they were executing their offices; some to hold the glass, others to comb out *Juno's* and *Minerva's* hair; one to tell *Jupiter* what o'clock it is; some *lassae* there are that sit gazing upon the image, and fancy *Jupiter* has a kindness for them. All these things, *says Seneca a while after*, a wise man will observe for the laws sake, more than for the gods; and all this rabble of Deities, which the superstition of many ages has gathered together, we are in such manner to adore, as to consider the worship to be rather matter of custom, than of conscience. Whereupon *St. Augustine* observes “That this illustrious senator worshipped what he reprov'd, acted what he disliked, and adored what he condemned.”



or by his study. Being *Nero's* tutor and governor, all things went well, so long as *Nero* followed his counsel. His two chief favourites, were *Burrhus* and *Seneca*, who were both of them excellent in their ways: *Burrhus*, in his care of military affairs, and severity of discipline: *Seneca* for his precepts and good advice in the matter of eloquence, and the gentleness of an honest mind: Assisting one another in the slippery age of the prince, (says *Tacitus*) to invite him by the allowance of lawful pleasures, to the tows of virtue. *Seneca* had two wives; the name of the first is not mentioned: His second was *Paulina* whom he often speaks of with great passion. By the former he had his son *Marcus*.

In the first year of *Claudius* he was banished into *Corsica*. when *Julia*, the daughter of *Germanicus*, was accused by *Messalina* of adultery, and banished too, *Seneca* being charged as one of the adulterers. After a matter of eight years or upwards, in exile he was called back, and as much in favor again as ever. His estate was partly patrimonial, but the greatest part of it was the bounty of his prince: His gardens, villas, lands, possessions, and incredible sums of money, are agreed upon at all hands, which drew envy upon him. *Dio* reports him to have had 250,000*l.* sterling at interest in *Brittany* alone, which he called in all at a sum. The court itself could not bring him to flattery; and, for his piety, submission, and virtue, the practice of his whole life witness for him. "So soon, says he, as

*De Ira, Lib. 3.* "the candle is taken away, my wife, who knows

"my custom, lies still, without a word speaking: "And then do I recollect all that I have said, or done that day, and

"take myself to shift. And why should I conceal, or reserve any

"thing, or make any scruple of inquiring into my errors, when I can

"say to myself, do so no more, and for this once I will forgive

"thee." And again, "What can be more pious, and self-denying

"than this passage, in one of his epistles: "Believe me now, when

"I tell you the very bottom of my soul: In all the

"difficulties and crosses of my life, this is my consid- *Epistle 96:*

"eration; since it is God's will, I do not only obey, but assent to

"it; nor do I comply, out of necessity, but inclination."

"Here follows now, says *Tacitus*, the death of *Seneca*, to *Nero's*

"great satisfaction: Not so much for any pregnant proof against

"him, that he was of *Piso's* conspiracy: but *Nero* was resolved to

"do that by the sword, which he could not effect by poison. For

"it is reported that *Nero* had corrupted *Cleonicus*, (a freeman of

"*Seneca's*) to give his master poison, which did not succeed. Wheth-

"er that the servant had discovered it to his master, or that *Seneca*

"by his own caution and jealousy had avoided it; for he lived only

"upon a simple diet, as the fruits of the earth; and his drink was

"most commonly river water."

"*NATALIS*, it seems, was sent upon a visit to him (being indis-

"posed) with a compliment, that he would not let *Piso*, come at

"him; and advising him to the continuance of their friendship and

"acquaintance, as formerly: To whom *Seneca* made answer, that

"frequent meetings and conferences betwixt them, could do neither

"of them any good; but that he had a great interest in *Piso's* wel-

fare. Hereupon *Granius Sylvanus*, a captain of the guard, was sent to examine *Seneca* upon the discourse that passed betwixt him and *Natalis*, and to return his answer. *Seneca*, either by chance, or on purpose, came that day from *Campania* to a villa of his own, within four miles of the city; and thither the officer went the next evening, and beset the place. He found *Seneca* at supper with his wife *Paulina*, and two of his friends, and gave him immediately an account of his commission. *Seneca* told him, that it was true, that *Natalis* had been with him in *Piso's* name, with a complaint, that *Piso* could not be admitted to see him: And that he excused himself by reason of his want of health, and his desire to be quiet and private: and that he had no reason to prefer another man's welfare before his own. *Cæsar* himself, he said, knew very well, that he was not a man of compliment: having received more proofs of his freedom, than of his flattery. This answer of *Seneca's* was delivered to *Cæsar*, in the presence of *Poppea* and *Tigellinus*, the intimate confidantes of this barbarous prince: And *Nero* asked him, whether he could gather any thing from *Seneca*, as if he intended to make himself away!. The tribune's answer was, that he did not find him one jot moved with the message: But that he went on roundly with his tale, and never so much as changed countenance for the matter. Go back to him then, says *Nero*, and tell him, *that he is condemned to die*. *Fabius Rusticus* delivers it, that the Tribune did not return the same way he came, but went aside to *Fenius* (a captain of that name) and told him *Cæsar's* orders, asking his advice, whether he should obey them, or not: who bade him by all means to do as he was ordered. Which want of resolution was fatal to them all; for *Sylvanus* also, who was one of the conspirators, assisted now to serve, and to increase those crimes, which he had before plotted to revenge. And yet he did not think fit to appear himself in the business, but sent a centurion to *Seneca* to tell him his doom. *Seneca*, without any surprise or disorder, calls for his will; which being delivered him by the officer, he turned to his friends, and told them, that since he was not permitted to requite them, as they deserved, he was yet at liberty to bequeath them the thing of all others that he esteemed the most, that is, the image of his life: Which should give them the reputation both of constancy and friendship if they would but imitate it; exhorting them to a firmness of mind, sometimes by good counsel, otherwise by reprehension, as the occasion required. Where, says he, is all your philosophy now? All your premeditated resolutions against the violence of fortune? Is there any man so ignorant of *Nero's* cruelty, as to expect, after the murder of his mother and brother, that he should ever spare the life of his governor and tutor? After some general expressions to this purpose, he took his wife into his arms, and having somewhat fortified her against the present calamity, he besought and conjured her to moderate her sorrows and betake herself to the contemplations and comforts of a virtuous life, which would be a fair and an ample consolation to her for the loss of her

husband. *Paulina*, on the other side, tells him her determination  
 to bear him company, and wills the executioner to do his office.—  
 Well, says *Seneca*, if after the sweetness of life as I have repre-  
 sented it to thee, thou hadst rather entertain an honorable death, I  
 shall not envy thy example; consulting at the same time, the fame  
 of the person he loved and his own tenderness, for fear of the in-  
 juries that might attend her when he was gone. Our resolution,  
 says he, in this generous act, may be equal, but thine will be the  
 greater reputation. After this, the veins of both their arms were  
 opened at the same time. *Seneca* did not bleed so freely, his spir-  
 its being wasted with age and a thin diet; so that he was forced  
 to cut the veins of his thighs and elsewhere, to hasten his dispatch.  
 When he was far spent, and almost sinking under his torments,  
 he desired his wife to remove into another chamber, lest the ago-  
 nies of the one might work upon the courage of the other. His  
 eloquence continued to the last as appears by the excellent things  
 he delivered at his death, which being taken in writing, from his  
 own mouth, and published in his own words, I shall not presume  
 to deliver them in any other. *Nero*, in the mean time, who had  
 no particular spite to *Paulina*, gave orders to prevent her death,  
 for fear his cruelty should grow more and more insupportable and  
 odious. Whereupon the soldiers gave all freedom and encourage-  
 ment to her servants to bind up her wounds, and stop the blood,  
 which they did accordingly; but whether she was sensible of it or  
 not, is a question. For among the common people, who are apt to  
 judge the worst, there were some of opinion, that as long as she  
 despaired of *Nero's* mercy, she seemed to court the glory of dying  
 with her husband for company; but that upon the likelihood of  
 a better quarter, she was prevailed upon to out-live him. And so  
 for some years she did survive him, and with all piety and respect  
 to his memory; but so miserably pale and wan, that any body  
 might read the loss of her blood and spirits in her counte-  
 nance.

"SENECA, finding his death slow and lingering, desired *Matius*  
*Annaeus* (his old friend and physician) to give him a dose of poison,  
 which he had provided beforehand, being the same preparation  
 which was appointed for capital offenders in *Athens*. This was  
 brought him, and he drank it up, but to little purpose; for his body  
 was already chilled, and bound up against the force of it. He went  
 at last into a hot bath, and sprinkling some of his servants that  
 were next to him, this say he, is an oblation to *Jupiter the deliverer*.  
 The fume of the bath soon dispatched him, and his body was burnt  
 without any funeral solemnity, as he had directed in his testament;  
 though this will of his was made in the height of his prosperity,  
 and power. There was a rumour that *Subrius Flavius*, in a private con-  
 sultation with the centurions had taken up this following resolution  
 (and that *Seneca* himself was no stranger to it) that is to say, that  
 after *Nero* should have been slain by the help of *Piso*, *Piso* himself  
 should have been killed too; and the empire delivered up to *Seneca*,  
 as one that well deserved it, for his integrity and virtue."





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# SENECA,

OF

## BENEFITS.

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### CHAP. I.

#### *Of Benefits in general,*

**O**NE of the most pernicious errors of a rash, and inconsiderate life, is perhaps the common ignorance of the world in the matter of exchanging *benefits*. And this arises from a mistake, partly in the person that we would oblige, and partly in the thing itself. To begin with the latter: *A benefit is a good office, done with intention and judgment; that is to say, with a due regard to all the circumstances of what, how, why, when, where, to whom, how much, and the like. Or otherwise; it is a voluntary and benevolent action that delights the giver, in the comfort it brings to the receiver.* It will be hard to draw this subject either into method or compass; the one, because of the infinite variety and complication of cases; the other, by reason of the large extent of it: For the whole business (almost) of mankind in society, falls under this head: The duties of kings, and subjects; husbands and wives; parents, and children; masters, and servants; natives, and strangers; high, and low; rich, and poor; strong, and weak; friends, and enemies. The very meditation of it breeds good blood, and generous thoughts; and instructs us in all the parts of honor, humanity, friendship, piety, gratitude, prudence, and justice. In short, the art



and skill of conferring benefits, is, of all human duties, the most absolutely necessary to the well being both of reasonable nature, and of every individual; as the very cement of all communities, and the blessing of particulars. He that does good to another man, does also good to himself; not only in the consequence, but in the very act of doing it: For the conscience of well doing is an ample reward.

Of benefits in general, there are several sorts; as \* *necessary, profitable, and delightful*. Some things there are, without which we cannot live; others, without which we ought not to live; and some again, without which we will not live. In the first rank are those, which deliver us from capital dangers, or apprehensions of death: And the favour is rated according to the hazard; for the greater the extremity, the greater seems the obligation. The next is the case wherein we may indeed live; but we had better die: As in the question of liberty, modesty, and a good conscience. In the third place follow those things which custom, use, affinity, and acquaintance, have made dear to us; as husbands, wives, children, friends, &c. which an honest man will preserve at his utmost peril: Of things profitable there is a large field; as money, honour, &c. to which might be added matters of superfluity and pleasure. But we shall open a way to the circumstances of a benefit, by some previous and more general deliberations upon the thing itself.

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## CHAP. II.

### *Several Sorts of Benefits.*

WE shall divide *benefits* into *absolute* and \* *vulgar*; the one, appertaining to good life; the other is only matter of commerce. The former are the more excellent, because they can never be made void; whereas all material benefits are tossed back, and forward, and change their master. There are some offices that look like benefits, but are only desirable conveniences, as wealth, &c. and these a wicked man may receive from a good, or a good man from an evil. Others again that bear the

face of injuries, which are only benefits ill taken; as cutting, lancing, burning, under the hand of a surgeon. The greatest benefits of all, are those of a good education, which we receive from our parents, either in the state of ignorance or perverseness, as their care and tenderness in our infancy; their discipline in our childhood, to keep us to our duties by fear; and, if fair means will not do; their proceeding afterwards to severity, and punishment; without which we should never have come to good. There are matters of great value many times, that are but of small price; as instructions from a tutor, medicines from a physician, &c. And there are small matters again, which are of great consideration to us: The gift may be small, and the consequence great; as a cup of cold water in a time of need may save a man's life: Some things are of great moment to the giver; others to the receiver: One man gives me a house; another snatches me out, when it is falling upon my head: One gives me an estate; another takes me out of the fire, or casts me out a rope when I am sinking: Some good offices we do to friends; others to strangers; but, those are the noblest that we do without pre-desert. There is an obligation of bounty; and an obligation of charity: This in case of necessity and that in point of convenience. Some benefits are common; others are personal; As if a prince (out of pure grace) grant a privilege to a city, the obligation lies upon the community; and only upon every individual, as a part of the whole: But if it be done particularly for my sake, then am I singly the debtor for it. The cherishing of strangers is one of the duties of hospitality; and exercises itself in the relief and protection of the distressed. There are benefits of good counsel; reputation, life, fortune, liberty, health; nay, and superfluity, and pleasure. One man obliges me out of his pocket; another gives me matter of ornament and curiosity; a third consolation. To say nothing of negative benefits; for some persons reckon it an obligation if they do a body no hurt; and place it to account, as if they saved a man when they do not undo him. To shut up all in one word; as benevolence is the most sociable of all virtues, so it is of the largest extent; for there is not any man either so great, or so little; but he is yet capable of giving

## C H A P. III.

*A Son may oblige his Father, and a Servant his Master.*

THE question is (in the first place) whether it may not be possible for a father to owe more to a son, in other respects, than a son owes to his father for his being? That many sons are both greater and better than their fathers, there is no question; as there are many other things that derive their being from others, which yet are far greater than their original. Is not the tree larger than the seed? The river than the fountain? The foundation of all things lies hid, and the superstructure obscures it. If I owe all to my father, because he gives me life, I may owe as much to a physician that saved his life; for if my father had not been cured, I had never been begotten: Or, if I stand indebted for all that I am, to my beginning; my acknowledgment must run back to the very original of all human beings. My father gave me the benefit of life, which he had never done, if his father had not first given it to him. He gave me life, not knowing to whom, and when I was in a condition, neither to feel death, nor to fear it. That is the great benefit, to give life to one that knows how to use it; and that is capable of the apprehensions of death. It is true, that without a father I could never have had a being; and so without a nurse that being had never been improved; but I do not therefore owe my virtue either to my nativity, or to her that gave me suck. The generation of me was the least part of the benefit. For to live is common with brutes, but, to live well is the main business; and that virtue is all my own, saving what I drew from my education. It does not follow that the *first* benefit must be the *greatest*, because without the first, the greatest could never have been. The father gives life to the son but once; but if the son save the father's life often, though he do but his duty, it is yet a greater benefit. And again, the benefit that a man receives is the greater, the more he needs it; but the living has more need of life than he that is not yet born: So that the father receives a greater benefit in the continuance of his life, than the son in the beginning of it. What if a son delivered his father

from the rack ; or, which is more, lay himself down in his place ? The giving of him a being, was but the office of a father ; a simple act ; a benefit given at a venture ; beside that he had a participant in it, and a regard to his family. He gave only a single life, and he received a happy one. My mother brought me into the world naked, exposed, and void of reason ; but my reputation and my fortune are advanced by my virtue. *Scipio* (as yet in his minority) rescued his father in a battle with *Hannibal* ; and afterwards from the practices and prosecution of a powerful faction ; covering him with consular honours, and the spoils of public enemies. He made himself as eminent for his moderation, as for his piety, and military knowledge : He was the defender, and establisher of his country. He left the empire without a competitor ; and made himself as well the ornament of *Rome*, as the security of it. And did not *Scipio* in all this more than requite a father barely for begetting him ? Did *Anchises* do more for *Aeneas*, in dandling the child in his arms ; or *Aeneas* for his father, when he carried him upon his back through the flames of *Troy*, and made his name famous to future ages, among the founders of the *Roman Empire* ? *T. Manlius* was the son of a sour and imperious father, who banished him from his house as a blockhead, and a scandal to his family ; This *Manlius* hearing that his father's life was in question, and a day set for his trial, went to the tribune that was concerned in his cause and discoursed with him about it : The tribune told him the appointed time, and withal (as an obligation upon the young man) that his cruelty to his son would be part of his accusation ; *Manlius* upon this takes the tribune aside, and presenting a poinard to his breast, swear, says he, that you will let this cause fall, or you shall have this dagger in the heart of you ; and now it is at your choice, which way you will deliver my father. The tribune swore, and kept his word, and made a fair report of the whole matter to the council. He that makes himself famous by his eloquence, justice, or arms, illustrates his extraction let it be ever so mean ; and gives inestimable reputation to his parents. We should never have heard of *Sophoniscus*, but for his son *Socrates* ; nor of *Ariosto* and *Gryllus*, if it had not been for *Xenophon* and *Plato*.

THIS is not to discontinue the veneration we owe to parents; nor to make children the worse, but the better; and to stir up generous emulations: For, in contests of good offices, both parties are happy; as well the vanquished, as those that overcome. It is the only honorable dispute that can arrive betwixt a father and a son, which of the two shall have the better of the other in the point of benefits.

IN the question betwixt a master and a servant; we must distinguish betwixt \* benefits, \* *A. Servant may* duties, and actions ministerial. By *oblige his master.* *Benefits* we understand those good offices that we receive from strangers, which are voluntary and may be foreborne without blame. *Duties* are the parts of a son, and wife; and incumbent upon kindred and relations. *Offices ministerial* belong to the part of a servant. Now, since it is the *mind*, and not the *condition* of the person, that prints the value upon the benefit, a servant may oblige his master, and so may a subject his sovereign, or a common soldier his General, by doing more than he is expressly bound to do. Some things there are, which the law, neither commands, nor forbids; and here the servant is free. It would be very hard for a servant to be chastised for doing less than his duty, and not thanked for it when he does more. His body, it is true, is his master's, but his mind is his own: And there are many commands which a servant ought no more to obey, than a master to impose. There is no man so great, but he may both need the help and service, and stand in fear of the power and unkindness, even of the meanest of mortals. One servant kills his master; another saves him, nay, preserves his master's life, perhaps, with the loss of his own: He exposes himself to torment and death; he stands firm against all threats and batteries: Which is not only a benefit to a servant, but much the greater for his being so.

WHEN *Domitius* was besieged at *Corfinium*, and the place brought to great extremity; he pressed his servant so earnestly to poison him, that at last he was prevailed upon to give him a potion; which, it seems, was an innocent opiate, and *Domitius* out-lived it; *Cæsar* took the town, and gave *Domitius* his life, but it was his servant that gave it him.

THERE was another town besieged, and when it was upon the last pinch, two servants made their escape, and went over to the enemy : Upon the *Romans* entering the town, and in the heat of the soldiers's fury, these two fellows ran directly home, took their mistress out of her house, and drove her before them, telling every body how barbarously she had used them formerly, and that they would now have their revenge ; when they had her without the gates, they kept her close till the danger was over ; by which means they gave their mistress her life and she gave them their freedom. This was not the action of a servile mind to do, so glorious a thing, under the appearance of so great a villainy : For if they had passed for deserters, and parricides, they could not have gained their end.

WITH one instance more (and that a very brave one) I shall conclude this chapter.

IN the civil war of *Rome*, a party coming to search for a person of quality that was proscribed, a servant put on his master's clothes, and delivered himself up to the soldiers as the master of the house ; he was taken into custody, and put to death without discovering the mistake. What could be more glorious than for a servant to die for his master, in that age, when there were not many servants that would not betray their masters ? So generous a tenderness in a public cruelty ; so invincible a faith in a general corruption ! What could be more glorious, I say, than so exalted a virtue, as rather to chuse death for the reward of his fidelity, than the greatest advantages he might otherwise have had for the violation of it ?

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#### CHAP. IV.

*It is the Intention, not the Matter, that makes the Benefit.*

**THE** good will of the benefactor is the fountain of all benefits ; nay, it is the benefit itself ; or, at least, the stamp that makes it valuable and current. Some there are, I know, that take the *matter* for the *benefit*, and tax the obligation by weight and measure. When anything is given them, they presently cast it up, *What may such a house be worth ? Such an office ? Such an estate ?*

As if that were the benefit, which is only the sign and mark of it : For the obligation rests in the *mind*, not in the *matter* ; and all those advantages which we see, handle, or hold in actual possession by the courtesy of another, are but several modes, or ways of explaining, and putting the good will in execution. There needs no greater subtilty, to prove, that both benefits and injuries receive their value from the intention, when even brutes themselves are able to decide this question. Tread upon a dog by chance, or put him to pain upon the dressing of a wound ; the one he passes by as an accident ; and the other, in his fashion, he acknowledges as a kindness ; but offer to strike at him, though you do not hurt him at all, he flies yet in the face of you, even for the mischief that you barely mean him.

It is further to be observed, that all \* benefits are good ; and (like the distributions of Providence) made up of wisdom and bounty ; whereas the gift itself is neither good, nor bad, but may be indifferently applied either to the one or to the other. The benefit is immortal, the gift perishable : For, the benefit itself continues, when we have no longer either the use or the matter of it. He that is dead, was alive ; he that has lost his eyes, did see ; and whatsoever is done, cannot be rendered undone. My friend (for instance) is taken by pirates ; I redeem him ; and, after that, he falls into other pirates' hands ; his obligation to me is the same still, as if he had preserved his freedom. And so, if I save a man from any one misfortune, and he falls into another ; if I give him a sum of money, which is afterwards taken away by thieves ; it comes to the same case. Fortune may deprive us of the matter of a benefit, but the benefit itself remains inviolable. If the benefit resided in the matter, that which is good for one man would be so for another ; whereas many times the very same thing given to different persons, works contrary effects ; even to the difference of life, or death ; and that which is one body's cure, proves another body's poison. Beside that the timing of it alters the value ; and a crust of bread, upon a pinch, is a greater present than an imperial crown.

\* *All benefits are good.*

What is more familiar than, in battle, to shoot at an enemy and kill a friend? Or instead of a friend, to save an enemy? But yet this disappointment in the event, does not at all operate upon the intention. What if a man cures me of a wen, with a stroke that was designed to cut off my head? Or, with a malicious blow upon the stomach, breaks an imposthume? Or, what if he save my life, with a draught that was prepared to poison me? The providence of the issue does not at all discharge the obliquity of the intent. And the same reason holds good even in religion itself. It is not the incense, or the offering that is acceptable to God, but the purity and devotion of the worshipper. Neither is the bare will, without action, sufficient; that is, where we have the means of acting; for, in that case, it signifies as little to *wish* well, without well-doing, as to do good without willing it. There must be effect, as well as intention, to make me owe a benefit; but, to will against it does wholly discharge it. In fine, the conscience alone is the judge, both of benefits and injuries.

It does not follow now, because the benefit rests in the \* good will, that therefore the good will should be always a benefit: For if it be not accompanied with government and discretion, those offices which we call benefits, are but the works of passion, or of chance; and, many times, the greatest of all injuries. One man does me good by mistake, another ignorantly, a third upon force, but none of these cases do I take to be an obligation, for they were neither directed to me, nor was there any kindness of intention: We do not thank the seas for the advantages we receive by navigation, or the rivers for supplying us with fish, and flowing on our grounds; we do not thank the trees either for their fruits or shades, or the winds for a fair gale: And what is the difference betwixt a reasonable creature, that does not know, and an inanimate, that cannot? A good horse saves one man's life, a good suit of arms another's, and a man, perhaps, that never intended it, saves a third. Where is the difference now betwixt the obligation of one, and of the other? A man falls into a river, and the fright cures him of an ague, we may call this a kind of lucky mischance, but not a



remedy. And so it is with the good we receive, either without or beside, or contrary to intention. It is the mind, and not the event, that distinguishes a benefit from an injury.

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## CHAP. V.

*There must be a Judgment in a Benefit as well as matter and Intention; and especially in the Choice of the Person.*

**A**S it is the *will* that designs the benefit, and the *matter* that conveys it, so it is the *judgment* that perfects it; which depends upon so many critical niceties, that the least error, either in the person, the matter, the manner, the quality, the quantity, the time, or the place spoils all.

THE consideration of the *person* is a \* main point; for we are to give by choice, and not by hazard. My inclination bids me oblige one man; I am bound in duty and justice, to serve another; here it is charity, there it is pity; and elsewhere, perhaps encouragement. There are some that want, to whom I would not give, because, if I did, they would want still. To one man I would barely offer a benefit, but I would press it upon another. To say the truth, we do not employ any money to more profit, than that which we bestow; and it is not to our friends, our acquaintances, or countrymen, nor to this or that condition of men, that we are to restrain our bounties, but wheresoever there is a man, there is a place and occasion for a benefit. We give to some that are good already, to others in hope to make them so, but we must do all with discretion: For, we are as well answerable for what we give, as for what we receive. Nay, the misplacing of a benefit is worse than the not receiving it; for the one is another man's fault, but the other is mine. The error of the giver does oft times excuse the ingratitude of the receiver; for a favour ill placed, is rather a profusion than a benefit. It is the most shameful of losses, an inconsiderate bounty. I will choose a man of integrity, sincere, considerate, grateful, temperate, well natured, neither covetous, nor sordid: And when I have obliged such a man,

\* *The choice of the person is a main point.*

though not worth a groat in the world, I have gained my end. If we give, only to receive, we loose the fairest objects for our charity, the absent, the sick, the captive, the needy. When we oblige those that can never pay us again in kind, as a stranger upon his last farewell, or a necessitous person upon his death bed, we make Providence our debtor, and rejoice in the conscience even of a fruitless benefit. So long as we are affected with passions, and distracted with hopes and fears, and (the most unmanly of all vices) with our pleasures, we are incompetent judges, where to place our bounties. But when death presents itself, and we come to our last will and testament, we leave our fortunes to the most worthy. He that gives nothing, but in hopes of receiving, must die intestate. It is the honesty of another man's mind that moves the kindness of mine: And I would sooner oblige a grateful man, than an ungrateful: But this shall not hinder me from doing good also to a person that is known to be ungrateful: Only with this difference, that I will serve the one in all extremities with my life and fortune; and the other no further than stands with my convenience. But what shall I do, you will say, to know whether a man will be grateful, or not? I will follow probability; and hope the best. He that sows, is not sure to reap, nor the seaman to reach his port, nor the soldier to win the field: He that weds is not sure that his wife shall be honest, or his children dutiful: But shall we therefore neither sow, sail, bear arms, nor marry? Nay if I knew a man to be incurably thankless, I would yet be so kind as to put him in his way, or let him light a candle at mine, or draw water at my well, which may stand him perhaps in great stead, and yet not be reckoned as a benefit from me, for I do it carelessly, and not for his sake, but my own, as an office of humanity, without any choice or kindness.

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## CHAP. VI.

*The Matter of Obligations, with its Circumstances.*

**N**EXT to the choice of the person, follows that of the matter, wherein a regard must be had to time, place, proportion, quality, and to the very *marks* of op-

be no mixture of sourness, severity, contumely, or reproof with our obligations; nay, in case there should be any occasion for so much as an admonition, let it be referred to another time. We are a great deal apter to remember injuries than benefits; and it is enough to forgive an obligation that has the nature of an offence.

There are some that spoil a good office after it is done; and others in the very instant of doing it.\* *Give cheerfully.* There must be so much intreaty and importunity: Nay, if we do but suspect a petitioner, we put on a sour face; look another way; pretend haste, company, business; talk of other matters, and keep him off with artificial delays; let his necessities be ever so pressing; and when we are put to it at last, it comes so hard from us, that it is rather extorted than obtained; and not so properly the giving of a bounty, as the quitting of a man's hold upon the tug, when another is too strong for him: So that this is but doing one kindness for me, and another for himself; he gives for his own quiet, after he has tormented me with difficulties and delays. The *manner* of saying or of doing any thing, goes a great way in the value of the thing itself. It was well said of him who called a good office that was done harshly, and with an ill will, *a stoney piece of bread*; it is necessary for him that is hungry to receive it, but it almost choaks a man in the going down. There must be no pride, arrogance of looks, or tumour of words in the bestowing of benefits: no insolence of behaviour, but a modesty of mind, and a diligent care to catch at occasions and prevent necessities. A pause, an unkind tone, word, look or action, destroys the grace of a courtesy. It corrupts a bounty when it is accompanied with state haughtiness and elation of mind in the giving of it. Some have the trick of shifting off a suitor with a point of wit, or a cavil. As in the case of the *Cynick* that begged a talent of *Antigonus*; *that is too much*, says he, *for a Cynick to ask*; when he fell to a penny, *that is too little*, says he, *for a prince to give*. He might have found a way to have compounded this controversy, by giving him a *penny*, as to a *Cynick*; and a *talent*, as from a *prince*. Whatsoever we bestow, let it be done with a frank and cheerful countenance: A man must not give with his hand, and deny with his looks. He that gives quickly gives willingly.

We are likewise \* to accompany good deeds with good words, and say (for the purpose) *why should you make such a matter of this?* \* Accompany good deeds with good words. *Why did not you come to me sooner? Why would you make use of any body else?* *I take it ill that you should bring me a recommendation; pray let there be no more of this; but when you have occasion hereafter, come to me upon your own account.* That is the glorious bounty, when the receiver can say to himself, *What a blessed day has this been to me! Never was any thing so generously, so tenderly, with so good a grace. What is it I would not do for such a man! A thousand times as much another way could not have given me this satisfaction.* In such a case, let the benefit be ever so considerable, the manner of conferring it is yet the noblest part. Where there is harshness of language, countenance or behaviour, a man had better be without it. A flat denial is infinitely before a vexatious delay; as a quick death is a mercy compared with a lingering torment. But to be put to waitings and intercessions, after a promise is past, is a cruelty intolerable. It is troublesome to stay long for a benefit, let it be ever so great; and he that holds me needlessly in pain loses two precious things, time, and the proof of friendship. Nay, the very hint of a man's wants, comes many times too late. *If I had money, said Socrates, I would buy me a cloak.* They that knew he wanted one, should have prevented the very intimation of that want. It is not the value of the present, but the benevolence of the mind that we are to consider. *He gave me but a little, but it was generously, and frankly done; it was a little out of a little; he gave it me without asking; he prest it upon me; he watched the opportunity of doing it, and took it as an obligation upon himself.* On the other side, many benefits are great in shew, but little or nothing perhaps in effect; when they come hard, slow, or at unawares. That which is given with pride and ostentation, is rather an ambition than a bounty:

SOME favors are to be conferred in \* public: Others in private. In public, the rewards of great actions; as honors, charges, or whatsoever else, gives a man reputation in the world; but, the good offices we do for a man in want, distress, or under reproach; these should be known only to those that have the benefit of them. Nay

not to them neither, if we can handsomely conceal it from whence the favor comes: For the secrecy, in many cases, is a main part of the benefit. There was a good man that had a friend, who was both poor and sick, and ashamed to own his condition: He privately conveyed a bag of money under his pillow, that he might seem rather to find than receive it. Provided I know that I give it, no matter for him who receives it, to know from whence it comes. Many a man stands in need of help, that has not the face to confess it: If the discovery may give offence, let it lie concealed: He that gives it to be seen, would never relieve a man in the dark. It would be too tedious to run through all the niceties that may occur upon this subject. But, in two words, he must be a wise, a friendly, and a well bred man, that perfectly acquits himself in the art, and duty of obliging; for all his actions must be squared according to the measures of civility good nature, and discretion.

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#### CHAP. VIII.

##### *The Difference and Value of Benefits.*

**W**E have already spoken of *benefits in general*, the matter, and the intention, together with the manner of conferring them. It follows now in course, to say something of the *value* of them; which is rated, either by the good they do us, or by the inconvenience they save us, and has no other standard than that of a judicious regard to circumstance, and occasion. Suppose I save a man from drowning, the advantage of life is all one to him, from what hand soever it comes, or by what means: But, yet there may be a vast difference in the obligation. I may do it with hazard, or with security; with trouble, or with ease; willing or by compulsion; upon intercession or without it; I may have a prospect of vain glory or profit. I may do it in kindness to another, or an hundred *by-ends* to myself: And every point does exceedingly vary the case. Two persons may part with the same sum of money, and yet not the same benefit: The one had it of his own, and it was but little out of a great deal; the other borrowed it, and bestowed upon me that which he wanted for himself. Two boys were sent out to bring a certain person to their master: One of them hung up and down, and comes home again weary,

without finding him ; the other falls to play with his companions at the wheel of fortune, sees him by chance passing by, delivers him his errand, and brings him. He that found him by chance deserves to be punished ; and he that sought for him, and missed him, to be rewarded for his good will.

In some cases we value \* the *thing* ; in others the *labor* and *attendance*. What can be more precious than good manners, good letters, life and health ? And yet we pay our physicians and tutors only for their service in their professions. If we buy things cheap, it matters not so long as it is a bargain : It is no obligation from the seller, if nobody else would give him more for it. What would not a man give to be set ashore in a tempest ? For a house in a wilderness ? A shelter in a storm ? A fire or a bit of meat when a man is pinched with hunger or cold ? A defence against thieves, and a thousand other matters of moment, that cost but little ? And yet we know that the skipper has but his freight for our passage ; and the carpenters and bricklayers do their work by the day. Those are many times the greatest obligations, in truth, which in vulgar opinions are the smallest : As comfort to the sick, poor, captives, good counsel, keeping of people from wickedness, &c. Wherefore we should reckon ourselves to owe most for the noblest benefits. If the physician adds care and friendship to the duty of his calling ; and the tutor to the common method of his business ; I am to esteem them as the nearest of my relations : For, to watch with me ; to be troubled for me ; and to put off all other patients for my sake, is a particular kindness : And so it is in my tutor, if he takes more pains with me than with the rest of my fellows. It is not enough, in this case, to pay the one his fees, and the other his salary ; but I am indebted to them over and above, for their friendship. The meanest of mechanics, if he does his work with industry, and care, it is an usual thing to cast him something by way of reward, more than the bare agreement : And, shall we deal worse with the preservers of our lives, and the reformers of our manners ? He that gives me himself (if he be worth taking) gives the greatest benefit : And, this is the present which *Æschines*, a poor disciple of *Socrates*, made to his master, and as a matter of great consideration. *Others may have*

given you much, says he, but I am the only man that has left nothing to himself: This gift, says Socrates, you shall never repent of; for I will take care to return it better than I found it: So that a brave mind can never want matter of liberality in the meanest condition; for, nature has been so kind to us, that where we have nothing of fortune's, we may bestow something of our own.

It falls out often that a benefit is followed with an injury; \* let which will be foremost, it is with the latter, as with one writing upon another; it does in a great measure hide the former, and keep it from appearing, but it does not quite take it away. We may in some cases divide them, and both requite the one, and revenge the other; or otherwise compare them, to know whether I am creditor or debtor. You have obliged me in my servant, but wounded me in my brother; you have saved my son, but have destroyed my father: In this instance, I will allow as much as pity and justice, and good nature will bear; but I am not willing to set an injury against a benefit. I would have some respect to the time; the obligation came first, and then, perhaps, the one was designed, the other against his will: Under these considerations I would amplify the benefit, and lessen the injury, and extinguish the one with the other; nay, I would pardon the injury even without the benefit, but much more after it. Not that a man can be bound by one benefit to suffer all sorts of injuries; for, there are some cases wherein we lie under no obligation for a benefit; because a greater injury absolves it: As for example, a man helps me out of a law-suit, and afterwards commits a rape upon my daughter; where the following impiety cancels the antecedent obligation. A man lends a little money, and then sets my house on fire: The debtor is here turned creditor, when the injury outweighs the benefit. Nay, if a man does but so much as repent the good office done, and grow sour and insolent upon it, and upbraid me with it: If he did it only for his own sake or, for any other reason, than for mine; I am in some degree, more or less acquitted of the obligation. I am not at all beholden to him that makes me the instrument of his own advantage. He that does me good for his own sake, I will do him good for mine.

**SUPPOSE** a man makes suit for a \* place and cannot obtain it, but upon the ransom of ten slaves out of the galleys : If there be ten, and *no more*, they owe him nothing for their redemption ; but they are indebted to him

for the choice, where he might have taken ten others as well as these. Put the case again, that by an act of grace so many prisoners are to be released ; their names to be drawn by lot, and mine happens to come out among the rest ; one part of my obligation is to him that put me in a capacity of freedom ; and the other is to Providence, for my being one of that number. The greatest benefits of all have no witnesses, but lie concealed in the conscience.

**THERE** is a great difference between a common obligation, and a particular ; † he that lends my country maney, obliges me only as a part of the whole. *Plato* crossed the river, and the ferry-man would take no money of him : He reflected upon it as an honor done to himself, and told him, that *Plato was in debt*. But *Plato*, when he found it to be no more than he did for others, recalled his words ; for, says he, *Plato will owe nothing in particular, for a benefit is common ; what I owe with others, I will pay with others*.

**SOME** will have it, that the necessity of § wishing a man well, is some abatement to the obligation in the doing him a good office. But, I say, on the contrary, that it is the greater, because the good will cannot be changed. It is one thing to say, that a man could not but do me this or that civility, because he was forced to it : and another thing that he could not quit the good will of doing it. In the former case, I am a debtor to him that imposeth the force ; in the other to myself. The unchangeable good will is an indispensable obligation ; and to say that nature cannot go out of her course, does not discharge us of what we owe to Providence. Shall he be said to will, that may change his mind the next moment ? And shall we question the will of the Almighty, whose nature admits no change ? Must the stars quit their stations and fall foul of one another ? Must the sun stand still in the middle of his course, and heaven and earth drop into confusion ? Must a devouring fire seize upon the universe ; the harmony of the creation be dissolved ; and the



whole frame of nature swallowed up in a dark abyss? And will nothing less than this serve to convince the world of their audacious and impertinent follies? It is not to say, that *these heavenly bodies are not made for us*; for, in part, they are so; and we are the better for their virtues and motions, whether we will or not: Though undoubtedly the principal cause is the unalterable law of God. Providence is not moved by any thing from without; but the divine will is an everlasting law; an immutable decree: And the impossibility of variation proceeds from God's purpose of preserving; for he never repents of his first counsels. It is not with our heavenly as with our earthly father. God thought of us, and provided for us, before he made us: (For unto him all future events are present:) Man was not the work of chance; his mind carries him above the slight of fortune, and naturally aspires to the contemplation of heaven and divine mysteries. How desperate a phrenzy is it now, to undervalue; nay to contemn and disclaim the divine blessings, without which we are utterly incapable of enjoying any other!

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C H A P. IX.

*An honest Man cannot be outdone in Courtesy.*

**I**T passes in the world for a generous and a magnificent saying, that, *it is a shame for a man to be outdone in courtesy*: And it is worth the while to examine both the truth of it, and the mistake. First, there can be no shame in a virtuous emulation; and, secondly, there can be no victory without crossing the cudgels, and yielding the cause. One man may have the advantages of strength, of means, of fortune; and this will undoubtedly operate upon the events of good purposes, but yet without any diminution to the virtue. The good will may be the same in both, and yet one may have the heels of the other: For it is not in a good office as in the course, where he wins the plate that comes first to the post: And even there also chance has many times a great hand in the success. Where the contest is about benefits, and that the one has not only a *good will*, but *matter* to work upon; and a *flower* to put the good intention into execution: And the other has barely a *good will*, without either the *means* or the *occasion* of a re-  
 q

quital; if he does but affectionately wish it, and endeavor it; the latter is no more overcome, in courtesy, than he is in courage, who dies with his sword in his hand, and his face to the enemy, and without shrinking, maintains his station: For where *fortune is partial*, it is enough that the *good will is equal*. There are two errors in this proposition: First, to imply that a good man may be overcome; and then to imagine that any thing shameful can befall him. The *Spartans* prohibited all those exercises where the victory was declared by the confession of the contented. The 300 *Fabii* were never said to be conquered but slain; nor *Regulus* to be overcome, though he was taken prisoner by the *Carthaginians*. The mind may stand firm under the greatest malice and iniquity of fortune; and yet the giver and receiver continue upon equal terms: As we reckon it a drawn battle, when two combatants are parted, though the one has lost more blood than the other. He that knows how to owe a courtesy, and heartily wishes that he could requite it, is invincible; so that every man may be as grateful as he pleases. It is your happiness to give it, it is my fortune that I can only receive. What advantage now has your chance over my virtue? But there are some men that have philosophized themselves almost out of the sense of human affections; as *Diogenes*, who walked naked and unconcerned through the middle of *Alexander's* treasures, and was as well in other men's opinions, as in his own, even above *Alexander* himself, who, at that time, had the whole world at his feet: For there was more than the one scorned to take, than that the other had in his power to give; and it is a greater generosity for a beggar to refuse money, than for a prince to bestow it. This is a remarkable instance of an immoveable mind: and there is hardly any contending with it; but a man is never the less valiant for being worsted by an invulnerable enemy; nor the fire one jot the weaker for not consuming an incombustible body; nor a sword ever the worse for not cleaving a rock that is impenetrable; neither is a grateful mind overcome for want of an answerable fortune. No matter for the inequality of the things given and received, so long as, in point of good affection, the two parties stand upon the level. It is no shame not to overtake a man, if we follow him as fast as we can. That humour of a man, the vain-glorious *Alexander*, was used to make his boast, that never any man went beyond him.

sion of dialogue, the conclusion is this : if you meant him a kindness, he is answerable for it ; and I may enjoy the fruit of it, without being obliged by it. But if it was done for my sake, then I am accountable. Or however upon any occasion, I am ready to do you all the kind offices imaginable ; not as the return of a benefit, but as the earnest of a friendship : Which you are not to challenge neither, but to entertain as an act of honour and of justice, rather than of gratitude. If a man find the body of my dead father in a desert, and give it burial ; if he did it as to my father, I am beholden to him : But, if the body was unknown to him, and he would have done the same thing for any other body, I am no farther concerned in it, than as a piece of public humanity.

THESE are, moreover, some cases, wherein an unworthy person may be \* obliged, for the sake of others ; and the seditious extract of an ancient nobility, may be preferred before a better man, who is but of yesterday's standing. And it is but reasonable to pay a reverence even to the memory of eminent virtues. He that is not illustrious in himself, may yet be reputed so in the right of his ancestors. And there is a gratitude to be entailed upon the offspring of famous progenitors. Was it not for the father's sake that Cicero the son was made consul ? And was it not the eminence of one Pompey, that raised and dignified the rest of his family ? How came Caligula to be emperor of the world ? A man so cruel, that he spilt blood as greedily as if he were to drink it ? The Empire was not given to himself, but to his father Germanicus : A braver man deserved that for him, which he could never have challenged upon his own merit. What was it that preferred Fabius Pervicus ? (whose very mouth was the uncleanest part about him :) What was it, but the three hundred of that family that so generously opposed the enemy, for the safety of the commonwealth ?

NAY, † Providence itself is gracious to the wicked posterity of an honorable race. The counsels of heaven are guided by wisdom, mercy, and justice. Some men are made

\* An unworthy person may be obliged for the sake of those who are more worthy.

† Providence itself is gracious.

kings for their proper virtues, without *to the wicked* any respect to their predecessors. Others, *posterity of an* for their ancestors sakes, whose virtues, *honorable race.* though neglected in their lives, come to be afterwards rewarded in their issues. And, it is but equality, that our gratitude should extend as far as the influence of their heroical actions and examples.

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 CHAP. XII.

*The Benefactor must have no By-ends.*

WE come now to the main point of the matter in question; that is to say, whether or not the giving or receiving benefits be a thing desirable in itself? There is a sect of Philosophers who account nothing valuable, but what is profitable; and so make all virtue mercenary: An unmanly mistake, to imagine, that the hope of gain, or fear of loss, should make a man either the more or the less honest. As if you should say, *what shall I get by it, and I'll be an honest man?* Whereas, on the contrary, honesty is a thing in itself to be purchased at any rate. It is not for a body to say, *It will be a charge; a hazard; I shall give offence, &c.* My business is to do what I ought to do: All other considerations are foreign to the office. Whensoever my duty calls me, it is my part to attend, without scrupulizing upon forms or difficulties. Shall I see an honest man oppressed at the bar, and not assist him for fear of a court faction? Or not second him upon the highway against thieves for fear of a broken head? And chuse rather to sit still the quiet spectator of fraud and violence? Why will men be just, temperate, generous, brave, but because it carries along with it fame, and a good conscience? And for the same reason and no other, (to apply it to the subject in hand) let a man also be bountiful. The school of *Epicurus*, I am sure will never swallow that doctrine? (this effeminate tribe of lazy and voluptuous Philosophers;) they will tell you, that virtue is but the vassal and servant of pleasure. *No*, says *Epicurus*, *I am not for pleasure neither, without virtue.* But, why then for pleasure, say I, *before virtue?* Not that the stress of the controversy lies upon the *order* only; for the *power* of it, as well as

the *dignity*, is now under debate. It is the office of virtue to superintend, to lead, and govern; but the parts you have assigned it, are, to submit, to follow, and to be under command. But this, you will say, is nothing to the purpose, so long as both sides are agreed, that there can be no happiness without *virtue*: *Take away that*, says Epicurus, *and I am as little a friend to pleasure as you*. The pinch in short, is this, whether virtue itself be the supreme good or only the cause of it? Is it not the inverting of the order that will clear this point; (though it is a very preposterous error, to set that first which would be last.) It does not half so much offend me, ranging pleasure before virtue, as the very comparing them; and the bringing of two opposites, and professed enemies, into any sort of competition.

THE drift of this discourse is, to support the cause of benefits; and to prove that it is a mean and dishonourable thing, to give, for any other end, than for giving sake.\* He that gives for gain, profit, or any by-end, destroys the very intent of bounty: for it falls only upon those that do not want; and prevents the charitable inclinations of princes and great men, who cannot reasonably propound to themselves any such end. What does the sun get by travelling about the universe; by visiting and comforting all the corners of the earth? Is the whole creation made, and ordered for the good of mankind, and every particular man only for the good of himself? There passes not an hour of our lives, wherein we do not enjoy the blessings of Providence without measure and without intermission. And what design can the Almighty have upon us, who is in himself fully safe, and inviolable? If he should give only for his own sake, what would become of poor mortals, who have nothing to return him, at best but dutiful acknowledgments? It is putting out a benefit to interest only to bestow where we may place it to advantage.

LET us be liberal then, after the example of our great Creator: And give to others with the same consideration that he gives to us. The answer of *Epicurus*\*\* to this will be, that God gives no benefit at all, but turns his back upon the world; and, without any concern for us, leaves

\* Gives only for giving sake.

\*\* The Epicureans deny Provi-

nature to take her course : And whence, the Stoicks  
 ther he does any thing himself, or noth- assert it.  
 ing, he takes no notice however, either of the good or  
 the ill that is done here, below. If there were not an  
 ordering and overruling Providence, how comes it (say I  
 on the other side) that the universality of mankind  
 should ever have so unanimously agreed in the madness  
 of worshipping a power that can neither hear nor help  
 us? Some blessings are freely given us; others upon  
 our prayers, are granted us; and every day brings forth  
 instances of great, and seasonable mercies. There never  
 was yet any man so insensible, as not to feel, see, and  
 understand a Deity in the ordinary methods of nature;  
 though many have been so obstinately ungrateful, as not  
 to confess it: Nor is any man so wretched, as not to be  
 a partaker in that divine bounty. Some benefits, it is  
 true, may appear to be unequally divided. But it is yet  
 no small matter that we possess in common; and which  
 nature has bestowed upon us in her very self. If God  
 be not bountiful whence is it that we have all that we  
 pretend to? That which we give, and that which we de-  
 ny: that which we lay up, and that which we squander  
 away? Those innumerable delights, for the entertain-  
 ment of our eyes, our ears, and our understandings?  
 Nay that copious matter even for luxury itself? For care  
 is taken, not only for our necessities, but also for our plea-  
 sures, and for the gratifying of all our senses and appe-  
 tites. So many pleasant groves, fruitful, and salutary  
 plants, so many fair rivers that serve us, both for recre-  
 ation, plenty, and commerce. Vicissitudes of seasons,  
 varieties of food, by nature made ready to our hand, and  
 the whole creation itself subjected to mankind, for  
 health, medicine, and dominion. We can be thankful  
 to a friend for a few acres, or a little money; and yet  
 for the freedom and command of the whole earth, and  
 for the great benefits of our being, our life, health and  
 reason, we look upon ourselves as under no obligation.  
 If a man bestows upon us a house that is delicately beau-  
 tified, with paintings, statues, gildings, and marble, we  
 make a mighty business of it, and yet it lies at the mer-  
 cy of a puff of wind, and the snuff of a candle, and a  
 hundred accidents, to lay it in the dust. And, is it noth-  
 ing now to sleep under the canopy of heaven, where we

have the globe of the earth for our place of repose, and the glories of the heavens for our spectacle? How comes it that we should so much value what we have, and yet at the same time be so unthankful for it? Whence is it that we have our breath, the comforts of light and of heat, the very blood that runs in our veins? The cattle that feed us, and the fruit of the earth that feed them? Whence have we the growth of our bodies, the succession of our ages, and the faculties of our minds? So many veins of metals, quarries of marble, &c. The seed of every thing is in itself, and it is the blessing of God that raises it out of the dust, into action and motion. To say nothing of the charming varieties of music, beautiful objects, delicious provisions for the palate, exquisite perfumes which are cast in over and above, to the common necessities of our being.

ALL this, says *Epicurus*, we are to ascribe to \* nature. \* *God and nature are one and the same power.* And, why not to *God*, I beseech ye? As if they were not both of them one and the same power working in the whole, and in every part of it. Or if you call him the *Almighty Jupiter*, the *Thunderer*; the *Creator* and *Preserver* of us all; it comes to the same issue: Some will express him under the notion of *fate*; which is only a connexion of causes, and himself the uppermost and original, upon which all the rest depend. The *Stoicks* represent the several functions of the *Almighty power* under several appellations. When they speak of him as the *father*, and the fountain of all beings, they call him *Bacchus*: And, under the name of *Hercules*, they denote him to be *indefatigable* and *invincible*: And in the contemplation of him in the *reason*, *order*, *proportion*, and *wisdom* of his proceedings, they call him *Mercury*: So that which way soever they look, and under what name soever they couch their meaning, they never fail of finding him: For he is every where, and fills his own work. If a man should borrow money of *Seneca*, and say that he owes it to *Annaeus*, or *Lucius*: he may change the name, but not his creditor; for let him take which of the three names he pleases, he is still a debtor to the same person. As justice, integrity, prudence, frugality, fortitude, are all the goods of one and the same mind, so that whichso-

ever of them pleases us, we cannot distinctly say, that it is this or that, but the mind.

BUT, not to carry this digression too far, that which God himself does, we are sure is well done; and we are no less sure, that † for whatsoever he gives, he neither wants, expects, nor receives any thing in return: So that the end of a benefit ought to be the advantage of the receiver; and that must be our scope, without any by-regard to ourselves. It is objected to us, the singular caution we prescribe in the choice of the person; for it were a madness, we say, for an husbandman to sow the land: Which, if true, say they, you have an eye upon profit, as well in giving, as in plowing and sowing. And then they say again, that if the conferring a benefit were desirable in itself, it would have no dependence upon the choice of the man; for let us give it when, how or wheresoever we please, it would be still a benefit. This does not at all affect our assertion: For the person, the matter, the manner, and the time, are circumstances absolutely necessary to the reason of the actions: There must be a right judgment in all respects to make it a benefit. It is my duty to be true to a trust, and yet there may be a time, or a place wherein I would make little difference betwixt the renouncing it, and the delivering it up; and the same rule holds in benefits; I will neither render the one or bestow the other to the damage of the receiver. A wicked man will run all risks to do an injury, and to compass his revenge; and shall not an honest man venture as far to do a good office? All benefits must be gratuitous; a merchant sells me the corn that keeps me and my family from starving; but he sold it for his interest, as well as I bought it for mine; and so I owe him nothing for it. He that gives for profit, gives to himself; as a physician or a lawyer gives council for a fee, and only makes use of me for his own ends; as a grazier fats his cattle to bring them to a better market. This is more properly the driving of a trade, than the cultivating of a generous commerce. This for that, is rather a truck than a benefit; and he deserves to be cozened, that gives any thing in hope of a return. And in truth, what end should a man honorably propound? Not profit sure; that is vulgar and mechanic;

† *The divine bounty expects no returns.*



and he who does not condemn it, can never be grateful. And then for *glory*, it is a mighty matter indeed for a man to boast of doing his duty. We are to give, if it were only to avoid *not giving*; if any thing comes of it, it is clear gain; and, at worst, there is nothing lost; beside that, one benefit well placed, makes amends for a thousand miscarriages. It is not that I would exclude the benefactor neither, for being himself the better for the good offices he has done for another. Some, there are that do us good only for their own sakes; others for ours; and some again for both. He who does for me in common with himself, if he had a prospect upon both in the doing of it, I am obliged to him for it, and glad with all my heart that he had a share in it. Nay, I were ungrateful, and unjust, if I should not rejoice that what was beneficial to me, might be so likewise to himself.

To pass now to the matter of gratitude, and ingratitude; there never was any man yet so wicked, as not to approve the one, and detest the other; as the two things in the whole world, the one to be the most abominated, the other the most esteemed. The very story of an ungrateful action puts us out of all patience and gives us a loathing for the author of it. *That intemperate villain, we cry, to do so horrid a thing: Not that inconsiderate fool, for omitting so profitable a virtue: Which plainly shews the sense we naturally have, both of the one and the other, and that we are led to it by a common impulse of reason, and of conscience.* *Epicurus* fancies God to be without power, and without arms; above fear himself, and as little to be feared. He places him betwixt the orbs, solitary and idle, out of the reach of mortals, and neither hearing our prayers, nor minding our concerns; and allows him only such a veneration and respect as we pay to our parents. If a man should ask him now, why any reverence at all, if we have no obligation to him? Or rather, why that greater reverence to his fortuitous atoms? His answer would be, that it is for their majesty, and their admirable nature, and not out of any hope or expectation from them. So that by his proper confession, a thing may be desirable for its own worth. But, says he, gratitude is a virtue that has commonly profit annexed to it. And where is the virtue, say I, that has not? But still the virtue is to be valued for it.

self and not for the profit that attends it : There is no question but gratitude for benefits received, is the ready way to procure more ; and in requiting one friend we encourage many ; but these accessions fall in by the bye ; and if I were sure that the doing good offices would be my ruin, I would yet pursue them. He that visits the sick in hopes of a legacy, let him be ever so friendly in all other cases, I look upon him in this to be no better than a raven, that watches a weak sheep, only to pick out the eyes of it. We never give with so much judgment or care, as when we consider the honesty of the action, without any regard to the profit of it ; for our understandings are corrupted with fear, hope, and pleasure.

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### CHAP. XIII.

*There are many Cases wherein a Man may be vindict of a Benefit, but it is very rare to be challenged, and never to be upbraided.*

**I**F the world were wise, and as honest as it should be, there would be no need of caution or precept, how to behave ourselves in our several situations and duties ; for both the giver and the receiver, would do what they ought to do of their own accord : The one would be bountiful, and the other grateful ; and the only way of minding a man of one good turn, would be the following it with another. But as the case stands, we must take other measures, and consult, the best we can, the common ease and relief of mankind.

As there are several sorts of ungrateful men, so there must be several ways of dealing with them : *Several sorts either by artifice, counsel, admonition, or reproof, according to the humor of the person, and the degree of the offence : Provided always that as well in the reminding a man of a benefit as in the bestowing of it, the good of the receiver be the principal thing intended.* There is a curable ingratitude, and an incurable ; there is a slothful, a neglectful, a proud, a dissembling, a disclaiming, a heedless, a forgetful, and a malicious ingratitude ; and the application must be suited to the person we have to work upon.

and he who does not condemn it, can never be grateful. And then for *glory*, it is a mighty matter indeed for a man to boast of doing his duty. We are to give, if it were only to avoid *not giving*; if any thing comes of it, it is clear gain; and, at worst, there is nothing lost; beside that, one benefit well placed, makes amends for a thousand miscarriages. It is not that I would exclude the benefactor neither, for being himself the better for the good offices he has done for another. Some, there are that do us good only for their own sakes; others for ours; and some again for both. He who does for me in common with himself, if he had a prospect upon both in the doing of it, I am obliged to him for it, and glad with all my heart that he had a share in it. Nay, I were ungrateful, and unjust, if I should not rejoice that what was beneficial to me, might be so likewise to himself.

To pass now to the matter of gratitude, and \*ingratitude; there never was any man yet so wicked, as not to approve the one, and detest the other; as the two things in the whole world, the one to be the most abominated, the other the most esteemed. The very story of an ungrateful action puts us out of all patience and gives us a loathing for the author of it. *That inhuman villain, we cry, to do so horrid a thing; Not that inconsiderate fool, for omitting so profitable a virtue;* Which plainly shews the sense we naturally have, both of the one and the other, and that we are led to it by a common impulse of reason, and of conscience. *Epicurus* fancies God to be without power, and without arms; above fear himself, and as little to be feared. He places him betwixt the orbs, solitary and idle, out of the reach of mortals, and neither hearing our prayers, nor minding our concerns; and allows him only such a veneration and respect as we pay to our parents. If a man should ask him now, why any reverence at all, if we have no obligation to him? Or rather, why that greater reverence to his fortitious atoms? His answer would be, that it is for their majesty, and their admirable nature, and not out of any hope or expectation from them. So that by his proper confession, a thing may be desirable for its own worth. But, says he, gratitude is a virtue that has commonly profit annexed to it. And where is the virtue, say I, that has not? But still the virtue is to be valued for it-

self and not for the profit that attends it: There is no question but gratitude for benefits received, is the ready way to procure more; and in requiring one friend we encourage many; but these accessions fall in by the bye; and if I were sure that the doing good offices would be my ruin, I would yet pursue them. He that visits the sick in hopes of a legacy, let him be ever so friendly in all other cases, I look upon him in this to be no better than a raven, that watches a weak sheep, only to pick out the eyes of it. We never give with so much judgment or care, as when we consider the honesty of the action, without any regard to the profit of it; for our understandings are corrupted with fear, hope, and pleasure.

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## SENECA—OF BENEFITS.

the advantage he has brought us ; but new appetites de-face old kindnesses, and we carry our prospect forward to something more, without considering what we have obtained already. All that is past we give for loss ; so that we are only intent upon the future. When a benefit is once out of sight, or out of use, it is buried.

It is the freak of many people, that they cannot do a good office, without immediately \*boasting of it, drunk or sober : And it goes into all companies, what wonderful things they have done for this man, and what for the other. A foolish and a dangerous vanity : of a doubtful friend to make a certain enemy. For these reproaches, and contempts, will set every body's tongue a talking ; and people will conclude, that these things would never be, if there were not something very extraordinary in the bottom of it. When it once comes to that, there is not any calumny but fastens, more or less, nor any falsehood so incredible, but in some part or other it shall pass for a truth. Our great mistake is this, we are still inclined to make the most of what we give, and the least of what we receive ; whereas we should do the clear contrary. *It might have been more, but he had a great many to oblige. It was as much as he could well spare ; he will make it up some other time, &c.* Nay, we should be so far from making publication of our bounties, as not to hear them so much as mentioned, without sweetening the matter : As, *Alas ! I owe him a great deal more than that comes to. If it were in my power to serve him ; I should be very glad of it.* And this too, not with the figure of a compliment, but with all humanity and truth. There was a man of quality, who, in the triumviral proscription, was saved by one of *Cesar's* friends, who would still be twitting him with it, reminding him who it was that preserved him, and telling him over and over, *You had gone to pot, friend, but for me.* Pray ye, (says the proscribed) *let me hear no more of this, or even leave me as you found me. I am thankful enough of myself to acknowledge, that I owe you my life ; but it is death to have it rung in my ears perpetually as a reproach : It looks as if you had only saved me, to carry me about for a spectacle. I would fain forget the mis-*

*fortune, that I was once a prisoner, without being led in triumph, every day of my life.*

OH! the \* pride and folly of a great fortune, that turns benefits into injuries: that delights in excesses, and disgraces every thing it does! \* *Some bounties are bestowed with insolence.* Who would receive any thing from it upon these terms? The higher it raises us, the more sordid it makes us. Whatsoever it gives, it corrupts: What is there in it that should thus puff us up? By what magic is it that we are so transformed, that we do no longer know ourselves? Is it impossible for greatness to be liberal without insolence? The benefits that we receive from our superiors are then welcome, when they come with an open hand and a clear brow, without either contumely or state; and so as to prevent our necessities. The benefit is never the greater for the making a bustle and a noise about it: But the benefactor is much the less for the ostentation of his good deeds; which makes that odious to us, which would be otherwise delightful. *Tiberius* had a trick, that when any man begged money of him, to refer them to the senate; where all the petitioners were to deliver up the names of their creditors. His end perhaps was to deter men from asking, by exposing the condition of their fortunes to an examination. But it was however a benefit, turned into a reprehension; and he made a reproach of a bounty.

BUT \* it is not enough yet to bear the casting of a benefit in a man's teeth: For there are \* *In what case a man may be reminded of a benefit,* some that will not allow it to be so much as challenged. For, an ill man, say they, will not make a return though it be demanded; and a good man will do it of himself: And then the asking of it seems to turn it into a debt. It is a kind of injury to be too quick with the former; for, to call upon him too soon, reproaches him, as if he would not have done it otherwise. Nor would I recall a benefit from any man, so as to force it; but only to receive it. If I left him quite alone, I make myself guilty of his ingratitude; and undo him for want of plain dealing. A father reclaims a disobedient son; a wife reclaims a dissolute husband; and one friend excites the languishing kindness of another. How many men are lost, for want of being touched to the quick! So long as

I am not pressed, I will rather desire a favor than so much as mention a requital ; but if my country, my family, or my liberty, be at stake, my zeal and indignation shall overrule my modesty, and the world shall then understand that I have done all I could, not to stand in need of an ungrateful man. And in conclusion, the necessity of receiving a benefit shall overcome the shame of recalling it. Nor is it only allowable upon some exigents to put the receiver in mind of a good turn, but it is many times for the common advantage of both parties.

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CHAP. XIV.

*How far to oblige or requite a wicked Man.*

**T**HERE are some benefits, whereof a wicked man is wholly incapable: Of which hereafter. There are others, which are bestowed upon him, not for his own sake; but for secondary reasons; and, of these, we have spoken in part, already. There are moreover certain common offices of humanity, which are only allowed him as he is a man, and without any regard, either to vice or virtue. To pass over the first point; the second must be handled with care and distinction, and not without some seeming exceptions to the general rule: As first, here is no *choice* or *intention* in the case, but it is a good office done him by some *by-interests* or *chance*. Secondly, there is no *judgment* in it neither, for it is to a *wicked man*. But to shorten the matter; without these circumstances it is not properly a benefit; or at least not to him: For it looks another way. I rescue a friend from thieves, and the other escapes for company. I discharge a debt for a friend, and the other comes off too, for they were both in a bond. The third is of a great latitude, and varies according to the degree of generosity on the one side; and of wickedness on the other. Some benefactors will supererogate, and do more than they are bound to do. And some men are so lewd, that it is dangerous to do them any sort of good; no, not so much as by way of return or requital.

\* If the benefactor's bounty must extend to the bad as well as to the good; suppose the case that I promise a good office to an ungrateful man; we are first to distinguish (as is said before) betwixt a *common benefit* and

*personal*; betwixt what is given for *merit*, and what for *company*. Secondly, whether or not we know the person to be ungrateful, and can reasonably conclude that his vice is *incurable*. Thirdly, a consideration must be had of the promise, how far they may oblige us. The two first points are cleared both in one. We cannot justify any particular kindness for one that we conclude to be a hopeless wicked man: So that the force of the promise is the single point in the question. In the promise of a good office to a wicked or ungrateful man, I am to blame if I did it knowingly; and I am to blame nevertheless, if I did it otherwise: But must yet make it good (under due qualifications) because I promised it; that is to say, matters continuing in the same state for no man is answerable for accidents. I will sup at such a place, though it be cold; I will rise at such an hour, though I be sleepy; but if it prove tempestuous, or if I fall sick of a fever, I will neither do the one, nor the other. I promise to second a friend in a quarrel, or to plead his cause; and when I come into the field, or into the court, it proves to be against my father, or my brother: I promise to go a journey with him; but there is no travelling upon the road for robbing; my child is fallen sick; or my wife in labour: These circumstances are sufficient to discharge me; for a promise against law or duty is void in its own nature. The councils of a wise man are certain; but events are uncertain. And yet, if I have passed a rash promise; I will in some degree punish the temerity of making it, with the damage of keeping it, unless it turn very much to my shame or detriment; and then I will be my own confessor in the point, and rather be once guilty of denying, than always of giving. It is not with a benefit as with a debt: it is one thing to trust an ill pay-master, and another thing to oblige an unworthy person; the one is an ill man, and the other only an ill husband.

THERE was a valiant fellow in the army, whom *Philip* of *Macedon* took particular notice of; and he gave him several considerable marks of the kindness he had for him. This soldier puts to sea, and was cast away upon a coast where a charitable neighbor took him up half dead, carried him to his house, and there at his own charge maintained, and provided for him thirty days.



until he was perfectly recovered: And after all furnished him over and above with a *viaticum* at parting. The soldier told him the mighty matters that he would do for him in return, so soon as he should have the honor once again to see his master. To court he goes, tells *Philip* of the wreck, but not a syllable of his preserver, and begs the estate of this very man that keeps him alive. It was with *Philip*, as with many other Princes, that give they know not what, especially in a time of war. He granted the soldier his request, contemplating at the same time the impossibility of satisfying so many ravenous appetites as he had to please. When the good man came to be turned out of all, he was not so mealy mouthed as to thank his majesty for not giving away his person too, as well as his fortune: But in a bold frank letter to *Philip*, made just report of the whole story. The king was so incensed at the abuse, that he immediately commanded the right owner to be restored to his estate, and the unthankful guest and soldier to be stigmatized for an example to others. Should *Philip*, now have kept his promise? First, he owed the soldier nothing. Secondly, it would have been injurious and impious. And lastly, a precedent of dangerous consequence to human society. For, it would have been little less than an interdiction of fire and water to the miserable, and to have inflicted such a penalty upon relieving them. So that there must be always some tacit exception, or reserve: *If I can, I may, or if matters continue as they were.*

\* If it should be my fortune to receive a benefit from one that afterwards betrays his country, I should still reckon myself obliged to him for such a requital as might stand with my public duty. I would not furnish him with arms, nor with money or credit, to levy, or pay soldiers; but I should not stick to gratify him at my own expense, with such curiosities as might please him one way, without doing mischief another; I would not do any that might contribute to the support, or advantage of his party. But what should I do now in the case of a benefactor, that should afterwards become, not only mine and my country's enemy, but the common enemy of mankind? I would here distinguish betwixt the wickedness of a man, and the cruelty of a beast; betwixt a limited or a particular passion; and

sanguinary rage, that extends to the hazard and destruction of human society. In the former case I would quit scores, that I might have no more to do with him ; but, if he comes oncē to a delight in blood, and to act outrageous with greediness ; to study and invent torments, and to take pleasure in them ; the law of reasonable nature has discharged me such a debt. But this is an impiety so rare, that it might pass for a portent, and be reckoned among comets, and monsters. Let us therefore restrain our discourse to such men as we detest with horror ; such men as we see every day in courts, camps, and upon the seats of justice : To such wicked men I will return what I have received, without making any advantage of their unrighteousness.

It does not divert the Almighty \* from being still gracious, though we proceed daily in the abuse of his bounties. How many are they that enjoy the comforts of the light, that do not deserve it ; that wish they had never been born ; and yet nature goes quietly on with her work, and allows them a being, even in despite of their unthankfulness ? Such a knave, we cry, was better used than I. And the same complaint we extend to Providence itself. How many wicked men have good crops, when better than themselves have their fruits blasted ? Such a man, we say, has treated me very ill. Why, what should we do, but that very thing which is done by God himself ? That is to say, give to the ignorant, and persevere to the wicked. All our ingratitude we see, does not turn Providence from pouring down benefits, even upon those that question whence they come. The wisdom of heaven does all things with a regard to the good of the universe, and the blessings of nature are granted in common to the worst, as well as to the best of men ; for, they live promiscuously together ; and it is God's will, that the wicked shall rather fare the better for the good, than that the good should fare the worse for the wicked. It is true that a wise Prince will confer peculiar honour only upon the worthy ; but in the dealing of a public dole, there is no respect had to the manners of the man ; but a thief or a traitor, shall put in for a share as well as an honest man. If a good man, and a wicked man, sail both in the same bottom, it is impossible that the same wind, which favours the one, should cross the other. The

\* *Providence is gracious even to the wicked.*

common benefits of laws, privileges, communities, letters and medicines are permitted to the bad, as well as to the good; and no man ever yet suppressed a sovereign remedy, for fear a wicked man might be cured with it. Cities are built for both sorts and the same remedy works upon both alike. In these cases, we are to set an estimate upon the persons: There is a difference betwixt chusing a man and the not excluding him: The law is open to the rebellious, as well as to the obedient: There are some benefits, which if they were not allowed to all, could not be enjoyed by any. The sun was never made for me, but for the comfort of the world, and for the providential order of the seasons: and yet I am not without my private obligation also. To conclude, he that will not oblige the wicked and ungrateful, must resolve to oblige nobody; for in some sort or other, we are all of us wicked, we are all of us ungrateful, every man of us.

We have been discoursing all this while how far a wicked man may be obliged, and the *Stoicks* tell us, at last, that he cannot be obliged at all. For they make him incapable of any good, and consequently of any benefit. But he has this advantage, that if he cannot be obliged, he cannot be ungrateful: For if he cannot receive, he is not bound to return: On the other side, a good man, and an ungrateful, are a contradiction: So that at this rate, there is no such thing as ingratitude in nature. They compare a wicked man's mind to a vitiated stomach, he corrupts whatever he receives, and the best nourishment turns to the disease. But, taking this for granted, a wicked man may yet be so far obliged, as to pass for ungrateful, if he does not requite what he receives. For, though it be not a perfect benefit, yet he receives something like it. There are goods of the mind, the body, and of fortune. Of the first sort, fools and wicked men are wholly incapable; to the rest they may be admitted. But why should I call any man ungrateful, you will say, for not restoring that which I deny to be a benefit? I answer, that if the receiver take it for a benefit, and fails of a return, it is ingratitude in him; for that which goes for an obligation among wicked men, is an obligation upon them: And they may pay one another in their own coin; the money is current, whether it be gold or leather, when it comes once

to be authorised. Nay, *Cleanthes* carries it further ; he that is wanting, says he, to a kind office, though it be no benefit, would have done the same thing if it had been one ; and is as guilty as a thief is, that has set his booty, and is already armed, and mounted, with a purpose to seize it, though he has not yet drawn blood. Wickedness is formed in the heart ; and the matter of fact is only the discovery, and the execution of it. Now, though a wicked man cannot either receive or bestow a benefit, because he wants the will of doing good, and for that he is no longer wicked when virtue has taken possession of him ; yet we commonly call it one, as well as a man illiterate that is not learned, and naked that is not well clad ; not but that the one can read, and the other is covered.

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## CHAP. XV.

### *A general View of the Parts and Duties of the Benefactor.*

THE three main points in the question of benefits, are first, a *judicious choice* in the object ; secondly, in the matter of our benevolence ; and thirdly, a grateful *felicity* in the manner of expressing it. But there are also incumbent upon the benefactor other considerations, which will deserve a place in this discourse.

It is not enough to do one good turn, and to do it with a good grace too, unless we follow it with more, and without either \* upbraiding, or repining. It is a common shift, to charge that upon the ingratitude of the receiver, which in truth, is most commonly the levity and indiscretion of the giver ; for, all circumstances must be duly weighed, to consummate the action. Some there are that we find ungrateful ; but, what with our frowardness, change of humour, and reproaches, there are more that we make so. And this is the business : We give with design, and most to those that are able to give most again. We give to the covetous, and to the ambitious ; to those that can never be thankful (for their desires are insatiable) and to those that *will* not. He that is a tribune, would be a prætor, the prætor a consul ; never reflecting upon what he *was*, but only looking forward to what he *would* be. People are still computing, *must I loose this,*

or that benefit? If it be lost, the fault lies in the ill bestowing it; for, rightly placed, it is as good as consecrated; if we be deceived in another, let us not be deceived in ourselves too. A charitable man will mend the matter, and say to himself, *perhaps he has forgotten it; perchance he could not; perhaps he will yet requite it.* A patient creditor will, of an ill paymaster, in time, make a good one; an obstinate goodness overcomes an ill disposition; as a barren soil is made fruitful by care and tillage. But let a man be ever so ungrateful, or inhuman, he shall never destroy the satisfaction of my having done a good office.

\* BUT, what if *others* will be wicked? Does it follow that we must be, so too? If *others* will be ungrateful, must we therefore be inhuman? To give and to lose, is nothing; but to lose and to give still, is the part of a great mind. And the other, in effect, is the greater loss; for, the one does but lose his benefit, and the other loses himself. The light shines upon the profane and the sacrilegious, as well as upon the righteous. How many disappointments do we meet with in our wives and children; and yet we couple still? He that has lost one battle, hazards another. The mariner puts to sea again after a wreck. An illustrious mind does not propose the profit of a good office, but the duty. If the world be wicked, we should yet persevere in well doing, even among evil men. I had rather never receive a kindness, than never bestow one. Not to return a benefit, is the greater sin, but not to confer it is the earlier. We cannot propose to ourselves a more glorious example, than that of the Almighty, who neither needs nor expects any thing from us. And yet he is continually showering down, and distributing his mercies and his grace among us, not only for our necessities, but also for our delights; as fruits and seasons; rain and sunshine; veins of water, and of metal: And all this to the wicked, as well as to the good; and without any other end than the common benefit of the receivers. With what face then can we be mercenary one to another, that have received all things from divine Providence *gratis*? It is a common saying, *I gave such, or such a man, so much money; I would I had thrown it into the sea.* And yet the merchant trades again after a piracy; and the banker ventures afresh after a bad security. He that will do no good offices after a dis-

appointment, must stand still, and do just nothing at all. The plough goes on after a barren year; and while the ashes are yet warm, we raise a new house upon the ruins of a former. What obligations can be greater than those which children receive from their parents? And yet, should we give them over in their infancy, it were all to no purpose: Benefits, like grain, must be followed from the seed of the harvest. I will not so much as leave any place for ingratitude. I will pursue, and I will encompass the receiver with benefits; so that, let him look which way he will, his benefactor shall be still in his eye, even when he would avoid his own memory. And then I will remit to one man, because he calls for it; to another, because he does not; to a third, because he is wicked; and to a fourth, because he is the contrary. I will cast away a good turn upon a bad man, and I will requite a good one. The one, because it is my duty; the other, that I may not be in his debt. I do not love to hear any man complain, that he has met with a thankless man. If he has met but with one, he has either been very fortunate, or very careful. And yet care is not sufficient. For, there is no way to escape the hazard of losing a benefit, but, the not bestowing it; and to neglect a duty to myself, for fear another should abuse it.

It is *another's* fault, if he be ungrateful, but it is *mine* if I do not give. To find one thankful man, I will oblige a great many that are not so. The business of mankind would be at a stand, if we should do nothing for fear of miscarriage in matters of uncertain event. I will try, and believe all things, before I give any man over, and do all that is possible, that I may not lose a good office, and a friend together. What do I know, but he may misunderstand the obligation? Business may have put it out of his head, or taken him off from it: He may have slight his opportunity: I will say, in excuse of human weakness, that one man's memory is not sufficient for all things: It is but of a limited capacity, so as to hold only so much, and no more; and when it is once full, it must let out part of what it had, to take in any thing besides; and the last benefit ever sits closest to us. In our youth, we forget the obligations of our infancy; and when we are men, we forget those of our youth. If nothing will prevail, let him keep what he has, and welcome; but let him have a care of returning evil for

good, and making it dangerous for a man to do his duty. I would no more give a benefit to such a man, than I would lend money to a beggarly spendthrift; or deposit any in the hand of a knave. *Knight of the Post.* However the case stands, an ungrateful person is never the better for a reproach; if he be already hardened in his wickedness, he gives no heed to it; and, if he be not, it turns a doubtful modesty into an incorrigible impudence: Beside that, he watches for ill words to pick a quarrel with them.

\* As the benefactor is not to upbraid a benefit, so neither to delay it: The one is tiresome, and the other odious. We must not hold men in hand, as physicians and surgeons do their patients, and keep them longer in fear and pain than needs, only to magnify the cure. A generous man gives easily; and receives as he gives, but never exacts. He rejoices in the return, and judges favorably of it, whatever it be, and contents himself with a bare thank for a requital. It is a harder matter with some to get the benefit after it is promised, than the first promise of it; there must be so many friends made in the case. One must be desired to solicit another; and he must be intreated to move a third; and a fourth must be at last besought to receive it; so that the author, upon the upshot, has the least share in the obligation. It is then welcome when it comes free, and without deduction; and no man either to intercept or hinder, or to detain it. And let it be of such a quality too, that it be not only delightful in the receiving, but after it is received; which it will certainly be, if we do but observe this rule, never to do any thing for another, which we would not honestly desire for ourselves.

## CHAP. XVI.

*How the Receiver ought to behave himself.*

**T**HERE are certain rules in common, betwixt the giver and the receiver: We must do both cheerfully, that the giver may receive the fruit of his benefits as in the very act of bestowing it. It is a just ground of satisfaction, to see a friend pleased; but it is much more to make him so. The intention of the one is to be suited to the in-

ention of the other ; and there must be an emulation betwixt them, which shall oblige most. Let the one say, that he has received a benefit, and let the other persuade himself that he has not returned it. Let the one say, *I am paid*, and the other, *I am yet in your debt* ; let the benefactor acquit the receiver, and the receiver bind himself. The frankness of his discharge heightens the obligation. It is in conversation, as in a Tennis-Court : Benefits are to be tost like balls ; the longer they rest, the better are the gamesters. The giver, in some respect, has the odds, because (as in a race) he starts first, and the other must use great diligence to overtake him. The return must be larger than the first obligation to come up to it ; and it is a kind of ingratitude, not to render it with interest. In a matter of money, it is a common thing to pay a debt out of course, and before it be due ; but we account ourselves, to owe nothing for a good office ; whereas the benefit increases by delay. So insensible are we of the most important affairs of human life. That man were doubtless in a miserable condition, that could neither see, nor hear, nor taste, nor feel, nor smell : But how much more unhappy is he then, that wanting a sense of benefits, loses the greatest comfort in nature ; in the bliss of giving, and receiving them ? He that takes a benefit as it is meant, is in the right ; for the benefactor has then his end, and his only end, when the receiver is grateful.

THE more glorious part, in appearance, is that of the giver ; but the receiver has undoubtedly the harder game to play, in many regards. There are some from whom I would not accept a benefit ; that is to say, from those upon whom I would not bestow one. For why should not I scorn to receive a benefit, where I am ashamed to owe it ? And, I would yet be more tender too, where I receive than where I give ; for it is a torment to be in debt, where a man has no mind to pay ; as it is the greatest delight imaginable to be engaged by a friend, whom I should yet have a kindness for, if I were ever so much disobliged. It is a pain to an honest, and a generous mind, to lie under a duty of affection against inclination. I do not speak here of wise men, who love to do what they ought to, that have their passions at command ; that prescribe laws to themselves ; and keep them when they have



done ; but of men, in a state of imperfection, who may have a good will perhaps to be honest, and yet be overborne by the contumacy of their affections. We must therefore have a care to whom we become obliged ; and, I would be much stricter yet in the choice of a creditor for benefits, than for money. In the one case, it is but paying what I had, and the debt is discharged ; in the other, I do not only owe more, but when I have paid that, I am still in arrear : And this law is the very foundation of friendship. I will suppose myself a prisoner, and a notorious villain offers to lay down a good sum of money for my redemption. *First*, Shall I make use of this money, or not ? *Secondly*, If I do, what return shall I make for it ? To the first point, I will take it ; but only as a debt, not as a benefit, that shall ever tie me to a friendship with him : And secondly, my acknowledgment shall be only correspondent to such an obligation. It is a school question, whether or not *Brutus*, who thought *Cæsar* not fit to live (and put himself at the head of a conspiracy against him) could honestly have received his life from *Cæsar* if he had fallen into *Cæsar's* power, without examining what reason moved him to that action ? How great a man soever he was in other cases, without dispute he was extremely out in this, and below the dignity of his profession. For a Stoick to fear the name of a King, when yet monarchy is the best state of government ; or there to hope for liberty, where so great rewards are propounded, both for tyrants and their slaves ; for him to imagine, ever to bring the laws to their former state, where so many thousand lives had been lost in the contest, not so much whether they should serve or not, but who should be their master : He was strangely mistaken sure in the nature and reason of things, to fancy, that when *Julius* was gone, somebody else would not start up in his place, when there was yet a *Tarquish* found, after so many Kings that were destroyed, either by sword or thunder : And yet the resolution is, that he might have received it, but not as a benefit ! for at that rate I owe my life to every man that does not take it away.

\* *GRÆCINUS JULIUS* (whom *Cælgula* put to death out of a pure malice to his virtue) had a considerable sum of money sent him from *Marius*

*A benefit refused for the person.*

*Persicus* (a man of great and infamous example) as a contribution towards the expense of

plays and other public entertainments; but *Julius* would not receive it; and some of his friends who had an eye more upon the present than the presenter, asked him, with some freedom, what he meant by refusing it: *Why* (says he) *do you think that I will take money, where I would not take so much as a glass of wine?* After this, *Rebitus* (a man of the same stamp) sent him a greater sum upon the same score. *You must excuse me* (says he to the messenger) *for I would not take any thing of *Persicus* neither.*

To match this scruple of receiving money, with another of keeping it, and the sum not above three pence, or a groat at most: There was a certain *Pythagorean* who contracted with a cobbler for a pair of shoes, and three or four days after, going to pay him his money, the shop was shut up: And when he had knocked a great while at the door, a friend (says a fellow) *you may hammer your heart out there; for the man that you look for is dead: And when our friends are dead, we hear no more news of them; but your's that are to live again, will shift well enough* (alluding to the transmigration of *Pythagoras*.) Upon this the philosopher went away, with his money chinking in his hand, and well enough content to save it: At last his conscience took check at it, and upon reflection, *though the man be dead* (says he) *to others, he is alive to thee; pay him what thou owest.* And so he when back presently, and thrust it into his shop, through the chink of the door. Whatever we owe; it is our part to find where to pay it, and to do it without asking too; for whether the creditor be good or bad, the debt is still the same.

\* If a benefit be forced upon me, as from a tyrant, or superior, where it may be dangerous to refuse; this is rather obeying than receiving, where the necessity destroys the choice. \* *A forced benefit.* The way to know what I have a mind to do, is to leave me at liberty, whether I will do it or not; but it is yet a benefit if a man does me good in spite of my teeth; as it is none, if I do any man good against my will. A man may both hate, and yet receive a benefit at the same time; the money is never the worse, because a fool, who is not read in coins, refuses to take it. If the thing be good for the receiver, and so intended, no matter how ill it is taken. Nay, the receiver may be obliged, and not know it: But there can be no benefit which is unknown to the giver. Neither will

I, upon any terms, receive a benefit from a worthy person—that may do him a mischief: It is the part of an enemy, to save himself, by doing another man harm.

\* But whatever we do, let us be sure always to keep a grateful mind. It is not enough to say, what requital shall a poor man offer to a prince, or a slave to his patron; when it is the glory of gratitude that it depends only upon the good will. Suppose a man defends my fame; delivers me from beggary; saves my life; or gives me liberty, that is more than life, how shall I be grateful to that man? I will receive, cherish, and rejoice in the benefit.—Take it kindly, and it is requited; Not that the debt itself is discharged, but it is nevertheless a discharge of the conscience. I will yet distinguish betwixt the debtor, who becomes insolvent by expenses upon whores and dice; and an other who is undone by fire or thieves; nor do I take this gratitude for a payment; but there is no danger, I presume, of being arrested for such a debt.

\* In the return of benefits, let us be ready, and cheerful, but not pressing. There is as much greatness of mind in the owing of a good turn, as in the doing of it; and we must no more force a requital out of season, than be wanting in it. He who precipitates a return, does as much as say, *I am weary of being in this man's debt*; not but that the hastening of a requital, as a good office, is a commendable disposition; but it is another thing to do it as a discharge; for, it looks like casting off a heavy and troublesome burden. It is for the benefactor to say *when* he will receive it; no matter for the opinion of the world, so long as I gratify my own conscience; for I cannot be mistaken in myself, but another may. He that is over solicitous to *return* a benefit, thinks the other so likewise to receive it. If he had rather we should keep it, why should we refuse, and presume to dispose of his treasure, who may call it in, or let it lie out of choice? It is as much a fault to receive what I ought not, as not to give what I ought: For, the giver has the privilege of choosing his own time for receiving.

\* Some are too proud in the conferring of benefits; others in the receiving of them; which is, *There must* to say the truth, intolerable. The same *be no pride*.

sale serves both sides, as in the case of a father and a son; husband and a wife; one friend, or acquaintance, and another, where the duties are known and common. There are some who will not receive a benefit, but in private; nor thank you for it but in your ear, or in a corner; there must be nothing under hand and seal, no brokers, notaries, or witnesses in the case: This is not so much a scruple of modesty, as a kind of denying the obligation, and only a less hardened ingratitude. Some receive benefits so coldly and indifferently, that a man should think the obligation lay on the other side: As who would say, *well, since you will needs have it so, I am content to take it.* Some again, so carelessly, as if they hardly knew of any such thing; whereas we should rather aggravate the matter, *you cannot imagine how many you have obliged in this act; there never was so great, so kind, so reasonable a courtesy.* *Furnius* never gained so much upon *Augustus*, as by a speech, upon the getting of his father's pardon for siding with *Anthony*. *This grace, says he, is the only injury that ever Caesar did me; for it has put me upon a necessity of living and dying ungrateful.* It is safer to affront some people than to oblige them; for the better a man deserves, the worse they will speak of him; as if the professing of open hatred to their benefactors, were an argument that they lie under no obligation. Some people are so sour and ill-natured, that they take it for an affront to have an obligation or a return offered them, to the discouragement both of bounty; and gratitude together. The not doing, and the not receiving of benefits, are equally a mistake. He that refuses a new one, seems to be offended at an old one: And yet sometimes I would neither return a benefit, nor so much as receive it if I might.

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 CHAP. XVII.

*Of Gratitude.*

**H**E who preaches gratitude, pleads the cause both of God and man; for without it, we can neither be sociable, nor religious. There is a strange delight in the very purpose, and contemplation of it, as well as in the

action; when I can say to myself, *I love my benefactor; what is there in this world that I would not do to oblige and serve him?* Where I have not the means of a requital, the very meditation of it is sufficient. A man is nevertheless an artist, for not having his tools about him; or a musician, because he wants his fiddle: Nor is he the less brave, because his hands are bound, or the worse pilot for being upon dry ground. If I have only *will* to be grateful, *I am so*. Let me be upon the wheel, or under the hand of the executioner; let me be burnt limb by limb, and my whole body dropping into the flames, a good conscience supports me in all extremities: Nay, it is comfortable even in death itself: For, when we come to approach that point, what care do we take to summon, and call to mind all our benefactors, and the good offices they have done us, that we may leave the world fair, and set our minds in order? Without gratitude, we can neither have security, peace, nor reputation: And, it is not therefore the less desirable, because it draws many adventitious benefits along with it. Suppose the sun, the moon, and the stars had no other business, than only to pass over our heads, without any effect upon our minds or bodies; without any regard to our health, fruits, or seasons: A man could hardly lift up his eyes towards the heavens without wonder, and veneration, to see so many millions of radiant lights, and to observe their courses, and revolutions, even without any respect to the common good of the universe. But when we come to consider, that Providence and nature are still at work when we sleep; with the admirable force and operation of their influences and motions; we cannot then but acknowledge their ornament to be the least part of their value; and that they are more to be esteemed for their virtue, than for their splendor. Their main end and use is matter of life, and necessity; though they may seem to us more considerable for their majesty and beauty. And so it is with gratitude; we love it rather for secondary ends, than for itself.

No man can be grateful without contemning those things that put the common people out of their wits.

*We must be* <sup>\*We must go into banishment;</sup> lay down our lives, beggar and expose our-

*grateful in dex-* selves to reproaches: Nay, it is often  
*ture of all oppo-* seen, that loyalty suffers the punishment  
*dition.* due to rebellion; and that reason re-  
 ceives the rewards of fidelity. As the benefits of it are

many and great, so are the hazards; which is the case, more or less, of all other virtues: And it were hard, if this, above the rest, should be both painful and fruitless: So that though we may go currently on with it in a smooth way, we must yet prepare, and resolve (if need be) to force our passage to it, even if the way were covered with thorns, and serpents; and *fall back, fall edge,* we must be grateful still; grateful for the virtue sake, and grateful over and above upon the point of interest; for it preserves old friends, and gains new ones. It is not our business to fish for one benefit with another; and by bestowing a little to get more: Or to oblige for any sort of expedience, but because I ought to do it, and because I love it; and that to such a degree, that if I could not be grateful, without appearing the contrary; if I could not return a benefit, without being suspected of doing an injury; in despite of infamy itself, I would yet be grateful. No man is greater in my esteem, than he who ventures his fame to preserve the conscience of an honest man; the one is but imaginary, the other solid, and inestimable. I cannot call him grateful, who, in the instant of returning one benefit, has his eye upon another. He who is grateful for profit or fear, is like a woman who is honest, only upon the score of reputation.

\* As gratitude is a necessary, and a glorious, so it is also an obvious, a cheap, and an easy virtue: So obvious, that wheresoever there is a life, there is a place for it: So cheap, that the covetous man may be grateful without expense; and so easy, that the sluggard may be so likewise, without labour. And yet it is not without its niceties too; for there may be a time, a place, or occasion, wherein I ought not to return a benefit; nay, wherein I may better disown it than deliver it.

\* *Gratitude is an obvious, a cheap, and an easy virtue.*

† Let it be understood by the way, that it is one thing to be grateful for a good office, and another thing to return it: The good will

† *It is one thing*

is enough in one case, being as much as *to be grateful* for the one side demands, and the other *a benefit and an- promises*; but the effect is requisite in *other thing to re-* the other. The physician who has done *turn it*, his best, is acquitted though the patient dies; and so is the advocate though the client may lose his cause. The General of an army, though the battle be lost, is yet worthy of commendation if he has discharged all the parts of a prudent commander: In this case, the one acquits himself though the other be never the better for it. He is a grateful man who is always willing and ready; and he who seeks for all means and occasions of requiting a benefit, though without attaining his end, does a great deal more than the man, who without any trouble makes an immediate return. Suppose my friend a prisoner, and that I have sold my estate for his ransom: I put to sea in foul weather, and upon a coast that is pestered with pirates: My friend happens to be redeemed before I come to the place; my gratitude is as much to be esteemed, as if he had been a prisoner; and if I had been taken and robbed myself, it would still have been the same case. Nay, there is a gratitude in the very countenance; for an honest man bears his conscience in his face, and propounds the requital of a good turn in the very moment of receiving it: He is cheerful and confident; and in the possession of a true friendship, delivered from all anxiety. There is this difference betwixt a thankful man, and an unthankful; the one is *always* pleased in the good he has *done*, and the other only *once*, in what he has *received*. There must be a benignity in the estimation even of the smallest offices; and such a modesty as appears to be obliged in whatsoever it gives: As the opportunity is indeed a very great benefit of doing a good office to a worthy man. He who attends to the present, and remembers what is past, shall never be ungrateful. But who shall judge in the case? For a man may be grateful without making a return, and ungrateful with it. Our best way is to help every thing by a fair interpretation; and wheresoever there is a doubt, to allow it the most favourable construction; for he who is exceptious at words or looks, has a mind to pick a quarrel. For my own part, when I come to cast up my account, and know what I owe, and

to whom; though I make my return sooner to some, and later to others, as occasion or fortune will give me leave, yet I will be just to all. I will be grateful to God; to man, to those who have obliged me; nay, even to those who have obliged my friends. I am bound in honour and in conscience, to be thankful for what I have received; and if it be not yet full, it is some pleasure still, that I may hope for more. For the requital of a favour, there must be virtue, occasion, means and fortune.

It is a common thing to screw up justice to the pitch of an injury. \* A man may be *overrighteous*; and, why not *overgrateful* too? There is a mischievous excess, that borders so close upon ingratitude, that it is no easy matter to distinguish the one from the other; but, in regard that there is good-will in the bottom of it (however distempered; for it is effectually but kindness out of the wits) we shall discourse it under the title of *gratitude mistaken*.

CHAP. XVIII.

*Gratitude. Mistaken.*

**T**O refuse a good office, not so much because we do not need it, as because we would not be indebted for it, is a kind of fantastical ingratitude, and somewhat akin to that nicety of honour on the other side, of being overgrateful; only it lies another way, and seems to be the more pardonable ingratitude of the two. Some people take it for a great instance of their good will, to be still wishing their benefactors such or such a mischief; only, forsooth, that they themselves might be the happy instruments of their release. These men do like extravagant lovers, who take it for a great proof of their affection, to wish one another banished, beggared, or diseased, that they might have the opportunity of interposing to their relief. What difference is there betwixt such wishing and cursing? Such an affection and a mortal hatred? The intent is good, you will say, but this is a misapplication of it. Let such a one fall into my power, or into the hands of his enemies, his creditors, or the common people, and no mortal be able to rescue him



but myself. Let his life, his liberty and his reputation lie all at stake, and no creature but myself in condition to succour him; and why all this, but because he has obliged me, and I would requite him? If this be gratitude to propound jails, shackles, slavery, war, beggary, to the man that you would requite; what would you do where you are ungrateful? This way of proceeding over and above that it is impious in itself, is likewise over hasty, and unseasonable; for he who goes too fast, is as much to blame, as he who does not move at all (to say nothing of the injustice) for if I had never been obliged, I should never have wished it. There are seasons wherein a benefit is neither to be received, nor requited. To press a return upon me, when I do not desire it, is unmannerly; but it is worse to force me to desire it. How rigorous would he be to exact a requital, who is thus eager to return it? To wish a man in distress, that I may relieve him, is, first, to wish him miserable: To wish that he may stand in need of any body, is *against him*; and to wish that he may stand in need of me is, *for myself*: So that my business is not so much a charity to my friend, as the cancelling of a bond: Nay, it is half way the wish of an enemy. It is barbarous to wish a man in chains, slavery, or want, only to bring him out again: Let me rather wish him powerful, and happy, and myself indebted to him. By nature, we are prone to mercy, humanity, compassion; may we be excited to be more so by the number of the grateful; may their number increase, and may we have no need of trying them.

It is not for an honest man to make way to a good office by a crime; \* as if a pilot should pray for a tempest, that he might prove his skill; or a General wish his army routed, that he might shew himself a great commander in recovering the day. It is throwing a man into a river, to take him out again. It is an obligation, I confess, to cure a wound, or a disease; but to *make* that wound or disease, on purpose to cure it, is a most perverse ingratitude. It is barbarous even to an enemy, much more to a friend; for it is not so much to do him a kindness, as to put him in need of it. Of the two, let it be rather a fear, than a wound; and yet it would be better to have it neither.

\* We must not do an ill thing that good may come of it.

Rome had been little beholden to *Scipio*, if he had prolonged the *Punic* war, (that he might have the finishing of it at last; or to the *Deii*, for dying for their country, if they had first brought it to the last extremity of needing their devotion. It may be a good contemplation, but, is a lewd wish. *Æneas* had never been surnamed the *Pious*, if he had wished the ruin of his country, only that he might have the honor of taking his father out of the fire. It is the scandal of a physician to make work, and irritate a disease, and to torment his patient for the reputation of his cure. If a man should openly imprecate poverty, captivity, fear, or danger, upon a person that he has been obliged to, would not the whole world condemn him for it? And what is the difference; but that the one is only a private wish, and the other a public declaration? *Rutilius* was told in his exile, that, for his comfort, there would be ere long a civil war, that would bring all the banished men home again. *God forbid* (says he) *for I had rather my country should blush for my banishment, than mourn for my return.* How much more honorable is it to owe cheerfully, than to pay dishonestly? It is the wish of an enemy, to take a town, that he may preserve it; and to be victorious, that he may forgive; but the mercy comes after the cruelty; beside that, it is an injury both to God and man, for the man must be first afflicted by *Heaven* to be relieved by *me*. So that we impose the cruelty upon God; and take the compassion to ourselves; and, at the best, is but a curse, that makes way for a blessing. The bare wish is an injury; and, if it does not take effect, it is because *Heaven* has not heard our prayers. Or, if they should succeed, the fear itself is a torment; and it is much more desirable to have a firm and unshaken security: It is friendly to wish it in your power to oblige me, if ever I chance to need it; but it is unkind to wish me miserable, that I may need it. How much more pious is it, and humane, to wish that I may never want the occasion of obliging, nor the means of doing it; nor ever have reason to repent of what I have done?

## CHAP. XIX.

*Of Ingratitude.*

**I**NGRATITUDE is, of all crimes, that which we are to account the most venial in others, and the most unpardonable in ourselves. It is impious in the highest degree; for it makes us fight against our children, and our altars. There are, there ever were, and there ever will be criminals of all sorts; as murderers, tyrants, thieves, adulterers, traitors, robbers and sacrilegious persons; but there is hardly any notorious crimes without a mixture of ingratitude. It disunites mankind, and breaks the very pillars of society. And yet so far is the prodigious wickedness from being any wonder to us, that even thankfulness itself were much the greater of the two. For men are deterred from it by labour, expence, laziness, business; or else diverted from it by lust, envy, ambition, pride, levity, rashness, fear: Nay, by the very shame of confessing what they have received. And the unthankful man has nothing to say for himself all this while; for there needs neither pains nor fortune, for the discharge of his duty; beside the inward anxiety and torment, when a man's conscience makes him afraid of his own thought.

To speak against the ungrateful, is to rail against mankind; for, even those who complain are guilty: nor do I speak only of those who do not live up to the strict rule of virtue; but mankind itself is degenerated and lost. We live unthankfully in this world, and we go struggling and murmuring out of it; dissatisfied with our lot; whereas we should be grateful for the blessings we have enjoyed, and account that sufficient which Providence has provided for us. A little more time may make our lives longer, but not happier; and whensoever it is the pleasure of God to call us, we must obey; and yet all this while we go on quarrelling at the world, for what we find in ourselves; and we are yet more unthankful to heaven, than we are to one another. What benefit can be great now to that man who despises the bounties of his Maker? We would be as strong as elephants, as swift as bucks, as light as birds, and we complain that we have not the sagacity of dogs, the sight of eagles, the long life of ravens, nay, that we are not immortal, and endued with the knowledge of things to come.

Nay, we take it ill, that we are not Gods upon earth: Never considering the advantages of our condition, or the benignity of Providence, in the comforts that we enjoy. We subdue the strongest of creatures, and overtake the fleetest; we reclaim the fiercest, and outwit the craftiest. We are within one degree of heaven itself, and yet we are not satisfied. Since there is not any one creature which we had rather be, we take it ill that we cannot draw the united excellencies of all other creatures into ourselves. Why, are we not rather thankful to that goodness, which has subjected the whole creation to our use and service?

\* The principal causes of ingratitude, are pride and self-conceit, avarice, envy, &c. It is a familiar exclamation, *It is true, he did this or that for me, but 't came so late, and it was so little, I had even as good have been without it: If he had not given it to me, he must have given it somebody else; it was nothing out of his own pocket: Nay, we are so ungrateful, that he who gives us all we have, if he leaves any thing to himself, we reckon that he does us an injury. It cost Julius Caesar his life, the disappointment of his insatiable companions; and yet he reserved nothing of all that he got to himself, but the liberty of disposing of it. There is no benefit so large but malignity will still lessen it; none so narrow, which a good interpretation will not enlarge. No man shall ever be grateful, who views a benefit on the wrong side; or takes a good office by the wrong handle. The avaricious man is naturally ungrateful, for he never thinks he has enough; but without considering what he has, only minds what he covets. Some pretend want of power to make a competent return, and you shall find in others a kind of graceless modesty, that makes a man ashamed of requiting an obligation, because it is a confession that he has received one.*

\* Not to return one good office for another, is inhuman; but to return evil for good, is diabolical. There are too many of this sort, who, the more they owe, the more they hate. There is nothing more dangerous than to oblige those people; for when they are conscious of not paying the debt, they wish the creditor out of the way. It is a mortal hatred, which arises from the shame of an abused benefit. When we are on the ask-

ing side, what a deal of cringing there is, and profession! Well, I should never forget this favour; it will be an eternal obligation to me. But, within a while the note is changed, and we hear no more words of it: Until by little and little, it is all quite forgotten. So long as we stand in need of a benefit; there is nothing dearer to us; nor any thing cheaper, when we have received it. And yet a man may as well refuse to deliver up a sum of money which he has in trust, without a suit, as not to return a good office without asking; and when we have no value any farther for the benefit, we do commonly care as little for the author. People follow their interest; one man is grateful for his convenience, and another man is ungrateful for the same reason.

\* Some are ungrateful to their own country; and their country no less ungrateful to others; \* *There are ungrateful govern-* so that the complaint of ingratitude, reaches all men. Doth not the son wish *ors, as well as un-* for the death of his father; the husband for that of his wife? &c. But who *grateful men.* can look for gratitude in an age of so many gaping and craving appetites, where all people take, and none give? In an age of license to all sorts of vanity, and wickedness; as lust, gluttony, avarice, envy, ambition, sloth, insolence, levity, contumacy, fear, rashness, private discords, and public evils, extravagant and groundless wishes, vain confidence, sickly affections, shameless impieties, rapine authorized, and the violation of all things sacred and profane: Obligations are pursued with sword and poison; benefits are turned into crimes; and that blood most seditiously spilt, for which every honest man should expose his own. These who should be the preservers of their country, are the destroyers of it; and it is matter of dignity to trample upon government. The sword gives the law, and mercenaries take up arms against their masters. Among these turbulent and unruly motions, what hope is there of finding honesty or good faith, which is the most peaceable of all virtues? There is no more lively image of human life, than that of a conquered city: There is neither mercy, modesty, nor religion; and if we forget our lives, we may well forget our benefits. The world abounds with examples of ungrateful persons, and no less with those of un-

grateful governments. Was not *Cataline* ungrateful, whose malice aimed, not only at the mastering of his country, but at the total destruction of it, by calling in an inveterate and vindictive enemy from beyond the *Alps*, to wreak their long thirst for revenge; and to sacrifice the lives of as many noble *Romans*, as might serve to answer and appease the ghosts of the slaughtered *Gauls*? Was not *Marius* ungrateful, who, from a common soldier, being raised up to a consul, not only gave the world for civil bloodshed and massacres, but was himself the sign for the execution; and every man he met in the streets, to whom he did not stretch out his right hand, was murdered? And, was not *Sylla* ungrateful too, who, when he had waded up to the gates in human blood, carried the outrage into the city, and there, most barbarously, cut two entire legions to pieces in a corner; not only after the victory, but most perfidiously after quarter given them? Good God! that ever any man should not only escape with impunity, but receive a reward for so horrid a villainy! Was not *Pompey* ungrateful too, who, after three consulships, three triumphs, and so many honours usurped before his time, split the commonwealth into three parts; and brought it to such a pass, that there was no hope of safety but by slavery? Only, forsooth, to abate the envy of his power, he took other partners with him into the government, as if that, which was not lawful for any one, might have been allowable for more; dividing and distributing the provinces, and breaking all into a *triumvirate*, reserving still two parts of the three in his own family. And was not *Cæsar* ungrateful also, though to give him his due, he was a man of his word; merciful in his victories, and never killed any man but with his sword in his hand? Let us therefore forgive one another. Only one word more now for the shame of ungrateful governments. Was not *Camillus* banished? *Scipio* dismissed? And *Cicero* exiled and plundered? But what is all this to those who are so mad, as to dispute even the goodness of Heaven, which gives us all, and expects nothing again, but continues giving to the most unthankful and complaining?

## C H A P. XX.

*There can be no Law against Ingratitude.*

**I**NGRATITUDE is so dangerous to itself, and so detestable to other people, that nature, one would think, had sufficiently provided against it, without need of any other law. For every ungrateful man is his own enemy, and it seems superfluous to compel a man to be kind to himself, and follow his own inclinations. This, of all wickedness imaginable, is certainly the vice which does the most divide and distract human nature. Without the exercise and the commerce of mutual offices, we can be neither happy, nor safe; for it is only society that secures us: Take us one by one, and we are a prey even to brutes, as well as to one another; nature has brought us into the world naked and unarmed; we have not the teeth or the paws of lions or bears, to make ourselves terrible: But by the two blessings of reason and union, we secure and defend ourselves against violence and fortune. This it is that makes a man the master of all other creatures, who otherwise were scarce a match for the weakest of them. This is it that comforts us in sickness, in age, in misery, in pains, and in the worst of calamities. Take away this combination, and mankind is dissociated, and falls to pieces. It is true, that there is no law established against this abominable vice; but we cannot say yet, that it escapes unpunished, for a public hatred is certainly the greatest of all penalties; over and above that, we lose the most valuable blessing of life, in the not bestowing and receiving benefits. If ingratitude were to be punished by a law, it would discredit the obligation; for a benefit is to be given, not lent; And if we have no return at all there is no just cause of complaint; For gratitude were no virtue, if there were any danger of being ungrateful. There are halters, I know, hooks and gibbets provided for homicide, poison, sacrilege, and rebellion; but ingratitude, (here upon earth) is only punished in the schools; all further pains and inflictions being wholly remitted to divine justice. And, if a man may judge of the conscience by the countenance, the ungrateful man is never without a canker at his heart; his mind and aspect is

and solicitous; whereas the other is always cheerful and serene.

As there are no laws extant against ingratitude, so it is utterly impossible to contrive any, that in all circumstances shall reach it. If it were actionable, there would not be courts enough in the whole world to try the causes. There can be no setting a day for the requiring of benefits, as for the payment of money; nor any estimate upon the benefits themselves; but the whole matter rests in the conscience of both parties: And then there are so many degrees of it, that the same rule will never serve all. Beside that, to proportion it, as a benefit is greater or less, will be both impracticable, and without reason. One good turn saves my life; another my freedom, or peradventure my very soul. How shall any law now suit a punishment to an ingratitude, under these differing degrees; it must not be said in benefits as in bonds, *Pay what you owe*. How shall a man pay life, health, credit, security, in kind? There can be no set rule to bound that infinite variety of cases, which are more properly the subject of humanity and religion, than of law and public justice. There would be disputes also about the benefit itself; which must totally depend upon the courtesy of the judge; for no law imaginable can set it forth. One man gives me an estate; another only lends me a sword, and that preserves my life. Nay, the very same thing several ways done, changes the quality of the obligation. A word, a tone, a look, makes a great alteration in the case. How shall we judge then, and determine the matter which does not depend upon the fact itself, but upon the force and intention of it? Some things are reputed benefits, not for their value, but because we desire them. And there are offices of a much greater value, that we do not reckon upon at all. If ingratitude were liable to a law, we must never give; but before witness; which would overthrow the dignity of the benefit; And then the punishment must either be equal, where the crimes are unequal, or else it must be unrighteous: So that blood must answer for blood. He who is ungrateful for any saving his life, must forfeit his own. And what can be more inhuman, than that benefits should conclude in sanguinary extent?



A man saves my life, and I am ungrateful for it : Shall I be punished in my purse ? That is too little ; if it be less than the benefit, it is unjust, and it must be capital to be made equal to it. There are moreover certain privileges granted to parents, that can never be reduced to a common rule : Their injuries may be cognizable, but not their benefits : The diversity of cases is too large and intricate, to be brought within the prospect of a law : So that it is much more equitable to punish none, than to punish all alike. What if a man follows a good office with an injury ; whether, or not, shall this quit scores ? Or who shall compare them and weigh the one against the other ? There is another thing yet, which perhaps we do not dream of : Not one man upon the face of the earth would escape, and yet every man would expect to be his own judge. Once again, we are all of us ungrateful ; and the number does not only take away the shame, but gives authority and protection to the wickedness.

It is thought reasonable by some, that there should be a law against ingratitude ; for, say they, it is common for one city to upbraid another, and to claim that of posterity which was bestowed upon their ancestors : But this is only clamor without reason. It is objected by others, as a discouragement to good offices, if men shall not be made answerable for them ; but I say, on the other side that no man would accept of a benefit upon those terms. He who gives, is prompted to it by a goodness of mind, and the generosity of the action is lessened by the caution ; for it is his desire that the receiver should please himself, and owe no more than he thinks fit. But, what if this might occasion fewer benefits ; so long as they would be franker ? Nor is there any hurt in putting a check upon rashness, and profusion : In answer to this ; men will be careful enough whom they oblige, without a law : Nor is it possible for a judge ever to set us right in it ; or indeed any thing else, but the faith of the receiver. The honor of a benefit is this way preserved, which is otherwise profaned, when it comes to be mercenary, and made matter of contention. We are even forward enough of ourselves to wrangle without unnecessary provocations. It would be well, I think, if money might pass upon the same conditions, with other benefits ; and the payment admitted to the conscience, without for-

nalizing upon bills and securities: But human wisdom has rather advised with convenience than virtue; and chosen rather to *force* honesty, than *expect* it. For every paltry sum of money, there must be bonds, witnesses, counterparts, powers, &c. which is no other than a shameful confession of fraud and wickedness; when more credit is given to our seals than to our minds; and caution taken lest he who has received the money should deny it. Were it not better now to be deceived by some, than to suspect all: What is the difference, at this rate, betwixt the benefactor and an usurer, save only that in the benefactor's case, there is no body stands bound?

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# SENECA,

OF A

## HAPPY LIFE.

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### CHAP. I.

*Of a happy Life, and wherein it consists.*

**T**HERE is not any thing in this world, perhaps, that is more talked of, and less understood, than the business of a *happy life*. It is every man's wish and design; and yet not one of a thousand who knows wherein that happiness consists. We live however in a blind and eager pursuit of it; and the more haste we make in a wrong way, the farther we are from our journey's end. Let us therefore *first* consider, *what it is we would be at*; and *secondly*, *which is the readiest way to compass it*. If we be right, we shall find every day how much we improve; but if we either follow the cry, or the track of people that are out of the way, we must expect to be misled, and to continue our days in wandering and error. Wherefore it highly concerns us to take along with us a skilful guide; for it is not in this as in other voyages, where the highway brings us to our place of repose; or, if a man should happen to be out, where the inhabitants might set him right again. But, on the contrary, the beaten road is here the most dangerous, and the people, instead of helping us, misguide us. Let us not therefore follow, like beasts, but rather govern ourselves by *reason* than by *example*. It fares with us in human life, as in a routed army; one stumbles first, and then another falls upon him, and so they follow one upon the neck of another,

till the whole field comes to be but one heap of miscarriages. And the mischief is, *that the number of the multitude carries it against truth and justice*; so that we must leave the crowd, if we would be happy; for the question of a *happy life* is not to be decided by vote: Nay, so far from it, that plurality of voices is still an argument of the wrong; the common people find it easier to believe than to judge; and content themselves with what is usual; never examining whether it be good or not. By the *common people* is intended *the man of title*, as well as *the clouted shoe*: For I do not distinguish them by the eye, but by the mind, which is the proper judge of the man. Worldly felicity, I know, makes the head giddy; but if ever a man comes to himself again, he will confess, that *whatsoever he has done, he wishes undone*; and that *the things he feared, were better than those he prayed for*.

THE true felicity of *life* is to be free from perturbations; to understand our duties toward  
 \* *True happiness.* God and man; to enjoy the present, without any anxious dependence upon the future. Not to amuse ourselves with either hopes or fears, but to rest satisfied with what we have, which is abundantly sufficient; for he that is so, wants nothing. The great blessings of mankind are within us, and within our reach; but we shut our eyes, and, like people in the dark, we fall foul upon the very thing we search for, without finding it. *Tranquillity is a certain equality of mind, which no condition of fortune can either exalt or depress.* Nothing can make it less; for it is the state of human perfection: It raises us as high as we can go; and makes every man his own supporter; whereas he that is borne up by any thing else may fall. He that judges aright, and perseveres in it, enjoys a perpetual calm: He takes a true prospect of things; he observes an order, measure, a *decorum* in all his actions. He has benevolence in his nature; he squares his life according to reason; and draws to himself love and admiration. Without a certain, and an unchangeable judgment, all the rest is but fluctuation: But, *he that always wills and wills the same thing, is undoubtedly in the right.* Liberty and serenity of mind must necessarily ensue upon the mastering of those things which either allure, or affright us; when, instead of those flashy pleasures (which even at the best are both vain and harmful together) we shall find ourselves possessed of

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joy transporting, and everlasting. It must be a sound mind, that makes a *happily man*; there must be a constancy in all conditions; and such an indifferency for the bounties of fortune, that either with them, or without them, we may live contentedly. There must be neither lamentation, nor quarreling, nor sloth, nor fear; for it makes a discord in a man's life. *He that fears, serves.* The joy of a wise man stands firm without interruption: In all places, at all times, and in all conditions, his thoughts are cheerful and quiet. As it never *came in* to him from *without*; so it will never leave him; but, is borne within him, and inseparable from him; it is a solicitious life that is edged on with the hope of any thing, though ever so open and easy; nay, though a man should never suffer any sort of disappointment. I do not speak this, either as a bar to the fair enjoyment of lawful pleasures, or to the gentle flatteries of reasonable expectations; But, on the contrary, I would have men to be always in good humour; provided that it arises from their own souls; and be cherished in their own breasts. Other delights are trivial; they may smooth the brow, but they do not fill and affect the heart. *True joy is a serene and sober motion*; and they are miserably out, who take laughing for rejoicing: The seat of it is within, and there is no cheerfulness like the resolution of a brave mind, that has fortune under its feet. He that can look death in the face, and bid it welcome; opens his door to poverty, and bridle his appetites: this is the man whom Providence has established in the possession of inviolable delights. The pleasures of the vulgar are ungrounded, thin, and superficial; but the others are solid and eternal. As the body itself is rather a *necessary thing*, than a *great*; so the comforts of it are but temporary and vain; beside that, without extraordinary moderation, their end is only pain and repentance. Whereas, a peaceful conscience, honest thoughts, virtuous actions, and an indifferency for casual events, are blessings without end, satiety, or measure. This consummated state of felicity is only a submission to the dictates of right nature: *The foundation of it is wisdom and virtue; the knowledge of what we ought to do, and the conformity of the will to that knowledge.*

## CHAPTER II.

*Human Happiness is founded upon Wisdom and Virtue—  
And first of Wisdom.*

**TAKING** for granted, that *human-happiness* is founded upon *wisdom* and *virtue*, we shall treat upon these two points in order as they lie: *And first of wisdom*; and not in the latitude of its various operations, but only as it has a regard to a good life, and the happiness of mankind.

**WISDOM** is the right understanding; a faculty of discerning good from evil; what is to be chosen, and what rejected; a judgment grounded upon the value of things, and not the common opinion of them; an equality of force, and the strength of resolution. It sets a watch over our words and deeds; it takes up with the contemplation of the works of nature; and makes us invincible, either by good or evil fortune. It is large and spacious; and requires a great deal of room to work in; it ransacks heaven and earth; it has for its object things past, and to come; transitory and eternal. It examines all the circumstances of time; *what it is*; *when it began*; and *how long it will continue*: And so for the mind, *whence it came*; *what it is*; *when it begins*; *how long it lasts*; *whether or not it passes from one form to another*; or *sees only one*; and *wanders when it leaves*; *where it abides in the state of separation*, and *what the action of it*; *what use it makes of its liberty*; *whether or not it retains the memory of things past*, and *comes to the knowledge of itself*. It is the habit of a perfect mind, and the perfection of humanity, raised as high as nature can carry it. It differs from *philosophy*, as *avarice* and *money*; the one desires, and the other is desired; the one is the effect; and the reward of the other. To be wise is the use of wisdom, as seeing is the use of eyes, and well speaking is the use of eloquence. He who is perfectly wise, is perfectly happy; nay, the very beginning of wisdom makes life easy to us. Neither is it enough to know this, unless we print it in our minds by daily meditation, and setting a good will to a good habit; and we must practise what we preach: For *philosophy* is not a subject for popular ostentation; nor does it rest

in words, but in things : It is not an entertainment taken up for delight, or to give a taste to our leisure ; but it fashions the mind, governs our actions, tells what we are to do, and what not. It sits at the helm, and guides us through all hazards : Nay, we cannot be safe without it, for every hour gives us an occasion to make use of it : It informs us in all the duties of life, piety to our parents, faith to our friends, charity to the miserable, judgment in counsel ; it gives us *peace*, by fearing nothing, and *riches*, by coveting nothing.

\* **TERRÉ** is no condition of life that excludes a wise man from discharging his duty. If his fortune be good, he *tempers* it ; if bad, he *masters* it ; if he has an estate, he will exercise his virtue in plenty ; if none, in poverty ; if he cannot do it in his country, he will do it in banishment ; if he has no command, he will do the office of a common soldier. Some people have the skill of reclaiming the fiercest of beasts : They will make a lion embrace his keeper ; a tyger kiss him, and an elephant kneel to him. This is the case of a wise man in the extremest difficulties ; let them be ever so terrible in themselves, when they come to him once, they are perfectly tame. They who ascribe the invention of tillage, architecture, navigation, &c. to wise men, may perchance be in the right, that they were invented by wise men ; but they were not invented by wise men, as *wise men* : For, wisdom does not teach our fingers, but our minds : Fiddling and dancing, arms and fortifications, were the works of luxury and discord ; but wisdom instructs us in the way of nature and in the art of unity and concord ; not in the instruments, but in the government of life ; nor to make us live only, but to live happily. She teaches us what things are good what evil, and what only appear so ; and to distinguish betwixt true greatness and tumour, she clears our minds of dross and vanity : She raises up our thoughts to heaven, and carries them down to hell. She discourses the nature of the soul ; the powers and faculties of it ; the first principles of things ; the order of Providence : She exalts us from things corporeal, to incorporeal ; and retrieves the truth of all : She searches toature, gives laws to life ; and tells us, *That it is not enough to know God, unless we obey him* : She looks upon all acci-

dents as acts of Providence ; sets a true value upon things ; delivers us from false opinions, and condemns all pleasures that are attended with repentance. She allows nothing to be good, that will not be so for ever ; no man to be happy, but he who needs no other happiness than what he has within himself ; no man to be great, or powerful, who is not master of himself. This is the felicity of human life ; a felicity that can neither be corrupted, nor extinguished : It enquires into the nature of the heavens, the influence of the stars, how far they operate upon our minds and bodies ; which thoughts, though they do not form our manners, they do yet raise and dispose us for glorious things.

It is agreed on all hands, That *right reason is the perfection of human nature*, and wisdom only the dictate of it. The greatness that arises from it is solid and immovable ; the resolutions of wisdom being free, absolute and constant ; whereas folly is never long pleased with the same thing, but still shifting of counsels, and sick of itself. There can be no happiness without constancy and prudence ; for, a wise man is to write without a blot ; and what he likes once, he approves for ever : He admits of nothing that is either evil, or slippery ; but marches without staggering or stumbling, and is never surprised : He lives always true, and steady to himself, and whatsoever befalls him this great artificer of both fortunes turns to advantage. He who demurs and hesitates, is not yet composed : But wheresoever virtue interposes upon the main, there must be concord and consent in the parts. For all virtues are in agreement, as well as all vices at variance. A wise man, in what condition soever he is, will be still happy, for he subjects all things to himself, because he submits himself to reason, and governs his actions by counsel, not by passion. He is not moved with the utmost violences of fortune, nor with the extremities of fire and sword ; whereas a fool is afraid of his own shadow, and surprised at ill accidents, as if they were all levelled at him. He does nothing unwillingly, for whatever he finds necessary, he makes it his choice. He propounds to himself the certain scope and end of human life : He follows that which conduces to it, and avoids that which



hinders it. He is content with his lot, whatever it be, without wishing what he has not: though of the two, he had rather abound than want. The great business of life, like that of nature, is performed without tumult, or noise; He neither fears danger, nor provokes it; but it is his caution, not any want of courage; for captivity, wounds, and chains, he only looks upon as false and lymphatical terrors. He does not pretend to go through with whatever he undertakes; but to do that well which he does. Arts are but the servants, wisdom commands; and where the matter fails, it is none of the workman's fault. He is cautious in doubtful cases, in prosperity temperate, and resolute in adversity; still making the best of every condition, and improving all occasions to make them serviceable to his fate. Some accidents there are, which I confess may affect him, but not overthrow him; as bodily pains, loss of children and friends; the ruin and desolation of a man's country. One must be made of stone, or iron, not to be sensible of these calamities; and beside, it were no virtue to bear them, if a body did not feel them.

THERE are *\* three degrees of proficients* in the school of wisdom. The *first* are those that come within the sight of it, but not up to it: They have learned what they ought to do, but they have not put their knowledge in practice: They are past the hazard of a relapse, but they have still the grudges of a disease, though they are out of the danger of it. By a disease, I do understand an obstinacy in evil, or an ill habit, that makes us ever eager upon things, which are either not much to be desired, or not at all. A *second* sort, are those who have subjected their appetite for a season, but are yet in fear of falling back. A *third* sort, are those who are clear of many vices, but not of all. They are not covetous, but perhaps they are choleric; not lustful, but perchance ambitious; they are firm enough in some cases, but weak in others: There are many who despise death, and yet shrink at pain. There are diversities in wise men, but no inequalities; one is more affable; another more ready; a third, a better speaker; but the felicity of them all is equal. It is in this, as in heavenly bodies; there is a certain state in greatness.

In civil and domestic affairs a wise man may stand in need of counsel, as of a physician, an advocate, a solicitor; but, in greater matters, the blessing of wise men rests in the joy they take in the communication of their virtues. If there were nothing else in it, a man would apply himself to wisdom, because it settles him in a perpetual tranquility of mind.

CHAP. III.

*There can be no Hastiness without Virtue.*

VIRTUE is that perfect good which is the complement of an *happy life*; the only immortal thing that belongs to mortality: It is the knowledge both of others, and itself; it is an invincible greatness of mind, not to be elevated or dejected, with good or ill fortune. It is sociable and gentle, free, steady, and fearless; content within itself; full of inexhaustible delight; and it is valued for itself. One may be a good physician, a good governor, a good grammarian, without being a good man, so that all things from without, are only accessories; for the seat of it is a pure and holy mind. It consists in a congruity of actions; which we can never expect, so long as we are distracted by our passions. Not but that a man may be allowed to change colour and countenance, and suffer such impressions as are properly a kind of natural force upon the body, and not under the dominion of the mind: But, all this while, I will have his judgment firm, and he shall act steadily, and boldly, without wavering betwixt the motions of his body, and those of the mind. It is not a thing indifferent, I know, whether man lies at ease upon a bed, or in torment upon a wheel: And yet the former may be the worse of the two, if we suffer the latter with honor, and enjoy the other with infamy. It is not the matter, but the virtue that makes the action good or ill: And he who is led in triumph, may yet be greater than his conqueror. When we come once to value our flesh above our honesty, we are lost: And yet I would not press upon dangers, no not so much as upon inconveniences, unless

where the man and the brute come in competition : And, in such a case, rather than make a forfeiture of my credit, my reason, or my faith, I would run all extremities. They are great blessings to have tender parents, dutiful children, and to live under a just, and well ordered government. Now, would it not trouble even a virtuous man, to see his children butchered before his eyes, his father made a slave, and his country overrun by a barbarous enemy ? There is a great difference betwixt the simple loss of a blessing, and the succeeding of a great mischief into the place of it over and above. The loss of health is followed with sickness ; and the loss of sight with blindness ; but, this does not hold in the loss of friends and children, where there is rather something to the contrary to supply that loss ; that is to say, *virtue*, which fills the mind, and takes away the desire of what we have not. What matters it whether the water be stopt, or not, so long as the fountain is safe ? Is a man ever the wiser for a multitude of friends, or the more foolish for the loss of them ? So neither is he the happier, nor the more miserable. Short life, grief and pain, are accessions that have no effect at all upon virtue. It consists in the action, not in the things we do : In the choice itself, and not in the subject matter of it. It is not a despicable body, or condition ; not poverty, infamy, or scandal, that can obscure the glories of virtue : but a man may see her through all oppositions, and he who looks diligently into the state of a wicked man, will see the canker at his heart, through all the false and dazzling splendors of greatness and fortune. We shall then discover our *childishness*, in setting our hearts upon things trivial and contemptible ; and in the selling our very country and parents for a rattle. And what is the difference (in effect) betwixt *old men and children*, but that the one deal in *painting and statues*, and the other in *babies* ? So that we ourselves are only the more expensive fools.

It were not possible to see the mind of a good man, as it is illustrated with virtue ; \* the beauty and the \* *The dignity* majesty of it, which is a dignity not so much *of virtue.* as to be thought of, without love, and veneration ; would not a man bless himself at the sight of such an object, as at the encounter of some supernatural power ? A power so miraculous that it is a kind of charm upon the souls of those who are truly affected with it. There is no

wonderful a grace and authority it is, that even the worst of men approve it, and set up for the reputation of being accounted virtuous themselves. They covet the fruit indeed, and the profit of wickedness; but they hate, and are ashamed of the imputation of it. It is by an impression of nature, that all men have a reverence for virtue: They know it, and they have a respect for it, though they do not practise it: Nay, for the countenance of their very wickedness, they miscall it *virtue*. Their injuries they call benefits, and expect a man should thank them for doing him a mischief; they cover their most notorious iniquities with a pretext of justice. He who robs upon the highway had rather find his booty than force it. Ask any of those who live upon rapine, fraud, oppression, if they had not rather enjoy a fortune honestly gotten; and their consciences will not suffer them to deny it. Men are vicious only for the profit of villany; for at the same time that they commit it, they condemn it. Nay, so powerful is virtue, and so gracious is Providence, that every man has a light set up within him for a guide; which we do all of us both see and acknowledge, though we do not pursue it. This is it that makes the prisoner upon the torture happier than the executioner, and sickness better than health, if we bear it without yielding or repining: This is it that overcomes ill fortune, and moderates good; for it marches betwixt the one and the other, with an equal contempt of both. It turns (like fire) all things into itself; our actions, and our friendships are tinged with it; and whatever it touches, becomes amiable. That which is frail and mortal, rises, and falls, grows, wastes, and varies from itself; but the state of things divine is always the same: And so is virtue, let the matter be what it will. It is never the worse for the difficulty of the action, nor the better for the easiness of it. It is the same in a rich man, as in a poor; in a sickly man, as in a sound; in a strong, as in a weak: The virtue of the besieged is as great as that of the besiegers. There are some virtues, I confess, which a good man cannot be without, and yet he had rather have no occasion to employ them. If there were any difference, I should prefer the virtues of patience before those of pleasure: For it is braver to break through difficulties, than to temper our delights. But, though the subject of virtue may possibly be a *manstrafurd*, as to be burnt or wounded; yet the w-

the itself of an invincible patience is according to nature. We may seem perhaps to promise more than human nature is able to perform; but we speak with a respect to the mind, and not to the body.

If a man does not live up to his own rules, it is something \* yet to have virtuous meditations, and good purposes; even without acting: \* *The good will is accepted for the deed.* It is very generous, the very adventure of being good, and the bare proposal of an eminent course of life, though beyond the force of human frailty to accomplish. There is something of honor yet in the miscarriage; nay, in the naked contemplation of it: I would receive my own death with as little trouble, as I would hear of another man's; I would bear the same mind, whether I be rich or poor, whether I get or lose in the world; what I have, I will not either sordidly spare, or prodigally squander away; and I will reckon upon benefits well placed, as the fairest part of my possessions: Not valuing them by number or weight, but by the profit, and esteem of the receiver; accounting myself never the poorer for that which I give to a worthy person. What I do shall be done for conscience, not ostentation. I will eat and drink, not to gratify my palate, or only to fill and empty, but to satisfy nature: I will be cheerful to my friends, mild and placable to my enemies: I will prevent an honest request, if I can foresee it, and I will grant it without asking: I will look upon the whole world as my country, and upon the Gods, both as the witnesses and judges of my words and deeds. I will live and die with this testimony; that I loved good studies and a good conscience; that I never invaded another man's liberty, and that I preserved my own: I never govern my life, and my thoughts, as if the whole world were to see the one, and to read the other; for, *what does it signify, to make any thing a secret to my neighbor, when to God (who is the Searcher of our hearts) all our privacies are open.*

Virtue is divided into two parts, \* *contemplation and action.* The one is delivered by institution, the other by admonition: One part of virtue consists in discipline; the other in exercise; for we must first learn and then practise. The sooner we begin to apply ourselves to it, and the more haste we make, the longer shall

\* *Virtue is divided into contemplation and action.*

we enjoy the comforts of a rectified mind ; nay, we have the fruition of it in every act of forming it ; but it is another sort of delight. I must confess, that arises from the contemplation of a soul, which is advanced into the possession of wisdom and virtue. If it was so great a comfort to us, to pass from the subjection of our childhood into a state of liberty, and business, how much greater will it be, when we come to cast off the boyish levity of our minds, and range ourselves among the philosophers ? We are past our minority, it is true, but not our indiscretions ; and, which is yet worse, we have the authority of seniors, and the weaknesses of children ; I might have said of infants, for every little thing frights the one, and every trivial fancy the other.) Whoever studies this point well, will find that many things are the less to be feared, the more terrible they appear. To think any thing good that is not honest, were to reproach Providence ; for good men suffer inconveniences ; but virtue, like the sun, goes on still with her work, let the air be ever so cloudy, and finishes her course ; extinguishing likewise all other splendors, and oppositions ; inasmuch that calamity is no more to a virtuous mind, than a shower into the sea. That which is right, is not to be valued by *quantity, number, or time* ; a life of a day may be as honest as a life of an hundred years ; but yet virtue in one man may have a larger field to shew itself in than another. One man perhaps may be in a station to administer unto cities and kingdoms ; to contrive good laws, create friendships, and do beneficial offices to mankind : It is another man's fortune to be straightened by poverty, or put out of the way by banishment ; and yet the latter may be as virtuous as the former ; and may have as great a mind, as exact a prudence, as inviolable a justice, and as large a knowledge of things both divine and human ; without which, a man cannot be happy. For virtue is open to all ; as well to servants and exiles as to princes : It is profitable to the world, and to itself, at all distances, and in all conditions ; and there is no difficulty can excuse a man from the exercise of it ; and it is only to be found in a wise man, though there may be some faint resemblances of it in the common people. The *Stoicks* hold all virtues to be equal ; but yet there is a great variety in the matter they have to work upon, according as it is larger

or narrower ; illustrious or less noble ; of more or less extent ; as all good men are equal ; that is to say, as they are good ; but yet one may be young, another old ; one may be rich, another poor ; one eminent and powerful, another unknown and obscure. There are many things which have little or no grace in themselves, and yet are made glorious and remarkable by virtue. Nothing can be good which gives neither greatness nor security to the mind ; but on the contrary, infects it with insolence, arrogance, and tumour : Nor does virtue dwell upon the tip of the tongue, but in the temple of the purified heart. He who depends upon any other good, becomes covetous of life, and what belongs to it ; which exposes a man to appetites that are vast, unlimited and intolerable. Virtue is free, and indefatigable, and accompanied with concord and gracefulness : Whereas pleasure is mean, servile, transitory, tiresome, and sickly, and scarcely outlives the tasting it : It is the good of the belly, and not of the man, and only the felicity of brutes. - Who does not know that fools enjoy their pleasures, and that here is great variety in the entertainments of wickedness ? Nay, the mind itself has its variety of perverse pleasures, as well as the body ; as insolence, self-conceit, pride, garrulity, laziness, and the abusive wit of turning every thing into *ridicule* ; whereas virtue weighs all this, and corrects it. It is the knowledge both of others and of itself ; it is to be learned from itself ; and, the very will itself is to be taught : Which will cannot be right, unless the whole habit of the mind be right, from whence the will comes. It is by the impulse of virtue that we love virtue, so that the very way to virtue lies by virtue, which takes in also, at a view, the laws of human life.

NETHER are we to value ourselves upon a day or an hour, or any one action, but upon the whole habit of the mind.\* Some men *A virtuous life must be all of a piece.* do one thing bravely, but not another ; they will shrink at infamy, and bear up against poverty : In this case we commend the fact, and despise the man. The soul is never in the right place until it be delivered from the cares of human affairs : We must labour and climb the hill, if we will arrive at virtue, whose seat is on the top of it. He who masters

avarice, and is truly good, stands firm against ambition; he looks upon his last hour, not as a punishment, but as the equity of a common fate; he who subdues his carnal lusts, shall easily keep himself untainted with any other: So that reason does not encounter this or that vice by itself, but beats down all at a blow. What does he care for ignominy, who only values himself upon conscience, and not opinion? *Socrates* looked a scandalous death in the face, with the same constancy that he had before practised towards the thirty tyrants: His virtue consecrated the very dungeon: As *Cato's* repulse was *Cato's* honor, and the reproach of the government. He who is wise, will take delight even in an ill opinion that is well gotten; it is ostentation, not virtue, when a man will have his good deeds published; and it is not enough to be just, where there is honor to be gotten, but to continue so, in defiance of infamy and danger.

BUT virtue cannot lie hid, for the time will come that \* shall raise it again (even after it is buried) and deliver it from the malignity of the age that oppressed it: Immortal glory is the shadow of it, and keeps it company whether we will or not; but sometimes the shadow goes before the substance, and sometimes it follows it: And the later it comes, the larger it is, when even envy itself shall have given way to it. It was a long time that *Democritus* was taken for a mad man, and before *Socrates* had any esteem in the world. How long was it before *Cato* could be understood? Nay, he was affronted, contemned and rejected; and people never knew the value of him, until they had lost him: The integrity and courage of mad *Rutulius* had been forgotten, but for his sufferings. I speak of those whom fortune has made famous for their persecutions: And there are others also that the world never took notice of, until they were dead; as *Epicurus*, and *Metrodorus*, who were almost wholly unknown, even in the place where they lived. Now, as the body is to be kept in upon the down hill, and forced upwards; so there are some virtues that require the rein, and others the spur. In *liberality, temperance, gentleness of nature*, we are to check ourselves, for fear of falling; but in *patience, resolution, and perseverance*, where we are to mount the hill, we stand in need of encouragement. Up-



on this division of the matter, I had rather steer the smoother course, than pass through the experiments of sweat and blood: I know it is my duty to be constant in all conditions; but yet if it were at my election, I would choose the fairest. When a man comes once to stand in need of fortune, his life is anxious, suspicious, timorous, dependent upon every moment, and in fear of all accidents. How can that man resign himself to God, or bear his lot, whatever it be, without murmuring, and cheerfully submit to Providence, who shrinks at every motion of pleasure, or pain? It is virtue alone that raises us above griefs, hopes, fears, and chances; and makes us not only patient, but willing, as knowing that whatever we suffer, is according to the decree of heaven. He who is overcome with pleasure (so contemptible and weak an enemy) what will become of him when he comes to grapple with dangers, necessities, torments, death, and the dissolution of nature itself? Wealth, honour, and favour may come upon a man by chance; nay, they may be cast upon him without so much as looking after them; but virtue is the work of industry and labour; and certainly it is worth the while to purchase that good which brings all others along with it. A good man is happy within himself and independent upon fortune; kind to his friend; temperate to his enemy, religiously just; indefatigably laborious; and he discharges all duties with a constancy, and congruity of actions.

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#### CHAP. IV.

##### *Philosophy is the Guide of Life.*

**I**F it be true, that the *understanding*, and the *will*, are the two eminent faculties of the reasonable soul; it follows necessarily, that *wisdom* and *virtue* (which are the best improvements of these two faculties) must be the perfection also of our reasonable being; and consequently, the *undeniable foundation of a happy life*. There is not any duty to which Providence has not annexed a blessing; nor any institution of heaven, which, even in this life, we may not be the better for; nor any temptation, either of fortune or of appetite, that is not subject to our reason; nor any passion or

affliction, for which virtue has not provided a remedy. So that it is our own fault if we either fear or hope for any thing; which two affections are the root of all our miseries. From this general prospect of the *foundation* of our tranquility, we shall pass by degrees to a particular consideration of the *means* by which it may be *procured*; and of the *impediments* that *obstruct* it; beginning with that *philosophy* which principally regards our *manners*, and instructs us in the measures of a virtuous and quiet life.

\* PHILOSOPHY is divided into *moral*, *natural*, and *rational*: The *first* concerns our *manners*; the *second* searches the works of *nature*; and the *third* furnishes us with propriety of words and *arguments*, and the faculty of *distinguishing*, that we may not be imposed upon with tricks and fallacies. The *causes* of things fall under *natural philosophy*; *arguments*, under *rational*; and *actions*, under *moral*. *Moral philosophy* is again divided into matter of *justice*; which arises from the estimation of things and of men; and into *affections* and *actions*; and a failing in any one of these, disorders all the rest: For what does it profit us to know the true value of things, if we are transported by our passions? Or, to master our appetites without understanding the *when*, the *what*, the *how*, and other circumstances of our proceedings? For it is one thing to know the rate and dignity of things; and another to know the little nicks and springs of acting. *Natural philosophy* is conversant about things *corporeal* and *incorporeal*; the disquisition of *causes* and *effects*, and the contemplation of the *cause* of *causes*: *Rational philosophy* is divided into *logic* and *rhetoric*; the one looks after *words*, *sense*, and *order*; the other treats barely of *words* and the *signification* of them. *Socrates* places all *philosophy* in *morals*; and *wisdom* in the distinguishing of *good* and *evil*. It is the art and law of life, and it teaches us what to do in all cases, and like good marksmen, to hit the white at any distance. The force of it is incredible: for it gives us, in the weakness of a man, the security of a *spirit*: In sickness it is as good a remedy to us; for whatsoever eases the mind, is profitable also to the body. The *physician* may prescribe diet and exercise, and accommodate his rule and medicine to the disease; but it is *philosophy* that must bring us to a contempt of death, which is the remedy of all diseases. In poverty, it gives us rich-

es, or such a store of mind as makes them superfluous to us. It arms us against all difficulties : One man is pressed with ceath, another with poverty ; some with envy, others are offended with Providence, and unsatisfied with the condition of mankind. But *philosophy* prompts us to relieve the prisoner, the infirm, the necessitous, the condemned ; to shew the ignorant their errors, and rectify their affections. It makes us inspect and govern our manners ; it rouses us where we are faint and drowsy ; it binds up what is loose, and humbles in us that which is contumacious : It delivers the mind from the bondage of the body, and raises it up to the contemplation of its divine original. Honors, monuments, and all the works of vanity and ambition are demolished and destroyed by time, but the reputation of wisdom is venerable to posterity ; and those who were envied or neglected in their lives, are adored in their memories, and exempted from the very laws of created nature, which has set bounds to all other things. The very shadow of *glory* carries a man of *honor* upon all dangers, to the contempt of fire and sword ; and it were a shame, if *right reason* should not inspire as generous resolutions in a man of *virtue*.

NEITHER is *philosophy* only profitable to the public, but  
 \* *One wise man teaches another.* \* one wise man helps another even in the exercise of their virtues ; and the one has need of the other, both for conversation and counsel ; for they kindle a mutual emulation in good offices. We are not so perfect yet, but that many new things remain still to be found out, which will give us the reciprocal advantages of instructing one another : For, as one wicked man is contagious to another ; and the more vices are mingled, the worse it is : So it is on the contrary with good men and their virtues. As men of letters are the most useful and excellent of friends, so are they the best of subjects ; as being better judges of the blessings they enjoy under a well ordered government, and of what they owe to the magistrate for their freedom and protection. They are men of sobriety and learning, and free from boasting and insolence : They reprove the vice, without reproaching the person ; for they have learned to be wise, without either pomp or envy. That which we see in high mountains, we find in *philosophers* ; they seem taller at hand than at a distance. They are raised above other

men, but their greatness is substantial. Nor do they stand upon the tiptoe, that they may seem higher than they are, but content with their own stature, they reckon themselves tall enough when fortune cannot reach them. Their laws are short, and yet comprehensive too, for they bind all.

It is by the bounty of nature that we live, but of *\* philosophy* that we live well; which is in truth a greater benefit than life itself. Not but that *\* philosophy* is also the gift of heaven, so far as to the faculty, but not to the science; for that must be the business of industry. No man is born wise: But wisdom and virtue require a tutor, though we can easily learn to be vicious without a master. It is *philosophy* that gives a veneration for God; a charity for our neighbor; that teaches us our duty to heaven, and exhorts us to an agreement one with another: It unmasks things that are terrible to us, assuages our lusts, refutes our errors, restrains our luxury, reproveth our avarice, and works strangely upon tender natures. I could never hear *Attalus* (says *Sextius*) upon the vices of the age, and the errors of life, without a compassion for mankind; and in his discourses upon poverty, there was something methought that was more than human. *More than we use* (says he) *is more than we need, and only a burden to the bearer.* That saying of his, put me out of countenance at the superfluities of my own fortune. And so in his invectives against vain pleasures; he did at such a rate advance the felicities of a sober table, a pure mind, and a chaste body, that a man could not hear him without a love for continence and moderation. Upon those lectures of his, I denied myself, for a while after, certain delicacies that I had formerly used: But in a short time I fell to them again; though so sparingly that the proportion came little short of a total abstinence.

Now to shew you (says our author) how much earnestly my entrance upon philosophy was than my progress; my tutor *Sotion* gave me a wonderful kindness for *Pythagoras*; and after him for *Sextius*: The former forbode shedding blood upon his *metempsychosis*, and put men in fear of it, lest they should offer violence to the souls of some of their departed friends and relations. *Whether* (says he) *there be a transmigration or not; if it be true, there is no hurt in it; if false, there is frugality: And nothing is gotten by cruelty neither,*

but the cozening a wolf, perhaps, or a vulture, of a supper. Now Sextius abstained upon another account; which was, that he would not have men inured to hardness of heart by the laceration and tormenting of living creatures; beside that nature had sufficiently provided for the sustenance of mankind, without blood. This wrought so far upon me, that I gave over eating of flesh; and in one year made it not only easy to me, but pleasant; my mind, methought, was more at liberty (and I am still of the same opinion) but I gave it over nevertheless, and the reason was this; it was imputed as a superstition to the Jews the forbearance of some sorts of flesh, and my father brought me back again to my old custom, that I might not be thought tainted with their superstition. Nay, and I had much ado to prevail upon myself to suffer it too. I make use of this instance to shew the aptness of youth to take good impressions, if there be a friend at hand to press them. Philosophers are the tutors of mankind; if they have found out remedies for the mind, it must be our part to apply them. I cannot think of Cato, Lelius, Socrates, Plato, without veneration; their very names are sacred to me. Philosophy is the health of the mind; let us look to that health first, and in the second place to that of the body, which may be had upon easier terms; for a strong arm, a robust constitution, or the skill of procuring this, is not a Philosopher's business. He does something as a wise man, and other things as he is a man; and he may have strength of body as well as of mind; but if he runs or casts the sledge, it were injurious to ascribe that to his wisdom which is common to the greatest of fools. He studies rather to fill his mind than his coffers; and he knows that gold and silver were mingled with dirt, until avarice or ambition parted them. His life is ordinate, fearless, equal, secure; he stands firm in all extremities, and bears the lot of his humanity with a divine temper. There is a great difference betwixt the splendor of philosophy, and of fortune; the one shines with an original light, the other with a borrowed one; beside, that it makes us happy, and immortal; for learning shall outlive palaces and monuments. The house of a wise man is safe, though narrow; there is neither noise nor furniture in it; no porter at the door, nor any thing that is either vendible or mercenary, nor any business of fortune; for she has nothing to do, where she has nothing to look after. This is the way to

Heaven, which nature has chalked out, and it is both secure and pleasant; there needs no train of servants, no pomp, or equipage, to make good our passage; no money, or letters of credit, for expenses upon the voyage; but the graces of an honest mind will serve us upon the way, and make us happy at our journey's end.

To tell you my opinion now of *\* the liberal sciences :*  
 I have no great esteem for any that *\* The liberal sciences*  
 terminates in profit or money; and *are matter rather of*  
 yet I shall allow them to be so far *curiosity than virtue.*  
 beneficial, as they only *prepare the*  
 understanding, without *detaching it.* They are but the ru-  
 diments of wisdom; and only then to be learned when the  
 mind is capable of nothing better; and the knowledge of  
 them is better worth the keeping than the acquiring; they  
 do not so much as pretend to the making of us virtuous,  
 but only to give us an aptitude of disposition to be so. The  
*grammarians*'s business lies in a *syntax* of speech; or if he  
 proceed to history, or the measuring of a *verse*, he is at the  
 end of his line: But what signifies a congruity of periods,  
 the computing of syllables, or the modifying of numbers,  
 to the tuning of our passions, or the repressing of our lusts?  
 The *philosopher* proves the body of the sun to be large, but  
 for the true dimensions of it, we must ask the *mathema-*  
*tician*: *Geometry* and *music*, if they do not teach us to mas-  
 ter our hopes and fears, all the rest is to little purpose.  
 What does it concern us to know which was the elder of the  
 two, *Homer* or *Heclot*; or which was the taller, *Helen* or *He-*  
*cube*? We take a deal of pains to trace *Ulysses* in his wan-  
 derings: But were it not time as well spent, to look to  
 ourselves tossed with tempestuous passions; and both ac-  
 cused by terrible *monsters* on the one hand, and *tempted by*  
*Sirens* on the other? Teach me my duty to my country, to  
 my father, to my wife, to mankind. What is it to me, wheth-  
 er *Penelope* was honest or not? Teach me to know how to  
 be so myself, and to live according to that knowledge. What  
 am I the better for putting so many parts together in *music*,  
 and raising an harmony out of so many different tones?  
 Teach me to tame my affections; and to hold constant to my-  
 self. *Geometry* teaches me the art of *measuring acres*; teach  
 me *to measure my desires*, and to know when I have enough:  
 Teach me to divide with my brother, and to rejoice in the

prosperity of my neighbour. You teach me how I may hold my own, and keep my estate; but I would rather learn how I may lose it all, and yet be contented. *It is hard, you will say, for man to be forced from the fortune of his family.* This estate, it is true, was my father's; but, whose was it in the time of my great grandfather? I do not only say what *man's* was it; but what *nation's*? The *Astrologer* tells me of *Saturn* and *Mars* in *opposition*, but I say, let them be as they will, their courses and their positions are ordered them by an unchangeable decree of fate. Either they produce, and point out the effects of all things, or else they signify them: If the former; what are we the better for the knowledge of that which must of necessity come to pass? If the latter, what does it avail us, to foresee what we cannot avoid? So that whether we know or not know, the event will still be the same.

He who designs the institution of human life should not \* be over-curious of his words; it does not stand with his dignity to be solicitous about sounds and syllables, and to debase the mind of man with small and trivial things; placing wisdom in matters that are rather difficult than great. If he be *eloquent*, it is his *good fortune*, not his *business*. Subtile disputations are only the sports of wits, that play upon the catch; and are fitter to be contemned, than resolved. Were not I a madman to sit wrangling about words, and putting nice and impertinent questions, when the enemy has already made the breach, the town fired over my head, and the mine ready to play that shall blow me up into the air? Were this a time for fooleries? Let me rather fortify myself against death, and inevitable necessities; let me understand that the good of life does not consist in the length or space, but in the use of it. When I go to *sleep*, who knows whether I shall ever *wake* again? And when I *wake*, whether ever I shall *sleep* again. When I go *abroad*, whether ever I shall come *home* again? And when I *return*, whether ever I shall go *abroad* again? It is not at sea only, that life and death are within a few inches of one another; but they are as near ~~every~~ where else too, only we do not take so much of it. What have we to do with frivolous and

capacious questions, and impertinent niceties? Let us rather study how to deliver ourselves from sadness, fear, and the burden of our secret lusts: Let us pass over all our most solemn levities, and make haste to a good life, which is a thing that presses us. Shall a man who goes for a midwife, stand gaping upon a post, to see *what play to-day?* Or when his house is on fire, stay the curling of a periwig before he calls for help? Our houses are on fire, our country invaded, our goods taken away, our children in danger, and I might add to these the calamities of earthquakes, shipwrecks, and whatever else is most terrible. Is this a time for us now to be playing fast and loose with idle questions, which are, in effect but so many unprofitable riddles? Our duty is, the cure of the mind, rather than the delight of it; but we have only the words of wisdom, without the works; and turn philosophy into a pleasure, that was given for a remedy. What can be more ridiculous than for a man to neglect his manners, and compose his style? We are sick and ulcerous, and must be lanced and scarified, and every man has as much business within himself, as a physician in a common pestilence. *Misfortunes in fine, cannot be avoided: But they may be sweetened, if not overcome; and our lives made happy by philosophy.*

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## CHAP. V.

### *The Force of Precepts.*

**T**HERE seems to be so near an affinity betwixt wisdom, philosophy and good counsels, that it is rather matter of curiosity, than of profit, to divide them; philosophy being only a limited wisdom, and good counsels, a communication of that wisdom, for the good of others, as well as of ourselves; and to posterity, as well as to the present. The wisdom of the ancients, as to the government of life, was no more than certain precepts what to do, and what not; and men were much better in that simplicity; for as they came to be more learned, they grew less careful of being good. That plain and open virtue, is now turned into a dark and intricate science; and we are taught to dispute, rather than to live. So long as wickedness was simple, simple remedies also were sufficient against it.



but now it has taken root and spread, we must make use of stronger.

THERE are some dispositions that embrace good things as \* soon as they hear them; \* *The best of us are yet the better for admonition and precept.* but they will soon need quickening by admonition and precept. We are rash and forward in some cases, and dull in others: And there is no repressing of the one humour, or raising of the other, but by removing the causes of them; which are (in one word) *false administration* and *false fear*. Every man knows his duty to his country, to his friends, to his guests; and yet when he is called upon to draw his sword for the one, or to labour for the other, he finds himself distracted betwixt his apprehensions, and his delights: He knows well enough the injury he does to his wife, in the keeping a wench; and yet his lust overrules him: So that it is not enough to give good advice, unless we can take away that which hinders the benefit of it. If a man does what he ought to do, he will never do it constantly, or equally, without knowing why he does it. And if it be only chance or custom, he who does well by chance, may do ill so to: And farther, a precept may direct us what we ought to do, and yet fall short in the manner of doing it. An expensive entertainment may, in one case, be extravagance or gluttony; and yet a point of honor and discretion in another. *Tiberius Caesar* had a large *Mullet* presented him, which he sent to the market to be sold: *And now* (says he) *to my masters* (to some company with him) *you shall see, that either Apricius or Octavius, will be the chapman for this fish; Octavius beat the price, and gave about 30*l.* sterling for it. Now there was a great difference between Octavius, who bought it for his luxury, and the other who purchased it for a compliment to Tiberius.* Precepts are idle, if we be not first taught what opinion we are to have of the matter in question; whether it be *poverty, riches, disgrace, sickness, banishment, &c.* Let us therefore examine them one by one; not what they are called, but what in truth they are. And so for the *virtues*: It is to no purpose to set an high esteem upon *prudence, fortitude, temperance, justice*; if we do not first know what *virtue is*: Whether *one or more* or if he who has *one, has all*; or *how they differ*.

PRECEPTS are of great weight; and a few \* useful ones at hand, do more toward a happy life than whole volumes of cautions, that we know not where to find. The solitary precepts should be our daily meditation, for they are the rules by which we ought to square our lives. When they are contracted into *sentences*, they strike the *affections*; whereas *admonition* is only *blowing of the coal*; it moves the vigor of the mind, and excites virtue: We have the thing already, but we know not where it lies. It is by precepts that the understanding is nourished and augmented; the offices of prudence and justice are guided by them, and they lead us to the execution of our duties. A precept delivered in *verse*, has a much greater effect than in *prose*; and those very persons who never think they have enough, let them but hear a sharp sentence against *avarice*; how will they clap and admire it, and bid open defiance to money? So soon as we find the affections struck, we must follow the blow: Not with *syllogisms*, or quirks of *wit*; but with *plain* and *weighty reason*: And we must do it with *kindness* too, and *respect*: For, *there goes a blessing along with counsels, and discourses that are bent wholly upon the good of the hearer*; And those are still the most efficacious, that take reason along with them; and tell us as well *why* we are to do this or that, as *what* we are to do. For, some understandings are weak, and need an instructor to expound to them what is good, and what is evil. It is a great virtue to *love, to give, and to follow good counsel*; if it does not lead us to honesty, it does at least *prompt* us to it. As several parts make up but one harmony, and the most agreeable music arises from discords; so should a wise man gather many acts, many precepts, and the examples of many arts, to inform his own life. Our forefathers have left us in charge to avoid three things; *hatred, envy, and contempt*; Now it is hard to avoid *envy*, and not to incur *contempt*; for, in taking too much care not to usurp upon others, we become many times liable to be trampled upon ourselves. Some people are afraid of others, because it is possible that others may be afraid of them: But let us secure ourselves on all hands: For *flattery* is as dangerous as *contempt*. It is not to say, in case of *admonition*, *I knew this before*: For, we

\* The power of precepts and sentences.

know many things, but we do not think of them; so that it is the part of a *minor*, not so much to *teach*, as to *mind* us of our duties. Sometimes a man oversees that which lies just under his nose; at another time he is careless, or *pretends* not to see it: We do all know, that friendship is sacred, and yet we violate it; and the greatest libertine expects that his own wife should be honest.

GOOD \* *counsel* is the most needful service that we can do to mankind, and if we give it to *many*, it will be sure to profit *some*: For, if many trials, some or other will undoubtedly succeed. He who places a man in the possession of himself, does a great thing; for wisdom does not shew itself so much in precept, as in life; in a firmness of mind, and a mastery of appetite: It teaches us to *do*, as well as to *talk*; and to make our words and actions all of a colour. If that fruit be pleasantest which we gather from a tree of our own planting, how much greater delight shall we take in the growth and increase of good manners of our own forming? It is an eminent mark of wisdom for a man to be always like himself. You shall have some who keep a thrifty table, and lavish out upon building; profuse upon themselves, and sordid to others; niggardly at home, and lavish abroad. This diversity is vicious, and the effect of a dissatisfied, and uneasy mind; whereas every wise man lives by rule. This disagreement of purposes, arises from hence, either that we do not propound to ourselves what we would be at; Or if we do, that we do not pursue it, but pass from one thing to another; and we not only *change* neither, but return to the very thing which we had both quitted and condemned.

In all our \* undertakings, let us first examine our own strength; the enterprize next; and thirdly, the persons with whom we have to do. The first point is most important; for we are apt to over value ourselves, and reckon that we can do more indeed than we can. One man sets up for a speaker, and is out as soon as he opens his mouth; another overcharges his estate perhaps, or his body: A bashful man is not fit for public business: Some again are too stiff,

and peremptory for the court ; many people are apt to fly out in their anger ; nay, and in a frolic too, if any thing sharp fall in their way, they will rather venture a neck than lose a jest. These people had better be quiet in the world than busy. Let him who is naturally choleric, and impatient, avoid all provocations, and those affairs also that multiply and draw on more ; and those also from which there is no retreat. When we may come off at pleasure, and fairly hope to bring our matters to a period, it is well enough. If it so happen that a man be tied up to business, which he can neither loosen or break off ; let him imagine those shackles upon his mind to be irons upon his legs : They are troublesome at first, but when there is no remedy but patience, custom makes them easy to us, and necessity gives us courage. We are all slaves to fortune ; some only in loose and gilded chains, others in strait ones, and coarser : Nay, and *they that bind us, are slaves to themselves* ; some to honour, others to wealth ; some to offices, others to contempt ; some to their superiors, others to themselves : Nay, life itself is a servitude : Let us make the best of it then, and with our philosophy mend our fortune. Difficulties may be softened, and heavy burdens disposed of to our ease. Let us covet nothing out of our reach, but content ourselves with things hopeful, and at hand ; and without envying the advantages of others : For greatness stands upon a craggy precipice ; and it is much safer and quieter living upon a level. How many great men are forced to keep their station upon mere necessity : because they find there is no coming down from it but headlong ? These men should do well to fortify themselves against ill consequences, by such virtues and meditations, as may make them less solicitous for the future. The surest expedient in this case is to bound our desires, and to leave nothing to fortune which we may keep in our own power. Neither will this course wholly compose us, but it shews us at worst the end of our troubles.

It is a main point to take care that we propose\* nothing but what is hopeful and honest. \* *Propose nothing but what is hopeful and honest.* For it will be equally troublesome to us, either not to succeed, or to be ashamed of the success. Wherefore, let us be

sure not to admit any ill design into our heart ; that we may lift up pure hands to heaven, and ask nothing which another shall be a loser by. Let us pray for a good mind, which is a wish to no man's injury. I will remember always that I am a man, and then consider, that if I am *hasty*, it will not last *always* ; if *unhasty*, I may be *otherwise*, if I please. I will carry my life in my hand, and deliver it up readily when it shall be called for. I will have a care of being a slave to myself, for it is a perpetual, a shameful, and the heaviest of all servitudes ; and, this may be done by moderate desires. I will say to myself, *what is it that I labour, sweat, and solicit for, when it is but very little that I want, and it will not be long that I shall need any thing?* He who would make trial of the firmness of his mind, let him set certain days apart for the practice of his virtues. Let him mortify himself with fasting, coarse clothes, and hard lodging ; and then say to himself, *is this the thing now that I was afraid of?* In a state of security a man may thus prepare himself against hazards, and in plenty fortify himself against want. If you will have a man resolute when he comes to the push, train him up to it before hand. The soldier does duty in peace, that he may be in breath when he comes to battle. How many great and wise men have made experiment of their moderation by a practice of abstinence, to the highest degree of hunger and thirst ; and convinced themselves, that a man may fill his belly, without being beholden to fortune ; which never denies any of us wherewith to satisfy our necessities, though she be ever so angry ? It is as easy to *suffer it always*, as to *try it once* ; and it is no more than thousands of servants and poor people to do every day of their lives. He who would live happily, must neither trust to good fortune, nor submit to bad : He must stand upon his guard against all assaults : He must stick to himself, without any dependence upon other people. Where the mind is tinctured with philosophy, there is no place for grief, anxiety, or superfluous vexations. It is prepossessed with virtue, to the neglect of fortune, which brings us to a degree of security not to be disturbed. It is easier to give counsel than to take it ; and a common thing for one choleric man to condemn another. We may be sometimes earnest in advising, but not violent or tedious. Few words with

gentleness and efficacy are best : The misery is, that the wise do not need council, and fools will not take it. A good man, it is true, delights in it : And it is a mark of folly and ill nature, to hate reproof. To a friend I would be always frank and plain; and rather fail in the success, than be wanting in the matter of faith and trust. There are some precepts that serve in common, both to the rich and poor, but they are too general, as *cure your avarice, and the work is done*. It is one thing not to desire money, and another thing not to understand how to use it. In the choice of the persons we have to do withal, we should see that they be worth our while ; in the choice of our business we are to consult nature, and follow our inclinations. He who gives sober advice to a witty droll, must look to have every thing turned into ridicule. *As if your philosophers (says Marcellinus) did not love your whores, and your guts, as well as other people ;* and then he tells you of such and such who were taken in the manner. We are all sick, I must confess, and it is not for sick men to play the physician ; but it is yet lawful for a man in an hospital to discourse of the common condition, and distempers of the place. He who should pretend to teach a madman how to speak, walk and behave himself, were not he the madder man of the two ! He who directs the pilot, makes him move the helm, order the sails so or so, and make the best of a scant wind, after this or that manner ? And so should we do in our counsels. Do not tell me what a man should do in health or poverty ; but shew me the way to be either sound or rich. Teach me to master my vices : For, it is to no purpose, so long as I am under their government, to tell me what I must do when I am clear of them. In case of an avarice a little eased, a luxury moderated, a temerity restrained, a sluggish humour quickened ; precepts will then help us forward, and tutor us how to behave ourselves. It is the first and the main tie of a soldier, his military oath, which is an engagement upon him both of religion and honour. In like manner he who pretends to a happy life, must first lay a foundation of virtue, as a bond upon him, to live and die true to that cause. We do not find felicity in the veins of the earth, where we dig for gold : Nor in the bottom of the sea, where we fish for pearl ; but in a pure and untainted

mind, which, if it were not holy, were not fit to entertain the Deity. *He who would be truly happy, must think his own lot best, and converse with men as considering that God sees him, and so speak to God, as if men heard him.*

## CHAP. VI.

*No Felicity, like Peace of Conscience.*

**A** GOOD conscience is the testimony of a good life, and the reward of it. This it is that fortifies the mind against fortune, when a man has gotten the mastery of his passions; placed his treasure and security within himself; learned to be content with his condition; and that death is no evil in itself, but only the end of man. He who has dedicated his mind to virtue, and to the good of human society, whereof he is a member, has consummated all that is either profitable or necessary for him to know, or to do, toward the establishment of his peace. Every man has a judge and witness within himself, of all the good and ill that he does; which inspires us with great thoughts, and administers to us wholesome counsels. We have a veneration for all the works of nature, the heads of rivers, and the springs of medicinal waters: The horrors of groves and of caves strike us with an impression of religion and worship. To see a man fearless in dangers, untainted with lusts, happy in adversity, composed in a tumult, and laughing at those things which are generally either coveted or feared; all men must acknowledge, that this can be nothing else but a beam of divinity that influences a mortal body. And this it is that carries us to the disquisition of things divine and human; what the state of the world was before the distribution of the first matter into parts; what power it was, which drew order out of that confusion, and gave laws both to the whole, and to every particle thereof; what that space is beyond the world; and whence proceed the several operations of nature. Shall any man see the glory and order of the universe; so many scattered parts and qualities wrought into one mass; such a medley of things, which are yet distinguished; the world enlightened; and the disorders of it so wonderfully regulated; and shall he not consider the

Author and Disposer of all this ; and whither we ourselves shall go when our souls shall be delivered from the slavery of our flesh ? The whole creation, we see, conforms to the dictates of Providence, and follows God both as a Governor and as a guide. A great, a good, and a right mind, is a kind of divinity lodged in flesh, and may be the blessing of a slave as well as of a prince ; it came from heaven and to heaven it must return ; and it is a kind of heavenly felicity, which a pure and virtuous mind enjoys, in some degree, even upon earth : Whereas temples of honour are but empty names, which probably owe their beginning either to ambition or to violence. I am strangely transported with the thoughts of eternity ; nay, with the belief of it ; for I have a profound veneration for the opinions of great men, especially when they promise things so much to my satisfaction : For they do promise them though they do not prove them. In the question of the immortality of the soul, it goes very far with me, a general consent to the opinion of a future reward and punishment ; which meditation raises me to the contempt of this life in hopes of a better. But still though we know that we have a soul ; yet what the soul is, how, and from whence, we are utterly ignorant : This only we understand, that all the good and ill we do, is under the dominion of the mind ; that a clear conscience states us in an inviolable peace : And, that the greatest blessing in nature, is that, which every honest man may bestow upon himself. The body is but the clog and prisoner of the mind ; tossed up and down, and persecuted with punishments, violences, and diseases ; but the mind itself is sacred, and eternal, and exempt from the danger of actual impression.

\* PROVIDED that we look to our consciences, no matter for opinion : Let me deserve well, though I hear ill. The common people take stomach, and audacity, for the marks of magnanimity, and honour ; and if a man be soft and modest, they look upon him as an easy top : But when they come once to observe the dignity of his mind, in the equality and firmness of his actions ; and that his external quiet is founded upon internal peace, the very same people have him in esteem and admiration. For, there is no man but approves of virtue, though But few pursue it ; we see where it is, but we dare not venture

\* Every man's conscience is his judge.



come at it : And the reason is, we over value that which we must quit to obtain it. A good conscience fears no witnesses, but a guilty conscience is solicitous even in solitude. If we do nothing but what is honest let all the world know it ; but if otherwise, what does it signify to have no body else know it so long as I know it myself ? Miserable is he who alights that witness ! Wickedness, it is true, may escape the law, but not the conscience : For a private conviction is the first and the greatest punishment of offenders, so that the sin plagues itself ; and the fear of vengeance pursues even those who escape the stroke of it. It were ill for good men that iniquity may so easily evade law, the judge and the execution, if nature had not set up torments and gibbets, in the consciences of transgressors. He who is guilty, lives in perpetual terrors, and while he expects to be punished, he punishes himself ; and whosoever deserves it, expects it. What if he be not detected ? He is still in apprehension yet, that he may be so. His sleep is painful, and never secure ; and he cannot speak of another man's wickedness, without thinking of his own ; whereas a good conscience is a continual feast. Those are the only certain, and profitable delights, which arise from the conscience of a well acted life : No matter for noise abroad, so long as we are quiet within : But if our passions be seditious, that is enough to keep us waking, without any other tumult. It is not the posture of the body, or the composure of the bed, that will give rest to an uneasy mind : There is an impatient sloth, that may be roused by action, and the vices of laziness must be cured by business. True happiness is not to be found in excesses of wine, or of women, nor in the largest prodigalities of fortune : What she has given me, she may take away ; but she shall not tear it from me ; and, so long as it does not grow to me, I can part with it without pain. He who would perfectly know himself, let him set aside his money, his fortune, his dignity, and examine himself naked ; without being put to learn from others the knowledge of himself.

It is dangerous for a man too suddenly or too easily to believe himself. Wherefore let us \* examine, watch, observe, and inspect our own hearts ; for we ourselves are our own greatest flatterers : We should every night call ourselves to an account, *what infirmity have I mastered to day ?*

\* *Let every man examine himself.*

*What passion opposed? What temptation resisted? What virtue acquired? Our vices will abate of themselves, if they be brought every day to the shift. O the blessed sleep that follows such a diary! O the tranquillity, liberty, and greatness of that mind, that is a spy upon itself; a private censor of its own manners! It is my custom (says our author) every night, so soon as the candle is out, to run over all the words and actions of the past day; and I let nothing escape me; for why should I fear the sight of my own errors, when I can admonish and forgive myself? I was a little too hot in such a dispute: My opinion might have been as well spared, for it gave offence, and did no good at all. The thing was true; but all truths are not to be spoken at all times; I would I had held my tongue, for there's no contending either with fools, or our superiors. I have done it; but it shall be so no more. If every man would but thus look into himself, it would be the better for us all. What can be more reasonable than this daily review of a life that we cannot warrant for a moment? Our fate is set, and the first breath we draw is only the first motion toward our last: One cause depends upon another, and the course of all things, public and private, is but a long connection of providential appointments. There is a great variety in our lives, but all tends to the same issue. Nature may use her own bodies as she pleases; but a good man has this consolation, that nothing perishes which he can call his own. It is a great comfort that we are only condemned to the same fate with the universe; the heavens themselves are mortal as well as our bodies; nature has made us passive, and to suffer is our lot. While we are in the flesh, every man has his chain and his clog, and it is looser and lighter to one man than to another; only he is more at ease who takes it up, and carries it, than he who drags it. We are born to lose, and to perish; to hope, and to fear; to vex ourselves and others; and there is no antidote against a common calamity but virtue; for the foundation of true joy is in the conscience.*

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 C H A P. VII.

*A good Man can never be miserable, nor a wicked Man happy.*

**T**HERE is not in the scale of nature a more inseparable connection of cause and effect, than in the case

in trust. Whosoever he who lent me myself, and what I have, shall call for all back again; it is not a loss, but a restitution; and I must willingly deliver up what most undeservedly was bestowed upon me. And it will become me to return my mind better than I received it.

\* *DEMETRIUS*, upon the taking of *Megara*, asked *Stilpo* the philosopher what he had lost: \* *A generous instance of a constant mind.*  
*Nothing*, says he, *for I had all that I could call my own about me.* And yet the enemy had then made himself master of his patrimony, his children, and his country: But these he looked upon only as adventitious goods, and under the command of fortune: Now he who neither lost any thing, nor feared any thing in a public ruin, but was safe and at peace in the middle of the flames, and in the heat of a military intemperance and fury; what violence or provocation imaginable can put such a man as this out of the possession of himself? Walls and castles may be mined and battered; but there is no art, or engine, that can subvert a steady mind. *I have made my way (says Stilpo) thro' fire and blood; what has become of my children, I know not; but these are transitory blessings, and servants that are condemned to change their masters; what was my own before, is my own still: Some have lost their estates; others their dear-bought mistresses; their commissions and offices; the vowers have lost the bonds and securities; but, Demetrius, for my part, I have saved all; and do not imagine, after all this, either that Demetrius is a conqueror, or that Stilpo is overcome: It is only thy fortune has been too hard for mine. Alexander took Babylon; Scipio took Carthage; the capitol was burnt: But, there is no fire or violence that can discompose a generous mind!* And let us not take this character neither for a *chimera*; for all ages afford some instances of this elevated virtue. A good man does his duty, let it be ever so painful, so hazardous, or ever so great a loss to him; and it is not all the money, the power, and the pleasure in the world; no not any force, or necessity, that can make him wicked: He considers what he is to do, not what he is to suffer, and will keep on his course, though there should be nothing but gibbets and torments in the way. And in this instance of *Stilpo*; who, when he had lost his country, his wife, his children, the town on fire over his head, himself escaping very hardly, and naked out of the

flames ; *I have saved all my goods* (says he) *my justice, my courage, my temperance, my frudence* ; accounting nothing his own, or valuable ; and shewing how much easier it was to overcome a nation than one wise man. It is a certain mark of a brave mind, not to be moved by any accidents. The upper region of the air admits neither clouds, nor tempest ; the thunder, storms and meteors, are formed below ; and this is the difference betwixt a mean, and an exalted mind ; the former is rude and tumultuary ; the latter is modest, venerable, composed, and always quiet in its station. In brief, it is the conscience, that pronounces upon the man, whether he be happy, or miserable. But, though sacrilege and adultery be generally condemned, how many are there still who do not so much as blush at the one, and in truth, that takes a glory in the other ? For, nothing is more common than for great thieves to ride in triumph, when the little ones are punished. But, *let wickedness escape as it may, at the bar, it never fails of doing justice upon itself : For every guilty person is his own hangman.*

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#### CHAP. VIII.

*The due Contemplation of Divine Providence, is the certain Cure of all Misfortunes.*

**W**HOEVER observes the world and the order of it, will find all the motions in it to be only vicissitudes of falling and rising ; Nothing extinguished, and even those things which seem to us to perish, are in truth but changed. The seasons go, and return ; day and night follow in their courses ; the heavens roll, and nature goes on with her work. All things succeed in their turns ; storms and calms ; the law of nature will have it so, which we must follow, and obey, accounting all things that are done, to be well done : So that what we cannot mend we must suffer, and wait upon Providence without repining : It is the part of a cowardly soldier to follow his commander groaning ; but a generous man delivers himself up to God without struggling ; and it is only for a narrow mind to condemn the order of the world, and to propound rather the mending of nature than of himself. No man has any cause of complaint against Providence, if that which is right pleases him. Those glories that appear fair to the eye, their lustre is but false and

superficial; and they only vanity and delusion: They are rather the goods of a dream, than a substantial possession; they may cozen at a distance, but bring them once to the touch, they are rotten and counterfeit. There are no greater wretches in the world, than many of those which the people take to be happy; those are the only true and incorruptible comforts, that will abide all trials; and the more we turn and examine them, the more valuable we find them; and the greatest felicity of all is, not to stand in need of any. What is *poverty*? No man lives so poor as he was born. What is *pain*? It will either have an end itself, or make an end of us. In short, fortune has no weapon that reaches the mind: But the bounties of Providence are certain and permanent blessings; and they are the greater, and the better, the longer we consider them: That is to say, *the power of contemning things terrible, and despising what the common people covet*. In the very methods of nature, we cannot but observe the regard that Providence had to the good of mankind, ~~even in the disposition of the world~~, in providing so amply for our maintenance and satisfaction. It is not possible for us to comprehend what the power is, which has made all things. Some few sparks of that divinity are discovered, but infinitely the greater part of it lies hid. We are all of us however thus far agreed; first in the acknowledgment and belief of that Almighty Being; and, secondly, that we are to ascribe to him all majesty, and goodness.

*If there be a Providence, say some, how comes it to pass that good men labour under affliction, and adversity; and wicked men enjoy themselves in ease and plenty?* My answer is, that God deals by us, as a good father does by his children: He tries us, he hardens us, and fits us for himself. He keeps a strict hand over those whom he loves, and by the rest he does as we do our slaves: He lets them go on in license and boldness. As the master gives his most hopeful scholars the hardest lessons, so does God deal with the most generous spirits; and the cross encounters of fortune, we are not to look upon as cruelty, but as a contest: The familiarity of dangers brings us to the contempt of them, and that part is strongest which is most

exercised ; the seaman's hand is callous, the soldier's arm is strong, and the tree that is most exposed to the wind takes the best root : There are people who live in a perpetual winter, in extremity of frost and penury, where a cave, or lock of straw, or a few leaves, is all their covering, and wild beasts their nourishment. All this by custom is not only made tolerable, but when once it is taken up upon necessity, by little, and little, it becomes pleasant to them. Why should we then count that condition of life a calamity, which is the lot of many nations ? There is no state of life so miserable, but there are in it remissions, diversions ; nay, and delights too ; such is the benignity of nature towards us, even in the severest accidents of human life. There were no way of living, if adversity should hold on as it begins, and keep up the force of the first impression. We are apt to murmur at many things as great evils, that have nothing at all of evil in them beside the complaint, which we should more reasonably take up against ourselves. If I be sick, it is part of my fate ; and for other calamities, they are usual things ; they ought to be ; nay, which is more, they must be, for they come by divine appointment. So that we should not only submit, but assent to God, and obey him out of duty, even if there were no necessity. All those terrible appearances that make us groan and tremble, are but the tribute of life ; we are neither to wish, nor to ask, nor to hope to escape them ; for it is a kind of dishonesty to pay a tribute unwillingly. Am I troubled with the stone ; or afflicted with continual losses ? Nay, is my body in danger ? All this is no more than what I prayed for when I prayed for old age : All these things are as familiar in a long life as dust and dirt in a long way. Life is a warfare ; and what brave man would not rather chuse to be in a tent than in shambles ? Fortune does like a swordsman, she scorns to encounter a fearful man : There is no hopout in the victory, where there is no danger in the way to it : She tries *Mucius* by fire ; *Rutilius* by exile ; *Socrates* by poison ; *Cato* by death. It is only in adverse fortune, and in bad times ; that we find great examples. *Mucius* thought himself happier with his hand in the flame, than if he had been in the bosom of his mistress ; *Fabritius* took more pleasure in eating the roots of his own planting, than in all the delicacies of luxury and

expencc. Shall we call *Rutilius* miserable, whom his very enemies have adored? Who upon a glorious, and a public principle, chose rather to lose his country than to return from banishment? The only man who denied any thing to *Sylla* the dictator, who recalled him. Nor did he only refuse to come, but drew himself farther off: *Let them* (says he) *that think banishment a misfortune, live slaves at Rome under the imperial cruelties of Sylla. He who sets a price upon the heads of senators, and after a law of his own institution against cut-throats became the greatest himself.* It is not better for a man to live an exile abroad, than to be massacred at home. In suffering for virtue, it is not the torment, but the cause that we are to consider; and the more pain the more renown. When any hardship befalls us, we must look upon it as an act of Providence, which many times suffers particulars to be wounded for the conversation of the whole: Beside that God chastises some people under an appearance of blessing them, turning their prosperity to their ruin, as a punishment for abusing his goodness. And we are farther to consider, that many a good man is afflicted only to teach others to suffer; for we are born for example: And likewise, that where men are contumacious and refractory, it pleases God many times to turn our miseries to cure greater evils by less, and to our advantage.

How many \* casualties and difficulties are there, that we dread, as insupportable mischiefs, which, upon farther thoughts we find to be mercies and benefits: As banishment, poverty, loss of relations, sickness, disgrace? Some are cured by the lance; by fire, hunger, thirst; taking out of bones, lopping off limbs, and the like: Nor do we only fear things that are many times beneficial to us; but on the other side, we hanker after, and pursue things that are deadly and pernicious. We are poisoned in the very pleasures of our luxury; and betrayed to a thousand diseases by the indulging our palate. To lose a child, or a limb, is only to part with what we have received, and nature may do what she pleases with her own. We are frail ourselves, and we have received things transitory: That which is given us, may be taken away; calamity tries virtue as the fire does gold; Nay, he who lives most at ease, is only delayed, not dismissed, and his portion is to come. When

we are visited with sickness or other afflictions, we are not to murmur as if we were ill used : It is a mark of the General's esteem, when he puts us upon a post of danger : We do not say, *my captain uses me ill*, but, *he does me an honor* : And so should we say, who are commanded to encounter difficulties, for this is our case with God Almighty.

WHAT WAS \* *Regulus* the worse, because fortune made choice of him for an eminent instance, both of *Calamity* faith and patience ? He was thrown into a case *is the trial of virtue.* of wood, stuck with pointed nails ; so that which way soever he turned his body, it rested upon his wounds ; his eye-lids were cut off, to keep him waking ; and yet *Mecenas* was not happier upon his *bed*, than *Regulus* upon his *torments*. Nay, the world is not yet grown so wicked as not to prefer *Regulus* before *Mecenas* ; and can any man take that to be an evil, of which Providence accounted this brave man worthy ? *It has pleased God* (says he) *to single me out for an experiment of the force of human nature*. No man knows his own strength or value, but by being put to the proof. The pilot is tried in a storm, the soldier in a battle ; the rich man knows not how to behave himself in poverty : He who has lived in popularity and applause, knows not how he would bear infamy and reproach : Nor he who never had children, how he would bear the loss of them. Calamity is the occasion of virtue, and a spur to a great mind. The very apprehension of a wound startles a man when he first bears arms ; but an old soldier bleeds boldly, because he knows that a man may lose blood, and yet win the day. Nay, many times a calamity turns to our advantage ; and great ruins have made way to great glories. The crying of fire, has many times quieted a fray, and the interposing of a wild beast has parted the thief and the traveller ; for, we are not at leisure for less mischiefs, while we are under the apprehensions of greater. One man's life is saved by a disease ; another is arrested, and taken out of the way, just when his house was falling upon his head.

To shew now that the favours, or the \* crosses of fortune, and the accidents of sickness, and of health, *Accidents are* are neither good nor evil ; God permits *neither good* them indifferently, both to good and evil *nor evil.* men. *It is hard, you will say, for a virtuous man to suffer all sorts of misery, and for a wicked man*



*not only to go free, but to enjoy himself at pleasure.* And is it not the same thing for men of prostituted impudence and wickedness, to sleep in a whole skin, when men of honour and honesty bear arms, lie in the trenches, and receive wounds? Or, for the vestal virgins to rise in the night to their prayers, when common strumpets lie stretching themselves in their beds? We should rather say with *Demetrius*, if I had known the will of heaven before I was called to it, I would have offered myself. If it be the pleasure of God to take my children, I have brought them up to that end: If my fortune, any part of my body, or my life I would rather present it, than yield it up: I am ready to part with all, and to suffer all; for I know that nothing comes to pass, but what God appoints: Our fate is decreed, and things do not happen by chance, but every man's portion of joy and sorrow is predetermined.

THERE is nothing falls amiss to a \* good man, that can be charged upon Providence; for wicked actions, lewd thoughts, ambitious projects, blind lusts, and insatiable avarice, against all these he is armed by the benefit of reason: And, do we expect now that God should look to our luggage too? (I mean our bodies.)—*Demetrius* discharged himself of his treasure, as the clog and burden of his mind. Shall we wonder then, if God suffers that to befall a good man, which a good man sometimes does to himself? I lose a son, and why not, when it may, sometimes so fall out that I myself may kill him? Suppose he be banished by an order of state: Is it not the same thing with a man's voluntarily leaving his country, and never to return? Many afflictions may befall a good man, but no evil; for contraries will never incorporate: All the rivers in the world are never able to change the taste or quality of the sea. Prudence and religion are above accidents, and draw good out of every thing: Affliction keeps a man in use, and makes him strong, patient, and hardy. Providence treats us like a generous father, and brings us to labours, toils, and dangers: Whereas the indulgence of a fond mother, makes us weak and spiritless: God loves us with a masculine love, and turns us loose to injuries and indignities: He takes delight to see a brave and a good man wrestling with evil fortune, and yet keeping himself upon his legs, when the whole world is in disorder about him.

And are not we ourselves delighted, to see a bold fellow press with his lance upon a boar, or lion? And the constancy and resolution of the action is the grace and dignity of the spectacle. No man can be happy who does not stand firm against all contingencies, and say to himself in all extremities, *I should have been content, if it might have been so, or so; but, since it is otherwise determined, God will provide better.* The more we struggle with our necessities, we draw the knot the harder, and the worse it is with us: And, the more the bird flaps and flutters in the snare, the surer she is caught: So that the best way is to submit, and lie still under this double consideration, that the *proceedings of God are unquestionable, and his decrees not to be resisted.*

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C H A P. IX.

*Of Levity of Mind, and other impediments of a Happy Life.*

NOW to sum up what is already delivered, we have shewed what happiness is, and wherein it consists: That it is founded upon wisdom and virtue; for we must first know what we ought to do, and then live according to that knowledge: We have also discoursed the helps of philosophy, and precepts towards a *happy life*: The blessing of a good conscience ~~is the~~ <sup>is the</sup> ~~mark~~ <sup>mark</sup> of a good man can never be miserable, nor a wicked man: Nor any man unfortunate, who cheerfully submits to Providence. We shall now examine, how it comes to pass, that when the certain way to happiness lies so fair before us, men will yet steer their course on the other side, which as manifestly leads to ruin.

There are some who live without any \* design at all, and only pass in the world like straws upon a river; they do not go, but they are carried. Others only deliberate upon the parts of life, and not upon the whole, which is a great error; for there is no disposing of the circumstances of it, unless we first propound the main scope. How shall any man take his aim without a mark? Or, what wind will serve him who is not yet resolved upon his port? We live as it were by chance, and by chance we are governed. Some there are who torment them-

selves afresh with the memory of what is past : *Lord!* *What did I endure?* *Never was any man in my condition ; every body gave me over ; my very heart was like to break, &c.* Others again afflict themselves with the apprehensions of evils to come ; and very ridiculously both : For the *one* does not *now* concern us, and the *other* not *yet* : Beside, that there may be remedies for mischiefs likely to happen ; for they give us warning by signs and symptoms of their approach. Let him who would be quiet, take heed not to provoke men who are in power, but live without giving offence : and if we cannot make all great men our friends, it will suffice to keep them from being our enemies. This is a thing we must avoid, as a mariner would do a storm. A rash seaman never considers what wind blows, or what course he steers ; but runs at a venture, as if he would brave the rocks, and the eddies ; whereas he who is careful and considerate, informs himself beforehand where the danger lies, and what weather it is like to be : He consults his compass, and keeps aloof from those places that are infamous for wrecks and miscarriages. So does a wise man in the common business of life : He keeps out of the way from those who may do him hurt ; but it is a point of prudence not to let them take notice that he does it on purpose ; for that which a man slurs, he tacitly condemns. Let him have a care also of *listeners, newsmongers and meddlers* in other people's *affairs*, so *far* but *that* *his* *discourse* is commonly of such things as are never profitable, and most commonly dangerous, either to be spoken or heard.

LEVITY \* of mind is a great hindrance of repose, and  
 \* *Levity of mind is* the very change of wickedness is an  
*a great hindrance of* addition to the wickedness itself ;  
*our repose.* for it is inconstancy added to ini-  
 quity : We relinquish the thing we  
 sought, and then we take it up again ; and so divide our  
 lives between our lusts and our repentances. From one  
 appetite we pass to another, not so much upon choice, as  
 for change, and there is a check of conscience that casts  
 a damp upon all our unlawful pleasures ; which makes  
 us lose the day, in expectation of the night, and the  
 night itself, for fear of the approaching light. Some  
 people are never quiet, others are *always* so ; and  
 they are both to blame : For that which looks like vi-

vacuity and industry in the one, is only a restlessness and agitation; and that which passes in the other for moderation and reserve, is but a drowsy and inactive sloth. Let motion and rest both take their turns, according to the order of nature, which make both the day and the night: Some are perpetually shifting from one thing to another: Others again make their whole life but a kind of uneasy sleep: Some lie tossing and turning till weariness brings them to rest: Others again, I cannot so properly call inconstant, as lazy: There are many proprieties and diversities of vice; but, it is one never failing effect of it, to live displeas'd. We do all of us labour under inordinate desires; we are either timorous, and dare not venture, or venturing, we do not succeed: Or else we cast ourselves upon uncertain hopes, where we are perpetually solicitous, and in suspense. In this distraction, we are apt to propose to ourselves things dishonest, and hard; and when we have taken great pains to no purpose, we come then to repent of our undertakings: We are afraid to go on, and we can neither master our appetites, nor obey them: We live and die restless and irresolute, and, which is worst of all, when we grow weary of the public, and betake ourselves to solitude for relief, our minds are sick, and wallowing, and the very house and walls are troublesome to us; we grow impatient, and ashamed of ourselves; and suppress our inward vexation, till it break our heart for want of vent. This it is that makes us sour and morose; envious of others, and dissatisfied with ourselves: Till at last, betwixt our troubles for other people's successes, and the despair of our own, we fall foul upon fortune, and the times; and get into a corner perhaps where we sit brooding over our own disquiets. In these dispositions there is a kind of pruriginous fancy that makes some people take delight in labor and uneasiness, like the clawing of an itch until the blood starts.

\* This is it that puts us upon rambling voyages; one while by land; but still disgusted with the present; the town pleases us to-day; the country to-morrow: The splendors of court at one time; the horrors of a wilderness at another: But all this while we carry our plague about us; for it is not the place we

*\* Change of places does no good without change of mind.*

are weary of, but ourselves. Nay, our weakness extends to every thing, for we are impatient equally of toil and pleasure. This trotting of the ring, and only treading the same steps over and over again, has made many a man lay violent hands upon himself. It must be the change of the mind, not of the climate, that will remove the heaviness of the heart: Our vices go along with us, and we carry in ourselves the causes of our disquiets. There is a great weight lies upon us, and the bare shocking of it makes it more uneasy: Changing of countries, in this case, is not travelling, but wandering. We must keep on our course, if we would gain our journey's end. *He who cannot live happily anywhere, will live happily no where* What is a man the better for travelling? As if his cares could not find him out wherever he goes: Is there any retiring from the fear of death or of torments? Or from those difficulties which beset a man wherever he is? It is only philosophy that makes the mind invincible, and places us out of the reach of fortune; so that all her arrows fall short of us. This it is that reclaims the rage of our lusts, and sweetens the anxiety of our fears: Frequent changing of places, or counsels, shews an instability of mind: And we must fix the body before we can fix the soul: We can hardly stir abroad, or look about us without encountering something or other that revives our appetites. As he who would cast off an unhappy love, avoids whatsoever may put him in mind of the person: So he who would wholly deliver himself from his beloved lusts must shun all objects that may put them in his head again, and remind him of them. We travel, as children run up and down after strange sights; for novelty, not profit; we return neither the better nor the sounder; nay, and the very agitation hurts us. We learn to call towns and places by their names, and to tell stories of mountains and of rivers: But had not our time been better spent in the study of wisdom and of virtue? In the learning of what is already discovered, and in the quest of things not yet found out? If a man break his leg, or strain his ankle, he sends presently for a surgeon to set all right again; and does not take horse upon it, or put himself on shipboard: No more does the change of place work upon our disordered minds, than upon our bodies. It is not the place, I hope, that makes either an

orator, or a physician. Will any man ask upon the road, pray which is the way to prudence, to justice, to temperance, to fortitude? No matter whether any man goes, who carries his affections along with him. He who would make his travels delightful, must make himself a temperate companion. A great traveller was complaining that he was never the better for his travels; *that is very true,* said Socrates, *because you travelled with yourself.* Now had he not better have made himself another man, than to transport himself to another place? It is no matter what manners we find any where, so long as we carry our own. But we have all of us a natural curiosity of seeing fine sights, and of making new discoveries; turning over antiquities, learning the customs of nations, &c. We are never quiet; to-day we seek an office; to-morrow we are sick of it: We divide our lives betwixt a dislike of the present, and a desire of the future; but he who lives as he should, orders himself so as neither to fear nor to wish for to-morrow. If it come, it is welcome; but if not, there is nothing lost; for, that which is come, is but the same over again with what is past. A levity is a pernicious enemy to quiet; so pertinacy is a great one too. He one changes nothing, the other sticks to nothing; and which of the two is the worse, may be a question. It is many times seen that we beg earnestly for those things, which, if they were offered us, we would refuse; and it is but just to punish this eagerness of asking with an equal felicity of granting. There are some things we would be thought to desire, which we are so far from desiring, that we dread them. *I shall tire you,* says one, in the middle of a tedious story: *May, if you be pleased to go on,* we cry, though we wished his tongue out at half way: Nay, we do not deal candidly even with God himself. We should say to ourselves in these cases, *this I have drawn upon myself. I could never be quiet, till I had gotten this woman, this place, this estate, this honor, and now see what has come of it.*

One sovereign remedy against all misfortunes, is constancy of mind; the changing of parties and countenances, looks as if a man were driven with the wind. Nothing can be above him who is above fortune. It is not violence, reproach, contempt, or

*Constancy of mind secures us in all difficulties.*

whatever else from without, that can make a wise man quit his ground ; but he is proof against calamities, both great and small ; only our error is, that what we cannot do ourselves, we think nobody else can ; so that we judge of the wise by the measures of the weak.— Place me among princes, or among beggars ; the one shall not make me proud, nor the other ashamed ; I can take as sound a sleep in a barn as in a palace, and a bottle of hay makes me as good a lodging as a bed of down. Should every day succeed to my wish, it should not transport me ; nor would I think myself miserable, if I should not have one quiet hour in my whole life.— I will not transport myself for either pain or pleasure ; but yet for all that, I could wish that I had an easier game to play ; and that I were put rather to moderate my joys, than my sorrows. If I were an imperial prince, I had rather take than be taken ; and yet I would bear the same mind under the chariot of my conqueror, that I had in my own. It is no great matter to trample upon those things that are most coveted or feared by the common people. There are those who will laugh upon the wheel ; and cast themselves upon a certain death, only upon a transport of love, perhaps anger, avarice, or revenge : How much more then upon an instinct of virtue ; which is invincible, and steady ? If a short obstinacy of mind can do this, how much more shall a composed, and a deliberate virtue ; whose force is equal and perpetual ?

To secure ourselves in this world ; first, we must aim at nothing that men count worth the wrangling for : Secondly, we must not value the possession of any thing, which even a common thief would think worth the stealing. A man's body is no booty. Let the way be ever so dangerous for robberies, the poor and the naked pass quietly. A plain-dealing sincerity of manners, makes a man's life happy, even in despite of scorn and contempt ; which is every good man's fate. But we had better yet be contemned for simplicity, than lie perpetually upon the torture of a counterfeit ; provided that care be taken not to confound simplicity with negligence : And it is moreover an uneasy life, that of a disguise : For a man to seem to

*\* The less we have to do with the world, the better.*

be what he is not; to keep a perpetual guard upon himself, and to live in fear of a discovery. He takes every man who looks upon him for a spy; over and above the trouble of being put to play another man's part. It is a great remedy in some cases for a man to apply himself to civil affairs, and public business; and yet in this state of life too, what betwixt ambition and calumny, it is hardly safe to be honest. There are indeed some cases wherein a wise man will give way: But let him not yield over easily neither: If he marches off, let him have a care of his honour; and make his retreat with his sword in his hand, and his face to the enemy. Of all others, a studious life is the least tiresome: It makes us easy to ourselves and to others, and gains us both friends and reputation.

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### C H A P. X.

*He who sets up his Rest upon Contingencies, shall never be quiet.*

**N**EVER pronounce any man happy who depends upon fortune for his happiness: For nothing can be more preposterous than to place the good of a reasonable creature in unreasonable things. If I have lost any thing, it was adventitious; and the less money, the less trouble; the less favour, the less envy: Nay, even in those cases that puts us out of our wits, it is not the loss itself, but the opinion of the loss that troubles us. It is a common mistake to account those things necessary that are superfluous, and to depend upon fortune for the felicity of life, which arises only from virtue. There is no trusting to her smiles: The sea swells and rages in a moment, and the ships are swallowed up at night, in the very place where they sported themselves in the morning. And fortune has the same power over princes, that it has over empires; over nations, that it has over cities; and the same power over cities that it has over private men. Where is the estate that may not be followed upon the heel with famine and beggary? That dignity which the next moment may not be laid in the dust? That kingdom that is secure from desolation and ruin? The period of all things is at hand, as well that which casts out the fortune, as the other that delivers the unhappy;



that which may fall out at any time, may fall out this very day. What *shall* come to pass I know not, but what *may* come to pass I know : So that I will despair of nothing, but expect every thing ; and whatsoever Providence remits, is clear gain. Every moment, if it spares me, deceives me : And yet in some sort it does not deceive me ; for though I know that any thing may happen ; yet I know likewise, that every thing will not. I will hope the best, and provide for the worst. Methinks we should not find so much fault with fortune for her inconstancy, when we ourselves suffer a change every moment that we live ; only other changes make more noise, and this steals upon us like the shadow of a dial ; every jot as certainly, but more insensibly.

THE burning of *Lyons* may serve to shew \* us, that we are never safe ; and to arm us against all surprises. The terror of it must needs be great, for the calamity is almost without example. If it had been fired by an enemy, the flame would have left some farther mischief to have been done by the soldiers : But to be wholly consumed, we have not heard of many earthquakes so pernicious : So many rarities to be destroyed in one night, and in the depth of peace to suffer an outrage beyond the extremity of war. Who would believe it ? But twelve hours betwixt so fair a city and none at all ! it was laid in ashes in less time than it would require to tell the story. To stand unshaken in such a calamity is hardly to be expected ; and our wonder cannot but be equal to our grief. Let this accident teach us to provide against all possibilities, that fall within the power of fortune ; all external things are under her dominion : One while she calls her hands to her assistance ; another while she contents herself with her own force, and destroys us with mischiefs of which we cannot find the author. No time, place, or condition is excepted ; she makes our very pleasures painful to us ; she makes war upon us in the depth of peace, and turns the means of our security into an occasion of fear ; she turns a friend into an enemy, and makes a foe of a companion ; we suffer the effects of war without any adversary ; and rather than fail, our felicity shall be the cause of our destruction. Lest we should either forget, or neglect her power, every day produces some-

\* An instance of the uncertainty of human affairs in the burning of Lyons.

thing extraordinary. She persecutes the most temper with sickness, the strongest constitutions with the phthis she brings the innocent to punishment, and the most reti she assaults with tumults. These glories that have gro up with many ages, with infinite labour and expense, under the favour of many auspicious Providences, one scatters; and brings to nothing. He who pronounced day, nay an hour sufficient for the destruction of greatest empire, might have fallen to a moment. It w some comfort yet to the frailty of mankind, and of hun affairs, if things might but decay as slowly as they ri but they grow by degrees, and they fall to ruin in instant. There is no felicity in any thing either priv or public: Men, nations and cities, have all their f and periods: Our very entertainments are not with terror, and our calamity rises there where we least exp it. Those kingdoms that stood the shock both of fore wars and civil, come to destruction without the sight o enemy. Nay, we are to dread our peace and feli more than violence, because we are then taken unpro ed; unless in a state of peace we do the duty of me war, and say to ourselves, *whatsoever may be, will I am to-day safe, and happy in the love of my count I am to-morrow banished; to-day in pleasure, pe health; to-morrow broken upon the wheel, led in trium in agony and sickness. Let us therefore prepare fi shipwreck in the port, and for a tempest in a calm. violence drives me from my country, another ravi that from me; and that very place where a man hardly pass this day for a crowd, may be to-morro desert. Wherefore let us set before our eyes the w condition of human nature, and consider as well what happen, as what commonly does. The way to make fi calamities easy to us in the sufferance, is to make familiar to us in the contemplation. How many citi Asia, Achaia, Assyria, Macedonia, have been swallowe by earthquakes! Nay, whole countries are lost, and provinces laid under water; but time brings all thir an end, for all the works of mortals are mortal: Al sessions and their possessors, are uncertain and pe ble; and what wonder is it to lose any thing at any when we must one day lose all?*

That which we call our own, is but lent us:

\* *That which we call our own, is but lent us.* what we have received *gratis*, we must return without complaint. That which fortune gives us this hour, she may take away the next; and he who trusts to her favours, shall either find himself deceived, or if he be not, he will at least be troubled because he may be so. There is no defence in walls, fortifications, and engines, against the power of fortune; we must provide ourselves within, and when we are safe there, we are invincible; we may be battered, but not taken. She throws her gifts among us, and we sweat and scuffle for them: Never considering how few are the better for that which is expected by all. Some are transported with what they get: Others tormented for what they miss; and many times there is a leg or an arm broken in a contest for a counter. She gives us honors, riches, favours, only to take them away again; either by violence or treachery: So that they frequently turn to the damage of the receiver. She throws out baits for us, and sets traps, as we do for birds and beasts; her bounties are snares, and lime twigs to us; we think that we take, but we are taken. If they had any thing in them that were substantial, they would some time or other fill, and quiet us; but they serve only to provoke our appetite, without any thing more than pomp, and show, to allay it. But the best of it is, if a man cannot mend his fortune, he may yet mend his manners, and put himself so far out of her reach, that whether she gives or takes, it shall be all one to us; for we are neither the greater for the one, nor the less for the other. We call this a dark room, or that a light one; when it is in itself neither the one nor the other, but only as the day and the night renders it. And so it is in riches, strength of body, beauty, honor, command: And likewise in pain, sickness, banishment, death; which are in themselves middle and indifferent things, and only good, or bad, as they are influenced by virtue. To weep, lament, and groan, is to renounce our duty; and it is the same weakness on the other side to exult and rejoice; I would rather make my fortune, than expect it; being neither depressed with her injuries, nor dazzled with her favour. When *Zeno* was told, that all his goods were drowned; *why then*, says he, *fortune has a mind to make me a philosopher.* It is a great matter for a man to advance his mind above

her threats, or flatteries ; for he who has once gotten the better of her, is safe for ever.

It is some comfort yet to the unfortunate, that great men lie under \* the lash for company ; and that death spares the palace no more than the cottage ; and that whoever is above me has a power also above him. Do we not daily see funerals without trouble, princes

\* *Fortune spares neither great nor small.*

deposed, countries depopulated, towns sacked without so much as thinking how soon it may be our own case ? Whereas, if we would but prepare, and arm ourselves against the iniquities of fortune, we should never be surprised. When we see any man banished, beggared, tortured, we are to account, that though the mischief fell upon another, it was levelled at us. What wonder is it, if of so many thousand dangers that are constantly hovering about us, one comes to hit us at last ? That which befalls any man may befall every man ; and then it breaks the force of a present calamity, to provide against the future. Whatsoever our lot is, we must bear it ; as suppose it to be contumely, fire, cruelty, sword, pains, diseases, or a prey to wild beasts ; there is no struggling, nor any remedy but moderation. It is to no purpose to bewail any part of our life, when life itself is miserable throughout ; and the whole flux of it only a course of transition from one misfortune to another. A man may as well wonder, that he should be cold in winter, sick at sea, or have his bones clattered together in a waggon ; as at the encounter of ill accidents, and crosses in the passage of human life ; and it is in vain to run away from fortune, as if there were any hiding-place wherein she could not find us ; or to expect any quiet from her, for she makes life a perpetual state of war, without so much as any respite or truce. This we may conclude upon, that her empire is but imaginary, and that whosoever serves her, makes himself a voluntary slave, for *the things that are often contemned by the inconsiderate, and always by the wise, are in themselves neither good nor evil, as pleasure and pain ; prosperity and adversity ; which can only operate upon our outward condition, without any proper and necessary effect upon the mind.*

## CHAP. XI.

*A Sensual Life is a miserable Life.*

THE sensuality that we here treat of, falls naturally under the head of luxury; which extends to all the excesses of gluttony, lust, effeminacy of manners; and, in short, to whatever concerns the over great care of the carcase.

To begin now with the pleasures of the palate, (which deal with us like the Egyptian thieves, who strangle those they embrace.) What shall we say of the luxury of Nomentanus and Aficius, who entertained their very souls in the kitchen; they had the choicest music for their ears, the most diverting spectacles for their eyes; the choicest variety of meats and drinks for their palates. What is all this, I say, but a merry madness? It is true, they have their delights, but not without heavy and anxious thoughts, even in their very enjoyments; beside that they are followed with repentance, and their frolics are little more than the laughter of so many people out of their wits.— Their felicities are full of disquiet, and neither sincere nor well grounded; but they have need of one pleasure to support another; and of new prayers to forgive the errors of the former. Their life must needs be wretched, who get with great pains, what they keep with greater. One division overtakes another; hope excites hope; ambition begets ambition, so that they only change the matter of their miseries, without seeking any end of them, and shall never be without either prosperous, or unhappy causes of disquiet. What if a body might have all the pleasure in the world for the asking? Who would so much unman himself, as by accepting them, to desert his soul, and become a perpetual slave to his senses? Those false and admirable palates, that judge of meats by the price and difficulty, not by the healthfulness, or taste: They vomit that they may eat; and they eat that they may fetch it up again. They cross the seas for rarities, and when they have swallowed them, they will not so much as give them time to digest. Wheresoever nature has placed men, she has provided them aliment: But we rather

## SENECA—OF A HAPPY LIFE.

chuse to irritate hunger by expense, than to allay it at an easier rate. . . . What is it that we plow the seas for; or arm ourselves against men and beasts? To what end do we toil and labour, pile bags upon bags? We may enlarge our fortunes, but we cannot our bodies; so that whatever we take more than we can hold, does but spill and run over. Our forefathers (by force of whose virtues we are now supported in our vices) lived every jot as well as we, when they provided and dressed their own meat with their own hands; lodged upon the ground, and were not as yet come to the vanity of gold and gems: When they swore by their earthen gods, and kept their oath, though they died for it. Did not our consuls live more happily when they cooked their own meat with those victorious hands that had conquered so many enemies, and won so many laurels? Did they not live more happily, I say, than our *Apicius*? (that corrupter of youth, and plague of the age he lived in) who after he had spent a prodigious fortune upon his belly, poisoned himself for fear of starving, when he had yet 250,000 crowns in his coffers; which may serve to shew us that it is the mind, and not the sum that makes any man rich: When *Apicius* with all his treasure counted himself in a state of beggary; and took poison to avoid that condition, which another would have prayed for. But why do we call it poison, which was the wholesomest draught of his life? His daily gluttony was poison rather, both to himself and others. His ostentation of it was intolerable; and so was the infinite pains he took to mislead others by his example, who went fast enough of themselves without driving.

It is a shame for a man to place his \* felicity in those entertainments and appetites, that are stronger in brutes. Do not beasts eat with a better stomach? Have they not more satisfaction in their lusts? And they have not only a quicker relish of their pleasures, but they enjoy them without either scandal or remorse. If sensuality were happiness, beasts were happier than men; but human felicity is lodged in the soul, not in the flesh. They who deliver themselves up to luxury are still either tormented with too little, or oppressed with too much; and equally misera;

\* *If sensuality were happiness, beasts were happier than men.*

ble by being deserted, or overwhelmed : They are like men in a dangerous sea ; at one time cast upon a rock, and at another swallowed up in a whirlpool ; and all this from the mistake of not distinguishing good from evil. The huntsman who with much labour and hazard takes a wild beast, runs as great a risk afterwards in the keeping him ; for many times he tears out the throat of his master ; and it is the same thing with inordinate pleasures : The more in number and the greater they are the more general and absolute a slave is the servant of them. Let the common people pronounce him as happy as they please, he pays his liberty, for his delights, and sells himself for what he buys.

Let any man take a view of our kitchens ; the number of our cooks, and the variety of our meats : Will he not wonder to see so much provision made for one belly ? We have as many diseases as we have cooks, or meats ; and the service of the appetite is the study now in vogue. To say nothing of our train of lacqueys ; and other troops of caterers and sewers. Good God ! that ever one belly should employ so many people. How nauseous and fulsome are the surfeits that follow these excesses ? Simple meats are out of fashion ; and all are collected into one ; so that the cook does the office of the stomach ; nay, and of the teeth too, for the meat looks as if it were chewed before hand ; here is the luxury of all tastes in one dish, and more likely a vomit than a soup. From these compounded dishes arise compounded diseases, which require compounded medicines. It is the same thing with our minds, that it is with our tables ; simple vices are curable by simple counsels, but a general dissoluteness of manners is hardly overcome : We are overrun with a public as well as with a private madness. The physicians of old understood little more than the virtue of some herbs to stop blood, or heal a wound : And their firm and healthful bodies needed little more, before they were corrupted by luxury and pleasure ; and when it came to that once, their business was not to allay hunger, but to provoke it by a thousand inventions and sauces. That which was aliment to a craving stomach, is become a burden to a full one. From hence come paleness;

trembling ; and worse effects from crudities, than famine : A weakness in the joints, the belly stretched, suffusion of choler ; the torpor of the nerves, and a palpitation of the heart. To say nothing of megrims, torments of the eyes, and ears ; head-ach, gout, scurvy ; several sorts of fevers, and putrid ulcers ; with other diseases, that are but the punishment of luxury. So long as our bodies were hardened with labour, or tired with exercise, or hunting, our food was plain and simple ; many dishes have made many diseases.

It is an ill thing for a man not to know the measure of his stomach ; nor to consider, that men do many things in their drink that they are ashamed of when sober ; drunkenness being nothing else but a voluntary madness. It emboldens men to do all sorts of mischiefs : It both irritates wickedness and discovers it ; it does not make men vicious, but it shews them to be so : It was in a drunken fit that Alexander slew Clytus. It makes him who is insolent, prouder ; him who is cruel, fiercer ; it takes away all shame. He who is peevish breaks out presently into ill words, and blows. The lecher, without any regard to decency, or scandal, turns up his whore in the market place. A man's tongue trips, his head turns round ; he staggers in his pace. To say nothing of the crudities and diseases that follow upon this distemper. Consider the public mischiefs it has done. How many warlike nations, and strong cities that have stood invincible to attacks and sieges, has drunkenness overcome ? Is it not a great honor to drink the company dead ? A magnificent virtue to swallow more wine than the rest, and yet at last to be outdone by a hog's head ? What shall we say of those men who invert the offices of day and night ? As if our eyes were only given us to make use of in the dark. Is it day ? *It is time to go to bed.* Is it night ? *It is time to rise.* Is it towards morning ? *Let us go to supper.* When other people lie down, they rise ; and lie till the next night to digest the debauch of the day before. It is an argument of clownery, to do as other people do. Luxury steals upon us by degrees ; first it shews itself in a mere than ordinary care of our bodies ; it slips next into the furniture of our houses ; and it



free, safe and quiet : All his actions shall succeed to his wish : and, what can any man desire more, than to want nothing from without, and to have every thing desirable within himself ? Pleasures do but weaken our minds, and send us, for our support, to fortune, who gives us money only as the wages of slavery. We must stop our eyes and ears. *Ulysses* had but one rock to fear, but human life has many. Every city, nay, every man is one, and there is no trusting even to our nearest friends. Deliver me from the superstition of taking those things which are light and vain, for felicities.

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## CHAP. XII.

*Avarice and Ambition are insatiable and restless.*

**T**HE man who would be truly rich, must not increase his fortune, but retrench his appetite : For riches are not only superfluous, but mean, and little more to the possessor, than to the looker on. What is the end of ambition and avarice ; when at best, we are but stewards of what we falsely call our own ? All those things which we pursue with so much hazard, and expense of blood, as well to keep, as to get ; for which we break faith and friendship : What are they but the mere *deposita* of fortune ? And not ours, but already inclined toward a new master. There is nothing our own, but that which we give to ourselves ; and of which we have a certain, and an inexpungable possession. Avarice is so insatiable, that it is not in the power of liberality to content it : And our desires are so boundless, that whatever we get, is but in the way to getting more without end : And so long as we are solicitous for the increase of wealth, we lose the true use of it, and spend our time in putting out, calling in, and passing our accounts, without any substantial benefit, either to the world or to ourselves. What is the difference betwixt old men and children ? The one cries for nuts and apples, and the other for gold and silver. The one sets up courts of justice ; hears and determines ; acquits and condemns in jest ; and the other in earnest : The one makes houses of clay, and the other of marble : So that the works of old men are nothing in the world but the progress and in-

provement of children's errors : And they are to be admonished, and punished too like children ; not in revenge for injuries received, but as a correction of injuries done, and to make them give over. There is some substance yet in gold and silver ; but as to judgments and statutes, procreation, and countenance money, these are only the visions and dreams of avarice. Throw a crust of bread to a dog, he takes it open-mouthed, swallows it whole, and presently gapes for more : Just so do we with the gifts of fortune ; down they go without chewing ; and we are immediately ready for another chop. But what has avarice now to do with gold and silver, that is so much out-done by curiosities of a far greater value ? Let us no longer complain, that there was not a heavier load laid upon those precious metals : or that they were not buried deep enough : when we have found out ways by wax and parchments, and by bloody usurious contracts to undo one another. It is remarkable that Providence has given us all things for our advantage near at hand : But iron, gold and silver, (being both the instruments of blood and slaughter, and the price of it) nature has hidden in the bowels of the earth.

THERE is no avarice without some\* punishment, over and above that which it is to itself. How \* *Avarice pun-* miserable is it in the desire ! How misera- *ishes itself.* ble even in the attaining of our ends ! For money is a greater torment in the possession, than it is in the pursuit. The fear of losing it, is a great trouble ; the loss of it a greater, and it is made a greater yet by opinion. Nay, even in the case of no direct loss at all, the covetous man loses what he does not get. It is true, the people call the rich man a happy man, and wish themselves in his condition ; but can any condition be worse than that which carries vexation and envy along with it ? Neither is any man to boast of his fortune ; his herds of cattle ; his number of slaves ; his lands and palaces : for, comparing that which he has, to that which he farther covets, he is a beggar. No man can possess all things, but any man may contemn them : and the contempt of riches is the nearest way to the gaining them.

SOME magistrates are made for\* money, and those commonly are bribed with money. \* *Money does all.* We are all turned merchants, and look

net into the quality of things, but into the price of them; for reward we are pious, and for reward again we are impious. We are honest, so long as we may thrive upon it; but if the devil himself gives better wages, we change our party. Our parents have trained us up into admiration of gold and silver: and the love of it is grown up with us to that degree, that when we should shew our gratitude to heaven, we make presents of these metals. This it is that makes poverty look like a curse and a reproach, and the poets held it forward; the chariot of the sun must be all of gold: the best of times must be the golden age; and thus they turn the greatest misery of mankind into the greatest blessings.

NEITHER does avarice make us\* only unhappy in ourselves, but malevolent also to mankind. *\* Avarice makes us ill-natured as well as miserable.* The soldier wishes for war; the husbandman would have his corn dear; the lawyer prays for dissention; the physician for a sickly year; he who deals in curiosities, for luxury and excess: and makes up his fortunes out of the corruptions of the age. High winds and public conflagrations make work for the carpenter and bricklayer; and one man lives by the loss of another; some few, perhaps, have the fortune to be detected, but they are all wicked alike. A great plague makes work for the sexton; and, in one word, whoever gains by the dead, has not much kindness for the living. Demades of Athens, condemned a fellow who sold necessaries for funerals, upon proof, that he wished to make himself a fortune by his trade, which could not be but by a great mortality. But perhaps he did not so much desire to have many customers, as to sell dear, and buy cheap; besides, that all of that trade might have been condemned as well as he. Whatsoever whets the appetite, flatters and depresses the mind, and by dilating it, weakens it; first blowing it up, and then filling and deluding it with vanity.

To proceed now from the most prostitute of all vices, sensuality and avarice, to that which passes *\*The cares and crimes that attend ambition.* in the world for the most generous, the thirst of glory,\* and dominion. If they who run mad after wealth and honor, could but look into the hearts of those who have already gained these points; How would it startle them to see those

hideous cares and crimes that wait upon ambitious greatness! All those acquisitions that dazzle the eyes of the vulgar, are but false pleasures, slippery and uncertain. They are atchieved with labor, and the very guard of them is painful. Ambition puffs us up with vanity and wind; and we are equally troubled, either to see any body before us, or nobody behind us; so that we lie under a double envy; for whosoever envies another, is also envied himself. What matters it how far *Alexander* extended his conquests, if he was not yet satisfied with what he had? Every man wants as much as he covets; and, it is most labor to pour into a vessel that will never be full. He who had subdued so many princes and nations, was, upon the killing of *Clytus* (one friend) and the loss of *Hection* (another) delivered up to anger and sadness; and when he was master of the world, he was yet a slave to his passions. Look into *Cyrus*, *Cambyses*, and the whole *Persian* line, and you shall not find so much as one man who died satisfied with what he had gotten. Ambition spires from great things to greater, and propounds matters ever impossible, when it has once arrived at things beyond expectation. It is a kind of dropsy; the more a man drinks, the more he covets. Let any man but observe the tumults and the crowds that attend palaces; what fronts must we endure to be admitted: and how much greater when we are in! The passage to virtue is fair, but the way to greatness is craggy, and it stands not only upon a precipice, but upon ice too; and yet it is a hard matter to convince a great man that his station is slippery, or to prevail with him not to depend upon his greatness; but all superfluities are hurtful. A rank top lays the corn; too great a burden of fruit breaks the bough; and our minds may be as well over charged with an immoderate happiness. Nay, though we ourselves would be at rest, our fortune will not suffer it: the way that leads to honor and riches, leads to trouble: and we find the causes of our sorrows in the very objects of our delights. What joy is there in feasting and luxury, in ambition and a crowd of clients; in the arms of a mistress, or in the vanity of an unprofitable knowledge? These short and false pleasures deceive us; and, like drunkenness, revenge the jolly madness of one man, with the nauseous and sad repentance of many.

Ambition is like a gulph, every thing is swallowed up in it, and buried ; beside the dangerous consequences of it : For, that which one has taken from all, may be easily taken away again by all, from one. It was not either virtue, or reason, but the mad love of a deceitful greatness, that animated *Pompey* in his wars, either abroad or at home. What was it but his ambition that hurried him to *Spain*, *Africa*, and elsewhere, when he was too great already in every body's opinion but his own ? And the same motive had *Julius Caesar*, who could not, even then, brook a superior to himself, when the commonwealth had submitted unto two already. Nor was it any instinct of virtue that pushed on *Marius*, who, at the head of an army, was himself led under the command of ambition ; but he came at last to the deserved fate of other wicked men, and to drink himself of the same cup that he had filled to others. We impose upon our reason, when we suffer ourselves to be transported with titles ; for, we know, that they are nothing but a more glorious sound : And so for ornaments, and gildings, though there may be a lustre to dazzle our eyes, our understanding tells us yet, that it is only outside, and that the matter under it is only coarse and common.

I will never envy\* those, whom the people call great and happy. A sound mind is not to be shaken with a popular and vain applause ; nor is it in the power of their pride to disturb the state of our happiness. An honest man is known now a-days by the dust he raises upon the way, and it is become a point of honor to overrun all people, and keep at a distance ; though he who is put out of the way, may perchance be happier than he who takes it. He who would exercise a power profitable to himself, and grievous to no body else, let him practise it upon his passions. They who have burnt cities, otherwise invincible, driven armies before them, and bathed themselves in human blood ; after that they have overcome all open enemies, have been vanquished by their lust, by their cruelty, and without any resistance. *Alexander* was possessed with the madness of laying kingdoms waste. He began with *Greece*, where he was brought up ; and there he quarried himself upon that in it which was best ; he enslaved *Lacc-*

\* Miserable are those whom the world accounts great and happy.

*demon*, and silenced *Athens*; Nor was he content with the destruction of those towns, which his father *Philip* had either conquered or bought; but he made himself the enemy of human nature; and, like the worst of beasts, he worried what he could not eat. Felicity is an unquiet thing; it torments itself, and puzzles the brain. It makes some people ambitious, others luxurious; it puffs up some, and softens others; only (as it is with wine) some heads bear it better than others; but it dissolves all. Greatness stands upon a precipice; and if prosperity carries a man ever so little beyond his poise, it overbears and dashes him to pieces. It is a rare thing for a man in a great fortune, to lay down his happiness gently: it being a common fate, for a man to sink under the weight of those felicities that raise him. How many of the nobility did *Marius* bring down to herdsmen, and other mean offices! Nay in the very moment of our despising servants, we may be made so ourselves.

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### CHAP. XIII.

*Hope and Fear are the Bane of Human Life.*

NO man can be said to be perfectly happy, who runs the risk of disappointment; which is the case of every man who *fears* or *hopes* for any thing. For *hope* and *fear*, how distant soever they may seem to be the one from the other, are both of them yet coupled in the same chain, as the guard and the prisoner; and the one treads upon the heel of the other. The reason of this is obvious, for they are passions that look forward, and are very solicitous for the future; only *hope* is the more plausible weakness of the two; which in truth, upon the main, are inseparable, for the one cannot be without the other; but where the *hope* is stronger than the *fear*, or the *fear* than the *hope*, we call it the one or the other. For, without *fear*, it were no longer *hope*, but *certainty*; as without *hope*, it were no longer *fear*, but *despair*. We may come to understand, whether our disputes are vain, or not, if we do but consider, that we are either troubled about the *present*, the *future*, or *both*. If the *present*, it is easy to judge; and the *future* is uncertain. It is a foolish thing to be miserable before hand, for fear of

misery to come: for a man loses the present which he might enjoy in expectation of the future: Nay, the fear of losing any thing is as bad as the loss itself. I will be as prudent, as I can, but not timorous, or careless: And I will bethink myself, and forecast what inconveniences may happen, before they come. It is true a man may fear, and yet not be fearful; which is no more, than to have the affection of fear, without the vice of it; but yet a frequent admittance of it runs into a habit. It is a shameful and unmanly thing to be doubtful, timorous and uncertain; to set one step forward, and another backward; and to be irresolute. Can there be any man so fearful, who had not rather fall once, than hang always in suspence?

\* Our miseries are endless, if we stand in fear of all

*\* Our miseries are endless, if we fear all possibilities.*

possibilities; the best way, in such a case is to drive out one nail with another, and a little to qualify fear with hope; which may serve to palliate a misfortune, though not to cure it. There is not any thing we fear, which is so certain to come, as it is certain that many things which we do fear will not come; but we are loth to oppose our credulity when it begins to move us, and so to bring our fear to the test. Well! but, *what if the things we fear should come to pass?* Perhaps it will be the better for us. Suppose it to be death itself, why may it not prove the glory of my life? Did not poison make Socrates famous? And was not Cato's sword a great part of his honor? *Do we fear any misfortune to befall us?* We are not presently sure that it will happen. How many deliverances have come unlooked for? And how many mischiefs that we looked for, have never come to pass? It is time enough to lament when it comes, and in the *Interim* to promise ourselves the best. What do I know but something or other may delay or divert it? Some have escaped out of the fire: others, when a house has fallen over their head, have received no hurt: One man has been saved when a sword was at his throat; another has been condemned, and out-lived his headsman: So that ill fortune, we see, as well as good, has her levities: Peradventure it will be peradventure not; and until it comes to pass, we are not sure of it: We do many times take words in a worse sense than they were intended, and imagine things to be worse taken

than they are. It is time enough to bear a misfortune when it comes, without anticipating it.

He who would deliver himself from all apprehensions of the \*future, let him first take for granted, \* *Prepare for that all fears will fall upon him ; and then, the worst.* examine and measure the evil that he fears,

which he will find to be neither great, nor long. Beside that the ills which he fears he may suffer, he suffers in the very fear of them. As in the symptoms of an approaching disease, a man shall find himself lazy and listless ; a weariness in his limbs, with a yawning and shuddering all over him : So it is in the case of a weak mind : it fancies misfortunes, and makes a man wretched before his time. Why should I torment myself at present, with what perhaps may fall out fifty years hence ? This humour is a kind of voluntary disease, an industrious contrivance of our own unhappiness, to complain of an affliction that we do not feel. Some are only moved with grief itself, but with the mere opinion of it ; as children will start at a shadow, or at the sight of a deformed person. If we stand in fear of violence from a powerful enemy, it is some comfort to us, that whosoever makes himself terrible to others, is not without fear himself : The least noise makes a lion start ; and the fiercest beasts whatever, enrages him, makes him terrible too : A shadow, a voice, an unusual odour, rouses him.

THE thing most to be feared I take to be three kinds. \* *Want, sickness and those violences that may* \* *The things*  
 be imposed upon us by a strong hand. The *most to be fear-*  
 last of these has the greatest force, because it *ed are want,*  
 comes attended with noise and tumult : *sickness, and*  
 Whereas the incommodities of poverty and *the violences of*  
 diseases are most natural, and steal upon us *men in power.*  
 in silence, without any external circum-  
 stances of horror : But the other marches in pomp, with  
 life and sword, gibbets, racks, hooks ; wild beasts to devour  
 us ; stakes to empale us ; engines to tear us to pieces ;  
 pitched bags to burn us in, and a thousand other exquisite  
 inventions of cruelty. No wonder then, if that be most  
 dreadful to us, that presents itself in so many uncouth shapes ;  
 and by the very solemnity is rendered the most formidable.  
 The more instruments of bodily pain the executioner shews  
 us, the more frightful he makes himself : For, many a man  
 who would have encountered death in any generous for-



with resolution enough, is yet overcome with the manner of it. As for the calamities of hunger and thirst, inward ulcers, scorching fevers, tormenting fits of the stone, I look upon these miseries to be at least as grievous as any of the rest: Only they do not so much affect the fancy, because they lie out of sight. Some people talk high of dangers at a distance; (but like cowards) when the executioner comes to do his duty, and shews us the fire, the axe, the scaffold, and death at hand, their courage fails them upon the very pinch when they have most need of it. Sickness, (I hope) captivity, fire, are no new things to us; the falls of houses, funerals, and conflagrations, are every day before our eyes. The man who I supped with last night is dead before morning; why should I wonder then, seeing so many fall about me, to be hit at last myself? What can be greater madness than to cry out, *who would have dreamed of this?* And why not, I beseech you? Where is that estate that may not be reduced to beggary: that dignity which may not be followed with banishment, disgrace, and extreme contempt; that kingdom that may not suddenly fall to ruin; change its master and be depopulated; that prince who may not pass the hand of a common hangman? That which is one man's fortune, may be another's; but the foresight of calamities to come, breaks the violence of them.

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#### CHAP. XIV.

*It is according to the true or false Estimate of Things, that we are happy or miserable.*

**H**OW many things are there that the fancy makes terrible by night, which the day turns into ridicule? What is there in labor, or in death, that a man should be afraid of? they are much slighter in act than in contemplation; and, we may condemn them, but we *will* not: So that it is not because they are hard, that we dread them; but they are hard, because we are first afraid of them. Pains, and other violences of fortune are the same thing to us, that goblins are to children: We are more scared with them, than hurt. We take up our opinions upon trust, and err for company, still judging that to be best, that has most competitors. We make a false calculation of matters be-

cause we advise with opinion, and not with nature: And this misleads us to an higher esteem for riches, honour, and power, than they are worth: We have been used to admire, and recommend them, and a private error is quickly turned into a public. The greatest and the smallest things are equally hard to be comprehended: we account many things *great*, for want of understanding effectually what is so: and we reckon other things to be *small*, which we find frequently to be of the highest value. Vain things only move vain minds; the accidents that we so much boggle at, are not terrible in themselves, but they are made so by our infirmities; but we consult rather what we hear than what we feel, without examining, opposing, or discussing things we fear; so that we either stand still and tremble, or else directly run for it; as those troops did, who upon the raising of the dust, took a flock of sheep for the enemy. When the body and mind are corrupted, it is no wonder if all things prove intolerable; and not because they are so in truth, but because we are dissolute, and foolish: For, we are infatuated to such a degree, that betwixt the common madness of men, and that which falls under the care of the physician, there is but this difference; the one labors of a disease, and the other of a false opinion.

THE *Stoicks* hold, that all those torments that commonly draw from us groans and ejaculations, are in themselves trivial, and contemptible. But these high flown expressions apart, (how true soever) let us discourse the point, at the rate of ordinary men, and not make ourselves miserable before our time; for the things we apprehend to be at hand, may possibly never come to pass. Some things trouble us more than they should; other things sooner; and some things again disorder us, that ought not to trouble us at all; So that we either enlarge, or create, or anticipate our disquiet. For the first part, let it rest as a matter in controversy, for that which I account light, another perhaps will judge insupportable; one man laughs under the lash, and another whines for a fillip. How sad a calamity is poverty to one man, which to another appears rather desirable, than inconvenient? For the poor man who has nothing to lose, has nothing to fear: And he who would deny himself to the satisfaction of his soul, must be

either poor indeed, or at least look as if he were so. Some people are extremely dejected with sickness, and pain: Whereas *Epicurus* blessed his fate with his last breath, in the acutest torments of the stone imaginable. And so for banishment, which to one man is so grievous, and yet to another is no more than a bare change of place: A thing that we do every day for our health, pleasure; nay, and upon the account even of common business. How terrible is death to one man! which to another appears the greatest Providence in nature; even towards all ages, and conditions? It is the wish of some, the relief of many, and the end of all. It sets the slave at liberty, carries the banished man home, and places all mortals upon the same level: Insomuch, that life itself were punishment without it. When I see tyrants, tortures, violences, the prospect of death is a consolation to me, and the only remedy against the injuries of life.

NAY, so great are our mistakes in the true estimate of things, that we have hardly done any thing that we have not had reason to wish undone; and we have found the things we feared to be more desirable than those we coveted: \* Our very prayers have been more pernicious than the curses of our enemies; and we must pray again to have our former prayers forgiven. Where is the wise man who wishes to himself the wishes of his mother, nurse, or tutor; the worst of enemies, with the intention of the best of friends? We are undone if their prayers be heard; and it is our duty to pray that they may not; for they are no other than well meaning execrations. They take evil for good; and one wish fights with another: Give me rather the contempt of all things whereof they wish me the greatest plenty. We are equally hurt by some who pray for us, and by others who curse us: The one imprints in us a false fear, and the other does us mischief by a mistake. So that it is no wonder if mankind be miserable, when we are brought up from the very cradle under the imprecations of our parents. We pray for trifles without so much as thinking of the greatest blessings; and we are not ashamed many times to ask God for that which we should blush to own to our neighbour.

It is with us, as with an innocent\* that my father had

in his family. She fell blind on a sudden, and nobody could persuade her she was blind. *She could not endure the house (she cried) it was so dark, and was still calling to go abroad.* That which we laughed at in her, we find to be true in ourselves: We are covetous and ambitious; but the world shall never bring us to acknowledge it, and we impute it to the place: Nay, we are the worse of the two; for the blind fool called for a guide, and we wander about without one. It is a hard matter to cure those who will not believe they are sick. We are ashamed to admit a master, and we are too old to learn. Vice still goes before virtue: so that we have two works to do; we must cast off the one, and learn the other. By one evil we may make way to another, and only seek things to be avoided, or those of which we are soon weary. That which seemed too much when we wished for it, proves too little when we have it; and it is not as some imagine, that felicity is greedy; but it is little, and narrow, and cannot satisfy us—That which we take to be very high at a distance, we find to be but low, when we come at it. And the business is, we do not understand the true state of things. We are deceived by rumours; when we have gained the thing we aimed at, we find it to be either ill or empty; or perchance less than we expect, or otherwise perhaps great, but not good.

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## CHAP. XV.

### *The Blessings of Temperance and Moderation.*

**T**HERE is not any thing that is necessary to us, but we have it *cheap* or *gratis*; and this is the provision that our heavenly Father has made for us, whose bounty was never wanting to our needs. It is true, the belly craves, and calls upon us, but then a small matter contents it: A little bread and water is sufficient, and all the rest is superfluous. He who lives according to reason, shall never be poor, and he who governs his life by opinion shall never be rich; for nature is limited, but fancy is boundless. As for meat, clothes, and lodging, a little feeds the body, and a little covers it; so that if mankind would only attend human nature, without gaping at superfluities, a cook would

be found as needless as a soldier : For we may have necessities upon very easy terms ; whereas we put ourselves to great pains for excesses. When we are cold, we may cover ourselves with skins of beasts ; and against violent heat, we have natural grottoes ; or with a few osiers, and a little clay, we may defend ourselves against all seasons. Providence has been kinder to us than to leave us to live by our wits, and to stand in need of invention and arts : It is only pride and curiosity that involves us in difficulties : If nothing will serve a man but rich clothes and furnitures, statues and plate, a numerous train of servants, and the rarities of all nations, it is not fortune's fault, but his own, that he is not satisfied : For his desires are insatiable, and this is not a thirst, but a disease : and if he were master of the whole world, he would be still a beggar. It is the mind that makes us rich and happy, in what condition soever we are : and money signifies no more to it than it does to the Gods. If the religion be sincere, no matter for the ornaments : It is only luxury and avarice that makes poverty grievous to us ; for it is a very small matter that does our business ; and when we have provided against cold, hunger, and thirst, all the rest is but vanity and excess ; and there is no need of expense upon foreign delicacies, or the sacrifices of the kitchen. . . . What is he the worse for poverty, who despises these things ! Nay, is he not rather the better for it, because he is not able to go to the price of them ; For he is kept sound whether he will or not : And that which a man cannot do, looks many times as if he would not.

When I look back into the \* moderation of past ages, it makes me ashamed to discourse, as if poverty had need of any consolation ; for we are now come to that degree of temperance, that a fair patrimony is too little for a meal. Homer had but one servant, Plato three ; and Zeno (the master of the masculine sect of Stoicks) had none at all.—The daughters of Scipio had their portions out of the common treasury, for their father left them not worth a penny : How happy were their husbands who had the people of Rome for their father-in-law ! Shall any man now contemn poverty after these eminent examples ; which are sufficient not only to justify, but to recommend it ? Upon Diogenes's only servant's running away from him, he was told where he

\* The moderation  
of past ages.

was, and urged to fetch him back again. *What, says he, can Manes live without Diogenes, and not Diogenes without Manes? and so let him go.* The piety and moderation of *Scipio* has made his memory more valuable than his arms; and more y<sup>e</sup> after he left his country, than while he defended it: For matters were come to that pass, that either *Scipio* must be injurious to *Rome*, or *Rome* to *Scipio*: Coarse bread and water, to a temperate man, is as good as a feast; and the very herbs of the field yield a nourishment to man, as well as to beasts. It was not by choice meats; and perfumes, that our forefathers recommended themselves, but in virtuous actions; and the sweat of honest; military, and of manly labours.

WHILE nature lay in common, and all her benefits were promiscuously enjoyed, what could be happier than the state of mankind when people lived without avarice, or envy? What could be richer, than when there was not a poor man to be found in the world? So soon as this impartial bounty of Providence came to be restrained, by covetousness; and that particulars appropriated that to themselves which was intended for all; then did poverty creep into the world; when some men by desiring more than came to their share, lost their title to the rest. A loss never to be repaired; for though we may come yet to get much, we once had all. The fruits of the earth were in those days divided among the inhabitants of it; without either want, or excess. So long as men contented themselves with their lot, there was no violence; no ingrossing, or hiding those benefits for particular advantages, which were appointed for the community; but every man had as much care for his neighbour, as for himself. No arms, or bloodshed; no war, but with wild beasts: But under the protection of a wood or cave, they spent their days without cares, and their nights without groans; their innocence was their security and their protection: There was as yet no beds of state, no ornaments of pearl, or embroidery, nor any of those remorse that attend them; but the heavens were their canopy; and the glories of them their spectacle. The motions of the orbs, the courses of the stars, and the wonderful order of Providence, was their contemplation: There was no fear of the house falling, or the

rustling of a rat behind the *arvæ* : They had no palaces then like cities ; but they had open air, and breathing-room, crystal fountains, refreshing shades, meadows dressed up in their native beauty, and such cottages as were according to nature, and wherein they lived contentedly, without fear either of losing or of falling. These people lived without either solicitude or fraud ; and yet I must call them rather happy, than wise. That men were generally better before they were corrupted, than after, I make no doubt ; and I am apt to believe, that they were both stronger and hardier too ; but their wits were not yet come to maturity ; for nature does not give virtue ; and it is a kind of art to become good : They had not as yet torn up the bowels of the earth for gold, silver and precious stones, and, so far were they from killing any man, as we do for a spectacle, that they were not as yet come to it, either in fear, or anger ; nay, they spared the very fishes. But after all this, they were innocent, because they were ignorant ; and there is a great difference betwixt not knowing how to offend, and not being willing to do it. They had, in that rude life, certain images and resemblances of virtue, but yet they fell short of virtue itself, which comes only by institution, learning, and study, as it is perfected by practice. It is indeed the end for which we were born, but yet it did not come into the world with us ; and in the best of men, before they are instructed, we find rather the matter, and the seeds of virtue, than the virtue itself. It is the wonderful benignity of nature, that has laid open to us all things that may do us good, and only hid those things from us that may hurt us ? As if she durst not trust us with gold, and silver ; or with iron, which is the instrument of war, and contention for the other. It is we ourselves who have drawn out of the earth, both the *causes* and *instruments* of our dangers : And we are so vain as to set the highest esteem upon those things to which nature has assigned the lowest place. What can be more coarse and rude in the mine, than these precious metals ; or more slavish, and dirty, than the people who dig and work them ? And yet they defile our minds more than our bodies, and make the possessor fouler than the artificer of them. Rich men, in fine, are

only the greater slaves. Both the one and the other wants a great deal.

HAPPY is that man who eats only for hunger, and drinks only for thirst; who stands upon his own legs, and lives by reason, not by example; and provides for use and necessity, not for ostentation and pomp. Let us curb

*A temperate life is an happy life.*

our appetites, encourage virtue, and rather be beholden to ourselves for riches than to fortune, who, when a man draws himself into a narrow compass, has the least mark at him. Let my bed be plain and clean, and my clothes so too; my meat without much expense, or many waters; and neither a burden to my purse, nor to my body; nor to go out the same way it came in. That which is too little for luxury, is abundantly enough for nature. The end of eating and drinking is satiety; now what matters it though one eats and drinks more, and another less, so long as the one is not hungry, nor the other thirsty? Epicurus who limits pleasure to nature, as the Stoicks ( ) virtue, is undoubtedly in the right; and those who cite him to authorize their voluptuousness do exceedingly mistake him, and only seek a good authority for an evil cause: For their pleasures of sloth, gluttony, and lust, have no affinity at all with his precepts or meaning. It is true, that at first sight his philosophy seems effeminate; but he who looks nearer him, will find him to be a very brave man, only in a womanish dress.

It is a common objection, I know \* that these philosophers do not live at the rate they talk; for they can flatter their superiors, gather estates, \* *Let Philosophers* and be as much concerned at the loss *live as they teach.* of fortune, or of friends, as other people: As sensible of reproaches, as luxurious in their eating and drinking, their furniture, their houses; as magnificent in their plate, servants, and officers; as profuse, and curious in their gardens, &c. Well! And what of all this, or if it were twenty times more? It is some degree of virtue for a man to condemn himself; and if he cannot come up to the best, to be yet better than the worst; and if he cannot wholly subdue his appetites, however to check, and diminish them. If I do not live as I preach; take notice that I do not speak of myself, but of virtue; nor am I so much offended with other



men's vices, as with my own. All this was objected to Plato, Epicurus, Zeno. Nor is any virtue so sacred, as to escape malevolence. The Cynic Demetrius was a great instance of severity and mortification; and one who imposed upon himself, neither to possess any thing, nor so much as to ask it: And yet he had this scuff put upon him that his profession was poverty not virtue. Plato is blamed for asking money: Aristotle for receiving it: Democritus for neglecting it: Epicurus for consuming it: How happy were we, if we could but come to imitate these men's vices; for if we knew our own condition, we should find work enough at home. But, we are like people who are making merry at a play, or a tavern, when their own houses are on fire, and yet they know nothing of it. Nay Cato himself was said to be a drunkard; but drunkenness itself shall sooner be proved to be no crime than Cato dishonest. They who demolish temples and overturn altars, shew their good will, though they can do the gods no hurt; and so it fares with those who invade the reputation of great men. If the professors of virtue be as the world calls them, avaricious, libidinous, ambitious; what are they then who have a detestation for the very name of it? But malicious natures do not want wit to abuse honest men than themselves. It is the practice of the multitude, to bark at eminent men, as little dogs do at strangers! for they look upon other men's virtues as the upbraiding of their own wickedness. We should do well to commend those who are good; if not, let us pass them over; but however let us spare ourselves; for beside the blaspheming of virtue, our rage is to no purpose. But to return to my text.

We are ready enough to limit others, but loth to put bounds and restraints upon ourselves; *It is good to practise frugality in plenty.* though we know that many times a greater evil is cured by a less; and the mind that will not be brought to virtue by precepts, comes to it frequently by necessity. Let us try a little to eat upon a joint stool; to serve ourselves; to live within compass, and accommodate our clothes to the end they were made for. Occasional experiments of our moderation gives us the best proof of our firmness and virtue. A well-governed appetite is a great part of liberty; and it is a blessed lot, that since no man can have

all things that he would have, we may all of us forbear desiring what we have not. It is the office of temperance to overrule us in our pleasures : Some she rejects, others she qualifies, and keeps within bounds ; O the delights of rest, when a man comes to be weary ! and of meat, when he is heartily hungry ! I have learned (says our author) by one journey, how many things we have that are superfluous, and how easily they may be spared ; for, when we are without them, upon necessity we do not so much as feel the want of them. This is the second blessed day (says he) that my friend and I have travelled together : One waggon carries ourselves, and our servants ; my mattress lies upon the ground, and I upon that : Our diet answerable to our lodgings ; and never without our figs and our table-books. The muletteer without shoes, and the mules only prove themselves alive by their walking. In this equipage, I am not willing, I perceive, to own myself ; but as often as we happen into better company, I presently fall a blushing ; which shews, that I am not yet confirmed in those things which I approve and commend : I am not yet come to own my frugality ; for he who is ashamed to be seen in a mean condition, would be proud of a splendid one. I value myself upon what passengers think of me, and tacitly renounce my principles ; whereas I should rather lift up my voice to be heard by mankind, and tell them, *you are all mad ; your minds are set upon superfluities, and you value no man for virtues* : I came one night weary home, and threw myself upon the bed, with this consideration about me, *there is nothing ill that is well taken*. My baker tells me, he has no bread ; but, says he, I may get some of your tenants, though I fear it is not good. No matter, said I, for I will stay until it be better ; that is to say, until my stomach will be glad of worse. It is discretion sometimes to practise temperance, and use ourselves to a little ; for there are many difficulties both of time and place, that may force us upon it : When we come to the matter of patrimony, how strictly do we examine what every man is worth, before we will trust him with a penny ? *Such a man we cry, has a great estate, but it is shrewdly incumbered ; a very fair house, but it was built with borrowed money ; a numerous family, but he does not*

keep touch with his creditors ; if his debts were paid, he would not be worth a groat. Why do we not take the same course in other things, and examine what every man is worth ? It is not enough to have a long train of attendants, vast possessions, or an incredible treasure in money and jewels ; a man may be poor for all this. There is only this difference at best ; one man borrows of the usurer, and the other of fortune. What signifies the carving or gilding of the chariot ; is the master ever the better for it ?

WE cannot close up this chapter with a more generous \* instance of moderation than that of *Fabricius*. *Pyrrhus* tempted him with a sum of money to betray his country ; and *Pyrrhus* his physician offered *Fabricius*, for a sum of money, to poison his master : But

\* *The moderation and bravery of Fabricius.*

he was too brave, either to be overcome by gold, or to overcome by poison ; so that he refused the money, and advised *Pyrrhus* to have a care of treachery ; and this in the heat too of a licentious war ; *Fabricius* valued himself upon his poverty, and was as much above the thought of riches as of poison. Live, *Pyrrhus*, says he, by my friendship ; and turn that to thy satisfaction, which was before thy trouble, that is to say, that *Fabricius* could not be corrupted.

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## CHAP. XVI.

*Constancy of mind gives a Man Reputation, and makes him happy in despite of all Misfortunes.*

THE whole duty of man may be reduced to the two points of abstinence, and patience ; temperance in prosperity, and courage in adversity. We have already treated of the former : and the other follows now in course.

EPICURUS will have it, that a \* wise man will bear all injuries ; but the Stoicks will not allow those things to be injuries which Epicurus calls so. Now betwixt these two there is the same difference that we find betwixt two gladiators ; the one receives wounds, but yet maintains his ground ; the other tells the people, when he is in blood

that *it is but a scratch*, and will not suffer any body to part them. An *injury* cannot be *received*, but it must be *done*. But it may be *done*, and yet not *received*; as a man may be in the water, and not swim; but if he swims, it is presumed that he is in the water. Or if a blow, or a shot be levelled at us, it may so happen that a man may miss his aim, or some accident interpose that may divert the mischief. That which is hurt, is passive, and inferior to that which hurts it; but you will say that *Socrates* was condemned, and put to death, and so received an injury; but I answer, that the tyrants *did* him an injury, and yet he *received* none. He who steals any thing from me, and hides it in my own house; though I have not lost it, yet he has stolen it. He who lies with his own wife, and takes her for another woman; though the woman be honest, the man is an adulterer. Suppose a man gives me a draught of poison, and it proves not strong enough to kill me; his guilt is never the less for a disappointment. He who makes a pass at me, is as much a murderer, though I put it by, as if he struck me to the heart. It is the intention, not the effect, that makes the wickedness. He is a murderer who has the will of killing, and slaying, before his hand is dipt in blood: As the very intention of laying violent hands upon holy things is sacrilege. If a philosopher be exposed to torments, the axe over his head, his body wounded, his guts in his hands, I will allow him to groan; for virtue itself cannot divest him of the nature of man; but if his mind stand firm, he has discharged his part. A great mind enables a man to maintain his station with honor; so that he only makes use of what he meets in his way, as a pilgrim, who would fain be at his journey's end.

\* It is the excellency of a great mind to *ask* nothing, and to *want* nothing; and to say, I *will* have nothing to do with fortune, that repulses Cato, and prefers Vatinius. He who quits his hold, and accounts any thing good that is not honest, runs gaping after casualties, spends his days in anxiety, and vain expectation: That man is miserable. And yet it is hard, you will say, to be banished, or cast into prison; nay, what if it were to be burnt, or any other way destroyed? We have examples in all ages, and in all cases, of great men who

\* A great mind neither asks any thing, nor wants any thing.

have triumphed over all misfortunes. *Mercellus* suffered *exile* resolutely; *Rutilius* cheerfully. *Socrates* disputed in the dungeon, and though he might have made his escape, refused it; to shew the world how easy a thing it was to subdue the two great terrors of mankind, *death* and *a jail*. Or what shall we say of *Mucius Scavola*, a man only of military courage, and without the help either of philosophy or letters: Who, when he found that he had killed the secretary, instead of *Porsenna* (the prince) burned his right hand to ashes for the mistake; and held his arm in the flame, until it was taken away by his very enemies. *Porsenna* did more easily pardon *Mucius* for his intent to kill him, than *Mucius* forgave himself for missing his aim. He might have done a luckier thing, but never a braver.

DID not *Cato*, in the last night of his life, take *Plato* to bed with him; with his sword at his bed's head; the one that he might have death at his will; the other, that he might have it in his power; being resolved that no man should be able to say, either that he killed, or that he saved *Cato*? So soon as he had composed his thoughts, he took his sword: *Fortune*, says he, *I have hitherto fought for my country's liberty, and for my own; and only that I might live free among freemen; but the cause is now lost, and Cato safe.* With that word he cast himself upon his sword; and after the physicians, who pressed in upon him, had bound up his wound, he tore it open again, and so expired with the same greatness of soul that he lived. But these are the examples, you will say of men famous in their generation. Let us but consult history, and we shall find, even in the most effeminate of nations, and the most dissolute of times, men of all degrees, ages and fortunes; nay, even women themselves, who have overcome the fear of death: Which, in truth, is so little to be feared, that duly considered, it is one of the greatest benefits in nature. It was as great an honor for *Cato*, when his party was broken, that he himself stood his ground, as it would have been if he had carried the day, and settled an universal peace. For, it is an equal prudence, to make the best of a bad game, as to manage a good one. The day he was *repulsed*, he *played*; and the night that he *killed* himself, he *read*. Is valuing the loss of his life, and the missing of an

office at the same rate. People, I know, are very apt to pronounce upon other men's infirmities by the measure of their own, and to think it impossible, that a man should be content to be burnt, wounded, killed, or shackled, though in some cases he may. It is only for a great mind to judge of great things; for otherwise that which is our infirmity will seem to be another's as a strait stick in the water appears to be crooked: He who yields, draws upon his own head his own ruin; for we are sure to get the better of fortune, if we do but struggle with her. See what blows and bruises fencers and wrestlers endure, not only for honor, but for exercise. If we turn our backs once, we are routed, and pursued: That man only is happy, who draws good out of evil; who stands fast in his judgment, and unmoved with any external violence: Or, however, so little moved, that the keenest arrow in the quiver of fortune, is but as the prick of a needle to him rather than a wound: And all her other weapons fall upon him only as hail upon the roof of an house, that crackles and skips off again, without any damage to the inhabitant.

A GENEROUS, and a clear-sighted young man will take it for an \* happiness to encountre ill fortune. It is loathing for a man to hold up his head in a \* *The greatest evil in adversity is the submitting to it.* calm; but to maintain his post, when all others have quitted their ground, and there to stand upright where other men are beaten down; this is divine and praise-worthy. What ill is there in torments, or in those things which we commonly account grievous crosses? The great evil is the want of courage, the bowing and submitting to them, which can never happen to a wise man; for he stands upright under any weight; nothing that is to be borne displeases him; he knows his strength; and whatever may be any man's lot, he never complains of, if it be his own. Nature, he says, deceives no body; she does not tell us whether our children shall be fair, or foul; wise or foolish, good subjects or traitors; not whether our fortune shall be good or bad. We must not judge of a man by his ornaments: but strip him of all the advantages, and the impostures of fortune, nay of his very body too; and look into his

mind. If he can see a naked sword at his eyes without so much as winking ; if he make it a thing indifferent to him, whether his life go out at his throat or at his mouth ; if he can hear himself sentenced to torments, or exile : and under the very hand of the executioners, say thus to himself, *all this I am fit to undergo for and it is no more than a man, who is to suffer the fate of humanity.* This is the temper of mind that speaks a man happy ; and without this, all the confluences of external comforts signify no more than the personating of a king upon the stage ; when the curtain is drawn, we are players again : Not that I pretend to exempt a wise man out of the number of men, as if he had no sense of pain. But I reckon him as compounded of body and soul : The body is irrational, and may be galled, burnt, tortured ; But the rational part is fearless, invincible, and not to be shaken.— This it is that I reckon upon as the supreme good of man ; which, until it be perfected, is but an unsteady agitation of thought ; and in the perfection an immovable stability. It is not in our contentions with fortune, as in those of the theatre, where we may throw down our arms, and pray for quarter : But here we must die firm and resolute. There need no encouragement to those things which we are inclined to by a natural instinct ; as the preservation of ourselves with ease, and pleasure ; but if it comes to the trial of our faith by torments, or of our courage by wounds, these are difficulties that we must be armed against by philosophy and precept. And yet all this is no more than what we were born to ; and no matter of wonder at all ; so that a wise man prepares himself for it : As expecting that *whatever may be, will be.* My body is frail, and liable not only to the impressions of violence, but to afflictions also, that naturally succeed our pleasures. Full means bring crudities : Whoring and drinking make the hands to shake, and the knees to tremble. It is only the surprise, and newness of the thing, which makes that misfortune terrible, which by premeditation might be made easy to us. For, that which some people make light by sufferance, others do by foresight. Whatever is necessary, we must bear patiently. It is no new thing to die ; no new thing to mourn, and no new thing to be merry again. Must I be poor ? I shall have company : In banish-

ment, I will think myself born there ; if I die, I shall be no more sick ; and it is a thing I can do but once.

LET us never wonder at any thing \* we are born to, for no man has reason to complain, where we are all in the same condition. He who escapes might have suffered, and it is but equal to submit to the law of mortality. We must undergo the colds of winter, the heat of summer, the distempers of the air, and diseases of the body. A wild beast meets us in one place, and a man who is more brutal, in another ; we are here assaulted by fire, there by water. *Demetrius* was reserved by Providence, for the age he lived in, to shew, that neither the times could corrupt him, nor he reform the people. He was a man of an exact judgment, steady to his purpose, and of a strong eloquence : not finical in his words, but his sense was masculine, and vehement. He was so qualified in his life and discourse, that he served both for an example and a reproach. If fortune should have offered that man the government, and the possession of the whole world, upon condition not to lay it down again ; I dare say he would have refused it : And thus have expostulated the matter with you : *Why should you tempt a freeman to put his shoulder under a burden : or an honest man to pollute himself with the dregs of mankind ? Why do you offer me the spoils of princes, and of nations, and the price not only of your blood, but of your souls ?* It is the part of a great mind to be temperate in prosperity, resolute in adversity ; to despise what the vulgar admire ; and to prefer a mediocrity to an excess. Was not *Socrates* oppressed with poverty, labor, nay, and the worst of wars in his own family, a fierce and turbulent woman for his wife ? Were not his children indocible, and like their mother ? After seven and twenty years spent in arms, he fell under the slavery of the *thirty tyrants*, and most of them his bitter enemies : He came at last to be sentenced as a violator of religion, a corrupter of youth, and a common enemy to God and man. After this he was imprisoned, and put to death by poison, which was all so far from working upon his mind, that it never so much as altered his countenance. We are to bear ill accidents, as unkind seasons, distempers, or diseases ; and why may we not reckon the actions of wicked men even among those acci-



dents? Their deliberations are not counsels; but frauds, snares, and inordinate motions of the mind; and they are never without a thousand pretences and occasions of doing a man mischief. They have their informers, their knights of the post; they can make an interest with powerful men, and one may be robbed as well upon the bench as upon the highway. They lie in wait for advantages, and live in perpetual agitation, betwixt hope and fear; whereas he who is truly composed, will stand all shocks, either of violence, flatteries, or menaces, without perturbation. It is an inward-fear that makes us curious after what we hear abroad.

It is an error to attribute either *good or ill to \* fortune*; But the *matter* of it we may; and we *\* The works of ourselves are the occasion of it, being, in effect, the artificers of our own* *fortune are neither happiness, or misery: For the mind good nor evil.* is above fortune: if that be evil, it makes every thing else so too: But if it be right and sincere, it corrects what is wrong, and mollifies what is hard, with modesty and courage. There is a great difference among those whom the world call wise men. Some take up private resolutions of opposing fortune, but they cannot go through with them; for they are either dazzled with splendor on the one hand, or affrighted with terrors on the other. But there are others who will close, and grapple with fortune, and still come off victorious. *Mucius* overcame the fire; *Regulus*, the gibbet; *Socrates*, poison; *Ratilius*, banishment; *Cato* death; *Fabricius*, riches; *Tubero*, poverty; and *Sextius*, honors. But there are some again so delicate, that they cannot so much as bear a scandalous report; which is the same thing as if a man should quarrel for being jostled in a crowd, or dashed as he walked in the streets. He who has a great way to go, must expect a slip, to stumble, and to be tired. To the luxurious man, frugality is a punishment: Labor and industry, to the sluggard; nay, study itself is a torment to him: Not that these things are hard to us by nature, but we ourselves are vain and irresolute: Nay, we wonder many of us, how any man can live without wine, or endure to rise so early in the morning.

\* A \* brave man must expect to be tessed; for he is to

\* *Virtue is glorious in extremity.* steer his course in the teeth of fortune, and to work against wind and weather. In the suffering of torments

though there appears but one virtue, a man exercises many. That which is most eminent is patience (which is but a branch of fortitude :) But there is prudence also in the choice of the action, and in the bearing what we cannot avoid : And there is constancy in bearing it resolutely ; and there is the same concurrence also of several virtues in other generous undertakings. When *Leonidas* was to carry his 300 men into the straits of *Thermopylae* to put a stop to the huge army of *Xerxes* ; *Come, fellow citizens,* says he, *cut your dinner here as if you were to sup in another world.* And they answered his resolution. How plain and imperious was that short speech of *Cassius* to his men upon a desperate action ; and how glorious a mixture was there in it both of bravery and prudence ? *Soldiers,* says he, *it is necessary for us to go, but it is not necessary for us to return.* This brief and pertinent harrangue was worth ten thousand of the frivolous cavils, and distinctions of the schools, which rather break the mind than fortify it ; and when it is once perplexed, and pricked with difficulties and scruples, there they leave it. Our passions are numerous and strong, and not to be mastered with quirks and tricks, as if a man should undertake to defend the cause of God and man with a bulrush. It was a remarkable piece of honour and policy together, that action of *Cesar's* upon the taking of *Pompey's* cabinet at the battle of *Pharsalia* : It is probable that the letters in it might have discovered who were his friends and who his enemies ; and yet he burnt it, without so much as opening it : Esteeming it the noblest way of pardoning, to keep himself ignorant both of the offender, and of the offence. It was a brave presence of mind also in *Alexander*, who, upon advice that his physician *Philist* intended to poison him, took the letter of advice in one hand and the cup in the other ; delivering *Philist* the letter to read, while himself drank the potion.

SOME are of opinion, that death gives a man courage to support pain, and that pain fortifies a man against death ; But I say rather, that a wise man depends upon himself against both, and that he does not either suffer with patience in hopes of death, or die willingly because he is weary of life ; but he

*Virtue is invincible.*

bears the one, and waits for the other; and carries a divine mind through all the accidents of human life. He looks upon faith and honesty, as the most sacred good of mankind, and neither to be forced by necessity, nor corrupted by reward; kill, burn, tear him to pieces, he will be true to his trust; And the more a man labours to make him discover a secret, the deeper he will hide it. Resolution is the inexpugnable defence of human weakness, and it is a wonderful Providence that attends it. *Horatius Cocles* opposed his single body to the whole army, until the bridge was cut down behind him, and then he leaped into the river with his sword in his hand, and came off safe to his party. There was a fellow questioned about a plot upon the life of a tyrant, and put to the torture to declare his confederates: He named, one by one, all the tyrant's friends that were about him; and still as they were named, they were put to death; the tyrant asked him at last, if there were any more: Yes, says he, you yourself were in the plot; and now you have no other friend left you in this world: Whereupon the tyrant cut the throats of his own guards. *He is the happy man who is the master of himself, and triumphs over the fear of death, which has overcome the conquerors of the world.*

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## CHAP. XVII.

*Our Happiness depends in a great Measure upon the choice of our company.*

**T**HE comfort of life depends upon conversation; good offices and concord, and human society is like the working of an arch of stone; all would fall to the ground, if one piece did not support another; above all things let us have a tenderness for blood; and it is yet too little not to hurt, unless we profit one another. We are to relieve the distressed; to put the wanderer into his way; and to divide our bread with the hungry: Which is but the doing of good to ourselves; for we are only several members of one great body; nay, we are all of a consanguinity; formed of the same materials, and designed to the same end: This obliges us to a mutual tenderness, and converse; and the other, to live with a regard to equity, and justice. The love of society is natural; but

the choice of our company is matter of virtue and prudence. Noble examples stir us up to noble actions ; and the very history of large and public souls inspires a man with generous thoughts. It makes a man long to be in action, and doing something that the world may be the better for, as protecting the weak, delivering the oppressed, punishing the insolent. It is a great blessing, the very conscience of giving a good example, beside that is the greatest obligation any man can lay upon the age he lives in. He who converses with the proud, shall be puffed up : A lustful acquaintance makes a man lascivious ; and the way to secure a man from wickedness, is to withdraw from the examples of it. It is too much to have them *near us*, but more to have them *within us* : Ill examples, pleasure, and ease, are no doubt, great corrupters of manners. A rocky ground hardens the horse's hoof: The mountaineer makes the best soldier, the miner the best pioneer, and severity of discipline fortifies the mind. In all excesses and extremities of good, and of ill fortune, let us have recourse to great examples, that have contemned both. *Those are the best instructors who teach in their lives, and prove their words by their actions.*

As an ill air may endanger a good constitution, so may a \* place of ill example endanger a good man. Nay, there are some places that have a kind of privilege to be licentious, and where luxury and dissolution of manners seem to be lawful ; for great examples give both authority and excuse to wickedness. Those places are to be avoided as dangerous to our manners. *Hannibal* himself was unmanned by the looseness of *Campania*, and though a conqueror by his arms, he was overcome by his pleasures. I would as soon live among butchers as among cooks ; not but that a man may be temperate in any place ; but to see drunken men staggering up and down every where ; and only the spectacles of lust, luxury, and excess before our eyes, it is not safe to expose ourselves to the temptation. If the victorious *Hannibal* himself could not resist it, what shall become of us then, who are subdued, and give ground to our lusts already ? He who has to do with an enemy in his breast, has a harder task upon him than he who has

to encounter one in the field: His hazard is greater if he loses ground, and his duty is perpetual; for he has no place or time for rest. If I give way to pleasure, I must also yield to grief, to poverty, to labour, to ambition, anger, until I am torn to pieces by my misfortunes, and my lusts. But, against all this, philosophy propounds a liberty, that is to say, a liberty from the service of accidents, and fortune. There is not any thing that does more mischief to mankind, than mercenary masters of philosophy, who do not live as they teach; they give a scandal to virtue. How can any man expect that a ship should steer a fortunate course, when the pilot lies wallowing in his own vomit? It is an unusual thing, first to learn to do all ourselves, and then to instruct others to do so: But that man must needs be very wicked, who has gathered into himself the wickedness of other people.

THE best conversation is with the philosophers: \* That is to say with such of them as teach us \* *Practical Philosophy* matter, not words: Who preach to us *philosophers are the best things necessary, and keep us to the practise of them.* There can be no *company.* peace in human life without the contempt of all events. There is nothing that puts better thoughts into a man, or sooner sets him right, who is out of the way, than a good companion. For, the example has the force of a precept, and touches the heart with an affection to goodness. And not only the frequent hearing and seeing of a wise man delights us, but the very encounter of him suggests profitable contemplations: Such as a man finds himself moved with when he goes into an holy place. I will take more care with *whom I eat and drink,* than *what:* for, without a friend the table is a manger. Writing does well; but personal discourse and conversation does better: For men give great credit to their ears, and take stronger impressions from example than precept. *Cleanthes* had never hit *Zeno* so to the life, if he had not been with him at all his privacies; if he had not watched and observed him, whether or not he practised as he taught. *Plato* got more from the *manners of Socrates,* than from his words; and it was not the school, but the *company,* and *familiarity of Epicurus,* that made *Metrodorus, Hermachus, and Polyanius* so famous.

Now though it be by instinct that we covet society, and avoid solitude, we should yet take this along with us, that the more acquaintance the more danger. Nay, there is not one man of an hundred who is to be trusted with himself. If company cannot alter us, it may interrupt us; and he who so much as stops upon the way, loses a great deal of a short life; which we yet make shorter by our inconstancy. If an enemy were at our heels, what haste should we make? But death is so, and yet we never mind it. There is no venturing tender and easy natures among the people; for it is odds that they will go over to the major part. It would perhaps shake the constancy of *Socrates*, *Cato*, *Laelius*, or any of us all even when our resolutions are at the height, to stand the shock of vice that presses upon us with a kind of public authority. It is a world of mischief that may be done by one single example of avarice and luxury. One voluptuous plate makes a great many. A wealthy neighbour stirs up envy, and a fleeing companion moves ill nature wherever he comes. What will become of those people then, who expose themselves to a popular violence? Which is ill both ways; either if they comply with the wicked, because they are many, or quarrel with the multitude, because they are not principalled alike. The best way is to retire, and associate only with those who may be the better for us and we for them: The respects are mutual, for while we teach, we learn. To deal freely; I dare not trust myself in the hands of much company; I never go abroad, and come home again the same man I went out. Something or other that I had put in order is discomposed: Some passion that I had subdued, gets head again: And it is just with our minds, as it is after a long indisposition with our bodies; we are grown so tender that the least breath of air exposes us to a relapse. And it is no wonder, if an extensive conversation be dangerous where there is scarce any single man, but by his discourse, example or behaviour, does either recommend to us, or imprint in us, or by any kind of contagion, insensibly infect us with one vice or other, and the more the people the greater is the peril. Especially let us have a care of public spectacles, where wickedness insinuates itself with pleasure; and above all others, let us avoid spectacles of cruelty and blood; and have nothing to do with

those who are perpetually whining and complaining; there may be faith and kindness there, but no peace. People who are either sad, or fearful, we do commonly, for their own sakes, set a guard upon them, for fear they should make an ill use of being alone: Especially the imprudent, who are still contriving mischief, either for others, or for themselves: in cherishing their lusts, or forming their designs. So much for the choice of a *companion*; we shall now proceed to that of a *friend*.

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## C H A P. XVIII.

### *The Blessings of Friendship.*

**O**F all felicities, the most charming is that of a *firm and gentle friendship*. It sweetens all our cares; dispels our sorrows, and counsels us in all extremities. Nay, if there were no other comfort in it, than the bare exercise of so generous a virtue, even for that single reason, a man would not be without it. Beside, that it is a sovereign antidote against all calamities; even against the fear of death itself.

**B**UT, we are not yet to number our friends \* by the *visits* that are made us; and confound the deficiencies of *ceremony* and *commerce* with the offices of *united affections*. *Caius Gracchus*, and after him *Livius Drusus*, were the men who introduced among the *Romans* the fashion of separating their visitants: Some were taken into their *closet*, others were only admitted into the *anti-chambers*; and some again were fain to wait in the *hall* perhaps, or in the *court*. So that they had their *first*, their *second*, and their *third rate* friends; but none of them true: Only they are called so in course, as we salute strangers with some title or other of respect at a venture. There is no depending upon those men who only take their compliment in their turn, and rather slip through the door, than enter at it: He will find himself in a great mistake, who either seeks for a friend in a place, or tries him in a feast.

**T**HE great difficulty rests in the \* choice of him; that is to say in the first place, let him be virtuous, for vice is contagious, and there is no trusting of the sound and the sick

\* *The choice of a friend.*

together: And he ought to be a wise man too, if a body knew where to find him: But in this case, he who is least ill, is best; and the highest degree of human prudence is only the most venial folly. That friendship where men's affections are cemented by an equal and by a common love of goodness, is neither by hope, or fear, or any private interest, ever dissolved; but we carry it with us to our graves and lay down our lives for it with satisfaction. *Paulina's* good, and mine, (says our author) were so wrap't up together, that in consulting her comfort, I provided for my own: And when I could not prevail upon her to take less care for me, she prevailed upon me to take more care of myself. Some people make it a question, which is the greater delight, the enjoying an old friendship, or the acquiring a new one: But it is in preparing a friendship, and in the possession of it, as it is with a husbandman in sowing and reaping: His delights are the hopes of his labor in the one case and the fruit of it in the other. My conversation lies among my books, but yet in the letters of a friend, methinks I have his company; and when I answer them, I do not only write, but speak: And in effect, a friend is an eye, a heart, a tongue, a hand at all distances. When friends see one another personally, they do not see one another as they do when they are divided, where the meditation dignifies the prospect: But they are effectually in a great measure absent, even when they are present. Consider their nights apart; their private studies; their separate employments, and necessary visits, and they are almost as much together, divided, as present. True friends are the whole world to one another; and he who is a friend to himself, is also a friend to mankind. Even in my very studies, the greatest delight I take in what I learn, is the teaching it to others: For there is no relish, methinks, in the possessing any thing without a partner: Nay, if wisdom itself were offered me, upon condition only of keeping it to myself, I should undoubtedly refuse it.

LUCILIUS tells me that he was written to by a \* friend; but cautions me withal, not to say any thing to him of the affair in question; for he himself stands upon the same guard. What is this but to affirm and to deny the same thing in the same breath; in calling a man a friend, whom we dare not trust as our own soul? For there must be no re-

*\*There must be no reserve in friendship.*



serves in friendship : As much deliberation as you please before the league is struck ; but no doubtings, or jealousies after. It is a preposterous weakness to love a man before we know him, and not care for him after. It requires time to consider of a friendship ; but the resolution once taken, entitles him to my heart : I look upon my thoughts to be as safe in his breast, as in my own ; I shall, without any scruple, make him the confidante of my most secret cares and counsels. It goes a great way toward making a man faithful, to let him understand that you think him so ; and he who does but so much as suspect that I will deceive him, gives me a kind of right to cozen him. When I am with my friend, methinks I am alone, and as much at liberty to speak any thing as to think it ; and, as our hearts are one, so must be our interests and convenience : For friendship lays all things in common, and nothing can be good to the one that is ill to the other. I do not speak of such a community as to destroy one another's property ; but as the father and the mother have two children, not one a piece, but each of them two.

BUT, let us have a care above all things, that our kindness \* be rightly founded ; for where there is any other invitation to friendship itself, that friendship \* *A generous friendship.* will be bought and sold. He derogates from the majesty of it, who makes it only dependent upon good fortune. It is a narrow consideration for a man to please himself in the thought of a friend ; because, says he, *I shall have one to help me when I am sick, in prison, or in want.* A brave man should rather take delight in the contemplation of doing the same offices for another. He who loves a man for his own sake, is in an error. A friendship of interest cannot lay any longer than the interest itself ; and this is the reason that men in prosperity are so much followed ; and when a man goes down the wind, no body comes near him. Temporary friends will never stand the test. One man is forsaken for fear or profit ; another is betrayed. It is a negotiation, not a friendship, that has an eye to advantages : Only through the corruption of times, that which was formerly a friendship is now become a design upon a booty : Alter your testament, and you loose your friend. But, my end of friendship is to have one dearer to me than myself ; and for the saving of whose life, I would cheerfully lay down my own

Taking this along with me ; that only wise men can be friends ; others are but companions : And that there is a great difference also betwixt love and friendship ; the one may sometimes do us hurt ; the other always does us good ; for one friend is helpful to another in all cases, as well in prosperity as affliction. We receive comfort even at a distance, from those we love, but then it is light and faint ; Whereas presence and conversation touches us to the quick ; especially if we find the man we love to be such a person as we wish.

It is usual with princes to reproach the living, by commending the dead ; and to praise those for speaking truth, from whom there is no longer any danger of hearing it. This is the case of *Augustus*. He was forced to banish his daughter *Julia* for her common and prostituted impudence ; and still, upon fresh information, he was often heard to say, *If Agrippa, or Mæcenas, had been now alive, this would never have been.* But yet where the fault lay, may be a question ; for perchance it was his own, who had rather complain for the want of them, than seek for others as good. The *Roman* loses by war, and by fire, *Augustus* could quickly supply and repair ; but, for the loss of two friends, he lamented his whole life after. One told *Xerxes* (a vain and foolish prince) when he made war upon *Greece*, *it would never come to a battle.* Another, *that he would find only empty cities and countries, for they would not so much as stand the very fame of his coming.* Others soothed him in the opinion of his prodigious numbers ; and they all concurred to puff him up to his destruction. Only *Demarethus* advised him not to depend too much upon his numbers, for he would rather find them a burden to him, than an advantage : And that three hundred men in the straits of the mountains, would be sufficient to give a check to his whole army : And that such an accident would undoubtedly turn his vast numbers to his confusion. It fell out afterwards as he foretold, and he had thanks for his fidelity. A miserable prince, who, among so many thousand subjects, had but one servant to tell him truth.

## C H A P. XIX.

*He who would be Happy, must take an account of his Time.*

**I**N the distribution of human life, we find, that a great part of it passes away in *evil-doing*; a greater yet, in doing just *nothing at all*: And effectually the whole, in doing things *beside our business*. Some hours we bestow upon ceremony and servile attendencies; some upon our pleasures, and the remainder runs to waste. What a deal of time is it that we spend in hopes and fears; love and revenge; in balls, treats, making of interests; suing for offices, soliciting of causes and slavish flatteries! The shortness of life, I know, is the common complaint both of fools and philosophers; as if the time we have was not sufficient for our duties. But it is with our lives as with our estates, a good husband makes a little go a great way; whereas, let the revenue of a prince fall into the hand of a prodigal, it is gone in a moment. So that the time allotted us, if it were well employed, were abundently enough to answer all the ends and purposes of mankind. But we squander it away in avarice, drink, sleep, luxury, ambition; fawning addresses, envy, rambling, voyages; impertinent studies, change of counsels, and the like; and when our portion is spent we find the want of it, though we give no heed to it in the passage: Insomuch that we have rather *made* our life short than *found* it so. You shall have some persons perpetually playing with their fingers, whistling, humming and talking to themselves; and others consume their days in the composing, hearing, or reciting of songs and lampoons. How many precious mornings do we spend in consultation with barbers, taylors, and tire-women, patching and painting, betwixt the comb and the glass? A counsel must be called upon every hair we cut, and one curl amiss, is as much as a body's life is worth. The truth is, we are more solicitous about our dress, than our manners; and about the order of our perriwigs than that of the government. At this rate, let us but discount, out of a life of an hundred years, that time which has been spent upon popular negotiations, frivolous amours, domestic brawls, saunterings up and down to no purpose; diseases that we have brought upon ourselves; and this large extent of life will not amount, perhaps, to the minority of another man. It is a

*long being*, but perchance a *short life*, and what is the reason of all this? We live as if we should never die, and without any thought of human frailty; when yet the very moment we bestow upon this man, or thing, may peradventure be our last. But the greatest loss of *time*, is delay and expectation, which depends upon the future. We let go the present, which we have in our power, we look forward to that which depends upon fortune, and so quit a certainty for an uncertainty. We should do by *time* as we do by a torrent, make use of it while we have it, for it will not last always.

THE calamities of human nature may be divided \* into the *fear of death*, and the *miseries and errors of life*. And it is the great work of mankind to master the one, and to rectify the other; and so live, as neither to make life irksome to us, nor death terrible. It should be our care, before we are old, to live well, and when we are so, to die well; that we may expect our end without sadness: for it is the duty of life to prepare ourselves for death; and there is not an hour we live, that does not remind us of our mortality: Time runs on, and all things have their fate, though it lies in the dark. The period is certain to nature, but, what am I the better for it, if it be not so to me? We propound travels, arms, adventures, without even considering that death lies in the way: Our time is set, and none of us know how near it is, but we are all of us agreed, that the decree is unchangeable. Why should we wonder to have that befall us to-day, which might have happened to us any minute since we were born? Let us therefore live as if every moment were to be our last; and set our accounts right every day that passes over our heads. We are not ready for death, and therefore we fear it, because we do not know what will become of us when we are gone; and that consideration strikes us with an inexplicable terror. The way to avoid this distraction, is to contract our business and our thoughts: When the mind is settled, a day, or an age, is all one to us; and the series of time, which is now our trouble, will then be our delight: For he who is steadily resolved against all uncertainties, shall never be disturbed, with the variety of them. Let us make haste therefore to live, since every day to a wise man is a new life: For he has done his business the day before, and so prepared himself for the next,

that if it be not his last, he knows yet that it might have been so. No man enjoys the true taste of life, but he who is willing and ready to quit it.

THE wit of man is not able to express the \* blindness of human folly, in taking so much more care of our fortunes, our houses and our money, than we do of our lives ; every body breaks in upon the one, *gratis*, but we betake ourselves to fire and sword, if any man invades the other. There is no dividing in the case of patrimony, but people share our time with us at pleasure : So profuse are we of that only thing, wherefore we may be honestly covetous. It is a common practice to ask an hour or two of a friend, for such or such a business, and it is as easily granted ; both parties only considering the occasion and not the thing itself. They never put time to account, which is the most valuable of all precious things : But because they do not see it, they reckon upon it as nothing ; and yet these easy men, when they come to die, would give the whole world for those hours again, which they so inconsiderately cast away before ; but there is no recovering of them. If they could number their days that are yet to come, as they can those that are already past, how would those very people tremble at the apprehension of death, though an hundred years hence, that never so much as think of it at present, though they know not but it may take them away the next minute ? It is an usual saying, *I would give my life for such or such a friend*, when at the same time we do give it without so much as thinking of it : Nay, when that friend is never the better for it, and we ourselves the worse. Our time is set, and day and night we travel on ; there is no bating by the way, and it is not in the power either of prince or people to prolong it. Such is the love of life, that even those decrepit dotards who have lost the use of it, will yet beg the continuance of it, and make themselves younger than they are, as if they could cozen even fate itself. When they fall sick, what promises of amendment if they escape that hour ! What exclamations against the folly of their mis-spent time ! And yet if they recover, they relapse. No man takes care to live well, but long ; when yet it is in every body's power to do the former, and is

\* We take more care of our fortunes than of our lives.

no man's to do the latter. We consume our lives, in providing the very instruments of life, and govern ourselves still with a regard to the future: So that we do not properly live, but we are about to live. How great a shame is it, to be laying new foundations of life at our last grasp; and for an old man (who can only prove his age by his beard) with one foot in the grave, to go to school again? While we are young, we may learn: Our minds are tractable, and our bodies fit for labor and study; but when age comes on, we are seized with languor and sloth, afflicted with diseases, and at last we leave the world as ignorant as we came into it: Only we *die* worse than we were *born*; which is none of nature's fault, but our's; for our fears, suspicions, perfidy, &c. are from ourselves. I wish with all my soul, that I had thought of my end sooner, but I must make the more haste now, and spur on, like these who set out late upon a journey; it will be better to learn late than not at all, though it be but only to instruct me how I may leave the stage with honor.

In the division of life there is \* *time present, past, and to come*. What we do is *short*; what we shall do is *doubtful*; but what we have done, is *certain*, and out of the power of fortune. The passage of time is wonderfully quick, and a man must look backward to see it: And in that retrospect he has all past ages at a view. But the present gives us the slip unperceived. It is but a moment that we live, and yet we are dividing it into *childhood, youth, man's estate, and old age*, all which degrees we bring into that narrow compass. If we do not watch, we lose our opportunities; if we do not make haste, we are left behind; our best hours escape us, the worst are come. The purest part of our life runs first, and leaves only the dregs at the bottom; and *that time which is good for nothing else we dedicate to virtue*; and only propound to begin to live at an age that very few people arrive at. What greater folly can there be in the world, than this loss of time, the future being so uncertain, and the dangers so irreparable? If death be necessary, why should any man fear it? And if the time of it be uncertain, why should we not always expect it? We should therefore first prepare ourselves by a virtuous life, against the dread of an inex-

itable death : And it is not for us to put off being good until such or such a business is over : For one business draws on another, and we do as good as sow it ; one grain produces more. It is not enough to philosophize when we have nothing else to do ; but we must attend wisdom, even to the neglect of things else ; for we are so far from having time to spare, that the age of the world would be yet too narrow for our business ; nor is it sufficient not to omit it, but we must not so much as intermit it.

There is nothing that we can properly call our own, but our time, and yet every body fools us out of it, who has a mind to do it. If a man borrows a paltry sum of money, there must needs be bonds and securities, and every common civility is presently charged upon account : But, he who has my time, thinks he owes me nothing for it, though it be a debt that gratitude itself can never repay. I cannot call any man poor who has enough still left, be it ever so little : It is good advice yet to those who have the world before them, to play the good husband betimes, for it is too late to spare at the bottom, when all is drawn out to the lees. He who takes away a day from me, takes away what he can never restore me. But our time is either forced away from us, or stolen from us, or lost : Of which, the last is the foulest miscarriage. It is in life, as in a journey : A book, or a companion, brings us to our lodging before we thought we were half way. Upon the whole matter ; we consume ourselves one upon another, without any regard at all to our own particularly. I do not speak of such as live in notorious scandal, but even those men themselves, whom the world pronounces happy, are smothered in their felicities ; servants to their professions and clients, and drowned in their lusts : We are apt to complain of the haughtiness of *great men*, when yet there is hardly any of them all so proud, but that at some time or other a man may yet have access to them, and perhaps a good word or look into the bargain. Why do we not rather complain of *ourselves* for being of all others, even to ourselves, the most deaf and inaccessible ?

COMPANY and business are great \* devourers of time,

and our vices destroy our lives, as well as our fortunes. The present is but a moment, and perpetually in flux; the time past we call to mind when we please, and it will abide the examination and inspection. But the busy man has not leisure to look back; or if he has, it is an unpleasant thing to reflect upon a life to be repented of: Whereas the conscience of a good life puts a man into a secure and perpetual possession of a felicity never to be disturbed, or taken away: But he who has led a wicked life, is afraid of his own memory, and on the review of himself, he finds only appetite, avarice, or ambition, instead of virtue. But still he who is not at leisure many times to live, must when his fate comes, whether he will or not, be at leisure to die. Alas! what is time to eternity? The age of a man to the age of the world? And how much of this life do we spend in fears, anxieties, tears, childhood? Nay, we sleep away the one half. How great part of it runs away in luxury, and excess? the ranging of our guests, our servants, and our dishes? As if we were to eat and drink, not for satiety but ambition. The nights may well seem short that are so dearly bought, and bestowed upon wine and women: The day is lost in expectation of the night, and the night in the apprehension of the morning. There is a terror in our very pleasures; and this vexatious thought in the very height of them, that *they will not last always*: Which is aanker in the delights, even of the greatest, and the most fortunate of men.

\* *Company and business are great devourers of time.*

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### CHAP. XX.

*Happy is the Man who may chuse his own Business.*

O H! the blessings of privacy, and leisure! the wish of powerful and eminent, but the privilege only of in-feriors; who are the only people that live to themselves: Nay, the very thought and hope of it, is a consolation, even in the middle of all the tumults and hazards, that attend greatness. It was the prayer of *Augustus* that he might live to retire, and deliver himself from public business: His discourses were still pointing that way, and the highest felicity which this mighty prince had in prospect, was the divesting himself of that illustrious



state, which how glorious soever in shew, had at the bottom of it, only anxiety and care. But it is one thing to retire for pleasure, and another thing for virtue: Which must be active, even in that retreat, and give proof of what it has learned: For a good and a wise man does in privacy consult the well being of posterity. *Zeno* and *Crysippus* did greater things in their studies, than if they had led armies, borne offices, or given laws: Which in truth they did not, to one city alone, but to all mankind; their quiet contributed more to the common benefit than the sweat and labour of other people. That retreat is not worth the while, which does not afford a man greater and nobler work than business. There is no slavish attendance upon great offices; no canvassing for places, no making of parties; no disappointments in my pretension to this charge, to that regiment; or to such or such a title; no envy of any man's favour or fortune: But a calm enjoyment of the general bounties of Providence, in company with a good conscience. A wise man is never so busy, as in the solitary contemplation of God and the works of nature. He withdraws himself to attend the service of future ages. And those counsels which he finds salutary to himself, he commits to writing, for the good of after times, as we do the receipts of sovereign antidotes or balsams. He who is well employed in his study, though he may seem to do nothing at all, does the greatest things yet of all others, in affairs both human and divine. To supply a friend with a sum of money, or give my voice for an office, these are only private and particular obligations; but he who lays down precepts for the governing of our lives, and the moderation of our passions, obliges human nature not only in the present, but in all succeeding generations.

He who would be quiet, let him repair to his \* philosophy, a study that has credit with all sorts of men. The eloquence of the bar, or whatever else addresses to the people, is never without enemies: But philosophy minds its own business, and even the worst have an esteem for it: There can never be such a conspiracy against virtue; the world can never be so wicked, but the very name of a philosopher shall still continue venerable and sacred. And yet philos-

sophy itself must be handled modestly, and with caution ; But what shall we say of *Cato* then, for his meddling in the broil of a civil war, and interposing himself in the quarrel betwixt two enraged princes? He who when *Rome* was split into two factions, betwixt *Pompey* and *Cesar*, declared himself against both. I speak this of *Cato's* last part, for in his former time the commonwealth was made unfit for a wise man's administration. All he could do then, was but bawling, and beating the air: One while he was lugged, and tumbled by the rabble, spit upon, and dragged out of the *forum*, and then again hurried out of the senate-house to prison. There are some things which we propound originally, and others that fall in as accessory to another proposition. If a wise man retire, it is no matter whether he does it because the commonwealth was wanting to him, or because he was wanting to it. But, to what republic shall a man betake himself? Not to *Athens*, where *Socrates* was condemned, and whence *Aristotle* fled for fear he should have been condemned too ; and where virtue was oppressed by envy : Not to *Carthage*, where there was nothing but tyranny, injustice, cruelty, and ingratitude. There is scarce any government to be found, that will either endure a wise man, or which a wise man will endure : So that privacy is made necessary, because the only thing which is better, is no where to be had. A man may commend navigation, and yet caution us against those seas that are troublesome and dangerous : So that he does as good command me not to weigh anchor, that commends sailing upon these terms. He who is a slave to business is the most wretched of slaves.

*But how shall I get myself at liberty ?* \* We can run any hazards for money ; take any pains for honor ; and why do we not venture something also for leisure and freedom : without which we must expect to live and die in a tumult : For, so long as we live in public, business breaks in upon us, as one blow drives on another ; and there is no avoiding it with either modesty or quiet. It is a kind of whirlpool that sucks a man in, and he can never disengage himself. A man of business cannot in truth be said to live, and not one of a thousand understands how to do it ; for how to live, and how to die, is

the lesson of every moment of our lives: All other arts have their masters. As a busy life is always a miserable life, so it is the greatest of all miseries, to be perpetually employed upon *other people's business*; for to sleep, to eat, to drink at their hours; to walk their pace, and to love and hate, as they do, is the vilest of servitudes. Now, though business must be quitted, let it not be done unseasonably; the longer we defer it, the more we endanger our liberty; and yet we must no more fly before the time, than linger when the time comes; or however, we must not love business for business sake; nor indeed do we, but for the profit that goes along with it: For we love the reward of misery, though we hate the misery itself. Many people I know, seek business without chusing it, and they are even weary of their lives without it, for want of entertainment in their own thoughts: The hours are long, and hateful to them when they are alone, and they seem as short on the other side in their debaucheries. When they are no longer *candidates*, they are *suffragants*. When they give over other people's business they do their own; and pretend business, but they make it, and value themselves upon being thought men of employment. Liberty is the thing which they are perpetually wishing for, and never come to obtain: A thing neither to be bought, nor sold: but a man must ask it of himself, and give it to himself. He who has given proof of his virtue in public, should do well to make trial of it in private also. It is not that solitude, or a country life teaches innocence or frugality; but vice falls of itself, without witnesses and spectators; for the thing it designs is to be taken notice of. Did ever any man put on rich clothes not to be seen? Or spread the pomp of his luxury, where no body was to take notice of it? If it were not for admirers, and spectators, there would be no temptations to excess; the very keeping us from exposing them, cures us of desiring them, for vanity and intemperance are fed with ostentation.

He who has lived at sea in a storm, let him \* retire, and die in the haven: But let his retreat be \* *Several people* without ostentation, and wherein he *withdraw for several ends.* may enjoy himself with a good conscience, without the want, the fear, the hatred, or the desire of any thing: Not out of a malev-

olent detestation of mankind, but for satisfaction, and repose. He who shuns both business, and men, either out of envy, or any other discontent, his retreat is but the life of a mole: Nor does he live to himself, as a wise man does, but to his bed, his belly, and his lusts. Many people seem to retire out of a weariness of public affairs, and the trouble of disappointments; and yet ambition finds them out even in that recess, into which fear and weariness had cast them: and so does luxury, pride, and most of the distempers of a public life. There are many who live close, not that they may live securely, but that they may transgress more privately; it is their conscience, not their estates, that make them keep a porter; for they live at such a rate, that to be seen before they are aware, is to be detected. *Crates* saw a young man walking, by himself; *have a care*, says he, *of lewd company*. Some men are busy in idleness, and make peace more laborious and troublesome than war: Nay, and more wicked too, when they bestow it upon such lusts and other vices, which even the license of a military life would not endure. We cannot call these people men of leisure, who are wholly taken up with their pleasures. A troublesome life is much to be preferred before a slothful one, and it is a strange thing, methinks, that any man should fear death, who has buried himself alive, as privacy, without letters, is but the burying of a man quick.

THERE are some who make a boast of their \* retreat, which is but a kind of lazy ambition: They retire to make people \* *Some men retire to be talked of.* talk of them: whereas I would rather withdraw to speak with myself. And what shall that be, but that which we are apt to speak of one another? I will speak ill of myself; I will examine, accuse, and punish my infirmities. I have no design to be cried up for a great man, who has renounced the world in a contempt of the vanity and madness of human life: I blame no body but myself, and I address only myself. He who comes to me for help is mistaken, for I am not a physician but a patient. And I shall be well enough content to have it said, when a man leaves me, *I took him for a happy, and a learned man, and truly I find no such matter.* I had rather have my retreat pardoned, than envied. There are some creatures that confound their footing about their

dens, that they may not be found out; and so should a wise man in the case of retirement. When the door is open, the thief passes it by, as not worth his while; but when it is bolted, and sealed, it is a temptation for people to be prying. To have it said, *that such a one is never out of his study, and sees no body, &c.* this furnishes matter for discourse. He who makes his retirement too strict and severe, does as good as call company to take notice of it.

EVERY man knows his own constitution. One eases his stomach by vomit, another supports it with good nourishment: He who has the gout forbears wine and bathing, and every man applies to the part, that is most infirm. He who shows a gouty foot, a lame hand, or contracted nerves, shall be permitted to lie still, and attend his cure. And why not so in the vices of his mind? We must discharge all impediments and make way for philosophy, as a study inconsistent with common business. To all other things we must deny ourselves openly and frankly: When we are sick, we refuse visits, keep ourselves close, and lay aside all public cares; and shall we not do as much when we philosophize? Business is the drudgery of the world; and only fit for slaves; but contemplation is the work of wise men. Not but that solitude and company may be allowed to take their turns: The one creates in us the love of mankind, and the other that of ourselves; solitude relieves us when we are sick of company; and conversation, when we are weary of being alone; so that the one cures the other. *There is no man in fine, so miserable as he who is at a loss how to spend his time.* He is restless in his thoughts, unsteady in his counsels; dissatisfied with the present, solicitous for the future: Whereas he who prudently computes his hours and his business, does not only fortify himself against the common accidents of life, but improves the most rigorous dispensations of Providence to his comfort; and stands firm under all the trials of human weakness.

## C H A P. XXI.

*The Contempt of Death makes all the Miseries of Life easy to us.*

**I**T is a hard task to master the natural desires of life, by a philosophical contempt of death; and to convince the world that there is no hurt in it, and crush an opinion, that, was brought up with us from our cradles. What help? What encouragement? What shall we say to human frailty, to carry it fearless through the fury of the flames, and upon the points of swords? What rhetoric shall we use, to bear down the universal consent of people to so dangerous an error? The captious, and superfine subtilties of the schools will never do the work. These speak many things sharp, but utterly unnecessary, and void of effect. The truth of it is, there is but one chain that holds all the world in bondage, and that is the love of life. It is not that I propound the making of death so indifferent to us, as it is whether a man's hairs be even or odd: For what with self-love, and an implanted desire in every thing, of preserving itself and a long acquaintance betwixt the soul and body; friends may be loth to part, and death may carry an appearance of evil, though in truth it is itself no evil at all. Beside that, we are to go to a strange place, in the dark; and under great uncertainties of our future state; so that people die in terror, because they do not know whither they are to go, and they are apt to fancy the worst of what they do not understand: These thoughts are indeed sufficient to startle a man of great resolution, without a wonderful support from above. And moreover, our natural scruples, and infirmities, are assisted by the wits and fancies of all ages, in their infamous and horrid description of another world: Nay, taking it for granted, that there will be no reward and punishment, they are yet more afraid of an annihilation, than of hell itself.

But, what is it we fear? *Gh!* It is a terrible thing to die: Well! and is it not better once to suffer it, \* than always to fear it? The earth itself suffers both *with me*, and *before me*. How many islands are swallowed up in the sea? How many towns do we sail over? Nay, how many nations are wholly lost, either by inundations, or earthquakes? And shall I be afraid of my little body?

Why should I, who am sure to die, and see that all other things are mortal, be fearful of coming to my last gasp myself? It is the fear of death that makes us base, and troubles and destroys the life that we would preserve: That aggravates all circumstances, and makes them formidable. We depend but upon a flying moment: Die we must; but when? What is that to us? It is the law of nature, the tribute of mortals, and the remedy of all evils. It is only the disguise that affrights us; as children that are terrified with a vizor. Take away the instruments of death, the fire, the axe, the guards, the executioner, the whips and the racks; Take away the pomp, I say, and the circumstances that accompany it, and death is no more than what my slave yesterday contemned: The pain is nothing to a fit of the stone; if it be tolerable, it is not great, and if intolerable, it cannot last long. There is nothing that nature has made necessary, which is more easy, than death; We are longer coming into the world than going out of it; and there is not any minute of our lives, wherein we may not reasonably expect it; Nay, the parting of the soul and body, is but a moment's work. What a shame is it then to stand in fear of any thing so long, that is over so soon?

Nor is it any great matter to \* overcome this fear; For we have examples as well of the \* *The fear of death* meanest of men as of the greatest who *is easily overcome.* have done it. There was a fellow to be exposed upon the theatre, who in disdain thrust a stick down his own throat, and choked himself: And another on the same occasion, pretended to nod upon the chariot, as if he were asleep, cast his head betwixt the spokes of the wheel, and kept his seat until his neck was broken. *Catigula*, upon a dispute with *Canius Julius*: *Do not flatter yourself,* says he *for I have given orders to put you to death.* I thank your most gracious majesty for it, says *Canius*; giving him to understand, perhaps, that under his government, death was a mercy: For he knew that *Catigula* seldom failed of being as good as his word in that case. He was at play when the officer carried him away to his execution, and beckoning to the centurion, *pray,* says he, *will you bear me witness, when I am dead and gone, that I had the better of the game.* He was a man exceedingly beloved and lamented; And for a farewell, after he had preached moderation

to his friends : *You, says he, are here disputing about the immortality of the soul, and I am going to learn the truth of it ; if I discover any thing upon that point, you shall hear of it.* Nay, the most timorous of creatures, when they see there is no escaping, they oppose themselves to all dangers ; the despair gives them courage, and the necessity overcomes the fear. *Socrates* was thirty days in prison after his sentence, and had time enough to have starved himself, and so have prevented the poison ; but he gave the world the blessing of his life as long as he could, and took that fatal draught, in the meditation, and contempt of death, *Marcellinus*, in a deliberation upon death, called several of his friends about him : One was fearful, and advised what he himself would have done in the case : Another gave the counsel which he thought *Marcellinus* would like best : But a friend of his, who was a *Stoick*, and a stout man, reasoned the matter to him after this manner : *Marcellinus*, do not trouble yourself as if it were such a mighty business that you have now in hand ; it is nothing to *live* ; all your servants do it, nay, your very beasts too ; but to *die* honestly, and resolutely, that is a great point. Consider with yourself, there is nothing pleasant in life, but what you have tasted already, and that which is to come is but the same over again : And how many men are there in the world, who rather chuse to die, than to suffer the nauseous tediousness of the repetition ? Upon which discourse he fasted himself to death. It was the custom of *Pacuvius* to solemnize, in a kind of pageantry, every day, his own funeral. When he had swilled and gormandized to a luxurious and beastly excess, he was carried away from supper to bed, with this song and acclamation, *he has lived, he has lived.* That which he did in lewdness, would become us to do in sobriety and prudence. If it shall please God to add another day to our lives, let us thankfully receive it ; but, however, it is our happiest and securest course, so to compose ourselves to-night, that we may have no anxious dependence upon to-morrow. *He who can say, I have lived this day, makes the next clear again,*

DEATH is the worst that either the severity of the laws or the cruelty of tyrants can impose upon us ; and it is the utmost extent of the dominion of fortune. He who is fortified against that, must consequently be superior to all other difficulties that are but in the way to it. Nay,

*He who despises death fears nothing.*



and on some occasions it requires more courage to live than to die. He who is not prepared for death, shall be perpetually troubled, as well with vain apprehensions as with real dangers. It is not death itself that is dreadful, but the fear of it that goes before it. When the mind is under a consternation, there is no state of life that can please us; for we do not so much endeavour to avoid mischiefs as to run away from them; and the greatest slaughter is upon a flying enemy. Had not a man better breathe out his last once for all, than lie agonizing in pains, consuming by inches, losing his blood by drops? And yet how many are there who are ready to betray their country and their friends, and to prostitute their very wives and daughters; to preserve a miserable carcass! Madmen and children have no apprehension of death, and it were a shame that our reason should not do as much toward our security, as their folly. But the great matter is to die considerately and cheerfully upon the foundation of virtue; for life in itself is irksome; and only eating and drinking in a circle.

How many are there, who, betwixt the \* apprehensions of death and the miseries of life, are at their wit's end what to do with themselves? \* All men must die.

Wherefore let us fortify ourselves against those calamities from which the prince is no more exempt than the beggar. *Pompey* the great, had his head taken off by a boy and an eunuch (young *Ptolemy*, and *Photidius*.) *Caligula* commanded the tribune *Decimus* to kill *Lepidus*; and another tribune (*Chareus*) did as much for *Caligula*. Never was any man so great, but he was as liable to suffer mischief, as he was able to do it. Has not a thief, or an enemy, your throat at his mercy? Nay, and the meanest of servants has the power of life and death over his master; for, whosoever contemns his own life, may be master of another body's. You will find in history, that the displeasure of servants has been as fatal as that of tyrants. And what matters it, the power of him we fear, when the thing we fear is in every body's power? Suppose I fall into the hands of an enemy, and the conqueror condemns me to be led in triumph: It is but carrying me thither, whither I should have gone without him; that is to say, toward death, whither I have been marching ever since I was born: It is the fear of our last hour that disquiets all the rest. By the justice of all constitutions, mankind are condemned to a

a capital punishment: Now, how despicable would that man appear, who, being sentenced to death in common with the whole world, should only petition, that he might be the last man brought to the block? Some men are particularly afraid of thunder, and yet extremely careless of other, and of greater dangers; as if that were all they have to fear. Will not a sword, a stone, a fever do the work as well? Suppose the bolt should hit us, it were yet braver to die with a stroke, than with a bare apprehension of it: Beside the vanity of imagining, that heaven and earth should be put into such a disorder only for the death of one man. A good and a brave man is not moved with lightning, tempest or earthquakes: But perhaps he would voluntarily plunge himself into that gulph, where otherwise we should only fall: The cutting of a corn, or swallowing of a fly, is enough to dispatch a man; and it is no matter how great that is, that brings me to my death, so long as death itself is but little. Life is a small matter; but it is a matter of importance to contemn it. Nature that begat us, expels us; and a better, and a safer place is provided for us. And what is death but a ceasing to be what we were before? We are kindled, and put out: To cease to be, and not to begin to be, is the same thing. We die daily; and while we are growing, our life decreases: Every moment that passes, takes away part of it: All that is past is lost: Nay, we divide with death the very instant that we live. As the last sand in the glass does not measure the hour, but finishes it, so the last moment that we live does not make up death, but concludes. There are some who pray more earnestly for death, than we do for life; but it is better to receive it cheerfully when it comes, than to hasten it before the time.

*But, what is it that we live any longer for? Not for our pleasures; for those we have tasted over and over, even to satiety: So that there is no point of luxury that is new to us: But a man would be loth to leave his country and his friends behind him: That is to say, he would have them go first; for that is the least part of his care. Well! but I would fain live to do more good, and discharging myself in the offices of life: As if to die were not the duty of every man who lives. We are loth to leave our possessions; and no man swims well with his luggage. We are all of*

us equally fearful of death, and ignorant of life: But what can be more shameful, than to be solicitous upon the brink of security? If death is at any time to be feared, it is always to be feared; but the way never to fear it, is to be often thinking of it. To what end is it to put off for a little while, that which we cannot avoid? He who dies does but follow him who is dead. *Why are we then so long afraid of that, which is so short a time in doing?* How miserable are those people who spend their lives in the dismal apprehensions of death! For they are beset on all hands, and every minute in dread of a surprise. We must therefore look about us, as if we were in an enemy's country; and consider our last hour, not as a punishment; but as the law of nature: The fear of it is a continual palpitation of the heart, and he who overcomes that terror, shall never be troubled with any other. Life is a navigation; we are perpetually wallowing, & dashing one against another: Sometimes we suffer shipwreck, but we are always in danger, and in expectation of it. And what is it when it comes, but either the end of a journey, or a passage? It is as great a folly to fear *death*, as to fear *old age*; nay, as to fear *life* itself; for he who would not die, ought not to live, since death is the condition of life. Beside, that is a madness to fear a thing that is certain, for where there is no doubt, there is no place for fear.

We are still chiding of \* fate; and even those who exact the most rigorous justice betwixt man and man, are yet themselves unjust to Providence. *Why was such a one taken away in the prime of his years?* \* *To die is to obey nature.* As if it were the number of years that makes death easy to us, and not the temper of the mind. He who would live a little longer to-day, would be as loth to die an hundred years hence. But which is most reasonable, for us to obey nature, or for nature to obey us? Go we must at last; and no matter how soon. It is the work of fate to make us live long, but it is the business of virtue to make a short life sufficient. Life is to be measured by action, not by time: A man may die old at thirty, and young at fourscore. Nay the one lives after death, and the other perished before he died. I look upon age among the effects of chance. How long I shall live is in the power of others, but it is in my own, how well. The largest space of time, is to live until a man is wise. He who dies of old age,

Does no more than go to bed when he is weary. Death is the test of life; and it is that only which discovers what we are, and distinguishes betwixt ostentation and virtue. A man may dispute, cite great authorities, talk learnedly, huff it out, and yet be rotten at heart. But let us soberly attend our business; and since it is uncertain *when or where* we shall die, let us look for death in all places, and all times: We can never study that point too much, which we can never bring to experiment, whether we know it or not. It is a blessed thing to dispatch the business of life, before we die; and then to expect death in the possession of an happy life. He is the great man who is willing to die, when his life is pleasant to him. An honest life is not a greater good than an honest death. How many brave young men, by an instinct of nature, are carried on to great actions, and even to the contempt of all hazards!

It is childish to go out of the \* world groaning, and wailing, as we came into it! Our bodies must be thrown away as the secondine that wraps up the infant; the other being only the covering of the soul. We shall then discover the secrets of nature; the darkness shall be discussed, and our souls irradiated with light and glory: A glory without a shadow; a glory that shall surround us, and from whence we shall look down, and see day and night beneath us. If we cannot lift up our eyes toward the lamp of heaven without dazzling, what should we do when we come to behold the divine light in its illustrious original? That death which we so much dread, is not a determination, but the intermission of a life, which will return again. All those things that are the very cause of life, are the way to death: We fear it as we do fame; but it is a great folly to fear words. Some people are so impatient of life, that they are still wishing for death; but he who wishes to die, does not desire it: Let us rather wait God's pleasure, and pray for health and life. If we have a mind to live, why do we wish to die? If we have a mind to die, we may do it without talking of it. Men are a great deal more resolute in the article of *death* itself, than they are about the circumstances of it. For it gives a man courage to consider that his fate is inevitable; the slow approaches of death are the most troublesome to us; as we see many a gladiator, who,

\* *It is childish to die lamenting.*

upon his wounds, will direct his adversary's weapon to his very heart; though but timorous perhaps in the very combat. There are some who have not the heart either to live or die; that is a sad case. But this we are sure of, *the fear of death is a continual slavery, as the contempt of it is certain liberty.*

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## CHAP. XXII.

*Consolations against Death, from the Providence and the necessity of it.*

**T**HIS life is only a prelude to eternity, where we are to expect another original, and another state of things: We have no prospect of heaven here, but at a distance; let us therefore expect our last, and decretory hour with courage. The last (I say) to our bodies, but not to our minds; our luggage we must leave behind us, and return as naked out of the world, as we came into it. The day which we fear as our last, is but the birth day of our eternity; and it is the only way to it; so that what we fear as a rock, proves to be but a port; in many cases to be desired, never to be refused; and he who dies young, has only made a quick voyage of it. Some are becalmed; others cut it away before the wind; and we live just as we sail: First, we run our childhood out of sight; our youth next; and then our middle age; after that follows old age, and brings us to the common end of mankind. It is a great Providence that we have more ways out of the world, than we have into it.—Our security stands upon a point, the very article of death. It draws a great many blessings into a very narrow compass: And although the fruit of it does not seem to extend to the defunct, yet the difficulty of it is more than balanced by the contemplation of the future. Nay, suppose that all the business of this world should be forgotten; or my memory traduced, what is all this to me? *I have done my duty.* Undoubtedly that which puts an end to all other evils, cannot be a very great evil itself; and yet it is no easy thing for flesh and blood to despise life. What if death comes? If it does not stay with us, why should we fear it? One hangs himself for a mistress, another leaps the garret window to avoid a choleric master; a third runs away, and stabs himself, rather than be brought back.

again. We see the force even of our infirmities, and shall we not then do greater things for the love of virtue? To suffer death is but the law of nature; and it is a great comfort that it can be done but once: In the very convulsions of it, we have this consolation, that our pain is near an end, and that it frees us from all the miseries of life. What it is we know not; and it were rash to condemn what we do not understand: But this we presume; either that we shall pass out of this into a better life, where we shall live with tranquillity and splendor, in diviner mansions; or else return to our first principles, free from the sense of any inconvenience. There is nothing immortal, nor many things lasting; but by divers ways every thing comes to an end. What an arrogance is it then, when the world itself stands condemned to a dissolution; that man alone should expect, to live for ever! It is unjust not to allow unto the Giver the power of disposing of his own bounty; and a folly only to value the present. Death is as much a debt as money; and life is but a journey towards it. Some dispatch it sooner, others later; but we must all have the same period. The thunder bolt is undoubtedly just, that draws even from those who are struck with it, a veneration. A great soul, takes no delight in staying with the body, it considers whence it came, and knows whither it is to go. The day will come, that shall separate this mixture of soul and body, of divine and human: My body I will leave where I found it; my soul I will restore to heaven, which would have been there already, but for the clog that keeps it down: And beside, how many men have been the worse for longer living, who might have died with reputation, if they had sooner been taken away? How many disappointments of hopeful youths, who have proved dissolute men? Over and above the ruins, shipwrecks, torments, poisons, that attend long life: A blessing so deceitful, that if a child were in condition to judge of it, and at liberty to refuse it, he would not take it.

\* WHAT Providence has made necessary, human prudence should comply with cheerfully: And there is a necessity of death, so that necessity is equal, and invincible.

\* *What God has made necessary, man* cause of complaint for that which

*should comply with every man must suffer as well as himself. When we should die, we will not, and when we would not, we must: But our fate is fixed, and unavoidable is the decree.*

Why do we then stand trembling when the time comes? Why do we not as well lament that we did not live a thousand years ago, as that we shall not live a thousand years hence? It is but travelling the great road, and to the place whither we must all go at last. It is but submitting to the law of nature, and to that lot which the whole world has suffered who have gone before us; and so must they too who are to come after us. Nay, how many thousands, when our time comes, will expire in the same moment with us? He who will not follow, shall be drawn by force: And is it not much better now to do that willingly, which we shall otherwise be made to do in spite of our hearts? The sons of mortal parents must expect a mortal posterity; death is the end of great and small. We are born helpless, and exposed to the injuries of all creatures, and of all weathers. The very necessaries of life are deadly to us. We meet with our fate in our dishes, in our cups, and in the very air we breathe; may our very birth is inauspicious, for we come into the world weeping; and in the middle of our designs, while we are meditating great matters, and stretching our thoughts to after ages, death cuts us off; and our longest date is only the revolution of a few years. One man dies at a table; another goes away in his sleep; a third in his mistress's arms; a fourth is stabbed; another is stung with an adder, or crushed with the fall of an house. We have several ways to our end, but the end itself, which is death, is still the same. Whether we die by a sword, by an halter, by a potion, or by a disease, it is all but death. A child dies in the clouts, and an old man at an hundred; they are both mortal alike, tho' the one goes sooner than the other. All that lies betwixt the cradle and the grave, is uncertain. If we compute the troubles, the life even of a child is long; if the sweetness of the passage, that of an old man is short; the whole is slippery and deceitful, and only death certain; and yet all people complain of that which never deceived any man. *Seneca* raised himself from a small beginning, to a vast fortune, being very

well skilled in the faculties both of getting and of keeping, and either of them was sufficient for the doing of his business. He was a man infinitely careful, both of his patrimony, and of his body. He gave me a morning's visit (says our author) and after that visit he went away, and spent the rest of the day with a friend of his who was desperately sick. At night he was merry at supper, and seized immediately after with a quinsy, which dispatched him in a few hours. This man who had money at use in all places, and in the very course and height of his prosperity, was thus cut off. How foolish a thing is it then for a man to flatter himself with long hopes, and to pretend to dispose of the future? Nay, the very present slips through our fingers, and there is not that moment which we can call our own. How vain a thing is it for us to enter upon projects; and to say to ourselves, *well, I will go build, purchase, discharge such offices, settle my affairs, and then retire?* We are all of us born to the same casualties; all equally frail, and uncertain of to-morrow. At the very altar, where we pray for life, we learn to die, by seeing the sacrifices killed before us. But there is no need of a wound, or searching the heart for it, when the noose of a cord, or the smothering of a pillow will do the work. All things have their seasons; they begin, they increase, and they die. The heavens and the earth grow old, and are appointed their periods. That which we call death, is but a pause or suspension; and in truth a progress to life; only our thoughts look downward upon the body, and not forward upon things to come. All things under the sun are mortal; cities, empires: And the time will come when it shall be a question where they were, and perchance whether they ever had a being, or not? Some will be destroyed by war; others by luxury, fire, inundations, earthquakes; Why should it trouble me then to die, as a forerunner of an universal dissolution? A great mind submits itself to God, and suffers willingly what the law of the universe will otherwise bring to pass upon necessity. That good old man *Bassus* (though with one foot in the grave) how cheerful a mind does he bear! He lives in the view of death, and contemplates his own end with less concern of thought or countenance than he would do another man's. It is a hard lesson, and we



are a long time learning it, to receive our death without trouble, especially in the case of *Basius*. In other deaths there is a mixture of hope; a disease may be cured, a fire quenched, a falling house either propped or avoided; the sea may swallow a man, and throw him up again; a pardon may interpose betwixt the axe and the body; but in the case of old age, there is no place for either hope or intercession. Let us live in our bodies therefore, as if we were only to lodge in them this night, and to leave them to-morrow. It is the frequent thought of death that must fortify us against the necessity of it. He who has armed himself against poverty, may perhaps come to live in plenty. A man may strengthen himself against pain and yet live in a state of health; against the loss of friends, and never loose any: But he who fortifies himself against the fear of death, shall most certainly have occasion to employ that virtue. It is the care of a wise and a good man to look to his manners and actions; and rather how well he lives, than how long; For to die sooner or later, is not the business; but to die well, or ill: For *death brings us to immortality.*

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#### CHAP. XXIII.

##### *Against immoderate Sorrow for the Death of Friends.*

**N**EXT to the encounter of death in our own bodies, the most sensible calamity to an honest man, is the death of a friend; and we are not in truth, without some generous instances of those who have preferred a friend's life before their own; and yet this affliction, which by nature is so greivous to us, is by virtue and Providence made familiar, and easy.

To lament the death of a friend is both natural\* and just: A sigh or a tear, I would allow to his memory; but no profuse or obstinate sorrow. Clamours and public lamentations are not so much the effects of grief, as of vain glory. He who is sadder in company than alone, shews rather the ambition of his sorrow, than the piety of it. Nay, and in the violence of his passion, there fall out twenty things that set him a laughing. At the long run, time cures all, but it were better done by moderation and wisdom. Some people do as good as set a watch upon themselves, as if they were afraid that their grief would make

\* *Sorrow within bounds is allowable.*

an escape. The ostentation of grief is many times more than the grief itself. When any body is within hearing, what groans and outcries ! When they are alone and private, all is hush and quiet : So soon as any body comes in, they are at it again ; and down they throw themselves upon the bed ; fall to wringing their hands, and wishing themselves dead ; which they might have executed by themselves ; but their sorrow goes off with the company. We forsake nature, and run over to the practices of the people, who never were the authors of any thing that is good. If destiny were to be wrought upon by tears, I would allow you to spend your days and nights in sadness and mourning ; tearing your hair and beating your breast ; but if fate be inexorable, and death will keep what he has taken, grief is to no purpose. And yet I would not advise insensibility and hardness ; it were inhumanity, and not virtue, not to be moved at the separation of familiar friends and relations : Now in such cases we cannot command ourselves ; we cannot forbear weeping, and we ought not to forbear : But, let us not pass the bounds of affection, and run into imitation : Within these limits it is some ease to the mind.

A WISE man gives way to tears \* in some cases, and cannot avoid them in others. When one is struck with the surprises of ill news, as the death of a friend, or the like ; or upon the last embrace of an acquaintance under the hand of an executioner, he lies under a natural necessity of weeping and trembling. In another case we may indulge our sorrow, as upon the memory of a dead friend's conversation, or kindness, one may let fall tears of generosity and joy. We favor the one, and we are overcome by the other ; and this is well ; but we not upon any terms to force them : They may flow of their own accord, without derogating from the dignity of a wise man, who at the same time both preserves his gravity, and obeys nature. Nay, there is a certain *decorum* even in weeping ; for excess of sorrow is as foolish as profuse laughter. Why do we not as well cry, when our trees that we took pleasure in, shed their leaves, as at the loss of other satisfactions ? When the next season repairs them, either with the same again, or others in their places. We may accuse fate, but we cannot alter it, for it is hard and inexorable, and not to be removed, either with reproaches or

tears. They may carry us to the *dead*, but never bring them back again to us. If reason does not put an end to our sorrows, fortune never will : One is pinched with poverty ; another solicited with ambition, and fears the very wealth that he covets. One is troubled for the loss of children ; another for the want of them ; so that we shall sooner want tears than matter for them ; let us therefore spare that for which we have so much occasion. I do confess that in the very parting of friends, there is something of an uneasiness and trouble ; but it is rather voluntary than natural ; and it is custom more than sense, that affects us ; we do rather impose a sorrow upon ourselves, than submit to it ; as people cry when they have company ; and when nobody looks on, all is well again. To mourn without measure, is folly ; and not to mourn at all, is insensibility. The best temper is betwixt piety and reason ; to be sensible, but neither transported nor cast down. He who can put a stop to his tears and pleasures when he will, is safe. It is an equal infelicity to be either too soft, or too hard. We are overcome by the one, and we are put to struggle with the other. There is a certain intemperance in that sorrow that passes the rules of modesty ; and yet great piety is in many cases a dispensation to good manners. The loss of a son, or of a friend, cuts a man to the heart, and there is no opposing the first violence of this passion ; but when a man comes once to deliver himself up wholly to lamentations, he is to understand, that though some tears deserve compassion, others are yet ridiculous. A grief that is fresh, finds pity and comfort ; but when it is inveterate it is laughed at, for it is either counterfeit or foolish. Beside that, to weep excessively for the dead, is an affront to the living. The most justifiable cause of mourning is to see good men come to ill ends, and virtue oppressed by the iniquity of fortune. But in this case too, they either suffer resolutely, and yield us delight in their courage and example ; or meanly, and so give us the least trouble for the loss. He who dies cheerfully dries up my tears, and he who dies whimingly does not deserve them. I would bear the death of friends and children, with the same constancy that I would expect my own ; and no more lament the one, than fear the other. He who bethinks himself how often friends will be parted, will find more time lost among the living, than upon the dead ; and the most desperate mount-

ers are they who cared least for their friends when they were living ; for they think to redeem their credit for want of kindness to the living, by extravagant ravings after the dead. Some (I know) will have grief to be only the perverse delight of a restless mind ; and sorrows and pleasures to be near akin : And there are some, I am confident, who find joy even in their tears. But which is more barbarous, to be insensible of grief for the death of a friend, or to fish for pleasure in grief, when a son perhaps is burning, or a friend expiring ? To forget one's friend, to bury the memory with the body ; to lament out of measure, is all inhuman. He who is gone, either would not have his friends tormented ; or does not know that they are so : If he does not feel it, it is superfluous : If he does, it is unacceptable to him. If reason cannot prevail, reputation may ; for immoderate mourning lessons a man's character : It is a shameful thing for a wise man to make the weariness of grieving the remedy of it. In time, the most stubborn grief will leave us, if in prudence we do not leave that first.

But do I grieve for my friend's sake, or for my \* own ? Why should I afflict myself for the loss of him who is either happy, or not at all in being ? In the one case it is envy ; and in the other it is madness. We are apt to say, *what would I give to see him again, and to enjoy his conversation ! I was never sad in his company ; my heart lifted, whenever I met him ; I want him whenever I go :* All that is to be said is, *the greater the loss, the greater is the virtue to overcome it.* If grieving will do no good, it is an idle thing to grieve ; and if that which has befallen one man remains to all, it is as unjust to complain. The whole world is upon march towards the same point ; why do we not cry for ourselves who are to follow, as well as for him who is gone first ? Why do we not as well lament beforehand for that which we know will be, and cannot possibly but be ? He is not gone, but sent before. As there are many things that he has lost, so there are many things that he does not fear. As anger, jealousy, envy, &c. Is he not more happy in desiring nothing, than miserable in what he has lost ? We do not mourn for the absent, why then for the dead, who are effectually in no other case ? We cannot have lost one blessing, but we have cradly left ; and shall not all these satisfactions support us against one sorrow ?

The comfort of having a friend \* may be taken away, but not that of having had one. As there is a sharpness in some fruits and a bitterness in some wines that please us, so there is a mixture in the remembrance of friends, where the loss of the company is sweetened again by the contemplation of their virtues. In some respects I have lost what I had ; and in others, I retain still what I have lost. It is an ill construction of Providence, to reflect only upon my friend's being taken away, without any regard to the benefit of his being once given me. Let us therefore make the best of our friends while we have them ; for how long we shall keep them, is uncertain. I have lost a hopeful son, but how many fathers have been deceived in their expectations ? And how many noble families have been destroyed by luxury and riot ? He who grieves for the loss of a son, what if he had lost a friend ? And yet he who has lost a friend, has more cause of joy that he once had him, than of grief, that he is taken away. Shall a man bury his friendship with his friend ? We are ungrateful for that which is past, in hope of what is to come ; as if that which is to come would not quickly be past too. That which is past we are sure of. We may receive satisfaction, it is true, both from the future, and what is already past ; the one by expectation, and the other by memory ; only the one may possibly not come to pass, and it is impossible to make the other not to have been.

But \* there is no applying of consolation to fresh and bleeding sorrow ; the very discourse irritates the grief, and inflames it. It is like an unseasonable medicine in a distemper ; when the first violence is over, it will be more tractable, and endure the handling. Those people whose minds are weakened by long felicity, may be allowed to groan and complain, but it is otherways with those who have led their days in misfortunes. A long course of adversity has this good in it, that though it vexes a body a great while, it comes to harden us at last :. As a raw soldier shrinks at every wound, and dreads the surgeon more than an enemy ; whereas, a veteran sees his own body cut, and lamed, with as little concern as if it were an

\* A friend may be taken away, but not the comfort of the friendship.

but not that of having had one. As there is a sharpness in some fruits and a bitterness in some wines that please us, so there is a mixture in the remembrance of friends, where the loss of the

\* There is no dealing with the first transports of sorrow.

other's. With the same resolution should we stand the shock and cure of all misfortunes; we are never the better for our experience, if we have not yet learned to be miserable. And there is no thought of curing us by the diversion of sports, and entertainments; we are apt to fall into relapses; wherefore we had better overcome our sorrow, than delude it.

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#### CHAP. XXIV.

##### *Consolations against Banishment, and Bodily Pain.*

**I**T is a master piece to draw good out of evil; and by the help of virtue to improve misfortunes into blessings. *It is a sad condition, you will say, for a man to be barred the freedom of his own country.* And is not this the case of thousands that we meet every day in the streets? Some, for ambition; others, to negotiate, or for curiosity, delight, friendship, study, experience, luxury, vanity, discontent: Some to exercise their virtues, others, their vices; and not a few to prostitute either their bodies or their eloquence? To pass now from pleasant countries into the worst of islands; let them be ever so barren, or rocky, the people ever so barbarous, or the climate ever so intemperate; he who is banished thither, shall find many strangers to live there for their pleasure. The mind of man is naturally curious, and restless; which is no wonder, considering its divine original: For heavenly things are always in motion; witness the stars, and the orbs, which are perpetually moving, rolling, and changing of place, and according to the law and appointment of nature. But here are no woods, you will say, no rivers; no gold, nor pearl; no commodity for traffic or commerce; nay, hardly provision enough to keep the inhabitants from starving. It is very right; here are no palaces, nor artificial grottos or materials for luxury, and excess; but we lie under the protection of heaven; and a poor cottage for a retreat, is more worth than the most magnificent temple, when that cottage is consecrated by an honest man under the guard of his virtue. Shall any man think banishment grievous, when he may take such company along with him? Nor is there any banishment but yields enough for our necessities, and no

kingdom is sufficient for superfluities. It is the mind that makes us rich in a desert; and if the body be but kept alive, the soul enjoys all spiritual felicities in abundance. What signifies the being banished from one spot of ground to another, to a man who has his thoughts above, and can look forward and backward, and wherever he pleases; and that wherever he is, has the same matter to work upon? The body is but the prison, or the clog of the mind; subjected to punishments, robberies, diseases; but the mind is sacred, and spiritual, and liable to no violence. Is it that a man shall want garments or covering in banishment? The body is as easily clothed as fed; and nature has made nothing hard that is necessary. But if nothing will serve us, but rich embroideries and scarlet, it is none of fortune's fault that we are poor, but our own. Nay, suppose a man should have all restored him back again that he has lost, it will come to nothing; for he will want more after that, to satisfy his desires, than he did before to supply his necessities. Insatiable appetites are not so much a thirst, as a disease.

To come lower now; where is <sup>\*</sup> that people or nation, who have not changed their place of abode? Some by the fate of war; others have been cast by tempests, shipwrecks, or want of provisions upon unknown coasts. Some have been forced abroad by pestilence, sedition, earthquakes, surcharge of people at home. . . . Some travel to see the world; others for commerce; but, in fine, it is clear, that upon some reason or other, the whole race of mankind have shifted their quarters; changed their very names, as well as their habitations: insomuch that we have lost the very memorials of what they were. All these transportations of people, what are they but public banishments? The very founder of the Roman Empire was an exile: Briefly, the whole world has been transplanted, and one mutation treads upon the heel of another. That which one man desires, turns another man's stomach; and he who proscribes me to-day, shall himself be cast out to-morrow. We have however this comfort in our misfortune; we have the same nature, the same Providence, and we carry our vis-

*\* Banishment is but change of place, in which sense, all people and nations have been banished.*

tues along with us. And this blessing we owe to the Almighty Power call it what you will; either a God of an *incorporeal reason*, a *divine spirit*, or *fate*, and the *unchangeable course of causes and effects*: It is however so ordered; that nothing can be taken from us, but what we can well spare; and that which is most magnificent, and valuable, continues with us. Wherever we go we have the heavens over our heads, and no farther from us than they were before; and so long as we can entertain our eyes and thoughts with those glories, what matter is it what ground we tread upon?

In the case of pain, or sickness, it is only the body that is affected: It may take off the speed of a footman, or bind the hands of a cobbler; but the mind is still at liberty to hear, learn, teach, advise, and to do other good offices. *Pain only affects the body, not the mind.* A man who is in pain, and yet patient, is an example of public benefit; Virtue may shew itself as well in the bed as in the field; and he who cheerfully encounters the terrors of death, and corporeal anguish, is as great a man as he who most generously hazards himself in a battle. A disease it is true, bars us of some pleasures, but procures others. Drink is never so grateful to us, as in a burning fever; nor meat, as when we have fasted ourselves sharp, and hungry. The patient may be forbidden some sensual satisfaction, but no physician will forbid us the delight of the mind. Shall we call any sick man miserable, because he must give over his intemperance of wine and gluttony, and betray himself to a diet of more sobriety, and expense; and abandon his luxury, which is the distemper of the mind as well as of the body? It is troublesome, I know, at first, to abstain from the pleasures we have been used to, and to endure hunger and thirst; but in a little time we loose the very appetite, and it is no trouble then, to be without that which we do not desire. In diseases, there are great pains; but if they go long they remit, and give us some intervals of ease; if short and violent, either they dispatch us, or consume themselves: So that either their respites make them tolerable, or the extremity makes them short. So merciful is the Almighty to us, that our torments cannot be very sharp, and lasting. The acute pains are those that of



fect the nerves, but there is this comfort in them too, that they will quickly make us stupid and insensible. In cases of extremity, let us call to mind the most eminent instances of patience and courage, and turn our thoughts from afflictions to the contemplation of virtue. Suppose it be the stone, the gout, nay, the rack itself: How many have endured it without so much as a groan, or word speaking; without so much as asking for relief, or giving an answer to a question? Nay, they have laughed at the tormentors upon the very torture, and provoked them to new experiments of their cruelty, which they have had still in derision. The *Asthma* I look upon, as of all diseases, the most importunate; the physician calls it *the meditation of death*, as being rather an agony, than a sickness: The fit holds not above an hour, as nobody is long in expiring. There are three things greivous in sickness, the fear of death, bodily pain, and the intermission of our pleasures: The first is to be imputed to nature, not to the disease; for we do not die because we are sick, but because we live. Nay sickness itself has preserved many a man from dying.

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#### CHAP. XXV.

*Poverty to a wise man is rather a Blessing than a Misfortune.*

**N**O man shall ever be poor, who goes to himself for what he wants; and that is the readiest way to riches: Nature indeed will have her due; but yet what ever is beyond necessity, is precarious, and not necessary. It is not her business to gratify the palate, but to satisfy a craving stomach: Bread, when a man is hungry, will answer let it be ever so coarse; and water when he is dry; let his thirst be quenched, and nature is satisfied; no matter whence it comes, or whether he drinks in gold, silver, or in the hollow of his hand. To promise a man riches, and to teach him poverty, is to deceive him: But shall I call him poor who wants nothing; though he may be beholden for it to his patience rather than to his fortune? Or shall any man deny him to be rich whose riches can never be taken away? Whether it is better to have much or enough? He who has much, desires more, which shews that he has not yet

enough; but he who has enough, is at rest. Shall a man be reputed the less rich, for not having that for which he shall be banished; for which his very wife, or son shall poison him? That which gives him security in war, and quiet in peace; which he possesses without danger, and disposes of without trouble? No man can be poor who has enough; nor rich who covets more than he has. *Alexander*, after all his conquests, complained that he wanted more worlds; he desired something more, even when he had all: And that which was sufficient for human nature, was not enough for one man. Money never made any man rich; for the more he had, the more he still coveted. The richest man who ever lived, is poor, in my opinion, and in any man's may be so: But he who keeps himself to the stint of nature, does neither feel poverty, nor fear it; nay, even in poverty itself, there are some things superfluous. Those whom the world call happy, their felicity is false splendor, that dazzles the eyes of the vulgar; but our rich man is glorious, and happy within. There is no ambition in hunger or thirst: Let there be food, and no matter for the table, the dish, and the servants; nor with what meats nature is satisfied. Those are the torments of luxury that rather stuff the stomach than fill it: It studies rather to cause an appetite, than to allay it. It is not for us to say, *this is not handsome; that is common; the other offends my eye*: Nature provides for health, not delicacy. When the trumpet sounds a charge, the poor man knows that he is not aimed at: When they cry out *fire*, his body is all he has to look after; if he be to take a journey, there is no blocking up of streets, and thronging of passages for a parting compliment: A small matter fills his belly, and contents his mind; he lives from hand to mouth, without caring or fearing for to-morrow. The temperate rich man is but his counterfeit; his wit is quicker, and his appetite calmer.

No man finds poverty a trouble to \* him, but he who thinks it so; and he who thinks it so, \* *Poverty is only makes it so. Does not a rich man travel more at ease, with less luggage, and fewer servants? Does he not eat, many times as little, and as coarse in the field, as a poor man? Does he not, for his own pleasure, sometimes, and*

for variety, feed upon the ground, and use only earthen vessels? Is he not a madman then, who always fears what he often desires, and dreads the thing that he takes delight to imitate? He who would know the worst of poverty, let him but compare the looks of the rich, and of the poor, and he shall find the poor man to have a smoother brow, and to be more merry at heart; or if any trouble befalls him, it passes over like a cloud; Whereas the other, either his good humour is counterfeit, or his melancholy deep and ulcerated, and the worse, because he dares not publicly own his misfortune: But he is forced to play the part of an happy man, even with a cancer in his heart. His felicity is but personated, and if he were but stripped of his ornaments, he would be contemptible. In buying a horse, we take off his clothes and his trappings, and examine his shape and body for fear of being cozened: And shall we put an estimate upon a man for being set off by his fortune, and quality? Nay, if we see any thing of ornament about him, we are to suspect him the more for some infirmity under it: He who is not content in poverty, would not be so neither in plenty; for the fault is not in the thing, but in the mind: If that be sickly, remove him from a kennel to a palace, he is in the same state; for he carries his disease along with him. What can be happier than that condition, both of mind and of fortune, from which we cannot fall? What can be a greater felicity than in a covetous designing age, for a man to live safe among informers and thieves? It puts a poor man into the very condition of Providence, that gives all, without reserving any thing. How happy is he who owes nothing but to himself, and only that which he can easily refuse, or easily pay! I do not reckon him poor, who has but a little; but he is so who covets more. It is a fair degree of plenty, to have what is necessary. Whether a man had better find satiety in want, or hunger in plenty? It is not the augmenting of our fortunes, but the abating of our appetites, that makes us rich. Why may not a man as well condemn riches in his own coffers, as in another man's? And rather hear that they are his, than feel them to be so? Though it is a great matter not to be corrupted, even by having them under the same roof. He is the greater man who is honestly poor in the

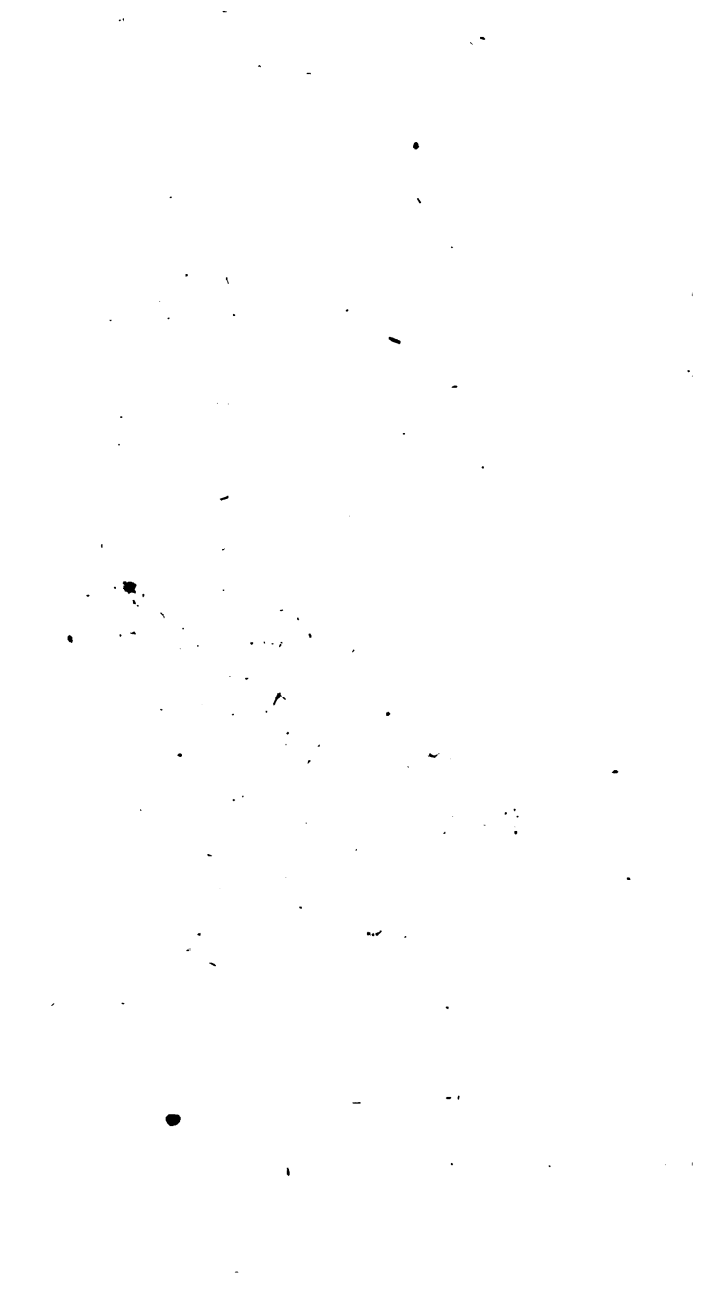
middle of plenty; but he is the most secure who is free from the temptation of that plenty; and has the least matter for another to design upon. It is no great wisdom for a poor man to preach the contempt of riches, or for a rich man to extol the benefits of poverty; because we do not know how either the one or the other would behave himself in the contrary condition. The best proof is, the doing it by choice, and not by necessity; for the practice of poverty in jest is a preparation toward the bearing of it in earnest. But it is yet a generous disposition, so to provide for the worst of fortunes, as what may be easily borne; the premeditation makes them not only tolerable, but delightful to us; for there is that in them, without which nothing can be comfortable, that is to say, security. If there were nothing else in poverty, but the certain knowledge of our friends, it were yet a most desirable blessing, when every man leaves us but those who love us. It is a shame to place the happiness of life in gold and silver, for which bread and water is sufficient; or, at the worst, hunger puts an end to hunger. For the honor of poverty, it was both the foundation and the cause, of the Roman empire; and no man was ever yet so poor, but he had enough to carry himself to his journey's end.

ALL I desire is, that my poverty \* may not be a burden to myself, or make me so to others; and that is the best state of fortune, that is neither directly necessitous; not far from it. A mediocrity of fortune, with gentleness of mind, will preserve us from fear or envy; which is a desirable condition; for no man wants power to do mischief. We never consider the blessing of coveting nothing, and the glory of being full in ourselves, without depending upon fortune. With parsimony a little is sufficient; and without it nothing is sufficient; whereas, frugality makes a poor man rich. If we lose an estate, we had better never have it: He who has least to lose, has least to fear; and those are better satisfied whom fortune never favored, than those whom she has forsaken. The state is most commodious, that lies betwixt poverty and plenty. Diogenes understood this very well, when he put himself into an incapacity of losing any thing. That course of life is most commodi-

\* *Mediocrity is the best state of fortune.*

ous, which is both safe and wholesome : The body is to be indulged no farther than for health ; and rather mortified than not kept in subjection to the mind. It is necessary to provide against hunger, thirst and cold ; and somewhat for covering to shelter us against other inconveniences ; but not a pin of consequence whether it be of turf, or of marble. A man may lie as warm, and as dry under a thatched, as under a gilded roof. Let the mind be great and glorious, and all other things are despicable in comparison. *The future is uncertain ; and I had rather beg of myself not to desire any thing, than of fortune to bestow it.*







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# S E N E C A,

## A N G E R.

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### CHAP. I.

*Anger described—It is against nature, and only to be found in Men.*

**W**E are here to encounter the most outrageous, brutal, dangerous, and intractible of all passions; the most loathsome, and unmannerly; nay, the most ridiculous too; and the subduing of this monster will do a great deal toward the establishment of human peace. It is the method of *physicians*, to begin with a description of the disease, before they meddle with the cure: And I know not why this may not do as well in the distempers of the mind, as those of the body.

The *Stoicks* will have anger to be, a desire of punishing another for some injury done. Against which it is objected, that we are many times angry with those who never did us hurt, but possibly may, though the harm be not as yet done. But I say, that they hurt us already in conceit: And the very purpose of it is an injury in thought, before it breaks out into an act. It is opposed again, that if anger were a desire of punishing, mean people would not be angry with great ones, who are out of their reach: For no man can be said to desire any thing, which he judges impossible to compass. But, I answer to this, that anger is the desire, not the power and faculty of revenge: Neither is



any man so low, but that the greatest man alive may, peradventure, lie at his mercy.

ARISTOTLE takes *anger* to be, a desire of paying sorrow for sorrow ; and of plaguing those who have plagued us. It is argued against both, that beasts are angry, though neither provoked by an injury, nor moved with a desire of any body's grief, or punishment. Nay, though they cause it, they do not design or seek it. Neither is *anger*, (how unreasonable soever in itself) found any where but in reasonable creatures. It is true, that beasts have an impulse of rage, and fierceness, as they are more affected also than men with some pleasures : But we may as well call them luxurious, and ambitious, as angry. And yet they are not without certain images of human affections. They have their likings and their loathings ; but neither the passions of reasonable nature, nor their virtues, nor their vices. They are moved to fury by some objects, they are quieted by others ; they have their terrors and their disappointments ; but without reflection : And let them be ever so much irritated or affrighted, so soon as the occasion is removed, they fall to their meat again, and lie down, and take their rest. Wisdom and thought are the goods of the mind, whereof brutes are wholly incapable ; and we are as unlike them within, as we are without : They have an odd kind of fancy ; and they have a voice too ; but inarticulate and confused, and incapable of those variations which are familiar to us.

ANGER is not only a vice, but a vice point-blank

*It is against nature.* against nature, for it divides instead of joining ; and in some measure, frustrates the end of Providence in human society.

One man was born to help another : Anger makes us destroy one another ; the one unites, the other separates ; the one is beneficial to us, the other mischievous ; the one succours even strangers, the other destroys even the most intimate friends : The one ventures all to save another, the other ruins himself to undo another. Nature is bountiful, but anger is pernicious : For it is not fear, but mutual love that binds up mankind.

THERE are some motions that look like anger, which cannot properly be called so ; as the passion of the people against the *gladiators* when they hang off, and will

not make so quick a dispatch as the spectators would have them : There is something in it of the humour of children, that if they get a fall, will never leave bawling, until the naughty ground is beaten, and then all is well again. They are angry without any cause, or injury ; they are deluded by an imitation of strokes, and pacified with counterfeit tears. A false and childish sorrow, is appeased with as false and as childish a revenge. They take it for a contempt, if the *gladiators* do not immediately cast themselves upon the sword's point. They look presently about them, from one to another, as who should say, *do but see, my masters, how these rogues abuse us.*

To descend to the particular branches, and varieties, would be unnecessary, and endless. There is a stubborn, a vindictive, a quarrelsome, a violent, a froward, a sullen, a morose kind of anger ; and then we have this variation in complication too. One goes no farther than words ; another proceeds immediately to blows, without a word speaking a third sort breaks out into cursing and reproachful language : And there are others who content themselves with chiding and complaining. There is a conciliable anger, and there is an implacable ; but in what form or degree soever it appears, all anger without exception, is vicious.

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## C H A P. II.

### *The Rise of Anger.*

**T**HE question will be here, whether anger takes its rise from impulse, or judgment : That is, whether it be moved of its own accord, or as many other things are, from within us, that arise we know not how : The clearing of this point will lead us to greater matters.

**T**HE *first* motion of anger is, in truth involuntary, and only a kind of menacing preparation towards it. The *second* deliberates ; as who should say, *this injury should not pass without a revenge*, and there it stops. The *third* is impotent ; and, right or wrong, resolves upon vengeance. The *first* motion is not to be avoided, nor indeed the *second* ;

any more than yawning for company. Custom and care may lessen it, but reason itself cannot overcome it. The *third*, as it rises upon consideration, it must fall so too; for, that motion which proceeds with judgment may be taken away with judgment. A man thinks himself injured, and hath a mind to be revenged, but for some reason, lets it rest. This is not properly anger, but an affection over-ruled by reason: A kind of proposal disapproved. And, what are reason and affection, but only changes of the mind for the better, or for the worse? Reason deliberates before it judges; but anger passes sentence without deliberation. Reason only attends the matter in hand; but anger is startled at every accident: It passes the bounds of reason; and carries it away with it. In short, *anger is an agitation of the mind that proceeds to the resolution of revenge, the mind assenting to it.* There is no doubt but anger is moved by the species of an injury, but whether that motion be voluntary or involuntary, is the point in debate; though it seems manifest to me, that *anger* does nothing but where the mind goes along with it. For, first to take an offence, and then to meditate a revenge; and, after that, to lay both propositions together, and say to myself, *this injury ought not to have been done; but as the case stands, I must do myself right.* This discourse can never proceed without the concurrence of the will. The first motion indeed is single; but all the rest is deliberation, and superstructure: There is something understood, and condemned; an indication conceived, and a revenge propounded. This can never be without the agreement of the mind to the matter in deliberation. The end of this question is, to know the nature and quality of *anger*. If it be bred in us, it will never yield to reason, for all involuntary motions are inevitable and invincible; as a kind of horror and shuddering upon the sprinkling of cold water: the hair standing on an end at ill news; giddiness at the sight of a precipice; blushing at lewd discourse. In these cases, reason can do no good; but *anger* may undoubtedly be overcome by caution and good counsel; for it is a *voluntary vice* and not of the condition of these accidents that befalls us as frailties of our humanity: Among which must be reckoned the first motions of the mind, after the opinion of an injury received, which it

is not in the power of human nature to avoid : And this is it that affects us upon the stage, or in a story. Can any man read the death of *Pompey*, and not be touched with an indignation? The sound of a trumpet rouses the spirits and provokes courage. It makes a man sad to see the shipwreck even of an enemy ; and we are much surprised by fear in other cases : All these motions, are not so much affections, as preludes to them. The clashing of arms, or the beating of a drum, excites a war horse. Nay, a song from *Xenophantes* would make *Alexander* take his sword in his hand. In all these cases, the mind rather suffers than acts ; and therefore it is not an affection to be moved, but to give way to that motion, and to follow willingly what was started by chance. These are not affections, but impulses of the body. The bravest man in the world may look pale when he puts on his armour, his knees knock, and his heart works before the battle is joined ; but these are only motions ; whereas *anger* is an *excursion*, and proposes revenge or punishment, which cannot be without the mind. As fear flies, so anger assaults ; and, it is not possible to resolve either upon violence or caution, without the concurrence of the will:

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### C H A P. III.

#### *Anger may be suppressed.*

IT is an idle thing to pretend, that we cannot govern our *anger* : For some things that we do, are much harder than others that we ought to do ; the wildest affections may be tamed by discipline, and there is hardly any thing which the mind will do, but it may do. There needs no more argument in this case, than the instances of several persons, both powerful and impatient, who have attained the absolute mastery of themselves in this point.

THRASIPPUS, in his drink, fell foul upon the cruelties of *Pisistratus* ; who, when he was urged by several about him to make an example of him, returned this answer, *why should I be angry with a man who stumbles upon me blindfold?* *Pisistratus mastered his anger.* In effect, most of our quarrels are of our own making, either by mistake, or aggravation. Anger comes some-

times upon us, but we go oftener to it, and instead of rejecting it, we call it.

AUGUSTUS was a great master of his passion; of *Timagines* an historian wrote several bitter things against his person, and his family; which passed among the people plausible enough, as pieces of rash wit commonly do. *Cæsar* advised him several times to forbear, and when that would not do, forbade him his roof. After this, *Aninius Pollio* gave him entertainment; and he was so well beloved in the city, that every man's house was open to him. Those things that he had written in the honor of *Augustus*, he recited and burnt; and publicly professed himself *Cæsar's* enemy: *Augustus*, for all this, never fell out with any man who received him; only he once told *Pollio*, that he had taken a snake into his bosom: And as *Pollio* was about to excuse himself; *No* (says *Cæsar* interrupting him) *make your best of him*; and offering to cast him off at that very moment, if *Cæsar* pleased; *Do you think* (says *Cæsar*) *that I will ever contribute to the parting of you, who made you friends?* For *Pollio* was angry with him before, and only entertained him, now, because *Cæsar* had discarded him.

THE moderation of *Antigonus* was remarkable; some of his soldiers were railing at him one night where there was but an hanging betwixt them; *Antigonus* overheard them; and putting it gently aside; *soldiers*, says he, *stand a little farther off, for fear the king should hear you.* And we are to consider, not only violent examples, but moderate, where there wanted neither cause of displeasure, nor power of revenge: As in the case of *Antigonus*, who, the same night, hearing his soldiers cursing him for bringing them into so foul a way, he went to them, and, without telling them who he was, helped them out of it. Now, says he *you may be allowed to curse him who brought you into the mire, provided you bless him who took you out of it.*

IT was a notable story of *Podius Pollio*, upon his inviting *Augustus*, to supper: One of his boys happened to break a glass; and his master, in a rage, commanded him to be thrown into a pond to feed his lampreys. This action of his might be taken for luxury, though in truth,

**It was said:** The boy was seized, but broke loose, and threw himself at the feet of *Augustus*, only desiring that he might not die that death; *Cæsar*, in abhorrence of the barbarity, presently ordered all the rest of the glasses to be broken; the boy to be released; and the pond to be filled up, that there might be no farther occasion for an inhumanity of that nature. This was an authority well employed. Shall the breaking of a glass cost a man his life? Nothing but a predominant fear could ever have mastered his choleric, and sanguinary disposition. This man deserved to die a thousand deaths, either for eating human flesh at second hand, in his lampreys, or for keeping his fish to be so fed.

It is written of *Praxæses* (a favorite of *Cambyses*, who was much given to wine) that he took the freedom to tell his prince of his hard drinking, and to lay before him the scandal, and the inconvenience of his excesses; and how that in those distempers, he had not the command of himself. Now, (says *Cambyses*) to shew you your mistake, you shall see me drink deeper than ever I did, and yet keep the use of my eyes, and of my hands, as well as if I were sober? Upon this he drank to a higher pitch than ordinary, and ordered the son of *Praxæses* to go out, and stand on the other side of the threshold, with his left arm over his head; and (says he) if I have a good aim, have at the heart of him. He shot, and upon cutting up the young man, they found indeed that the arrow had struck him through the middle of the heart. What do you think now (says *Cambyses*) is my hand steady or not? *Apollo himself* (says *Praxæses*) could not have outdone it. It may be a question now, which was the greater impiety, the murder itself, or the commendation of it; for him to take the heart of his son, while it was yet reeking, and panting under the wound, for an occasion of flattery: Why was there not another experiment made upon the father, to try if *Cambyses* could not have yet mended this shot? This was a most unmanly violation of hospitality; but the approbation of the fact was still worse than the crime itself. This example of *Praxæses* proves sufficiently that a man may repress his anger; for he returned not one ill word, no not so much as a complaint: but he paid dear for his good counsel. He had been wiser, perhaps, if he had let the king alone in his cups, for he had better have drunk

wine than blood. It is a dangerous office to give good advice to intemperate princes.

ANOTHER instance of anger suppressed we have in *Harpagus*, who was commanded to expose *Cyrus* upon a mountain, but the child was preserved; which when *Astyages* came afterwards to understand, he invited *Harpagus* to a dish of meat; and when he had eaten his fill, he told him it was a piece of his son, and asked him how he liked the seasoning. *Whatever pleases your majesty, says Harpagus, must please me:* And he made no more words of it. It is most certain that we might govern our anger, if we would; for the same thing that galls us at home, gives us no offence at all abroad; and what is the reason of it, but that we are patient in one place, and forward in another.

It was a strong provocation, which was given to *Philip* of *Macedon*, the father of *Alexander*: *The moderation of Philip of Macedon.* The *Athenians* sent their ambassadors to him, and they were received with this compliment, *Tell me, gentlemen, says Philip, what is there that I can do to oblige the Athenians?* *Demochares*, one of the ambassadors, told him, that they would take it for a great obligation, if he would be pleased to hang himself. This insolence gave an indignation to the by-standers; but *Philip* bade them not to meddle with him, but even to let that foul mouthed fellow go as he came. And for you, the rest of the ambassadors, says he *I pray tell the Athenians, that it is worse to speak such things, than to hear and forgive them.* This wonderful patience under contumelies was a great mean of *Philip's* security.

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#### CHAP. IV.

*Anger is a short Madness, and a deformed Vice.*

HE was much in the right, whoever it was, who first called *anger a short madness*; for they have both of them the same symptoms? and there is so wonderful a resemblance betwixt the transport of *choler* and those of *phrenzy*, that it is a hard matter to know the one from the other. A bold, fierce, and threatening countenance, as pale as ashes, and in the same moment as red as blood

A glaring eye, a wrinkled brow, violent motions, the hands restless, and perpetually in action, wringing and menacing, snapping of the joints, stamping with the feet, the hair starting, trembling lips, a forced and squeaking voice; the speech false and broken, deep and frequent sighs, and ghastly looks; the veins swell, the heart pants, the knees knock; with an hundred dismal accidents that are common to both distempers. Neither is anger a bare resemblance only of madness, but many times an irrecoverable transition into the thing itself. How many persons have we known, read, and heard of, who have lost their wits in a passion, and never came to themselves again! It is therefore to be avoided, not only for moderation sake, but also for health. Now if the outward appearance, of anger be foul and hideous, how deformed must that miserable mind be, that is harrassed with it? For it leaves no place either for counsel, or friendship, honesty, or good manners; no place either for the exercise of reason, or for the offices of life. If I were to describe it, I would draw a tiger bathed in blood, sharp set, and ready to take a leap at his prey; or dress it up, as the poets represent the furies, with whips, snakes, and flames: It should likewise be sour, livid, full of scars, and wallowing in gore, raging up and down, destroying, grinning, bellowing, and pursuing! sick of all other things, and most of all of itself. It turns beauty into deformity, and the calmest counsels into fierceness: It disorders our very garments, and fills the mind with horror. How abominable is it in the soul then, when it appears so hideous even through the bones, the skin, and so many impediments? Is not he a mad man who has lost the government of himself, and is tossed hither and thither by his fury, as by a tempest; the executioner of his own revenge, both with his heart and hand; and the murderer of his nearest friends? The smallest matter moves it, and makes us unsociable, and inaccessible. It does all things by violence, as well upon itself, as others: And it is, in short, the master of all passions.

There is not any creature\* so terrible, and dangerous by nature, but it becomes fiercer by anger. \* *All creatures.* Not that beasts have human affections, but



certain impulses they have which come ve- *are made terri-*  
 rily near them. The boar foams, champs, *ble by anger.*  
 and whets his tusks; the bull tosses his horns in the air,  
 bounds and tears up the ground with his feet. The lion  
 roars, and swings himself with his tail; the serpent swells,  
 and there is a ghastly kind of folliness in the aspect of a mad  
 dog. How great a wickedness is it now to indulge a vio-  
 lence, that does not only turn a man into a beast, but makes  
 even the most outrageous of beasts themselves to be more  
 dreadful and mischievous! A vice that carries along with  
 it neither pleasure nor profit; neither honor nor security;  
 but on the contrary destroys us to all the comfortable and  
 glorious purposes of our reasonable being. Some there are,  
 who will have the root of it to be greatness of mind. And,  
 why may we not as well entitle *impudence to courage*, where-  
 as the one is proud, the other brave; the one is gracious  
 and gentle, the other rude and furious? At the same rate  
 we may ascribe magnanimity to avarice, luxury and ambi-  
 tion, which are but splendid impotencies, without meas-  
 ure and foundation. There is nothing great, but what is  
 virtuous, nor indeed truly great, but what is also compo-  
 also composed and quiet.—Anger, alas! is but a wild im-  
 petuous blast, an empty tumour, the very infirmity of wo-  
 men and children; a brawling clamorous evil: And the  
 more noise the less courage; as we find it commonly, that  
 the boldest tongues have the faintest hearts.

\* \* \* \* \*

● C H A P. V. ●

*Anger is neither warrantable nor useful.*

**I**N the first place, anger is *unwarrantable* as it is *unjust*:  
 For it falls many times upon the wrong person, and dis-  
 charges itself upon the innocent instead of the guilty: Be-  
 side the disproportion of making the most trivial offences  
 to be capital, and punishing an inconsiderate word perhaps  
 with torments, fetters, infamy, or death. It allows a man  
 neither time nor means for defence, but judges a cause  
 without hearing, and admits of no mediation. It flies into  
 the face of truth itself, if it be of the adverse party; and  
 turns obstinacy in an error, into an argument of justice. It  
 does every thing with agitation and tumult: Whereas  
 reason and equity can destroy whole families, if there be

occasion for it, even to the extinguishing of their names and memories, without any indecency, either of countenance, or action.

SECONDLY, it is unsociable to the highest point \* ; for it spares neither friend nor foe ; but tears all to pieces, and casts human nature into a perpetual state of war. It dissolves the body of mutual society, insomuch that our very companions and relations dare not come near us ; it renders us unfit for the ordinary offices of life, so that we can neither govern our tongues, our hands, nor any part of our body. It tramples upon the laws of hospitality, and nations, leaves every man to be his own carver, and all things public and private, sacred and profane, suffer violence.

THIRDLY, it is to no purpose : \* *It is a sad thing, we cry, to put up with these injuries, and we are not able to bear them ; as if any man who can bear anger, could not bear an injury, which is much more supportable.* You will say, that anger does some good yet, for it keeps people in awe, and secures a man from contempt ; never considering, that it is more dangerous to be feared than despised. Suppose that an angry man could do as much as he threatens ; the more terrible, he is still the more odious : And on the other side, if he wants power, he is the more despicable in his anger ; for there is nothing more wretched than a choleric huff, that makes a noise and no body cares for it. If anger should be valuable because men are afraid of it, why not an adder, a toad, or a scorpion as well ? It makes us lead the life of gladiators ; we live, and we fight together. We hate the happy, despise the miserable, envy our superiors, insult our inferiors, and there is nothing in the world which we will not do, either for pleasure or profit. To be angry at offenders, is to make ourselves the common enemies of mankind, which is both weak and wicked ; and we may as well be angry that our thistles do not bring forth apples, or that every pebble in our ground is not an oriental pearl. If we are angry both with young men, and with old, because they do offend ; why not with infants too, because they will offend ? It is laudable to rejoice for any thing that is well done ; but, to be transported for another man's doing ill, is narrow and sordid. Nor is it for the dignity of virtue to be either angry or sad. It is with a tainted mind as with

an ulcer, not only the touch, but the very offer at it makes us shrink, and complain: when we come once to be carried off from our poize, we are lost. In the choice of a sword, we take care that it be wieldy, and well mounted; and it concerns us as much to be weary of engaging in the excesses of ungovernable passions. It is not the speed of an horse altogether that pleases us, unless we find that he can stop, and turn at pleasure. It is a sign of weakness, and a kind of stumbling, for a man to run when he intends only to walk; and it behoves us to have the same command of our mind that we have of our bodies. Besides that, the greatest punishment of an injury, is the conscience of having done it; and no man suffers more than he who is turned over to the pain of a repentance. How much better is it to compose injuries, than to revenge them? For it does not only spend time, but the revenge of one injury exposes us to more. In fine, as it is unreasonable to be angry at a crime, it is as foolish to be angry without one.

BUR, \* *May not an honest man then be allowed to be angry*

\* *And in no case allowable.* *at the murder of his father, or the ravishing of his sister or daughter before his face?*

No, not at all; I will defend my parents, and I will repay the injuries that are done them; but it is my piety, and not my anger that moves me to it. I will do my duty without fear or confusion; I will not rage, I will not weep; but discharge the office of a good man, without forfeiting the dignity of a man. If my father be assaulted, I will endeavour to rescue him; if he be killed, I will do right to his memory; and all this not in any transport of passion, but in honor and conscience. Neither is there any need of anger where reason does the same thing. A man may be temperate, and yet vigorous, and raise his mind according to the occasion, more or less, as a stone is thrown according to the discretion and intent of the caster. How outrageous have I seen some people for the loss of a monkey, or a spaniel! And were it not a shame to have the same sense for a friend that we have for a puppy; and to cry like children, as much for a bauble, as for the ruin of our country? This is not the effect of reason, but of infirmity. For a man indeed to expose his person for his prince, or for his parents or his friends, out of a sense of honesty, and a judgment of duty, is, without dispute,

a worthy and a glorious action ; but it must be done then with sobriety, calmness and resolution. It is high time to convince the world of the indignity, and uselessness of this passion, when it has the authority and recommendation of no less than *Aristotle* himself, as an affection very much conducing to all heroic actions, that require heart and vigour. Now, to shew on the other side, that it is not in any case profitable, we shall lay open the obstinate and unbridled madness of it : A wickedness, neither sensible of infamy, nor of glory ; without either modesty, or fear ; and if it passes once from anger into a hardened hatred, it is incurable. It is either stronger than reason, or it is weaker. If stronger, there is no contending with it ; if weaker, reason will do the business without it. Some will have it that an angry man is good natured, and sincere ; whereas in truth, he only lays himself open out of heedlessness and want of caution. If it were in itself good, the more of it the better ; but in this case, the more, the worse ; and a wise man does his duty, without the aid of any thing that is ill. It is objected by some, that those are the most generous creatures, which are most prone to anger. But first, *reason in man, is impetuous in beasts*. Secondly, without discipline, it runs into audaciousness, and temerity ; over and above that the same thing does not help all. If anger helps the lion, it is fear that saves the stag, swiftness the hawk, and flight the pidgeon : But man has *God* for his example, (who is never angry) and not the *creatures*. And yet it is not amiss sometimes to counterfeit anger ; as upon the stage : Nay, upon the bench, and in the pulpit, where the imitation of it is more effectual, than the thing itself. But it is a great error to take this passion either for a companion, or for an assistant to virtue ; that makes a man incapable of those necessary counsels, by which virtue is to govern herself. Those are false and inauspicious powers and destructive of themselves, which arise only from the accession and fervor of a disease. Reason judges according to right : Anger will have every thing seem right, whatever it does ; and when it has once pitched upon a mistake, it is never to be convinced ; but prefers a pertinacity even in the greatest evil, before the most necessary repentance.

Some people are of opinion, that anger inflames and

animates the soldier; that it is a spur to bold and arduous undertakings, and that it were better to moderate it, than wholly to suppress it, for fear of dissolving the spirit and force of the mind. To this I answer, that virtue does not need the help of vice; but where there is an ardour of mind necessary, we may rouse ourselves, and be more or less brisk and vigorous, as there is occasion: But all without anger still. It is a mistake to say, that we may make use of anger as a common soldier, but not as a commander; for if it hears reason, and follows orders, it is not properly anger; and if it does not, it is contumacious and mutinous. By this argument a man must be angry to be valiant: covetous to be industrious; timorous to be safe; which makes our reason confederate with our affections. And it is all one whether passion be inconsiderate without reason, or reason ineffectual without passion; since the one cannot be without the other. It is true, the less the passion, the less is the mischief; for a little passion is the smaller evil. Nay, so far is it from being of use or advantage in the field, that it is there where it is the most dangerous; for the actions of war are to be managed with order and caution, not precipitation and fancy: Whereas anger is heedless, and heady, and the virtue only of barbarous nations; which, though their bodies were much stronger, and more hardened, were still worsted by the moderation and discipline of the Romans. There is not upon the face of the earth, a bolder, or a more indefatigable nation than the Germans: Not a braver upon a charge, not a hardier against colds and heats; their only delight and exercise is in arms, to the utter neglect of all things else: And yet upon the encounter, they are broken and destroyed through their own undisciplined temerity, even by the most effeminate of men. The huntsman is not angry with the wild boar, when he either pursues or receives him; a good swordsman watches his opportunity, and keeps himself upon his guard, whereas passion lays a man open: Nay, it is one of the prime lessons of a fencing school, to learn not to be angry. If Fabius had been choleric, Rome had been lost: And before he conquered Hannibal he overcame himself. If Stipio had been ungracious, he would never have left Hannibal, and his army (who were the proper objects of his pleasure) to carry the war into Africa, and so compass his

\* It is more  
mischievous in  
peace.

end by a more temperate way. Nay, he was so slow, that it was charged upon him for want of mettle and resolution. And, what did the *other Scipio* (*Africanus* I mean?) How much time did he spend before *Numantia*, to the common grief both of his country and himself? Though he reduced it at last, by so miserable a famine, that the inhabitants laid violent hands upon themselves, and left neither man, woman nor child to survive the ruins of it. If anger makes a man fight better, so does wine, phrenzy, nay, and fear itself; for the greatest coward in despair does the greatest wonders. No man is courageous in his anger who was not so without it. But put the case that anger, by accident, may have done some good, and so have fevers removed some distempers; but it is an odious kind of remedy, that makes us indebted to a disease for a cure. How many men have been preserved by poison; by a fall from a precipice; by a shipwreck; by a tempest? Does it therefore follow, that we are to recommend the practice of these experiments?

*But in case of an exemplary and prostitute \* dissolution of manners, when Clodius shall be preferred, \* He who is un-*  
*and Cicero rejected: when loyalty shall gry at public wic-*  
*be broken upon the wheel, and treason sit kedness shall ne-*  
*triumphant upon the bench; is not this ver be at peace.*  
*a subject to move the choler of any virtu-*  
*ous man?* No, by no means; virtue will never allow of the correcting one vice by another; or that anger, which is the greater crime of the two, should presume to punish the less. It is the natural property of virtue to make a man serene and cheerful; and it is not for the dignity of a philosopher, to be transported either with grief or anger; and then the end of anger is sorrow, the constant effect of disappointment and repentance. But to my purpose: If a man should be angry at wickedness, the greater the wickedness is, the greater must be his anger; and so long as there is wickedness in the world, he must never be pleased; which makes his quiet dependent upon the humour or manners of others. There passes not a day over our heads, but he who is choleric, shall have some cause or other of displeasure, either from men, accidents, or business. He shall never stir out of his house, but he shall meet with criminals of all sorts; prodigal, impudent, covetous, perfidious, contentious; children persecuting their parents, parents curs-

ing their children; the innocent accused, the delinquent acquitted, and the judge practising that in his chamber, which he condemns upon the bench: In fine, wherever there are men, there are faults; and upon these terms, *Socrates* himself should never bring the same countenance home again that he carried out with him.

If anger were sufferable in any case, it might be allowed against an incorrigible criminal under the hand of \* justice; but punishment is not a matter of anger but of caution. The law is without passion, and strikes malefactors as we do serpents and venomous creatures, for fear of greater mischief. It is not for the dignity of a judge when he comes to pronounce the fatal sentence, to express any motions of anger in his looks, words, or gestures: For he condemns the vice, not the man, and looks upon the wickedness without anger, as he does upon the prosperity of wicked men without envy. But though he be not angry, I would have him a little moved in point of humanity; but yet without any offence either to his place or wisdom. Our passions vary, but reason is equal; and it were a great folly for that which is stable, faithful and sound, to repair for succour to that which is uncertain, false, and distempered. If the offender be incurable, take him out of the world, that if he will not be good, he may cease to be evil; but this must be without anger too. Does any man hate an arm, or a leg, when he cuts it off? Or reckon that a passion, which is only a miserable cure? We knock mad dogs on the head, and remove scabbed sheep out of the fold: And this is not anger still, but reason; to separate the sick from the sound. Justice cannot be angry; nor is there any need of an angry magistrate, for the punishment of foolish and wicked men. The power of life and death must not be managed with passion. We give a horse the spur, that is resty or jadish, and tries to cast his rider. But this without anger too, and only to take down his stomach, and bring him by correction to obedience.

It is true, that correction is necessary, \* yet within reason and bounds; for it does not hurt but profits us under an appearance of harm. All dispositions in the mind are to be dealt with as those in the body: The physician first tries purging, and abstinence; if this will not do, he

\* Correction is necessary but within bounds.

proceeds to bleeding, nay, to dismembering rather than fall; for there is no operation too severe that ends in health. The public magistrate begins with persuasion, and his business is to beget a detestation of vice, and a veneration for virtue: From thence, if need be, he advances to admonition and reproach, and then to punishments; but moderate and revocable, unless the wickedness be incurable, and then the punishment must be so too. There is only this difference; the physician, when he cannot save his patient's life, endeavours to make his death easy; but the magistrate aggravates the death of the criminal with infamy and disgrace; not as delighting in the severity of it (for no good man can be so barbarous) but for example, and to the end that they who will do no good living, may do some dead. The end of all correction is either the amendment of wicked men, or to prevent the influence of ill example: For men are punished with a respect to the future; not to expiate offences committed, but for fear of worse to come. Public offenders must be a terror to others; but still all this while, the power of life and death must not be managed with passion. The medicine, in the mean time, must be suited to the disease: Infamy cures one; pain another; exile cures the third; beggary a fourth; but there are some who are only to be cured by the gibbet. I would be no more angry with a thief, or a traitor than I am angry with myself when I open a vein. All punishment is but a moral or civil remedy. I do not do any thing that is very ill, but yet I transgress often. Try me first with a private reprehension, and then with a public; if that will not serve, see what banishment will do; if not that neither, load me with chains, lay me in prison; but if I should prove wicked even for wickedness sake, and leave no hope of reclaiming me, it would be a kind of mercy to destroy me. Vice is incorporated with me; and there is no remedy, but the taking of both away together; but still without anger.

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## CHAP. VI.

*Anger in general, with the Danger and Effects of it.*

**T**HERE is no surer argument of a great mind, than not to be transported to anger by any accident. The clouds and the tempests are formed below, but all above is



quiet and serene : Which is the emblem of a brave man, who suppresses all provocations, and lives within himself, modest, venerable, and composed : Whereas anger is a turbulent humour, which at first dash casts off all shame, without any regard to order, measure, or good manners ; transporting a man into misbecoming violence, with his tongue, his hands, and every part of his body. And whoever considers the foulness, and the brutality of this vice, must acknowledge, that there is no such monster in nature, as one man raging against another, and labouring to sink that which can never be drowned, but with himself, for company. It renders us incapable, either of discourse, or of other common duties. It is of all passions the most powerful : For it makes a man who is in love, kill his mistress ; the ambitious man to trample upon his honours, and the covetous to throw away his fortune. There is not any mortal who lives free from the danger of it ; for it makes even the heavy, and the good natured to be fierce and outrageous : It invades us like a pestilence, the lusty as well as the weak ; and it is not either strength of body, or a good diet, that can secure us against it ; nay, the most learned, and men otherwise of exemplary sobriety, are infected with it. It is so potent a passion, that *Socrates* durst not trust himself with it. *Sirrah* (says he to his man) *now, would I beat you if I were not angry with you.* There is no age or sect of men that escapes it. Other vices takes us one by one : but this, like an *epidemical contagion*, sweeps all : Men, women, and children ; princes, and beggars, are carried away with it in shoals, and troops, as one man. It was never seen that a whole nation was in love with one woman, or unanimously bent upon one vice : But here and there, some particular men are tainted with some particular crimes : Whereas in anger, a single word many times inflames the whole multitude, and men betake themselves to fire and sword upon it : The rabble take upon them to give laws to their governors ; the common soldiers to their officers, to the ruin not only of private families, but of kingdoms ; turning their arms against their own leaders, and choosing their own generals. There is no public counsel ; no putting of things to the vote ; but in a rage the mutineers divide from the senate, name their head, force the nobility into their own

houses, and put them to death with their own hands. The laws of nations are violated, the persons of public ministers affronted, whole cities infected with a general madness, and no respite allowed for the abatement, or discussing of this public tumour. The ships are crowded with tumultuary soldiers. And in this rude and ill-boding manner they march, and act under the conduct only of their own passions. Whatever comes next serves them for arms, until at last they pay for their licentious rashness, with the slaughter of the whole party : This is the event of an heady, and inconsiderate war. When men's minds are struck with the ~~opinion~~ of an injury, they fall on immediately wheresoever their passions lead them, without either order, fear, or caution, provoking their own mischief ; never at rest, until they come to blows ; and pursuing their revenge, even with their bodies upon the points of their enemy's weapons. So that the anger itself is much more hurtful for us, than the injury that provokes it ; for the one is bounded, but where the other will stop no man living knows. There are no greater slaves certainly, than those who serve anger, for they improve their misfortunes by an impatience more insupportable than the calamity that causes it.

NOR does it rise by degrees, as other passions, but flashes like gun-powder, \* blowing up all in a moment. Neither does it only press to the mark, but overbears every thing in *\* Anger blows up all in a moment.* the way to it. Other vices drive us, but this hurries us headlong ; other passions stand firm themselves, though perhaps we cannot resist them ; but this consumes, and destroys itself : It falls like thunder or a tempest, with an irrevocable violence, that gathers strength in the passage, and then evaporates in the conclusion. Other vices are *unreasonable*, but this is *unhealthful* too ; other distempers have their intervals, and degrees, but in this we are thrown down, as from a precipice : There is not any thing so amazing to others, or so destructive to itself ; so proud and insolent if it succeeds ; or so extravagant, if it be disappointed. No repulse discourages it, and for want of other matter to work upon, it falls foul upon itself ; and let the ground be ever so trivial, it is sufficient for the wildest outrage imaginable. It spares neither age, sex, nor quality. Some people would be luxurious perhaps, if they were not poor ; and others,

lazy, if they were not perpetually kept at work. The simplicity of a country life keeps many men in ignorance of the frauds and impieties of courts and camps. But, no nation or condition of men is exempt from the impressions of anger, and it is equally dangerous, as well in war, as in peace. We find that elephants will be made familiar; bulls will suffer children to ride upon their backs, and play with their horns; bears and lions, by good usage, will be brought to fawn upon their masters; how desperate a madness is it, then for men, after the reclaiming of the fiercest of beasts, and the bringing of them to be tractable and domestic, to become yet worse than beasts one to another! Alexander had two friends, *Clytus* and *Lysimachus*; the one he exposed to a lion, the other to himself; and he who was turned loose to the beast escaped. Why do we not rather make the best of a short life, and render ourselves amiable to all while we live, and desirable when we die?

LET us bethink ourselves of our mortality, and not squander away the little \* time that we have upon animosities and feuds, as if it were never to be at \* *Anger is loss of time,* an end. Had we not better enjoy the *as well as of peace.* pleasure of our own life, than be still contriving how to gall and torment another's? In all our brawlings and contentions, never so much as dreaming of our weakness. Do we not know that these implacable enemies of ours lie at the mercy of a fever, or any petty accident, or disappointment? Our fate is at hand, and the very hour that we have set for another man's death, may, peradventure be prevented by our own. What is it that we make all this bustle for, and so needlessly disquiet our minds? We are offended with our servants, our masters, our princes, our clients: It is but a little patience, and we shall be all of us equal; so that there is no need either of ambushes, or of combats. Our wrath cannot go beyond death; and death will most undoubtedly come, whether we be peevish or quiet. It is time lost to take pains to do that which will infallibly be done without us. But, suppose that we would only have our enemy banished, disgraced, or damaged, let his punishment be more or less, it is yet too long, either for him to be inhumanly tormented, or for ourselves to be most barbarously pleased with it. It holds in anger as in mourning, it must, and will at last fall of itself; let us look to it then betimes, for

when it is once come to an ill habit, we shall never want matter to feed it ; and it is much better to overcome our passions, than to be overcome by them. Some way or other, either our parents, children, servants, acquaintance, or strangers will be continually vexing us. We are tossed hither and thither by our affections, like a feather in a storm, and by fresh provocations the madness becomes habitual. Miserable creatures ! that ever our precious hours should be so ill employed ! How prone and eager are we in our hatred, and how backward in our love ! Were it not much better now to be making friendships ; pacifying of enemies ; doing good offices both public and private, than to be still meditating mischief, and designing how to wound one man in his fame, another in his fortune, and a third in his person ? The one being so easy, innocent, and safe ; and the other so difficult, impious, and hazardous. Nay, take a man in chains, and at the foot of his oppressor ; how many are there, who, even in this case, have maimed themselves in the heat of their violence upon others !

THIS untractable passion is much more \* easily kept out, than governed when it is once admitted ;  
 \* *Anger may be better kept out than governed.* for the stronger will give laws to the weaker ; and make reason a slave to the appetite. It carries us headlong, and in the course of our fury, we have no more command of our minds than we have of our bodies down a precipice ; when they are once in motion, there is no stop till they come to the bottom. Not but that it is possible for a man to be warm in winter, and not to sweat in summer, either by the benefit of the place, or the hardness of the body ; and in like manner we may provide against anger. But, certain it is, that virtue and vice can never agree in the same subject ; and one may be as well a sick man and a sound at the same time, as a good man, and angry. Beside, if we will needs be quarrelsome, it must be either with our superior, our equal, or inferior. To contend with our superior is folly and madness ; with our equals it is doubtful and dangerous ; and with our inferiors, it is base. For does any man know but that he who is now our enemy may come hereafter to be our friend, over and above the reputation of clemency and good nature ? And what can be more honourable or comfortable, than to exchange a feud for a

friendship? The people of *Rome* never had more faithful allies, than those who were at first the most obstinate enemies: Neither had the *Roman* empire ever arrived at that height of power, if Providence had not mingled the vanquished with the conquerors. There is an end of the contest, when one side deserts it: So that the paying of anger with benefits, puts a period to the controversy. But however, if it be our fortune to transgress, let not our anger descend to the children, friends, or relations, even of our bitterest enemies. The very cruelty of *Sylla* was heightened by that instance of incapacitating the issue of the proscribed. It is inhuman to entail the hatred we have for the father upon his posterity. A good and a wise man is not to be an enemy of wicked men, but a reprovener of them; and he is to look upon all the drunkards, the lustful, the thankless, covetous, and ambitious, that he meets with, no otherwise than as a physician looks upon his patients; for he who will be angry with any man, must be displeased with all; which were as ridiculous, as to quarrel with a body for stumbling in the dark; with one who is deaf, for not doing as you bid him; or with a school boy for loving his play better than his book. *Democritus* laughed and *Heraclitus* wept, at the folly and wickedness of the world, but we never read of an angry philosopher.

THIS is undoubtedly the most detestable of vices, even compared with the worst of them. Avarice scrapes and gathers together, that which somebody may be the better for; But anger lashes out, and no man comes off gratis. An angry master makes ones servant run away, and another hang himself; and his choler causes him a much greater loss than he suffered in the occasion of it. It is the cause of mourning to the father, and of divorce to the husband; It makes the magistrate odious, and gives the candidate a repulse. And it is worse than luxury too, which only aims at its proper pleasure; whereas the other is bent upon another body's pain. The malevolent and the envious content themselves only to wish another man miserable; but it is the business of anger to make him so; and to wreak the mischief itself, not so much desiring the hurt of another, as to inflict it. Among the powerful it breaks out into open war, and into a private one with the common people, but without force or arms. It engages us in treach-

eries, perpetual troubles and contentions. It alters the very nature of a man, and punishes itself in the persecution of others. Humanity excites us to love, this to hatred; that to be beneficial to others, this to hurt them : Beside that, though it proceeds from too high a conceit of ourselves, it is yet in effect but a narrow and contemptible affection, especially when it meets with a mind that is hard and impenetrable ; and returns the dart upon the head of him who casts it.

To take a further view now of \* the miserable consequences, and sanguinary effects of this hideous distemper ; from hence come slaughters, and poisons, wars, and desolations, the razing and burning of cities ; the unpeopling of nations, and the turning of populous countries into desarts ; public massacres and regicides ; princes led in triumph ; some murdered in their bed-chambers ; others stabbed in the senate, or cut off in the security of their spectacles and pleasures. Some there are who take anger for a princely quality ; as *Darius*, who in his expedition against the *Scythians*, being besought by a nobleman who had three sons, that he would vouchsafe to accept of two of them into his service, and leave the third at home for a comfort for his father : *I will do more for you than that*, says *Darius*, *for you shall have them all three again* : So he ordered them to be slain before his face, and left them their bodies. But *Xerxes* dealt a little better with *Pythius*, who had five sons, and desired only one of them for himself. *Xerxes* bade him take his choice, and he named the *eldest*, whom he immediately commanded to be cut in halves ; and one half of the body to be laid on each side of the way, when his army was to pass betwixt them : Undoubtedly a most auspicious sacrifice ; but he came afterward to the end that he deserved ; for he lived to see that prodigious power scattered and broken ; and instead of military and victorious troops, to be encompassed with carcases. But, these, you will say, were only barbarous princes, who knew neither civility, nor letters : And these savage cruelties will be imputed perchance to their rudeness of manners and want of discipline. But what will you say then of *Alexander the Great*, who was trained up under the institution of *Aristotle* himself ; and killed *Clytus* his favourite and school-fellow, with his own hand.

ness, the place, our fortune, or ourselves. Some men value themselves upon their wit, and will never forgive any one who pretends to lessen it : Others are inflamed by wine ; and some are distempered by sickness, weariness, watchings, love, care, &c. Some prone to it by heat of constitution ; but moist, dry, and cold complexions are most liable to other affections, as suspicion, despair, fear, jealousy, &c. But most of our quarrels are of our own contriving. One while we suspect upon mistake, and another while we make a great matter of trifles. To say the truth, most of those things that exasperate us, are rather subjects of disgust, than of mischief : There is a large difference betwixt opposing a man's satisfaction, and not assisting it ; betwixt *taking away*, and *not giving* ; but we reckon upon *denying* and *deferring*, as the same thing ; and interpret another's being *for himself*, as if he were *against us*. Nay, we do many times entertain an ill opinion of well doing, and a good one of the contrary : And we hate a man for doing that very thing which we should hate him for on the other side, if he did not do it. We take it ill to be opposed when there is a father perhaps, a brother, or a friend in the case against us ; when we should rather love a man for it ; and only wish that he could be honestly of our party. We approve the fact, and detest the doer. It is a base thing to hate the person whom we cannot but commend, but it is a great deal worse yet, if we hate him for the very thing that deserves commendation. The things that we desire, if they be such as cannot be given to one, without being taken away from another, must needs set those people together by the ears who desire the same thing. One man has a design upon my mistress ; another upon mine inheritance ; and that which should make friends, makes enemies ; our being all of a mind. The general cause of anger, is the sense, or opinion of an *injury* ; that is, the opinion either of an injury simply done, or of an injury done which we have not deserved. Some are naturally given to anger, others are provoked to it by occasion ; the anger of women and children, is commonly sharp, but not lasting ; old men are rather querulous, and peevish. Hard labour, diseases, anxiety of thought, and whatever hurts the body or the mind, disposes, a man to be froward, but we must not add fire to fire.

He who duly considers the subject \* matter of all our controversies and quarrels, will find them low and mean, not worth the thought of a generous mind; but the greatest noise of all is about money. This it is that sets fathers and children together by the ears; husbands and wives; and makes way for sword and poison: This it is that tries our courts of justice, enrages princes, and lays cities in the dust, to seek for gold and silver in the ruins of them. This it is that finds work for the judge, to determine which side is least in the wrong; and whose is the most plausible avarice, the plaintiff, or the defendant's: And what is it that we contend for all this while, but those baubles that make us cry when we should laugh? To see a rich old cuss, who has nobody to leave his estate to, break his heart for a handful of dirt; and a gouty usurer who has no other use of his fingers left him, but to count withal; to see him, I say, in the extremity of his fit, wrangling for the odd money in his interest.—If all that is precious in nature were gathered into one mass, it were not worth the trouble of a sober mind. It were endless to run over all those ridiculous passions that are moved about meats, and drinks, and the matter of our luxury; nay, about words, looks, actions, jealousies, mistakes, which are all of them as contemptible fooleries, as those very baubles that children scratch and cry for. There is nothing great, or serious in all that which we keep such a clutter about; the madness of it is, that we set too great a value upon trifles. One man flies out upon a salute, a letter, a speech, a question, a gesture, a wink, a look. An action moves one man; a word affects another: One man is tender of his family; another of his person; one sets up for an orator, another for a philosopher: This man will not bear pride, nor that man opposition. He who plays the tyrant at home, is as gentle as a lamb abroad. Some take offence if a man ask a favour of them, and others if he does not. Every man has his weak side; let us learn which that is, and take care of it; for the same thing does not work upon all men alike. We are moved like beasts at the idle appearances of things; and the fiercer the creature the more it is startled. The sight of a red coat enrages a



bull ; a shadow provokes the asp ; nay, so unreasonable are some men, that they take moderate benefits for injuries ; and squabble about it with their nearest relations : *They have done this and that for others, they cry, and they might have dealt better with us if they had pleased.* Very good ! And if it be less than we looked for, it may be yet more than we deserve. Of all unquiet humours, this is the worst that will never suffer any man to be happy, so long as he sees an happier man than himself. I have known some men so weak, as to think themselves contemned if an horse did not play the jade with *them*, that is yet obedient to another *rider*. A brutal folly ; to be offended at a mute animal ; for no injury can be done us without the concurrence of reason. A beast may hurt us, as a sword, or a stone, and no otherwise. Nay, there are some, who will complain of *foul weather, a raging sea, a biting winter*, as if it were expressly directed to them ; and this they charge upon Providence, whose operations are all of them so far from being injurious, that they are beneficial to us.

How vain and idle are many of those \* things that make us stark mad ! a resty horse, the overturning of a glass, the falling of a key, the dragging of a chair, a jealousy, a misconstruction. *\* We are angry for trifles.* How shall that man endure the extremities of hunger and thirst, who flies out into rage for putting a little too much water into his wine ? What haste is there to lay a servant by the heels, or break a leg or an arm immediately for it ; as if he were not to have the same power over him an hour after, that he has at that instant ! The answer of a servant, a wife, a tenant, puts some people out of all patience ; and yet they can quarrel with the government for not allowing them the same liberty in public, which they themselves deny to their own families. If they say nothing, it is contumacy : If they speak, or laugh, it is insolence. As if a man had his ears given him only for music ; whereas we must suffer all sorts of noises, good and bad, both of man and beasts. How idle is it to start at the tinkling of a bell, or the creaking of a door, when, for all this delicacy, we must endure thunder ? Neither are our eyes less curious and fantastical than our ears : When we are abroad, we can bear well enough

with foul ways, nasty streets, noisome ditches ; but a spot upon a dish at home, or an unswept hearth, absolutely distracts us. And, what is the reason, but that we are patient in the one place, and fantastically peevish in the other ? Nothing makes us more intemperate than luxury, that shrinks at every stroke, and starts at every shadow. It is death to some to have another sit above them, as if a body were ever the more or the less honest for the cushion. But they are only weak creatures who think themselves wounded if they are but touched. One of the *Sybarites*, who saw a fellow hard at work a digging, desired him to give over, for it made him weary to see him : And it was an ordinary complaint with him, that *he could take no rest, because the rose-leaves lay double under him*. When we are once weakened without pleasures, every thing grows intolerable. And we are angry as well with those things that cannot hurt us, as with those that do. We tear a book, because it is blotted ; and our clothes because they are not well made : Things that neither deserve our anger, nor feel it. The taylor perchance did his best, or however had no intent to displease us : If so, first, why should we be angry at all ? Secondly, Why should we be angry with the thing for the man's sake ? Nay, our anger extends even to dogs, horses, and other beasts.

THAT \* was a blasphemous and sottish extravagance of *Caius Cæsar*, who challenged *Jupiter* for making such a noise with his thunder that he could not hear his *mimicks*, and so invented a machine in imitation of it, to oppose *thunder to thunder* ; a brutal conceit, to imagine, either that he could reach the Almighty, or that the Almighty could not reach him.

AND every jot as ridiculous, though not so impious, was that of \* *Cyrus* ; who in his design upon *Babylon*, found a river in his way that put a stop to his march : The current being strong, carried away one of the horses that belonged to his own charriot : Upon this he swore, that since it had obstructed *his passage*, it should never hinder any body's else ; and presently set his whole army to work upon it, which diverted it into an hundred and fourscore channels, and laid it dry. In this ignoble and unprofitable employment, he lost his time, and the

\* *The blasphemous extravagance of Caius Cæsar.*

\* *A ridiculous extravagance of Cyrus.*

soldiers their courage, and gave his adversaries an opportunity of providing themselves, while he was waging war with a river instead of an enemy.

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## CHAP. VIII.

### *Advice in Cases of Contumely and Revenge.*

**O**F provocations to anger there are two sorts ; there is an *injury*, and there is a *contumely*. The former in its own nature is the heavier ; the other slight in itself and only troublesome to a wounded imagination. And yet some there are who will bear blows, and death itself, rather than contumelious words. A contumely is an indignity below the consideration of the very law ; and not worthy either of a revenge, or so much as a complaint. It is only the vexation and infirmity of a weak mind, as well as the practice of an haughty and insolent nature, and signifies no more to a wise and sober man than an idle dream, that is no sooner past than forgotten. It is true, it implies contempt ; but, what need any man care for being contemptible to others, if he be not so to himself ? For a child in the arms to strike the mother, tear her hair, claw her face, and call her names ; that goes for nothing with us, because the child knows not what he does. Neither are we moved at the impudence and bitterness of a *buffoon* ; though he fall upon his own master, as well as the guests : But on the contrary, we encourage and entertain the freedom. Are we not mad then to be delighted and displeas'd with the same thing, and to take that as an *injury* from one man, which passes only for a *raillery* from another ? He who is wise, will behave himself toward all men as we do to our children : For they are but children too, though they have grey hairs : They are indeed of a larger size, and their errors are grown up with them ; they live without rule, they call without choice, they are timorous and unsteady ; and if at any time they happen to be quiet, it is more out of fear, than reason. It is a wretched condition to stand in awe of every body's tongue ; and whoever is vext at a reproach would be proud if he were commended. We should look upon contumelies, slanders, and ill words, only as the clamour of enemies, or arrows

shot at a distance, that make a clattering upon our arms, but do no execution. A man makes himself less than his adversary, by fancying that he is contemned. Things are only ill that are ill taken; and it is not for a man of worth to think himself better or worse for the opinion of others. He who thinks himself injured, let him say, *Either I have deserved this, or I have not: If I have, it is a judgment: If I have not, it is an injustice; and the doer of it has more reason to be ashamed than the sufferer.* Nature has assigned every man his post, which he is bound in honour to maintain, let him be ever so much pressed. *Diogenes* was disputing of anger, and an insolent young fellow, to try if he could put him beside his philosophy, spit in his face: *Young man, says Diogenes, this does not make me angry yet; but I am in some doubt whether I should be so or not.* Some are so impatient, that they cannot bear a contumely, even from a woman; whose very beauty, greatness, or ornaments, are all of them little enough to vindicate her from many indecencies, without much modesty and discretion. Nay, they will lay it to heart even from the meanest of servants. How wretched is that man whose peace lies at the mercy of the people! A physician is not angry at the intemperance of a mad patient; nor does he take it ill to be railed at by a man in a fever. Just so should a wise man treat all mankind, as a physician does his patient; and looking upon them only as sick, and extravagant; let their words and actions, whether good or bad, go equally for nothing; attending still his duty, even in the coarsest offices that may conduce to their recovery. Men who are proud, froward, and powerful, he values their scorn as little as their quality, and looks upon them no otherwise than as people in the access of a fever. If a beggar worships him, or if he takes no notice of him, it is all one to him; and with a rich man he makes it the same case. Their honours, and their injuries, he accounts much alike; without rejoicing at the one, or grieving at the other.

In these cases, the rule is to pardon all \* offences,

where there is any sign of repentance, or hope of amendment. It does not hold in injuries, as in benefits, the requiting of the one with the other: For

\* Pardon all where there is either sign of re-

*penitance, or hope of it is a shame to overcome in the one; amendment.* and in the other to be overcome. It is the part of a great mind to despise injuries; and it is one kind of revenge, to neglect a man as not worth it? For it makes the first aggressor too considerable. Our philosophy methinks might carry us up to the bravery of a generous mastiff, that can hear the barking of a thousand curs, without taking any notice of them. He who receives an injury from his superior, it is not enough for him to bear it with patience, and without any thought of revenge; but he must receive it with a cheerful countenance, and look as if he did not understand it too; for if he appear too sensible, he shall be sure to have more of it. *It is a bad humour in great men, that whom they wrong they will hate.* It was well answered of an old courtier, who was asked, how he kept so long in favour: *Why, says he, by receiving injuries, and crying your humble servant for them.* Some men take it for an argument of greatness, to have revenge in their power; but so far is he who is under the dominion of anger, from being great, that he is not so much as free. Not but that anger is a kind of pleasure to some in the act of revenge: But the very word is inhuman, though it may pass for honest. *Virtue, in short, is impenetrable, and revenge is only the confession of an infirmity.*

It is a fantastical humour, that the same \* jest in private, should make us merry, and yet enrage \* *The same conceit makes us merry in private, and angry in public.* us in-public; nay, we will not allow the liberty that we take. Some raileries we account pleasant, others bitter: A conceit upon a *squint eye*, a *hunch back*, or any personal defect, passes for a reproach: And, why may we not as well hear it, as see it? Nay, if a man imitates our gait, speech, or any natural imperfection, it puts us out of all patience, as if the counterfeit were more grievous than the doing of the thing itself. Some cannot endure to hear of their age, nor others of their poverty; and they make the thing the more taken notice of, the more they desire to hide it. Some bitter jest (for the purpose) was broken upon you at the table; keep better company then. In the freedom of cups a sober man will hardly contain himself within bounds. It sticks with us extremely sometimes, that the porter will not let us in to his great

master. Will any but a mad man quarrel with a cur for barking, when he may pacify him with a crust? What have we to do but to keep further off, and laugh at him? *Fidus Cornelius* (a tall, slim fellow) fell a crying in the senate house, at *Corbalo's* saying, that *he looked like an Ostrich*. He was a man who made nothing of a dash upon his life and manners; but it was worse than death to him, a reflection upon his person. No man was ever ridiculous to others, who laugh at himself first; it prevents mischief, and it is a spiteful disappointment of those who take pleasure in such abuses. *Vatinius* (a man who was made up of scorn and hatred; scurrilous and impudent to the highest degree, but most abusively witty; and with all this he was diseased and deformed to extremity) his way was always to begin to make sport with himself, and so he prevented the mockery of other people. There are none more abusive to others, than they who lie most open to it themselves; but the humour goes round, and he who laughs at me to-day, will have somebody to laugh at him to-morrow, and revenge my quarrel. But however, there are some liberties that will never go down with some men.

*ASIATICUS VALERIUS* (one of *Caligula's* particular friends, and a man of stomach, who would not easily \* digest an affront) was told by *Caligula* in public what kind of bed-fellow his wife was.—Good \* *Some jests will never be forgiven.* God! that ever any man should hear this, or a prince speak it, especially to a man of consular authority, a friend, and an husband! And in such a manner too, as at once to own his disgust, and his adultery. The tribune *Chereas* had a weak broken voice, like an *hermaphrodite*; when he came to *Caligula* for the word, he would give him sometimes *Venus*, at other times *Priapus*; as a slur upon him both ways. *Valerius* was afterwards the principal instrument in the conspiracy against him; and *Chereas*, to convince him of his manhood, at one blow cleft him down the chine with his sword. No man was so forward as *Caligula* to break a jest, and no man more unwilling to bear it.

W

## C H A P. IX.

*Cautions against Anger in the Matter of Education, Conversation; and other general Means of preventing it, both in ourselves and others.*

**A**LL that we have to say in particular upon this subject, lies under these two heads: First, that we do not fall into anger; and secondly, that we do not *transgress in it*. As in the case of our bodies, we have some medicines to preserve us when we are well, and others to recover us when we are sick; so it is one thing not to admit it, and another thing to overcome it. We are in the first place, to avoid all provocations, and the beginnings of anger: For if we be once down, it is an hard task to get up again. When our passion has got the better of our reason, and the enemy is received into the gate, we cannot expect that the conqueror should take conditions from the prisoner. And in truth, our reason, when it is thus mastered, turns effectually into passion. A careful education is a great matter; for our minds are easily formed in our youth, but it is an harder business to cure ill habits: Beside that, we are inflamed by climate, constitution, company, and a thousand other accidents that we are not aware of.

THE choice of a good nurse and a well natured tutor, goes a great way; for the sweetness both of the blood and of the manners, will pass into the child. There is nothing breeds anger more than a soft and effeminate education; and it is very seldom seen, that either the mothers or the schoolmaster's darling ever comes to good. But *my young master*, when he comes into the world, behaves himself like a choleric coxcomb; for flattery and a great fortune nourish touchiness. But it is a nice point so to check the seeds of anger in a child, as not to take off his edge and quench his spirits, whereof a principal care must be taken betwixt license and severity, that he be neither too much emboldened nor depressed. Commendation gives him courage and confidence; but then the danger is, of blowing him into insolence and wrath: So that when to use the bit, and when the spur is the main difficulty. Never put him to a necessity of begging any thing basely; or, if he does, let him go without it.

Enure him to a familiarity, where he has any emulation. And in all his exercises let him understand, that it is generous to overcome his competitor, but not to hurt him. Allow him to be pleased when he does well, but not transported; for that will puff him up into too high a conceit of himself. Give him nothing that he can boast of, until the dogged fit is over, but then let him brag it when he is quiet; to shew him that there is nothing to be gotten by being peevish. Chide him for what he does amiss, and make him sometimes acquainted with the fortune that he was born to. Let his diet be clean but sparing; and clothe him like the rest of his fellow. For by placing him upon that equality at first, he will be the less proud afterwards: And consequently the less waspish and quarrelsome.

In the next place, let us have a care of temptations that we cannot resist, and provocations that we cannot bear; and especially of sour and exceptionous company. For a cross humour is contagious: Nor is it all the man shall be the better for the example of a quiet conversation; but an angry disposition is troublesome, because it has nothing else to work upon. We should therefore choose a sincere, easy, and temperate companion, who will neither provoke anger, nor return it; nor give a man any occasion of exercising his distemper. Nor is it enough to be gentle, submissive, and humane without integrity and plain dealing. For flattery is offensive on the other side. Some men would take a curse from you better than a compliment. *Celius*, a passionate orator, had a friend of singular patience, who supped with him; who had no way to avoid a quarrel but by saying *Amen* to all that *Celius* said. *Celius* taking this ill: *Say something against me*, says he, *that you and I may be two*; and he was angry with him because he would not; but the dispute fell as it needs must for want of an opponent.

He who is naturally addicted to anger, let him use moderate diet, and abstain from wine, for it is but adding fire to fire. Gentle exercises, recreations, and sports temper and sweeten the mind. Let him have a care of long and obstinate disputes, for it is easier not to begin them than to put an end to them. Severe studies are not good for him neither: As *law*, *mathematicks*;



much attention prays upon the spirits, and makes him eager. But *poetry, history, and those lighter entertainments* may serve him for diversion and relief. He who would be quiet, must not venture at things out of his reach, nor beyond his strength; for he shall either stagger under the burden, or discharge it upon the next man he meets; which is the same case in civil and domestic affairs. Business, that is ready and practical, goes off with ease; but when it is too heavy for the bearer, they fall both together. Whatever we design, we should first take a measure of ourselves, and compare our force with the undertaking, for it vexes a man not to go through with his work: A repulse inflames a generous nature, as it makes one who is *phlegmatic, sad*. I have known some who have advised looking into a glass when a man is in the fit, and the very spectacle of his own deformity has cured him. Many who are troublesome in their drink, and know their own infirmity, give their servants orders beforehand, to take them away by force for fear of mischief and not to obey their masters themselves, when they are hotheaded. If the thing were duly considered, we should need no other cure than the bare consideration of it. We are not angry at madmen, children, and fools, because they do not know what they do: And why should not imprudence have an equal privilege in other cases? If an horse kick, or a dog bite, shall a man kick or bite again? The one, it is true, is wholly void of reason, but it is also an equivalent darkness of mind that possesses the other. So long as we are among men, let us cherish humanity! and so live, that no man may be either in fear, or in danger of us. Losses, injuries, reproaches, calumnies, are but short inconveniences, and we should bear them with resolution: Beside that, some people are above our anger, others below it. To contend with our superiors, were a folly, and with our inferiors an indignity.

THERE is hardly a more effectual remedy against anger than \*patience and consideration. Let but the first fervour abate, and that  
 \* *Patience softens wrath.*  
 mist which darkens the mind, will be either lessened or dispelled; a day, nay, an hour does much in the most violent cases, and perchance totally suppresses it: Time discovers the truth of things, and tints

that into judgment which at first was anger. *Plato* was about to strike his servant, and while his hand was in the air, he checked himself, but still held it in that menacing posture. A friend of his took notice of it, and asked him what he meant: *I am now, says Plato, punishing an angry man*: So that he had left his servant to chastise himself. Another time, his servant having committed a great fault: *Speusippus*, says he, *do you beat that fellow, for I am angry*: So that he forbore striking him: for the very reason that would have made another man do it. *I am angry, says he, and shall go farther than becomes me*. Nor is it fit that a servant should be in his power who is not his own master. Why should any one venture now to trust an angry man with a revenge, when *Plato* durst not trust himself? Either he must govern that, or that will undo him. Let us do our best to overcome it; but let us however keep it close without giving it any vent. An angry man, if he gives himself liberty at all times, will go too far. If it comes once to shew itself in the eye, or countenance, it has got the better of us. Nay, we should so oppose it, as to put on the very contrary dispositions: calm looks, soft and slow speech; an easy and deliberate march, and by little and little we may possibly bring our thoughts into a sober conformity with our actions. When *Socrates* was angry, he would check himself in it, and *speak low*, in opposition to the motions of his displeasure. His friends would take notice of it; and it was not to his disadvantage neither, but rather to his credit, that so many should *know* that he was angry, and nobody *feel* it; which could never have been, if he had not given his friends the same liberty of admonition which he himself took. And this course should we take: We should desire our friends not to flatter us in our follies, but to treat us with all liberties of reprehension; even when we are least willing to hear it, against so powerful, and so insinuating an evil; we should call for help, while we have our eyes in our head, and are yet masters of ourselves. Moderation is profitable for subjects, but more for princes, who have the means of executing all that their anger prompts them to. When that power comes once to be exercised to a common mischief, it can never long continue, a common fear joining in one cause all their divided complaints. In a word now,

how we may prevent, moderate, or master this important passion in others.

It is not enough to be sound ourselves, unless \* we

\* *Several ways of diverting anger.*

endeavour to make others so, wherein we must accommodate the remedy to the temper of the patient. Some are to be dealt with by artifice and address ;

as for example, *Why, will you gratify your enemies, to shew yourself so wuch concerned? It is not worth your anger ; it is below you ; I am as much troubled at it myself, as you can be ; but you had better say nothing, and take your time to be even with them.* Anger in some people is to be openly opposed ; in others there must be a little yielding, according to the disposition of the person. Some are won by entreaties, others are gained by mere shame and conviction ; and some by delay ; a dull way of cure for a violent distemper : But this must be the last experiment. Other affections may be better dealt with at leisure : For they proceed gradually ; but this commences and perfects itself in the same moment. It does not, like other passions, solicit, and mislead us, but runs away with us by force ; and hurries us on with irresistible temerity, as well to our own, as to another's ruin : Not only flying in the face of him who provokes us, but like a torrent, bearing down all before it. There is no encountering the first heat and fury of it, for it is deaf and mad. The best way is (in the beginning) to give it time and rest, and let it spend itself : While the passion is too hot to handle, we may deceive it : But however, let all instruments of revenge be put out of the way. It is not amiss sometimes to pretend to be angry too ; and join with him, not only in the opinion of the injury, but in the seeming contrivance of a revenge. But this must be a person then who has some authority over him. This is a way to get time, and by advising upon some greater punishment, to delay the present : If the passion be outrageous, try what shame or fear can do. If weak, it is no hard matter to amuse it by strange stories, grateful news, or pleasant discourses. Deceit in this case, is friendship ; for men must be cozened to be cured.

THE injuries that press hardest upon us, are those which \* either we have not deserved, or not expected, or at least not in so high a \* *Those injuries*

degree. This arises from the love of *go nearest us that ourselves* : For every man takes upon *we have neither* him like a prince in this case to practise *deserved, nor ex-* all liberties, and to allow none. Which *pected.*

proceeds either from ignorance or insolence. What news is it for people to do ill things ? For an enemy to hurt ; nay, for a friend or a servant to transgress, and to prove treacherous, ungrateful, covetous, impious ? What we find in one man, we may in another, and there is no more security in fortune, than in men. Our joys are mingled with fear, and a tempest may arise out of a calm ; but a skilful pilot is always provided for it.

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## CHAP. X.

### *Against rash Judgment.*

**I**T is good for every man to fortify himself on his weak side : And if he loves his peace, he must not be inquisitive, and hearken to tale bearers ; for the man who is over curious to hear and see every thing, multiplies troubles to himself ; for a man does not feel what he does not know. He who is listening after private discourse, and what people say of him, shall never be at peace. How many things that are innocent in themselves, are made injurious by misconstruction ? Wherefore, some things we are to pause upon, others to laugh at, and others again to pardon. Or if we cannot avoid the sense of indignities, let us however shun the open profession of it ; which may easily be done, as appears by many examples of those who have suppressed their anger, under the awe of a greater fear. It is a good caution not to believe any thing until we are very certain of it ; for many probable things prove false, and a short time will make evidence of the undoubted truth. We are prone to believe many things which we are unwilling to hear ; and so we conclude and take up a prejudice before we can judge. Never condemn a friend unheard ; or without letting him know his accuser, or his crime. It is a common thing to say, *Do not tell that you had it from me ; for if you do, I will deny it, and never tell you any thing again.* By which means, friends are set together by the ears, and the informer slips his neck out of the collar.

Admit no stories upon these terms ; for it is an unjust thing to believe in private, and to be angry openly. He who delivers himself up to guess and conjecture, runs a great hazard ; for there can be no suspicion without some probable grounds ; so that without much candour, and simplicity, and making the best of every thing, there is no living in society with mankind. Some things that offend us, we have by report ; others we see, or hear. In the first case, let us not be too credulous : Some people frame stories that they may deceive us ; others only tell what they hear, and are deceived themselves. Some make it their sport to do ill offices ; others do them only to pick a thank ; There are some who would part the dearest friends in the world ; others love to do mischief, and stand aloof, to see what comes of it. If it be a small matter, I would have witnesses ; but if it be a greater I would have it upon oath, and allow time to the accused, and counsel too, and hear it over and over again.

In those cases where we ourselves are witnesses, we should \* take into consideration all the circumstances : If a child, it was ignorance : If a woman a mistake : If done by command a necessity : If a man be injured, it is but *quid pro quo* : If a judge he knows what he does : If a prince, I must submit : either, if guilty, to justice, or if innocent, to fortune : If a brute, I make myself one by imitating it : If a calamity, or disease, my best relief is patience : If Providence, it is both *impious* and *vain* to be angry at it : If a good man, I will make the best of it : If a bad, I will never wonder at it. Nor is it only by *tales* and *stories*, that we are inflamed, but *suspitions*, *countenances* ; nay, a *look*, or a *smile* is enough to blow us up. In these cases let us suspend our displeasure, and plead the cause of the absent. *Perhaps he is innocent ; or if not, I have time to consider it, and may take my revenge at leisure* : But when it is once executed, it is not to be recalled. A jealous head is apt to take that to himself which was never meant him. Let us therefore trust to nothing but what we see ; and chide ourselves where we are over credulous. By this course we shall not be so easily imposed upon ; nor put ourselves to trouble about things not worth the while ; as the loitering of a servant upon an errand, the tumbling of a bed, or the spoiling of a glass of drink. It is

a madness to be disorder'd at these fooleries; we consider the thing done, and not the doer of it. *It may be he did it unwillingly, or by chance. It was a trick put upon him, or he was forced to it. He did it for reward perhaps, not hatred; not of his own accord; but he was urged on to it.* Nay, some regard must be had to the age of the person, or to fortune; and we must consult humanity and candour in the case: *One does me a great mischief at unawares; another does me a very small one by design; or peradventure none at all, but intended me one.* The latter was more his fault, but I will be angry with neither. We must distinguish betwixt what a man cannot do, and what he will not. *It is true, he has once offended me; but, how often has he pleased me? He has offended me often, and in other kinds, and, why should I not bear it as well now as I have done? Is he my friend? Why then it was against his will. Is he my enemy? It is no more than I looked for.* Let us give way to wise men, and not squabble with fools: And say this to ourselves, *We have all of us our errors; no man is so circumspect, so considerate, or so fearful of offending, but he has much to answer for.* A generous prisoner cannot immediately comply with the sordid and laborious offices of a slave: A footman cannot keep pace with his master's horse: He who is over watched may be allowed to be thowsy. All these things are to be weigh'd, before we give any ear to the first impulse. If it be my duty to love my country, I must be kind also to all my countrymen: If a veneration be due to the whole, so is a piety also to the parts: And it is the common interest to preserve them. We are all members of one body, and it is as natural to help one another, as for the hands to help the feet, or the eyes the hands. Without the love and care of the parts, the whole can never be preserved; and we must spare one another, because we are born for society, which cannot be maintained without a regard to particulars. Let this be a rule to us never to deny a pardon that does no hurt either to the giver or receiver: That may be well enough in one, which is ill in another; and therefore we are not to condemn any thing that is common to a nation: For custom defends it. But much more pardonable are those things which are common to mankind.

It is a kind of spiteful comfort, that whoever does

Whoever does me an injury, may receive one; and as injury, is liable that there is a power over him who is to suffer one. above me. A man should stand as firm against all indignities, as a rock does against the waves. And it is some satisfaction to a man in a mean condition, that there is no security in a more prosperous; and as the loss of a son in a corner is borne with more patience, upon the sight of a funeral carried out of a palace; so are injuries, and contempts, the more tolerable from a meaner person; when we consider, that the greatest men and fortunes are not exempt. The wisest also of mortals have their failings, and no man living is without the same excuse. The difference is, that we do not all of us transgress the same way: But we are obliged in humanity to bear with one another. We should every one of us bethink ourselves how remiss we have been in our duties; how immodest in our discourses; how intemperate in our cups. And why not as well how extravagant we have been in our passions? Let us clear ourselves of this evil, purge our minds, and utterly root out all those vices, which, upon leaving the least sting, will grow again, and recover. We must think of every thing, expect every thing, that we may not be surprised. It is a shame, says *Fabius*, for a commander to excuse himself by saying, *I was not aware of it.*

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## CHAP. XI.

*Take nothing ill from another Man, until you have made it your own Case.*

IT is not prudent to deny a pardon to any man without first examining, if we do not stand in need of it ourselves; for it may be our lot to ask it, even at his feet, to whom we refuse it. But we are willing enough to do what we are very unwilling to suffer. It is unreasonable to charge public vices upon particular persons: For we are all of us wicked, and that which we blame in others, we find in ourselves. It is not a paleness in one, or a leanness in another, but a pestilence that has laid hold upon all. It is a wicked world, and we make part of it; and the way to be quiet, is to bear one with another.

*Such a man, we cry, has done me a shrewd turn, and I never did him any hurt.* Well, but it may be, I have injured other people, or at least I may live to do as much to him, as that comes to. *Such a one has spoken ill things of me*; but if I first speak ill of him, as I do of many others, this is not an injury, but a repayment. What if he did overshoot himself? He was loth to lose his conceit perhaps, but there was no malice in it; and if he had not done me a mischief, he must have done himself one. How many good offices are there that look like injuries? Nay, how many have been reconciled and good friends, after a professed hatred?

BEFORE we lay any thing to heart, let us ask ourselves, if we have not done the \* same thing to others. But, where shall we find an equal judge? He who loves another man's wife (only perhaps because she is another's) will not suffer his own to be so much as looked upon. No man so fierce against calumny, as an evil speaker; none so strict exactors of modesty in a servant, as those who are most prodigal of their own. We carry our neighbour's crime in sight, and we throw our own over our shoulders. The intemperance of a bad son is chastised by a worse father; and the luxury that we punish in others, we allow to ourselves. The tyrant exclaims against homicide; and the sacrilegious against theft. We are angry with the persons, but not with the faults.

*\* Let no man condemn another, without making it his own case.*

SOME things there are that cannot hurt, us and others will not: As good magistrates, parents, tutors, judges; whose reproof or correction we are to take, as we do abstinence, bleeding, and other uneasy things, which we are the better for. In which cases, we are not so much to reckon upon what we suffer, as upon what we have done. *I take it ill*, says one; and *I have done nothing*, says another; when at the same time we make it worse, by adding arrogance and contumacy to our first error. We cry out presently, *What law have we transgressed?* As if the letter of the law were the sum of our duty, and that piety, humanity, liberty, justice and faith, were things beside our business. No, no, the rule of human duty is of a greater latitude;



and we have many obligations upon us, that are not to be found in the *statute books*. And yet we fall short of the exactness, even of that *legal innocency*. We have intended one thing, and done another; wherein only the want of success has kept us from being criminals. This very thing, methinks, should make us more favourable to delinquents, and to forgive, not only ourselves, but the gods too, of whom we seem to have harder thoughts, in taking that to be a particular evil directed to us, that befalls us only by the common law of mortality. In fine, no man living can absolve himself to his conscience, though to the world, perhaps he may. It is true, that we are also condemned to pains and diseases, and to death too, which is no more than the quitting of the soul's house. But, why should any man complain of bondage, who, wherever he looks has his way open to liberty? That precipice, that sea, that river, that well, there is freedom in the bottom of it. \* *Astoical error*. \* It hangs upon every crooked bough; and not only a man's throat, or his heart, but every vein in his body opens a passage to it.

To conclude, where my proper virtue fails me, I will have recourse to examples, and say to myself, am I greater than *Philip* or *Augustus*, who both of them put up with greater reproaches? Many have pardoned their enemies, and shall not I forgive a neglect, a little freedom of the tongue? Nay, the patience but of a second thought does the business; for, though the first shock be violent, take it in pants, and it is subdued. And, to wind up all in one word; the great lesson of mankind, as well in this, as in all other cases, is, *to do as we would be done by*.

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## CHAP. XII.

### OF CRUELTY.

**T**HERE is so near an affinity betwixt *anger* and *cruelty*, that many people confound them: As if *cruelty* were only the *execution* of *anger* in the payment of a *revenge*; which holds in some cases, but not in others. There are a sort of men who take delight in the spilling of human blood; and in the death of those who never

did them any injury, nor were ever so much as suspected of it; as *Apholodorus, Phalaris, Sinis, Procrustus* and others, who burnt men alive; whom we cannot so properly call angry as brutal. For anger does necessarily presuppose injury either done, conceived, or feared; but the other takes pleasure, in tormenting, without so much as pretending any provocation to it, and kills merely for killing sake. The original of this cruelty perhaps was anger; which by frequent exercise and custom, has lost all sense of humanity and mercy; and those who are thus affected, are so far from the countenance and appearance of men in anger, that they will laugh, rejoice, and entertain themselves with the most horrid spectacles; as rocks, gaols, gibbets, several sorts of chains, and punishments; dilaceration of members, stigmatizings, and wild beasts, with other exquisite inventions of torture: And yet at last the cruelty itself is more horrid and odious than the means by which it works. It is a bestial madness to love mischief; beside that it is womanish to rage and tear; a generous beast will scorn to do it, when he has any thing at his mercy. It is a vice for wolves and tygers; and no less abominable to the world, than dangerous to itself.

THE Romans had their morning and their meridian spectacles. In the former they had their combats of men with wild beasts; and in the latter, the men fought one with another. I went (says our author) the other day to the meridian spectacles, in hope of meeting somewhat of mirth, and diversion, to sweeten the humour of those who had been entertained with blood in the morning: But it proved otherwise; for compared with this inhumanity, the former was a mercy. The whole business was only murder upon murder; the combatants fought naked, and every blow was a wound. They did not contend for victory, but for death; and he who kills one man, is to be killed by another. By wounds they are forced upon wounds, which they take, and give, upon the bare breasts. Burn that rogue! they cry: What! Is he afraid of his flesh? Do but see how sneakingly that rascal dies. Look to yourselves, my masters, and consider it: Who knows but this may come to be your own case? Wicked examples seldom fail of coming home at last to the authors. To destroy a single man, may be dangerous; but to murder whole nations, is only a more glorious wickedness. Private av-

arice and rigour are condemned ; but oppression, when it comes to be authorized by an act of state, and to be publicly commanded, though particularly forbidden, becomes a point of dignity and honor. What a shame is it for men to destroy one another, when yet the fiercest even of beasts are at peace with those of their own kind ! This brutal fury puts philosophy itself to a stand. The drunkard, the glutton, the covetous, may be reduced ; nay, and the mischief of it is, that no vice keeps itself within its proper bounds. Luxury runs into avarice, and when the reverence of virtue is extinguished, men will stick at nothing that carries profit along with it. Man's blood is shed in wantonness ; his death is a spectacle for entertainment, and his groans are music. When *Alexander* delivered up *Lysimachus* to a lion, how glad would he have been to have had nails and teeth to have devoured him himself ? It would have too much derogated, he thought from the dignity of wrath, to have appointed a man for the execution of his friend. Private cruelties, it is true, cannot do much mischief, but in *princes* they are a war against mankind.

C. CÆSAR would commonly, for exercise and pleasure, put senators and Roman knights to the torture, and whip several of them like slaves, or put them to death with the most exquisite torments, merely for the satisfaction of his cruelty. That *Cæsar* who wished the people of Rome had but one neck, that he might cut it off at one blow. It was the employment, the study, and the joy of his life. He would not so much as give the expiring leave to groan, but caused their mouths to be stopped with sponges, or for want of them with rags of their own clothes, that they might not so much as breathe out their last agonies at liberty : Or, perhaps, lest the tormented should speak something which the tormentor had no mind to hear. Nay, he was so impatient of delay, that he would frequently rise from supper to have men killed by torch light, as if his life and death had depended upon their dispatch before the next morning. To say nothing how many fathers were put to death by him in the same night with their sons (which was a kind of mercy in the prevention of their mourning.) And was not *Sylla's* cruelty prodigious too, which was only stopt for want of enemies ? He caused 7000 citizens of Rome to be slaughtered at once ; and some of the senators being startled at their cries which were

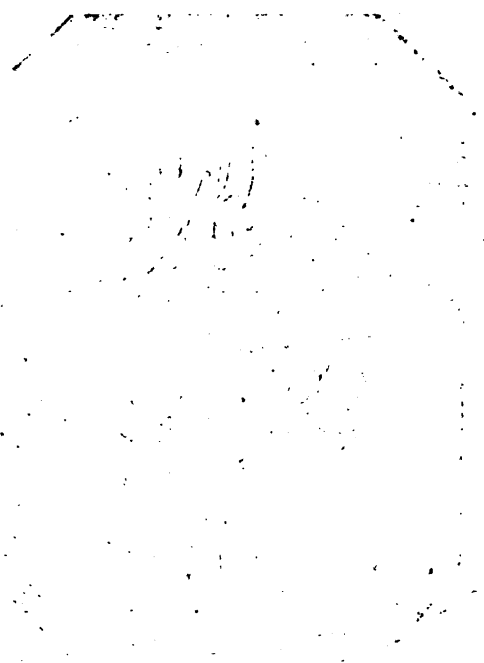
heard in the senate house : *Let us mind our business*, says *Sylla*. *This is nothing but a few mutineers that I have ordered to be sent out of the way. A glorious spectacle !* says *Hannibal*, when he saw the trenches flowing with human blood ; and if the rivers had run blood too, he would have liked it so much the better.

Among the famous and detestable speeches that are committed to memory, I know none worse than that *impudent and tyrannical maxim*, \* *Let them hate me, \* He who threatens all, fears all.* who are kept in obedience by fear, are both malicious and mercenary, and only wait for an opportunity to change their master. Beside that, whoever is terrible to others, is likewise afraid of himself. What is more ordinary, than for a tyrant to be destroyed by his own guards ? Which is no more than the putting those crimes into practice which they learned of their masters. How many slaves have revenged themselves of their cruel oppressors, though they were sure to die for it ? But when it comes once to a popular tyranny, whole nations conspire against it. For whoever threatens all, is in danger of all ; ever and above that the cruelty of a prince increases the number of his enemies, by destroying some of them ; for it entails an hereditary hatred upon the friends and relations of those who are taken away. And then it has this misfortune, that a man must be wicked upon necessity ; for there is no going back : So that he must betake himself to arms, and yet he lives in fear. He can neither trust to the faith of his friends, nor to the piety of his children ; he both dreads death, and wishes it ; and becomes a greater terror to himself than he is to his people. Nay, if there were nothing else to make cruelty detestable, it were enough, that it passes all bounds both of custom and humanity ; and is followed upon the heel with sword and poison. A private malice indeed does not move whole cities ; but that which extends to all, is every body's mark. One sick person gives no great disturbance in a family ; but when it comes to a depopulating plague, all people fly from it. And why should a prince expect any man to be good, whom he has taught to be wicked ?

But what if it were safe to be cruel ? Were it not still a sad thing, the very state of such a government ? \* *Tyrannical government is* \* *A government that bears the image.*

*a perpetual state of war.* of a *taken city*, where there is nothing but *sorrow, trouble, and confusion*. Men dare not so much as trust themselves with their friends, or with their pleasures. There is not any entertainment so innocent, but it affords pretence of crime and danger. People are betrayed at their *tables*, and in their *cups*, and drawn from the very *theatre* to the *prison*. How horrid a madness is it to be still *raging and killing*; to have the rattling of *chains* always in our ears; *bloody spectacles* before our *eyes*; and to carry *terror and dismay* wherever we go? If we had *lions and serpents* to rule over us; this would be the manner of *their government*; saving that they agree better among themselves. It passes for a mark of greatness, to burn cities, and lay whole kingdoms waste; nor is it fit for the honor of a prince, to appoint this or that single man to be killed, unless they have whole *troops* or (sometimes) *legions* to work upon. But it is not the spoils of *war*, and *bloody trophies*, that make a prince *glorious*, but the *divine power* of preserving *unity and peace*. *Ruin without distinction*, is more properly the business of a general *deluge*, or a *conflagration*. Neither does a fierce and inexorable *anger* become the *supreme magistrate*; *greatness of mind* is always *meeke and humble*; but *cruelty* is a mark and an effect of *weakness*; and brings down a *governor* to the level of a *competitor*.

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# S E N E C A,

OF

## CLEMENCY,

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**T**HE humanity and excellence of this virtue is confessed on all hands, as well by the men of *pleasure*, or those who think every man was made for himself, as by the *Stoicks*, who make man a *sociable creature*, and born for the common good of mankind: For it is of all dispositions, the most *peaceable* and *quiet*. But before we enter any farther upon the discourse, it should be first known what *clemency* is, that we may distinguish it from *pity*, which is a *weakness*, though many times taken for a *virtue*. And the next thing will be, to bring the mind to the *habit and exercise* of it.

*CLEMENCY* is a *favorable disposition of the mind*, in the matter of *inflicting punishment*; or, a *moderation that remits somewhat of the penalty incurred*; as *pardon* is the *total remission of a deserved punishment*. We must be careful not to confound *clemency* with *pity*; for, as *religion* worships *God*, and *superstition* profanes that worship; so should we distinguish betwixt *clemency* and *pity*; practicing the one, and avoiding the other. For *pity* proceeds from a *narrowness of mind*, that respects rather *fortune* than the *cause*. It is a kind of *moral sickness*, contracted from other people's misfortunes; such another *weakness* as *laughing*, or *yawning* for company; or as that of *sick eyes*, that cannot look upon others that are *bleared* without *drooping themselves*. I will give a *shipwrecked man* a plank, a *lodging* to a *stranger*, or a *piece of money* to



him who wants it : I will dry of the tears of my friend ; yet I will not weep with him, but treat him with constancy and humanity, as *one man* ought to treat *another*.

It is objected by some, that *clemency* is an insignificant virtue ; and that only the bad are the better for it, for the good have no need of it. But in the first place, as physic is in use only among the sick, and yet in honour among the sound ; so the innocent have a reverence for clemency, though criminals are the proper objects of it ; And then again, a man may be innocent, and yet have occasion for it too : For by the accidents of fortune, or the condition of times, virtue itself may come to be in danger. Consider the most populous city, or nation ; what a sollicitude it would be, if none should be left there but those who could stand the test of a severe justice. We should have neither judges, nor accusers ; none either to grant a pardon, or to ask it. More or less, we are all sinners ; and he who has best purged his conscience, was brought by errors to repentance. And is further profitable to mankind ; for many delinquents come to be converted. There is a tenderness to be used, even toward our slaves, and that, which we have bought with our money : How much more then, to free and to honest men, who are rather under our protection, than dominion ? Not that I would have it so general neither, as not to distinguish betwixt the good, and the bad ; for that would introduce a confusion, and give a kind of encouragement to wickedness. It must therefore have respect to the quality of the offender and separate the curable from the desperate ; for it is an equal cruelty to pardon all, and to pardon none. Where the matter is in balance, let mercy turn the scale. If all wicked men should be punished, Who should escape ?

THOUGH mercy and gentleness of nature keeps all in peace and tranquillity, even in the cottage ? Yet it is much more beneficial and conspicuous in a palace. Private men in their condition, are likewise private in their virtues, and in their vices ; but the words and the

*Clemency does well in private persons, but it is more beneficial in princes.*

actions of *princes* are the subject of *public rumour*; and therefore; they have need to take care, what occasion they give people for discourse, of whom people will be always a talking. There is the *government* of a *prince* over his *people*, a *father* over his *children*, a *master* over his *scholars*, an *officer* over his *soldiers*. He is an unnatural father, who for every trifle beats his children. Who is the better master, he who rages over his scholars, for but missing a word in the lesson; or he who tries by admonition, and fair words, to instruct and reform them? An outrageous officer makes his men run from their colours. A skilful rider brings his horse to obedience, by mingling fair means with foul; whereas to be perpetually switching and spurring, makes him vicious and jadish: And shall we not have more care of *men* than of *beasts*? It breaks the hope of generous inclinations, when they are depressed by servility and terror. There is no creature so hard to be pleased with ill usage as man.

CLEMENCY does well with all, but best with \* *princes*, for it makes their power comfortable and beneficial, which would otherwise be the pest of mankind. It establishes their greatness when they

\* *Mercy is the interest both of prince and people.*

make the good of the public their particular care, and employ their power for the safety of the people. The prince, in effect, is but the soul of the community, as the community is the only body of the prince: So that being merciful to others, he is tender of himself. Nor is any man so mean, but his master feels the loss of him, as a part of his empire: And he takes care, not only of the lives of his people, but also of their reputation. Now, giving for granted, that all virtues are in themselves equal, it will not yet be denied, that they may be more beneficial to mankind in one person, than in another. A beggar may be as magnanimous as a king: For what can be greater or braver than to baffle ill fortune? This does not hinder, but that a man in authority and plenty, has more matter for his generosity to work upon, than a private person, and it is also more taken notice of upon the bench, than upon the level. When a gracious prince shews himself to his people, they do not fly from him as from a tyger, that roused himself out of his den, but they worship him as a benevolent influence; they secure him against all con-

spiracies, and interpose their bodies betwixt him and danger. They guard him while he sleeps, and defend him in the field against his enemies. Nor is it without reason, this unanimous agreement in love and loyalty; and this heroical zeal of abandoning themselves for the safety of their prince; but it is as well the interest of the people. In the breath of a prince there is life and death; and his sentence stands good, right or wrong. If he be angry, nobody dares advise him; and if he does amiss, who shall call him to account? Now for him who has so much mischief in his power, and yet applies that power to the common utility and comfort of his people, diffusing also clemency and goodness into their hearts too: What can be a greater blessing to mankind than such a prince? *Any man may kill another against the law, but only a prince can save him so.* Let him so deal with his own subjects, as he desires God should deal with him. If Heaven should be inexorable to sinners, and destroy all without mercy, what flesh could be safe? But as the faults of great men are not presently punished with thunder from above, let them have a like regard to their inferiors here upon earth. He who has revenge in his power, and does not use it, is the great man. Which is the more beautiful and agreeable state, that of a calm, a temperate, and a clear day; or that of lightning, thunder and tempests? And this is the very difference betwixt a moderate and a turbulent government. It is for low and vulgar spirits to brawl, storm and transport themselves; but it is not for the majesty of a prince to lash out into intemperance of words. Some will rather think it slavery than empire, to be debarred liberty of speech: And what if it be, when government itself is but a more illustrious servitude? He who uses his power as he should, takes as much delight in making it comfortable to his people as glorious to himself. He is affable, and easy of access; his very countenance makes him the joy of his people's eyes, and the delight of mankind. He is beloved, defended and revered by all his subjects: and men speak as well of him in private, as in public; He is safe without guards, and his sword is rather his ornament, than his defence: In his duty, he is like that of a good father, who sometimes gently reproveth a son, sometimes threatens him; nay, and perhaps corrects him: But no father in his right wits, will disinherit a son

for the first fault: There must be many greater offences, and only desperate consequences that should bring him to that decretory resolution; He will make many experiments, to try if he can reclaim him first, and nothing but the utmost despair must put him upon extremities. It is not flattery that calls a prince *the father of his country*. The titles of great and august, are matter of compliment, and of honour; but, in calling him *father*, we mind him of that moderation, and indulgence, which he owes to his children. His subjects are members; where, if there must be an amputation, let him come slowly to it; and when the part is cut off, let him wish it were on again. Let him grieve in the doing it. He who passes a sentence *hastily*, looks as if he did it willingly; and then there is an injustice in the excess.

It is a glorious contemplation, for a prince, first to consider the vast multitudes of his people; whose seditious, divided, and impotent passions, would cast all into confusion and destroy themselves, and public order

*The blessed reflections of a merciful prince.*

so, if the bond of government did not restrain them: And hence to pass to the examination of his conscience, saying thus to himself, It is by the choice of Providence that I am here made God's deputy upon earth; the arbitrator of life, and death; and that upon my breath depends the fortune of my people. My lips are the oracles of their fate, and upon them hangs the destiny both of cities and of men. His under my favour that people seek either for prosperity or protection: Thousands of swords are drawn or sheathed at my pleasure. What towns shall be advanced or destroyed; who shall be slaves, or who free, depends upon my will; and yet in this arbitrary power of acting without controul, I was never transported to do any cruel thing, either by anger or hot blood in myself, or by the contumacy, rashness, or provocations of other men: Though sufficient to turn mercy itself into fury; I was never moved by the odious vanity of making myself terrible by my power, (that is cursed though common humour of ostentation and glory that haunts imperious natures.) My sword has not only been buried in the scabbard, but in a manner bound to peace, and tender even of the cheapest blood: And where I find no other motive to compassion, humanity itself is sufficient. I have been always slow to severity, and prone to forgive;

and under as strict a guard to observe the laws, as if I were accountable for the breaking of them. Some I pardoned for their youth; others for their age. I spare one man for his indignity, another for his humility; and when I find no other matter to work upon, I spare myself. So that if God should at this instant call me to an account, the whole world would agree to witness for me, that I have not by any force, either public or private; either by myself, or by any other, defrauded the commonwealth; and the reputation that I ever sought for, has been that which few princes have obtained, the conscience of my proper innocence. And I have not lost my labour neither, for no man was ever so dear to another, as I have made myself to the whole body of my people. Under such a prince the subject has nothing to wish for, beyond what he enjoys; their fears are quieted, and their prayers heard; and there is nothing can make their felicity greater, unless to make it perpetual; and there is no liberty denied to the people, but that of destroying one another.

It is the interest of the people, by the consent of all nations, to run all hazards for the safety of their prince,

*Upon the well being of the prince depends the safety of the people.* and by a thousand deaths to redeem that one life, upon which so many millions depend. Does not the whole body serve the mind, though only the one is exposed to the eye, and the other not; but, thin, and invisible, the very seat of it being uncertain? Yet the hands, feet and eyes observe the motions of it: We lie down, run about, and ramble as that commands. If we be covetous, we fish the seas, and ransack the earth for treasure; if ambitious, we burn our flesh with *Scævola*; we cast ourselves into the gulph with *Curtius*: So would that vast multitude of people who are animated; but with one soul, governed by one spirit, and moved by one reason, destroy itself with its own strength if it were not supported by wisdom, and government. Wherefore it is for their own security that the people expose their lives for their prince, as the very bond that ties the republic together; the vital spirit of so many thousands, which will be nothing else but a burden and prey, without a governor. When this union comes once to be dissolved, all fall to pieces; for empire and obedience must stand and fall together. It is no wonder then, if a prince be dear to

his people, when the community is wrapt up in him, and the good of both is inseparable as the body and the head; the one for strength, and the other for counsel; for what signifies the force of the body, without the direction of the understanding? While the prince watches, his people sleep; his labour keeps them at ease, and his business keeps them quiet. The natural intent of monarchy appears even from the very discipline of bees: They assign to their master the fairest lodgings, the safest place; and his office is only to see that the rest perform their duties. When their king is lost, the whole swarm dissolves: More than one, they will not admit; and then they contend who shall have the best: They are of all creatures the fiercest, for their bigness, and leave their stings behind them in their quarrels; only the king himself has none, intimating, that kings should neither be vindictive nor cruel. Is it not a shame, after such an example of moderation in these creatures, that men should be yet intemperate? It were well if they lost their stings too in their revenge, as well as the other, that they might hurt but once, and do no mischief by their proxies. It would tire them out, if they were to execute all with their own hands, or to wound others, at the peril of their own lives.

A prince should behave himself generously \* in the power which God has given him, of life and death; especially toward those who have been any time his equals; for the one has his revenge, and the other his punishment in it. He who stands indebted for his life, has lost it; but he who has received his life at the foot of his enemy, lives to the honour of his preserver. He lives the lasting monument of his virtue; whereas if he had been led in triumph, the spectacle would have been quickly over. Or what if he should restore him to his kingdom again: Would it not be an ample accession to his honour, to shew that he found nothing about the conquered that was worthy of the conquerer? There is nothing more venerable than a prince who does not revenge an injury. He who is gracious, is beloved, and revered as a common father; but a tyrant stands in fear, and in danger even of his own guards. No prince can be safe himself, of whom all others are afraid; for to spare none is to enrage all. It is an error to imagine, that any man can be secure, who suffers no

\* *The Prince who is gracious is beloved.*

body else to be so too. How can any man endure to lead an uneasy, spurious, anxious life, when he may be safe, if he pleases, and enjoy all the blessings of power, together with the prayers of his people? Clemency protects a prince without a guard; there is no need of troops, castles, or fortifications: Security on the one side, is the condition of security on the other; and the affections on the subject are the most invincible fortress. What can be fairer than for a prince to live the object of his people's love; to have the vows of their heart, as well as of their lips; and his health and sickness, their common hopes and fears? There will be no danger of plots; nay, on the contrary, who would not frankly venture his blood to serve him, under whose government, justice, peace, modesty, and dignity flourish; under whose influence, men grow rich and happy; and whom men look upon with such veneration, as they would do upon the immortal gods, if they were capable of seeing them? And as the true representatives of the Almighty they consider him, when he is gracious and bountiful, and employs his power to the advantage of his subjects.

WHEN a prince proceeds to punishment, \* it must be either to vindicate himself or others. It is a hard matter to govern himself in his own case. If a man should advise him not to be credulous, but to examine matters, and indulge the innocent, this is rather a point of justice than clemency: But, in case, that he be manifestly injured, I would have him *forgive*, where he may *safely* do it; and be *tender* even where he cannot *forgive*; but far more exorable in his own case, however, than in another's. It is nothing to be free of another man's purse; and it is as little to be merciful in another man's cause. He is the great man who masters his passion where he is stung himself; and pardons when he might destroy. The end of punishment, is either to comfort the party injured, or to secure him for the future. A prince's fortune is above the need of such a comfort, and his power is too eminent to seek an advantage of reputation, by doing a private man a mischief. This I speak in case of an affront from those who are below us: But he who of an equal, has made any man his inferior, has revenge in the bringing of him down. *A prince has been killed by a servant, destroyed*

\* Where punishment is necessary, let it be moderate.

by a serpent; but whoever preserves a man, must be greater than the person whom he preserves. With citizens, strangers, and people of low condition, a prince is not to contend, for they are beneath him: He may spare some out of good will, and others as he would do some creatures that a man cannot touch without fouling his fingers: But for those who are to be pardoned or exposed to public punishment, he may use mercy as he sees occasion; and a generous mind can never want inducements and motives to it; and whether it be age or sex, high or low, nothing comes amiss.

To pass now to the vindication of others, there must be had a \* regard either to the the amendment \* *The ends of* of the person punished, or the making *punishment.* others better for fear of punishment; or the taking the offender out of the way for the security of others. An amendment may be procured by a small punishment, for he lives more carefully who has something yet to lose; it is a kind of *impurity*, to be incapable of a *farther punishment.* The corruption of a city is best cured by a few and sparing severities; for the multitude of offenders creates a custom of offending, and company authorises a crime; and there is more good to be done upon a *dissolute age by patience than by rigour*, provided that it pass not for an *approbation of ill manners*; but only as an *unwillingness to proceed to extremities.* Under a merciful prince a man will be ashamed to offend; because a punishment that is inflicted by a gentle-governor, seems to fall heavier, and with more reproach: And it is remarkable also, that *those sins are often committed, which are very often punished.* Caligula, in five years condemned more people to the rack, than ever went before him: And there were *fewer parricides before the law against them, than after.* For our ancestors did wisely presume that the crime would never be committed, until by law for punishing it, they found that it might be done. *Parricides began with the law against them, and the punishment instructed men in the crime.* Where there are few punishments, inoffency is indulged as a public good, and it is a dangerous thing to shew a city how strong it is in delinquents. There is a certain contumacy in the nature of man, that makes him oppose difficulties. We are better to follow than to drive; as a generous horse rides best with an easy bit. People.



obey willingly, where they are commanded kindly. When *Burrhus*, the prefect, was to sentence two malefactors, he brought the warrant to *Nero* to sign; who after long reluctance, came to at it last with this exclamation, *I would I could not write.* A speech that deserved the whole world for an auditory, but all princes especially; and that the hearts of all the subjects would conform to the likeness of their masters. As the head is well or ill, so is the mind dull or merry. What is the difference betwixt a king, and a tyrant; but a diversity of will, under one and the same power? The one destroys for his pleasure, the other upon necessity: A distinction rather in fact than in name. A gracious prince is armed as well as a tyrant; but it is for the defence of his people, and not for the ruin of them. No king can ever have faithful servants who accustoms them to tortures and executions: The very guilty themselves do not lead so anxious a life as the persecutors; for they are not only afraid of justice, both divine and human, but it is dangerous for them to mend their manners; so that when they are once in, they must continue to be wicked upon necessity. An universal hatred unites in a popular rage. A temperate fear may be kept in order; but when it comes once to be continual and sharp, it provokes people to extremities, and transports them to desperate resolutions: As wild beasts, when they are pressed upon the tail, turn back, and assault the very pursuers. A turbulent government is a perpetual trouble to both prince and people; and he who is a terror to all others, is not without terror also himself. Frequent punishments and revenges may suppress the hatred of a few, but then it stirs up the detestation of all. So that there is no destroying one enemy without making many. It is good to master the will of being cruel, even while there may be cause for it, and master to work upon.

*AUGUSTUS* was a gracious prince\* when he had the power in his own hand; but in the triumviracy he made use of his sword, and had his friends ready armed, to set upon *Anthony* during that dispute. But he behaved himself afterwards at another rate; for when he was betwixt forty and fifty years of age, he was told that *Cinna* was in a plot to murder him with the time, place, and manner of the design; and this

\* A famous instance of Augustus's clemency.

from one of the confederates. Upon this he resolved upon a revenge, and sent for several of his friends to advise upon it. The thought of it kept him waking, to consider, that there was the life of a young nobleman in the case, the nephew of *Pompey*, and a person otherwise innocent. He was off and on several times, whether he should put him to death or not. *What, (says he) shall I live in trouble and danger myself, and the contriver of my death walk free and secure? Will nothing serve him but my life, which Providence has preserved in so many civil wars; in so many battles, both by sea and land; and now, in the state of an universal peace too? And not a simple murder neither, but a sacrifice; for I am to be assaulted at the very altar; and shall the contriver of all this villainy escape unpunished? Here Augustus made a little pause, and then recollecting himself: No, no, Cæsar, (says he) it is rather Cæsar than Cinna, that I am to be angry with: Why do I myself live any longer, after that my death is become the interest of so many people? And if I go on, what end will there be of blood and of punishment? If it be against my life that the nobility arm themselves, and level their weapons; my single life is not worth the while, if so many must be destroyed that I may be preserved.* His wife *Livia* gave him here an interruption, and desired that he would for once hear a woman's counsel. "Do, says she, like a physician, who when common remedies fail, will try the contrary. You have got nothing hitherto by severity: After *Salvidianus* there followed *Lepidus*; after him *Murena*; *Cæcio* followed him, and *Egnatius* followed *Cæcio*: Try now what mercy will do; forgive *Cinna*. He is discovered, and can do you no hurt in your person; and it will yet advantage you in your reputation." *Augustus* was glad of the advice, and he gave thanks for it; and thereupon countermanded the meeting of his friends, and ordered *Cinna* to be brought to him alone; for whom he caused a chair to be set, and then discharged the rest of the company. *Cinna, (says Augustus,) before I go any farther, you must promise not to give me the interruption of one syllable until I have told you all I have to say; and you shall have liberty afterwards to say what you please. You cannot forget, that when I found you in arms against me, and not only made my enemy, but born so; I gave you your life and fortune. Upon your petition for the priesthood, I granted it, with a repulse to the sons of those*

who had been my fellow soldiers; and you are at this day so happy and so rich, that even the conquerors envy him who is overcome; and yet after all this, you are in a plot, *Cinna*, to murder me.\* At that word *Cinna* started, and interposed with exclamations, "That certainly he was far from being either so wicked or mad." "This is a breach of conditions, *Cinna*, (says *Augustus*,) it is not your time to speak yet. I tell you again, that you are in a plot to murder me;" and so he told him the time, the place, the confederates, the order and manner of the design, and who was to do the deed. *Cinna*, upon this, fixed his eye upon the ground, without any reply; not for his word's sake, but as in a confusion of conscience; and so *Augustus* went on, "What, says he, may your design be in all this? Is it that you would pretend to step into my place? The commonwealth were in an ill condition, if only *Augustus* were in the way betwixt you and the government. You were cast the other day in a cause by one of your own freemen; and do you expect to find a weaker adversary in *Cesar*? But, what if I were removed? There is *Æmilius Paulus*, *Pabius Maximus*, and twenty other families of great blood and interest who would never bear it." To cut off the story short, (for it was a discourse of above two hours; and *Augustus* lengthened, the punishment in words, since he intended that should be all.) "Well, *Cinna*, says he, the life that I gave you once as an enemy, I will now repeat to a traitor, and to a parricide, and this shall be the last reproach I will give you. For the time to come there shall be no other contention betwixt you and me, than which shall outdo the other in point of friendship." After this *Augustus* made *Cinna* consul (an honor, which, he confessed, he durst not so much as desire) and *Cinna* was ever affectionately faithful to him: He made *Cæsar* his sole heir; and this was the last conspiracy that ever was formed against him.

THIS moderation of *Augustus* was \* the excellency of his mature age; for in his youth he was passionate and sudden; and he did many things which afterward he looked back upon with trouble: After the battle of *Actium*, so many navies broken in *Sicily*, both *Roman* and strangers; the *Persian altars*, (where 300 lives were sacrific-

\* *Augustus's* moderation to his enemies.

ced to the ghost of *Julius*), his frequent *proscriptions*, and other severities : his *temperance* at last seemed to be little more than a *wearry cruelty*. If he had not forgiven those he conquered, whom should he have governed ? He chose his very *lifeguard* from among his *enemies*, and the *flower* of the *Romans* owed their *lives* to his *clemency*. Nay, he only punished *Lepidus* himself with *banishment*, and permitted him to wear the *ensigns* of his *dignity*, without taking the *pontificate* to himself, so long as *Lepidus* was living ; for he would not possess it as a *spoil*, but as an *honour*. This *clemency* it was that secured him in his *greatness*, and ingratiated him to the *people*, though he laid his hand upon the *government* before they had thoroughly submitted to the *yoke* ; and this *clemency* it was, that made his *name* famous to *posterity*. This it is, that makes us reckon him *divine*, without the authority of an *apothecosis*. He was so tender and patient, that though many a bitter jest was broken upon him (and *contumelias* upon princes are the most intolerable of all *injuries*) yet he never punished any man upon that subject. It is then generous to be merciful, when we have it in our power to take revenge.

A son of *Titus Arius* being examined, and found guilty of *parricide*, was banished from Rome, and confined to *Marseilles*, where his father, allowed him the same annuity that he had before ; which made all people conclude him guilty, when they saw that his father had yet condemned the son whom he could not hate. *Augustus* was pleased to sit upon the fact in the house of *Arius*, only as a single member of the council, that was to examine it. If it had been in *Cesar's* palace, the judgment must have been *Cesar's*, and not the father's. Upon a full hearing of the matter, *Cesar* directed, that every man should write his own opinion, whether guilty or not ; and without declaring his own, for fear of a partial vote. Before the opening of the books, *Cesar* passed an oath, that he would not be the heir of *Arius* ; and to shew that he had no interest in his sentence, as appeared afterward ; for he was not condemned to the ordinary punishment of *parricides*, nor to a prison ; but by the mediation of *Cesar*, only banished from *Rome*, and confined to the place which his father should name : *Augustus* in-

sisted upon it, that the father should content himself with an easy punishment; and arguing, that the young man was not moved to the attempt by *malice*, and that he was but half resolved upon the fact, for he wavered in it; and therefore to remove him from the city, and from his father's sight, would be sufficient. This is a glorious mercy and worthy of a prince, to make all things gentler wherever he comes. How miserable is that man in himself, who when he has employed his power in rapine and cruelty upon others, is yet more unhappy in himself! He stands in fear both of his domestics, and of strangers; the faith of his friends, and the piety of his children; and flies to actual violence to secure him from the violence he fears. When he comes to look about him, and to consider what he *has* done, what he *must*, and what he *is about* to do; what with the *wickedness* and with the *torments* of his *conscience*, many times he fears death, oftner he wishes for it; and lives more odious to himself, than to his subjects: Whereas, on the contrary, he who takes a care of the public, though of one part more perhaps than of another, yet there is not any part of it, but he looks upon as part of himself. His mind is tender and gentle, and even where punishment is necessary and profitable, he comes to it unwillingly, and without any rancour and enmity in his heart. Let the authority, in fine, be what it will, clemency, becomes it, and the greater the power, the greater is the glory of it. *It is a truly royal virtue, for a prince to deliver his people from other men's anger, and not to oppress them with his own.*

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# EPISTLES.

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## EPISTLE I.

*Certain general Directions for the Government of the Voice :  
As in speaking soft or loud, quick or slow : The Speech is  
the Index of the Mind.*

**Y**OU say well, that in speaking, the very ordering of the voice (to say nothing of the actions, countenance and other circumstances, that accompany it) is a consideration worthy of a wise man. Some there are who prescribe certain modes of rising and falling : Nay, if you will be governed by them, you shall not speak a word, move a step, or eat a bit, but by rule : And these perhaps are too critical. Do not understand me yet, as if I made no difference betwixt entering upon a discourse loud or soft ; for the affections do naturally rise by degrees ; and in all disputes or pleadings, whether public or private, a man should properly begin with modesty and temper ; and so advance by little, if need be, into clamour and vociferation. And as the voice rises by degrees, let it fall so too ; not snapping off upon a sudden, but abating, as upon moderation : The other is unmannerly and rude. He who has a precipitate speech, is commonly violent in his manners : Beside, that there is in it much of vanity and emptiness ; and no man takes satisfaction in a flux of words, without choice ; where the noise is more than the value. *Fabius* was a man eminent both for his life and learning ; and no less for his eloquence. His speech was rather easy and sliding, than quick ; which he accounted to be not only liable to many errors, but to a suspicion of immodesty. Nay, let a man have words ever so much at will, he will no more speak fast, than he will run ; for fear his tongue should go before his wit. The speech of a philosopher should be like his life, composed, without pressing or stumbling ; which is fitter for a mountebank, than a man of sobriety and business. And then to drop one word after another, he is as bad on the other side. The interruption is tedious, and tires out the auditor with expectation. Truth and morality

should be delivered in words plain, and without affectation; for, like remedies, unless they stay with us, we are never the better for them. He who would work upon his hearers, must no more expect to do it upon the post, than a physician to cure his patients, only in passing by them. Not but that I would have a wise man in some cases, to raise himself and mend his pace; but still with a regard to the dignity of his manners; though there may be a great force also in moderation. I would have his discourse smooth, and flowing like a river; not impetuous like a torrent. There is rapid, lawless, and irrevocable velocity of speech, which I would scarce allow, even to an orator; for if he be transported with passion, or ostentation, a man's attention can hardly keep him company. It is not the quantity, but the pertinence, that does the business. Let the words of an ancient man flow soft and gentle; but not run on without fear, or wit, as if a whole declamation were to be but one period. *Cicero* wrote with care, and that which will forever stand the test. All public languages are according to the humour of the age. A wantonness and effeminacy of speech, debases luxury; for the wit follows the mind: If the latter be sound, composed, temperate and grave; the wit is dry, and sober too: But if the one be corrupted, the other is likewise unsound. Do we not see when a man's mind is heavy, how he creeps and draws his legs after him? A fical temper is read in the very gestures and clothes; if a man be choleric and violent, it is also discovered in his motions. An angry man speaks short and quick; the speech of an effeminate man is loose and melting. A quaint and solicitous way of speaking, is the sign of a weak mind; but a great man speaks with ease and freedom; and with more assurance, though less care. Speech is the index of the mind: When you see a man dress, and set his clothes in print, you shall be sure to find his words so too, and nothing in them that is firm and weighty: It does not become a man to be delicate. As it is in drink, the tongue never trips, until the mind is overcome; so it is with speech, so long as the mind is whole and sound, the speech is masculine and strong, but if one fails, the other follows.

## EPISTLE II.

*Of Styles, Compositions, and the Choice of Words. That is the best Way of Writing and Speaking, which is free and natural. Advice concerning Reading.*

**Y**OU cannot expect any certain or universal rule, either for the style, or for the manner of speaking, or writing; because they vary according to usage and occasion. So that we must content ourselves with generals. Men write and speak commonly according to the humor of the age they live in: And there is also a correspondence betwixt the language and the lives of particular persons; as one may give a near guess at a man, by his very gait, furniture, and clothes. In the first place let the sense be honest, and noble; not pinched up in sentences, but substantial, and of higher design, with nothing in it superfluous. Let the words be fitted to the matter: And where the subject is familiar, let the style be so too. But great thoughts must have suitable expressions; and there ought to be a kind of transport in the one, to answer it in the other. It is not enough to compose a pleasant fable, and tickle the fancy; but he who treats of weighty matters, must do it in grave and sober terms. These are some who have not so much of the vigor of an orator, or of that sententious sharpness; and yet the worthiness of the sense makes amends for the lowness of the style. Our forefathers were not at all delighted with fine words, and flowers: But their compositions were strong, equal, and manly. We have now a days here and there a point; but the work is uneven, where only this or that particular is remarkable. We never admire this or that single tree, where the whole wood is all of a height. A specious title page may commend a book to sale, but not for use. An eminent author is to be taken down whole, and not here and there a bit. It is a maiming of the body to take the members of it apart; nor is it an handsome leg, or arm, that makes an handsome man; but the symmetry and agreement of all together. It is the excellency of speaking and writing, to do it close, and in words accommodated to the intention; and I would yet have somewhat more to be signified than is delivered: It being also a mark of strength, and solidity of judgment. The propriety of words in some cases, is wonderful; especially when we are well read in the know-



ledge of things, and of duties, and there is a singular grace in the gentleness of numbers, when they run smooth, and without perturbation. Some are raised and startled at words, as an horse is at a drum ; and indulge the very passion of the speaker. Others are moved with the beauty of things ; and when they hear any thing bravely urged against death or fortune, they secretly wish for some occasion of experiencing that generosity in themselves. But not one of a thousand carries the resolution home with him that he had conceived. It is an easy matter to excite an auditory to the love of goodness, having already the foundation and the seeds of virtue within themselves : So that it is but awakening the consideration of it, where all men are agreed before hand upon the main. Who is so sordid, as not to be roused at such a speech as this, *The poor man wants many things ; but the covetous man wants all ? Can any flesh forbear being delighted with this saying, though a satire against his own vice ? As to forced metaphors, and wild hyperboles, I would leave them to the poets.* And I am utterly against fooling with tinkling conceits and sounds : Not that I would wholly forbid the use of *hyperboles* ; which although they exceed the truth, may yet be a means, by things incredible, to bring us unto things credible. And there may be great use made also of *parables* : For the way of application does usually more affect the mind, than the downright meaning. That speech which gains upon the passions, is much more profitable than that which works only upon the judgment. *Chrystianus*, was a great man, and of acute wit ; but the edge of it was so fine, that every thing turned it : And he might be said, in truth, rather to prick the subject that he handled, than to pierce it thro'.

As it is not for the honor of a *philosopher* to be solicitous about words, I would not have him negligent neither : But let him speak with assurance, and without affectation. If we can, let our discourses be powerful ; but however, let them be clear. I like a composition that is nervous and strong ; but yet I would have it sweet and gracious withal. There are many things, I know, that please well enough in the delivery, and yet will hardly abide the test of an examination. But that eloquence is mischievous, that diverts a man from things to words, and little better than a prostitution of letters. For what signifies the pomp of words or the jumbling of syllables, to the making up a wise man ?

*Tully's* compositions indeed are equal, his numbers are harmonious, free and gentle ; and yet he takes a care, not to make any forfeiture of his gravity. *Fabian* is a great man, in being second to *Cicero*. *Pollio* is a great man too, though a step below him ; and so is *Livy* likewise, though he comes after the other three. But several subjects require several excellences. An *orator* should be sharp ; the *tragedian* great, and the *comedian* pleasant. When a man declaims against vice let him be bitter ; against danger, bold ; against fortune, proud ; against ambition, reproachful : Let him chide luxury, defame lust : An impotency of mind must be broken. In these cases words are the least part of an honest man's business.

In the matter of composition, I would write as I speak, with ease and freedom ; for it is more friendly as well as more natural : and so much my inclination, that if I could make my mind visible to you, I would neither speak nor write it. If I put my thoughts in good sense, the matter of ornament I shall leave to the *orators*. There are some things that a man may write even as he travels : Others that require privacy and leisure : — But, however, it is good in writing, as in other cases, to leave the best bit for the last. A *philosopher* has no more to do, than to speak properly, and in words that express his meaning. And this may be done without tossing the hands, stamping, or any violent agitation of the body ; without either the vanity of the theatre, on the one hand, or an insipid heaviness on the other. I would have his speech as plain and simple as his life ; for he is then as good as his word, when both hearing him, and seeing him, we find him to be the same person. And yet if a man can be eloquent, without more pains than the thing is worth, let him use his faculty ; Provided that he value himself upon the matter, more than upon the words ; and apply himself rather to the understanding, than to the fancy : For this is a business of virtue, not a trial of wit. Who is there who would not rather have a healing, than a rhetorical *physician* ? But for esteeming any man purely upon the score of his rhetoric, I would as soon choose a pilot for his good head of hair.

In the matter of reading ; I would fix upon some particular authors, and make them my own. He who is

every where, is no where ; but like a man who spends his life in travel, he has many hosts, but few friends; which is the very condition of him who skips from one book to another : The variety does but distract his head, and for want of digesting, it turns to corruption, instead of nourishment. It is a good argument of a well composed mind, when a man loves home, and to keep company with himself : Whereas a rambling head, is a certain sign of a sickly humour. Many books, and many acquaintances, bring a man to a levity of disposition, and a liking of change. What is the body the better for meat, that will not stay with it ? Nor is there any thing more hurtful in the case of diseases, or wounds, than the frequent shifting of physic, or plaisters. Of authors be sure to make choice of the best ; and (as I said before) to stick close to them ; and though you take up others by the bye, reserve some select ones however for your study and retreat. In your reading, you will every day meet with consolation and support against poverty, death and other calamities, incident to human life : Extract what you like ; and then single out some particular from the rest, for that day's meditation. Reading does not only feed and entertain the understanding ; but when a man is dosed with one study, he relieves himself with another ; but still reading and writing are to be taken up by turns. So long as the meat lies whole upon the stomach, it is a burden to us ; but upon the concoction, it passes into strength and blood. And so it fares with our studies ; so long as they lie whole, they pass into the memory without affecting the understanding. But, upon meditation they become our own, and supply us with strength and virtue : The bee that wanders and sips from every flower, disposes what she has gathered into her cells.

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### EPISTLE III.

*Against all Affectation in Discourse, fantastical studies : impertinent and unprofitable Subtilties. Man's Business is Virtue, not words.*

**T**HERE are many men (and some of great sense too) who lose both the profit and the reputation of good thoughts, by the uncouth manner of expressing

them. They love to talk in *mystery*, and take it for a mark of *wisdom* not to be understood. They are so fond of making themselves public, that they will rather be ridiculous, than not taken notice of. When the mind grows squeamish; and comes to a loathing of things that are common, as if they were *sordid*, this sickness betrays itself in our way of speaking too: For we must have *new words*, *new compositions*; and it passes for an ornament to borrow from other tongues where we may be better furnished in our own. One man prizes himself upon being *concise*, and talking in *parables*: Another runs himself out in *words*; and that which he takes only for *copious*, renders him to others both *ridiculous* and *tedious*. Others there are, who, like the error well enough, but cannot come up to it. But take this for a rule; *wheresoever the speech is corrupted, so is the mind*. Some are only for words antiquated, and long since out of date; others only for that which is *popular* and *coarse*; and they are both in the wrong; for the one takes too little care, and the other too much. Some are for a *rough*, *broken style*, as if it were a thing unmanly to please the ear; others are too nice upon the matter of *number*, and make it rather *singing* than *speaking*. Some affect not to be understood till the end of the period, and hardly then neither. It is not a good style that is either too *bold*, or too *florid*; the one wants *modesty*, and the other effect. Some are too *starch*, and *formal*; others take a pride in being *rugged*; and if they chance to let fall any thing that is smooth, they will transpose and mangle it on purpose, only to maim the period, and disappoint a body's expectation. These errors are commonly introduced by some persons who are famous for their eloquence; others follow them, and so it passes into fashion. And we are as much out of the choice of the matter, as in that of our words.

THERE are some studies which are only matter of curiosity, and trial of skill; others of pleasure, and of use. But still there are many things worth the knowing, perhaps that were not worth the learning. It is a huge deal of time that is spent in cavilling about words, and captious disputations, that works us up to an edge, and then nothing comes on it. There are some tricks of wit, like sleight of hand, which amount to no more than the tying of knots, only to loosen them again; and it is

the very fallacy that pleases us ; for so soon as we know how they are done, the satisfaction is at an end. He who does not understand these *sophisms*, is never the worse ; and he who does, is never the better. If a man tells me that I have horns, I can tell him again, that I have none, without feeling on my forehead. *Bion's dilemma* makes all men to be sacrilegious, and yet at the same time maintains, that there is no such thing as sacrilege. He who takes to himself (says he) what belongs to God, commits sacrilege, but all things belong to God, therefore he who applies any thing to his own use is sacrilegious. On the other side, the very rising of a temple, he makes to be no sacrilege : For it is (says he) but the taking something out of one place that belongs to God, and removing it to another that belongs to him too. The fallacy lies in this, that though all things belong to him, all things are not yet dedicated to him. There is no greater enemy of truth, than over much subtilty, of speculation. *Protagoras* will have every thing disputable, and as much to be said for the one side as for the other. Nay, he makes it another question *Whether every thing be disputable or not?* There are others who make it a science, to prove that *man knows nothing* : But the former is the more tolerable error ; for the other takes away the very hope of knowledge ; and it is better to know that which is superfluous, than nothing at all. And yet it is a kind of intemperance to desire to know more than enough ; for it makes men troublesome, talkative, impertinent, conceited, &c. There is a certain hankering after learning, which if it be not put into a right way, hinders, and falls foul upon itself. Wherefore the burden must be fitted to the shoulders, and no more than we are able to bear. It is in a great measure, the fault of our tutors, who teach their disciples rather how to dispute, than how to live : And the learner himself is also to blame, for applying himself to the improvement, rather of his wit than of his mind : By which means philosophy is now turned to *philology*. Put a *grammarian* to a *Virgil* ; he never heeds the *philosophy* but the *verse* : Every man take notes for his own study. In the same meadow the *cow* finds *grass*, the *dog* starts a *hare*, and the *stork* snaps a *lizzard*. *Tully's de republica*, finds work both for the *philosopher*, the *philologer*, and the *grammarian*. The *philosopher* wonders how it was possible to speak so much

against justice. The *philologer* makes this observation, that Rome had *two Kings*: The one without a *father*, and the other without a *mother*; for it is a question, who was the mother of *Servius* and who was the father of *Ancus*? There is not so much as any mention. The *grammariar* takes notice, that *Reapsa* is used for *Reipsa*; and *Seise* for *Seipsa*: And so every man makes his notes for his own purpose. These fooleries apart, let us learn to do good to mankind, and to put our knowledge into action. Our danger is the being mistaken in things, not in words; and in the confounding of good and evil. So that our whole life is but one continued error, and we live in dependency upon to-morrow. There is a world of things to be studied, and learned, and therefore we should discharge the mind of things unnecessary, to make way for greater matters. The business of the school is rather a play than a study, and only to be done when we can do nothing else. There are many people who frequent them, only to hear, and not to learn; and they take notes too, not to reform their manners, but to pick up words which they vent, with as little benefit to others, as they heard them themselves. It cost us a great deal of time, and other men's ears a great deal of trouble, to purchase the character of a learned man; wherefore I shall even content myself with the course title of an honest man. The worst of it is, that there is a vain and idle pleasure in it, which tempts us to squander away many a precious hour to very little purpose. We spend ourselves upon subtilties, which may perchance make us to be thought learned but not good. Wisdom delights in openness and simplicity; in the forming of our lives, rather than in the niceties of the schools, which, at best, do but bring us pleasure without profit. And in short, the things which the *philosophers* impose upon us with so much pride and vanity, are little more than the same lessons over again, which they learned at school. But some authors have their names, though their discourses be mean enough; they dispute, and wrangle, but they do not edify any farther, than as they keep us from ill doing, or perhaps stop us in our speed to wickedness. And there ought to be a difference betwixt the applauses of the schools, and of the theatre; the one being moved with every popular conceit, which does not at all

consist with the dignity of the other. Whereas there are some writings that stir up some generous resolutions, that do as it were, inspire a man with a new soul. They display the blessings of a happy life and possess me at the same time with admiration and with hope. They give me a veneration for the oracles of antiquity, and a claim to them, as to a common inheritance; for they are the treasures of mankind, and it must be my duty to improve the stock, and transmit it to posterity. And yet I do not love to hear a man cite *Zeno*, *Cleanthes*, *Epicurus*, without something of his own too. What do I care for the bare hearing of that which I may read? Not but that word of mouth makes a great impression, especially when they are the speaker's own words: But he who only recites another man's words, is no more to me than a notary. Beside that there is an end of invention, if we rest upon what is invented already; and he who only follows another, is so far from finding out any thing new, that he does not so much as look for it. I do not pretend all this while to be the master of truth, but I am yet a most obstinate inquisitor after it. I am no man's slave; but as I ascribe much to great men, I challenge something to myself. Our forefathers have left us not only their invention, but matter also for farther inquiry; and perhaps they might have found out more things that are necessary, if they had not bent their thoughts too much upon superfluities.

Is not this a fine time for us to be fiddling and fooling about words? How many useful and necessary things are there, that we have first to learn, and secondly, to imprint in our minds? For it is not enough to remember, and to understand, unless we do what we know.

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#### EPISTLE IV.

*Business, and want of News, are no excuse among Friends for not Writing. Wise Men are the better for one another.—How far Wisdom may be advanced by Precept.*

**Y**OUR last letter was very short; and the whole letter itself was little more than an excuse for the shortness of it. One while you are so full of business

that you cannot write at all; and another while, you have so little *news*, that you do not know what to write. Now assure yourself, that whoever has a mind to write, may find leisure for it: And for your other pretence, it looks as if we ourselves were the least part of our own business. Put the case that the whole world were becalmed, and that there were neither wars, amours, factions, designs, disappointments, competitions, or lawsuits; no prodigals, usurers, or fornicators in nature: there would be a large field yet left for the offices of friendship, and for the exercise of philosophy and virtue. Let us rather consider, what we ourselves ought to do, than hearken after the doings of other people. What signifies the story of our neighbour's errors, to the reforming of our own? Is it not a more glorious and profitable employment, to write the history of *Providence*, than to record the usurpation of *ambitious princes*; and rather to celebrate the bounties of the Almighty, than the robberies of *Alexander*? Nor is business any excuse for the neglect, either of our studies, or of our friends. First, we continue our business, and then we increase it: And instead of lending, we do wholly give ourselves up to it, and hunt for colourable pretences for mispending our time. But, I say, that whatever we are, or with whomsoever we are, or however employed, we have our thoughts at liberty.

You have here drawn a long letter from me; and if you find it tedious, you may thank yourself, for calling upon me to be as good as my word. Not but that I write by inclination too. For if we love the pictures of our friends, by what hand soever they be drawn, how much more then shall we joy in a friend's letters, which are undoubtedly the most lively pictures of one another? It is a shame, you will say, to stand in need of any remembrances of an absent friend; and yet sometimes the place, a servant, a relation, an house, a garment, may honestly excite the memory; and it renders every thing as fresh to us, as if they were still joined in our embraces, and drinking up one another's tears. It is by the benefit of letters, that absent friends are in a manner brought together; beside that *epistolary discourses* are much more profitable than public and premeditated declamations. For they insinuate themselves into the af-



factions with more freedom and effect, though with less pomp, and pretence. You do expect, perhaps, that I should tell you, how gentle, and short a winter we have had; how cold and unseasonable a spring, or some other fooleries, to as little purpose. But, what are you and I the better for such discourses? We should rather be laying the foundations of a good mind; and learning to distinguish betwixt the blessings of virtue, and the amusements of imagination. There came in some friends to me yesterday, who made the chimney smoke a little more than ordinary; but not at a rate to make the neighbourhood cry out *fire*. We had variety of discourse; and passing from one thing to another, we came at last to read something of *Quintus Sextius*; (a great man, upon my credit, deny it who will) good God! the force and vigor of that man's writings! and how much are they above the common level of other philosophers! I cannot read them, methinks, without challenging fortune, and defying all the powers of ambition and violence. The more I consider him, the more I admire him; for I find him (as in the world itself) *every day* to be a *new spectacle*, and to afford fresh matter still for more veneration. And yet the wisdom of our forefathers has left work enough for their posterity; even if there were no more in it than the application of what they have transmitted to us of their own invention. As suppose, that they had left us remedies for such and such diseases; so certain, that we should not need to look for any other medicines there would be some skill yet required in the applying of them in the proper case, proportion, and season. I have an honour for the memorials of our worthy progenitors. If I meet a *consul* or a *praetor* upon the road, I will alight from my horse, uncover my head, and give him the way; and shall I have no veneration now for the names of the governors of mankind? No man is so wise, as to know all things; or if he did, one wise man may yet be helpful to another, in finding out a nearer way to the finishing of his work: For let a man make ever so much haste, it is some sort of assistance, the bare encouraging him to continue his course; beside the comforts and benefits of communication, in loving, and being beloved, and in the mutual approbation of each other.

The last point, you know, that you and I had in debate, was, *whether or not wisdom may be perfected by precept.* There are some, who account only that part of *philosophy* to be profitable to mankind, which delivers itself in particular precepts to particular persons, without forming the whole man: Teaching the husband, (for the purpose) how to behave himself to his wife: The father how to train up, and discipline his children; and the master how to govern his servants. As if any man could be sufficiently instructed in the parts of life, without comprehending the whole sum, and scope of it. Others (as *Aristotle* the *Stoick*) are rather for the general decrees of the philosophers; which whoever knows in the main, that person understands in every particular how to tutor himself. As he who learns to cast a dart, when he has by practice and exercise, gotten a true aim, will not only strike this or that mark, but whatever he has a mind to: So he who is well informed in the *whole*, will need no direction in the *parts*, but under the principles of a good life, learn how to behave himself in all the circumstances of it. *Cleanthes* allows the *paranetic* or *preceptive philosophy*, to be in some sort profitable; but yet very short and defective, unless as it flows from the universal understanding of the heads and degrees of *philosophy*. Now the question is, whether this alone can make a good man, and whether it be superfluous itself; or so sufficient, as to make all other knowledge appear, so? They who will have it superfluous, argue thus: If the eyes be covered, there is no seeing, without removing the impediment; and in that condition, it is to no purpose to bid a man go to such or such a place, or to reach this or that with his hand. And so it fares with the mind; so long as that continues clouded with ignorance and error, it is idle to give particular precepts; as if you should teach a poor man to act the part of a rich; or one who is hungry, how to behave himself with a full stomach: While the one is necessitous, and the other half starved, they are neither of them the better for it. And then, Shall we give precepts in *manifest cases*, or in *doubtful*? The former need none, and in the latter we shall not be believed. Nor is it enough simply to advise, unless we also give reasons for it. There are two errors which we are liable to in this case; either the wickedness of per-

verse opinions, which have taken possession of us; or at least a disposition to entertain error, under any resemblance of truth. So that our work must be, either to cure a sick mind, that is already tainted; or to prepossess an evil inclination, before it comes to an ill habit. Now, the decrees of *philosophy*, enable us in both these cases. Nor is it possible, by particulars, to obviate all particular occasions. One man marries a widow, another a maid: She may be rich, or poor; barren, or fruitful; young, or ancient; superior, inferior, or equal. One man follows public business, another flies it; so that the same advice that is profitable to the one, may be mischievous to the other. Every one has a particular case, and must be suited with a particular counsel. The laws of *philosophy* are brief, and extend to all: But the variety of the other is incomprehensible, and can never make that good to all which it promises to a few. The precepts of wisdom lie open, but the decrees of it are hidden in the dark.

Now, in answer, it does not hold; with the mind, as with the eye: If there be a suffusion, it is to be helped by remedy, and not by precept. The eye is not to be taught to distinguish colours; but the mind must be informed what to do in life. And yet the physician will prescribe order also to the patient, as well as physic; and tell him, *You must bring your eye to endure the light by degrees; and have a care of studying upon a full stomach, &c.* We are told, that precepts do neither extinguish nor abate false opinions in us of good or evil: And it shall be granted, that of themselves they are not able to subdue vicious inclinations: But this does not hinder them from being very useful to us in conjunction with other helps. First, as they refresh the memory; and secondly, as they bring us to a more distinct view of the parts, which we saw but confusedly in the whole. At the same rate, consolatories, and exhortations will be found superfluous, as well as precepts, which yet upon daily experience we know to be otherwise. Nay, we are the better, not only for the precepts, but for the converse of *philosophers*, for we still carry away somewhat of the tincture of virtue, whether we will or not: But the deepest impression they make, is upon children. It is urged, that precepts are insufficient without proof; but

I say, that the very authority of the adviser, goes a great way in the credit of the advice : As we depend upon the opinion of the lawyer, without demanding his reason for it. And again, whereas the variety of precepts is said to be infinite, I cannot allow it : For the greatest and most necessary affairs are not many ; and for the application to time, places, and persons, the differences are so small, that a few general rules will serve the turn. Nay, let a man be ever so right in his opinion, he may be yet more confirmed in it by admonition. There are many things that may assist a cure, though they do not perfect it ; even madmen themselves may be kept in awe by menaces and correction. But it is a hard matter, I must confess, to give counsel at a distance. For advice depends much upon the opportunity ; and that perhaps which was proper when it was desired, may come to be pernicious before it be received. Some indeed may be prescribed, as some remedies, at any distance, and transmitted to posterity for others ; a man must be upon the place, and deliberate upon circumstances, and be not only present, but watchful to strike in with the very nick of the occasion.

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EPISTLE V.

*Seneca gives an account of himself—Of his Studies, and of his Inclinations : With many excellent Reflections upon the Duties and Errors of human Life.*

**Y**OUR letters were old, before they came to my hand ; so that I made no inquiry of the messenger what you were a doing ; besides that, wherever you are, I take it for granted, that I know your business ; and that you are still upon the great work of perfecting yourself : A thing not to be done by chance, but by industry and labour. We are all of us wicked, before we come to be good. We are prepossessed, so that we must unlearn iniquity, and study virtue. The great difficulty is to begin the enterprise ; For a weak mind is afraid of new experiments. I have now given over troubling myself for fear of you ; because I have that security for your well doing, that never failed any man. The love of truth and of goodness, is become habitual to you. It may so fall out, that fortune perhaps

may do you an injury ; but there is no fear of your doing yourself one. Go on as you have begun, and compose your resolutions ; not to an effeminate ease, but to a frame of virtuous quiet. It is a double kindness that you call me to so strict an account of my time ; that nothing less than a diary of my life will satisfy you : For I take it as a mark both of your good opinion, and your friendship ; the former in believing that I do nothing which I care to conceal ; and the other assuring yourself that I will make you the confidante of all my secrets. I will hereafter set a watch upon myself, and do as you would have me : And acquaint you not only with the course and method, but with the very business of my life.

THIS day I have had entire to myself, without any knocking at my door, or lifting up the hanging ; but I have divided it betwixt my book and my bed, and been left at liberty to do my own business : For all the impertinents were either at the theatre, at bowls, or at the horse match. My body does not require much exercise ; and I am beholden to my age for it : A little makes me weary ; and that is the end also of that which is most robust. My dinner is a piece of dry bread, without a table, and without dirtying my fingers. My sleep is short, and in truth a little doubtful, betwixt slumbering and waking. One while I am reflecting upon the errors of antiquity ; and then I apply myself to the correcting my own. In my reading (with reverence to the ancients) some things I take, others I alter ; and some again I reject others I invent ; without enthralling myself so to another's judgment, as not to preserve the freedom of my own. Sometimes of a sudden in the middle of my meditations, my ears are struck with a shout of a thousand people together, from some spectacle or other ; the noise does not at all discompose my thoughts ; it is no more to me than the dashing of waves, or the wind in a wood ; but possibly sometimes it may divert them. *Good Lord (think I) if men would but exercise their brains, as they do their bodies ; and take as much pains for virtue as they do for pleasure !* For difficulties strengthen the mind, as well as labour does the body.

You tell me, that you want my books more than my counsels ; which I take just as kindly, as if you should have asked me for my picture. For I have the very same opinion of my wit, that I have of my beauty. You shall have

both the one and the other, with my very self into the bargain.

In the examination of my own heart, I find some vices that lie open ; others more obscure, and out of sight ; and some that take me only by fits. Which last I look upon as the most dangerous and troublesome ; for they lie upon the catch, and keep a man upon a perpetual guard ; Being neither provided against them, as in a state of war nor secure as in any assurance of peace. To say the truth, we are all of us as cruel, as ambitious, as our fellows. But we want the fortune, or the occasion perchance, to shew it. When the snake is frozen it is safe ; but the poison is still in it, though it is benumbed. We hate upstarts, who use their power with insolence ; when yet if we had the same means, it is odds that we should do the same thing ourselves. Only our corruptions are private, for want of opportunity to employ them. Some things we look upon as superfluous, and others, not as worth the while. But we never consider that we pay dearest for that which we pretend to receive gratis : As anxiety, loss of credit, liberty, and time. So cheap is every man in effect, who pretends to be most dear to himself. Some are dipt in their lusts, as in a river ; there must be an hand to help them out : Others are strangely careless of good counsel ; and yet well enough disposed to follow example. Some again must be forced to their duties, because there is no good to be done upon them by persuasion. But out of the whole race of mankind, how few are there who are able to help themselves ! Being thus conscious of our own frailty, we should do well to keep ourselves quiet ; and not to trust weak minds with wine, beauty, or pleasure ; we have much ado, you see, to keep our feet upon dry ground : What will become of us then, if we venture ourselves where it is slippery ? It is not to say, *This is an hard lesson, and we cannot go through with it.* For we can, if we would endeavour it ; but we cannot, because we give it for granted that we cannot, without trying whether we can or not. And what is the meaning of all this : but that we are pleased with our vices, and willing to be mastered by them ? So that we had rather excuse than cast them off. The true reason is, we will not ; but the pretence is that we cannot. And we are not only under a necessity of error, but the very love of it.

To give you now a sketch of my own character : I am

none of those who take delight in tumults; and in struggling with difficulties. I had rather be quiet, than in arms: For I account it my duty to bear up against ill-fortune: But still without choosing it. I am no friend to contention: especially that of the bar; but I am very much a servant to all honest business that may be done in a corner. And there is no retreat so unhappy as not to yield entertainment for a great mind; by which a man may make himself profitable both to his country and his friends, by his wisdom, by his interest, and by his counsel. It is the part of a good patriot to prefer men of worth; to defend the innocent; to provide good laws; and to advise in war and in peace. But is not he a good patriot, who instructs youth in virtue; and furnishes the world with precepts of morality and keeps human nature within the bounds of right reason? Who is the greater man, he who pronounces a sentence upon the bench, or he who in his study, reads us a lecture of justice, piety, patience, fortitude, the knowledge of heaven, the contempt of death, and the blessings of a good conscience? The soldier who guards the ammunition and the baggage, is as necessary as he who fights the battle. Was not *Cato* a greater example than either *Ulysses* or *Hercules*? They had the same, you know, of being indefatigable; despisers of pleasure, and great conquerors both of their enemies and of their appetites. But *Cato*, I must confess, had no encounters with monsters; nor did he fall into those times of credulity, when people believed that the weight of the heavens rested upon one man's shoulders. But he grappled with ambition, and the unlimited desire of power; which the whole world, divided under a *triumvirate*, was not able to satisfy. He opposed himself to the vices of a degenerate city; even when it was now sinking under its own weight. He stood single, and supported the falling commonwealth, until at last, as inseparable friends, they were crushed together: For neither would *Cato* survive the public liberty nor did that liberty outlive *Cato*. To give you now a farther account of myself: I am naturally a friend to all the rules and methods of sobriety and moderation. I like the old fashioned plate that was left me by my country father: It is plain and heavy; and yet for all this, there is a kind of dazzling, methinks, in the ostentations of splendor and luxury. But it strikes the eye more than the mind; and though it may shake a

wise man, it cannot alter him. Yet it sends me home many times sadder, perhaps than I went out ; but yet, I hope, not worse ; though not without some secret dissatisfaction at my own condition. Upon these thoughts I betake myself to my *philosophy* ; and then, methinks, I am not well, unless I put myself into some public employment : Not for the honor, or the profit of it ; but only to place myself in a station where I may be serviceable to my country, and to my friends. But when I come, on the other side, to consider the uneasiness, the abuses, and the loss of time that attends public affairs, I go home again as fast as I can, and take up a resolution of spending the remainder of my days within the privacy of my own walls. How great a madness is it to set our hearts upon trifles ; especially to the neglect of the most serious offices of our lives, and the most important end of our being ! How miserable, as well as short is their life, who compass with great labor, what they possess with greater ; and hold with anxiety, what they acquire with trouble ? But, we are governed in all things by opinion, and every thing is to us as we believe it. What is *poverty*, but a *privation* ; and not intended of what a man *has*, but of that which he has *not* ? The great subject of human calamities, is *money*. Take all the rest together, as death, sickness, fear, desire, pain, labor ; and those which proceed from *money* exceed them all. It is a wonderful folly, that of tumblers, rope-dancers, divers ; what pains they take, and what hazard they run, for an inconsiderate gain ! And yet we have not patience for the thousandth part of that trouble, though it would put us into the possession of an everlasting quiet. *Epicurus*, for experiment sake, confined himself to a narrower allowance, than that of the severest prisons to the most capital offenders ; and found himself at ease too in a stricter diet, than a man in the worst condition needs to fear. This was to prevent fortune, and to frustrate the worst which she can do. We should never know any thing to be superfluous, but by the want of it. How many things do we provide, only because others have them, for fashion sake ? *Caligula* offered *Demetrius* five thousand crowns ; who rejected them with a smile, as if he should say, *It was so little, the refusing of it did him no honour.* *Nothing less*, says he, *than the offer of his whole empire would have been a temptation to have tried the firmness of my virtue.* ~~By this contempt of~~



riches, is intended only the fearless possession of them. And the way to attain that, is to persuade ourselves, that we may live happily without them. How many of those things, which reason formerly told us were superfluous, and mimical, do we now find to be so by experience? But we are misled by the counterfeit of good on the one hand, and the suspicion of evil on the other. Not that riches are an efficient cause of mischief; but they are a precedent cause, by way of irritation and attraction. For they have so near a resemblance of good, that most people take them to be good. Nay, virtue itself is also a precedent cause of evil; as many are envied for their wisdom, or for their justice: Which does not arise from the thing itself, but from the irreproveable power of virtue, that forces all men to admire and to love it. That is not good that is more advantageous to us, but that which is only so.

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EPISTLE VI.

*The blessings of a virtuous Retirement. How we come to the Knowledge of Virtue. A distinction betwixt Good and Honest. A Wise Man contents himself with his Lot.*

**T**HERE is no opportunity escapes me, of inquiring where you are, what you do, and what company you keep: And I am well enough pleased that I can hear nothing concerning you; for it shews that you live retired. Not but that I durst trust you with the wide world too: But, however, it is not easy to have such a general conversation: Nor is it absolutely safe neither; for, though it should not corrupt you, it would yet hinder you. Now wherever you are, known, that I am with you; and you are so to live, as if I both heard and saw you. Your letters are really blessings to me, and the sense of your improvements relieves me, even under the consideration of my own decay. Remember, that as I am old, so are you mortal. Be true to yourself, and examine yourself, whether you be of the same mind to-day, that you were yesterday; for that is a sign of perfect wisdom. And yet give me leave to tell you, that though change of mind be a token of imperfection; it is the business of my age to unwill one day, that which I willed another. And let me recommend it to your practice too, in many cases; for the abatement of our

appetites, and of our errors, is the best entertainment of mankind. It is for young men to gather knowledge, and for old men to use it: And assure yourself, that no man gives a fairer account of his time, than he who makes it his daily study, to make himself better. If you be in health, and think it worth your while to become the master of yourself; it is my desire, and my advice, that you apply yourself to wisdom with your whole heart: And judge of your improvement, not by what you speak, or by what you write; but by the firmness of your mind, and the government of your passions. What extremities have some men endured in sieges; ever for the ambition and interest of other people! And shall not a man venture the crossing an intemperate lust, for the conquest of himself? You do very well to betake yourself to a private life; and better yet, in keeping of that privacy private. For, otherwise, your retreat would look like ostentation: The greatest actions of our lives are those that we do in a recess from business; Besides, that there are some governments, and employments, that a man would not have any thing to do withal. And then it is to be considered, that public offices and commissions are commonly bought with our money; whereas, the great blessings of leisure and privacy cost us nothing. Contemplation is undoubtedly the best entertainment of peace, and only a shorter cut to heaven itself: Over and above that, business makes us troublesome to others, and unquiet to ourselves; for, the end of one appetite or design, is the beginning of another. To say nothing of the expence of time in vexatious attendances, and the danger of competitors. Such a man, perhaps, has more friends at court than I have; a larger train, a fairer estate, more profitable offices, and more illustrious titles. But what do I care to be overcome by men, in some cases, so long as *fortune* is overcome by me in all? These considerations should have been earlier; for it is too late in the article of death, to project the happiness of life. And yet there is no age better adapted to virtue, than that which by many experiments, and long sufferings, comes to the knowledge of it! For our lusts are then weak, and our judgment strong: and wisdom is the effect of time.

SOME are of opinion, that we come to the knowledge of virtue by chance; (which were an indignity.) Others by observation, and comparing matters of fact one with an-

other ; the understanding, by a kind of *analogy*, proving this, or that, for good and honest. These are two points, which others make wholly different ; but the *Stoicks* only divide them. Some will have every thing to be good, that is beneficial to us : As money, wine : and so lower, to the meanest things we use. And they reckon that to be honest, where there is a reasonable discharge of a common duty : As reverence to a parent ; tenderness to a friend ; the exposing of ourselves for our country, and the regulating of our lives according to moderation and prudence. The *Stoicks* reckon them to be two ; but so as to make *these two*, yet, out of *one*. They will have nothing to be good, but what is honest, nor any thing to be honest, but that which is good : So that in some sort they are mixed, inseparable. There are some things that are neither good, nor bad ; as war, embassy, jurisdiction : But these, in the laudable administration of them, do, of doubtful, become good ; which good is only a consequent upon honesty. But honesty is good in itself, and the other flows from it. There are some actions that seem to us matter of benignity, humanity, generosity, resolution ; which we are apt to admire, as perfect : And yet, upon farther examination, we find that great vices were concealed under the resemblances of eminent virtues. Glorious actions are the images of virtue : But yet many things seem to be good, that are evil ; and evil that are good : And the skill is to distinguish betwixt things that are so much alike in shew, and so disagreeing in effect. We are led to the understanding of virtue by the congruity we find in such and such actions to nature, and right reason : By the order, grace, and constancy of them ; and, by a certain majesty and greatness, that surpasses all other things. From hence proceeds a happy life ; to which nothing comes amiss ; but, on the contrary, every thing succeeds to our very wish. There is no wrangling with fortune ; no being out of humour for accidents ; whatever befalls me in my lot, and whether in appearance it be good or bad, it is God's pleasure ; and it is my duty to bear it. When a man has once gotten a habit of virtue, all his actions are equal : He is constantly one and the same man ; and he does well, not only upon counsel, but out of custom too. Shall I tell you now, in a word, the sum of human duty ? *Patience* where we are to suffer ; and *Prudence*, in things we do. It is a frequent complaint in

the world, that the things we enjoy are but few, transitory, and uncertain; so ungrateful a construction do we make of the divine bounty. Hence it is, that we are neither willing to die, nor contented to live; betwixt the fear of the one, and detestation of the other. Hence it is, that we are perpetually shifting of counsels, and still craving of more; because that which we call felicity is not able to fill us. And what is the reason, but that we are not yet come to that immense and inseparable good, which leaves us nothing farther to desire? In that blessed estate we feel no want; we are abundantly pleased with what we have; and what we have not, we do not regard: So that every thing is great because it is sufficient. If we quit this hold, there will be no places for the offices of faith and piety: In the discharge whereof we must both suffer many things, that the world calls evil; and part with many things, which are commonly accounted good. True joy is everlasting; pleasures are false and fugitive. It is a great encouragement to *well doing*, that when we are once in the possession of virtue, it is our own forever. While I speak this to you, I prescribe to myself; what I write, I read; and reduce all my meditations to the ordering of my own manners. There is nothing so mean and so ordinary, but it is illustrated by virtue; and externals are of no more use to it, than the light of a candle to the glory of the sun.

It is often objected to me, that I advise people to quit the world, to retire, and content themselves with a good conscience. But what becomes of your precepts then (say they) that enjoin us to die in action? To whom I must answer, *That I am never more in action, than when I am alone in my study; where I have only locked up myself in private, to attend the business of the public. I do not lose so much as one day; nay, and part of the night too I borrow for my book. When my eyes will serve me no longer, I fall asleep; and till then I work. I have retired myself, not only from men, but from business also, and my own, in the first place, to attend the service of posterity, in hope that what I now write, may, in some measure, be profitable to future generations.*

But it is no new thing, I know, to calumniate virtue, and good men, for sick eyes will not endure the light; but, like *birds of night*, they fly from it into their holes.

Why does such a man talk so much of his *philosophy*, and yet live in magnificence? Of contemning riches, lie, health; and yet cherish and maintain them with the greatest care imaginable? Banishment he says, is but an idle name; and yet he can grow old within his own walls. He puts no difference betwixt a long life, and a short one; and yet he spins out his own as far it will go. The thing is this, he does not contemn temporary blessings, so as to refuse, or drive them away; but if they come, they are welcome; if not, he will never break his heart for the want of them: He takes them into his house, not into his soul; and he makes use of them, only as matter for his virtue to work upon. There is no doubt but a wise man may shew himself better in riches than in poverty: That is to say, his temperance, his liberality, his magnificence, providence, prudence, will be more conspicuous. He will be a wise man still, if he should want a leg, or an arm; but yet he had rather be perfect. He is pleased with wealth, as he would be at sea with a fair wind, or with a glance of the warm sun in a frosty morning: So that the things which we call indifferent, are not yet without their value; and some greater than others. But, with this difference betwixt the *philosophers* and the common people, riches are the servants of the one, and the masters of the other. From the one, if they depart, they carry away nothing but themselves; but from the other, they take away the very heart and peace of the possessor along with them. It is true, that if I might have my choice, I would have health, and strength; and yet if I come to be visited with pain, or sickness, I would endeavour to improve them to my advantage, by making a right judgment of them; as I ought to do of all the appointments of Providence. So that as they are not good in themselves, neither are they evil; but matter of exercise for our virtues; of temperance, on the one hand, and of resignation, on the other.



## EPISTLE VII.

*Of impertinent Studies, and impertinent Men. Philosophers  
the best Companions.*

**H**E who duly considers the business of life and death, will find that he has little time to spare from that study : And yet how we trifle away our hours upon impertinent niceties and cavils ! Will *Plato's* imaginary ideas make me an honest man ? There is neither certainty in them, nor substance. *A mouse is a syllable ; but a syllable does not eat cheese : Therefore a mouse does not eat cheese.* O ! these childish follies ! Is it for this that we spend our blood, and our good humour, and grow grey in our closets ? We are jesting, when we should be helping the miserable ; as well ourselves as others. There is no sporting with men in distress. The felicity of mankind depends upon the counsel of philosophers. Let us rather consider what nature has made superfluous, and what necessary : How easy our conditions are, and how delicious that life which is governed by reason rather than opinion. There are impertinent studies, as well as impertinent men. *Didymus* the grammarian wrote 4000 books : wherein he is much concerned to discover where *Homer* was born ; who was *Aeneas's* true mother ; and whether *Anacreon* was the greater whoremaster or drunkard : With other fopperies that a man would labour to forget if he knew them. Is it not an important question, which of the two was first, the mallet or the tongs ? Some people are extremely inquisitive to know how many oars *Ulysses* had : Which was first written, the *Iliad* or the *Odyssey* ; or if they were both done by the same hand : A man is never a jot more learned for his curiosity, but much the more troublesome. Am I ever the more just, the more moderate, valiant, or liberal, for knowing, that *Curius Dendatus* was the first who carried elephants in triumph ? Teach me my duty to Providence, to my neighbour, and to myself : To dispute, with *Socrates* ; to doubt, with *Carneades* ; to set up my rest, with *Epicurus* ; to master my appetites, with the *Stoicks* ; and to renounce the world, with the *Cynic*. What a deal of business there is, first, to make *Homer* a philosopher ; and secondly, in what classes to range him ? One will have him to be a *Stoick*, a friend to virtue, and an enemy to

pleasure ; preferring honesty even to immortality itself : Another makes him an *Epicurean* ; one who loves his quiet, and to spend his time in good company : Some are positive in it, that he was a *Peripatetic* ; and others, that he was a *Sceptic*. But it is clear, that in being all these things, he was not any one of them. These divided opinions do not at all hinder us from agreeing upon the main, that he was a wise man. Let us therefore apply ourselves to those things that made him so, and even let the rest alone.

It was a pleasant humour of *Calpurnius Sabines*, a rich man, and one who managed a good fortune with a very ill grace. He had neither wit nor memory ; but would fain pass for a learned man, and so took several into his family ; and whatever they knew, he assumed to himself. There are a sort of people who are never well, but at theatres, spectacles, and public places ; men of business, but it is only in their faces ; for they wander up and down without any design ; like *fisnires*, eager and empty ; and every thing they do is only *as it happens*. This is an humour, which a man may call a kind of restless laziness. Others you shall have, who are perpetually in haste, as if they were crying fire, or running for a midwife ; and all this hurry perhaps only to salute somebody who had no mind to take notice of them ; or some such trivial errand. At night, when they come home tired and weary, ask them, why they went out : Where they have been : And, what they have done : It is a very slender account that they are able to give you ; and yet the next day they take the same *jaunt* over again. This is a kind of fantastical industry, a great deal of pains taken to no purpose at all : Twenty visits made, and nobody at home, (they themselves least of all :) They who have this vice, are commonly hearkeners, tale bearers, newsmongers, meddlers in other people's affairs, and curious after secrets, which a man can neither safely hear, nor report. These men of idle employment, who run up and down, eternally vexing others, and themselves too ; who thrust themselves into all companies : What do they get by it ? One man is asleep, another is at supper, a third in company, a fourth in haste, a fifth gives them the slip : And when their folly has gone the round, they close up the day with shame and repent-

ance. Whereas, *Zeno, Pythagoras, Democritus, Aristotle, Theophrastus*, and all the patrons of *philosophy*, and virtue, are always at leisure, and in good humour; familiar, profitable; a man never comes away empty handed from them; but, full of comfort and satisfaction; they make all past ages present to us, or make us their contemporaries. The doors of these men are open, night and day; and in their conversation there is neither danger, treachery, nor expense; but we are the wiser, the happier, and the richer for it. How blessedly does a man spend his time in this company, where he may advise in all the difficulties of life? Here is counsel without reproach, and praise without flattery. We cannot be the choosers of our own parents, but of our friends we may, and adopt ourselves into those noble families. This is the way of making mortality in a manner, to be immortal: The time past, we make to be our own, by remembrance; the present, by use; and the future by providence, and foresight. That only may properly be said to be long life, that draws all ages into one; and that a short one, that forgets the past, neglects the present, and is solicitous for the time to come. But it is not yet sufficient to know what *Plato or Zeno* said, unless we make it all our own by *habit, and practice*, and improve both the world and ourselves, by an example of life answerable to their precepts.

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### EPISTLE VIII.

#### *Against Singularity of Manners and Behaviour.*

IT is the humour of many people to be singular in their dress and manner of life; only to the end that they may be taken notice of. Their clothes, forsooth, must be coarse, and slovenly; their heads and beards neglected; their lodgings upon the ground, and they live in open defiance of money. What is all this, upon the whole, but an ambitious vanity, that has crept in at the back door? A wise man will keep himself clear of all these fooleries, without disturbing public customs, or making himself a gazing stock to the people: But will this secure him, think you? I can no more warrant it, than that a temperate man shall have his health; But



it is very probable that it may. A philosopher has enough to do to stand right in the world, let him be ever so modest : And his outside shall be still like that of other people, let them be ever so unlike *within*. His garments shall be neither rich nor sordid. No matter for arms, mottoes, and other curiosities upon his plate : But he shall not yet make it a matter of conscience, to have no plate at all. He who likes an earthen vessel, as well as silver, has not a greater mind than he who uses plate, and reckons it as dirt. It is our duty to live better than the common people, but not in opposition to them ; as if *philosophy* were a faction ; for by so doing, instead of reforming, and gaining upon them, we drive them away ; and when they find it unreasonable to imitate us in all things, they will follow us in nothing. Our business must be to live according to *nature*, and to own the sense of outward things with other people : Not to torment the body ; and, with exclamations against that which is sweet and cleanly, to delight in nastiness ; and to use, not only a coarse, but a sluttish, and offensive diet. Wisdom preaches temperance, not mortification ; and a man may be a very good husband without being a sloven. He who steers a middle course betwixt virtue and popularity ; that is to say, betwixt good manners and discretion, shall gain both approbation and reverence. But, what if a man governs himself in his clothes, in his diet, in his exercises, as he ought to do ? It is not that his garments, his meat, and drink, or his walking, are things simply good ; but it is the tenor of a man's life ; and the conformity of it to nature, and right reason. *Philosophy* obliges us to humanity, society, and the ordinary use of external things. It is not a thing to please the people with, or to entertain an idle hour ; but a study for the forming the mind, and the guidance of human life. And a wise man should also live as he discourses, and in all points be like himself ; and in the first place, set a value upon himself, before he can pretend to become valuable to others. Our good deeds, as well as our evil, come home to us at last ; he who is charitable, makes others so by his example, and finds the comfort of that charity when he wants it himself. He who is cruel, seldom finds mercy. It is a hard matter for a man to be both popular, and virtuous ; for he must be like the people who would oblige them ; and the kindness of dishonest men is not to be acquired by

honest means. He lives by reason, not by custom; he shuns the very conversation of the intemperate, and ambitious. He knows the danger of great examples of wickedness, and that public errors impose upon the world under the authority of precedents; for they take for granted, that they are never out of the way so long as they keep the road.

We are beset with dangers; and therefore a wise man should have his virtues in a continual readiness to encounter them. Whether poverty, loss of friends, pains, sickness or the like; he still maintains his post: Whereas a fool is surprised at every thing, and afraid of his very succours: Either he makes no resistance at all, or else he does it by halves. He will neither take advice from others, nor look to himself: He reckons upon *philosophy*, as a thing not worth his time; and if he can but get the reputation of a good man among the common people, he takes no further care, but accounts that he has done his duty.

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### EPISTLE IX.

*The Blessings of a vigorous Mind in a decayed Body: with some pertinent Reflections of Seneca upon his own Age.*

WHEN I call *Claranus* my school fellow, I need not say any thing more of his age, having told you, that he and I were *cotemporaries*. You would not imagine how green, and vigorous his mind is, and the perpetual conflict that it has with his body. They were naturally ill matched; unless to shew, that a generous spirit may be lodged under any shame. He has surmounted all difficulties; and from the contempt of himself, is advanced to the contempt of all things else. When I consider him well, methinks his body appears to me as fair as his mind. If nature could have brought the soul naked into the world, perhaps she would have done it: But yet she does a greater thing, in exalting that soul above all impediments of the flesh. It is a great happiness, to preserve the force of the mind, in the decay of the body; and to see the loss of appetite more than requited with the love of virtue. But, whether I owe this comfort to my age or to *wisdom*, is the

question. And whether, if I could any longer, I would not do still the same things over again, which I ought not to do. If age had no other pleasure than this, that it neither cares for any thing, nor stands in need of any thing; it were a great one to me, to have left all my painful and troublesome lusts behind me. But, *it is uneasy*, you will say to be always in fear of death. As if that apprehension did not concern a young man as well as an old; or that death only called us, according to our years. I am however beholden to my old age, that has now confined me to my bed; and put me out of condition of *doing* those things any longer; which I should not do. The less my mind has to do with my body, the better. And if age puts an end to my desires, and does the business of virtue, there can be no cause of complaint; nor can there be any gentier end, than to melt away in a kind of dissolution. Where fire meets opposition and matter to work upon, it is furious and rages; but where it finds no fuel, as in old age, it goes out quietly, for want of nourishment. Nor is the body the settled habitation of the mind: But a temporary lodging, which we are to leave whenever the master of the house pleases. Neither does the soul, (when it has left the body,) care any more what becomes of the carcase, and the several parts of it, than a man does for the shavings of his beard under the hand of a barber. There is not any thing that exposes a man to more vexation and reproach, than the overmuch love of the body: For sense neither looks forward nor backward, but only upon the present: Nor does it judge of good, or evil; or foresee consequences, which give a connexion to the order, and series of things, and to the unity of life. Not but that every man has naturally a love for his own carcase, as poor people love even their own beggarly cottages, they are old acquaintances, and loth to part: And I am not against the indulging it neither, provided that I make not myself a slave to it; for he who serves it, has many masters. Beside, that, we are in continual disorder: One while with gripes, pains in the head, tooth-ache, gout, stone, defluxions; sometimes with *too much* blood; other while with *too little*: And yet this frail, and putrid carcase of ours values itself as if it were immortal. We put no bounds to our hopes, our avarice, our ambition. The same man is *Vatinius* today, and *Cato* to-morrow: This hour as luxurious as

*Apicius*, and the next as temperate as *Tuberio* : Now, for a mistress ; by and by for a wife : Imperious this hour ; servile the next : Thrifty and prodigal ; laborious, and voluptuous by turns. But still the goods or the ills of the body do but concern the body (which is peevish, sour, and anxious) without any effect upon a well composed mind. I was the other day at my *villa*, and complaining of my charge of repairs ; my bailiff told me, *It was none of his fault ; for the house was old, and he had much ado to keep it from falling upon his head.* Well, (thought I) and what am I myself then, who saw the laying of the first stone ? In the gardens, I found the trees as much out of order ; the boughs knotted, and withered, and their bodies overrun with moss. *This would not have been* (said I) *if you had trenched them, and watered them, as you ought to have done.* By my soul, master, says the poor fellow, *I have done what I could : But alas ! they are all dotards, and spent.* What am I then (thought I to myself) *who planted all these trees with my own hands ?* And then I come to bethink myself, that age itself is not yet without its pleasures ; if we did but know how to use them ; and that the best morsel is reserved for the last : Or at worst, it is equivalent to the enjoying of pleasures, not to stand in need of any. It is but yesterday methinks, that I went to school. But time goes faster with an old man, than with a young : Perhaps because he reckons more upon it. There is hardly any man so old, but he may hope for one day more yet : And the longest life is but a multiplication of days, nay, of hours, nay, of moments. Our fate is set, and the first breath we draw is but the first step towards our last. One cause depends upon another ; and the course of all things, public and private, is only a long connection of providential appointments. There is great variety in our lives ; but all tends to the same issue. Nature may use her own bodies as she pleases : But a good man has this consolation, that nothing perishes that he can call his own. What *must* be, shall be ; and that which is a necessity to him who struggles, is little more than choice to him who is willing. It is bitter to be forced to any thing ; but things are easy, when they are complied with.



## EPISTLE X.

*Custom is a great Matter, either in Good, or Ill. We should check our Passions betimes. Involuntary Motions are invincible.*

**T**HERE is nothing so hard, but custom makes it easy to us. There are some who never laughed; others, who wholly abstain from wine, and women, and almost from sleep. Much use of a coach makes us lose the benefit of our legs: So that we must be infirm to be in the fashion; and at last, lose the very faculty of walking by disusing it. Some are so plunged in pleasures, that they cannot live without them. And, in this, they are most miserable; for what was at first but *superfluous*, is now become *necessary*. But their infelicity seems to be then consummate, and incurable, when sensuality has laid hold of the judgment, and wickedness is become a habit. Nay, some there are, who both hate, and persecute virtue; and that is the last act of desperation. It is much easier to check our passions in the beginning, than to stop them in their course; for, if reason could not hinder us at first, they will go on in despite of us. The *Stoicks* will not allow a wise man to have any passions at all. The *Peripatetics* temper them; but that mediocrity is altogether false and unprofitable. And it is all one, as if they said, That we may be a little mad or a little sick. If we give any sort of allowance to sorrow, fear, desires, perturbations, it will not be in our power to restrain them. They are fed from abroad, and will increase with their causes. And if we yield ever so little to them, the least disorder works upon the whole body. It is not my purpose all this while, wholly to take away any thing, that is either necessary, beneficial, or delightful to human life; but, to take that away, which may be vicious in it. When I forbid you to desire any thing, I am yet content, that you may be willing to have it. So that I permit you the same things: And those very pleasures will have a better relish too, when they are enjoyed without anxiety; and when you come to command those appetites, which before you served. It is natural you will say, to weep for the loss of a friend; to be moved at the sense of a good, or ill report, and to be sad in adversity. All this I will grant you; and there is no vice, but something may be said for it. At first it is tractable and modest; but if

we give it entrance we shall hardly get it out again; as it goes on, it gathers strength, and becomes quickly ungovernable. It cannot be denied, but that all affections flow from a kind of natural principle; and that it is our duty to take care of ourselves; but it is then our duty also, not to be over indulgent. Nature has mingled pleasures, even with things most necessary; not that we should value them for their own sakes, but to make those things which we cannot live without, to be more acceptable to us. If we esteem the pleasure for itself, it turns to luxury: It is not the business of nature to raise hunger or thirst, but to extinguish them.

As there are some natural frailties, that by care and industry, may be overcome; so there are others that are invincible: As for a man who values not his own blood, to swoon at the sight of another man's. Involuntary motions are insuperable, and inevitable; as the starting of the hair at ill news; blushing at a scurrilous discourse; swimming of the head upon the sight of a precipice, &c. Who can read the story of *Clodius's* expelling *Cicero*, and *Anthony's* killing him, the cruelties of *Marius*, and the proscriptions of *Sylla*, without being moved at it? The sound of a trumpet, the picture of any thing that is horrid, the spectacle of an execution, strikes the mind, and works upon the imagination. Some people are strangely subject to sweat, to tremble, to stammer; their very teeth will chatter in their heads, and their lips quiver; and especially in public assemblies. These are natural infirmities; and it is not all the resolution in the world, that can ever master them. Some redden when they are angry; *Sylla* was one of these; and when the blood flushed into his face, you might be sure he had malice in his heart. *Pompey*, on the other side, (who hardly ever spake in public without a blush) had a wonderful sweetness of nature; and it did exceedingly well with him. Your comedians, will represent fear, sadness, anger, and the like; but when they come to a bashful modesty, though they will give you humbleness of looks, softness of speech, and downcast eyes, to the very life, yet they can never come to express a blush; for it is a thing neither to be commanded, nor hindered; but it comes and goes of its own accord. The course of nature is smooth and easy; but when we come to cross it, we strive against the stream. It is not for one man to act another

man's part. For nature will quickly return, and take off the mask. There is a kind of sacred instinct that moves us. Even the worst have a sense of virtue. We are not so much ignorant as careless. Whence comes it, that grazing beasts distinguish the salutary plants from deadly? A chicken is afraid of a kite: and not of a goose, or a peacock, which is much bigger: A bird, of a cat, and not of a dog. This is impulse, and not experiment. The cells of bees, and the webs of spiders, are not to be imitated by art, but it is nature that teaches them. The stage-player has his actions, and gestures in readiness; but this is only an improvement by art of what nature teaches them; who is never at a loss for the use of herself. We come into the world with this knowledge; and we have it by a natural institution; which is no other than a natural logic. We brought the seeds of wisdom itself. There is the goodness of God, and that of man; the one is immortal, and the other mortal; nature perfects the one, and study the other.

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### EPISTLE XI.

*We are divided in ourselves; and confound Good and Evil.*

**I**T is no wonder that men are generally very much unsatisfied with the world; when there is not one man of a thousand who agrees with himself; and that is the root of our misery; only we are willing to charge our own vices upon the malignity of fortune. Either we are puffed up with pride, racked with desires, dissolved in pleasures, or blasted with cares; and which perfects our unhappiness, we are never alone, but in perpetual conflict, and controversy with our lusts. We are startled at all accidents. We boggle at our own shadows, and frighten one another. *Lucretius*, says, *That we are as much afraid in the light, as children in the dark*; but I say, *That we are altogether in darkness, without any light at all, and we run on blindfold, without so much as groping our way; which rashness in the dark, is the worst sort of madness.* He who is in his way, is in hope of coming to his journey's end; but error is endless. Let every man therefore examine his desires, whether they be according to rectified nature or not. That man's mind can never be right, whose actions disagree. We must not live

by chance ; for there can be no virtue without deliberation and election. And, where we cannot be certain, let us follow that which is most hopeful, and probable. Faith, justice, piety, fortitude, prudence, are venerable, and the possessions only of a good man ; but a plentiful estate, a brawny arm, and a firm body, are many times the portion of the wicked. The perfection of human nature, is that state which supports itself, and so is out of the fear of falling. It is a great weakness for a man to value himself upon any thing, wherein he shall be outdone by fools and beasts. We are to consider health, strength, beauty, and other advantages of that kind, only as adventitious comforts : We may preserve them with care, provided that we are always ready to quit them without trouble. There is a pleasure in wickedness as well as in virtue, and there are those who take a glory in it too ; wherefore our forefathers prescribed us the best life, and not the most plentiful ; and allowed us pleasure for a companion, but not for a guide. We do many times take the instruments of happiness, for the happiness itself ; and rest upon those matters, which are but in the way to it. That man only lives composed, who thinks of every thing that may happen before he feels it. But this is not yet to advise either neglect or indifference ; for I would avoid any thing that may hurt me, where I may honourably do it. But yet I would consider the worst of things beforehand. Examine the hope and the fear ; and where the things are uncertain, favour yourself, and believe that which you had rather should come to pass. There are not many men who know their own minds, but in the very instant of willing any thing. We are for one thing to-day, for another to-morrow ; so that we live and die, without coming to a resolution : Still seeking that elsewhere, which we may give ourselves ; that is to say, a good mind. And in truth, we do persuade ourselves, that in several cases do we desire the thing, which effectually we do not desire. And all this, for want of laying down some certain principles to make judgment inflexible and steady. When we do any evil, it is either for fear of greater evil, or in hope of such a good, as may more than balance that evil. So that we are here distracted betwixt the duty of finding our purpose, and the fear



of mischief and danger. This infirmity must be discharged. In the pursuit of pleasures, we should take notice, that there are not only sensual, but sad pleasures also, which transport the mind with adoration, (though they do not tickle the senses) and give us a veneration for those virtues that exercise themselves in sweat and blood. All true goods hold an affinity and friendship one with another; and they are equal; but false ones have in them much of vanity; they are large and specious to the eye; but upon examination, they want weight. Now, those virtues are all alike, they may yet be distinguished into desirable, and admirable; virtues of patience, and of delight: But, in the matter of common accidents, there is not any thing which is truly worthy either of our joy, or of our fear. For reason is immoveable; does not serve, but command our senses. What is pleasure, but a low and brutish thing? Glory is vain and volatile; poverty is only hard to him who does not resist it; superstition is a frantic error, that fears where it should love; and rudely invades where it should reverentially worship. Death itself is no evil at all, but the common benefit, and right of nature. There is a great difference betwixt those things which are good in common opinion, and those which are so in truth and effect: The former have the name of good things, but not the property: They may befall us, but they do not stick to us: And they may be taken away without either pain to us, or diminution. We may use them, but not trust in them; for, they are only deposited; and they must and will forsake us. The only treasure is that, over which fortune has no power: And the greater it is, the less envy it carries along with it. Let our vices die before us, and let us discharge ourselves of our dear bought pleasures, that hurt us, as well past, as to come; for they are followed with repentance, as well as our sins. There is neither substance in them, nor truth; for a man can never be weary of truth, but there is satiety in error. The former is always the same, but the latter is various; and if a man looks near it, he may see through it. Beside that, the possessions of a wise man are maintained with ease. He has no need of ambassadors, armies, and castles: But like God himself, he does his business without either noise or tumult. Nay, there is something so

venerable and sacred in virtue, that if we do but meet with any thing like it, the very counterfeit pleases us. By the help of *philosophy* the soul gives the slip to the body, and refreshes itself in heaven. Pleasures, at best, are short-lived; but the delights of virtue are secure and perpetual. Only we must watch, labour and attend it ourselves. For it is a business not to be done by a deputy. Nor is it properly a virtue to be a little better than the worst. Will any man boast of his eyes because they tell him that the sun shines? Neither is he presently a good man who thinks ill of the bad. For wicked men do that too; and it is perhaps the greatest punishment of sin, the displeasure that it gives to the author of it. The saddest case of all is, when we become enamoured of our ruin, and make wickedness our study; when vice has got a reputation; and when the dissolute have lost the only good thing they had in their excesses, the shame of offending. And yet the lewdest part of our corruptions is in private; which if any body had looked on, we should never have committed. Wherefore, let us bear in our minds the *idea* of some great person, for whom we have an awful respect; and his authority will even consecrate the very secret of our souls; and make us not only mend our manners, and purify our very thoughts; but in good time render us exemplary to others, and venerable to ourselves. If *Scipio* or *Lælius* were but in our eye, we should not dare to transgress. Why do we not make ourselves then such persons, as those in whose presence we dare not offend?

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## EPISTLE XII.

*We are moved at the Novelty of Things, for want of understanding the Reason of them.*

THE whole subject of *natural philosophy* falls under these three heads; the heavens, the air, and the earth. The first treats of the nature of the stars; their form and magnitude; the substance of the heavens; whether solid or not, and whether they move of themselves, or be moved by any thing else; whether the stars be below them, or fixt in their orbs; in what man-

ner the sun divides the seasons of the year; and the like. The second part inquires into the reason of things betwixt the heavens and the earth; as clouds, rain, snow, thunder, and whatever the air either does or suffers. The third handles matters that have a regard to the earth; as the difference of soils, minerals, metals, plants, groves, &c. *But these are considerations wholly foreign to our purpose, in the nature of them: Though they may be of very proper and pertinent application.* There is not any man so brutal, and so groveling upon the earth, but his soul is roused, and carried up to higher matters and thoughts, upon the appearance of any new light from heaven. What can be more worthy of admiration than the sun, the stars in their courses and glory? And yet so long as nature goes on in her ordinary way, there is nobody takes notice of them; but when any thing falls out beyond expectation and custom, what a gazing, pointing and questioning is there presently about it! The people gather together, and are at their wit's end; not so much at the importance of the matter, as at the novelty. Every meteor makes people desirous to know the meaning of it, and what it portends; and whether it be a star or prodigy: So that it is worth the while to inquire into the nature and philosophy of these lights, (*though not the business of this place*) that by discovering the reason, we may overcome the apprehension of them. There are many things which we know to be, and yet we know nothing at all of what they are. Is it not the mind that moves us, and restrains us? But, *what* that ruling power is, we do no more understand, than we know *where* it is. One will have it to be a spirit: Another will have it to be a divine power; some only a subtile air: Others an incorporeal being; and some again will have it to be only blood, and heat. Nay, so far is the mind from a perfect understanding of other things, that it is still in search of itself. It is not long since we came to find out the causes of eclipses; and farther experience will bring more things to light, which are as yet in the dark; but one age is not sufficient for so many discoveries: It must be the work of successions, and posterity; and the time will come, when we shall wonder that mankind should be so long ignorant of things that lay so open, and so easy to be made known.

Truth is offered to all ; but we must yet content ourselves with what is already found ; and leave some truths to be retrieved by after ages. The exact truth of things is only known to God ; but it is yet lawful for us to inquire and to conjecture, though not with too much confidence : Nor yet altogether without hope. In the first place however, let us learn things necessary ; and if we have any time to spare, we may apply it to superfluities.

Why do we trouble ourselves about things which possibly may happen, and peradventure not ? Let us rather provide against those dangers that watch us, and lie in wait for us. To suffer shipwreck, or to be crushed with the ruin of a house, are great misfortunes, but they seldom happen. The deadly and the hourly danger that threatens human life, is from one man to another. Other calamities commonly give us some warning : The smoke gives us notice of a fire ; the clouds bid us provide for a storm ; but human malice has no prognostic ; and the nearer it is, the fairer it looks. There is no trifling to the countenance ; we carry the shapes of men, and the hearts of beasts. Nay, we are worse than beasts ; for a beast has no reason at all ; but the other is perverted, and turns his reason to his mischief. Beside that, all the hurt which they do is out of fear, or hunger ; but man takes delight in destroying his own kind. From the danger we are in from men, we may consider our duty to them ; and take care that we neither do, nor suffer wrong. It is but humane, to be troubled at the misfortune of another, and to rejoice at his prosperity. And it is likewise prudent, to bethink ourselves what we are to do, and what we are to avoid ; by which means we may keep ourselves from being either harmed or deceived. The things that most provoke one man to do hurt to another, are hope, envy, hatred, fear and contempt ; but contempt is the slightest. Nay, many men have betaken themselves to it for their security. There is no doubt, but he who is contemned, shall be trod upon : but then his enemy passes over him as not worth his anger.

## EPISTLE XIII.

*Every man is the Artificer of his own Fortune. Of Justice and Injustice.*

**T**HE short of the question betwixt you and me, is this, *Whether a man had better part with himself, or something else that belongs to him?* And it is easily resolved in all competition betwixt the goods of sense and fortune, and those of honour and conscience. Those things which all men covet, are but specious outsides; and there is nothing in them of substantial satisfaction. Nor is there any thing so hard and terrible in the contrary, as the vulgar imagine; only the word *calamity* has an ill reputation in the world; and the very name is more grievous than the *thing itself*. What have I to complain of, if I can turn that to happiness, which others count a misery? A wise man, either repels, or elects, as he sees the matter before him, without fearing the ill which he rejects, or admiring what he chooses. He is never surprised: But in the midst of plenty he prepares for poverty; as a prudent prince does for war, in the depth of peace. Our condition is good enough, if we make the best of it; and our felicity is in our own power. *Things that are adventitious, have no effect upon him who studies to make sure of his happiness within himself.* Every man should stand upon his guard against fortune; and take most heed to himself when she appears to him fairest. All the advantage she gets upon us, is at unawares; whereas he who is provided for her, and stands the first shock, carries the day. It is not with common accidents of life, as with fire and sword, that burn and cut all alike; but misfortunes work more or less, according to the weakness, or resolution of the patient. He who grieves for the loss of casual comforts, shall never want occasion of sorrow. We say commonly, *That every man has his weak side*: But give me leave to tell you, that he who masters one vice, may master all the rest. He who subdues avarice, may conquer ambition. It is not for philosophy to excuse vices. The patient has little hope of health, when the physician prescribes intemperance: Though I know, on the other side, that he who does any thing more than ordinary, does but set himself up for a mark to malevolence and envy. Where laws are neglected, corruptions must inevitably be introduced:

For the authority of virtue is shaken. And what are laws but only *precepts* mingled with *threats*? With this difference, that the latter deter us from wickedness, and the former advise us to virtue. A preamble, methinks, derogates from the honour of a law, which ought to be short and clear; and to command, without suffering any expostulation. A law with a prologue, is a flat, and idle thing. Let me only be told my duty, and I am not to *dispute*, but to *obey*.

If I have not acquitted myself of my last promise to you, know, that in all promises, there is a tacit reserve; *if I can; if I ought; or, if things continue in the same state*: So that by the change of circumstances, I am discharged of my obligation. I know very well the bonds of justice; and yet the practices of the world to the contrary. There are no greater exactors of faith, than the perfidious; no greater persecutors of falshood, than the perjurious. He who loves his neighbour's wife, for that very reason, because she is another man's, locks up his own. The wickedness of other men we have always in our eye, but we cast our own over our shoulders. A worse father chastises a better son: He who denies nothing to his own luxury, will pardon nothing in another man's. A tyrant is offended at bloodshed; the sacrilegious punishes theft, and the greater part of the world quarrels rather with the offender than with the offence. It is very rare, that either the joy or the benefit of an estate injuriously gotten, continues long. Men go together by the ears about the booty, and we pay dear for things of little value. We live and die, lugging one another, breaking one another's rest; and our lives are without fruit, and without pleasure. Justice is a natural principle. I must live thus with my friend, thus with my fellow-citizens, thus with my companion: And why? Because it is just: Not for design, or reward: For it is virtue itself, and nothing else that pleases us. There is no law extant for keeping the secrets of a friend, or for not breaking faith with an enemy. And yet there is just cause of complaint, if a body betrays a trust. If a wicked man calls upon me for money that I owe him; I will make no scruple of pouring it into the lap of a common prostitute, if she be appointed to receive it. For my business is to return the money, not to order him how to dispose of it. I must pay it to a good man when it is expedient; and to a bad, when he calls for it.

## EPISTLE XIV.

*Of Trust in Friendship. Prayer, and bodily Exercise.*

**T**HERE are some persons, who, if any thing goes cross with them, though of a nature only fit for the ear of a friend, out it goes at a venture to the next comer; Others again are so suspicious, and so obstinately close, that they will rather perish than trust the best friend they have with it; they are, both of them, in the wrong: Only the one is the better natured error, and the other the safer. Now, as to the trust of a friend: There are many innocent things which in their own nature may seem to be privacies, and which custom has ever reputed so: In which case, there is place enough for the offices of friendship, in the mutual communication of our most secret cares and counsels. But yet we are so to govern ourselves, that even an enemy should not turn our actions to reproach. For an honest man lives not to the world, but to his own conscience. There is a certain softness of nature, and spirit, that steals upon a man; and, like wine, or love, draws all things from him. No man will either conceal, or tell, all that he hears. But he who tells the thing, will hardly conceal the author. So that it passes from one to another; and that which was at first a secret, does presently become a rumour. For this, and for many other reasons, we should set a watch upon our lips, and attend the more useful and necessary work of contemplation. The first position that we are to make to God Almighty, is for a *good conscience*; the second for *health of mind*; and then of *body*. There are some things which we directly wish for, as joy, peace, and the like; some that we pray for, only in case of necessity; as patience in pain or sickness, &c. Others that concern but external behaviour, as modesty of countenance, decency of motion, and such a demeanor as may become a prudent man. Many things may be commodious; that is to say, they may be of more use than trouble; and yet not simply good. Some things we have for exercise, others for instruction and delight. These things belong to us only as we are men, but not as we are *good men*. Some things serve to correct and regulate our manners; others to inquire into the nature, and original of them. How shall we know what a man is to do, if we do not search into his nature, and find out what is best for him, and what he is to avoid,

and what to pursue? Humanity not only keeps us from being proud, and covetous; but it makes us affable and gentle in our words, actions, and affections. We have no precepts for the *liberal arts*, neither for this, nor for sincerity, integrity of manners, modesty, frugality; no, nor for clemency itself; which makes us as tender of another's blood, as of our own; and distinguishes *men in society* from *beasts of prey*. Some people are even complaining of the iniquity of the times; but let no man depend upon the goodness of his cause, but rather upon the firmness of his courage: there may be force or bribery; I would hope the best, but prepare for the worst. What if I have served an ungrateful interest, and suffered wrongfully? An honest man is more troubled for the injustice of a severe sentence, than for the cruelty of it; and that his country has done an ill thing, rather than that he himself suffers it. If he be banished, the shame is not his, but the authors of it. He tempers his delights and afflictions, and says to himself, that if our joys cannot be long, neither will our sorrows. He is patient in his own misfortunes; without envy at the advantages of his *neighbour*. His virtue is bolder in the *opposition* of ill things than tyranny itself can be in the *imposing* of them. This is rather to tell you what you do already, than what you should do. Go on, as you have begun, and make haste to be perfect: But, take notice, that the mind is to be now and then unbent; a glass of wine, a journey, a mouthful of fresh air, relieves it: But then there is a difference betwixt a remission, and a dissolution. Without exercise, a dull humour invades us; and it is remarkable, that men of brawny arms, and broad shoulders, have commonly weak souls. Some exercises are short and gentle, and set the body right presently. But, whatever we do, let us return quickly to the mind; for that must not lie idle. A little labour serves it; and it works in all seasons; in summer, winter, old age; nothing hinders it. And to make it more valuable, it is every day better than another. Not that I would have you perpetually poring upon a book; but allow yourself seasonable respites, and to it again. A coach or a walk, does your body good, without interrupting your study: For you may discourse, dictate, read, hear, at the same time. Now, though the exercise be laudable and healthful, yet the masters of them are for the most part of lewd example. They divide their lives



betwixt the tavern and the hot house, and a swimming debauch is a good day's work with them. But, how apt are we to set bounds to others, and none to ourselves; and to observe their warts, when our own bodies are covered with ulcers! What is more ordinary, than for people to reverence and detest the fortunate at the same time, even for doing those things which they themselves would do, if they could! There might be some hope of our amendment, if we would but confess our faults; as a man must be awake who tells his dream. There are some diseases which are absolutely hopeless, and past cure; but they may yet be palliated; and philosophy, if it cannot help in one case, it may in another. To a man in a fever, a gentle remission is a degree of health: And it is something, if a man be not perfectly sound, to be yet more curable. But we are loth to be at the pains of attending our own business: We lead that life in the world which some lazy people do in a market; they stand gaping about them, without either buying or selling. We slip our opportunities, and if they be not caught in the very nick, they are irrecoverably lost.

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### EPISTLE XV.

*The Danger of flattery; and in what Cases a Man may be allowed to commend himself.*

**D**EMETRIUS was wont to say, *That knavery was the ready way to riches; and that the casting off of virtue was the first step to thriving in the world.* Study but the art of flattery (which is now a days so acceptable that a moderate commendation passes for a liberal) study that a art (I say) and you shall do your business without running any risk upon the seas, or any hazards of merchandize, husbandry, or suits at law. There is not one man of a million who is proof against an artificial flatterer, but something or other will stick, if we do but give him the hearing. Nay, we like him well enough, though we shake him off, and the quarrel is easily reconciled. We seem to oppose him, but we do not shut the door against him; or if we do, it is but as a mistress will do sometimes upon her servant, *she would be well enough content to be hindered; and take it much better get to have it broke open.* Besides that, a man lies commonly most

open where he is attacked: How shamefully are great men fawned upon by their slaves, and inured to fulsome praises, when the only business of those who call themselves friends, is to try who can most dexterously deceive his master! For want of knowing their own strength, they believe themselves as great as their parasites represent them; and venture upon broils, and wars, to their irreparable destruction. They break alliances, and transport themselves into passions, which, for want of better counsels, hurry them on to blood and confusion. They pursue every wild imagination as a certainty, and think it a greater disgrace to be bent, than to be broke. They set up their rest upon the perpetuity of a tottering fortune, until they come at last to see the ruin of themselves, and their possessions; and too late to understand that their misfortunes and their flatteries were of the same date: There is a sparing, and a crafty flattery that looks like plain dealing. But all flatteries are words of course, and he who receives them will give them. Nay, let it be ever so shameless, a man takes all to himself, though his very conscience gives him the lie. Cruelty shall be translated mercy; extortion and oppression shall be called liberality; lust and gluttony, to the highest degree in the world, shall be magnified for temperance. Now, what hope is there for his changing for the better, who values himself as the best of men already? The stroke of an arrow convinced *Alexander* that he was not the son of *Jupiter*; but a mortal man. And thus, upon the experiment of human frailty, should every man say to himself, Am I not sad, sometimes, and tortured betwixt hope and fear? Do I not hanker after vain pleasure? He who is not yet satisfied, is not so good as he should be. The words of flatteries and parasites seldom die in the hearing; and when they have gained admittance, they grow more and more upon you: And shortly they will tell you, that *virtue, philosophy, and justice*, are but empty sounds; let every man live while he may, and make the best of the present; and not govern himself at a rate, as if he were to keep a diary for his father: What madness is it, to enrich a man's heir, and starve himself; and to turn a friend into an enemy? For, his joy will be proportioned to what you leave him: Never trouble yourself for these superfluous censurers of

other men's lives, and enemies of their own : These pedagogues of mankind are not worth your care. These are the people who draw us from our parents and country, our friends, and other necessary duties.

I would neither be deceived myself, nor deceive others ; but if a man cannot live without it, let him commend himself, and say thus, " I have applied myself to liberal studies ; though both the poverty of my condition, and my own reason might rather have put me upon the making my fortune. I have given proof, that all minds are capable of goodness ; and have illustrated the obscurity of my family, by the eminence of my virtue. I have preserved my faith in all extremities, and I have ventured my life for it. I have never spoken one word contrary to my conscience, and I have been more solicitous for my friend, than for myself : I never make any base submission to any man ; and I have never done any thing unworthy of a resolute and an honest man. My mind is raised so much above all danger, that I have mastered all hazards ; and I bless myself in the Providence which gave me that experiment of my virtue : For it was not fit, methought, that so great glory should come cheap. Nay I did not so much as deliberate, whether good faith should suffer for me, or I for it. I stood my ground, without laying violent hands upon myself, to escape the rage of the powerful ; though under *Caligula*, I saw cruelties to such a degree, that to be killed outright was accounted a mercy. And yet I persist in my honesty, to shew that I was ready to do more than die for it. My mind was never corrupted with gifts ; and when the humour of avarice was at the height, I never laid my hand on any unlawful gain. I have been temperate in my diet ; modest in my discourse ; courteous and affable to my inferiors ; and have even paid a respect and reverence to my betters." After all, what I have said, is either true or false : If true, I have commended myself before a *great witness*, my own conscience ; if false, I am ridiculous, without any witness at all. Let every man retire into himself ; for the old, the young ; men, women, and children, are all wicked. Not every one only, or a few, but there is a general conspiracy in evil. We should therefore fly the world, withdraw into ourselves ; and in some sort avoid even ourselves too.

## EPISTLE XVI.

*A general Dissolution of Manners ; with a Censure of corrupt Magistrates.*

THE corruption of the present times, is the general complaint of all times ; it has ever been so, and it ever will be so : Not considering that the wickedness of the world is always the same, as to the degree of it ; though it may change places, perhaps, and vary a little in the matter. One while whoring is in fashion ; another while gluttony : To-day, excess in apparel ; and more care of the body than of the mind : To-morrow, comes up the humour of scoffing ; and after that, perchance, a vein of drinking ; when *he* shall be accounted the bravest man, who makes himself the veriest beast. This prostitute looseness of manners makes way for sedition and cruelty. Under *Tiberius*, the plague of your *dilators*, or *informers*, was worse than any civil war. It was an age wherein the words of men in their cups, the most innocent raileries, and ingenious freedom of conversation were made capital. When it was dangerous to be honest, and only profitable to be vicious. And not only ill things, but vice itself were both commended and preferred ; for all insolence, when it comes to be exemplary, pretends to be lawful. Authority in sin is an incentive to it : And is at least an excuse, if not a warrant to transgress, after great example. Beside that, we are prone enough to do amiss, even of ourselves, without either a leader or a companion. But it is a malevolent sort of comfort, which men take in the number of the wicked.

The worst of all is ; that whereas in other cases the people are ashamed of their errors ; in that of life, they are delighted with them, and so become incurable. The pilot takes no pleasure in running upon a rock ; nor the physician in the death of his patient ; nor the advocate in the loss of his client's cause ; but, on the other side, the criminal rejoices in his uncleanness, in his ambition, and in his theft ; and never troubles himself for the fault, but for the miscarriage : He makes infamy the reward of lewdness, and values himself upon his excellency in ill doing. The question is, who shall be most impious ? We have every day worse appetites, and less

shame ; sobriety and conscience, are become foolish and scandalous things ; and it is half the relish of our lusts that they are committed in the face of the sun. Innocency is not only rare, but lost ; and mankind are entered into a sort of confederacy against virtue. To say nothing of intestine wars ; fathers and sons in league against one another ; poisoned fountains ; troops in search of the banished and proscribed ; prisons crammed with worthy citizens ; cities demolished ; rape and adultery authorised ; public perjuries and frauds ; a violation of common faith ; and all the bonds of human society cancelled. *Adultery* is the ready way to *wedlock*, and *marriage* to a *single life* again ; for *parting* is one condition of it. For, they divorce to marry ; and they marry, to be divorced. That which they often talk, and hear of, they easily do. What shame can there be of incontinence, when modesty is become a reproach ; and when it is the mode for every wife to provide herself a gallant or two, beside her husband ? It is an idle thing to think of ever converting those people, who find both advantage and reputation in their wickedness.

Would any man ever have imagined, that *Clodius* should have come off by bribery, for debauching the wife of *Cesar*, and profaning the public vows for the safety of the people ; but, the judges were corrupted ; and not only with money, but with the bodies of young men and women : So that his absolution was fouler than his crime ; the *bribe* was *adultery*, as well as the *offence* ; and he had no way to be safe, till he made his judges like himself. *Name the woman you have a mind to* (says he) *and you shall have her. And when you have committed the sin, condemn it if you dare. Appoint the time, and the place, and she shall be ready for you.* Nay, the practice was so gross, that the bench desired a guard of the senate, to secure them from the people. Before the sentence was given, he was an adulterer ; in the management of the cause, he was a pander ; and his way of escaping punishment, was fouler than the offence that deserved it. A list that spared not the altar, and perverted justice upon the very seat of judgment. The question was, *whether an adulterer should escape unpunished* ; and the resolution was, *That, without being an adulterer, he could not be secure.* Nor is it likely, that their conversation was more honest than

their sentence. These things have been done, and will be done. Discipline and fear may restrain the license of the people ; but it is not to be thought, that they ever will be good of their own accord. But, let us not yet speak of luxury and dissolution, as the vices of the age ; which, in truth, are only the vices of the men. The practices of our times are moderate, compared with those, when the delinquent pleaded *not guilty* to the bench, and the bench confessed itself *guilty* to the delinquent ; and when one adultery was excused by another. In those days it passed for great piety, not to be very impious. He who gave most, carried the cause ; and it is but according to the law of nations, for him who buys, to sell. And, it is to be noted that a man may be as covetous of what he intends to squander away, as if he were to hoard it up. The contempt of poverty in others, and the fear of it in ourselves, unmerciful oppressions, and mercenary magistrates, are the common grievances of a licentious government. The baths, and the theatres are crowded, when the temples and the schools are empty ; for men mind their pleasures more than their manners. All vices gain upon us, by the promise of reward ; avarice promises money ; luxury, sensual satisfaction ; ambition promises preferment, and power. And it is no excuse to say, that a man is not very covetous ; a little ambitious, choleric, inconstant, lustful, and the like. He had better have one great vice, than a spice of all little ones. We say commonly that a fool has all sorts of vices in him ; that is to say, he is free from none ; but they do not all appear ; and he is more prone to one, than to another. One is given to avarice, another to luxury, a third to wantonness ; but we are not yet to ask the *Stoicks*, if *Achilles* be a coward ; *Aristides*, unjust ; *Pabius*, rash ; *Mucius*, a traitor ; *Camillus*, a deserter. We do not say, that all vices are in all men, as some are in some particulars.

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## EPISTLE. XVII.

*The Original of all Men is the same; and Virtue is the only Nobility. There is a tenderness due to Servants.*

**I**T is not well done to be still murmuring against nature and fortune; as if it were their unkindness that makes you considerable, when it is only by your own weakness, that you make yourself so: For it is virtue, not pedigree, that renders a man either valuable, or happy. Philosophy does not either reject or choose any man for his quality. *Socrates* was no *patrician*; *Cleanthes*, but an *under gardener*; neither did *Plato* dignify philosophy by his birth, but by his goodness. All these worthy men are our *progenitors*; if we will but do ourselves the honour to become their *disciples*. The original of all mankind was the same; and, it is only a clear conscience that makes any man *noble*: For, that comes even from heaven itself. It is the saying of a great man, that "if we could trace our descents, we should find all slaves to come from princes, and all princes from slave." But, fortune has turned all things topsyturvy, in a long story of revolutions. It is most certain, that our beginning had nothing before it; and our ancestors were some of them splendid, others sordid, as it happened. We have lost the memorials of our extraction, and in truth, it matters not whence we came, but whither we go. Nor is the glory of our predecessors any more to our honour, than the wickedness of our posterity is to our shame. We are all of us composed of the same elements: Why should we then value ourselves upon our nobility of blood, as if we were not all of us equal, if we could but recover our evidence? But, when we can carry it no farther, the *herald* provides some *hero* to supply the place of an illustrious original; and there is the rise of arms and families. For a man to spend his life, in pursuit of a title, that serves only, when he dies, to furnish out an *epitaph*, is below a wise man's business.

It pleases me exceedingly to understand by all who come out of your quarters, that you demean yourself humanely and tenderly towards your servants. It is the part of a wise and a good man, to deal with his inferior as he would have his superior deal with him; for servants are not only men, but a kind of humble friends:

And fortitude has no more power over them, than over their masters: And he who duly considers, how many servants have come to be masters, and how many masters to be servants, will lay no great stress of argument, either upon the one or upon the other. Some use their servants worse than beasts, in slavish attendances, betwixt their drink and their lusts; some are brought up only to carve, others to season; and all to serve the turns of pomp and luxury. Is it not a barbarous custom, to make it almost capital for a servant only to cough, sneeze, sigh, or but wag his lips, while he is in waiting; and to keep him the whole night mute and fasting? Yet so it comes to pass, that they dare not speak *before* their masters, will not forbear talking of them; and those, on the other side, who were allowed a modest freedom of speech in their master's entertainments, were most obstinately silent upon the torture, rather than they would betray them. But we live as if a servant were not made of the same materials with his master, or to breathe the same air, or to live, and die under the same conditions. It is worthy of observation, that the most imperious masters over their own servants, are, at the same time, the most abject slaves to the servants of other masters. I will not distinguish a servant by his office, but by his manners. The one is the work of fortune, the other of virtue. But we look only to his quality, and not to his merit. Why should not a brave action rather dignify the condition of a servant, than the condition of a servant, lessen a brave action? I would not value a man for his clothes, or degree, any more than I would an horse for his trappings, What if he be a servant? Shew me any man who is not so, to his lusts, his avarice, his ambition, his palate, to his queen; nay, to other men's servants; and we are all of us servants to *fear*. Insolent we are, many of us, at home; servile and despised abroad; and none are more liable to be trampled upon, than those who have an habit of giving affronts by suffering them. What matter is it how many masters we have, when it is but one slavery? And whoever contemns that, is perfectly free, let his masters be ever so many. That man is not free, over whom fortune has a *little* power, but over whom she has *none at all*: Which state of liberty is an



inestimable good, when we desire nothing, that is either superfluous, or vicious. They are asses who are made for burden, and not the nobler sort of horses. In the civil wars, betwixt *Cesar* and *Pompey*, the question was not, who should be slaves, or free, but who should be master. Ambition is the same thing in private that it is in public; and the duties are effectually the same, betwixt the master of a kingdom, and the master of a family. As I would treat some servants kindly, because they are worthy; and others to make them so; so, on the other side, I would have a servant to reverence his master, and rather to love him than fear him. Some there are who think this too little for a master, though it is all we pay, even to God himself. The body of a servant may be bought and sold, but his mind is free.

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EPISTLE XVIII.

*We are juster to Men than to God. Of Life and Death : of Good and Evil.*

**I**T is without dispute that the loss of a friend is one of the greatest trials of human frailty; and no man is so much exalted above the sense of that calamity, as not to be affected with it. And yet if a man bears it bravely, they cry, *He has no sense of piety or good nature in him*: If he sinks under it, they call him effeminate: So that he lies both ways under a reproach. And what is the ground of his trouble, I beseech you, but that he *might have lived longer, in respect of his years, and in effect, that he ought to have done so in regard of his usefulness to the world?* I cannot but wonder to see men who are really just, and temperate in all their dealings with men, and in business, so exceedingly forget themselves, in this point. But we have in excuse of this error, the fillings of the whole world with us for company. For even those who are most scrupulously conscientious towards men, are yet unthankful and injurious to Providence.

It is not the number of days that makes a life long, but the full employment of them, upon the main end and purpose of life, which is the perfecting of the

mind: In making a man the absolute master of himself, I reckon the matter of age among external things; the main point is to live and die with honour. Every man who lives, is upon the way, and must go through with his journey, without stopping, till he comes at the end: And where it ends, if it ends well, it is a perfect life: There is an invincible fate that attends all mortals; and one generation is condemned to tread upon the heels of another. Take away from life, the power of death, and it is a slavery. As *Caligula* was passing upon the way, an old man, who was a prisoner, and with a beard down to his girdle, made his request to *Cæsar*, that he might be put to death: *Why* says *Cæsar*, to him, *Are you not dead already?* So that you see some desire it, as well as others fear it: And why not? When it is one of the duties of life, to die: And it is one of the comforts of it too; for the living are under the power of fortune, but she has no dominion at all over the dead. Now can life be pleasant to any man, who is not prepared to part with it? Or what loss can be easier to us, than that which can never be missed or desired again? I was brought by a defluxion into a hopeless consumption; and I had it in my thought many times to deliver myself from a miserable life, by a violent death: But the tenderness I had for an aged and indulgent father held my hands; for, thought I to myself, it will be very hard for my father to be without me, though I could most willingly part with myself. In the case of a particular disease, a physician may propound a remedy: But the only remedy for all diseases, is the contempt of death. (Though I know too, that it is the business of a long life to learn that lesson.)

O! the happiness of distinguishing good from evil, in the work of providence! But, instead of raising our thoughts to the contemplation of divine matters, and inquiring into the original, the state, and appointed issue of created nature, we are digging the earth, and serving our avarice; neglecting all the good things that are so frankly offered us. How great a folly and madness is it, for men who are dying, and in the hands of death already, to extend their hopes, and to carry their ambition and desires to the grave unsatisfied! For whatever is tainted with those hydropic appetites, can never

have enough, either of money, or power. It is remarkable, that among those who place their happiness in sense, *they* are the most miserable who seem to be happiest. The riches of nature are the most precious treasures. What has any man to desire more, than to keep himself from cold, hunger, and thirst? It is not the quantity, but the opinion that governs in this case: *That can never be little, which is enough: Nor does any man account that to be much, which is too little.* The benefits of fortune are so far comfortable to us, as we enjoy them without losing the possession of ourselves. Let us purge our minds, and follow nature; we shall otherwise be still either fearing or craving, and slaves to accidents: Nor that there is any pleasure in poverty, but it is a great felicity for a man to bring his mind to be contented even in that state, which fortune itself cannot make worse. Methinks our quarrels with ambition, and profitable employments, are somewhat like those we have with our mistresses; we do not hate them, but wrangle with them. In a word, betwixt those things which are sought and coveted; and yet complained of; and those things which we have lost, and pretend that we cannot live without, our misfortunes are purely voluntary: And we are servants, not so much by necessity, as by choice. No man can be happy who is not free, and fearless: And no man can be so, but he, who by philosophy has got the better of fortune. In what place soever we are, we shall find ourselves beset with the miseries of human nature; some without us; that either encompass us, deceive us, or force: Others within us, that eat up our very hearts, in the middle of solitude. And it is not yet, as we imagine, that fortune has long arms; she meddles with nobody who does not first lay hold upon her. We should keep a distance therefore, and withdraw into the knowledge of nature, and of ourselves: We understand the original of things; the order of the world, the circulation of the seasons, the courses of the stars, and that the whole frame of the universe (only the earth excepted) is but a perpetual motion. We know the causes of day and night; of light and darkness; but it is at a distance: Let us direct our thoughts then to that place where we shall see all nearer at hand. And, it is not this hope neither, that makes a wise man resolute at the

point of death, because death lies in his way to heaven ; for the soul of a wise man is there beforehand : Nay, if there were nothing after death to be either expected or feared, he would yet leave this world with as great a mind, though he were to pass into a state of annihilation. He who reckons every hour his last, a day or an age is all one to him. Fate is doing our work while we sleep ; death steals upon us insensibly ; and the more insensibly, because it passes under the name of life. From childhood we grow up without perceiving it, to old age ; and this increase of our life, duly considered, is a diminution of it. We take death to be before us, but it is behind us ; and has already swallowed up all that is past : Wherefore make use of the present ; and trust nothing to the morrow ; for delay is just so much time lost. We catch hold of hopes and flatteries of a little longer life ; as drowning men do upon thorns, or straws, that either hurt us or deceive us. You will ask, perhaps what I do myself, who preach at this rate : Truly, I do like some ill husbands, who spend their estates, and yet keep their accounts : I run out ; but yet I can tell which way it goes. And I have the fate of ill husbands, too, another way ; for every body pities me, and nobody helps me. The soul is never in the right place, so long as it fears to quit the body. Why should a man trouble himself to extend life, which at best, is a kind of punishment ; and at longest, amounts to very little more than nothing ? He is ungrateful, who takes the period of pleasure for an injury ; and he is foolish, who knows no good but the present. Nay, there are some courses of life, which a man ought to quit, though with life itself : As the trade of killing others, instead of learning to die himself. Life itself is neither good nor evil ; but only a place for good and evil : It is a kind of tragi-comedy. Let it be well acted, and no matter whether it be long or short. We are apt to be misled by the appearances of things, and when they come to us recommended in good terms, and by great example, they will impose many times upon very wise men. The mind is never right, but when it is at peace within itself, and independent upon any thing from abroad. The soul is in heaven, even while it is in the flesh ; if it be purged of natural corruptions, and taken up with divine thoughts :

And whether any body sees us, or takes notice of us, it matters not. Virtue will of itself break forth, though ever so much pains be taken to suppress it. And it is all one, whether it be known or not: But after ages however will do us right, when we are dead and insensible of the veneration they allow us. He who is wise will compute the conditions of humanity: and contract the subjects both of his joy and fear. And it is time well spent, so to abate of the one, that he may likewise diminish the other. By this practice he will come to understand, how short, how uncertain, and how safe, many of those things are, which we are wont to fear. When I see a splendid house, or a glittering train, I look upon it, as I do upon courts, which are only schools of avarice and ambition; and they at best but a pomp which is more for shew than possession. Beside that, great goods are seldom long lived; and that is the fairest felicity, which is of the shortest growth.

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### EPISTLE XIX.

#### OF TRUE COURAGE.

**FORTITUDE** is (properly) *the contempt of all hazards, according to reason; though it be commonly and promiscuously used also, for contempt of all hazards, even without or against reason:* Which is rather a daring or a brutal fierceness, than an honourable courage. A brave man fears nothing more than the weakness of being affected with popular glory. His eyes are not dazzled with either gold or steel; he tramples upon all the terrors and glories of fortune: he looks upon himself as a citizen and soldier of the world, and, in despite of all accidents and oppositions, he maintains his station. He does not only suffer, but court the most perilous occasions of virtue, and those adventures which are most terrible to others: For he values himself upon the experiment; and is more ambitious of being reputed good than happy. *Mucius* lost his hand with more honour than he could have preserved it: He was a greater conqueror without it, than he could have been with it: For with the very stump of it, he overcame two kings, *Tarquinius* and *Porrexena*. *Rutulia* followed *Cato* into banishment; she staid and she return-

ed with him too ; and soon after she lost him, without so much as shedding a tear : A great instance of her courage in his banishment ; and of her prudence in his death. This (says *Epicurus*, when he was ready to expire in an extreme torment of the stone,) is the last and the most blessed day of my life. It was never said of the three hundred *Fabii*, that they were overcome; but that they were slain; nor of *Regulus*, that he was vanquished by the *Carthaginians*, but that he was taken. The *Spartans* prohibited all exercises where the victory was declared by the voice and submission of him who was worsted. When *Platon* begged of *Phœbus* the government of the chariot of the sun for one day, the poets make him so far from being discouraged by his father's telling him of the danger of the undertaking, and how he himself had much ado to keep his seat for fear, when he looked down from the meridian, that it proved a spur to his importunity. *That is the thing* (says *Phæton*) *that I would be at ; to stand firm in that difficulty, where Phœbus himself trembles.* Security is the caution of narrow minds : But as fire tries gold, so does difficulty and hazard try virtuous men. Not but that he may be as valiant who watches upon the tower, as he who fights upon his knees ; only the one has the good fortune of an occasion for the proof of his resolution. As some creatures are cruel, others crafty, and some timorous ; so man is endued with a glorious and an excellent spirit, that prompts him, not so much to regard a safe life, as an honest one. Providence has made him the master of this lower world ; and he reckons it his duty to sacrifice his own particular to the advantage of the whole. And yet there is a vast difference, even in the same action done by a brave person, and by a stupid : As the death of *Cato* was honourable, but that of *Brutus* was shameful. Nor is it death itself that we recommend for glorious, but it is a glorious thing to die as we ought. Neither is it poverty, banishment, or pain, that we commend, but the man who behaves himself bravely under those afflictions. How were the gladiators contemned who called for quarter ; and those on the other side favoured, who despised it ! Many a man saves his life, by not fearing to lose it ; and many a man loses his life for being over solicitous to save it. We are many times afraid of dying by one thing, and we

come to die by another. As for example ; we are threatened by an enemy, and we die by a pleurisy. The fear of death enlarges all other things that we fear. To bear it with constancy we should compute, that whether our lives be long, or short, it comes all to a point : Some hours we lose : What if they were days, months, years ? What matters it if I never arrive at that which I must certainly part with when I have it ? Life is but one point of flying time ; and that which is to come is no more mine, than that which is past. And, we have this for our comfort too, that whoever now fears death, will, some time or other, come to wish it. If death be troublesome or terrible, the fault is in *us*, and not in *death itself*. It is as great madness for a man to fear that which he is not to feel, as that which he is not to suffer ; the difference lies in the manner of dying, and not in the issue of death itself. It is a more inglorious death to be smothered with perfumes, than to be torn to pieces with pincers. Provided my mind be not sick, I shall not much heed my body. I am prepared for my last hour, without tormenting myself when it will come. It is betwixt the *Stoicks* and *other philosophers*, as betwixt men and women, they are both equally necessary for society ; only the one is born for government, and the other for subjection. Other sects deal with their disciples, as plausible physicians do with their patients, they flatter and humour them ; whereas the *Stoicks* go a bolder way to work, and consider rather their profit, than their pleasure.

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EPISTLE XX.

*It is never too late to learn. The Advantages of a private Life, and the Slavery of a public. The End of Punishments.*

LET no man presume to advise others, who has not first given good counsel to himself, and he may then pretend to help his neighbour. It is, in short, as hard a matter to give good counsel as to take it : Let it however be agreed betwixt the two parties, that the one designs to confer a benefit, and the other to receive it. Some people scorn to be taught ; others are ashamed of it, as they would be of going to school when they are old : But it is never too late to learn what it is always necessary to

know; and it is no shame to learn, so long as we are ignorant; that is to say, so long as we live. When any thing is amiss in our bodies, or estates, we have recourse presently to the physician, or the lawyer for help: And why not to the philosopher, in the disorders of our mind? No man *lives*, but he who applies himself to *wisdom*; for he takes into his own life the supplement of all past ages. It is a fair step towards happiness and virtue, to delight in the conversation of good and wise men: And where that cannot be had, the next point is, to keep no company at all. Solitude affords business enough, and the entertainment is comfortable and easy: Whereas public offices are vexatious and restless. There is a great difference betwixt a life of leisure, and laziness. When people will express their envy of a man in an happy condition, they will say, *He lives at his ease*: When in truth the man is, *dead, alive*. There is a *long life* and a *long death*: The former when we enjoy the benefits of a right mind; and the other, when the senses are extinguished, and the body dead beforehand. He who makes me the master of my own time, and places me in a state of freedom, lays a great obligation upon me. As a merchant who has a considerable fortune abroad, is more sensible of the blessing of a fair wind and safe passage, than he who has only ballast, or some coarse commodity in the vessel: So that man who employs his privacy upon thoughts divine and precious, is more sensible of the comfort of that freedom, than he who bends his meditation an ill way. For he considers all the benefits of his exemption from common duties; he enjoys himself with infinite delight, and makes his gratitude answerable to his obligations. He is the best of subjects, and the happiest of men; and he lives to nature and to himself. Most men are to themselves the worst company they can keep. If they be good, quiet, and temperate, they are as good alone, as in company: But if otherwise, let them converse with others, and avoid themselves: But, he who has made himself good company, can never be too much alone. Many a ship is lost in the harbor, but more in the ocean; as many an honest man is condemned, but more of the guilty. This however, is certain, he who cannot secure himself in privacy, shall be much more exposed in public. That which the world calls felicity,



is greedy itself, and exposed to the greediness of others. Prosperity, like a fair gale upon a strong current, carries a man in a trice, out of the very sight of peace and quiet ; and if it be not tempered, and regulated, it is so far from easing us, that it proves an oppression to us. A busy and a fortunate man in the world, calls many men his friends, who are at best but his guests. And if people flock to him, it is but as they do to a fountain, which they both exhaust and trouble.

WHAT greater slavery can there be, than that of princes in this very respect, who are chained to their post, and cannot make themselves less ? All their words and actions are descanted upon, and made public discourse ; and there are many things allowable to a private man, that are not fit for a governor. I can walk alone where I please, without a sword, without fear, and without company ; whereas a prince must be armed in peace, and cannot with indignity quit his guards. Fortune has him in custody ; a train besets him wherever he goes ; and there is no making any escape. He is little better than nailed to his place, and it is the perfection of his misery that he cannot go less. He can no more conceal himself, than the sun in the firmament ; whereas the subjects may come and go, change habits and humour, without being taken notice of. Servitude is the fate of palaces ; the splendor of a crown draws all men's eyes upon it. When *Cæsar* speaks, the whole world hears his voice, and trembles at his displeasure ; and where it falls it shakes whatever is near it. His lips are the oracles of the people, and government is the cement that binds them together. But still he who is master of many, is the servant yet of more. The power, it is true, of all things belongs to the *prince* ; but the property, to particular persons ; and the same thing may be both yours and mine in several respects. We cannot say that a son, or a servant, has nothing ; because a master, or a father may take it away if he will ; or that he cannot give willingly, because he may hinder it, whether he will or not : *This is power, and true dominion : And not to rule and command, as we may do it when we please.* The strength of a prince is the love of his people ; for there is nothing so great, but it must itself perish, when it becomes the common safety that it should be so. Tyrants are hated, because they are feared ; and

because they are hated, they will be feared. They are rendered odious to posterity ; and they had better never have been born, than to stand upon record for the plagues of mankind. Miserable is that people, where their very keepers are their executioners. And, it is not an armed tyranny, neither, but the unarmed vices of avarice and envy, that we ought to be most afraid of. Some will not endure to have their vices touched, but will shrink and struggle under the operation, as if they were under the hand of a surgeon. But, this shall not hinder me from lancing and probing, because of the cries and groans of the patient. Every man should have a *monitor* at his elbow, to keep him from avarice, by showing him how rich a man he may be with a little : To keep him also from ambition, by representing the disputes and hazards that accompany greatness ; which makes him as great a burden to others, as he is to himself. When it once comes to that, fear, anxiety, and weariness, make us philosophers. A sickly fortune produces wholesome counsel ; and we reap this fruit from our adversary, that it brings us at last to wisdom.

Now, though clemency in a prince be so necessary and profitable a virtue, and cruelty so dangerous an excess ; it is yet the office of a governor, as of the master of a hospital to keep sick and madmen in order : And in cases of extremity, the very member is to be cut off with the ulcer. All punishment is either for amendment, or for example, or that others may live more secure. What is the end of destroying those poisonous and dangerous creatures, which are never to be reclaimed, but to prevent mischief ? And yet there may be as much hazard in doing too much, as too little. A particular mutineer may be punished, but when the whole army is in revolt, there must be a general pardon. The multitude of offenders, is their security and protection : For there is no quarrelling with a public vice, where the custom of offending takes away the shame of it : And it is not prudent neither, by many punishments to shew a city that the wicked are so much the major parts. Beside, that it is a great dishonour for a *prince* to have many executions, as for a *physician* to have many funerals. Shall a father disinherit a son for the first offence ? Let him first admonish, then threaten, and afterwards punish him, So long as there is hope, we would apply gentle remedies.

But some nations are intractable, and neither willing to serve, nor fit to command; and some persons are incorrigible too.

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### EPISTLE XXI.

*The two Blessings of Life are a sound Body and a quiet Mind. The extravagance of the Roman Luxury. The Moderation and Simplicity of former Times.*

**E**PICURUS makes the two blessings of life, to be a sound body, and a quiet mind: Which is only a compendious reduction of human felicity to a state of health and of virtue. The way to be happy is, to make vice not only odious, but ridiculous; and every man to mind his own business; for he who torments himself with other people's misfortunes, shall never be at rest. A virtuous life must be all of a piece; and not advance by starts and intervals, and then go on where it left off; for this is losing ground. We are to press and persevere; for the main difficulties are yet to come. If I discontinue my course, when shall I come to pronounce these words, *I am a conqueror*? Not a conqueror of barbarous enemies, and savage nations: But I have subdued avarice, ambition, and those lusts that have subjected even the greatest conquerors. Who was greater than *Alexander*, who extended his empire from *Thracia*, to the utmost bounds of the *East*. But yet he burnt *Persepolis* at the request of a prostitute, to gratify his lust. He overcame *Darius*, and slew many thousands of the *Persians*, but yet he murdered *Calisthenes*: and that single blot has tarnished the glory of all his victories. All the wishes of mortals, and all the benefits which they can either give or receive, are of a very little conducement to a happy life. Those things which the common people gaze after, are transitory and vain. Whereas happiness is permanent; nor is it to be estimated by number, measure, or parts; for it is full, and perfect. I do not speak as if I myself were arrived at that blessed state of repose: But it is something yet to be on the mending hand. It is with me as with a man who is creeping out of disguise; he feels yet some remains of it; he is often examining his pulse; and suspects every touch of heat to be a relic of his fever. Just at that rate, I am zealous of myself. The best remedy

that I know in this case is, to go on with confidence, and not to be misled by the errors of other people. It is with our manners as with our health : The abatement of vice is a degree of virtue ; as the abatement of a disease is a degree of health.

SOME place their happiness in wealth ; some in the liberty of the body ; and others in the pleasures of the sense, and palate. But, what are metals, tastes, sounds, or colours to the mind of a reasonable creature ? He who sets his mind upon riches, the very fear of poverty will be grievous to him. He who is ambitious, shall be galled with envy at any man who gets before him : For in that case he who is not first, is last. I do not speak against riches neither ; for if they hurt a man, it is his own folly. They may be indeed the cause of mischief, as they are a temptation to those who do it. Instead of courage, they may inspire us with arrogance ; and instead of greatness of mind ; with insolence ; which is, in truth, but the counterfeit of magnanimity. What is it to be a prisoner, and in chains ? It is no more than that condition to which many princes have been reduced ; and out of which, many men have been advanced to the authority of princes. It is not to say, *I have no master* ; in time you may have one. Might not *Hecuba*, *Cræus*, and the mother of *Darius* have said as much ? And where is the happiness of luxury, when a man divides his life betwixt the kitchen and the stews ; betwixt an anxious conscience, and a nauseous stomach ? *Caligula* who was born to shew the world what mischief might be done by a concurrence of great wickedness, and a great fortune, spent near 10,000*l.* sterling upon a supper ; the works and inventions of it were prodigious, not only in the counterfeiting of nature, but even in the surpassing it. The *Romans* had their brooks even in their parlours, and found their dinners under their tables. The *Mullet* was reckoned stale, unless it died in the hand of the guest : And they had their glasses to put them into, that they might the better observe all the changes and motions of them in the last agony betwixt life and death. So that they fed their eyes before their bodies. See how it reddens (says one) there is no vermilion like it. Take notice of these veins, and that grey brightness upon the head of it. And now he is at his last gasp : See how pale he turns, and all of a color. These persons would

not have given themselves half this trouble with a dying friend ; nay, they would leave a father or a brother, at his last hour, to entertain themselves with the barbarous spectacle of an expiring fish. And that which enhances the esteem of every thing, is the price of it : Inasmuch that water itself, which ought to be gratuitous, is exposed to sale, in their conservatories of ice and snow. Nay, we are troubled that we cannot buy breath, light ; and that we have the air itself *gratis* ; as if our conditions were evil, because nature has left something to us in common. But luxury contrives ways to set a price upon the most necessary and communicable benefits in nature : Even those benefits which are free to birds and beasts, as well as to men ; and serve indifferently for the use of the most sluggish creatures. But, how comes it that fountain water is not cold enough to serve us, unless it be bound up into ice ? So long as the stomach is sound, nature discharges her functions without trouble ; but when the blood comes to be inflamed with excess of wine, or meats, simple water is not cold enough to allay that heat ; and we are forced to make use of remedies, which remedies themselves are vices. We heap suppers upon dinners, and dinners upon suppers, without intermission. Good God ! how easy is it to quench a sound and an honest thirst ! But, when the palate is grown callous, we taste nothing : And that which we take for thirst, is only the rage of a fever. *Hippocrates* delivered it as an *aphorism*, that *women were never bald, nor gouty, but in one singular case*. Women have not altered their nature since, but they have changed the course of their lives ; for, by taking the liberties of men they partake as well of their diseases as of their wickedness. They sit up as much ; they drink as much ; nay, in their very appetites they are masculine too ; they have lost the advantages of their sex by their vices.

Our ancestors, when they were free, lived either in caves or arbours ; but slavery came in with gildings, and with marble. I would have him who comes into my house take more notice of the master, than of the furniture. The golden age was before architecture : Arts came in with luxury, and we do not hear of any philosopher, who was either a *locksmith* or a *painter*. Who was the wiser man, think you, he who invented a saw ; or the other, who upon seeing a boy drink water out of the hollow of his hand

brake his pitcher, with this check to himself, *What a fool am I to trouble myself with superfluities?* Carving is one man's trade; cooking is another's: Only he is more miserable who teaches it for pleasure, than he who learns it for necessity. It was luxury, not philosophy, that invented fish pools, as well as palaces; where, in case of foul weather at sea, they might have fishes to supply their gluttony in harbour. We do not only pamper our lusts, but provoke them, as if we were to learn the very art of voluptuousness. What was it but avarice that originally broke the union of society, and proved the cause of poverty, even to those who were the most wealthy? Every man possessed all, until the world came to appropriate possessions to themselves. In the first age, nature was both a law and a guide, and the best governed; which was but according to nature too. The largest and the strongest bull leads the herd; the goodliest elephant; and, among men too, in the blessed times of innocence, the best was uppermost. They chose governors for their manners; who neither acted any violence, nor suffered any. They protected the weak against the mighty; and persuaded, or dissuaded, as they saw occasion. Their prudence provided for their people; their courage kept them safe from dangers; their bounty both supplied and adorned their subjects. No man, in those days, had either a mind to do an injury, or a cause for it. He who commanded well, was well obeyed: And the worst menace that governors could then make to the disobedient, was to forsake them. But with the corruption of times, tyranny crept in, and the world began to have need of laws; and those laws were made by wise men too, as *Solon*, and *Lucurgus*, who learned their trade in the school of *Pythagoras*.

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EPISTLE XXII.

*Man is compounded of Soul and Body, and has naturally a civil War within himself. The Difference betwixt a Life of Virtue, and a Life of Pleasure.*

**T**HERE is not so disproportionate a mixture in any creature, as that in man, of soul and body. There is intemperance joined with divinity; folly with severity; sloth with activity; and uncleanness with purity. But a

good sword is never the worse for an ill scabbard. We are moved more by imaginary fears, than truths ; for truth has a certainty, and foundation ; but in the other we are exposed to the license and conjecture of a distracted mind ; and our enemies are not more imperious than our pleasures. We set our hearts upon transitory things, as if they themselves were everlasting ; or we, on the other side, were to possess them for ever. Why do we not rather advance our thoughts to things that are eternal, and contemplate the heavenly original of all beings ? Why do we not, by the divinity of reason, triumph over the weaknesses of flesh and blood ? It is by Providence that the world is preserved, and not from any virtue in the matter of it ; for the world is as mortal as we are, only the *almighty wisdom* carries it safe through all the motions of corruption. And so by prudence, human life itself may be prolonged, if we will but stint ourselves in those pleasures that bring the greater part of us untimely to our end. Our passions are nothing else but certain disallowable motions of the mind ; sudden, and eager : which, by frequency and neglect, turn to a disease, as a distillation brings first a cough, and then a phtisic. We are carried up to the heavens, and down again to the deep, by turns ; so long as we are governed by our affections, and not by virtue : Passion and reason are a kind of civil war within us : And as the one or the other has dominion, we are either good or bad : So that it should be our care, that the worst mixture may not prevail. And they are linked like the chain of causes and effects, one to another : betwixt violent passion, and a fluctuation of the mind, there is such a difference, as betwixt the agitation of a storm, and all the nauseous sickness of a calm. And they have all of them their symptoms too, as well as our bodily distempers : They who are troubled with the falling sickness, know when the fit is coming, by the cold of the extremities ; the dazzling of the eyes ; the failing of the memory ; the trembling of the nerves, and the giddiness of the head : So that every man knows his own disease, and should provide against it. Anger, love, sadness, fear, may be read in the countenance, and so may the virtues too. Fortitude makes the eye vigorous ; prudence makes it intent ; reverence shews itself in modesty ; joy, in serenity ; and truth, in openness and simplicity. The seed of divine things are sown in mortal bodies. If the mi-

be well cultivated, the fruit answers the original; and, if not, all runs into weeds. We are all of us sick of curable diseases; and it costs us more to be miserable, than would make us perfectly happy. Consider the peaceable state of clemency, and the turbulency of anger; the softness and quiet of modesty, and the restlessness of lust. How cheap and easy to us is the service of virtue, and how dear we pay for our vices! The sovereign good of man, is a mind that subjects all things to itself, and is itself subject to nothing; His pleasures are modest, severe, and reserved; and rather the sauce or the diversion of life, than the entertainment of it. It may be some question, whether such a man goes to heaven, or heaven comes to him: For a good man is influenced by God himself, and has a kind of divinity within him. What if one good man lives in pleasure and plenty, and another in want and misery? It is no virtue to contemn superfluities, but necessities: And they are both of them equally good, though under several circumstances, and in different stations. *Cato* (the *censar*) waged war with the *manners* of *Rome*; *Scipio* with the *enemies*. Nay, bating the very conscience of virtue, who is there, that, upon sober thoughts, would not be an honest man, even for the reputation of it? Virtue you shall find in the temple, in the field, or upon the walls, covered with dust and blood, in the defence of the public. Pleasures you shall find sneaking in the stews, sweating houses, powdered and painted, &c. Not that pleasures are wholly to be disclaimed, but to be used with moderation, and to be made subservient to virtue. Good manners always please us; but wickedness is restless, and perpetually changing; not for the better, but for variety. We are torn to pieces betwixt hopes and fears; by which means, Providence (which is the greatest blessing of heaven) is turned into a mischief. Wild beasts, when they see their danger, fly from them; and when they have escaped them, they are quiet: But wretched man is equally tormented, both with things past, and to come; for the memory brings back the anxiety of our past fears, and our foresight anticipates the future: Whereas the present makes no man miserable. *If we fear all things that are possible, we live without any bounds to our miseries.*



## EPISTLE XXIII.

*We abuse God's Blessings, and turn them into Mischiefs. Meditations upon the Horrors of Earthquakes, and Consolations against them. Death is the same Thing which way soever it comes: Only we are moved by Accidents that we are not used to.*

**T**HERE is nothing so profitable, but it may be perverted to an injury. Without the use of the winds, what should we do for commerce? Beside that, they keep the air sweet, and healthful, and bring seasonable rains upon the earth. It was never the intent of Providence, that they should be employed for war, and devastation; and yet that is a great part of the use we make of them; pursuing one hazard through another, we expose ourselves to tempests, and to death, without so much as the hope of a sepulchre. And all this might be borne too, if we only ran these risks in order to peace; but when we have escaped so many rocks and flats, thunders and storms, what is the fruit of all our labour and terror? It is only war; and to burn and ravage, as if the earth were not large enough for the scene of our destruction. Whereas we might live and die at ease, if we had a mind to it, and draw out our lives in security. Why do we press upon our own dangers then, and provoke our fates? What do we look for? Only death, which is to be found every where. It will find us in our beds, in our chambers: But wherever it finds us, let it find us innocent. What a madness it is to pursue mischiefs; to fall foul of those we do not know; to be angry without a cause; to overrun whatever is in our way; and, like beasts, to kill that which has not offended us. Nay, worse than beasts, we run great hazards, only to bring us to greater. We force our way to gold, without any regard either to God or man. But, in all this, without any cause of complaint, we abuse the benefits of God, and turn them all into mischief. We dig for gold; we leave the light, and abandon the courses of a better nature: We descend, where we find a new position of things; hideous caves, hollow and hanging rocks, horrid rivers, a deep and perpetual darkness, and not without the apprehensions even of hell itself. How little now, and how inconsiderable are those things that men venture for, with the price of their lives? But to pass from those hazards which we can avoid, to others which we cannot. As in the case of earthquakes.

In what condition can any man be safe, when the world itself is shaken; and, the only thing that passes for fixed and immoveable in the universe, trembles, and deceives us? Whither shall we fly for security, if, wherever we are, the danger be still under our feet? Upon the cracking of a house, every man takes to his heels, and leaves all to save himself: But what retreat is there, where that which should support us, fails us; when the foundation, not only of cities, but even of the world itself, opens, and wavers? What help, or what comfort, where fear itself can never carry us off? An enemy may be kept at a distance with a wall; a castle may put a stop to an army; a port may protect us from the fury of a tempest; fire itself does not follow him who runs away from it; a vault may defend us against thunder; and we may quit the place in a pestilence! There is some remedy in all these evils. Or however, no man ever knew a whole nation to be destroyed with lightning. A plague may unpeople a town, but it will not carry it away. There is no evil of such an extent, so inevitable, so greedy, and so publicly calamitous as an earthquake. For, it does not only devour houses, families, or single towns, but ruins whole countries, and nations: Either overturning or swallowing them up, without so much as leaving any footstep or mark of what they were. Some people have a greater horror for this death, than for any other. *To be taken away alive, out of the number of the living!* As if all mortals, by what means soever, were not to come to the same end. Nature has eminently this justice, that when we are all dead, we are all alike. And it is not a pin matter, whether I be crushed to pieces by a stone, or by a whole mountain; whether I fall by the crush of a house, or under the burden of the whole earth; whether I be swallowed up alone, or with a thousand more for company. What does it signify to me, the noise and discourse that is made about my death; when death is every where and in all cases the same? We should therefore arm ourselves against that blow, that can neither be avoided nor foreseen. And it is not the forswearing of those places that we find infested with earthquakes, that will do our business, for there is no place that can be warranted against them. What if the earth be not yet moved? It is still moveable; for the whole body of it lies under the same law, and exposed to danger; only some part at one time, and some at another.

As in some great cities, where all the houses are subject to ruin, though they do not all fall together : So in the body of the earth, now this part falls, and then that. *Tyre* was formerly subject to earthquakes : In *Asia* twelve cities were swallowed up in a night : *Achaia* and *Macedonia* have had their turns, and now *Campania*. The fate goes round, and strikes at last where it has a great while passed by. It falls oftner, it is true, in some places, than in others : But no place is totally free and exempt. And it is not only men, but cities; coasts, nay, the shores, and the very sea itself, that suffers under the dominion of fate. And yet we are so vain, as to promise ourselves some sort of assurance in the goods of fortune : Never considering, that the very ground we stand upon is unstable. And it is not the frailty of this or that place, but the quality of every spot of it. For, not one-inch of it is so compacted, as not to admit many causes of its revolution; and though the bulk of the earth remain entire, the parts of it may yet be broken.

There is not any thing which we can promise to itself a lasting quiet. And it is no small comfort to us, the certainty of our fate : For, it is a folly to fear, where there is a remedy. He who troubles himself sooner than he needs, grieves also more than is necessary. For the same weakness that makes him anticipate his misery—makes him enlarge it too. The wise fortify themselves by reason, and fools by despair. That saying which was applied to a conquered party, under fire and sword, might have been spoken to all mankind : *That man is in some sense out of danger, who is out of hope.* He who would fear nothing, should consider, that if he fears any thing, he must fear every thing. Our very meat and drink, sleeping and waking, without measure, are hurtful to us. Our bodies are nice and weak, and a small matter does their work. That man has too high an opinion of himself, who is only afraid of thunder and earthquakes. If he were conscious of his own infirmities, he would as much fear the being choaked with his own phlegm. What do we see in ourselves, that heaven and earth should join in a distemper to procure our dissolution, when the ripping of an hangnail is sufficient to dispatch us ? We are afraid of inundations from the sea, when a glass of wine, if it goes the wrong way, is enough to suffocate us. It is a great comfort in death, the very mortality itself. We creep under ground for fear of thunder, we dread the

sudden concussions of the earth, and the rages of the sea; when yet we carry death in our own veins, and it is at hand in all places, and at all times. There is nothing so little; but it is of force enough to bring us to our last end. Nay, so far should we be from dreading an eminent fate, more than a vulgar, that on the contrary, since die we must, we should rather rejoice in the breathing of our last, under a more glorious circumstance. What if the ground stand still within its bounds, and without any violence? I shall have it over me at last; and it is all one to me, whether I be laid under that, or that lay itself over me: *But it is a terrible thing for the earth to gape, and swallow a man up into a profound abyss*: And what then? Is death any easier above ground? What cause have I of complaint, if nature will do me the honor to cover me with a part of herself? Since we must fall, there is a dignity in the very manner of it, when the world itself is shocked for company. Not that I would wish for a public calamity; but it is some satisfaction in my death, that I see the world also to be mortal.

NEITHER are we to take these extraordinary revolutions for divine judgments; as if such motions of the heaven, and the earth, were the denouncings of the wrath of the Almighty: But they have their ordinate, and their natural causes: Such as, in proportion, we have in our own bodies; and while they seem to act a violence, they suffer it. But yet, for want of knowing the causes of things, they are dreadful to us; and the more so, because they happen but seldom. *But why are we commonly more afraid of that which we are not used to?* Because we look upon nature with our eyes, not with our reason: Rather computing what she usually does, than what she is able to do. And we are punished for this negligence, by taking those things to which we are not used, to be new and prodigious. The eclipses of the sun and moon; blazing stars, and meteors, while we admire them, we fear them; and since we fear them, because we do not understand them, it is worth our while to study them, that we may no longer fear them. Why should I fear a man, a beast, an arrow, or a lance, when I am exposed to the encounter of greater dangers? We are assaulted by the nobler part of nature itself; by the heavens, by the seas, and the land. Our business is therefore to defy death, whether extraordinary or common.

No matter for the menaces of it, so long as it asks no more of us than age itself will take from us, and every petty accident that befalls us. He who contemns death, what does he care for either fire or water, the very dissolution of the universe? Or if the earth should open under him, and shew him all the secrets of the infernal pit, he would look down without trouble. In the place that we are all of us to go to, there are no earthquakes, or thunderclaps; no tempestuous seas; neither war nor pestilence. *Is it a small matter? Why do we fear it then? Is it a great matter? Let it rather once fall upon us, than always hang over us.* Why should I dread my own end, when an end I must have, and that all created things are limited?

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#### EPISTLE XXIV.

*A Discourse of God's Providence, in the Misfortunes of good Men in this World, and in the Prosperity of the Wicked.*

**Y**OU are troubled, I perceive, that your servant has run away from you; but I do not hear yet, that you are either robbed, or strangled, or poisoned, or betrayed, or accused by him: So that you have escaped well, in comparison with others. And, why should you complain then, especially under the protection of so gracious a Providence, as suffers no man to be miserable, but by his own fault? Nor is this a subject worthy of a wise man's consideration. Adversity indeed is a terrible thing in sound and opinion, and that is all. Some men are banished and stripped of their estates; others again are poor in plenty; (which is the basest sort of beggary.) Some are overborne by a popular tumult, that breaks out like a tempest, even in the highest security of a calm; or like a thunderclap, that frightens all who are near it: There is but one struck, perhaps, but the fear extends to all; and affects those who may suffer, as well as those who do: As in the discharge of a piece with powder only; it is not the stroke, but the crack which frights the birds. Adversity, I will grant you, is not a thing to be wished, no more than war; but if it be my lot to be torn with the stone, broken upon the wheel, or to receive wounds or maims, it shall be my prayer that

I may bear my fortune as becomes a wise and an honest man. We do not pray for tortures, but for patience; not for war, but for generosity and courage, in all the extremities of a war, if it happens. Afflictions are but the exercise of virtue; and an honest man is out of his element when he is idle. It is, must be, practice and patience that perfects it. Do we not see how one wrestler provokes another? And if he find him not to be his match, he will call for somebody to help him, who may put him to all his strength.

It is a common argument against the justice of Providence, in the matter of reward and punishment, *the misfortune of good men in this world: and the prosperity of the wicked*: But it is an easy matter to vindicate the cause of the gods. There are many things that we call evil, which turn very often to the advantage of those who suffer them; or at least, for the common good whereof Providence has the greater care. And farther, they either befall these who bear them willingly, or those who deserve them by their impatience under them: And lastly, they come by divine appointment; and to those who are good men, even for that very reason, because they are good. Nor is there any thing more ordinary, than for that which we feared as a calamity, to prove the foundation of our happiness. How many are there in the world who enjoy all things to their own wish, whom God never thought worthy of a trial? If it may be imagined that the *Almighty* should take off his thought from the care of his whole work, what more glorious spectacle could he reflect upon, than a valiant man struggling with adverse fortune; or *Cato*, standing upright, and unmoved, under the shock of a public ruin? *Let the whole world (says he) fall into one hand, and let Cæsar encompass me with his legions by land, his shipping at sea, and his guards at the gates: Cato will yet cut out his way; and with that weapon that was untainted, even in the civil war, give himself that liberty, which fate denied to his country. Set upon the great work then, and deliver thyself from the clog of thy humanity. Juba and Petreius have already done this good office one for the other, by a generous counter-revolt of resolution and fate; but Cato is above example, and does as much scorn to ask his death of any man, as his life. With what joy did this great man contemplate immortality, when he took his book*

and his sword together, and in cold thoughts dispatched himself! Let this suffice of *Cato*, whose virtue Providence made use of to cope with all the powers of the earth. His courage took delight in, and sought for all occasions of hazard; keeping his eye still upon the end, without valuing the difficulties of the passage. The sufferance is one part of the glory, and though one man may escape without wounds, yet *he* is still more reverend and remarkable, who comes off bloody: The malice of great men is grievous, you will say; and yet he supported the oppositions of *Pemfley*, *Cæsar*, and *Crassus*. It is troublesome to be repulsed. *Vatinius* was preferred before him. Prosperity shews a man but one part of human nature. Nobody knows what such a man is good for: Neither in truth does he understand himself, for want of experiment. Temporal happiness is for weak and vulgar minds; but the subduing of public terrors is a work that is reserved for more generous spirits. Calamity is the touchstone of a brave mind; that resolves to live and die free, and master of itself. The combatant brings no mettle into the field that was never battered: He who has lost blood, and yet keeps his stomach: He who has been under his enemy, and worsted, and yet comes on again, and gathers heart from his misfortunes, this is the man of hope and courage.

But is it not a very unjust and rigorous fate that good men should be poor and friendless? All this is no more than the natural work of matter and form. Mean souls are meanly principled: But, there goes more to the making up a brave man who is to work out his way thro' difficulties and storms. We are condemned to terrible encounters; and because we cannot, according to the course of nature, avoid them, we have faculties given us, that will enable us to bear them: Or at the worst, to have a retreat; if we will not fight, we may fly. So that nothing is made more easy to us, than that which is most necessary to us, to die. No man is kept in the world against his will. But adversity is the better for us all: For, it is God's mercy to shew the world their errors, and that the things they fear, and covet, are neither good nor evil: Being the common and promiscuous lot both of good men and bad: If they were good, only the good should enjoy them: And if bad, only the wicked should suffer them. One man is taken away in a

scuffle for a wench; and another in the defence of his country; and we find silver and gold, both in a temple, and in the stews.

Now to shew you, that the virtue which I affect, is not so imaginary and extravagant as it is taken to be, I will allow a wise man to tremble, to turn pale, nay and to groan too: And to suffer all the affections of his bodily sense, provided that he keep his mind firm, and free from submission to his body; and that he do not repent of his constancy (which is in itself so great a virtue, that there is some authority, even in a pertinacious error.) If the body be brought by exercise, to the contempt of bruises and wounds, how much more easily then may the mind be fortified against the assaults of fortune; and though perhaps thrown down and trod upon, yet recover itself. The body must have meat and drink, much labour, and practice; whereas the food and the business of the mind is within itself; and virtue maintained without either toil or charge. If you say, that many professors of wisdom are wrought upon by menaces and mischiefs; these, let me tell you, are but proficients, and not as yet arrived at the state of wisdom: they are not strong enough to practice what they know. It is with our dispositions, as with our clothes: They will take some colors at one dipping: But others must be steeped over and over, before they will imbibe them. And so for discipline, it must soak, and lie long before it takes the tincture. No man can receive an injury, and not be moved at it; but yet he may keep himself free from perturbations; and so far from being troubled at them, that he may make use of them for the experiment and trial of his virtue; keeping himself still moderate, placid, cheerful, and safe; in a profound quiet, and fixed in his station. *But if a wise man cannot be poor, how comes it that he is many times without meat, drink, clothes, or lodging? If only fools are mad; how comes it then, that wise men have their alienations of mind, and talk as idly in a fever as other people?* It is one thing, the receiving of an injury, and another thing, the conceiving of an indignation for it; it is the body in this case that suffers (which is the fool's part) but not the mind. That man is never the worse pilot, who by foul weather is forced behind his business. When a ship springs a leak, we do not pres-



ently quarrel either with the mariners or with the vessel; But some to the pump, others into the hold, to keep the ship above water. And if we cannot absolutely master it, we must still work on; for it is then a great point gained, if we can but keep it at a stay. Some men are strangely transported at the insolence of the porter, who refuses to let them into a great man's house. They forget, that the door of a prison is not more safely guarded than that of a palace. He who has business must pay for his passage, and sweeten him as he would do a churlish cur with a sop. That which is to be sold, is to be bought: He is a weak man who rates himself according to the civility of a slave. Let him have a reverence for himself; and then no matter who despises him. What if he should break his staff, or cause his master to turn him away; or to correct him? He who contends, supposes an equality; and even when he has got the better of him, admits that there was one. What if he should receive a blow? *Cato* (the greatest man of his age) did not only forgive it, but forget it.

It is not to say, that this or that is *tolerable* to a wise man, or *intolerable*. If we do not totally subdue fortune, fortune overcomes us. It is the foundation of a happy life for a man to depend upon himself; but an absolute tranquility of mind, and a freedom from errors, must be the business of another world.

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### EPISTLE XXV.

*A wise and a good Man, is proof against all Accidents of Fate.*

THE book you promised me is now come to hand, and I opened it with an intent to read it over at leisure. But when I was once in, I could not lay it down again until I had gone through with it. At present I shall only tell you, that I am exceedingly pleased with the choice of the subject; but, transported with the spirit and gentleness of it. You shall hear farther from me upon a second reading; and you need not fear the hearing of the truth, for your goodness leaves a man no place for flattery. I find you still to be one and the same man, which is a great matter, and only proper to a wise man; for fools are variable: At one time thrifty,

and grave; at another, profuse and vain. Happy is the man who sets himself right at first, and continues so to the end. All fools, we say, are madmen, though they are not all of them in *Bethlehem*. We find some at the bar, some upon the bench, and not a few even in the senate itself. One man's folly is sad; another's is wanton; and a third is busy and impertinent. A wise man carries all his treasures within himself: What fortune gives, she may take: but he leaves nothing at her mercy. He stands firm and keeps his ground against all misfortunes, without so much as changing countenance. He is free, inviolable; unshaken: Proof against all accidents; and not only invincible, but inflexible. So long as he cannot lose any thing of his own, he never troubles himself for what is another's. He is a friend to providence, and will not murmur at any thing that comes to pass by God's appointment. He is not only resolute, but generous, and good natured; and ready to lay down his life in a good cause; and for the public safety, to sacrifice his own. He does not so much consider the pleasure of his life, as the need that the world has of him: And he is not so nice neither, as to be weary of his life, while he may either serve his wife or his friends. Nor is it all, that his life is profitable to them; but it is likewise delightful to himself, and carries its own reward; for, what can be more comfortable, than to be so dear to another as for that reason to become dearer to himself? If he loses a child, he is pensive; he is compassionate to the sick; and only troubled, when he sees men wallowing in infamy and vice. Whereas on the other side, you shall see nothing but restlessness; one man hankering after his neighbour's wife; another in pain about his own; a third in grief for a repulse; another as much out of humour for his success. If he loses an estate, he parts with it as a thing that was only adventitious. Or if it was of his own acquiring, he computes the possession and loss: And says thus to himself, I shall live as well afterwards, as I did before. Our houses (says he) may be burnt or robbed; our lands taken from us; and we can call nothing our own, that is under the dominion of fortune. It is a foolish avarice, that restrains all things to a propriety, and believes nothing to be a man's own, that is public. Whereas a wise man judges nothing so

much his own, as that wherein mankind are allowed a share. It is not with the blessings of Providence, as it is with a dole; where every man receives so much a head; but every man there has all. That which we eat, and either give or receive with the hand, may be broken into parts; but peace and freedom of mind, are not to be divided. He who has first cast off the empire of fortune, needs not fear that of great men, for they are but fortune's hands; nor was any man ever broken by adversity, who was not first betrayed by prosperity. *But what signifies philosophy (you will say), if there be a fate: if we be governed by fortune, or some overruling power? for certainties are unchangeable, and there is no providing against uncertainties. If what I shall do and resolve, is determined, of what use is philosophy?* Yes, great use; for taking all this for granted, philosophy instructs and advises us to obey God, and to follow him willingly; to oppose fortune resolutely, and to bear all accidents.

Fate is an irrevocable, an invincible, and an unchangeable decree; a necessity of all things and actions, according to eternal appointment. Like the course of a river, it moves forward without contradiction, or delay, in an irresistible flux, where one wave pushes on another. He knows little of God, who imagines it to be controled. There is no changing the purpose even of a wise man: For he sees before hand what will be the best for the future. How much more unchangeable then is the Almighty, to whom all futurity is always present? *To what end, then is it, if fate be inexorable, to offer up prayers, and sacrifices, any further, than to relieve the scruples, and the weakness of sickly minds?* My answer, is first, That the gods take no delight in the sacrifices of beasts, or in the images of gold and silver, but in a pious and obedient will. And secondly, That by prayers and sacrifices, dangers and afflictions may be sometimes removed; sometimes lessened; at other times deferred: And all this without any offence to the power, or necessity of fate. There are some things which providence has left so far in suspence, that they seem to be (in a manner) conditional; in such sort, that even *appearing evil*, may upon our prayers and supplications, be turned into good: Which is so far from being against fate, that it is even a part of fate itself. You will say, *That either this shall come to pass or not, If the*

former, it will be the same thing if we do not pray : And if the other, it will be the same thing if we do. To this I must reply : That the proposition is false, for want of the middle exception betwixt the one, and the other. This will be (say I) that is, if there shall any prayers interpose in the case. But then do they object on the other side, that this very thing also is necessary : For it is likewise determined by fate, either that we shall pray, or not. What if I should now grant you, that there is a fate also even in our very prayers ; a determination that we shall pray, and that therefore we shall pray ? It is decreed, that a man shall be eloquent ; but, upon condition that he apply himself to letters : By the same fate it is decreed, that he shall so apply himself, and that therefore he shall learn. Such a man shall be rich, if he betake himself to navigation : But, the same fate that promises him a great estate, appoints also that he shall sail, and therefore he puts to sea. It is the same case in expiations ; a man shall avoid dangers if he can (by his prayers) avoid the threatenings of divine vengeance : But this is a part of his fate also, that he shall so do, and therefore he does it. These arguments are made use of, to prove, that there is nothing left to our will, but that we are all overruled by fatalities. When we come to handle that matter, we shall shew the consistency of free will with fate, having already made it appear, that notwithstanding the certain order of fate, judgments may be averted by prayers and supplications, and without any repugnance to fate ; for they are part even of the law of fate itself. You will say, perhaps, *What am I the better for the priest, or the prophet ? For whether he bids me sacrifice, or not, I lie under the necessity of doing it.* Yes, in this I am the better for it, as he is a minister of fate. We may as well say, that it is a matter of fate that we are in health ; and yet we are indebted for it to the physician, because the benefit of that fate is conveyed to us by his hand.

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## EPISTLE XXVI.

*All Things are produced out of Cause, and Matter. Of Providence. A brave Man is a match for Fortune.*

I HAD but one half of yesterday to myself: My disorder took up the morning; the afternoon was my own. My first trial was, how far I could endure reading. And when I saw I could bear that, I fell to writing; and pitched upon a subject difficult enough, for it required great attention; but yet I was resolved not to be overcome. Some of my friends coming in, told me that I did ill, and took me off; so that from writing, we passed into discourse, and made you the judge of the matter in question. The *Stoicks* you know, will have all things to be produced out of *cause* and *matter*. The *matter* is dull and passive; susceptible of any thing, but not capable of doing any thing itself. The *cause* is that power, which forms the *matter*, this or that way, at pleasure. Some thing there must be, of which every thing is made; and then there must be a workman to form every thing. All art is but an imitation of nature: And that which I speak in general of the world, holds in the case of every particular person. As for example: The *matter* of a statue is the wood, the stone, or the metal; the *statuary* shapes it, and is the *cause* of it. *Aristotle* assigns four causes to every thing. The *material*; which is the *signum non* (or that without which it could not be.); The *efficient*; as the workman. The *formal*; as that which is stamped upon all operations. And the *final*; which is the design of the whole work. Now to explain this: The first cause of the statue (for the purpose) is the copper: For it never had been made, if there had not been something to work upon. The second is the artificer; for if he had not understood his art, it had never succeeded. The third cause is the form; for it could never properly have been the statue (of such) or such a person, if such a resemblance had not been put upon it. The fourth cause is the end of making it, without which it had never been made: As money, if it were made for sale; glory, if the workman made it for his credit; or religion, if he designed the bestowing of it upon a temple. *Plato* adds a fifth, which he calls the *idea*, or the exemplar, by which the

workman draws his copy. And he makes God to be full of these figures, which he represents to be inexhaustible, unchangeable, and immortal. Now upon the whole matter, give us your opinion. To me it seems, that here are either too many causes assigned, or too few; and they might as well have introduced time and place, as some of the rest. Either clear the matter in question, or deal plainly, and tell us that you cannot: And so let us return to those cases, wherein all mankind are agreed, the reforming of our lives, and the regulation of our manners. For these subtilities are but time lost; let us search ourselves in the first place, and afterward the world.

There is no great hurt in passing over those things which we are never the better for when we know, and it is so ordered by Providence, that there is no great difficulty in learning, or acquiring those things which may make us either happier, or better. Beside that, whatever is hurtful to us, we have drawn out of the very bowels of the earth.

Every man knows without being told, that this wonderful fabric of the universe is not without a Governour; and that a constant order cannot be the work of chance, for the parts would then fall foul one upon another. The motions of the stars; and their influences, are caused by the command of an eternal decree. It is by the dictate of an Almighty Power, that the heavy body of the earth hangs in balance. Whence come the revolutions of the seasons, and the flux of rivers; the wonderful virtue of the smallest seeds? (As an oak to rise from an acorn.) To say nothing of those things that seem to be most irregular and uncertain; as clouds, rain, thunder, the eruptions of fire out of mountains, earthquakes, and those tumultuary motions in the lower region of the air, which have their inordinate causes: And so have those things too, which appear to us more admirable, because less frequent. As scalding fountains, and new islands started out of the sea: Or, what shall we say of the ebbing and flowing of the ocean, the constant times and measures of the tides, according to the changes of the moon that influences most bodies? But this needs not; for, it is not that we doubt of Providence, but complain of it. And it were a good office to reconcile mankind to the gods, who are undoubt-

edly good to the good. It is against nature, that good should hurt good. A good man is not only the friend of God, but the very image, the disciple, and the imitator of him, and the true child of his heavenly father. He is true to himself, and acts with constancy and resolution. *Scipio*, by a cross wind, being forced into the power of his enemies, cast himself upon the point of his sword; and, as the people were inquiring what was become of the General: *The General (says Scipio) is very well, and so he expired.* What is it for a man to fall, if we consider the end, beyond which no man can fall? We must repair to wisdom for arms against fortune; for it were unreasonable for her to furnish arms against herself. A gallant man is fortune's match. His courage provokes and despises those terrible appearances, that would otherwise enslave us. A wise man is out of the reach of fortune, but not free from the malice of it; and all attempts upon him are no more than the arrows of *Xerxes*; they may darken the day, but they cannot strike the sun. There is nothing so holy, as to be privileged from sacrifice. But, to strike, and not to wound, is anger lost; and he is invulnerable who is struck, and not hurt. His resolution is tried; the waves may dash themselves upon a rock, but not break it. Temples may be profaned and demolished, but the Deity still remains untouched.

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EPISTLE XXVII.

*Some Traditions of the Ancients concerning Thunder and Lightning; with the Author's Contemplation Thereon.*

**T**HERE is no question, but that Providence has given to mortals the tokens, or forerunners of things to come; and by those means, laid open, in some measure, the decrees of fate: Only we take notice of some things, without giving any heed to others. There is not anything done, according to the course of nature, which is not either the cause or the sign of some thing that follows: So that wherever there is order, there is place for prediction. But there is no judgment to be given upon accidents: Now, though it is a very hard matter to arrive at the foreknowledge of things to come,

and to predict: particularly what shall hereafter fall out, upon a certain knowledge of the power and influences of the stars: It is yet unquestionable that they have a power, though we cannot expressly say what it is. In the subject of thunder there are several opinions, as to the significations of it. The *Stoicks* hold, that because the cloud is broken, therefore the bolt is shot, (*according to common speech.*) Others conjecture, that the cloud is broken to that very end, that it may discharge the thunderbolt; referring all in such sort to God, as if the signification did not arise from the thing done, but as the thing itself were done for the signification sake: But, whether the signification goes before, or follows, it comes all to the same point. There are three sorts of lightning; the first is so pure and subtle, that it pierces through whatever it encounters: The second shatters and breaks every thing to pieces: The other burns, either by blasting, consuming, or inflaming, or discolouring, and the like. Some lightnings are monitory, some are menacing, and others they fancy to be promising. They allot to *Jupiter* three sorts; the first is only monitory and gentle, which he casts of his own accord: The second they make an act of council, as being done by the vote and advice of twelve gods. This, they say, does many times some good, but not without some mischief too: As the destruction of one man may prove the caution of another. The third is, the result of a council of the superior deities, from whence proceed great mischiefs, both public and private. Now, this is a great folly to imagine that *Jupiter* would wreak his displeasure upon pillars, trees, nay, upon temples themselves, and yet let the sacrilegious go free: To strike sheep, and consume altars; and all this upon a consultation of the gods; as if he wanted either skill or justice to govern his own affairs by himself; either in sparing the guilty, or in destroying the innocent. Now, what should be the mystery of all this? The wisdom of our forefathers found it necessary to keep wicked people in awe, by the apprehension of a superior power; and to fright them into their good behaviour, by the fear of an armed and avenging justice over their heads. But how comes it, that the lightning which comes from *Jupiter* himself should be said to be harmless; and that which he casts after counsel and ad-



vice, to be dangerous and mortal? The moral of it is this, That all kings should have *Jupiter's* example, do all good by themselves; and when severity is necessary, permit that to be done by others: Beside that, as crimes are unequal, so should also be the punishments. Neither did they believe that *Jupiter* to be the *thunderer*, whose image was worshipped in the *capitol*, and in other places; but intended it for the *Maker* and *Governor* of the *Universe*, by what name soever we shall call him. In truth, *Jupiter* does not immediately cast the lightning himself, but leaves nature to her ordinary method of operation; so that what he does not immediately by himself, he does yet cause to be done: For, whatever nature does, *God* does. There may be something gathered out of all things, that are either said, or done, that a man may be the better for; and he does a greater thing who masters the fear of thunder, than he who discovers the reason of it. We are surrounded and beset with ill accidents; and since we cannot avoid the stroke of them, let us provide ourselves honestly to bear them. But, how, must that be? By the contempt of death we do also contemn all things in the way to it; as wounds, shipwrecks, the fury of wild beasts, or any other violence whatever; which, at the worst, can but part the soul and the body. And we have this for our comfort, though our lives are at the mercy of fortune, she has yet no power over the dead.

How many are there who call for death in the distress of their hearts, even for the very fear of it: And, this unadvised desire of death, does in common affect both the best and the worst of men; only with this difference, the former despise, and the other are weary of it.

It is a nauseous thing to serve the body, and to be so many years doing so many beastly things, over and over. It is well, if in our lives we can please others; but whatever we do in our deaths, let us be sure to please ourselves. Death is a thing which no care can avoid; no felicity can tame it; no power overcome it. Other things are disposed of by chance, and fortune; but death treats all men alike.

The prosperous must die, as well as the unfortunate; and methinks the very despair of overcoming our fate.

should inspire us with courage to encounter it : For there is no resolution so obstinate, as that which arises from necessity. It makes the coward as bold as *Julus Cæsar*, though upon different principles. We are all of us reserved for death ; and, as nature brings forth one generation, she calls back another. The whole dispute is about the time, but nobody doubts about the thing itself.

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EPISTLE XXVIII.

*A contemplation of Heaven and heavenly Things. Of God ; and of the Soul.*

**T**HERE is a great difference betwixt philosophy, and other arts ; and a greater yet, betwixt that philosophy itself, which is of divine contemplation, and that which has a regard to things here below. It is much higher and braver ; it takes a large scope ; and being unsatisfied with what it sees, it aspires to the knowledge of something that is greater and fairer, and which nature has placed out of our ken. The one only teaches what is to be done upon earth ; the other reveals to us that which actually is done in heaven : The one discusses our errors, and holds the light to us, by which we distinguish in the ambiguities of life ; the other surmounts that darkness which we are rapt up in, and carries us up to the Fountain of light itself. And then it is, that we are in a special manner to acknowledge the infinite grace and bounty of the nature of things ; when we see it not only where it is public, and common, but in the very secrets of it, as being admitted into the cabinet of divinity itself. There it is that we are taught to understand what is the *matter* of the world, who is the *Author* and *Preserver* of it. What *God* himself is, and whether he be wholly intent upon himself, or at any time descends to consider us. Whether he has done his work *once for all*, or whether he be *still in action* : Whether he be a *part of the world*, or the *world itself* : Whether he be at liberty, or not, to determine any thing new to-day, and to controul, or derogate from the laws of fate. Whether it be any diminution of his wisdom, or any confession of error, to do and undo, or to have made things that were

afterwards to be altered: For, the same things must of necessity always please him, who can never be pleased, but with that which is best. Now this is no lessening, either of his liberty, or of his power: for himself is his own necessity. Without the benefit, and the comfort of these thoughts, it had been even as well for us never to have been born. For, to what end do we live? Is it only to eat, and drink? To stuff up an infirm and fluid carcase, that would perish without it; and to live only a servant to one who is sick? To fear death, to which we are all born? Take away this inestimable good, and life itself is not worth the labour and the care of it. O! how wretched, how contemptible a thing were man, if he should not advance himself above the state of human affairs; So long as we struggle with our passions; what is there in this world that we do which is glorious? Nay, if we advance ourselves so far as to overcome them; it is but the destroying so many monsters. And, have we not then a mighty exploit to value ourselves upon; when we have made ourselves a little more tolerable than the worst of men? Is it not a wondrous matter to brag, that we are a little stronger than a man who is sick? Alas! alas! my friend, there is a large difference betwixt strength and health. You have not a wicked mind perhaps; you may have a clear brow; a tongue that will not flatter, and a single heart: You have not that avarice perchance, that refuses to itself whatever it takes from other people; nor that luxury, that squanders away money shamefully, and yet more shamefully repairs it: Nor that ambition, that leads you by unworthy ways to places of preferment. These are only negatives; and you have got nothing all this while. You will tell me, that you have escaped many things: But you have not yet escaped yourself. The virtue that we recommend is high and illustrious. Not that it is a happiness in itself; to be free from evil; but because it dignifies and enlarges the mind; because it prepares for the knowledge of heavenly things, and makes it capable even of conversing with God himself. It is then prized at the highest pitch of human felicity; when it soars aloft, and enters into the privacies of nature, trampling all that is evil or vulgar under its feet. What a delight, what a transport is it for a soul that is wandering among the

stars, to look down and laugh at the palaces of princes, and the whole globe of the earth, and all its treasures! I do not speak of that only that is converted into money and plate, but of that also which is reserved in the bowels of the earth to gratify the insatiable covetousness of posterity. Nor can we ever bring ourselves to the absolute contempt of luxurious ornaments, rich furniture, stately buildings, pleasant gardens, and fountains, until we have the world under us, and until looking down from the heavens, and beholding that spot of ground we live upon, the greater part of it covered with the sea; beside a great deal of it desolate; and either scorched or frozen, we shall say thus to ourselves. *Is this miserable point the ball of contention, that is divided among so many nations with fire and sword? How ridiculous are the bounds, as well as the contests of mortals! Such a prince must not pass such a river; nor another prince those mountains; and, why do not the very fismires canton out their posts and jurisdiction too?* For what does the bustle of troops and armies amount to, more than the business of a swarm of ants upon a mole hill? The scene of all the important actions here below, where, both at sea and land, we tug and scuffle for dominion and wealth, is but a wretched point of earth; whereas the dominions of the soul above, are boundless. This very contemplation gives us force, liberty, and nourishment: The mind is there at home: And it has this argument of its divinity, that it takes delight in what is divine. It contemplates the rising and the falling of the stars, and the admirable harmony and order, even in their various motions: Discussing and inquiring into every thing, as properly appertaining unto itself. With how much scorn does it then reflect upon the narrowness of its former habitation! There it is, that it learns the end of its proper being; the knowledge of God: And, what is God? *An immense and an Almighty Power; great, without limits; and he does whatever pleases him.* He who applies himself to his study, transcends the very lot and condition, of his mortality. That Almighty Power is all that we do see, and all that we do not see. What is the difference betwixt the divine nature, and ours? Man is compounded, and his best part is his mind: But, the Almighty is all mind, and all reason; and yet mortals are so blind, that the actions of this

incomprehensible power, so excellent for beauty, constancy, and disposition, are looked upon by many men only as fortuitous, and the work of chance; and subject to all the tumults of thunder, clouds and tempests, that affect poor mortals. And this is not only the folly and madness of the common people, but the weakness also of the wise men. There are some, who arrogate to themselves the faculties of Providence, and reason; and the skill of ordering as well other people's affairs, as their own: And yet these very men are so besotted, as to imagine the world only to be governed by an unadvised rashness: As if nature knew not what she did. How profitable would it be for us to know the truth of things, and to allow them their due terms and measures: To inquire into the power of the Almighty, and the method of his workings; whether he made the matter itself, or found it ready to his hand; and which was first, the matter itself, or the idea of it? Whether or not he does what he pleases; and what may be the reason of so many seeming imperfections in his operations? It is well said of *Aristotle*, that we should handle divine matters with modesty and reverence. When we enter into a temple, or approach the altar, we compose our looks and our actions to all the decencies of humility and respect: How much more then does it concern us, when we treat of heavenly things, to deal candidly; and not to let one syllable pass our lips that may favour of confidence, rashness, or ignorance? Truth lies deep, and must be fetched up at leisure. How many mysteries are there, which God has placed out of our sight, and which are only to be reached by thought and contemplation! The notions of the divinity are profound, and obscure; or else perhaps we see them without understanding them. But, the Divine Majesty is only accessible to the mind. What this is (without which nothing is) we are not able to determine: And when we have guessed at some sparks of it, the greater part lies yet concealed from us. How many creatures have we now in this age, that never were known to us before? And how many will the next age know, more than we do? And many yet will be still reserved for after time. The very rites of religion are at this day a secret, and unknown to many people. Nay, the very thing that we most eagerly pur-

sue, we are not yet arrived at : That is to say, a perfection in wisdom. Vice is still upon the improvement of Luxury, immodesty, and a prostitute dissolution of manners will find still new matter to work upon. Our men are grown effeminate in their habits, their motions, and in their ornaments, even to a degree of whorishness. There is no body minds philosophy, excepting in the want of a comedy, perhaps, or in foul weather, when there is nothing else to be done.

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To the BINDER.

- Plate I. (Of Seneca expiring) to face page 1  
 Ditto II. (Of receiving Benefits) do. p. 14  
 Ditto III. (Of Anger) do. p. 109  
 Ditto IV. (Of Contemplation, &c.) do. p. 257
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## Postscript.

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**B**EFORE I take my last leave of *Seneca*, I will here discharge my conscience, as if I were taking my last leave of the whole world. I have been so just, both to the reader, and to the author, that I have neither left out any thing in the original, which I thought the one might be the better for; nor added any thing of my own, to make the other fare the worse. I have done in this volume of *epistles*, as a good husband does with his cold meat: It is only an *hash* made up of the fragments that remained of the two former parts: Which I could not well dispose of into any other form, or so properly publish under any other title. Let me not yet be understood to impose this piece upon the public as an *abstract* of *Seneca's epistles*, any more than I did the other, for the *abstracts* of his *benefits* and *happy life*. It is in works of this nature, as it is in *cordial waters*; we taste all the ingredients, without being able to separate this from that; but still we find the virtue of every plant in every drop. To return to my *allegory*; *books* and *dishes* have this common fate; there was never any one of either of them that pleased all palates. And, in truth, it is a thing as little to be wished, as expected: For, an universal applause is at least two thirds of a scandal. So that though I deliver up these papers to the press, I invite no man to the reading of them: And whoever reads and repents, it is his own fault. To conclude: As I made this composition principally for myself, so it agrees exceeding well with my constitution; and yet, if any man has a mind to take part with me, he has free leave, and welcome. But let him carry this consideration along with him, That he is a very unmannerly guest, who presses upon another body's table and quarrels with his dinner.

## After Thought.

**T**HIS abstract has now past the fifth impression ; but the world has not been altogether so kind of late, to my politics as to my morals. And what is the meaning of it, but that we live in an age that will better bear the image of what people ought to do, than the history of what they do? And that is the difference they put betwixt the one and the other. We are not yet to take an estimate of the intrinsic value of truth, honesty, and reason, by fancy or imagination ; as if the standard of virtue were to be accommodated to the various changes and vicissitudes of times, interests, and contending parties : But so it falls out that some verities, and some good offices, will take a false colour better than others, and set off an imposture with more credit and countenance to the common people. Daily experience tells us, that our affections are as liable to be vitiated as our palates ; insomuch, that the most profitable of meats, drinks, or remedies, lose not only their effect, but their very savour, and give us a loathing at one time, for that we longed for and took delight in at another. But then we are to consider, that the humour may come about again, and that writings and opinions have their seasons too, and take their turns as well as all other changeable things under the sun. So that let error, corruption, or iniquity, be ever so strong, ever so popular ; let the ignorance of things necessary to be known, be ever so dark and palpable, we may yet assure ourselves, that however truth and justice may suffer a temporal eclipse, they will yet at the long run, as certainly vindicate themselves, and recover their original glory, as the setting sun shall rise again.

WHEN I speak of *my morals*, let me not be understood to play the plagiary, and to assume the subject matter of this work to myself ; for it is **SENECA'S**, every thought and line of it : Though it would be as hard to refer each sentence, text, and precept, to the very place whence it was drawn, as to bring every distinct drop in a cask of wine, to the particular grape from whence it was pressed. So that I have no other claim to the merit of this composition, than the putting of things in order, that I found in confusion ; and digesting the loose mu-



utes, and the broken meditations of that divine heathen, into a kind of system of good counsels, and of good manners. But how faithfully soever I have dealt with my author, in a just and genuine representation of his sense and meaning, so have I, on the other hand, with no less conscience and affection, consulted the benefit, the ease, and the satisfaction of the *English* reader, in the plainness and simplicity of the style, and in the perspicuity of the method. And yet, after all this, there is something still wanting, methinks, toward the doing justice to *Seneca*, to the world, and to myself, and to the thorough finishing of this piece: A thing that I have had in my head long and often, and which I have had as good a will to prosecute, even at this instant, as ever, if I could but flatter myself with day enough before me to go through with it. But before I come to the point under deliberation, it will be well, first, to take a view of the true state of the matter in hand; upon what ground we stand at present. Secondly, to consider from whence it is, that we are to take our rise to it; and so to open briefly, and by degrees, into the thing itself.

This abstract, I say, is entirely *Seneca's*; and though little more in the bulk, than the third part of the original, it is, in effect, a summary of the whole body of his philosophy concerning manners, contracted into this epitome, without either overcharging it with things idle and superfluous, or leaving out any thing which I thought might contribute to the order and dignity of the work. As to his school questions, and philosophical disquisitions upon the natural reason of things, I have almost totally cast them out, as curiosities that hold little or no intelligence with the government of our passions, and the forming of our lives; and as matters, consequently, that are altogether foreign to my province. I have taken the liberty also in many cases, where our author inculcates and enforces the same conceptions over and over again in variety of phrase, to extract the spirit of them; and instead of dressing up the same thought in several shapes, to make some one adequate word or sentence serve for all. But when all is said that can be said; nay, and when all is done too that can be done, within the compass of an essay of this quality, though ever so correct in the kind, it is at best but an abstract still; and a bare abstract will never do the business as it ought to be done.

It is not one jot derogatory to *Seneca's* character to observe, that he made it his profession, rather to give lights and hints to the world, than to write compasses of morality, and prescribe rules and measures in a set course of philosophy for the common instruction of mankind. So that many of his thoughts seem to spring only like sparks, upon a kind of collision, or a striking of fire within himself, and with a very little dependence sometimes one upon another. What if those incomparable starts and structures of his, that no translator can lay hold of, shall be yet allowed by the common voice of mankind, to be as much superior to those parts of him that will bear the turning; as the faculties and operations of the soul are to the functions of the body? And no way of conveying the benignity of these influences to the world, but by a speculation upon them in paraphrase. In few words; *Seneca* was a man made for meditation. He was undoubtedly a master of choice thoughts, and he employed the vigor of them upon a most illustrious subject. Beside that, this ranging humor of his, (as Mr. *Hobbes* expresses it) is accompanied with so wonderful a facility of lively and pertinent reflections, even in the most ordinary occurrences of life; and his applications so happy also, that every man reads him over again within himself; and feels, and confesses in his own heart, the truth of his doctrine. What can be done more than this now in the whole world, toward establishing a right principle? For there is no test of the truth, and reason of things, like that which has along with it the assent of universal nature. As he was much given to thinking, so he wrote principally for thinking men; the periods that he lays most stress upon, are only so many detachments of one select thought from another, and every fresh hint furnishes a new text to work upon. So that the reading of *Seneca*, without reading upon him, does but the one half of our business; for his intentions are infinitely more instructive than his words at length; and there is no coming at him in those heights without a paraphrase.

It will be here objected that a paraphrase is but the reading upon a text, or an arbitrary descant upon the original at the will and pleasure of the interpreter: If we have all of *Seneca* that is good already, there is no place left for a supplement; and the animadversion will be no more *Seneca's* at last, than our comments upon the word of God are holy writ.

A PARAPHRASE, it is true, may be loose, arbitrary, and extravagant. And so may any thing else, that ever was committed to writing; nay, the best, and the most necessary of duties, faculties, and things, may degenerate by the abuse of them, into acts of sin, shame, and folly. Men may blaspheme in their prayers; they may poison one another in their cups, or otherwise. They may talk treason; and, in short, they may do a million of extravagant things in all cases and offices that any man can imagine under the sun. And what is the objector's inference now, from the possibility of this abuse, but that we are neither to pray, nor to eat, nor to drink, nor to open our mouths, nor in fine, to do any thing else, for fear of mere possibilities, as dangerous as the other. It is suggested again, that the paraphrase is foreign to the text, and that the animadverter may make the author speak what he pleases. Now the question is not the possibility of a vain, an empty, a flat, or an unedifying exposition; but the need, the use, the means, the possibility, nay, and the easiness of furnishing a good one: Beside that, there is no hurt at all, on the one hand to countervail a very considerable advantage to all men of letters, and of common honesty, on the other. A short or an idle comment does only disgrace the writer of it, while the reputation of the author stands nevertheless as firm as ever it did; but he who finishes *Seneca's* minutes with proper and reasonable supplements, where he does not speak his own thoughts out at large, does a necessary rite both to the dead and to the living, and a common service to mankind.

He does a rite to the dead, I say, more ways than one: For over and above the justice and respect that is due to his memory, it is, in a fair equity of construction, a performance of the very will of the dead. For all his fragments of hints and essays, were manifestly designed for other people to meditate, read and speculate upon: And a great part of the end of them is lost without such an improvement: So that the very manner of his writings call for a paraphrase; a paraphrase be expected; and a paraphrase is due to him; and, in short, we owe a paraphrase to ourselves too: For the meaning of his hints and minutes, does as well deserve to be expounded, as the sense and energy of his words. Nay, and when all is done, whoever considers how he diversifies the same thing over and over in a change of phrase;

Now many several ways he winds and ravel's his own thoughts; and how he labours under the difficulty of clearing even his own meaning: Whoever considers this, I say, will find *Seneca*, upon the whole matter, to be in a great measure a paraphraist upon himself. He gives you his first sense of things, and then he enlarges upon it, improves it, distinguishes, expounds, dilates, &c. and when he finds at last that he cannot bring up the force of his words to the purity and vigour of his conceptions, so as to extricate himself in all respects to his own satisfaction, it is his course commonly, to draw the stress of the question to a point, and there to let it rest as a theme of light that stands effectually recommended to farther consideration. This must not be taken as if *Seneca* could not speak his own mind as full and as home as any man; or that he has left any thing imperfect, because he could not finish it himself; But it was a turn of art in him, by breaking off with an, &c. to create an *appetite* in the reader of pursuing the hint; over and above the flowing of matter so fast upon him that it was impossible for his words to keep pace with his thoughts.

BE this now spoken with all reverence to his divine essays upon Providence, *happy* life, benefits, anger, clemency, human frailty, &c. where he shews as much of skill in the distribution of his matter, the congruity and proportion of the parts, and the harmony of the whole in the context, as he does of a natural felicity, in adapting the tendency and the virtue of all his sententious raptures to the use of human life. So that he was evidently in possession of both faculties, (of *springing game*, that is, and of flying it home) though he made choice of exercising the one oftener than the other. There is a vein in this mixture that runs through all his discourses, whether broken or continued; notwithstanding, there is no touching any piece of his to advantage, after he has finished it: There is room abundantly yet for explication, and for supplement in other cases, where he snaps off short with a kind of *cetera desiderantur*, and so leaves a foundation for those to build upon who shall come after him. Now these independent thoughts are the touches that I would offer to a farther improvement; and only here and there one of the most elevated even of them too; which will amount to no more in the conclusion than a discourse upon this or that theme or text, under what name or title the expositor pleases. I want

not however have the comment break in upon the context; and I would so scrupulously confine it to the bounds of modesty and conscience, as not to depart upon any terms, either from the intent of the original, or from the reason of the matter in question: This office performed, would raise another *Seneca* out of the ashes of the former; and make, perhaps, a manual of salutary precepts for the ordering of our passions, and for the regulation of our lives, not inferior to any other whatsoever, the divine oracles of inspiration only excepted. For it would teach all states of men, all conditions of fortune, all distresses, of body, all perturbations of mind; and, in fine, it would answer all the ends that are worthy of an honest man's care. It was once in my head to digest the whole into such an abstract, as might at the same time do the office also of a paraphrase, both under one; but what with the scruple, of either assuming any of *Seneca's* excellencies to myself, or of imputing any of my weaknesses to *Seneca*, I compounded the matter thus within myself: That though both would do well, the doing of them separate and apart would be best. Not but that the undertaker, I fear, will find well nigh as much difficulty to preserve his own reputation in his attempt, as to do right to the author; especially when he is sure to have every coffee-house sit upon him like a court of justice, and if he shall but happen to stumble upon any of the same figures or illustrations over again; if the *supplement* shall but have so much as the least tincture of any thing that is done already; a common criminal, for the basest sort of washing, clipping, and coining, shall find better quarter. Here is the old abstract, they will cry, juggled into a new paraphrase, and the same thing palmed upon the world over again, only under another name: It will be hard to get clear of such a cavil when it shall be started, and it will be a very easy thing to find out a plausible colour for the setting it a foot.

As to the supposition of disparaging an excellent author by a lewd paraphrase, it is as idle, as to imagine that a canonical text should suffer for an heretical interpretation. And so for the fancy of robbing him of his due, by a good one; in a case where the single point is only a virtuous emulation betwixt them which shall do best upon the same topic. Now where the comment has a kindness for the text; there can be no interfering upon a pique of honor, though they should both happen to agree in the very self-same thoughts. For what is all the writing, reading, dis-

ecursing consulting, disputing, meditating, compounding, and dividing, from the first quickening breath of the Almighty into reasonable nature, to this very moment; what is all this, I say, but the lighting of one candle at another? Make it the case that by the benefit of that light, I find a treasure: Here is no robbing of *Peter* to pay *Paul*, nor any particular obligation for an act of common humanity. Reason works by communication, and one thought kindles another from generation to generation, as naturally as one spark begets another, where the matter is disposed for the impression:

THIS is no more than to say, that Providence, for the good of mankind, has made all men necessary to one another. He who puts a good hint into my head, puts a good word into my mouth, unless a blockhead has it in keeping: So that there is an obligation on both sides. The text is beholden to him who reads upon it for improving it; and the latter had never thought of the subject perhaps, if the former had not bolted it. What is all this now, but reasoning upon first motions; and a joining of these two powers or faculties both in one, for a public good? Reason is uniform; and where two men are in the right, they must of necessity agree upon the same point; and the thoughts of several men in such a case, are as much one, as a conflagration is one fire, by how many several hands soever it was kindled: So that there is no saying which was one's thought, or which the other's, but they are incorporated into one common stock. The great nicety will lie in a judicious choice what to take, and what to leave; where to begin, and where to end; and in hitting the precise medium betwixt too much and too little: Without forcing the design of the author, or intermixing any tawdry flourishes by and bye, to disgrace the dignity of the matter. I would not have so much as one word inserted, that might not become *Seneca* himself, if he were now living, either to speak or to approve. Once for all, such a reading upon *Seneca* as I have here propounded upon these terms, and under these conditions; and in such a manner too, as to take the genuine air and figure of his mind, in its native simplicity and beauty: Such a paraphrase, I say, superadded by way of supplement, where the abstract falls short, would furnish us with that which of all things in the world we want the most: That is to say, a perfect and a lively image of human nature.

ELVIS.

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