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CHAPTER IX

OF VANITY

There is, peradventure, no more manifest vanity than to write of it so vainly. That which divinity has so divinely expressed to us—["Vanity of vanities: all is vanity."—Eccles., i. 2.]—ought to be carefully and

continually meditated by men of understanding. Who does not see that I have taken a road, in which, incessantly and without labour, I shall proceed so long as there shall be ink and paper in the world? I can give no account of my life by my actions; fortune has placed them too low: I must do it by my fancies. And yet I have seen a gentleman who only communicated his life by the workings of his belly: you might see on his premises a show of a row of basins of seven or eight days' standing; it was his study, his discourse; all other talk stank in his nostrils. Here, but not so nauseous, are the excrements of an old mind, sometimes thick, sometimes thin, and always indigested. And when shall I have done representing the continual agitation and mutation of my thoughts, as they come into my head, seeing that Diomedes wrote six thousand books upon the sole subject of grammar?

> [It was not Diomedes, but Didymus the grammarian, who, as Seneca (Ep., 88) tells us, wrote four not six thousand books on questions of vain literature, which was the principal study of the ancient grammarian.—Coste. But the number is probably exaggerated, and for books we should doubtless read pamphlets or essays.]

What, then, ought prating to produce, since prattling and the first beginning to speak, stuffed the world with such a horrible load of volumes? So many words for words only. O Pythagoras, why didst not thou allay this tempest? They accused one Galba of old for living idly; he made answer, "That every one ought to give account of his actions, but not of his home." He was mistaken, for justice also takes cognisance of those who glean after the reaper.

But there should be some restraint of law against foolish and impertinent scribblers, as well as against vagabonds and idle persons; which if there were, both I and a hundred others would be banished from the reach of our people. I do not speak this in jest: scribbling seems to be a symptom of a disordered and licentious age. When did we write so much as since our troubles? when the Romans so much, as upon the point of ruin? Besides that, the refining of wits does not make people wiser in a government: this idle employment springs from this, that every one applies himself negligently to the duty of his vocation, and is easily debauched from it. The corruption of the age is made up by the particular contribution of every individual man; some contribute treachery, others injustice, irreligion, tyranny, avarice, cruelty, according to their power; the weaker sort contribute folly, vanity, and idleness; of these I am one. It seems as if it were the season for vain things, when the hurtful oppress us; in a time when doing ill is common, to do but what signifies nothing is a kind of commendation. 'Tis my comfort, that I shall be one of the last who shall be called in question; and whilst the greater offenders are being brought to account, I shall have leisure to amend: for it would, methinks, be against reason to punish little inconveniences, whilst we are infested with the greater. As the physician Philotimus said to one who presented him his finger to dress, and who he perceived, both by his complexion and his breath, had an ulcer in his lungs: "Friend, it is not now time to play with your nails." —[Plutarch, How we may distinguish a Flatterer from a Friend.]

And yet I saw, some years ago, a person, whose name and memory I have in very great esteem, in the very height of our great disorders, when there was neither law nor justice, nor magistrate who performed his office, no more than there is now, publish I know not what pitiful reformations about cloths, cookery, and law chicanery. Those are amusements wherewith to feed a people that are ill-used, to show that they are not totally forgotten. Those others do the same, who insist upon prohibiting particular ways of speaking, dances, and games, to a people totally abandoned to all sorts of execrable vices. 'Tis no time to bathe and cleanse one's self, when one is seized by a violent fever; it was for the Spartans alone to fall to combing and curling themselves, when they were just upon the point of running headlong into some extreme danger of their life.

For my part, I have that worse custom, that if my slipper go awry, I let my shirt and my cloak do so too; I scorn to mend myself by halves.

When I am in a bad plight, I fasten upon the mischief; I abandon myself through despair; I let myself go towards the precipice, and, as they say, "throw the helve after the hatchet"; I am obstinate in growing worse, and think myself no longer worth my own care; I am either well or ill throughout. 'T is a favour to me, that the desolation of this kingdom falls out in the desolation of my age: I better suffer that my ill be multiplied, than if my well had been disturbed.—[That, being ill, I should grow worse, than that, being well, I should grow ill.]—The words I utter in mishap are words of anger: my courage sets up its bristles, instead of letting them down; and, contrary to others, I am more devout in good than in evil fortune, according to the precept of Xenophon, if not according to his reason; and am more ready to turn up my eyes to heaven to return thanks, than to crave. I am more solicitous to improve my health, when I am well, than to restore it when I am sick; prosperities are the same discipline and instruction to me that adversities and rods are to others. As if good fortune were a thing inconsistent with good conscience, men never grow good but in evil fortune. Good fortune is to me a singular spur to modesty and moderation: an entreaty wins, a threat checks me; favour makes me bend, fear stiffens me.

Amongst human conditions this is common enough: to be better pleased with foreign things than with our own, and to love innovation and change:

> "Ipsa dies ideo nos grato perluit haustu,
> Quod permutatis hora recurrit equis:"
>
> ["The light of day itself shines more pleasantly upon us because it changes its horses every hour." Spoke of a water hour-glass, adds Cotton.]

I have my share. Those who follow the other extreme, of being quite satisfied and pleased with and in themselves, of valuing what they have above all the rest, and of concluding no beauty can be greater than what they see, if they are not wiser than we, are really more happy; I do not envy their wisdom, but their good fortune.

This greedy humour of new and unknown things helps to nourish in me the desire of travel; but a great many more circumstances contribute to it; I am very willing to quit the government of my house. There is, I confess, a kind of convenience in commanding, though it were but in a barn, and in being obeyed by one's people; but 'tis too uniform and languid a pleasure, and is, moreover, of necessity mixed with a thousand vexatious thoughts: one while the poverty and the oppression of your tenants: another, quarrels amongst neighbours: another, the trespasses they make upon you afflict you;

> "Aut verberatae grandine vineae,
> Fundusque mendax, arbore nunc aquas
> Culpante, nunc torrentia agros
> Sidera, nunc hyemes iniquas."
>
> ["Or hail-smitten vines and the deceptive farm; now trees damaged by the rains, or years of dearth, now summer's heat burning up the petals, now destructive winters."—Horatius, Od., iii. I, 29.]

and that God scarce in six months sends a season wherein your bailiff can do his business as he should; but that if it serves the vines, it spoils the meadows:

> "Aut nimiis torret fervoribus aetherius sol,
> Aut subiti perimunt imbres, gelidoeque pruinae,
> Flabraque ventorum violento turbine vexant;"
>
> ["Either the scorching sun burns up your fields, or sudden rains or frosts destroy your harvests, or a violent wind carries away all before it."—Lucretius, V. 216.]

to which may be added the new and neat-made shoe of the man of old, that hurts your foot,

> [Leclerc maliciously suggests that this is a sly hit at Montaigne's wife, the man of old being the person mentioned in Plutarch's Life of Paulus Emilius, c. 3, who, when his friends reproached him for repudiating his wife, whose various merits they extolled, pointed to his shoe, and said, "That looks a nice well-made shoe to you; but I alone know where it pinches."]

and that a stranger does not understand how much it costs you, and what you contribute to maintain that show of order that is seen in your family, and that peradventure you buy too dear.

I came late to the government of a house: they whom nature sent into the world before me long eased me of that trouble; so that I had already taken another bent more suitable to my humour. Yet, for so much as I have seen, 'tis an employment more troublesome than hard; whoever is capable of anything else, will easily do this. Had I a mind to be rich, that way would seem too long; I had served my kings, a more profitable traffic than any other. Since I pretend to nothing but the reputation of having got nothing or dissipated nothing, conformably to the rest of my life, improper either to do good or ill of any moment, and that I only desire to pass on, I can do it, thanks be to God, without any great endeavour. At the worst, evermore prevent poverty by lessening your expense; 'tis that which I make my great concern, and doubt not but to do it before I shall be compelled. As to the rest, I have sufficiently settled my thoughts to live upon less than I have, and live contentedly:

> "Non aestimatione census, verum victu atque cultu, terminantur pecunix modus."
>
> ["'Tis not by the value of possessions, but by our daily subsistence and tillage, that our riches are truly estimated." —Cicero, Paradox, vi. 3.]

My real need does not so wholly take up all I have, that Fortune has not whereon to fasten her teeth without biting to the quick. My presence, heedless and ignorant as it is, does me great service in my domestic affairs; I employ myself in them, but it goes against the hair, finding that I have this in my house, that though I burn my candle at one end by myself, the other is not spared.

Journeys do me no harm but only by their expense, which is great, and more than I am well able to bear, being always wont to travel with not only a necessary, but a handsome equipage; I must make them so much shorter and fewer; I spend therein but the froth, and what I have reserved for such uses, delaying and deferring my motion till that be ready. I will not that the pleasure of going abroad spoil the pleasure of being retired at home; on the contrary, I intend they shall nourish and favour one another. Fortune has assisted me in this, that since my principal profession in this life was to live at ease, and rather idly than busily, she has deprived me of the necessity of growing rich to provide for the multitude of my heirs. If there be not enough for one, of that whereof I had so plentifully enough, at his peril be it: his imprudence will not deserve that I should wish him any more. And every one, according to the example of Phocion, provides sufficiently for his children who so provides for them as to leave them as much as was left him. I should by no means like Crates' way. He left his money in the hands of a banker with this condition—that if his children were fools, he should then give it to them; if wise, he should then distribute it to the most foolish of the people; as if fools, for being less capable of living without riches, were more capable of using them.

At all events, the damage occasioned by my absence seems not to deserve, so long as I am able to support it, that I should waive the occasions of diverting myself by that troublesome assistance.

There is always something that goes amiss. The affairs, one while of one house, and then of another, tear you to pieces; you pry into everything too near; your perspicacity hurts you here, as well as in other things. I steal away from occasions of vexing myself, and turn from the knowledge of things that go amiss; and yet I cannot so order it, but that every hour I jostle against something or other that displeases me; and the tricks that they most conceal from me, are those that I the soonest come to know; some there are that, not to make matters worse, a man must himself help to conceal. Vain vexations; vain sometimes, but always vexations. The smallest and slightest impediments are the most piercing: and as little letters most tire the eyes, so do little affairs most disturb us. The rout of little ills more offend than one, how great soever. By how much domestic thorns are numerous and slight, by so much they prick deeper and without warning, easily surprising us when least we suspect them.

> [Now Homer shews us clearly enough how surprise gives the advantage; who represents Ulysses weeping at the death of his dog; and not weeping at the tears of his mother; the first accident, trivial as it was, got the better of him, coming upon him quite unexpectedly; he sustained the second, though more potent, because he was prepared for it. 'Tis light occasions that humble our lives.]

I am no philosopher; evils oppress me according to their weight, and they weigh as much according to the form as the matter, and very often more. If I have therein more perspicacity than the vulgar, I have also more patience; in short, they weigh with me, if they do not hurt me. Life is a tender thing, and easily molested. Since my age has made me grow more pensive and morose,

"Nemo enim resistit sibi, cum caeperit impelli,"

> ["For no man resists himself when he has begun to be driven forward."—Seneca, Ep., 13.]

for the most trivial cause imaginable, I irritate that humour, which afterwards nourishes and exasperates itself of its own motion; attracting and heaping up matter upon matter whereon to feed:

"Stillicidi casus lapidem cavat:"

["The ever falling drop hollows out a stone."—Lucretius, i. 314.]

these continual tricklings consume and ulcerate me. Ordinary inconveniences are never light; they are continual and inseparable, especially when they spring from the members of a family, continual and inseparable. When I consider my affairs at distance and in gross, I find, because perhaps my memory is none of the best, that they have gone on hitherto improving beyond my reason or expectation; my revenue seems greater than it is; its prosperity betrays me: but when I pry more narrowly into the business, and see how all things go:

"Tum vero in curas animum diducimus omnes;"

> ["Indeed we lead the mind into all sorts of cares."
> —AEneid, v. 720.]

I have a thousand things to desire and to fear. To give them quite over, is very easy for me to do: but to look after them without trouble, is very hard. 'Tis a miserable thing to be in a place where everything you see employs and concerns you; and I fancy that I more cheerfully enjoy the pleasures of another man's house, and with greater and a purer relish, than those of my own. Diogenes answered according to my humour him who asked him what sort of wine he liked the best: "That of another," said he.—[Diogenes Laertius, vi. 54.]

My father took a delight in building at Montaigne, where he was born; and in all the government of domestic affairs I love to follow his example and rules, and I shall engage those who are to succeed me, as much as in me lies, to do the same. Could I do better for him, I would; and am proud that his will is still performing and acting by me. God forbid that in my hands I should ever suffer any image of life, that I am able to render to so good a father, to fail. And wherever I have taken in hand to strengthen some old foundations of walls, and to repair some ruinous buildings, in earnest I have done it more out of respect to his design, than my own satisfaction; and am angry at myself that I have not proceeded further to finish the beginnings he left in his house, and so much the more because I am very likely to be the last possessor of my race, and to give the last hand to it. For, as to my own particular application, neither the pleasure of building, which they say is so bewitching, nor hunting, nor gardens, nor the other pleasures of a retired life, can much amuse me. And 'tis what I am angry at myself for, as I am for all other opinions that are incommodious to me; which I would not so much care to have vigorous and learned, as I would have them easy and convenient for life, they are true and sound enough, if they are useful and pleasing. Such as hear me declare my ignorance in husbandry, whisper in my ear that it is disdain, and that I neglect to know its instruments, its seasons, its order, how they dress my vines, how they graft, and to know the names and forms of herbs and fruits, and the preparing the meat on which I live, the names and prices of the stuffs I wear, because, say they; I have set my heart upon some higher knowledge; they kill me in saying so. It is not disdain; it is folly, and rather stupidity than glory; I had rather be a good horseman than a good logician:

> "Quin to aliquid saltem potius, quorum indiget usus,
> Viminibus mollique paras detexere junco."
>
> ["'Dost thou not rather do something which is required, and make osier and reed basket."—Virgil, Eclog., ii. 71.]

We occupy our thoughts about the general, and about universal causes and conducts, which will very well carry on themselves without our care; and leave our own business at random, and Michael much more our concern than man. Now I am, indeed, for the most part at home; but I would be there better pleased than anywhere else:

> "Sit meae sedes utinam senectae,
> Sit modus lasso maris, et viarum,
> Militiaeque."
>
> ["Let my old age have a fixed seat; let there be a limit to fatigues from the sea, journeys, warfare."—Horace, Od., ii. 6, 6.]

I know not whether or no I shall bring it about. I could wish that, instead of some other member of his succession, my father had resigned to me the passionate affection he had in his old age to his household affairs; he was happy in that he could accommodate his desires to his fortune, and satisfy himself with what he had; political philosophy may to much purpose condemn the meanness and sterility of my employment, if I can once come to relish it, as he did. I am of opinion that the most honourable calling is to serve the public, and to be useful to many,

> "Fructus enim ingenii et virtutis, omnisque praestantiae, tum maximus capitur, quum in proximum quemque confertur:"
>
> ["For the greatest enjoyment of evil and virtue, and of all excellence, is experienced when they are conferred on some one nearest."—Cicero, De Amicil., c.]

for myself, I disclaim it; partly out of conscience (for where I see the weight that lies upon such employments, I perceive also the little means I have to supply it; and Plato, a master in all political government himself, nevertheless took care to abstain from it), and partly out of cowardice. I content myself with enjoying the world without bustle; only-to live an excusable life, and such as may neither be a burden to myself nor to any other.

Never did any man more fully and feebly suffer himself to be governed by a third person than I should do, had I any one to whom to entrust myself. One of my wishes at this time should be, to have a son-in-law that knew handsomely how to cherish my old age, and to rock it asleep; into whose hands I might

deposit, in full sovereignty, the management and use of all my goods, that he might dispose of them as I do, and get by them what I get, provided that he on his part were truly acknowledging, and a friend. But we live in a world where loyalty of one's own children is unknown.

He who has the charge of my purse in his travels, has it purely and without control; he could cheat me thoroughly, if he came to reckoning; and, if he is not a devil, I oblige him to deal faithfully with me by so entire a trust:

> "Multi fallere do cuerunt, dum timent falli; et aliis jus peccandi suspicando fecerunt."
>
> ["Many have taught others to deceive, while they fear to be deceived, and, by suspecting them, have given them a title to do ill."—Seneca, Epist., 3.]

The most common security I take of my people is ignorance; I never presume any to be vicious till I have first found them so; and repose the most confidence in the younger sort, that I think are least spoiled by ill example. I had rather be told at two months' end that I have spent four hundred crowns, than to have my ears battered every night with three, five, seven: and I have been, in this way, as little robbed as another. It is true, I am willing enough not to see it; I, in some sort, purposely, harbour a kind of perplexed, uncertain knowledge of my money: up to a certain point, I am content to doubt. One must leave a little room for the infidelity or indiscretion of a servant; if you have left enough, in gross, to do your business, let the overplus of Fortune's liberality run a little more freely at her mercy; 'tis the gleaner's portion. After all, I do not so much value the fidelity of my people as I contemn their injury. What a mean and ridiculous thing it is for a man to study his money, to delight in handling and telling it over and over again! 'Tis by this avarice makes its approaches.

In eighteen years that I have had my estate in my, own hands, I could never prevail with myself either to read over my deeds or examine my principal affairs, which ought, of necessity, to pass under my knowledge and inspection. 'Tis not a philosophical disdain of worldly and transitory things; my taste is not purified to that degree, and I value them at as great a rate, at least, as they are worth; but 'tis, in truth, an inexcusable and childish laziness and negligence. What would I not rather do than read a contract? or than, as a slave to my own business, tumble over those dusty writings? or, which is worse, those of another man, as so many do nowadays, to get money? I grudge nothing but care and trouble, and endeavour nothing so much, as to be careless and at ease. I had been much fitter, I believe, could it have been without obligation and servitude, to have lived upon another man's fortune than my own: and, indeed, I do not know, when I examine it nearer, whether, according to my humour, what I have to suffer from my affairs and servants, has not in it something more abject, troublesome, and tormenting than there would be in serving a man better born than myself, who would govern me with a gentle rein, and a little at my own case:

> "Servitus obedientia est fracti animi et abjecti, arbitrio carentis suo."
>
> ["Servitude is the obedience of a subdued and abject mind, wanting its own free will."—Cicero, Paradox, V. I.]

Crates did worse, who threw himself into the liberty of poverty, only to rid himself of the inconveniences and cares of his house. This is what I would not do; I hate poverty equally with pain; but I could be content to change the kind of life I live for another that was humbler and less chargeable.

When absent from home, I divest myself of all these thoughts, and should be less concerned for the ruin of a tower, than I am, when present, at the fall of a tile. My mind is easily composed at distance, but suffers as much as that of the meanest peasant when I am at home; the reins of my bridle being wrongly put on, or a strap flapping against my leg, will keep me out of humour a day together. I raise my courage, well enough against inconveniences: lift up my eyes I cannot:

"Sensus, o superi, sensus."

["The senses, O ye gods, the senses."]

I am at home responsible for whatever goes amiss. Few masters (I speak of those of medium condition such as mine), and if there be any such, they are more happy, can rely so much upon another, but that the greatest part of the burden will lie upon their own shoulders. This takes much from my grace in entertaining visitors, so that I have, peradventure, detained some rather out of expectation of a good dinner, than by my own behaviour; and lose much of the pleasure I ought to reap at my own house from the visitation and assembling of my friends. The most ridiculous carriage of a gentleman in his own house, is to see him bustling about the business of the place, whispering one servant, and looking an angry look at another: it ought insensibly to slide along, and to represent an ordinary

current; and I think it unhandsome to talk much to our guests of their entertainment, whether by way of bragging or excuse. I love order and cleanliness—

"Et cantharus et lanx
Ostendunt mihi me"—

["The dishes and the glasses shew me my own reflection."
—Horace, Ep., i. 5, 23]

more than abundance; and at home have an exact regard to necessity, little to outward show. If a footman falls to cuffs at another man's house, or stumble and throw a dish before him as he is carrying it up, you only laugh and make a jest on't; you sleep whilst the master of the house is arranging a bill of fare with his steward for your morrow's entertainment. I speak according as I do myself; quite appreciating, nevertheless, good husbandry in general, and how pleasant quiet and prosperous household management, carried regularly on, is to some natures; and not wishing to fasten my own errors and inconveniences to the thing; nor to give Plato the lie, who looks upon it as the most pleasant employment to every one to do his particular affairs without wrong to another.

When I travel I have nothing to care for but myself, and the laying out my money; which is disposed of by one single precept; too many things are required to the raking it together; in that I understand nothing; in spending, I understand a little, and how to give some show to my expense, which is indeed its principal use; but I rely too ambitiously upon it, which renders it unequal and difform, and, moreover, immoderate in both the one and the other aspect; if it makes a show, if it serve the turn, I indiscreetly let it run; and as indiscreetly tie up my purse-strings, if it does not shine, and does not please me. Whatever it be, whether art or nature, that imprints in us the condition of living by reference to others, it does us much more harm than good; we deprive ourselves of our own utilities, to accommodate appearances to the common opinion: we care not so much what our being is, as to us and in reality, as what it is to the public observation. Even the properties of the mind, and wisdom itself, seem fruitless to us, if only enjoyed by ourselves, and if it produce not itself to the view and approbation of others. There is a sort of men whose gold runs in streams underground imperceptibly; others expose it all in plates and branches; so that to the one a liard is worth a crown, and to the others the inverse: the world esteeming its use and value, according to the show. All over-nice solicitude about riches smells of avarice: even the very disposing of it, with a too systematic and artificial liberality, is not worth a painful superintendence and solicitude: he, that will order his expense to just so much, makes it too pinched and narrow. The keeping or spending are, of themselves, indifferent things, and receive no colour of good or ill, but according to the application of the will.

The other cause that tempts me out to these journeys is, inaptitude for the present manners in our state. I could easily console myself for this corruption in regard to the public interest:

"Pejoraque saecula ferri
Temporibus, quorum sceleri non invenit ipsa
Nomen, et a nullo posuit natura metallo;"

["And, worse than the iron ages, for whose crimes there is no
similitude in any of Nature's metals."—Juvenal, xiii. 28.]

but not to my own. I am, in particular, too much oppressed by them: for, in my neighbourhood, we are, of late, by the long licence of our civil wars, grown old in so riotous a form of state,

"Quippe ubi fas versum atque nefas,"

["Where wrong and right have changed places."
—Virgil, Georg., i. 504.]

that in earnest, 'tis a wonder how it can subsist:

"Armati terram exercent, semperque recentes
Convectare juvat praedas; et vivere rapto."

["Men plough, girt with arms; ever delighting in fresh robberies,
and living by rapine."—AEneid, vii. 748.]

In fine, I see by our example, that the society of men is maintained and held together, at what price soever; in what condition soever they are placed, they still close and stick together, both moving and in heaps; as ill united bodies, that, shuffled together without order, find of themselves a means to unite and settle, often better than they could have been disposed by art. King Philip mustered up a rabble of the most wicked and incorrigible rascals he could pick out, and put them all together into a city he had

caused to be built for that purpose, which bore their name: I believe that they, even from vices themselves, erected a government amongst them, and a commodious and just society. I see, not one action, or three, or a hundred, but manners, in common and received use, so ferocious, especially in inhumanity and treachery, which are to me the worst of all vices, that I have not the heart to think of them without horror; and almost as much admire as I detest them: the exercise of these signal villainies carries with it as great signs of vigour and force of soul, as of error and disorder. Necessity reconciles and brings men together; and this accidental connection afterwards forms itself into laws: for there have been such, as savage as any human opinion could conceive, who, nevertheless, have maintained their body with as much health and length of life as any Plato or Aristotle could invent. And certainly, all these descriptions of polities, feigned by art, are found to be ridiculous and unfit to be put in practice.

These great and tedious debates about the best form of society, and the most commodious rules to bind us, are debates only proper for the exercise of our wits; as in the arts there are several subjects which have their being in agitation and controversy, and have no life but there. Such an idea of government might be of some value in a new world; but we take a world already made, and formed to certain customs; we do not beget it, as Pyrrha or Cadmus did. By what means soever we may have the privilege to redress and reform it anew, we can hardly writhe it from its wonted bent, but we shall break all. Solon being asked whether he had established the best laws he could for the Athenians; "Yes," said he, "of those they would have received." Varro excuses himself after the same manner: "that if he were to begin to write of religion, he would say what he believed; but seeing it was already received, he would write rather according to use than nature."

Not according to opinion, but in truth and reality, the best and most excellent government for every nation is that under which it is maintained: its form and essential convenience depend upon custom. We are apt to be displeased at the present condition; but I, nevertheless, maintain that to desire command in a few—[an oligarchy.]— in a republic, or another sort of government in monarchy than that already established, is both vice and folly:

> "Ayme l'estat, tel que to le veois estre
> S'il est royal ayme la royaute;
> S'il est de peu, ou biers communaute,
> Ayme l'aussi; car Dieu t'y a faict naistre."

> ["Love the government, such as you see it to be. If it be royal,
> love royalty; if it is a republic of any sort, still love it; for
> God himself created thee therein."]

So wrote the good Monsieur de Pibrac, whom we have lately lost, a man of so excellent a wit, such sound opinions, and such gentle manners. This loss, and that at the same time we have had of Monsieur de Foix, are of so great importance to the crown, that I do not know whether there is another couple in France worthy to supply the places of these two Gascons in sincerity and wisdom in the council of our kings. They were both variously great men, and certainly, according to the age, rare and great, each of them in his kind: but what destiny was it that placed them in these times, men so remote from and so disproportioned to our corruption and intestine tumults?

Nothing presses so hard upon a state as innovation: change only gives form to injustice and tyranny. When any piece is loosened, it may be proper to stay it; one may take care that the alteration and corruption natural to all things do not carry us too far from our beginnings and principles: but to undertake to found so great a mass anew, and to change the foundations of so vast a building, is for them to do, who to make clean, efface; who reform particular defects by an universal confusion, and cure diseases by death:

> "Non tam commutandarum quam evertendarum rerum cupidi."

> ["Not so desirous of changing as of overthrowing things."
> —Cicero, De Offic., ii. i.]

The world is unapt to be cured; and so impatient of anything that presses it, that it thinks of nothing but disengaging itself at what price soever. We see by a thousand examples, that it ordinarily cures itself to its cost. The discharge of a present evil is no cure, if there be not a general amendment of condition. The surgeon's end is not only to cut away the dead flesh; that is but the progress of his cure; he has a care, over and above, to fill up the wound with better and more natural flesh, and to restore the member to its due state. Whoever only proposes to himself to remove that which offends him, falls short: for good does not necessarily succeed evil; another evil may succeed, and a worse, as it happened to Caesar's murderers, who brought the republic to such a pass, that they had reason to repent the meddling with the matter. The same has since happened to several others, even down to our

own times: the French, my contemporaries, know it well enough. All great mutations shake and disorder a state.

Whoever would look direct at a cure, and well consider of it before he began, would be very willing to withdraw his hands from meddling in it. Pacuvius Calavius corrected the vice of this proceeding by a notable example. His fellow-citizens were in mutiny against their magistrates; he being a man of great authority in the city of Capua, found means one day to shut up the Senators in the palace; and calling the people together in the market-place, there told them that the day was now come wherein at full liberty they might revenge themselves on the tyrants by whom they had been so long oppressed, and whom he had now, all alone and unarmed, at his mercy. He then advised that they should call these out, one by one, by lot, and should individually determine as to each, causing whatever should be decreed to be immediately executed; with this proviso, that they should, at the same time, depute some honest man in the place of him who was condemned, to the end there might be no vacancy in the Senate. They had no sooner heard the name of one senator but a great cry of universal dislike was raised up against him. "I see," says Pacuvius, "that we must put him out; he is a wicked fellow; let us look out a good one in his room." Immediately there was a profound silence, every one being at a stand whom to choose. But one, more impudent than the rest, having named his man, there arose yet a greater consent of voices against him, an hundred imperfections being laid to his charge, and as many just reasons why he should not stand. These contradictory humours growing hot, it fared worse with the second senator and the third, there being as much disagreement in the election of the new, as consent in the putting out of the old. In the end, growing weary of this bustle to no purpose, they began, some one way and some another, to steal out of the assembly: every one carrying back this resolution in his mind, that the oldest and best known evil was ever more supportable than one that was, new and untried.

Seeing how miserably we are agitated (for what have we not done!)

> "Eheu! cicatricum, et sceleris pudet,
> Fratrumque: quid nos dura refugimus
> AEtas? quid intactum nefasti
> Liquimus? Unde manus inventus
> Metu Deorum continuit? quibus
> Pepercit aris."
>
> ["Alas! our crimes and our fratricides are a shame to us! What crime does this bad age shrink from? What wickedness have we left undone? What youth is restrained from evil by the fear of the gods? What altar is spared?"—Horace, Od., i. 33, 35]

I do not presently conclude,

> "Ipsa si velit Salus,
> Servare prorsus non potest hanc familiam;"
>
> ["If the goddess Salus herself wish to save this family, she absolutely cannot"—Terence, Adelph., iv. 7, 43.]

we are not, peradventure, at our last gasp. The conservation of states is a thing that, in all likelihood, surpasses our understanding;—a civil government is, as Plato says, a mighty and puissant thing, and hard to be dissolved; it often continues against mortal and intestine diseases, against the injury of unjust laws, against tyranny, the corruption and ignorance of magistrates, the licence and sedition of the people. In all our fortunes, we compare ourselves to what is above us, and still look towards those who are better: but let us measure ourselves with what is below us: there is no condition so miserable wherein a man may not find a thousand examples that will administer consolation. 'Tis our vice that we more unwillingly look upon what is above, than willingly upon what is below; and Solon was used to say, that "whoever would make a heap of all the ills together, there is no one who would not rather choose to bear away the ills he has than to come to an equal division with all other men from that heap, and take his share." Our government is, indeed, very sick, but there have been others more sick without dying. The gods play at ball with us and bandy us every way:

"Enimvero Dii nos homines quasi pilas habent."

The stars fatally destined the state of Rome for an example of what they could do in this kind: in it are comprised all the forms and adventures that concern a state: all that order or disorder, good or evil fortune, can do. Who, then, can despair of his condition, seeing the shocks and commotions wherewith Rome was tumbled and tossed, and yet withstood them all? If the extent of dominion be the health of a state (which I by no means think it is, and Isocrates pleases me when he instructs Nicocles not to envy princes who have large dominions, but those who know how to preserve those which have fallen into

their hands), that of Rome was never so sound, as when it was most sick. The worst of her forms was the most fortunate; one can hardly discern any image of government under the first emperors; it is the most horrible and tumultuous confusion that can be imagined; it endured it, notwithstanding, and therein continued, preserving not a monarchy limited within its own bounds, but so many nations so differing, so remote, so disaffected, so confusedly commanded, and so unjustly conquered:

"Nec gentibus ullis
Commodat in populum, terra pelagique potentem,
Invidiam fortuna suam."

["Fortune never gave it to any nation to satisfy its hatred against the people, masters of the seas and of the earth."—Lucan, i. 32.]

Everything that totters does not fall. The contexture of so great a body holds by more nails than one; it holds even by its antiquity, like old buildings, from which the foundations are worn away by time, without rough-cast or mortar, which yet live and support themselves by their own weight:

"Nec jam validis radicibus haerens,
Pondere tuta suo est."

Moreover, it is not rightly to go to work, to examine only the flank and the foss, to judge of the security of a place; we must observe which way approaches can be made to it, and in what condition the assailant is: few vessels sink with their own weight, and without some exterior violence. Now, let us everyway cast our eyes; everything about us totters; in all the great states, both of Christendom and elsewhere, that are known to us, if you will but look, you will there see evident menace of alteration and ruin:

"Et sua sunt illis incommoda; parque per omnes
Tempestas."

["They all share in the mischief; the tempest rages everywhere."—AEneid, ii.]

Astrologers may very well, as they do, warn us of great revolutions and imminent mutations: their prophecies are present and palpable, they need not go to heaven to foretell this. There is not only consolation to be extracted from this universal combination of ills and menaces, but, moreover, some hopes of the continuation of our state, forasmuch as, naturally, nothing falls where all falls: universal sickness is particular health: conformity is antagonistic to dissolution. For my part, I despair not, and fancy that I discover ways to save us:

"Deus haec fortasse benigna
Reducet in sedem vice."

["The deity will perchance by a favourable turn restore us to our former position."—Horace, Epod., xiii. 7.]

Who knows but that God will have it happen, as in human bodies that purge and restore themselves to a better state by long and grievous maladies, which render them more entire and perfect health than that they took from them? That which weighs the most with me is, that in reckoning the symptoms of our ill, I see as many natural ones, and that Heaven sends us, and properly its own, as of those that our disorder and human imprudence contribute to it. The very stars seem to declare that we have already continued long enough, and beyond the ordinary term. This also afflicts me, that the mischief which nearest threatens us, is not an alteration in the entire and solid mass, but its dissipation and divulsion, which is the most extreme of our fears.

I, moreover, fear, in these fantasies of mine, the treachery of my memory, lest, by inadvertence, it should make me write the same thing twice. I hate to examine myself, and never review, but very unwillingly, what has once escaped my pen. I here set down nothing new. These are common thoughts, and having, peradventure, conceived them an hundred times, I am afraid I have set them down somewhere else already. Repetition is everywhere troublesome, though it were in Homer; but 'tis ruinous in things that have only a superficial and transitory show. I do not love over-insisting, even in the most profitable things, as in Seneca; and the usage of his stoical school displeases me, to repeat, upon every subject, at full length and width the principles and presuppositions that serve in general, and always to realledge anew common and universal reasons.

My memory grows cruelly worse every day:

"Pocula Lethaeos ut si ducentia somnos,

Arente fauce traxerim;"

["As if my dry throat had drunk seducing cups of Lethaean oblivion."—Horace, Epod., xiv. 3.]

I must be fain for the time to come (for hitherto, thanks be to God, nothing has happened much amiss), whereas others seek time and opportunity to think of what they have to say, to avoid all preparation, for fear of tying myself to some obligation upon which I must insist. To be tied and bound to a thing puts me quite out, and to depend upon so weak an instrument as my memory. I never read this following story that I am not offended at it with a personal and natural resentment: Lyncestes, accused of conspiracy against Alexander, the day that he was brought out before the army, according to the custom, to be heard as to what he could say for himself, had learned a studied speech, of which, hesitating and stammering, he pronounced some words. Whilst growing more and more perplexed, whilst struggling with his memory, and trying to recollect what he had to say, the soldiers nearest to him charged their pikes against him and killed him, looking upon him as convict; his confusion and silence served them for a confession; for having had so much leisure to prepare himself in prison, they concluded that it was not his memory that failed him, but that his conscience tied up his tongue and stopped his mouth. And, truly, well said; the place, the assembly, the expectation, astound a man, even when he has but the ambition to speak well; what can a man do when 'tis an harangue upon which his life depends?

For my part, the very being tied to what I am to say is enough to loose me from it. When I wholly commit and refer myself to my memory, I lay so much stress upon it that it sinks under me: it grows dismayed with the burden. So much as I trust to it, so much do I put myself out of my own power, even to the finding it difficult to keep my own countenance; and have been sometimes very much put to it to conceal the slavery wherein I was engaged; whereas my design is to manifest, in speaking, a perfect calmness both of face and accent, and casual and unpremeditated motions, as rising from present occasions, choosing rather to say nothing to purpose than to show that I came prepared to speak well, a thing especially unbecoming a man of my profession, and of too great obligation on him who cannot retain much. The preparation begets a great deal more expectation than it will satisfy. A man often strips himself to his doublet to leap no farther than he would have done in his gown:

"Nihil est his, qui placere volunt, turn adversarium,
quam expectatio."

["Nothing is so adverse to those who make it their business to please as expectation"—Cicero, Acad., ii. 4]

It is recorded of the orator Curio, that when he proposed the division of his oration into three or four parts, or three or four arguments or reasons, it often happened either that he forgot some one, or added one or two more. I have always avoided falling into this inconvenience, having ever hated these promises and prescriptions, not only out of distrust of my memory, but also because this method relishes too much of the artist:

"Simpliciora militares decent."

["Simplicity becomes warriors."—Quintilian, Instit. Orat., xi. I.]

'Tis enough that I have promised to myself never again to take upon me to speak in a place of respect, for as to speaking, when a man reads his speech, besides that it is very absurd, it is a mighty disadvantage to those who naturally could give it a grace by action; and to rely upon the mercy of my present invention, I would much less do it; 'tis heavy and perplexed, and such as would never furnish me in sudden and important necessities.

Permit, reader, this essay its course also, and this third sitting to finish the rest of my picture: I add, but I correct not. First, because I conceive that a man having once parted with his labours to the world, he has no further right to them; let him do better if he can, in some new undertaking, but not adulterate what he has already sold. Of such dealers nothing should be bought till after they are dead. Let them well consider what they do before they, produce it to the light who hastens them? My book is always the same, saving that upon every new edition (that the buyer may not go away quite empty) I take the liberty to add (as 'tis but an ill jointed marqueterie) some supernumerary emblem; it is but overweight, that does not disfigure the primitive form of the essays, but, by a little artful subtlety, gives a kind of particular value to every one of those that follow. Thence, however, will easily happen some transposition of chronology, my stories taking place according to their opportuneness, not always according to their age.

Secondly, because as to what concerns myself, I fear to lose by change: my understanding does not

always go forward, it goes backward too. I do not much less suspect my fancies for being the second or the third, than for being the first, or present, or past; we often correct ourselves as foolishly as we do others. I am grown older by a great many years since my first publications, which were in the year 1580; but I very much doubt whether I am grown an inch the wiser. I now, and I anon, are two several persons; but whether better, I cannot determine. It were a fine thing to be old, if we only travelled towards improvement; but 'tis a drunken, stumbling, reeling, infirm motion: like that of reeds, which the air casually waves to and fro at pleasure. Antiochus had in his youth strongly written in favour of the Academy; in his old age he wrote as much against it; would not, which of these two soever I should follow, be still Antiochus? After having established the uncertainty, to go about to establish the certainty of human opinions, was it not to establish doubt, and not certainty, and to promise, that had he had yet another age to live, he would be always upon terms of altering his judgment, not so much for the better, as for something else?

The public favour has given me a little more confidence than I expected; but what I 'most fear is, lest I should glut the world with my writings; I had rather, of the two, pique my reader than tire him, as a learned man of my time has done. Praise is always pleasing, let it come from whom, or upon what account it will; yet ought a man to understand why he is commended, that he may know how to keep up the same reputation still: imperfections themselves may get commendation. The vulgar and common estimation is seldom happy in hitting; and I am much mistaken if, amongst the writings of my time, the worst are not those which have most gained the popular applause. For my part, I return my thanks to those good-natured men who are pleased to take my weak endeavours in good part; the faults of the workmanship are nowhere so apparent as in a matter which of itself has no recommendation. Blame not me, reader, for those that slip in here by the fancy or inadvertency of others; every hand, every artisan, contribute their own materials; I neither concern myself with orthography (and only care to have it after the old way) nor pointing, being very inexpert both in the one and the other. Where they wholly break the sense, I am very little concerned, for they at least discharge me; but where they substitute a false one, as they so often do, and wrest me to their conception, they ruin me. When the sentence, nevertheless, is not strong enough for my proportion, a civil person ought to reject it as spurious, and none of mine. Whoever shall know how lazy I am, and how indulgent to my own humour, will easily believe that I had rather write as many more essays, than be tied to revise these over again for so childish a correction.

I said elsewhere, that being planted in the very centre of this new religion, I am not only deprived of any great familiarity with men of other kind of manners than my own, and of other opinions, by which they hold together, as by a tie that supersedes all other obligations; but moreover I do not live without danger, amongst men to whom all things are equally lawful, and of whom the most part cannot offend the laws more than they have already done; from which the extremist degree of licence proceeds. All the particular being summed up together, I do not find one man of my country, who pays so dear for the defence of our laws both in loss and damages (as the lawyers say) as myself; and some there are who vapour and brag of their zeal and constancy, that if things were justly weighed, do much less than I. My house, as one that has ever been open and free to all comers, and civil to all (for I could never persuade myself to make it a garrison of war, war being a thing that I prefer to see as remote as may be), has sufficiently merited popular kindness, and so that it would be a hard matter justly to insult over me upon my own dunghill; and I look upon it as a wonderful and exemplary thing that it yet continues a virgin from blood and plunder during so long a storm, and so many neighbouring revolutions and tumults. For to confess the truth, it had been possible enough for a man of my complexion to have shaken hands with any one constant and continued form whatever; but the contrary invasions and incursions, alternations and vicissitudes of fortune round about me, have hitherto more exasperated than calmed and mollified the temper of the country, and involved me, over and over again, with invincible difficulties and dangers.

I escape, 'tis true, but am troubled that it is more by chance, and something of my own prudence, than by justice; and am not satisfied to be out of the protection of the laws, and under any other safeguard than theirs. As matters stand, I live, above one half, by the favour of others, which is an untoward obligation. I do not like to owe my safety either to the generosity or affection of great persons, who allow me my legality and my liberty, or to the obliging manners of my predecessors, or my own: for what if I were another kind of man? If my deportment, and the frankness of my conversation or relationship, oblige my neighbours, 'tis that that they should acquit themselves of obligation in only permitting me to live, and they may say, "We allow him the free liberty of having divine service read in his own private chapel, when it is interdicted in all churches round about, and allow him the use of his goods and his life, as one who protects our wives and cattle in time of need." For my house has for many descents shared in the reputation of Lycurgus the Athenian, who was the general depository and guardian of the purses of his fellow-citizens. Now I am clearly of opinion that a man should live by right and by authority, and not either by recompense or favour. How many gallant men have rather chosen to lose their lives than to be debtors for them? I hate to subject myself to any

sort of obligation, but above all, to that which binds me by the duty of honour. I think nothing so dear as what has been given me, and this because my will lies at pawn under the title of gratitude, and more willingly accept of services that are to be sold; I feel that for the last I give nothing but money, but for the other I give myself.

The knot that binds me by the laws of courtesy binds me more than that of civil constraint; I am much more at ease when bound by a scrivener, than by myself. Is it not reason that my conscience should be much more engaged when men simply rely upon it? In a bond, my faith owes nothing, because it has nothing lent it; let them trust to the security they have taken without me. I had much rather break the wall of a prison and the laws themselves than my own word. I am nice, even to superstition, in keeping my promises, and, therefore, upon all occasions have a care to make them uncertain and conditional. To those of no great moment, I add the jealousy of my own rule, to make them weight; it wracks and oppresses me with its own interest. Even in actions wholly my own and free, if I once say a thing, I conceive that I have bound myself, and that delivering it to the knowledge of another, I have positively enjoined it my own performance. Methinks I promise it, if I but say it: and therefore am not apt to say much of that kind. The sentence that I pass upon myself is more severe than that of a judge, who only considers the common obligation; but my conscience looks upon it with a more severe and penetrating eye. I lag in those duties to which I should be compelled if I did not go:

"Hoc ipsum ita justum est, quod recte fit, si est voluntarium."

["This itself is so far just, that it is rightly done, if it is voluntary."—Cicero, De Offic., i. 9.]

If the action has not some splendour of liberty, it has neither grace nor honour:

"Quod vos jus cogit, vix voluntate impetrent:"

["That which the laws compel us to do, we scarcely do with a will." —Terence, Adelph., iii. 3, 44.]

where necessity draws me, I love to let my will take its own course:

"Quia quicquid imperio cogitur, exigenti magis,
quam praestanti, acceptum refertur."

["For whatever is compelled by power, is more imputed to him that exacts than to him that performs."—Valerius Maximus, ii. 2, 6.]

I know some who follow this rule, even to injustice; who will sooner give than restore, sooner lend than pay, and will do them the least good to whom they are most obliged. I don't go so far as that, but I'm not far off.

I so much love to disengage and disobligate myself, that I have sometimes looked upon ingratitudes, affronts, and indignities which I have received from those to whom either by nature or accident I was bound in some way of friendship, as an advantage to me; taking this occasion of their ill-usage, for an acquaintance and discharge of so much of my debt. And though I still continue to pay them all the external offices of public reason, I, notwithstanding, find a great saving in doing that upon the account of justice which I did upon the score of affection, and am a little eased of the attention and solicitude of my inward will:

"Est prudentis sustinere, ut currum, sic impetum benevolentia;"

["'Tis the part of a wise man to keep a curbing hand upon the impetus of friendship, as upon that of his horse." —Cicero, De Amicit., c. 17.]

'tis in me, too urging and pressing where I take; at least, for a man who loves not to be strained at all. And this husbanding my friendship serves me for a sort of consolation in the imperfections of those in whom I am concerned. I am very sorry they are not such as I could wish they were, but then I also am spared somewhat of my application and engagement towards them. I approve of a man who is the less fond of his child for having a scald head, or for being crooked; and not only when he is ill-conditioned, but also when he is of unhappy disposition, and imperfect in his limbs (God himself has abated so much from his value and natural estimation), provided he carry himself in this coldness of affection with moderation and exact justice: proximity, with me, lessens not defects, but rather aggravates them.

After all, according to what I understand in the science of benefit and acknowledgment, which is a subtle science, and of great use, I know no person whatever more free and less indebted than I am at this hour. What I do owe is simply to foreign obligations and benefits; as to anything else, no man is

more absolutely clear:

"Nec sunt mihi nota potentum
Munera."

["The gifts of great men are unknown to me."—AEneid, xii. 529.]

Princes give me a great deal if they take nothing from me; and do me good enough if they do me no harm; that's all I ask from them. O how am I obliged to God, that he has been pleased I should immediately receive from his bounty all I have, and specially reserved all my obligation to himself. How earnestly do I beg of his holy compassion that I may never owe essential thanks to any one. O happy liberty wherein I have thus far lived. May it continue with me to the last. I endeavour to have no express need of any one:

"In me omnis spec est mihi."

["All my hope is in myself."—Terence, Adelph., iii. 5, 9.]

'Tis what every one may do in himself, but more easily they whom God has placed in a condition exempt from natural and urgent necessities. It is a wretched and dangerous thing to depend upon others; we ourselves, in whom is ever the most just and safest dependence, are not sufficiently sure.

I have nothing mine but myself, and yet the possession is, in part, defective and borrowed. I fortify myself both in courage, which is the strongest assistant, and also in fortune, therein wherewith to satisfy myself, though everything else should forsake me. Hippias of Elis not only furnished himself with knowledge, that he might, at need, cheerfully retire from all other company to enjoy the Muses: nor only with the knowledge of philosophy, to teach his soul to be contented with itself, and bravely to subsist without outward conveniences, when fate would have it so; he was, moreover, so careful as to learn to cook, to shave himself, to make his own clothes, his own shoes and drawers, to provide for all his necessities in himself, and to wean himself from the assistance of others. A man more freely and cheerfully enjoys borrowed conveniences, when it is not an enjoyment forced and constrained by need; and when he has, in his own will and fortune, the means to live without them. I know myself very well; but 'tis hard for me to imagine any so pure liberality of any one towards me, any so frank and free hospitality, that would not appear to me discreditable, tyrannical, and tainted with reproach, if necessity had reduced me to it. As giving is an ambitious and authoritative quality, so is accepting a quality of submission; witness the insulting and quarrelsome refusal that Bajazet made of the presents that Tamerlane sent him; and those that were offered on the part of the Emperor Solyman to the Emperor of Calicut, so angered him, that he not only rudely rejected them, saying that neither he nor any of his predecessors had ever been wont to take, and that it was their office to give; but, moreover, caused the ambassadors sent with the gifts to be put into a dungeon. When Thetis, says Aristotle, flatters Jupiter, when the Lacedaemonians flatter the Athenians, they do not put them in mind of the good they have done them, which is always odious, but of the benefits they have received from them. Such as I see so frequently employ every one in their affairs, and thrust themselves into so much obligation, would never do it, did they but relish as I do the sweetness of a pure liberty, and did they but weigh, as wise: men should, the burden of obligation: 'tis sometimes, peradventure, fully paid, but 'tis never dissolved. 'Tis a miserable slavery to a man who loves to be at full liberty in all reapects. Such as know me, both above and below me in station, are able to say whether they have ever known a man less importuning, soliciting, entreating, and pressing upon others than I. If I am so, and a degree beyond all modern example, 'tis no great wonder, so many parts of my manners contributing to it: a little natural pride, an impatience at being refused, the moderation of my desires and designs, my incapacity for business, and my most beloved qualities, idleness and freedom; by all these together I have conceived a mortal hatred to being obliged to any other, or by any other than myself. I leave no stone unturned, to do without it, rather than employ the bounty of another in any light or important occasion or necessity whatever. My friends strangely trouble me when they ask me to ask a third person; and I think it costs me little less to disengage him who is indebted to me, by making use of him, than to engage myself to him who owes me nothing. These conditions being removed, and provided they require of me nothing if any great trouble or care (for I have declared mortal war against all care), I am very ready to do every one the best service I can. I have been very willing to seek occasion to do people a good turn, and to attach them to me; and methinks there is no more agreeable employment for our means. But I have yet more avoided receiving than sought occasions of giving, and moreover, according to Aristotle, it is more easy., My fortune has allowed me but little to do others good withal, and the little it can afford, is put into a pretty close hand. Had I been born a great person, I should have been ambitious to have made myself beloved, not to make myself feared or admired: shall I more plainly express it? I should more have endeavoured to please than to profit others. Cyrus very wisely, and by the mouth of a great captain, and still greater philosopher, prefers his bounty and benefits much before his valour and warlike conquests; and the elder Scipio, wherever he would raise himself in

esteem, sets a higher value upon his affability and humanity, than on his prowess and victories, and has always this glorious saying in his mouth: "That he has given his enemies as much occasion to love him as his friends." I will then say, that if a man must, of necessity, owe something, it ought to be by a more legitimate title than that whereof I am speaking, to which the necessity of this miserable war compels me; and not in so great a debt as that of my total preservation both of life and fortune: it overwhelms me.

I have a thousand times gone to bed in my own house with an apprehension that I should be betrayed and murdered that very night; compounding with fortune, that it might be without terror and with quick despatch; and, after my Paternoster, I have cried out,

"Impius haec tam culta novalia miles habebit!"

["Shall impious soldiers have these new-ploughed grounds?"
—Virgil, Ecl., i. 71.]

What remedy? 'tis the place of my birth, and that of most of my ancestors; they have here fixed their affection and name. We inure ourselves to whatever we are accustomed to; and in so miserable a condition as ours is, custom is a great bounty of nature, which benumbs out senses to the sufferance of many evils. A civil war has this with it worse than other wars have, to make us stand sentinels in our own houses.

"Quam miserum, porta vitam muroque tueri,
Vixque suae tutum viribus esse domus!"

["'Tis miserable to protect one's life by doors and walls, and to be
scarcely safe in one's own house."—Ovid, Trist., iv. I, 69.]

'Tis a grievous extremity for a man to be jostled even in his own house and domestic repose. The country where I live is always the first in arms and the last that lays them down, and where there is never an absolute peace:

"Tunc quoque, cum pax est, trepidant formidine belli....
Quoties Romam fortuna lacessit;
Hac iter est bellis.... Melius, Fortuna, dedisses
Orbe sub Eco sedem, gelidaque sub Arcto,
Errantesque domos."

["Even when there's peace, there is here still the dear of war when
Fortune troubles peace, this is ever the way by which war passes."
—Ovid, Trist., iii. 10, 67.]

["We might have lived happier in the remote East or in the icy
North, or among the wandering tribes."—Lucan, i. 255.]

I sometimes extract the means to fortify myself against these considerations from indifference and indolence, which, in some sort, bring us on to resolution. It often befalls me to imagine and expect mortal dangers with a kind of delight: I stupidly plunge myself headlong into death, without considering or taking a view of it, as into a deep and obscure abyss which swallows me up at one leap, and involves me in an instant in a profound sleep, without any sense of pain. And in these short and violent deaths, the consequence that I foresee administers more consolation to me than the effect does fear. They say, that as life is not better for being long, so death is better for being not long. I do not so much evade being dead, as I enter into confidence with dying. I wrap and shroud myself into the storm that is to blind and carry me away with the fury of a sudden and insensible attack. Moreover, if it should fall out that, as some gardeners say, roses and violets spring more odoriferous near garlic and onions, by reason that the last suck and imbibe all the ill odour of the earth; so, if these depraved natures should also attract all the malignity of my air and climate, and render it so much better and purer by their vicinity, I should not lose all. That cannot be: but there may be something in this, that goodness is more beautiful and attractive when it is rare; and that contrariety and diversity fortify and consolidate well-doing within itself, and inflame it by the jealousy of opposition and by glory. Thieves and robbers, of their special favour, have no particular spite at me; no more have I to them: I should have my hands too full. Like consciences are lodged under several sorts of robes; like cruelty, disloyalty, rapine; and so much the worse, and more falsely, when the more secure and concealed under colour of the laws. I less hate an open professed injury than one that is treacherous; an enemy in arms, than an enemy in a gown. Our fever has seized upon a body that is not much the worse for it; there was fire before, and now 'tis broken out into a flame; the noise is greater, not the evil. I ordinarily answer such as ask me the reason of my travels, "That I know very well what I fly from, but not what I seek." If they tell me

that there may be as little soundness amongst foreigners, and that their manners are no better than ours: I first reply, that it is hard to be believed;

"Tam multa: scelerum facies!"

["There are so many forms of crime."—Virgil, Georg., i. 506.]

secondly, that it is always gain to change an ill condition for one that is uncertain; and that the ills of others ought not to afflict us so much as our own.

I will not here omit, that I never mutiny so much against France, that I am not perfectly friends with Paris; that city has ever had my heart from my infancy, and it has fallen out, as of excellent things, that the more beautiful cities I have seen since, the more the beauty of this still wins upon my affection. I love her for herself, and more in her own native being, than in all the pomp of foreign and acquired embellishments. I love her tenderly, even to her warts and blemishes. I am a Frenchman only through this great city, great in people, great in the felicity of her situation; but, above all, great and incomparable in variety and diversity of commodities: the glory of France, and one of the most noble ornaments of the world. May God drive our divisions far from her. Entire and united, I think her sufficiently defended from all other violences. I give her caution that, of all sorts of people, those will be the worst that shall set her in discord; I have no fear for her, but of herself, and, certainly, I have as much fear for her as for any other part of the kingdom. Whilst she shall continue, I shall never want a retreat, where I may stand at bay, sufficient to make me amends for parting with any other retreat.

Not because Socrates has said so, but because it is in truth my own humour, and peradventure not without some excess, I look upon all men as my compatriots, and embrace a Polander as a Frenchman, preferring the universal and common tie to all national ties whatever. I am not much taken with the sweetness of a native air: acquaintance wholly new and wholly my own appear to me full as good as the other common and fortuitous ones with Four neighbours: friendships that are purely of our own acquiring ordinarily carry it above those to which the communication of climate or of blood oblige us. Nature has placed us in the world free and unbound; we imprison ourselves in certain straits, like the kings of Persia, who obliged themselves to drink no other water but that of the river Choaspes, foolishly quitted claim to their right in all other streams, and, so far as concerned themselves, dried up all the other rivers of the world. What Socrates did towards his end, to look upon a sentence of banishment as worse than a sentence of death against him, I shall, I think, never be either so decrepid or so strictly habituated to my own country to be of that opinion. These celestial lives have images enough that I embrace more by esteem than affection; and they have some also so elevated and extraordinary that I cannot embrace them so much as by esteem, forasmuch as I cannot conceive them. That fancy was singular in a man who thought the whole world his city; it is true that he disdained travel, and had hardly ever set his foot out of the Attic territories. What say you to his complaint of the money his friends offered to save his life, and that he refused to come out of prison by the mediation of others, in order not to disobey the laws in a time when they were otherwise so corrupt? These examples are of the first kind for me; of the second, there are others that I could find out in the same person: many of these rare examples surpass the force of my action, but some of them, moreover, surpass the force of my judgment.

Besides these reasons, travel is in my opinion a very profitable exercise; the soul is there continually employed in observing new and unknown things, and I do not know, as I have often said a better school wherein to model life than by incessantly exposing to it the diversity of so many other lives, fancies, and usances, and by making it relish a perpetual variety of forms of human nature. The body is, therein, neither idle nor overwrought; and that moderate agitation puts it in breath. I can keep on horseback, tormented with the stone as I am, without alighting or being weary, eight or ten hours together:

"Vires ultra sorternque senectae."

["Beyond the strength and lot of age."—AEneid, vi. 114.]

No season is enemy to me but the parching heat of a scorching sun; for the umbrellas made use of in Italy, ever since the time of the ancient Romans, more burden a man's arm than they relieve his head. I would fain know how it was that the Persians, so long ago and in the infancy of luxury, made ventilators where they wanted them, and planted shades, as Xenophon reports they did. I love rain, and to dabble in the dirt, as well as ducks do. The change of air and climate never touches me; every sky is alike; I am only troubled with inward alterations which I breed within myself, and those are not so frequent in travel. I am hard to be got out, but being once upon the road, I hold out as well as the best. I take as much pains in little as in great attempts, and am as solicitous to equip myself for a short journey, if but to visit a neighbour, as for the longest voyage. I have learned to travel after the Spanish fashion, and to make but one stage of a great many miles; and in excessive heats I always travel by night, from sun set to sunrise. The other method of baiting by the way, in haste and hurry to gobble up a dinner, is,

especially in short days, very inconvenient. My horses perform the better; never any horse tired under me that was able to hold out the first day's journey. I water them at every brook I meet, and have only a care they have so much way to go before I come to my inn, as will digest the water in their bellies. My unwillingness to rise in a morning gives my servants leisure to dine at their ease before they set out; for my own part, I never eat too late; my appetite comes to me in eating, and not else; I am never hungry but at table.

Some of my friends blame me for continuing this travelling humour, being married and old. But they are out in't; 'tis the best time to leave a man's house, when he has put it into a way of continuing without him, and settled such order as corresponds with its former government. 'Tis much greater imprudence to abandon it to a less faithful housekeeper, and who will be less solicitous to look after your affairs.

The most useful and honourable knowledge and employment for the mother of a family is the science of good housewifery. I see some that are covetous indeed, but very few that are good managers. 'Tis the supreme quality of a woman, which a man ought to seek before any other, as the only dowry that must ruin or preserve our houses. Let men say what they will, according to the experience I have learned, I require in married women the economical virtue above all other virtues; I put my wife to't, as a concern of her own, leaving her, by my absence, the whole government of my affairs. I see, and am vexed to see, in several families I know, Monsieur about noon come home all jaded and ruffled about his affairs, when Madame is still dressing her hair and tricking up herself, forsooth, in her closet: this is for queens to do, and that's a question, too: 'tis ridiculous and unjust that the laziness of our wives should be maintained with our sweat and labour. No man, so far as in me lie, shall have a clearer, a more quiet and free fruition of his estate than I. If the husband bring matter, nature herself will that the wife find the form.

As to the duties of conjugal friendship, that some think to be impaired by these absences, I am quite of another opinion. It is, on the contrary, an intelligence that easily cools by a too frequent and assiduous companionship. Every strange woman appears charming, and we all find by experience that being continually together is not so pleasing as to part for a time and meet again. These interruptions fill me with fresh affection towards my family, and render my house more pleasant to me. Change warms my appetite to the one and then to the other. I know that the arms of friendship are long enough to reach from the one end of the world to the other, and especially this, where there is a continual communication of offices that rouse the obligation and remembrance. The Stoics say that there is so great connection and relation amongst the sages, that he who dines in France nourishes his companion in Egypt; and that whoever does but hold out his finger, in what part of the world soever, all the sages upon the habitable earth feel themselves assisted by it. Fruition and possession principally appertain to the imagination; it more fervently and constantly embraces what it is in quest of, than what we hold in our arms. Cast up your daily amusements; you will find that you are most absent from your friend when he is present with you; his presence relaxes your attention, and gives you liberty to absent yourself at every turn and upon every occasion. When I am away at Rome, I keep and govern my house, and the conveniences I there left; see my walls rise, my trees shoot, and my revenue increase or decrease, very near as well as when I am there:

"Ante oculos errat domus, errat forma locorum."

["My house and the forms of places float before my eyes"
—Ovid, Trist, iii. 4, 57.]

If we enjoy nothing but what we touch, we may say farewell to the money in our chests, and to our sons when they are gone a hunting. We will have them nearer to us: is the garden, or half a day's journey from home, far? What is ten leagues: far or near? If near, what is eleven, twelve, or thirteen, and so by degrees. In earnest, if there be a woman who can tell her husband what step ends the near and what step begins the remote, I would advise her to stop between;

"Excludat jurgia finis . . . .
Utor permisso; caudaeque pilos ut equinae
Paulatim vello, et demo unum, demo etiam unum
Dum cadat elusus ratione ruentis acervi:"

["Let the end shut out all disputes . . . . I use what is permitted; I pluck out the hairs of the horse's tail one by one; while I thus outwit my opponent."—Horace, Ep., ii, I, 38, 45]

and let them boldly call philosophy to their assistance; in whose teeth it may be cast that, seeing it neither discerns the one nor the other end of the joint, betwixt the too much and the little, the long and the short, the light and the heavy, the near and the remote; that seeing it discovers neither the beginning nor the end, it must needs judge very uncertainly of the middle:

"Rerum natura nullam nobis dedit cognitionem finium."

["Nature has green to us no knowledge of the end of things."
—Cicero, Acad., ii. 29.]

Are they not still wives and friends to the dead who are not at the end of this but in the other world? We embrace not only the absent, but those who have been, and those who are not yet. We do not promise in marriage to be continually twisted and linked together, like some little animals that we see, or, like the bewitched folks of Karenty,—[Karantia, a town in the isle of Rugen. See Saxo-Grammaticus, Hist. of Denmark, book xiv.]—tied together like dogs; and a wife ought not to be so greedily enamoured of her husband's foreparts, that she cannot endure to see him turn his back, if occasion be. But may not this saying of that excellent painter of woman's humours be here introduced, to show the reason of their complaints?

"Uxor, si cesses, aut to amare cogitat,
Aut tete amari, aut potare, aut animo obsequi;
Et tibi bene esse soli, cum sibi sit male;"

["Your wife, if you loiter, thinks that you love or are beloved; or that you are drinking or following your inclination; and that it is well for you when it is ill for her (all the pleasure is yours and hers all the care)."
—Terence, Adelph., act i., sc. I, v. 7.]

or may it not be, that of itself opposition and contradiction entertain and nourish them, and that they sufficiently accommodate themselves, provided they incommodate you?

In true friendship, wherein I am perfect, I more give myself to my friend, than I endeavour to attract him to me. I am not only better pleased in doing him service than if he conferred a benefit upon me, but, moreover, had rather he should do himself good than me, and he most obliges me when he does so; and if absence be either more pleasant or convenient for him, 'tis also more acceptable to me than his presence; neither is it properly absence, when we can write to one another: I have sometimes made good use of our separation from one another: we better filled and further extended the possession of life in being parted. He—[La Boetie.]—lived, enjoyed, and saw for me, and I for him, as fully as if he had himself been there; one part of us remained idle, and we were too much blended in one another when we were together; the distance of place rendered the conjunction of our wills more rich. This insatiable desire of personal presence a little implies weakness in the fruition of souls.

As to what concerns age, which is alleged against me, 'tis quite contrary; 'tis for youth to subject itself to common opinions, and to curb itself to please others; it has wherewithal to please both the people and itself; we have but too much ado to please ourselves alone. As natural conveniences fail, let us supply them with those that are artificial. 'Tis injustice to excuse youth for pursuing its pleasures, and to forbid old men to seek them. When young, I concealed my wanton passions with prudence; now I am old, I chase away melancholy by debauch. And thus do the platonic laws forbid men to travel till forty or fifty years old, so that travel might be more useful and instructive in so mature an age. I should sooner subscribe to the second article of the same Laws, which forbids it after threescore.

"But, at such an age, you will never return from so long a journey." What care I for that? I neither undertake it to return, nor to finish it my business is only to keep myself in motion, whilst motion pleases me; I only walk for the walk's sake. They who run after a benefit or a hare, run not; they only run who run at base, and to exercise their running. My design is divisible throughout: it is not grounded upon any great hopes: every day concludes my expectation: and the journey of my life is carried on after the same manner. And yet I have seen places enough a great way off, where I could have wished to have stayed. And why not, if Chrysippus, Cleanthes, Diogenes, Zeno, Antipater, so many sages of the sourest sect, readily abandoned their country, without occasion of complaint, and only for the enjoyment of another air. In earnest, that which most displeases me in all my travels is, that I cannot resolve to settle my abode where I should best like, but that I must always propose to myself to return, to accommodate myself to the common humour.

If I feared to die in any other place than that of my birth; if I thought I should die more uneasily remote from my own family, I should hardly go out of France; I should not, without fear, step out of my parish; I feel death always pinching me by the throat or by the back. But I am otherwise constituted; 'tis in all places alike to me. Yet, might I have my choice, I think I should rather choose to die on horseback than in bed; out of my own house, and far from my own people. There is more heartbreaking than consolation in taking leave of one's friends; I am willing to omit that civility, for that, of all the offices of friendship, is the only one that is unpleasant; and I could, with all my heart, dispense with that great and eternal farewell. If there be any convenience in so many standers-by, it brings an hundred

inconveniences along with it. I have seen many dying miserably surrounded with all this train: 'tis a crowd that chokes them. 'Tis against duty, and is a testimony of little kindness and little care, to permit you to die in repose; one torments your eyes, another your ears, another your tongue; you have neither sense nor member that is not worried by them. Your heart is wounded with compassion to hear the mourning of friends, and, perhaps with anger, to hear the counterfeit condolings of pretenders. Who ever has been delicate and sensitive, when well, is much more so when ill. In such a necessity, a gentle hand is required, accommodated to his sentiment, to scratch him just in the place where he itches, otherwise scratch him not at all. If we stand in need of a wise woman—[midwife, Fr. 'sage femme'.]—to bring us into the world, we have much more need of a still wiser man to help us out of it. Such a one, and a friend to boot, a man ought to purchase at any cost for such an occasion. I am not yet arrived to that pitch of disdainful vigour that is fortified in itself, that nothing can assist or disturb; I am of a lower form; I endeavour to hide myself, and to escape from this passage, not by fear, but by art. I do not intend in this act of dying to make proof and show of my constancy. For whom should I do it? all the right and interest I have in reputation will then cease. I content myself with a death involved within itself, quiet, solitary, and all my own, suitable to my retired and private life; quite contrary to the Roman superstition, where a man was looked upon as unhappy who died without speaking, and who had not his nearest relations to close his eyes. I have enough to do to comfort myself, without having to console others; thoughts enough in my head, not to need that circumstances should possess me with new; and matter enough to occupy me without borrowing. This affair is out of the part of society; 'tis the act of one single person. Let us live and be merry amongst our friends; let us go repine and die amongst strangers; a man may find those, for his money, who will shift his pillow and rub his feet, and will trouble him no more than he would have them; who will present to him an indifferent countenance, and suffer him to govern himself, and to complain according to his own method.

I wean myself daily by my reason from this childish and inhuman humour, of desiring by our sufferings to move the compassion and mourning of our friends: we stretch our own incommodities beyond their just extent when we extract tears from others; and the constancy which we commend in every one in supporting his adverse fortune, we accuse and reproach in our friends when the evil is our own; we are not satisfied that they should be sensible of our condition only, unless they be, moreover, afflicted. A man should diffuse joy, but, as much as he can, smother grief. He who makes himself lamented without reason is a man not to be lamented when there shall be real cause: to be always complaining is the way never to be lamented; by making himself always in so pitiful a taking, he is never commiserated by any. He who makes himself out dead when he is alive, is subject to be thought living when he is dying. I have seen some who have taken it ill when they have been told that they looked well, and that their pulse was good; restrain their smiles, because they betrayed a recovery, and be angry, at their health because it was not to be lamented: and, which is a great deal more, these were not women. I describe my infirmities, such as they really are, at most, and avoid all expressions of evil prognostic and composed exclamations. If not mirth, at least a temperate countenance in the standers-by, is proper in the presence of a wise sick man: he does not quarrel with health, for, seeing himself in a contrary condition, he is pleased to contemplate it sound and entire in others, and at least to enjoy it for company: he does not, for feeling himself melt away, abandon all living thoughts, nor avoid ordinary discourse. I would study sickness whilst I am well; when it has seized me, it will make its impression real enough, without the help of my imagination. We prepare ourselves beforehand for the journeys we undertake, and resolve upon them; we leave the appointment of the hour when to take horse to the company, and in their favour defer it.

I find this unexpected advantage in the publication of my manners, that it in some sort serves me for a rule. I have, at times, some consideration of not betraying the history of my life: this public declaration obliges me to keep my way, and not to give the lie to the image I have drawn of my qualities, commonly less deformed and contradictory than consists with the malignity and infirmity of the judgments of this age. The uniformity and simplicity of my manners produce a face of easy interpretation; but because the fashion is a little new and not in use, it gives too great opportunity to slander. Yet so it is, that whoever would fairly assail me, I think I so sufficiently assist his purpose in my known and avowed imperfections, that he may that way satisfy his ill-nature without fighting with the wind. If I myself, to anticipate accusation and discovery, confess enough to frustrate his malice, as he conceives, 'tis but reason that he make use of his right of amplification, and to wire-draw my vices as far as he can; attack has its rights beyond justice; and let him make the roots of those errors I have laid open to him shoot up into trees: let him make his use, not only of those I am really affected with, but also of those that only threaten me; injurious vices, both in quality and number; let him cudgel me that way. I should willingly follow the example of the philosopher Bion: Antigonus being about to reproach him with the meanness of his birth, he presently cut him short with this declaration: "I am," said he, "the son of a slave, a butcher, and branded, and of a strumpet my father married in the lowest of his fortune; both of them were whipped for offences they had committed. An orator bought me, when a child, and finding me a pretty and hopeful boy, bred me up, and when he died left me all his estate, which I have transported into this city of Athens, and here settled myself to the study of philosophy. Let

the historians never trouble themselves with inquiring about me: I will tell them about it." A free and generous confession enervates reproach and disarms slander. So it is that, one thing with another, I fancy men as often commend as undervalue me beyond reason; as, methinks also, from my childhood, in rank and degree of honour, they have given me a place rather above than below my right. I should find myself more at ease in a country where these degrees were either regulated or not regarded. Amongst men, when an altercation about the precedence either of walking or sitting exceeds three replies, 'tis reputed uncivil. I never stick at giving or taking place out of rule, to avoid the trouble of such ceremony; and never any man had a mind to go before me, but I permitted him to do it.

Besides this profit I make of writing of myself, I have also hoped for this other advantage, that if it should fall out that my humour should please or jump with those of some honest man before I die, he would then desire and seek to be acquainted with me. I have given him a great deal of made-way; for all that he could have, in many years, acquired by close familiarity, he has seen in three days in this memorial, and more surely and exactly. A pleasant fancy: many things that I would not confess to any one in particular, I deliver to the public, and send my best friends to a bookseller's shop, there to inform themselves concerning my most secret thoughts;

"Excutienda damus praecordia."

["We give our hearts to be examined."—Persius, V. 22.]

Did I, by good direction, know where to seek any one proper for my conversation, I should certainly go a great way to find him out: for the sweetness of suitable and agreeable company cannot; in my opinion, be bought too dear. O what a thing is a true friend! how true is that old saying, that the use of a friend is more pleasing and necessary than the elements of water and fire!

To return to my subject: there is, then, no great harm in dying privately and far from home; we conceive ourselves obliged to retire for natural actions less unseemly and less terrible than this. But, moreover, such as are reduced to spin out a long languishing life, ought not, perhaps, to wish to trouble a great family with their continual miseries; therefore the Indians, in a certain province, thought it just to knock a man on the head when reduced to such a necessity; and in another of their provinces, they all forsook him to shift for himself as well as he could. To whom do they not, at last, become tedious and insupportable? the ordinary offices of fife do not go that length. You teach your best friends to be cruel perforce; hardening wife and children by long use neither to regard nor to lament your sufferings. The groans of the stone are grown so familiar to my people, that nobody takes any notice of them. And though we should extract some pleasure from their conversation (which does not always happen, by reason of the disparity of conditions, which easily begets contempt or envy toward any one whatever), is it not too much to make abuse of this half a lifetime? The more I should see them constrain themselves out of affection to be serviceable to me, the more I should be sorry for their pains. We have liberty to lean, but not to lay our whole weight upon others, so as to prop ourselves by their ruin; like him who caused little children's throats to be cut to make use of their blood for the cure of a disease he had, or that other, who was continually supplied with tender young girls to keep his old limbs warm in the night, and to mix the sweetness of their breath with his, sour and stinking. I should readily advise Venice as a retreat in this decline of life. Decrepitude is a solitary quality. I am sociable even to excess, yet I think it reasonable that I should now withdraw my troubles from the sight of the world and keep them to myself. Let me shrink and draw up myself in my own shell, like a tortoise, and learn to see men without hanging upon them. I should endanger them in so slippery a passage: 'tis time to turn my back to company.

"But, in these travels, you will be taken ill in some wretched place, where nothing can be had to relieve you." I always carry most things necessary about me; and besides, we cannot evade Fortune if she once resolves to attack us. I need nothing extraordinary when I am sick. I will not be beholden to my bolus to do that for me which nature cannot. At the very beginning of my fevers and sicknesses that cast me down, whilst still entire, and but little, disordered in health, I reconcile myself to Almighty God by the last Christian, offices, and find myself by so doing less oppressed and more easy, and have got, methinks, so much the better of my disease. And I have yet less need of a notary or counsellor than of a physician. What I have not settled of my affairs when I was in health, let no one expect I should do it when I am sick. What I will do for the service of death is always done; I durst not so much as one day defer it; and if nothing be done, 'tis as much as to say either that doubt hindered my choice (and sometimes 'tis well chosen not to choose), or that I was positively resolved not to do anything at all.

I write my book for few men and for few years. Had it been matter of duration, I should have put it into firmer language. According to the continual variation that ours has been subject to, up to this day, who can expect that its present form should be in use fifty years hence? It slips every day through our fingers, and since I was born, it is altered above one-half. We say that it is now perfect; and every age says the same of its own. I shall hardly trust to that, so long as it varies and changes as it does. 'Tis for

good and useful writings to rivet it to them, and its reputation will go according to the fortune of our state. For which reason I am not afraid to insert in it several private articles, which will spend their use amongst the men that are now living, and that concern the particular knowledge of some who will see further into them than every common reader. I will not, after all, as I often hear dead men spoken of, that men should say of me: "He judged, he lived so and so; he would have done this or that; could he have spoken when he was dying, he would have said so or so, and have given this thing or t'other; I knew him better than any." Now, as much as decency permits, I here discover my inclinations and affections; but I do more willingly and freely by word of mouth to any one who desires to be informed. So it is that in these memoirs, if any one observe, he will find that I have either told or designed to tell all; what I cannot express, I point out with my finger:

"Verum animo satis haec vestigia parva sagaci
Sunt, per quae possis cognoscere caetera tute"

["By these footsteps a sagacious mind many easily find all other matters (are sufficient to enable one to learn the rest well.)"
—Lucretius, i. 403.]

I leave nothing to be desired or to be guessed at concerning me. If people must be talking of me, I would have it to be justly and truly; I would come again, with all my heart, from the other world to give any one the lie who should report me other than I was, though he did it to honour me. I perceive that people represent, even living men, quite another thing than what they really are; and had I not stoutly defended a friend whom I have lost,—[De la Boetie.]—they would have torn him into a thousand contrary pieces.

To conclude the account of my poor humours, I confess that in my travels I seldom reach my inn but that it comes into my mind to consider whether I could there be sick and dying at my ease. I desire to be lodged in some private part of the house, remote from all noise, ill scents, and smoke. I endeavour to flatter death by these frivolous circumstances; or, to say better, to discharge myself from all other incumbrances, that I may have nothing to do, nor be troubled with anything but that which will lie heavy enough upon me without any other load. I would have my death share in the ease and conveniences of my life; 'tis a great part of it, and of great importance, and I hope it will not in the future contradict the past. Death has some forms that are more easy than others, and receives divers qualities, according to every one's fancy. Amongst the natural deaths, that which proceeds from weakness and stupor I think the most favourable; amongst those that are violent, I can worse endure to think of a precipice than of the fall of a house that will crush me in a moment, and of a wound with a sword than of a harquebus shot; I should rather have chosen to poison myself with Socrates, than stab myself with Cato. And, though it, be all one, yet my imagination makes as great a difference as betwixt death and life, betwixt throwing myself into a burning furnace and plunging into the channel of a river: so idly does our fear more concern itself in the means than the effect. It is but an instant, 'tis true, but withal an instant of such weight, that I would willingly give a great many days of my life to pass it over after my own fashion. Since every one's imagination renders it more or less terrible, and since every one has some choice amongst the several forms of dying, let us try a little further to find some one that is wholly clear from all offence. Might not one render it even voluptuous, like the Commoyientes of Antony and Cleopatra? I set aside the brave and exemplary efforts produced by philosophy and religion; but, amongst men of little mark there have been found some, such as Petronius and Tigellinus at Rome, condemned to despatch themselves, who have, as it were, rocked death asleep with the delicacy of their preparations; they have made it slip and steal away in the height of their accustomed diversions amongst girls and good fellows; not a word of consolation, no mention of making a will, no ambitious affectation of constancy, no talk of their future condition; amongst sports, feastings, wit, and mirth, common and indifferent discourses, music, and amorous verses. Were it not possible for us to imitate this resolution after a more decent manner? Since there are deaths that are good for fools, deaths good for the wise, let us find out such as are fit for those who are betwixt both. My imagination suggests to me one that is easy, and, since we must die, to be desired. The Roman tyrants thought they did, in a manner, give a criminal life when they gave him the choice of his death. But was not Theophrastus, that so delicate, so modest, and so wise a philosopher, compelled by reason, when he durst say this verse, translated by Cicero:

"Vitam regit fortuna, non sapientia?"

["Fortune, not wisdom, sways human life."
—Cicero, Tusc. Quaes., V. 31.]

Fortune assists the facility of the bargain of my life, having placed it in such a condition that for the future it can be neither advantage nor hindrance to those who are concerned in me; 'tis a condition that I would have accepted at any time of my life; but in this occasion of trussing up my baggage, I am

particularly pleased that in dying I shall neither do them good nor harm. She has so ordered it, by a cunning compensation, that they who may pretend to any considerable advantage by my death will, at the same time, sustain a material inconvenience. Death sometimes is more grievous to us, in that it is grievous to others, and interests us in their interest as much as in our own, and sometimes more.

In this conveniency of lodging that I desire, I mix nothing of pomp and amplitude—I hate it rather; but a certain plain neatness, which is oftenest found in places where there is less of art, and that Nature has adorned with some grace that is all her own:

"Non ampliter, sea munditer convivium."

["To eat not largely, but cleanly."—Nepos, Life of Atticus, c. 13]

"Plus salis quam sumptus."

["Rather enough than costly (More wit than cost)"—Nonius, xi. 19.]

And besides, 'tis for those whose affairs compel them to travel in the depth of winter through the Grisons country to be surprised upon the way with great inconveniences. I, who, for the most part, travel for my pleasure, do not order my affairs so ill. If the way be foul on my right hand, I turn on my left; if I find myself unfit to ride, I stay where I am; and, so doing, in earnest I see nothing that is not as pleasant and commodious as my own house. 'Tis true that I always find superfluity superfluous, and observe a kind of trouble even in abundance itself. Have I left anything behind me unseen, I go back to see it; 'tis still on my way; I trace no certain line, either straight or crooked.—[Rousseau has translated this passage in his Emile, book v.]—Do I not find in the place to which I go what was reported to me—as it often falls out that the judgments of others do not jump with mine, and that I have found their reports for the most part false—I never complain of losing my labour: I have, at least, informed myself that what was told me was not true.

I have a constitution of body as free, and a palate as indifferent, as any man living: the diversity of manners of several nations only affects me in the pleasure of variety: every usage has its reason. Let the plate and dishes be pewter, wood, or earth; my meat be boiled or roasted; let them give me butter or oil, of nuts or olives, hot or cold, 'tis all one to me; and so indifferent, that growing old, I accuse this generous faculty, and would wish that delicacy and choice should correct the indiscretion of my appetite, and sometimes soothe my stomach. When I have been abroad out of France and that people, out of courtesy, have asked me if I would be served after the French manner, I laughed at the question, and always frequented tables the most filled with foreigners. I am ashamed to see our countrymen besotted with this foolish humour of quarrelling with forms contrary to their own; they seem to be out of their element when out of their own village: wherever they go, they keep to their own fashions and abominate those of strangers. Do they meet with a compatriot in Hungary? O the happy chance! They are henceforward inseparable; they cling together, and their whole discourse is to condemn the barbarous manners they see about them. Why barbarous, because they are not French? And those have made the best use of their travels who have observed most to speak against. Most of them go for no other end but to come back again; they proceed in their travel with vast gravity and circumspection, with a silent and incommunicable prudence, preserving themselves from the contagion of an unknown air. What I am saying of them puts me in mind of something like it I have at times observed in some of our young courtiers; they will not mix with any but men of their own sort, and look upon us as men of another world, with disdain or pity. Put them upon any discourse but the intrigues of the court, and they are utterly at a loss; as very owls and novices to us as we are to them. 'Tis truly said that a well-bred man is a compound man. I, on the contrary, travel very much sated with our own fashions; I do not look for Gascons in Sicily; I have left enough of them at home; I rather seek for Greeks and Persians; they are the men I endeavour to be acquainted with and the men I study; 'tis there that I bestow and employ myself. And which is more, I fancy that I have met but with few customs that are not as good as our own; I have not, I confess, travelled very far; scarce out of the sight of the vanes of my own house.

As to the rest, most of the accidental company a man falls into upon the road beget him more trouble than pleasure; I waive them as much as I civilly can, especially now that age seems in some sort to privilege and sequester me from the common forms. You suffer for others or others suffer for you; both of them inconveniences of importance enough, but the latter appears to me the greater. 'Tis a rare fortune, but of inestimable solace; to have a worthy man, one of a sound judgment and of manners conformable to your own, who takes a delight to bear you company. I have been at an infinite loss for such upon my travels. But such a companion should be chosen and acquired from your first setting out. There can be no pleasure to me without communication: there is not so much as a sprightly thought comes into my mind, that it does not grieve me to have produced alone, and that I have no one to communicate it to:

"Si cum hac exceptione detur sapientia, ut illam inclusam teneam, nec

enuntiem, rejiciam."

["If wisdom be conferred with this reservation, that I must keep it to myself, and not communicate it to others, I would none of it." —Seneca, Ep., 6.]

This other has strained it one note higher:

"Si contigerit ea vita sapienti, ut ommum rerum afliuentibus copiis, quamvis omnia, quae cognitione digna sunt, summo otio secum ipse consideret et contempletur, tamen, si solitudo tanta sit, ut hominem videre non possit, excedat a vita."

["If such a condition of life should happen to a wise man, that in the greatest plenty of all conveniences he might, at the most undisturbed leisure, consider and contemplate all things worth the knowing, yet if his solitude be such that he must not see a man, let him depart from life."—Cicero, De Offic., i. 43.]

Architas pleases me when he says, "that it would be unpleasant, even in heaven itself, to wander in those great and divine celestial bodies without a companion. But yet 'tis much better to be alone than in foolish and troublesome company. Aristippus loved to live as a stranger in all places:

"Me si fata meis paterentur ducere vitam
Auspiciis,"

["If the fates would let me live in my own way."—AEneid, iv. 340.]

I should choose to pass away the greatest part of my life on horseback:

"Visere gestiens,
Qua pane debacchentur ignes,
Qua nebula, pluviique rores."

["Visit the regions where the sun burns, where are the thick rain-clouds and the frosts."—Horace, Od., iii. 3, 54.]

"Have you not more easy diversions at home? What do you there want? Is not your house situated in a sweet and healthful air, sufficiently furnished, and more than sufficiently large? Has not the royal majesty been more than once there entertained with all its train? Are there not more below your family in good ease than there are above it in eminence? Is there any local, extraordinary, indigestible thought that afflicts you?"

"Qua to nunc coquat, et vexet sub pectore fixa."

["That may now worry you, and vex, fixed in your breast." —Cicero, De Senect, c. 1, Ex Ennio.]

"Where do you think to live without disturbance?"

"Nunquam simpliciter Fortuna indulget."

["Fortune is never simply complaisant (unmixed)." —Quintus Curtius, iv. 14]

You see, then, it is only you that trouble yourself; you will everywhere follow yourself, and everywhere complain; for there is no satisfaction here below, but either for brutish or for divine souls. He who, on so just an occasion, has no contentment, where will he think to find it? How many thousands of men terminate their wishes in such a condition as yours? Do but reform yourself; for that is wholly in your own power! whereas you have no other right but patience towards fortune:

"Nulla placida quies est, nisi quam ratio composuit."

["There is no tranquillity but that which reason has conferred." —Seneca, Ep., 56.]

I see the reason of this advice, and see it perfectly well; but he might sooner have done, and more pertinently, in bidding me in one word be wise; that resolution is beyond wisdom; 'tis her precise work and product. Thus the physician keeps preaching to a poor languishing patient to "be cheerful"; but he would advise him a little more discreetly in bidding him "be well." For my part, I am but a man of the common sort. 'Tis a wholesome precept, certain and easy to be understood, "Be content with what you have," that is to say, with reason: and yet to follow this advice is no more in the power of the wise men of the world than in me. 'Tis a common saying, but of a terrible extent: what does it not comprehend?

All things fall under discretion and qualification. I know very well that, to take it by the letter, this pleasure of travelling is a testimony of uneasiness and irresolution, and, in sooth, these two are our governing and predominating qualities. Yes, I confess, I see nothing, not so much as in a dream, in a wish, whereon I could set up my rest: variety only, and the possession of diversity, can satisfy me; that is, if anything can. In travelling, it pleases me that I may stay where I like, without inconvenience, and that I have a place wherein commodiously to divert myself. I love a private life, because 'tis my own choice that I love it, not by any dissenting from or dislike of public life, which, peradventure, is as much according to my complexion. I serve my prince more cheerfully because it is by the free election of my own judgment and reason, without any particular obligation; and that I am not reduced and constrained so to do for being rejected or disliked by the other party; and so of all the rest. I hate the morsels that necessity carves me; any commodity upon which I had only to depend would have me by the throat;

"Alter remus aquas, alter mihi radat arenas;"

["Let me have one oar in the water, and with the other rake the shore."—Propertius, iii. 3, 23.]

one cord will never hold me fast enough. You will say, there is vanity in this way of living. But where is there not? All these fine precepts are vanity, and all wisdom is vanity:

"Dominus novit cogitationes sapientum, quoniam vanae sunt."

["The Lord knoweth the thoughts of the wise, that they are vain." —Ps. xciii. II; or I Cor. iii. 20.]

These exquisite subtleties are only fit for sermons; they are discourses that will send us all saddled into the other world. Life is a material and corporal motion, an action imperfect and irregular of its own proper essence; I make it my business to serve it according to itself:

"Quisque suos patimur manes."

["We each of us suffer our own particular demon."—AEneid, vi. 743.]

"Sic est faciendum, ut contra naturam universam nihil contendamus; ea tamen conservata propriam sequamur."

["We must so order it as by no means to contend against universal nature; but yet, that rule being observed, to follow our own." —Cicero, De Offcc., i. 31.]

To what end are these elevated points of philosophy, upon which no human being can rely? and those rules that exceed both our use and force?

I see often that we have theories of life set before us which neither the proposer nor those who hear him have any hope, nor, which is more, any inclination to follow. Of the same sheet of paper whereon the judge has but just written a sentence against an adulterer, he steals a piece whereon to write a love-letter to his companion's wife. She whom you have but just now illicitly embraced will presently, even in your hearing, more loudly inveigh against the same fault in her companion than a Portia would do;—[The chaste daughter of Cato of Utica.]—and men there are who will condemn others to death for crimes that they themselves do not repute so much as faults. I have, in my youth, seen a man of good rank with one hand present to the people verses that excelled both in wit and debauchery, and with the other, at the same time, the most ripe and pugnacious theological reformation that the world has been treated withal these many years. And so men proceed; we let the laws and precepts follow their way; ourselves keep another course, not only from debauchery of manners, but ofttimes by judgment and contrary opinion. Do but hear a philosophical lecture; the invention, eloquence, pertinency immediately strike upon your mind and move you; there is nothing that touches or stings your conscience; 'tis not to this they address themselves. Is not this true? It made Aristo say, that neither a bath nor a lecture did aught unless it scoured and made men clean. One may stop at the skin; but it is after the marrow is picked out as, after we have swallowed good wine out of a fine cup, we examine the designs and workmanship. In all the courts of ancient philosophy, this is to be found, that the same teacher publishes rules of temperance and at the same time lessons in love and wantonness; Xenophon, in the very bosom of Clinias, wrote against the Aristippic virtue. 'Tis not that there is any miraculous conversion in it that makes them thus wavering; 'tis that Solon represents himself, sometimes in his own person, and sometimes in that of a legislator; one while he speaks for the crowd, and another for himself; taking the free and natural rules for his own share, feeling assured of a firm and entire health:

"Curentur dubii medicis majoribus aegri."

["Desperate maladies require the best doctors."

—Juvenal, xiii. 124.]

Antisthenes allows a sage to love, and to do whatever he thinks convenient, without regard to the laws, forasmuch as he is better advised than they, and has a greater knowledge of virtue. His disciple Diogenes said, that "men to perturbations were to oppose reason: to fortune, courage: to the laws, nature." For tender stomachs, constrained and artificial recipes must be prescribed: good and strong stomachs serve themselves simply with the prescriptions of their own natural appetite; after this manner do our physicians proceed, who eat melons and drink iced wines, whilst they confine their patients to syrups and sops. "I know not," said the courtezan Lais, "what they may talk of books, wisdom, and philosophy; but these men knock as often at my door as any others." At the same rate that our licence carries us beyond what is lawful and allowed, men have, often beyond universal reason, stretched the precepts and rules of our life:

"Nemo satis credit tantum delinquere, quantum
Permittas."

["No one thinks he has done ill to the full extent of what he may."
—Juvenal, xiv. 233.]

It were to be wished that there was more proportion betwixt the command and the obedience; and the mark seems to be unjust to which one cannot attain. There is no so good man, who so squares all his thoughts and actions to the laws, that he is not faulty enough to deserve hanging ten times in his life; and he may well be such a one, as it were great injustice and great harm to punish and ruin:

"Ole, quid ad te
De cute quid faciat ille vel ille sua?"

["Olus, what is it to thee what he or she does with their skin?"
—Martial, vii. 9, I.]

and such an one there may be, who has no way offended the laws, who, nevertheless, would not deserve the character of a virtuous man, and whom philosophy would justly condemn to be whipped; so unequal and perplexed is this relation. We are so far from being good men, according to the laws of God, that we cannot be so according to our own human wisdom never yet arrived at the duties it had itself prescribed; and could it arrive there, it would still prescribe to itself others beyond, to which it would ever aspire and pretend; so great an enemy to consistency is our human condition. Man enjoins himself to be necessarily in fault: he is not very discreet to cut out his own duty by the measure of another being than his own. To whom does he prescribe that which he does not expect any one should perform? is he unjust in not doing what it is impossible for him to do? The laws which condemn us not to be able, condemn us for not being able.

At the worst, this difform liberty of presenting ourselves two several ways, the actions after one manner and the reasoning after another, may be allowed to those who only speak of things; but it cannot be allowed to those who speak of themselves, as I do: I must march my pen as I do my feet. Common life ought to have relation to the other lives: the virtue of Cato was vigorous beyond the reason of the age he lived in; and for a man who made it his business to govern others, a man dedicated to the public service, it might be called a justice, if not unjust, at least vain and out of season. Even my own manners, which differ not above an inch from those current amongst us, render me, nevertheless, a little rough and unsociable at my age. I know not whether it be without reason that I am disgusted with the world I frequent; but I know very well that it would be without reason, should I complain of its being disgusted with me, seeing I am so with it. The virtue that is assigned to the affairs of the world is a virtue of many wavings, corners, and elbows, to join and adapt itself to human frailty, mixed and artificial, not straight, clear, constant, nor purely innocent. Our annals to this very day reproach one of our kings for suffering himself too simply to be carried away by the conscientious persuasions of his confessor: affairs of state have bolder precepts;

"Exeat aula,
Qui vult esse pius."

["Let him who will be pious retire from the court."
—Lucan, viii. 493]

I formerly tried to employ in the service of public affairs opinions and rules of living, as rough, new, unpolished or unpolluted, as they were either born with me, or brought away from my education, and wherewith I serve my own turn, if not so commodiously, at least securely, in my own particular concerns: a scholastic and novice virtue; but I have found them unapt and dangerous. He who goes into a crowd must now go one way and then another, keep his elbows close, retire or advance, and quit the

straight way, according to what he encounters; and must live not so much according to his own method as to that of others; not according to what he proposes to himself, but according to what is proposed to him, according to the time, according to the men, according to the occasions. Plato says, that whoever escapes from the world's handling with clean breeches, escapes by miracle: and says withal, that when he appoints his philosopher the head of a government, he does not mean a corrupt one like that of Athens, and much less such a one as this of ours, wherein wisdom itself would be to seek. A good herb, transplanted into a soil contrary to its own nature, much sooner conforms itself to the soil than it reforms the soil to it. I found that if I had wholly to apply myself to such employments, it would require a great deal of change and new modelling in me before I could be any way fit for it: And though I could so far prevail upon myself (and why might I not with time and diligence work such a feat), I would not do it. The little trial I have had of public employment has been so much disgust to me; I feel at times temptations toward ambition rising in my soul, but I obstinately oppose them:

"At tu, Catulle, obstinatus obdura."

["But thou, Catullus, be obstinately firm."—Catullus, viii. 19.]

I am seldom called to it, and as seldom offer myself uncalled; liberty and laziness, the qualities most predominant in me, are qualities diametrically contrary to that trade. We cannot well distinguish the faculties of men; they have divisions and limits hard and delicate to choose; to conclude from the discreet conduct of a private life a capacity for the management of public affairs is to conclude ill; a man may govern himself well who cannot govern others so, and compose Essays who could not work effects: men there may be who can order a siege well, who would ill marshal a battle; who can speak well in private, who would ill harangue a people or a prince; nay, 'tis peradventure rather a testimony in him who can do the one that he cannot do the other, than otherwise. I find that elevated souls are not much more proper for mean things than mean souls are for high ones. Could it be imagined that Socrates should have administered occasion of laughter, at the expense of his own reputation, to the Athenians for: having never been able to sum up the votes of his tribe, to deliver it to the council? Truly, the veneration I have for the perfections of this great man deserves that his fortune should furnish, for the excuse of my principal imperfections, so magnificent an example. Our sufficiency is cut out into small parcels; mine has no latitude, and is also very contemptible in number. Saturninus, to those who had conferred upon him the command in chief: "Companions," said he, "you have lost a good captain, to make of him a bad general."

Whoever boasts, in so sick a time as this, to employ a true and sincere virtue in the world's service, either knows not what it is, opinions growing corrupt with manners (and, in truth, to hear them describe it, to hear the most of them glorify themselves in their deportments, and lay down their rules; instead of painting virtue, they paint pure vice and injustice, and so represent it false in the education of princes); or if he does know it, boasts unjustly and let him say what he will, does a thousand things of which his own conscience must necessarily accuse him. I should willingly take Seneca's word on the experience he made upon the like occasion, provided he would deal sincerely with me. The most honourable mark of goodness in such a necessity is freely to confess both one's own faults and those of others; with the power of its virtue to stay one's inclination towards evil; unwillingly to follow this propension; to hope better, to desire better. I perceive that in these divisions wherein we are involved in France, every one labours to defend his cause; but even the very best of them with dissimulation and disguise: he who would write roundly of the true state of the quarrel, would write rashly and wrongly. The most just party is at best but a member of a decayed and worm-eaten body; but of such a body, the member that is least affected calls itself sound, and with good reason, forasmuch as our qualities have no title but in comparison; civil innocence is measured according to times and places. Imagine this in Xenophon, related as a fine commendation of Agesilaus: that, being entreated by a neighbouring prince with whom he had formerly had war, to permit him to pass through his country, he granted his request, giving him free passage through Peloponnesus; and not only did not imprison or poison him, being at his mercy, but courteously received him according to the obligation of his promise, without doing him the least injury or offence. To such ideas as theirs this were an act of no especial note; elsewhere and in another age, the frankness and unanimity of such an action would be thought wonderful; our monkeyish capets

[Capets, so called from their short capes, were the students of Montaigne College at Paris, and were held in great contempt.]

would have laughed at it, so little does the Spartan innocence resemble that of France. We are not without virtuous men, but 'tis according to our notions of virtue. Whoever has his manners established in regularity above the standard of the age he lives in, let him either wrest or blunt his rules, or, which I would rather advise him to, let him retire, and not meddle with us at all. What will he get by it?

"Egregium sanctumque virum si cerno, bimembri

Hoc monstrum puero, et miranti jam sub aratro
Piscibus inventis, et foetae comparo mulae."

["If I see an exemplary and good man, I liken it to a two-headed boy, or a fish turned up by the plough, or a teeming mule."
—Juvenal, xiii. 64.]

One may regret better times, but cannot fly from the present; we may wish for other magistrates, but we must, notwithstanding, obey those we have; and, peradventure, 'tis more laudable to obey the bad than the good. So long as the image of the ancient and received laws of this monarchy shall shine in any corner of the kingdom, there will I be. If they unfortunately happen to thwart and contradict one another, so as to produce two parts, of doubtful and difficult choice, I will willingly choose to withdraw and escape the tempest; in the meantime nature or the hazards of war may lend me a helping hand. Betwixt Caesar and Pompey, I should frankly have declared myself; but, as amongst the three robbers who came after,—[Octavius, Mark Antony, and Lepidus.]—a man must have been necessitated either to hide himself, or have gone along with the current of the time, which I think one may fairly do when reason no longer guides:

"Quo diversus abis?"

["Whither dost thou run wandering?"—AEneid, v. 166.]

This medley is a little from my theme; I go out of my way; but 'tis rather by licence than oversight; my fancies follow one another, but sometimes at a great distance, and look towards one another, but 'tis with an oblique glance. I have read a dialogue of Plato,—[The Phaedrus.]—of the like motley and fantastic composition, the beginning about love, and all the rest to the end about rhetoric; they fear not these variations, and have a marvellous grace in letting themselves be carried away at the pleasure of the wind, or at least to seem as if they were. The titles of my chapters do not always comprehend the whole matter; they often denote it by some mark only, as these others, Andria, Eunuchus; or these, Sylla, Cicero, Toyquatus. I love a poetic progress, by leaps and skips; 'tis an art, as Plato says, light, nimble, demoniac. There are pieces in Plutarch where he forgets his theme; where the proposition of his argument is only found by incidence, stuffed and half stifled in foreign matter. Observe his footsteps in the Daemon of Socrates. O God! how beautiful are these frolicsome sallies, those variations and digressions, and all the more when they seem most fortuitous and careless. 'Tis the indiligent reader who loses my subject, and not I; there will always be found some word or other in a corner that is to the purpose, though it lie very close. I ramble indiscreetly and tumultuously; my style and my wit wander at the same rate. He must fool it a little who would not be deemed wholly a fool, say both the precepts, and, still more, the examples of our masters. A thousand poets flag and languish after a prosaic manner; but the best old prose (and I strew it here up and down indifferently for verse) shines throughout with the lustre, vigour, and boldness of poetry, and not without some air of its fury. And certainly prose ought to have the pre-eminence in speaking. The poet, says Plato, seated upon the muses tripod, pours out with fury whatever comes into his mouth, like the pipe of a fountain, without considering and weighing it; and things escape him of various colours, of contrary substance, and with an irregular torrent. Plato himself is throughout poetical; and the old theology, as the learned tell us, is all poetry; and the first philosophy is the original language of the gods. I would have my matter distinguish itself; it sufficiently shows where it changes, where it concludes, where it begins, and where it rejoins, without interlacing it with words of connection introduced for the relief of weak or negligent ears, and without explaining myself. Who is he that had not rather not be read at all than after a drowsy or cursory manner?

"Nihil est tam utile, quod intransitu prosit."

["Nothing is so useful as that which is cursorily so."
—Seneca, Ep., 2.]

If to take books in hand were to learn them: to look upon them were to consider them: and to run these slightly over were to grasp them, I were then to blame to make myself out so ignorant as I say I am. Seeing I cannot fix the attention of my reader by the weight of what I write, 'manco male', if I should chance to do it by my intricacies. "Nay, but he will afterwards repent that he ever perplexed himself about it." 'Tis very true, but he will yet be there perplexed. And, besides, there are some humours in which comprehension produces disdain; who will think better of me for not understanding what I say, and will conclude the depth of my sense by its obscurity; which, to speak in good sooth, I mortally hate, and would avoid it if I could. Aristotle boasts somewhere in his writings that he affected it: a vicious affectation. The frequent breaks into chapters that I made my method in the beginning of my book, having since seemed to me to dissolve the attention before it was raised, as making it disdain to settle itself to so little, I, upon that account, have made them longer, such as require proposition and assigned leisure. In such an employment, to whom you will not give an hour you give nothing; and you

do nothing for him for whom you only do it whilst you are doing something else. To which may be added that I have, peradventure, some particular obligation to speak only by halves, to speak confusedly and discordantly. I am therefore angry at this trouble-feast reason, and its extravagant projects that worry one's life, and its opinions, so fine and subtle, though they be all true, I think too dear bought and too inconvenient. On the contrary, I make it my business to bring vanity itself in repute, and folly too, if it produce me any pleasure; and let myself follow my own natural inclinations, without carrying too strict a hand upon them.

I have seen elsewhere houses in ruins, and statues both of gods and men: these are men still. 'Tis all true; and yet, for all that, I cannot so often revisit the tomb of that so great and so puissant city,—[Rome]— that I do not admire and reverence it. The care of the dead is recommended to us; now, I have been bred up from my infancy with these dead; I had knowledge of the affairs of Rome long before I had any of those of my own house; I knew the Capitol and its plan before I knew the Louvre, and the Tiber before I knew the Seine. The qualities and fortunes of Lucullus, Metellus, and Scipio have ever run more in my head than those of any of my own country; they are all dead; so is my father as absolutely dead as they, and is removed as far from me and life in eighteen years as they are in sixteen hundred: whose memory, nevertheless, friendship and society, I do not cease to embrace and utilise with a perfect and lively union. Nay, of my own inclination, I pay more service to the dead; they can no longer help themselves, and therefore, methinks, the more require my assistance: 'tis there that gratitude appears in its full lustre. The benefit is not so generously bestowed, where there is retrogradation and reflection. Arcesilaus, going to visit Ctesibius, who was sick, and finding him in a very poor condition, very finely conveyed some money under his pillow, and, by concealing it from him, acquitted him, moreover, from the acknowledgment due to such a benefit. Such as have merited from me friendship and gratitude have never lost these by being no more; I have better and more carefully paid them when gone and ignorant of what I did; I speak most affectionately of my friends when they can no longer know it. I have had a hundred quarrels in defending Pompey and for the cause of Brutus; this acquaintance yet continues betwixt us; we have no other hold even on present things but by fancy. Finding myself of no use to this age, I throw myself back upon that other, and am so enamoured of it, that the free, just, and flourishing state of that ancient Rome (for I neither love it in its birth nor its old age) interests and impassionates me; and therefore I cannot so often revisit the sites of their streets and houses, and those ruins profound even to the Antipodes, that I am not interested in them. Is it by nature, or through error of fancy, that the sight of places which we know to have been frequented and inhabited by persons whose memories are recommended in story, moves us in some sort more than to hear a recital of their—acts or to read their writings?

> "Tanta vis admonitionis inest in locis....Et id quidem in hac urbe infinitum; quacumque enim ingredimur, in aliquam historiam vestigium ponimus."
>
> ["So great a power of reminiscence resides in places; and that truly in this city infinite, for which way soever we go, we find the traces of some story."—Cicero, De Fin., v. I, 2.]

It pleases me to consider their face, bearing, and vestments: I pronounce those great names betwixt my teeth, and make them ring in my ears:

"Ego illos veneror, et tantis nominibus semper assurgo."

> ["I reverence them, and always rise to so great names."
> —Seneca, Ep., 64.]

Of things that are in some part great and admirable, I admire even the common parts: I could wish to see them in familiar relations, walk, and sup. It were ingratitude to contemn the relics and images of so many worthy and valiant men as I have seen live and die, and who, by their example, give us so many good instructions, knew we how to follow them.

And, moreover, this very Rome that we now see, deserves to be beloved, so long and by so many titles allied to our crown; the only common and universal city; the sovereign magistrate that commands there is equally acknowledged elsewhere 'tis the metropolitan city of all the Christian nations the Spaniard and Frenchman is there at home: to be a prince of that state, there needs no more but to be of Christendom wheresoever. There is no place upon earth that heaven has embraced with such an influence and constancy of favour; her very ruins are grand and glorious,

"Laudandis pretiosior ruinis."

> ["More precious from her glorious ruins."
> —Sidonius Apollinaris, Carm., xxiii.; Narba, v. 62.]

she yet in her very tomb retains the marks and images of empire:

"Ut palam sit, uno in loco gaudentis opus esse naturx."

["That it may be manifest that there is in one place the work of rejoicing nature."—Pliny, Nat. Hist., iii. 5.]

Some would blame and be angry at themselves to perceive themselves tickled with so vain a pleasure our humours are never too vain that are pleasant let them be what they may, if they constantly content a man of common understanding, I could not have the heart to blame him.

I am very much obliged to Fortune, in that, to this very hour, she has offered me no outrage beyond what I was well able to bear. Is it not her custom to let those live in quiet by whom she is not importuned?

"Quanto quisque sibi plum negaverit,
A diis plum feret: nil cupientium
Nudus castra peto . . . .
Multa petentibus
Desunt multa."

["The more each man denies himself, the more the gods give him. Poor as I am, I seek the company of those who ask nothing; they who desire much will be deficient in much."
—Horace, Od., iii. 16,21,42.]

If she continue her favour, she will dismiss me very well satisfied:

"Nihil supra
Deos lacesso."

["I trouble the gods no farther."—Horace, Od., ii. 18, 11.]

But beware a shock: there are a thousand who perish in the port. I easily comfort myself for what shall here happen when I shall be gone, present things trouble me enough:

"Fortunae caetera mando."

["I leave the rest to fortune."—Ovid, Metam., ii. 140.]

Besides, I have not that strong obligation that they say ties men to the future, by the issue that succeeds to their name and honour; and peradventure, ought less to covet them, if they are to be so much desired. I am but too much tied to the world, and to this life, of myself: I am content to be in Fortune's power by circumstances properly necessary to my being, without otherwise enlarging her jurisdiction over me; and have never thought that to be without children was a defect that ought to render life less complete or less contented: a sterile vocation has its conveniences too. Children are of the number of things that are not so much to be desired, especially now that it would be so hard to make them good:

"Bona jam nec nasci licet, ita corrupta Bunt semina;"

["Nothing good can be born now, the seed is so corrupt."
—Tertullian, De Pudicita.]

and yet they are justly to be lamented by such as lose them when they have them.

He who left me my house in charge, foretold that I was like to ruin it, considering my humour so little inclined to look after household affairs. But he was mistaken; for I am in the same condition now as when I first entered into it, or rather somewhat better; and yet without office or any place of profit.

As to the rest, if Fortune has never done me any violent or extraordinary injury, neither has she done me any particular favour; whatever we derive from her bounty, was there above a hundred years before my time: I have, as to my own particular, no essential and solid good, that I stand indebted for to her liberality. She has, indeed, done me some airy favours, honorary and titular favours, without substance, and those in truth she has not granted, but offered me, who, God knows, am all material, and who take nothing but what is real, and indeed massive too, for current pay: and who, if I durst confess so much, should not think avarice much less excusable than ambition: nor pain less to be avoided than shame; nor health less to be coveted than learning, or riches than nobility.

Amongst those empty favours of hers, there is none that so much pleases vain humour natural to my country, as an authentic bull of a Roman burgess-ship, that was granted me when I was last there,

glorious in seals and gilded letters, and granted with all gracious liberality. And because 'tis couched in a mixt style, more or less favourable, and that I could have been glad to have seen a copy of it before it had passed the seal.

Being before burgess of no city at all, I am glad to be created one of the most noble that ever was or ever shall be. If other men would consider themselves at the rate I do, they would, as I do, discover themselves to be full of inanity and foppery; to rid myself of it, I cannot, without making myself away. We are all steeped in it, as well one as another; but they who are not aware on't, have somewhat the better bargain; and yet I know not whether they have or no.

This opinion and common usage to observe others more than ourselves has very much relieved us that way: 'tis a very displeasing object: we can there see nothing but misery and vanity: nature, that we may not be dejected with the sight of our own deformities, has wisely thrust the action of seeing outward. We go forward with the current, but to turn back towards ourselves is a painful motion; so is the sea moved and troubled when the waves rush against one another. Observe, says every one, the motions of the heavens, of public affairs; observe the quarrel of such a person, take notice of such a one's pulse, of such another's last will and testament; in sum, be always looking high or low, on one side, before or behind you. It was a paradoxical command anciently given us by that god of Delphos: "Look into yourself; discover yourself; keep close to yourself; call back your mind and will, that elsewhere consume themselves into yourself; you run out, you spill yourself; carry a more steady hand: men betray you, men spill you, men steal you from yourself. Dost thou not see that this world we live in keeps all its sight confined within, and its eyes open to contemplate itself? 'Tis always vanity for thee, both within and without; but 'tis less vanity when less extended. Excepting thee, O man, said that god, everything studies itself first, and has bounds to its labours and desires, according to its need. There is nothing so empty and necessitous as thou, who embracest the universe; thou art the investigator without knowledge, the magistrate without jurisdiction, and, after all, the fool of the farce."

ETEXT EDITOR'S BOOKMARKS:

A man may govern himself well who cannot govern others so
A man should diffuse joy, but, as much as he can, smother grief
A well-bred man is a compound man
All over-nice solicitude about riches smells of avarice
Always complaining is the way never to be lamented
Appetite comes to me in eating
Better to be alone than in foolish and troublesome company
By suspecting them, have given them a title to do ill
Change only gives form to injustice and tyranny
Civil innocence is measured according to times and places
Conclude the depth of my sense by its obscurity
Concluding no beauty can be greater than what they see
Confession enervates reproach and disarms slander
Counterfeit condolings of pretenders
Crates did worse, who threw himself into the liberty of poverty
Desire of travel
Enough to do to comfort myself, without having to console others
Friend, it is not now time to play with your nails
Gain to change an ill condition for one that is uncertain
Giving is an ambitious and authoritative quality
Good does not necessarily succeed evil; another evil may succeed
Greedy humour of new and unknown things
He must fool it a little who would not be deemed wholly a fool
I always find superfluity superfluous
I am disgusted with the world I frequent
I am hard to be got out, but being once upon the road
I am very willing to quit the government of my house
I content myself with enjoying the world without bustle
I enter into confidence with dying
I grudge nothing but care and trouble
I hate poverty equally with pain

I scorn to mend myself by halves
I write my book for few men and for few years
Justice als takes cognisance of those who glean after the reaper
Known evil was ever more supportable than one that was, new
Laws (of Plato on travel), which forbids it after threescore.
Liberty and laziness, the qualities most predominant in me
Liberty of poverty
Liberty to lean, but not to lay our whole weight upon others
Little affairs most disturb us
Men as often commend as undervalue me beyond reason
Methinks I promise it, if I but say it
My mind is easily composed at distance
Neither be a burden to myself nor to any other
No use to this age, I throw myself back upon that other
Nothing falls where all falls
Nothing presses so hard upon a state as innovation
Obstinate in growing worse
Occupy our thoughts about the general, and about universal cause
One may regret better times, but cannot fly from the present
Opposition and contradiction entertain and nourish them
Our qualities have no title but in comparison
Preferring the universal and common tie to all national ties
Proceed so long as there shall be ink and paper in the world
Satisfied and pleased with and in themselves
Settled my thoughts to live upon less than I have
Some wives covetous indeed, but very few that are good managers
That looks a nice well-made shoe to you
There can be no pleasure to me without communication
Think myself no longer worth my own care
Tis for youth to subject itself to common opinions
Tis more laudable to obey the bad than the good
Titles of my chapters do not always comprehend the whole matter
Travel with not only a necessary, but a handsome equipage
Turn up my eyes to heaven to return thanks, than to crave
Weigh, as wise: men should, the burden of obligation
What sort of wine he liked the best: "That of another,"
What step ends the near and what step begins the remote
When I travel I have nothing to care for but myself
Wise man to keep a curbing hand upon the impetus of friendship
World where loyalty of one's own children is unknown
Wretched and dangerous thing to depend upon others
You have lost a good captain, to make of him a bad general

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