

MICHEL DE MONTAIGNE  
**ESSAYS**

**Book 1 · Chapter 25**



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## Of the institution and education of Children

To the Ladie Diana of Foix, Countesse of Gurson.

I NEVER knew father, how crooked and deformed soever his sonne were, that would either altogether cast him off, or not acknowledge him for his owne: and yet (unlesse he be meerely besotted or blinded in his affection) it may not be said, but he plainly perceiveth his defects, and hath a feeling of his imperfections. But so it is, he is his owne. So is it in my selfe. I see better then any man else, that what I have set downe, is nought but the fond imaginations of him, who in his youth hath tasted nothing but the paring, and seene but the superficies of true learning: whereof he hath retained but a generall and shapelesse forme: a smacke of every thing in generall, but nothing to the purpose in particular: After the French manner. To be shorte, I know there is an arte of Phisicke; a course of lawes; foure parts of the Mathematikes; and I am not altogether ignorant, what they tend unto. And perhaps I also knowe the scope and drift of sciences in generall, to be for the service of our life. But to wade further, or that ever I tired my selfe with plodding upon *Aristotle* (the Monarch of our moderne doctrine) or obstinately continued in the search of any one science: I confesse I never did it. Nor is there any one arte, whereof I am able so much as to drawe the first lineaments. And there is no scholler (be he of the lowest forme) that may not repute himselfe wiser then I, who am not able to appose him in his first lesson: and if I be forced to it, I am constrained very impertinently to draw in matter from some generall discourse, whereby I examine, and give a guesse at his naturall judgement: a lesson asmuch unknowne to them, as theirs is to me. I have not dealt or had commerce with any excellent booke, except *Plutarke* or *Seneca*, from whom (as the *Danaïdes*) I drawe my water, uncessantly filling, and as fast emptying: some thing whereof I fasten to this paper, but to my selfe nothing at all. And touching bookes: Historie is my chiefe studie, Poesie my onely delight, to which I am particularly affected: for as *Cleanthes* said, that as the voice being forcibly pent in the narrow gullet of a trumpet, at last issueth forth more strong and shriller, so me seemes, that a sentence cunningly and closely couched in measure-keeping Poesie, dartes it selfe forth more furiously, and woundes me even to the quicke. And concerning the naturall faculties that are in me, (whereof behold here an essay) I perceive them

to faint under their owne burthen; my conceites, and my judgement march but uncertaine, and as it were groaping, straggering, and stumbling at every rush: And when I have gone as far as I can, I have no whit pleased my selfe: for the further I saile, the more land I descry, and that so dimmed with fogges, and over-cast with cloudes, that my sight is so weakned, I cannot distinguish the same. And then undertaking to speake indifferently of all that presents it selfe unto my fantasie, and having nothing but mine owne naturall meanes to imploy therein, if it be my hap (as commonly it is) amongst good Authors, to light upon those very places which I have undertaken to treat off, as even now I did in *Plutarke*, reading his discourse of the power of imagination, wherein in regarde of those wise men, I acknowledge my selfe so weake, and so poore, so dull and grose-headed, as I am forced both to pittie and disdain my selfe, yet am I pleased with this, that my opinions have often the grace to jumpe with theirs, and that I follow them a loofe-off, and thereby possesse at least, that which all other men have not; which is, that I knowe the utmost difference betweene them and my selfe: all which notwithstanding I suffer my inventions to runne abroade, as weake and faint, as I have produced them, without bungling and botching the faultes, which this comparison hath discovered to me in them. A man had need have a strong backe, to undertake to march foote to foote with these kinde of men. The indiscreete writers of our age, amidst their triviall compositions, entermingle and wrest in whole sentences taken from ancient Authors, supposing by such filching-theft to purchase honour and reputation to themselves, doe cleane contrarie. For, this infinit varietie and dissemblance of lustres, makes a face, so wan, so il-favored, and so ugly, in respect of theirs, that they loose much more then gaine thereby. These were two contrarie humours: The Philosopher *Chrisippus* was wont to foiste-in amongst his bookes, not onely whole sentences, and other long-long discourses, but whole bookes of other Authors, as in one, he brought in *Euripides* his *Medea*. And *Appollodorus* was wont to say of him, that if one should drawe from out his bookes, what he had stolne from others, his paper would remaine blanke. Where as *Epicurus* cleane contrarie to him in three hundred volumes, he left behinde him, had not made use of one allegation. It was my fortune not long since to light upon such a place: I had languishingly traced after some french words, so naked and shallowe, and so voide either of sence or matter, that at last I found them to be nought but meere French words; and after a tedious and wearisome travell, I chanced to stumble upon an high, rich, and even to the cloudes-raised piece, the descent whereof hadde it been somewhat more pleasant or easie, or the ascent reaching a little further, it had beene excusable, and to be borne-withall; but it was such a steepie downe-fall, and by meere strength hewen out of the maine rocke, that by reading of the first sixe words, me thought I was caried into another world: whereby I perceive the bottome whence I came to bee so low and deep, as I durst never more adventure to goe through it; for, if I did stuffe any one of my discourses with those rich spoiles, it would manifestly cause the sottishnes of others to appeare. To reprove mine owne faults in others, seemes to me no more unsufferable, then to reprehend (as I doe often) those of others in my selfe. They ought to be accused everywhere, and have all places of Sanctuarie taken from them: yet doe I know how overbouldly, at all times I adventure to equall my selfe unto my filchings, and to march hand in hand with them; not without a fond-hardie hope, that I may perhaps be

able to bleare the eyes of the judges from discerning them. But it is as much for the benefit of my application, as for the good of mine invention and force. And I doe not furiously front, and body to body wrestle with those olde champions: it is but by sleights, advantages, and false-offers I seeke to come within them, and if I can, to give them a fall. I doe not rashly take them about the necke, nor doe I goe so farre as by my bargaine I would seeme to doe; could I but keepe even with them, I should then be an honest man; for I seeke not to venture on them, but where they are strongest. To doe as I have seene some, that is, to shroud themselves under others armes, not daring so much as to show their fingers endes unarmed, and to botch up all their works (as it is an easie matter in a common subject, namely for the wiser sort) with ancient inventions, here and there huddled-up together. And in those who endeavored to hide what they have filched from others, and make it their owne, it is first a manifest note of injustice, then a plaine argument of cowardlines; who having nothing of any worth in them-selves to make showe of, will yet under the countenance of others sufficiencie goe about to make a faire offer: Moreover (oh great foolishnes) to seeke by such cosening trickes to forestall the ignorant approbation of the common sorte, nothing fearing to discover their ignorance to men of understanding (whose praise onely is of value) who will soone trace out such borrowed ware. As for me, there is nothing I will doe lesse. I never spake of others, but that I may the more speake of my selfe. This concerneth not those mingle-mangles of many kindes of stuffe, or as the Grecians call them *Rapsodies*, that for such are published, of which kinde I have (since I came to yeares of discretion) seene divers most ingenious and wittie; amongst others, one under the name of *Capilupus*; besides many of the ancient stampe. These are wits of such excellence, as both here and elsewhere they will soone be perceived, as our late famous writer *Lipsius*, in his learned and laborious worke of the Politikes: yet whatsoever come of it, for so much as they are but follies, my intent is not to smother them, no more then a bald and hoarie picture of mine, where a Painter hath drawne not a perfect visage, but mine owne. For, howsoever, these are but my humors and opinions, and I deliver them but to showe what my conceite is, and not what ought to be beleaved. Wherein I ayme at nothing but to display my selfe, who peradventure (if a new prentiship change me) shall be another to morrow. I have no authoritie to purchase believe, neither do I desire it; knowing well that I am not sufficiently taught to instruct others. Some having read my precedent Chapter, tolde me not long since in mine owne house, I should somewhat more have extended my selfe in the discourse concerning the institution of children. Now (Madam) if there were any sufficiencie in me, touching that subject, I could not better imploy the same, then to bestowe it as a present upon that little lad, which ere long threatneth to make a happie issue from out your honorable wombe: for (Madame) you are too generous to beginne with other then a man childe. And having had so great a part in the conduct of your successefull marriage, I may chalenge some right and interest in the greatnes and prosperity of all that shall procede from it: moreover the ancient and rightfull possession, which you from time to time have ever had, and still have over my service, urgeth mee with more then ordinarie respectes, to wish all honour, well-fare and advantage to whatsoever may in any sorte concerne you and yours. And truely, my meaning is, but to shewe, that the greatest difficulty, and importing all humane knowledge, seemeth to

I NEVER knew father, how crooked and deformed soever his sonne were, that would either altogether cast him off, or not acknowledge him for his owne: and yet (unlesse he be meere besotted or blinded in his affection) it may not be said, but he plainly perceiveth his defects, and hath a feeling of his imperfections. But so it is, he is his owne. So is it in my selfe. I see better then any man else, that what I have set downe, is nought but the fond imaginations of him, who in his youth hath tasted nothing but the paring, and seene but the superficies of true learning: whereof he hath retained but a generall and shapelesse forme: a smacke of every thing in generall, but nothing to the purpose in particular: After the French manner. To be shorte, I know there is an arte of Phisicke; a course of lawes; foure parts of the Mathematickes; and I am not altogether ignorant, what they tend unto. And perhaps I also knowe the scope and drift of sciences in generall, to be for the service of our life. But to wade further, or that ever I tired my selfe with plodding upon *Aristotle* (the Monarch of our moderne doctrine) or obstinately continued in the search of any one science: I confesse I never did it. Nor is there any one arte, whereof I am able so much as to drawe the first lineaments. And there is no scholler (be he of the lowest forme) that may not repute himselfe wiser then I, who am not able to appose him in his first lesson: and if I be forced to it, I am constrained very impertinently to draw in matter from some generall discourse, whereby I examine, and give a guesse at his naturall judgement: a lesson asmuch unknowne to them, as theirs is to me. I have not dealt or had commerce with any excellent booke, except *Plutarke* or *Seneca*, from whom (as the *Danaïdes*) I drawe my water, uncessantly filling, and as fast emptying: some thing whereof I fasten to this paper, but to my selfe nothing at all. And touching bookes: Historie is my chiefe studie, Poesie my onely delight, to which I am particularly affected: for as *Cleanthes* said, that as the voice being forcibly pent in the narrow gullet of a trumpet, at last issueth forth more strong

Madame, Learning joyned with true knowledge is an especiall and gracefull ornament, and an implement of wonderfull use and consequence, namely in persons raised to that degree of fortune, wherein you are. And in good truth, learning hath not her owne true forme, nor can she make shew of her beauteous lineaments, if she fall into the hands of base and vile persons. For, as famous *Torquato Tasso* sayeth; Philosophie being a rich and noble Queene, and knowing her owne worth, graciously smileth upon, and lovingly embraceth Princes and noble men, if they become sutors to her, admitting them as her minions, and gently affording them all the favours she can; whereas upon the contrarie, if shee be wooed, and sued unto by clownes, mechanicall fellowes, and such base kind of people, she holds hir selfe disparaged and disgraced, as holding no proportion with them. And therefore see we by experience, that if a true Gentleman, or nobleman followe hir with any attention, and wooe her with importunity, hee shall learne and knowe more of hir, and proove a better scholler in one yeere, then an ungentle, or base fellow shall in seaven, though he pursue hir never so attentively. She is much more ready and fierce to lend hir furtherance and direction in the conduct of a war, to attempt honorable actions, to command a people, to treat a peace with a prince of forraine nation, then she is to form an argument in Logick, to devise a Sillogisme, to canvase a case at the barre, or to prescribe a receipt of pills. So (noble Ladie) forsomuch as I cannot perswade my selfe, that you will either forget or neglect this point,

concerning the institution of yours, especially having tasted the sweetnesse thereof, and being descended of so noble and learned a race. For we yet possesse the learned compositions of the ancient and noble Earles of *Foix*, from out whose heroicke loynes your husband and you take your of-spring. And *Francis* Lord of *Candale* your worthie unckle, doth dayly bring forth such fruites thereof, as the knowledge of the matchlesse qualitie of your house shall hereafter extend it selfe to many ages; I will therefore make you acquainted with one conceite of mine, which contrarie to the common use I holde, and that is all I am able to affoorde you, concerning that matter. The charge of the tutor, which you shall appoint your sonne, in the choise of whom consisteth the whole substance of his education and bringing-up; on which are many branches depending, which (forasmuch as I can adde nothing of any moment to it) I will not touch at all. And for that point, wherein I presume to advise him, he may so farre forth give credite unto it, as he shall see just cause. To a gentleman borne of noble parentage, and heire of a house, that aymeth at true learning, and in it would be disciplined, not so much for gaine or commoditie to himselfe (because so abject an end is farre unworthie the grace and favour of the Muses, and besides, hath a regarde or dependencie of others) nor for externall shew and ornament, but to adorne and enrich his inward minde, desiring rather to shape and institute an able and sufficient man, then a bare learned man. My desire is therefore, that the parents or overseers of such a gentleman bee very circumspect, and carefull in chusing his director, whom I would rather commend for having a well composed and temperate braine, then a full stuff head, yet both will doe well. And I would rather preferre wisdome, judgement, civill customes, and modest behaviour, then bare and meere litterall learning; and that in his charge he hold a new course. Some never cease brawling in their schollers eares (as if they were still powring in a tonell) to follow their booke, yet is their charge nothing else, but to repeate, what hath beene told them before. I would have a tutor to correct this parte, and that at first entrance, according to the capacitie of the wit he hath in hand, he should beginne to make shew of it, making him to have a smacke of all things, and how to chuse and distinguish them, without helpe of others, sometimes opening him the way, other times leaving him to open-it by him-selfe. I would not have him to invent and speake alone, but suffer his disciple to speake when his turne commeth. *Socrates*, and after him *Arcesilaus*, made their schollers to speak first, and then would speake them-selves. *Obest plerumque ijs qui discere volunt, auctoritas eorum, qui docent. Most commonly the authoritie of them that teach, hinders them that would learne.*

It is therefore meete, that he make him first trot-on before him, whereby he may the better judge of his pace, and so guesse how long he will hold out, that accordingly hee may fit his strength: for want of which proportion, we often marre-all. And to know how to make a good choyce, and how farre forth one may proceede (still keeping a due measure) is one of the hardest labours I know. It is a signe of a noble, and effect of an undanted spirit, to know how to second, and how farre forth he shall condescend to his childish proceedings, and howe to guide them. As for my selfe, I can better and with more strength walke up, then downe a hill. Those which according to our common fashion, undertake with one selfe-same lesson, and like maner of education, to direct many spirits of diverse formes and different humours, it is no marvell if among a

multitude of children, they scarce meete with two or three, that reape any good fruite by their discipline, or that come to any perfection. I would not onely have him to demaund an accompt of the words contained in his lesson, but of the sense and substance thereof, and judge of the profit he hath made of-it, not by the testimonie of his memorie, but by the witsnesse of his life. That what hee lately learned, he cause him to set forth and pourtray the same into sundry shapes, and then to accommodate-it to as many different and severall subjects; whereby he shall perceive, whether he have yet apprehended the same, and therein enfeoffed himselfe, at due times taking his instruction from the institution given by *Plato*. It is a signe of cruditie and indigestion for a man to yeeld up his meat, even as he swallowed the same: the stomacke hath not wrought his full operation, unlesse it have changed forme, and altered fashion of that which was given him to boyle and concoct. We see men gape after no reputation but learning, and when they say, such a one is a learned man, they thinke they have said enough; our minde doth move at others pleasure, as tied and forced to serve the fantasies of others, being brought under by authoritie, and forced to stoope to the lure of their bare lesson, we have beene so subjected to harpe upon one string, that we have no way left-us to descant upon voluntarie: our vigor and libertie is cleane extinct. *Nunquam tutelæ suæ fiunt. They never come to their owne tuition.* It was my hap to bee familiarly acquainted with an honest man at *Pisa*, but such an *Aristotelian*, as he held this infallible position; that a conformitie to *Aristotles* doctrine was the true touchstone and squire of all solide imaginations, and perfect veritie; for, whatsoever had no coherencie with-it, was but fond *Chimeraes*, and idle humours; in asmuch as he had knowne-all, seene-all, and saide-all. This proposition of his, being somewhat over-amply and injuriously interpreted by some, made him a long time after to be troubled in the inquisition of *Rome*, I would have him make his scholler narrowly to sift all things with discretion, and harbour nothing in his head by meere authoritie, or upon trust. *Aristotles* principles shall be no more axiomes unto him, then the *Stoikes* or *Epicurians*. Let this diversitie of judgements be proposed unto him, if he can, he shall be able to distinguish the truth from falsehood, if not, he will remaine doubtfull.

*Che non men che saper dubbiar m'aggrada.*

*No lesse it pleaseth me,  
To doubt, then wise to be.*

For if by his owne discourse he embrace the opinions of *Xenophon*, or of *Plato*, they shall be no longer theirs, but his. Hee that meereley followeth another, traceth nothing, and seeketh nothing: *Non sumus sub rege, fibi quisque se uindicet. We are not under a Kings command; everie one may challenge himselfe, for himselfe:* It is requisite he indevor as much to feede himselfe with their conceits, as labour to learne their precepts; which, so hee know how to apply, let him hardly forget, where, or whence he had them. Truth and reason are common to all, and are no more proper unto him that spake them heretofore, than unto him that shall speake them hereafter. And it is no more according to *Platoes* opinion, than to mine, since both he and I understand and see alike. The bees do heere and there sucke this, and cull that flower, but afterward they produce the hony, which is peculiarly their owne, then is it no more Thyme or Marjoram. So of

peeces borrowed of others, he may lawfully alter, transforme, and confound them, to shape out of them a perfect peece of worke, altogether his owne; alwayes provided, his judgement, his travel, studie, and institution tend to nothing, but to frame the same perfect. Let him hardly conceale, where, or whence hee hath had any helpe, and make no shew of any thing, but of that which hee hath made himselfe. Pirates, filchers, and borrowers, make a shew of their purchaces and buildings, but not of that which they have taken from others: you see not the secret fees or bribes Lawyers take of their Clients, but you shal manifestly discover the alliances they make, the honours they get for their children, and the goodly houses they build. No man makes open shew of his receites, but every one of his gettings. The good that comes of studie (or at least should come) is to prove better, wiser, and honeste. It is the understanding power (said *Epicharmus*) that seeth and heareth, it is it, that profiteth all, and disposeth all, that moveth, swayeth, and ruleth all: all things else are but blinde, sencelesse, and without spirit. And truly in barring him of libertie to doe any thing of him selfe, we make him thereby more servile and more coward. Who would ever enquire of his scholler what he thinketh of Rethorike, of Grammar, of this, or of that sentence of *Cicero*? Which things throughly fethered (as if they were oracles) are let flie into our memorie; in which both letters and sillables are substantiall partes of the subject. To knowe by roat is no perfect knowledge, but to keepe what one hath committed to his memories charge, is commendable: what a man directly knoweth, that will he dispose-of, without turning still to his booke, or looking to his pattern. A meere bookish sufficiencie is unpleasant. All I expect of it, is an imbellishing of my actions, and not a foundation of them, according to *Platoes* minde, who saith, constancie, faith, and sinceritie, are true Philosophie; as for other Sciences, and tending else-where, they are but garish paintings. I would faine have *Paluel* or *Pompey*, those two excellent dauncers of our time, with all their nimblenesse, teach any man to doe their loftie tricks, and high capers, onely with seeing them done, and without stirring out of his place, as some Pedanticall fellowes would instruct our mindes without mooving or putting it in practise. And glad would I be to find-one, that woulde teach-us how to manage a horse, to tosse a pike, to shoote-off a peece, to play upon the lute, or to warble with the voyce, without any exercise, as these kind of men would teach us to judge, and how to speake well, without any exercise of speaking or judging. In which kind of life, or as I may terme it, Prentiship, what action or object soever presents it-selfe unto our eies, may serve-us instead of a sufficient booke. A pretty pranke of a boy, a knavish tricke of a page, a foolish part of a lackey, an idle tale or any discourse-else, spoken either in jeast or earnest, at the table or in company, are even as new subjects for-us to worke-upon: for furtherance whereof, commerce or common societie among men, visiting of forraine countries, and observing of strange fashions, are very necessary, not only to be able (after the maner of our yong gallants of *France*) to report how many paces the Church of *Santa Rotonda* is in length or breadth, or what rich garments the curtezan *Signora Livia* weareth, and the worth of her hosen; or as some do, nicely to dispute how much longer or broader the face of *Nero* is, which they have seene in some olde ruines of *Italie*, then that which is made for him in other olde monuments else-where. But they should principally observe, and be able to make certaine relation of the humours and fashions of those countries they have seene, that they may



the better know, how to correct and prepare their wittes by those of others. I would therefore have him beginne even from his infancie to travell abroad; and first, that at one shoote hee may hitte two markes, he should see neighbour-countries, namely where languages are most different from ours; for, unlesse a mans tongue be fashioned unto them in his youth, hee shall never attaine to the true pronuntiation of them, if he once growe in yeares. Moreover, we see it received as a common opinion of the wiser sorte, that it agreeth not with reason, that a childe be alwayes nuzled, cockered, dandled, and brought up in his parents lappe or sight; forsomuch as their natural kindnesse, or as I may call it tender fondnesse causeth often, even the wisest, to proove so idle, so over-nice, and so base-minded. For parents are not capable, neyther can they finde in their hearts to see them checkt, corrected, or chastised, nor indure to see them brought-up so meanelly, and so farre from daintinesse, and many times so dangerously, as they must needs be. And it would grieve them to see their children come home from those exercises, that a Gentleman must necessarily acquaint himselfe with, sometimes all wet and bemyred, other times sweatie and full of dust, and to drinke being either extreame hote, or exceeding cold; and it would trouble them to see him ride a rough-untamed horse, or with his weapon furiously incounter a skilfull Fencer, or to handle and shoote-off a musket; against which there is no remedy, if he wil make him proove a sufficient, compleate, or honest man: he must not be spared in his youth; and it will come to passe, that he shall many times have occasion and be forced to shooke the rules of Physicke.

*Vitamque sub dio & trepidis agat  
In rebus.*

*Leade he his life in open aire,  
And in affaires full of despaire.*

It is not sufficient to make his minde strong, his muskles must also be strengthned: the minde is over-borne if it be not seconded: and it is too much for hir alone to discharge two offices. I have a feeling howe mine panteth, being joynd to so tender and sensible a body, and that lyeth so heavy upon it. And in my lecture, I often perceive howe my Authors in their writings sometimes commend examples for magnanimitie and force, that rather proceed from a thicke skinne and hardnes of the bones. I have knowne men, women and children borne of so hard a constitution, that a blow with a cudgell would lesse hurt them, then a fillip would doe me, and so dull and blockish, that they will neither stirre tongue nor eiebrowes, beate them never so much. When wrestlers goe about to counterfeit the Philosophers patience, they rather shew the vigor of their sinnewes, then of their harte. For the custome to beare travell, is to tolerate grieffe: *Labor callum obducit dolori. Labour worketh a hardnesse upon sorrow.* Hee must be endured to suffer the paine and hardnesse of exercises, that so he may be induced to endure the paine of the colicke, of costivenes, of falls, of sprains, and other diseases incident to mans body: yea, if neede require, patiently to beare imprisonment, and other tortures, by which sufferance hee shall come to be had in more esteeme and accoumt: for according to time and place, the good as well as the bad man may haply fal into them; we have seene it by experience. Whosoever striveth against the lawes, threats good men with mischief

and extortion. Moreover, the authoritie of the tutor (who should be soveraigne over him) is by the cockering and presence of the parents, hindred and interrupted: besides the awe and respect, which the houshold beares him, and the knowledge of the meanes, possibilities, and greatnesse of his house, are in my judgement, no small letts in a yong Gentleman. In this schoole of commerce, and society among men, I have often noted this vice, that in lieu of taking acquaintance of others, we only indevor to make our selves known to them: and we are more ready to utter such marchandize as we have, then to engrose and purchase new commodities. Silence and modestie are qualities verie convenient to civill conversation. It is also necessary, that a yong man be rather taught to be discreetly-sparing, and close-handed, then prodigally-wastefull and lavish in his expences, and moderate in husbanding his wealth when he shall come to possesse it. And not to take pepper in the nose for every foolish tale that shal be spoken in his presence, because it is an uncivill importunity, to contradict, whatsoever is not agreeing to our humour: let him bee pleased to correct himselfe. And let-him not seeme to blame that in others, which he refuseth to doe-him-selfe, nor goe about to withstand common fashions. *Licet sapere sine pompa, sine invidia. A man may be wise without ostentation, without envie.* Let him avoide those Prosopoyall' images of the world, those uncivill behaviours, and childish ambition, wherewith God-wot, too-too many are possest: that is, to make a faire shew of that, which is not in him: endeavouring to be reputed other then indeed he-is; and as if reprehension and new devises were hard to come by, he would by that meane acquire unto himselfe, the name of some peculiar vertue. As it pertaineth but to great Poets to use the libertie of artes; so is-it tollerable but in noble minds, and great spirites to have a preheminece above ordinary fashions. *Si quid Socrates & Aristippus contra morem & consuetudinem fecerunt, idem sibi ne arbitretur licere: Magnis enim illi & divinis bonis hanc licentiam assequabantur.* If Socrates and Aristippus have done aught against custome or good manner, let not a man thinke he may doe the same: for they obtained this licence by their great and excellent good partes: He shalbe taught, not to enter rashly into discourse or contesting, but when he shall encounter with a Champion, worthy his strength; And then would I not have him imploy all the trickes that may fit his turne, but only such as may stand him in most stead. That he be taught to be curious in making choice of his reasons, loving pertinency, and by consequence brevitie. That above all, hee be instructed to yeeld, yea to quit his weapons unto truth, as soone as he shall discern the same, whether it proceed from his adversarie, or upon better advice from himselfe; for, he shall not be preferred to any place of eminencie above others, for repeating of a prescript part; and he is not engaged to defend any cause, further then he may approve it; nor shall he be of that trade, where the liberty for a man to repent and re-advise himselfe is solde for ready mony. *Neque, ut omnia, que præscripta & imperata sint, defendat, necessitate ulla cogitur.* Nor is he inforced by any necessitie to defend and make good all that is prescribed and commaunded him. If his tutor agree with my humour, hee shall frame his affection, to be a most loyall and true subject to his Prince, and a most affectionate and courageous Gentleman, in all that may concerne the honor of his Soveraigne, or the good of his cuntry. And endeavour to suppress in him all maner of affection to undertake any action, otherwise then for a publike good and duty. Besides many inconveniences, which greatly prejudice our libertie, by reason of these

particular bonds; the judgement of a man that is waged and bought, either it is lesse free and honest, or else it is blemisht both with oversight and ingratitude. A meere and precise Courtier, can neither have lawe nor will to speake or thinke, otherwise then favourably of his maister, who among so many thousands of his subjects, hath made choice of him alone, to institute and bring him-up with his owne hand. These favours, with the commodities that follow minion-courtiers, corrupt (not without some colour of reason) his libertie, and dazle his judgement. It is therefore commonly seene, that the Courtiers-language differs from other mens, in the same state, and to be of no great credite in such matters. Let therefore his conscience and vertue shine in his speach, and reason be his chiefe direction. Let-him be taught to confesse such faultes as he shall discover in his owne discourses, albeit none other perceive them but himselfe; for it is an evident shew of judgement, and effect of sinceritie, which are the chiefest qualities he aymeth at. That willfully to strive, and obstinately to contest in words, are common qualities, most apparant in basest mindes: That to re-advise and correct himselfe, and when one is most earnest, to leave an ill opinion; are rare, noble, and philosophical conditions. Being in company, he shall be put in minde, to cast his eyes round about, and every-where: For I note, that the chiefe places are usually seized upon the most unworthy, and lesse capable; and that height of fortune is seldome joyned with sufficiencie. I have seene, that whilst they at the upper end of a boarde were busily entertaining themselves, with talking of the beautie of the hangings about a chamber, or of the taste of some good cup of wine, many good discourses at the lower end, have utterly beene lost. He shall weigh the carriage of every man in his calling, a Heardsman, a Mason, a Stranger, or a Traveller; all must be employed; every one according to his worth; for all helps to make-up houshold; yea, the folly and the simplicitie of others, shall bee as instructions to him. By controlling the graces and maners of others, he shall acquire unto himselfe envy of the good, and contempt of the bad. Let him hardly be possess with an honest curiositie to search-out the nature and causes of all things: let him survay what-soever is rare and singulare about him; a building, a fountaine, a man, a place where any battell hath been fought, or the passages of *Cæsar* or *Charlemaine*.

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

*What land is parcht with heat, what clog'd with frost,  
What wind drives kindly to th'Italian coast.*

He shall endeavour to be familiarly acquainted with the customes, with the meanes, with the state, with the dependances and alliances of all Princes; they are things soone and pleasant to be learned, and most profitable to be knowne. In this acquaintance of men, my meaning is, that hee chiefly comprehend them, that live but by the memorie of bookes. He shall, by the help of Histories, informe himselfe of the worthiest mindes that were in the best ages. It is a frivolous studie, if a man list, but of unvaluable worth, to such as can make use of it. And as *Plato* saith, the onely study the Lacedemonians reserved for themselves. What profit shall he not reape, touching this point, reading the lives of our *Plutarke*? Alwayes conditioned, the maister bethinke himselfe whereto his charge tendeth, and that he imprint not so much in his

schollers minde the date of the ruine of *Carthage*, as the manners of *Hanniball* and *Scipio*, nor so much where *Marcellus* died, as because he was unworthy of his devoire he died there: that he teach him not somuch to know Histories, as to judge of them. It is, amongst things that best agree with my humour, the subject to which our spirits doe most diversly apply themselves. I have read in *Titus Livius* a number of things, which peradventure others never read, in whome *Plutarke* happily read a hundred more, then ever I could reade, and which perhaps the author himselfe did never intend to sette downe. To some kinde of men, it is a meere gramaticall studie, but to others a perfect anatomie of Philosophie; by meanes whereof, the secretest part of our nature is searched-into. There are in *Plutarke* many ample discourses most worthy to be knowne: for in my judgement, he is the chiefe worke-maister of such workes, whereof there are a thousand, whereat he hath but slightly glanced; for with his finger he doth but point us out a way to walke in, if we list; and is sometimes pleased to give but a touch at the quickest and maine point of a discourse, from whence they are by diligent studie to be drawne, and so brought into open market. As that saying of his. That the inhabitants of *Asia*, served but one alone, because they could not pronounce one onely sillable, which is *Non*, gave perhaps both subject and occasion to my friend *Boetie* to compose his booke of voluntarie servitude. If it were no more but to see *Plutarke* wrest a slight action to mans life; or a word that seemeth to beare no such sence, it will serve for a whole discourse. It is pittie men of understanding should so much love brevitie, without doubt their reputation is thereby better, but we the worse. *Plutarke* had rather we should commend him for his judgement, then for his knowledge, he loveth better to leave a kind of longing-desire in us of him, then a sacietie. He knew very well, that even in good things, too much may be saied: and that *Alexandridas* did justly reprove him, who spake very good sentences to the *Ephores*, but they were overtedious. Oh stranger, quoth he, thou speakest what thou oughtest, otherwise then thou shouldest. Those that have leane and thinne bodies stuffe them up with bumbasting. And such as have but poore matter wil puffe-it up with loftie words. There is a marvelous cleerenesse, or as I may terme-it an enlightning of mans judgement drawn from the commerce of men, and by frequenting abroad in the world: we are all so contrived and compact in ourselves, that our sight is made shorter by the length of our nose. When *Socrates* was demaunded whence he was, he answered, not of *Athens*, but of the world; for hee, who had his imagination more full, and farther stretching, embraced all the world for his native Citie, and extended his acquaintance, his societie, and affections to al man-kind: and not as we-do, that looke no further then our feete. If the frost chance to nip the vines about my village, my Priest doth presently argue, that the wrath of God hangs over our head, and threatneth all mankind: and judgeth that the rheume is alreadie falne upon the Caniballs.

In viewing these intestine and civill broiles of ours, who doth not exclaime, that this worldes vast-frame is neere unto a dissolution, and that the day of judgement is ready to fall on us? never remembering that many worse revolutions have been seene, and that whilst we are plunged in grieffe, and overwhelmed in sorrowe, a thousand other partes of the worlde-besides, are blessed with all happinesse, and wallow in pleasures, and never thinke on-us? whereas, when I behold our lives, our licence, and impunitie, I wonder to see them so milde and easie. He on

whose head it haileth, thinks all the Hemispheare besides to be in a storme and tempest. And as that dull-pated *Savoyard* saide, that if the seely king of *France* could cunningly have managed his fortune, hee might very well have made himselfe chiefe chiefe Steward of his Lords houshold, whose imagination conceived no other greatnesse than his Maisters; we are all insensible of this kinde of errour: an errour of great consequence and prejudice. But whosoever shall present unto his inward eyes, as it were in a Table, the Idea of the great image of our universall-mother Nature, attired in her richest roabes, sitting in the throne of her Majestie, and in her visage shall read, so generall, and so constant a varietie; he that therein shall view himselfe, not himselfe alone, but a whole kingdome, to be in respect of a great circle; but the smallest point that can be imagined, hee onely can value things according to their essentiall greatnes and proportion. This great universe (which some multiply as *Species* under one *Genus*) is the true looking-glasse wherein we must looke, if we wil know whether we be of a good stamp, or in the right byase. To conclude, I would have this worldes-frame to be my Schollers choise-booke: So many strange humours, sundry sects, varying judgements, diverse opinions, different lawes, and fantastical customes teach-us to judge rightly of ours, and instruct our judgement to acknowledge his imperfections and naturall weaknesse, which is no easie an apprenticeship: So many innovations of estates, so many falles of Princes, and changes of publike fortune, may, and ought to teach us, not to make so great accompt of ours: So many names, so many victories, and so many conquests buried in darke oblivion, makes the hope to perpetuate our names, but ridiculous, by the surprising of tenne Argo-lettiers, or of a small cottage, which is knowne but by his fall. The pride and fiercenesse of so many strange and gorgeous shewes: the pride-pufft majestie of so many courtes, and of their greatnesse, ought to confirme and assure our sight, undauntedly to beare the affronts and thunder-clappes of ours, without seeling our eyes: So many thousands of men, lowe-layde in their graves afore-us, may encourage-us, not to feare, or be dismayed to goe meete so good company in the other world; and so of all things else. Our life (saide *Pithagoras*) drawes-neare unto the great and populous assembles of the Olympike games, wherein some, to get the glory, and to winne the gole of the games, exercise their bodies with all industrie; others, for greedinesse of gaine, bring thither marchandise to sell: others there are (and those be not the worst) that seeke after no other good, but to marke, how, wherefore, and to what end, all things are done: and to be spectators or observers of other mens lives and actions, that so they may the better judge and direct their owne. Unto examples may all the most profitable Discourses of Philosophie bee sorted, which ought to be the touch-stone of humane actions, and a rule to square them by, to whome may be said,

*quid fas optare, quid asper*  
*Utile nummus habet, patriæ charisque propinquis*  
*Quantum elargiri deceat, quem te Deus esse*  
*Iussis, & humana qua parte locatus es in re,*  
*Quid sumus, aut quidnam victuri gignimur:*

*What thou maiest wish, what profit may come cleare,*  
*From new-stampt coyne, to friends and countrie deare,*  
*What thou oughtst give: whom God would have thee bee,*

*And in what parte mongst men he placed thee.  
What we are, and wherefore,  
To live heer we were bore.*

What it is to know, and not to know (which ought to be the scope of studie) what valour, what temperance, and what justice-is: what difference there-is betweene ambition and avarice, bondage and freedome, subjection and liberty, by which markes a man may distinguish true and perfect contentment, and how farre-forth one ought to feare or apprehend death, grieffe, or shame.

*Et quo quemque modo fugiátque ferátque laborem.*

*How ev'ry labour he may plie,  
And beare, or ev'ry labour flie.*

What wardes or springs move-us, and the causes of so many motions in-us: For me seemeth, that the first discourses, wherewith his conceit should be sprinkled, ought to bee those, that rule his manners, and direct his sense; which will both teach him to know himselfe, and how to live, and how to die well. Among the liberall Sciences, let us beginne with that which makes-us free: Indeede, they may all in some sort steade-us, as an instruction to our life, and use of-it; as all other things-else serve the same to some purpose or other. But let us make especiall choyce of that, which may directly and pertinently serve the same. If we could restraine and adapt the appurtenances of our life to their right byase and naturall limites, we should finde the best parte of the sciences that now are in use, cleane out of fashion with us: yea and in those that are most in use, there are certaine by-ways and deepe-flows most profitable, which we should doe-well to leave, and according to the institution of *Socrates*, limite the course of our studies in those where profit is wanting.

*sapere aude,  
Incipe: vivendi qui rectè prorogat horam,  
Rusticus expectat dum defluat amnis, at ille  
Labitur, & labetur in omne volubilis ævum.*

*Be bold to be wise: to beginne, be strong,  
He that to live well doth the time prolong,  
Clowne-like expects, till downe the streame be runne;  
That runnes, and will runne, till the world be done.*

It is more simplicitie to teach our children.

*Quid moveant pisces, animosáque signa leonis,  
Lotus & Hesperia quid Capricornus aqua.*

*What Pisces move, or hot-breath'd Leos beames,  
Or Capricornus bath'd in westerne streames.*

The knowledge of the starres, and the motion of the eightspheare, before their owne.

τι πλειάδεσι κάμοι  
τιδ'ἀστράσι βώωτω.

*What longs it to the seaven stars, and me,  
Or those about Boötes be.*

Anaximenes writing to Pithagoras, saith, with what sence can I amuse my selfe to the secrets of the starres, having continually death or bondage before mine eyes? For at that time the Kings of Persia were making preparations to warre against his countrie. All men ought to say so. Beeing beaten, with avarice, with rashnesse, and with superstition, and having such other enemies unto life within him. Wherefore shall I studie and take care about the inhability and variation of the world? When hee is once taught what is fit to make him better and wiser, he shalbe entertained with Logicke, Musicke, Geometrie, and Rhetoricke, then having setled his judgement, looke what science he doth most addict him-selfe unto, he shall in short time attaine to the perfection of-it. His lecture shall be somtimes by way of talk, and somtimes by booke: his tutor may now and then supplie-him with the same Author, as an ende and motive of his institution: sometimes giving him the pith and substance of-it readie chewed. And if of-him-selfe he be not so thoroughly acquainted with bookes, that he may readily find so manie notable discourses as are in them to effect his purpose, it shal not be amisse, that some learned man being appointed to keepe him company, who at any time of neede, may furnish him with such munition, as he shall stand in neede-of; that hee may afterwarde distribute and dispense them to his best use. And that this kind of lesson be more easie and naturall then that of *Gaza*, who will make question? Those are but harsh, thornie, and unpleasant precepts; vaine, idle and immateriall words, on which smal hold may be taken; wherin is nothing to quicken the minde. In this, the spirite findeth substance to bide and feed upon. A fruit without all comparison much better, and that will soone bee ripe. It is a thing worthy consideration, to see what state things are brought unto in this our age; and how Philosophy, even to the wisest, and men of best understanding, is but an idle, vaine and fantasticall name, of small use, and lesse worth, both in opinion and effect. I thinke these Sophistries are the cause of-it, which have forestalled the wayes to come-unto-it: They doe very ill, that goe about to make-it seeme as it were inaccessible for children to come unto, setting-it fourth with a wrimped, gastlie, and frowning visage; who hath masked hir with so counterfet, pale, and hideous a countenance? There-is nothing more beauteous, nothing more delightfull, nothing more gamesome; and as I may say, nothing more fondly wanton: for she presenteth nothing to our eyes, and preacheth nothing to our eares, but sporte and pastime. A sadde and lowring looke plainely declareth, that that is not hir haunt. *Demetrius* the Gramarian, finding a company of Philosophers sitting close together in the Temple of *Delphos*, said unto them, *either I am deceived, or by your plausible and pleasant lookes, you are not in any serious and earnest discourse amongst your selves; to whome one of them named Heracleon the Megarian answered, that belongeth to them, who busie themselves in seeking, whether the future tense of the verbe βάλλω hath a double λ, or that labour to find the derivation of the comparatives, χειρων βέλτιων, and of the superlatives χειριστον βέλτιστον, it is they, that must chafe in entertaining themselves with their science: as for discourses of Philosophie they are wont to glad, rejoyce, and not to vexe and molest those that use them.*

*Deprendas animi tormenta latentis in ægro  
Corpore, deprendas & gaudia, sumit utrumque  
Inde habitum facies.*

*You may perceive the torments of the minde,  
Hidde in sicke body, you the joyes may finde,  
The face such habite takes in either kind.*

That minde which harboureth Philosophie, ought by reason of hir sound health, make that body also sound and healthie: it ought to make hir contentment to through-shine in all exterior partes: it ought to shapen and modell all outward demeanours to the modell of it: and by consequence arme him that doth possesse it, with a gracious stoutnes, and livelie audacitie, with an active and pleasing gesture, and with a settled and cheerefull countenance. The most evident token, and apparant signe of true wisdome, is a constant, and unconstrained rejoycing, whose estate is like unto al things above the Moone, that is, ever cleare, alwaies bright. It is *Baroco* and *Baralipton*, that makes their followers proove so base and idle, and not Philosophie; they know hir not, but by heare-say; what? Is it not shee, that cleereth all stormes of the minde? And teacheth miserie, famine, and sicknes to laugh? Not by reason of some imaginarie Epicicles, but by naturall and palpable reasons. Shee aymeth at nothing but vertue: it is vertue shee seekes after; which as the schoole saieth, is not pitcht on the top of an high, steepie, or inaccessible hil; for they that have come unto hir, affirme, that cleane-contrarie, shee keepes hir stand, and holds hir mansion, in a faire, flourishing, and pleasant plaine, whence as from an high watch Tower, she survaieith all things, to be subject unto hir, to whome any man may with great facilitie come; if he but knowe the way or entrance to hir pallace: for, the pathes that lead unto hir, are certaine fresh, and shadie greene allies, sweete and flowerie wayes, whose ascent is even, easie, and nothing wearisome, like unto that of heavens-vaultes. Forsomuch as they have not frequented this vertue, who gloriously, as in a throne of Majesty sittes soveraigne, goodly, triumphant, lovelie, equally delicious, and courageous, protesting her-selfe to be a professed and irreconcilable enemie to all sharpnesse, austeritie, feare, and compulsion; having nature for hir guide, fortune and voluptuousnesse for her companions; they according to their weaknesse have imaginarily fained hir, to have a foolish, sadde, grimme, quarelous, spitefull, threatning, and disdainfull visage, with an horride and unpleasant looke; and have placed her, upon a craggy, sharpe, and unfrequented rocke, amidst desart cliffes, and uncouth crags, as a skarre crow, or Bugge-beare, to affright the common people with. Now the tutour, which ought to know, that hee should rather seeke to fill the minde, and store the will of his disciple, as much or rather more, with love and affection, then with awe, and reverence unto vertue, may shewe and tell him, that Poets followe common humours, making him plainly to perceive, and as it were palpable to feele, that the Gods have rather placed labour and sweat at the entrances, which leade to *Venus* chambers, then at the dores, that direct to *Pallas* cabinets.

And when he shall perceive his scholler to have a sensible feeling of himselfe, presenting *Bradamant*, or *Angelica* before him, as a Mistresse to enjoy, embelished with a natural, active, generous, and unspotted beautie, not uglie, or Giant-like, but blithe and livelie, in respect of a wanton, softe, affected, and artificial-flaring beautie; the one attired like



unto a yoong man, coyfed with a bright-shining helmet, the other disguised and drest about the head like unto an impudent harlot, with embroyderies, frizelings, and carcanets of pearles: he will no doubt deeme his owne love to be a man and no woman, if in his choice he differ from that effeminate shepheard of *Phrigia*. In this new kinde of lesson, he shall declare unto him, that the prize, the glory, and height of true vertue, consisteth in the facilitie, profit, and pleasure of his exercises: so farre from difficultie, and encombrances, that children as well as men, the simple as soone as the wise, may come unto hir. Discretion and temperance, not force or way-wardnesse are the instruments to bring him unto hir. *Socrates* (vertues chiefe favorite) that hee might the better walke in the pleasant, natural, and open path, of hir progresses, doth voluntarily and in good earnest, quit all compulsion. Shee is the nurse and foster-mother of all humane pleasures, who in making them just and upright, shee also makes them sure and sincere. By moderating them, shee keepeth them in ure<sup>2</sup> and breath. In limiting and cutting them off, whome she refuseth; she whets-us-on toward those she leaveth unto us; and plenteouslie leaves-us them, which Nature pleaseth, and like a kinde mother giveth us over unto sacietie, if not unto wearisomnesse; unlesse we will peradventure say, that the rule and bridle, which stayeth the drunkard before drunkenesse, the glutton before surfetting, and the lecher before the loosing of his haire, be the enemies of our pleasures. If common fortune faile-hir, it cleerely scapes hir; or she cares not for hir, or she frames another unto hir-self, altogether hir owne, not so fleeting, nor so rowling. She knoweth the way how to be rich, mighty and wise, and how to lie in sweete-perfumed beds. She loveth life; she delights in beauty, in glorie, and in health. But hir proper and particular office is, first to knowe how to use such goodes temperately, and how to loose them constantly. An office much more noble, then severe, without which, al course of life is unnaturall, turbulent, and deformed, to which one may lawfully joyne those rocks, those encombrances, and those hideous monsters. If so it happen, that his Disciple proove of so different a condition, that he rather love to give-eare to an idle fable, then unto the report of some noble voiage, or other notable and wise discourse, when hee shall heare-it; that at the found of a drumme or clang of a Trumpet, which are wont to rowze and arme the youthly heate of his companions, turneth to another that calleth him to see a play, tumbling, juggling tricks, or other idle loose-time sports; and who for pleasures-sake doth not deeme it more delightsome to returne all sweaty and weary from a victorious combate, from wrestling or riding of a horse, than from a Tennis-court, or dancing schoole, with the prize or honor of such exercises; The best remedy I know for such a one, is, to put him prentise to some base occupation, in some good towne or other, yea, were he the sonne of a Duke; according to *Platoes* rule, who saieth, *that children must be placed, not according to their fathers conditions, but the faculties of their mind*. Since it is Philosophie that teacheth us to live, and that infancy as well as other ages, may plainly reade hir lessons in the same, why should it not be imparted unto yoong schollers?

*Vdum & molle lutum est, nunc nunc properandus, & acri  
Fingendus fine fine rota.*

*He's moist and soft mould, and must by and by  
Be cast, made up, while wheele whir'l's readily.*

We are taught to live, when our life is well-nigh spent. Many schollers have beene infected with that lothsome and marrow-wasting disease, before ever they came to read *Aristotles* treatise of Temperance. *Cicero* was wont to say, *That could he out-live the lives of two men, he should never finde leasure to studie the Lyrike Poets.* And I find these Sophisters both worse and more unprofitable. Our childe is engaged in greater matters; And but the first fifteene or sixteene yeares of his life, are due unto Pedantisme, the rest unto action: let us therefore imploy so short time, as we have to live in more necessarie instructions. It is an abuse; remove these thornie quiddities of Logike, whereby our life can no whit be amended, and betake our selves to the simple discourses of Philosophie; know how to chuse and fitly to make use of them: they are much more easie to be conceived then one of *Bocace* his tales. A childe comming from nurse is more capable of them, then he is to learne to read or write. Philosophie hath discourses, whereof infancie as well as decaying old-age may make good use. I am of *Plutarkes* minde, which is, that *Aristotle* did not so much amuse his great Disciple about the arts how to frame Sillogismes, or the principles of Geometrie, as he endeavoured to instruct-him with good precepts, concerning valor, prowesse, magnanimitie and temperance, and an undanted assurance not to feare any thing; and with such munition he sent him, being yet very yoong, to subdue the Empire of the world, onely with 30000. footemen, 4000. horsemen, and 42000. crownes in monie. As for other artes and sciences, he saith *Alexander* honored them, and commended their excellencie and comlines; but for any pleasure he tooke in them, his affection could not easily be drawne to exercise them.

*petite hinc iuvenésque senésque  
Finem animo certum, miserísque viatica canis.*

*Young men and olde, drawe hence (in your affaires)  
Your mindes set marke, provision for graire haire.*

It is that which *Epicurus* said in the beginning of his letter to *Meniceus*: *Neither let the yoongest shunne, nor the oldest wearie himselfe in philosophying, for who doth otherwise seemeth to say, that either the season to live happily is not yet come, or is alreadie past.* Yet would I not have this yoong gentleman pent-up, nor carelesly cast-off to the heedles choller, or melancholie humor of the hasty schoole-maister. I would not have his budding spirit corrupted with keeping-him fast-tied, and as it were labouring foureteeene or fifteene houres a day poaring on his booke, as some doe, as if he were a day-labouring man; neither doe I thinke-it fit, if at any time, by reason of some solitarie or melancholie complexion, he should be seene with an over-indiscreet application given to his booke, it should be cherished in him; for, that doth often make-him both unapt for civill conversation, and distracts him from better employments: How many have I seene in my daies, by an over-greedie desire of knowledge, become as it were foolish? *Carneades* was so deeply plunged, and as I may say besotted in it, that he could never have leasure to cut his haire, or pare his nales: nor would I have his noble maners obscured by the incivilitie and barbarisme of others. The French wisdome hath long since proverbially beene spoken-off, as very apt to conceive studie in hir youth, but most unapt to keepe it long. In good truth, we see at this day, that there is nothing lovelier to beholde, then the yoong children of *France*; but for the

most part, they deceive the hope which was fore-apprehended of them: for when they once become men, there-is no excellencie at all in them. I have heard men of understanding holde this opinion, that the colledges to which they are sent (of which there are store) doe thus besotte-them: whereas to our scholler, a cabinet, a gardin, the table, the bed, a solitarines, a companie, morning and evening, and all houres shall be alike unto him, all places shall be a studie for him: for Philosophie (as a former of judgements, and modeler of customes) shall be his principall lesson, having the priviledge to entermedle hir selfe with all things, and in all places. *Isocrates* the orator, being once requested at a great banquet to speake of his arte, when all thought he had reason to answer, said, *It is not now time to doe what I can, and what should now be done, I cannot doe-it;* For, to present orations, or to enter into disputation of Rhetorike, before a companie assembled together to be merrie, and make good cheere, would be but a medly of harsh and jarring musicke. The like may be said of all other sciences. But touching Philosophie, namely in that point where it treateth of man, and of his duties, and offices, it hath beene the common judgement of the wisest, that in regarde of the pleasantnes of hir conversation, she ought not to be rejected, neither at banquets, nor at sportes. And *Plato* having invited hir to his solemne feast, wee see how kindly she entertaineth the companie with a milde behaviour, fitly suting hir selfe to time and place, notwithstanding it be one of his learned'st and profitable discourses.

*Æquè pauperibus prodest, locupletibus æquè,  
Et neglecta æquè pueris senibusque nocebit.*

*Poore men alike, alike rich men it easeth,  
Alike it scorneth old, and yoong displeaseth.*

So doubtles he shall lesse be idle then others; for even as the paces we bestow walking in a gallerie, although they be twice as many more, wearie-us not so much as those we spend in going a set journey: So our lesson being past over, as it were, by chance, or way of encounter, without strict observance of time or place, being applied to all our actions, shall be digested, and never felt. All sportes and exercises shalbe a part of his studie; running, wrestling, musicke, dancing, hunting, and managing of armes, and horses. I would have the exterior demeanor or decencie, and the disposition of his person to be fashioned together with his minde: for, it is not a minde, it is not a body that we erect, but it is a man, and we must not make two partes of him. And as *Plato* saith, *they must not be erected one without another, but equally be directed, no otherwise then a couple of horses matched to drawe in one selfe-same teeme.* And to heare-him, doth he not seeme to employ more time and care in the exercises of his body: and to thinke that the minde is together with the same exercised, and not the contrarie? As for other matters, this institution ought to be directed by a sweet-severe mildnes; Not as some doe, who in lieu of gently-bidding children to the banquet of letters, present them with nothing but horror and crueltie. Let me have this violence and compulsion removed, there-is nothing that, in my seeming, doth more bastardise and dizzie a well-borne, and gentle nature: If you would have him stand in awe of shame and punishment, doe not so much enure him to-it: accustome him patiently to endure sweate and colde, the sharpnes of the winde, the heate of the sunne, and how to despise all hazards. Remove from him all

nicenesse and quaintnesse in clothing, in lying, in eating, and in drinking: fashion him to all things; that he prove not a faire and wanton-puling boy, but a lusty and vigorous boy: When I was a childe, being a man, and now I am old, I have ever judged and beleevved the same. But amongst other things, I could never away with this kinde of discipline used in most of our Colledges. It had peradventure bin lesse-hurtfull, if they had somewhat enclined to mildnes or gentle entreatie. It is a very prison of captivated youth, and proves dissolute, in punishing it before it be so. Come upon them when they are going to their lesson, and you heare nothing but whipping and brawling, both of children tormented, and maisters besotted with anger and chafing. How wide are they, which goe about to allure a childes minde to goe to his booke, being yet but tender and fearefull, with a stearne-frowning countenance, and with hands-full of roddes? Oh wicked and pernicious manner of teaching! which *Quintillian* hath very well noted, that this imperious kinde of authoritie, namely this way of punishing of children, drawes many dangerous inconveniences with-it. How much more decent were it, to see their schoole-houses and formes strewed with greene boughes and flowers, then with bloodie burchen twigges? If it lay in me, I would doe as the Philosopher *Speusippus* did, who caused the pictures of Gladnes and Ioy, of *Flora* and of the Graces, to be set-up round about his schoole-house. Where their profit lieth, there should also be their recreation. Those meates ought to bee sugred-over, that are healthfull for childrens stomakes, and those made bitter that are hurtfull for them. It is strange to see how carefull *Plato* sheweth himselfe in framing of his lawes about the recreation and pastime of the youth of his Citie, and how farre he extends himselfe about their exercises, sports, songs, leaping, and dancing, whereof he saieth, that severe antiquitie gave the conduct and patronage unto the Gods themselves, namely to *Apollo*, to the Muses, and to *Minerva*. Marke but how farre-forth he endevoreth to give a thousand precepts to be kept in his places of exercises both of body and mind. As for learned Sciences, hee stands not much upon them, and seemeth in particular to commend Poesie, but for Musickes-sake. All strangenes and selfe-particularitie in our manners, and conditions, is to be shunned, as anemie to societie and civill conversation. Who would not be astonished at *Demophoons* complexion, chiefe steward of *Alexanders* houshold, who was wont to sweat in the shadowe, and quiver for cold in the sunne? I have seene some to startle at the smell of an apple, more then at the shotte of a peece; some to be frighted with a mouse, some readie to cast their gorge at the sight of a messe of creame, and others to be scared with seeing a fether-bed shaken: As *Germanicus*, who could not abide to see a cock, or heare his crowing. There may happily be some hidden propertie of nature, which in my judgement might easily be removed, if it were taken in time. Institution hath gotten this upon me (I must confesse with much a doe) for, except beere, all things else that are mans foode agree indifferently with my taste. The body being yet souple, ought to be accommodated to all fashions and customes; and (alwaies provided, his appetites and desires be kept under) let a yong man boldely be made fit for all nations and companies, yea if neede be for, all disorders and surfetings; let him acquaint himselfe with all fashions; That he may be able to doe all things, and love to doe none but those that are commendable. Some strict Philosophers commend not, but rather blame *Calisthenes*, for loosing the good favour of his Maister *Alexander*, only because he would not pledge him as much as he had drunke to him. He shal laugh, jest, dally, and debauch himselfe with his Prince. And in his debauching, I would have

him out-go all his fellowes in vigor and constancie, and that he omitte not to doe evill, neither for want of strength or knowledge, but for lacke of will. *Multum interest, utrum peccare quis nolet, aut nesciat.*<sup>3</sup> I thought to have honored a gentleman (as great a stranger, and as farre from such riotous disorders as any is in *France*) by enquiring of him in very good companie, how many times in all his life he had been drunke in *Germanie*, during the time of his abode there, about the necessarie affaires of our King; who tooke it even as I ment-it, and answered, three times, telling the time and manner-how. I know some, who for want of that qualitie, have beene much perplexed when they have had occasion to converse with that nation. I have often noted with great admiration, that wonderfull nature of *Alcibiades*, to see how easily he could sute himselfe to so divers fashions, and different humors, without prejudice unto his health; sometimes exceeding the sumptuousnes and pompe of the Persians, and now and then surpassing the austeritie and frugalitie of the Lacedemonians, as reformed in *Sparta*, as voluptuous in *Ionia*.

*Omnis Aristippum decuit color, & status, & res.*

*All colours, states, and things are fit  
For courtly Aristippus wit.*

Such a one would I frame my Disciple,

*quem duplici panno patientia uelat.  
Mirabor, uitæ uia si conversa decebit,*

*Whom patience clothes with sutes of double kind,  
I muse, if he another way will finde.*

*Personamque feret non inconcinnus utramque.*

*He not unfitly may,  
Both parts and persons play.*

Loe-here my lessons, wherin he that acteth them, profiteth more, then he that but knoweth them, whome if you see, you heare, and if you heare him, you see him. God forbid, sayeth some body in *Plato*, that to Philosophie, be to learne many things, and to exercise the artes. *Hanc amplissimam omnium artium bene uiuendi disciplinam, uita magis quàm litteris persequuti sunt.* This discipline of living well, which is the amplest of all other artes, they followed rather in their lives, then in their learning or writing. *Leo* Prince of the Phliatians, enquiring of *Heraclides Ponticus*, what arte he professed, answered. Sir, I professe neither art nor science; but I am a Philosopher. Some reprov'd *Diogenes*, that being an ignorant man, he did neverthesse meddle with Philosophie, to whome he replyed, so much the more reason have I, and to greater purpose doe I meddle with-it. *Hegesias* praid-him upon a time to reade some booke unto him; *You are a merry man*, saide hee: As you chuse naturall and not painted, right and not counterfeit figges to eate, why doe you not likewise chuse, not the painted and written, but the true and naturall exercises? He shall not so much repeate, as acte his lesson. In his actions shall he make repetition of the same. We must observe, whether there be wisdom in his enterprises, integritie in his demeanor, modestie in his jestures, justice

in his actions, judgement and grace in his speech, courage in his sicknes, moderation in his sports, temperance in his pleasures, order in the government of his house, and indifferencie in his taste, whether it be flesh, fish, wine, or water, or whatsoever he feedeth upon. *Qui disciplinam suam non ostentationem scientiæ, sed legem vitæ putet: quique obtemperet ipse sibi, & decretis pareat. Who thinks his learning not an ostentation of knowledge, but a law of life, and himselfe obayes himselfe, and doth what is decreede.*

The true mirror of our discourses, is the course of our lives. *Xeuxidamus* answered one that demaunded of him, why the Lacedemonians did not draw into a booke, the ordinances of prowesse, that so their yong men might reade them; it is, saith he, *because they would rather accustome them to deedes and actions, then to bookes and writings.* Compare at the end of fifteene or sixteene yeares one of these collegiall Latinizers, who hath employed all that while onely in learning how to speake, to such a one as I meane. The world is nothing but babling and words, and I never saw man, that doth not rather speake more than he ought, then lesse. Notwithstanding halfe our age is consumed that way. We are kept foure or five yeares learning to understand bare words, and to joyne them into clauses, then as long in proportioning a great body extended into foure or five parts; and five more at least, ere we can succinctly know how to mingle, joyne, and interlace them handsomly into a subtil fashion, and into one coherent orbe. Let-us leave-it to those, whose profession is to doe nothing else. Being once on my journey toward *Orleans*, it was my chance to meete upon that plaine that lieth on this side *Clery*, with two Maisters of Arts, traveling toward *Burdeaux*, about fiftie paces one from another, farre-off behinde them, I descrie a troupe of horsemen, their Maisters riding formost, who was the Earle of *Roche-focault*; one of my servants enquiring of the first of those Maisters of artes, what gentleman he was that followed him; supposing my servant had meant his fellow-scholler, for he had not yet seene the Earles traine, answered pleasantly, *He is no gentleman Sir, but a Gramarian, and I am a Logitian.* Now, we that contrariwise seeke not to frame a Gramarian, nor a Logitian, but a compleate gentleman, let us give them leave to mispend their time; we have else-where, and somewhat else of more importe to doe. So that our Disciple be well and sufficiently stored with matter; words will followe apace, and if they will not followe gently, hee shall hale them-on perforce. I heare some excuse themselves, that they cannot expresse their meaning, and make a semblance that their heades are so full-stufft with many goodly things, but for want of eloquence they can neither utter nor make shewe of them. It is a meere fopperie. And will you knowe what, in my seeming, the cause is? They are shadows and *Chimeraes*, proceeding of some formelesse conceptions, which they cannot distinguish or resolve within, and by consequence are not able to produce them, inasmuch as they understand not themselves: And if you but marke their earnestnesse, and how they stammer and labor at the point of their delivery, you woulde deeme, that what they go withall, is but a conceiving, and therefore nothing neere downelying; and that they doe but licke that imperfect and shapelesse lump of matter. As for me, I am of opinion and *Socrates* would have it so, that he who hath a cleare and lively imagination in his mind, may easily produce and utter the same, although it be in *Bergamask*, or *Welsh*, and if he be dombe, by signes and tokens.

*Uerbâque prævisam rem non invita sequentur.*

*When matter we fore-know,  
Wordes voluntarie flow.*

As one saide, as poetically in his prose, *cùm res animum occupavere, uerba ambiunt*. When matter hath possessèd their mindes, they hunt after words: and another: *ipsæ res uerba rapiunt*. Things themselves wil catch and carry words: He knowes neither Ablative, Coniunctive, Substantive, nor Gramar, no more doeth his Lackey, nor any Oyster-wife about the streetes, and yet if you have a mind to-it, he wil intertaine you your fil, and peradventure stumble as litle and as seldome against the rules of his tongue, as the best maister of artes in *France*. Hee hath no skill in Rhetoricke, nor can hee with a preface fore-stall and captivate the Gentle Readers good will: nor careth he greatly to knowe it. In good sooth, all this garish painting is easily defaced, by the lustre of an in-bred, and simple trueth; for these dainties and quaint devises, serve but to amuse the vulgare sort, unapt and incapable to taste the most solide, and firm meat: as *Afer* very plainly declareth in *Cornelius Tacitus*. The Ambassadors of *Samos* being come to *Cleomenes* King of *Sparta*, prepared with a long prolixè Oration, to stirre him up to war against the tyrant *Policrates*, after he had listned a good while unto them, his answer was: *Touching your Exordium or beginning I have forgotten it! the middle I remember not; and for your conclusion I wil do nothing in-it*. A fit, and (to my thinking) a very good answer; and the Orators were put to such a shift, as they knew not what to reply. And what said another? the *Athenians* from out two of their cunning Architects, were to chuse one to erect a notable great frame: the one of them more affected and selfe-presuming, presented himselfe before them, with a smoothe forepremeditated discourse, about the subject of that piece of worke, and thereby drewe the judgements of the common people unto his liking; but the other in fewe wordes, spake thus: *Lordes of Athens, what this man hath saide, I will performe*. In the greatest earnestnesse of *Ciceroes* eloquence many were drawne into a kinde of admiration; But *Cato* jeasting at it, said, *have we not a pleasant Consull? A quicke cunning Argument, and a witty saying, whether it go before, or come after, it is never out of season*. If it have no coherence with that which goeth before, nor with what commeth after; it is good and commendable in it selfe. I am none of those that thinke a good rime, to make a good Poeme; let him hardly (if so he please) make a short sillable long, it is no great matter: if the invention bee rare and good, and his wit and judgement have cunningly plaide their part. I wil say to such a one; he is a good Poet, but an ill Versifier.

*Emunctæ naris durus componere versus.*

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

Let a man (saieth *Horace*) make his worke loose all seames, measures, and joynts.

*Tempora certa modòsque, & quod prius ordine uerbum est,  
Posterius facias, præponens, ultima primis,  
Invenias etiam disiecti membra Poetæ.*

*Set times and moods, make you the first worde last,  
The last worde first, as if they were new cast:  
Yet find th'unjoynted Poets joynts stand fast.*

He shall for all that, nothing gaine say himselfe, every piece will make a good shew. To this purpose answered *Menander* those that chidde him, the day being at hand, in which he had promised a Comedy, and had not begunne the same, *Tut-tut*, saide he, *it is alreadie finished, there wanteth nothing but to adde the verse unto-it:* for, having ranged and cast the plot in his minde, he made small accompt of feete, of measures, or cadences of verses, which indeed are but of small import in regarde of the rest. Since great *Ronzarde* and learned *Bellay*, have raised our French Poesie unto that height of honour, where it now-is: I see not one of these petty-ballad-makers, or prentise-dogrell rymers, that doth not bumbast his labors with high swelling and heaven-disimbowelling wordes, and that doth not marshall his cadences verie neere as they doe. *Plus sonat quàm valet. The sound is more then the weight or worth.* And for the vulgare sort, there were never so many Poets, and so fewe good: but as it hath bin easy for them to represent their rymes, so come they farre short in imitating the rich descriptions of the one, and rare inventions of the other. But what shall he doe, if he bee urged with sophisticall subtilties about a Sillogisme? A gammon of Bacon makes a man drinke, drinking quenbeth a mans thirst, *Ergo*, a gammon of bacon quenbeth a mans thirst. Let him mock at-it, it is more wittie to be mockt at, then to be aunswered. Let him borrowe this pleasant counter-craft of *Aristippus*; *Why shall I unbind that, which being bound doth so much trouble me?* Some one proposed certaine Logically quiddities against *Cleanthes*, to whom *Chrisippus* saide; use such juggling trickes to plaie with children, and divert not the serious thoughtes of an aged man to such idle matters. If such foolish wiles, *contorta & aculeata sophismata. Intricate and stinged sophismes*, must perswade a lie, it is dangerous; but if they proove void of any effect, and moove him but to laughter, I see not why he shall beware of them. Some there are so foolish that will go a quarter of a mile out of the way to hunt after a quaint new word, if they once get in chace; *Aut qui non uerba rebus aptant, sed res extrinsecus arcessunt, quibus uerba conueniant. Or such as fit not wordes to matter, but fetch matter from abroad, whereto words be fitted.* And another, *Qui alicuius uerbi decore placentis, uocentur ad id quod non proposuerunt scribere. Who are allured by the grace of some pleasing word, to write that they intended not to write.* I doe more willingly winde up a witty notable sentence, that so I may sewe-it upon me, then unwinde my thread to goe fetch it. Contrariwise, it is for words to serve and waite upon the matter, and not for matter to attend upon words, and if the French tongue cannot reach unto-it, let the Gaskonie, or any other. I would have the matters to surmount, and so fil the imagination of him that harkeneth, that he have no remembrance at all of the wordes. It is a naturall, simple, and unaffected speach that I love, so written as it is spoken, and such upon the paper, as it is in the mouth, a pithy, sinnowie, full, strong, compendious, and materiall speach, not so delicate and affected, as vehement and piercing.

*Hæc demum sapiet dictio, quæ feriet.*

*In fine, that word is wisely fit,  
Which strikes the sence, the marke doth hit.*



Rather difficult then tedious, voyde of affection, free, loose and bolde, that every member of-it seeme to make a bodie; not Pedanticall, nor Frierlike, nor Lawyerlike, but rather downe-right, Souldier-like. As *Suetonius* calleth that of *Iulius Cæsar*, which I see no reason that some shoulde goe about to disgrace. I have sometimes pleased my selfe in imitating that licenciousnesse or wanton humour of our youths, in wearing of their garments; as carelesly to let their cloakes hang downe over one shoulder; to weare their cloakes scarfe or bawdriekewise, and their stockings loose-hanging about their legs. It represents a kinde of disdainefull fiercenesse of these forraine embellishings, and neglect carelesnesse of arte: But I commend-it more being employed in the course and forme of speech. All manner of affectation, namely in the liveliness and libertie of *France*, is unseemely in a Courtier. And in a Monarchie every gentleman ought to addresse himselfe unto a Courtiers carriage. Therefore do we well somewhat to encline to a native and carelesse behaviour. I like not a contexture, where the seames and pieces may be seene: As in a well compact body, what neede a man distinguish and number all the bones and veines severally? *Quæ ueritati operam dat oratio, incompressa sit & simplex. Quis accuratè loquitur, nisi qui uult putidè loqui?* The speach that intendeth truth must be plaine and unpollisht: Who speaketh elaborately, but he that meanes to speake unsauouredly? That eloquence offereth injurie unto things, which altogether drawes-us to observe-it. As in apparell it is a signe of pusillanimitie for one to marke himselfe, in some particular and unusuall fashion: so likewise in common speach, for one to hunt after new phrases, and unaccustomed-quaint words, proceedeth of a scholasticall and childish ambition. Let me use none other then are spoken in the halls of *Paris*. *Aristophanes* the Gramarian was somewhat out of the way, when he reproved *Epicurus*, for the simplicitie of his words, and the end of his arte oratorie, which was onely perspicuitie in speach. The imitation of speach, by reason of the felicitie of it, followeth presently a whole nation. The imitation of judging and inventing, comes more slow. The greater number of Readers, because they have found one selfe-same kinde of gowne, suppose most falsly to holde one like body. Outward garments and cloakes may be borrowed, but never the sinews and strength of the body. Most of those that converse with me, speake like unto these Essayes; but I know not whether they thinke alike. The Athenians (as *Plato* averreth) have for their parte great care to be fluent and eloquent in their speach; The Lacedemonians endevour to be short and compendious; And those of *Creet* labour more to be plentiful in conceites, then in language. And these are the best. *Zeno* was wont to say, *That hee had two sortes of disciples; the one hee called φιλόλογος, curious to learne things, and those were his darlings, the other he termed λογοφίλος, who respected nothing more then the language.* Yet can no man say, but that to speake well, is most gracious and commendable, but not so excellent as some make it: and I am grieved to see how we imploy most parte of our time about that onely. I would first knowe mine owne tongue perfectly, then my neighbours with whom I have most commerce. I must needes acknowledge, that the Greeke and Latine tongues, are great ornaments in a gentleman, but they are purchased at over-high a rate. Use-it who list, I will tell you how they may be gotten better cheape, and much sooner then is ordinarily used, which was tried in my selfe. My late father, having by all the meanes and industrie, that is possible for man, sought amongst the wisest, and men of best understanding, to finde a

most exquisite and ready way of teaching, being advised of the inconveniences then in use; was given to understand, that the lingering while, and best parte of our youth, that we employ in learning the tongues, which cost-them nothing, is the only cause wee can never attaine to that absolute perfection of skill and knowledge, of the Greekes, and Romanes. I doe not believe that to be the onely cause. But so it-is, the expedient my father found-out, was this; that being yet at nurse, and before the first loosing of my tongue, I was delivered to a Germaine (who died since, a most excellent Phisitian in *France*) he being then altogether ignorant of the French tongue, but exquisitely ready and skilfull in the Latine. This man, whom my father had sent-for of purpose, and to whom he gave very great entertainment, had me continually in his armes, and was mine onely overseer. There were also joyned unto him two of his countrimen, but not so learned; whose charge was to attend, and now and then, to play with me; and all these together did never entertaine me with other then the Latine tongue. As for others of his houshold, it was an inviolable rule, that neither himselfe, nor my mother, nor man, nor maide-servant, were suffered to speake one worde in my companie, except such Latine wordes, as every one had learned to chatte and prattle with mee. It were strange to tell how everie one in the house profited therein. My Father and my mother learned so much Latine, that for a neede they could understand-it, when they heard-it spoken, even so did all the housholde servants, namely such as were neerest and most about-me. To be short, we were all so Latinized, that the townes round about us had their share of-it; insomuch as even at this day, many Latine names both of workemen and of their tooles, are yet in use among them. And as for my selfe, I was above six yeares olde, and could understand no more French or Perigordine, then Arabike, and that without arte, without bookes, rules, or gramer, without whipping or whining. I had gotten as pure a Latine tongue as my maister could speake; the rather because I could neither mingle or confound the same with other tongues. If for an Essay they would give me a Theame, whereas the fashion in Colledges is, to give it in French, I had it in bad Latine, to reduce the same into good. And *Nicholas Grucchi*, who hath written, *De comitijs Romanorum*, *William Guerenti*, who hath commented *Aristotle: George Buchanan*, that famous Scottish Poet, and *Marke-Antonie Muret*, whom (while he lived) both *France* and *Italie* to this day, acknowledge to have beene the best Orator: all which have beene my familiar tutors, have often told me, that in mine infancie I had the Latine tongue so readie and so perfect, that themselves feared to take mee in hand. And *Buchanan*, whom afterward I saw attending on the Marshall of *Brissack*, told me, he was about to write a treatise of the institution of children, and that he toke the modell and patterne from mine: for, at that time he had the charge and bringing up of the yong Earle of *Brissack*, whom since we have seene prove so woorthy and so valiant a Captaine. As for the Greeke, wherein I have but small understanding, my father purposed to make mee learne-it by arte; But by new and uncustomed meanes, that is, by way of recreation and exercise. We did tosse our declinations, and conjugations to and fro, as they doe, who by way of a certaine game at tables learne both Arithmetike and Geometrie. For, amongst other things he had especially beene perswaded to make me taste and apprehend the fruits of dutie and science by an unforced kinde of will, and of mine owne choyce; and without any compulsion or rigor to bring me up in all mildnesse and libertie: yea with such kinde of

superstition, that, whereas some are of opinion, that sodainely to awaken yong children, and as it were by violence to startle and fright them out of their dead sleepe in a morning (wherein they are more heaue and deeper plunged then wee) dooth greatly trouble and distemper their braines, he would every morning cause me to be awakened by the sound of some instrument; and I was never without a servant who to that purpose attended upon me. This example may serve to judge of the rest; as also to commend the judgement and tender affection of so carefull and loving a father: who is not to bee blamed, though hee reaped not the fruites answerable to his exquisite toyle, and painefull manuring. Two things hindered the same; first the barrenesse and unfit soyle: for howbeit I were of a sound and strong constitution, and of a tractable and yeelding condition, yet was I so heavy, so sluggish, and so dull, that I could not be rouzed (yea were-it to goe play) from-out mine idle drowzinesse. What I saw, I saw it perfectly; and under this heavy, and as it were Lethe-complexion did I breede hardie imaginations, and opinions farre-above my yeares. My spirit was very slow, and would go no further then it was led by others; my apprehension blockish, my invention poore; and besides, I had a marvelous defect in my weake memorie: it is therefore no woonder, if my father could never bring me to any perfection. Secondly, as those that in some dangerous sicknesse, moved with a kinde of hope-full and greedy desire of perfect health againe, give-eare to every Leache or Emperike, and follow all counsells, the good-man being exceedingly fearefull to commit any oversight, in a matter he tooke so to harte, suffered himselfe at last to be led away by the common opinion, which like unto the Cranes, followeth ever those that go before, and yeelded to custome: Having those no longer about him, that had given him his first directions, and which they had brought out of *Italie*. Being but six yeares olde I was sent to the Colledge of *Guienne*, then most flourishing and reputed the best in *France*, where it is impossible to adde any thing to the great care he had, both to chuse the best and most sufficient Maisters, that could bee found, to reade unto mee, as also for all other circumstances pertaining to my education; wherein contrary to usuall customes of Colledges, he observed many particular rules. But so it is, it was ever a Colledge. My Latin tongue was forthwith corrupted, whereof by reason of discontinuance, I afterward lost all manner of use: which new kinde of institution, stood me in no other steade, but that at my first admittance, it made me to overskip some of the lower formes, and to be placed in the highest. For at thirteene yeares of age, that I left the Colledge, I had read over the whole course of Philosophie (as they call it) but with so small profit, that I can now make no accompt of it. The first taste or feeling I had of bookes, was of the pleasure I tooke in reading the fables of *Ovids* Metamorphosies; for, being but seaven or eight yeares old, I would steale and sequester my selfe from all other delights, onely to reade them: Forsomuch as the tongue wherein they were written was to me naturall; and it was the easiest booke I knew, and by reason of the matter therein contained, most agreeing with my yong age. For of King *Arthur*, of *Lancelot du-Lake*, of *Amadis*, of *Huon of Burdeaux*, and such idle time-consuming, and wit-besotting trash of bookes wherein youth doth commonly amuse it-selfe, I was not so much as acquainted with their names, and to this day know not their bodies, nor what they containe: So exact was my discipline. Whereby I became more carelesse to studie my other prescript lessons. And well did it fall-out for my purpose, that I had

to deale with a very discreet maister, who out of his judgement could with such dexteritie winke-at, and second my untowardlinesse, and such other faults that were in mee. For by that meanes, I read-over *Virgils Aeneados*, *Terence*, *Plato*,<sup>4</sup> and other Italian Comedies, allured thereunto by the pleasantnesse of their severall subjects: Had he beene so foolishly-severe, or so severely-froward as to crosse this course of mine, I think verily I had never brought any thing from the Colledge, but the hate and contempt of Bookes, as doth the greatest part of our Nobilitie. Such was his discretion, and so warily did he behave himselfe, that he saw and would not see: hee would foster and encrease my longing: suffering me but by stealth, and by snatches to glut my selfe with those bookes; holding ever a gentle hand over me, concerning other regular studies. For, the chiefest thing my father required at their hands (unto whose charge he had committed me) was a kinde of well-conditioned mildenesse, and facilitie of complexion. And, to say truth, mine had no other fault, but a certaine dull-languishing, and heavie slouthfulnessse. The danger was not, I should do-ill, but that I should doe nothing.

No man did ever suspect, I would prove a bad, but an unprofitable man: foreseeing in me rather a kind of idlenesse, then a voluntary craftinesse. I am not so selfe-conceited but I perceive what hath followed. The complaints that are dayly are buzzed in mine eares are these; that I am idle, colde, and negligent in offices of friendship, and dutie to my parents, and kinsfolkes; and touching publike offices, that I am over-singular and disdainefull. And those that are most injurious cannot aske, wherefore I have taken, and why I have not paied? but may rather demand, why I doe not quit, and wherefore I doe not give? I would take it as a favour, they should wish such effects of superarrogation in me. But they are unjust and over-partiall, that will goe about to exact that from me, which I owe not, with more rigor than they will exact from themselves that which they owe; wherein if they condemne me, they utterly cancell, both the gratifying of the action, and the gratitude, which thereby would be due to-me. Whereas the active well-doing should be of more consequence, proceeding from my hand, in regarde I have no passive at all. Wherefore I may so much the more freely dispose of my fortune, by how much more it is mine, and of my selfe that am most mine owne. Notwithstanding, if I were a great blazoner of mine owne actions, I might peradventure barre such reproches, and justly upbraide some, that they are not so much offended, because I doe not enough, as for that I may, and it lies in my power to doe much more then I doe. Yet my minde ceased not at the same time to have peculiar unto-it selfe well-settled motions, true and open judgements, concerning the objects, which it knewe; which alone, and without any helpe or communication it would digest. And amongst other things I verily believe, it would have proved altogether incapable, and unfit to yeeld unto force, or stoope unto violence. Shall I accompt or relate this qualitie of my infancie, which was, a kinde of boldenesse in my lookes, and gentle softnesse in my voyce, and affabilitie in my gestures, and a dexteritie in conforming my selfe to the parts I undertooke? for before the age of the

*Alter ab undecimo tum me vix cœperat annus:*

*Yeares had I (to make even.)*  
*Scarse two above eleven.*

I have under-gone and represented the chiefest parts in the Latine Tragedies of *Buchanan*, *Guerenti*, and of *Muret*; which in great state were acted and plaid in our colledge of *Guienne*: wherein *Andreas Goveanus* our Rector principall; who as in all other partes belonging to his charge, was without comparison the chiefest Rector of *France*, and my selfe (without ostentation be it spoken) was reputed, if not a chiefe maister, yet a principall Actor in them. It is an excercise I rather commend then disalow in yong gentlemen: and have seene some of our Princes (in imitation of some of former ages) both commendably and honestly, in their proper persons acte and play some parts in Tragedies. It hath heretofore been esteemed a lawfull exercise, and a tollerable profession in men of honor, namely in *Greece*. *Aristoni tragico actori rem aperit: huic & genus & fortuna honesta erant: nec ars quia nihil tale apud Græcos pudori est, ea deformabat. He impartes the matter to Ariston a Player of tragedies, whose progenie and fortune were both honest; nor did his profession disgrace them, because no such matter is a disparagement amongst the Græcians.*

And I have ever accused them of impertinencie, that condemne and disalow such kindes of recreations, and blamed those of injustice, that refuse good and honest Comedians, (or as we call them) Players, to enter our good townes, and grudge the common people such publike sports. Politike and well-ordred commonwealths, endeavor rather carefully to unite and assemble their cittizens together; as in serious offices of devotion, so in honest exercises of recreation. Common societie and loving friendship is thereby cherished and increased. And besides, they cannot have more formall and regular pastimes allowed them, then such as are acted and represented in open view of all, and in the presence of the magistrates themselves: And if I might beare sway, I would thinke-it reasonable, that Princes should sometimes, at their proper charges, gratifie the common people with them, as an argument of a fatherly affection, and loving goodnes towards them: and that in populous and frequented cities, there should be Theatres and places appointed for such spectacles; as a diverting of worse inconveniences, and secret actions. But to come to my intended purpose, there is no better way then to allure the affection, and to entice the appetite: otherwise a man shall breede but asses laden with bookes. With jerkes of roddes they have their satchels full of learning given them to keepe. Which to doe well, one must not onely harbour in him-selfe, but wed and marry the same with his minde.

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## NOTES

- 1 To paraphrase Missy Elliott, *prosopoyall images* is “a John Florio exclusive.” Montaigne wrote *images regenteuses* which Charles Cotton translated *images of authority* and Donald Frame *domineering airs*. Florio uses a similar construction in 3.13 (*On Experience*) to translate *troigne magistrale: prosopopeyall gravity*.
- 2 *in ure*, from which we get *inure*, means *customary*. It is derived from Anglo-French *en ovre* (comparable to modern French *en œuvre*.)

- 3 Florio's translation is missing in this edition. Other editions have: *There is a great difference, whether one have no will, or no wit to do amisse.*
- 4 Later editions have *Plautus* instead, which is what Montaigne wrote.