

MICHEL DE MONTAIGNE  
**ESSAYS**

**Book 1 · Chapter 40**



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## That the taste of goods or evilles doth greatly depend on the opinion we have of them

MEN (saith an ancient Greeke sentence) *are tormented by the opinions they have of things, and not by things themselves*. It were a great conquest for the ease of our miserable humane condition, if any man could establish every where this true proposition. For if evilles have no entrance into-vs, but by our judgement, it seemeth that it lieth in our power, either to contemne or turne them to our good. If things yeelde themselves unto our mercie, why should we not have the fruition of them, or apply them to our advantage? If that which we call evill and torment, be neither torment, nor evil, but that our fancie only gives it that qualitie, it is in us to change-it: and having the choice of it, if none compell-us, wee are very fooles, to bandie for that partie, which is irkesome unto us: and to give infirmitie, indigence and contempt, a sharpe and ill taste, if we may give them a good: And if fortune simply affoord-us the matter, it lieth in us to give-it the forme. Now that that which wee terme evill, is not so of it selfe, or at least, such as it is, that it depends of us to give-it another taste, and another countenance (for all comes to one) let us see whether it can be maintained. If the originall-being of those things we feare, had the credite of it's owne authoritie to lodge it selfe in us, alike and semblable would it lodge in all: For men be all of one kinde, and except the most or least, they are furnished with like meanes to judge, and instruments to conceive. But the diversitie of opinions, which we have of those things, doth evidently shew, that but by composition they never enter into-us. Some one peradventure doth lodge them in himselfe, as they are in essence, but a thousand others give them a new being, and a contrarie. Wee accompt of death, of povertie, and of sorrowe, as of our chiefest partes. Now death, which some of all horrible things call the most horrible, who knowes not, how others call-it, the onely haven of this lives-torments? the soveraigne good of nature? the onely staie of our libertie? and the ready and common receipt of our evills? And as some doe, fearefully-trembling, and sensesly-affrighted, expect her comming, others endure it more easily then life: And one complaineth of her facilitie;

*Mors utinam pavidos uita subducere nolles,  
Sed virtus to sola daret!*

*O death! I would thou would'st let coward's live,  
That resolv'd valour might thee only give!*

But let us leave these glorious minds: *Theodorus* answered *Lysimachus*, who threatened to kill him: *Thou shalt doe a great exploite to come to the strength of a Cantharides*. The greatest number of Philosophers are found to have either by designe prevented, or hastned and furthered their deaths. How many popular persons are seen brought unto death, and not to a simple death, but entermixt with shame, and sometimes with grievous torments, to embrace it with such an undaunted assurance; some through stubborne wilfulnesse, other-some through a naturall simplicitie, in whome is nothing seene changed from their ordinarie condition; settling their domesticall affaires, recommending themselves unto their friends, preaching, singing, and entertaining the people: yea, and sometimes uttering wordes of jesting and laughter, and drinking to their acquaintance, as wel as *Socrates*? One who was ledde to the gallows, desired it might not be through such a streete, for feare a Marchant should set a Serjant on his backe, for an old debt. Another wished the hang-man not to touch his throate, lest hee should make him swowne with laughing, because he was so ticklish. Another answered his confessor, who promised him he should suppe that night with our Saviour in heaven, Goe thither your selfe to supper, for I use to fast a nights. Another upon the Gibbet calling for drinke, and the hang-man drinking first, said, he would not drinke after him, for feare hee should take the poxe of him. Everie man hath heard the tale of the Piccard, who being upon the ladder ready to be throwne downe, there was a wench presented unto him, with this offer (as in some cases our law doth sometimes tolerate) that if hee would marry hir, his life should be saved, who after he had beheld her, and perceving that she halted, said hastily, *Away, away, good hang-man, make an end of thy businesse, she limps*. The like is reported of a man in *Denmarke*, who being adjudged to have his head cut-off, and being upon the scaffold, had the like condition offered him, but refused it; because the wench offered him was jawe-falne, long cheekt, and sharpe-nosed. A yoong ladde at *Tholous*, beeing accused of heresie, in all points touching his believe, referred himselfe wholly to his Maisters faith, a yoong scholler that was in prison with him, and rather chose to die, then he would be perswaded, his Maister could erre. We reade of those of the Towne of *Arras*, at what time king *Lewis* the eleventh tooke it, that amongst the common people manie were found, who rather then they would say, *God save the King*, suffered themselves to be hanged. And of those base-minded jesters or buffons, some have bin seene, that even at the point of death, would never leave their jesting and scoffing. He whom the heads-man threw-off from the Gallows, cried out, *Rowe the Gally*, which was his ordinary receptacle. An other, who being at his last gaspe, his friendes had laid him upon a pallet alongest the fire-side, there to breathe his last, the Phisitian demaunding where his grieffe pained him? Answered, betweene the bench and the fire: And the Priest to give him the last unction, seeking for his feete, which by reason of his sicknesse were shrucken-up, he told him, My good friend you shall find them at my legges endes, if you look well. To another that exhorted him to recommend himself to God, he asked, Who is going to him? And the fellowe answering, your selfe shortly. If it be his good pleasure, I would to

God it might be to morrow night, replied he: Recommend but your selfe to him, said the other, and you shall quickly be there: It is best then, answered he, that my selfe carry mine owne commendations to him. In the Kingdome of *Narsinga*, even at this day their Priestes wives, are buried alive with the bodies of their dead husbands. All other wives are burnt at their husbands funerals, not only constantly, but cheerefully. When their king dieth, his wives, his concubines, his minions, together with al his officers and servants, which make a whole people, present themselves so merrily unto the fire, wherein his body is burned, that they manifestly seeme to esteeme-it as a great honour, to accompanie their deceased maister to his ashes. During our last warres of *Millane*, and so many takings, losses, miseries and calamities of that Cittie, the people impatient of so manie changes of fortune, tooke such a resolution unto death, that I have heard my father say, hee kept account of five and twentie chiefe housholders, that in one week made them-selves away. An accident which hath some affinitie with that of the Xanthians, who being besieged by *Brutus*, did pell-mell-headlong, men, women, and children precipitate them-selves into so furious a desire of death, that nothing can be performed to avoid death, which these did not accomplish to avoid life: So that *Brutus* had much adoe, to save a very small number of-them. Every opinion is of sufficient power to take holde of a man in respect of life. The first Article of that couragious oathe, which the Countrie of *Greece* did sweare, and keepe, in the Medoisan warre, was, that everie particular man should rather change his life unto death, than the Persian lawes for theirs. What a world of people are dayly seene in the Turkish warres and the Græcians, more willing to embrace a sharpe, a bitter, and violent death then to be uncircumcized and baptized? An example whereof no religion is incapable. The Kings of *Castile* having banished the Jewes out of their Country, king *John* of *Portugall* for eight crownes a man sold them a retreat in his dominion, for a certaine time, upon condition (the time expired) they should avoid, and he finde them shippes to transport them into *Affrike*. The day of their departure come, which past, it was expressed, that such as had not obeyed, should for-ever remaine bond-slaves; shippes were provided them, but very scarce and sparingly: And those which were embarked, were so rudely, churlishly, and villainously used, by the passengers and marriners; who besides infinit other indignities, loitred so long on the seas, now forward, now backward, that in the end, they had consumed all their victualls, and were forced, if they would keepe themselves alive, to purchase some of them, at so excessive a rate, and so long, that they were never set a shore, til they had brought them so bare, that they had nothing left them but their shirts. The newes of this barbarous inhumanity being reported to those that were yet on land, most of them resolved to yeeld and continue bound-slaves: whereof some made a semblance to change their religion. *Emanuel* that immediately succeeded *John*, being come to the Crowne, first set them at liberty, then changing his minde, commaunded them to depart out of his dominions, and for their passages assigned them three ports. He hoped, as Bishop *Osorius* reporteth, (a Latine Historian of our ages, not to be despised) that the favour of the liberty, to which he had restored them, having failed to convert them unto Christianity, the difficultie to commit themselves unto marriners and pyrates robberies, to leave a Country where they were settled with great riches, for to go seeke unknowen and strange regions,

would bring them into *Portugall* againe. But seeing all his hopes frustrate, and that they purposed to passe away, he cutte-off two of the three portes he had promised them, that so the tedious distance and incommoditie of the passage might retaine some, or rather that hee might have the meane to assemble them all together in one place, for a fitter opportunity of the execution hee intended, which was this. Hee appointed that all their children under fourteene yeeres of age, should be taken from out the handes of their parents, and remooved from their sight and conversation, to some place where they might be brought-up, and instructed in our religion. He saieth that this effect caused an horrible spectacle: The naturall affection betweene the fathers and the children; moreover the zeale unto their ancient faith, striving against this violent ordinance. Diverse fathers and mothers were ordinarily seene to kill themselves, and with a more cruell example through compassion and love, to throw their yong children into pittes and welles, thereby to shunne the lawe. The terme, which he had prefixed them being expired, for want of other meanes, they yeelded unto thraldome. Some became Christians, from whose faith and race, even at this day (for it is a hundred yeares since) few Portugalles assure themselves; although custome, and length of time be much more forcible counsellors unto such mutations, than any other compulsion. In the Towne of *Castelnaw Darry*, more then fiftie *Albigois*, all heretikes, at one time, with a determined corage, suffred themselves to be burned alive, all in one same fire, before they would recant and disavow their opinions. *Quoties non modò ductores nostri, sed uniuersi etiam exercitus, ad non dubiam mortem concurrerunt?* How often have, not only our Leaders (saith Tully) but also our whole armies run roundly together to an undoubted death? I have seene one of my familiar friendes runne furiously on death, with such, and so deeply in his heart rooted affection, by diverse visages of discourse, which I could never suppress in him, and to the first that offered it selfe masked with a lustre of honour, without apprehending any sharpe or violent end, therein to precipitate himselfe. We have many examples in our dayes: yea in very children of such as for feare of some slight incommoditie have yeelded unto death. And to this purpose saieth an ancient Writer, what shall we not feare, if we feare that, which cowardise it selfe hath chosen for her retireite? Here to huddle-up a long bead-rowle of those of all sexes, conditions, and sects, in most happy ages, which either have expected death most constantly, or sought for it voluntarily, and not onely sought to avoyd the evils of this life, but some, onely to shunne the sacietie of living any longer: and some, for the hope of a better condition else-where, I should never have done. The number is so infinit, that verily it would be an easier matter for me to reckon up those that have feared the same. Onely this more. *Pirro* the philosopher, finding himselfe upon a very tempestuous day in a boat, shewed them whom he perceived to be most affrighted through feare, and encouraged them by the example of an hog, that was amongst them, and seemed to take no care at-all for the storme: Shall wee then dare to say, that the advantage of reason, whereat we seeme so much to rejoyce, and for whose respect we accompt our selves Lords and Emperours of all other creatures, hath bene infused into-us for our torment? *What availeth the knowledge of things, if through them we become more demisse?* If thereby we loose the rest and tranquillitie wherein we should be without them? and if it makes us of worse condition then was *Pirrhos* hog? Shall we employ the intellegence,

heaven hath bestowed upon us for our greatest good, to our ruine? repugning natures desseigne and the universall order and vicissitude of things, which implieth that every man should use his instruments and meanes for his owne commoditie? Wel (wil some tel me) let your rule fit you against death; but what wil you say of indigence and necessitie? what will you also say of minde-grieving sorrow, which *Aristippus*, *Hieronimus*, and most of the wisest have judged the last evill? and those which denied the same in words, confessed the same in effect? *Possidonius* being extreemely tormented with a sharpe and painefull sicknesse, *Pompey* came to see him, and excused himselfe hee had chosen so unfit an houre to heare him discourse of Philosophie: *God forbid* (answered *Possidonius*) *that ever paine should so farre usurpe upon me, as to hinder me from discoursing of so worthy a subject*, And thereupon beganne to speake of the contempt of paine. But there whilst she plaied her parte, and uncessantly pinched and urged him; gainst whom he exclaimed: *Paine, do what thou list, I shall never be drawne to say, that thou art an evill*. That saying, which they would make of such consequence, what doth-it inferre against the contempt of paine? it contends but for the word. And if the pangs thereof move him not there-whilst, why breakes he off his discourse for-it? Why thinkes hee to worke a great exploit, not to call-it an evill? All doth not consist in imagination. Here we judge of the rest. It is assured learning that heere doth play her part, our owne senses are judges of it?

*Qui nisi sunt veri, ratio quoque falsa sit omnis.*

*Which sences if they be not true,  
All reason's false, it must ensue.*

Shall we make our skin beleeve, the stripes of a whip doe tickle it? and perswade our taste, that Aloes be wine of Graves? *Pirrhos* hog is here in our predicament. He is nothing danted at death, but if you beate him, he will grunt, crie, and torment himselfe. Shall we force the generall law of nature, which in all living creatures under heaven is seene to tremble at paine? The very trees seeme to groane at offences. Death is but felt by discourse, because it is the motion of an instant.

*Aut fuit, aut veniet, nihil est præsentis in illa.*

*Death hath come, or it wil not misse;  
But in it nothing present is.*

*Morsque minus pœnæ, quàm mora mortis habet.*

*Deaths paines lesse, roundly acted,  
Then when death is protracted.*

A thousand beasts, a thousand men, are sooner dead then threatned. Besides, what we principally call feare in death, it is paine her customary fore-runner. Neverthelesse if we must give credit unto an ancient father, *Malam mortem non facit, nisi quod sequitur mortem*. *Nothing, but what follows death, makes death to be evill*. And I might more truly say, that neither that which goeth before, nor that which commeth after, is no appurtenance of

death, we falsely excuse our selves. And I find by experience, that it is rather the impatience of the imagination of death, that makes us impatient of the paine, and that we feele it two-fold grievous, forasmuch as it threatens us to die. But reason accusing our weakenesse, to feare so sodaine a thing, so unavoydable, so insensible; we take this other more excusable pretence. All evils that have no other danger, but of the evill, we count them dangerlesse. The tooth-ach, the paine of the gowt, how grievous soever, because they kill not, who reckoneth them in the number of maladies? Well, suppose that in death we especially regard the paine: As also, povertie hath nothing to be feared-for, but what she casteth upon us through famine, thirst, colde, heate, and other miseries, it makes us feele and endure. So have we nothing to doe but with paine. I will willingly grant them, that it is the worst accident of our being. For, I am the man that hate and shunne-it as much as possible may be; because hitherto (thanks be unto God) I have no commerce or dealing with her: But it is in our power, if not to dissanull, at least to diminish the same, through patience: And though the body should be moved thereat, yet to keepe the minde and reason in good temper. And if it were not so, who then hath brought vertue, valour, force, magnanimitie, and resolution into credite, Where shall they play their parte, if there be no more paine defied? *Avida est periculi virtus, Vertue is desirous of danger.* If a man must not lie on the hard ground, armed at all assayes, to endure the heat of the scorching Sunne, to feede hungerly upon a horse or an asse, to see himselfe mangled and cut in peeces, to have a bullet pluckt out of his bones, to suffer incisions, his flesh to be sticht-up, cauterized, and searched, all incident unto a martiall man; how shall we purchase the advantage and preheminance, which we so greedily seeke-after, over the vulgar sort? It is far from avoiding the evill and paines of it, as wise men say, that of actions equally good, one should most be wished to be done, wherein is most paine and griefe. *Non enim hilaritate nec lascivia risu aut ioco comite levitatis, sed sæpe etiam tristes firmitate & constantia sunt beati.* For men are not happy by mirthfulness, or wantonnesse, or laughing, or jesting, which is the companion of lightnesse; but often, even those that are sorrowfull, through their strong heart and constancie. And therefore was it impossible to perswade our fathers, that conquests atchieved by maine force, in the hazard of warre were not more availeable and advantageous, then those obtained in all securitie by practises and stratagems.

*Lætius est, quoties magno sibi constat honestum.*

*Honestie makes chieftest cheare,  
When it doth cost itselfe most deare.*

Moreover, this ought to comfort us, that naturally, if paine be violent, it is also short; if long, it is easie: *Si gravis, brevis; si longus, levis.* If it be grievous, it is short; if it be long, it is light. Thou shalt not feele-it over long; if thou feele-it over much, it will either end it selfe, or end thee: All comes to one: If thou beare not it, it will beare thee away. *Memineris maximos morte finiri, parvos multa habere intervalla requietis; mediocrium nos esse dominos: ut si tolerabiles sint feramus: sin minus, è vita, quum ea non placeat, tanquàm è theatro exeamus.* Remember the greatest are ended with death, the lesser have many pauses of rest; we are maisters of the meane ones: so as if they be tolerable, we may beare them; if not, we may make an Exit from our life which doth not please, as from a stage. That

which makes us endure paine with such impatience, is, that we are not accustomed to take our chiefe contentment in the soule, and that we do not sufficiently relie on her; who is the onely, and soveraigne mistris of our condition. The body hath (except the least or most) but one course, and one byase. The soule is variable in all maner of formes, and rangeth to herselfe, and to her state, whatsoever it be, the senses of the body, and all other accidents. Therefore must she be studied, enquired, and sought-after: and her powerfull springs and wardes should be rowzed up. There is neither reason, nor prescription, nor force can availe against her inclination and choise. Of so infinit byases, that shee hath in her disposition, let us allow hir one sutable and fit to our rest and preservation: Then shall we not onely be sheltered from all offence, but if it please her, also gratified and flattered of all grievances and evils. She indifferently makes profit of all; even errours and dreames, doe profitably bestede-her, as a loyall matter, to bring-us unto safetie and contentment. It may easily be seene, that the point of our spirite, is that which sharpeneth both paine and pleasure in us. Beastes wanting the same, leave their free and naturall senses unto their bodies: and by consequence, single well-nigh in every kinde, as they shew by the semblable application of their moovings. If in our members we did not trouble the jurisdiction, which in that belongs unto them; it may be thought, we should be the better for-it, and that nature hath given them a just and moderate temperature toward pleasure and toward paine. And it can not choose but be good and just, being equall and common. But since we have freed and alienated our selves from her rules, to abandon our selves unto the vagabond libertie of our fantasies: let us at least help to bend them to the most agreeing side. *Plato* feareth our sharp engaging unto paine and voluptuousnes, forsomuch as he over-strictly tieth and bindeth the soule unto the body: I am rather opposite unto him, because it is sundred and loosed from it. Even as an enemy becommeth more furious when we flie from him, so doth paine grow more proud if it see-us tremble under it. It will stoope and yeeld upon better compositions to him that shall make head against-it. A man must oppose and bandy against it. In recoyling and giving ground, we call and draw on, the ruine threatning-us. Even as the body is more steady and stronge to a charge, if it stand stiffely to-it, so is the soule. But lette us come to examples properly belonging unto weake-backt men, as I am, where we shal find, that it is with paine, as with stones, which take either a higher or deeper colour, according to the foyle that is laide under them, and holdeth no other place in us then we give-it. *Tantum doluerunt, quantum doloribus se inseruerunt. So much they grieved, as they interested themselves in griefes.* We feele a dash of a chirurgions razor more then ten blows with a sword in the heate of fight. The painful throwes of childbearing, deemed both by Phisitians, and by the word of God to be very great, and which our women passe with so many ceremonies.

There are whole nations that make no reckoning of them. I omitte to speake of the *Lacedemonian* women; but come we to the *Swizzers* of our Infanterie, what change doe you perceive in them? But that trudging and trotting after their husbands, to day you see them carrie the childe about their necke, which but yesterday they bare in their wombe. And those counterfet roging *Giptians*, whereof so many are daily seene amongst us, doe they not wash their children so soone as they are borne? And in the



next river that comes to hand? Besides so many harlots, which daiely steale their children in the generation as in the conception. The beauteous and noble Ladie of *Sabinus* a Roman Patritian, for the interest of others, did alone, without any bodies helpe or assistance, and without noyse or groning endure the bearing, and deliverie of two twinnes. A simple lad of *Lacedemon*, having stolne a Foxe (for they more feared the shame of their foolishnes in stealing, then we feare the paine or punishment of misdeedes) and hiding the same under his cloake, endured rather to have his guts gnawne out by hir, then to discover himselfe. An other who offering incense at a sacrifice, suffered his flesh to burne to the bone, by a coale falne into his sleeve, rather then he would trouble that sacred mysterie. And a great number have been seene, for the onely essay of vertue, following their institution, that at the age of seaven yeares, without so much as changing their countenance, have indured to be whipped to death. And *Cicero* hath seene whole troupes, to beate one another so long, with their fists, with their feete, and with their teeth, till they have fainted and fall downe halfe dead, before ever they would confesse to be overcome. *Nunquam naturam mos uinceret, est enim ea semper inuicta, sed nos umbris, delitiis, otio, languore, desidia, animum infecimus: opinionibus maloque more delinitum mollivimus. Custome should never overcome nature, for she is still invincible: but wee have infected our minde with shadows, daintines, idlenes, faint-hartednes, sloughtfulnes, and have effeminated it; inveagled with opinions and evill custome.* Every man knowes the storie of *Scevola*, who being entred the enemies campe, with a full resolution to kill their Chieftaine, and having missed of his purpose, to checke his effect with a stranger invention, and to cleare his countrie, confessed unto *Porsenna*, (who was the King he intended to kill) not onely his dessigne, but added more-over, that in his campe there were a great many Romanes, who had undertaken and sworne the very same enterprise, and were confederates with him. And to make shew of his dread-lesse magnanimitie, having caused a panne of burning coales to be brought, hee sawe and suffred his right arme (in penance that it had not effected his project) to be parched and wel-nigh rosted-off: untill such time as his enemie himselfe, feeling a kind of remorse-ful horror, commaunded the fire to be caried away. What shall we say of him, that would not vouchsafe to leave, or so much as to interrupt the reading of his booke, whilst he had an incision made into him? And of him who resolved to skoffe and laugh, even in spight and contempt of the tortures, which were inflicted upon him, so that the raging crueltie of the hangmen, that held him, and all the inventions of torments that could be devised, being redoubled upon him, one in the necke of another, gave him over? But he was a Philosopher. What? of one of *Cæsars* gladiators, who with a cheerefull and smiling countenance endured his woundes to be slitte and sounded? *Quis mediocris gladiator ingemuit? Quis uultum mutauit unquam? Quis non modò stetit, verùm etiam decubuit turpiter? Quis cùm decubisset, ferrum recipere iussus, collum contraxit? What meane fencer hath once groned? Which of them hath once changed his countenance? Which of them not onely hath stode up, but even falne with shame? Which of them when he was downe, and was willed to take his death, did once shrinke-in his necke?* But let us joyne some women unto them. Who hath not heard of hir at *Paris*, which onely to get a fresher hew of a new skinne, endured to have hir face flead all over? There are some, who being found, and in perfect health, have had some teeth puld-out, thereby to frame a daintier and more pleasing voyce,

or to set them in better order. How many examples of contempt of paine or smart have we of that kinde and sex? What can they not doe? What will they not doe? What feare they to doe? So they may but hope for some amendment of their beautie?

*Uellere quis cura est albos à stirpe capillos,  
Et faciem dempta pelle referre novam.*

*Who take great care to roote out their gray haire,  
And skinne fleade-off a new face to repaire.*

I have seene some swallow gravell, ashes, coles, dust, tallow, candles, and for-the-nonce, labour and toyle themselves to spoile their stomacke, onely to get a pale-bleake colour. To become slender in waste, and to have a straight spagnolized body, what pinching, what guirding, what cingling will they not indure? Yea sometimes with yron-plates, with whalebones, and other such trash, that their very skinne, and quicke flesh is eaten-in and consumed to the bones? Whereby they sometimes worke their owne death. It is common to divers nations of our times, to hurt and gash themselves in good earnest, to give credit to their words. And our King reporteth sundrie examples, of what himselfe sawe in *Polonia*, and towards himselfe. But besides what I know to have by some beene imitated in *France*; when I came from the famous Parliament of *Blois*; I had a little before seene a wench in *Picardie*, to witnes the vehemencie of hir promises, and also hir constancie, with the bodkin she wore in hir haire, to give hir-selfe foure or five thrusts in hir arme, which made hir skinne to crack and gush out blood. The *Turkes* are wont to wound and scarre themselves for their Ladies sakes, and that the marke may the better appeare, and continue the longer, they will presently lay fire upon the cuttes; and to stanch the blood, and better to forme the cicatrice, they will keepe-it on, an incredible while. Honest men that have seene-it, have written the same, and sworne it unto me. And for ten Aspers you shall daiely finde some amongst them, that will give themselves a deepe gash with a Scimitarie, either in their armes or thighes. I am very glad witnesses are so readie at hand; where we have most neede of them: For, Christendome affordeth many. And after the example of our holy guide, there have beene divers, who for devotion would needes beare the crosse. We learne by a worthie testimonie of religion, that Saint *Lewes* the King wore a haire-shirt, untill such time as he was so aged, that his confessor gave him a dispensation for-it; and that every friday he caused his priests to beate his shoulders with five little yron chaines, which to that purpose were ever caried with his nightgeare. *William* our last Duke of *Guienne*, father to that *Eleonore*, who transferred that Dutchie unto the houses of *France* and *England*, the last ten or twelve yeares of his life, for penance-sake wore continually a corselet, under a religious habit. *Foulkes* Earle of *Anjou* went to *Jerusalem*, there with a rope about his necke, to be whipped by two of his servants, before our Saviours sepulchre. Doe we not upon every good-friday, in sundrie places, see a great number of men and women, scourge and beate-themselves so long till they bruse and teare their flesh, even to the bones? I have often seene it my selfe, and that without enchantment. And some say (for they are masked) there were some amongst them, who for monie would undertake thereby to warrant

other mens religion, by a contempt of smart-full paine, so much the greater, by how much the stings of devotions are of more force, then those of covetousnes. Q. *Maximus* buried his sonne being Consull: *Marcus Cato* his, beeing elected Pretor: and *L. Paulus* both his, within few daies, with so cheereful and settled a countenance, and without any shew of sorrowe. I have sometimes by way of jesting tolde one, that he had confronted divine justice: For, the violent death of three tall children of his, comming unto his eares all upon one day, and sent-him, as it may be imagined, as a great scourge: He was so farre from mourning, that he rather tooke-it as a favour and singular gratification at Gods hand. I doe not follow these monstrous humours. Yet have I lost two or three my selfe, whilst they were yong and at nurse, if not without apprehension of sorrow, yet without continuance of grieffe. And *there is no accident woundeth men deeper, or goeth so neere the heart, as the losse of children.* I see divers other common occasions of affliction, which, were I assailed by them, I should scarcely feele. And I have contemned and neglected some, when it hath pleased God to visite me with them, on which the world setteth so uglye and baleful a countenance, that I hardly dare boast of them without blushing. *Ex quo intelligitur, non in natura, sed in opinione esse ægretudinem. Whereby it is understood, that grieffe consisteth not in nature, but opinion.* Opinion is a powerfull, bold, and unmeasurable party. Who doth ever so greedily search after rest-full ease and quietnes, as *Alexander* and *Cæsar* have done after difficulties and unquietnesse? *Terez*, the father of *Sitalcez*, was wont to say, *that when hee had no warres, he thought there was no difference betweene him and his horse-keeper.* *Cato* the Consull, to assure himselfe of certaine townes in *Spaine*, having onely interdicted some of their inhabitants to weare armes, many of them killed themselves: *Ferox gens nullam uitam rati sine armis esse. A fierce kinde of people, that thought there was no life without armes.* How many knowe wee who have abandoned and forsaken the pleasure of an ease-full and quiet life in their houses, and to live with their friends and acquaintance; to follow the toying-horror of unfrequented deserts, and that yeelded and cast themselves unto the abjectnesse, contempt and vilifying of the world, wherwith they have so pleased themselves, as nothing more? *Cardinall Boremeus*, who dyed lately at *Milane*, in the midst of the pleasures and debawches to which his Nobilitie, and the great riches he possessed, enticed him, and the ayre of *Italie* afforded him, and his youth allured him, did ever keep himself in so an austere forme of life, that the same gowne which served him in Summer he wore in Winter. He never lay but upon strawe; the houres which he might conveniently spare from his charge, hee bestowed in continuall studie, ever kneeling, and having a smal quantitie of bread and water by his bookes side, which was al the provision for his repast, and time he employed in study. I know some who wittingly have drawn both profit and preferment from cuckoldrie, the only name wherof is so yrkesome and bail-full to so many men. If sight be not the most necessary of our senses, at least is it the most pleasing: the most plausible and profitable of our members, seeme those that serve to beget us: notwithstanding divers have mortaly hated them, only because they were over-much amiable, and for their worths-sake have rejected them. So thought he of his eies, that voluntarily put them out. The most common and soundest part of men, holdeth multitude of children to be a signe of great happinesse and comfort; So doe I, and many others, the want of them. And when *Thales* was demaunded *Wherfore he did*

*not marie*, he answered, *because he would leave no issue or line of himselfe behind him*. That our opinon endeareth and encreaseth the price of things, it is seene in a great number of them, which we doe not regard to esteeme them; but for our use. And we neither consider their qualities nor utilities, but only our cost to recover and attaine them: as if it were a part of their substance; and wee call that worth in them, not what they bring-us, but what we bring to them. According as it weigheth, and is of consequence, so it serveth. Wherupon I perceiveth, we are thriftie husbands of what we lay out. Our opinion never suffers-it to runne a false gallop. *The price giveth a Diamond his title, and difficultie to vertue, paine unto devotion, and sharpenesse unto Phisicke*. Such a one to come unto povertie, cast those few crownes he had into the same sea, wherein so many others, with such carke, danger, and care, on all parts seeke to fish for riches. *Epicurus saith, that to be rich is no ease, but a charge of affaires*. Verily, it is not want, but rather plenty that causeth avarice. I will speake of mine owne experience, concerning this subject. I have lived in three kindes of condition, since I came out of my infancy. The first time, which continued well-nigh twenty yeeres, I have passt-it over, as one who had no other meanes but casuall, and depending from the direction and help of others; without any certaine mainteinance, or regular prescription. My expences were so much the more carelessly layed-out, and lavishly employed, by how much more they wholly depended on fortunes rashnesse and exhibition. I never lived so well at ease: my fortune was never to finde my friendes purse shutte: besides which I was to frame my selfe to all necessities: the care I tooke to pay every man at his prefixed day, which a thousand times they have prolonged, seeing the care I tooke to satisfie them. So that I had gotten unto my selfe the credite of a thriftie kinde of good husbandry, though it were something shifting and deceitful. I do naturally feele a kinde of pleasing contentment in paying of my debts, as if I ridde my selfe of a burthenous weight, and free my selfe from the yoake of bondage and ingratitude. Besides, me-thinks I feele a kind of delight, that tickleth me to the quick, in performing a lawfully-just action, and contenting of others. I except payments that require delayes, covenants, and after-reckonings: for, if I find any body that will undertake them, I blushingly and injuriously deferre them as long as I can, for feare of that altercation or wrangling, to which my humor and manner of speach is altogether incompatible. There is nothing I hate more then driving of bargains: It is a meere commerce of dodging and impudencie. After an houres debating and paltring, both parties will goe from their wordes and oathes for the getting or saving of a shilling: yet did I borrowe with great disadvantage. For, having no hart to borrow before others, or by worde of mouth, I would adventure it upon a piece of paper, which with some hath no great power to move or force to perswade, and which greatly helps to refuse. I was wont to commit the successe of my wants more freely and more carelessly unto fortune, then I have done since unto my wit and providence. Most good-husbands think-it strange and horrible to live on such uncertainties, but they remember not, that most men in the world live so. How many good and well-borne men have heretofore, and are dayly seene to neglect and leave at six and seaven, their patrimonies and certaine goods, to follow and seeke after court-holy water, and wavering-favours of Princes and of fortune? *Cæsar* engaged and ended himselfe above a million of gold, more then he was worth, to become *Cæsar*. And

I have seene some swallow gravell, ashes, coles, dust, tallow, candles, and for-the-nonce, labour and toyle themselves to spoile their stomacke, onely to get a pale-bleake colour. To become slender in waste, and to have a

*Tot per impotentia freta?*

In so great scarcitie of devotion, we have thousands of Colledges, which passe the time very conveniently, dayly gaping and expecting from the liberalitie of the heavens, what they must dine withall to morrow. Secondly; they consider not, that this certaintie on which they ground themselves, is not much lesse uncertaine and hazardous, then hazard-itselfe. I see miserie as neere beyond two thousand crownes rent, as if it were hard at hand. For, besides that fortune hath many-many meanes to open a hundred gaps for poverty to enter-at, even through the thickest of our riches, and that often there is no meane betwene the highest and lowest fortune.

*Fortuna vitrea est: tum, quum splendet, frangitur.*

*Fortune is glasse-like, brittle as t'is bright:*

*Light-gon, light-broken, when it lends best light.*

And to turne all our defences, and raisings of high walles topsie-turvie: I find that want and necessitie is by diverse or different causes, as ordinarily seene to accompany and follow those that are rich in goods, as those that have none at all: and that peradventure it is somewhat lesse incommodious, when it is alone, then when it meeteth with riches: They rather come from order, then from receipte: *Faber est suæ quisque fortunæ. Every man is the forger of his owne fortune.* And me thinkes that a rich man, who is needie, full of businesse, carke and toyle, and troubled in minde, is more miserable, then he that is simply poore. *In diuitiis inopes, quod genus egestatis gravissimum est. In their aboundance indigent, which is the most grievous kinde of indigence.* The richest and greatest Princes are ordinarily urged by povertie and neede unto extreame necessities. For, can any be more extreame, then thereby to become Tyrants, and unjust usurpers of their subjects goods? My second maner of life hath beene to have money; which when I had once fingred, according to my condition I sought to hoord up some against a raignie day; esteeming that it was no having, unlesse a man had-ever somewhat besides his ordinary expences in possession: and that a man should not trust that good, which he must live in hope to receive; and that be his hope never so likely, hee may many wayes be prevented. For, I would say unto my selfe; what if I should be surprised by this chance, or that accident? What should I doe then? And in pursuite of these vaine and vicious imaginations, I endeavoured by hooke or crooke, and by wile or wit to provide by this superfluous sparing for all inconveniences that might happen: And I could answer him, that would alleadge the number of inconveniences to be over-infinite; which if they followed not all men, they accompanied some, and happily the greatest number. An apprehension which I did not passe with out some painefull care. I kept the matter secret, and I (that dare say so much of my selfe) would never speake of my money but falsely; as others doe, who being rich, would seeme to be poore, or beeing poore would appeare rich: and dispence with their conscience,

never to witness sincerelie what they are worth. Oh ridiculous and shamefull prudence. Did I travell any where? me thought I was never sufficiently provided; and the more I had laden my selfe with coine, the more I had also burthened my selfe with feare: sometimes of my wayes-safetie, other times of their trust that had the charge of my sumpters and baggage, whereof, as some others that I know, me thought I was never throughly assured, except it were still in my sight. Left I my keyes or my purse behinde-me? how many suspitions and thornie imaginations, and which is worse, incommunicable, did uncessantly haunt-me? My minde was ever on my halfepenney; my thoughts ever that way. *The summe being rightly cast, there is ever more paine in keeping, then in getting of mony.* If I did not altogether so much as I say, I at the least endeavoured to doe-it. Of commodity I had little or nothing. To have more meanes of expences, is ever to have encrease of sorrow. For (as said Bion) *The hairy man doth grieve as much as the bald, if he have his haire pulld out.* And after you are once accustomed, and have fixed your thoughts upon a heape of money, it is no longer at your service; you dare not diminish-it; it is a building, which if you touch or take any parte from-it, you will thinke it will all fall. Necessitie must first pinch you by the throate, and touch you neere, before you will lay handes on it. And I should sooner pawne my clothes, or sell my horse, with lesse care and compulsion, then make a breach into that beloved purse, which I kept in store. But the danger was, that a man can hardly prefix any certaine limites unto his desire (they are hard to be found in things a man deemeth good) and continue at one stay in sparing: A man shall ever encrease this heape, and augment-it from one number to another; yea so long, til he basely and niggardly deprive himselfe of the enjoying of his owne goods, and wholly fix-it on the safe-keeping of them, and never use them. According to this kind of usage, those are the richest people of the world, that have the charge of keeping the gates and walles of a rich Cittie. Every monied man is covetous, according to mine opinion. *Plato marshalleth this humane or corporall goods; health, beautie, strength, riches: And riches, saith he, are not blinde, but cleere-seeing, if they be illuminated by wisdom.* *Dionisius* the yonger, plaide a notable parte; who being advertised, that one of his *Siracusans*, had hidden a certaine treasure under the ground, commanded him to bring it unto him, which he did, reserving secretly one parte of it unto himselfe, with which he removed his dwelling unto another Cittie, where having lost the humor of hoarding-up of treasure, beganne to live a spending and riotous kinde of life: which *Dionisius* hearing, commanded the remainder of his treasure, and which he had taken from-him, to be restored unto him; saying, *That sithence hee had learned howe to make use of-it, hee did most willingly redeliver the same unto him.* I was some yeares of the same humour: I wot not what good *Demon* did most profitably remove me from-it, like to the *Siracusan*, and made me to neglect my sparing. The pleasure I apprehended of a farre and chargeable jorney, having overthrowne this foolish imagination in me; From which I am falne into a third kinde of life (I speake what I thinke of-it) assuredly much more pleasing and formall: which is, that I measure my garment according to my cloth, and let my expences goe together with my comming-in; some-times the one, other-whilst the other exceeds: But they are never farre-asunder. I live from hand to mouth, from day to day; and have I but to supply my present and ordinary needs, I am satisfied: As for extraordinary wants, all the provisions of the world will not suffice

them. And it is folly to expect that fortune will ever sufficiently arme us against herselfe. It is with our owne weapons that we must combate-her. Casuall armes will betray-us, when we shall have most neede of them. If I lay up any thing, it is for the hope of some employment at hand, and not to purchase landes, whereof I have no neede, but pleasure and delight. *Non esse cupidum, pecunia est: non esse emacem, uectigal est. It is currant coine, not to be covetous: it is a thriftie in-come, not to be stil buying.* I am neither possessed with feare, that my goods shall faile me, nor with desire they should encrease and multiplie. *Diuitiarum fructus est in copia: copiam declarat satietas. The fruite of riches is in plentie: sacietie content with enough approoves that plentie.* And I singularly gratifie my selfe this correction came upon me in an age naturally enclined to covetousnesse, and that I am free from that folly so common and peculiar to old men, and the most ridiculous of all humane follies. *Feraulez* who had passed through both fortunes, and found, that encrease of goods, was no accrease of appetite, to drinke, to eate, to sleepe, or to embrace his wife; and who on the other side felt heavily on his shoulders, the importunitie of ordering and directing his Oeconomicall affaires, as it doth on mine, determined with himselfe to content a poore yong man, his faithfull friend, greedily gaping after riches, and frankly made him a present donation of all his great and excessive riches; as also of those, he was likely every day to get by the liberalitie and bountie of his good maister *Cyrus*, and by warre: alwayes provided, hee should undertake to entertaine and finde-him honestly, and in good sorte, as his guest and friend. In which estate they lived afterward most happily, and mutually content with the change of their condition.

Loe here a part, I could willingly find in my heart to imitate. And I much commend the fortune of an olde prelate, whom I see, to have so clearly given-over his purse, his receites, and his expences, now to one of his chosen servants, and now to another, that he hath lived many yeares as ignorant of his housholde affaires, as any stranger. The confidence in others honestie, is no light testimonie of ones owne integritie: therfore doth God willingly favour-it. And for his regarde, I see no houshold order, neither more worthily directed, nor more constantly managed then his. Happie is that man, that hath so proportionably directed his estate, as his riches may discharge and supply the same, without care or encombrance to himselfe; and that neither their consultations or meetings may in any sorte interrupt other affaires or disturbe other occupations, which he followeth, more convenient, more quiet, and better agreeing with his heart. Therefore doth ease and indigencie depend from every mans owne opinion; and wealth and riches no more then glorie or health, have either more preheminance or pleasure, then he who possesseth them, lendeth them. Every man is either well or ill, according as he findes himselfe. Not he whom an other thinkes content, but he is content indeede, that thinkes he is so himselfe: And onely in that, opinion giveth it selfe essence and veritie. Fortune doth us neither good nor ill: She onely offereth-us the seede and matter of it, which our minde more powrefull then she, turneth and applieth as best it pleaseth: as the efficient cause and mistris of condition, whether happie or unhappie. Externall accessions take both savor and color from the internall constitution: As garments do not warme-us by their heate, but by ours, which they are fit to cover, and nourish: he that with clothes should cover a cold body, should draw the

very same service from them by cold. So is snow and yce kept in summmer. Verily as unto an idle and lazie body, studie is but a torment; abstinence from wine to a drunkard, is a vexation; frugalitie is a hearts sorrowe to the luxurious; and exercise molesteth an effeminate body: so is it of all things else. Things are not of themselves so irksome, nor so hard, but our basenes, and weakenesse maketh them such. To judge of high and great matters, a high and great minde is required; otherwise we attribute that vice unto them, which indeede is ours. A straight oare being under water seemeth to be crooked. It is no matter to see a thing, but the matter is how a man dooth see the same. Well, of so many discourses, which diversly perswade men to contemne death, and patiently to endure paine, why shall we not finde some one to make for our purpose? And of so severall and many kindes of imaginations, that have perswaded the same unto others, why doth not every man apply one unto himselfe, that is most agreeing with his humor? If he cannot digest a strong and abstersive drugge, for to remove his evill, let him at least take a lenitive pill to ease the same. *Opinio est quædam effæminata ac levis: nec in dolore magis, quam eadem in voluptate: qua, quum liquescimus fluimûsque molitia, apis aculeum sine clamore ferre non possumus. Totum in eo est, ut tibi imperes. There is a certaine effeminate and light opinion, and that no more in sorrow, then it is in pleasure, whereby when we melt and runne over in daintie tendernes, we cannot abide to be stung of a Bee, but must rore and crie out. This is the totall summe of all, that you be maister of your selfe.* Moreover, a man doth not escape from Philosophie, by making the sharpnes of paines, and humane weakenesse to prevaile so far beyond measure: For, she is compelled to cast hir selfe over againe unto these invincible replications. If it be bad to live in necessitie, at least there is no necessitie, to live in necessitie. No man is long time ill, but by his owne fault. He that hath not the heart to endure neither life nor death, and that will neither resist nor runne away, what shall a man doe to him?