

MICHEL DE MONTAIGNE

ESSAYS

Book 1 · Chapter 52



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Of the parcimony of our Forefathers

ATTILIUS REGULUS, Generall of the Romanes Army in *Affrike*, in the midst of his glory and victory against the Carthaginians, writ unto the common wealth, that a hynde, or plough-boy whom he had left alone to over-see and husband his land (which in all was but seaven acres of ground) was run away from his charge, and had stolne from him all his implements and tools, belonging to his husbandrie, craving leave to be discharged, and that he might come home to look to his busines, for feare his wife and children shuld therby be endamaged: the Senate took order for him, and appointed another man to looke to his land and busines, and made that good unto him, which the other had stolne from him, and appointed his wife and children to be maintained at the common-wealths charge. *Cato* the elder returning Consull from *Spaine*, sold his horse of service, to save the monie he should have spent for his transport by Sea into *Italie*: And being chiefe Governour in *Sardinia*, went all his visitations a foote, having no other traine, but one officer of the common-welth, who carryed his gowne, and a vessell to do sacrifice-in, and for the most part carried his male himselfe. Hee boasted that hee never woare Gowne, that cost him more then tenne crownes, nor sent more then one shilling sterling to the market for one whole dayes-provision, and had no Countrie house rough-cast or painted over. *Scipio Emilianus* after he had triumphed twice, and twice bin Consull, went on a solemne Legation, accompanied and attended-on onely with seaven servantes. It is reported that *Homer* had never any more then one servant. *Plato* three, and *Zeno* chiefe of the Stoikes sect, none at all. *Tiberius Graccus*, being then one of the principall men amongst the Romanes and sent in commission about weightie matters of the common-wealth was allotted but six-pence halfe-penie a day for his charges.