

MICHEL DE MONTAIGNE
ESSAYS

Book 2 · Chapter 11



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Of Crueltie

ME THINKES vertue is another manner of thing, and much more noble than the inclinations unto goodnesse, which in us are ingendered. Mindes well borne, and directed by themselves, follow one same path, and in their actions represent the same visage, that the vertuous doe. But vertue importeth, and soundeth somewhat I wot not what greater and more active, then by an happy complexion, gently and peaceably, to suffer it selfe to be led or drawne, to follow reason. He that through a naturall facilitie, and genuine mildnes, should neglect or contemne injuries received, should no doubt performe a rare action, and worthy commendation: But he who being toucht and stung lo the quicke, with any wrong or offence received, should arme himselfe with reason against this furiously-blinde desire of revenge, and in the end after a great conflict, yeeld himselfe maister over-it, should doubtlesse doe much more. The first should doe well, the other vertuously: the one action might be termed goodnesse, the other vertue. For *it seemeth that the very name of vertue presupposeth difficultie, and inferreth resistance, and cannot well exercise it selfe without an enemy.* It is peradventure the reason why we call God, good, mighty, liberall and just, but wee terme him not vertuous. His workes are all voluntary, unforced, and without compulsion. Of Philosophers, not onely Stoicks, but also Epicureans (which endearing I borrow of the common-received opinion, which is false, whatsoever the nimble saying or witty quipping of *Archesilaus* implied, who answered the man that upbraided him, how divers men went from his schole to the Epicurean, but none came from thence to him: I easilie beleeeve-it (said he) for *Of cocks are many capons made, but no man could ever make a cocke of a capon.* For truly, in constancy, and rigor of opinion, and strictnesse of precepts, the Epicurian Sect doth in no sort yeeld to the stoicke. And a stoicke acknowledging a better faith, then those disputers, who to contend with *Epicurus*, and make sport with him, make him to inferre and say what hee never ment, wresting and wyre-drawing his wordes to a contrary sense, arguing and silogizing by the Grammarians priviledge, another meaning, by the maner of his speach, and another opinion, then that they know he had, either in his minde or maners, saith, that he left to bee an Epicurian, for this one consideration, amongst others, that he findeth their pitch to be overhigh and inaccessible: *Et ii quiφιλήδονοι vocantur, suntφιλόκαλοι&φιλοδίκαιοι omnèsque uirtutes & colunt &*

retinent: And those that are called lovers of pleasure, are lovers of honestie and justice, and doe both reverence and retaine all sorts of vertue.) Of Stoicke and Epicurian Philosophers, I say, there are divers, who have judged, that it was not sufficient to have the minde well placed, wel ordered and well disposed unto vertue; it was not enough to have our resolutions and discourse beyond all the affronts and checks of fortune; but that moreover, it was very requisite, to seeke for occasions, whereby a man might come to the triall of it: They will diligently quest and seeke out for paine, smart, necessitie, want and contempt, that so they may combate them, and keepe their minde in breath: *Multum sibi adiicit uirtus lacessita: Vertue provoked addes much to it selfe.* It is one of the reasons why *Epaminondas* (who was of a third sect) by a very lawfull way refuseth some riches, fortune had put into his handes, to the end (as he saith) he might have cause to strive and resist poverty, in which want and extremity he ever continued after.

Socrates did in my mind more undantedly enure himselfe to this humor, maintaining for his exercise the peevish frowardnes of his wife, then which no essay can be more vex-full, and is a continuall fighting at the sharpe. *Metellus* of all the Romane senators (he onely having undertaken with the power of vertue, to endure the violence of *Saturninus* Tribune of the people in *Rome*, who by maine force went about, to have a most unjust law passe in favour of the comunaltie: by which opposition, having incurred all the capitall paines, that *Saturninus* had imposed on such as should refuse it) entertained those that led him to the place of execution, with such speeches: That *to doe evill was a thing very easie, and too demissly base: and to doe well where was no danger, was a common thing; but to doe well, where was both perill and opposition, was the peculiar office of a man of vertue.* These words of *Metellus* doe clearely represent unto us, what I would have verified; which is, that *vertue rejecteth facilitie to be hir companion:* And that an easefull, pleasant and declining way, by which the regular steppes of a good inclination of nature, are directed, is not the way of true vertue. She requireth a craggie, rough and thornie way; She would either have strange difficulties to wrestle withall (as that of *Metellus*) by whose meanes fortune hir selfe is pleased to breake the roughnes of his course; or inward encombrances, as the disordinate appetites and imperfections of our condition bring unto hir. Hithertoe I have come at good ease; but at the ende of this discourse, one thing commeth into my minde, which is, that the soule of *Socrates*, which is absolutely the perfectest that ever came to my knowledge, would, according to my accoumpt, prove a soule deserving but little commendation: For, I can perceive no manner of violence or vicious concupisence in him: I can imagine no manner of difficultie or compulsion in the whole course of his vertue. I knowe his reason so powerfull, and so absolute mistris over him, that she can never give him way to any vicious desire, and will not suffer it so much as to breede in him. To a vertue so exquisit, and so high-raised as his is, I can perswade nothing. Me thinkes I see it march with a victorious and triumphant pace, in pompe, and at ease, without let or disturbance. If vertue cannot shine but by resisting contrarie appetites, shall we then say, it cannot passe without the assistance of vice, and oweth him this, that by his meanes it attaineth to honour and credit? What should also betide of that glorious and generous Epicurian voluptuousnes, that makes accoumpt, effeminately to pamper vertue in hir lappe, and there wantonly to

entertain it, allowing it for his recreation, shame, reproch, agues, povertie, death, and tortures? If I presuppose, that perfect vertue is knowne by combating sorrow, and patiently, undergoing paine, by tolerating the fits and agonies of the gout, without stirring out of his place; if for a necessarie object, I appoint her sharpnes and difficultie; what shall become of that vertue, which hath attained so high a degree, as it doth not onely despise all manner of paine, but rather rejoyceth at it, and when a strong fit of the collike shall assaile-it to cause it selfe to be tickled; as that is, which the Epicurians have established, and whereof divers amongst them, have by their actions leaft most certaine proofes unto-us? As also others have, whom in effect finde to have exceeded the very rules of their discipline; witnes *Cato* the yonger; when I see him die, tearing and mangling his entrails; I cannot simply content my selfe to beleve, that at that time, he had his soule wholly exempted from all trouble, or free from vexation: I cannot imagine, he did onely maintaine himselfe in this march or course, which the rules of the stoike sect had ordained unto him, settled, without some alteration or emotion, and impassibilitie. There was, in my conceit, in this mans vertue overmuch cheerefulness, and youthfulness to stay there. I verily beleve, he felt a kinde of pleasure and sensualitie in so noble an action, and that therein he more pleased himselfe, then in any other, he ever performed in his life. *Sic abiit e uita, ut causam moriendi nactum se esse gauderet: So departed he his life, that he rejoyced to have found an occasion of death.* I doe so constantly beleve-it, that I make a doubt, whether he would have had the occasion of so noble an employte taken from him. And if the goodnes which induced him to embrace publike commodities more than his owne, did not bridle me, I should easily fall into this opinion, that he thought himselfe greatly beholding unto fortune, to have put his vertue unto so noble a triall, and to have favored that robber, to tread the ancient libertie of his countrie under foote. In which action me thinkes I reade a kinde of unspeakable joy in his minde, and a motion of extraordinarie pleasure, joyned to a manlike voluptuousnes, at what time it beheld the worthines, and considered the generositie and haughtines of his enterprise,

Deliberata morte ferocior

*Then most in fiercenes did he passe,
When he of death resolved was,*

not urged or set-on by anie hope of glorie, as the popular and effeminate judgements have judged: For, that consideration is over base, to touch so generous, so haughtie, and so constant a heart; but for the beautie of the thing it selfe, which he, who managed all the springs, and directed all the wardds thereof, sawe much more clearer, and in it's perfection, then we can doe. Philosophie hath done me a pleasure to judge, that so honorable an action, had beene undecently placed in any other life, then in *Catoes*, and that onely unto his it appertained to make such an end. Therefore did he with reason perswade both his sonne, and the Senators that accompanied him, to provide otherwise for themselves. *Catoni quum incredibilem natura tribuisset grauitatem, eamque ipse perpetua constantia roborauisset, sempérque in proposito consilio permansisset: moriendum potius quàm tyranni uultus aspiciendus erat: Whereas nature had afforded Cato an incredible gravitie, and he had strengthened it by continuall constancie, and ever had stooode firme in his purposed desseignes, rather to die then behold the Tyrants*

face. Each death should be such as the life hath beene. By dying we become no other than we were. I ever interpret a mans death by his life. And if a man shal tell me of any one undanted in apparance, joynd unto a weake life; I imagine it to proceed of some weake cause, and sutable to his life. The ease therefore of his death, and the facilitie he had acquired by the vigor of his minde, shall we say, it ought to abate something of the lustre of his vertue? And which of those, that have their spirites touched, be it never so little, with the true tincture of Philosophie, can content himselfe to imagine *Socrates*, onely, free from feare and passion, in the accident of his emprisonment, of his fetters, and of his condemnation? And who doth not perceiue in him, not onely constancie and resolution (which were ever his ordinarie qualities) but also a kinde of I wot not what new contentment, and carelesse rejoycing in his last behaviour, and discourses? By the startling at the pleasure, which he feeleth in clawing of his legges, after his fetters were taken-off; doth he not manifestly declare an equall glee and joy in his soule, for being ridde of his former incommodities, and entring into the knowledge of things to come? *Cato* shall pardon me (if he please) his death is more tragicall, and further extended, whereas this in a certaine manner is more faire and glorious. *Aristippus* answered those, that bewailed the same; when I die, I pray the Gods send me such a death. A man shall plainely perceiue in the mindes of these two men, and of such as imitate them (for I make a question whether ever they could be matched) so perfect an habitude unto vertue, that it was even converted into their complexion. It is no longer a painefull vertue, nor by the ordinances of reason, for the maintaining of which their minde must be strengthened: It is the very essence of their soule; it is hir naturall and ordinarie habite. They have made it such, by a long exercise and observing the rules and precepts of Philosophie, having lighted upon a faire and rich nature. Those vicious passions, which breede in us, finde no entrance in them. The vigor and constancie of their soules, doth suppress and extinguish all manner of concupisences, so soone as they but beginne to move. Now that it be not more glorious, by an undaunted and diuine resolution, to hinder the growth of temptations, and for a man to frame himselfe to vertue, so that the very seeds of vice be cleane rooted out; then by maine force to hinder their progresse; and having suffred himselfe to be surprised by the first assaults of passions, to arme and bandie himselfe, to stay their course and to suppress them: And that this second effect be not also much fairer, then to be simply stored with a facile and gentle nature, and of it selfe distasted and in dislike with licentiousnes and vice, I am perswaded there is no doubt. For, this third and last manner, seemeth in some sort, to make a man innocent, but not vertuous: free from doing ill, but not sufficiently apt to doe well. Seeing this condition is so neere unto imperfection and weaknes, that I knowe not well how to cleare their confines and distinctions. The very names of goodnes and innocencie, are for this respect in some sorte names of contempt. I see that many vertues, as chastitie, sobrietie and temperance, may come unto us by meanes of corporall deffects and imbecilitie. Constancie in dangers (if it may be termed constancie) contempt of death, patience in misfortunes, may happen, and are often seene in men, for want of good judgement in such accidents, and that they are not apprehended for such as they are indeede. *Lacke of apprehension and stupiditie, doe sometimes counterfet vertuous effects*. As I have often seene come to passe, that some men are commended, for things they rather deserve to be blamed. An Italian

gentleman did once hold this position in my presence, to the prejudice and disadvantage of his nation; That the subtiltie of the Italians, and the vivacitie of their conceptions was so great, that they foresawe such dangers and accidents as might betide them so farre-off, that it was not to be deemed strange, if in times of warre, they were often seene to provide for their saftie, yea before they had perceived the danger: That we and the Spaniards, who were not so wary and subtill, went further; and that before we could be frighted with any perill, we must be induced to see it with our eyes, and feele it with our hands, and that even then we had no more holde: But that the Germanes and Switzers, more shallow and leaden-headed, had scarce the sense and wit to re-advise themselves, at what time they were even overwhelmed with miserie, and the axe readie to fall on their heades. It was peradventure but in jest, that hee spake-it, yet is it most true, that in the arte of warre-fare new trained Souldiers, and such as are but novices in the trade, doe often headlong, and hand over head cast themselves into dangers, with more inconsideration, then afterward when they have seene and endured the first shocke, and are better trained in the schoole of perils.

*haud ignarus, quantum noua gloria in armis,
Et prædulce decus primo certamine possit.*

*Not ignorant, how much in armes new praise,
And sweetest honor, in first conflict weighs.*

Lo here the reason why when we judge of a particular action, we must first consider many circumstances, and throughly observe the man, that hath produced the same before we name and censure it. But to speake a word of my selfe: I have sometimes noted my friends to terme that wisdome in me, which was but meere fortune; and to deeme that advantage of courage and patience, that was advantage of judgement and opinion: and to attribute one title for another unto me, sometimes to my profit, and now and then to my losse. As for the rest, I am so farre from attaining unto that chiefe and most perfect degree of excellencie, where a habitude is made of vertue, that even of the second, I have made no great triall. I have not greatly strived to bridle the desires, wherewith I have found my selfe urged and pressed. My vertue, is a vertue, or to say better innocencie, accidentall and casuall. Had I beene borne with a lesse regular complexion, I imagine my state had been very pittifull, and it would have gonne hard with me: for, I could never perceiue any great constancie in my soule, to resist and undergoe passions, had they beene any thing violent. I cannot foster quarels, or endure contentions in my house. So am I not greatly beholding unto my selfe, in that I am exempted from many vices:

*si uitii mediocribus, & mea paucis
Mendosa est natura, alioqui recta uelut si
Egregio inspersos reprehendas corpore næuos.*

*If in a few more fault's my nature faile,
Right otherwise: as if that you would raile
On prettie moles well placed, on body seemely graced.*

I am more endebted to my fortune, then to my reason for it: She hath made me to be borne of a race famous for integritie and honestie, and of a very good father. I wot not well whether any part of his humours have descended into me, or whether the domestike examples, and good institution of my infancie have insensibly set their helping hand unto it; or whether I were otherwise so borne:

*Seu libra, seu me scorpius aspicit
Formidolosus, pars uiolentior
Natalis horæ, seu tyrannus
Hesperia Capricornus undæ*

*Whither the chiefe part of my birth-houre were
Ascendent Libra, or Scorpius full of feare,
Or in my Horoscope were Capricorne, Whose tirannie neere westerne Seas is borne.*

But so it is, that naturally of my selfe, I abhorre and detest all manner of vices. The answer of *Antisthenes* to one, that demanded of him, which was the best thing to be learned: *To unlearne evill*, seemeth to be fixed on this image or to have an ayme at this. I abhorre them (I say) with so naturall, and so innated an opinion, that the very same instinct and impression which I suckt from my nurse, I have so kept, that no occasions could ever make mee alter the same: No, not mine owne discourses, which because they have bin somewhat lavish in noting or taxing something of the common course, could easily induce mee to some actions, which this my natural inclination makes me to hate. I wil tel you a wonder, I wil tel it you indeed: I therby find in many things, more stay and order in my maners, then in my opinion: and my concupiscence lesse debauched then my reason. *Aristippus* established certaine opinions so bold, in favour of voluptuousnesse and riches, that he made al Philosophie to mutiny against him. But concerning his manners, *Dionisius* the tyrant, having presented him with three faire yong Wenches, that he might chuse the fairest; he answered he would chuse them, all three, and that *Paris* had very ill successe, forsomuch as hee had preferred one above hir fellowes. But they being brought to his owne house, he sent them backe againe, without tasting them. His servant one day carrying store of mony after him, and being so overcharged with the weight of it, that he complained, his maister commanded him, to cast so much thereof away, as troubled him. And *Epicurus*, whose positions are irreligious and delicate, demeaned himselfe in his life very laboriously, and devoutly. He wrote to a friend of his, that he lived but with browne bread and water, and entreated him to send him a piece of cheese, against the time hee was to make a solemne feast. May it be true, that to bee perfectly good we must be so by an hidden, natural, and universal proprietie, without law, reason and example? The disorders and excesses, wherein I have found my selfe engaged, are not (God bee thanked) of the worst. I have rejected and condemned them in my selfe, according to their worth; for, my judgement was never found to be infected by them. And on the other side, I accuse them more rigorously in my selfe, than in another. But that is all: as for the rest I applie but little resistance unto them, and suffer my selfe over-easily to encline to the other side of the Ballance, except it be to order and impeach them from beeing commixt with others, which (if a man take not good heed unto himselfe) for the most part entertaine and enterchaine themselves the

one with the other. As for mine, I have as much as it hath laine in my power, abridged them, and kept them as single, and as alone as I could:

*nec ultra,
Errorem foueo.*

*Nor doe I cherish any more,
The error which I bred before.*

For, as touching the Stoickes opinion, who say, that when the wise man worketh, hee worketh with all his vertues together; howbeit, according to the nature of the action, there be one more apparant than others (to which purpose the similitude of mans body might, in some sorte, serve their turne; for, the action of choller cannot exercise it selfe, except all the humours set-to their helping-hand, although choller be prædominant) if thence they will drawe alike consequence, that when the offender trespasseth, he dooth it with all the vices together. I doe not so easily beleve them, or else I understand them not; for, in effect, I feele the contrarie. They are sharpe-wittie subtilties, and without substance, about which Philosophie dooth often busie it selfe. Some vices I shunne; but othersome I eschew as much as any Saint can do. The Peripathetikes doe also disavow this connexitie, and indissoluble knitting together. And Aristotle is of opinion, *That a wise and just man may be both intemperate and incontinent.* Socrates avowed unto them, who in his Phisiognomie perceived some inclination unto vice, that indeede it was his naturall propension, but that by discipline he had corrected the same. And the familiar friendes of the philosopher *Stilpo* were wont to say, that being borne subject unto wine and women, he had, by study, brought him selfe to abstaine from both. On the other side, what good I have, I have it by the lot of my birth: I have it neither by lawe nor prescription, nor by any apprenticeship. The innocencie that is in me, is a kinde of simple-plaine innocencie, without vigor or arte. Amongst all other vices, there is none I hate moore, than crueltie, both by nature and judgement, as the extreamest of all vices. But it is with such an yearning and faint-hartednes, that if I see but a chickins necke pulld off, or a pigge stickt, I cannot choose but grieve, and I cannot well endure a seely dew-bedabled hare to groane, when she is seized upon by the howndes; although hunting be a violent sport. Those that are to withstand voluptuousnes, doe willingly use this argument, to shew, it is altogether vicious and unreasonable: That where she is in her greatest prime and chiefe strength, shee doth so over-sway us, that reason can have no accesse unto us, and for a further triall, alleadge the experience we feele and have of it, in our acquaintance or copulation with women.

*cùm iam præ sagit gaudia corpus
Atque in eo est Uenus, ut muliebria conserat arua.*

*When now the body doth light-joyes fore-knowe,
And Venus set the womans fields to sowe.*

Where they thinke pleasure doth so far transport us beyond our selves, that our Discourse, then altogether overwhelmed, and our reason wholly ravished in the gulfe of sensualitie, cannot by any meanes discharge her function. I knowe it may be otherwise: And if a man but please, he may

sometimes, even upon the very instant, cast his mind on other conceits. But she must be strained to a higher key, and heedefully pursued: I knowe a man may gourmandize the earnest and thought-confounding violence of that pleasure: for I may with some experience speake of it; and I have not found *Venus* to be so imperious a goddess, as many, and more reformed than my selfe witness hir to be, I thinke it not a wonder, as doth the Queene of *Navarre*, in one of the Tales of her *Heptameron* (which respecting the subject it treateth-of, is a very prettie booke) nor doe I deeme it a matter of extreame difficultie, for a man to weare-out a whole night, in all opportunitie and libertie, in company of a faire mistress, long time before sued-unto, and by him desired; religiously keeping his word, if he have engaged himselfe, to be contented with simple kisses and plaine touching. I am of opinion, that the example of the sporte in hunting would more fit the same: wherein as there is lesse pleasure, so there is more distraction and surprising, whereby our reason being amazed, looseth the leasure to prepare her selfe against it: when as after a long questing and beating for some game, the beast doth sodainly start, or rowze up before us, and happily in such a place, where we least expected the same. That sodaine motion, and riding, and the earnestnes of showing, jubeting and hallowing, still ringing in our eares, would make it very hard for those, who love that kinde of close or chamber-hunting, at that verie instant, to withdrawe their thoughts else-where. And Poets make *Diana* victoriously to triumph both over the firebrand and arrowes of *Cupid*.

*Quis non malarum quas amor curas habet
Hæc inter obliuiscitur?*

*While this is doing, who doth not forget
The wicked cares wherewith Love hearts doth fret?*

But to returne to my former discourse, I have a very feeling and tender compassion of other mens afflictions, and should more easily weepe for company sake, if possibly for any occasion whatsoever, I could shed teares. There is nothing sooner mooveth teares in mee, then to see other weepe, not onely fainedly, but howsoever, whether truly or forcedly. I doe not greatly waile for the dead, but rather envie them. Yet doe I much waile and moane the dying. The Canibales and savage people do not so much offend me with roasting and eating of dead bodies, as those, which torment and persecute the living. Let any man be executed by law, how deservedly soever, I cannot endure to beholde the execution with an unrelenting eye. Some one going about to witness the clemencie of *Julius Cæsar*; He was (saith he) tractable and milde in matters of revenge. Having compelled the Pirates to yeelde themselves unto him, who had before taken him prisoner, and put him to ransome, forasmuch as he had threatned to have them all crucified, he condemned them to that kinde of death, but it was after he had caused them to be strangled. *Philomon* his secretarie, who would have poisoned him, had no sharper punishment of him, then an ordinarie death. Without mencioning the Latin Author, who for a testimonie of clemencie dared to alledge, the onely killing of those, by whom a man hath beene offended, it may easily be guessed, that he is tainted with vile and horrible examples of crueltie, such as Romane Tyrants brought into fashion. As for me, even in matters of justice, *Whatsoever is beyond a simple death, I deeme it to be meere crueltie*: And

especially amongst us, who ought to have a regardfull respect, that their soules should be sent to heaven, which cannot be, having first by intollerable tortures agitated, and as it were brought them to dispaire. A Souldier, not long since, being prisoner, and perceiving from a loft a Tower, where he was kept, that store of people flocked together on a greene, and Carpenters were busie at worke to erect a skaffold, supposing the same to be for him, as one desperat, resolved to kill himselfe, and searching up and downe for something to make himselfe away, found nothing but an olde rustie cart-naile, which fortune presented him with; he tooke it, and therewithall, with all the strength he had, strooke and wounded himselfe twice in the throte, but seeing it would not ridde him of life, he then thruste it into his belly up to the head, where he left it fast- sticking. Shortly after, one of his keepers coming-in unto him, and yet living, finding him in that miserable plight, but weltring in his goare-blood, and readie to gaspe his last, told the Magistrates of it, which, to prevent time before he should die, hastened to pronounce sentence against him: which when he heard, and that he was onely condemned to have his head cut-off, he seemed to take heart of grace againe, and to be sorie for what he had done, and tooke some comfortable drinks, which before he had refused, greatly thanking the Judges for his unhoped gentle condemnation: And tolde them, that for feare of a more, sharply-cruell, and intolerable death by lawe, he had resolved to prevent-it by some violent manner of death, having by the preparations he had seene the Carpenters make, and by gathering of people together, conceived an opinion that they would torture him with some horrible torment, and seemed to be delivered from death, onely by the change of it. Were I worthie to give counsell, I would have these examples of rigor, by which superior powers goe about to keepe the common people in awe, to be onely exercised on the bodies of criminall malefactors: For, to see them deprived of christian buriall, to see them haled, disbowelled, parboyled, and quartered, might happily touch the common sorte as much, as the paines, they make the living to endure: howbeit in effect it be little or nothing, as saith God, *Qui corpus occidunt, & postea non habent quod faciant. Those that kill the body, but have afterwards no more to doe:* And Poets make the horror of this picture greatly to prevaile, yea and above death,

*Heu reliquias semiassi regis, denudatis ossibus,
Per terram sanie delibutas fœde diuexarier.*

*O that the reliques of an halfe-burn't King, bones bared,
On earth besmeared with filth, should be so fouly marred.*

It was my fortune to be at *Rome*, upon a day that one *Catena*, a notorious high-way thief, was executed: at his strangling no man of the company seemed to be mooved to any ruth; but when he came to be quartered, the Executioner gave no blowe that was not accompanied with a pitteous voyce, and hartie exclamation, as if every man had had a feeling sympathie, or lent his senses to the poore mangled wretch. Such inhumane outrages, and barbarous excesses should be exercised against the rinde, and not practised against the quicke. In a case somewhat like unto this, did *Artaxerxes* asswage and mitigate the sharpnes of the ancient lawes of *Persia*, appoynting that the Lordes, which had trespassed in their estate, whereas they were wont to be whipped, they should be

stripped naked, and their clothes whipped for them: and where they were accustomed to have their haire pulled off, they should onely have their hatte taken off. The Ægyptians so devout and religious, thought they did sufficiently satisfie divine Justice, in sacrificing painted and counterfet hogges unto it: An over-hardy invention, to goe about with pictures and shadowes to appease God, a substance so essentiall and divine. I live in an age, wherein we abound with incredible examples of this vice, through the licentiousnes of our civill and intestine warres: And reade all ancient stories, be they never so tragicall, you shall finde none to equall those, wee daily see practised. But that hath nothing made mee acquainted with it. I could hardly bee perswaded, before I had seene it, that the worlde could have afforded so marble-hearted and savage-minded men, that for the onely pleasure of murther would commit-it; then cut, mangle, and hacke other members in pieces: to rouze and sharpen their wittes, to invent unused tortures and unheard-of torments; to devise new and unknowne deathes, and that in colde blood, without any former enmitie or quarrell, or without any gaine or profit; and onely to this end, that they may enjoy the pleasing spectacle of the languishing gestures, pittifull notions, horror-moving yellings, deepe-fetcht groanes, and lamentable voyces of a dying and drooping man. For, that is the extreamest point whereunto the crueltie of man may attaine. *Ut homo hominem, non iratus, non timens, tantum spectaturus occidat.* That one man should kill another, neither being angrie nor afeard, but onely to looke on. As for me, I could never so much as endure, without remorse and griefe, to see a poore, silly, and innocent beast pursued and killed, which is harmles and voide of defence, and of whom we receive no offence at all. And as it commonly happneth, that when the Stagge begins to be embost, and findes his strength to faile-him, having no other remedie left him, doth yeelde and bequeath himselfe unto us that pursue him, with teares suing to us for mercie,

*questúque cruentus
Atque imploranti similis:*

*With blood from throte, and teares from eyes,
It seemes that he for pittie cries.*

was ever a grievous spectacle unto me. I seldom take any beast alive, but I give him his libertie. *Pythagoras* was wont to buy fishes of fishers, and birds of fowlers to set them free againe.

*primóque à cæde ferarum
Incaluisse puto maculatum sanguine ferrum.*

*And first our blades in blood embrude I deeme
With slaughter of poore beasts did reeking steeme.*

Such as by nature shew themselves bloodie-minded towards harmles beasts, witnes a naturall propension unto crueltie. After the ancient Romanes had once enured themselves without horror to beholde the slaughter of wilde beastes in their showes, they came to the murther of men and Gladiators. Nature (I feare me) hath of hir owne selfe added unto man a certaine instinct to inhumanity. No man taketh delight to see wilde beasts sport and wantonly to make much one of another: yet all are pleased to see

them tugged, mangled, and entertained one another. And lest any body should jeast at this simphathie, which I have with them, Divinitie it selfe willeth us to shewe them some favour: And considering, that one selfesame maister (I meane that incomprehensible worldes-framer) hath placed all creatures in this his woondrous pallace for his service, and that they, as well as we, are of his houshold: I say, it hath some reason to enjoyne us, to shew some respect and affection towards them. *Pythagoras* borrowed *Metempsychosis* of the Egyptians, but since, it hath been received of divers nations, and especially of our *Druides*:

*Morte carent animæ, sempérque priore relicta
Sede, nouis domibus uiuunt, habitántque receptæ*

*Our death-lesse soules, their former sects refrained,
In harbors new live and lodge entertained.*

The religion of our ancient Gaules, inferred, that soules being eternall, ceased not to remove and change place, from one body to another: to which fantasie was also entermixed some consideration of diuine justice. For, according to the soules behaviors, during the time she had beene with *Alexander*, they said, that God appointed-it another bodie to dwell-in, either more or lesse painfull, and sutable to hir condition.

*muta ferarum
Cogit uincla pati, truculentos ingerit ursis,
Prædonésque lupis, fallaces uilpibus addit.
Atque ubi per varios annos per mille figuras
Egit letheo purgatos flumine tandem
Rursus ad humanæ reuocat primordia formæ.*

*Dumbe bandes of beastes he makes mens soules endure,
Blood-thirsty soules he doth to Beares enure,
Craftie to Foxes, to Woolves bent to rapes;
Thus when for many yeares, through many shapes,
He hath them driv'n in Lethe lake at last,
Them purg'd he turn's to mans forme whence they passt.*

If the soule had bin valiant, they placed-it in the body of a Lion; if voluptuous, in a swine; if faint-harted, in a stagge or a hare: if malicious, in a foxe; and so of the rest, untill that being purified by this punishment, it reassumed and tooke the bodie of some other man againe.

*Iipse ego, nam memini, Troiani tempore belli
Panthoides Euphorbus eram.*

*When Troy was wonne, I, as I call to mind,
Euphorbus was, and Panthus sonne by kind.*

As touching that alliance betweene us and beastes, I make no great account of-it, nor do I greatly admit it; neither of that which diuers nations, and namely of the most ancient and noble, who have not onely received beastes into their societie, and company, but allowed them a place farre above themselves; sometimes deeming them to bee familiars and favored of their Gods, and holding them in a certaine awfull respect

and reverence, more then humane, and others acknowledging no other God, nor no other Divinitie, then they. *Belluæ à barbaris propter beneficium consecratæ:Beasts by the Barbarians were made sacred for some benefite.*

*crocodilon adorat
Pars hæc, illa pauet saturam serpentibus Ibin,
Effigies sacri hic nitet aurea Cercopithecii.*

*This country doth the Crocodile adore
That feares the Storke glutted with serpents goare,
The sacred Babion here,
In gold shape doth appeare.*

*hic piscem fluminis, illic
Oppida tota canem uenerantur.*

*A fish here, whole Townes reverence most,
A Dogge they honour in that coast.*

And the very same interpretation, that *Plutarke* giveth unto this error, which is very well taken, is also honourable for them. For, he saith, that (for example-sake,) it was neither the Cat nor the Dog, that the Egyptians adored; but that in those beasts, they worshipped some image of divine faculties. In this, patience and utility, and in that, vivacity, or (as our neighbours, the Borgonians, with all *Germany*) the impatience to see themselves shut-up: Wherby they represented the liberty, which they loved and adored, beyond all other divine facultie, and so of others. But when amongst the most moderate opinions, I meete with some discourses, that goe about and labour to shew, the neere resemblance betweene us and beastes, and what share they have in our greatest Priviledges, and with how much likely-hood they are compared unto us, truely I abate much of our presumption, and am easily removed from that imaginary Soveraigntie, that some give and ascribe unto us above all other creatures. If all that, were to be contradicted, yet is there a kinde of respect, and a generall duty of humanitie, which tieth us, not only unto brute beasts that have life and sense, and are Sensitives, but even unto trees and plants, which are but Vegetatives. *Unto men we owe Justice, and to all other creatures, that are capable of it, grace and benignitie.* There is a kinde of enter-changeable commerce, and mutuall bond betweene them and us. I am not ashamed nor afraide to declare the tendernesse of my childish Nature, which is such, that I cannot well reject my Dog, if hee chance (although out of season) to fawne upon me, or begge of mee to play with him. The Turkes have almes, and certaine Hospitalls appoynted for brute beasts. The Romans had a publike care to breed and nourish Geese, by whose vigilancie their Capitoll had beene saved. The Athenians did precisely ordaine, that all manner of Mules, which had served or bin employed about the building of their Temple, called *Hecatompodon*, should be free, and suffered to feede wheresoever they pleased, without any let or empeachment. The Agrigentines had an ordinary custome, seriously and solemnly to bury al such beasts, as they had held deare; as horses of rare worth and merite; speciall dogs; choyse or profitable birds, or such as had but served to make their children sport. And the sumptuous magnificence, which in all other things was ordinary and peculiar unto them, appeared also almost notablie in the stately sumptuousnes, and

costly number of monuments erected to that end, which many ages after have endured and beene maintained in pride and state. The Ægyptians were wont to bury their Woolves, their Dogges, their Cats, their Beares, and Crocodiles in holy places, embalming their carcasses, and at their deaths to weare mourning weedes for them. *Cymon* caused a stately-honourable toombe to be erected for the Mares, wherewith he had three times gaine the prize at running in the Olimpique games. Ancient *Xantippus* caused his Dog to bee enterred upon a hill by the sea shoare, which ever since hath bin named by him. And *Plutarke* (as himselfe saith) made it a matter of conscience, in hope of a small gaine, to sell or send an Oxe to the shambles, that had served him a long time.