

MICHEL DE MONTAIGNE
ESSAYS

Book 2 · Chapter 3



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A custome of the Ile of Cea

IF, as some say, to philosophate be to doubt; with much more reason, to rave and fantastiquize, as I doe, must necessarily be to doubt: For, to enquire and debate, belongeth to a scholler, and to resolve appertaines to a cathedrall maister. But know, my cathedrall, it is the authoritie of Gods divine will, that without any contradiction doth sway-us, and hath hir ranke beyond these humane and vaine contestations. *Philip* being with an armed hand entred the countrie of *Peloponnesus*, some one told *Damidas*, the Lacedemonians were like to endure much, if they sought not to reobtaine his lost favour. Oh varlet as thou art (answered he.) And what can they suffer, who have no feare at all of death? *Agis* being demanded, how a man might do to live free, answered; *Despising and contemning to die*. These and a thousand like propositions, which concurre in this purpose, doe evidently inferre some thing beyond the patient expecting of death it selfe, to be suffered in this life: witnes the Lacedemonian child, taken by *Antigonus*, and solde for a slave, who urged by his master, to performe some abject service; Thou shalt see (said he) whom thou hast bought; for, it were a shame for me to serve, having libertie so neere at hand, and therewithal threw himselfe headlong downe from the top of the house. *Antipater*, sharpely threatning the Lacedemonians, to make them yeeld to a certaine request of his; they answered, shouldest thou menace us worst then death, we will rather die. And to *Philip*, who having written unto them, that he would hinder al their enterprises; What? (say they) wilt thou also hinder us from dying? That is the reason, why some say, that the wiseman liveth as long as he ought, and not so long as he can. And that the favourablest gift, nature hath bequeathed-us, and which removeth all meanes from-us to complaine of our condition, is, that she hath left-us the key of the fieldes. She hath appointed but one entrance unto life, but many a thousand wayes out of it: *Well may wee want ground to live upon, but never ground to die in*. As *Boiocatus* answered the Romanes. Why dost thou complaine against this world? It doth not containe thee: If thou livest in paine and sorrow, thy base courage is the cause of-it, To die there wanteth but will.

*Ubique mors est: optimè hoc cauit Deus,
Eripere uitam nemo non homini potest:
At nemo mortem: mille ad hanc aditus patent.*

*Each where death is: God did this well purvey,
No man but can from man life take away,
But none barr's death, to it lies many'a way.*

And it is not a receipt to one maladie alone; *Death is a remedie against all evilles*: It is a most assured haven, never to be feared, and often to be sought: All comes to one period, whether man make an end of himselfe, or whether he endure-it; whether he runne before his day, or whether he expect-it: whence soever it come, it is ever his owne, where ever the threed be broken, it is all there, it's the end of the web. The voluntariest death, is the fairest. *Life dependeth on the will of others, death on ours*. In nothing should we so much accommodate our selves to our humors, as in that. Reputation doth nothing concerne such an enterprise, it is folly to have any respect unto it. *To live is to serve, if the liberty to die be wanting*. The common course of curing any infirmitie, is ever directed at the charge of life: we have incisions made into us, we are cauterized, we have limbes cut and mangled, we are let blood, we are dieted. Goe we but one step further, we neede no more phisicke, we are perfectly whole. Why is not our jugular or throate veine as much at our commaund as the mediane? To extreame sicknesses, extreame remedies. *Servius* the Gramarian being troubled with the gowt, found no better meanes to be rid of it, then to applie poison to mortifie his legs. He cared not whether they were *Podagrees* or no, so they were insensible. God giveth us sufficient priviledge, when hee placeth us in such an estate, as life is worse then death unto us. *It is weakenesse to yeelde to evilles, but folly to foster them*. The Stoikes say, it is a convenient naturall life, for a wise man, to forgoe life, although he abound in all happinesse; if he doe it opportunely: And for a foole to prolong his life, albeit he be most miserable, provided hee be in most part of things, which they say to be according unto nature. As I offend not the lawes made against theeves, when I cut mine owne purse, and carry away mine owne goods; nor of destroyers when I burne mine owne wood: so am I nothing tied unto lawes made against murtherers, if I deprive my selfe of mine owne life. *Hegesias* was wont to say, that even as the condition of life, so should the qualitie of death depend on our election. And *Diogenes* meeting with the Philosopher *Speusippus*, long time afflicted with the dropsie, and therefore carried in a litter, who cried out unto him; All haile *Diogenes*: And to thee no health at all, (replied *Diogenes*) that endurest to live in so wretched an estate. True it is that a while after, *Speusippus* as overtired with so languishing a condition of life, compassed his owne death. But this goeth not without some contradiction: For, many are of opinion, that without the expresse commandement of him, that hath placed us in this world, wee may by no meanes forsake the garrison of it, and that it is in the hands of God onely, who therein hath placed-us, not for our selves alone, but for his glory, and others service, when ever it shall please him to discharge us hence, and not for us to take leave: *That we are not borne for our selves, but for our countrie*: The lawes for their owne interest require an accompt at our hands for our selves, and have a just action of murther against-us. Else as destroyers of our owne charge, we are punished in the other world.

*Proxima deinde tenent mœsti loca, qui sibi lethum
Insontes peperere manu, lucémque perosi
Proicere animas.*

*Next place they lamentable hold in hell,
Whose hand their death caus'd causelesse, (but not well)
And hating life did thence their soules expell.*

There is more constancie in using the chaine that holds-us, then in breaking the same; and more triall of stedfastnesse in *Regulus*, then in *Cato*. It is indiscretion and impacience that hasteneth our way. *No accidents can force a man to turne his backe from lively vertue*: She seeketh-out evils and sorrowes as her nourishment. The threates of fell tyrants, tortures and torments; executioners and torturers, doe animate and quicken her.

*Duris ut ilex tonsa bipennibus
Nigræ feraci frondis in Algido
Per damna, per cædes, ab ipso
Ducit opes animúmque ferro.*

*As holme-trees doe with hard axe lopt
On hills with many holme-trees topt,
From losse, from cuttings it doth feele,
Courage and store rise ev'n from steele.*

And as the other saith.

*Non est ut putas uirtus, pater,
Timere uitam, sed magis ingentibus
Obstare, nec se uertere ac retro dare.*

*Sir, ti's not vertue, as you understand,
To feare life, but grose mischiefe to withstand,
Not to retire, turne backe, at any hand.*

*Rebus in aduersis facilè est contemnere mortem.
Fortius ille facit, qui miser esse potest.*

*T'is easie in crosse chance death to despise:
He that can wretched be, doth stronger rise.*

It is the parte of cowardlinesse, and not of vertue, to seeke to squat it selfe in some hollow-lurking hole, or to hide her selfe under some massie tombe, thereby to shunne the strokes of fortune. She never forsakes her course, nor leaves her way, what stormy weather soever crosse-her.

*Si fractus illabatur orbis,
Impavidam ferient ruinæ.*

*If the world broken should upon her fall,
The ruines may her strike, but not appall.*

The avoyding of other inconveniences doth most commonly drive us into this, yea, sometimes the shunning of death, makes us to run into it.

Hic, rogo, non furor est, ne moriari, mori?

*Madnesse is't not, say I,
To die, lest you should die?*

As those who for feare of a downe-right precipice, doe headlong cast themselves into-it.

*multos in summa pericula misit
Uenturi timor ipse mali: fortissimus ille est,
Qui promptus metuenda pati, si cominus instent,
Et differre potest.*

*The very feare of ills to come, hath sent
Many to mightie dangers: strongest they,
Who fearefull things t'endure are ready bent,
If they confront them, yet can them delay.*

*usque adeo mortis formidine, vitæ
Percipit humanos odium, lucisque uidendæ,
Ut sibi consciscant mœrenti pectore lethum,
Obliti fontem curarum hunc esse timorem.*

*So farre by feare of death the hate of life,
And seeing-light doth men as men possesse,
They grieving kill themselves to end the strife,
Forgetting, feare is spring of their distresse.*

Plato in his lawes, alots him that hath deprived his neerest and deerest friend of life (that is to say himselfe) and abridged him of the destinies course, not constrained by any publike judgement, nor by any lewde and inevitable accident of fortune, nor by any intolerable shame or infamie, but through basenesse of minde, and weakenesse of a faint-fearfull courage, to have a most ignominious, and ever-reproachfull buriall. And the opinion which disdaineth our life, is ridiculous: For, in fine it is our being. It is our all in all. Things that have a nobler and richer being, may accuse ours: But it is against nature, wee should despise, and carelesly set our selves at naught: It is a particular infirmitie, and which is not seene in any other creature, to hate and disdaine himselfe. It is of like vanitie, that we desire to be other, then we are. The fruit of such a desire doth not concerne-us, forasmuch as it contradicteth and hindereth it selfe in it selfe. He that desireth to be made of a man an Angell, doth nothing for himselfe: He should bee nothing the better by it: And beeing no more, who shall rejoyce or conceive any gladnesse of this change or amendment for him?

*Debet enim miserè fortè ægréque futurum est,
Ipse quoque esse in eo tum tempore, cùm male possit
Accidere,*

*For he, who shall perchance proove miserable,
And speede but ill, should then himselfe be able
To be himselfe, when ills may chance unstable.*

The securitie, indolencie, impassibilitie, and privation of this lives-evilles, which wee purchase at the price of death, bring us no commoditie at all. *In vaine doth be avoide warre, that can not enjoy peace; and bootelesse doth he shunne paine, that hath no meanes to feele rest.* Amongst those of the first opinion, great questioning hath beene, to know what occasions are sufficiently just and lawfull to make a man undertake the killing of himselfe, they call that, *ἐύλογον ἐξαγωγήν, a reasonable orderly out-let.* For, although they say, a man must often die for slight causes, since these that keepe us alive, are not very strong; yet is some measure required in them. There are certaine fantastick and braine-sicke humors, which have not only provoked particular men, but whole nations to defeate themselves. I have heretofore alleaged some examples of them: And moreover we reade of certaine Milesian virgins, who upon a furious conspiracy hanged themselves one after an other, untill such time as the Magistrate provided for it, appoynting that such as should bee found so hanged, should with their owne halters be dragged naked through the streetes of the Citty. When *Threicion* perswadeth *Cleomenes* to kill himselfe, by reason of the badde and desperate estate his affaires stood in, and having escaped a more honourable death in the battell which he had lately lost, moveth him to accept of this other, which is second to him in honour, and give the conqueror no leisure to make him endure, either another death, or else a shameful life. *Cleomenes* with a Lacedemonian and Stoicke courage, refuseth this counsell as base and effeminate: It is a receipt, (saith he) which can never faile me, and whereof a man should make no use, so long as there remaineth but one inch of hope: That to live, is sometimes constancy and valour; That he will have his very death serve his Countrie, and by it, shew an act of honour and of vertue. *Threicion* then believed, and killed himselfe. *Cleomenes* did afterwards as much, but not before hee had tried and assayed the utmost power of fortune. All inconveniences are not so much worth, that a man should die to eschue them. Moreover, there being so manie sodaine changes, and violent alterations in humane things, it is hard to judge in what state or point we are justly at the end of our hope:

*Sperat & in sæua uictus gladiator arena,
Sit licet infesto pollice turba minax.*

*The fencer hopes, though downe in lists he lie,
And people with turn'd hand threat's he must die.*

All things, saith an ancient Proverb, may a man hope-for, so long as hee liveth: yea but, answereth *Seneca*, wherefore shall I rather have that in minde; that fortune can do al things for him that is living, then this; that fortune hath no power at all over him, who knoweth how to die? *Joseph* is seene engaged in so an apparant-approaching danger, with a whole nation against him, that according to humane reason, there was no way for him to escape; notwithstanding being (as he saith) counseled by a friend of his, at that instant, to kil himselfe, it fell out wel for him to opinate himselfe yet in hope: for fortune, beyond al mans discourse, did so turne and

change that accident, that without any inconvenience at all, he saw himselfe delivered: whereas on the contrarie *Brutus* and *Cassius*, by reason of the down-fall and rashnesse, wherewith before due-time and occasion, they killed themselves; did utterly loose the reliques of the Roman libertie, whereof they were protectors. The Lord of *Anguien* in the battell of *Serisolles*, as one desperate of the combates successe, which on his side went to wracke, attempted twice to runne himselfe through the throate with his Rapier, and thought by precipitation to bereave himselfe of the enjoying of so notable a victorie. I have seene a hundred Hares save themselves even in the Gray-hounds jawes: *Aliquis carnifici suo superstes fuit. Some man hath out-lived his Hang-man.*

*Multa dies uariúsque labor mutabilis æui
Rettulit in melius, multos alterna reuisens
Lusit, & in solido rursus fortuna locauit.*

*Time, and of turning age the divers straine,
Hath much to better brought, fortunes turn'd traine,
Hath many mock't, and set them fast againe.*

Plinie saith, there are but three sorts of sicknesses, which to avoyde, a man may have some colour of reason to kill himselfe. The sharpest of all is the stone in the bladder, when the urine is there stopped. *Seneca*, those onely, which for long time disturbe and distract the offices of the minde. To avoyde a worse death, some are of opinion, a man should take it at his owne pleasure. *Democritus* chiefe of the *Ætolians*, beeing led Captive to *Rome*, found meanes to escape by night: but being pursued by his keepers, rather then hee would be taken againe, ranne himselfe through with his Sword. *Antinoüs* and *Theodotus*, their City of *Epirus* being by the Romans reduced unto great extremitie, concluded, and perswaded all the people to kill themselves. But the counsel, rather to yeeld, having prevailed: they went to seeke their owne death, and rushed amidst the thickest of their enemies, with an intention, rather to strike, than to warde themselves. The iland of *Gosa*, being some yeres since surprized and over-runne by the Turkes, a certaine Sicilian therein dwelling, having two faire daughters ready to be married, killed them both with his owne hands, together with their mother, that came-in to help them. That done, running out into the streeetes, with a crossebow in one hand, and a caliver in the other, at two shoots, slew the two first Turkes that came next to his gates, then resolutely drawing his Sword, ranne furiouslie among them; by whom he was sodainly hewen in pieces: Thus did he save himselfe from slavish bondage, having first delivered his owne from-it. The Jewish women after they had caused their children to be circumcized, to avoide the crueltie of *Antiochus*, did headlong precipitate themselves and them unto death. I have heard-it credible reported, that a gentleman of good quality, being prisoner in one of our Gaoles, and his parents advertized that hee should assuredly be condemned, to avoyde the infamy of so reproachfull a death, appointed a Priest to tell him, that the best remedie for his deliverie, was to recommend himselfe to such a Saint, with such and such a vow, and to continue eight dayes without taking any sustenance, what faintnesse or weaknesse soever he should feele in himselfe. He believed them, and so without thinking on it, was delivered both of life and danger. *Scribonia*

perswading *Libo* his nephew to kill himselfe, rather then to expect the stroke of justice, told him, that for a man to preserve his owne life, to put it into the hands of such as three or foure dayes after should come and seek it, was even to dispatch another mans businesse, and that it was no other, then for one to serve his enemies, to preserve his blood, therewith to make food. We reade in the holy Bible, that *Nicanor* the persecutor of Gods law, having sent his Satelites to apprehend the good old man *Rasias*, for the honor of his vertue, surnamed the father of the *Jewes*; when that good man saw no other meanes left him, his gate being burned, and his enemies ready to lay holde on him, chose, rather then to fall into the handes of such villaines, and be so basely abused, against the honour of his place to die nobly, and so smote him-selfe with his owne sword; but by reason of his haste, having not throughly slaine him-selfe, he ranne to throw himselfe downe from an high wall, amongst the throng of people, which making him roome, hee fell right upon his head. All which notwithstanding, perceiving life to remaine in him, hee tooke heart of grace againe; and getting up on his feete, all goared with bloud, and loaden with strokes, making way through the prease, came to a craggie and downe-steepie rocke, where unable to goe any further, by one of his woundes, with both his handes he pulled out his guttes, and tearing and breaking them, cast them amongst such as pursued him, calling and attesting the vengeance of God to light upon them. Of all violences committed against conscience, the most in mine opinion to be avoyded, is that which is offred against the chastitie of women, forsomuch as there is naturally some corporall pleasure commixt with it: And therefore the dissent cannot fully enough be joyned thereunto: And it seemeth, that force is in some sort, intermixed with some will. The ecclesiasticall storie hath in especiall reverence, sundry such examples of devout persons, who called for death to warrant them from the out-rages which some tyrants prepared against their religion and consciences. *Pelagia* and *Sophronia*, both canonized; the first, together with her mother and sisters, to escape the outrageous rapes of some souldiers, threw her selfe into a river; the other, to shunne the force of *Maxentius* the Emperour, slew her selfe. It shall peradventure redound to our honour in future ages, that a wise Author of these dayes, and namely a Parisian, doth labour to perswade the ladies of our times, rather to hazard upon any resolution, than to embrace so horrible a counsell of such desperation. I am sorry, that to put amongst his discourses, he knew not the good saying I learnt of a woman at *Tholouse*, who had passed through the hands of some souldiers: God be praised (saide she) that once in my life, I have had my belly-full without sinne. Verily these cruelties are not woorthy of the French curtesie. And God be thanked, since this good advertisement; our ayre is infinitely purged of them. Let it suffice, that in doing it, they say, *No, and take it*, following the rule of *Marot*. The historie is very full of such, who a thousand wayes have changed a lingering-toylsome life with death. *Lucius Aruntius* killed himselfe (as he saide) to avoyde what was past, and eschew what was to come. *Granius Sylvanus*, and *Statius Proximus*, after they had bene pardoned by *Nero*, killed themselves; eyther because they scorned to live by the favour of so wicked a man, or because they would not another time be in danger of a second pardon, seeing his so easie-yeelding unto suspicious and accusations against honest men. *Spargapizes* sonne unto Queene *Tomiris*, prisoner by the lawe of warre unto *Cyrus*, employed the

first favor that *Cyrus* did him, by setting him free, to kill himselfe, as he who never pretended to reape other fruit by his libertie, then to revenge the infamie of his taking upon himselfe. *Boges* a Governour for king *Xerxes* in the country of *Ionia*, being besieged by the *Athenians* army under the conduct of *Cymon*, refused the composition, to returne safely, together with his goods and treasure in to *Asia*, as one impatient to survive the losse of what his maister had given him in charge; and after he had stowtly, and even to the last extremitie, defended the towne, having no manner of victualles left him; first he cast all the golde, and treasure, with whatsoever he imagined the enemy might reape any commoditie-by, into the river *Strimon*; Then having caused a great pile of wood to be set on fire, and made all women, children, concubines and servants to be stripped, and thrown into the flames, afterward ranne-in himselfe, where all were burned. *Minachetuen* a Lorde in the East *Indies*, having had an inkling of the king of *Portugales* Viceroyes deliberation to dispossesse him, without any apparant cause, of the charge he had in *Malaca*, for to give it unto the king of *Campar*; of himselfe resolved upon this resolution. First he caused an high scaffold to be set up, somewhat longer then broade, underpropped with pillers, all gorgeously hanged with rich tapistry, strewed with flowers, and adorned with pretious perfumes: Then having put-on a sumptuous long robe of cloth of gold, richly beset with store of pretious stones of inestimable worth, hee came out of the pallace into the streete, and by certaine steppes ascended the scaffold, in one of the corners whereof, was a pile of aromaticall wood set afire. All the people of the Citie were flocked together, to see what the meaning of such unaccustomed preparation might tend unto. *Minachetuen* with an undanted-bold, yet seeming-discontented countenance, declared the manifold obligations, which the *Portugal* Nation was endebted unto him for; expostulated how faithfully and truly he had dealt in his charge; that having so often witnessed, armed at all assayes, for others; that his honour was much dearer unto him then life, he was not to forsake the care of it for himselfe; that fortune refusing him all meanes to oppose himselfe against the injurie intended against him, his courage, at the least willed him to remoove the feeling thereof, and not become a laughing stocke unto the people, and a triumph to men of lesse worth then himselfe: which wordes as he was speaking, he cast himselfe into the fire. *Sextilia* the wife of *Scaurus* and *Paxea* wife unto *Labeo*, to encourage their husbands, to avoyd the dangers, which pressed them, wherein they had no share (but in regard of the interest of their conjugal affection) voluntarily engaged their life, in this extreame necessity, to serve them, as an example to imitate, and company to regard. What they performed for their husbands; *Cocceius Nerva* acted for his country, and though lesse profitable, yet equall in true-love. That famous interpreter of the lawes, abounding in riches, in reputation, in credit, and flourishing in health about the Emperour, had no other cause to ridde himselfe of life, but the compassion of the miserable estate, wherin he saw the Roman common-wealth. There is nothing can be added unto the daintinesse of *Fulvius* wives death, who was so inward with *Augustus*. *Augustus* perceiving he had blabbed a certaine secret of importance, which he on-trust had revealed unto him; one morning comming to visit him, he seemed to frowne upon him for-it; whereupon as guiltie, he returneth home, as one full of despaire, and in pitteous sort told his wife, that sithence he was falne into such a

mischief, he was resolved to kill himselfe; shee as one no whit dismaide, replide unto him; Thou shalt do but right, since having so often experienced the incontinence of my tongue, thou hast not learnt to beware of it, yet give me leave to kill my self first, and without more adoe, ranne hir selfe through with a sword. *Vibius Virius* despairing of his Citties safetie, besieged by the Romans, and mistrusting their mercie; in their Senates last consultation, after many remonstrances employed to that end, concluded that the best and fairest way, was to escape fortune by their owne hands. The very enimies should have them in more honour, and *Hanniball* might perceive what faithfull friends he had forsaken: Enviting those that should allow of his advise, to come, and take a good supper, which was prepared in his house, where after great cheere, they should drinke together whatsoever should be presented unto him: a drinke that shall deliver our bodies from torments, free our minds from injuries, and release our eyes and eares from seeing and hearing so many horrible mischiefes, which the conquered must endure at the handes of most cruell and offended conquerors: I have (quoth he) taken order, that men fitte for that purpose shall be ready, when we shalbe expired, to cast us into a great burning pile of wood. Diverse approved of his high resolution, but few did immitate the same. Seaven and twenty Senators followed him; who after they had attempted to stifle so yrkesome, and suppress so terror-mooving a thought, with quaffing and swilling of wine, they ended their repast by this deadly messe: and entre-embracing one another, after they had in common deplored and bewailed their countries misfortune; some went home to their owne houses, othersome stayed there, to be entombed with *Vibius* in his owne fire; whose death was so long and lingring, forsomuch as the vapor of the wine having possessed their veines, and slowed the effect and operation of the poyson, that some lived an houre after they had seene their enemies enter *Capoa*, which they caried the next day after, and incurred the miseris, and saw the calamities, which at so high a rate they had sought to eschew. *Taurea Iubellius*, another citizen there, the Consul *Fulvius* returning from that shameful slaughter, which he had committed of 225. senators, caled him churlishly by his name, and having arested him; Command (quoth he) unto him, that I also be massacred after so many others, that so thou maist brag to have murdered a much more valiant man then ever thou wast. *Fulvius*, as one enraged, disdainig him; forsomuch as he had newly received letters from *Rome* contrary to the inhumanity of his execution, which inhibited him to proceed any further; *Iubellius* continuing his speach, said; sithence my country is taken, my friends butchered, and having with mine owne hands slaine my wife and children, as the only meane to free them from the desolation of this ruine; I may not die the death of my felow-citizens, let us borrow the vengeance of this hateful life from vertue: And drawing a blade, he had hidden under his garments, therewith ran himselfe through, and falling on his face, died at the Consuls feet. *Alexander* besieged a citie in *India*, the inhabitants whereof, perceiving themselves brought to a very narrow pinch, resolved obstinately to deprive him of the plesure he might get of his victory, and together with their cittie, in despite of his humanitie, set both the towne and themselves on a light fire, and so were all consumed. A new kind of warring, where the enemies did all they could, and fought to save them, they to loose themselves, and to be assured of their death, did all a man

can possible effect to warrant his life. *Astapa* a Citie in *Spaine*, being very weake of walles and other defences, to withstand the Romanes that besieged the same; the inhabitants drew all their riches and wealth into the market-place, whereof having made a heape, and on the top of it placed their wives and children, and encompassed and covered the same with drie brush wood, that it might burne the easier, and having appointed fiftie lusty yong men of theirs for the performance of their resolution, made a sallie, where following their determined vow, seeing they could not vanquish, suffered themselves to be slaine every mothers childe. The fiftie, after they had massacred every living soule remaining in the Cittie, and set fire to the heape, joyfully leaped thereinto, ending their generous libertie in a state rather insensible, then dolorous and reprochfull; shewing their enemies, that if fortune had beene so pleased, they should as well have had the courage to bereave them of the victory, as they had to yeeld it them both vaine and hideous, yea, and mortall to those, who allured by the glittering of the gold, that moulten ran from out the flame, thicke and three-fold approaching greedily unto it, were therein smothered and burned, the formost being unable to give back, by reason of the throng that followed them. The *Abideans* pressed by *Philip*, resolved upon the very same, but being prevented, the King whose heart yerned and abhorred to see the fond-rash precipitation of such an execution (having first seized-upon and saved the treasure, and moveables, which they had diversly condemned to the flames and utter spoyle) retiring all the Souldiers, granting them the full space of 3. dayes to make themselves away, that so they might do it with more order and leisure; which three dayes they replenished with blood and murther beyond all hostile crueltie: And which is strange, there was no one person saved, that had power upon himselfe. There are infinit examples of such-like popular conclusions, which seeme more violent, by how much more the effect of them is more universall. They are lesse then severall, what discourse would not doe in every one, it doth in all: The vehemence of societie, ravishing particular judgements. Such as were condemned to die in the time of *Tiberius*, and delayde their execution any while, lost their goods, and could not be buried, but such as prevented the same, in killing themselves, were solemnly enterred, and might, at their pleasure, bequeath such goods as they had to whom they list. But a man doth also sometimes desire death, in hope of a greater good. I desire (saith Saint *Paul*) to be out of this world, that I may be with *Jesus Christ*: and who shall release me out of these bonds? *Cleombrotus Ambraciota* having read *Platoes Phædon*, was so possessed with a desire and longing for an after-life, that without other occasion or more adoe, hee went and headlong cast himselfe into the sea. Whereby it appeareth how improperly we call this voluntary dissolution, dispaire; unto which the violence of hope doth often transport-us, and as often a peacefull and settled inclination of judgement. *Jaques du Castell*, Bishop of *Soissons*, in the voyage which Saint *Lewes* undertooke beyond the seas, seeing the King and all his Armie ready to returne into *Fraunce*, and leave the affaires of Religion imperfect, resolved with himselfe rather to goe to heaven; And having bidden his friends farewell, in the open view of all men, rushed alone into the ennemies troopes, of whom he was forthwith hewen in pieces. In a certaine kingdome of these late-discovered *Indies*, upon the day of a solemne procession, in which the Idoles they adore, are publikely caried up and

downe, upon a chariot of exceeding greatnesse: besides that, there are many seene to cut and slice great mammocks of their quicke flesh, to offer the said Idoles; there are numbers of others seene, who prostrating themselves alongst upon the ground, endure very paciently to be mouldred and crushed to death, under the Chariots wheelles, thinking thereby to purchase after their death, a veneration of holinesse, of which they are not defrauded. The death of this Bishop, armed as we have said, argueth more generositie, and lesse sence: the heate of the combate ammusung one parte of it. Some common-wealths there are, that have gone about to sway the justice, and direct the opportunitie of voluntary deaths. In our Cittie of *Marseille*, they were wont in former ages, ever to keepe some poison in store, prepared and compounded with hemlocke, at the Citties charge, for such as would upon any occasion shorten their daies, having first approved the reasons of their enterprise unto the six hundred Elders of the towne, which was their Senate: For, otherwise it was unlawfull for any body, except by the magistrates permission, and for very lawfully-urgent occasions, to lay violent hands upon himselfe. The very same law was likewise used in other places. *Sextus Pompeius* going into *Asia*, passed through the Iland of *Cea*, belonging to *Negroponto*; it fortuneth whilst he abode there, (as one reporteth that was in his company) that a woman of great auctoritie, having first yeilded an accompt unto her Cittizens, and shewed good reasons why she was resolved to end her life, earnestly entreated *Pompey* to be an assistant at her death, that so it might be esteemed more honourable, which he assented unto; and having long time in vaine sought, by vertue of his eloquence (wherin he was exceeding ready) and force of perswasion, to alter her intent, and remove her from her purpose, in the end yeilded to her request. She had lived foure score and ten yeares in a most happy estate of minde and bodie, but then lying on her bed, better adorned then before she was accustomed to have-it, and leaning on her elbow, thus she bespake: The Gods, Oh *Sextus Pompeius*, and rather those I forgo, then those I go unto, reward and appay thee, for that thou hast vouchsafed to be both a counsellor of my life, and a witnesse of my death. As for my part, having hitherto ever tasted the favourable visage of fortune, for feare the desire of living overlong should make me taste of her frownes, with an happy an successefull end, I wil now departe, and licence the remainder of my soule, leaving behinde me two daughters of mine, with a legion of grand-children and nephewes. That done, having preached unto, and exhorted all her people and kinsfolkes to an unitie and peace, and divided her goods amongst them, and recommended her houshold Gods unto her eldest daughters, with an assuredly-staide hand she tooke the cup, wherein the poyson was, and having made her vowes unto *Mercurie*, and praiers, to conduct her unto some happy place in the other world, roundly swallowed that mortal potion; which done, she intertained the company with the progresse of her behaviour, and as the partes of her body were one after another possessed with the cold operation of that venome; untill such time as shee saide, she felt-it worke at the heart and in her entralls, she called her daughter to doe her the last office, and close her eyes. *Plinie* reporteth of a certaine *Hiperborean* nation, wherein, by reason of the milde temperature of the aire, the inhabitants thereof, commonly never die, but when they please to make themselves away, and that being wearie and tired with living, they are accustomed at the end of a long-long age; having first

made merry and good cheare with their friends, from the top of an heigh-steepy rocke, appointed for that purpose, to cast themselves headlong into the sea. Grieving-smarte, and a worse death seeme to me the most excusable incitations.