

MICHEL DE MONTAIGNE  
ESSAYS

**Book 2 · Chapter 37**

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## Of the resemblance between children and fathers

THIS HUDLING UP of so much trash, or packing of so many severall pieces, is doone so strangely, as I never lay hands on it, but when an over lazie idlennesse urgeth me; and no where, but in mine owne house. So hath it beene compact at sundry pauses, and contrived at severall intervalls, as occasions have sometimes for many months together, here and there in other places, detained me. Besides, I never correct my first imaginations by the second; it may happen, I now and then alter some word, rather to diversifie, then take any thing away. My purpose is, to represent the progresse of my humours, that every part be seene or member distinguished, as it was produced. I would to God I had begunne sooner, and knew the tracke of my changes, and course of my variations. A boy whom I employed to write for me, supposed, he had gotten a rich bootie, when he stole some parts, which he best liked. But one thing comforts me, that he shall gaine no more, then I lost by them. I am growne elder by seaven or eight yeares since I beganne them; nor hath it beene without some new purchase. I have by the liberalitie of yeares acquainted my selfe with the stone-chollike. Their commerce and long conversation, is not easiely past-over without some such-like fruite. I would be glad, that of many other presents, they have ever in store, to bestow upon such as waite upon them long, they had made choise of some one, that had beene more acceptable unto me: for they could never possesse me with any, that, even from my infancie, I hated more. Of all accidents incident to age, it was that I feared most. My selfe have many times thought, I went on too farre, and that to hold out so long a journey, I must of necessitie, in the end, stumble upon some such displeasing chance. I perceived plainely, and protested sufficiently, it was high time to depart, and that according to the rule of skillfull chirurgions, who when they must cut off some member, life must be seared to the quicke, and cut to the sound flesh. *That nature is wont to make him pay untollerable usurie, who doth not yeeld or pay the same in due time.* I was so farre from being readie to make lawfull tender of it, that in eighteene months, or thereabouts, I have continued in so yrkesome and displeasing plight, I have already learnt to apply my selfe unto it; and am now entring into covenant with this chollicall kind of life; for therein I finde matter, wherewith to comfort me, and to hope better. *So much are*

*men enured in their miserable estate, that no condition is so poore, but they will accept; so they way continue in the same. Heare Mæcenas.*

*Debilem facito manu,  
Debilem pede, coxa,  
Lubricos quate dentes,  
Uita dum superest, bene est.*

*Make me be weake of hand,  
Scarse on my legges to stand,  
Shake my loose teeth with paine,  
T'is well, so life remaine.*

And *Tamburlane* cloked the fantastical cruelty, he exercised upon Lazars or Leprousmen, with a foolish kinde of humanitie, putting all he coulde finde or heare-of, to death, (as he saide,) to ridde them from so painefull and miserable a life, as they lived. For, there was none so wretched amongst them, that would not rather have beene three times a Leaper, than not to be at all. And *Antisthenes* the Stoicke, being very sicke, and crying out: *Oh who shall deliver me from my tormenting evils? Diogenes*, who was come to visite him, foorthwith presenting him a knife; *Mary* this, said he, and that very speedily, if thou please: I meane not of my life, replyed hee, but of my sicknesse. The sufferances which simply touch us in minde, doe much lesse afflict me, then most men: Partly by judgement; For the Worlde deemeth divers things horrible, or avoydable with the losse of life, which to me are in maner indifferent: Partly, by a stupide and insensible complexion, I have in accidents, that hitte me not point-blancke: Which complexion I esteeme one of the better partes of my naturall condition. But the truely-essentiall and corporall sufferances, those I taste very sensibly: Yet is it, having othertimes fore-apprehended them with a delicate and weake sight, and by the enjoying of this long health and happy rest, which God hath lent me, the better part of my age, somewhat empairod: I had by imagination conceived them so intolerable, that in good truth, I was more afraide, than since I have found hurt in them: Whereupon, I dayly augment this opinion: That most of our soules faculties (as we employ them) doe more troubles than steede the quiet repose of life. I am continually grappling with the worst of all diseases, the most grievous, the most mortall, the most remedillesse and the most violent. I have already had triall of five or sixe long and painefull fittes of it: Neverthelesse, eyther I flatter my selfe, or in this plight there is yet something, that would faine keep life and soule together, namely in him, whose minde is free from feare of death, and from the threats, conclusions and consequences, which phisicke is ever buzzing into our heads. But the effect of paine it selfe, hath not so sharpe a smarting, or so pricking a sharpnesse, that a settled man should enter into rage or fall into despaire. This commoditie at leaste, I have by the chollicke, that what I could never bring to passe in my selfe, which was, altogether to reconcile, and thorowly to acquaint my selfe with death, she shall atchieve, she shall accomplish: for, by how much more she shall importune and urge me, by so much lesse shall death be fearefull unto mee, I had already gotten, not to be beholding to life, but onely in regard of life, and for lives sake: She shall also untie this intelligence, and loose this combination. And God graunt, if in the end her

sharpenesse shall happen to surmount my strength, shee cast mee not into the other extremitie, no lesse vicious, no lesse badde, that is, to love and desire to die.

*Summum nec metuas diem, nec optes.*

*Nor feare thy latest doome,  
Nor wish it ere it come.*

They are two passions to be feared, but one hath her remedy neerer than the other. Otherwise, I have ever found that precept ceremonious, which so precisly appoints a man to set a good countenance, a setled resolution, and disdainfull carriage, upon the sufferance of evils. Why doth Philosophy, which onely respecteth livenessse and regardeth effects, ammuze it selfe about these externall apparances? Let her leave this care to Mimikes, to Histrions, and to Rhethoricke Maisters, who make so great account of our gestures. Let her hardly remit this vocall lithernesse unto evill, if it be neyther cordiall, nor stomacall. And let her lend her voluntary plaints to the kinde of sighes, sobbes, palpitations and palenesse, which nature hath exempted from our puissance. Alwayes provided, the courage be without feare, and wordes sance dispaire; let her be so contented. *What matter is it if we bend our armes, so we writhe not our thoughts?* She frameth us for our selves, not for others: to be, not to seeme. Let her applie her selfe to governe our understanding, which she hath undertaken to instruct. Let her in the pangs or fittes of the chollike, still maintaine the soule capable to acknowledge hir selfe and follow her accustomed course, resisting sorrow and enduring grieffe, and not shamefully to prostrate her selfe at his feete: Mooved and chafed with the combate, not basely suppressed nor faintly overthrown: Capable of entertainment and other occupations, unto a certaine limmite. In so extreame accidents, it is crueltie to require so composed a warde at our hands. *If we have a good game, it skills not, though wee have an ill countenance.* If the body be any whit eased by complaining, let him doe it: If stirring or agitation please him, let him turne, rowle and tosse himselfe as long as he list: If with raising his voyce, or sending it forth with more violence, he thinke his grieffe any thing alayed or vented (as some Phisitians affirme, it somewhat easeth women great with childe, and is a meane of easie or speedie delivery) feare he not to doe it; or if he may but entertaine his torment, let him mainely cry out. Let us not commaund our voyce to depart, but if she will, let us not hinder it. *Epicurus* doth not only pardon his wise man to crie-out, when hee is grieved or vexed, but perswadeth him to it. *Pugiles etiam quum feriunt, in iactandis caestibus ingemiscunt, quia profundenda uoce omne corpus intenditur, uenitque plaga uehementior.* Men when they fight with sand-bagges or such heavy Weapons, in fetching their blowe and driving it, wil give a groane withall, because by stretching their voyce all their body is also strayned, and the stroke commeth with more vehemence. We are vexed and troubled enough with the evill, without troubling and vexing our selves with these superfluous rules. This I say to excuse those, who are ordinarily seene to rage in the fittes and storme in the assaults of this sicknesse: for, as for me, I have hitherto passt it over with somewhat a better countenance, and am content to groane without braying and exclaiming. And yet I trouble not my selfe, to mainetaine this exterior decency; for, I make small reckoning of such an advantage; In that

I lend my sicknesse what it requireth: But either my paine is not so excessive, or I leave it with more constancy than the vulgare sorte. Indeede I must confesse, when the sharpe fittes or throwes assaile me, I complaine, and vex my selfe, but yet I never fall into dispaire, as that fellow:

*Eiulatu, questu, gemitu, fremitibus  
Resanando multum flebiles uoces refert.*

*With howling, groaning, and complaint of fates,  
Most lamentable cries he imitates.*

I feele my selfe in the greatest heate of my sicknesse; and I ever found my selfe capable and in tune, to speake, to thinke and to answer, as soundly as at any other time, but not so constantly; because my paine doeth much trouble and distract me. When I am thought to be at the lowest, and that such as are about me spare me, I often make a triall of my forces, and propose them such discourses as are furthest from my state. There is nothing impossible for me, and me thinks I can doe all things uppon a sodaine fitte, so it continue not long. Oh why have not I the gift of that dreamer; mentioned by *Cicero*, who, dreaming, that hee was closely embracing a yong wench; found himselfe ridde of the stone in his sheets! Mine doe strangely dis-wench me. In the entervales or respites of this outrageous paine, when as my Ureters (through which the Urine passeth from the reines to the bladder) languish without gnawing me, I sodainely returne into my ordinarie forme: forsomuch as my mind taketh no other allarume, but the sensible and corporall. All which I certainly owe unto the care I have had to prepare my selfe by reason and discourse of such accidents:

*laborum  
Nulla mihi noua nunc facies inopináque surgit,  
Omnia præcepi, atque animo mecum antè peregi.*

*No new or unexpected forme is cast  
Of travels in my brest: all I forecast,  
In my minde with selfe I all forepast.*

I am handled somewhat roughly for a Prentise, and with a violent and rude change; being at one instant falne from a very pleasing, calme, and most happy condition of life, unto the most dolorous, yrkesome and painefull, that can possibly be imagined: For, besides that in it selfe it is a disease greatly to be feared, it's beginnings or approaches are in me sharper or more difficult, than it is wont to trouble others withall. The pangs and fittes thereof doe so often assaile me, that in a manner I have no more feeling of perfect health. Notwithstanding I hitherto keepe my spirite so seated, as if I can but joyne constancie unto it, I finde my selfe to be in a much better state of life, than a thousand others, who have neither agew nor other infirmitie, but such as for want of discourse they give themselves. There is a certaine fashion of subtile humilitie, which proceedeth of presumption: As this: That in many things we acknowledge our ignorance, and are so curteous to avowe, that in Natures workes, there are some qualities and conditions, which to us are imperceptible, and whereof our sufficiencie cannot discover

the meanes, nor finde out the causes. By this honest and conscientious declaration, we hope to gaine, that we shall also be beleevd in those, we shall say to understand. Wee neede not goe to cull out myracles, and chuse strange difficulties: me seemeth, that amongst those things we ordinarily see, there are such incomprehensible rarities, as they exceede all difficultie of myracles. What monster is it, that this teare or drop of seede, whereof we are ingendred brings with it; and in it the impressions, not only of the corporall forme, but even of the very thoughts and inclinations of our fathers? Where dooth this droppe of water containe or lodge this infinite number of formes? And how beare they these resemblances, of so rash, and unruly a progresse, that the childe childe shall be answerable to his grandfather, and the nephew to his unckle? In the family of *Lepidus* the Roman, there have beene three, not successively, but by intervalles, that were borne with one same eye covered with a cartilage or gristle. There was a race in *Thebes*, which from their mothers wombe, bare the forme of a burre, or yron of a launce; and such as had it not, were judged as misbegotten and deemed unlawfull. *Aristotle* reporteth of a certaine Nation, with whome all women were common, where children were allotted their fathers, only by their resemblances. It may be supposed, that I am indebted to my father for this stonie qualitie; for he died exceedingly tormented with a great stone in his bladder. He never felt himselfe troubled with the disease, but at the age of sixtie seaven yeares: before which time hee had never felt any likelihood or motion of it, nor in his reines, nor in his sides, nor elsewhere: and untill then had lived in very prosperous health, and little subject to infirmities, and continued seven yeares and more with that disease, training a very dolorous lives-end. I was borne five and twenty yeares before his sicknesse, and during the course of his healthy state, his third child. Where was al this while the propension or inclination to this defect, hatched? And when he was so farre from such a disease, that light part of his substance wherewith he composed me, how could it for hir part, beare so great an impression of it? And how so closely covered, that fortie five yeares after, I have begunne to have a feeling of it? And hitherto alone, among so many brethren and sisters, and all of one mother. He that shall resolve me of this progresse, I will believe him as many other miracles as he shall please to tell mee: alwayes provided (as commonly they doe) hee goe not about to pay me, with a doctrine much more difficult and fantastically, then is the thing it selfe (let Phisitians somewhat excuse my libertie: for by the same infusion and fatall infinuation, I have received the hate and contempt of their doctrine.) The Antipathie, which is betweene me and their arte, is to me hereditarie. My father lived three score and foureteene yeares: My grandfather three score and nine; my great grandfather very neere foure score, and never fasted or tooke any kinde of Physicke. And whatsoever was not in ordinary use amongst them, was deemed a drug. *Physicke is grounded upon experience and examples*. So is mine opinion. Is not this a manifest kinde of experience and very advantageous? I know not whether in all their registers, they are able to finde me three more, borne, bred, brought up, and deceased, under one rooffe, in one same chimnie, that by their owne direction and regiment have lived so long. Wherein they must needs grant me, that if it be not reason, at least it is Fortune that is on my side. Whereas among Phisitians fortune is of more consequence, then reason. Lowebrought, and weake as I am now, let them not take me at an advantage, nor let them not threaten me: for that were *Supercherie*. And to say truth, I have

by my familiar examples gained enough upon them although they would take hold and stay there. Humane things have not so much constancie: It is now two hundred yeares; wanting but eighteene, that this Essay continueth with us: For, the first was borne in the yeare of our Lord one thousand foure hundred and two. Some reason there is why this experience should now beginne to faile us. Let them not upbraide me with those infirmities, which now have seized upon me: Is it not sufficient to have lived seaven and fortie yeares in good and perfect health for my part? Suppose it be the end of my carriere, yet it is of the longest. Mine ancestors by some secret instinct and naturall inclination have ever loathed all maner of Phisicke: for the very sight of drugs made my father to abhorre them. The Lord of *Gaviac*, mine unckle by the fathers side, a man of the church, sickish even from his birth, and who notwithstanding made his weake life to hold out untill sixtie seaven yeares; falling once into a dangerous and vehement continuall feaver, it was by the Phisitions concluded, that unlesse he would aide himselfe (for they often terme that aide, which indeede is impeachment) hee was but a dead man. The good soule, afrighted as he was, at that horrible sentence, answered thus, why when I am a dead man: But shortly after God made their prognostications to proove vaine. The Lord of *Bussaquet* last of the brethren (for they were foure) and by much the last; he alone submitted himselfe to that arte, as I imagine by reason of the frequence he had in other Sciences; for he was a Counsellor in the Court of Parliament, which prospered so ill with him, that though he were in shew of a very strong complexion, hee died long before the others, except one, the Lord of *Saint Michaell*. It may well be, I have received of them that naturall dispathie unto Phisicke. Yet if there had beene no other consideration but this, I would have endeoured to force it. For, all these conditions, which without reason are borne in us, are vicious. It is a kinde of maladie a man must fight withall. It may be I had such a propension, but I have settled and strengthened the same by discourses, which in me have confirmed the opinion I have of it. For, I have also the consideration to refuse Phisicke by reason of the sharpenesse of it's taste. It would not easily agree with my humour, who thinke *health worthie to be purchased, with the price of all cauthers and incisions, how painefull soever*. And following *Epicurus*, mee seemeth that *all maner of voluptuousnesse should be avoided, if greater griefes follow them*: And griefes to be sought after, that have greater voluptuousnesse ensuing them. Health is a very precious jewell, and the onely thing, that in pursuite of it deserveth, a man should not onely employ, time, labour, sweate and goods, but also life to get it; forasmuch as without it, life becommeth injurious unto us. Voluptuousnesse, Science and vertue, without it tarnish and vanish away. And to the most constant and exact discourses, that Philosophie wil imprint in our mindes to the contrarie, wee neede not oppose any thing against it but the image of *Plato*, being visited with the falling sicknesse, or an Apoplexie; and in this presupposition chalenge him to call the richest faculties of his minde to helpe him.

All meanes that may bring us unto health, can not be esteemed of mee either sharpe or deare. But I have some other apparances, which strangely make me to distrust all this ware. I doe not say but there may be some arte of it: It is certaine, that amongst so many of Natures workes, there are some things proper for the preservation of our health. I knowe there are some simples, which in operation are moist, and some drie: My selfe have

found by experience, that radish-roots are windie, and senie-leaves breede loosenesse in the belly. I have the knowledge of diverse such experiments, as I knowe that Mutton nourisheth, that Wine warmeth me. And Solon was wont to say, *that eating was as all other Drugges are, a medicine against the disease of hunger.* I disallow not the use we drawe from the world, nor doubt I of Natures power and fruitfulnessse, and of her application to our neede. I see, that the Pickrell-fish, and the Swallowes live well by her lawes. I greatly distrust the inventions of our wit, of our arte and of our Science: in favour of which we have forsaken Nature, and abandoned her rules; wherein we can neither observe limitation, nor keepe moderation. As wee terme Justice, the composition of the first lawes that come unto our handes, and their practise and dispensation very often most wicked and inconvenient. And as those which mocke and condemne it, intend neverthesse to wrong this noble vertue; but onely to condemne the abuse and profanation of so sacred a title: So likewise in Physicke, I knowe her glorious name, her proposition, and her promise, so profitable to mankinde: but what it desseigneth amongst us, I neither honour nor respect. First, experience makes me feare it, for of all I knowe, *I see no kinde of men so soone sicke, nor so late cured, as those who are under the jurisdiction of Physicke.* Their very health is distempered and corrupted by the constraint of their prescriptions. Physitions are not contented to have the government over Sickenesse, but they make Health to be sicke, lest a man should at any time escape their authoritie. Of a constant and perfect health, doe they not frame an argument of some future dangerous sickennesse? I have often beene sicke, and without any their help, I have found my sickenneses (though I never medled with the bitternessse of their prescriptions) as easie to be tolerated, and as short, as any mans else, and yet I have felt diverse. My health is free and sound, without any rules or discipline, except of mine owne custome and pleasure. I find no difference in places, all are alike to me to dwell in: for being sicke, I neede no other commodities, then those I must have when I am in health. I am nothing passionated, though I be without Phisition, without Apothecary, or without phisicall help; whereat I see some as much troubled in minde, as they are with their disease, *What? doth the best Physition of them all make us perceive any happinesse or continuance in his life, as may witnessse some manifest effect of his skill and learning?* There is no Nation, but hath continued many ages without physicke: yea the first ages, which is as much to say, the best and most happy: and the tenth part of the world hath as yet no use of it. Infinite Nations knowe it not; where they live both more healthie and much longer then we doe: yea and amongst us, the common sort live happily without it. The Romanes had beene sixe hundred yeares before ever they received it: by meanes or interposition of *Cato* the Censor, they banisht it their Cittie, who declared how easily man might live without it, having lived himselfe foure score and five yeeres, and his wife untill she was extreamely old, not without Phisicke, but indeede without any Phisition: For, *whatsoever is by experience found healthie for our body and health, may be termed physicke.* He entertained (as *Plutarke* saith) his familie in health, by the use (as farre as I remember) of Hares milke: As the Arcadians (saith *Plinie*) cure all malladies with Cowes milke. And the Lybians (saith *Herodotus*) doe generally enjoy a perfect health, by observing this custome, which is, so soone as their children are about foure yeeres olde, to cauterize and seare the veines of their head and temples, whereby



they make a way to all rheumes and defluction. And the countrie-people where I dwell, use nothing against all diseases, but some of the strongest wine they can get, with store of saffron and spice in it; and all with one like fortune. And to say true, of all this diversitie of rules, and confusion of prescriptions, what other end or effect workes it, but to evacuate the belly? which a thousand home-simples will doe as well. And I knowe not whether it be as profitable (as they say) and whether our nature require the residents of her excrements, untill a certaine measure, as wine doth his lees for his preservation. You see often men very healthy, by some strange accidents to fall into violent vomites, and fluxes, and voyd great store of excrements, without any præcedent neede, or succeeding benefite: yea with some empairing and prejudice. I learn't of *Plato* not long since, that of three motions, which belong to us, the last and worst, is that of purgations, and that no man, except he be a foole, ought to undertake it; unlesse it be in great extremitie. The evill is troubled and stirred up by contrary oppositions. It is the forme of life, that gently must diminish, consume and bring it to an end. Since the violent twinges of the drug and maladie are ever to our losse: since the quarrell is cleared in us, and the drug a trustlesse helpe; by it's owne nature an enemie to our health, and but by trouble hath no accesse in our state. Let's give them leave to go on. *That order which provideth for Fleas and Moles, doth also provide for men, who have the same patience to suffer themselves to be governed, that Fleas and Moles have.* We may fairely cry bo-bo-boe; it may well make us hoarse, but it will nothing advance it. It is a prowde and impetuous order. Our feare and our despaire, in lieu of enviting the same unto it, doth distaste and delay it out of our helpe: he oweth his course to evill, as well as to sicknesse. To suffer himselfe to be corrupted in favour of one, to the prejudice of the others rights, he will not doe it; so should they fall into disorder. Let us goe on in the name of God; let us follow; He leadeth-on such as follow him: those that follow him not, he haleth-on, both with their rage and phisicke together. Cause a purgation to be prepared for your braine; it will bee better employed unto it, then to your stomacke. A Lacedemonian being asked, what had made him live so long in health, answered, *The ignorance of physicke.* And *Adrian* the Emperour, as he was dying, ceased not to crie out, that *the number of Physitions had killed him.* A bad Wrestler became a Physition. Courage, saide *Diogenes* to him, *thou hast reason to do so, for now shalt thou help to put them into the ground, who have heretofore ayded to lay thee on it.* But according to *Nicoles*, they have this happe, *That the Sunne doth manifest their successe, and the earth doth cover their fault.* And besides, they have a very advantageous fashion among themselves, to make use of all manner of events; for, whatsoever either Fortune or Nature, or any other strange cause (whereof the number is infinit) produceth in us, or good or healthfull, it is the priviledge of Physicke to ascribe it unto herselfe. All the fortunate successes that come to the patient, which is under their government, it is farre from physicke<sup>1</sup> he hath them. The occasions that have cured me, and which heale a thousand others, who never send or call for physitions to helpe them, they usurpe them in their subjects. And touching ill accidents, either they utterly disavow them, in imputing the blame of them to the patient, by some vaine reasons, whereof they never misse to finde a great number; as he lay with his armes out of the bed, he hath heard the noyse of a coach;

*rhedarum transitus arcto  
Vicorum inflexu.*

*Coaches could hardly passe,  
The lane so crooked was.*

His Window was left open all night; He hath laine uppon the left side, or troubled his head with some heavie thought. In some, a word, a dreame, or a looke, is of them deemed a sufficient excuse, to free themselves from all imputation: Or if they please, they will also make use of this emparing, and thereby make up their businesse; and as a meane which can never faile them, when by their applications the disease is growne desperate, to pay us with the assurance, that if their remedies had not beene, it would have beene much woorse. He, whom but from a colde they have brought to a Cotidian Ague, without them should have had a continuall feaver. *They must needes thrive in their businesse, since all illis redownd to their profit.* Truly they have reason to require of the pacient an application of favourable confidence in them; which must necessarily be in good earnest, and yeelding to apply itselfe unto imaginations, over-hardly to be believed. *Plato* said very well, and to the purpose, that *freely to lie belonged onely to Phisicians*, since our health dependeth on their vanitie and falsehood of promises. *Æsope* an Authour of exceeding rare excellence, and whose graces few discover, is very pleasant in representing this kinde of tyrannicall authoritie unto us, which they usurpe upon poore soules, weakened by sicknesse, and over-whelmed through feare; for he reporteth, how a sicke man being demaunded by his Phisition, what operation he felt by the Phisike he had given him. I have sweate much, answered he; that is good, replied the Phisition, Another time he asked him againe how he had done since; I have had a great colde and quivered much, said he: that is very well, quoth the Phisition againe, The third time he demaunded of him, how he felt himselfe? He answered, I swell and puffe-up as it were with the dropsie; That's not amisse, saide the Phisition. A familiar friend of his comming afterward to visite him, and to know how he did? Verely (said hee) my friend I die with being too too well. There was a more equall Law in *Ægypt*, by which for the first three dayes the Phisition tooke the pacient in hand, uppon the patients perrill and fortune; but the three dayes expired, it was at his owne. For, *What reason is there, that Æsculapius their Patrone must have beene strucken with Thunder, forsomuch as hee recovered Hippolitus from death to life?*

*Nam pater omnipotens aliquem indignatus ab umbris,  
Mortalem infernis, ad lumina surgere uitæ.  
Ipse repertorem medicinæ talis, & artis  
Fulmine Phœbigenam stygias detrusit ad undas,*

*Jove scorning that from shades infernall night,  
A mortall man should rise to lifes new light  
Apolloes sonne to hell he thunder-threw,  
Who such an arte found out, such med'cine knew.*

*and his followers must be absolved, that send so many soules from life to death? A Phisitian boasted unto Nicocles, that his Arte was of exceeding great*

authoritie, It is true (quoth *Nicocles*) for, it may kill so many people without feare of punishment by Law. As for the rest, had I beene of their counsel, I would surely have made my discipline more sacred and mysterious. They had begunne very well, but the end hath not answered the beginning. It was a good ground, to have made Gods and Demons Authors of their Science, to have assumed a peculiar language and writing to themselves. Howbeit Philosophie supposeth it to be folly to perswade a man to his profit, by wayes not understood: *Ut si quis medicus imperet ut sumat: As if a Physition should bid a man take.*

*Terrigenam, herbigradam, domiportam, sanguine cassam,*

*One earth-borne, goe-by grasse, house-bearing, slimilie-bloodlesse.*

It was a good rule in their arte, and which accompanieth all fanaticall, vaine, and supernaturall arts, that *the patients beliefe must by good hope and assurance preoccupate their effect and operation.* Which rule they holde so farre forth, that the most ignorant and bungling horseleach is fitter for a man that hath confidence in him, than the skilfullest and learnedst Physition. The verie choyce of most of their Drugges, is somewhat mysterious and divine. *The left foote of a Tortoyze; The stale of a Lizard; The dongue of an Elephant; The liver of a Mole, Blood drawne from under the right wing of a white Pigeon; And for us who are troubled with the stone-chollike (so disdainfully abuse they our misery) Some Rattes pounded to small powder; and such other foolish trash, which rather seeme to be magike-spells or charmes, than effects of any solide science. I omitte to speake of The odde number of their pilles; The destinations of certaine dayes and feastes of the yeere; The distinction of houres to gather the simples of their ingredients; And the same rewbarbative and severely-grave looke of theirs, and of their port and countenance; Which Plinie himselfe mocketh at. But, as I was about to say, they have failed, forsomuch as they have not added this to their faire beginning, to make their assemblies more religious, and their consultations more secret. No profane man should have accesse unto them, no more than to the secret ceremonies of *Æsculapius*. By which meanes it commeth to passe, that their irresolution, the weakenesse of their Arguments, divinations and grounds, the sharpnesse of their contestations full of hatred, of jealousie and particular considerations, being apparant to all men; a man must needes be starke blinde, if he who falleth into their handes, see not himselfe greatly endangered. Who ever saw Phisition use his fellowes receipt, without diminishing or adding somewhat unto it? Whereby they greatly betraie their Art; And make us perceive, they rather respect their reputation, and consequently their profit, than the well-fare or interest of their patients. He is the wisest amongst their Doctors, who hath long since prescribed them, that one alone should meddle to cure a sicke man; for, if it prosper not with him, and he doe no good, the reproach will not be great to the Arte of Phisicke, through the fault of one man alone; and on the other side, if it thrive well with him, the Glorie shalbe the greater. Whereas if they be manie, everie hand-while they discover their mysterie, because *They oftner happen to doe ill than well.* They should have beene content with the perpetuall dis-agreeing, which is ever found in the opinions of the principall Maisters and chiefe Authors of their Science, knowen but by such as are conversant in Bookes, without making apparant shew of the*

controversies, and inconstanties of their judgement, which they foster and continue amongst themselves. Will wee have an example of the ancient debate of Physicke? *Hierophilus* placeth the originall cause of sicknesse in the humours: *Erasistratus*, in the blood of the Arteries: *Asclepiades*, in the invisible Atomes that passe into our pores: *Alcmeon*, in the abundance or defect of corporall forces: *Diocles*, in the inequality of the bodies elements, and in the qualitie of the aire, we breathe: *Strato*, in the abundance, cruditie and corruption of the nourishment we take: *Hipocrates* doth place it in the spirits. There is a friend of theirs, whom they know better than I, who to this purpose crieth out; that the most important science in use amongst us (as that which hath charge of our health and preservation) is by ill hap, the most uncertaine, the most confused, and most agitated with infinite changes. There is no great danger to mistake the height of the Sunne, or misse-reckon the fraction of some Astronomical supputation; but herein, wheron our being and chiefe free-hold doth wholly depend, it is no wisdom, to abandon our selves to the mercy of the agitation of so manifold contrarie winds. Before the Peloponesian warre, there was no great newes of this science. *Hipocrates* brought it into credite. Whatsoever he established, *Chrysippus* overthrewe. Afterward *Erasistratus* Grand-Childe to *Aristotle*, re-enverst what ever *Chrysippus* had written of it. After these, start up the Emperikes, who concerning the managing of this Arte, tooke a new course, altogether different from those ancient fathers. And when their credite began to grow stale; *Hierophilus* brought another kinde of Phisike into use, which *Asclepiades* when his turne came impugned, and in the end subverted. Then came the opinions of *Themison* to be in great authoritie, then those of *Musa*, and afterward those of *Vexius Valens*, a famous Phisition, by reason of the acquaintance hee had with *Messalina*. During the time of *Nero*, the soveraintie of Phisike fell to the handes of *Thessalus*, who abolished and condemned whatsoever had beene held of it before his time. This mans Doctrine was afterward wholly overthrowne by *Crinas* of *Marseille*, who a new revived and framed, that all men should direct and rule medicinable operations to the *Ephemerides* and motions of the starres, to eate, to drinke, to sleepe at what houre it should please *Luna* and *Mercurie*. His authority was soone after supplanted by *Charinus*; a Phisition of the same Towne of *Marseilles*, who not onely impugned ancient Phisicke, but also the use of warme and publike bathes, which had beene accustomed so many ages before. He caused men to be bathed in cold Water; yea, were it in the deepe of Winter he plunged and dived sicke men into the running streame of Rivers. Untill *Plinies* time no Romane had ever dained to exercise the Arte of Phisike, but was ever used by Strangers and Græcians, as at this daie it is used in *France* by Latinizers. For, as a famous Phisition saith, we do not easilie admit and allow that phisike, which wee understand, nor those Drugs we gather our selves. If those Nations from whom we have the Wood *Guaiacum*, the *Salsapareille*, and the Wood *Desquine*, have any Phisition amongst them, how much thinke we by the same commendation of the strangenesse, rarenesse and dearth, they will rejoyce at our coleworts and parsley? For, who dareth contemne things sought and fetch so far-off, with the hazard of so long and dangerous a peregrination? since these auncient mutations of phisicke, there have beene infinite others, that have continued unto our dayes, and most often entire and universall mutations; as are those which *Paracelsus*, *Fioravanti* and *Argenterius* have produced: for (as it is told me) they doe not only change a

receipt, but also the whole contexture and policie of phisikes whole bodie, accusing such as hitherto have made profession thereof, of ignorance and cosinage. Now I leave to your imagination, in what plight the poore patient findeth himselfe. If we could but be assured, when they mistake themselves, their phisike would doe us no harme, although not profit us; *It were a reasonable composition, for a man to hazard himselfe to get some good, so hee endangered not himselfe to loose by it.* Æsopē reporteth this Storie; that one who had bought a Moore-slave, supposing his blacke hew had come unto him by some strange accident, or ill usage of his former Maister, with great diligence caused him to be medicined with divers bathes and sundry potions: It fortuneth the Moore did no whit mend or change his swarthie complexion, but lost his former health. *How often commeth it to passe, and how many times see we phisitions charge one another with their patients death.* I remember a popular sicknesse, which some yeares since, greatly troubled the Townes about me, very mortall and dangerous; the rage whereof being overpast, which had carried away an infinite number of persons: One of the most famous phisitions in all the country, published a booke, concerning that disease, wherein he adviseth himselfe, that they had done amisse to use phlebotomie, and confesseth, it had beene one of the principall causes of so great an inconvenience. Moreover, their Authors holde, that *there is no kinde of Physicke, but hath some hurtfull parte in it.* And if those that fit our turne, doe in some sort harme us; what must those doe, which are given us to no purpose, and out of season? As for me, if nothing else belonged thereunto, I deeme it a matter very dangerous, and of great prejudice for him who loaths the taste, or abhorres the smel of a potion, to swallow it at so inconvenient houres, and so much against his heart. And I thinke it much distempereth a sicke man, namely in a season he hath so much neede of rest. Besides, consider but the occasions, on which they ordinarily ground the cause of our sicknesse; they are so light and delicate, as thence I argue, *That a very small error in compounding of their Drugges, may occasion us much detriment.* Now if the mistaking in a Physition be dangerous, it is very ill for us: for it is hard, if he fall not often into it. *He hath neede of many partes, divers considerations and severall circumstances to proportion his desseigne justly. He ought to know the sicke mans complexion, his temper, his humors, his inclinations, his actions, his thoughts and his imaginations. He must be assured of externall circumstances; of the nature of the place; the condition of the ayre; the qualitie of the weather; the situation of the Planets, and their influences. In sicknesse, he ought to be acquainted with the causes, with the signes, with the affections and criticall dayes: In drugges he should understand their weight, their vertue and their operation, the country, the figure, the age, the dispensation.* In all these parts, hee must knowe how to proportion and referre them one unto another; thereby to beget a perfect Symmetrie, or due proportion of each parte: wherein if he misse never so little, or if amongst so many wheelles and severall motions, the least be out of tune or temper; it is enough to marre all.

God knowes how hard the knowledge of most of these parts is: As for example, how shall he finde out the proper signe of the disease, every maladie being capable of an infinite number of signes; How many debates, doubts and controversies have they amongst themselves about the interpretations of Urine? Otherwise whence should that continuall altercation come we see amongst them, about the knowledge of the

disease? How should we excuse this fault, wherein they fall so often, to take a Martre for a Foxe? In those diseases I have had (so they admitted any difficultie) I could never yet finde three agreeing in one opinion. I more willingly note examples that concerne my selfe. A Gentleman in *Paris* was not long since cut off the stone by the appointment of Phisitions, in whose bladder they found no more stone, then in his hand: Where also a Bishop, who was my very good friend, had by his Phisitions beene earnestly solicited to be cut; and my selfe, because they were of his counsell, upon their words, aided to perswade him to it; who being deceased and opned, it was found, he had no infirmitie but in his reines. They are lesse excusable in this disease, forsomuch as it is in some sort palpable. Whereby I judge the arte of Chirurgery much more certaine; For, it seeth and handleth what it doth; and therein is lesse conjecture and divination. Whereas Phisitions have no *speculum matricis*, to discover our braine, our lungs and our liver unto them. *The very promises of phisicke are incredible.* For, being to provide for divers and contrary accidents, which often trouble us together, and with a kinde of necessarie relation one unto another; as the heate of the liver, and the cold of the stomake, they will perswade us, that with their ingredients, this one shall warme the stomake, and this other coole the liver; the one hath charge to goe directly to the reynes, yea even to the bladder, without enstalling his operation any where else, and by reason of it's secret proprietie, keeping his force and vertue, all that long way, and so full of stops or lets, untill it come to the place, to whose service it is destined. Another shall drie the braine, and another moisten the lungs. Of all this hotch-pot having composed a mixture or potion, *is it not a kind of raving, to hope their severall vertues shall devide and seperate themselves from out such a confusion or commixture, to runne to so diverse charges?* I should greatly feare they would loose or change their tickets and trouble their quarters. And who can imagine, that in this liquide confusion, these faculties be not corrupted, confounded and alter one an other? What? that the execution of this ordonance depends from another officer, to whose trust and mercie wee must once more forsake our lives? As we have doublet and hosemakers to make our clothes, and are so much the better fitted, in as much as each medleth with his owne trade, and such have their occupation more strictly limitted, then a Tailer that will make all. And as for our necessary foode, some of our great Lords, for their more commoditie and ease have severall Cookes, as some only to dresse boyled meates, and some to roste, others to bake, whereas if one cooke alone would supply all three in generall, he could never doe it so exactly. In like sort for the curing of all diseases, the *Ægyptians* had reason to reject this generall mysterie of Phisitions, and to sunder this profession for every maladie, allotting each part of the body his distinct workeman. For, every particular parte was thereby more properly attended, and lesse confusedly governed, and forsomuch as they regarded but the same especially. Our Phisitions never remember, that *he who will provide for all, provideth for nothing*; and that the totall and summarie policie of this little world, is unto them indigestible. Whilst they feared to stop the course of a bloodie flux, because he should not fall into an ague, they killed me a friend of mine, who was more worth then all the rabble of them; yea were they as many more. They ballance their divinations of future things, with present evils, and *because they will not cure the braine in prejudice of the stomake, they offend the stomake and empaire the braine, and all by*

*their seditious and tumultuary drugs.* Concerning the varietie and weaknesse of the reasons of this arte, it is more apparant then in any other arte. Things soluble and opening<sup>2</sup> are good for a man troubled with the collike, because that opening the passages and dilating them, they adresse this slymie matter, whereof the gravell and stone is ingendred, and so convay downward whatsoever beginneth to harden and petrifie in the reynes:<sup>3</sup> the matter engendring gravell, which by reason of the propensions they have with it, doe easily seize on the same. They must then by consequence stay great store of that which is convaied unto them. Moreover, if by chance it fortune to meete with a body, somewhat more grosse then it ought to be, to passe all those strait turnings, which to expell the same they must glide through; that body being mooved by those soluble things, and cast in those strait channells, and comming to stop them, it will doubtlesse hasten a certaine and most dolorous death. They have a like constancy about the counsells they give us; touching the regiment of our life. It is good to make water often; for by experience we see, that permitting the same idly to lie still, wee give it leasure to discharge it selfe of her lees and excrements, which may serve to breede the stone in the bladder: It is good to make water but seldome, for the weightie dregs it drawes with it, are not easily carried away, except by violence: as by experience is seene in a torrent that runneth very swift, which sweepeth and cleanseth the place through which he passeth, much more then doth a slow-gliding streame. Likewise it is good to have often copulation with women; for that openeth the passages, and convayeth the gravell away: It is also hurtfull; for it heateth, wearieth, and weakeneth the reines. It is good for one to bathe himselfe in warme water; forsomuch as that looseth and moisteneth the places where the gravell and stone lurketh: It is also bad; because this application of externall heate, helpeth the reines to decoct, to harden and petrifie the matter disposed unto it. To such as are at the bathes, it is more healthfull to eate but little at night, that the water they are to drinke the next morning, finding the stomake empty, and without any obstacle, it may worke the greater operation: on the other side, it is better to eate but a little at dinner, lest a man might hinder the operation of the water, which is not yet perfect, and not to charge the stomake so sodainly, after this other travell, and leave the office of digesting unto the night, which can better doe it then the day; the body and spirit being then in continuall motion and action. Loe heere how they in all their discourses juggle, dally, and trifle at our charge, and are never able to bring me a proposition, but I can presently frame another to the contrary, of like force and consequence. Let them then no longer raile against those who in any sicknesse, suffer themselves gently to be directed by their owne appetite, and by the counsell of nature; and who remit themselves to common fortune. I have by occasion of my travells seene almost all the famous Bathes of Christendome, and some years since have begunne to use them: For, in generall I deeme bathing to be very good and healthy, and I am perswaded, wee incurre no small incommodities in our health, by having neglected and lost this custome, which in former times were generally observed very neere amongst all nations, and is yet with diverse at this time to wath their bodies every day: And I cannot imagine but that we are much the worse with keeping our bodies all over-crusted, and our pores stopt with grease and filth. And touching the drinking of them, fortune hath first made it to agree very well with my taste: Secondly

it is naturall and simple; and though vaine, nothing dangerous: whereof this infinitie of people of all sorts and complexions, and of all nations that come to them, doeth warrant mee. And although I have as yet found no extraordinary good or wondrous effect in them, but rather having somewhat curiously examined the matter, I finde all the reports of such operations, which in such places are reported, and of many believed, to be false and fabulous. *So easily doth the world deceive it selfe, namely in things it desireth, or faine would have come to passe.* Yet have I seene but few or none at all, whom these waters have made worse; and no man can without malice denie, but that they stirre up a mans appetite, facilitate digestion, and except a man goe to them overweake and faint (which I would have none doe) they will adde a kinde of new mirth unto him. They have not the power to raise men from desperate diseases. They may stay some light accident, or prevent the threates of some alteration. Whosoever goeth to them, and resolveth not to be merry, that so hee may enjoy the pleasure of the good company resorts to them, and of the pleasant walkes or exercises, which the beauty of those places, where bathes are commonly seated, doth affoord and delight men withall; he without doubt looseth the better part and most assured of their effect. And therefore have I hitherto chosen to stay my selfe and make use of those, where I found the pleasure of the scituation most delightsome, most conveniencie of lodging, of victualls and companie, as are in *France* the bathes of *Banieres*; those of *Plombieres*, on the frontiers of *Germanie* and *Lorraine*; those of *Baden* in *Switzerland*; those of *Lucca* in *Tuscanie*; and especially those of *Della villa*; which I have used most often and at diverse seasons of the yeare. Every nation hath some particular opinion concerning their use, and severall lawes and formes how to use them, and all different: And as I have found by experience the effect in a maner all one. In *Germanie* they never use to drinke of their waters; but bathe themselves for all diseases, and will lie padling in them, from rise to set of Sunne. In *Italie* if they drinke nine dayes of the water, they wash themselves other thirtie dayes with it. And commonly they drinke it mixed with other drugges, thereby to helpe the operation. Heere our Phisitions appoint us when wee have drunke to walke upon it, that so wee may helpe to digest it: There, so soone as they have dronke, they make them lie a bed, untill they have voided the same out againe, continually warming their stomake and feete with warme clothes. All the Germanes whilst they lie in the water, doe particularly use cupping glasses, and scarifications: And the Italians use their *Doccie*, which are certaine spowts running with warme waters, convaide from the bathes-spring in leaden pipes, where, for the space of a month, they let it spout upon their heads, upon their stomake, or upon any other part of the bodie, according as neede requireth, one houre in the forenoone, and as long in the afternoone. there are infinite other differences of customes in every countrie: or to say better, there is almost no resemblance betweene one and other. See how this part of Phisicke, by which alone I have suffered my selfe to be carried away, which though it be the least artificiall, yet hath she her share of the confusion and uncertaintie, seene in all other parts and every where of this arte. Poets may say what they list, and with more emphasie and grace: witness the two Epigrames.

*Alcon hesterno signum Iouis attigit. Ille  
Quamuis marmoreus, uim patitur medici.*



*Ecce hodie iussus transferri ex æde uetusta,  
Effertur, quamuis sit Deus atque lapis.*

*Alcon look't yesterday on carved Jove.  
Jove, though of marble, feels the leeches force,  
From his old Church to-day made to remove,  
Though God and Stone, he's carried like a coarse.*

And the other:

*Lotus nobiscum est hilaris, cœnauit & idem,  
Inuentus mane est mortuus Androgoras.  
Tam subitæ mortis causam Faustine requiris?  
In somnis medicum uiderat Hermocratem.*

*Androgoras in health bath'd over night with us,  
And merry supt, but in the morne starke-dead was found.  
Of his so sodaine death, the cause shall I discusse.  
Hermocrates the Leech he saw in sleepe unsound.*

Upon which I will tell you two prettie stories. The Baron of *Caupene* in *Chalosse* and I, have both in common the impropration or patronage of a benifice, which is of a very large precinct, situated at the feet of our Mountaines, named *Lahontan*. It is with the inhabitants of that corner, as it is saide to be with those of the valley of *Angrougne*. They leade a kind of peculiar life; their fashion, their attyre, and their customes apart and severall. They were directed and governed by certaine particular policies and customes, received by tradition from Father to Child; Where to, without other Lawes or Compulsion, except the reverence and awe of their custome and use, they awefully tyed and bound themselves. This petty state had from all antiquitie continued in so happie a condition, that no neighbouring severe judge had ever beene troubled to enquire of their life and affaires, nor was ever Atturrie or pety-fogging Lawyer called-for, to give them advise or counsel; nor stranger sought unto to determine their quarrelles or decide their contentions; neither were ever beggers seene amongst them. They alwayes avoyded commerce and shunned alliances with the other World, lest they should alter the puritie of their orders and policie; untill such time (as they say) that one amongst them, in their fathers dayes, having a minde pufft up with a noble ambition, to bring his name and credit in rputation, devised to make one of his Children Sir *John Lack-latine*, or Maister *Peter-an-Oake*: And having made him learne to write in some neighbour Towne not farre-off, at last procured him to be a Country Notarie, or petty-fogging Clarke. This fellow having gotten some pelfe and become great, beganne to disdaine their ancient customes, and put the pomp and statinesse of our hither regions into their heades. It fortun'd that a chiefe Gossip of his had a Goate dishorned, whom he importunately solicited to sue the Trespasser, and demaund lawe and right at the Judge or Justicers hands, that dwelt there-about; And so never ceasing to sow sedition and breede sutes amongst his neighbours, he never left till hee had confounded and marrd all. After this corruption or intrusion of law (they say) there ensued presently another mischiefe of worse consequence, by meanes of a quagge-salver, or Empirike Physition

that dwelt amongst them, who would needes be married to one of their daughters, and so endenizon and settle himselfe amongst them.

This gallant beganne first to teach and instruct them in the names of agewes, rheums and impostumes; then the scituation of the heart, of the liver and other entrailes: A Science untill then never knowne or heard-of among them. And insteade of garlike, wherewith they had learned to expell, and were wont to cure all diseases, of what qualitie and how dangerous soever they were. He induced and inured them, were it but for a cough or cold, to take strange compositions and potions: And thus beganne to trafficke not onely their health, but also their deaths. They sweare, that even from that time, they have apparantly perceived, that the evening Sereine or night-calme bred the head-ach and blasted them; that to drinke being hote or in a sweate empaired their helths; that Autumne windes were more unwholesome and dangerous, then those of the Springe-time: And that since his slibbersawces, potions and physicke came first in use, they finde themselves molested and distempered with legions of unaccustomed malladies and unknowne diseases; and plainly feele and sensibly perceive a generall weakenesse and declination in their antient vigor; and that their lives are nothing so long, as before they were. Loe heere the first of my Discourses. The other is, that before I was troubled with the stone-cholicke and gravell in the bladder, hearing diverse make especiall accompt of a he-goates blood, as of an heavenly *Manna* sent in these latter-ages for the good and preservation of mans-life: and hearing men of good understanding speake of it, as of an admirable and much-good-working drugge, and of an infallible operation: I, who have ever thought my selfe subject to all accidents, that may in any sort fall on man, being yet in perfect health, beganne to take pleasure to provide my selfe of this myracle, and foorthwith gave order (according to the receipt) to have a bucke-goate gotten, and carefully fed in mine owne house. For the blood must be drawne from him in the hottest moneth of Summer, and he must onely be fed with soluble hearbes, and drinke nothing but white wine. It was my fortune to come to mine owne house the verie same day the goate should be killed; where some of my people came in haste to tell me, that my Cooke found two or three great bowles in his paunch, which in his maw amongst his meate shocked one against another. I was so curious as I would needes have all his garbage brought before me; the thicke and large skinne whereof I caused to be opened, out of which came three great lumpes or bodies, as light as any sponge, so framed as they seemed to be hollow, yet outwardly hard and very firme, bemotled with diverse dead and wannish colours: The one perfectly as round as any bowle, the other two somewhat lesser, and not so round, yet seemed to growe towards it. I have found (after I had made diligent inquirie among such as were wont to open such beasts) that it was a seld-seene, and unheard-of accident. It is very likely they were such stones as ours be, and cozen-germanes to them; which if it be, it is but vaine for such as be troubled with the stone or gravel to hope to be cured, by meanes of a beasts blood, that was drawing neere unto death, and suffered the same disease. For, to aleadge the blood cannot participate of that contagion, and doth no whit thereby alter his accustomed vertue, it may rather be inferred, that nothing ingendreth in a body, but by consent and communication of all the partes. The whole masse dooth worke, and the

whole frame agitate altogether, although one part, according to the diversitie of operations, doth contribute more or lesse than another; whereby it manifestly appeareth, that in all parts of this bucke goate, there was some grettie or petrificant qualitie. It was not so much for feare of any future chauce, or in regard of my selfe, that I was so curious of this experiment; as in respect, that as well in mine owne house, as else-where in sundry other places, it commeth to passe, that many women doe often gather and lay up in store, divers such kindes of slight drugges to help their neighbours, and other people with them, in time of necessitie; applying one same remedy to an hundred severall diseases: yea many times such as they would be very loath to take themselves; with which they often have good lucke, and well thrives it with them. As for me, I honour Physitions, not according to the common-received rule, for necessitie sake (for to this passage another of the Prophet may be alleaged, who reprooved King *Asa*, because he had recourse unto Physitions) but rather for love I beare unto themselves; having seene some, and knowne diverse honest men amongst them, and worthy all love and esteeme. *It is not them I blame, but their Arte*; yet doe I not greatly condemne them for seeking to profit by our foolishnesse (for most men do so) and it is a thing common to all worldlings. *Diverse professions and many vacations, both more and lesse worthie than theirs, subsist and are grounded onely upon publike abuses and popular errors*. I send for them when I am sicke, if they may conveniently be found; and love to be entertained by them, rewarding them as other men doe. I give them authoritie to enjoyne me to keepe my selfe warme, if I love it better so than otherwise. They may chuse, be it either leekes or lettuce, what my broth shall be made withall, and appoynt mee either white or claret to drinke; and so of other things else, indifferent to my taste, humor or custome. I know well it is nothing to them, forsomuch as *Sharpenesse and Strangenesse are accidents of Physickes proper essence*. *Lycurgus* allowed and appoynted the sicke men of *Sparta* to drinke wine. Why did he so? Because being in health, they hated the use of it. Even as a Gentleman who dwelleth not farre from mee, useth wine as a soveraigne remedie against agews, because being in perfect health, he hateth the taste thereof as death. How many of them see we to be of my humour? That is, to disdain all Physicke for their owne behoofe, and live a kinde of formall free life, and altogether contrarie to that, which they prescribe to others? And what is that, but a manifest abusing of our simplicitie? For, they holde their life as deare, and esteeme their health as pretious as we doe ours, and would apply their effects to their skill, if themselves knew not the uncertaintie and falsehoode of it. It is the feare of paine and death; the impatience of the disease and griefe; and indiscreete desire and headlong thirst of health, that so blindeth them, and us. It is meere faintnes that makes our conceit; and pusillanimitie forceth our credulitie, to be so yeelding and pliable. The greater parte of whome doe notwithstanding not beleeeve so much, as they endure and suffer of others: For I heare them complaine, and speake of it no otherwise than we doe. Yet in the ende are they resolved. What should I doe then? As if impatience were in it selfe a better remedie than patience. Is there any of them, that hath yeelded to this miserable subjection, that doth not likewise yeelde to all manner of impostures? or dooth not subject himselfe to the mercie of whomsoever hath the impudencie to promise him recoverie, and warrant him health?

The Babilonians were wont to carry their sicke people into the open streetes; the common sort were their physitions: Where all such as passed by were by humanitie and civilitie to enquire of their state and maladie, and according to their skill or experience, give them some sound advise and good counsell. We differ not greatly from them: There is no poore Woman so simple, whose mumbling and muttering, whose slobber-slabbers and drenches wee doe not employ. And as for mee, were I to buy any medicine, I would rather spend my money in this kinde of physike, than in any other; because therein is no danger or hurt to be feared. What *Homer* and *Plato* saide of the Ægyptians, that they were all Physitians, may well be saide of all people. There is neyther Man nor Woman, that vanteth not himselfe to have some receipt or other, and doeth not hazard the same upon his neighbour, if he will but give credite unto him.

I was not long since in a companie, where I wot not who of my fraternitie, brought newes of a kinde of pilles, by true accoumpt, composed of a hundered and odde severall ingredients; Whereat we laughed very heartely, and made our selves good sporte: For, what rocke so hard were able to resist the shocke, or withstand the force of so thicke and numerous a batterie? I understand neverthelesse, of such as tooke of them, that the least graine of gravell dained not to stirre at all. I cannot so soone give over writing of this subject, but I must needes say a worde or two, concerning the experience they have made of their prescriptions, which they would have us take as a warrantize or assurance of the certainty of their drugges and pocions. The greatest number, and as I deeme, more than the two thirds of medicinable vertues, consist in the quintessence or secret propriety of simples, whereof we can have no other instruction but use and custome. For, *Quintessence is no other thing than a qualitie, whereof we cannot with our reason finde out the cause.* In such trials or experiments, those which they affirme to have acquired by the inspiration of some Demon, I am contented to receive and allow of them (for, touching miracles, I meddle not with them) or be it the experiments drawne from things, which for other respects fall often in use with us: As if in Wooll, wherewith we wont to clothe our selves, some secret exciting or drying qualitie, have by accident beene found, that cureth kibes or chilblaines in the heeles; and if in reddishes, wee eat for nourishment, some opening or aperitive operation have beene discovered. *Galen* reporteth, that a leprous man chaunced to be cured, by meanes of a Cuppe of Wine he had drunke, forsomuch as a Viper was by fortune fallen into the Wine caske. In which example we finde the meane, and a very likely directorie to this experience. As also in those, to which Physitions affirme, to have beene addressed by the examples of some beastes. But in most of other experiences, to which they say they came by fortune, and had no other guide but hazard, I finde the progresse of this information incredible. I imagine man, heedfully viewing about him the infinite number of things, creatures, plants and mettalls. I wot not where to make him beginne his Essay; And suppose he cast his first fantasie upon an Elkes-Horne, to which an easie and gentle credulitie must be given; he will be as farre to seeke, and as much troubled in his second operation: So, many diseases and several circumstances are proposed unto him, that before he come to the certaintie of this point, unto which the perfection of his experience should arrive, mans witte shalbe to seeke, and not know where to turne himselfe; And before

(amiddest this infinitie of things) he finde out what this Horne is: Amongst the numberlesse diseases that are, what an Epilepsie is; the sundrie and manifolde complexions in a melancholy man; So manie seasons in Winter; So diverse Nations amongst French-men; So many ages in age; So diverse cœlestiall changes and alterations, in the conjunction of *Venus* and *Saturne*; So severall and many partes in a mans body, nay in one of his fingers. To all which, being neyther guided by argument, nor by conjecture, nor by example, or divine inspiration, but by the onely motion of fortune; it were most necessarie, it should be by a perfectly artificiall, well-ordred, and methodicall fortune. Moreover, suppose the disease thorowlie cured, how shall he rest assured, but that eyther the evill was come to his utmost periode, or that an effect of the hazard, caused the same health? Or the operation of some other thing, which that day he had eyther eaten, drunke or touched? or whether it were by the merite of his Grand-mothers prayers? Besides, suppose this experiment to have bin perfect, how many times was it applied and begunne a new? And how often was this long and tedious Webbe of fortunes and encounters woven over againe, before a certaine rule might be concluded? And being concluded, by whom is it I pray you? *Amongst so many millions of men, you shall scarce meete with three or foure, that well duely observe, and carefully keepe a register of their experiments;* shall it be your, or his happe, to light truely, or hitte just with one of them three or foure? What if another man? Nay what if a hundred other men have had and made contrary experiments, and cleane opposite conclusions, and yet have sorted well? We should peradventure discern some shew of light, if all the judgements and consultations of men were knowne unto us. But *That three Witnesses and three Doctors shall sway all mankind, there is no reason.* It were requisite, humane nature had appointed and made special choise of them, and that by expresse procuracion and letter of atturny they were by her declared our Judges and deputed our Atturnies.

## TO MY LADIE OF DURAS

MADAME, the last time it pleased you to come and visite me, you found me upon this point. And because it may be, these toyes of mine may happily come to your hands: I would have them witsse, their Authour reputeth himselfe highly honoured, for the favours it shall please you to shew them. Wherein you shall discern the very same demeanor and self-countenaunce, you have seene in his conversation. And could I have assumed unto my selfe any other fashion, than mine owne accustomed, or more honourable and better forme, I would not have done it: For, all I seeke to reape by my writings, is, they will naturally represent and to the life, pourtray me to your remembrance. The very same conditions and faculties, it pleased your Ladi-ship to frequent and receive, with much more honor and curtesie, than they any way deserve, I will place and reduce (but without alteration and change) into a solide body, which may happily continue some dayes and yeares after mee: Where, when-soever it shall please you to refresh your memory with them, you may easilie finde them, without calling them to remembrance; which they scarsely deserve. I would entreate you to continue the favour of your Friend-ship towards mee, by the same qualities, through whose meanes it was produced. I labour not to be beloved more and esteemed better being dead, than alive.

The humour of *Tyberius* is ridiculous and common, who endeavoured more to extinguish his glory in future ages, than yeeld himselfe regardfull and pleasing to men of his times. If I were one of those, to whom the Worlde may be indebted for praise, I would quit it for the one moytie, on condition it would pay me before-hand: And that the same would hasten, and in great heapes environ me about, more thicke than long, and more full than lasting. And let it hardly vanish with my knowledge, and when this sweete alluring sound shall no more tickle mine eares. It were a fond conceite, now I am readie to leave the commerce of men, by new commendations, to goe about, anew to beget my selfe unto them.

I make no accompt of goods, which I could not employ to the use of my life. Such as I am, so would I be elsewhere then in paper. Mine art and industrie have beene employed to make my selfe of some worth. My studie and endeavour to doe, and not to write. I have applied all my skill and devoire to frame my life. Loe-heere mine occupation and my worke. I am a lesse maker of bookes, then of any thing else. I have desired and aimed at sufficiencie, rather for the benefite of my present and essentiall commodities, then to make a store-house, and hoarde it up for mine heires. Whosoever hath any worth in him, let him shew it in his behaviour, maners and ordinary discourses; be it to treat of love or of quarrells, of sport and play or bed-matters, at boarde or else-where; or be it in the conduct of his owne affaires, or private houshold matters. Those whom I see make good bookes, having tottred hosen and ragged clothes-on, had they believed me they should first have gotten themselves good clothes. Demand a Spartan, whether he would rather be a cunning Rhethorician, then an excellent Souldier: nay were I asked, I would say, a good Cooke, had I not some to serve me. Good Lord (Madame) how I would hate such a commendation, to be a sufficient man in writing, and a foolish-shallow-headed braine or coxcombe in all things else: yet had I rather be a foole, both here and there, then to have made so bad a choise, wherein to employ my worth. So farre am I also from expecting, by such trifles to gaine new honour to my selfe, as I shall thinke I make a good bargaine, if I loose not a part of that little, I had already gained. For, besides that this dombe and dead picture, shall derogate and steale from my naturall being, it fadgeth not and hath no reference unto my better state, but is much falne from my first vigor and naturall jollitie, enclining to a kind of drooping or mouldinesse. I am now come to the bottome of the vessell, which beginneth to taste of his dregs and lees. Otherwise (good Madame) I should not have dared so boldly to have ripped up the mysteries of Phisicke, considering the esteeme and credite your selfe, and so many others, ascribe unto it, and hold it in; had I not beene directed thereunto by the authors of the same. I thinke they have but two ancient ones in Latine, to wit *Plinie* and *Celsus*. If you fortune at any time to looke into them, you shal finde them to speake much more rudely of their Arte, then I do. I but pinch it gently, they cut the throate of it. *Plinie* amongst other things, doth much scoffe at them, forsomuch as when they are at their wits-end, and can goe no further, they have found out this goodly-shift, to send their long-turmoiled, and to no end much-tormented patient, with their drugs and diets, some to the help of their vowes and miracles, and some others to hot Baths and waters. (Be not offended noble Lady, he meaneth not those on this side, under the protection of your house, and all

*Gramontoises*.) They have a third kinde of shift or evasion to shake us-off, and discharge themselves of the imputations or reproaches, wee may justly charge them with, for the small amendment of our infirmities; whereof they have so long had the survay and government, as they have no more inventions or devises left them, to amuse us with; that is, to send us, to seeke and take the good aire of some other countrie. Madam, wee have harped long enough upon one string; I hope you will give me leave to come to my former discourses againe, from which for your better entertainment, I had somewhat digressed.

It was (as farre as I remember) *Pericles*, who being demanded, how he did; you may (said he) judge it by this, shewing certaine scroules or briefes hee had tied about his necke and armes. He would inferre, that he was very sicke, since he was forced to have recourse to such vanities, and had suffered himselfe to be so drest. I affirme not, but I may one day be drawne to such fond opinions, and yeeld my life and health to the mercie, discretion and regiment of Phisitions. I may happily fall into this fond madnesse; I dare not warrant my future constancie. And even then if any aske me how I doe, I may answer him as did *Pericles*; You may judge, by shewing my hands fraughted with six drammes of Opium. It will be an evident token of a violent sicknesse. My judgement shal be exceedingly out of temper. If impacience or feare get that advantage upon me, you may thereby conclude some quelling fever hath seized upon my minde. I have taken the paines to pleade this cause, whereof I have but small understanding, somewhat to strengthen and comfort naturall propension, against the drugs and practise of our Phisicke, which is derived into mee from mine ancestors: lest it might onely be a stupide and rash inclination; and that it might have a little more forme. And that also those, who see me so constant against the exhortations and threatates, which are made against me, when sicknesse commeth upon me, may not thinke it to be a meere conceite, and simple wilfulnesse; And also, lest there be any so peevisch, as to judge it to be some motive of vaine glory. *It were a strange desire, to seeke to draw honour from an action, common both to me, to my gardiner, or to my groome.* Surely my heart is not so pufft up, nor so windie, that a solide, fleshy and marowie pleasure, as health is; I should change it for an imaginarie, spirituall and airie delight. Renowme or glorie (were it that of *Aymons* foure sons) is over-deerely bought by a man of my humour, if it cost him but three violent fits of the chollike. Give me health a Gods name. Those that love our Phisicke, may likewise have their considerations good, great and strong. I hate no fantasies contrary to mine. I am so farre from vexing my selfe, to see my judgement differ from other mens, or to grow incompatible of the societie or conversation of men, to be of any other faction or opinion then mine own; that contrariwise (as varietie is the most generall fashion that nature hath followed, and more in the mindes, then in the bodies; forsomuch as they are of a more supple and yeelding substance, and susceptible or admitting of formes) I finde it more rare to see our humour or desseignes agree in one. And never were there two opinions in the world alike, no more than two haire, or two graines. *Diversitie is the most universall qualitie.*

**NOTES**

- 1 Later editions have *it is from nature he hath them*.
- 2 Montaigne had *Les choses aperitives* which Florio later retranslated as *Aperitive things*.
- 3 Florio left out a large portion of the following sentence, restoring it later as: *Aperitive things are dangerous for a man thats troubled with the collike, because that opening and dilating the passages, they addresse towards the reines, the matter engendring ....*