

MICHEL DE MONTAIGNE  
ESSAYS

**Book 3 · Chapter 10**



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## How one ought to governe his will

IN REGARDE OF the common sorte of men, few things touch mee, or (to speake properly) detaine me: For it is reason they touch, so they possesse us not. I have great neede, both by studie and discourse, to encrease this priviledge of insensibilitie, which is naturally crept farre into me. I am not wedded unto many things, and by consequence, not passionate of them. I have my sight cleare, but tied to few objects: My senses delicate and gentle; but my apprehension and application hard and dull: I engage my selfe with difficultie. As much as I can, I employ my selfe wholly to my selfe. And in this very subject, I would willingly bridle and uphold mine affection, lest it be too farre plunged therein: Seeing it is a subject I possesse at the mercie of others, and over which fortune hath more interest then my selfe. So-as even in my health, which I so much esteeme, it were requisite not to desire, nor so carefully to seeke it, as thereby I might light upon intolerable diseases. *We must moderate our selves, betwixt the hate of paine, and the love of pleasure.* Plato sets downe a meane course of life betweene both. But to affections that distract me from my selfe, and divert me elsewhere; surely, to such I oppose my selfe with all my force. Mine opinion is, that one should lend himselfe to others, and not give himselfe but to himselfe. Were my will easie to engage or apply it selfe, I could not continue: I am over tender both by nature and custome,

*fugax rerum, securaque in otia natus.*

*Avoiding active businesse,  
And borne to secure idlenesse.*

Contested and obstinate debates, which in the end would give mine adversarie advantage, the issue which would make my earnest pursuite ashamed, would perchance torment mee cruelly. If I vexed as other men, my soule should never have strength to beare th'alaroms and emotions, that follow such as embrace much. She would presently be displaced by this intestine agitation. If at any time I have beene urged to the managing of strange affaires, I have promised to undertake them with my hand, but not with my heart and spleenes; to charge, and not to incorporate them

into me; to have a care, but nothing at all to be over passionate of them: I looke to them, but I hatch them not. I worke enough to dispose and direct the domesticall troubles within mine owne entrailles and veines, without harbouring, or importune my selfe with any forraine employments: And am sufficiently interested with my proper, naturall and essentiall affaires, without seeking others businesses. Such as know how much they owe to themselves, and how many offices of their owne they are bound to performe, shall finde that nature hath given them this commission fully ample and nothing idle. *Thou hast businesse enough within thy selfe, therefore stray not abroade:* Men give themselves to hire. Their faculties are not their owne, but theirs to whom they subject themselves; their inmates, and not themselves, are within them. This common humour doth not please me. We should thriftily husband our mindes libertie, and never engage it but upon just occasions; which if wee judge imparcially, are very few in number. Looke on such as suffer themselves to be transported and swayde, they doe it every where. In little as well as in great matters; to that which concerneth, as easie as to that which toucheth them not. They thrust themselves indifferently into all actions, and are without life, if without tumultuary agitation. *In negotiis sunt, negotii causa. They are busie that they may not be idle, or else in action for actions sake.* They seeke worke but to be working. It is not so much because they will goe, as for that they cannot stand still. Much like to a rowling stone, which never stayes untill it come to a lying place. To some men, employment is a marke of sufficiency and a badge of dignitie. Their spirits seeke rest in action, as infants repose in the cradle, They may be saide, to be as serviceable to their friends, as importunate to themselves. *No man distributes his mony to others, but every one his life and time.* We are not so prodigall of any thing, as of those whereof to be covetous would be both commendable and profitable for us. I follow a cleane contrary course, I am of an other complexion: I stay at home and looke to my selfe. What I wish-for, I commonly desire the same but mildely; and desire but little: so likewise I seldome employ and quietly embusie my selfe. What ever they intend and act, they doe it with all their will and vehemencie. There are so many dangerous steps, that for the more securitie, we must somewhat slightly and superficially slide through the world, and not force it. *Pleasure it selfe is painefull in it's beight.*

*incedis per ignes,  
Subpositos cineri doloso.*

*You passe through fire (though unfraide)  
Under deceitfull ashes laide.*

The towne-counsell of *Bordeaux* chose me Maior of their Cittie, being farre from *France*; but further from any such thought. I excused my selfe and would have avoided it. But they told me I was to blame; the more, bicause the kings commandement was also employd therein. It is a charge, should seeme so much the more goodly, because it hath neither fee nor rewarde, other then the honour in the execution. It lasteth two yeares, but may continue longer by a second election, which seldome hapneth. To me it was, and never had beene but twice before: Some yeares past the Lord of *Lansac*; and lately to the Lord of *Biron*, Marshall of *France*. In whose place I

succeeded; and left mine to the Lord of *Matignon*, likewise Marshall of *France*. Glorious by so noble an assistance.

*Vterque bonus pacis bellique minister.*

*Both, both in peace and warre,  
Right serviceable are.*

Fortune would have a share in my promotion by this particular circumstance, which she of her owne added thereunto; not altogether vaine. For *Alexander* disdained the Corinthian Ambassadors, who offred him the freedome and Burgeoisie of their Cittie, but when they told him that *Bacchus* and *Hercules* were likewise in their registers, he kindly thanked them and accepted their offer. At my first arrivall, I faithfully disciphred and conscientiously displaide my selfe, such as I am indeede: without memorie, without diligence, without experience and without sufficiencie; so likewise without hatred, without ambition, without covetousnesse and without violence: that so they might be duely instructed what service they might, or hope, or expect at my hands. And forsomuch as the knowledge they had of my deceased father, and the honour they bare unto his memorie, had mooved them to chuse me to that dignitie, I told them plainly, I should be very sorie, that any thing should worke such an opinion in my will, as their affaires and Cittie had done in my fathers, while he held the said government, whereunto they had called mee. I remembred to have seene him being an infant, and he an old man, his minde cruelly turmoyled with this publike toile; forgetting the sweete aire of his owne house, whereunto the weakenesse of his age had long before tied him; neglecting the care of his health and familie, in a maner despising his life, which as one engaged for them, he much endangered, riding long and painefull journeys for them. Such a one was he: which humor proceeded from the bountie and goodnesse of his nature. Never was minde more charitable or more popular. This course, which I commend in others, I love not to follow: Neither am I without excuse. He had heard, that *a man must forget himselfe for his neighbour: that in respect of the generall, the particular was not to be regarded.* Most of the worldes-rules and precepts hold this traine, to drive-us out of our selves into the wide world, to the use of publike societie. They presumed to worke a goodly effect, in distracting and withdrawing us from our selves: supposing wee were by a naturall instinct, too-too much tied unto it: and to this end have not spared to say anything. For to the wise it is no noveltie, to preach things as they serve, and not as they are. Truth hath her lets, discommodities and incompatibilities with us. Wee must not often deceive others, lest we beguile our selves. And feele our eyes, and dull our understanding, thereby to repaire and amend them. *Imperiti enim iudicant, & qui frequenter in hoc ipsum fallendi sunt, ne errent. For unskillfull men judge, who must often even therefore be deceived, lest they erre and be deceived.* When they prescribe us, to love three, foure yea fifty degrees of things before our selves, they present us with the Arte of shooters who to come neerer the marke take their aime far above the same. *To make a crooked sticke straight, we bend it the contrary way.* I suppose that in the Temple of *Pallas*, as we see in all other religions, they had some apparant mysteries, of which they made shew to all the people; and others more high and secret, to bee imparted onely to such as

were professed. It is likely, that the true point of friendship, which everie man oweth to himselfe, is to be found in these. Not a false amitie, which makes us embrace glorie, knowledge, riches and such like, with a principall and imoderate affection, as members of our being; nor an effeminate and indiscreete friendship; Wherin hapneth as to the Ivie, which corrupts and ruines the Walls it claspeth: But a sound and regular amitie, equally profitable and pleasant. Who so understandeth all her duties and exerciseth them, hee is rightly endenized in the Muses cabinet: He hath attained the tipe of humane Wisedome and the perfection of our happinesse. This man knowing exactly what he oweth to himselfe, findeth, that he ought to employ the use of other men and of the World unto himselfe; which to performe, he must contribute the duties and offices that concerne him unto publike societie. *He that lives not somewhat to others, liveth little to himselfe. Qui sibi amicus est, scito hunc amicum omnibus esse; He that is friend to himselfe, know, he is friend to all.* The principall charge we have, is every man his particular conduct. And for this onely we live heere. As he that should forget to live well and religiously, and by instructing and directing others, should thinke himselfe acquitted of his dutie; would be deemed a foole: Even so, who forsaketh to live healthie and merrily himselfe, therewith to serve another, in mine opinion taketh a badde and unnaturall course. I will not, that in any charge one shall take in hand, hee refuse or thinke much of his attention, of his labour, of his steps, of his speech, of his sweat, and if need be, of his blood,

*non ipsa pro charis amicis,  
Aut patria timidus perire.*

*Not fearing life to end  
For Country or deare friend.*

But it is onely borrowed and accidentally; The mind remaining ever quiet and in health: not without action, but without vexation or passion. Simply to moove or be dooing, cost's it so little, that even sleeping it is mooving and dooing. But it must have it's motion with discretion. For the bodie receiveth the charges imposed him, justly as they are: But the spirit extendeth them, and often to his hinderance makes them heavy; giving them what measure it pleaseth. Like things are effected by divers effortes and different contentions of will. The one may goe without the other. For, how manie men doe dayly hazard themselves in warre which they regarde not, and presse into the dangers of battelles, the losse wherof shal no whit breake their next sleep? Wheras some man in his own house, free from this danger, which he durst not so much as have look't towards it, is for the Wars issue more passionate, and therewith hath his minde more perplexed, than the soldier, that therein employeth both his blood and life. I know how to deale in publike charges, without departing from my selfe the breadth of my naile; and give my selfe to an other, without taking mee from my selfe: This sharpenesse and violence of desires hindereth more, then steade the conduct of what we undertake, filling us with impacience to the events, eyther contrary or slowe: and with bitterness and jealousie toward those with whom we negotiate. We never governe that thing well, wherwith we are possessed and directed.

*Malè cuncta ministrat  
Impetus.*

*Fury and haste doe lay all waste;  
Misplacing all, disgracing all,*

He who therein employeth but his judgement and direction, proceeds more cheerefully: he faines, he yeeldes, he deferrs at his pleasure according to the occasions of necessitie: hee failes of his attempt, without torment or affliction: readie and prepared for a new enterprise. He marcheth alwayes with the reines in his hand. He that is besotted with this violent and tyrannicall intention, dooth necessarily declare much indiscretion and injustice. The violence of his desire transports him. They are rash motions, and if fortune helpe not much, of little fruite. Philosophie wills us to banish choller in the punishment of offences; not to the end revenge should be more moderate, but contrary, more weighty and surely set on: wherunto this violence seemeth to be a let. Choller doth not onely trouble, but wearieth the executioners armes. This passionate heate dulleth and consumes their force. As in too much speede, *festinatio tarda est; Hastinesse is slow*. Haste makes waste, and hinders and stayes it selfe: *Ipsa se uelocitas implicat; Swiftnesse entangles it selfe*. As for example, according as by ordinarie custome I perceiue, covetousnesse hath no greater let, then it selfe. The more violent and extended it is, the lesse effectuall and fruitfull. Commonly it gathers wealth more speedily being masked with a shew of liberallitie. A very honest Gentleman and my good friend, was likely to have endangered the health of his bodie, by an over passionate attention and earnest affection to the affaires of a Prince, who was his Maister. Which Maister hath thus described himselfe unto me: That as another, hee discerneth and hath a feeling of the burthen of accidents: but such as have no remedie, hee presently resolveth to suffer with patience: For the rest, after he hath appointed necessarie provisions, which by the vivacitie and nimblenesse of his wit hee speedily effects, hee then attends the event with quietnesse. Verily, I have seene in him at one instant a great carelesnesse and liberty, both in his actions and countenance: Even in important and difficult affaires. I finde him more magnanimous and capable, in badde then in good fortune. His losses are to him more glorious, than his victories; and his mourning than his triumphs. Consider how in meere vaine and frivolous actions, as at chesse, tennis and such like sports, this earnest and violent engaging with an ambitious desire to winne, doth presently cast both minde and limmes into disorder and indiscretion. Wherein a man doth both dazle his sight and distemper his whole body. He who demeaneth himselfe with most moderation both in winning and loosing, is ever neerest unto himselfe, and hath his wits best about him. The lesse hee is mooved or passionate in play, the more safely doeth he governe the same, and to his greater advantage. We hinder the mindes seazure and holdfast, by giving her so many things to seize upon. Some wee should onely present unto hir, others fasten upon hir, and others incorporate into hir. Shee may see and feele all things, but must onely feede on hir selfe: And be instructed in that which properly concerneth hir, and which meerey belongeth to her essence and substance. *The Lawes of Nature teach us what is just and fit for us*. After the wise-men have told us, that according to Nature no man is indigent or wanteth, and that each-one is

poore but in his owne opinion, they also distinguish subtly, the desires proceeding from Nature, from such as grow from the disorders of our fantasie. Those whose end may be discerned are meerely hers; and such as flie before us and whose end we cannot attaine, are properly ours. *Want of goods may easilie be cured, but the poverty of the mind, is incurable.*

*Nam si, quod satis est homini, id satis esse potesset,  
Hoc sat erat. nunc, quum hoc non est, qui credimus porro  
Diuitias ullas animum mi explere potesse?*

*If it might be enough, that is enough for man,  
This were enough, since it is not, how thinke we can  
Now any riches fill  
My minde and greedy will?*

Socrates seeing great store of riches, jewells and pretious stuffe carried in pompe through his Cittie: *Oh how many things* (quoth he) *doe not I desire!* Metrodorus lived daily with the weight of twelve ounces of foode: Epicurus with lesse: Metrocles in winter lay with sheep, and in summer in the Cloisters of Churches. *Sufficit ad id natura, quod poscit.* Nature is sufficient for that which it requires. Cleanthes lived by his handes, and boasted, that if Cleanthes would, he could nourish another Cleanthes. If that which Nature dooth exactly and originally require at our handes, for the preservation of our being, is over little (as in truth what it is, and how good cheape our life may be maintained, cannot better be knowne or expressed than by this consideration. That it is so little, and for the smallnesse thereof, it is out of Fortunes reach, and she can take no hold of it) let us dispense something els unto our selves, and call the custome and condition of every-one of us by the name of Nature. Let us taxe and stint and feede our selves according to that measure; let us extend both our appurtenances and reckonings thereunto. For so farre, me seemes, we have some excuse: *Custom is a second Nature*, and no lesse powerfull. What is wanting to custome, I hold it a defect: And I had well nigh as leefe one should deprive mee of my life, as refraine or much abridge me of the state wherein I have lived so long. I am no more upon termes of any great alteration, nor to thrust my selfe into a new and un-usuall course, no not toward augmentation: it is no longer time to become other or be transformed. And as I should complaine if anie great adventure should now befall mee, and grieve it came not in time that I might have enjoyed the same.

*Quo mihi fortuna, si non conceditur uti?*

*Whereto should I have much,  
If I to use it grutch?*

I should likewise be grieved at any inward purchase: I were better in a manner, never, than so late, to become an honest man: and well practised to live, when one hath no longer life. I who am readie to depart this World, could easily be induced, to resigne the share of wisdom I have learnt, concerning the Worlds commerce, to anie other man new-come into the world. *It is even as good as Mustard after dinner. What neede have I of that good, which I cannot enjoy? Whereto serveth knowledge, if one have no head?* It is an

injurie and disgrace of Fortune, to offer us those presents, which, forso much as they faile us when we should most neede them, fill us with a just spite. Guide me no more: I can go no longer. Of so many dismembings that Sufficiencie hath, patience sufficeth us. Give the capacitie of an excellent treble to a Singer, that hath his lungs rotten; & of eloquence to an Hermit confined into the Desarts of Arabia. *There needes no Arte to further a fall. The end findes it selfe in the finishing of every worke.* My world is at an end, my forme is expired. I am wholly of the time past. And am bound to authorize the same, and thereto conforme my issue. I will say this by way of example; that the eclipsing or abridging of tenne dayes, which the Pope hath lately caused, hath taken me so lowe, that I can hardly recover my selfe. I followe the yeares, wherein we were wont to compt otherwise. So long and ancient a custome doth chalenge and recall me to it againe. I am thereby enforced to be somewhat an heretike: Incapable of innovation, though corrective. My imagination maugre my teeth runnes still tenne dayes before, or tenne behinde; and whispers in mine eares: *This rule toucheth those, which are to come.* If health it selfe so sweetely-pleasing, comes to me but by fittes, it is rather to give mee cause of grieffe, than possession of it selfe. I have no where left me to retire it. Time forsakes me; without which nothing is enjoyed. How small accompt should I make of these great elective dignities I see in the worlde, and which are onely given to men, ready to leave the world! wherein they regarde not so much how duellie they shall discharge them, as how little they shall exercise them: from the beginning they looke to the end. To conclude, I am ready to finish this man, not to make another. *By long custome, this forme is changed into substance, and Fortune into Nature.* I say therefore, that amongst us feeble creatures, each one is excusable to compt that his owne, which is comprehended under this measure. And yet all beyond these limites, is nothing but confusion.

It is the largest extension we can grant our rights. The more wee amplifie our neede and possession, the more we engage our selves to the crosses of fortune and adversities. The carriere of our desires must be circumscribed, and tied to strict bounds of neerest and contiguous commodities. Moreover, their course should be managed, not in a straight line, having another end, but round, whose two points hold together, and end in our selves with a short compasse. The actions governed without this reflection, I meane a neere and essentiall reflection, as those of the covetous, of the ambitious and so many others, that runne directly point-blanke, the course of which carrieth them away before them, are erronious and crazed actions. Most of our vacations are like playes. *Mundus uniuersus exercet histrioniam. All the world doth practise stage-playing.* We must play our parts duely, but as the part of a borrowed personage. Of a visard and apparance, we should not make a reall essence, nor proper of that which is anothers. We cannot distinguish the skinne from the shirt. It is sufficient to disguise the face, without deforming the breast. I see some transforme and transubstantiate themselves, into as many new formes and strange beings, as they vndertake charges: and who emprelate themselves even to the heart and entrailles; and entraine their offices even sitting on their close stoole. I cannot teach them to distinguish the salutations and cappings of such as regard them, from those that respect either their office, their traine, or their mule. *Tantum se fortunæ permitunt,*



*etiam ut naturam dediscant. They give themselves so much over to Fortune, as they forget Nature.* They swell in mind and puffe up their naturall discourse, according to the dignitie of their office. The Maior of *Bourdeaux*, and *Michell* Lord of *Montaigne*, have ever beene two, by an evident separation. To be an advocate or a Treasurer, one should not be ignorant of the craft incident to such callings. An honest man is not comtable for the vice and foly of his trade, and therefore ought not to refuse the exercise of it. It is the custome of his country; and there is profite in it. *We must live by the worlde, and such as we finde it, so make use of it.* But the judgement of an Emperour should be above his Empire; and to see and consider the same as a strange accident. He should know howe to enjoy himselfe aparte; and communicate himselfe as *James* and *Peter*; at least to himselfe. I can not so absolutely or so deeply engage my selfe. When my will gives me to any partie, it is not with so violent a bond, that my understanding is thereby infected. In the present intestine troubles of our State, my interest hath not made mee forget neither the commendable qualities of our adversaries, nor the reproachfull of those I have followed. They parcially extoll what ever is on their side: I doe not so much as excuse the greater number of my friends-actions. A good Oratour looseth not his grace by pleading against me. The intricatenesse of our debate remooved, I have maintained my selfe in equanimitie and pure indifferencie. *Neque extra necessitates belli, præcipuum odium gero, Nor beare I capitall hatred, when I am out of the necessitie of warre.* Wherein I glorie, for that commonly I see men erre in the contrary. Such as extend their choller and hatred, beyond their affaires (as most men doe) shew that it proceedes elsewhence, and from some private cause: Even as one being cured of an ulcer, and his fever remaineth still, declareth it had another more hidden begining. It is the reason they beare none unto the cause, in generall: and forsomuch as it concerneth the interest of all, and of the state: But they are vexed at-it, onely for this, that it toucheth them in private. And therefore are they distempered with a particular passion, both beyond justice and publike reason. *Non tam omnia uniuersi, quàm ea, quæ ad quemque pertinent, singuli carpebant. All did not so much finde fault withall, as every one with those that appertained to every one.* I will have the advantage to be for us, which though it be not, I enrage not. I stand firmly to the founder parts. But I affect not to be noted a private enemy to others, and beyond generall reason, I greatly accuse this vicious forme of obstinate contesting: He is of the League, because he admireth the grace of the Duke of *Guise*: or he is a *Hugonote*, forsomuch as the King of *Navarres* activitie amazeth him: He findes fault in the Kings behaviours, therefore he is sedicious in his heart. I would not give the magistrate my voice, that he had reason, to condemne a booke, because an heretike was therein named and extolled to be one of the best Poets of this age. Dare wee not say that a theefe hath a good leg? if he have so indeede; If she be a strumpet, must she needes have a stinking breath? In wiser ages, revoked they the prowde title of *Capitolinus*, they had formely given to *Marcus Manlius*, as the preserver of religion and publike libertie? Suppressed they the memory of his liberalitie, his deedes of armes and military rewards granted to his vertues, because to the prejudice of his countries lawes, he afterward affected a Royaltie? If they once conceive a hatred against an Orator or an Advocate, the next day he becommeth barbarous and uneloquent. I have elsewhere discoursed of zeale, which hath driven good men into like errours. For my selfe, I can

say: that he doth wickedly, and this vertuously. Likewise, in prognostikes or sinister events of affaires, they will have every man blinde or dull in his owne cause: and that our perswasion and judgement, serve not the truth, but the project of our desires. I should rather erre in the other extremitie; So much I feare my desire might corrupt mee. Considering, I somewhat tenderly distrust my selfe in things I most desire. I have in my dayes seene wonders, in the indiscreete and prodigious facility of people, suffering their hopes and beliefes, to be ledde and governed, as it hath pleased and best fitted their leaders: above a hundred discontents, one in the neck of another: and beyond their fantasies and dreames. I wonder no more at those, whom the apish toyes of *Apollonius* and *Mahomet* have seduced and blinded. Their sence and understanding is wholly smothered in their passion. Their discretion hath no other choise but what pleaseth them and furthereth their cause. Which I had especially observed in the beginning of our distempered factions and factious troubles. This other, which is growne since, by imitation surmounteth the same. Whereby I observe, that it is an inseparable qualitie of popular errorrs. The first being gone, opinions entershocke one another, following the winde, as waves doe. They are no members of the bodie, if they may renounce it; if they folow not the common course. But truely they wrong the just partes, when they seeke to helpe them with fraude or deceipts. I have alwayes contradicted the same. This meane is but for sicke braines: The healthy have surer and honester wayes to maintaine their resolutions and excuse al contrary accidents. The Heavens never saw so weighty a discord and so harmefull a hatred, as that betweene *Cæsar* and *Pompey*; nor ever shall heereafter: Mee seemeth notwithstanding, I see in those noble and Heroicall mindes, an exemplar and great moderation of the one toward the other. It was a jelousie of honour and emulation of command, which transported them, not to a furious and indiscreete hatred; without malice or detraction. In their sharpest exploitcs, I discover some reliques of respect and cinders of well-meaning affection. And I imagine, that had it beene possible, eyther of them desired rather to effect his purpose without overthrowing his competitour, than by working his utter ruine. Note how contrarie the proceeding was betweene *Sillæ* and *Marius*. We must not runne headlong after our affections and private interests. As in my youth, I ever opposed my selfe to the motions of love, which I felt to usurpe upon me; and laboured to diminish it's delights, lest in the ende it might vanquish and captivate me to his mercie: So do I now in all other occasions, which my will apprehendeth with an over great appetite. I bend to the contrary of my disposition, as I see the same plunged and drunke with it's owne Wine. I shunne so farre foorth to nourish hir pleasure, as I may not revoke it without a bloodie losse. Those mindes which through stupiditie see things but by halves, enjoy this happinesse, that such as be hurtfull, ofend them least: It is a spirituall leprosie, that hath some shew of health; and such a health, as Philosophy doth not altogether contemne. But yet it may not lawfully be termed wisdom; as we often doe. And after this manner did in former times some body mocke *Diogenes*, who in the dead of Winter, went all naked, embracing an image of snow, to trie his patience; Who meeting him in this order, saide thus unto him; *Arte thou now verie colde?* *Nothing at all*, answered *Diogenes*. *What thinkst thou to doe then, that is either hardor exemplar by standing in the colde?* replied the other: *To measure constancie, we must necessarily know sufferance*, saide *Diogenes*. But such

mindes as must behold crosse events, and fortunes injuries in their height and sharpnesse, which must weigh and taste them according to their naturall bitternesse and charge; let them employ their skill and keepe themselves from embracing the causes, and divert their approaches. What did King *Cotys*? He payed liberallie for that goodly and rich Vessell, which one had presented unto him, but forsomuch as it was exceeding brittle, hee presently brake it himselfe, that so betimes hee might remoove so easie an occasion of choller against his servaunts. I have in like sorte shunned confusion in my affaires, and sought not to have my goods contiguous to my neighbours, and to such as I am to be linked in strict friendship: Whence commonly ensue causes of alienation and unkindnesse. I have heeretofore loved the hazardous play of Cardes and Dice: I have long since left it, onely for this, that notwithstanding anie faire semblance I made in my losses, I was inwardly disquieted. Let a man of honour, who is to take a lie or endure an outrageous wrong, and cannot admit a badde excuse for paiment or satisfaction, avoyde the progresse of contentious altercations. I shunne melancholike complexions and froward men, as infected. And in matters, I cannot talke-of without interest and emotion, I meddle not with them, except duetie constraine me thereunto. *Melius non incipient, quam desinent. They shall better not beginne, than leave off.* The surest way, is then to prepare our selves before occasion. I know that some wisemen have taken an other course; and have not feared to engage and vehemently to insinuate themselves into divers objects. Those assure themselves of their owne strength, under which they shrowd themselves against all manner of contrary events, making mischiefs to wrestle one against another, by vigor and vertue of patience:

*Velut rupes uastum quæ prodit in æquor,  
Obuia uentorum furiis, expositaque ponto,  
Vim cunctam atque minas perfert cælique marisque,  
ipsa immota manens.*

*Much like a rocke, which but's into the Maine,  
Meeting with windes-rage, to the Sea laide plaine,  
It doeth the force ofskies and Seas sustaine,  
Endure their threats, yet doth unmoov'd remaine.*

Let us not imitate these examples, we shal not attaine them. They opinionate themselves resolutely to behod, and without perturbation to be spectatours of their Countries ruine, which whilome possessed and commaunded their full will. As for our vulgar mindes, therin is too much effort and roughnesse. *Cato* quit thereby the noblest life that ever was. Wee seely-ones must seeke to escape the storme further off: We ought to provide for apprehension and not for patience, and avoyde the blowes we cannot withstand. *Zeno* seeing *Chremonides* a yong man whom he loved, approach to sitte neere him; rose up sodainly. *Cleanthes* asking him the reason? I understand (said he) that Phisicians above all things prescribe rest, and forbidde emotion in all tumors. *Socrates* saith not; yeeld not to the allurements of beautie; maintaine it, enforce your selves to the contrary: Shunne her (saith he) runne out of her sight and companie; as from a violent poyson, that infecteth and stingeth farre-off. And his good Disciple, faining or reciting, but in mine opinion, rather reciting then

faining, the matchlesse perfections of that great *Cyrus*, describeth him distrusting his forces to withstand the blandishments or allurings of the divine beautie of that famous *Panthea* his Captive, committing the visitation and garde of her to an other, that hadde lesse libertie then himselfe. And like-wise the Holy-Ghost sayeth *ne nos inducas in temptationem, and lead us not into temptation*. Wee pray not that our reason bee not encountred and vanquished by concupiscence: but that it be not so much as assayed therewith: That we be not reduced to an estate, where we should but suffer the reproaches, solicitations and temptations of sinne: and we entreate our Lord, to keepe our conscience quiet, fully and perfectly free from all commerce of evill. Such as say they have reason for their revenging passion, or any other minde-troubling perturbation: say often truth, as things are, but not as they were. They speake to us, when the causes of their error are by themselves fostred and advanced. But retire further backward, recall these causes to their beginning: there you surprise and put them to a *non-plus*. Would they have their fault be lesse, because it is more ancient; and that of an unjust beginning, the progresse be just? He that (as I doe) shall wish his countries well-fare, without fretting or pining himselfe, shall be grieved, but not swowned, to see it threatning, either his owne downefall, or a continuance no lesse ruinous. Oh seely-weake barke, whom both waves, windes and Pilote, hull and tosse to so contrary desseignes!

*in tam diuersa, magister,  
Uentus & unda trahunt.*

*Maister the wave and winde  
So diverse wayes doe binde.*

Who gapes not after the favour of Princes, as after a thing without which he cannot live; nor is much disquieted at the coldnesse of their entertainment or frowning countenance, nor regardeth the inconstancie of their will. Who hatcheth not his children or huggeth not honours, with a slavish propension; nor leaves to live commodiously having once lost them. Who doth good, namely for his owne satisfaction, nor is much vexed to see men censure of his actions against his merite. A quarter of an ounce of patience provideth for such inconveniences. I finde ease in this receite: redeeming my selfe in the beginning, as good cheape as I can: By which meanes I perceiue my selfe to have escaped much trouble and manifold difficulties. With very little force, I stay these first motions of my perturbations: And I abandon the subject which beginnes to molest me, and before it transport me. *Hee that stops not the loose, shall hardly stay the course. He that cannot shut the dore against them, shall never expell them being entred. He that cannot attaine an end in the beginning, shall not come to an end of the conclusion. Nor shall hee endure the fall, that could not endure the starts of it. Etenim ipsæ se impellunt, ubi semel à ratione discessum est; ipsaque sibi imbecillitas indulget, in altúmque prouehitur imprudens: nec reperit locum consistendi. For they drive themselves headlong, when once they are parted and past reason; and weakenesse soothes it selfe, and unawares is carried into the deepe, nor can it finde a place to tarry in.* I feele betimes, the low windes, which are forerunners of the storme, buzze in mine eares and sound and trie me within:

*ceu flamina prima  
Cùm deprensa fremunt sylvis, & cæca uolutant  
Murmura, uenturos nautis prodentia uentos.*

*As first blasts in the woods perceiv'd to goe  
Whistle, and darkely speake in murmurs low,  
Foretelling Mariners what windes will grow.*

How often have I done my selfe an apparant injustice, to avoide the danger I should fall into, by receiving the same, happily worse, from the judges, after a world of troubles, and of foule, and vile practises, more enemies to my naturall disposition, then fire or torment? *Conuenit à litibus quantum licet, & nescio an paulo plus etiam quàm licet, abhorrentem esse; Est enim non modò liberale, paululum non nunquam de suo iure decedere, sed interdum etiam fructuosum.* As much as we may, and it may be more then we may, we should abhorre brabling and lawing; for it is not onely an ingenious part, but sometimes profitable also at sometimes to yeeld a little of our right. If we were wise indeede, wee should reioice and glory, as I heard once a yong gentleman, borne of a very great house, very wittily and unfainedly, reioice with all men that his mother had lost her sute; as if it had beene a cough, an ague, or any other yrksome burthen. The favours, which fortune might have given me, as aliances and acquaintances with such as have Soveraigne authoritie in those things; I have, in my conscience done much, instantly to avoide imploying them to others prejudice, and not over value my rights above their worth. To conclude, I have so much prevailed by my endevours (in a good houre I may speake it) that I am yet a virgin for any sutes in law, which have notwithstanding not omitted gently to offer me their service, and under pretence of lawfull titles insinuate themselves into my allowance, would I but have given eare unto them. And as a pure maiden from quarrels; I have without important offence, either passive or active, lingred out a long life, and never heard worse than mine owne name: A rare grace of heaven. Our greatest agitations, have strange springs and ridiculous causes. What ruine did our last Duke of *Burgundie* runne into, for the quarrell of a carte-loade of sheepes-skinnes? And was not the graving of a seale, the chiefe cause of the most horrible breach and topsie-turvy, that ever this worlds-frame endured? For, *Pompey* and *Cæsar* are but the new buddings and continuation of two others. And I have seene in my time, the wisest heads of this realme assembled with great ceremonie and publike charge, about treaties and agreements, the true deciding whereof depended in the meane while absolutely and soveraignely of the will and consultations held in some Ladies pate or cabinet; and of the inclination of some seely woman. Poets have most judiciously look't into this, who but for an apple have set all *Greece* and *Asia* on fire and sword. See why that man doth hazard both his honour and life on the fortune of his rapier and dagger; let him tell you whence the cause of that contention ariseth; he cannot without blushing; so vaine and so frivolous is the occasion. To embarke him, there needes but little advisement, but being once-in, all parts do worke; Then are greater provisions required, more difficult and important. How farre more easie is it not to enter, then to get forth? We must proceede contrarie to the brier, which produceth a long and straight stalke at the first springing; but after as tyred and out of breathe, it makes many and thicke knots, as if they were pawses, shewing to have no more

that vigor and constancie. Wee should rather beginne gently and leasurly; and keepe our strength and breath for the perfection of the worke. We direct affaires in the beginning, and hold them at our mercie, but being once undertaken, they guide and transport us, and we must follow them. Yet may it not be saide, that this counsell hath freed me from all difficulties, and that I have not beene often troubled to controle and bridle my passions: which are not alwayes governed according to the measure of occasions: whose entrances are often sharpe and violent. So is it, that thence may be reaped good fruit and profit. Except for those, who in well doing are not satisfied with any benefit, if their reputation be in question. For in truth, such an effect is not compted-of but by every one to himselfe. You are thereby better satisfied, but not more esteemed, having reformed your self, before you come into action, or the matter was in sight: yet not in this onely, but in all other duties of life, their course which aime at honour, is diverse from that, which they propound unto themselves, that followe order and reason. I finde some, that inconsiderately and furiously thrust themselves into the listes, and growe slacke in the course. As *Plutarke* saith, that *Such as by the vice of bashfulnesse are soft and tractable to graunt whatsoever is demaunded, are afterward as prone and facile to recant and breake their worde*: In like manner, he that enters lightly into a quarrel, is subject to leave it as lightly. The same difficultie which keeps me from embracing the same, should encite me, being once mooved and therein engaged, to continue resolute. It is an ill custome. Being once embarked, one must either goe-on or sinke. *Attempt coldly (sayed Byas) but pursue hotly*. For want of judgement, our harts faile-us; Which is also lesse tolerable. Most agreements of our moderne quarrels, are shamefull and false: Wee onely seeke to save apparances, and therewithst betray and disavow our true intentions. We salve the deede: We knowe how we spake it, and in what sence the by-standers know it: yea and our friendes to whome wee would have our advantages knowne. It is to the prejudice of our libertie and interest of our resolutions-honour, that we dis-avow our thoughts and seeke for starting holes in falshood, to make our agreements. We beelie ourselves, to salve a lie we have given to another. We must not looke whether your action or word may admitte another interpretation, but it is your owne true and sincere construction, that you must now maintaine; whatsoever it cost you. It is to your vertue and to your conscience that men speake; parts that ought not to bee disguised. Leave we these base courses, wrangling shifts and verball meanes, to petty-fogging Lawyers. The excuses and reparations, or satisfactions, which dayly I see made; promised and given to purge indiscretion, seeme to mee more foule than indiscretion it self. Better were it for one to offend his adversarie againe, than in giving him such satisfaction, to wrong himselfe so much. You have braved him mooved by choller, and now you seeke to pacifie and flatter him in your cold and better sence: Thus you abase your selfe more, than you were before exalted. I finde no speech so vicious in a Gentleman, as I deeme any recantation he shall make, dishonorable; especially if it be wrested from him by authoritie: Forsomuch as obstinacie is in him more excusable, than cowardize. Passions are to me as easie to be avoyded, as they are difficult to be moderated. *Excinduntur facilius animo, quam temperantur. They are more easilie rooted out of the minde, than brought to good temper*. Hee that can not attaine to this noble Stoicall impassibilitie, let him shrowde himselfe in the bosome of this my popular stupiditie. What they

did by vertue, I inure my selfe to doe by Nature. The middle region harboureth stormes; the two extreames containe philosophers and rurall men, they concurre in tranquility and good hap.

*Fœlix qui potuit rerum cognoscere causas,  
Atque metus omnes & inexorabile fatum  
Subiecit pedibus, strepitumque Acherontis auari.  
Fortunatus & ille, Deos qui nouit agrestes,  
Panâque, Syluanumque senem, Nymphâsque sorores.*

*Happy is he that could of things the causes finde,  
And subject to his feete all fearefulnesse of minde,  
Inexorable fate, and noise of greedy Hell.  
And happy he, with Countrie Gods acquainted well,  
Pan and old Silvan knowes,  
And all the sister shrowes.*

The beginnings of al things are weak and tender. We must therefore be cleare-sighted in beginnings: For, as in their budding we discerne not the danger, so in their full growth wee perceive not the remedie. I should have encountred a thousand crosses, daily more hard to be digested in the course of ambition, than it hath bin uneasy for me to stay the natural inclination, that led me unto them.

*iure perhorruï,  
Late conspicuum tollere uerticem.*

*I have beene much afraid for causes right.  
To raise my foretop far abroad to fight.*

*All publike actions are subject to uncertaine and diuers interpretations:* For, too many heads judge of them. Some say of this my Cittie employment (whereof I am content to speake a word; not that it deserves it, but to make a shew of my manners in such things) I have demeaned my selfe like one that is too slowly mooved and with a languishing affection: And they are not altogether voyde of reason. I strive to keepe my mind and thoughts quiet. *Cum semper Natura, tum etiam ætate iam quietus. Both ever quiet by Nature, and now because of yeeres.* And if at any time they are debauched to some rude and piercing impression, it is in truth without my consent. From which naturall slackenesse, one must not therefore inferre anie prooffe of disabilitie: For, *Want of care and lacke of judgement are two things:* And lesse unkindnesse and ingratitude toward those Cittizens, who to gratifie me, employed the utmost of all the meanes they could possibly; both before they knew me and since. And who did much more for me, in appoynting me my charge the second time, then in choosing me the first. I love them with all my heart, and wish them all the good that may be. And truly if occasion had beene offered, I would have spared nothing to have done them service. I have stirred and laboured for them, as I doe for my selfe. They are a good people, war-like and generous; yet capable of obedience and discipline, and fit for good employment, if they be well guided. They say likewise, that I passed over this charge of mine without any deede of note or great shew. It is true. Moreover, they accuse my

cessation, when as all the world was convicted of too much dooing: I have a most nimble motion, where my will doth carrie me. But this point is an ennemie unto perseverance. Whosoever will make use of mee, according to my self, let him employ me in affaires, that require vigor and libertie: that have a short, a straight, and therewithall a hazardous course: I may peradventure somewhat prevaile therein. Whereas if it be tedious, craftie, laborious, artificiall and intricate, they shall doe better to addresse themselves to some other man. All charges of importance are not difficult. I was prepared to labour somewhat more earnestly, if there had beene great need. For it lyes in my power, to doe something more than I make shew-of, and than I love to doe. To my knowledge, I have not omitted any motion that duty required earnestly at my hands. I have easilie forgotten those, which ambition blendeth with dutie and cloketh with her title. It is they, which most commonly fill the eyes and eares and satisfie men. Not the thing it selfe, but the apparance payeth them. If they heare no noise, they imagine we sleepe. My humours are contrary to turbulent humours. I could pacifie an inconvenience or trouble without troubling my self, and chastise a disorder without alteration.

Have I neede of choller and inflammation; I borrow it, and therewith maske my selfe: My maners are mustie, rather wallowish then sharpe. I accuse not a Magistrate that sleepe, so they that are under it sleepe also. So sleepe the lawes. For my part, I commend a gliding, an obscure and reposed life: *Neque submissam & abiectam, neque se efferentem. Neither too abject and submisse, nor vaunting it selfe too much.* But my fortune will have it so; I am descended of a family, that hath lived without noise and tumult: and of long continuance particularly ambitious of integritie. Our men are so framed to agitation and ostentations: that goodnesse, moderation, equitie, constancie, and such quiet and meane qualities, are no more hard-of. Rough bodies are felt, smoothe ones are handled imperceptibly. Sicknesse is felt, health little or not at all: nor things that annoint us, in regard of such as sting us. It is an action for ones reputation and private commoditie, and not for the common good, to refer that to be done in the market place, which a man may do in the counsel-chamber: and at noone day, what might have beene effected the night before: and to be jealous to doe that himselfe, which his fellow can performe as well. So did some Surgeons of *Greece* shew the operations of their skill, upon scaffolds, in view of all passengers, thereby to get more practise and custome. They suppose, that good orders cannot be understood, but by the sound of a trumpet. Ambition is no vice for pettie companions, and for such endeavours as ours. One saide to *Alexander*: your father will leave you a great commaund, easie and peacefull: the boy was envious of his fathers victories, and of the justice of his goverment. He would not have enjoyed the worlds Empire securely and quietly. *Alcibiades* in *Plato*, loveth rather to die, yong, faire, rich, noble, learned, and all that in excellence, then to stay in the state of such a condition. This infirmitie is happily excusable, in so strong and full a minde. When these pettie wretched soules, are therewith enveagled; and thinke to publish their fame, because they have judged a cause rightly, or continued the order in guarding of a Citties gates; by how much more they hoped to raise their head, so much more doe they shew their simplicitie. This pettie well-doing, hath neither body nor life. It vanisheth in the first moneth; and walkes but from one corner of a street



to another. Entertaineth therewith your sonne and your servant, and spare not. As that ancient fellow, who having no other auditor of his praises and applauding of his sufficiencie, boasted with his chamber-maide, exclaiming: Oh *Perette*, what a gallant and sufficient man thou hast to thy maister! If the worst happen, entertaineth your selves in your selves: As a Counsellor of my acquaintance, having degorged a rable of paragraphes, with an extreame contention and like foolishnesse; going out of the counsell-chamber, to a pissing place neere unto it; was heard very conscientiously to utter these words to himselfe: *Non nobis, Domine, non nobis, sed nomini tuo da gloriam. Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto thy name give the glory.* He that cannot otherwise, let him pay himselfe out of his owne purse. Fame doth not so basely prostitute it selfe, nor so cheape. Rare and exemplare actions, to which it duly belongeth, could not brooke the company of this innumerable multitude of vulgare petty actions. *Well may a piece of marble raise your titles as high as you list, because you have repaired a piece of an olde Wall, or cleansed a common ditch; but men of judgement will never doe-it.* Report followeth not all goodnesse, except difficultie and raritie be joynd thereunto. Yea simple estimation, according to the Stoikes, is not due to everie action proceeding from vertue. Neyther would they have him commended, who through temperance abstaineth from an old bleare-ey'd woman. Such as have knowne the admirable qualities of *Scipio* the Affrican, renounce the glorie which *Panætius* ascribeth unto him, to have abstained from gifts, as a glory, not his alone, but peculiar to that age. We have pleasures sortable to our fortune; let us not usurpe those of greatnesse. Our owne are more naturall. They are the more solide and firme, by how much the meaner. Since it is not for conscience, at least for ambition let us refuse ambition. Let us disdain this infaciate thirst of honour and renowne, base and beggerly, which makes us so suppliantly to crave it of all sortes of people: *Quæ est ista laus quæ possit è macello peti? What praise is this, which may be fetcht out of the Shambles?* By abject meanes, and at what vile rate soever. To be thus honoured, is meereley a dishonour. *Learn wee to be no more griedie of glorie, then we are capable of it.* To be proud of every profitable and innocent action, is it fit for men to whom it is extraordinarie and rare. They will value it, for the price it cost them. According as a good effect is more resounding; I abate of it's goodnes: the jealousie I conceive, it is produced more because it is so resounding, than because it is good. *What is set-out to show, is halfe solde.* Those actions have more grace, which carelessly and under silence, passe from the handes of a Workeman, and which some honest man afterward chuseth and redeemeth from darkenesse, to thrust them into the Worlds-light; Onely for their worth. *Mihi quidem laudabiliora uidentur omnia, quæ sine uenditione, & sine populo teste fiunt: All things in sooth seeme to me more commendable that are performed with no ostentation; and without the people to witnesse.* Said the most glorious man of the World. I had no care but to preserve and continue, which are deafe and insensible effects. Innovation is of great lustre: But interdicted in times, when we are most urged, and have to defend our selves but from novelties. *Abstinence from doing, is often as generous, as doing; but it is not so apparant.* My small worth is in a manner all of this kinde. To be short, the occasions in this my charge have seconded my complexion; for which I conne them hartie thanks. Is there any man that desireth to be sicke, to see his Phisition set a worke? *And Should not that Phisition be well whipped, who to put his art in practize, would wish the plague*

*to infect us?* I was never possessed with this impious and vulgare passion, to wish that the troubled and distempred state of this Cittie, might raise and honour my government. I have most willingly lent them my hand to further, and shoulders to ayde their ease and tranquillitie. He that will not thanke me for the good order and for the sweet and undisturbed rest, which hath accompanied my charge; can not at least deprive mee of that parte, which by the title of my good fortune, belongeth unto me. This is my humour, that I love as much to be happy as wise: And attribute my successes as much to the meere grace of God, as to the meane furtherance of my operation. I had sufficiently published to the Worlde my insufficiency in managing of such publike affaires: Nay, there is something in me, worse than insufficiencie: Which is, that I am not much displeased therewith: and that I endeavour not greatly to cure it, considering the course of life I have determined to my selfe. Nor have I satisfied my self in this employment. But have almost attained what I had promised unto my selfe: Yet have I much exceeded, what I had promised those, with whome I was to negotiate: For I willingly promise somewhat lesse, then I can performe, or hope to accomplish. Of this I am assured, I have never left offence or hatred amongst them: To have left either regret or desire of mee. This know I certainly, I have not much affected it.

*Méne huic considerare monstre,  
Méne salis placidi uultum, fluctúsque quietos  
Ignorare?*

*Should I this monster trust? Should I not know  
The calme Seas counterfeit dissembling show,  
How quietly sometimes the flouds will go?*