

MICHEL DE MONTAIGNE

# ESSAYS

## Book 3 · Chapter 13



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## Of Experience

THERE IS NO DESIRE more naturall, then that of knowledge. We attempt all means that may bring us unto it. When reason failes us, we employ experience.

*Per uarios usus artem experientia fecit:  
Exemplo monstrante uiam.*

*By diverse proofes experience arte hath bred,  
Whilst one by one the way examples led.*

Which is a meane by much more, weake and vile. But trueth is of so great consequence, that wee ought not disdain any induction, that may bring us unto it. *Reason hath so many shapes, that wee knowe not which to take holde of. Experience hath as many.* The consequence we seeke to draw from the conference of events, is unsure, because they are ever dissemblable. No qualitie is so universall in this surface of things, as varietie and diversitie. The Greekes, the Latines, and we use for the most expresse examples of similitude, that of eggs. Some have neverthesse beene found, especially one in *Delphos*, that knew markes of difference betweene egges, and never tooke one for another. And having diverse Hennes, could rightly judge which had laid the egge. Dissimilitude doth of it selfe insinuate into our workes, no arte can come neere unto similitude. Neither *Perozet* nor any other carde-maker can so industriously smoothe or whiten the backside of his cardes, but some cunning gamster will distinguish them, onely by seeing some other player handle or shuffle them. Resemblance doth not so much make one, as difference maketh another. Nature hath bound herselfe to make nothing that may not be dissemblable. Yet doth not the opinion of that man greatly please me, that supposed by the multitude of lawes, to curbe the authoritie of judges, in cutting out their morsells. He perceived not, that there is as much libertie and extension in the interpretation of lawes, as in their fashion. And those but mocke themselves, who thinke to diminish our debates and stay them, by calling us to the expresse word of sacred Bible. Because our spirit findes not the field lesse spacious, to controle and checke the sense of others, then to

represent his owne: And as if there were as litle corage and sharpenesse to glose as to invent. We see how farre he was deceived. For wee have in *France* more lawes then all the world besides; yea more then were needefull to governe all the worlds imagined by *Epicurus*: *Ut olim flagitiis, sic nunc legibus labor amus. As in times past we were sicke of offences, so now are we of lawes.* As we have given our judges so large a skope to moote, to opinionate, to suppose and decide, that there was never so powerfull and so licentious a libertie. What have our lawmakers gained with chusing a hundred thousand kindes of particular cases, and adde as many lawes unto them? That number hath no proportion, with the infinite diversitie of humane accidents. The multiplying of our inventions shall never come to the variation of examples. Adde a hundred times as many unto them, yet shall it not followe, that of events to come, there be any one found, that in all this infinite number of selected and enregistred events, shall meete with one, to which hee may so exactly joyne and match it, but some circumstance and diversitie will remaine, that may require a diverse consideration of judgement. There is but little relation betweene our actions, that are in perpetuall mutation, and the fixed and unmooveable lawes. The most to be desired, are the rarest, the simplest and most generall. And yet I believe, it were better to have none at all, then so infinite a number as we have. Nature gives them ever more happy, then those we give our selves. Witnesse the image of the golden age that Poets faine; and the state wherein we see diverse nations to live, which have no other. Some there are, who to decide any controversie, that may rise amongst them, will chuse for judge the first man that by chance shall travell alongst their mountaines: Others, that upon a market day will name some one amongst themselves, who in the place without more wrangling shall determine all their questions. What danger would ensue, if the wisest should so decide ours, according to occurrences and at first sight; without being tide to examples and consequences? *Let every foote have his owne shooe.* *Ferdinando* King of *Spaine* sending certaine *Collonies* into the *Indies*, provided wisely, that no lawyers or students of the lawes should be carried thither, for feare lest controversies, sutes or processes should people that new-found world. As a Science that of her owne nature engendreth altercation and division, judging with *Plato* that *Lawyers and Phisitions are an ill provision for any countrie.* Wherefore is it, that our common language so easie to be understood in all other matters, becommeth so obscure so harsh and so hard to be understood in law-cases, bills, contracts, indentures, citations, wills and testaments? And that he who so plainly expresseth himselfe, what ever hee speake or write of any other subject, in law matters findes no manner or way to declare himselfe or his meaning, that admits not some doubt or contradiction? Unlesse it be, that the Princes of this arte applying themselves with a particular attention, to invent and chuse strange, choise and solemne words, and frame artificiall cunning clauses, have so plodded and poized every silable; canvased and sifted so exquisitely every seame and quiditie, that they are now so entangled and so confounded in the infinitie of figures and so severall-small partitions, that they can no more come within the compasse of any order, or prescription or certaine understanding. *Confusum est quidquid usque in puluerem sectum est. Whatsoever is sliced into very powder is confused.*

Whosoever hath seene Children, labouring to reduce a masse of quicke-silver to a certaine number, the more they presse and worke the same, and strive to force it to their will, so much more they provoke the libertie of that generous mettall, which scorneth their arte, and scatteringly disperseth it selfe beyond all imagination. Even so of lawyers, who in subdividing their subtleties or quiddities, teach men to multiply doubts: and by extending and diversifying difficulties; they lengthen and amplifie, they scatter and disperse them. In sowing and retailing of questions, they make the World to fructifie and abound in uncertaintie, in quarrels, in sutes and in controversies. As the ground the more it is crumbled, broken and deeply remooved or grubbed up, becommeth so much more fertile. *Difficultatem facit doctrina. Learning breedes difficultie.* Wee found many doubts in *Ulpian*, wee finde more in *Bartolus* and *Baldus*. The trace of this innumerable diversitie of opinions should never have beene used to adorne posteritie, and have it put in her head, but rather have beene utterlie razed out. I know not what to say to it; but this is seene by experience, that so many interpretations, dissipate and confound all trueth. *Aristotle* hath written to be understoode: Which if he could not, much lesse shall another not so learned as he was; and a third, than he who treateth his owne imagination. We open the matter, and spill it in distempering it. Of one subject we make a thousand: And in multiplying and subdividing we fall againe into the infinitie of *Epicurus* his Atomes. It was never seene, that two men judged alike of one same thing. And it is impossible to see two opinions exactly semblable: not onely in divers men, but in any one same man, at severall houres. I commonly find something to doubt-of, where the commentary happily never deigned to touch, as deeming it so plaine. I stumble somtimes as much in an even smooth path; as some horses that I know, who oftner trip in a faire plaine way, than in a rough and stonie. Who would not say, that glosses increase doubts and ignorance, since no booke is to be seene, whether divine or profane, commonly read of al men, whose interpretation dimmes or tarnisheth not the difficultie? The hundred commentarie sends him to his succeder, more thornie and more crabbed, than the first found him. When agreede wee amongst our selves, to say, this booke is perfect, there's now nothing to be saide against it? This is best seene in our French-pedling Law. Authoritie of Law is given to infinite Doctours, to infinite arrests, and to as manie interpretations. Find we for all that any ende of neede of interpretors? Is there anie advaancement or progresse towards tranquillitie seene therein? Have we now lesse neede of Advocates and Judges, then when this huge masse of Law was yet in hir first infancie? Cleane contrary, we obscure and bury understanding. We discover it no more, but at the mercie of so many Courts, Barres, or Plea-benches. Men mis-acknowledge the naturall infirmitie of their minde. She doth but quest and firret, and uncessantly goeth turning, winding, building and entangling her selfe in hir owne worke; as doe our silke-wormes, and therein stifleth hir selfe. *Mus in pice. A Mouse in pitch.* Hee supposeth to note a farre-off I wot not what apparence of cleerenesse and immaginarie truth; but whilest he runneth unto it, so many lets and difficulties crosse his way, so many impeachments and new questings start up, that they stray loose and besot him. Not much otherwise than it fortuneth to *Æsops* Dogges, who farre-off discovering some shew of a dead bodie to flote upon the Sea, and being unable to approach the same, undertooke to drinke up

all the Water, that so they might drie-up the passage; and were all stifeled. To which answereth that, which one *Crates* saide of *Heraclitus* his compositions, that they needed a Reader, who should be a cunning swimmer, lest the depth and weight of his learning should drowne and swallow him up. It is nothing but a particular weakenesse, that makes us contented with that which others or wee our selves have found in this pursuite of knowledge. A more sufficient man will not be pleased therewith. There is place for a follower, yea and for our selves, and *More wayes to the Wood than one*. There is no ende in our inquisitions. Our end is in the other World. It is a signe his wits grow short, when hee is pleased; or a signe of wearinesse. No generous spirite stayes and relies upon himselfe. Hee ever pretendeth and goeth beyond his strength. He hath some vagaries beyond his effects. If he advaunce not himselfe, presse, settle, shooke, turne, winde and front himselfe, he is but halfe alive; His pursuites are termelesse and formelesse. His nourishment is admiration, questing and ambiguitie: Which *Apollo* declared sufficiently, always speaking ambiguously, obscurely and obliquely unto us; not feeding, but busying and ammusing us. It is an irregular uncertaine motion, perpetuall, patternelesse and without end. His inventions enflame, follow and enterproduce one another.

*Ainsi voit-on en un ruisseau coulant,  
 San fin l'une eau, apres l'autre roulant,  
 Et tout de rang, d'un eternel conduit,  
 L'une suit l'autre, et l'une l'autre fuit.  
 Par cette-cy, celle-là est poussée,  
 Et cette-cy, par l'autre est devancée:  
 Tousjours l'eau va dans l'eau, et tousjours est ce  
 Mesme ruisseau, et tousjours eau diverse.*

*As in a running river we behold  
 How one Wave after th'other still is rold,  
 And all along as it doth endlesse rise,  
 Th'one th'other followes, th'one from th'other flyes.  
 By this Wave, that is driv'n, and this againe,  
 By th'other is set forward all amaine.  
 Water in Water still, one river still,  
 Yet diverse Waters still that river fill.*

There's more adoe to enterprete interpretations, than to interprete things: and more bookes upon bookes, then upon any other subject. We doe but enter-glose our selves. All swarmeth with commentaries: Of Authors, their is great penurie. Is not the chiefest and most famous knowledge of our ages, to knowe how to understand the wise? Is it not the common and last scope of our study? Our opinions are grafted one upon an other. The first serveth as a stocke to the second; the second to the third. Thus we ascend from steppe to steppe. Whence it followeth, that the highest-mounted hath often more honour, than merite. For, he is got-uppe but one inch above the shoulders of the last save one. How often and peradventure foolishly, have I enlarged my Booke to speake of himselfe? Foolishly if it were but for this reason: That I should have remembred, that what I speake of others, they doe the like of me. That those so frequent glances

on their workes, witsse their hart shivereth with their love they beare them; and that the disdainfull churlishnesse wherewith they beate them, are but mignardizes and affectations of a motherly favour. Following *Aristotle*, in whom, both esteeming and dis-esteeming himselfe, arise often of an equall ayre of arrogancie. For mine excuse; That in this I ought to have more libertie than others, fosome as of purpose, I write both of my selfe and of my writings, as of my other actions: that my theame doth turne into it selfe: I wot not whether every man will take it. I have seene in *Germanie*, that *Luther* hath left as many divisions and altercations, concerning the doubt of his opinions, yea and more, than himselfe mooveth about the Holy Scriptures. Our contestation is verball. I demaund what Nature voluptuousnesse, circle and substitution is? The question is of wordes, and with wordes it is answered. A stone is a bodie: but he that should insist and urge; And what is a body? A substance: And what a substance? And so goe-on: Should at last bring the respondent to his Calepine or wittes end. One word is changed for another word, and often more unknowne. I know better what *Homo* is, then I know what *Animall* is, either mortall or reasonable. To answer one doubt, they give me three: It is *Hidraes* head. *Socrates* demaunded of *Memnon* what vertue was; There is answered *Memnon*, the vertue of a Man, of a Woman, of a Magistrate, of a private Man, of a Childe, of an olde Man: What vertue meane you? Yea mary, this is very well, quoth *Socrates*; we were in search of one vertue, and thou bringest mee a whole swarme. We propose one question, and wee have a whole huddle of them made unto us againe. As no event or forme doth wholly resemble an other, so doth it not altogether differ one from another. Oh ingenious mixture of Nature. *If our faces were not like, we could not discern a man from a beast: If they were not unlike, we could not distinguish one man from another man.* Al things hold by some similitude: Every example limpeth. And the relation, which is drawne from experience, is ever defective and imperfect. Comparisons are neverthelesse joyned together by some end. So serve the Lawes, and so are they sorted and fitted to all our sutes or affaires; by some wire-drawne, forced and colaterall interpretation. Since the morall Lawes, which respect the particular dutie of every man in himselfe, are so hard to be taught and observed, as we see they are: It is no wonder, if those which governe so many particulars, are more hard. Consider the forme of this Lawe, by which we are ruled: It is a lively testimony of humane imbecilitie; so much contradiction and so many errors are therein contained. That which we thinke favour or rigour in Law (wherein is so much of either, that I wot not wel whether we shal so often find indifferencie in them, are crazed-infected parts and unjust members of the verie body and essence of Lawe. Certaine poore Country-men came even now to tell me in a great haste, that but now in a forrest of mine, they have left a man wounded to death, with a hundred hurts about him, yet breathing, and who for Gods sake hath begged a little water and some helpe to raise himselfe at their hands. But that they durst not come neere him and ran all away, for feare some officers belonging to the Law should meete and catch them; and as they doe with such as they find neere unto a murdered body, so they should be compelled to give an account of this mischance, to their utter undoing; having neither friends nor mony to defend their innocencie. What should I have said unto them? It is most certaine, that this Office of humanitie had brought them to much trouble. How many innocent and

guilt-lesse men have wee seene punished? I say without the Judges fault; and how many more that were never discovered? This hath hapned in my time. Certaine men are condemned to death for a murther committed; the sentence, if not pronounced, at least concluded and determined. This done, the Judges are advertised by the Officers of a sub-alternall Court, not far-off, that they have certaine prisoners in hold, that have directly confessed the foresaide murther, and thereof bring most evident marks and tokens. The question and consultation is now in the former Court, whether for all this, they might interrupt, or should deferre the execution of the sentence pronounced against the first. They consider the noveltie of the example and consequence thereof, and how to reconcile the judgement. They conclude, that the condemnation hath passed according unto Lawe, and therefore the Judges are not subject to repentance. To be short, these miserable Wretches are consecrated to the prescriptions of the Law. *Philip*, or some other, provided for such an inconvenience, in this manner. He had by an irrevokable sentence condemned one to pay an other a round summe of money for a fine. A while after, the truth being discovered, it was found, hee had wrongfully condemned him. On one side was the right of the cause, on the other the right of judiciarie formes. Hee in some sort satisfied both parties, suffering the sentence to stand in full power: and with his owne purse recompenced the interest of the condemned. But hee was to deale with a reparable accident, my poore slaves were hanged irreparably. How many condemnations have I seene more crimminal, than the crime it selfe? All this puts me in minde of those auncient opinions; That *He who will doe right in grose, must needes doe wrong by retaile; and unjustly in small things, that will come to doe justice in great matters;* That humane justice is framed according to the modell of physike, according to which, whatsoever is profitable is also just and honest: And of that the Stoickes hold, that Nature her selfe in most of her workes, proceedeth against justice: And of that which the Cyreniaques hold, that there is nothing just of it selfe: That customes and lawes frame justice. And the Theodorians, who in a wise man allow as just, all manner of theft, sacriledge and paillardise, so he thinke it profitable for him. There is no remedy: I am in that case, as *Alcibiades* was, and if I can otherwise chuse, will never put my selfe unto a man that shall determine of my head; or consent that my honour or life, shall depend on the industrie or care of mine atturnie, more then mine innocencie. I could willingly adventure my selfe, and stand to that Law, that should as well recompence me for a good deed, as punish me for a mis-deede: and where I might have a just cause to hope, as reason to feare. *Indemnitie is no sufficient coyne for him, who doeth better than not to trespasse.* Our Law presents us but one of hir hands, and that is her left hand. *Whosoever goes to Law, dooth in the end but loose by it.* In *China*, the policie, arts and governement of which kingdome, having neither knowledge or commerce with ours; exceede our examples in divers partes of excellencie; and whose Histories teach me, how much more ample and diverse the World is, than either we or our forefathers could ever enter into. The Officers appointed by the Prince to visite the state of his Provinces, as they punish such as abuse their charge, so with great liberalitie they reward such as have uprightly and honestly behaved themselves in them, or have done any thing more then ordinarie, and besides the necessitie of their duty: There, all present themselves, not onely to warrant themselves, but also to get something: Not simply to be

paid, but liberally to be rewarded. No judge hath yet, God be thanked, spoken to me as a judge, in any cause whatsoever either mine or another mans; criminall or civill. No prison did ever receive me, no not so much as for recreation or to walk in. The very imagination of one, maketh the sight of their outside seeme yrkesome and loathesome to me. I am so besotted unto libertie, that should any man forbidde me the accesse unto any one corner of the Indiaes, I should in some sort live much discontented. And so long as I shall finde land or open ayre elsewhere, I shall never lurke in any place, where I must hide my self. Oh God, how hardly could I endure the miserable condition of so many men, confined and immured in some corners of this kingdome, barred from entring the chiefest Citties, from accesse into Courts, from conversing with men, and interdicted the use of common wayes, onely because they have offended our lawes. If those under which I live, should but threaten my fingers end, I would presently goe finde out some others, wheresoever it were. All my small wisdom, in these civill and tumultuous warres, wherein we now live, doeth wholly employ it selfe, that they may not interrupt my libertie, to goe and come where ever I list. Lawes are now maintained in credite, not because they are essentially-just, but because they are lawes. It is the mysticall foundation of their authoritie; they have none other; which avails them much: They are often made by fooles. More often by men, who in hatred of equalitie, have want of equitie; But ever by men, who are vaine and irresolute Authours. There is nothing so grosely and largely offending, nor so ordinarily wronging as the Lawes. Whosoever obayeth them because they are just, obeyes them not justly the way as he ought. Our French Lawes doe in some sort, by their irregularity and deformitie, lend an helping hand unto the disorder and corruption, that is seene in their dispensation and execution. Their behest is so confused, and their commaund so inconstant, that it in some sort excuseth, both the disobedience and the vice of the interpretation, of the administration and of the observation. Whatsoever then the fruit is wee may have of Experience, the same which wee drawe from forraine examples, will hardly steade our institution much; if we reape so small profit, from that wee have of our selves, which is most familiar unto us: and truely sufficient to instruct us of what wee want. I studie my selfe more than any other subject. It is my supernaturall Metaphisike, it is my naturall Philosophie.

*Qua Deus hanc mundi temperet arte domum,  
Qua uenit exoriens, qua deficit, unde coactis  
Cornibus in plenum menstrua luna redit:  
Unde salo superant uenti, quid flamine captet  
Eurus, & in nubes unde perennis aqua.  
Sit uentura dies mundi quae subruat arces,*

*This worlds great house by what arte God doeth guide.  
From whence the monethly Moone doth rising ride,  
How wane, how with clos'd hornes returne to pride.  
How windes on seas beare sway, what th'Easterne winde  
Would have, how still in clowdes we water finde;  
If this worldes Towres to rase a day be signde.*



*Quærite quos agitât mundi labor:*

*All this doe you enquire*

*Whom this worldes travailes tyre.*

In this universalitie I suffer my selfe ignorantly and negligently to be managed by the generall law of the world. I shall sufficiently know it when I shall feele it. My learning cannot make her change her course: she will not diversifie herselfe for me; it were folly to hope it: And greater folly for a man to trouble himselfe about it; since it is necessarily semblable, publike and common. The governours-capacitie and goodnesse, should throughly discharge us of the governments care. Philosophical inquisitions and contemplations serve but as a nourishment unto our curiositie. With great reason doe Philosophers addresse us unto natures rules: But they have nought to do with so sublime a knowledge: They falsifie them, and present her to us with a painted face, too-high in colour and overmuch sophisticated; whence arise so many different pourtraits of so uniforme a subject. As she hath given us feete to goe withall, so hath she endowed us with wisdom to direct our life. A wisdom not so ingenious, sturdie and pompous, as that of their invention, but yet easie, quiet and salutarie. And that in him who hath the hap to know how to employ it orderly and sincerely, effecteth very well what the other saith: that is to say naturally. For a man to commit himselfe most simply unto nature, is to doe it most wisely. *Oh how soft, how gentle, and how sound a pillow is ignorance and incuriositie to rest a well composed head upon.* I had rather understand my selfe well in my selfe, then in *Cicero*. Out of the experience I have of my selfe, I finde sufficient ground to make my selfe wise, were I but a good proficient scholler. Whosoever shall commit to memorie the excesse or inconvenience of his rage or anger past, and how farre that fit transported him, may see the deformitie of that passion, better then in *Aristotle*, and conceive a more just hatred against it. Whosoever calleth to minde the dangers he hath escaped, those which have threatned him, and the light occasions that have remooved him from one to another state, doth thereby the better prepare himselfe to future alterations, and knowledge of his condition. *Cæsars* life hath no more examples for us, then our owne; Both imperiall and popular; it is ever a life that all humane accidents regard. Let us but give care unto it, we recorde all that to us, that we principally stand in neede-of. He that shall call to minde how often and how severall times hee hath beene deceived, and misaccompted his owne judgement: is hee not a simple gull, if hee doe not for ever afterward distrust the same? When by others reason, I finde my selfe convicted of a false opinion, I learne not so much, what new thing he hath told me; and this particular ignorance; which were but a small purchase; as in generall I learne mine owne imbecilitie and weakenesse, and the treason of my understanding: whence I draw the reformation of all the masse. The like I doe in all my other errours: by which rule I apprehend and feele great profite for, and unto my life. I regarde not the *species* or *individuum*, as a stone whereon I have stumbled. I learne every where to feare my going, and endeavour to order the same. To learne that another hath either spoken a foolish jest, or committed a sottish act, is a thing of nothing. A man must learne, that he is but a foole: A much more ample and important instruction. The false steps my memory hath so often put upon me, at what time she stood most

upon her selfe, have not idly beene lost: she may sweare and warrant me long enough; I shake mine eares at her: the first opposition made in witness of her, makes me suspect. And I durst not trust her in a matter of consequence; nor warrant her, touching others affaires. And were it not, that what I doe for want of memorie, others more often doe the same for lacke of faith, I would ever in a matter of fact rather take the truth from anothers mouth, then from mine owne. Would every man prie into the effects and circumstances of the passions that sway him, as I have done of that whereunto I was allotted; hee should see them comming; and would somewhat hinder their course and abate their impetuositie: They doe not alwayes surprise and take hold of us at the first brunt, there are certaine foreshadowings and degrees as forerunners.

*Fluctus uti primò cœpit cùm albescere ponto,  
Paulatim sese tollit mare, & altius undas  
Erigit, inde imo consurgit ad æthera fundo.*

*As when at sea, floods first in whitenesse rise,  
Sea surgeth softly, and then higher plies  
In waves, then from the ground mounts up to skies.*

Judgement holds in me a presidentiall seate, at least hee carefully endeavours to hold it: He suffers my appetites to keep their course: both hatred and love, yea and that I beare unto my selfe; without feeling alteration or corruption. If he can not reforme other parts according to himselfe, at least he will not be deformed by them: he keepes his court apart. That warning-lesson given to all men, *To knowe themselves*, must necessarily be of important effect, since that God of wisdom, knowledge and light, caused the same to be fixed on the frontispice of his temple: as containing whatsoever he was to counsell us. *Plato* saith also, that wisdom is nothing but the execution of that ordinance: And *Socrates* doth distinctly verifie the same in *Xenophon*. Difficulties and obscuritie are not perceived in every science, but by such as have entrance into them: For, some degree of intelligence is required, to be able to marke that one is ignorant: and wee must knocke at a gate, to knowe whether it bee shutte. Whence ensueth this Platonicall subtiltie, that *neither those which knowe have no further to enquire, forsomuch as they knowe already: nor they that knowe not, because to enquire, it is necessary they know what they enquire after*. Even so in this, for a man to know himselfe: that every man is seene so resolute and satisfied, and thinks himselfe sufficiently instructed or skilfull, doth plainly signifie that no man understands any thing, as *Socrates* teacheth *Euthydemus*. My selfe, who professe nothing else, finde therein so bottomlesse a deapth, and infinit a varietie, that my apprenticeship hath no other fruit, than to make me perceive how much more there remaineth for me to learne. To mine owne weakness so often acknowledged, I owe this inclination which I beare unto modestie; to the obedience of beliefes prescribed unto me; to a constant coldnesse and moderation of opinions; and hatred of this importunate and quarellous arrogancie, wholly beleeving and trusting it selfe, a capitall ennemie to discipline and veritie. Doe but heare them sway and talke. The first fopperies they propose, are in the stile, that Religions and Lawes are composed in. *Nihil est turpius quam cognitioni & præceptioni, assertionem approbationemque præcurrere*. *Nothing is more absurd, than that avowching and*

*allowance should runne before knowledge and precept. Aristarchus saide, that in antient times, there were scarce seven wise men found in the world; and in his time, hardly seven ignorant. Have not we more reason to say-it in our dayes, than he had? Affirmation and selfe-conceit, are manifest signes of foolishnesse. Some one, who a hundred times a day hath had the canvase and beene made a starke coxcombe, shall notwithstanding be seene to stand upon his Ergoes, and as presumptuously-resolute as before. You would say, he hath since some new minde and vigor of understanding infused into him. And that it betides him, as to that ancient childe of the Earth, who by his falling to the ground and touching his Mother, still gathered new strength and fresh courage.*

*cui cùm tetigere parentem,  
Iam defecta uigent renouato robore membra.*

*Whose failing limmes with strength renew'd regrow,  
When they once touch his mother Earth below.*

Doth not this indocile, blocke-headed asse, thinke to reassume a new spirite, by undertaking a new disputation? It is by my experience I accuse humane ignorance, which (in mine opinion) is the surest part of the Worlde schoole. Those that will not conclude it in themselves, by so vaine an example as mine, or theirs, let them acknowledge it by *Socrates*, the Maister of Maisters. For the Philosopher *Antisthenes*, was wont to say to his Disciples: Come on my Maisters, let you and me goe to heare *Socrates*. There shall I be a fellow Disciple with you. And upholding this Doctrine, of the Stoickes Sect, that *only vertue sufficed to make a life absolutely-happy*; and having no need of any thing, but of *Socrates* his force and resolution, he added moreover: This long attention, I employ in considering my self enableth me also to judge indifferently of others: And there are few things whereof I speake more happily and excusably. It often fortuneth me to see and distinguish more exactly the conditions of my friends, than themselves do. I have astonied some by the pertinencie of mine owne description, and have warned him of himselfe. Because I have from mine infancy enured my selfe to view mine owne life in others lives; I have thereby acquired a studious complexion therein. And when I thinke on it, I suffer few things to escape about me, that may in any sort fit the same; whether countenaunces, humour or discourses. I studiously consider all I am to eschew and all I ought to follow. So by my friends productions I discover their inward inclinations. Not to marshall or range this infinite varietie of so diverse and so distracted actions to certaine Genders or Chapters, and distinctly to distribute my parcels and divisions into formes and knowne regions.

*Sed neque quàm multæ species, & nomina quæ sint.  
Est numerus.*

*But nor how many kindes, nor what their names:  
There is a number of them (and their frames.)*

The wiser sort speake and declare their fansies more specially and distinctly: But I, who have no further insight then I get from common use,

without rule or methode, generally present mine owne, but gropingly. As in this: I pronounce my sentence by articles, loose and disjoynted: it is a thing cannot be spoken at once and at full. Relation and conformity are not easily found in such base and common mindes as ours. Wisedome is a solide and compleate frame; every severall piece whereof keepeth his due place and beareth his marke. *Sola sapientia in se tota conuersa est. Onely wisedome is wholly turned into it selfe.* I leave it to Artists, and I wot not whether in a matter so confused, so severall and so casual, they shall come to an end, to range into sides, this infinite diversitie of visages; and settle our inconstancie and place it in order. I doe not onely finde it difficult to combine our actions one unto another; but take every one aparte, it is hard, by any principall qualitie to desseigne the same properly: so double, so ambiguous and partie-coloured are they to diverse lusters. Which in *Perseus* the *Macedonian* King was noted for a rare matter, that his spirit fastning it selfe to no kinde of condition; went wandring through every kinde of life: and representing so new-fangled and gadding maners, that he was neither knowne of himselfe nor of others, what kinde of man hee was: me thinkes may well-nigh agree and sute with all the world. And above all, I have seene some other of his coate or humour, to whom (as I suppose) this conclusion might also more properly be applide. No state of mediocritie being ever transported from one extreame to another, by indivinable occasions: no maner of course without crosses, and strange contrarities: no facultie simple: so that the likeliest a man may one day conclude of him, shall be, that he affected and laboured to make himselfe knowne, by being not to be knowne. *A man had neede of long-tough eares, to heare himselfe freely judged.* And because there be few that can endure to heare it without tingling: those which adventure to undertake it with us, shew us a singular effect of true friendship. For, *that is a truely-perfect love, which, to profit and doe good, feareth not to hurt or offend.* I deeme it absurde, to censure him, in whom bad qualities exceede good conditions. *Plato* requireth three parts in him that will examine anothers minde: *Learning, goodwill, and boldnesse.* I was once demanded, what I would have thought my selfe fit-for, had any beene disposed to make use of me, when my yeares would have fitted service:

*Dum melior uires sanguis dabat, æmula necdum  
Temporibus geminis canebat sparsa senectus,*

*While better blood gave strength, nor envious old yeares  
Orelaide with wrinckled temples grew to hoarie haire.*

I answered, for nothing. And I willingly excuse my selfe that I can doe nothing which may enthrall me to others. But had my fortune made me a servant, I would have told my maister all truths; and, had he so willd it, controled his maners: Not in grose, by scolasticall lessons, which I cannot doe, besides, I see no true reformation to ensue in such as know them: but faire and softly and with every opportunitie observing them; and simply and naturally judging them distinctly by the eye. Making him directly to perceive, how and in what degree hee is in the common opinion; opposing my selfe against his flatterers and sycophants. There is none of us, but would be worse then Kings, if as they are, he were continually corrupted with that rascally kinde of people. But what? if *Alexander* that mightie King

and great Philosopher, could not beware of them? I should have had sufficient fidelitie, judgement and libertie for that. It would be a namelesse office, otherwise it should loose both effect and grace; And is a part, which cannot indifferently belong to all. For, *truth it selfe, hath not the priviledge to be employed at all times, and in every kinde*: Be her use never so noble, it hath his circumscriptions and limites. It often commeth to passe, the world standing as it doth, that truth is whispred into Princes eares, not onely without fruit, but hurtfully and therewithall unjustly. And no man shall make me believe, but that an hallowed admonition may be viciously applied, and abusively employed: and that the interest of the substance should not some times yeeld to the interest of the forme. For such a purpose and mysterie I would have an unrepining man and one contented with his owne fortune,

*Quod sit, esse uelit, nihilque malit:*

*Willing to be as him you see,  
Or rather nothing else to bee:*

and borne of meane degree: Forsomuch as on the one side, hee should not have cause to feare, lively and neerely to touch his maisters heart, thereby not to loose the course of his preferment: And on the other side, being of a low condition, hee should have more easie communication with all sorts of people. Which I would have in one man alone; for, to empart the priviledge of such libertie and familiaritie unto many, would beget an hurtful irreverence. Yea, and of that man, I would above all things require trustie and assured silence. *A King is not to be credited, when for his glorie, he boasteth of his constancie, in attending his enemies encounter: if for his good amendment and profit, hee cannot endure the libertie of his friends words, which have no other working power, then to pinch his learning: the rest of their effect remaining in his owne hands*. Now, there is not any condition of men, that hath more neede of true, sincerely-free and open-hearted advertisements, then Princes. They undergoe a publike life, and must applaude the opinion of so many spectators, that if they be once enured, to have that concealed from them, which diverteth them from their course, they at unawares and insensibly finde themselves deeply engaged in the hatred and detestation of their subjects; many times for occasions, which had they beene forewarned, and in time gently reformed, they might no doubt have eschewed, to no interest or prejudice of their private delights. *Favorites doe commonly respect themselves more then their maisters*. And surely it toucheth their free-hold, forsomuch as in good truth, the greatest part of true friendships-offices, are towards their soveraigne in a crabbed and dangerous Essay. So that, there is not onely required much affection and libertie, but also an undanted courage. To conclude, all this galiemafrie which I huddle-up here, is but a register of my lives-Essayes: which in regard of the internall health are sufficiently exemplar to take the instruction against the haire. But concerning bodily health, no man is able to bring more profitable experience, then my selfe; who present the same pure, sincere and in no sorte corrupted or altdred, either by arte or selfewill'd opinion. Experience in her owne precinct, may justly be compared to Phisicke, unto which, reason giveth place. *Tiberius was wont to say, that whosoever had lived twenty yeares, should be able to answer himselfe of all such things as were either*

*wholesome or hurtfull for him, and knowe howe to live and order his body without Phisicke.* Which he peradventure had learned of *Socrates*; who industriously advising his disciples (as a studie of chiefe consequence) to studie their health, told them moreover, that it was very hard, if a man of understanding, heedefully observing his exercises, his eating and drinking, should not better then any Phisition discerne and distinguish such things as were either good or bad or indifferent for him. Yet doth Phisicke make open profession alwayes to have experience for the touchstone of her operation. And *Plato* had reason to say, that *to be a good Phisition, it were requisite, that he who should undertake that profession, had past through all such diseases as he will adventure to cure, and knowne or felt all the accidents and circumstances he is to judge of.* It is reason, themselves should first have the pox, if they will know how to cure them in others. I should surely trust such a one better then any else. Others but guide us, as one who sitting in his chaire paints seas, rockes, shelves and havens upon a boarde, and makes the modell of a tale ship to saile in all safetie: But put him to it in earnest, he knows not what to doe, nor where to beginne. They make even such a description of our infimities as doth a towne-crier, who crieth a lost horse or dog, and describeth his haire, his stature, his eares, with other markes and tokens, but bring either unto him, he knowes him not. Oh God, that phisicke would one day affoorde me some good and preceptible help, how earnestly would I exclaime.

*Tandem efficaci do manus scientæ.*

*I yeeld, I yeeld at length,  
To knowledge of chiefe strength.*

The Artes that promise to keepe our body and minde in good health, promise much unto us; but therewithall there is none performeth lesse what they promise. And in our dayes, such as make profession of these Artes amongst us, doe lesse then all others shew their effects. The most may be said of them, is, that they sell medicinable drugs; but that they are Phisitions, no man can truly say-it. I have lived long enough, to yeeld an account of the usage that hath brough me to this day. If any be disposed to taste of it, as his taster I have given him an assay. Loe here some articles, digested, as memorie shall store me with them. I have no fashion, but hath varried according to accidents: I onely register those I have most beene acquainted with; and hetherto possesse me most. My forme of life is ever alike, both in sicknesse and in health: one same bed, the same houres, the same meates, the same drinke doe serve me. I adde nothing to them but the moderation of more or lesse, according to my strength or appetite. My health is to keepe my accustomed estate free from care and trouble. I see that sicknesse doth on the one side in some sort divert me from it, and if I believe Phisitions, they on the other side will turne me from it: So that both by fortune and by arte I am cleane out of my right bias. I beleve nothing more certainly then this; that I cannot be offended by the use of things, which I have so long accustomed. *It is in the hands of custome to give our life what forme it pleaseth:* in that it can do all in all. It is the drinke of *Circes*, diversifieth our nature as she thinkes good. How many nations neere-bordering upon us imagine the feare of the sereine or night-calme to be but a jest, which so apparantly doth blast and hurt us? and whereof

our Mariners our watermen, and our counciemen make but a laughing-stocke? You make a Germane sicke, if you lay him upon a matteras, as you distemper an Italian upon a fetherbed, and a Frenchman to lay him in a bed without curtaines, or lodge him in a chamber without a fire. A Spaniard can not well brooke to feede after our fashion, nor wee endure to drinke as the Swizzers. A Germane pleased me well at *Augusta* to raile against the incommoditie of our chimnies, using the same reasons or arguments, that we ordinarily imploy in condemning their stoves. For, to say truth, the same close-smothered heate, and the smell of that oft-heated matter, whereof they are composed, fumeth in the heads of such as are not accustomed unto them; not so with me. But on the other side, that heate being equally dispersed, constant and universall, without flame or blazing, without smoake, and without that winde which the tonnells of our chimnies bring us, may many wayes be compared unto ours. Why doe we not imitate the Romanes architecture?

It is reported that in auncient times they made no fire in their houses, but without and at the foote of them: Whence by tonnells, which were conuaide through their thickest walls, and contrived neere and about all such places as they would have warmed; so that the heate was conuaied into every part of the house. Which I have seene manifestly described in some place of *Seneca*, though I can not well remember where. This Germane, hearing mee commend the beauties and commodities of his Citty (which truely deserveth great commendation) beganne to pittie mee, because I was shortly to goe from it. And the first inconvenience hee urged mee withall, was the heavinesse in the head, which Chimnies in other places would cause mee. Hee had heard some other bodie complaine of it, and therefore alleadged the same against mee, beeing wont by custome to perceive it in such as came to him. All heate comming from fire doth weaken and dull mee: Yet saide *Evenus*, that fire was the best sauce of life. I rather allow and embrace any other manner or way to escape cold. We feare our Wines when they are lowe; whereas in *Portugall*, the fume of it is counted delicious, and is the drinke of Princes. To conclude, each severall Nation hath divers customes, fashions and usages; which, to some others, are not onlie unknowne and strange, but savage, barbarous and wondrous. What shall we doe unto that people, that admit no witnesse, except printed; that will not believe men, if not printed in Bookes, nor credite truth, unlesse it be of competent age? Wee dignifie our fopperies, when we put them to the presse. It is another maner of weight for him, to say, I have seene it, then if you say, I have heard it reported. But I, who mis-believe no more the mouth, than the hand of men; and know that *men write as indiscreetly, as they speake unadvisedly*; and esteeme of this present age, as of another past; alleadge as willingly a friend of mine, as *Aulus Gellius* or *Macrobius*, and what my selfe have seene, as that they have written. And as they account vertue to bee nothing greater by being longer, so deeme I truth to be nothing wiser by being more aged. I often say it is meere folly that makes us runne after strange and scholasticall examples. The fertilitie of them is now equall unto that of *Homer* and *Platoes* times. But is it not, that we rather seeke the honour of allegations, than the truth of discourses? As if it were more to borrow our proofes from out the shoppe of *Vascosane* or *Plantin*, than from that, we dayly see in our village. Or verely, that wee have not the witte to blanch, to sift-out or make that to

prevaile, which passeth before us, and forcibly judge of it, to draw the same into example. For, if we say, that authority failes us, to adde credite unto our testimonie, we speake from the purpose. Forsomuch as in my conceit, could we but find out their true light, Natures greatest myracles and the most wonderfull examples, namely upon the subject of humane actions, may be drawne and formed from most ordinarie, most common and most knowne things. Now concerning my subject, omitting the examples I know by bookes; And that which *Aristotle* speaketh of *Andron of Argos*, that hee would travell all over the scorching sands of *Lybia*, without drinking: A Gentleman, who hath worthily acquitted himselfe of many honourable charges, reported where I was, that in the parching heate of Summer, he had travelled from *Madrill* to *Lisbone*, without ever drinking. His age respected, he is in very good and healthie plight, and hath nothing extraordinarie in the course or custome of his life, saving (as himselfe hath told me,) that hee can verie well continue two or three moneths, yea a whole yeere, without any manner of beverage. He somtimes finds himselfe thirstie, but let's it passe; and holds, that it is an appetite, which will easily and of it selfe languish away: and if he drinke at any time, it is more for a caprice or humor, than for any need or pleasure. Loe here one of another key. It is not long since, that I found one of the wisest men of *France*, (among those of so meane fortune) studying hard in the corner of a great Hall, which for that purpose was hung about with tapistrie, and round about him a disordered rable of his servaunts, groomes and lackeys; pratling, playing and hoyting: who told me (as *Seneca* in a manner saith of himselfe) that hee learn'd and profited much by that hurly-burly or tintimare: as if beaten with that confused noyse, he did so much the better recall and close himselfe into himselfe, for serious contemplation; and that the said tempestuous rumours did strike and repercusse his thoughts inward. Whilst he was a scholler in *Padua*, his study was ever placed so neere the jangling of bells, the ratling of coaches and rumbling tumults of the market place, that for the service of his studie, he was faine, not onely to frame and enure himselfe to contemne, but to make good use of that turbulent noise. *Socrates* answered *Alcibiades*, who wondered how he could endure the continuall tittle-tattle and uncessant scoulding of his Wife: even as those who are accustomed to heare the ordinary creaking of the squeaking wheeles of welles. My selfe am cleane contrarie, for I have a tender braine, and easie to take snuffe in the nose, or to bee transported. If my minde be busie alone, the least stirring, yea the buzzing of a flie doth trouble and distemper the same. *Seneca* in his youth, having earnestly undertaken to follow the example of *Sextius*, to feede on nothing that were taken dead: could with pleasure (as himselfe averreth) live so a whole yeere. And left it, onely because hee would not be suspected to borrowe this rule from some new religions, that instituted the same. He therewithall followed some precepts of *Attalus*, not to lie upon any kinde of carpets or bedding that would yeeld under one; and untill he grew very aged, he never used but such as were very hard and un-yeelding to the body. What the custome of his dayes makes him account rudenesse, ours makes us esteeme wantonnesse. Behold the difference betweene my varlets life and mine: The Indians have nothing further from my forme and strength. Well I wot, that I have heretofore taken boyes from begging and that went roaguig up and downe, to serve me; hoping to doe some good upon them, who have within a little while after left me, my fare and my



livery; onely that they might without controule or checke follow their former idle loytring life. One of which I found not long since gathering of muskles in a common sincke, for his dinner; whom (doe what I could) I was never able, neither with entreatie to reclaime, nor by threatning to withdrawe, from the sweetnesse he found in want, and delight he felt in roaguing lazinesse. Even vagabonding roagues, as well as rich men, have their magnificences and voluptuousnesse, and (as some say) their dignities, preheminenes and politike orders. They are effects of custome and use: and *what is bred in the bone, will never out of the flesh*. Both which have power to enure and fashion us, not onely to what forme they please (therefore, say the wise, ought we to be addressed to the best, and it will immediately seeme easie unto us) but also to change and variation: Which is the noblest and most profitable of their apprentisages. The best of my corporall complexions, is, that I am flexible and little opiniative. I have certaine inclinations, more proper and ordinarie, and more pleasing than others. But with small adoe and without compulsion, I can easilie leave them and embrace the contrarie. A yong man should trouble his rules, to stirre-up his vigor; and take heede he suffer not the same to grow faint, sluggish or reastie: For, there is no course of life so weake and sottish, as that which is mannaged by Order, Methode and Discipline.

*Ad primum lapidem uectari cum placet, hora  
Sumitur ex libro, si prurit frictus ocelli  
Angubus, inspecta genesi collyria quaerit.*

*List he to ride in coach but to Mile-end, By th'Almanacke he doeth the houre attend:  
If his eye-corner itch, the remedie,  
He fet's from calculation of nativitie.*

If he beleve me, he shall often give himselfe unto all manner of excesse: otherwise the least disorder will utterly overthrowe him; and so make him unfit and unvelcome in all conversations. *The most contrary qualitie in an honest man, is nice-delicatenesse, and to bee tied to one certaine particular fashion.* It is particular, if it be not supple and pliable. *It is a kind of reproch, through impuissance not to doe or not to dare, what one seeth his other companions doe or dare.* Let such men keepe their kitchin. It is undecent in all other men, but vitious and intollerable in one professing Armes: who (as *Philopæmen* saide) should fashion himselfe to all manner of inequalitye and diversitie of life. Although I have (as much as might be) beene enured to libertie and fashioned to indifferencie; yet in growing aged, I have through carelesnesse relied more upon certaine forms (my age is now exempted from institution, and hath not anie thing else to looke unto, but to maintaine it selfe) which custome hath already, without thinking on it, in certaine things so well imprinted her character in me, that I deeme it a kinde of excesse to leave them. And without long practise, I can neither sleepe by day; nor eat betweene meales; nor breake my fast; nor goe to bed without some enterrmission (as of three houres after supper) nor get children, but before I fall asleepe, and that never standing; nor beare mine owne sweate; nor quench my thirst, either with cleere water or wine alone; nor continue long bare-headed; nor have mine haire cut after dinner. And I could as hardly spare my gloves as my shirt: or forbear washing of my handes, both in the morning and rising from the table; or lie in a bed

without a testerne and curtaines about it, as of most necessarie things: I could dine without a table-cloth, but hardly without a cleane napkin, as Germans commonly doe. I foule and fully them more than either they or the Italians: and I seldome use either spoone or forke. I am sorie we follow not a custome, which according to the example of Kings I have seene begunne by some; that upon every course or change of dish, as we have shift of cleane trenchers, so we might have change of cleane napkins. We reade that that laborious souldier *Marius*, growing olde, grew more nicely-delicate in his drinking, and would taste no drinke, except in a peculiar cuppe of his. As for me, I observe a kinde of like methode in glasses, and of one certaine forme, and drinke not willingly in a common glasse: no more than of one ordinary hand: I mislike all manner of mettall in regarde of a bright transparent matter: let mine eyes also have teste of what I drinke according to their capacitie. I am beholding to custome for many such nicenesses and singularities. Nature hath also on the other side bestowed this upon me, that I can not wel brooke two ful meales in one day, without surcharging my stomacke; nor the meere abstinence of one, without filling my selfe with winde, drying my mouth and dulling my appetite: And to find great offence by a long serene or night-calme. For some yeeres since, in the out-roades or night-services that happen in times of warres, which many times continue all night, five or sixe houres after my stomacke beginnes to qualme, my head feeleth a violent aking, so that I can hardly hold-out till morning without vomiting. When others goe to breakefast, I goe to sleepe: and within a while after I shall be as fresh and jolly as before. I ever thought that the serene never fell, but in the shutting in of night, but having in these latter yeeres long time frequented very familiarly the conversation of a Gentleman, possessed with this opinion, that it is more sharpe and dangerous about the declination of the Sunne, an houre or two before it set, which he carefully escheweth, and despiseth that which falles at night: hee hath gone about to perswade and imprint into me, not onely his discourse but also his conceit. What if the very doubt and inquisition, woundeth our imagination and changeth us? Such as altogether yeelde to these bendings, drawe the whole ruine upon themselves. And I bewaile diverse Gentlemen, who being yoong and in perfect health, have by the ignorant foolishnes of their Physitions brought themselves into consumptions and other lingering diseases; and as it were in Physikes fetters. Were it not much better to be troubled with a rheume, than for ever through discustome, in an action of so great use and consequence, loose the commerce and conversation of common life? Oh yrkesome learning! Oh Science full of molestation; that wasteth us the sweetest houres of the day. Let us extend our possession unto the utmost meanes. A man shall at last, in opinionating himselfe, harden and enure himselfe for it, and so correct his complexion: as did *Cæsar* the falling sicknesse, with contemning and corrupting the same. A man should apply himselfe to the best rules, but not subject himselfe unto them: except to such (if any there be) that dutie and thraldome unto them, be profitable. Both Kings and Philosophers obey nature, and go to the stoole, and so doe Ladies: Publike lives are due unto ceremony: mine which is obscure and private, enjoyeth all naturall dispensations. To be a Souldier and a *Gascoyne*, are qualities somewhat subject to indiscretion. And I am both. Therefore will I say thus much of this action; that it is requisite we should remit the same unto certaine prescribed night-houres; and by custome (as I have done) force

and subject our selves unto it: But not (as I have done) growing in yeeres, strictly tie him selfe, to the care of a particular convenient place, and of a commodious *Ajax* or easie close-stoole for that purpose: and make it troublesome with long sitting and nice observation. Neverthelesse in homeliest matters and fowlest offices, is it not in some sorte excusable, to require more care and cleanelinesse? *Naturâ homo mundum & elegans animal est.* By nature man is a cleanly and neate creature.

Of all naturall actions, there is none wherein I am more loath to be troubled or interrupted, when I am at it. I have seene divers great men and souldiers, much troubled and vexed with their bellies untune and disorder, when at untimely houres it calleth upon them: whilst mine and my selfe never misse to call one upon another at our appointment: which is, as soone as I get out of my bed, except some urgent busines or violent sicknesse trouble mee. Therefore (as I saide) I judge no place where sicke men may better seate themselves in securitie, then quietly and wisht to holde themselves in that course of life, wherein the have beene brought up and habituated. Any change or variation soever, astonieth and distempereth. Will any beleeve, that Chestnuttes can hurt a *Perigordin* or a *Luquois*, or that milke or whit-meates are hurtful unto a mountaine-dwelling people? whome if one seeke to divert from their naturall diet, he shall not onely prescribe them a new, but a contrarie forme of life: A change, which a healthy man can hardly endure. Appoynt a *Bretton* of three score yeeres of age to drinke water; put a Sea-man or Mariner into a Stove; forbid a lackey of Baske to walke: you bring them out of their element, you deprive them of all motion, and in the end, of aire, of light and life.

*an uiuere tanti est?*

*Doe we reckon it so deare,  
Onely living to be here?*

*Cogimur à suetis animum suspendere rebus.  
Atque ut uiuamus, uiuere desinimus:*

*From things erst us'd we must suspend our minde,  
We leave to live that we may live by kinde.*

*Hos superesse reor quibus & spirabilis aër,  
Et lux qua regimur, redditur ipsa grauis.*

*Doe I thinke they live longer, whom doth grieve  
Both aire they breathe, and light whereby they live.*

If they doe no other good, at least they doe this, that betimes they prepare their patients unto death, by little undermining and cutting-off the use of life. Both in health and in sicknesse, I have willingly seconded and given my selfe over to those appetites that pressed me. I allow great authoritie to my desires and propensions. I love not to cure one evill by another mischief. I hate those remedies, that importune more then sicknesse. To be subject to the cholike, and to be tide to abstaine from the pleasure I have in eating of oysters, are two mischiefes for one. The disease pincheth

us on the one side, the rule on the other. Since we are ever in danger to misdoe, let us rather hazard our selves to follow pleasure. Most men doe contrary and thinke nothing profitable, that is not painefull: Facilitie is by them suspected. Mine appetite hath in diverse things very happily accommodated and ranged it selfe to the health of my stomake. Being yong, acrimonie and tartnesse in sawces did greatly delight me, but my stomake being since glutted therewith, my taste hath likewise seconded the same. Wine hurts the sicke; it is the first thing that with an invincible distaste, brings my mouth out of taste. Whatsoever I receive unwillingly or distastefully hurts me, whereas nothing doth it whereon I feede with hunger and rellish. I never received harme by any action that was very pleasing unto me. And yet I have made al medicinall conclusions, largely to yeeld to my pleasures. And when I was yong,

*Quem circumcursans huc atque huc sæpe Cupido  
Fulgebat crocina splendidus in tunica,*

*About whom Cupid running here and there,  
Shinde in the saffron coate which he did weare.*

I have as licentiously and inconsiderately as any other furthred al such desires as possessed me;

*Et militai non sine gloria.*

*A Souldier of loves hoast,  
I was not without boast.*

More notwithstanding in continuation and holding out, then by snatches or by stealth.

*Sex me uix memini sustinuisse uices.*

*I scarce remember past  
Six courses I could last.*

It is surely a wonder accompanied with unhappinesse, to confesse how yong and weake I was brought under it's subjection. Nay, shall I not blush to tell it? It was long before the age of choise or yeares of discretion: I was so yong, as I remember nothing before. And fittely may my fortune be compared to that of *Quartilla*, who remembered not her mayden-head.

*Inde tragus celerésque pili, mirandáque matri  
Barba meæ.*

*Thence goatishnesse, haïres over-soone, a bearde  
To make my mother wonder, and afear'de.*

Phisitions commonly enfold and joyne their rules unto profit, according to the violence of sharpe desires or earnest longings, that incidently follow the sicke. No longing-desire can be imagined so strange and vicious, but nature will apply herselfe unto it. And then how easie is it to content ones

fantasie? In mine opinion, this part importeth all in all; at least more and beyond all other. The most grievous and ordinary evils are those, which fancie chargeth us withall. That Spanish saying doth every way please me: *Deffienda me Dios de my. God defend me from my selfe.* Being sicke I am sorry I have not some desire may give mee the contentment to satiate and cloy the same: Scarsly would a medicine divert me from it, So doe I when I am in health: I hardly see any thing left to be hoped or wished-for. I t is pittie a man should be so weakned and enlanguished, that he hath nothing left him but wishing. The arte of Phisicke is not so resolute, that whatsoever wee doe, we shall be voide of all authoritie to doe-it. Shee changeth and she varrieth according to climates; according to the Moones; according to *Fernelius*; and according to *Scala*. If your Phisition thinke it not good that you sleepe, that you drinke wine, or eate such and such meates: Care not you for that; I will finde you another that shall not be of his opinion. The diversitie of phisicall arguments and medicinall opinions, embraceth all manner of formes. I saw a miserable sicke man, for the infinite desire he had to recover, ready to burst, yea and to die with thirst; whom not long since another Phisition mocked, utterly condemning the others counsell, as hurtfull for him. Had not he bestowed his labour well? A man of that coate is lately dead of the stone, who during the time of his sicknesse used extreame abstinence to withstand his evill; his fellowes affirme that contrary, his long fasting had withered and dried him up, and so concocted the gravell in his kidneis. I have found, that in my hurts and other sickneses, earnest talking distempers and hurts me as much as any disorder I commit. My voyce costs me deare, and wearie me; for I have it lowd, shrill and forced: So that, when I have had occasion to entertaine the eares of great men, about weightie affaires, I have often troubled them with care how to moderate my voyce. This storie deserveth to bee remembred and to divert me. A certaine man, in one of the Greeke schooles spake very lowde, as I doe; the maister of the ceremonies sent him word, he should speake lower: let him (quoth he) send me the tune or key in which he would have me speake. The other replide, that hee should take his tune from his eares to whom he spake. It was well saide, so he understood himselfe: Speake according as you have to do with your auditorie. For if one say, let it suffice that he heareth you; or, governe your selfe by him: I do not think he had reason to say so. The tune or motion of the voyce, hath some expression or signification of my meaning: It is in me to direct the same, that so I may the better represent my selfe. There is a voyce to instruct, one to flatter, and another to chide. I will not onely have my voice come to him, but peradventure to wound and pierce him. When I brawle and rate my lackey, with a sharpe and piercing tune; were it fit he should come to me and say, Maister speake softly, I understand and heare you very well? *Est quaedam uox ad auditum accomodata, non magnitudine sed proprietate. There is a kinde of voyce well applied to the hearing, not by the greatnesse of it, but by the proprietie.* The word is halfe his that speakeh, and halfe his that harkoneth unto it. The hearer ought to prepare himselfe to the motion or bound it taketh. As betweene those that play at tennis, he who keepes the hazard, doth prepare, stand, stirre and march, according as he perceives him who stands at the house, to looke, stand, remoove and strike the ball, and according to the stroke. Experience hath also taught me this, that we loose our selves with impatience. *Evills have their life, their limites; their diseases and their health.* The constitution of diseases is framed

by the patterne of the constitution of living creatures. They have their fortune limited even at their birth, and their dayes allotted them. He that shall imperiously goe about, or by compulsion (contrary to their courses) to abridge them, doth lengthen and multiply them; and instead of appeasing, doth harsell and wring them. I am of *Crantors* opinion, that a man must neither obstinately nor frantikely oppose himselfe against evils; nor through demissenesse of courage faintingly yeeld unto them, but according to their condition and ours, naturally incline to them. A man must give sickenesses their passage: And I finde that they stay least with me, because I allow them their swinge, and let them doe what they list. And contrary to common-received rules, I have without ayde or arte ridde my selfe of some, that are deemed the most obstinately-lingring, and unremoovably-obstinate. *Let Nature worke*: Let hir have hir will: Shee knoweth what shee hath to doe, and understands hir selfe better then we doe. But such a one died of it, will you say; So shall you doubtlesse; if not of that, yet of some other disease. And how many have wee seene die, when they have had a whole Colledge of Phisitions round about their bed, and looking in their excrements? *Example is a bright looking-glasse, universall and for all shapes to looke-into*. If it be a lushious or taste-pleasing potion, take it hardly; it is ever so much present ease. So it be delicious and sweetely-tasting, I will never stand much upon the name or colour of it. *Pleasure is one of the chieftest kindes of profite*. I have suffered rheumes, gowtie defluxions, relaxions, pantings of the heart, megreimes and other such-like accidents, to grow old in me, and die their naturall death; all which have left me, when I halfe enured and framed my selfe to foster them. They are better conjured by curtesie, then by bragging or threats, *We must gently obey and endure the laws of our condition*: We are subject to grow aged, to become weake and to fall sicke, in spight of all phisicke. It is the first lesson the Mexicans give their children; When they come out of their mothers wombes, they thus salute them: *My childe, thou art come into the world to suffer; Therefore suffer and hold thy peace*. It is injustice for one to grieve, that any thing hath befallen to any one, which may happen to all men. *Indignare si quid in te iniquè propriè constitutum est. Then take it ill, if any thing be decreede unjustly against thee alone*. Looke on an aged man, who sueth unto God to maintaine him in perfect, full an vigorous health, that is to say, he will be pleased to make him yong againe:

*Stulte quid hæc frustra uotis puerilibus optas?*

*Foole, why dost thou in vaine desire,  
With childish prayers thus t'aspire?*

Is it not folly? his condition will not beare it. The gowt, the stone, the gravell and indigestion are symptomes or affects of long-continued yeares; as heates, raines and windes, are incident to long voyages. *Plato* cannot believe, that *Æsculapius* troubled himselfe with good rules and diet to provide for the preservarion of life, in a weake, wasted and corrupted body: being unprofitable for his country, inconvenient for his vocation, and unfit to get sound and sturdy Children: and deemes not that care inconvenient unto divine justice and heavenly Wisedome, which is to direct all things unto profite. My good sir, the matter is at an end: You

cannot be recovered; for the most, you can be but tampered withal, and somewhat under-propt, and for some houres have your misery prolonged.

*Non secus instantem cupiens fulcire ruinam  
Diuersis contrà nititur obicibus,  
Donec certa dies omni compage solutâ,  
Ipsam cum rebus subruat auxilium.*

*So he that would an instant ruine stay,  
With diuers props strives it to underlay,  
Till all the frame dissolv'd, a certaine day,  
The props with the edifice doth oversway.*

*A man must learne to endure that patiently, which he cannot avoyde conveniently.* Our life is composed, as is the harmonie of the World, of contrary things; so of diuers tunes, some pleasant, some harsh, some sharpe, some flat, some low and some high: What would that Musition say, that should love but some one of them? He ought to know how to use them severally and how to entermingle them. So should we both of goods and evils, which are consubstantiall to our life. Our being cannot subsist without this commixture, whereto one side is no lesse necessarie than the other. To go about to kicke against naturall necessity, were to represent the folly of *Ctesiphon*, who undertooke to strike or wince with his mule. I consult but little about the alterations which I feele: For these kinde of men are advantageous, when they hold you at their mercy. They glutt your eares with their Prognostications, and surprising me heretofore, when by my sicknesse I was brought very lowe and weake, they have injuriously handled me with their Doctrines, positions, prescriptions, magistrall fopperies and prosopopeyall gravitie; sometimes threatning me with great paine and smart, and othertimes menacing me with neere and unavoydable death: All which did indeede move, stirre and touch me neere, but could not dismay, or remoove mee from my place or resolution: If my judgement be thereby neither changed nor troubled; it was at least hindred: It is ever in agitation and combating. Now I entreate my imagination as gently as I can, and were it in my power I would cleane discharge it of all paine and contestation. A man must further, help, flatter and (if he can) cozen and deceive it. My spirit is fit for that office. There is no want of apparances every where. Did he perswade, as he preacheth, he should successefully ayde me. Shall I give you an example? He tels me, it is for my good, that I am troubled with the gravell: That the compositions of my age, must naturally suffer some leake or flaw: It is time they beginne to relent and gaine-say themselves: It is a common necessitie: And it had beene no new wonder for me. That way I pay the reward due unto age, and I could have no better reckoning of it. That such company ought to comfort me, being fallen into the most ordinary accident incident to men of my dayes. I every where see some afflicted with the same kinde of evill; whose society is honourable unto me, forsomuch as it commonly possesseth the better sort of men: and whose essence hath a certaine nobilitie and dignitie connexed unto it: That of men tormented therewith, fewe are better cheape quit of it: and yet, it costs them the paine of a troublesome dyet, tedious regiment and daily loathsome taking of medicinall drugges and phisicall potions: Whereas I meerly owe it to my good fortune. For,

some ordinarie broths made of Eringos or Sea-Holme, and Burstwort, which twice or thrice I have swallowed downe, at the request of some Ladies, who more kindly then my disease is unkind, offred me the moitie of theirs, have equally seemed unto mee as easy to take, as unprofitable in operation. They must pay a thousand vows unto *Æsculapius*, and as many crownes to their Physition, for an easie profluvion or abundant running of gravell, which I often receive by the benefite of Nature. Let me be in anie company, the decencie of my countenance is thereby nothing troubled; and I can hold my water full tenne houres, and if neede be, as long as any man that is in perfect health: The feare of this evill (saith hee) did heeretofore affright thee, when yet it was unknowne to thee. The cries and despaire of those, who through their impatience exasperate the same; bred a horror of it in thee. It is an evill that comes and falles into those limmes, by, and with which thou hast most offended: Thou art a man of conscience:

*Quæ uenit indignè pœna, dolenda uenit.*

*The paine that comes without desart,  
Comes to us with more griefe and smart.*

Consider but how milde the punishment is, in respect of others, and how favourable. Consider his slownesse in comming: he onely incommodeth that state and encombred that season of thy life, which (all things considered) is now become barren and lost, having as it were by way of composition given place unto the sensuall licentiousnesse and wanton pleasures of thy youth. The feare and pittie, men have of this evill, may serve thee as a cause of glory. A qualitie, whereof, if thy judgement be purified and thy discourse perfectly sound, thy friends doe notwithstanding discover some sparks in thy complexion. It is some pleasure for a man to heare others say of him: *Loe there a patterne of true fortitude; loe there a mirrour of matchlesse patience.* Thou art seene to sweate with labour, to grow pale and wanne, to wax red, to quake and tremble, to cast and vomite blood, to endure strange contractions, to brooke convulsions, to trill downe brackish and great teares, to make thicke, muddie, blacke, bloody and fearefull urine, or to have it stopt by some sharpe or rugged stone, which pricketh and cruelly wringeth the necke of the yarde: entertaining in the meane while the by-standers with an ordinarie and undanted countenance, by pawses jeasting and by entremissions dallying with thy servants: keeping a parte in a continued discourse; with wordes now and then excusing thy griefe, and abating thy painefull sufferance. Dost thou remember those men of former ages, who to keep their vertue in breath and exercise, did with such greedinesse seeke after evils? Suppose Nature driveth and brings thee unto that glorious Schoole, into which thou hadst never come of thine owne accord and free will. If thou tel me, it is a dangerous and mortall evill,: what others are not so? For, it is a kinde of phisicall cousenage, to except any, and so they goe directly unto death: what matter is it, whether they goe by accident unto it; and easily slide on either hand, toward the way that leadeth us thereunto? But thou diest not because thou arte sicke; thou diest because thou arte living. Death is able to kill thee without the helpe of any sicknesse. Sicknesse have to some prolonged their death; who have lived the longer, inasmuch as they imagined they were still dying.



Seeing it is of woundes, as of diseases, that some are medicinall and wholesome. The chollike is often no lesse long-lived than you. Many are seene, in whom it hath continued even from their infancy unto their extreamest age, who had they not forsaken hir company, she was like to have assisted them further. You oftner kill her, than she doth you. And if she did present thee with the image of neere-iminent death, were it not a kinde office for a man of that age, to reduce it unto the cogitations of his end? And which is woorse, thou hast no longer cause to be cured: Thus and howsoever, common necessitie calles for thee against the first day. Consider but how artificially and how mildely she brings thee in distaste with life, and out of liking with the world; not forcing thee with a tyrannicall subjection, as infinite other diseases doe, wherwith thou seest olde men possessed, which continually holde them fettered and ensnared, and without release of weakenesse or entermission of paines; but by advertisements and instructions, reprised by intervalles: entermixing certaine pawses of rest, as if it were, to give thee meanes, at thy ease, to meditate and repeate her lesson. To give thee leasure and abilitie to judge soundly, and like a man of corage to take a resolution, shee presents thee with the state of thy condition perfect, both in good and evill, and in one same day, sometimes a most pleasing, sometimes a most intolerable life. *If thou embrace not death, at least thou shakest her by the hand once a moneth.* Whereby thou hast more cause to hope, that she will one day surprise thee without threatning. And that being so often brought into the haven; supposing to be still in thy accustomed state, one morning at unawares, both thy selfe and thy confidence shall be transported over. A man hath no reason to complaine against those diseases, which so equally divide time with health. I am beholding to Fortune, that she so often assailes mee with one same kinde of weapon: shee by long use doth fashion and enure mee unto it, harden and habituate me thereunto: I nowe knowe within a little which way and how I shall be quit. For want of naturall memorie I frame some of paper. And when some new symptome or accident commeth to my evill, I set it downe in writing: whence it proceedeth, that having now (in a manner) passed over and through all sortes of examples, if any astonishment threaten mee; running and turning over these my loose memorialles (as *Sybillas* leaves) I misse no more to find to comfort me with some favourable prognostication, in my former-past experience. Custome dooth also serve mee, to hope the better heereafter. For, the conduct of this distribution, having so long beene constituted, it is to be supposed that Nature will not change this course, and no other worse accident shall follow, then that I feele. Moreover, the condition of this disease is not ill-seeming to my ready and sodaine complexion. When it but faintly assailes mee, it makes me afraide, because it is like to continue long: But naturally it hath certaine vigorous and violent excesses. It doth violently shake me for one or two dayes. My reynes have continued a whole age without alteration, an other is now well-nigh come, that they have changed state. *Evilles as well as goods have their periodes:* this accident is happily come to his last. Age weakeneth the heate of my stomacke: his digestion being thereby lesse perfect, hee sendeth this crude matter to my reines. Why may not, at a certaine revolution, the heat of my reines be likewise infebled: so that they may no longer petrifie my fleagme; and Nature addresse her selfe to find some other course of purgation? Yeares have evidently made me dry up certaine rheumes: And why not these

excrements, that minister matter to the stone or gravell? But is there any thing so pleasant, in respect of this sodaine change, when by an extreame paine, I come by the voyding of my stone, to recover, as from a lightning, the faire Sunne-shine of health; so free and full, as it happeneth in our sodaine and most violent cholliks? Is there any thing in this paine suffered, that may be counterpoised to the sweete pleasure of so ready an amendment? By how much more health seemeth fairer unto me after sickenes, so neere and so contiguous, that I may know them in presence one of another, in their richest ornaments; wherein they attyre themselves avy, as it were confront and counterchecke one another: Even as the Stoickes say, that *Vices were profitablie brought in; to give esteeme and make head unto vertue*; So may we with better reason and bold conjecture, affirme, that Nature hath lent us grieffe and paine, for the honour of pleasure and service of indolencie. When *Socrates* (after he had his yrons or fetters taken from him) felt the pleasure or tickling of that itching, which their weight and rubbing had caused in his legges; he rejoyced, to consider the neere affinitie that was betweene paine and pleasure: how they combined together by a necessarie bond; so that at turnes they enter-engender and succede one an other: And cryed out to good *Æsop*e, that he should from that consideration have taken a proper body unto a quaint fable. The worst I see in other deseases, is, that they are not so grievous in their effect, as in their issue. A man is whole yeare to recover himselfe; ever full of weaknesse, alwayes full of feare.

There is so much hazard and so many degrees before one can be brought to safety, that hee is never at an end. Before you can leave-off your cover-chef and then your nightcappe; before you can the ayre againe, or have leave to drinke Wine, or lye with your Wife, or eate melons, it is much, if you fall not into some relapse or new miserie. The gravell hath this priviledge, that it is cleane carried away. Whereas other maladies, leave ever some impression and alteration, which leaveth the bodie susceptible or undertaking of some new infirmitie; and they lend one an other their hands. Such are to be excused, as are contented with the possession they have over us, without extending the same, and without introducing their sequell: But courteous, kind and gracious are those, whose passage brings us some profitable consequence. Since I have had the stone-chollike, I finde my selfe discharged of other accidents: more (as me thinks) then I was before, and never had ague since. I argue, that the extreame and frequent vomites I endure, purge mee; and on the other side, the distasts and strange abstinences I tolerate, disgest my offending humours: and Nature voydeth in these stones and gravell, whatsoever is superfluous and hurtfull in her. Let no man tell me, that it is a medicine too deere sold. For, what availe so many loathsome pills, stincking pocions, cauterizings, incisions, sweatings, setons, dyets and so divers fashions of curing, which, because we are not able to undergoe their violence and brooke their importunity, doe often bring us unto our graves? And therefore, when I am surprized, I take it as physicke: and when I am free, I take it as a constant and full deliverance. Lo here an other particular favour of my disease, which is, that he in a manner, keepes his play a-part, and let's mee keepe mine owne; or else I want but courage to doe it: In his greatest emotion, I have held out tenne houres on Horse-backe with him. Doe but endure, you neede no other rule or regiment: Play, dally, dyne, runne, be gamesome,

doe this, and if you can, doe the other thing, your disorder and debauching will rather availle than hurt it. Say thus much to one that hath the pox, or to one that hath the gowt, or to one that is belly-broken or codburst. Other infirmities have more universall bonds, torment farre-otherwise our actions, pervert all our order, and engage all the state of mans life unto their consideration: Whereas this doth only twitch and pinch the skinne, it neither medleth with your understanding, nor with your will, tongue, feete nor hands, but leaves them all in your disposition; it rather rouzeth and awaketh you, then deterre and drouzie you. The mind is wounded by the burning of a feaver, suppressed by an Epilepsie, confounded by a migrane, and in conclusion, astonied and dismayde by all the deseases that touch or wound the whole masse of his body, and it's noblest partes: This never medleth with it. If therefore it go ill with it, his be the blame: she bewrayeth, she forsaketh and she displaceth hirselle. None but fools will be perswaded, that this hard, gretty and massie body, which is concocted and petrified in our kidneis, may be dissolved by drinks. And therefore after it is stirred, there is no way, but to give it passage; For if you doe not, he will take it himselfe. This other peculiar commodity I observe, that it is an infirmitie, wherein we have but little to divine. We are dispensed from the trouble, whereinto other maladies cast us, by the uncertaintie of their causes, conditions and progresses. A trouble infinitely painful. We have no neede of doctorall consultations, or collegiall interpretations. Our sences tell us where it is, and what it is. By, and with such arguments, forcible or weake (as *Cicero* doth the infirmitie of his eld-age) I endeavour to lull asleepe, and studie to amuse my imagination, and to supple or annoynt her sores. If they growe worse to morrow; to morrow we shall provide for new remedies or escapes. That this is true: loe afterward againe, happily the lightest motion wrings pure blood out of my reines. And what of that? I omitte not to stirre as before, and with a youthfull and insolent heate ride after my hounds. And finde that I have great reason of so important an accident, which costs me but a deafe heavinesse and dombe alteration in that parte. It is some great stone that wasteth and consumeth the substance of my kidneis and my life, which I voyde by little and little: not without some naturall pleasure, as an excrement now superfluous and troublesome. And feele I something to shake? Except not that I amuse my selfe to feele my pulse or looke into my urine, thereby to finde or take some tedious prevention. I shall come time enough to feele the smart, without lengthening the same with the paine of feare. *Who feareth to suffer, suffereth alreadie, because he feareth.*

Seeing the doubt and ignorance of those, who wil and do meddle with expounding the drifts and shifts of nature, with her internall progresses; and so many false prognostications of their arte should make us understand, her meanes infinitely unknowne. There is great uncertaintie, varietie and obscuritie, in that she promiseth and menaceth us. Except old-age, which is an undoubted signe, of deaths approaching: of all other accidents, I see few signes of future things, whereon we may ground our divination. I onely judge my selfe by true-feeling-sense and not by discourse: To what end? since I will adde nothing thereunto except attention and patience. Will you know what I gaine by it? Behold those who doe otherwise, and who depend on so many diverse perswasions and counselles; how oft imagination presseth them without the bodie. I have

diverse times being in safetie and free from all dangerous accidents, taken pleasure to communicate them unto Phisitions, as but then comming upon me. I endured the arrest or doome of their horrible conclusions, and remained so much the more bounden unto God for his grace, and better instructed of the vanitie of this arte. *Nothing ought so much be recommended unto youth, as activitie and vigilancie.* Our life is nothing but motion, I am hardly shaken, and am slow in all things, be it to rise, to go to bed, or to my meales. Seaven of the clocke in the morning is to me an early houre: And where I may command, I neither dine before eleven, nor sup till after six. I have heretofore imputed the cause of agues or maladies, whereinto I have falne, to the lumpish heavinesse or drowzy dulnesse, which my long sleeping had caused me. And ever repented me to fall asleepe againe in the morning. *Plato* condemnes more the excesse of sleeping, then the surfet of drinking. I love to lie hard and alone, yea and without a woman by me: after the kingly maner: some what well and warme covered. I never have my bed warmed; but since I came to be an old man, if neede require, I have clothes given me to warme my feete and stomake. Great *Scipio* was taxed to be a sluggard or heavy sleeper (in my conceit) for no other cause, but that men were offended, hee onely should be the man, in whom no faulte might justly be found. If there be any curiositie in my behaviour or maner of life, it is rather about my going to bed, then any thing else; but if neede be, I generally yeeld and accommodate my selfe unto necessitie, as well and as quietly, and any other whosoever. Sleeping hath possessed a great parte of my life: and as old as I am, I can sleepe eight or nine houres together. I do with profit withdraw my selfe from this sluggish propension, and evidently finde my selfe better by it. Indeede I somewhat feele the stroke of alteration, but in three dayes it is past. And I see few that live with lesse (when neede is) and that more constantly exercise themselves, nor whom toying and labour offend lesse. My body is capable of a firme agitation, so it be not vehement and sodaine. I avoide violent exercises, and which induce me to sweate: my limbs will sooner be wearied, then heated. I can stand a whole day long, and am seldome weary with walking. Since my first age, I ever loved rather to ride then walke upon paved streetes. Going a foote, I shall durtie my selfe up to the waste: and little men, going amongst our streetes, are subject (for want of presentiall apparance) to be justled or elbowed. I love to take my rest, be it sitting or lying-along, with my legs as high or higher then my seate. No profession or occupation is more pleasing then the militarie; A profession or exercise, both noble in execution (for, *the strongest, most generous and prowdest of all vertues, is true valour*) and noble in it's cause. No utilitie, is either more just or universall then the protection of the repose, or defence of the greatnesse of ones country. The company and dayly conversation of so many noble, yong and active men, cannot but be well-pleasing to you: the dayly and ordinary sight of so diverse tragicall spectacles: the libertie and uncontroled freedome of that artelesse and unaffected conversation, masculine and ceremonillesse maner of life: the hourelly varietie of a thousand ever-changing and differing actions: the couragious and minde-stirring harmonie of warlike musike, which at once entertaineth with delight and enflameth with longing, both your eares and your minde: the imminent and matchlesse honour of that exercise; yea the very sharpenesse and difficultie of it, which *Plato* esteemeth so little, that in his imaginary Commonwealth, he imparteth the same both to women and to children.

As a voluntary Souldier, or adventurous knight you enter the lists, the bands or particular hazards, according as your selfe judge of their successes or importance: and you see when your life may therein be excusably employed,

*pulchrúmque mori succurrit in armis.*

*And nobly it doth come in minde,  
To die in armes may honor finde.*

Basely to feare common dangers, that concerne so numberlesse a multitude, and not to dare, whatso many sortes of men dare, yea whole nations together, is onely incident to base, craven and milke-sop-hearts. *Company and good fellowship doth harten and encourage children.* If some chance to exceede and outgoe you in knowledge, in experience, in grace, in strength, in fortune, you have third and colaterall causes to blame and take hold-of; but to yeeld to them in constancie of minde, and resolution of courage, you have none but yourselfe to find fault with. *Death is much more abject, languishing, grisly and painefull in a downe-bed, then in a field-combate; and agues, catarres or apoplexies, as painefull and mortall, as an harquebusado.* He that should be made undantedly to beare the accidents of common life, should not neede to bumbast his courage, to become a man at armes. *Uivere, mi Lucilli, militare est. Friend mine, to live is to goe on warre-fare.* I can not remember that ever I was scabbed: yet is itching one of natures sweetest gratifications, and as readie at hand. But repentance doth over-impotunately attend on it. I exercise the same in mine eares (and by fits) which within doe often itch. I was borne with all my senses sound, almost in perfection. My stomake is commodiously good; and so is my head: both which, together with my winde, maintaine themselves athwart my agues. I have outlived that age, to which some nations have not without some reason prescribed for a just end unto life, that they allowed not a man to exceede the same. I have notwithstanding some remyses or intermissions yet: though unconstant and short, so sound and neate, that there is little difference betweene them and the health and indolencie of my youth. I speake not of youthly vigor and chearefull blithnesse; there is noreason they should follow me beyond their limites:

*Non hæc amplius est liminis, aut aquæ  
Cœlestis, patiens latus.*

*These sides cannot still sustaine,  
Lying without dores, showing raine.*

My visage and eyes doe presently discover me. Thence beginne all my changes, and somewhat sharper then they are in effect. I often moove my friends to pittie, ere I feele the cause of it. My looking glasse doth not amaze me: for even in my youth it hath diverse times befallne me, so to put-on a duskie looke, a wanne colour, a troubled behaviour and of ill presage, without any great accident; so that Phisitions perceiving no inward cause to answer this outward alteration, ascribed the same to the secret minde or some concealed passion, which inwardly gnawed and consumed me. They were deceived, were my body directed by me, as is my

minde, we should march a little more at our ease. I had it then, not onely exempted from all trouble, but also full of satisfaction and blithenesse, as it is most commonly, partly by it's owne complexion, and partly by it's owne desseigne:

*Nec uitiant artus ægræ contagia mentis.*

*Nor doth sicke mindes infection,  
Pollute strong joynts complexion.*

I am of opinion, that this her temperature hath often raised my body from his fallings: he is often suppressed, whereas she, if not lasciviously wanton, at least in quiet and reposed estate. I had a quartan ague which held me foure or five moneths, and had altogether disvisaged and altered my countenance, yet my minde held ever out, not onely peaceably but pleasantly. So I feele no paine ot smarte; weaknesse and languishing doe not greatly perplex me. I see diuers corporall defailances, the only naming of which breede a kind of horror, and which I would feare lesse then a thousand passions and agitations of the mind, which I see in use. I resolve to runne no more: it sufficeth me to goe-on faire and softly; nor do I complaine of their naturall decadence or empairing that possesseth me,

*Quis tumidum guttur miratur in Alpibus?*

*Who wonders a swolne throate to see,  
In those about the Alpes that bee?*

No more, then I grieve that my continuance is not as long and sound, as that of an oake. I have no cause to finde fault with my imagination. I have in my life had very few thoughts or cares, that have so much as interrupted the course of my sleepe, except of desire, to awaken without dismay or afflicting me. I seldome dreame, and when I doe, it is of extravagant things and chymeras; commonly produced of pleasant conceits, rather ridiculous then sorrowfull. And thinke it true, that dreames are the true interpretors of our inclinations: but great skill is required to sort and understand them.

*Res quæ in uita usurpant homines, cogitant, curant, uident,  
Quæque agunt uigilantes, agitantque ea sicut insomno accidunt  
Minus mirandum est.*

*It is no wonder if the things, which we  
Care-for, use, thinke, doe-of, or waking see,  
Unto us sleeping represented be.*

Plato saith moreover, that is the office of wisdom to draw diuining instructions from them, against future times. Wherein I see nothing but the wonderfull experience, that *Socrates*, *Xenophon* and *Aristotle* relate of them: men of unreprouable authoritie. Histories reporte, that the inhabitants of the Atlantique Iles never dreame: who feede on nothing that hath beene slaine. Which I adde, because it is peradventure the occasion they dreame not. *Pythagoras* ordained therefore a certaine methode of

feeding, that dreames might be sorted of some purpose. Mine are tender, and cause no agitation of body or expression of voice in me. I have in my dayes seene many strangely stirred with them. *Theon* the Philosopher walked in dreaming; and *Pericles* his boy went upon the tiles and top of houses. I stand not much on nice choice of meates at the table: and commonly beginne with the first and neerest dish: and leape not willingly from one taste to another. Multitude of dishes, and varietie of services displeas me as much as any other throng. I am easily pleased with few messes, and hate the opinion of *Favorinus*, that at a banquet you must have that dish whereon you feede hungerly taken from you, and ever have a new-one set in the place: And that it is a niggardly supper, if all the guests be not glutted with pinions and rumps of divers kindes of fowle: and that onely the daintie bird *heccaffico* or snapfig deserveth to be eaten whole at one morsell. I feede much upon salte cates, and love to have my bread somewhat fresh: And mine own Baker makes none other for my bord; against the fashion of my cuntry. In my youth, my overseers had much adoe to reforme the refusall I made of such meats as youth doth commonly love best, as sweete-meates, confets and marchpanes. My tutor was wont to find great fault with my lothing of such dainties, as a kinde of squeamish delicacie. And to say truth, it is nothing but a difficultie of taste, where it once is applied. Whosoever remooveth from a childe a certaine particular or obstinate affection to browne bread, to bakon, or to garlike, taketh friandize from him. There are some, that make it a labour, and thinke it a patience to regret a good piece of powdred beefe, or a good gammon of bakon, amongst partridges. Are not they wise men in the meane time? It is the chiefe daintie of all dainties: It is the taste of nice effeminate fortune, that will be distasted with ordinary and usuall things. *Per quæ luxuria diuitiarum tædio ludit. Whereby the lavishnesse of plentie; playes with tedious pleasure.* To forbear to make good cheare, because another doth it; for one to have care of his feeding, is the essence of that vice.

*Si modica cœnare times olus omne patella.*

*If in a sorry dish to sup  
You brooke not all th'hearbe pottage up.*

Indeede there is this difference, that it is better for one to tye his desires unto things easiest to be gotten, yet is it a vice to tie himselfe to any stricknesse. I was heeretofore wont to name a kinsman of mine over delicate, because, whilst he lived in our Gallies, hee had unlearn't and left to lie upon a bedde, and to strippe himselfe to goe to bedde. Had I any male-children, I should willingly wish them my fortune. That good Father, it pleased God to allot me (who hath nothing of mee but thankfulnessse for his goodnesse, which indeed, is as great as great may be) even from my cradle sent mee to be brough-up in a poore village of his, where he kept me so long as I suckt, and somewhat longer: breeding me after the meanest and simplest-common fashion: *Magna pars libertatis est benè moratus uenter.* *A mannerly belly is a great part of a mans libertie.* Never take unto your selfe, and much lesse never give your wives the charge of your childrens breeding or education. Let fortune frame them under the popular and naturall Lawes: Let custome enure them to frugality, and breed them to hardnesse: That they may rather descend from sharpenesse, than ascend

unto it: His conceipt aymed also at another end; To acquaint and re-aly me, with that people and condition of men that have most neede of us: And thought I was rather bound to respect those which extend their armes unto me, than such as turne their backe toward me. And that was the reason he chose no other gossips to hold me at the font, than men of abject and base fortune, that so I might the more be bound and tied unto them. His purpose hath not altogether succeeded ill. I willingly give and accost my selfe unto the meaner sort; whether it bee because there is more glorie gotten by them, or through some naturall compassion, which in me is infinitely powerfull. The faction which I condemne in our civill warres, I shall more sharply condemne when it prospers and flourisheth. I shall in some sort be reconciled unto it, when I see it miserably-depressed and overwhelmed. Oh how willingly doe I remember that worthy humour of *Chelonis*, daughter and wife to Kings of *Sparta*! Whilest *Cleombrotus* hir husband, in the tumultuous disorders of his Citty, had the upper hand of *Leonidas* her father, shee played the part of a good daughter: allyng her selfe with her father, in his exile and in his misery, mainly opposing hir selfe against the Conquerour: Did fortune turne? So chaunged she hir minde, couragiously taking hir husbands part: Whom she never forsooke, whether-soever his ruine or distresse carryed him. Having (in my seeming) no other choise, than to follow that side, where she might doe most good, where shee was most wanted, and where she might shew her selfe most truly pittifull. I doe more naturally encline toward the example of *Flaminius*, who more and rather yeilded to such as had neede of him, than to those who might doe him good: than I bend unto that of *Pyrrhus*, who was ever wont, demissely to stoope and yeeld to the mighty, and insolently to grow proud over the weake. Long sitting at meales doth much weary and distemper me: for, be it for want of better countenance and entertainment, or that I used my selfe unto it when I was a child, I feede as long as I sitt at the table. And therefore, being in mine owne house, though my board be but short, and that we use not to sit long, I doe not commonly sit downe with the first, but a pretty while after others: According to the forme of *Augustus*: yet I imitate him not in his rising before others. Contrary, I love to sit a great while after, and to heare some discourse or table-talk. Alwayes provided I beare not a part my selfe; for, if my belly be full, I shall soone be weary, and hurt my selfe with talking: and I finde the exercise of lowde-speaking and contesting before meate very pleasant and wholesome. The auncient Græcians and Romanes had better reason than wee, aloting unto feeding, which is a principall action of mans life (if any other extraordinary businesse did not let or divert them from it) divers hours, and the best part of the night: eating and drinking more leisurely than we doe, who passe and runne-over all our actions in post-haste: and extending this natural pleasure unto more leisure and use: entermixing therewith divers profitable and mind-pleasing offices of civill conversation. Such as have care of me, may easily steale from me whatsoever they imagine may be hurtful for me: inasmuch as about my feeding, I never desire or find fault with that I see not: That Proverb is verified in me; *What the eye seeth not, the heart rueth not*. But if a dish or any thing else be once set before me, they loose their labour, that go about to tell me of abstinence: so that, when I am disposed to fast, I must be sequestred from eaters, and have no more set before me, than may serve for a stinted and regular colation: for if I but sitt downe at a sett table, I forget my resolution. If I



chance to bidde my cooke change the dressing of some kinde of meate or dish, all my men know, I inferre my appetite is wallowish and my stomacke out of order, and I shall hardly touch it. I love all manner of flesh or fowle but greene rosted and rawe sodden, namely, such as may beare it without danger; and love to have them throughly mortified; and in diverse of them the very alteration of their smell. Onely hardnesse or toughnesse of meates doth generally molest me (of all other qualities. I am as carelesse, and can as well brooke them, as any man that ever I knew) so that (contrary to received opinion) even amongst fishes, I shall finde some, both too new and over-hard and firme. It is not the fault or want of teeth, which I ever had as perfectly-sound and compleate as any other man: and which but now, being so olde, beginne to threaten me. I have from my infancie learnd to rubbe them with my napkin, both in the morning when I rise, and sitting downe and rising from the table. God doth them a grace, from whom by little and little he doth substract their life. It is the onely benefite of olde age. Their last death shal be so much the lesse full, languishing and painefull: it shall then kill but one halfe or quarter of a man. Even now I lost one of my teeth, which of it selfe fell out, without strugling or paine: it was the naturall terme of it's continuance. That part of my being, with diverse others, are already dead and mortified in mee, others of the most active, halfe dead, and which, during the vigor of my age held the first ranke. Thus I sinke and scape from my selfe. What foolishnes will it be in my understanding, to feele the start of that fall, already so advaunced, as if it were perfectly whole? I hope it not; verely I receive a speciall comfort in thinking on my death, and that it shall be of the most just and natural: and cannot now require or hope other favor of destinie, concerning that, then unlawfull. Men perswade themselves, that as heretofore they have had a higher stature, so their lives were longer; But they are deceivd: for *Solon*, of those antient times, thogh he were of an exceeding high stature, his life continued but 70. yeeres. Shal I, that have so much and so universally adored, that *ἀριστον μέτρον*, a meane is best, of former times; and have ever taken a meane measure for the most perfect, therefore pretend a most prodigious and unmeasurable life? whatsoever commeth contrary to Natures course, may be combersome, but what comes according to her, should ever please. *Omnia quæ secundum naturam fiunt, sunt habenda in bonis. All things are to be accompted good, that are donne according to nature.* And therefore (saith *Plato*) is that death violent, which is caused either by woundes or sicknesses; but that of all others the easiest and in some sort delicious, which surprizeth us by meanes of age. *Vitam adolescentibus, vis aufert, senibus maturitas. A forcible violence takes their life from the yoong, but a ripe maturitie from the olde.* Death entermedleth, and every where confoundes it selfe with our life: declination doth preoccupate her houre, and insinuate it selfe in the very course of our advaancement: I have pictures of mine owne, that were drawne when I was five and twenty, and others being thirtie yeeres of age, which I often compare with such as were made by me, as I am now at this instant. How many times doe I say, I am no more my selfe; how much is my present image further from those, then from that of my decease? It is an over-great abuse unto Nature to dragge and hurry her so farre, that shee must bee forced to give us over; and abandon our conduct, our eyes, our teeth, our legges and the rest, to the mercy of a forraine help and begged assistance: and to put our selves into the hands of arte, wearie to followe us. I am not overmuch or greedily

desirous of sallets or of fruites, except melons. My father hated all manner of sawces; I love them all. Overmuch eating dooth hurt and distemper me: but for the qualitie I have yet no certaine knowledge that any meate offends me: I never observe either a full or wained Moone, nor make a difference betweene the Spring time or Autumne. There are certaine inconstant and unknowne motions in us. For (by way of example) I have heeretofore found redish-rootes to be very good for mee, then very hurtfull, and now againe very well agreeing with my stomacke. In diverse other things, I feele my appetite to change, and my stomacke to diversifie from time to time. I have altdred my course of drinking, sometimes from white to claret wine, and then from claret to white againe.

I am very friand and gluttonous of fish; and keepe my shroving dayes upon fish dayes; and my feasts upon fasting-dayes. I believe as some others doe, that fish is of lighter disgestion than flesh. As I make it a conscience to eate flesh upon a fish day, so doth my taste to eate fish and flesh together. The diversitie betweene them, seemes to me over-distant. Even from my youth I was wont now and then to steale some repast, either that I might sharpen my stomake against the next day; for, (as *Epicurus* was wont to fast, and made but sparing meales, thereby to accustomeh his voluptuousnesse, to neglect plentie: I, contrarie to him, to enure my sensualitie to speede the better, and more merrily to make use of plentie) or else I fasted, the better to maintaine my vigor for the service or performaunce of some bodily or mentall action: for both are strangely dulled and ideled in me, through over-much fullnesse and repleatenesse. (And above all, I hate that foolish combination, of so sound and bucksome a Goddess, with that indigested and belching God, all puffed with the fume of his liquor) or to recover my crazed stomake, or because I wanted some good companie. And I say as *Epicuris* saide, that *A man should not so much respect what he eateth, as with whome hee eateth*. And commend *Chilon*; that he would not promise to come to *Perianders* feast, before he knew certainly who were the other bidden guests. *No viands are so sweetely-pleasing, nor no sauce so tastefull, as that which is drawne from conversable and mutuall societie*. I think it wholesomer to eate more leisurely, and lesse in quantity, and to feede oftner: But I will have appetite and hunger to be endeared: I should finde no pleasure, after a phisicall maner, to swallow three or foure forced and spare meales a day. Who can assure me, if I have a good taste or stomake in the morning, that I shall have it againe at supper? Let us old men; let us, I say, take the first convenient time that commeth: Let us leave hopes and prognostikes unto Almanacke-makers. The extreame fruite of my health, is pleasure: Let us holde fast on the present, and to us knowne. I eschew constancie in these Lawes of fasting. Who so will have a forme to serve him, let him avoyde continuance of it: but we harden our selves unto it, and thereunto wholly apply our forces: sixe moneths after, you shall finde your stomake so enured unto it, that you shall have gotten nothing but this, to have lost the liberty to use it otherwise without damage. I use to goe with my legges and thighs no more covered in Sommer than in Winter; for I never weare but one paire of single silke-stockins. For the easing of my rheume and helpe of my chollike, I have of late used to keepe my head and belly warme. My infirmities did in few dayes habituate themselves thereunto, and disdained my ordinary provisions. From a single night-cappe, I came to a

double coverchef, and from a bonnet, to a lined and quilted hat. The bum basting of my doublet, serves me now for no more use then a stomacher: it is a thing of nothing, unlesse I adde a hare or a vultures skin to it; and some warme wrapping about my head. Follow this gradation and you shall goe a faire pace, I wil do no such thing. If I durst I could find in my hart to revoke the beginning I have given unto it. Fall you into any new inconvenience? This reformation will no longer availe you. You are so accustomed unto it, that you are driven to seeke some new one. So are they overthrowne, that suffer themselves with forced formalities or strict rules, to be intangled, and do supersticiously constraine themselves unto them: they have neede of more, and of more after that: they never come to an end. It is much more commodious both for our businesse and for our pleasure (as did our fore fathers) to loose our dinner, and deferre making of good cheere, unto the houre of withdrawing and of rest, without interrupting the day: So was I wont to doe heretofore. I have for my health found out since by experience, that on the contrary, it is better to dine, and that one shall digest better being awake. Whether I be in health or in sicknesse, I am not much subject to be thirstie: indeede my mouth is somewhat dry, but without thirst. And commonly I use not to drinke, but when with eating I am forced to desire it, and that is when I have eaten well. For a man of an ordinary stature I drinke indifferent much. In Sommer, and at an hungry meale, I not onely exceede the limites of *Augustus*, who drunke but precisely three times: but, not to offend the rule of *Democritus*, who forbade us to stay at foure, as an unlucky number; if need be, I come to five: Three demisextiers, or thereabouts. I like little glasses best; and I love to emptie my glasse: which some others dislike, as a thing unseemely. Sometimes, and that very often, I temper my wine one halfe, and many times three partes with water. And when I am in mine owne house, from an antient custome, which my fathers phisition ordained both for him and himselfe, looke what quantitie of Wine is thought will serve mee a meale, the same is commonly tempered two or three houres before it be served in, and so kept in the seller. It is reported, that *Cranaus* King of the Athenians, was the first, that invented the mingling of Wine with Water. Whether it were profitable or no, I will not now dispute or stand upon. I thinke it more decent and more wholesome, that children should drinke no Wine, untill they be past the age of sixteene or eighteene yeares. *The most usuall and common forme of life, is the best.* Each particularitie, doth in mine opinion impugne-it. And I should as much detest a Germane, that should put Water in his Wine, as a French-man, that should drinke it pure. Publike custome giveth Law unto such things. I feare a foggie and thicke ayre, and shunne smoke more than death; (the first thing I began to repaire when I came to be maister of mine owne house, was the chimnies and privies, which, in most of our buildings, is a generall and intolerable fault) and among mischiefs and difficulties attending on Warre, there is none I hate more, than in hot-sweltring wether, to ride up and downe all the day-long in smokie dust, as many times our Souldiers are faine to doe. I have a free and easie respiration, and doe most commonly passe-over my mures and colds without offence to my lungs, or without coughing. The soultry heate of Sommer is more offensive to me, than the sharpnesse of Winter: for, besides the incommodity of heate, which is lesse to bee remedied, than the inconvenience of cold; and besides the force of the Sunnes beames, which

strike into the head, mine eyes are much offended with any kind of glittering or sparkling light; so that I cannot well sit at dinner over against a cleare-burning fire. To allay or dim the whitenesse of paper, when I was most given to reading, I was wont to lay a piece of greene glasse upon my booke, and was thereby much eased. Hitherto I never used spectacles, nor know not what they meane; and can yet see as farre as ever I could, and as any other man; true it is, that when night comes, I begin to perceive a dimnes and weakenes in reading; the continuall exercise whereof, and specially by night, was ever somewhat troublesome unto mine eyes. Loe-heere a steppe-backe, and that very sensible. I shall recoyle one more, from a second to a third, and from a third to a fourth, so gently, that before I feele the declination and age of my sight, I must be starke blinde. So artificially doe the Fates untwist our lives-threede. Yet am I in doubt, that my hearing is about to become thicke: and you shall see, that I shall have lost it halfe, when yet I shall finde fault with their voyces that speake unto mee. The minde must be strained to a high pitch, to make it perceive howe it declineth. My going is yet verie nimble, quicke and stout; and I wot not which of the two I can more hardly staie at one instant, eyther my minde or my body. I must like that preacher wel, that can tie mine attention to a whole sermon. In places of ceremonies, where every man doth so nicely stand upon countenance, where I have seene Ladies hold their eyes so steady, I could never so hold out, but some part of mine would ever be gadding: although I be sitting there, I am not well settled. As *Chrysippus* the Phylosophers chamber-maide, saide of hir Maister, that he was never drunke but in his legges; for whersoever he sate, he was ever accustomed to be wagging with them: and this she saide at what time store of Wine had made his companions cuppe-shotten, and yet he felt no alteration but continued sober in minde. It might likewise have beene saide of mee, that even from mine infancy, I had either folly or quicke-silver in my feete, so much stirring and naturall inconstancy have I in them, where ever I place them. It is unmannerlinesse, and prejudiciall unto health, yea and to pleasure also, to feede grosely and greedily, as I doe. I shall sometimes through haste bite my tongue and fingers ends. *Diogenes* meeting with a childe, that did eate so, gave his tutor a whirret on the eare. There were men in *Rome*, that as others teach youth to go with a good grace, so they taught men to chew, with decency. I doe sometimes loose the leisure to speake, which is so pleasing an entertainment at the table, provided they be discourses short, witty and pleasant. There is a kinde of jelosie and envy betweene our pleasures, and they often shooke and hinder one an other. *Alcibiades*, a man very exquisitely-skilfull in making good cheere, inhibited all manner of musicke at tables, because it should not hinder the delight of discourses, for the reason which *Plato* affoordes him: that it is a custome of populare or base men to call for minstrels or singers at feasts, and an argument, they want witty or good discourses, and pleasing entertainment, wherewith men of conceipt and understanding knowe howe to enterfeast and entertaine themselves. *Varro* requireth this at a banquet: an assemblie of persons, faire, goodly and handsome of presence, affable and delightfull in conversation, which must not be dumbe nor dull, sullaine nor slovenly: cleanlinesse and neatnesse in meates: and faire wether. A good minde-pleasing table-entertainment, is not a little voluptuous feast, nor a meanly artificiall banquet. Neither great or sterne commaunders in Warres, nor famous or

strict Philosophers have disdained the use or knowledge of it. My imagination hath bequeathed three of them to the keeping of my memorie, onely which, fortune did at several times, yeeld exceedingly delightsome unto me. My present state doth now exclude me from them. For, every one, according to the good temper of body or mind, wherein he findes himselfe, addeth either principall grace or taste unto them. My selfe, who but grovell on the ground, hate that kinde of inhumane Wisedome, which would make us disdainfull and enemies of the bodies reformation. I deeme it an equall injustice, either to take naturall sensualities against the hart, or to take them too neere the hart. *Xerxes* was a ninny-hammer, who enwrapped and given to all humane voluptuousnesse, proposed rewards for those, that should devise such as he had never heard-of. And he is not much behinde him in sottishnesse, that goes about to abridge those, which nature hath devised for him. One should neither follow nor avoyde them: but receive them. I receive them somewhat more amply and graciously, and rather am contented to follow naturall inclination. We neede not exaggerate their inanitie: it will sufficiently be felt, and doth sufficiently produce it selfe. Godamercy our weake, crazed and joy-diminishing spirite, which makes us distaste both them and himselfe. Hee treateth both himself and whatsoever he receiveth, somtimes forward and othertimes backward, according as himselfe is either insaciate, vagabond, newfangled or variable.

*Sincerum est nisi uas, quod cūque infundis, accescit.*

*In no sweet vessell all you poure,  
In such a vessell soone will sowre.*

My selfe, who brag so curiously to embrace and particularly to allow the commodities of life; whensoever I looke precisely into it. I finde nothing therein but winde. But what? we are nothing but winde. And the very winde also, more wisely then we, loveth to bluster and to be in agitation: And is pleased with his owne offices: without desiring stabilitie or soliditie; qualities that be not his owne. The meere pleasures of imagination, as well as displeasure (say some) are the greatest: as the ballance of *Critolaüs* did expresse. It is no wonder, she composeth them at hir pleasure, and cuts them out of the whole cloth. I see daylie some notable presidents of it, and peradventure to be desired. But I, that am of a commixt condition, homely and plaine, cannot so throughly bite on that onely and so simple object: but shall grosely and carelesly give my selfe over to the present delights, of the generall and humane law. Intellectually sensible, and sensibly-intellectuall. The *Cyrenaique* Philosophers are of opinion, that as griefes, so corporall pleasures are more powerfull; and as double, so more just. There are some (as *Aristotle* saith) who with a savage kinde of stupiditie, will seeme distastefull or squemish of them. Some others I knowe, that doe it out of ambition. Why renounce they not also breathing? why live they not of their owne, and refuse light, because it commeth of gratuitie; and costs them neither invention nor vigor? That *Mars*, or *Pallas*, or *Mercurie*, should nourish them to see, insteade of *Ceres*, *Venus*, or *Bacchus*. Will they not seeke for the quadrature of the circle, even upon their wives? I hate that we should be commanded to have our minde in the clouds, whilst our bodies are sitting at the table: yet would I not

have the minde to be fastned thereunto, nor wallow upon it, nor lie along thereon, but to applie it selfe and sit at it. *Aristippus* defended but the body, as if wee had no soule: *Zeno* embraced but the soule, as if we had no body. Both viciously, *Pythagoras* (say they) hath followed a Philosophie, all in contemplation: *Socrates* altogether in maners and in action: *Plato* hath found a mediocritie betweene both. But they say so by way of discourse. For, the true temperature is found in *Socrates*; and *Plato* is more *Socraticall* then *Pythagorically*; and it becomes him best. When I dance, I dance; and when I sleepe, I sleepe. And when I am solitarie walking in a faire orchard, if my thoughts have a while entertained themselves with strange occurrences I doe another while bring them to walke with mee in the orchard, and to be partakers of the pleasure of that solitarinesse and of my selfe. Nature hath like a kinde mother observed this, that such actions as shee for our necessities hath enjoyned unto us, should also be voluptuous unto us. And doth not onely by reason, but also by appetite envite us unto them: it were injustice to corrupt her rules. When I behold *Cæsar* and *Alexander* in the thickest of their wondrous-great labours, so absolutely to enjoy humane and corporall pleasures, I say not, that they release thereby their minde, but rather strengthen the same; submitting by vigor of courage their violent occupation, and laborious thoughts to the customarie use of ordinary life. Wise had they beene, had they believed, that that was their ordinary vocation, and this their extraordinarie. What egregious fooles are we! Hee hath past his life in idlenesse, say we; alas I have done nothing this day. What? have you not lived? It is not onely the fundamentall, but the noblest of your occupations. Had I beene placed, or thought fit for the managing of great affaires, I would have shewed what I could have performed. *Have you knowne how to meditate and manage your life? you have accomplished the greatest worke of all.* For a man to shew and exploite himselfe, nature hath no neede of fortune, she equally shewes her selfe upon all grounds, in all sutes, before and behinde, as it were without curtines, welt, or garde. *Have you knowne how to compose your manners? you have done more then he who hath composed bookes.* Have you knowne how to take rest? you have done more then he, who hath taken Empires and Citties. *The glorious maister-piece of man, is, to live to the purpose.* All other things, as to raigne, to governe, to hoarde up treasure, to thrive and to build, are for the most part but appendixes and supportes thereunto. It is to me a great pleasure, to see a Generall of an armie at the foote of a breach, which he ere long intendeth, to charge or enter; all whole, undistracted and carelesly to prepare himselfe, whilst he sits at dinner with his friends about him, to talke of any matter. And I am delighted to see *Brutus*, having both heaven and earth conspired against him and the libertie of *Rome*, by stealth to take some houres of the night from his other cares and walking of the round, in all securitie to reade, to note and to abreviate *Polibius*. It is for base and pettie mindes, dulled and overwhelmed with the weight of affaires, to be ignorant how to leave them, and not to know how to free themselves from them; nor how to leave and take them againe.

*O fortes peioraque passi,  
Mecum sæpe uiri, nunc uino pellite curas,  
Cras ingens iterabimus æquor.*

*Valiant compeeres, who oft have worse endured  
 With me, let now with wine your cares be cured:  
 To morrow we againe  
 Will launch into the maine.*

Whether it be in jest or earnest, that the *Sorbonicall* or theologicall wine, and their feasts or gaudy dayes are now come to be proverbially jested-at: I thinke there is some reason, that by how much more profitably and seriously they have bestowed the morning in the exercise of their schooles, so much more commodiously and pleasantly should they dine at noone. A cleare conscience to have well employed and industriously spent the other houres, is a perfect seasoning and savorie condiment of tables. So have wise men lived. And that inimitable contention unto vertue, which so amazeth us, in both *Catoes*, their so strictly-severe humour, even unto importunitie, hath thus mildly submitted it selfe, and taken pleasure in the lawes of humane condition, and in *Venus* and *Bacchus*. According to their Sects-precepts, which require a perfectly wise man, to be as fully-expert and skilfull in the true use of sensualities, as in all other duties or devoirs belonging to life. *Cui cor sapiat, ei & sapiat palatus. Let his palate be savorie, whose heart is savorie.* Easie-yeelding and facilitie doth in my conceit, greatly honour, and is best befitting a magnanimous and noble mind. *Epaminondas* thought it no scorne, to thrust himselfe amongst the boyes of his citie, and dance with them, yea and to sing and play, and with attention busie himselfe, were it in things that might derogate from the honor and reputation of his glorious victories, and from the perfect reformation of manners, that was in him. And amongst so infinite admirable actions of *Scipio* the grandfather, a man worthy to be esteemed of heavenly race, nothing addeth so much grace unto him, as to see him carelesly to dally and childishly to trifle, in gathering and chusing of cockle-shells, and play at cob-castle amongst the sea-shore with his friend *Lælius*. And if it were fowle whether, amusing and solacing himselfe, to represent in writing and commedies the most popular and base actions of men. And having his head continually busied with that wonderfull enterprise against *Hanniball* and *Affrike*, yet he still visited the schooles in *Cicilie*, and frequented the lectures of Philosophie, arming his enemies teeth at *Rome* with envie and spight. Nor any thing more remarkeable in *Socrates*, then, when being old and crazed, he would spare so much time as to be instructed in the arte of dancing and playing upon instruments; and thought the time well bestowed. Who notwithstanding hath beene seene to continue a whole day and night in an extasie or trance, yea ever standing on his feete, in presence of all the Greeke armie, as it were surprised and ravished by some deede and minde-distracting thought. He hath beene noted to be the first, amongst so infinite valiant men in the armie, headlong to rush out, to help and bring-of *Alcibiades*, engaged and enthroned by his enemies: to cover him with his body, and by maine force of armes and courage, bring him-off from the rout: And in the *Deliane* battell, to save and disingage *Xenophon*, who was beaten from his horse. And in the midst of all the Athenian people, wounded, as it were with so unworthy a spectacle, headlong present himselfe the first man, to recover *Theramenes*, from out the hands of the officers and satelites, of the thirtie tyrants of *Athens*, who were leading him to his death; and never desisted from his bold attempt, untill he met with *Theramenes* himselfe,

though hee were followed and assisted with two more. He hath beene seene (provoked thereunto by a matchlesse beautie, wherewith he was richly endowed by nature) at any time of neede to maintaine severe continencie. He hath continually beene noted to march to the warres on foote; to breake the yce with his bare feete; to weare one same garment in summer and winter; to exceede all his companions in patience of any labour or travell; to eate no more, or otherwise at any banquet, then at his ordinary: He hath beene seene seaven and twenty yeares together with one same undismaide countenance, patiently to beare and endure hunger, povertie, the indocilitie and stubbornesse of his children, the frowardnes and scratchings of his wife; and in the end malicious detraction, tyranny, emprisonment, shakles and poison. But was that man envited to drinke to him by duty of civilitie? he was also the man of the armie, to whom the advantage thereof remained. And yet he refused not, nor disdained to play for nuts with children, nor to run with them upon a hob by-horse, wherein he had a very good grace: *For, all actions (saith Philosophie) doe equally beseeme well, and honour a wise man.* We have good ground and reason, and should never be wearie to present the image of this incomparable man, unto all patterns and forme of perfections. There are very few examples of life, absolutely ful and pure. And our instruction is greatly wronged, in that it hath certaine weake, defective and unperfect formes proposed unto it, scarcely good for any good use, which divert and drawe us backe; and may rather bee termed Corrupters then Correctors. *Man is easily deceived.* One may more easily goe by the sides, where extremitie serveth as a bound, as a stay and as a guide, then by the mid-way, which is open and wide; and more according unto arte, then according unto nature: but therewithall lesse noblie and with lesse commendation. *The greatnesse of the minde is not so much, to drawe up and hale forward, as to knowe how to range, direct and circumscribe it selfe.* It holdeth for great whatever is sufficient. And sheweth her height, in loving meane things better then eminent. *There is nothing so goodly, so faire and so lawfull as to play the man well and duely: Nor Science so hard and difficult, as to knowe how to live this life well.* And of all the infirmities we have, the most savage, is to despise our being. Whoso wil sequester or distract his minde, let him hardily doe it, if he can, at what time his body is not well at ease, thereby to discharge it from that contagion: And elsewhere contrarie; that shee may assist and favour him, and not refuse to be partaker of his naturall pleasures, and conjugally be pleased with them: adding thereunto, if shee be the wiser, moderation, lest through indiscretion, they might be confounded with displeasure. *Intemperance is the plague of sensualitie; and temperance is not her scourge, but rather her seasoning.* Eudoxus, who thereon established his chiefe fecilitie; and his companions, that raised the same to so high a pitch, by meanes of temperance, which in them was very singular and exemplar, savoured the same in her most gracious sweetenes. I enjoyne my minde, with a looke equally regulare, to behold both sorrow and voluptuousnes: *Eodem enim uitio est effusio animi in laetitia, quo in dolore contractio.* As faultie is the enlarging of the minde in mirth, as the contracting it in griefe; and equally constant: But the one merrily, and the other severely: And according to that shee may bring unto it, to be as carefull to extinguish the one, as diligent to quench the other. *To have a perfect insight into good, drawes with it an absolute insight into evill.* And sorrow hath in her tender beginning something that is unavoydable: and voluptuousnes in her excessive ende, something that is



evitable. *Plato* coupleth them together, and would have it to be the equall office of fortitude, to combate against sorrowes, and fight against the immoderate and charming blandishments of sensualitie. They are two fountaines, at which whoso draweth, whence, when and as much as hee needeth, be it a cittie, be it a man, be it a beast, he is very happy. The first must be taken for phisicke and necessitie, and more sparingly: The second for thirst, but not unto drunkennesse. *Paine, voluptuousnesse, love and hate, are the first passions a childe feeleth: if reason approach, and they apply themselves unto it; that is vertue.* I have a Dictionarie severally and wholly to my selfe: I passe the time when it is foule and incommodious; when it is faire and good, I will not passe-it: I runne it over againe, and take holde of it. *A man should runne the badde, and settle himselfe in the good.* This vulgar phrase of passe time, and, to passe the time, represents the custome of those wise men, who thinke to have no better account of their life, then to passe it over and escape it: to passe it over and bawke it, and so much as in them lieth, to ignore and avoyde it, as a thing of an yrkesome, tedious, and to be-disdained qualitie. But I knowe it to be otherwise; and finde it to be both priseable and commodious, yea in her last declination; where I holde it. And Nature hath put the same into our handes, furnished with such and so favourable circumstances, that if it presse and molest us, or if unprofitably it escape us, wee must blame our selves. *Stulti uita ingrata est, trepida est, tota in futurum fertur.* *A fooles life is all pleasant, all fearefull, all fond of the future.* I therefore prepare and compose my selfe, to forgoe and loose it without grudging; but as a thing that is looseable and transitorie by it's owne condition: not as troublesome and importunate. Nor beseemes it a man not to be grieved when he dieth, except they be such as please themselves to live still. There is a kinde of husbandrie in knowing how to enjoy it: I enjoy it double to others. For, *the measure in jouissance dependeth more or lesse on the application we lend it.* Especially at this instant, that I perceive mine to be short in time, I will extend it in weight: I still stay the readinesse of her flight, by the promptitude of my holde-fast by it: and by the vigor of custome recompence the haste of her fleeting. According as the possession of life is more short, I must endevoure to make it more profound and full. Other men feele the sweetnesse of a contentment and prosperity. I feele it as well as they; but it is not in passing and gliding: yet should it be studied, tasted and ruminated, thereby to yeelde him condigne thanks, that it pleased to graunt the same unto us. They enjoy other pleasures, as that of sleepe, without knowing them. To the end that sleepe should not dully and unfeelingly escape mee, and that I might better taste and be acquainted with it, I have heeretofore found it good, to be troubled and interrupted in the same. I have a kinde of contentment, to consult with my selfe: which consultation I doe not superficially runne over, but considerately sound the same, and applie my reason to entertaine and receive it, which is now become froward, peevish and distasted. Doe I finde my selfe in some quiet moode; is there any sensualitie that tickles me? I doe not suffer the same to busie it selfe or dally about senses, but associate my minde unto it: Not to engage or plunge it selfe therein, but therein to take delight: not to loose, but therein to finde it-selfe. And for her parte I employ her, to view her selfe in that prosperous estate, to ponder and esteeme the good fortune she hath, and to amplifie the same. Shee measureth how much she is beholding unto God, for that she is at rest with her conscience, and free from other

intestine passions, and hath her body in her naturall disposition: orderly and competently enjoying certaine flattering and effeminate functions, with which it pleaseth him of his grace to recompence the griefes, wherewith his justice at his pleasure smiteth us. Oh how availefull is it unto her, to be so seated, that whatever she casteth her eyes, the heavens are calme round about her; and no desire, no feare or doubt troubleth the ayre before her: there is no difficultie, either past, or present, or to come, over which her imagination passeth not without offence. This consideration takes a great lustre from the comparison of different conditions. Thus doe I in a thousand shapes propose unto my selfe, those whom either fortune, or their owne errour doth transport and torment. And these nearer, who so slackely and incuriously receive their good fortune. They are men which indeede passe their time: they overpasse the present, and that which they possesse, thereby to serve their hopes with shadowes and vaine images, which fancie sets before them,

*Morte oblitâ quales fama est uolitare figuras,  
Aut quæ sopitos deludunt somnia sensus.*

*Such walking shapes we say, when men are dead,  
Dreames, whereby sleeping senses are misse-led.*

Which hasten and prolong their flight, according as they are followed. The fruit and scope of their pursuite, is to pursue: As *Alexander* said, that *The end of his travell, was to travell.*

*Nil actum credens cùm quid superesset agendum.*

*Who thought that nought was done,  
When aught remain'd undone.*

As for mee then, I love my life and cherish it, such as it hath pleased God to graunt it us. I desire not he should speake of the necessitie of eating and drinking. And I woulde thinke to offend no lesse excusably, in desiring it should have it double. *Sapiens diuitiarum naturalium quæsitore acerrimus. A wise man is a most eage and earnest searcher of those things which are natural.* Nor that we should sustaine our selves by only putting alittle of that drugge into our mouth, wherewith *Epimenides* was wont to alay hunger, and yet maintained himselfe. Nor that wee should insensibly produce children at our fingers endes or at our heeles, but rather (speaking with reverence) that wee might with pleasure and voluptuousnesse produce them both at our heeles and fingers endes. Nor that the bodie should be voyde of desire, and without tickling-delight. They are ungratefull and impious complaintes. I cheerefully and thankfully, and with a good heart, accept what nature hath created for me; and am therewith well pleased, and am proud of it. Great wrong is offred unto that great and all-puissant Giver, to refuse his gift, which is so absolutely good; and disanull or disfigure the same, since hee made it perfectly good. *Omnia quæ secundum naturam sunt; æstimatione digna sunt. All things that are according to nature, are worthy to be esteemed.* Of Philosophies opinions, I more willingly embrace those, which are the most solide: and that is to say, such as are most humane and most ours: My discourses are sutable to my manners; lowe and humble. Shee

then brings forth a childe well-pleasing me, when she betakes herself to her Quiddities and Ergoes, to perswade us, that it is a barbarous aliance, to marrie what is divine with that which is terrestriall; wedde reasonable with unreasonable; combine severe with indulgent, and couple honest with dishonest: that voluptuousnesse is a brutall qualitie, unworthie the taste of a wiseman. The onely pleasure he drawes from the enjoying of a faire yong bride, is the delight of his conscience, by performing an action according unto order; As to put on his bootes for a profitable riding. Oh that his followers had no more right, or sinnewes, or pithe, or juice, at the dis-maydening of their wives, than they have in his Lessons. It is not that, which *Socrates*, both his and our Maister, saith; He valueth rightly as he ought corporall voluptuousnesse: but he preferreth that of the minde, as having more force, more constancie, facilitie, varietie and dignitie. This, according to him, goeth nothing alone, he not so fantastically; but onely first. For him, temperance is a moderatrix, and not an adversarie of sensualities. *Nature is a gentle guide*: Yet not more gentle, then prudent and just. *Intrandum est in rerum naturam, & penitus quid ea postulet, peruidendum*. Wee must enter into the nature of things, and throughly see what she inwardly requires. I quest after her tracke; wee have confounded her with artificiall traces. And that Academicall and Peripateticall *summum bonum* or soveraigne felicitie, which is, to live according to her rules: by this reason becommeth difficult to be limited, and hard to be expounded. And that of the Stoickes, couzin-german to the other, which is, to yeelde unto nature. Is it not an errour, to esteeme some actions lesse woorthie, forsomuch as they are necessary? Yet shall they never remoove out of my head, that it is not a most convenient marriage, to wedde Pleasure unto Necessitie. With which (saieth an ancient Writer) the Gods doe ever complot and consent.

To what end doe we by a divorce, dismember a frame contexted with so mutuall, coherent and brotherly correspondencie? Contrariwise, let us repaire and renewe the same by interchangeable offices: that the spirit may awake and quicken the dul heavinesse of the body, and the body stay the lightnesse of the spirite, and settle and fixe the same. *Qui uelut summum bonum, laudat animæ naturam, & tanquam malum, naturam carnis accusat, profectò & animam carnaliter appetit, & carnē incarnaliter fugit, quoniam id uanitate sentit humana, non ueritate diuina*. He that praiseth the nature of the soule, as his principall good, and accuseth the nature of the flesh as evill, assuredly he both carnally affecteth the soule, and carnally escheweth the flesh, since he is of this minde not by divine veritie, but humane vanitie. There is no part or parcell unwoorthy of our care in that present, which God hath bestowed upon us: Wee are accomptable even for the least haire of it. And it is no commission for fashion-sake for any man, to direct man according to hir condition: it is expresse, naturall and principall: And the Creator hath seriously and severely given the same unto us. Onely authority is of force with men of common reach and understanding; and is of more weight in a strange language. But here let us charge againe. *Stultitiæ proprium quis non dixerit, ignauè & contumaciter facere quæ facienda sunt: & aliò corpus impellere, alio animum, distrahique inter diuersissimos motus?* Who will not call it a property of folly to doe sloathfully and frowardly, what is to be done, and one way to drive the body and another way the minde, and himselfe to bee distracted into most diuers motions? Which, the better to see, let such a man one day tell you the amusements and imaginations, which he puts into his owne head, and for

which he diverteth his thoughts from a good repast, and bewaileth the houre, he employeth in feeding himselfe: you shall finde there is nothing so wallowish in all the messes of your table, as is that goodly entertainment of his minde (*It were often better for us to be sound asleepe, than awake unto that we doe*) and you shall find, that his discourses and intentions are not worth your meanest dish. Suppose they were the entrancings of *Archimedes* himselfe: and what of that? I here touch not, nor doe I blend with that rabble or raskalitie of men, as wee are, nor with that vanitie of desires and cogitations, which divert us, onely those venerable mindes, which through a fervencie of devotion and earnestnesse of religion, elevated to a constant and consciencious meditation of heavenly divine things, and which by the violence of a lively, and vertue of a vehement hope, preoccupating the use of eternall soule-saving nourishment; the finall end, only stay and last scope of Christian desires; the onely constant delight and incorruptible pleasure; disdain to relie on our necessitous, fleeting and ambiguous commodities: and easily resigne, the care and use of sensuall and temporall feeding unto the body. It is a priviledged study. Super-celestiall opinions, and under-terrestriall manners, are things, that amongst us, I have ever seene to be of singular accord. *Aesope* that famous man, saw his Maister pisse as he was walking: What (saide he) must wee not etc. when we are running? *Let us husband time as well as wee can. Yet shall we employ much of it, both idely and ill.* As if our minde had not other houres enough to doe hir businesse, without disassociating hir selfe from the body in that litle space which she needeth for hir necessitie. They will bee exempted from them and escape man. It is meere folly: in steade of transforming themselves into Angels, they transchange themselves into beasts: in lieu of advauncing, they abase themselves. Such transcending humours affright me as much, as steepy, high and inaccessible places. And I finde nothing so hard to be digested in *Socrates* his life, as his extasies and communication with *Dæmones*. Nothing so humane in *Plato*, as that for which they say, he is called divine. And of our sciences those which are raised and extolled for the highest, seeme to me, the most basest and terrestriall. I finde nothing so humble and mortall in *Alexanders* life, as his conceits about his immortalization. *Philotas* by his answere quipped at him very pleasantly and wittily. Hee had by a letter congratulated with him, and rejoyced that the Oracle of *Jupiter Hammon* had placed him amongst the Gods; to whom he answered, that in respect and consideration of him, he was very glad; but yet there was some cause those men should be pittied, that were to live with a man and obey him, who outwent others, and would not be contented with the state and condition of a mortall man.

*Diis te minorem quòd geris, imperas.*

*Since thou lesse then the Gods  
Bear'st thee, thou rul'st with ods.*

The quaint inscription, wherewith the Athenians honored the comming of *Pompey* into their Cittie, agreeth well, and is conformable to my meaning.

*D'autant es tu Dieu, comme  
Tu te recognois homme.*

*So farre a God thou mai'st accompted be  
As thou a man doost re-acknowledge thee.*

*It is an absolute perfection, and as it were divine for a man to know how to enjoy his being loyally. We seeke for other conditions, because we understand and not the use of ours: and goe out of our selves, forsomuch as we know not what abiding there is. Wee may long enough get upon stilts, for, be we upon them, yet must we goe with our owne legges. And sit we upon the highest throne of the World, yet fit we upon our owne taile. The best and most commendable lives, and best pleasing me are (in my conceit) those which with order are fitted, and with decorum are ranged to the common mould and humane model: but without wonder or extravagancy. Now hath old age neede to be handled more tenderly. Let us recommend it unto that God, who is the protector of health, and fountaine all wisdome: but blithe and sociall:*

*Frui paratis & ualido mihi  
Latoe dones, & precor integra  
Cum mente, nec turpem senectam,  
Degere, nec Cythara carentem.*

*Apollo graunt, enjoy health I may  
That I have got, and with sound minde, I pray:  
Nor that I may with shame spend my old yeares,  
Nor wanting musike to delight mine eares.*