

MICHEL DE MONTAIGNE  
ESSAYS

**Book 3 · Chapter 8**



Translation by John Florio (1603, Public domain) · Last updated on January 5, 2024

HYPERESSAYS is a project to create a modern and accessible online edition of the *Essays* of Michel de Montaigne. More information at [www.hyperessays.net](http://www.hyperessays.net)

FLORIO-3-8-20240215-142040

## Of the Arte of conferring

IT IS A CUSTOME of our lawe, to condemne some, for the warning of others. To condemne them because they have misdome, were folly, as saith *Plato*. For what is once done, can never be undone: but they are condemned to the end that they should not offend againe, or that others may avoide the example of their offence. *He who is hanged is not corrected, but others by him.* Even so doe I. My errors are sometimes naturall, incorrigible and remedillesse. But whereas honest men profit the Common-wealth in causing themselves to be imitated. I shall happily benefit the same, in making my selfe to be evitated.

*Nonne uides Albi ut male uiuat filius, utque  
Barrus inops? magnum documentum, ne patriam rem  
Perdere quis uelit.*

*Doe you not see, how that mans sonne lives badly,  
That man's a begger by his spending madly?  
A lesson great, that none take joy: His patrimonie to destroy.*

By publishing and accusing my imperfections, some man may peradventure learne to feare them. The partes I most esteeme in my selfe, reape more honour by accusing, then by commending my selfe. And that's the cause I more often fall into them againe, and rest upon them. But *when all the cardes be told, a man never speakes of himselfe, without losse. A mans owne condemnations are ever increased: praises ever decreased.* There may be some of my complexion, who am better instructed by contrarietie then by similitude; and more by escaping then by following. *Cato senior* had a special regard to this kind of discipline, whē he said, that *wisemen have more to learne of fooles, then fooles of wisemen.* And that ancient player on the Lyra, whom *Pausanias* reporteth, to have beene accustomed to compell his schollers sometimes to goe heare a bad Player, who dwelt right over-against him; where they might learne to hate his discordes and false measures. The horror of cruelty drawes me nearer unto clemencie, then any patterne of clemencie can possiblie win me. A cunning rider or skilfull horse-man doth not so properly teach me, to sit well on horse-back, as

doth one of our Lawyers, or a Venetian by seeing him ride. And an ill manner of speach doth better reforme mine, then any well-polished forme of speaking. The sottish countenance of another, doth daily advertise and forewarne me. That which pricketh, toucheth and rouseth better, then that which delighteth. These times are fit to reforme us backward, more by dissenting, then by consenting; more by difference then by accord. Being but little instructed by good examples, I make use of bad: the lesson of which is ordinary. I have endeoured, nay I have laboured to yeeld my selfe as pleasing and affable, as I sawe others peevisch and froward: as constant, as I saw others variable; as gentle and milde, as I perceived others intractable and wilde: and as good and honest, as I discerned others wicked and dishonest. But I proposed certaine invincible measures unto my selfe. The most fruitfull and naturall exercise of our spirit, is, in my selfe-pleasing conceit, conference. The use whereof, I finde to be more delightsome, then any other action of our life: And that's the reason, why, if I were now forced to choose, (being in the minde I now am in) I would rather yeeld to loose my sight, then fogue my hearing or my speach. The Athenians and also the Romans, did ever holde this exercise in high honor and reputation, namely in their *Academies*. And at this day, the Italians do yet keepe a kinde of forme and trace of it, to their great profit, as may apparantly be discerned by comparing their wits unto ours. The studie and plodding on bookes, is a languishing and weake kinde of motion, and which heateth or earnesteth nothing; whereas conference doth both learne, teach and exercise at once. If I conferre with a stubborne wit, and encounter a sturdy wrestler, he toucheth me to the quick, hits me on the flanks, and pricks me both on the left and right side: his imaginations vanquish and confound mine. Jelousie, glory and contention, drive, cast and raise me above my selfe. And an unison or consent, is a qualitie altogether tedious and wearisome in conference. But as our minde is fortifide by the communication of regular and vigorous spirits; it cannot well be expressed, how much it looseth and is bastardized, by the continuall commerce and frequentation, we have with base, weake and dull spirits. No contagion spreads it selfe further then that. I know by long experience what an ell of it is worth. I love to contest and discourse, but not with many, and only for my selfe. For, to serve as a spectacle unto great men, and by way of contention, for one to make a glorious show of his ready wit and running tongue; I deeme it a profession farre unfitting a man of honor. Sottishnes is an ill quality, but not to be able to endure it, and to fret and vexe at it, as it hapneth to me, is another kinde of imperfection, which in opportunity is not much behind sottishnes: and that's it I will now accuse in my selfe: I doe with great liberty and facilitie, enter into conference and disputation: forsomuch as opinion findes but a hard soile to enter and take any deepe roote in me. No propositions amaze me, no conceit woundeth me, what contrarietie soever they have to mine. There is no fantazie so frivolous or humor so extravagant, that in mine opinion is not sortable to the productiō of humane wit. We others, who debarre our judgement of the right to make conclusions, regard but negligently the divers opinions: and if we lend it not our judgement, we easily affoorde it our eares. Where one scale of the ballance is altogether empty, I let the other waver too and fro, under an old wives dreames. And me seemeth, I may well be excused, if I rather accept an odde number, then an even: Thursday in respect of Friday; if I had rather make a twelfth

or fourteenth at a table, thē a thirteenth: if when I am traveling I would rather see a Hare coasting, then crossing my way: and rather reach my left, then my right foote, to be shod. All such fond conceits, now in credit about us, deserve at feast to be listned unto. As for me, they only beare away inanity, and surely they do so. Vulgar and casuall opinions are yet of some waight, which in nature are something els then nothing. And who wadeth not so far into them, to avoide the vice of superstition, falleth happily into the blame of wilfulnesse. The contradictions then of judgements, doe neither offend nor moove, but awaken and exercise me. We commonly shunne correction, whereas we should rather seeke and present our selves unto it, chieflie when it commeth by way of conference, and not of regencie. At every opposition, we consider not whether it be just; but be it right or wrong, how we may avoide it: In steede of reaching our armes, we stretch forth our clawes unto it. I should endure to be rudely handled and checked by my friends, though they should call me foole, coxcombe or say I raved. I love a man that doth stoutlie expresse himselfe, amongst honest and worthy men and whose wordes answer his thoughts. We should fortifie and harden our hearing, against the tendernesse of the cerimonious sound of wordes. I love a friendly societie and a virile and constant familiaritie: An amitie, which in the earnestnesse or vigor of it's commerce, flattereth it selfe: as love in bitings and bloodie scratchings. It is not sufficientlie generous or vigorous, except it be contentious and quareulous: If she be civilised and a skilfull artiste: if it feare a shock or free encounter, and have hir starting hoales or forced by-ways. *Neque enim disputari sine reprehensione potest. Disputation cannot be held without reprehension.* When I am impugned or contraried, then is mine attention and not mine anger, stirred up; I advance my selfe towarde him, that doth gainesay and instruct me. *The cause of truth, ought to be the common cause, both to one and other:* What can he answer? The passion of choller hath already wounded his judgement: trouble, before reason hath seized upon it. It were both profitable and necessarie, that the determining of our disputations, might be decided by way of wagers; and that there were a materiall marke of our losses: that we might better remember and make more accoumpt of it: and that my boye might say unto me: Sir, if you call to minde; your contestation, your ignorance and your selfe-wilfulnesse, at severall times, cost you a hundred crownes the last yeare: I feast, I cherrish and I embrace trueth, where and in whomsoever I finde it, and willinglie and merilye yeeld my selfe unto hir; as soone as I see but hir approche, though it be a farre-off, I laye downe my weapons and yeeld my selfe vanquished. And alwayes provided, one persist not or proceede therein, with an over imperious stiffnesse or commanding surlinesse; I am well pleased to be reprooved. And I often accomodate my selfe unto my accusers, more by reason of civilitie, then by occasion of amendment: loving by the facilitie of yeelding, to gratifie and foster their libertie, to teach or advertise me. It is notwithstanding no easie matter to drawe men of my times unto it. They have not the courage to correct, because they wante the hart to endure correction: And ever speake with dissimulation in presence one of another. I take so great a pleasure to bee judged and knowne, that it is indifferent to me, in whether of the two formes I be so. Mine owne imagination doth so often contradict and condemne it selfe, that if another doe it, all is one unto me; especially seeing, I give his reprehension no other aucthoritie, then I list. But I shall breake a strawe

or fall at oddes with him, that keeps himselfe so alofte; as I know some, that will fret and chafe, if their opinions be not believed, and who take it as an injurie, yea and fall out with their best friends, if they will not follow it. And that *Socrates* ever smiling, made a collection of such contradictions as were opposed to his discourse, one might say, his force was cause of it; and that the advantage being assuredlie to fall on his side, he tooke them as a subject of a new victorie. Neverthelesse we see on the contrarie, that nothing doth so nicelie yeelde our sence unto it, as the opinion of preheminance and disdaine of the adversarie. And that by reason, it rather befits the weakest to accept of oppositions in good parte, which restore and repayre him. Verilie I seeke more the conversation of such as curbe me, then of those that feare me. It is an unsavorie and hurtfull pleasure, to have to doe with men, who admire and give us place. *Anthistenes* commanded his children, never to be beholding unto, or thanke any that should command them. I feele my selfe more lustie and cranke for the victorie I gaine over my selfe, when in the heate or furie of the combate, I perceive to bend and fall under the power of my adversaries reason, then I am pleased with the victorie, I obtaine of him by his weakenesse. To conclude, I receive all blowes and allow all attaints given directly, how weake soever: but am very impacient at such as are stricken at randan and without order, I care but little for the matter, and with me opinions are all one, and the victory of the subject in a manner indifferent. I shall quietly contest a whole day, if the conduct of the controversie be followed with order and decorum. It is not force nor subiltie, that I so much require, as forme and order. The forme and order, dayly seene in the altercations of Shepherds, or contentions of shop-prentise-boyes; but never amongst us; If they parte or give one another over, it is with incivility: and so doe we. But their wrangling, their brawling and impacience, cannot make them to forgoe or forget their theame.

Their discourse holdes on his course. If they prevent one another, if they stay not for, at least they understand one another. A man doth ever answere sufficiently well for me, if he answere what I say. But when the disputation is confounded and orderlesse, I quit the matter, and betake me to the forme, with spight and indiscretion: and imbrace a kinde of debating, teasty, headlong, malicious and imperious, whereat I afterward blush. *It is impossible to treate quietly and dispute orderly with a foole.* My judgement is not onely corrupted under the hand of so impetuous a maister, but my conscience also. Our disputations ought to be forbidden and punished, as other verball crimes. What vice raise they not, and heape up together, beeing ever swayed and commaunded by choller? First we enter into enmitie with the reasons, and then with the men. We learne not to dispute, except it be to contradict: and every man contradicting and being contradicted, it commonly followeth, that the fruite of disputing, is to loose and to disanull the trueth. So *Plato* in his common wealth, forbiddeth foolish, unapt and base-minded spirits, to undertake that exercise. To what purpose goe you about to quest or inquire that, which is with him, who hath neyther good pace nor proceeding of worth? No man wrongs the subject, when he quits the same, for want of meanes to treate or mannage it. I meane not a scholasticall and artist meane, but intend a naturall meane, and of a sound understanding. What will the end be? one goeth Eastward, and another Westward: They loose the principall, and

stray it in the throng of incidents. At the end of an houres wrangling, they wot not what they seeke for: one is high, another low, and another wide. Some take holde of a word, some of a similitude. Some forget what was objected against them, so much are they engaged in the pursuite and thinke to follow themselves, and not you. Some finding themselves weake-backt, feare all, refuse all, and at the very entrance mingle the subject and confound the purpose: or in the heate of the disputation, mutinie to holde their peace altogether: through a spightfull ignorance, affecting a proud kinde of contempt, or a foolish modesty avoyding of contention. Provided that one strike and hit, he careth not how open he lie. Another compteth his wordes, and wayeth them for reasons; Another employeth no thing but the advantage of his voyce and winde. Here one concludeth against himselfe; here another weariech you with idle prefaces, and frivolous digressions. Another armeth himselfe afore hand with injuries, and seekes after a Dutch quarrell, to rid himselfe of the society, and shake off the conference of a spirite, that presseth and overbeareth his. This last hath no insight at all in reason, but still beleagreth you with the dialecticall or logicall close of his clause, and ties you to the rule of his arte or forme of his skill. Now who doth not enter into distrust of sciences, and is not in doubt, whether in any necessity of life, he may reape solid fruite of them; if he consider the use we have of them? *Nihil sanantibus literis. Since learning doth not cure. Who hath learnt any wit or understanding in Logique? Where are her faire promises? Nec ad melius uiuendum, nec ad commodius disserendum. Nether to live better or to dispute fitter.* Shall a man heare more brabbling or confusion in the tittle-tattle of fishlwives or scoulding sluts, then in the publike disputations of men of this profession? I had rather my childe should learne to speake in a Taverne, then in the schooles of well-speaking Arte. Take you a maister of artes, and conferre with him, why doth he not make us perceive this artificiall excellencie, and by the admiration of his reasons-constancie, or with the beauty of his quaint order, and grace of his method, ravish silly women, and bleare ignorant men as we are? Why doth he not sway, winde and perswade us as he list? Why should one so advantageous in matter and conduct, entermixe injuries, indiscretion and chollicke rage with his fence? Let him pull-of his twofaced hoode, his gowne and his latine, let him not fill our eares with meereley beleaved *Aristotle*, you will discover and take him for one of us, and worse if worse my be. Me thinkes this implication and entangling of speach, where with they so much importune us, may fittly be compared unto juglers play of fast and loose: their nimblenesse combates and forceth our sences, but it nothing shaketh our believe: Take away their jugling, what they doe is but base, common and slight. Though they be more wittie and nimble spirited, they are not the lesse foolish, simple and unapt. I love wit, and honour wisdom, as much as them that have it. And beeing rightly used, it is the noblest, the most forcible, yea and richest purchase men can make. But in such (of which kinde the number is infinite) that upon it establish their fundamentall sufficiencie and worth: that from their wit refer themselves to their memory, *sub aliena umbra latentes: reposing them under another mans protection*; and can doe nothing but by the booke (if I may be bould to say so) I hate the same, a little more then sottishnesse. *In my country, and in my dayes, learning and bookishnesse, doeth much mend purses, but mindes nothing at all.* If it chance to finde them empty light and dry, it filleth, it over

burthens and swelleth them: a raw and indigested masse: if thinne, it doth easily purifie, clarifie, extenuate and subtilize them, even unto exinanition or evacuation. It is a thing of a quality very neare indifferent: a most profitable accessory or ornament unto a well borne minde, but pernicious and hurtfully domagable unto any other. Or rather a thing of most precious use, that wil not basely be gotten, nor vilie possessed. In some handes a royal sceptor, in other some a rude mattocke. But let us proceede. *What greater or more glorious victory can you expect, then teach your enemy, that he cannot withstand you?* When you gaine the advantage of your proposition, it is Trueth that winneth: when you get the advantage of the order and conduct, it is you that winne. I am of opinion, that both in *Plato* and in *Xenophon*, *Socrates* disputeth more in favour of the disputers, then in grace of the disputation: and more to instruct *Euthydemus* and *Protagoras* with the knowledge of their impertinencie, then with the impertinencie of their arte. He takes holde of the first matter, as he who hath a more profitable ende, then to cleare it; that is, to cleare the spirites he undertaketh to manage and to exercise. Agitation, stirring and hunting is properly belonging to our subject or drift; we are not excusable to conduct the same ill and impertinently, but to misse the game and faile in taking, that's another matter. *For we are borne to quest and seeke after trueth; to possesse it belongs to a greater power.* It is not (as *Democritus* saide) hidden in the deepes of abisse: but rather elevated in infinite height of divine knowledge. *The world is but a Schoole of inquisition.* The matter is not who shall put in, but who shall runne the fairest courses. As well may he playe the foole that speaketh truely, as he that speaketh falsely: for we are upon the manner, and not uppon the matter of speaking. My humour is, to have as great a regarde to the forme, as to the substance; as much respect to the Advocate, as to the cause; as *Alcibiades* appointed we should doe. And I daylie amuse my selfe to reade in authors, without care of their learning: therein seeking their manner, not their subject. Even as I pursue the communication of some famous wit, not that he should teach me, but that I may know him; and knowing him (if he deserve it) I may imitate him. Every one may speake truely, but to speake orderly, methodically, wisely and sufficiently, few can doe it. So, falsehood proceeding of ignorance doth not offend me; ineptnesse and trifling doth. I have broken-off divers bargaines, that would have bin very commodious unto me, by the impertinencie of their contestation, with whome I did bargaine. I am not mooved once a yeare, with the faults or oversights of those, over whom I have power: but touching the point of the sottishnesse and foolishnesse of their alegations, excuses, and defences, rude and brutish, we are every day ready to goe by the eares. They neyther understand what is said, nor wherefore, and even so they answer; a thing able to make one dispaire. I feele not my head to shock hard but by being hit with another. And I rather enter into compositiō with my peoples vices, then with their rashnesse, importunity and foolishnesse. Let them doe lesse, provided they be capable to doe. You live in hope to enflame their will: *But of a block there is nothing to be hoped for, nor any thing of worth to be enjoyed.* Now, what if I take things otherwise then they are? So it may be: And therefore I accuse my impatience. And first, I should, that it is equally vicious in him, who is in the right, as in him, that is in the wrong: For, it is ever a kinde of tyrannicall sharpenesse, not to be able to indure a forme different from his: and verily, since there is not a greater fondnesse, a more constant

gullishnesse, or more heteroclite insipidity then for one to move or vex himselfe at the fondnesse, at the gullishnesse, or insipidity of the world: For it principally formalizeth and moveth us against our selves: and that Philosopher of former ages should never have wanted occasion to weepe, so long as he had considered himselfe. *Miso*, one of the seaven sages (a man of a Timonian disposition and Demoratitian humour) being demanded, where-at he laughed alone; he answered, because I laugh alone? How many follies doe I speake and answer every day, according to my selfe; and then how much more frequent according to others? And if I bite mine owne lips at them, what ought others to doe? *In fine, we must live with the quick, and let the water runne under the bridge, without any care, or at least without alteration to us.* In good sooth, why meete we sometimes with crooked, deformed and in body mishapen men, without falling into rage and discontent, and cannot endure to light-upon a froward, skittish, and ill-ranged spirit, without falling into anger and vexation? This vicious austeritie is rather in the judge, then in the fault. Let us ever have that saying of *Plato* in our mouthes: *What I finde unwholsome, is it not to be unhealthy my selfe? Am not I in fault my selfe? May not mine owne advertisement be retorted against my selfe?* Oh wise and devine restraint, that curbeth the most universall and common error of men: Not onely the reproches, we doe one to another, but our reasons, our arguments and matters controverted, are ordinarily retortable unto us: and wee pinche our selves up in our owne armes. Whereof antiquitie hath left me divers grave examples. It was ingeniously spoken and fit to the purpose, by him that first devised the same.

*Stercus cuique suum bene olet.*

*Ev'ry mans ordure well,  
To his owne sense doth smell.*

Our eyes see nothing backward. A hundred times a day we mocke our selves, upon our neighbours subject, and detest some defects in others, that are much more apparant in us; yea and admire them with a strange impudencie and unheedinesse. Even yesterday, I chanced to see a man of reasonable understanding, who no lesse pleasantly then justly flouted at anothers fond fashion, and yet upon every silly occasion doth nothing but molest al men with the impertinent bedrowle and register of his pedigrees, genealogies and alliances, more then halfe false and wrested in; (for it is the maner of such people, commonly to undertake such foolish discourses, whose qualities are more doubtfull and lesse sure) who if he had imparcially considered and looked upon himselfe, should doubtles have found himselfe no lesse intemperate, indiscreet and tedious, in publishing and extolling the prerogative of his wives pedigree and descent. Oh importunate presumption, wherewith the wife seeth her selfe armed by the hands of her owne husband. If he understand Latine, a man should say to him,

*Age si hęc non insanit satis sua sponte, instiga.*

*Goe too, if of hir owne accorde before,  
She were not madde enough, provoke hir more.*

I say not, that *none should accuse, except he be spotlesse in himselfe*: For then none might accuse: no not spotlesse in the same kinde of fault. But my meaning is, that our judgement charging and blaming another, of whom there is then question, spareth us nothing, of an inward and severe jurisdiction. It is an office of charity, that, *he who cannot remove a vice for himselfe, should neverthelesse endeavour to remoove it from others, where it may have a lesse hurtful and froward seede*. Nor do I deeme it a fit answer, for him that warneth me of my fault, to say, the same is likewise in him. But what of that? *Well meaning warning is alwayes true and profitable*. Had we a good and sound nose, our owne ordure should be more unsavory unto ourselves, forasmuch as it is our own. And *Socrates* is of opinion, that he, who should finde himselfe, and his son, and a stranger guilty of any violence or injurie, ought first begin by himselfe, and present himselfe to the sentence and condemnation of the law, and for his owne discharge and acquital implore the assistãce of the executioners hand: secondly for his sonne, and lastly for the stranger. If this precept take his tune somewhat too high: it should at least be first presented to the punishment of ones owne conscience. Our senses are our proper and first judges, who distinguish not things, but by externall accidents; and no marvell, if in all partes of the service belonging to our society, there is so perpetuall and universall commixture of cerimonies and superficial apparances: so that the best and most effectuall part of policies, consists in that. It is man with whom we have alwaies to doe, whose condition is marvelouslie corporall. Let those, who in these latter dayes have so earnestly laboured, to frame and establish unto us, an exercise of religion and service of God, so contemplative and immateriall, wonder nothing at all, if some be found, who thinke, it would have escaped and mouldred away betweene their fingers, if it had not held and continued amongst us, as a marke, a title and instrument of division and faction, more then by it selfe. As in conference: The gravitie, the gowne and the fortune of him that speaketh, doth often adde and winne credit unto vaine, trifling and absurde discourses. It is not to be presumed, that one of these gowne Clarkes or quoified Serjants, so followed, and so redoubted, have not some sufficiencie within him, more then populare: and that a man so sullen, so grim and so disdainfull, to whome so many commissions, charges and auctorities are given, be not more sufficient and worthy, then another, who saluteth and vaileth to him so farre-off, and whome no man employeth. Not onely the wordes, but the powtings of such people, are considered and registred, every one applying himselfe to give them some notable and solide interpretation. If they stoope to common conference, and that a man affoorde or showe them other then reverence and approbation, they overthrowe you with the auctoritie of their experience: they have read, they have heard, seene and done goodly things, you are cleane over-whelmed with examples. I would faine tell them, that the fruit of a Chirurgions experience, is not the story of his practises, or the remembrance that hee hath cured foure who had the plague, and healed as many that had the Goute, except he knowe and have the wit, from his use and experience, to drawe a methode how to frame his judgements and by his skill and practise make us perceave, he is become wiser in his arte. As in a consort of instruments, one heares not severally a Lute, a Vyol, a Flute or a paire of Virginalles, but a perfect-full harmonie: the assemblie and fruite of all those instruments in one. If their travels and charges have amended them, it is in the production of their

understanding to make it appeare. It sufficeth not to number the experiments; they ought to be well poised and orderly sorted: and to extract the reasons and conclusions they containe, they should be well digested and throughly distilled. There were never so many Historians. It is ever good and profitable to heare them: for out of the magazin of their memorie, they store us with divers good instructions and commendable documents. Verily a chiefe part, for the assistance and directing of our life. But now adayes we seeke not after that, but rather whether the collectors and reporters of them be praise worthy themselves. I hate all maner of tyrannie, both verball and effectuall. I willinglie bandie and oppose my selfe against these vaine and frivolous circumstances, which by the sences delude our judgement; and houlding my selfe aloofe-off from these extraordinarie greatneses, have found, that for the most parte, they are but men as others be:

*Rarus enim fermè sensus communis in illa  
Fortuna.*

*For common sence is seldome found  
In fortunes that so much abound.*

They are peradventure esteemed and discerned lesse then they be, forsomuch as they undertake more, and so show themselves; they answer not the charge they have taken. *There must necessarilie be more vigour and strength in the bearer, then in the burthen.* He who is not growne to his full strength, leaves you to guesse, whether he have any left him beyond that, or have beene tride to the utmost of his powre. He who fainteth under his burthen, bewrayeth his measure and the weakenesse of his shoulders. That's the reason, why amongst the wiser sorte, there are so many foolish and unapt mindes seene, and more then of others. They might happilie have beene made good husbandmen, thriving marchants and plodding artificers. Their naturall vigour was cut out to this proportion. Learning is a matter of great consequence: they faint under it. To enstall and distribute, so ritche and so powerfull a matter, and availefully to employe the same, their witte hath neither sufficient vigour, nor conduct enough to manage it. It hath no prevailing vertue but in a strong nature; and they are very rare: And such as are but weake (saith *Socrates*) corrupt and spoylinglie deface the dignitie of Philosophie, in handling the same. Shee seemeth faultie and unprofitable, being ill placed and unorderly disposed. Loe how they spoile and entangle themselves.

*Humani qualis simulator simius oris,  
Quem puer arridens, pretioso stamine serum  
Uelauit, nudásque nates ac terga reliquit,  
Ludibrium mensis.*

*Such counterfaicts as Apes are of mans face,  
Whom children sporting-at, featly incase  
In costly coates, but leave his backside bare  
For men to laugh at, when they feasting are.*

To those likewise, who sway and commaund us, and have the world in their owne hands, t'is not sufficient to have a common understanding, and to be able to doe, what we can effect. They are farre beneath us, if they be not much above us. As they promise more, so owe they more. And therefore silence is in them, not onely a countenance of respect and gravitie, but often of thrift and profit: *Megabysus* going to visite *Apelles* in his worke-house, stood still a good while without speaking one worde, and then began to discourse of his workes. Of whom he received this rude and nipping check: *So long as thou heldest thy peace, by reason of thy garish clothes, goodly chaines and stately pompe, thou seemedst to bee some worthy gallant: but now thou hast spoken, there is not the simplest boye of my shop, but scorneth and contemns thee.* That great state of his, those rich habilliments, and goodly traine, did not permit him to be ignorant with a populare ignorance and to speake impertinentlie of painting. He should have kept mute, and concealed his externall and presuming sufficiencie. Unto how many fond and shallow mindes, hath in my dayes, a sullen, colde and silent countenance, served as a title of wisdom and capacitie? Dignities, charges and places, are necessarily given, more by fortune then by merit: and they are often to blame, that for it laye the blame on Kings. Contrariwise it is a wonder, that being so untowarde, they should therein have so good lucke: *Principis est uirtus maxima, nosse suos. Chiefe vertue it is knowne, In Kings to knowe their owne.* For Nature hath not given them so perfect a sight, that it might extend it selfe and overlooke so many people, to discerne their pre-excellencie; and enter their breasts, where lodgeth the knowledge of our will and better worth. It is by conjectures, and as it were groping they must trye us: by our race, alliances, dependences, ritches, learning, and the peoples voyce: all over-weake arguments. *He that could devise a meane, how men might be judged by lawe, chosen by reason, and advanced by desart, should establish a perfect forme of a Commonwealth.* Yea but he hath brought that great businesse unto a good passe. It is to say something: but not to say sufficiently. For, this sentence is justly receaved, *That counsels ought not to be judged by the events.* The Carthaginians were wonte to punish the ill counsels of their Captaines, although corrected by some fortunate successe. And the Romane people hath often refused triumphes to famous, succesfull and most profitable victories, forsomuch as the Generals conduct, answered not his good fortune. It is commonly perceaved by the worldes actions, that fortune, to teach us, how farre hir powre extendeth unto all things; and who taketh pleasure to abate our presumption, having not beene able to make sillie men wise, she hath made them fortunate, in envie of vertue: And commonlye gives hir selfe to favour executions, when as their complot and devise is meerelie hers. Whence we dayly see, that the simplest amongst us, compasse divers great and important affaires, both publike and private. And as *Sirannez* the Persian Prince, answered those, who seemed to wonder how his negotiations succeeded so ill, his discourses being so wise: That *he was onely maister of his discourses, but fortune mistris of his affaires successe.* These may answer the like; but with a contrary byas. Most things of the world are made by themselves.

*Fata uiam inueniunt.*

*Fates finde and know, which way to goe.*

The issue doth often auctorise a simple conduct. Our interposition is in a manner nothing els but an experience, and more commonly a consideration of use and example, then of reason. And as one amazed at the greatnesse of some businesse, I have sometimes understood by those who had atchieved them, both their motives and addresses: wherein I have found but vulgar advises: and the most vulgar and used, are peradventure the surest and most commodious for the practise, if not for the showe. And what if the plainest reasons are the best seated: the meanest, basest and most beaten, are best applyde unto affayres? To maintaine the auctoritie of our Kings-counsell, it is not requisite, that prophane persons should be partakers of it, and looke further into it, then from the first barre. To uphold it's reputation, it should be revered upon credit, and at full. My consultation doth somewhat roughlie hew the matter, and by it's first show, lightly consider the same: the maine and chiefe point of the worke, I am wonte to resigne to heaven,

*Permitte diuis cætera.*

*How all the rest shall goe,  
Give leave to Gods to knowe.*

Good and bad fortune, are in my conceit two soveraigne powers Tis folly to thinke, that humane wisdomes may acte the full part of fortune. And vaine is his enterprise, that presumeth to embrace both causes and consequences, and leade the progresse of his fact by the hand. And above all, vainest in militarie deliberations. There was never more circumspection and militarie wisdomes, then is sometimes seene amongst us: May it be that man feareth to loose himselfe by the way, reserving himselfe to the catastrophe of that play? I say moreover, that even our wisdomes and consultation for the most part followeth the conduct of hazard. My will and my discourse, is sometimes mooved by one ayre, and sometimes by another: and there be many of these motions, that are governed without me. My reason hath dayly impulsions and casuall agitations:

*Vertuntur species animorum, et pectora motus  
Nunc alios, alios dum nubula uentus agebat.  
Concipiunt.*

*The showes of mindes are chang'd, and brests conceive  
At one time motions, which anon they leave,  
And others take againe, As windes drive clouds amaine.*

Let but a man looke who are the mightiest in Citties and who thrive best in their businesse: he shall commonly finde, they are the silliest and poorest in wit. It hath hapned to simple women, to weake children, and to mad men, to commaund great states, as well as the most sufficient Princes. And the gullish or shallow-pated (saith *Thucidides*) doe more ordinarilie come unto them, then the wisest and subtilest. We ascribe their good fortunes effects, unto their prudence.

*ut quisque fortuna utitur,  
Ita præcellit: atque exinde sapere illum omnes dicimus.*

*As men their fortune use, so they excell,  
And so we say, they are wise and doe well.*

Wherefore I say well, that howsoever, events are but weake testimonies of our worthe and capacitie. I was now upon this point, that we need but looke upon a man advanced to dignitie; had we but three dayes before knowne him to be of little or no worthe at all: an image of greatnesse, and an Idea of sufficiencie, doth insensiblie glide and creepe into our opinions; and we perswade our selves, that increasing in state, in credite and followers, he is also encreased in merite. We judge of him, not according to his worth; but after the manner of casting-counters, according to the prerogative of his ranke. But let fortune turne hir wheele, let him againe decline and come downe amongst the vulgar multitude; every one with admiration enquireth of the cause, and how he was rayseed so high. Good Lord, is that he? will some say. What? knew he no more? had he no other skill when he was so alofte? Are Princes pleased with so little? Nowe in good sooth wee were in very good hands, will others say. It is a thing my selfe have often seene in my dayes. Yea the verye maske of greatnesse, or habite of majestie, represented in Tragedies, doth in some sorte touch and beguile us. The thing I adore in Kings, is the throng of their adoratores. All inclination and submission is due unto them, except the mindes. My reason is not framed to bend or stoope; my knees are. *Melanthius* being demanded, what he thought of *Dionysius* his tragedy, answered, I have not seene it, so much was it overclouded with language. So should those say, that judge of great mens discourses: I have not understoode his discourse, so was it overdarkned with gravity, with greatnesse and with majesty. *Antisthenes* one day perswaded the Athenians, to commaund, that their Asses should as well be employed about the manuring of grounds, as were their horses: who answered him, that the Asse was not borne for such service: that's all one (quoth he) there needes but your allowance for it: for the most ignorant and incapable men you imploy about the directing of your warres, leave not to become out of hand most worthy, onely because you employe them. Whereon depends the custome of so many men, who canonize the king, whom they have made amongst them, and are not contented to honour him, unlesse they also adore him. Those of *Mexico*, after the cerimonies of his consecration are finished, dare no more looke him in the face: but as if by his royaltie, they had deified him, they afterward deeme him to be a God: Amongst the othes, they make him sweare *to maintaine their religion, to keepe their lawes, to defend their liberties, to be valiant, just and debonaire*: he is also sworne, to make the Sunne march in his accustomed light: in time of need to cause the cloudes showre downe their waters; to enforce rivers to runne in their right wonted chanel; and compell the earth to produce all necessary things for his people. I differ from this common fashion, and more distrust sufficiencie, when I see it accompanied with the greatnesse of fortune, and applauded by populare commendation. We should heedefully marke, of what consequence it is, for a man to speake in due time, to choose fit opportunity, to breake or change his discourse with a magistrale authority: to defend himselfe from others oppositions, by a nod or mooving of the head, by a smile, a shrug or a silence, before an assembly, trembling with reverence and respect. A man of monstrous fortune, chancing to shoote his boulte, and give his opinion upon a

frivolous subject, which but jestingly was tossed too and fro at his table, beganne ever thus; he cannot choose but be a lyer, or an ignorant asse, that will say otherwise then, etc. Follow this Philosophicall point, out commeth a dagger, and there is some mischiefe. Loe here another advertisement; from whence I reape good use; Which is, that in disputations and conferences, all good seeming wordes, ought not presently to be allowed and accepted. Most men are rich of a strange sufficiencie. Some may chance to speake a notable saying, to give a good answere, to use a witty sentence, and to propound it, without knowing the force of it. That a man holdeth not all he borroweth, may peradventure be verified in my selfe. A man should not alwayes yeelde, what trueth or goodnes so ever it seemeth to containe. A man must eyther combat the same in good earnest, or drawe-backe, under colour of not understanding the matter: to try on al partes, how it is placed in it's author. It may fortune, that we shut our selves up, and further the stroake, beyond its bearing. I have sometimes in the necessity and throng of the combat, employed some reviradoes or turnings, which beyond my intent, have proved false offers. I but gave them by tale, and they were received by waight. Even as when I contend with a vigorous man; I please my selfe to anticipate his conclusions: I ease him the labour to interpret himselfe: I endeavour to prevent his imperfect and yet budding imagination: the order and pertinencie of his understanding forwarneth and menaceth a farre off: of these others I doe cleane contrary; a man must understand or presuppose nothing but by them. If they judge in generall termes: *This is good; that's naught*: and that they jump right; see whither it be fortune, that jumpeth for them. Let them a little circumscribe and restraine their sentence; wherefore it is, and which way it is. These universall judgements, I see so ordinarily say nothing at all. They are men, that salute a whole multitude, in throng and troupe. Such as have true knowledge of the same, salute and marke it by name and particularly. But it is a hazardous enterprise. Whence I have oftner then daylie seen, to happen that wits weakly grounded, intending to show themselves ingenious, by observing in the reading of some worke, the point of beauty: stay their admiration with so bad a choise, that in lieu of teaching us the authors excellencie, they showe us their owne ignorance. This manner of exclamation is safe; *Loe this is very excellent; Surely this is very good*, having heard a whole page of *Virgile*. And that's the shift whereby the subtill save themselves, But to undertake to followe him by shrugs and crinches, and with an expresse selected judgement to goe about to marke which way a good author surmounteth himselfe; pondring his wordes, his phrases, his inventions, and his severall vertues one after another: *Away; goe by; It is not for you. Videndum est non modo, quid quisque loquatur, sed etiam quid quisque sentiat, atque etiam qua de causa quisque sentiat. Man must take heede not onely what he speakes, but what he thinkes, and also why he thinkes*. I daylie heare fooles utter unfoolish wordes. Speake they any good thing; let us understand whence they know it, how farre they understand and whereby they holde it. We helpe them to employ this fine word, and this goodly reason, which they possesse not, and have but in keeping; they have happily produced the same by chance and at randan, our selves bring it in credit and esteeme with them. You lend them your hand; what to doe? to konne you no thanks, and thereby become more simple, and more foolish. Doe not second them; let them goe-on: they will handle this

matter as men affraide to bewray themselves, they dare neither change her seate or light, nor enter into it. Shake it never so little, it escapeth them; they quit the same, how strong and goodly soever it be. They are hand-some weapons, but ill hafted. How often have I seene the experience of it? Now if you come to expound and confirme them, they take holde of you, and presently steale the advantage of your interpretation from you. *It was that which I was about to say: It was just my conceite: if I have not so exprest it, it is but for want of speach.* Handy-dandie, what is this? Malice it selfe must be employed to correct this fierce rudenesse. *Hegesias* his position, that a man must neither hate nor accuse, but instruct, hath some reason else where. But here, it is injustice to assist, and inhumanity to raise him up againe, that hath nothing to doe with it, and is thereby of lesser worth. I love to have them entangle and bemire themselves more then they are, and if it be possible, to wade so deepe into the gulfpe of error, that in the end they may recall and readvise themselves. *Sottishnesse and distraction of the senses, is no disease curable by a tricke of advertismment.* And we may fitly say of this reparation, as *Cyrus* answered one, who urged him to exhort his army in the nicke when the battell should beginne; That *men are not made warlike and couragious in the field, by an excellent oration; no more then one becommeth a ready cunning musition, by hearing a good song.* They are prentisages that must be learnt aforehand, by long and constant institution. This care wee owe to ours, and this assiduitie of correction and instruction: but to preach to him that first passeth by, and sway the ignorance or fondnesse of him we meete next, is a custome I cannot well away with. I seldome use it, even in such discourses as are made to me; and I rather quit all, then come to these far-fetcht and magistrale instructions. My humour is no more proper to speake, then to write, namely for beginners. But in things commonly spoken, or amongst others, how false and absurd soever I judge them, I never crosse or gibe them, neither by word nor signe. Further, nothing doth more spight mee in sottishnesse then that it pleaseth it selfe more, then any reason may justly be satisfide. It is ill lucke, that wisdom forbids you to please and trust your selfe, and sends you alwayes away discontented and feareful: whereas wilfulnes and rashnesse, fill their guests with gratulation and assurance. It is for the simplest and least able, to looke at other men over their shoulders, ever returning from the combat ful of glory and gladnes. And most often also, this outrecuidance of speach and chearefulnesse of countenance, giveth them the victory over the by-standers, who are commonly weake, and incapable to judge aright and discern true advantage. *Obstinacie and earnestnesse in opinion, is the surest tryall of folly and selfe conceite.* Is there any thing so assured, so resolute, so disdainfull, so contemplative, so serious and so grave, as the *Asse*? May we not commixe with the title of conference and communication, the sharpe and interrupted discourses, which mirth and familiarity introduceth amongst friends, pleasantly dallying and wittily jesting one with another? An exercise, to which my naturall blithenesse makes me very apt. And if it be not so wire-drawne and serious, as this other exercise I now speake of, yet is it no lesse sharpe or ingenious, nor lesse profitable, as it seemed to *Lycurgus*. For my regard I bring more liberty then wit unto it, and have therein more lucke then invention: but I am perfect in sufferance; for I endure the revenge, not onely sharpe but also indiscrete, without any alteration. And to any assault given me, if I have not presently or stoutely wherewith to worke

mine owne amends, I amuse not my selfe to follow that ward or point, with a tedious and selfe-wil'dcontestation, enclining to pertinacie: I let it passe, and hanging downe mine eares, remit my selfe to a better houre to right my selfe. *He is not a marchant that ever gaineth.* Most men change both voyce and countenance, where might faileth them: And by an importunate rage, instead of avenging themselves, they accuse their weaknesse and therewith bewray their impacience. In this joylity we now and then harpe uppon some secret strings of our imperfections; which, setled or considerate we cannot touch without offence: and we profitably enter-advertize our selves of our defects. There are other handy-sportes, indiscrete, fond and sharpe, just after the French manner; which I hate mortallye: I have a tender and sensible skinne: I have in my dayes seene two Princes of our royall blood brought to their graves for it. *It is an ill-seeming thing for men, in jest to hitte, or in sporte to streake one another.* In other matters, when I will judge of any bodye, I demaund of him, how farre or how much hee is contented with himselfe: how farre his speache or his worke pleaseth him. I will avoyde these goodlye excuses, *I did it but in jest:*

*Ablatum mediis opus est incudibus istud.*

*This worke away was brought,  
Halfe hammered, halfe wrought,*

*I was not an houre there; I have not seene him since.* Now I say, let us then leave these partes, give me one that may represent you whole and entire, by which it may please you to be measured by another. And then; what finde you fairest in your owne worke? is it that or this part? the grace or the matter, the invention, the judgement, or the learning? For I ordynarily perceive, that *a man misseth as much in judging of his owne worke, as of anothers.* Not onely by the affection, he therein employeth; but because he hath not sufficiencie to know, nor skill to distinguish it. The worke of it's owne power and fortune, may second the worke-man, and transport him beyond his invention and knowledge. As for me, I judge not the worth of anothers worke more obscurely then of mine owne: and place my Essayes sometimes lowe, sometimes high, very unconstantly and doubtfully. There are dyvers bookes profitable by reason of their subjects of which the author reapeth no commendations at all: And good bookes, as also good workes, which make the workeman ashamed. I shall write the manner of our bankets, and the fashion of our garments; and I shall write it with an ill grace: I shall publish the Edicts of my time, and the letters of Princes that publikelye passe from hand to hand: I shall make an abridgement of a good booke (and every abridgement of a good booke, is a foole abridged) which booke shall come to bee lost; and such like things. Posterity shall reape singular profit by such compositions: but I, what honour, except by my good fortune? Many famous bookes are of this condition.

When I read *Philip de Comines*, (now dyvers yeares since) a right excellent author, I noted this speach in him, as a saying not vulgar: *That a man should carefullye take heede, how he doe his maister so great or much service, that he thereby be hindred from finding his due recompence for it.* I should have commended the invention, but not him. After that I found it in *Tacitus: Beneficia eo usque lata sunt, dum uidentur exolui posse, ubi multum anteuenero pro*

*gratia odium redditur.* Benefites are so long wel-come, as wee thinke they may bee requited, but when they much exceede all power of recompence, hate is return'd for thankes and good will. And Seneca very stoutely. *Nam qui putat esse turpe non reddere, non uult esse cui reddat.* For he that thinkes it a shame not to requite, could wish, he were not whom he should requite. Q. Cicero with a looser byas: *Qui se non putat satisfacere, amicus esse nullo modo potest.* He that thinkes he doth not satisfie, can by no meanes be a friend. The subject according as it is, may make a man be judged learned, wise and memorious: but to judge in him the partes most his owne and best worthy, together with the force and beauty of his minde; 't is very requisite, we know first what is his owne, and what not: and in what is not his owne, what we are behoulding to him for, in consideration of his choise, disposition, ornament, and language he hath thereunto furnished. What if he have borrowed the matter and empaired the forme? as many times it commeth to passe. We others that have little practise with bookes, are troubled with this; that when we meete with any rare or quaint invention in a new Poet, or forcible argument in a Preacher, we dare not yet commend them, untill wee have taken instruction of some wise man, whether that part be their owne or another bodies. And untill then I ever stand upon mine owne guard. I come lately from reading over, (and that without any intermission) the story of *Tacitus* (a matter not usuall with me; it is now twenty yeares, I never spent one whole houre together upon a booke) and I have now done it, at the instant request of a gentleman, whom *France* holdeth in high esteeme; as well for his owne worth and valour, as for a constant forme of sufficiencie and goodnes, apparantly seene in divers brethren of his. I know no author, that in a publique register entermixeth so many considerations of manners, and particular inclinations. And I deeme cleane contrary, to what he thinketh: who beeing especially to follow the lives of the Emperours of his time, so dyvers and extreame in all manner of forme, so manye notable and great actions, which, namelye their cruelty produced in their subjectes: hee had a more powerfull and attractive matter, to discourse and relate, then if hee had beene to speake or treat of battels and universall agitations. So that I often finde him barren, sleightlye running-over those glorious deathes, as if hee feared to attediate and molest us with their multitude and continuance. This forme of historye is much more profitable: *Publike innovations, depend more on the conduct of fortune: private on ours.* It is rather a judgement, then a deduction of an history: therein are more precepts, then narrations: It is not a booke to reade, but a volume to study and to learne: It is so fraught with sentences, that right or wrong they are huddled up: It is a seminary of morall, and a magazine of polittique discourses, for the provision and ornament of those, that possesse some place in the managing of the world. He ever pleadeth with solide and forcible reasons; after a sharpe and witty fashion: following the affected and laboured stile of his age: They so much loved to raise and puffe themselves up, that where they found neither sharpenesse nor subtilty in things, they would borrow it of wordes. He draweth somewhat neare to *Senecas* writing. I deeme *Tacitus* more sinnowie, *Seneca* more sharpe. His service is more proper to a crazed troubled state, as is ours at this present: you would often say, he pourtrayeth and toucheth us to the quicke. Such as doubt of his faith, doe many festly accuse themselves to hate him for somewhat else. His opinions be sound, and enclining to the better side of the Romane affaires. I am neverthesse something greeved, that hee hath more bitterly judged

of *Pompey*, then honest mens opinions, who lived and conversed with him, doe well allowe-off: to have esteemed him altogether equall to *Marius* and *Silla*, saving that he was more close and secret. His intention and canvassing for the government of affaires, hath not beene exempted from ambition, nor cleared from revenge: and his owne friendes have feared, that had he gotten the victory, it would have transported him beyond the limites of reason; but not unto an unbridled and raging measure. There is nothing in his life that hath threatned us with so manyfest a crueltye, and expresse tyranny. Yet must not the suspition be counterpoised to the evidence: So doe not I beleeve him.

That his narrations are naturall and right, might happylie be argued by this: That they doe not alwayes exactly apply themselves to the conclusions of his judgments; which he pursueth according to the course he hath taken, often beyond the matter hee showeth us; which he hath dayned to stoope unto with one onely glance. He needeth no excuse to have approved the religion of his times, according to the lawes which commaunded him, and beene ignorant of the true and perfect worship of God. That's his ill fortune, not his defect. I have principallie considered his judgement, whereof I am not everye where thoroughly resolved. As namely these wordes containyd in the letter, which *Tiberius* beeing sicke and aged, sent to the Senate. *What shall I write to you my maisters, or how shall I write to you, or what shall I not write to you in these times? May the Gods and Goddesses loose me worse, then I daylie feele my selfe to perish, if I can tell.* I cannot perceive why hee should so certainly applye them unto a stinging remorse, tormenting the conscience of *Tiberius*: *At least when my selfe was in the same plight, I saw it not.* That hath likewise seemed somewhat demisse and base unto me, that having saide, how hee had exercised a certayne honourable magistracie in *Rome*, hee goeth about to excuse himselfe, that it is not for ostentation, hee spake it: This one tricke, namely in a minde of his quality, seemeth but base and cource unto mee: For, not to dare speake roundly of himselfe, accuseth some want of courage: A constant, resolute and high judgement, and which judgeth soundly and surelye, every hand while useth his owne examples, as well as of any strange thing; and witnesseth as freelye of himselfe, as of a third person: A man must overgoe these populare reasons of civility, in favour of trueth and libertye. I dare not onely speake of my selfe: but speake alone of my selfe. I stragle when I write of any other matter, and digresse from my subject. I doe not so indiscretely love my selfe, and am so tide and commixt to my selfe, as that I can not distinguish and consider my selfe a part: as a neighbour; as a tree. it is an equall error, eyther not to see how farre a mans worth stretcheth, or to say more of it then one seeth good cause. *We owe more love to God, then to our selves, and know him lesse, and yet we talke our fill of him.* If his writings relate any thing of his conditions: he was a notable man, up-right and courageous; not with a superstitious vertue, but Philosophicall and generous: He may be found over hardy in his testimonies: As where hee houldeth, that a souldier carrying a burthen of woode, his handes were so stiffly benumbed with colde, that they stuck to his woode, and remayned so fast unto it, that as deade flesh they were divided from his armes. In such cases I am wont to yeelde unto the authoritie of so great testimonies. Where he also saieth, that *Vespasian* by the favour of the God *Serapis*, healed in the cittie of *Alexandria* a blinde woman, with the rubbing and anoynting her eyes with fasting spettle: and some other miracles, which I remember not

well now: he doth it by the example and devoir of all good historians. They keepe a register of important events: among publike accidents, are also popular reports and vulgar opinions. It is their part to relate common conceites, but not to swaie them. This part belongeth to Divines and Philosophers, directors of consciences. Therefore that companion of his, and as great a man as he, saide most wisely: *Equidem plura transcribo quam credo: Nam nec affirmare sustineo, de quibus dubito, nec subducere quæ accipi: I write out more then I beleeve: for neither can I abide to affirme what I doubt of, nor to withdrawe what I have heard.* And that other: *Hæc neque affirmare neque refellare operæ precium est: fama rerum standum est. It is not worth the talke, or to avouch, or to refute these things; we must stand to report.* And writing in an age, wherein the beleeve of prodigies beganne to decline, he saieth, he would notwithstanding not ommit to insert in his Annales, and give footing to a thing received and allowed of so many honest men, and with so great reverence by antiquitie. It is very well saide: That they yeelde us the historie, more according as they receive, then according as they esteeme it. I who am king of the matter I treat of, and am not to give accompt of it to any creature living, do neverthelesse not altogether beleeve my selfe for it: I often hazard upon certaine outslips of my minde, for which I distrust my selfe; and certaine verball wilie-beguilies, wherewith I shake mine eares: but I let them runne at hab or nab; I see some honour them selves with such like things: 'Tis not for me alone to judge of them. I present my selfe standing and lying, before and behinde, on the right and left side, and in all by naturall motions. *Spirites alike in force, are not ever alike in application and taste.* Loe here what my memorie doth in grose, and yet very uncertainely present unto me of it. In breefe, all judgements are weake, demisse and imperfect.