

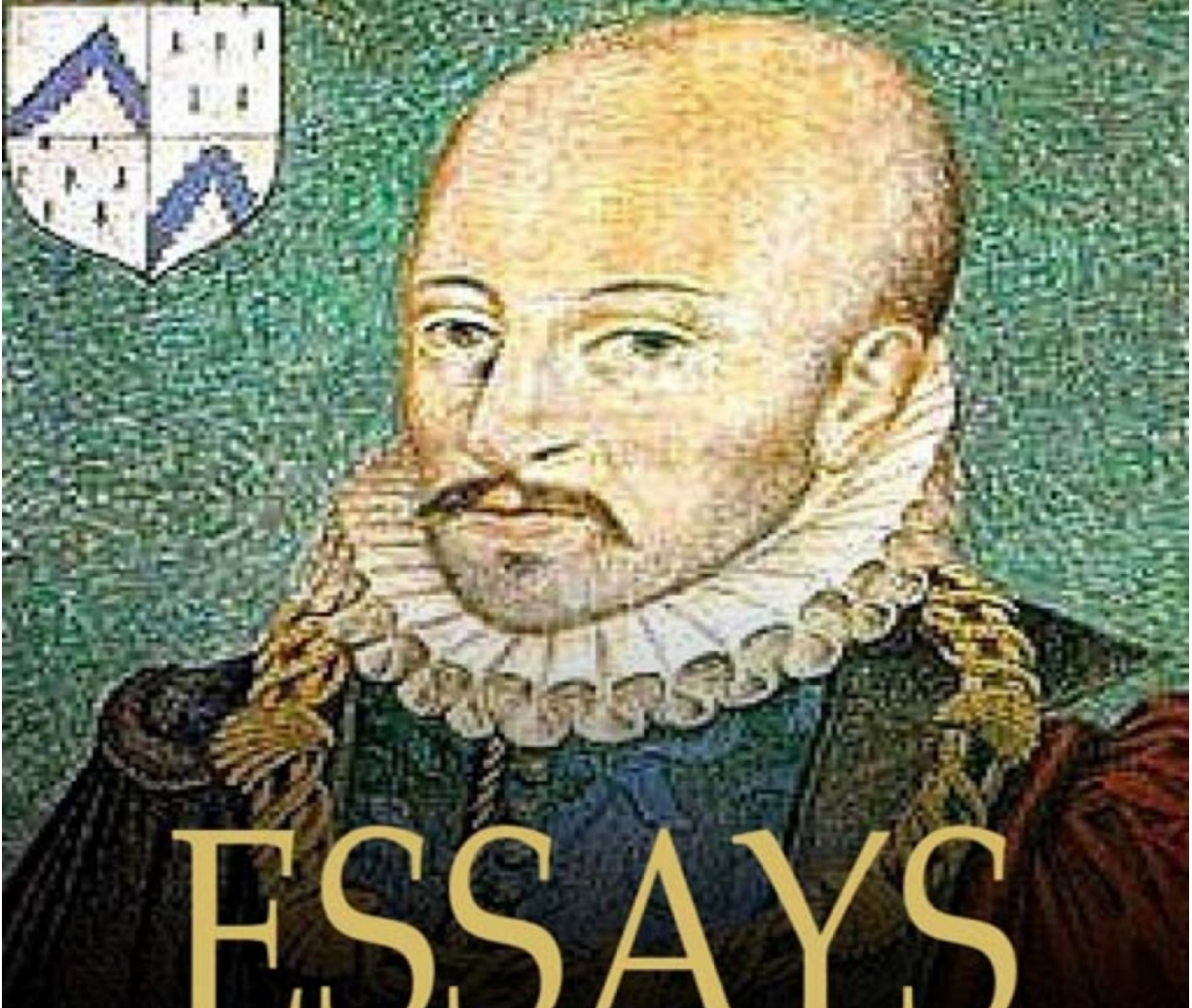
LE SEIGNEUR DE MONTAIGNE



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Michel de Montaigne

The Essays of Montaigne

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By Michel de Montaigne

MEN BY VARIOUS WAYS ARRIVE AT THE SAME END

The most usual way of appeasing the indignation of such as we have any way offended, when we see them in possession of the power of revenge, and find that we absolutely lie at their mercy, is by submission, to move them to commiseration and pity; and yet bravery, constancy, and resolution, however quite contrary means, have sometimes served to produce the same effect.— [Florio's version begins thus: "The most vsuall waie to appease those minds wee have offended, when revenge lies in their hands, and that we stand at their mercie, is by submission to move them to commiseration and pity: Nevertheless, courage, constancie, and resolution (means altogether opposite) have sometimes wrought the same effect."—] [The spelling is Florio's D.W.]

Edward, Prince of Wales [Edward, the Black Prince. D.W.] (the same who so long governed our Guienne, a personage whose condition and fortune have in them a great deal of the most notable and most considerable parts of grandeur), having been highly incensed by the Limousins, and taking their city by assault, was not, either by the cries of the people, or the prayers and tears of the women and children, abandoned to slaughter and prostrate at his feet for mercy, to be stayed from prosecuting his revenge; till, penetrating further into the town, he at last took notice of three French gentlemen,—[These were Jean de Villemure, Hugh de la Roche, and Roger de Beaufort.—Froissart, i. c. 289. {The city was Limoges. D.W.}]—who with incredible bravery alone sustained the power of his victorious army. Then it was that consideration and respect unto so remarkable a valour first stopped the torrent of his fury, and that his clemency,

beginning with these three cavaliers, was afterwards extended to all the remaining inhabitants of the city.

Scanderbeg, Prince of Epirus, pursuing one of his soldiers with purpose to kill him, the soldier, having in vain tried by all the ways of humility and supplication to appease him, resolved, as his last refuge, to face about and await him sword in hand: which behaviour of his gave a sudden stop to his captain's fury, who, for seeing him assume so notable a resolution, received him into grace; an example, however, that might suffer another interpretation with such as have not read of the prodigious force and valour of that prince.

The Emperor Conrad III. having besieged Guelph, Duke of Bavaria,—[In 1140, in Weinsberg, Upper Bavaria.]—would not be prevailed upon, what mean and unmanly satisfactions soever were tendered to him, to condescend to milder conditions than that the ladies and gentlewomen only who were in the town with the duke might go out without violation of their honour, on foot, and with so much only as they could carry about them. Whereupon they, out of magnanimity of heart, presently contrived to carry out, upon their shoulders, their husbands and children, and the duke himself; a sight at which the emperor was so pleased, that, ravished with the generosity of the action, he wept for joy, and immediately extinguishing in his heart the mortal and capital hatred he had conceived against this duke, he from that time forward treated him and his with all humanity. The one and the other of these two ways would with great facility work upon my nature; for I have a marvellous propensity to mercy and mildness, and to such a degree that I fancy of the two I should sooner surrender my anger to compassion than to esteem. And yet pity is reputed a vice amongst the Stoics, who will that we succour the afflicted, but not that we should be so affected with their sufferings as to suffer with them. I conceived these examples not ill suited to the question in hand, and the rather because therein we observe these great souls

assaulted and tried by these two several ways, to resist the one without relenting, and to be shook and subjected by the other. It may be true that to suffer a man's heart to be totally subdued by compassion may be imputed to facility, effeminacy, and over-tenderness; whence it comes to pass that the weaker natures, as of women, children, and the common sort of people, are the most subject to it but after having resisted and disdained the power of groans and tears, to yield to the sole reverence of the sacred image of Valour, this can be no other than the effect of a strong and inflexible soul enamoured of and honouring masculine and obstinate courage. Nevertheless, astonishment and admiration may, in less generous minds, beget a like effect: witness the people of Thebes, who, having put two of their generals upon trial for their lives for having continued in arms beyond the precise term of their commission, very hardly pardoned Pelopidas, who, bowing under the weight of so dangerous an accusation, made no manner of defence for himself, nor produced other arguments than prayers and supplications; whereas, on the contrary, Epaminondas, falling to recount magniloquently the exploits he had performed in their service, and, after a haughty and arrogant manner reproaching them with ingratitude and injustice, they had not the heart to proceed any further in his trial, but broke up the court and departed, the whole assembly highly commending the high courage of this personage.—[Plutarch, How far a Man may praise Himself, c. 5.]

Dionysius the elder, after having, by a tedious siege and through exceeding great difficulties, taken the city of Reggio, and in it the governor Phytton, a very gallant man, who had made so obstinate a defence, was resolved to make him a tragical example of his revenge: in order whereunto he first told him, "That he had the day before caused his son and all his kindred to be drowned." To which Phytton returned no other answer but this: "That they were

then by one day happier than he." After which, causing him to be stripped, and delivering him into the hands of the tormentors, he was by them not only dragged through the streets of the town, and most ignominiously and cruelly whipped, but moreover vilified with most bitter and contumelious language: yet still he maintained his courage entire all the way, with a strong voice and undaunted countenance proclaiming the honourable and glorious cause of his death; namely, for that he would not deliver up his country into the hands of a tyrant; at the same time denouncing against him a speedy chastisement from the offended gods. At which Dionysius, reading in his soldiers' looks, that instead of being incensed at the haughty language of this conquered enemy, to the contempt of their captain and his triumph, they were not only struck with admiration of so rare a virtue, but moreover inclined to mutiny, and were even ready to rescue the prisoner out of the hangman's hands, he caused the torturing to cease, and afterwards privately caused him to be thrown into the sea.— [Diod. Sic., xiv. 29.]

Man (in good earnest) is a marvellous vain, fickle, and unstable subject, and on whom it is very hard to form any certain and uniform judgment. For Pompey could pardon the whole city of the Mamertines, though furiously incensed against it, upon the single account of the virtue and magnanimity of one citizen, Zeno,—[Plutarch calls him Stheno, and also Sthemnus and Sthenis]—who took the fault of the public wholly upon himself; neither entreated other favour, but alone to undergo the punishment for all: and yet Sylla's host, having in the city of Perugia —[Plutarch says Preneste, a town of Latium.]—manifested the same virtue, obtained nothing by it, either for himself or his fellow-citizens.

And, directly contrary to my first examples, the bravest of all men, and who was reputed so gracious to all those he overcame, Alexander, having, after many great difficulties,

forced the city of Gaza, and, entering, found Betis, who commanded there, and of whose valour in the time of this siege he had most marvellous manifest proof, alone, forsaken by all his soldiers, his armour hacked and hewed to pieces, covered all over with blood and wounds, and yet still fighting in the crowd of a number of Macedonians, who were laying on him on all sides, he said to him, nettled at so dear-bought a victory (for, in addition to the other damage, he had two wounds newly received in his own person), "Thou shalt not die, Betis, as thou dost intend; be sure thou shall suffer all the torments that can be inflicted on a captive." To which menace the other returning no other answer, but only a fierce and disdainful look; "What," says Alexander, observing his haughty and obstinate silence, "is he too stiff to bend a knee! Is he too proud to utter one suppliant word! Truly, I will conquer this silence; and if I cannot force a word from his mouth, I will, at least, extract a groan from his heart." And thereupon converting his anger into fury, presently commanded his heels to be bored through, causing him, alive, to be dragged, mangled, and dismembered at a cart's tail.—[Quintus Curtius, iv. 6. This act of cruelty has been doubted, notwithstanding the statement of Curtius.]—Was it that the height of courage was so natural and familiar to this conqueror, that because he could not admire, he respected it the less? Or was it that he conceived valour to be a virtue so peculiar to himself, that his pride could not, without envy, endure it in another? Or was it that the natural impetuosity of his fury was incapable of opposition? Certainly, had it been capable of moderation, it is to be believed that in the sack and desolation of Thebes, to see so many valiant men, lost and totally destitute of any further defence, cruelly massacred before his eyes, would have appeased it: where there were above six thousand put to the sword, of whom not one was seen to fly, or heard to cry out for quarter; but, on the contrary, every one running here and there to seek out and

to provoke the victorious enemy to help them to an honourable end. Not one was seen who, however weakened with wounds, did not in his last gasp yet endeavour to revenge himself, and with all the arms of a brave despair, to sweeten his own death in the death of an enemy. Yet did their valour create no pity, and the length of one day was not enough to satiate the thirst of the conqueror's revenge, but the slaughter continued to the last drop of blood that was capable of being shed, and stopped not till it met with none but unarmed persons, old men, women, and children, of them to carry away to the number of thirty thousand slaves.

OF SORROW

No man living is more free from this passion than I, who yet neither like it in myself nor admire it in others, and yet generally the world, as a settled thing, is pleased to grace it with a particular esteem, clothing therewith wisdom, virtue, and conscience. Foolish and sordid guise! —["No man is more free from this passion than I, for I neither love nor regard it: albeit the world hath undertaken, as it were upon covenant, to grace it with a particular favour. Therewith they adorne age, vertue, and conscience. Oh foolish and base ornament!" Florio, 1613, p. 3] —The Italians have more fitly baptized by this name—[La tristezza]— malignity; for 'tis a quality always hurtful, always idle and vain; and as being cowardly, mean, and base, it is by the Stoics expressly and particularly forbidden to their sages.

But the story—[Herodotus, iii. 14.]—says that Psammenitus, King of Egypt, being defeated and taken prisoner by Cambyses, King of Persia, seeing his own daughter pass by him as prisoner, and in a wretched habit, with a bucket to draw water, though his friends about him were so concerned as to break out into tears and lamentations, yet he himself remained unmoved, without uttering a word, his eyes fixed upon the ground; and seeing, moreover, his son immediately after led to execution, still maintained the same countenance; till spying at last one of his domestic and familiar friends dragged away amongst the captives, he fell to tearing his hair and beating his breast, with all the other extravagances of extreme sorrow.

A story that may very fitly be coupled with another of the same kind, of recent date, of a prince of our own nation, who being at Trent, and having news there brought him of the death of his elder brother, a brother on whom depended the whole support and honour of his house, and soon after of that of a younger brother, the second hope of his family,

and having withstood these two assaults with an exemplary resolution; one of his servants happening a few days after to die, he suffered his constancy to be overcome by this last accident; and, parting with his courage, so abandoned himself to sorrow and mourning, that some thence were forward to conclude that he was only touched to the quick by this last stroke of fortune; but, in truth, it was, that being before brimful of grief, the least addition overflowed the bounds of all patience. Which, I think, might also be said of the former example, did not the story proceed to tell us that Cambyses asking Psammenitus, "Why, not being moved at the calamity of his son and daughter, he should with so great impatience bear the misfortune of his friend?" "It is," answered he, "because only this last affliction was to be manifested by tears, the two first far exceeding all manner of expression."

And, peradventure, something like this might be working in the fancy of the ancient painter,—[Cicero, *De Orator.*, c. 22 ; Pliny, xxxv. 10.]— who having, in the sacrifice of Iphigenia, to represent the sorrow of the assistants proportionably to the several degrees of interest every one had in the death of this fair innocent virgin, and having, in the other figures, laid out the utmost power of his art, when he came to that of her father, he drew him with a veil over his face, meaning thereby that no kind of countenance was capable of expressing such a degree of sorrow. Which is also the reason why the poets feign the miserable mother, Niobe, having first lost seven sons, and then afterwards as many daughters (overwhelmed with her losses), to have been at last transformed into a rock—

"Diriguise malis,"

["Petriified with her misfortunes."—Ovid, *Met.*, vi. 304.]

thereby to express that melancholic, dumb, and deaf stupefaction, which benumbs all our faculties, when oppressed with accidents greater than we are able to bear. And, indeed, the violence and impression of an excessive

grief must of necessity astonish the soul, and wholly deprive her of her ordinary functions: as it happens to every one of us, who, upon any sudden alarm of very ill news, find ourselves surprised, stupefied, and in a manner deprived of all power of motion, so that the soul, beginning to vent itself in tears and lamentations, seems to free and disengage itself from the sudden oppression, and to have obtained some room to work itself out at greater liberty.

"Et via vix tandem voci laxata dolore est."

["And at length and with difficulty is a passage opened by grief for
utterance."—Aeneid, xi. 151.]

In the war that Ferdinand made upon the widow of King John of Hungary, about Buda, a man-at-arms was particularly taken notice of by every one for his singular gallant behaviour in a certain encounter; and, unknown, highly commended, and lamented, being left dead upon the place: but by none so much as by Raisciac, a German lord, who was infinitely enamoured of so rare a valour. The body being brought off, and the count, with the common curiosity coming to view it, the armour was no sooner taken off but he immediately knew him to be his own son, a thing that added a second blow to the compassion of all the beholders; only he, without uttering a word, or turning away his eyes from the woeful object, stood fixedly contemplating the body of his son, till the vehemency of sorrow having overcome his vital spirits, made him sink down stone-dead to the ground.

"Chi puo dir com' egli arde, a in picciol fuoco,"

["He who can say how he burns with love, has little fire"
—Petrarca, Sonetto 137.]

say the Innamoratos, when they would represent an 'insupportable passion.

"Misero quod omneis

Eripit sensus mihi: nam simul te,
Lesbia, aspexi, nihil est super mi,

Quod loquar amens.
Lingua sed torpet: tenuis sub artus
Flamma dimanat; sonitu suo pte
Tintinant aures; gemina teguntur
Lumina nocte."

["Love deprives me of all my faculties: Lesbia, when once
in thy

presence, I have not left the power to tell my distracting
passion:

my tongue becomes torpid; a subtle flame creeps
through my veins; my
ears tingle in deafness; my eyes are veiled with
darkness."

Catullus, Epig. li. 5]

Neither is it in the height and greatest fury of the fit that
we are in a condition to pour out our complaints or our
amorous persuasions, the soul being at that time over-
burdened, and labouring with profound thoughts; and the
body dejected and languishing with desire; and thence it is
that sometimes proceed those accidental impotencies that
so unseasonably surprise the lover, and that frigidity which
by the force of an immoderate ardour seizes him even in the
very lap of fruition. —[The edition of 1588 has here, "An
accident not unknown to myself."— For all passions that
suffer themselves to be relished and digested are but
moderate:

"Curæ leves loquuntur, ingentes stupent."

["Light griefs can speak: deep sorrows are dumb."

—Seneca, Hippolytus, act ii. scene 3.]

A surprise of unexpected joy does likewise often produce
the same effect:

"Ut me conspexit venientem, et Troja circum
Arma amens vidit, magnis exterrita monstis,
Diriguit visu in medio, calor ossa reliquit,
Labitur, et longo vix tandem tempore fatur."

["When she beheld me advancing, and saw, with stupefaction, the

Trojan arms around me, terrified with so great a prodigy, she

fainted away at the very sight: vital warmth forsook her limbs: she

sinks down, and, after a long interval, with difficulty speaks."—

AEneid, iii. 306.]

Besides the examples of the Roman lady, who died for joy to see her son safe returned from the defeat of Cannae; and of Sophocles and of Dionysius the Tyrant,—[Pliny, vii. 53. Diodorus Siculus, however (xv. c. 20), tells us that Dionysius "was so overjoyed at the news that he made a great sacrifice upon it to the gods, prepared sumptuous feasts, to which he invited all his friends, and therein drank so excessively that it threw him into a very bad distemper."]
—who died of joy; and of Thalna, who died in Corsica, reading news of the honours the Roman Senate had decreed in his favour, we have, moreover, one in our time, of Pope Leo X., who upon news of the taking of Milan, a thing he had so ardently desired, was rapt with so sudden an excess of joy that he immediately fell into a fever and died.—[Guicciardini, Storia d'Italia, vol. xiv.]—And for a more notable testimony of the imbecility of human nature, it is recorded by the ancients—[Pliny, 'ut supra']—that Diodorus the dialectician died upon the spot, out of an extreme passion of shame, for not having been able in his own school, and in the presence of a great auditory, to disengage himself from a nice argument that was propounded to him. I, for my part, am very little subject to these violent passions; I am naturally of a stubborn apprehension, which also, by reasoning, I every day harden and fortify.

THAT OUR AFFECTIONS CARRY THEMSELVES BEYOND US

Such as accuse mankind of the folly of gaping after future things, and advise us to make our benefit of those which are present, and to set up our rest upon them, as having no grasp upon that which is to come, even less than that which we have upon what is past, have hit upon the most universal of human errors, if that may be called an error to which nature herself has disposed us, in order to the continuation of her own work, prepossessing us, amongst several others, with this deceiving imagination, as being more jealous of our action than afraid of our knowledge.

We are never present with, but always beyond ourselves: fear, desire, hope, still push us on towards the future, depriving us, in the meantime, of the sense and consideration of that which is to amuse us with the thought of what shall be, even when we shall be no more.— [Rousseau, *Emile*, livre ii.]

"Calamitosus est animus futuri auxius."

["The mind anxious about the future is unhappy."

—Seneca, *Epist.*, 98.]

We find this great precept often repeated in Plato, "Do thine own work, and know thyself." Of which two parts, both the one and the other generally, comprehend our whole duty, and do each of them in like manner involve the other; for who will do his own work aright will find that his first lesson is to know what he is, and that which is proper to himself; and who rightly understands himself will never mistake another man's work for his own, but will love and improve himself above all other things, will refuse superfluous employments, and reject all unprofitable thoughts and propositions. As folly, on the one side, though it should enjoy all it desire, would notwithstanding never be

content, so, on the other, wisdom, acquiescing in the present, is never dissatisfied with itself. —[Cicero, *Tusc. Quae.*, 57, v. 18.]—Epicurus dispenses his sages from all foresight and care of the future.

Amongst those laws that relate to the dead, I look upon that to be very sound by which the actions of princes are to be examined after their decease.—[Diodorus Siculus, i. 6.]—They are equals with, if not masters of the laws, and, therefore, what justice could not inflict upon their persons, 'tis but reason should be executed upon their reputations and the estates of their successors—things that we often value above life itself. 'Tis a custom of singular advantage to those countries where it is in use, and by all good princes to be desired, who have reason to take it ill, that the memories of the wicked should be used with the same reverence and respect with their own. We owe subjection and obedience to all our kings, whether good or bad, alike, for that has respect unto their office; but as to esteem and affection, these are only due to their virtue. Let us grant to political government to endure them with patience, however unworthy; to conceal their vices; and to assist them with our recommendation in their indifferent actions, whilst their authority stands in need of our support. But, the relation of prince and subject being once at an end, there is no reason we should deny the expression of our real opinions to our own liberty and common justice, and especially to interdict to good subjects the glory of having reverently and faithfully served a prince, whose imperfections were to them so well known; this were to deprive posterity of a useful example. And such as, out of respect to some private obligation, unjustly espouse and vindicate the memory of a faulty prince, do private right at the expense of public justice. Livy does very truly say,—[xxxv. 48.]— "That the language of men bred up in courts is always full of vain ostentation and false testimony, every one indifferently magnifying his own master, and stretching his commendation to the utmost

extent of virtue and sovereign grandeur." Some may condemn the freedom of those two soldiers who so roundly answered Nero to his beard; the one being asked by him why he bore him ill-will? "I loved thee," answered he, "whilst thou wert worthy of it, but since thou art become a parricide, an incendiary, a player, and a coachman, I hate thee as thou dost deserve." And the other, why he should attempt to kill him? "Because," said he, "I could think of no other remedy against thy perpetual mischiefs." —[Tacitus, Annal., xv. 67.]—But the public and universal testimonies that were given of him after his death (and so will be to all posterity, both of him and all other wicked princes like him), of his tyrannies and abominable deportment, who, of a sound judgment, can reprove them?

I am scandalised, that in so sacred a government as that of the Lacedaemonians there should be mixed so hypocritical a ceremony at the interment of their kings; where all their confederates and neighbours, and all sorts and degrees of men and women, as well as their slaves, cut and slashed their foreheads in token of sorrow, repeating in their cries and lamentations that that king (let him have been as wicked as the devil) was the best that ever they had;—[Herodotus, vi. 68.]—by this means attributing to his quality the praise that only belongs to merit, and that of right is due to supreme desert, though lodged in the lowest and most inferior subject.

Aristotle, who will still have a hand in everything, makes a 'quaere' upon the saying of Solon, that none can be said to be happy until he is dead: "whether, then, he who has lived and died according to his heart's desire, if he have left an ill repute behind him, and that his posterity be miserable, can be said to be happy?" Whilst we have life and motion, we convey ourselves by fancy and preoccupation, whither and to what we please; but once out of being, we have no more any manner of communication with that which is, and

it had therefore been better said by Solon that man is never happy, because never so, till he is no more.

"Quisquam

Vix radicitus e vita se tollit, et eicit;

Sed facit esse sui quiddam super inscius ipse,

Nec removet satis a projecto corpore sese, et

Vindicat."

["Scarcely one man can, even in dying, wholly detach himself from

the idea of life; in his ignorance he must needs imagine that there

is in him something that survives him, and cannot sufficiently

separate or emancipate himself from his remains"

—Lucretius, iii. 890.]

Bertrand de Guesclin, dying at the siege of the Castle of Rancon, near unto Puy, in Auvergne, the besieged were afterwards, upon surrender, enjoined to lay down the keys of the place upon the corpse of the dead general. Bartolommeo d'Alviano, the Venetian General, happening to die in the service of the Republic in Brescia, and his corpse being to be carried through the territory of Verona, an enemy's country, most of the army were inclined to demand safe-conduct from the Veronese; but Theodoro Trivulzio opposed the motion, rather choosing to make his way by force of arms, and to run the hazard of a battle, saying it was by no means fit that he who in his life was never afraid of his enemies should seem to apprehend them when he was dead. In truth, in affairs of the same nature, by the Greek laws, he who made suit to an enemy for a body to give it burial renounced his victory, and had no more right to erect a trophy, and he to whom such suit was made was reputed victor. By this means it was that Nicias lost the advantage he had visibly obtained over the Corinthians, and that Agesilaus, on the contrary, assured that which he had

before very doubtfully gained over the Boeotians.—
[Plutarch, Life of Nicias, c. ii.; Life of Agesilaus, c. vi.]

These things might appear strange, had it not been a general practice in all ages not only to extend the concern of ourselves beyond this life, but, moreover, to fancy that the favour of Heaven does not only very often accompany us to the grave, but has also, even after life, a concern for our ashes. Of which there are so many ancient examples (to say nothing of those of our own observation), that it is not necessary I should longer insist upon it. Edward I., King of England, having in the long wars betwixt him and Robert, King of Scotland, had experience of how great importance his own immediate presence was to the success of his affairs, having ever been victorious in whatever he undertook in his own person, when he came to die, bound his son in a solemn oath that, so soon as he should be dead he should boil his body till the flesh parted from the bones, and bury the flesh, reserving the bones to carry continually with him in his army, so often as he should be obliged to go against the Scots, as if destiny had inevitably attached victory, even to his remains. John Zisca, the same who, to vindication of Wicliffe's heresies, troubled the Bohemian state, left order that they should flay him after his death, and of his skin make a drum to carry in the war against his enemies, fancying it would contribute to the continuation of the successes he had always obtained in the wars against them. In like manner certain of the Indians, in their battles with the Spaniards, carried with them the bones of one of their captains, in consideration of the victories they had formerly obtained under his conduct. And other people of the same New World carry about with them, in their wars, the relics of valiant men who have died in battle, to incite their courage and advance their fortune. Of which examples the first reserve nothing for the tomb but the reputation they have acquired by their former achievements, but these attribute to them a certain present and active power.

The proceeding of Captain Bayard is of a better composition, who finding himself wounded to death with an harquebuss shot, and being importuned to retire out of the fight, made answer that he would not begin at the last gasp to turn his back to the enemy, and accordingly still fought on, till feeling himself too faint and no longer able to sit on his horse, he commanded his steward to set him down at the foot of a tree, but so that he might die with his face towards the enemy, which he did.

I must yet add another example, equally remarkable for the present consideration with any of the former. The Emperor Maximilian, great-grandfather to the now King Philip,—[Philip II. of Spain.]—was a prince endowed throughout with great and extraordinary qualities, and amongst the rest with a singular beauty of person, but had withal a humour very contrary to that of other princes, who for the despatch of their most important affairs convert their close-stool into a chair of State, which was, that he would never permit any of his bedchamber, how familiar soever, to see him in that posture, and would steal aside to make water as religiously as a virgin, shy to discover to his physician or any other whomsoever those parts that we are accustomed to conceal. I myself, who have so impudent a way of talking, am, nevertheless, naturally so modest this way, that unless at the importunity of necessity or pleasure, I scarcely ever communicate to the sight of any either those parts or actions that custom orders us to conceal, wherein I suffer more constraint than I conceive is very well becoming a man, especially of my profession. But he nourished this modest humour to such a degree of superstition as to give express orders in his last will that they should put him on drawers so soon as he should be dead; to which, methinks, he would have done well to have added that he should be blindfolded, too, that put them on. The charge that Cyrus left with his children, that neither they, nor any other, should either see or touch his body after the soul was

departed from it,—[Xenophon, Cyropedia, viii. 7.]—I attribute to some superstitious devotion of his; for both his historian and himself, amongst their great qualities, marked the whole course of their lives with a singular respect and reverence to religion.

I was by no means pleased with a story, told me by a man of very great quality of a relation of mine, and one who had given a very good account of himself both in peace and war, that, coming to die in a very old age, of excessive pain of the stone, he spent the last hours of his life in an extraordinary solicitude about ordering the honour and ceremony of his funeral, pressing all the men of condition who came to see him to engage their word to attend him to his grave: importuning this very prince, who came to visit him at his last gasp, with a most earnest supplication that he would order his family to be there, and presenting before him several reasons and examples to prove that it was a respect due to a man of his condition; and seemed to die content, having obtained this promise, and appointed the method and order of his funeral parade. I have seldom heard of so persistent a vanity.

Another, though contrary curiosity (of which singularity, also, I do not want domestic example), seems to be somewhat akin to this, that a man shall cudgel his brains at the last moments of his life to contrive his obsequies to so particular and unusual a parsimony as of one servant with a lantern, I see this humour commended, and the appointment of Marcus. Emilius Lepidus, who forbade his heirs to bestow upon his hearse even the common ceremonies in use upon such occasions. Is it yet temperance and frugality to avoid expense and pleasure of which the use and knowledge are imperceptible to us? See, here, an easy and cheap reformation. If instruction were at all necessary in this case, I should be of opinion that in this, as in all other actions of life, each person should regulate the matter according to his fortune; and the philosopher

Lycon prudently ordered his friends to dispose of his body where they should think most fit, and as to his funeral, to order it neither too superfluous nor too mean. For my part, I should wholly refer the ordering of this ceremony to custom, and shall, when the time comes, accordingly leave it to their discretion to whose lot it shall fall to do me that last office. "Totus hic locus est contemnendus in nobis, non negligendus in nostris;"—"The place of our sepulture is to be contemned by us, but not to be neglected by our friends."—Cicero, Tusc. i. 45.]— and it was a holy saying of a saint, "Curatio funeris, conditio sepultura: pompa exequiarum, magis sunt vivorum solatia, quam subsidia mortuorum."—"The care of death, the place of sepulture, the poms of obsequies, are rather consolations to the living than succours to the dead." August. De Civit. Dei, i. 12.]— Which made Socrates answer Crito, who, at death, asked him how he would be buried: "How you will," said he. "If I were to concern myself beyond the present about this affair, I should be most tempted, as the greatest satisfaction of this kind, to imitate those who in their lifetime entertain themselves with the ceremony and honours of their own obsequies beforehand, and are pleased with beholding their own dead countenance in marble. Happy are they who can gratify their senses by insensibility, and live by their death!"

I am ready to conceive an implacable hatred against all popular domination, though I think it the most natural and equitable of all, so oft as I call to mind the inhuman injustice of the people of Athens, who, without remission, or once vouchsafing to hear what they had to say for themselves, put to death their brave captains newly returned triumphant from a naval victory they had obtained over the Lacedaemonians near the Arginusian Isles, the most bloody and obstinate engagement that ever the Greeks fought at sea; because (after the victory) they followed up the blow and pursued the advantages presented to them by the rule of war, rather than stay to gather up and bury their dead.

And the execution is yet rendered more odious by the behaviour of Diomedon, who, being one of the condemned, and a man of most eminent virtue, political and military, after having heard the sentence, advancing to speak, no audience till then having been allowed, instead of laying before them his own cause, or the impiety of so cruel a sentence, only expressed a solicitude for his judges' preservation, beseeching the gods to convert this sentence to their good, and praying that, for neglecting to fulfil the vows which he and his companions had made (with which he also acquainted them) in acknowledgment of so glorious a success, they might not draw down the indignation of the gods upon them; and so without more words went courageously to his death.

Fortune, a few years after, punished them in the same kind; for Chabrias, captain-general of their naval forces, having got the better of Pollis, Admiral of Sparta, at the Isle of Naxos, totally lost the fruits of his victory, one of very great importance to their affairs, in order not to incur the danger of this example, and so that he should not lose a few bodies of his dead friends that were floating in the sea, gave opportunity to a world of living enemies to sail away in safety, who afterwards made them pay dear for this unseasonable superstition:

"Quaeris, quo jaceas, post obitum, loco?

Quo non nata jacent."

["Dost ask where thou shalt lie after death?

Where things not born lie, that never being had."]

Seneca, Tyoa. Choro ii. 30.

This other restores the sense of repose to a body without a soul:

"Neque sepulcrum, quo recipiatur, habeat: portum corporis, ubi,

remissa human, vita, corpus requiescat a malis."

["Nor let him have a sepulchre wherein he may be received, a haven

for his body, where, life being gone, that body may rest from its

woes."—Ennius, ap. Cicero, Tusc. i. 44.]

As nature demonstrates to us that several dead things retain yet an occult relation to life; wine changes its flavour and complexion in cellars, according to the changes and seasons of the vine from whence it came; and the flesh of—venison alters its condition in the powdering-tub, and its taste according to the laws of the living flesh of its kind, as it is said.

THE SOUL EXPENDS ITS PASSIONS UPON FALSE OBJECTS

A gentleman of my country, marvellously tormented with the gout, being importuned by his physicians totally to abstain from all manner of salt meats, was wont pleasantly to reply, that in the extremity of his fits he must needs have something to quarrel with, and that railing at and cursing, one while the Bologna sausages, and another the dried tongues and the hams, was some mitigation to his pain. But, in good earnest, as the arm when it is advanced to strike, if it miss the blow, and goes by the wind, it pains us; and as also, that, to make a pleasant prospect, the sight should not be lost and dilated in vague air, but have some bound and object to limit and circumscribe it at a reasonable distance.

"Ventus ut amittit vires, nisi robore densa

Occurrant sylvae, spatio diffusus inani."

["As the wind loses its force diffused in void space, unless it in

its strength encounters the thick wood."—Lucan, iii. 362.]

So it seems that the soul, being transported and discomposed, turns its violence upon itself, if not supplied with something to oppose it, and therefore always requires an object at which to aim, and whereon to act. Plutarch says of those who are delighted with little dogs and monkeys, that the amorous part that is in us, for want of a legitimate object, rather than lie idle, does after that manner forge and create one false and frivolous. And we see that the soul, in its passions, inclines rather to deceive itself, by creating a false and fantastical a subject, even contrary to its own belief, than not to have something to work upon. After this manner brute beasts direct their fury to fall upon the stone or weapon that has hurt them, and with their teeth a even

execute revenge upon themselves for the injury they have received from another:

"Pannonis haud aliter, post ictum saevior ursa,
Cui jaculum parva Lybis amentavit habena,
Se rotat in vulnus, telumque irata receptum
Impetit, et secum fugientem circuit hastam."

["So the she-bear, fiercer after the blow from the Lybian's thong-

hurled dart, turns round upon the wound, and attacking the received

spear, twists it, as she flies."—Lucan, vi. 220.]

What causes of the misadventures that befall us do we not invent? what is it that we do not lay the fault to, right or wrong, that we may have something to quarrel with? It is not those beautiful tresses you tear, nor is it the white bosom that in your anger you so unmercifully beat, that with an unlucky bullet have slain your beloved brother; quarrel with something else. Livy, speaking of the Roman army in Spain, says that for the loss of the two brothers, their great captains:

"Flere omnes repente, et offensare capita."

["All at once wept and tore their hair."—Livy, xxv. 37.]

'Tis a common practice. And the philosopher Bion said pleasantly of the king, who by handful pulled his hair off his head for sorrow, "Does this man think that baldness is a remedy for grief?"—[Cicero, Tusc. Quest., iii. 26.]—Who has not seen peevish gamblers chew and swallow the cards, and swallow the dice, in revenge for the loss of their money? Xerxes whipped the sea, and wrote a challenge to Mount Athos; Cyrus employed a whole army several days at work, to revenge himself of the river Gyndas, for the fright it had put him into in passing over it; and Caligula demolished a very beautiful palace for the pleasure his mother had once enjoyed there.

—[Pleasure—unless 'plaisir' were originally 'deplaisir'—must be

understood here ironically, for the house was one in which she had

been imprisoned.—Seneca, *De Ira*. iii. 22]—

I remember there was a story current, when I was a boy, that one of our neighbouring kings—[Probably Alfonso XI. of Castile]—having received a blow from the hand of God, swore he would be revenged, and in order to it, made proclamation that for ten years to come no one should pray to Him, or so much as mention Him throughout his dominions, or, so far as his authority went, believe in Him; by which they meant to paint not so much the folly as the vainglory of the nation of which this tale was told. They are vices that always go together, but in truth such actions as these have in them still more of presumption than want of wit. Augustus Caesar, having been tossed with a tempest at sea, fell to defying Neptune, and in the pomp of the Circensian games, to be revenged, deposed his statue from the place it had amongst the other deities. Wherein he was still less excusable than the former, and less than he was afterwards when, having lost a battle under Quintilius Varus in Germany, in rage and despair he went running his head against the wall, crying out, "O Varus! give me back my legions!" for these exceed all folly, forasmuch as impiety is joined therewith, invading God Himself, or at least Fortune, as if she had ears that were subject to our batteries; like the Thracians, who when it thunders or lightens, fall to shooting against heaven with Titanian vengeance, as if by flights of arrows they intended to bring God to reason. Though the ancient poet in Plutarch tells us—

"Point ne se faut couroucer aux affaires,
Il ne leur chault de toutes nos choleres."

["We must not trouble the gods with our affairs; they take no heed

of our angers and disputes."—Plutarch.]

But we can never enough decry the disorderly sallies of our minds.

WHETHER THE GOVERNOR OF A PLACE BESIEGED OUGHT HIMSELF TO GO OUT TO PARLEY

Quintus Marcius, the Roman legate in the war against Perseus, King of Macedon, to gain time wherein to reinforce his army, set on foot some overtures of accommodation, with which the king being lulled asleep, concluded a truce for some days, by this means giving his enemy opportunity and leisure to recruit his forces, which was afterwards the occasion of the king's final ruin. Yet the elder senators, mindful of their forefathers' manners, condemned this proceeding as degenerating from their ancient practice, which, they said, was to fight by valour, and not by artifice, surprises, and night-encounters; neither by pretended flight nor unexpected rallies to overcome their enemies; never making war till having first proclaimed it, and very often assigned both the hour and place of battle. Out of this generous principle it was that they delivered up to Pyrrhus his treacherous physician, and to the Etrurians their disloyal schoolmaster. This was, indeed, a procedure truly Roman, and nothing allied to the Grecian subtlety, nor to the Punic cunning, where it was reputed a victory of less glory to overcome by force than by fraud. Deceit may serve for a need, but he only confesses himself overcome who knows he is neither subdued by policy nor misadventure, but by dint of valour, man to man, in a fair and just war. It very well appears, by the discourse of these good old senators, that this fine sentence was not yet received amongst them.

"Dolus, an virtus, quis in hoste requirat?"

["What matters whether by valour or by strategem we overcome the

enemy?"—Aeneid, ii. 390]

The Achaians, says Polybius, abhorred all manner of double-dealing in war, not reputed it a victory unless where the courage of the enemy was fairly subdued:

"Eam vir sanctus et sapiens sciet veram esse victoriam, quae, salva fide et integra dignitate, parabitur."—"An honest and prudent man will acknowledge that only to be a true victory which shall be obtained saving his own good faith and dignity."—Florus, i. 12.]—Says another:

"Vosne velit, an me, regnare hera, quidve ferat,
fors virtute experiamur."

["Whether you or I shall rule, or what shall happen, let us determine by valour."—Cicero, De Offic., i. 12]

In the kingdom of Ternate, amongst those nations which we so broadly call barbarians, they have a custom never to commence war, till it be first proclaimed; adding withal an ample declaration of what means they have to do it with, with what and how many men, what ammunitions, and what, both offensive and defensive, arms; but also, that being done, if their enemies do not yield and come to an agreement, they conceive it lawful to employ without reproach in their wars any means which may help them to conquer.

The ancient Florentines were so far from seeking to obtain any advantage over their enemies by surprise, that they always gave them a month's warning before they drew their army into the field, by the continual tolling of a bell they called Martinella.—[After St. Martin.]

For what concerns ourselves, who are not so scrupulous in this affair, and who attribute the honour of the war to him who has the profit of it, and who after Lysander say, "Where the lion's skin is too short, we must eke it out with a bit from that of a fox"; the most usual occasions of surprise are derived from this practice, and we hold that there are no moments wherein a chief ought to be more circumspect, and to have his eye so much at watch, as those of parleys and treaties of accommodation; and it is, therefore, become