

ESSAYS OF MONTAIGNE

(VOLUME-I)

{COMPLETE & ILLUSTRATED}

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BY

MICHEL MONTAIGNE

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Translated by Charles Cotton

Edited by William Carew Hazlitt

1877

ILLUSTRATED &
PUBLISHED BY
E-KİTAP PROJESİ & CHEAPEST BOOKS



www.cheapestbooks.com

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Istanbul

ISBN:

978-625-6004-30-6

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About Author



THE LIFE OF MONTAIGNE

The author of the *Essays* was born, as he informs us himself, between eleven and twelve o'clock in the day, the last of February 1533, at the chateau of St. Michel de Montaigne. His father, Pierre Eyquem, esquire, was successively first Jurat of the town of Bordeaux (1530), Under-Mayor 1536, Jurat for the second time in 1540, Procureur in 1546, and at length Mayor from 1553 to 1556. He was a man of austere probity, who had "a particular regard for honour and for propriety in his person and attire . . . a mighty good faith in his speech, and a conscience and a religious feeling inclining to superstition, rather than to the other extreme. Between 1556 and 1563 an important incident occurred in the life of Montaigne, in the commencement of his romantic friendship with Etienne de la Boetie, whom he had met, as he tells us, by pure chance at some festive celebration in the town. From their very first interview the two found themselves drawn irresistibly close to one another, and during six years this alliance was foremost in the heart of Montaigne, as it was afterwards in his memory, when death had severed it.

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Preface (About the Book)

PREFACE

The present publication is intended to supply a recognised deficiency in our literature—a library edition of the *Essays of Montaigne*. This great French writer deserves to be regarded as a classic, not only in the land of his birth, but in all countries and in all literatures. His *Essays*, which are at once the most celebrated and the most permanent of his productions, form a magazine out of which such minds as those of Bacon and Shakespeare did not disdain to help themselves; and, indeed, as Hallam observes, the Frenchman's literary importance largely results from the share which his mind had in influencing other minds, coeval and subsequent. But, at the same time, estimating the value and rank of the essayist, we are not to leave out of the account the drawbacks and the circumstances of the period: the imperfect state of education, the comparative scarcity of books, and the limited opportunities of intellectual intercourse. Montaigne freely borrowed of others, and he has found men willing to borrow of him as freely. We need not wonder at the reputation which he with seeming facility achieved. He was, without being aware of it, the leader of a new school in letters and morals. His book was different from all others which were at that date in the world. It diverted the ancient currents of thought into new channels. It told its readers, with unexampled frankness, what its writer's opinion was about men and things, and threw what must have been a strange kind of new light on many matters but darkly understood. Above all, the essayist uncased himself, and made his intellectual and physical organism public property. He took the world into his confidence on all subjects. His essays were a sort of literary anatomy, where we get a diagnosis of the writer's mind, made by himself at different levels and under a large variety of operating influences.

Of all egotists, Montaigne, if not the greatest, was the most fascinating, because, perhaps, he was the least affected and most truthful. What he did, and what he had professed to do, was to dissect his mind, and show us, as best he could, how it was made, and what relation it bore to external objects. He investigated his mental structure as a schoolboy pulls his watch to pieces, to examine the mechanism of the works; and the result, accompanied by illustrations abounding with originality and force, he delivered to his fellow-men in a book.

W. C. H.

KENSINGTON, November 1877.

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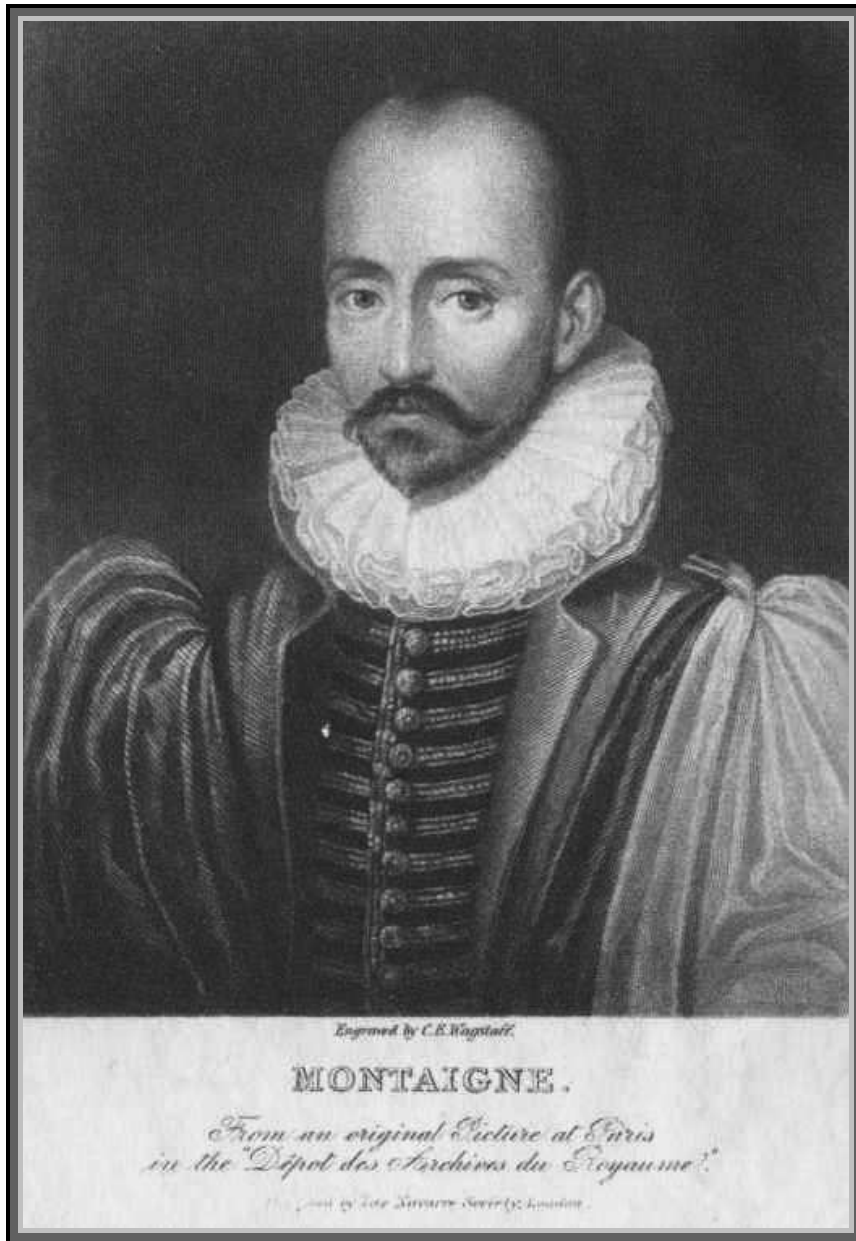
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END OF THE VOLUME-I





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ESSAYS OF MICHEL DE MONTAIGNE

Introduction and Attributions



I.—To Monsieur De Montaigne

[This account of the death of La Boetie begins imperfectly. It first appeared in a little volume of Miscellanies in 1571. See Hazlitt, *ubi sup.* p. 630.]—As to his last words, doubtless, if any man can give good account of them, it is I, both because, during the whole of his sickness he conversed as fully with me as with any one, and also because, in consequence of the singular and brotherly friendship which we had entertained for each other, I was perfectly acquainted with the intentions, opinions, and wishes which he had formed in the course of his life, as much so, certainly, as one man can possibly be with those of another man; and because I knew them to be elevated, virtuous, full of steady resolution, and (after all said) admirable. I well foresaw that, if his illness permitted him to express himself, he would allow nothing to fall from him, in such an extremity, that was not replete with good example. I consequently took every care in my power to treasure what was said. True it is, Monseigneur, as my memory is not only in itself very short, but in this case affected by the trouble which I have undergone, through so heavy and important a loss, that I have forgotten a number of things which I should wish to have had known; but those which I recollect shall be related to you as exactly as lies in my power. For to represent in full measure his noble career suddenly arrested, to paint to you his indomitable courage, in a body worn out and prostrated by pain and the assaults of death, I confess, would demand a far better ability than mine: because, although, when in former years he discoursed on serious and important matters, he handled them in such a manner that it was difficult to reproduce exactly what he said, yet his ideas and his words at the last seemed to rival each other in serving him. For I am sure that I never knew him give birth to such fine conceptions, or display so much eloquence, as in the time of his sickness. If, Monseigneur, you blame me for introducing his more ordinary observations, please to know that I do so advisedly; for since they proceeded from him at a season of such great trouble, they indicate the perfect tranquillity of his mind and thoughts to the last.

On Monday, the 9th day of August 1563, on my return from the Court, I sent an invitation to him to come and dine with me. He returned word that he was obliged, but, being indisposed, he would thank me to do him the pleasure of spending an hour with him before he started for Medoc. Shortly after my dinner I went to him. He had laid himself down on the bed with his clothes on, and he was already, I perceived, much changed. He complained of diarrhoea, accompanied by the gripes, and said that he had it about him ever since he played with M. d'Escars with nothing but his doublet on, and that with him a cold often brought on such attacks. I advised him to go as he had proposed, but to stay for the night at Germignac, which is only about two leagues from the town. I gave him this advice, because some houses, near to that where he was ping, were visited by the plague, about which he was nervous since his return from Perigord and the Agenois, here it had been raging; and, besides, horse exercise was, from my own experience, beneficial under similar circumstances. He set out, accordingly, with his wife and M. Bouilhonnas, his uncle.

Early on the following morning, however, I had intelligence from Madame de la Boetie, that in the night he had fresh and violent attack of dysentery. She had called in physician and apothecary, and prayed me to lose no time coming, which (after dinner) I did. He was delighted to see me; and when I was going away, under promise to turn the following day, he begged me more importunately and affectionately than he was wont to do, to give him as such of my company as possible. I was a little affected; yet was about to leave, when Madame de la Boetie, as if she foresaw something about to happen, implored me with tears to stay the night. When I consented, he seemed to grow more cheerful. I returned home the next day, and on the Thursday I paid him another visit. He had become worse; and his loss of blood from the dysentery, which reduced his strength very much, was largely on the increase. I quitted his side on Friday, but on Saturday I went to him, and found him very weak. He then gave me to understand that his complaint was infectious, and, moreover, disagreeable and depressing; and that he, knowing thoroughly my constitution, desired that I should content myself with coming to see him now and then. On the contrary, after that I never left his side.

It was only on the Sunday that he began to converse with me on any subject beyond the immediate one of his illness, and what the ancient doctors thought of it: we had not touched on public affairs, for I found at the very outset that he had a dislike to them.

But, on the Sunday, he had a fainting fit; and when he came to himself, he told me that everything seemed to him confused, as if in a mist and in disorder, and that, nevertheless, this visitation was not displeasing to him. "Death," I replied, "has no worse sensation, my brother." "None so bad," was his answer. He had had no regular sleep since the beginning of his illness; and as he became worse and worse, he began to turn his attention to questions which men commonly occupy themselves with in the last extremity, despairing now of getting better, and intimating as much to me. On that day, as he appeared in tolerably good spirits, I took occasion to say to him that, in consideration of the singular love I bore him, it would become me to take care that his affairs, which he had conducted with such rare prudence in his life, should not be neglected at present; and that I should regret it if, from want of proper counsel, he should leave anything unsettled, not only on account of the loss to his family, but also to his good name.

He thanked me for my kindness; and after a little reflection, as if he was resolving certain doubts in his own mind, he desired me to summon his uncle and his wife by themselves, in order that he might acquaint them with his testamentary dispositions. I told him that this would shock them. "No, no," he answered, "I will cheer them by making out my case to be better than it is." And then he inquired, whether we were not all much taken by surprise at his having fainted? I replied, that it was of no importance, being incidental to the complaint from which he suffered. "True, my brother," said he; "it would be unimportant, even though it should lead to what you most dread." "For you," I rejoined, "it might be a happy thing; but I should be the loser, who would thereby be deprived of so great, so wise, and so steadfast a friend, a friend whose place I should never see supplied." "It is very likely you may not," was his answer; "and be sure that one thing which makes me somewhat anxious to recover, and to delay my journey to that place, whither I am already half-way gone, is the thought of the loss both you and that poor man and woman there (referring to his uncle and wife) must sustain; for I love them with my whole heart, and I feel certain that they will find it very hard to lose me. I should also regret it on account of such as have, in my lifetime, valued me, and whose conversation I should like to have enjoyed a little longer; and I beseech you, my brother, if I leave the world, to carry to them for me an assurance of the esteem I entertained for them to the last moment of my existence. My birth was, moreover, scarcely to so little purpose but that, had I lived, I might have done some service to the public; but, however this may be, I am prepared to submit to the will of God, when it shall please Him to call me, being confident of enjoying the tranquillity which you have foretold for me. As for you, my friend, I feel sure that you are so wise, that you will control your emotions, and submit to His divine ordinance regarding me; and I beg of you to see that that good man and woman do not mourn for my departure unnecessarily."

He proceeded to inquire how they behaved at present. "Very well," said I, "considering the circumstances." "Ah!" he replied, "that is, so long as they do not abandon all hope of me; but when that shall be the case, you will have a hard task to support them." It was owing to his strong regard for his wife and uncle that he studiously disguised from them his own conviction as to the certainty of his end, and he prayed me to do the same. When they were near him he assumed an appearance of gaiety, and flattered them with hopes. I then went to call them. They came, wearing as composed an air as possible; and when we four were together, he addressed us, with an untroubled countenance, as follows: "Uncle and wife, rest assured that no new attack of my disease, or fresh doubt that I have as to my recovery, has led me to take this step of communicating to you my intentions, for, thank God, I feel very well and hopeful; but taught by observation and experience the instability of all human things, and even of the life to which we are so much attached, and which is, nevertheless, a mere bubble; and knowing, moreover, that my state of health brings me more within the danger of death, I have thought proper to settle my worldly affairs, having the benefit of your advice." Then addressing himself more particularly to his uncle, "Good uncle," said he, "if I were to rehearse all the obligations under which I lie to you, I am sure that I never should make an end. Let me only say that, wherever I have been, and with whomsoever I have conversed, I have represented you as doing for me all that a father could do for a son; both in the care with which you tended my education, and in the zeal with which you pushed me forward into public life, so that my whole existence is a testimony of your good offices towards me. In short, I am indebted for all that I have to you, who have been to me as a parent; and therefore I have no right to part with anything, unless it be with your approval."

There was a general silence hereupon, and his uncle was prevented from replying by tears and sobs. At last he said that whatever he thought for the best would be agreeable to him; and as he intended to make him his heir, he was at liberty to dispose of what would be his.

Then he turned to his wife. "My image," said he (for so he often called her, there being some sort of relationship between them), "since I have been united to you by marriage, which is one of the most weighty and sacred ties imposed on us by God, for the purpose of maintaining human society, I have continued to love, cherish, and value you; and I know that you have returned my affection, for which I have no sufficient acknowledgment. I beg you to accept such portion of my estate as I bequeath to you, and be satisfied with it, though it is very inadequate to your desert."

Afterwards he turned to me. "My brother," he began, "for whom I have so entire a love, and whom I selected out of so large a number, thinking to revive with you that virtuous and sincere friendship which, owing to the degeneracy of the age, has grown to be almost unknown to us, and now exists only in certain vestiges of antiquity, I beg of you, as a mark of my affection to you, to accept my library: a slender offering, but given with a cordial will, and suitable to you, seeing that you are fond of learning. It will be a memorial of your old companion."

Then he addressed all three of us. He blessed God that in his extremity he had the happiness to be surrounded by those whom he held dearest in the world, and he looked upon it as a fine spectacle, where four persons were together, so unanimous in their feelings, and loving each other for each other's sake. He commended us one to the other; and proceeded thus: "My worldly matters being arranged, I must now think of the welfare of my soul. I am a Christian; I am a Catholic. I have lived one, and I shall die one. Send for a priest; for I wish to conform to this last Christian obligation." He now concluded his discourse, which he had conducted with such a firm face and with so distinct an utterance, that whereas, when I first entered his room, he was feeble, inarticulate in his speech, his pulse low and feverish, and his features pallid, now, by a sort of miracle, he appeared to have rallied, and his pulse was so strong that for the sake of comparison, I asked him to feel mine.

I felt my heart so oppressed at this moment, that I had not the power to make him any answer; but in the course of two or three hours, solicitous to keep up his courage, and, likewise, out of the tenderness which I had had all my life for his honour and fame, wishing a larger number of witnesses to his admirable fortitude, I said to him, how much I was ashamed to think that I lacked courage to listen to what he, so great a sufferer, had the courage to deliver; that down to the present time I had scarcely conceived that God granted us such command over human infirmities, and had found a difficulty in crediting the examples I had read in histories; but that with such evidence of the thing before my eyes, I gave praise to God that it had shown itself in one so excessively dear to me, and who loved me so entirely, and that his example would help me to act in a similar manner when my turn came. Interrupting me, he begged that it might happen so, and that the conversation which had passed between us might not be mere words, but might be impressed deeply on our minds, to be put in exercise at the first occasion; and that this was the real object and aim of all philosophy.

He then took my hand, and continued: "Brother, friend, there are many acts of my life, I think, which have cost me as much difficulty as this one is likely to do; and, after all, I have been long prepared for it, and have my lesson by heart. Have I not lived long enough? I am just upon thirty-three. By the grace of God, my days so far have known nothing but health and happiness; but in the ordinary course of our unstable human affairs, this could not have lasted much longer; it would have become time for me to enter on graver avocations, and I should thus have involved myself in numberless vexations, and, among them, the troubles of old age, from which I shall now be exempt. Moreover, it is probable that hitherto my life has been spent more simply, and with less of evil, than if God had spared me, and I had survived to feel the thirst for riches and worldly prosperity. I am sure, for my part, that I now go to God and the place of the blessed." He seemed to detect in my expression some inquietude at his words; and he exclaimed, "What, my brother, would you make me entertain apprehensions? Had I any, whom would it become so much as yourself to remove them?"

The notary, who had been summoned to draw up his will, came in the evening, and when he had the documents prepared, I inquired of La Boetie if he would sign them. "Sign them," cried he; "I will do so with my own hand; but I could desire more time, for I feel exceedingly timid and weak, and in a manner exhausted." But when I was going to change the conversation, he suddenly rallied, said he had but a short time to live, and asked if the notary wrote rapidly, for he should dictate without making any pause. The notary was called, and he dictated his will there and then with such speed that the man could scarcely keep up with him; and when he had done, he asked me to read it out, saying to me, "What a good thing it is to look after what are called our riches." 'Sunt haec, quae hominibus vocantur bona'. As soon as the will was signed, the chamber being full, he asked me if it would hurt him to talk. I answered, that it would not, if he did not speak too loud. He then summoned Mademoiselle de Saint Quentin, his niece, to him, and addressed her thus: "Dear niece, since my earliest acquaintance with thee, I have observed the marks of, great natural goodness in thee; but the services which thou rendered to me, with so much affectionate diligence, in my present and last necessity, inspire me with high hopes of thee; and I am under great obligations to thee, and give thee most affectionate thanks. Let me relieve my conscience by counselling thee to be, in the first place, devout, to God: for this doubtless is our first duty, failing which all others can be of little advantage or grace, but which, duly observed, carries with it necessarily all other virtues. After God, thou shouldest love thy father and mother—thy mother, my sister, whom I regard as one of the best and most intelligent of women, and by whom I beg of thee to let thy own life be regulated.

Allow not thyself to be led away by pleasures; shun, like the plague, the foolish familiarities thou seest between some men and women; harmless enough at first, but which by insidious degrees corrupt the heart, and thence lead it to negligence, and then into the vile slough of vice. Credit me, the greatest safeguard to female chastity is sobriety of demeanour. I beseech and direct that thou often call to mind the friendship which was betwixt us; but I do not wish thee to mourn for me too much—an injunction which, so far as it is in my power, I lay on all my friends, since it might seem that by doing so they felt a jealousy of that blessed condition in which I am about to be placed by death. I assure thee, my dear, that if I had the option now of continuing in life or of completing the voyage on which I have set out, I should find it very hard to choose. Adieu, dear niece."

Mademoiselle d'Arsat, his stepdaughter, was next called. He said to her: "Daughter, you stand in no great need of advice from me, insomuch as you have a mother, whom I have ever found most sagacious, and entirely in conformity with my own opinions and wishes, and whom I have never found faulty; with such a preceptress, you cannot fail to be properly instructed. Do not account it singular that I, with no tie of blood to you, am interested in you; for, being the child of one who is so closely allied to me, I am necessarily concerned in what concerns you; and consequently the affairs of your brother, M. d'Arsat, have ever been watched by me with as much care as my own; nor perhaps will it be to your disadvantage that you were my step-daughter. You enjoy sufficient store of wealth and beauty; you are a lady of good family; it only remains for you to add to these possessions the cultivation of your mind, in which I exhort you not to fail. I do not think necessary to warn you against vice, a thing so odious in women, for I would not even suppose that you could harbour any inclination for it—nay, I believe that you hold the very name in abhorrence. Dear daughter, farewell."

All in the room were weeping and lamenting; but he held without interruption the thread of his discourse, which was pretty long. But when he had done, he directed us all to leave the room, except the women attendants, whom he styled his garrison. But first, calling to him my brother, M. de Beauregard, he said to him: "M. de Beauregard, you have my best thanks for all the care you have taken of me. I have now a thing which I am very anxious indeed to mention to you, and with your permission I will do so." As my brother gave him encouragement to proceed, he added: "I assure you that I never knew any man who engaged in the reformation of our Church with greater sincerity, earnestness, and single-heartedness than yourself. I consider that you were led to it by observing the vicious character of our prelates, which no doubt much requires setting in order, and by imperfections which time has brought into our Church.

It is not my desire at present discourage you from this course, for I would have no one act in opposition to his conscience; but I wish, having regard to the good repute acquired by your family from its enduring concord—a family than which none can be dearer to me; a family, thank God! no member of which has ever been guilty of dishonour—in regard, further, to the will of your good father to whom you owe so much, and of your, uncle, I wish you to avoid extreme means; avoid harshness and violence: be reconciled with your relatives; do not act apart, but unite. You perceive what disasters our quarrels have brought upon this kingdom, and I anticipate still worse mischiefs; and in your goodness and wisdom, beware of involving your family in such broils; let it continue to enjoy its former reputation and happiness. M. de Beauregard, take what I say in good part, and as a proof of the friendship I feel for you. I postponed till now any communication with you on the subject, and perhaps the condition in which you see me address you, may cause my advice and opinion to carry greater authority." My brother expressed his thanks to him cordially.

On the Monday morning he had become so ill that he quite despaired of himself; and he said to me very pitifully: "Brother, do not you feel pain for all the pain I am suffering? Do you not perceive now that the help you give me has no other effect than that of lengthening my suffering?"

Shortly afterwards he fainted, and we all thought him gone; but by the application of vinegar and wine he rallied. But he soon sank, and when he heard us in lamentation, he murmured, "O God! who is it that teases me so? Why did you break the agreeable repose I was enjoying? I beg of you to leave me." And then, when he caught the sound of my voice, he continued: "And art thou, my brother, likewise unwilling to see me at peace? O, how thou robbest me of my repose!" After a while, he seemed to gain more strength, and called for wine, which he relished, and declared it to be the finest drink possible. I, in order to change the current of his thoughts, put in, "Surely not; water is the best." "Ah, yes," he returned, "doubtless so;—(Greek phrase)—" He had now become, icy-cold at his extremities, even to his face; a deathly perspiration was upon him, and his pulse was scarcely perceptible.

This morning he confessed, but the priest had omitted to bring with him the necessary apparatus for celebrating Mass. On the Tuesday, however, M. de la Boetie summoned him to aid him, as he said, in discharging the last office of a Christian. After the conclusion of Mass, he took the sacrament; when the priest was about to depart, he said to him: "Spiritual father, I implore you humbly, as well as those over whom you are set, to pray to the Almighty on my behalf; that, if it be decreed in heaven that I am now to end my life,

He will take compassion on my soul, and pardon me my sins, which are manifold, it not being possible for so weak and poor a creature as I to obey completely the will of such a Master; or, if He think fit to keep me longer here, that it may please Him to release my present extreme anguish, and to direct my footsteps in the right path, that I may become a better man than I have been." He paused to recover breath a little; priest was about to go away, he called him back and proceeded: "I desire to say, besides, in your hearing this: I declare that I was christened and I have lived, and that so I wish to die, in the faith which Moses preached in Egypt; which afterwards the Patriarchs accepted and professed in Judaea; and which, in the course of time, has been transmitted to France and to us." He seemed desirous of adding something more, but he ended with a request to his uncle and me to send up prayers for him; "for those are," he said, "the best duties that Christians can fulfil one for another." In the course of talking, his shoulder was uncovered, and although a man-servant stood near him, he asked his uncle to re-adjust the clothes. Then, turning his eyes towards me, he said, "Ingenui est, cui multum debeas, ei plurimum velle debere."

M. de Belot called in the afternoon to see him, and M. de la Boetie, taking his hand, said to him: "I was on the point of discharging my debt, but my kind creditor has given me a little further time." A little while after, appearing to wake out of a sort of reverie, he uttered words which he had employed once or twice before in the course of his sickness: "Ah well, ah well, whenever the hour comes, I await it with pleasure and fortitude." And then, as they were holding his mouth open by force to give him a draught, he observed to M. de Belot: "An vivere tanti est?"

As the evening approached, he began perceptibly to sink; and while I supped, he sent for me to come, being no more than the shadow of a man, or, as he put it himself, 'non homo, sed species hominis'; and he said to me with the utmost difficulty: "My brother, my friend, please God I may realise the imaginations I have just enjoyed." Afterwards, having waited for some time while he remained silent, and by painful efforts was drawing long sighs (for his tongue at this point began to refuse its functions), I said, "What are they?" "Grand, grand!" he replied. "I have never yet failed," returned I, "to have the honour of hearing your conceptions and imaginations communicated to me; will you not now still let me enjoy them?" "I would indeed," he answered; "but, my brother, I am not able to do so; they are admirable, infinite, and unspeakable." We stopped short there, for he could not go on. A little before, indeed, he had shown a desire to speak to his wife, and had told her, with as gay a countenance as he could contrive to assume, that he had a story to tell her.

And it seemed as if he was making an attempt to gain utterance; but, his strength failing him, he begged a little wine to resuscitate it. It was of no avail, for he fainted away suddenly, and was for some time insensible. Having become so near a neighbour to death, and hearing the sobs of Mademoiselle de la Boetie, he called her, and said to her thus: "My own likeness, you grieve yourself beforehand; will you not have pity on me? take courage. Assuredly, it costs me more than half the pain I endure, to see you suffer; and reasonably so, because the evils which we ourselves feel we do not actually ourselves suffer, but it certain sentient faculties which God plants in us, that feel them: whereas what we feel on account of others, we feel by consequence of a certain reasoning process which goes on within our minds. But I am going away" —That he said because his strength was failing him; and fearing that he had frightened his wife, he resumed, observing: "I am going to sleep. Good night, my wife; go thy way." This was the last farewell he took of her.

After she had left, "My brother," said he to me, "keep near me, if you please;" and then feeling the advance of death more pressing and more acute, or else the effect of some warm draught which they had made him swallow, his voice grew stronger and clearer, and he turned quite with violence in his bed, so that all began again to entertain the hope which we had lost only upon witnessing his extreme prostration.

At this stage he proceeded, among other things, to pray me again and again, in a most affectionate manner, to give him a place; so that I was apprehensive that his reason might be impaired, particularly when, on my pointing out to him that he was doing himself harm, and that these were not of the words of a rational man, he did not yield at first, but redoubled his outcry, saying, "My brother, my brother! dost thou then refuse me a place?" insomuch that he constrained me to demonstrate to him that, as he breathed and spoke, and had his physical being, therefore he had his place. "Yes, yes," he responded, "I have; but it is not that which I need; and, besides, when all is said, I have no longer any existence." "God," I replied, "will grant you a better one soon." "Would it were now, my brother," was his answer. "It is now three days since I have been eager to take my departure."

Being in this extremity, he frequently called me, merely to satisfy him that I was at his side. At length, he composed himself a little to rest, which strengthened our hopes; so much so, indeed, that I left the room, and went to rejoice thereupon with Mademoiselle de la Boetie. But, an hour or so afterwards, he called me by name once or twice, and then with a long sigh expired at three o'clock on Wednesday morning, the 18th August 1563, having lived thirty-two years, nine months, and seventeen days.

II.—To Monseigneur, Monseigneur De Montaigne

[This letter is prefixed to Montaigne's translation of the "Natural Theology" of Raymond de Sebonde, printed at Paris in 1569.]

In pursuance of the instructions which you gave me last year in your house at Montaigne, Monseigneur, I have put into a French dress, with my own hand, Raymond de Sebonde, that great Spanish theologian and philosopher; and I have divested him, so far as I could, of that rough bearing and barbaric appearance which you saw him wear at first; that, in my opinion, he is now qualified to present himself in the best company. It is perfectly possible that some fastidious persons will detect in the book some trace of Gascon parentage; but it will be so much the more to their discredit, that they allowed the task to devolve on one who is quite a novice in these things. It is only right, Monseigneur, that the work should come before the world under your auspices, since whatever emendations and polish it may have received, are owing to you. Still I see well that, if you think proper to balance accounts with the author, you will find yourself much his debtor; for against his excellent and religious discourses, his lofty and, so to speak, divine conceptions, you will find that you will have to set nothing but words and phraseology; a sort of merchandise so ordinary and commonplace, that whoever has the most of it, peradventure is the worst off.

Monseigneur, I pray God to grant you a very long and happy life. From Paris, this 18th of June 1568. Your most humble and most obedient son,

MICHEL DE MONTAIGNE

III.—To Monsieur, Monsieur De Lansac

—[This letter appears to belong to 1570.]—Knight of the King's Order, Privy Councillor, Sub-controller of his Finance, and Captain of the Cent Gardes of his Household.

MONSIEUR,—I send you the OEconomics of Xenophon, put into French by the late M. de la Boetie,—[Printed at Paris, 8vo, 1571, and reissued, with the addition of some notes, in 1572, with a fresh title-page.]—a present which appears to me to be appropriate, as well because it is the work of a gentleman of mark,—[Meaning Xenophon.]—a man illustrious in war and peace, as because it has taken its second shape from a personage whom I know to have been held by you in affectionate regard during his life. This will be an inducement to you to continue to cherish towards his memory, your good opinion and goodwill. And to be bold with you, Monsieur, do not fear to increase these sentiments somewhat; for, as you had knowledge of his high qualities only in his public capacity, it rests with me to assure you how many endowments he possessed beyond your personal experience of him. He did me the honour, while he lived, and I count it amongst the most fortunate circumstances in my own career, to have with me a friendship so close and so intricately knit, that no movement, impulse, thought, of his mind was kept from me, and if I have not formed a right judgment of him, I must suppose it to be from my own want of scope. Indeed, without exaggeration, he was so nearly a prodigy, that I am afraid of not being credited when I speak of him, even though I should keep much within the mark of my own actual knowledge. And for this time, Monsieur, I shall content myself with praying you, for the honour and respect we owe to truth, to testify and believe that our Guienne never beheld his peer among the men of his vocation. Under the hope, therefore, that you will pay him his just due, and in order to refresh him in your memory, I present you this book, which will answer for me that, were it not for the insufficiency of my power, I would offer you as willingly something of my own, as an acknowledgment of the obligations I owe to you, and of the ancient favour and friendship which you have borne towards the members of our house. But, Monsieur, in default of better coin, I offer you in payment the assurance of my desire to do you humble service.

Monsieur, I pray God to have you in His keeping. Your obedient servant, MICHEL DE MONTAIGNE.

IV.—To Monsieur, Monsieur De Mesmes, Lord of Roissy and Malassize, Privy

Councillor to the King.

MONSIEUR,—It is one of the most conspicuous follies committed by men, to employ the strength of their understanding in overturning and destroying those opinions which are commonly received among us, and which afford us satisfaction and content; for while everything beneath heaven employs the ways and means placed at its disposal by nature for the advancement and commodity of its being, these, in order to appear of a more sprightly and enlightened wit, not accepting anything which has not been tried and balanced a thousand times with the most subtle reasoning, sacrifice their peace of mind to doubt, uneasiness, and feverish excitement. It is not without reason that childhood and simplicity have been recommended by holy writ itself. For my part, I prefer to be quiet rather than clever: give me content, even if I am not to be so wide in my range. This is the reason, Monsieur, why, although persons of an ingenious turn laugh at our care as to what will happen after our own time, for instance, to our souls, which, lodged elsewhere, will lose all consciousness of what goes on here below, yet I consider it to be a great consolation for the frailty and brevity of life, to reflect that we have the power of prolonging it by reputation and fame; and I embrace very readily this pleasant and favourable notion original with our being, without inquiring too critically how or why it is. Insomuch that having loved, beyond everything, the late M. de la Boetie, the greatest man, in my judgment, of our age, I should think myself very negligent of my duty if I failed, to the utmost of my power, to prevent such a name as his, and a memory so richly meriting remembrance, from falling into oblivion; and if I did not use my best endeavour to keep them fresh. I believe that he feels something of what I do on his behalf, and that my services touch and rejoice him. In fact, he lives in my heart so vividly and so wholly, that I am loath to believe him committed to the dull ground, or altogether cast off from communication with us. Therefore, Monsieur, since every new light I can shed on him and his name, is so much added to his second period of existence, and, moreover, since his name is ennobled and honoured by the place which receives it, it falls to me not only to extend it as widely as I can, but to confide it to the keeping of persons of honour and virtue; among whom you hold such a rank, that, to afford you the opportunity of receiving this new guest, and giving him good entertainment, I decided on presenting to you this little work, not for any profit you are likely to derive from it, being well aware that you do not need to have Plutarch and his companions interpreted to you—but it is possible that Madame de Roissy, reading in it the order of her household management and of your happy accord painted to the life, will be pleased to see how her own natural inclination has not only reached but surpassed the theories of the wisest philosophers, regarding the duties and laws of the wedded state. And, at all events, it will be always an honour to me, to be able to do anything which shall be for the pleasure of you and yours, on account of the obligation under which I lie to serve you.

Monsieur, I pray God to grant you a long and happy life. From Montaigne, this 30th April 1570. Your humble servant, MICHEL DE MONTAIGNE.

V.—To Monsieur, Monsieur De L'Hospital, Chancellor of France

MONSEIGNEUR,—I am of the opinion that persons such as you, to whom fortune and reason have committed the charge of public affairs, are not more inquisitive in any point than in ascertaining the character of those in office under you; for no society is so poorly furnished, but that, if a proper distribution of authority be used, it has persons sufficient for the discharge of all official duties; and when this is the case, nothing is wanting to make a State perfect in its constitution. Now, in proportion as this is so much to be desired, so it is the more difficult of accomplishment, since you cannot have eyes to embrace a multitude so large and so widely extended, nor to see to the bottom of hearts, in order that you may discover intentions and consciences, matters principally to be considered; so that there has never been any commonwealth so well organised, in which we might not detect often enough defect in such a department or such a choice; and in those systems, where ignorance and malice, favouritism, intrigue, and violence govern, if any selection happens to be made on the ground of merit and regularity, we may doubtless thank Fortune, which, in its capricious movements, has for once taken the path of reason.

This consideration, Monseigneur, often consoled me, when I beheld M. Etienne de la Boetie, one of the fittest men for high office in France, pass his whole life without employment and notice, by his domestic hearth, to the singular detriment of the public; for, so far as he was concerned, I may assure you, Monseigneur, that he was so rich in those treasures which defy fortune, that never was man more satisfied or content. I know, indeed, that he was raised to the dignities connected with his neighbourhood—dignities accounted considerable; and I know also, that no one ever acquitted himself better of them; and when he died at the age of thirty-two, he enjoyed a reputation in that way beyond all who had preceded him.

But for all that, it is no reason that a man should be left a common soldier, who deserves to become a captain; nor to assign mean functions to those who are perfectly equal to the highest. In truth, his powers were badly economised and too sparingly employed; insomuch that, over and above his actual work, there was abundant capacity lying idle which might have been called into service, both to the public advantage and his own private glory.

Therefore, Monseigneur, since he was so indifferent to his own fame (for virtue and ambition, unfortunately, seldom lodge together), and since he lived in an age when others were too dull or too jealous to witness to his character, I have it marvellously at heart that his memory, at all events, to which I owe the good offices of a friend, should enjoy the recompense of his brave life; and that it should survive in the good report of men of honour and virtue. On this account, sir, I have been desirous to bring to light, and present to you, such few Latin verses as he left behind. Different from the builder, who places the most attractive, portion of his house towards the street, and to the draper, who displays in his window his best goods, that which was most precious in my friend, the juice and marrow of his genius, departed with him, and there have remained to us but the bark and the leaves.

The exactly regulated movements of his mind, his piety, his virtue, his justice, his vivacity, the solidity and soundness of his judgment, the loftiness of his ideas, raised so far above the common level, his learning, the grace which accompanied his most ordinary actions, the tender affection he had for his miserable country, and his supreme and sworn detestation of all vice, but principally of that villainous traffic which disguises itself under the honourable name of justice, should certainly impress all well-disposed persons with a singular love towards him, and an extraordinary regret for his loss. But, sir, I am unable to do justice to all these qualities; and of the fruit of his own studies it had not entered into his mind to leave any proof to posterity; all that remains, is the little which, as a pastime, he did at intervals.

However this may be, I beg you, sir, to receive it kindly; and as our judgment of great things is many times formed from lesser things, and as even the recreations of illustrious men carry with them, to intelligent observers, some honourable traits of their origin, I would have you form from this, some knowledge of him, and hence lovingly cherish his name and his memory. In this, sir, you will only reciprocate the high opinion which he had of your virtue, and realise what he infinitely desired in his lifetime; for there was no one in the world in whose acquaintance and friendship he would have been so happy to see himself established, as in your own. But if any man is offended by the freedom which I use with the belongings of another, I can tell him that nothing which has been written or been laid down, even in the schools of philosophy, respecting the sacred duties and rights of friendship, could give an adequate idea of the relations which subsisted between this personage and myself.

Moreover, sir, this slender gift, to make two throws of one stone at the same time, may likewise serve, if you please, to testify the honour and respect which I entertain for your ability and high qualities; for as to those gifts which are adventitious and accidental, it is not to my taste to take them into account.

Sir, I pray God to grant you a very happy and a very long life. From Montaigne, this 30th of April 1570.—Your humble and obedient servant,

MICHEL DE MONTAIGNE.

VI.—To Monsieur, Monsieur De Folx, Privy Councillor, and Ambassador of His Majesty to the Signory of Venice.

—[Printed before the 'Vers Francois' of Etienne de la Boetie, 8vo, Paris, 1572.]

SIR,—Being on the point of commending to you and to posterity the memory of the late Etienne de la Boetie, as well for his extreme virtue as for the singular affection which he bore to me, it struck me as an indiscretion very serious in its results, and meriting some coercion from our laws, the practice which often prevails of robbing virtue of glory, its faithful associate, in order to confer it, in accordance with our private interests and without discrimination, on the first comer; seeing that our two principal guiding reins are reward and punishment, which only touch us properly, and as men, through the medium of honour and dishonour, forasmuch as these penetrate the mind, and come home to our most intimate feelings: just where animals themselves are susceptible, more or less, to all other kinds of recompense and corporal chastisement. Moreover, it is well to notice that the custom of praising virtue, even in those who are no longer with us, impalpable as it is to them, serves as a stimulant to the living to imitate their example; just as capital sentences are carried out by the law, more for the sake of warning to others, than in relation to those who suffer. Now, commendation and its opposite being analogous as regards effects, we cannot easily deny the fact, that although the law prohibits one man from slandering the reputation of another, it does not prevent us from bestowing reputation without cause. This pernicious licence in respect to the distribution of praise, has formerly been confined in its area of operations; and it may be the reason why poetry once lost favour with the more judicious. However this may be, it cannot be concealed that the vice of falsehood is one very unbecoming in gentleman, let it assume what guise it will.

As for that personage of whom I am speaking to you, sir he leads me far away indeed from this kind of language; for the danger in his case is not, lest I should lend him anything, but that I might take something from him; and it is his ill-fortune that, while he has supplied me, so far as ever a man could, with just and obvious opportunities for commendation,

I find myself unable and unqualified to render it to him —I, who am his debtor for so many vivid communications, and who alone have it in my power to answer for a million of accomplishments, perfections, and virtues, latent (thanks to his unkind stars) in so noble a soul. For the nature of things having (I know not how) permitted that truth, fair and acceptable—as it may be of itself, is only embraced where there are arts of persuasion, to insinuate it into our minds, I see myself so wanting, both in authority to support my simple testimony, and in the eloquence requisite for lending it value and weight, that I was on the eve of relinquishing the task, having nothing of his which would enable me to exhibit to the world a proof of his genius and knowledge.

In truth, sir, having been overtaken by his fate in the flower of his age, and in the full enjoyment of the most vigorous health, it had been his design to publish some day works which would have demonstrated to posterity what sort of a man he was; and, peradventure, he was indifferent enough to fame, having formed such a plan in his head, to proceed no further in it. But I have come to the conclusion, that it was far more excusable in him to bury with him all his rare endowments, than it would be on my part to bury also with me the knowledge of them which I had acquired from him; and, therefore, having collected with care all the remains which I found scattered here and there among his papers, I intend to distribute them so as to recommend his memory to as many persons as possible, selecting the most suitable and worthy of my acquaintance, and those whose testimony might do him greatest honour: such as you, sir, who may very possibly have had some knowledge of him during his life, but assuredly too slight to discover the perfect extent of his worth. Posterity may credit me, if it chooses, when I swear upon my conscience, that I knew and saw him to be such as, all things considered, I could neither desire nor imagine a genius surpassing his.

I beg you very humbly, sir, not only to take his name under your general protection, but also these ten or twelve French stanzas, which lay themselves, as of necessity, under shadow of your patronage. For I will not disguise from you, that their publication was deferred, upon the appearance of his other writings, under the pretext (as it was alleged yonder at Paris) that they were too crude to come to light. You will judge, sir, how much truth there is in this; and since it is thought that hereabout nothing can be produced in our own dialect but what is barbarous and unpolished, it falls to you, who, besides your rank as the first house in Guienne, indeed down from your ancestors, possess every other sort of qualification, to establish, not merely by your example, but by your authoritative testimony, that such is not always the case: the more so that, though 'tis more natural with the Gascons to act than talk, yet sometimes they employ the tongue more than the arm, and wit in place of valour.

For my own part; sir, it is not in my way to judge of such matters; but I have heard persons who are supposed to understand them, say that these stanzas are not only worthy to be presented in the market-place, but, independently of that, as regards beauty and wealth of invention, they are full of marrow and matter as any compositions of the kind, which have appeared in our language. Naturally each workman feels himself more strong in some special part his art, and those are to be regarded as most fortunate, who lay hands on the noblest, for all the parts essential to the construction of any whole are not equally precious. We find elsewhere, perhaps, greater delicacy phrase, greater softness and harmony of language; but imaginative grace, and in the store of pointed wit, I do not think he has been surpassed; and we should take the account that he made these things neither his occupation nor his study, and that he scarcely took a pen in his hand more than once a year, as is shown by the very slender quantity of his remains. For you see here, sir, green wood and dry, without any sort of selection, all that has come into my possession; insomuch that there are among the rest efforts even of his boyhood. In point of fact, he seems to have written them merely to show that he was capable of dealing with all subjects: for otherwise, thousands of times, in the course of ordinary conversation, I have heard things drop from him infinitely more worthy of being admired, infinitely more worthy of being preserved.

Such, sir, is what justice and affection, forming in this instance a rare conjunction, oblige me to say of this great and good man; and if I have at all offended by the freedom which I have taken in addressing myself to you on such a subject at such a length, be pleased to recollect that the principal result of greatness and eminence is to lay one open to importunate appeals on behalf of the rest of the world. Herewith, after desiring you to accept my affectionate devotion to your service, I beseech God to vouchsafe you, sir, a fortunate and prolonged life. From Montaigne, this 1st of September 1570.—Your obedient servant,

MICHEL DE MONTAIGNE.

VII.—To Mademoiselle De Montaigne, My Wife.

—[Printed as a preface to the "Consolation of Plutarch to his Wife," published by Montaigne, with several other tracts by La Boetie, about 1571.]

MY WIFE,—You understand well that it is not proper for a man of the world, according to the rules of this our time, to continue to court and caress you; for they say that a sensible person may take a wife indeed, but that to espouse her is to act like a fool. Let them talk; I adhere for my part the custom of the good old days; I also wear my hair as it used to be then; and, in truth, novelty costs this poor country up to the present moment so dear (and I do not know whether we have reached the highest pitch yet), that everywhere and in everything I renounce the fashion. Let us live, my wife, you and I, in the old French method. Now, you may recollect that the late M. de la Boetie, my brother and inseparable companion, gave me, on his death-bed, all his books and papers, which have remained ever since the most precious part of my effects. I do not wish to keep them niggardly to myself alone, nor do I deserve to have the exclusive use of them; so that I have resolved to communicate them to my friends; and because I have none, I believe, more particularly intimate you, I send you the Consolatory Letter written by Plutarch to his Wife, translated by him into French; regretting much that fortune has made it so suitable a present you, and that, having had but one child, and that a daughter, long looked for, after four years of your married life it was your lot to lose her in the second year of her age. But I leave to Plutarch the duty of comforting you, acquainting you with your duty herein, begging you to put your faith in him for my sake; for he will reveal to you my own ideas, and will express the matter far better than I should myself. Hereupon, my wife, I commend myself very heartily to your good will, and pray God to have you in His keeping. From Paris, this 10th September 1570.—Your good husband,

MICHEL DE MONTAIGNE.

VIII.—To Monsieur Dupuy

—[This is probably the Claude Dupuy, born at Paris in 1545, and one of the fourteen judges sent into Guienne after the treaty of Fleix in 1580. It was perhaps under these circumstances that Montaigne addressed to him the present letter.]—the King's Councillor in his Court and Parliament of Paris.

MONSIEUR,—The business of the Sieur de Verres, a prisoner, who is extremely well known to me, deserves, in the arrival at a decision, the exercise of the clemency natural to you, if, in the public interest, you can fairly call it into play. He has done a thing not only excusable, according to the military laws of this age, but necessary and (as we are of opinion) commendable. He committed the act, without doubt, unwillingly and under pressure; there is no other passage of his life which is open to reproach. I beseech you, sir, to lend the matter your attentive consideration; you will find the character of it as I represent it to you. He is persecuted on this crime, in a way which is far worse than the offence itself. If it is likely to be of use to him, I desire to inform you that he is a man brought up in my house, related to several respectable families, and a person who, having led an honourable life, is my particular friend. By saving him you lay me under an extreme obligation. I beg you very humbly to regard him as recommended by me, and, after kissing your hands, I pray God, sir, to grant you a long and happy life. From Castera, this 23d of April 1580. Your affectionate servant, MONTAIGNE.

IX.—To the Jurats of Bordeaux

—[Published from the original among the archives of the town of Bordeaux, M. Gustave Brunet in the *Bulletin du Bibliophile*, July 1839.]

GENTLEMEN,—I trust that the journey of Monsieur de Cursol will be of advantage to the town. Having in hand a case so just and so favourable, you did all in your power to put the business in good trim; and matters being so well situated, I beg you to excuse my absence for some little time longer, and I will abridge my stay so far as the pressure of my affairs permits. I hope that the delay will be short; however, you will keep me, if you please, in your good grace, and will command me, if the occasion shall arise, in employing me in the public service and in yours. Monsieur de Cursol has also written to me and apprised me of his journey. I humbly commend myself to you, and pray God, gentlemen, to grant you long and happy life. From Montaigne, this 21st of May 1582. Your humble brother and servant, MONTAIGNE.

X.—To the Same

—[The original is among the archives of Toulouse.]

GENTLEMEN,—I have taken my fair share of the satisfaction which you announce to me as feeling at the good despatch of your business, as reported to you by your deputies, and I regard it as a favourable sign that you have made such an auspicious commencement of the year. I hope to join you at the earliest convenient opportunity. I recommend myself very humbly to your gracious consideration, and pray God to grant you, gentlemen, a happy and long life. From Montaigne, this 8th February 1585. Your humble brother and servant, MONTAIGNE.

XI.—To the Same

GENTLEMEN,—I have here received news of you from M. le Marechal. I will not spare either my life or anything else for your service, and will leave it to your judgment whether the assistance I might be able to render by my presence at the forthcoming election, would be worth the risk I should run by going into the town, seeing the bad state it is in, —[This refers to the plague then raging, and which carried off 14,000 persons at Bordeaux.]—particularly for people coming away from so fine an air as this is where I am. I will draw as near to you on Wednesday as I can, that is, to Feuillas, if the malady has not reached that place, where, as I write to M. de la Molte, I shall be very pleased to have the honour of seeing one of you to take your directions, and relieve myself of the credentials which M. le Marechal will give me for you all: commending myself hereupon humbly to your good grace, and praying God to grant you, gentlemen, long and happy life. At Libourne, this 30th of July 1585. Your humble servant and brother, MONTAIGNE.

XII—To the Same

—["According to Dr. Payen, this letter belongs to 1588. Its authenticity has been called in question; but wrongly, in our opinion. See 'Documents inedits', 1847, p. 12."—Note in 'Essais', ed. Paris, 1854, iv. 381. It does not appear to whom the letter was addressed.]

MONSEIGNEUR,—You have heard of our baggage being taken from us under our eyes in the forest of Villebois: then, after a good deal of discussion and delay, of the capture being pronounced illegal by the Prince. We dared not, however, proceed on our way, from an uncertainty as to the safety of our persons, which should have been clearly expressed on our passports. The League has done this, M. de Barrant and M. de la Rochefocault; the storm has burst on me, who had my money in my box. I have recovered none of it, and most of my papers and cash—[The French word is *hardes*, which St. John renders things. But compare Chambers's "Domestic Annals of Scotland," 2d ed. i. 48.]—remain in their possession. I have not seen the Prince. Fifty were lost . . . as for the Count of Thorigny, he lost some *ver plate* and a few articles of clothing. He diverged from his route to pay a visit to the mourning ladies at Montresor, where are the remains of his two brothers and his grandmother, and came to us again in this town, whence we shall resume our journey shortly. The journey to Normandy is postponed. The King has despatched MM. De Bellieure and de la Guiche to M. de Guise to summon him to court; we shall be there on Thursday.

From Orleans, this 16th of February, in the morning [1588-9?].—Your very humble servant, MONTAIGNE.

XIII.—To Mademoiselle Paulmier

—[This letter, at the time of the publication of the variorum edition of 1854, appears to have been in private hands. See vol. iv. p. 382.]

MADemoISELLE,—My friends know that, from the first moment of our acquaintance, I have destined a copy of my book for you; for I feel that you have done it much honour. The courtesy of M. Paulmier would deprive me of the pleasure of giving it to you now, for he has obliged me since a great deal beyond the worth of my book. You will accept it then, if you please, as having been yours before I owed it to you, and will confer on me the favour of loving it, whether for its own sake or for mine; and I will keep my debt to M. Paulmier undischarged, that I may requite him, if I have at some other time the means of serving him.

XIV.—To the King, Henry IV

—[The original is in the French national library, in the Dupuy collection. It was first discovered by M. Achille Jubinal, who printed it with a facsimile of the entire autograph, in 1850. St. John gives the date wrongly as the 1st January 1590.]

SIRE, It is to be above the weight and crowd of your great and important affairs, to know, as you do, how to lend yourself, and attend to small matters in their turn, according to the duty of your royal dignity, which exposes you at all times to every description and degree of person and employment. Yet, that your Majesty should have deigned to consider my letter, and direct a reply to be made to it, I prefer to owe, less to your strong understanding, than to your kindness of heart. I have always looked forward to your enjoyment of your present fortune, and you may recollect that, even when I had to make confession of it to my cure, I viewed your successes with satisfaction: now, with the greater propriety and freedom, I embrace them affectionately. They serve you where you are as positive matters of fact; but they serve us here no less by the fame which they diffuse: the echo carries as much weight as the blow. We should not be able to derive from the justice of your cause such powerful arguments for the maintenance and reduction of your subjects, as we do from the reports of the success of your undertaking; and then I have to assure your Majesty, that the recent changes to your advantage, which you observe hereabouts, the prosperous issue of your proceedings at Dieppe, have opportunely seconded the honest zeal and marvellous prudence of M. the Marshal de Matignon, from whom I flatter myself that you do not receive day by day accounts of such good and signal services without remembering my assurances and expectations. I look to the next summer, not only for fruits which we may eat, but for those to grow out of our common tranquillity, and that it will pass over our heads with the same even tenor of happiness, dissipating, like its predecessors, all the fine promises with which your adversaries sustain the spirits of their followers. The popular inclinations resemble a tidal wave; if the current once commences in your favour, it will go on of its own force to the end. I could have desired much that the private gain of the soldiers of your army, and the necessity for satisfying them, had not deprived you, especially in this principal town, of the glorious credit of treating your mutinous subjects, in the midst of victory, with greater clemency than their own protectors, and that, as distinguished from a passing and usurped repute, you could have shown them to be really your own, by the exercise of a protection truly paternal and royal. In the conduct of such affairs as you have in hand, men are obliged to have recourse to unusual expedients.

It is always seen that they are surmounted by their magnitude and difficulty; it not being found easy to complete the conquest by arms and force, the end has been accomplished by clemency and generosity, excellent lures to draw men particularly towards the just and legitimate side. If there is to be severity and punishment, let it be deferred till success has been assured. A great conqueror of past times boasts that he gave his enemies as great an inducement to love him, as his friends. And here we feel already some effect of the favourable impression produced upon our rebellious towns by the contrast between their rude treatment, and that of those which are loyal to you. Desiring your Majesty a happiness more tangible and less hazardous, and that you may be beloved rather than feared by your people, and believing that your welfare and theirs are of necessity knit together, I rejoice to think that the progress which you make is one towards more practicable conditions of peace, as well as towards victory!

Sire, your letter of the last of November came to my hand only just now, when the time which it pleased you to name for meeting you at Tours had already passed. I take it as a singular favour that you should have deigned to desire a visit from so useless a person, but one who is wholly yours, and more so even by affection than from duty. You have acted very commendably in adapting yourself, in the matter of external forms, to your new fortunes; but the preservation of your old affability and frankness in private intercourse is entitled to an equal share of praise. You have condescended to take thought for my age, no less than for the desire which I have to see you, where you may be at rest from these laborious agitations. Will not that be soon at Paris, Sire? and may nothing prevent me from presenting myself there!—Your very humble and very obedient servant and subject, MONTAIGNE.

From Montaigne, this 18th of January 1590.

XV.—To the Same

—[This letter is also in the national collection, among the Dupuy papers. It was first printed in the "Journal de l'Instruction Publique," 4th November 1846.]

SIRE,—The letter which it pleased your majesty to write to me on the 20th of July, was not delivered to me till this morning, and found me laid up with a very violent tertian ague, a complaint very common in this part of the country during the last month. Sire, I consider myself greatly honoured by the receipt of your commands, and I have not omitted to communicate to M. the Marshal de Matignon three times most emphatically my intention and obligation to proceed to him, and even so far as to indicate the route by which I proposed to join him secretly, if he thought proper.

Having received no answer, I consider that he has weighed the difficulty and risk of the journey to me. Sire, your Majesty will do me the favour to believe, if you please, that I shall never complain of the expense on occasions where I should not hesitate to devote my life. I have never derived any substantial benefit whatever from the bounty of kings, which I have neither sought nor merited; nor have I had any recompense for the services which I have performed for them: whereof your majesty is in part aware. What I have done for your predecessors I shall do still more readily for you. I am as rich, Sire, as I desire to be. When I shall have exhausted my purse in attendance on your Majesty at Paris, I will take the liberty to tell you, and then, if you should regard me as worthy of being retained any longer in your suite, you will find me more modest in my claims upon you than the humblest of your officers.

Sire, I pray God for your prosperity and health. Your very humble and very obedient servant and subject, MONTAIGNE.

From Montaigne, this 2d of September 1590.

XVI.—To the Governor of Guienne

MONSEIGNEUR,—I have received this morning your letter, which I have communicated to M. de Gourgues, and we have dined together at the house of M.[the mayor] of Bourdeaux. As to the inconvenience of transporting the money named in your memorandum, you see how difficult a thing it is to provide for; but you may be sure that we shall keep as close a watch over it as possible. I used every exertion to discover the man of whom you spoke. He has not been here; and M. de Bordeaux has shown me a letter in which he mentions that he could not come to see the Director of Bordeaux, as he intended, having been informed that you mistrust him. The letter is of the day before yesterday. If I could have found him, I might perhaps have pursued the gentler course, being uncertain of your views; but I entreat you nevertheless to feel no manner of doubt that I refuse to carry out any wishes of yours, and that, where your commands are concerned, I know no distinction of person or matter. I hope that you have in Guienne many as well affected to you as I am. They report that the Nantes galleys are advancing towards Brouage. M. the Marshal de Biron has not yet left.

Those who were charged to convey the message to M. d'Usee say that they cannot find him; and I believe that, if he has been here, he is so no longer. We keep a vigilant eye on our gates and guards, and we look after them a little more attentively in your absence, which makes me apprehensive, not merely on account of the preservation of the town, but likewise for your own sake, knowing that the enemies of the king feel how necessary you are to his service, and how ill we should prosper without you. I am afraid that, in the part where you are, you will be overtaken by so many affairs requiring your attention on every side, that it will take you a long time and involve great difficulty before you have disposed of everything. If there is any important news, I will despatch an express at once, and you may conclude that nothing is stirring if you do not hear from me: at the same time begging you to bear in mind that movements of this kind are wont to be so sudden and unexpected that, if they occur, they will grasp me by the throat, before they say a word. I will do what I can to collect news, and for this purpose I will make a point of visiting and seeing men of every shade of opinion. Down to the present time nothing is stirring. M. de Londel has seen me this morning, and we have been arranging for some advances for the place, where I shall go to-morrow morning. Since I began this letter, I have learnt from Chartreux that two gentlemen, describing themselves as in the service of M. de Guise, and coming from Agen, have passed near Chartreux; but I was not able to ascertain which road they have taken. They are expecting you at Agen. The Sieur de Mauvesin came as far as Canteloup, and thence returned, having got some intelligence. I am in search of one Captain Rous, to whom . . . wrote, trying to draw him into his cause by all sorts of promises. The rumour of the two Nantes galleys ready to descend on Brouage is confirmed as certain; they carry two companies of foot. M. de Mercure is at Nantes. The Sieur de la Courbe said to M. the President Nesmond that M. d'Elbeuf is on this side of Angiers, and lodges with his father. He is drawing towards Lower Poictou with 4000 foot and 400 or 500 horse, having been reinforced by the troops of M. de Brissac and others, and M. de Mercure is to join him. The report goes also that M. du Maine is about to take the command of all the forces they have collected in Auvergne, and that he will cross Le Foret to advance on Rouergue and us, that is to say, on the King of Navarre, against whom all this is being directed. M. de Lansac is at Bourg, and has two war vessels, which remain in attendance on him. His functions are naval. I tell you what I learn, and mix up together the more or less probable hearsay of the town with actual matter of fact, that you may be in possession of everything. I beg you most humbly to return directly affairs may allow you to do so, and assure you that, meanwhile, we shall not spare our labour, or (if that were necessary) our life, to maintain the king's authority throughout. Monseigneur, I kiss your hands very respectfully, and pray God to have you in His keeping. From Bordeaux, Wednesday night, 22d May (1590-91).—Your very humble servant,

MONTAIGNE.

I have seen no one from the king of Navarre; they say that M. de Biron has seen him.

THE AUTHOR TO THE READER.

—[Omitted by Cotton.]—

READER, thou hast here an honest book; it doth at the outset forewarn thee that, in contriving the same, I have proposed to myself no other than a domestic and private end: I have had no consideration at all either to thy service or to my glory. My powers are not capable of any such design. I have dedicated it to the particular commodity of my kinsfolk and friends, so that, having lost me (which they must do shortly), they may therein recover some traits of my conditions and humours, and by that means preserve more whole, and more life-like, the knowledge they had of me. Had my intention been to seek the world's favour, I should surely have adorned myself with borrowed beauties: I desire therein to be viewed as I appear in mine own genuine, simple, and ordinary manner, without study and artifice: for it is myself I paint. My defects are therein to be read to the life, and any imperfections and my natural form, so far as public reverence hath permitted me. If I had lived among those nations, which (they say) yet dwell under the sweet liberty of nature's primitive laws, I assure thee I would most willingly have painted myself quite fully and quite naked. Thus, reader, myself am the matter of my book: there's no reason thou shouldst employ thy leisure about so frivolous and vain a subject. Therefore farewell.

From Montaigne, the 12th June 1580—[So in the edition of 1595; the edition of 1588 has 12th June 1588]

From Montaigne, the 1st March 1580.

—[See Bonnefon, Montaigne, 1893, p. 254. The book had been licensed for the press on the 9th May previous. The edition of 1588 has 12th June 1588;]—

Book-I



Chapter I



—THAT 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 usuall 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.

Chapter II

—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.

“I do not believe, from what I have been told about this people, that there is anything barbarous or savage about them, except that we all call barbarous anything that is contrary to our own habits.”

— Michel de Montaigne, *The Complete Essays*

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—

"Diriguissè malis,"

["Petrified 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 suoapte

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:

"Curae 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

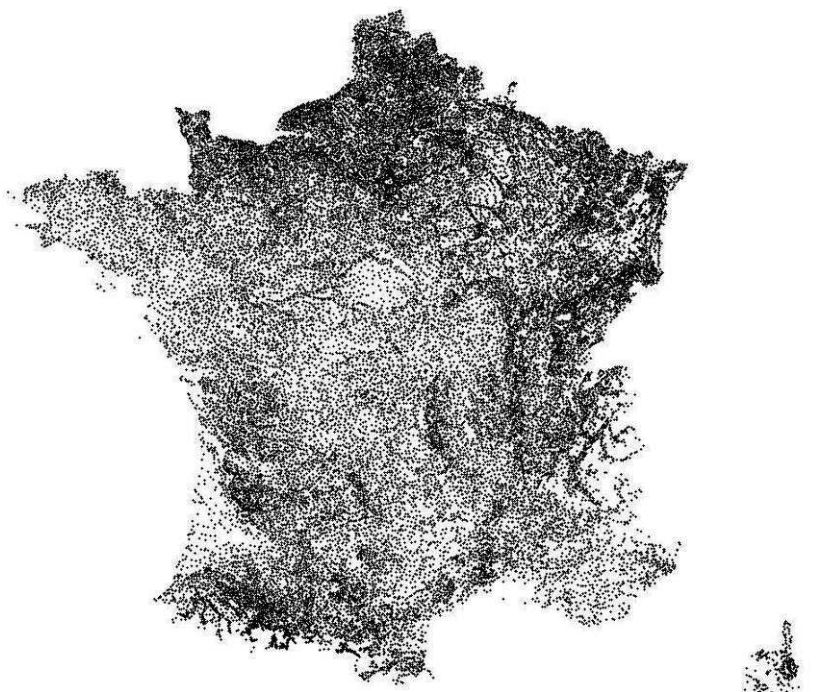
fainted away at the very sight: vital warmth forsook her limbs: she

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.

Chapter III



—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 pomps 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.

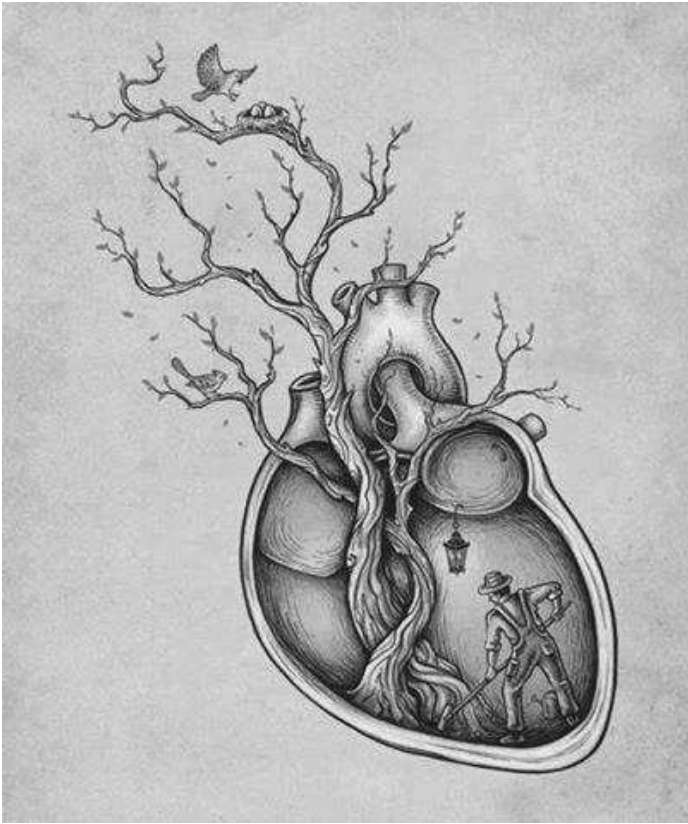
Chapter IV

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.]



—THAT THE SOUL EXPENDS ITS PASSIONS UPON FALSE OBJECTS, WHERE THE TRUE ARE WANTING

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 gamesters 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,

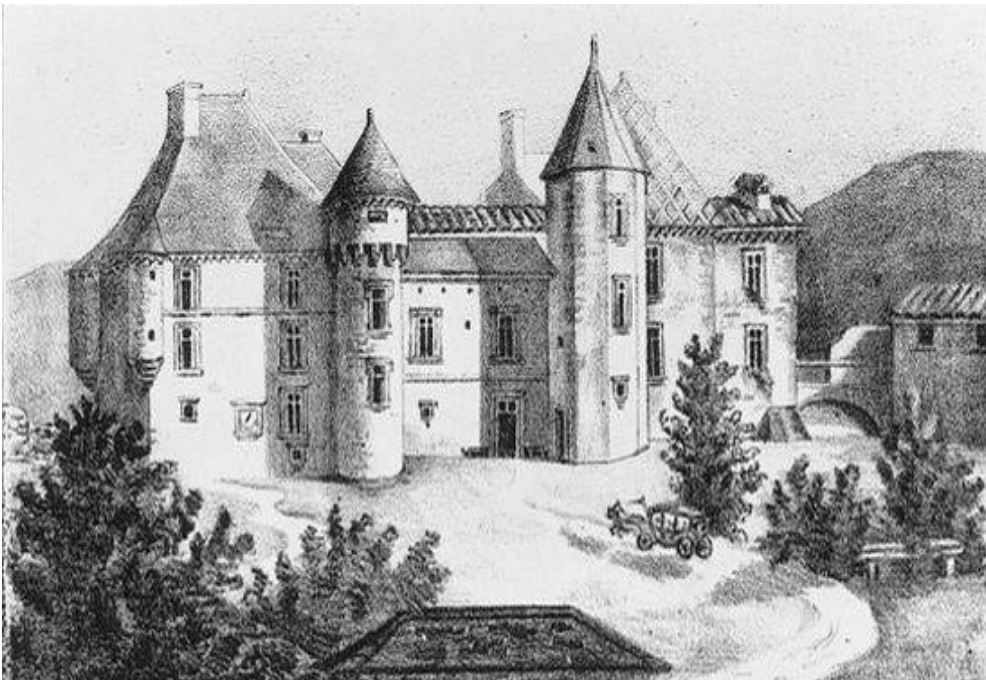
Il ne leur chault de toutes nos choleres."

["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.

Chapter V

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.



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

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 a general rule amongst the martial men of these latter times, that a governor of a place never ought, in a time of siege, to go out to parley. It was for this that in our fathers' days the Seigneurs de Montmord and de l'Assigni, defending Mousson against the Count of Nassau, were so highly censured. But yet, as to this, it would be excusable in that governor who, going out, should, notwithstanding, do it in such manner that the safety and advantage should be on his side; as Count Guido di Rangone did at Reggio (if we are to believe Du Bellay, for Guicciardini says it was he himself) when the Seigneur de l'Escut approached to parley, who stepped so little away from his fort, that a disorder happening in the interim of parley,

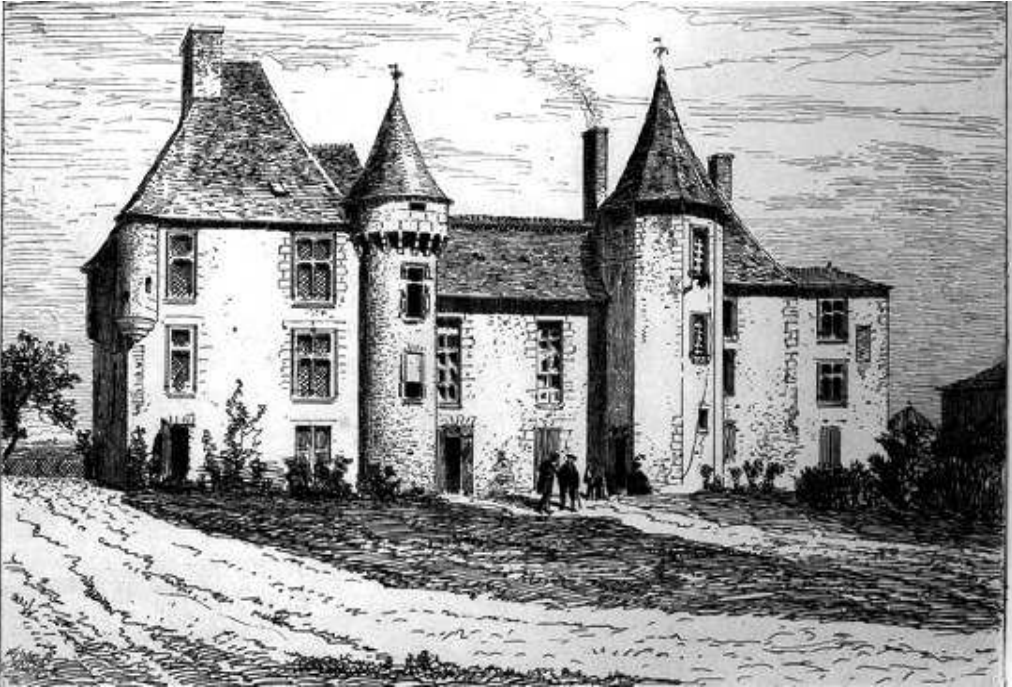
not only Monsieur de l'Escut and his party who were advanced with him, found themselves by much the weaker, insomuch that Alessandro Trivulcio was there slain, but he himself follow the Count, and, relying upon his honour, to secure himself from the danger of the shot within the walls of the town.

Eumenes, being shut up in the city of Nora by Antigonus, and by him importuned to come out to speak with him, as he sent him word it was fit he should to a greater man than himself, and one who had now an advantage over him, returned this noble answer. "Tell him," said he, "that I shall never think any man greater than myself whilst I have my sword in my hand," and would not consent to come out to him till first, according to his own demand, Antigonus had delivered him his own nephew Ptolomeus in hostage.

And yet some have done very well in going out in person to parley, on the word of the assailant: witness Henry de Vaux, a cavalier of Champagne, who being besieged by the English in the Castle of Commercy, and Bartholomew de Brunes, who commanded at the Leaguer, having so sapped the greatest part of the castle without, that nothing remained but setting fire to the props to bury the besieged under the ruins, he requested the said Henry to come out to speak with him for his own good, which he did with three more in company; and, his ruin being made apparent to him, he conceived himself singularly obliged to his enemy, to whose discretion he and his garrison surrendered themselves; and fire being presently applied to the mine, the props no sooner began to fail, but the castle was immediately blown up from its foundations, no one stone being left upon another.

I could, and do, with great facility, rely upon the faith of another; but I should very unwillingly do it in such a case, as it should thereby be judged that it was rather an effect of my despair and want of courage than voluntarily and out of confidence and security in the faith of him with whom I had to do.

Chapter VI



—THAT THE HOUR OF PARLEY DANGEROUS

I saw, notwithstanding, lately at Mussidan, a place not far from my house, that those who were driven out thence by our army, and others of their party, highly complained of treachery, for that during a treaty of accommodation, and in the very interim that their deputies were treating, they were surprised and cut to pieces: a thing that, peradventure, in another age, might have had some colour of foul play; but, as I have just said, the practice of arms in these days is quite another thing, and there is now no confidence in an enemy excusable till the treaty is finally sealed; and even then the conqueror has enough to do to keep his word: so hazardous a thing it is to entrust the observation of the faith a man has engaged to a town that surrenders upon easy and favourable conditions, to the licence of a victorious army, and to give the soldier free entrance into it in the heat of blood.

Lucius AEmilius Regillus, the Roman praetor, having lost his time in attempting to take the city of Phocaea by force, by reason of the singular valour wherewith the inhabitants defended themselves, conditioned, at last, to receive them as friends to the people of Rome, and to enter the town, as into a confederate city,

without any manner of hostility, of which he gave them all assurance; but having, for the greater pomp, brought his whole army in with him, it was no more in his power, with all the endeavour he could use, to restrain his people: so that, avarice and revenge trampling under foot both his authority and all military discipline, he there saw a considerable part of the city sacked and ruined before his face.

Cleomenes was wont to say, "that what mischief soever a man could do his enemy in time of war was above justice, and nothing accountable to it in the sight of gods and men." And so, having concluded a truce with those of Argos for seven days, the third night after he fell upon them when they were all buried in sleep, and put them to the sword, alleging that there had no nights been mentioned in the truce; but the gods punished this subtle perfidy.

In a time of parley also; and while the citizens were relying upon their safety warrant, the city of Casilinum was taken by surprise, and that even in the age of the justest captains and the most perfect Roman military discipline; for it is not said that it is not lawful for us, in time and place, to make advantage of our enemies' want of understanding, as well as their want of courage.

And, doubtless, war has naturally many privileges that appear reasonable even to the prejudice of reason. And therefore here the rule fails, "Neminem id agere ut ex alte rius praedetur inscitia."—"No one should prey upon another's folly."—Cicero, *De Offic.*, iii. 17.]—But I am astonished at the great liberty allowed by Xenophon in such cases, and that both by precept and by the example of several exploits of his complete emperor; an author of very great authority, I confess, in those affairs, as being in his own person both a great captain and a philosopher of the first form of Socrates' disciples; and yet I cannot consent to such a measure of licence as he dispenses in all things and places.

Monsieur d'Aubigny, besieging Capua, and after having directed a furious battery against it, Signor Fabricio Colonna, governor of the town, having from a bastion begun to parley, and his soldiers in the meantime being a little more remiss in their guard, our people entered the place at unawares, and put them all to the sword. And of later memory, at Yvoy, Signor Juliano Romero having played that part of a novice to go out to parley with the Constable, at his return found his place taken. But, that we might not scape scot-free, the Marquess of Pescara having laid siege to Genoa, where Duke Ottaviano Fregosa commanded under our protection, and the articles betwixt them being so far advanced that it was looked upon as a done thing, and upon the point to be concluded, the Spaniards in the meantime having slipped in, made use of this treachery as an absolute victory.

And since, at Ligny, in Barrois, where the Count de Brienne commanded, the emperor having in his own person beleaguered that place, and Bertheville, the said Count's lieutenant, going out to parley, whilst he was capitulating the town was taken.

"Fu il vincer sempremai laudabil cosa, Vincasi o per fortuna, o per ingegno,"

["Victory is ever worthy of praise, whether obtained by valour or wisdom."—Ariosto, xv. l.]

But the philosopher Chrysippus was of another opinion, wherein I also concur; for he was used to say that those who run a race ought to employ all the force they have in what they are about, and to run as fast as they can; but that it is by no means fair in them to lay any hand upon their adversary to stop him, nor to set a leg before him to throw him down. And yet more generous was the answer of that great Alexander to Polypercon who was persuading him to take the advantage of the night's obscurity to fall upon Darius. "By no means," said he; "it is not for such a man as I am to steal a victory, 'Malo me fortunae poeniteat, quam victoria pudeat.'"—["I had rather complain of ill-fortune than be ashamed of victory." Quint. Curt. iv. 13]—

"Atque idem fugientem baud est dignatus Oroden

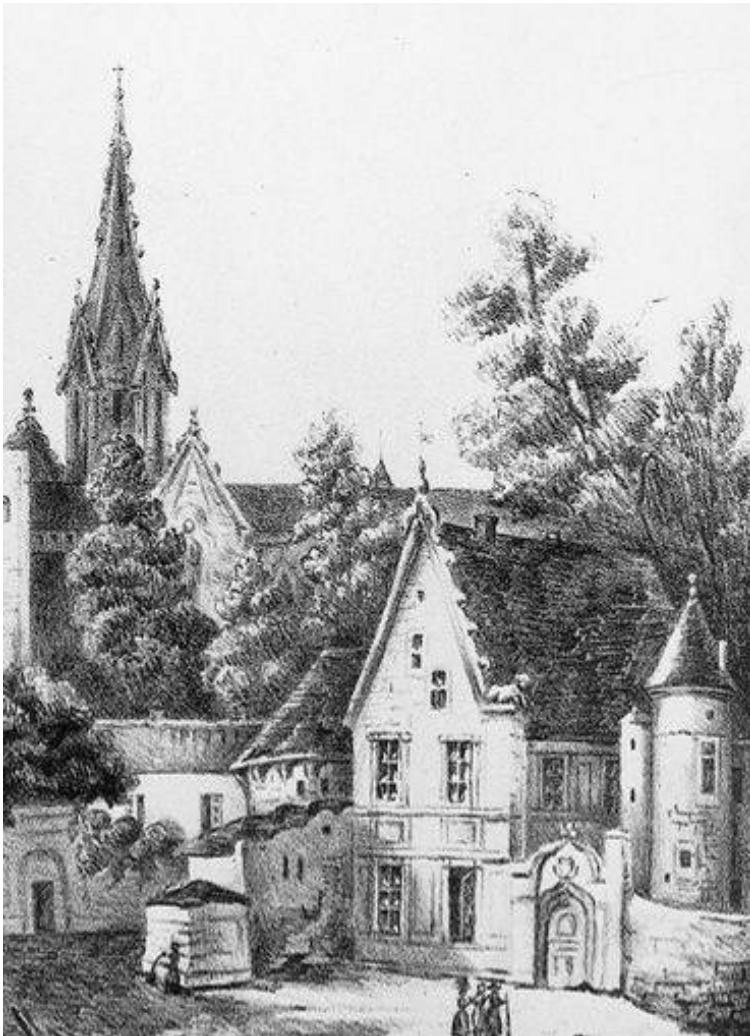
Sternere, nec jacta caecum dare cuspide vulnus

Obvius, adversoque occurrit, seque viro vir

Contulit, haud furto melior, sed fortibus armis."

["He deigned not to throw down Orodes as he fled, or with the darted spear to give him a wound unseen; but overtaking him, he confronted him face to face, and encountered man to man: superior, not in stratagem, but in valiant arms."—AENEID, x. 732.]

Chapter VII



—THAT THE INTENTION IS JUDGE OF OUR ACTIONS

'Tis a saying, "That death discharges us of all our obligations." I know some who have taken it in another sense. Henry VII., King of England, articed with Don Philip, son to Maximilian the emperor, or (to place him more honourably) father to the Emperor Charles V., that the said Philip should deliver up the Duke of Suffolk of the White Rose, his enemy, who was fled into the Low Countries, into his hands; which Philip accordingly did, but upon condition, nevertheless, that Henry should attempt nothing against the life of the said Duke;