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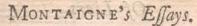
Montaigne's Essays

In Three Books. With Notes and Quotations. And an Account of The Author's Life; With a short Character of the Author and Translator, by the late Marquis of Halifax; With the Addition of A Complete Table to each Volume

Montaigne, Michel Eyquem de London, 1743

Chap. 10. Of quick or slow Speech.

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That he had also himself considered the same Difficulties, and had represented as much to the Pope. From which Saying of his, so directly opposite to the Thing propounded, and the Business he came about, which was immediately to incite him to War, the King sirst derived Argument (which he also afterwards found to be true) that this Ambassador, in his own private Bosom, was a Friend to the French; of which having advertised the Pope, his Estate at his Return home was confiscate, and himself very narrowly escaped the losing of his Head.



CHAP. X.

Of quick or flow Speech.

Ont ne fut à tous toutes Graces donnes.

All Graces by All-liberal Heaven
Were never yet to all Men given.

S we see in the Gift of Eloquence, wherein some have such a Facility and Promptness, and that which we call a present Wit, fo easy, that they are ever ready upon all Occasions, and never to be surpriz'd: And others more heavy and flow, never venture to utter any Thing but what they have long premeditated, and taken great Care and Pains to fit and prepare. Now, as we teach young Ladies those Sports and Exercises which are most proper to fet out the Grace and Beauty of those Parts wherein their chiefest Ornament and Persection lye; so in these two Advantages of Eloquence, to which the Lawyers and Preachers of our Age feem principally to pretend. If I were worthy to advise, the slow Speaker, methinks, should be more proper for the Pulpit, and the other for the Bar; and that because the Employment of the first does naturally allow him all the Leifure he can defire to prepare himself, and besides, his Career is perform'd in an even and unintermitted Line, without Stop or Interruption; whereas, the Pleader's Business and Interest compels

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him to enter the Lists upon all Occasions, and the unexpected Objections and Replies of his adverse Party, justle him out of his Course, and put him upon the Instant, to pump for new and extempore Answers and Defences. Yet, at the Interview betwixt Pope Clement and King Francis, at Marseilles, it happened quite contrary, that Monsieur Poyet, a Man bred up all his Life at the Bar, and in the highest Repute for Eloquence, having the Charge of making the Harangue to the Pope committed to him, and having fo long meditated on it before hand, as (it was faid) to have brought it ready along with him from Paris; the very Day it was to have been pronounc'd, the Pope fearing fomething might be faid that might give Offence to the other Princes Ambassadors who were there attending on him, fent to acquaint the King with the Argument which he conceiv'd most fuiting to the Time and Place, but by Chance quite another Thing to that Monfieur de Poyet had taken so much Pains about: So that the fine Speech he had prepared was of no Use, and he was upon the Instant to contrive another; which finding himself unable to do, Cardinal Bellay was constrained to perform that Office. The Pleader's Part is, doubtless, much harder than that of the Preacher; and yet, in my Opinion we see more passable Lawyers than Preachers. It should seem that the Nature of Wit is, to have it's Operation prompt and fudden, and that of Judgment, to have it more deliberate, and more flow: But he who remains totally filent for want of Leifure to prepare himself to speak well, and he also whom Leifure does no ways benefit to better fpeaking, are equally unhappy. 'Tis faid of Severus, that he spoke best extempore, that he stood more oblig'd to Fortune, than his own Diligence, that it was an Advantage to him to be interrupted in speaking, and that his Adversaries were afraid to nettle him, left his Anger should redouble his Eloquence. I know experimentally, a Disposition so impatient of a tedious and elaborate Premeditation, that if it do not go frankly and gaily to work, can perform nothing to Purpose. We say of some Compositions, that they stink of Oil, and smell of the Lamp, by reason of a certain rough Harshness that the laborious Handling imprints upon those where great Force has been employed: But besides this, the solicitude of doing well, and a certain ftriving

