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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. 13. The Ceremony of the Interview of Princes.

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as to infect and to corrupt it. He judges according to his Fear, and conforms his Behaviour to it. But in this Verse you may see the true State of the wise Stoick learnedly and plainly express'd :

*Mens immota manet, lacrymæ voluntur inanes\**.

The Eye, perhaps, frail, fruitless Showers rains,  
Whilst yet the Mind firm and unshook remains.

The wise Peripatetick is not himself totally free from Perturbations of Mind, but he moderates them by his Wisdom.



C H A P. XIII.

*The Ceremony of the Interview of Princes.*

THERE is no Subject so frivolous, that does not merit a Place in this Rhapsody. According to the common Rule of Civility, it would be a kind of an Affront to an Equal, and much more to a Superior, to fail of being at home, when he has given you Notice he will come to visit you. Nay, *Queen Margaret of Navarre* farther adds, That it would be a Rudeness in a Gentleman to go out to meet any one that is coming to see him, let him be of what Condition soever; and that it is more respectful and more civil to stay at home to receive him, if only upon the Account of missing of him by the Way, and that it is enough to receive him at the Door, and to wait upon him to his Chamber. For my Part, who as much as I can endeavour to reduce the Ceremonies of my House, I very often forgot both the one and the other of these vain Offices, and peradventure some one may take Offence at it; if he do, I am sorry, but I cannot find in my Heart to help it; it is much better to offend him once, than myself every Day, for it would be a perpetual Slavery; and

\* *Virg. Æneid. l. 2.*

to what End do we avoid the servile Attendance of Courts, if we bring the same, or a greater Trouble, home to our own private Houses? It is also a common Rule in all Assemblies, that those of less Quality are to be first upon the Place, by reason that it is a State more due to the better Sort to make others wait and expect them. Nevertheless, at the Interview betwixt Pope *Clement* and King *Francis* at *Marseilles*, the King, after he had in his own Person taken order in the necessary Preparations for his Reception and Entertainment, withdrew out of the Town, and gave the Pope two or three Days respite for his Entry, and wherein to repose and refresh himself before he came to him. And in like manner, at the Assignation of the Pope and the Emperor at *Bologna*, the Emperot gave the Pope Leave to come thither first, and came himself after; for which, the Reason then given was this; that at all the Interviews of such Princes, the Greater ought to be first at the appointed Place, especially before the other in whose Territories the Interview is appointed to be, intimating thereby a kind of Deference to the other, it appearing proper for the Less to seek out, and to apply themselves to the Greater, and not the Greater to them. Not every Country only, but every City, and so much as every Society, have their particular Forms of Civility. There was Care enough taken in my Education, and I have liv'd in good Company enough to know the Formalities of our own Nation, and am able to give Lessons in it; I love also to follow them, but not to be so servilely tied to their Observation, that my whole Life should be enslav'd to Ceremony; of which there are some, that provided a Man omits them out of Discretion, and not for want of Breeding, it will be every whit as handsom. I have seen some People rude, by being over-civil, and troublesom in their Courtesy; tho' these Excesses excepted, the Knowledge of Courtesy and good Manners is a very necessary Study. It is, like Grace and Beauty, that which begets Liking and an Inclination to love one another at the first Sight, and in the beginning of an Acquaintance and Familiarity; and consequently, that which first opens the Door, and introduces us to better ourselves by the Example of others, there be any thing in the Society worth taking Notice of.