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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

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Chap. 30. Of Cannibals.

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Place, for the Welcome of the said *Cortez*, they sacrificed fifty Men at once. I will tell you this one Tale more, and I have done; some of these People being beaten by him, sent to compliment him, and to treat with him of a Peace, whose Messengers carried him three Sorts of Presents, which they presented in these Terms: Behold, Lord, here are five Slaves, if thou art a furious God that feedst upon Flesh and Blood, eat these, and we will bring thee more; if thou art an affable God, behold here Incense and Feathers; but if thou art a Man, take these Fowls and these Fruits that we have brought thee.



C H A P. XXX.

Of Cannibals.

WHEN *Pyrrhus* King of *Epirus* invaded *Italy*, having viewed and considered the Order of the Army the *Romans* sent out to meet him; I know not, said he, what Kind of *Barbarians* (for so the *Greeks* called all other Nations) these may be; but the Discipline of this Army that I see has nothing of Barbarity in it. As much said the *Greeks* of that which *Flaminius* brought into their Country; and *Philip* beholding, from an Eminence, the Order and the Disposition of the *Roman* Camp, led into his Kingdom by *Publius Sulpitius Galba*, spake to the same Effect. By which it appears, how cautious Men ought to be, of taking Things upon Trust from vulgar Opinion, and that we are to judge by the Eye of Reason, and not from common Report. I have long had a Man in my House, that lived ten or twelve Years in the new World discovered in these latter Days, and in that Part of it where *Velegaignon* landed, which he called *Antarick France*. This Discovery of so vast a Country seems to be of very great Consideration; and we are not sure, that hereafter there may not be another, so many wiser Men than we having been deceived in this. I am afraid our Eyes are bigger than our Bellies, and that we have more Curiosity than Capacity;

Capacity ; for we grasp at all, but catch nothing but Air. *Plato* brings in *Solon*, telling a Story that he had heard from the Priests of *Sais* in *Aegypt*, that of old, and before the Deluge, there was a great Island call'd *Atlantis*, situate directly at the Mouth of the Streight of *Gibraltar*, which contain'd more Ground than both *Africk* and *Asia* put together ; and that the Kings of that Country, who not only possess that Isle, but extended their Dominion so far into the Continent, that they had a Country as large as *Africk* to *Aegypt*, and as long as *Europe* to *Tuscany*, attempted to encroach even upon *Asia*, and to subjugate all the Nations that border upon the Mediterranean Sea, as far as the Gulph of *Mare Maggiore* ; and to that Effect over-ran all *Spain*, the *Gauls*, and *Italy*, so far as to penetrate into *Greece*, where the *Athenians* stop't the Torrent of their Arms : But some Time after, both the *Athenians*, they, and their Island, were swallowed by the Flood.

It is very likely, that this violent Irruption and Inundation of Water made a wonderful Change, and strange Alteration in the Habitations of the Earth : As 'tis said that the Sea then divided *Sicily* from *Italy* ;

*Hæc locavi quondam, & vasta convulsa ruina,
Dissiluisse ferunt : cum protinus utraque tellus,
Una foret *.*

'Tis said those Places by the o'erbearing Flood,
Too great and violent to be withstood,
Split, and was thus from one another rent,
Which were before one solid Continent.

Cyprus from *Syria* ; the Isle of *Negropont* from the firm Land of *Bæotia* ; and elsewhere, united Lands that were separate before, by filling up the Channel betwixt them with Sand and Mud ;

—*Sterilesque diu palus, aptaque remis
Ficinas urbes alit, & grave sentit aratrum †.*

* *Virg. Æn. l. 3.* † *Horat. in Art. Poet.*

Where

Where sterile remigable Marshes now
Feed neighb'ring Cities and admit the Plough.

But there is no great Appearance, that this Isle was this new World so lately discover'd: For that almost touch'd upon *Spain*, and it were an incredible Effect of an Inundation, to have tumbled so prodigious a Mass above twelve hundred Leagues: Besides that, our modern Navigators have already almost discover'd it to be no Island, but firm Land, and Continent, with the *East-Indies* on the one Side, and with the Land under the two Poles on two others; or if it be separated from them, 'tis by so narrow a Streight and so inconsiderable a Channel, that it never the more deserves the Name of an Island for that. It should seem, that in this great Body, there are two Sorts of Motions, the one natural, and the other febrifick, as there are in ours. When I consider the Impression that our River of *Dordogne* has made in my Time, on the right Bank of it's Descent, and that in twenty Years it has gain'd so much, and undermin'd the Foundation of so many Houses, I perceive it to be an extraordinary Agitation: For had it always follow'd this Course, or were hereafter to do it, the Prospect of the World would be totally chang'd. But Rivers alter their Course, sometimes beating against the one Side, and sometimes the other; and sometimes quietly keeping the Channel; I do not speak of sudden Inundations, the Causes of which every Body understands. In *Medoc*, by the Sea-shore, the *Sieur d'Arzac*, my Brother, sees an Estate, he had there buried under the Sands which the Sea vomits before it; where the Tops of some Houses are yet to be seen, and where his Rents and Revenues are converted into pitiful barren Pasturage: The Inhabitants of which Place affirm, That of late Years the Sea has driven so vehemently upon them, that they have lost above four Leagues of Land: These Sands are her Harbingers. And we now see great Heaps of moving Sand, that march half a League before her.

The other Testimony from Antiquity, to which some would apply this Discovery of the new World, is in *Aristotle*; at least, if that little Book of unheard Miracles be his. He there tells us, That certain *Carthaginians*, having cross'd the *Atlantick* Sea without the Streight of *Gibraltar*, and sailed a very long Time, discover'd at last a great and fruitful

fruitful Island, all cover'd over with Wood, and water'd with several broad and deep Rivers; far remote from all firm Land, and that they, and others after them, allur'd by the Pleasantness and Fertility of the Soil, went thither with their Wives and Children, and began to plant a Colony: But the Senate of *Carthage*, visibly perceiving their People by little and little to grow thin, issu'd out an exprefs Prohibition, That no one, upon Pain of Death, should transport themselves thither; and also drove out these new Inhabitants; fearing, 'tis said, lest in Process of Time, they should so multiply, as to supplant themselves, and ruin their State. But this Relation of *Aristotle's* does no more agree with our new found Lands, than the other. This Man that I have is a plain ignorant Fellow, and therefore the more likely to tell Truth: For your better bred Sort of Men are much more curious in their Observation. 'Tis true, they discover a great deal more, but then they gloss upon it, and to give the greater Weight to what they deliver, and allure your Belief, they cannot forbear a little to alter the Story: They never represent Things to you simply as they are, but rather as they appear'd to them, or as they would have them appear to you, and to gain the Reputation of Men of Judgment, and the better to induce your Faith, are willing to help out the Business with something more than is really true, of their own Invention. Now in this Case we should either have a Man of irreproachable Veracity, or so simple, that he has not wherewithal to contrive and to give a Colour of Truth to false Relations, and that can have no Ends in forging an Untruth. Such a one is mine; and besides, the little Suspicion the Man lyes under, he has divers Times shewed me several Seamen and Merchants, that at the same Time went the same Voyage. I shall therefore content myself with his Information, without enquiring what the Cosmographers say to the Business. We should have Maps to trace out to us the particular Places where they have been; but for having had this Advantage over us, to have seen the Holy Land, they would have the Privilege forsooth, to tell us Stories of all the other Parts of the World besides. I would have every one write what he knows, and as much as he knows, but no more; and that not in this only, but in all other Subjects: For such a Person may have
some

some particular Knowledge and Experience of the Nature of such a River; or such a Fountain, that as to other Things knows no more than what every Body does, and yet to keep a Clutter with this little Pittance of his, will undertake to write the whole Body of Physicks: A Vice from whence great Inconveniencies derive their Original.

Now, to return to my Subject, I find that there is nothing barbarous and savage in this Nation, by any Thing that I can gather, excepting, That every one gives the Title of Barbarity to every Thing that is not in Use in his own Country: As indeed we have no other Level of Truth and Reason, than the Example and Idea of the Opinions and Customs of the Place wherein we live. There is always the true Religion, there the perfect Government, and the most exact and accomplish'd Usance of all Things. They are Savages at the same Rate, that we say Fruits are wild, which Nature produces of herself, and by her own ordinary Progress; whereas in Truth, we ought rather to call those wild, whose Natures we have chang'd by our Artifice, and diverted from the common Order. In those, the genuine, most useful and natural Virtues and Properties, are vigorous and spritely, which we have help'd to degenerate in these, by accommodating them to the Pleasure of our own corrupted Palate. And yet for all this, our Taste confesses a Flavour and Delicacy, excellent even to Emulation of the best of ours, in several Fruits those Countries abound with, without Art or Culture; neither is it reasonable, that Art should gain the Pre-eminence of our great and powerful Mother, Nature. We have so oppress'd her with the additional Ornaments and Graces which we have added to the Beauty and Riches of our own Works by our Inventions, that we have almost smother'd and choak'd her; and yet in other Places, where she shines in her own Purity, and proper Lustre, she strangely baffles and disgraces all our vain and frivolous Attempts.

*Et veniunt hederæ sponte sua melius,
Surgit & in solis formosior arbutus antris,
Et volucres nulla dulcius arte canunt* *.

* *Propest. l. 1. Elec. 2.*

The Ivy best spontaneously does thrive,
Th' *Arbutus* best in shady Caves does live,
And Birds in their wild Notes their Throats do stretch
With greater Art, than Art itself can teach.

Our utmost Endeavours cannot arrive at so much as to imitate the Nest of the least of Birds, it's Contexture, Queintness and Convenience: Not so much as the Web of a contemptible Spider. All Things, says *Plato*, are produc'd either by Nature, by Fortune, or by Art; the greatest and most beautiful by the one, or the other of the former, the least and the most imperfect by the last. These Nations then seem to me to be so far barbarous, as having receiv'd but very little Form and Fashion from Art and human Invention, and consequently, not much remote from their original Simplicity. The Laws of Nature however govern them still, not as yet much vitiated with any Mixture of ours: But in such Purity, that I am sometimes troubled we were no sooner acquainted with these People, and that they were not discover'd in those better Times, when there were Men much more able to judge of them, than we are. I am sorry that *Lycurgus* and *Plato* had no Knowledge of them; for to my Apprehension, what we now see in those Natives, does not only surpass all the Images with which the Poets have adorn'd the Golden Age, and all their Inventions in feigning a happy State of Man; but moreover the Fancy, and even the Wish and Desire of Philosophy itself; so native, and so pure a Simplicity, as we by Experience see to be in them, could never enter into their Imagination, nor could they ever believe that human Society could have been maintain'd with so little Artifice; should I tell *Plato* that it is a Nation wherein there is no Manner of Traffick, no Knowledge of Letters, no Science of Numbers, no Name of Magistrate, nor politick Superiority; no use of Service, Riches or Poverty; no Contracts, no Successions, no Dividends, no Properties, no Employments, but those of Leisure; no Respect of Kindred, but common; no Clothing, no Agriculture, no Metal, no use of Corn or Wine; and where so much as the very Words that signify, Lying, Treachery, Disimulation, Avarice, Envy, Detraction, and Pardon, were never heard of: How much would he find

find his imaginary Republick short of his Perfection?

Hos natura modos primum dedit †.

These were the Manners first by Nature taught.

As to the rest, they live in a Country, beautiful and pleasant to a Miracle, and so temperate withal, as my Intelligence informs me, that 'tis very rare to hear of a sick Person; and they moreover assure me, that they never saw any of the Natives, either paralytick, blear-ey'd, toothless, or crooked with Age. The Situation of their Country is all along by the Sea-shore, and enclos'd on the other Side towards the Land, with great and high Mountains, having about an hundred Leagues in Breadth between. They have great Store of Fish and Flesh Meat that have no Resemblance to ours, which they eat without any other Cookery, than plain Boiling, Roasting, or Broiling. The first that carried a Horse thither, though in several other Voyages he had contracted an Acquaintance and Familiarity with them, put them into so terrible a Fright, that they kill'd him with their Arrows before they could come to discover who he was. Their Buildings are very long, and of Capacity to hold two or three hundred People, made of the Barks of tall Trees, rear'd with one End upon the Ground, and leaning to, and supporting one another, at the Top, like some of our Barns, of which the Covering hangs down to the very Ground, and serves for the side Walls. They have Wood so hard, that they cleave it into Swords, and make Grills of it to broil their Meat. Their Beds are of Cotton, hung swinging in the Roof, like our Seamen's Hammocks, for every one one, the Wives lying apart from their Husbands. They rise with the Sun, and so soon as they are up, eat for all Day; for they have no more Meals but that: They do not then drink, (as *Suidas* reports of some other People of the *East*, that never drink at their Meals) but drink very often all Day after, and sometimes to a rousing Pitch. Their Liquor is made of a certain Root, and is as red as our Claret; which they never drink but Luke-

* *Vig. Georg. 2.*

warm. It will keep above two or three Days, has a quick Taste, is nothing heady, but very comfortable to the Stomach, loosning to Strangers, and a very pleasant Beverage to such as are us'd to it. Instead of Bread, they make use of a certain white Matter, like *Coriander* Comfits; I have tasted of it, the Taste is sweet, and a little insipid. All the whole Day is spent in Dancing. Their young Men go a Hunting after wild Beasts with Bows and Arrows, and one part of their Women are employ'd in preparing their Drink the while, which is their chief Employment. There are some of their old Men, who in the Morning before they fall to Eating preach to the whole Family, as they walk to and fro from the one End of the House to the other, several Times repeating the same Sentence, 'till they have finish'd their Turn, (for their Houses are at least a hundred Yards long;) Valour towards their Enemies, and Love towards their Wives, are the two Heads of his Discourse, and he never fails in the Close, to put them in Mind that they have so much the greater Obligation to it, because they provide them their Drink warm, and well order'd. The Fashion of their Beds, Ropes, Swords, and Wooden Bracelets, which they tie about their Wrists, when they go to fight, and great Canes, boar'd hollow at one End, by the Sound of which they keep the Cadence of their Dances, are to be seen in several Places, and amongst others at my House. They shave all their hairy Parts, and much more neatly than we, without any other Razor than one of Wood, or of Stone. They believe the Immortality of the Soul, and that those who have merited well of the Gods, are lodg'd in that Part of Heaven where the Sun rises; and the Accursed in the West. They have I know not what kind of Priests and Prophets, that very rarely present themselves to the People, having their Abode in the Mountains. At their Arrival there is a great Feast, and solemn Assembly of many Villages made: That is, all the neighbouring Families, for every House, as I have describ'd it, makes a Village, and are about a *French* League distant from one another. This Prophet declaims to them in Publick, exhorting them to Virtue, and their Duty: But all their Ethicks terminate in these two Articles, of Resolution in War, and Affection to their Wives. This also prophesies to them Events to come, and the Issues they

they are to expect from their Enterprizes, prompts them to, or diverts them from War: But let him look to't; for if he fail in his Divination, and any Thing happen otherwise than he has foretold, he is cut into a thousand Pieces, if he be caught and condemn'd for a false Prophet; and for that Reason, if any of them finds himself mistaken, he is no more to be heard of. Divination is a Gift of God, and therefore to abuse it ought to be a punishable Imposture. Amongst the *Scythians*, where their Diviners fail'd in the promis'd Effect, they were laid, bound Hand and Foot, upon Carts loaden with Furz and Bavins, and drawn with Oxen, on which they were burnt to Death. Such as only meddle with Things subject to the Conduct of human Capacity, are excusable in doing the best they can: But those other Sort of People that come to delude us, with Assurances of an extraordinary Faculty, beyond our Understanding, ought they not to be punish'd for the Temerity of their Imposture when they do not make good the Effect of their Promise? They have continual War with the Nations that live farther within the main Land, beyond their Mountains, to which they go naked, and without other Arms than their Bows, and Wooden-Swords, fashioned at one End like the Head of a Javelin. The Obstinacy of their Battles is wonderful, and never end without great Effusion of Blood: For as to running away, they know not what it is. Every one for a Trophy brings home the Head of an Enemy he has kill'd, which he fixes over the Door of his House. After having a long Time treated their Prisoners very well, and given them all the Regalia's they can think of, he to whom the Prisoner belongs invites a great Assembly of his Kindred and Friends, who being come, he ties a Rope to one of the Arms of the Prisoner, of which at a Distance, out of his Reach, he holds the one End himself, and gives to the Friend he loves best, the other Arm, to hold after the same Manner; which being done, they two, in the Presence of all the Assembly, dispatch him with their Swords. After that they roast him, eat him amongst them, and send some Chops to their absent Friends, which nevertheless they do not do, as some think, for Nourishment, as the *Scythians* anciently did, but as a Representation of an extreme Revenge; as will immediately appear: Having observed the *Portuguese*,
who

who where in League with their Enemies to inflict another Sort of Death upon any of them they took Prisoners; which was, to set them up to the Girdle in the Earth, to shoot at the remaining Part 'till it was stuck full of Arrows, and then to hang them: They who thought those People of the other World, (as those who had sown the Knowledge of a great many Vices amongst their Neighbours and were much greater Masters in all kind of Mischief than they,) did not exercise this Sort of Revenge without Mystery, and that it must needs be more painful than theirs; and so began to leave their old Way, and to follow this. I am not sorry that we should here take Notice of the barbarous Horror of so cruel an Action, but grieved that seeing so clearly into their Faults, we should be so blind to our own: For I conceive, there is more Barbarity in eating a Man alive, than when he is dead; in tearing a Body Limb from Limb, by Racks and Torments, that is yet in perfect Sense, in roasting it by Degrees, causing it to be bit and worried by Dogs and Swine, (as we have not only read, but lately seen; not amongst inveterate and mortal Enemies, but Neighbours, and fellow Citizens, and which is worse, under Colour of Piety and Religion,) than to roast and eat him after he is dead. *Chrysippus*, and *Zeno*, the two Heads of the Stoical Sect, were of Opinion, that there was no Hurt in making Use of our dead Carcasses, in what Kind soever, for our Necessity, and in feeding upon them too; as our Ancestors, who being besieg'd by *Cæsar* in the City of *Alexia*, resolv'd to sustain the Famine of the Siege with the Bodies of their old Men, Women, and other Persons, who were incapable of bearing Arms.

*Vascones (fama est) alimentis talibus usi,
Produxere animas* *.

'Tis said the *Gascons* with such Meats as these,
In Time of Siege their Hunger did appease.

And the Physicians make no Difficulty of employing
it to all Sorts of Use, that is, either to apply it outwardly,

* *Juvenal Sat. 15.*

or to give it inwardly for the Health of the Patient: But there never was any Opinion so irregular, as to excuse Treachery, Disloyalty, Tyranny and Cruelty, which are our familiar Vices. We may then call these People barbarous, in respect to the Rules of Reason: But not in respect to ourselves, who in all Sorts of Barbarity exceed them. Their Wars are throughout noble and generous, and carry as much Excuse and fair Pretence, as their human Frailty is capable of; having with them no other Foundation, than the sole Jealousy of Virtue. Their Disputes are not for the Conquests of new Lands, those they already possess, being so fruitful by Nature, as to supply them without Labour or Concern, with all Things necessary, in such Abundance, that they have no Need to enlarge their Borders. And they are moreover happy in this, that they only covet so much as their natural Necessities require: All beyond that is superfluous to them: Men of the same Age generally call one another Brothers, those who are younger, Sons and Daughters, and the old Men are Fathers to all. These leave to their Heirs in common this full Possession of Goods, without any Manner of Division, or other Title, than what Nature bestows upon her Creatures, in bringing them into the World. If their Neighbours pass over the Mountains, and come to assault them, and obtain a Victory, all the Victors gain by it is Glory only, and the Advantage of having prov'd themselves the better in Valour and Virtue: For they never meddle with the Goods of the Conquer'd, but presently return into their own Country, where they have no Want of any Thing necessary; nor of this greatest of all Goods, to know how to enjoy their Condition happily, and to be content. And these in Turn do the same. They demand of their Prisoners no other Ransom, than Acknowledgment that they are overcome: But there is not one found in an Age that will rather not chuse to die, than make such a Confession: or either by Word or Look recede from the entire Grandeur of an invincible Courage. There is not a Man amongst them, who had not rather be kill'd and eaten, than so much as to open his Mouth to intreat he may not. They use them with all Liberality and Freedom, to the End their Lives may be so much the dearer to them: But frequently entertain them withal with Menaces of their approaching Death.

Death, of the Torments they are to suffer, of the Preparations that are making in order to it, of the mangling their Limbs, and of the Feast that is to be made, where their Carcasses is to be the only Dish. All which they do to no other End, but only to extort some gentle or submissive Word from them, or to fright them so as to make them run away; to obtain this Advantage, that they were terrified, and that their Constancy was shaken; and indeed, if rightly taken, it is in this Point only that a true Victory does consist.

— *Victoria nulla est,*

Quam quæ confessos animo quoque subjugat hostes †.

No Victory can be entire and true;
But what does Minds as well as Limbs subdue.

The Hungarians, a very warlike People, never pretend farther than to reduce the Enemy to their Discretion; for having forc'd this Confession from them, they let them go without Injury, or Ransom, excepting at the most, to make them engage their Word, never to bear Arms against them again. We have several Advantages over our Enemies that are borrowed, and not truly our own; 'tis the Quality of a Porter, and no Effect of Virtue to have stronger Arms and Legs, 'tis a corporeal Quality to be active, 'tis an Exploit of Fortune to make our Enemy stumble, or to dazzle him with the Light of the Sun; 'tis a Trick of Science and Art, which may happen in a mean base Fellow, to be a good Fencer. The Estimate and Valour of a Man consist in the Heart, and in the Will, there his true Honour lives: Valour is Stability, not of Legs and Arms, but of the Courage and the Soul; it does not lye in the Valour of our Horse, or our Arms, but in ourselves. He that falls obstinate in his Courage, *Si succiderit de genu pugnabit* *; If his Legs fail him, fights upon his Knees. He who for any Danger of apparent Death abates nothing of his Assurance, who dying, does yet dart at his Enemy a fierce and disdainful Look, is overcome not by us, but by

† *Claud. in Panegy.*

* *Seneca Epist.*

Fortune; he is kill'd, not conquer'd; the most valiant, are sometimes the most unfortunate. There are also Defeats triumphant to Emulation of Victories. Neither durst those four Sister-Victories, the fairest the Sun ever beheld, of *Salamis*, *Platea*, *Mical*, and *Sicily*, ever oppose all their united Glories, to the single Glory of the Discomfiture of King *Leonidas*, and his Army at the Pass of *Thermopylæ*. Who ever ran with a more glorious Desire, and greater Ambition, to the winning, than the Captain *Iscobas* to the certain Loss of a Battle? Who could have found out a more subtle Invention to secure his Safety, than he did to assure his Ruin? He was set to defend a certain Pass of *Peloponnesus* against the *Arcadians*, which, considering the Nature of the Place, and the Inequality of Forces, finding it utterly impossible for him to do, and concluding that all who were presented to the Enemy, must certainly be left upon the Place; and on the other Side, reputing it unworthy of his own Virtue, and Magnanimity, and of the *Lacedæmonian* Name, to fail in any Part of his Duty, he chose a Mean betwixt these two Extremes, after this Manner; the youngest and most active of his Men, he would preserve for the Service and Defence of their Country, and therefore sent them back; and with the rest, whose Loss would be of less Consideration, he resolv'd to make good the Pass, and with the Death of them, to make the Enemy buy their Entry as dear as possibly he could: As it also fell out, for being presently encompassed on all Sides by the *Arcadians*, after having made a great Slaughter of the Enemy, he and his Men were all cut in Pieces. Is there any Trophy dedicated to the Conquerors, which is not much more due to those who were overcome? The Part that true conquering is to play, lyes in the Encounter, not in the coming off; and the Honour of Virtue consists in fighting, not in subduing.

But to return to my Story, these Prisoners are so far from discovering the least Weakness, for all the Terrors can be represented to them, that, on the contrary, during the two or three Months, that they are kept, they always appear with a chearful Countenance; importune their Masters to make Haste to bring them to the Test; defy, rail at them, and reproach them with Cowardice, and the Number of Battles they have lost against those of their Country.

Country. I have a Song made by one of these Prisoners, wherein he bids them *come all, and dine upon him, and welcome, for they shall withal eat their own Fathers, and Grand-fathers, whose Flesh has serv'd to feed and nourish him. Those Muscles, says he, this Flesh, and these Veins, are your own: Poor silly Souls as you are, you little think that the Substance of your Ancestors Limbs is here yet: But mind as you eat, and you will find in it the Taste of your own Flesh:* In which Song there is to be observed, an Invention that relishes nothing of the *Barbarian*. Those, that paint these People dying after this Manner, represent the Prisoner spitting in the Face of his Executioners, and making at them a wry Mouth. And 'tis most certain, that to the very last Gasp, they never cease to brave and defy them both in Word and Gesture. In plain Truth, these Men are very savage in Comparison of us, and of Necessity, they must either be absolutely so, or else we are savager: For there is a vast Difference betwixt their Manners and ours.

The Men there have several Wives, and so much the great Number, by how much they have the greater Reputation and Valour, and it is one very remarkable Virtue their Women have, that the same Endeavour our Wives have to hinder and divert us from the Friendship and Familiarity of other Women, those employ to promote their Husbands Desires, and to procure them many Spouses; for being above all Things solicitous of their Husbands Honour, 'tis their chiefest Care to seek out and to bring in the most Companions they can, forasmuch as it is a Testimony of their Husbands Virtue. I know most of ours will cry out, that 'tis monstrous; whereas in truth, it is not so; but a truly matrimonial Virtue; though of the highest Form. In the Bible, *Sarah, Leah and Rachel*, gave the most beautiful of their Maids to their Husbands; *Livia* preferred the Passion of *Augustus* to her own Interest; and the Wife of King *Dejotarus* of *Stratonica* did not only give up a fair young Maid, that serv'd her, to her Husband's Embraces, but moreover carefully brought up the Children he had by her, and assisted them in the Succession to their Father's Crown. And that it may not be suppos'd, that all this is done by a simple and servile Observation to their common Practice, or by any Authoritative Impression of their ancient Custom, without Judgment,

ment, or Examination; and for having a Soul so stupid, that it cannot contrive what else to do, I must here give you some Touches of their Sufficiency, in point of Understanding; besides what I repeated to you before, which was one of their Songs of War, I have another and a Love-Song, that begins thus; *Stay, Adder, stay, that by thy Pattern my Sister may draw the Fashion and Work of a noble Wreath, that I may present to my Beloved, by which Means thy Beauty, and the excellent Order of thy Scales, shall forever be preferr'd before all other Serpents.* Wherein the first Couplet, *Stay, Adder, &c.* makes the Burthen of the Song. Now I have convers'd enough with Poetry to judge thus much: That not only, there is no Thing of barbarous in this Invention; but moreover, that it is perfectly *Anacreontick*; to which their Language is soft, of a pleasing Accent, and something bordering upon the *Greek* Terminations. Three of these People not foreseeing how dear their Knowledge of the Corruptions of this Part of the World would one Day cost their Happiness and Repose, and that the Effect of this Commerce would be their Ruin, as I presuppose it is in a very fair Way, (Miserable Men to suffer themselves to be deluded with Desire of Novelty, and to have left the Serenity of their own Heaven, to come so far to gaze at ours,) came to *Roan*, at the Time that the late King *Charles* the Ninth was there: Where the King himself talk'd to them a good while, and they were made to see our Fashions, our Pomp, and the Form of a great City; after which, some one ask'd their Opinion, and would know of them, what of all the Things they had seen, they found most to be admir'd? To which they made Answer, Three Things, of which I have forgot the Third, and am troubled at it; but two I yet remember. They said, that in the first Place they thought it very strange, that so many tall Men wearing Beards, strong and well arm'd, who were about the King, ('tis like they meant the *Swiss* of the Guard) should submit to obey a Child, and that they did not chuse out one amongst themselves to command: Secondly; (they have a way of Speaking in their Language, to call Men the half of one another,) that they had observ'd that there were amongst us, Men full and cramm'd with all manner of Conveniencies, whilst in the mean Time, their

Halves

Halves were begging at their Doors, lean, and half-starv'd with Hunger and Poverty; and thought it strange, that these necessitous Halves were able to suffer so great an Inequality and Injustice, and that they did not take the others by the Throats, or set Fire to their Houses. I talk'd to one of them a great while together, but I had so ill an interpreter, and that was so perplex'd by his own Ignorance, to apprehend my Meaning, that I could get nothing out of him, of any Moment. Asking him, what Advantage he reapt from the Superiority he had amongst his own People? (for he was a Captain, and our Mariners call'd him King,) he told me, to march in the Head of them to War; and demanding of him farther, how many Men he had to follow him? he shewed me a Space of Ground, to signify, as many as could march in such a Compass: Which might be four or five thousand Men; and putting the Question to him, Whether or no his Authority expir'd with the War? he told me this remain'd; that when he went to visit the Village of his Dependance, they plain'd him Paths through the thick of their Woods, through which he might pass at his Ease. All this does not sound very ill, and the last was not much amiss; for they wear no Breeches.



C H A P. XXXI.

That a Man is soberly to judge of divine Ordinances.

THings unknown are the principal and true Subject of Imposture, forasmuch as, in the first Place, their very Strangeness lends them Credit, and moreover, by not being subjected to our ordinary Discourse, they deprive us of the Means to question, and dispute them. For which Reason, says *Plato*, it is much more easy to satisfy the Hearers, when speaking of the Nature of the Gods, than of the Nature of Men, because the Ignorance of the Auditor affords a fair and large Career, and all Manner of

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Liberty